

SWOT-Analysis

Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities – Threats

This document contains the participants' arguments that were grouped according to similarity and focus

Strengths¹

Organization

- The hospitality and good environment contributed for a very good atmosphere of stimulating discussions during the breaks and the walk
- Very good organization of time schedule, fantastic timing and schedule, excellent organization and timing, great organization and strict observation of time
- Excellent organization in all aspects, perfect organization
- Successful conference especially in terms of getting the experiences of researchers and speakers from different parts of the world, I consider the symposium totally successful
- Prior distribution of “list of participants”
- The most cohesive program we ever had in the commission and in international conferences in general
- A really international conference
- The various topics and origins of the communications and people
- Abstracts were well valued and sessions were organized according to topics
- Excellent grouping of individual papers into sessions that had common themes
- Coherence of the program in general and the individual sessions, very well organized themes
- Thematic focus with option for wide interpretation
- Interesting inputs
- No parallel sessions, possibility to hear all presentations / papers, we all heard the same talks
- The best aspect of this conference was that all sessions had all the audience (no parallel sessions). Often I was disappointed in conferences to present my paper for only 4-5 participants that did not happen to me this time.
- Interesting contributions
- The whole organization (program and development)
- There was a good variety of presenters from junior to senior
- Heterogeneity and coherence
- Friendly, cooperative and relaxed atmosphere

¹ The question people were asked to answer, was: “We would like to invite you to outline one or two positive aspects – aspects that you do consider as strength or success of the past two days.”

Papers and Presentations

- Very good theme sessions organization and high interest of papers presented
- Very well focused topic of the conference
- Papers from many countries, seeing all the new work on gender
- Spread of papers, participants, diversity of cultures, approaches, rich
- Great diversity of discourses, subjects and countries, large variety of papers (themes, countries)
- The scientific level of the contents
- Stimulating papers (some) and inputs
- Most papers good, some exceptional
- The abstracts were very informative
- Good mix of topics
- High quality of presentations
- The presentations were almost all of high standard with lively debates
- Bringing together such an exciting group of people, presentation and discussion

General aspects

- The discussions were very friendly, pleasant and open minded atmosphere
 - It was very friendly and great to meet people who work on gender geography
 - Easy to communicate with the presenters / to ask questions because of the friendly and democratic atmosphere
 - I got a better idea about the possibilities in research within gender geography
 - Introduction to a rich diversity of research on public space
 - Interesting thematic division of sessions
 - The size of the group was ideal
 - I met great people and had the chance to talk to them, opportunity to meet a lot of colleagues
 - I found very different research, communication and cultures that I have been used to, thus improved to expect, understand and even work in a different way, widening of perspectives, good variety of approaches
 - Possibilities to sketch interdisciplinary dimensions or introduce methodical debate
 - I found people concerning very similar issues and even technical problems I deal with, thus found an opportunity to help to resolve very particular problems I have in my research
 - Impressed by the depth of thinking / theorizing in most of the papers
 - For me it means new point of view in geography
 - I leave with a lot of new ideas for future research; there is hope in the world! We try to change international signs and make them more gender...(?)
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- Learning process from papers and walking through Zurich
 - City tour, great excursion, very interesting tour of the city
 - Technical assistance was great, great help from Powerpoint
 - All the staff was great, helpful and sincere
 - Besides the excellent organization: I was introduced to a rich diversity of research on public space, impressed by the depth of thinking / theorizing in most of the papers, open atmosphere of debate vs. time restrictions

Weaknesses²

Organization

- I would welcome edition of written papers in advance (at the place)
- Not enough space for discussion (workshops in groups would be better, because we can read papers – the same like to see presentations, but we didn't have much space for exchange of opinions)
- Time constraints after presentations – sometimes felt more than at other times
- In some sessions very little time for discussion (not easily compensated by informal talks during the breaks)
- The last panel needed a bit more time, lack of discussion time
- We needed more time for discussion after each panel as a group
- Fewer presentations could contribute to a richer discussion of the work presented
- Less speakers in each panel and hence a bit more than 15 min presentation. 5 min discussion; impossible to achieve and too stressful but also counter productive to limit discussion
- Speakers who try to pack too much information in the talk (difficult to follow)
- Speakers who have not clearly formulated their presentations, taking into account the differing language capabilities of the audience.
- Some of the papers presentations didn't follow the time constraints
- Pressure, fatigue, overload...(I am older...)
- Too long days, longer breaks or more time for questions and presentations could be very welcome
- Density of program and papers, not enough time for discussion
- More than two days and hence spread panels over half days with evenings less compact
- Too much working hours, sessions until too late. Would prefer 2, 5 or 3 days and shorter sessions
- Longer breaks or more time for questions and presentations could be very welcome
- I would prefer parallel sessions in order to get a less full day-program. It is not possible to be intellectual active after too many presentations on one day.
- Why no "concurrent sessions"? Sometimes sessions were too broadly thematic and focused sessions on specific aspects of gender or sexualized relations to public space could have been organized
- Some weak speakers
- Speakers who just read their papers (without eye contact, without support of graphic material)
- Functionally of power point to be verified in advance (ex. videos projection)
- The microphone during the discussions was very unequally distributed and participants asking for word but sitting too far from chairs were ignored

² The question people were asked to answer, was: "Now we would like to invite you to name one or two negative points – points that you consider as weaknesses of the past two days."

- Reduce fees, find more funding and offer more scholarships
- Assistance with hotel selection / accommodation and provision of food at lunchtime was lacking
- Lack of information (and lack of maps!) given to the participants in advance
- The city tour did not meet my expectations. There were no opportunities to visit shops, ride the boats and simply absorb the city's atmosphere.
- Translations from French... to French....

