

2009 IAG Conference – Session descriptions

Cultural geography study group sponsored sessions

[1] Photography as a visual methodology

Convenors: Nicola Vaughan, Lisa Webber & Kathy Mee (University of Newcastle)

Photography, like many other types of visual methodologies, is gaining popularity as a methodology in human geography. Geographers have used this method in a variety of different ways, including participant self-directed photography, researcher-directed photography and analysing existing photographs.

This session calls for papers that examine the use of photography in cultural geography and consider some of the methodological implications of using photography as a method. Papers based on case-studies of research using photography as a methodology are particularly encouraged. Papers which consider how photography is used with other methodologies would also be welcome.

The session also seeks papers which will explore the ethical considerations of the use and implementation of this method. In particular the session will explore the ways in which ethical considerations have impacted upon the use of photography. Papers which explore the interplay between the role of institutional ethics committees and researchers' ethical practices are welcomed.

[2] Making home: material geographies of house and home

Convenors: Andrew Gorman-Murray (University of Wollongong) & Rosie Cox (Birkbeck College, London)

This sponsored session responds to the growing interest in house, home and domesticity in geographical and related research, and calls for papers addressing the broad theme of 'making home'. As the truism goes, house and home are not the same, and in this session we are interested in papers which explore the relationship between residential housing and the notion of home. This, in turn, demands attention to the material geographies of house and home, and particularly the material processes of homemaking. Homemaking should be understood broadly to include a range of practices, including (but not limited to) DIY, home repair, home decoration, interior design, material consumption, spatial arrangements, renovations, housework, gardening, waste disposal, and a wide range of financial practices. How are these material processes enlisted to turn houses into homes?

A range of further questions emerge from these provocations. How is the conventional gendering of house and home confirmed or challenged by material homemaking practices? How do our multiple subjectivities – class, race, gender, sexuality, disability – inform practices of making home? How are non-human presences – pets, plants, dirt, weather patterns, *inter alia* – implicated in material homemaking? Indeed, how is homemaking influenced by the house itself (denoted by Daniel Miller as 'estate agency')? Relatedly, what is the role of money and debt in homemaking practices? How is consumption and disposal of 'things' balanced in homemaking efforts? In this context, have material homemaking practices changed in light of concerns about environmental conditions and impacts of global warming? How might sustainable housing be seen as a way of making home? We invite paper addressing these questions and more.

[3] Intimate geographies

Convenors: Carey-Ann Morrison & Lynda Johnston (University of Waikato)

This session aims to draw together the growing bodies of work on geographies of gender, sexualities and emotions. Studies into the relationship between sexuality and/or gender and space continue to provide valuable insights into the production of bodies and places. This session seeks to add to this extensive scholarship by encouraging presenters to explore the particularities and intersection of gender and sexuality with emotions. Emotional geographies have recently emerged as a valuable lens through which to explore the politics of identity construction. Combining the insights gained from spatialised studies into gender and/or sexuality with emotional geographies brings forth a new type of 'intimate geographies'.

This call for paper welcomes explorations into the intersections of gender, sexuality and emotions with other identity axes including race, ethnicity, class, disability, age, spirituality. Papers may be theoretical, methodological and/or empirical in nature.

[4] Recent research in cultural geography

Convenor: Andrew Gorman-Murray (University of Wollongong)

Cultural geography comprises a wide-ranging group of geographical sub-disciplines. Cultural domains of geographical research continue to grow in breadth and depth, with expanding theoretical formulations, methodological approaches and fields of interest. Cultural geographers embrace the material, discursive and sensory moments of spatiality. These cultural dimensions are increasingly recognised across the full spectrum of geographical research, as seen in the emergence and growing popularity of such concepts as cultural economy, cultural politics, cultural ecology and naturecultures. The vitality and range of cultural geography invites regular reflection. Accordingly, in this session we provide a forum to showcase recent cutting-edge research in cultural geography in Australia.

