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STATISTICS IN TRANSITION" AND "STATISTICS IN TRANSITION - NEW SERIES " - FIRST FIFTEEN YEARS

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How did we in Poland start preparing a statistical journal in English? I remember that we discussed this issue, after the reactivation of the Polish Statistical Association (PTS) in April 1981, among members of the PTS and some colleagues in GUS. I also discussed this with Prof. Ryszard Zasepa¹ and next with Prof. Wiesław Sadowski², who was at that time the President of the Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS) and the former Editor-in-Chief of “*Przegląd Statystyczny*” (Statistical Review). He advised us to establish a statistical journal in English as the journal of the Polish Statistical Association, and “*Przegląd Statystyczny*” would remain as it was, the journal of the Committee of Statistics and Econometrics and the Polish Academy of Sciences. Professor Sadowski supported that idea fully, and promised some assistance from GUS. We accepted the approach of Professor Sadowski, and discussed it with some colleagues from the PTS.

We realized that there were several problems to be solved, and one of them was a financial support of such an undertaking. In December 1985, when I was elected the President of the Polish Statistical Association³, we started activities in different fields, and among others, we discussed how to get a permanent financial support for the Association’s activities. We realized that the contribution of GUS was important but not sufficient. In 1986 the Main Council of PTS decided to establish the Bureau of Statistical Research and Analysis (BSRA) to get from that activity financial sources for different projects undertaken or supported by the Association. We prepared appropriate documents and sent them to the Ministry of Internal Affairs for approval. It was not an easy task, and Dr. Lucjan Adamczuk, a member of the Main Council of PTS, and I, had to convince the appropriate

¹ An international expert in sampling; Professor at Warsaw School of Economics; an author of the first Polish handbook in sampling; a chairman of the Mathematical Commission of GUS; cooperated with FAO and other international organization; cooperated with Prof. Jerzy Neyman.

² The President of the Central Statistical Office of Poland in 1980–1989; Editor-in-Chief of “*Przegląd Statystyczny*” (Statistical Review) in 1970s; Chairman of the Committee of Statistics and Econometrics of the Polish Academy of Sciences; Rector of Warsaw School of Economics (1965–1978), author of several books on mathematical statistics (translated also in English, Italian and Slovakian), theory of decision taking (translated in English and German).

³ Prof. Jan Kordos was the President of the Polish Statistical Association in 1995–1994.

officials at the Ministry of Internal Affairs that the Bureau would be involved in statistical activity only. We should remember that in was before 1989, when the changes of the system begun. Finally, in March 1987 we got approval of the appropriate officials, and started different projects approved by the Main Council of PTS.

The possibility of issuing a statistical journal in English by the Polish Statistical Association was repeatedly discussed among members of the Association. We got financial support from activities of the Bureau of Statistical Research and Analysis of PTS. Finally, in April 1991, the Main Council of PTS decided to set up a Working Group chaired by Prof. Aleksander Zeliaś (University of Economics, Crakow), for preparing detailed proposals to start a new journal. Initially, the working title of the journal *The Polish Statistician* was adopted.

Decision of the Main Council of PTS

There were different ideas for the journal. Finally, we decided together with the statisticians from other countries, that it should be an international statistical journal published by our Association but edited by statisticians from different countries. The final name of the journal was established in October 1992 during the international conference on small area statistics¹.

I discussed this issue with a number of international statisticians, with Prof. Graham Kalton (USA), and Dr. Richard Platek (Canada), as my main advisors. We came to the conclusion that the most appropriate name would be *Statistics in Transition*, which essentially corresponded to the journal's initial aim to serve mainly countries undergoing transition. Besides, statistics is always "*in transition*" in a sense.

The creation of "Editorial Board"

The Working Group chaired by Prof. Aleksander Zeliaś suggested me as an Editor-in-Chief of the Journal. First, I had some objections to that suggestion since I was already involved in different activities. Finally, after some discussion, I accepted it, and the Main Council of PTS appointed me to these duties, and we started, overcoming some difficulties, to implement this task. The role of *Co-editors* was accepted by Prof. Tomasz Panek and Prof. Adam Szulc of Warsaw School of Economics.

It was necessary to select appropriate colleagues from Poland and abroad, i.e. *Associate Editors* (AE). First, we chose Polish AE, which was not easy, and then the AE from abroad. The latter came from Belgium, Canada, Holland, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as from countries in transition, namely Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia,

¹ Small Area Statistics and Survey Designs, International Scientific Conference, Warsaw, Poland, 30th September – 3rd October 1992.

Lithuania, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia and Ukraine. I was able to establish cooperation with them due to my long-term (more than eight years) work abroad, participation in various international conferences and acquaintance with many eminent statisticians.

