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IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS ON URBAN CYCLING

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Abstract: Little is known about the importance of different variables in shaping cyclists' risk perception when cycling in urban areas. We evaluate the effects of environmental and demographic factors on cyclists' perception of risk in urban cycling, by conducting a study in the central area of a large city, Qazvin, Iran. We develop a linear mixed model to predict the cyclists' angular movement. With twenty-six cyclists included in this study, the outcome variable is the change in the cyclists' angular movement as a surrogate for risk perception, while the predictors are the personal characteristics and environmental features. Cycling through residential and commercial areas, one-way routes, routes with speed limits, wide routes ≥ 12 m, existing bike lanes, traffic volume, and path elevation (all $P \leq 0.001$) are associated with angular movement. However, sex, age, cycling history, psychological distress score, and presence of parks are not significant predictors of the angular movement. While the cyclist characteristics do not show significant correlations with the angular movement, environmental factors have significant effects on the cyclists' risk perception. This study, therefore, highlights the critical role of cycling infrastructure in shaping the cyclists' risk perception and it provides implications for urban planners and policymakers.

Keywords:

risk perception;
angular movement;
cycling;
psychological distress;
environmental features;
Iran

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Introduction

Urban environments, inhabited by more than two-thirds of the world's population, pose significant health challenges due to multiple factors that influence the well-being of their inhabitants (Gavrilidis et al. 2023). Over the past thirty years, research has focused on understanding and addressing the complex causes of deteriorating health status in large cities, emphasising the importance of urban design, regulations in promoting human health, and preventing randomness in urban development processes (Ortiz et al. 2021, Gavrilidis et al. 2023). Research conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic led to the implementation of non-pharmaceutical interventions and the dissemination of detailed data to understand and mitigate the spread of the pandemic. Geospatial analysis of the data was considered essential to support decision-making by health authorities and policymakers at various levels (Miramontes Carballada and Balsa-Barreiro 2021). In addition, urban planning plays a critical role in managing social movements associated with environmental risks, which requires an examination of location patterns and their impact on regional development, including socio-economic and political aspects (Creţan et al. 2005).

The growing popularity of cycling as a mode of transport can be attributed to its inherent advantages over alternative modes (Blondiau et al. 2016). The attractiveness of cycling is based on its cost-effectiveness, accessibility, health benefits, and ability to reduce travel time within urban areas (Oja et al. 2011, Blondiau et al. 2016). Nevertheless, cycling exposes riders to various risks, such as accidents resulting from interactions with other road users, poor infrastructure, and environmental factors (Reynolds et al. 2009). To reduce these risks and to promote cycling as a sustainable transport mode, researchers have conducted studies where various models have been formulated to capture the effects of environmental conditions and the cyclist-specific variables on cyclist safety (De Hartog et al. 2010). The environmental factors included air quality, road surface conditions, weather, and lighting conditions; while the personal factors included age, gender, experience level, and cycling frequency (Reynolds et al. 2009).

Studies have highlighted the importance of risk perception in shaping people's behaviour and their acceptance of technologies, policies, and standards (Siegrist and Árvai 2020). Current research on risk perception revolves around three main perspectives: the characteristics of hazards, the characteristics of risk aspects, and the use of heuristics in forming risk judgments (Siegrist and Árvai 2020). While psychometric research focuses on how hazard characteristics influence perceptions, there's a notable gap in understanding how individual differences affect risk perception (Siegrist and Árvai 2020). Factors such as demographics, psychological traits, and knowledge levels contribute to diverse risk perceptions, underscoring the need for a deeper understanding to improve communication, decision-making, and

risk management capabilities. For instance, a study in Germany showed that heat risk perception is primarily influenced by factors such as awareness of heat risks, sensitivity to such risks, and an external locus of control (Beckmann and Hiete 2020). Descriptive statistics revealed significant effects of health implication scores, chronic diseases, and young age on heat perception.

However, there is a scarcity of information on how environmental and behavioural factors affect the cyclists' perception of risk (Zhao et al. 2020). Objective risk factors, such as traffic volume and infrastructure quality, influence the estimation of risk associated with cycling. Individual characteristics, including prior experience and personal attitudes towards cycling safety, also play important roles in shaping the cyclists' risk perception (Branion-Calles et al. 2019, Zheng et al. 2019, Zhao et al. 2020). Risk perception involves the cyclist's subjective assessment of both the expectation and severity of potential hazards in the cycling environment.

Cycling safety research has traditionally focused on objective crash risk, but there is growing interest in the cyclists' subjective risk perceptions (von Stülpnagel and Krukar 2018). Crash risk and subjective risk perception in urban cycling appear to be largely consistent. A study examined the relationship between bicycle crashes and subjective risk perception for different types of infrastructure and different speed limits, controlling for the local cycling volume (von Stülpnagel and Krukar 2018). The results showed that reporting absolute values can be misleading. Adjusting the absolute values for significant covariates (e.g. cycling volume) yields for more accurate models. Also, cyclists may misperceive crash risk in certain situations, suggesting the need for further research to understand these differences and to improve the cyclists' perceptions (von Stülpnagel and Krukar 2018). Individuals make decisions about preventive behaviours and response strategies by perceiving and assessing the risk, ultimately minimising the occurrence and impact of adverse events (Doorley et al. 2015).

Psychological traits have the potential to influence an individual's perception of risk in various situations (Anderson et al. 2013). Anxiety plays a central role in determining how individuals respond to conditions that may pose potential dangers to them (Doorley et al. 2015). Higher levels of psychological distress correlate with increased risk perception (Böhm and Brun 2008). Research suggests that people experiencing psychological distress are more likely to overestimate the level of risk, even in circumstances where the objective risk assessment suggests relatively safe conditions (Zheng et al. 2019). Integrating demographic and psychological characteristics into a predictive model provides an opportunity to evaluate their impact on risk perception.

Our objective was to provide insight into the importance of different characteristics in shaping the cyclists' risk perception. This would be valuable in designing interventions that promote cycling while ensuring the safety of cyclists. The change in gaze angle has been proposed as an indicator of risk perception for cyclists riding in urban areas,

representing risk anticipation and reaction to potential hazards (Mantuano et al. 2017, Schmidt and von Stülpnagel 2018, von Stülpnagel 2020). It has been suggested that increasing the visual workload requires more concentration from the rider, leading to discomfort and changes in the movement preferences (e.g., angle of movement). Consequently, measuring the angular changes while adjusting for the internal state and external conditions has the potential to represent the cyclist's perceived risk. The effects of speed and path characteristics on the steering of professional cyclists have been previously investigated in research settings (Vansteenkiste et al. 2013, Schepers et al. 2014, Vansteenkiste et al. 2014a, Vansteenkiste et al. 2014b). Meanwhile, the assessment of angular movement in real-world environments among non-professional cyclists may also provide insight into cyclists' risk perception. Our investigation was focused on evaluating the angular movement of cyclists as a surrogate for the measurement of their ability to perceive risk. We hypothesised that both participants' and environmental characteristics would be associated with changes in the risk perception of cyclists.

Methodology

Study area

A single cohort of cyclists was studied from July 2022 to October 2022 in the urban areas of Qazvin, located in the Qazvin Province in Iran (Figure 1). The geographical location of Qazvin City is about 152 kilometres northwest of the capital of Iran (Tehran) and it borders Zanjan Province in the north, Alborz Province in the east, Markazi Province in the south, and Hamadan Province in the west. Qazvin is known as one of the historical cities of Iran and it has many historical, cultural, and natural monuments. This city has a semi-arid and cold climate.

Due to its flat topography, with an average road gradient of 2.5% and an area of about 120 hectares, the historical city of Qazvin has a high potential for cycling as a mode of transportation. Since 2010, the Qazvin Deputy for Transport and Traffic has been seriously engaged in the development of clean and human-oriented transportation. As a first step, the topic of clean transportation was proposed and approved by the Ministry of Interior as one of the main objectives in the Transportation Master Plan (City of Qazvin 2013). In the second step, a professional committee was formed to plan and design new strategies to develop the infrastructure and to promote the culture of cycling in the city. During the investigation and research conducted by this committee, the issue of safety was identified as the most important factor responsible for the decreased adoption of cycling in Qazvin. Following the development of clean transportation, nearly 52 km of bicycle paths were constructed in the city. With regard to the Transportation Master Plan (City of Qazvin 2013), the deputy intends to develop bicycle lanes in busy streets through a medium-term plan and to establish a connected network between the existing lanes. Also, to provide the citizens with access to shared

bicycles in the city, in cooperation with the private sector, the construction of mechanised stations for shared bicycles is on its agenda.

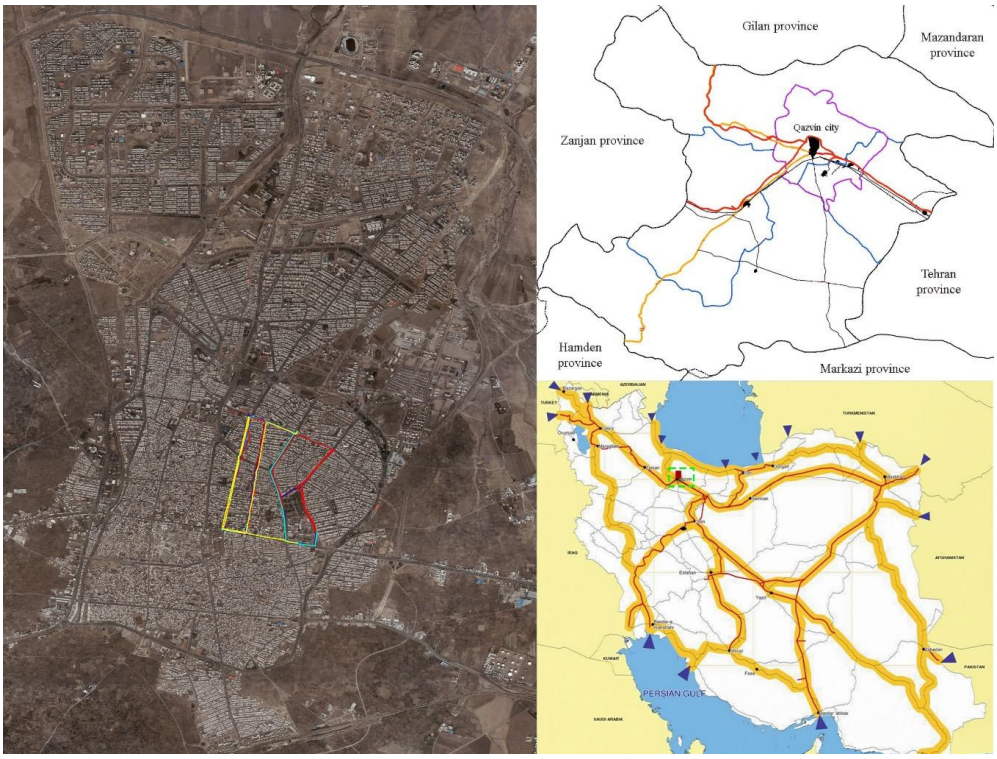

Figure 1. The research area and the cycling routes. Source: City of Qazvin (2013)

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of Imam Khomeini International University, with the reference number 12018/1400/04/10, and all enrolled participants provided written informed consent. Participants were given verbal explanations of the study rationale, and they were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time during the research.

Recruitment and Eligibility

The cyclists were selected using a convenience sampling approach. We included individuals of both sexes who were willing to participate in the study and they were 18 years of age or older. Potential participants were initially invited to attend a screening visit, during which the study phases and rationale were fully explained. If an individual refused to participate, a subsequent candidate was recruited using the same process until the required sample was provided. During the screening visit, all

participating cyclists completed questionnaires that asked about their demographics, cycling-related data, and medical history. A qualified physician conducted a comprehensive medical examination of the participants to ensure the absence of any health problems that could potentially introduce confounding variables to the study outcome. Particular attention was paid to the musculoskeletal, blood, and cardiovascular health (Callaghan 2005, Nordengen et al. 2019, Mohammadi and Mohammadi 2023a, Sharifkazemi et al. 2023). In parallel, a clinical psychologist conducted interviews with the cyclists and administered two validated psychological questionnaires. Individuals with a documented history of significant physical or psychological disorders and those with current medical conditions were excluded from the study.

Protocols and Measurements

All of the bike routes were located in the central city and all the participants cycled in this area at the same time of the day. Each study participant underwent a total of 60-minute assessments. It has been proposed that the cyclists' angular movement during urban cycling is related to their subjective perception of risk (von Stülpnagel 2020). The outcome of our study was the participants' angular movement which was measured by the Garmin Virb XE camera.

A number of predictors were also assessed during the study. Participants were given identical bicycles, each equipped with two GoPro Hero 7 compact video cameras (Van Cauwenberg et al. 2018). The first camera was mounted on the handlebars of the bike to video record the obstacles in the forward direction. The second camera, facing rearwards, was used to document the passage of other vehicles. In addition, environmental factors, subjective variables, and various cycling parameters (e.g., cycling history) were quantified. Participants were instructed to verbally report any instances of discomfort or anxiety during their cycling sessions. The cameras were able to store the data collected by the sensors. In addition, the Sydney Coordinated Adaptive Traffic System was installed on all routes and used for data collection.

A validated Persian-translated Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) was used to assess the levels of anxiety (Kaviani and Mousavi 2008). The BAI has good reliability and validity with coefficients of 0.72 and 0.83, respectively. In addition, the internal consistency of the instrument was remarkably high as evidenced by an alpha (Cronbach's alpha) coefficient of 0.92 (Kaviani and Mousavi 2008). The questionnaire consists of a total of 21 multiple-choice items designed to collect information about anxiety symptoms experienced during the previous week. Each item is scored on a scale of 0 to 3, with higher scores indicating greater severity of anxiety symptoms. The cumulative score on the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) ranges from 0 to 63. In addition, a validated Persian translation of the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) was used to assess the psychological distress (Ataei et al. 2015). One study estimated an average content

validity ratio and content validity index of 0.88 and 0.95, respectively, for the K10 questionnaire (Ataei et al. 2015). The questionnaire showed Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.84. In addition, the intra-class correlation coefficient was 0.77, indicating good agreement between the responses. The K10 questionnaire includes ten questions about emotional states, with a total score ranging from 10 to 50. A higher score corresponds to an increased level of psychological distress.

Statistical Analyses

Results are presented as mean (SD) for continuous variables and as absolute numbers (%) for categorical data. The normality of variables was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test. A linear mixed model was constructed to examine the effects of participant characteristics and environmental factors on the angular movement. It is a form of regression analysis that can account for both fixed and random effects within the data set and it is particularly useful for analysing repeated measures data. Given the ability of mixed models to handle missing data, imputation was not required to handle missing values. We included participant and environmental variables as predictors of angular movement, while also accounting for random intercepts and slopes associated with age, BAI, and cycling history in the model. This framework allowed us to examine not only the global effects of fixed variables but also the variance in both intercepts and slopes across participants. The level of significance was set at two-tailed $\alpha = 0.05$. Data analysis and visualisation were performed using the R software version 4.0.2. for Windows. We used the afex library (Singmann et al. 20246) of R to fit our mixed model. It estimates mixed models using the lme4 library, it calculates p-values for all fixed effects, and it tests the results with ANOVA.

Sample

A cohort of 26 cyclists, 20 (76.9%) of whom were men, were enrolled as participants in this study. The total number of trials in the entire cohort was 14,423. A minimal proportion of data (2.8%) was missing. We did not impute the missing data. The cohort characteristics, including both demographic and anthropometric aspects as well as environmental attributes, are shown in Table 1. In general, the participants were young to middle-aged individuals. Predominantly, the cohort consisted of single males with a healthy body mass index, cycling for either professional (serious) or recreational purposes.

The BAI scores ranged from 1 to 28, corresponding to minimal to severe anxiety. Similarly, the K10 scores ranged from 11 to 37, indicating a psychological distress from mild to severe. Referring to the routes used for this study, in general, the cycling participants travelled mostly within the commercial area of the city. The routes were representative of the prevailing cycling conditions during normal, non-holiday daytime hours.

Table 1. *The sample characteristics (N = 26) and the environmental features*

Characteristic	***Description***
Sample (N = 26 participants)	
Age (year)	*33.5 (10.6)*
Sex (male)	*20.0 (76.9%)*
BMI (kg/m²)	*24.1 (2.9)*
Marital status (married)	*10.0 (38.5%)*
Family size	*3.6 (1.8)*
Cycling purpose (serious)	*11.0 (47.8%)*
Cycling history (year)	*10.7 (8.0)*
History of cycling accident	*11.0 (47.8%)*
K10	*21.2 (7.6)*
BAI	*12.0 (8.0)*
Angular movement (degree)	*158.9 (12.1)*
Routes and Environment (N = 14423 trials)	
Residential area	*2162 (15.0%)*
Commercial area	*9410 (65.2%)*
Mixed area	*3689 (25.6%)*
Park	*2763 (19.2%)*
One-directional route	*4644 (32.2%)*
Posted speed limits ≤50 km/h	*4078 (28.3%)*
Path width ≥12 m	*4102 (28.4%)*
Bikeway	*4755 (33.0%)*
Traffic volume	*2435.1 (431.9)*
Elevation (m)	*1321.2 (7.2)*

The figures indicate the mean (SD) for continuous variables and the absolute number or share (%) for categorical variables BMI (Body Mass Index); K10 (the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale); and BAI (Beck Anxiety Inventory)

Results

Univariate Analysis

The Shapiro tests for normality implied that angular movement, K10, and BAI data were normally distributed, W = 0.940, 0.934, and 0.933 with the P-values of 0.135, 0.133, and 0.127, respectively. The univariate analysis did not show a significant linear relationship between the angular movement and the K10 score (r = -0.20, P = 0.387), and the angular movement and the BAI score (r = -0.25, P = 0.251). Plausibly, there was a significant correlation between K10 and BAI scores (r = 0.76, P <0.01). We excluded K10 scores from further analysis. Figure 2 shows the association of psychological assessment scores with the angular movement and the variation of the angular movement for the study participants. Multivariable models were needed to assess more accurately the relationship between the BAI score and the angular movement. This required a mixed-effects model as the preferred analytical framework to examine the precise nature of the linear relationship between psychological scores and the angular movement observed

in our cohort of cyclists. The mixed model effectively captured the inherent randomness of the variation in the participants' psychological scores.

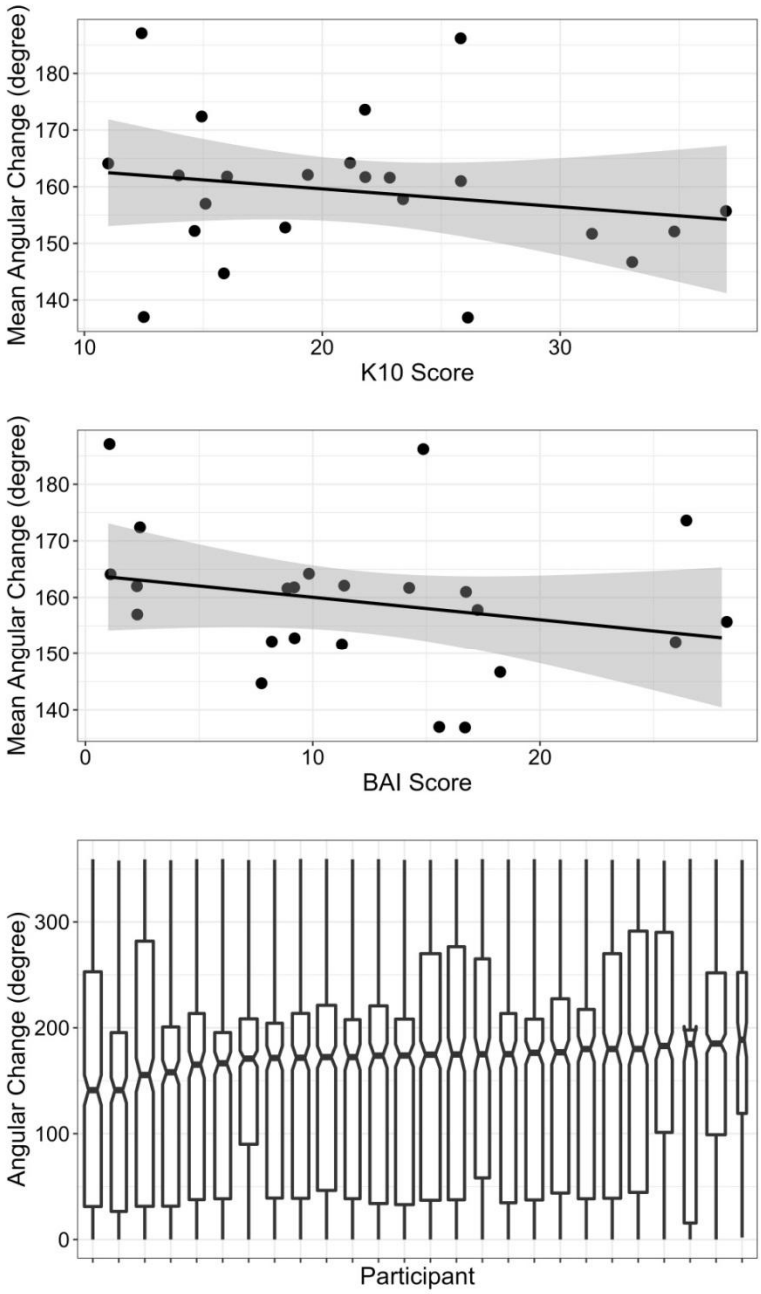

Figure 2. Scatter plots of K10 and BAI scores versus heart rate (in the upper row, the black lines represent linear regressions, and the shaded grey areas display the 95% confidence intervals around the regression line), and boxplots of heart rate variation within each participant (lower row)

Mixed Models

Participants' Characteristics and Environmental Features

The linear mixed model for predicting the angular movement did not show important associations of cyclists' characteristics with the angular movement (Table 2). Age, sex, and BAI scores were not significant predictors in changing the angle of movement. However, the environmental characteristics had statistically significant effects on the angular movement. Cycling through residential and commercial areas posted speed limits, and the existence of bikeways was negatively related to the angular movement. One-way streets or wide cycling paths were directly related to the angular movement. While traffic volume and route elevation were significantly associated with the angular movement, the degrees of association were not practically important. The model also included random intercepts and slopes for the cycling history, BAI, and age across the participants. The angular movement for the participants varied around the average intercept of 553 degrees by about 100 degrees. The SD for by-participant random slopes of cycling history, BAI, and age indicate that the participants' estimated slopes varied around the average slopes of -0.36, 0.14, and -0.58 by 55.25, 48.54, and 14.32, respectively. This implies that the random effects of cycling history, BAI, and age were controlled appropriately across participants. Meanwhile, the random effects of the participants' cycling history and BAI scores were higher than the effect of age. The model residual of 100.53 suggested a relatively accurate model.

Table 2. *The linear mixed model for predicting the angular movement using the cyclists' and environmental variables*

Characteristics	***Statistical Analysis Variables"***					***Likelihood Ratio Test Anova***	
	B	*SE*	*df*	*t*	*P*	*χ2(1)*	*P*
Intercept	*553.70*	*328.00*	*872.3*	*1.69*	*0.092*		
Residential area	*-23.39*	*3.58*	*1301.0*	*-6.53*	*<0.001**	*0.00*	*0.999*
Commercial area	*-70.92*	*3.03*	*1301.0*	*-23.42*	*<0.001**	*514.99*	*<0.001**
Park	*1.57*	*4.04*	*1301.0*	*0.39*	*0.698*	*11.62*	*<0.001**
One-directional route	*39.31*	*3.55*	*1301.0*	*11.06*	*<0.001**	*0.00*	*0.999*
Age	*-0.58*	*6.26*	*4008.0*	*-0.09*	*0.926*	*7.10*	*0.008**
Sex	*-26.12*	*91.52*	*376.2*	*-0.29*	*0.775*	*2.81*	*0.094*
BAI	*0.14*	*15.75*	*7203.0*	*0.01*	*0.993*	*20.75*	*<0.001**
Cycling history	*-0.36*	*16.90*	*4913.0*	*-0.02*	*0.983*	*18.41*	*<0.001**
Posted speed limits ≤50 km/h	*-26.04*	*2.79*	*1301.0*	*-9.34*	*<0.001**	*0.00*	*0.999*
Path width ≥12 m	*50.31*	*3.81*	*1301.0*	*13.22*	*<0.001**	*192.88*	*<0.001**
Bikeway	*-65.69*	*3.68*	*1301.0*	*-17.83*	*<0.001**	*326.64*	*<0.001**
Traffic volume	*0.07*	*0.003*	*1301.0*	*25.67*	*<0.001**	*504.98*	*<0.001**
Elevation	*-0.34*	*0.09*	*1301.0*	*-3.61*	*0.001**	*0.00*	*0.999*

**significant at p <0.05*

Discussion

The purpose of conducting this study was to assess the effects of various individual and environmental factors on the cyclists' angular movement, which served as an indicator of risk perception while cycling. Our study implied significant effects of environmental factors on the angular movement, however, it did not show a significant association of cyclists' personal characteristics with the angular movement. We recruited a representative sample of cyclists using identical bicycles on common urban terrain in a metropolitan area and performed multiple measurements on each participant. The results showed that environmental variables were significantly associated with changes in the cyclists' risk perception. We found that cycling through residential and commercial areas posted speed limits, and the existence of bikeways were negatively related, while one-way streets, or wide cycling paths were positively related to cycling risk perception. The effects of traffic volume and route elevation on risk perception were statistically significant but practically unimportant. Our results failed to show a statistically significant relationship between BAI scores and the angular movement.

Angular Movement

The human factor is one of the main causes of accidents. The relation between neuropsychological features and motor function has been reported in the scientific literature (Di Corrado et al. 2021, Mohammadi and Mohammadi 2023b). Visual perception of the environment plays an important role in bicycle accidents (Schepers et al. 2014). Misinterpretation or misreading of the cycling path can lead to the perception of an unsafe environment for cyclists, with a lack of visual information or inconsistent design exacerbating potential hazards (Sener et al. 2009). An increased visual workload that requires increased concentration may cause a cyclist to perceive the path as uncomfortable, potentially leading to changes in their travel choices (Schepers et al. 2014). Thus, it is important to examine the specific elements that attract the cyclists' attention to identify the factors that truly influence their behaviour.

Exploring the connection between gaze and locomotion is facilitated by measuring head and body movement (Patla and Vickers 2003). The study of gaze angle enhances our understanding of human factors and cyclist psychology, particularly when gaze behaviour during cycling remains poorly documented (Vansteenkiste et al. 2013, Schepers et al. 2014). The effects of speed and path characteristics on bicycle steering have been investigated in a few studies (Vansteenkiste et al. 2013, Vansteenkiste et al. 2014a, Vansteenkiste et al. 2014b). Meanwhile, the results of controlled indoor or simulation studies should be evaluated in the real environment. We included non-professional cyclists and assessed the changes in the cognitive activity using angular movement repeated measures in the short term. The angle data were normally distributed, and we applied various adjustments to ensure accurate statistical results.

Cyclists' Characteristics

Intuition and affect are interrelated concepts that influence both risk perception and decision-making (Böhm and Brun 2008). Maintaining a stable bike ride requires muscular strength, balance, and flexibility (Shaffer et al. 2020). Various stress scenarios, encompassing physiological, psychosocial, cognitive load, or anticipatory stress, trigger physiological responses in the body (Mohammadi and Mohammadi 2023b). We investigated the relationship between the cyclists' characteristics and the angular movement. Those characteristics included sex, age, cycling history, and BAI score. However, none of the participants' characteristics significantly affected the angular movement, suggesting that this metric may be more closely related to movement strategy and environmental factors than to internal traits. This finding is consistent with the outcomes of previous research examining how location-specific factors relate to gaze behaviour (Vansteenkiste et al. 2013, Vansteenkiste et al. 2014a, Vansteenkiste et al. 2014b, Schmidt and von Stülpnagel 2018).

Environmental Features

We assessed the effects of environmental factors on the cyclists' risk perception. The results suggested that the change in the movement angle is related to infrastructure and environmental conditions during urban cycling. Among the examined environmental features, cycling through commercial or residential areas, using one-way streets, having posted speed limits, navigating wide paths of 12 metres or more, having dedicated bike lanes, facing high traffic volumes, and traversing varying elevations, showed significant effects on the cyclists' risk perception. Some of these findings are consistent with previously reported observations in the scientific literature, confirming the consistency of our findings with previous research in this area.

Studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between the cycling infrastructure and the cyclists' perception of risk. Without the physical protection provided by cars, the cyclists face potential risks on the road with motorised vehicles, making them vulnerable to accidents, exposure to air pollution, and increased vulnerability due to their lower mass and slower speed (Reynolds et al. 2009, De Hartog et al. 2010). Infrastructure improvement offers significant advantages in injury prevention because of its population-wide impact, passive nature, and the ability to achieve substantial benefits through a single intervention (Reynolds et al. 2009). Infrastructure plays a central role in preventing injury and reducing crash risk, with a lower risk associated with separated tracks and the presence of bicycle facilities, while major roads were found to pose a higher hazard compared to minor roads (Reynolds et al. 2009). In two-lane roundabouts, the number of crashes and injuries was more than twice the expected number, while in single-lane roundabouts there was no significant difference between the expected and the observed statistics (Brude 2000). Wider medians were found to increase the crash risk for cyclists, and the use of a logistic

model to assess the bicycle route safety showed a significant association between wider roads and more severe injuries (Brude 2000, McGraw et al. 2000).

Implications

Briefly, this study provided insight into the factors that influence the cyclists' risk perception in urban areas. The results suggested that environmental factors such as cycling infrastructure and traffic volume have a significant impact on the cyclists' risk perception. The study showed that cycling through residential and commercial areas, one-way routes, routes with speed limits, wide routes, and existing bike lanes were associated with a change in the cyclists' angular movement. The study also implied that cyclist characteristics such as sex, age, cycling history, psychological distress score, and presence of parks were not significant predictors of angular movement. These findings highlight the critical role of cycling infrastructure in shaping the cyclists' risk perception and they provide important implications for urban planners and policymakers. Change in angular movement is an important aspect of cycling and its better understanding can help reduce the incidence of injury.

By investing in the cycling infrastructure, cities can create safer and more attractive environments for cyclists, which can help to promote cycling as a sustainable mode of transportation (Castells-Graells et al. 2020, Cafiso et al. 2021). Our findings could be used as a reference for designing future research on the topic. For instance, a study that analyses the relationship between risk perception and behavioural factors of rural cyclists. This study could also be used to raise awareness among cyclists and policymakers about the importance of cycling infrastructure in promoting safer cycling in urban areas.

Limitations

To the best of our knowledge, there are no previous reports in the literature that have simultaneously assessed the effects of environmental, health, psychological, and demographic variables on the cyclists' risk perception. However, some limitations may have affected the generalizability of our conclusions. Although our sample was representative of the urban cyclist population, its size limited the generalizability of our conclusions. Due to the small sample size, some confounders may not have been adequately controlled for. Moreover, our sample was drawn from urban areas, so caution should be taken when extrapolating our results to cycling in rural areas. Meanwhile, we collected a significant amount of repeated measures data, which reduced the inherent variance, and it increased the power of statistical tests.

Conclusions

We used the angular movement as a measure of cycling risk perception among urban cyclists. Our study implied that environmental factors significantly influence risk

perception. Cyclists' age, sex, BAI score, and cycling history did not significantly affect the angular movement. However, there was a statistically significant relationship between the angular movement and the environmental features. The significant environmental factors included cycling through commercial or residential areas, using one-way streets, having posted speed limits, navigating wide paths ≥12 metres, existing dedicated bike lanes, facing high traffic volumes, and varying elevations. One-way streets with high-speed limits and heavy traffic adversely affect the cyclists' perception of risk. In urban design, however, the provision of dedicated bicycle lanes and passageways through residential and commercial areas facilitates the use of bicycles. These findings show the importance of cycling infrastructure in promoting urban cycling as a safe commuting choice. By addressing these elements, urban planners and policymakers can promote urban cycling and support healthier and more sustainable urban environments.

Increasing the perceived safety of cyclists is effective in promoting the use of the bicycle as a mode of transportation. Appropriate urban design and bicycle facilities affect the cyclists' perceptions of safety in motion. Cyclists also respond dynamically to environmental factors. Our study showed that changes in the cyclists' heading angle are primarily related to lane characteristics. Meanwhile, more studies are needed to establish the specific findings of this study. A larger sample size, the inclusion of weather conditions and seasonal variations, and the recruitment of participants with physical disabilities would be helpful in designing further research. Given the benefits of cycling in urban areas, it is imperative to raise the awareness of public authorities of the critical role of cycling infrastructure in the promotion of cycling.

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NON-TERRITORIAL AND TERRITORIAL OBJECTIVES OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN ETHNOREGIONAL PARTIES

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Abstract: In Central and Eastern Europe, even the post-socialist period has not made it easy for ethnic communities to exercise their linguistic and cultural rights, and territorial autonomy or self-government, as a risk to territorial integrity, has been granted only in exceptional cases. This paper focuses on the main objectives of ethnoregional parties to reorganise the power structure of the national political system. The study is based on an analysis of core documents from 92 parties in 15 Central and Eastern European countries, identifying and classifying the objectives set out in these documents. The results highlight the ethnoregional objectives in Central and Eastern Europe, including not only the cultural-linguistic dimension but also the need to change internal/external borders or the division of power within each state, highlighting the diversity and complexity of the problems and objectives underlying each category.

Keywords:

ethnoregional parties; political typology; party documents; Central and Eastern Europe

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Introduction

Social cleavages, which play a decisive role in the formation of parties and party families, appear not only in the classical theory of Lipset and Rokkan (1967), but also in the works of other scholars (Seiler 1982, Seiler 1985, von Beyme 1985, von Beyme 1996) who attempt to systematise parties, to characterise and examine individual party systems. In addition to the "classical" parties classified on ideological grounds, these systematic works often include a party family composed of ethnic and regional (geographically and/or nationally peripheral) political organisations. Lipset and Rokkan (1967), Rokkan (1970), and then Rokkan and Urwin (1982) mention peripheral movements emerging along the centre-periphery cleavage; Seiler (1985) refers to parties representing the interests of the periphery; while von Beyme (1985) distinguished the category of regional and ethnic parties. Nonetheless, there is no scientific consensus surrounding the delimitation of party families, and especially the definition of regional, subnational parties as one of these families. Criticisms are primarily aimed at the fact that these parties are ideologically extremely diverse (Strmiska 2002), so they can hardly be interpreted as an independent category in a grouping that basically uses ideology as a category-forming criterion. Some critics even suggest that it would be more useful to divide this party family and to classify parties according to their ideology (Mair and Mudde 1998), while others claim, that, although their internal logic differs from other party families, they form a coherent group (Miodownik and Cartrite 2006).

However, the independent ethnic and regional party family, legitimised and thus accepted by the literature, points to its diversity and the existence of (at least) two subgroups even in its name. Ethnic (Horowitz 1985, Bugajski 1995, Chandra 2011, Chandra 2012) and regional parties (Rokkan and Urwin 1982, van Houten 2007, Raos 2011, Massetti and Schakel 2020) are fundamentally different from each other, as they are organised on completely different bases. Still, the two sets do have an intersection, in which the group of ethnoregional parties is found, combining their essential characteristics. The acceptance of the presence, name, and role of ethnoregional parties is growing in political science, and even their appearance and importance in CEE is becoming less and less debatable.

Several attempts have been made to define ethnoregional parties, however, the term 'ethnoregional' is not commonly accepted either. In the literature, scholars use many terms for this type of party (Hepburn 2009, Salat and Székely 2018). The double bind idea presented above is supported by Rokkan and Urwin's (1982) definition of parties as identifying with areas and groups that do not coincide with state boundaries and national populations and representing them in opposition to central governments. Similarly, Türsan (1998) also emphasises the two interconnected dimensions by defining ethnoregional parties as a supporter of nationalism based on ethnic distinctiveness and territorial claims. According to Müller-Rommel (1998: 19), ethno-

regional parties are organisations "referring to the efforts of geographically concentrated peripheral minorities which challenge the working order and sometimes even the democratic order of a nation-state by demanding recognition of their cultural identity". De Winter (2001: 4) adds that the aim of ethnoregional parties is "the reorganisation of the power structure of the national political system, for a certain degree of self-government for the region". Although for such organisations in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) the term ethnic party is more common (Zuber and Szöcsik 2012), this paper uses the more expressive ethnoregional term.

Even though several ethnoregional parties in CEE are much smaller and less relevant than those in Western Europe, some organisations are significant actors in their political and party systems (Zamfira 2015), characterised by a permanent presence in the Parliament and occasionally in governments (Hungarians in Romania, Slovakia or in Serbia; Turks in Bulgaria). Regardless of their size, many parties are members of international organisations, they have joined European parties or parliamentary groups of the European Parliament (and not necessarily the European Free Alliance), and often they have representatives in the EP. Therefore, they have caught up with Western European parties.

