

# RSAI NEWSLETTER

THE REGIONAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL

*new series 19 - November 2020*

## CONTENTS

RSAI membership information	1
From the Editor(s)	1
Welcome	2
Interview	3
Meet the Fellows: Geoffrey Hewings	4
Weekly Regional Science seminars at Illinois	5
ERSA Summer School 2020	6
Positions	6
Chairperson - Department of City and Regional Planning at Cornell	6
Centers of Excellence in Regional Science: the GSSI	6
Theme: Regional Science and the Pandemic	7
Urban Resilience and the Impact of COVID-19 on Geographies of Commercial Retail Landscapes: Survivorship of Retail Firms in the Case Study of Montreal	7
International Economic Geography seminars	9
In memory of Professor Börje Johansson	9
Nordic Section of ERSA: new board	9

## RSAI MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

All RSAI members have online access to Papers in Regional Science (PiRS) and Regional Science Policy and Practice (RSPP): journals of the Regional Science Association International. Members will need to log in to access full text articles online.

In addition to the RSAI publications, members are offered an opportunity to purchase other regional science journals at reduced rates and participate in the national and international conferences at reduced rates.

For details on how to become a member, contact the Executive Director, Andrea Caragliu at [andrea.caragliu@polimi.it](mailto:andrea.caragliu@polimi.it), or visit [www.regionalscience.org](http://www.regionalscience.org).

## FROM THE EDITOR(S)

The newsletter of the Regional Science Association International (RSAI) appears two times a year and contains information about upcoming conferences and meetings, recent events and publications, and short contributions on current themes.

A change in the editorial team: co-editor Graham Clarke (*top picture*) is retiring and leaves the editorial team after many, many years of being a pillar of support; hence I, Martijn, want to thank him for his help, also on behalf of my immediate predecessors Andrea Caragliu and Eveline van Leeuwen, and wish him all the best for the future!



This means the editorial team has an open position! I'd very much appreciate a second pair of eyes to help with both the gathering of contributions, and the proofreading of the final product. Applications from the global South or from those with a good range of contacts there would be particularly welcome, as would being a native speaker of English. Please contact me at [m.j.smit@uu.nl](mailto:m.j.smit@uu.nl) by Friday 8 January 2021 if you're interested, enclosing a CV and a half-page statement of purpose, indicating why you feel you're a good fit for editing the newsletter and how involved you have been and plan to be in RSAI and its supraregionals. Andrea Caragliu, the Executive Director, and the remaining editor will decide together.

Text contributions for the newsletter are always welcome, and can be submitted directly to Martijn Smit ([m.j.smit@uu.nl](mailto:m.j.smit@uu.nl)). Deadline for the next issue is 15 April; see p. 2 for details.



# RSAI NEWSLETTER

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## WELCOME

Greetings from RSAI! I am happy to report on new initiatives, the rescheduled Morocco Conference, the new Roger Stough Mentorship Award and other NARSC awards, and some of my future expectations.

It doesn't take a genius to know that 2020 has been challenging. Fortunately, regional science has met these challenges and is poised to bounce back. I believe we are better positioned than other organizations that did not anticipate a multitude of "black-swan" events.

## RSAI STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR A BETTER GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

RSAI Council has engaged in an over year-long strategic planning exercise led by a committee chaired by former RSAI President Jean-Claude Thill. The reexamination of our governance structure included multiple RSAI Council meetings and a survey of our global membership. The member survey indicates that while members like our scientific products including conferences, there is more ambivalence regarding how our associations are managed and whether RSAI is sufficiently transparent, democratic, and structured to attract and retain an increasingly diverse and young membership. After lengthy discussion, RSAI Council created multiple new committees including ones to reevaluate the Association's awards; diversity and inclusion; communications and publications; and perhaps the most important for the long-run, young members and new member recruitment. For the general membership, **note that there will be openings for non-Council members from the general membership to serve on these committees.** Given this further democratization of the RSAI, there will be openings for junior- and mid-career members to participate in the Association's decision-making and become involved in its leadership.



## 2021 RSAI WORLD CONGRESS

We are pleased to announce that the postponed 2020 World Congress in Marrakesh, Morocco is rescheduled for late May 2021 at the same venue. The future state of Covid-19 is unclear, but the emergence of at least two vaccines along with the arrival of warm spring weather with reduced transmission rates suggest that we may be able to meet in person—in which our plan is to have the same fantastic array of plenary sessions and keynote speakers. Nonetheless,

## CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The next issue of the newsletter will focus on *diversity*, both in the real world and in our scientific community. If you have a contribution that fits the theme, for example intermediate results of ongoing research, or a brief overview of results from a finished project, you are warmly invited to contribute a short or longer piece to the next newsletter. Work of PhD students is particularly welcome.

- Size: 400-600 words works best, longer is possible
- Formatting: preferably very basic, but images/graphs are warmly appreciated
- Deadline: 15 April; earlier contact is much appreciated.
- Submit to Martijn Smit, [m.j.smit@uu.nl](mailto:m.j.smit@uu.nl)

to be safe, we are planning an online option for the Congress. Expect more details in short order.

## 2020 NARSC AWARDS AND NEW ROGER STOUGH MENTORSHIP AWARD

The recent 2020 NARSC conference was held online and was remarkably successful despite being the first-time it was held online. At the awards ceremony, NARSC initiated the inaugural Roger Stough Mentorship Award. Professor Stough was RSAI President and Fellow, and was a long-time leader in regional science organizations including RSAI, WRSA, and NARSC. Roger's unfortunate passing in 2019 led to conversations as to how to honor his lifelong regional science commitment. These discussions led to the NARSC Council establishing the Roger Stough Mentorship Award to recognize his tireless efforts to advise students and to mentor those in their professional career. NARSC awarded Peter Nijkamp the first Roger Stough Mentorship Award. This recognizes Peter's work with graduate students, young regional scientists from (literally) all over the world, and junior-career academics. Peter has devoted countless hours and developed calluses on his behind from flying around the world stimulating interest in regional science. It is only fitting that Professor Nijkamp is the first winner of this award.

