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Mystery of the Black Lake

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Abstract

Nestled within the dense forests of Pohorje Mountain in northeast Slovenia lies the enigmatic Black Lake. This body of water, of artificial origins, was constructed in the 19th century to facilitate timber transport. Over time, nature's relentless forces have reclaimed it, masking its artificial beginnings and endowing it with the appearance of a natural lake. Concerns have been raised about the possible disappearance of the lake due to encroaching vegetation. Since 2017, our research team has embarked on a comprehensive study to monitor and document the lake's condition. Utilizing a combination of regular aerial photography and historical images dating back to the 1960s, we have gathered a detailed visual record of its evolution. By working on this project, we hope to shed light on the lake's probable disappearance as well as possible conservation measures. This paper delves into these investigations, seeking to illuminate the fate of the Black Lake and explore measures to thwart its possible obliteration by nature's hand.

Keywords: nature encroachment, lake conservation, historical analyses, habitat preservation

The Role of the Home in Times of Crisis

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Abstract

In the face of unprecedented crises, especially the ongoing climate crisis, our homes have become more important than ever before as sanctuaries. These crises often result in environmental disruptions such as fires, floods, and storms, as well as deep-seated psychological impacts, challenging our sense of security and well-being. This paper argues that our homes' architecture must evolve beyond mere structural resilience and adopt a holistic approach that integrates green spaces, natural light, and other essential elements to promote safety, comfort, and adaptability. We discuss the importance of flexible interior layouts that cater to various activities, from work to leisure, promoting versatility in changing lifestyles. We also highlight the significance of communal spaces within residential areas, emphasizing social support networks' vital role in times of hardship. Furthermore, we advocate sustainable building materials and practices for their environmental benefits and contribution to creating durable and safe homes. The paper also delves into energy-efficient designs and technologies that ensure homes remain functional and comfortable, even in the event of external system failures. We discuss water management strategies such as rainwater harvesting, which serve a dual purpose of sustainability and crisis resilience. We also examine indoor-outdoor connectivity for its potential to enhance mental well-being by fostering a closer relationship with nature. Additionally, we address the importance of thermal comfort through efficient insulation and ventilation, ensuring that homes remain havens of comfort regardless of external weather conditions. Lastly, incorporating disaster-resilient features tailored to local environmental threats is crucial in safeguarding homes' physical integrity. Through this comprehensive exploration, the paper aims to redefine the concept of home in the context of contemporary crises, offering insights into creating spaces that protect and nurture, enabling occupants to lead fulfilling lives amidst the challenges of our times.

Keywords: crisis-resilient housing, sustainable architecture, well-being in architecture, climate crisis

The impact of conceiving an empirical ESP course on undergraduate Engineering students: A case study at Ovidius University of Constanta

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to show why speaking English while practising, focussing on, and promoting language learning plays such an important role in conceiving an empirical ESP course. It also looks into how ESP classes are viewed by engineering students as a means of preparing them for both professional and academic communication. A questionnaire is conducted on 104 Civil and Mechanical engineering students at Ovidius University of Constanta. In addition to being questioned about their expectations, learning goals, and perceived initial level of proficiency, students were also asked about how well they felt they had developed the various skills, how well their initial learning objectives had been met, and how well they thought the ESP course had prepared them for professional and academic communication on a global scale. The empirical evidence collected based on both quantitative and qualitative research methods will show that speaking is regarded as the utmost significant skill among all since it is needed to enter the labor market swiftly after being integrated. Since ESP is thought to be a means of acquainting students with discourse particular to their field of study, to improve the courses and bring them closer to learners' perceived requirements and specialized communication practices, it is imperative to determine how to make them even more beneficial to students.

Keywords: ESP, speaking skill, empirical study, P(resent) S(ituation) A(nalysis), T(arget) S(ituation) A(nalysis), C(ontext) A(nalysis).

Visual Story Telling and Data Journalism: A New Perspective in Higher Education

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Abstract

Data journalism and more generally, data-based communication represents a rapidly growing experience in higher educational courses, since the media and news systems are more and more appreciating the use of data, in a systematic and scientific way, in the production of journalistic and communication content.

