IGU COMMISSION ON THE HISTORY OF GEOGRAPHY. WORK PLAN FOR 2020-2024

The Commission on the History of Geography actively fosters multilingual and worldwide promotion of research in the Philosophy and History of Geography, Historical Geography and the History of Cartography. The Commission carries out an interdisciplinary agenda and works in collaboration with other scholars in the wider fields of the histories of science. After 52 years of activities, one of the Commission’s main duties is to contribute to the UGI and to represent our disciplinary sector. The Commission engages in a range of scholarly approaches and is committed to research on geography’s institutionalization processes and to geography’s non-academic and heterodox presences, including current debates on theme such as the Anthropocene and the SDGs. We acknowledge the importance of the social, political and cultural contexts behind the production of geographical knowledge and the theoretical impetus of the spatial turn in the history of science. We address the processes of colonization and nation building and the relations between geography and planning/territorial policies. We encourage the study and the development of non-European geographical cultures and challenge internalist, historicist and positivist readings of geography’s disciplinary histories.

Five major achievements for 2016-20 and five major activities to be undertaken during 2020-24.


3. [conference] Annual Symposium on the History of Geographical Thought Geographies of identities and imaginations, University College Dublin, Belfield (Dublin 4, Republic of Ireland) 10-12 July 2019, including a tribute to Anne Buttimer.

4. [conference] At the occasion of the IGU regional Conference in Quebec City (6-10 August 2018), we organised or co-organised the following symposia: C23-SP1. Culturally or linguistically non-dominant geographies: Obsolescence, fantasy or necessity / Les géographies culturellement ou linguistiquement non dominantes : obsolescence, fantasme ou nécessité? [Convenors: Mario Bédard; Anne Gilbert; Guy Mercier; Jhon Williams Montoya; Guilherme Ribeiro; Marcella Schmidt di Friedberg; Sorina Voiculescu]; C23-SP-2. Indigenous Spatial Capital: Turning Places, Knowledge and Practices Into Mapping Processes / Capital spatial autochtone : transformer les lieux, savoirs et pratiques en processus cartographiques [Convenors: Caroline Desbiens; Carole Levesque; Béatrice Collignon; Irène Hirt]; C23-SP-3. Theoretical geographies: The contribution of geography to social theory and the production of geographical concepts / Géographies théoriques : L’apport de la géographie aux théories sociales et la production de concepts géographiques [Convenors: Marcella Schmidt di Friedberg; Mathis Stock; Anne Volvey; Mario Bédard; Guy Mercier]; C23-SP4. Revisiting Paul Vidal de la Blache’s thought / Revisiter la pensée de Paul Vidal de la Blache [Convenors: Vincent Berdoulay; Marcella Schmidt di Friedberg; Guy Mercier; Guilherme Ribeiro]; C23-SP100. Open session / Session libre [Guy Mercier, Marcella Schmidt di Friedberg].

5. [conference] At the occasion of the ICHST 2017 in Rio de Janeiro, the Commission organized the following two symposia: 1- Geography as an international science Chairs: Jacobo García-Álvarez (Carlos III University of Madrid), Jean-Yves Puyo (University of Pau), Mike Heffernan (University of Nottingham), Bruno Schelhaas (Leipzig Institut fur Landerkunde), Sergio Nunes (UFF); 2- Critical, radical and postcolonial geographies and cartographies from early approaches to present-day debates Chairs: Perla Zusman (University of Buenos Aires), Federico Ferretti (UCD), Marcella Schmidt di Friedberg (University of Milan-Bicocca), André Reyes Novaes (UERJ).
Work plan envisaged for 2020-24

The programme of the Commission History of Geography will stand in continuity with the works endeavoured by the colleagues who have preceded the current members. Sadly, during the expiring mandate we had the sorrow of the passing of Anne Buttimer (1938-2017), former IGU Chair and Honorary Chair of the Commission. While our tributes to this bright figure in geography were recorded in our latest activity reports, continuing Anne’s work and fostering her intellectual legacy remains among our priorities.

In more practical terms, our first duty will be to continue organising substantial sessions in the Philosophy and History of Geography within the international conferences of the IGU and the ICHST, as well as the periodic organisation of Commission-led specific symposia in collaboration with local organisations. For the 2020-24 mandate, as a minimum conference programme, we will organise sessions on the history of geography in the following occasions:


4. 2021: Co-organisation of the session *Crossing the borders between meteorology, climatology and geography* for the 26th International Congress of History of Science and Technology (ICHST), Prague 25-31 July 2021

Further plans


Supplementary conferences can be organised in collaboration with local groups or for special occasions which members think worthy of the Commission’s presence: for instance, it is the case with our ongoing collaborations with other IGU Commissions such as those on Political Geography and Geography and Gender. The conferences’ themes will highlight the continuity with the former commission’s research policy. Likewise, one of our key tasks will be the consolidation and expansion of the international and multilingual network of the Commission on the History of Geography, improving the participation of extra-European groups and colleagues, mainly through the creation of an international directory of groups and associations concerned with the history of geography, identifying at least one individual for every country in order to strengthen scientific networking and exchange of ideas. This will be accompanied by the creation of an international directory of archives (both personal and institutional) related to the history of geography, to make these materials (including the UGI archives themselves) available to the global geographical community and to others such as historians of science, as well as to provide for them detailed inventories and adequate conservation.

Specific duties and communicational tasks

- We will maintain our website in Pau, thanks to the availability and support of colleagues there, and will keep the site constantly updated.
We will support the outgoing commission’s proposals on the annual serial publication *Geographers Bio-Bibliographical Studies (GBS)* and will foster the relevance of *GBS* and related themes within the entire range of the Commission’s activities. We will work with the publishers to disseminate these studies in all their forms and to raise their international profile, including the organization of *GBS* keynote speeches as successfully experienced at the occasion of the Warsaw ICHST 2018. This will include public calls for chapters as it has been done at the occasion of the special issue on women in the history of geography. Either inside or outside of *GBS*’ editorial framework, we are considering the creation of an on-line geographers’ biographical dictionary, with the collaboration of the entire international directory, to give visibility to the work of the Commission and to research groups specially working on the history of geography.

We will support any effort to digitize and make publicly available digital archives containing interviews, videos and records of geographers’ activities, such as the material which were included in the *International Dialogue Project* (1978-1988) by Anne Buttimer and Torsten Hägerstrand, issued online via a dedicated IGU You Tube Channel (thanks to the cooperation of the IGU Executive Committee and the former CSC).

**Members of the new Commission’s Steering Committee.**

The CSC proposes to make some changes regarding its composition for the 2020-2024 period. In compliance with IGU’s general regulations, eight current members of the CSC will remain in their positions: Marcella Schmidt di Friedberg (Chair); Marie-Vic Ozouf-Marignier (Vice-Chair); Federico Ferretti (Secretary/Treasurer/Webmaster); Elizabeth Baigent (*Geographers, Biobibliographical Studies*); André Reyes Novaes (*Geographers, Biobibliographical Studies*); Bruno Schelhaas (IGU Archives); Guy Mercier; Judite Nascimento.

The other current members will be replaced by the following colleagues:

a) Carla Lois will replace Perla Zusman as Commission Member.

b) Verónica Ibarra García will replace Leon Yacher as Commission Member.

c) Toshiyuki Shimazu will replace Tamami Fukuda as Commission Member.
The new members, who have already agreed to join the CSC, are scholars with extensive experience who are highly respected in the field of the history of geography in their respective geographical areas, and who have already worked actively in initiatives organized by the Commission. Therefore, the Commission’s membership for 2020-2024 will be as follows:

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