

Editorial Report — 2006



PAPERS IN REGIONAL SCIENCE

The Journal of the Regional Science Association International

Jouke van Dijk, Editor-in-Chief

1. Organizational changes

This report updates statistics that were presented during the last few years with information for 2006, the last year that Raymond Florax (Purdue University, West Lafayette, U.S.A) was in charge as Editor-in-Chief. The report was prepared by the new Editor-in-Chief Jouke van Dijk (University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands) who is in charge since January 2007 when the organizational changes became effective as decided by the RSAI Council during the meetings in Volos (August 2006) and Toronto (November 2006). Since January 2007 the editorial team has consisted of four members: the Book Review Editor plus three editors with a base in each of the three superregional organisations of RSAI, North America, Europe and the Pacific. Philip McCann (University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand) is the successor of Jacques Poot (also at University of Waikato) who served for almost a decade as Pacific Editor, James LeSage (Texas State University–San Marcos, U.S.A.) replaces Jessie Poon (University at Buffalo–SUNY, Buffalo, U.S.A.) who served as North American Editor for five years. I took over the Editor-in-Chief responsibilities from Raymond Florax and I will keep my responsibilities as European editor. The geographical base of the editors in no way implies they represent the superregional organisation or that they deal exclusively with papers from that part of the world. All submissions are to the Editor-in-Chief who distributes manuscripts to the editorial team based on areas of scholarly expertise. Charlie Karlsson (Jönköping International Business School, Sweden) has been appointed as the new book review editor replacing Brigitte Waldorf (Purdue University, West Lafayette, U.S.A). The editorial office moved from West Lafayette to Groningen where Sophia Klaassen took over from Joy L. May as editorial assistant. I would like to thank the outgoing editors, editorial assistance and especially, Raymond Florax the outgoing Editor-in-Chief, for their excellent service to the association and to *Papers in Regional Science* in particular. The terms of the new editors will go through 2009.

2. Organization of the journals' editorial and production operations

The current Editorial Board was appointed in 2004 for a five-year term ending in 2009. In 2005 there were no changes to the Editorial Board, and in November 2006 the new editors left the Editorial Board and the old editors were appointed at the Toronto meeting as members of the Editorial Board. All current members will serve a five-year term ending in December 2009, so the first "regular" review of the composition of the Editorial Board for the journal is set for 2009. The Board now comprises the following 47 members (with affiliations listed as current in 2007).

Anselin, L.	Arizona State University, Arizona	USA
Arbia, G.	Universita degli Studi G. d'Annunzio di Chieti, Pescara	Italy
Baker, R.G.V.	University of New England, Armidale	Australia
Ben-Akiva, M.E.	Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge	USA
Berliant, M.	Washington University, St. Louis	USA
Boarnet, M.	University of California, Irvine	USA
Bröcker, J.	Christian-Albrechts-University, Kiel	Germany
Chang, S.	University of British Columbia, Vancouver	Canada
de Groot, H.L.F.	Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam	The Netherlands
Durantón, G.	University of Toronto, Toronto	Canada
Ertur, C.	University of Orléans, Orléans	France
Florax, R.J.G.M.	Purdue University, West Lafayette	USA
Fujita, M.	Kyoto University, Kyoto	Japan
Garretsen, H.	Utrecht University, Utrecht	The Netherlands
Greenwood, M.J.	University of Colorado, Boulder	USA
Haddad, E.	University of Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo	Brazil
Henry, M.	Clemson University, Clemson	USA
Higano, Y.	University of Tsukuba, Tsukuba	Japan
Jayet, H.	University of Lille, Lille	France
Kilkenny, M.	University of Nevada, Reno	USA
Kobayashi, K.	Kyoto University, Kyoto	Japan
Kockelman, K.M.	University of Texas at Austin, Austin	USA
Lai, F.-C.	National Taipei University of Technology, Taipei	Taiwan
Lindsey, C.R.	University of Alberta, Edmonton	Canada
Longley, P.	University College of London, London	UK
López-Bazo, E.	University of Barcelona, Barcelona	Spain
Madden, J.R.	Monash University, Clayton	Australia
Mitomo, H.	University of Waseda, Tokyo	Japan
Miyata, Y.	Toyohashi University of Technology Tempaku, Aichi	Japan
O'Kelly, M.	Ohio State University, Columbus	USA
Oosterhaven, J.	University of Groningen, Groningen	The Netherlands
Overman, H.G.	London School of Economics & Political Science, London	UK
Park, S.O.	Seoul National University, Seoul	Korea
Plane, D.A.	University of Arizona, Tucson	USA
Poon, J.	State University of New York, Buffalo	USA
Poot, J.	University of Waikato, Hamilton	New Zealand
Quigley, J.M.	University of California, Berkeley	USA
Rey, S.	San Diego State University, San Diego	USA
Shefer, D.	Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa	Israel
Smith, C.	Griffith University, Nathan	Australia
Stimson, R.R.	University of Queensland, St. Lucia	Australia
Thill, J.-C.	University of North Carolina, Charlotte	USA
Thisse, J.	CORE, Louvain la Neuve	Belgium
Venables, A.J.	London School of Economics & Political Science, London	UK
Verhoef, E.T.	Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam	The Netherlands
Waldorf, B.S.	Purdue University, West Lafayette	USA

