

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 geo-graphies (that is all the discursive praxis pertaining with the representation of the world in its political organisation) and the making of the world itself.

Chair's Column

Beyond the Orbanization of Europe? Political geographers and global mutual understanding

The fifth EUGEO Conference took place this summer in Budapest. EUGEO is the Association of Geographical Societies in Europe and as such a cluster of members of the International Geographical Union (IGU). The event took place from August 30 to September 2 2015, just a few weeks after the Regional Conference of the IGU in Moscow. Among the many geographical conferences last year, the event is memorable, because at the moment hundreds of geographers, including political geographers, gathered in Budapest, the city became the symbol of the outbreak of what we now routinely call *the European migrant crisis*.

About one million migrants have arrived illegal in Europe in 2015 (twice the estimated number of illegal border crossings between Mexico and the United States) risking their lives on faulty and overcrowded boats and marching through the Balkans to the country they thought the fittest for their future: Germany.

Unlike Latin American immigrants to the United States who make a living in the informal economy and hope eventually to regularize their situation in the US, migrants to Europe apply for asylum. However the member states of the European Union have agreed that asylum seekers are allowed to apply only once for asylum, namely in the first Member State they arrive when they enter the EU – and Schengen means open internal borders but also an information database. This policy generate great inequalities as indeed their evaluation of asylum applications and foremost the conditions of reception such as the (length of the) procedures, the accommodation and the care provided and the rules regarding access to work, education, family reunification and eventually citizenship are extremely different. Moreover, the geographies of these applications is particularly uneven: countries at the external border of the EU are confronted with the bulk of the arrivals: Spain in the past, later Italy, now Greece, possibly Poland tomorrow if things escalate in Ukraine.

Contact us at:

Virginie Mamadouh
v.d.mamadouh@uva.nl
 and /or
 Takashi Yamazaki
yamataka@lit.osaka-cu.ac.jp



<http://igu-online.org/>

CPG Website

<http://www.igu-cpg.unimib.it/>

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/456054597763023/?fref=ts>

Greece – under severe austerity policies since the financial crisis – was and is completely unable to cope with the flows of arrivals, and even more importantly migrants are unwilling to apply for asylum there, preferring to travel further to countries that they see as countries of opportunities.

The upwelling numbers of migrants in 2015 was directly caused by the tragic events in Syria, the repression of the regime of Assad and the campaign of Daesh (Islamic State in Syria and Iraq) for a Caliphate, and the poor life conditions of the millions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey (in the latter case exacerbated by the internal war in Eastern Turkey).

One of the game changing moments in the media coverage and the public debate about and the political response to the urgency of the situation was early September 2015 the events in Keleti Station, the Eastern railway terminal of Budapest, where migrants get trapped on their way to Germany.

The proximity in time and space of this event and the EUGEO conference legitimates some remarks about the role of (political) geographers in the media coverage and public debates and the associated moral panics. I was not attending the event but I was struck by the different echoes I got from colleagues because they reflected different perceptions of the events. Some were affected by this unlikely proximity. Some were impressed by what they saw at the Keleti station and appalled by the lack of respect of European and international laws regarding human rights, asylum and children. Others were upset by the apparent lack of attention for the events within the conference, colleagues presenting their papers in their workshops as scheduled – business as usual – no ad hoc panels or discussions organized. Others were stroke by the power of the media, that they saw blowing up the urgency at the station, as if the city was on fire, while things were about normal in the rest of Budapest.

While the media and the public opinion seem to discover the harsh reality of the migration flows across the Mediterranean, the images and the reports did not brought ay nothing was new for many (political) geographers. The media attention for the human distress of the journeys of the migrants at Keleti Station, and on the last day of the Conference for the children caught in these dangerous journeys, with the iconic picture of the body of Alan Kurdi a Syrian Kurdish three years old boy born in Kobani, who drown and was washed up on the beach near Bodrum – once the Saint Tropez of Turkey, now one of the portals to the hell of criminally organized sea crossings – was long overdue.

Indeed many (political) geographers have questioned the border making of the European Union since the turn of the century – as well as similar policies in Australia, Canada or the United States. To name only one project I would like to recall the early attempt to provide an overview of the Mediterranean graveyard and the geography of the EU border policies on a map drawn in 2004 by Olivier Clochard and Philippe Rekacewicz for *Le Monde diplomatique* (and the many updates see for an overview <http://visionscarto.net/mourir-aux-portes-de-l-europe> and <http://neocarto.hypotheses.org/1370> and *Atlas des migrants en Europe: Géographie critique des politiques migratoires* (2012)). Others worked with the notions of the EU as a gated community or a global apartheid (visa) regime, stressed the offshoring and outsourcing of border controls, focused on the role of mobile borders and followed the very journeys of the migrants.