[5] Methodology and data update

Convenors: Danielle Drozdowski & Wendy Shaw (University of New South Wales)

In this era of mixed methods and new technological formats, a raft of innovative methodological and data possibilities has opened. Some researchers are engaging with, for example, the use of 'memory' as a source of data, and have used interesting methods to access memories and historical narratives. Others have worked on the inclusion of visual or aural data in inventive and plausible ways. Researchers have unearthed a whole set of methods for generating unusual forms of data, to either compliment more traditional research methods or open new pathways of data generation and analysis.

This session seeks to engage with methodologies and data sources that suggest new, sometimes unorthodox directions.

Cultural geography study group & Asia Pacific transformations group sponsored session

[1] Re-imagining the tropics: sites and networks of knowledge

Convenors: Lisa Law (James Cook University) & Katherine Gibson (Australian National University)

The terms 'tropics' and 'tropicality' are re-emerging in scholarly debate across a range of academic disciplines (geography, history, anthropology). In Euro-American research in particular, there has been a return to the archives of 'tropical geography' as conceptualised throughout the 19th and 20th centuries and formalised in the immediate post-WWII period. Some have focused attention on the formation of tropical knowledges in the colonial and post-WWII archives (e.g. Arnold 1998, 2000, 2006; Driver 2004; Bowd and Clayton 2005), while others chart the circulation of tropical knowledges through cinema (Law et al 2007) and academic books and journals (Power and Sidaway 2004; Grundy-Warr et al 2003). Some scholars examine how tropical knowledges shape historical and contemporary practices of fieldwork (Driver and Martins 2005; Corbridge and Mawdsley 2003), and Australian researchers re beginning to interrogate planning policies for the contemporary tropical city (Luckman et al forthcoming). Drawing on these ideas, but in a postcolonial context of multiculturalism and global connectedness, this session aims to:

- Re-cast the tropics not as 'geography' but as 'discourse' of knowledge and power
- Examine the texts, institutions, technologies and practices that help define and produce tropical regions as knowable geographies
- Consider the tropics as a network rather than bounded geography

We welcome papers with these general themes, as well as those that more broadly articulate with debates about 'tropicality'.

Asia Pacific transformations group sponsored sessions

[1] Agrarian and rural transformations

Convenor: Philip Hirsch (University of Sydney)

Since Hart, Turton et al published their seminal *Agrarian Transformations* two decades ago,¹ much has continued to transform rural parts of Southeast Asia and the wider Asia-Pacific countryside. Geographers were notable for their absence in that volume. The context of transformation has moved far beyond the intensification of rice agriculture and the political economy of changing production relations associated with green revolution technologies and class processes that underpinned earlier studies. Globalisation, environmental processes and movements, de-agrarianisation, shifts from rural production to consumption landscapes, decentralised governance and many other frames of reference have shaped the ways in which rural change is examined. Many of these themes and contexts are inherently geographical, and geographers have moved centre-stage in studies of the changing Asian countryside. This panel invites papers that explore parallel shifts in conceptual, methodological and empirical understandings of agrarian and rural transformations in the Asia-Pacific region.

[2] Globalisation, consumption and development

Convenors: Barbara Rugendyke & Kiran Shinde (University of New England)

The ‘manufacture of new forms of poverty’ (Donnison, 1982) within the Asia Pacific, as elsewhere, has been the cost of the global drive to improve material standards of living. Despite decades of ‘development’ efforts with the objective of creating ‘an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives’ (Mahbub ul Haq, in UNDP, 2009), and despite some gains having been made towards realisation of some of the Millennium Development Goals, global spatial inequalities persist; many in the neighbouring Asia Pacific region and beyond struggle to access the basic resources necessary for survival. This general session invites papers which explore issues of current importance related to the broad themes of globalisation, consumption and development. These may include (but need not be limited to):

- Food – the new oil? Food security and global consumption
- International labour migration: empowerment or exploitation?
- International cooperation for poverty alleviation – aid, corporates and global governance
- Climate change, vulnerability, adaptation and the poor
- Environment – a new justification for intervention?
- Consuming places: tourism in the Asia Pacific
- The challenges of urbanisation.

¹ Hart, G., A. Turton, et al., Eds. (1989). *Agrarian transformations: local processes and the state in Southeast Asia*. Berkeley, University of California Press.