3. Publication and circulation statistics

An update of the vital publication statistics, following Anselin's (PRS, vol. 74, no. 4) set-up is presented in this section. Figure 1 summarizes the geographic coverage of *Papers in Regional Science*. The geographical distribution of authors pertains to full articles, research notes and comments, book reviews and eventually will also include editorials, etc. The unit of measurement is author pages, implying that pages of multiple-authored articles are pro-rated.

It is obvious from Figure 1 that the geographical distribution of authorship has been relatively stable over time. The trends are such that North American contributions in terms of author pages are still slightly decreasing, the European contributions show a strong upward trend and Pacific contributions are decreasing.

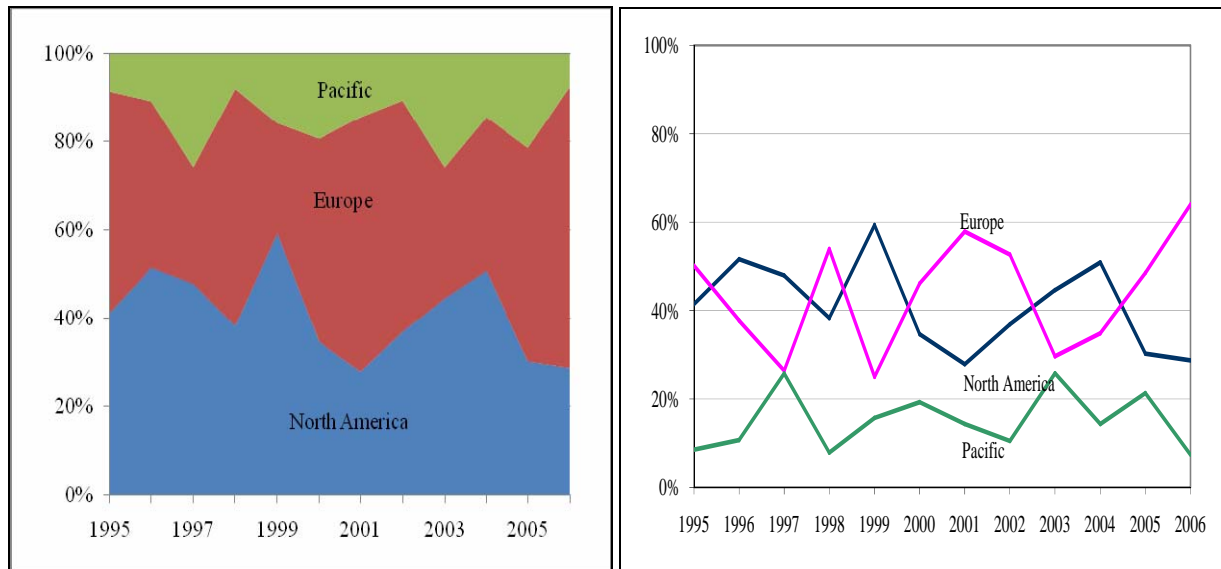


Figure 1. Geographic distribution of authors in author pages (% per year and proportion), vol. 74–85, 1995–2006

