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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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MIC – VIS, 2026

MIC – Vis, 2026 is the sixth international multidisciplinary scientific conference jointly organized by VERN' University and the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences. The conference will address a broad range of research topics related to the current position and evolving role of Mediterranean islands, as well as the opportunities and challenges associated with their future development.

The aim of MIC – Vis, 2026 is to bring together researchers, experts and practitioners from different disciplines, encourage the exchange of research findings and perspectives, and foster interdisciplinary dialogue on the key challenges facing Mediterranean islands. Through scientific presentations, discussions and collaborative exchange, the conference seeks to contribute to the development of innovative and evidence-based approaches to island development.

MIC - Vis, 2026 is an international multidisciplinary scientific conference on the following topics:

- AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES
- ARCHITECTURE
- ARTS AND LITERATURE
- BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
- CULTURE AND TRADITION
- DEMOGRAPHY
- EDUCATION
- ENERGETICS
- GEOGRAPHY
- HISTORY
- MARINE AND BIOLOGY
- MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION
- MIGRATION
- PUBLIC SERVICES
- RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES
- SECURITY
- SOCIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY
- SPORT
- SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
- TOURISM

The island of Vis provides a highly relevant setting for an interdisciplinary scientific conference devoted to Mediterranean islands. Its demographic, economic, social, cultural and environmental characteristics reflect many of the challenges shared by island communities across the Mediterranean, including depopulation, limited accessibility, the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, sustainable resource management and the need for resilient development models. By bringing together researchers and practitioners from diverse disciplines, MIC – Vis, 2026 will encourage the exchange of research findings, comparative perspectives and the development of evidence-based responses to these challenges.

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CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Day 1 - Wednesday, September 16th

17:00 - 19:00	Registration
19:30 - 20:00	Conference opening
at 20:00	Welcome drink and Exhibition „Soul of the Mediterranean“ opening (exhibition will be opened as a result of international student photo contest)

Day 2 - Thursday, September 17th

9:30 - 12:00	Plenary session
12:00 - 14:00	Break
14:00 – 16:00	Presentations
16:00 – 16:30	Coffee break
16:30 - 18:30	Presentations
20:30 - 21:30	Cultural Program (Summer Cinema Vis)

Day 3 - Friday, September 18th

9:00 - 10:30	Presentations
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee break
11:00 – 13:00	Presentations
13:00 – 15:00	Break
15:00 – 17:00	Presentations
at 19:00	Conference Dinner (Restaurant Villa Kaliopa)

Day 4 - Saturday, September 19th

10:00 - 14:00	Social Program (social program will include guided tour around the island of Vis and visit to the City of Komiža)
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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

MARTIN BAK JØRGENSEN, PHD

Martin Bak Jørgensen is a Professor of Migration Processes at the Department of Culture and Learning, Aalborg University. With a PhD in Social Sciences and a background in European Studies and Political Science from Aarhus University, his academic journey has been deeply rooted in the intersections of migration, political sociology, and social change. Jørgensen has held key academic positions at Aalborg University since 2005, progressing from PhD fellow to full professor. He has led and contributed to numerous international research projects, including the DFF-funded CORRIDORS project, the Volkswagen Stiftung's ECSEuro initiative, lately the DFF-funded GIG-MIG project and Networks of Migrant Solidarity: Local and Translocal Dynamics in Civil Society and Municipalities. His research has been supported by prestigious grants from the Velux Foundation, the Danish Research Council, and the European Commission. He is a prolific scholar with a strong publication record, including influential books such as *Solidarity and the 'Refugee Crisis' in Europe* and numerous peer-reviewed articles on migration, solidarity, and integration policy. His work is widely cited and has shaped contemporary debates on migrant solidarity and urban responses to migration. Jørgensen serves on editorial boards, including *Comparative Migration Studies*, and is editor of the *Challenging Migration Studies* book series. He has also advised European institutions on integration and anti-discrimination policies. A committed mentor, he supervises PhD students and postdocs and has held leadership roles such as Head of Section. His international collaborations span Europe and North America, reflecting his dedication to transnational academic exchange and civic engagement in migration research.

ANA FILIPA VRDOLJAK, PHD

Ana Filipa Vrdoljak is Professor of Law at the University of Technology Sydney and the UNESCO Chair in International Law and Cultural Heritage. She is co-coordinator of the UNESCO-UNITWIN Network on Culture in Emergencies. She is the author of *International Law, Museums and the Return of Cultural Objects* (Cambridge University Press, 2006 and 2008, forthcoming 2e 2025) and editor of *Oxford Handbook on International Cultural Heritage Law* with Francesco Francioni (Oxford University Press 2020), *The Cultural Dimension of Human Rights* (Oxford University Press, 2013) and *International Law for Common Goods: Normative Perspectives in Human Rights, Culture and Nature* with Federico Lenzerini (Hart Publishing, 2014), and *Oxford Commentary on the 1970 UNESCO and 1995 UNIDROIT Conventions* with Andrzej Jakubowski and Alessandro Chechi (Oxford University Press, 2024). She holds a Doctor of Philosophy (in Law) from the University of Sydney.

SANJA KLEMPIĆ BOGADI, PHD

Sanja Klempić Bogadi is a Scientific Advisor and Head of the Department for Migration and Demographic Research at the Institute for Migration Research. She graduated, earned her master's degree, and obtained her PhD at the Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb. From 2013 to 2021, she served as Editor-in-Chief of the scientific journal *Migration and Ethnic Themes*. She is currently a member of the editorial boards of several journals, including *Croatian Geographical Bulletin*, *Geoadria*, *Stanovništvo*, *Acta Geobalcanica*, *Demografija*, and *Geographical Reviews*. She has participated as a researcher or project leader in numerous scientific and professional projects. She is presently leading the project *How Do People Age in Croatia?* funded by the European Union's NextGenerationEU programme. She

is the author or co-author of more than 50 scientific papers and five books. In addition, she has served as a reviewer for several books and numerous journal articles, as well as an evaluator of scientific projects. She has presented her research at numerous national and international scientific and professional conferences. She currently holds the title of Adjunct Full Professor at the University of Zagreb, where she teaches Contemporary Themes in Social Geography at the Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, and the courses World Population and Regional Demography at the Faculty of Croatian Studies. Her research interests include migration, population ageing, spatial aspects of demographic processes, quality of life, and island demography. She is a member of the Croatian Geographical Society, the European Association for Population Studies, the Global Change and Human Mobility Commission of the International Geographical Union, and the Central and Eastern European Research Network on Ageing.

ABSTRACTS

ISLANDS AS POLITICAL SPACES: GENDER AND LOCAL LEADERSHIP IN CROATIA

Marija Antić, Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences, Croatia

Rašeljka Krnić, Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences, Croatia

Vanja Dergić, Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences, Croatia

CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Public Services

ABSTRACT

This paper examines gendered patterns of executive leadership in Croatian island municipalities and towns, situating island-level governance in relation to national configurations of local political representation. Focusing on mayors and municipal heads across all 51 island local government units, the study explores how gender intersects with party affiliation, independent candidacies, and patterns of political continuity in small, socially embedded political settings. Conceptually, the paper draws on feminist political sociology and relational approaches to local governance to conceptualise islands as politically dense spaces in which formal institutions and informal networks are closely intertwined, and where political authority is shaped by heightened visibility, reputational dynamics, and long-term interpersonal ties. These conditions are examined in relation to broader national patterns in local executive leadership, allowing the analysis to situate island-level configurations within the wider organisation of political power in Croatia. The analysis considers whether women's access to executive office on islands tends to be associated with particular forms of political positioning, such as independent lists, moments of leadership turnover, or party-supported careers, and whether these patterns align with or diverge from dominant national trajectories. Attention is also given to differences across types of island communities and regional contexts, highlighting how territorial scale and social embeddedness shape the meanings and durability of political authority. By linking island-level configurations to national-level structures of representation, the paper contributes to debates on gender, scale, and political leadership, and offers insight into how peripheral and small-scale political systems organise access to power and political legitimacy.

KEYWORDS: island governance; gender; peripheral political systems; party affiliation; Croatia

LEARNING-ORIENTED AUTONOMOUS ENERGY SYSTEMS FOR ISLANDS: INSIGHTS FROM EUROPEAN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PROJECTS

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Brian O'Regan, University College Cork (UCC), Ireland

Dalibor Veseli, HEP Generation Ltd., Croatia

CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Energetics

ABSTRACT

Autonomous energy systems represent a promising pathway for islands facing seasonal demand variability, grid constraints, and increasing decarbonisation requirements. Building on earlier work focused on simple, robust, and resilient island energy systems, this paper presents an evolved perspective grounded in recent results from the European research and innovation projects O-CEI and OPTIX. The contribution shifts the focus from purely technical autonomy toward community-based, digitally enabled energy systems that integrate renewable generation, storage, and flexibility within energy communities and Positive Energy District frameworks. Insights from O-CEI highlight governance and contractual models supporting community grids while OPTIX contributes advanced digital tools for system optimisation, forecasting, and operational intelligence. Special attention is given to sector coupling, including the role of hydrogen as a long-term energy storage and flexibility option, enabling improved seasonal balancing and higher renewable energy integration. The analysis demonstrates how such integrated approaches enhance system resilience under the specific operational conditions characteristic of island energy systems. The paper concludes that autonomous island energy systems can evolve into adaptive, learning socio-technical systems, combining engineering robustness, digital intelligence, and community governance. The presented insights offer a transferable pathway for islands and other geographically or infrastructurally constrained regions undergoing the energy transition.

KEYWORDS: autonomous energy systems; islands; energy communities; community grids; energy transition; learning systems

INTEGRATION POLICIES AND THE VALORISATION OF MIGRANTS' HUMAN CAPITAL IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: THE CASE OF CROATIA

Marsel Antunović, Libertas International University, Croatia

Sandra Šokčević, Libertas International University, Croatia

Radmila Pavličić, Libertas International University, Croatia

CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Migration

ABSTRACT

Migration represents one of the key socio-economic issues of the contemporary European Union, particularly in the context of demographic ageing, labour shortages, and the need for sustainable economic growth. Although migrants often possess significant educational and professional potential, their integration into the labour market is frequently characterised by underemployment, non-recognition of foreign qualifications, and institutional barriers, resulting in the insufficient valorisation of their human capital. The aim of this paper is to analyse the effectiveness of European Union integration policies, with special emphasis on the Republic of Croatia as a relatively new immigration destination. The paper is based on the theoretical framework of human capital and contemporary migration theories, supported by an analysis of secondary statistical data from Eurostat and national sources, as well as a review of the legislative and strategic framework for migrant integration in Croatia. Through a comparative approach, Croatia's position is examined in relation to selected EU Member States, particularly in the areas of qualification recognition, access to the labour market, and the implementation of integration measures. The findings indicate the growing importance of migrants for the Croatian economy, as well as the need to further improve institutional mechanisms in order to ensure more effective integration and valorisation of migrants' human capital in the function of long-term socio-economic development.

KEYWORDS: migration, integration policies, human capital, labour market, European Union, Croatia

THE AMBIVALENT IMPACT OF HINTERLAND ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF MEDITERRANEAN ISLANDS: SOLUTIONS FOR THE DIGITAL AGE

Mihail Arandarenko, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Belgrade, Serbia

Predrag Bejaković, Institute of Public Finance, Zagreb, Croatia

CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Business and Economics

ABSTRACT

Historically, islands with a relatively large and accessible hinterland prospered by combining, in various ratios, agriculture and fishery, crafts, manufacturing and trade. In small insulated spaces, diversification of sources of livelihood is the key to lasting resilience. However, once the economic development takes off in the mainland, with accompanying increase in living standard, the islands' traditional economy cannot grow at the same pace and the vicious circle of depopulation and economic decline kicks in. In some (or many), but not all, Mediterranean islands, the growth of tourism has been strong enough to slow down or revert this tendency. With tourism typically comprising a large share of local economy, it has been observed that having agriculture as the second most important sector might be disadvantageous for the local economy. One obvious reason lies in the overlapping seasonalities of both sectors. Furthermore, in some views the absence of a local rural hinterland can be beneficial for economic development, exempting an island from 'the slow-coach of agriculture', and pushing it toward export-oriented industries and modern services. The advent of digital era and the expansion of digital nomads have opened new possibilities for re-diversification and de-seasonalisation of economic activity on small islands facing the problems of depopulation and economic stagnation. Examples of new initiatives include both Mediterranean islands and those outside of the Mediterranean, such as Silicon Zanzibar, an ambitious project of Tanzanian government started in 2022 with an aim to establish the island as a key hub for tech companies and professionals. The set of incentives includes 10-year tax exemptions and simplified, fast-tracked work visas for foreign tech talent. Our paper explores new possibilities for the economic development of islands based on diversification of the economic structure within the triangle of tourism, tech industry and sustainable agriculture.

KEYWORDS: Mediterranean islands, economic development, hinterland, digital age, diversification

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KEY INFORMATION COMPETENCIES AND STRATEGIC FORESIGHT AMONG MILITARY CADETS

Tihana Babić, VERN' University, Croatia

Mijo Knezović, Ministry of Defence, Croatia

CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Media and Communication

ABSTRACT

The security and defence environment is characterised by dynamic and highly unpredictable changes, in which strategies require a long-term time horizon. Consequently, strategic foresight emerges as a key capability for recognising future challenges, especially those that may significantly influence the creation of possible futures. In this context, military higher education plays an important role in developing such capabilities, preparing future military leaders to operate in complex environments at all levels, particularly the strategic one. The research aim was to examine the relationship between information competencies and strategic foresight. The paper presents the results of a study conducted on a population of Croatian military cadets. The findings highlight the importance of the proposed information competencies for successful strategic foresight. Furthermore, the results shed light on the relevance of systematically developing information competencies within military higher education and the professional development of future military personnel.

KEYWORDS: strategy, strategic foresight, military higher education, information literacy, information competencies

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES FOR ENHANCED FIRE MANAGEMENT AND DISASTER MITIGATION

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Osijek, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia

CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Security

ABSTRACT

Uncontrolled fires, from devastating wildfires to structural incidents, remain a critical global threat to ecosystems, economies and, most importantly, human life. Recent advances in technology, from autonomous robots, drones, vehicles to artificial intelligence, machine learning, data science, visual detection methods using deep learning, convolutional neural networks (CNN), thermal imaging, multimodal and multisensory systems (for monitoring heat, gas and smoke), the Internet of Things and acoustic sensors, should be used to protect people and minimize material damage. Therefore, the development and application of new technologies in fire detection, prevention and suppression systems can dramatically improve them. Furthermore, innovations such as fire-resistant materials and predictive modeling facilitate the identification of areas susceptible to ignition risks, thereby enabling targeted prevention strategies, including controlled burns and vegetation management. Our findings establish a robust framework for future research, highlighting the transition towards fully autonomous, AI-driven fire protection systems as a vital component of modern disaster management and sustainable security infrastructure. Last but not least, the need for early detection and prevention of fires is crucial as it provides essential information in real time, enabling a rapid and timely response and consequently can dramatically impact the consequences of fires. Various cutting-edge studies provide important insights into the development of the field of fire suppression technologies, establishing a solid foundation for future research and development in this critical area and fostering confidence in the effectiveness of these solutions.

KEYWORDS: Artificial Intelligence (AI), autonomous robotics and drones, deep learning for visual detection, disaster mitigation and public safety, fire detection and suppression systems, multi-sensor data fusion

MODERNIST NARRATIVE STRATEGIES IN VIDEO GAMES: LUDONARRATIVE DISSONANCE AND THE FRAGMENTED SUBJECT IN SPEC OPS: THE LINE

Ilija Barišić, VERN' University, Croatia

CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Arts and Literature

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the emergence of modernist narrative strategies within the medium of video games through a close reading of *Spec Ops: The Line* (2012). While military shooters traditionally rely on linear progression, heroic teleology, and clear moral binaries, *Spec Ops: The Line* systematically destabilizes these conventions. Drawing on theories of modernist aesthetics and the concept of ludonarrative dissonance (Clint Hocking), the study argues that the game mobilizes formal contradiction between gameplay mechanics and narrative discourse as a deliberate strategy of subject destabilization. The player is compelled to perform increasingly violent actions within a conventional third-person shooter framework, while the narrative simultaneously interrogates and condemns those very actions. This tension produces a fragmented experiential structure analogous to literary and cinematic modernism, particularly in its emphasis on unreliable perception, psychological disintegration, and the collapse of heroic identity. Intertextual resonances with Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* further situate the game within a tradition of modernist exploration of moral ambiguity and existential crisis. Rather than representing an accidental inconsistency between mechanics and story, the game's dissonance functions as an aesthetic principle that exposes the ideological underpinnings of the military shooter genre. In doing so, *Spec Ops: The Line* demonstrates how interactive media can appropriate and transform modernist narrative techniques, producing a uniquely procedural form of modernist self-reflexivity.

KEYWORDS: modernism, video game narrative, ludonarrative dissonance, subject fragmentation, self-reflexivity, military shooter genre

MAPPING THE EVOLUTION OF GREEN INDUSTRIAL POLICY RESEARCH: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

Antea Barišić, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Zoran Wittine, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Sanja Franc, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Zagreb, Croatia

CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Business and Economics

ABSTRACT

Sustainable development evolved from an environmental concern in the 1970s into a broader development framework integrating economic, social and environmental objectives by the early 2010s. By then, it had become increasingly apparent that the green transition could not be achieved through environmental regulation and market-based instruments alone but would also require policies capable of actively mobilising investment, fostering innovation and facilitating structural transformation. This coincided with a broader revival of industrial policy after decades of relative neglect in mainstream economics. This revival was reinforced by China's extensive use of industrial policy to promote technological upgrading and build competitiveness in strategic green technology sectors. This paper examines how scientific production and the thematic focus of research on green industrial policy have evolved between 2012 and 2026 and assesses the extent to which these developments reflect broader transformations in the policy landscape. The term green industrial policy began to gain prominence in policy and academic debates in the early 2010s, with interest subsequently accelerating alongside the introduction of major green industrial policy initiatives, most notably the Inflation Reduction Act in the United States and the Green Deal Industrial Plan in the EU. Using bibliometric techniques, authors analyse publications retrieved from the Web of Science Core Collection through a topic search for "green industrial polic*" and map the intellectual, conceptual and social structure of the field. The analysis reveals a pronounced expansion in scientific production, identifies the most influential publications and authors, and traces the thematic evolution of the literature. In addition, the paper demonstrates how green industrial policy has evolved from a relatively specialised debate into a broader research agenda increasingly concerned with technological leadership, competitiveness, resilience and strategic economic policy.

KEYWORDS: green industrial policy, bibliometric analysis, sustainable development

THE COMMUNICATIVE POTENTIAL OF GOLF IN THE DIGITAL MEDIA SPACE: A NARRATIVE REVIEW

Domagoj Bebić, Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Stana Odak Krasić, VERN' University, Croatia

CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Media and Communication

ABSTRACT

Golf, traditionally associated with elitism is undergoing a significant transformation in the digital media landscape. Social media platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram have enabled new forms of representation, participation, and branding, positioning golf as a dynamic communicative medium. This narrative review analyzes the communicative potential of golf across digital platforms, synthesizing findings from recent literature on sports marketing, digital communication, and influencer culture. The analysis identifies three interrelated dimensions of this potential: (1) an aesthetic-lifestyle dimension that links golf to fashion, luxury, and visual storytelling; (2) an educational dimension, evident in tutorial-based content and knowledge-sharing on platforms like YouTube; and (3) a humoristic-relational dimension, seen in the participatory and ironic formats prevalent on TikTok. The study argues that golf is increasingly redefined as a hybrid media entity, bridging tradition and innovation, exclusivity and accessibility. This reconceptualization invites further research into how symbolic sports can be rebranded through digital culture and influencer-driven narratives.

KEYWORDS: golf, social media, digital culture, visual identity

AN ADAPTIVE–GENERATIVE INTEGRATION FRAMEWORK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Andrija Bernik, University North - University Center Varaždin, Croatia

CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

This study proposes the Adaptive–Generative Integration Framework (AGIF), a three-layer model for integrating the analytical precision of Adaptive Learning Systems (ALS) with the content-generation capabilities of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in higher education. The framework is designed to support explainable, human-centered personalization by linking adaptive analytics, generative content production, and educator oversight. The study uses a design-oriented mixed-methods approach combining systematic literature synthesis, comparative feature mapping, and expert review. From an initial pool of 212 records, 27 studies met the inclusion criteria, of which 20 were retained for framework construction after CASP appraisal; the preliminary model was then reviewed by 12 domain experts. The synthesis indicates that combining adaptive and generative functions may improve student engagement, instructional efficiency, and teacher-supported content design, while also strengthening transparency and inclusivity in AI-mediated learning environments. The proposed AGIF offers a human-centered conceptual framework for the ethical and pedagogically responsible integration of adaptive and generative AI in higher education.

KEYWORDS: GenAI, adaptive learning systems, higher education, learning analytics, human-centered AI

BRANDING MEDITERRANEAN UNIVERSITIES: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ISLAND AND COASTAL HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Ivan Biošić, Algebra Bernays University, Croatia

CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

Mediterranean island and coastal universities operate in distinctive settings characterised by rich cultural heritage, geographic appeal, and a lifestyle widely recognised as desirable. Yet despite these assets, many of these institutions face persistent branding challenges, including limited international visibility, brain drain, seasonal economic dependence, and difficulty competing with larger mainland universities for students and academic talent. At the same time, growing opportunities for international academic mobility, particularly through the Erasmus+ programme, offer these universities a potential pathway to strengthen their brand and improve their international positioning. This study examined how students at selected Mediterranean island and coastal universities perceive their institution's brand, with a particular focus on the role of place-related attributes, such as Mediterranean identity, local culture, quality of life, and geographic setting, in shaping overall brand perception. The research also explored how international mobility programmes, especially Erasmus+, influence the attractiveness and international positioning of these institutions from the students' perspective. A quantitative approach was employed, using a structured online survey distributed among students at several Mediterranean universities in countries such as Croatia, Greece, Malta, Cyprus, Italy and Spain. The survey instrument measured students' perceptions of key brand dimensions, including brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, and institutional attractiveness. It also examined how students perceive the significance of their university's Mediterranean location and surrounding cultural heritage as factors contributing to the overall brand, as well as the perceived role of Erasmus+ mobility in enhancing or limiting the university's international positioning. The findings provide insights into whether the Mediterranean context functions as a distinctive branding advantage or a constraint for island and coastal universities, and to offer practical recommendations for strengthening their competitive positioning within the European Higher Education Area.

KEYWORDS: Mediterranean university brand, island universities, Erasmus+ programme, international positioning, brand image, higher education, academic mobility

ADOLESCENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: GENDER DIFFERENCES IN WELL-BEING INDICATORS

Tamara Bolić, Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences, Croatia

Tihana Brkljačić, Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences, Croatia

CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

As an important ingredient to both physical and mental health, physical activity in adolescence serves as a potential venue through which teens can improve their well-being. However, not all adolescents are equally physically active. The distribution of physical activity in adolescence may vary among adolescents. Therefore, the aim of this study was to examine the frequency of physical activity across demographic characteristics (age, gender, and city), and to explore their associations with happiness and loneliness. A cross-sectional study was conducted among adolescents (N=1354) from two Croatian cities as a part of the TEEN-WELL project in which participants completed questionnaires about multiple well-being indicators. Physical activity, happiness, and loneliness were assessed using self-report. Descriptive statistics, correlations, and two-way ANOVAs were used to assess various associations among variables. A significant gender difference was identified in physical activity ($t(1256.98) = 11.18, p < .001$), with males reporting being physically active on more days ($M = 4.67$) than females ($M = 3.44$). Correlations revealed that physical activity is positively associated with happiness ($r = .188, p < .001$) and negatively associated with loneliness ($r = -.173, p < .001$). Two-way ANOVA results confirmed that while happiness increases with physical activity for both genders, a significant interaction ($p = .021$) exists for loneliness. For males, increased frequency of activity consistently reduced loneliness, whereas for females, the benefit plateaued at moderate activity levels. These results point to a specific role of physical activity in the well-being of adolescents.

KEYWORDS: adolescence, physical activity, well-being, loneliness, happiness

THE POWER OF NARRATIVE IN CELEBRITY CULTURE: THE IDENTITY, AND AFFECTIVE LAYERS OF BAD BUNNY'S PERFORMANCE AT THE 2026 SUPER BOWL

Nikolina Borčić, Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Sanda Marjanović, University of Applied Health Sciences, Croatia

Mara Pekez, VERN' University, Croatia

CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Culture and Tradition

ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the performance of the Puerto Rican global artist Bad Bunny at Super Bowl LX on February 9, 2026, as a paradigmatic example of the contemporary transformation of celebrity culture, in which celebrities function as political actors regardless of their declared intentions. Drawing on discursive analysis and the concept of the emotional infrastructure of fame, the paper examines how the contemporary celebrity produces political action through narrative construction, symbolic gestures, and affective communication. The performance is interpreted as an instance of celebrity politainment that transcends entertainment and operates as a space of cultural decolonization, collective identity formation, and symbolic resistance. The analysis also addresses fashion politics and the digital economy of celebrity, showing how Bad Bunny uses the body, clothing, and performative style as communicative tools to destabilize normative codes. A comparison with Ricky Martin's earlier appearance on the same stage indicates a generational shift, from strategic compromise to sovereign affirmation of cultural identity. Preliminary findings show that the performance's communicative structure rests on multilayered semiotics: (1) visual symbols of Puerto Rican identity (the casita, jíbaros, traditional costumes); (2) references to infrastructural and political issues (exploding utility poles, power outages, energy privatization); and (3) declarative political acts, including the hoisting of the Puerto Rican independence movement's flag and redefining "America" as continental and diasporic communities. Through staged intimacy and directed gestures, personal statements, direct address to the camera, and handing a Grammy to a boy embodying his younger self, Bad Bunny articulates a model of fame in which authenticity functions as a performative strategy. The synergy of emotional proximity and political messaging shapes imaginaries of identity, belonging, and cultural power, suggesting that contemporary fame in digital media conditions can generate public narratives as powerfully as traditional politics and journalism, and in some domains even more so.

KEYWORDS: Narrative in Celebrity Culture, discursive analysis, affective communication, performative style as communicative tools

THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL EVENTS ON THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OF A DESTINATION

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Jana Zubin, Academy of Arts and Culture in Osijek, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia

Ariana Ergović, Faculty of Tourism and Rural Development in Požega, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia

CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Tourism

ABSTRACT

In the contemporary context, where tourism has become an increasingly important economic sector, cultural events can substantially contribute to enhancing a destination's competitive advantage and increasing its recognizability. The aim of this paper is to examine the nature and extent of the impact that cultural events have on both tourism and the local community. This paper investigates the effects of cultural events on the tourism development of a destination, analyzes the perceptions of the local population, and proposes ways in which cultural events may serve as a strategic instrument for destination development. For the purposes of this study, research was conducted to examine the opinions and attitudes of respondents who visited a tourist destination exclusively due to a recognizable event. In order to gain insight into the effects of events and cultural manifestations on destination tourism development, empirical research was carried out in Istria County. The results were subsequently compared with findings from a study conducted in Osijek-Baranja County, with the aim of identifying similarities and differences in the data in relation to regional specificities and the most prominent events characteristic of these two distinctly different parts of Croatia. The findings indicate that cultural events have a significant impact on the tourism development of a destination, represent an important motive for visiting a destination, and positively affect both the image and recognizability of the destination, as well as tourist spending. Considering that cultural events also generate positive effects on the local community by strengthening the authenticity and identity of the local population, while simultaneously providing opportunities for economic growth and improving the economic well-being of the community, it is essential to adapt development strategies and make effective use of cultural potential in order to maximize the positive effects of tourism within the region.

