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# Introduction: The Travels of *Environment and Planning A*

*Jamie Peck, Trevor J. Barnes and Nigel Thrift*

*E*nvironment and Planning A is a journal concerned with all forms of analysis and interpretation applied to cities and regions. It publishes pathbreaking work at the various frontiers of urban and regional studies. No journal is encyclopedic, but more than most, *Environment and Planning A* is committed to addressing the full range of issues of urban and regional analysis, along with associated matters of policy and practice. By virtue of its size and frequency, the journal is uniquely placed to combine breadth of coverage with depth in engagement. For the same reasons, *Environment and Planning A* maintains programmatic concerns in urban and regional analysis, while at the same time tapping into emerging fields of research. Interdisciplinary and international in both scope and outlook, the journal boasts a readership and submission base that extends across Europe, North America, and Asia, and more recently also into South America and Africa. Its commitment to intellectual pluralism is reflected in a rude diversity of contributions, spanning critical social theory, quantitative modeling, econometrics, policy analysis, science studies, and cultural deconstruction. *Environment and Planning A* relies upon its polymathic and international editorial board to maintain this effort, publishing works across multiple registers that are innovative, authoritative, and provocative.

Founded in 1969, as *Environment and Planning*, the journal began life as a product of geography's quantitative revolution. As founding editor, Alan Wilson wrote in his inaugural editorial, this was a "time of rapid development in environmental planning techniques", one in which "research and planning [were] becoming increasingly scientific and interdisciplinary", not to say internationalizing as well (Wilson, 1969, page 1). Seeking to appeal to rising generations of researchers in geography, sociology, urban and regional planning, economics, political science, and even mathematics and statistics, the new journal endeavored not simply to reflect but to *shape* an emerging interdisciplinary field, focused on the study of cities and regions.

Research in this field is concerned both with the analysis and systematic study of cities and regions at various scales, and with planning processes themselves. There are many possible approaches ranging from statistical analysis to the development, testing, and use of advanced theories . . . The journal will contain contributions representing all these approaches and

will be concerned, ultimately, to foster an integrated inter-disciplinary approach to the problems of city and regional planning . . . Papers offering quantitative approaches to such topics are especially welcome (Wilson, 1969, page 1).

Running to less than 250 pages in total, the first volume of the journal was enthusiastically welcomed (Kaiser, 1970). It featured articles on urban social theory, the planning of growth poles, kinetic theories of transport flows, combinatorial programming and urban and regional systems, industrial location modeling, and humanistic planning. Today, the annual volume of what is now known as *Environment and Planning A* is divided into 12 monthly issues and routinely exceeds 3,000 printed pages.<sup>1</sup> Further, the theoretical, methodological, and empirical horizons of the journal have been repeatedly extended over the years. A recent random selection, for example, would find articles on the politics of climate change and financial crises, on game theory and actor-network theory, and on 'signature' architecture and learning regions. While a concern with cities and regions remains a tie that binds, *Environment and Planning A* is now best known for its radical openness to different methodological approaches, theoretical perspectives, and academic languages. Certainly, the journal incorporates recurring debates, but perhaps its most durable characteristic is an evolving culture of intellectual openness. In terms of analytical approaches, there are no cores and peripheries at *Environment and Planning A*; no hewing toward a singular 'party line' or favored mode of research. In part this stems from deliberate editorial policy, but also in part from the sheer number of individual published contributions during a year that ensures no single theme dominates.

In upholding this spirit of openness and innovation, the journal has remained true to its founding principles. As Nigel Thrift, Wilson's successor as managing editor, wrote on *E&PA's* 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, by embracing cross-disciplinary engagement the journal "has kept faith with [its distinctive] view of the world".

In a time of specialization, the journal has stayed resolutely generalist. In a time of supposed methodological choices, the journal continues to carry both quantitative and qualitative papers. In a time of an implied divide between theory and empirical work, the journal is happy to carry both abstract and applied papers. In a time in which economy and culture are often seen as alternatives, the journal is willing to publish on both without demur. In other words, the journal has acted as common ground in which different traditions can and do talk to one another without fear or favour (Thrift, 2008, page 1).

Founded in a moment of intellectual revolution, the journal retains a restless and occasionally radical spirit. Now in its fifth decade, it embraces new intellectual currents and approaches. Many of these new, interdisciplinary endeavors

were scarcely imaginable at the time of its foundation, including political ecology, science studies, feminist geography, and socioeconomics.

## Departures

Even though the intellectual journey of *Environment and Planning A* might be a long and winding one, the journal was launched onto a transformative path from the beginning. In part this reflected the visionary nature of John Ashby, the journal's publisher. He was always able to recognize the potential of new possibilities before others. That included recognizing the potential of a new journal, *Environment and Planning*, which accorded with exciting changes occurring in the spatial sciences (and indeed beyond) during the 1960s.

