What do We Think are the Most Important Journals for Regional Science?

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Abstract

This paper reports the results of a survey conducted among regional scientists about what they regard as the most important journals for work in the discipline. The survey was conducted online and generated 740 responses, mostly from European scholars. The paper shows a strong consensus in the (European) regional science community on the top journals for the discipline. Particularly, the top position is almost always occupied by the same journal, irrespective of the method applied, or the way in which the sample is subdivided. Marked differences can only be found among countries, particularly between European countries on the one hand, and the USA and Japan on the other.

When the results were correlated with the impact factors of the journals, support could not be found for a positive correlation. Correlation coefficients were small, insignificant, and mostly negative.

Keywords: regional science journals; rankings; citations vs usefulness.

JEL-classification codes: R10.

Quali riteniamo essere le riviste più importanti per le scienze regionali? Questo articolo riporta i risultati di una indagine condotta tra studiosi di scienze regionali riguardo a quelle che ritengono essere le riviste più importanti per il loro lavoro nella disciplina. L'indagine è stata condotta on-line e ha generato 740 risposte, prevalentemente di studiosi europei. L'articolo mostra un forte consenso nella comunità (europea) delle scienze regionali sulle più importanti riviste per la disciplina. In particolare, la prima posizione è quasi sempre occupata dalla stessa rivista, indipendentemente dal metodo utilizzato o dal modo in cui il campione è suddiviso. Differenze marcate possono invece essere trovate tra i paesi, in particolare tra i paesi europei da un lato e Stati Uniti e Giappone dall'altro.

Quando i risultati vengono correlati con l'impact factor delle riviste, non si evidenzia supporto per una correlazione positiva. I coefficienti di correlazione sono piccoli, non significativi e generalmente negativi.

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1. Introduction

In many respects the academic world has become more competitive in recent years. With money notoriously in short supply, researchers and research institutions now compete at numerous levels. At the international one, the EU states this quite clearly in its Lisbon Strategy, which aims to make the European Union "the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world" by 2010. One instrument for this purpose is boosting research and innovation. While this can be viewed as good news for research and innovation in general, the necessary concentration processes and targeting of efforts put the European countries and research institutions in competition which each other.

The need to apply the basic economic question (i.e. where to invest scarce resources in order to achieve the best results) to higher education and research stimulates demand for evaluation at all levels: among countries, among institutions, disciplines, departments, all the way down to the individual researchers, who compete for recognition and for a limited number of posts. Whenever research is involved, every evaluation effort encounters the problem of measuring the outcome of research activities. The diversity of those outcomes makes evaluation of research very complicated and cumbersome. Although most researchers would probably agree that not all research is equally valuable, the question of how to determine the value of research outcomes typically provokes long and heated discussions.

When evaluating basic research, one of the main problems is that publications in different forms of literature, and in different media within each form of literature, must be combined into one evaluation. This immediately sets these forms and media in relation to one another and implicitly or explicitly states that one is more valuable than the other. Are journal articles worth more than articles in edited books? Is a publication in journal A more valuable than one in journal B? Does everything published in a journal constitute an article or are there different categories of publications? Does a long review article carry the same weight as a short, but highly technical research note? These are questions with which all those who conduct research evaluation must cope at some time.

The broader the scope of the evaluation, the more severe the problem becomes, because it attempts to apply a unifying framework to a heterogeneous group of researchers, research groups, disciplines, or even institutions. But, even in a comparatively narrow field like regional science there are no easy answers to these questions. Different traditions, research cultures, specializations, and so on, make the creation of a unifying framework for evaluation extremely difficult. One of the most fundamental questions concerns the comparative value of journals as publication channels. Various ratings, rankings, and bibliometric indicators have been proposed, and they will be discussed in section 2 of this paper.

As we shall see, all quality indicators attempt to reflect the reputation of a specific journal in the scientific community. Therefore, one may also try to answer this question by directly asking the members of the scientific community. This is the approach taken by this paper. The next section discusses the questions of what is meant by the 'quality' of a journal, how a reputation is developed, and how it relates to the scientific production process. The section also discusses various ways to assess the quality of journals. Section 3 describes the questionnaire that we used in our study, while section 4 deals with the sample and the respondents. Section 5 presents the results of the analysis. The paper ends with summary and conclusions in section 6.

2. Reputation, Quality, and Impact of Journals

Scholarly journals are a central component of the scientific production process. Although the majority of journals are produced and distributed by commercial publishers, the scientific community is essential for the development of a journal. The scientific community provides the input in the form of paper submissions, consumes the output in the form of subscription and readership, and contributes to quality management by refereeing the submissions. In many cases the strategic management of a journal is in the hands of the scientific community as well. Each of the two sides is highly differentiated. Even within a single discipline on the one hand there is a large number of journals with different thematic orientations, history, geographical focus, and so on, and on the other, a highly diverse scientific community with many thematic niches, institutional relationships, work environments, and so on.

A key element in this complex relationship is the reputation of a journal. We shall seek to define reputation later. A journal's reputation is probably closely connected on the one hand to the reputation of the articles which it publishes, and of their authors, and on the other to the reputation of its publisher and the members of its editorial board. If an article is published in a journal of high reputation, it enjoys greater visibility in the scientific community than if it is published in a journal of low reputation. The simple fact that an article is published in a highly reputable journal enhances the reputation of the article and of its author. Moreover, the article is more likely to be cited by other scholars, and this further increases the reputations of the article, the author, and the journal. On the other hand, publishing important articles by scholars with high reputation raises the reputation of the journal, the publisher, and the members of its editorial board.

Shapiro (1982) defines the reputation of a firm as the consumer's expectations regarding the quality of the firm's products. By analogy, the reputation of a journal can be seen as the expectations of the scientific community about the quality of articles published in that journal (Bräuninger and Haucap,

2003). Similarly, the reputation of an author is the scientific community's expectation about the quality of an article written by that author. Hence, it is the perception in the scientific community and the expectations deriving therefrom that generate reputation.

To some extent, our definition of reputation clarifies one vague term, 'reputation', by reference to another, 'quality'. The Research Evaluation Policy Project (REPP) of the Australian National University discusses three key concepts in this regard: 'research quality', 'impact', and 'scientific excellence'. It concludes that, although research quality includes some objectively measurable elements, it is essentially a relative concept that "in its complexity can only be judged by peers" (REPP, 2005, p. 3). Quality "is not just intrinsic to research but judged by others with differing research interests and social goals" (Martin, Irvine, 1983, p. 70). "Quantitative indicators may be related to quality and measure certain aspects of it, but cannot exhaustively represent quality" (REPP, 2005, p.3). Similar arguments are put forward in regard to 'impact'. This is seen as "the actual influence on surrounding research" (Martin, Irvine, 1983, p.70), which is again a relative concept that depends on the perception of the scientific community. Journal impact factors, which relate the number of citations of a journal to the number of articles it publishes, cover only part of what really constitutes a journal's impact. As regards 'scientific excellence', REPP (2005, p. 4) concludes that "attempts to define 'scientific excellence' have led to the same difficulties encountered with the definition of 'research quality'".

