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Editorial Introduction to ‘Paddison Geographies’

On July 8th 2019, Ronan Paddison, founding editor of *Space and Polity* (from 1997–) and for over two decades Editor-in-Chief of the journal, sadly died. Under Ronan’s stewardship, *Space and Polity* has become a globally recognized and highly respected outlet for the very best research in political (with a small ‘p’) geography. The journal published an ‘In Memoriam’ to Ronan in Issue 23/2. In recognition of the foundational role he played in conceiving, launching, managing and growing the journal, Ronan’s name will also be permanently included on the Taylor and Francis *Space and Polity* website and in the inside jacket of published Issues, bearing the title ‘Founding Editor’.

Already, a number of commentaries marking and celebrating Ronan’s extensive and varied scholarly contributions have been published (Cumbers & Philo, 2019; Ionas, 2019). More will surely follow. On November 22nd 2019, Chris Philo, Mark Boyle, and Sarah Bird – to whom he was variously a teacher, supervisor, mentor, colleague, and close friend – convened a day-long celebration of Ronan’s intellectual oeuvre and scholarship. The event was held at his beloved Glasgow University, where he spent most of his academic career. It is fitting that *Space and Polity* has chosen to publish these presentations in the form of a *special* Special Issue – titled ‘Paddison Geographies’.

Reflecting biographical entanglements at varying points in both their and Ronan’s lives and careers, the contributors bear witness to Ronan’s expansive intellect and the thematic, conceptual, disciplinary, methodological and geographical breadth of his research concerns. We can learn much from studying an academic life, and especially one as rich and prodigious as Ronan’s. And yet, as academics, we do so little of this kind of labour, depriving ourselves of repositories of vital wisdom and knowledge and wastefully neglecting hard won intellectual resources. In Ronan’s scholarly corpus, there is much to excavate, reappraise, and appreciate. But this Editorial Introduction to ‘Paddison Geographies’ will not revisit Ronan’s research, teaching, and service – this task is performed with authority, empathy, wisdom and verve in the formal introduction to the Special Issue written by Chris Philo and thereafter in the articles which follow.

Here instead, we wish to look forward to the future that Ronan anticipated could lie ahead for *Space and Polity*. Before his passing Ronan was planning a significant refresh, restructure and repositioning of the journal, believing that it had the potential to be developed to the next level. Thankfully his ideas, hopes and plans were not lost to posterity. Prior to his death and mindful of the finite energy and capacity he could dedicate to the project, Ronan felt it necessary to pass over the mantle. Thanks to a planned succession strategy, incoming Editor in Chief, Mark Boyle had the opportunity of entering into conversation with him at various coffee shops (between May 2018 and April 2019) in Glasgow to ruminate over his preferred direction of travel for the journal. Inspired and informed by Ronan’s vision, and in a quest to do justice to his aspirations, the new Editorial Board is currently engaged in a significant reappraisal and relaunch of the Journal.

A duty of care exists to report Ronan’s views faithfully; attribution of ideas demands care. This is a difficult obligation to honour. Ideas are given birth, swirl and germinate in complex

and non-linear ways. A product of his convivial company, conversations were dialogical and ranged anarchically over a wide expanse of professional and personal affairs of the day. But their outcomes, summarized below, wholly in spirit and substantially in substance, embody the essence of the principal conclusions to arise from his briefings.

So what were Ronan's hopes and what is new?

Ronan's wish was for *Space and Polity* to serve as an international peer reviewed scholarly journal publishing the very best political geographical research from across the world. He believed that whilst the journal consistently published high impact Special Issues, it had the capacity to attract more regular submissions and a higher quality of submission. More authors needed to choose the journal as a primary outlet. The journal needed to expand its profile and its readership base. Published articles should be more impactful and generate more citations and engagement. As flow of high quality copy increased, consideration should be given to moving from three Issues a year to four or more.

How might this happen?

