Message from the Commission Chair

Recently, I, with the help of others, prepared a report for the IGU Executive Committee that summarised information about our Commission. I think some of this information is interesting and worth sharing. As of April 2010, our Commission’s listserv included 494 subscribers representing 45 countries. The largest representation of listserv subscribers are in the US and the UK (over 40 each), and India (over 70) where participation has grown rapidly over the last two years. Other notable strengths are in Spain and Canada (each 25); Australia (19); Italy (14); New Zealand (12); Switzerland (11); and Japan (15). Although pleased with this number and spread of subscribers we would welcome more participation from east and south-east Asian countries, African countries, eastern Europe (though the 2009 meeting in Hungary/Romania generated growth to 9 members) and the Middle East (although we do have 7 subscribers from Israel). Latin American membership includes Argentina and Brazil (8 members) and Mexico (6 members) though interest is growing rapidly in this part of the world. So, if you know of anyone who is interested in being on our mailing list please invite them to contact me at robynl@waikato.ac.nz.

As you will see from the content of this newsletter our Commission continues to be very active. Over the past year we have produced a number of newsletters and publications, and supported meetings in a range of places (participating in the Commission on Political Geography meeting, "Borderscapes II" in Sicily, Italy, 13-16 September 2009; and co-sponsoring “Positioning Geography” in Hamilton, New Zealand, 19-22 January 2010; and “Contextualizing Geographical Approaches to Studying Gender in Asia” in Dehli, India, 3-5 March 2010). These collaborations are very productive. More detailed information is available in the newsletter.

Robyn Longhurst, University of Waikato, New Zealand
International Seminar: Contextualizing Geographical Approaches to Studying Gender in Asia

In many ways this extremely successful and timely seminar in Delhi organized by Anindita Datta (University of Delhi) and Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt (Australian National University) was a first. It was the first major initiative in India to engage gender scholars across and within disciplinary boundaries, the first seminar in India under the banner of the IGU Gender Commission, and also the first attempt to bring together significant number of geographers working on gender related themes in Asia in general and India in particular.

Over three days (March 3-5) geographers from 14 countries engaged in 12 parallel sessions that included more than 45 papers, three plenary sessions, and two workshops. Janice Monk (University of Arizona) was the Guest of Honour and the seminar was opened by Veena Mazumdar, often described as the grandmother of the women’s movement in India, and Amitabh Kundu eminent social scientist of Jawaharlal Nehru University. Brenda Yeoh, (National University of Singapore), Linda Peake (York University, Canada, and Tamara Jacka (Australian National University) were plenary speakers. Apart from the delegates, almost a hundred people registered as listeners/workshop participants, underlining the importance of the seminar.

Many small touches aimed at widening the field set the seminar apart. Among these were the deliberate inclusion of voices from the margins (early career researchers and geographers from non metro locations); the distribution of important readings to all participants (courtesy of the British WGSG and ANU) and informal get togethers that broke down cultural barriers creating a spirit of bonhomie and camaraderie.

Sessions ranged from methodological issues to the spatial underpinnings of gender and gender performances over different levels of space, including a distinct movement away from the older political economy approach to the more contemporary postmodern and postcolonial approaches to doing gender. Animated discussions spilled over to the coffee breaks and get togethers so that important connections were forged. The seminar cannot but be remembered as a major milestone in widening and deepening the field in Asia in general and India in particular. We thank everybody for their support and good will and look forward to continuing this dialogue.

Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt
Resource Management
Asia-Pacific Program
Australian National University

Anindita Datta
Department of Geography
Delhi School of Economics
Delhi University

On 19-22 January 2010 three IGU Commissions – the Commission on Geographical Education, the Commission on Tourism, Leisure and Global Change and the Gender and Geography Commission - came together for a geographical education conference at University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. Approximately 80 delegates took part. Countries represented included Papua New Guinea, Saudi Arabia, Australia, Slovakia, Taiwan, United Kingdom, United States and of course New Zealand. Delegates were welcomed with a powhiri (Maori welcome) at the University marae (meeting house).

