

Zen and the Art of Urban Geography by Bicycle

By: Austin Kocher

IN CONVERSATION

Urban geography is never so real as when you feel it rushing through your bicycle helmet on a crisp fall morning. The Ohio days have taken a cold turn but I continue to ride. It is not just gas prices and parking passes that keep me peddling. It is the desire to see the city as clearly as possible. To know it not only as a subject of analysis, but as a being with unrivaled character, a sordid past, and complicated present, and an ever-contested future. Maps alone cannot show the diversity of life that flows within the organs of this giant, concrete body. They cannot comprehend the faces of Clintonville, Weinland Park, the Hilltop, the Short North, German Village, and Franklinton. I travel the streets like lines on a time-space map to confront the realities they obscure.

Some have said that because we can fly from New York City to Beijing in a day, that geography is dead. That the global frothing, streaming milieu of information has negated the consideration of geography as a field of useful analysis. It is but a trick of the modern world that accepts corporate globetrotting as travel. One can fly from New York City to Beijing and take fewer steps than it takes to walk to the local grocer. This is not the irrelevance of geography but the ignorance of geography. For one can fly around the world and be greeted with a homogeneity overlooked in ones own town. For the willing person, there is more diversity to explore in a midwestern city like Columbus than one can likely fit into a busy undergraduate schedule.

Majoring in geography – specifically urban and regional studies – has done more than deepen my love affair with the city. As a founding board member of Consider Biking (.org), a local bicycle advocacy organization, I have been fortunate to work with city officials, other non-profits, and fellow citizens who want to increase multi-modal access for Columbus. Thanks to my outstanding professors at the Ohio State University, urban geographers like you, and the AAG, there is a wealth of research that I draw upon often to inform our organizational goals. The intersection of politics, culture, transportation, and economics at this scale we call the city is a fascinating subject of theory and practice.

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competitions are announced!****See page 3, and the UGSG website:**<http://www.geog.ubc.ca/~ewyly/ugsg.html>

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What is left to study? Let your bicycle tell you. Go for a ride. Take the back streets, which meander and twist and scrunch through narrow neighborhoods overlooked by freeways and spacious suburban planning. See the faces of basketballers, school children and storeowners who are inscrutable at a car's pace. As a researcher, and as a human being, wave. Click through GIS layers that you've mentally imported over years of study, and see the convergence of politics and economics touch down all around you in real time. For all of us who love the city and the few who earn a living researching it, may our bicycle set us free upon the city.

Austin Kocher is an undergraduate student at the Ohio State University. He is graduating with his BA in Geography - Urban and Regional Studies on December 14, 2008, and is applying for the geography graduate program at OSU for fall of 2009. Austin rides his bike everywhere and his favorite color is green. He can be contacted at akocher@gmail.com.

UGSG Membership Information

- **UGSG Membership:** \$7 with AAG membership; student membership is free.
- **Address and e-mail changes** of UGSG members should be sent to: address@aaq.org, where a master membership list is maintained.
- To subscribe to URBGEOG, the UGSG's **discussion forum and listserv**, follow these instructions: [1] Send an e-mail message to listserv@listserv.arizona.edu with no subject line, and include the following message, with appropriate name changes: **subscribe urbgeog firstname lastname**
[2] Make sure to disable automatic e-mail signature functions [3] You will be sent an automated message that provides information on how to post to the list and how to unsubscribe, etc.
- Calls for submission and notifications of availability of the Newsletter are e-mailed to both the listserv and Specialty Group membership list. Distribution of the Newsletter is via the UGSG website. This Newsletter is currently published 3 times per year.

UGSG Website: <http://www.geog.ubc.ca/~ewyly/ugsg.html>

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AAG Urban Geography Specialty Group Student Awards, 2009

Graduate Student Paper Competition [Deadline: January 31st, 2009](#)

The UGSG Graduate Student Paper Competition Committee solicits submissions of single-authored papers presented by a student at any professional meeting in the 12 months preceding (and including) the Boston AAG conference. Preference will be given to fully developed academic papers. The winner of the award will receive \$100 and an invitation to submit the paper to Urban Geography. Send one copy to each of the judges: James DeFilippis (jdefilip@rutgers.edu) and Steve Herbert (skherb@u.washington.edu).

Dissertation Competition [Deadline: January 31st, 2009](#)

The UGSG Dissertation Competition Committee solicits submissions of single-authored papers based on the applicant's dissertation (not full dissertations). The dissertation must have been completed during the 2008 calendar year. The paper need not be presented at the 2009 AAG meeting in order to be eligible. Preference will be given to fully developed academic papers. Papers submitted to the UGSG Graduate Student Paper Competition will not be considered for the Dissertation Award. Papers submitted for awards with other AAG-affiliated organizations are not eligible. The winner of the award will receive \$250 and an invitation to submit the paper to Urban Geography. Send one copy to each of the judges: Melanie Rapino (marapino@memphis.edu) and Kevin Ward (kevin.ward@manchester.ac.uk).