To give impetus and vigour to this rebirth of the journal a new Editor in Chief and Editorial Board was appointed. Mark Boyle (University of Liverpool) now serves as Editor in Chief, Kirsi Pauliina Kallio and Derek Ruez (both Tampere University) as Associate Editors, Alistair Fraser (Maynooth University) as Associate Editor and Social Media Editor and Debangana Bose (Maynooth University) as Book Review Editor. The Editorial Board are now in turn appointing a new international Advisory Board to inform the strategic direction of *Space and Polity* and to strengthen its visibility.

In contrast to his wider inter-disciplinary ambitions at the time of launch in 1997, Ronan saw *Space and Polity* as primarily in and off the geographical community. But he was averse to firm boundaries: research conducted in other disciplines such as political science, sociology, philosophy, gender studies, feminist and postcolonial scholarship, urban studies, management studies, economics, anthropology, environmental studies, planning and development studies would still be published if its central concerns attended to questions of 'space', 'place', 'nature' and 'scale'. Moreover, he construed political geographical scholarship to include geographers from across the discipline working on 'political' topics as well as those who identify primarily as political geographers. We, the new editorial team, too remain committed to carrying forward the journal's longstanding interest in studying politics across the broadest possible range of scales, contexts, and sites.

Ronan's hope was that published articles would be more impactful, moving beyond 'normal science', leading debates, setting agendas and shaping the field. The journal should publish more theoretically-informed articles, drawing more explicitly from political philosophy: he found the nexus between political philosophy and human geography to be absolutely fascinating and yet still to be fully exploited. And in his final months, Ronan became particularly interested in the idea of public good, how to think about it, and how it might inform activism and normative research. A keen observer of current affairs and an engaged citizen, Ronan believed that political geographical research could speak more explicitly to the grand challenges confronting humanity in the twenty first century and thereby enrich public conversation. More articles exploring the history and philosophy of political geographical ideas and debates should be procured, not least to heighten reflexivity of the Global North origins of much

theory and the implications that follow. The journal should take care that in its editorial and review practices it encouraged scholarship submitted from non-anglophone contexts, took seriously traditions of thought emerging from beyond the privileged centres of geographic knowledge production, and worked to interrupt assumptions that place unfair burdens on some authors to justify or situate their projects in ways that are not asked of all researchers.

Codifying, and in the spirit of respecting but elaborating upon these ideas, the journal will continue to accept submissions from across the geographical spectrum and beyond which bear on political topics and themes but will now actively procure, publish and promote articles which:

- (a) Strengthen ties between political philosophy, political philosophers, and political geographical thought and make foundational theoretical and conceptual contributions We are interested in articles which interrogate and rethink, from a geographical perspective, fundamental concepts such as power, ecocide, Anthropocene, capitalocene, democracy, liberalism, colonialism, post-colonialism, political violence, socialism, the state, statecraft, violence, fascism, populism, nationalism, geopolitics, government, freedom, difference, alienation, imperialism, territoriality, citizenship, borders, sovereignty, activism, governmentality, bio-politics, social movements, protest, public square, and public good.
- (b) Conduct politically aware historiographical investigations of political geographical thinkers, theories, concepts, ideas and debates and interrogate and reimagine the trajectory of political geography as a politico-intellectual project itself. We will publish historiographical studies which undertake critical reappraisals of classic political geographical texts and the work of key thinkers.
- (c) Provincialize political geographical scholarship as it has been practiced, decolonize political geographical thought and increase substantive engagement with theory and debate from the Majority World/Global South. We also wish to encourage work that takes difference seriously and as central to politics—as exemplified in queer, trans, feminist, Indigenous, and Black geographies. Whatever their approach or topic, we ask that all authors think carefully about the way that citational practices can perpetuate hierarchies and inequalities within and beyond the academy (see Mott & Cockayne, 2017; Roy, 2020). In addition, before submitting papers, we encourage authors to consider whether the references they list accurately reflect the relevant literatures, as well as how their citational practices might be able to contribute to a more inclusive academy and to better scholarship.
- (d) Advance significant new insights, through new approaches, methodologies, data sets, and empirical analyses into the most pressing public political problems which present in the 2020s across a wide range of scales and contexts. From notes taken at one particularly long and animated conversation held *al fresco* on rather in an unusually blistering hot Glasgow afternoon in July 2018, a list of potential focal points for the journal included urgent topics as diverse as:
 - the failures and futures of liberal democracy and capitalism
 - populism, nationalism, racism, borders and citizenship
 - reterritorializing state power, state building, secession, devolution, and supranational polities
 - genocide and state and other varieties of political violence
 - emerging migration and refugee corridors and a new politics of hospitality
 - human rights frameworks and abuses and international law and justice
 - new spatial bio-political technologies such as ‘the camp’
 - rustbelt politics and the future of ‘left behind’ places