The four day programme included fieldtrips, keynote presentations, workshops, round-tables and paper presentations. On the first day delegates were offered a choice of fieldtrips, some of which covered an extensive part of the central North Island; a good opportunity for international visitors to explore the country in the warmth of summer. On the second day each of the three Commissions offered a range of activities. The Commissions on Gender and Geography, and Tourism, Leisure and Global Change
joined forces to take a group of delegates on a walking tour of Hamilton that included stops at various buildings, shops, and monuments of potential interest to geographers. It was followed by a visit to the Waikato Museum to see the exhibition ‘Assume Nothing: Celebrating Gender Diversity’ and a screening of the New Zealand movie ‘Top Twins: Untouchable Girls’. The third and fourth days of the conference were devoted mainly to the presentation of research papers and workshops. Paper sessions included ‘indigenous geographies’, and ‘feminist geographies’.

What made this conference different from so many was that it provided an opportunity for school and university teachers and researchers alike to come together resulting in some closing of the gap that so often exists between these institutions. It was also useful having three commissions come together. It enabled a sharing of knowledge on topics such as ‘otherness’, ‘cultural difference’ and technology across different subdisciplinary areas.

- Robyn Longhurst, University of Waikato

News from Around the World

The Geography and Gender of the Association of Italian Geographers organized an international seminar, January 25 at the University of Milan-Bicocca to present an issue of the Italian journal, Geotema, N0. 33, 2007, dedicated exclusively to the theme Luoghi e identità di genere (Places and Gender Identity). edited by Gisela Cortesi. Among speakers were Marcella Schmidt (current president of the Group, University of Milan-Bicocca), Elena dell’Agnese (University of Milan-Bicocca) and the former president of the Group, Gisela Cortesi (University of Pisa). The invited speakers were Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon (Universidad Autònoma de Barcelona) and Jason Dittmer (University College London). The journal issue includes 15 articles, all by Italian geographers. This issue of the journal represents a landmark in the evolution of the geography of gender in Italy, one that has been promoted in a major way by the creation of this Group’s work on gender for more than four years.

Mary Njeri Kinyanjui (Insitute of Development Studies, University of Nairobi) recently held a Visiting Research Fellowship at the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. During her fellowship she worked on the paper Social Relations and Associations in the Informal Sector in Kenya published as Social Policy and Development Paper e-paper No. 43/ 2010. For further information on these UN publications see info@unrisd.org

Susana da Silva (Universidade Federal do Rio Grande) is conducting research on “Working women: stigmas and (im)mobility”) which explores the representations of women’s work in the municipality of Rio Grande (the southern-most Brazilian state) at two historic moments: a) passing from the nineteenth to the twentieth-century, following abolition of slavery and the beginning of industrial activity and the introduction of free labor; and b) from the 1970s to the present, an important period of growth for the fishing
industry and incremental participation of women workers in such industries. The project is funded by the National Advice of Scientific and Technological Development.

Kiran Bhairannavar (University of Delhi) published a highly readable article in the “Opinion” section of the popular national press, The Hindu on the insights of a domestic servant into the daily life of the local community. See below, articles and book chapters.

At the University of Bern the first Bäschlin Lecture: Feminist and Gender Geographies took place January 15-16, 2010. This discussion platform has been initiated to honour Elisabeth Bäschlin for her longstanding contribution to feminist geography and it is planned to be repeated at a 2-years interval. One of the aims of this first event was the creation of a dialogue between younger and older feminist/gender researchers. Projects of early stage researchers were presented and discussed during the first day. The second day was dedicated to reflections on the feminist movement by invited guests (Stephanie Bock, Elisabeth Aufhauser, Annemarie Sancar, Herta Kurig, Doris Stump) and to review its contributions to scientific knowledge, politics, and international collaboration.

