

International Geographical Union
Commission on Political Geography
www.cas.sc.edu/geog/cpg
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Edited by Anton Gosar

IGU Commission on Political Geography, 2004-2008

Chair-in-Charge : Anton Gosar, Department of Geography, University of Primorska, Titov trg 5, 6000 Koper/Capodistria, Slovenia. E-mail : anton.gosar@guest.arnes.si

Secretary : David Newman, Department of Politics & Government, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, POB 653, 84105 Beer Sheva, Israel. E-mail : newman@bgumail.bgu.ac.il

Webmaster : Carl Dahlman, Department of Geography, University of South Carolina, Columbia SC 29208, USA. E-mail : dahlmac@muohio.edu

Steering Committee :

° Sanjay Chaturvedi, Centre for the Study of Geopolitics, Panjab University, 1600-014 Chandigarh, India. Email : sanjay@pu.ac.in

° Elena Dell'Agnese, Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Milano-Bicocca, Via Bicocca degli Arcimbaldi 8, 20126 Milan, Italy. E-mail : elena.dellagnese@unimib.it

° Alexandru Ilies, Department of Geography, University of Oradea, Str. Armata Romana 5, 410078 Oradea, Romania. E-mail : ilies@uoradea.ro

° Maano Ramutsindela, Department of Environmental and Geographical Science, University of Cape Town, Private Bag, 7701 Rondebosch, South Africa. E-mail : maano@enviro.uct.ac.za

° Paul Reuber, Institute of Geography, University of Münster, Robert Koch Strasse 26, 48149 Münster, Germany. E-mail : p.reuber@uni-muenster.de

° Lynn Staeheli, Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado, Boulder CO 80309-0487, USA. Email : lynnr@colorado.edu

° Marek Sobczynski, Department of Political Geography, University of Lodz, Collegium Geographicum, ul. Kopcinskiego 31, 90142 Lodz, Poland. E-mail : marsob@geo.uni.lodz.pl

° Takashi Yamazaki, Department of Geography, Osaka City University, Sugimoto, Sumiyoshi-ku, 5588585 Osaka, Japan. E-mail : yamataka@lit.osaka-cu.ac.jp

I – Chairman's Column

Dear Commission Members, Friends and Colleagues:

In the course of the year 2007 the commission has experienced an unexpected restructuring as the Chair of the Commission on Political Geography, our distinguished colleague and friend, *Prof. Andre-Louis Sanguin* resigned from the office. This personal decision by Andre-Louis came unexpectedly and on a very short notice. It had its reasoning in the obscure accusations and actions of his employer, the University of Paris IV (Sorbonne). In the name of the IGU Executive Committee I was on Mai 28, 2007 appointed by Jose L. Palacio, First Vice President and Acting President to the Chairmanship of the IGU's Commission on Political Geography. *Prof. Vladimir Kolosov*, previous Chair of the IGU Commission on Political Geography (1996 – 2004) and Vice-President of the International Geographical Union, was very helpful in establishing contacts to the major key players within the commission and IGU as I took office. It took me a while to come into grips with the new function and the organizational structure of the IGU. This is the second Newsletter of the Commission in 2007 and eight in the time-frame of the mandate. But, since this is my first column and my first Newsletter of the Commission, I hope you will go easy on me! I have added a new chapter with the intention to stimulate discussion among us, members of the Commission.

Prof. Andre-Louis Sanguin. I would like to thank *Prof. Andre-Louis Sanguin* for the efforts and the time he has devoted to make this commission, the Commission on Political Geography, to be among the most active group of scholars within the frame of the IGU! After 20-years in existence and 5 four-years terms, the Commission on Political Geography has been renewed at the IGU IGC in Glasgow (August 2004) and Professor André-Louis Sanguin (France) has been elected as the fifth Chair of this body of political geographers. Andre-Louis Sanguin

had been Vice-Chair during Vladimir Kolossov's two terms as Chair. The current mandate expires at the IGU IGC in Tunis (August 2008).

Commission's History. On the occasion of the 25th IGU International Congress in Paris (August 1984), a Study Group on the World Political Map was created by the IGU General Assembly and Executive Committee. Its first Chair was *Professor Ronald Johnston* (UK). Due to the huge pressures exerted at the Paris Congress by the Soviet delegation and its leader, the academician Inokienti Gerasimov, the use of the expression "Political Geography" was criticized (which had a "fascist and Nazi connotation," according to Gerasimov) and the final choice was "World Political Map"! With the 26th IGU IGC in Sydney (August 1988), the Study Group was transformed into a Full Commission under the same name. The second Chair was *Professor David Knight* (Canada). At the 27th IGU IGC in Washington (August 1992), the Commission was renewed for a third term with a new Chair, *Professor Herman Van Der Wusten* (The Netherlands). At the 28th IGU IGC in The Hague (August 1996), *Professor Vladimir Kolossov* (Russia) succeeded the previous Chair. On the occasion of the 29th IGU IGC, which was held in Seoul (August 2000), Professor Kolossov was re-elected for a second and last term in accordance with IGU rules. At that meeting the name of the Commission was transformed into "Commission on Political Geography". In 2004 *Professor Andre-Louis Sanguin* became Chair. This year the first electronic Newsletter was distributed among membership and our own page became active.

Tunis 2008. At present our attention should be focused on the oncoming IGU conference in Tunis. On behalf of the community of Tunisian geographers, we are invited to take part in the proceedings of the **XXXIst Geographical Congress** that will be held in **Tunis from August 12th to 15th 2008**. The 2008 Tunis Congress will be held under the aegis of His Excellency Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia. It enjoys the support of the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technology, and is backed by various other ministerial departments and academic and research institutions. The Congress will be held in a country rich of a three thousand years old heritage, and enjoying an exceptional geographical diversity. It is a country of openness and dialogue, offering its hospitality to, and providing all world geographers with the necessary means to grant the success of their congress. For this major geographical event, the National Organizing Committee of the 2008 Tunis Congress has planned a scientific agenda meant to further develop the reflection and debates of the past two decades, while highlighting new paradigms and promoting new stances to geographers.

