

## **Lyon 2019 Epainos award speech by Katarzyna Kopczewska**

Being a young researcher is quite a special state – you need to prove that your research is worth attention, you have to show that walking new paths is as interesting as the race on old beaten tracks, you have to face the criticism of more experienced researchers. But, you also can be awarded for your effort, with the prize which is unavailable for the older scientists – with Epainos prize.

This year, the EPAINOS jury also had a tough choice, which of the submitted papers is the closest to the high bar in this contest. Probably many young scholars are now thinking, what is the key to success. The answer is only seemingly simple. Jury in its search for the best paper, looks for the balanced composition of theory, methods, data analysis, research questions and implications. We look for novelty, which will be well-grounded in existing state-of-art of regional science. We also look for interesting story as well as if the paper can be published soon.

This award is very prestigious, as *ex ante* - it is usually the first award the young scholars get, while *ex post* - Epainos awards go to researchers who later are invited for the key-note speeches.

In this 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of Epainos, there were 9 competing papers, each reviewed by chairs and reviewers of sessions and Epainos committee which consisted of: our chair Brigitte Waldorf, Papers In Regional Science editors Roberta Capello and Rosella Nicolini, REGION editor Sierdjan Koster, Annals of Regional Science editor Martin Andersson, Roberto Patuelli, and myself, Kathy Kopczewska, acting as the secretary. I wanted also to thank all involved distinguished scholars who supported the Epainos and Young Scientists Sessions with their reviews and recommendations.

This year we had a challenging task. We went through papers with very advanced and sophisticated methods, but lacking the theory behind, or oppositely, deeply immersed in literature with simple study onboard. However, the goal of the Epainos is to award papers which are to answer the important questions and enrich the theory of regional science. Wonderful, when they open, not close, the path for new wave of studies.

This feature is present in the winning paper. This year the Epainos prize goes to **Eduardo Ibarra-Olivo** from London School of Economics, for the paper on the "Outward Foreign Direct Investment and the Skill Composition in Mexican Regions".

His paper is a smart combination of international and regional economics. He studies an impact of Outward Foreign Direct Investment (later OFDI) on labour market and skill composition, in regional and sectoral cross-section, but also with regard to the destinations of OFDI, thus consequently to the motives of this internationalization. What is novel, it extends the existing literature by testing OFDI for developing, not developed country. Starting from cost minimisation problem, Author derives and estimates a relative demand for given skills, with regard to wages, industry and its scale, domestic assets and capital investment, technology and others. The research shows that internationalisation via OFDI towards high-income countries is associated with skill downgrading in the home region-sector, while for destinations in middle-income economies skills at home remain unchanged. This innovative paper, except scientific value, has also implications for policy making, what increases its value.

We really hope, that next year in Bolzano the Epainos award will keep its taste of prestige and uniqueness and that the new wave of ambitious young scholars will keep on enriching the regional science.

Many congratulations to **Eduardo Ibarra-Olivo**.