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Sustainable Tourism as Diversification Tool in Mono-Industrial Towns

Моноиндустриялық қалаларда әртараптандыру құралы ретіндегі тұрақты туризм · Устойчивый туризм как инструмент диверсификации в моноиндустриальных городах

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ХАЛЫҚАРАЛЫҚ ҒЫЛЫМИ-ПРАКТИКАЛЫҚ КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ

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Конференция проведена в рамках реализации научного проекта Министерства науки и высшего образования Республики Казахстан (МНВО РК) **ИРН AP23489358 «Разработка методики оценки устойчивости проектов в моногородах в контексте достижения Целей устойчивого развития».** Материалы сборника способствуют обмену научным опытом, развитию междисциплинарного сотрудничества и поиску эффективных решений для обеспечения экологической, социальной и экономической устойчивости регионов.

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СОДЕРЖАНИЕ

Wenyville N. Galang, Timothy O. Randhir
Sustainable balance of agricultural residue valorization: a review 5

Sagynbekov Amanzhol[1], Akzambekkyzy Akbota[2]
Stakeholder-oriented multi-criteria sustainability assessment of development projects in single-industry towns 17

Akhmetzakiyev Zhanibek, Salimbayeva Rassima
I*ntegration of esg factors into project portfolio management: evidence from fmcg companies* 28

Айдана Галымжанова, Шынара Саркамбаева, Сатьянанд Сингх
Проектный менеджмент как инструмент устойчивого развития городской инфраструктуры в Казахстане 42

Timothy Randhir, Rassima Salimbayeva
Sustainable project assessment in Agribusiness and mining 56

Сатбаева Г.С.
Моноқалалардың тұрақтылығын бағалаудың кешенді көрсеткіштер жүйесін әзірлеу 67

Стамкулова К.У., Стамкулов С.У.
Ответственное потребление и производство – механизмы достижения цели 12 в моногородах Карагандинской области 79

Даулбаева А.Н.
Анализ уровня загрязнения воздушного бассейна Карагандинской области 92

Молдагазыева Ж.Ы.
Мониторинг загрязнения почвенного покрова Карагандинской области тяжелыми металлами 105

Есенкулова Ж.Ж.
Оценка экологического состояния и уровня загрязнения поверхностных вод Карагандинской области 114

Kutay Oktay, Mahmut Vural
Sustainable tourism as diversification tool in mono-industrial towns 125

Gulden Manarbek
Sustainable project management from the perspectives of institutional theory 139

Katarzyna Skiert-Andrzejuk
Empowering the Next Generation: Youth Diplomacy and Climate Action in Kazakhstan 149

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AS DIVERSIFICATION TOOL IN MONO-INDUSTRIAL TOWNS

МОНОИНДУСТРИЯЛЫҚ ҚАЛАЛАРДА ӘРТАРАПТАНДЫРУ ҚҰРАЛЫ РЕТІНДЕГІ ТҰРАҚТЫ ТУРИЗМ

УСТОЙЧИВЫЙ ТУРИЗМ КАК ИНСТРУМЕНТ ДИВЕРСИФИКАЦИИ В МОНОИНДУСТРИАЛЬНЫХ ГОРОДАХ

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Abstract

Mono-industrial towns are urban settlements in which the local labour market and the local economy are organised around a single industrial sector. Settlements of this type have been documented in the relevant literature as being exposed to commodity-price shocks, to the depletion of the resource on which the local industry depends, and to long-term contractions in demand. The present paper considers sustainable tourism as a possible diversification mechanism for such settlements, and the assessment is carried out with reference to the Sustainable Development Goals. The objective is the determination of the conditions under which tourism can be integrated into post-industrial transition strategies and the determination of the limits of such integration. A qualitative review of the academic and policy literature was conducted for this purpose, and three reference cases were examined, namely Anaconda in the United States, Heerlen in the Netherlands, and the Ruhr region in Germany. The findings of the review indicate that tourism operates as a complementary component of diversification and not as a stand-alone solution, and that alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals provides an assessment structure of use both in the design of projects and in the financing of projects. A set of policy recommendations at three levels, namely national, regional, and local, is proposed on the basis of the findings.