The journal's birth in 1969 was at the apogee of postwar 'spatial Keynesianism', with its normative presumption that the state would intervene and shape urban and regional outcomes through the deployment of (increasingly sophisticated) policy instruments and planning techniques (see Hall, 1989; Massey and Meegan, 1985; Brenner, 2004). Those instruments and techniques could often be stated formally as equations and mathematical models, or in the form of computable algorithms. As John Ashby reflected, *Environment and Planning* "was launched during the start of the quantitative revolution in geography, when the idea of applying some concepts from physics via statistical mechanics opened up exciting new paths to prediction and planning" (Ashby, 1993, page 6).

The ambition of the project was reflected in the first of the nouns in the journal's title. "Environment" was a horizon-spanning keyword, "to be as general and wide-ranging as possible [allowing the journal to] carry the latest research topics as they evolved" (Ashby, 1993, page 2; Wilson, 1982). The second noun in the title, *Planning*, was necessary in part for practical reasons (the journal, *Environment*, already existed), in part to signal interests beyond the founding editor's well-known concerns with quantification and modeling, and in part (possibly unconsciously) to resonate with spatial-Keynesianism. Wilson was the assistant director of the Centre for Environmental Studies (CES) in London at the time he became the journal's editor. The remit of CES, a non-profit, quasi-governmental organization, was "a very broad and mainly *planning* one" (Wilson, 1993, page 7), which would be reflected in Wilson's vision of the journal. Finally, the aspiration to stake out expanded territory was conveyed by the subtitle, *An international journal of urban and regional research*.

The manner in which *Environment and Planning* would occupy this territory would be very different, however, to that of another consequential journal launched that same year. Based in the United States, *Antipode: A radical journal of geography* was very much a product of the contentious politics of the late 1960s, reflecting Vietnam war protests, the women's movement, anti-racist struggles, student uprisings, and concerns about environmental despoliation

and destruction. As *Environment and Planning's* first assistant editor, Doreen Massey, later recalled, this was a time of “complicated politics – [a] mixture of repression and hope for a different future”, but it was also a time of rationalization, modernization, and order:

For the other side of the nineteen-sixties was the glorification, in a particular form, of science and of technical expertise. Social democracy plus knowledge were, in the United Kingdom at least, to transform society, to modernise it but in a socially progressive way . . . *Environment and Planning* was born out of this side of the 'sixties – out of the assuredness of expertise, the apparent precision of quantification, and the liberating potential of 'science'. Its place of birth was the [CES, which] I had joined . . . at the beginning of '68 and found myself surrounded by physical scientists – physicists, crystallographers, materials scientists – all anxious to apply their approaches to social issues and the structures of urban areas. Alan Wilson – research head of the Centre and editor of *Environment and Planning* – was a young lad in brown corduroys with an irrepressible enthusiasm for modelling things in mathematical equations. And it was to this brand of urban and regional studies that the new journal devoted itself (Massey, 1993, pages 10–11).

The assistant editor was a conscientious proof-reader, but she never committed to the wider technocratic project. A product of the 'other side' of the 1960s, Massey would later confess that the contents of the journal often left her “not a little bemused” (Massey, 1993, page 11). “In part it was that I simply didn't understand a lot of the stuff that passed across my desk for the journal”, Massey continued, “in some of it there seemed to be barely a word of English between the equations.” But her deeper sense of unease came from “what was and what was not being modelled, and indeed about what could and could not be modelled. Quantification and modeling really restrict [the analytical vision, which had become] focussed on transport, job-numbers, easily measurable things” (Massey, 1993, page 12).

Soon, in fact, the orderly world that many of these modeling exercises presumed was itself turned upside down, not least by macroeconomic crisis. *Environment and Planning* had been launched during the optimistic decade of the “white heat of the technological revolution.” The following decade, however, proved much more disorientating and turbulent. Reflecting on the journal's first ten years, Alan Wilson highlighted the marked instability of the socioeconomic environment, especially at the international scale. Considerable progress was evident in realizing the founding goals of the journal – particularly the technical elaboration of advanced forms of urban and regional analysis. But subsequent real-world events had provoked a fundamental realignment of the fledgling field.

Writing in 1979, Wilson noted: “Many of the achievements [of the journal have been] in methodology – modelling techniques, for example, which were

initiated in the 1960s have been consolidated, extended, and sometimes overtaken by new methods in the 1970s". Set against such achievements, though, were pervasive national and global macroeconomic disruptions and instabilities:

The technical competence now exists . . . to tackle a wide range of problems. The overwhelming impression left by the last ten years, however, is not so much to do with technical methodology, but much more with large-scale change and uncertainty and with the recognition of a wider range of issues. The most significant change was probably the 1973 OPEC increase in oil prices and its consequent effects on economic development. Many other developments have combined with this to produce an era when growth and general increase in incomes, in much of the world, is no longer to be taken for granted. Developments in computers and microelectronics are generating wealth for some and unemployment for many, for example, and this illustrates the tensions and contradictions which are features of many current problems . . . [Today, particular concerns are] energy supply and economic development (including the problems of increasing unemployment). There are others. Population growth is still a major issue in many parts of the world, but birthrates in general have declined. Some would argue there is now a greater concern with equity (Wilson, 1979, page 1).

