

Regional Resilience



By Chandrima Mukhopadhyay (email).

There were multiple sessions on regional resiliency in the conference from both a climate change and an economic resilience perspective. The first session I attended on regional economic resilience was *“Rural Resilience in the context of Trends in Urban-Rural Digital divide”*. The sessions’ presentations mainly investigated how resilient rural regions were based on the availability of digital media infrastructure, which could be remotely associated with economic resilience. The first speaker presented a study from Prague. He examined rural resilience for the period of 2020-24.

Regarding the infrastructural dimension, he looked into functional and capability dimensions. While the study looked into whether certain rural micro-regions were digitally lagging, or digitally progressive, they did not find much difference in terms of gender. The second speaker presented a study on spatial justice within the digital region in the German periphery. She investigated the difference between urban, peri-urban and rural areas, the study being conducted in 2021. Her presentation raised the question of whether such digital infrastructure

availability is related to the Smart City initiative. One important quote from her presentation was from William Gibson: “The future is already here. It’s not very evenly distributed.” She discussed rural areas as places of innovation. The third presentation of the session was a modification of the OECD circle of declining rural regions.

There were two sessions on “*Rethinking regional resilience in crisis-ridden times*”. Presentations in the first session were predominantly based on quantitative methods and measured the correlation between resistance and recovery. The session started with Robert Hassink’s presentation on concepts related to resilience. He discussed combining network and regional resilience, systems approach, path dependency, long-term view, and return to normal (including bouncing back or bouncing forward). Resilience is understood through the lens of engineering, ecological, evolutionary, and transformative (to create new reconfiguration) approaches. The scale, nature and duration of shock were explored as variables. In terms of “resilience to what”, the speaker explained the nature of crisis could be economic, institutional, organizational, environmental, man-made, technological, and epidemic. Various dimensions of resiliency include preparation, vulnerability, resistance, robustness, and recoverability. Ron Martin’s use of the term “Build forward better” was pointed out, as a framework to distinguish between “build back” and “build forward”. Henry Yeung’s discussion on the localization and regionalization of production networks was raised too. The similarity between these two works of literature is that both require qualitative research with key roles for an agency: Transformative, network, and regional resilience. The second presentation of the session examined the correlation between the resistance index and recovery index, while the economy was measured through GDP at constant price and employment. The study looked into which regions are most and least resilient regarding employment. The third presenter discussed poly-centricity and regional resilience in China. He measured resistance as “real recession-expected recession”.

The first online presentation in session II was “Spatial dependency of regional economic resilience”. The speaker presented a multi-authored paper on using spatial model as a road map- spatial weight matrix. The second presenter discussed a study on regional forest peripheries regarding forest resilience in Finland. The third speaker presented a study on the team Finland network as governance to improve resilience. I presented my own paper in the second

session. My own presentation was on post Covid regional economic resilience of Delhi NCR, India with a focus on air pollution and informal migrant labourers, two wicked problems in Delhi NCR's economy.

The final session on resilience on the last day was most interesting and was on "Resilience, Anti-fragile Urbanism, and adaptive design: The future of built environment". The moderator introduced the session to consider uncertainty in climate change resilience as the main motive. Both papers were conceptual. The first presenter discussed transformative governance. She discussed the depth of transformation, scale of transformation, and speed as main variables. Transformation happens under external pressure, and continuous transformative change takes place in two parts, i.e., small-scale incremental and large-scale radical change. She discussed enabling deep change at a small scale and upscaling deep change at a small scale. She explored the barriers of upscaling process as resistance, impatience, and inability to step outside. The second and final presentation was "Anthropocene to address climate change in the built environment". The speaker introduced multiple new terms and concepts like adaptive, tactical, urban resilience, and anti-fragile planning. He described anti-fragile planning through the lens of fragile, robust, and anti-fragility. Anti-fragile planning is a spontaneous process, which is explained using ineffective planning (to escape from organizers), plans and policies, centralization, excess specialization, and extractive political and economic institution. In his concluding remarks, he also mentions the concepts of post-human planners, which the audience did not accept.

Conference photos, plenary recordings and a short conference video of the 2023 Annual Conference in Ljubljana are available at [2023 RSA Annual Conference](#).

The next RSA Annual Conference #RSA24 will be held 11th -14th June 2024 at the University of Florence, Italy. For more details, please go to [2024 RSA Annual Conference](#).

We hope you can join us in Florence for the #RSA24.