Keywords: Mono-Industrial Town, Sustainable Tourism, Economic Diversification, Industrial Heritage, Sustainable Development Goals, Post-Industrial Transition.

Аңдатпа

Моноиндустриялық қалалар-бұл жергілікті еңбек нарығы мен жергілікті экономика біртұтас өнеркәсіптік сектордың айналасында ұйымдастырылған қалалық елді мекендер. Осы типтегі елді мекендер тиісті әдебиеттерде тауар бағасының күйзелісіне, жергілікті өнеркәсіп тәуелді ресурстардың сарқылуына және сұраныстың ұзақ мерзімді қысқаруына ұшырағаны туралы құжатталған. Осы мақалада тұрақты туризм осындай елді мекендерді әртараптандырудың ықтимал тетігі ретінде қарастырылады және бағалау Тұрақты Даму Мақсаттарына сілтеме жасай отырып жүзеге асырылады. Мақсаты-туризмді постиндустриалды өтпелі стратегияларға біріктіруге болатын жағдайларды анықтау және осындай интеграцияның шектерін анықтау. Осы мақсатта академиялық және саяси әдебиеттерге сапалы шолу жасалып, үш анықтамалық іс қаралды, атап айтқанда Ақш-тағы Анаконда, Нидерландыдағы Херлен және Германиядағы Рур аймағы. Шолу нәтижелері туризмнің дербес шешім ретінде емес, әртараптандырудың қосымша құрамдас бөлігі ретінде әрекет ететінін және Тұрақты Даму Мақсаттарына сәйкестендіру жобаларды жобалауда да, қаржыландыруда да пайдалануды бағалау құрылымын қамтамасыз ететінін көрсетеді.жобалар. Қорытындылар негізінде үш деңгейдегі, атап айтқанда ұлттық, аймақтық және жергілікті деңгейдегі саясат бойынша ұсыныстар жиынтығы ұсынылады.

Түйінді сөздер: Моноиндустриялық Қала, Тұрақты Туризм, Экономиканы Әртараптандыру, Өнеркәсіптік Мұра, Тұрақты Даму Мақсаттары, Постиндустриалды Көшу.

Аннотация

Монопромышленные города - это городские поселения, в которых местный рынок труда и местная экономика организованы вокруг единого промышленного сектора. В соответствующей литературе описано, что поселения такого типа подвержены шокам цен на сырьевые товары, истощению ресурсов, от которых зависит местная промышленность, и долгосрочному сокращению спроса. В настоящем документе устойчивый туризм рассматривается как возможный механизм диверсификации таких поселений, и оценка проводится с учетом Целей устойчивого развития. Цель состоит в определении условий, при которых туризм может быть интегрирован в стратегии постиндустриального перехода, и определении пределов такой интеграции. С этой целью был проведен качественный

обзор академической и политической литературы, и были рассмотрены три основных примера, а именно «Анаконда» в Соединенных Штатах, «Херлен» в Нидерландах и Рурский регион в Германии. Выводы обзора свидетельствуют о том, что туризм функционирует как дополнительный компонент диверсификации, а не как самостоятельное решение, и что соответствие Целям устойчивого развития обеспечивает структуру оценки для использования как при разработке проектов, так и при финансировании проектов. На основе полученных результатов предлагается набор политических рекомендаций на трех уровнях, а именно национальном, региональном и местном.

Ключевые слова: Моноиндустриальный город, устойчивый туризм, Диверсификация экономики, Промышленное наследие, Цели устойчивого развития, постиндустриальный переход.

