EDITORIAL

Tadeusz Stryjakiewicz, Tomasz Kaczmarek, Jan Buček

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Problems in the geography of governance have not appeared frequently in *Quaestiones Geographicae*, even though this field has lately become an object of interest to a growing number of researchers and practitioners. What emphasises it weight is its interdisciplinary character and far-reaching, application-related consequences for the shaping of contemporary geographical space. Spatial or territorial governance has recently focused largely on its local, metropolitan and regional dimensions. The dynamics of change is very high here, which results in the appearance of ever new research questions, approaches and challenges. Those are the issues you will find in the present thematic volume of our journal, prepared in cooperation with the IGU Commission on Geography of Governance.

The volume opens with an article by the Chair of this Commission, Jan Buček, on urban development policy challenges in East-Central Europe. Those challenges concern in particular three main issues: models and structures of governance, the formation of city regions, and financialisation. The author gives a general outline of the traditional and present-day urban development policies, and illustrates them using Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, as a case in point. He concludes that in spite of a delay in the application of governance innovations, post-socialist cities in East-Central Europe recognise the importance of mutually multiplying effects of governance, city regionalism and financialisation in their urban development policies.

The object of discussion in the next article, by Tadeusz Stryjakiewicz and Emilia Jaroszewska, is one of the major challenges to contemporary urban governance: the process of urban shrinkage, i.e. a long-term decline in the urban population number associated with a structural crisis of local economies and mounting social problems. This challenge, like those analysed by Buček, is also serious in the countries of East-Central Europe, where strategic thinking and planning culture have for years relied on a steady-growth paradigm. The authors present various policies and strategies intended to respond to the process of shrinkage. Generally, strategies predominant in this part of Europe are ones that seek to overcome (ameliorate) the negative effects of shrinkage ('mitigation strategies'), while those oriented towards development in the conditions of shrinkage (i.e. treating shrinkage as an opportunity for a qualitative change in urban development) are still very rare.

The title of the third article, by Christophe Breuer and Jean-Marie Halleux, "Spatiality of local governments in European intermediate urban regions: A methodological approach", shows it to be different from the previous ones, more methodological in character. The authors propose a methodology to implement a European database to understand the phenomenon of the fragmentation of local authorities within urban regions. They have tested several European databases (FUA, LUZ, MET) to create indicators and to develop a typology of urban fragmentation (which mainly depends on a national context). This contribution is an important voice in the debate on territorial reforms and the urban governance transformation.

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The next article, by Jan Binek, Zdeněk Opravil, Roman Chmelař and Hana Svobodova, deals with cooperation and mutual relationships of cities and their hinterlands with regard to the operation of EU development instruments, in particular integrated territorial investments (ITI). Using the Czech Republic as a case in point, the authors evaluate the formation of municipal partnerships and the process of preparing integrated strategies for metropolitan areas. The article closes with concrete recommendations for a regional policy based on an assessment of the situation in the Czech Republic against a wider background of other EU countries.

The article by Tomasz Kaczmarek and Michał Wójcicki is devoted to a very important aspect of local governance: social participation. The authors focus on participation in consultations on physical planning documents. Using the results of a survey research conducted in Poznań (Poland), they assess the procedure of preparing planning documents and forms of their consultation with residents. They list strong and weak points of the socialisation of the planning process and opt for the introduction of new forms and instruments of social participation, e.g. the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and the Internet.

The next two articles discuss the problem of inter-municipal cooperation. Eran Razin demonstrates the importance of such cooperation in the development of industrial parks and in tax revenue redistribution in Israel. He shows how an initiative 'from below' has been adopted and encouraged 'from above', and finally used by the central state as a tool of control, to serve its own objectives. It highlights the inherent temptation for top-down imposition, embedded in bottom-up cooperation mechanisms (hence the subtitle of the article: "The road to hell is paved with good intentions"). In conclusion the author calls for high-touch regulatory legislation and opts for gently imposed solutions where needed.

In turn, Bartłomiej Kołsut discusses inter-municipal cooperation in the field of waste management (with Poland as an example). He identifies and analyses three key factors of cooperation: (1) geographical conditions (including both, the contemporary administrative division as well as the heritage of historical and cultural regions), (2) institutional conditions (in particular the implementation of the EU legal framework), and (3) financial motivation (not corroborated in Poland).

The next two articles are devoted to organisational problems of governance at the local level in Poland. The first, by Marzena Walaszek and Edyta Bąkowska, deals with the organisation of the local educational system. The authors present it on the example of the Poznań agglomeration, show its transition from a public monopoly to an outsourcing model (with a growing proportion of non-public schools), and discuss its strong and weak points.

Robert Perdał, in turn, examines factors of local e-government development in Poland. Having defined indicators representing them, he verifies his model of e-government development using partial correlation and multiple regression methods. The analysis embraces the group of communes making up the Poznań agglomeration.

The last article transfers the reader to Georgia, where problems of territorial governance differ sharply from those in most European states. They are largely determined by the historical heritage and ethnic structures. Those are the issues on which Cezary Mądry and Julia Kaczmarek-Khubnaia focus in "Historical determinants of regional divisions of Georgia and their implications for territorial governance". The inclusion of this article in the thematic *QG* volume demonstrates the depth of the term 'geography of governance'.

The present volume shows the variety of new challenges and approaches to territorial governance in such diverse countries as EU states, Israel and Georgia. That is why we believe that it will meet with great interest on the part of the international audience, both researchers and practitioners, in various geographical areas as well as various geopolitical and institutional settings.

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and Jan Buček
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