СЕКЦИЯ «ЭКОНОМИКА. ПРАВО. СОЦИОЛОГИЯ. НАЦИОНАЛЬНАЯ БЕЗОПАСНОСТЬ»

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THE RISE OF PLATFORM URBANISM: ROLE OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS FOR PARTICIPATORY SMART CITIES

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The recent pandemic and its restrictions affected lots of businesses and economic spheres, as well as social connections and physical inclusion in a variety of activities. At the same time, the introduced restrictions limited the physical manifestations of those activities and connections, and many of them have shifted into digital environment. A possibility to keep being physically connected has affected, in turn, participatory processes and civic actions. While the restrictions related to the pandemic might change and be lifted, it is still an opportunity to revisit the existing models of performing socio-economic transactions and operations, as well as of participation and social inclusion. The new form of urban organization requires to widen economic stakeholders and third parties' participation. Digital or platform urbanism transforms usual ways of public participation in a number of ways through providing access to various social groups and wider coverage of both territories and actors (stakeholders). Digital platforms can unite not only those, who often cannot physically participate but also those who would have not considered being connected previously. The phenomenon of platform urbanism gathers increasing attention by going beyond the academic and policymaking spheres. For example, it was manifested as the theme of the Austrian pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale 2022 (Italy), which investigated the digital platforms and disconnects of platform urbanism. The theme focused on digital platforms as elevated structures and their ability to open up a space for new forms of exchange that suspended the protocols of previous forms of social interaction, communication, mobility and trade [2, p. 14].

At the same time, platforms and digital technologies are not so widely presented in different socio-economic spheres. To start with, in general there is a shortage of urban platforms which collect and coordinate partic-

ipatory processes and their actors in one digital space, with shared logic and logistics. The so-called new normal calls for not simply a digital platform but platform strategy, which combines business, technology, and data strategy [2]. In the local and regional development perspective, a need for a (local) platform which represents a particular territory or area and includes its variety of networks: social, economic, cultural/educational, etc, is growing significantly. Digital multi-sided platforms promise to increase the efficiency of transactions, to optimise logistics, to decrease the environmental impact caused by the transit of people and goods. Moreover, "smartness" in smart cities and regions is built upon, among other technologies, digital platforms which integrate tools and technologies for data management and e-participatory planning. To put in other words, a major part of smart cities' infrastructural capacities is based on the use of digital platforms. Although, only their use for participatory activities, which engage various groups of actors by transforming them into stakeholders, can serve the idea of participatory smart cities. One of the crucial advantages of digital platforms' application in local and regional development is its potential of integrated data collection, analysis and exchange. While data has already become an (economic) resource itself, at the same time it brings up more issues – social, ethical, economic. Moreover, use of data for decision making gives an advantage not only for economic but also ecological efficiency. Although, only certain actors (for example, firms and enterprises) have capabilities to collect data and even less – to analyse it. Agricultural data is often analysed by the third parties, which exchange and sell it back to stakeholders and actors. This situation disrupts connectivity and trust formation, leaving farmers and enterprises often biased against the use of digital technologies and data collection in particular. In short, inclusion of data ethics' regulations in agricultural digital platform and its operation is a way to extend trust and, in a longer run, to boost sustainability in the sector as a whole.

References

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