Wilson's sentiment represented less a distraction from the original mandate of *Environment and Planning*, than the *de facto* birth of a new tradition of urban and regional analysis grounded in material circumstances. Already, the journal's intellectual project was showing signs of evolving through time, as well as varying markedly across space. The journal's tradition of empirical work was moving with the changing urban and regional landscape that was its object of investigation.

Consequently, *Environment and Planning A* was pulled in several directions at the same time. By the 1970s, it was a pre-eminent international venue for leading-edge work in regional science. The journal published two definitive contributions to spatial-interaction modeling during this period (Openshaw, 1977; Harris and Wilson, 1978), together with work measuring accessibility (Pirie, 1979), and a pioneering article on the calibration of travel demand models, which remains *E&PA's* most cited article (Williams, 1977). Apart from quantitative regional studies, other contributions, often empirical, signaled important turning points in urban and regional analysis, and in the urban and regional system itself. For example, Vining and Strauss (1977) drew attention to systemic processes of metropolitan decentralization in the United States; Firm's (1975; this volume) work on the phenomenon of external control of manufacturing operations prefigured research on the new international division of labor and global production chains (Barff and Austen, this volume; Hess and Yeung, this volume; Wright, this volume); and research conducted on interurban disparities in access to medical care by Paul Knox (1978), later an editor of *Environment and Planning A*, opened new avenues in welfare

geography and the study of urban collective services. Finally, a provocative contribution from Scott and Roweis (1977) reappraised the larger project, philosophy, and practice of urban planning.

## Debates

This was hardly a seamless process of harmonious evolution or analytical synthesis, however. The journal began its life with precociously interdisciplinary ambitions. For the first issue, for example, Wilson proactively secured articles “from an economist (Darwent), a sociologist in a planning department (Gans), a statistician also in a planning department (Rogers), two planners in a geography department (Cripps and Foot), two geographers in an interdisciplinary social science department (Wolpert and Zillman), and a traffic planner in Wilson’s own centre (Hyman)”. But for all this diversity, “most [of these] articles were concerned with quantitative models of spatial patterns and processes” (Johnston and Thrift, 1993, page 15; Kaiser, 1970). In the early years of *E&PA*, economics provided the methodological inspiration and the ‘role model’ for the journal (Fotheringham, 1993). This was to remain a largely unrequited relationship, though. To recall one of Alan Wilson’s favorite jokes, putting the word ‘urban’ before ‘economist’ seemed to have a similar effect to placing the word ‘domestic’ before ‘science’, or perhaps ‘horse’ before ‘doctor’ (Wilson, 1984, 1993).

Very soon though, the journal would become largely dominated by geographers, and to a lesser degree by academic planners, with other disciplines being no more than a minority presence, albeit a continuing one (Wilson, 1982; Wrigley, 1983; Johnston and Thrift, 1993). *Environment and Planning A* came to reflect the endlessly changeable intellectual culture of its primary disciplinary base, geography, which by the 1970s was characterized by paradigm instability and restless experimentalism. In this context, the fact that the journal had come to symbolize “above all else [the accomplishments of] the Wilsonian style of mathematical and scientific modelling” (Openshaw, 1993, page 78), retaining a “special relationship with regional science” (Wilson, 1982, page 287), was a source of both vulnerability and strength.

Wilson was moved to editorialize on this subject, on his return from a restive 1977 meeting of the Institute of British Geographers. Wilson had seen there “some reaction against quantitative methods”, the vanguard of which was a new generation of geographers inspired by “radical-Marxist philosophies” (Wilson, 1977, page 245). The tables were being turned:

It was at times amusing to those not directly engaged to see the usually staid conference sessions on historical geography become this year’s centres of controversy as the Marxists aired their wares. The quantitative revolution is over! Theoreticians and quantifiers are now part of the establishment and a new revolution may be pending (Wilson, 1977, page 245).

Wilson felt it necessary to reassure both established and new constituencies of *Environment and Planning A* that “good and interesting articles from a broad field will be accepted by the journal . . . It is essential that readers and prospective authors do not label this journal as exclusively quantitative, though we shall try to maintain the reputation in this field which we have achieved in the last few years” (1977, page 245). While baulking at the characterization, Wilson was pleased to report that the previous issue of the journal had featured a letter from Andrew Sayer and Simon Duncan (1977, page 232) that began in confrontational style: “In a journal dominated by the uncritical acceptance of extreme forms of positivist method, it is reassuring to see an article which goes against the grain . . .” Having underlined the point that these debates were occurring *within* the journal, rather than about the journal, Wilson argued that both detached scholars and social activists could surely agree on the continuing importance of “skilled scientific analysis”. It was this that would remain the journal’s “centre of gravity”, rather than partisan attachment to quantitative modeling *per se* (Wilson, 1977, page 245). For his part, the editor would remain an “unrepentant eclectic” (Wilson, 1982, page 287).

