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Special session proposal: **Geography of science and the spatial dimension of scientific activity**

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The spatiality of scientific activity is quite a novel topic of inquiry in the framework of Regional Science. So far, together with the territorial dimension of higher education and innovation systems, the spatiality of scientific activity has mainly been approached through its relations with industry (science-industry linkages literature). The spatial distribution of researchers, their links in terms of both collaboration and knowledge exchange, and the interplay between individual careers, network formation and scientific communities’ dynamics have not been much explored. We argue that there is a theoretical and empirical need to explore the spatiality of scientific activity according to three levels of analysis: -macro, -meso and -micro. We propose three possible avenues of exploration to fill this gap:

-investigating the geography of scientific activity and its recent dynamics: what are the determinant of the spatial distribution observed over time? What are its relations to the distribution of other human activities? What is the role-played by cities, countries and macro-regional areas in its organization?

-focussing on the networks and the role-played by scientific communities on scientific collaboration and knowledge exchanges between researchers within and between territories at different levels (cities, regions, countries, macro-regional areas). The main question here is the embeddedness of these social networks in territorial systems and the extent to which these social networks are able to reconfigure previous spatial arrangements.

-looking at the link between geographical trajectories of researchers (job-to-job as much as temporary mobility) and the connection with collaborators, and questioning the extent to which scientific collaborations are maintained (or not) over time despite geographical distance.

One can rely on several sources of data in order to explore these different levels of analysis and improve our understanding of their connections. We think notably of bibliometric data, qualitative materials as CV, surveys and interviews as promising methodology. Given the complementary of these materials and the richness they are all equally able to bring, we are open to mixed methodologies as well as purely quantitative or qualitative ones.