



IDHEAP

POLICY BRIEF

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The aim behind IDHEAP Policy Briefs is to make the general public aware of scientific research conducted at IDHEAP, underlining its pluridisciplinarity and multidisciplinary, while bringing out its implications for public policy, thereby asserting our place “at the heart of public service”.

This fourth edition is focused on infrastructure. The first article explores the circular economy’s potential for reconciling the preservation of historic infrastructures with the objectives of energy sobriety. The second addresses citizens’ participation in online platforms to report public infrastructure defects in the city of Zurich. The article explores graphic designs that improve the user experience, thereby promoting inclusive design for online participatory infrastructure management tools. The final article looks at questions surrounding the creation of sports infrastructures for the purpose of developing territorial branding. The author analyses the inherent risk of relegation in open sports leagues and shows how a territory’s demographic potential and budget can help in understanding and, indirectly, predicting the long-term survival of sports infrastructures.

Enjoy!

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Circular economy in construction: food for thought

Public Policy and Sustainability unit Dunia Brunner and Prof. Stéphane Nahrath

Heritage conservation: a balancing act

While public policies on heritage conservation are concerned with the preservation of buildings' artistic, archaeological, historical, scientific or educational interests, public policies on energy aim in particular at low, rational energy consumption. In current practice, the latter policies lead to buildings being insulated to reduce their energy consumption during the use phase, occasionally to the detriment of their identity and their historical substance, which are exactly what the former policies seek to preserve. Pursuing these differing public interests, all of which are legitimate, but which implementation practices make incompatible with each other, requires a balancing of the interests at issue. To improve coherence, reduce institutional complexity, provide better legal security, relieve the courts and facilitate the work of actors in the field, the possibility of reshaping public policies should be addressed.

The ecological transition of construction: what solutions?

As part of the Volteface 2021 project “Patrimoine bâti et économie circulaire : territoire ré-duit / temps long”¹, UNIL's Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration (IDHEAP) and History of Art Section (HART) launched an interdisciplinary collaboration effort to explore the ecological transition of construction, and more specifically the relationship between energy transition and heritage conservation.

Environmental imperatives and the need to meet climate goals call for a radical transformation of our socioeconomic system. **In this context, the circular economy concept has much to offer.** It provides an alternative to the wastage of materials and energy enshrined by the practices of the linear economy and urges us to create new public policies or revamp existing ones. Moving to an ideal circular economy would allow us to stop extracting new raw materials, avoid the creation of waste and minimize the loss of energy and materials by extending the lifetime of objects and materials already in circulation: maintain, repair, reuse, recycle.

¹ “Built heritage and the circular economy: small territory / long term”.

The Volteface research project sets out to explore whether the circular economy concept, which is systemic, could be mobilized to bring about a new perspective likely to decompartmentalize the issues traditionally opposing two very distinct areas of public policy. To achieve this aim, it uses an applied case study (the Château d'Hauteville, VD), interviews with actors in the field, and the study of various political, legal and archive documents.

The circular economy obviates the need for arbitration between heritage conservation and energy policy

The figure below illustrates the shift to a circular economy in the construction field, together with the hierarchy of implementation strategies: from the closest circle, formed by the red arrows, to the most distant. Minimizing the wastage of energy and materials requires us first to prolong the use of existing buildings (and the [grey] energy and resources they contain), then to repair or renovate them, then to reuse building elements (selective deconstruction and repurposing) and, finally, to recycle construction materials.