True to this commitment, from the 1980s *Environment and Planning A* increasingly became known as a venue for heterodox contributions and conversations, rather than as an unreconstructed bastion of a particular approach. Notable contributions included a series of paradigm-shaping contributions to economic geography, such as Taylor and Thrift’s (1982a, 1982b) influential analysis of corporate networks and industrial linkages; an outline of Allen Scott’s formative arguments concerning functional disintegration and industrial agglomeration, along with his case-study work on semiconductors (Scott, 1985; Scott and Angel, 1987, 1988; Scott, this volume); Gordon Clark’s heterodox analyses of segmented labor markets (Clark, 1983a, 1983b; Clark and Whiteman’s, 1983), together with his proto labor-geographical work on unions (Clark and Johnston, 1987a, 1987b); and the methodological exchange between David Keeble and Andrew Sayer on the adequacy of statistical regression methods in manufacturing geography (Keeble, 1980; Sayer, 1982). Other consequential contributions included Moos and Dear’s exploration of structuration approaches to urban theory (Dear and Moos, 1986; Moos and Dear, 1986), innovative work on urban services (Wolch and Geiger, 1983; Pinch, 1989), debates around urban rent theory (Ball, 1985, 1987; Clark, 1987), Johnston and Hay’s (1982) novel geographical analysis of electoral change, and a far-reaching prospective review of the ‘localities debate’ (Cox and Mair, this volume; Duncan and Savage, 1991; Massey, this volume; Warde, 1992).

By the end of the 1980s, a different kind of quantitative revolution was beginning to sweep the spatial sciences in general, and geography in particular. Geographical information systems (GIS) were already proving to be a noticeably disruptive technology, not least for the unstable intellectual order of the spatial sciences. While there were substantive contributions to GIS published in *E&PA*, perhaps the most important role of the journal was as a forum during the late 1980s and early 1990s for short commentaries and rebuttals.

The best example, and which continues to resonate, is the commentary by Openshaw (1991) and the reply by Taylor and Overton (1991) around the integrative potential of GIS in geography.

Stan Openshaw had been a longtime contributor to the journal, and sometime *E&PA* algorithms editor. His argument was that by 1990 GIS had arrived, and could function as “elemental superglue” to fix the myriad broken shards of geography (Openshaw, 1991, page 626). Until then, Openshaw observed, innovations in computational geography and (proto) GIS were considered a minority pursuit carried out by that

handful of what are often referred to as “mindless number crunchers and mere handle-crankers”, the computer freaks, the left-over and born-again spatial analysts from a previous era, and mathematical modellers who live (or lived) in Leeds and a small number of model-rich oases (1991, page 624).

Leeds had been *Environment and Planning A*'s editorial home ever since Alan Wilson relocated there in 1970. He would go on to shape decisively a broadly based geography department, with conspicuous strengths in quantitative approaches, from which the successful spinoff company, GMAP, was launched in 1985. (Indeed, Openshaw himself soon moved to Leeds.)

In a related article that Openshaw later contributed to the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue of the journal, he shared with readers a self-consciously situated account of the evolution of *Environment and Planning A*. In the beginning, approximately 1969–1976, the journal reflected the “excitement and hope for mathematical model-based applications in urban and regional research and planning” (Openshaw, 1993, page 71). After 1975, however, the journal descended into “years of depression”, as the earlier generation of models failed to meet and remake the world as intended, and as practitioners turned to more ‘theoretical’ concerns “without any hope of real application” (Openshaw, 1993, page 71). Openshaw’s third period began in the early 1980s, marked by the rise of “alternative paradigms . . . and social-theory-related views”, together with a move away from systematic modeling. Ironically, this was the same time in which developments in information technology were opening up quite different avenues, and “to make available the data that would have been needed to power the period 1 models and convert essentially academic curiosities into useful and valuable tools” (1993, page 72).