When viewed against the perspective of the supraregional distribution of the membership of the Association, it appears that the geographic distribution of authors of published articles by and large reflects the membership of the Association, although Europe was over-represented and the Pacific was under-represented in 2006. The geographical distribution of authorship is also not an explicit editorial goal, as publication decisions are based on scientific merit and quality considerations alone.

Figure 2 shows the development of the number of submissions over time. In 2006, the number of submissions is again somewhat higher, following the upward trend. The journal received 46 submissions from Europe, 15 from North America, and 19 from the Pacific, totaling 80 submissions. Figure 2 also shows that the number of submissions from Europe is on average the highest and increasing, whereas the number of submissions from North-America decreased in recent years.

For the book review section, the geographic distribution of reviewers is such that reviewers are generally from North America (only 1 from Europe). The total number of book reviews published in 2006 equaled 12.

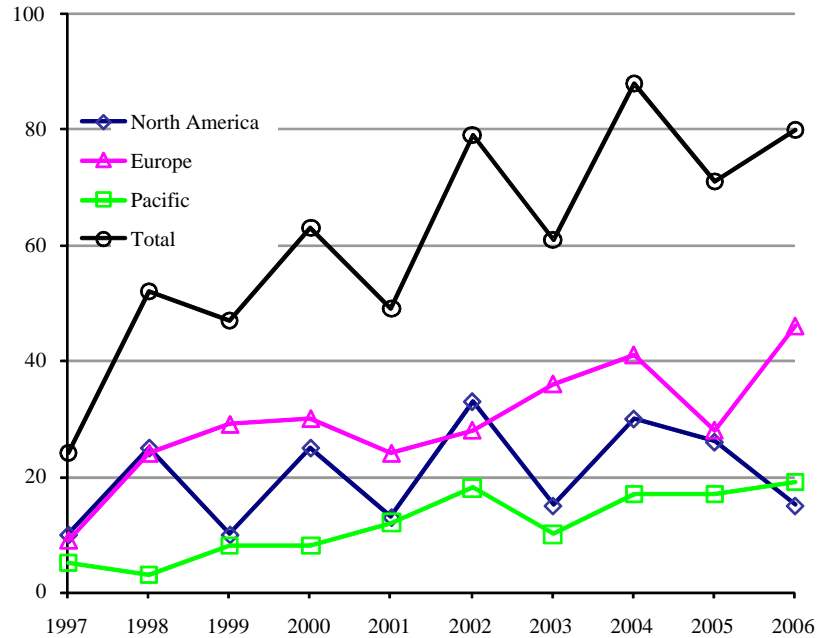


Figure 2. Geographically detailed number of submissions, 1997–2006

In Figure 3 the affiliations of authors are broken down, again using author pages as the metric, and following Anselin's (PRS, vol. 74, no. 4, 1995) categorization of 'disciplines' using the following 'departmental' affiliations:

- Geography,
- Economics,
- Planning,
- Engineering (including Transportation),
- Urban and Regional Studies (including Regional Science and Regional Research Centers),
- Applied Economics (including Agricultural Economics, Land Economics, Business and Management Sciences),
- Mathematics and Physics,
- Social Sciences (including Sociology, and Social Psychology),
- Public Policy,
- Government Research Agencies,
- Private Research Agencies, and
- Miscellaneous.

Figure 3 shows the extent to which regional science has a multidisciplinary focus. The dominance of economics is becoming more and more visible. Together with applied economics, these two fields account for 72% of the total number of author pages in 2006. The number of contributions by geographers shows an upwards trend (18%) after a historic low of 3% in 2005.