Andre-Louis has, in co-operation with members of the Steering Committee, announced five themes we would like to explore at the conference. They were:

- Geopolitical Trends of the Mediterranean in a 21st Century Globalized World;
- The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership;
- The Maritime Boundaries of the Mediterranean: Assessments and Outlooks;
- Conflicts and Conflict Resolutions in the Mediterranean World;
- Current Issues in Political Geography Outside the Mediterranean World.

Due to several circumstances, my personal opinion is that we will be able to fill out (only) two sessions. I have asked the organizing committee to schedule the sessions on one day, limiting therewith – for some of us – the registration expenses. In this regard, we will except contributions /papers and posters/ to the above mentioned topics, but would place them under:

- GEOPOLITICAL TRENDS IN A 21ST CENTURY GLOBALIZED WORLD; and
- CURRENT ISSUES IN POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY.

In accordance with the theme /the title and abstract subject/, I will ask the organizing committee to combine topics of certain phenomenon in the session where they would relate to other presented subjects. Therefore, I would ask each one of you who have the intention to actively contribute to the success of the IGU Tunis 2008 meeting to forward your abstract not only on the Abstract Submission Form (abstracts@igc-tunis2008.com), but

also as a attachment to me (anton.gosar@guest.arnes.si). Such information could give me grounds for suggestions regarding session program.

The year 2008 looks full of activities for political geography. I would like to encourage you to actively participate in the events. Also, I would be pleased if you would send me short statements on what you do and what you have or are planning to publish. I would appreciate if we all could share your thoughts regarding academia, impressions of travels and reading and other experiences you've had. I would gladly include some of them into the next Newsletter which should be out March, 2008. Later, before our IGU meeting Tunis 2008, I am planning to inform you in short on the planned activities there.

With all best wishes for 2008 and beyond

Anton Gosar, Chair

II - Future Events

1. Department of Geography, Faculty of Humanities/Science and Research Centre, University of Primorska:

International Conference Spatial Restructuring of Slovenia and the Neighbouring Regions since EU Membership: Advantages for Border Regions; Koper/Capodistria, Slovenia, November 30 - December 2, 2007. The conference has attracted 41 presenters from the region (Central Europe) and broader. Papers will focus on the impact of the widening of the EU Schengen Zone in 2008. The limitation and/or stimulation of co-operation across the new strengthened EU outer border and the downfall of any sign of borders between members will be major themes. Proceedings will follow in 2008. The organizers of the conference are to be reached by E-mail: anton.gosar@guest.arnes.si.

2. Université de Reims Champagne Ardennes (URCA); Campus Croix Rouge, Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines: International Colloquium Spaces of Politics: Concepts and Scales; Reims, April 2 - 4, 2008

Political geography remains a relatively closed discipline in the francophone countries and is most clearly developed in the English speaking world (cf. the journal *Political Geography*). This colloquium aims to take stock of a research direction which derives, variably, from geopolitics, from human geography, and from other social sciences, particularly political science. The idea of arriving at a common definition of this discipline seems hard to achieve even useless. This colloquium aims a more reasonable objective would be to sketch out a set of major themes. These themes are not necessarily new, but most of them have been profoundly reworked in the course of the twentieth century. Accordingly the organizers of this event would like to: 1.) Situate research carried out in political geography; 2.) Underline the hiatus between the relatively marginal position of this discipline and the increasing demand for information and analytic skills with respect to the political aspects of space; 3.) Bring together the scientific community concerned with themes of space and power (whether they be geographers or not) and to promote professional connections within it.

Proposals for papers can develop one or several of these themes. They will accordingly be integrated into the plenary sessions, or into the workshops. The State, which was the central focus of what might be called the 'first' political geography (from F. Ratzel to N. Pounds) is put in question today. Between the two poles of hollowing out and redeployment, its role is often seen as a diminishing one. Is this a purely neo-liberal view or an objective reading of globalized space? If one agrees that weakening is indeed occurring, is it irremediable or transitory? The frontier is a theme quite as old as that of the State and is linked dialectically to it. Frontiers assume new forms that are tied to contemporary socio-economic change and to the imperatives of security. Assuming a general weakening of the state, their role as barriers (United States/Mexico, etc.) appears – paradoxically – enhanced (immigration, security). How might one analyze this contradiction? Territory is a concept that has entered into widespread use more recently but has now become central. It poses several fundamental questions: its

