SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN VIENNA AND BUDAPEST: THE FRAMEWORK AND ATTRIBUTES OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE

By

Eszter Gottreich-Horváth

Submitted to

Central European University

Department of International Relations

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Supervisor: Dr. Dóra Piroska

Vienna, Austria

2024

Abstract

Sustainable development has emerged as a key solution to various economic, social and environmental challenges. To achieve sustainability, policies need to be implemented at all levels of government, and responsibilities vary depending on the structure of the state. There is an ongoing debate in the world of International Relation and Public Policy on which governance structure is the most progressive in terms of sustainable development. This paper examines how different local government institutions approach sustainable development through a comparative case study analysis of Budapest and Vienna's institutional and governance structure. The findings established that the core drivers of progressive subnational policy implementation on sustainable development include an extensive policy framework, central government support and strong commitment.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Dóra Piroska, for all the assistance. I am grateful to my Academic Writing Instructor, Éva Ajkay-Nagy and all my teachers at CEU who added to my knowledge and experience with their expertise.

I couldn't have done it without the support of my family, I have immense love for them and will be forever thankful. I hope my friends know how grateful I am for their patience, support and the time spent together that kept me sane throughout this academic journey. I consider myself the luckiest girl in the world to be surrounded by people like them.

And finally, I would like to thank everyone who made me laugh during this period, although not a particularly difficult task, it is nonetheless appreciated.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Sustainable development is the prime political and social phenomena among those that seek solutions to the problems of the world today. Seen as a solution to both growing inequality and environmental degradation, sustainable development has implications for all countries in the world. Developing and developed countries alike have a responsibility to lay the foundations for a livable future for the next generation generations. The developed countries of Central Europe all have their own specific problems, be they political, economic, environmental or social.

Although Budapest and Vienna are both cities are located in the Central European region and have a close historical connectedness, there is a significant gap in their quality of life, development, sustainability, and economy between the two neighboring capitals. Vienna consistently ranks among the top cities globally in terms of livability, evidenced by its consistent placement in the top five of the global Liveability Index for the past decade, owing to its winning combination of stability, good culture and entertainment, reliable infrastructure, and exemplary education and health services for the residents. In contrast, Budapest has been ranked lower, below the 40th position. While it is still higher than the other capitals in the region, such as Warsaw or Prague, it is still remarkably lower than Vienna. Although this index has its weaknesses, because it primarily measures how a foreigner perceives living in a city rather than the people living in the city it is nonetheless a relevant indicator of a city's success in multiple aspects. However, looking at other quality-of-life studies that consider local aspects, such as the Numbeo Quality of Life Index by City and the Mercer Quality of Living City Ranking Vienna performs well. It is clear that Vienna is consistently in the top 10, while Budapest typically ranks around 130th on the global scale and 60th on the European scale.

1

Another key indicator is that according to the yearly Vienna in Figures (2023)[1] booklet published by Statistics Vienna 90 percent of Viennese people like living in Vienna. According to a report by Eurobarometer, on the quality of life in European cities around 87 percent of the people are satisfied with living in their city, while in Budapest this statistic is less than 85 percent which is below average (Zsigó 2023).

These large differences are intriguing as the two cities do share similarities in the historical heritage, cultural life and economic importance of the region. Despite these commonalities, the differing rankings in the quality-of-life studies highlight the profound impact of local government dynamics, policy choices, and socio-economic factors on the lived experiences of residents in Vienna and Budapest. The differences in quality-of-life indicators suggest that while Vienna has succeeded in translating its progressive governance into measurable improvements in well-being, infrastructure, and public services, Budapest faces persistent challenges in urban planning, social well-being, and environmental sustainability.

To explore the reason behind the success of policies in cities, we need to assess their place and legal status in comparison with others to see if that lies behind it. In the existing literature there is a gap in the examining of the dynamics between political influence and the institutional structure of certain states. I will explore this question and attempt to shed light if there is a connection between Budapest and Vienna's political culture, governmental structure and financial resource and their ability to successfully implement sustainable development policies in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The comparison of these two cities, sharing similar historical and cultural background yet different political and administrative frameworks, makes it easier to understand how local governance and political cultural factors influence policy success.

---

[1]Vienna in Figures. (2023) URL: https://www.wien.gv.at/statistik/pdf/viennainfigures-2023.pdf

In the first chapter I will review the existing literature about sustainable development and the UN 2030 Sustainable Agenda determined its Sustainable Development Goals which are calls for action in a global partnership. I will then look at how cities and local authorities can play a role in sustainable development policy making, providing an overview of the smart city approach, its definition and its relationship to sustainable development. Following the literature review, I will describe the organizational structures of the two cities, the structure of the municipalities and the main bodies involved in decision-making and policymaking, highlighting the role of the mayor. I then detail and evaluate the plans developed or revised by the two cities since 2019, assessing their contribution to the UN 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. In the analysis section, I compare the effectiveness of different governance structures and strategies in Budapest and Vienna in implementing sustainable development policies. In this section, I will assess how the institutional set-up, policy dynamics and resource allocation of each city affect their ability to achieve the SDGs. I will conclude this thesis by summarizing the findings and providing recommendations for future research and policy implementation and suggest areas where further investigation is needed to bridge existing gaps.

Literature Review

Among the main liberal norms that are integral in global governance sustainable development is on those that achieved recognition and dedication among international organizations. The United Nations is very committed to promoting sustainable development (Tallberg et al. 2020). Within the member states this commitment is at a variable level, however, Tallberg et al. found that those states with more democratic values and supportive structure will likely display real commitment to sustainable development. This commitment involves financial mechanisms and strategic approaches that will ensure long-term

sustainability. These global mechanisms best manifest at a local level, it is thus vital to implement effective policies and strategies like effective urban planning, promotion of social equity with access to basic services and housing. Integrating these into local governance will contribute the overall quality of life for residents and promote sustainable development at global level (Tallberg et al. 2020; Sippel and Jenssen 2009).

Policymaking is the main instrument in the efforts of reaching the sustainable development. Understanding the connection between the success of climate strategies and social frameworks is crucial for evaluating the effectiveness of different types of political cultures and institutional structures. In the existing literature the implementation of SDGs is mainly assessed on a national level, the dynamic of national and sub-national governance and the level of sustainability and successful policymaking are also well research topics, however, rarely taken together in a comprehensive way. The connection of these topics is the purpose of this review, and based on the examined literature it can be stated that the successful policy implementation requires socio-economic stability and support from higher levels of government for advancing green and social policies. Strategic cooperation between local and national policymaking strategies will allow using national and other funds, like those coming from the EU, most effectively.

Sustainable development

Sustainable development in the literature is a vaguely defined term, as the scope of it is quite broad. There are many definitions of sustainable development, but often they all have the same components. First defined in the Brundtland Report, "Our Common Future", it was described as

meeting the needs and aspirations of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It is a form of social and economic development that enhances, not destroys, the resource base. It requires a more equitable distribution of wealth within and between nations than is currently the case, and aims to eradicate global mass poverty, keeping open the possibilities for the future. (Brundtland 1987, 16)

Nearly forty years after the report, Eisenmenger (2020) continues to call it a "challenge" to ensure that the living conditions of those in need continue to improve while preserving the ecological integrity of the planet. Kuhn (2018) stresses that the part of the definition where the concept of needs is mentioned, especially the basic needs of the world's poor, should be given priority, given the limitations of technology and the prevailing social situation. Others concentrate on the intergenerational and environmental aspects of the definition(Lanshina et al. 2019); Wurster (2011) adds that the term sustainable development began to include not only the protection of the environment and natural resources after the 1992 Rio conference but also social and economic objectives and the extension of political responsibility.