The RSAI membership and hence the potential readership for the journal is now at 3,500 and still increasing, and institutional subscriptions are at 300 with another 1,526 libraries having access to the journal through consortia licenses.

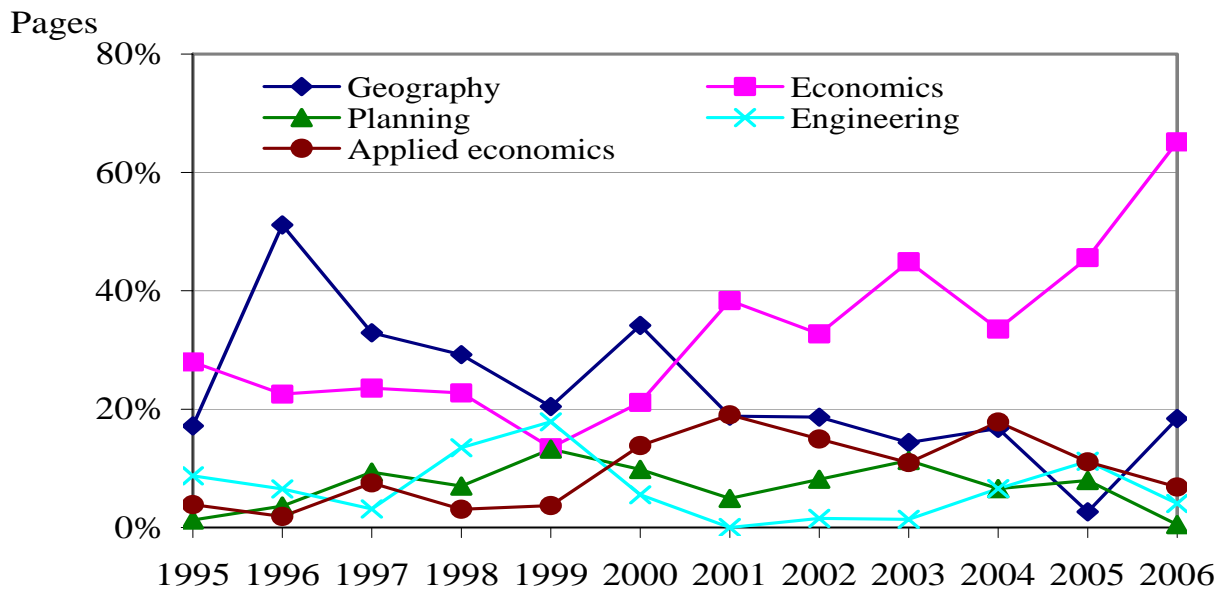
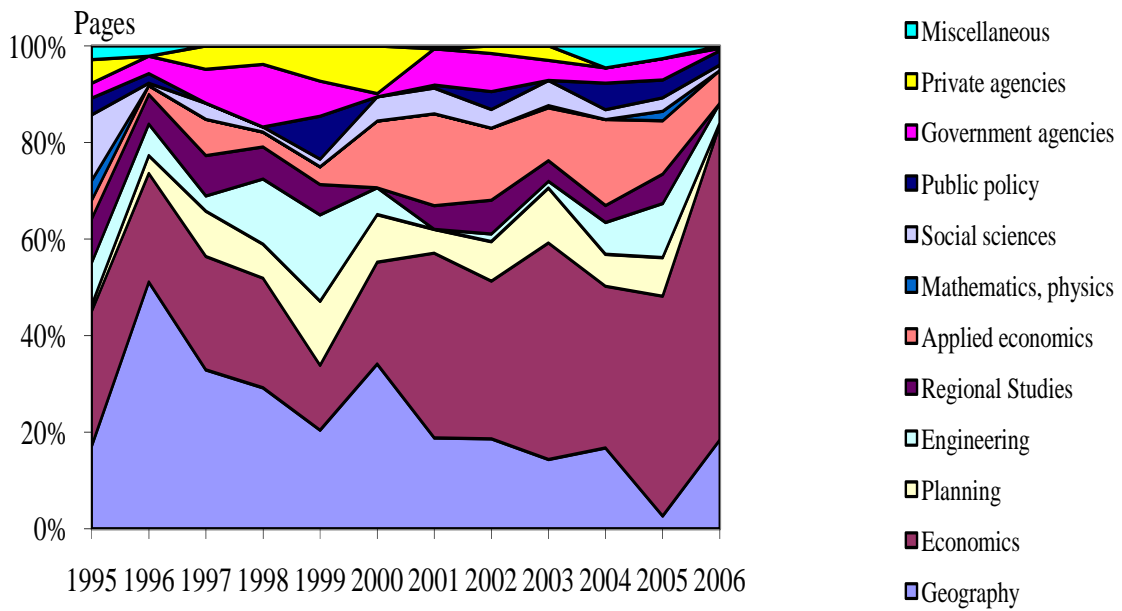


