# The Brexit Issue




**DOI reference:** 10.1080/13673882.2018.00001044

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**Editorial on The Brexit Issue**

*By Eduardo, Michael and Julie*

After four successful eZine Issues we have landed on the Brexit Issue; landed but certainly not settled in the discussions. This Issue raises further questions while providing critical – yet sober and mature -responses to the impacts of the scheduled withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU) in the economic and social geography of the UK, the EU Member States and beyond.

The novelty of this issue is that the Regional Insights section is guest edited by Alex de Ruyter, affiliated to the Centre for Brexit Studies (UK). This section includes eight articles featuring the various dimensions of Brexit e.g. 'No Deal Brexit' and its impacts upon important social and economic sectors. For example,

Christopher Huggins highlights why Brexit matters to English local government. His article evidences the many challenges remaining in the realm of uncertainty. Specifically, while a case is often made that Brexit can present an opportunity to reform the centre–local relationship, several local authorities are sceptical about whether they will be able to shape their post-Brexit position. While many debates about the impact of 'No Deal' Brexit on the UK automotive sector abound; given the many contributions of scholars such as David Bailey (e.g. No Deal Brexit and UK Automotive in this Issue), less is known about the potential effect of Brexit on agriculture and environmental standards. David Hearne and Alex de Ruyter push this matter further. They argue that agriculture is heavily affected by state intervention and hence that Brexit could lead to a significant realignment of UK farming. This is because once out of the EU, the UK will come under pressure to realign its so-called Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) standards that regulate the nature of the food we eat. Alex de Ruyter provides an evolved glimpse of the eight articles themed around Brexit in his Editorial.

Brexit-related debates are featured also in the Spotlight section. Crispian Fuller presents results of an on-going study, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, into the impacts of pre-Brexit market and institutional upheaval and uncertainties on foreign-owned subsidiaries, and their mediation of these impacts leading up to a final agreement or a no-deal. The study examines the automotive, aerospace and machinery (SIC 26) sectors in the nation of Wales, and the English region of the West Midlands.

We are also very excited to introduce novel research involving different geographies and themes, such as the increasing attention given to urban infrastructures and its relationship with regional studies. For example, In the Spotlight section Jen Nelles, Michael Glass, and Jean-Paul Addie outline the launch of the RSA Research Network on Infrastructural Regionalism (NOIR) in Montréal (Canada) during the 2019 RSA North America Conference. Moving forward, the Research Network has been designed to function as an open network that allows researchers and practitioners interested in infrastructure and regions to collaborate and convene. One of NOIR's initial projects has involved reviewing key points of engagement with infrastructural questions across 50-plus years of the field's flagship journal –Regional Studies. The resulting virtual Special Issue – *Regional Infrastructures, Infrastructural Regionalism* (now available online) compiles 14 important articles published from 1967 to 2019 that reveal major

conceptual and policy interventions and areas of opportunity for future research. Thinking about infrastructure regionally means considering what the presence or absence of infrastructural networks does to the way regions are constructed, how people live in them, and how they are reconstructed.

In the Must Reads section we featured the book *Geopolitics of the Knowledge-Based Economy* by Sami Moisio

We hope our readers appreciate and take advantage of this Issue's debates to further elaborate on their possible responses to prime social and economic problems cities and regions are confronted.

The forthcoming issue 6 will be themed around nature-based solutions for cities and regions and will be published early April 2020.

Regions e-Zine Editorial Team

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