So how can the quality of research, and hence the quality of journals, be assessed? Widely used for this purpose are the journal impact factors published by ISI/Thomson Scientific. The impact factor "is calculated by dividing the number of current citations to articles published in the two previous years by the total number of articles published in the two previous years" (ISI Journal Citation Reports, Tutorial). Although it should be clear from the above discussion that the number of citations in journal articles is only one part of a journal's impact, and that impact is only one aspect of a journal's quality, one notes a tendency to use impact factors "as a proxy measure for quality in total" (REPP, 2005, p.4). In addition, there are a number of technical and methodological problems with these measures (van Raan, 2005). Although bibliometric researchers have long warned against the simple use of the standard impact factors (Moed, van Leeuwen, 1995, 1996), their application in this form is still quite common (e.g., Bauer, 2003).

Impact factors and other bibliometric analyses try to measure the reputation of journals via the revealed preferences of the scientific community. The hypothesis is that, by citing the articles in a journal, the members of the scientific community reveal the reputation that the journal has for them. An alternative approach is to apply a stated preferences approach and ask the members of the respective scientific community directly about the reputation of

journals. This is the approach applied in this paper. Since impact factors are available for many of the journals in our analysis, we can compare the results produced by both approaches. This comparison is reported at the end of section 5.3.

Of course, also the stated preferences approach has its weaknesses. Some of the main ones are:

- definition of the relevant scientific community (who belongs to the scientific community in regional science?),
- the method of inquiry (personal interviews, telephone interviews, online questionnaire?),
- what should be measured (frequency of use, intensity of use, usefulness, reputation?),
- how it should be measured (free response, selection from a list, constrained selection?).

In the following sections we discuss how we approached these issues.

The next section describes the survey instrument that we used. Section 4 describes the sample and the respondents, and Section 5 presents the results of the investigation.

3. The Questionnaire

The survey was conducted electronically between 31 March and 18 May 2005. The questionnaire was presented as a series of web-pages and had to be completed online. It took advantage of this medium in the sense that some question options presented to the respondent were derived from their replies to previous questions. This procedure will be described in more detail below.

The questionnaire had two main parts. Part 1 was concerned with regional science journals and gathered information about the respondent's valuation of these journals. Various techniques were applied: they will be described in detail in section 5 together with analysis of the results. Part 2 of the questionnaire dealt with the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents and the characteristics of their work environment. The summary statistics on our set of respondents will be shown in section 4, where we describe the sample and the respondents.

While part 2 of the questionnaire was identical for all respondents, part 1, the main part, differed among respondents partly according to their replies. The questions in this part followed a logical sequence. After checking the validity of respondents, the first question asked them to name the five most important journals for their work in regional science. No journals were suggested to the respondents at this stage. The replies to these questions were compared with the titles in a list of 196 important regional science journals. For each of the respon-

dents' entries, similar journal titles were suggested to them and they were asked to select the journal title that they actually meant (or to stay with their original entry). This step was meant to eliminate some possible ambiguities in the replies to the first question. Of the 3256 journals named by the respondents in response to this question (on average 4.4 per questionnaire), 2532 (77.8%) were contained in our list. Seventy-five journals from the list were not mentioned at all in response to question one. Among them were *Progress in Planning*, *GIS World*, *Urban Systems*, and *Development and Change*.

The second question presented a list of journal titles and asked respondents to mark the journals that they knew. The list depended on the answer to question 1 in that it was the union set of the respondent's answer to this question and the 196 journals in our precompiled list. Since this list was almost 200 items long and respondents might grow tired as they read through it, we presented the list in ascending or descending alphabetical order at random. On the one hand, this mitigated the possible bias; on the other it allowed us to check for deterioration effects in the replies to this question. For this test we split our list of journals – ordered alphabetically by title – into four quartiles and counted how often respondents checked journals from these quartiles as known when the list was presented in ascending or descending order. The result is shown in Table 1. To check whether the two dimensions were independent, we applied a chi-square test, which yielded a statistic of 158.1 (3 degrees of freedom), implying that the null hypothesis of independence between the two dimensions was rejected. We must therefore conclude that the suspected deterioration effect indeed exists. Although this result raises concerns regarding the validity of our results, the figures in Table 1 do not appear damaging. Also, as long as we combine the results from both orderings, we can expect the effect to be dampened. Nevertheless, in section 5.3 we will use this distinction to check the overall validity of our results.

In addition to the options generated from the answers to question 1 and the precompiled list, respondents could add up to 10 additional regional science journals that they knew: 387 respondents added a total number of 747 journals in this step. The largest number added by one respondent was five.

This second question also served the purpose of reducing the number of options that needed to be presented in later questions. This simplified the questionnaire and made it easier to complete. Since later questions made sense only for journals that the respondents knew, the options presented in those questions were only journals that the respondent had either selected in the second question (including those journals mentioned at question 1) or had added as additional journals in question 2. In this form, the answer to the first two questions determined the options for later questions in the questionnaire.

The chance offered to structure questions according to earlier replies is not the only advantage of an electronic questionnaire. Other advantages are the opportunity to conduct immediate validity checks, and the fact that answers can be directly stored in machine readable form. We utilized both opportunities. As

Table 1 – Selection of journals by ordering

Ordering	*1st Quart.*	*2nd Quart.*	*3rd Quart.*	*4th Quart.*
Ascending	2403	1619	2010	2023
Descending	1719	1452	2232	2378

far as validity checks were concerned, the program receiving the responses rejected those that lacked answers to a set of key questions. The main purpose of this step was to avoid messing up the data set with empty entries resulting from mere scanning by respondents of the questionnaire's structure .

A major risk of an electronic questionnaire is that it may rapidly generate a large number of responses. Consequently, the questionnaire and the program behind it had to be thoroughly pre-tested. We asked local colleagues to check the procedures and ran a pre-test with 50 randomly selected persons from our sample. Since this pre-test did not lead to any changes in the questionnaire, the responses of the pre-test were added to the final data-set.

4. Sample and Respondents

Since it was the aim of the study to determine how regional scientists evaluate journals for work in their discipline, we needed to generate a sample of regional scientists. Given that the questionnaire was to be filled in online, we decided also to contact potential respondents electronically via email.

We decided to draw on all the sources available for the email addresses of regional scientists. All these sources related to the European Regional Science Association (ERSA), the European section of the Regional Science Association International. ERSA[1] is by far the largest scholarly association of regional scientists in Europe. It covers all parts of the continent and organizes annual European congresses (the ERSA Congresses). The sources used to generate our sample were the ERSA member directory and the participant lists of ERSA Congresses since 1998. Owing to numerous duplicate entries, we obtained a database with 3789 distinct email addresses. Since the raw data for this database covered a number of years, the entries were checked manually for obvious duplicates, i.e., entries where the same person used different email addresses. In cases where such duplicates were identified, they were combined into one user-number. However, this step was applied very conservatively, because we decided to accept the risk of double entries rather than erroneously eliminate potential respondents. The precautions that we took to avoid the misuse of double entries will be described below.

