



International Geographical Union  
Commission on Political Geography

## **Activity Report 2012-2016**

Edited

by

Takashi Yamazaki & Virginie Mamadouh

March 2016

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(i.e. 317 subscribers to the Facebook of the Commission)

|                        |           |                     |           |
|------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|
| <i>Italy</i>           | <i>39</i> | <i>Sweden</i>       | <i>2</i>  |
| <i>UK</i>              | <i>31</i> | <i>Tunisia</i>      | <i>2</i>  |
| <i>India</i>           | <i>29</i> | <i>Algeria</i>      | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Poland</i>          | <i>26</i> | <i>Austria</i>      | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>USA</i>             | <i>24</i> | <i>Botswana</i>     | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Canada</i>          | <i>12</i> | <i>Cambodia</i>     | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Finland</i>         | <i>10</i> | <i>Estonia</i>      | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>France</i>          | <i>7</i>  | <i>Greece</i>       | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Pakistan</i>        | <i>6</i>  | <i>Iceland</i>      | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Switzerland</i>     | <i>6</i>  | <i>Ireland</i>      | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Israel</i>          | <i>5</i>  | <i>Jordan</i>       | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Japan</i>           | <i>5</i>  | <i>Lithuania</i>    | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Brazil</i>          | <i>4</i>  | <i>Malaysia</i>     | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Hungary</i>         | <i>4</i>  | <i>Nepal</i>        | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Norway</i>          | <i>3</i>  | <i>Nigeria</i>      | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>The Netherlands</i> | <i>3</i>  | <i>Qatar</i>        | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Argentina</i>       | <i>2</i>  | <i>Russia</i>       | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Bangladesh</i>      | <i>2</i>  | <i>Sierra Leone</i> | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Belgium</i>         | <i>2</i>  | <i>Singapore</i>    | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Czech Republic</i>  | <i>2</i>  | <i>South Africa</i> | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Denmark</i>         | <i>2</i>  | <i>Turkey</i>       | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Egypt</i>           | <i>2</i>  | <i>UAE</i>          | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Georgia</i>         | <i>2</i>  | <i>Ukraine</i>      | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Germany</i>         | <i>2</i>  | <i>Uruguay</i>      | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Romania</i>         | <i>2</i>  | <i>Vietnam</i>      | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Slovakia</i>        | <i>2</i>  | <i>Zimbabwe</i>     | <i>1</i>  |
| <i>Spain</i>           | <i>2</i>  | <i>Unknown</i>      | <i>56</i> |

## **C. URL of the Commission website.**

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The Commission has got also a mailing list;

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Moderator: Virginie Mamadouh [v.d.mamadouh@uva.nl](mailto:v.d.mamadouh@uva.nl)

The Commission has also established a Facebook group.

IGU CPG Commission on Political Geography

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/456054597763023/>

To become a member, it is necessary to join Facebook and to send a request to the group administrator Elena dell'Agnese [elena.dellagnese@unimib.it](mailto:elena.dellagnese@unimib.it)

## **2. Meetings**

### **A. Meetings organised, co-organised and sponsored by the commission**

1. Organised conference “Borderscapes III”, Trieste, Italy, 28-30 June 2012, 120 participants, and post-conference fieldtrip to Sarajevo, 30 participants
2. Organised IGU Pre-Conference: Spatialising The (Geo)Political: Political Geography And Critical Geopolitics, Frankfurt Am Main, Germany, 24-25 August 2012, 40 participants
3. Activities at the IGC 2012, Cologne, Germany, August 2012, seven sessions, 80-100 participants
4. Co-sponsored Conference “The 13th International ‘Lodz’ Conference On Political Geography On The Eastern Dimension of The European Union”, 12-14 September 2012, 51 participants
5. Co-sponsored conference “BRIT XII – Border Regions In Transition: Borderland Voices – Shaping A New World Order”, Fukuoka, Japan -Pusan, Korea, 13–16 November 2012, 300 participants
6. AAG Annual meeting, “Author meets critics” sponsored session, Los Angeles, US, 9-23 April 2013, 40 participants
7. Commission on Political Geography Sponsored Seminar, The Border Crossing Seminar, Second Edition, Milan, Italy, 10-15 June 2013, 20 participants
8. Co-sponsored conference “Mapping Conceptual Change in Thinking European Borders”, Bergamo, Italy, 3-5 July 2013, 134 participants
9. Activities at the 2013 IGU Regional Conference, Kyoto, Japan, 4-9 August, 2013, 12 sessions, 60 participants
10. Commission post conference fieldtrip to Okinawa, Japan, 12-13 August 2013, 21 participants
11. Organized conference “Geopolitics Towards the Future”, Rome, Italy, 2-4 September 2013, , 80 participants
12. IGU Co-sponsored conference “IV EUGEO”, 4-7 September, Rome, 400 participants; one IGU Commission on Political Geography co-sponsored session, about 20 participants
13. Political Geography of the Environment conference in Eugene, Oregon, 9-21 June 2014, 30 participants
14. The International Conference on Geopolitics in Changing Southeast Asia: Boundaries and Borderlands, Kunming/Xishuangbanna, China, 20-24 July 2014, 200 participants.

15. The 14th International 'Lodz' Political Geography Conference / Pre-conference of the IGU Commission on Political Geography (CPG), Lopuszna, Poland, 15-17 August, 2014, 65 participants
16. Activities at the IGU Regional Conference, Krakow, Poland, 18-24 August 2014, seventeen sessions (ranging from 10 to 100 participant), 1400 participants for the whole conference
17. Dark Tourism Workshop: Post-WW1 Destinations of Human Tragedies and Opportunities for Tourism Development, Portoroz-Portorose/Koper-Capodistria, Slovenia, 2-4 October, 2014, 60 participants.
18. First Brazilian Congress of Political Geography, Geopolitics and Territorial Management: Rationalities and Practices at Multiple Scales, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 7-10 October 2014, 260 participants.
19. BRIT XIV: The Border, a Source of Innovation / La frontière, source d'innovation, Arras and Lille, France and Mons, Belgium, 4-7 November 2014, 170 participants.
20. Borders at the interface, Beer Sheva, Israel, 8-11 December 2014, 80 participants.
21. Association of Borderlands Studies (ABS) 2015 Annual Meeting, Portland, Oregon, USA, 8-11 April 2015, 200 participants.
22. Association of American Geographers (AAG) Political Geography Speciality Group (PGSG) preconference, Chicago, USA, 20-25 April 2015, 60 participants.
23. 7th International Conference on Critical Geography (ICCG 2015) Precarious Radicalism on Shifting Grounds: Towards a Politics of Possibility, Ramallah, Palestine, 26-30 July 2015, 400 participants.
24. IGU Moscow Regional Conference, Moscow, Russia, 17-21 August 2015, 1658 participants for the whole conference.
25. International Scientific-Practical Conference 'The Spatial Transformation of the Urban Environment in the Development of Post-Industrial Society' and Socratic XI Reading 'Jean Gottmann as a Visionary and a Critic (on the centenary of his birth),' Kaliningrad, Russia, 23-26 August 2015, 25 participants.
26. International Workshop "And So Europe Dehumanized Itself: Mediterranean Geographies in Action," Palermo, Italy, 10-11 November 2015, 40 participants.

## **B. A summary of the topics addressed at each meeting**

### **BORDERSCAPES III, Trieste 28-30 June 2012**

From the 27th and the 30th of June 2012, the third edition of the International seminar Borderscapes was held in Trieste, under the scientific direction of Elena dell'Agnese and Sergio Zilli. The seminar, organized as one of the activities of the Commission was attended by

more than one hundred scholars, mainly political geographers but also people with a multidisciplinary background and a shared interest in border landscapes. Indeed, this perspective has been the focal point of the different sessions of the seminar, articulated both around the general idea of borders as a relevant factor in local territorial transformations, and of borders as an object of popular culture and artistic representations. While the first edition of the Seminar, held in Trento 2006, had as a special interest in the myth of the “natural boundaries”, and the second one, held in Trapani 2009, had maritime boundaries as its main centre of attention, the third edition of *Borderscapes*, given the place of the venue, had a special focus on divided cities. For this reason, an intra- conference excursion to the cities of Gorizia and Nova Gorica was organised. Given the attention reserved to the general concept of landscape, a large amount of the discussion in *Borderscapes 3* was specially focused on visual aspects and analysis. For this reason, jointly with the conference, a cartographic exhibition was organised, open not only to the conference participants but also to the citizens of Trieste (organizers: Orietta Selva, Dragan Umek and Sergio Zilli). A five days post conference excursion from Trieste (Italy) to Ljubljana (Slovenia) – Zagreb (Croatia) – Plitvice Lakes – Bihač (Bosnia and Herzegovina) – Jajce – Travnik – Sarajevo – Mostar – Biograd (Croatia) – Trieste (Italy), organised by Anton Gosar and Elena dell’Agnese, and led by Mladen Klemenčić and Tanja Sekulić, helped a group of more than 30 participants to taste, on field, the “borderscape” experience.

### **IGU Pre-Conference: Spatialising The (Geo)Political: Political Geography and Critical Geopolitics, Frankfurt am Main, 24/25 August 2012**

The conference *Spatialising the (Geo)Political: Political Geography and Critical Geopolitics Preconference 2012*, held in Frankfurt am Main on 24/25 August 2012, was jointly organized by the Department of Human Geography of Goethe- University Frankfurt, the Arbeitskreis Politische Geographie and the Commission on Political Geography of the International Geographical Union (IGU) and sought to bring together scholars of political geography and critical geopolitics prior to the International Geographical Congress (IGC) in Cologne. It was organised in two parallel strands; the first of which addressed processes of integration and disintegration of the nation state in light of a changing territorial order of the world political map and included a plenary lecture by Alexander B Murphy entitled “Trapped in the Logic of the Modern State System? European Integration in the Wake of the Financial Crisis”\_ (see Murphy, forthcoming in *Geopolitics*). The second strand answered to a more open call for papers from critical geopolitics four years after the *Critical Geopolitics 2008* conference at Durham University, focusing on relations between the geopolitical and seemingly mundane practices. Contributions addressed how the geopolitical is enacted in local settings and how specific personal, social and institutional arrangements shape the geopolitical and included a plenary lecture by Joanne Sharp on “Geopolitics at the margins? Reconsidering genealogies of critical geopolitics”.

### **Activities of the IGU Commission on Political Geography at the IGC 2012 in Cologne, Germany**

The IGU Commission on Political Geography had a highly successful scientific exchange at the IGC in Cologne. It organized 7 sessions, which were very well attended. The papers presented lead to lively and vibrant discussions over a wide range of topics and research fields of Political Geography representing both ongoing theoretical debates as well as empirical case studies.

