

Where Species Meet and Mingle: Remaking and Tracing Biogeographies

Research Group Affiliation	Biogeography Research Group Social and Cultural Geography Research Group History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group Rural Geography Research Group
<p>This session explores the geographical dimensions to our multispecies world. Space is critically intertwined with the emergence and definition of species. Spatial parameters of proximity and distance influence species evolution; geographical relationships shape plant and animal distributions; whilst certain spaces, such as museums, zoos, field centres and laboratories have been central to understanding the relations between species and the spatial. As cultural, economic and political process reconfigure environments, organisms and the spaces that link them, these biogeographies and the techniques that produce and understand them are shifting. On the one hand, new connections are accompanied by a loss of diversity, to be countered through spatial technologies like biosecurity and conservation. Yet on the other, the production and opening up of new spaces is revealing and producing new organisms and relations between species, new understandings and forms of life, whether in the wild, field, city, laboratory or body. Bringing these strands together, we explore the intersection of humans, animals and other organisms, landscapes, and technologies in producing novel biogeographies. We reflect on what these processes mean for our understandings of the 'bio', biodiversity and biogeography; our concepts of species and species integrity, including our own (posthuman) species being; and the spatial processes involved in remaking and tracing biogeographies.</p>	
Session Organisers	Gail Davies (University College London) & Jamie Lorimer (University of Oxford)
Session Chairs	Gail Davies (University College London), Jamie Lorimer (University of Oxford), Jennifer Hill (University of West England) & Henry Buller (University of Exeter)

SESSION ONE: PERFORMING KIN AND KINDS	
Paper 1	Forces of Nature: Re-calibrating Ethology and Geography
Presenter	Hayden Lorimer (University of Glasgow)
<p>What can we humans discover of ourselves amid the lives of other creatures? How do other creatures inform our sense of what it is to be alive? What cues might we take from those many "kinds" inhabiting the world around us? This paper considers the lore of likeness between humans, beasts and birds. It offers a selective history of ethology as an experimental fringe science enabling consideration of habits of living, or the shared "ways" we otherwise understand as performance, play, curiosity, custom and generosity. Classically, ethological studies extend out from immediate families as relating subjects to forms of association in colonies, flocks and herds. The paper shadows this approach, making situated observations of family life and shared space in pioneering field practice focusing on Atlantic grey seals. What comes under scrutiny are staple geographical concerns, home making, personhood, community and territoriality, and, the acquisition of complex characteristics centring on courtship, parenthood, companionship, togetherness and loss. These accounts of animality from earlier empirical science offer the means to think anew on theoretical postures being struck in current disciplinary debate, on the possibilities for creativity in research conduct and of the generative consolations of narrative.</p>	
Paper 2	Biogeographies of Concern: Virtual Nature and the Conservation Imagination
Presenter	Bill Adams (University of Cambridge)
<p>Through the twentieth century, public concern about the welfare or survival of animals and plants was awakened through the physical presence of dead or live specimens within specific spaces (the museum, the zoo and the nature reserve or park). Such spaces have increasingly been supplanted by representations of virtual natures, first through film, then television and most recently through the internet. The success of virtual natures in generating support for conservation depends on a series of specific strategies that seek to identify natural objects (species and habitats) and regions (e.g. biodiversity hotspots), to make specific linkages between support and conservation action, and to identify individual animals (sponsorship). This paper will discuss such strategies and the changing role of place in the generation of concern for nature.</p>	