Monkelbaan (2019) says that the Brundtland definition is normative, subjective, and ambiguous. It is normative because it feels that future generations should have the same opportunities as the present without knowing the needs of future generations. Subjective, as it requires an assessment of future needs, and ambiguous, as it does not specify what those needs are and what and how they should be maintained. Moreover, according to Monkelbaan (2019), the definition does not describe what sustainable development is but what it should result in, which is not really a definition.

Sustainable development is a comprehensive approach to social development that seeks to meet the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future. It simultaneously seeks economic prosperity, social justice and environmental integrity. It acknowledges the interconnectedness and interdependence of these dimensions. It prioritizes the needs of the world's poorest people while protecting the health of ecosystems and preserving natural resources for future generations. Sustainable development is thus

characterized by a commitment to balancing economic growth, social progress and environmental protection, building resilience, prosperity and a better quality of life for all members of society, now and in the future. It encompasses the overarching goal of aligning different objectives to ensure a just future for humanity and the planet (Bull and Miklian 2019; Eisenmenger et al. 2020; Gyene 2009; Kuhn 2018; Lanshina et al. 2019; Monkelbaan 2019; Wurster 2011; Brundtland 1987). This definition covers almost every significant aspect of sustainable development according to today's scholars. Building on this definition this thesis will explore what attributes of sustainable development policies make them more or less successful. Thus, with the extent of environmental problems and rising social inequalities global organizations and leaders made attempts at improving the state of affairs.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the UN in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 17 goals include social, economic, and environmental dimensions. Each of the goals addresses different aspects of human well-being and planetary health while recognizing the links between social development, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability. These targets cover a wide range of issues, including poverty eradication, gender equality, access to clean energy, sustainable consumption and production, combating climate change, and biodiversity conservation. By addressing these different aspects of development, the SDGs aim to promote a comprehensive and inclusive approach to achieving sustainable development for present and future generations. The achievement of these SDGs is a global effort; however, the implementation of policies that will aid them is a localized effort (Monkelbaan 2019). It is crucial to understand how cities, municipalities, and other sub-national levels of government can make policies that are in line

with the SDGs. It is also interesting to see what is influencing the implementation and creation of policies.

SDG Policy Implementation

In the literature about SDGs and SDG implementation, there are multiple views on the successful way in which policies that help reach the goals are best. However, research about the success of policymaking and sustainable development mainly stays in the national and regional frameworks, in addition to being context specific. A suggestion or policy solution that might be suitable for one country might not be relevant in another. This is also applicable to cities in a more complex way, as sub-national policymaking is multi-layered. It must align with national, regional, and EU directives.

Since Austria and Hungary are both part of the European Union and within this large system of the EU that influences state institutions and levels of governance (Schultze 2003) the relationship between local and national governments has become more complex. City governments have to navigate through national and EU policies. This multi-layered governance can also give an advantage to city policymaking. It has also improved some levels of localized input and allowed for significant regional and local participation (Jeffery 2015). EU funds can provide financial support for city-level innovations and investments that they might have been lacking until then (Gusul 2024).

Cities as agents of policymaking

Some argue that cities or sub-national level governments in the EU policymaking system are primarily followers; however, they actually play a strong role in policy creation

(Schultze 2003). It is also stated that although nations and regions were the driving forces behind energy and green policies until recently, cities and other sub-national levels of government have started to take over responsibility as the previous efforts and results were deemed insufficient (Jaccard et al. 2019). However, Jaccard's modeling case study also suggested that municipalities cannot advance green policies without the support of higher levels of government. Support from higher levels of government is also essential for the successful implementation of policies aimed at achieving the SDGs, as stated by Leavesley and Trundle, who underscore that strategic alignment is needed for the successful localization of the SDGs. Monitoring and documentation of progress are also crucial for understanding the success of implementation (Leavesley, Trundle, and Oke 2022; Bush 2020).

Implementing green policies can be a priority for local authorities because it helps improve the quality of life for the people living there (Sippel and Jenssen 2009). Sustainable development is a significant part of a city's quality of life, as highlighted by the WHO (Giles-Corti, Lowe, and Arundel 2020), with health being a major indicator of it. Successful SDG implementations correlate with high level of satisfaction in cities (Silva et al. 2024). In addition, there are several more reasons why national governments should facilitate local policymaking and implementation. In terms of climate policies, it is evident that the impact of climate change is manifested locally, affecting local lives. Moreover, capacity for implementation is determined at a local level (Corfee-Morlot et al. 2009). Thus, it is important for local governance to be able to adopt and adapt to global changes manifesting locally and to realize the global directives according to their own terms and conditions.

Centralization and decentralization

It is not decided whether centralization or decentralization is the better working institutional structure, some say decentralization can do more harm than good (Hutchcroft 2001), or that organizational performance works best or performs better in centralized structure (Brandts and Cooper 2016). Others concluded that there is no universal solution and choosing a structure should be based on the characteristic of the organization or government (Porter and Olsen 1976). The literature confirms that a centralized system is in strong connection with the nationalization of the party system of a country. (Kollman and Worthington 2021) A nationalized party system more often than not have a unified agenda that prioritizes national interests above the local ones. Decentralization, however, can often cause delay in the decision-making processes and coordination of the administrative activities. All these theories and studies are based on the premise that policy makers put the interests of citizens at first priority. The question of centralization and decentralization is not only an administrative political science question but a decision with a palpable impact for the everyday of the citizens. The comparison of two similar cities or countries with different centralization levels might shed light a bit more about this puzzle.

Smart City strategy

The term "smart city" has a prominent role in achieving sustainable development(Chen 2023). Building on Caragliu, Del Bo and Nijkamp's definition, a city is considered smart if it invests in human and social capital, urban transport infrastructure, modernization of communication and information flows that help sustain economic growth, high quality of life, natural resource management through participatory governance. Today, the concepts of sustainable development and smart cities are interlinked, as the

implementation of one inevitably follows the other. Since smart cities are dedicated to the SDGs (Chen 2023), the complexity of SDG implementation has made smart cities a holistic medium for achieving urban sustainability. Moreover, the transformation to become a smart city requires technological, governance and societal changes(Pozdniakova 2018) that alligns with the SDG directives.

Organizational Structure and Governance of Vienna and Budapest

This chapter compares in detail the organizational structure and management of Budapest and Vienna. It highlights how each city's local government system works and covers aspects such as budget management. A thorough grasp of these differences is crucial for assessing their ability to implement sustainable development goals and other green policies. In the public policy literature, it is accepted that there are two types of policy implementation method: the top-down model and the bottom-up method (Potter 2020; Signe 2017; Khan and Khandaker 2016). The top-down model starts from the decision-making process at the highest level of government and implemented in a structured hierarchical way. The bottom-up model starts from the local level of government, bypassing a centralized route that may not prove flexible enough for the wide variety of local governments that exist. The multi-level governance that is a feature of EU states can provide a compromise between the two approaches. Implementation of sustainable development policies in cities, building on Jaccard et al. uses the bottom-up approach as the main driving force of reaching the SDGs. This thesis will be exploring the institutional build of cities with different progress in them might shed light on how structure influences the success of green and social policies. Vienna and

Budapest's differences and similarities in their legal and political status within their countries provide a solid basis for the comparison.