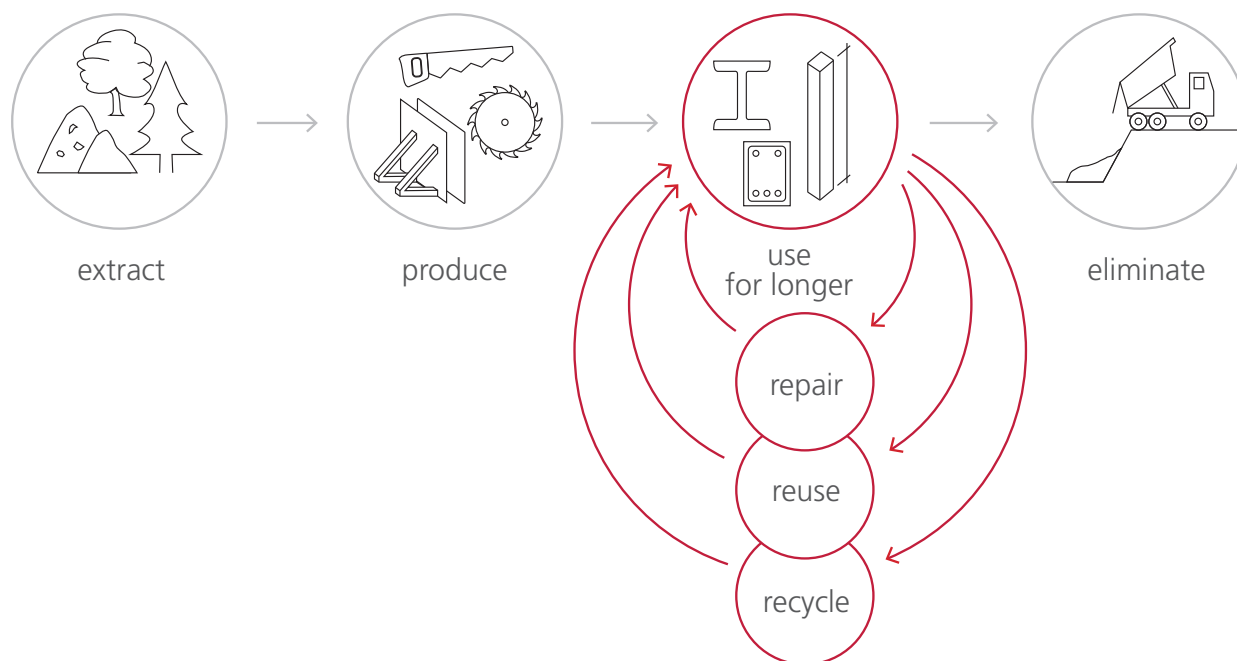


Figure 1 | From a linear to a circular economy (image taken from K pfer C., Fivet, C. (2021), D construktion S lective - Construction R versible : recueil pour diminuer les d chets et favoriser le r emploi dans la construction, DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.4314325, p. 15).



“ Seen from this broader circular perspective, the traditional clash between heritage conservation and energy policy dissolves.”



Adopting the circular economy concept in construction thus places heritage conservation practices at the top of strategies for optimizing resource and energy use, thereby directly helping to meet the goal of reducing energy wastage in buildings, understood broadly, over their entire lifecycle. This would allow the impact of all the (grey) energy required for the production and transport of insulating materials and for renovation operations to be taken into account, instead of focusing solely on emissions and energy used during the operational phase of the building. Seen from this broader circular perspective, the traditional clash between heritage conservation and energy policy dissolves.

References

Brunner, D., Meier, N. (2022). Énergie et patrimoine, même combat?, *Tracés (Juin)*, <https://www.es-pazium.ch/fr/actualites/energie-et-patrimoine-meme-combat>.

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Zurich's "citizen-sourcing" platform: how can women be encouraged to participate?

Strategy and Organisation unit Pascale-Catherine Kirklies and Prof. Oliver Neumann


Inequality in the use of online platforms

Digitalization opens up new avenues for collaboration between public administration and citizens. **This collaboration can bring valuable additional resources and ideas, and improve the quality of services.** Although the use of participatory platforms brings benefits for both municipal government and citizens, previous research reveals that they are not being used equally by all demographic groups. The resulting participation gap raises important questions about democratic principles such as equal opportunity and equity.

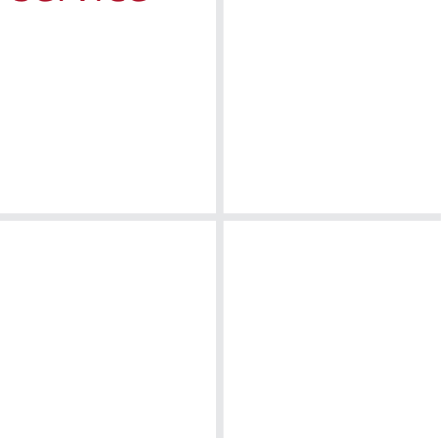
Data collection in collaboration with the city of Zurich

In this study, we worked with the city of Zurich on their "Züri wie neu" ("Zurich as good as new") platform, on which citizens can report infrastructure defects, such as faulty traffic signals or damage to a playground. We chose this platform because a preliminary study indicated that only 24% of its users are women (Neumann & Schott, 2021).

The literature shows that there are significant differences between women's and men's preferences regarding user interface designs. For example, men prefer darker colours such as black and blue, while women favour lighter colours such as yellow or mauve. The platform's current design (see Figure 1: Version 1) could therefore be less attractive to women than to men.