Paper 3	Pests, Pets and Prey: Uncertainty in the City
Presenter	Bryndís Snæbjörnsdóttir, Mark Wilson (Snæbjörnsdóttir / Wilson)
<p>Long ago, settlements and therefore latterly, cities were predicated on the concept of refuge and a physical division of culture and nature. Clearly such division has proved increasingly porous as more and more animals and birds consider concentrations of human population an attraction rather than a deterrent because of the opportunities such culture provides in terms of habitat and feeding. For some, the presence of these creatures – pigeons, starlings, rats, mice, foxes, and all manner of insects is a threat of some kind, a kind of leakage and therefore a representation of the fragility of our insulation from the ‘wild’, the unpredictability and ‘chaos’ of ‘nature’. This art project explores specific perceptions and limits of tolerance and ‘animal infringement’ in the city of Lancaster building a picture of local human behaviour towards animals and the environment – of tolerance and intolerance, of fear and loathing, affection, conflict, pathos and admiration. What is conspicuously at play is a continual conflict over territory. During our research we’ve observed ambivalence and contradictory vested interests in relation to a wide range of creatures. Most significant is the mixture of responses, the paradoxical nature of human attitudes towards agents of ‘the wild’ and the implicit cohesion-in-tension of the human/nature paradigm.</p>	
Paper 4	Enacting Species in Zoos: Performative practices and emotional engagements in zoo spaces
Presenter	Chris Wilbert (Anglia Ruskin University)
<p>Zoos are spaces that have attracted much attention in animal geographies and wider animal studies. Attention has been drawn to the politics of zoo histories, production of spaces and species orderings, as well as the ways particular zoo animals may be relationally enacted within spatial networks that leads to them becoming very different from wilder animals of the same species. Yet, some of this work on zoos and zoo animals has also drawn criticism in terms of the loss of a sense of fleshiness of animal bodies and embodied emotional entanglements in the miasma of techonatural practices invoked. Here, through empirical engagement in a zoo I focus on some performative practices around some animals, and how these involve wider zoo networks in terms of how attempts are made by zoo workers and others to enact some animals as good representative members of their species both for viewing publics as part of tourism/leisure and wider conservation aims. As an aspect of this I also point to ways animals may be doing things that co-produce these ordering practices, as well as how performative practices of behaviour management can lead to often highly emotionalised encounters. Through interviews with zoo staff and others, and by watching and listening to actors in the field of study, I seek to further reflect on some of the relational theories invoked in and around animal geographies.</p>	
Paper 5	Dead biogeographies – and how to make them live
Presenter	Merle Patchett (University of Glasgow) & Kate Foster (Glasgow Sculpture studios)
<p>“Apparently this section had been devoted to natural history, but everything had long since passed out of recognition... I was sorry for that, because I should have been glad to trace the patient readjustments by which the conquest of animated nature had been attained.” H. G. Wells., <i>The Time Machine</i>.</p> <p>Considerable attention has been paid to the ‘finished’ form and display of taxidermy specimens inside cabinets, behind glass – in other words, to their representation. By way of contrast, our co-enquiry has sought to recover the practices and relationships that brought specimens to their state of enclosure, inertness and seeming fixity. These efforts are aligned with work in cultural geography seeking to counteract ‘deadening effects’ in an active world (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000), and stay alive to the ‘more-than-representational’ aspects of life (Lorimer 2005). Attempting to bring life to taxidermy specimens is, we contend, not a matter sprinkling them with “magical agency dust”, rather, it is to view them as objects ‘in life’ (Ingold 2006). Following Ingold, we consider specimens as active assemblages of the movements, materials and practices which brought them into existence (and thus seek to scramble their integrity as symbols of human conquest over animated nature). Furthermore, we show how attention to the deteriorating materials of taxidermy specimens not only reveals the secrets of their assembly, but exposes the clever artifice and ambiguity of representation. As substances and specimens start to unravel, so too do the bio-geographical stories of their making, showing up tangles of beings, practices and places.</p>	

SESSION 2: ENTANGLED ECOLOGIES	
Paper 1	Eating Well, Surviving Humanism: Biophilosophy’s Filthy Lesson
Presenter	Myra J Hird (Queen’s University, Kingston, Canada)

When Species Meet reflects upon what it means for species to 'eat well' (2007: 287). I am interested in the literal meaning of Haraway's concept: how organisms ingest, use or otherwise transform living/nonliving matter. All animals are, by definition, consumers (heterotrophs must use ready-made organic compounds). Bacteria, by contrast, do not 'eat' (they 'fix' or otherwise convert the elements on which all living organisms depend). Bacteria are producers, engaging in a different economy of eating and relating with the world. This difference invokes a metaphoric sense of 'eating well' – an ethics through which 'care, respect, and difference can flourish in the open' (Haraway 2007: 287), at the same time that humans confront what Pollan (2007) acerbically calls 'the omnivore's dilemma'. The irony of Haraway's post-human epistemology is that 'eating well' obscures production as the most prevalent relational economy on Earth. While appreciating the 'filthy lesson' (Pearson 1997) of our complex interdependencies within-and-between living and nonliving matter, Haraway's 'species meeting' excludes bacteria (bacteria are not species) and the abiotic figures only as 'land' (Lovelock 2000). Indeed, bacteria – the original organisms on Earth, creators of all species, and on which the biosphere intimately depends – are typically excluded from the burgeoning interest in human-animal relations (Margulis 1981). Put another way, 'eating well' with bacteria requires an ethics absent from current formulations. By fore fronting the majority of organisms on Earth, I invite critical reflection upon the serious limitations we create by eclipsing the much more significant relations all animals enjoy with the microcosmos – how our eating (well with) bacteria requires a different relational economy.

