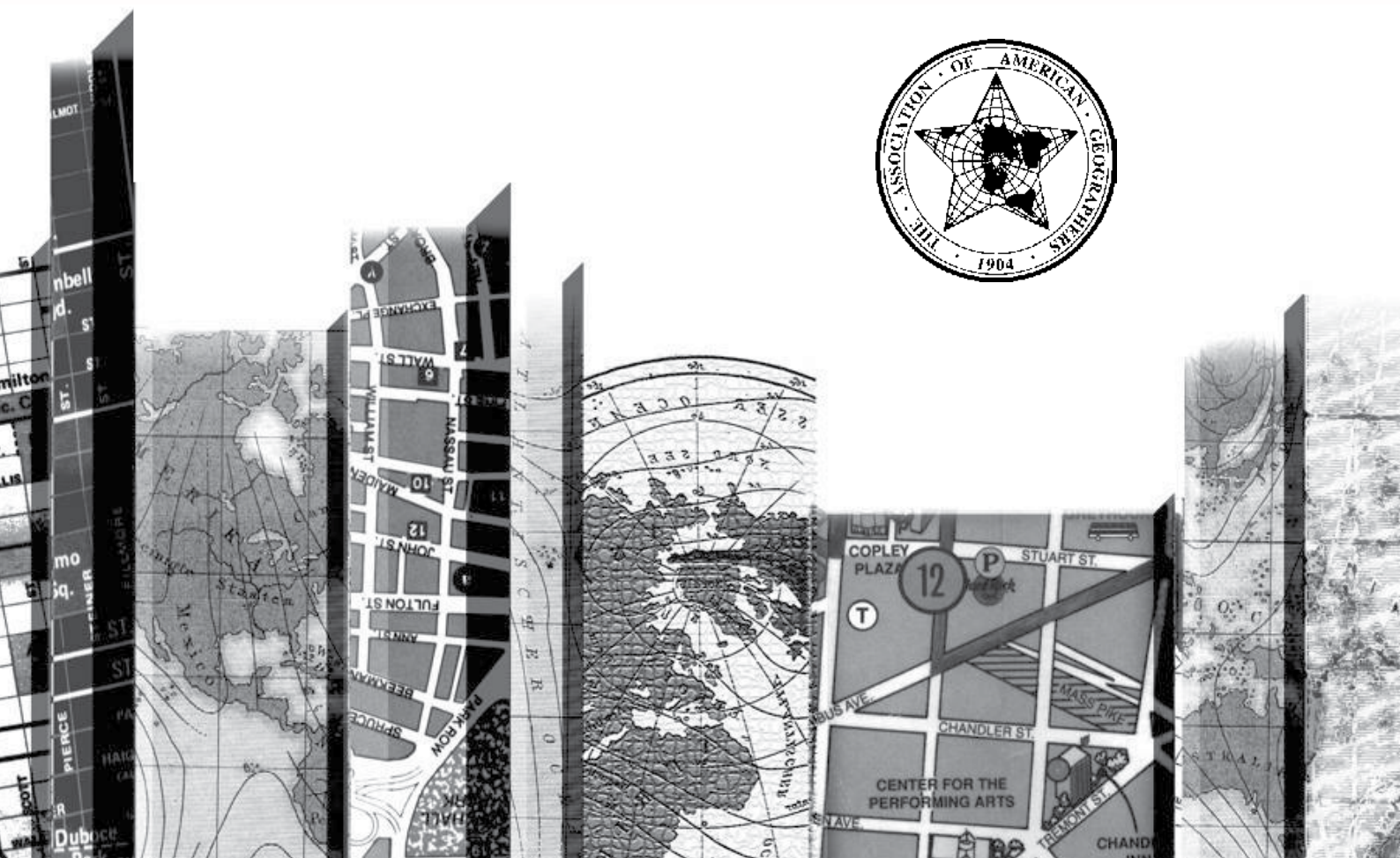


The Professional Geographer

FORUM AND JOURNAL OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN GEOGRAPHERS

Special Virtual Issue:
New Directions in Geography



Contents

This **Special Virtual Issue** from *The Professional Geographer* provides a collection of leading Geographical articles, each relating back to the underlying theme of New Directions in Geography.