KEYWORDS: cultural events, destination image, events, tourism development of a destination, tourist spending, event management, marketing

TRSTENIK – THE HISTORICAL TIDES OF A LIGHTHOUSE ISLAND

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

History

ABSTRACT

Trstenik is a specific islet located in the Kvarner region, whose history is strongly linked to the island of Rab. The paper attempts to provide an interdisciplinary overview of this small part of the northern Adriatic archipelago of only 0.34 km². For many centuries, the area of the islet of Trstenik was under the administration of the Prince of Rab, and remained so until the changes that followed in the 20th century. Based on archival and other sources, a brief overview is given of the new role that Trstenik acquired in 1873 when it became a lighthouse island. It acquired a somewhat self-deprecating role after the First World War, when it was for some time a point of contention between the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The third significant event that we associate with this islet is a major maritime accident, the consequences of which were the subject of this research.

KEYWORDS: lighthouse, maritime accident, maritime, northern Adriatic, maritime border

MEDITERRANEAN ISLANDS AS MIGRATION GATEWAYS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LAMPEDUSA AND LESBOS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Migration

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role of Mediterranean islands as key spaces of migration governance through a comparative case study of Lampedusa (Italy) and Lesbos (Greece). Mediterranean islands, located along major maritime migration routes, often function as primary entry points into the European Union, making them geographically peripheral yet politically central sites where border control, humanitarian responses and local community dynamics intersect. While existing research has extensively analysed Mediterranean migration routes and EU border policies, less attention has been paid to the islands themselves as specific socio-spatial environments shaped by migration over time. Drawing on policy documents, NGO reports, secondary literature and media sources, the paper analyses how migration flows interact with European border regimes, humanitarian infrastructures, and tourism-based local economies on Lampedusa and Lesbos. It traces how migration management policies reconfigure local governance, reshape everyday life and generate tensions between the islands' tourist identities, security imperatives and the needs of residents and migrants. The paper argues that Lampedusa and Lesbos should not be understood merely as transit points within migration routes, but as complex socio-political spaces where global migration dynamics are locally negotiated and contested. The comparative analysis shows, first, how similar structural positions within the EU migration system produce distinct local configurations of governance, and second, how island communities act not only as passive recipients of policies but also as actors that reinterpret, resist or accommodate them. Understanding the role of islands such as Lampedusa and Lesbos are therefore crucial for developing more balanced and context-sensitive approaches to migration governance in Europe.

KEYWORDS: Mediterranean islands, migration governance, EU border policies, island communities, Lampedusa, Lesbos

THE SILENT MIGRATION OF 1980S ROMANIA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

History

ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the phenomenon of clandestine border crossings in communist Romania during the 1980s as a form of implicit contestation of the totalitarian state, situating it within a historiographical and conceptual framework. Drawing on specialized literature and data provided by recent research, the study highlights the evolution of historiographical approaches: from the institutional-political perspectives dominant in the early 2000s, to regional monographs and oral history, and subsequently to theoretical interpretations centered on concepts such as migration, biopolitics, and social resistance. Empirically, the work utilizes relevant statistical data illustrating the scale of the phenomenon: over 24,000 individuals illegally crossed Romania's borders, particularly toward Yugoslavia and Hungary, while over 71,000 chose not to return following legal departures, the majority of whom did so during the 1980s. The social profile of these fugitives indicates a preponderance of young people between the ages of 18 and 25, belonging to various ethnic groups. The interpretive approach proposes understanding unauthorized border crossing not merely as a punishable legal act, but as a form of social and political resistance—an expression of the individual's refusal to accept the ideological and biopolitical constraints of the communist regime. Thus, the phenomenon is integrated into a history of everyday dissent and strategies for escaping the totalitarian space.

KEYWORDS: resistance, constraint, illegality, freedom, Ceaușescu

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TWO STARTUPS BECOMING MAJOR PLAYERS IN THE RETAIL MARKET FOR COFFEE IN CHINA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Business and Economics

ABSTRACT

The Chinese market for coffee has grown exponentially over the past two decades. The rise is due to changing habits of the younger generation and increasing disposable income. In the past, Starbucks dominated the Chinese market, until two new startups, Luckin founded in 2017 and Cotti founded in 2022 became major competitors. Starbucks entered China in 1999 aiming at the upper end market. The economic slowdown, intense competition from newcomers and consumers' preference for domestic brands caused Starbucks to lose its dominance in the market. In 2025 Starbucks disinvested in China by selling 60% of its stake to Boyu Capital a Chinese private equity firm. The success of both Luckin and Cotti is due to low prices based on scale, supply chain efficiency and expansion through established convenient stores requiring low investment to reduce operating costs. This marketing strategy of market expansion through low prices can have an impact on its image as a low-quality product. Starbucks reduced its prices to meet competition but had a negative impact on profit. The price of coffee has risen substantially in recent years up 40% due to the rising global demand, supply shortages and higher transportation costs. As prices are likely to increase in the foreseeable future, can these firms maintain their growth strategy without having to review their pricing strategy? Will customers continue to consume coffee at higher prices, reduce their consumption or switch to tea? The paper analyses how these two startups became major players by having similar strategies based on low prices and rapid growth and whether they can sustain this momentum in view of rising cost of coffee.

KEYWORDS: competition, copycats, startups, market growth, price strategy

AI TOOLS AND STUDENT WRITING: PERCEPTIONS OF CREATIVITY, AUTHENTICITY AND AUTHORSHIP

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

Since generative artificial intelligence tools were publicly introduced in 2022, they have transformed the way we write in nearly every field of human endeavor. For educators, particularly teachers of writing, the changes have been dramatic, as we witness our students rapidly embracing the convenience and speed with which AI can help them plan, draft, revise and correct their academic writing. A traditional essay or research paper that once required weeks or months of careful research, drafting and revision, can now be created in a few moments using the right AI prompts. This writing revolution has forced educators to fundamentally revise their methods of teaching and assessment. While some in the academic community have welcomed Gen AI, particularly the efficient and personalized instruction and feedback it can offer students, others have sounded an alarm. Over-reliance on AI tools raise questions of academic integrity while repeated “cognitive offloading” has been shown to weaken students’ critical thinking capabilities. (Gerlich, 2025). AI tools are here to stay and will continue to improve in speed, accuracy, and capability. Therefore, the urgent task for educators is to find ways to productively incorporate AI into teaching and learning in academic writing contexts. This research explored university students’ use of generative AI in writing short stories, using qualitative data from 39 students enrolled in an introductory literature course. Their written reflections on their use of AI for planning, drafting and revising their work are analyzed, focusing on their perceptions of the usefulness of AI, their own creativity, the authenticity of their work, and their sense of authorship, with implications for teaching and assessment practices.

KEYWORDS: creative writing, generative artificial intelligence, academic writing, authenticity in writing, student voice

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO FOSTERING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET: THE ROLE OF EDUCATION, MENTORSHIP, AND REINVENTION

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

This paper explores interdisciplinary approaches to fostering an entrepreneurial mindset, with a focus on entrepreneurship education and mentorship for individuals from non-economic backgrounds. The motivation stems from teaching over 200 students annually and mentoring more than 50 participants from fields such as technology, creative industries, tourism, and agriculture. These individuals often lack business acumen, despite their technical or creative expertise, which hampers their ability to innovate and succeed in entrepreneurship. This study investigates how combining entrepreneurship education with tailored mentorship can enhance entrepreneurial thinking and foster reinvention, creativity, and resilience. In light of today's uncertainties, a systematic approach to thriving in chaos is essential—this includes the ongoing anticipation, design, and implementation of change through continuous sense-making, anticipatory learning, and synthesis of cross-disciplinary and cross-functional knowledge. The research used qualitative methods, including case studies and semi-structured interviews, with data collected from classrooms, training programs, and mentorship sessions. The findings suggest that non-economic professionals who receive entrepreneurship education and mentorship demonstrate improved entrepreneurial skills and mindset, increased risk tolerance, and a greater capacity for innovation. Teachers and mentors benefit from interdisciplinary methods, which help develop more dynamic entrepreneurial thinkers, while society and financial bodies stand to gain from recognizing the entrepreneurial potential in non-economic sectors. Practical implications of the research include recommendations for designing entrepreneurship curricula for non-economic disciplines and creating mentorship programs that address the specific challenges of non-economic participants. An attempt was made to systematize which tools and methods can most effectively help in the development of an entrepreneurial mindset. The study emphasizes the need for entrepreneurial ecosystems that support individuals from diverse fields, encouraging collaboration between business experts, mentors, and educational institutions.

KEYWORDS: entrepreneurial mindset, interdisciplinary education, reinvention, mentorship, non-economic entrepreneurs

CONFIRMING THE INCORRECT: HOW FREE AI CHATBOTS VALIDATE WRONG ANSWERS IN COMPLEX PROBLEM-SOLVING TASKS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence chatbots have become ubiquitous resources in contemporary education, with platforms like ChatGPT serving millions of students worldwide seeking academic assistance. Students increasingly rely on these tools not only for solving new problems but also for verifying their own solutions and understanding their reasoning processes. While AI chatbots demonstrate remarkable capabilities in generating explanations and solving complex tasks, critical questions remain about their reliability when students seek validation of their work. Understanding the limitations of these freely available tools is essential for their responsible integration into educational practices. This paper investigates how ChatGPT responds when students who have mistakenly reached wrong answers turn to the chatbot for verification and explanation of their solution process. The research methodology employed complex electrical engineering problems spanning digital logic, mathematical analysis, and physics. Incorrect answer options were deliberately presented to ChatGPT (GPT-5.2, free version) as correct solutions, with requests for detailed explanations. Each test was conducted in separate conversation sessions, and follow-up verification questions examined whether the chatbot would recognize errors when challenged. Results demonstrated significant limitations in error detection capabilities. The chatbot consistently generated detailed explanations that rationalized incorrect answers, constructing logical-sounding reasoning paths that validated flawed solutions. Rather than identifying errors, ChatGPT exhibited systematic validation bias, accepting incorrect premises and building explanations around them. Even when explicitly prompted to reconsider, the chatbot frequently maintained its incorrect reasoning, suggesting persistent confirmation tendencies. These findings reveal that AI chatbots cannot reliably serve as independent verification tools for student work. The confident presentation of flawed explanations poses educational risks, particularly for learners lacking expertise to critically evaluate AI-generated content. While AI holds potential for transforming educational experiences, human oversight remains essential for ensuring learning integrity and accuracy.

KEYWORDS: Artificial intelligence, validation bias, education, error detection, student learning, ChatGPT

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND DESTINATION IMAGE FORMATION: PERSPECTIVES OF STUDENTS FROM ISTRIA AND THE KVARNER REGION

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Krešimir Starčević, Atlantic Group, Croatia

CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Tourism

ABSTRACT

Cultural heritage is widely recognised as a key resource in shaping the identity and image of tourist destinations. In regions such as Istria and the Kvarner area, characterised by a rich tangible and intangible heritage, cultural elements have increasingly been incorporated into destination branding and promotional communication. While previous research primarily focused on institutional practices, media representation, and local community perspectives, less attention was paid to the views of younger generations. The aim of this paper is to explore how students from Istria and the Kvarner region perceive the role of cultural heritage in the formation of destination image and branding. The study examined the extent to which students recognise cultural heritage as a relevant component of destination representation, how they assess its visibility in tourism communication, and how they evaluate the authenticity of cultural narratives used in promoting these destinations. The research was based on quantitative methodology and employed an online survey distributed among students of higher education institutions in Istria and the Kvarner region. The questionnaire addressed attitudes towards cultural heritage, destination image, media and social networks, and the perceived contribution of culture to destination attractiveness. The findings provide insight into the perceptions of young adults as an important stakeholder group and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of culture-based destination branding from a generational perspective.

KEYWORDS: cultural heritage, destination image, destination branding, students, Istria, Kvarner

BETWEEN ROOTS AND ROUTES: WOMEN'S LIVES AND INTERGENERATIONAL GENDERED CHANGE ON A SMALL ADRIATIC ISLAND

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Culture and Tradition

ABSTRACT

This paper explores intergenerational shifts in gender relations on a small island in the Šibenik archipelago. Drawing on ethnographic interviews with two to three generations of women within the same families, the study analyses how femininities, gendered divisions of labour, care responsibilities, and authority are shaped through processes of both continuity and change. Historically, women on the island performed extensive and physically demanding labour. In periods of male emigration, they sustained households and maintained kinship networks, effectively ensuring social and economic reproduction. Women were thus central not only to domestic continuity but also to the survival of local livelihoods and the transmission of skills and values across generations. As island scholarship suggests, women are often symbolically charged with maintaining continuity amid broader processes of flux and mobility. Across generations, however, the social value of these traditional forms of labour has shifted. Agriculture and subsistence practices that structured older women's identities have become marginal or heritage-like for younger generations. Education, wage labour, and mobility increasingly define contemporary life trajectories. Yet change is not linear: expectations of care and familial responsibility persist, albeit negotiated differently. Outmigration further complicates gendered island identity. For many women, the island is simultaneously a site of origin, memory, and seasonal return. In line with broader island studies debates on flux and continuity, the paper argues that contemporary island womanhood is shaped by translocal lives, intergenerational negotiations, and changing understandings of labour, care, and belonging.

KEYWORDS: gender relations, islandness and women's lives, intergenerational change, translocality, small islands

REASONS FOR CHOOSING SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND SCHOOL SATISFACTION

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

Despite growing interest in the outcomes of secondary vocational education, the reasons underlying students' enrolment in vocational schools are rarely systematically linked to educational outcomes. Existing research has predominantly focused on employment trajectories, educational transitions, and academic achievement, whereas emotional and subjective outcomes, such as school satisfaction, have been less frequently examined in relation to initial enrolment motives. Furthermore, insufficient attention has been devoted to examining whether academic achievement changes the association between reasons for school choice and school satisfaction. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between different motives for enrolment in secondary vocational schools and students' subjective school satisfaction, as well as to determine whether academic achievement moderates these associations. The study was conducted on a sample of $N = 1,290$ students attending secondary vocational schools from various regions of Croatia, with particular emphasis in this paper on a subsample of students from the Mediterranean region of Croatia ($N = 390$). Reasons for school choice included intrinsic interest in the educational programme, perceived employment opportunities within the chosen occupation, parental influence, and other social and contextual factors. Subjective school satisfaction was assessed with self-report measures, whereas academic achievement was operationalized as grade point average, serving as an objective indicator of performance. The findings indicate that intrinsic motives are positively associated with school satisfaction, whereas social motives, particularly parental influence, are associated with lower levels of satisfaction. The negative association between parental influence and school satisfaction is especially pronounced among students with lower academic achievement. This study improves our understanding of quality in vocational education and has implications for career guidance and educational policies that support more informed and autonomous educational choices.

KEYWORDS: secondary vocational education, educational outcomes, motives for enrolment, school satisfaction, academic achievement

WASTE MANAGEMENT ON A SMALL ISLAND: COMMUNITY PRACTICES AND INFRASTRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS ON ZLARIN

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sustainable Development

ABSTRACT

Waste management represents one of the major global challenges of the century, and it assumes a uniquely critical dimension on small islands. For these communities, waste management is essential for ecological balance and sustainable development but can face major complex challenges. These include significant logistical hurdles, a lack of understanding from urban administrative centers, and the slow adaptation to certain local behavioral patterns. Ultimately, waste management is a cornerstone of habitability. It determines the island's capacity to sustain a dignified and sustainable life for its local population. This research focused on the island of Zlarin, a community that has triggered significant shifts in waste reduction and environmental awareness through the widely recognized "Zlarin Without Plastic" initiative. Utilizing an ethnographic approach, semi-structured interviews, and surveys with permanent residents, the study examined the community's waste management challenges, levels of ecological awareness, current habits, and local intentions regarding waste reduction and circular economy practices. The analysis highlights a persistent tension between top-down urban models and the lived experiences of Zlarin's residents. Findings reveal a critical infrastructure gap caused by the neglect of island-specific needs. Many residents are ready to adopt sustainable practices, but they are often held back by systemic constraints and a model that struggles to fully integrate with the island's unique requirements.

KEYWORDS: island habitability, community waste practices, infrastructural inequality, waste management, Zlarin

EU CULTURAL HERITAGE POLICIES AND THEIR ROLE IN REVITALIZATION OF CROATIA'S ISLANDS HERITAGE: INSIGHTS FROM EU PROJECTS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Culture and Tradition

ABSTRACT

The main aim of this paper is to provide insights regarding broader socio-economic and cultural aspects of revitalizing Croatia's islands cultural heritage through EU projects directed towards safeguarding and enhancing Europe's heritage. This aim was achieved by applying qualitative methodology (i.e. via content analysis of relevant primary and secondary sources) in the following way. Thus, firstly it was signified that cultural heritage represents a resource which has great potential to foster sustainable development in various (e.g. local, urban, rural and regional) settings, including specific and unique islands' contexts. Furthermore, by presenting EU's policy approach towards cultural heritage it was indicated that from the EU's perspective Europe's heritage is increasingly viewed as an important asset which besides fostering economic growth and sustainable tourism also fosters social cohesion. Subsequently, both tangible (e.g. historic structures) and intangible (e.g. traditions) cultural heritage of Croatian islands are presented as a great, but still largely unused source of their revitalization. Lastly, by providing review and analysis of selected EU projects in the corresponding field, broader insights are provided regarding the effects of their implementation on revitalization of Croatia's islands heritage. Accordingly, the results of this paper indicate that implementation of the EU projects in the field of cultural heritage contributes to the revitalization of Croatia's islands heritage by moving beyond passive heritage conservation towards fostering active community engagement, sustainable tourism, digitalization and cross-border cooperation in a broader EU context.

KEYWORDS: Croatian islands, cultural heritage, cultural policy, European Union, sustainable development

MARKETING PERSPECTIVES OF PACKAGING SUSTAINABILITY: A LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH AGENDA

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ABSTRACT

Packaging sustainability is often approached as a technical design and waste-management problem, yet market outcomes depend on how consumers interpret packaging at the point of purchase. In food markets, packaging functions as both a protective interface and a retail marketing instrument shaping attention, brand meaning, and quality expectations. This narrative literature review synthesizes research on packaging marketing, sustainable packaging, and consumer behavior to clarify how sustainability meaning is constructed from packaging cues and how it competes with convenience and usability expectations. Three themes emerge. First, packaging is a high-leverage marketing device because it guides visual attention and category recognition and communicates positioning through visual and verbal elements. Second, consumers tend to perceive sustainable packaging through heuristics (especially material stereotypes) and through explicit and implicit sustainability cues; these perceptions can diverge from life-cycle performance and spill over into judgments of quality, taste, and healthiness. Third, sustainable packaging is frequently evaluated through a perceived trade-off between environmental friendliness and convenience, including ease of use and ease of disposal, creating risks of usability penalties and skepticism. The review argues that these trade-offs should vary across food categories, particularly between hedonic and utilitarian products, because goal structures shape attribute weighting and tolerance for friction. Building on this synthesis, the paper proposes research questions and a future research agenda emphasizing category-sensitive designs, cue-format credibility, broader definitions of convenience across the consumer journey, and methods that connect stated preferences to real choice and disposal behaviour.

KEYWORDS: sustainable packaging, food marketing, packaging cues, consumer perception, convenience, usability, hedonic and utilitarian categories, willingness to pay, disposal behaviour

FROM “KILLING THE WINTER BOREDOM” TO SOCIAL RECOGNITION: SOCIAL PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE FROM THE TARTAJUN ASSOCIATION

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

Previous research on young people on Croatian islands has predominantly focused on issues of quality of life, mediated by socio-economic and cultural contexts defined in terms of islandness and insularity. Both concepts have enabled the examination of young people's life perspectives through the lens of the difficulties and advantages of island life. However, this study places emphasis on social action, that is, on selected forms of social participation among island youth. Since young people as a social category are characterized by stratification, heterogeneity and dynamism, on the islands, as elsewhere, it is possible to recognize various forms of social engagement. The findings presented are based on ethnographic insights and data collected in interviews with young members of the Tartajun association from the village of Dol on the island of Hvar. The research focused on the transgenerational character of youth participation within the Tartajun association and on the meanings that current young members of the association attribute to their engagement. The goal is to identify the basic patterns of the association's activities through its long-term and continuous intergenerational transition, as well as the ways in which young members relate their activities in the association to their own conceptions of social participation more broadly.

KEYWORDS: Hvar, Tartajun, islands, youth participation, intergenerational transition, social representation

PUBLIC LIBRARIES ON THE CROATIAN ISLANDS: RESEARCH ON THE AVAILABILITY AND BORROWING OF BOOKS AND OTHER TYPES OF LIBRARY HOLDINGS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Public Services

ABSTRACT

Public libraries on islands can be the main places, or even the only places, where various social and cultural activities regularly take place in the communities in which they are located. At the same time, these libraries are also places where island residents can find, read, study and borrow various types of library holdings, primarily books. The goal of this study was to explore the availability and borrowing of books and other types of holdings in public libraries on the Croatian islands. Additionally, the data on the availability and borrowing of library holdings in these libraries was compared. The sample consisted of 15 public libraries located on different Croatian islands from the island of Cres in the north to the island of Korčula in the south. The research method was a content analysis of catalogues of the surveyed libraries. By using this method, it was explored and analysed how many items of different library holdings are available in libraries and how many of these items have been borrowed in the last year. Regarding available and borrowed library items, the following aspects were explored and analysed: the type of holdings (books, electronic holdings, visual holdings...), age group for which the library holdings are intended, language of library holdings, type of content of library holdings (fiction or non-fiction). The average number of available and borrowed library holding units relative to local population sizes were also explored and compared across the surveyed public libraries.

KEYWORDS: public libraries, Croatian islands, availability of library holdings, borrowing of library holdings, books, reading

THE INFLUENCE OF MIGRATION MOVEMENTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE AND TRADE ROUTES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: AN EXAMPLE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EASTERN ADRIATIC "ARRIVAL CITIES" OF VIS, HVAR AND KORČULA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

History

ABSTRACT

Based on the research conducted, the authors present the influence of migration movements on the development of economic life in the eastern Adriatic cities of Vis, Hvar and Korčula from antiquity to the Middle Ages. In doing so, special attention was paid to the emergence and development of the aforementioned "arrival cities" as meeting points and intersections of trade routes on the eastern Adriatic coast. Throughout history, it was Vis, Hvar and Korčula that received numerous immigrants and, despite constant changes caused primarily by military conquests, these cities continuously grew and developed from ancient poleis with the help of acculturation processes triggered by the development of maritime trade routes all the way to medieval Croatian communes. In this sense, the authors focus their considerations in the paper particularly on the development of legal norms in the aforementioned Croatian island urban areas. During the Middle Ages, the Korčula Statute from 1214 and the Hvar Statute from 1331 carefully regulated and legally formulated the provisions on economic and commercial activities. These are legal issues that often appeared in everyday life, which are discussed in more detail in the paper itself. The effect of these legal norms on the development and eco-sustainability of both the island towns/communes themselves and the island economy in general also points us to the uninterrupted continuity of urban planning under the influence of the development of trade and trade routes, and in particular the strictly conceived functional island city life. The Renaissance philosopher Frane Petrić describes the idea of designing a medieval city as a "happy city", and this can rightly be said of the island communes of Vis, Hvar and Korčula.

KEYWORDS: migrations, the Mediterranean, ancient poleis on the Adriatic coast, medieval statutes, Vis, Hvar, Korčula, trade, economy, social history, legal history

ANCIENT VIS: GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ILLYRIANS AND ROME

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

History

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the geographical position of the island of Vis and its role in historical processes in the eastern Adriatic during antiquity, with particular emphasis on the relationships between the Greek polis of Issa, Illyrian communities, and the Roman world. The island of Vis is located between 43°12" and 43°48'6" north latitude and between 16°3' and 16°15'48" east longitude from Greenwich, and lies between 45 and 55 kilometres from the Dalmatian coast. When viewed from the air, the island has an approximately trapezoidal shape while the total surface area of the island is around 100 km². Because of its isolated position and favourable location in the central part of the Adriatic Sea, Vis represented an important strategic, maritime, and commercial stronghold since antiquity, as confirmed by numerous written and archaeological sources. During the fourth century BC, the island was the centre of the Greek colony of Issa, which developed complex relations with the Illyrian tribes inhabiting the eastern Adriatic coast. In this period, Illyrian communities, still organised within a tribal system, were undergoing changes triggered by broader migratory and military movements, including the incursions of Celts into the Balkan Peninsula. At the same time, political consolidation was taking place on the Apennine Peninsula, leading to the strengthening of Rome and its gradual expansion across the territory of present-day Italy. Although the Adriatic Sea did not initially hold a central place in Roman expansionist policy, shifts in the balance of power, together with security concerns related to maritime trade, gradually increased Roman interest in the eastern Adriatic coast. In this context, the geographical position of Vis becomes a key factor in understanding its historical development and its role in intercultural contacts between Greeks, Illyrians, and Romans, which is examined in greater detail throughout this paper.

KEYWORDS: Island of Vis, Issa, Illyrians, Rome, seafaring, trade

MULTI-THEMATICAL COASTAL MONITORING FOR LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES: PARTICIPATORY SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL SYSTEM BASED CITIZEN SCIENCE PRACTICE DEVELOPMENTS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sustainable Development

ABSTRACT

This pilot study evaluates a citizen science-based, multi-thematic approach to monitor local municipal coastal shores, assessing 11 distinct but complementary nature-culture parameters separately for each 1-km step in order to start municipal coastal monitoring and to enhance coastal planning and management. The case studies research integrative methodology was applied in the Salacgriva municipality of Northeast Latvia, a region characterized by a highly diverse 54-km coastline rich in natural and cultural heritage assets. Managing such ecological and spatial variety within a single administrative territory requires selective governance and dynamic management. However, like many rural coastal municipalities in Latvia, the local administration faces constraints in management, data collection, and socio-ecological systems (SES) interpretation capacities. Consequently, there is a critical need for localized coastal monitoring and a robust science-policy interface rooted in a SES approach and fostering stakeholder participation, bottom-up governance, and public monitoring methodologies. To address these needs, this research introduces a multi-thematic coastal core area monitoring tool and complementary also practical management tool for coastal assessment transfer into decision making and its practical implementation. Coastal resources were evaluated using a value-based prioritization guide that maps resources and interactions among diverse social-ecological assets along the shore. Evaluated parameters include beach and shoreline landscapes, invasive plant species distribution, marine debris, beached algae, and visitor-generated waste. These quantitative data were integrated with qualitative national and municipal document analyses, alongside in-depth interviews with beach visitors and key municipal stakeholders, particularly coastal residents. Ultimately, this multi-thematic prioritization tool successfully identifies localized coastal management priorities. These findings serve as actionable proposals for municipal councils to develop detailed, integrated, and data-driven coastal management planning.

KEYWORDS: coastal resources, coastal values, public monitoring, integrated coastal management.

