

## SUMMARY

This collection is divided into three thematic chapters which deal with possibilities for facilitating rural development and, ultimately, for achieving the integral sustainability of rural areas in Croatia.

The first thematic chapter, *(Ne)razvoj nekada i sada* [(Non)development Then and Now], includes contributions by Ivan Brlić, Nikola Šimunić and Ivo Turk. In his paper „Pregled povijesti zaštite prirodnog i kulturnog okoliša u Lici (1746.–1942.)“ [A Historical Overview of the Preservation of the Natural and Cultural Environment in Lika (1746–1942)], Ivan Brlić describes the history of environmental protection in Lika, affected by stark climate and flora changes on the one hand, and constant human adaptations to nature on the other hand. Negative factors such as deforestation, poor soil, the spread of fern plants, frequent erosion and flooding highlighted the need for legal regulations to stop such processes. For that reason, the Lika area had strict laws and detailed intervention plans related to the environment as early as the time of the Croatian Military Frontier. The paper provides some positive environmental protection examples in Lika between the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Although these examples can no longer be applied, they definitely represent good practice. In this context, one must mention Austrian general Gideon Laudon. In 1746, this military commander planted a small forest on the sandy soil of the Krbava field. During that period, the area of Lika and Podgorje saw the establishment of ten place-decoration organizations, while there were also over 100 school gardens, several dozen cultural councils, foundations and other organizations that took care of the natural and cultural environment in the towns and villages of Lika. First and foremost, the paper gives an overview of the activities of Lika society's civil and organizational elements which took care of the environment and raised awareness about environmental protection. Therefore, the goal of this paper is, based on local government reports, the local press, and the archives and laws, to highlight some bright examples from the past where the local people influenced the natural and cultural environment. In order to present the whole picture, the paper also includes some negative examples and their consequences.

The next paper – „Stanovništvo Grada Gospića i održivi razvoj: izazovi budućnosti“ [The Population of the Town of Gospić and Sustainable Development: Challenges of the Future] by Nikola Šimunić and Ivo Turk – depicts current demographic trends on the example of the town of Gospić. Gospić represents a typical small Croatian town: one that is usually surrounded by predominantly or completely rural areas, and as such serves as a warning about the challenges which these towns may have to face

in the future due to demographic processes. The concrete research question of this paper is related to the demographic dynamics and structure of the town of Gospić in the period 1971–2011, considered by the authors as one of the factors of sustainable development. The authors emphasize the fact that residents themselves constitute every area's fundamental development agent. The authors also note that facilitating development based on the concept of sustainability is a challenge which requires a stable population with strong positive demographic trends and structures. Gospić has a very negative demographic situation, which also means that the negative demographic characteristics from the state level (depopulation, external migration, emigration from rural areas, population ageing) are present in this area, maybe even more profoundly than in the rest of Croatia. The authors conclude that certain processes have taken a great toll on the demographic structure of the town of Gospić. Among these processes, a centuries-long general depopulation stands out. This depopulation has been caused by agricultural overpopulation, wars, famine, a constant drop in the birth rate, and the recent recession (unemployment and emigration, particularly of younger people, along with an increase in divorce rates). The total population of Gospić has decreased by 50% in the last 50 years. To sum up, the paper depicts and analyses the basic determinants of Gospić's demographic dynamics during the mentioned period and puts the natural increase and net migration rates into focus. The paper also analyses the population composition of the town of Gospić. In order to depict the mentioned demographic processes, the authors use statistical methods of demographic analysis.

The second thematic chapter, *Utiranje staze za održivu budućnost* [Paving the Way for a Sustainable Future], consists of four papers. The first paper – „Aktualnost ruralne sociologije: problematiziranje održivosti 'prostora iza'“ [The Topicality of Rural Sociology: Problematizing the Sustainability of the 'Hinterland'] by Toni Popović, Renata Relja and Tea Gutović – deals with the branch of sociology that has recently not been in the focus of sociological research. The authors maintain that the need for such research is supported by the size and large population of rural areas, which should become/remain a relevant point of interest in sociology. Even though Croatian rural areas are not inhabited by the majority of the population as in the past, nor are they the starting point of production activities as they were before; they are still important as multifunctional space of living, work, rest and recreation through activities whose goal is to preserve rural tradition and at least some basic sustainability. Since the 1970s and the growing problems of urban living, Europe has witnessed an increase in the demand to live in rural areas. The importance of an integral urban-rural development has nowadays been widely recognized. Croatia's accession to the European Union has opened up the possibility to update rural development after it has been neglected for

several decades by building supranational guidelines into national strategic documents with the possibility of substantial funding. Based on bibliometric analysis and content analysis of scholarly magazines that, among other things, deal with the Croatian countryside: (*Sociologija i prostor* [Sociology and Space], *Revija za sociologiju* [Sociological Review], *Socijalna ekologija* [Social Ecology] and *Društvena istraživanja* [Social Research]), the authors look at the very topicality in analysing rural space with an emphasis on the situation in Croatia. The time frame of the analysis is a period of ten years: from 2006 to 2016. With regard to the findings and the importance of the international dimension of rural sociology, the conclusion deals with the role of sociological research in rural development, as well as with sociologists' training for engaging in this issue.