Putting what he plainly described as his own ‘prejudices’ to a content analysis of *E&PA*'s first quarter-century, Openshaw (1993, pages 75–76) discovered that while there was a measurable “slackening off of the intensity of mathematical symbolism” in the pages of the journal, the shift was not nearly as marked as he had anticipated. What was “most worrying,” however, was the absence of a serious embrace of the “‘sexy’ modelling and research areas of the 1990s”, based on GIScience, artificial intelligence, and related computing-intensive innovations. As Openshaw (1993, page 76) summarized:



[There was] a growth in [E&PA of] equation-free or reduced-equation papers, giving the impression of a move towards softer and more weakly descriptive and analysis-free contents. Some of the more recent papers might have been better suited to *National Geographic*! Maybe it does not matter, but this might well be a cause for concern because of the belief that the leading edge of scientific research in the *Environment and Planning* theatre of operations is now rapidly moving on into a new information-rich world characterised above all else by an increasingly computation, rather than analytical, approach in which urban and regional research [takes place] within a large database (call it GIS if you prefer) context . . . The original *Environment and Planning* platform was strongly proactive; it was used as a tool for stimulating changes in research styles and creating new specialisms. Will the journal in the 1990s be able to revert to this more militant and radical form?

Meanwhile, parallel concerns were raised by one of the journal's longtime editors, Bill Clark, about the extent to which *Environment and Planning A* had realized its mandate in pioneering knowledge *applications* across its 'theatre of operations': "Even though the body of theoretical knowledge has increased beyond recognition (proliferated in unexpected directions) and the whole field of spatial analysis has grown in rich and diverse ways, the application of our findings, the usefulness of that theory and research, is still limited" (Clark, 1993, page 38). The hubris of planning science had barely survived into the 1970s, and soon it was becoming clear that while many of the original "planning problems" had intensified, marshaling effective responses to these, if anything, "seem[ed] harder" (Wilson, 1982, page 288).

This was a point conceded by two of Clark's co-editors, who were, nevertheless, more inclined to see the glass as (at least) half full. Johnston and Thrift argued that the progressive re-envisioning of the role and remit of *Environment and Planning A* taking place since the mid-1970s was affirmed in both deed and word:

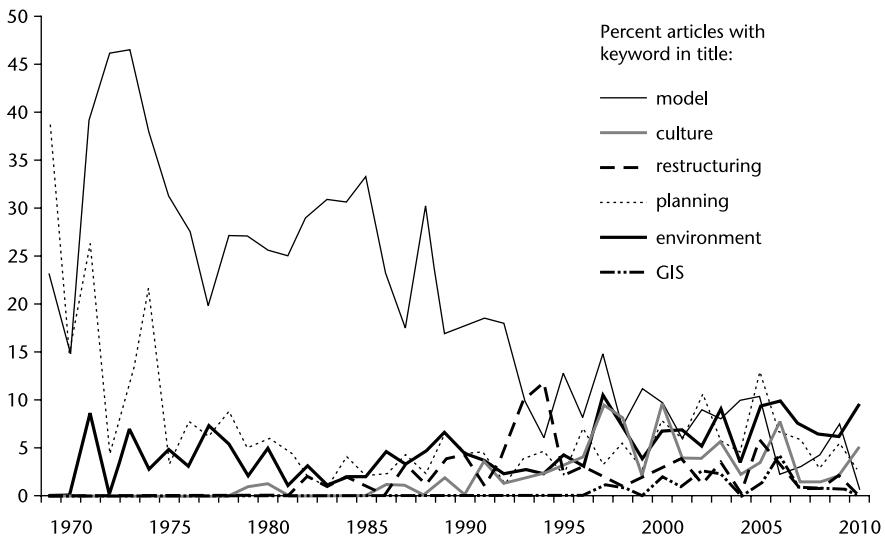
[S]tatements of catholicity of interest, backed up by editorial efforts to attract the best from a wide range of scholarly backgrounds, mean that *E&PA* has changed substantially over its first quarter century . . . Some scholars from outside geography have been attracted to use the journal as a major outlet for their work, but the interdisciplinary focus is undoubtedly not as strong as Alan Wilson initially hoped. Nor are the majority of papers published as utilitarian as originally intended [. . .] Relatively little of the work published, even by planners, could really be called applied . . . In this context, it seems that to a considerable extent *E&P* arrived too late. By the early 1970s planning was less enthusiastically embraced than before, and the seeds of what later became known as Thatcherism or Reaganism were already being sown (Johnston and Thrift, 1993, pages 17, 16).

Not only was there less 'planning' in the journal by the early 1990s, there was not much 'environment' either.<sup>2</sup> In the journal's earlier incarnation, environment meant *built* environment rather than nature. Despite proactive efforts

to cultivate contributions to understanding nature or socionature (O’Riordan, 1977a, 1977b), the growth and energy of the environmental sciences during the 1980s mostly bypassed *Environment and Planning A*. Ironically, a rising generation of environmental researchers “very largely shunn[ed] the pages of a journal which, on the face of it, was launched to provide an outlet for their work” (Johnston and Thrift, 1993, page 19).<sup>3</sup>