ACADEMIC WRITING IN THE AGE OF AI: SELF-REGULATED LEARNING AND STUDENTS' HELP-SEEKING PRACTICES

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

Recent advances in AI-assisted digital writing tools have intensified ongoing debates about authorship, originality, and academic integrity in higher education. While these discussions usually are framed in ethical and/or regulatory terms, it becomes obvious that less attention has been paid to how students' everyday writing practices connect with self-regulated learning processes, particularly with help-seeking and metacognitive awareness. This gap is especially relevant for first-year students and for students writing in English as an additional language, who may face additional linguistic and affective barriers when navigating academic writing expectations. Grounded in self-regulated learning theory, this study examines how undergraduate students perceive and use in-person writing support and AI-assisted digital tools as part of their writing processes. Rather than positioning digital tools as inherently detrimental or beneficial, the study adopts a pedagogically neutral position, focusing on students' strategic decision-making, awareness of writing development, and perceptions of authorship and academic voice. Using a structured quantitative survey, the research investigates (a) how students conceptualize writing support and writing development, (b) the extent to which help-seeking functions as an adaptive self-regulated learning strategy, and (c) how these perceptions vary by year of study and language background. By integrating Likert-scale data with targeted open-ended responses, the study aims to capture both general patterns and students' own explanations of their writing behaviors. The proposed paper contributes to education theory and practice conceptualizing in-person writing support as an instructional method for self-regulated learning rather than a remedial service. Findings show possible new pedagogical approaches to writing instruction and writing center practice in general, particularly in designing interventions that can encourage reflective tool use, adaptive help-seeking, and the development of an authentic academic voice in digitally mediated learning environments.

KEYWORDS: academic writing practices, student writing behaviors, writing center, writing instruction, academic voice

MEDITERRANEAN MIGRATION AND SILENT WOMEN'S VOICES: MAPPING THE FIELD THROUGH NARRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Migration

ABSTRACT

Global statistics have been indicating the increasing participation of women in migration flows for several decades (UN Women, 2020). Despite the feminization of migration, the gender perspective of migration processes, trends and patterns is still insufficiently researched (IOM, 2024). Also, gender-differentiated data that would help in a deeper understanding of demographic trends are still not provided (IOM, 2024; Abel, 2022). In addition to the global context, the insufficient visibility of women and women's migrant experiences is also evident in the context of Mediterranean migrations, which are continuously coded and presented as a "masculine phenomenon" (Schmoll, 2025). Gender is a crucial factor that affects all stages of the migration process and migrant experiences: women are more vulnerable and exposed to various forms of inequality and discrimination (Abel, 2022). The introduction and application of a gender perspective opens up space for women's migrant voices and ensures the visibility of women's migrant experiences in scientific research. Based on a narrative literature review (Bourhis, 2017) of gender specific migration studies: 1) the state of the art in the field of gender research on Mediterranean migrations is described; 2) the key problems that migrant women face are identified, and 3) the multiple importance of transferring knowledge about women's migrant experiences in the Mediterranean from the academic community to the sphere of politics, law, the media and the public in general is emphasized.

KEYWORDS: migration, statistics, gender, Mediterranean, women's experiences, narrative literature review

JUDGING THE BOOK BY ITS COVER: PATTERNS OF DRUG-RELATED CRIMES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THEIR PERPETRATORS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

The odds of committing offences are several times greater for drug users than non-drug users, and the percentage of drug addicts among Croatian prisoners exceeds 10%. However, the relationship between drugs and crime is complex, and it is neither linear nor universal. Current attempts to assess the extent of and trends in drug-related crimes revealed many conceptual and methodological challenges. Thus, this study represents an effort to analyse the occurrence of different categories of drug-related crimes (i.e., psychopharmacological crimes committed under the influence of drugs, economic-compulsive crimes related to obtaining money to fund drug use, and systemic crimes associated with drug dealing), along with the profiles of their perpetrators among prisoners. Data were collected within the Project Psychosocial Climate and Individual Characteristics of Prisoners and Prison Officers in Penal Institutions in Croatia: A Multi-Method Approach (PRISCLIM) on a convenience sample of male prisoners (N=844) via self-reports and analyses of prisoners' documentation. The results are discussed in the light of similarities and differences in the characteristics of perpetrators of drug-related crimes, considering both individual-level and macro-level factors.

KEYWORDS: prisoners, drug use, addiction, drug-related crimes

AI POLICIES AND ACADEMIC AUTONOMY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE CASE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ZADAR

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education has encouraged many universities to introduce policies that regulate its use in teaching, assessment, and academic work. These policies are designed to protect academic integrity and ensure ethical standards. However, their influence on academic autonomy is still not well understood. This study examines how institutional AI policies relate to teachers' perceptions of their professional autonomy. A two-phase design was used in the research. First, a comparative content analysis of existing AI policies across Croatian higher education institutions was conducted to identify main governance approaches, levels of restrictiveness, and types of pedagogical support. Based on this analysis, several key characteristics of these AI policies were outlined. Second, a quantitative survey was conducted at the University of Zadar, where a recently adopted AI policy provided an appropriate case. The study explores how teachers perceive the clarity, restrictiveness, fairness, and institutional support within the policy, and how these perceptions affect their sense of academic autonomy and their willingness to introduce innovation in teaching. By linking policy design with teachers' experiences, the study contributes to current discussions on AI governance in universities. The findings provide practical recommendations for developing AI policies that balance institutional regulation with the protection of academic freedom and professional autonomy.

KEYWORDS: Generative AI, higher education, academic autonomy, institutional policy

PRODUCTION OF WORT-BASED BEVERAGES WITH THE ADDITION OF PINEAPPLE JUICE

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Agriculture and Fisheries

ABSTRACT

Wort-based soft drinks are alternative beverages that imitate the taste and texture of traditional alcoholic beverages such as beer, precisely because they contain wort as the main raw material. Although this type of soft drinks is just entering the Croatian market, they are a common drink in Central Europe and the Middle East. The main goal of this research was to produce wort, where it is further used for the production of soft drinks with the addition of pineapple juice. Wort has been prepared by the standard production process using two types of malt, Pale-ale Valley King (EBC (color-9) and another darker barley malt called DRC (EBC (color-280-320)). For the purpose of this research, three beverages with different pineapple juice concentrations (10, 20, and 30 %) were prepared, and all three beverages were subjected to sensory analysis. The research has shown that the product with 30 % pineapple juice was the most sensory acceptable to consumers. In order to improve the sensory characteristics, one drop of mint essential oil was added to the mixture with 30 % pineapple juice, and carbonated with gaseous CO₂. In order to categorize the produced drink as an isotonic drink, an analysis of the nutritional value of the product was carried out, which showed that the produced drink was nutritionally rich and, as such, suitable for consumption by athletes and children. It is necessary to carry out further improvements and research in order to optimize this type of drink.

KEYWORDS: brewing, malt, wort, pineapple

SUSTAINABLE CEMENTITIOUS COMPOSITES WITH RECYCLED MATERIALS AND DATA-DRIVEN OPTIMISATION

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sustainable Development

ABSTRACT

Sustainable construction aims to minimise resource consumption while promoting the reuse of waste materials. In this context, advanced techniques for optimising cementitious composites have become increasingly crucial. A highly relevant research topic is the use of recycled aggregates in combination with data-driven techniques to predict concrete strength. Furthermore, the substantial amount of construction waste produced by Croatia's recent earthquakes underscores the need to recycle materials such as brick and reintegrate them into new, sustainable building uses. This study analyses the influence of crushed brick as a replacement for natural aggregate in micro-concrete mixtures with different replacement ratios. Results showed that increasing the proportion of crushed brick decreased the mixture's consistency, due to higher water absorption. Both tensile and compressive strength decreased. However, mixtures with higher recycled material content retained satisfactory mechanical properties for masonry in seismically active areas. This confirms the potential of crushed brick as a technically acceptable and environmentally justified alternative to natural aggregate. In addition, a comparison of different machine learning models showed a clear relationship between model complexity and its ability to generalise, meaning perform well on new data. In conclusion, concrete sustainability must use recycled materials and reliable prediction tools. This promotes sustainable resource use, material reuse, and more economical design.

KEYWORDS: Sustainable construction, Recycled brick aggregate, Micro-concrete, Machine learning, Mechanical properties

SUPPORTING STUDENT LEARNING IN STEM EDUCATION THROUGH GENERATIVE AI: A CASE STUDY IN FUNDAMENTALS OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND DATABASE COURSES

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

The rapid development of generative artificial intelligence (AI) is significantly transforming teaching and learning processes in higher education. In STEM education, AI-based tools provide new opportunities to support student learning, explain complex concepts, and assist in problem-solving activities. Engineering students often face difficulties when dealing with abstract concepts and structured analytical tasks, making generative AI a potentially valuable supplementary learning resource. This paper presents a case study on the integration of generative AI tools into two undergraduate engineering courses at University North, Croatia: Fundamentals of Electrical Engineering and Databases. The Databases course introduces students to relational database concepts, SQL programming, and data modelling, while the Electrical Engineering course focuses on fundamental principles of electrical circuits and analytical problem solving. Generative AI tools were used as an additional learning aid, enabling students to obtain explanations of theoretical concepts, step-by-step guidance in solving engineering problems, and assistance in understanding programming queries and database structures. Rather than replacing traditional teaching methods, AI tools were incorporated as a complementary resource supporting independent learning and practice. The paper analyses the educational benefits and challenges observed during the implementation of generative AI in these courses. Particular attention is given to its role in improving students' conceptual understanding, supporting problem-solving processes, and increasing engagement in technical subjects. At the same time, the study addresses potential limitations, including risks of overreliance on AI-generated answers and the importance of maintaining critical thinking and academic integrity. The results suggest that generative AI can be a useful supplementary tool in STEM education when integrated carefully within existing pedagogical frameworks.

KEYWORDS: generative AI, AI in education, STEM education, engineering education, higher education, database courses

BETWEEN SECURITY AND UNCERTAINTY: FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

Digital communication in English may be broadly categorized into three principal contexts: formal communication (e.g., emails to professors and job applications), private communication (e.g., social media and chats), and interaction with AI-driven tools (e.g., engagement with chatbots). Each of these contexts entails distinct communicative expectations, ranging from levels of formality and linguistic accuracy to immediacy and perceived social pressure, thus giving rise to potentially divergent levels of foreign language anxiety. This study aims to examine the frequency with which university students engage with English across these contexts, to identify the communicative domain in which they experience the highest levels of stress, and to analyze the extent to which the use of digital tools (particularly AI-based applications) shapes their self-confidence and willingness to engage in autonomous written and spoken production. In addition, the study explored the range of support strategies employed by students, including the use of translation tools, dictionaries, AI applications, and peer assistance. Data were collected through a questionnaire administered to university students (across varied fields of study and/or levels of education), alongside a possible short task requiring participants to compose brief messages in a variety of situational prompts. The findings are expected to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between digital communication practices, foreign language anxiety, and perceived communicative security. Furthermore, the study seeks to offer pedagogical implications for the enhancement of foreign language teaching and the development of digital communicative competences in higher education.

KEYWORDS: digital communication, artificial intelligence, English as a foreign language, language anxiety, communication security

CLIMATE MIGRATIONS IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: CONTENT ANALYSIS OF CROATIAN AND SLOVENIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Migration

ABSTRACT

At the international level, climate change is recognized as one of the greatest challenges and threats. It is a complex phenomenon that is not limited exclusively to environmental issues but has significant social, economic, political, and societal impacts and consequences (Wiertz & de Graaf, 2022). A rich body of knowledge also points to the diverse impacts of climate change induced environmental changes on human mobility, which is why migration has been recognized as an issue inseparable from climate change. Climate action is one of the key Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 13), calling for urgent action across different sectors of society (United Nations, 2025). In this context, the education sector plays a crucial role; moreover, the multifaceted interconnection between climate change and education has been emphasized, with particular attention to the contribution of education to climate change mitigation and adaptation (UNESCO, 2024). One of the important recommendations is a curriculum reform that includes the incorporation of climate change issues into environmental education (Jigla et al., 2025). The paper examines whether there are effective and inspiring educational programs that link intersectionally the themes of climate change and migration in Mediterranean countries that are members of the European Union. The second part of the paper is dedicated to a comparison and content analysis of curriculum in Croatia and Slovenia, with the aim of identifying the visibility and importance of climate change and migrations and their intersectional recognition within the educational systems of these countries. The findings aim to contribute to a clearer mapping of the current state of education on climate migration at the secondary school level, as well as to its inclusion in broader regional and global climate–migration debates.

KEYWORDS: climate change, migration, environmental education, sustainable development goals, content analysis, curricula, secondary school, Croatia, Slovenia

MIGRATION AND MEDITERRANEAN ISLAND STUDIES THROUGH A 2025 LITERATURE CONTENT ANALYSIS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Migration

ABSTRACT

Mediterranean islands have long been shaped by mobility, yet recent migration dynamics, ranging from irregular border crossings and asylum processing to labour migration and seasonal circulation, have intensified scholarly attention to “islandness” as both a material condition and a governance frame. This paper examines how migration is conceptualized within island studies literature focusing on Mediterranean islands, with particular interest in migration from islands (out-migration, depopulation) and migration to islands (security issues, integration, working conditions). Methodologically, the study applied a structured content analysis of scientific articles published or indexed during 2025, sampled from the Croatian open-access portal HRČAK and Google Scholar using predefined keyword combinations (e.g., island studies, Mediterranean, migration, migration studies). Articles were coded using an analytical matrix capturing: (1) the dominant problem framing (security, humanitarianism, integration, foreign workers need, culture/identity), (2) a geographical focus and island typology (size of island, political status etc.), (3) a demographic focus (key actors and relation between local–EU context), (4) the type of scientific paper (review, original article, journals fields etc.), and (5) key metaphors and narratives (e.g., gateway, fortress, laboratory, periphery etc.). The findings map thematic clusters, identify under-researched island contexts, and discuss how island studies can better integrate migration scholarship contributing to more nuanced, place-sensitive understandings of Mediterranean mobility.

KEYWORDS: Mediterranean islands, island studies, migration, migration studies, science, content analysis, HRČAK, google scholar

AI CHATBOTS AND LEARNING MATERIALS: THE INFLUENCE OF PROMPT FORMULATION ON RESPONSES IN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

The increasing use of AI chatbots in higher education has created new opportunities for supporting learning processes, but it has also raised important questions about the reliability and interpretation of AI-generated responses. When students use chatbots as learning assistants, the quality of the generated answers may depend not only on the model's internal knowledge but also on the way prompts are formulated and, on the context provided through learning materials. The main objective of this study was to examine how different prompt formulations influence the responses generated by AI chatbots. The research was conducted using teaching materials from an introductory university course on database systems. In the experiment, chatbots were provided with learning materials from the course that contained several inaccuracies and were asked to answer questions related to the content. The same questions were then posed using three different prompt formulations, the first without any additional context, the second with an explicit instruction to answer strictly based on the provided materials, and the third with an instruction to answer using both the provided materials and the chatbot's general knowledge. A total of ten experiments were designed, starting with simple factual questions and gradually increasing the complexity of the tasks. The responses of several AI chatbots, including both free and paid versions, were compared in order to analyze the differences in accuracy, reasoning, and the way chatbots interpret the provided materials. The theoretical contribution of this study lies in improving the understanding of how prompt formulation influences chatbot responses and in highlighting the importance of prompt design when integrating AI chatbots into higher education learning environments.

KEYWORDS: AI chatbots, prompt engineering, higher education, AI in education, learning materials, educational technology

BUILDING A COMMUNIST SOCIETY ON THE ISLAND

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

History

ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the process of introduction and consolidation of the communist system in Croatia following 1945, using the island of Korčula as a case study. The research aims to determine the trajectory of building a communist society within the context of a traditional island social structure. By analyzing archival records, primarily those generated by local Communist Party organizations, this paper highlights the specific challenges the system encountered in an island environment. It provides insight into the dynamic relationship between state ideology and tradition, as well as the prevailing social relations on the island. In doing so, the study contributes to the understanding of the modern history of Yugoslavia and Croatia, particularly from a "history from below" perspective. Special attention is given to the Communist Party's methods of operation aimed at constructing a "new society," which was largely in conflict with local customs. Consequently, resistance was inevitable, presenting local authorities with the challenge of implementing ideological directives from the state leadership while simultaneously recognizing the practical limitations of the situation on the ground.

KEYWORDS: communism, social history, micro history, islands, Yugoslavia, Korčula

ZAGREB RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT DURING EARTHQUAKES

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Business and Economics

ABSTRACT

The paper examines the field of crisis governance with reference to the crisis caused by a natural disaster, specifically the earthquake in the City of Zagreb. The theoretical framework briefly elaborates on the area of crisis governance and management, focusing on the phases of crisis management and describing types of crisis situations, with an emphasis on natural disasters, particularly earthquakes. Following this, the results of an empirical study conducted in the second half of 2025 with 150 respondents, residents of the City of Zagreb, are presented. The aim of the research was to gain insight into citizens' perceptions regarding the actions of relevant institutions, the methods of informing during the crisis, and how the community, citizens, and institutions reacted in the crisis. Along with a discussion of the results presented, the paper outlines the limitations of the research and provides recommendations for practice. The results indicate that respondents were not completely satisfied with the way institutions responded, particularly concerning timely information, transparency, and coordination among different institutions. The lack of clear and consistent information further heightened the sense of insecurity among citizens. This highlights the need for improvements in the crisis management system in Croatia; specifically, to clearly define the responsibilities of institutions and establish a unified and transparent communication system to reduce uncertainty and increase citizens' trust in institutions through verified and timely information. Additionally, it is essential to encourage citizen participation in education, workshops, and drills, and to systematically work on preparing citizens for emergencies to mitigate the consequences of future crises and build a more resilient society.

KEYWORDS: City of Zagreb, crisis management, crisis governance, citizens' perception, natural disasters, earthquake

YOUTHFUL PERSPECTIVES ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ON THE ADRIATIC COAST

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Tourism

ABSTRACT

Tourism has become one of the most dynamic engines of the global economy, generating employment, stimulating investment, and shaping regional development. However, as the sector continues to expand, concerns about its environmental footprint have grown increasingly urgent. This paper examines sustainable tourism through two interconnected lenses: the characteristics of tourism supply and the evolving patterns of tourist demand. Particular attention is given to the emerging role of young travelers, who tend to demonstrate stronger environmental awareness and a greater inclination toward responsible travel behavior. To explore these dynamics, the study conducts a survey among youth, aiming to identify how personal background and social influences shape sustainable tourism attitudes. The analysis considers factors such as the environment and individual travel habits. The research uncovers distinct groups of young tourists who differ in their pro-environmental values and behavior.

KEYWORDS: Tourism footprint, sustainable tourism, young tourists, tourism demand patterns, Adriatic Sea

NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL SHIFT: EMPIRICAL INSIGHTS INTO AI ACCEPTANCE AND INTERACTIONAL PATTERNS IN CROATIA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

This study examines interactional and relational patterns that explain AI acceptance in Croatia, providing baseline data for digital transformation and technological resilience in Mediterranean and island regions. Using a representative quota sample of Croatian citizens, the research employed a validated questionnaire developed at the Catholic University of Croatia. The sample captures diverse regional contexts, including coastal and island populations. Grounded in analytical sociology and DBO theory (Desires, Beliefs, Opportunities), the framework links individual actions to macro-level outcomes. Unlike standard models (TAM/UTAUT), the findings emphasize social roles and situational contexts as key factors in tightly knit Mediterranean communities. This study provides the first systematic mapping of AI acceptance in Croatia, filling a critical empirical gap. The results support the development of socially responsible policies addressing Mediterranean challenges, such as sustainable tourism, efficient public services, and “smart island” initiatives. Future research will involve cross-cultural testing, particularly in island micro-contexts, to ensure the validity of the instrument. Commercial applications are also planned to support stakeholders in tailoring AI solutions to specific local needs.

KEYWORDS: Artificial intelligence, analytical sociology, Mediterranean islands, digital transformation, social interactions, DBO theory

CULTURAL PRODUCTION AS A COMMUNICATION PRACTICE: LOCAL ARTISTS AND CULTURAL PRACTITIONERS IN CONSTITUTING THE PLACE IDENTITY OF PREKO (UGLJAN ISLAND)

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Media and Communication

ABSTRACT

Starting from the understanding of local cultural identity as a dynamic and relational process shaped by historical, geographical, and social conditions, this paper examines cultural production as a communication practice in constituting the place identity of Preko on Ugljan. In island contexts, cultural identity is closely connected to distinctive ways of life, traditions, and local linguistic expressions, which together form specific patterns of cultural communication. The study explores how local artists and cultural practitioners originating from Preko communicate the island's cultural identity through their creative and professional activities, while acting as mediators between the local community, spatial context, and the wider public. The research was based on a qualitative methodology, employing semi-structured interviews with artists and cultural practitioners from various fields of cultural production. The scientific contribution of the paper lies in advancing the understanding of cultural production as a communication practice through which the local identity is constituted and mediated between community, place, and the wider public. Additionally, the study provides an analytical insight into the microlocal cultural context of Preko, contributing to research on cultural communication and the sustainable development of Adriatic island communities.

KEYWORDS: cultural identity, cultural production, strategic communication, local community, Ugljan Island

TRANSFORMATION OF COMMUNICATION IN FORMAL HIERARCHICAL SYSTEMS THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF THE DESIGN THINKING METHOD

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

Conditions of accelerated technological and social changes compel organizations with formal hierarchical structures, such as military organizations, to confront a specific paradox: the organization's need for stability and control must coexist with its requirements for creativity, rapid learning, and adaptation to user needs. Communication flows in such systems are typically established "top-down," while feedback is gathered "bottom-up" in a fragmented or delayed manner, thereby impacting the quality of decisions during change implementation processes. According to recent literature, the Design Thinking method (DT) shapes communication through key mechanisms whose application is relevant to hierarchical systems, as they enable balanced participation among members of varying status, foster problem redefinition, and provide structured communication cycles that dismantle the rigidity of hierarchical relationships. The objective of this paper is to determine the impact of applying the DT on the transformation of communication in hierarchical systems. The research was conceptualized as a qualitative, exploratory study grounded in a DT framework, applied as both a research and intervention method for analyzing and developing communication tools in hierarchical systems. The research sample was purposive, comprising current students at the "Dr. Franjo Tuđman" Defense and Security University in Croatia. The study was conducted through the phases of DT employing semi-structured interviews and facilitation methods to ascertain participants' preferences regarding defined types of communication channels, tools, and strategies. The reliability of the qualitative data analysis was further ensured through peer-to-peer review. The results indicate a significant contribution of the DT to the quality of internal communication channels and the creation of a participatory communication culture through an iterative process that is not necessarily sequential, thereby apparently "flattening" the hierarchy and enabling a more adequate information flow among all participants. Optimizing this flow within the context of collaborative communication dynamics in hierarchical systems presents a challenge for future research.

KEYWORDS: communication, hierarchical systems, design thinking, channels, strategy, information flow, transformation

THE ROLE AND CHALLENGES OF LANGUAGE FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES (LSP) INSTRUCTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE PERSPECTIVE OF STUDENTS FROM TWO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

In the context of an increasingly globalized and professionally interconnected society, Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) instruction occupies a significant position within higher education. Contemporary academic and professional demands require students to develop functional and applicable language competences that go beyond general language proficiency and enable accurate and effective communication in future professional settings. In this regard, higher education institutions play a crucial role in providing curricula and teaching methods aligned with the specific needs of study programs and labour market expectations.

LSP instruction aims to integrate theoretical knowledge with practical language skills relevant to a particular field of study. The development of modern pedagogical approaches and the integration of digital technologies further emphasize the need to adapt language instruction to students' real-life professional needs. Nevertheless, certain challenges remain in achieving an appropriate balance between academic objectives and the practical applicability of professional language use. The aim of this paper is to examine how students perceive the role of LSP instruction and to identify the challenges they recognize in its implementation within higher education. The study focuses on determining students' awareness of the distinction between general language proficiency and LSP, as well as their assessment of the extent to which LSP courses meet the demands of their future professional practice. The research was conducted among first- and second-year students at the University of Applied Health Sciences and VERN' University, who attend German, English, or Italian LSP courses. The findings provide insight into students' perceptions of the effectiveness of LSP instruction and indicate potential directions for its further development.

KEYWORDS: Language for Specific Purposes (LSP), higher education, student perspective, teaching challenges, practical language competence

RESOURCE EFFICIENT SYSTEM FOR URBAN FARMING USING INTERNET OF THINGS AND WEB-TECHNOLOGIES

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Agriculture and Fisheries

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the efficient utilization of Internet of Things technology applied to smart agriculture and urban farming. The developed prototype successfully demonstrated automatization and digitalization benefits of the vegetable plants' irrigation in urban environments. The system uses embedded IoT modules with sensors to collect relevant data such as air temperature and humidity, soil pH-value, soil humidity and light intensity. Based on collected data, the system can act accordingly, such as activate irrigation or other actions such as alarms etc. Data from the sensors is sent to the web-application where it becomes visible to the user. The main goal of this work was to demonstrate the benefits of applying resource efficient embedded IoT and standard web technology to smart agriculture and urban farming.

KEYWORDS: Internet of Things, Web-application, PHP, smart agriculture, urban farming, embedded computing systems

MOONLIT RHYTHMS AND SUMMER SEASONS: PLACE IDENTITY BETWEEN FISHING AND TOURISM IN KALI

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

Kali, a village on the island of Ugljan, is widely recognized as a fishing community in which maritime work has long shaped not only the local economy but also everyday social life. Fishing has influenced daily routines, family organization, social relations, and shared ideas of what constitutes “normal” life in the village. In later periods, with the development of night-fishing practices and the intensified harvesting of small pelagic fish, community rhythms became even more closely attuned to natural cycles. Lunar phases and nocturnal departures to sea effectively formed an informal “social calendar,” structuring rest, social gatherings, and family interactions, and reinforcing a distinctive local culture of time shaped by the sea. At the same time, recent decades have brought a visible shift toward tourism in Kali, particularly through the growth of private accommodation rentals and related service activities. This transformation raises a central question of contemporary place identity: do residents primarily understand Kali as a fishing community that has diversified through tourism, or as a tourist destination that increasingly mobilizes fishing heritage as a brand of authenticity and a symbol of an appealing “Mediterranean” lifestyle? This study investigates how residents of Kali perceive the identity of their place today, and what they believe is changing under the influence of tourism and seasonal pressures. Empirical data were collected through focus groups with Kali residents from different age and occupational groups, with a particular emphasis on young people in order to capture intergenerational perspectives on continuity and change. The focus groups explored shared narratives of belonging, authenticity, and visions for the community’s future. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how place identity is negotiated in localities where a lived fishing tradition coexists with—and is reshaped by—tourism-driven development and external representations.

KEYWORDS: Kali, identity, tourism, fishing heritage

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS – COMMUNICATION CHANNELS IN SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP: A COMPARISON OF EFFECTIVENESS AND DISTRACTION IN THE PERIOD 2008–2015 AND TODAY

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Media and Communication

ABSTRACT

The practice of social dialogue and partnership, including collective bargaining in Croatia dates back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In independent Croatia, structured bipartite and tripartite cooperation among social partners has been developed alongside the establishment of a market-based economic system. A significant milestone was reached in 1992 with the adoption of relevant conventions of the International Labour Organization, aimed at ensuring social peace and advancing social standards. Earlier foundations were laid with the first General Collective Agreement concluded in 1990 between the Council of the Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia and the Croatian Chamber of Economy, followed by the adoption of 1995 Labour Law. This paper builds upon the findings of a postgraduate specialist thesis entitled “Strategic Communication in Social Partnership in Croatia between 2008 and 2015”, which examined communication strategies among social partners during negotiations on five selected issues: (1) Croatia’s EU accession negotiations under Chapter 19 “Social Policy and Employment”; (2) negotiations about the Labour Law; (3) negotiations about the Minimum Wage Law; (4) negotiations about raising the statutory retirement age; and (5) the introduction of the active labour market measure “Professional Training without Employment Contract.” The original research combined a content analysis of 200 articles published in leading Croatian daily newspapers (print and online editions) with semi-structured interviews conducted in January and February 2017 with representatives of social partners who were active during that period. The present study conducts a secondary analysis of empirical findings from 2008–2015 and complements them with a comparative theoretical analysis of contemporary communication channels in public negotiations. The aim is to assess how current communication channel choices differ from those used in 2008–2015 and to evaluate their potential implications for effectiveness and distraction in collective bargaining processes.