Introduction

Mono-industrial towns, sometimes also called single-industry resource towns or monotowns, are settlements in which a substantial part of local employment and of local industrial output is concentrated in one sector, and in some cases in one enterprise [1, 2]. The structural vulnerability of such settlements has long been noted in the literature, since dependence on one sector means that the local economy is exposed to fluctuations in commodity prices, to shifts in global demand for the product of the sector, and to the eventual depletion of the resource on which the settlement was founded in the first place [2]. The phenomenon is not restricted to a single country or to a single region of the world. Settlements of this type have been documented in Canada, in Australia, in the United Kingdom, in Germany, in the Russian Federation, and in Kazakhstan, and they continue to be reported in a number of further national contexts [2, 3, 4].The relevance of the topic has increased in the recent period and has done so for two reasons that are linked to one another. The first reason has to do with the global agenda for sustainable development, as set out in the 2030 Agenda and in the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals that the Agenda contains, which has placed local economic resilience and decent work among the priorities of international policy [11]. The second reason has to do with the fact that the conditions required for the achievement of these goals are weak in mono-industrial settlements, where socio-economic stability is fragile and where the local economy is exposed to external shocks [3, 4].

The intersection of these two reasons has been recognised at the level of national governments. In the case of Kazakhstan, monotowns are reported to account for approximately forty percent of national industrial output, and the diversification of these settlements has been treated by the government as a matter of urgency [4].Tourism as a possible diversification path for post-industrial and mono-industrial settlements has been the subject of a growing body of research [7, 8, 9]. The literature in question, however, tends to treat tourism and industrial restructuring as separate phenomena, and the alignment of tourism-based diversification with the Sustainable Development Goals has not been examined in a systematic manner for the specific case of the mono-industrial settlement. The present paper is concerned with this gap.The object of the study is the mono-industrial town as a settlement type. The subject is sustainable tourism as a mechanism of economic diversification. The aim is the assessment of the conditions under which tourism may serve as a viable component of diversification, and the positioning of this assessment within the Sustainable Development Goals as an analytical structure. The objectives are the following: to review the recent literature on mono-industrial towns and on tourism-based diversification; to examine three reference cases in which diversification of this type has been attempted; and to develop a set of policy recommendations applicable at the national level, at the regional level, and at the local level. The hypothesis of the study is that tourism, when combined with industrial heritage assets and with participatory governance, is associated with measurable contributions to the diversification of mono-industrial settlements, but that tourism is not in itself a sufficient solution. The significance of the study is to be found in the synthesis of evidence across several national contexts and in the alignment of this evidence with the Sustainable Development Goals as an evaluation structure that is already in use by national governments and by international financing instruments.

Literature review

The literature on mono-industrial settlements has been shaped to a considerable extent by the early study of Canadian single-industry communities by Lucas, in which the vulnerability associated with sectoral dependence was first identified [1]. The vulnerability document-

ed by Lucas has been reaffirmed in the subsequent literature. A recent restatement of the position is provided by Hayter, who describes the boom-and-bust character of single-industry resource towns as a structural feature of such settlements and not as an accidental outcome of particular events [2]. The pattern is confirmed by the experience of the Russian Federation and of Kazakhstan. In the Russian Federation, more than three hundred settlements of this type have been identified, and the socio-economic problems already present in such settlements were intensified by the financial crisis of 2008 [3]. In the case of Kazakhstan, twenty-seven cities out of the country's eighty-nine have been classified as monotowns, and the share of national industrial production attributed to these settlements is reported to be approximately forty percent [4].

The literature on regional diversification has examined the conditions under which the development of new economic activities at the regional level becomes possible. The evolutionary economic geography literature maintains that diversification proceeds more readily into sectors that are related to existing local capabilities, on the grounds that the transfer of skills, of equipment, and of tacit knowledge is more feasible between related sectors than between unrelated ones [5, 6]. The principle of relatedness has been applied to tourism in the recent literature. The case of the Ulytau region of Kazakhstan provides one illustration of this application, since tourism is proposed in that case as a diversification path for a region in which non-ferrous metallurgy has long been dominant [4].