With hindsight we can say that the events at Keleti Station were particularly important because they announced a movement of people unprecedented in Europe, and the collapse of EU policies – if not the EU itself, as some speculate.

The Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his government seize the opportunity to look tough and proactive and the real defender of EU Schengen agreements by building fences at its border with Serbia (a non-EU, non-Schengen state) and Croatia (EU but not yet Schengen) but also with Slovenia (EU and Schengen). Polarization intensified, at all scale levels, between those prioritizing the respect of humanitarian international laws and values and the interests of arriving migrants, and those prioritizing the rights of the erstwhile residents to continuity and protection, when they fear competition for jobs in times of precarization of labour and scarce resources in times of austerity measures, and foremost the importation of the very cultural values and political attitudes that the newcomers try to flee. At the EU level it was Western vs. Eastern (or old vs. new member states), at the national level pro-EU vs neo-nationalist parties, and at the local level volunteers trying to ease the arrivals and natalists trying to defend their neighbourhoods against change – sometimes through violent ways.

The German Chancellor Angela Merkel made a stand to prioritize humanitarian values and to welcome Syrian refugees, unintendedly fostering a huge movement of people that try their luck in Europe hoping to pass for Syrians and a boost of perilous border crossings. Whether plans to arrange safer ways to organize asylum applications will be implemented or whether the new year will bring an even more massive exodus across the Mediterranean remains to be seen. By early 2016 even the most welcoming governments (Germany, Sweden)

introduced internal border controls and started to send back large numbers of migrants that turned out not to be genuine asylum seekers.

As the control of EU internal borders become routine, some have talked of the Orbanization of Europe after the Hungarian Prime Minister Orbán – a phrase also used in another context nowadays to point at the worrisome development in Poland where the government elected in November took several measures to reduce press freedom and the constitutional state, that echoes earlier illiberal moves of the Hungarian government.

Cologne – incidentally the location of the last International Geographical Conference of the IGU in 2012 – became synonym of another tipping point in the public debate in Europe. The sexual harassments of hundreds of women during New Year Eve (in Cologne and in other German cities) in a crowd of North African and Western Asian young men has prompted a new moral panic of the protection of “our women” including the more than unhappy reaction of the police of Cologne that first tries to silence the events and the Mayor of Cologne who suggested women to make sure to keep strangers at arm’s length, blaming women for being harassed in public space. The reactions to these events, where it has proven very difficult to trace individual perpetrators, demonstrate the complicated connections between geopolitical imagination and human security and the ease by which between fears are instrumentalized in.

Could make a difference as political geographers in times of obvious collective disarray? That is: when the media and the opinion makes, but even more the policy makers and those who implement them daily, at the border, in reception camps or in the streets so obviously have no clue what to do. Surely political geographers are just people. They do not necessarily share political values, they surely have different ideas about what is happening and what should be done and they certainly not support one political stand. Some have been very active as volunteers, working with newcomers, with or without trying to involve their network in the academic community. Others make other choices.

Nevertheless as academics we have the responsibility to share knowledge and insights and to debunk false common sense statements. For example the political debates in European member states (and elsewhere – think of the statements of several president candidates for the US presidency about closing the borders of the countries to all Syrians or Muslims) are cursed with simplistic categories, outdated taken for granted knowledge and delusive geographical imaginations. At the time of writing, both leaders of the Dutch Labour Party (for long a defender of migrants rights) the member of the Commission Frans Timmermans and the parliamentary leader Diederik Samsom stress that 60% are no asylum seekers but “gelukszoekers” (happiness diggers a word that has become very pejorative in the Dutch public debate) that should be sent back immediately. There is a great need for the problematization of seemingly simple binaries that blur the hard realities in the countries neighbouring the EU, for new ways of talking about the interconnections between here and there and possible ways to promote cooperation (and mutual aid as Kropotkin would say).

2016 has been declared by the international scientific organizations the International Year of Global Understanding (IYGU) , an initiative of the IGU. The IYGU intends to emphasize the link between local, everyday actions and global problems such as climate change and food security. For political geographers this could be an opportunity to contribute to a better comprehension of the connections between sustainability challenges of all kinds (that is also demographical, social, cultural and political ones) in different places and to look for different ways to deal with them – possibly not through global but through mutual understanding. The many political geography, geopolitics and border conferences scheduled over the world in the coming year provide plenty of opportunities to foster such dialogue and mutual understanding – as will our 2017 Peace Conference.

Virginie Mamadough, Co-chair of CPG

Call for Application

CPG Travel Grant

For the IGC Beijing, CPG will 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 is based on the list of such countries prepared by the Local Organizing Committee (we employ the list of the IGU Moscow Conference at <http://igu2015.ru/grants>). Applicants are first to submit an abstract for participation in the Congress. To be eligible for a CPG grant, the abstract is to be reviewed, accepted and placed in a CPG-related session within the IGC Scientific Programme. Applicants were then to submit **a 2-page summary of the accepted paper** to both of CPG Co-Chairs (Virginie Mamadouh and Takashi Yamazaki) via email by **March 31, 2016**. The results of the review will be notified by **April 15** (the deadline for early registration). A grant will be awarded to the awardees in US dollar cash after their presentation at the Congress venue.

