

PUBLIC POLICIES, GOVERNANCE, DEVELOPMENT AND INCLUSION. EDITORIAL AND INTRODUCTORY STUDY

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Abstract. *This paper is an introductory and editorial approach to an issue of a journal published under the aegis of the EuroINCLUS Research Center within the Department of International Relations and European Studies, University of Oradea. The aim of this editorial project is to contribute to national and international academic debates in international relations and European studies, by publishing theoretical and empirical analyzes with a vast array of topics, but prioritizing articles on current debates and interdisciplinary analyzes.*

The collection of articles in this volume brings together the papers selected through the peer review process to be included in issue XVIII of the journal the Annals of University of Oradea, Series International Relations and European Studies. In addition to this editorial and introductory study, the volume includes 17 theoretical and applied papers on specific fields. In addition to these, 3 book reviews are added. The articles have been grouped thematically into three sections: 1. International Relations and Governance; 2. Identity, Education and Inclusivity; 3. Public Policies. Development and Socio-Economic Realities.

Keywords: *international relation, public policies, governance, development, identity, inclusion*

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1. International Relations and Governance – is the first section containing 5 papers on various topics in the field of international relations and governance at various levels. These are both theoretical approaches and analytical research.

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First paper, which is published in French, *L'initiative « Une Ceinture, Une Route » comme mécanisme de renforcement de la coopération multilatérale*, is signed by Svetlana Cebotari and Violeta Cotilevici, both from the State University of Moldova, Faculty of International Relations, Political and Administrative Sciences, Department of International Relations (Republic of Moldova). Launched in 2013 by President Xi Jinping, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)—often characterized as the "New Silk Road"—represents a monumental shift in global infrastructure development. Frequently compared in scale and ambition to the Marshall Plan, the BRI has evolved over the past decade into the most significant geopolitical and economic undertaking of the modern era, reshaping the landscape of transregional connectivity (Cebotari and Cotilevici, 2026). The article, provides a comprehensive examination of the structural frameworks through which the BRI facilitates international synergy. The research highlights several key pillars of the initiative:

- **Transregional Connectivity and Infrastructure:** By analyzing data on maritime and terrestrial logistics, the study demonstrates how BRI projects catalyze economic integration and diversify global trade routes.
- **Policy Harmonization and Investment:** The initiative serves as a vehicle for aligning national regulatory frameworks, thereby fostering an environment conducive to large-scale foreign direct investment and institutional partnerships.
- **Global Governance and Diplomacy:** Beyond physical assets, the BRI acts as a platform for intensified dialogue between sovereign states at disparate levels of development, potentially altering the traditional norms of global governance.
- **Multilateralism and Interdependence:** The research posits that the initiative functions as a catalyst for a sophisticated framework of economic interdependence. However, it also acknowledges critical challenges, such as: transparency and Sustainability

This research utilizes analysis and synthesis as its fundamental analytical tools to provide a structured investigation into the BRI's strategic aims and institutional architecture. The application of this method allows for a nuanced understanding of how the initiative reshapes multilateral cooperation across political and economic spheres. Critically, the study adopts an interdisciplinary theoretical approach, synthesizing insights from realism, institutional neoliberalism, and constructivism to capture the complexity of the Chinese-led project.

The conclusions of the two authors, while the BRI offers unprecedented prospects for global growth, its success as a multilateral mechanism depends on a coordinated, high-standard approach among international stakeholders to address its inherent complexities. More than a decade since its 2013 inception, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has transcended its initial role as a logistical project to become a dynamic, multi-dimensional framework for global cooperation. By integrating economic, technological, and institutional components, the BRI is actively restructuring global trade flows and establishing novel platforms for diplomatic dialogue among diverse sovereign actors. The research identifies that while the initiative effectively drives cross-border investment and regional integration, its ultimate efficacy is contingent upon three critical variables: 1. The robustness of the institutional frameworks governing project implementation; 2. The clarity and accountability of financial and legal processes; 3. The capacity of participating states to align BRI projects with their internal development goals. Despite its potential as a catalyst for multilateralism, the initiative faces significant

headwinds regarding financial risk management, environmental sustainability, and the maintenance of geopolitical equilibrium (Cebotari and Cotilevici, 2026).

