

EDITORIAL

TADEUSZ STRYJAKIEWICZ

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Tadeusz Stryjakiewicz, Institute of Socio-Economic Geography and Spatial Management, Adam Mickiewicz University, ul. Dziegielowa 27, 61-680 Poznań, Poland; e-mail: tadek@amu.edu.pl

Quaestiones Geographicae has been going through the process of continuous transformation intended to widen its range of readership, improve its citation index, and raise its level of internationalisation. After the introduction of the journal onto the Versita platform (where it is available on-line) and a change of editors, the time has come for a new Editorial Board. On behalf of the editors, I would like to thank its outgoing members for the many years of fruitful cooperation; we count on them to keep in contact with *Quaestiones Geographicae*. I also welcome the new members, hoping they will popularise the journal among new readers.

The present issue is a *Varia* one; it is a set of eight articles addressing a variety of topics. Apart from two contributions of a theoretical and methodological nature, they all concern regional development problems in two countries: Poland and Russia. Such an international composition allows a comparative analysis of present-day development processes.

The volume opens with an extensive article by Zbyszko Chojnicki presenting an empirical-scientific model of modern geography. The author characterises the model along three lines: ontological, epistemological and methodological, defending the conception of geography as an empirical science (as opposed, e.g., to its humanistic model).

The next articles address various aspects of socio-economic development at two levels: national and regional. The current state and development prospects of the Russian economy are presented, against the backdrop of other countries, by Irina Rodionova and Tatiana Kokuytseva. They show the process of Russia joining the integrated world economic system to be far from simple. They argue that the country has to find a new place for itself on the global market, especially where high-technology and knowledge-intensive industries are concerned.

The three articles that follow deal with the heterogeneity of development processes in Poland. Teresa Czyż and Jan Hauke analyse the evolution of regional disparities in Poland over the years 1995–2007. They examine differences in the economic development level of Polish regions on the basis of per capita income, indices of local government finance, and investment outlays. They also consider the effect of development-activating factors on regional income. The authors conclude that the development process does not involve regional convergence, and that the development-activating factors do not contribute significantly to an equalisation of inter-regional differences. This means that the regional policy conducted in Poland so far has failed to produce the expected results, and should be revised.

Anna Kołodziejczak and Tomasz Kossowski discuss the advancing diversification of the farming system in Poland. Through its diversification, owing to measures introduced under the EU Common Agricultural Policy, Polish agriculture seems to ever better adjust to the natural and economic conditions.

A totally different aspect of the Polish economy is considered by Joanna Dominiak in her article on the country's level of development of electronic services. She compares it with the other European Union states to find that while Poland entered the path of e-service development with much delay, over the years 2004–2009 this sector showed high development dynamics, especially in the fields of e-government and e-commerce.

The next two articles acquaint the reader with selected development problems of the vast region of Siberia. Natalia Syssoeva and Igor Dets present the effect of state-level strategic planning projects on the socio-economic development of Siberian regions. They emphasise, among other things, an increasing dependence of this area on foreign Asian markets and the need for change in the institutional framework of regional development.

A continuation of this discussion, this time focusing on the prospects of development of

environmental protection infrastructure in the Siberian Baikal region, is the article by Tatiana Zabortseva. It offers an analysis of the current infrastructure for managing solid waste and proposes a scenario of its development. The solution of this problem is of key significance considering the planned growth of the world-status tourism industry in this environmentally unique region.

The last contribution, by Jan Hauke and Tomasz Kossowski, is methodological in nature. The authors make a comparison of values of Pearson's and Spearman's correlation coefficients as well as their statistical significance for different sets of data describing regional indices of socio-economic development. Considering the popularity of correlation analysis in spatial research, worth noting is their final conclusion calling for care in the interpretation of Spearman's rank correlation coefficient as a measure of the strength of associations between variables. It should be taken to heart by all planners and regional analysts employing this method.

The Editors hope that the variety of problems, methodological approaches and geographical areas discussed in this volume will meet the expectations of a wide spectrum of our readers.

Tadeusz Stryjakiewicz

Managing Editor
Human Geography and Spatial Management