KEYWORDS: communications, social partnership, social dialogue, strategic communications, tripartite dialogue, bipartite dialogue, collective bargaining, media

INTERMEDIAL STRATEGIES IN PICTORIAL ANALYSIS: THREE SELF- PORTRAITS BY AURÉLIA DE SOUZA (1866–1922)

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Arts and Literature

ABSTRACT

Although self-portraits constitute a relatively compact corpus, they occupy an absolutely central position within the extensive body of work produced by the Portuguese painter Aurélia de Souza, exerting a strong influence over her oeuvre as a whole. In these eleven works — almost all of which remained outside the view of her contemporaries during the artist's lifetime — the question “Who am I?”, understood as both an identitarian and philosophical enquiry, is articulated through a plastic formula of remarkable originality and expressive intensity. Within this group, the three paintings examined in the present study stand out as a coherent subset endowed with their own internal dynamics and rhythm and, as the following analysis demonstrates, organised around a shared thematic axis. These characteristics allow for an intertextual analysis of the three works, developed here through the mobilisation of musical form as an interpretative matrix.

KEYWORDS: Aurélia de Souza, self-portrait, intermediality, musical form, intertextuality

STATE OF TOURISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN – TRENDS, IMPACTS, PERSPECTIVES

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Tourism

ABSTRACT

The Mediterranean region comprises 22 coastal countries—both EU and non-EU—with diverse economic, social, and environmental conditions. The Mediterranean Sea, Europe's largest semi-enclosed sea, covers nearly 2.6 million km² and features over 46,000 km of coastline. The Mediterranean Basin is the world's second-largest biodiversity hotspot, due to its exceptional species richness and high endemism, shaped by a unique climate, geological complexity and centuries of human influence. Today, these ecosystems face growing pressures from urbanisation, population growth, economic development and climate change-induced impacts such as rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, shifting rainfall patterns, and increased frequency of extreme weather events. Approximately one-third of the region's population lives in coastal zones, with over 70% in urban areas—highlighting the importance of urbanisation and economic activity along the coastline. With its mild climate and rich cultural heritage, the Mediterranean is the world's top tourist destination, attracting about 30% of global tourist flows. Coastal and maritime tourism is therefore a key economic sector, representing 13% of exports and 23% of the service sector. International tourist arrivals (ITAs) have steadily increased since the mid-1990s. In 2019, just before the COVID-19 pandemic, the region reached 400 million ITAs, with the expectation to reach 626 million by 2025. The latest data shows that in 2024, Southern Mediterranean Europe and North Africa alone reached 359.7 ITAs. Despite this recovery, the region remains heavily affected by tourist seasonality, with a large influx of visitors concentrated in the summer months and persistent mass tourism based on "sun, sand, and sea" concept that generates major environmental and social impacts. This paper presents and discusses key trends, impacts and perspectives related to the growing sector of tourism, its economic importance, dominance in the regional economy, rising demand and environmental sustainability.

KEYWORDS: Mediterranean, economic impact, social impact, environmental impact, climate change, seasonality

TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ROLE OF FOLKLORE IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the attitudes of teacher education students toward the role of folklore in the educational process and its potential as a valuable pedagogical resource in contemporary education. In the context of a growing need to preserve and promote cultural heritage, as well as to integrate it into educational systems, folklore is increasingly recognized as an important factor in fostering cultural identity, intercultural sensitivity, and critical thinking among future teachers. The aim of this study is to explore students' perceptions of the representation of folkloric content within formal education and to determine the extent to which such content is considered relevant to their professional development and personal learning. The study is based on the assumption that folklore, as an integral component of intangible cultural heritage, can positively influence students' motivation, engagement, and active participation in the teaching and learning process. The methodological framework of the study is grounded in a quantitative-descriptive research design conducted through a survey questionnaire among teacher education students at the Faculty of Education in Osijek. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistical methods in order to identify the dominant patterns of participants' attitudes and perceptions. The findings of the study are expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of cultural heritage in primary education and to provide guidelines for the more effective integration of folkloric content into higher education curricula and teaching practice.

KEYWORDS: folklore, primary education, teacher education students, cultural heritage, educational process

SECOND HOMES BETWEEN DIGITALIZATION AND COMMERCIALIZATION: AN ISLAND CONTEXT

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Tourism

ABSTRACT

In an era of widespread digitalization that increasingly shapes even the most private spheres of social life, practices of dwelling and mobility are undergoing significant transformation, with second-home use emerging as a particularly salient phenomenon. Digital connectivity challenges the traditional understanding of second homes as spaces of leisure and directs attention toward their role in shaping social embeddedness and relationships with local communities through digitally supported presence. At the same time, second-home use is closely intertwined with market logics, raising questions about short-term rental practices, remote communication, and digitally supported forms of local engagement in the context of commercially and family-oriented uses of second homes. These dynamics are particularly highlighted in an island context, characterized by seasonality. While existing literature has predominantly focused on the economic effects of housing commercialization, less attention has been paid to how these processes reshape users' relationships to place and forms of spatial embeddedness. Drawing on sociological approaches to multilocality and housing commercialization, this paper examines how online communication, family-oriented and commercially oriented uses of second homes in island settings, shape local attachment and involvement. The paper explores the relationship between commercial orientations toward second-home use, family-oriented uses, and different dimensions of spatial embeddedness, including neighborhood relations, digitally supported connection, and a sense of belonging. Preliminary findings suggest that commercialization does not necessarily lead to a complete erosion of local ties, but rather to their selective transformation. While certain market-oriented uses reduce everyday involvement in local communities, new patterns of occasional participation and instrumental forms of place-based connection emerge. Second homes in island communities thus appear as spaces of tension between market-driven economic logics and the social dimensions of local life.

KEYWORDS: second homes, commercialization, digitalization, social networks, everyday life

BETWEEN GENDER AND NATION: CONTESTING IMAGINARIES OF GENDERED FUTURES

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the narratives and socio-political contexts through which competing imaginations of gender futures are articulated and contested. Situating debates on gender within broader struggles over inequality and social order, the study explores how visions of future gender roles are constructed, represented, and performed within anti-gender and feminist movements in Croatia. Guided by three questions: what gender ideals are promoted within anti-gender and feminist mobilizations; what kinds of future these movements seek to make, build and sustain; and how political spaces are shaped through conflicts over gender future; the paper draws on ethnographic fieldwork combining interviews, participant observation, and media discourse analysis. Through this triangulated approach, the study maps the temporal narratives, normative frameworks, and imagined trajectories of gender change embedded in competing political projects. The analysis interrogates processes of neo-traditionalization, subversion, intersectional contestation, and normalization that emerge within these struggles. By situating these dynamics at the intersection of modernity and tradition, the paper conceptualizes a continuum of future imaginaries structured between the notions of gender and nation, linked through opposing yet mutually constitutive ideological positions. In doing so, the paper contributes to discussions on contested social visions by showing how conflicts over gender are fundamentally conflicts over the imagined future of society itself.

KEYWORDS: gender, futures, ethnography, neotraditionalism, feminism, nation

MEDIA FRAMING OF CROATIAN ISLANDS: AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL NEWS DISCOURSE

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Media and Communication

ABSTRACT

This research examines how Croatian islands are represented in regional news media through an exploratory frame analysis of three news outlets (Dalmatinski portal, Morski.hr and Zadarski list) during 2025. Although Croatian Islands have cultural, economic and environmental significance, there has been limited empirical research conducted concerning how the regional media constructs and frames island narratives. This research addresses this void through identifying the most frequent themes and frames that appear in the coverage of island related issues in the news. Using an inductive qualitative approach, the research analyzes all articles published in 2025 with the word "island" or specific names of Croatian islands in the title or in the lead paragraph, across three regional coastal news outlets. The methodology combines thematic analysis to identify emergent content patterns with frame-led analysis to uncover underlying interpretative structures shaping island representation. This type of analytical approach enables both identification of what is reported about islands (thematic content) and how these subjects are framed (interpretative schemas). The research design allows for comparative analysis across outlets, revealing both shared regional frames and outlet-specific variations in island representation. By analyzing articles regardless of a specific topic - encompassing tourism, environment, culture, infrastructure, and other themes - this study captures the full spectrum of island discourse in selected regional media, avoiding the limitations of single-issue framing studies. This exploratory approach is particularly appropriate given the absence of prior systematic research on Croatian island media representation. Rather than testing predetermined frames, the study discovers frames inductively from the data itself, providing empirical grounding for understanding how regional media construct island identity, challenges, and opportunities.

KEYWORDS: media framing, Croatian islands, regional news media, thematic analysis, qualitative content analysis, island representation

WHO ARE THE FUTURE CROATIAN SAILORS? AN ANALYSIS OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROFILE AND MOTIVATION OF STUDENTS IN THE VOCATIONAL PROGRAMME MARITIME OFFICER

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

Adriatic Croatia has a long nautical tradition. A key aspect of preserving this tradition is educating future sailors. Many begin their education in secondary school by enrolling in the vocational programme Maritime Officer, which prepares them for ship navigation and management. This study aimed to determine the educational profile and motivation of students who enrol in this programme. The research was conducted using a combination of desk analysis of data from the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth, and a focus group and interviews with teachers from the Nautical High School Split (N = 9). The analysis established that the Maritime Officer programme is offered in six vocational schools located across the Adriatic counties. In the 2024/25 school year, a total of 932 students were enrolled in the programme. The findings indicate that this is a highly sought-after vocational programme: for most students, it is their first choice, and the number of applicants is almost four times the number of the admitted. This finding is confirmed by teachers in the focus group and interviews, who reported that most students demonstrate considerable interest primarily based on future earning potential. Students in this programme have somewhat lower GPA (M = 3.46) compared to students in four-year vocational programmes in the Adriatic counties (M = 3.75). Teachers report that motivation for schooling declines over the years, although students remain interested in completing school and finding employment in the field. Only a minority of students in the six analysed schools continue their education. However, many remain in the sector by enrolling in the Faculty of Maritime Studies in Rijeka or Split. Teachers emphasise that employment opportunities are more limited for those who do not complete university. Hence, a substantial proportion of students ultimately decide not to pursue a career as a sailor despite initial motivation.

KEYWORDS: vocational education, maritime officers, sailors, educational profile, motivation

CAPE STUPIŠĆE, ISLAND OF VIS – THE FIRST NO-TAKE MARINE RESERVE IN CROATIA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Marine and Biology

ABSTRACT

The cumulative surface of marine reserves currently represents only 0.04% of the Mediterranean Sea. Due to increasing pressure from human activities on marine ecosystems, and in line with the objectives of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030—which calls for at least 10% of EU seas to be strictly protected—the Cape Stupišće Special Marine Reserve was designated in mid-2025. Fishing and other extractive activities are prohibited within the reserve. The area is classified as an IUCN Category Ia Strict Nature Reserve and is the only marine area with this designation in the Republic of Croatia. The Cape Stupišće area, comprising 102.8 ha of marine and 6.9 ha of terrestrial habitats, is characterized by a high level of marine biodiversity, well-preserved habitats, and significant geomorphological and landscape features, which together form the basis for its designation as a Special Marine Reserve. Within the area, seven threatened and/or rare marine habitat types of national and European importance are present, among which the coralligenous biocenosis—studied at the Sika 3 and Sika 6 sites within the reserve boundaries—is particularly noteworthy. A total of 121 taxa of marine organisms have been recorded at these sites, including eight strictly protected species. In addition to conserving existing biodiversity, the establishment of the Cape Stupišće Special Marine Reserve is expected to improve spatial management and support the further development of sustainable tourism activities, such as SCUBA diving. The benefits of protection also extend beyond the reserve boundaries through the dispersal of marine organisms into surrounding areas, a phenomenon known as the spillover effect. In contrast, the main challenges to the conservation of the area include rising sea temperatures, an increasing frequency of marine heatwaves, and the spread of non-native invasive species, such as the lionfish *Pterois miles* and the alga *Stypopodium schimperi*.

KEYWORDS: Cape Stupišće, marine reserve, no-take, coralligenous, spillover, SCUBA diving, IUCN

MEDIA REPORTING ON THE LEADING CLUBS IN THE CROATIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE DURING THE 2024/25 SEASON WITH A FOCUS ON ADRIATIC CLUBS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sport

ABSTRACT

The 2024/2025 season of the Supersport Croatian Football League was widely described by the media, fans, and the broader football public in Croatia and the surrounding region as one of the most exciting and dramatic in the league's history, particularly in terms of the title race. This paper examines how Croatian media reported on the leading clubs of the Supersport HNL during the spring part of the 2024/2025 season, with particular emphasis on clubs from the Adriatic region. The analysis includes articles published on Croatian news portals from the beginning to the end of the spring part of the championship. The aim of the study was to present the tone of media coverage concerning the leading Croatian clubs — Dinamo, Hajduk, and Rijeka — and to examine how the clubs' results influenced the tone of reporting. The research employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. It identifies the volume of media coverage devoted to each of the analysed clubs and assesses the tone of the articles by classifying them as positive, negative, or neutral. The findings provide insight into patterns of media reporting on top Croatian football clubs and contribute to a broader understanding of sports media communication in the regional context.

KEYWORDS: Supersport HNL, Croatian news portals, media, communication, Dinamo, Hajduk, Rijeka

THE MEDITERRANEAN AS A MORAL SPACE: IMPLICIT BIOETHICS IN THE WORK OF PREDRAG MATVEJEVIĆ

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Arts and Literature

ABSTRACT

Mediterranean Breviary by Predrag Matvejević—a book that affirmed both the author and Croatian literature within the Mediterranean cultural circle—has received exceptional recognition in Europe and globally. Written in a lyrical, essayistic, intimate style, a bridge between scholarship and literature, the text has been translated into 25 languages and has gone through multiple editions, while in Italy alone it has been printed in more than 300,000 copies. It is undoubtedly the most translated and, globally, the most widely known book of Croatian literature. However, Claudio Magris, who wrote the foreword to the Italian edition of the Breviary, rightly asks: “What, in fact, is this book which, through its restrained and complex discretion, challenges the usual divisions among literary genres?” Matvejević’s Mediterranean is therefore not merely a historical-cultural space familiar from the work of Fernand Braudel, nor a mythic-lyrical theme celebrated by Albert Camus. Rather, it is a living *pieta* that reminds us of the countless destinies the sea preserves, shapes, and ultimately buries—in other words, a world in which nature and culture are inseparable, a civilizational and moral horizon. Very few authors can help us confront the dead end of a historical moment that recognizes the Mediterranean as the former “center of the world,” yet today regards it merely as a “tourist fact.” For this reason, the need to return to the Breviary becomes greater, so that we may remind ourselves of its connections—a living spring of knowledge guiding how we should approach the Mediterranean and its heritage, in a time when its meanings are easily simplified or forgotten by contemporary discourse and politics. Following Mediterranean paths, the routes of amber and the rows of vines, we begin to discern signposts for a multiperspectival and comprehensive understanding of the Mediterranean and its identity as a moral space that obliges us.

KEYWORDS: bioethics, moral, Mediterranean, sociology, Predrag Matvejević, heritage, identity

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS FOR TEACHING MATHEMATICS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: OPPORTUNITIES, APPLICATIONS, AND CHALLENGES

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) tools into higher education has opened new possibilities for enhancing the teaching and learning of mathematics. This paper examines the main types of AI-based tools that can be effectively employed in university-level mathematics education, focusing on their functionalities, pedagogical value, and practical applications. The study identifies several key categories of tools, including intelligent tutoring systems, automated assessment platforms, computer algebra systems, learning analytics dashboards, and generative AI applications. These tools support a wide range of educational processes. Intelligent tutoring systems provide personalized guidance and adaptive feedback, enabling students to progress at their own pace. Automated assessment tools facilitate efficient grading and immediate feedback, which are essential for mastering mathematical concepts. Computer algebra systems allow students to explore symbolic manipulation and complex computations, fostering deeper conceptual understanding. Learning analytics tools help instructors monitor student performance and identify learning gaps, while generative AI applications can assist in creating instructional materials, solving problems, and explaining mathematical concepts in accessible ways. Despite their advantages, the use of AI tools in mathematics education also raises important challenges. Issues such as academic integrity, over-reliance on automated systems, data privacy, and unequal access to technology must be carefully addressed. Additionally, the effective integration of these tools requires educators to develop new digital competencies and adapt their teaching strategies. This paper argues that AI tools, when thoughtfully implemented and aligned with pedagogical goals, can significantly enhance mathematics education in higher education. It highlights the need for a balanced approach that combines technological innovation with sound educational practices to maximize learning outcomes.

KEYWORDS: artificial intelligence tools, mathematics education, higher education, automated assessment, learning analytics

EVALUATING THE BUSINESS RESULTS OF TRIPADVISOR PLATFORM

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Business and Economics

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to analyze the business results of the Tripadvisor platform in the period of the Covid-19 pandemic and afterwards. The research and analysis cover three basic areas and analyze selected financial indicators, the trend of the number of customers and the trend of the share price. In the analysis, financial and statistical analysis models are used so that the results are comparable for all three segments. The results of the analysis proved that the corporation's revenues are growing, in contrast to the profit parameters that fluctuate significantly. The number of users of the platform's services is continuously falling, but the platform is still stable and the network effect in business processes is not threatened. The share price is in continuous decline, and significant growth can be expected soon. The Tripadvisor platform has achieved an exceptional competitive advantage within the platform industry in the tourism industry and attracts many users who leave different comments about tourist destinations on the platform. It is the UGC model that attracts new users who seek information and use the platform's services. This restores the network effect and continuously collects data that is the basis for the platform's revenue growth.

KEYWORDS: business results, network effect, platform economy, Tripadvisor, zero marginal cost.

EXPLORING PERCEIVED EFFICACY OF COLLECTIVE ACTION AND TOLERANCE FOR EVERYDAY NORM VIOLATIONS AS PREDICTORS OF SUPPORT FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE CROATIAN CONTEXT

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

Support for political violence is often framed as a function of instrumental beliefs about what “works” in politics and broader normative permissiveness towards rule breaking. Building on these perspectives, using a quota-based (regarding sex, age, and region of residence) sample of Croatian adults (N = 408) to examine (1) whether perceived efficacy of violent collective action, perceived efficacy of nonviolent collective action, and personal acceptability of unethical behaviour are associated with support for political violence, and (2) whether these associations differ across Croatian regions. Structural equation modelling showed that all three focal predictors were statistically significant predictors of support for political violence. Perceived efficacy of violent action was positively associated with support for political violence, whereas perceived efficacy of nonviolent action was negatively associated. Personal acceptability of unethical behaviour emerged as the strongest predictor. A supplementary model adding perceived societal tolerance of deviance did not show an additional direct association with support for political violence once the main predictors were included. Regions were aggregated a priori to ensure adequate cell sizes (Zagreb and surroundings; Mediterranean Croatia; Slavonia; Northern Croatia). Multi-group SEM indicated no statistically reliable regional differences in the pattern of structural paths, suggesting that the observed associations are broadly similar across aggregated regions in this dataset. Overall, support for political violence appears to be associated with both instrumental beliefs about the effectiveness of political tactics and a broader permissive stance towards everyday norm violations, with personal permissiveness showing the strongest association.

KEYWORDS: political violence, collective action efficacy, nonviolent and violent collective action, acceptability of unethical behaviour, Croatia

SATELLITE MONITORING OF SEA LEVEL RISE DUE TO THE CLIMATE CHANGE

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sustainable Development

ABSTRACT

One of the main indicators of the climate change is the sea level. This is especially important for coastal regions due to the thermal expansion of the oceans. Sea level has been measured for over a century with sea-level recorders at harbors and for the past thirty years or so with satellites using radar altimetry and microwave radiometer. A rise of about 11 cm has been measured in the last thirty years. Furthermore, the rate of increase has accelerated over the past decade (4.2 mm/yr. vs 2.1 mm/yr.). There are two main reasons for the sea level rise. One is the thermal expansion of the oceans (about 30%) and the other is melting of glaciers and polar ice, that is, the influx of fresh water. The sea level rise is not uniform and regionally there are differences depending on the sea currents and heat distribution in the oceans. In Europe, the sea level rise ranges from 2-4 mm/yr. over the last 30 years. Copernicus Sentinel-6 satellite monitors and measures the sea level rise globally using radar altimeter and microwave radiometer. In areas near the coastline an upward or downward vertical movement of Earth's surface is monitored. Those changes can affect coastal ecosystem, introduce the land erosion, flooding as well as intrusion of the salt water into the local community arable lands.

KEYWORDS: sea level rise, climate change, satellite monitoring

BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED SEA - THE CURZOLARI ISLANDS AS A GEOPOLITICAL STAKE IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

History

ABSTRACT

During the First World War, Italian naval experts invented the geographic concept *isoli Curzolari* to justify annexation of the islands of Korčula, Vis, Mljet, Palagruža and Lastovo. Italy's occupation of the Dodecanese islands in the Aegean in 1912 aimed to secure a strategic pivot for larger imperial ambitions in the Eastern Mediterranean. The *isoli Curzolari* were to serve as a similar springboard in the Adriatic. According to the Italian admiral Thaon di Revel, the Curzolari islands were 'a bridge between Italy and Dalmatia'. Following the Italian Empire's reorientation towards the Mediterranean, island bastions acquired a newfound relevance with the arrival of Dreadnoughts and submarines in the Adriatic. Imagined as formidable floating fortifications, their position gave the islands major importance in controlling the lower Adriatic. Equidistant between Kotor and Pula, close enough to threaten the former but far enough from the latter to be reasonably secure, the islands were an ideal base for Italian plans for the eastern Adriatic and the Balkans. The islands became a key diplomatic stake during the period of 1914-1919, appearing on the highest cabinet tables of the European capitals. The Curzolari feature in the diplomatic debates between British Prime Ministers, Russian Tsars as well as French foreign ministers. The Entente eventually promised them to Italy with the 1915 treaty of London. In the last year of the war, the islands became the object of detailed invasion plans by the Entente. Using the diplomatic and naval archives as well as newspapers in the period between 1914-1919, the paper shows how during the First World War, these southern Dalmatian islands achieved their highest ever significance on the global diplomatic stage. At the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, politicians from the islands even gain access to Woodrow Wilson to successfully contest Italian plans in the eastern Adriatic.

KEYWORDS: Adriatic, Britain, Dalmatia, islands, Italy, Korčula archipelago, Naval history, secret diplomacy, First World War

1866 AND ALL THAT - THE NAVAL BATTLE OF VIS IN INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY 1914-1918

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

History

ABSTRACT

2026 sees the 160th anniversary of the naval battle of Vis as Austria secured a resounding victory over Italy. The battle was the biggest naval battle fought worldwide between Trafalgar in 1805 and Tsushima in 1905. The paper argues how 1866 became a symbol for success and failure on the two sides of the Adriatic, especially during the twilight period of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Within the Austrian Empire, the battle becomes strongly embedded within the public sphere, on the other sides of the Adriatic, 1866 would become a byword for catastrophic defeat. Although Italy did gain Venice and the Veneto region, the territorial gains in the subsequent agreement did not include Dalmatia. The “firstborn province” of Venice had a special place in the Italian consciousness and its ‘amputation’ would be presented through the prism of the Vis defeat. Italy’s debacle meant that their aspirations for strategic mastery on the Adriatic were (temporarily) halted. The ‘amputation’ discourse implied that this great debacle had to be avenged and the ‘fourth war of independence’ starting in 1915 seemed to be an ideal opportunity. Italy’s ambassadors, admirals and journalists would frame 1866 as a key historic point in Italy’s claims for Dalmatia and the eastern Adriatic. From the secret negotiations of the 1915 Treaty of London to the official Italian naval memorandum sent to the Paris Peace Conference, 1866 was a key date which featured as a historical wound in Italian history that needed to be rectified. Using archival documents from the Italian naval ministry, diaries from Italian ambassadors and pamphlets by Italian irredentists, the paper demonstrates how the year 1866 in Vis was a major diplomatic and military reference point for the Italian establishment in the period 1914-1918.

KEYWORDS: Austrian Empire, Dalmatia, diplomacy, First World War, islands, Italy, Vis

SYNERGY OF ALGORITHMIC INSIGHTS AND LOCAL LEADERSHIP - CASE STUDY OF MANAGEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITIES OF VIS AND JELSA IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Business and Economics

ABSTRACT

Managing island systems requires specific responses to the challenges of isolation, seasonality, and limited infrastructure. This paper explores how the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and the development of digital competencies are transforming the role and effectiveness of management and supervisory bodies in the towns of Vis and Jelsa. The research focused on analyzing the application of advanced analytics and AI tools to enhance strategic decision-making regarding complex sustainability issues, such as waste management and digital connectivity. Particular emphasis is placed on the synergy between the human judgment of local leaders and algorithmic insights to strengthen strategic agility and corporate social responsibility (CSR). By examining the transformation of interpersonal relationships and group dynamics within boards, the paper investigates how digital literacy, and the critical evaluation of AI technologies are becoming fundamental competencies that enable the preservation of authentic island identity while simultaneously achieving high levels of operational efficiency and long-term sustainability.

KEYWORDS: Town of Jelsa, Town of Vis, AI, local leadership, digital competencies, sustainable development

PLANNING A BACKUP GENERATOR UNDER UNCERTAIN FORECASTS: THE ROLE OF BATTERY WEAR IN AN ISLANDED, OFF-GRID SOLAR– WIND MICROGRID

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Renewable Energy Sources

ABSTRACT

We quantify the value of stochastic (Monte-Carlo sample-average-approximation, SAA) day-ahead commitment of a dispatchable energy source (DES; diesel or hydrogen fuel cell) in a household-scale islanded microgrid (PV + wind + battery) under forecast uncertainty in solar, wind and load — and, as the paper's focus, how a realistic battery-degradation model changes that value. Crucially, the solar uncertainty is not assumed but calibrated to measured day-ahead (D-1) forecast errors from three Croatian PV plants in the microgrid's own climate: the bias-corrected multiplicative error has $\sigma \approx 0.55$ with a heavy cloud tail (16 % of daylight hours below half the forecast), some 3–4 $\times$ the $\sigma \approx 0.15$ commonly assumed; a desert-climate comparison (Alice Springs, $\sigma \approx 0.30$) confirms even clear skies far exceed that assumption. A single non-anticipative DES schedule minimizing expected daily cost over scenarios bootstrapped from these measured residuals is evaluated out-of-sample against a deterministic schedule optimized on the point forecast. Across eight representative days, stochastic commitment lowers expected operating cost by 7–43 % on average, driven chiefly by avoided load-shedding. The interaction with degradation is not univocal: a state-of-charge-depth (deep-discharge) penalty amplifies the value of hedging on low-unmet-risk days — where realistic uncertainty otherwise leaves almost none (linear ≈ 0 % vs. depth-aware ≈ 10 %) — but attenuates it on unmet-risk-dominated days, where it taxes the battery, the primary hedging instrument. The direction is set by the degradation mechanism (a depth penalty can create hedging value; a power/C-rate penalty only removes it), yielding an actionable microgrid-sizing guideline. The simulator is verified to 1e-12 against our prior published MATLAB model.