Academic interest towards ethnoregional parties in CEE is growing, and the literature is mainly dominated by case studies, country studies or studies focusing on the organisations of one ethnic group (Kiss et al. 2013, Zuber 2013, Harrach 2016). However, comprehensive studies covering the whole region have also been published, sometimes with the aim to develop typologies (Nedelcu and DeBardeleben 2016) or to compare and to summarise processes in the CEE region (Kostadinova 2002, Bochsler 2006, Nakai 2009, Bernauer and Bochsler 2011, Bochsler 2011, Székely and Horváth 2014, Strijbis and Kotnarowski 2015, Szöcsik and Zuber 2015, Koev 2022), although they generally cannot cover all ethnoregional organisations in CEE due to their thematic and methodological nature. Such a wide-ranging analysis was last seen in Bugajski's (1995) detailed presentation and typology of ethnic politicisation in Central and Eastern Europe, distinguishing five different stages (cultural revivalism, political autonomy, territorial self-determination, separatism, irredentism). Since then, some of the aspirations have already been fulfilled (especially in the territory of the former Yugoslavia), several organisations disappeared or replaced by another, and new identities awakened or entered another phase of ethnic politics.

The aim of this paper is therefore to renew the typology using elements from Western European classifications and to summarise the macro regional characteristics of the types of ethnoregional parties in CEE seeking to involve in the research as many of these organisations as possible. The passage of time and the changes mentioned above both call for a reassessment of ethnic politics and a review of their types in CEE. This attempt has been facilitated by Dandoy's (2010) typology of ethnoregional parties in

Western Europe, which is based on – among others – Bugajski's (1995) work. His classification assessed parties according to the nature of their goals and demands.

Therefore, this paper provides a renewed typology for CEE parties based on an analysis of statutes and political programs of ethnoregional parties published on their websites. Due to historical reasons and political considerations, it is not certain that ethnoregional communities choose to form a party and to participate in elections as a solution for asserting their interests, as there are other ways besides the elections (Rokkan and Urwin 1982, Chandra 2011), such as community engagement (Park and Kim 2014). Moreover, it is common for a community to be represented by more than one organisation, as the community members, thus political parties, may have different ideas about the nature of representation and aspirations (Schrijver 2006). In total, 105 ethnoregional communities have been identified in 16 CEE states, and the typology provides an overview of 92 ethnoregional parties (Appendix 1).

Regional characteristics in historical perspective

The situation of CEE states is undoubtedly unique in geographical, geopolitical, and historical terms, as expressed by the term "Lands in Between" (Batt 1998: 7). The region's specific indeterminacy, its ambivalence towards (Western) Europe, its peripheral location, its economic and social backwardness, its remoteness, its ethnic diversity, and the determining reasons were analysed in historical depth. According to Szűcs (1981) and Bibó (2016), the roots of the different development of historical regions go back to the time of the organisation of states. As they state, western-style integration developed organically, organised from the bottom up, along the lines of fiefdom treaties, while in the CEE region – drifting from the eastern periphery to the western – it was achieved rapidly, because of non-organic development, and directed from above, so that the western structural elements appeared somewhat distorted and muted (Szűcs 1981, Bibó 2016). This distortion and incompleteness persisted in later periods.

The need for 'national self-determination' emerged, and after World War I this was manifested in the dissolution of empires on the one hand, and in the competition of nations for territories on the other hand (Hajdú 2008). The new nation-states faced significant internal challenges and difficulties in the interwar period, which was then interrupted by the state-socialist period (Batt 1998), bringing similar features for CEE countries, such as dictatorial regimes, ideologically driven social changes, then deep transformation, and many challenges in the transition period (Gherghina and Jiglau 2011, Jiglau and Gherghina 2011).

Different development, including different social development of the previous periods, resulted in an intermediate state even after the transition – as Kulcsár (2016) concludes, the "hybrid" or the "in between" status of CEE can be understood also in the

democratisation period, as although the structures of the market economy and civil democracy followed the Western patterns; but the operating mechanisms, the values and behaviour prevailing in society are more Eastern (e.g. weaknesses of the system of checks and balances, paternalistic elite, revival of the oligarchy, "socialist-feudal" behaviour, weak and vulnerable civil society). Today, as Rovny (2023) argues, democratic backsliding is also a feature in the region, especially in countries that were previously at the forefront of the transition and have relatively homogeneous societies. Even though democratic backsliding can be interpreted as a natural consequence of consolidation (Berman 2019), it may also be the result of democratisation that has taken place too quickly, under external influences rather than organically from within, and which the CEE countries have not yet been able to internalise successfully.

The nationalist rhetoric, which was revived in the period after the transition, (re)ignited ethnic antagonisms, generating conflicts between the majority and minority nations that make up the states. These conflicts then led to the dissolution of federations, the creation of a whole series of nation-states and the re-emergence of internal tensions (Batt 1998). Due to the features of historical past and ethnic conflicts in CEE, almost all ethnoregional communities in the region formulate protectionist demands related to fundamental rights. The absence of a stable, long democratic past, the (perceived or real) territorial and ethnic grievances still play a significant role in the life of states and nations. The (armed) conflicts of the recent and present have all contributed to the fact that the status of ethnic communities in the CEE region is often unsettled (e.g. denial of citizenship in the Baltic States) and ethnic rights are scarce and uncertain (e.g. there is no explicit minority law in Romania summarising and detailing these rights). The ethnic issue is often a tool of national and territorial protection. Especially in states where communities live in large numbers or even concentrated, and (at least according to the state or the majority society) they potentially threaten the stability and territorial integrity of the state, certain rights of communities are denied, or they are kept in limbo (cf. nationalising state, Brubaker 1995). During the accession negotiations, the European Union only indirectly formulated expectations in the field of minority protection (Brusis 2003), so the EU membership by itself does not guarantee a certain level and quality of ethnic rights. Still, the EU's role in minority protection is important, as it has played a significant role, together with other international organisations, in the resolution and mitigation of ethnic conflicts, especially in the Balkans (Vizi 2013).

A region, in Western terminology, means something quite different from what exists in CEE, often in the form of a mere statistical unit. During the transition, the emphasis was placed on the elements of horizontal power sharing, and the vertical dimension received little attention (Myśliwiec 2016), mostly only in connection with the EU accession (Brusis 2002). As Saarts emphasises (2020: 629), "regionalization in CEE has thus always been rather a normative and externally imposed issue, rather than a natural bottom-up initiative or a goal in itself, as in the West".

Regarding the regions, CEE states can be characterised as follows: (1) very strong state centralist tradition; (2) lack of territorial units that have their own distinct history, identity and culture, even in historical regions; (3) weak regional civil society and underdeveloped regional civic networks; (4) ethnic regionalism has served rather as a counter-productive factor concerning greater devolution and decentralisation; (5) regionalisation has been 'administrative–statistical'; (6) although the EU's impact has been very significant and multi-layered, it has not been as pervasive and omnipotent as previous studies have claimed it to be (Saarts 2020). In contrast to organic development in the West, there is much less tradition of wider territorial autonomy in CEE, and the limited role of the regions can be traced back to the still lack of self-governments (Masetti and Shakel 2020). Moreover, instead of using decentralisation to accommodate national minorities (Bochsler and Szöcsik 2013), the states preferred to divide, through regionalisation, the regions with strong historical or ethnic (e.g. Slovakia) identities (Saarts 2020). Thus, apart from the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, no ethnic (or ethnoregional) community has an institutionalised region: either they have no political representation at the regional level or the regional division cuts across their place of residence (Szöcsik and Zuber 2021).

Significant differences between states in CEE were noticeable during the democratic transition, both socio-economically and politically. von Beyme (1996) and Seiler (1995) have noted that state socialism has also created new fault lines in the region, unknown in the West, while some of the classic social conflicts have faded. The capital-labour cleavage is one of the latter, and the specific features of the state socialist system – nationalisations, abolition of the bourgeoisie – made this type of conflict irrelevant but it was later revived in relation to the market economy. The new cleavages, that were primarily the basis of party formation in the transition period, were revived based on the attitude towards the transition and the state-socialist system. The existence of these splits is confirmed by the party family structure created for the CEE region, which included a group of reform communists and forum parties, as well as regional and ethnic parties (von Beyme 1996). Kitschelt (1992) also considered the nature of the previous regime(s), but especially of state socialism and transition, as decisive in emergent cleavages. According to him, the society was divided by conflicts along the dimensions of citizenship (cosmopolitans and particularists), political establishment and decision-making (authoritarians and libertarians), and socio-economic distribution, resources, and attitudes (market distribution and political redistribution). He divided CEE states into three types (patrimonial systems; bureaucratic-authoritarian systems; and national-commodity systems), whose different development paths were determined by the socio-cultural development of the countries, the education of the electorate, the nature of the socialist and pre-socialist systems, the specificities of the transition, and the nature of the new political institutions.

Methodology

Study area

The geographical scope of the research is CEE, although the delimitation – and even the naming – of the region is not entirely obvious (Butt 1998, Haughton 2007). Authors from different historical periods and disciplines have developed various concepts of Europe in two, three or four divisions, based on a variety of perspectives and approaches, which have been described in detail by Okey (1992), Probáld and Szabó (2005) or Páthy (2022). CEE is sometimes referred to by other names in these divisions (Mitteleuropa, Zwischeneuropa), and the picture is also mixed in terms of the included states. Within the region, further sub-regions can be distinguished (e.g. V4 countries, Baltic States, the Balkans), although some countries are not always included in political (the Baltic was part of the Soviet Union) or geographical terms (the Balkans can be interpreted as a separate category as South-East Europe) (Szabó 2022). It is precisely the lack of clear geographical boundaries and the diversity as a "hallmark" (Batt 1998: 3) of the region that gives researchers the freedom to define it according to their own convictions and ideas. In so doing, this paper uses the term CEE in a political rather than a geographical sense and it considers the states as part of the region that was democratised after the socialist era in the early 1990s and those that were created/-independent states, except for the current members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Therefore, within this paper CEE includes: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine.

Analysis of ethnoregional parties

As defined above, ethnoregional parties are political organisations representing territorial concentrated ethnic communities. Minority groups living in border or multiethnic regions (Berceanu et al. 2023) are special cases of so-called ethnoregional communities. Parties are interpreted according to the following three criteria: first, all organisations that present candidates or lists for any election are treated as a party (Sartori 2005). As there is no common legal status required to participate in the elections in the concerned states, the research covers not only those registered as political parties, but also all other organisations (associations, movements). Secondly, parties represent a territorial concentrated ethnic community that does not constitute the majority society of the state. This criterion excludes pure ethnic and regional parties, as well as majority (nationalist) parties. In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina – like in Belgium (Raos 2011) – parties representing the three constituent nations are treated as ethnoregional. Thirdly, by definition, parties target some degree of self-government for the community/region that they represent and it can vary from cultural protectionism to separatism (De Winter 2001).

The following steps were needed to identify ethnoregional parties. First, ethnoregional communities across CEE were identified based on census data. Difficulties caused by the fact that states hold censuses at different times, at different intervals, provide results at different levels of detail, and there is not necessarily a formal way or individual intention to record the ethnic identity. The problem can be further complicated by ethnic boycotts declared in protest of a particular conflict. At present, only a few states (e.g. Slovenia) use register-based censuses, but this may become commonplace in the future, so that this information based on individual declarations may disappear. The limitations of censuses are therefore obvious but, in the absence of any other and more reliable reference, this data collection should be used as a basis for defining communities. The most recent census data, which are best suited to reveal the main characteristics of each ethnoregional community, were used to define them.

In any case, the communities were delimited in the most generous way possible: (1) the legal status (recognised, non-recognised) of the community was ignored; (2) no lower limit was set for the size or proportion of the group within the society; (3) no strict proportions were applied to the degree of spatial concentration; and (4) the characteristics were examined on a spatial scale adapted to the ethnic group, sometimes crossing the administrative boundaries. Only historical ethnic communities were included, so transnational communities or migrant groups of the past decades were not part of the research. The Roma, a transnational minority present in large numbers in almost all regions of Central and Eastern Europe, have many political parties but they are insignificant in relation to their share of the population (Dobos 2013). However, immigrant groups, forming ethnic enclaves mostly in urban areas (Schafft and Kulcsár 2015, Andersen 2019), do not typically form parties.

As a second step, election databases and results were examined to identify organisations representing ethnoregional communities. As previously specified, "organisations stand for any election", not just national (parliamentary or presidential), but all levels of subnational elections were also considered. The third step was to examine these parties' websites. The existent website was a necessary but not sufficient condition for classification. Most of the time, websites contain the statutes and programs governing the functioning and the basic characteristics of the parties. Nowadays, it is also a common phenomenon that political communication and contact with the voters is shifted to social media platforms, in which case the website may be neglected, it is less frequently updated, or, in extreme cases, it is even closed by the organisations, so that the documents of relevance to the research are not available. So, these parties were not included in the research.

The classification of ethnoregional parties is therefore based on an analysis of the main objectives manifested within the parties' basic documents. As the aim was to categorise them by general objectives, the statutes and framework programmes were the main

basis for the analysis. Election programmes, and other information on the websites ("about us", "objectives", etc.) were analysed only in their absence. To explore these objectives, a qualitative content analysis was carried out on the parts of each document that contained information on basic non-territorial and territorial demands. To explore these objectives, a qualitative content analysis was carried out on the parts of each document that contain information on basic non-territorial and territorial needs.

For the analysis, the relevant and mandatory chapter of the party statutes, usually entitled "objectives of the organisation", was used. If the organisation had a general framework programme, the descriptions contained in it were used for typing, as these are generally more detailed texts containing more and more precise information than the statutes. If no organisational document was available on the party's website, but there was some official information on the objectives ("about us", "our mission" sub-page), this was considered for the classification. However, for constitutional or strategic reasons, a party may not necessarily set out its true aspirations in its documents. To verify and validate the results, a questionnaire was sent to the parties, but due to the low response rate, this could not be considered in the analysis. This potential for error was considered in the research, and therefore the results were validated with information from other data sources and databases. All parties are included in the typology based on the "highest level" of its aspirations. Parties can be grouped into categories based on their documents, within which further subcategories can be developed that include important differences.

Dandoy (2010) grouped ethnoregional parties into three main categories that pose different challenges to their environment. Protectionist parties' objects are related to issues of cultural autonomy and political representation, i.e., these parties fight for the recognition of their community, the elimination of discrimination, the guarantee or even the extension of their rights (conservative), or for the representation of the community in the Parliament and the change of the electoral system (participationist). Decentralist parties formulate their territorial demands within the state, seeking to transform the vertical division of power and to change internal borders. A distinction can be made between a subset of parties that seek self-government exclusively for the region inhabited by the community (autonomist), a subset of parties that seek general autonomy, i.e., broader autonomy for all territorial units of the country (federalist), and organisations that see the region as the depository of sovereignty and that wish to decide for themselves what powers to delegate to the state level (confederalist). The territorial demands of secessionist parties go beyond the current national borders, and they are therefore already being expressed in the international arena. In these cases, the territorial claims are directed towards a well-defined, specific territory, and the ownership of which these parties wish to change. This can take the form of a demand for the creation of an independent state (independentist), the annexation of a territory to an existing state (irredentist) or the annexation of a region to another state (rattachist).

Results

De Winter's (2001) definition on ethnoregional parties anticipates the possibility of categorising organisations and setting up typologies. The parties' objectives can vary from cultural protectionism to separatism, and this points to the factors on which parties can be classified into different types. Classifications were generally developed based on Western European parties. These typologies categorise ethnoregional aspirations into cultural and territorial types, and within the territorial one, they distinguish between intra-state and cross-border attempts, with significant differences in terms of categories and approaches by scholars (Snyder 1982, Rudolph and Thompson 1985, Mikesell and Murphy 1991, Keating 1996, De Winter 1998, Ishiyama and Breuning 1998, Coakley 2002, Wolff 2004, Seiler 2005, Gómez-Reino Cachafeiro et al. 2006, Jenne 2007, Dandoy 2010).

The different development trajectories of the Western and (Central and) Eastern European regions make it difficult to treat them together or even to compare them, so typologies typically do not include CEE parties. Moreover, the only comprehensive typology on ethnic politicisation in CEE was developed by Bugajski in the early '90s (Bugajski 1995), which, in terms of methodology, undoubtedly fits into the range of Western European classifications. In his basic work, he distinguished five stages of ethnic politics: cultural revivalism, political autonomism, territorial self-determinism, separatism, and irredentism. In the following, the types (Figure 1), and subtypes of ethnoregional parties in CEE are described, based on the analysed party documents: protectionist (conservative, participationist), decentralist (exclusively decentralist, regionalist, autonomist, federalist), and separatist ([r]attachist) parties.

Most ethnoregional parties in the CEE region represent protectionist claims. As seen above, democratisation, state and nation building took place in parallel after the transition, thus the rebuilding of different national or ethnic identities have sometimes worked against each other, generating conflicts. Within this paper, the detailed rights granted to minorities is not analysed, but there are obviously significant differences between minorities among countries, and even within the same country (Poland, for example, has established three categories of ethnic groups in the country, with different rights: national minorities, ethnic minorities, and regional languages).

Typically, communities represented by conservative parties already have a legal status and definitive individual and/or collective ethnic rights, but, naturally, they seek to maintain and to extend them as widely as possible (e.g. Poles in Lithuania, Croats in Serbia, Serbs in Kosovo). The most frequent demands include the elimination of discrimination against minorities, the expansion of the use of the mother tongue, the provision of education in the mother tongue, finally, the provision and expansion of the conditions necessary for the protection and preservation of identity. In CEE, especially in the Balkans, it is a peculiar phenomenon that the ethnic and religious

cleavages sometimes coincide (typically the case of Albanians, Bosniaks and Turks), and the parties wish to ensure the free exercise of religion in parallel with the expansion of minority rights as well.

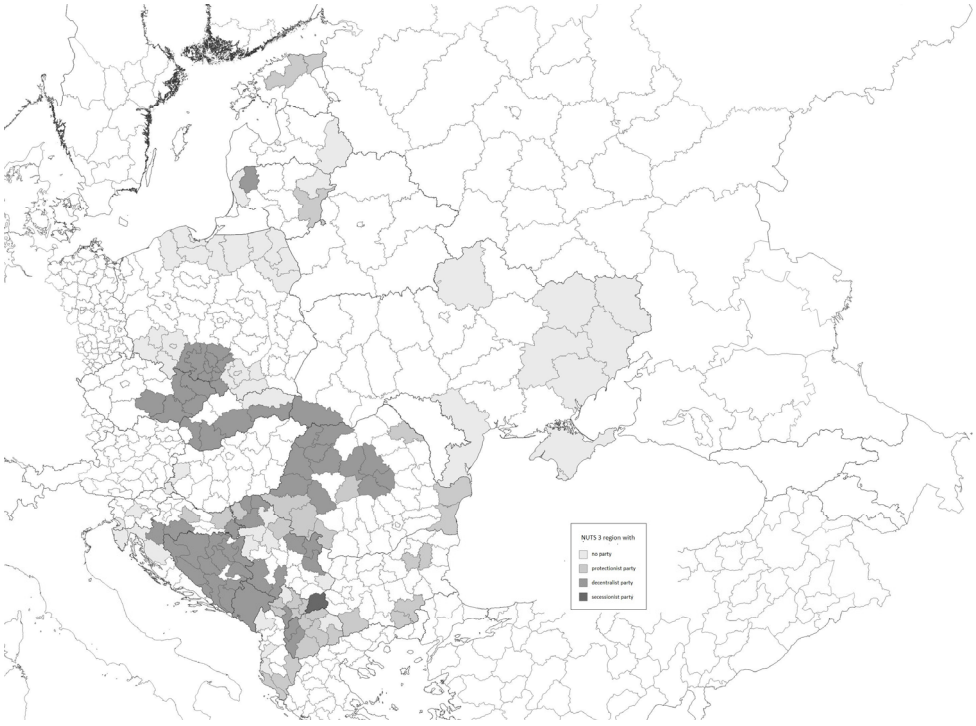

Figure 1. NUTS 3 regions by party formation by ethnoregional communities and types of ethnoregional parties in CEE

Note: As there are no defined NUTS 3 regions in Montenegro, the whole country is marked on the map

States in CEE use different solutions to ensure the representation of minorities. Juberías (2000) categorises the states as opposer, ignorer, supporter, and granter of ethnic representation, while the states are making ethnicity the basis of political representation. Today, there is no country that prohibits ethnic organisation in practice, although the differences between countries in electoral systems are significant – there is a wide range of solutions: no guaranteed representation or special electoral preference (Baltic States, Czech Republic, and Slovakia); electoral preference (Poland, Serbia); guaranteed mandate (Kosovo, Romania, and Slovenia); minority constituency (Croatia, Montenegro). However, the benefits of electoral systems do not always apply to all ethnic groups in a given state. A group of parties wish to strengthen the ethnic communities' political representation through changing the electoral method, by ensuring (more) guaranteed seat in the Parliament, a proportional representation for the community in the Parliament (e.g. Turks in North Macedonia), or other, by local representative bodies, and by reinforcing the local governmental participation.

Decentralist parties, in general, formulate territorial claims that go beyond the ethnic rights discussed above. According to these parties, only territorial self-governments can ensure the interests of ethnic communities. In all cases, the aim of the organisations is to claim autonomy for the area inhabited by the ethnoregional community. This area can be an existing, delimited territorial unit or a region that can only be created through administrative reform. In CEE, the lack of general decentralisation, the insufficient depth of vertical power sharing and the disparities between natural, sometimes historical regions and the artificial administrative units have given rise to four subtypes of decentralist parties.

First, exclusively decentralist parties do not strive for a radical transformation of the state power system, although they are mostly dissatisfied with the current territorial structure, and their demands for decentralisation can be realised through territorial reforms and internal border corrections. Parties belonging to this subtype often hide their aspirations in the regional categories created in the European Union and, because of integration, they are almost completely banishing the radical term 'territorial autonomy' from their vocabulary. Mainly these organisations are strongly integrated into the party system, they have parliamentary representation, and they sometimes hold government positions as well. To maintain their coalition potential, they have a specific interest in moderate politicisation and the careful and considered demand for territorial needs.

Although regionalisation is also a form of decentralisation, it creates a more stable situation, providing constitutional status for the established territorial units. Along this argument, regionalist parties can be distinguished. Some of these organisations advocate a reorganisation of the territorial division of the state based on natural, historical, economic, and cultural borders (Hungarians in Slovakia), while others promote regionalisation, even in its asymmetric form (some Hungarian parties in Romania, Bakk and Székely 2012), as a kind of modernisation reform, and a genuine European solution. In the latter cases, parties expect that regionalisation is easier to accept than territorial autonomy, which is perceived as a potential threat in the region.

Autonomist parties do not strive to put their demands into a form acceptable to the majority society, so these organisations focus only on their own region (Bosniaks in Serbia, Silesians in Poland). A group of parties wants autonomy for the historic region (Sandžak, Upper Silesia) inhabited by the ethnoregional community, which previously had independence or a special status, and in some cases after the transformation of the administrative boundaries or the territorial division. Another group of parties envisages the creation of a smaller self-governing territorial unit within the framework of territorial autonomy (Hungarians in Serbia or Ukraine). Such solutions typically arise in multi-ethnic regions, which currently exist either in a unit with a special status (Vojvodina) or in a unitary structure (Transcarpathia).

The federalist party is a rare phenomenon in CEE. Federalism – if it has no traditions of state organisation – can be the guarantee of a peaceful coexistence or living side by side in multi-ethnic states and societies with pillars. In the region, during the transition, the federations broke up peacefully (Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union) or through armed conflicts (Yugoslavia). The need for federalisation is typical among ethno-regional organisations operating in historical (Moravia) or multi-ethnic regions (Transcarpathia) that have developed permanently separately from the rest of the state. Currently, only Bosnia and Herzegovina have a federal (but not organically formed) structure. Croatian parties (most of them) wish to transform the federal system by the creation of the third, Croatian entity, on the territory of the Federation of BiH.

The quasi-absence of the secessionist type can be traced to recent ethnic conflicts and wars. As a result of dissolution of federations, many ethnic communities and nations have established their own independent states, and thus such aspirations in CEE have (temporarily?) disappeared. Of course, the creation of new state borders – or their establishment and definition in peace negotiations – new communities were forced into minority existence. The dissatisfaction with the situation takes the form of demands for border adjustments, but only to a minimal extent. Based on the examined party documents – although the literature suggests that several parties can be characterised by secessionist aspirations – only one organisation could be classified in the (r)attachist subtype.

Discussion

In line with its original objectives, the present study has classified ethnoregional parties of the CEE region into: protectionist, decentralist and secessionist types, following the Western European typologies. Given the previously described problems, it is not surprising that almost all examined organisations could be classified as conservative. It is worth noting that parties of the non-recognised, or constitutionally-legally not determined ethnoregional communities, have also a "higher" territorial demand based on their historical past (antecedents) and historical regions. This is the case in some geographical-historical regions (Moravia, Pirin Macedonia, Samogitia, Timok Valley, Upper Silesia) where parties represent communities whose independent existence is at least disputed. The majority society considers these communities as a subset of the nation, and their language as a dialect of the majority language. In states with a significant minority (Albanians in Northern Macedonia, Hungarians in Romania or Slovakia, Serbs in Montenegro), ethnoregional parties represent communities whose status is recognised in practice, but they are fighting for constitutional amendment or at least legislative reforms to acknowledge them as a minority, to regularise their status as an equal state-forming nation, or to affirm their existing practical ethnic rights. These parties also have territorial claims due to the communities' indigenous status, size, and territorial concentration.

Related to this, one may legitimately ask whether the chosen research methodology was appropriate to establish the parties' objectives beyond reasonable doubt. The answer is clearly no. It is obvious that there is often a discrepancy between what is stated in the documents and what is said in the political arena. The gaps in the documents and the differences in its content are also striking, given that small parties have much more limited (material and human) resources, the electoral participation of some organisations is often nominal, and therefore the range of their written documents is more limited and less developed. However, there was no other somewhat coherent base available for a more comprehensive mapping, comparison, and typology of ethnoregional parties.

In the light of all this, it is necessary to verify and to validate the results presented above by analysing the relevant findings of databases compiled by other authors. It should be noted that no data set was found to cover all cases in our research, whether communities or parties, so the validation cannot be complete. The verification of the results is firstly carried out in a broader framework, and then typological classifications of Hungarian parties in Romania (Hungarian Democratic Alliance of Romania, RMDSZ; Hungarian Civic Party, MPP; Hungarian People's Party of Transylvania, EMNP – the latter two organisations merged in 2022 under the name of the Transylvanian Hungarian Alliance, but they are still listed here as separate parties; the documents of the new party are not yet available) is validated, of which information were found in almost all databases.

Regarding the databases used for validation, it should be stressed below that they cannot be used to check the totality of our detailed results, but only to check the general findings. In our research, we have tried to examine all ethnoregional parties in the region – even this will likely contain outdated elements due to the dynamism of the party activity. The other databases available to us, however, contain information on a much narrower range of organisations due to the different research approaches. The FraTerr database (Elias et al. 2023), for example, cannot be used for general validation, as it mainly covers Western European organisations.

The most comprehensive dataset is undoubtedly the Manifesto Project Dataset (Lehmann et al. 2022), which contains information about the election programmes of all those parties that gained one or two mandates (this is the case in CEE) in the national elections to the lower chamber, as well as those parties that were relevant actors in the past. Since not the electoral success but setting up candidates or lists in an election was the selection criterion in the research, information on a narrower range of parties is available in this database. For validation, the variable on support for decentralisation (per301) was used – the variable indicates the percentage of the text of the given election programme that addresses the issue of decentralisation. The average value of this variable among organisations classified as protectionist in the database was 2.58%,

with extreme values of 0% (Movement for Rights and Freedoms, BG), and 7.75% (Alliance of Independent Social Democrats, HR). Among the so-called decentralist parties, the average value is 4.31%, and the two extremes are 0% (Democratic Community of Magyars of Vojvodina, RS), and 9.81% (German Minority, PL). Although the difference between the average scores of the two groups is not spectacular or extreme, it does provide some justification for the distinction, although it does not seem to apply to the programs of all parties. While recognising the possibility of mistake, the difference can also be explained by the fact that the main objectives set out in the parties' framework programmes are not necessarily reflected in the programme for a given election year, since its content may be influenced by other factors (e.g. current political considerations, crisis situations), even at the expense of the emphasis on the core objectives.

The second round of the EPAC dataset (Zuber and Szöcsik 2019) contains policy positions of 222 political parties evaluated by experts in 20 multinational European democracies. Ethnoregional (ethnonational in that research) parties were included in the database if they won at least one seat in the national Parliament, or at least one seat and at least 3% of the sub-national vote in at least one region as of September 2016. Non-ethnic parties were entered in the dataset if they obtained at least 5 percent in national elections according to the above conditions. In addition, all EPAC parties in 2011 were included in the survey regardless of their current electoral success. For validation, the differences between the variable expressing support for territorial autonomy (ter) and the variables expressing the importance of cultural (culsal) and territorial autonomy (tersal) were used in the case of every ethnoregional party. As far as territorial demands are concerned, based on the average of the experts' impressions, they are more serious matters than can be inferred from the party documents. In general, it is true that in the case of the parties that we classify as decentralist and even secessionist, the experts also believe that the parties support territorial autonomy by orders of magnitude more than protectionist parties. However, there are of course exceptions. For example, for Lithuanian Poles (Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania), the average value of 7.6 (on a scale of 10) seems a bit high and exaggerated, while for Kosovo Serbs (Serb List), the expert assessment (9.9) is probably closer to reality than the non-territorial target system that can be read from the party programs. But, we cannot find an example of what we call a decentralist organisation being characterised by experts as a party that does not support territorial autonomy. With a few exceptions (Democratic Party of Albanians, RS; Serbian Democratic Party, BIH; National Democratic Revival, MK; Forca for Unity, ME), we see that cultural autonomy is more important for parties than territorial autonomy, regardless of the type of ethnoregional party. The expert evaluations confirm our previous statement that there is much to be done in fundamental minority rights in the CEE region, and that all parties are formulating goals in this area. At the same time, it is also true that the difference among protectionist parties between the importance of territorial and non-territorial goals is

greater (2.5 compared to 1.1) than in the case of decentralist and secessionist parties (for which, in some cases, the territorial aspect is even more important).

Although within the decentralist party type several categories can be developed and even hierarchised, these types are not necessarily experienced. In this paper, we used a 'state perspective' approach to assess each aspiration and to rank them according to their (potential) threat to territorial integrity. In this approach, territorial autonomy can be seen as a more radical demand (e.g. a first step towards an independent state) than the general or even asymmetric regionalisation. At the same time, from the point of view of state structure and vertical power sharing, territorial autonomy, when implemented in a unitary state typical of CEE, leads to more limited territorial change than regionalisation, which is limited to a single region and it is, therefore, a less radical form.

In the light of the above, the claim that the RMDSZ is proposing a more radical solution than the other two Hungarian parties in Romania should be interpreted. The correctness of the typological classification is confirmed by the answers to the questionnaire survey (which was originally part of the research but it was not used due to many non-responses; its purpose was to supplement, specify and clarify the characteristics and aspirations of organisations), in which the RMDSZ indicated the option of "territorial self-government within a unitary state" as the most ideal solution for the interests of the community, while the EMNP chose the option of "territorial self-government with asymmetric decentralisation/regionalisation". It is also important to note that when indicating the main aspiration of the parties, the RMDSZ did not indicate a territorial objective, while the EMNP did.

The fact that there are different emphases between the parties' priorities and the importance of each priority is also highlighted by the two EPAC surveys conducted so far (Szöcsik and Zuber 2015, Zuber and Szöcsik 2019). In the first EPAC survey, only the RMDSZ and the MPP participated, and the experts' opinion is that territorial autonomy is more important for the latter organisation. In the 2017 expert study, the EMNP was also included. According to the results, the priorities of the MPP and the EMNP are in the same order, with territorial autonomy following ethnonationalism, while cultural autonomy is the least important, with territorial autonomy being the last priority for the RMDSZ.

Similar to our research, the database of the FraTerr project (Elias et al. 2023), which is based on a detailed examination and coding of segments of party documents, confirms the above: according to the latest documents processed in detail, a significant part of the territorial demands (TD) of the EMNP (manifesto, 2012) aim at the creation of a federal structure (although we classified the party into the regionalist type based on its explicit objectives), while the RMDSZ (manifesto, 2016) places greater emphasis on changing the distribution of power instead of the state structure. The MPP's document (political statement, 2008) also emphasises the need to transfer competencies to

subnational levels, but the framework program (2009) already shares the EMNP's point on asymmetric regionalism.

This study has addressed only a relatively narrow segment of the topic of ethnoregional communities and parties. Although the results contribute to our knowledge of the wide range of ethnoregional parties in the region, the research cannot be considered completed. In the future, it is worth comparing and complementing the results with those of other relevant research on ethnic spatialisation and dynamics (Rotaru et al. 2023), the socio-economic consequences of identity assumption (Schafft and Kulcsár 2015), identity change (Creţan et al. 2014), the politicisation of identity (Muś 2021), the (potential) role of ethnic groups in the development policy (Péti and Mozga 2023), ethnic mobilisation (Olzak 1983, Jiglau and Gherghina 2011), motherland policies towards abroad communities and its consequences, and the response of majority parties (Doiciar and Creţan 2021).

Conclusions

A comprehensive analysis of ethnoregional communities, regions, and parties in Central and Eastern Europe requires further study. In our research, we have sought to identify ethnoregional communities and their parties in Central and Eastern Europe, which, to our knowledge, has not been done on such a broad scale before. In this study, we have shown how ethnoregional parties can be grouped according to the objectives that can be extracted from the documents of the organisations, using a classification similar to Western typologies, and how they can be characterised along the lines of their main objectives. The results show what non-territorial or territorial objectives are present in the CEE region and what kind of conflicts can be expected along these lines. The database containing the data collected during the research, which will be made publicly available, will provide an opportunity for further analysis of ethnoregional parties and communities.

There is no doubt that the roots, paths, perspectives, and advocacy strengths of the parties in CEE are different from those in Western Europe, and radical changes are not expected any time soon. The drivers and experiences of ethnic mobilisation are quite different in this region, and the short democratic period since the transition has not been able to overcome these determinants. In line with Myśliwiec's (2016) argument, the importance of examining ethnoregional parties within the CEE in terms of aspirations and changes in aspirations, as well as other approaches, should be highlighted. Any such attempt and analysis can only capture a snapshot in time, since, as Bugajski (1995) and Schrijver (2006) emphasise, the aims of organisations are constantly changing, and their aspirations are moving to a new level and a new stage of ethnic politicisation. One source of this change can be the reaction of the state and other actors in the political system, which can strengthen or weaken the aspirations, role, and potential of

ethnoregional parties (Rokkan and Urwin 1982). The range of state responses to ethnic or ethnoregional demands can vary from disregard to restriction to a wide spectrum of electoral concessions (Juberías 1998, Juberías 2000). Experience shows that negotiated conflict resolution, institutional restructuring and political coalition building can temporarily work towards moderating the aspirations (Gadjanova 2015).

The results of the analysis clearly show that the ethnoregional demands of CEE are dominated by protectionist and decentralist demands. Among the protectionist parties, the conservative subtype is the most populous, which highlights the insufficient level of individual and collective rights of minorities. The participation subgroup consists of Balkan parties, which mostly wish to strengthen their already existing parliamentary or local representation by modifying the electoral system. Despite many theoretical and structural differences, the territorial claims are in practice all directed towards territorial autonomy. The different forms of aspirations are determined by history, tradition, the territorial organisation of states, the historical, multi-ethnic character or the former autonomy of the regions seeking self-determination. The states in CEE are reluctant to guarantee any form of deep territorial self-government, as they are protective of their sovereignty. Consequently, decentralist and regionalist parties use modern and EU terms instead of the radical term 'territorial autonomy' to gain social acceptance and to dispel the concerns about territorial integrity.

During the transition and the Balkan wars, and in the years since then, ethnoregional communities have demanded the creation of their own state instead of territorial autonomies. Accordingly, new state borders were formed explosively in the CEE region, and perhaps by now all states that were desired have been created. It follows from the above that today we hardly come across secessionist aspirations (at least as described in the documents). At the same time, such far-reaching and ethnoregional events as the current war in Ukraine can also affect the territorial processes in the region. However, it is not yet known how the war and its outcome will affect the ethnic relations in CEE, and whether it will radicalise or soften ethnoregional aspirations. It is likely that a possible loss of territory by Ukraine would trigger processes with unforeseeable consequences in CEE, especially in the parts of the Balkans with fragile stability.