Vienna

Vienna holds a unique position within the Austrian federal state administration. It serves as the national federal capital, a federal province of the Republic of Austria, and a municipality with the legal status of a chartered city. As the federal capital, Vienna is the seat of the highest authorities, including the federal government, head of state, federal parliament, and the highest courts, making it the political and economic center of Austria (Stadt Wien, n.d.). Despite this, Vienna does not enjoy specific privileges as a federal capital. However, as a federal province, it has the right to its own legislation and provincial executive body.

The highest executive body is the Provincial Government, headed by the Governor, who is also the Mayor of Vienna. The City Senate, acting as the Provincial Government, serves as the highest executive body at the provincial level. The Provincial Government includes the Governor and 12 City Councillors. Administrative tasks are performed by the Office of the Provincial Government under the direction of the Head of the Office. Vienna designates 10 representatives to the second chamber of federal legislation, the Federal Council (also known as the "Chamber of Provinces") (Stadt Wien, n.d.).

The legislative functions within Vienna are handled by the Vienna Provincial Parliament, composed of 100 members. The Vienna City Council, which is also the Provincial Parliament, serves as the legislative body for both the city and the province. The Mayor of Vienna also serves as the Governor, and the Vienna City Administration doubles as the Office of the Vienna Provincial Government.

11

As a municipality, Vienna must adhere to the Federal Constitutional Act, which stipulates that every municipality must have three mandatory bodies supported by an administrative apparatus: a municipal council, a municipal board, and a mayor. In Vienna, these bodies are the City Council (municipal council), the City Senate (municipal board), and the Mayor. The City Administration in Vienna assumes the role of the Municipal Council Office and also functions as a separate body (Stadt Wien, n.d.).

Vienna has its own Vienna City Statutes (WStV) that serve as municipal statutes. The first section of these statutes takes the form of provincial law, while the second section, which defines the tasks and functions of Vienna as a federal province, has the status of a constitutional act at the provincial level. According to the WStV, Vienna also has a number of other non-mandatory bodies and offices, including the Executive City Councillors, the committees and commissions of the City Council, the District Councils, and the Vienna Appellate Senate.

The Vienna City Council consists of 100 members who are also members of the Provincial Parliament. These members are elected for a five-year term based on proportional representation (Wiener Stadtverfassung, Abschnitt 1, § 1(1)).

While Vienna is firmly anchored in a legalistic-bureaucratic continental European tradition (Brandtner et al. 2017)6/3/2024 9:54:00 AM, it also holds municipal status and is a federal state. This means Vienna is responsible for enforcing federal law and drafting legislation in several policy areas, such as land use and parts of environmental legislation. Despite increased decentralization and the rise of non-ministerial agencies providing public services, Vienna's city hall still exercises considerable power over its subsidiaries (Brandtner et al. 2017). This makes the comparison particularly interesting, as the two cities have different scopes of authority in the sphere of policymaking. Budapest does not exercise a similar level of authority, having to rely instead on national directives.

Vienna's budget is governed by the act on constitutional rules on public finance, which distributes financial responsibilities between the federal state, the provinces, and the municipalities. The municipality of Vienna assigns certain tasks to its districts, as outlined in the WStV. The required budget funds are allocated to the districts by the municipal council (Stadt Wien, n.d.).

The Vienna Municipal District authorities have responsibilities, tasks, and decisions transferred to them by the administration of the City of Vienna. This decentralized approach promotes the diversity and variety of the city across its 23 municipal districts. As a result, district authorities have decision-making powers regarding project and policy implementation within the scope of the responsibilities outlined by the WStV. However, they must collaborate with the Vienna City Administration's specialist departments, which are responsible for applying for funds and executing these projects.

Budapest

The capital city of Hungary, Budapest, also has a multi-leveled place in the country's administration. As a city, it is the seat of the Hungarian government, the seat of Pest County, and a municipality. It is, however, different from the Vienna case as the Budapest municipality bodies function separately from the county seat functions. Budapest operates under a dual self-governing system, which means that in addition to the Budapest Municipality, each of the twenty-three districts has its own local government with elected mayors and a body of representatives. (The Municipality of Budapest, n.d.) They have significant authority over their district; however, bigger projects require collaboration with the central power.

Hungary has a two-level local government system, (The Municipality of Budapest, n.d.) with distinct tasks and powers for the capital local authority and the district local authorities.

The capital local authority, a territorial local authority, handles all territorial and municipal development, spatial planning, and urban management tasks that affect the entire capital or relate to its special status in the country. It also undertakes local government tasks affecting the entire capital or multiple districts.

The city's municipal duties and powers are exercised by the local governing body, the General Assembly of Budapest. The General Assembly and its committees, the Mayor, and the Mayor's office handle municipal duties. The General Assembly may delegate its powers to the Mayor or one of the committees to fulfill relevant tasks. The capital district local authorities independently exercise all the tasks and powers assigned by law to municipal local authorities, except those specifically assigned to the capital local authority. They also undertake municipal development, spatial planning, and urban management tasks that do not fall under the jurisdiction of the capital local authority. District mayors hold 23 of the 33 mandates in the Budapest General Assembly. The remaining mandates are filled based on a compensation list.

Financial support for state-administrative tasks is provided from the central budget. For local government tasks, support is proportional to the tasks undertaken, and for public administrative tasks, budget support is necessary. Most state support and contributions reach local governments through a task-based financing system. Local governments can further extend their revenues through development funds acquired via bids for funding, which can come from the national budget or European Union funds including the European Investment Bank (EIB).

The financial struggle for autonomy of Budapest and other municipalities, started with the new Constitution of 2011, otherwise known as the New Fundamental Law. The previous municipality system was uniquely broad in the powers it gave to municipalities. The normative financing system, which had been based on free use of financial aid, was replaced by a system of task financing with a conditional use, which meant that the role of the state in the local

energy, water, waste management, road maintenance and local public transport tasks was greatly increased (Kákai and Vető 2023). In the New Fundamental Law, an important right—the right to local self-governance—was omitted. This law also failed to include several provisions related to local financial autonomy, such as the municipalities' right to own revenues. One of the biggest sources of revenue in Budapest was local tax revenues, such as business tax or other local tax revenues. These funds were the basis for all municipalities in Hungary, maintaining a level of financial and political autonomy. However, since 2011, as the current government has centralized many of the tasks previously entrusted to local governments, including the Budapest municipal tasks, the central government has taken over the financial resources associated with these tasks. On paper, this centralization would have meant that the central government would collect the tax and then distribute it, but this centralization has only strained the financial autonomy of municipalities, including Budapest, as the city has less direct control over revenue sources. In 2008, after the economic crisis, many states have turned to centralization to address the effects of the economic crisis. Yet such a profound transformation of the local government system in Hungary is not only due to the crisis but is part of a political process in which central power can more directly impose its will on local politics. (Kákai and Vető 2023) The new Fundamental Law stipulates that local self-governments shall be entitled to proportionate budgetary and other financial support for the performance of their mandatory tasks and competencies (Article 34 (1) of the Fundamental Law) (Pál and Radvan 2024).

The Mayors

The main actors and participants in the mayoral activities of Vienna and Budapest are part of the city's administrative body and the Mayor's office. The Mayor of Vienna is the head

of the City Administration and holds seniority over all Executive City Councillors, district chairpersons, and any employees of the City Administration. The Mayor's tasks include convening City Council sessions and City Senate meetings. The Mayor carries out all the tasks assigned by the Federal Constitution and is assisted by the City Administration. The Mayor is also responsible for the "delegated sphere of competence," which means all tasks carried out by the municipality must be in accordance with federal or provincial directives.