The second paper, *Hegemony at an Inflection Point: U.S. and The Crisis of the International System*, is signed by Adrian – Ionuț Bogdan, PhD Candidate at Babeș-Bolyai University from Cluj-Napoca (Romania). The contemporary international order is increasingly characterized by a convergence of overlapping crises that challenge the institutional resilience of global governance and the adaptability of U.S. strategic leadership. By utilizing the conceptual frameworks of the "Perfect Storm", the "Crises' Decade", and the "Permacrisis" (Bogdan, 2026), this research provides a nuanced interpretation of current global turbulence, capturing the intricate interplay between immediate shocks, cyclical disruptions, and deep-seated systemic fragility. The study adopts a qualitative methodological approach, synthesizing case-based analyses of contemporary conflicts, primary policy documents, and extant scholarly literature. This multifaceted analysis aims to evaluate the strategic posture of the Trump second Administration within a landscape defined by: 1. Systemic Revisionism: Challenges to the established norms of the liberal international order; 2. Geoeconomic Rivalry: The intensification of economic competition as a tool of statecraft; 3. Democratic Uncertainty: The implications of internal and external pressures on democratic stability.

The author has analyzed throughout this work, beyond the simple diagnosis of the vulnerabilities inherent in the liberal order, to delineate potential strategic trajectories for US power, offering a critical assessment of how American leadership could navigate an era of unprecedented global volatility. „The Trump administration’s embrace of transactional bilateral/minilateral underscores the fragility of traditional alliance systems, even as the United States retains unparalleled military, technological, and financial assets. The key issue is no longer whether the U.S. can remain powerful, but whether it can sustain legitimacy and cohesion as the anchor of global stability. The decline in trust, both at home and abroad, risks hollowing out the very basis of hegemonic endurance” (Bogdan, 2026).

The third paper is signed by Laurențiu Petrila, Felix-Angel Popescu and Ana Maria Coatu: *Analysis of Local Governance in Romania*. The authors propose an analysis of the electoral promises formulated in the 2012 campaign that reveals a remarkable convergence towards several dominant themes that reflect both the structural deficiencies of regional development in Romania and the politicians' perception of the electorate's expectations. „The result was, almost invariably, the transition of these commitments to the register of promises without consequences, with a high reputational cost and with the side effect of disturbing the rational prioritization of budgets. Beyond individual failures and cases of corruption, the analysis reveals deep systemic problems. that transcend political affiliation or regional specifics” (Petrila; Popescu and Coatu, 2026). The conceptualization of local governance (see Șoproni, 2025), through references to analyses that include multilevel governance, and the analysis of electoral promises vs. public policies led to several results of this research, both at a theoretical and practical level.

The longitudinal analysis of county council leadership within the 2012–2016 cycle provides a critical diagnostic of local governance dynamics in post-communist democracies. The research distills three foundational lessons that redefine the intersection of political commitment and administrative efficacy: 1. The Paradigm of Institutional Competence: The study posits that political mandates must be articulated through a vocabulary of operational feasibility. Commitments are only viable when framed as

specific objectives within the legal and budgetary jurisdiction of the county council—complete with fiscal annexes, strict timelines, and quantifiable performance indicators. This distinguishes between deliverable administrative outputs and broader advocacy goals. 2. Integrity as a Metric of Operational Efficiency: Moving beyond moral considerations, the research treats integrity as a structural determinant of performance. By implementing systemic prevention policies—including procurement transparency, rigorous internal controls, and robust whistleblower protection—integrity is repositioned as a mechanism to minimize institutional friction and maximize resource optimization. 3. The Imperative of Professionalization: The analysis underscores that the professionalization of public administration must be a continuous strategic investment rather than a transient project. Establishing a viable career path in public project management is presented as a prerequisite for institutional resilience. Without such human capital development, the persistent skills deficit risks transforming administrative inertia into a systemic failure of the democratic mandate. In conclusion, these three pillars—operational clarity, institutional integrity, and professional continuity—form the essential framework for elevating subnational governance from "habitual failure" to sustainable public service delivery (Petrița; Popescu and Coatu, 2026).