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Appendix 1. Ethnoregional parties of Central and Eastern Europe

State	Ethnoregional community represented by the party	Name of the ethnoregional party in English	Official name of the ethnoregional party	Abbreviation	Type	Subtype	Basis of classification (type of party document)	Year of publication
Albania	Greek	Greek Minority for the Future	Minoreti Etnik Grek Per The Ardhmen	MEGA	Protectionist	Conservative	Program	Missing
Albania	Macedonian	Macedonian Alliance for European Integration	Aleanca Maqedonase për Integrimin European	MAEI	Protectionist	Conservative	Other	Missing
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatian	Croatian Party of Rights of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Hrvatska stranka prava Bosne i Herzegovine	HSP BiH	Decentralist	Federalist	Other	2015
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatian	Croatian Democratic Union 1990	Hrvatska demokratska zajednica 1990	HDZ 1990	Decentralist	Federalist	Program	Missing
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatian	Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Hrvatska demokratska zajednica Bosne i Herzegovine	HDZ BiH	Decentralist	Federalist	Program	2019
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatian	Croatian Republican Party	Hrvatska republikanska stranka	HRS	Decentralist	Federalist	Program	Missing
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatian	The Croatian Peasant Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Hrvatska seljačka stranka Bosne i Herzegovine	HSS BiH	Protectionist	Participationist	Statute	2012

State	Ethnoregional community represented by the party	Name of the ethnoregional party in English	Official name of the ethnoregional party	Abbreviation	Type	Subtype	Basis of classification (type of party document)	Year of publication
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosniak	Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina	Stranka za Bosnu i Herzegovinu	SBiH	Decentralist	Excusively Decentralist	Program	Missing
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosniak	Party of Democratic Action	Stranka demokratske akcije	SDA	Decentralist	Excusively Decentralist	Program	2019
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosniak	Movement of Democratic Action	Pokret demokratske akcije	PDA	Decentralist	Excusively Decentralist	Other	Missing
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Serb	Democratic National Alliance	Partija demokratskog progresa	PDP	Protectionist	Conservative	Program	2015
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Serb	Serb Democratic Party	Srpska demokratska stranka	SDS	Decentralist	Excusively Decentralist	Program	2010
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Serb	United Srpska	Ujedinjena Srpska	US	Decentralist	Excusively Decentralist	Program	Missing
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Serb	Alliance of Independent Social Democrats	Savez nezavisnih socijaldemokrata	SNSD	Protectionist	Conservative	Program	2019
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Serb	Demokratikus Nemzeti Szövetség	Demokratski narodni savez	DNS	Protectionist	Conservative	Program	Missing
Bulgaria	Macedonian	United Macedonian Organization Ilinden–Pirin	Obedinena makedonska organizatsiya: Ilinden–Pirin	OMO “Ilinden” – Pirin	Protectionist	Conservative	Program	Missing

State	Ethnoregional community represented by the party	Name of the ethnoregional party in English	Official name of the ethnoregional party	Abbreviation	Type	Subtype	Basis of classification (type of party document)	Year of publication
Bulgaria	Turkish	Movement for Rights and Freedoms	Dvizhenie za prava i svobodi	DPS	Protectionist	Conservative	Statute	2016
Croatia	Czech	Federation of Czechs in the Republic of Croatia	Savez Čeha u Republici Hrvatskoj	SCRH	Protectionist	Conservative	Statute	2017
Croatia	Hungarian	Democratic Community of Hungarians in Croatia	Demokratska zajednica Mađara Hrvatske	DZMH	Protectionist	Conservative	Statute	2010
Croatia	Slovakian	Association of Slovaks	Savez Slovaka	SS	Protectionist	Conservative	Statute	2015
Croatia	Serb	Party of Danube Serbs	Partija podunavskih Srba	PP	Protectionist	Participationist	Program	2016
Croatia	Serb	Independent Democratic Serbian Party	Samostalna demokratska srpska stranka	SDSS	Decentralist	Excusively Decentralist	Program	1997
Czech Republic	Moravian	The Moravians	Moravané	Moravané	Decentralist	Federalist	Program	Missing
Czech Republic	Moravian	Moravian Land Movement	Moravské zemské hnutí	MZH	Decentralist	Federalist	Program	Missing

State	Ethnoregional community represented by the party	Name of the ethnoregional party in English	Official name of the ethnoregional party	Abbreviation	Type	Subtype	Basis of classification (type of party document)	Year of publication
Estonia	Russian	Estonian United Left Party	Eestimaa Ühendatud Vasakpartei	EÜVP	Protectionist	Conservative	Program	2014
Kosovo	Ashkali	Movement for Integration	Lëvizja për Integrim	LpB	Protectionist	Conservative	Program	2018
Kosovo	Bosniak	Social Democratic Union	Socijaldemokratska Unija	SDU	Decentralist	Excusively Decentralist	Statute	Missing
Kosovo	Egyptian	New Democratic Initiative of Kosovo	Iniciativa e Re Demokrarike e Kosovës	IRDK	Protectionist	Conservative	Program	Missing
Kosovo	Egyptian	Egyptian Liberal Party	Partia Liberale Egjiptiane	PLE	Protectionist	Conservative	Statute	2018
Kosovo	Gorani	Civic Initiative of Gora	Građanska Inicijativa Gore	GIG	Protectionist	Conservative	Program	2013
Kosovo	Macedonian	Democratic Party of the Macedonians in Kosovo	Partia Demokratike e Maqedonasve të Kosovës	PDMK	Protectionist	Conservative	Other	Missing
Kosovo	Serbian	Serb List	Lista Serbe	LS	Protectionist	Conservative	Statute	2017
Kosovo	Turkish	Turkish Democratic Party of Kosovo	Partia Demokratike Turke e Kosovës	KDTP	Protectionist	Conservative	Program	Missing

State	Ethnoregional community represented by the party	Name of the ethnoregional party in English	Official name of the ethnoregional party	Abbreviation	Type	Subtype	Basis of classification (type of party document)	Year of publication
Lithuania	Polish	Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania – Christian Families Alliance	Lietuvos lenkų rinkimų akcija – Krikščioniškų šeimų sąjunga	LLRA–KŠS	Protectionist	Conservative	Program	2012
Lithuania	Russian	Lithuanian Russian Union	Lietuvos rusų sąjunga	LRS	Protectionist	Conservative	Statute	2005
Lithuania	Samogit	Samogitian Party	Žemaičių partija	ZP	Decentralist	Autonomist	Program	Missing
Montenegro	Albanian	New Democratic Force	Nova Demokratska Snaga	FORCA	Protectionist	Participationist	Statute	2011
Montenegro	Bosniak	Bosniak Party	Bošnjačka Stranka	BS	Decentralist	Regionalist	Statute	2021
Montenegro	Bosniak	Justice and Reconciliation Party	Stranka Pravde i Pomirenja	SPP (M)	Decentralist	Regionalist	Program	2017
Montenegro	Croatian	Croatian Civic Initiative	Hrvatska građanska inicijativa	HGI	Protectionist	Participationist	Program	2013
Montenegro	Serb	New Serb Democracy	Nova srpska demokratija	NSD	Protectionist	Participationist	Program	2009
Montenegro	Serb	Democratic People's Party in Montenegro	Demokratska narodna partija Crne Gore	DNP	Protectionist	Conservative	Program	2014
North Macedonia	Albanian	Alternative	Alternativa	A	Protectionist	Conservative	Statute	2021

State	Ethnoregional community represented by the party	Name of the ethnoregional party in English	Official name of the ethnoregional party	Abbreviation	Type	Subtype	Basis of classification (type of party document)	Year of publication
North Macedonia	Albanian	Democratic Union for Integration	Demokratska unija za integracija	DUI	Protectionist	Conservative	Statute	2014
North Macedonia	Albanian	The Alliance for the Albanians	Alijansa za Albancite	AA	Protectionist	Participationist	Program	2022
North Macedonia	Albanian	Besa Movement	Dviženje Besa	BESA	Decentralist	Excusively Decentralist	Program	2014
North Macedonia	Albanian	National Democratic Revival	Nacionalna Demokratska Prerodba	RDK	Decentralist	Excusively Decentralist	Other	Missing
North Macedonia	Bosniak	Bosniak Democratic Union	Bošnjački Demokratski Savez	BDU	Protectionist	Conservative	Other	Missing
North Macedonia	Serb	Democratic Party of Serbs in Macedonia	Demokratska Partija na Srbite vo Makedonija	DPSM	Protectionist	Participationist	Other	Missing
North Macedonia	Turkish	Turkish Democratic Party	Demokratska Partija na Turcite	TDP	Protectionist	Conservative	Statute	2021
North Macedonia	Turkish	Turkish Action Party	Türk Hareket Partisi	THP	Protectionist	Conservative	Statute	Missing
North Macedonia	Turkish	Movement for National Unity of Turks in Macedonia	Türk Milli Birlik Hareketi	TMBH	Protectionist	Participationist	Program	2006

State	Ethnoregional community represented by the party	Name of the ethnoregional party in English	Official name of the ethnoregional party	Abbreviation	Type	Subtype	Basis of classification (type of party document)	Year of publication
Poland	German	Social-Cultural Society of Germans in Opole Silesia	Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne Niemców na Śląsku Opolskim	TSKN	Decentralist	Regionalist	Program	2019
Poland	Silesian	Silesians Together	Ślonzoki Razem	SR	Decentralist	Autonomist	Program	2018
Romania	Croatian	Union of Croats of Romania	Uniunea Croaților din România	UCR	Protectionist	Conservative	Statute	2012
Romania	Czech, Slovakian	Democratic Union of Slovaks and Czechs of Romania	Uniunea Democratică a Slovacilor și Cehilor din România	UDSC	Protectionist	Conservative	Other	Missing
Romania	German	Democratic Forum of Germans in Romania	Forumul Democrat al Germanilor din România	FDGR	Protectionist	Conservative	Statute	2021
Romania	Greek	Hellenic Union of Romania	Uniunea Elenă din România	UER	Protectionist	Conservative	Statute	1995
Romania	Hungarian	Hungarian People's Party of Transylvania *	Partidul Popular Maghiar din Transilvania	PPMT	Decentralist	Regionalist	Program	2012
Romania	Hungarian	Hungarian Civic Party *	Partidul Civic Maghiar	PCM	Decentralist	Regionalist	Program	Missing

State	Ethnoregional community represented by the party	Name of the ethnoregional party in English	Official name of the ethnoregional party	Abbreviation	Type	Subtype	Basis of classification (type of party document)	Year of publication
Romania	Hungarian	Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania	Uniunea Democrată Maghiară din România	UDMR	Decentralist	Autonomist	Program	2015
Romania	Macedonian	Association of Macedonians of Romania	Asociația Macedonenilor din România	AMR	Protectionist	Conservative	Other	Missing
Romania	Russian-Lipovan	Community of Lipovan Russians in Romania	Comunitatea Rușilor Lipoveni din România	CRLR	Protectionist	Conservative	Statute	2017
Romania	Rusyn	Cultural Union of Ruthenians of Romania	Uniunea Culturală a Rutenilor din România	UCRR	Protectionist	Conservative	Other	Missing
Romania	Serb	Union of Serbs of Romania	Uniunea Sârbilor din România	USR	Protectionist	Conservative	Program	Missing
Romania	Tatar	Democratic Union of Turkish-Muslim Tatars of Romania	Uniunea Democrata a Tatarilor Turco-Musulmani din Romania	UDTTMR	Protectionist	Conservative	Other	Missing
Romania	Turkish	Democratic Turkish Union of Romania	Uniunea Democrată Turcă din România	UDTR	Protectionist	Conservative	Statute	2020

State	Ethnoregional community represented by the party	Name of the ethnoregional party in English	Official name of the ethnoregional party	Abbreviation	Type	Subtype	Basis of classification (type of party document)	Year of publication
Serbia	Albanian	Albanian Democratic Party	Partia Demokratike Shqiptare	PDSH	Secessionist	(R)Attachist	Program	2016
Serbia	Albanian	Alternative for Changes	Alternativa za promene	AP	Decentralist	Excusively Decentralist	Statute	2015
Serbia	Bosniak	Sandzak Democratic Party	Sandžačke Demokratske Partije	SDP	Protectionist	Conservative	Statute	2009
Serbia	Bosniak	Bosniak Civil Party	Bošnjačka građanska stranka,	BGS	Protectionist	Conservative	Program	2009
Serbia	Bosniak	Bosniak National Party	Bošnjačke narodne stranke	BNS	Decentralist	Excusively Decentralist	Statute	2012
Serbia	Bosniak	Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak	Stranka Demokratske Akcije Sandžaka	SDA S	Decentralist	Regionalist	Program	2009
Serbia	Bosniak	Sandzak National Party	Sandžačka Narodna Partija	SNP	Decentralist	Regionalist	Program	2009
Serbia	Bosniak	Justice and Reconciliation Party	Stranka Pravde i Pomirenja	SPP (S)	Decentralist	Regionalist	Program	2017
Serbia	Bosniak	Bosniak Democratic Union	Bošnjačke demokratske zajednice	BDZ	Decentralist	Autonomist	Program	Missing
Serbia	Bosniak	Party for Sandzak	Stranka za Sandžak	SS	Decentralist	Autonomist	Program	2009

State	Ethnoregional community represented by the party	Name of the ethnoregional party in English	Official name of the ethnoregional party	Abbreviation	Type	Subtype	Basis of classification (type of party document)	Year of publication
Serbia	Bunjevac	Association of Bačka Bunjevci	Savez bačkih Bunjevaca	SBB	Protectionist	Participationist	Program	2010
Serbia	Croatian	Democratic Alliance of Croats in Vojvodina	Demokratski savez Hrvata u Vojvodini	DSHV	Protectionist	Conservative	Statute	2009
Serbia	Hungarian	Republican Party	Republikanska Stranka – Republikánus Párt	PC–RP	Protectionist	Conservative	Program	2015
Serbia	Hungarian	Democratic Fellowship of Vojvodina Hungarians	Demokratska zajednica vojvođanskih Mađara	DZVM	Decentralist	Autonomist	Program	2010
Serbia	Hungarian	The Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	Savez vojvođanskih Mađara	SVM	Decentralist	Autonomist	Program	2004
Serbia	Hungarian	Hungarian Movement	Magyar Mozgalom – Mađarski pokret	MM–MP	Decentralist	Autonomist	Program	2017
Serbia	Montenegrin	Montenegrin Party	Crnogorska partija	CP	Protectionist	Conservative	Statute	2010
Serbia	Rusyn	Together for Vojvodina	Zajedno za Vojvodina	ZzV	Protectionist	Conservative	Program	2011
Serbia	Slovakian	Green Party	Zelena Stranka	ZS	Protectionist	Conservative	Program	2014

State	Ethnoregional community represented by the party	Name of the ethnoregional party in English	Official name of the ethnoregional party	Abbreviation	Type	Subtype	Basis of classification (type of party document)	Year of publication
Serbia	Vlach	Vlach Party	Vlaska Stranka	VS	Decentralist	Regionalist	Statute	2011
Serbia	Vlach	Vlach National Party	Vlaška narodna stranka	VNS	Protectionist	Conservative	Program	2010
Slovakia	Hungarian	Hungarian Christian Democratic Alliance	Maďarská kresťanskodemokratická aliancia – Magyar Kereszténydemokrata Szövetség	MKDA-MKDSZ	Decentralist	Regionalist	Program	2013
Slovakia	Hungarian	Hungarian Forum	Magyar Fórum – Maďarské Fórum	MF	Decentralist	Regionalist	Program	2019
Slovakia	Hungarian	Alliance	Szövetség – Aliancia	Aliancia	Decentralist	Regionalist	Program	2022
Ukraine	Hungarian	Hungarian Democratic Federation in Ukraine	Demokratychna Spilka Uhortsiv Ukrayiny	DSUU	Decentralist	Autonomist	Program	2021
Ukraine	Hungarian	Hungarian Cultural Federation in Transcarpathia	Tovarystvo Uhors'koyi Kul'tury Zakarpattya	TUKZ	Decentralist	Federalist	Program	Missing

**The Transylvanian Hungarian People's Party and the Hungarian Civic Party, which have merged into the Transylvanian Hungarian Alliance, are still listed separately here. The documents of the new party are not yet available.*

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ASSESSING THE VIABILITY OF ROMANIA'S NEWLY ESTABLISHED METROPOLITAN AREAS

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Abstract: The legislation of new metropolitan areas in Romania follows the complicated and confusing experience of previous metropolitan areas, instilling a sense of excessive caution among both public authorities and researchers. A review of the literature demonstrates the prevalence of theoretical, methodological, and sectoral approaches when dealing with this functional frame of territorial delineation. Our research proposes an exploratory analysis of the major metropolitan areas developed around county seats, in order to understand the medium and long-term dynamics affecting the development of these territorial structures that are contingent on the local governance. By using a methodology based on the harmonisation of statistical series according to the current administrative structure, as well as on the cartographic analysis of demographic trends between 1992 and 2021, the study demonstrates the uneven development trends of major metropolitan areas, increasing the risk of widening territorial gaps.

Keywords:
metropolitan area;
metropolitan ring;
territorial dynamics;
uneven development;
Romania

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Introduction

Originally rooted in the United States, where it was established as a system of statistical/fiscal units as far back as the 1950s, the metropolitan level has proven its importance in the functioning of the modern world (OECD 2015, da Cruz et al. 2020). Its importance has been formalised through global or macro-regional policy documents, such as those of the United Nations (2017) and the European Union (European Commission 2016), both supported by sophisticated manuals and methodologies (OECD 2012, European Commission et al. 2021). The metropolitan phenomenon, with all its implications, has become an essential dimension of policies promoted by the European Parliament (Margaras 2019), and implemented by the European Commission, instituting research bodies and territorial monitoring mechanisms for cohesion policy, such as ESPON (Simeonova 2019). The EU's cohesion policy described the phenomenon in the early 2000s, first through research projects focused on polycentric development (ESPON 2005), and then through other dedicated projects (ESPON 2018, ESPON 2021). The importance of EU metropolitan areas and regions is also emphasised by the emergence of associative bodies (METREX 2024) and lobbying groups as the European Metropolitan Authorities (LobbyFacts 2024).

In the context of pre-accession and the harmonisation of national legislation with that of the European Union, the first metropolitan areas in Romania were established following Law 351/2001, concerning the national territorial planning (Romanian Parliament 2001). However, progress continued at a slow pace with few tangible results. It was only after the adoption of Law 315/2004 on regional development (Romanian Parliament 2004) that the government issued a regulatory act regarding the designation of national growth poles (Government of Romania 2008), which much rather imposed than supported the establishment of new metropolitan areas. Established under the threat of being unable to access EU funds (the "mandatory" cooperation, which generated resistance from local authorities, Hintea et al. 2018), these metropolitan areas were not significantly linked with the territorial administration and spatial planning of Romania (Hințea and Neamțu 2015).

The failure of the metropolitan system implementation in Romania was extensively analysed in the literature (Danielewicz 2020, Cocheci 2023), followed then by the recent creation of a specific law for metropolitan areas (MAs), namely Law no. 246/2022 (Romanian Parliament 2022). Among the three main possible criteria for delimiting MAs (administrative, functional, or morphological), the law endorsed the administrative one. The disillusionment from the initial metropolitan attempts and the methodological fragility of the new law currently fail to mobilise both researchers and public authorities. Nearly two years after the law came into effect, only 6 out of the 100 new potential metropolitan areas are listed in the national register of metropolitan areas: Bacău, Iași, Sibiu, Târgu Jiu, Târgu Mureș, and Zalău (Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration 2024).

Despite this somewhat daunting scenario, the success of a few former metropolitan areas (such as Cluj-Napoca, Timișoara, Iași, Oradea) fosters hope for the widespread adoption of best practices and it stimulates reflection on the relationship between central policy guidelines and local executive actions. Our research aims to explore the viability of the new Romanian metropolitan level and to outline a medium to long-term analysis model of this territorial reality, which is compelled to evolve in a field fraught with relationships that combine global, European, and national interests (Lang and Török 2017).

Methodology

Conceptual clarifications

The official administrative system in Romania operates on the basis of 41 counties and it is hierarchically structured: (1) starting from the urban units, namely the capital city (with 6 administrative sectors); followed by the county seat cities with status of municipalities; the other municipalities that are not county seats; and the rest of cities and towns (all of which may have urban and/or rural component settlements); (2) down to the rural units, namely the communes with their incorporated villages. In addition to these constitutional administrative units, the system also encompasses semi-official territorial units, in alignment with the European cohesion policy. The main territorial units involved in the national territorial policies are the development regions, metropolitan areas, intercommunity development associations, and local action groups, all of them working only on an associative basis and without having an administrative status.

Throughout this study, the terms Local Area Unit 1 and 2 (LAU1 and LAU2) are solely used for the sake of convenience and not in accordance with the Eurostat (2024) definition, which, since 2017, maintains only one LAU level. LAU1 refers to the basic and official administrative units (communes, towns/cities, municipalities, and county seat municipalities), while LAU2 contains the elementary settlement units, namely the component localities of towns/cities and municipalities (including the urban centres), and the villages forming the communes. Also, for the sake of convenience, we use the term "major metropolitan areas" (MMAs) for what the Law no. 246/2022 refers to metropolitan areas of county seat municipalities, and the term "other metropolitan areas" for what the same law refers to as metropolitan areas of non-county seat municipalities.

Data and administrative geometry

In Romania, the newly established metropolitan areas, as outlined by the Law no. 246/2022, operate as voluntary-based associative entities with local governance. This framework suggests that their configuration may fluctuate over time and space. Such potential for periodic restructuring presents challenges similar to those induced by the

ongoing redefinitions of metropolitan areas in the USA, and, consequently, tracking trends in territorial evolution becomes increasingly challenging (Clark and Roche 1984, Puderer 2008, Porter and Howell 2009). To tackle this issue, a pragmatic approach involves devising a spatial recomposition system for the statistical data series. Such a system facilitates the examination of medium- and long-term territorial dynamics (Fuguitt et al. 1988) and it can even aid in delineating new metropolitan areas more efficiently (Moreno-Monroy et al. 2021, Salazar et al. 2021).

Based on this, the primary, and intentionally analytical, and methodological dimensions of our research pursue two objectives: (1) detecting the main long-term demographic trends within the major metropolitan areas; and (2) revealing the interest presented by these trends for scientific research and, especially, for calibrating the Romanian public policies on territorial cohesion.

The first objective requires a harmonised database, which is a challenging task due to the active administrative tectonics, particularly pronounced after the fall of the communist regime. This activity has been manifested across various fronts, from the alteration of place names following orthographic reforms and territorial symbolisms, to the rapid proliferation of administrative units. In addition to multiple name changes, a total of 344 LAU1s were affected by direct administrative alterations, such as: division (by establishing new LAU1s); dissolution (by incorporation into another LAU1 – the cases of Cernele to Craiova in Dolj County, and Goranu to Râmnicu Vâlcea in Vâlcea county); promotion or demotion to another administrative category (such as Băneasa in Constanța county, changing its status from commune to town, and then back to commune). The most significant impact on the continuity of statistical data series resulted from the divisions, affecting 462 LAU1s in Romania, encompassing 225 initial units, from which 237 new LAU1s emerged. As a consequence of this process, Romania's administrative system evolved from 2,946 LAU1s in 1996 to 3,181 LAU1s in 2010, a number that fortunately remains consistent to the present day.

Given these circumstances, conducting long and medium-term research on territorial trends becomes nearly impossible. This is because inter-censal statistical information from public databases (such as Tempo of the National Institute of Statistics) is available at the LAU1 level, allowing only a retrograde reconstruction of statistical series (transitioning from the current 3,181 LAU1s to the 2,946 LAU1s of the 1990s), with evident consequences for building an accurate picture of present situations. Regarding metropolitan areas, a total of 182 units (91 old and 91 new LAU1s) are affected by discontinuities in statistical series, meaning that 14.5% of the total of 1,254 metropolitan LAU1s could not be analysed.

The only approach to ensure the reliability of a long and medium-term analysis relies on the statistical data provided by the Population and Housing Censuses (1992, 2002, 2011, and 2021), which provide demographic information at the level of settlement

units (National Institute of Statistics 2024a). But using this information is challenging, primarily due to the fact that the first three censuses did not indicate the official code for the surveyed settlement units; instead, the data were identified by toponyms. The use of toponyms was challenging in the process of harmonising statistical information because of the existence of numerous identical toponyms, and the absence of diacritical marks (such as "ș" and "ț," replaced in tables with "s" and "t"), and especially because of the gradual and unarticulated adoption of new orthographic norms (primarily replacing "î" with "â"). For example, in some censuses, the same LAU2 appears as "Fintinele," while in others as "Fantanele" or even "Fantinele," with the correct spelling being "Fântânele". The creation of comparable statistical series at the four census moments was completed by using the official 13,755 LAU2s structure, according to the SIRUTA coding (National Institute of Statistics 2024b).

After harmonising the data series, the information was aggregated into the current 3,181 LAU1s, considered a stable administrative system for all four census moments. Subsequently, we utilised a particular information coding system (Table 1) to enable the further analysis at various spatial levels (major metropolitan areas; other metropolitan areas; first ring; second ring).

Table 1. Spatial structure of MAs

		LAU2 (no.)	*% of total*	LAU1 (no.)	*% of total*
County seat metropolitan areas	Metropolitan centre	128*	*0.9*	41	*1.3*
	First ring	1376	*10.0*	339	*10.7*
	Second ring	2230	*16.2*	512	*16.1*
	Total	**3734**	***27.2***	**892**	***28.0***
Other metropolitan areas	Metropolitan centre	180	*1.3*	59	*1.9*
	First ring	1156	*8.4*	303	*9.5*
	Total	**1336**	**9.7**	**362**	***11.4***
All metropolitan areas	Metropolitan centre	309	*2.2*	100	*3.1*
	First ring	2532	*18.4*	642	*20.2*
	Second ring	2230	*16.2*	512	*16.1*
	Total	**5070**	***36.9***	**1254**	***39.4***
The rest of Romania		8685	*63.1*	1927	*60.6*
Romania		**13755**	***100.0***	**3181**	***100.0***

**Including the 6 sectors of Bucharest and excluding Bucharest as single LAU2*

In order to generate cartographic representations on a metropolitan scale, a basemap was created (Figure 1), based on the official administrative geometry of Romania (National Agency for Cadastre and Land Registration 2024).

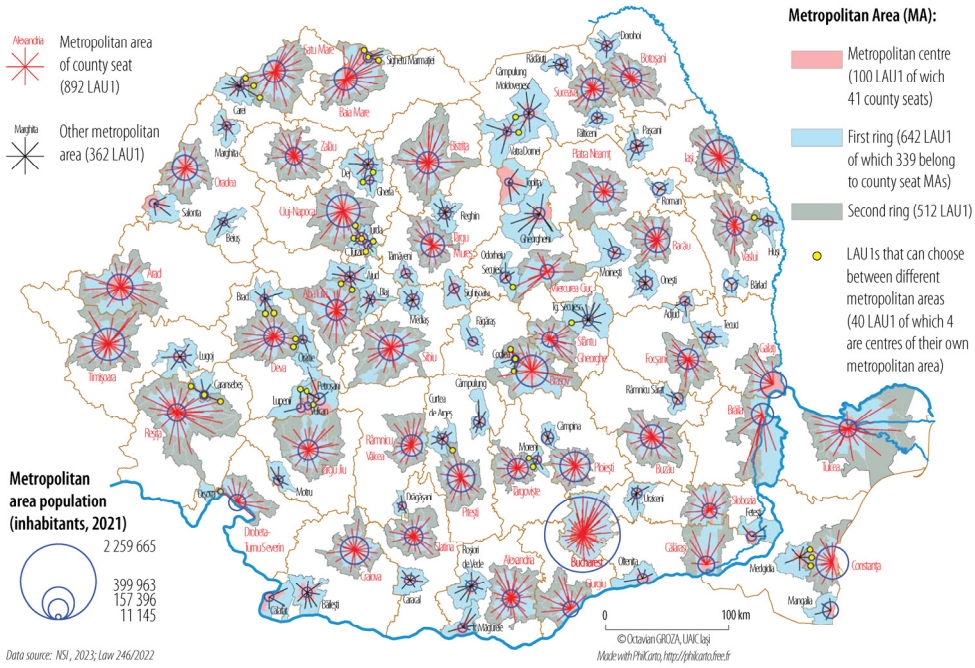

Figure 1. The new metropolitan areas in Romania

To tackle the potential statistical ambiguities brought about by the Law 246/2022, LAU1 areas, which had the choice between a county seat metropolitan area and another metropolitan area, were placed in the former category if they shared a border with it. Meanwhile, the four non-county seat metropolitan centres (Caransebeș, Codlea, Oravița, and Sighetu Marmației), which had the option to be integrated into the upper metropolitan area level, were regarded as standalone metropolitan areas, but without LAU1 areas that could opt and shared a border with the upper metropolitan area.

Testing territorial trends

In order to validate the long-term analysis results, a probabilistic spatial interaction model was employed, namely the Huff (1963) model, integrated within the PhilCarto cartographic software (Waniez 2024). This software was also utilised for creating all cartographic representations for this study.

Given its simplicity and adaptability to multiple spatial and territorial contexts, the Huff (1963) model still remains one of the most powerful tools of analysis and visualisation for urban polarisation. Defined first as a model in business geography (Huff 1963), it quickly gained in utility outside geomarketing, as it began to be applied for the assessment of the cities' areas of spatial attraction. Since the early phases of the model inception in geography, progresses were made in passing from the initial formalisation to more sophisticated forms of parameter integration in the model,

aiming to define the market areas as discrete objects instead of continuous probability surfaces (Huff and Batsell 1977), or to validate the Huff model output using empirical data (Huff and Rust 1984).

In French quantitative geography, during its golden '80s and early '90s, attempts were made to popularise the use of the Huff approach, with mixed results (Cliquet 1990, Waniez 1992). Recently, there is a renewed interest in the use of this model, mainly for the evaluation of public services' areas of attraction, but this trend lacks in providing results at national or regional scales, focusing more on local case studies (Bai et al. 2023, Wang et al. 2024).

In its basic form, the Huff model will provide isolines of equal probability of interaction between the consumers and the services' providers and, when applied to urban systems, it will depict the potential interactions between the rural communities and urban centres, usually within the conceptual frames derived from the central-places theory. The user of this model should be aware that the probability assigned to its results is reliant on the concept of statistical frequency (Equation 1), and not as derived from a distribution. Given Huff's background in economics, the model is an extension of the Cobb-Douglas utility functions in a spatial context, if one considers that the trade-off between accessibility and the services' size is similarly treated (Grigg 1984).

$$P_{ij} = \frac{\frac{A_j^{\alpha}}{D_{ij}^{\beta}}}{\Sigma_{j=1}^{n} \frac{A_j^{\alpha}}{D_{ij}^{\beta}}} \quad (1)$$

In equation 1, *Pij* is the probability that a resident originating from a certain point *i* will interact with a certain metropolitan area *j*, *Aj* is a measure of the attractiveness of the metropolitan area *j*, *Dij* is the distance between an inhabitant *i* and the metropolitan area *j*, α is an attractiveness parameter (in this case the number of inhabitants), β is the distance decay parameter, while *n* is the total number of metropolitan areas, including metropolitan area *j*. The formalisation is sometimes misleading, as the *Pij* in the equation needs mathematical adjustments, usually based on the extraction of the maximum value of the probability obtained for *i*.

In terms of spatial analysis, the way in which one deals with the treatment of distances in the Huff model is the most difficult challenge. A common assumption is that the β distance decay parameter is typically -2, at least in the initial forms of the model and in a conceptual linkage with Reilly's law, creating an inverse distance squared weighting function that received a battery of unavoidable critics. And there is little theoretical and empirical support for this fixed parameter and no relevant progress in exploring other types of distance decay functions, such as the logarithmic, exponential, negative-exponential or quadratic ones.

Results

Long-term evolution of demographic dynamics in MAs

The cartographic analysis of demographic evolution at LAU2 level – settlement population between 1992 and 2021 (Figure 2) – demonstrates a widespread, pronounced, and accelerated decline: over the entire period, Romania has lost 3.3 million people, with an additional unclear number of individuals (between 2 and 5 million) integrated into the circular migratory movement to and from EU states. The demographic reflux affects both urban and rural areas, with the exception of small areas in the northeast and the far west of the country. The map allows for the identification of the first ring of metropolitan areas centred on county seats as, almost without exception, they are the only spaces with positive dynamics, thus justifying the focus of our research on these spatial structures, rightfully deserving the designation of major metropolitan areas.

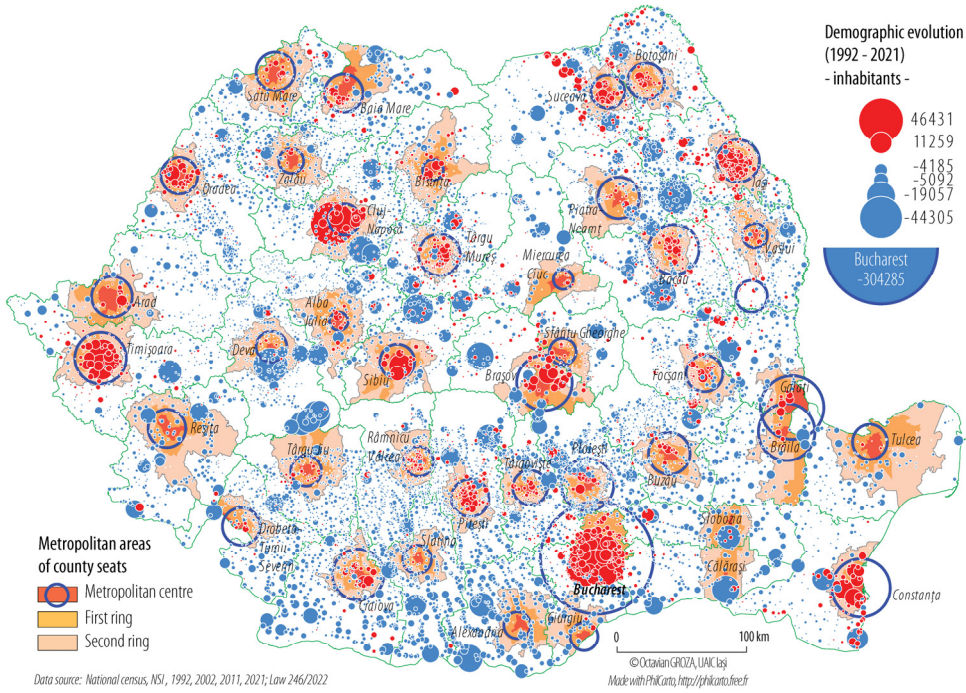

Figure 2. Demographic evolution of Romania (LAU2)

The spatially differentiated intensity of these new population concentrations largely stems from the interplay of two processes, essentially describing the strength of the metropolitan centre. The first one is driven by the attractiveness of the urban centre, characterised by its comparative advantages (socio-economic position in the urban system during the communist period), and especially by its competitive ones, developed (or not) depending on the exploitation of opportunities generated by the

interurban competition in the era of globalisation, and particularly by the European cohesion policy. The above-mentioned comparative advantages have either been the source of what has been termed "good resilience" or of what has been defined as "bad resilience" (Rufat 2012, Bănică and Muntele 2017). They underpinned the population redistribution in the early years after the fall of communism when the former migrants working in the processing or extractive industry areas returned to their usual areas of residence, which may explain the negative dynamics of metropolitan areas (Figure 3), such as Baia Mare, Reșița, Deva, Târgu Jiu, Ploiești, or of major metropolitan centres (Brașov, Galați, Timișoara).

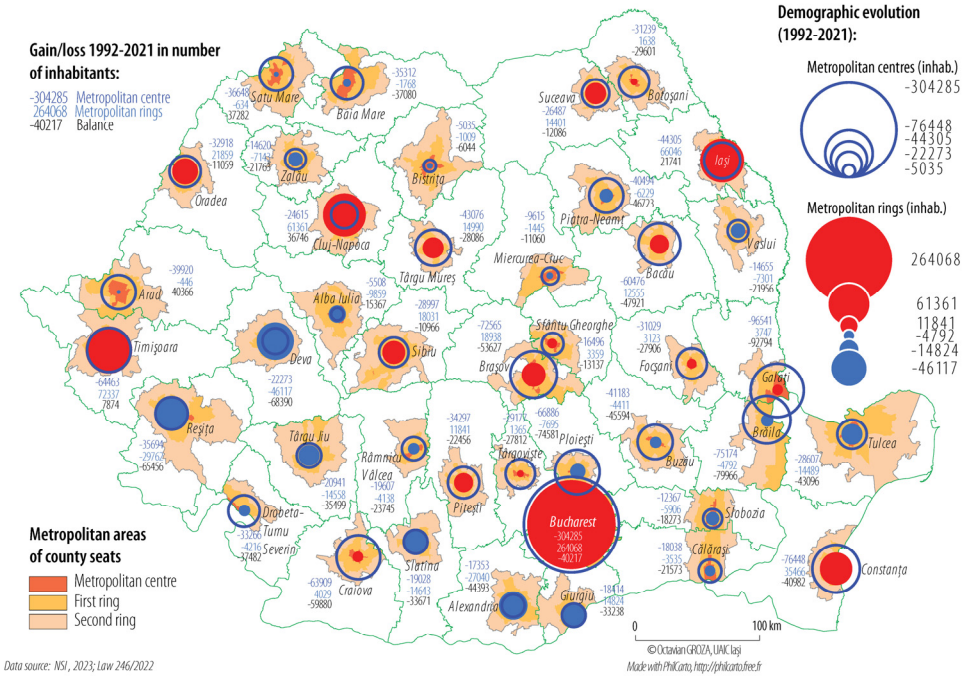

Figure 3. Spatial differences in the relationship between the demographic evolution of metropolitan centres and of metropolitan rings

At county level, the population redistribution has particularly affected the urban centres equipped with low-technology industries during the communist period (Alexandria, Brăila, Călărași, Giurgiu, Piatra Neamț, Slatina, Slobozia, Tulcea, Vaslui, Zalău). Competitive advantages have emerged against the backdrop of comparative advantages that formed the basis of the "good resilience" (higher administrative status, more present tertiary sector, integration into the air transport network, medium-technology industries etc.) and they have only been developed by cities benefiting from innovative and determined public authorities (Cluj-Napoca, Oradea, Sibiu, Timișoara). These advantages underpin the economic momentum that attracts skilled labour, preferring the municipalities in the first metropolitan ring as a place of residence.