Past Events

Visiting Moscow and Dmitrov for Kropotkin

Simon Springer (Department of Geography, University of Victoria, Canada) contributes this short essay about his visit to Moscow and Dmitrov. He organized a session titled "For Kropotkin" with Anthony Ince for the IGU Moscow Regional Conference and made a trip to the Kropotkin museum in Dmitrov.



This past August, along with several other anarchist geographers, I had the wonderful opportunity to travel to Moscow for the IGU's Regional Conference. The event represented an ideal occasion and location to celebrate the life and work of Russia's most well-known geographer and anarchist, Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921). Moscow is of course the city of Kropotkin's birth and accordingly, along with my co-organizer, Anthony Ince (Cardiff), we decided to organize a session called very simply "For Kropotkin" in his honor. Kropotkin is most famous for his notion of 'mutual aid', which insists that cooperation and reciprocity are vitally important for the evolution of any given species, but also fundamental to human organization and our survival on the planet. Born into the Russian aristocracy, Kropotkin's politics saw him forgo his princely inheritance. His ethical convictions were rooted in a desire to tear down all hierarchies and promote anarchism as a path towards greater equality and social justice. Anarchism, as Kropotkin knew well, is not violence and chaos, as is so often caricatured, but rather a philosophy and ideal that insists upon our voluntary association, self-

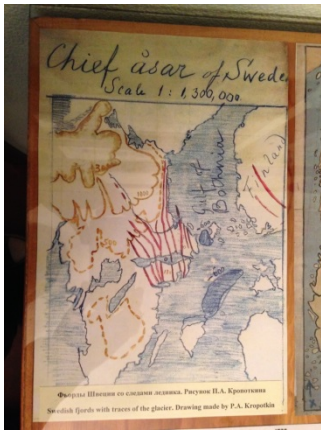
management, and horizontal organization free from all forms of authority, coercion, and domination. As a man of incredible moral fortitude, Kropotkin folded this sense of anarchism into his geographical thought, arguing that "In our time of wars, of national self-conceit, of national jealousies and hatreds ably nourished by people who pursue their own egotistic, personal or class interests, geography must be... a means of dissipating these prejudices and of creating other feelings more worthy of humanity" (Kropotkin, Peter 1885. "What Geography Ought to Be." *The Nineteenth Century*. V.18, pp. 940-56)

In addition to Anthony and myself, participants who joined us in Moscow included Ruth Kinna (Loughborough University), Federico Ferretti (University College Dublin), Lee Dugatkin (University of Louisville), and Sergey Saitanov (International Slavonic Institute). The sessions proved to be well attended, where the papers that were presented generated some really good discussion. Expectedly perhaps, there was even some controversy as divergent understandings between those committed to anarchist ideas were challenged by those who did not fully appreciate or understand the politics of anarchism. This was unsurprising insofar as despite the foundational and vitally important work that Kropotkin laid down over a century ago, anarchist geographies continue to remain underrepresented in our discipline. So while not all of the audience members were sold on the utility of anarchism in contemporary geographical thought, and challenges were raised, the participants were able to offer greater clarification to what an anarchist geographical approach might look like, and why it is important to consider alternatives in a world where state-centricity and hierarchical modes of thought are taken for granted. The conversation proved to be lively and thought provoking, which was ultimately an excellent opportunity for everyone involved to think critically about the future of anarchist thought within geographical scholarship.

Aside from participating in the conference session, members of the group also travelled to Dmitrov to visit the Kropotkin Museum. This was a highlight of our time in Russia, as the curators of the



(Left: Simon)



museum had put so much thought and effort into making our visit meaningful and enjoyable. They had an entire day's worth of activities planned for us, where the depth of their knowledge of Kropotkin's life and the influence of his work was unparalleled. We were shown old photographs, maps that Kropotkin had drawn by hand, and old letters that he wrote to friends and colleagues. The museum itself is located in the final home of Kropotkin and his wife Sophie, and in addition to a guided tour of the museum and the town, we were also treated to tea, traditional Russian cookies, and delicious red apples, a local favourite. This was easily one of the most inspiring opportunities I've ever had as a scholar, and it is a memory that I will cherish for as long as I live. Some of the group also took the opportunity to visit Kropotkin's grave at Novodevichy Cemetery in Moscow to pay our respects to a brilliant man who has offered so much to the intellectual landscape of geographical thought.