Other NARSC awards included the prestigious Isard Award for Lifetime research, which was awarded to Kara Kockelman of the University of Texas-Austin. The Hewings Award for the best Junior Scholar went to Carlianne Patrick of Georgia State University. Finally the Boyce Award for Lifetime service was presented to John Spring. All of these winners are well deserved and represent the best of regional science. Congratulations!

## THE FUTURE OF RSAI

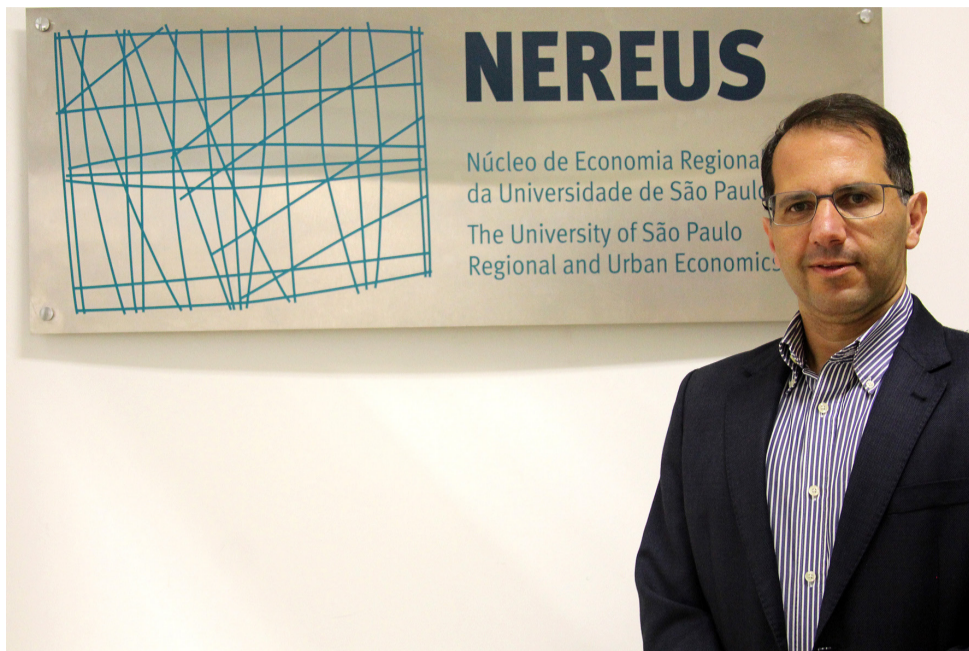
Scientific organizations around the world have been adversely affected by Covid-19. RSAI and our sister regional science partners have also been affected. After talking to my network in other scientific organizations, we are much better placed to withstand this crisis. Regional Science organizations used conservative budgeting models that allows us to withstand a challenging 2021 and many of our sections can even survive a difficult 2022. Yet, even under rosy scenarios of rainbows, unicorns, pixie dust, and effective vaccines without normal production hiccups, universities are facing severe budget cuts. For example, those who follow U.S. politics know that the odds federal of support for universities greatly declined after the outcome of the U.S. general election. Will regional scientists be able to meet in person at conferences as before? I am optimistic because similar dreary predictions were made in the wake of 9/11 or the Great Recession. However, people smarter than yours truly disagree. Likewise, academia faces a complete change in the publishing environment. How does this affect regional scientists? I don't know!

Despite all of these challenges, one thing I am certain. Regional Science offers the best real-world solutions for a wide range of the problems facing humanity. Whether it is climate change, economic development, socioeconomic inequality, or political uncertainty, problems happen in places! Regional Science is about the science of activities that happen in places! We are at the front line of the solutions to our problems. As I once said in a Presidential Address nearly twenty years ago—Regional Science is where it is at!

It has been an honor to serve as RSAI President and I look forward to returning more of my attention to research.

Mark Partridge

*President Regional Science Association International & The Ohio State University*



## INTERVIEW

*In this issue, editor Martijn Smit interviews Alessandra Faggian, winner of the 2020 ERSA Prize (pictured on the next page), and Eduardo Haddad, president-elect of RSAI (pictured above), on the corona pandemic and regional science.*

MS: Alessandra, how do you feel the switch to digital has affected the regional science community?

AF: I feel our community was deeply affected but showed a great capacity to adapt to the “new world”. We did not stop teaching, rather we quickly moved online. We all learned (or improved upon) new skills, becoming very familiar with multiple online platforms to effectively communicate, even if distant. Most regional science conferences became virtual and run as smoothly and successfully as possible (I am thinking of ERSA or the Italian Regional Science Conference in August and September for instance). Many regional science seminar series and workshops also became virtual, attracting large audiences, larger than would have been possible in presence.

MS: Eduardo, how was it for you?

EH: All of a sudden, we had to reinvent ourselves once we were forced to avoid social interactions. Technology played an important role. The tools were already available to us, and compared to other professions, our transition was very smooth. Actually, most of us were able to experiment with existing technological advances that we refrained to use before the pandemic crisis.

In my university, for instance, one week after the state government imposed the lockdown, we were already teaching online, most of us for the first time ever. That is a typical example of well-studied learning processes in the labour market, such as on-the-job training and learning-by-doing. A couple of weeks later, different activities such as seminar series, council meetings and doctoral committees moved online, and we tried to give a sense of normality to our activities. There are various rich experiences going on all around the scholarly world. Entrepreneurial scholars are taking advantage of the new possibilities that emerged with the broad digitalization of our activities: “bring” speakers from different parts of the world, engage a wider community to interact, expand the geographical reach of different activities, not to mention the various research opportunities on COVID-19-related topics. On the latter, regional scientists are playing an amazing role in different parts of the world. We are particularly well equipped to understand the different dimensions of the processes associated with the pandemic.

