

AAG Urban Geography Specialty Group

NEWSLETTER

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JULY 1985

Letter from the Chair

Long-range planning for the UGSG moved an important step forward at the Detroit meetings, with discussions at the Directors Meeting and Business Meeting and a meeting of the Long Range Planning Committee. These discussions indicated agreement on three broad points: (1) the benefits to the UGSG of a long-range planning effort; (2) the appropriateness of moving the UGSG from a role of facilitator to one of initiator of activities; and (3) an initial agenda of activities for the UGSG to consider. The activities discussed at the meetings present a challenging and exciting prospect for the UGSG. I'd like to use this space to outline a few of them.

First, the opportunity is ripe for the UGSG to sponsor a large-scale research effort focusing on urban restructuring. Elements of this effort would include a broad overview of the links between economic transformation and the restructuring of urban space; local vignettes, illustrating the process in a variety of contexts; and a series of synoptic analyses focusing on specific attributes or effects of restructuring on e.g. urban labor markets, local government, housing, social services, and the like. A project of this sort would involve a large number of researchers in a variety of ways on a topic of central importance to urban geography — a natural for UGSG sponsorship.

A second proposal for the UGSG is to establish a formal policy-review role for the Specialty Group. This would involve positioning the UGSG to prepare formal reviews of public documents such as the President's National Urban Policy Report, HUD reports, budget proposals, and similar policy statements. Reviews could be structured around sessions at annual meetings, articles prepared for journal publication, preparation of white papers, or similar means under UGSG sponsorship.

A third possible direction for the UGSG is sponsorship of a monograph comprised of original papers marking the status and prospect of the urban geography discipline. Papers could be solicited from individuals active in the principle subfields of urban geography, with the aim of delineating the issues, directions, problems, and potentials of the field. Published commercially, such a monograph might prove useful for students, teachers, and future historians of geography.

Many other UGSG activities have been suggested and will be considered by the Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC). These include more direct involvement with the NCGE and other groups;

facilitating the exchange of information on teaching methods, field trips, course readings, and syllabi; pursuing opportunities for consulting and professional activity; developing employment opportunities and exchanging employment information — the possibilities are without limit.

Now is the opportunity to comment, criticize, suggest, propose — say your piece about these or any other, possible activities, directions, priorities for the UGSG. The LRPC will collate all suggestions and comments for its report to be presented at the Minneapolis AAG meetings next year. Send your comments to any LRPC member (see below).

Best wishes for an enjoyable and productive summer.

Bob Lake
Chair, UGSG

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SESSIONS PLANNED FOR MINNEAPOLIS MEETINGS

The Urban Geography Specialty Group is in the process of organizing a number of Special Sessions for the AAG meetings in Minneapolis next May. To date the following sessions have been proposed:

a.) Sessions that are already virtually complete

SUBJECT: Cities under Socialism
(organized with George Demko)
ORGANIZER: Prof. Joanna Regulska
Department of Geography
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, NJ 08903

SUBJECT: The Local State (in cooperation with Society and Space and the Political Geography Specialty Group)
ORGANIZER: Prof. Kevin Cox
Department of Geography
Ohio State University
Columbus Ohio 43210

b.) Sessions that are still being formulated

Any readers of the UGSG Newsletter who are still interested in participating in one of these sessions should contact the organizer as soon as possible:

SUBJECT: Session on Urban Geography in conjunction with continental European scholars
ORGANIZER: Prof. Joanna Regulska
Department of Geography
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, NJ 08903

SUBJECT: Session on urban geography with participation from members of the Institute of British Geographers.
ORGANIZER: Prof. Robert Lake
Center for Urban Policy Research
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, N.J. 08903

SUBJECT: Urban Policy (in cooperation with the Quantitative Geography Specialty Group)
ORGANIZER: Prof. John Paul Jones
Department of Geography
San Diego State University
San Diego, CA 92182

SUBJECT: Approaches to Development in the Inter-urban System
ORGANIZER: Prof. Randy Smith
Department of Geography
Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio 43210

SUBJECT: The Geography of Office Location
ORGANIZER: Mr. David Selwood
Department of Geography
Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio 43210

SUBJECT: The Restructuring of the City (in cooperation with the Socialist Geography Specialist Group)
ORGANIZER: Prof. Neil Smith
Department of Geography
Columbia University
New York City, NY 10027