The fourth paper, *Ethical Governance in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Challenges and Opportunities for the Western Balkans*, is signed by Marco Marsili, from University of Venice (Italy), Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage. In this paper, the author examines the ethical and political implications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in governance, focusing on the Western Balkans in the broader context of European integration and democratic transformation (Marsili, 2026). A deep debate and analysis of AI is of paramount importance across all disciplines, and particularly through its implications for the social sciences and humanities (they also pose significant risks of surveillance, algorithmic bias, and reduced accountability, especially in regions facing fragile democratic institutions, ethnic diversity, and complex security challenges). „AI technologies increasingly shape decision-making, policy implementation, and public discourse, offering opportunities for efficiency, transparency, and citizen participation” (Marsili, 2026). Drawing upon political philosophy, ethical theory, and contemporary debates in digital governance, this study develops a robust normative framework for the ethical adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI), grounded in democratic values and fundamental human rights. By utilizing empirical references to governance practices in the Western Balkans, complemented by comparative perspectives from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), the research identifies both regional vulnerabilities and strategic pathways for responsible technological integration. The paper posits that cross-border cooperation, civil society engagement, and policy alignment with European Union standards are indispensable prerequisites for establishing ethical AI governance. By critically addressing both systemic risks and transformative opportunities, this research contributes to the broader scholarly discourse on democratization, security management, and the role of emerging technologies in reconfiguring the future of public governance. The governance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Western Balkans represents a critical intersection of technological disruption, democratic fragility, and geostrategic rivalry. While countries like Serbia, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina pursue modernization, their efforts are complicated by institutional weaknesses and risks of state capture. The study proposed by Marco Marsili contends that AI regulation is not merely a technical endeavor but a profound political challenge; it serves as a battleground between European normative standards and alternative authoritarian models. To

ensure democratic consolidation, the region must transcend simple policy compliance, prioritizing institutional resilience, civil society engagement, and the embedding of fundamental rights within AI architectures. In conclusion, AI will either act as a catalyst for emancipation or a mechanism for systemic control.

The last paper of this section, *Theoretical and Conceptual Approaches to the Phenomenon of New Regionalism*, is signed by Svetlana Cebotari and Selena Stejaru, both from the State University of Moldova, Faculty of International Relations, Political and Administrative Sciences, Department of International Relations (Republic of Moldova). It is a theoretical and conceptual analysis research on the subject of regionalization. New regionalism transcends formal economic integration, emerging as a multidimensional paradigm involving state and non-state actors. Driven by globalization and a "bottom-up" orientation, it reconfigures regions as strategic, interconnected entities. This alternative governance framework adapts to local contexts while navigating the complexities of a multipolar, interdependent international order (Cebotari and Stejaru, 2026; Brie; Islam and Polgár, 2022).

2. Identity, Education and Inclusivity - is the second section of the journal issue, containing 5 papers on various topics in the field of identity and different types of integration/inclusion (educational, intercultural, linguistic or socio-economic).

