

Economic Geography Research Group (EGRG) Chair's Annual Report, January 2008

Current Committee

Chair and Webpage Officer Neil Coe (University of Manchester, 2006-2009)
Secretary Mia Gray (University of Cambridge, 2005-2008)
Treasurer Martin Hess (University of Manchester, 2007-2010)

Joint Book Review

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

Many thanks to Andrew Jones, who stood down in September 2007, for his service as EGRG Treasurer.

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.

EGRG Annual Symposium and Postgraduate Forum

The EGRG Annual Symposium and Postgraduate Forum took place at the University of Sussex (Brighton) from 6-7th June 2007, with approximately 30 attendees. The meetings were organised by Professor Mick Dunford. Holding the two events back-to-back was again extremely successful – allowing as it did a considerable cross-over in audiences – and we will be following this model again in 2008. Many thanks are due to Mick for all his hard work in organising the event.

Day 1: Economic geographies of globalization and its impacts

The first day was devoted to 12 short presentations by research students and was chaired by Mia Gray (University of Cambridge) and Adam Swain (University of Nottingham). The event allowed students to present their work and participate in thinking through how economic-geographical research understands globalization and its impacts 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. The first day was concluded with a very enjoyable and well-attended meal/social event.

Day 2: Global commodity chains, global value chains and global production networks: governance and development

The Annual Symposium attracted six high profile speakers and was chaired by Mick Dunford (University of Sussex) and Mia Gray and Adam Swain. The speakers and audience engaged in fascinating discussions about various aspects of transnational production systems and the governance and developmental implications thereof. 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.

Full details of these events including presentations and a report are available on: www.egrg.org.uk.

The RGS-IBG Annual Conference September 2007

The EGRG sponsored or co-sponsored the following sessions at the 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. Magic, Myth and Local Economic Development (John Bryson and Michael Taylor, University of Birmingham)
4. Spaces of Financialization (Shaun French, University of Nottingham and Sarah Hall, University of Loughborough)
5. Economic Geographies of Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (Tim Vorley, University of Oxford, Helen Lawton Smith, Birkbeck, and John Bryson, University of Birmingham)

The EGRG also sponsored three guests at the 2007 conference: Karel Williams, Julie Froud and Andrew Atherton.

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, with £100 being awarded to each winner. We would like to thank all those who entered their work for consideration; the quality of the work entered was again excellent, making the judging process difficult.

Our congratulations go to:

- Best PhD Thesis: **Andrew Currah** (University of Cambridge, now at Oxford University), “The Internet gift economy: a study of socio-technological change in the US film industry.”
- Best MA Dissertation: **Pedro Marques** (CURDS, University of Newcastle), “Regional paths to the knowledge economy: can all regions be knowledge based?”

The judging panel was Neil Coe (Chair), Mia Gray and Andrew Jones.

Website overhaul

During spring 2007 the EGRG website was thoroughly overhauled in order to improve its ‘portal’ function for all matters related to economic geography. As part of this endeavour, the new editors have sought to reinvigorate the book review and working paper components through, for example, ‘theming’ book reviews and working papers in line with the topic of the annual symposium. Due to technical issues, the address of the EGRG site was changed to www.egr.org.uk in December 2007 and a new hosting arrangement established with UK Web Solutions Direct Ltd.

Other activities

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

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 2008 postgraduate prizes (deadline January 31st 2008). We are currently seeking external sponsorship for these awards.

Annual Symposium/Postgraduate Forum

Following the successful events of 2006 and 2007, these two events will again be combined at a meeting at the University of Manchester in May 2008. The event, organised by Gavin Bridge, will have 'Economy, space, nature: economic geographies and the environment' as its central theme.

Summer Institute in Economic Geography

4th Summer Institute in Economic Geography will take place at the University of Manchester from 13-18th July 2008, organised by Neil Coe and Kevin Ward. This is a significant biannual event on the economic geography calendar and the EGRG will help to publicise and promote the event.

RGS-IBG Conference August 2008

The EGRG is currently sponsoring the following sessions, although we expect more to follow ahead of the February deadline:

1. 'New Geographies of the UK Economy' (Neil Coe, Mia Gray and Andrew Jones)
This is designed to be a high-profile set of flagship sessions: John Allen, Andrew Leyshon, Ron Martin, Doreen Massey and Alison Stenning are currently confirmed as keynote speakers. We are also considering developing a book proposal on the same theme which could provide royalties for the EGRG coffers in the same way as *Geographies of Economies* (Lee and Wills).
2. 'Transnational Formations of Class' (Andrew Cook and Jeremy Anderson)
3. 'Economic Geography across the School/Higher Education Divide' (Peter Wood and Simon Oakes)
4. 'Networks in Economic Geography: Exploring Mechanisms and Methods' (Franz Huber)

Neil Coe, January 2008