

Coming Up:

DFG Network at RGS-IBG Annual International Conference 2019

Session **“Re-Presenting Economic Geography”** organised by

- Nicholas Phelps (University of Melbourne, Australia)
- Michiel van Meeteren (Loughborough University, UK)
- Jana Kleibert (Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space/Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany)

Session Abstract:

Once upon a time, Peter Haggett described the core of geographical praxis as “the art of the mappable”. Back then, the notion of cartographic or figurative representation and generalization of common geographical features was not controversial, but something to aspire to. These days, there has been somewhat of a pushback against mapping and abstracting economic geographic phenomena through representation as geographers have focused on the non-representable aspects of geographical praxis and the perils that arise from the performative power of representations.

This RGS-IBG session raises the question whether a lack of representations is a cause for concern in economic geography - where is the geography in some economic geography? This relates to worries about having lost something distinctive that characterized old-school economic geography: the explanatory power that can be derived from spatial figures. Moreover, distrust of the visual might have caused the loss of distinctiveness of economic-geographical approaches vis-à-vis sister disciplines in heterodox economic studies. Perhaps the lack of images has tainted economic geography’s image? Is there a need to ensure we make the effort to re-present economic geography?

Of course, the use of spatial figures in geography has not been without its problems. Spatial figures, think of icons such as networks, enclaves, mosaics, webs, archipelagos, or corridors, simplify reality. Their abstractions allow focusing on common aspects of disparate geographical phenomena. They can be rendered as overly crude simplifications of complex realities. Worse, their use and misuse over time can see these simplifications further distorted to the point where an original figure can become downright misleading or unhelpful. Ironically, the most successful spatial figures can gain something of a life of their own – travelling far out of geographical and historical context. This brings both fame and notoriety to the economic geographer: as the spatial figure spreads, the criticisms levelled at it might become valid as it unreflexively applied in an unsuitable context.

We invite contributions that discuss the potential and pitfalls of spatial figures and representation in economic geography. This could be case studies on particular spatial figures; the potential of spatial figures in bolstering economic geography’s visibility in the world; how spatial figures enable knowledge mobility and conceptual stretching; and the politics of spatial figures.

Programme: Friday, 30 August 2019

Session 1: 11:10 - 12:50

- **Re-Presenting Economic Geography** Nicholas Phelps, Michiel van Meeteren & Jana Kleibert
- **Emptying the Future to make one Agrarian Future: The claim of territory between Dreamscapes of Modernity and Malthusian Nightmares** Gideon Hartmann & Peter Dannenberg
- **Re-presenting Guangzhou as a gateway** Heidi Østbø Haugen
- **Imagining the metropolitan region** Stefanie Dühr
- **Mapping the Creative Economy as Bourdieuan Field** Nicole Foster

Session 2: 14:40 - 16:20

- **“The World According to GaWC”: potentials and pitfalls of being on/off the map** Michael Hoyler
- **The Economic Geography of China’s Industrial Parks in Africa** Xingping Wang, Shengbo Zhao & Yingcheng Li
- **A triple helix for the diverse economy? The experiment of a cooperative bakery in Macrocampamento, Los Arenales, Antofagasta, Chile** Martín Arias Loyola, Francisco Vergara Perucich
- **Rethinking freeports as “enclave” spaces: finance – logistics – extraction** Sabine Dörry
- **From Urban to Urbanization Economies: Conceptual and Representational Challenges** Nikos Katsikis

Session 3: 16:50 - 18:30

- **Picturing Economic Practices** Michael Crang, Nicky Gregson & Lizzie Richardson
- **Mapping the architectures of global production** Anke Hagemann & Elke Beyer
- **The Cambridge “Spin-off net” reimagined: a case study of Optics Valley, China** Julie T. Miao
- **Shoring-up the Archipelago: value manipulation across new(er) international divisions of Labour** Michiel van Meeteren & Jana Kleibert

Discussant: Karen P. Y. Lai

The **4th DFG Network meeting** will take place after the RGS-IGB annual international conference at the University of Loughborough (UK) on 31 August and 1 September 2019 – an apt place to discuss the Future of World City Networks.