Session 1 on “Environmental Geopolitics and Climate Change” (Chair: Jürgen



Oßenbrügge, Hamburg). The presented papers discussed a range of topics like the imaginative geographies of climate wars (Benedikt Korf, Zurich), geoengineering as technological assemblage (Thilo Wiertz, Heidelberg) and the role of environmental dystopias in the field of popular geopolitics (Elena dell'Agnes, Milano).

Session 2 on “Conflicts over natural resources” (Chair: Paul Reuber, Muenster) addressed several issues with different theoretical approaches ranging from political ecology to conceptions of social movement agency. Case studies were presented on the political geography of water conflicts in India (Michael Brinkschröder, Muenster), on a comparison of China’s south- north water diversion and Spain’s Ebro water transfer (Teresa Sprague, Dortmund), on Tamil fisheries cooperatives societies and their struggle for inclusion in northern Sri Lanka (Joeri Scholtens, Amsterdam) and on conflicts around biofuels in Brazil (Elisa Freitas, São Paulo).

Session 3 focused on “Conceptual approaches and theoretical debates within Political Geography” (Chair: Annika Mattissek, Heidelberg). Following ongoing debates one of the presentations emphasized the relationship of representations and practices using the broader framework of systems theory (Frank Meyer, Leipzig). A second strand of theoretical discussions in the papers was centered around debates on “post-politics” and their implications for political geographical research. Two case studies were presented: the first one dealing with new forms of disagreement in urban development conflicts (Iris Dzudzek, Frankfurt) the second analyzing spatial practices in Milan autonomist movements (Shinya Kitagawa, Osaka)

Session 4 on “The (Geo-)Politics of Identity” (Chair: Anton Gosar, Primorska) brought together case studies from very different geographic scales. The issues in the papers ranged from symbolic and iconic representations in the construction of national identity in Turkmenistan (Hendrik Meurs, Heidelberg) and multiconfessional identities in Albania (Peter Jordan, Austria), both on the level of nation- states, to more specific issues like the mapping of neoliberal Bavarian regional identities (Gregor Glötzl and Holger Lehmeier, Bamberg) and the critical geopolitics of global management gurus (Sami Moisiu, Oulu).

Session 5 addressed the ongoing and politically explosive conflicts and revolutions in the Near and Middle East (Chair: Vladimir Kolosov, Moscow). Besides a broader regional overview on geostrategic aspects of the current conflicts in the Middle East (Philippe Boulanger, Cergy- Pontoise) the papers discussed the Gaza - West Bank disconnect and its impact on Israeli- Palestinian conflict resolution (Aharon Klieman, Tel-Aviv) and specific political and social implications of the fences and walls between Israeli and Palestinian territories (Nurit Kliot, Haifa).

Session 6 focused on the “political geographies of the European Union” (Chair: Georg Glasze, Erlangen). Two papers addressed topics concerning EU-politics. Tobias Chilla (Luxembourg) introduced a new tool of European Governance, the “European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation” initiative. Merje Kuus (British Columbia) outlined the transnational political geographies of knowledge in the EU capital of Brussels. Two further papers concentrated on border issues, one of them reporting on the securitization of borders (Amaël Cattaruzza, Saint-Cyr), another focusing on the specific conditions of transborder openness of companies in divided cities at the Polish-German and Polish-Czech border (Sylvia Dołzbłasz, Wrocław).

Session 7 was dedicated to a set of case studies in Political Geography which used quantitative methods for their approaches and field work (Chair: Anton Gosar, Primorska). Vladimir Kolosov (Moscow) presented critical and functional approaches in geopolitics using the example of geopolitical visions of the world. A case study from the Pusztta region showed how gerrymandering can be a strategic tool of power politics (Zoltán Kovács, Szeged). For the Czech Republic, Tomáš Kostelecký (Czech Academy of Sciences) presented an analysis of the

historical roots of contemporary voting patterns in the Czech Republic. From the perspective of international relations Andrii Fedchuk (Kiev) outlined lessons learned from the Antarctic Treaty System against the background of a semi- centennial Antarctic governance.

### **The 13th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography, on The Eastern Dimension of the European Union, 12-14 September 2012**

The 13th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography on The Eastern Dimension of the European Union was held in Chelm (Poland) and Lutsk (Ukraine) at September 12–14. 2012. The organizers were: Department of Political Geography and Regional Studies University of Lodz, Silesian Institute in Opole, Polish Geographical Society Branch of Lodz, The State School of Higher Education in Chelm and Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University in Lutsk (Ukraine). The conference was held under patronage of International Geographical Union Commission of Political Geography. 51 participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Ukraine and USA, presented 25 papers in 6 sessions.

The substantive aim of the conference was a discussion over the issue concerning the eastern dimension of the United Europe. Most of all the following problems were raised: Eastern politics of the European Union, Historical dimension of the East-West relations in Europe, Relation between EU member-countries and East European Region Economical conditions of the East-West relations in Europe, European integration processes from the Ukrainian perspective, national and religious diversification and EU-EE relations.

### **BRIT XII, Fukuoka, Japan-Busan, Korea - Borderland Voices: Shaping A New World Order, 13–16 November 2012**

For the first time the Border Regions in Transition (BRIT) meeting took place in the Far East. In Fukuoka, Japan and Pusan, Korea 48 countries have been represented by close to 300 scholars. Both conference venues would not be hosting such a number of outstanding professionals if border issues in the Western Pacific would not have become centre stage news of the world media. The conference opening discussion was introduced by Tony Payan (University of Texas, El Paso) who acted as moderator to a group of experts from the Queens University Belfast (Liam O'Dowd), the French Institute for Higher National Defense Studies, France (Michel Foucher), University of Eastern Finland (James W. Scott), Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Science (Vladimir Kolossov), University of Texas, El Paso (Kathleen Staudt) and Kyushu University (Yuzu Yabuno). The afternoon was devoted to parallel sessions on several to border issues related topics and to a special event for the Fukuoka citizens introducing the formation of the Fukuoka-Busan supra-regional economic zone. Sessions continued to be arranged on the second day of the conference in Fukuoka. Parallel sessions continued to be organized at the Dongseo University venue in Pusan as the focus there shifted to large extend to the issues of the divided Korean peninsula: 13 sessions took place and 41 papers have been presented.

### **2013 Annual Conference of the Association of American Geographers AAG, Los Angeles 9-23 April 2013**

In April 2013 seven thousands of geographers from around the world convened as each year in Spring for the Annual Conference of the Association of American Geographers (AAG). Many of the hundreds of sessions were sponsored by the AAG Political Geography Specialty Group (PGSG) and political geographers from all over the world also attended the pre-conference

organized at UCLA by the PGSG on April 8. The IGU Commission on Political Geography sponsored a well-attended Authors-meet-critics session together with PGSG (Session 4628). The book under debate was the political geography textbook *Making Political Geography* (2012 Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield). The two authors John Agnew and Luca Muscarà responded to comments by Elena dell'Agnese, Takashi Yamazaki, Colin Flint, Natalie Koch and Virginie Mamadouh. The members of the board and the young members of the IGU-CPG present in Los Angeles also hold an informal meeting, off the AAG Annual meeting.

### **The second edition of the Border Crossing Seminar, Milan, 10-15 June 2013**

The Border Crossing Seminar is a joint program between the University of Milano-Bicocca (Italy) and the University of Notre Dame (USA), sponsored by the U.S. - Italy Fulbright Commission, and by the IGU Commission on Political Geography and supported by: University of Cork (Ireland), University Justus Liebig University Giessen (Germany), University of Łódź (Poland), University of Rzeszów (Poland), Vassar College (USA), Fondazione per la Cittadinanza Attiva (Rome), Bruno Kessler Foundation (Trento). The co-organizers are Marina Calloni (social and political philosophy, University of Milano-Bicocca) and Eileen Hunt Botting (political theory, University of Notre Dame).

The theme of the June 2013 seminar, second meeting of "The Border Crossing Seminar", was "From the Polis to the City: Perspectives on Global Justice." "The seminar examined the evolution of the city within European and non-European political theory and practice, from the polis of the ancient Greeks, to the cosmopolis of contemporary theories of global justice, to the present diversity of the city of Milan. The school featured lectures by expert faculty from the University of Notre Dame, the University of Milano-Bicocca, and other universities from around the globe, in fields such as political theory, political philosophy, anthropology, sociology, political science, and geography.

### **Border Studies conference on "Mapping Conceptual Change in Thinking European Borders", Bergamo, Italy, 3-5 July 2013**

The first joint Border Studies conference of the EU-FP7 projects EUBORDERSCAPES and EUBORDERREGIONS on "Mapping Conceptual Change in Thinking European Borders", organized in Bergamo, Italy, in early July 2013 did not only present on-going research activities within these two large-scale international projects to the wider public, but engaged also a numerous scholars external to the projects in dialogue and in this way contributing to the development of conceptual, methodological and empirical research on borders and border crossings. Organized by the University of Eastern Finland, in close cooperation with Ce.R.Co. – Centro di Ricerca sulla Complessità at the University of Bergamo, the conference aimed to make a constructive contribution to debate within border studies by encouraging a processual reading of borders as well as showcasing border research as an interdisciplinary field with its own academic standing. The conference employed also the concept of borderscapes as a way of approaching bordering processes in specific geographical and social contexts, both in borderlands but also wherever a specific border has impacts, is represented, negotiated or displaced.

Whether it was the topic at hand, or the exceptionally beautiful location in Bergamo, the organizers were faced with a flood of paper proposals, the number, which eventually had to be limited due to the size of the conference venue. In addition to the actual conference, an internal project workshop as well as an open summer school was organized. The conference was kicked off with a get-together event that took place at GAMEC – Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, where participants got to enjoy a travelling exhibition "The Memory of the

Sea. Objects Migrating within the Mediterranean”. This was then followed by a screening of “Mare Chiuso/Closed Sea” (2012), a touching film by Stefano Liberti & Andrea Segre.

The next day, following the opening words by Stefano Paleari, the Rector of the University of Bergamo and the conference organizers, the floor was given to Elena dell’Agnese, who delivered the eye-opening first keynote on “New Geo-graphies of Border Landscapes”. As the second keynote, Henk van Houtum, pushed the borders of cartography even further in his ever so enthusiastic trajectory “Towards a C/artography of Borderscapes”. These though provoking lectures paved the road for 22 parallel sessions focusing, inter alia, on:

- Post-soviet borders and conceptual change
- Borders, intersectionality and the everyday
- Borders and critical geopolitics of neighbourhood
- The state of the debate in border studies: theories and methods
- Europeanisation: European integration and conceptual change
- Post-colonial bordering and Euro-African borderscapes
- Border-crossing and cultural production
- Cross-border cooperation and regionalisation processes
- Rebordering state spaces: cities, borders and integration processes
- Policies and practices of cross-border cooperation
- Post-conflict borders and the emergence of new borderscapes

In all, the presented papers clearly showcased that concept of the border has indeed undergone significant changes during the last decades. After the somewhat premature attempt to “think away” political borders in the early 1990s, contemporary approaches solemnly acknowledge the continued relevance of borders for politics and everyday life. The conference uncovered important connections between borders as a “challenge” to national (and EU) policies and borders as potential elements of political innovation through conceptual (re-)framings of social, political, economic and cultural spaces. As a number of papers indicated, this requires a nuanced and critical re-reading and understanding of borders as resources in terms of the exercise of power, the management of conflict, cross-border cooperation, and the everyday negotiation of borders by “ordinary” citizens and non-citizens. The presented papers will be developed into an edited volume as well as a journal special issue in order to disseminate the findings more broadly. A number of working papers will also be uploaded in the project’ webpages.