- the climate and ecological emergency and energy transitions
 - AI, cyber-physical technologies, big data, 5G internet and digital innovations
 - the ethics and efficacy of the UN Sustainable Development Goals
 - alternative models of development and alternative measures of global prosperity
- (e) Inspire political geographical centred scholar activism and enhanced civic and cultural engagement and think anew about the contribution of political geographical scholarship, research, pedagogy and praxis to the public square and to the public good. We will publish research on activism and research as activism, public problem solving, public intellectuals and public policy, practices of political geography in the age of the civic university and the impact agenda, ethics in political geographical research and the meaning and implications of competing and contested ideas of public good for political geographical scholar-activism; in short, contributions which are committed to intervening in the current political moment, imagining alternative futures, and defending scholars and scholarship at risk.

We also will endeavour to make the journal more flexible for authors and will now publish in a wider range of formats. In addition to regular research articles and book reviews, *Space and Polity* will incorporate shorter ‘provocations’, ‘extended authors meets critics’ fora and ‘topical special issues’ speaking to topical disciplinary conundrums and timely public political problems. Regular articles for this journal should normally be no less than 6000 words and no more than 9000 words, inclusive of the abstract, tables, references, and figure captions. Provocations should be no shorter than 1000 words and no longer than 2000 words, inclusive of the abstract, tables, references, and figure captions. Special Issues normally consist of an introduction from the Guest Editor(s) and 5–8 related regular research papers. The standard journal word lengths generally apply. Book reviews should be no shorter than 1000 words and longer than 1500 words. Extended authors meets critics fora normally comprise a guest editorial introduction (circa 1500 words), 4–6 commentaries from reviewers (circa 1000 words), and a response from the book’s author (circa 2000 words to 2500 words).

A priority, for us, is to speed up the time taken from first submission to decision and (if accepted) final publication. We offer a commitment to authors to work to achieve:

- reviews of first submission within 90 days
- reviews of revised submission within 45 days
- reviews of resubmission within 90 days.

In addition we will work with authors to ensure that their research gets read and cited. A new social media strategy and twitter account will help authors expand the number of readers engaging and citing their work. A select number of articles will be designed for Free Access. Annual *Space and Polity* Invited Lectures will be held at future AAG Meetings, RGS (IBG) conferences, the Nordic Geographers Meeting and IGU conferences.

The continued success of *Space and Polity* depends in large part on the goodwill, enthusiasm and expertise of the (political) geographical community. We believe that Ronan Paddison was fundamentally correct in his assessment that now – when the world is in crisis, inflamed by grotesque inequalities, new geopolitical factionalism, political populism, new forms of political violence, a climate and ecological emergency – is an especially opportune moment to significantly scale the journal and impress its contribution more centrally in the human geographical canon. We invite you to join us on this exciting new journey and to consider publishing your very best research with us.

Visit our new twitter account at: <https://twitter.com/SpacePolity>

Visit our web site at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cspp20>

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