

## EDITORIAL

We are pleased to present the second issue of Central European Papers in 2025, bringing together a diverse collection of contributions that address contemporary political, social, and governance-related challenges from both Central European and broader comparative perspectives. The four articles included in this issue examine democratic innovation, climate-related political narratives, smart city development, and quality of life in educational settings. Despite their thematic diversity, all contributions share a common interest in how institutions, policies, and social actors respond to the pressures of rapidly changing societies.

This issue once again reflects the interdisciplinary mission of Central European Papers: to provide a platform for critical reflection on political, administrative, and societal transformations affecting Central Europe and beyond. The articles presented here explore both structural and everyday dimensions of governance and public life, highlighting the importance of participation, legitimacy, contextual adaptation, and social well-being in contemporary societies.

The opening article, authored by Joanna Podgórska-Rykała and entitled *Successes and Failures of Citizens' Assemblies According to Decision-Makers: Evidence from Polish Cities*, examines how local political and social actors evaluate citizens' assemblies implemented in major Polish cities between 2016 and 2021. Based on qualitative empirical research and in-depth interviews, the article identifies the factors that shape decision-makers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with deliberative democratic innovations. By focusing on actors directly involved in commissioning and implementing these processes, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the practical challenges and opportunities connected with deliberative democracy at the local level.

The second contribution, *Climate Change – Political Narrative and Disinformation* by Arkadiusz Jan Sójka, addresses the growing politicization of climate change and the spread of disinformation narratives surrounding environmental policies. The article analyses how climate-related issues are selectively interpreted and instrumentalized by political actors, particularly within euroskeptic discourse in the European Union. Through selected examples, the study demonstrates how climate policy increasingly becomes a subject of ideological conflict and political polarization, raising important questions regarding the legitimacy of environmental governance and public trust in democratic institutions.

A comparative and globally oriented perspective is offered in the third article, *Contextualization of Smart City Development: A Comparison of Asian and European Cases*, written by Lukito Edi Nugroho, Sayuri Egaravanda, Dalibor Mikuš, and Richard Brix. The authors explore how smart city strategies are adapted to differing regional and institutional contexts through a comparison of the Yogyakarta Province in Indonesia and the Trnava Region in Slovakia. The article highlights the importance of contextualization in the implementation of innovative public policies and demonstrates that technological modernization is inseparable from local political, social, and economic realities.

The final article, authored by Michaela Mláka Kakašová and entitled *Subjective Perception of the Quality of Life by Students and Teachers at a Vocational School*, focuses on well-being and quality of life in the educational environment. Using the SQUALA questionnaire, the study compares perceptions of students and teachers across several life domains, including health, interpersonal relationships, leisure time, and abstract values. The findings underline the importance of mental well-being, balanced social relations, and supportive school environments, while also contributing to broader discussions on quality of life and educational policy.

In addition to the research articles, this issue features a book review devoted to *Ethics and Méti*s offering readers an additional perspective on current debates within the field. We hope that this issue will inspire further interdisciplinary dialogue and encourage reflection on the ways democratic institutions, public policies, and social environments adapt to current societal challenges. The contributions collected here demonstrate the continued relevance of examining both local experiences and broader global trends in understanding the evolving dynamics of contemporary societies.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the authors, reviewers, and members of the editorial board for their valuable cooperation and commitment. We also thank the Faculty of Public Policies in Opava and its academic community for their long-term support of the journal and its development.

Editorial Team of C.E.P.