Getting random for looking at reality: alternative methods for random survey

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Anuradhapura is one of the most significant historic cities in South Asia as attested by archaeological and historical sources (Coningham, 1999; Coningham & Allchin, 1995; Seneviratne, 1994; De Silva, 2005). The aim of this presentation is to review the research methodology of the Upper Malwatu Oya Exploration Project (UMOEP), which is designed to test the centre – peripheral model. The UMOEP methodology aims to model the networks between urban and non-urban communities and the environment within the plain of Anuradhapura over the course of two millennia. In doing so, we will define and interpret the following:

1. The spatial location and sequence of urban and non-urban communities;
2. The morphology and function of urban and non-urban communities;
3. The subsistence base of urban and non-urban communities;
4. Soils and sedimentary sequences within the plain;
5. Resource patterns and enhancement within the plain.

Our sample universe is a 50 km diameter centred on trench ASW2 in the Citadel of Anuradhapura, and includes rocky outcrops and ridges, streams and rivers, grasslands, forests, tanks, villages, *chena* and paddy fields (Coningham, 1999). Field exploration is our principle methodology to collect data and we are attempting to log differences in physical and environmental conditions which may have affected the visibility of archaeological sites. This paper will conclude that random survey can be a positive, and flexible, alternative to meet issues of access, personnel and funding.

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