First paper, *The German Minority and the Romanian Diaspora in Romanian-German Cultural Diplomacy*, is signed by Natalia Andone, PhD student, Babeş-Bolyai University, Faculty of European Studies, Cluj-Napoca (Romania). „This article examines the role of the German minority in Romania and the Romanian diaspora in Germany in shaping Romanian–German cultural diplomacy” (Andone, 2026). This study integrates the German minority and Romanian diaspora into a unified framework of societal cultural diplomacy, emphasizing non-state actors in bilateral dialogue. Utilizing qualitative discourse and documentary analysis, the research explores how transnational cultural capital and collective memory are mobilized. Findings reveal a functional complementarity: the German minority leverages institutional continuity and heritage, while the Romanian diaspora utilizes mobility and associative structures. The article proposes the concept of “community soft power” to explain how societal symbolic influence sustains long-term diplomatic stability (see more cases Jusufi, 2025; Orjuhovski and Brie, 2025). The article argues that the sustenance and intensification of the cultural nexus between Romania and Germany are not solely contingent upon political or economic continuity, but increasingly rely on the capacity of minority and diaspora communities to serve as credible intermediaries. By navigating the intersections of disparate national spaces, these actors enhance the social legitimacy, stability, and long-term viability of bilateral relations. In conclusion, this underscores the pivotal role of societal cultural diplomacy within a contemporary European landscape defined by heightened mobility, pluralism, and systemic interconnection (Andone, 2026).

The next paper, *Europeanization in Segregated Schools? Third Parties' Efforts to Build a Trans-Ethnic Educational Space in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, is signed by Georgiana-Diana Horobeanu and Miruna Butnaru-Troncotă, both from National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA), Bucharest (Romania). „This article addresses that gap by examining reconciliation from a bottom-up perspective, by examining third-party efforts to build trans-ethnic educational spaces in post-conflict societies” (Horobeanu and Butnaru-Troncotă, 2026). The conceptualization refers to Europeanization, participatory approach, peacebuilding, reconciliation, ethnic segregation

in schools, development of public policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see more concepts for Western Balkan area Mahmutović, 2026; Tanasijević; Škorić, and Popovski, 2025; Brie; Islam, and Polgar, 2023; Brie; Islam, and Polgar, 2021; Brie and Solcan, 2025). This research employs a qualitative case study design, utilizing a triangulation of data sources including European Commission progress reports (2018–2024), Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) allocations, and NGO-led project documentation. The methodology examines the nexus between EU-driven structural support and local agency, evaluating whether participatory frameworks can catalyze sustainable institutional change within a historically segregated educational landscape. The findings indicate that while macro-level national reforms remain characterized by political inertia, micro-level initiatives have facilitated quantifiable improvements in interethnic cooperation, with select institutions successfully integrating inclusive pedagogical models into their core curricula. These results underscore the potential of participatory educational paradigms to circumvent stalled state-level transitions. Furthermore, they illustrate how bottom-up approaches can foster a trans-ethnic social fabric, yielding both localized dividends and viable strategic pathways for Bosnia and Herzegovina's European integration (Horobeanu and Butnaru-Troncotă, 2026).

Main conclusion is Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU integration is hindered by persistent educational segregation and macro-level reforms, reflecting an ambivalent process of Europeanization. While structural, top-down changes remain stalled, bottom-up participatory initiatives—such as those implemented by local NGOs—demonstrate potential to foster interethnic trust and generate meaningful, localized reconciliation. The study concludes that embedding these inclusive, micro-level practices is essential to transforming education and advancing social cohesion. To achieve systemic change, the analysis highlights the need for EU efforts to prioritize scaling these grassroots initiatives.

The third paper is signed by Simona Camelia Fer and focuses on *The Evolution of Political Language in the Digital Age. Linguistic Tendencies and Implications for the Legitimacy of Power*, „examines the evolution of political discourse in digital environments, focusing on the strategies through which political actors articulate power relations and legitimacy” (Fer, 2026). Integrating critical discourse analysis and cognitive linguistics, this research examines four dimensions of digital political communication: lexical polarization, pronominal identity formation, metaphorical strategies, and moral binaries. The findings reveal that digital platforms do more than accelerate messaging; they actively amplify ideological polarization and emotional engagement through iterative cycles that consolidate group cohesion while marginalizing dissent. By synthesizing classical and contemporary scholarship, the study underscores the transformative interplay between language, technology, and political power. Fundamentally, it demonstrates that online discourse is a dynamic, influential force capable of profoundly reshaping public opinion and political identities in the digital age (Fer, 2026). For a broader approach to the role of language in the legitimacy process, please see: Brie (2023); Brie and Goreainov (2026); Solcan and Burea (2026); Cebotari and Guțu (2025); Villányi (2026).