Industrial heritage tourism is a particular form of tourism associated with settlements of a post-industrial character. The concept was introduced by Hospers in the context of the regional restructuring of European industrial regions, with the observation that its effects on restructuring may be limited where it is pursued in isolation from other diversification activities [7]. The use of the industrial past as a marketing resource in the post-industrial development strategy of the Ruhr region has been examined by Berkenbosch and colleagues, and the tension between heritage preservation and consumption-oriented redevelopment is noted in their account [8]. Spanish industrial heritage sites have been examined by Pardo Abad, who has developed a set of criteria for the assessment of such sites with reference to sustainability [9]. The case of the Cuyuna Iron Range in the State of Minnesota, a former extractive site, has been documented by Bergstrom, with the demonstration that

the re-envisioning of such sites is capable of stimulating local communities, although the outcomes of such re-envisioning are uneven [10].

The literature on tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals has expanded in the period since the publication of the 2030 Agenda. The joint report of the United Nations World Tourism Organization and the United Nations Development Programme identifies tourism as a sector capable of contributing, in a direct manner or in an indirect manner, to all seventeen of the Sustainable Development Goals, with explicit mention of tourism as a target in Goals 8, 12, and 14 [11]. Community-based tourism has been identified within this body of work as a model in which tourism development is aligned with the objectives of local empowerment and of poverty reduction [12]. The competitiveness of touristic destinations in Kazakhstan has been the subject of recent investigation, in which the lack of marketing communication tools, the underdevelopment of tourism infrastructure, and the absence of a clear tourism cluster strategy are reported as continuing obstacles to tourism-based diversification [13].The gap in the existing literature with which the present paper is concerned is the absence of an integrated treatment of three issues, namely the vulnerability of mono-industrial towns, the conditions for the success of tourism-based diversification, and the alignment of such diversification with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Research materials and methods

The present paper is a conceptual and review-based study. The questions that the study seeks to answer are three in number. The first question concerns the conditions under which tourism may contribute to the diversification of mono-industrial towns. The second question concerns the identification of those Sustainable Development Goals that have the most direct bearing on this contribution. The third question concerns the policy responses that may be brought to bear in support of this contribution at the different levels of governance. The hypothesis of the study, which has been set out in the preceding section, is restated for ease of reference. The hypothesis is that tourism, when it is supported by heritage assets and by participatory governance, makes a contribution to diversification, and that tourism is not in itself a sufficient solution.

The research was carried out in three stages. The first stage consisted of a literature review. The review was restricted to publications subjected to peer review and to publications issued by international organisations. The databases consulted were Scopus, Web of Science, and the Directory of Open Access Journals, and the search terms employed were "mono-industrial town", "monotown", "single-industry town", "tourism diversification", "industrial heritage tourism", and "sustainable development goals tourism". The publications retained for the purposes of the analysis were those that appeared between 2002 and 2024, with the exception of a number of earlier works that continue to be cited in the recent literature and that were retained on that basis [1]. The second stage consisted of the examination of three reference cases. The cases examined were Anaconda in the State of Montana in the United States, Heerlen in the Province of Limburg in the Netherlands, and the Ruhr area in North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany. The cases were retained on three grounds. The first ground is the availability of documentation in the academic literature. The second ground is the representation of distinct national contexts. The third ground is that each of the cases exemplifies a particular combination of diversification approaches. The third stage of the research consisted of the alignment of the findings of the review and of the case examination with the Sustainable Development Goals as a structuring tool, and the derivation, on this basis, of policy recommendations at the three levels of governance.

The methods are qualitative in character. The collection of new empirical data did not form part of the design of the study. The analysis is based on the synthesis of secondary sources. The limitations associated with an approach of this kind are discussed in the conclusion of the paper.

Results and discussion

The vulnerability of mono-industrial settlements. Several interrelated forms of vulnerability have been associated in the reviewed literature with settlements of the mono-industrial type. Economic vulnerability is one such form, and it arises from the concentration of local employment in a single sector [1, 2]. The contraction of the sector in question leaves the local labour market with limited adjustment capacity, since alternative employers are absent or are present only in small

numbers. A second form is demographic in character. The out-migration of younger residents and the consequent ageing of the population that remains in the settlement are reported as recurrent features of the demographic profile of such settlements [3]. A third form is environmental. The legacies of the original industrial activity, including the contamination of the soil, the pollution of the water table, and the physical degradation of the surrounding landscape, constitute a vulnerability of an environmental character that is documented in the literature on post-industrial sites [9, 10]. The three forms of vulnerability that have been described are reported to reinforce one another and to compound the difficulty of the post-industrial transition.

