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## Potential PhD studentships 2009

Inviting applications for 2009/10

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This is a list of potential PHD proposals in the Institute of Spatial and Environmental Planning. You can apply via the main University portal but we encourage you to make informal inquiries before hand by contacting the first named supervisor from the list below. Your application should be accompanied by a 3000 word proposal setting out your understanding of: the theoretical understanding of the subject; research objectives; an outline methodology; timeline; and your suitability for the post. Please note that this is a competitive process and there is no guarantee that your application will be successful. Applications will be evaluated on the following criteria: educational attainment and relevance to subject area; research competence of the applicant; and the quality of the research proposal. You can apply via the QUB portal at:

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### Spatial Planning and Article 6 of the European Convention of Human Rights

Geraint Ellis ([g.ellis@qub.ac.uk](mailto:g.ellis@qub.ac.uk))

The core tension in spatial planning of having to balance public interest with individual rights has meant that the procedures and decisions of planning practice have subject to a range of legal challenges on human rights grounds. This has been particularly so since the introduction of the UK's Human Rights Act of 1998, which has allowed the UK courts to determine such cases. While the human rights challenges to planning have been made on a number of the articles of the European Convention of Human Rights, Article 6 (Right to a Fair Trial) has attracted particular interest because of the procedural basis of planning law and the opportunities this has presented for third parties to challenge planning decisions. This project aims to explore the consequences of this for understanding the core values of justice expressed in the UK's planning systems by quantifying the range of article 6 challenges, assessing factors of success and developing a comparative analysis with other European planning systems.

### Place, memory and contestation

Brendan Murtagh ([b.murtagh@qub.ac.uk](mailto:b.murtagh@qub.ac.uk)) and Linda Price ([l.price@qub.ac.uk](mailto:l.price@qub.ac.uk))

This project explores the contested nature of heritage and history in the contemporary management of place. *Hot tourism* and *terror tourism* have emerged as important markets within the wider growth of global and regional tourist industry. Northern Ireland has capitalised on the curiosity value of the Troubles which raises a range of ethical, policy and infrastructure issues. How narratives of the past are told of places of memory is problematic evidenced by the treatment of the Maze site, Crumlin Road jail and the site of the Battle of the Boyne in County Louth. This thesis will explore memory, place and the past and how contested sites are represented in contemporary tourism and heritage initiatives. Whilst the research locale is centred on Northern Ireland the project is set within a wider international field context and literature.

### Migrant workers: exploring the role of social networks in residential mobility and settlement patterns

Ruth McAreavey ([r.mcareavey@qub.ac.uk](mailto:r.mcareavey@qub.ac.uk))

Rural communities are in a constant state of flux for a number of reasons. In Western economies many rural areas are experiencing decline due to the ongoing restructuring of agriculture and related industries. Population ageing is evident in some areas as younger people leave and seek a livelihood in urban centres. Meanwhile other areas are experiencing an influx of the newly retired and of middle class families who wish

to move away from more densely populated areas. At the same time foreign nationals are moving within and between these areas as the ability of citizens to move between countries, and indeed continents, continue to provide new opportunities in distant places. The types of social services needed by these different groups will vary as will the way in which they use the services. As population profiles change, so the need for particular services will develop. It is clear that population statistics alone provide an inadequate picture of these dynamics. This research will consider the role of service provision in population movements. It will examine the role of service provision as a mechanism for social integration. It will examine: How local resources (e.g. education, housing) are used by social networks (of migrants), and if so how? What impact do they have on settlement patterns? What is the role of social capital? The research will illuminate the extent to which social networks and local service provision influence migration behaviour and patterns.

### **Rural development and Regional development: can rural development make rural areas more competitive?**

Ruth McAreavey ([r.mcareavey@qub.ac.uk](mailto:r.mcareavey@qub.ac.uk))

Economies across the globe are facing major problems in the wake of the global financial crisis. It is likely that the challenges will be particularly felt by peripheral, outlying and indeed rural areas as they struggle to remain competitive in a context of limited public funds. Nonetheless strengthening the competitiveness of the EU remains central to the Lisbon agenda. Important questions therefore arise for those responsible for the development of rural areas about their expected future role. It is inevitable that societies will be compelled to make complex decisions and so it is essential that the relationship between peripheral and indeed rural areas is fully explicated. This research would consider the relationships between rural areas and the competitiveness of regions in the EU. It would identify ways in which the positive contribution of rural areas to regional development and competitiveness might be enhanced.

