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INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR BAYESIAN ANALYSIS

THE ISBA BULLETIN

OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR BAYESIAN ANALYSIS

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Igor Prünster
president@bayesian.org

2021 ISBA World Meeting

The ISBA World Meeting (June 28-July 2, 2021) is about to take place. I believe we will all remember it as a **meeting of "firsts"**: it is our first virtual and the first completely free meeting featuring for the first time a mix of pre-recorded and live talks with online personal interactions. The number of participants will represent a new record for the ISBA World Meetings: at the time of writing we have already exceeded the symbolic threshold of **2,000 participants**, yet another terrific first! And some late registrations are still coming in.

Personally I will carry many questions into this event: Will this be the new normal? Will we be converging to hybrid formats in the future? How should we design our schedule of talks to attend? How should we deal with the inevitable "Zoom fatigue"? Will we get used to and enjoy online surrogates of informal interactions? For sure the questions are more than the answers I will obtain, but certainly I will have many impressions and I look forward to exchange these experiences among us – hopefully sooner or later at a physical meeting as well!

The Scientific Program is superb and features amazing Named, Foundational and Keynote Lectures in addition to awesome Invited Sessions, Contributed Presentations, Posters and Short Courses. Everything is carefully planned to max-

imize the attendance across time zones and this represents just the tip of the iceberg of the incredible organizational work behind such a huge event. A lot of ISBA members contributed with great dedication and generosity to the organization of this meeting, originally to be held in Kunming in 2020, then postponed and restructured to best fit a virtual format. The ISBA Board of Directors unanimously decided to award a **Certificate of Appreciation to Ming-Hui Chen, Athanasios Kottas and Li Ma**, who led all these efforts (see the dedicated section). However, our heartfelt gratitude extends to all the members of the Organizing Committees, the Scientific Committee, and the many other people involved in the organization of these events under the most difficult circumstances.

Editorial Appointments

I am delighted to announce that **Mark Steel** (U Warwick, UK) has been appointed as **Editor in Chief of Bayesian Analysis** for a three year term starting January 2022. Mark is unquestionably one of the worldwide leading researchers in Bayesian Statistics. This, combined with his vast experience in leadership roles, make of him an ideal EiC. A big thanks to the Editorial Search Committee, chaired by Michele Guindani, for coming up with such a great recommendation and to the ISBA Board for enthusiastically approving Mark's appointment. Our journal could not be in better hands!

In addition to the EiC of BA, **Tony Pourmohamad** (Genentech, USA) and **Tommaso Rigon** (U Milano Bicocca, Italy) have been appointed as **ISBA Web Editor** and **ISBA Social Media Manager**, respectively. The latter is a newly created ISBA office to strengthen and coordinate ISBA's institutional communication through social media channels. Thanks to Tony and Tommaso for stepping up for such major service roles! More info can be found in the Editorial Vacancies Section.

Junior Awards & Support

In order to best position ISBA and its junior members within today's increasingly competitive environment, a **new ad-hoc committee** has been established. It is tasked with: (a) surveying how other societies and disciplines support their early career researchers; (b) reviewing the current junior support provided by ISBA and assessing whether all career stages (PhD student, Postdoc, Junior Faculty) are adequately covered; (c) making proposals to the ISBA Executive Committee to reshape and optimize existing initiatives and awards as well as to create new ones. I would like to thank **Abhirup Datta** (Johns Hopkins U, USA), **Akira Horiguchi** (Duke U, USA), **Angela Bitto-Nemling** (Johannes Kepler U Linz, Austria), **Maria Fernanda Gil Leyva** (UNAM, Mexico), **Marta Catalano** (U Torino, Italy), **Minwoo Chae** (Pohang UST, Korea), **Xenia Miscouridou** (Imperial College London, UK), who have generously agreed to serve on this important committee. We all look forward to hear their proposals!

The first building block of our expanded junior support has been laid by j-ISBA with the launch of its **new Blackwell-Rosenbluth Awards**. In addition to honoring two key role models for every junior Bayesian, they also have the merit of highlighting ISBA's quite unique geographical diversity and genuinely international nature. See the j-ISBA column for more information.