The second process delineates the internal economic strength of the metropolitan centre, which explains the false dimension of its own demographic decline. The internal prosperity of the population translates into suburbanisation and peri-urbanisation through urban sprawl, involving the residents from the metropolitan centre who have the necessary economic resources for relocating their residence to the municipalities and communes in the first ring. Thus, the first ring offsets the decline of the centre, adjusting, to a greater (Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Constanța, Iași, Oradea, Pitești, Sibiu, Suceava, Timișoara etc.) or lesser extent (Brașov, Târgu Mureș, Bacău etc.), the total metropolitan demographic balance.

According to Eurostat, 60% of the EU population lived in metropolitan areas (Margaras 2019), placing Romania well below this figure (27.9% cumulated by 9 metropolitan areas considered by Eurostat, namely: Brașov, Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Constanța, Craiova, Galați, Iași, Ploiești, and Timișoara). But Romania's new metropolitan areas surpass the European level, and they demonstrate structural stability over time, as they encompassed 67.5% of Romania's population in 1992, and 68.4% in 2021.

Table 2 demonstrates that the stability of the proportion is possible partly due to the generalised demographic decline in the country, and partly due to the dynamism of the first ring of major metropolitan areas, which, however, is highly spatially differentiated. The absolute losses of population recorded by many metropolitan areas (Alba Iulia, Alexandria, Deva, Giurgiu, Ploiești, Reșița, Tulcea, Vaslui, Zalău etc.) are scarcely moderated or compensated by a small number of metropolitan areas (Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Constanța, Iași, Oradea, Pitești, Sibiu, Suceava etc.). So, the issue of the viability of the new metropolitan areas is raised, given that the metropolitan centres as a whole have growth rates below the national average and even below the averages of non-metropolitan areas, while the second ring of major metropolitan areas and the first ring of other metropolitan areas barely exceed these averages.

The evident need for coherent public policies to balance the current territorial demographic trends arises. In the absence of such policies, the inter-metropolitan competition is likely to exacerbate the disconnection of dynamic areas from the rest of the territorial ensemble, at a speed and intensity that are difficult to control, even in the long term. Furthermore, even metropolitan territorial structures will suffer the consequences of structural demographic changes over medium and long terms. Over the past three decades, major metropolitan centres have lost over 8% of the population aged 0-14, 7.2% of the population aged 15-59, and they have "gained" 15.3% of the population aged over 60 (Table 3). For the centres of other metropolitan areas, the situation is even more concerning (-10.8% for the 0-14 years population, -7.5% for the group aged 15-59, and a gain of +18.3% for the 60+ years category).

Thus, different arising issues are highlighted, such as the difficult access to educational facilities and job opportunities due to the multiplication and elongation of daily routes

Table 2. Demographic evolution of MAs
Source: National Institute of Statistics (2024a)

			1992	**2002**	**2011**	**2021**	***1992***	***2002***	***2011***	***2021***
		Number of LAUs	thousand inhabitants				*1992 = 100%*			
County seat metropolitan areas	Metropolitan centre	41	8099	7720	7111	6387	*100*	*95.3*	*87.8*	*78.9*
	First ring	339	1758	1819	1960	2363	*100*	*103.5*	*111.5*	*134.4*
	Second ring	512	2051	2042	1916	1843	*100*	*99.6*	*93.4*	*89.9*
	Total	**892**	**11908**	**11581**	**10987**	**10593**	***100***	***97.3***	***92.3***	***89.0***
Other metropolitan areas	Metropolitan centre	59	1978	1819	1561	1393	*100*	*91.9*	*78.9*	*70.4*
	First ring	303	1203	1192	1094	1044	*100*	*99.1*	*90.9*	*86.8*
	Total	**362**	**3181**	**3011**	**2655**	**2437**	***100***	***94.6***	***83.5***	***76.6***
All metropolitan areas	Metropolitan centre	100	10077	9539	8672	7780	*100*	*94.7*	*86.1*	*77.2*
	First ring	642	2961	3011	3055	3407	*100*	*101.7*	*103.1*	*115.0*
	Second ring	512	2051	2042	1916	1843	*100*	*99.6*	*93.4*	*89.9*
	Total	**1254**	**15089**	**14592**	**13643**	**13030**	***100***	***96.7***	***90.4***	***86.4***
The rest of Romania		1927	7269	7087	6483	6025	*100*	*97.5*	*89.2*	*82.9*
Romania		**3181**	**22358**	**21679**	**20125**	**19055**	***100***	***97.0***	***90.0***	***85.2***

Table 3. Demographic evolution of MAs, by age categories
Source: National Institute of Statistics (2024a)

		0-14 years (%)			**15-59 years (%)**			**over 60 years (%)**		
		1992	**2002**	**2021**	**1992**	**2002**	**2021**	**1992**	**2002**	**2021**
County seat metropolitan areas	Metropolitan centre	23.5	14.7	15.4	64.8	70.7	57.6	11.7	14.6	27.0
	First ring	22.0	18.9	18.0	60.3	61.3	60.7	17.7	19.8	21.3
	Second ring	21.7	19.4	16.4	57.9	58.0	58.2	20.4	22.6	25.5
Other metropolitan areas	Metropolitan centre	25.9	17.8	15.1	63.3	67.6	55.8	10.8	14.6	29.1
	First ring	21.5	19.7	16.4	58.1	57.5	58.3	20.4	22.8	25.3
The rest of Romania		21.6	19.5	16.3	57.2	56.4	57.5	21.3	24.1	26.2
Romania		**22.7**	**17.6**	**16.1**	**60.9**	**63.0**	**57.9**	**16.4**	**19.3**	**26.0**

to and from the metropolitan peripheries, leading to traffic congestion and pollution; and the reduction of economic means allocated for housing maintenance, resulting in a decline in the quality of the housing stock in the metropolitan centre. It is highly likely that these problems will affect the quality of competitive advantages and they will ultimately lead to agglomeration diseconomies. Many studies, some very recent (Cocheci 2023), clearly indicate that reaching this situation is not far off. Although the

concept of urban sprawl may still be debated in terms of its direction and utility (Franz et al. 2006), it remains an effective descriptor of the complex relationships between the metropolitan centre and its surrounding rings, and especially between metropolitan structures and the rest of the territory (Figure 4).

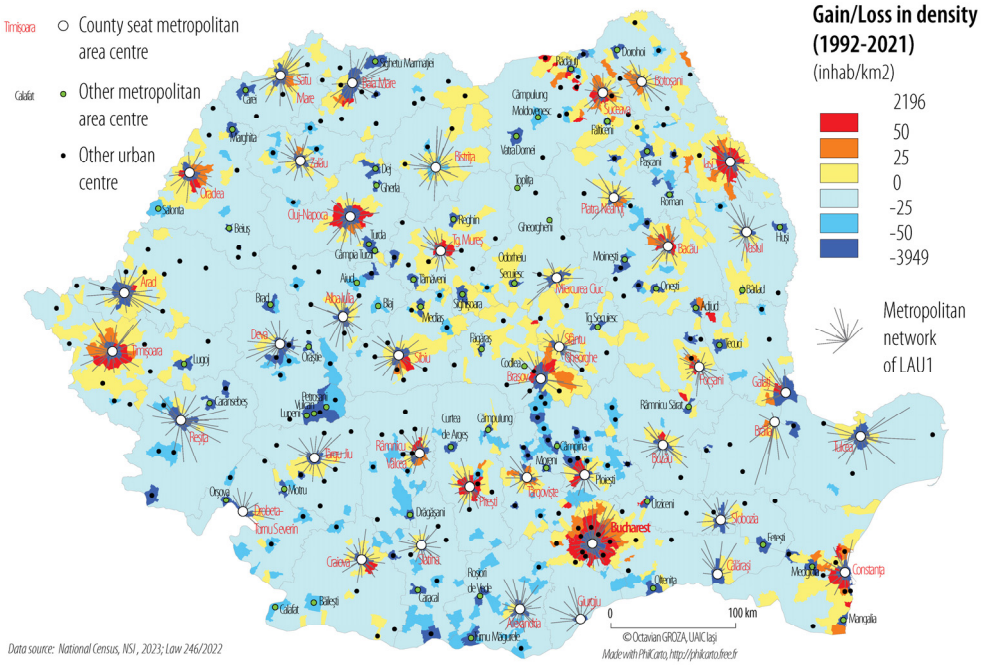

Figure 4. Evolution of population density between 1992 and 2021 (LAU1)

The demographic decline in itself diminishes the socio-economic vitality of various territories, yet the accompanying phenomenon, namely the reduction in population density, directly impacts the spatial interaction system, thereby diluting the very fabric of social relations and undermining the foundations of territorial structures. The reduction of areas of dynamism to just a few metropolitan oases in a demographic desert amplifies the negative dimensions of the aforementioned phenomena. Built around Romania's main territorial engines, namely the municipalities, the ensemble of metropolitan areas encompasses, on the 38.8% of the national territory allocated to them, 78 out of the 216 existing cities, accounting for 36.1% of the total, of which 31.5% are included in the major metropolitan areas themselves. This means that the remaining 61.2% of the territory, where 31.6% of Romania's population resides, is controlled by just 138 small cities, already facing difficulties.

In this context, the “bridges" connecting the major metropolitan areas, which have managed to gain up to 25 inh./sq.km between 1992 and 2021, could have a special significance and they should be further analysed. Arising from the synergy of multiple

processes and situations (high natural growth with local explanations, more complex rural economy, favourable position on transport axes, metropolitan urban sprawl beyond legally delimited rings), they could signify the delineation of genuine major metropolitan areas (Brașov – Sfântu Gheorghe, Constanța – Mangalia – Medgidia, Timișoara – Arad), while potentially softening old urban rivalries (Brăila – Galați or Botoșani – Suceava), and, why not, inviting the possible existence of genuine metropolitan regions, such as in central or northeastern Romania.

The densification of major metropolitan areas (Table 4), as a direct result of urban sprawl, should be considered more frequently as a national issue, not just a local one. With a few exceptions, some of which are notable (Cumpăna – nearby Constanța; Rediu and Miroslava – for Iași; or even Dumbrăvița – for Timișoara, in the initial phase), metropolitan suburbanisation tends to favour the urban extension along major transport axes (motorways, European and national roads, ring roads). Within the metropolitan area, these axes often accommodate additional traffic from the suburbanised LAU1 areas based on other factors (natural framework, land availability, local real estate policies). The resulting traffic congestion thus affects the entire national and European transport system.

Table 4. Evolution of population density in major metropolitan areas
Source: National Institute of Statistics (2024a)

	Population (thousand inhabitants)				**Area (Km²)**	Density (inhabitants/Km²)			
	1992	2002	2011	2021		1992	2002	2011	2021
Metropolitan centre	8098.8	7720.4	7110.8	6386.8	**4485.6**	1805.5	1721.1	1585.3	1423.8
First ring	1758.1	1818.8	1960.3	2362.6	**22553.0**	78.0	80.6	86.9	104.8
Second ring	2050.7	2041.6	1916.2	1843.4	**38488.9**	53.3	53.0	49.8	47.9
Bucharest	2021.2	1926.3	1883.4	1717.0	**240.6**	8401.5	8007.0	7828.6	7136.7
Chiajna	7.6	8.0	14.3	43.6	**16.4**	463.6	488.6	869.9	2659.1
Cluj-Napoca	311.2	318.0	324.6	286.6	**179.2**	1736.7	1774.3	1811.3	1599.4
Florești	6.1	7.5	22.8	52.7	**61.0**	99.9	122.5	374.2	865.0
Iași	316.0	320.9	290.4	271.7	**91.7**	3445.1	3498.4	3166.3	2962.1
V. Lupului	2.1	3.1	5.0	14.5	**10.6**	195.7	289.7	469.3	1366.8
Timișoara	315.3	317.7	319.3	250.8	**130.2**	2422.1	2440.1	2452.6	1926.9
Dumbrăvița	2.4	2.7	7.5	20.0	**18.7**	128.1	143.8	401.5	1068.3

It therefore becomes legitimate to question whether the proliferation of Romanian metropolitan areas is the right spatial planning strategy. With a surface area 2.3 times larger than Romania and a population 3.5 times higher, France has only 22 agglomerations with metropolitan status (Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes

Economiques 2024), founded on the same principle of intercommunal collaboration. The question becomes all the more relevant considering that, at least from a demographic perspective, most metropolitan areas defined by the Law 246/2022 do not seem to be evolving towards a territorial role worthy of this status. Few of them manage to combine the internal strength of the centre with the overall attraction of the metropolitan structure (Figure 5).

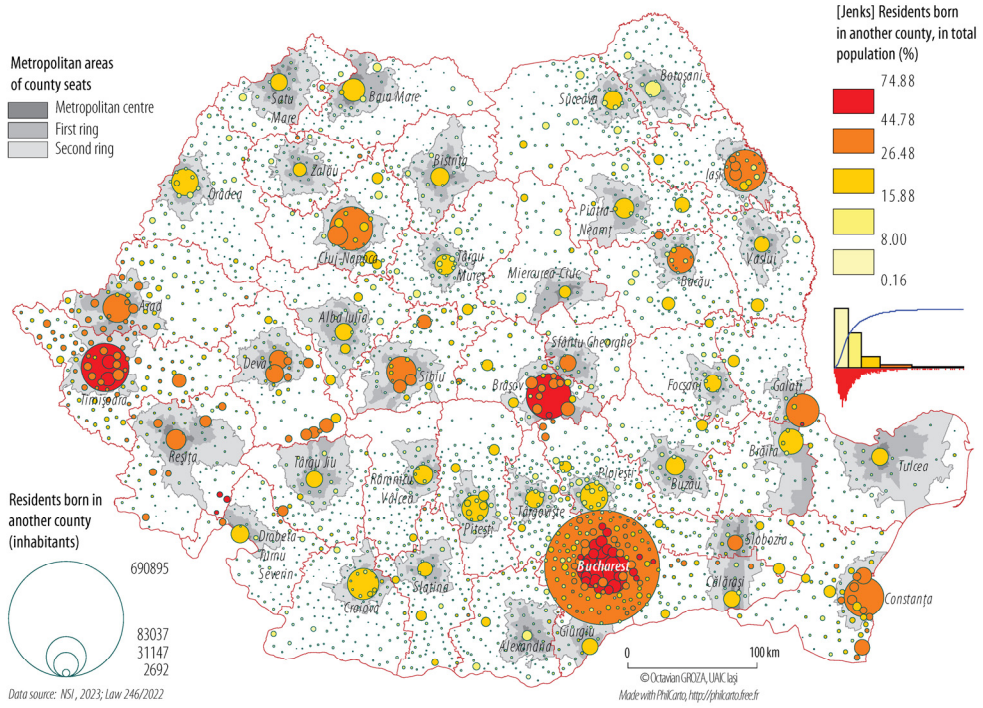

Figure 5. Attractiveness of county seat metropolitan areas – between historical heritage and current dynamics

Traces of the old attractiveness of the urban centres that are currently in a metropolitan area position can still be observed, due to the early phases of industrialisation and communist urbanisation, which favoured the internal migration towards the major industrial centres (Arad, Bucharest, Brașov, Cluj-Napoca, Constanța, Iași, Hunedoara, Reșița, Sibiu, Timișoara, and Bistrița later followed by Bacău, Galați, Mangalia, and Slobozia), and towards the regions of coal, oil, and natural gas extraction industries. The socio-economic system crisis following the collapse of the communist system prompted the redistribution of a large portion of these migrants back to their regions of origin. The phenomenon affected the proportion of those born in another county both in the departure cities (reduction, although sufficient remain to account for the share in MAs, such as Constanța, Deva, Reșița, Timișoara), and in the destination cities (increase, through the registration of the descendants of those who returned).

The newfound attractiveness of the metropolitan area as a whole can be estimated through the proportion of individuals born in another county within the demographic system of the communes in the first ring, which, for major metropolitan areas, presents an almost 1/1 ratio (50.7% versus 49.3%) between the locals and the non-locals (Table 5).

Table 5. Origin of the population in MAs (%, 2021)
Source: National Institute of Statistics (2024a)

		Born Inside LAU1	Born Outside LAU1	Other LAU1 of the county	*of which:*		Other LAU1 of other county	*of which:*	
					urban	*rural*		*urban*	*rural*
County seat metropolitan area	Metropolitan centre	55.3	44.7	11.6	*25.2*	*74.8*	31.0	*67.8*	*32.2*
	First ring	50.7	49.3	20.6	*71.1*	*28.9*	26.8	*74.7*	*25.3*
	Second ring	69.8	30.2	17.8	*61.5*	*38.5*	10.5	*59.3*	*40.7*
Other metropolitan area	Metropolitan centre	59.9	40.1	17.5	*28.1*	*71.9*	20.7	*60.5*	*39.5*
	First ring	72.8	27.2	16.5	*64.0*	*36.0*	8.7	*57.5*	*42.5*
The rest of Romania		73.5	26.5	14.5	*57.0*	*43.0*	9.9	*63.1*	*36.9*
Romania		63.2	36.8	14.9	*49.6*	*50.4*	19.8	*67.0*	*33.0*

But this ratio is deceptive, as the attractiveness of major metropolitan areas varies greatly in terms of spatial distribution. The total number of individuals born in another county residing in the municipalities within the first ring of the 41 major metropolitan areas amounts to 457,858 people. This number exceeds the population of Romania's largest MA (namely Iași), with the exception of the capital city, Bucharest. An analysis of the spatial distribution of this category of residents shows that almost three-quarters (72.4%) belong to the first rings of just six MMAs: Bucharest (301,029 people), Timișoara (40,545 people), Brașov (32,331 people), Cluj-Napoca (30,469 people), Constanța (29,010 people), and Iași (24,474 people). Excluding Bucharest, the first 10 MMAs account for 70.1%.

The new metropolitan area law has come under heavy criticism due to the adoption of administrative delimitation criteria. It is highly likely that the critical attitudes would have been just as virulent if any of the other criteria had been considered. Two comprehensive studies (Dadashpoor and Malekzadeh 2020, Dadashpoor et al. 2023) analyse metropolitan structures and their structuring forces based on the scientific literature covering relatively long periods, namely 1999-2019, and 1980-2019. According to these studies, different forces and contexts lead to four main types of spatial structures: convergent, divergent, homogeneous, and heterogeneous, from which no fewer than 23 secondary types derive. It is evident that such an approach would support

the functional criterion for delimiting metropolitan areas. The problem is that any classification ultimately focuses on each analysed object, and it ignores its relationship with the others. The example of individuals born in another county and located in the first ring of major MAs demonstrates the consequences of this fact and the relativity that it can induce in the functional analyses. Since the majority (74.7%) come from the urban environment of other counties, their polarisation accentuates the convergent nature of the local ring, but it induces a divergent character in the origin rings and centres. Considering other categories of residents and the multiscalarity of involved processes, the local rings emerge as structures resulting from both divergence (from the metropolitan centre to the ring), and convergence (from the exterior to the MA).

Testing the territorial consequences of demographic concentration in MMAs

The vast spatial differences in attractiveness among MMAs, with evident impacts on the territorial (im)balances at the local, regional, or national level, are challenging to capture through analytical methods. Therefore, the use of spatial models, such as the Huff model, becomes a necessary method for exploring the new territorial realities. Despite the methodological problems underlying the Huff formalisation, it still retains an interesting potential as a tool of investigation of the viability of new metropolitan areas in Romania. When applied at national scale, using a canonical -2 β distance decay parameter, for 41 metropolitan administrative centres and their metropolitan rings, the cartographic output of the model shows that the high levels of theoretical polarisation follow an extremely concentrated pattern (Figure 6a).

The areas depicted by *Pij* values larger than 0.5 occupy a considerable portion of surfaces across multiple counties, with variations induced by the demographic masses of metropolitan areas in 2021. By its size, only Bucharest is able to develop an area of intense polarisation, overlapping multiple counties. The distribution of *Pij* values smaller than 0.5, mainly the lowest ones, creates areas of regional spatial discontinuities, separating some potential sub-national urban systems – the North-East Region of Romania or the multi-county system of Brasov, Covasna and Harghita. Less visible on the map, as the intensity of the discontinuity is more reduced, a potential sub-national urban system might also be identified on the Western border (Bihor, Arad, Timiș and Caraș-Severin).

This tension between the concentration of high-level polarisation and the shape of spatial discontinuities presents a double interest, both scientifically and for the policy design. It emphasises that the emergence of metropolitan areas in Romania is a clear indication that the intermediate regional scale of decision taking (NUTS2) is not overlapping the shape of the sub-national urban systems. For example, the area of interactions of indifference (*Pij*< 0.2) that intersects the counties of Mureș, Harghita and Brașov suggests that the metropolitan areas acting in the central NUTS2 region are eventually disconnected.

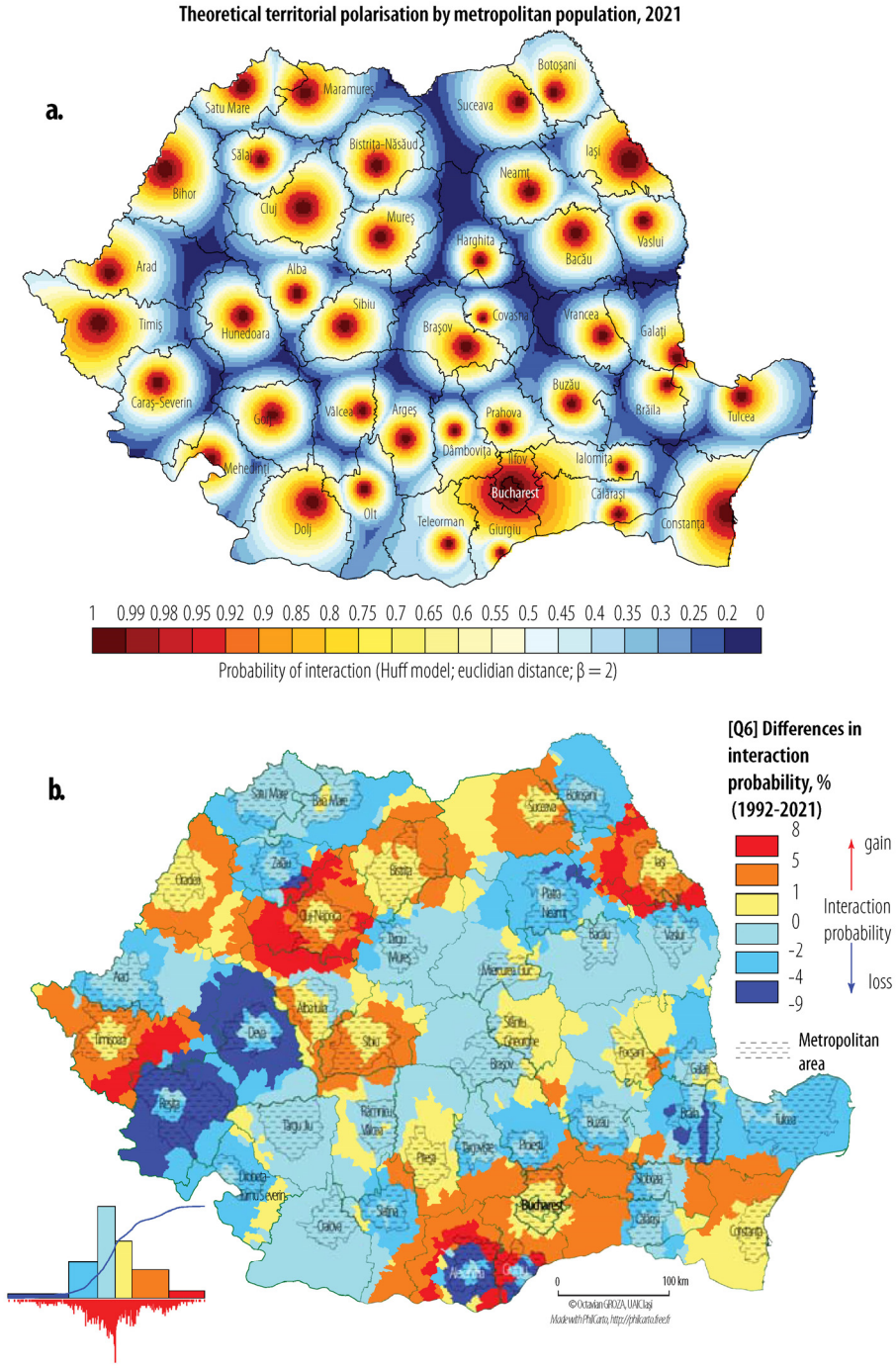

Figure 6. The emergence of new territorial imbalances as a result of differentiated demographic trends

The dynamics in time of the potential of interaction (Figure 6b), calculated for long periods (1992-2021), are associated with the demographic trends of the metropolitan areas. The spatial distribution of this indicator reveals territorial imbalances that need to be framed by a set of sectoral policies aimed to better develop the territorial connectivity and to better drive the demographic, services, and economic concentration in the metropolitan areas, together with their contiguous ring. The target should be the counties endowed with medium sized administrative centres or with a declined industrial specialisation.

Table 6. The economic activity of major companies (2021)
Source: Ministry of Public Finance (2023)

	Turnover (million euros)	Profit (million euros)	Number of employees	Number of companies
County seat metropolitan areas	300190.4	20582.1291	2637345	69488
% of total	*87.7*	*83.6*	*83.1*	*75.0*
of which Bucharest	151758.1	10428.1	1019802	18581
%	*50.6*	*50.7*	*38.7*	*26.7*
Other metropolitan areas	19785.2	2017.5	262062	9841
% of total	*5.8*	*8.2*	*8.3*	*10.6*
The rest of Romania	22275.3	2011.4	273450	13368
% of total	*6.5*	*8.2*	*8.6*	*14.4*
Romania	342250.9	24611.0	3172857	92697

The absence of these policies will deepen the territorial imbalances, as economic concentration will enhance demographic concentration, and vice versa, in a spiral that is far from virtuous for the overall territory. The detailed analysis in Table 6, excluding Bucharest, demonstrates that the top 20 out of the remaining 40 MMAs cumulate 83.3% of turnover, 81.4% of profit, 78.5% of employees, and 74.6% of the number of companies. Furthermore, their geographic distribution is extremely imbalanced: 11 are in central and western Romania (Cluj-Napoca, Brașov, Oradea, Târgu Mureș, Arad, Alba Iulia, Sibiu, Timișoara, Baia Mare, Satu Mare), 6 in the south (Constanța, Craiova, Ploiești, Pitești, Buzău, Slatina), and 3 in the east of the country (Galați, Bacău, Iași).

Discussion

In summary, the analysis revealed the diverse local situations within major metropolitan areas in Romania, as a simultaneous result of territorial legacies and the unequal exploitation of opportunities arising after the fall of the communist regime.

Against the backdrop of the administrative criterion favoured by all relevant legislation (2001-2022), which led to the establishment of metropolitan areas as structures devoid of any content, this diversity has manifested inertially, and somewhat chaotically, leading to the exacerbation of territorial imbalances. Most national research focused on the metropolitan phenomenon highlighted its negative dimensions and it sought administrative "culprits" that are hard to demonstrate or, rather, difficult to support with irrefutable arguments.

But it is now the time to explore the positive dimensions of the evolution of metropolitan concepts and realities over the past three decades. The Spatial Planning Law of 2001 was not a spontaneous occurrence. Romania began modernising its relevant legislation even before 1995, when the negotiations for accession to the European Union began. Harmonising the national legislation with that of the EU, itself in continuous evolution, faced a major challenge from the outset – the gap between the form and the spirit of normative acts and the targeted territorial reality, marked by the massive inertia of structures established during the communist era. European reservations about the integration of Romania and Bulgaria, manifested in the failure of the first wave of accession in 2004, further delayed the reduction of this handicap, while increasing the pressure to adopt the EU acquis.

In this context, choosing the administrative criterion in delineating new forms of governance (development regions, functional urban areas, inter-municipal development associations, metropolitan areas, etc.) seems more than natural, being readily accessible and easy to implement. The short intervals allocated both for the elaboration and for the public debate of the legislative proposals did not allow the consideration of other criteria, while the process was burdened by various contexts that are difficult to frame in the short term (explosive urban sprawl, lack of coherent and easily usable statistical and spatial information, cadastral deficiencies etc.). This was also the case with the new law regarding metropolitan areas. Proposed for public debate in the second half of March 2022 (Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration 2022), the draft was adopted and promulgated in June, with effect from July, so various proposals for amendment (Romanian Professional Association of Urban Planners 2022) had little chance of being considered.

The fact that the new law has overcome several obvious shortcomings in the previous legislation (e.g. fiscal measures proposing additional incentives to metropolitan areas, Cocheci 2023) is a direct result of the partial integration of ideas from studies supported by the World Bank, the European Commission, and the Government of Romania, whether related to the delimitation and functionality of metropolitan areas (Cristea et al. 2017, Ionescu-Heroiu et al. 2019), or their governance (European Commission et al. 2019). This demonstrates the openness and, why not, the competence of the involved ministries (especially the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration),

dimensions that can be supported along with their position regarding the promotion of other decentralised forms of governance, such as functional rural areas or administrative consortia – to mention just the most recent ones.

The role of local authorities has been often viewed through a negative lens, associated with issues like corruption, incompetence, indifference to public interests and partisan favouritism. While acknowledging these perspectives, both widely known public successes and those highlighted by our research, demonstrating positive dynamics at the local or regional level, serve as examples supporting the hypothesis that the entire context of the past three decades represents a learning ground for the local administrations. The unusually rapid pace at which the new legislation had to be implemented, coupled with the urgency to capitalise on the economic opportunities, favoured the most prepared and determined entities (such as Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Timișoara, Oradea, and Iași). However, it also compelled progress from others, who now have access to concrete examples of best practices.

Establishing metropolitan governance, seen as a crucial dimension of metropolitan territorial structures, is not an easy task, not only within the European Union (Ayuso and Coll 2016) but also in the most advanced democracies of Europe (Vinci 2019, Demazière 2021). No single policy can effectively encompass all stakeholders, especially when diversity reigns as the norm in urban systems in Romania and across Eastern Europe (Bănică and Muntele 2017, Cocheci and Petrișor 2023, Sandu 2024).

This study has highlighted the inequalities caused over the medium and long term by the divergent demographic evolution of major metropolitan areas. While perhaps a mundane outcome, it serves as a robust foundation for a deeper reflection on the relationship between local government structures (which naturally seek to maximise their competitive advantages, inadvertently widening the territorial disparities) and regional and central governance structures, tasked with envisioning and implementing new policies to mitigate these disparities. In other words, it fuels the discussion on achieving a balanced alignment of the national, European, and neoliberal agendas mentioned by Lang and Török (2017) and, consequently, on the efficient territorial differentiation of general policies (Zhukovsky 2020).

In terms of validity and reliability, it is fundamental to address any limitations pertaining to our work from a methodological standpoint. The utilisation of secondary data sources, which might incorporate biases, or even mistakes, into our study, is one such constraint. Subsequent studies may include primary data gathering techniques, including surveys or interviews with relevant stakeholders, to offer a more thorough comprehension of metropolitan dynamics.

Despite the fact that our study dives into the challenges of metropolitan governance in Romania and it provides insights that could prove valuable in the very near future,

there is still potential for improvement and further investigation. An interesting prospect for future research is to extend the comparison of metropolitan governance models among European countries, looking at how well different strategies work to alleviate the territorial imbalances and to advance sustainable development. While our study already offers peripheral insights on the matter, more targeted research is required. Policymakers looking to improve urban governance frameworks should benefit from such insightful analysis of best practices.

Conclusions

Our research doesn't seek to criticise the territorial design of the new metropolitan areas, nor does it advocate for the pursuit of a superior alternative, as such efforts would likely prove equally futile. But the methodology developed in this study could prove valuable in the very near future, particularly as the long-overdue administrative reform, postponed for decades, is now deemed critically necessary.

Our findings serve as a compelling argument for the establishment of a geolocated statistical information system, meticulously gathered at finely detailed spatial scales. Such a system should be readily accessible and seamlessly mobilised to support the crafting and the ongoing monitoring of strategic policies at various local geographic tiers. By doing so, it would transcend the constraints of administrative boundaries, rendering obsolete the sole or combined utilisation of the three primary criteria for demarcating metropolitan areas. This approach fulfils also the aspiration of governance proponents — an aspiration centred on effective governance, untethered from the confines of a hierarchical system of administrative delineations.

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SMART SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT FOR THE NEW CAPITAL CITY OF INDONESIA

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Abstract: Research on the concept of Smart Sustainable Urban Development and its implementation is critical to support the urban future and urban governance. This research analyses the implementation of the smart sustainable urban development concept to support the urban future through the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals, and urban governance in Nusantara Capital City, Indonesia. We collected data through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with the policy stakeholders and agencies relevant to the development plan of the city, supplemented with field surveys. The results show that the urban future from the national government is envisaged through six domain services encapsulating the sustainability and smart city elements. In the regional and local level, challenges are met including the environmental and social impact but through government collaboration and devising Information and Communication Technology, the authority has been able to design the solution. Sustainability, Information and Communication Technology, smart city, and urban governance constitute critical elements in the process of urban development, especially for the development of a new capital city.

Keywords:

smart city;
sustainable development;
urban development;
urban future;
urban governance;
Nusantara

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Introduction

The discussion on smart sustainable urban development begins with a description of the smart city concept and its implementation, the concept of sustainable urban development and urban future (Hatuka et al. 2018). With the emerging complexities and challenges to the urban area such as climate change, inclusivity, technological disruption and big data, and ecological vulnerability, smart sustainability would be more and more crucial (Bibri and Krogstie 2017, Alagirisamy and Ramesh 2022). The planning and development of cities should be navigated to a more sustainable way powered with the smart elements or ICT components. ICT can facilitate cities to achieve the climate targets in battling climate change (Kramers et al. 2014, Ahad et al. 2020), ensuring collaboration among stakeholders (Park and Yoo 2023, Shah 2023), and enhancing well-being (Carro-Suárez et al. 2023).

As the debate for the urban future and its relationship with the smart city and village continues, several notions and concepts have been put into the spotlight under the framework such as liveability (Sofeska 2017), the New Urban Agenda (NUA), or the Sustainable Development Goals (Kasinathan et al. 2022). The former has become a grand concept that encompasses several elements, and it intertwines with the smart city elements. For this part, we still focus on the service domains in Nusantara Capital City and how it is related to liveability as one of the main purposes of the urban future. In the praxis realm, sustainable urban development should be at the centre of global policy formulation to respond to social and environmental challenges (Corsi et al. 2022, Keith et al. 2022), in accordance with the goal 11 of SDGs committed to "making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" (United Nations 2023).

The urgency of sustainable urban development is also mandated through the New Urban Agenda framework (Satterthwaite 2016, Caprotti et al. 2017, Kaika 2017). Coordinated by UN Habitat, NUA aims to strengthen Goal 11 of SDGs and to provide a clear and concise urban planning guideline for the city planner and government to refer to. With the emergence of technology, the combination of 'smart' and 'sustainable' enables policy makers to manage, monitor, adapt, and create effective interventions for city development (Haarstad 2017, Sugandha et al. 2022). The implementation of sustainable urban development could be done through several strategies incorporating SDGs or smart services (Benites and Simões 2021, Clement et al. 2023).