All in all, the trip to Moscow was an amazing and unforgettable experience. I offer my sincere thanks to the IGU for choosing such a beautiful and vibrant city for this conference. Most importantly, I want to offer my gratitude to the Commission on Political Geography, and particularly Takashi Yamazaki (Osaka City University) and Virginie Mamadouh (University of Amsterdam) for recognizing what a unique opportunity this was for the furtherance of anarchist geographies by agreeing to sponsor and promote this session on Kropotkin.

(Simon Springer)

Other Past Events

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

□landformable the ABS

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)

7th International Conference on Critical Geography (ICCG 2015) Precarious Radicalism on Shifting Grounds: Towards a Politics of Possibility, Ramallah, Palestine, July 26-30, 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 ICGG 2015 Organizing Team to sign onto the Palestinian Academic and Cultural Boycott and the broader Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel. The ICGG Steering Committee also unanimously supported the resolution.

(Anna Secor)

International Workshop “And So Europe Dehumanized Itself: Mediterranean Geographies in Action,” Palermo, Italy, November 10-11, 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 Sovrintendenza 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 Scirba (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 criminilization 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)



(Third session of the conference at the Coast Guard headquarters)

Future Events

The 33rd IGC in Beijing and the CPG preconference in Guangzhou 2016

The 33rd International Geographical Congress (IGC) will be held in Beijing, China from August 21st to 25th, 2016. The CPG preconference will also be held in Guangzhou prior to the IGC Beijing.

Approved CPG Sessions

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 **February 15, 2016**. Abstracts can be submitted through the Congress website at <http://www.igc2016.org/dct/page/70047>. For any information about the Congress, please look at <http://www.igc2016.org/dct/page/1>. Those who have any questions about CPG sessions can ask CPG Co-chairs (Virginie Mamadouh and/or Takashi Yamazaki). We look forward to seeing as many participants as possible in Beijing.

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)

CPG Preconference in Guangzhou

Prior to the above-mentioned IGC in Beijing, the CPG preconference will be held on August 18-21 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**. For more information, please visit the preconference website at <http://politicalsysu.com/>



*CPG Sponsored Conference***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

<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>

*Other Future Events***Invitation à co-construire les « Rencontres de géopolitique critique » L'Afrique et le postcolonial : quels apports de la géopolitique? Grenoble, du 16 au 19 mars 2016 (in French)**

L'Afrique est un continent pris dans des histoires et des géographies postcoloniales complexes, qui donnent à voir des rapports de pouvoir territoriaux intriqués avec le capitalisme global contemporain. Pour dénouer les fils de ces relations spatiales et temporelles qui produisent de nombreuses injustices et inégalités, la géopolitique critique peut être un outil particulièrement pertinent pour construire des discours alternatifs sur le continent africain.

Les **Rencontres de géopolitique critique** se dérouleront du **16 au 19 mars 2016** et prendront la forme de tables rondes et de débats pour impliquer les personnes concernées en premier lieu par les situations de conflits afin d'envisager les différentes échelles concernées et sortir d'un nationalisme méthodologique.

Ainsi à titre d'exemple, voici plusieurs champs thématiques sur lesquels nous souhaitons échanger : toute autre proposition ne peut être reçue qu'avec intérêt.

- « Les nouvelles formes de conflits et de guerres »
- « Frontières et migrations : repenser les liens nord / sud et sud / nord »
- « Accaparement de terres et économie de rentes »
- « Les politiques de la traduction et du langage : écrits et oraux »
- « De la colonialité des esprits à la décolonisation des savoirs »

Cette initiative collaboratrice est née de discussions entre des membres du collectif de recherches FAMME (Frontières, Altérité, Marges, Mondialisation, Expérimentation) du laboratoire PACTE ("Politiques publiques, ACTION politique, Territoires" qui associe le CNRS, l'université de Grenoble-Alpes et l'Institut d'Études Politiques de Grenoble), l'association Modus Operandi qui mène des activités de recherche participative et de formation à Grenoble et en Afrique ainsi que de plusieurs collectifs associatifs de l'agglomération grenobloise.

Pour plus d'informations, vous pouvez nous contacter à l'adresse suivante : info@modop.org
Un retour d'intention vous est demandé avant la date du **15 février 2016** afin de nous retourner vos propositions en vue du bon déroulement des « Rencontres de géopolitique critique ».

Association of American Geographers (AAG) Political Geography Speciality Group (PGSG) preconference San Francisco, USA, March 28.

PGSG preconference will be held on March 28 at Hilton San Francisco Union Square, a venue for the subsequent AAG annual meeting. For detailed information about PGSG preconference and PGSG-related calls for papers, please visit their website at <http://www.politicalgeography.org/>

Association of American Geographers (AAG) annual meeting, San Francisco, USA, March 29 – April 2, 2016

The meeting will be held at Hilton San Francisco Union Square and will feature over 5,500 presentations, posters, workshops, and field trips by leading scholars, experts, and researchers. The deadline of abstract submission is October 29th (as of October 17th). The AAG website (<http://www.aag.org/cs/annualmeeting>) provides any kind of information about the meeting.