In her paper „(Ne)mogućnost održivog razvoja za male i srednje gradove u hrvatskom prostornom sustavu“ [The (Im)possibility of Sustainable Development for Small- and Medium-sized Towns Within the Croatian Space System], Anđelina Svirčić Gotovac notes that the concept of sustainable development has, since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, arisen from the need to analyse, in a new way, the process of growth and development of modern society, i.e. the society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. She adds that in the context of globalization within this concept, the basic juxtaposition is the one between the ideas of development and ecology. The author then goes to assert that the dangers to the environment, climate change, the urban population on the one hand, and socio-ecological issues, demographic and space imbalance and a drop in quality of life on the other, as well as urban-political issues, remain topical and unsolvable issues particularly for smaller urban areas, such as those in Croatia. What is more, regional development in Croatia has been unbalanced and profoundly centralized for decades, and this became even more evident during the period of transition. For instance, about 25% of the population lives in the four major cities. While there are many small towns, there is not enough of medium-sized towns. The possibility for sustainable development of smaller developed areas (first and foremost small- and medium-sized towns) within the context of EU documents and recommendations represents one of the ways to deal with these issues. It is the *Territorial Agenda 2020* adopted in 2011 within the framework of Europe 2020 strategy – the EU's strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth – that draws special attention to a balanced and polycentric regional development and territorial cohesion. This strategy aims to mitigate the long-lasting and increasingly damaging processes of depopulation, stagnation, centralization, the hierarchization of towns, littoralization, decreased birth rates, population ageing and other processes affecting Croatia. What may be a key factor in this mitigation is the mutual action of the existing and mostly preserved natural capital and human capital at a local level and the possibility to use the relevant EU funds. The concept of smart

cities is part of the mentioned EU strategy and an example of the so-called applied sustainability at a local level. Even though there are some positive examples in Croatia, which the author mentions in the paper, they are still too scarce.

The third paper, „Prakse održivosti: tko radi ono o čemu mi maštamo?“ [Sustainability Practices: Who is Doing That What We Dream About?], shows first and foremost the ideas and concepts of sustainable growth, degrowth, and solidarity economy or ethical economy which are present in different forms of public discourse. Afterwards, authors Olga Orlić and Nataša Bokan analyse several phenomena and practices that have recently been occurring in Croatia and that are closely tied to the previously mentioned concepts. The initiatives and groups they specifically analyse are ecovillages and community-supported agriculture. The analysis is carried out within the frame of several concepts of utopia and utopian thought, Mumford's concept of utopias of reconstruction and de Geus' analysis of literary utopias. What these movements share, and what is closely tied to utopian thought, is the fact that they represent a certain form of ecotopia, an inevitable form of utopia in modern times which entails not just modified relationships between people but also those between man and nature as well. Creating a more sustainable society is the key area which modern, green political theorists advocate for. Therefore, an ecotopia, as a very current form of utopia of reconstruction and utopia of sufficiency is absolutely necessary for them. However, creating a more sustainable society is being put forward as a duty for the majority of individuals who are unhappy with the present system. Some of them have turned their dissatisfaction into concrete attempts of achieving the intended. These attempts are the focus of analysis in this paper.

The second chapter of the collection ends with Neven Duvnjak and Kajo Ferić's paper „Sociološki okvir održive gradnje“ [The Sociological Frame of Sustainable Construction]. Here, the focus is on the area of construction that aligns all built environment as closely as possible with the principles of sustainable development. The authors emphasize the fact that a slew of different professions take part in the creation and management of built environment, so cooperation should be the key to construction that is adapted to the environment in which it is created. When it comes to the very process of designing and constructing a building, it consists of a cooperation between engineering sciences such as architecture, construction, engineering, energetics and electrical engineering. On the other hand, one of the basic pillars of sustainable development is social development, which is mostly in the domain of the social sciences. Sustainable construction attempts to reach full alignment with sustainable development with the help of social sciences whose findings are used in the planning, projecting, building, upkeep and administration of buildings. In order for experts and

scholars dealing with social development to help, in a much more concentrated and effective way, the experts dealing with sustainable construction, they must better understand the importance of engineering sciences for the creation of built environment. The paper attempts, on the one hand, to provide experts and scholars in the social sciences with basic technological knowledge concerning sustainable construction. On the other hand, it attempts to provide experts and scholars from technical fields with the basic knowledge of sustainable social development. It is understandable and logical that this in turn creates new interdisciplinary knowledge, and it is with that in mind that the authors wish to point out the need for a more intense cooperation between scholars and experts that belong to different professions and sciences and influence the solutions within sustainable construction, as well as the realizations of the concept of sustainable development.