A second small but still significant step concerns the **Savage Awards**. Resuming a good practice of the past, a total of four finalists for each of the two categories (Theory & Methods and Applied Methodology) will be publicly announced each year, hence officially commending 4+4 brilliant PhD graduates (not just winners and runner-ups). You can find out about the names of this year's finalists in the Report by the Prize Committee. Make sure not to miss the two Savage Award sessions, one per category, at ISBA 2021!

Nominating Committee & ISBA General Meeting

As every year, ISBA elections will take place in Fall. This year, the ISBA community will vote for: the President-Elect 2022 who will serve as ISBA President in 2023; the Executive Secretary, who will serve for a three year term 2022-2024; four new ISBA Board Members to serve on the ISBA Board of Directors in 2022-2024. The ISBA Board has just completed the appointment of the **Nominating Committee**: it will be chaired by Past-President Sylvia Frühwirth-Schnatter and will nominate candidates for each ISBA office. Thanks to the many ISBA members who have sent suggestions and to the appointed members (their names are listed in the ISBA Elections Section) for agreeing to serve.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to our first virtual **General Meeting** during ISBA 2021 on Friday Juny 2 @12pm (EDT): it will consist of short presentations by the Executive Committee, the Program Council and the BA and Bulletin Editors with ample room for discussion. We look forward to hearing your questions, ideas and suggestions!

See you all at ISBA 2021 and stay safe,
igor

FROM THE EDITOR

Gregor Kastner
gregor.kastner@aau.at

Just in time before the World Meeting comes a Bulletin packed with announcements, prizes, awards, and (newly filled) vacancies. Enjoy!

MITCHELL AND SAVAGE AWARDS

The ISBA Prize Committee 2020

The ISBA Prize Committee is pleased to announce that the Mitchell and Savage Award Committees, whose compositions are reported below, have completed their work. We remind you that the ISBA Executive Committee decided to postpone the ceremonies for the 2019 and 2020 awards to the 2022 World Meeting in Montreal, Canada. However, we would like to communicate and congratulate all finalists and winners of 2020!

Mitchell Prize

The Mitchell Prize is given in recognition of an outstanding paper that describes how a Bayesian analysis has solved an important applied problem. The Mitchell Prize 2020 competition received a large number of submissions demonstrating deep innovations in the application of Bayesian methodology to challenging real-world problems. The exceptionally high quality of the submission made the decision very difficult. After extended deliberation, the Committee concluded that the Mitchell Prize 2020 goes to

> Bayesian Semiparametric Longitudinal Drift-Diffusion Mixed Models for Tone Learning in Adults. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 10.1080/01621459.2020.1801448) by Giorgio Paulon, Fernando Llanos, Bharath Chandrasekaran, and Abhra Sarkar.

Congratulations to Giorgio, Fernando, Bharath and Abhra for such an excellent work!

Savage Award Finalists

The Savage Award, named in honor of Leonard J. "Jimmie" Savage, is bestowed each year to two outstanding doctoral dissertations in Bayesian econometrics and statistics, one each in Theory & Methods and Applied Methodology. Also for this award the quality of submissions was outstanding and the two committees, one for the Theory & Methods category and one for the Applied Methodology, performed several rounds of screening and ranking to finalize the list of four finalists for each category. All finalists will present at the upcoming 2021 ISBA World Meeting: session I43 will feature the Theory and Methods finalists, whereas Applied Methodology finalists will present in session I35. We invite all the ISBA membership to join the Savage Award Sessions and learn about the early achievements of our new rising Bayesian stars!

Savage 2020 Award Finalist in the category Theory and Methods

- Seonghyun Jeong for this thesis entitled "Frequentist Properties of Bayesian Procedures for High-Dimensional Sparse Regression" (Supervisor: Subhashis Ghoshal).

- George Papamakarios for this thesis entitled "Neural density estimation and likelihood-free inference" (Supervisor: Iain Murray).

- Tommaso Rigon for this thesis entitled "Finite-dimensional nonparametric priors: Theory and applications" (Supervisors: Antonio Lijoi and Igor Prünster).

- Leah South for her thesis entitled "Contributions to computational Bayesian statistics" (Supervisor: Christopher Drovandi).

Savage 2020 Award Finalist in the category Applied Methodology

- Adji Dieng for her thesis entitled "Deep Probabilistic Graphical Modeling" (Supervisor: David Blei).

