



## Themed Sessions

### Conference of Irish Geographers 2015



This document provides a provisional list of themed sessions submitted for the conference.

#### Call for Papers:

- Inland waterbodies: opportunities and vulnerabilities
- Irish Geomorphology in the 21st Century
- Coastal and Marine Environments
- The Real Map of Ireland? Current progress in the palaeo-geographic reconstruction of submerged landscapes
- Geographic Information Science and Remote Sensing in Geomorphology
- Natural Hazards
- Coastal and marine resource management
- Climate Scenarios & Impacts
- Mobilities and identities in contemporary Ireland
- Belfast Futures on the island of Ireland
- Literary Geographies
- Exploring integration from the perspective of migrants
- Cultural geographies of display, exhibition and spectacle
- The Humanitarian Present: Precarity, Intervention, and the New World Order
- Geographies of Financialisation
- Religion: Environment, Apocalypse, Geopolitics
- Bordering, Borders, People and Place: the construction and governance of borders
- The Economic Geographies of Imperialising Knowledge Claims
- Technological imaginaries and the production of space
- Calculated Spaces: small data, big data, open data and data infrastructures

**Inland waterbodies: opportunities and vulnerabilities (Organisers: Dr Helen Roe and Dr Alastair Ruffell, both QUB)**

Inland water bodies comprise vulnerable ecosystems as sediment and pollutant capture zones, yet they are important recorders of past environmental change. Understanding sedimentation, siltation, biological productivity and human management of ponds, lakes, ditches and rivers assists in both protecting these elements of wetland environments and interpreting past records.

Potential contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [a.ruffell@qub.ac.uk](mailto:a.ruffell@qub.ac.uk).

### **Irish Geomorphology in the 21st Century (Organiser: Dr Patricia Warke, QUB)**

Irish Geomorphology has a significant role to play in a time when our landscape is facing considerable pressures associated with both natural and human factors. The former includes the unfolding impact of climate change and the latter reflects the effects of a growing population interacting with often marginal and increasingly sensitive components of the Irish landscape. Whilst the focus of this session is on the island of Ireland, its scope is broad and seeks to provide a forum for demonstrating the significant role geomorphological understanding has to play in the 21st Century in explaining the nature and rate of landscape and landform development and management responses to conditions that are set to become increasingly challenging.

Potential contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [p.warke@qub.ac.uk](mailto:p.warke@qub.ac.uk).

### **Coastal and Marine Environments (Organisers: Dr Eugene Farrell, NUIG, and Prof. Derek Jackson, University of Ulster)**

Ireland's identity is intertwined with the coast and our economy is intimately linked to how well we manage this natural resource. In addition to its intrinsic value, the coastal zone is one of the most dynamic and ecologically significant landscapes on Earth's surface. We invite presentations on all aspects of coastal and marine environments, including, but not limited to: coastal processes and landforms, coastal evolution, coastal and marine biodiversity, modelling, GIS and remote sensing of marine and terrestrial systems, ICZM and marine spatial planning.

Potential contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [eugene.farrell@nuigalway.ie](mailto:eugene.farrell@nuigalway.ie).

### **The Real Map of Ireland? Current progress in the palaeo-geographic reconstruction of submerged landscapes (Organiser: Dr Kieran Westley, University of Ulster. Chair: Dr Ruth Plets, University of Ulster)**

Ireland's coastal landscapes and geography have changed considerably over the recent geological past, having been reshaped by repeated cycles of glaciation, climate and sea-level change. This has meant that tracts of the Irish Quaternary landscape, and evidence pertaining to it, now lie submerged on the continental shelf. However, over the last decade, thanks to national remote sensing seabed mapping initiatives, this formerly and largely unexplored record is now being revealed. To date, this has allowed considerable advances in the reconstruction of Ireland's palaeo-geography and landscape history. Consequently, this is an opportune moment to take stock and assess the state of the art with regards to technologies, techniques and approaches used to map, visualize, analyse and interpret Ireland's underwater landscape. This interdisciplinary session accordingly seeks contributions which cover topics relating to the palaeo-geographic and palaeo-environmental reconstruction of submerged landscapes focusing in particular on studies that utilize data from the intertidal zone and offshore. This includes studies relating to evidence of past glaciation, sea-level change, geomorphology, palaeo-ecology and archaeology of these now-submerged landscapes. While the principal focus of this session is on current progress around Ireland, we also welcome international submissions so as to place the Irish record in a global context.