SUBJECT: Suburban Business Centers
ORGANIZER: Prof. Peter Muller
Department of Geography
The University of Miami
Coral Gables, FL 33124

SUBJECT: Energy Use and the City
ORGANIZER: Prof. Fred Stutz
Department of Geography
San Diego State University
San Diego, CA 92182

SUBJECT: Housing and Community Development
ORGANIZER: Prof. Harry Margulis
Department of Geography
Cleveland State University
Cleveland, Ohio 44115

c) Session still on the drawing board

Several other sessions in a very preliminary stage. Volunteers are sought to help organize and contribute ideas for these. Suggestions should be directed to

Eric Sheppard
Department of Geography
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612) 373-2666

1. A DEBATE between a prominent protagonist and a prominent antagonist on a major current issue of debate in urban geography. Suggestions for an appropriate theme are solicited.

2. A SESSION ON THE U.S. CENSUS. We have an opportunity at this time to influence the Census as it selects which data items will be collected for 1990. The purpose of this meeting would not be to obtain information from census officials, but rather to prepare a report to send to the census recommending changes that would be of use to urban geographers, a report that could have, through this body, the full weight of the AAG behind it.

3. SESSIONS ON APPLIED URBAN POLICY ISSUES. This topic was suggested at the UGSG annual meeting in Detroit by several people, but no volunteer to organize such a session was forthcoming. Potential organizers and volunteers are sought.

4. THE TWIN CITIES METROPOLITAN AREA. A special session recognizing the location of the meetings. This would include prominent scholars of the Twin Cities presenting different perspectives on the development of, problems in, and prospects for the Twin Cities.

UGSG Business Meeting

The annual Business Meeting of the AAG Urban Geography Specialty Group was held at the Westin Hotel, Detroit on Monday 22, April 1985.

1. The meeting was called in order by Robert Lake at 6:05 p.m. There were 33 members in attendance.
2. Bob Lake, acting Chairperson 1984-85 introduced the items for discussion.
 - a. W. Randy Smith, Secretary/Treasurer was asked to give his report:
 - i) the Minutes of the 1984 Business Meeting (which appeared in the November 1984 Newsletter) were distributed and approved.
 - ii) Copies of the Treasurer's Report 1985, were distributed. The current balance is \$826.62, a net increase of \$321.09 since April 1984. No expenses had been incurred because Temple University had provided funds for production and distribution of all three Newsletters for 1984-85. It was noted that if no external financial support for producing and distributing the Newsletter occurred in 1985-86, most of our current balance would be used for such purposes. Therefore, using our funds for other purposes may be inappropriate.
 - b. Issues discussed and decisions made at the Board of Director's Meeting of 21 April 1985 were presented.
 - i) 1985 election results were announced. Chairperson - Robert Lake; Vice Chairperson, Peter Muller; Board Members (1985-87) - Eric Sheppard, Neil Smith, and, as a result of a tied vote, Hazel Morrow-Jones and Rebecca Smith. The tie in voting means that the Board will consist of 7 members for the 1985-87 period, instead of the usual 6 members. The Nominating Committee, chaired by Dave Hodge was thanked for its work.
 - ii) W. Randy Smith was asked and agreed to serve for a third (and final) year as Secretary/Treasurer.
 - iii) Committee assignments include: Nomination Committee - Roman Cybriwsky (Chairperson) with two other members to be selected; Dissertation Award Committee - Don Dahmann (Chairperson), Briavel Holcomb, and Neil Smith; Minneapolis Program Committee - Eric Sheppard (Chairperson).
 - iv) The co-winners of the 1985 Dissertation Award were: Geraldine Pratt (Ph.D. University of British Columbia; "An Appraisal of the Incorporation Thesis: Housing Tenure and Political Values in Urban Canada," Advisor - David Ley); and Kristin Nelson (Ph. D. University

minutes (cont.)

of California - Berkeley; "Back Offices and Female Labor Markets: Office Suburbanization in the San Francisco Bay Area," Advisor - Richard Walker). Thanks were extended to the Dissertation Award Committee - Ted Muller (Chairperson), Jennifer Wolch and Don Dahmann. The winners will be announced at the AAG Business Meeting. Details will be announced in the AAG Newsletter. Each winner will be encouraged to submit a paper based on her dissertation research to the Editors of Urban Geography. An announcement about the 1986 competition will appear in the November 1985 Newsletter.