In Budapest, the Mayor's main duties are related to the activities of the General Assembly of Budapest and its committees. The Mayor manages the Mayor's Office and, as a representative of the state, has the capacity to decide on issues of public administration. The responsibilities of the Mayor include overseeing the execution of tasks assigned by the General Assembly, ensuring that the city's administrative activities comply with state regulations, and managing the Mayor's Office. Acting as a representative of the state, the Mayor in Budapest has significant decision-making authority on public administration issues.

Vienna's centralized governance within the federal system gives the mayor considerable control over the city's budget. In contrast, Budapest's decentralized power structure allows the mayor and district mayors to control their local budgets independently. Consequently, the implementation of the SDGs differs due to the different governance and budgetary frameworks. The difference between the two cities' institutional structure, however, is not as drastic as their quality-of-life.

Table 1.: Organizational structures and governance processes of Vienna and Budapest.

Aspect	Vienna	Budapest
Federal Status	National federal capital, federal province, and municipality	Capital city of Hungary, seat of Hungarian government, Pest County, and municipality
Legislative Body	Vienna Provincial Parliament (100 members)	General Assembly of Budapest (33 members)

	Provincial Government, headed by the Governor (Mayor of Vienna)	Mayor and Mayor's Office
Executive Body		
Municipal Governance	Vienna City Council (legislative), City Senate (executive)	Local governing body(executive), General Assembly (legislative)
Provincial Governance	Vienna Provincial Parliament, City Senate as Provincial Government	General Assembly and its committees, capital district local authorities
Decentralization	Centralized administration	Decentralized, with 23 districts each having its own local government
District Governance	District representatives, but centralized budget management	District mayors and local governments manage their own budgets
Budget	In 2022 the state and local government of Vienna's Balance came to -4 871 444 euros[2]	In 2022, the Operational resources and deduction balance arising from central budgetary relations of Budapest came to -1 524,4 million[3] forint
Budget Management	Drafted by Mayor, debated and approved by City Council	Decentralized; city-wide initiatives overseen by Mayor, local budgets by district mayors

Sources: budapest.hu; wien.gv.at

The Political Landscape of Austria and Hungary

The general political processes of the two states differ not only in the level of centralization and the institutional structure of municipal government, but also in the degree of crisis of their respective democracies. The backsliding of democracy in the Central European region is not only characteristic of Hungary, but the decline is also present in various ways. However, the Hungarian case is particularly interesting as the new model of authoritarianism utilizes democratic institutional forms, through processes in which elected political figures implement policies to systematically weaken or eliminate internal checks and balances and

---

[2] https://www.statistik.at/en/statistics/national-economy-and-public-finance/public-finance/public-finance/accounting-of-public-authorities

[3] Basic Goals and Values Defining the 2023 budget of the Municipality of Budapest

secure the long-term rule of the ruling parties (Fleck, Chronowski, and Bard 2022). In the case of Austria, although there have been political scandals, these only reinforce that it is a more stable liberal democracy, as no democratic backsliding is detectable (Tshona 2021).

The scandal in Austria, known as the 'Ibiza scandal', in which high-ranking politicians were filmed offering public contracts in exchange for media coverage and campaign support. In the aftermath of the scandal, a vice-chancellor and other political figures resigned almost immediately. Its further impact led to the dissolution of the then coalition government. The situation in Hungary, on the other hand, is less capable of overcoming the political excesses of the current central power. Due to the systemic breakdown of checks and balances and its monopoly on power, which has been firmly established so far, the political scandals of the last more than a decade have been without consequences in the country. This comparison reveals a profound difference between the political cultures of the two countries; while the self-regulating mechanism of the Austrian democratic framework and culture is at function, the lack of democratic institutions and political accountability in Hungary lead to fundamental problems in the country's governance. This affects local political decision-making on multiple levels. The process of undermining democracy in Hungary (Ágh 2018; Anghel and Jones 2024) is also accompanied by the centralization of power. As a result, local decision-making has a steadily decreasing autonomy, making the implementation of certain policy innovations increasingly difficult. Without considering the individual needs and capacities of local communities, the conditions for sustainability are difficult to create and impede the achievement of the SDG agenda. Centralized economic decision making, although it is operational in Austria, in Hungary leads to misallocation of funds without a democratic distributional framework. Thus, due to the difficulty to detach from the national policy agenda, the implementation of a sustainable local economy and development that meets local needs is slowed down or does not take place.

After a detailed description of the two cities institutional structure and political status in their country we can conclude that that Vienna benefits from the established centralized structure of the governance, that allows for a more effective policymaking, while Budapest's structure provides challenges financial and political hurdles. The two countries political landscape also defines how local policymaking is facilitated.

SDG Policies: Policy frameworks related to the Sustainable Development Goals

In this section the two cities' frameworks and strategies will be collected to understand how comprehensive and related they are to each other and to ease the assessment of their connections to the directives of the SDGs. Vienna's Smart City initiative that was first introduced in 2014 however, been revised and is still the main framework in use. Budapest's multiple social and environmental programs have been introduced by the government which have been in power since 2019.

Vienna and Budapest are both large cities with large populations and considerable regional influence. As members of the United Nations, they are also part of the SDG network, meaning both are committed in the pursuit of reaching the goals until 2030. However, the two capitals have had different successes in achieving the SDGs, with diverging policy implementation. Recognized globally as an accomplished green city, Vienna boasts a high quality of life, a stable economy and solid social policies, providing a strong foundation for SDG initiatives. In contrast, Budapest's progress is more in line with the regional average ("European Cities SDG Index" 2019). The city faces challenges in policy implementation and sustainable development, which will affect its overall success in achieving the SDGs. These

challenges may be linked to the political landscape in the country. In Budapest, local government is occasionally not aligned with national policies and guidelines. However, the centralized control of the national government may undermine the city's ability to implement its own initiatives (Deets 2023). Deets (2023) states that limiting the access of information in the city, running themed campaigns, blaming the district government over budgeting issues, or transportation mistakes is able to weaken the political approval of the city and with the new Constitution alteration of local power, thus preventing effective policymaking. The mismatch between local and national priorities leads to inefficient policy implementation, as funding and budget constraints. Exploring Budapest's green and social policy frameworks will show in detail how connected they are to the SDG network.

In both Vienna and Budapest, new mayors took office in 2018 and 2019, marking a new beginning and an opportunity to shape a new political framework for their cities. The focus of policy evaluation and analysis begins in 2019, as both Michael Ludwig, Mayor of Vienna, and Gergely Karácsony, Mayor of Budapest, have brought new perspectives to the political landscape of their cities. Ludwig replaced a predecessor in power for two decades, while Karácsony followed a decade of dominance by the previous mayor. This transition gave both cities the opportunity to innovate and implement new strategic directions under new leadership.

Programs of Budapest

There is no specific policy or body in the municipal government dealing with the SDGs; there are environmental, development programs and strategies. The current climate program of Budapest (Zétényi et al. 2021), the Budapest Climate Program, has been developed by the city to improve and protect the green environment of Budapest. This Plan was approved by the General Assembly by Resolution 141/2021 (I.27.). The implementation of the environmental

plan can be monitored annually in the Budapest Environmental Assessment. This environmental plan is to be implemented in the urban development concept and urban planning instruments, as well as in other urban development policy plans. The environmental vision and targets set out in the National Environment Program form the basis of the Climate Change Program of the City of Budapest. It does not include the SDGs as a specific target to be achieved, but it fits within the framework of the 2030 Climate and Energy Framework of the EU and Energy Roadmap 2050 environmental policy strategy roadmap of the EU and other international agreements, such as the Paris Agreement of the UN.

