W on the focus

The weighting matrix is a key element in the specification of a spatial model and, frequently, is cause of dispute in relation to how that matrix should be specified, the content that should have its terms or the role played by this matrix to assure identification in a cross-sectional model.

Given that there is no consensus on most of these points, it is quite easy to criticize the usual practice in the literature: the matrix is fixed by the researcher on a priori grounds, without considering other alternatives; theoretical justification for the chosen matrix tends to be very vague; the selection problem is rarely reconsidered and the suitability of the matrix, even the sensitivity of the final estimates to its specification, seldom is tested. However, in defense of the user, we should admit there are few useful guidelines to support its work in this field.

The purpose of this sessions, **'W on the focus'**, is to promote the debate in relation to W. We think that this reflection may be timely in these moments because in recent years there have appear several interesting, innovative proposals to deal with the W issue, from different angles. We would like to help to maintain the impulse.

In this sense, the session is open to all kind of papers dealing directly with problems related to W, both from a methodological approach, presenting new algorithms or estimation/testing methods as well as papers of an applied nature dealing with problems caused by W.

Especially welcomed papers, but not exclusively, are those coping with topics such as:

- Comparison/selection between different weighting matrices.
- Feedback between weighting matrix and model identifiability/model selection/inference from the estimated model.
- Estimation of the weighting matrix from the data.
- Testing the weighting matrix.
- Endogenous weighting matrices.
- Other topics of interest related to the weighting matrix