

# Report on the Regions in Recovery e-Festival 2022: Session on addressing racial, ethnic, gender and other divides in cities and regions



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By Yifan Zhang, Renmin University of China, and Ana Gutiérrez Sanchis, Francisco de Vitoria University, Spain.

Yifan was thrilled to have joined as an RSA member in 2021. After attending one of their public lectures, she did not hesitate to join the RSA family. This year was her first time attending the RSA Annual Conference and she learnt a lot from many interesting panels, especially those related to South and Southeast Asia in “area studies”, which attracted her attention. Through the two weeks of intensive study, she gained a better understanding of “regional studies”, and the experts and scholars from various countries and fields.

Ana decided to attend the second edition of RinR, after her good experiences in the previous year. This year, she attended sessions more related to migration (borders, integration, ethnicity), population, gender, housing, regional and local development, ‘left behind places’ and, of course, the plenaries. For her, the

session SS23, about Local development, was very useful because they also talked about how Spain is a regional country with more autonomy at local level with local action groups to operate, with some differences from other EU countries.

We cannot cover all the information from this year's annual conference in this report, but we can highlight some aspects about the session "Addressing racial, ethnic, gender and other divides in cities and regions". For Teodora Dogaru's presentation, Yifan broadened her understanding of "High-Low culture and class relations", based on Teodora's anthropological background, her explanations of concepts, such as institutions, the church, and the role of the wife and career women in the respective social cultures. Ana also highlights the concept referred to as *cultural order* (Rapoport in Agnew et al., 1984) and other concepts of everyday life from philosophers and sociologists, about gender and education in the institution of family. Ana also liked the example of ethnicity showed by Zadie Smith.

Moreover, the detailed charts illustrated by Tasos Kitsos greatly attracted both of us. Tasos identified the links between the creative industries and the housing market, house price changes and gentrification of residential areas. In addition, Elena Heller's presentation focused on European regions, where she pointed out the diversity and innovation factor in Europe. She introduced three ways in which diversity works, mentioning that the interactions between natives and migrants are required. Her reference to "attitudes matter" resonated strongly for Yifan.

Kim Pollermann showed research that has been ongoing since 2007, which analyzes the effects of financing rural development on agriculture, the environment and well-being/quality of life in rural areas. It was surprising to find out that the issue of female representation is finally starting to become part of the agenda in Germany for rural development planning, aimed at tackling this structural discrimination.

The sessions relating to grants, early careers, how to publish in RSA Journals, and meeting the RSA journal editors were all very useful for us. We also appreciate very much the offer for us to write this report. Finally, we want to comment that this virtual Conference by Zoom is a great opportunity to be informed, share knowledge and improve our social network with many colleagues around the world!

Yifan Zhang is a doctorate student at Renmin University, Yifan is pursuing his Ph.D. degree in religious anthropology, his focus is on the South Asian religions, especially the Jain across the Bay of Bengal in the history and during the contemporary era.

Ana Gutiérrez Sanchis is an early career researcher. Her educational background is in Sociology, and she holds a Ph.D. in International Migration and Cooperation for Development. Her main research line is about Demography of Spain.