### **IGU Regional Conference in Kyoto, 4-9 August 2013**

The IGU Kyoto Regional Conference (KRC) was held in the Kyoto International Conference Center, Kyoto, Japan from August 4th to 9th, 2013. Although categorized as ‘regional,’ it attracted more than 1,400 participants from about 70 countries. CPG, as usual, was one of the Commissions that organized a large number of paper sessions in KRC (twelve sessions and one business meeting):

- New frontiers in border studies (1) (Chair: Anton Gosar)
- New frontiers in border studies (2) (Chair: Virginie Mamadouh)
- Political rhetoric, media representation and popular culture in the making of state power (Chair: Anton Gosar)
- Migrations, ethnic minorities and the spatial reconceptualization of citizenship (1) (Chair: Shinya Kitagawa)
- Migrations, ethnic minorities and the spatial reconceptualization of citizenship (2) (Chair: Elena dell’Agnese)
- Localizing social movements and environmental questions in a globalizing world (1) (Chair: Elena dell’Agnese)

- Localizing social movements and environmental questions in a globalizing world (2) (Chair: Yuichi Kagawa)
- Militarization and de-militarization from a comparative perspective (1): Security and subject (Chair: Takashi Yamazaki)
- Militarization and de-militarization from a comparative perspective (2): Okinawa and its re-/de-militarization (Chair: Colin Flint)
- Contemporary political geography and geopolitics in Asia (1): Dynamics in East Asia (Chair: Takashi Yamazaki)
- Contemporary political geography and geopolitics in Asia (2): International tensions and cooperations (Chair: Sang-Hyun Chi)
- Re-theorizing territory, sovereignty, and space (Chair: Akihiko Takagi)

The Political Geography sessions involved scholars from all over the globe including Japan, Poland, the Netherlands, India, Hungary, South Korea, Italy, Finland, Russia, South Africa, the Ukraine, Great Britain, Switzerland, Taiwan, and the United States. Most interesting were the collaborations and counter-perspectives on the topics of borders and borderlands. Particularly pleasing was the continuation of political geography's ability to seamlessly accommodate graduate students and established scholars in the same sessions.

### **Post conference fieldtrip to Okinawa, 10-12 August 2013**

The theme of the trip was "Militarization and demilitarization of Okinawa as a geostrategic "keystone" under the Japan-U.S. alliance" and co-organized by the Political Geography Research Group of the Human Geographical Society of Japan and the Okinawa Geographical Society. The planning of the trip was supported by the General Affairs Department of Okinawa City Government and other local officials. Part of the trip expense was covered by the research grant from the Osaka City University Research Center for Human Rights. The trip began with visits to the controversial US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma and the huge US Kadena Air Base and stayed for two nights in the typical 'base town' of Koza. The trip ended with a visit to US Marine Corps Camp Hansen in which a military helicopter crashed just a week before the trip began. By listening to both Okinawan and American voices at each site, the participants were able to comprehend the complexity, profoundness, and prospects of issues on the militarized island.

### **Geopolitics Towards the Future, Rome, September 2013**

The Conference was organized by prof. Paola Pagnini, Dean at the University Niccolò Cusano, and Anton Gosar, former Chair of our Commission. It lasted three full days. It was mainly focused on the new scenarios and new problems of the incoming future, investigated with a geopolitical, geo-economical and mainly interdisciplinary approach. Geopolitical scenarios, both dynamic and complex, in Europe, Africa, Asia and America, have been the topics of the many sessions and round tables. A special session, focused on "Global Integration and Networks", was devoted to the Adriatic Forum 2013. The Forum included a discussion about the future perspectives of the Port of Trieste. In the final day, a concluding round table "Geopolitics Towards the Future" was chaired by Lucio Caracciolo, Director of Limes, the most prominent Italian journal of geopolitics. The conference was enriched by the presence of scholars, PhD students and many exponents of the diplomatic and political world, whose different perspectives enriched the discussion in a very stimulating way.

### **IV EUGEO Conference, Rome, 4-7 September 2013**

The conference, co-sponsored by all the four Italian geographical associations and also by IGU, was opened by a lecture from Vladimir Kolosov, IGU President, on "Sovereignty, 'Stateness' and Contested Borders in the Contemporary Geopolitical Context". Many sessions on political geography themes were offered. The session officially co-sponsored by the Commission on Political Geography, "New geo-graphies of exile. Displacements, re-placements and literary reconstructions of belonging", was organized by Elena dell'Agnese and by Michael Shapiro.

### **Political Geography of the Environment conference, IGU-CPG International Conference, Eugene, USA, 19-21 June 2014**

On June 19-21, 2014, the Department of Geography at the University of Oregon hosted a meeting of the IGU Commission on Political Geography in Eugene, Oregon. The conference theme was the Political Geography and the Environment. The conference consisted of two days of sessions followed by a day-long field trip to the Oregon coast. Commission Steering Committee member Professor Alexander Murphy hosted the conference—ably assisted by University of Oregon doctoral student Anna Moore. Most of the participants came from the United States and Canada, but two young scholars came from Mexico, and former Commission chair Anton Gosar won the informal award for coming the farthest: from Slovenia.

Simon Dalby kicked off the first day of the conference with a wide-ranging, provocative plenary address. Playing off of Neil Smith's effort to link nature, capital, and the production of space, Dalby sketched out a variety of ways in which political geographers can and should engage environmental themes. His address was followed by sessions focused on trans-boundary water issues, the power-politics-environment relationship, and the environmental dimensions of consumption.

Shannon O'Lear gave the opening plenary address on the second day of the meeting, discussing the environment-geopolitics link and the need to examine the assumptions behind the ways in which issues of scarcity, security, and resilience are framed. Papers during the day focused on questions of environmental governance, the disconnect between development initiatives in particular places and local environmental conditions, and the relationship between political geography and political ecology.

The formal part of the meeting ended with an interesting discussion highlighting the need for more engagement by political geographers with environmental matters and communicating the nature and importance of the types of issues raised at the conference to a broader audience. On the last day of the gathering, many of the participants who came from farther afield took a day-long field trip to the Oregon coast led by Alec Murphy. The group explored the extraordinary physical environment along the coast and learned about the planning and legislative initiatives that have succeeded in keeping much of the Oregon coast within the public domain. (Alexander Murphy)

### **Association of American Geographers (AAG) Political Geography Specialty Group Preconference, Tampa, USA, 7 April 2014**

The Political Geography Specialty Group of the AAG held its 2014 preconference at the University of South Florida on Monday April 7. It was hosted by Jayajit Chakrabarty, Pratyusha Bosu and the School of Geosciences at USF. There were approximately 60 people at the pre-conference, which included 32 papers and a plenary panel on Florida politics featuring Jason Dittmer, Fred Shelley, Susan McManus, and Martin Bosman. The next PGSG preconference will be held at the Lincoln Park Campus of Depaul University in Chicago on Monday 20 April, 2015. Kara Dempsey will act as local coordinator. A call for papers will be

circulated. (Reece Jones)

### **Colloque International « Métropoles et Régions, Entre Concurrences Et Complémentarités, Regards Croisés France / Italie, Paris, France, 9-11 Avril 2014**

Organisé par l'Ecole française de Rome, en partenariat avec l'UMR Géographie-cités (Universités Paris-Diderot et Paris 1, CNRS) et le Lab'urba (Université Paris-Est), et avec la collaboration des Universités de Rome, de Turin et de Naples, ce colloque a réuni à la fois des enseignants-chercheurs et chercheurs en géographie, aménagement du territoire, histoire, sciences politiques et sociales, et des responsables politiques et des techniciens de l'aménagement métropolitain et régional.

Dans un contexte marqué par la multiplication des débats et des réformes portant sur les mailles métropolitaines en Europe, ce colloque international a essayé de contribuer à la réflexion contemporaine sur les rapports entre les échelles régionale et métropolitaine.

La question des concurrences et des complémentarités entre régions et métropoles se pose avec une importance nouvelle depuis environ deux décennies dans un double contexte : celui de la mondialisation qui, en Europe comme ailleurs, accentue les concurrences entre territoires « gagnants » et « perdants » ; et celui de la décentralisation, qui contribue à redéfinir les formes de gouvernance dans un processus toujours évolutif.

Les trois premières sessions étaient intitulées : “ Métropoles et régions : une histoire déjà longue” ; “ Constructions et représentations des territoires régionaux et métropolitains” et “ Métropoles et régions dans la course à la métropolisation ”. Deux sessions ont été consacrées au sujet-clé de la gouvernance et l'aménagement ont été consacrés deux sessions. Toujours dans la dimension de la comparaison entre l'Italie et la France, deux sessions se sont déroulées sur les politiques sectorielles et sur les interstices métropolitains. Des représentants des collectivités locales des deux pays ont participé à la table ronde animée par les organisateurs. (Fabio Amato)

### **Association for Borderland Studies (ABS) 1st World Conference, Joensuu, Finland / St. Petersburg, Russia, 9-13 June 2014**

The first Association of Borderland Studies World Conference was held this year on June 9-13 in Joensuu, Finland and St. Petersburg, Russia, seeking to provide a forum for a global gathering of border scholars. While the Association was initially formed in 1976 by scholars focused upon the United States-Mexico borderlands, it was decided in 2012 to reflect the growing internationalization of the Association's membership by hosting a World Conference every four years, in addition to the Annual Meetings held in a western US city. Rather than merely duplicate that meeting in a different hemisphere, however, the goal is to provide a gathering not tied to one specific location, which can bring together various scholarly networks and the wider border studies community. The 400-plus participants from 50-odd countries were testament to the success of the organizer's vision.

Hosting duties were shared between Joensuu and St. Petersburg, with a fleet of six busses shuttling participants between the two venues on Wednesday, June 11. The same globalization that has driven the expansion of the geographical spread of the organization's members and concerns was also visible in this decision to cross the border during the conference. The still-ongoing tug-of-war occurring in Ukraine between EU and Russian interests potentially affects the situation of academics crossing the border between them, and indeed one Ukrainian colleague was ultimately refused entry to Russia. The tension, of course, serves to underline the significance of what the ABS World Conference sought to achieve, bringing home to everyone the importance of further work on the borders that exist between

us and how they are functioning today, in a world criss-crossed by markers and means of inclusion and exclusion.

