

Economic Geography Research Group (EGRG) Chair's Annual Report, January 2010

Current Committee

Chair Andrew Jones (Birkbeck, University of London, 2009-2012)

Secretary Al James (Queen Mary, University of London, 2008-2011)

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)

Annual Events Officers Sarah Hall (University of Nottingham) and Laura James (University of Birmingham) (2008-2011)

Postgraduate Book Review Editor Kim Ward, University of Exeter

Activities during the year

The EGRG continues to be a thriving research group of the RGS/IBG.

EGRG Annual Symposium and Postgraduate Forum The 2009 EGRG Annual Symposium took place from 6-7th May 2009 in the Department of Geography, Queen Mary University of London. The new format combined the postgraduate symposium and the annual symposium together. There were eight postgraduate presentations on day 1 structured around 3 core themes: (i) Economic Geographies of Environmental Change (Alexia Rogers-Wright, Carl Lewis); (ii) Economic Geographies of Post-Socialist Transition (Adam Novak, Helen Lowther; Piotr Niewiadomski); and (iii) Economic Geographies of Work and Finance (Yajing Li, Rachel Mulhall, Sejeong Ha). Day Two, the Annual Symposium itself, was co-sponsored with the journal *European Urban and Regional Studies* and was entitled 'Reflections on the Spaces of Economy and Society Twenty Years After the Collapse of State Socialism'. This was comprised of 7 presentations from Judit Timár and Adrian Smith, John Pickles, Simon Reid-Henry, Stefan Bouzarovski, Vlad Mykhnenko and Adam Swain, John Round, and Alison Stenning. The two days were attended by approximately 40 people in total, and thanks to the organisers – Al James, Sarah Hall, Laura James and Adrian Smith – were recorded. The papers presented on day two will be published as a special issue of *European Urban and Regional Studies* in early 2010. The Committee were also pleased that the attendance at the 2009 postgraduate symposium represented a significant improvement on previous years thanks to the hard work of Sarah Hall and Laura James in compiling a database of contact details for all economic geography PhD students (broadly defined) in the UK. This database will be maintained and used to encourage even more postgraduates to present their work at the 2010 EGRG Symposium.

The RGS-IBG Annual Conference September 2009

7 sessions for the 2009 RGS-IBG Conference, the EGRG compiled and successfully submitted 18 sessions (of which eight were co-sponsored with other research groups):

- 1) Boom, crunch, ouch: exploring possibilities in the spaces of financial disruption
- 2) The rise of China and its implications for the developed world
- 3) Retail and the city: The urban geographies of retailing
- 4) Follow the things: new cultural / economic geographies
- 5) Geographies of expertise and experts

- 6) Geographical Perspectives on International Labour Migration
- 7) Governing Temptation. The emerging geographies of soft paternalism
- 8) Acknowledging Ethical Economies

Overall, the EGRG continues to demonstrate a very strong presence at the RGS-IBG conference through a wide range of high-profile sessions, and through co-sponsorship of sessions with other research groups.

New textbook on the UK economy

Building upon the success of sessions at the 2008 RGS-IBG Conference, the book entitled 'The Economic Geography of the UK' is well progressed and due to be published in August 2010. The book, to be edited by Neil Coe (Manchester) and Andrew Jones (Birkbeck), will contain a varied range of 18 chapters and any funds generated will go to the EGRG. The Group is planning a launch at the Annual Conference in early September.

Postgraduate activities

As always, we have been involved in supporting 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. The prizes this year were kindly sponsored by Wiley-Blackwell. We would like to thank all those who entered their work for consideration; the quality of the work entered was again excellent and the field highly competitive making the judging process difficult.

Our congratulations go to:

Best PhD Thesis: **Karen Lai** (University of Nottingham, now at University of British Columbia): 'Approaches to 'Markets': The Development of Shanghai as an International Financial

Best MA Dissertation: **Lucie Edwards** (Newcastle University): 'NewcastleGateshead Place Marketing and the Attraction of a Creative Class'.

The judging panel was Andrew Jones (Chair), Al James and Martin Hess.

Other activities

Our working paper and book review series continued this year; members are encouraged to send in papers and reviews. The first working paper prize had attracted a reasonable filed of submissions, with the prize awarded to: Franz Huber (University of Cambridge): 'Social capital of economic clusters: towards a network-based conception of social resources'. It was also noted that the recently compiled database of UK PhD students in economic geography might provide a useful means for generating a greater number of applications for next year's prize.

Future activities

Postgraduate prize

A call has gone out for the 2010 postgraduate prizes, including the new postgraduate working paper prize (deadline January 31st 2010). We are once again seeking external sponsorship for these awards.

Annual Symposium/Postgraduate Forum

Following the successful events of 2006-2008, these two events will again be combined at a meeting at The University of Nottingham University in May 2010. The event, to be organised by Sarah Hall and Laura James, will have 'Geographies of Finance After the Crisis' as its central theme.

RGS-IBG Conference August 2010

The EGRG is currently sponsoring the following sessions for the annual conference which moves back to London in 2010:

- 1) The geography of creativity and its links to local development: issues and challenges. (Roberta Comunian, Alessandra Faggian, Charlotta Mellander)
- 2) The economic geography and management science interface: building opportunities for knowledge sharing? (Jennifer Johns and Henry Yeung)
- 3) Global Production Networks, Labour and Development. EGRG and DARG (Martin Hess, Neil Coe and Marina Prieto-Carrón.
- 4) Theorising the production and reproduction of city economies. EGRG and UGRG (James Faulconbridge and Sarah Hall)
- 5) "Migration and migrants in a time of crisis and thereafter: economic repercussions, strategies to cope and beyond". . EGRG and PGRG (Demyan Belyaev)

Finally

I would again like to record my thanks to the outgoing Chair, Neil Coe for all his help in handing over the role last year. The Committee would also like to reiterate their thanks to Graham Bowden at the University of Manchester for all his unpaid assistance with the website and other EGRG activities over the last decade.

Andrew Jones, EGRG Chair, January 2010