Editors’ Pick

In our 3rd issue, dedicated to Smart Specialisation, we have asked editors from the five RSA journals to highlight one paper of significance and relevance. The selection criteria vary but like our previous issues, we have challenged our RSA journals’ Editors about why the selected paper is particularly interesting; the theoretical and empirical linkage with other papers published in the same journal; and also assess the wider impacts for policymaking, practice and society in general. With the kind support of the Editors of Spatial Economic Analysis; Territory, Politics, Governance; Regional Studies, Regional Science; Regional Studies and Area Development and Policy, the following five papers contribute to various emerging topics on smart specialization and on the field of regional studies in general.

Area Development and Policy

Managing Editors: Michael Dunford & Liu Weidong, Chinese Academy of Sciences

Sheppard, E. (2018). Globalizing capitalism's raggedy fringes: thinking through Jakarta. Area Development and Policy, 4(1) 1-27.

Eric Sheppard's article challenges notions of global development and change that are Euro-centric and that concentrate on endogenous forces at the expense of interactivity. At least since the European Enlightenment, the dominant conception of the world is one which views the west as a centre of modernity and the rest as rooted in earlier stages of development, occupying different positions along a universal path to modernity already mapped out by the western world. For Sheppard, the rest is one of capitalism's ragged fringes. Instead of simply stationed at different points on a path to western modernity, it comprises a complex set of economic, political, cultural and ethical worlds shaped by and shaping the core economies of the world.

Alongside the use of this geographical metaphor of the west and the rest, the ragged fringes of capitalism also refer to capitalism's engagement with activities that are not or ought not to be capitalist. These activities include Polanyi's fictitious commodities and in particular the biosphere along with non-capitalist activities especially certain types of informality.

This concern with interactivity is also associated with the addition of important elements to standard accounts of uneven development, with Sheppard's insistence on the importance of asymmetric and unequalizing connectivities. A concern with connectivities is in fact a long-standing one in urban and regional research and theories of location and yet connectivities are often underplayed in place-centred accounts of uneven development.

An important question that Sheppard also addresses concerns the specificity of the world outside of the capitalist core, an issue that he deals with in general and also in relation to the specific and interesting case of Jakarta. To deal with specificities, Sheppard does not share with post-colonial thought a denial of the value of analyses of the powers, tendencies and structures of capitalist globalization. Nor will he consider places where empirical outcomes depart from the theoretical expectations of western models as 'places of theoretical exception' to be accounted for by addition of a few supplementary empirical observations. Instead, he draws on political economy and calls for geographically and

conjuncturally contingent causality (or in his words ‘positional conjunctural analysis’). As he emphasizes, contingency does not just depend on place-specific characteristics but also on socio-spatial positionality and connectivity. The outcome is analysis of the reproduction of hybridity in ever changing forms as a result not just of culture but of a multiplicity of in-place and between-place factors.

In the final part of the article Sheppard illustrates these general ideas through a short study of Jakarta concentrating on three ragged edges, namely, informality, state intervention and the relation to the biosphere. For Sheppard these fringes afford places to think and act differently and possibly possess ‘the potential to fray the whole cloth’ and cause capitalism to unravel ‘from the outside in’. This claim is a somewhat unusual one in that it is more common to argue that and unravelling of capitalism will fundamentally derive from its inability to resolve its own internal contradictions and global problems.

The article makes a major contribution to an understanding of the specificity of development in the emerging world, uneven development and the relationships between developing and developed areas.

Spatial Economic Analysis

Editor in Chief: Paul Elhorst, University of Groningen

Bond-Smith, S., McCann, P. & Oxley, L. (2018). A regional model of endogenous growth without scale assumptions. Spatial Economic Analysis, 13(1), 5-35.

