

# INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL UNION COMMISSION ON GENDER AND GEOGRAPHY

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## Letter from Commission Chair

On 25-26 July 2011 I attended the ‘Householding in Transition: Emerging Dynamics in “Developing” East and Southeast Asia’ workshop in Singapore. For me the heat was a welcome change from the cold of the New Zealand winter. This event was superbly organised and a great success. Gender was an important theme throughout. For more information see Shirlena Huang’s report later in this newsletter.

In my last note from the Chair I mentioned being on the Steering Committee of the [International Year of Global Understanding](#) (IYGU), an [IGU](#) initiative lead by Professor Benno Werlen. It aims to mobilize the sciences, social sciences and humanities in a united effort to raise awareness of the global implications of everyday living. Benno is keen to see gender issues addressed as part of this project. Funding issues are still being resolved and I hope to be able report more in the next newsletter.

I would like to remind everyone that on 8-10 November 2011 we will be addressing the theme ‘Connecting differences through spatial borders’ at the Pontificia Universidade Católica (PUC) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This will be the inaugural Latin-American meeting of the Commission (it will precede the IGU regional conference 14-18 November 2011 in Santiago, Chile). For more information on the Rio meeting see <http://www.gete.net.br/ocs/index.php/ugi/SGGUGI> or contact Joseli Maria Silva at [joseli.genero@gmail.com](mailto:joseli.genero@gmail.com). It is not too late if you would like to take part.

Next year, 23-25 August 2012, our Commission will host a pre-meeting ‘Down to earth: identities, bodies and spatial scales’ at the University of Hamburg, Germany (it will precede the International Geographical Congress, 26-30 August in Cologne). More information, including contact details of the organizers, is available in this newsletter.

Finally, Commission members have been busy publishing. In particular two sets of articles have emerged from the meeting ‘Post-Socialism, Neo-Liberalism – Old and New Gendered Societies and Policies held Szeged, Hungary and Timisoara, Romania 23-25 May 2009. One is a special issue of *Annals of West University of Timisoara*, Series *GEOGRAPHIE*, XIX, 2009. Articles are included in the bibliography below. and see also <http://www.geografie.uvt.ro/en/research/publications/annals/annals2009.htm>); the other is the latest issue of *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education* (IRGEE), Vol 20, No. 3. 2011. (also in the bibliography) .

**Robyn Longhurst**

**University of Waikato. Aotearoa/New Zealand**

## **Singapore Workshop: “Householding in Transition: Emerging Dynamics in ‘Developing’ East and Southeast Asia.”:**

The IGU Commission on Gender and Geography together with the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore and the Department of Geography, Royal Holloway University of London, organized an international workshop on “Householding in Transition: Emerging Dynamics in ‘Developing’ East and Southeast Asia” on July 25-26, 2011 in Singapore. **Shirlena Huang**, (National University of Singapore) and a member of the Gender Commission’s Steering Committee served on the organizing committee for the workshop which was held at the Asia Research Institute in Singapore. Commission Chair, **Robyn Longhurst**, (University of Waikato) chaired a session and also provided concluding remarks at the end of the conference. Drawing on the concept of transnational ‘householding’ forwarded by Michael Douglass, who keynoted the workshop, speakers sought to enhance current understandings of the profound implications of the dramatic social and economic changes that have swept the region in recent decades with consequences for the domestic landscapes in some of Asia’s lesser understood country contexts. Thirteen papers – covering Cambodia, China, Laos, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam – examined the forces shaping, and the challenges facing, household structures and their members’ everyday lives along three broad themes: (non)marriage and divorce; inter-generational questions concerning aging and care; and issues surrounding migration and the ‘left behind.’ In wrapping up the workshop Robyn observed that gender was a theme that ran through most of the presentations and suggested that sexuality is a topic we might see increasingly addressed in future research on householding in the region. Finally, she prompted a discussion on some of the similarities and differences between the terms ‘household,’ often used in literature on migration, global cities, transnationalism, and diaspora, and ‘home’, often used in feminist, social, and cultural geography. The final discussion was a productive end to two very fruitful days. For the full program, with abstracts and bios of speakers see: [http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/events\\_categorydetails.asp?categoryid=6&eventid=1092](http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/events_categorydetails.asp?categoryid=6&eventid=1092)

## **.Pre-IGC-Conference: IGU-Commission on Gender and Geography, August 23-25, 2012, Hamburg, Germany.**

The conference will be held at University of Hamburg. Campus. Bundesstraße), located close to the city centre (railway station: Hamburg-Dammtor). All conference venues are in walking distance and/or accessible by public transport. Hamburg is easily accessible by air (international airport), sea (port) and train from all over Europe; train ride to Cologne (IGC main conference) is 4 hours.