Potential contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [kl.westley@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:kl.westley@ulster.ac.uk).

**Geographic Information Science and Remote Sensing in Geomorphology (Organisers: Dr Fiona Cawkwell, UCC, Dr Jennifer McKinley, QUB, and Dr Alastair Ruffell, QUB)**

Advances in GI science along with widening access to satellite and UAV imagery, are rapidly transforming how we understanding Earth processes. This session will examine both how this is happening and where we, as Earth scientists, should embrace and direct the use of such technology.

The session organisers welcome not only talks, but also poster presentations.

Potential contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [a.ruffell@qub.ac.uk](mailto:a.ruffell@qub.ac.uk).

**Natural Hazards (Organiser: Dr Mary Bourke, TCD)**

Many geomorphological hazards are driven by high magnitude low frequency/ and fast-acting geomorphological processes, (e.g., floods, landslides, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions). Other hazards result from high frequency/low magnitude processes (e.g., soil salinization). Mounting evidence suggests that atmospheric warming and sea level rise may be associated with an increase in the magnitude and frequency of weather extremes and associated hazards. Owing to increasing human population and the consequent land surface modification, human activities are taking place in areas that are increasingly vulnerable to natural processes and contribute to the documented rise in the magnitude and frequency of geomorphological hazards. This session invites submissions on all aspects of Natural Hazards. It endeavours to bring together geographers who specialise in hazards, risk, resilience, adaptation and mitigation. Of interest are studies on the impact of climatic and environmental changes on natural hazards in the present and past. Papers describing new techniques, methods and tools for the detection, mapping, monitoring and modelling of natural hazard are also welcome.

Potential contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [Bourkem4@TCD.ie](mailto:Bourkem4@TCD.ie).

**Coastal and marine resource management (Organiser: Dr Wesley Flannery, QUB)**

Coastal and marine ecosystems are under stress due, in part, to technological advances, globalisation, climate change and lax governance frameworks. Projections indicate that industrialisation of the marine environment is likely to accelerate in the coming decades. This will not only affect marine ecosystems, but also have an impact on the people and communities that uses these resources. There is growing consensus amongst policymakers and the academic community alike that the challenges emanating from increasing marine industrialisation need to be addressed through new and more effective governance arrangements. Designing effective governance regimes requires high quality applied social science that elucidates contextual understanding of emerging issues, evaluates institutional mechanisms for addressing these issues and highlights opportunities for innovative management at various scales. Papers that address any social science aspect of coastal and marine management are welcome. Topics could include, but are not limited to, coastal and marine spatial planning, valuation of ecosystem services, stakeholder participation and collaborative planning, climate change mitigation and adaptation, etc.

Potential contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [w.flannery@qub.ac.uk](mailto:w.flannery@qub.ac.uk).

#### **Climate Scenarios & Impacts (Organiser: Dr Donal Mullan, QUB)**

In their Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) published in 2013, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicate that globally averaged temperatures are likely to rise by between 0.3°C and 4.8°C by the end of the 21st century relative to the period 1986-2005. Such increases in temperature could have serious consequences for a range of environmental and socio-economic systems, many of which face considerable existing pressures during challenging economic times on both sides of the Irish border. The large temperature range reflecting the uncertainty in future climate scenarios is another challenge facing action/inaction among decision makers. This session is seeking papers relating to the development and/or application of future climate scenarios for Ireland, or alternatively for another global region where lessons can be learned in an Irish context. Development of scenarios will typically involve regional or statistical downscaling approaches, with validation of methods and/or quantification of uncertainty particularly pertinent themes. The application of scenarios based on impact models, sensitivity analyses, analogues etc. are all welcome. Any papers relating to the utility of scenarios and their influence (potential or actual) on policy or decision-making are also encouraged.

Potential contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [D.Mullan@qub.ac.uk](mailto:D.Mullan@qub.ac.uk).

#### **Mobilities and identities in contemporary Ireland (Organisers: Dr Ruth McAreavey, QUB, and Dr Mary Gilmartin, Maynooth)**

This themed paper session focuses on mobilities and identities in contemporary Ireland, both North and South. We welcome papers that address new, emerging or traditional processes or experiences of mobility (including, though not restricted to, geographic, economic and social mobilities). We also welcome papers that address changing understandings of identity, given the broader context of migration to and from contemporary Ireland, and the differential experiences of different localities. The session is open to new and established researchers, and to researchers with a focus on Ireland, broadly defined.