Environmental Policies

Three strategic goals are defined in the Budapest Climate Program including the Reduction of Emissions; Adaptation and preparedness; Climate awareness and shaping mindsets about the climate(Tatai et al. 2021). These strategic goals are consistent with multiple targets of the SDGs such as target 13.2 "Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning" or 13.3 "Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning" under SDG 13 (Climate Action). Reducing emissions would mean improving energy efficiency and increasing the proportion of renewable energy sources, improving the energy efficiency of the transport and developing environmentally friendly modes of transport and increasing and improving the quality of green spaces to improve carbon absorption capacity. In addition, the National Climate Program is based on nine principles, and upon which the Budapest Climate Program is based; the right to a healthy environment as a fundamental human right, the precautionary principle, the principle of conservation, the "polluter pays principle" meaning that the one who pollutes, should pay the

damages, the importance of biodiversity, the principles of cooperation, integration and the principle of mutual assistance or subsidiarity which means that what a smaller part of society - for example, a local authority - can do, it should not be taken over by a higher entity.

Social Policies

The social elements of the SDGs are presented in the Home, For Everyone social policy strategy that was adopted in June of 2022. While it does not explicitly mention the SDGs, the underlying goals correspond with each other. Ensuring access for affordable housing and basic services is one of the targets of SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). Home, For Everyone instead of policing the issue, calls for more affordable housing to address homelessness. The strategy sets out four overarching goals: 1. to prevent homelessness from occurring, 2. to help people move out of homelessness by expanding affordable housing, 3. to reduce street homelessness and ensure that no one has to live without an accessible home, and 4. to ensure decent housing. This strategy advises the central government on social policy reforms to reduce homelessness and on a review of the budget for funding social policy. For district authorities, the strategy calls for improvements in the delivery of legal accountability. One of the legally required tasks of the Municipality of Budapest included in the strategy, is to provide extraordinary municipal support to homeless people. Over the last decade, the municipal spending on financial assistance for homeless people has decreased significantly. The strategy also underlines that in social policy reforms aimed at radically reducing homelessness in the long term, the Budapest municipality can only play a limited role in policymaking, making the responsibility of the central government even more pronounced. By and large Budapest's social and environmental programs have elements of the SDG agenda, although not in an all-inclusive framework.

Smart city of Vienna

In contrast, Vienna has already reaffirmed its commitment in multiple ways to the goals made by the UN. Many of the objectives embraced by the SDGs have already been included in city strategies. The goals and their indicators were directly integrated into the city's Smart City Framework for a smart and sustainable urban development in 2018 and 2019 during the part of a review. The strategy has been revised since then, the last time in 2022. The rationale behind the revision is to place more focus on the climate targets and to avoid the possible policy "greenwashing" by creating absolute target values. The long-term nature of the strategy implies that there will be other instances of revision and reassessing.

History and Framework

The Smart City Wien was first introduced in 2011 first as a framework. It serves as an umbrella framework aimed at achieving a high quality of life for everyone in Vienna through social and technical innovation in all areas while maximizing resource conservation (Roblek 2019). It was then adapted into the Smart City Wien Framework Strategy in 2014 as the first version. Since then, it has been reevaluated and revised in 2017 and 2019, and the last revision was in 2022, intending to uphold the city's leading position within the alliance of sustainable cities. The three main objectives of the Smart City Wien framework have been broken down into eleven closely related themes. Each thematic area contributes to the achievement of a specific sustainable development objective.

Connection to the SDGs

The SDGs and the Agenda 2030 correspond with Smart City Wien; the revised framework builds upon the goals and integrates them in a deliberate way. The strategy of Vienna is contributing to many international national climate goals. It incorporates the values of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs; it provides the framework for their delivery. It also is committed to other agreements like the UN Paris Agreement. In regional aspect it embodies the directives of the European Green Deal and the EU Circular Economy Plan. It aligns with the federal commitment to reaching net zero by 2040 and achieving a 100% renewable electricity supply by as early as 2030.

The attributes of a smart city have a multi-faceted realization in Vienna. Vienna's Smart City strategy encompasses multiple dimensions, including education, social inclusion, and healthcare (Pozdniakova 2018). In terms of education, Vienna prioritizes further education for youth in higher education. The social inclusion aspect focuses on increasing the number of women in decision-making positions, providing affordable housing for all, and ensuring overall safety in the city. The healthcare component promotes a healthy lifestyle and provides the highest level of medical care to its citizens. The environmental objectives of Smart Cities are implemented in several sectors, including the energy sector, transportation, cost-optimization of buildings, and increasing green areas. Economically, Vienna's long-term plans aim to remain Europe's largest city with the highest purchasing power by 2050 and to enhance its attractiveness as the central European headquarters of international companies and organizations. The Smart City strategy of Vienna is one of the most detailed, promoting the implementation capabilities needed to process the complexity of the SDGs (Pozdniakova 2018).

The comparison of the two cities' inclusion of SDGs in an important base for seeing the structure about sustainability and development. However, this chapter also explores the

intention of the two cities to see how determined they are with national or international objectives, particularly about the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the UN. The integration of the SDGs in the Budapest Climate Program and Home, For Everyone strategy, is less comprehensive compared to the Smart City Wien. The Budapest Climate Program also does not directly reference SDGs, thus leaving the opportunity to leave out specific goals.

Table 2.: SDGs and their connections to Budapest and Vienna Policies

SDG	Policy	
	Budapest	Vienna
1. No Hunger	Reducing Street Homelessness	Economy and employment Urban ecology, environment & water Health & social inclusion Education, science & research Digitalization
2. Zero Hunger		Adapting to climate change Urban ecology, environment & water Health & social inclusion
3. Good Health and Well-Being	Right to a healthy environment as a fundamental human right	Adapting to climate change Urban ecology, environment & water Health & social inclusion
4. Quality Education		Economy & employment Health & social inclusion Education, science & research Digitalization Participation, engagement & culture
5. Gender Equality		Economy & employment Health & social inclusion Education, science & research Digitalization Participation, engagement & culture
6. Clean Water and Sanitation	Right to a healthy environment as a fundamental human right	Zero waste & circular economy Adapting to climate change Urban ecology, environment & water
7. Affordable and Clean Energy	Reduction of Emissions, Principle of Integration	Energy supply Buildings Adapting to climate change Education, science & research Digitalization
8. Decent Work and Economic Growths		Economy & employment Health & social inclusion Education, science & research Digitalization
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	Principle of Integration	Economy & employment Education, science & research Digitalization

10. Reduced Inequalities		Economy & employment Health & social inclusion Education, science & research Digitalization Participation, engagement & culture
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities	Reduction of Emissions, Adaptation and Preparedness, Affordable Housing, Homelessness Prevention, Reducing Street Homelessness, Ensuring Decent Housing, Principle of Integration	Energy supply, Mobility and transport, Buildings, Economy & employment, Zero waste & circular economy Adapting to climate change, Urban ecology, environment & water, Health & social inclusion Education, science & research, Digitalization, Participation, engagement & culture
12. Responsible Consumption and Production	Precautionary principle, Polluter pays principle	Energy supply Buildings Economy & employment Zero waste & circular economy Adapting to climate change Education, science & research Digitalization
13. Climate Action	Reduction of Emissions, Adaptation and Preparedness, Climate Awareness, Precautionary principle, Polluter pays principle	Energy supply Mobility and transport Buildings Adapting to climate change Education, science & research
14. Life Below Water		Urban ecology, environment & water
15. Life on Land	Principle of conservation, Importance of biodiversity	Zero waste & circular economy Adapting to climate change Urban ecology, environment & water
16. Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	Subsidiarity principle, Principle of Cooperation	Health & social inclusion Digitalization Participation, engagement & culture
17. Partnership for the Goals	Principle of Cooperation	Economy & employment, Health & social inclusion Participation, engagement & culture

Source: Smart City Wien; Budapest Climate Program

Evaluation of the policies: The Smart City of Vienna and the programs of Budapest

The evaluation of the policies will show how the overall structure of the strategies and frameworks might connect to the city's effort in reaching the SDGs by emphasizing the the effectiveness of Vienna's governance which enables cohesive planning and showing how Budapest's current isolated strategies and frameworks lead to policy trade-offs.