Yet in so many other ways, *Environment and Planning A* was clearly being actively (re)shaped by its social and political environment. “It is a truism that since 1969 the world has changed dramatically”, Thrift and Johnston (1993, page 83) observed, “the collapse of Bretton Woods and the Berlin Wall, the rise of the women’s movement and environmental concerns, the attack on Western ethnocentrism and a resurgent Islam all eloquently attest to new orders of experience”. The very fact that Thrift and Johnston chose to envision the “futures of *Environment and Planning A*” in the plural was prescient. The content analysis of the journal found in Figure 1 suggests that the early 1990s were something of an inflection point for *Environment and Planning A*. It was not that the journal had suddenly embraced a new orthodoxy, or turned a cold shoulder towards its long-established constituencies in the worlds of modeling, quantification, and planning. Rather, this latter style of work now sat side-by-side with other very different kinds in a yet more robust eclecticism: articles on spatial interaction modeling and land-use planning alternated with articles on cultural theory, political ecology, critical urbanism and discourse analysis. This pattern of pluralist heterodoxy remains to this day.

Concerns have been episodically voiced that this pluralist intellectual environment might produce fragmentation, even tribalism. The editors, at least,



Source: Authors’ calculations from <http://www.envplan.com/A.html>

**Figure 1:** The rise, fall, and recombination of *Environment and Planning A* keywords

committed themselves “to combat this tendency in the firm belief that researchers should talk to and not past each other” (Thrift and Johnston, 1993, page 98). But the extent to which there is active engagement, as opposed to merely passive coexistence, remains an open (and occasionally troubling) question. That said, it is undeniable that there are few, if any, ‘establishment’ constituencies in the world of *E&PA* (see Longley, 1993), wielding intellectual entitlement, favored status, or ‘inside tracks’ in a fashion designed to silence alternatives. “*Environment and Planning A* is the only journal I am aware of”, Eric Sheppard (1998, page 381) observed, “in which dynamical systems and spatial equilibrium models habitually appear cheek by jowl with studies on discourses of identity and case-study applications of regulation theory (and much else besides)”. While this may foster in some eyes a certain catch-all, ‘jack-of-all-trades’ image, at the same time, it signifies the creation of an intellectual space – freely occupied and contested – in which pluralism is the dominant principle.

By lying outside a particular discipline, and thus not having its identity based on policing the borders of that discipline, journals like this can create a space for unconventional conversations [. . .] If *Environment and Planning A* makes space for many kinds of conversations, can it also create a place for new conversation? Pluralism means more than letting a thousand flowers bloom, and place means more than living side by side. We need places to reinforce and defend particular established conversational conventions, but just as important are other places where the borders of conventions can be broken down . . . Intellectual communities can also stultify progress, if different kinds of places are not maintained for those eager to question convention. Currently this journal has the potential to be such a place. To achieve this goal, we need to go beyond making wise publication decisions on diverse individual cases, to develop novel fora for those kinds of path-breaking conversations that can be genuinely innovative (Sheppard, 1998, page 382).

*Environment and Planning A*’s intellectual space has been subject to multiple occupation for several decades now, though it must be said that the objective of truly ‘engaged pluralism’ (cf. Barnes and Sheppard, 2010) remains as much of an aspiration as it does an achievement – not least because of the continued proliferation of specialisms, often with their own journals, norms, and constituencies.

## Distinctions

Correspondingly, it is impossible to account for the effervescent evolution of *Environment and Planning A* through its second quarter-century in terms of singular trajectories. Singularity has been radically absent. If there is one way to chart the leading edges of work in the journal, however, it would be according to those contributions to *Environment and Planning A* judged most original

by its editors. The 'Anniversary Awards' were initiated to mark the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the journal in 1990. The distinction of "the most innovative article published in the journal" during the preceding year was first awarded to the University of Southampton's Steven Pinch for his work on the restructuring of public services (Pinch, 1989; Anon, 1990). A full listing of Anniversary Award winners, which spans work in critical geopolitics, industrial restructuring, science studies, regulation theory, and feminist geography, is found at Table 1.

In recognition of the formative contributions to the development of the *Environment and Planning* series made by Pion founder and publisher, John Ashby, who died in June 1999 on his way to the office, the Anniversary Awards were renamed the Ashby Prizes in 2000. A passionate supporter of academic publishing, a perfectionist in everything he did, right down to profoundly divisive issues of proper punctuation, John Ashby was a tireless advocate for the journal from the start. Without his initiative, *E&PA* would never have existed (Wilson, 1993). It was undoubtedly true that "he was happiest with the quantitative end of the subject and sometimes struggled to understand the new turn towards cultural and critical geography", but he always "made the effort" (Anon, 1999, page 1522). Following Ashby's death, Jan Schubert assumed the role of Director of Publishing at Pion, having worked on all of the *Environment and Planning* journals since the early 1980s, consolidating their digital presence amongst other initiatives. Under her management, *E&PA* would continue to provide a welcome home to the kind of inventive, bold quantitative work that Ashby valued. It was fitting, then, that one of the first recipients of the Ashby Prize was David Smith of Queen Mary, University of London, whose work on industrial location was published in the first volume of the journal (Smith, 1969).