Glenda Laws Undergraduate Paper Award [Deadline: January 31st, 2009](#)

Please encourage your students to submit papers to the Glenda Laws Undergraduate Paper competition. This award goes to the best paper on an urban geographic topic written by an undergraduate student, regardless of membership in the AAG or participation in the AAG meetings. The winner of the award will receive \$50. Papers submitted for awards to other AAG-affiliated organizations are not eligible. Send one copy to each of the judges: Laura Liu (liul@newschool.edu) and Jennifer Rogalsky (rogalsky@geneseo.edu).

Student Travel Support [Deadline: January 31st, 2009](#)

The UGSG has a small amount of money available to support students presenting on urban topics at the Boston AAG meeting. A limited number of travel awards, each worth \$100, will be awarded. They are intended to support presentations on topics related to the urban focus of the specialty group. To apply, send a short letter stating your degree program, your institutional affiliation, and your goals and purposes in attending the conference. Also include copies of your abstract and conference registration. Send materials to Jim Fraser, UGSG Treasurer, 230 Appleton Place / Peabody #90, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN 37203. Email submissions may be sent to pavement@vanderbilt.edu. Awards will be announced as soon as possible after the deadline. The specialty group cannot guarantee that every applicant will receive an award.

Urban Geography Graduate Student Fellowships [Deadline: January 31st, 2009](#)

Each year, the Urban Geography Specialty Group will award one Master's fellowship (approximately \$300) and one or more doctoral fellowships (each approximately \$500), to support urban-oriented Master's and doctoral research. Fellowships are intended to provide targeted support for original Master's research and for those at a relatively early stage of doctoral dissertation research -- while also ensuring that award recipients have well-developed research proposals that have a high likelihood of completion. Fellowship support may be used for any reasonable expenses associated with a research proposal. Eligibility is limited to current student members of the Urban Geography Specialty Group who will have completed all Master's or Ph.D. requirements except the thesis or dissertation by the end of the semester or term in which any award is approved. Dissertation supervisors must certify eligibility by signing the application form or emailing James DeFilippis at jdefilip@rutgers.edu. Submit applications by email to James DeFilippis. Applications received after this date cannot be considered. Award decisions are made by the Board of the Urban Geography Specialty Group on the basis of the quality and feasibility of the research proposal. Applicants will be informed of the award decisions shortly before the AAG Annual Meeting. Applications will be available for download on the UGSG website: <http://www.geog.ubc.ca/~ewyly/ugsg.html>

Note: Live links for e-mails are disabled in a meager attempt to prevent address harvesting.,.

PEOPLE, NEWS, PUBLICATIONS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Special Issue of *Progressive Planning Magazine* on "Planning for Diversity in Canada: From Rhetoric to Action" co-edited by Amy Siciliano and Norma Rantisi, No. 177, Fall 2008. *Progressive Planning Magazine* is the quarterly publication of Planners Network, an association of planning professionals, activists, academics, and students (Visit www.plannersnetwork.org for more information).

Sandra Baptista, Ph.D. in Geography, Rutgers University, 2008, Email: srb2158@columbia.edu This fall I began a two-year postdoctoral research position at Columbia University as an Earth Institute Fellow. I am based on the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory campus at the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN; <http://www.ciesin.columbia.edu>) where I am primarily involved in projects within the NASA-funded Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center (SEDAC). My current research addresses land use, development, globalization, social inequalities, vulnerabilities, human rights, environmental justice, and participatory governance in metropolitan contexts. In my dissertation, titled "Forest Recovery and Just Sustainability in the Florianópolis City-Region," I focused on the Florianópolis metropolitan region in the state of Santa Catarina, Brazil. Earlier this year, an article in which I report part of my dissertation research was published in the open access journal *Ecology and Society*:

Baptista, Sandra R. 2008. Metropolitanization and forest recovery in southern Brazil: a multiscale analysis of the Florianópolis city-region, Santa Catarina State, 1970 to 2005. *Ecology and Society* 13(2): 5. URL: <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol13/iss2/art5/>

NEW BOOK: Michel S. Laguerre, *Global Neighborhoods: Jewish Quarters in Paris, London and Berlin*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008.

The Jewish enclave is seen as incorporated in the nation-state where it is located and in the global network of sites with which it maintains concrete and permanent relations, as well as in the daily practices and activities of the particular residential community. The logic of the local site as it is transformed into a transglobal site is shaped by and is in sync with the logic of the network. Therefore, while this book allows local actors to voice their opinions and interpretations of everyday life in their neighborhoods, it nevertheless dissects the interface of the global with the local in the production of the enclave as a transglobal site. It also unveils the dominant logic of the network constituted by a heterogeneity of sites, each with own history and cultural orientation.

This book shifts the emphasis from assimilation theory to globalization theory as the proper frame of reference for the study of locality. It also departs from earlier community studies by not assuming that the globalization of the neighborhood comes about mainly or exclusively as a result of the globalization of the metropolis. In contrast, it theorizes the local neighborhood as a global social formation that generates its own global flows, a formation that disciplines, influences, and pollinates metropolitan globalization.