International Conference "The Return of Geopolitics," University of Arizona, April 4-5, 2016

An International Conference Sponsored by the World Society Foundation

<http://rc41.ipso.org/post/2015/10/11/International-Conference-The-Return-of-Geopolitics,-University-of-Arizona,-April-4-5,-2016>

Borders and Mobility: 33rd Annual Spring Symposium of the Centre for South Asian Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Honolulu, Hawai'i, April 6-8, 2016.

For detailed information, please visit the Center for South Asian Studies website at: <http://www.hawaii.edu/csas>

Association for Borderlands Studies (ABS) Annual Conference, April 13-16, 2016, Reno, Nevada, USA

ABS Annual Meetings are held in conjunction with the Western Social Science Association's annual conference at Grand Sierra Resort and Casino (2500 E 2nd St, Reno, NV 89502, United States). The

Association for Borderlands Studies invites proposals for individual papers and complete panels related to the study of borders. Papers on all topics and areas concerned with border studies are invited but papers related to the theme for the 2016 annual conference "Borders in the XXI century: Border institutions and governance" will particularly be welcome. For more detailed information, please look at:

<http://absborderlands.org/studies/annual-meetings/>

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

Contemporary Crisis and Changes: Geoeconomical and Geopolitical Approaches International Conference, University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne (URCA), Reims, France, May 26 and 27, 2016

This conference will be organized by François Bost and Stéphane Rosière, Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne, EA 2076 Habiter and supported by the IGU-CPG. 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, then spread planet wide in all areas of activity, leading to lower growth and unemployment. In geopolitical terms, tension spots have also multiplied (Middle East, Ukraine) and challenge the borders, generating strong migratory waves. This process, by itself, carries conflicts. The aim of the conference "Contemporary Crisis and changes" is to question these contemporary upheavals through both a geo-economic and a geopolitical reading. Deadline for submission: 1 December 2015. More information (English and French) <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>

Borders, Walls and Violence: Costs and Alternatives to Border Fencing: International conference organized by the Raoul Dandurand Chair at the University of Quebec at Montreal (UQAM), Montreal, Canada, June 1-3, 2016

The conference website: <http://borderwalls.hypotheses.org/130>

An International Conference on Migration and Borders 2016, Yunnan Normal University, Kunming, China, August 27-30

This is a small conference of approximately 40 scholars (15 foreign and 25 Chinese). Full cost will be covered for foreign scholars selected, including a round trip from Beijing (after the IGC) to Kunming, accommodation and other fees. The overall theme of the conference is Migration and Borders. Within this broad context, we will explore aspects of culture, economy, environment and security. Foreign participation will be limited based on the availability of funding. To be considered for participation and funding, please submit a brief letter requesting consideration with a title and a brief 150 word abstract of a presentation related to the theme, and one of the specific aspects. Application deadline is 15 February, 2016. Please submit application to Scientific Committee for the 'Migration and Borders Conference' and send to victor.konrad@carleton.ca

1st International Conference on Geographies of Migration and Mobility (iMigMob), Loughborough University, UK, July 18-20, 2016

In the 'age of migration', where migration and mobilities are prominent daily and emotive topics on the radar of media, politicians, and wider populations, debating the processes and patterns of sub-national and international movements are imperative. Yet, a dedicated international conference on these 'geographies' of migration and mobility is currently lacking, and opportunities to debate the spatialities of migration and mobility are limited. Understandings can be enriched by bringing together scholars, whose work deepens knowledge of the movement of people across space, as migration (e.g. Castles, Champion, Cooke, Ellis, King, Wright) or mobility (e.g. Adey, Bissell, Cresswell, Merriman) unfolds within and across neighbourhoods, local, regional, national, continental boundaries and borders. In proposing this new conference, our aim is to cultivate and share different disciplinary perspectives of migration and mobilities, and to firmly fix the spotlight on the

intersections between population and demographic research and the wider social science tradition of work on mobilities.

Please submit abstracts (maximum 150 words) before 19th February to:

d.p.smith@lboro.ac.uk (Professor Darren Smith).

To register for the conference see:

<http://store.lboro.ac.uk/browse/product.asp?compid=1&modid=2&catid=70>

The conference is kindly sponsored by: Population Geography Research Group of RGS-IBG; Social and Cultural Geography Research Group of RGS-IBG; British Society for Population Studies (BSPS).

There will be 10+ bursaries to support the attendance of new career, postgraduate, and unwaged delegates (please send email to Dr Sophie Cranston (S.Cranston@lboro.ac.uk)).