On March 12 members of the Gender Group in Geography at the Autonomous University of Barcelona participated on March 12 in an international videoconference with scholars at El Colegio de la Frontera Norte campuses in Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. The videoconference addressed border regions in an era of globalization.

The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, in conjunction with the University of Western Sydney, the University of Adelaide, and the University of Wollongong sponsored the first annual Fay Gale Travelling Lecture in 2010. in March and April, 2010. Presented by Kay Anderson on the theme “A provocation from the periphery: rethinking ‘the human.” In memory of Fay Gale, AO (1932 - 2008) the lecture series honors the Australian pioneer woman geographer for her contributions to academia, the advancement of women within academia, Indigenous Studies, and juvenile justice. Fay was the first woman President of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia and also Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Australia.

The retirement of Maria Luisa Gentileschi of the University of Cagliari, Sicily, has been honored by publication of a book edited by Monica Iorio and Giovanni Sistu, Dove finisce il mare (Cagliari:,Sandhi Editore 2010): With articles in Italian and English, one section is devoted entirely to women /gender themes which also recur in sections on migration and knowing places. Contributors to the book represent Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Romania, the UK and the US, testifying to Maria Luisa’s reach. The first conference on gender sponsored by an IGU Commission (by the Commission on Population Geography) was organized by Maria Luisa in Sardinia in 1982

The University of Toronto (Canada) conferred an honorary degree in 2010 on Emeritus Professor Marie Sanderson, first woman graduate in geography from the University and first Canadian woman to become a full professor in Geography. Her biographical study of
the 19th century British woman geographer Mary Somerville (*Geographical Review*, 1974) is one of the earliest works to bring women into the history of the discipline.

**Elsbeth Robson** is now working with Nanzikambe Arts for Development - an NGO based in Malawi (www.nanzikambe.org) using participatory theatre arts for development. Their work has a strong gender dimension to challenge inequalities and works for example with women's community arts groups. She would be interested to hear from other geographers about similar participatory research or activism they may be engaged with involving drama and theatre around the world. (e.robson@Africa-Online.net)

**Elisabeth Bühler** reports that the gendered and gendering nature of the economy will be one of the three main areas of interest at the unit of economic geography at the Department of Geography at the University of Zurich, Switzerland under its new chair, Christian Berndt. Other foci are geographies of global production and consumption and labor markets and migration.

Congratulations to **Saraswati Raju** (Jawaharlal Nehru University) who has been awarded the 2010 Jan Monk Distinguished Service Award by the Geographic Perspectives on Women Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers. This is the first time the award has been made to a geography outside the US or Europe. She is currently working on the project: ‘More Unequal than others: Gender disparities in Higher Education in Kerala’, sponsored by The Kerala State Higher Education Council.

*Global Medical Geography: Essays in Honour of Professor Yola Verhasselt*, edited by Rais Aktar and Nilofar Izhar has just been published in India in recognition of Yola Verhasselt’s (Belgium) important and long-standing international contributions to research on geographies of health. A section of the book focuses on women’s health (see references to book chapters below in this newsletter).

Congratulations to **Ibipo Johnston-Anumonwo** (State University of New York Cortland) on being awarded the Chancellor’s Award for Distinguished Scholarship in the State University of New York multi-campus system wide competition. Among her works are *Diversity, Multiculturalism, and Social Justice* (co-edited with Seth N. Asumah, Binghamton, NY Global Publications); her multiple articles on gender, race, and urban commuting in the US, and her forthcoming work in *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* on the implications of globalization for women’s work in Africa’s informal economies.

**Special Journal Issues**

*Revista Latino-americana de Geografia e Gênero* 1(1), 2010 inaugurates a new electronic journal. The introductory issue includes eleven articles (see below)
Gender, Work and Organization 17(1), 2010 is a special issue on “Spatial Sexuality reflecting the spatial turn in sociology.”