1. For more information see http://www.ersa.org.

This step produced a list of 3491 distinct user-numbers. For each one of them we generated a unique password. Email messages were then sent to each email address in the database. These messages explained the purpose of the survey, informed the recipient about his or her user-number and password, and asked him/her to go to the start page and fill in the questionnaire. These email messages were not all mailed at the same time, but over a period of eight days. Every day, between about 200 and 600 not yet contacted user-numbers were selected from the database and contacted via email. The sending of an email to a specific address was recorded in the database.

As expected, a substantial number of email addresses turned out to be invalid. They generated return messages informing about delivery failure. This event was also stored in a specific field in the database. Since we also recorded the fact that a response was submitted for a specific user-number in the database, we could identify those entries that seemed to have received our email but have not yet filled in the questionnaire. A reminder email was sent to those addresses a week after the original contact. This proved to be important for our survey's response rate.

Although we based a large part of our sample selection procedure on participant lists of regional science congresses, not all the subjects in our sample turned out to be regional scientists. We received a substantial number of emails from correspondents who informed us that they did not consider themselves to be regional scientists. Many had co-authored papers with regional science researchers and had contributed to the joint paper from their specific discipline. This quite impressively highlights the interdisciplinary character of regional science and ERSA Congresses. Since these respondents actively informed us that they were unable to fill in the questionnaire, we marked their database entries in the same way as a failed contact, so as not to bother them with a reminder email. Unfortunately, as a consequence, we cannot distinguish between those two groups: those who could not be reached by email and those who said that they were unable to fill in the questionnaire. A total number of 701 persons fell into these two categories. Our guess is that about two-thirds of them belonged to the first category, leaving 2884 persons who had apparently been reached by email but had not explicitly declined to fill in the questionnaire.

Despite its availability on the Internet, we are confident that the questionnaire was completed only by those persons that we had contacted, and by each of them only once. The combination of user-number and password emailed to our potential respondents had to be entered on the survey entry page in order to access the questionnaire. When the response was finally stored in the data-set, the date and time of this event was stored in the respective record of the database. This deactivated the user-number and password, making it impossible to use again later.

Table 2 – Respondents by country (top 10)

Country	*Number*	*Percent*
The Netherlands	86	12.20%
Germany	77	10.92%
Spain	77	10.92%
Italy	64	9.08%
United Kingdom	41	5.82%
Portugal	40	5.67%
United States	33	4.68%
Finland	29	4.11%
Austria	23	3.26%
Japan	23	3.26%

Our survey produced 740 responses that could be used in the analysis. This implies a response rate of 25.7% with respect to the 2884 persons who had apparently received the information and had not explicitly declined to fill in the questionnaire. Compared to the 3491 distinct user-numbers in our database, the response rate was 21.2%. While the former figure is too high (the denominator does not include some people who declined to fill in the questionnaire), the latter is too low (the denominator includes people who were never informed about the survey). Hence the 'true' response rate lies somewhere between the two figures, probably closer to the higher one. The results for the first part of the questionnaire are reported in the next section. In the rest of this section we report the characteristics of our respondents.

Since ERSA provided the source for our sample, most of our respondents (620, 87.9%) were resident in European countries (including Russia and Turkey). There were 47 (6.7%) in the Americas, 37 (5.3%) in Asia, and one in Australia (0.1%). All together our respondents represented 39 different countries. The 10 countries with the most respondents are given in Table 2 (35 responses were missing).

As in other analyses (van Dijk and Maier, 2006; Maier and van Dijk, 2004) the Netherlands head the table, followed by Germany, Spain and Italy. The number of respondents from the fifth-placed UK is already less than half that from the Netherlands. The largest non-European group of respondents is from the USA.

Given the high level of mobility of researchers, the country in which a respondent lived did not necessarily correspond to his/her cultural heritage. We therefore also asked for the respondent's mother tongue. Table 3 shows the results, again for the top ten responses (28 missing).

Table 3 – Respondents by mother tongue (top 10)

Language	*Number*	*Percent*
German	107	15.03%
Dutch	80	11.24%
Spanish	66	9.27%
Italian	65	9.13%
English	58	8.15%
Portuguese	51	7.16%
French	33	4.63%
Finnish	29	4.07%
Greek	29	4.07%
Japanese	24	3.37%

The largest number of respondents (40, 5.8%) were born in the year 1971. Over half of our respondents were aged under forty. The median year of birth was 1966, and the average birth year was 1963. This was also reflected in the number of years for which respondents had been active in the discipline (33 missing). Over half (56.4%) reported that they had been active for ten years or less. Only 12 respondents (1.7%) had been active in regional science for forty years or more. Regional science still seems to be strongly male dominated: indeed, almost three fourths (73.7%) of our respondents were men, only 26.3% women.

Similarly concentrated was the distribution of the types of institution at which our respondents worked. 76.5% at a university, 16.3% at some other research institution. Only small shares worked in consulting or policy (2.8% each) or some other type of institution (1.6%). This is also reflected in the type of community to which the respondents were mainly oriented. 81.1% reported an academic community as their main orientation, 14.3% policy, and 4.6% a professional community.

More balanced among respondents was the regional community to which they were oriented. The results of the relative question are given in Table 4. The two most important communities stand at the ends of the spectrum: regional, and international.

The questionnaire contained five evaluation questions intended to identify the type of work environment to which the respondents belonged and to check some of the basic hypotheses of our analysis.

The basic hypotheses were:

- Evaluation of research is important in people's work environments,
- Journal articles are an important source of information and stimulate respondent's research.

Table 4 – Respondent's regional community

Regional Community	*Number*	*Percent*
International	188	26.40%
Continental	147	20.65%
National	146	20.51%
Regional	231	32.44%

In the questionnaire these hypotheses were formulated as statements about the respondent's work environment and research, respectively. 60.5% agreed fully with the first statement, another 36.1% did so partially. Only 3.5% of the respondents did not agree with this statement (19 missing cases). The second statement obtained even greater consensus: 79.1% agreed fully, 20.1% partially, and only 0.3% rejected the statement (19 missing cases).

The results of the other evaluation questions are given in Table 5.

Table 5 – Evaluation questions

Statement		*agree fully*	*agree partially*	*not*	*missing*
Lobbying and politics are more important for my future career than my reputation in the research community	number	43	286	379	32
	percent	5.8	38.7	51.2	4.3
	percent valid	6.0	40.4	53.5	
The topics of my research are defined. by myself, not others	number	338	342	39	21
	percent	45.7	46.2	5.3	2.8
	percent valid	47.0	47.6	5.4	
My research contributes to my private income.	number	131	288	290	31
	percent	17.7	38.9	39.2	4.2
	percent valid	18.5	40.6	40.9	

5. Results

We now turn to the main results of our analysis. What do researchers consider to be the most important journals for regional science? We could answer this question in a number of ways. We could:

- identify which journal was mentioned most often in first place on the list of most important journals;
- identify which journal was mentioned most often in any place on the list of most important journals,

- generate a weighted index based on this list and identify the journals that scored highest;
- identify those journals for which the respondents were willing to pay the highest price;
- identify those journals that the respondents found most useful in their work; and
- identify those journals that according to the respondents had the highest reputation.