In my view, the regional science community engaged in a positive way during

these times of stress. We see different national sessions and supra-nationals moving on with their activities, adapting their conferences and taking the leadership in many countries on the debates related to coronavirus. Nonetheless, it is part of our training to understand the different forms of human interactions in space, including the virtual space. I am very optimistic about the way I see us moving on after we get back to what people are calling the “new normal”. We have learned to use digital technology in a productive way.

AF: Of course, we all miss the “socialising” aspect of in-presence gatherings, not just because we miss seeing our colleagues and friends, but also because social events in conferences often lead to international fruitful collaborations. Informally exchanging information over dinner or a drink is more important than we probably realised before this sanitary crisis.

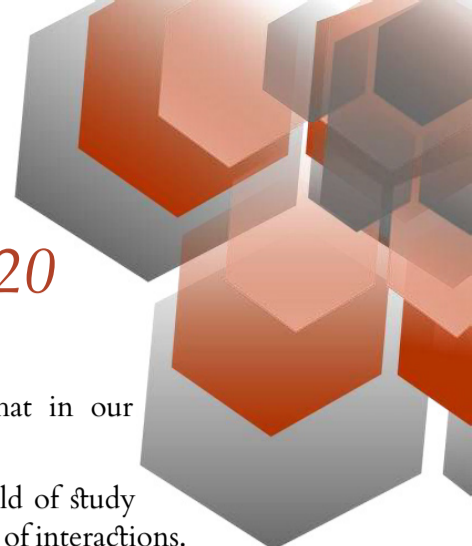
EH: This makes us even more aware of the benefits of face-to-face interactions. Because of that, my view is that the benefits from our forthcoming conferences and workshops will last longer. People will put more value to the networks, which were fundamental to make life go on during this year. Almost everybody I talk to in our community are eager to return to conferences, with different ideas on how to enhance the benefits from this “forced” digital experience to enlarge the menu of options for interactions, aiming at generating stronger connections, longer-lasting collaborations, and long-term multi-institutional research projects.

MS: Lots of people proclaim the ‘death of distance’ is finally upon us, including Saskia Sassen in her contribution to the TRSA opening session at this year’s online NARSC, where she spoke of ‘deurbanization’. Surely, the pandemic offers huge research opportunities for regional science?

EH: In my case, as many regional scientists, I moved forcefully to a brand-new research area, as opportunities knocked at my door. I am part of a research group at the University of Sao Paulo called NEREUS (USP Regional and Urban Economics Lab - [www.usp.br/nereus](http://www.usp.br/nereus)). Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have switched the focus of our research to topics related to COVID-19. Different institutions approached us seeking assistance to policymakers. The work we developed so far has been used to inform regional and national governments in Brazil, Colombia and Morocco about the potential costs of different measures of isolation and social distancing. Using multiregional and multisectoral models, for instance, we simulated scenarios that helped to substantiate top-level decision making. We adapted an existing methodology to assess potential daily sectoral and regional economic costs of control strategies for mitigating the effects of COVID-19. Our training in the toolkits of regional science was fundamental to make it possible to provide an immediate and agile response to policymakers.

AF: This is not the first time that people proclaim the “death of distance” – and yet it has never happened. I think this time will not be different. We probably realised that we can do more things online, now that we were forced into trying and experimenting, but we also realised the importance of keeping a good balance between virtual and face-to-face contacts. Having said that, doing more work online might bring new opportunities for peripheral areas. Together with my group at the GSSI and building on our work on Italian “inner areas”, we are now researching the topic of “centripetal” versus “centrifugal” forces linked to Covid19. It is a complex topic, with no easy answer, also in the light of the fact that we are still IN the crisis and there are many uncertainties on its length and magnitude.

EH: I really disagree with those people that proclaim the “death of distance”. I also did not fully agree with the idea that the world really has gone digital



with the pandemic, as we discussed before. For the scholarly community, it has. However, if we try to answer this question from the perspective of this part of the world, the answer is a sound NO! The COVID-19 made it even more explicit the various dimensions of inequality in developing countries, exacerbating privileges and deprivations. How can we say the world went digital to kids that have no access even to basic services, not to say to a connecting device usually in regions with poor connection, if any? How to convince informal workers, without access to the safety net, to stay home during lockdown? One of my criticisms to regional science nowadays is that it frequently devises creative solutions to issues that belong particularly to developed nations, and we tend to apply the same recipes and policy prescriptions everywhere. Of course, there are many exceptional regional scientists with a sound and conscious knowledge of the different realities; those are the scholars that inspire me. Thus, looking forward, we have to look and move “South” if we want to make an even bigger difference as a discipline.

*MS: Which other fields do you think regional science could build stronger connections with?*

*AF:* As I’ve said in a couple of keynotes as well, I truly believe the most fascinating topic right now is understanding how much of what we are experiencing it is here to stay in the long-term. This will depend on two things: 1. whether individuals really changed their habits for good or just temporarily; 2. whether the new “choices” now available (working and studying from home, for instance) will also be available in the future and people will still prefer them. These two things will have severe consequences on the spatial distribution of activities, but regional scientists will have to collaborate with psychologists and behavioural economists to come up with useful and meaningful insights.