Thematic aspects

- Several presentations were too monographic. The approaches were too local and not enough theoretic for me.
- More theoretical issues
- The approach of public spaces presented with regards gender issues are very local and particular
- Not many people, including me, provided focused presentations i.e. a diffusion of ideas, or incomplete value of data was often the end result
- Papers that spent too much time on their introduction / theoretical framework so we didn't get to hear the individual's research or about their project. The advantage of such a focused conference is that we are all up to date on the literature, so it's not necessary to explain it – just a list is more than sufficient (public/name/year)
- Only paper presentations without activities to connect presentations (coreferees, general discussions, somebody who formulates some conclusions from one or more sessions)
- Geographers' lack of knowledge of planning and it's tools

General aspects

- The lecture halls
- As in other conferences, cramming in all submitted papers
- I couldn't have made it better
- No one, no weaknesses

Opportunities³

People

- Encourage young people to participate
- There was quite a few young people but we should do some more along this line and look for funding
- Listen to young people having Teleconference
- Think about why several countries are so sub – represented (at European scale) and how to imply (?) them

³ The question people were asked to answer, was: “We would like you to tell us, how **future meetings** of the commission could be improved. Please name one or two opportunities to make it better in the future. If you wish, you may also name specific **topics** that should be discussed closer in future meetings.”

- Funding for all future meetings in order to encourage a broader participation
- More opportunities for funding for participants
- Have the meetings spread across more days, maybe Thursday – Saturday so the papers can be a bit more spread and participants can have more time between sessions to rest etc.
- Bring in more participants from the third world! China, India were glaring holes in the participant list, so was Latin America. If necessary, provide funding to them to travel.
- To organize the conference in East Europe, to invite people from countries where this discipline is not well developed
- It would be good to have dormitory style and priced housing available for all to stay in the same place.

Organization

- No parallel sessions
- More days, less hours per day

- More support for non English speakers
- I appreciated (not frequent) co-operations and mutual help when people did not feel comfortable to speak English. Mutual support in translation should be encouraged.
- There can be offered participation grants for those who offer to make simultaneous translations so as to encourage non English speakers
- If it's known that a paper will be presented in a language that most of the participants do not communicate in, some arrangements should be made to have someone to translate etc.

- Divide the program into presentations and works in groups (possibility to create new partnerships; new papers and projects)

- By inviting local woman (etc.) associations to learn more about the place we are
- More information about the city and the country in advance
- Written papers
- Maybe (!) there's a way to reduce the number of papers in a session in order to spare more time to discussion
- Do round tables on panels on specific issues, presenting posters, longer conferences and field things
- More space for exchange of opinions
- Perhaps parallel sessions; to have the possibility to discuss a bit longer
- Make sure there is enough time for discussion after the presentations
- Some workshop on specific themes, not just case studies
- Include a couple of slots where moderated small group discussions can reflect on overlapping themes that emerged from papers
- Refereed, peer-reviewed special issue out of the conference papers
- Perhaps session chairs or discussion moderators could have papers from their sessions in advance in order to be prepared to lead effective discussions

- Information on publication possibilities for members of the commission

Suggestions for future topics

- The discussion issues opened in this symposium deserve another Conference, with more discussion time (and perhaps fewer papers)
- Suggest a conference at 2009 in border area Hungary / Romania / Serbia. Topic: “Gender and / in space”, “Gender and rural area”
- I think a specific session on sexuality should be organized and trans-disciplinary dimension reinforced.
- The question of “ethics” in research
- I hope there will be a future session about geography of sexualities

Presentations and papers

- Try to encourage discussion and papers on more theoretical and conceptual issues linked to gender
- I would welcome edition and distribution of all full versions of papers related to presentation in the place
- More variety in working / presenting / discussion forms, for example restricting presentations to 10 min and then do more collaborative work afterwards
- Meet in round table format
- More attention for teaching
- Better integration with general economic geography

- I can't think of a thing – very nice job and organization

Threats⁴

Organization

- A longer participation might need longer time and higher expenses for accommodation, meals, etc.
- Lack by financial support to attract people from allover the world
- Time is money; a lot of people could not afford to participate at longer conferences
- Less budget
- The risk of longer conferences is that people come for less time or not at all.
- The unstable status of people “doing gender” in various universities may threaten the allocation of resources of such meetings and the possibilities of younger people to attend
- A problem is that people only can participate (get funding) when they present a paper, however, you could restrict this to 10 min (as it happens sometimes in other conferences) and then save some time for discussion, collaboration, other ways of interaction, and exchange of experiences on teaching
- One risk would be to not incorporate young people in the commission

⁴ The question people were asked to answer, was: “Which are – in your opinion – the greatest risks or threats that prevent an improvement of the future of our commission’s meetings? Please reconsider the opportunities for future meetings you have just outlined. Do you see any threats that would prevent the implementation of these opportunities? If you see such threats, please name them.”

- Developed country participants might feel alienated or even marginalized in the presence of more women from China, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Indonesia
 - As organizers get older who and how will take the witness / replace them?
 - How to increase the dynamization through ITCs before and after the meetings?
 - (Self) selection process
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- To repeat too much “women’s lives” without going beyond the making visible.
 - Adding moderated small group discussions would need to be in parallel sessions
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- Problems of language ability and ability of using English which discourages and sometimes even discriminates people
 - If simultaneous translations will be provided then it might take too long
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- Lose small size, inclusive nature
 - Lose personal relations through teleconferencing

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