We will discuss all these approaches and report their results in section 5.1.

In addition to answering the key question of this paper, our analysis yields further insight into the process that produces the reputation of a journal. In section 5.2 we report which journals are best known, used most frequently, and followed most regularly. In section 5.3 we analyze the validity of our results and compare them to other rankings, particularly those based on impact factors.

5.1. *The Most Important Journals for Regional Science*

Although the six ways to answer the main research question differed considerably, they yielded similar results. In particular, the top-ranked journal was the same irrespective of which measure we applied. This top-ranked journal was *Regional Studies*.

Table 6 shows the 21 journals named most often in response to question 1 – "*What are the most important journals for your work in regional science?*". The respondents were asked to name up to five journals and order them by importance (most important first). As table 6 shows, *Regional Studies* was mentioned by 122 respondents as the top journal in regional science. The second-placed *Journal of Regional Science* obtained only 60% of this score; the third-placed one *Regional Science and Urban Economics* just 41.8%. The numbers decline rapidly with the tenth-placed journal (*European Planning Studies*), which received less than one tenth of the nominations of *Regional Studies*.

Two additional points are worth mentioning: First, *American Economic Review*, a highly-rated general economics journal, occupies position 11 in the ranking (nominated 10 times). Second, as the only non-English language journal, the German language publication *Raumforschung und Raumordnung* shares fourteenth place (nominated 8 times).

The result in Table 6 is based only on which journal the respondents identified as number 1 in their individual list of top journals. However, they could nominate up to five journals, furnishing additional information that should be taken into account. This raises the question of how to weight the entries in the various positions. The results in Table 6 can be viewed as the outcome of

Table 6 – Most important journals, first place

Question 1, first place:		*nominations*
1	Regional Studies	122
2	Journal of Regional Science	74
3	Regional Science and Urban Economics	51
4	Papers in Regional Science	41
5	Urban Studies	38
6	Journal of Urban Economics	27
7	Annals in Regional Science	25
8	Environment and Planning A	22
9	Research Policy	14
10	European Planning Studies	11
11	American Economic Review	10
12	Journal of Economic Geography	9
12	International Regional Science Review	9
14	European Urban and Regional Studies	8
14	Environment and Planning B – Planning and Design	8
14	Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice	8
14	Raumforschung und Raumordnung	8
18	Transportation Research Part B	7
19	Landscape and Urban Planning	6
19	Journal of Environmental Economics and Management	6
19	Economic System Research	6

weighting the top position by 1 and all the other positions by 0. Alternatively, we can weight all positions equally (by 1, for the sake of simplicity) or with some declining weights. When we weight them all equally, we get the number of times a journal was nominated in any place within the respondents' top five journals. This yields the ranking of Table 7. We see that *Regional Studies* is again at the top of the list, but it is now followed more closely by the next ranked journals: *Journal of Regional Science*" and *Papers in Regional Science*. When comparing with the ranking based on top position (Table 6), we find that *Papers in Regional Science* and *Annals in Regional Science* move up the list, while the urban-oriented journals *Urban Studies* and *Journal of Urban Economics* move down. The *American Economic Review* comes only thirteenth in this ranking, and *Raumforschung und Raumordnung* drops out of the top twenty.

Table 7 – Most important journals, number of times mentioned

	Question 1, all nominations, no weighting	*nominations*
1	Regional Studies	308
2	Journal of Regional Science	239
3	Papers in Regional Science	226
4	Regional Science and Urban Economics	189
5	Annals in Regional Science	139
6	Urban Studies	138
7	Journal of Urban Economics	118
8	Environment and Planning A	112
9	International Regional Science Review	71
10	European Planning Studies	65
11	Journal of Economic Geography	54
12	European Urban and Regional Studies	52
13	American Economic Review	39
13	Research Policy	39
15	International Journal of Urban and Regional Research	36
15	Environment and Planning B – Planning and Design	36
17	Entrepreneurship and Regional Development	32
18	Economic Geography	31
19	Geographical Analysis	29
20	Transportation Research Part A: Policy And Practice	28

Table 8 – Most important journals, weighted 5, 4, 3, 2, 1

	Question 1, weighted (1st place = 5 points, 2nd place = 4 points, ...):	*index score*
1	Regional Studies	1141
2	Journal of Regional Science	852
3	Papers in Regional Science	701
4	Regional Science and Urban Economics	651
5	Urban Studies	456
6	Annals in Regional Science	419
7	Journal of Urban Economics	381
8	Environment and Planning A	342
9	International Regional Science Review	206
10	European Planning Studies	201
11	European Urban and Regional Studies	160
12	Journal of Economic Geography	152
13	Research Policy	141
14	Environment and Planning B – Planning and Design	125
15	American Economic Review	117
16	Entrepreneurship and Regional Development	100
17	Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice	99
18	International Journal of Urban and Regional Research	94
19	Economic Geography	90
20	Geographical Analysis	85

Table 6 and Table 7 represent quite extreme weighting schemes. We may want to take into account all nominations by the respondents, but give more weight to those nominations which are higher. One way of doing this is to weight the top-mentioned journal by 5, the second by 4, the third by 3, the fourth by 2, and the fifth by 1. The result of this weighting scheme is shown in Table 8. Because of the intermediate weighting, the results lie somewhat between those reported in Table 6 and Table 7. Again, *Regional Studies* occupies the top position, and *Journal of Regional Science* is in second place. Compared to Table 6, *Papers of Regional Science* scores higher, and so does *Annals in Regional Science*, but not as high as in Table 7. Although some journals trade places or move a few positions up or down the list, in all three tables the top positions are occupied by the same journals. Obviously, the weighting of the raw data has only little influence on the results. All of the top journals are internationally oriented, affiliated with a commercial publisher, and published in English.

One problem with a ranking based on first, second, third, etc. place nominations is that we did not know how the respondents weighted these positions. It may well have been that for one respondent the journal that s/he put in top position was more than ten times more important than his/her second choice, while for another respondent the difference in importance between all five journals might only have been marginal. Since these differences are not known, they cannot be taken into account in the analysis. As a substitute, typically applied is either our own or some plausible weighting scheme.

To address this problem, we formulated a question later in the questionnaire (question 9) that implemented a contingent valuation experiment. The respondents were given the following scenario:

Suppose, the library is evaluating its journal subscriptions. It asks every faculty member in your university to allocate 50 value points to journals the library should subscribe to. In the end, the value points allocated to each journal will be added and those journals that have the most points will be available at the library in the future. Please, allocate your value points to those journals that you want to find in the library.

