

ON THE 5th SPECIAL ISSUE: EDITORS' PREFACE

This Special Issue of the Journal has been prepared in cooperation with the “Regional Development and Inter-Regional Cooperation” Working Group of the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration of Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee)¹.

In October 2015, the WG workshop was organized in Moscow. It was dedicated to cooperative inter-regional projects; areas, forms and mechanisms of inter-regional cooperation; tools for the evaluation of regional development quality and for measuring the influence of cooperation on regional economic, social, innovative and civic indexes and indicators; and the social and cultural conditions of regional development. Over 14 reports and talks were presented by scholars from 6 countries: Italy, Finland, Russia, Hungary, the UK, and the USA. Russian scholars from leading institutions, including Moscow State University, NRU HSE, RANEPA, Tyumen University, and the People's Friendship University shared their research projects which are concentrated on analyses of different aspects of the regional diversity and complexity of modern Russia.

¹ The WG was established in NISPAcee in 2014, it fostering the cooperation of scholars of the region along with the topics, as:

- Regionalism and regionalization in the context of globalization: driving forces, differences, background;
- Best practices and mechanisms for sustainable regional development;
- The models of regional governance;
- Inter-regional networks;
- Regional identities;
- Strategy for successful economic development of regions: cooperation, or autonomy?
- Territorial differences and regional heterogeneity: EU and EU neighbors;
- Possibilities and different schemes of cooperation between heterogeneous regions, outside the EU, and EU regions with non-EU regions.

NRU-HSE, as the institution (together with London Metropolitan University) that is responsible for coordination of WG work, take an active role in all WG events, including preparation (and NRU HSE scholars' participation) of the sessions on territorial development and cooperation, that were the part of the Annual NISPAcee conferences in Budapest (May 2014) and Tbilisi (May 2015). Right now the WG sessions at the next Annual NISPAcee conference in Zagreb (May, 2016) are under preparation. The huge interest of scholars, plus many applications for all WG events, shows that regional problematic in public administration is one of the most popular and promising in respect of new results and theoretic insights in Europe.

The authors of selected talks from the workshop were invited to convert their presentations into articles for this Special Issue. As Guest Editor of this Special Issue, I am grateful to all of the authors for their willingness to participate in the Special Issue, and for their efforts in preparing the articles based on their presentations.

These Special Issue research articles are divided into two groups.

The first group of articles is concentrated around the problem of regional development, including the evaluation of regional development strategies (*Barabashev and Semenov*, Kamchatka region); data analysis for border region development (*Bushko*, the effects of border transparency, the West-Hungarian border area); regional governance diversity as an obstacle to the applicability of modern public administration theories and practices outside liberal democracies (*Pain*, Central Asia region); and sustainable development on a regional level (*Kavtaradze and Casu*, the ecopolis strategy for Korolev city, Moscow region).

The second group of articles focuses on the problem of inter-regional cooperation. The authors view cooperation through the lens of contradictions regarding horizontal vs vertical cooperation (*Stirbu*, EU influence on the devolution of horizontal cooperative processes in the UK, namely the horizontal shake-up triggered by new public management as complemented by a vertical shake-up of governance systems, fuelled by the European integration process); cooperation mechanisms of neighboring regions with close ties (*Larionov*, the case of Tyumen oblast, Russia, as a multi-structured region, or so-called “matreshka-style” region with a complex of cooperative decision-making procedures, shared responsibilities, resource re-distribution, and joint policy programs); case studies of some Russian regional bilateral and multi-lateral strategies (*Leonard, Ilina, Pliseckij*, spatial components of inter-regional planning cooperation); and cooperation in learning strategies (*Prysmakova*, international cooperative learning and its influence on learning habits in Seoul metropolitan area).

The huge diversity of the article topics shows almost unlimited potential for the area of research in regional development and cooperation. Personally, I believe that this subject field, Public Administration, right now is one of the most fruitful in terms of governance progress. A deep practical need to re-shape the traditional, rigid and out-of-date schemes of regional interactions, to construct more sophisticated and flexible instruments and mechanisms for regional development support and to find and implement new ideas on how regions can shape their cooperative progress despite borders and limitations of different sorts, sooner or later will lead toward a series of regional shifts, not in the sense of administrative borders, but in the sense of new administrative and social behavior in regions of Europe and of neighbor countries.

Alexey Barabashev
December, 2015