[3] Migration, land and livelihoods

Convenors: Gina Koczberski & George Curry (Curtin University of Technology)

Across the Asia-Pacific region people are leading more mobile lives as they seek new livelihood opportunities and experiences (Rigg, 2007). Whilst much of this migration is rural-to-urban, a sizable proportion is rural-to-rural, particularly to agricultural and resource frontier zones. In pursuit of livelihoods, land-poor migrants are entering into a broad range of informal arrangements with customary landowners to gain short and long-term access to land, creating burgeoning informal land markets and changes to customary land tenure regimes. Whilst migration research has been an active area of investigation among geographers, less attention has been paid to understanding at a local level the processes and procedures by which migrants without customary land use rights access land and resources, and the diverse range of land tenure arrangements emerging in sites of high immigration.

Papers are invited which focus on one or more of the following broad areas regarding informal land markets, especially in rural areas of the Asia-Pacific region:

- Migrant strategies for accessing customary land to create new livelihood opportunities.
- Modifications to, or manipulations of, customary land tenure arrangements.
- Role of social relationships in land tenure security.
- Land tenure rights and obligations of migrants.
- Tensions and conflicts arising from informal land transactions.
- Changing concepts of land ownership.
- Changes over time in informal land markets.
- Local historical, cultural and socio-economic contexts of informal land markets.
- Informal land markets and export cash-cropping.
- Local governance and the role of the state.

It would be useful if some papers considered the implications of their research for national land policy and land reform.

Economic geography & Environmental sustainability groups sponsored sessions

[1] Community Food Economies

Convenors: Jenny Cameron & Sarah Wright (University of Newcastle)

Communities across the globe are mobilising around the issue of food, and seeking to build more sustainable and community orientated food futures. This session invites papers that explore (either empirically or theoretically) community food economies in contexts that range from individual households to more formally organised initiatives that are place-based (such as community gardens) or that connect people across different places (such as Community Supported Agriculture, networks of small-scale farmers and Fair Trade). Questions to be addressed include:

- What are some ways that communities are forging community centred food economies?
- What environmental and social ethical commitments underpin these food economies?
- How are economic practices being reshaped in light of these ethical commitments?
- How do we represent the relationship between community food economies and those that are primarily market-driven?
- To what extent are market-driven economies being reshaped by community food economies?
- How might the progressive potential of community food economies be realised?
- What role is there for academic researchers to contribute to building community food economies?

Environmental sustainability study group sponsored sessions

[1] Sustainable cities: oxymoron no more

Convenor: Arvind Varshney (Hassell)

Cities hold the key to the sustainability of the world. More than 50% of world population now lives in cities. Cities are major consumers and distributors of goods and services--draining resources out of far-flung regions that they depend on. It is no more a matter of debate that the ecological impact of cities extends far beyond their geographic locations--putting the sustainability of human race at risk. Despite the enormous amount of research that has been undertaken already on the subject around the world, the concept of sustainable development is still evolving. There is no consensus on what it is or how it can be defined. It is perceived by different people in different geographical regions differently. However the following description that emerged during the Urban 21 conference in Berlin in 2000, seems to capture the essence of sustainable urban development:

"Improving the quality of life in a city, including ecological, cultural, political, institutional, social and economic components without leaving a burden on the future generations. A burden which is the result of a reduced natural capital and an excessive local debt".

It captures the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and highlights the issues of equity, and balance between natural and anthropogenic elements. While professionals and administrators in Australia grapple with the issue like others around the world this session aims to bring the good news-- it is indeed possible plan, design and manage cities that are sustainable. The objective is to bring together geographers, planners, academics and urban administrators from all Australia and learn from their experience what is being done and can be done to attain a culture of sustainable urban development.