- v) A Long Range Planning Committee to define goals and activities for the UGSG was established. Members include Bob Lake (Chairperson), Marilyn Brown, Don Dahmann, Dave Hodge, Ted Muller and Randy Smith.
 - vi) Janet Byler, Editor of the UGSG Newsletter noted that we are distributing, using her new computerized mailing list, nearly 600 Newsletters, a value which exceeds the number assigned to us by the AAG for rebate money. Members who want, and are getting, Newsletters based on past membership lists, are failing to identify our group when they register with the AAG each autumn. Can/should we continue distribute courtesy copies? The Editor noted that reports on current research and teaching activities by individuals or departments are welcome for inclusion in the Newsletter. Newsletters for 1985-86 will appear in February/March, June/July, and October/November. Bob Lake thanked Janet for her work during her first year as Editor, and indicated a letter of thanks to Temple University for its financial support of the Newsletter will be sent.
- d. New Business Items:
- i) The annual meetings in Minneapolis. Eric Sheppard agreed to serve as Program Coordinator. The deadline for abstracts is September 25. All those wishing to organize a special session should contact Eric as soon as possible. Among the topics discussed for special sessions were: suburban business centers, approaches to urban system development and the geography of office location. It was noted that joint sessions with other specialty groups were highly successful and should be continued; that debate sessions based on a set of position papers should be considered; that there should be a special session on the Twin Cities; and that public policy issues should be addressed in our sessions.
 - ii) Marilyn Brown, current NSF panel member, noted that the NSF is now considering revisions to guidelines on research topics for funding, and that as a group we should be considering research topics in urban geography to which the panel might be alerted.

minutes (cont.)

- iii) The AAG Publication Committee is considering developing a "Spotlight Series" - a major publication on the metropolitan areas in which the annual meeting of the AAG is held. To what extent could/should the UGSG be involved in such a project? More information will be gathered on the status and nature of this Series.
- iv) Activities for the Long Range Planning Committee were discussed. Now that the UGSG is firmly established in an administrative way, and has become active in the annual meetings of the AAG, what directions should the group take, and what goals should be established for the next five years? A wide-ranging discussion followed. Members suggested developing large scale joint research projects funded by units such as the NSF; establishing stronger ties with other groups such as the Urban Land Institute or urban groups in other national associations such as the IBG; encouraging stronger graduate student input to the group, developing a stronger teaching element to the UGSG by having special sessions at NCGE meetings. Above all, it was stressed that the Committee prioritize its goals. The Committee will prepare a report for and present it at the Minneapolis meetings.
- e. There was no additional business. The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

W. Randy Smith
Secretary/Treasurer

URBAN GEOGRAPHY

URBAN GEOGRAPHY has initiated a new series of Progress Reports that will appear as a regular feature of the journal. The purpose of the Progress Reports is to provide succinct, up-to-date overviews and evaluations of current literature and research in sub-fields of urban geography.

The first set of Progress Reports (vol. 5, no. 3) includes essays by David Ley on "Urban Structure in Context"; Briavel Holcomb on "Women in the City"; Robert Beauregard on "Making Planning Theory"; and Stephen Golant on "The Geographic Literature on Aging and Old Age." Vol. 5, no. 4 includes reports by Kevin Cox on "Neighborhood Conflict and Urban Social Movements," and Elizabeth Burns on "Progress in Land Use Planning." Upcoming issues of URBAN GEOGRAPHY will have Progress Reports on urban mental health, the geography of the local state, urban morphology, urban politics, migration, Soviet cities, urban imagery, applied geography, and quantitative methods.

In addition to the Progress Reports section, URBAN GEOGRAPHY continues to publish full-length articles, book reviews, and comments from readers. Vol. 5, no. 3 includes articles by Gordon Clark, "Who's to Blame for Residential Segregation," providing a critique of the prisoner's dilemma rationale for racial residential change; Paula McClain, "Urban Neighborhoods, Black Residents, and Homicide Risk," assessing the relationship between environmental factors and homicide risk for black residents in six cities; and Harold Elliot, "Cardinal Places and the Urban Gradient," setting forth a theoretical construct for analysis of urban systems. Vol. 5, no. 4 is a special issue on urban geography in France.