“Public administrations often underestimate the importance of user experience and inclusive website design. The results of this study are thus relevant not only for online participation platforms, but for any type of digital service or process.”



In our study, we examined the user’s experience of the platform design in order to determine a design that could increase women’s participation intentions. In collaboration with the communication department of the city of Zurich, we developed five new mock-ups—interactive versions that differ in terms of design, colours and language, based on the results of prior research (see Figure 1). We tested these mock-ups by conducting an experimental study with a representative sample (N=500) of citizens that live in Zurich who had not yet used the platform. After presenting one of the versions to study participants we measured, among other things, two variables: their perception of the platform’s design quality (scale 1-5) and their intention to use it (scale 1-7).



Version 1:
Original /
status quo

Version 2:
Added image
to increase
social identity

Version 3:
More inclusive
and informal
language

Version 4:
New layout

Version 5:
With image,
more inclusive
language,
and new layout

Version 6:
New colour
combination
proposed by
the city of Zurich

Figure 1 | Six interactive versions of "Zurich as good as new."

There are ways to significantly increase women's use of online platforms

We found support for our hypothesis that the design that women liked least was the original version. Our results also demonstrate that the more attractive the platform's design is to a person, the more likely they are to use it.

With versions (3) and (6), women would participate significantly more than men. Moreover, while inclusive language had a very positive effect on women, it produced the reverse effect on men.

Overall, if the goal is to find a design that is equally suitable for both genders, versions (2) and (6) (colour blue, combined with an added image) should be considered.

Public administrations often underestimate the importance of user experience and inclusive website design. The results of this study are thus relevant not only for online participation platforms, but for any type of digital service or process.

References

Neumann, O., & Schott, C. (2021). Behavioral effects of public service motivation among citizens: testing the case of digital co-production. *International Public Management Journal*, 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10967494.2021.1937413>

Territorial branding and professional sports clubs: Threats and opportunities of open leagues for sports infrastructures

Regulation of Sport unit Prof. Mickaël Terrien

Sport: a lever for territorial development

Economy, culture, tourism: many levers can be used to develop territorial branding, among them sport, by means of four mechanisms. The first mechanism consists in creating a platform for sports venues, as Vaud Canton, which hosts 46 international federations, has done. Two other possibilities are hosting sports events (such as the Youth Olympic Games) and organizing competitions that attract many participants (the Geneva Course de l'Escalade). The last option is to host a professional team in the territory. However, this final mechanism carries a risk if the team plays in an open league with a promotion and relegation system. While the association of the territory and club brands is advantageous when the team's results are good, things can quickly turn the other way if performances suffer. Moreover, construction of a sports infrastructure commits the administration over a long period, but there is no guarantee that the club will continue to perform at the highest level season after season. The case of Lausanne Sport, playing in the brand new La Tuilière stadium and recently relegated to the second division, makes the point. Our analysis will endeavour to show that administrations need to be aware of the risk of relegation inherent in open leagues.

Factors that explain clubs' performance

Our research is based on the relative importance of exogenous, contingency factors, as opposed to endogenous factors, in explaining clubs' performance. It examines the quasi-transitive relation postulated for a professional sports club between its home territory's demographic potential (exogenous factor), its budget (endogenous factor) and its sporting results. The objective is to identify thresholds that would guarantee access to certain specific segments of a competition (relegation to a lower division; qualifying for playoff games, or for a European competition).

The fact that Swiss professional clubs do not publish their budgets prevents an analysis of this type in the Swiss context. However, we were able to consider the French men's first division championships in basketball (Pro A), football (L1), handball (D1), rugby (Top 14) and volleyball (LAM) for the period from 2014/2015 to 2018/2019.

Results and implications for decision-makers

The results for each league were obtained by linking sporting results and relative budget (the club's budget divided by the sum of budgets in the league). We found that, on the one hand, a population of 150,000 is necessary to attain a 2.5% relative budget (approximately €40.9 million). A budget of this magnitude would allow a club to operate in L1 over the long term (Figure 1). On the other hand, a city of over 500,000 inhabitants allows a club to attain a relative budget of 6% (approximately €98.2 million), sufficient to enable it to be a perennial challenger for European competitions (Figure 1).