For further information, including an Abstract and a link to the full text, **click on the article title from the contents list below**. All of these articles are free to access for a limited time.

A Place for Geography in the Liberal Arts College?

Advancing Human Geography at the Commencement du Siécle

American Geography and International Research: A Sustainable-Development Agenda

Confronted by Insurmountable Opportunities: Geography in Society at the AAG's Centennial

Employment Trends in Geography, Part 3: Future Demand Conditions

Skills in Professional Geography: An Assessment of Workforce Needs and Expectations

The Big Questions in Geography

Geography's Human Resources over the Past Half-Century

Geography Education: The Glass Is Half Full and It's Getting Fuller

Laws, Contingencies, Irreversible Divergence, and Physical Geography

Geo-Narrative: Extending Geographic Information Systems for Narrative Analysis in Qualitative and Mixed-Method Research

Theorizing and Researching Intersectionality: A Challenge for Feminist Geography

Grand Theory and Context-Specificity in the Study of Forest Dynamics: Forest Transition Theory and Other Directions

Connecting Local to Global: Geographic Information Systems and Ecological Footprints as Tools for Sustainability

Special Virtual Issue

A Place for Geography in the Liberal Arts College?

Mark D. Bjelland

This study charts the presence of geography at liberal arts colleges and explores the relationship between the liberal arts and the study of geography. The results of this study reveal a paradox: geography embodies many of the ideals of a liberal arts education and yet this study indicates an absence of degree-granting geography programs at 93% of institutions. Geography thrives, however, at a select group of liberal arts colleges, and these colleges are disproportionately important as the undergraduate origin for doctorate recipients in geography.

[Read the full article here](#)

Avancing Human Geography at the Commencement du Siécle

Barney Warf

Human geography today exhibits unprecedented vitality and diversity. This survey first charts some major lines of research in the field in light of the ascendancy of critical theory, political economy, and poststructuralist thought, including feminism, the cultural turn, consumption, urban geography, and globalization. Next, it focuses on several “cutting-edge” issues, such as race, postcolonialism, the social construction of nature, representations of space, and cyberspace. Finally, the article turns an eye toward the future, offering comments on the discipline’s likely trajectories with regard to the blurring of traditional dualisms, methodological integration, and the lacunae of public policy and geographic education.

[Read the full article here](#)

American Geography and International Research: A Sustainable-Development Agenda

William B. Wood

Over the past one hundred years, the world has undergone dramatic change physically, economically, culturally, demographically, and politically. Many societies have experienced some form of “globalization” at the expense of valued local traditions. Some economies have adapted quickly to the technology-intensive “information age,” while others flounder with growing underemployment and declining agricultural productivity. The world’s population has trebled (from about 2 to over 6 billion), with continued growth concentrated in the poorest regions, where income-generating opportunities are rare and resource-access inequities are common. During this period, the world geo-political map has been redrawn several times, from one dominated by Europe-controlled colonies to one where the United Nations now boasts 191 independent member states, the latest being Switzerland.

[Read the full article here](#)

Special Virtual Issue

Confronted by Insurmountable Opportunities: Geography in Society at the AAG's Centennial

Douglas Richardson and Patricia Solis

Geographers at the AAG's centennial are challenged with exceptional opportunities to create a more central place for geography in society and in the university. Realizing these opportunities requires identifying and leveraging key emerging trends in the formation and uses of geographic knowledge. Better integration of geography's profound technological innovations with its core traditions also is necessary to strengthen the discipline's research capacity, and to more effectively engage with and contribute to the needs of society. Trends toward multidisciplinary research and integrative science, and the heightened need for geographic understanding in today's world, hold further promise for advancing the discipline while sustaining its historic strengths and diversity.

