



## Editorial: Reaching Out to New Territories ...

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# Editorial: Reaching Out to New Territories . . .

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## A NEW TEAM . . .

While taking over the Editorial Board of a journal like *Regional Studies* will never be easy, our start greatly benefited from the excellent shape in which we inherited the journal from the team based in Newcastle upon Tyne. We were provided with a very healthy stock of papers and special issues, and a well-organized journal administration. Special words of thanks should go out to Andy Pike from Newcastle University, who not only coordinated an excellent team of Editors, but also arranged for a smooth and gradual transition between Newcastle and the new Editorial Board in Utrecht-Nijmegen. We are very happy that Andy Pike will remain in post as an Editor, so that we can benefit from his experience and insights in the years to come.

On a more substantive point, the Newcastle team, like their predecessors in Cambridge, have successfully widened the scope and reach of the journal (cf. PIKE *et al.*, 2008). While economic issues continue to take centre stage, this has been increasingly accompanied by, and often integrated with, work on cohesion, sustainability, governance and planning, amongst others. And while the UK remains a significant source of submissions and readership, others areas, notably the rest of Europe but also the North America and Asia, have increased their share significantly. For the coming years, our team will be firmly committed to pursuing further the objectives of widening and strengthening the thematic and geographical scope of the journal. In doing so, we adhere to similar practices that have defined the journal's success in the past: high-quality standards, which are used, wherever possible, in a constructive way to help scholars improve their research and writing skills; collective decision-making; a proactive commissioning of special issues, and an active support of special sessions in international conferences. This will be accomplished through a more international team of Editors, making use of new forms of distance and online communication and administration. In the remainder of this Editorial we will set out our aims and strategies for the years to come, and provide a brief introduction to our first issue.

## INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES IN PURSUIT OF NEW FRONTIERS, EMPIRICAL RIGOR AND POLICY RELEVANCE

Both from a conceptual and a policy perspective, there is a growing need for interdisciplinary approaches in the field of Regional Studies. We will therefore welcome papers and special issues that engage further with more sub-disciplines within geography and economics, including evolutionary and institutional approaches in economic geography, and actor-based and network approaches. We will be particularly keen to see collaboration with other fields, such as sociology, demography, environmental and spatial planning, and political sciences. In doing so, we want to promote the journal's role as a platform for bringing together, and bridging, different styles of research, such as quantitative and qualitative methods, more formal and narrative approaches, or more analytical and policy-oriented research (cf. CHAMBERS and SANDBERG, 2007; MARKUSEN, 2003; MATUSCHEWSKI, 2006; MCCANN, 2007; PAIN and HALL, 2008).

These various strands should help us to deepen our insights into what we regard as the core themes of our field. *Regional Studies* has always emphasized an economic perspective on regional development, whereby economic growth, innovation, agglomeration, spatial inequalities, welfare and equity, living, working and mobility issues are central. Increasingly, cities and regions act as hubs in networked societal and economic development processes involving industries, individuals and households (POWER and HALLENCREUTZ, 2007; SALAZAR and HOLBROOK, 2007; SAXENIAN, 2006; STEINER and PLODER, 2008; TAYLOR *et al.*, 2008; THIERSTEIN *et al.*, 2008). We want to address a growing plea in the literature for a multi-scalar understanding of space, ranging from localities to regions to nations and supranational structures, in which network relations and (spatial) dependencies are embedded in relational space (AMIN, 2004; BATHELT and GLUCKLER, 2003; HOYLER *et al.*, 2008; LAGENDIJK, 2007; MACLEOD and JONES, 2007; PORTNOV and SCHWARTZ, 2008; YEUNG, 2005). Besides a multi-scalar approach, this also calls for an economic and

social network approach of actors in their relevant contexts. We welcome further contributions to the debate on relationality and territoriality, in particular studies that seek to base conceptual ideas on empirical work.

Over time, *Regional Studies* has gained a reputation for both being a platform for renewal and refreshment of geographically based theories and concepts, and a place to review and criticize them (DÖRING and SCHNELLENBACH, 2006; HUDSON, 2007; IBERT, 2007; PIKE, 2007; WRIGHT *et al.*, 2007). The section titled Critical Surveys, in particular, welcomes this kind of contribution. In view of our overarching interest in building bridges between different fields and between theory and practice, we are interested in accounts that elaborate on space, scale and networking, and specifically on relevant measurable and locally translatable elements that draw on different literatures and research traditions. Such accounts could also focus, in novel ways, on concepts such as path-dependency, the reach of externalities and the role of location factors, the role of spillovers, effects on firm and consumer behaviour, and the evolution and functioning of clusters (BOSCHMA and FRENKEN, 2006; GIULIANI, 2007; GLÜCKLER, forthcoming 2009; HASSINK, 2005; STRAMBACH, forthcoming 2009).