The aforementioned strategies and their implementation within the governance structure of each city can shed light on how the structure can influence the implementation of policies to achieve the SDGs. Vienna's ability to effectively implement the smart city framework can be attributed to its mainly centralized structure, as the unified governance of the city allows for rapid and effective implementation (Mocca, Friesenecker, and Kazepov 2020). The link between research and the economy is also a key component of its success. Many of Austria's major cities are home to a number of important economic and innovation hubs that are making Austria a global green pioneer.

In Budapest, there are several strategies to achieve a greener, more livable Budapest, but these are isolated plans with different governmental setups behind them, unlike the Smart City in Vienna, which is a comprehensive, all-encompassing plan. There is no body dedicated to the SDGs and no mention of them in the strategies. Efforts in Budapest to achieve the SDGs without specifically mentioning them and including them in the draft plan may lead to different policies overlapping or compromises instead of increasing synergies. The strategies adopted after 2019 are good direction towards a sustainable city, however, there is a need for cohesive planning and data management for facilitating assessment of the progress the city has made.

Vienna's centralized municipal governance and all-encompassing approach to sustainability is an example of how governance structures can facilitate the implementation of

policies to achieve the SDGs. The city's ability to capitalize on its strengths and the substantial support of the federal state equates to achievable goals and a high quality of life in the city. The implementation of the smart city framework contributes to connect the complex web of policies related to sustainable development. In comparison, Budapest is more fragmented, both in structure and in strategic planning.

Analysis

Budapest and Vienna were thus built on different institutional structures based on the legal status and constitution of their respective states. Vienna's centralized structure, which leaves room for individual decision-making in each district of the city, nevertheless allows for a unified policymaking and implementation path. With Budapest's 23 districts and their own district councils with the district mayors forming part of the city's main decision-making body, making policymaking for the city as a whole is a slow process requiring consensus. In addition, district mayors have independent policymaking authority, which can lead to contradictions and overlaps, which can result in trade-offs in SDG policies. From a budgetary perspective, Vienna's situation is also decided at a centralized level, but as Budapest is politically bound, the budget issue creates problems in policy formulation. Local governments with different political stances do not receive budget cuts from the government in Austria based on the literature reviewed.

Vienna's main framework to help achieve the SDGs is Smart City Vienna, a comprehensive strategy with the main objective of improving the quality of life in the city. Its revisions explicitly mention the SDGs and link policies to the SDGs so that the plan is interlinked, and synergies help to achieve the goals in the city. In Budapest, there are multiple frameworks, which creates opportunities for inconsistencies, overlaps, or gaps in the

28

implementation of the SDGs and climate policies (Corfee-Morlot et al. 2009); if there is no specific mention, it is easy to miss targets needed to achieve the SDGs. Examining specifically those goals that may have no direct connection to SDGs, seen on Table 2 we can find the strategies of Budapest lacking for a variety of reasons. As an example, the Smart City Wien framework contains breaking the traditional gender roles, especially, in education and promoting gender equality, in contrast the social policy program of Budapest cannot be linked to SDG 5 (Gender Equality) or its targets, even though gendered inequalities are significant problems, not just locally, but nationwide(Csóré 2022; Fodor 2022). It SDG 4 (Quality Education) presents a unique struggle in Budapest due to the centralization of the education system in the country. Municipal authorities do not have the ability anymore to implement their own policies in hope of improving education of their district (Velkey 2022; Semjén, Le, and Hermann 2018). This demonstrates how central government centralization effort can complicate implementation of policies or strategies aimed at achieving the SDGs.

SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) is a critical element as healthcare is cornerstone of the social aspect of sustainable development. However, the poor state of the healthcare system was highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Human Rights Watch conducted interviews with multiple survivors or relatives of victims and found structural problems in the healthcare system. Lack of hygiene standards, protective equipment, isolation rooms and personnel were among the many issues reported (Human Rights Watch, 2020). In contrast, Austria has one of the highest density of doctors in the EU, with almost 7 doctors per 1000 inhabitants in Vienna. The density of nurses is also above the EU average (OECD and European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies 2023). These examples further prove how in some cases of centralization can restrict flexibility and obstruct sustainable development improvements.

It cannot be stated that all of the missing elements are excluded from the table are ignored by the city's administration, however, the lack of specific mentioning and

comprehensive introduction may cause ineffective policies and trade-offs. Because the SDGs are such a complex and interconnected system, they can either hinder or assist each other's progress. A cohesive policy strategy that explicitly addresses each target will support the efforts, use resources efficiently and raise the city's ability to achieve sustainable development.

The issue of financing and budgeting for the SDGs is a complex struggle, as even the most successful cities sometimes lack the resources to implement their municipal government's plans. However, since the SDGs are as collective a framework as they can potentially be, it would be beneficial to try to label the allocated budget in relation to what SDGs they are promoting. This would therefore allow to better identify which SDGs need the most financial support, thereby helping other cities or levels of government to prioritize and allocate funds most efficiently.

The two cities' green and social policymaking is, however, not as different, which could cause gaps in their success of implementation. Their governmental structure could also not be the sole reason for the distance between them. There is a political culture and socio-economic gap that is making the policy implementation, including the policies in an effort to reach the SDGs, less successful. Whilst Budapest is making efforts to advance sustainable development in the city, these efforts are less successful, as discussed previously. From the above we can conclude that these are due to both external and internal reasons. The internal structure of the city legislative body leaves room for weakening the capacity to assert political will and for different political agendas to mutually obstruct each other. Moreover, the lack of consistent commitment to sustainable development also slows down the implementation of real progress. External political pressures and the opposing political will of central power also put the Hungarian capital in a policy-making predicament in which local governance is limited in its policymaking capacity, making it difficult to create the conditions necessary to foster sustainable development.

Vienna's success, in contrast, can be attributed to its support of local governance for the sustainable development agenda. The centralized system of the city facilitates the implementation of the smart city initiative. Although Vienna's top-down centralized system has been effective, it may not be universally suitable, as many additional factors facilitate the path to sustainable development, including a democratic political culture, a long tradition of social policy and the relatively stable economic situation of the city. The transformation to a smart city requires functioning governance along with long-term commitment towards sustainability and "smart reforms". Vienna is still on the path towards the objective it has set, and while global events such as the Covid-19 pandemic have had a major impact on the city, as everywhere else in the world, it remains a city of stability, which is an important characteristic.

Both cities are, however, deficient in regularly collecting and publishing quantitative data on the progress of SDG-related indicators. The lack of data and indicative publications based on specific targets make it difficult to accurately assess the success of policy implementation. The collection and clustering of certain economic and social performance indicators, which are inherently part of central statistics, would help to assess the overall urban conditions and would also be an important signal of a higher level of commitment to sustainability objectives. Data management is essential to show how previous commitment can make a tangible difference, helping to drive further change.