applicability, how it gets constructed through territoriality, and those raised by the issue of jurisdictional partition. How might one judge its role between the two extremes of object of contestation and symbol of state power;? Agency is a current focus of geopolitics (at the world scale), as it is in International Relations but also in Political Geography. Agency attaches to a huge variety of institutional forms: states and their local branches, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, firms, professional associations, as well as to more informal groups. At what scales do these agents act and what are their strategies? What resources do they call upon? And what forms do their contestation and cooperation assume? Power occupies a central position in International Relations and in geopolitics. But does it have a place in political geography? What exactly is meant by a geography of power? How does power structure space in order to facilitate its realization? On the other hand, how does space condition the exercise of power? Democracy. The question of power is clearly linked to that of democracy. Following Lévy, Badaritti and Bussi have been able to make this theme the basis of a 'new political geography.' So what are the implications of globalization for democracy? Or for a revolution in the political relations between agents? Flows are increasingly determinant in a world characterized by pervasive mobility. Material flows, as in the case of people and commodities, and immaterial ones like those of capital and information, underline the importance of networks and of mobility. Do they put the notion of territory in question or do they indicate the advent of a 'liquid society', to use Zygmunt Bauman's expression? Nature. The connection with the natural environment is one of the earliest themes in political geography (Ratzel). Characterized initially by determinism, today it has been completely reworked. The development of political ecology is the best example of this. But does this mean that we are witnessing no more than a (periodic) return to research around environmental problematics? The city now occupies a more important place in contemporary political geography than it used to. The major themes are varied and multiscale and include: the role of urban networks and of world cities, urban power and violence, urban governance, environment and lived space, etc. Is the urban a defensible scale of action in the logics of power or simply a scale of analysis? General epistemology. Several different approaches, each with its own distinct historical period, can be distinguished and examined: the functionalist or classical approach in political geography which is essentially represented by people working in the United States (from R. Hartshorne to N. Pounds); systems approaches as in the idea of world systems; modeling and quantitative work; and the post-modern approach, including post-colonial studies, minority studies, and the like. The question of a distinction between political geography and geopolitics also appears pertinent: Are they redundant terms, or quite different approaches? It would appear necessary to deconstruct them and to inquire into that very particular politics which has tied them together. All these themes can be broached at three scales. The macro, or the global. Is research at the global level specific to geopolitics? Is the 'clash of civilizations' an appropriate interpretive framework? What is the contribution of political geography to the understanding of globalization? The meso. The state and the region, along with spaces that are interstitial between the global and the local. The micro. The local and place. The local in an age of the global (glocalization). Is it a new scale for political geography? Key places and symbolic places as stakes in the competition between actors.

Schedule and deadlines > 15 september 2007: Deadline for abstracts; >1st January 2008: Opening of registration; >29 February 2008: Deadline for full papers; >15 March 2008 End of registration; 2 - 4 April 2008 Colloquium. Conference fees. A nominal conference fee will be charged for academics and professionals. The regular registration is 160 Euros. Student fee is 60 Euros. If you are interested to participate (and not present a paper - since the deadline was Sept. 15) contact Stéphane Rosière stephane.rosiere@univ-reims.fr and Céline Vacchiani-Marcuzzo vacchiani@parisgeo.cnrs.fr

3. AAG (American Association of Geographers) – PGSG - Political Geography Specialty Group: Annual AAG Pre-Conference, Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, April 13 - 14, 2008

The AAG's Political Geography Specialty Group announces a pre-conference at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts for Sunday April 13-Monday April 14, 2007. The AAG meetings are April 15-19, in nearby Boston. To provide an intimate and more intellectually rewarding alternative to the AAG we are committed to not scheduling concurrent sessions. We hope everyone in attendance will hear everyone else's paper, fostering a place wherein political geographers at all levels of professional achievement - from undergraduates to full professors - engage in intellectually stimulating dialogue. The deadline for submitting abstracts is **February 15, 2008**, but we encourage you to submit your abstract early to ensure that you will be able to fully participate in the conference. Registration is \$35 and \$10 for students. To register contact by e-mail Michael Brown at

michaelb@u.washington.edu. International attendees will be permitted to pay their registration fees in U.S. dollars at the conference..

The PGSG and DASG have negotiated a rate of \$87 (+ tax) per night for Sunday and Monday nights at the Hilton Garden Inn (<http://hiltongardeninn.hilton.com/en/gi/hotels/index.jhtml?ctyhocn=BEDWOGI>), at 35 Major Taylor Blvd. (still called Worcester Center Boulevard on some maps) in downtown Worcester. To make a reservation, contact the Hilton at +1 508 753 5700 and tell them that you are with the “AAG Political Geography and Developing Areas Room Block.” If you run into problems getting a room at the group rate, please contact Phil Steinberg at psteinbe@fsu.edu. Parking is an additional \$8.95 per night (or \$12.95 per night for valet parking). The Hilton is located in downtown Worcester, about 1.8 miles from Clark University. We will have access to a Clark University van during the duration of the conference, and the Hilton also has a van that they will make available to us. Between these two vans, we should be able to provide pretty good access from the Hilton to Clark Sunday before the keynote and on Monday morning.

Busses between Boston’s Logan Airport and Worcester’s Union Station (a combined bus/train station) are \$18 one-way and take about two hours. There’s approximately one bus every two hours (with the last bus leaving the airport on Sunday at 7:30). See www.peterpanbus.com for bus schedules. Busses between Boston’s South Station (a combined bus/train/subway station) and Worcester’s Union Station are \$8 one-way and take just over one hour. There’s about one bus an hour. See www.peterpanbus.com for bus schedules. Commuter train service between Boston’s South Station and Worcester’s Union Station is comparably priced (\$7.25 one-way) and takes about the same time as the bus, but trains run less frequently than busses. See www.mbta.com (and click on the Framingham/Worcester rail line) for train schedules. Once you’re in Worcester, the Hilton is about a half-mile from Union Station. To get to the Hilton, you can walk, take a cab, or phone the Hilton for their courtesy van (+1 508 753 5700). Another transport option is Worcester Airport Limo, a van service which has a special rate for transporting university-related guests between the airport and Worcester-area hotels or universities. They serve all of the area airports (Providence’s T.F. Green and Springfield/Hartford’s Bradley Airports as well as Boston’s Logan). The Clark University rate for traveling one way from Logan to Worcester (whether you’re going to the Hilton or directly to Clark) is \$42. For more information, go to <http://wlimo.hudsonltd.net>. To make a reservation using the Clark University discount code, go to <https://wlimo.hudsonltd.net/res?USERIDENTRY=CLARKU&LOGON=GO>. Travel within Boston (before or after the preconference) is easy. The city’s subway system (“The T”) connects the airport, South Station, and the convention hotel (and other venues). Individual fares are \$2. For a route map of “The T,” see www.mbta.com and click on “subway.”

