

Editorial

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This miscellaneous issue of DIE ERDE presents five contributions from human geographers from four countries (Canada, France, the Netherlands and Germany), covering a wide spectrum of topics and methodology ranging from a “softer” cultural geography to a “harder” economic geography, and even to a “really hard” quantitative approach that is set in regional economics as well as in economic geography.

Laura Beattie and *David Ley*'s paper originates from the geography of religion, which as part of the cultural turn in geography has seen considerable revival and renewal in recent years, highlighting aspects of the relationship between religious elements in society and societies and the spatial organisation of those societies. In this article the approach taken is also very much that of the social geographer, investigating the geography of urban immigrant groups bound together not only by ethnic ties but also by a common denomination, in this case German immigrants to Canadian Vancouver after 1945. The focus is on a number of churches whose initial role is to provide certain services for their members in the years of the immigrants' arrival. This leads to the construction of specific social and spatial ties and the formation of collective spatial identities which, however, must undergo change as the ethnic, spatial and socio-cultural ties in the community and the city as a whole change, with the members of the ethnic-religious communities becoming increasingly spread out over suburban areas and with new groups of immigrants arriving into the more central districts. Of course, language plays a key role, and with the perfect acculturation of the immigrants' descendants the churches have to adapt to changing conditions. In this way, the socio-cultural religious communities mirror the changing social geography of the city.

Nicolas Joly investigates renewal processes in industrial areas and is especially interested in the ways in which structural and urban adjustment

processes are flanked by advertising attempting to promote a new image for the region in question. After similar studies by other Lille geographers, especially on the French region of Nord-Pas-de-Calais, *Joly* here presents a case study of the Ruhr, the largest conurbation in central Europe. Once a major mining and manufacturing region, the area has been going through a stunning process of structural change for some decades – in many respects directed or at least accompanied by measures of economic policy and planning by both the federal government and the *Land* (federal state) of Northrhine-Westphalia. For a long time now, these measures have included efforts to influence the image of the region on various levels: within the Ruhr, in Germany and abroad. *Joly*'s study looks in particular at tourism iconography and discovers that in recent years industrial heritage (now often under careful conservation) as well as culture in a wider sense have been set centre-stage in the promotion of the Ruhr cities as tourist destinations. These efforts have been very much helped by the decadal operation of the spatial development institution of IBA Emscher Park in the 1990s, with which the Ruhr has served once again as a major pioneer region for innovation in spatial planning. IBA Emscher Park has been responsible for a number of new highlights in the region that may also serve as major tourist attractions.

Olaf Kühne delineates major political, economic and cultural (macro-)regions in Europe. His approach is “cultural” or even “neo-idealist” in the sense that he attributes a good deal of causation in the complexities involved to cultural factors, including and especially highlighting religion. In the fusion of ideas from political, economic and cultural geography, it is the latter factors that are used most to explain distinctions in the ability of countries to adapt to the standards of western Europe, i.e. to follow post-modernisation and to change their political system as well as their economic



organisation according to the western European model. In a similar way to, for example, *Johan Galtung* in several earlier contributions, and, of course, in the wake of *Huntington's* theses, *Kühne* associates Western Protestant or Catholic influences with the more advanced countries and both Orthodox Christianity and Muslim influences with the less advanced countries of the East. As a result, *Kühne's* article is in fact much more a product of a geography of religion than *Beattie* and *Ley's*, even if the titles do not convey this at all. The systems theory approach which *Kühne* claims for his paper, however, appears perhaps somewhat superimposed and does not really correspond with his descriptive analysis of the countries investigated. The evolving territorial pattern is clear: a distinct west-east gradient through Europe, with the more advanced states in the west and the less advanced in the east, a situation which *Kühne* divides into "New Central Europe", "The Inner Periphery" and "The Outer Periphery".

In this issue *Henk Huisman's* contribution is the only one dedicated to Third World problems. After decades of enormous flows of refugees, refugee aid has become an almost routine operation in affected areas and aid organisations have learnt many a lesson. There is, however, little knowledge as yet about the impact of refugee aid on the economic situation in a refugee host area, although relevant international organisations, such as UNHCR, have in fact brought up the question of late. It is exactly this question which *Huisman* addresses in his case study of the district of Ngara in north-west Tanzania, where in several waves of flight and in-migration refugees from Rwanda and Burundi found refuge after 1996. Aspects of the use of labour are discussed, especially the origins of the staff of aid organisations as well as the use of refugee labour in the host area. Changes in trade have been substantial, with experienced traders from all parts of Tanzania taking advantage of the market the refugees represent. In comparison, agricultural change has been slight, even though there have been so many more hungry people to feed in the district, and the author sees a lot of potential in this area. Economic opportunities in the case study area were seized predominantly by the better-off, resulting in increasing social disparities in the host area and Tanzania as a whole.

Nevertheless, aid imports have substantially mitigated the situation of over-exploitation of resources – a severe problem at the beginning of the refugee influx. However, *Huisman* also observes that the notion of an "aid dependency syndrome" is still valid: without outside aid growth dynamics in the refugee host area will probably break down again after the refugee phase, unless improved regional governance and organisation encourage a more equal distribution of initiative.

The most controversial contribution in this issue is certainly *Jörg Güßefeldt's* article on selected aspects of *Paul Krugman et al.'s* "New Economic Geography" and an empirical application of some specific models. We print this article in German, as it has its place within a specific German discussion of New Economic Geography which has been going on for the last three years – also featured in *DIE ERDE* –, and summarises, supplements and corrects this discussion in some respects. We are quite aware of the fact that even among German-speaking readers, the article will only be accessible to those with a solid knowledge of the quantitative school in the Regional Science tradition. But this school is still highly relevant for Human Geography and deserves consideration. *Güßefeldt* applies some selected NEG theorems to a German case study, linking it, in addition, to some more "German" strands of geographic thought, especially – with his example of retailing – central place theory, which the author also defends against the NEG protagonists. Indeed, the interesting aspect of *Güßefeldt's* contribution is that he combines NEG models with more traditional approaches in economic (and econometric) geography, focusing on problems of endogenous market size as well as of employment and turnover in supply locations of different size, i.e. also of different positions in the city-system hierarchy. Of course, these questions could also be dealt with in a more conventional form, for instance aspects of productivity could be included when linking employment and turnover in retailing, but the author's aim is to bring NEG and economic geography closer together. Here, it is above all the German-speaking community of readers whose comments are invited.

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