The rise and development of the new city are inevitable parts of planetary urbanisation that states that this planet is heading to be a global urban area (Ruddick et al. 2018, Jain and Korzhenevych 2022). Development, economic growth, and increasing population induce new city development to be the consequences. For the last decades, several new city developments demonstrate how cities emerge as economic and global culture hubs while responding to the flow of capital and investment, as seen in Sadat, Egypt (El-

Shakhs 1994), Shenzen (Zacharias and Tang 2010), and several other cases in China (Zhao et al. 2021). Intensified cities make the needs for smart sustainable urban development more relevant. Along with the business hub and economic cities that emerge at the impact of global economic growth, the new capital cities also rise to balance and facilitate the development of a country.

Smart sustainable urban development for the new capital city is required due to the capital city functioning as the administrative centre of its country (Rachmawati et al. 2021a). Experiences from two capital cities of Lagos and the New Administrative Capital City of Cairo illustrated how the smart and sustainable elements provide help in managing the settlement, the infrastructure and the identity of the capital city (Soyinka et al. 2016, Abusaada et al. 2023). The smart strategy made to support the new capital city is prepared in the form of planning products, spatial and environmental plans, physical infrastructure, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), as well as through local communities (Rachmawati et al. 2021b). The infrastructure that is important to be available for the urban development to become a capital city consists of ICT, social and regional development, and physical and environmental aspects as well (Rachmawati et al. 2021c). In relation to ICT, in the future it is also necessary to develop the concept of urban governance, metaverse and digital twins (Jaynes et al. 2003, Duan et al. 2021, Lee et al. 2021). Metaverse is a new social network in which people can interact as if they were real without any constraints of physical space in the 3-dimensional virtual reality (Mir et al. 2020). Digital twins describe the utilisation of physical and virtual spaces simultaneously on two sides (Weil et al. 2023).

Nusantara Capital City, Indonesia, as a newly developed city, requires a strong urban governance as the governmentality of the city will be highly privileged to implement the smart sustainable urban development (Sulistyaningsih et al. 2023). The amalgamation of urban governance with the smart element may result in smart governance and it becomes an underlying factor for urban planning (Meijer and Bolívar 2016, Tomor et al. 2019).

There are various backgrounds underlying the relocation of the capital city, from supporting and inhibiting factors, both internal and external, to supporting the development of complete and modern infrastructure, having given a significant impact to Nusantara Capital City (Rachmawati et al. 2021b). Smart sustainable urban development for the Nusantara Capital City is imperative as the manifestation of the government's vision (Nusantara Capital Authority 2024). As mandated by the Act Number 3 Year 2022 on the Capital City, the government expects that the Nusantara Capital City will be a forest city, sponge city, and smart city. This mandate and directive could be achieved through the implementation of smart sustainable urban development. The sustainability stands above the three main pillars of social, economy, and environment, which align with the objective of Nusantara Capital City (Nusantara

Capital Authority 2024). Furthermore, as the relocation of the capital city is due to Jakarta's burden as the centre of government and business, a more sustainable and technology based urban planning is necessary to avoid similar problems arise.

The implementation of the smart city can be adapted to the characteristics of Indonesian cities that have their own unique archipelagic nature and culture of the people. One of the ways is by initiating the Nusantara Smart City model (Arief et al. 2022). In urban management, it is important to support and apply the concept of smart city (Rachmawati 2019). The same case is what needs to be implemented in the Nusantara Capital City. The most important element of the smart city in the preparation of a new capital city in Indonesia is the smart urban governance, particularly in establishing effective and efficient public services (Rachmawati et al. 2021a), and supporting the data openness by the government as well (Sunindyo and Amrita 2019). The initial framework of cyber security for Nusantara Capital City is focused on a smart and liveable city along with its critical infrastructure to maintain confidentiality, integrity, availability, security, and privacy (Sensuse et al. 2022). Furthermore, it is necessary to apply various smart strategies to support the achievement of a smart city.

The concept of smart city is also expected to enhance the quality of life in a city. In the case of Nusantara Capital City, the smart city is proposed to avoid similar problems as it happened in the old capital city of Jakarta, such as annual floods, land subsidence, and traffic congestion, while increasing the inclusivity and empowerment to the vulnerable members of the community (Vanolo 2014, Lee et al. 2023, Lepore et al. 2023). This could be achieved by fostering innovation, and particularly the digital one (Kerimoglu and Ekinci 2021). Innovation of the smart city will also help the urban expansion and managing the adverse effects which it may induce to the periphery area (Ortiz-Báez et al. 2022, Dragan et al. 2024), while being considered as a new city, the Nusantara Capital City will be very likely to expand to its vicinity.

Smart sustainable urban development firmly exists in the middle of SDGs and the NUA streams, and the Nusantara Capital City in Indonesia, as a new rising city, means to follow those streams and to be the role model for new city development. Conducting research in this case will provide additional empirical evidence to the concept of smart city (Kitchin 2015, Sikora-Fernandez 2018). For this reason, this research is aimed at reasoning and developing a scenario to implement the concept of smart sustainable urban development that is suitable to support the urban future and urban governance in Nusantara Capital City. The Nusantara Capital City as our focus provides a good example of how a smart sustainable urban development can be implemented. There are two main concepts of which we channelled our focus: the New Urban Agenda as the concept of urban development, and urban governance as the framework for collaboration between the stakeholders and inter-regional authorities. The relation of Nusantara Capital City with its partner region in developing smart sustainable urban

development also becomes our focus. We expect that this research could have a wider contribution to urban and regional science by providing empirical evidence on the implementation of smart sustainable urban development in the new capital city and the challenges that appear on maintaining regional interaction between one administrative region with the other.

Methodology

The method applied in this research is a case study because it involves selecting contemporary cases or new issues (Yin 2018), namely the Nusantara Capital City as the new capital of Indonesia in East Kalimantan (Figure 1). The facts found in the research area were then collected because the research of the case study is naturalistic (a real-life context) (Gerring 2016). In this research, the focus is on the future urban development needs related to its function as the state capital. The arising questions in this research are about how and why, characterising the research of the case study, leading to an in-depth, more explanatory, research (Yin 2018).

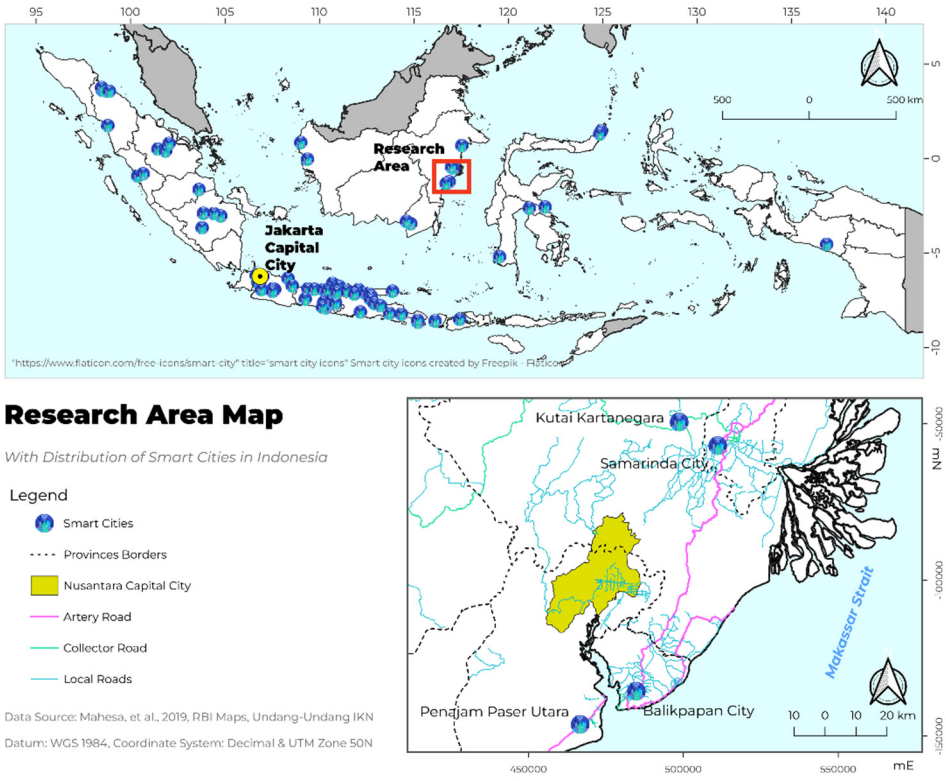

Figure 1. The research area with the distribution of Smart Cities. Source: Modified from Mahesa et al. (2019)

The digging for data in this research was done by conducting in-depth interviews (Gerring 2016). In addition, the data were also obtained by doing observation and conducting focus group discussions (FGD). The concept of triangulation (multiple sources of evidence) (Gerring 2016) is used to obtain the accuracy of data. In-depth interviews and FGDs were conducted with the stakeholders who have authority, and they are related to the concept and implementation of the topic of Smart Sustainable Urban Development in Nusantara Capital City in relation to the regional apparatus (Mack et al. 2005, Skovdal and Cornish 2015).

We conducted a semi-structured interview with the Deputy for Green and Digital Transformation of the Nusantara Capital City Authority from the National Capital Authority because this stakeholder has the authority to deal directly with the construction and development of the smart city and the urban sustainability of Nusantara Capital City. To obtain comprehensive results and for the triangulation, the selected resource persons and FGD participants came from the administrative areas that directly border Nusantara Capital City and they will be directly affected by the development of the capital city. They include Balikpapan City, Samarinda City and the Regency of North Penajam Paser.

The main criteria to select the FGD participants is their role toward the implementation of smart sustainable urban development in the capital city (Table 1). Their knowledge on the regional development in their respective region is another consideration. We held four FGDs for each administrative authorities and the local communities to gather the perspective and the cooperation on pursuing smart sustainable urban development in Nusantara Capital City. During the FGDs, we gathered the informant's perspective, knowledge, and challenge in their region led by the facilitators. Each participant was asked to present their thoughts and the current situation to be responded to by other participants. That way, we expect that we could capture the current situation and how they position themselves toward the smart sustainable urban development notion of Nusantara Capital City.

The primary data resulting from interviews and FGDs were then reinforced with the secondary data in the form of policies, regulations, and previous research results. The existing master plan of smart city, spatial planning, and regional planning document constitute those documents. The data having been collected were then analysed to explore the elements of Smart Sustainable Urban Development that have been, are being, and will be implemented by those stakeholders. Exploration is done by taking important information and synthesising and analysing the relationships between the key information to obtain a complete understanding of the research purposes. The FGD method and the multi-stakeholder interviews are also one of the triangulation techniques for cross-checking the data obtained from one informant to the others.

Table 1. Stakeholders' investigation on Smart Sustainable Urban Development

Method	Apparatus	Roles
In-Depth Interview at national level	Deputy for Green and Digital Transformation of the Nusantara Capital City Authority	Directing the implementation of smart city and urban sustainability of Nusantara Capital City
	Staff in the Directorate of Urban Areas and State Borders, Ministry of Home Affairs and as an activity in the ASEAN Smart City Network	Reviewing, formulating policies, and preparing recommendations for development plans for the implementation of smart cities and urban sustainability in the Nusantara Capital City
	Head of Indonesian Association of Urban and Regional Planners	Reviewing, formulating policies, and preparing recommendations for development plans for the implementation of smart cities and urban sustainability in the Nusantara Capital City
	Chief Executive Officer, ASECH - Centre of Executive on Smart City	Reviewing, formulating policies, and preparing recommendations for development plans for the implementation of smart cities and urban sustainability in the Nusantara Capital City
	Chairman of the Association of the Indonesian Information Technology Consultants	Providing consultation and relevant technology solutions to support national capital planning for the implementation of smart city and urban sustainability
FGD at national level	Director of Government Administration Control and Development Licensing, Authority of State Capital City	Directing the implementation of smart city and urban sustainability of Nusantara Capital City
	Director of Engineering Development for Housing and Settlement, Directorate General of Cipta Karya, Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing	Directing the implementation of smart city and urban sustainability of Nusantara Capital City
	Chairperson of the Smart Indonesia Initiatives Association	Reviewing, formulating policies, and preparing recommendations for development plans for the implementation of smart cities and urban sustainability in the Nusantara Capital City
	Experts in the urban and ICT fields relevant to the development plans for the Nusantara Capital City	Designing cities that are efficient, sustainable, and environmentally friendly
	Agency for National Research and Innovation	Carrying out research to support infrastructure development that supports technological innovation relevant to sustainable development in the archipelago's capital city

Method	Apparatus	Roles
FGD at regional level	Agency for Communication and Information Services, Regional Secretariat, Agency for Environmental Services, Board for Regional Disaster Management, Agency for Regional Development Planning, Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning, Department of Manpower and Transmigration, Department of Population and Civil Registration, Department of Population and Civil Registration, Department of Education and Culture, Department of Social Affairs, Department of Industry and Trade, Department of Food Security, Department of Food Security, Investment and Integrated One-Stop Service Agency, Department of Transportation, Department of Community Empowerment and Village Development in Balikpapan City, Samarinda City and the Regency of North Penajam Paser (The FGD activities for each region invited 15 related OPDs, so the total number of FGD participants for the three regions was 45 people)	Regulator and executive for each smart dimension related to the sustainable urban development (disaster, environment, urban planning)
	Head of Regency of North Penajam Paser	Implementation of Local Scale Central Policy for the implementation of smart city and urban sustainability in the Nusantara Capita City
FGD at local level	Community Representative	The directly impacted community

The technical and bureaucratic process becomes an obstacle and it limits the data we may gather. In addition, as the development and the Nusantara Capital City issues were subjected to change rapidly, the data and perception were also limited to the period we conducted the FGD (August 2023). For the research area, we excluded Kutai Kartanegara in this paper due to the availability of data and its preparation in the context of smart sustainable urban development (Rachmawati et al. 2023).

Results

The main concept of Nusantara Capital City planning

The smart city in the development of Nusantara Capital City is interpreted as a process of planning the development, operation and maintenance of a city that has made use of digital technology to improve the quality of life of the city residents. At present, the smart city in the development of Nusantara Capital City in terms of infrastructure is divided into two: 1). The passive infrastructure development – construction of multi-

purpose panels for underground utilities, such as fibre optics, electrical cables, water pipe networks, etc. In the future, with the development of the passive infrastructure, the Central Government Core Area (KIPP) that is under construction will have no hanging cables so that all cables will be underground; 2). The active infrastructure development – done by building 4G BTS and data collection. An integrated data centre and command centre will be built, and they will later manage 6 domain service apps for fulfilling the needs of Nusantara Capital City as mentioned by our informant from the Nusantara Capital City Authority:

> *There are six domains that have been planned: e-governance, transportation and mobility, smart living, natural resources and energy, smart industry and human resources, and the last is smart built environment and infrastructure. How we will utilise metaverse, digital twin, satellite monitoring is included in the object information, therefore these six domains are the ones that we are currently building to make Nusantara Capital City a smart city. It is all included in our masterplan*.

For the designation of the future Nusantara Capital City, in terms of the smart dimension, the authority enlists six service area domains. These domains serve as the main focus of development, and they consist of:

1. E-governance: digital registration, integrated command centre, smart registration, licensing process services, public services, transportation, and mobility.
2. Transportation and mobility: in 2024, there will be a trial showcase for passenger drones, technology development, and building a joint research centre so as to become a pioneer in transportation mobility. Accessibility is one of the supporting factors that enables the interaction among regions to take place. In the future, a new bridge will be built, and it will connect Balikpapan City to the area of Nusantara Capital City.
3. Smart living: health, security, air pollution monitoring, installation of sensors, CCTV, use of AI, and telemedicine collaboration for the availability of medicines, doctor consultations, etc.
4. Natural resources and energy: Nusantara Capital City is mandated to become a zero-carbon city where 65% of it will be returned to tropical forests including city parks and smart farming, while 25% of it will be built up by urban areas whose development is established. Meanwhile, it is 10% for green areas. The Board for Nusantara Capital City Authority issued scenarios for the achievement of renewable energy.
5. Smart industry and human resources: it is realised in digital MSME

activities through high tech industry and CIPS computers. Besides, it is expected that it can complement the existing industries in Indonesia, especially in the area of KEK (Special Economic Zone). In addition, from the side of human resources, to reduce the gap in facilities, all schools and universities can access the Nusantara Digital Library.

6. Smart built environment and infrastructures: intelligent environmental infrastructure packaged in the concept of metaverse, digital games, satellites, and sensor interfaces. Further, according to the smart building guideline of Nusantara Capital City, the buildings must be integrated within the Integrated Building Management System (IBMS) (Nusantara Capital Authority 2023)

The Nusantara Capital Authority (2021) has incorporated these 6 service area domains into the Nusantara Capital City Smart City Masterplan (Figure 2). Each service domain would be fully supported by the smart city elements including the programs and targets. The connection between the service domains and the smart elements is required to ensure that the service deliveries are at their best.

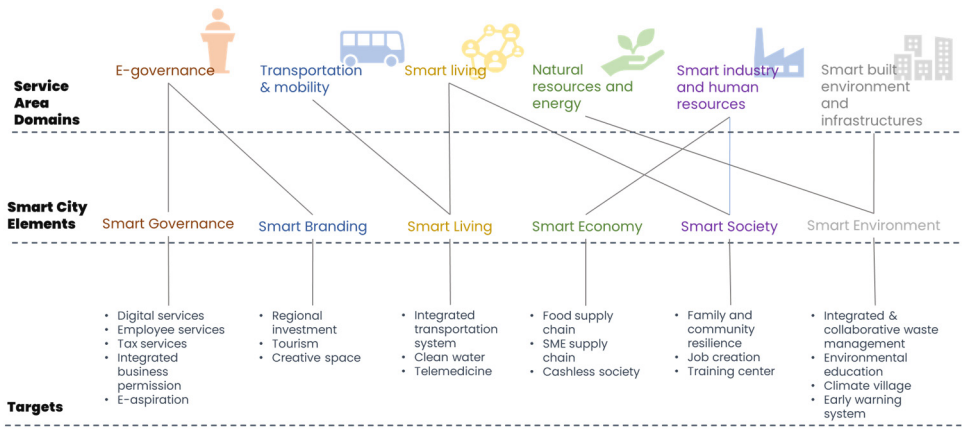

Figure 2. Relation of service area domains, smart city elements, and targets of Nusantara Capital City. Source: Nusantara Capital Authority (2021), In-depth interview (2023)

Additionally, there are six development areas in the area of Nusantara Capital City, such as: 1) financial centre designation; 2) tourism deduction areas or areas used for tourism activities (ecotourism, forests, music festivals); 3) renewable energy development for logistics and industry; 4) food security (smart farming and agriculture); 5) research and development; and 6) innovation and education areas. To serve as an economic generator, Nusantara Capital City has 6 planning areas including: financial centre; tourism and leisure; renewable energy; logistics and industry; food; research and development. The construction of the Ministerial Site Houses at

Nusantara Capital City consists of two types, namely Type 105 with twelve houses and Type 104 with 24 houses planned to have been completed by June 8, 2024.

A study on ducting as a form of spatial planning, especially on cable network infrastructure at Nusantara Capital City has been done, and there are two PLN as infrastructure support. A ducting study is a study in the form of analysis and design planning for a cable utility network system, where in this case the cable network infrastructure being built at Nusantara Capital City will use an underground system (electrical cables, fibre optics, etc. are underground). In addition, the presence of Worker Residential Areas is one of the government's concerns, especially for the workers in the area of Nusantara Capital City (Figure 3). The Worker Residential Area is presently occupied by 3,000 workers spreading over 22 towers. In the future, those worker residential areas that are no longer in use can be converted into public health centres and Islamic boarding schools.

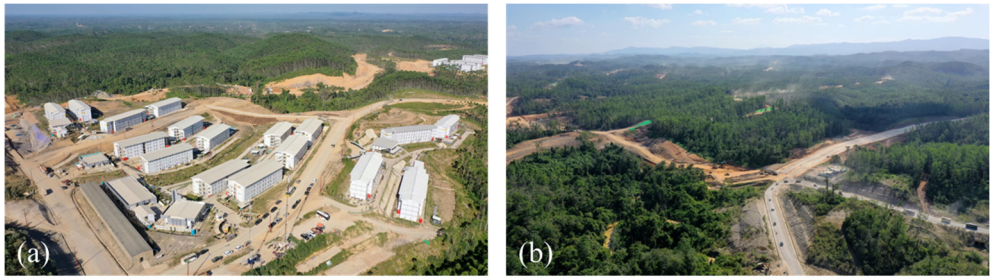

Figure 3. (a) Worker's housing; (b) The construction of road in Nusantara Capital City: utilities are grounded

The roles of regional partners in the Smart Sustainable Urban Development

As big cities are located around the area of Nusantara Capital City, in this case Balikpapan City and Samarinda City, they have their own roles. The Regency of North Penajam Paser with the branding Serambi Nusantara certainly has a role in supporting the acceleration of infrastructure and growth of MSMEs. Due to its branding Serambi Nusantara, the Regional Head of the Regency of North Penajam Paser has a priority to improve human resources through various informal trainings and to develop food agriculture, especially in freshwater fisheries along with its infrastructure (providing clean water, dams, and intakes). The regional governments in the area of Nusantara Capital City are at present in the transitional process of relocating or transferring authority to Nusantara Capital City. At this point, several State Civil Servants from the Regency of North Penajam Paser were withdrawn by the central government to be placed to work for the Nusantara Capital City Authority Agency. The Regency of North Penajam Paser, in this case, has prepared a regional concept to make it a satellite city (Table 2).

Table 2. Interregional Comparison Matrix

Potential Factors	**Cities and Regency**			
	Samarinda City	*Balikpapan City*	*Regency of North Penajam Paser*	*Regency of Kutai Kartanegara*
City Branding	Buffer zone As the heart of Nusantara Capital City	Buffer zone As the nerve of Nusantara Capital City	Serambi Nusantara	Mitra & Kukar Asia Wonders (tourism promotion media)
Priorities of Nusantara Capital City Support Program	Community development and empowerment programs (Pro Bebaya)	Availability of industrial areas Availability of transportation	HR (operators, programmers, and administrators) Food agriculture (Village of Cultivation Fisheries) Infrastructure	IT Human Resources Development
Strategic Roles	Provincial capital The airport located in Samarinda City will be redeveloped	The airport located in Balikpapan City Balikpapan as an economic centre	VIP Airport located in the area of the Regency of North Penajam Paser The construction of the Balang Island bridge and toll road makes it easy to access the area of Nusantara Capital City	Directly bordering the area of Nusantara Capital City A forest zone found in the area of Kutai Kartanegara

For their smart development readiness, there are still several areas, especially in the Regency of North Penajam Paser, with blank-spot zones causing delays in the digitalization process, particularly in giving government services to the community. One of the good examples of digitalization is the program PERISAI SIDIK 112 which allows disaster management on a digital-based system. Another effort for digitalization derives from the digital signature program as part of the smart city e-government. There are 28 out of 35 OPDs already equipped with electronic signatures for piloting the Bukit Raya Village project as a Digital Village. In addition, there are 20 other villages included in the plan for developing smart areas. The development of Nusantara Capital City will surely have an impact on the open market potential to absorb natural resources through various e-commerce platforms, inducing an urgency to develop the smart economy.

From the FGD result, we conclude that the community as the subject of development and direct recipient of it becomes an important aspect in the implementation and the sustainability of government's programs. There are 3 villages located in the Central

Government Core Area (KIPP): Bumi Harapan, Pemaluan and Sepaku. One of the villages in the area of Nusantara Capital City, namely Bumi Harapan, generally supports the presence of Nusantara Capital City. However, there is still a small percentage of people involved in Nusantara Capital City activities due to salaries below the minimum wage and the limited number of people taking part in the training that the government has provided. These are the challenges in themselves. The maximum age limit for training the participants (35-40 years of age) means that those over 40 years old do not have the opportunity to take part in the training. In addition, the on-going massive development has had an impact on the environmental aspects, especially air pollution, as well as it concerns those around the area of Nusantara Capital City that it is not child-friendly because of the presence of a large number of construction vehicles. Furthermore, the people around the area of Nusantara Capital City hope that there will be workforce trainings suitable with their potential and competency certificates in line with the development of Nusantara Capital City and that there will be an absorption of workers from the local community, as it can be found from one of our participants in the FGD with the local communities:

> *Basically, people in here support the Nusantara Capital City program from the government, especially the training and education for an effort to enhance the human resources in welcoming the Nusantara Capital City. What we want from the training are also the jobs. The age restriction in training forbids the people who are older than 40 years old to participate.*

The local people at Sepaku District encounter difficulties in accessing jobs and work in the construction site due to the lack of education certificates. They also feel that the salary does not meet their end because it is below the regional minimum wage. Although many capacity buildings and workshops have been organised by the government, the locals think that they are not enough. For them it would be better if the government also provided a job soon after they finished the training. The local people are anxious about the relocation issue. As the authority intensifies the physical construction, an unrestful feeling lurks, and it encroaches the people. They do not object to the relocation, but the government must ensure that, in the case if relocation really happens, their assets and livelihood are brought.

In general, smart and sustainable urban development is in line with several frameworks that lead to an urban future such as the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. However, the successful implementation of the Smart Sustainable Urban Development in the Nusantara Capital City cannot be separated from the involvement and participation of various stakeholders. From the FGD results, we conclude that the Nusantara Capital Authority (IKN) becomes a model for implementing the Sustainable Urban Development concept. Development and implementation in IKN are generally much easier because it is a new area so that various obstacles in IKN can be minimised

or anticipated. The implementation of the Smart Sustainable Urban Development needs to be adjusted to regional planning documents, IKN master documents, and other documents (Table 3), as stated by several other informants in the FGD: "*IKN's spatial planning and master plan already regulate the sustainable principles, however, it needs to be examined further regarding the implementation of IKN's smart sustainable urban development*". Furthermore, *"smart sustainability involves: government (making regulations), OPD (stakeholders in implementing activity programs), and society (strengthening capacity building)".*

Table 3. Preparation of Smart Sustainable Urban Development of Nusantara Capital City

Stakeholder (level)	SSUD Dimension		
	Economy	Environment	Social
Nusantara National Capital Authority (national)	• Passive and active infrastructure • Capturing captive market from Samarinda and Balipapan (productivity) • Nusantara will serve as an "economic generator" in the region • Objected to city productivity (measured from the GDP)	• Smart building • Land resources • Implementation of ESG framework • Reforestation by replanting and preservation of forest cover (>65%)	• Well-being and sharp increasing labour numbers • Hardware, software, and brainware constitute the human resources development • Nusantara digital library
Balikpapan City (regional)	• Adjusting spatial planning in the northern area • Dedicated industrial area • E-permit and OSS system	• Mitigating environment impact on traffic management	• Increasing population • "Rumah Layak Huni" program • Settlement Masterplan (RP3KP)
Regency of Penajam Paser Utara (regional)	• Development of industrial area	• MoU with Korean investors in waste management (processing waste with salt water into chemicals)	• Enhancing workforce and labour skills
Samarinda City (regional)			
Local community at Sepaku District (local)	• Training and enhancing capability • Involving in small and medium enterprise to support Nusantara Capital City	• Maintaining land cover and water quality	• Ensuring social cohesion at the grassroot level • Participating in Nusantara Capital City development

As the Nusantara Capital City is situated in the interior area of the Province of East Kalimantan, Balikpapan City and the Regency of North Penajam Paser seize the opportunity to promote themselves by the branding of "Beranda Nusantara Capital City" for Balikpapan City and "Serambi Nusantara" for North Penajam Paser. This program is not only beneficial for promotion purposes, but it is also stealing the spotlight from the Central Government. Both Balikpapan City and the Regency of North Penajam Paser envisage a special industrial area. Balikpapan City has appointed Kariangau as the location of the industrial area while North Penajam Paser tries to adjust the industrial area to support the Nusantara Capital City. A city or region branding can also be helped by smart branding, and it could attract investors to come and boost the regional economy while also helping the tourism sector to gain visitors.

Discussion

The growing awareness and concern for the environment, urbanisation and technological advances result in an urgent need and opportunity in managing a city, which can also be seen in the case of Nusantara Capital City. In general, there are two approaches to Smart Sustainable Cities. They are inductive/bottom-up (seeing and synthesising how other people define the concept in theory and/or in practice) and deductive/top-down approaches (definition development starts with a hypothesis or statement normative about what Smart Sustainable Cities should be) (Höjer and Wangel 2015). Smart Sustainable Urban Development is a unified concept of smart technology, sustainability, and cities. Smart Sustainable Urban Development can be materialised when these 3 aspects are implemented harmoniously. Connecting the concepts of sustainable and smart cities can also increase awareness about the potential of making use of ICT to promote urban sustainability (Höjer and Wangel 2015). The Smart Sustainable Urban Development concept can be used as a joint framework to elaborate new collaborations and models especially in urban development. This effort is reflected toward urban governance and the e-governance as the smart element to support the governance.

The Nusantara Capital City Authority, regional government, and local communities have elaborated their perspectives. From the constellation of those three, it could be perceived that the Nusantara Capital City Authority has a larger contribution in planning and implementing the plan through its own body. Their planning shows ambition in catapulting Nusantara Capital City far into a future version. At the regional level, the regional governments of Balikpapan City, Samarinda City, and Penajam Paser Utara Regency have shown their response by presenting the challenges and their own planning for the surrounding region of Nusantara Capital City. At the local level, local communities highly hope for the positive impact of Nusantara Capital City, including job creation, improvement of life quality, and their right to land and

livelihood resources. Further, we will discuss the arguments toward the New Urban Agenda as the operational framework for sustainability and urban governance as concepts for the interrelation between the national, regional, and local level. Above all, we will see the context of smart city and ICT implementation into NUA and urban governance.

Smart City and ICT Implementation for Urban Governance in Nusantara Capital City

Our findings provide an empirical ground for the smart city concept and its linkage to urban governance in the case of Nusantara Capital City. The New Capital City realises that the application of smart cities and ICT in urban governance needs to be viewed further and deeper than just e-government or digitalization that is seen merely as a reflection of the city because a city is not only reflected by its data and the supporting infrastructure (Xiao and Xie 2021). One of the foundations that can be established through the application of smart city dimensions in urban governance is how smart cities are able to identify urban issues and to place them in an appropriate context and within the main spatial, institutional, and technological elements. The intersection of these three key elements is of primary importance in implementing urban governance to support the urban future vision in Nusantara Capital City. As a city viewing the future and taking technocratic and cyber-utopianism as one of its imaginations, Nusantara Capital City needs to prepare urban governance structures to achieve the expected achievement of urban future.

In its implementation, one of the requirements to support the implementation of smart city elements in establishing urban governance is the availability of data and information (Allam et al. 2022). The implementation of smart cities for urban governance can be viewed in the governance structure of certain cities. One of the case studies where the smart city dimension can strengthen urban governance is represented by Italian cities (Caselli et al. 2022). The structure of urban governance can be in the forms of projects, administrative structures, and public communication by applying certain platforms (Song et al. 2023).

As the implementation of urban governance, there are several programs set to be launched. One of the programs as the implementation of public communication is the digital public services. In the Masterplan for Smart City Development, the public services consist of six main programs including integrated business permission, tax service, e-aspiration, employees service, and civil administration. The latter will be implemented in collaboration with the regional government. To foster a stronger regional cooperation, the authority designs an affirmative program where it recruits the regional and local government into the administrative structure of Nusantara Capital City Authority (Table 4).

Table 4. Implementation in supporting Urban Governance

Structure of Urban Governance	Implementation
Public communication via certain platforms	The launch of the website: www.ikn.go.id, containing the latest information and updating the condition of Nusantara Capital City. Public services: taxes, aspirations, civic administration, business permission, and employee's administration.
Administrative structure	The Authority institution of Nusantara Capital City has a deputy for digital transformation as the implementer of the concept of smart city. Recruiting regional government to administrative structure of Nusantara Capital City Authority.
Project smart city	The preparation of a smart city master plan for the Nusantara Capital City.

The integration of smart city components into the planning of Nusantara Capital City by the Capital City Authority could be read as an effort to initiate the sustainable development through a 'smart' approach. As urban challenges such as climate change, disaster, urban injustice, and urban inclusivity are emerging and the problems are getting more intense, a firm governance is required to overcome them. One of the future urban governance ready to be implemented in the Nusantara Capital City is the digital twin. Nusantara Capital City Authority plans to apply digital twins featuring spatial information of development, disaster simulation, and traffic congestion simulation (Weil et al. 2023). Digital twins will help urban governance by mediating civil society and the government through the virtual world. Digital twins will stand above infrastructure and the "urban brain" to support service delivery and to strengthen the one-stop service from the government (Deng et al. 2021). To ensure the data security and the implementation of city decentralisation, digital twins provide a blockchain system for the supporting nodes of urban governance. The utilisation of a blockchain system is predicted to be the future of urban governance due to its reliability, transparency, and traceability (Khanna et al. 2021, Zheng 2022, Zygiaris et al. 2023).

An advanced smart urban governance, backed by several instruments such as digital twins and blockchain systems will be fruitful for the implementation of smart sustainable urban development. The Nusantara Capital City Authority intends to open 6 service area domains as the backbone of new urban governance in the new capital city. At least three service domains will have direct benefit,including e-governance, transportation & mobility, and smart industry. For e-governance, technological application will help to close the wide gap between the government and the people.

Furthermore, in the initial state, the Nusantara Capital City is expected to bring about 1.5 million people to the region, consisting of civil servants along with their family. This exodus will invoke an unplanned migration as the increasing population will significantly stimulate economic growth through supply-demand mechanisms.

As for nowadays, Balikpapan City has started to feel exasperated by the traffic congestion in the weekend as the newcomers flood this city, speculating on the information and the promise of the Nusantara Capital City. The newcomers are usually unequipped with the necessary skills to access the job market. Hence, they are frequently stranded in the street, and they become homeless. The Balikpapan City authority perceives them as a social problem that needs to be addressed. Often, the authorities have to send them back home. This phenomenon will wreak an administrative civil havoc on the Nusantara Capital City and its vicinity causing, in time, the government failure to deliver its basic service to the residents. A quick, reliable, and strong administration function of e-governance is highly required to ensure the civic registration for the people who flock to the new capital city. This phenomenon could be triggered by the presence of activity centres such as the university, as well as of central business districts (CBD), inducing a local migration (O'Brien et al. 2023).

For the preparation of the new capital city, the Indonesian government made a promise not to burden the national budget by using investment and capital from the corporations. It strongly reflects the government's intention to make Nusantara Capital City a growth pole in the eastern part of Indonesia, particularly in the East Kalimantan Province. For the execution, the central government along with the regional government from Penajam Paser Utara and Balikpapan City have prepared a designated industrial area in, respectively, Buluminung and Kariangau.

These industrial areas are expected to open the floodgate of investment to Nusantara Capital City under high-tech industry including petrochemical and green energy. Powered by the ICT, smart industry in Nusantara Capital City will also address the SMEs and it will involve them in the big scheme of the industrial sector in the capital city and its vicinity. The government also launched an integrated business permission online. It will help to attract the Foreign Direct Investment as the main financial source. Respectively, the FDI could also aid the development of smart city in the case of Nusantara Capital City, circularly enforcing the numbers of FDI (Turnock 2005, Jayathilaka and Park 2022). To ensure that the flow of capital and investment is held accountable, an open system of governance using ICT is necessary. This is the point where e-government weighs in as the reformation and future of urban governance.

The constellation of Nusantara Capital City between Balikpapan City, Samarinda City, and Penajam Paser Utara Regency is also a critical point in addressing the interregional

interaction. The Nusantara Capital City is situated in the centre of Balikpapan as the centre of economy; Samarinda works as the capital city of Kalimantan Timur; and Penajam Paser Utara as the centre of agriculture and food. The smart city concept and ICT will enable the interaction to head toward competition within this region as studied by several works (Brenner 2009, Vesalon and Creţan 2020). However, the administrative structure of Nusantara Capital City as part of the urban governance shows otherwise. All partner regions and the Nusantara Capital City Authority direct the smart city development towards collaboration instead of competition, hence it fosters interregional collaboration rather than competitiveness. This is also indicated by the development of smart branding from Balikpapan and Penajam Paser Utara which is closely related to the theme of Nusantara Capital City. The integrated business permission online is also an evidence of how smart development increases collaboration.

Underpinning the Urban Future: the liveability of a city

The Nusantara Capital City Authority set the course to make the new capital city both lovable and liveable. To implement this ambition, the liveability of Nusantara Capital City stands on six service domains to deliver the necessary services for its future residents. Transportation and mobility in the New Capital City become a main focus for the Nusantara Capital City while this topic is also considered as a hot one for the discussion on urban governance. For the best practice, Spain has stolen the world's attention for the advancement of Smart Mobility due to the 80% of its population (Song et al. 2023). The first service domain, smart transportation, is a fundamental element to increase the quality of the residence in a city (Benevolo et al. 2016). As the main driving force for the relocation, traffic congestion in Jakarta severely takes the toll on its residents, impacting not only the economy sector but also the population mental and physical health (Yudhistira et al. 2016, Ghazali et al. 2019). Smart mobility with a better public transportation system and its derivatives should increase the quality of life for Nusantara's future residents.