This preconference is organized by Michael Brown (U. of Washington – michaelb@washington.edu), Deb Martin (Clark U. – demartin@clarku.edu), and Phil Steinberg (Florida State U. – psteinbe@fsu.edu). Collectively, we have over 30 years experience living in Worcester (and over 12 years experience studying or working at Clark). Please contact Michael with questions concerning registration and the program of paper presentations, Deb with questions concerning on-campus arrangements, and Phil with general questions about hotel, transportation, or overall logistics.

4. IGU/UGI – International Geographical Union

31st International Geographical Congress, Tunis 2008, August 12th – 15th, 2008

Detailed

Information

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[http://www.igc-](http://www.igc-tunis2008.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=27&Itemid=89)

[tunis2008.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=27&Itemid=89](http://www.igc-tunis2008.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=27&Itemid=89)

Building together our territories will be the major theme of the Congress. Three major issues will be discussed: the territory; the operational orientation of geography; and the role of the players. Going beyond the classical divides of the discipline, these issues make of geography a science that allows man to live intelligently with the others and his milieu. Other breaking-news topics themes are also scheduled for debate. The evolution of geographical thought; Cultures and Civilisations for Human Development; the Renaissance of the Mediterranean; the International Year of the Planet Earth, are, inter alia, some of the issues that will be raised, showing the ability of geographers to share their concerns with others. Tunis 2008 will provide an ideal forum

for geographers to express and confront their visions on the major issues of our time. The 2008 Tunis Congress will host 36 IGU committees and 4 working groups whose activities will be integrated in the Congress general agenda. It will also offer the possibility of convening meetings for the different IGU regional networks (the Commonwealth network, Latin America network, South-East Asia network, Australia and the Pacific network) or for other nascent networks (Mediterranean, Africa, the Arab world, etc). The 2008 Tunis Congress will thus be a collective undertaking, aiming mainly at building and contributing to the renewal of Geography.

Le Kram Congress and Exhibition Centre is the congress venue. It is located about ten kilometres from downtown, is easily accessible. We can get there by taking the National Road n° 9 heading for La Marsa or via road and commuter train (via T.G.M). Yet, the taxi is the most comfortable means of transportation. It can hold three people who will pay around 10 TD (around 7€). Air-conditioned buses will be put at the disposal of the participants to ease the shuttle between the different hotels and the Kram Centre. A shuttle bus is also available to link downtown to Kram Centre. Access to the Congress venue is strict to the registered or pre-registered participants. The passage to the activities area, behind the registration desks, is restricted to those who carry badges.

Registration. The 31st Geographical Congress, Tunis2008, will be held during the tourism high season. The Organizing Committee calls into attention that the registration procedures as well as hotel reservations should be done as soon as possible in order to avoid facing any problem. Registration before January 31, 2008 for Senior Participants is Euro 650.00 (Students: Euro 455,00; One Day/Accompanying Persons: Euro 200,00). To register, please fill out the application form with paying attention to the required sections – available at http://www.igc-tunis2008.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=27&Itemid=89. After confirmation, it will immediately reach us and will be transmitted to the Congress Secretariat which will, in its turn, send you your file number. Once you have paid the fees through the way you have chosen, the Secretariat will transmit your final identifier. For those who will not be able to finalize the registration process from the website of the Congress, it will be possible to download the **registration form**, fill it out and send it to the congress secretariat. Partner: Millesima Travel (secretariat@igc-tunis2008.com) T.:+216 71282324/71282321/71282330; F. : +216 71282482 **Date to Remember:** Deadline for early registration: On *January 31, 2008*; Deadline for normal registration: On April 30, 2008; Deadline for late registration: On June 30, 2008. **Abstracts:** Deadline for abstract submission: *On May 31, 2008*. An Abstract Submission Form is available at http://www.igc-tunis2008.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=27&Itemid=89 and can be received also through an E-mail request: abstracts@igc-tunis2008.com. **Accommodation.** National Organizing Committee of the Congress (CNOc) has made a hotel selection in order to accommodate all attendees. For students searching for low budget accommodation, student residence will be available also. Hotels are prized from 39 Euros (3 star hotels, single room) up to 186 Euros (5 star hotels, double room). You can book online (via http://www.igc-tunis2008.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=27&Itemid=89) or contact the CNOc partner Millesima Travel (address above). The organizers will provide transportation (shuttle) from hotels to the conference and from/to the airport.

5. Politics-State-Space (PSS) research cluster at Durham University:

Critical Geopolitics 2008: Collingwood College, Durham University, September 23rd and 24th 2008

An international interdisciplinary conference on the State of critical geopolitics 2008 Collingwood College, Durham University 23rd and 24th September 2008. Organised by the Politics-State-Space (PSS) research cluster at Durham with sponsorship from the Political Geography Research Group of the RGS-IBG and the journal Political Geography. Confirmed keynote speakers: Simon Dalby (Carleton University, Canada); Derek Gregory (University of British Columbia, Canada); Jennifer Hyndman (Simon Fraser University, Canada); Katharyne Mitchell (University of Washington, USA); Gerard Ó Tuathail (Virginia Tech, USA); Neil Smith (City University of New York, USA). The PSS cluster at Durham includes Ben Anderson, Ash Amin, Louise Amoore, Stuart Elden, David Campbell, Steve Graham, Ray Hudson, Kathrin Horschellmann, Cheryl McEwan, Colin McFarlane, Gordon Macleod, Joe Painter, Marcus Power and Angharad Closs Stephens. The Department is also home to the International Boundaries Unit (IBRU). Further information about IBRU and the Politics-State-Space research cluster is available at:

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/geography/research/researchclusters/>

As a body of scholarship that first emerged in the early 1990s 'critical geopolitics' sought to bridge the disciplines of Geography and International Relations and was initially inspired by the pioneering work of 'dissident' scholars including Simon Dalby, John Agnew and Gearoid Ó Tuathail. Grounded in a corpus of work emerging from the discipline of International Relations in the 1980s and bolstered by post-structuralism and political economy, these contributions sought to radically reconceptualise 'geopolitics' as a complex and problematic set of discourses, representations and practices. Through the 1990s a number of geographers used the term critical geopolitics to encompass a diverse range of academic challenges to the conventional ways in which political space was written, read and practiced. Since then the research agendas of 'critical geopolitics' have flourished and developed considerably.

This international conference seeks to assess the current state of 'critical geopolitics' and in so doing will explore areas for reconsideration and future research. Just over a decade on from the publication of a special 'Critical geopolitics' issue of the journal *Political Geography* and the publication of Ó Tuathail's landmark text *Critical Geopolitics* in 1996, this conference recognises that, politically as well as intellectually, the time is right to appraise and reflect upon the contribution that this corpus of critical scholarship has made both within and beyond the discipline. Rather than assuming critical geopolitics to be a single analytical or methodological endeavour, this conference recognises that this corpus of scholarship encompasses various ways of unpacking the tropes and epistemologies of dominant geographers and scriptings of political space. The conference will open with a series of short (pre-circulated) 'position papers' given by the key speakers around the theme of critical geopolitics before opening out to explore the variety of ways in which critical geopolitical inquiry has been practiced. In particular we have invited key speakers to discuss how critical geopolitics shapes their current and ongoing research. Postgraduate student participation and presentations will be welcome and a number of travel bursaries are available from the PGRG and Political Geography to enable postgraduate students to attend. Themes explored in the conference might include (but are not limited to): 1.) Geopolitics and Security; 2.) Territory and Boundaries; 3.) Critical Geopolitics Theory and Post-Colonialism; 4.) Geopolitical Tradition and Histories of Geopolitics; 5.) Visuality and Geopolitics 6.); Geopolitics and Development; 7.) Critical Geopolitics Methodologies; 8.) Critical Geopolitical Practices and 9.) War on Terror.

Registration, tea, coffee and lunch over the two days is £70 (waged) or £60 (unwaged/student). There are a number of travel bursaries available for postgraduate students wishing to attend this event and further details of these will be available from the conference website: <http://www.geography.dur.ac.uk/conf/criticalgeopolitics2008/>. We now welcome offers of participation, with an abstract (to be sent to marcus.power@dur.ac.uk) by January 10th 2008. The full conference programme will be available by the end of February 2008. Conference timetable: **January 10th 2008: Deadline for abstracts;** January 31st 2008: Communication of accepted proposals; May 25th 2008: Deadline for full papers; August 31st 2008: End of registration; September 23rd and 24th 2008: Conference.

Registration for the event is now open and must be completed by 31st August 2008. A booking form is available from the conference website. The conference will be held in Collingwood College (which is fully accessible) in Durham. Bed and Breakfast and hotel accommodation are available in the city (details of these and the rooms available at Collingwood College are now available from the conference website). Please note that accommodation in the city is limited so early reservations are recommended. Durham is well served by high-speed mainline rail services from the major UK cities (2.5 hours from London). Newcastle and Durham Tees Valley airports are within 30-40 minutes drive with frequent connections to major London airports. Ferry services link the River Tyne to ports in Scandinavia, The Netherlands and Germany. Information submitted by: Dr Jason Dittmer; Lecturer in Human Geography; Department of Geography; University College London; 26 Bedford Way; London WC1E 6BT; +44 0207 679 5505.

6. Università degli Studi Milano

Teaching Geography: Textbooks and Maps as Political Narratives. Milano-Bicocca, Italy, September 25 - 26, 2008

The University of Milano organizes an international conference entitled Teaching Geography: Textbooks and Maps as Political Narratives. The event will take place September 25 – 26, 2008 at the premises of the university Milano-Biococca. Information is – thanks to Elena dell’ Agnese (elena.dellagnese@unimib.it) available at: enrico.squarcina@unimib.it and stefano.malatesta@unimib.it.

7. University of Oradea, Department of Geography, Tourism and Territorial Planning

University of Gdansk, Department of Regional Geography
Political Geography and Tourism in New Contemporary European Borderland Context. Oradea - Sighetu Marmatiei, Romania, September 2008.

The University of Oradea (Romania) and University of Gdansk (Poland) are planning to organise an International Conference Political Geography and Tourisms in New Contemporary European Borderland Context (the title of conference is not definite yet). The conference should be held in Oradea - Sighetu Marmatiei, Romania. Organizers are Prof. Ilies Alexandru from the Department of Geography and Tourism and Territorial Planning of the University of Oradea and Prof Jan Wendt from the Department of Regional Geography, University of Gdansk. In the frame of this conference, 10 years since the first issue of Romanian Review on Political Geography was edited, will be celebrated. The site of review is: <http://rrgp.uoradea.ro>. Information submitted by Prof. Ilies Alexandru [ilies@uoradea.ro]

III – Past Events

5 - 9 June, 2007: Oradea, Romania - International seminar **From Kaliningrad to the Black Sea: Intercultural Dialogue and the New Interpretation of the Frontier**, organized by Institute of Euroregional Studies Oradea-Debrecen; (info: Dr. Alexandru Illies).