I must admit that I had no experience in running such a serious journal, but I received a considerable assistance in the early years of my work from my colleagues, here I would like to mention: Dr. Richard Platek from Canada, formerly Statistics Canada, Dr. M.P. Singh from Canada, the Editor-in-Chief of "*Survey Methodology*", and as well from Dr. Lars Lyberg, Sweden, the Editor-in-Chief of "Official Statistics".

Over the course of the years natural changes followed and several of our close colleagues passed away. I shall mention here, above all, our *Associate Editors*: Prof. Ryszard Zasepa (Poland), Prof. Aleksander Ryszard Wójcik (Mexico), Dr. M.P. Singh (Canada), Prof. Ken Takeuchi (Japan), Prof. A. Revenko (Ukraine) and Prof. Aleksander Zeliaś (Poland).

The first issue of the journal

I would like to mention here only the first issue of the journal published in June 1993 which was devoted to various aspects of Polish statistics. That year we celebrated two hundred years of Polish statistics, and 75 years of establishment of the Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS). The first paper, prepared by Dr. J. Oleński, President of GUS, dealt with different problems connected with transition of Polish statistics to the requirements of market economy. Prof. T. Walczak described seventy five years of official statistics in Poland on background of two hundred years of the Polish statistics. Prof. W. Wojciechowski prepared a note on the Committee of Statistics and Econometrics of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Prof. W. Welfe developed the concept of the computerized system of macroeconomic short and medium-term forecast and economic policy simulation for the period of transition towards the marked economy. Prof. Z. Hellwig considered estimation of linear regression parameters under scarcity of data. Prof. R. Zasepa described sampling methods used in different household surveys in Poland, including application of sampling methods in population censuses in Poland as a means of speeding up tabulation in 1950 and 1960, and to broaden the scope of the censuses. Dr. J. Wywiał described the estimation of a mean for three sampling designs in a fixed population. There were also three notes on the following topics:

- The Polish Statistical Journal, by Prof. Cz. Domański,
- A short note on Small Area Statistics and Survey Designs, International Scientific Conference, held in 30th September – 3rd October 1992, by Mr. W. Łagodziński,
- The Research Bulletin of the Research Centre for Economic and Statistical Studies which was launched 1992, by Dr. A. Szulc.

I described the activities of the Polish Statistical Association founded in 1912.

Over the 15 years of my work as the Editor-in-Chief of *SIT* and *SIT-ns*, we published 46 issues, i.e. over three issues per year, in eight volumes, comprising the total of about 8200 pages, 505 articles, 55 reports, 26 book reviews, and eight obituaries. We have published five special issues devoted to statistics of small areas, a number of articles on sample surveys in various countries, the methodology of household surveys, data quality and the methodology of the population census 2002. We also raised several statistical aspects observed in countries in transition and presented a lot of papers discussed at international conferences, some of them organized by the PTS. We promoted Polish statistics in the international arena, and enabled statisticians from other countries to present their achievements. In 2006 we received a proposal for cooperation with Springer Publishing Company, and I regret to say we failed to take advantage of this offer.

The first version of the journal, known as *Statistics in Transition (SIT)*, was published in the years 1993-2006 twice a year, with additional "*special issues*" published often as well. The journal provided a forum for exchanging views and experience in various fields of statistics, at the beginning regarding mainly the countries in transition from central planning to the market economy.

Gradually the scope of our interests was extended to include wider areas of application of statistical methods, and preparation for a new series of the journal began. *Statistics in Transition - new series (SIT-ns)*, was launched in 2007 as an electronic version of the Polish Statistical Association journal, published by the Central Office Statistics.

We agreed that the journal should be published three times a year (April, August, December). The new edition is to some extent a continuation of the previous release, regarding the numbering of volumes and the logo. However, *SIT-ns* is now taking a broader policy of presenting the application of statistical methods, educational statistics and its development.

After finishing my work as the Editor-in-Chief at the end of 2007, my duties are now limited to those of the *Founder/Former Editor*. I still continue to follow carefully the development of the journal and provide assistance as far as I can.

In 2008 Prof. Włodzimierz Okrasa was appointed a new Editor-in-Chief of *Statistics in Transition - new series*, Dr. Marek Cierpiał-Wolan was approved a new Scientific Secretary, and Dr. Roman Popiński became the Secretary. The issues published since 2000 are available on-line at the address: http://www.stat.gov.pl/pts/15_ENG_HTML.htm

The year 2012 is not only the hundredth anniversary of the Polish Statistical Association, but also the twentieth year of the journal being issued. I hope that the journal will continue to be published in the future, serving Polish statistics and giving statisticians from other countries the chance to present their contributions to the development of statistics.

Jan Kordos

Editor-in-Chief in 1993-2007