Potential contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [mary.gilmartin@nuim.ie](mailto:mary.gilmartin@nuim.ie).

#### **Belfast Futures on the island of Ireland (Organiser: Dr Philip Boland, QUB)**

This session will address some of the urgent and pressing geographical issues facing Belfast within the context of the island of Ireland. The papers will address some of the key social, economic, environmental and political challenges that Belfast faces in an era of neoliberalism, and in particular the role that planning can play in ameliorating some of the excesses of market-driven competitiveness.

Potential contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [p.boland@qub.ac.uk](mailto:p.boland@qub.ac.uk).

### **Literary Geographies (Organiser: Dr Oliver Dunnett, QUB)**

This session will explore the relationships between literature and notions of place, landscape and identity. Past engagements of this kind have focused on areas including travel writing (Pratt, 1992), post-colonialism (Ashcroft et al, 1989; Said, 1993), urban identities (Daniels and Rycroft, 1993; Johnson, 2004) and science fiction (Kitchin and Kneale, 2002). Herein, studies have derived meaning from literary form and biographical engagements with writers, whilst by contrast, approaches to literature based on audience interpretations and reader positionality have also been considered (Barnett, 1996; Phillips, 2001). This session seeks to incorporate approaches based on authorship as well as taking into account agency or the 'distinctive voice' of literary texts (Sharp, 2000: 327), aiming to generate meaningful engagements between literature and geographical discourse, both in the context of the island of Ireland and beyond.

Potential contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [o.dunnett@qub.ac.uk](mailto:o.dunnett@qub.ac.uk).

### **Exploring integration from the perspective of migrants (Organisers: Jenny McCurry, QMUL, and Brendan Quail, QUB.**

The last decade has witnessed a rise in critiques of multiculturalism within the UK and other European countries, which in turn has propagated a move back towards an assimilationist perspective on integration (Cheong, 2007; Hickman et al. 2013). In particular, UK political discourse on immigration has hardened to produce a more challenging climate for many migrants, whether this be regarding restrictive immigration controls, cuts to migrant support services, or political (and popular) rhetoric which casts them in a negative light. Within these debates, the voices of migrants themselves are infrequently heard, perhaps explained by a general trend to view migrants as objects of policy rather than actors with agency (Pero, 2007). High-level political debates offer little insight into migrants' own lived experiences and interactions with others in their locality or, indeed, how such hardening political discourse, and its additional consequences, may impact on migrants' lives. As a result, we invite papers which focus on the integration of migrants from a migrant perspective. How do migrants integrate within society, build social networks and interact with long-term settled populations and other migrant groups? Papers may address this question from a range of angles, including experiences in the workplace, the community and in civic and political life. We are particularly interested in exploring how specific socio-political contexts aid or present barriers to migrant integration and participation, asking how a geographical focus on place can enhance understanding of migrants' social network building and integration processes, and how these may vary in different contexts.

Potential contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [bquail01@qub.ac.uk](mailto:bquail01@qub.ac.uk).

### **Cultural geographies of display, exhibition and spectacle (Organiser: Dr James Robinson, QUB)**

Geographers have long expressed an interest in the practices of displays, spectacles and exhibition spaces. These engagements have taken place in relation to a diverse range of geographical themes – imperial landscapes (Driver and Gilbert, 1999), projections of nation and national identity (Kong and Yeoh, 1997), memory (Johnson, 1999), museum geographies (Geoghagen, 2010) and spaces of nature (Anderson, 1995), to name a few examples. This session seeks to provide a forum for ongoing discussions about the cultural geographies of display, exhibition and spectacle. Contributions to the session may be historical or contemporary in nature and may focus on spaces of display within the

island of Ireland or further afield. Themes for consideration include (but are by no means limited to):

- The material landscapes of display, spectacle and exhibition
- Performative and enacted spaces of display
- Material cultures of the spectacle
- Parades and ritual cultures of display
- Cultural and contested politics of exhibition

Potential contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [j.p.robinson@qub.ac.uk](mailto:j.p.robinson@qub.ac.uk).