[Read the full article here](#)

Employment Trends in Geography, Part 3: Future Demand Conditions

*Patricia Gober, Amy K. Glasmeier, James M. Goodman,
David A. Plane, Howard A. Stafford and Joseph S. Wood*

The third and final article in this series about employment conditions in geography addresses the issue of future demand in both academic and nonacademic settings. To gain an understanding of future demand conditions in colleges and universities, we projected the retirement of AAG members by topical specialty and then matched these retirement trends with a profile of new faculty searches as reported by geography department chairs. We assessed the likely future demand for geography teachers at the precollegiate level through a survey of Geography Alliance Coordinators about teacher certification requirements and the education environments in their respective states. We speculated on how the kinds of jobs geographers do will be affected by changes now underway in the national and global economies. And finally, we conducted a small telephone survey of AAG corporate sponsors to determine how future business trends will affect the demand for geographers.

[Read the full article here](#)

Skills in Professional Geography: An Assessment of Workforce Needs and Expectations

Michael Solem, Ivan Cheung and M. Beth Schlemper

This study compares the skills of professional geographers and the needs of employer organizations across major sectors of the U.S. workforce. Following a series of focus groups, two surveys were developed to explore:

- (1) the extent to which specific skills were performed by geographers in different professional positions, and
- (2) the value of and anticipated demand for those skills from the perspective of employers.

Overall, respondents in the focus groups and both surveys emphasized the need for general skills ranging from time management and writing ability to information management and computer literacy. Employers also cited many geographic skills as being vital for enhancing the work of professionals in all types of organizations. Competency in field methods, the ability to work across disciplinary boundaries, and spatial thinking were three skill areas that characterized the work of geographic professionals irrespective of specialty.

[Read the full article here](#)

Special Virtual Issue

The Big Questions in Geography

Susan L. Cutter, Reginald Golledge and William L. Graf

In noting his fondness for geography, John Noble Wilford, science correspondent for *The New York Times*, nevertheless challenged the discipline to articulate those big questions in our field, ones that would generate public interest, media attention, and the respect of policymakers. This article presents our collective judgments on those significant issues that warrant disciplinary research. We phrase these as a series of ten questions in the hopes of stimulating a dialogue and collective research agenda for the future and the next generation of geographic professionals.

[Read the full article here](#)

Geography's Human Resources over the Past Half-Century

Kavita Pandit

This article examines trends over the past five decades in three human resource issues in geography: the production of new geographers; the size and diversity of the membership of the Association of American Geographers (AAG); and the topical specializations of geographers. The number of geography degrees awarded increased rapidly in the 1950s and 1960s, followed by a modest decline as baby boomers exited their college years. The number surged again in the 1990s, however, and it seems to have stabilized in recent years. AAG membership trends followed a similar trajectory and membership is currently poised to set a new record. The participation of women in the discipline has increased steadily over the past half-century, but geography still lags the social and physical sciences in the share of women receiving bachelor's degrees. The participation of geographers from ethnic minority groups continues to be very low. The number of AAG specialty groups has doubled since their inception in 1978, and geographic information science (GIS) now occupies a prominent position within the discipline. Challenges in the coming years include increasing the diversity in geography, reducing the turnover in AAG membership, preparing for the imminent retirement of a large cohort of baby-boom geographers, and reconnecting with nonacademic geographers.

[Read the full article here](#)

Geography Education: The Glass Is Half Full and It's Getting Fuller

Robert S. Bednarz and Sarah Witham Bednarz

This article examines the recent progress of geography education as an academic subfield of geography and as an area of activity in K-12 education. Challenges to both endeavors are described. A restructuring of geography education's research program that focuses on spatial thinking and reasoning and merges applied and theoretical research is proposed.