The subsequent trajectories of the Ashby Prizes which, in accordance with the increased size and indeed scope of the journal in the new millennium are now awarded to the two most innovative articles published each year, are no less unpredictable than before. The list of winners, provided at Table 2, spans works of ethnography, historiography, deconstruction, polemic, institutionalism, geovisualization, and advanced modeling. And, substantively, the work runs the gamut from political ecology to socioeconomics, from quantitative critical urbanism to abstract political economy.

At the April 2011 meetings of the Association of American Geographers in Seattle, Pion Ltd was the recipient of the AAG's publication award "in recognition of more than four decades of support for geographical scholarship and publishing across the entire field of human geography" (Anon, 2011, page 1). At the same event, *Environment and Planning A's* longtime editorial manager, Ros Whitehead, was a most deserving recipient of the Ronald F Abler Honors for Distinguished Service. Involved with the journal since the early years, initially as a sideline activity alongside her regular job as Alan Wilson's secretary, Ros Whitehead may have done more than any other individual to keep the

**Table 1:** Winners of the *Environment and Planning A* Anniversary Award, 1990–1999

	Authors	Article title	Volume, pages
1990	Steven P Pinch	The restructuring thesis and the study of public services	21 905–926
1991	Allen J Scott	The technopolis of Southern California	22 1575–1605
1992	Gearóid Ó Tuathail	'Pearl Harbor without bombs': A critical geopolitics of the US–Japan 'FSX' debate	24 975–994
1993	Richard Barff, Jonathan Austen	'It's gotta be da shoes': Domestic manufacturing, international subcontracting, and the production of athletic footwear	25 1103–1114
1994	Erica Schoenberger	Corporate strategy and corporate strategists: Power, identity, and knowledge within the firm	26 435–451
1995	Jamie Peck, Adam Tickell	The social regulation of uneven development: 'Regulatory deficit', England's South East, and the collapse of Thatcherism	27 15–40
1996	Roger Lee	Moral money? LETS and the social construction of local economic geographies in Southeast England	28 1377–1394
1997	Erik Swyngedouw	Power, nature, and the city: The conquest of water and the political ecology of urbanization in Guayaquil, Ecuador: 1880–1990	29 311–332
1998	Timothy W Luke Trevor J Barnes Martyn L Senior, Huw C W L Williams, Gary H Higgs	At the end of nature: Cyborgs, 'humachines', and environments in postmodernity A history of regression: Actors, networks, machines, and numbers Spatial and temporal variation of mortality and deprivation 2: Statistical modelling	29 1367–1380 30 203–223 30 1815–1834
1999	Michael Webber, David Rigby Melissa W Wright	Accumulation and the rate of profit: Regulating the macroeconomy The politics of relocation: Gender, nationality, and value in a Mexican maquiladora	31 141–164 31 1601–1617

**Table 2:** Winners of the *Environment and Planning A* Ashby Prize, 2000–2010

	Authors	Article title	Volume, pages
2000	David M Smith	Social justice revisited	32 1149–1162
	Noel Castree	Professionalisation, activism, and the university: Whither 'critical geography'?	32 955–970
2001	Paul Plummer, Mike Taylor	Theories of local economic growth (part 1): Concepts, models, and measurement	33 219–236
		Theories of local economic growth (part 2): Model specification and empirical validation	33 385–398
2002	Bob Jessop	Institutional re(turn)s and the strategic-relational approach	33 1213–1235
	Ash Amin	Ethnicity and the multicultural city: Living with diversity	34 959–980
2003	Monique Girard, David Stark	Distributing intelligence and organizing diversity in new-media projects	34 1927–1949
	Elizabeth C Dunn	Trojan pig: Paradoxes of food safety regulation	35 1493–1511
2004	Neil Wrigley, Daniel Warm, Barrie Margetts	Deprivation, diet, and food-retail access: Findings from the Leeds 'food deserts' study	35 151–188
	Julie Guthman	Back to the land: The paradox of organic food standards	36 511–528
2005	Andrés Rodríguez-Pose, Nicholas Gill	Is there a global link between regional disparities and devolution?	36 2097–2117
	James McCarthy	Devolution in the woods: Community forestry as hybrid neoliberalism	37 995–1014
	Anssi Paasi	Globalisation, academic capitalism, and the uneven geographies of international journal publishing spaces	37 769–789
2006	Emily T Yeh, Kunga T Lama	Hip-hop gangsta or most deserving of victims? Transnational migrant identities and the paradox of Tibetan racialization in the USA	38 809–829
2007	LaDona Knigge, Meghan Cope	Grounded visualization: Integrating the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data through grounded theory and visualization	38 2021–2037
	Judith Pallot	'Gde muzh, tam zhena' (where the husband is, so is the wife): Space and gender in post-Soviet patterns of penalty	39 570–589
	Richard C Powell	'The rigours of an arctic experiment': The precarious authority of field practices in the Canadian High Arctic, 1958–1970	39 1794–1811
2008	Denis Cosgrove	Images and imagination in 20th-century environmentalism: From the Sierras to the Poles	40 1862–1880
	Andrew Donaldson	Biosecurity after the event: Risk politics and animal disease	40 1552–1567
2009	Hazel Christie, Susan J Smith, Moira Munro	The emotional economy of housing	40 2296–2312
	Andrew Leyshon	The software slump? Digital music, the democratisation of technology, and the decline of the recording studio sector within the musical economy	41 1309–1331
	Scott Prudham	Pimping climate change: Richard Branson, global warming, and the performance of green capitalism	41 1594–1613
2010	Nicky Gregson, Helen Watkins, Melania Calestani	Inextinguishable fibres: Demolition and the vital materialisms of asbestos	42 1065–1083
	Elvin Wylie, Kathie Newman, Alex Schafraan, Elizabeth Lee	Displacing New York	42 2602–2623