The paper by Bond-Smith, McCann and Oxley, offers a well-rounded theoretical contribution on a topical issue in regional growth theory. The paper fits within the tradition of new economic geography. It adopts a scale neutral approach to investigate the spatial mechanisms that cause regional innovation and growth, thereby relying on counterfactual scale effects. This is achieved through a careful design of spatial spillovers in the wake of state-of-the-art growth theory. In contrast to previous works, the ensuing policy analysis concludes that the spatial concentration of economic activities can be growth enhancing even in the absence of scale effects. According to the reviewers of this paper, the analysis is carefully executed with detailed policy implications for topics such as R&D subsidies,

peripheral innovation subsidies, policies to retain industries in peripheral regions, and policies encouraging interregional knowledge spillovers.

Territory, Politics, Governance

Editor in Chief: John Agnew, University of California Los Angeles

Debarbieux, B. (2017).”Hannah Arendt’s Spatial Thinking: An Introduction.” Territory, Politics, Governance, 5(4): 351-367.

Debarbieux highlights the tragic dimensions of nation-statehood in his introduction to the spatial thinking inherent in Hannah Arendt’s understanding of modern politics. More particularly, he shows the ways in which Arendt opens up how much nationalism came to naturalize the link between state and nation, and the extent to which modern statehood rested on the redefinition of property in terms of private ownership licensed by the state as opposed to the earlier sense of simple location within a body politic. This is accomplished within the contours of a broad reconsideration of Arendt as a thinker with much to offer to contemporary efforts at reworking connections between territory, politics and governance. Not least, of course, it suggests how much we need to think in spatial terms other than just nation-states, such as regions of various spatial magnitudes when considering politics and governance.

Regional Studies Regional Science

Editors in Chief: Alasdair Rae, University of Sheffield & Stephen Hincks, University of Sheffield.

Boeing, G. 2018. “Estimating Local Daytime Population Density from Census and Payroll Data.” Regional Studies, Regional Science, 5 (1), 179-182.

“What’s the population of …” is a common question we might ask about cities, yet the answer is not necessarily as straightforward as you might think. London, for example, has a resident population of about 8.8 million yet there are normally more than 10 million people in London during the daytime, due to commuting and short-term visitors like tourists. This topic is of particular importance to city

planners because of things like infrastructure, traffic and even disaster management planning, and has been something of a vexed problem for decades. That's why Geoff Boeing's innovative treatment of the topic has received so much attention (at the time of writing it has an Altmetric Attention Score of 31, where 20 would be considered high).

In his Regional Graphic and accompanying short commentary, Geoff very helpfully describes his method for estimating the density of population during the daytime in the San Francisco Bay Area using a novel approach which combines Census and payroll data. His analysis is focused on the Census Tract level (quite small areas, with an average of 4,000 or so residents nationally) and he finds some areas with quite astonishing daily shifts in population. This is to be expected, but the fact that Boeing is able to quantify this at a micro-spatial scale is both fascinating and important. For example, the highest daytime density is to be found in a Tract with a resident population of just 1,783 but a daytime population of 70,728. Another geographically larger area has a resident population of 11,502 and a daytime population of 92,865. This kind of information is critically important to city planners, emergency services, transit authorities, and many more real-world organisations who rely on accurate, up-to-date information in service provision.

The real innovation here is in the method, yet the results have clearly struck a chord with our readers. This is not surprising, since Boeing is one of the rising stars of a new generation of urban and regional scholars who combine geocomputational prowess with an acute awareness of contemporary policy problems. As such, we are pleased to have published Geoff's work and glad that our Regional Graphic short paper format was able to showcase his work.

Regional Studies

Editor in Chief: David Bailey, Aston University, UK

Balland, P.-A., Boschma, R., Crespo, J. & Rigby, D. L. (2018) Smart specialization policy in the European Union: relatedness, knowledge complexity and regional diversification, Regional Studies.

These authors pointed out an important issue that the operationalization of smart

specialization policy has been rather limited because a coherent set of analytical tools to guide the policy directives remains elusive. To address this gap, these authors proposed a policy framework around the concepts of relatedness and knowledge complexity. They demonstrated that diversifying into more complex technologies is attractive but difficult for European Union regions to accomplish. Regions can overcome this diversification dilemma by developing new complex technologies that build on local related capabilities. They used these findings to construct a policy framework for smart specialization that highlights the potential risks and rewards for regions of adopting competing diversification strategies.