Figure 3. Author pages by affiliation of the author(s), volume 74–85, 1995–2006

4. Editorial operations statistics

Tables 1–3 present an overview of the number of submissions and rejection rates, manuscript processing, and the geographic distribution of peer reviewers for the period 1997–2006, respectively. The number of submissions over the years shows a rather erratic distribution, although it is evident that the number of submissions exhibits a positive trend. In 2006, the journal received 80 submissions in total. Over a somewhat longer period the acceptance rate went down from over 40% to 30–35% after all manuscripts have been processed, which given the regularly available space, is too high to allow publication within a year after acceptance. The number of pending manuscripts is increasing too.

Table 1. Number of submissions and rejection rates.^a

Cohort	Submissions	Acceptance rate	Rejection rate	Pending manuscripts
1997	24	0.46	0.54	0
1998	52	0.48	0.52	0
1999	47	0.30	0.70	0
2000	63	0.46	0.54	0
2001	49	0.40	0.60	0
2002	79	0.39	0.61	0
2003	63	0.35	0.65	0
2004	88	0.31	0.69	24
2005	71	0.28	0.72	32
2006	80	0.35	0.65	54

^a Including special issues

Table 2 shows that the average duration of manuscript handling to time of final decision in 2006 was slightly higher than the previous year, although time needed to reach a first decision decreased slightly. The goal continues to be a three-month time period between submission and first-decision and the new editorial team has confidence this goal can be achieved when Manuscript Central is in full operation in 2007.

Table 2. Manuscript processing in months.^a

Cohort	First decision	Second decision	Third decision	Final decision to publication
1997	8.1	5.6	—	6.6
1998	5.3	3.6	1.4	8.6
1999	6.1	2.8	—	9.0
2000	4.3	2.9	2.3	9.5
2001	4.3	2.9	0.8	7.9
2002	5.2	3.5	1.0	8.0
2003	6.1	3.9	1.0	9.2
2004	5.6	3.3	1.5	9.0
2005	6.1	2.9	—	n.a.
2006	5.4	4.9	—	12.1

^a Including special issues.

From table 3 it is clear that the geographic distribution of peer reviewers in 2006 shows a development towards a somewhat greater involvement of North American reviewers at the expense of Pacific reviewers. This is most likely due to a larger proportion of the manuscripts being handled by the editor from North America. It is standard policy of the editors to strive for a minimum of three reviewers per manuscript.

Table 3. Number of reviewers and proportion of reviewers by supraregion.^a

Year	Reviewers	Europe	North America	Pacific
1998	148	0.35	0.51	0.14
1999	142	0.32	0.54	0.14
2000	205	0.32	0.54	0.14
2001	158	0.40	0.48	0.12
2002	194	0.38	0.44	0.18
2003	186	0.34	0.53	0.13
2004	192	0.39	0.50	0.11
2005	192	0.38	0.31	0.32
2006	181	0.40	0.52	0.08

^a Including special issues.