In the analysis we did exactly what we said the library would do: add up the value points assigned by the respondents in order to obtain a ranking of journals. The results are given in Table 9. Again, Regional Studies occupies the top position, with the high-ranking journals from the previous tables following. The only notable exception is American Economic Review, which ranks second, well ahead of the third-ranked Journal of Regional Science. Obviously, our respondents were willing to forgo subscriptions to important regional science journals in order to ensure the availability of this general economics journal. This result probably says more about the composition and scientific orientation of regional scientists than it does about the importance of the American Economic Review as a regional science journal. Clearly, it cannot be claimed that AER is a regional science journal, but, it is obviously valuable for those working in regional science.

Table 9 – Importance of journals, willingness to pay approach

Value Points of Journals:		*value points*
1	Regional Studies	2320
2	American Economic Review	2043
3	Journal of Regional Science	1748
4	Papers in Regional Science	1428
5	Annals in Regional Science	1358
6	Regional Science and Urban Economics	1258
7	Urban Studies	1175
8	Environment and Planning A	1114
9	Journal of Urban Economics	1064
10	International Regional Science Review	627
11	Journal of Economic Geography	599
12	Economic Geography	578
13	European Planning Studies	562
14	European Urban and Regional Studies	554
15	Research Policy	516
16	Environment and Planning B – Planning and Design	457
17	Environment and Planning C – Government and Policy	388
18	Environment and Planning D – Society and Space	377
19	International Journal of Urban and Regional Research	354
20	Entrepreneurship and Regional Development	333
21	Transportation Research Part A: Policy And Practice	333

Table 10 – Usefulness for own work – number of times categorized in the 'top 20%'

1	Regional Studies	181
2	Journal of Regional Science	129
3	Papers in Regional Science	103
4	Regional Science and Urban Economics	96
5	Urban Studies	90
6	Journal of Urban Economics	84
7	American Economic Review	80
8	Annals in Regional Science	80
9	Environment and Planning A	77
10	Research Policy	54
11	Journal of Economic Geography	54
12	European Planning Studies	48
13	International Regional Science Review	46
14	European Urban and Regional Studies	39
15	Transportation Research Part B	33
16	Economic Geography	33
17	Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice	31
18	Environment And Planning B – Planning and Design	30
19	Entrepreneurship and Regional Development	27
20	Geographical Analysis	23

Table 11 – Usefulness for own work – weighted index

1	Regional Studies	1335
2	Journal of Regional Science	1121
3	Papers in Regional Science	1028
4	Urban Studies	923
5	Regional Science and Urban Economics	902
6	Annals in Regional Science	809
7	Environment and Planning A	789
8	Journal of Urban Economics	751
9	American Economic Review	680
10	International Regional Science Review	546
11	Journal of Economic Geography	542
12	European Urban and Regional Studies	498
13	Economic Geography	461
14	European Planning Studies	432
15	Environment and Planning B – Planning and Design	366
16	Environment and Planning C – Government and Policy	362
17	Research Policy	354
18	International Journal of Urban and Regional Research	330
19	Environment and Planning D – Society and Space	319
20	Growth and Change	294

Table 12 – Reputation of journals – number of times categorized in the 'top 20%'

1	American Economic Review	230
2	Regional Studies	216
3	Journal of Regional Science	195
4	Regional Science and Urban Economics	145
5	Environment and Planning A	139
6	Journal of Urban Economics	135
7	Urban Studies	134
8	Papers in Regional Science	128
9	Annals in Regional Science	113
10	Journal of Economic Geography	66
11	Economic Geography	61
12	Environment and Planning B – Planning and Design	60
13	Environment and Planning D – Society and Space	60
14	Environment and Planning C – Government and Policy	55
15	International Regional Science Review	52
16	Research Policy	48
17	Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice	46
18	Progress in Human Geography	45
19	Transportation Research Part B	45
20	Annals of the Association of American Geographers	38
21	European Urban and Regional Studies	38

Question 7 asked "*How useful are these journals for your own work in regional science?*". The questionnaire defined 6 categories: top 20%, 20-40%, 40-60%, 60-80%, bottom 20% and irrelevant. By default, every journal was categorized as irrelevant. The results were again very similar to those reported above. Table 10 gives the results for the top category, Table 11 shows the ranking based on the weighted index, where again the weights were 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1. Journals categorized as "irrelevant" were not included, of course.

In the steps thus far we have derived rankings of journals on the basis of participants' responses. Another way to derive information about the valuation of journals is to ask participants to rate them according to some predefined scheme. Our questionnaire included two questions that applied this concept. The first (question 7) asked respondents to rate the journals that they knew according to their usefulness for their work in regional science. The second one (question 8) asked them to rate the journals according to their reputations in regional science. While the first question was intended to obtain information about the respondent's own perception (based on his or her experience), the second one targeted the respondent's view of the perception in the discipline. Both cases again offered various options for analysis. We report the number of times a journal was rated in the top category, and then an index based on a weighted sum of the categorizations.

The results are again very similar to the previous ones. Again, *Regional Studies* is in the top position, followed by journals scoring high in the previous analyses as well. There are minor differences between the two versions, but no qualitatively new results.

Question 8 asked "How do you judge the overall reputation of these journals in regional science?". Again, quintiles from 'top 20%' to 'bottom 20%' were defined as categories. 'Irrelevant' was not given as a category in this case. Table 12 shows the results for the top category, and Table 13 those for the weighted index with the same weights as used previously.

Table 12 is the only one thus far in which Regional Studies does not occupy the top position. American Economic Review is more often classified within the top 20% in terms of reputation than is Regional Studies, which follows in second place. This effect is levelled out in Table 13, which takes account not only of the top category but all the others as well (weights as in table 8). American Economic Review drops to sixth position in this ranking. This may be the result of differing interpretations of the question and the task by the respondents. Those who applied the question only to regional science journals and did not consider AER to fall within this category did not rate it at all. Those who decided to rate AER as well, rated it in the top category.