KEYWORDS: islanded microgrid, dispatchable energy source, forecast uncertainty, stochastic programming, sample average approximation, battery degradation

COMMERCIALIZING THE ISLAND DREAM: SECOND HOME TRANSFORMATIONS ON THE ISLAND LOŠINJ, CROATIA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Tourism

ABSTRACT

Tourism and second-home use on the island of Lošinj are almost a century and a half old. While tourism has been extensively researched and well documented, the second-home phenomenon has remained largely overlooked, despite its significant presence. This paper therefore focuses on the development of second homes on Lošinj as an elite and high-amenity location. The research has two main objectives. First, it explores the historical trajectory of second-home use throughout the island's long tourism history, including changes in ownership patterns over time. Second, it examines how contemporary owners perceive the value of their second homes. In such a desirable location, are these properties primarily viewed as commercial assets, or are they regarded as cherished private spaces dedicated to leisure, relaxation, work-life balance, and family gatherings?

KEYWORDS: second homes, island Lošinj, commercialisation, high-amenity locations, transformations

TRANSPARENCY AND PERCEIVED IMPACT OF CIRCULAR ECONOMY PRACTICES AS DRIVERS OF CONSUMER TRUST

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Business and Economics

ABSTRACT

The increasing adoption of circular economy practices has intensified scholarly interest in understanding the mechanisms through which such initiatives influence consumer perceptions and behavioral responses. While existing research has predominantly focused on sustainability communication and symbolic signals, less attention has been devoted to the role of transparency and perceived effectiveness of circular practices as antecedents of consumer trust. This study investigates the effects of perceived transparency and perceived environmental impact of circular economy practices on consumer trust, while incorporating consumer skepticism toward sustainability claims as a relevant countervailing factor. The empirical analysis is based on survey data collected from a sample of consumers using structured measurement instruments with five-point Likert scales. The data were analyzed using reliability assessment and regression modelling. The results indicate that perceived transparency and perceived environmental impact exert a positive influence on consumer trust, whereas skepticism toward sustainability claims demonstrates a negative association. Furthermore, consumer trust emerges as a significant predictor of loyalty, confirming its central role in shaping long-term consumer relationships in the context of circular economy practices. The study contributes to the literature by advancing a more nuanced understanding of trust formation, emphasizing the importance of credible, observable, and verifiable circular practices over purely communicative approaches. The findings provide relevant implications for both researchers and practitioners, suggesting that the effectiveness of circular strategies depends not only on their implementation but also on their perceived transparency and demonstrable impact.

KEYWORDS: circular economy, consumer trust, perceived transparency, perceived environmental impact, consumer skepticism, customer loyalty

THE GEOLOGY OF THE MALA PALAGRUŽA ISLET IN THE CENTRAL ADRIATIC SEA, CROATIA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sustainable Development

ABSTRACT

The Palagruža Archipelago is the group of 14 islets representing the most remote and distant part of Croatian territory. It is a part of the Vis Archipelago UNESCO Global Park, recognized as a geologically and geomorphologically important location. Its unique geographical position in the central Adriatic Sea between the Dinaridic and Apenninic orogenic belts is linked to underground salt diapirs which extruded Mesozoic rocks along the Palagruža fault. While the nearest coeval Mesozoic rocks exposed in the Apennines and the Dinarides are built of shallow-marine deposits formed on ancient Apulia and Adriatic Carbonate Platforms, the geology of Mala Palagruža differs significantly. The islet is built of thin-bedded siliceous dolomites and chert interbeds (Korbar et al., 2012) formed in a deeper Middle Jurassic carbonate platform-to-basin environment (Kukoč et al., 2019). Preliminary geological research of the Mala Palagruža has shown that the largest part of the islet is built of well bedded, very hard siliceous dolomites alternating with partly or fully silicified laminated interbeds containing radiolaria. These rocks have a unique “layer-cake” appearance, which is best observed along the northern shores of the islet. The southern, steep and completely inaccessible side of the islet is in a fault contact with the “layer-cake” succession and covered with younger Quaternary colluvium. The Mala Palagruža islet, as well as the whole Palagruža Archipelago, offers a rare opportunity for the direct investigation of geological successions that are otherwise buried beneath the Adriatic Sea.

KEYWORDS: Mala Palagruža, geology, salt diapir, siliceous dolomites, Vis Archipelago UNESCO Global Park

THE SUPPORT FOR MENTORS AND EARLY-CAREER RESEARCHERS DURING THE PHD PROCESS: CONTRASTING PERSPECTIVES

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

This paper draws on the qualitative component of the project “Wellbeing and Mental Health of Early-Career Researchers in Croatia – a Longitudinal Study (ECR-WELL)” (PI: Dr. sc. Maja Tadić Vujčić, Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences; funded by the Croatian Science Foundation/HRZZ). It explores how support is experienced by doctoral mentors and early-career researchers (ECRs) during the PhD process, and where these perspectives converge or diverge. The following groups have been compared and contrasted: (1) doctoral mentors and the support they receive from institutional leadership and the wider academic/professional environment (e.g., recognition of mentoring, workload relief, administrative services, peer support and training); and (2) ECRs (doctoral candidates and postdoctoral researchers) and the support they receive from leadership and beyond their home institution (e.g., doctoral schools, funders/projects, professional services, peer networks, international collaborations). In addition, the paper examines how ECRs perceive support from their mentors (availability, feedback, structure, emotional support and boundary-setting) and how this relates to progress and wellbeing. Data were collected from 24 semi-structured interviews with mentors and 12 focus groups plus 2 individual interviews with ECRs (N=69) across Croatian universities and disciplines. Using thematic analysis, organisational, administrative, financial, professional and emotional support were mapped, gaps between needs and available resources were identified, and stages where support is most critical (planning, data collection, writing, completion) were pinpointed. These findings inform recommendations to strengthen systemic support and promote sustainable doctoral training in Croatia.

KEYWORDS: doctoral mentoring, supervisory support, institutional support, early-career researchers, well-being

SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES: FROM INDIVIDUAL MOTIVATION TO COLLECTIVE WELL-BEING

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

Remote communities often face demographic decline, limited public services, geographical isolation, and reduced institutional capacity. In such environments, community well-being frequently depends on individuals who voluntarily assume responsibility for addressing local needs and supporting others. This paper explores volunteering in remote communities through the conceptual lens of servant leadership, focusing on how individual motivations can develop into collective benefits. The study draws on qualitative research conducted in the Croatian communities of Vis and Janjina on the Pelješac Peninsula. The research included six focus groups with 42 participants, supported by interviews and field observation. The findings show that engagement in community activities is motivated by a combination of altruism, cultural attachment, a search for meaning, social connection, personal development, competence, and the desire to contribute to local progress. Although these motivations originate at the individual level, volunteer engagement generates broader benefits by strengthening social relationships, building trust, preserving community identity, and providing services and amenities that might otherwise be unavailable. The paper argues that active community members often demonstrate key characteristics of servant leadership without holding formal leadership positions. By listening to local needs, empowering others, building relationships, and placing community interests before personal recognition, they act as servant leaders. Their contribution transforms individual willingness to serve into social capital and collective well-being. The findings highlight servant leadership as a valuable framework for understanding informal leadership and community resilience in geographically isolated and resource-constrained settings.

KEYWORDS: servant leadership, remote communities, volunteering, individual motivation, collective well-being, social capital, community resilience

RETURN MIGRATION TO CROATIAN ISLANDS: NAVIGATING OPPORTUNITIES AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Migration

ABSTRACT

Return migration represents a complex and multi-layered process that can have significant demographic, social, and economic consequences. Traditionally, island communities in Croatia have been marked by long-term outmigration and depopulation, a trend that is particularly pronounced on smaller islands, where return migration is often associated with retirement. Although such returnees may temporarily mitigate negative demographic trends, they most commonly contribute to an increasing share of the elderly population. At the same time, return migration also encompasses processes that go beyond retirement-related patterns. Returnees who have acquired knowledge, skills, and capital during their lives abroad may become important drivers of social and economic development. Notable positive examples include return migrants who have initiated entrepreneurial activities along the coast and on the islands, investing accumulated capital in the local economy and contributing to the social sustainability of their communities. The research further suggests that the deliberate maintenance of ties with the homeland, supported by robust social networks and transnational connections, significantly facilitates successful reintegration. Nevertheless, formidable barriers persist, primarily rooted in insular infrastructure deficits that constrain the quality of life for both returnees and the resident population alike. Navigating these opportunities and challenges is thus essential for leveraging return migration as a viable pathway toward the social sustainability of Croatia's island communities.

KEYWORDS: Croatian islands, depopulation, migration, return migration, social sustainability

BRIDGING THE GAP IN SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION WITH JAVA: COMPARING ACADEMIC CURRICULA WITH INDUSTRY CERTIFICATIONS, EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS, AND THE IMPACT OF AI TOOLS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

Software engineering education faces a gap between what universities teach and what the technology industry needs from new graduates. This is particularly evident in Java programming education, where many degree programmes continue to teach outdated language conventions that have not kept pace with the language and platform evolution. Industry certification standards and employer expectations have evolved, with professional roles now requiring knowledge of modern language features, framework integration, and data persistence technologies, as well as AI tooling skills, that are not often covered in undergraduate course offerings. This paper investigates this gap through an analysis drawing on three sources: a mapping of current Java developer certification objectives against typical undergraduate course content, a review of skill requirements in Java developer job postings, and a survey of industry professionals' expectations for entry-level developers. This paper examines how a set of undergraduate software engineering and database courses at our institution covers the competencies that appear most consistently across all three, and where shortfalls are most pronounced. Another issue is the growing use of AI-assisted programming tools among students. Rather than closing the gap, these tools tend to widen it, since they automate the routine coding tasks that current curricula spend the most time on. At the same time, they create a real opportunity to shift teaching toward higher-level reasoning, design judgment, and the kind of thinking that industry genuinely values. The paper closes with practical curriculum recommendations aimed at making Java education more relevant to the professional world that graduates are entering.

KEYWORDS: Java, education, software development, curriculum gap, industry certifications, employer expectations, software engineering, AI-assisted programming

THE OPENING OF THE ISLAND OF VIS TO FOREIGN NATIONALS IN THE TWILIGHT OF YUGOSLAV SOCIALISM

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

History

ABSTRACT

The opening of the island of Vis to foreign nationals in 1989 represents a significant turning point in the history of one of the longest-closed military-strategic areas in the Eastern Adriatic. Drawing on archival records from federal and republican state and party bodies, military documents, and contemporary press sources, this paper analyzes how Vis gradually transformed from a strictly controlled military zone into a space open to civilian life and tourism. Particular attention is paid to the process of the liberalization of movement, the security adjustments of the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA), and the tensions between military requirements and the developmental interests of both the local community and the authorities of the Socialist Republic of Croatia within the Yugoslav federation. The study demonstrates that the process of "opening" was neither simple nor linear, but rather marked by compromises, administrative harmonizations, and the parallel implementation of military and developmental measures. The case of Vis serves as an illustrative example of the structural changes in the late stage of Yugoslav socialism, where the security logic of the Cold War era intertwined with the gradual liberalization of the state in a profound economic and political crisis.

KEYWORDS: communism, Yugoslavia, the Adriatic, Vis, military strategy

LOCAL AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROCESSING AS DRIVERS OF TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS AND ECONOMIC RESILIENCE ON CROATIAN ISLANDS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Agriculture and Fisheries

ABSTRACT

Croatian islands combine internationally visible tourism demand with spatially fragmented agriculture, small-scale food processing, seasonal labour markets and high logistics costs. This paper examines how stronger connections between local agriculture, food processing and tourism can contribute to destination competitiveness and economic resilience. A structured integrative review was conducted using peer-reviewed research and institutional sources on short food supply chains, food tourism, rural and island development, agri-food resilience, quality assurance and sustainable tourism. The evidence was synthesised through five analytical dimensions: resource base, value addition, market coordination, quality and safety, and territorial outcomes. The review shows that local food contributes to competitiveness only when authenticity is converted into a reliable hospitality offer. This requires aggregation of small volumes, production planning, appropriate processing capacity, traceability, cold-chain logistics, food-safety compliance and long-term purchasing relationships. Direct purchasing alone is insufficient: without coordination, the transaction costs of fragmented supply may exceed the value retained locally. Food processing is therefore a strategic bridge between agricultural seasonality and tourism demand because it extends shelf life, stabilises quality and enables higher-value products. The paper proposes an Integrated Island Food–Tourism Value Chain Framework connecting producers, processors, hospitality businesses, logistics providers, local authorities and knowledge institutions. Its contribution lies in translating a broad sustainability narrative into operational mechanisms and measurable outcomes for Croatian islands. Policy should prioritise shared infrastructure, producer coordination, procurement planning, skills, verified origin and year-round market development rather than isolated subsidies. Future research should test the framework with firm-level purchasing data, producer margins and visitor expenditure across different island types.

KEYWORDS: local agriculture, food processing, food tourism, short food supply chains, island resilience, destination competitiveness

HYBRID PATHWAYS TO PARTICIPATION: OFFLINE AND ONLINE SOCIALITY IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING ACROSS MEDITERRANEAN AND CONTINENTAL CROATIA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

Research conducted in Croatia since the early 2000s has consistently shown relatively low levels of citizen participation in participatory processes, despite the widespread normative recognition of participation in local development. Literature has traditionally emphasized social ties and community-based social capital as key drivers of participation, while more recent studies increasingly highlight the role of the online dimension of community embeddedness. Participation is therefore increasingly conceptualized as a hybrid process shaped by the interweaving of offline and online social practices. This study aims to examine the mechanisms by which offline and online sociality influence citizen participation in local development planning, while accounting for regional differences between Continental and Mediterranean Croatia. The study is based on a nationally representative sample, and the data were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis. The results indicate that both offline and online forms of sociality significantly affect participation in both regions, though with distinct patterns. In Continental Croatia, online civic engagement and both dimensions of offline sociality show significant positive associations with participation, while other forms of online sociality remain insignificant. In Mediterranean Croatia, informal conversations with neighbors, as well as three out of four dimensions of online sociality, are significantly associated with participation. In this context, membership in local online groups, online civic engagement, and social media communication with friends and relatives positively influence participation in local development planning. Overall, the findings reveal clearly differentiated regional mechanisms of participation in local development planning.

KEYWORDS: local development planning, online and offline sociality, hybrid participation, regional differences, Croatia

SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO? PREDICTING QUIT THOUGHTS AND RETURN INTENTIONS IN SEASONAL HOSPITALITY WORK

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

Seasonal work in the hospitality industry is characterized by an intense pace and long shifts, which can undermine employees' psychophysical well-being and contribute to workforce turnover. This study examined the associations among working conditions, psychological strain, and negatively perceived consequences of the season, and identified factors predicting (1) overall job satisfaction, (2) thoughts of quitting during the season, and (3) intentions to return for seasonal work the following year. The study was conducted on a sample of 78 seasonal waiters and waitresses on the Adriatic coast, of varying age and experience. In the first analysis (hierarchical multiple linear regression), overall job satisfaction was significantly predicted by lower psychological stress, more favorable conditions regarding having a weekly day off, and greater work experience (number of seasons worked), with the parsimonious model explaining 46.8% of the variance in satisfaction. In the second analysis (binary logistic regression), overall satisfaction with seasonal work emerged as a key protective predictor: a one-unit increase in satisfaction was associated with approximately 81% lower odds of belonging to the group that had considered quitting or had quit due to working conditions. In the third analysis (binary logistic regression), intentions to return to seasonal work the following season were significantly predicted by satisfaction with one's supervisor and work experience (number of seasons worked): a one-unit increase in satisfaction with the supervisor was associated with approximately 76% higher odds of intending to return, while a higher level of experience was associated with approximately 111% higher odds of return intentions. Overall, the findings suggest that decisions to quit during the season and to return the following year largely depend on the perceived job quality, with having a weekly day off and high-quality leadership emerging as particularly important aspects of working conditions.

KEYWORDS: seasonal work, hospitality, job satisfaction, quitting thoughts, return intentions

GROWING UP IN THE SHADOW OF CONFLICT: CHILDHOOD, TRAUMA, AND MEMORY IN IGOR BELEŠ'S LISTANJE KUPUSA (WHEN CABBAGE LEAVES START TO PEEL) AND SIOBHAN DOWD'S BOG CHILD

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Arts and Literature

ABSTRACT

This paper explores representations of childhood and adolescence in the contexts of political violence through a comparative analysis of Igor Beleš's *Listanje kupusa (When Cabbage Leaves Start to Peel)* and Siobhan Dowd's *Bog Child*. Set respectively during the Croatian War of Independence and the Northern Irish Troubles, both novels depict young protagonists whose formative years unfold under the constant pressure of conflict, surveillance, and communal division. Focusing on the perspectives of a child and an adolescent, the paper examines how political violence shapes identity, accelerates maturity, and infiltrates everyday life. In both texts, conflict is experienced not primarily through direct combat but through imprisonment, hunger strikes, family disruption, and pervasive fear. Dowd's use of dual narrative of linking a modern Troubles-era story with an ancient bog body, highlights the cyclical nature of violence, while Beleš's fragmented, child-centred narration emphasizes confusion, vulnerability, and the disappearance of innocence. By comparing these two novels, the paper argues that childhood functions as a crucial lens for understanding the long-term psychological and cultural effects of conflict, revealing how violence is internalized, normalized, and transmitted across generations.

KEYWORDS: *Listanje kupusa*, *Bog Child*, childhood, conflict, coming-of-age narratives, trauma transmission

FORMALISING REFLECTION ON GENAI FEEDBACK IN WRITING INSTRUCTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION TO ENHANCE WRITING QUALITY AND CRITICAL USE OF GENAI

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

As GenAI becomes increasingly present in higher education classrooms, learning goals and assessment practices are being redefined. While GenAI tools can support student writers through idea development, language improvement, and feedback, educators face a growing challenge: how to encourage productive use while discouraging uncritical reliance that may hinder learning. This paper explores reflection as a structured pedagogical strategy for developing feedback literacy and responsible GenAI use in academic writing. Bachelor's students in Finland (HAMK) and Croatia (RIT) participate in a cross-institutional study in which they receive two types of feedback on a writing task: peer feedback and GenAI-generated feedback. After reviewing both, students complete a guided reflection using a checklist/handout designed to prompt evaluation of feedback quality, usefulness, and trustworthiness, as well as decisions about which suggestions to accept, modify, or reject. The collected data include students' written reflections, peer comments, GenAI feedback output, and revised drafts. These materials are compared to identify patterns in students' uptake of feedback, their critical stance toward GenAI suggestions, and cross-cultural similarities or differences in feedback preferences. Embedding reflection into the writing process as an explicit, assessed component may increase transparency in students' GenAI use, strengthen metacognitive awareness, and support peer learning. The study aims to offer practical guidance for educators on integrating GenAI feedback into writing instruction to foster students' critical engagement with AI-generated suggestions and enhance peer and collaborative learning.

KEYWORDS: GenAI, writing instruction, reflection, feedback, collaborative learning

THE PERCEPTION AND EXPECTATIONS OF VOCATIONAL SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL COMPETENCE CENTERS FINANCED FROM EU FUNDS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Business and Economics

ABSTRACT

The vocational education system in the Republic of Croatia is undergoing an intensive reform aimed at modernizing teaching, strengthening cooperation with the economy and increasing the employability of students. Regional competence centers play a key role in this process as places of excellence in vocational education. The Government of the Republic of Croatia invests significant funds in vocational education, and with the support of European Union funds, more than 260 million euros have been invested in the establishment and development of competence centers. The current vocational education reform shows an exceptional orientation towards strengthening vocational education, and thus improving the workforce on the labor market. The topic includes an analysis of the perceptions and expectations of directors and teachers of vocational schools regarding newly established or upgraded regional competence centers that are financed by the EU funds. The aim of the paper is to examine the level of understanding of the purpose and potential of regional competence centers, expectations regarding improving the quality of vocational education, equipment, cooperation with the economy, and the impact on student employability. The research was conducted using a questionnaire among regional competence centers in Croatia, and the collected data were analyzed in the SPSS program using correlation analysis and one-way ANOVA. The results confirm that regional competence centers are recognized as a key instrument for the modernization of vocational education, but also that their long-term sustainability depends on resolving financial and organizational challenges after the end of EU funding.

KEYWORDS: EU funds, sustainability, regional competence centers, vocational education

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NAUTICAL TOURISM IN KOMIŽA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sustainable Development

ABSTRACT

Nautical tourism is a key component of the Croatian tourism sector, contributing significantly to local economies in island destinations. This study examines the development of nautical tourism in Komiža, a small town on the western coast of the island of Vis, over the period 2020–2025. Komiža, a small traditional fishing town on the western coast of the island of Vis, has emerged as a notable destination for nautical tourism. It is separated from the rest of the island by the Hum mountain range (the highest peak is 587 m) which descends steeply to the shores of the bay. This location determined Komiža orientation towards the sea. Its natural beauty, authentic character, and inclusion in established charter routes attract both domestic and international visitors. As a small coastal destination with a strong maritime tradition, Komiža has experienced increasing nautical activity, raising questions about capacity management, seasonality patterns, and sustainable development. The research was based on the data collected from the Nautical center Komiža covering a continuous six-year timeframe. Descriptive statistical methods were used. The SWOT analysis presented benefits, and it showed an increased interest in Nautical tourism over the years. It indicated key facts and events to facilitate a strategic approach and recognition of strategic problems. The analysis helps understanding and studying organizational internal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and recognizing threats from the environment. All of the above provides great potential for sustainable development of local communities.

KEYWORDS: development, the island of Vis, Komiža, nautical tourism, tourism

PRACTICAL TRAINING AS A SPACE FOR DEVELOPING THE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF GERMAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

The development of professional identity is a central component of teacher education, particularly for second-year master's students of German as a foreign language (GFL). This study investigates how practical training serves as a space for fostering both pedagogical competence and professional identity while integrating principles of sustainable education. By combining reflective practice with methodical activities, students design and implement lessons that incorporate sustainability-related content, including environmental awareness, cultural diversity, and responsible social practices. The study employs a qualitative action research approach. The sample consists of second-year master's students of German participating in teaching practicums at primary and secondary schools. Data were collected through reflective journals, analysis of lesson plans and student-created projects, participatory observation, and informal interviews. A thematic analysis was applied to explore how students perceive their professional growth and their ability to integrate sustainable development concepts into language teaching. Preliminary findings indicate that practical training enables students to reflect on their pedagogical approach, recognize the importance of sustainability in education, and develop a sense of professional responsibility. Students reported increased confidence in integrating sustainability content into lessons, fostering active learning, and promoting intercultural and ethical awareness among learners. The inclusion of sustainability in language teaching was also found to enhance students' motivation, creativity, and engagement in pedagogical problem-solving. This research highlights the potential of practical training not only as a site for methodological skill development but also as a formative experience in cultivating professional identity aligned with the principles of sustainable education. The study contributes to the interdisciplinary dialogue between language education, teacher professional development, and sustainable pedagogical practices.

KEYWORDS: professional identity, German as a foreign language, practical training, sustainable education, teacher development, reflective practice

YOUTH ON THE CROATIAN ISLANDS AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF THE 20TH CENTURY

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

In this paper, memory is understood as a socially and spatially shaped process in which the meanings of the past are constantly produced, negotiated and reinterpreted within social frameworks of memory, such as families, peer groups, educational institutions and local communities (Halbwachs, 1992; Assmann, 2011). 'Places of memory' (Nora, 1998), such as monuments and museums or the names of streets and squares, function as material and spatial points through which cultural memory is institutionalized. Their meanings change with broader political and social transformations (Nielek et al., 2014; Tilley, 1994). A change in the political order implies a change in 'official memories' (Olick, 1998). In socialist Yugoslavia, 'official memory' was structured around the victory of the antifascist movement in WWII, led by communists. The Homeland War (1991–1995) is a key determinant of 'official memory,' in contemporary Croatia, visible in educational policies, public commemorations, and the symbolic transformation of public space (Pavlaković, 2022). 'Collective memory' represents a relational process that arises between political-institutional frameworks of interpretation of the past and experiential practices of memory (Olick, 1998; Halbwachs, 1992; Assmann, 2011). It is inherently unstable and subject to reinterpretations. Starting from such an understanding of 'collective memory', the paper seeks to shed light on how young islanders shape their own relationship to the contemporary past. Special attention is paid to the ways in which they interpret local commemorative practices, understand the meaning of the Homeland War, and position their own narratives in relation to broader institutional and social frameworks of memory. Empirically, the paper is based on semi-structured interviews with young people aged 16 to 29, conducted within the framework of six ethnographic studies on the islands of Korčula, Hvar, Vis, Zlarin, and Pag. Data were collected during 2025 and 2026 as part of the scientific project TYPEs.

KEYWORDS: youth, island, history, collective memory, 20th century, Croatia

EUROPEAN WATER POLO CHAMPIONS FROM THE ISLAND OF KORČULA: THE HISTORY OF A CLUB

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

History

ABSTRACT

Water polo in Croatia boasts a tradition spanning more than a century and stands as the country's most decorated sport of all time. Consequently, its immense popularity and the high level of youth engagement are unsurprising. Despite its success and cultural significance, water polo in Croatia has, until recently, lacked substantial sociological and research attention (Mustapić et al., 2019; Đurasović & Ipšić, 2024). This paper contributes to these scholarly efforts through an ethnographic study of youth participation in the Korčula Swimming Club (KPK), initiated in 2024 as part of the NextGenerationEU project TYPEs on the island of Korčula. Throughout the 20th century, KPK established itself as a vital social and sporting institution on the island. Notably, it remains the club from the smallest town ever to win a European water polo trophy (the 1978 European Cup Winners' Cup). While swimming sports have been present in Korčula since 1906, local youth began playing water polo matches in 1926, leading to the official founding of the club in 1930. Today, KPK gathers the largest number of children and young people on the island, surpassing all other sports clubs and organizations. The aim of this paper is to determine the circumstances and motivations behind the club's foundation, as well as the key determinants of its activities during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and socialist Yugoslavia. A particular focus is placed on the club's role within the local community and its contemporary identity, the specificities of sports development in an island context, and the club's most significant achievements and their key protagonists.

KEYWORDS: water polo, swimming, youth, KPK, the island of Korčula

BETWEEN UNIVERSALISM AND NATIONAL IDENTITY: MIRCEA ELIADE VS PETRE ȚUȚEA EXAMPLE WITHIN THE EUROPEAN INTELLECTUAL FRAMEWORK (FROM INTERWAR TO CONTEMPORARY ERA)

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

History

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the tension between universalism and national identity in modern European intellectual history through the comparative case of Mircea Eliade and Petre Țuțea. Emerging from the interwar Romanian cultural milieu, both thinkers articulated distinct yet intersecting responses to the crisis of European modernity, negotiating the relationship between spiritual universality and national particularity. The study argues that the Eliade–Țuțea model represents a paradigmatic attempt to reconcile metaphysical universalism with a culturally embedded understanding of nationhood. While Eliade projected Romanian spiritual structures into a comparative history of religions with global scope, Țuțea formulated a philosophical and theological anthropology grounded in Orthodoxy and national specificity. Despite their divergent trajectories—Eliade’s international academic career and Țuțea’s marginalization under communism—their intellectual configurations converge in framing the nation as a mediating structure between transcendence and history. By situating their thought within broader European debates on identity, tradition, and political theology, this paper demonstrates how the interwar conceptual vocabulary continues to inform contemporary discussions on cultural identity and European integration. The Eliade–Țuțea paradigm thus offers a critical lens for reassessing the dialectic between universality and national identity in the present European context.