The Conference succeeded in both appealing to the Association's past while looking towards a more expansive future in its plenary sessions, the speakers of which provided a marvelous cross-section of the potential of this gathering for the future. Along with speeches from two distinguished border scholars from Russia and Finland (Alexander Filippov and Anssi Paasi), there was a talk provided by Oscar Martinez, producer of ground-breaking work on the US-Mexico borderlands and founder member of ABS. If Oscar succeeded in demonstrating the Association's connections with its own past, Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary and Paul Nugent both pointed towards its future in exciting new ways. Paul's talk, as well as the cooperation and participation of the African Borderlands Research Network (ABORNE), allowing for African border experiences to be better represented than is frequently the case at these events. As with the increasing tension between the EU and Russia's borders, though, the denial of visas to the majority of ABORNE's African members once again showed the continuing centrality and inequality in the border functions in our connected world. This inequitable order supported by our current borders is ripe for being challenged in the manner Anne-Laure's exciting work at the intersection between art, advocacy and academia provides.

The excellence of the sessions on offer during the four days of the conference were matched by the more social sides of the occasion, with generous entertainment provided on each evening and during the bus ride to St. Petersburg. This generosity extended to the provision of a Student Paper Award, the three winners of which were announced at a reception hosted by Joensuu's Mayor in the city's Art Gallery. From speaking to many of the participant's, it was clear that the original concept behind the Conference was being successfully realized, and the bar has been set very high for the next edition of ABS World when, like the World Cup, it rolls around in four years' time. (Edward Boyle)

### **The International Conference on Geopolitics in Changing Southeast Asia: Boundaries and Borderlands, Kunming/Xishuangbanna, China, 20-24 July 2014**

The Chinese province of Yunnan hosted the first international conference on geopolitics and borderlands in China on 20-24 July 2014 in two locations: Kunming and Xishuangbanna. The conference was organized by Yunnan Normal University, the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research and Beijing Normal University, and co-organized by the School of Tourism and Geographic Science of Yunnan Normal University and Xishuangbanna Vocational and Technical Institute.

A key player in the organization was Stan Brunn, who has been a visiting professor at Yunnan Normal University for the past year, teaching political geography. The conference brought together keynote speakers from North America, Europe, Southwest Asia and South Asia (Victor Konrad from Ottawa, Virginie Mamadouh from Amsterdam, David Newman from Beer Sheva, and James Sidaway from Singapore) and many scholars and PhD students from all over China, and from abroad, with participants from India, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Russia, the USA, Australia, Finland, Italy and the UK.

The Conference took place in Kunming the capital city of Yunnan, in southwest China then moved to Xishuangbanna, the prefecture at the southern border, where workshops took place in Jing Hong the main city and a fieldtrip took the participants to the Forest Park near Mengla and the border crossing with Laos in Mohan. Yunnan, once a periphery of China, where Yunnan Normal University was created in 1938 by academics fleeing China under Japanese occupation is now a booming city stimulated by the central state policies to stimulate development in the west and to strengthen crossborder ties with southeastern neighbours. The construction boom can be witnessed by dozens and dozens of high rise



towers, new highways and cloverleaves (among which the highway to Bangkok), the new international airport near Kunming (the 4th largest one in China), the huge brand new suburban campus of Yunnan Normal University, and similar developments in Jung Hong. The region is particularly rich in terms of agriculture with endless greeneries, but even more famous for its tea, tobacco, aloe vera, and rubber plantation and a tropical destination for Chinese tourists.

After a series of complementary introductions to border studies by the keynote speakers, the many contributions presented in workshops at Yunnan Normal University in Kunming or at Xishuangbanna Vocational and Technical Institute in Jing Hong, addressed various aspects of China's foreign relations as well as cultural economic and political themes related to borderlands in China and to international relations in the region. Yunnan is known in China both for its rather harmonious arrangements with its ethnic minorities, and as a spearhead of the good neighbourhood policy of China. (Virginie Mamadouh)

### **The 14th International 'Lodz' Political Geography Conference / Pre-conference of the IGU Commission on Political Geography (CPG), Lopuszna, Poland, 15-17 August 2014**

The 14th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography and International Geographical Union Commission on Political Geography Workshop – Geographical-political aspects of the transborder conservation of natural and cultural heritage was held in Lopuszna (Poland) between 15th and 17th August 2014.

The organizers were: Department of Political Geography and Regional Studies University of Lodz (Prof. Marek Sobczyński), Silesian Institute in Opole (Prof. Krystian Heffner) and Commission on Political and Historical Geography Polish Geographical Society. The conference was held under patronage of International Geographical Union Commission of Political Geography. The last session of the conference was organised jointly with IGU Commission on Tourism, Leisure and Global Change (Prof. Marek Więckowski).

65 participants from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, China, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, UK and USA, have 32 papers in 6 sessions.

The substantive aim of the conference was a discussion on the transborder conservation of natural and cultural heritage all around the world. Most of all the following problems were considered:

- Integration vs peripherality – changes in border regions,
- Contemporary changes in border regions – new challenges for political geography,
- Geopolitics of borders and borderlands in globalised World,
- Transborder conservation of natural and cultural heritage between the EU member and not-member countries,
- Contemporary practice in the field of the conservation of natural and cultural heritage all over the World,
- The role of Euroregions in the transborder heritage conservation.

During the conference two study tours were held: all-day long to the Slovak part of the historical region of Spis and half-day long tour to the Polish part of this region.

The national minorities on the borderlands were indicated as the necessary topic for the future conferences in this cycle. The proposal of the organizers to hold the next 15th International 'Lodz' Political Geography Conference in September 2016 at Kliczków Castle in Lower Silesia (Poland) and Bautzen (Upper Lusatia in Germany) on Borderlands of nations and nations of borderlands was accepted. (Marek Sobczynski)

### **Activities at the IGU Regional Conference, Krakow, Poland, 18-24 August 2014**

The 2014 Regional Conference organized in Krakow by the International Geographical Union was an enormous success. It brought 1372 geographers to Krakow and to the Jagiellonian University established in 1364 by King Casimir the Great (at the time Krakow was the capital of the Polish Kingdom). About 100 young researchers took part in the conference. The participants came to Krakow from 60 countries, including 416 persons from Poland. Polish geographers seized the opportunity to present the many geography departments and journals to a large and diverse group of participants. The main venue was the Campus of the 600th anniversary of the Jagiellonian University Revival.

The Commission on Political Geography (CPG) sponsored and cosponsored a large number of sessions so that there were parallel sessions all the time.

A highlight was the Thursday with a special lecture sponsored by the academic journal Political Geography featuring the Political Geography IGU 2014 lecture: Camps by Claudio Minca, (Wageningen University, The Netherlands), and interventions: Vladimir Kolosov, Institute of Geography, Russian Academy of Sciences President of the IGU, and former chair of the Commission on Political Geography and Irit Katz, Cambridge University, UK). This section attracted the attention of geographers way beyond the Commission, and was followed by a regular panel about The Political Geographies of Camps organized by Irit Katz and James D. Sidaway.

Other sessions included:

- Political Geographies of Society and Nature, organized by Paul Reuber
- Transforming Political Geographies in the 21st century: Case Studies on Local, National and Global Scale, organized by Paul Reuber
- Contemporary Conflicts and New/Old Forms of Belligerence, organized by Elena dell'Agnese
- Here There Everywhere: Social Movements Spatializing Dissent, organized by Valeria Pecorelli

On Wednesday there were three sessions on the Political Geographies of Multilingualism convened by Virginie Mamadouh, grouping papers in three topical clusters: 1: Demographies and ethnicities, 2: Boundary making, 3 Politics and Policies.

On Thursday afternoon and Friday morning there were four sessions on European Integration (organized and chaired by Virginie Mamadouh, Anna Casaglia, Jussi Laine) that included themes such as "Territoriality and ENP" and "Processes of Europeanization."

The Commission collaborated with several other commissions for other sessions:

- With the Commission on the History of Geography for a session entitled What (Political) Geography Ought to Be? Theoretical Approaches to and Historical Perspectives on Geography and Geopolitics as Instruments of Peace, organized by Elena dell'Agnese and Toshiyuki Shimazu
- With the Commission on Gender and Geography for a session on Gender, Human Rights and Citizenship, organized by Inocent Moyo and Marcella Schmidt di Friedberg
- And with the Commission on the Geography of Tourism, Leisure, and Global Change for two sessions: one on Tourism and Political Borders, organized by Marek Więckowski and Elena dell'Agnese and one on Dark Tourism, Heritage and War, organized by Carolin Funck, Tim Coles, and Elena dell'Agnese.

Next to the many panel sessions, the conference organizers offered a series of plenary lectures on Changes, Challenges, respectively Responsibility every early afternoon, an exhibition on the History of Geographical Thought in Poland at the Museum of the Jagiellonian University, several social events at the Auditorium Maximum, in Kazimierz, and at the Wieliczka Salt Mine and numerous academic excursions after the conference and short trips

to Krakow Old Town and to Nowa Huta District. Details about the programme and abstracts can be found at <http://www.igu2014.org/> (Virginie Mamadouh)

### **Dark Tourism Workshop: Post-WW1 Destinations of Human Tragedies and Opportunities for Tourism Development, Portoroz-Portorose/Koper-Capodistria, Slovenia, 2-4 October 2014**

This workshop was organized by the Faculty of Tourism Studies TURISTICA, of the University of Primorska Università dell' Litorale, Koper-Capodistria. The workshop took place in Portoroz-Portorose and in Koper-Capodistria, Slovenia. There was a fieldtrip to the Isonzo Battlefields of the Great War and to the War Museum at Kobarid (Caporetto): Koper – Komen - Gorizia – Tolmin – Kobarid – Nova Gorica- Koper.

There were 16 papers with contributors from seven EU countries: the United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Poland, Italy, Austria, Croatia and Slovenia, including two former chairs of the Commission on Political Geography : Anton Gosar and Elena dell'Agnese. In addition there were about sixty participants, students, teachers and interested individuals from the University of Primorska / Università dell' Litorale, Koper-Capodistria.