These four dimensions collectively illustrate how digital political discourse is strategically engineered to modulate both cognition and affect. The interplay between lexical selection, identity construction, metaphorical framing, and moral reductionism creates a discursive environment that is both dynamic and emotionally charged. In the digital era, political language does not merely reflect social realities but

actively constructs them, reshaping the negotiation of power and collective identities. By condensing multifaceted realities into binary oppositions, digital messaging enhances accessibility while simultaneously eroding sophisticated deliberation and fueling polarization. The participatory architecture of social media amplifies these dynamics; users do not merely consume content but actively reinforce ideological alignment and emotional investment through iterative engagement. Consequently, this study demonstrates that digital discourse is a constitutive force that legitimizes power relations. Mastering these discursive strategies is therefore essential for understanding the contemporary mechanisms of political legitimacy and the intensification of affective polarization in online spaces (Fer, 2026).

The next paper in this section is *Social Inclusion and European Rural Development Policy: The Case of Non-Agricultural Tourism Activities in Rural Bihor County*, proposed by Claudiu Gabriel Bonaciu and Mircea Brie. Romanian rural territories contend with structural vulnerabilities arising from geographic isolation and restricted economic dynamics, which impede sustainable employment. Consequently, private sector resilience and inter-actor synergy are pivotal for social inclusion, with job creation serving as the primary benchmark for cohesion policy efficacy. By financing non-agricultural sectors—such as tourism, crafts, and services—this mechanism sought to mitigate over-reliance on the primary sector, addressing labor outflow and demographic aging. However, the effectiveness of these instruments has been historically hampered by fragmented planning and the absence of a cohesive long-term vision. Despite the alignment of non-agricultural development with market demands, suboptimal implementation has exacerbated social inclusion disparities, risking the transformation of isolated investments into interventions lacking systemic sustainability. This study analyzes the contribution of non-agricultural activities to labor market dynamics and their spillover effects on the local entrepreneurial ecosystem, specifically within the tourism sector. The units of analysis comprise the communes of Aușeu, Vadu Crișului, Șuncuiuș, and Bratca (Bihor County), situated within the Crișul Repede Gorge protected/natural area. The methodology integrates multi-level data, synthesizing European and national statistics with specialized scholarly literature. „The creation of employment opportunities in non-agricultural sectors is a fundamental pillar for the resilience and structural transformation of rural areas, offering a strategic alternative to traditional farms. This economic diversification helps strengthen financial stability and social inclusion, directly contributing to poverty alleviation and the modernization of local communities” (Bonaciu and Brie, 2026).

The last paper in this section is *The Role of Border Management in the Process of Migration Management at the EU's South Eastern Borders*, proposed by István Polgár from University of Oradea. This research is very important and high topicality, addressing critical dimensions of public policy, governance, and the strategic management of diversity. Furthermore, it examines the integration and protection of individuals within the migratory process. The phenomenon of migration transcends traditional geographical, economic, and legal frameworks. Examining this issue through a specialized lens reveals significant ambiguities and uncertainties concerning the role of sovereign states and the institutional efficacy of migration management systems. The Southeastern border regions of the European Union, along with their adjacent territories, constitute a geopolitical epicenter for migratory flows. Specifically, the Western Balkan route serves as a primary transit corridor for thousands of migrants and refugees seeking entry into EU Member States. Effective border governance and migration management

within the EU and its neighborhood represent critical socio-economic investments, fostering societal cohesion, resilience, and long-term prosperity. Furthermore, this is a multifaceted societal process wherein responsibility is distributed across a broad spectrum of stakeholders rather than a single entity (Polgár, 2026).