The standard procedure for book reviews is to provide reviewers with a twelve-week period between the initial contact and the deadline for the review. This is slightly higher than what would be desirable, but a shorter time spell increases non-response considerably. Once the review is received (typically via e-mail as an attached file), it takes less than a week to deal with editorial changes and processing files to the editorial office. However, some reviewers choose not to adhere to the twelve-week deadline and need several reminders. This, of course, lengthens the time span considerably, so the actual time between initial contact and submission to the editorial office varies between four weeks and several months.

Figure 4 gives an overview of the citation impact factor for various regional science journals during the period 1997–2006. *Regional Studies*, *International Regional Science Review* and *Journal of Regional Science* now form a cluster with an impact factor around 1. *Papers in Regional Science* has rather persistently been somewhere at the lower end of the distribution together with the *Annals of Regional Science* and *Regional Science and Urban Economics*. The upward trend that was visible in 1999 and 2000 now seems to have stabilized. In 2006, the citation impact for the journal (defined as cites in 2006 to articles published in 2004 and 2005 divided by the number of articles published in 2004 and 2005) has gone up from 0.475 to 0.524. A further increase of the impact factor closer to the value of 1 is an important goal of the new editorial team. The impact factor for 2007 might benefit from the special issues “Agglomeration, economic geography and regional growth” with Philip McCann and Daniel Shefer as guest editors in 2005 and ‘The spatial dimension of economic growth and convergence’ edited by Eckhardt Bode and Sergio J. Rey published in 2006.

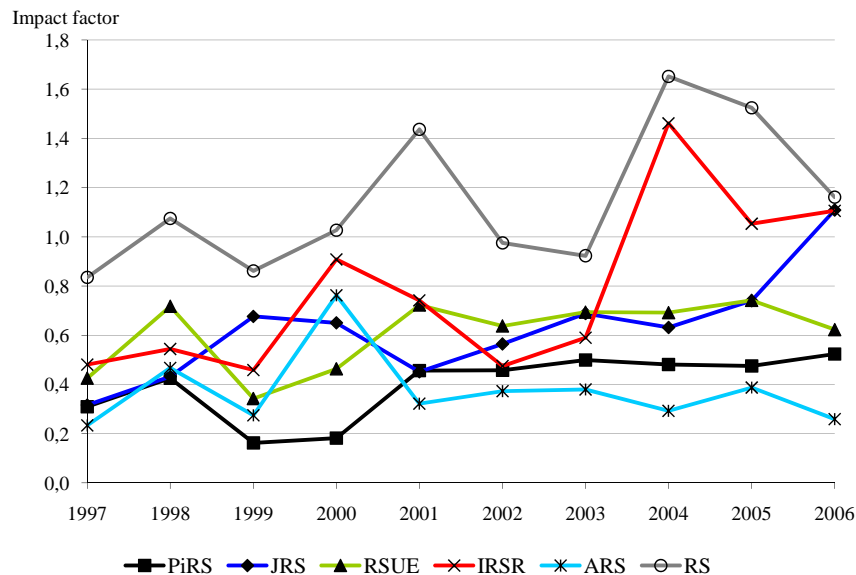


Figure 4. Citation impact factor for various regional science journals, 1997–2006

Over the period 1962 through 2000 the average volume size has been approximately 450 pages, and after 2000 it has increased to 600 pages, with the year 2004 when the Golden Anniversary issue appeared representing an all-time high of 744 pages. The 2005 and 2006 volumes both contained around 630 pages, and this was slightly higher than the page budget of 600 in the contract with Blackwell. With an acceptance rate around 35% and an increasing number of submissions, the regularly available space may be not sufficient to publish papers within a year after acceptance.

The first three issues of volume 86 (2007) have already appeared. Issue #3 was a special issue on “Spatial knowledge diffusion through collaborative networks” prepared by the guest-editors Corinne Autant-Bernard (University of Saint-Etienne, France), Jacques Mairesse (CREST-ENSAE, France and NBER, USA) and Nadine Massard (University of Saint-Etienne, France). Some articles of issue #4 are already available on the Online Early part of Blackwell’s website and will be printed and distributed in November 2007.