The main conclusions of the workshop were:

1. Dark Tourism is 'alive and well' and constantly develops new and enriches old travel destinations;
2. The dark tourism research is relatively recent (1990's) and lacks international discussion
3. The naming of this tourism experience is from the marketing point of view criticized and needs to be changed. At the international workshop the following terms have been named: Memory Tourism, Peace Tourism, Tanatourism, Historical Tourism, Tourism of Reconciliation;
4. The experience of dark tourism has increasingly moved towards "Disneyfications", as it increases the number of "live shows" and re-enactments – much to the disappointment of historians and academicians; we all have a great responsibility in managing dark sites in a way that maintains the utmost respect for the people who were the victims of these vents. This extends to public sector agencies, the private sector and also to academics researching the phenomenon of dark tourism. This is a moral responsibility and we owe to the victims to ensure that dark sites are never over-commercialized.
5. Local residents and municipalities embrace dark tourism presented in any way; they appreciate the increase of working places, the increase of visitors and commodities related to culinary and other tourism related services;
6. Tourists visiting dark tourism destinations increasingly appreciate not only the educational part of the experience (museums, memorial sites, etc.) but in particular the tourism amenity complexity offered - which would include own, active participation in hiking around places of previous conflicts, disasters and places of macabre experiences (for example: overnight in trenches);
7. At present, in particular in the Italian-Slovenian borderland dark tourism tourist destinations lack tourist infrastructure, especially accommodation amenities; tourists also complain that some dark tourism sites are constantly closed and the interest to visit has to be announced well in advance at appropriate associations and/or municipalities;
8. The experience of dark tourism at dark tourism sites, if explained in adequate way - as history is understood in the 21<sup>st</sup> century - could help in understanding the

complexity of the ethnic, national and world history; the one-sided interpretation, often inspired by the past and/or present politics of a nation-state, has to be omitted;

9. The WW1 tourism sites are in particular trendy not only due to the centennial (and this will last for another 5 years), but also because the war and disasters of that period are at a “safe historical distance” and on which historians have already made a consensual interpretation, and dark tourism can offer “neutral” perspectives, focusing on the tragedies of everyday people – military and others;
10. The WW1 tourism destinations in the Slovenian-Italian borderland is in particular popular, since for the first time in two centuries the geopolitical situation is oriented towards re-conciliation and in a consensual interpretation of history; the Walk of Peace (from the Alps to the Adriatic) is a good example of bipartisan co-operation in the dark tourism destination development; cross-border co-operation still needs to be improved and markets outside the immediate neighborhood explored;
11. In particular the Karst and the Upper Soča/Isonzo area (Tolmin, Kobarid, Bovec) is - because of the increase of visits – in desperate need of hotel accommodations, whereas the restaurant amenities are already adequate;

The publication of the proceedings of the workshop is planned for early 2015.

(Anton Gosar)

### **First Brazilian Congress of Political Geography, Geopolitics and Territorial Management: Rationalities and Practices at Multiple Scales, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 7-10 October 2014**

In the history of political geography, it was probably the first time that a country organized a national congress devoted to this field of geography. In May 2013 at Manaus, a group of researchers decided to create REBRAGEO, namely the Brazilian Network of Political Geography, Geopolitics and Territorial Management. This network implemented this Congress which was held from 7 to 10 October 2014 at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro within its Gavea Campus located at the bottom of Corcovado. With the presence of 257 registered participants, the First Brazilian Congress of Political Geography offered a wide range of scientific activities. The meeting opened with the speech of Claudio Antonio Egler Brazil Through the Eyes of Bertha Becker which was a tribute to the memory of Bertha Koiffman Becker (1930-2013), the international reference of the Brazilian political geography and a former IGU Vice-President (1996-2000). The opening conference was made by Lia Osorio Machado, under the title Empire and the Decolonial Epistemological Turn.

During the first two mornings, twenty-four posters were proposed to the attention of the participants in one of the outdoor mall of the welcome institution. The three mornings were devoted to the presentation of 152 papers which were distributed among five general axes: 1/ Classical and contemporary political geography and geopolitics in the 20th and 21st centuries; 2/ (Geo)politics of environment, resources management and sustainabilities; 3/ Localism, nationalism, regionalism and globalism; 4/ Borders: an ongoing territorial challenge; 5/ The scales of management of territorial policies. The four afternoons were occupied by thematic round tables structured around the five general axes, with interventions by recognized scholars. A strong point was made by André Roberto Martin, from the University of São Paulo, on the theory of meridionalism: this theory is not only an imaginary projection of the geopolitical power but also an explanatory model of the limits and feasibilities of Brazil and Southern Hemisphere countries within the international system. Meridionalism is a contemporary geopolitical theory which denies those of Atlantism and

Eurasianism. Three foreign guest speakers were invited to deliver a speech: André-Louis Sanguin (France) scrutinized the evolution of political geography since the 1990s according to an international perspective. Mario Valero Martinez (Venezuela) analysed the cross-border situation between Venezuela and its neighbors when Yann Richard concluded the Congress with a speech devoted to the Ukraine Crisis.

The Brazilian school of political geography has at its disposal a critical mass which contributes to explain its development: it is a country of 200 million inhabitants, with a network of 186 universities, and an educational system where geography is an obligatory subject in seven school years, leading to the formation of more than five thousand professionals each year. Besides, Brazilian nationalism is deeply rooted in themes like the unity of Brazilian territory and its cornucopic natural resources. Furthermore, echoes of the geopolitical reasoning forwarded by the Doctrine of National Security central during dictatorship years can still be heard, at the same time as strong voices claiming time has come for epistemic disconnection and situated theories. The First Brazilian Congress of Political Geography was a significant testimony of this vitality and (post)modernity. Probably due to the linguistic partitioning (ignorance of the Portuguese language) and due to the French influence and Anglo-American intellectual hegemony, Brazilian political geography is little known out Iberian spheres, even if its scientific output is impressive. For a foreign observer, the Congress gave a good image of the practices and styles of the Brazilian political geography. An attention was paid to figureheads and historical concepts. A lot of papers emphasized the border issues between Brazil and its neighboring countries as well as the projection of Brazil to the Atlantic, Africa and the Antarctic, and the rise of a paradigmatic view on Brazilian borderlands studies can be perceived. The geography of public policy and territorial management are part of the field of political geography in Brazil which is not really the case in other countries. Consequently, many papers focused on issues regarding land conflicts, territorial governance, federalism and decentralization. The small number of papers devoted to foreign countries outside Latin America was another key feature of the Congress. Proceedings are planned to be published and the Second Brazilian Congress of Political Geography is foreseen at Natal, in the Northeastern state of Rio Grande do Norte, in 2016. (Adriana Dorfman and André-Louis Sanguin)

### **The Art of Bordering: Economies, Performances and Technologies of Migration Control, Rome, Italy, 24-26 October 2014**

Organizing Committee: Cédric Parizot, Filippo Celata, Raffaella Coletti, Heidrun Friese, Nicola Mai, Alessio Rosati, Benoit Tadié, Antoine Vion

Art Curator: Isabelle Arvers

The Art of Bordering is an art-science event merging an academic conference with an exhibition in order to discuss the material and symbolic construction of the Mediterranean as a border zone as well as the governance and politicization of migration control within the EU. During three days, Italian, French, German and British academics, journalists and artists have debated at Maxxi-Roma how technological innovation, geopolitical conflicts and socio-economic inequalities have transformed both migration flows and the material, political and symbolic dimensions of borders in the 21st century.

Research, art and technology are deeply involved in the representation and deconstruction of the dynamics and politics of migration management and control. They frame the strategies of adaptation, contestation and subversion of "Fortress Europe" developed by migrants and European citizens.

The working languages of the event were English and Italian . A French language

report by Camille Schmoll (Université Paris VII Denis Diderot) is available at:  
<http://www.antiatlas.net/blog/2014/12/09/compte-rendu-du-colloque-the-art-of-bordering/>

### **Border Regions in Transition (BRIT) XIV: The Border, a Source of Innovation / La frontière, source d'innovation, Arras and Lille, France/Mons, Belgium, 4-7 November 2014**

The 14th Border Regions in Transition (BRIT) international conference was held in France and Belgium on November, 4 to 7, 2014 (in the tradition of BRIT conferences, this event is bi-national). The theme of this meeting was: "The Border, a Source of Innovation." As usual, this conference was the opportunity to meet a lot of colleagues geographers but also many political scientists and law specialists, coming from more than 30 countries, although participants from North America and Europe were more numerous than those coming from Africa, Latin America and Asia. The participation of colleagues from the "South" is more difficult for financial reasons and that is true of all academic events organized in the "North".

The BRIT XIV (the fourteenth edition of the Border Regions in Transition series) remained true to the high standards set by the now established tradition. It was marked by its user-friendliness and overall scientific quality. 36 sessions were organized, featuring more than 170 papers. The variety of the subjects must be underlined. Innovation was discussed through various dimensions, including border management (border crossing, border control), but also the footprint of the border in the landscape and in societies and its impact on societies governments or the environment. In a "critical" way, sessions were dedicated to representations of boundaries and mental borders. In addition to regular sessions, more targeted sessions were organized, for instance by the Commission on Political geography of the IGU and the French CNFG who organized two successful sessions on "borders of war and peace"(coordinated by Amael Cattaruzza and Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary).

Interventions in the conference as the podcasts are visible on its website at <http://www.brit2014.org/?lang=en>

A fieldtrip "From World War I to crossborder cooperation" was organized on Wednesday November 5, 2014. The destination of this fieldtrip was the area of Calais. The participants were divided in three groups and visited the maritime security facilities at Cap Gris Nez on the strait of Dover, the Eurotunnel installations, or Calais harbour (connected to England with ferries). Such a region is a very informative spot to consider contemporary border management and illegal migrations (let's recall that the UK is not a member of the Schengen area which implies control for every crossing of this border). The spontaneous camps of immigrants were not visible (as undocumented migrants hide their camps from the French police), but it was not difficult to watch them roaming around the queues of lorries on the motorways waiting to board the Shuttle under the Channel. This image, shocking in its hardness, best summed up than a conference the toughness of the status of illegal immigrants in contemporary Europe.

Furthermore, the conference included three cultural exhibitions (in Arras, Lille and Mons), a cooperation with the MOT, the French national committee of geography and the Katholiek Universiteit van Leuven - Campus Kortrijk. This successful academic event confirms the dynamism of border studies in a world where borders still represent decisive ruptures that produce obstructions but also overflows and innovation. (Stéphane Rosière)

### **Journées géopolitiques de Reims, France, 12 November 2014**

The First Journées géopolitiques de Reims were held 12 November 2014 at the Université

Reims Champagne Ardenne (URCA) in France. The ambition of this conference is to become a regularly event (as it exists already in the French cities of Nantes and Grenoble) and it consists of a seminar for PhD students in the morning and a public conference in the afternoon.

The theme of this first Conference was International borders between affirmation and contestation. With such a title, the conference wanted to highlight the beginning of a “post-debordering” era.

After Prof. Stéphane Rosière opened the conference and introduced its main theme, the audience could listen (and ask questions) to Prof. Vladimir Kolosov (IGU/UGI President) and Prof. Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly.

