

Multifaceted migration research around the world



Elli Heikkilä

The 5th International Conference on Population Geographies was held in Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, USA in 5.8.–9.8.2009. There were over 60 papers presented around the world and in many sessions migration and its different forms were the main theme.

Professor Allan Findlay's, University of Dundee, topic was "International students: reproducing difference" and he told that the United Kingdom students are going also to study to other countries and the number of countries is growing. USA is the main destination (30 % in 2006) and other important countries have been for example Australia, Germany and France. Women had higher propensity to go abroad than men. Students had a clear sense of a global hierarchy of universities. Also some students had a plan of international career. It is interesting that some students claim that they'll never return to the UK, and this is the case for example among those who are studying in Australia: 50 percent of them are planning to stay in Australia after finishing their studies. Professor Thomas Cooke, University of Connecticut, pointed out in his presentation of "The inter-state migration of college-bound high school graduates" that there is very little study about student migration. When looking student migration there is a concern of brain drain especially if there existed cumulative loss of human capital, i.e. net-migration is negative.

Professor John Stillwell, University of Leeds, talked about "Age-specific ethnic migration in Britain: a census-based analysis" and noted that relatively little work has been reported on the internal migration in Britain. The key findings together with Serena Husain include that over 6 million people moved usual residence in 2000–2001 and 91 percent of those were white. Amongst the non-white migrants, the black group had the largest shares of both inter and intra-district migrants. The spatial pattern of net migration indicates net losses of white migrants in metropolitan

areas and net gains in rural Britain, whereas remarkable net migration gains and losses for the non-white population are confined to urban areas and their immediate surrounds. When looking London and its migration dynamics, white migrants are leaving inner London for destinations in the outer suburbs, those living in outer London are moving beyond the city boundary altogether whilst inner London wards remain the destination of in-migrants from the rest of the country.

PhD Student Jenny Olofsson, Umeå University, presented a paper on "Motives and perceptions among East European migrants" and the case study was dealing with Sweden as a destination country and Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland as origin countries. The disintegration of Soviet Union in 1989 and the EU enlargement in 2004 has changed the preconditions of East-West migration. However, these geopolitical changes in Europe have not resulted in the mass migration initially expected, but these post-Soviet states and/or new EU Member States are nevertheless important new countries of origin for migrants. According to results, social motives dominate since 47 percent mentioned "marriage/moved in with partner" as their main motive. More women than men mentioned social reasons as their main motive, while economic reasons are most frequent among male respondents. The knowledge of Sweden before migration was low and over 80 percent consider that their current situation is better since the move. Two thirds were satisfied with their place of living.

Dr. Jan Amcoff, Institute for Future Studies, Sweden, raised interesting questions in his paper on "Return migration in Sweden": when in the life person is rooting, and how far we have to move to leave home region? According to his study most return migration occurred within 5 years. Rural areas are a bit more dependent on return migration than other regions. Return migrants are quite young but also retired. Returnees to small regions do not stay.