This paper looks at this new perspective in Journalism Studies at Higher Education level in the countries of the Western Balkans in the context of knowledge exchange and multidisciplinary teaching and learning innovation. Attention will be given to the potential use of knowledge and skills from fields such as data science, statistics, visualization, and communication, necessary to fruitfully operate in the data journalism and data communication frameworks.

Data journalism is perceived as related to what good, skilled journalism should look like and surveys show that respondents acknowledge that being independent may be part of this, according to Thomson and Reuters Foundation Reports. They suggest that audiences are seeking impartial, reliable, and balanced journalism and that journalists separate reporting of facts and statistics from their own interpretation. Therefore, data journalism is seen as a valuable tool for enhancing transparency, accountability, and fact-checking. However, the adoption of data journalism among different media organizations and journalists is related to factors such as limited resources, lack of technical skills, and challenges in accessing reliable and comprehensive data, that hinder its widespread implementation. Additionally, the public's understanding and consumption of data-driven stories is influenced by factors like digital literacy levels and media consumption habits.

Overall, it is recognized that data skills may enable journalists to uncover patterns, trends, and insights that might not be immediately apparent through traditional reporting methods. By studying to meaningfully use data, future journalists can provide evidence-based analysis, support their journalistic claims, and present complex information in a more accessible manner.

The procedure at the executive level for the approximation of Albanian legislation with the EU *acquis*

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Abstract

The opening of the membership negotiations by the European Union (EU) with the Republic of Albania in July 2022 is a very important stage for the process of integration into the EU. It requires the commitment of the country's institutional structure in many new directions. One of the most important issues for a country's full membership is the approximation of national law with the EU *acquis*. For this purpose, during the years this process is undergoing, important legal changes have been made. This article will analyze the changes made at the executive level of two important acts: 1. Law No. 9000, date 30.1.2003 "For the Organization and functioning of the Council of Ministers" and 2. Decision of Council of Ministers No. 584, date 28.8.2003 "For the approval of the Regulation of the Council of Ministers", as amended. These acts have been changed many times to define necessary elements a project acts aiming at approximation should contain. The purpose of this paper is to identify, analyze, and compare with the previous provisions these changes.

The object of this paper is related to one of the topics of this conference as it analyzes an important legal basis that is part of the Albanian approximation framework during the integration process towards the EU. More specifically, this paper analyzes the role of the Council of Ministers in the approximation of national law with that of the EU.

For this paper, the author has conducted a study in two phases: that of desk-based research and the analysis of the data collected. During the desk-based research, the legal framework in force and the concrete changes it underwent were identified. The phase of analysis of the data collected enabled the identification of the impact of the changes of the two above acts bringing in the approximation of national legislation process and the relevant recommendations for its improvement. These approaches used by the authors are in function to identify the results and implications that this paper aims to bring.

Keywords: executive power, approximation, act, integration process.

Guardians of the Belt and Road Initiative – the Chinese private military and security companies

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Abstract

Chinese private military companies (CPMC) have provided security and army services for Chinese interests in countries along the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) since its launch in 2013. This central foreign policy and economic strategy aimed at strengthening Beijing's footprint globally; therefore, it has invested comprehensively in infrastructure projects, including railways, ports, and power plants. Chinese private military companies are keen to protect these investments against militant and criminal ferocity. In doing so, Beijing also aims to leverage the brand-new legitimacy of private military (and security) companies as opposed to the outdated mercenaries. As such, these companies have become an amalgam of U.S. firms like Blackwater and the new model of Wagner Group that offers mercenary-blend quasi-private proxy-type services. Although the heightened tensions with the United States have left Chinese state-owned enterprises less willing to collaborate with security contractors from the United States and Europe, and cooperation with Wagner Group since Yevgeny Prigozhin's mutiny in 2023 is not an option, Chinese firms are more independent and increasingly able to safeguard Chinese investments. CPMCs are likely to become increasingly fundamental in shielding Chinese interests and, by that, also boosting security capabilities in a realm where there is no clear distinction between private and public. Given China's emergent global diplomatic and economic entanglement and engagement, functional and practical CPMCs could also be increasingly important to advance Beijing's foreign policy interests - quite similarly to how its Western and Eastern counterparts are being contracted. This paper examines the origin, role, and activities of the CPMCs as well as the domestic competing models and the domestic legal framework.