*EH:* One thing that attracts me in regional science is the possibility researchers envisage in collaborating in an interdisciplinary setting. Space acts as a transversal dimension that invites collaborations across disciplines, not only in social sciences, but also in a broader range of fields. As an economist by training, I’ve always found myself challenged by my regional science colleagues coming from other disciplines to think outside the “my” box. This is very motivating and, comparing to self-contained areas, it also makes us exercise the virtue of intellectual humility, which is not very common in the scientific community. As such, we, as regional scientists, are more open to absorbing new ideas and

connecting to other scholars. We find that in our conferences.

The very interdisciplinary nature of our field of study requires even higher frequency and intensity of interactions.

Thus, in the various conferences and workshops we circulate, more and more we tend to find a wider representation of expertise.

Not seldomly I found myself interacting in regional science meetings with scholar from areas as distinct as oceanography, scientometrics, anthropology and engineering. However, I do not see these people returning to our conferences. Trying to answer your question, my point is that there is great interest in regional science – even though sometimes people do not really know what regional science is about – with a very high potential to attract a even more diverse crowd of scholars, but, for some reason, we do not succeed to transform our first encounters into enduring relationships. Regional scientists are not a homogenous group, and I praise that diversity, and the stronger connections with other fields will arise more naturally from topics of common interest, rather than methodological approaches.

*MS: Many thanks to both of you for your cooperation!*

## MEET THE FELLOWS: GEOFFREY HEWINGS

“...I THINK YOU should you should try to acquire two books, Location and the Space Economy and Methods of Regional Analysis both by Walter Isard. I think you might find the new field of regional science of interest.” These remarks were made at the end of a warm letter from Professor Richard B. Andrews, the journal editor of Land Economics and a professor at the University of Wisconsin. At the time, I was an undergraduate at the University of Birmingham. The courses that I was taking were so boring that I ended up spending a great deal of time in the library where I came across a new addition to the economics’ journals collection – Land Economics. In the first issue they had obtained, there was the fifth in a series of articles on the economic base model by Andrews; I wrote to him about my interest in regional models and asked whether he could send me copies of the first four articles in the series which he did along with this wonderful letter. I bought the recommended books (well over \$100 in today’s currency and a fortune in terms of my purchasing capacity in 1964). After some research, I decided to apply for a PhD at the University of Washington where Douglass North and Charlie Tiebout were in economics and several analytical folks in geography. During my first semester, Morgan Thomas (at one time editor of the Papers & Proceedings of RSA and a fellow Welshman) approached me “Geoffrey, I want you to give me \$5 for membership in the Regional Science Association.” How was I to say no and so the first journal arrived in 1965. Tiebout ended up as one of my advisors but, sadly, died while I was starting my dissertation. If my classes had interested me at Birmingham and if Andrews had not responded, I may not have found regional science!

Tiebout’s class at the University of Washington was entitled Regional Income Analysis and it was here that I was introduced to the new field of regional economics and especially to input-output models. Tiebout’s charismatic approach to teaching, his wicked sense of humor and his demonstrable enthusiasm for his research quickly struck a resonant chord. During the class, he asked us to review



drafts of chapters of Nourse's (1968) book on Regional Economics, adopting an innovation of having students react to a proposed new textbook (Tiebout used the honorarium he received for reviewing the book to host a party at his house as a way of rewarding our efforts). From Seattle, I spent two years as a Post-Doc at the University of Kent at Canterbury before accepting a position at the University of Toronto. Thereafter, in 1974, I came to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I expected to stay 3-5 years, but it has now been 46! H.F. (Bill) Williamson, Lewis Hopkins and Andrew Isserman provided the foundation for a community of scholars interested in regional science, joined later by Michael Romanos, T. John Kim, James Huff, Arthur Getis, David Boyce, Frank Southworth, Jan Brueckner, Kieran Donaghy, Bruce Newbold, Marilyn Brown and Luc Anselin among others.

In the full spirit of regional science, these scholars were spread across the departments of agricultural and consumer economics, economics, urban and regional planning, civil engineering and geography. The seminar series and the high frequency of international visitors made for a vibrant intellectual atmosphere; by this time, our sons had moved out of the community and my wife, Adrianna, with her newly acquired PhD had accepted a position with USDA in Washington, leaving me in a house with 4 bedrooms! To save money, visitors were housed there at such a high frequency that John Kim referred to it as the Regional Science Hotel!

In the mid 1980s, Philip Israilevich (PhD Regional Science, Pennsylvania) and I began a series of conversations at regional science meetings; he was in the process of moving from the Cleveland to the Chicago Federal Reserve Bank and given our shared interests in regional economic modeling, we thought it might be attractive to create a joint research center between the University of Illinois and the Chicago Fed. Much to our surprise, both institutions were supportive and in January 1989, the Regional Economics Applications Laboratory (REAL) was created. We started with one post-doc, Ramamohan Mahidhara, and two PhD students, Eduardo Martins and Ricardo Gazel with offices at the Chicago Fed and one on the Urbana campus. Eighteen months later, the Chicago Region Econometric Input-output Model (CREIM) was completed, with considerable assistance from Richard Conway, and we began to obtain grants and contracts to perform a variety of economic impact and forecasting analyses. CREIM provided the bases for a continuing series of research papers including the innovation of extracting endogenous time-series input-output coefficients, exploring alternative measures of structural change and developing the concept of field of influence with Michael Sonis. Sonis, based in Israel, was a frequent visitor to REAL and commented on more than one occasion that it was his intellectual home. The initial focus on regional input-output models quickly broadened to include spatial econometric work, explorations of business cycles, convergence, income distributions, housing and migration.