**The Humanitarian Present: Precarity, Intervention, and the New World Order (Organiser: Darren Keegan, NUIG, Dr John Morrissey, NUIG, and Prof. Gerry Kearns, Maynooth)**

The geopolitical order and interventionary spaces of the post-Cold War era have been variously described as unipolar, as a Global War on Terror, and as a Humanitarian Present. This call for papers invites reflections upon the changing contexts of interventionism charactering our contemporary moment, including: the fallout from the loosening of Cold War international relations in terms of regimes losing their primary geopolitical sponsor, especially in Latin American and North Africa; the democratic promise of their successor regimes and how they are being framed and threatened by new disciplines of the Global War on Terror; and the broadening rationales of intervention we are witnessing today, which are redefining what counts as war by focusing upon pre-emptive security, humanitarianism and ultimately the use of force beyond the spaces, practices and legalities of conventional war.

Potential contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [john.morrissey@nuigalway.ie](mailto:john.morrissey@nuigalway.ie).

**Geographies of Financialisation (Organisers: Dr Sinéad Kelly, Maynooth, and Dr Dáithí Downey, TCD)**

Robin Blackburn's (2006:39) simple definition of financialisation as "the growing and systemic power of finance and financial engineering", while brief, certainly has strong resonance in the continuing financial crisis where the influence of those engaged in financial activities has strengthened rather than waned. Indeed state (state/market) responses to the crisis have bolstered and deepened existing processes of financialisation while also enabling new opportunities for increasing the integration of finance. For geographers, the influence of financialisation on the geography of uneven development remains an important point for consideration. This is especially so as post-crisis political trajectories seek to reassert and strengthen the influence of finance capital over all aspects of the economy, over the state and over daily life itself. Marked but also contested changes to financialisation are underway, for example in economy and to the institutional complementarities of state and market agencies. Resistance and adaptation to the financialisation of everyday life among a range of actors, networks and communities is also a feature. This session is concerned with exploring the 'geographies of financialisation'. Papers considering theoretical frameworks used to analyse processes and meanings of 'financialisation' are especially welcome as are empirical and practice-based papers that consider the following themes: financial centres and the geographies of financial power; the financialisation of real estate and property markets; finance and gentrification; the post-crisis nexus between state, finance-debt and uneven development (urban and rural); finance and infrastructure; financial governmentalities, and; the financialisation of everyday life.

Potential contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [sinead.m.kelly@nuim.ie](mailto:sinead.m.kelly@nuim.ie).

### **Religion: Environment, Apocalypse, Geopolitics (Organiser: Dr Tristan Sturm, QUB)**

Given the small nature of this conference, this session invites paper presentations on any religion-based theme within geography. The subtitle “Environment, Apocalypse, Geopolitics” was added as a tripartite marker of some recent research within geography and geopolitics, albeit with important exceptions. It is hoped that geography’s cognate fields might also participate in this session and push these theoretical, methodological, topical boundaries. Possible topics might include: religion-based or –inspired environmental movements or interpretations of catastrophic climate change; geographical imaginations of good/evil places by millennial movements or studies of how such movements use geography to gage the temporal distance of the apocalypse; and possibly how “religious geopolitics” (secular discourses that utilize religious discourse) and the “geopolitics of religion” (geopolitics by religious groups and of theologies) have used apocalyptic and/or environmental themes to create sites of complacency and post-politics, or action and alarmism. There is no limit to the number of possible research topics, the hope is to put together a robust set of papers from various disciplinary backgrounds and perspectives with a diverse set of examples from various religions.

Potential contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [tristan.sturm@gmail.com](mailto:tristan.sturm@gmail.com)

### **Bordering, Borders, People and Place: the construction and governance of borders (Organiser: Dr Karen Keaveney, UCD)**

Exploring the borders of Ireland and beyond, this session seeks to frame and investigate the everyday geographies of regions that have created by ‘artefacts on the ground’ (Agnew, 2008). The ‘process of bordering’ (Newman, 2006) will be examined with a focus on both the demarcation of borders – their categorisation and construction over time – and the management of those borders – with a particular focus on multi-level governance. While the Irish border region will form the main focus of attention in this session, papers are also welcome that seek to examine the dynamics of borders and ‘bordering’ internationally.

Current speakers include: Karen Keaveney (UCD), Brendan O’Keeffe (University of Limerick), Gavan Rafferty (University of Ulster), Caroline Creamer (Maynooth)

Additional contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [karen.keaveney@ucd.ie](mailto:karen.keaveney@ucd.ie).

