

# *IGU Commission on Population Geography*

## *Newsletter*

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### Message from the Chair

by ETIENNE PIGUET

Dear colleagues,

At long last, here is a new edition of our Newsletter.

Sadly, this is the first Newsletter since the death of our IGU Commission steering committee member and colleague Graeme Hugo. Graeme was a fantastic scholar and a friend. We miss him a lot.



### Upcoming: IGU Regional Conference in Moscow, August 2015

The IGU will meet in Moscow this month. The conference motto is "Geography, Culture and Society for Our Future Earth." Our commission has organised seven sessions on:

1. Human mobility and latest Census data: new evidences, new insights
2. Migrating out of Poverty in Asia
3. Interactions between human processes, population changes and the environment
4. Processes of population change and migration
5. 2 Sessions on Geographies of International Student Mobility

You can find more details online at <http://igu2015.ru/> and in this newsletter.

## Conference Report: 8th International Conference on Population Geographies, Brisbane, June 2015

by NIKOLA SANDER

This year's Conference on International Population Geographies was hosted at the University of Queensland in Brisbane. Travelling to Australia from Europe is a long trip, but it was definitely worthwhile the hassle! The conference, which was supported by the IGU Commission on Population Geography, brought together over 200 delegates from 36 countries. The theme of the conference was "The Spatial Dimensions of Population", and the programme included a broad range of topics, from Indigenous Demography to Immigrants and Settlements. The full programme can be found here: <http://icpg2015.org/>.

The conference was officially opened by David Kalisch, the 15th Australian Statistician. The programme featured three plenary talks on (1) Migration in the Modern World, jointly by Phillip Rees, Peter McDonald, Ellen Percy-Kraly and me; (2) The Global Burden of Disease, by Alan Lopez; and (3) Advances in Applied Demography, by David Swanson.

The presentation slides of the plenary talks and many other presentations are available here: <http://www.gpem.uq.edu.au/icpg-presentations>

A big, big Thank You to the conference organisers Martin Bell and Elin Charles-Edwards, as well as Susan Harris and her team from AbsoluteEvents!



Source: Twitter

The 9th International Conference on Population Geographies will take place in June 2017 in Seattle, Washington, US.

## Conference Announcement: IGU Moscow Regional Conference, August 2015

by ETIENNE PIGUET

Full program: <http://www.igu2015.ru/>

Seven sessions are organized by the Commission on Population Geography.

Several members of the Committee will attend the conference and look forward to an interesting and inspiring meeting in Moscow.

**Session 1: Human mobility and latest Census data: new evidences, new insights** (a joint session of the Commission on Population Geography and the Commission on Global Change and Human Mobility)

Organizer & Chair: Josefina Domínguez-Mujica (University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria - [josefina.dominguezmujica@ulpgc.es](mailto:josefina.dominguezmujica@ulpgc.es)) & Etienne Piguet (University of Neuchâtel)

Abstract: Statistical data available today are still highly variable from country to country. Developed countries have normally specialised Statistical Institutes and different records provided by Municipal Register Statistics, Social Security Registrations, surveys, which allow a detailed knowledge of demographic phenomena. However, human mobility is still a phenomenon very difficult to measure and track. Data arising from Population Censuses in terms of both flows and stocks enhance the possibilities of researchers on this matter but several countries recently abandoned population censuses. A move that might be especially problematic for data on small areas related to migrant populations.

Besides, such demographic sources are especially meaningful in the case of developing countries, as they represent most of the times the only means to study population figures and its significant processes. The goal of this proposal is, therefore, to promote the use of census data for the analysis of human mobility, allowing us to identify new trends in specific geographic regions and countries. In countries where census data are not available any more the session will explore alternative sources such as register and large scale surveys.

## **Session 2: Migrating out of Poverty in Asia**

Organizer & Chair: Brenda Yeoh (National University of Singapore)

Abstract: An on-going tension exists around migration as a strategy for development. While some argue that labour migration is a means of improving livelihoods, others claim the need to migrate is necessitated precisely due to conditions of poverty and lack of development. Nevertheless international migration has become increasingly significant in the Asian region as people respond to the global demand for jobs that include production, construction, domestic and care-related work. It has been well established that labour migration does not just result in economic gains, but entails a rather complex set of 'costs' that include but are not limited to prolonged separation from family and the potential for abuse and exploitation.

This session seeks to ask critical questions about labour migration in the context of poverty alleviation including:

- How do migrants themselves weigh up the financial and social 'costs' of migration against the potential 'gains' through remittances?
- To what extent do pre-existing conditions at the point of migration, such as the stability of migrant families' financial resources, influence what might be considered a 'successful migration'?
- How do particular migration regimes, especially those that are highly dependent on the role of recruitment and placement agencies and other commercial intermediaries, influence migrants' potential to 'migrate out of poverty'?
- What are some of the policy, as well as legal and institutional frameworks that need to be deployed by both sending and receiving countries in order for migration to become a sustainable development strategy for migrant families in Asia?

## **Session 3: Interactions between human processes, population changes and the environment**

Organizer & Chair: Daniel Ervin & Jessica Marter-Kenyon (University of California, Santa Barbara)

Abstract: This session will feature research about the impact of human processes on the environment. We will focus on coarse-scale data gathered from satellite images, population surveys, and similar data measures in order to explore the complex dynamics between human population changes, human movement, agriculture, and the characteristics of the landscapes they inhabit.