8 - 11 July, 2007: Port Elizabeth, South Africa - Session **South African Geographers in the spatial division of labour**

of knowledge production held within 7th Biennial Conference of the Society of South African Geographers.

Papers will be delivered at the session will appear in South African Geographical Journal Vol. 89, No. 2 (2007);

(info: Dr. Maano Ramutsindela).

6 - 9 September, 2007: Constanta, Romania - International Conference **Dobrogea - A New EU Border Space. Socio-Economic, Ethnic, Geopolitical and Ecological Problems**, organized by “Ovidius” University of Constanta (Romania) and The University of Potsdam (Germany); (info: Dr. Alexandru Illies).

10 – 13 September, 2007: Lublin, Poland - International Conference **European Multiculturalism as a Challenge**

- Policies, Successes and Fails, organized by The Department of Economic Geography, Maria Curie-Sklodowska

University, Lublin, Poland; (info: Dr. Wojciech Janicki).

8 - 9 November, 2007: Oradea, Romania - International Conference **Migration and Identity in the European Union**, organized by University of Oradea, Department of Political Science, and the Department of Geography, - Tourism and Territorial Planning; (info: Dr. Alexandru Illies).

IV – Experience and Work of Members

1. **Unna Lassiter, California State University, Long Beach** (ulassite@csulb.edu):

Reflections on a trip to the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI)

I have returned from Iran believing more than ever that Iran is a country that can inform us greatly as to tomorrow’s post-fundamentalisms. This may come as a surprise given the media’s focus on Iran as the heart of a doctrinaire revival (Nasr 2006), but my visit showed me otherwise. One day in Tehran I visited both the Shah’s

Palace and Khomeini's house. Both led me to reflect on these two very different men's role in shaping today's Iran.

Iran's last Shah was a man of his time and embodied the best and worst of Modernity. He was the US's greatest ally in the region but his commitment to Iran was total. He understood that the world order would inevitably change and saw himself as a world leader in this upcoming reordering. In a 1973 article in the New York Times (quoted in Walter LaFeber's *Russia, America, and the Cold War* and *Wikipedia*) the Shah, whose nation was then already the world's second-largest exporter of oil, said "Of course [the world price of oil] is going to rise, certainly and how...; You [Western nations] increased the price of wheat you sell us by 300%, and the same for sugar and cement...; You buy our crude oil and sell it back to us, refined as petrochemicals, at a hundred times the price you've paid to us... It's only fair that, from now on, you should pay more for oil. Let's say 10 times more." He understood that one day the developing world would have the power and will to resist the economic fundamentalism of the US, just as is becoming clear to analysts such as former Secretary of State Zbigniew Brzezinski for instance (see *Second Chance*, 2007).

After the Palace, I headed to Khomeini's home. In the museum next door, I was stopped by a 1979 photograph of Khomeini getting off the Air France plane that brought him back to Iran. Khomeini was humble, devoted and incorruptible and therein lies his appeal. He was also a master of political strategy, particularly in terms of creating a post-imperial *raison d'être* for Iran, while inspiring Iranians to endure undeserving sacrifice. Khomeini was a stern and inflexible man who did not follow Islamic credo to the degree that is often assumed. Putting religion aside, his brand of politics was socialism which played well in the minds of a population that was outraged over the uneven consequences of rapid modernization. He also supported a galloping birth rate that more than doubled the population in a matter of decades and that has been brought under control only recently. Now, 60% of Iran's population is under 30 and hungry for opportunities the IRI has difficulty in providing. It is in Khomeini's use of Islam for political ends that I feel he did the most harm. He used Islam to motivate young idealists to martyrdom during the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-88. As Takeyh describes (*Hidden Iran*, 2006), the current generation of conservative ideologues remembers the Revolution mostly in terms of the war (not the revolution's success in ousting the monarchy) and especially the fact that, of the entire international community, only Syria, Libya and North Korea came to Iran's aid during Saddam's brutal assault. This helps explain their defensive (rather than 'defiant') isolationism. True, Khomeini could have stopped the war sooner (there was a Saudi initiated peace proposal in 1982) but the war mobilized Iranians and heightened their sense of nationalism which, in turn, made them more accepting of his autarkist and religious socialism, or what has been called 'Khomeinism' (Abrahamian, 1993) While the country has not recovered yet from Iraq's attacks on its oil refineries for instance, it is evident everywhere that Iran's isolated status in the world (also due to long standing US economic sanctions) has meant continued hardship on its people. Nevertheless this isolation is not changing the fact that Iran is perhaps again at the vanguard of a critical reconceptualization of the union between politics and religion. Many Iranians, especially among the urban middle class, are cynical if not disillusioned by their clergy. And some of the clergy is unhappy to be affiliated with Ahmadinejad's firebrand style of politics. One thing is certain: while Iranians long for improvements there is little interest in turning the clock back and in recovering a pre-revolutionary or even a revolutionary Iran. The leader of a new regime would have to have a different strategy and *raison d'être*. How can one do this without incendiating the religious sensibilities that are still deployed, mobilized, kept alive? Are the IRI's elite prepared to create this or have they run out of steam? For now, Iranians are waiting. It is definitely worth watching but requires the removal of our media's blinders.

2. Ilies Alexandru (ilies@uoradea.ro)

The Borders and Borderlands in Contemporary European Context.

The European political space developed in the second part of the XX Century and the beginning of the IIIrd millennium important modifications of structural-territorial nature between which, the most important ones had been generated by the continuous extension of the UE.