The results presented thus far quite clearly show the dominance of international, English-language journals. Also journals with a national background, like those of European ERSA sections, have difficulties in making it into the top rank positions. Although Italy is the fourth largest contributor to the sur-

Table 13 – Reputation of journals – weighted index

1	Regional Studies	1519
2	Journal of Regional Science	1393
3	Urban Studies	1249
4	Papers in Regional Science	1207
5	Regional Science and Urban Economics	1165
6	American Economic Review	1139
7	Annals in Regional Science	1085
8	Environment and Planning A	1050
9	Journal of Urban Economics	1022
10	Journal of Economic Geography	681
11	International Regional Science Review	661
12	Economic Geography	647
13	Environment and Planning B – Planning and Design	633
14	Environment and Planning C – Government and Policy	622
15	European Urban and Regional Studies	581
16	Environment and Planning D – Society and Space	572
17	European Planning Studies	505
18	International Journal of Urban and Regional Research	477
19	Research Policy	409
20	Land Economics	403

Table 14 – Journals known

Rank	*Journal*	*Number*	*Percent*
1	Regional Studies	572	77.3%
2	Urban Studies	530	71.6%
3	Journal of Regional Science	521	70.4%
4	Papers in Regional Science	491	66.4%
5	Regional Science and Urban Economics	454	61.4%
6	Annals in Regional Science	452	61.1%
7	Environment and Planning A	411	55.5%
8	Journal of Urban Economics	397	53.6%
9	American Economic Review	380	51.4%
10	International Regional Science Review	298	40.3%
11	Environment and Planning B – Planning and Design	298	40.3%
12	Journal of Economic Geography	296	40.0%
13	Environment and Planning C – Government and Policy	293	39.6%
14	Economic Geography	285	38.5%
15	European Urban and Regional Studies	282	38.1%
16	Environment and Planning D – Society and Space	275	37.2%
17	European Planning Studies	243	32.8%
18	International Journal of Urban and Regional Research	231	31.2%
19	World Bank Economic Review	221	29.9%
20	Land Economics	197	26.6%

vey results, *Scienze Regionali*, for example, obtains the following rank positions (see http://www-sre.wu-wien.ac.at/journals.html): table 6: 49, table 7: 34, table 8: 37, table 9: 35, table 10: 32, table 11: 42, table 12: 54, and table 13: 57. This raises obvious questions for the editors of the journal as to how they can improve its position. Some important aspects of the underlying process of reputation building will be discussed in the following subsection.

5.2. *Knowledge and Use of Journals*

As discussed in section 2, the reputation of a journal results from a complex long-term process that involves various important elements, three of which were checked as part of our survey:

1. whether a journal was known to the respondents,
2. whether they had experience with a journal (i.e., had ever used it), and
3. whether they regularly followed the information and discussion in a journal.

Questions 3 to 5 asked respondents

- Which journals in the following list do you know? (question 3)
- Which of the journals you know have you ever used in your research? (question 4)
- Which of the journals you know do you follow regularly? (question 5)

The results (number of times a journal was marked as known, used, or followed) are set out in Tables 14-16. The last column in Table 14 gives the percentage of respondents who said that they knew journal concerned.

We see that the same journals as before are again in the lead. In particular, *Regional Studies* occupies the top position in all three tables. Generally, the most highly regarded journals are also those which are known, used, and followed by the largest number of respondents. An interesting strategic question for the publishers of journals, which our analysis cannot answer, is whether knowledge gives rise to reputation, or whether reputation gives rise to knowledge. More detailed analyses would be required to answer this question.

The three concepts involved in those questions – whether a journal is known, used, and followed– represent nested concepts of increasing intensity of usage. A journal can only be used by respondents if they know the journal. Regularly following a journal is an intensive form of using it.

Ideally, publishers would like their journals – other things remaining equal – to be well known and intensively used, besides being highly regarded. Given the large number of journals even in a small discipline like regional science, and the corresponding competition between them, this outcome is extremely difficult to achieve. Many journals are specialized in certain respects, in that they concentrate on specific topics or cover a certain geo-

Table 15 – Journals used

Rank	*Journal*	*Number*
1	Regional Studies	454
2	Journal of Regional Science	405
3	Papers in Regional Science	383
4	Urban Studies	382
5	Annals in Regional Science	357
6	American Economic Review	326
7	Environment and Planning A	324
8	Regional Science and Urban Economics	323
9	Journal of Urban Economics	271
10	Economic Geography	199
11	International Regional Science Review	185
12	Journal of Economic Geography	175
13	European Urban and Regional Studies	171
14	Environment and Planning B – Planning and Design	167
15	European Planning Studies	166
16	Environment and Planning C – Government and Policy	155
17	Environment and Planning D – Society and Space	149
18	Growth and Change	139
19	Tijdschrift Voor Economische en Sociale Geografie	138
20	International Journal of Urban and Regional Research	122

Table 16 – Journals followed

Rank	*Journal*	*Number*
1	Regional Studies	335
2	Papers in Regional Science	279
3	Journal of Regional Science	268
4	American Economic Review	232
5	Urban Studies	217
6	Annals in Regional Science	207
7	Regional Science and Urban Economics	204
8	Environment and Planning A	180
9	Journal of Urban Economics	157
10	European Urban and Regional Studies	110
11	European Planning Studies	109
12	International Regional Science Review	108
13	Journal of Economic Geography	104
14	Economic Geography	102
15	Environment and Planning B – Planning and Design	77
16	Research Policy	77
17	Tijdschrift Voor Economische en Sociale Geografie	71
18	Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice	68
19	Environment and Planning D – Society and Space	67
20	Environment and Planning C – Government and Policy	67

graphical area more closely than others. These journals will be known to fewer researchers than the more general international journals, but they may be quite effective within their market niche. In this case, a large percentage of those few researchers who knew this journal may have used it or may have followed it regularly. In order to check for this feature, we computed 'Use'-intensities and 'Follow'-intensities. 'Use'-intensity was the percentage of respondents who used a journal among those who knew it (the numbers in Table 15 divided by the corresponding ones in Table 14). 'Follow'-intensity was the same percentage of those who regularly followed the journal (the numbers in Table 16 divided by the corresponding ones in Table 14). To prevent distortion due to small numbers of observations, we restricted this part of the analysis to those journals reported as being known by at least 50 respondents. The results sorted by the respective index in descending order for 'Use'-intensity are shown in Table 17; those for 'Follow'-intensity are set out in table 18.

Since these indices were not intended to measure the importance of journals, but rather their effectiveness within their – possibly specialized – community, the results in these tables differ from the previous ones; but they do not do so dramatically. Although *Regional Studies* is not the highest-ranking journal in these tables, it is still quite effective (ranking fourth and third, respectively). Some other journals appearing in the previous lists again show up here among the top twenty. However, also to be noted in this list is the presence of a number of geographically specialized journals, whose titles are italicized. Some of these journals publish in non-English languages, like *Raumforschung und Raumordnung*, *Revue d'économie régionale et urbaine*, and *Informationen zur Raumentwicklung*. *Jahrbuch für Regionalwissenschaft* and *Scienze regionali* are the journals of the German and Italian sections of ERSA, respectively. All these journals seem to be quite effective within their regional markets. In tables 14-16 *Scienze regionali* occupy rank positions 54, 47, and 32, respectively.

5.3. *Validity of the Results*

In this section we evaluate the results presented in section 5.1. As already said, the results seem quite similar, irrespective of which approach was used to measure the importance of the journals. Inspection of Tables 6-13, each showing the top 20 (or 21 in case of a tie for twentieth place) journals according to the respective criterion, gives the names of 31 different journals, fourteen of which appear in every table. This occurs despite the fact that the indicators were derived using quite different methods. Tables 6-8 are based on respondents' unsupported nominations of the most important journals, and the results in Tables 9-13 are potentially influenced by the journal list we provided.