The next year conference (November 2015) will deal with internal borders and the administrative subdivisions of states. A hot topic in France. (Stéphane Rosière)

### **Borders at the Interface: Bordering Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, Beer Sheva, Israel, 8-11 December 2014**

International workshop “Borders at the Interface” was held in corporation with the EP7 EUROBORDERSCAPES Consortium at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva. Host organizers were David Newman as Professional Chair in Geopolitics and his two assistants: Renen Yeziarsky and Maya Golan. The workshop was a combination of plenary/parallel sessions and field trips with approximately 80 participants. On the first day, it began with an opening plenary session with papers by Vladimir Kolosov (Moscow Academy of Science, IGU President), Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly (University of Victoria, Editor of the Journal of Borderland Studies), and Victor Konrad (Carleton University), followed by 6 parallel sessions focusing on Israel-Palestine, Africa, and Euro-Asia borders, cultural production of borders, and trans-border migration.

On the second day, participants made a full-day field trip to Israel-Jordan border. Experts from the Friends of the Earth Middle East introduced participants to the complex geopolitical and environmental issues that surround the region’s transboundary water and other environmental resources through an in-depth look at the Jordan River Valley.

On the third day, back to the campus, six parallel sessions and two roundtable discussions focused on securitization, debates in border studies, Israel/Palestinian borders, urbanism, identities, internal borders, border cultures, and the future of human geography. At the end of the day, the last plenary session marked the establishment of the Professional Chair in Geopolitics at Ben-Gurion University. Under the theme of “A hundred years since the First World War: Reshaping the geopolitical map of the Middle East,” papers were given by Shlomo Avineri (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Richard Schofield (King’s College, University of London), and Dror Zeevi (Ben-Gurion University).

On the last day, participants again went on a full-day field trip to the West Bank and Jerusalem. The tour was given by Ir Amin, a non-profit organization founded in 2004 that focuses on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Jerusalem. Ir Amin’s study tour provided a ground level exposure to East Jerusalem, creating a platform for critically assessing the notion of Jerusalem as the “eternal, undivided capital of Israel” and understanding the city’s fundamental role in Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Altogether, the workshop was extremely well organized and full of intriguing information about the history and current state of border issues. The combination of intensive sessions and stimulating field trip to contested areas made the workshop one of the most ideal arenas for understanding and sensing the complex realities of border issues. (Takashi Yamazaki)

## **Association of Borderlands Studies (ABS) 2015 Annual Meeting, Portland, Oregon, USA, 8-11 April 2015**

The 2015 annual meeting of the Association for Borderlands Studies (ABS) was organized in Portland, Oregon, in April, in conjunction with the Western Social Science Association's (WSSA) annual conference. ABS was officially established in 1976 in affiliation with WSSA as an initiative of a small but growing body of scholars in various disciplines, most located at U.S. border state colleges and universities, who saw the need for a professional body to facilitate systematic study of the rapidly urbanizing U.S.-Mexico border region— within a comparative international context. This makes ABS as one of oldest WSSA affiliated organizations, and today ABS is also the largest of them.

The conference held in Portland succeeded in both appealing to the Association's past while looking towards a more expansive future both in its plenary and parallel sessions, the speakers of which provided a marvelous cross-section of the potential of the field has to offer. Given the ABS's devotion to a greater understanding of borders through multidisciplinary approaches and perspectives from all border contexts worldwide, the themes of the sessions provided a far-reaching cross-section of today's border studies. The program chaired by Prof. Akihiro Iwashita, who is currently acting as the President of the association, was filled with presentations ranging from fascinating case studies to those more theoretically and methodological inclined. Close to 200 participants from 26 different countries can be seen as a testament to the conscious efforts made to expand of the association's membership and scope of activities both geographically and thematically.

Among the topics that were discussed were, inter alia, post-colonial and indigenous perspectives on borders, migration and memory, border theory in the new world (dis)order, political ecology of international borders, mobile borders and transnationality, cross-border development and challenges, grand theories or epistemic pluralism, communicating difference and identity in border cities and borders and human security. Sessions on Asian borders in the current era, on bordered people, South China borders and borderlands as well as on migration, diaspora and border crossing phenomena in East Asia were crosslisted with the Asian Studies section under WSSA, whereas a session on territory, violence, culture, and institution was crosslisted with Latin American studies.

One of highlights of the conference was the special plenary session organized to honor Prof. Ellwyn Stoddard, one of the founding members of the association, with the ABS Lifetime Achievement Award. In perhaps the best attended session of the conference, Prof. Stoddard offered a fascinating lecture titled: "The Multidisciplinary ABS: Reminiscences of a Borderline Scholar" featuring his personal insights and memories from the early stages of the associations' history. As one of the award selection committee members described him: "He is clearly the most important of the original twelve apostles that formed the ABS and arguably more significant than anyone who has come after". Prof. Stoddard has been a distinguished scholar in sociology and anthropology during his career, and recognised as a leading border scholar. He was also the brains behind the original bylaws and organizational system that ABS has had all these years.

Also the ABS Past Presidents' Book Awards were announced during the annual conference. The gold award was granted to Tero Mustonen & Kaisu Mustonen for their *Eastern Sámi Atlas* (Snowchange, 2011), the silver award went to Heikki Eskelinen, Ilkka Liikanen, and James W. Scott's edited collection *The EU-Russian Borderland: New Contexts for Regional Cooperation* (Routledge, 2012), and the bronze award was given to Isabelle Thuy Pelaud, Lan Duong, Mariam B. Lam, and Kathy L. Nguyen for their edited volume *Troubling Borders: An Anthology of Art and Literature by Southeast Asian Women in the Diaspora* (University of Washington Press, 2014) The *Eastern Sámi Atlas* was selected as the gold award winner



because it was a unique and rich study of Sami culture and history in a cross-border context. The book is based on an extensive project to resurrect, document, compile and express the Sami experience, not only as an indigenous culture but one that crosses borders and is enriched by this process. This book is exemplary of the deep ethnography, geographical analysis, and synthesis that is possible and indeed necessary to comprehend how borders and culture touch and combine in our globalizing world, and how the border experience may be documented and explored. The Eastern Sami Atlas is an achievement in border publication and a model for other extensive projects to document and comprehend the meeting of borders and cultures. The committee was also impressed by the quality, originality and contribution of the books selected as silver and bronze award winners. The EU-Russia Borderland is a well-designed and effectively presented anthology of contemporary research on this cross-border region. It represents the current research of the leading scholars working on this region and it is a major contribution to the field. The bronze award was given to Troubling Borders because this anthology of art and literature by Southeast Asian Women was highly original, visual and poetic in its expression of the cross-border migration experience.

The next ABS Annual Conference will be held on April 13-16, 2016 in Reno, Nevada. Papers on all topics and areas concerned with border studies are invited but we particularly welcome papers related to the theme for the 2016 annual conference: "Borders in the XXI century: Border institutions and governance". Please visit: <http://absborderlands.org/studies/annual-meetings/> for more information. We look forward to seeing you in Reno! (Jussi P. Laine, ABS Executive Secretary and Treasurer)

### **Association of American Geographers (AAG) Political Geography Speciality Group (PGSG) preconference, Chicago, USA, 20-25 April 2015**

The AAG Political Geography Specialty Group (PGSG) preconference was held at DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois, USA, on 20 April 2015. There were approximately 60 attendees, including graduate students, faculty, and the broader community. There were 44 paper presentations, divided into 8 sessions: (1) Violence, Governance, and Resistance; (2) Resource Economies and Environmental Governance; (3) Nation and Identity; (4) Militarism, Technology, and Logistics; (5) Theorizing Political Geography: Key Topics & Debates; (6) Borders: Theory and Practice; (7) Borders and geopolitics in the Middle East; (8) Borders and geopolitics in Asia. The event, which ran from 8 am - 6 pm, was followed by a PGSG group dinner. (Natalie Koch)

### **7th International Conference on Critical Geography (ICCG 2015) Precarious Radicalism on Shifting Grounds: Towards a Politics of Possibility, Ramallah, Palestine, 26-30 July 2015**

This past summer the International Critical Geography Group (ICGG) convened its seventh annual conference in the occupied city of Ramallah, Palestine. Following a two-decade tradition and four years of preparation, the conference brought together scholars and activists committed to combating social exploitation and oppression. This was the ICGG's first gathering in the Middle East. The program of five days (and six nights) was packed with critical geographical engagements anchored around the theme Precarious Radicalism on Shifting Grounds: Towards a Politics of Possibility. Participants shared analysis of the mounting crises of capital, space, bodies and nature and explored ways to turn them into moments of political possibility by reconnecting scholarship with solidarity and struggle. Aside from nearly ninety paper sessions and workshops, there were a series of working

plenaries and fieldtrips central to the conference's deliberations. This direct dialogue with the site of the meeting and the commitment of participants, volunteers, community and international supporters, technicians and organizers came together into a substantive shared academic and political project.

Four hundred scholars, activists and members of the public from over forty countries energetically took up issues on and beyond the violent frontlines of class, gender, race, sexual, and colonial divisions. And they also took critical steps beyond discussion and debate of their intellectual work towards concrete collective action. Before attending the conference, every participant that registered already agreed to a political statement that supports basic Palestinian rights. By endorsing this statement, they acknowledged the power asymmetries and injustices that define Palestinian life and stood on the side of the oppressed. Through the political statement the conference shed any false facade of normalcy and openly acknowledged the realities of settler colonial oppression and racial discrimination. During the final session of the conference, participants voted overwhelmingly in support of a resolution drafted by the ICCG 2015 Organizing Team to sign onto the Palestinian Academic and Cultural Boycott and the broader Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel. The ICCG Steering Committee also unanimously supported the resolution. (Anna Secor)

### **IGU Moscow Regional Conference, Moscow, Russia, 17-21 August 2015**

Following Krakow, the IGU Regional Conference was held in Moscow from August 17th to 21st, 2015. CPG organized twelve sessions under eight themes many of which were well attended. Current and former members of the CPG Steering Committee also gave keynote and thematic lectures in addition to our award winning ceremony. In the business meeting, the plan for the CPG pre-conference in Guangzhou/Shenzhen 2016 and other issues were discussed.

