

# The Variety of Migration Streams – Examples around the World

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The Fourth International Conference on Population Geographies was held in 10-13 July 2007 in the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong. There were 170 participants from over 30 countries and they were representing different scientific disciplines, but mostly population geographers.

Professor C. Cindy Fan, University of California, Los Angeles, USA, had the keynote speech on the theme “The Migrant and the Household: Understanding China’s Floating Population”. She told that the level of urbanization in China was 21 percent in 1982 but it grew to 43 percent in 2006. The volume of inter-county migration was in the 1990 census 33 percent but it had increased up to 41 percent in the 2000 census. Temporary migration in inter-county migration had increased in volume from 46 percent in the 1990 census to 74 percent in the 2000 census. One phenomenon has been the decrease of permanent migration and when in 1990 census a half of the migration was permanent it was only a one quarter in 2000 census. Fan pointed out that the number of floating population is thus increasing all the time: according to statistics there were 30 million people in this category in the early 1980s, 150 million in 2005 and the forecast shows 200 million population in 2015. As she puts into slogan

“there is nothing as permanent as temporary migration”.

Usually the floating population gets so-called 3D-jobs (dirty, dangerous, difficult). Fan raises the question about discrimination of migrant children how migrant families have no money for fees to local schools. When looking at countryside there is low cost of living but cities have more income possibilities. Jobs are not, however, permanent and many times part-time basis. Left behind children is a problem and children are taken care by one parent or grand parents. Migrants from the cities send remittances to the rural areas for example for new housing. The burning issue this moment is the question will rural migrants stay in the city or will they return back to the countryside?

Professor Graeme Hugo, the University of Adelaide, Australia, had the presentation dealing with Asian Skilled Migration to and from Australia: Patterns and Policy Implications. He said that earlier there was more family migration than skilled ones. One of the defining features of the new global migration has been the increasing tempo of the search for global talent and the accelerated flow of skilled workers between nations. Foreign students from Asia are an important pool of migrants who can move first temporary but the

staying can turn to be permanent in Australia. He also uses the term temporary return back migration which means coming and going between countries. The reasons are economically connected in return for a while phenomenon.

Ph.D. Candidate Natsuko Chubachi, Queen’s University, Canada, was talking about Post-war Immigration from Japan to Canada: Its Reasons, Characteristics and Meanings. The study data covered 61 interviews of Japanese people living in Canada. Before moving many of them visited Canada several times until they decide to become an immigrant and also they go back to Japan regularly after they immigrate. They came to Canada, often influenced by somebody who recommended Canada as a place to live. Urban/rural metaphors also often appear in their discourse to describe their immigration, regarding Japan/Canada as urban/rural. More women tend to immigrate to Canada than men. Although their emigration can be seen as a rebellion against Japanese tradition, it can also be read as a reconstruction of their traditional life course. For example, some female interviewees decided to immigrate to Canada to get married to a Canadian, being tired of the traditional life course imposed on them in Japan.

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International Geographical Union, Commission on Population and Vulnerability, the members of steering group. From the left: Professor Jianfa Shen, Hong Kong, who was the chair of organizing committee of the Fourth International Conference on Population Geographies, Hong Kong, Professor Daniel Joseph Hogan, Brazil, Professor Brenda Yeoh, Singapore, Research Director Elli Heikkilä, Finland, Professor Gunnar Malmberg, Sweden, Professor Allan M. Findlay, Scotland (Chair) and Professor Paul Gans, Germany.

The Commission members organized special session series in the Conference and for example Brenda Yeoh and Elli Heikkilä were organizers for Love and Mobility in the Time of Globalization -sessions including around 15 papers around the world.