Another key element to increase the liveability of the Nusantara residents is the Green Open Urban Space (Kusuma et al. 2023). Without a doubt, the Nusantara Capital City will have greenery at all of its corners since the government has declared this future capital city as the 'forest city' and 'sponge city'. The role of Green Open Urban Space is also critical in the context of the NUA. United Nations (2017) envisaged that the future city and urban area will have at least six principles foundations, including: (i) socially functioned; (ii) participatory; (iii) gender equality; (iv) sustainable economic growth; (v) integrated and boundless; (vi) inclusive mobile; (vii) disaster-resilience; and (viii) ecological. Nusantara Capital City is running toward NUA by implementing service domains such as transportation & mobility, and natural resources & energy. For the latter, the Nusantara Capital City Authority enacted that 65% of its urban area must be green or forested, encapsulating the point numbers vii) and viii) of the NUA.

With a green land coverage, annual hydrometeorological disasters that plague Jakarta, like floodings, will be deducted or even eliminated. Green land coverage is also beneficial for the hydrological cycle, securing the water resources and the natural habitat, while becoming a nature-based solution for urban living (McPhearson et al. 2023).

In the term of smart elements, the pursuit of liveability through nature-based solutions and the spirit of NUA can be fuelled by the smart environment. This element encapsulates the application of ICT to monitor land use and land cover change which is crucial to retain the percentage of land cover and also to supervise the air and water quality. In a wider extension, smart environments also include the smart infrastructure, as constructions and buildings have a heavy impact on the urban environment. It is related with a service domain of smart infrastructure and inherently with the smart grid that it accompanies.

Sustainability, as one of the strategic goals of smart cities, is an important concept in the development of the State Capital City. In general, the characteristics of the Smart Sustainable Urban Development Indicator can be approached by using the Smart Sustainable Cities indicator in accordance with the Key Performance Indicator of Smart Sustainable City (KPI SSC) from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and also from SDG 11, that is Sustainable Cities and Communities. The indicators of Smart Sustainable Cities according to the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) are divided into 3 main dimensions, namely: economic, environmental, and social dimensions. According to Lehtonen (2004), the economic dimension focuses on the aspects of urban production; the environmental dimension focuses on ecological aspects, the conservation of the natural environment, natural resources and energy; and, meanwhile, the social dimension covers equality, community autonomy, citizen welfare, and the satisfaction of basic human needs.

Since urbanisation is continuously increasing, the role of urban areas is getting more crucial. Urban areas do not merely serve as a living space but also as economic, political, and ecological nodes. At present, combining the issues of sustainable development, urbanisation, and sustainable city areas is becoming a new field of interest for research, education, and policy making. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was developed through a bottom-up and comprehensive process in different aspects, namely social, economic, and environmental ones (Walker et al. 2019). In general, the transformation of urban development towards sustainable development is aimed at reviving the development of strategic cities. According to Cook and Nair (2021), the technological aspects of Smart Cities require in-depth scientific exploration and cutting-edge technology as well. The knowledge gaps faced by communities and the unequal fiscal capacity prevent the process of smart city development from growing (Viola and Fitrianto 2022). The concept of sustainability has been indirectly included in smart cities that highlight several aspects of sustainability, such as the need for

responsible resource management, energy efficiency, and citizen involvement. The concept of smart city has the potential to overcome the aspects of sustainability challenges by promoting people's participation, developing innovative and smart solutions for sustainability, increasing efficiency in city systems, and adopting the system of transparent and inclusive governance (Basiri et al. 2017).

Ensuring sustainable development is of primary importance for building systems that enable cities to analyse initiatives and to make decisions. Meanwhile, the goal of sustainable development is long-term economic and environmental stability that is achievable by integrating economic, environmental, and social dimensions (Basiri et al. 2017). Sustainable cities have become a goal desired for future urban development, especially in the Nusantara Capital City. The connection between the concept of sustainable cities and smart cities is one of the solutions in developing the Nusantara Capital City in the future. This is in line with what Caragliu et al. (2011) stated, where investment in human and social capital supported by transportation and digital infrastructure is able to encourage sustainable economic growth. Besides, the high quality of life along with the wise management of natural resources through participatory governance can also be achieved.

Conclusions

The Indonesian Government envisaged Nusantara Capital City to be a forest city, sponge city, and smart city. However, this research focuses on the smart city as linked to sustainability. The research question was related to how the concept of Smart Sustainable Urban Development will be implemented in the Capital City of Nusantara. As a framework that is constructed above sustainability and the implementation of ICT in urban planning, a smart sustainable city could aid Nusantara Capital City to achieve its objectives. Our results show that Nusantara Capital City has been designed to be a futuristic city through the smart city pillar. There are some fundamental service areas in the Nusantara Capital City that become the main issues and challenges for the future of urban life, including smart governance, smart mobility and transportation, smart living for supporting liveability, while the smart environment takes the form of balancing the use of natural resources and energy, and the smart society is achieved through increasing human resources and digital literacy, and smart infrastructures.

The smart sustainable urban development framework in Nusantara Capital City addresses the three main dimensions of economic, environment, and social aspects. The implementation of smart sustainable urban development in Nusantara Capital City will also permeate benefits through its boundaries and it will enhance cooperation between the new capital city and its partner region, facilitated by the ICT. The roles and presence of the partner region of Kutai Kartanegara, Penajam Paser Utara, Balikpapan, and

Samarinda, are crucial because these regions will accept benefits while simultaneously sustaining the effort to employ the smart sustainable urban development in the Nusantara Capital City. With massive development and enormous investments, it is important to encourage regional cooperation with the partner region for the Nusantara Capital City to accelerate a general economic development. Regional cooperation could be done through human resource development for the surrounding areas, while improving the infrastructure, and promoting the identity of the partner region. That way, the Nusantara Capital City can be a model for regional cooperation in Indonesia.

It is also imperative that the smart sustainable urban development needs to be enacted due to the urban area issues that the world has recently faced. Disaster risk, spatial and social injustice, economic stagnancy, to mention a few, have become impediments for the development of a region or urban area. Smart sustainable urban development also resonates with several frameworks that the urban future is heading to, such as the New Urban Agenda and good urban governance. Nusantara Capital City needs a clear and concise development plan and smart sustainable urban development may pave the way for this city to reach its full potential by providing general background, management guidelines, and measurable indicators. Apart from that, the results of this research can be a concept that is applied at the international level, especially in countries that move their capital to a completely newly built place.

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"ALERT FOR THE NEIGHBOURS": NEGOTIATING MUSLIM (NON-)REPRESENTATIONS IN AN EAST GERMAN CITY

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Abstract: When it comes to Muslim representational practices in European cities, fears, criticism, and scepticism emerge in the public discourse. The aim of this paper is to investigate how Muslim places of prayer are negotiated. By means of a multi-method approach, we investigate how Muslim places of prayer in Leipzig become visible. We further question the media's role in local negotiation processes. The analysis shows that the diverse Muslim places of prayer rather resemble 'backyard mosques' due to financial and structural hurdles as well as conflict avoidance. However, some interviewees explain their satisfaction with the places of prayer, which are places of migration and thus social networks, especially for the first generation. Due to its East German past, Leipzig is experiencing a partly catch-up debate regarding the arrival of Islam through migration. But, religion as culture is giving-way to individual local practices of representation of diverse Muslim people that could be picked up more strongly by the media.

Keywords:

negotiation processes;
representation;
places of prayer;
backyard mosques;
East Germany

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Introduction

The (architectural) representation of Islam repeatedly leads to local conflicts. This is illustrated, for example, through the plans to build a representative mosque by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat religious congregation in Gohlis, a district of the city of Leipzig (Kirndörfer and Wiest 2020). Although the plans for the building have existed since 2012/2013, construction has not yet begun (Jakobi 2021). While the citizens' association in Gohlis and the city administration support the construction plans, other initiatives including members of right-wing parties organise protests and take a written stance. In 2013 and 2016, there were two attacks in which five bloody pig's heads were impaled on wooden stakes on the site (Loch 2016, Jakobi 2021).

Despite the conflict-laden events surrounding the planned new mosque, the spokesperson for the Ahmadiyya community believes that acceptance will grow as soon as people get to know each other better: "This has been the experience in Berlin, for example, and everywhere else in Germany, where there was a lot of fear and concern before the mosque was built but, afterwards, the situation developed very positively" (Jakobi 2021). If the construction in Leipzig goes ahead as planned, it will be one of the first mosques to be built in East Germany alongside Berlin. The first representative mosque in East Germany outside of Berlin is currently being built in the industrial area Erfurt-Marbach, also supported by the Ahmadiyya community, which is due to be completed by the end of 2023 (MDR Thüringen 2023). The representation of Islam is, therefore, increasing in East German large cities (Figure 1), which is presumably due to the refugee reception crisis in 2015/2016 and the corresponding immigration of Muslim people (Stenske and Bioly 2021).

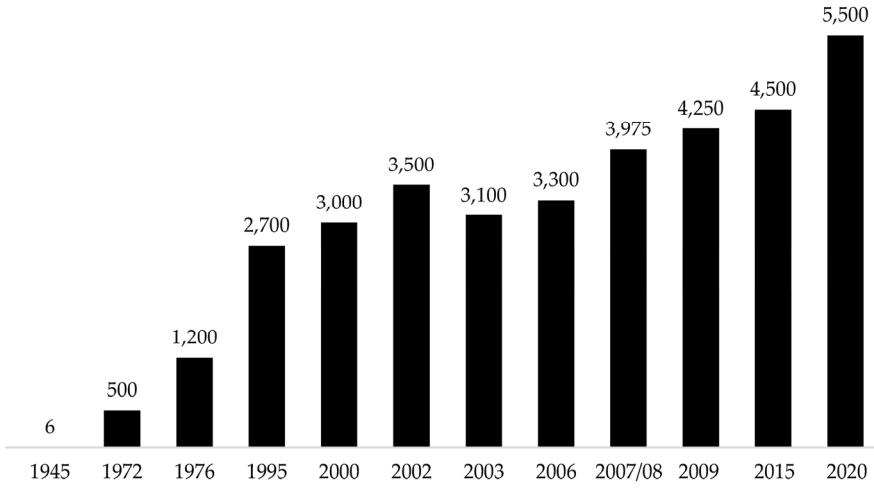

Figure 1. Development of the Muslim population in Germany 1945-2020 (in 1000 people; based on estimates)
Source: Pfündel et al. (2021)

Against the background of the conflicts surrounding the plans to build a new mosque in Leipzig Gohlis, the increasing proportion of Muslim people and growing (architectural) representation of Islam in East Germany as well as the words of Majoka, the aim of this article is to examine how Muslim places of prayer have been negotiated, which have existed in Leipzig for years. Our hypothesis is that the invisibility of places of prayer in Leipzig is related to conflicts and hostilities based on religion. The study serves to answer the following sub-questions: (1) How do Muslim places of prayer become visible in Leipzig and to what extent is their (in)visibility related to conflicts and hostilities based on religion or migration? (2) What role does the media play in the local negotiation processes of Muslim representation in Leipzig, and to what extent do they establish a connection with the topic of migration?

First, we focus on the emergence of local conflictual negotiation processes in relation to the connections between religion, urbanity, and representation. Then, we explain the research design using the methods of image analysis, guided expert interviews and a discourse analysis. After that, we present and discuss the results on the role of (in)-visibility in negotiation processes of Muslim representations in Leipzig.

Negotiation processes on the representation of religion in the city

Globalisation, modernisation, and crisis-ridden developments lead to migration and the transformation of religion in cities (Casanova 1994). However, according to Global Prayers scholars (Lanz 2014), the current view of religion in urban development is analysed too much on a global level. As a consequence, stereotyping takes place (Stump 2008, Bielefeldt 2010, Färber et al. 2012, Lanz 2014). The increase of trans-local contacts and the exchange of the global and the local leads to a "multi-layered glocalisation" (Rüpke 2020: 4). It creates a dynamic that links traditional religious aspects with new everyday practices (Lefebvre 1991, Lanz 2014). This development is reflected in representations within the city, e.g. in the architecture (Knott et al. 2016). Religion and the city, and their respective development, are thus mutually dependent and interlinked. In the future, it will therefore be increasingly important to mediate between the urban and the religious space (Rüpke 2020).

In relation to the religion of Islam, Muslims are to be understood as urban actors who have individual histories and cultivate everyday practices which, in turn, are influenced by everyday urban practices. Muslims thus participate in negotiation processes in the city and help to shape them, which is why "Islam can be described as an expression of urbanity" (Färber et al. 2012: 62). Mosques have a special significance in these processes because they can play a role in the everyday practices of Muslims, but they can also have a representative effect in the city.

The connection of representation and visibility

The concept of representation originates primarily from communication and media studies, as well as political and social science, but it can also have a spatial effect, which is why it is relevant to urban and spatial research. Spatial representations can define an objective reality and they are able to create inclusions and exclusions (Dzudzek et al. 2011). This means that the creation of an objective reality, i.e. the connection of the visible with images, documents and other analogue and digital contributions that produce general validity and are accessible to the community, leads to representation: "Representations are complex formations of material, techniques, and ideologies in which social practice is indissolubly linked to social thought and imagination. (...) Representation therefore raises the problem of the politics of what is visible and what is hidden" (Shields 2004: 10).

Visibility, as an essential component of representation, can help to induce negotiation processes for social representation, which can cause conflicts in social relationships (Färber et al. 2012, Hall 2013, Oltmer 2018), but also co-operation or participation: "[With visibility,] not only seeing as a practice and the visual comes into the focus of research, but (...) also legal, ethical and discursive framings of visibility, which determine what can become visible at all" (Maier 2018: 84-85). (In)visibility, among other things, due to (a lack of) visualisation, but also, for example, due to socio-political pressure, quite probably leads to (non-)representation. Negotiation processes that arise as a consequence of representation influence everyday religious practices and, at the same time, decide who shapes the city and how.

Causes and effects of conflictual negotiation processes

In urban areas, many different religions and their non-believers come together (Stump 2008). On the one hand, this can lead to diverse interactions and increased tolerance, as suggested by the contact hypothesis (Allport 1954). On the other hand, religious territoriality in such a confined space can lead to competition and conflict (Baumann 1999, Kong 2001, Goldblatt and Omer 2014, Knott et al. 2016). In addition, changes in the built and the lived urban environment are generally negatively perceived by the residents. These changes can trigger conflicts, because the city challenges our sense of security on a daily basis as the city is subject to constant processes of change and negotiation (Shields 1996, Knott et al. 2016).

Conflicts over religion in the city in particular are often emotionally fraught, due to the visibility of symbols, and they have an impact on representation. Symbols strengthen the sense of belonging of people within the subject position but, at the same time, they intensify the feeling of exclusion of outsiders, and they can evoke conflicts (Baumann 1999). Conflicts, especially if they are conducted in a hostile manner, can result in minoritised subject positions deciding against visibility. According to Keller (2012) and

Schaffer (2018), the term 'subject position' refers to the discursive decision of individuals to identify themselves as subjects in a certain way, and to make themselves identifiable to others. The term 'group' or 'grouping' is avoided here (unless it is a quotation or it expresses criticism), as the subject position is already determined from the outside without the subject being able to influence this. The 'minoritised subject position' refers to identified subject positions that are assumed to belong to a minority and that are ascribed to a minoritised social position.

The representation of hostile imaginaries and texts also lead to visible power inequalities, and they can contribute to invisibility and marginalisation, as visibility and invisibility are closely linked (Schaffer 2008, Hall 2013, Collis and Webb 2014, Powell and Van Baar 2019). Vetter (2019: 379) refers to architectural or structural invisibility and he concludes: "(...) the house must not be seen because of the safety of what is inside, or because the building should at least not visually burden its surroundings". He thus describes a (visible) retreat of social processes into invisibility, and he shows that invisibility can also be intentional (Schaffer 2008). On the contrary, greater visibility allows people to become part of the public discourse (Bielefeldt 2010). But, this also exposes them to criticism (Uehlinger 2013). As a result, minoritised subject positions, in particular, decide to remain invisible (Schaffer 2008), because which is not visible cannot be rejected. Without visibility, however, we cannot know about each other and experience diversity in a community (Habermas 2006, Collis and Webb 2014).

The decisive factor for visibility is whether, and how, conflicts which result in hostile actions are socially and legally dealt with (El-Mafaalani 2018), so that the fear of confrontation and conflict does not result in forced invisibility, especially for minoritised subject positions. But science can contribute to this. According to Alkin et al. (2022: 5), cultural and social sciences, in particular, but also spatial and urban research, must repeatedly address the following questions as a subject of research: "What is it and how do we want to live together in the city? What is it based on? Where do our actions find a space? What do these spaces look like? Which spaces remain invisible and why?".

Media products can contribute to making minoritised subject positions visible by reproducing and disseminating public statements about religious and everyday practices (Li and Zhang 2022). However, the (frequent) articulation of otherness, or the focus on the same aspects that reflect otherness, can trigger or even mask conflicts (Creţan and Turnock 2008, Canan and Foroutan 2019, Creţan et al. 2023). The terms Islam, and migration can be cited as an example. Islam initially came to Europe primarily through migration. But, the permanently corresponding and almost synonymous use of Islam and migration can reproduce the feeling of otherness and highlight intersectional stereotyping (Canan and Foroutan 2019, Wigger 2019, Diekmann 2022).

The historical interaction and relationship between society and religion in space and place continues to influence their negotiation processes to this day (Martínez-Ariño

2019, Sutkutė 2019). In Europe in particular, the negotiation processes surrounding the representation of religion in the public space play a certain role: "In many European cases, secularisation did not entail a fundamental separation between religion and politics (…) but territorially-based national churches. One of the consequences (…) is that certain religious traditions are generally described and experienced as fitting with the nation and others are not" (Oosterbaan 2014: 591). Not least, the increasing diversity of religious and spiritual faith communities poses challenges for the European community: "Within Europe, however, there are very different religious settings, both in terms of inner religiosity, and in terms of legal and institutional backgrounds, which vary from state churches on the one hand, to the system of laïcité on the other" (Hamplová and Nešpor 2009: 582).

Methodology

Study area

In Germany, the stronger presence of Islam has only occurred since the 1950s and it varies from region to region (Pfündel et al. 2021, Figure 2). In West Germany, guest-workers were recruited from Muslim countries, such as Turkey and countries in North Africa in the post-war period. Increasing family reunification from the 1970s onwards intensified the reference back to religion, not least in view of the experiences of marginalisation (Beinhauer-Köhler 2010). In East Germany, e.g. in Saxony, the immigration of Muslims only began in the late half of the 20th century (Hakenberg and Klemm 2016). Immigration is mainly made up of EU-workers, international experts from various sectors, students, and refugees from third countries (Hakenberg and Klemm 2016). The attitudes towards religion and Islam have developed differently in East and West Germany, partly due to the history of occupation and the associated socio-political influences.

Hamplová and Nešpor (2009: 582) assume that the religious socialisation of people in post-socialist countries, in which religion was hardly allowed to play a role and it remained relatively invisible, differs from the countries in which people experience diverse religious socialisation in terms of turning-to and accepting religiosity: "(…) the former [socialist states such as] East Germany (...) usually rank amongst the most secularised countries in what is generally seen as a non-religious continent", which is why the acceptance of religiosity in these states might be generally lower (Table 1).

Islam has received little attention to date in East Germany due to its relatively short history and supposedly minor role. It is only a few years ago that Muslim life in East Germany, as well as immigration to East Germany, have become research topics (Glorius 2020) that are attracting increasing interest: "(...) [This is a] plea to take a close look at when comparisons between West and East Germany are beneficial and when

they establish a West German norm that cannot grasp the circumstances of Muslim life in East Germany" (Stenske and Bioly 2021: 6-7). Besides, it was concluded that "hostility towards Muslims [...] is strongly pronounced and (...) [repeatedly] significantly higher in the East than in the West" (Decker et al. 2022: 64).

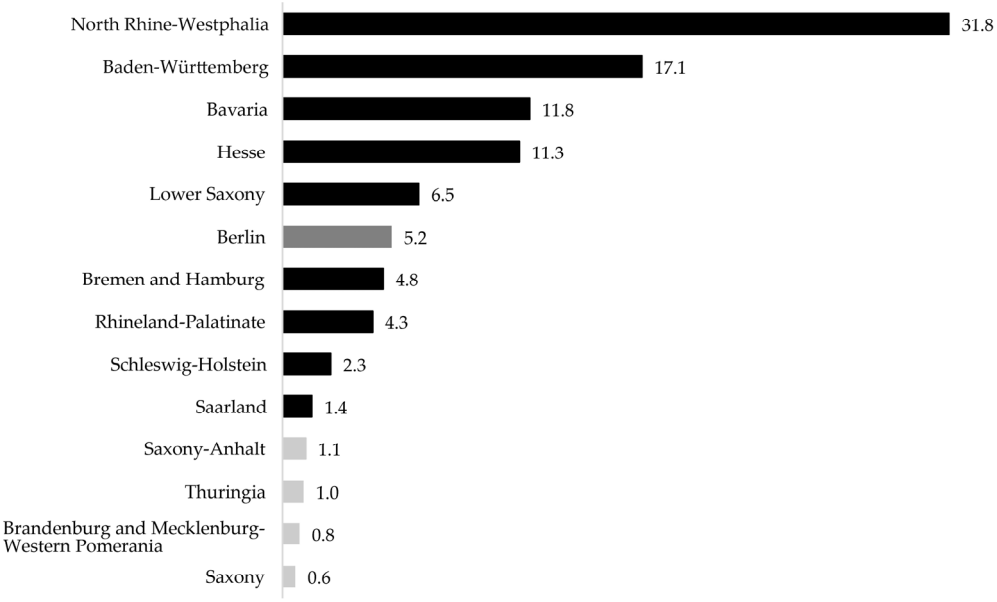

Figure 2. Share of Muslims in the German federal states in 2020 (in %). Berlin as part of former East and West Germany has been coloured dark grey, East German counties have been coloured light grey
Source: Pfündel et al. (2021)

Table 1. Eurobarometer survey: beliefs of the German population (% of the population in West and East Germany)
Source: Federal Agency for Civic Education (2018)

Identification	**East Germany**	**West Germany**
Buddhists	0.6	0.8
Catholics	6	34.5
Dont't know	2.1	2.2
Hindus	0	0.2
Jews	0	0.2
Members of another Christian religion	7	7.7
Muslims	1.5	4.2
Non-believers,agnostics, atheists	68.3	16.6
Orthodox Christians	1.9	2.2
Other	3.5	2
Protestants	9.7	29.8

On the one hand, racist and specifically anti-Muslim attacks are an all-German problem (such as in the city of Halle 2019 or city of Hanau 2020). On the other hand, demonstrations such as those organised by PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident – anti-Islamic, xenophobic, nationalist, racist and far-right organisation) do not occur with the same regularity and scale in the West (Akca 2021), even though demonstrators from all federal states attend. However, according to Rohe (2018: 71), it seems that Muslims in East Germany represent a "double-foreignness"; and many people in East Germany feel like a "minority" (Yendell 2013) or left behind in their own country: "The perceived own devaluation could translate into a passing-on and consolidation of stereotypes towards Muslims (...). Thus, in the field of negotiating positions and placements of non-dominant subject positions in Germany, the position in the lower field of social recognition would be passed-on to others" (Canan and Foroutan 2019: 428).

A look at the East German case study of Leipzig reveals specific local conditions for the acceptance of religiosity in the urban society and institutions. Leipzig was already considered a 'cosmopolitan city' in East Germany during the GDR era, thanks to the international trade fair and the Thomaner choir, a religious cultural and educational institution. The Church played a particular role as a place of prayer but also as resistance under socialism. In 1968, for example, the SED (Socialist Unity Party of Germany) ordered the demolition of Leipzig's Pauliner church, which triggered protests among the city's population (MDR 2023). With Luckmann's (2023) idea of the evasion of religion into the private sphere, the question arises as to whether there is possibly an individual religiosity among the former GDR citizens of Leipzig which could facilitate the acceptance of diverse religiosity today, or whether the increasing diversity actually harbours particular potential for conflict. It is also conceivable that individual religiosity has decreased (between 2020 and 2021, the number of people leaving the church in Leipzig rose sharply from 1,508 to 3,475, according to City of Leipzig 2021), and that this increases the potential for conflict. As a rapidly growing city with increasing competetion for space, as a university city, and as the second most important DHL airport location within Europe, Leipzig also attracts young immigrants with experience of diversity, who may have a more open approach to Muslim places of prayer. Institutional stakeholders, such as the city administration and politicians, are also positioning themselves as cosmopolitan and diversity-positive, leading to controversies between various stakeholders in Leipzig's urban society (Kirndörfer and Wiest 2020).

Analysis of negotiation processes of religion

In order to empirically investigate negotiation processes of religion in the urban space, a multi-method approach is required, because (non-)representation cannot be explained one-dimensionally if visibility is only one component of it. The approach refers in particular to the application of methods of empirical social research, namely: image

analysis, guided expert interviews, and discourse analysis based on the sociology of knowledge (Table 2). The research topic requires a sensitive approach, as the possible visualisation of invisible places can trigger internal and external conflicts (Göle 2004).

Table 2. Overview of the empirical methods applied in this study

Applied method	Image analysis	Guided expert interviews	Sociological knowledge of discourse analysis
Data collection	Taking pictures of the architecture of each known Muslim place-of-prayer or community in Leipzig and developing their location map	Interviewing three people of three different religious denominations of Islam in Leipzig, and analysing them according to Mayring and Fenzl (2019)	Analysing eleven out of 100 collected national and local newspaper articles, published between 2013 and 2021, according to Keller (2011)
Topic	(In)visibility and its connection with conflicts and hostilities		The role of the media in local negotiation processes and their connection with migration

Image analysis

The aim of the image analysis is to answer the first part of the first sub-question of how Muslim places of prayer become visible in Leipzig. From our perspective, architectural visibility includes identificatory visibility. By identificatory visibility, we mean the extent to which Muslim places of prayer can be identified, e.g. through symbols, signs or the like, if the architecture does not allow for clear indications.

Snyder and Allen (1975: 169) have described the connection between photography, visualisation and representation in detail and they formulate: "(…) 'documentary' questions we ought to ask (...): what it means, who made it, for whom was it made, and why it was made in the way it was made". With this in mind, we analyse our own photographs of Muslim places of prayer and congregations in Leipzig. We determined the addresses of all Islamic religious communities with an internet presence, and we photographed them on their location in Leipzig with regard to certain features. The photos are limited to the buildings, the windows, symbols, or signs visible from the outside, as well as doorbell-signs, letterboxes, and the respective surroundings.

The visualisation of invisible places, to which our research undoubtedly contributes, can lead to conflicts which we want, and must help, to avoid. In the spirit of upholding scientific-ethical practice in relation to minoritised subject positions in space and place, no street names, house numbers or other signs that would indicate the exact location are visualised, or they are made unrecognisable (Sales and Folkman 2000, Popke 2007, Pittaway et al. 2010, Ullrich and Tullney 2012, Resnik 2020). The mapping of Muslim places of prayer in Leipzig carried-out after the image analysis also remains general and it only refers to the approximate localisation in the city districts. We are aware that

it is nevertheless possible to identify their locations, and this is why we only depict and name public places that can be found online anyway.

Guided expert interviews

The aim of the guideline-based expert interviews is to complement the findings of the image analysis and to answer the second part of the first sub-question of to what extent Leipzig's Muslim places of prayers' (in)visibility is related to conflicts and hostilities based on religion or migration.

The three interviewees represent three different religious denominations of Islam. Firstly, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat congregation represents the minoritised religious subject position of the Ahmadis. Secondly, the Islamic Al-Sahra Center e.V. represents the minoritised religious subject position of the Shiites in Leipzig. In both cases, the interviewees are direct representatives of the communities. The major religious subject position in Leipzig is formed by the Sunni denomination of Islam, which is indirectly represented in the third interview through a representative of Haus SoVi. Haus SoVi in Leipzig sees itself as an intermediary partner in the dialogue between the Muslim migrant population and the majority population (Haus SoVi 2023a); their projects focus heavily on the Sunni mosques in Leipzig. So, the surveyed interview partners are in contact with the Sunni communities in particular. The focus in the interviews lies on the experiences, opinions, and actions of the experts. For this reason, as well as to protect minoritised subject positions as a scientific-ethical practice, the interviews are anonymised. The interview guidelines contain relevant topics that emerge from the research and guiding questions.

The analysis follows Mayring and Fenzl (2019) in the form of a qualitative content analysis, specifically as a summarising content analysis with inductive category formation, in which the individual interviews are analysed using six categories and, in the next step, they are examined for their frequency in the interview material, inter alia: the communities and their development; architectural and identificatory visibility; media visibility; interactions between the congregations, and, between the congregations and the city; the relevance of migration; the connection with (hostile) conflicts.

In summary, the approach aims to capture experiences and opinions of representatives of Islam in Leipzig about local negotiation processes regarding the representation of Muslim places of prayer. In this context, the development of the communities and their understanding of visibility is relevant.

Sociological knowledge of discourse analysis

We use the discourse analysis as a third approach to examine public perception and media coverage from 2013 to 2021 to include several stakeholder perspectives,

especially with regard to the representation of Muslim places of prayer in Leipzig. With that, we aim to answer the second sub-question, addressing the media's role in the local negotiation processes of the representation of Islam in Leipzig, and to what extent they establish a connection with the topic of migration.

The sociology of knowledge through discourse analysis examines "social knowledge relations and knowledge policies" (Keller 2011: 61) and how stakeholders or organisations produce, confirm, or change the discursive reality (Keller 2012). In this study, the discourse-analytical method will help to investigate how knowledge about Islam and its visibility is created, and how it is represented. Based on Keller (2011), the procedure is divided into six steps, further explained.

The reason for the analysis period 2013 and 2021 is that the 'Mosque construction in Gohlis' project was first publicly communicated in 2013. The start of the analysis period also predates the refugee reception crisis of 2015/2016, so it is possible to identify changes over time (First step: exploring the field of study). For the data, newspaper articles were selected which are considered an influential mass medium and thus significantly determine the media coverage of the visibility of Muslim places of prayer in Leipzig (Second step: Data selection). Two local daily newspapers, the Leipziger Volkszeitung (LVZ) and the Sächsische Zeitung (SZ), as well as the national weekly newspaper, DIE ZEIT, were used as sources, shedding light on geographically different views. Inductive research on the keywords of 'Islam' and 'Leipzig' in the period between 1st January 2013 and 31st December 2021 resulted in a total corpus of over 100 articles (Third step: Corpus formation). This is followed by a selection which leads to the decision as to which articles are analysed in more detail. When selecting the articles, the first priority is to see how well they can answer the sub-question mentioned above (Keller 2011). Furthermore, it is ensured that the articles in each newspaper cover different time periods between 2013 and 2021. For the subsequent detailed analysis, a sample of eleven articles is thus identified by selecting four articles from each newspaper, LVZ and SZ, and three from DIE ZEIT. The detailed analysis is carried out using coding (Fourth step: Fine analysis). This is then divided into six questions, from which the categories are derived, in order to analyse the articles (stakeholders, differentiation of Islam, negotiation processes regarding representation, positioning of the author, migration and visibility). Finally, the results of the individual categories are brought together. This is followed by an interpretative-analytical recording of the content (Fifth step: Interpretation). In the final step, the results are aggregated into overarching discourse-related statements and an overall result of the study is compiled (Sixth step: Overall result).

Results

Based on the three applied methods, the two sub-questions are answered, focusing on the (in)visibility of Muslim places of prayer in Leipzig, the negotiation processes

around representation, and the media's role in the representation of Islam and its connection with migration.

The (in)visibility of Muslim places of prayer in Leipzig

The research into the architectural visibility of mosques in Leipzig revealed the existence of seven Muslim places of prayer from at least four different Muslim denominations (Figure 3). Two mosques are located in the west, two in the centre and north, one in the north-east and two in the east of Leipzig. With the exception of one mosque in the east, all communities are located within a three-kilometre radius of the city centre. For the image analysis, the following mosques and Muslim religious centres were visited from the outside: Takva Mosque, El Furkan Mosque, Bilal Mosque, Pakistani Mosque, Eyüp Sultan Mosque, Al Rahman Mosque, Al-Sahra Center, and the Community centre of the Ahmaddiya Muslim Jamaat.

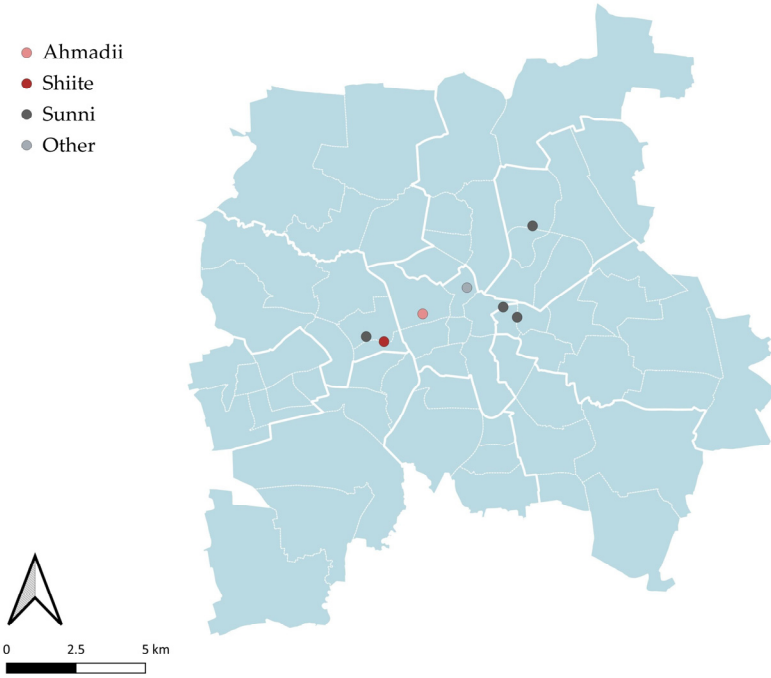

Figure 3. Muslim places of prayer per denomination in Leipzig
Source: Data basis – City of Leipzig (2022a); Map source – OSM, © OpenStreetMap contributors (2022); published under the Open Data Commons Open Database License (ODbL) v1.0

The major denominations of Islam are represented in Leipzig in a similar manner as in Germany as a whole (Figure 4). The Sunni denomination makes up the majority of Muslims in Leipzig, Germany and worldwide. According to the category of 'Communities and their development', there are currently five Sunni mosques in Leipzig: the Takva Mosque, the El Furkan Mosque, the Bilal Mosque, the Pakistani Mosque, and the

Eyüp Sultan Mosque. There is also a Shiite religious community, the Al Rahman Mosque, the Islamic Al-Sahra Center and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat congregation. The latter two have no mosques in Leipzig to date. No prayer room for Alevi Muslims is known. However, Alevi Muslims in Leipzig are represented by the registered Alevi cultural association CEM HAUS (City of Leipzig 2022a, City of Leipzig 2022b).

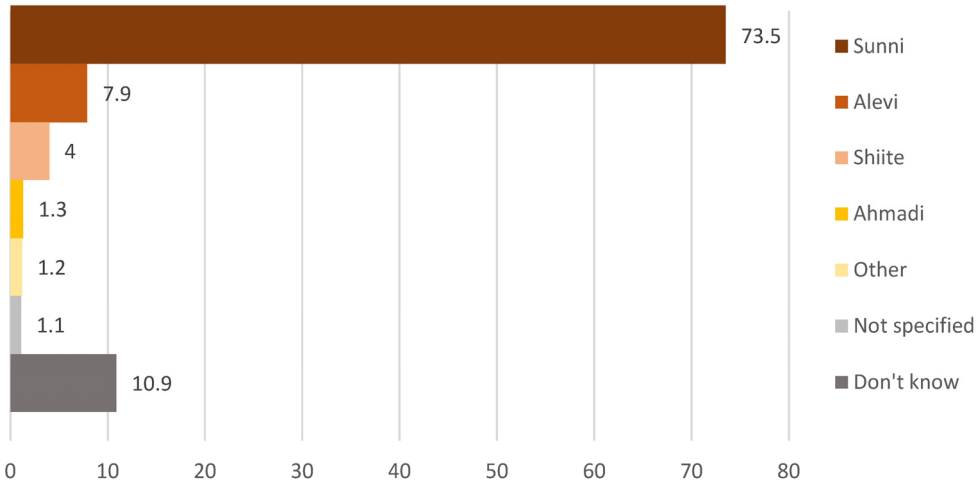

Figure 4. Denominations of Muslim immigrants in Germany (in %)
Source: Pfündel et al. (2021)

Basically, there is (still) no mosque in Leipzig that has the classic, representative architectural features of a mosque. All the portrayed mosques are located in multi-storey residential buildings, or single-storey (warehouse) halls. Four places of prayer can be recognised as mosques from the outside due to signs and symbols (identificatory visibility).