Within a few years, we had a suite of offices on the Urbana campus that were connected to form one large space. One of the innovations of REAL was that it was modeled on the environment which my wife had experienced – with students and professors sharing a lab space in which there was a great deal of interaction. Soon, we found that we were attracting international visitors and students in increasing numbers – but all were housed in this communal space. As a result, a great deal of collaborative work ensued often involving students and visiting professors from different countries and different disciplinary backgrounds – regional science in action! In the 30+ years of REAL's existence, somewhere between 400-500 visitors have spent at least 3 months in REAL, many returning for second and third stays. Clones of REAL have been created in Chile, Brazil, Spain, UK, China and, hopefully, soon in Mexico; fostering an atmosphere in which personal and professional relationships can be mutually developed seems to have been an attractive and sustaining feature.

For me, these developments have been a source of great pleasure; my peripatetic nature (a genetic trait inherited from one of my grandparents who was an Irish traveller) has enabled me to stay in touch with so many of the participants over the years. Watching their careers evolve has been incredibly rewarding. Hence, I am indebted to Richard Andrews, Morgan Thomas, Charlie Tiebout, Philip Israilevich and, of course, Walter Isard who, at critical junctures provided a gentle push and amazing support. I have always tried to respond to inquiries or requests for papers in a timely way since I recognize how important the response from Andrews was to launching me on my career path.

*Geoffrey J.D. Hewings, Emeritus Director,  
Regional Economics Applications Laboratory  
University of Illinois (US)*

## WEEKLY REGIONAL SCIENCE SEMINARS AT ILLINOIS

THE REGIONAL ECONOMICS Applications Laboratory (REAL) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA, is hosting weekly Regional Science seminars every Friday at 9 AM Central Time (4 PM European time). These seminars are hosted jointly with the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, are open to anyone and are accessible through Zoom.



It is a great opportunity for PhD students to develop an international network quickly and for presenters to get early feedback on their on-going work.

As Prof. Sandy Dall'erba, Director of REAL, indicates: "It is important to keep a professional, intellectual and international community at a time when Covid obliges us to stay socially distant. We have held weekly seminars at REAL for years but 2020 is the first time we hold them online. The great advantage is that we are able to reach out to an international community – we literally have attendees from three continents each time – and to have presentations by scholars who otherwise would find it difficult to block 2 or 3 days for an on-campus visit."

REAL focuses on the development and application of systemic economic models at the urban and regional levels. Since 2015, REAL has hosted more than 110 graduate students and visiting scholars from China, Brazil, Colombia, USA, Chile, and Spain among other countries.

*Information about the Fall seminars is here: <https://bit.ly/3hOUiOl>*

*Information about past seminars: <http://www.real.illinois.edu/seminar/sem2020.html>*

*If you want to be added to the list of participants, e-mail Eduardo: [eduardorodriguessanguinet@gmail.com](mailto:eduardorodriguessanguinet@gmail.com)*



REAL focuses on the development and application of systemic economic models at the urban and regional levels. Since 2015, REAL has hosted more than 110 graduate students and visiting scholars from China, Brazil, Colombia, USA, Chile, and Spain among other countries.

Catalina Herrera, Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Rafael Garduño-Rivera, Professor, School of Business and Economics, Universidad Panamericana, México.

Euijune Kim, Professor of Urban and Regional Economics, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development, Seoul National University.

August  
21  
10:00-11:30 am  
Central Time (US)

Join Zoom Meeting by [clicking here](#)  
Password: real123

# ERSAI NEWSLETTER

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## ERSA SUMMER SCHOOL 2020

ERSA HELD ITS 33rd Summer School virtually this year, from 15 to 17 June 2020. Our warmest thanks go to Leïla Kebir and Marjolaine Gros-Balthazard for their huge work and perfect organization. We also express our thankfulness and appreciation to the University of Lausanne, the site for hosting this event.

With 15 smart young researchers from Europe and beyond and 7 prominent lecturers, the 3 day Intensive Programme included a lecture and a master class by the 2019 ERSA prize winner, 4 Hot Topic Lectures, 2 lectures on regional science fundamentals and 5 young researchers' sessions.

Young researchers are the core asset for ERSA development. We count on them for our future and the training during Summer or Winter School Classes proves to be essential.

The 2020 ERSA "Antoine Bailly" Summer Class is planned to be part of next year's congress in Bolzano, giving the participants the opportunity to meet in-person and benefit from new opportunities to grow.

*André Torre, ERSA president*



## POSITIONS

### CHAIRPERSON - DEPARTMENT OF CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING AT CORNELL

The Department of City and Regional Planning (CRP) in the College of Architecture, Art and Planning at Cornell University invites applications for a dynamic, visionary leader to serve as the Department Chair for a renewable three-year term, to be appointed at the associate or full professor level. Areas of specialization are open. The next Chairperson will be an internationally known scholar with the ability to be strategic about CRP's future opportunities, who can build on the record for scholarly and professional excellence that CRP has established since its inception more than 80 years ago. We seek a scholar and administrative leader committed to supporting innovative research and scholarship, engaged learning and community outreach, professional excellence and service, and who is supportive of partnerships and collaborative work both inside and outside the college and university. The qualifications of the candidate should be consistent with a tenured appointment at the level of an associate or full professor, with a Ph.D. in urban planning or a related field.

Further info: <https://academicjobsonline.org/ajo/jobs/17287>, [crpsearch@cornell.edu](mailto:crpsearch@cornell.edu) (the CRP Chair Search Committee), phone +1 (607) 255-9987.

## CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE IN REGIONAL SCIENCE: THE GSSI

THE GRAN SASSO Science Institute (GSSI) is based in L'Aquila, the capital of the Abruzzo Region, in the south-central part of Italy. L'Aquila is approximately 100 kilometres East of Rome and can easily be reached by car or by public transportation. Thanks to the presence of both the GSSI and the University of L'Aquila, L'Aquila is a lively college town, hosting many different cultures due to the presence of foreign students and professors. From a geographical standpoint, L'Aquila has a peculiar position being the real "centroid" of Italy along both the North-South dimension and the East-West dimension. Although L'Aquila is located near the Apennines (and the Gran Sasso mountain), it is also close to the seaside which can be reached in less than an hour.