Third international Summer School in Peace and Conflict Studies, State sovereignty and Conflicted Commons: Violence, Displacement, Cohabitation, ECPR/University of Cyprus, Nicosia, July 10-22, 2016

International Teaching Faculty: Rob Nixon (Princeton University), Rebecca Bryant (LSE), Klaus Dodds (Royal Holloway, University of London), Yael Navaro (University of Cambridge), Julian Reid (University of Lapland).

<https://www.ucy.ac.cy/sap/en/summer-school>

24th World Congress of Political Science (IPSA-AISP), Istanbul, Turkey, July 23-28, 2016

Sessions of the Research Committee (RC) 15 Political and Cultural Geography

<https://istanbul2016.ipsa.org/events/istanbul2016/session/rc15-political-and-cultural-geography>

Royal Geographical Society with IBG Annual Conference, London, UK, August 30 – September 02, 2016

Hotel geopolitics: nexuses of geopower and hospitality across time and space and other sessions sponsored by the Political Geography Research Group (PolGRG) (Calls still open). For detail, see:

<https://polgrg.wordpress.com/>

1st International Conference on “Europe in Discourse: Identity, Diversity, Borders,” Athens, Greece, September 23-25, 2016

The Conference seeks to examine issues in the ongoing construction of European identity, including notions of diversity and (physical and symbolic) borders. It will focus on critical investigations that draw on discourse theory or bottom-up textual analysis to investigate these topics from the following perspectives:

- historical, to explore the determinants which have been used to support a collective European identity;
- geopolitical, to understand the importance of space and its role in the European edifice;
- ideological/discursive, to investigate, synchronically and diachronically, key concepts that have informed EU practices of inclusion and exclusion.

Methodologically, the Conference will highlight discourse as a major practice that both shapes and reflects European identity.

The Conference welcomes contributions that investigate the role that key European Union texts have played in forging, maintaining or challenging European identities. The conference will thus highlight identity not as a static concept but as a construct that is continually negotiated and re-written in multiple discourses.

In addition to attracting contributions from discourse analysts and linguists, the Conference hopes to bring together leading scholars and researchers from a broad range of other fields, including history, European studies, cultural theory, media studies, sociology, political science, economics, and ethnology.

<http://europeindiscourse.eu/>

10th European urban & Regional Studies Conference “Europe, Crisis and Uneven Development,” Mediterranean Agricultural Institute of Chania, Crete, Greece, September 14-16, 2016

Europe is witnessing a profound period of crisis and uneven development. The Eurozone crisis is re-shaping economic and geo-political relations across the continent. Reactions to the 2007/8 financial crisis still rebound and austerity remains a primary neo-liberal response. At the same time Europe is impacted by a crisis of migration and mobility arising from events in the Middle East and North Africa. These dynamics continue to have important consequences for Europe’s cities and regions; re-working in complex ways the inter-dependencies between place and the lived experiences of austerity urbanism and regionalism. The global rise of ‘new powers’ are also having an impact on how Europe, its citizens, and its cities and regions are connected

to the wider world. The 10th European Urban and Regional Studies conference aims to consider a wide range of consequences of these changes as well as other themes relating to European urban and regional change.

<http://news.uoc.gr/news/2015/19-11/10th.EURS.Conference-call.for.papers.pdf>

27e Festival International de Géographie, 30 septembre — 2 octobre 2016, Saint-Dié-des-Vosges (in French)

Thème : Un monde qui va plus vite ?

Pays invité : La Belgique

Appel à proposition 6 February 2016

<http://www.fig.saint-die-des-vosges.fr/>

Publications

The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Political Geography

Edited by John Agnew, Virginie Mamadouh, Anna Secor and Joanne Sharp. Wiley Blackwell. 2015

The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Political Geography aims to account for the intellectual and worldly developments that have taken place in and around political geography in the last 10 years. Bringing together established names in the field as well as new scholars, it highlights provocative theoretical and conceptual debates on political geography from a range of global perspectives. It discusses the latest developments and places increased emphasis on modes of thinking, contested key concepts, and on geopolitics, climate change and terrorism and Explores the influence of the practice-based methods in geography and concepts including postcolonialism, feminist geographies, the notion of the Anthropocene, and new understandings of the role of non-human actors in networks of power

The volume offers an accessible introduction to political geography for those in allied fields including political science, international relations, and sociology.

The thirty-six chapters by 40+ authors based are grouped into four sections 1) Key Concepts in Political Geography 2) Theorizing Political Geography 3) Doing politics 4) Material political geographies, plus a closing section on Dong political geography with a chapter on *academic capitalism and the geopolitics of knowledge* by Anssi Paasi.

(Virginie Mamadouh)

Borderities and the politics of contemporary mobile borders.