The period between 1949 and 1990 can be considered as static from the restructuring-territorial point of view; being predominantly marked by an ideological conflict, by a media dominated "Cold War". The last decade of the 2nd millennium remains marked in the European history by the disintegration of the Socialist system, by the

transformation of the European political sphere into one marked with continuous restructurings because of the disappearance of a state-system, the construction of another new, better or less viable (EU, CIS). At the moment the most utter phenomena of the 3rd millennium is the extension and the consolidation of the EU, especially towards the Eastern part of the continent. The 7 waves of extension and integration, beginning with 1958, proves the Europeans wish to create a protective structure, which, at the same time, does not alter their national, regional and local identity. Of course, the dynamism of the political sphere first implies the alignment or consolidation of a border with the consequences that reside in this process, especially from the multiplication of the number of the states, and the dependence from 35 (including Turkey) in 1949 to 50 in 2007.

The typology of the state borders spread by including new sectors characterized by structural complexity and variety. Crossing one of the borders sector from the extern category to the intern EU, the superposition in many cases with the “NATO” and “Schengen” border, the inclusion of new “territorial waters”, all these on the background of “new states regrouping” etc are only a few of the mutations which determined new relations between the component system which, the most exposed are the “suburb” frontier areas. Hereby, from about 21.000 km of frontier sectors specific the European Community of Coal and Steel (ECCS) nucleus (1952) became in 2004-2007 (the most ample waves of integration) at over 80.000 km of terrestrial and maritime borders, intern and suburb referenced to the EU space. To specify is the fact that yet exists at the standard of the EU areas a series of problems into determination and “recognition” of some frontier maritime sectors like Germany/Denmark, Poland/Denmark or Bulgaria/Romania etc. With each extending wave of the UE the frontier system became more complex, and within these the “extern” eastern border of the UE came to be the most dynamic under the route and secular aspect. Practically, through the integration waves which took place in 2004 the political territorial space of the UE is formed by “4 parts”: *properly continental*, *Scandinavian*, *Balkan* and *British-insular*, all these including 25 states, over 4.2 millions km² territory and over 83000 km sectors of intern and extern borders, terrestrial and maritime. Only after 2007 the number of “parts” reduced at 3, when trough Romania and Bulgaria, the “*properly continental body*” unified with *Balkan “body*” and determine the direct access of the European Union to the Black Sea and Lower Danube Basin.

The dynamics of the EU political space within the 1952-2007 intervals aiming the constitution of a functional territorial European system determined continuous changes regarding the role and function of the frontiers of the associated states. For half a century the frontiers of the integrated states acquired complex functions, from the control of the human exchanges to the military ones, transferring from an initial external position specific for any state to an associated internal or external one. Each repositioning of the integrated sub-systems was generating new relations and the necessity of interconnection between new subsystems with major implications in their social, economical and political aspect. Also, the extension of the EU territorial super system followed a coherent scenario with transition lines of the external frontier towards South and North, to continue towards East in an area that was unimaginable during the bi-polar Europe. The complexity of the inter-state frontier system generated by the continuous process of extension and of consolidation of the concepts “internal and external EU frontiers”, is amplified by the superposing of new external frontiers inside EU such as the Schengen system which facilitates people’s freedom of circulation between the member states. The system becomes more complicated because its edges don’t totally overlap the external EU ones. EU enlargement towards the ex-socialist space represents a victory of the market economy system in the duality with the centralized-socialist while the perspective of the territorial superposition of the physical-geographical Europe over the political-territorial one of the EU appears to be a very likely objective in a near perspective which will continue with a new extension wave after 2007 to Eastern Europe and Central Balkans.

3. Chad F. Emmett (Brigham Young University) is announcing a new database on the status of women: The WomanStats Project (headed by five professors from three different disciplines and three different universities) is pleased to announce a newly available database comprised of 245 variables dealing with the situation of women in 172 countries. The variables are continually updated and cover information dealing with law, practice and data. The web site is easily accessible and free. It can be found at <http://www.womanstats.org>. Data can be viewed at the webpage or downloaded to your desktop. Also included at the web site are maps dealing with the physical security of women, trafficking of women, sex ratios, polygyny and the discrepancy between governmental laws regarding women and the enforcement of those laws. The comprehensive data base will be of great interest to academics as well as governmental and no-governmental researchers.

4. **Elena Dell’Agnese** (elena.dellagnese@unimib.it) has for the past year worked on the relation between gender and nation. She has published three book chapters on national narratives and their heroes. She also has edited a book on Italian masculinities.

5. **Maano Ramutsindela** (Maano.Ramutsindela@uct.ac.za) has been working on the theme of transfrontier conservation in southern Africa. The theme brings together issues of land reform, nature-society interrelationships and interstate politics in the southern African region. Maano is using this theme to understand constructions of scales and the roles of actors in that process.

6. **Lynn A. Staeheli** (lynn.staeheli@ed.ac.uk) had a fellowship at the Rockefeller Centre in Bellagio, where he drafted a book with colleague Don Mitchell. His research these days is aimed at understanding the geographies of the public realm. There are several projects that are combined under this rubric. He has an ongoing interest in the relationships between publicity and privacy, reflected in my work on public space, property, and the moral geographies that shape public space. This interest can be seen in the book (with **Don Mitchell**), *The People’s Property?*, and also in a new project that examines the moral codes regulating who can be in public and under what conditions. A second element of this broader project includes the training or disciplining of citizens, including citizenship education programmes. He is currently developing a cross-national study of these programmes that focuses on the ways in which they accommodate histories of conflict and violence as governments attempt to construct new accounts of the nation and political community. A final element of the geography of the public realm involves the ways in which individuals – rather than states or political theorists – understand citizenship and what it means to belong to a political community. This research has focused on Arab immigrants to the United States and United Kingdom. **John O’Loughlin**, **Gerard Toal** and **Vladimir Kollosov** have been working on a project examining ethnic and religious conflicts in the northern Caucasus mountains, which has involved several stints of fieldwork in the region. **Gerard Toal** will be presenting the *Political Geography* lecture at the Boston AAG meetings based on this work.

