

Economic Geography Research Group Chair's Annual Report, January 2007

Current Committee

Chair and Webpage Officer	Neil Coe (University of Manchester, 2006-2009)
Secretary	Mia Gray (University of Cambridge, 2005-2008)
Treasurer	Andrew Jones (Birkbeck, University of London, 2004-2007)

Joint Book Review

and Working Paper Editors James Faulconbridge (University of Lancaster) and John Harrison (University of Loughborough) (2006-2009)

Many thanks to all those who stood down in September 2006 for their efforts, and in particular to Jane Pollard (University of Newcastle), for her service as Chair.

Activities during the year

The EGRG continues to be a thriving research group of the RGS/IBG. This past year has been a busy one.

Economic Geography Research Group (EGRG) Annual Symposium and Postgraduate Forum on 'Exploring the Geographies of Inequality'

The EGRG Annual Symposium and Postgraduate Forum took place in Cambridge from 20-21st April 2006, with approximately 50 attendees. The meetings were organised by Mia Gray (EGRG Secretary) and Karenjit Clare (postgraduate representative). The Annual Symposium attracted a wide range of high profile speakers and was characterised by a highly stimulating dialogue on identifying, theorising, explaining and responding to economic inequality at different spatial scales and with respect to different social groups. In this way the meeting continued the tradition of the annual symposium as a high quality and thought provoking meeting for economic geographers – and others – to engage in state-of-the-art dialogue.

The postgraduate event allowed a range of postgraduate students to present their work and participate in thinking through how economic-geographical research understands inequality in a supportive yet challenging environment. The meeting continues to be a crucial forum for young economic geographers seeking to gain experience in presenting, and handling questions on, their research. Holding the event back-to-back with the symposium was extremely successful – allowing as it did a considerable cross-over in audiences – and we hope to use this model again in 2007. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the RGS-IBG for financially supporting this highly successful event.

The RGS-IBG Annual Conference September 2006

The EGRG sponsored or co-sponsored the following sessions:

- Organisational Geographies of Power (1 & 2)
- Geographies of corruption (1, 2 & 3)
- Researching workspaces: ethical challenges in the field
- Globalising failures
- Sustainable welfare? Choice, risk and inequality in the 21st century
- Travelling theory: governance and institution building (1 & 2)

- Economies of enterprise, innovation and creativity (1, 2 & 3)
- Rescaling the political economy of social justice/injustice: the urbanisation and regionalisation of inclusion/exclusion (1 & 2 with PGRG)
- Worker empowerment and collective action in a global economy: bridging the divide between economic and development geographies (1 & 2 with DARG)
- 'Urban' politics in a relational age: governing cities and circuits of knowledge and capital (with PGRG and UGRG)
- New conceptions of sustainability and urban regeneration (1&2 with PERG)
- 'Alternative' this, 'alternative' that: interrogating alterity (1 & 2 with PYWGWG)
- Migrant workers in global cities: linking the Global South and Global North (with DARG)

There were also two postgraduate sessions on research in economic geography at this year's conference.

Postgraduate activities

As always, we have been involved with administering postgraduate support and supporting undergraduate and postgraduate work in economic geography. As noted above, the postgraduate conference this year was combined with our Annual Symposium and attracted a good number of speakers. Our MA and PhD Dissertation Prizes have continued this year and again had an encouraging response. This year we have received sponsorship money from the *Review of Social Economy* to sponsor these prizes, awarding £100 to each winner. We would like to thank all those who entered their work for consideration; the quality of the work entered has been excellent, making it difficult to choose winners.

Our congratulations go to:

- Best PhD Thesis: James Faulconbridge, University of Lancaster, "Local-global geographies of tacit knowledge production in London and New York's advertising and law professional service firms"
- Best MA Dissertation: Will Harvey, University Cambridge, "Highly-skilled migration: An analysis of immigrant networks in biotechnology"

Thanks to Andrew Jones for chairing the adjudication.

Other activities

Our Working Paper and book review series continued this year; members are encouraged to send in papers and reviews.

EGRG were approached to provide feedback to Simon Oakes (Examinations Board at Edexcel) concerning appropriate content for economic geography teaching for 16-19 year olds. Thanks to Peter Wood for co-ordinating our response and to all those that contributed their views.

We encourage members and other interested parties to use the EGRG web site as a source of information. The Committee also makes regular use of its email distribution list to consult members, particularly regarding matters arising from the RGS-IBG.

Future activities

Postgraduate prize

A call has gone out for the 2007 postgraduate prizes (deadline January 31st 2007).

Website overhaul

During spring 2007 the EGRG website will be thoroughly overhauled in order to improve its 'portal' function for all matters related to economic geography. As part of this endeavour, the new editors are seeking to reinvigorate the book review and working paper components. Several ideas, including 'theming' book reviews in line with the topic of the annual symposium, are currently being considered.

Annual Symposium/Postgraduate Forum

Following last year's successful event, these two events will again be combined at a meeting at the University of Sussex in June 2007. The event, organised by Professor Mick Dunford, will have global value chains as its central theme.

RGS-IBG Conference 2007

The EGRG is sponsoring or co-sponsoring the following sessions at the upcoming 2007 RGS-IBG Conference:

1. Creativity and its Geographies (Russell Prince and Charles Rolfe, University of Bristol)
2. Local and Sustainable Development in Southern Europe: debates, practices, and conflicts (Filippo Celata, University of Rome, and Ugo Rossi, University of Naples)
3. The links between Shell, RGS and Geography: ethics, power and responsibility in our workplace (Paul Chatterton, Leeds University, Larch Maxey, Swansea University and David Featherstone, Liverpool University)
4. Questioning 'Development' (John Tomaney and Andy Pike, CURDS, University of Newcastle)
5. Magic, Myth and Local Economic Development (John Bryson and Michael Taylor, University of Birmingham)
6. New Resource Geographies (Gavin Bridge, University of Manchester)
7. Spaces of Financialization (Shaun French, University of Nottingham and Sarah Hall, University of Loughborough)
8. Geographies of Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (Tim Vorley, University of Oxford, Helen Lawton Smith, Birkbeck, and John Bryson, University of Birmingham)

Neil Coe, January 2007