Tourism as a diversification component. A number of reasons for which tourism has been proposed as a diversification component for mono-industrial settlements are identified in the literature. One reason has to do with the existing capital stock of the settlement. Industrial infrastructure that has become productively obsolete can be repurposed for tourism use, with the consequence that the immediate replacement of the capital stock is not required of the local economy [7, 8]. A further reason concerns the structure of tourism employment, which extends across a range of skill levels and which therefore offers a degree of absorption for labour displaced from a contracting industrial sector [11]. Another reason has to do with the assets that are already present in the settlement. Tourism development may proceed from heritage assets and from natural assets that are already in place, and the marginal cost of such development may be lower than the cost of attracting a new industrial sector to the settlement [9, 10]. A final reason that is identified in the literature concerns the multiplier effect of tourism, by means of which expenditure by visitors is partially retained in the local economy [11].

The literature identifies a number of conditions that are to be satisfied for tourism to function as an effective diversification component. There is, in the first place, the existence of heritage assets or of natural assets with sufficient appeal to attract visitors to the settlement [7, 9]. There is also the question of hospitality infrastructure and of a trained workforce, the absence of which has been described as a known limitation in many settlements of the mono-industrial type [4, 13]. A further condition concerns governance. Tourism developments that are im-

posed on a settlement without local consent tend to fail, and participatory governance and community acceptance are accordingly identified as conditions for success [12]. A condition of a different kind is the integration of tourism into a broader diversification strategy, on the grounds that reliance on tourism alone would replicate the original problem of sectoral concentration [7].

Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals. The development of sustainable tourism in mono-industrial settlements has been associated in the literature with several of the Sustainable Development Goals. Sustainable Development Goal 8, which concerns decent work and economic growth, is engaged where tourism generates employment that has the effect of diversifying the local labour market [11]. Sustainable Development Goal 11, on sustainable cities and communities, is engaged where the infrastructure developed for visitors has a secondary effect on the quality of life of the resident population [11]. The development of tourism on a low-impact, eco-tourism basis brings the activity within the scope of Sustainable Development Goal 12, on responsible consumption and production [11]. Tourism activities of a low-carbon character, and the reduction of the carbon footprint of the settlement through brownfield regeneration, are associated with Sustainable Development Goal 13, on climate action [9, 10]. The use of public-private-community partnerships in the delivery of tourism projects is associated with Sustainable Development Goal 17, on partnerships for the goals [11, 12]. The alignment of tourism projects with these goals provides an assessment structure for the design of projects and provides, in addition, a basis for access to development financing, since a number of national and international financing instruments have been tied to indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Reference cases. Three reference cases are examined in the present paper. Anaconda, in the State of Montana in the United States, is a former copper-smelting town in which the smelter closed in 1980. The local economy of Anaconda has since been partially rebuilt around heritage tourism, around outdoor recreation, and around environmental remediation. The industrial smokestack of the former smelter, together with the landscape associated with it, has been preserved as a state park, and the remediation activities carried out under the Superfund programme have been combined with the development of a golf

course on the site of the former smelter. Heerlen, in the Province of Limburg in the Netherlands, is the second case. Heerlen is a former coal-mining town in which the mines were closed in the period between 1965 and 1974. The diversification path subsequently pursued by Heerlen has been into the creative economy, into knowledge-intensive services, and into the geothermal energy that is supplied from the flooded mine workings of the former coal industry. A museum of coal mining was opened in 2022 in a building of historical industrial significance, and the town has been positioned, in addition, as a centre for the tourism of street art. The third case is the Ruhr area in the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany. Former coal-and-steel sites in the Ruhr area, of which Zollverein and Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord are among the principal examples, have been transformed into heritage tourism destinations, with a part of this transformation having been carried out under the International Building Exhibition programme that operated in the region between 1989 and 1999 [8]. The Ruhr case is reported in the literature as an illustration of both the potential and the limits of industrial heritage tourism as a tool of regional restructuring [7, 8].