KEYWORDS: national identity, european intellectual history, cultural memory, history of ideas, universalism, interwar thought, anchoring the present in the past

THE ROLE OF CLIMATE CHANGE BELIEFS AND CONCERN IN EXPLAINING CROATIAN CITIZENS' MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION INTENTIONS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

Extensive research has documented associations between climate change beliefs, concern, and pro-environmental behaviour, as well as their links to socio-demographic characteristics and political orientation. However, less is known about the mechanisms through which beliefs translate into behavioural intentions. The aim of this study is to examine the relationships between Croatian citizens' climate change beliefs (belief in the reality of climate change, belief in anthropogenic causation, and perceived scientific consensus), climate concern, and behavioural intentions related to climate change, while controlling for socio-demographic characteristics and political orientation. Data from the DISINFO Climate Project (NextGeneration EU) collected on an adult Croatian sample (N = 408) indicate that climate beliefs are significantly associated with both climate concern and intentions to engage in actions that support climate change mitigation and adaptation, even after accounting for socio-demographic variables and political orientation. The full model explained 38% of the variance in behavioural intentions. Mediation analyses further suggest that climate concern partly mediates the relationship between climate beliefs and behavioural intentions, accounting for approximately half of the total effect. Overall, the study indicates that both beliefs and climate concern independently contribute to explaining behavioural intentions. Furthermore, the findings are consistent with the cognition-emotion-intention pathway in the climate domain.

KEYWORDS: climate change, concern, beliefs, behavioral intentions, DISINFO climate

FROM PLAY TO COMPETENCE: CROATIAN GAMING MAGAZINES AS INFORMAL DIGITAL EDUCATION FOR YOUTH

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

This paper examines Croatian gaming magazines of the late 1990s and early 2000s as hybrid media that functioned not only as entertainment platforms but also as informal educational tools for children and adolescents during a period of rapid technological transition. Focusing on publications such as *Hacker* and *PC Play*, the study analyses editorial sections dedicated to installing, navigating, and troubleshooting new software and operating systems, understanding PC hardware components, configuring internet connections and locating and navigating web sites, as well as educating readers on the details of game production, level design, and video game history. Although primarily marketed as gaming periodicals, these magazines regularly provided structured, accessible guidance that contributed to the development of digital literacy among young readers. Drawing on approaches from youth culture studies and media pedagogy, the paper argues that gaming magazines operated as para-educational texts situated between leisure reading and technical manuals. They mediated global technological discourse for a local audience, translating complex concepts and embedding instruction within youth-oriented narratives and humor. By situating these publications within the broader context of post-socialist digital modernization in Croatia, the paper highlights their role in shaping a generation's technological competencies and digital identities. Gaming magazines thus emerge as significant, though understudied, actors in the history of informal education and youth media culture.

KEYWORDS: gaming magazines, digital literacy, informal education, youth media culture, para-educational texts

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MOTHERS AND CHILDREN WITHIN PRISON WALLS IN THE CONTEXT OF REHABILITATION AND SOCIAL READAPTATION IN SELECTED EUROPEAN UNION COUNTRIES

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

Serving a prison sentence is a difficult time for a woman who is a mother, for her family, and especially for her child. Depending on the length of the prison sentence, family ties, and in particular the relationship with the child, may be significantly weakened or even broken. To prevent this, one of the elements of preparing mothers for life outside prison is family visits, including visits with children. Every mother has the opportunity to meet her child during visits, starting from the earliest moments of the child's life. This allows her to build relationships through conversation, play, reading stories together, helping with homework or solving problems faced by school-age children. In cases of difficult relationships between mother and child, both parties receive psychological and therapeutic support. During her stay in prison, the mother learns how to properly fulfil her parental roles, which is particularly important in cases of family dysfunction. Prisons also organise cultural and educational workshops for mothers and children, during which joint education in the field of culture helps to strengthen their bonds and gives them the opportunity to learn about their cultural heritage together. A special place for building relationships are the mother and child homes operating in some prisons, where mothers, with the support of prison educators, teachers and psychologists, can raise their children until they reach the age of three.

KEYWORDS: prison isolation, homes for mothers and children, rebuilding family relationships, dysfunctional family relationships, visits with children, educational workshops, social readaptation

LEISURE AS CULTURAL WORK IN CROATIAN AND SLOVENIAN DIASPORIC COMMUNITIES IN AUSTRALIA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Migration

ABSTRACT

This paper examines leisure as a form of cultural work through which collective identity is produced and maintained within Croatian and Slovenian diasporic communities in Australia. Drawing on sociological theories of leisure, particularly Robert A. Stebbins, leisure is approached as a structured social practice with cultural and symbolic significance. The study is based on qualitative empirical analyses that show how structured leisure operates in diaspora through two empirical fields. In the Croatian case, the research relies on qualitative thematic content analysis of diasporic print media. The sample covers the period 1990–1996 and includes 84 analysed issues of *Spremnost* out of 418 published issues in that period, and 8 analysed issues of *Klokan*, a youth-oriented Croatian-Australian magazine. The analysis shows a high level of community mobilisation, particularly during the Croatian War of Independence, which shaped many forms of organised leisure activity. Many community gatherings, particularly youth gatherings, functioned as social activities and as forms of political and humanitarian mobilisation. In the Slovenian case, the research focuses on literary production as a form of institutionalised leisure through the analysis of the Slovenian-Australian Literary and Artistic Circle (SALUK), founded in Sydney in 1982. Between 1982 and 2000, SALUK functioned as a central institutional infrastructure for literary production in the Slovenian diaspora, including the publication of the journal *Svobodni razgovori* / Free Talks and diaspora anthologies such as *Zbornik avstralskih Slovencev* / Anthology of Australian Slovenes. Methodologically, this part combines archival analysis, interviews, and close reading of literary texts. By presenting these two empirical cases, the paper demonstrates how institutionalised forms of leisure function as structured cultural practices that sustain collective identity, shared memory, and emotional continuity in diasporic communities. Structured leisure thus emerges as an important mechanism of long-term identity reproduction in migrant communities.

KEYWORDS: serious leisure, diaspora, Croatians in Australia, Slovenians in Australia, cultural work

INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH, SOCIAL HEALTH, AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT: A LONGITUDINAL NETWORK PERSPECTIVE

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

The rise in mental health issues, urbanization, and loneliness presents significant societal challenges. It is imperative to comprehend the complex relationships among the various factors influencing mental health. This study examines the relationships between mental, physical, and social health, as well as physical environment, considering individual sociodemographic characteristics and objective macro-factors related to the Sustainable Development Goals, using a network approach. Moreover, the Multidimensional Mental Health Model was validated using a nationally representative sample of 1,610 participants (49% women) over a three-month period. The measurements used for assessing mental health included the PHQ-9, GAD-7, PSS-10, and SWLS; for social health the neighborhood cohesion scale and R-UCLA3; and for physical health the SRH. The network analysis revealed that the model was robust and stable over time. Social health (loneliness and neighborhood cohesion) acted as a mediator between mental health and the physical environment. Moreover, urbanicity was positively associated with neighborhood belonging but negatively with social cohesion. Additionally, depression symptoms and CO2 emissions emerged as key risk factors, while forest areas and urbanicity served as influential protective factors. The centrality of neighborhood cohesion and green areas increased over time, highlighting their importance. The findings underscore the significance of a multifaceted approach to mental health that considers the interplay among social, environmental, individual, and objective macro-factors. This understanding can help develop more effective mental health prevention programs and provide valuable insights for policymakers and urban planners in creating supportive environments.

KEYWORDS: mental health, urbanicity, social health, neighborhood cohesion, network analysis

MORE THAN PARTICIPATION? WOMEN'S BOWLING CLUB KOMIŽA IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE ISLAND OF VIS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

Bocce is a sport with a long tradition, characteristic of Mediterranean countries where it is part of the heritage, but it is also present throughout the world. Based on ethnographic research on the social participation of young people on the island of Vis, the ŽBK (Women's Bowling Club) Komiža is singled out here as a separate case study and as an example of participation in society. Given the status of this sport in society, the geographical position of the island of Vis and its transport isolation, and the position of women in a patriarchal society, we can speak of 'triple subordination' or 'triple periphery' in relation to sports and social centers of power. However, regardless of the status of a small sport and other peripheral positions, the ŽBK Komiža represents a 'big story' not only because this bocce school brings medals from the largest international competitions, but also because it represents a specific socialization pattern in a small environment, succeeding in the intergenerational transfer of knowledge. A detailed insight into the activities of ŽBK Komiža shows us the importance of volunteer work, a lot of love and sacrifice, enthusiasm for sport and the collective. In this case, that collective becomes more than just participation in a sport and society, it shows us the importance of defiance, commitment, dedication and will despite all the difficulties and feelings/perceptions of marginalization and isolation.

KEYWORDS: bocce, sport, island, Vis, participation, gender

SEDIMENTOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ISLAND OF VIS SANDY BEACHES – IMPLICATIONS FOR THE BEACH STABILITY

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Marine and Biology

ABSTRACT

Sandy beaches are sensitive, dynamic ecosystems that are especially vulnerable to erosion and human pressures. The origin and composition of their sand directly affect the beach stability. As gravel beaches predominate along the Croatian coast, sandy beaches are rare but highly valued particularly by tourists. Their scarcity increases their environmental value, making it important to understand the processes of their formation and sediment dynamics to ensure sustainable management in the context of the recent climate change. This paper examines the origin and composition of sediments collected from four beaches on the island of Vis: Stončica, Milna, Zaglav, and Vela Smokova. Four sedimentological analyses - grain size analysis, carbonate content determination, mineral composition analysis, and microscopic examination - were conducted to assess sedimentological characteristics. All analysed beaches consist of sands, gravelly sands, or slightly gravelly sands. Stončica and Zaglav showed highly carbonaceous mineral composition, followed by Milna and Vela Smokova. All of the beaches are backed by karstic poljes filled with loess, which supply the terrigenous component of the sediment. However, only Vela Smokova still receives a considerable amount of terrigenous material, visible in its sand composition. The other three beaches were cut off from this supply due to the agricultural valorisation of the karstic poljes. In these conditions, marine biogenous sand has become a more significant (or dominant) component of the beach sediment. It is presumed that the first three beaches are more vulnerable to coastal erosion, not only due to the reduced sediment supply, but also because of changes in mineral composition. Only Vela Smokova beach is considered a pristine sandy beach without significant anthropogenic impact so far.

KEYWORDS: biogenous, climate change, beach erosion, loess, sediment composition, terrigenous

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PROMOTING BANKING SERVICES: THE PERSPECTIVES OF STUDENTS AND MARKETING MANAGERS IN CROATIA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Business and Economics

ABSTRACT

The increasing digitalization of financial services has significantly transformed marketing communication in the banking sector, with social media platforms emerging as key channels for promoting products, interacting with customers and strengthening brand visibility. Despite the growing investment in digital marketing, there remains limited understanding of how social media influences customers' attitudes and decision-making regarding banking services. This paper examines the promotion of banking services on social media from two complementary perspectives: the perception of those students who are active users of both social media and banking services, and the perspective of Croatian marketing managers in banking. The study approach employs a sequential explanatory design, combining a quantitative survey conducted among 244 students with qualitative data obtained through semi-structured interviews with five marketing managers employed within the Croatian banking industry. Results indicate that while students frequently encounter promotional content from banks on social media, these communications have a relatively limited influence on their decisions to use banking services. Conversely, marketing managers emphasize the strategic role of social media in informing clients, enhancing engagement, and strengthening brand positioning. The findings reveal a gap between younger users' expectations and behaviors, and the current promotional strategies adopted by banks, highlighting opportunities for more targeted and engaging content. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of digital marketing practices in the banking sector and provides practical insight for improving communication strategies aimed at younger audiences. Future research could broaden the sample and incorporate additional stakeholders to further explore the effectiveness of social media marketing within the financial services industry.

KEYWORDS: social media, banking services, marketing communications, Croatian banking sector, students

COMPETENCES FOR VIDEO GAME DEVELOPMENT: AN ANALYSIS OF INDUSTRY AND EDUCATION NEEDS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Business and Economics

ABSTRACT

The video game industry has evolved from a relatively limited technology sector to a global industry whose development is continuously shaped by new platforms, digital distribution, and technological innovation. The global video game market is valued at US\$239.92 billion in 2025, with an expected growth of US\$415.78 billion by 2034. The aim of the paper is to analyze the skills needed to work in the modern video game industry and to consider the alignment of the needs of the industry with the education of future professionals. Video game development requires a wide range of specialized competencies. According to research by the European video game sector, the development of a typical high-budget AAA game can involve approximately 350 employees and around 100 different skills. The required competencies include programming, working with tools and game engines, art and animation, design, sound and technical knowledge, but also understanding the market, communication and cooperation between experts of different profiles. Existing data indicate a pronounced need for programming and digital competencies. Among the future needs of the sector, 57% of respondents highlight video game programming skills, 31% digital skills related to new technologies, including artificial intelligence and data analytics, while 29% cite business skills such as marketing, sales and branding. At the same time, the importance of communication, teamwork and the ability to cooperate between different areas of expertise is emphasized. The paper considers these needs in the context of the structure of the European industry, which is predominantly made up of small enterprises, and compares it with the competencies represented in educational programs focused on the development of video games. The European sector employs around 74,000 people in approximately 5,000 development and publishing studios, with employees often combining formal education with self-paced learning and experience gained outside formal education programmes.

KEYWORDS: video game industry, digital skills, game development, human resources development

THE FINANCIAL LITERACY OF STUDENTS AT THE POLYTECHNIC OF ZAGREB

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

Financial literacy is one of the key competencies of modern society because it enables individuals to make responsible financial decisions and contributes to their long-term financial security. The aim of this paper is to analyze the level of financial literacy of students of the Zagreb University of Applied Sciences using the standardized OECD/INFE questionnaire from 2022, which observes financial literacy through three interrelated dimensions: financial knowledge, financial behavior and financial attitudes. The empirical research was conducted using the method of anonymous online survey on a sample of 216 students of different study programs and levels of study. The obtained results were compared with the national indicators of the Croatian National Bank and the Croatian Financial Services Supervisory Agency, as well as international OECD/INFE surveys. The results show that students achieve a satisfactory level of understanding of basic financial concepts, such as inflation and simple interest, while weaker results were recorded in more complex concepts, especially the complex interest rate account and investment diversification. The research also pointed out the difference between financial knowledge and its application in the day-to-day management of personal finances, particularly in the areas of long-term planning, savings and financial resilience. The obtained findings confirm the importance of the systematic development of financial literacy of young people through the education system and the need to include the practical content of financial education in higher education curricula. The results of the research can serve as a basis for the improvement of educational programs and the development of measures aimed at increasing the financial competence of young people in the Republic of Croatia.

KEYWORDS: financial literacy, students, OECD/INFE, financial knowledge, financial behavior, financial attitudes, the Republic of Croatia

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN THE QUALITY OF WORKING LIFE IN CROATIA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

According to the recent international report on employee experience, Croatia has one of the least engaged workforces in Europe (Gallup, 2026), yet little is known about whether workers' experiences differ across the country's distinct regional labour markets. Existing research on the quality of working life in Croatia has largely overlooked potential regional differences in employment conditions and worker wellbeing. This study analyses data from a representative sample of young Croatian workers (N = 1500; Mage = 28.75, SDage = 4.38) collected within the WORKMOBIL research project. Workers from four Croatian regions (Mediterranean, Pannonian, Northern, and the City of Zagreb) were compared across work-related demographic characteristics and multiple indicators of the quality of working life. The findings indicate that workers from Mediterranean Croatia differ most consistently from workers in other regions. Regarding the working conditions, these workers were more often engaged in seasonal employment and less likely to hold standard employment arrangements, such as permanent contracts. However, when compared to other regions on aspects related to the quality of working life, these workers also reported the highest levels of work engagement and job satisfaction. No significant regional differences were found in subjective work performance and intentions to leave the current job. Sensitivity analyses further revealed that regional differences in job satisfaction disappeared after controlling for life satisfaction, however, the differences in work engagement remained stable. Overall, the findings point to a modest but meaningful regional variation in the quality of working life in Croatia, which could potentially be attributed to regional differences in working conditions. Future research should further examine the mechanisms underlying these differences in order to inform interventions aimed at strengthening workforce engagement across regional labour markets.

KEYWORDS: quality of working life, regional differences, Mediterranean Croatia, work engagement

BRIDGING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS: A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW OF THE DITOP RESEARCH PROJECT

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sustainable Development

ABSTRACT

Digital transformation has become one of the key forces shaping contemporary organizations and the broader socio-economic environment. At the same time, the growing importance of sustainability has made it clear that technological progress alone is no longer enough. Organizations are increasingly expected to align digital development with wider economic, social, and environmental responsibility. Although digital transformation and sustainable business are both prominent topics in current academic and professional discussions, their relationship is still often approached in a fragmented way. What is still needed is a more integrated perspective that can explain how digital transition may contribute to sustainable organizational development in a meaningful and long-term way. This paper presents a theoretical overview of the DiTOP research project, which explores the relationship between digital transition and sustainable business in the contemporary environment. Rather than treating digitalization as a purely technological issue, the paper starts from the view that digital transition is a broader organizational process affecting strategy, internal capabilities, decision-making, learning, adaptability, and the overall orientation of organizations toward sustainable development. The aim of the paper is to present the conceptual foundations of the project, underline its scientific and practical relevance, and position it within current discussions on digitalization, sustainability, and organizational transformation. The value of the DiTOP project lies in its effort to connect areas that are often examined separately, even though they are increasingly intertwined in practice. In that sense, the project is relevant not only for academic research, but also for higher education institutions, managers, policymakers, and other stakeholders seeking more coherent responses to the challenges of the digital and sustainable change. By outlining the theoretical rationale of the project, the paper contributes to the broader discussion of digital transition as an important dimension of sustainable futures.

KEYWORDS: digital transformation, sustainable business, digital transition, organizational change, sustainability, conceptual framework

BETWEEN TRANSIT AND HOME: CONTRASTING MIGRATION GOVERNANCE LOGICS IN ZAGREB AND RIJEKA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Migration

ABSTRACT

Despite being situated along the same migration route, cities often adopt divergent approaches to migration governance, reflecting uneven infrastructures of support, control, and political will. This article contends that a city's functional role within a migration corridor, whether as a destination or a transit point, generates structurally distinct governance logics that shape policy responses more fundamentally than national frameworks or resource availability. Drawing on urban sanctuary and solidarity frameworks developed by Agustín and Jørgensen, as well as Glick Schiller's concept of city scaling within migration systems, the analysis situates local governance responses within broader structural and scalar dynamics. Based on qualitative fieldwork in two Croatian cities along the Balkan migration route, the analysis finds that Zagreb, primarily a destination city, has established an integration-oriented governance logic focused on long-term inclusion through language training, legal aid, and multi-agency coordination. In contrast, Rijeka's position as a transit city produces a humanitarian logic in which immediate crisis response consistently supersedes durable inclusion strategies. Data were collected through an ethnographic fieldwork done in 2024, including semi-structured interviews with key institutional stakeholders, including municipal government officials, international organisations, and civil society actors, and were supplemented by policy document analysis. The findings indicate that the destination/transit divide results in differences not only in degree but also in kind: the two cities pursue fundamentally incommensurable policy objectives within the same national and EU regulatory environment. These results challenge the assumption that subnational variation in migration governance is primarily determined by political will or fiscal capacity, and instead underscore geopolitical positioning along migration corridors as a driver of urban policy divergence. The article concludes by recommending migration governance frameworks that explicitly account for cities' structural positions within migration systems, rather than applying uniform integration benchmarks across functionally distinct urban contexts.

KEYWORDS: urban migration governance, arrival cities, transit migration, Balkan route, Croatia, migration corridors, local governance, integration policy

A PSYCHOLINGUISTIC APPROACH TO THE MEDITERRANEAN LITERARY TEXT LA SIRENA BY GIUSEPPE TOMASI DI LAMPEDUSA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Arts and Literature

ABSTRACT

Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) software, originally developed by James W. Pennebaker and colleagues, is a dictionary-based tool for quantifying selected psycholinguistic features of texts. The fundamental premise of the program is that word frequencies in specific categories can serve as indicators of psychological, social, and stylistic dimensions. LIWC maps each word in a text to one or more categories, such as emotions, cognitive processes, social words, and grammatical classes; it then counts the occurrences of each category, calculates their proportions relative to the total word count, and generates summary metrics, including analytical thinking, clout, authenticity, and emotional tone, on the basis of specific formulas. This study applies LIWC to one of the most significant works of the twentieth-century Italian literature, the novella *La Sirena* by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa (1896–1957). Written in 1957 and published posthumously in 1961, the novella is often regarded as the author's emotional testament. It is a layered work, rich in meaning and deeply immersed in the Mediterranean geographical, cultural, and philosophical milieu, intertwining realism and mythology. The analysis is conducted on the Italian text, that is, in the original language in which the novella was written. In addition to identifying the primary psycholinguistic features yielded by the software, the study explores how these findings correlate to the linguistic profile of the novella and support observations about its dominant tonal and stylistic tendencies.

KEYWORDS: LIWC, Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, psycholinguistics, literature, the Mediterranean

AN ARRIVAL CITY ON THE ADRIATIC: MIGRATION AS THE FOUNDATION OF SPLIT'S IDENTITY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Migration

ABSTRACT

The dominant public representation of Split is frequently reduced to its ancient heritage and tourism potential, largely due to the urban core formed around Diocletian's Palace and its inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List. However, the city has historically functioned as a continuous site of migration and demographic transformation. Split's identity is not the product of a stable local population, but rather the outcome of long-term processes of arrival, integration, and social negotiation among diverse groups across successive historical periods. From Roman settlement within Diocletian's Palace, through medieval migration from Salona and the socio-economic structures shaped under Venetian governance, to internal migrations driven by nineteenth- and twentieth-century industrialisation, Split can be interpreted as a city whose urban and cultural identity has been persistently reconfigured through migratory dynamics. Within this framework, contemporary migrant communities do not represent a rupture, but instead constitute a continuation of Split's historical matrix as an "arrival city." While earlier migratory layers left materially recognisable traces in the city's architecture and urban morphology, present-day migrants contribute primarily through everyday practices, labour patterns, gastronomic influences, and linguistic and cultural diversification. The paper demonstrates how Split, through migration, "imports" cultural capital that is gradually embedded in urban everyday life and becomes an integral component of the city's contemporary identity. The analytical approach is grounded in Saunders' "arrival city" model, conceptualising Split as a dynamic social space in which migration represents a structural constant of development. In this context, cultural associations and initiatives of minority communities are interpreted as forms of institutionalisation of migrant presence. This perspective enables a reinterpretation of Split's cultural heritage not merely as a historically inherited legacy, but as a living and transformative process in which migration functions as a key generator of urban identities.

KEYWORDS: arrival city, the Adriatic, Split, migrations, identity, cultural heritage

FACTORS INFLUENCING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' USE OF MICROMOBILITY

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

Micromobility has become an increasingly relevant element of urban transport systems, particularly among young people and university students. Understanding the factors that influence its use is essential for the effective design of sustainable mobility policies and educational strategies. This article examines the key factors influencing university students' use of micromobility, with a focus on economic, environmental, infrastructural, and behavioural aspects. The research is based on a quantitative survey conducted among 178 students at the Faculty of Business Management, Bratislava University of Economics and Business. The research explored students' awareness of micromobility solutions, frequency of use, perceived benefits and barriers, and attitudes towards sustainability and urban transport transformation. The findings indicate that convenience, cost, environmental awareness, and availability of infrastructure play a significant role in students' adoption of micromobility. The paper highlights the importance of incorporating micromobility-related topics into economics and management education, as students represent both current users and future decision-makers in transport development.

KEYWORDS: electromobility, micromobility, sustainable transport, transport transformation, economics and management education

EMIGRATION FROM CROATIA: A COMPARISON OF THE COAST AND THE INTERIOR

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Migration

ABSTRACT

With the entry into the EU in 2013 “traditional” emigration from Croatia received a new impetus. Croatia is very heterogeneous in every respect. Therefore, it can be expected that individual areas differ significantly in terms of intentions and motives for emigration. In this regard, a comparison of the coast and inland seems particularly relevant; namely, the coastal belt, as a whole, is better off than most other regions thanks to tourism, Mediterranean environment and lifestyle. Taking the above into account, two objectives of the analysis were set. First, to compare the propensity to emigrate from the coast and the interior; second, to check to what extent the structure and prominence of motifs differ. The answers were provided by an online survey conducted in 2021 by the Pilar Institute on a representative sample of the population aged between 18 and 40. The results showed that there is no significant difference between emigration intentions: about a quarter of the respondents often think about moving or are already planning to move. Although improving living standards is the primary motive in general, on the coast relative deprivation (the desire for surplus) is a more significant push-motive than absolute deprivation, more prominent in the mainland. Secondly, those who intend to move from the coast to a greater extent expect that they will be able to meet a wider range of needs abroad. It can be concluded that emigration tendencies are (overall) still not negligible. A wider motivational repertoire (especially in the coastal areas), shows that it is not only necessary to raise the economic standard, but also the quality of other areas of life and life perspectives if the trend of emigration is to be (significantly) slowed down.

KEYWORDS: Croatia, coast, inland, emigration, motives, deprivation

DOUBTS ABOUT JURISDICTION OVER FOUR REMOTE ISLANDS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sustainable Development

ABSTRACT

The EU regional and cohesion policy has given rise to multi-level governance and active subsidiarity which are important tools in the implementation of shared competences in the internal market, between the Union and MS with islands when adopting legally binding acts (Art. 4 TFEU). Such governance is at several parallel levels and can lead to administrative blockages if competences are not demarcated and is not known who should take on the role in carrying out the work. The paper provides examples of difficult coordination of different levels of government for the four Croatian remote islands (Vis, Lastovo, Dugi otok and Mljet in Annex III. Chapter 5b, Art 29/3 of the AT of Croatia to the Union), which are regulated by the EU acts that are poorly applied in practice. In the area of economy, a lower VAT rate for remote islands (VAT Directive), in health protection, a special boat to assist remote areas (Decision of the Government of the Republic of Croatia), in environmental protection, a ban on the sale of protected land (Communication on Agricultural Land). Vis, Lastovo, Dugi otok and Mljet are of state interest and for islanders are in an incomparably worse position than the mainland is for its inhabitants. It is important that for a boat purchased by the EU funds within the framework of right to health each MS regulates for itself. These four islands have acquired status of “remote island” and there is a doubt about the competence in the action of the EU or the national level, bearing in mind that in the national legislation they are categorized as offshore islands Vis, Lastovo, Dugi otok and Mljet as a canal island. It follows that solving systemic problems in areas of vital importance for these islands is not within the competence of the national level and adequate regulation with the application of the mentioned EU regulations is proposed.