The other religious communities have no signs or symbols visible from the outside (Figure 5). A common feature of all mosques and places of prayer is that the first floor is always covered, barred and opaque with stained glass. Only one community shows 'Islamische Gemeinde' (Islamic congregation) on the doorbell-sign, while two others say 'Gemeinde' or 'Vereinshaus' (congregation house) (Figure 6). Furthermore, the other municipalities do not have doorbell-signs indicating that the respective religious community is located in the building. The publicly accessible letterboxes do not indicate this either. Only one mailbox of a mosque at the end of a cul-de-sac shows the name and the head of the community. All the mosques are located within, or adjacent to, residential areas.

The image analysis reveals that the existing Muslim places of prayer and congregations in Leipzig are rather invisible to non-Muslims, and they resemble the original "backyard mosques" that Bielefeldt (2010) described for West Germany in the

1950s/1960s. It takes special attention to recognise the places as places of prayer or congregations of Islam; people passing-by would probably not notice that they are Muslim places of prayer. Nevertheless, unlike in Erfurt-Marbach, these places are mostly part of the densely populated urban area of Leipzig. The analysis also shows that there are diverse Muslim places of prayer in the city, with (at least) four out of seven Muslim denominations.

Figure 5. The entrance to the Takva Mosque in Leipzig (house number retouched) and its letter box without address
Source: Levert (April 2024)

Figure 6. Windows and doorbell sign ('congregation') of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat congregation (house number retouched)
Source: Levert (April 2024)

Causes and effects of (in)visibility

The interviews illustrate that both financial resources and permanent personnel structures within the communities are lacking for the implementation of architectural visibility, thus confirming the particular difficulties of Muslim self-organisation in East Germany (Interview 1, Akca 2021). The city administration does not provide any financial support for the communities in Leipzig either, as religion and the state are fundamentally separated in Germany. So, all congregations have to finance themselves independently (Czermak and Hilgendorf 2018). So far, they have financed themselves through donations and membership fees. But the available funds are not sufficient to build a representative mosque. Thus, the buildings converted into mosques are either privately-owned or in buildings where the rent is reasonable. In the case of the Ahmadiyya community, the mosque construction in Leipzig can be financed thanks to supra-regional funds (Interview 2). There are also difficulties at the organisational level. In most cases, communities are organised by individuals on a voluntary basis (Interviews 1 and 3). According to the Shiite religious community, there is another mosque in the east of Leipzig, but it does not have a website and its exact location is unknown. Akca (2021: 34) confirms the difficult circumstances for some Muslim denominations: "It is precisely this problem of self-organised religion that can manifest itself locally in very similar ways, which connects Muslims in east and west. There are also mosques in West Germany that do not have full-time religious staff, or they are not networked".

Some of the communities in Leipzig are satisfied with their current premises but, in principle, they would like to be more visible (Interviews 1 and 3). They would also like to be able to protect themselves from possible attacks, which is why the issue of structural protection measures further exacerbates the question of financing when building a mosque (Interview 1). In addition, the right location has to be found. Even in the past, the (urban) location of mosques was dependent on the available properties and affordable rents (Interview 1). However, the affordable locations are often also less central: "Somewhere on the outskirts is cheap but, as I said, then you have the difficulty of even noticing [the community]" (Interview 1). The congregation of the Eyüp Sultan mosque, for example, is currently looking for new premises due to a limited amount of space (Interview 1). The interviewee from the Al-Sahra community says that a larger, prestigious mosque could cause a stir in the residential area: "This is possible, but if, for example, so many people come, then it's not good, alert for the neighbours, for the people. That's possible. However, if we build a large mosque, for example, then (it should be) somewhere else, not here" (Interview 3). According to the interviewee, there have been no confrontations so far. These statements by the interviewees point to the preference for the invisibility of Muslim places of prayer for reasons of conflict avoidance, or even anti-Muslim racism (Schaffer 2008, Collis and Webb 2014, Vetter 2019, Alkin et al. 2022). This means that negotiation processes with Leipzig's urban

society do not even take place. However, negotiation processes that arise from conflicts could later lead to greater acceptance as a result. The interviewee from the Ahmadiyya community refers, for example, to the construction of a mosque in Berlin, which was also prevented for some time due to concerns from local residents: "Those who were afraid before, they're not anymore, and I hope and believe that this will also happen in Leipzig" (Interview 3). This person hopes that the mosque's design will also bring "the positive, these influences into the society" (Interview 3).

Despite the lack of architectural visibility in Leipzig, most Muslim communities can still be classified as visible to informed or inquisitive people. Most congregations are linked on the official website of the City of Leipzig and their homepages provide the addresses, as well as the names, of the community leaders. Some of the communities are also active on social media. In this respect, a media presence is created on their own initiative (Interviews 1 and 2, Li and Zhang 2022). The external media visibility of the communities in Leipzig sometimes complicates the representation of Muslims in Leipzig and it causes some frustration. It is important to all the interviewees that they are not reduced exclusively to their religion. In addition, Islam must always be viewed in the context of its different denominations (Interviews 1-3): "We, the Muslims, also have identities. We are perceived as a 'thing', we pray a hundred times a day and only do fasting, or never go out and only read the Koran. It is not like that. We also have several identities. We also have needs, interests" (Interview 1). The second interviewee is also annoyed by the fact that only Islam is included as additional information in the newspaper when crimes are reported, whereas this is not done for people of a different faith (Interview 2). These statements certainly suggest stereotyping encounters of a media or personal nature that articulate the otherness (Hall 2013, Canan and Foroutan 2019, Sutkutė 2019). This also happens, for example, through the media representation of the Eisenbahnstraße: "I've read in the newspaper a few times: 'Eisenbahnstraße – the most dangerous street in Germany' [...]. I mean, whether you like it or not, you are already labelled in every respect. There are two mosques on the most dangerous [street]" (Interview 1). The interviewee thus refers to the joint articulation of Muslim places of prayer and localised crime in the media, which can contribute to conflictual negotiation processes, or at least to stereotyping (Canan and Foroutan 2019, Wigger 2019, Diekmann 2022). This also shows how simple casualties (mosques and crime) and their combination with metaphors and bold, exaggerated statements ("Germany's most dangerous street") can contribute to stereotyping. At this point, it should be noted that the epithet of "most dangerous street in Germany" was created by the media due to gang crime (especially between biker-gangs), drugs and violence and it is not based on religious conflicts (ProSieben 2013).

There are no conflicts between the Muslim communities, but no significant interactions either. Interviewee 1 explains: "Everyone goes their own way". The planned mosque cannot be used by the other Muslim communities in Leipzig due to the different

movements within Islam, and the resulting differentiated principles of faith (Interviews 1-3). The Al-Sahra Centre emphasises: "No, we have our people, and they have their people. As I said at the beginning, our goal [is] not their goal; it is different, and it is not possible because of that" (Interview 2). These statements once again illustrate the desire for differentiation. In this context, one interviewee also referred once again to the public discourse surrounding the Al Rahman mosque, which is often associated with the extremist Salafist movement: "It is the language that they understand, and they go there. Some have nothing to do with this ideology at all. Some go there because most of their friends and family go there. Some go there because they've always gone there. So, you have to look a bit rather than placing everyone under the same umbrella" (Interview 1). The interviews show that the opportunity for diverse Muslim exchange in East Germany is hardly possible in a larger city like Leipzig. Muslim structures in Leipzig are more similar to West German cities, as ethnic and linguistic divisions have already been made in the infrastructure among Muslims, and they have assigned themselves to different religious communities (Akca 2021). However, there is an indirect dialogue with the city administration in Leipzig, especially with the Department for Migration and Integration. This is addressed by Akca's study (2021: 27), mentioning that "the exchange between local mosques in East German cities is less strained" and the relationships between representatives of Islam and the city administrations are generally better than in the West: "The East German communities, particularly those founded in recent years, benefit from dialogical contacts with municipal authorities. [The] integration into the municipalities can have a positive impact on the fledgling communities in the long-term" (Akca 2021: 39).

Due to personnel, space and financial hurdles faced by the individual communities, Haus SoVi (2023b) is an important stakeholder for Muslims in Leipzig. The association is committed to the appreciation of the Muslim faith communities, and it facilitates a dialogue between the city and Muslims. Nevertheless, not all communities are represented by Haus SoVi, although there have been approaches from both sides. For example, Haus SoVi does not see itself as a representative of the Al Rahman Mosque, and it excluded it from the self-organised project entitled 'Umut - Muslim communities as communal stakeholders' (Interview 1, Haus SoVi 2023b). This could be due to the diverse ideology of the discussed community, but it was not clearly addressed in the interview. However, according to the interview, Haus SoVi and the Al-Sahra community are also not in contact with each other (Interview 3). The exchange with the non-Muslims is desired and actively promoted, for example, through the Open Mosque Day or by Haus SoVi itself. Tours for school classes are to be offered in the future (Interview 1). This indicates an opening of Muslim places of prayer and visibility, which is associated with interaction, and it can contribute to mediation between the urban (society) and religion (Rüpke 2020).

In Leipzig, there are certainly correlations between the growth in membership of

Muslim communities and migration. In principle, the congregations in Leipzig have grown since the refugee reception crisis in 2015/2016, but not significantly. The number of Muslims is difficult to estimate, as they are not subject to church-tax and therefore not officially registered as Muslims. The question of whether only active Muslims are counted, or whether all people understood as Muslim people are also included, has not been conclusively clarified (Interview 1). This also includes believers who, for example, practise religion independently, do not belong to a fixed mosque or community, or they only attend Friday prayers, or they only honour the high holidays. Additionally, the number fluctuates because there is a "constant back and forth" due to the distribution of refugees of Muslim faith in the course of the refugee reception crisis (Interview 1). Furthermore, refugees of the Muslim faith feel more uncomfortable in (East German) rural areas "because there is nothing there" and they prefer to move to the cities. At the same time, there is also an internal migration of Muslims from other federal states to Leipzig. This means that the internal migration among Muslims from the rural areas in Saxony, and from other federal states to Leipzig, plays a certain role.

The Ahmadiyya community currently counts around 130 members, with a small increase of ten people since 2015 (Interview 2). The Al-Sahra Centre has grown to around 100 members (Interview 3). This means that the largest increase in membership has occurred in the Sunni communities. This might be because the Sunnis make up the majority of Muslims. In parallel, structures of Sunni mosques are more developed, and therefore more visible and easier to find than those of other denominations in Leipzig.

This illustrates the direct connection between visibility and invisibility; the visibility of one Muslim community leads to the invisibility of another (Schaffer 2008, Uehlinger 2013). Mosques can play an important role for Muslim immigrants, and they facilitate their arrival. For example, the interviewee from the Al-Sahra community reported that the women of the communities came together to celebrate the residence permit: "She got a rejection at the beginning. For many years and then..., she was so happy and said: when I get it, I'll invite everyone" (Interview 3). However, the religious community is also an important point of contact and place for the newcomers when it comes to family matters, such as marriage or divorce (Interview 3).

Another interviewee also makes a distinction between the Muslims who belong to the first generation of immigrants, and the later ones: "[...] for example, my grandfather often went to the community because he could hardly speak German; he had his network there, he knew the people, and if he had to look for an apartment, for example, he looked there because the mosque played a central role for people, especially for the first generation" (Interview 1). The later generation has often built up a wider network and asks friends or other institutions for help. Originally, the prayer-room was also seen as a "meeting place". However, the relevance of Islam has changed in recent years: "Overall, the role of the mosque for the Muslim community [has] declined somewhat" (Interview 1).

The resulting loss of importance can be observed in all world religions in Europe, as Casanova (1994) and Luckmann (2023) described with institutional secularisation. Both in the countries of origin and in Germany, mosques increasingly serve as places of prayer instead of meeting centres where social interaction and togetherness are lived (Interview 1). Voluntary activity is declining due to age and mentality, for example, because young people have less time or desire. German Muslims are also active in other social circles outside the community and mosques are no longer the only point of contact for the Muslims (Interview 1). This indicates that the Muslims engage in diverse everyday practices. They do not necessarily (want to) identify with their religiosity, but they are characterised by general urban everyday practices, or they help to shape them (Färber et al. 2012). Additionally, the efforts of the Ahmadiyaa community to build a mosque in Leipzig-Gohlis suggests that only the well-organised, larger Muslim communities (can and/or want to) afford structural, and representative visibility (Hjelm 2014, Amiraux 2016).

The media's role regarding Muslim representations

For the discourse analysis, the previously formed individual categories were analysed in order to find out how the media contributes to the representation of Islam and to the potentially conflictual negotiation processes. The first category of the discourse analysis records the various stakeholders involved in the negotiation processes as emerged from the articles in the fine analysis. A total of over 80 different stakeholders are identified. They are then categorised into: experts/academics, media, foundations/institutions, politicians/city administration, representatives of Islam, legislature, urban society, and others. The stakeholders' positions towards the Islam in Leipzig are analysed. For example, the support of Leipzig's mayor for the construction of a mosque is a sign of the appreciation of Islam in Leipzig and it illustrates the positive positioning of the city's representatives (Heitkamp 2013, Akca 2021).

The articles also address the contrary attitudes towards the Muslim representation in the form of sacred mosques in Leipzig, especially in the city's society, such as the citizens' initiative entitled 'Gohlis sagt nein!' (Gohlis says no!), which carried-out a leaflet campaign to form the initiative against the mosque, as well as the right-wing political parties such as the AfD and NPD (Kailitz 2013, Heitkamp 2021a). The reports also include information about the stakeholders in regulatory religious policy, such as the observation of Salafists by the Defence of the Constitution, which provides a supposed justification for the scepticism in the urban society (Döring 2018). In the same article, the sub-heading warns of an "[imminent] radicalisation of migrants", before the later attempting to relativise it by saying that not all visiting believers are potential Salafists (Döring 2018). Experts, artists, and the media are also addressed as further stakeholder positions who react to the discourse and, through feedback effects, they in turn contribute to the endorsement of the diverse Muslim representation in Leipzig.

For example, the artists criticise the perception of Muslims in Leipzig and they plead for a more differentiated view (Salzbrenner 2019). This builds on the desire for differentiation based on diverse identities and practices expressed in the interviews.

The second category enquires precisely about this differentiated view of Muslims. Some of the articles express that Muslims are still too often seen as a homogeneous group in the society and that no differentiation is made between the individual communities; this results in pluralisation (Färber et al. 2012). Accordingly, other articles strive for a differentiated view by including the perspective of academics on the topic. They justify the pluralisation with the one-sided media coverage in the general social ignorance of the religion, and the missing touchpoints with Islam (Debski 2016, Salzbrenner 2019).

The analysed articles largely differentiate between the Islamic communities. In particular, the reports focus on two communities and one denomination associated with Islamism, which are explicitly mentioned. The Ahmadiyya community, which wants to build a representative mosque in Leipzig-Gohlis, is often mentioned. Specific values of the community are referred to, which are presented exclusively positively in some articles (Kailitz 2013), but also neutrally or critically in others (Dpa Sachsen 2021). The second community is the DITIB community, which is considered to have unacceptable values, such as "anti-constitutional and nationalist-religious", and it is mentioned in connection with an attack on the community (Heitkamp 2021b). The Islamist Salafist movement is also the focus of reporting, and it is considered an extremist movement which refers to Islam; this is why it is monitored by the Defence of the Constitution (Döring 2018). In summary, the differentiated reporting by Muslims, or a differentiation of Muslims from the extremist religious movements, takes place when they become particularly visible or when they hold radical views contrary to the mainstream. This refers to Hjelm's (2014) argument about the re-emerging visibility of religion, which only occurs when it is either problematic (DITIB, Salafists), or useful (Ahmadiyaa), for the public discourse. However, differentiation only takes place with regard to the differentiation of communities from other movements, but not with regard to the diversity of Muslims as subjects within the Muslim communities, or with regard to individual practices. Individual everyday practices of Muslims remain rather invisible, apart from defensive attitudes, e.g. with regard to the rights of women to drive a car (Kailitz 2013).

The third category relates to the negotiation processes of the visibility of Muslim representation practices. Three articles mention how residential buildings are currently being used as places of prayer for Muslims (Heitkamp 2013, Debski 2016, Heitkamp 2021a). At the same time, the articles addressed urban society, with questions like whether a mosque will fit in with its surroundings, which is almost synonymous with 'whether the Muslims visiting the mosque will integrate into the urban society' (Stange

2013, Heitkamp 2021a). Religions often coexist in urban areas. This spatial proximity of different religions can facilitate diversity and tolerance towards other cultures (Stange 2013, Debski 2016).

The articles also express the potential conflict of the negotiation processes of Muslim representation practices as the opponents interpret the construction of a mosque as a "drive to conquer the world" (Kailitz 2013, Wöbking 2019). Also, a fear of foreign religions is highlighted: "The feeling of threat is primarily of a symbolic nature. It is the fear of losing one's own culture" (Debski 2016). This gives rise to conflicts, such as protests and even vandalism (Heitkamp 2021b), or the littering of the mosque construction area in Gohlis (Dpa Sachsen 2021); the latter can be forms of hostile conflict.

With regard to the architectural visibility of Islam in Leipzig, the new mosque being built by the Ahmadiyya community in Gohlis is a particular focus of the media. In this context, the mosque's decorative minaret and its exact height are often discussed. The articles increasingly refer to the fact that the mosque will be "restrained", "not taller than the surrounding residential buildings" and that everything will take place within the framework of the planning permission (Heitkamp 2013). Quotes from Muslim representatives such as: "We are not building ostentatious buildings" clarify this (Heitkamp 2013). The selected articles and media thus adopt a kind of appeasing stance, which aims to defuse the budding hostile conflicts and to respond to the sceptical urban society that there is a desire for integration on the part of Muslims. Visual representations of the planned mosque, which were published together with some articles, thus contribute to the visibility of Muslim places of prayer that were previously invisible in the urban space, and they are intended to help to defuse the conflicts. The emphasis on the fact that there will be no muezzin call in the Gohlis mosque also speaks in the favour of mediation and the willingness to integrate on the part of the media, but also of the interviewed Muslim representatives: "There will not be a muezzin who calls to prayer five-times-a-day. It would hardly be heard by the faithful either" (Heitkamp 2013).

The fourth category of the discourse analysis asks about the positioning of the authors on the visibility of Islam. Some articles criticise the unbalanced reporting in other media. One article cites a study which states that 80% of media reports on Islam are negative (Wöbking 2019). The strongly negative media visibility is also noticeable in the quantitative corpus formation of the analysed articles. Most search results can be found under the headings 'extremism' and 'demonstration'. This cannot be observed in the articles selected for the discourse analysis. Even if some titles are provocative, most newspapers do not attempt to take a judgmental stance towards Islam (Döring 2018). Opponents are criticised, and a lack of understanding is expressed (Kailitz 2013). However, when reporting on vandalism against a mosque, the newspapers also depict the possible motives for the vandalism, and they describe the criticism of certain self-proclaimed Islamic movements in Leipzig which are classified as extremist (Heitkamp 2021b).

A distinction between the communities and movements is drawn here, and there are different positions. There is criticism of the increasing number of Salafist followers and their visibility (Döring 2018). In contrast, when describing the values of the Ahmadiyya community, mostly positive, neutral, and negative values are mentioned, and no clear position is taken (Dpa Sachsen 2021). It can be argued that media coverage tends to be reactive rather than proactive; i.e. according to Hjelm (2014), the media turns to Muslims when problematic urban practices in connection with the communities become visible. The associated articulation leads to stereotyping and pluralisation, even if unintentionally. There is a parallel to the institutions of the Catholic Church in Germany, which is currently being reported less about the content of the new 'synodal path' and more about the associated problematic reform processes (Zeit Online 2023), certainly not least because of the nationwide abuse scandal.

In the fifth category, the articles are analysed with regard to their visibility and connection to migration. As described above, an article in the LVZ (Döring 2018) creates a negative, striking connection between the visibility of Muslims and migration in a sub-heading. The author of the article further states that the "Salafist mosque (...) has seen an enormous influx in the wake of the migration flows" and that "Muslims [lacked] alternatives in the city, so that there is a threat of radicalisation of migrants who previously had no connections to Islamist structures" (Döring 2018).

Another article in the SZ (Heitkamp 2013) documents the agitation by the NPD, which uses terms such as 'oriental desert warriors' or 'foreign infiltration'; 'xenophobia' is also a term that continues to play a role in connection with migration in the right-wing populist public sphere (Kailitz 2013). Some articles use the term 'integration', which shows parallels to the topic of migration (Debski 2016). Some articles argue that the visibility of Islam is an important factor for the integration of Muslims in Leipzig, and that the construction of mosques, for example, could contribute to this (Debski 2016). Other articles criticise the anti-democratic values of the Salafists in Leipzig, or they mention concerns about certain homophobic, nationalistic, and discriminatory ideas of the DITIB community in the newspapers, which stand in the way of integration (Döring 2018, Heitkamp 2021b). Looking at when the articles were written, it is noticeable that the article seeking a direct connection with migration, in particular, was written shortly after the refugee reception crisis. This event might have intensified the search for connections. However, a larger sample is required for a more detailed investigation.

Discussion

The analysis indicates that Muslim representation practices, such as the mosque construction project, lead to conflicts due to the visualisation of (religious) diversity. These conflicts can contribute to the paradigm shift from pluralisation to the

individualisation of Muslims against the background of the incomplete becoming of the subject (Butler 2001) and to reflecting on this within the local context. Media coverage, as well as institutional stakeholders in urban society, can play a decisive role in occupying a "transcoding of negative images with new interpretations" (Hall 2013: 277) by proactively focusing on the individual everyday urban practices of Muslims which promote exchange and participation in the urban society. The representations have the potential to ensure the exchange between the diverse residents of a neighbourhood (Beinhauer-Köhler 2010, Färber et al. 2012). At the same time, it could also be the task of Leipzig city with its institutions to promote the exchange among the diverse urban society. New impetus can also be provided by external interventions, for example as part of transfer projects. So, it is crucial to talk not only about but also with the affected people and to include their perspectives too.

A mosque does not just have to be a place-of-prayer, but it can also fulfil the functions of a cultural and social meeting-place. Among other things, it offers educational opportunities, and it is (still) used as the first point of contact for the immigrants (Beinhauer-Köhler 2010). Representative places of prayer can therefore offer Muslims opportunities to participate in the urban society (Halm 2006). Even if the visibility of Muslim places of prayer is no guarantee for more participation (Schaffer 2008), it at least sets negotiation processes in motion that can lead to increased participation: "(...) non-organised Muslim life [is] often invisible at municipal level (...), as municipalities do not record them if they do not have a minimum level of organisation and visibility, or municipalities do not have religious associations in view per se. This applies, for example, to educational initiatives, cultural associations, and informal circles. Thus, the diversity of informally, or not at all networked religious communities, often remains unconsidered" (Akca 2021: 33). Diversity among Muslims must therefore also be negotiated.

According to Schaffer (2008: 161), the crucial question, which also highlights the connection between visibility and representation, is how "minoritised subject positions are visually represented without repeating minoritisation in the form of their representation?". This is also about accepting intentional invisibility, as it can represent a privilege: "This is not about more visibility, but about examining and weighing-up the conditions and effects of specific visibilities [on a local level]" (Schaffer 2008: 161). Despite the relevance of visibility for the representation of Muslim communities, it stands in supposed contrast to re-secularisation: "The need of religious communities to be publicly visible and accepted with their identity contrasts with processes of increasing [institutional] secularisation of parts of the population" (Helleckes 2022: 259). All religious faiths have to face this issue.

In this context, speaking for Leipzig, it remains unclear as to whether: it is the difficulty in accepting the visible, and the diverse religiosity due to its socialist, institutionally-

secular character; or it is the own devaluation perceived by the East German subject positions as minoritisation, which is passed on to Muslims by means of a comparatively strong rejection (Yendell 2013, Canan and Foroutan 2019); or it is a specific local religiosity that shapes the conflict-laden negotiation processes in the city. A mixture of several aspects can be assumed, coupled with the possibility that Leipzig, as a rapidly growing city in East Germany, is embarking on a post-cosmopolitan path which may bring new combinations of urban and religious practices to light. This can mean conflicts, co-operations, but also participation with, and, for the approximately 17,000 Muslims in the city, and it could enable new corresponding representations (Humphrey and Skvirskaja 2012, Kirndörfer and Wiest 2020).

The multi-method approach enabled a comprehensive analysis of the (non-)representation of Islam in Leipzig, whose findings can also be applied to other religiously, ethnically, indigenous, gendered, or other differentiation categories that minorise the subject positions (Hirschauer 2014). However, the presented approaches have several limitations. For the image analysis, communities without an internet presence could not be considered for scientific and ethical reasons. The question of completeness therefore arises in respect of whether, and indeed where, additional Muslim faith communities are located. This also points to the increasing institutional secularisation discussed ambivalently in the literature, and the difficulty of obtaining a picture of the actual religiosity of the urban society, especially at a local level. A more in-depth insight into the internal and external perception of the individual communities in Leipzig would certainly be informative in follow-up studies. Additionally, the interviewees represent only three of the Islamic denominations, as not all of listed communities could be interviewed individually. In the discourse analysis, there is a risk of selective perception in the interpretation of the fine analysis and its results, due to the sample selection and category formation.

This study provides several approaches for further research, such as: the causes and effects of (East German) rural to urban migration of Muslim people; the attitudes towards diverse visible religiosity in a local context; and the urban everyday practices of Muslim people.

Conclusions

The article discussed the representation of Islam using Leipzig as a case study. It raises questions regarding the role of the (in)visibility of Muslim places of prayer and the (non-)representation of Islam through the media for the participation of Muslims in Leipzig's urban society. It thus discusses at the intersection of: (1) an increasing institutional secularisation of all faiths (Casanova 1994, Luckmann 2023); (2) the growing desire for individual expression and visibility of everyday practices, which also, but not exclusively, include religious practices, but in particular connects these

with urban, local practices (Färber et al. 2012, Rüpke 2020); (3) the inequality of power through unequally visible religious communities which, due to financial and structural conditions, succeed or fail in becoming visible in the urban space and thus part of the negotiation processes (Stenske and Bioly 2021); however, these negotiation processes are necessary for the (4) post-migrant and post-secular city (Beaumont and Baker 2011, Canan and Foroutan 2019).

The specific role of the local context for the causes and effects of Muslim representations, and the associated conflictual negotiation processes is addressed (Hamplová and Nešpor 2009, Sutkutė 2019). By means of an image analysis, guided expert interviews and a sociological knowledge of discourse analysis, questions regarding the causes and effects of the (in)visibility of Muslim places of prayer and the connection with the (non-)representation of Islam in Leipzig are answered.

The results of the image analysis show that the existing Muslim places of prayer and congregations in Leipzig's cityscape are barely visible, if at all, as they are located in converted residential buildings or warehouses. According to the expert interviews, the invisibility of Muslim places of prayer is mainly due to financial, as well as structural, hurdles which is also evident from the current state of research on the Muslim life in East Germany (Akca 2021). There is certainly a desire for more space to practise their religion. However, the interviewed Muslim communities are generally satisfied with the current situation. The partly deliberate invisibility of the communities is due to the targeted avoidance of conflicts, as confrontations and resistance often occur, particularly in connection with new mosque buildings.

The discourse analysis shows that the newspaper articles tend to express the positive to neutral opinions of the authors towards Islam, although more results are found for the search terms with negative connotations. A key point here is the differentiation between the Islamic denominations. The newspapers primarily focused on the Ahmadiyya community and its planned mosque construction, the extremist 'Salafist' movement in connection with the Al Rahman Mosque, and the DITIB community in the Eyüp Sultan Mosque. So, visibility is expressed more medially than physically. Invisibility can, therefore, also lead to representation. Hjelm (2014) referred to this by arguing that religion becomes more visible when it is either problematic, or useful.

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SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE IN TRADITIONAL VILLAGE TOURISM: A STUDY OF POST REVITALISATION PROJECT IN HUTA SIALLAGAN, INDONESIA

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Abstract: The Indonesian government has allocated 30 billion rupiahs in 2020 to revitalise Huta Siallagan, a traditional village on the borderline of Lake Toba, in order to support the national development agenda. The revitalisation is carried out to increase the attractiveness of the destination by reorganising the area and improving the facilities. Traditional villages in Lake Toba are typically acres of land owned and lived on by a single-family clan, which manages tourism activities through family members. As Huta Siallagan receives significant attention from the government, this study seeks to examine the managerial modifications and adjustments following the finished revitalisation project. This study employs a sustainable tourism framework from the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). The findings are juxtaposed with the model of sustainable traditional village revitalisation that has been widely used as the basis for integrating rural tourism into tourism growth. The result of this study provides knowledge in the sustainable tourism literature, particularly in the context of village revitalisation for tourism purposes. It also highlights, from a practical standpoint, the subsequent challenges that arise in traditional village revitalisation projects. The study then identifies solutions to minimise internal and external conflicts in tourism governance.

Keywords:

traditional village; top-down approach; post-revitalisation; sustainable governance

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Introduction

The Lake Toba area is part of the government program of the National Tourism Strategic Area and it has been designated as a super-priority destination in the country. In order to build world-class tourism destinations and the creative industries as a pillar of the future economy, Lake Toba and its surroundings are receiving more attention and assistance due to the designation as a super-priority destination (KPPIP 2017). Lake Toba and the other nine priority destinations are expected to contribute 30 billion to the country's foreign exchange with an expectation of 350-400 million trips and the arrival of 22.3 million foreign tourists in 2024 (Secretariat of Cabinet Deputy for Economic Affairs 2020). So, in its development, it is essential to apply the concept of sustainable tourism considering the long-term goals (Ginting and Ferani 2019). The development, revitalisation, and promotion of Lake Toba, which has been ongoing for at least five years, has hastened the program to achieve those goals.

The traditional village's uniqueness makes it highly valued as a tourist destination. Many traditional villages worldwide and in Indonesia have utilised this tourism function, such as Yuanjia village in Shaanxi province, China, and Pentingsari village in Yogyakarta, Indonesia (Gao and Wu 2017, Aji 2020). Huta Siallagan itself is a traditional village with a closed settlement, governed and managed by the local wisdom of the villagers descended from the second son of the indigenous leader Raja Batak, named Raja Isumbaon (Kennedy 2022, Siregar et al. 2022). Traditional villages such as Huta Siallagan have the potential for tourist attractions in terms of the physical, social, and cultural aspects (Gao and Wu 2017, Kaelafaoui et al. 2021). The renewal of traditional villages is expected to highlight the existing potential. However, any renewal or revitalisation to increase tourism value must be balanced with proper governance, especially in the scope of traditional villages that involve many local stakeholders who still use local wisdom in the government hierarchy and daily basis (Saxena et al. 2007, Setijanti et al. 2015, Zhang 2020). A sustainable destination must also meet requirements set forth by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC 2022), which are categorized into four groups: management, socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental sustainability.

In the previous research, Tavakolinia and Shams Pouya (2022) discovered that the local stakeholders and community have taken a significant role in the succession of local sustainable development in rural tourism areas, especially in terms of mental participation. Although acting as a strategic tool in sustainable development, the tourism and recreation ecosystem could also bring pressures and conflicts if done without thorough consideration (Schvab et al. 2022). In a case of major revitalisation, such as in Huta Siallagan, the revitalisation has been done in a top-down approach and left the local stakeholders and community in the aftermath that needs to be understood and dealt with. Thus, this study aims to find the aftermath of revitalisation that has occurred within the material, social and spiritual levels through the sustainable

management perspective from the GSTC (2022). Furthermore, the findings of this study will provide valuable insights into planning future traditional village revitalisation projects and avoiding internal conflict that may arise.

Traditional village revitalisation

Traditional villages naturally have an attraction from its settlement and natural environment, the social community that formed them, to the culture and habits that have been carried out for generations (Gao and Wu 2017, Aji 2020, Zhang 2020). Therefore, the tourism approach to traditional villages is very effective in helping to develop the economy and the quality of life of the local community (Gao and Wu 2017, Aji 2020, Wiweka et al. 2021). The revitalisation strategy is also a systematic and comprehensive initiative to strengthen the rural economy although generally done in a top-down approach (Yang et al. 2021). Rural tourism not only offers the chance for better profits but also supports the restoration of agriculture and the repopulation of rural areas, as well as the employment of young people. Seasonality is also one of the key factors influencing demand, for example, the spring season in Croatia is the most alluring season for tourism activity because it is when nature awakens and becomes more beautiful (Grgić et al. 2017). On the one hand, tourism has notably improved the quality of life of the people in the destination and brought physical infrastructure development (Ginting et al. 2017). On the other hand, the tourism industry can harm the environment and society if being carried out exploitatively (Zhang 2020, Sitikarn 2021, Wiweka et al. 2021). Therefore, tourism development should uphold the values of sustainability so it can benefit the environment, economy, society, and culture and it can be passed down from generation to generation or, in other words, it has the nature of sustainability (Sitikarn 2021, GSTC 2022, Rasoolimanesh et al. 2023).

The development of the function of traditional villages as tourist destinations is driven by the search for unique and memorable experiences in particular settings (Sheresheva and Kopiski 2016, Kastenholz et al. 2018, Purnomo et al. 2020). Changes in the habits and behaviour of post-modern society, which are increasingly distant from their roots or origins, create a need for recreation that can show noble values and distinctiveness (Ginting and Wahid 2017, Purnomo et al. 2020). Rural areas not only function in the production of commodities but they also have additional functions as tourism and recreational destinations (Saxena et al. 2007, Wang and Yatsumoto 2019, Purnomo et al. 2020).

Tourism in traditional villages supports the realisation of equitable development in disadvantaged areas (Wang and Yatsumoto 2019, Fleischer and Felesenstein 2000), which is globally stated in the vision and mission of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In essence, the development of traditional village tourism helps employ local communities, and it also regenerates and reassess the existing potential and

infrastructure in traditional village tourism destinations (Lane and Kastenholz 2015, Kelfaoui et al. 2021, Rosalina et al. 2021, Jia et al. 2023). The existence of traditional village tourism also conserves and maintains the sustainability of traditional communities and the customs that apply to them (Lane and Kastenholz 2015, Zhang 2020, Jia et al. 2023). In modern practice, proper, fair, and efficient governance is essential for the multi-stakeholders involved in it, both from local and external parties (Gao and Wu 2017, Roxas et al. 2020, Jia et al. 2023). Moreover, governing tourism through direct investment in a less developed area can help to reduce high unemployment (Creţan et al. 2005). With its advantages in national economic growth, government intervention is needed to promote the growing demand of tourism by providing the required facilities and other supplementary factors that could boost the tourism industry (Khoshnevis Yazdi et al. 2017).

In its sustainable approach, tourism must pay attention to environmental, economic, and sociocultural components, as well as its governance which includes multi-stakeholders (Blancas et al. 2011, Gao and Wu 2017, Guo et al. 2019). The previous research in the Danube Delta, Romania, has shown the environmental degradation as a result of tourism chaotic growth which further led to the proposal of slow visits as a tourism brand of the destination (Schvab et al. 2022). Hence, the regulations and political work in domestic tourism development planning are the most crucial in order to protect the assets in a tourist destination that are vulnerable to tourist pressure in the long term (Schvab et al. 2022, Tavakolinia and Shams Pouya 2022). Governance in a tourist destination is responsible for coordinating the approach to sustainable tourism in a tourist destination (Guo et al. 2019, GSTC 2022).

The existence of coordination between multi-stakeholders in sustainable tourism management in tourist destinations in the form of traditional villages requires a particular approach, namely community participation (Canavan 2017, Saito and Ruhanen 2017, Aji 2020, Zhang 2020, Jia et al. 2023). Community participation can realise sustainable tourism growth in traditional villages by establishing good relations between local and outside parties (Curcija et al. 2019, Aji 2020, Jia et al. 2023). The involvement of local communities in the revitalisation process is vital because they are the ones who live and influence the area (Gao and Wu 2017, Curcija et al. 2019).

Revitalisation is designated in this study as a process of cultural manifestation. Thus, to comprehend, from a cultural standpoint, the underlying morphology of the upper layers is represented by the physical environment and the things that can be seen visually. Social structure, such as the inhabitants, creates the interlayer, in terms of varieties of behaviour and local productivity. Then, the deeper depth layer is cultural inheritance, which includes local laws and customs (Gao and Wu 2017, Page and Connell 2020). Cultural manifestation is understood as movable or immovable items that have been preserved from the past and it allows the identification of particular

stages in social development, for example, the importance of cultural monuments in a desirable tourist destination (Grgić et al. 2017).

The first level of revitalisation requires the village's physical space to be correctly rebuilt based on local history and culture. The physical elements should reflect the locality as a complex phenomenological feature formed by connections between the perception of social immediacy, the mechanisms of contact, and the relevance of setups in contrast to a gated community (Kozorog 2011, Page and Connell 2020). For the second level, a sustainable tourism destination revitalisation should sustainably enhance the local's quality of life and result in sustainable development through the viewpoints of governance (Tao and Wall 2009, Gao and Wu 2017, Su et al. 2019). Physical revitalisation and proper governance will then enhance people's idea of place identity, community, and local dignity, resulting in the revitalisation's spiritual or cultural aspect as the third level. A successful sustainable traditional village revitalisation would result from accomplishing all these three level objectives (Saxena and Ilbery 2010, García-Delgado et al. 2020, Świdyńska and Witkowska-Dąbrowska 2021), which are integrated (Figure 1).