Papers on the following issues are welcome in this session

- The concept of sustainable urban development
- The emergence of a sustainable development philosophy in Australia
- Sustainable urban policy
- Prospects for sustainable urban development in Australia
- Sustainable urban transport and land use
- Demographic shifts, population health, and climate change
- Assessment of urban sustainability

[2] Climate change and migration

Convenors: Graeme Hugo and Douglas Bardsley (University of Adelaide)

The session will examine emerging challenges to integrate research and policy development in the fields of climate change and migration studies. The geographical focus will be Asia, the Pacific and Australia. Papers will cover one of the following topics or a related issue, including:

- Issues of nomenclature relating to the definition of migrants resulting from climate change
- Challenges of methodology to estimate the impacts of environmental change on migration patterns, and use those estimates to develop future projections
- The role of migration as an adaptation option to climate change risk
- Whether climate change will lead to thresholds or tipping points after which fundamental changes in migration patterns might be expected

- Integration of policy development for climate change and migration
- Case studies relevant to these issues.

[3] Material geographies in environmental and resource management

Convenor: Nicholas Gill (University of Wollongong)

In 2006 Bakker and Bridge² outlined their vision of a theoretically reinvigorated environmental or resource geography. They call for research that ‘address[es] the analytical significance of concrete differences in the material world and the way these enable and constrain the social relations necessary for resource production’, be it of minerals, animals, biodiversity, water, various incarnations of land, or biotechnology.

This session and the associated workshop seek to respond to this call for research that addresses materiality in society and nature, examines their co-production, and the enabling and constraining processes, properties, and histories that are part of, and result from, such co-production. Moreover it seeks to assess the implications of such co-production in areas such the shaping of space and nature, the production of knowledge about resources and environment, for the creation and production of commodities, for environmental governance, and for responses to broader issues such as sustainability and climate change.

Papers are invited that address these or related themes and in which authors aim to contribute to the further development of critical resource and environmental geographies. At a post-conference workshop papers from the sessions will be further developed in conjunction with Dr. Gavin Bridge who will be a guest of the Environmental Sustainability Study Group. Attendance at the workshop will be open, but if necessary, and depending on numbers, the inclusion of papers may be on a competitive basis. Our aim is to produce an edited collection of papers from the sessions.

All contributors to the writing workshop will need to submit a draft paper to other participants by a date earlier in 2009 (to be set). All participants would be expected to read the other papers, to not divulge any of the contents, to be prepared to be constructively critical and supportive at the writing workshop, and to be prepared to finalise their paper for publication in a timely manner. They should also read the paper by Bakker and Bridge as listed below. The workshop aims are to get the papers closer to publication quality, to integrate the papers around the theme of the publication, and to provide material for the editors’ introduction to the publication.

² Bakker, K. and G. Bridge (2006). “Material worlds? Resource geographies and the ‘matter of nature’.” Progress in Human Geography 30(1): 5-27.

Rural studies study group sponsored sessions

[1] Non metropolitan ageing: people and places

Convenors: Amity James (University of Queensland) & Helen Feist (University of Adelaide)

As demographic profiles are increasingly dominated by older populations, interest in the issues brought about by the ageing phenomenon has grown. Ageing people and places in non metropolitan regions have not escaped the interest of researchers, particularly as some non metropolitan regions are ageing at a faster rate than the capital cities. Despite the diversity of non metropolitan regions, many share issues around service provision, transport and housing. Moreover, residential mobility patterns such as sea-change and tree-change populations bring both new prospects and complexities to some regions. Undoubtedly, the ageing population will transform the non metropolitan Australian landscape. This session would like to unearth the trends, challenges and opportunities that population ageing will bring to non metropolitan people and places.

[2] Rural Adaptation under Conditions of Uncertainty

Convener: Tony Sorensen (University of New England)

Rural Australia is operating under conditions of systemic shock. Several overlapping and occasionally intersecting change processes have the capacity to modify rural production systems at a pace and intensity rarely seen over the last 50 years:

- Wild swings in currency values;
- Galloping competition between mining, agriculture, leisure and recreation and alternate energy sectors;
- Burgeoning environmental regulation – land clearing, water availability and pricing, ecosystem management, CO2 emissions trading, etc;
- Climate changes under way (evidence in exceptional drought / deluge events?);
- The China, India (and SE Asia) factor in shifting demand for ag commodities;
- The massive R & D effort in the farm sector and its implications for what is produced where;
- Accelerating corporatisation of farming (increasingly large and integrated scale of operations);
- On-going decline in the number of people on the land;
- And so on.

