

Questionnaire to Juan R. Cuadrado-Roura, nominated RSAI Fellow 2020

How and when did you know you wanted to make a career in research? What made you choose the regional science field?

I was born in Girona, the capital of a province of Catalonia, in Spain, where regional issues have always been at the centre of historical claims and very varied debates. This likely influenced my decision to focus on regional matters; but when I really decided that regional issues were going to be one of my research fields was in my junior year. I was always very inspired by social and territorial inequalities in the distribution of income, poverty, unemployment, etc. And I always thought that, in addition to taking active political positions, as I did, it was very important to have a solvent theoretical base, training in quantitative analysis and to understand the alternatives of economic and social policy. Hence, when offered the opportunity, I joined a university team as a young assistant professor.

How did you begin taking part in the regional science and in ERSA activities?

My dissertation had already dealt with the analysis of agglomeration and economic concentration processes, in relation to the localization of productive activities and the different development speeds and their causes. My first publications focused not only on regional issues, but on issues related to economic policy, as part of 'Applied Economics'. In fact, along with the use of input-output tables, localization of activities, incentive policies, development poles, etc. I also worked on monetary and fiscal policy issues, the development of services activities and industry-service relations. As a Full Professor at the University of Malaga, I promoted the creation of the first regional magazine: Estudios Regionales, which is still alive today. I was also among the founders of the Spanish Regional Science Association (AECR in Spanish) and among the organizers of various meetings, congresses, and symposia on territorial issues and also on general economic policy.

From the AECR, of which I was its second president, I dedicated a lot of effort to open the Spanish section to the international arena, and I believe that we managed to increase the number of Spanish researchers at ERSA Congresses enormously. I had the satisfaction of being able to organize one of these European congresses in Barcelona early on (1980) and, lately, a RSAI World Congress held in Mallorca (1992), as well as other international meetings and workshops.

What were your first thoughts when you learned about the prestigious recognition as RSA fellow?

It has been a great satisfaction. I have received several Honoris Causa Doctorates and other distinctions (including the H. Kohno Award, from the RSAI, in 2017). But my election as RSAI Fellow 2020, together with my good friend Jouke van Dijk, still surprised me because I was not expecting it. Of course, receiving the news was a great gratification. I am aware that there are many colleagues who could deserve it and perhaps more than me. I sincerely appreciate this distinction, and this will motivate me to continue working with even more enthusiasm in favor of Regional Science and in the development of the RSAI and its sections.

Your contributions to regional science are significant and numerous. If you should cite one paper, a book or a contribution you are very proud of, which you choose and why?

I am never fully satisfied with what I have done and what I have published. But I think there are several works on regional convergence with which I am somewhat more satisfied. One of my greatest fulfillments was launching (in 2002) and consolidating the 'Journal of Regional Research / Investigaciones Regionales', with the support of the AECR, indexed and which has served to develop high caliber regional studies. Among my publications, I am particularly pleased with two of the four books Springer has published for me: *Service Industries and Regions* and *Regional Problems and Policies in Latin America* (in collaboration with P. Aroca, as editors and co-authors). Both continue to have a high number of chapter downloads. I also think some articles on the relations between services and regions and on the productivity of services have been quite innovative.

You have a long history with the RSAI network with key responsibilities like the ERSA President... Can you say a few words about your rich contribution to the research network and the future inside that network?

I think my time as President of ERSA was quite fruitful. The number of congress attendees grew enormously, several points of the statutes were clarified, we opened ourselves to collaborate more and more with the French Language Association and we also collaborated then and later in the birth and development of various European and Latin American sections. I have always believed in research growth through networks, and I believe that the RSAI has had and still has a fundamental role in this, as do the continental and national associations. In the area of regional and urban issues, fertilization through international contacts is essential. The contrast is always enriching and stimulating.

What is your vision of the network regarding its key roles for scientist, society?

Research - with very few exceptions - needs to be tested and verified with what others do or think. And in an interdisciplinary science, as in our case, interrelation, and discussion with other researchers from other fields is essential. As it is to produce works that start from real problems of society, that try to explain them and offer solutions and improvements.

What guidance might you give to a young researcher willing to build his/her career in regional science?

My main recommendation would be to be innovative, that they do not simply imitate what other researchers have published, in other countries or in other social contexts. Another key point is to get closer to reality. To ask questions about what is happening, why, and how it appears to be evolving. And also, to think about how to face and solve people's and communities' problems. Fortunately, the socio-economic reality is always changing, and new problems appear along with older ones that resurface or are not yet resolved. This calls to explore new topics, new problems and the use of new methodologies. Without forgetting that in the field of regional and urban issues, interdisciplinarity is always a requirement.

Sept. 15, 2020