The 2015 IGU Regional Conference was held at Lomonosov State University of Moscow, Russia to commemorate the 170th anniversary of the Russian Geographical Society. Our long-time colleague, Vladimir Kolosov acted as a representative of the Local Organizing Committee and led the Conference to great success. During the Conference, CPG organized the following themed sessions:

- Bordering Eurasia: Politics, power, and political geography (chaired by Paul Richardson and Akihiro Iwashita)
- Borders and illegalities (chaired by Adriana Dorfman and Elena dell'Agnese)
- The critical geopolitics of food (chaired by Elena dell'Agnese)
- For Kropotkin (chaired by Anthony Ince and Simon Springer)
- Gender activism in Asia: Peoples, places and politics (with the Commission on Gender and Geography, chaired by Shirlena Huang and Chih Yuan Woon)
- Problems of contemporary political geography and geopolitics (chaired by Inocent Moyo and Christoher C. Nshimbi)
- Rethinking what (political) geography ought to be: Theories, histories, and practices of geography and geopolitics as instruments of peace (with the Commission on the History of Geography, chaired by Takashi Yamazaki and Alexey Postnikov)
- Russian geopolitics and the former Soviet countries (chaired by Takashi Yamazaki)

Many of the sessions were well attended and had active discussion though some CPG sessions were held in parallel. In addition to these sessions, former and current members of the CPG Steering Committee also gave the following keynote and thematic lectures, marking the important role (political) geography plays in understanding contemporary world affairs:

- Alexander Murphy (USA): Coping with a fast-changing, unstable world: Opportunities and challenges for geography

- John O'Loughlin (USA): Climate change and conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Vladimir Kolosov (Russia): Russian geography: Specifics, achievements, problems
- Elena dell'Agnese (Italy): From "pasta" to "poi": towards a critical geography of food
- Takashi Yamazaki (Japan): The spatial control of "vices" in the U.S. military outpost: Value contradictions in a long-term stationing on foreign soil. This lecture was sponsored by the journal *Geopolitics* published by Taylor & Francis (see [www.tandfonline.com/fgeo20](http://www.tandfonline.com/fgeo20)).

During the conference, the Russian Geographical Society awarded John O'Loughlin (University of Colorado at Boulder, USA) a Semyonov gold medal for his distinguished research in political geography on the former Soviet Union.

For this conference, CPG decided to offer limited funding (two grants of \$500) to assist two postgraduate students and/or early career scientists from low-income countries in attending the conference. The definition of low-income countries was based on the list of such countries prepared by the Local Organizing Committee (see <http://igu2015.ru/grants>). Applicants were first to submit an abstract for participation in the conference. To be eligible for a CPG grant, the abstract was to be reviewed, accepted and placed in a CPG-related session within the IGU 2015 Scientific Programme. Applicants were then to submit a full paper to both of CPG Co-Chairs (Virginie Mamadouh and Takashi Yamazaki) via email by 31 March 2015. The results of the review were notified by the end of April. After the review of the applied papers, a grant was awarded to Deepika Saraswat (India) in US dollar cash after her presentation at the conference venue. The title of her excellent paper is "Regional convergence of Russian and Iranian geopolitics: Changing contours of Eurasia."

(Takashi Yamazaki)

### **International Scientific-Practical Conference 'The Spatial Transformation of the Urban Environment in the Development of Post-Industrial Society' and Socratic XI Reading 'Jean Gottmann as a Visionary and a Critic (on the centenary of his birth),' Kaliningrad, Russia, 23-26 August 2015**

After the IGU 2015 Regional Conference in Moscow, the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University (IKBFU) brought together a group of Russian and foreign academics (from Italy, France, the Netherlands, Poland and the USA) at the Institute of Environmental Management, Territorial Development and Urban Construction, to discuss political and urban geography. Special attention was given to the work of cosmopolitan geographer Jean Gottmann (born in Kharkov in the Russian Empire in 1915) who has been an innovative and prolific urban and political geographer in France, the USA and the UK. The IKBFU also organized a field trip in the National Park Curonian Spit and a visit of the city of Kaliningrad. The photo shows the participants at the feet of the statue of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) who was teaching philosophy – and geography – in Königsberg. (Virginie Mamadouh)

### **International Workshop "And So Europe Dehumanized Itself: Mediterranean Geographies in Action," Palermo, Italy, 10-11 November 2015**

When and how has Europe dehumanized itself?

And how is possible to recover that alleged humanity in a present of spatial and racial hierarchization?

What kind of new humanism and new places for life are we asked to imagine now?

These were key questions at the two-day symposium organized by Giulia de Spuches,

Professor of Geography at the University of Palermo. Bringing together academics and activists from Europe and beyond (Tunisia, Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Ireland, United Kingdom, Spain), the purpose of the workshop was to critically analyse, challenge and decentre the vision of European spectacular borders by re-enhancing a particular attention to the Mediterranean frontier, to its imagery and to its immobilized and fractured bodies and hopes.

Reading productively across the more than thirteen interventions proposed, shows a clear intention manifested by convenors and participants not only to linger to a “historical” question – what made such ‘things’ as dehumanization, controlled migration and borderization possible – but also to address the “political” question: what might be possible once deconstructed several apparatuses disciplining our ways of seeing, living and acting in a fenced world?

Indeed, the special nature of the ‘call for action’ that was circulated in early July, by replacing a more usual ‘call for papers’, has made necessary a political positioning in addressing migration issues that concern geographers not only as social scientists but also as privileged human beings. A condition summarized in the tragic awareness that if we are all human, it is time to deal with the fact that some are more mortal than others. In the two-day workshop, three sessions have been organized plus the discussion of a Manifesto, each one in a different place. Due to the itinerant nature of the conference, the four location chosen dressed a symbolic importance in their relation to the Mediterranean Sea, as underlined by Giulia de Spuches in her position paper. Participants moved from Sovraintendenza del Mare to Fonderia Oretea in the first day and from the Coast Guard operating base to Palermo’s Harbour in the second.

It is also worth considering that presenters have been divided in couple, when possible, in order to dialogically discuss through their presentations. Due to the interdisciplinary character the workshop, several different critical positions have been heard, disparate but not incompatible.

In this spirit, drawing on different academic backgrounds, the first session was aimed to discuss and deconstruct the geographical imagination (modern, colonial and postcolonial) of the Mediterranean borderland through the visual mastery and literary representation of spaces and (in)human bodies. More specifically, Olivier Thomas Kramsch (University of Nijmegen) focused on the travel literature concerning the Southern Italy by exposing the othering process and the idea of humanity therein underpinned, while Gabriele Proglia (University of Tunis ‘El Manar’) revealed how the distorted representation of the former Italian colonies and their inhabitants has shaped the contemporary mental imagery on migrants, requiring a critical attempt to decolonize our gaze.

Of greatest impact have been the other two presentations of the morning, followed by an intense discussion among the audience. Alessandra Bonazzi (University of Bologna) reasoned on the link between liquidable/liquid humanity considering that the human hierarchy exposed by migrant bodies depends on the neat division between the land and the sea, which should be replaced by a fluid geo-ontology aimed to fight spatial dialectics and identity binaries. The visual frame of the sea has been then provocatively deconstructed by Chiara Giubilaro (University of Milano Bicocca) who tried to unfold the scopic regime in which the power of contemporary migratory aesthetics, especially in the proliferation of shipwreck images, works and affects us as spectators.

The second session was very heterogeneous in the critical voices brought together and marked by several points of fervent discussion. The focus on the ‘minimal’ human rights of asylum seekers, their problematic representation over time and their economic disposability was addressed by Alessandra Sciarba (University of Palermo), Claire Dorrity (University College Cork) and Francesco Lo Piccolo (University of Palermo). These interventions made it

explicit how is hard to escape from the grip of both the criminilazitation and the humanitarianism in addressing migration issues. Then, in an intriguing way, Fabio Amato (University of Napoli-L'Orientale) suggested to normalize and historicize the take on migration, taking it away from the logic of emergency and trying to understand it as a set of societal structural conditions. Finally, the need to address a postcolonial education system in Italy and in Europe was foregrounded by Giuseppe Burgio (University of Palermo) in his intervention. Some of these points have been touched later in the evening with the screening of Asmarina, a documentary directed by Alan Maglio e Medhin Paolos. This occasion gave a chance to tell the experiences of the Eritrean and Ethiopian communities in Italy, offering a counterpoint to a too linear and smooth narration of the Italian national identity. Both one of the directors and some members of the Habesha community in Palermo were present.

The following day, the third session was opened by Elena dell'Agnese (University of Milano Bicocca), Honorary member and current Vice President of the IGU. Her consideration extended the criticalities faced by contemporary border studies both to the practices and to the theories that they aim to explore. The challenge was taken up by Paolo Novak (SOAS University of London), who proposed in his intervention to use the inherent contradictions of border policies to develop progressive border politics.

A call for greater collaboration between activists and researchers on the challenges of borders securitization was especially highlighted by Giulia di Carlo (University of Deusto), while the last contributions were case-studies. Janna Völpel (University of Berlin) investigated how Ceuta inhabitants negotiate their conditional relation to European Union as a tactic to re-humanize geopolitical studies. Paolo Cuttitta (University of Amsterdam) gave a timely overview of the independent actors involved in rescuing shipwreck victims at sea, in order to understand how and if they can influence or disempower governmental actors.

To get a better idea of how institutional actors work, at the end of the session it was possible to visit the Coast Guard control room to look closely at the instruments used to check the transit of all vessels in Italian territorial waters and how the coordination between the various actors responsible for the rescue of the migrants operates.

Finally, the last afternoon of the workshop was devoted to the discussion of drawing up a manifesto, emphasizing a call to action for the academic world in order to open to a critical space of enunciation where to expose and challenge dominant discourse on migration and borders routinized in the academia as well as in the public realm. After having outlined several key-words as guidelines for the Manifesto, the desire to build a research network for further dialogue and debate was also underlined. This also speaks to the way in which one should conceive nowadays the role of critical scholars who need to analyse and interpret the world in order to pursue 'an agenda' for the present. (Laura Lo Presti)

### **C. Future events (more detailed information about future events can be found on the IGU CPG website)**

**International Conference "Contemporary crisis and changes: Geoeconomical and geopolitical approaches," University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne (URCA), May 26 and 27, 2016 (in English and French)**

For several years, the world seems to have entered a period of high instability. Economically, the "subprime mortgage crisis" appeared in 2007 in the USA and spread planet wide in all areas of activity. In 2015, economic difficulties still persist (growth stagnation in developed countries and lower growth in emerging markets, explosion of unemployment, deindustrialisation and offshoring, market tensions in China, the euro zone, etc.). In

geopolitical terms, tension spots have also multiplied (Saharian and Sahelian Africa, Middle East, Far East and Eastern Europe) leading to strong migratory waves while power poles seem to be redeploying between the USA, China and other regional powers.

The aim of the conference "Contemporary Crisis and changes" is to question these contemporary upheavals through both a geo-economic and a geopolitical reading. The conference will provide elements of analysis and compare them especially with contemporary representations of globalisation emphasizing in particular the logic of closure that seems to characterize this phenomenon.

The organizers of the conference "Crisis and changes" wish to highlight three main themes.

1. Since 2007-2008, is the World facing a "crisis" or is it experiencing a very unprecedented "change", heralding major and chain upheavals? In this regard, it will be the occasion to debate and choose the most relevant words to describe this crisis and/or these changes shaping another World.
2. The "closure" (isolationism, more or less latent forms of protectionism, competing logics of blocks, building of border barriers, etc.) seems to be one of the manifestations of the current situation. Is it one of the new dominant world logics? In which way do these "closure" processes, always relative, refer to an asymmetrical concept and create imbalances?
3. What links can be established between the economic and geopolitical fields as part of contemporary world change? What about the overlap between these two fields? Is the paradigm of the "end of territory" (and so of geopolitics), often associated with globalisation and liberalism, still relevant? Is the current situation challenging the most common mental representations of globalisation?