The final thematic unit, *O održivosti kroz „svijet života“* [On Sustainability Through „the World of Life“], consists of two papers which, after explaining concepts related to sustainable development, pay special attention to and show specific examples of rural tourism in Lika that are at least in some way deemed as sustainable.

In her paper „Koncept održivog ruralnog turizma: primjeri dobre prakse u Lici“ [The Concept of Sustainable Rural Tourism: Examples of Good Practice in Lika], Anita Bušljeta Tonković describes a reconciliation of sorts between ecological and economic interests. She emphasizes the importance of the role of sustainable rural tourism that is in synergy with other economic activities in the rural area and does not represent the backbone of the economy, but rather an additional income for the communities, as well as a way of distributing local products. Although there is criticism aimed at the vagueness of the concept, especially due to the fact that different forms of developmental plans can be encompassed by the concept of sustainable rural tourism, examples from real life are in favour of such tourism. The current paradigm of rural development in the European Union entails a decentralized approach and a mutual action by the public, the private and the civil sectors. There is often talk of a neo-endogenous approach to development, that is, a meeting point between the possibilities and visions of local communities and national and regional developmental guidelines. Such meeting points in European countries signify a place where local developmental strategies appropriate for ecological as well as economic developmental interests of specific regions are created and afterwards implemented. Such approach to the development of rural areas aims to preserve the genuine character, and at the same time meet modern needs and demands. There is an emphasis on investments, not subsidies; that is, for public income to be used to support new economic activities in rural areas, which include a wide range of activities – from the protection of

biodiversity and landscape management to tourist activities and business undertakings. Contemporary development concepts focus on the multifunctionality of rural areas and as such form the integral sustainability of villages and smaller cities. The author concludes that towns in Lika, along with their rural areas, are an ideal test site for the design and implementation of such developmental solutions, especially because the countryside is finally starting to be considered a public good in Croatia, meaning that it is seen as a space that offers a quality ecological, ambient and recreational content. The paper shows this by listing examples of such good practice.

Author Katarina Milković, in her paper „Pećinski park Grabovača u funkciji razvoja održivog turizma s naglaskom na geobaštinu, georaznolikost i geoturizam“ [Cave Park Grabovača in the Role of Developing Sustainable Tourism with Emphasis on Geoheritage, Geodiversity and Geotourism], writes about the process of the creation, development and operation of the public institution Cave Park Grabovača, which is located in the Perušić Municipality in Lika-Senj County. The goals of the institution include the development of sustainable, and in this case rural tourism. The institution focuses on ecotourism, with special emphasis on geotourism, that is, the protection and reasonable use of geodiversity and geoheritage, while keeping in mind the inclusion and wellbeing of the local community. Based on yearly reports, the paper shows a chronological view of the carried-out projects and research in the Park's protected area. Along with listing the carried out local and European projects, some of which include Erasmus+ projects *Karst 4U: Discover Undiscovered* and *Karst 4U – Explore Croatia's Nature*, as well as the *Pogled u divljinu: izgradnja kapaciteta za održivo korištenje i praćenje sastavnica prirode* [Wildlife Watch – Increasing Capacities for the Sustainable Use and Monitoring of Wildlife] project, one must emphasize the cooperation of the park with the youth, members of the local communities and young people from other European countries. The specific elements of the protected area – geodiversity and geoheritage – are potential for further development of this form of selective tourism, that is, the strengthening of sustainable rural tourism in Lika in general. The paper, from a somewhat different perspective, shows the „world of life“ of a concrete and rural life that truly becomes a recognizable place of recreation, pastime, rest, and an ambiently pleasant space that EU citizens have been in search of since the 1970s.

The *Koga (p)održava održivi razvoj?* [Whom Does Sustainable Development Sustain and Support?] collection is a mosaic of thought about the rural that finds its basic purpose in the diversity of ideas, concepts and examples, so that we can have the option of choosing the rural as a space to whose sustainable development we can contribute.