
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Irina D. Turgel is a Doctor of Economics and Professor. She is the Director of School of Economics and Management, and Head of Theory and Methodology of Public Administration Department GSEM UrFU, Yekaterinburg. Her research interests include regional and urban economics, industrial territories development, capital cities, company towns. She is an Associate Editor of *Scientific Journal Economy of Region*, Editor-in-Chief of *Scientific Journal R-Economy*.

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The papers published in this IJEPEE special issue were presented at the annual international conference “Russian Regions in the Focus of Change”, held on 10–14 November, 2020, in Ekaterinburg, Russian Federation. The conference was organised by the Institute of Economics and Management (Ural Federal University) in

collaboration with the Analytical Center ‘Expert’ and the business magazine ‘Expert-Ural’.

The papers in this special issue were peer reviewed according to the following procedure. Guest editors conducted an initial evaluation, rejecting manuscripts outside the journal’s aims and scope or lacking sufficient originality. Papers meeting the minimum criteria were sent to at least two experts for further double-blind review, ensuring anonymity for both reviewers and authors throughout the process.

The papers presented in this special issue can be thematically grouped into three categories. Papers in the first group focus on new principles and approaches for analysing ongoing economic transformation processes in regions, including agglomeration, digitisation, and informatisation. Skhvediani et al. in their paper ‘Modelling of a regional industry specialisation: the impact of agglomeration economies on labour productivity’ show the negative impact of externalities on labour productivity. Factors contributing to such an impact include the breakup of territorial-industrial complexes, low competitiveness, and insufficient funding.

The second group of papers comprises studies that discuss new approaches to assessing the economic development of countries and regions. Koziol and Cherkasova consider the issue of measuring economic activity at the national level. Their study focuses on the contemporary use of GDP as the primary indicator for this purpose, aiming to identify situations when the GDP indicator, despite its limitations, remains most pertinent for assessing economic activity levels. The study also suggests measures to enhance the quality of GDP measurement and interpretation. Balashova and Revinova in the paper ‘Impact of network interaction on quality of higher education in CIS countries’, assess how opportunities for network interaction contribute to the improvement of the quality of higher education. The authors analyse the demand for higher education in Russia from students from other CIS countries. Antonova et al. study the phenomenon of single-industry “Invisible” towns in Russia. The authors propose an original model for recovering data on the share of revenue, fixed assets and wages in single-industry towns hidden in the reports of enterprises.

Papers of the third group provide an in-depth analysis of the economic aspects of citizen and local community participation in public governance processes. Derbeneva et al. consider the factors that influence the initiative budgeting development in Russian regions. Pevnaya et al. analyse the economic and social effects of youth volunteering in the early phase of the Covid-19 pandemic, focusing on the cases of major Russian regions.

This special issue combines sections on regional economic transformation, new approaches to territorial development assessment, and economic aspects of citizen involvement in governance, offering a comprehensive view of current regional studies in developing economies.