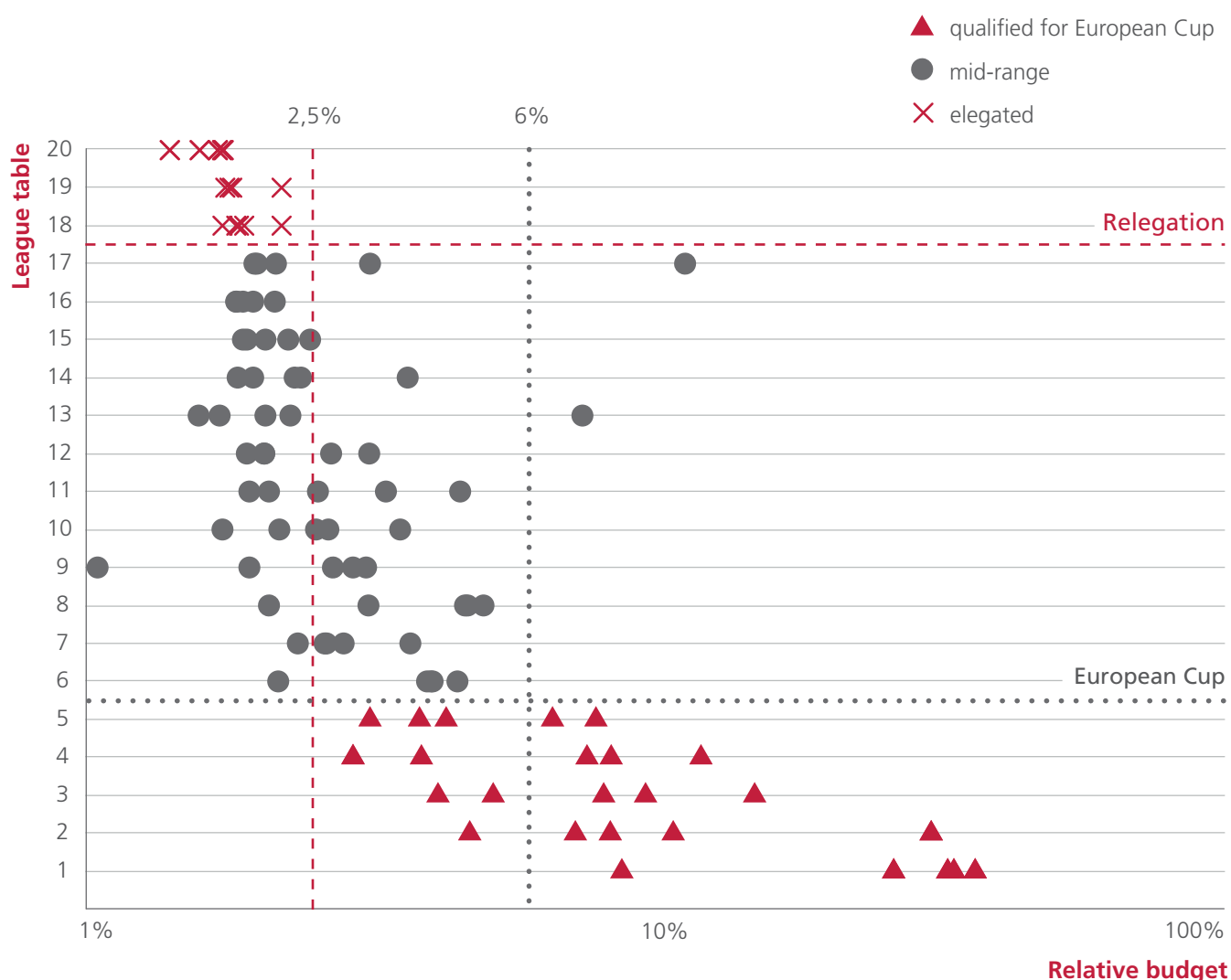


Figure 1 | Economic thresholds determining access to the various league table segments in L1.



“These thresholds can help administrations to determine the size of sports infrastructures, taking the professional team’s chances of long-term sporting success into consideration.”



These results are specific to L1. The thresholds identified vary from league to league and may be porous, or even nonexistent (for example, no demographic criteria in LAM (volleyball)). **They tell communities whether direct support (through subsidies) can allow a club to maintain a stable position in a segment of the league table, or whether private financial support is needed.** These thresholds can help administrations to determine the size of sports infrastructures, taking the professional team’s chances of long-term sporting success into consideration.

However, caution should be exercised in interpreting these thresholds, which are based solely on probabilities. Another limitation is that the results of this study say nothing about the legitimacy or usefulness of subsidizing a professional club to build the brand of a territory. Not all cities have the same need to change their image through sport, a strategy that is chiefly the prerogative of post-industrial cities.

Reference

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