### **The Economic Geographies of Imperialising Knowledge Claims (Organiser: Dr Niall Majury, QUB)**

Economic geography’s engagement with heterodox approaches has opened up a series of creative analytical, methodological and political responses to ‘the market’. ‘The market’ and other orthodox analytical concepts are no longer safe places to theorise (Zelizer 2011). Rather important and challenging questions have been raised about the geographical form and constitution of foundational economic concepts (Peck 2012) and the spatial dynamics at play in their circulation, evolution and practical deployment (Berndt and Boeckler 2012).

This session seeks to draw together empirically focused papers that reflect on how the circulation of analytical concepts puts in place a particular politics of calculation, that is, forms of economic governance and policy-making which operate through situated distinctions, boundaries, exceptions and exclusions. The objective of the session is to reflect on and critically engage with elements of the multiplicity of forms, settings, domains and scales across which imperialising knowledge claims circulate and are translated into economies-in-the-making.

In organising this session, we wish to bring together papers that represent a diverse range of economic concepts, including, but not limited to, the market, austerity, property rights, development, globalisation and the knowledge economy.

Potential contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [n.majury@gub.ac.uk](mailto:n.majury@gub.ac.uk).

### **Technological imaginaries and the production of space (Organiser: Jim White, NUIM)**

This session aims to think through the complex relationship between space and technology. The proliferation of smart phones and city-scale embedded devices is reshaping homes, work places and cities. Rather than focus explicitly on how technologies might autonomously and automatically produce such spaces, our focus is the broader imaginaries which pre-empt and prefigure socio-technical systems. We are interested in submissions that explore how space is produced or performed through contested relationships between technologies, imaginaries and situated practices. This might mean, on the one hand, to approach technologies by reflecting on cultural representations or utopian visions of the future. On the other hand, imaginaries might be understood through the ways communities, social groups or initiatives think about already existing technologies. We are open to a broad range of theoretical and methodological approaches.

Contributions may respond to various topics, including but not limited to urban planning, surveillance, emergency response, energy management, sustainable transportation or everyday consumption and mobility. The following questions might be addressed:

- what kinds of urban futures are being imagined and what are the technologies mobilised for such imaginaries?
- how are technologies evoked as a solution to contemporary problems or perceived threats?
- what space-times are evoked or rearranged?
- what forms of resistance to dominant visions are being practiced or displayed?
- how are politics articulated within utopian and dystopian imaginations?
- how are the coupling of bodies, technologies and data imagined, planned and enacted?
- how is human and nonhuman agency perceived and practiced in relation to technological imaginaries?

Potential contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [james.white.2014@nuim.ie](mailto:james.white.2014@nuim.ie).

### **Calculated Spaces: small data, big data, open data and data infrastructures (Organiser: Dr Tracey Lauriault, NUIM)**

The promise of big and open data and data infrastructures is for greater evidence based decision making, informed policy, and efficient management. As mobile devices, wearables, UAVs/Drones, webcams, and sensors become more accessible and distributed in terms of cost, size and useability, it is assumed, that the 'neutral facts' derived from these 'democratized technologies' will lead to the production of objective and politically neutral models of places and spaces. Also, combining



these data with those collected by GPS, satellite and radar with transaction (i.e. loyalty & swipe cards) and social media data and with framework data such as street networks or political boundaries, will lead to the perfect calculated model of the world. Finally, there is the dream of cloud storage liberating the data from geography with 'free' and 'open' platforms yet geo-fencing persists.

We hope submissions will include critically reflections on some of the following: the 'politically neutral' production of objective space, technological determinism, data driven managerialism, the social shaping effects of technology and data, technocratic governance, and data assemblages (Kitchin 2014). Also, on the implications of algorithmic, mathematic and geometric modelling of spaces and places, social physics, the ontologies of ontologies (Hacking 2012), the politics of portals and 3rd party platforms and the geopolitics of data storage and global infrastructures. Also how do small, data, and open data and data infrastructures transduce spaces and places (Kitchin, 2014, Dalton and Thatcher 2014, Kitchin and Lauriault 2014). The objective of this session is therefore to interrogate the epistemological and ontological issues raised by data and infrastructures and to discuss their social, ethical, legal and political implications.

Potential contributors should liaise with the session organiser prior to submission of their abstract on the conference website. Contact email: [Tracey.Lauriault@NUIM.ie](mailto:Tracey.Lauriault@NUIM.ie).