## **Session 4: Processes of population change and migration**

Organizer & Chair: Jianfa Shen (Chinese University of Hong-Kong)

Abstract: Different countries, regions and cities are experiencing different paces and patterns of population change driven by migration and changes in mortality and fertility. Some countries and regions are experiencing rapid population growth and urbanization while others are facing population decline. These different trends of population changes have profound consequences for social and economic development. The aim of this session is to examine emerging trends of population changes in different countries, regions and cities and discuss the social impacts of such population changes. Each paper can focus on a particular case and all participants can exchange and compare the processes, patterns, social impacts and policy options of population change in different parts of the world.

The session has three aims: 1. Analyse emerging processes and main drivers of population changes in different countries, regions and cities; 2. Examine the social and economic impact of emerging trends of population changes; 3. Discuss policy options for solving the challenges brought by population changes.

## **Session 5: Geographies of International Student Mobility 1: The Roles of Gender, Class and Ethnicity**

Organizer & Chair: Yvonne Riaño (University of Neuchâtel) & Allan Findlay (University of St Andrews)

Abstract: Remarkable advances have been achieved in re-theorising international student mobility in relation to the forces shaping the internationalisation and differentiation of spaces of higher education. Within this context, this session will explore the uneven nature of

student flows in terms of gender, class and ethnicity. Recognising that intersectionality is now an important paradigm, the aim of the session will be to offer an analytical perspective that sheds light on how social norms around gender, class and ethnicity shape student mobility and how it is practiced and performed: who goes, why they go, where they go, how they go, when they go, with whom they go, and whether they stay after their studies or move on. In this spirit, we invite empirical papers and/or theoretically driven presentations inspired by, but not limited to, any of the following questions:

- How does intersectionality shed light on how migration practices have emerged in the pre-migration stage, in the transition across state boundaries, and in the experiences of different international students in countries of destination?

- To what extent do social norms around gender, class and ethnicity influence the decision of students about which country to choose for tertiary studies, what kind of university to enrol in, what field to choose, what city to go to or avoid, and whether to return, stay or move on?

- How do patriarchy and class operate in the 21st century in terms of i) people's ability to migrate for tertiary education, and ii) the relationship between student mobility and lifetime mobility aspirations? To what extent do the practices of student migration have enduring impacts on power relations in other arenas such as the household?

### **Session 6: Geographies of International Student Mobility II: The Roles of Immigration Policies, Universities and Recruitment Agencies**

Organizer & Chair: Yvonne Riaño (University of Neuchâtel) & Darren Smith (University of Loughborough)

Abstract: The numbers of internationally mobile students have dramatically increased in recent decades. The forces that shape international student mobility have been a central preoccupation among scholars in recent years. The aim of this session is to explore the role that external agents, such as governments, universities and recruitment agencies play in facilitating or restricting the cross-border mobility of international students.

The session will reflect upon the following questions: How do immigration policies affect the movement of students across national borders? Are immigration policies geared to attracting the largest possible numbers of international students or rather to restrict the numbers of student flows? What are the interests and strategies of Universities towards international students? Are educators and administrators working in all cases towards eliminating barriers to student mobility? To what extent have recruitment agencies become a central agent in recruiting international students for universities?

A central premise of this session is that there is no homogeneous answer to the former questions. Answers will depend to a larger extent on the individual national contexts, and the different degrees of importance assigned by individual national governments and universities to international student flows. In Europe alone there is no homogeneity across national states, and even policies within individual states can sometimes be quite contradictory.

Gaining a cross-national and comparative perspective is thus much needed at the present time. This session, therefore, welcomes empirical papers and/or theoretically driven presentations inspired by, but not limited to the former questions.

### **Session 7: Migration and Climate change an overview with a specific focus on Russia and neighboring countries**

Organizer: Etienne Piguet (University of Neuchâtel)

Abstract: The amount of empirical research focusing on the link between environmental degradation and forced migration in order to forecast the migratory consequences of global warming has risen significantly in recent years. The variety of empirical methods used by researchers is impressive, ranging from qualitative interviews and historical analogies to questionnaire surveys and highly sophisticated statistical methods.

This session will attempt at an overview of recent empirical results with a specific focus on Russia and neighbouring countries.

## Conference Announcement: IGU Beijing International Conference, August 2016

by ETIENNE PIGUET

The 33rd International Geographical Congress will be held in Beijing, China on August 21-25, 2016. Conference website: <http://www.igc2016.org/>

Six sessions and two joint sessions will be organized by the Commission on Population Geography. The session titles are:

1. Migration and Changing Social Worlds in Asia: Negotiating Gender Subjectivities and Family Relations (Chair: Brenda Yeoh)
2. Demographic Divide 1: Coping with shrinking (Chair: Paul Gans)
3. Demographic Divide 2: Coping with growth (Chair: Paul Gans)
4. Processes of population change and migration (Chair: Jianfa Shen)

5. Urbanisation and population change in China: parallels and differences to the developed world (Chair: Darren Smith)

6. Migration and Climate change an overview with a specific focus on China and Asia (Chair: Etienne Piguet)

7. Understanding Contemporary Dynamics of International Student Mobilities (Chair: Yvonne Riano)

8. Demographic sources and methodologies to study human mobility (Chair: Josefina Domínguez-Mujica)

