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**FUTURE CHALLENGES TO REGIONAL SCIENCE.
HIGHLIGHTS FOR CEECs RELATED RESEARCH**

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Introductory remarks

Institutional roots of regional science - mid of the XXth century - Walter Isard – RSAI - 1954

Subsequently - supranational associations, made of national regional science associations in North-America, Europe, Pacific region, Latin America, etc.

Regional science - well-defined interdisciplinary character: economics, geography, urban planning, architecture, sociology, public policy, etc., → spatial economics, spatial planning, regional and local development, etc.

Europe

- the First European Congress: The Hague, August 1961
- European Regional Science Association (ERSA) – 1979 (after the ERSA Congress in London). At present: 17 active associations ('sections', established either at country level or as linguistic groups)
- **CEECs** - many sections were created or revitalized after the fall of the 'iron curtain'
- Big RS events in CEECs: World Congress of RSAI (Timisoara, Romania, 2012), the ERSA Congress (e.g. Lodz, Poland, 2009 or Bratislava, Slovakia, 2012), ERSA Summer Institutes (Budapest, Bratislava), etc.
 - the approach of classical topics from the perspective specific to transition countries
 - the emergence of new issues

Overview

- Introduction
- Sub-periods in the evolution of regional science
- Current and future challenges to regional science
- Subjects of particular interest to CEECs
- Concluding remarks

Sub-periods in the evolution of regional science

1950

Post war regional adjustments

“Thinking regionally”

“Location matters”

“Cold war programmes”

1980

Globalisation

“Thinking globally”

“Flexible space”

“Liberalism”

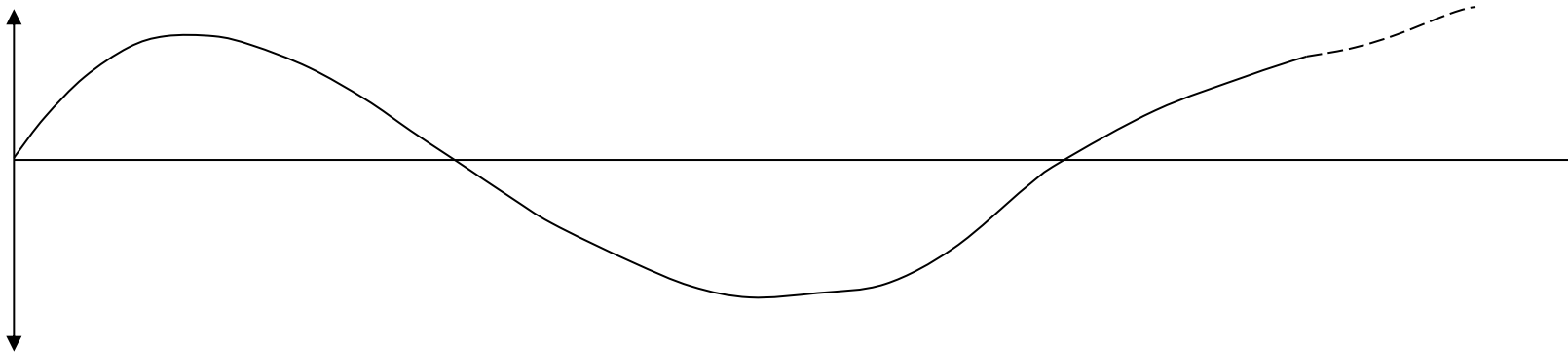
2010

Environmental and Social
Sustainability

“Thinking sustainable”

“Continental cooperation”

“Financial power”



Source: simplified version from Bailly and Gibson 2004, p. 131

1990s - sources of “new combinations” in RS:

- progress in theory, research tools and techniques
 - major changes in the economy
 - the rise of new spatial policy questions
- (Nijkamp and van Geenhuizen, 1996)

The rise of new spatial policy questions

EU Enlargement:

- the regional profile, potential and specialization
- the quality of regional/local business environment and, at the same time, the social and cultural influences on the creation of regional networks
- the way these specific patterns are reflected in the regional competition and competitiveness dynamics
- new perspectives for convergence/divergence in regional growth question in relation with the new wave of the EU enlargement, etc.

Transition:

- the need for theory and policy concepts on transformation processes such as those on the establishment of an institutional and legal framework for the market economy;
- strategies for economic restructuring, macrostabilisation, privatization;
- solutions for meeting the criteria of a functioning market economy as a basic condition for the access to the EU;
- and, at *regional scale*:
- problems of economic restructuring in the old industrial regions;
- ways of opening the formerly closed economic systems and finding a role for them in the global competition;
- relationship between Eastern Europe and Western Europe in terms of competition, complementarity, equity and dependency, polarization, integration;
- strategic cooperation of a trans-border nature;
- defining/establishing territorial organization structures compatible with those existing in the EU;
- ensuring a high absorption capacity of the EU financial support via structural-type instruments, etc.

Current and future challenges to regional science

Specific issues to various spatial scales:

- at local spatial scale - integrating rural and urban areas and managing urbanization
- at national spatial scale - integration of lagging and leading regions
- at international spatial scale - the integration of isolated and well-connected countries (Gill and Goh 2010).

Complex policy analysis framework: integration of sustainable development, territorial cohesion, competitiveness and growth at supra-national, inter-regional, intra-regional and intra-urban scale.

Major need to address more practical, concrete issues affecting large geographical areas and numerous communities:

- global environmental changes and human security-related aspects.
- international migration
- research on urban phenomena
- The new realities → adequate solutions for including space in the new economic models, envisaging the cross-fertilisation among location theory, development theory and macroeconomic growth theory at the same time.

Subjects of particular interest to CEECs

Regional analysis and regional policy at EU level are being reshaped → subjects that are investigated for all EU countries but which require differentiated approaches when it comes to the new EU members.

Brief selection:

- *the EU convergence process*
- *absorption capacity of the EU Funds*
- *regional clusters*
- *network-based collaboration at European level*
- *support to regional science-related subjects in the academic curricula*

Concluding remarks

- For more than fifty years regional science has proved its viability and usefulness in both theory and practice.
- Its future is closely related to the *progress in theory and improvement in research tools* and techniques, going in parallel with the *structural changes in economy* and the raise of *new spatial policy questions*.
- At European level, the CEECs bring about their own landscape, derived from the overall orientation of cohesion policy. As a result, specific responses are required and it is strongly recommended to outline these responses in a favorable, *synergic, networking- based environment*.

Thank you!