- Sharmistha Guha for her thesis entitled "Bayesian Methods in Network Regression with Applications in Brain" (Supervisor: Abel Rodriguez).

- Kelly Moran for her thesis entitled "Advances in Bayesian Factor Modeling and Scalable Gaussian Process Regression" (Supervisor: Amy Herring).

- Daniel Spencer for this thesis entitled "Inference and Uncertainty Quantification for High-dimensional Tensor Regression with Tensor Decompositions and Bayesian Methods" (Supervisors: Rajarshi Guhaniyogi and Raquel Prado).

Finally, ISBA and its Prize Committee would like to thank the incredible effort placed by all members of the Mitchell and Savage Award Committees for their dedication and excellent work, despite the difficulties and disruptions caused by the pandemic.

Committees

Mitchell Prize

Chair: David A. Stephens
Committee: Jim Griffin, Ruth King, Rob McCulloch

Theory & Methods Savage Award

Chair: Alejandro Jara
Committee: David Dahl, Ismael Castillo, Catherine Forbes, Peter Hoff, Fernando Quintana, Lorenzo Trippa, Sinead Williamson

Applied Methodology Savage Award

Chair: Donatello Telesca
Committee: David Rossell, Yang Ni, Yanxun Xu, Trevor Campbell, Tyler McCormick

CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION

Igor Prünster
president@bayesian.org

Upon unanimous proposal by the Executive Committee, the ISBA Board of Directors has enthusiastically approved the award of the following three Certificates of Appreciation for exceptional service to ISBA:

- **Ming-Hui Chen** for his incomparable commitment to a successful 2020-2021 ISBA World Meeting and leadership of most commendable Organizing Committees.

- **Athanasios Kottas** for his outstanding service on the Program Council (2019-2021) and the organization, with the support of a most dedicated Scientific Committee, of a superb program for the 2020-21 ISBA World Meeting under truly difficult circumstances.

- **Li Ma** for his outstanding service on the Program Council (2018-2020) and the organization, with the support of a most dedicated Scientific Committee, of a superb program for the 2020-21 ISBA World Meeting under truly difficult circumstances.

Congratulations to Ming-Hui, Thanasis and Li!

A historical account of former certificates can be found here.

JUNIOR ISBA

Sally Paganin
spaganin@hsph.harvard.edu

During the past months, the j-ISBA board has been working on designing a new award for junior researchers. We are now thrilled to share the call for the **Blackwell-Rosenbluth Award**! A total of 6 winners will be selected and invited to present their work in 2 special events of the Junior Bayes Beyond the Borders (JB^3) webinar series. Check the dedicated section for more information!

Creating an award has been a new experience for the j-ISBA board, and we are extremely grateful to Igor Prünster and Sylvia Frühwirth Schnatter, for their constant advice and support throughout the past months. We also owe a big thank you to Daniele Durante and Giacomo Zanella for their invaluable contribution. Finally, we wish to express our gratitude to the ISBA board members, who had generously agreed to support 3-year free ISBA memberships for the award winners.

We also remind you that j-ISBA is a wide and friendly community and we would love to welcome new members. You can join our section with only 5 with your ISBA membership! To get to know us more, you can follow j-ISBA life through our Facebook page or Twitter account.

We look forward to this very first edition of the **Blackwell-Rosenbluth Award**!

Blackwell-Rosenbluth Award
Annual award of j-ISBA, the junior section of ISBA

It is with great pleasure that we announce the **Blackwell-Rosenbluth Award** by j-ISBA, a new award for junior researchers in different areas of Bayesian statistics. Winners will be invited to present their

work in two special events of the Junior Bayes Beyond the Borders (JBˆ3) webinar series and receive three years of free ISBA and j-ISBA membership.

ISBA proudly has a wide geographical diversity among its members. To encourage scientific exchange and strengthen research connections between geographies, three prizes will be awarded to researchers based in time zones UTC+0 to UTC+13 [e.g. Africa + Asia + Europe + Oceania] and three to those based in UTC−12 to UTC−1 [e.g. North America + South America]. The winners belonging to the former group will present in a special JBˆ3 event hosted in the latter time zones, and vice versa, to raise their intercontinental visibility. We welcome nominations of junior researchers working in the broad spectrum of topics in Bayesian statistics, including but not limited to methods, theory, computation, machine learning, data science, biostatistics, econometrics, industrial statistics, environmental science, and software.

