Editorial

A new team for new challenges

During the ERSA conference in Bratislava last August the RSAI Council appointed me as Editor in Chief of the Papers in Regional Science for the next three years. At the NARSC Conference in Ottawa at the beginning of November the new editorial team was chosen: Alessandra Faggian, Ohio State University, representing RSAmericas, Paul Elhorst, University of Groningen, representing ERSA, Takatoshi Tabuchi, University of Tokyo and Yoshi Hayashi, Nagoya University, representing PRSCO. The representatives of PRSCO have already served for one term, and accepted to continue for another three year term, guaranteeing continuity with the previous team. In addition, Eduardo Haddad, São Paulo University, was appointed as Book Review Editor.

The new team has high potential. It is composed of relatively young people, willing to serve the journal with enthusiasm, ideas and time to dedicate to this work; the scholars appointed cover a wide spectrum of disciplines, from regional and urban economics, to transport and environmental economics, spatial econometrics, economic geography. Moreover, they are characterized by different and complementary approaches to regional science, from qualitative to modelling methods and tools; from conceptual to analytical theoretical frameworks. These features allow us to say that Papers in Regional Science will be able to handle all different kinds of regional science papers, as in the past.

We inherit a journal well positioned in the international scientific world thanks to the work of the previous editorial teams. The impact factor of Papers in Regional Science, as well as the number of submissions and the number of papers downloaded, has steadily grown over the past six years. The number of pages per issue has also increased, allowing the time between on line and printed version publication to be shortened. On behalf of all the RSAI community, I would like to express my gratitude to Jouke van Dijk, previous Editor in Chief, and to all the members of the previous editorial team, for these invaluable achievements.

This wealthy situation is an advantage for the new team. We can go on following the trajectories established by the previous team, and thanks to the exploitation of the good reputation that the journal has achieved, I am sure we will achieve good results. Our efforts will also be directed at strengthening some aspects of the journal, which call for specific attention, such as: (i) increasing the number of submission from authors based in the Pacific area where the journal’s presence is more limited (especially if compared to Europe); (ii) solidifying and reinforcing the journal’s position in North and South America. This would also require a clear analysis of the competitors in this area, so as to put in place a truly winning strategy; (iii) balancing the presence of papers in the different fields of regional science, which include not only economics – a traditional strong area of the journal – but also other disciplines. Some strategies can be foreseen to achieve these goals. For example, the allocation of special issues to highly qualified scientists in the Pacific and American areas or in fields other than economics; engage highly-qualified scientists from China and India in submitting papers and advertising the journal to other qualified scientists in the area.

However, in a world of fierce competition as the one of international journals, the best strategy is to clearly specify the editorial nature of the journal. In particular, I have the ambition...
to characterize *Papers in Regional Science* as a journal fully reflecting the nature of regional science, i.e. a science that:

concerns the careful and patient study of social problems with regional and spatial dimensions, employing diverse combinations of analytical and empirical research (Isard 1975, p. 2).

A regional science journal is therefore first and foremost a multidisciplinary journal containing studies aiming to a systematic understanding of individual and collective behavioural responses, accompanied by rigorous scientific theoretical and empirical approaches from various disciplines, evolving in time to better fit the interpretation of a changing world.

My ambition is that a diverse combination of analytical and empirical researches will characterize the work published in *Papers in Regional Science*, with no *a priori* exclusion of any theoretical or empirical field of research, but with the consciousness that an integrative social science would be the aspiration, instead of different disciplines hosted by an umbrella discipline called ‘regional science’ with the simple common denominator of a ‘regional’ analysis. On this issue, I fully share Walter Isard’s opinion that while regional science draws generously on concepts, methods and techniques of existing social science disciplines, it is more than a serious interdisciplinary pursuit (Donaghy 2012):

> It has come to have its own peculiar core and wholeness . . . and it is forging (its own) tools and techniques accordingly (Isard 2003, p. 187).

Careful and precise work directed at spatial issues, drawing generously on concepts, methods and techniques of existing social science disciplines characterize regional science (Donaghy 2012), and these kinds of papers are welcome in *Papers in Regional Science*.

Second, regional science is and remains an applied science. Therefore, without renouncing high-quality contributions of an abstract nature either in theoretical (new economic geography; neoclassical endogenous growth theories; spatial general equilibrium models) or methodological fields (pure spatial econometric advances), a preference will be made for applied papers, of both qualitative and quantitative nature, embedded in advanced scientific techniques, presenting an integration of both positive and normative perspectives – facts and values – and driven by the need to solve real social problems in space.

My understanding of a regional science journal is therefore that of an applied science journal, of both qualitative and quantitative nature, containing conventional and unconventional approaches directed to the interpretation of social processes that develop in space, with the aspiration of continually striving to apply the best available scientific models, theories and techniques to advance our understanding of social processes with a regional or spatial dimension and with the ambition to solve real problems and to guide policy-makers in the design of effective policy interventions.

My intention is to lead *Papers in Regional Science* to be recognized more as a regional science journal according to the definition provided above. Whether this is a winning strategy will be something to be assessed in the future.

Robert Capello
Editor-in-chief, on behalf of the Editorial team

References

