

RSA Events: Report on the 2024 RSA Europe Summer College “Migration, well-being and spatial inclusion” 22-24 May 2023, L’Aquila, Italy



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Between the 22nd -24th May 2024, the Regional Studies Association’s European Foundation (RSA Europe), in collaboration with the Gran Sasso Science Institute (GSSI), organised the fifth RSA Europe College entitled “*Migration, well-being and spatial inclusion*”.

At the summer college, high-profile researchers provided useful insights into their regional well-being, migration, and social inclusion expertise for PhD candidates and early career researchers.

Paolo Veneri from the GSSI opened the summer college with a lecture about Measuring and Understanding Well-being across space. His presentation offered the participants interesting insights into different alternatives to measuring well-being and their implications for policy-making. He mentioned the sources of well-being indicators and discussed the trade-off between life satisfaction and earnings. Paolo Veneri further stressed the importance of well-being indicators in adding dimensions to policy evaluations.

Antonella Ferrara from the University of Calabria presented in her lecture “Spatial Dimension of Well-being and Impact of EU Place-based Policies” the inter-play between well-being and place-based policies. Her presentation focused on the EU Cohesion and showcased the heterogeneity of regional absorption capacity.

In the migration dimension of the summer college, Özge Öner from the University of Cambridge provided an overview of empirical literature concerning ethnic enclaves and their implications for integration. Her lecture, “Home away from Home: Geography and Micro Geography of Immigrants”, additionally showed research results on migration patterns focused on European cities. Özge Öner emphasized the importance of networks among migrants and looked at the spatial continuum rather than the urban-rural divide. She further talked about the differentiation between labour and the social integration of migrants.

On a similar topic, Annekatrien Niebuhr from the University of Kiel revealed in her lecture “Drivers of Interregional Migration—Recent Evidence and Approaches” recent contributions on the topic of interregional migration. She further highlighted the impact of recent problematics, such as COVID-19 and xenophobic behaviour, on regional migration balance. Lastly, her lecture also offered perspectives on the methods used for empirical analyses of policy evaluation.

Along the same lines, Vincente Royuela from the University of Barcelona focused his presentation “Challenges and Methods of Migration Analysis. Scrutiny of Internal Migration Flows” on insights into the empirical analysis of interregional migration flows. He provided insights into relevant push and pull factors that come into play. Moreover, the lecture also emphasized observations on gravity models and multilevel modelling to analyse migration flows.

Regarding tips for professional development, Maria Giovanna Brandano from the

GSSI gave a presentation titled “Research Papers: From Design to Publication”, outlining the essential processes of organizing and submitting a paper to a journal. The whole process was illustrated using a submission to Regional Studies, making the whole procedure more straightforward to understand for participants. The goal was to show early-career researchers how to publish their research effectively.

On the same note, Daniela Carl from the Regional Science Association offered a view into professional development possibilities within the RSA and RSA Europe. Her presentation outlined the various events organized by the RSA to promote research, such as webinars and different funding possibilities and awards. It stressed the importance of using the RSA formal and informal events to extend one’s network.

Student presentations were a new element added to this year’s summer college. Organized in three blocks of seven presentations, they offered the participants five minutes to present their research and get feedback from other participants and senior researchers. Additionally, this also allowed the participants to learn more about each other’s research interests.

The RSA offered the participants two field trips to see the practical side of regional well-being. During one, the participants had the opportunity to visit Lecce nei Marsi, a municipality in the province of L’Aquila. In the second, the participants were able to see the rich history of Aquila itself. As a severe earthquake hit the region in 2009, the tours showed the participants the extent of the damage and what was done in the process of recovery from the earthquake. The trips allowed the participants to network and informally discuss their research topics.

Overall, the summer college organized by the RSA and the GSSI was a great success that enabled participants to expand their knowledge of the topics related to the research. Furthermore, it allowed them to get feedback on their research from senior researchers. Lastly, the informal events let them get to know other participants better and expand their network.

RSA Europe is planning a similar Summer College for 2025, and details will be available in due course at RSA Europe Events.