Conclusions

In conclusion, a number of key lessons can be drawn from the comparison of the two cities. The success of policymaking and implementation, whether directly linked to the SDGs or not, depends on a number of variables. However, the examples and analysis suggest that,

regardless of how decentralized or centralized a system is, political culture, political preferences and differences, and alliances play a crucial role.

Vienna, a centralized city in a decentralized state has successfully implemented its comprehensive city initiative that encompasses social, environmental, economic and urban developmental aspects with the main goal of raising the quality-of-life of its citizens. The success can be contributed to the city governance's ability to keep a unified approach, with support from the federal government, amongst other conditions. No budget cut or other political reprisals were given. Budapest, on the other hand, is suffering the consequences of central government control over the funding of an increasing number of issues, which is preventing the city's progress in important areas such as education and social equality. It also faces challenges arising from fragmented governance structures, such as policy trade-offs and inconsistencies. In order to Budapest to achieve more successful implementation of sustainable development there is a need for the city to start the transformative steps towards becoming a smart city and develop a holistic, mostly encompassing strategy that will help outlining the necessary changes and policies.

While Vienna's success shows the benefits of its institutional structure, Budapest's struggles show that this is not the main obstacle to sustainability. The EU framework can offer opportunities and potentially bridge the gap between the two cities, but the need for central government coordination and support is not diminished. Both cities are committed to improving the quality of life and are taking significant steps to combat climate change. While there are similarities and differences between Vienna and Budapest, the most important takeaway is the importance of a democratic political culture and coordinated, comprehensive policymaking. In such a culture, even the opposition and the governing party can coordinate and work together on issues for a better future.

Cohesive analysis about the traditional and modern infrastructure and in-depth analysis about the education system and health services provided by the city are out of the scope of this thesis, however, future urban studies or other comparative policy analysis would provide a comprehensive description of how the cities address these critical areas. The gaps of this thesis can also be addressed through future research about SDGs and their localized implementation strategies, moreover, how local governments are able to integrate SDG targets into urban development plans. Other recommendation, as we are approaching the 2030 deadline for the SDGs is to keep build data sets and information about policy implementation dedicated specifically for the SDGs, which helps in cooperation and strategic planning on sub-national, national and even regional level. Future research needs to delve into the dynamic of localized SDGs and to explore the need to incorporate them into development strategies. Moreover, examining how national policies shape local governance structures and policy implementation and analyzing how centralized or decentralized is the best practice in achieving successful localized policy implementation. Exploring how local and national political priorities can affect policymaking in multi-level governances to find methods and recommendations for better practices in policymaking in efforts of achieving sustainable development.

References:

Ágh, Attila. 2018. "Decline of Democracy in the ECE and the Core-Periphery Divide: Rule of Law Conflicts of Poland and Hungary with the EU." *Journal of Comparative Politics* 11 (2): 30–48.

Anghel, Veronica, and Erik Jones. 2024. "What Went Wrong In Hungary." *Journal of Democracy* 35 (2): 52–64.

Brandtner, Christof, Markus A Höllerer, Renate E Meyer, and Martin Kornberger. 2017. "Enacting Governance through Strategy: A Comparative Study of Governance Configurations in Sydney and Vienna." *Urban Studies* 54 (5): 1075–91. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098015624871.

Brandts, Jordi, and David J. Cooper. 2016. "Centralized vs. Decentralized Management: An Experimental Study."

Brenner, János. 2021. "Hungary." ARL Academy For Territorial Development in the Leibniz Association. 2021. https://www.arl-international.com/knowledge/country-profiles/hungary.

Brundtland, Gro Harlem. 1987. "Our Common Future—Call for Action." *Environmental Conservation* 14 (4): 291–94. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0376892900016805.

Bull, Benedicte, and Jason Miklian. 2019. "Towards Global Business Engagement with Development Goals? Multilateral Institutions and the SDGs in a Changing Global Capitalism." *Business and Politics* 21 (4): 445–63. https://doi.org/10.1017/bap.2019.27.

Bush, Judy. 2020. "The Role of Local Government Greening Policies in the Transition towards Nature-Based Cities." *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions* 35 (June):35–44. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eist.2020.01.015.

Caragliu, Andrea, Chiara Del Bo, and Peter Nijkamp. 2013. "Smart Cities in Europe." In *Creating Smart-Er Cities*, 65–82. Routledge.

Chen, Chong-Wen. 2023. "Can Smart Cities Bring Happiness to Promote Sustainable Development? Contexts and Clues of Subjective Well-Being and Urban Livability." *Developments in the Built Environment* 13 (March):100108. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dibe.2022.100108.

Corfee-Morlot, Jan, Lamia Kamal-Chaoui, Michael Donovan, Ian Cochran, Alexis Robert, and Pierre-Jonathan Teasdale. 2009. "Cities, Climate Change and Multilevel Governance." *OECD, Environment Directorate, OECD Environment Working Papers* 14 (January).

Csóré Kira Tícia. 2022. "A nők és férfiak közötti egyenlőtlenség a munka világában : női és férfi vezetők, a nemek motiválása és munkahelyi nehézségeik." *ÚJ MUNKAÜGYI SZEMLE* 3 (4): 82–86.

Deets, Stephen. 2023. "Liberal Democratic Mayors in Illiberal Regimes: Budapest's Challenges." *Problems of Post-Communism* 0 (0): 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/10758216.2023.2241617.

Eisenmenger, Nina, Melanie Pichler, Nora Krenmayr, Dominik Noll, Barbara Plank, Ekaterina Schalmann, Marie-Theres Wandl, and Simone Gingrich. 2020. "The Sustainable Development Goals Prioritize Economic Growth over Sustainable Resource Use: A Critical Reflection on the SDGs from a Socio-Ecological Perspective." *Sustainability Science* 15 (4): 1101–10. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-020-00813-x.

"European Cities SDG Index." 2019. 2019. https://euro-cities.sdgindex.org/#/.

Fleck, Zoltán, Nora Chronowski, and Petra Bard. 2022. "The Crisis of the Rule of Law, Democracy and Fundamental Rights in Hungary."

Fodor, Eva. 2022. "More Babies for the State: The 'Carefare' Regime of Anti-Liberal Hungary." *New Labor Forum* 31 (1): 34–41. https://doi.org/10.1177/10957960211062460.

Giles-Corti, Billie, Melanie Lowe, and Jonathan Arundel. 2020. "Achieving the SDGs: Evaluating Indicators to Be Used to Benchmark and Monitor Progress towards Creating Healthy and Sustainable Cities." *Health Policy* 124 (6): 581–90. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthpol.2019.03.001.

Gusul, Procopie Florin. 2024. "The Role Of Eu Funds On Boosting Local Economies In Small Towns Of Romania. Analysis Of Smart City Projects Implemented In Siret Town, Romania." *The USV Annals of Economics and Public Administration* 23 (2 (38)): 76–85.

Gyene, Gyöngyvér. 2009. "Sustainability Discourse in Hungary. An analysis of the sustainability discourse by state and government leaders in the electronic media." *L'Europe en Formation* 352 (2): 197–233. https://doi.org/10.3917/eufor.352.0197.

"Hungary: Health Care Failures Endanger Lives | Human Rights Watch." 2020. August 4, 2020. https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/08/05/hungary-health-care-failures-endanger-lives.

Hutchcroft, Paul D. 2001. "Centralization and Decentralization in Administration and Politics: Assessing Territorial Dimensions of Authority and Power." *Governance* 14 (1): 23–53.