URBAN GEOGRAPHY welcomes submission of high-quality manuscripts on any aspect of the field. Manuscripts can be sent to either Co-Editor:

James O. Wheeler
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Athens, GA 30602

Robert W. Lake
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Subscriptions are available for \$35 a year (for AAG members in U.S. and Canada), from V.H. Winston and Sons, Inc., 7961 Eastern Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Dissertation Competition

The Urban Geography Specialty Group completed successfully its third Dissertation Competition and announced the co-winners at the AAG annual meetings in Detroit this past April. The Competition Committee (composed of Donald Dahmann, Edward Muller, and Jennifer Wolch) evaluated seven dissertations of excellent quality. The co-winners were Geraldine Pratt, who wrote her dissertation at the University of British Columbia with David Ley as her advisor, and Kristin Nelson, who wrote her dissertation at the University of California-Berkeley with Richard Walker as her advisor.

An Appraisal of the Incorporation Thesis--
Housing Tenure and Political Values in Urban Canada

Geraldine Pratt
The University of British Columbia

The incorporation thesis, which links homeownership and conservative was examined. A dearth of empirical work, as well as the complexity of the argument, which integrates economic, political, and social factors, necessitated a complex research design. This included a consideration of the material advantages of homeownership in the Vancouver, British Columbia housing market to establish that homeownership has been a significant source of revenue for the homeowner, through both house price inflation and government subsidization. Claims concerning the association between homeownership and conservative political attitudes were then evaluated by means of an urban national sample of roughly 2000 publicly available interviews, collected in 1979 as part of the Social Change in Canada study. Housing class, discriminating between renters, mortgaged homeowners and outright homeowners, was consistently associated with political behaviors and attitudes, which ranged from objective measures such as political party affiliation to subjective indicators including attitudes towards planning life ahead. The independent significance of housing class in relation to attitudes was established by controlling for class, SES, household income, education, and life-cycle. A striking outcome of this analysis was the finding that the association between housing tenure and political attitudes or behavior was indeed evident, but only within particular social classes, household income groups, and stages of life-cycle. A social profile was developed of those for whom housing class was especially associated with attitudes: low

dissertations (cont.)

income household heads in skilled nonmanual occupational categories, whose family obligations had perhaps forced them into a marginal homeownership position. In contrast, no association between housing class and political orientation was noted for skilled manual workers.

This contrast was taken into a sample of 100 in depth interviews with homeowners and renters in an outer Vancouver suburb in order to understand the processes lying behind the associations. The patterns of association noted for the larger data set were confirmed and linked to institutional memberships. Additional insight from the qualitative indepth interviews include an understanding of the links between self-employment and rental status, as well as family life-style choices and housing tenure.

The findings of this study throw into question the line of causal imputation advanced by incorporation theorists, while supporting the consumption sector approach to urban politics.

Back Offices and Female Labor Markets:
Office Suburbanization in the San Francisco Bay Area

Kristin Nelson
The University of California-Berkeley

A theory of private office location is proposed to explain the suburbanization of corporate offices in the late 1960s and 1970s in the U.S. and other advanced industrial nations. The theory views the location of corporate offices as a form of corporate rationalization in response to competitive conditions, consisting of moving to locations with more appropriate supplies of the important office "factors of production": land, linkages, prestige (for some offices), and labor.

The office location theory is used to analyze the location of one type of office function: back offices--large, usually highly-automated offices with low extra-corporate contact needs. Case studies of six back offices in the San Francisco Bay Area identify locational demands for land, linkages (access) and labor. An investigation of differential metropolitan supply of back office locational requirements concludes that demands for land, linkages, and higher-wage labor can be met in various localities that have not been sought for back office development, including some central city areas, but only outer suburban subregion now attracting most back offices has excellent supplies of the preferred clerical labor, as well as all other locational requirements. Case study occupational analyses of automated clerical jobs show them to be characterized by high job performance requirements and/or eroded working conditions, increasing the importance of clerical workers who will be productive, stable and non-militant at low clerical wages. Labor markets characterized either by upwardly-mobile women or low-income, minority women do not satisfy this contradictory labor demand. Case study journey-to-work data demonstrate the dependence of back offices on local clerical labor markets. The class structure and related household structure of expanding suburban owner-occupied housing districts guarantee corporate back offices a supply of relatively educated female workers whose position in the household economy limits their career mobility and who are likely to identify with the managerial class. The transfer of back office clerical jobs from central city low income, predominantly-minority female workforces to higher-income, predominantly-white suburban female workforces has important policy implications.

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