Message from the Editor

This is the last issue of *Applied Spatial Analysis and Policy* (*ASAP*) for which I share responsibility as Co-Editor in Chief. In stepping down, I would like to think that *ASAP* has become a journal that commands the respect of those working in the broad area of quantitative social science and in the disciplines of applied human geography and regional science in particular.

Measuring the success of a journal is never easy but the numbers suggest that *ASAP* has achieved a reasonable degree of progress since its inception a decade years ago – the first volume of papers in 2008 contained an editorial plus 11 papers, three of which appeared in the very first issue and involved two authors from the United Kingdom and two from the USA; the 2018 volume contains 35 papers, seven of which are published in this issue (11.4) along with two editorials and two book reviews. The number of papers published per year grew rapidly from seven in 2010 to 28 in 2016 as submissions increased, inducing a concomitant increase in the rejection rate. The 2017 journal impact factor for *ASAP*, published each summer by Thomson Reuters via Journal Citation Reports (JCR), was 1.367 for the preceding calendar year, and the 2017 five year impact factor was 1.420, the latter being the average number of times that papers from *ASAP* published in the last five years have been cited in the JCR and is calculated by dividing the number of citations in the JCR year by the total number of papers published in ASAP in the last five years. The 2017 downloads count was 38,675, according to the number of downloads on the SpringerLink platform based on the COUNTER (Counting Online Usage of NeTworked Elctronic Resources) standard with a usage factor of 148, i.e. the mean number of downloads in 2016/17 of all papers published online in ASAP during that period.

These quantitative measures that are pleasing to report because they show improvement over time but it is also encouraging to observe the wide range of countries from which papers are submitted and reach publication. *ASAP* has truly become an international journal, one of the key objectives that was established when the journal was conceived by members of the Centre for Spatial Analysis and Policy (CSAP) in the School of Geography at the University of Leeds over a decade ago. Whilst the major contributing countries are the UK and the USA, providing over 40 papers in each case, Australia, the Netherlands and Canada have provided between 10and 20 papers each and there are many countries that have supplied between two and 10 papers, including China, Italy, Malaysia, Spain, Germany, Poland, Sweden, Iran, new Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Greece, India, France, Finland, Belgium, Ireland and Taiwan. It is also important to acknowledge a set of authors whose demographic characteristics are diverse; whilst papers by 'old timers' appear from time to time, so do papers by those at an early stage in their careers, including taught postgraduate students and those doing postgraduate research.

Less encouraging, perhaps, has been the relatively small number of contributions by those outside the academic sector but doing applied research in their respective professions; in these days when 'impact' is such priority for funding agencies, we had also hoped to see many more papers submitted by academics that were based on consultancy research for public and private sector organisations, for example. The reasons for the dearth of such contributions are manyfold, from the lack of time and inclination by researchers to convert 'applied research' into papers suitable to meet rigorous academic journal standards, to the level of confidentiality surrounding consultancy work undertaken for certain institutions that prevents subsequent publication.

It is fortuitous that my departure coincides with an issue of *ASAP* that contains several papers on the theme of 'Spatial interaction modelling', guest-edited by my friend and colleague, Martin Clarke, who was responsible for organising a special session of the European Colloquium on Quantitative and Theoretical Methods in Geography held in York September 2017 to celebrate the first paper authored by Alan Wilson on entropy-maximising methods. I am delighted that the set of papers given at the session is appearing in *ASAP*, but I am also delighted that I was asked to contribute a paper to the session and to the special issue. Sir Alan Wilson was appointed to the School of Geography in the same year that I joined as an undergraduate student, reading for a BA degree in Geography and Economics. When I graduated in 1973, one of my first tasks as a new PhD student at Leeds, under the careful supervision of Philip Rees, was to write the code (in Fortran) to calibrate each of the different variants of the family of spatial interaction models expounded by Alan which have been subsequently applied in various contexts, particularly in the commercial sector. My own area of interest has always been internal migration and the paper in this issue of *ASAP* reports the results of fitting spatial interaction models to measure the effects of scale and zonation on the distance of migration and on the distance decay parameter. It was conducted using essentially the same modelling software that was written back in the 1970s but has been integrated within the IMAGE Studio, software written in C# by Kostas Daras (now at the University of Liverpool) as part of a large international research project comparing internal migration in different countries around the world that was led by Martin Bell (University of Queensland, now retired) and funded by the Australian Research Council.

In stepping down, I would like to record my thanks to all those who have helped bring *ASAP* to where it is today, especially to Mark Birkin, who helped me launch the journal and get it off the ground in the early years, to Paul Norman and Adam Dennett, who have joined the team as Co-Editors in Chief and have shouldered much of the responsibility in more recent years; and to Evelien Bakker at Springer with whom we started the journal and who, after a period doing other things, is back in charge of overseeing the journal. There are, of course, a lot of other people, past and present, including the Book Reviews Editors, the Associate Editors, members of the Editorial Advisory Board, and members of the Springer publishing team both in the Netherlands and in the Philippines, whose work and support I have been very grateful for. I am pleased to say that Dianna Smith, from the University of Southampton, has agreed to sign up as the third Co-Editor in Chief from January 2019 and I wish her and everyone else connected with *ASAP*, as well as the journal itself, a very bright future.

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