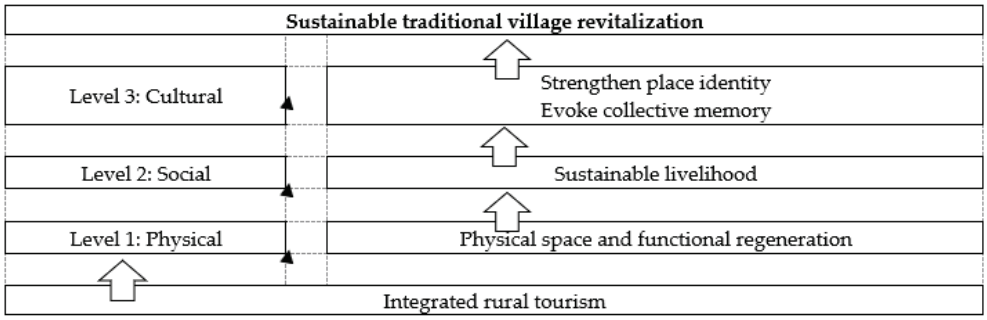

Figure 1. A sustainable traditional village revitalisation model. Source: Gao and Wu (2017)

Sustainable governance for sustainable tourist destinations

According to the World Economic Forum (Schwab 2013), one of the keys to a destination's competitiveness lies in its sustainability. However, it is not easy for a destination to apply the concept of sustainable tourism since there is a vague definition that makes it challenging to be generally accepted (Boluk et al. 2019, Passafaro 2020). The Global Sustainable Tourism Council Criteria (GSTC 2022) establishes collective goals that all tourism destinations should intend to achieve. However, by embracing sustainable tourism, specific criteria for sustainable destination accreditation may be applied. Any tourist destination management organisation must adhere to the GSTC Destination Criteria (GSTC 2022) as an essential requirement to coordinate the destination's sustainable tourism strategy. Sustainability in local governance is

addressed by the management structure and framework, stakeholder management, and readiness to handle pressure and change within the tourist ecosystem (Canavan 2017, GSTC 2022). These three criteria are then broken down into eleven sub-criteria that determine the sustainability of a destination's management (Table 1).

Table 1. Sustainable Destination Criteria

No	Criteria	Sub-criteria
1.	Management structure and framework	a. Destination management responsibility b. Destination management strategy and action plan c. Monitoring and reporting
2.	Stakeholder engagement	a. Enterprise engagement and sustainability standards b. Resident engagement and feedback c. Visitor engagement and feedback d. Promotion and information
3.	Managing pressure and change	a. Managing visitor volumes and activities b. Planning regulations and development control c. Climate change adaptation d. Risk and crisis management

Sustainable governance approach in traditional village revitalisation

A few criteria must be established to achieve sustainable governance in a tourist destination. The values built upon the management structure and framework, the stakeholder engagement, and the pressure and change management are the trifectas needed to sustain a tourism business within a destination (Hall et al. 2020, Deng et al. 2021, Liburd et al. 2022). The shifting nature of tourism trends highlights the value of local tourism planning and the need for the local government to take an increasingly active role in the creation and execution of tourism policy and planning (Light et al. 2020). Moreover, a sustainable governance approach in a tourist destination is especially important in a traditional society with a particular hierarchy and way of life (Deng et al. 2021). The aspects of sustainable governance can be seen physically, socially, and culturally in a community structure (Figure 2).

Criteria for sustainable destination governance		Sustainable traditional village revitalisation
Management structure and framework	⇨	Physical level
Stakeholder engagement		Social level
Pressure and change management		Cultural level

Figure 2. Sustainable governance approach in traditional village revitalisation

Methodology

Study area

This research was carried out after the revitalisation project implemented in the traditional village of Huta Siallagan (Figure 3), as a part priority zone for achieving the development agenda of the Integrated Tourism Master Plan (Regional Infrastructure Development Agency 2018). Huta Siallagan is located on the borderline of Lake Toba in the North Sumatra Province of Indonesia on an area of 11 thousand square metres.

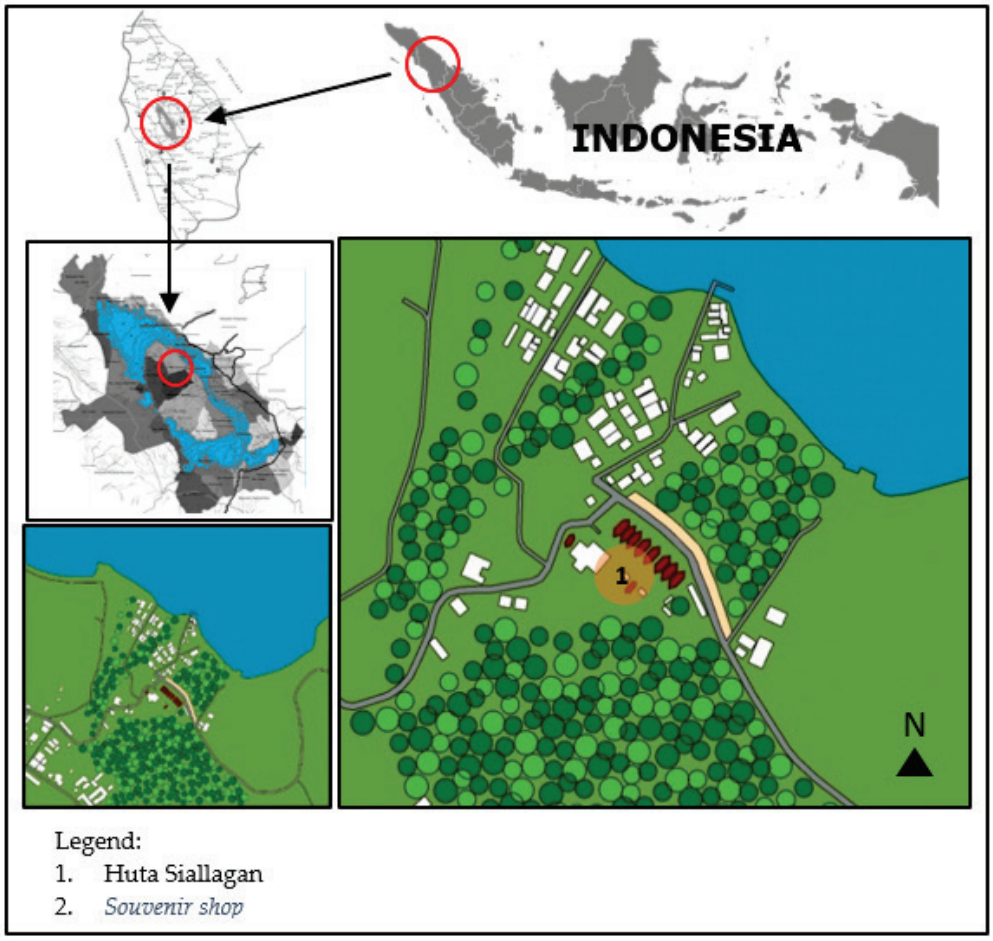

Figure 3. Research key area

Huta Siallagan is a traditional village inhabited by the Siallagan clan family from the Batak King's second son named King Isumbaon. The village is specifically located on Samosir Island, in the centre of Lake Toba region of North Sumatra, Indonesia and it is also identified as one of the geo-sites in the Toba Caldera Geopark. The traditional

village has been famous with the authentic Batak settlement typology and the site of The Stone Chair of King Siallagan where the King and his council adjudicated upon the criminals and spies, and also held important meetings. This site began law enforcement civilization in Samosir, eventually becoming a cultural tourism village (Tobing et al. 2020).

"Huta" refers to a traditionally built settlement so one tight community could expand. The person who established the settlement became the Huta's chief (raja ni Huta), and his descendants would manage its governance and future growth. All families living in the Huta must be from the same clan and bloodline, so in Huta Siallagan, all the residents are from the Siallagan clan of the same lineage.

Based on data from the Indonesian Ministry of Public Works and Housing, the revitalisation of Huta Siallagan has been carried out during 2020-2021 with 30-billion-rupiah spendings (KPPIP 2017). The project includes some scopes, starting from the revitalisation of the roof of the traditional houses called Bolon houses, construction of new traditional bolon houses, public toilets, kiosk buildings, amphitheatres, plazas, the neighbourhood pathways, signages, communal wastewater treatment instalment, parking areas, and information centres.

Sustainable tourism governance analysis

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative methodology by the nature of the social sciences and humanities in tourism management, emphasising quality. Desktop research is the first phase in the data collection procedure to retrieve available information regarding the Huta Siallagan restructuring and revitalisation project. Literature research was then conducted to comprehend the many theoretical analyses of sustainable tourism, particularly on governance.

Sustainable tourism governance standards according to UNWTO recommendations were reviewed as the basis for research variables. Meanwhile, primary data was gathered through five days of fieldwork in Huta Siallagan and interviews with multi-stakeholders involved. International agencies, the central government, businesses, local governments, communities, and visitors are the primary stakeholders in sustainable tourism governance (Roxas et al., 2020). Interviewees were selected using the purposive sampling, where the sample group is targeted to have specific attributes (Apostolopoulos and Liargovas 2016). Following this principle, the researchers interviewed the groups closely related to the village revitalisation – both those who participated in the planning activities directly and those who were knowledgeable about the project. The village committee, or group of leaders in the village, was first approached, and relevant local information was collected. This village committee was further interviewed to grasp the fundamentals of tourism development, planning and governance, village transformations and the authorities' attitudes toward them, recent

challenges and concerns at the village level, and the leaders' long-term aims.

The village was then attentively observed, for each building and the surrounding area. Completing the data collection, structured interviews with 36 stakeholders were conducted, including the representatives from the central government, the local government, the Samosir Regency Tourism Agency, tourism managers, tourism business owners, the village elders, tribe leaders, local communities, and Huta Siallagan visitors to fully comprehend the point of views of these diverse groups and the growth of rural tourism in the village (Table 2). Questions developed from the sustainable tourism criteria from GSTC (2022) were asked to the interviewees. The criteria had three different angles, accordingly: (1) destination management structure and framework, including destination management responsibility, management strategy and action plan, and monitoring and reporting; (2) stakeholder engagement, including engagement and feedback from enterprises, residents, and visitors; and (3) managing pressure and change, including planning regulations and development control.

Table 2. List of interviewees

Interviewee	Numbers
Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia	1
Regional Development Planning Agency of Samosir Regency	5
Samosir Tourism Board	5
Attraction Manager (Huta Siallagan)	2
Attraction Manager (Batu Panghampuran, near Huta Siallagan)	1
Business Owner (Locals)	3
Business Owner and employees (Outsiders)	2
Tour Guide	2
Tourist	10
Local Residents	5
TOTAL	36

Data analysis was then conducted. Firstly, the records from interviews were transcribed. The findings were objectively evaluated by correlating the results of observations, interviews, and relevant project evaluations with the hypotheses from the previous literature studies. The framework for the data analysis follows the sustainable traditional village revitalisation model developed by Gao and Wu (2017), which includes the physical, social, and cultural levels through the perspective of sustainable management from the GSTC (2022).

Results

The revitalisation of Huta Siallagan is included in the Master Plan for Priority Tourism Destinations of Lake Toba for 2020-2045, which states that Huta Siallagan and the

surrounding area are included as cultural heritage sites. Huta Siallagan is a traditional closed settlement and it has been functioning in tourism under an internal management scale since 1970. A tourist attraction, including Huta Siallagan, is part of the Lake Toba tourism development plan, specifically in the Ambarita region. The program aims to develop a tourist attraction in the form of this traditional village as a tourism icon in the Simanindo district (Regional Infrastructure Development Agency 2018). This vision was then embodied through the arrangement of commercial areas and tourism support facilities, improving the quality of the physical environment, and supporting infra-structures in and around the village area, such as structuring the port area, adding service functions, urban areas, pedestrian path improvement, traffic and parking arrangements. In the 2018 Regional Spatial Plan of Samosir Regency, Huta Siallagan is also designated as a cultural heritage site along with the Old Tomb of King Sidabutar, cultural tourism performances of Sigale-gale, Huta Bolon, and the Pagar Batu Site.

Cultural heritage sites are products of high-value human culture in the form of historical relics, archaeological buildings, monuments, and structures and they are beneficial for knowledge and science (Regional Infrastructure Development Agency 2018). In line with that, in the master plan for the integration of Lake Toba tourism designed by the National Development Planning Agency, Huta Siallagan was assigned to Cluster 1 or in the top priority level of Simanindo's priority development zone of cultural tourism. Huta Siallagan is also included as the main cultural tourism attraction and the entrance to the Samosir Island tourism area (KPPIP 2017).

Based on the action plan for structuring the Huta Siallagan area, the Huta Siallagan revitalisation project covered a private property area of 11,000 square metres and it was carried out during 2020-2021. This project covers the construction of new traditional houses, public toilets, souvenir centres, amphitheatres, plazas, neighbourhood areas, signage, communal sewage treatment installation, a parking area, and an information centre (Figure 4). The revitalisation was carried out directly by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing by involving local craftsmen to train local communities to maintain the sustainability of traditions and skills and improve the local economy during the COVID-19 pandemic (Public Communications Bureau of PUPR Ministry 2022).

Figure 4. Huta Siallagan pre-revitalisation and post-revitalisation

The traditional village of Huta Siallagan has a typical Batak village layout, consisting of two rows of traditional Batak houses. At the centre of the settlement, a fig tree or, in the local language, hariara, can be found side by side with the famous icon of Huta Siallagan, the Stone Chair of King Siallagan. And the execution stone is located at the back of the village. The revitalisation plan looks neat, and it is shown in the post-revitalisation physical embodiment, although it looks very different from the previous Huta Siallagan condition.

The most apparent improvement and revitalisation can be seen in installing paving blocks in all village areas, starting from the entrance gate to the exit. Revitalisation in the area also includes rebuilding some of the existing modern houses into three new traditional houses. For the existing traditional houses, improvements are made by changing the roofing material previously made of ijuk (palm fibre) or tin roof into sirap (shingle) imported directly from Kalimantan, then renovating the houses' extension. The extension is a part of adaptation concerning the shifting needs of humans living there. This extension section consists of the 'modern' layout for living and the service areas for traditional houses that previously did not have such a function (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Traditional house extension from inside and outside perspective

The extension houses use concrete and marble contrasting with the original materials of wood and stone used in the traditional custom, similarly like the roofing substitution to shingles roofing from Kalimantan. The main reason for the material substitution is the better fire resistance quality compared to flammable fibres. However, these changes bring some concerns about the internal management of Huta Siallagan, who also serves as the inheritor of the village, as stated by an interviewee:

> *Several dimensions do not match traditional buildings' long-standing requirements of traditional buildings… I am afraid that people who are not critical enough will think that this is the original form of our cultural and traditional heritage. This error is because they didn't do the cultural research thoroughly, maybe because this project was also pursued by the deadline.*

Furthermore, the observations show that there is no significant change regarding the village layout. Visitors entering the Huta Siallagan area are marked by passing through the entrance gate, which is only wide enough to be through by a buffalo or two adults, and then directed to the information centre or counter to purchase entrance tickets and to hire local guide services. At this point, visitors can already see the appearance of the traditional village. There are two rows of traditional Batak houses, consisting of houses of ordinary people and kings, and a hariara tree in the centre of the village, side by side with the stone chair of King Siallagan. A platform containing three additional traditional houses, sopo anting, a plaza, amphitheatres, and the king's burial area at the end faces the row of traditional houses. Visitors will generally be offered to watch the Sigale-gale performance and to join the tor-tor dance. The platform section also serves as a stage for holding festivals. The execution stone is located at the back of Huta Siallagan then the sequence ends with a souvenir shopping centre area, toilets, and a cafe (Figure 6):

> *Visitors to Huta Siallagan came because of stories about traditional Batak villages, which are full of culture and myths. Therefore, tour guides will usually help visitors in small or large groups to tour this traditional village and hear the origins of Huta Siallagan and the legend of the Stone Chair of King Siallagan. Then visitors can also enjoy the Sigale-gale performance and perform the tor-tor dance together. Visitors can see and buy the island's souvenirs at the end of the visit (Key person: local guide).*

Figure 6. Sequence in Huta Siallagan

The Siallagan family arranges the activity flow to manage this tourist destination. However, based on interviews with residents and merchants outside the gate, this flow

only benefits the management because the Huta Siallagan area has become a one-stop destination. The concept of a one-stop destination is contradictory between visitors and residents in the village, who tend to be satisfied; on the contrary, the residents, and merchants outside the gate do not get the benefits of tourism.

Sustainable livelihood

The main tourist attraction in Huta Siallagan is the story about the Stone Chair of King Siallagan and the cannibalism story that has been legendary worldwide. Therefore, the selling point served during the visit by tourists is a village tour accompanied by a local tour guide who is also a native of Huta Siallagan. While the other residents still rely on agriculture as their livelihood. In addition, the existence of a souvenir centre at every tourist attraction is a common thing to find. The souvenir centre consists of two buildings: inside the village, and outside the village gate, lined up to the Siallagan pier.

Revitalising the souvenir shopping centre was also done by updating old, shabby stalls and adding new kiosks, bringing the total number of booths inside the village area to 65. These stalls were built in the Huta Siallagan area, which is run by independent management of the Siallagan family with the lineage of King Isumbaon. The management of merchants in the village is also under family management. The merchants who rent booths in the village area are residents of Siallagan Village (both in the Huta Siallagan area and its surroundings) with close family relationships and they are selected according to the assessment of the traditional chief of Huta Siallagan. This selection causes internal friction between the residents of Huta Siallagan and the residents of Huta Siallagan and the neighbourhood residents because the criteria for merchants who can rent in the village area are considered too subjective and not in the favour of the community around the tourist attraction. In addition, the profit of renting the booth is entirely owned by the chief, thus creating a conflict of interest that benefits the established chief from tourism in Huta Siallagan. As the project only covers booths in the village area, people who have kiosks around tourist attraction areas feel an imbalance in development, mainly because they are in a very close and interconnected range. The residents and merchants outside the gate are experiencing inequality development, which also appears because of the close distance.

Due to the issue, the ministry did a simple fix on the facades of the neighbourhood's booth. However, the outside gate community still believes that development is carried out by unfair selection because the restoration is only done on the surface while the inside still looks shabby, especially the stalls located along the road to the pier, which have not been revitalised at all (Figure 7). Attractions at Huta Siallagan also rely on legends and the tangible existence of traditional houses and the stone chair of King Siallagan. Great potential based on local communities can be developed to enrich tourism activities around Huta Siallagan.

Figure 7. Side by side, the souvenir shopping centre in Siallagan pier and Huta Sialllagan's neighbourhood

Place identity

The legendary site of the Stone Chair of King Siallagan and the cannibalism story had engaged the tourist in some anticipation even before visiting the place. This legacy in the form of stories or legends is one of Huta Siallagan's privileges. This potential is well captured by the Indonesian government, and it is one of the solid reasons for revitalisation. Based on interviews with local and foreign tourists, it was found that there were significant differences in perceptions related to revitalisation in Huta Siallagan. Most local tourists are satisfied and they think that the revitalisation has increased the value of this traditional village because of the neatness of the arrangement and the supporting facilities that are already very adequate compared to the condition of the village before the revitalisation. Meanwhile, foreign tourists feel that the revitalisation of Huta Siallagan is too polished (Figure 8) for the authenticity that the tourists seek:

> *In my memory, Huta Siallagan used to have an exciting and tense vibe (the legend of the stone chair of Huta Siallagan), but now, everything reversed when I entered this area. Everything is so new… The authenticity of the traditional village seems to diminish when I set my foot on the surface of the paving block that used to be earth and soil… as well as on the stone chair which no longer makes me shudder because everyone is allowed to touch and sit on something that is supposed to be sacred (Key person: Tourist from Germany).*

Figure 8. Stone chair of Siallagan King

This creates a feel that it is too new and 'modern' for a traditional village that sells the value of local wisdom and sacredness as attraction.

Huta Siallagan is an exclusive traditional village run by private governance of its own and it follows the tradition of ulubalang. The local authority protects and organises the village. Therefore, some adjustments are needed to achieve sustainable management, including traditional community groups with external stakeholders such as the central government and the business actors around tourist attractions.

Discussion

Material level: physical and functional revitalisation

Huta Siallagan is mentioned and regulated in the Masterplan for the priority tourism destination of Lake Toba and the Regional Spatial Plan of Samosir Regency. This shows the importance of this destination in the tourism cycle in the Lake Toba region. In addition, the revitalisation project was also directly under the ministry of tourism, and it was then carried out by the Ministry of Public Works. The involvement of many parties in the development of the Huta Siallagan destination has led to overlapping roles between ministries and local governments, not to mention the traditional government, which is very thick with its traditional hierarchies (Hall et al. 2020, Deng et al. 2021, Liburd et al. 2022). This issue arose related to the responsibility for the maintenance of Huta Siallagan, especially after the physical revitalisation was completed. These overlapping roles will later lead to confusion in monitoring and reporting, which are essential to a destination's sustainability.

But Huta Siallagan is endowed with unique identities that reside within its residential area, the Stone chair of King Siallagan, and the execution stone. The uniqueness of a place makes it an identity or branding used as a strategic tool to differentiate itself from the competition. An area must create a positive image to attract visitors (Kotler et al. 2004, Pike et al. 2007, Baker and Cameron 2008, Marzano and Scott 2009, Anholt 2010, World Tourism Organization 2009, Jarratt et al. 2019). This uniqueness is certainly essential as a selling point for domestic and foreign tourists.

Although the post-revitalisation allows the village's appearance to be more immaculate than the previous state, it also diminishes some of its unique characteristics. For instance, the replacement of the roofing material from ijuk to sirap is somewhat contrast to the idea of sustainability that requires the utilisation of local materials. Similarly, the renovation of the extension of the traditional houses also uses the same approach. The traditional Batak house uses wood and stone materials, while after the revitalisation of the extension, the house uses concrete and marble. Using these materials does not have much influence on an environmental sustainability approach.

Even though the locals who inhabit the place feel satisfied and proud of the traditional houses composed to be more modern and functional, this finding shows a decrease in the cultural values reflected through local wisdom. Local pride in their cultural identity has been relegated. This phenomenon also applies to roofing substitution to shingles roofing from Kalimantan. The main reason for the material substitution is the better fire resistance quality compared to flammable fibres. However, the idea of maintaining traditional house roofs in the long term seems to be less explored. In the event of inevitable damage, it will be challenging for the locals to replace the damaged parts with similar materials that are locally produced.

The physical revitalisation of Huta Siallagan should also consider the pressure and change management. The premature design thinking will later lead to a much bigger issue, such as issues involving climate change and natural disasters. Tourism is significantly affected by the weather because it allows visitors to engage in various activities, impacts satisfaction, and financially impacts businesses. These worries will grow due to climate change and natural disasters, influencing how weather impacts tourism. Although if one cannot affect the weather or the climate, one may actively reduce vulnerability, limit unpleasant consequences, and prepare for likely changes (Becken et al. 2011).

In parallel with the architectural sequence paradigm, the tourist experiences the flow of time and space as a continual story of events connected one after another by imagination (Kastenholz et al. 2018). The findings reveal that there has not been much of a shift in the way the village was originally set up. Continuous innovation and diversity of activities will attract tourists to revisit (Chang et al. 2017).

Social level: sustainable livelihood

The inequality that continues to develop among the residents and business owners outside the gate happens because of their non-related status to the Siallagan Clan. The ministry made quick corrections to the neighbourhood booth's facades as a response to the issue that occurred. The outside gate community, however, continues to believe that development is performed by unjust choice because work has only been done on the exterior while the interior still appears deteriorating, especially the stalls on the road to the pier, which have not received any sort of repair in the least.

Attractions at Huta Siallagan also seem to rely on legends and the tangible existence of traditional houses and the stone chair of King Siallagan. Great potential based on local communities can be developed to enrich tourism activities around Huta Siallagan. Thus, the duration of visitor tourism can be extended, and the residents can benefit from tourism activities without requiring the provision of superb facilities. Community-based tourism is meant to offer unique experiences that can be obtained by participating in daily activities only by involving tourists in the daily activities of

residents (Wiweka et al. 2021, Jia et al. 2023). Thus, the community will benefit economically and preserve local culture and customs, for example, by farming and processing corn. A similar concept has been done and proven to be successfully implemented by the village of Nglanggeran and Pentingsari in Yogyakarta (Aji 2020, Wiweka et al. 2021). By relying on community-based tourism, the village of Nglanggeran and Pentingsari has been included in the Top 100 World Sustainable Destinations. This proves that community-based implementation as a tourist attraction can ensure environmental, cultural, and economic sustainability. On the contrary, a study in Romania shows a rather successful effort when the authorities tried to transform a former gold mining area into a tourism destination due to the premature policy framework and the lack of participation from the local communities, NGOs, state institutions and other political and economic actors (Vesalon and Creţan 2013).

Spiritual level: place identity

Place identity is associated with people's perceptions of a place to distinguish one place from another (Kastenholz et al. 2018). This perception is not only related to the physical aspects of a place but also to the social and cultural constructions that shape the identity of the place (Ginting et al. 2017). Huta Siallagan is a traditional village that is the most famous among other traditional Batak villages (Siregar et al. 2022). This fact is based on the existence of a legend or story that distinguishes it from other traditional villages even though physically they look similar. Stories have deep persuasive power, continually influencing and changing how people think, understand, and make decisions. The study's results show a significant positive effect of story marketing on travel engagement and behavioural intentions (Hall et al. 2020).

Tourism activity that involves a backstory or a legend can engage the visitor with a range of reflection, memory work, or imagination that gives the place its own identity (Light et al. 2021a). Tourist destinations, such as memorial museums or cultural heritage sites like Huta Siallagan, may attempt to influence how the recent past is remembered, but their efforts may be impeded by the visitors who have their own entrance narratives, background information, and the ability to accept, negotiate, or reject the historical presentation that they experience (Light et al. 2021b).

Even before going to the location, the tourist was looking forward to seeing the Stone Chair of King Siallagan where the story of cannibalism legend took place. Huta Siallagan has the advantage of inheriting this tradition in the form of tales or legends. The Indonesian government has done a good job of releasing this potential, which is one of the primary forces of revitalisation. However, many foreign visitors suspect that Huta Siallagan's revitalisation is excessively reducing the authenticity that they are looking for. For a traditional village that markets the value of local wisdom and sanctity as the draw, this generates an impression that it is too new and “modern”.

Huta Siallagan is an exclusive traditional village that upholds the ulubalang custom and it is privately governed. The village is organised and protected by the local government. In order to achieve sustainable management, several changes must be made, including integrating traditional community groups with external stakeholders like the national government and business enterprises around tourist sites.

Traditional Village Governance

Based on the previous discussion, the revitalisation project implemented a top-down planning approach. The leading roles are taken by the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Public Works. On the one hand, this strategy reduces bureaucracy, which has impeded tourism development efforts, particularly in lagging areas. On the other hand, this strategy has become a rebounding challenge due to the fact that it raises issues and tensions since parties feel that their interests have been overlooked or disregarded. Previous studies have shown that a top-down (government-community) approach to tourism development and management has proven unsuccessful (Garrod 2003). A top-down strategy begins at the level of the government by dictating strategic policies for the growth of the tourism industry. This planning procedure can be described as more bureaucratic and centralised (Boukas and Ziakas 2016). A top-down strategy fails to give the neighbourhood chances and incentives for successful change (Kubickova and Campbell 2020).

Regarding the structure and framework of management, it is ambiguous who is accountable for and entitled to the outcomes of revitalisation, which naturally involves risks and benefits associated with tourism activity. At this point, Huta Siallagan remains under the supervision of the Ministry of Public Works and Housing for one year after the completion of revitalisation works. Despite all this, the unclear management structure raises doubts about who is accountable for the necessary operational expenses, in this case, the two-month-overdue electricity payments. Who should take advantage of revitalisation, such as the revenue from kiosk rent, which the chief has been the only one to benefit this far? This means that, after the revitalisation completes, there has been no discussion on who is responsible for what. This ambiguity creates a conflict of interest, as the central government appears to only get insight and listen to ideas from a limited group of stakeholders. Another example comes from the unequal tourists' spending in the souvenir shops area. The revitalised space opens opportunities only for the kiosks inside the village perimeter, where structures are designed accordingly. Unfortunately, the sellers in the village's surroundings, which are plenty, receive fewer shoppers. The area which has been badly affected is within the proximity of the lake, with the absence of visitors passing. The economic benefit for the local community is proven unequal. These challenges that arise are due to the absence of clarity in the structure, strategy, and action plans that should have been developed prior to the execution of the project. Ultimately, due to insufficient

governance and coordination, monitoring and reporting efforts are also neglected.

Besides that, top-down planning makes it difficult for those engaged in tourism in Huta Siallagan and its surroundings to get along. Several parties believe that they have been neglected and do not play a substantial role in this project. In addition, the rotation of service personnel in the local government agencies hinders the staff's ability to optimally supervise the destination. This will also have an effect on the promotion and diffusion of information about the destination, as the new personnel will require time to adjust to the new work environment and to learn about the potential and challenges.

A social-entrepreneurship tourism approach that emphasises local community companies and activities can also facilitate engagement between local communities, external stakeholders, and tourists (Canavan 2017, Roxas et al. 2020). The existence of cultural performances and entertainment must also be safeguarded by genuine local knowledge in order to not impact the long-established identity of the location. Entertainment shows and performances must be carried out with clarity and commitment in reality.

Finally, in managing pressure and change, which involves preventing and overcoming crises that could be detrimental to a tourism location, there are several things that occur. Being a place of cultural heritage, the environment's authenticity must always be preserved. Preventing and mitigating external hazards such as fires and natural catastrophes is essential. The absence of a visible and accessible fire extinguisher in the village is one of the concerns that can be addressed. A fire had happened in this village, which is one of the reasons for replacing the palm-fibre roof with shingle roofs. The perception of the local inhabitants, which is gradually growing more modern and accepting these changes as natural, represents a further internal concern. This is risky for the originality that defines the identity of Huta Siallagan; physical changes caused by revitalisation, such as the use of non-local materials and the construction of extended homes, can significantly change the people's perceptions of the original design of the Batak traditional house.

Governance of the Traditional Village

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Besides that, top-down planning makes it difficult for those engaged in tourism in Huta Siallagan and its surroundings to get along. Several parties believe that they have been neglected and that they do not play a substantial role in this project. In addition, the rotation of service personnel in the local government agencies hinders the staff's ability to optimally supervise the destination. This will also have an effect on the promotion and diffusion of information about the destination, as the new personnel will require time to adjust to the new work environment and learn about the potential and challenges. A social-entrepreneurship tourism approach that emphasises local community companies and activities can also facilitate engagement between local communities, external stakeholders, and tourists (Canavan 2017, Roxas et al. 2020). The existence of cultural performances and entertainment must also be safeguarded by genuine local knowledge in order to not impact the long-established identity of the

location. Entertainment shows and performances must be carried out with clarity and commitment in reality.

Figure 9. The area of Huta Siallagan receives different economic gains (red kiosks with the least number of visitors; yellow kiosks with average numbers of visitors; and blue kiosks with the most visitors)

Finally, in managing pressure and change, which involves preventing and overcoming crises that could be detrimental to a tourism location, there are several things that occur. Being a place of cultural heritage, the environment's authenticity must always be preserved. Preventing and mitigating external hazards such as fires and natural catastrophes is essential. The absence of a visible and accessible fire extinguisher in the village is one of the concerns that can be addressed. A fire happened in this village, which is one of the reasons for replacing the palm-fibre roof with shingle roofs. The perception of the local inhabitants, which is gradually growing more modern and accepting these changes as natural, represents a further internal concern. This is risky for the originality that defines the identity of Huta Siallagan; physical changes caused by revitalisation, such as the use of non-local materials and the construction of extended homes, can significantly change the people's perceptions of the original design of the Batak traditional house.

Conclusions

Huta Siallagan, located on the shores of Lake Toba, is expected to generate a significant income for the nation's tourism industry. Such expectations must consider the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's standards (GSTC 2022) in its development and they

must pay attention to the implications of destination sustainability. The objective of revitalising tourism destinations is to expand a region's tourism economy. Physical, sociocultural, and spiritual revitalisation should be conducted as part of a sustainable tourism strategy. These three levels of village revitalisation are interconnected and mutually influencing. The social and spiritual levels that comprise a place should therefore be considered during the pre-design phase, even if the revitalisation is limited to the physical level through the refurbishment of facilities and infrastructure. The foundation of sociocultural and spiritual significance will protect and preserve cultural and environmental assets and maintain the long-established image and perception of the village. Additionally, the top-down planning of this revitalisation project, which affects the people's lives, causes both internal and external tensions. Experts and stakeholders from the destination must be involved in the development and comprehension of local knowledge.

It can be concluded that in order to achieve sustainable governance within a tourist destination, research in planning is essential. The lack of research as a foundation will lead to a premature design that causes further issues in the physical, sociocultural, and even the place identity, especially in revitalising a destination with a high reputation. The findings from this research can provide valuable insights into planning future indigenous village revitalisation projects and on how to avoid internal conflicts that may arise in tourism. Further research is recommended to develop a suitable governance structure and framework for sustainable tourism in traditional village areas. Research and planning are vital for achieving sustainable governance in a destination. A lack of research as a basis will lead to an inappropriate design, which will bring in extra problems in the physical, sociocultural, and even place identity, particularly when revitalising a well-known destination. Finally, the findings of this study can provide valuable insights for planning future traditional village revitalisation programs and avoiding potential conflicts that may occur due to tourism activities.

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Aims & Scope

Urban and regional questions are crucial in understanding the present territorial conditions. From the World Bank's 'rediscovery' in its 2009 Report of the potential of cities in encouraging economic growth, to the multiple ways in which cities are being drawn into the processes of neoliberalism, to the dynamic growth of cities in the developing countries in Asia far out stripping the scale of cities in the older urbanized nations – everywhere there are signs of a rapidly changing urban condition. The same is true for the regions where 'old questions' of regional economic disparity and uneven development are being given a new twist as economic globalization impacts the national and local arenas.

JURA, the **Journal of Urban and Regional Analysis**, working as an **Open-access journal** (**with two issues/year, in February and in August - starting with 2020;** previously annually publishing in June and in December, for the period 2009-2019), was launched as a response to the exciting world of urban and regional research emerging in reaction to these changes happening in the real world.

JURA represents the initiative of the Interdisciplinary Center for Advanced Research on Territorial Dynamics (CICADIT) at the University of Bucharest working in collaboration with Ronan Paddison at the University of Glasgow, for the period 2009-2020. Starting with 2021, JURA is also supported by the Professional Association of Romanian Geographers (APGR). While the intention is that articles published by JURA will draw on examples throughout the world, particular emphasis will be given to urban and regional change as it is being experienced in Eastern Europe.

Transitional economies, and urban and regional shifts in the region since the end of the socialist regimes have been profound. The socialist regime had its particular effects on the regional economy and the cities, linked with structures that, in many ways, were very different from the trends apparent in Western Europe in the post-World War II period. Since 1990, change has been swift, challenging our theoretical understanding of the processes; for example, it is plausible to transport theories of contemporary urban change under neoliberalism developed in the advanced economies to the transitional economy. The legacy of the socialist regime, its imprint on the city physically and socially, provides further reason to suppose that urban (and regional) development in transitional economies is distinctive. These differences re-emphasise a consistent axiom underpinning the study of cities and regions: that if it is possible to point to broad theories that apply across different regions of the world, they often need to be modified to take into account local conditions.

Though JURA is primarily concerned with looking at urban and regional change in the transitional East European economies, case studies exploring similar problems but in other parts of the world are certainly parts of the journal's agenda. The remit of the journal is emphatically interdisciplinary. The analysis of the urban and regional conditions needs to be interdisciplinary. In reality, urban researchers usually tend to belong to a discipline reflecting their training whether as sociologists, geographers, planners or any number of subjects concerned with the study of space and place. Our training very often endorses an appreciation of how other disciplines explore the city. For the journal, the acknowledgement of the many disciplines that are concerned with understanding cities and regions will be indicated by the different disciplinary backgrounds reflected in the published papers. Articles will be published by geographers, sociologists, planners, economists, political scientists, to mention just a few of the disciplines involved in the urban and regional study.

JURA plans to be a key outlet publishing topical articles dealing with cities and regions. In later issues, we plan to include sections devoted to notes and comments as well as a policy section outlining and discussing state and non-state initiatives aimed at improving cities and regions, together with the problems confronted by their implementation.

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