[Read the full article here](#)

Special Virtual Issue

Laws, Contingencies, Irreversible Divergence, and Physical Geography

Jonathan D. Phillips

Four critical challenges for physical geography are examined here: deterioration of common cores of knowledge associated with increasing intellectual niche specialization; the need for conceptual thinking and problem-framing to catch up with measurement and analysis technology; and the need to explicitly incorporate human decision making in analysis of earth surface systems. The future calls for physical geography to embrace and confront the creative tension between nomothetic and interpretive science, and to fruitfully and explicitly integrate these approaches.

[Read the full article here](#)

Geo-Narrative: Extending Geographic Information Systems for Narrative Analysis in Qualitative and Mixed-Method Research

Mei-Po Kwan and Guoxiang Ding

This research seeks to contribute to advancing qualitative methodologies at the intersection of qualitative geographic information systems (GIS), narrative analysis, 3D GIS-based time-geographic methods, and computer-aided qualitative data analysis. The approach to GIS-based narrative analysis developed in the study, called “geo-narrative,” is based on extending current GIS capabilities for the analysis and interpretation of narrative materials such as oral histories, life histories, and biographies. The three central elements in this approach are (1) narrative analysis as the qualitative approach; (2) 3D GIS-based time-geographic methods as the representational framework; and (3) 3D-VQGIS as the GIS-based computer-aided qualitative data analysis component. A case example based on a study of the lives of the Muslim women in Columbus, Ohio, after 11 September 2001 is used to illustrate the approach.

[Read the full article here](#)

Theorizing and Researching Intersectionality: A Challenge for Feminist Geography

Gill Valentine

This article focuses on the concept of intersectionality, which is being used within the wider social sciences by feminists to theorize the relationship between different social categories: gender, race, sexuality, and so forth. Although research within the field of feminist geography has explored particular interconnections such as those between gender and race, the theoretical concept of intersectionality as debated in the wider social sciences has not been addressed. This article attempts to respond to that omission. It begins by tracing the emergence of debates about the interconnections between gender and other identities. It goes on to reflect on attempts to map geometries of oppressions. The emphasis then moves from theorizing intersectionality to questioning how it can be researched in practice by presenting a case study to illustrate intersectionality as lived experience. The conclusion demonstrates the contribution that feminist geography can make to advance the theorization of intersectionality through its appreciation of the significance of space in processes of subject formation. It calls for feminist geography to pay more attention to questions of power and social inequalities.

[Read the full article here](#)

Special Virtual Issue

Grand Theory and Context-Specificity in the Study of Forest Dynamics: Forest Transition Theory and Other Directions

Stephen G. Perz

This article critically reviews forest transition theory, which posits a decline in forest cover followed by expansion during the course of development. Whereas case studies in advanced industrial nations provided an empirical foundation, more recent cross-national modeling efforts and studies in developing regions have raised doubts. Forest transition theory has limitations in its concept of forests, its treatment of forest dynamics, its explanation for forest transitions, and its generalizability. This critique provides the basis for research needs to link studies of forest dynamics on various timescales to other land use/land cover research, as via historical-comparative methods and interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks.

[Read the full article here](#)

Connecting Local to Global: Geographic Information Systems and Ecological Footprints as Tools for Sustainability

Sonja Klinsky, Renée Sieber and Thom Meredith

Tools that support public engagement with sustainability are essential for local sustainability planning. This research investigates the ability of two geographic information system (GIS)-based tools to promote discussion of sustainability in a suburban context. A local ecological footprint tool and a community environmental atlas (an environmentally themed online mapping system) were created for seven suburban boroughs of Montreal. Variations of both tools have been used to support sustainability efforts, but their use has not been widely evaluated. Working from a public participation GIS (PPGIS) framework that recognizes the powerful influence of data representation, this research uses focus groups to evaluate how well these tools address three criteria that have emerged from the literature on public engagement in sustainability: interdependency across systems, reflexivity about personal and social decision making, and interactions across spatial scales. Whereas the atlas remains advantageous for discussing local spatial specifics, it was found that the ecological footprint helped people see the interconnections among systems, integrate local and global aspects of sustainability, and reflect on the values and assumptions underlying current social and economic structures.

[Read the full article here](#)