This study provides a comprehensive inventory of general trends and evolutions over the past decade, focusing on the shifting perceptions of borders within the Southeast European space. Additionally, it examines how migration management processes have influenced transnational institution-building. The research seeks to highlight the insufficient interaction between the border authorities of neighboring states at various operational levels along the European Union's Southeastern frontiers (see more Polgár and Brie, 2023; Polgár and Brie, 2024; Polgár and Brie, 2025)

3. Public Policies. Development and Socio-Economic Realities – is the third section which includes 7 papers. Among the main concepts with which we operationalize the analysis of the papers included in this section, we mention: disparities in regional development, risk management, Green Industrial Policy, polycentric development, knowledge and technology transfer and tourism development.

The paper *Entrepreneurial Networks in Tochigi Prefecture During the Meiji Period: Unraveling Regional Development Disparities from Human Connections*, proposed by Yu Tsuchiya, Nobumichi Watahiki and Cristian Vlad, investigates whether the regionality of entrepreneurial networks is a characteristic unique to Niigata Prefecture. In addition, the relationship between the three types of centrality and their strengths and weaknesses in relation to economic development is examined. „While it was thought that the strength or weakness of centrality might affect regional development or decline, there were also regions like Tochigi Town where the number of companies increased but centrality weakened. From the current results, no relationship was found between the strength or weakness of centrality and economic development (Tsuchiya, Watahiki and Vlad, 2026).

The paper *Health Risk Management for the Safety of Festival Tourism*, signed by Tamás Suszter, investigates the law enforcement dimensions of festival tourism safety. A multi-methodological approach was employed, including a review of Hungarian and international literature and legal frameworks. Findings indicate that health safety is a cornerstone of festival security; inadequate provision correlates with declining regional attractiveness. Subjective safety is significantly dictated by the visibility and efficiency of medical services. The study advances the conceptual framework of 'cooperative safety,' synthesizing statutory regulatory requirements with organizational objectives and the operational roles of private providers. The research concludes that the adoption of health protocols surpassing mandatory standards transcends mere regulatory compliance; rather, it constitutes a fundamental strategic imperative. Such proactive measures are essential for ensuring institutional resilience and safeguarding the long-term interests of all stakeholders involved (Suszter, 2026).

A very interesting research is proposed by Ehlimana Spahić, Anisa Gradašćević and Mirza Pojskić on the topic of *Transforming the Brain Drain into Transfer of Knowledge and Technology to Strengthen the Healthcare System of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. This article examines the interdependency between Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) complex political architecture and its healthcare governance, with a primary focus on the structural challenges of human capital management. Central to the analysis is the phenomenon of medical brain drain, evaluated through its long-term

implications for the stability, accessibility, and quality of national health services. Conversely, the study identifies the medical diaspora as a pivotal agent for knowledge exchange and technology transfer. The research employs a qualitative methodology, integrating institutional analysis, an extensive literature review, and a targeted case study of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Doctors Association in Germany (BHÄG). The narrative transitions from a systemic deconstruction of BiH's fragmented political-administrative framework to an evaluation of the healthcare system's inherent vulnerabilities. By analyzing diaspora-driven initiatives, the authors demonstrate how migration—while detrimental to domestic staffing—can be leveraged to facilitate clinical mentorship and professional collaboration. Finally, the article synthesizes institutional critiques with empirical examples of diaspora engagement, offering a comprehensive understanding of how structural stagnation intersects with international mobility. The findings conclude with strategic policy recommendations aimed at transforming brain drain into brain gain through formalized transnational cooperation and systemic healthcare reform (Spahić; Gradašević and Pojskić, 2026). „In this publication, the following are highlighted as key strengths of the health system: increased transparency among health care providers and targeted anti-corruption efforts” (Spahić; Gradašević and Pojskić, 2026).