Table 17 – Journals (known by 50 or more respondents) with highest 'Used' intensity

Rank	*Journal*	*Know*	*Know –> used*
1	American Economic Review	380	85.79%
2	*Informationen zur Raumentwicklung*	66	80.30%
3	*Tijdschrift Voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*	172	80.23%
4	Regional Studies	572	79.37%
5	Annals in Regional Science	452	78.98%
6	Environment and Planning A	411	78.83%
7	Papers in Regional Science	491	78.00%
8	Journal of Regional Science	521	77.74%
9	Transportation Research Part A	161	73.91%
10	Research Policy	160	73.75%
11	Entrepreneurship and Regional Development	114	73.68%
12	Urban Studies	530	72.08%
13	Regional Science and Urban Economics	454	71.15%
14	Growth and Change	196	70.92%
15	Futures	113	70.80%
16	Area	111	70.27%
17	Economic Geography	285	69.82%
18	*Jahrbuch für Regionalwissenschaft*	122	68.85%
19	Progress in Human Geography	149	68.46%
20	Transportation Research Part B	136	68.38%

Table 18 – Journals (known by 50 or more respondents) with highest 'Follow' intensity

Rank	*Journal*	*Know*	*Know –> follow*
1	*Informationen zur Raumentwicklung*	66	66.67%
2	American Economic Review	380	61.05%
3	Regional Studies	572	58.57%
4	Papers in Regional Science	491	56.82%
5	*Scienze Regionali / Italian Journal of Regional Science*	87	52.87%
6	Journal of Regional Science	521	51.44%
7	Entrepreneurship and Regional Development	114	50.88%
8	Research Policy	160	48.13%
9	*Jahrbuch für Regionalwissenschaft*	122	46.72%
10	*Revue d'Economie Regionale et Urbaine*	56	46.43%
11	Annals in Regional Science	452	45.80%
12	Transportation Research Part B	136	45.59%
13	*Raumforschung und Raumordnung*	109	44.95%
14	Regional Science and Urban Economics	454	44.93%
15	European Planning Studies	243	44.86%
16	Environment and Planning A	411	43.80%
17	Transportation Research Part A	161	42.24%
18	Annals of Tourism Research	72	41.67%
19	*Tijdschrift Voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*	172	41.28%
20	Urban Studies	530	40.94%

Table 19 – Pearson's correlation coefficients between rankings

	Tab. 6	*Tab. 7*	*Tab. 8*	*Tab. 9*	*Tab.10*	*Tab.11*	*Tab.12*	*Tab.13*
Tab. 6	1.00	0.95	0.97	0.84	0.91	0.76	0.80	0.77
Tab. 7	0.95	1.00	1.00	0.91	0.96	0.86	0.87	0.86
Tab. 8	0.97	1.00	1.00	0.90	0.95	0.83	0.86	0.84
Tab. 9	0.84	0.91	0.90	1.00	0.97	0.91	0.98	0.92
Tab.10	0.91	0.96	0.95	0.97	1.00	0.91	0.95	0.92
Tab.11	0.76	0.86	0.83	0.91	0.91	1.00	0.91	1.00
Tab.12	0.80	0.87	0.86	0.98	0.95	0.91	1.00	0.92
Tab.13	0.77	0.86	0.84	0.92	0.92	1.00	0.92	1.00

A more direct measure of the similarities of the various rankings is provided by Table 19, which shows the correlations between the numbers in the full respective rankings. It will be seen that the correlations are very high, the largest coefficient being 0.996, the smallest 0.76. We obtained very similar results when taking account of only the 20 or 21 journals listed in Tables 6-13. This shows that the different indicators used to measure the importance of journals in our dataset all yielded very similar results. The choice of method, in fact, had only minor implications for the results, so that, to some extent, the instrument could be chosen according to availability or convenience. Our results indicate that we probably did not commit any serious error in doing so. But, given this result, we would nevertheless expect higher correlations between those listings based on more similar methods: on the one hand between Tables 6-8 and on the other between Tables 9-13. We have marked these areas in Table 19. In the grey areas along the main diagonal one would expect to see larger correlation coefficients than in the off-diagonal areas. And this is indeed the case. None of the coefficients in the grey areas is smaller than 0.91, while in the off-diagonal area eleven of the fifteen coefficients are smaller than 0.91.

Because of the high correlation between our various rankings, in the rest of the paper we shall concentrate only on one of the rankings: the weighted index reported in Table 8. We shall check the validity of the results in this ranking as representative of all our results in section 5.1.

Because we could distinguish our respondents by a number of characteristics, we generated the respective ranking for subsets of respondents and computed correlation statistics among those subsets. This would tell us to what extent the overall ranking was also representative for the subgroups. For theoretical reasons, we expected to find differences for some of the subgroups, but not for others.

Table 20 – Correlation between rankings by subgroups

differentiated by	*correlation*
ordering (ascending, descending)	0.986
gender (male, female)	0.970
age (birthyear < 1963, > = 1963)	0.974

Table 20 shows the correlation coefficients among the rankings generated by various subdivisions. Since the replies that generated Table 8 did not depend upon the ordering, we expected a high correlation when we differentiated by ordering. We did not have any strong hypotheses in regard to the differentiation by gender or age. The differentiation by age might give an indication how persistent the valuation of journals was over time. If, for example, the valuation of journals was generated mainly during the PhD-education of researchers and did not change greatly according to new developments later, we would expect to find a low correlation between the rankings of young and old researchers. As it turns out, all the correlation coefficients reported in Table 20 are very high. This was expected for the differentiation by ordering and gives confidence regarding the validity of the results. The coefficients for gender and age show that these groups do not differ substantially in their valuation of the importance of journals.

In section 4 we reported the number of respondents by the type of institution for which they worked, their main type of community, and their regional community. Tables 21-23 show the correlations between the rankings when the respondents were differentiated according to these criteria.

As far as the type of institution is concerned, there is a close correspondence between respondents working at a university (by far the largest group) and those working at some other research institution. They differ markedly in their evaluations from respondents working in consulting, policy, or at some other institution. The respective correlation coefficients are quite low, although it should be borne in mind that there were only few observations in these other categories.

On differentiating the respondents by the main type of community reported, we again had two categories with very similar evaluations: academic and policy. The third category in the table, professional, shows lower coefficients in relation to the other two, and it is again the category with by far the smallest number of respondents.

When the respondents were differentiated by their main regional community, the size of the groups was more balanced, as we saw in section 4. As Table 23 shows, the evaluations of these groups are very similar. Only those

Table 21 – Correlation between rankings by type of institution

	University	*Research*	*Consulting*	*Policy*	*Other*
University	1	0.960	0.593	0.469	0.812
Research	0.960	1	0.621	0.453	0.873
Consulting	0.593	0.621	1	0.344	0.405
Policy	0.469	0.453	0.344	1	0.100
Other	0.812	0.873	0.405	0.100	1

Table 22 – Correlation between rankings by main type of community

	Academic	*Professional*	*Policy*
Academic	1	0.792	0.945
Professional	0.792	1	0.814
Policy	0.945	0.814	1

Table 23 – Correlation between rankings by main regional community

	International	*Continental*	*National*	*Regional*
International	1	0.915	0.927	0.928
Continental	0.915	1	0.965	0.973
National	0.927	0.965	1	0.965
Regional	0.928	0.973	0.965	1

who are internationally oriented are somewhat conspicuous in that they have slightly smaller correlation coefficients with the other three categories (but still higher than 0.91).