Answers should be given at all scales (from local to global) and considering any type of actors.

The conference is organized by François Bost and Stéphane Rosière, Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne, EA 2076 Habiter. With the support of the Commissions « Industrie et emploi » and « Géographie politique et géopolitique » of the Comité National Français de Géographie (CNFG) and of the Commission on Political Geography of the IGU-UGI. The conference website is:

<http://www.univ-reims.fr/site/laboratoire-labellise/habiter-amenagement-et-geographie-politique/les-activites-de-recherche/axe-espace-politique/colloque-crisis-et-mutations-mai-2016,18852,32229.html>

### **15th Border Regions in Transition (BRIT) Conference "Cities, States and Borders: From the Local to the Global," Hamburg (Germany) - Sønderborg (Denmark), May 17-20, 2016**

The objective of the 15th Border Regions in Transition (BRIT) Conference organized by the University of Southern Denmark, the University of Hamburg and the HafenCity University Hamburg is to rethink the complicated relationships that bind cities and state borders. The conference will offer a unique opportunity to explore the collaborative or competitive strategies of this odd couple under the current circumstances of globalization. The conference website is:

[http://www.sdu.dk/en/Om SDU/Institutter centre/I Graenseforskning/Events/BRIT+2016](http://www.sdu.dk/en/Om%20SDU/Institutter%20centre/I%20Graenseforskning/Events/BRIT+2016)

### **2016 IGU Geomorphology and Society Commission, Island Study Commission, and Political Geography Joint Symposium, Taipei and Matsu, Taiwan, 25-30 June 2016**

The conference organizers welcome proposals for papers and panels from a wide range of disciplines and theoretical schools in Geomorphology and Society, Island Study, and Political Geography. They invite researchers, academics, community and business interests, government authorities and interest groups to participate in the conference. The event offers an opportunity to present papers and posters, discuss issues and developments on a wide range of subjects, and identify common themes affecting geomorphology and society, islands, and political geography throughout the world.

### **CPG preconference in Guangzhou, August 18-20, 2016**

Prior to the above-mentioned IGC in Beijing, the CPG preconference will be held on August 18-20 at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, China followed by a field trip to the Shenzhen/Hong Kong border region. The title of the preconference is "International Forum on Frontiers of Political Geography" the main objective of which is to promote the "understanding" of political geography in China and narrow the gap in the level of such understanding between the West and the East. The preconference will have three thematic sessions on "East-West Dialogues on Frontiers in Political Geography," "New Dynamisms of Borders in Asia," and "Micro Territoriality and Urban Governance." After the preconference, participants can travel to Beijing by train, which will take about 8 hours. Accommodation and ground transportation will be arranged by the local organizer. The deadline for registration will be March 31, 2016. Those interested should submit an abstract/paper to the local organizer by May 31, 2016. More information can be found on the preconference website at <http://politicalsysu.com/>

### **The 33rd IGC in Beijing, August 21-25, 2016**

The 33rd International Geographical Congress (IGC) will be held in Beijing, China from August 21st to 25th, 2016. The theme of the Congress is "Shaping Our Harmonious Worlds," which highlights today's common pursuit for harmony between humankind and nature, between environment and society, and for harmonious approaches to the world's hazards and conflicts. The call for session proposals was closed at the end of September. CPG will organize the following 13 session proposals. The summaries of these sessions are downloadable from the Congress website at <http://www.igc2016.org/dct/page/70060> The deadline for abstract submission will be March 31, 2016. Abstracts can be submitted through the Congress website at <http://www.igc2016.org/dct/page/70047>

1. Sociocultural Encounters in Geography: Borders, Borderlands, Grassroots Non-State Actors and the Southern African Integration Project (proposed by Christopher Changwe Nshimbi and Inocent Moyo)
2. The Eurasian Pacific: Geopolitical Moments and Unfulfilled Promise (Sergei Golunov and Akihiro Iwashita)
3. Scales of Politics and Policies in Latin American Borders (Adriana Dorfman and Alejandro Benedetti)
4. Autochthony, Allochthony and Belonging: Migration, Xenophobia and Social Cohesion in the Southern African Region (Inocent Moyo and Christopher Changwe Nshimbi)
5. Rethinking Carceral Geography in 'Harmonised Societies' (Claudio Minca and Chin-Ee Ong)
6. Politics of Environment and People (Anjana Mathur Jagmohan)
7. The Transformation of Political Space and Prospects for New Governance in the

- Contemporary Phase of Globalization (Takashi Yamazaki)
8. A Reexamination of Militarization and “the Space of Occupation”: A Comparison Perspective (Takashi Yamazaki and Rassem Khamaisi)
  9. Changing Geopolitical Imaginations of Asia (Alexander Murphy)
  10. China’s Geopolitical (Re)Positionings in a Changing World (Chih Yuan Woon)
  11. China Looks South: Development, Infrastructure and Culture on the Border with Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam (Jussi Laine and Victor Konrad)
  12. Postcolonial Literary Geographies (Patricia Noxolo)
  13. Conversations between Gender and Political Geographies Key Concepts, Methods and Themes (with the Commission on Gender and Geography, Virginie Mamadouh and Marianne Blidon)

### ***3. Networking and communication***

#### **A. Collaboration with other IGU Commissions and Task Forces during 2012-2016**

The Commission on Political Geography worked with other IGU Commissions such as Gender and History of Geography Commissions in order to organise a group of joint sessions in the IGU Regional Conferences in Kyoto, Krakow, and Moscow and the IGC in Beijing. Hopefully, a strongest collaboration will follow.

#### **B. Collaboration with other international, intergovernmental, and inter- and multi-disciplinary groups in 2012-2016**

The Commission on Political Geography has been actively collaborating with other international research groups, such as BRIT (Border Regions in Transition), ABS (Association of Borderlands Studies), Società Geografica Italiana, EuGeo, AAG (Association of American Geography) Political Geography Study Group, IPSA (International Political Science Association) Research Committee 15 on Political and Cultural Geography, and many others, in order to co-organise and co-sponsor conference and seminars.

#### **C. Cooperative efforts with ISSC (International Social Science Council) and with ICSU (the International Council for Science) programs.**

The Commission has brought the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), initiated by the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB) and adopted December 2012 during the ASCB Annual Meeting in San Francisco. The Commission was pleased to see that the Executive Committee has decided to sign the Declaration on behalf of the IGU.

### ***4. Publications***

#### **A. Newsletters, special journal issues, and books published in 2012-2016.**

On the Commission website are available the six newsletters edited in 2012 and 2016 (n. 16-21).

In the same span of time, some of the papers presented in IGU CPG sponsored or organized conferences have been published or submitted to different journals and are now in the referee



process.

The AAG 2013 session Authors-meet-critics session, organized by the commission together with PGSG led to the publication of the Review Forum “Reading John Agnew and Luca Muscarà’s Making Political Geography”, by Virginie Mamadouh, Elena dell’Agnese, Takashi Yamazaki, Colin Flint, Natalie Koch, Luca Muscarà and John Agnew, *Political Geography*, 38 (2014) pp. 46-56.

As far as the second edition of the Border Crossing Seminar is concerned, seminar papers and students' final works will be published in an annual e-book with the imprint of the University of Milano-Bicocca.

The Post conference fieldtrip to Okinawa has been accompanied by an e-booklet, which is downloadable from: <http://www.lit.osaka-cu.ac.jp/user/yamataka/CPG-Okinawa.pdf> (2.9MB).

Claudio Minca's plenary paper for the CPG lecture at the Krakow conference was published as “Geographies of the Camp” in *Political Geography* 49 (2015), pp. 74-83.

Papers presented at the IGU CPG pre-conference at Lodz were published in the first and second volumes of *Region and Regionalism* No. 12 in 2015. They are downloadable from [http://geopol.geo.uni.lodz.pl/?page\\_id=669](http://geopol.geo.uni.lodz.pl/?page_id=669)

Some of the papers presented at “The International Conference on Geopolitics in Changing Southeast Asia” are planned to be published as two books *China’s Borderlands and Landscapes* and *China’s Geopolitics and Southeast Asia* by Palgrave Macmillan.

The proceedings of the “Dark Tourism Workshop” was published as Anton Gosar, Miha Koderman and Mariana Rodela eds. *Dark Tourism: Post-WWI Destinations of Human Tragedies and Opportunities for Tourism Development* (Koper, 2015), which is downloadable from: <http://www.hippocampus.si/ISBN/978-961-6963-28-2.pdf>

Proceedings for “First Brazilian Congress of Political Geography, Geopolitics and Territorial Management” are planned for publication.

## **5. Archival Contributions**

All the CPG newsletters published from 2012-2016 have been sent to the IGU Secretary.

## **6. Continuation**

### **A. The name of the Commission**

Political Geography

### **B. The mission of the Commission**

The Commission on Political Geography (CPG) of IGU-UGI aims at encouraging geographical research on various dimensions of the connections between power, politics, and spaces, and at stimulating the exchange of findings and insights among political geographers from different countries. It is also focused on the analysis of the connections between political geographies (that is all the discursive praxis pertaining with the representation of the world in its political organisation) and the making of the world itself.

### **C. A tentative list of new steering committee members from 2016-2020**

Three current members have fulfilled three terms

Takashi Yamazaki (Japan) (co-chair)

Alexandru Ilies (Romania)

Paul Reuber (Germany)

Remaining members

Virginie Mamadouh (The Netherlands) (co-chair)

Simon Dalby (Canada),

Adriana Dorfman (Brazil),

Alexander Murphy (US),

Stéphane Rosière (France)

James Sidaway (Singapore)

Jan Wendt (Poland)

Oren Yftachel (Israel)

The chairs aim to recruit three new members in the coming months, aiming at a similar geographical balance and a better gender balance.

Likewise the group of Young Members will be renewed.

### **D. A summary of the work plan for the Commission for the 2016-2020 period**

CPG will plan to organize sessions for the IGU Thematic Conference on “Geographies of Peace” in La Paz, 24-25 April 2017, the IGU Regional Conference in Quebec City, 6-10 August 2018, and the 34th IGC in Istanbul 2020. Other than these IGU-related conferences, CPG will co-organize or sponsor conferences and seminars with international organizations such as BRIT (Border Regions in Transition), ABS (Association of Borderlands Studies), Società Geografica Italiana, EuGeo, AAG (Association of American Geography) Political Geography Study Group, IPSA (International Political Science Association) Research Committee 15 on Political and Cultural Geography, and many others for the 2016-2020 period.