Challenges. A number of challenges are identified in the reviewed literature. The image of the industrial town is described in the literature as a barrier to the development of tourism, on the grounds that potential visitors tend to associate settlements of this kind with pollution and with decline [8]. The absence of hospitality infrastructure and the limited supply of trained personnel are described as recurrent obstacles to tourism development in such settlements [4, 13]. Community resistance to change has been documented in several of the cases reviewed, and the phenomenon is reported to be of particular relevance where the identity of the settlement is closely bound up with the original industrial activity [8]. The limited availability of public investment and the weak character of local governance are described in the literature as obstacles to the implementation of large-scale projects [4]. The legacies of the original industrial activity in the environmental domain are described in the literature as both a barrier and a possible opportunity, on the grounds that the regeneration of brownfield sites may itself be presented as an eco-tourism attraction, provided that the remediation in question has been completed to an acceptable standard [9, 10].

Conclusion

The present paper has examined sustainable tourism as a diversification mechanism for settlements of the mono-industrial type, with reference to the manner in which such diversification may be aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. The findings of the literature review and of the case examination support the hypothesis stated at the outset of the paper. Tourism is able to make a contribution to the diversification of settlements of this type, but tourism is not, in itself, a sufficient solution. The function of tourism is that of a complementary component within a broader diversification strategy, and the effectiveness of tourism in this function depends on a number of conditions. These conditions are the presence of heritage assets or of natural assets in the settlement, the availability of hospitality infrastructure and of trained personnel, the existence of participatory governance arrangements, and the integration of the tourism sector with other sectors of the local economy.

The policy recommendations derived from the analysis are presented at three levels of governance.

The recommendations at the national level are three in number. Tourism is to be included in the revitalisation strategies that are formulated for settlements of the mono-industrial type. Dedicated development funds are to be made available, with the disbursement of such funds tied to indicators drawn from the Sustainable Development Goals. Legislation enabling the designation of heritage zones is to be put in place where such legislation is not already on the statute book.

The recommendations at the regional level are also three in number. Regional tourism clusters connecting several settlements of the mono-industrial type are to be developed, on the grounds that such clusters increase the visibility of the settlements concerned. Transport links and digital infrastructure are to be improved in the regions in which such settlements are located. Regional tourism training centres are to be established, so that the training of personnel can be carried out at a scale appropriate to the regional labour market.

At the local level, a further set of three recommendations is proposed. Participatory destination branding initiatives are to be supported by the local administration. Small and medium-sized enterprises operating in the hospitality sector are to be assisted with financing and with

training. The sustainability of tourism activities is to be monitored, with the indicators used for the monitoring drawn from the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The recommendations are of particular relevance to the case of Kazakhstan. Twenty-seven cities in Kazakhstan are currently classified as monotowns, and tourism development has been identified by the government of the country as one of the priorities of the diversification policy [4]. The Ulytau region, in which non-ferrous metallurgy has long been the dominant sector of the regional economy, is one of the contexts in which tourism-based diversification is at present being explored [4]. The applicability of the recommendations made in the present paper to contexts of this kind is a matter for assessment in future empirical work, given that the present paper has been based on a qualitative review of secondary sources. Further empirical research, conducted with the use of regional economic data and of stakeholder interviews, would permit the testing of the conditions identified in the present paper in a more rigorous manner than has been possible within the limits of the present study.

The contribution of the present paper is to be found in the synthesis of three bodies of literature that have, until the present, been treated separately. The body of literature on mono-industrial settlements, the body of literature on tourism-based diversification, and the body of literature on tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals are brought together in the analysis presented in the foregoing sections. The alignment of these three bodies of literature provides an assessment structure that can be used in the design of projects, and provides, in addition, a basis for the formulation of policy recommendations applicable at the several levels of governance.

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