The **General Theme** is “**Down to Earth: Identities, Bodies and Spatial Scales.**” It encompasses gender issues with a particular focus on embodied identities and their materialities at various spatial scales, but also more general feminist concerns in urban and migration studies, as well as political, economic and social geographies.

**Call for Papers and Sessions** will be posted in October 2011; deadline for abstracts is end of March 2012. Authors of accepted papers will be notified in May 2012 and a preliminary program and list of participants will be circulated soon after. (It is planned to publish a special journal issue in 2013 with a selection of conference papers)

**Conference fee** for university staff will be € 100; for students € 50, including tea, coffee and lunch. Dinner and transfer to Cologne on Sunday are not included in the registration fee.

**Accommodation:** There are many hostels and hotels close to the conference venue (from € 19 upward) and private accommodation can also be organized (for students).

**Local Organization Committee** members are Anke Strüver (University of Hamburg, [struever@geowiss.uni-hamburg.de](mailto:struever@geowiss.uni-hamburg.de)) and Sybille Bauriedl (University of Kassel, [bauriedl@uni-kassel.de](mailto:bauriedl@uni-kassel.de))

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Congratulations to the recently created **Rede de Estudos de Geografia e Gênero da America Latina (REGAL)** on the publication of its edited book (see below, **Joseli Maria Silva, Marcio Jose Ornat, and Alides Baptista Chimin Junior**). REGAL represents the expanding activity and productivity of feminist/gender geographers in Brazil. In this volume the Brazilian editors have brought together an array of geographers from Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, and Portugal, notably widening the international reach of contributions to the field. The book's contributors address an array of settings in rural and urban, public and private spaces. They bring diverse approaches to their investigations: interpretation of cultural representations in media, analysis of planning and policy documents, in-depth qualitative interviews, examination of multiple case studies, analysis of spatial behaviors, and examination of national statistics. In so doing, they demonstrate the multiple ways in which gender roles, relations, and identities can be explored. But beyond simply documenting lives and places, the book exhibits commitments to raising social and political consciousness and change. Contributors make visible such crucial issues as domestic violence and the disproportionately high rate of female murders in Latin American countries. They show how even in situations of crisis and warfare, women's activism can have personally transcendent implications and support personal empowerment. They point to the limits of hierarchical political and social structures for sustainable environments of production.

At the August 2011 conference of the Royal Geographical Society/Institute of British Geographers in London, gender research was well represented in 20 sessions either sponsored by the Women and Geography Study Group or co-sponsored with Research Groups such as Children, Youth and Families; Leisure and Tourism; Space, Sexualities and Queer, and the Developing Areas. Illustrating the range of gender research and

international engagement were papers by **Isis Díaz-Carrión** (Universidad Complutense de Madrid) “When did the river become masculine? Tourist use of natural resources in Jalcomulco (Mexico)” in the session on “Imagining Rural Landscapes beyond Traditional Gender(ed) Structures;” by **Fazeeha Azmi** (University of Peradinaya), **Catherine Brun** and **Ragnhild Lund** (Norwegian University of Science and Technology) on “Inclusive Citizenship and Gendered Participation: Perceptions of Youth in Sri Lanka” in the session on “Youth in the Global South; “Friendship as Place: Social and Cultural Practices of Barcelona’s Teenagers” by **Anna Ortiz, Maria Prats** and **Mireia Baylina** (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) in one of several sessions devoted to geographies of friendships, and by **Katherine Brickell** (Royal Holloway, University of London) on “Community Dramatisation of Family Life: Participatory Video as Research and Gender-Training Tool in Hue, Central Vietnam” co-sponsored with three other research groups.

Congratulations to **Yoga Rasanayagam** (Sri Lanka) who has been appointed as the **Chancellor of the Eastern University of Sri Lanka** by the His Excellency, the President of Sri Lanka with immediate effect for five years. It is a great honor to hold this position especially since Yoga is the first Tamil woman to be appointed Chancellor of a Sri Lankan University. Now retired from the University of Colombo, Yoga was one of the first members of the IGU Commission on Gender and Geography, so we are especially pleased to learn of her appointment. .

The Women’s Research Program at National Taiwan University celebrated the distinguished career of geographer **Lan-Hung Nora Chiang** on her recent retirement with a farewell seminar on “The Difficulties, Challenges and Breakthroughs of Gender Researchers”: on April 19, 2011. The seminar also marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Women’s Research Program of which Professor Chiang was a co-founder and director.

