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Editorial

Special Issue of *Economic Themes*, entitled *Advanced Analytics for Sustainable Cities and Regions*, brings together contributions that examine different dimensions of contemporary urban and regional development. Despite the diversity of their research questions and methodological approaches, the papers share a common underlying perspective: sustainable territorial development requires a stronger connection between data, analytical methods, institutional capacity, and evidence-based decision-making. The Special Issue has been developed within the broader research environment of the Horizon Europe project **UR-WISE – Advancing Data-Based Policy-Making in Urban and Regional Development and Wide-Scale Implementation for Sustainable Environments**, with guest editors Vesna Janković Milić, Beniamino Murgante, Chiara Garau.

The opening paper, **“Understanding City Performance through Perceptions: A Descriptive Multidimensional Analysis of Serbian Cities”**, by Vesna Janković-Milić, Jelena J. Stanković and Ivana Marjanović, directly addresses one of the fundamental challenges of contemporary urban analytics: how city performance should be measured. Moving beyond conventional GDP-centred assessments, the authors examine urban quality of life across 28 Serbian cities and ten dimensions of urban experience. By combining residents' perceptions with Principal Component Analysis, the study develops an empirically grounded multidimensional perspective on city performance. Its findings identify governance, economic opportunities and environmental conditions as particularly important structural challenges, while mobility emerges as a major source of differentiation among cities. The paper demonstrates why richer, multidimensional measurement frameworks are essential for evidence-based urban governance.

The contribution by **Claudia van der Laag and John Östh, “Is the Space Syntax Approach Useful for the 15-Minute City Concept? A Commentary,”** turns attention to the spatial dimension of sustainable urban development. The paper considers whether space syntax can enrich the operationalisation of the 15-minute city by analysing relationships between spatial configuration, accessibility, centrality, movement, and economic activity. The discussion highlights an important distinction between physical proximity and functional accessibility. The availability of services within a short distance does not in itself ensure a well-functioning neighbourhood; the configuration and connectivity of the urban network also matter. By bringing together spatial analysis, urban morphology, and the smart-city perspective, the paper demonstrates the potential of advanced spatial analytics to support more informed urban planning.

The third contribution, **“Regenerative Tourism as a Contemporary Development Model for Enhancing the Resilience and Competitiveness of Tourist Destinations,”** by Ivana Filipović, Sonja Jovanović and Marina Stanojević, extends the sustainability debate towards the emerging paradigm of regeneration. Rather than limiting development strategies to reducing negative impacts, regenerative approaches seek to restore and strengthen ecological, social, and cultural systems. Focusing on the potential application of regenerative tourism principles in Serbia, the study emphasises the importance of local communities, natural-resource revitalisation, circular business models, and stakeholder participation. In doing so, it connects tourism development with broader debates on territorial resilience, inclusive development, and long-term sustainability.

A complementary institutional perspective is offered by **Valentina Ivanić** in **“The Role of Academia in the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process and the Development of a Culture of Cooperation in Serbia: The Case of Cooperation with the NGO Sector.”** Sustainable and innovative regions cannot be built solely through technology or analytical tools; they also depend on institutional relationships, trust, participation, and the capacity of different actors to cooperate. Focusing on the Šumadija and Western Serbia region, the paper examines the

potential of academia to act as a driver of Smart Specialisation and the Entrepreneurial Discovery Process, with particular attention to cooperation with civil society organisations. Its findings draw attention to organisational culture and managerial practices as relevant elements of the broader regional innovation environment. The contribution therefore underlines the importance of the institutional and relational foundations of data-informed and place-based development.

The Special Issue subsequently broadens its analytical perspective towards the socioeconomic conditions that shape sustainable territorial development. In **“Education, Job Quality, and Training as Determinants of Household Income Rank in Europe,”** Milica Marić and Dalibor Tomaš use European Social Survey microdata covering 30 European countries and a survey-weighted ordered logistic regression framework to examine the relationship between human capital, employment conditions and household income position. The results point to the importance of education, continuous training, employment stability and job quality for economic well-being. These findings are particularly relevant for regional development because human capital, labour-market opportunities and economic security constitute important foundations of territorial cohesion, social resilience and inclusive growth.

Finally, Wataru Johdo, in **“Macroeconomic Effects of Labour Market Deregulation and International Production Location,”** places labour-market changes within the broader context of an open and increasingly interconnected economy. Using an open-economy macroeconomic model, the paper investigates the relationships between labour-market deregulation, consumption, exchange rates, welfare and the international location of production. By explicitly incorporating producer mobility, the analysis draws attention to the spatial consequences of macroeconomic and labour-market policies. The contribution therefore provides an important reminder that urban and regional trajectories cannot be understood in isolation from wider national and international economic mechanisms.

Taken together, the papers in this Special Issue illustrate the multidimensional nature of sustainable urban and regional development. They range from perception-based urban performance assessment and spatial network analysis to regenerative development, regional innovation ecosystems, labour-market inequality and international production dynamics. Methodologically, they combine multivariate statistical analysis, spatial and configurational approaches, survey-based empirical research, institutional analysis and theoretical macroeconomic modelling. Through this Special Issue, *Economic Themes* seeks to contribute to this evolving research and policy agenda and to encourage further interdisciplinary discussion on how advanced analytical approaches can support more effective, inclusive and sustainable urban and regional development.

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Editor-in-Chief