### **Rural Development: identifying rural development in an era of governance.**

Ruth McAreavey ([r.mcareavey@qub.ac.uk](mailto:r.mcareavey@qub.ac.uk))

Numerous models of rural development have been evident in recent decades in western economies. For many years the word 'integrated' has been closely associated with a vision for rural development. Typically economic, environment, social and cultural issues are integrated at a spatial community level to achieve sustainable rural development. Superimposed upon this are the various layers of multi-governance; meanwhile at the local level individuals interact in processes of micro-politics to achieve action 'on the ground' that relates to their own particular agenda. Many challenges result, such as issues of power, participation, involvement, sustainability and equality. This research will examine what rural development looks like. How is it played out at the local level? What are the prospects for future models of rural development? What is the capacity of rural development programmes to achieve meaningful and lasting change within rural communities? Has the time come for alternative approaches?

### **Discourses of objection and the tensions of collaboration**

Geraint Ellis ([g.ellis@qub.ac.uk](mailto:g.ellis@qub.ac.uk))

The current dominant theoretical paradigm in spatial planning is one of collaborative or communicative planning (Healey, Forester). This is based on particular views of power and the assumption of this approach is the willingness of stakeholders to engage in "undistorted communication" with honesty and integrity. These aspects of collaborative planning have attracted substantial criticism, often focussing on the ability of different interests to share an conceptual understanding of the public interest, which allows common goals to be negotiated. Indeed, a range of researchers (e.g.??) have highlighted the disparities between the participative process in planning as theorised and that as current practised, often focussing on the conflictive, rather than consensual nature of the process. A core issue here is a failure to capture the motivations of stakeholders in a more meaningful way, often resorting to the conceptually weak notion of NIMBYism (Wolsink) or interest capture (Pennington). This project aims to develop a better understanding of the motivational drivers that inform those that see participation primarily in terms of objection and will seek to expand the initial insights on this provided in Ellis (2006). It is anticipated that the outcomes of the project will have relevance to both planning theory and the way in which local environmental disputes are mediated.

### **The regulation of National parks**

Aileen Stockdale ([a.stockdale@qub.ac.uk](mailto:a.stockdale@qub.ac.uk))

This project will focus on the proposed National Park for the Mourne area of South Down. The National Park Working Group has reported on the mechanisms to best implement the approach but this has met with strong objection from farmers, land owners and extractive industries. The dissertation will look at National Parks in a global context and their contested history in terms of rural regeneration, amenity and tourism development in the post-productive countryside. The competing understandings of amenity and the regulation of the countryside via land use designation will be a key component of the empirical work.

### **Skills Development for Marine Spatial Planning**

Geraint Ellis ([g.ellis@qub.ac.uk](mailto:g.ellis@qub.ac.uk))

The Marine and Coastal Access Act was passed by the UK government in December 2008. This ground making legislation introduces a range of innovative measures aimed at improving the management of the UK's marine environment and for the first time establishes a comprehensive system of Marine Spatial Planning. Although this draws heavily on the policy approaches, processes and ethos of the traditions of land-based spatial planning, the marine environment offers a very different regulatory environment because of, inter alia, the nature of the stakeholders, patterns of governance, property rights regime, geographic scale and the economic and natural character of the marine environment. These all offer challenges to the nature of regulatory intervention and the skills needed to competently manage the new system of management of the marine environment. This research project will explore many of these issues by establishing the various skills profiles demanded as a consequence of the Marine Act. This will include an analysis of the skills associated with various elements of Marine Spatial Planning (ie. licensing, formulation of Marine plans, stakeholder engagement), exploring the professional identities of those already engaged in such activities, stakeholder perspectives and will reflect on whether these activities should be regarded as an extension of the professional competencies of (land-based) spatial planners or whether it calls for a new distinct professional grouping, that of Marine Spatial Planners.

### **Border spaces and settlement interdependency**

Karen Keaveney ([k.keaveney@qub.ac.uk](mailto:k.keaveney@qub.ac.uk)) and Brendan Murtagh ([b.murtagh@qub.ac.uk](mailto:b.murtagh@qub.ac.uk))

The European Spatial Development Perspective and spatial development plans for the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland highlight the need to rethink and reshape territorial relationships in the context of globalisation, European enlargement and stronger North-South relationships. This dissertation will explore settlement relationships at a range of scales but will focus on the extent and quality of collaboration and contestation on a cross-border basis. The rhetoric of inter-dependency and functional complementarity will be empirically challenged in the context of the Irish border but the work will draw heavily on international practice and the relationship between sovereignty and spatial economics in the 'new' Europe. This project aims to reach policy relevant conclusions at the national and European level, not least in evaluating the future of the ESDP and polycentricity and the implications of accession countries for supra-scale planning.