Why Blackwell-Rosenbluth

The award is named after David H. Blackwell and Arianna W. Rosenbluth for their groundbreaking works that lie at the foundation of modern Bayesian statistical theory and computation. They represent important role models for new researchers in Bayesian statistics.

David Harold Blackwell

Born on April 24, 1919, Blackwell excelled in mathematics from an early age. He earned his doctoral degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign under the supervision of Joseph L. Doob in 1941. He had a distinguished career, becoming a founding member in 1955 of the newly established Department of Statistics at University California, Berkeley. In 1965, he became the first African American to be elected member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and was awarded the John von Neumann Theory Prize in 1979. In addition to his seminal contributions to Bayesian inference, decision theory, game theory, sequential analysis and renewal theory, he also wrote one of the first textbooks in Bayesian statistics (Basic Statistics, McGraw-Hill, 1969).

Arianna Wright Rosenbluth

Born on September 15, 1927, Arianna Wright Rosenbluth showed an affinity for sciences from early childhood. She completed her doctoral work under the supervision of a future Nobel Laureate, John Van Vleck, in 1949, making her the fifth woman to earn a Ph.D. in Physics from Harvard. Later, as a coauthor of the seminal 1953 paper introducing the Metropolis algorithm, Rosenbluth almost single-handedly implemented the algorithm on the MANIAC I hardware at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory. This made her the first person to ever implement the Markov chain Monte Carlo method when sophisticated programming tools were still years away, and the program had to be written in strings of 1's and 0's.

Eligibility and Application Procedure

Ph.D. students or early career researchers who graduated after January 1, 2016 are eligible for nomination. A nomination may come from any ISBA member, including the nominee themselves. A nomination is to be submitted electronically and should contain:

- Nominating letter in support of the candidate

- CV of the candidate

- One manuscript or alternate form of exposition (e.g. software documentation) of scientific work most representative of the candidate's achievements; the submitted work should also be available as publication or in a public repository such as arXiv, bioRxiv, CRAN, Bioconductor or GitHub.

Submit here.

If you are unable to use Google Forms, please email your nomination to `jisba.section@gmail.com`.

Timeline

The deadline for submission is **July 31, 2021**. Winners will be announced by **October** and invited to present their work at the online seminar series Junior Bayes Beyond the Borders (JBˆ3).

EDITORIAL VACANCIES

Michele Guindani
`mguindan@uci.edu`

An important aspect of the activities of ISBA rely around its ability to coordinate the communication to the ISBA membership through our website and the dissemination of innovative Bayesian methods through our flagship journal, *Bayesian Analysis*. Social media have also become very important in today communication, and they require specific attention and expertise to be effective and timely (click here to follow ISBA on Twitter). An Editorial Search Committee was tasked with identifying the Editor-in-Chief of Bayesian Analysis (BA), the ISBA Web Editor, and the newly created ISBA Social Media Manager for a three-year term (January 2022-December 2024). The Committee was composed by Michele Guindani (Chair), Feng Liang, Ioanna Manolopoulou, Alicia Carriquiry, Tyler H. McCormick, David John Nott. After a careful scrutiny of all the applications received and a vote of the ISBA Board, the following nominees have been confirmed as leading those editorial positions at ISBA:

Editor-in-Chief of Bayesian Analysis:
Prof. Mark Steel, University of Warwick.

ISBA Web editor:
Dr. Tony Pourmohamad, Genentech.

ISBA Social Media Manager:
Dr. Tommaso Rigon, University of Milano-Bicocca.

Prof. Steel was a co-Editor of *Bayesian Analysis* for many years (2010-2018), and he is well recognized in the community for his outstanding contributions to Bayesian theory and methods. Prof. Steel will be the first Editor-in-Chief of the journal with an Academic appointment outside of the United States, further contributing to the diversity profile of Bayesian Analysis and ISBA. Dr. Pourmohamad has been a Managing Editor of *Bayesian Analysis* (2017-2019) and a program chair of the BioPharma Section of ISBA (2019-2020), leading the development of well-attended Section webinars. As the program chair of the Section, Dr. Pourmohamad created and maintained the Section website and its Google groups page, in addition to maintaining the section's Youtube page on the official ISBA channel. Dr. Rigon was an Elected member of the Board (2016-2018) of the young group (ySIS) of the

Italian Statistical Society and he has organized the j-ISBA session at the 2021 ISBA world meeting. He also brings to the job some industry experience in the online marketing sector.