Paper 2	Who gets bitten? First reflections on malaria control in Ghana
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Presenter	Uli Beisel (Open University)
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Malaria is a disease that emerges out of an encounter of three species – the plasmodium parasite, the anopheles mosquito and humans. The object of scholarly attention hence has to be the meeting in itself – the fragile but potentially destructive moment when the lives of three distinct and very much alive species intersect. But this intersection is not only the place where the disease evolves, but also offers medical technologies several points to intervene and interrupt the flow of blood and parasites. This paper will look at different ways to prevent, treat and diminish malaria in Ghana, a country where malaria is hyperendemic and accounts for approximately 40% of hospital visits. More concretely, malaria control in Ghana happens in a space where lively mosquitoes meet gold mining companies, fast evolving parasites encounter enthusiastic vaccine developers and where poor people still struggle to pay for antimalarial drugs. The paper will tease out some of the complex intertwinings of mosquito-parasite-human interactions, health policies and political economy around malaria control in Ghana and will be informed by a preliminary analysis of six months of fieldwork in Ghana in 2007/2008.

Paper 3	Where species meet and mingle: The Common Cold Unit 1946-1990
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Presenter	Beth Greenhough (Queen Mary, University of London)
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In thinking through the relations between humans and other species geographers have become interested in how we reach particular kinds of settlements or accommodations, or the question of 'how can we live together?' (Bingham 2006). At the same time we might all possibly agree that viruses are something we would rather live without, and for at least some something we cannot live with. Such vital geographies, which have formed the focus of recent geographical attention, show how viruses such as HIV/AIDS and H5N1 provide compelling arguments for restricting the meeting and mingling of certain species. In contrast to these event-driven analyses of epidemic spaces (van Loon 2005) and the bio(in)securities they raise, this paper explores what might be called the more everyday ecologies of human-virus interactions. It focuses on the Common Cold Research Unit (CCU), based near Salisbury in the UK, as a different moment in the co-evolution of 'humans, pigs, fowls and viruses' (Haraway 2003). At the CCU humans and viruses were encouraged to meet and mingle so that scientists could study the common cold. The paper argues that the CCU's active promotion of human-virus interactions might be seen as a kind of geographical experiment in how humans and viruses might live together and explores some of the structures and agencies enrolled in order to make such biogeographies possible.

Paper 4	Food for thought: cows, grass, omega 3 and the human mind
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Presenter	Henry Buller (University of Exeter)
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Recent years have seen a growth in interest in certain naturally occurring polyunsaturated fatty acids, notably the Omega 3 group of docosahexaenoic acid, eicosapentaenoic acid and alpha-linolenic acid. These are increasingly held to provide a number of health benefits to humans including reducing the risk of heart disease, combating inflammation (including headaches) and arteriosclerosis. More controversially, some studies have claimed that increased intakes of Omega 3 can improve human intelligence or, at least, improve the abilities of children with learning difficulties (for example, the controversial 'Durham Trials' of 2005/2006). One potentially significant source of Omega 3 (alpha-linolenic acid) can be found in natural grass and consequently in the meat of grass-fed stock animals. Although not as significant a source as certain fish-oils, the presence of Omega 3 in grass-fed beef is seen by some as a further element in the

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The starting point for this paper is the connectivity that Omega 3 offers between human and stock animal bodies and the sense that the quality and benefits of that connectivity are themselves linked to notions of grassland biodiversity and natural richness. The paper explores the nature of the 'claim building' associated with Omega 3 in grass fed animal products as a bridging device whereby the 'intermediate object' (linolenic acid) is transited from grass, to cow to food to a potential contributory factor in human 'intelligence'. It is argued that the evidential requirements of such claims reveal an increasingly contested ontological politics in the definition and accounting of 'quality' and the emerging biogeographies of human/animal intersections.