From a policy perspective, the spotlight is on original multi- and interdisciplinary spatial research, policy analysis and debate in the field of urban and regional development studies. Global developments, governance shifts in the European Union and European Union policy influences are of increasing importance for spatial planning and policy-making in the nation-states and regions. Submissions are encouraged that critically discuss the spatial and regional impacts of international and European Union policy developments, focus on multi-scalar configurations (from international to local), multilevel processes and governance, and the effect of relational configurations on territories and spatial policy (FALUDI, 2006). Over recent years there has also emerged a stronger emphasis on 'evidence-based policy making' (FALUDI and WATERHOUT, 2006). The link between academic research and public policy intervention is therefore of considerable interest to the debates in *Regional Studies* (cf. SCOTT and STORPER, 2007). Such contributions will especially find a warm welcome in the 'Policy Debates' section.

In sum, this cutting-edge approach seeking theoretical, conceptual and empirical richness, combined with policy relevance and reflection, constitutes *Regional Studies'* core ambition. Besides being a platform for the initiation, evaluation and empirical and policy-based weighing of geographical concepts, the journal will continue to embrace the need for conceptual precision and clarity, analytical consistency, theory testing and definition (MARKUSEN, 2003). Following MCCANN'S (2007) argument, a better matching between the 'stylized constructs' of conceptualizations and empirical evaluation through hypothesis formulation and testing is needed. *Regional Studies* actively wants to contribute to

this. This discussion clearly is related to the important questions on how to infer causality and on how to address normative arguments (MARKUSEN, 2006).

### SIGNING ON ...

Our mission for *Regional Studies* is to consolidate and strengthen its position as a leading international journal in theoretical development, empirical analysis and policy debate in the multi- and interdisciplinary field of regional studies. The new editorial team will ensure that papers in *Regional Studies* continue to be scientifically solid, conceptually and analytically sound, state-of-the-art, innovative and thought-provoking. In addition, new directions and focal points will be developed, primarily through special issues. The themes that are currently under development relate to our overall vision for *Regional Studies*. They include work on the cultural economy, internationalization and delocalization of business activity, the dynamics of innovative networks, debates on place and regional identity, strategic spatial planning and the role of knowledge, human capital and entrepreneurship, cluster life cycles, agglomeration and network economies, path dependency and regional development, amongst others. We will be keen to receive and discuss new ideas and proposals that suit our mission.

Papers published in *Regional Studies* should be of interest to both an academic audience as well as practitioners working in the field of regional development, spatial policy and planning. A spatial, integrated and interdisciplinary approach to the themes covered in the journal is at the core of our ambitions. We welcome, in particular, papers discussing both empirical ('hands-on') applications as well as policy issues, which at the same time remain critical and conceptually challenging. We especially aim to encourage empirical studies that are firmly founded in the theoretical debate, push forward theoretical frontiers and contribute to the policy debate. In terms of methods used, we are keen to receive papers using a broad range of quantitative and qualitative methods. We are especially interested in manuscripts that combine different and complementary methods on analysing specific research topics. In doing so, we intend to stimulate empirical analyses that not only follow more established trajectories, but also test ideas in novel ways.

### IN THIS ISSUE ...

The various papers included in this issue are an example of the variety of topics and conceptual and empirical approaches that *Regional Studies* is well known for. The papers in this issue reflect our emphasis on networking, flows and territoriality, and the publication of work that is relevant for both research and policy-making. In a study on knowledge spillovers, Gallié (p. 39) reveals 'how secrets are not in the air but in the networks',

which tend to be geographically dispersed. Another way to approach the geographical dimension of knowledge flows is through a sophisticated conceptualization and operationalization of proximity, as undertaken by Massard and Mehier. In a similar vein, Feser and Isserman stress the need to study clustering in rural places from a broader value chain perspective, suggesting that policy could be more oriented towards 'leveraging external linkages'. Drawing on theories on discourse and networking, Hanson and Blake unravel the social identity of entrepreneurs, with specific attention for the role of gender. Also focusing on the level of the individual,

Coulombe and Tremblay assess the impact of immigration on regional skill levels in Canada, with a specific interest in measurement issues. Arntz and Wilke examine the impact of regional, individual and institutional factors on unemployment duration, indicating that regional policies can only be expected to play a supplementary role in addition to other kinds of policy-making. Other interesting contributions deal with regional convergence (Byrne *et al.*), the principle of territorial concentration in the allocation of Structural Funds (Crescenzi), and the extent of coherence of functional versus administrative regions (Cörvers *et al.*).

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