The establishment of the GSSI was part of the reconstruction strategy in response to the 2009 earthquake which devastated the city. The presence of the University of L'Aquila and the National Physics Laboratories nearby was the perfect substrate to add an international doctoral school and make L'Aquila a truly international "city of knowledge".

Also thanks to the endorsement by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the GSSI was established in 2012, as a curiosity-driven science centre, in order to support and foster the re-birth of L'Aquila. After 4 successful experimental years, the GSSI was officially given University status in 2016, becoming 1 of the 6 Italian "Schools of advanced studies".



The main mission of the GSSI is to strengthen the scientific excellence of L'Aquila by attracting Italian and international faculty and students. To this end, the GSSI supports both the collaboration with other top universities and research centres around the world, and also with private companies and the society as a whole in order to stimulate regional and national innovation and the creation of knowledge-based communities. The GSSI includes four different, but complementary, areas: Physics, Mathematics, Computer Science and Social Sciences.

The Social Sciences area, directed by Prof. Alessandra Faggian, runs a unique PhD program in "Regional Science & Economic Geography". The program aims at preparing the regional scientists of the future, combining economic geography with regional science and fostering the contamination with other disciplines such as sociology, innovation studies, international, health and environmental studies. Aside from Prof. Faggian, the area includes other 10 Faculty Members, 9 Post-doc Researchers and 24 PhD Students.

The GSSI Social Sciences area is involved in a wide array of research activities, all with a policy-oriented perspective and encouraging cross-disciplinary collaboration. Some of the current research interests include:

- Inner areas and peripheral development (coordinated by Alessandra Faggian)

and Giulia Urso), that deals with the socio-economic specificities and development trajectories of peripheral areas and marginalized areas, with a special focus on the Italian ones identified as “inner areas”;

- Disasters and regional resilience (coordinated by Alessandra Faggian and Marco Modica), a research track focused on the adaptation, preparedness and resilience of territorial systems in response to a diverse array of external shocks, including natural, economic, political and health/sanitary shocks;
- Human capital, migration, and local labour market (coordinated by Alessandra Faggian and Martina Dal Molin), that addresses the diverse issues related to the contemporary migration patterns and workers’ mobility in relation to local labour market dynamics, human capital formation and innovation;
- Cultural heritage, tourism and regional urban development (coordinated by Alessandro Crociata and Ugo Rossi), a research track that focuses on the role of cultural goods and cultural capital in favouring urban and regional development, in particular with respect to peripheral and marginal areas;
- Business, innovation and environmental sustainability within and across regions (coordinated by Andrea Ascani and Sandro Montresor), that encompasses the study of firm and business activities in a spatial perspective, addressing their contribution to a smart, sustainable and inclusive regional development in a global economy;
- Regional policy evaluation and local urban governance (coordinated by Alessandro Palma and Ugo Rossi), aimed at addressing the opportunities and challenges posed by the evaluation of regional policies, projects and programmes in different domains and by the design and management of local/urban governance systems.

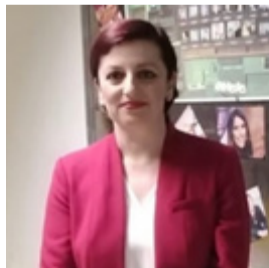
The GSSI Social Sciences area organizes online seminars on a regular basis, attracting top scholars. Recent talks include

- The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on social justice in Italy: what can we learn and do (Fabrizio Barca, ex Italian Minister for Cohesion Policy and member of Forum Disuguaglianze e Diversità)
- Tenant Rights, Eviction and Housing Affordability (Prof. Edward Coulson, University of California and co-editor Journal of Regional Science)
- Self-Driving & All Electric: Evidence from US Market (Professor Kara Kockelman, The University of Texas at Austin)
- Coronavirus, Economic Shocks and the Geography of Discontent (Prof. Philip McCann, University of Sheffield)
- How Monopoly, Technology and Finance drive Regional Inequality (Prof. Simona Iammarino, London School of Economics and Political Science)
- How Humans Judge Machines (Prof. Cesar Hidalgo, Harvard University)
- Bowling with Trump (Prof. Andrés Rodríguez-Pose, London School of Economics and Political Science)
- The socio-spatiality of urban creative fairs: a Chinese perspective (Prof. June Wang, City University of Hong Kong).

All talks are recorded and publicly available on the GSSI YouTube channel.

If you want to contact us please feel free to drop us an e-mail at [rseg@gssi.it](mailto:rseg@gssi.it)!