Edited by Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary and Frédéric Goraut. Palgrave. 2015

This book looks at contemporary transformations affecting border spaces, by using the concept of the 'mobile border' to examine the growing dissociation between border functions and border locations. The book bears witness to the claim that de/rebordering and de/reterritorialization processes are not equivalent. It questions them through the analysis of 'borderities,' a concept built upon a close reading of the writings of Michel Foucault and derived from 'governmentality.' 'Borderity,' any technology of spatial or socio-spatial division, could be defined as the governmentality of territorial limits. Although initially defined as a technology of power, borderity may also appear as a differentiated social and political quality that individualized regimes of crossing reveal. The contributors examine the production of mobile borders (section 1: technologies), their embodiment (section 2: biopolitics) and their complex interpretation (section 3: 'dispositifs'). By looking at how political subjects can be disabled and enabled, the proposed 'borderities' approach illuminates the question of how borders can be the site of both power and counter-power.

With contributions of Saskia Sassen, Michael Strauss, Sylvain Guyot, Jouni Häkli, Gabriel Popescu, Nicolas Lambert, Olivier Clochard, Chiara Brambilla, Thomas Hendriks, Adriana Dorfman, Olivier Walther, Denis Retailié, Sarah Mekdjian, Luiza Bialasiewicz, Paolo Cuttitta, and Ariane Littman.

(Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary)

Borderscaping: Imaginations and Practices of Border Making

Edited by Chiara Brambilla, Jussi Laine, James W. Scott & Gianluca Bocchi, Ashgate, 2015

Using the borderscapes concept, this book offers an approach to border studies that expresses the multilevel complexity of borders, from the geopolitical to social practice and cultural production at and across the border. Accordingly, it encourages a productive understanding of the processual, de-territorialized and dispersed nature of borders and their ensuring regimes in the era of globalization and transnational flows as well as showcasing border research as an interdisciplinary field with its own academic standing.

Contemporary bordering processes and practices are examined through the borderscapes lens to uncover 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. The authors offer a nuanced and critical re-reading and understanding of the border not as an entity to be taken for granted, but as a place of investigation and as a resource in terms of the construction of novel (geo)political imaginations, social and spatial imaginaries and cultural images. In so doing, they suggest that rethinking borders means deconstructing the interweaving between political practices of inclusion-

exclusion and the images created to support and communicate them on the cultural level by Western territorialist modernity. The result is a book that proposes a wandering through a constellation of bordering policies, discourses, practices and images to open new possibilities for thinking, mapping, acting and living borders under contemporary globalization. (Source: <http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781472451460>)

(Jussi Laine)

Diplomatic Cultures and International Politics: Translations, Spaces and Alternatives

Edited by Jason Dittmer, Fiona McConnell, Routledge, 2016

This volume offers an inter-disciplinary and critical analysis of the role of culture in diplomatic practice. If diplomacy is understood as the practice of conducting negotiations between representatives of distinct communities or causes, then questions of culture and the spaces of cultural exchange are at its core. But what of the culture of diplomacy itself? When and how did this culture emerge, and what alternative cultures of diplomacy run parallel to it, both historically and today? How do particular spaces and places inform and shape the articulation of diplomatic culture(s)? This volume addresses these questions by bringing together a collection of theoretically rich and empirically detailed contributions from leading scholars in history, international relations, geography, and literary theory. Chapters attend to cross-cutting issues of the translation of diplomatic cultures, the role of space in diplomatic exchange and the diversity of diplomatic cultures beyond the formal state system. Drawing on a range of methodological approaches the contributors discuss empirical cases ranging from indigenous diplomacies of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, to the European External Action Service, the 1955 Bandung Conference, the spatial imaginaries of mid twentieth-century Balkan writer diplomats, celebrity and missionary diplomacy, and paradiplomatic narratives of The Hague. The volume demonstrates that, when approached from multiple disciplinary perspectives and understood as expansive and plural, diplomatic cultures offer an important lens onto issues as diverse as global governance, sovereignty regimes and geographical imaginations.

(Fiona McConnell)

*Membership***Steering Committee****Virginie Mamadouh (Co-chair)**

Department of Human Geography, Planning and International Development
University of Amsterdam
Address: Nieuwe Achtergracht 166
1018 WV Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Postal Address: Postbus 15629
1001 NC Amsterdam, The Netherlands
V.D.Mamadouh@uva.nl

Takashi Yamazaki (Co-chair)

Department of Geography
Osaka City University
Sugimoto, Sumiyoshi-ku
5588585 Osaka, Japan
yamataka@lit.osaka-cu.ac.jp

Simon Dalby

CIGI Chair in the Political Economy of Climate Change
Balsillie School of International Affairs/ Wilfrid Laurier University
67 Erb Street West
Waterloo, ON N2L 6C2 Canada
sdalby@gmail.com