5. Editorial policy for the period after 2007

To enhance the further development and success of the flagship journal of RSAI several new steps have been taken by the new editorial team. As of December 2006 *Papers in Regional Science* started using the internet based online submission and administration system Manuscript Central of Scholar One for manuscript handling and management of the review process. Already in 2007 this system proved to be much more efficient than the old paper trail based system in combination with an Excel-sheet. Since the system has been in place, the time to first decision has declined from 5.4 months in 2006 to 2.7 months in 2007! Also the number of submissions increased substantially after introduction of online submission: through October 17, 2007 there were 126 new submissions compared to 80 for the entire 2006 year, and this was much higher than the previous historic high of 88 in 2004.

Since the second issue of volume 86 (2007) the online issues at the Blackwell Synergy website contain abstracts of articles and research notes in Spanish and Japanese that complement the English abstracts, which should increase accessibility of the journal worldwide.

Since the third issue of volume 86 (2007) articles are published online in the Online Early section of *Papers in Regional Science* on the Blackwell Synergy website as soon as final versions have been accepted and prepared for publication by Blackwell.

To promote the visibility of the journal the Martin Beckmann prize for the best article published in *Papers in Regional Science* in 2006 will be awarded for the first time during the NARSC-meeting in Savannah in November 2007.

In terms of publication planning, the issues of volume 87 (to appear in 2008) are filled. Issue #3 will be a special issue on "Spatial econometrics" prepared by guest-editors Giuseppe Arbia (University G. d'Annunzio, Pescara, Italy) and Bernard Fingleton (University of Cambridge, United Kingdom) based on papers presented at the First World Conference of the Spatial Econometrics Association in Cambridge (UK) in July 2007. Currently we are collecting proposals for a special issue in 2009 tentatively planned for issue #2 of volume 88. The publication of special issues might help increase the impact factor moving us closer to the goal of 1 set by the new editorial team.

Through October 17, 2007 only four submissions of research notes with a maximum of 3500 words were received and they were all rejected. The policy to recruit research notes has not been very successful to date, and only a single research note is scheduled for publication in volume 87 of 2008. Because Springer recently launched the new journal *Letters in Spatial and Resource Sciences*, we may need to reconsider the appropriateness of shorter articles as well as ways to attract this type of submission.

With an acceptance rate around 35% and an increasing number of submissions, the regularly available space of 600 pages may not be sufficient to realize the goal of publishing papers within a year of final acceptance. Therefore, negotiations with Blackwell have been initiated to increase the number of papers that could be published each year. From a cost perspective, the most likely option is to increase the page-size of *Papers in Regional Science*, which would allow the number of papers to increase with approximately 20% starting in 2008 with volume 87.

In concluding this report, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Sophia Klaassen for preparing materials for this Editorial Report as well as her outstanding work managing the transition process from the old paper trail/Excel based system to the new online Manuscript Central submission and review management system and for customizing the system to suit the needs of the editorial team. In this respect, we appreciate the support from Blackwell provided by Kirsten Burrell, Angela Richardson, Emma Smith, Claire Spinks, Katherine Wheatley and Ailsa Youngson which was instrumental in getting everyone started with the new Manuscript Central system and realizing new features like Online Early for which we are truly thankful.

Finally I would like to thank all authors and reviewers for their cooperation. Submission by authors of their best work to *Papers in Regional Science* and timely responses from reviews allows the editors to provide both timely and informed feedback to authors provided a good experience for all involved. This should result in scholarly contributions that will enhance the further development and success of *Papers in Regional Science* as the flagship journal of RSAI.

We are looking forward to your comments and suggestions, and hope to see you at the Board Meeting in Savannah.

Jouke van Dijk

Editor-in-chief *Papers in Regional Science*

also on behalf of the other members of the editorial team Phil McCann, James P. LeSage and Charlie Karlsson

Groningen, The Netherlands

October 17, 2007