Special Session Proposal

Advancing Regional Resilience: Addressing Political Discontent with Cutting-Edge Approaches for Sustainable and Inclusive Futures

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Abstract

Recent years have seen regions worldwide grappling with a series of unprecedented and overlapping crises, including the global financial downturn, the refugee crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and rising levels of political discontent. These challenges have disrupted economic systems, deepened social inequalities, and fuelled public dissatisfaction with governance structures. In this turbulent context, there is a growing need to understand how regions can adapt, recover, and ultimately thrive in the face of such shocks.

Regional Science, with its interdisciplinary lens, offers powerful tools to analyse these dynamics and provide actionable insights.

This special session, titled "Advancing Regional Resilience: Addressing Political Discontent with Cutting-Edge Approaches for Sustainable and Inclusive Futures", invites researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to explore how advanced computational methods, such as among others machine learning (ML), can uncover new dimensions of regional resilience and inform policies that address the intertwined challenges of economic shocks, social inequalities, and political discontent.

We welcome contributions addressing the following themes:

1. Resilience in the Era of Political Discontent. How do socio-political factors, such as public dissatisfaction with governance, impact regional resilience? The interplay between political discontent, economic vulnerability, and social cohesion using the latest developments in economic analysis and modelling techniques is a poorly explored area of research.

2. Advanced Tools for Resilience Prediction. How can frontier methods contribute to a more granular and interpretable understanding of resilience? Contributions showcasing how e.g. ML or spatial ML outperforms traditional statistical methods in predicting and explaining resilience outcomes—such as resistance and recovery—are particularly valued.

3. Multidimensional Analysis of Resilience Factors. What role do economic, social, geographic, and political factors play in shaping regional resilience? Integrative approaches that assess predictors like income inequality, industrial structures, demographic trends, infrastructure accessibility, and governance quality are of special interest.

4. Policy Responses in Times of Crises. How can data-driven insights inform more effective policy responses to crises? Contributions focusing on strategies to mitigate inequality, enhance infrastructure resilience, address agglomeration diseconomies, and reduce the socio-political roots of discontent are particularly welcome.

5. Comparative Case Studies. How do regions with varying levels of resilience respond to global shocks, and what lessons can be drawn? Submissions presenting comparative analyses will enrich the dialogue.

By combining cutting-edge econometric approaches with the principles of Regional Science, this session seeks to illuminate how regions can not only withstand crises but also address the deeper drivers of vulnerability, including political and social fractures. For instance, applying ML to classify resilience clusters—such as regions characterized by high resistance but low recovery, or vice versa—provides actionable insights for both theory and practice. Furthermore, the interpretability of ML models, enables the identification of key drivers behind resilience, helping policymakers design targeted interventions. Moreover, growing dissatisfaction with governance can erode social cohesion, weaken institutional trust, and hinder collective responses to crises. Exploring these dynamics through the lens of econometric tools at the frontiers offers opportunities to identify patterns and predictors that might otherwise remain hidden, providing valuable insights into how to rebuild trust and foster inclusive growth.

We invite researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to submit papers that investigate the intersections of resilience, political discontent, and advanced econometric techniques. Contributions are expected to offer innovative perspectives and practical solutions to the pressing challenges of our time, advancing our collective understanding of how to create more resilient, sustainable, and inclusive futures for all.