The next paper, *The Future of Green Industrial Policy: An Overview of Policy Communication*, is signed by Luciana-Mirela Butișcă and Cristina-Matilda Vănoagă. The authors argue that Green Industrial Policy has emerged as a cornerstone of contemporary governance, aligning industrial competitiveness with climate neutrality. This paper examines the evolution of European Union institutional discourse between 2021 and 2025, specifically analyzing the Updated Industrial Strategy, the Green Deal Industrial Plan, and the Clean Industrial Deal. Employing qualitative documentary and discourse analysis, the study investigates shifts in narratives, revealing how EU discourse serves as a strategic instrument to recalibrate political legitimacy amid intensifying geoeconomic and geopolitical constraints. „The research aimed to identify how the EU is redefining industrial policy in a context marked by the tension between climate ambition and economic and geopolitical constraints” (Butișcă and Vănoagă, 2026).

The paper *Comparative Analysis of Industrial Agglomerations in the Chūbu Region during the Meiji Period. A Quantitative Examination through Network and Statistical Analyses*, proposed by Masamichi Takagi, Nobumichi Watahiki, Luiza Gatan and Cristian Vlad, investigates the developmental disparities between Hamamatsu City and Yokkaichi City—both regional industrial centres and clusters that prospered during the Meiji period—by comparing the structural and statistical characteristics of their entrepreneurial networks. During the Meiji period, Japan experienced a surge in manufacturing productivity fueled by railway expansion and technological diffusion. While regional gaps grew, industrialization reached peripheral areas and fostered significant agglomeration in regional cities. The foundations of Japan's four major industrial zones were already visible during this era. This study compares Hamamatsu and Yokkaichi to clarify their divergent trajectories. Moving beyond planned districts, this research employs network analysis to track organic urban connections. By examining these distinct developmental patterns, the study addresses the challenge of visualizing complex inter-city linkages and provides deeper insight into the heterogeneous nature of Japan's industrial evolution (Takagi; Watahiki; Gatan and Vlad, 2026).

The paper *Do Intercommunity Development Associations favour Polycentric Development? An Analysis of Territorial Policies of the EU*, proposed by Cosmin Chiriac, develops an analysis of territorial policies of the EU. For over two decades, polycentric development has remained a foundational concept within both the official and informal strategic frameworks of the European Union, generating significant scholarly discourse and global policy interest. Parallel to Romania's pre-accession efforts, the national legal framework integrated Intercommunity Development Associations (IDA) as institutional vehicles designed to foster horizontal cooperation among administrative units. These structures were primarily conceived to mitigate the systemic challenges of territorial fragmentation and the chronic fiscal constraints afflicting rural municipalities. The objective of this research is to evaluate the territorial efficacy of these collaborative frameworks, specifically examining whether IDA catalyze polycentric evolution or, conversely, exacerbate the polarizing dynamics of established urban centers. To achieve this, the study adopts a robust quantitative methodological approach, encompassing the entire Romanian territory. By synthesizing granular datasets that characterize existing IDA and their constituent Local Administrative Units, the paper seeks to discern the impact of these associations on regional cohesion. In conclusion, the analysis addresses whether inter-municipal cooperation functions as a mechanism for balanced spatial distribution or merely reinforces existing monocentric dependencies within the national urban hierarchy (Chiriac, 2026).

The next paper, signed by Sylvie Christine Daphné Varellas, from University of Toliara (Madagascar), is *Tourisme, inégalités et recompositions sociales : pour une approche critique du développement touristique dans Le Sud-Ouest Malgache*. This article synthesizes research findings from Mangily, a rapidly expanding coastal resort in southwestern Madagascar. By integrating foundational theories from tourism studies, development economics, human geography, and Durkheimian sociology of anomie, the study examines social disparities, communal restructuring, and emergent processes of tourism-driven gentrification. Qualitative data reveal a profound structural paradox: while acting as a catalyst for economic growth, tourism simultaneously precipitates communal destabilization, cultural erosion, and the marginalization of indigenous populations. Consequently, the research advances an interpretive model that articulates the concept of disharmonious social recomposition alongside peripheral tourism gentrification. This dual framework captures how globalized leisure industries reconfigure local spaces, often at the expense of social cohesion and traditional livelihoods. Finally, the analysis underscores the complexities of sustainable development in ecologically and socially vulnerable coastal environments (Varellas, 2026).

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