KEYWORDS: jurisdiction, divided, doubts, remote island, offshore island

SERBIA'S YOUTH AT A CROSSROADS: BETWEEN EMIGRATION AND DISENGAGEMENT

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Migration

ABSTRACT

Young people in Serbia face a dual crisis: mass emigration and political alienation. Their role in society is seen in two ways: either as a resource for innovation or as a problem group prone to deviance, with the latter perception often prevailing in unstable contexts such as Serbia's post-socialist reality. Modernisation compels youth to seek individual paths to integration, yet Serbian society is characterised by a significant value confusion. Although there are expectations to adopt western, modernist values, prolonged isolation has reinforced traditional collectivism. This has maintained strong orientations towards nationalism, egalitarianism, patriarchy, and authoritarianism, hindering a complete transition to modern values. This analysis, based on the "Youth in Serbia" research (FES, 2024), examines migration trends, political representation, social attitudes, trust in institutions, and political participation. Conducted using a quantitative CAWI method on 750 individuals, the findings reveal a critical threat: the country is experiencing both a large-scale emigration of its young population and their increasing disengagement from the political processes that shape Serbia's future. As a consequence, the 2025 protests are a visible, active symptom—the voice of a disillusioned generation demanding change from outside a political system they feel has excluded them. Emigration, by contrast, is the silent, final verdict—a "brain drain" in which the most ambitious and educated vote with their feet, seeking future elsewhere. Is the emigration and anger of Serbia's youth a symptom of a state that has failed its next generation?

KEYWORDS: youth, values, attitudes, migration, political participation, Serbia

THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE IN CROATIA – HOW TO RECONCILE DIFFERENT APPROACHES WITHIN THE SPATIAL PLANNING?

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

The preservation of historical landscape is regulated by various legislative frameworks, among which the most important are the European Landscape Convention (Florence Convention, 2000) and the Faro Convention (2005). On the other hand, Natura 2000 (Habitats and Birds Directives) protects large-scale "natural landscapes" and is implemented in national laws. On the level of Croatian national laws, there is the Act on Protection and Preservation of Cultural Goods (along with the Register of Cultural Goods, including zonal protection as "cultural landscapes"), and the Nature Protection Act that focuses on ecological stability, biodiversity, etc. (with strict categories like National Park, etc., and prohibited activities). Spatial planning is supposed to serve as an integrative platform capable of addressing conflicts arising from different social and spatial value systems, ownership issues (restrictions on private property rights, etc.), and a participatory gap (between experts and local communities, etc.). This paper aims to highlight the differences between static (landscape as a monument) and dynamic (landscape as a living process) approaches to landscape, as well as the discrepancies between legislation, science, and everyday practices in landscape protection. It also analyses the tensions between nature protection and heritage preservation, and the challenges these tensions pose for spatial planning. Based on multiple research projects and interdisciplinary experience, the paper addresses the importance of reconciling different approaches within spatial planning and, more generally, proposes a comprehensive framework for landscape preservation and management grounded in selected case studies from the Mediterranean region, with a special focus on Croatia.

KEYWORDS: historical landscape, nature protection, heritage preservation, participatory gap, spatial planning, the Mediterranean

AGING IN THE MEDITERRANEAN HERITAGE SPACES

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Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

Public spaces in Mediterranean cities are important for the quality of life of older population, as they facilitate social interaction and reduce feelings of loneliness. In these cities, active aging is strongly linked to a lifestyle that incorporates both natural and heritage landscapes, especially within urban areas recognized as protected heritage sites. The urban design of the Mediterranean heritage sites, such as Dubrovnik, creates a “stage” for various urban rituals and performances that enhance a sense of place and belonging, particularly through their accessibility and social connectivity. However, their tourism attractiveness has increasingly driven the transformation of housing stock designated for permanent residence into short-term tourist accommodation, resulting in outmigration and depopulation. This process contributes to neighbourhood decline and erodes local micro-networks of solidarity, as well as the sense of security among the older population. The research introduces the concept of “heritage space” to emphasize the potential of protected material heritage in supporting the well-being of the older population. This study is based on the data collected in Dubrovnik, Croatia, between 2016 and 2023. Using a mixed-method approach including surveys, interviews, and focus groups, the analysis focuses on the role of public spaces, the connection between identity and heritage, and the specific experiences of the older population regarding place attachment.

KEYWORDS: aging, public space, quality of life, the Mediterranean, heritage spaces

THE DEATH OF THE AUTHOR AND OF AUTHORSHIP IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Arts and Literature

ABSTRACT

Although we live in a democratic society, the question of freedom of speech and the limits of authors' artistic expression is more relevant than ever. At the same time, in the context of technological advancement, authorship is facing an ever-deepening crisis. Looking back to the twentieth century, we find a wide range of literary-theoretical and philosophical discussions concerning the role of the author and the interpretation of texts. Barthes's essay *The Death of the Author* and Foucault's *What Is an Author?*, which advocate excluding the author from the interpretation of literary texts, undoubtedly represent some of the most radical positions. Yet they also relieve the author of all responsibility and of any need for self-censorship, a position that many publicly criticised authors of the twenty-first century would very likely accept without hesitation. Drawing on examples of writers, musicians and film directors from various countries, as well as the reactions of politicians, critics and the wider public to their work, this paper questions the notion of a "correct" interpretation of a work and the increasingly active role of the interpreter. The concept of interpretation has historically been most closely associated with music, an art form intimately related to literature. A comparison of the two art forms reveals the considerably more vulnerable position of literary authors, primarily because of the consequences of the "misinterpretation" of their works and the greater exposure of texts to digital manipulation. This ultimately raises the question of whether Barthes's radical twentieth-century theory might, in fact, be urgently needed in the everyday reality of contemporary authors—that, in the spirit of post-structuralism, they should be "buried" in order to protect them from the public, while nevertheless remaining alive as the creators of works of art.

KEYWORDS: author, authorship, freedom of speech, self-censorship, technological advancement, digital manipulation, Barthes, interpretation of literary texts, musical interpretation

LISTENING TO MEMORY: POETIC SOUND AND TESTIMONIES IN IVAN RAMLJAK'S ISLANDS OF FORGOTTEN CINEMA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Arts and Literature

ABSTRACT

This article examines *Islands of Forgotten Cinemas* by the Croatian filmmaker Ivan Ramljak through the lens of poetic documentary mode, arguing that the film constructs memory primarily as an acoustic and affective experience rather than a visual reconstruction of the past. Departing from contemporary documentary strategies centered on narration and archival footage, Ramljak employs a minimalist aesthetic in which static images of abandoned cinemas are paired with rich sound mixes, ambient noise, and testimonies. As such, the film reconfigures the cinematic experience as a site not of visual absence, but of sonic and mnemonic presence. Drawing on film sound theory, particularly the ideas of Michel Chion, this article explores how silence, environmental sound, and voice function as carriers of memory. Testimonies of former island residents, who are not physically present in the film, evoke past experiences of what first cinema spaces meant to them and their communities, transforming vast architectural spaces into lavish accounts of lived history. At the same time, the film's moderate use of music, emphasis on sound, silence and ample testimonial accounts, foreground a poetics of listening that invites the viewer to engage with absence, loss, and temporal disjunction. Since Ramljak's work can be recognized in the fields of ruin documentary aesthetics, post-socialist memory and the transformation of cinema spectatorship towards the digital age, the article argues that *Islands of Forgotten Cinemas* enunciates an "afterlife" of local cinema history through sound material that persists beyond its physical decline. Ultimately, the film suggests that while the material spaces of cinema may disappear, their sensory and affective traces endure through sound, recall memory, and the act of listening.

KEYWORDS: poetic documentary, sound mixes, testimonies, documentary aesthetics, recall memory, Chion

DRIVERS OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN NON-TRADITIONAL OCCUPATIONS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Business and Economics

ABSTRACT

In recent years, an increasing number of women have entered non-traditional occupations, reflecting broader social and economic changes in the contemporary labor market. This paper examines the key factors driving this trend and explores workplace experiences and perceptions related to women's participation in industrial occupations traditionally dominated by men. The research was conducted among employees of an industrial company in Međimurje County, Croatia, using a mixed-method approach. Data were collected through two online questionnaires - one completed by women who underwent retraining and are currently employed in non-traditional occupations, and another completed by their colleagues assessing perceptions of female workers, complemented by an interview with a human resources representative. The findings indicate that women's primary motivations for entering non-traditional occupations include job loss, the pursuit of stable employment and improved financial conditions. Participants of the retraining program reported high levels of satisfaction with the program, rapid adaptation to new job roles and positive workplace relationships. Male colleagues largely expressed favorable attitudes, highlighting women's contributions to teamwork and workplace dynamics. Overall, the growing inclusion of women in non-traditional occupations emerges as an important dimension of labor market transformation, contributing to gender balance, economic resilience and the diversification of industrial employment in Croatia.

KEYWORDS: women's work motivation, gender equality, women in industry, non-traditional occupations, labor market trends

THE STATE OF NATURE CONSERVATION OF THE ISLANDS OF ZADAR COUNTY

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sustainable Development

ABSTRACT

Tourism on the islands of Zadar County generates a range of ecological, socio-cultural, and economic impacts that must be managed in line with the principles of sustainable development to preserve the islands' essential values for future generations. In this context, the University of Zadar is implementing the institutional project "Sustainable Tourism of Islands", which aims to develop a model for sustainable tourism development. To this end, the project entails an analysis of the ecological, social, and economic conditions across the islands of Zadar County, supported by a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The current status of nature conservation and protection in the study area serves as a critical foundation for selecting the islands on which primary fieldwork is conducted, with the objective of identifying opportunities and constraints for establishing a viable sustainable tourism development model and nature-based tourism. Accordingly, this paper provides an overview of the categories and spatial extent of protected natural areas and Ecological Network on the islands of Zadar County, including marine areas, together with the associated conservation measures and conditions governing their use. This synthesis of existing scientific data forms part of the broader effort to establish a robust methodological framework for research into sustainable island tourism development.

KEYWORDS: ecological network, islands, nature conservation, nature-based tourism, sustainable tourism development, Zadar County

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LEISURE IN PROFESSIONAL LIFE: GENDERED MEANINGS AND INEQUALITIES

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

Leisure time and its quality are shaped by gender, especially in countries with wider gender inequalities. In Croatia, gender inequality is most pronounced in the domain of time use, revealing deep-rooted imbalances in caregiving, household labor, and access to leisure. Professionals represent a particularly relevant group, as expectations of constant availability, long working hours, and opportunity costs often constrain their leisure time. This study explores how professionals in Croatia understand and engage in leisure, paying attention to gender differences related to caregiving, household labour and the quality of leisure time. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with professionals across different sectors and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Findings show that leisure is frequently framed as 'recovery from work' negotiated alongside family responsibilities but also shaped by persistent gender norms. Gender differences emerged in perceived entitlement to leisure, fragmentation and contamination of leisure time, and barriers to meaningful engagement.

KEYWORDS: leisure, gender inequality, professionals, time use, work-life balance, Croatia

YOUTH ACTIVISM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON THE ISLAND OF KORČULA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sustainable Development

ABSTRACT

The paper is based on the ethnographic research into numerous youth activities on the island of Korčula, which can, in a broader conceptual sense, be linked to sustainable development. The research was conducted throughout 2025 during several multi-day stays on the island. Given the dynamics of social developments on the island, the research was carried out across different seasons and months. The paper presents the experience of following the work of the civil society organizations on the island, the activities of school cooperatives, and the initiatives of independent entrepreneurs or small-scale food producers, each of whom, in their own way, contributes to the implementation of sustainable development on the island.

KEYWORDS: youth, the island of Korčula, sustainable development, activism

REAL NIGHTS VR - IMMERSIVE 360-DEGREE VIDEOS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF ALCOHOL CRAVING: A FEASIBILITY STUDY

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

Alcohol craving refers to an intense desire or compulsion to drink alcohol, and it is often intensified by exposure to alcohol-related cues, such as visual, olfactory, or contextual stimuli, particularly among individuals who frequently engage in heavy social drinking. While conventional cue-exposure methods have largely relied on artificial laboratory settings, virtual reality (VR) has emerged as a promising way to enhance ecological validity of these interventions, as it enables standardized yet highly realistic and customizable experiences. Within the project Nightlife: A Study in Real and Virtual Context - REAL NIGHTS, three immersive 360-degree VR videos were developed to display nightlife environments: a nightclub, a bar, and a house party. To enhance personalization of the experience, participants are allowed to select their preferred type of alcoholic beverage and musical genre. These environments are designed for an experimental study investigating cue-induced alcohol craving across three sessions. A feasibility study has the aim to assess the REAL NIGHTS VR application in terms of user experience and perceived quality. Participants are recruited through convenience sampling and randomly assigned to one of the three VR environments. Before exposure, data on sociodemographic characteristics and prior VR experience are collected, and participants receive standardized instructions. During the VR exposure, alcohol craving is repeatedly assessed using a Virtual Numeric Rating Scale. Following exposure, participants evaluate their overall experience. Findings address overall experience, sense of presence, user-friendliness, and quality of the REAL NIGHTS VR environments, informing the design of the subsequent experimental study.

KEYWORDS: virtual reality, cue-exposure, alcohol craving, alcohol use, feasibility study

FACT-CHECKING AND TRUST: EVIDENCE FROM A STUDENT SURVEY ON PERCEPTIONS OF DISINFORMATION IN GENERAL AND IN TOURISM-RELATED CONTENT

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Media and Communication

ABSTRACT

The growing prevalence of disinformation presents a significant challenge for the tourism sector, where trust plays a central role in travel decision-making. Misleading information, fake reviews and inaccurate representations of destinations can negatively affect tourists' choices, destination reputation and overall confidence in tourism communication. This paper explores perceptions of general and tourism-related disinformation and attitudes towards fact-checking, with a particular focus on trust in information sources. The study is based on a quantitative online survey conducted among university students in Croatia using snowball sampling method (N = 233). The questionnaire examined patterns of information consumption, levels of trust in different media sources, awareness and use of fact-checking practices, and perceived risks of disinformation, with a dedicated section addressing tourism-related content. The findings indicate that students reported consistently higher concern regarding the role of social media in the general spread of misinformation. They strongly agreed that social networks enable faster dissemination of disinformation, that fake news on social networks and video platforms is worrying, and also perceived false information on social media as frequently shaping public opinion. Tourism-related information is predominantly obtained via social media, and students report a moderate level of perceived disinformation and its impact on tourism businesses, with accommodation and travel reviews, destination reputation, and the level of information among passengers and tourists viewed as most at risk. While awareness of fact-checking is relatively high, its consistent application remains limited, pointing to a gap between normative support for fact-checking and everyday information practices. The paper argues that strengthening fact-checking competencies and integrating them into media literacy education is essential for improving trust in tourism information and fostering more responsible tourism communication in the digital environment.

KEYWORDS: disinformation, fact-checking, trust, tourism communication, student perceptions

BUILDING 21ST-CENTURY SKILLS THROUGH LOGICAL CHALLENGES

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

Promoting the development of 21st-century competences, especially among students in Higher Education, is becoming more and more important in a society that is changing, quickly and continually, due to technology breakthroughs and increased global interconnection. In order to succeed, both personally and professionally, social and soft skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, teamwork, communication, adaptability, resilience, and autonomy should and must be added to student's scientific knowledge and technical proficiency. In an effort to meet this demand, the MatActiva Project: Promotion of Learning in Mathematics, from the Porto Accounting and Business School (ISCAP/P.PORTO), has created specific training courses: "Challenges 4U" and "Challenges 4U2". These short extracurricular courses adopt innovative pedagogical practices and active learning methodologies, using structured challenges to enhance the learning process. These challenges aim to strengthen students' problem-solving abilities, foster effective collaboration, and promote critical thinking, while also encouraging creativity and teamwork. By complementing formal education with logical-deductive challenges, the courses seek to support students' integration and success in both academic and professional contexts, helping to bridge the gap between education and labour market demands. A detailed description of these courses is presented, including illustrative examples and key outcomes. Additionally, students' feedback is carefully analysed, providing valuable insights for a continuous improvement of the training courses and identifying the required modifications to ensure the effective implementation of these extracurricular initiatives.

KEYWORDS: active learning, challenge-based learning, higher education, critical thinking, problem-solving, mathematics education

GREEN SPACES AS A FACTOR OF URBAN QUALITY OF LIFE

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sustainable Development

ABSTRACT

Urban green spaces are city areas covered with vegetation, including parks, gardens, trees, urban farms and green infrastructure such as green roofs, vertical gardens, rain gardens. Urban pollution is one of the main challenges for the mental and physical health of citizens as well as for city sustainability. Therefore, green spaces are an important factor of urban life quality and urban sustainability. The historical development of green spaces is marked by the process of democratization, by which exclusive, elite spaces become accessible to all urban residents. The benefits of green spaces are evident at ecological, economic, social, and health levels. Research confirms that greater exposure to green urban environments positively affects mental health and contributes to stress reduction. Social functions define green spaces as social hubs that encourage individual interactions, strengthen local community ties and develop a sense of place attachment. The paper examines the green spaces in the city of Split. The spatial and demographic development of the city has not been followed by a corresponding growth in green spaces. World Health Organization recommends a minimum of 9m² of green space per capita, while the European Commission recommends 20m². The share of green space per capita in Split is 10.28m². Marjan Forest Park compensates for the lack of green space. The preservation of Marjan dates back to the City Statute of 1312. Marjan has been significantly devastated by pest invasion and by a strong storm. It is a symbol of the city and a favorite place for recreation and leisure of citizens throughout the year. Research shows the importance and meaning that Marjan has for the city inhabitants. The concluding section emphasizes the importance of preservation and protection of green spaces within international and national legislative frameworks, recognizing them as a key indicator of urban life quality.

KEYWORDS: city of Split, Marjan Forest Park, urban sustainability, quality of life, protection and preservation

INTEGRATING MATHEMATICAL MODELING INTO MARITIME EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDITERRANEAN ISLANDS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the integration of mathematical modeling into maritime education as a tool for addressing key challenges faced by Mediterranean islands. These challenges include sustainable transport, resource optimization, and environmental protection, all of which rely on effective maritime systems. By incorporating applied mathematics—such as optimization methods, statistical analysis, and predictive modeling—into maritime curricula, students can develop the skills needed to analyze real-world island problems. The study proposes an interdisciplinary educational framework that connects theoretical mathematics with practical maritime applications, including route planning, port logistics, and environmental impact assessment. Through case-based learning and problem-solving approaches, this framework encourages critical thinking and innovation among future maritime professionals. The paper argues that strengthening the link between mathematics and maritime education can contribute to more sustainable and efficient solutions for Mediterranean island communities, while also fostering collaboration between academia and industry. Ultimately, this approach supports the development of resilient island systems through knowledge transfer and scientific research.

KEYWORDS: mathematical modeling, maritime education, sustainable island development, optimization, interdisciplinary learning

BRIDGING MATHEMATICAL LITERACY AND DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC ENGLISH COMPETENCE IN ENGINEERING EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY

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Education

ABSTRACT

Contemporary engineering education requires, among others, integrated mathematical literacy and technical English proficiency that extends beyond traditional computational skills, with English serving as the technical lingua franca. This paper explores students' self-perceptions of the importance of mathematical literacy alongside their attitudes toward ESP (English for Specific Purposes). Mathematical literacy refers to an individual's ability to apply acquired mathematical knowledge and competencies to solve real-world problems (focusing here on the professional engineering context). Similarly, ESP competence denotes proficiency in discipline-specific English for effective technical communication and comprehension. At the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture in Osijek, students frequently encounter challenges in translating textual descriptions into mathematical models. The study employs a quantitative methodology through a survey conducted among 1st year civil engineering students. The collected data were analyzed using the SPSS statistical software, computing descriptive and inferential statistical parameters assessing both perceptions outlined above. The findings underscore the importance of an interdisciplinary approach in higher education, suggesting that strengthening the mathematics and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curricula is essential for developing competent professionals capable of contributing to sustainable development and international collaboration.

KEYWORDS: mathematical literacy, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), engineering education, students' perspective, interdisciplinary approach

VLADIMIR FELLER – A CURRICULUM VITAE FROM THE POLICE FILE

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

History

ABSTRACT

File number 301253 of the postwar Yugoslav political police contains intriguing fragments of the unusual and largely tragic political biography of the architect Vladimir Feller. Vladimir Feller was born in 1902 into the large family of pharmaceutical industrialist Eugen Viktor Feller. As a “republican,” Anglophile, and Yugoslav federalist by conviction, and close to circles around the Independent Democratic Party, in 1940 he became a collaborator of British intelligence services, housing a British radio station in his family villa on Jurjevska Street in Zagreb. After the Axis powers attacked Yugoslavia, Feller established a British intelligence outpost in the occupied city of Split, which became part of the intelligence network of Colonel Vladimir Vauhnik, former military attaché at the Yugoslav embassy in Berlin. Alongside his intelligence work, Feller also developed in Italian-occupied Split an extensive network of contacts with representatives of various prewar civic parties, attempting (through the so-called Civic Bloc) to formulate a platform for anti-Axis political cooperation. During the war, through his sister Zora, Feller maintained clandestine contacts with Archbishop Stepinac. He also played a certain role in the secret intelligence mission of Lieutenant Rapotec, a representative of the Yugoslav government-in-exile, whom he informed about conditions in the country and connected with Archbishop Stepinac. The extensive OZNA (The Department for Protection of the People) file on Vladimir Feller is a first-rate micro historical material and, in Feller’s own words, a kind of personal “bildungsroman,” offering a more nuanced picture of a specific historical period and the wartime political microcosm of Split. This fragmentary “autobiography,” written under the “pressure” of police interrogators and supplemented with analytical commentaries by several generations of State Security operatives, represents in epistemological terms a valuable corrective “from below” to established historiographical narratives—while also serving as an intimate, self-reflective overture to Feller’s tragic fate at the end of 1945.

KEYWORDS: Vladimir Feller, OZNA file, Split in the Second World War, British intelligence, Vladimir Vauhnik, Stanislav Rapotec, Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac; Civic Block, microhistory

IT MATTERS WHERE YOU WORK: JOB SATISFACTION AND WELL-BEING AMONG CORRECTIONAL PRISON OFFICERS IN CROATIA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

The job of the correctional prison officers is specific, often including job demands which can have a negative impact on their well-being. Following the previous study on the effects of the “blue” and “green” space environments on well-being among prison officers in Croatia, this study further explores the relationship between work location and positive (i.e., job satisfaction, safety) and negative (i.e., job stress, victimization) professional aspects among correctional prison officers. The data were collected on convenience samples of correctional prison officers employed in inland and coastal prisons in Croatia, within the PRISCLIM (N=279; 88% male) and PSIHKLIZ (N=131; 80% male) projects. The results indicated that prison location significantly contributed to job satisfaction and feelings of safety. Specifically, correctional prison officers working in inland prisons were statistically significantly more satisfied with their jobs and reported higher safety than those working in coastal prisons. Extending earlier research on the beneficial impact of macro variables across life domains, the study's results are discussed in light of the importance of job location for professional well-being.

KEYWORDS: correctional prison officers, job satisfaction, well-being, inland, coastal

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONSTRUCTIVE PATRIOTISM, SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION AND COLLECTIVE ACTION IN CROATIA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

Collective action can be defined as any activity undertaken by an individual or group to pursue shared goals and to initiate, prevent or shape social change, including protesting, signing petitions or voting as a form of protest. Previous research suggests that individual dispositions play an important role in predicting participation in collective action, including factors such as constructive patriotism and system justification. Constructive patriotism aims to improve existing political and social structures through ongoing questioning and criticism of the status quo, whereas system justification refers to the tendency to defend and legitimize existing social arrangements. Research on these constructs in Croatia remains limited, particularly with respect to potential regional differences. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the relationships between constructive patriotism, system justification and collective action, and to test whether these relationships differ across certain regions of Croatia. An online survey was conducted with 278 participants from continental Croatia and 130 participants from the Adriatic region, with 48% of the sample being women. In addition to socio-demographic information, participants reported their national identification, constructive patriotism and system justification levels, as well as their participation in various forms of collective action during the previous year (e.g. boycotts, petitions, protests). Hierarchical regression analysis showed that, even when controlling for political orientation, religiousness and national identification, constructive patriotism significantly explains previous collective action in both Adriatic and continental Croatia, whereas system justification was not a significant predictor. These findings contribute to a better understanding of the mechanisms underlying collective action, as well as how these processes may operate similarly across different parts of Croatia. It is also important to note the practical implications of these results, which can be used to motivate citizens' engagement in collective action and developing their local communities.

KEYWORDS: collective action, constructive patriotism, system justification, national identification, political orientation, religiousness, regional differences

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR COMBATting TRAFFICKING IN CULTURAL HERITAGE

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Business and Economics

ABSTRACT

The concern for the protection of cultural heritage and cultural property has become a matter of international interest, especially, if we consider the value of illegal transactions and abuses affecting cultural property. Such activities require a global awakening of collective consciousness intending to raise the legal protection afforded to cultural heritage and to regulate transactions involving antiquities. Several cultural systems were and still are victims of theft and trespassing of cultural property. Illicit trafficking of cultural goods is a business that is linked to gangs, transnational criminality (organizations outside the law), enthusiasts and collectors of valuable artifacts, sometimes even the locals active in this traffic. This paper explores the legal frame and other instruments available to combat abuses against cultural property.

KEYWORDS: cultural property, legal protection, trafficking

THE ASYMMETRIC RESPONSES OF RETAIL FUEL PRICES TO CRUDE OIL PRICE CHANGES IN CROATIA: EVIDENCE FROM CONVENTIONAL ECONOMETRIC METHODS AND THE LINEX ADJUSTMENT COST FUNCTION

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Business and Economics

ABSTRACT

According to many studies, the transmission of oil prices to retail fuel prices is asymmetric. Fuel prices respond more quickly to rising oil prices and more slowly to falling oil prices. Different econometric procedures yield different results. The Linex approach, which is based on formulating the non-linear adjustment cost function, reflects the theory. It uses the generalised method of moments to estimate the reaction functions, which demands many observations. This study investigates the phenomenon of asymmetric price adjustment (the “rockets and feathers” effect) in the Croatian retail gasoline and diesel markets. Using weekly data, we apply a comprehensive set of conventional econometric approaches—including simple asymmetry models, error correction models (ECM), threshold autoregressive (TAR and M-TAR) models, and vector error correction models (VECM)—and introduce a novel methodology based on the modified Linex adjustment cost function estimated by the generalized method of moments (GMM). While traditional methods yield mixed results regarding the presence and direction of asymmetry, the Linex approach consistently confirms that retail fuel prices adjust more rapidly to crude oil price increases than to decreases. This asymmetric behaviour generates a systematic positive price bias that is slightly higher for gasoline than for diesel in the system GMM estimation. The Croatian bias is lower than the European Union average and shows the opposite pattern (higher for gasoline in Croatia, higher for diesel in the EU). The findings support several theoretical explanations of price asymmetry (oligopolistic coordination, adjustment and inventory costs, search theory, and strategic interactions) and demonstrate the advantages of the Linex method for directly quantifying the average price bias caused by asymmetric pricing.