7. **James D. Sidaway** (University of Plymouth; Associate Editor Political Geography http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/30465/description#description) announces an opening for a Political Geographer at the Department of Geography of the National University of Singapore (NUS). Having worked there (and taught a number of Political Geography classes there) from 2001-2005, he can vouch that Geography there (and the wider community at NUS) provides a very rewarding and stimulating scholarly environment. The position could suit either a finishing (or better already recently finished!) grad student, or someone more senior who wishes to spend time teaching political geography based at NUS. If interested, please contact Professor Henry Yeung and Dr Carl Grundy-Warr (both at NUS Geography) to discuss the prospects if you are interested. Department of Geography, National University of Singapore http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/geog/research/pol_econ_intro.html

The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) has several schemes for prospective visitors to be attached to the Department and conduct research in his/her preferred areas of expertise. As a Research Cluster, we seek candidates who have research interests and expertise in Political Economies of Transformations in East Asia (including Southeast Asia). You will work with our faculty members in the Department who are conducting ongoing research in related areas described in our Cluster-specific pages. In general, there are at least three visiting schemes for your consideration: FASS Postdoctoral Fellowships (One year, renewable) FASS Visitor Scholars Scheme (Up to 3 months) Isaac Manasseh Meyer Fellowship (Up to 1 month). You are strongly advised to visit the Faculty's website for further information and application deadlines on each of these schemes: <http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/research/visit.html>. Positions and PDFs available (click: http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/geog/research/pol_econ_job.html): 1. Visiting Fellow/Visiting Senior Fellow position in Political Geography (deadline: 30 November 2007); 2. Post-doctoral Fellowship (deadline: 31 December 2007).

V – Suggested Readings in Political Geography

BENHABIB, Seyla, 2004, <i>The Claims of Culture</i> . Princeton University Press.
BROWN, Wendy, 2006, <i>Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire</i> . Princeton University Press.
KLEINFELD, Margo. (2007). <i>Misreading the Post-tsunami Political Landscape in Sri Lanka: The Myth of Humanitarian Space</i> ," <i>Space and Polity</i> 11(2), pp. 169 - 184.
MICHALSKI, Tomasz (2006). <i>The Geographical Aspects of The Transformation Process in Central and East-Central Europe</i> , 234 pag., Edition Wydawnictwo Bernardinum Gdynia-Pelplin, ISBN 83-7380-331-9, in English
O'LEAR, Shannon. 2006. "Resource Concerns for Territorial Conflict", <i>GeoJournal</i> 64:4 (journal date December 2005; published in August 2006), pp. 297-306 (Shannon O'Lear, Paul F. Diehl, Derrick V. Frazier and Todd L. Allee, guest editors of theme issue on territorial conflict).
O'LEAR, Shannon. 2007. "Azerbaijan's Resource Wealth: Political Legitimacy and Public Opinion", <i>The Geographical Journal</i> 173(3), pp. 207-223. In print Sept. 2007; available electronically at: http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1475-4959.2007.00242.x
POPA Nicolae, (2006), <i>Frontiere, regiuni transfrontaliere si dezvoltare regionala in Europa mediana (Borders, Borderlands and Regional development in Median Europe)</i> , 286 pag, Editura Universitatii de Vest, Timisoara, ISBN 973-125-039-5, (in Romanian with abstract in English and French)
RAMUTSINDELA, M. 2007 <i>Geographical knowledge, case studies and the division of labour</i> . <i>South African Geographical Journal</i> 89(2): 121-127.
RAMUTSINDELA, M. 2007 <i>Resilient geographies: land, boundaries and the consolidation of the former bantustans in post-1994 South Africa</i> . <i>Geographical Journal</i> 173(1): 43-55.
RAMUTSINDELA, M. 2007 <i>Scaling Peace Parks and Peacemakers in Transfrontier Conservation</i> . In Ali, S.H. (ed) <i>Peace Parks: Conservation and conflict Resolution</i> , 69-81. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
RAMUTSINDELA, M. 2007 <i>The geographical imprint of land restitution with reference to Limpopo Province, South Africa</i> . <i>Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie</i> 98(4): 455-467.
RAMUTSINDELA, M. 2007 <i>Transfrontier Conservation in Africa: at the confluence of capital, politics and nature</i> . <i>Noswothrthy and Massachusetts: CABI</i> (ISBN 978 184593 221 3).
STAEHEL, Lynn A. and MITCHELL Don, 2008, <i>The People's Property? Power, Politics, and the Public</i> . Routledge.
STAEHEL, Lynn A. and MITCHELL, 2007, <i>Locating the Public in Research and Practice</i> , <i>Progress in Human Geography</i> , 31(6).
STAEHEL, Lynn A., 2008, <i>Citizenship and the Problem of Community</i> , <i>Political Geography</i> , 27(1).
SULI-ZAKAR Istvan and HORGA Ioan (Editors), (2006), <i>Regional Development in The Romanian-Hungarian Cross-Border Space – From National to European Perspective</i> , Debrecen, 420 pag, ISBN 978-963-473-035-4-07-79, in English;

This newsletter has been edited by Dr. Anton GOSAR, Chair of the IGU Commission on Political Geography (anton.gosar@fbs.upr.si), with the Assistance of Dr. Carl T. DAHLMAN, the Webmaster of the IGU Commission on Political Geography (dahlmac@muohio.edu)