This session will ask authors to dust off their ‘crystal balls’ and think about the implications of these events separately and collectively for Australia’s rural regions.

[3] The Changing Governance of Rural Society, Space and Place

Convener: Neil Argent (University of New England)

The hegemony of neoliberalism and the associated dominance of ‘Third Way’ politics in Western advanced nations over the past two decades has greatly complicated relationships between different tiers of government. Additionally, and more importantly, perhaps, the disrupting of conventional politics has seen new interest groups assert themselves into the broader body politic. It is now customary to describe this structural change as a shift from relations of ‘government’ to relations of ‘governance’. Amongst other things, this shift has been accompanied by a vibrant, emergent literature and a sustained research

agenda on the topic. Of course, the fundamentally altered relationships between citizens, communities, interest groups and the mainstream political system – centred on Parliament and its processes – over the past decade or so have profound spatial consequences, and no less so than for rural regions. Compared to the situation twenty decades ago, most aspects of rural land and natural resource use and social and economic development are now more or less closely governed, with a growing panoply of hitherto ignored or excluded interest groups involved in the public debate over the use of rural space and place.

The purpose of this special themed session is to bring together researchers working across the spectrum of geography and related social sciences to discuss, in a focused fashion, the changing governance of rural society, space and place.

Urban geography study group sponsored sessions

[1] Harmony, trust and participation in culturally diverse cities

Convenors: Kevin Dunn (University of Western Sydney) & Jim Forrest (Macquarie University)

For some decades now, urban scholars have eschewed the suggestion of the heartless city, and have 'found' community within larger settlements where there is high population density. However, it is still too often assumed that circumstances of cultural diversity are inconsistent with the formation of civic virtues like harmony, participation, interaction, trust and community. Recent research on contact theory has outlined how cross cultural interactions can produce both better and worse community relations. The more pessimistic assessments have concluded that isolation and segregation are expected outcomes of cultural diversity within the city. The empirical work of Robert Putnam (USA) has found that such isolation is likely for new migrants, who 'turtle' for the early years of their settlement (i.e. they don't participate in civics nor build bridges outside of their community). Empirical studies in Australia have attempted to replicate the work of Putnam, with somewhat similar results (Cummins, 2008; Markus et al 2008). The data can be used by those who do not favour cultural diversity, who can latch on to the evidence of friction and turtling, and use that to critique policies of multiculturalism.

This session of papers will reflect on the following important questions:

1. Are the negative effects of new diversity unavoidable and universal?
2. Are the negative effects of new diversity universal across space and time?
3. Do negative effects always precede positive effects or can negative effects continue in perpetuity?
4. And can the negative and positive effects of diversity co-exist in the same space?
5. Do the dominant conceptualisations of community give too much emphasis to harmony?
6. As cultural difference is worked-out, or up, does the valencies of positive or negative effects all depend on the context?

[2] Panel discussion & book launch (*Planning and diversity in the city: redistribution, recognition and encounter* – Ruth Fincher and Kurt Iveson)

Convenors: Donald McNeill & Therese Kenna (University of Western Sydney)

"Planning theory and practice has become more conscious in recent times of the need to cater for a diverse range of needs and preferences. But there has been less clarity about what goals and objectives should inform planning for such diversity.

In this important new book Ruth Fincher and Kurt Iveson identify three distinct working principles of planning for diversity: redistribution, recognition and encounter. Each principle is the subject of a pair of chapters. The first explaining the principle and the second showcasing and comparing efforts to shape cities according to it, drawing on relevant examples from around the world. *Planning for Diversity* is the ideal introduction to the issues that surround diversity and planning and provides a stimulating new line of advance for reducing inequality and working towards 'just diversity' in cities".

[3] General urban geography

Convenors: Therese Kenna & Donald McNeill (University of Western Sydney)

Papers sessions will be formed around coherent themes for papers submitted in the area of urban geography.