

Transportation Geography Specialty Group Report

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Abstract:

It is exciting time for the Transport Geography Specialty Group (TGSG) of the Association of American Geographers (AAG). After a year of membership drive, I am pleased to report that as of December 2013 the TGSG membership has increased to 343, which is a record after it slightly declined from 339 in 2011 to 273 in 2012. Please continue to encourage your colleagues and students to join the TGSG when they renew their AAG memberships.

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Article:

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Among many TGSG activities, each year at the Annual Meeting of AAG the TGSG proudly honors a few outstanding individuals who have made significant contributions to transportation scholarship as well as those who are beginning their careers in Transportation Geography. The Ph.D. student dissertation award was received by Dr. Woo S. Jang for his dissertation entitled ‘Spatial Dynamics of Disaggregated Urban Commuting Patterns’, supervised by Dr. Xiaobai Yao at the University of Georgia. The Master’s student competition award went to Benjamin Lundberg for his thesis ‘Accessibility and University Population: Local Effects on Non-Motorized Transportation in the Tuscaloosa-Northport Area’, supervised by Dr. Joe Weber at the University of Alabama.

The Edward L. Ullman Award for outstanding contributions to the field of transportation geography was awarded to John S. Adams, Professor Emeritus of the Department of Geography at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Adams is well known in the field of transportation and urban geography for his four decades of intra-metropolitan growth showing the interrelationship between urban growth and transportation development in the U.S. Dr. Adams was among the

few distinguished scholars who realized many years ago that transport and urban professionals should work together, not separately. Thus, throughout his career, Dr. Adams' work has not only centered on transportation alone, but has considered transportation as an integral part of understanding urban geography, connected to housing, employment, industry, and regional growth and change. Among others, his most important contribution was the Transportation and Regional Growth Study sponsored by the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the Metropolitan Council, and the Minnesota Local Road Research Board. This study, in which he was one of the main investigators, ran from 1998–2003 and made major strides towards understanding the connections between land use and transportation with regards to housing, freight, financing, urban design, and policy. By custom, Dr. Adams is invited to give the Fleming Lecture in Transportation Geography at the Annual Meeting of AAG 2014 in Tampa, FL. The title of his talk will be 'Ten Things to Know about American Cities'. Dr. David Kaplan at Kent State University will serve as the discussant.

The 2013 Fleming Lecture was delivered by Dr. Jean-Claude Thill, winner of the 2012 Ullman Award. Dr. Thill is the Knight Distinguished Professor of Public Policy at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. The title of Dr. Thill's talk was "About Flows, Spatial Interaction, and Spatial Economic Organization". His expertise is in the area of transportation and mobility systems and his talk was around this theme. The audience was thrilled to hear his insights on the modalities of spatial operations of transportation and communication networks and of their articulation with their surrounding regions, in technologies and policies that frame these modalities, and in the socio-economic implications on the regional context. The Fleming lecture was organized and introduced by Dr. Selima Sultana at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. Dr. Morton O'Kelly at Ohio State University served as the discussant.

There were record number of sessions (43) sponsored by the Transportation Geography Specialty Group (including the Fleming lecture) at the Los Angeles AAG 2013 meeting. Many of these sessions were co-sponsored with a variety of other specialty groups, including Asian, Human Dimensions of Global Change, Geographic Information Science and Systems, Qualitative, Tourism & Recreation, and Urban Geography specialty groups. Topics covered in those sessions included Accessibility to Public Spaces in Changing Urban Environments, Asia On The Move II: Transportation, Cultural Change and Diffusions, Bicycling For Fun and For Profit, Children, Childhoods, and Transport Geography (two sessions), Cities, Transportation and Sustainability I: Environments and Flows, Cities, Transportation and Sustainability II: Governance and Policy, Cities, Transportation and Sustainability III: Applications and Implementation, Contesting and Constructing Spaces of Mobility and Transport (five sessions), Electric and Alternative Fueled Transport, Getting There is Half the Fun: Maritime and Land-Based Logistics, Healthy Geographies of Transportation, High-Speed Rail: Development, Integration and Crisis, Mobility, Travel, and Place, New Approaches to Transportation and Economic Development, One If By Land, Two If By Sea: Transportation Networks for Ports and Transit, Port Cityscapes: Dynamic Perspectives on the Port-City-Waterfront Interface (four sessions), Rail Landscapes I: Spaces and Networks (three sessions), Spatial Optimization and Analysis (two sessions), Spatiotemporal Thinking, Computing and Applications (two sessions), The Automobile and Its Consequences, Travel, Visitation, and Transportation in the Parks, Urban Commuting, Using ICT for transport to facilitate the development of Green Economy. One of the highlighted sessions covered a wide array of papers on Travel, Visitation, and Transportation in the Parks. The Children, Childhoods,

and Transport Geography session included many stimulating papers from Asia, Europe and North America. Lively sessions on the topic “Cities, Transportation, and Sustainability” particularly drew attention from audiences.

As a part of the 2013 Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, Dr. Andrew Goetz (University of Denver) and Dr. Keith Ratner (Salem State University) organized a field trip to visit transit-oriented development along the city’s gold light-rail line and red subway line. The tour was focused on the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority (Metro) Joint Development Program, “a real property asset development and management program designed to secure the most appropriate private and/or public sector development on Metro-owned property at and adjacent to transit stations and corridors.”

As part of the expansion of TGSG’s activities, there were number of TGSG sponsored special sessions at the 2013 international conference of Network on European Communications and Transport Activities Research (NECTAR) in Azores, Portugal. Among them four sessions of ‘Commuting, Migration, Housing and Labor Markets’ were organized by Dr. Selima Sultana. Dr. Andrew Goetz at University of Denver organized another four sessions on future non-motorized modes.

The TGSG is looking forward to having many more exciting sessions with variety of topics at the upcoming 2014 AAG Annual Meeting in Tampa, FL on April 8–12. The sessions that are proposed included Geographies of mobility, Rail Landscapes, Perception of public transportation and urban infrastructure, The metropolitan policies and challenges, Spatial epidemiology, Time Geography, Spatiotemporal thinking, etc.

Sad to say, attendance at last year’s business meeting in Los Angeles was a record low. However, I am optimistic that this number will increase in Tampa. Please continue to encourage your colleagues and students to get involved with TGSG activities in Tampa. I look forward to seeing you all there!