### **The Spatial Planning of Small Islands**

Geraint Ellis ([g.ellis@qub.ac.uk](mailto:g.ellis@qub.ac.uk))

The small island communities of the UK and Ireland face specific social, economic and environmental challenges in the face of globalising forces. They also exhibit unique community identities, social culture and relationships with specific territories, both terrestrial and marine. Such factors demand a particular planning response, for which conventional approaches may be inappropriate. This research project aims to develop an initial analysis of the planning challenges of planning for small islands by identifying the core drivers, planning styles and types of spatial interventions that have been applied to the UK 's and Ireland's small island communities with the aim of generating models of good practice.

### **Inter-professional Perceptions in Healthy Urban Planning**

Geraint Ellis ([g.ellis@qub.ac.uk](mailto:g.ellis@qub.ac.uk))

In recent years, the medical discipline has increasingly focused on the social determinants of health, while those researching in the field of planning have begun to explore the relationship of the built environment with human well being. These shared concerns have come together under the Healthy Urban Planning

Movement, promoted by, among others, the WHO's Healthy Cities Network. Such a movement offers huge potential to improve the quality of life of those most effected by poor health, yet is dependent on the ability of at least two professions (planners and medical professionals) to develop a shared understanding of the problems, policy priorities and potential interventions that will give shape to healthy built environments. This research aims to develop an initial analysis of the prospects for such productive inter-professional collaborative by generating an understanding of how planners and medical professions identify their areas of competence and those of the other profession to identify the potential obstacles to further developing a healthy urban planning.

### **Energy, Spatial Planning and the Transition Town Movement**

Geraint Ellis ([g.ellis@qub.ac.uk](mailto:g.ellis@qub.ac.uk))

The challenges of climate change, energy security and oil dependency are well known and subject to a range of global and national interventions. In recent years, there has also been a growing grassroots involvement with the UK and Ireland, typified by the Transitions Towns Movement. Characterised by voluntary, cross-sectoral, collaborative action this has provide a range of innovative practices aimed at developing community resilience to global challenges, through social, economic and environmental initiatives at the local level. At the same time, there has also been a broadening of statutory responsibilities in the UK's planning systems from a narrow focus on land use to a wider range of spatial interventions. Although this should have allowed an integration of Transition Town activity with that of statutory planning authorities, the relationships between these two areas appear poorly developed. This research will aim to clarify existing and potential integration of spatial planning and grassroots Transition Town activity through an overview of national activity and the development of detailed local case studies. It is anticipated that this research will provide valuable insights into the potential development civic forms of sustainability and how the spatial planning system can provide a supporting role in reducing oil dependency at a local level.

### **Children, planning and the built environment**

Brendan Murtagh ([b.murtagh@qub.ac.uk](mailto:b.murtagh@qub.ac.uk))

This dissertation will explore the complex relationship between children and the built environment. Children and young people gain multiple advantages from their environment including repair and restoration, exploration and socialisation. Planners have been criticised for their mechanistic understanding of children and that the supply of infrastructure, such as play areas, has traditionally been the response of officials in meeting their needs and expectations. The fieldwork will examine the relationship that children and young people of different ages develop with their environment. There is extensive literature on the importance of shopping Malls and city centres to teenagers as sites for meeting, mixing and developing a range of cognitive skills. Yet, many young people are policed out of these spaces and regulation and control limit the positive engagement that teenagers in particular extract from place. The dissertation seeks to examine the policy relevance of these socio-psychological relationships and how to manage the built environment in more inclusive and sustainable ways.

### **Professional Identities and the Planning Academy**

Geraint Ellis ([g.ellis@qub.ac.uk](mailto:g.ellis@qub.ac.uk))

The individuals that first took up positions in the founding planning schools of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were virtually indistinguishable from those pioneering the planning profession itself. In the intervening century, both the planning profession and the planning academy have undergone dramatic evolution, mainly in different directions. Yet universities and the academics within them play a vital part in any professional grouping, providing the function of training for novice and through research, providing much of the intellectual basis and conceptual thinking that informs the expertise of the profession. Despite this, the links between the planning profession and the planning academy are poorly conceived and weakly articulated. This research aims to explore this relationship by reviewing the extent and form of links between planning practice and the academy, assessing the type of professional identities present amongst planning academics and comparing the way in which this relationship functions and managed to other professional groupings. It is anticipated that this research will result in findings of both conceptual and applied relevance to the future of the planning profession.