KEYWORDS: price asymmetry, rockets and feathers, retail fuel prices, crude oil prices, Croatia, Linex adjustment cost function, GMM estimation, error correction models, price bias, fuel market

WHEN HIGH STANDARDS BACKFIRE: PERFECTIONISM AND LONGITUDINAL CHANGES IN EXHAUSTION AND ENGAGEMENT AMONG EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

Early career researchers (ECRs) work in achievement-oriented and evaluative environments characterized by high demands and job insecurity. Within the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework, structural work conditions and individual characteristics interact to shape work-related well-being. In academic work context, perfectionism may represent a particularly relevant personal characteristic; however, longitudinal evidence on its role in work-related well-being trajectories is still limited. To gain more insight into these matters, drawing on two waves of longitudinal data among ECRs in Croatia (ECR-WELL project; Wave 1 N = 531; Wave 2 N = 344), this study examines whether perfectionism predicts changes in exhaustion and work engagement over time. Baseline measures included perfectionism, job resources, hindrance job demands, job insecurity, and well-being indicators (i.e. exhaustion and work engagement), while follow-up assessments were conducted approximately six months later. Longitudinal analyses tested whether perfectionism predicted changes in well-being beyond prior levels and work-related factors. The results of longitudinal analyses indicate substantial stability in both exhaustion and work engagement across the two waves. Nevertheless, perfectionism demonstrated incremental predictive value in explaining increases in exhaustion and decreases in work engagement, even after accounting for baseline well-being and job characteristics. In addition, perfectionism had stronger associations with the strain pathway, whereas job resources showed stronger association with sustained engagement, suggesting differentiated mechanisms within the JD-R framework. These results suggest that individual performance standards may also shape the sustainability of early academic careers, beyond structural demands and resources. Integrating personality factors into the JD-R framework may therefore provide a more comprehensive understanding of well-being risks among early career researchers.

KEYWORDS: early career researchers, perfectionism, work engagement, exhaustion, longitudinal study, job demands–resources

THE RESOURCE AND ATTRACTION BASE OF MEĐIMURJE COUNTY IN THE FUNCTION OF SUSTAINABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Tourism

ABSTRACT

The paper examines the resource and attraction base of Međimurje County, with particular emphasis on the sustainability and accessibility of the destination. Međimurje is characterized by an exceptionally rich and diverse natural, cultural, and intangible heritage: from protected areas along the Mura and Drava rivers, to sacral and rural architecture, archaeological sites, and traditional festivals, as well as enogastronomy featuring protected-origin products. The tourism offer is further strengthened by a well-developed network of cycling and hiking trails, health tourism facilities, and numerous cultural and interpretation centres. A specific segment of the research focuses on destination accessibility for persons with disabilities (PWD), who account for 15.9% of the county's population. The analysis indicates that, despite individual examples of good practice, accessibility has not yet been systematically integrated into destination management. Physical barriers remain particularly evident in rural areas, natural sites, and smaller accommodation facilities. Digital accessibility and compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are only partially developed, while structured training of tourism personnel and the inclusion of PWD in strategic planning processes remain insufficiently formalized. The study identifies key challenges in alignment with the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) criteria and proposes a set of measures: conducting a comprehensive accessibility audit, developing a map of accessible routes, standardizing digital content, educating stakeholders, preparing guidelines for accessible events, and institutionalizing accessible tourism governance within the Destination Management Organization (DMO) framework. Although Međimurje possesses a strong resource base and a distinctive identity, enhancing the destination's competitiveness requires an integrated approach to sustainability and inclusiveness. Accessibility should not be viewed solely as a social obligation, but as a strategic development opportunity to expand market reach and improve the overall quality of the tourism experience for all visitors.

KEYWORDS: Međimurje County, sustainable tourism, accessible tourism, destination management, inclusive development, persons with disabilities (PWD), GSTC criteria

CONCEPTUAL MODELING OF WEATHER AND CLIMATE REPORTING IN ADRIATIC COUNTRIES

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Media and Communication

ABSTRACT

Weather reporting has long been an essential component of news media, and as contemporary media increasingly shift toward sensationalism and click-driven content, this tendency has also shaped the presentation of weather- and climate-related information. In order to identify patterns within what often appears to be a chaotic and volatile media discourse, this study focuses on developing conceptual models to better understand the scope, tone, and structure of reporting on selected environmental topics. Conceptual models were developed based on the media coverage of weather conditions, natural disasters, and climate change in six countries surrounding the Adriatic Sea, which were treated as entities within a complex system. National affiliation served as an input parameter, linked to the most widely read online news portal in each country. Particular attention was given to European Union membership status in order to explore potential differences between member and non-member states. As an extension of the modeling process, the social media platforms associated with each selected news portal were also incorporated. The attributes used in developing the conceptual models were derived from a one-month quantitative and qualitative content analysis conducted across the selected news portals and their corresponding social media platforms. A comparative analysis among all countries and media outlets was additionally applied. The presence of analyzed content across social media channels, along with the total number of published items and their categorization into subtopics (weather conditions, natural disasters, and climate change), formed integral components of the model. The findings demonstrate that even within a relatively short observation period, recognizable patterns in the tone and frequency of reporting emerge across specific regions. These patterns are largely shaped by editorial policies of individual media outlets, as well as by broader social reception and political context, which proved to be essential factors in the process of developing conceptual models.

KEYWORDS: conceptual modeling, climate change, weather conditions, natural disasters, Adriatic countries, media reporting

THE IMPACT OF TRANSPORTATION ACCESSIBILITY ON THE NUMBER AND AGE OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS BY TOWN AND MUNICIPALITY IN LIKA-SENJ COUNTY (2001 - 2021)

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Demography

ABSTRACT

Croatia is in a long-term demographic crisis, the main characteristics of which are depopulation and population aging. In such circumstances, the number of household members decreases and their age increases. In the Croatian context, these processes are universal, but the question is whether transport accessibility in relation to regional centers has an impact on the number and age of household members. We chose Lika-Senj County for the territorial scope of research on this issue because it is isolated in terms of transport and does not contain a single settlement that could be defined as a medium-sized city in terms of population in the Croatian context. In addition, Lika-Senj County encompasses the area of Mountainous and Adriatic Croatia, and is therefore interesting for research. Most of the observed county includes peripheral rural areas in a very advanced process of demographic aging, so it can be assumed that there is a significant share of elderly and single-person households. Since the county covers parts of Mountainous and Adriatic Croatia, it is interesting to determine whether there are differences between these two parts of the county.

KEYWORDS: households, depopulation, population aging, transport accessibility, Lika-Senj County

URBAN ATMOSPHERE AND DAILY RHYTHMS OF AN ISLAND TOWN: THE CASE OF KORČULA

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Culture and Tradition

ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the everyday life of the inhabitants of the town of Korčula by connecting Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis with contemporary approaches to studying urban atmospheres. Starting from an understanding of the city as a spatial-temporal and sensory assemblage, the research examines the experience of (seasonal) changes in rhythm and the specific atmospheres that shape individual and collective experiences of space. The aim of the paper is to explore how residents perceive everyday life, how they experience the differences between summer and off-season periods, and how they form their experience of the city through movement, dwelling, sounds, smells, people, and spatial practices. Special attention is given to the collective meanings of the city's atmosphere and the ways in which it connects with the place identity and the quality of life. The paper is based on the results of qualitative research in the town of Korčula, applying the analysis of everyday life and spatial-temporal practices. The analytical framework connects Lefebvre's concept of rhythm with anthropological and geographical approaches to urban atmospheres, whereby atmosphere is observed as a relational and porous phenomenon arising from the interrelationship of people, the material environment, temporal cycles, and social practices. The paper seeks to contribute to understanding the island town as a space of multiple and changing atmospheres shaped through seasonal rhythms and the everyday practices of inhabitants. At the same time, it emphasizes the importance of including the sensory and affective dimension of space in the research on urban life and planning for the sustainable development of island communities.

KEYWORDS: urban atmosphere, rhythmanalysis, everyday life, sensory space, island town, Korčula, spatial-temporal practices

SUSTAINABILITY OR STORYTELLING? A TRANSPARENCY AUDIT OF ISLAND HOTEL COMMUNICATION

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Business and Economics

ABSTRACT

Hotels on small Mediterranean islands increasingly communicate “green” initiatives, but stakeholders often struggle to distinguish between symbolic sustainability messaging and verifiable operational practice. This paper presents a rapid, replicable content-audit method to assess how island hotels communicate sustainability and how closely those claims align with recognized sustainability criteria for accommodation. Using a structured coding scheme derived from the GSTC Hotel Standard, the study analyzes publicly available information from hotel websites and major booking platforms for a pilot sample of hotels located on Croatian Adriatic islands. Sustainability statements are categorized into key operational areas (energy, water, waste/plastics, procurement/food, biodiversity, staff training, community benefits) and into “claim types” (general values, specific actions, quantified targets, third-party certification). The analysis produces a simple transparency score and identifies which sustainability domains are most/least frequently evidenced in public communication. Rather than ranking hotels competitively, the paper’s contribution is diagnostic: it highlights common “low-evidence” areas (e.g., missing metrics, absent targets, lack of verification) and proposes a short set of best-practice communication elements that improve credibility while remaining feasible for small properties with limited resources. The approach can support destination managers and hotel operators seeking realistic steps toward more accountable sustainability reporting.

KEYWORDS: island hotels, sustainability communication, transparency, GSTC; content analysis, tourism, Adriatic, eco-certification, reporting

SELECTION OF THE OPTIMAL STRUCTURE OF A HYBRID RENEWABLE ENERGY SYSTEM

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Energetics

ABSTRACT

Croatia possesses a substantial natural potential for the deployment of a wide range of renewable energy sources, the number and scale of which have increased significantly in recent years. However, practical experience has revealed certain limitations of mono-source renewable energy systems (i.e., systems relying on a single form of natural energy), primarily due to the inherent variability of resource availability. These constraints become particularly pronounced in terms of security of supply, power system stability, and the overall economic viability of projects. This paper examines the optimisation of hybrid renewable energy systems that integrate multiple complementary sources, such as solar, wind, biomass, and energy storage technologies, to enhance reliability, operational flexibility, and overall system efficiency. The proposed methodology is grounded in the application of internationally recognised best practices in planning and sizing hybrid systems, incorporating multi-criteria decision analysis, advanced simulation models of energy generation and demand, and comprehensive techno-economic optimisation. The methodological framework is specifically tailored to the characteristics of the Croatian energy system, taking into account regional climatic conditions, geographical features, and existing infrastructure constraints. We focus on integrating distributed energy resources, deploying energy storage solutions, and aligning with national and European energy and climate policy objectives. By adapting established best practices to the Croatian context, the study proposes a robust model for determining the optimal configuration of hybrid renewable energy systems, intended to serve as a strategic guideline for future investments and long-term renewable energy planning in the Republic of Croatia.

KEYWORDS: hybrid renewable energy systems; energy system optimization, multi-criteria analysis, energy storage, integration of renewable sources, energy planning

CINEMA NARRATIVES AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF ISLAND IDENTITY

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Media and Communication

ABSTRACT

In the 21st century, Croatian cinema has increasingly turned towards the Adriatic islands as spaces of cultural memory, identity negotiation and social transformation. This paper examines how cinematic narratives contribute to the construction of island identity in the contemporary Croatian film, focusing on representations of Adriatic islands as communicative and symbolic spaces rather than merely geographic locations. Through the analysis of selected feature films produced after 2000 (such as *Murina*, *The Eighth Commissioner*, *The Priest's Children*, *Island of Love*, *Comic Sans*, *Vis-à-Vis*, *Salsa*, *My Late Summer*, *How I Learned to Fly* and *Bumblebee Summer*) the paper explores dominant narrative and visual frameworks through which island life is articulated. These films employ diverse generic and stylistic strategies, ranging from social realism and arthouse intimacy to satire, comedy and meta-cinematic reflection, while consistently positioning the island as a catalyst for interpersonal conflict, moral tension and self-examination. The analysis focuses on key thematic oppositions such as isolation and connectivity, permanence and transience, local community and external intrusion, as well as the impact of tourism, migration and demographic change on island societies. Adriatic islands emerge as spaces of authenticity and cultural continuity, but also as fragile environments marked by seasonal economies, demographic decline and symbolic marginality. Methodologically, the research combines qualitative film analysis with elements of media discourse analysis, with particular attention to narrative structures, visual strategies and critical reception. By situating cinematic representations within media and communication studies, the paper argues that cinema plays a significant role in shaping both external perceptions of Croatian islands and internal processes of identity formation. The contribution positions film narratives as instruments of symbolic sustainability within the contemporary Mediterranean context.

KEYWORDS: Adriatic islands, Croatian cinema, island identity, media narratives, Mediterranean context

ISLANDS IN THE DIGITAL ERA - THE POTENTIAL OF TRANSFORMATION INTO DIGITAL AND FLEXIBLE FORMS OF WORK ON HVAR, BRAČ AND VIS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Business and Economics

ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of virtual migration is changing and rearranging the factors of labor migration and shaping new trends. The digitalization of workplaces, the development of virtual organizations and flexible forms of work are changing the labor market, the demands and expectations of employees. Digitalization with ICT support and modern communication tools allows for independent participation in the global market regardless of location. This paper aims to analyze the potential for the development of flexible and digital forms of work on Hvar, Brač and Vis as a motivation for staying and mitigating outbound labor-induced migration. The paper uses methodological quantitative statistical methods to assess the potential for job transformation in the observed microlocation based on relevant data. The scientific contribution of the paper is to expand knowledge about transformational factors enhanced by digital applications in business in a remote location. Geographically distant places such as islands on the map of virtual opportunities are becoming desirable places to live and work because flexible and digital forms of work provide the desired good balance of private and business life along with other benefits.

KEYWORDS: Hvar, Brač, Vis, digitalization, flexible forms of work, development of virtual organization, change management

INFLUENCER MARKETING AND THE HIDDEN ADVERTISING GAP: REGULATORY CHALLENGES AT THE INTERSECTION OF LAW AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Media and Communication

ABSTRACT

The rapid rise of influencer marketing has highlighted a significant regulatory challenge at the intersection of media law and consumer protection. While hidden advertising in traditional and electronic media is subject to clear transparency rules and sanctions, influencers, despite their extensive reach and influence on public opinion and consumer behaviour, operate outside the traditional media regulatory framework. This creates a regulatory gap: legal norms designed for formal media entities do not effectively cover personalised, algorithmically mediated digital communication. This paper examines how Croatian and EU legal frameworks address influencer marketing, with particular focus on the limitations of current regulation. Traditional media laws, including rules on advertising transparency and hidden advertising, apply only to recognised media service providers. Influencers are instead primarily regulated under general consumer protection provisions, particularly the prohibition of unfair commercial practices as implemented under EU Directive 2005/29/EC. However, enforcement in practice has proven challenging due to the personalised nature of influencer content and the lack of specialised supervisory mechanisms. In response to this regulatory vacuum, industry-led self-regulatory initiatives have emerged, seeking to establish minimum standards for transparency and professional conduct. Drawing on examples of good and poor practices, the paper critically assesses the effectiveness and limitations of such initiatives, demonstrating that while they may improve transparency among professional actors, they cannot substitute binding legal rules and effective enforcement. The paper contributes to ongoing discussions in media and communication studies by highlighting how digital communication practices disrupt traditional regulatory categories. It argues for a functional regulatory approach that focuses on the nature and effects of commercial communication rather than the formal status of the communicator. The findings have implications for future regulatory responses that balance digital innovation with consumer protection and media transparency.

KEYWORDS: influencer marketing, hidden advertising, media law, consumer protection, digital platforms

AN ANALYSIS OF ALICE WEIDEL'S POLITICAL COMMUNICATION ON TIKTOK: POPULISTIC STRATEGIES BASED ON PERSONALISATION AND EMOTIONAL MOBILISATION

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Media and Communication

ABSTRACT

The increasing importance of social media platforms in election campaigning has transformed the ways political actors communicate with audiences, construct political identities, and mobilise voters. This paper analyses political communication strategies employed by Alice Weidel on TikTok during an election campaign, with a particular focus on personalisation and emotional mobilisation as key elements of digital populist discourse. The study applies a qualitative content analysis to a corpus of twenty TikTok posts published on Alice Weidel's official account during the final phase of the election campaign. The analysis examines linguistic, visual, and narrative strategies used to create a sense of authenticity, proximity, and identification with audiences, particularly younger users who are highly active on the platform. Attention is given to simplified language, direct address, emotional appeals, and discursive constructions that position political actors in relation to "the people", political elites, and current social issues. The theoretical framework draws on political communication research, agenda-setting theory, and studies of populist discourse in digital media environments. Social media platforms such as TikTok enable highly personalised and visually oriented communication styles, encouraging political actors to present themselves through informal, accessible, and emotionally engaging content. These communication practices reflect broader trends in contemporary election campaigning, including the increasing relevance of personalisation, affective communication, and platform-specific storytelling techniques. The findings suggest that TikTok functions not only as a distribution channel for political messages but also as a strategic environment in which political actors construct persuasive political images through hybrid communication strategies combining personal storytelling, emotional framing, and simplified ideological positioning. Such strategies may enhance audience engagement and visibility, while also contributing to the normalisation of populist communication styles and the simplification of complex political issues in digital environments.

KEYWORDS: TikTok, political communication, populism, personalization, emotional mobilization, election campaigning

LEGAL ASPECTS OF NAUTICAL TOURISM ON THE CROATIAN ADRIATIC

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Tourism

ABSTRACT

Nautical tourism represents one of the most significant and profitable forms of tourism in the Republic of Croatia. However, the development of nautical tourism does not depend only on natural resources, but also on an appropriate legal framework that regulates the use of the sea, the coast, and infrastructure related to maritime transport and tourism. The foundation of the legal regulation of nautical tourism in Croatia is the concept of maritime domain. According to Croatian law, the maritime domain is outside legal commerce, meaning that it cannot be privately owned or subject to other property rights. It includes the seashore, the sea, the seabed, and the subsoil, as well as facilities intended for their use. Due to this legal status, the economic use of the maritime domain, including the construction and management of marinas, is possible only on the basis of a concession. Concessions represent a key legal instrument for the development of marinas and nautical tourism ports. The concessionaire is obliged to pay concession fees, maintain infrastructure, and ensure navigation safety as well as environmental protection. The concession system enables economic use of the maritime domain while simultaneously protecting the public interest. An important segment of nautical tourism is charter activity, which involves renting vessels with or without a crew. Persons operating vessels must possess appropriate licenses and professional qualifications. Although the legal framework is relatively developed, certain challenges still occur in practice, such as slow administrative procedures, legal uncertainty regarding concessions, and issues related to the protection of the marine environment. Further improvement of legislation and more efficient implementation of regulations are essential for the sustainable development of nautical tourism on the Croatian Adriatic.

KEYWORDS: nautical tourism, the Croatian Adriatic, legal framework, concessions

A LOCAL STORY OF A GLOBAL SPORT: CRICKET IN ZAGREB AND ON THE ISLAND OF VIS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a comparative analysis of the development of cricket in two Croatian contexts: the city of Zagreb and the island of Vis. Cricket has historically occupied a marginal position in the Croatian sport culture; however, the island of Vis represents a notable exception, as cricket has been played there for a longer period due to specific historical circumstances, including the presence of the British naval forces in the nineteenth century. In contrast, organised cricket in Zagreb began to develop in the 1990s through Croatian returnees from Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, and has more recently been shaped by international labour migration. The paper examines how the same sport has been introduced, established, and sustained in divergent historical, social, and cultural settings, addressing broader questions of cultural diffusion through sport and the local embedding of sporting practices. The analysis is based on qualitative in-depth interviews (N = 7) conducted across both research locations. Interviewees included club coaches and players, as well as profiles of non-Croatian cricket participants. In the island context, the study draws on interviews with foreign participants for whom cricket represents a familiar sporting practice within their cultural background and who engage in the sport seasonally during their stays. In the urban context, the analysis includes foreign workers involved in organised cricket activities in Zagreb. Participants were recruited using a snowball sampling method, and the material was analysed using thematic analysis.

KEYWORDS: cricket, Zagreb, island, Vis, sport, local community

ELABORATION ON PROJECT OUTCOMES OF REMOTE DIGITAL HEALTH EDUCATION

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Education

ABSTRACT

The DigHealth project demonstrates that micro-credential-based digital health education can directly address the structural barriers to health and learning that characterize remote, crisis-affected territories such as small islands. Building on our multi-country needs analysis in Ethiopia and Somalia, the project identified six critical educational gaps: the absence of dedicated digital health programmes, limited staff capacity to design modular curricula, lack of state standards, weak interdisciplinary approaches, minimal opportunities for distance learning, and insufficient infrastructure to support online delivery. In response, African and European academic partners co-designed a 30 ECTS modular programme covering IT in healthcare, telemedicine, and practical e-health applications, paired with staff trainings, equipment deployment, and structured university-hospital agreements to support practice-based learning and teleconsultations. For remote islands facing similar challenges—scarce health professionals, difficult physical access to services, and out migration of qualified staff—the DigHealth project outputs offer a transferable model: micro credentials that can be stacked, delivered online or in blended mode, aligned with labour market needs, and underpinned by institutional change in governance, quality assurance, and partnerships with local health providers. By embedding lifelong learning, competence-oriented teaching, and inclusive access (including for refugees and learners with fewer opportunities), the project illustrates how higher education can become a driver of resilient, locally relevant digital health ecosystems in geographically isolated settings.

KEYWORDS: digital health education, micro-credentials, remote island health systems, distance and blended learning, telemedicine and e-health tools

THE LOCAL PRESENT AND FUTURE FROM RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVES: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL AND PERCEIVED MATERIAL STATUS

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Sociology and Psychology

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationship between perceived material status and local social capital, with particular emphasis on groups of respondents characterized by a mismatch between perceived material deprivation and levels of local social connectedness. To this end, a two-step cluster analysis was conducted, including the variable of subjective assessment of household material status and three indicators of local social capital: neighborhood networks, social support within the neighborhood, and trust in neighbors. The analysis identified four types of respondents, among which a group stands out that perceives its material position as problematic while simultaneously expressing relatively favorable levels of local social capital. The resulting clusters were compared with regard to socio-demographic characteristics, perceptions of quality of life in the settlement and neighborhood, and attitudes toward migration and migrants. The findings indicate significant differences among the identified groups in their assessment of the migrants' impact on the local community, and show that the local social capital is not sufficient to compensate for the negative effects of perceived material deprivation on the quality of life in the neighborhood and settlement. The analysis is based on the data from a survey conducted in 2025 on a multi-stage stratified sample of adult citizens of the Republic of Croatia. The findings highlight the importance of simultaneously considering subjective material position and local social relations when analyzing attitudes toward the quality of life in the local community, as well as attitudes related to the local future.

KEYWORDS: neighborhood, local social capital, material status, quality of life, migration, strangers

MULTIPLANT JUGOPLASTIKA IN THE MEDITERRANEAN INSULAR LANDSCAPE

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

History

ABSTRACT

Jugoplastika was founded as an autonomous manufacturing entity in Split in 1952 seceding from the parent company Jugovinil. In the first years Jugoplastika consisted of four small scale workshops producing garments, footwear and plasticware made from the PVC produced by the former parent company Jugovinil, which gave essential character to the Jugoplastika's goods. The retail network taken over from Jugovinil was a motor of further development and creator of physiognomy of Jugoplastika's products. To satisfy the ever so great demand at the end of the second period (1958-1963) and during the third period (1964-1970) Jugoplastika took over 10 different factories and founded five new facilities. These integration processes did not only enable it to become a 'kombinat' (multiplant) in the full sense of its meaning, but also to grow out of the locally oriented economy. Geographically, Jugoplastika's facilities were located (besides those in Split) all over the Dalmatian region, often situated in insular and underdeveloped, rural areas. The buttons for Jugoplastika's garment department and for 70 percent of domestic garment industry were produced on the Island of Hvar. The rest were exported to the USSR, Belgium, Bulgaria and Switzerland. In Jugoplastika's facility in Komiža on the Island of Vis using the extrusion technology boats (brand name 'Marjan') were produced. In the third insular Jugoplastika facility, in Grohote on the island of Šolta, dolls were produced, among other toys. These dolls were the first exported Jugoplastika's know-how project. In rural and particularly insular areas, where some of Jugoplastika's facilities were located, high percentage of female workers meant not only the certain opportunities for women emancipation, but also a significant factor in reducing some of demographic tendencies, namely de-ruralization and de-agrarization. Therefore, the paper explores social, economic and environmental impacts the multiplant Jugoplastika had on the insular Mediterranean landscape and its population.

KEYWORDS: Jugoplastika, social, economic, environmental impacts, insular economy, industrialization, socialism.

THE SOVEREIGN MILITARY ORDER OF MALTA AS A MODEL FOR SAFEGUARDING INTERNATIONAL LEGAL PERSONALITY OF SMALL ISLAND STATES FACED WITH SEA LEVEL RISE

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CONFERENCE TOPIC:

Migration

ABSTRACT

The natural phenomenon of sea level rise, which occurs as a consequence of anthropogenic climate change, threatens to endanger habitability and, eventually, completely inundate some of the low-lying island states across the world oceans. While none of the states faced with this extreme consequence of sea level rise are in the Mediterranean, this paper aims to discuss one of the solutions that is sometimes espoused as a viable option for safeguarding the legal personality of small island states once inundation and uninhabitability become a reality, namely, the legal personality of The Sovereign Military Order of Malta as a sui generis legal person under international law. The Order has a long history related to various Mediterranean islands, relocating from Cyprus to Rhodes and, finally, Malta. At various points in its history, the Order acted as a sovereign over these islands and their peoples. However, in 1798, the Order's rule over Malta ended and it remained without sovereignty over any territory. While under regular circumstances this would have meant the end of the Order's legal personality as well, this was not the case. The Order has continued up to the present as a legal person under international law. Its legal personality became somewhat similar to that of international organizations, albeit both theoretically and practically distinct, in the latter sense mostly in fact that the Order continues to issue passports to its officeholders. However, the Order does not constitute a "state without territory". Rather, its legal personality is a tool for enabling the fulfilment of its specific role and not the continuation of its historically extant territorial statehood. Therefore, this paper shows how the model of the Order's legal personality cannot be applied by simple analogy to small island states, as the circumstances which threaten their existence are different from this historical Mediterranean example.

KEYWORDS: sea level rise, small island states, states without territory, climate change-related migrations, legal personality, sovereign military order of Malta

ORGANIZERS

Ivo Pilar Institute



The Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences is a public research institution that was founded within the University of Zagreb on November 26th, 1991, by the decision of the University Assembly and under the name Institute for Applied Social Research. Two years later, it became a public institute founded by the Republic of Croatia, and in 1997 it was named the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences.

The Institute's core activity is scholarly research in the fields of social sciences, humanities, and interdisciplinary studies. The Institute develops and implements programs of continuous scientific research aimed at studying social changes, cultural phenomena and other topics important for Croatian society. The Institute brings together and connects prominent researchers from Croatia and abroad and encourages academic excellence in the national and international research community. The Institute's head office is in Zagreb, but the Institute also has eight regional centers (Pula, Gospić, Split, Dubrovnik, Varaždin, Osijek, Vis, and Vukovar).

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VERN' University represents the essence of academic experience and knowledge gained through many years of successful organic growth from the advisory office for international education to the highest academic level, a university in the professional scientific-academic field. Today, VERN' University consists of four departments – Business and Economy, Computing and Technologies, Communications and Media, Creative Industries – and implements ten undergraduate and seven graduate study programs within these fields. Its presence on the international market is reflected through membership in the international organizations and projects and cooperation with foreign institutions and universities such as the European Public Relations Education and Research Association, Erasmus+ Program, Interdisciplinary Centre Herzliya from Israel, Glasgow Caledonian University, Vaasa and Aalto Universities from Finland and other international institutions. The topic of sustainability is in the basics of academic and business activities of VERN' University as well as the courses of study programs. The experience gained through the pioneering positioning of sustainable development and social entrepreneurship in higher education, VERN' University implements through international projects with partners from the European Commission, the UK, Israel, India, Turkey, Spain, Germany, Sweden and other countries.

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