The Tenth Asian Urbanization Conference 16-19 August 2009

First Call for Papers

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 15 February 2009

Please be informed that the 10th Asian Urbanization Conference will be held at the University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, People's Republic of China from 16 to 19 August 2009. Conference Themes: Theoretical or empirical studies on urban form and process, urban population change including migration, urban systems, quality of life, sustainable development, city marketing and economic development, social justice, urban governance, applications related to GIS, comparative urbanization, and environmental conditions in Asian cities. Other papers which contribute to an understanding of Asian urbanization are welcomed.

Paper Abstract Submission and Registration: 15 February 2009 is the deadline for submission of paper abstracts. Abstract should be 100 to no more than 200 words and should be submitted online. The abstract should provide information on the research problem, study area, data, methodology, findings, and significance of the research. While the format of your abstract may vary from this format, these contents are useful and informative to the conference participants. Co-authored papers should indicate who is the main presenter and author. Submission of complete paper is strongly encouraged. Selected papers will be considered for publication after the conference.

The conference registration fee is USD200 for early bird registration (before 30 June 2009) and USD250 for normal registration. The registration fee for student is USD140 and accompanying person is USD140. Registration can be done via online, e-mail or by regular post.

One local technical tour within Hong Kong SAR that features new towns, infrastructures, urban renewal projects will be arranged. An optional field trip (overnight) to Shenzhen / Pearl River Delta region will be arranged at additional cost.

Detailed information of the conference is available at www.hku.hk/asia2009. Please contact the Conference Organizer, Professor Anthony G. O. Yeh or Dr. Roger C. K. Chan of the University of Hong Kong, or Dr George Pomeroy (Asian Urban Research Association (AURA) Secretary-General) if further information is needed.

Conference Secretariat:
Centre of Urban Studies and Urban Planning
The University of Hong Kong
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Hong Kong SAR, China
Tel: (+852) 2859-2721
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Email: asia2009@hku.hk
Homepage: www.hku.hk/asia2009

Sixteenth International Seminar on Urban Form Guangzhou, China, 4 - 7 September 2009

The Sixteenth International Seminar on Urban Form (ISUF 2009), co-hosted by South China University of Technology and Guangzhou Urban Planning Bureau, will take place in Guangzhou, China from Friday 4 September to Monday 7 September 2009. The theme of the conference is *Urban morphology and urban transformation*. The organizers and the Council of ISUF invite participation in the Conference by interested academics and professionals. Topics on which proposals are particularly welcome include:

- Urban morphological theory • Urban morphology, planning and design
- Urban morphology and architectural design • New developments in research on building typology
- Typological research, planning and design • Cities in transition
- Cities in a global era • Urban form in Asia • Traditional urban form
- Urban heritage and change • Geospatial technology in urban morphology



South China University of Technology: venue of ISUF 2009

Proposals for papers should take the form of abstracts of papers, in either English or Chinese. They should be prepared in the following format: title of paper, author(s) name, affiliation, address, e-mail address, telephone number, key words and 250-word abstract. They should be addressed to Professor Yinsheng Tian, Department of Architecture, College of Architecture and Civil Engineering, South China University of Technology, Guangzhou 510640, P. R. China (e-mail: ISUF2009@scut.edu.cn). Abstracts of papers must be received on or before 31 December 2008. Notification of whether abstracts have been accepted will be provided by 1 March 2009. Those whose abstracts have been accepted will be required to pay a registration fee by 15 June 2009 to have their papers included in the conference programme. The registration fee includes membership of ISUF, and conference lunches and dinners.

Following acceptance of abstracts, submission of papers (not exceeding 4000 words) is optional. If submitted, they should be received by Professor Tian by 15 July 2009. Authors should consult the notes for the guidance of contributors to *Urban Morphology*, available on the ISUF website (www.urbanform.org) or in recent copies of the journal, before preparing their papers. Selected papers may be published after the conference.

The official conference languages are English and Chinese. There will be a New Researchers' Forum, in which researchers new to the field are invited to take part. New researchers should indicate when they submit their abstracts whether they would like to be included in the New Researchers' Forum.

The city of Guangzhou, with over 2000 years of history, is the third largest city in China. Capital of one of the most economically dynamic provinces in China and located some 120 kilometres north west of Hong Kong, Guangzhou is the southern gateway of China. A number of excursions to places in the city and the region will be featured.

Enquiries and suggestions concerning the conference should be forwarded to Professor Yinsheng Tian (e-mail: ISUF2009@scut.edu.cn), or Dr Kai Gu (e-mail: k.gu@auckland.ac.nz). The Conference organizing committee comprises Yinsheng Tian and Yunding Lu, South China University of Technology; Dong Wang and Haojun Ye, Guangzhou Urban Planning Bureau; Kai Gu, University of Auckland; and J. W. R. Whitehand, University of Birmingham.