

MODEST
international working group on
MODelling of Economies and Societies in Transition

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Newsletter

sent out irregularly, mainly on the basis of what's new
Edited etc. by Jan Owsinski

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Merry Christmas2008

and a prosperous and happy New Year 2009 to all of you

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1. MODEST 2008 meeting in Warsaw and the publications thereof

As announced in the previous issue of the Newsletter, the consecutive meeting in our series, the MODEST 2008 Workshop, took place on September 19th-20th, 2008, in Rembertów by Warsaw, within the campus of the National Defence Academy. It was, just like in the preceding cases, affiliated with the bi-annual conference of the Polish Operational and Systems Research Society (BOS 2008), having taken place on 18th-20th September. The proper MODEST meeting in the framework of the BOS conference was a joint undertaking of MODEST and the Polish chapter of INFORMS. A number of interesting papers were presented, and a vivid discussion followed.

The papers from the BOS conference, including those, resulting from the MODEST meeting, which passed the refereeing procedure and were accordingly modified, were published in three books, being three successive volumes (62, 63 and 64) in the series of "Systems Studies", which is being published by the Systems Research Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences, one of the co-organisers of the BOS conference series. The three volumes contain close to 100 papers from the BOS 2008 meeting.

Notwithstanding these three volumes, in which majority of papers were, naturally, in Polish, two special English language issues of two different journals are planned as a follow-up. Both of them are largely due to the activity of the MODEST group, and this fact shall be duly acknowledged in the respective publications.

One is a special issue of the *Journal of Organisational Transformation and Social Change*, published by Intellect in the United Kingdom, and the tentative title of this special issue is "Corruption and Good Governance". Some eight authors of papers from the BOS 2008 conference have been invited to contribute and by this time (just prior to Christmas 2008) three papers have already been sent in and shall be directed for review. The special issue shall be guest-edited by Jan W. Owsinski. We hope to have this special issue appear yet in 2009.

The other is a special, English-language issue of the Polish journal *Badania Operacyjne i Decyzje (Operations Research and Decisions)*, published by the University of Technology in Wrocław. The tentative title of this issue is "Decisions in Politics, Economics and Business", and the guest editors will be Jacek Mercik and Jan Owsinski. More than a dozen authors from BOS 2008 were invited to contribute, and the deadline for sending in papers is January 2009. Number 4 of 2009 of the journal, which is a quarterly, has been "reserved" for this particular special issue.

2. Next MODEST meeting

At the BOS 2008 conference it was decided that the next BOS conference, BOS 2010, should take place in autumn 2010 in Bydgoszcz, an important city in central-northern Poland, and be organised jointly with the Systems Research Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the University of Technical and Natural Sciences in Bydgoszcz. Traditionally, we plan to hold our consecutive MODEST Workshop affiliated with this conference. Once more is known of the modalities of this meeting, we shall inform you and send out explicit invitations.

3. Proposals and suggestions

In the preceding issue of the Newsletter we forwarded some suggestions concerning the potential fields of collaboration, say – within the framework of bilateral or European projects. We now return to these ideas, by inserting some additional information, and adding one more domain of potential joint work. Let us emphasise that in all those fields not only definite research work is, of course, being carried out, but, actually, some collaborative work is, as well, underway.

So, while involved in the activities mentioned in sections 1 and 2 before, the secretariat of the Working Group dealt also with a number of other issues, of potential interest to its members. These activities may, in particular, lead to concrete ideas concerning joint work within the Working Group, be it of a European or bilateral dimension. These activities, and the related ideas, concentrate around the following four themes (which, of course, do by no means limit the potential scope of concepts for future collaborative work):

- modeling for the evaluation of the consequences of and design of changes in the Common Agricultural Policy; there are already a number of models that supposedly do the job, but what virtually all of them lack is the micro- or landscape, or community dimension (or, at a bare minimum – the one of a municipality); on the other hand there is also a gap on the real macro scale meaning aggregate effects for the EU and the world; in conditions of the current crisis the knowledge of potential consequences of various policies and instruments at the scale of the real processes, and not only somewhat abstract aggregates, becomes even more important;
- assessing and modeling the role of ICT in development (place and role in the feedback loop), especially in terms of development dynamics from various starting points, and the possibility of short-cuts; here, as well, the local and regional dimension is of importance; again, this applies equally to the macro- and the real micro- dimensions, in economic and spatial terms;
- modeling the consequences of policies related to the "green paths", and the possibility of making (or leaving open and effectively available) the truly "optimum" choices, without bearing too much of economic and social costs that would impair short- and medium-term competitiveness; this involves an intricate interplay of time horizons, investment and risk, mainly associated with energy; the recent events on the world scene, oil prices and global-warming-related undertakings included, show it very clearly that the respective models are indeed necessary, and, at that, a variety of them, that could grasp the different aspects and perspectives on these issues;

- development of the methodologies related to decision making under uncertainty in situations of emergency, with the use of decision rules, decision trees, fuzzy and intuitionistic logic, and respective linguistic representations; this set of methodological tools might be of high value in devising decision support systems for the high-risk operations with limited information and high uncertainty.

Should you be interested in collaboration on these themes, or in coining other ones of potential interest to members of MODEST, please, contact us about it.

4. A reminder: the book published by Palgrave

As announced already before, early in 2007 a book was published by Palgrave Macmillan, very closely associated with the activity of MODEST, as you can easily see for yourself from the list of editors and contributors. An important aspect of this book is the contribution of the 2007 Nobel Prize Laureate in Economics, late Leonid Hurwicz. You shall find below the complete information on the book and its contents:

Zbigniew Nahorski, Jan W. Owsinski and Tomasz Szapiro, eds., *The Socio-Economic Transformation. Getting Closer to What?* Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills – New York, 2007, ISBN 13: 978-0-230-00794-9; ISBN 10: 0-230-00794-5 (hardback).

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