Belgeo

Revue belge de géographie

1 | 2009

**Recent developments in economic geography –
Miscellaneous**

Editorial: Issue on Economic Geography

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Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/belgeo/7868>

DOI: 10.4000/belgeo.7868

ISSN: 2294-9135

Publisher:

National Committee of Geography of Belgium, Société Royale Belge de Géographie

Printed version

Date of publication: 31 March 2009

Number of pages: 3-4

ISSN: 1377-2368

Electronic reference

Dominique Vanneste, « Editorial: Issue on Economic Geography », *Belgeo* [Online], 1 | 2009, Online since 19 May 2013, connection on 22 September 2020. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/belgeo/7868> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/belgeo.7868>

This text was automatically generated on 22 September 2020.

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Editorial: Issue on Economic Geography

Dominique Vanneste

- ¹ This special Issue on Economic Geography chronicles the 10th Dutch-German-Belgian Seminar on Economic Geography organized by Dominique Vanneste (K.U. Leuven) in 2007. The seminar consisted of a series of biennial conferences that gathered economic geographers from, predominantly, Dutch, German and Belgian universities and research institutions. The seminar was not widely announced – participation was by invitation and only full papers were accepted. All papers were commented upon by a discussant, which guaranteed an in-depth colloquy on contemporary issues in economic geography and created a platform for further collaboration.
- ² In the 2007 edition in Ostend, Belgium, 21 participants presented 18 excellent papers centred around the theme “*New Theories and Methods on Economic Geography*”. Contributions focussed variously on methodological components such as the application of multilevel analysis (Raspe, Atzema and van Oort), the multilevel structural equation approach (Van Acker and Witlox), an econometric approach (Noback and van Dijk), the gravity approach (Hoekman, Frenken and van Oort) as well as work on connectivity (Vannuffel *et al.*) and even on a constructivist perspective with discourse analysis (Chilla). Other topics covered were more theoretical in nature, such as research outcomes on evolutionary theory and path dependency (Frenken and Boschma; Koster), on network theory and strategic collaboration (Dietsche; Cabus; Phlippen and van der Knaap; Weterings), on political construction and institutional complementarity at the national and metropolitan levels (Ossenbruegge; Terhorst), and on neo-institutional theory combined with the theory of stakeholder identification (Braun). Finally, a number of presentations were situated in between theory and methodology such as contributions about assets for regional growth, e.g. technological complementarities and variety (Boschma and Iammarino), real estate (Nozeman) and soft location factors (Vanneste). Some of these papers are included in this issue of *Belgeo* on economic geography.

- 3 It is striking that most of the contributions can be situated at the “frontiers of the New Economic Geography” as presented by Fujita and Mori (2005). The papers presented at the 10th Seminar and subsequently in this issue, go beyond the well-known determinants of agglomeration economies exploring the heterogeneity of location space, of workers’ characteristics and behaviour, non-tradable characteristics of differentiated spaces and goods, of local endowments and (asymmetric) interactions, etc. It is easy to recognise the contributions meet “the way forward” as developed by Fujita and Mori when mentioning “the role of developers and (city) governments”, “qualitative(ly) different forms of agglomeration and dispersion”, “many-region [and/or] many-industry models of trade and geography”, “knowledge externalities and information spill-overs”, “linkages among people” and the “dynamics of the framework”, etc. (2005, pp. 394-400). Furthermore, most contributions focus on processes rather than on spatial structures resulting in an inter-disciplinary approach to these topics of research. One could conclude that the contributions are not only “at the frontiers of the New Economic Geography”, but at those of geography as such.
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