Paper 5	Colonies in Motion: The Ethics of Encountering the Other as an Unfamiliar Ecology
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Presenter	Nigel Clark (Open University)
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Who we are, it has been said, is an outcome of borrowings, absorptions and ingestions - of and from others. Others, that is, of our own species, and of other species. When we encounter a stranger, it could be said, what we meet is an unfamiliar ecology, a kind of mobile colony which we cannot assume to be the same, or even a safe approximation of our own composite body. In this paper I want to ask what it means

SESSION 3: EMERGING BIOGEOGRAPHIES

Paper 1	Geopolitics, Bio-Revolutions, and the Emerging Science of Defense
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Presenter	Elizabeth R. Johnson (CUNY Graduate Center)
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Over the past ten years, the US Department of Defense has increasingly turned toward biological research as a source of inspiration for re-animating military strategy and technological development. Through "biomimicry" and "combat zoology", fields of political force resonate in the unlikely places of university laboratories, temperate forests, bee hives, and bodies as scientists and government officials explore how evolutionary traits generated in one environment might be applied to another: that of the battlefield. This paper explores the political implications of these trends that work at the intersection of security and 'life,' interrogating what it means for geopolitics to be engaged with bio-geographies that blur the boundaries between humans, animals, and things. Here, politically hopeful concepts—hybrids, cyborgs, and becomings-animal—are challenged: as clearly as borders are eroded and crossed in experimental practices, conceptual boundaries and subsequent hierarchies remain. Military hybrids commingle and (re)produce animal and human bodies in order to draw them into the service of the state. The resulting processes and forms serve as a means of controlling the emergent potentials of life itself in the hope of achieving "full spectrum dominance" in battlespaces at home and abroad. I ultimately ask how political struggle for an optimistic "post-human" future might engage with these military trends.

Paper 2	The return of the wild? Biogeographies of immanence in wildlife conservation
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Presenter	Jamie Lorimer (University of Oxford)
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Post-war conservation has obsessed with managing extinction; with preserving an extant set of documented species against the ravages of modernisation – form has been primary to process. In recent years however a shift appears to be underway. Impelled by new thinking within conservation practice (towards biodiversity, disequilibrium and rewilding) and in reaction to broader trends within global political ecology ('invading' species, a changing climate and the threat and promise of biotechnology) processes are returning to the centre ground of conservation. This shift interweaves with the recent vitalist turn within strands of social theory. This paper draws on this work to explore two contrasting manifestations of the return of the wild – the self-willed 'global swarming' (Fall 2008) of invasive species versus the ambitious attempts by conservationists at landscape-scale 'Pleistocene rewilding' (Donlan et al. 2006). It examines their different implications for understandings of evolution and difference – here dubbed 'modern' or 'amodern' – and the biogeographies of their unruly species mixings and minglings. It identifies their common desire for networks and immanence, and their contrasting consequences for future ecologies. The

