

## EDITORIAL

ANDRZEJ KOSTRZEWSKI, TADEUSZ STRYJAKIEWICZ

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Andrzej Kostrzewski, Institute of Palaeogeography and Geoecology, Adam Mickiewicz University, Dziegielowa 27, 61-131 Poznań, Poland; e-mail: anko@amu.edu.pl

Tadeusz Stryjakiewicz, Institute of Socio-Economic Geography and Spatial Management, Adam Mickiewicz University, Dziegielowa 27, 61-131 Poznań, Poland; e-mail: tadek@amu.edu.pl

The present volume of *Quaestiones Geographicae* appears on the eve of the 32nd International Geographical Congress in Cologne. Worth noting at this point is the relationship between the 'development path' of our journal and the congresses organised by the International Geographical Union. The first volume of *Quaestiones* came out in 1974 with a view to presenting the scholarly achievements of geographers – mostly from East-Central Europe, then under communist rule – at the IGU Regional Conference in New Zealand and later at the International Geographical Congress in Moscow. In turn, its first Human Geography and Spatial Management volume was published six years ago on the occasion of the IGU Regional Conference in Brisbane.

Since then our journal has undergone a substantial evolution; having developed, it has now won a growing international recognition. The proof is the present volume with contributions of many eminent scholars. Its content is highly diversified; it features a variety of approaches to geographical and spatial-economic research and a variety of scales of analysis.

The first group of articles has a great methodological load and addresses new trends in quantitative research. The volume opens with Peter Nijkamp's "Behaviour of humans and behaviour of models in dynamic space". The paper

provides a concise survey of micro-oriented research and reveals the potential of spatial interaction models (SIMs) to map out human behaviour. Well-grounded in the tradition of geographical thought (Hägerstrand, Tobler), it also indicates new avenues of inquiry, for example one connected with the conception of complexity and an evolutionary approach.

The next article, by Daniel Griffith and Sandra Arlinghaus, is entitled "Urban compression patterns: Fractals and non-Euclidean geometries – inventory and prospect". It is a contribution to an interesting discussion on urban growth and fractality in both, theoretical and practical terms. The authors start with inventorying the existing body of knowledge about fractals and urban areas, and then go on to present evidence of the geometry of and movement in physical urban space. The "Prospect" section offers a variety of future research topics for the reader's consideration.

The discussion of city geometry and fractality continues with the article by Nahid Mohajeri, Paul Longley and Michael Batty, "City shape and the fractality of street patterns". Using fractal analysis, the authors show that the street pattern of the city of Dundee (East Scotland) has fractal characteristics and follows power-law relations.

Although the next articles do not deal with fractal geometry, they show the wide possibili-

ties of application of many other quantitative methods in geographical and spatial-economic research. Tomasz Kossowski and Jan Hauke employ a spatial filtering approach to analyse the labour market in Poland with a focus on metropolitan areas. This approach allows them, among other things, to gain a deeper insight into the spatial dimension of unemployment.

Still other multivariate statistical methods (principal components and cluster analyses) are used by Petr Kladiwo and Marián Halás to make a typology of urban units from the point of view of the quality of life (on the basis of environmental and social indicators). The area studied is the city of Olomouc in the Czech Republic, and the results of the statistical analysis are tested against the perception of the quality of life by its residents.

An urban context also appears in the next contribution, by Olaf Kühne. Its title, however, "Urban nature between modern and postmodern aesthetics: Reflections based on the social constructivist approach", indicates a theoretical-methodological perspective radically different from those of the preceding articles. It tackles the question of the social construction and assessment of physical urban objects (such as trees, gardens, parks) which are perceived as natural. The author also formulates practical recommendations for urban planning, emphasising that the postmodern perspective on planning should be an integral part of the sustainable development of cities.

The next two articles go beyond the space of a city and move on to that of a country. They take up the question of Poland's socio-economic transformation, but adopt the quantitative approach again. Teresa Czyż offers a diagnosis of

the country's current spatial-economic structure with regions divided into core and peripheral ones, and a dynamic analysis of the evolution of this structure over the years 1998-2008. She employs the model of potential to construct an index of regional development, and tests the results against the visions and scenarios presented in official planning documents.

The article by Wiesława Gierańczyk and Tomasz Rachwał deals with structural changes in the industry of Poland against the background of other eastern European Union states. Such a comparison, based on several indicators, allows them to assess the competitive position of Polish industry on international markets and to trace the course of its transformation.

The last article, by Radu Săgeată, takes us to another post-communist country – Romania in South-Eastern Europe. Among its transformation problems have been changes in the territorial-administrative organisation making it necessary to work out standards of inter-communal cooperation. The author shows these questions in terms of their influence on regional development, demonstrating also how heavy the task of overcoming the heritage of the past can be.

We hope that the present volume of *Quaestiones Geographicae*, like its predecessors, will not fail to meet the expectations of the readers. The mosaic of topics, research approaches and study areas that it offers (which fully justifies the Latin term applied to this type of publication, *Varia*) is evidence of the diversity of geography. This diversity is also manifest at the International Geographical Congress (IGC) 2012 in Cologne, which seems to be the largest to be held to date. Let our journal be a modest contribution to this important event.

Andrzej Kostrzewski

Editor-in-Chief  
President of the Committee  
on Geographical Sciences  
Polish Academy of Sciences

Tadeusz Stryjakiewicz

Managing Editor  
Human Geography and Spatial Management