As Chair of the Selecting Committee, I would like to thank Mark Steel, Tony Pourmohamad and Tommaso Rigon for their willingness to serve on these positions. The ISBA editorial activities could not really be in better hands!

FROM THE PROGRAM COUNCIL

Botond Szabo
program-council@bayesian.org

The Program Council is working on the organizations of the ISBA 2021 and ISBA 2022 World Meetings, along with the respective Scientific and Organizing Committees, and in consultation with the ISBA Executive Committee.

ISBA 2021: The virtual ISBA 2021 World Meeting will take place online on June 28 to July 2, 2021, with short courses offered from June 23rd to June 27th, 2021. Please visit the World Meeting website for the detailed program.

ISBA 2022: The ISBA 2022 World Meeting is scheduled to be held in Montreal, Canada from June 25 to July 1, 2022. Please visit the ISBA 2022 website for updates. The call for Invited Session Proposal Submission is open (deadline 15th of August, 2021). To submit your proposal please fill out the online form (also available on the website). The results will be announced by the end of September 2021, and after that there will be a call for individual contributed oral presentations and posters.

(Co-)Sponsorship/Endorsement Requests

If you are planning a meeting and would like to request financial sponsorship (or co-sponsorship) or non-financial endorsement from ISBA, please submit your request to the program council at program-council@bayesian.org. Detailed information on how to submit a request for either sponsorship or endorsement can be found here.

Upcoming ISBA-sponsored/endorsed events

- Bayesian Young Statisticians Meeting (BAYSM) 2021, September 1-3, 2021, online.

- European Seminar on Bayesian Econometrics (ESOBE) 2021, September 2-3, 2021, Madrid, Spain.

- 11th BAYES-PHARMA Applied Bayesian Biostatistics Workshop (BAYES2020), Rockville, MD, USA. (Postponed until September 2021).

- The 5th EAC-ISBA Conference: A Satellite Meeting of the 2021 ISBA World Meeting in Celebrating James O Berger's 70th Birthday. (Postponed to Fall 2021).

- 1st BNP Networking event, April 25-29, 2022, Nicosia, Cyprus.

- ISBA 2022 World Meeting, June 25-July 1, 2022, Montreal, Canada.

- NSF-CBMS Conference on "Bayesian Forecasting and Dynamic Models", University of California, Santa Cruz, CA, USA. (Postponed to Summer 2022).

- O'Bayes 2022, September 7-10, 2022, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA, USA.

NEWS FROM THE WORLD

Francesco Denti
fdenti@uci.edu

Upcoming Meetings, Conferences, and Workshops

- The 2021 **NBER-NSF Seminar on Bayesian Inference in Econometrics and Statistics (SBIES)** will be held online, August 6-7, 2021. The seminar will be hosted by the Olin Business School, Washington University in St. Louis.

  The meeting aims to feature presentations by young and established researchers working on the theory and application of Bayesian methods in econometrics and statistics. As usual, the meeting should be an exciting and productive forum for researchers in these areas.

  Paper submissions must be received by July 2, 2021, while registration for attendance will remain open until August 4, 2021. More information at this link.

- The **Thirty-eighth International Conference on Machine Learning** will be virtual and will take place between Sunday, July 18, through Saturday, July 24. The conference is globally renowned for presenting and publishing cutting-edge research on all aspects of machine learning. Registration is still open. More details at this link.

And don't forget:

- The **ISBA 2021 World Meeting** will be **fully online** during the week of June 28 to July 2, 2021. Recall that short courses will be offered between June 23 and June 28, 2021. Check this link to find more information regarding the conference web app and the conference schedule!

- The **Joint Statistical Meetings 2021 (JSM)** is the largest gathering of statisticians and data scientists in North America. The 2021 Joint Statistical Meetings will be held virtually. The conference is scheduled for August 7-12, 2021, and early registration will remain open until June 15. More info at this link, where you can access the online program.