paper reflects on what this wild shift implies for the place of conservation in environmental governance in the 21 st century.	
Paper 3	
	Leap Frog: Pregnancy Testing and the Market Biogeography of the African Clawed Frog (<i>Xenopus laevis</i>) c.1940-1970
Presenter	Lance van Sittert (University of Cape Town)
The development of the frog pregnancy test by researchers in South Africa in the 1930s created a global demand for their experimental animal, the African Clawed Frog (<i>Xenopus laevis</i>). The Cape provincial trout hatchery at Jonkershoek near Cape Town was a major supplier of this market despatching more than 400,000 frogs in the thirty years 1940-69. The hatchery both cultured <i>Xenopus</i> and harvested an annual wild crop from private and public dams across the south western Cape to meet the burgeoning demand from tertiary institutions, pathologists and researchers nationally, regionally and internationally. The hatchery's surviving frog order records enable this amphibian commerce to be comprehensively reconstructed to reveal the outlines of a new artificial market biogeography of <i>Xenopus</i> as it first broke out of its natural range through commodification; established breeding populations in laboratories across the world and, particularly once the frog pregnancy test was superseded by a chemical test in 1963, escaped these institutional incubators to found self-sustaining wild populations in new home ranges around the world.	
Paper 4	
	Murine bio(geo)raphies: tracing transgenic mice origins and ontologies
Presenter	Gail Davies (University College London)
This paper uses the figure of the experimental laboratory mouse to reflect upon the production of contemporary transgenic biogeographies. Through the concept of biogeography, the paper seeks to connect practices concerned with the production and management of biological life in contemporary biotechnology – characterised through concepts of biocapital or biopolitics – with the emergent and stochastic qualities of life. Specifically, it identifies a tension between two forms of narrating the development of transgenic mouse strains. Firstly, it explores the documentation of new strain development, which through accounts of personal biography and chance discovery, attest to the contingent and situated moments of biotechnological production. Secondly, it reflects on subsequent efforts to standardise mouse ontologies and disease phenotypes in developing, stabilising and globalising murine strains. The co-existence of these two narratives within the same database draws attention to the oscillation between chance and control, determination and emergence in the development and implications of these new forms of life.	
Paper 5	
	Global swarming: cosmopolitan natures, 'alien' species and the politics of barbarian plants
Presenter	Juliet Fall (Université de Genève)
In a context of accelerated world travel and increased global trade, the policing of living matter and the focus on good and bad circulations are part and parcel of globalisation. Terms such as invasive, exotic, non-native, non-indigenous and alien are used to describe a global swarming of plants and animals, a term creatively coined with reference to climate change. These are seen to be out-of-place and out-of-control, beyond their native habitats. This global problem is increasingly framed as a problem of security: the survival of native species versus the swarming success of new arrivals, of uninvited guests. These tales of swarming, invading, foreign, and out-of-control natures, with concurrent stories of a global homogenization of biodiversity that reduces local diversity and distinctiveness the McDonaldization of nature. In this context, plants are unusually scripted as dynamic, marching across the world, crossing boundaries, setting forth outside the spaces set aside for them, and beyond the spaces they were thought to belong to. Global Black Lists and Watch lists are selecting what are seen as the worst offenders across the entire globe. The focus of this paper is on the mobilisation of specific ecological and botanical knowledge by scientists to construct certain species as native or foreign, as out-of-place, as weeds. We focus on who assigns native locales, nationalities and invasive agendas to plants, and how and where does this happen? What processes of categorisation underpin these approaches? How do the subsequent securitising discourses reflect anxieties about a rapidly globalising world? We examine tales of plant transgressions and hybridity (Whatmore 2002; Fall 2005), plants escaping from gardens and becoming super-plants (Lambelet & Jeanmonod 2005), theorising the politicisation of feral geographies.	

SESSION 4: BOUNDING SPECIES AND SPACES	
Paper 1	The Politics and Production of Sterility through Plant Biosecurity in New Zealand
Presenter	Kezia Barker (University of Southampton)

Biosecurity, involving the selective management or control of biological movement, has witnessed a growth in social scientific attention in recent years (Braun 2007; Donaldson and Wood 2004; Hinchliffe and Bingham forthcoming). New Zealand has engaged in over 150 years of native and alien species' control, currently consolidated in the most extensive, integrated biosecurity regime in the world. During this time the spatial and temporal points of biosecurity intervention into the process of species naturalisation, or invasion, have shifted. Spatial points of intervention have included the national border, the wider landscape, the garden, the nursery shelf, and the pre-border point of departure from exporting countries. Biosecurity-related scientific and economic rationalities have also justified earlier and earlier points of biosecurity intervention. This has brought with it an emphasis on risk assessment methodologies and the prevention of risk. In this climate of preventative action, plant biosecurity is increasingly being enacted through explicit and implicit support for the production of sterile plants. Against this backdrop, this paper will consider the significance of plant liveliness and reproduction in different contexts of plant biosecurity practice in New Zealand: in the scientific representations of plant naturalisation processes, in nursery propagation for gardening markets, in the practices of plant sharing and exchange between gardeners, in the use of plants as educative objects within public communication campaigns, and in the practical control of invasive plants in the wider landscape. I will use this discussion to suggest the potential consequences of sterile plants for both the biosecurity regime itself, and for wider contexts of the making and remaking of ecological attachments.