Keywords: China, BRI, private military company, private security and military company, Wagner Group,

Resilience of social economy structures:case study

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Abstract

Introduction:

This paper explores the resilience mechanisms of social economy structures through a comparative study between the Western region of Romania and the state of Bavaria in the German Federal Republic. Specifically, it investigates the integration of vulnerable individuals, including former prisoners, into the labor market. The focal point of analysis is Biss Munich, a notable model of social economy structure known for its innovative approach to inclusion.

Discussion:

The study employs a multidisciplinary approach, drawing from sociology, economics, and psychology to understand the dynamics of social economy structures in facilitating the reintegration of offenders. It examines the principles and methodologies implemented by Biss Munich to assess their effectiveness in promoting sustainable employment and reducing recidivism rates among vulnerable populations.

Biss Munich:

Biss Munich operates on the principle of social solidarity, emphasizing the inherent dignity and worth of every individual. Its model revolves around providing meaningful employment opportunities, social support, and skill development for marginalized individuals, including former prisoners. Key principles guiding its operations include:

Dignity and Respect: Biss Munich prioritizes treating all individuals with dignity and respect, irrespective of their background or past experiences.

Empowerment through Work: The organization believes in the transformative power of work, empowering individuals to rebuild their lives and contribute positively to society.

Holistic Support: Biss Munich offers comprehensive support services, including counseling, training, and access to resources, to address the multifaceted needs of its beneficiaries.

Community Integration: The organization fosters community integration by collaborating with local businesses and stakeholders to create inclusive environments for vulnerable individuals.

Conclusion:

Through the comparative analysis of Biss Munich and similar initiatives in Romania, this study aims to shed light on effective strategies for the socio-economic integration of offenders. By understanding the resilience mechanisms of social economy structures, policymakers and practitioners can develop targeted interventions to support the reintegration process and promote long-term rehabilitation.

Insights from BISS Munich In many societies worldwide, former prisoners encounter significant challenges when re-entering the labour market. Social economy initiatives have emerged as effective tools to support this process and promote the successful reintegration of ex-offenders. This presentation offers insights from BISS Munich, an organization renowned for its social newspaper and innovative approaches to social economy interventions. The presentation begins by outlining the multifaceted barriers faced by former prisoners, including social stigma, lack of qualifications, and limited employment opportunities. It then delves into the diverse models and initiatives within BISS Munich's social economy framework aimed at enhancing employment prospects for ex-offenders. These include vocational training programs, social enterprises, and collaborative partnerships with public institutions, businesses, and civil society. Drawing on real-life case studies and success stories, the presentation highlights the tangible impact of BISS Munich's social economy initiatives on the labour market integration of former prisoners. Moreover, it addresses future challenges and opportunities for advancing these approaches, emphasizing the importance of ongoing collaboration and innovation. This presentation offers a comprehensive exploration of the role of social economy in facilitating the labour market integration of former prisoners, with BISS Munich's experience serving as a valuable case study. It is intended to inform and inspire policymakers, practitioners, and researchers engaged in similar initiatives globally, fostering dialogue and knowledge exchange for sustainable social change.

CONNECTION BETWEEN CHEBYSHEVIAN PRODUCTS IN AFFINE SPACE WITHOUT TENSOR

MUSA AJETI AND AGAN BISLIMI

Abstract

Let A_4 be a space with affine connections without tensor. We define the conjugated products $x \times \bar{x}$ and $y \times \bar{y}$ in A_4 and the third product $z \times \bar{z}$ with the help of affinors a_α^β , b_α^β and $\bar{c}_\alpha^\beta = ic_\alpha^\beta (i^2 = -1)$, where $c_\alpha^\beta = -a_\alpha^\beta b_\alpha^\delta$. We find all connections Chebishevian-Chebishevian products (ch-ch). We found the affine connection defined as $\Gamma_{\alpha\beta}^\gamma(\alpha, \beta, \gamma = 1, 2, 3, 4)$, [?] [?]

Key words: Spaces of products (compositions), connection between products, affinors of compositions, affine spaces.

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