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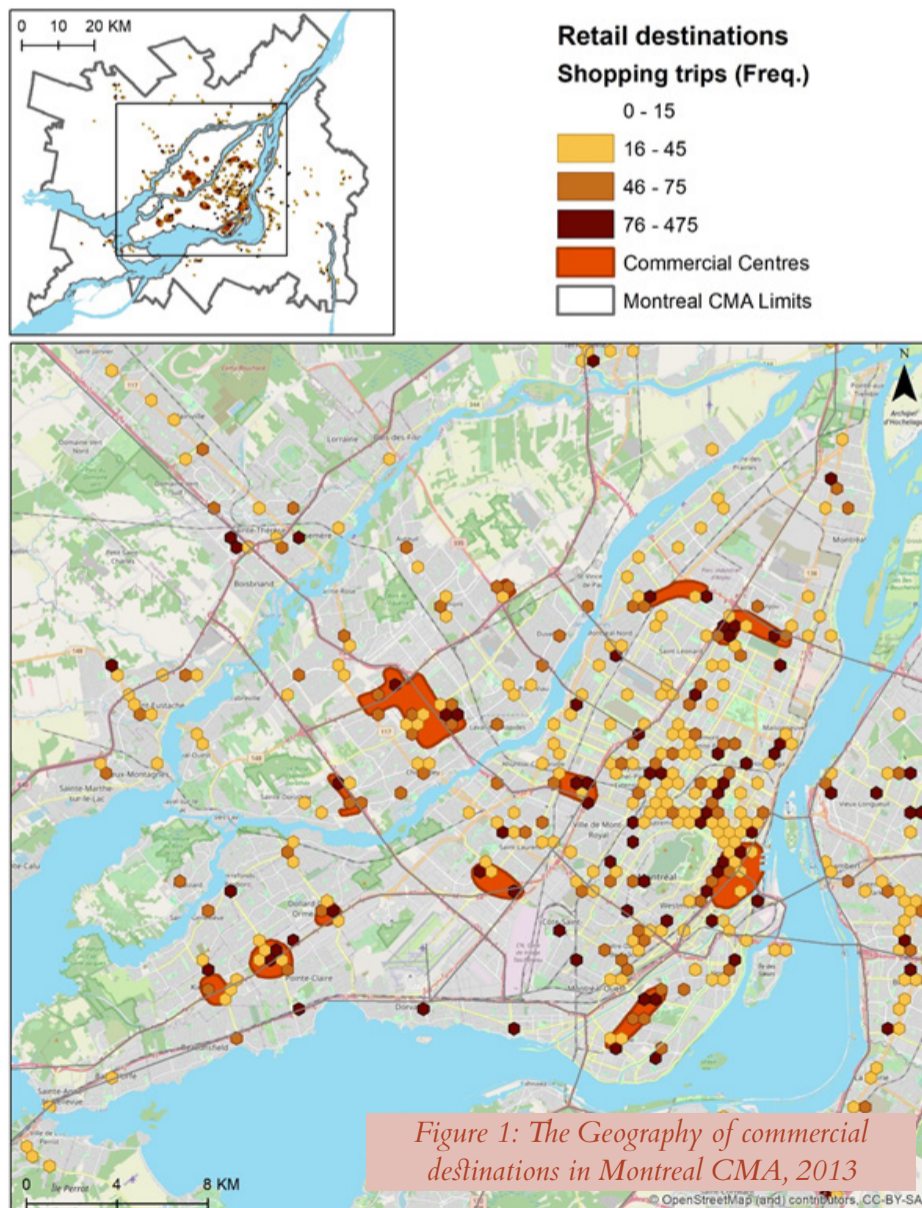
## THEME: REGIONAL SCIENCE AND THE PANDEMIC

*A request for contributions on covid-related research did not result in many submissions - in fact, the editor managed to obtain only one piece. Don't hesitate to submit materials!*

### URBAN RESILIENCE AND THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON GEOGRAPHIES OF COMMERCIAL RETAIL LANDSCAPES: SURVIVORSHIP OF RETAIL FIRMS IN THE CASE STUDY OF MONTREAL

*Maha Abdelhalim & Cedric Brunelle, Institut National de la Recherche Scientifique, Centre Urbanisation Culture Société, Montréal, Canada*

URBAN RESILIENCE IS a city's ability to rebound. As such it is not just a “response” to exogenous shock, but its society's and economy's flexibility and ability to adjust facing uncertainty. Urban economic resilience is the capacity of solving local economic problems so that long-term success is achieved (Drobniak, 2012). And since pandemics reoccur at intervals of 10–50 years, preparedness for future outbreaks through the analysis of consequences of the current crisis is crucial to achieve urban resilience (Donthu and Gustafsson, 2020). If lessons of COVID are learnt, Canadian cities could emerge more resilient, livable, sustainable, and equitable. Montreal is a useful case study of the



*Figure 1: The Geography of commercial destinations in Montreal CMA, 2013*

Canadian City, since it provided a fast policy response to support retail that was already in trouble before the pandemic. It is interesting to see the policy effect in retail streets of different neighborhoods (submarkets).

While we are transitioning to a remote work mode, the pandemic has significantly caused a reduction in traffic. Montreal residents started adopting walking/cycling for daily commutes. In a context of social distancing, people needed more public space especially in highly dense neighborhoods. Commercial retail was also in trouble. The City surveyed 17,000 merchants who demanded more space to cope with the new realities of social/physical distancing in retail (CBC.ca).

Montreal's policy response involved enacting some short and medium term mitigation measures to help support economic recovery and business such as a fast pedestrianization of streets and street segments to help boost retail and tax breaks (e.g. postponing "municipal tax, emergency financial assistance, and an automatic moratorium on capital and interest"). The city embarked on a new experiment in its centre creating a temporary "new hybrid system" or "a network of safe active transportation circuits", in which 200 km of the city streets were transformed temporarily into pedestrian and bike paths (88 km for pedestrians/cyclists and 112 km "safe active transportation circuits") as part of a temporary 2020 summer plan (Montreal.qc.ca.) Much of Montreal was built before the widespread use of cars, which makes such a re-appropriation of space possible.

We aim to answer the following questions: 1- How did COVID-19 affect the survivorship (i.e. death and birth) of firms in Retail? 2-What were the effects of the government's COVID-19 mitigation measures (i.e. pedestrianization) on the survival of retail firms in commercial streets? 3- How did these effects vary according to retail firms' sizes, types, and neighborhoods, or the entrepreneur's characteristics (micro-level determinants) (Wagner and Strenberg, 2004; Arenius and De Clercq, 2005; Arenius and Minniti, 2005)? 4- Based on the difference in geographical distribution of survivorship, what types of commercial spaces (i.e. large-sized retail, commercial streets, mixed use, commercial plazas) are more resilient?