Congratulations to **Heidi Kaspar** who was awarded her doctorate in Geography at the University of Zurich in July on her research on the everyday appropriation of space in urban public parks. The research indicates that despite various measures towards safer cities, women continue to express concerns about safety and fear of crime as they did in the past.. An inference is that increasing street lighting, a common measure, leaves the power relations between sexes untouched. Heidi is pursuing the issue of feelings of safety, including men's perspectives in a project (2011-2013 undertaken on behalf of the municipality of Zurich in a newly built public park.

Congratulations to **Sylvia Chant** (London School of Economics) who has been named as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (FRSA) on account of her “expertise and exploration of gender in geographical development’.” See references below for the latest of her continuing contributions.

**Anindita Datta** (Delhi School of Economics) continues to be active internationally in contributing to gender studies in geography on Asian themes. In July she delivered a keynote presentation at a workshop on “Youth Risk and Sexuality in Vietnam and India: Educational Concerns.” In September she will share her work on “Regional Constructs of Gender in India” and “Power and Agency within Indigenous Feminisms in Asia “ at the

Population Research Centre, Faculty of Spatial Sciences, University of Groningen, the Netherlands, as part of the 'New India Program. The goal of the visit it also to build collaborative networks with interested faculty. This will be followed with a lecture tour during India Week at NTNU in Norway on themes of declining sex ratios and regional constructs of gender in India. She also recently edited a special issues of *Gender, Technology and Development* (15 (3)) on " Gender and Space: Themes from Asia".which will be out in November. This is the first post seminar publication of several planned from the event which Delhi University, Australian National University and the IGU Commission on Gender and Geography held in Delhi in 2010..

**Jasmine Truong, Christian Berndt and Karin Schwiter** (University of Zurich) have received funding from the city of Zurich to analyse the market of care providers for the elderly in private homes in Zurich (German title: Marktanalyse "Care in Zürcher Privathaushalten") The project represents an example of the contributions that Swiss geographers working in gender studies are making in the public arena.

## NEW BOOKS

Gilbert, Melissa R. and Michelle Masucci. 2011. *Information and Communication Technology Geographies: Strategies for Bridging the Digital Divide* (This book, which addresses issues related to low income women, may be downloaded. <http://www.praxis-epress.org/availablebooks/ictgeographies.html>)

Jaschok, Maria and Jingjun Shui. 2011. *Women, Religion and Space in China: Islamic Mosques and Daoist Temples, Catholic Convents and Chinese Virgins*. London and New York: Routledge.

Melesu, Afaf Ibrahim, Eugenie L. Birch, and Susan M. Wachter (eds). 2011. *Women's Health and the World's Cities*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Raju, Saraswati (ed). 2011, *Gendered Geographies: Space and Place in South Asia*. New Delhi, U.K. and U..S: Oxford University Press.

Silva, Joseli Maria, Marcio Jose Ornatm and Alides Baptista Chimin Junior. (eds) 2011. *Espaç. E Gênero Feminilidades ibero-americanas*. Ponta Gross. Todapalavra.

Twine, Francine Winndance. 2011. *Outsourcing the Womb.: Race, class, and gestational surrogacy un a global market.*” London and New York: Routledge.

Note: Two books previously published in hardback editions the International Studies of Women and Place series (Routledge, NY and London) are now available in paperback: Dyck, Isabel, Nancy Davis Lewis, and Sara McLafferty (eds) *Geographies of Women's Health* and Anne Coles and Anne-Meike Fechter (eds) *Gender and Family Among Transnational Professionals*.

## SPECIAL JOURNAL ISSUES

*Annals of West University of Timisoara* 19 (2009) is a special issues guest edited by Sorina Voiculescu and Robyn Longhurst that includes an editorial introduction and ten articles originally presented at the IGU Commission on Gender and Geography conference on “Gender, Post-socialism and neo-liberalism” held in Szeged, Hungary and Timisoara, Romania in 2009. See below for contents. For the English version see: <http://www.geografie.uvt.ro/en/research/publications/annals/annals2009.htm>

*Justice Spatiale: Spatial Justice* (volume 3) is a bi-lingual French-English journal issue that addresses issues of gender/sexuality in urban spaces. The entire issue can be downloaded from (<http://www.jssj.org>) with separate versions in each language.

*International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education* 20 (2) August 2011 includes a Forum section on “Perspectives on teaching geography and gender in a postsocialist, neoliberal-dominated world.” The individual items are listed in the section below. The papers were originally offered at the IGU Gender Commission conference sessions in Timisoara, Romania, and include contributions from Aotearoa/New Zealand, Israel, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain, and an overview of issues that emphasizes earlier developments and trends over time in the US and Britain. .

## BOOK CHAPTERS AND ARTICLES

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