Paper 2	Drawing and contesting human-animal boundaries in discourses surrounding genetic interventions in the life of farm animals
Presenters	Lewis Holloway (University of Hull), Carol Morris (University of Nottingham), David Gibbs (University of Hull) and Ben Gilna (University of Hull)

The meeting of humans and nonhumans in agricultural spaces and processes, and the resulting co-production of species, bodies and subjectivities, has a long history. New forms of genetic intervention in the breeding and management of livestock animals, associated with particular knowledge-practices concerning the life itself of those animals, promise to transform livestock agriculture in line with agendas including increasing agricultural productivity and efficiency, improving the 'quality' of animal products, reducing agriculture's environmental impact, contributing to human health, and improving animal welfare. Drawing on primary and secondary empirical sources, this paper seeks to explore some of the debates surrounding the circulation of genetic knowledge-practices in livestock agriculture, focusing on the negotiated representation of human and nonhuman bodies and identities. The paper argues that genetic interventions are associated with the production of particular truth discourses which rest on ontological assumptions or debates regarding the boundaries between humans and animals. The evident multiplicity of truth discourses and associated ontologies in turn means that processes of network-building and enrolment are important as certain truths and modes of intervention become predominant, even if temporarily and in a contested manner. As such, the biogeography of genetic interventions in livestock agriculture produces 'life', and understandings of life, in different ways, at different scales, and in different spaces - e.g. the gene/genome, the body, the breed, the population, the species, the farm and the nation. The paper argues, then, that an important reconfiguring of human-animal relationships is associated with genetic interventions in the biogeography of livestock agriculture.

Paper 3	Hybrid Bio-Geographies of Disease: Technologies of Species Boundary Maintenance in the Late Victorian Milk Industry
Presenter	Richie Nimmo (University of Aberdeen)

This paper traces the spatial political technologies through which the human-nonhuman hybridity inscribed by zoonotic tuberculosis transmitted through dairy milk was contained and made invisible as condition of 'social' modernity. This is examined in the context of a historical analysis of emergent forms of sanitary regulation and expertise in the late nineteenth century British milk industry. At the centre of this is a genealogy worked through milk itself, which posed deep spatial problems for modernisation, being a particularly fertile environment for the growth of bacteria, so that it could not be transported any distance from cow to consumer without becoming inedible. Thus the commodification of milk was dependent upon technologies of refrigeration and railway transportation. But these technologies were replete with unintended consequences, for they became conduits for the flow of hybrid materiality in the form of tubercular bacilli from rural 'nature' into the urban centres of 'culture' and consumption. This new bio-geography of inter-species infection, contamination and risk, precipitated the growth of a network of milk testing regimes and disciplinary knowledges, which sought to contain this 'ontological disorder' within the natural and to police the human/animal boundary rendered permeable by these flows of zoonotic disease. This paper seeks to understand these forms of organisation as humanist technologies for re-inscribing the human/animal divide at the heart of the modern constitution.

Paper 4	Human and farm animal relations in China: negotiating the relevance of the Western cultural concept of animal welfare in different sites.
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Presenter	Emma Roe (University of Southampton)
<p>'Animal welfare' is a term with little or no popular understanding in mainland China (Li 2006). Yet western animal welfare non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are investing resources in the introduction of this concept to a country producing nearly half of all the livestock on the planet. This paper presents research studying some of these current initiatives and addresses the complaint that this practice is an example of the west telling the east what to think and do. I refrain from supporting this argument by considering how NGOs are working in sites where Chinese farm animals are enrolled in cross-cultural practices whether inspired through networks of capital flow or the modern consumer concern for safe food from an industrialised agro-food network. Whichever, how animal welfare or its surrogates rural sustainability, animal health or meat quality and hygiene are deployed indicates how human/farm animal relations are adapting and changing in the current era.</p> <p>By considering the sites where these initiatives are located - the abattoir, the farm, universities and the body of the Chinese food consumer who desires safe food, I consider how and why these sites enable cross-cultural negotiations on human/farm animal relations whilst attending to the notably different political and governmental framing prevalent in Communist China. The suitability of these sites speaks to how Chinese farm animals are mobilised geopolitically at various scales, and in which spaces they come to matter and for whom. These spaces also enable the possibility for interrogating practical and discursive comprehension of this new concept 'animal welfare' as it works to try to create a new biogeography for Chinese farm animals.</p>	
Paper 5	Discussant
Presenter	Steve Hinchliffe (Open University)