Jaccard, Mark, Rose Murphy, Brett Zuehlke, and Morgan Braglewicz. 2019. "Cities and Greenhouse Gas Reduction: Policy Makers or Policy Takers?" *Energy Policy* 134 (November):110875. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2019.07.011.

Jeffery, Charlie. 2015. *The Regional Dimension of the European Union: Towards a Third Level in Europe?* Routledge.

Kákai László, and Vető Balázs. 2023. "Állam vagy/és önkormányzat? Adalékok az önkormányzati rendszer átalakításához." *Politikatudományi Szemle* XXVIII. (1.): 17.-41.

Khan, Anisur Rahman, and Shahriar Khandaker. 2016. "A Critical Insight into Policy Implementation and Implementation Performance." *Public Policy & Administration/Viesoji Politika Ir Administravimas* 15 (4).

Kollman, Ken, and Alton B. H. Worthington. 2021. "Party Systems and Political Centralization and Decentralization." *The Journal of Politics* 83 (3): 1178–83. https://doi.org/10.1086/710971.

Kuhn, Berthold M. 2018. "China's Commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals: An Analysis of Push and Pull Factors and Implementation Challenges." *Chinese Political Science Review* 3 (4): 359–88. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41111-018-0108-0.

Lanshina, Tatyana, Vera Barinova, Arina Loginova, Lavrovskii Edward, and I. Ponedelnik. 2019. "Localizing and Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals at the National Level: Cases of Leadership." *International Organisations Research Journal* 14 (April):207–24. https://doi.org/10.17323/1996-7845-2019-01-12.

Leavesley, Amelia, Alexei Trundle, and Cathy Oke. 2022. "Cities and the SDGs: Realities and Possibilities of Local Engagement in Global Frameworks." *Ambio* 51 (6): 1416–32. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-022-01714-2.

Mocca, Elisabetta, Michael Friesenecker, and Yuri Kazepov. 2020. "Greening Vienna. The Multi-Level Interplay of Urban Environmental Policy–Making." *Sustainability* 12 (4): 1577. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12041577.

Monkelbaan, Joachim. 2019. *Governance for the Sustainable Development Goals: Exploring an Integrative Framework of Theories, Tools, and Competencies*. Sustainable Development Goals Series. Singapore: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0475-0.

Mötv. - 2011. Évi CLXXXIX. Törvény Magyarország Helyi Önkormányzatairól - Hatályos Jogszabályok Gyűjteménye. 2011. https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1100189.tv.

OECD, and European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. 2023. "Austria: Country Health Profile 2023." https://eurohealthobservatory.who.int/publications/m/austria-country-health-profile-2023.

"Otthon, Mindenkinek." 2022. June 2022. https://archiv.budapest.hu/Documents/civil_iroda/Otthon,%20mindenkinek%20(Elo%CC%8Bzetes%20va%CC%81ltozat).pdf.

Pál, Ádám, and Michal Radvan. 2024. "Constitutional Regulation of Local Financial Autonomy in the Visegrad Countries." *Studia Iuridica Lublinensia* 33:1.

Porter, David O., and Eugene A. Olsen. 1976. "Some Critical Issues in Government Centralization and Decentralization." *Public Administration Review* 36 (1): 72–84. https://doi.org/10.2307/974743.

Potter, Melle. 2020. "Accelerating the Implementation of the SDGs : How Multilevel Governance Supportsthe Implementation of SDG 12 in the EU." Info:eu-repo/semantics/masterThesis. University of Twente. 2020. https://essay.utwente.nl/82814/.

Pozdniakova, Anna M. 2018. "SMART CITY STRATEGIES 'LONDON-STOCKHOLM-VIENNA-KYIV.'" *Acta Innovations*, no. 27, 31–45.

Roblek, Vasja. 2019. "The Smart City of Vienna." In *Smart City Emergence*, 105–27. Elsevier.

Schultze, Claus J. 2003. "Cities and EU Governance: Policy-Takers or Policy-Makers?" *Regional & Federal Studies* 13 (1): 121–47. https://doi.org/10.1080/714004785.

Semjén, András, Marcell Le, and Zoltán Hermann. 2018. "The Goals and Consequences of the Centralization of Public Education in Hungary." *Acta Educationis Generalis* 8 (3): 9–34. https://doi.org/10.2478/atd-2018-0015.

Signe, Landry. 2017. "Policy Implementation – A Synthesis of the Study of Policy Implementation and the Causes of Policy Failure."

Silva, Felipe, Thiago De Paula, Felipe Gerhard, Caio Victor, and Ana Freitas. 2024. "Does Tackling the Sustainable Development Goals Lead to Life Satisfaction?" *Environment,*

Development and Sustainability, February, 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-024-04640-3.

Sippel, Maike, and Till Jenssen. 2009. "What About Local Climate Governance? A Review of Promise and Problems." *University Library of Munich, Germany, MPRA Paper*, January. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1514334.

Stadt Wien. n.d. "The Organisation of the Vienna City Administration."

Tallberg, Jonas, Magnus Lundgren, Thomas Sommerer, and Theresa Squatrito. 2020. "Why International Organizations Commit to Liberal Norms." *International Studies Quarterly* 64 (3): 626–40. https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqaa046.

Tatai, Zsombor, Anasztázia Bódi-Nagy, István Orosz, Péter Becsák, Zoltán Pető, and Krisztián Szabó. 2021. "Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan of Budapest." 2021. https://archiv.budapest.hu/sites/english/Documents/BP_klimastrategia_SECAP_EN_final.pdf.

"The Municipality of Budapest." n.d. Accessed May 30, 2024. https://archiv.budapest.hu:443/sites/english/Lapok/The-Municipality-of-Budapest.aspx.

Tshona, Jean Marc Mwambi. 2021. "How European Populists Contribute to Democratic Backsliding : A Comparative Study of Austria and Hungary." *100*. Master thesis, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, Ås. https://nmbu.brage.unit.no/nmbu-xmlui/handle/11250/2836886.

Velkey, Gábor. 2022. "The Increasing Replication of Territorial and Social Inequalities in Public Education in Hungary—Causes, Components, Practices and Mechanisms." *Social Sciences* 11 (3): 95. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11030095.

Wiener Gemeindewahlordnung 1996 - Landesrecht Konsolidiert Wien, Fassung Vom 01.06.2024. n.d. Accessed June 1, 2024.

https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=LrW&Gesetzesnummer=20 000320.

Wiener Stadtverfassung - Landesrecht Konsolidiert Wien, Fassung Vom 17.05.2024. n.d. Accessed May 17, 2024. https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=LrW&Gesetzesnummer=20 000308.

Wurster, Stefan. 2011. "Sustainability and Regime Type: Do Democracies Perform Better in Promoting Sustainable Development than Autocracies?" *Zeitschrift Für Staats- Und Europawissenschaften (ZSE) / Journal for Comparative Government and European Policy* 9 (4): 538–59.

Zétényi Dávid, Szőke Balázs, Becsák Péter, Orosz István, Tatai Zsombor, and Szabó Krisztián. 2021. "Budapest Főváros Környezetvédelmi Programja 2021-2026."

Zsigó Zsanett. 2023. "Budapest az élhető városok nyomában – Budapest élhetőségének kérdései a nemzetközi kutatásokban Közép- Európa fővárosainak tükrében." https://unipub.lib.uni-corvinus.hu/9897/1/SZAZADVEG_2023_04_02_Budapest-az-elheto-varosok-nyomaban--Budapest-elhetosegenek-kerdesei-a-nemzetkozi-kutatasokban-Kozep-Europa-fovarosainak-tukreben.pdf.