

RGS-IBG Economic Geography Research Group

2020 Annual General Meeting Minutes

22 September 2020, 4-5 pm BST

Location: Online meeting

Apologies: Dominic Obeng, PGR Rep.; Andrew Greenlough-Cook (Education Officer, HE); Rhiannon Pugh (Ordinary Member)

Attendees: See list of attendees in Appendix I

Meeting called to order at 16:03

1. **Apologies:** none
2. **Confirmation of minutes** of 2019 AGM were tabled at the meeting and approved.
3. **EGRG Constitutional Amendments** were tabled at the meeting. No objections were heard, and the changes were approved. The changes were minor. The revised constitution updates the previous EGRG constitution (dated 1997) and incorporates updated text provided in the RGS Research Group Handbook (dated 22nd February 2019). Other changes include the addition of points d) and e) under the aims of the EGRG (#2) and the removal of a numerical limit on the number of ordinary members allowed under the Constitution (#6). It was previously 6. Over recent years we have needed more ordinary members to cover new roles such as Social Media Officer and officers to cover our emphasis on equality, diversity and inclusion.
4. **Treasurer's report:** The EGRG is in a relatively strong financial position with a current balance of £1,723. The EGRG spent slightly more in the past year than in previous years, but this was offset by a grant from the RGS that helped to pay for the diversity and inclusion event. Given that RGS budget is suffering as a result of the postponement of the annual conference, it is possible that the EGRG subvention will decrease this year. Typically the EGRG pays for a reception at the RGS mid-term PG conference, but the conference may not happen this year, so that may translate into savings.
5. **Reports on last year's activities:**
 - The EGRG was set to **sponsor 14 sessions of various kinds at the annual RGS conference**, but it was postponed. We've told session organizers that we will do our best to prioritise their sessions if they choose to resubmit in 2021, but it is not yet clear whether the RGS will convene the conference.
 - **Undergraduate dissertation award:** Hamida Khanom, Queen Mary University of London, "London: A Western Utopia for Bangladeshi Migrants? A Study of Male Bangladeshi Restaurant Workers and Their Vision of Life in The Global City"

- **PhD dissertation award:** Misbah Khatana, Cambridge University, “Navigating Gendered Space: The Social Construction of Labour Markets in Pakistan”
 - **Diversity and Inclusion event** held at Nottingham University in January, 2020: Thank you to Jon Swords and Sarah Hall for organising a successful event. Roughly 12 participants including several guests from the Race, Culture and Equality Working Group of the RGS-IBG. Discussions included how to improve diversity in research, teaching, and impact. Concerns and questions raised and discussed included the extent to which the EGRG represents itself as open to everyone, the extent to which the EGRG ought to enter into partnerships with other research groups such as the Gender and Feminist RG, and whether the EGRG wished to issue a formal statement on inclusion and diversity. The latter is complicated by RGS guidelines on issuing public statements.
 - **ECR Event**—held online in June of 2020. Thanks to Alexandra Dales and Harry Pettit for organising a successful event. Roughly 30 participants attended. Issues discussed included the intensification of challenges for ECRs during the Covid-19 pandemic in an already structurally competitive environment. Frustrations and concerns were voiced, and there was a wide ranging discussion of recent experiences related to job security, redundancy, fieldwork, and the ways flexible working can negatively impact those with caring responsibilities. The possibility of issuing a formal statement was discussed, but as above this is complicated by RGS policy on public statements. A commentary authored by Alexandra Dales and Harry Pettit reflecting on the event and the broader environment will soon be published in the *Times Higher Education*.
6. **Election of new committee members.** The committee thanked outgoing committee members who have completed their terms: Chris Muellerleile (Secretary), Steve Wood (Prize Officer), Alexandra Dales (ECR Rep), Dominic Obeng (PGR Rep). The following new committee members were duly elected:
- Early Career Rep: Chloe Billing, University of Birmingham
 - Post Graduate Rep: Minjing Lee, Newcastle University
 - Secretary, Kean Fan Lim, Newcastle University
 - Prizes Officer, Alexandra Dales, York St. John University
7. **Discussion of efforts to improve diversity and inclusion** in EGRG and economic geography more broadly. Some progress has recently been made in improving the diversity of the EGRG committee. The EG committee may be able to build upon the discussions held in January at the Nottingham event (see item 5). These include ongoing discussions related to how to better project and represent the EGRG committee as well as economic geography as an open discipline, carefully considering the language we employ to describe EG, making recommendations to journals regarding appointments to editorial boards, assisting in efforts to decolonize various curricula. There is an open question as to whether the committee should spend some money to further these efforts. Chair will discuss with the committee.
8. **Discussion of community building in EG.** There was a discussion of how to foster connectivity between members and in the EG more broadly during a pandemic that has prohibited the community from attending face to face conferences. The committee will explore the possibilities of sponsoring a writing retreat, a mentoring program, an event

related to research strategies in the time of Covid-19, and a regular online social gathering.

9. **Forthcoming events:** Given the pandemic, there are no concrete plans at this time. The discussion overlapped with that from item #8. The midterm RGS conference may not happen this year, which is usually a good opportunity for the committee to promote the openness of EG.
10. **Date of the next meeting** depends on whether the RGS convenes an annual conference, and in what format.
11. **Any other business:** None.

Appendix I: List of Pre-registered attendees

Jennifer	Johns (Chair)
Julie	MacLeavy (Treasurer)
Chris	Muellerleile (Secretary)
Al	James
Lotte	Thomsen
Blessing	Sibanda
James	Faulconbridge
Alex	Hughes
Alice	Ngo
Alexandra	Dales
Adrian	Smith
STEVE	WOOD
Giuseppe	Simone
Harry	Pettit
Heidi	Haugen
Karen	Lai
Kean	Lim
Amy	Horton
Possapon	Charoenporn
Minjing	Li
Jennifer	Ferreira
Wenying	Fu
Zara	Babakordi
Sarah Marie	Hall
Sarah	Hall
Joshua	Ee
Zrinka	Mendas
Wanjing (Kelly)	Chen
Katharine	JONES
Nihan	Akyelken

Yaku Fernando	FERNANDEZ LANDA
Blessing	Sibanda
Han	Lin
Emil	Evenhuis
Michiel	van Meeteren
Laura	Sariego
Jon	Beaverstock
Jon	Swords
Chloe	Billing
Vlad	Mykhnenko