

History of Regional Science
and the
Regional Science Association International

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Walter Isard

History of
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and the
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Association
International

The Beginnings
and Early History



Springer

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ISBN 978-3-642-53446-1 ISBN 978-3-540-24751-7 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-540-24751-7

Cataloging-in-Publication Data applied for

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

Bibliographic information published by Die Deutsche Bibliothek
Die Deutsche Bibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie;
detailed bibliographic data available in the internet at <http://dnb.ddb.de>

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Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg New York
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<http://www.springer.de>

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Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2003

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Cover design: Erich Kirchner, Heidelberg

SPIN 10922644 42/3130 – 5 4 3 2 1 0 – Printed on acid-free paper

Acknowledgments

Once again I am grateful to both Helena Wood and Henning Pape-Santos for excellent work on my almost illegible manuscript. In the writing of this book I have received continued support and encouragement from David E. Boyce, Kieran P. Donaghy and Geoffrey J. D. Hewings. David Boyce, as Archivist of the Regional Science Association International, has made a number of suggestions that have led to significant improvement in the organization of the book and its coverage of materials. He also succeeded me in carrying forward the effective management and organization of the Association when such advancement was beyond my capabilities. As with so many times before, my wife, Caroline, has graciously put up with my extreme writing sprees.

Preface

It is difficult, if not impossible, to establish the point of time at which a new field of study starts to emerge. While the date of formal organization of a society associated with the field can be precisely stated, such timing says little about when and where the seeds for a field's development were planted. Also, such timing says little about the essential "why" for the development of a field and provides little understanding of the path that it traced.

It is clear that the emergence of the field of regional science, like many other fields, was dependent on a particular setting as well as the pattern of events and interaction of diverse personalities who became involved.

As best I can, I shall attempt in this Part I of the History to unravel the *where*, *when* and *why* questions in the development of Regional Science and the Regional Science Association International. Further, in the last section of this essay, I shall briefly point up some potentialities for analytical advances in the field of regional science. Also, I shall note the opportunity for leadership by regional scientists in attacking global and regional development problems, thereby to help formulate relevant policy. In this way, I hope to expose the potential for fruitful research by young scholars interested in entering the field.

Walter Isard
April 2003

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