- The **4th International Conference on Econometrics and Statistics (EcoSta 2021)** will take place virtually. The virtual conference will be hosted by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong, on June 24-26, 2021. Tutorials will be given on Wednesday 23rd of June 2021. Registration is still open, more info at this link.

- The **series of monthly webinars** organized by the Bayesian nonparametric section of ISBA (**BNP-ISBA**) will stop in July and August. The next webinar will be in September 2021. Stay tuned and check this link for updates.

- **useR! 2021 conference** will take place on July 5-9, 2021, and it will be online. useR! conferences are non-profit conferences organized by community volunteers for the community, supported by the R Foundation. The useR! 2021 conference will be the first R conference globally designed, both in audience and leadership. Registration is open until June 25, 2021. More info at this link.

- The 11th **European Seminar on Bayesian Econometrics** will occur on September 2-3, 2021, at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Spain. The conference is planning to take place in a hybrid format, however in the unfortunate case that the pandemic situation became worse in Spain it would become fully online. In addition to invited presentations, the workshop will have contributed sessions, a special session by junior researchers, and poster presentations. See this link for more details.

- Unfortunately, the **BAYES2020: Bayesian Biostatistics** conference is canceled and delayed until September 2021. Keep an eye on the conference website for updates regarding BAYES2021 accessible at this link.

UPDATES FROM BA

Michele Guindani
micheleguindani@gmail.com

- As mentioned in the President's column and detailed in an other Section of the Bulletin, **Mark Steel (University of Warwick) has been identified as the 7-th Editor-in-Chief of** *Bayesian Analysis*, starting his term officially on January 2022. Mark has made many contributions in theoretical and applied Bayesian statistics. He has served a variety of roles within ISBA and in the Royal Statistical Society, including serving as a co-Editor of *Bayesian Analysis* between 2010 and 2018. His extraordinary research profile and expertise will ensure the future growth and ever increasing standing of the journal.

- *Bayesian Analysis* will have a **dedicated session during the ISBA 2021 World Meeting**, with recent contribution on the inference in graphical models and networks. More specifically, Yuguo Chen (University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign) will discuss mixed membership stochastic blockmodels for heterogeneous networks, Jami J. Mulgrave (Facebook) will discuss Bayesian inference in nonparanormal graphical models and Jian Kang (University of Michigan) will discuss Bayesian network marker selection via the thresholded graph Laplacian Gaussian prior. Abel Rodriguez will lead the discussion. The session is scheduled as a grand finale live session at the end of the World Meeting on Friday July 2nd, 2021. Check the details on the Whova App to know the time of the session in your time zone.

- The theme of the next **Joint Statistical Meetings** conference will be "Statistics, Data and the Stories They Tell". Thanks to the valuable support of the Section on Bayesian Statistical Science of the American Statistical Association, a nice tradition over the past few yeas has given us the opportunity to organize **a session dedicated to the highlights from our flagship journal** presenting a selection of manuscripts recently accepted in the journal. This year, to conform to the general theme of the conference, the unifying theme of the session is to showcase the role that an appropriate and thoughtful use of Bayesian techniques can play in important applied problems. The talks will touch upon issues in survey sampling, criminology, experimental designs and the analysis of time-ordered functional data. The session will feature Yuxiang Gao (University of Toronto), Francis Oliver Bunnin (The Alan Turing Institute), Steven Kleinegesse, (The University of Edinburgh) and Daniel Kowal (Rice University). The session is scheduled on the first day of the virtual JSM, on Sun, August 8th, 2021, from 1:30 pm to 3:20 pm (EDT). You can access the full details of the session on the 2021 JSM online program.

ISBA ELECTIONS

Gregor Kastner
gregor.kastner@aau.at

It is my great pleasure to announce that the Nominating Committee for the upcoming elections next fall has been successfully established and approved by the ISBA Board.

Chair: Sylvia Frühwirth-Schnatter (WU Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria)

Members:

- Ismael Castillo (Sorbonne University, France)

- Alessandra Guglielmi (Politecnico di Milano, Italy)

- Feng Liang (University of Illinois, US)

- Fernando Quintana (Pontificia Universidad Católica, Chile)

- Alexandra M. Schmidt (Mc Gill University, Canada)

- Bruno Sansó (UC Santa Cruz, US)