In terms of methodology, we will use a difference-in-difference (DID) model to isolate the effect of pedestrianization on the survival of retail firms. We will match street segments using a propensity score (Rosenbaum and Rubin, 1983) and comparing street segments (with or without the treatment (i.e. pedestrianization policy), both before and during the crisis. We build on Meltzer and Capperis's (2017) six measures for assessment of movement of firms into/out of a neighborhood over time, namely: stay, entry, exist, birth, death and churn, where the latter is the summary measure indicating retail change, capturing overall retail volatility for different neighborhoods. We will integrate the spatiotemporal dimension/analysis to investigate the spatial distribution of survivorship, while controlling for problems of spatial dependence (Dubé et al., 2014).

Because of the difficulty in obtaining real time data, we will concentrate on the case of Montreal (Canada), for which we have available retail firms' data from the Registraire des entreprises (REQ) of Ministère du travail, de l'emploi et de la solidarité sociale. The REQ provides data from 2011 until present day, which will be used in creating additional comparison and mapping pre/post COVID-19 survivorship/exit of retail firms' patterns. Using GIS and the available data, we will geolocate firms to assess impact by neighborhood and type of retail. By estimating both the effects of COVID-19 and mitigation policies on retail death, this project has the bigger aim of enhancing the robustness of Canadian retail landscapes to ensure more walkable, sustainable, and user-friendly cities and regions.

*"From healthcare to high street retail... Covid-19 outbreak has exposed the limited resilience of our cities." (Chong, 2020).*

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## Image sources

Figure 1: INRS (Othmane Sajid). Data: ARTM. 2013. *Enquête Origine-Destination*. Ville de Montréal, 2016

Figure 2: SDBSL. 2020. *Mémoire présenté à la Commission sur le développement économique et urbain et l'habitation dans le cadre de la consultation publique au sujet des locaux vacants à Montréal*. <http://boulevardsaintlaurent.com/fr/download/?pid=9693>



*Figure 2: Retail closures and empty stores on Boulevard St-Laurent, 2020*



## INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY SEMINARS

An international group runs the Seminars in Economic Geography (SEG), hosting advanced graduate students and junior faculty 1-2 times per month. Past themes have involved innovation, migration, multinational enterprises, and income inequality. The seminars are open to the general public and full information (including recordings of past talks) is found at [www.seminarsineconomicgeography.com](http://www.seminarsineconomicgeography.com); they are organized by Chris Esposito (UCLA), Dieter Kogler (University College Dublin), Carolin Ioramashvili (LSE) and Ryan Hynes (University College Dublin).

## IN MEMORY OF PROFESSOR BÖRJE JOHANSSON

PROFESSOR EMERITUS BÖRJE Johansson (\*1945) passed away in his home in Stockholm, Sweden, June 18, 2020, at the age of 74. Börje served as President of the European Regional Science Association 2000-2003. In 2013 he was awarded the EIB-ERSA Prize for his great contributions to regional science. From 1994 and 20 years onwards, he served as Editor for the *Annals of Regional Science*. He always stood out as a great beacon of regional science from the North.



Börje Johansson took his PhD in Economics at Gothenburg University 1978. 1982-1984 he was Acting Leader of the Integrated Regional & Urban Development Group (RUD) at IIASA, Laxenburg, Austria. 1985 he became Director of CERUM (Centre for Regional Science Research), University of Umeå. 1994 he was appointed Professor of Economics at JIBS (Jönköping International Business School), Jönköping, Sweden, a position that he kept until his retirement a few years ago. Börje also held positions as Professor in Economics at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway, and as Guest Professor in Infrastructure Economics at KTH, Stockholm, Sweden.

Börje's research interests spanned over large areas of economics and regional science. He made important contributions to economic network theory and productivity analysis. He was an excellent teacher and fostered a new generation of PhD students wherever he was active. Börje also had an extraordinary ability to apply his theoretical knowledge to practical problems, and he had innumerable commissions for agencies and authorities at national and regional levels. He was always hard working and had an extraordinary scholarly and personal integrity combined with a terse sense of humour inherited from his family background in the coastal surroundings of Gothenburg.

Börje is mourned and missed by many colleagues and friends across the world, most of all by his children Eleanor, Eskil and Olof.

*Hans Westlund, Folke Snickars, Charlie Karlsson*

## NORDIC SECTION OF ERSAS: NEW BOARD

THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL Science Association (ERSA) is the supranational grouping of national regional science associations across Europe. Under the umbrella of ERSAS, there are 20 sections, organized either by country/ies or by language. ERSAS president André Torre asked Charlie Karlsson, Professor Emeritus at Jönköping International Business School (JIBS), and Hans Westlund, Professor at JIBS and KTH Royal Institute of Technology, to propose a new board and to hold a meeting to restore the Nordic Section.

The meeting and election were organized virtually on September 18, with approximately 30 participants from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. Martin Andersson was elected as the new chair: "We are very happy to have reestablished the Nordic Section of ERSAS. The new board will build on the strong tradition of regional science in the Nordic countries and work to further strengthen regional science and develop a strong Section of ERSAS."

The elected board consists of the following members:

*Chair: Martin Andersson, Blekinge Institute of Technology (BTH), Karlskrona, Swedish Entrepreneurship Forum, Stockholm and Lund University, Lund (SE)*

*Secretary: Mikaela Backman, Jönköping International Business School (SE)*

*Treasurer: Magnus Andersson, Malmö University (SE)*

*Members: Daniel Rauhut, University of Eastern Finland (FI); Tom Brökel, University of Stavanger Business School (NO); Nino Javakhishvili-Larsen, Center For Regional And Tourism Research (DK); Grétar Þór Eyþórsson, University of Akureyri (IS)*