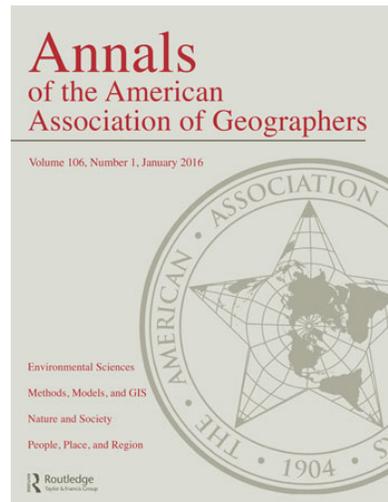


Consultation on sections in the *Annals of the AAG*

After the AAG meetings in Hawaii in 1999, a new format for the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* was introduced wherein four sections and four editors were put in place to represent the breadth of the academic discipline of geography. Four major areas – (i) Environmental Sciences, (ii) Methods, Models, and Geographic Information Sciences, (iii) Nature and Society, and (iv) People, Place, and Region – were introduced as sections in the *Annals* to offset long-standing concerns about the lack of representation of certain aspects of the discipline (especially physical geography) in one of its flagship journals. Further, concerns about perceived biases accruing to a single editor were allayed by establishing an editorial team, with each editor taking responsibility for one of the four major subject areas.



With an understanding that the discipline is ever changing and defining a core or establishing specific fundamental areas of endeavor is always contentious, the sections were never meant to be immutable or permanent. On the recommendation of the Publications Committee, AAG Council is considering removing the *Annals* section headings while maintaining the integrity of an editorial team that represents the breadth of the discipline.

This is proposed in light of suggestions that the sections do not represent changes in the discipline and have the potential of characterizing articles in problematic ways. It is also clear that certain kinds of articles (e.g. papers that transcend the four major areas or papers that reflect on the discipline in general) are rarely submitted to the *Annals* and that the physical and environmental sciences are still underrepresented. Potential authors have raised concerns about not knowing to which section they should submit their work. Moreover, when two section editorships were advertised last year, more than one applicant stated that they were qualified to edit either section.

The proposal to remove the section headings is made with the understanding that the creation of an editorial team that represents the breadth and integrity of the discipline should continue. It is also understood that several substantive areas of geography can reside within the expertise of each editor but no one editor can encompass the whole discipline. The proposal is to remove the confusion and containment that accrues to the establishment of section headings while maintain the disciplinary integrity of an editorial team. The proposal is endorsed by the current four *Annals* editors and the two most recent past editors.

We would be most grateful for your views on this matter. Please send your thoughts, comments and suggestions to the AAG Publications Committee Chair, Stuart Aitken (saitken@mail.sdsu.edu) by 31 July 2016. All responses will be collated and presented to the AAG Council in Fall 2016 for their consideration.