When the respondents were differentiated by country, substantial differences emerged. We used only the ten countries with the largest number of respondents (see Table 2). The correlation matrix is displayed in Table 24. The highest correlation coefficient is 0.92 between The Netherlands and the UK, showing that the evaluations by respondents from these countries are the most similar. The lowest is 0.27 between the UK and Japan, showing that their evaluations are the most different. The correlation matrix also shows some clustering of countries. One cluster is formed by Japan and the USA, another by the European countries. Correlation coefficients tend to be high between countries in the same cluster and low between countries in different clusters.

Table 24 – Correlation between rankings by country[2]

	NL	*DE*	*ES*	*IT*	*UK*	*PT*	*FI*	*AT*	*US*	*JP*
NL	1.00	0.79	0.69	0.83	0.92	0.59	0.69	0.69	0.36	0.29
DE	0.79	1.00	0.84	0.90	0.85	0.84	0.89	0.86	0.49	0.47
ES	0.69	0.84	1.00	0.88	0.81	0.83	0.81	0.84	0.77	0.76
IT	0.83	0.90	0.88	1.00	0.89	0.83	0.80	0.80	0.54	0.50
UK	0.92	0.85	0.81	0.89	1.00	0.75	0.77	0.73	0.39	0.27
PT	0.59	0.84	0.83	0.83	0.75	1.00	0.89	0.78	0.49	0.48
FI	0.69	0.89	0.81	0.80	0.77	0.89	1.00	0.85	0.35	0.29
AT	0.69	0.86	0.84	0.80	0.73	0.78	0.85	1.00	0.42	0.42
US	0.36	0.49	0.77	0.54	0.39	0.49	0.35	0.42	1.00	0.88
JP	0.29	0.47	0.76	0.50	0.27	0.48	0.29	0.42	0.88	1.00

These results by countries recall discussions in ERSA concerning the differences in research approaches among European countries. Since this argument has been typically framed in terms of differences between southern and northern countries, we derived the rankings for respondents from two groups of European countries and computed the correlation between them. As southern countries we combined Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, and Greece, as northern countries we aggregated UK, Sweden, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, and Finland. The result shows that the respondents from those groups of countries valued regional science journals in very similarly ways: with 0.91, the correlation coefficient is quite high, higher than most of the values in Table 24. This evinces that the hypothesis of substantial differences between the southern and northern countries of Europe is not supported, at least as far as the perception of journal quality is concerned.

In section 2 we discussed impact factors as means with which to measure the importance of scholarly journals. While a survey analysis like ours measures the perception of the importance of journals, impact factors are frequently viewed as objective measures of the importance of journals. In section 2 we reviewed some of the problems arising when impact factors are used, and we discussed the question of whether one instrument or the other is more adequate. Accordingly, we now address the question of how the results produced by these two measures are correlated.

2. NL = The Netherlands, DE = Germany, ES = Spain, IT = Italy, UK = United Kingdom, PT = Portugal, FI = Finland, AT = Austria, US = USA, JP = Japan.

Our results (Table 25) are striking. When we collected the impact factors for 2003 for all the journals in Table 8 – one of them, the *Journal of Economic Geography*, was not in the SSCI and therefore no impact factor existed – and calculated the correlation coefficient between the point score of the journals and the value of their respective impact factor, the result was a negative correlation coefficient of –0.275. When we ignored the point scores and impact factors and used them only to generate rankings of journals, the rank correlation between the two rankings was –0.281. Hence, the journals with higher impact factors were considered to be important by fewer of our respondents than were those with lower impact factors, and they were frequently ranked below the latter. On inspection of the list of journals, *American Economic Review* stands out as a general economics journal with a high impact factor. Although our respondents nominated AER as one of the top journals for their work in regional science, one may argue that it does not fit into our list and may cause the disturbing negative correlation. However, when we removed AER from the calculations, the result remained qualitatively the same.

Another potential problem is the short list of journals on which the result is based. To correct for this, we included all journals that obtained a point score of at least 10, meaning, for example, that they had been nominated as the most important by 2 respondents. This yielded a list of 110 journals, 70 of which were in the SSCI and for which impact factors therefore existed. The Pearson correlation coefficient between the point score and the impact factor was still negative and remained negative even when we removed all the economics journals (like *Econometrica*, *Journal of Economic Literature*, etc.). Only the more indirect measure of the rank correlation coefficient became positive. But with values of 0.098 and 0.206 it did not show a strong correlation between the two rankings.

Irrespective of whether the correlation coefficients are negative or slightly positive, they are statistically insignificant. We must therefore reject the hypothesis of a strong positive relationship between our results based on the perception of 740 regional scientists of the importance of journals for their discipline and the impact factors of those journals as published by ISI/Thomson Scientific. Either the researchers' perception of the importance of journals is fundamentally wrong or biased, or the impact factor is not a good measure for their perception of journals and the reputation of the latter. Given the discussion in section 2, and the stability of our results between various subcategories and methods of measurement that we have reported above, we tend to favour the second option. Maier (2006) extends this comparison by including the full set of journals, five years of impact factors, and the survey results reported in tables 6 to 13 above. Also in this more extensive analysis he reaches the same conclusion: "The impact factors of regional science journals do not reflect the reputation of these journals among european regional scientists".

Table 25 – Correlation with impact factors

Source	*Pearson correlation*	*Rank correlation*
short list (top 20)		
all	-0.275	-0.281
excluding AER	-0.222	-0.249
long list (top 110, 70 in SSCI)		
all	-0.112	0.098
excluding economics journals	-0.039	0.206

6. Summary and Conclusions

In this paper we have reported the results of a web-based survey on the importance of journals for work in regional science. Based on 740 responses (response rate 25%) we have been able to derive a number of findings on the reputation of regional science journals. Clearly the most important journal is *Regional Studies*: it occupied the top position in almost every ranking that we derived from the survey. We were also able to identify a group of top journals that performed strongly on all indicators.

When we divided the sample and compared the rankings for those subgroups, in most cases the results were surprisingly similar. This applied, for example, to gender, age, and main geographical orientation of the respondents. Interesting differences were found when subdividing by country. The valuations for European countries were very similar, but they differed from those of US or Japanese respondents. Within Europe, no strong differences could be found between northern and southern countries.

When comparing our survey-based results with the impact factors for our set of journals, we found that the two outcomes were unrelated or even negatively correlated. This shows that the two methods apparently measure different things and that impact factors are not necessarily good indicators of the reputation of journals in the scientific community.

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