wheels of *Environment and Planning A* turning for nearly four decades. During this time, she courteously and deftly handled the contributions of literally thousands of authors, “from world renowned scholars [to] tentative graduate students” (Anon, 2011, page 1), while managing the circulation of something like 30,000 referees’ reports, and counting. There is no better marker of *Environment and Planning A*’s continuing commitment to both professionalism and demanding scholarly standards, as well as to a humane outlook.

## Dips

Dipping into *Environment and Planning A*’s vast archive, in search of a somehow ‘representative’ sample of articles is a daunting task. Our choices were guided partly by the Anniversary/Ashby Prize winners, partly by citation counts, and partly (and most serendipitously) by what we as the editors of this volume personally admired, referenced, recommended, and put on our own class reading lists. We tended to choose pieces published in the second half of *E&PA*’s existence, dividing them into four main sub-sections that delineated the most significant theoretical and substantive themes pursued by the journal.

‘Production, Consumption, Networks’ deals with the complex spatialities involved in the making of economic goods and services, and their associated long- and sometimes short-distance travels. It goes to one of the most durable themes of the journal, economic-geographical analysis, which were present at *E&PA*’s inception. ‘Nature, Environment, Ecologies’ comes next, speaking to the first noun of the journal’s title. The contributions here, however, are not inspired by the life sciences as such (as perhaps John Ashby might have imagined), but instead from social theory and political economy, and enjoined to an analysis of nature as political ecology, now one of the most intellectually vibrant approaches within human geography (see especially McCarthy, this volume; Swyndgedouw, this volume). The third section, ‘Strategy, Regulation, Governance’, consists of works taken mainly from the 1990s, the heyday of regulationist research. Regulation initially designated regulation by the state in the contradictory reproduction of the economy, but in the form of ‘governance’ its registers have been extended to include all forms of regulation, including self-regulation, and the larger panoply of socioeconomic processes and institutions (Dunn, this volume). The last section signals the strong impress of geographical thought on the journal, in this case, regarding spatial scale: ‘Globalization, Regionalization, Locality’. Space is not a single homogenous plane, but is patterned and differentiated, being organized and articulated across various fracture lines, including scale (see Paasi, this volume). The globe, the region, and the locality can each be considered to be distinctive, and are each associated with their own peculiar processes and problematics, even as they are all connected in complicated and sometimes hidden ways. The firm, especially in the guise of the multinational corporation, is often a central player, but it never acts alone.

For a journal with distinctive and determinate origins, the travels of *Environment and Planning A* have been wide-ranging and sometimes surprising. The following sample of articles can only hint at the scope and depth of this work, and at the commitment of those that have propelled the journal through more than four decades now. We hope, however, that this selection from the archives gives an indication of what has been achieved and stimulates an interest in exploring further, while perhaps also hinting at what is still to come.

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## Notes

1. Redesignation as *Environment and Planning A* occurred in 1974, when series B was added, with a focus on planning and design. Series C and D, which are concerned with government and planning and with social theory respectively, were added in 1983.
2. This once prompted Phil Rees (1990, page 1) to ask, by way of a friendly intervention, “what’s in a name”?

**environment** 1: a surrounding 2: conditions influencing development or growth.

**planning** 1: a drawing up of a scheme to accomplish a purpose.

Despite its title, the journal has been focused neither on the material or physical environment nor on specialist planning matters, though its catholicity ensures a sprinkling of such specialist pieces. Rather the essence has, I think, been a concern to link humankind’s purposive activities with the environment in which they take place and to analyse, using a variety of methods, the ways in which such systems work and might be improved.

3. The residual reputation of *Environment and Planning A* as a “quantifier’s journal” may have also deterred some potential contributors working in the new environmental studies of the 1980s, which at the time was less quantitatively inclined; and like the GISers, these researchers were also busily establishing their own journals (Johnston and Thrift, 1993, page 19).

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