Adriana Dorfman

Departamento de Geografia, Instituto de Geociências
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul
Av. Bento Gonçalves, 9500, Prédio 43136, sala 212
91509-900, Agronomia, Porto Alegre, RS
Brazil
adriana.dorfman@ufrgs.br

Alexandru Ilies

Department of Geography
University of Oradea
Str. Armata Romana 5
410078 Oradea, Romania
ilies@uoradea.ro

Alexander Murphy

Department of Geography
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403-1251, USA
abmurphy@uoregon.edu

Paul Reuber

Institute of Geography
University of Munster
Robert Koch Strasse 26
48149 Munster, Germany
p.reuber@uni-muenster.de

Stéphane Rosiere

Department of Geography
University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne
UFR Lettres et Sciences humaines
57, rue Pierre Taittinger
51100 REIMS, France
stephane.rosiere@univ-reims.fr

James Sidaway

Dept. of Geography
National University of Singapore
AS2, #03-01, 1 Arts Link,
Kent Ridge, Singapore 117570
geojds@nus.edu.sg

Jan Wendt

Department of Regional Development Geography
University of Gdańsk
Ul. Bażyńskiego 4
80-952 Gdańsk, Poland
jan.wendt@ug.edu.pl

Oren Yftachel

Department of Geography and Environmental Development
Ben Gurion University of the Negev
P.O.B. 653 Beer Sheva
Israel
yiftach@exchange.bgu.ac.il

Elena dell'Agnese (Honorary member and current Vice President of the IGU)

Department of Sociology and Social Research
University of Milano-Bicocca
Via Bicocca degli Arcimboldi 8 20126 Milan, Italy
elena.dellagnese@unimib.it

Board of Young Researchers and Student Members

Ira Bliatka

PhD Student
Aberystwyth University
irb2@aber.ac.uk

Edward Boyle

Centre for Asia-Pacific Future Studies
Kyushu University
3F 6-10-1, Hakozaki, Higashi-ku
Fukuoka, 812-8581 Japan
tedkboyle@gmail.com

Anna Casaglia (Webmaster)

Postdoctoral researcher
Karelian Institute, University of Eastern Finland
Joensuu Campus, P.O. Box 111, FI-80101 Joensuu,
Finland
tel: +358 505674927
anna.casaglia@uef.fi

Sang-Hyun Chi

Assistant Professor
Kyung Hee University, Seoul, Korea
hyungeo@gmail.com

Iris Dzudzek

Research Assistant
Department of Human Geography
Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main
Campus Westend, Grüneburgplatz 1, PEG-
Gebäude
60323 Frankfurt am Main, Germany
dzudzek@em.uni-frankfurt.de

Xavier Ferrer-Gallardo

Postdoc Researcher
Departament de Geografia
Facultat de Lletres, Edifici B
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
08193 Bellaterra (Barcelona)
xavier.ferrer.gallardo@uab.cat

Corey Johnson

Assistant Professor
Department of Geography
University of North Carolina at Greensboro
corey_johnson@uncg.edu

Sara Koopman

Assistant Professor
Department of Geography
York University
Toronto, Canada
Sara.koopman@gmail.com

Jussi Laine

Researcher
Karelian Institute, University of Eastern Finland
Joensuu Campus, P.O. Box 111, FI-80101 Joensuu,
Finland
jussi.laine@uef.fi
www.uef.fi/ktl/jussi_laine

Fiona McConnell

Associate Professor
School of Geography and the Environment
University of Oxford
South Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3QY
fiona.mccconnell@ouce.ox.ac.uk

Inocent Moyo

Geography Department
Florida Campus, University of South Africa
South Africa
minnox@yahoo.com

Ben Schrager

Degree Program: M.A.
Saunders Hall 411, 2424 Maile Way, Honolulu, HI
96822
schrager@hawaii.edu

Carolin Schurr

Branco Weiss Fellow
Department of Geography, University of Zürich,
J25L67
Winterthurerstrasse 190, 8057 Zürich, Switzerland
carolin.schurr@geo.uzh.ch

Victoria Ayelen Sosa

Researcher and consultant
National Institute of Anthropology and Latin
American Thought
Secretariat of Culture of the Nation
3 de Febrero 1378, C1426BJN Ciudad Autónoma
de Buenos Aires (Argentina)
Victoria.ayelen.sosa@gmail.com

Woon Chih Yuan

Assistant Professor

Department of Geography, National University of
Singapore

AS2 #03-01 1 Arts Link Kent Ridge Singapore
117570

geowcy@nus.edu.sg

The **Newsletter #21** was edited by Takashi Yamazaki and Virginie Mamadouh, Chairs of the IGU Commission on Political Geography Osaka/Amsterdam, February 2015
Contact: yamataka@lit.osaka-cu.ac.jp and/or v.d.mamadouh@uva.nl