

Economic Geography Research Group (EGRG) Chair's Annual Report, January 2011

Current Committee

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

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

Treasurer Jennifer Johns (University of Liverpool, 2010-2013)

Conference Session Coordinator Steven Musson, University of Reading

Annual Events Officers Sarah Hall (University of Nottingham) and Laura James (Institute of Education)

Book Review Editors Kim Ward, University of Exeter ; Jenny Barnett, University of Exeter

Activities during the year

The EGRG continues to be a thriving research group of the RGS/IBG and has enjoyed a very successful year during 2010 both with regard to events and publications.

EGRG Postgraduate Symposium The 2010 EGRG Annual Postgraduate Symposium was held on May 18th at the University of Nottingham. The event was attended by 20 EGRG members, with 8 postgraduate students presenting exciting high quality papers in two sessions: (i) the changing nature of work and consumption (topics included the geography of sex shopping and temporary staffing and the links between innovation and inequality); and (ii) regional economies and the geography of finance (topics included challenges to the role of the current monetary systems, the geographical impact of public expenditures and the consequences of migration of high-skilled individuals). It was decided to repeat the timing of the postgraduate symposium for May 2011, given the success of attracting speakers to the May 2010 event. The committee thanks Sarah Hall and Laura James for their hard work in organising these events, and for maintaining a database of economic geography PhD students in the UK to target for potential participation.

EGRG Annual Symposium - Geographies of Finance After the Crisis. This Symposium had been scheduled to take place at the same time as the postgraduate event in May, but due to the disruption experienced by many UK geographers around the ash cloud in the Spring, uptake of places was low. It was decided to reschedule the event and it took place at the University of Nottingham on 17th November. The event was based around four keynote papers from the leading speakers on the area of finance, and was attended by around 20 academics and postgraduate researchers. It also involved a wider discussion and debate with the audience concerning the geographies of money and finance in the wake of the global financial crisis. The papers presented were: Professor Gordon Clark, University of Oxford, '*Myopia*'; Professor Karel Williams, Manchester University, '*Rebalancing the economy or buyer's remorse*'; ; Dr Jane Pollard, Newcastle University, '*Geographies of finance after the crisis: possibilities for Islamic finance in the UK*' and Professor Andrew Leyshon, University of Nottingham, '*These F@#king Guys*': *the terrible waste of a good crisis*. The Committee thought the new timing for the symposium worked well in the autumn and has decided to follow this pattern in 2011. Again our thanks is recorded to Sarah Hall for all her hard work organising the event.

The RGS-IBG Annual Conference September 2010

The group sponsored 6 sessions for the 2010 RGS-IBG Conference, (of which three were co-sponsored with other research groups). However, as always there were many other sessions with an economic geography 'flavour' on the programme. The sessions were:

- 1) The geography of creativity and its links to local development: issues and challenges. (3 sessions)
- 2) The economic geography and management science interface: building opportunities for knowledge sharing? (3 sessions)
- 3) Book Launch Panel - 'The Economic Geography of the UK'
- 4) Global Production Networks, Labour and Development. (3 sessions 2)
- 5) Theorising the production and reproduction of city economies. EGRG and UGRG (2 sessions)
- 6) Migration and migrants in a time of crisis and thereafter: economic repercussions, strategies to cope and beyond. EGRG and PGRG. (1 session)

Overall, the EGRG continues to demonstrate a very strong presence at the RGS-IBG conference.

New textbook on the UK economy

The launch of the new EGRG textbook '*Reading the Economy: the UK in the 21st Century*', edited by Neil Coe (Manchester) and Andrew Jones (Birkbeck) took place at Annual Conference. The Sage-sponsored wine reception / launch event was very successful, with over 50 people (the majority of whom were undergraduate lecturers intending to use the book in their teaching) attending a panel presentation and discussion by four of the contributors. The book replaces the previous (1997) EGRG textbook '*Geographies of Economies*' edited by Roger Lee and Jane Wills, and has received some attention in the national press. All funds generated from the sale of the new textbook will go to the EGRG in support of bursaries for postgraduate students in economic geography. It was also noted that Sage are potentially interested in publishing a second edition.

Postgraduate activities

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 and the field highly competitive making the judging process difficult.

Our congratulations go to:

PhD Thesis: David Jordhus-Lier, University of Manchester (now at the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research): *The Practice of Neoliberalism: Responses to public sector restructuring across the labour-community divide in Cape Town*

Master's Prize Etienne LeBlanc, London School of Economics: *Can enterprise zones deliver local jobs to local people? The impact of the French Zones Franches Urbaines on local unemployment*

The judging panel was Andrew Jones (Chair), Al James and Sarah Hall.

Other activities

In response to a request from Jamie Peck at British Columbia, the Committee decided to provide two bursaries to enable two UK-based postgraduate research students to attend the International Summer Institute in Economic Geography that was held in Vancouver in 2010.

Future activities

Postgraduate prize

A call has gone out for the 2011 postgraduate prizes (deadline January 31st 2011). We are continuing to seek external sponsorship for these awards although revenue from the new EGRG book eases this need.

Annual Symposium/Postgraduate Forum

Following the successful events of recent years, these two events will again be run in 2011. We plan to hold the postgraduate event again in May as before, but the Annual Symposium will now be in November as it was in 2010.

RGS-IBG Conference August 2011

The EGRG is currently sponsoring the following sessions for the annual conference which moves back to London in 2011:

- 1) Geographical perspectives on ICT and Development Discourse, Policy and Practice Mark Graham (Oxford) and Dorothea Klein (RHUL)
- 2) New and Emerging Economic Geographies Jennifer Watts (Manchester) and Stacey Coppick (Nottingham)
- 3) Financial Crisis, Moral Crisis: New Urban Geographies of Blame and Responsibility Julian Brash (Montclair State, US), John Clarke and Janet Newman (both Open) and Jeff Maskovsky (CUNY)
- 4) The geopolitics of European financial landscapes James Sidaway, Manuel Aalbers and Ewald Engelen, (all Amsterdam)
- 5) Economic, Ecological and Resource Crises: Developing Coping Strategies for the Future Sarah Marie Hall (Salford) and Peter North (Liverpool)
- 6) The geography of the green economy Adrian Newton (Bournemouth) and Mark Hepworth
- 7) Economic Geographical Imaginations James Faulconbridge (Lancaster) and Sarah Hall (Nottingham)
- 8) Embodied and technical expertise in agri-food innovation: sites, relations and practices Richard Milne and Richard Lee (both Sheffield)
- 9) Start2Finish: Advancing the field of Qualitative Methodologies Research (QMR) Chantal Hales, Rachel Mulhall and Georgina Henricksen (all Birmingham)
- 10) Emerging Geographies of Transition Ralitsa Hiteva and Jennifer Watts (both Manchester)

Finally

I would again like to record my thanks to the outgoing Treasurer, Martin Hess who has done an excellent job of keeping a tight rein on the Groups' finances as well as contributing to the life to the Committee. The Committee would also like to reiterate their ongoing thanks to Graham

Bowden at the University of Manchester for all his unpaid assistance with the website and other EGRG activities.

Andrew Jones, EGRG Chair, January 2011