Janice Monk and Lan-Hung Nora Chiang, have edited a special issue on “Asian Women: Gender, Migration, and Work” for Journal of Geographical Science, December 2009, No. 57. The journal is published at National Taiwan University See below for individual articles.

Social and Cultural Geography 10(8), 2009 is a special issue on men and masculinities. See entries below.

Agora 3, 2009 is a special issue on prostitution. See entries below.

New Books


Recent Articles and Book Chapters


Bhairannavar, Kiran. 2010. “She even opens the pages of history no historian could even have thought of.” THE HINDU, May 2.2010. http://beta.thehindu.com/opinion/open-page/article419457.ece


Boyer, Kate. 2009 (or 10?) “Of care and commodities: breastmilk and the new politics of mobile biosubstances.” Progress in Human Geography 34: 5-20


Giddings, Carla and Alice J. Hovorka. 2010. “Place, ideological mobility and youth negotiations of gender identities in urban Botswana, Gender, Place and Culture. 17(2): 211 - 229


Hanson, Susan. 2010. “Gender and mobility: new approaches for informing sustainability.” Gender, Place and Culture 17(1):5-23.


Hazel, Rob van den and Sybil van Oijen. 2009. “Prostitutie is anders” (Prostitution is different), *Agora* 2009-3:: 4-5.


Houston, Serin, D., James Mclean, Jennifer Hyndman, and Arif Jamal. 2010. “Still methodologically becoming: collaboration, feminist politics, and ‘Team Ismail’.” *Gender, Place and Culture* 17(1): 61-70.


Kenwaym Jane and Anna Hickey-Moody.” Spatialized leisure pleasures, global flows, and masculine distinctions.” *Social and Cultural Geography* 10(8) 837-52,


Lundstrom, Catrin. 2010. “Concrete bodies?: young Latina women transgressing the boundaries of race and class in white inner-city Stockholm. Gender, Place and Culture 17(2):151 - 167


Mulligan, Adrian. 2009. “‘By a thousand ingenious feminine devices’: The Ladies Land League and the development of Irish nationalism.” *Historical Geography* 37: 159-77.


Ortiz, Anna; Mireia Baylina, and Maria Prats. 2009. "Paisatges quotidians i diversitat social i de gènere: la seva relació amb la salut i el benestar.” In J.Nogué; L. Puigbert; G. Bretcha (eds.), *Paisatge i salut*, Observatori del Paisatge,


Pujol, Herminia, Anna Ortiz and Maria Dolors Garcia-Ramon. 2009. “La presencia y la carrera profesional de las mujeres en la geografía académica. Estudio de las


Riley, Mark, 2009. “Bringing the ‘invisible farmer’ into sharper focus: gender relations and agricultural practices in the Peak District (UK).” Gender, Place and Culture 16(6):n665-82.


Samson, Melanie. 2010. “Producing pivatisation: re-articulating race, gender, class and space.” Antipode 42(2) 404-32


Shirlow, Pete and Lorraine Dowler. 2010. “‘Wee women no more’: Female partners of republican political prisoners in Belfast.” *Environment and Planning A.* 42(2) 384-99.


Song, Jesook. 2010. “A room of one's own?: the meaning of spatial autonomy for unmarried women in neoliberal South Korea.” *Gender, Place and Culture,* 17(2): 131 – 149


Vogel, I., L. van Rossum, K. van Drongelen, H. Haisma, I. Mesters, K. van Wouwe & H. Raath. 2009. *Borstvoeding in de eerste zes maanden; Een focusgroep studie naar de redenen en motieven van vrouwen om gedeeltelijk of geheel te stoppen met het geven van borstvoeding in de eerste zes maanden.* [Breastfeeding in the first six months; a focus group study on the reasons and motives of women to stop breastfeeding partly or entirely in the first six months]. Rotterdam: Instituut voor Maatschappelijke Gezondheidszorg.


