

Report on the 2011 annual meeting of the IGU Globility Commission

The Global Change and Human Mobility (“Globility”) Commission¹ of the International Geographical Union (IGU) was established in 2000 by Professor Armando MONTANARI, Department of European and Comparative Studies, University of Rome “La Sapienza”. The general objectives of the commission are to examine those forms of human mobility that may be related to the processes of global change, to the new forms of investment, local development and to social and cultural behaviour. Since its establishment the Globility Commission has organized numerous meetings all around the world. The 2011 annual meeting of the commission was held in Rome on September 23–24. The venue of the conference was the Faculty of Humanistic Sciences, University of Rome “La Sapienza”.



Opening speech by Prof. BERNARDINI at the Conference

¹ For further information please visit the website of the Globility Commission at <http://130.54.245.7/geo/globility/>

Three major topics were discussed at the meeting: human mobility and business sector; human mobility and higher education students; and human mobility and cultural changes. The first day of the conference was devoted to sessions and discussion, while on the second day a full-day field trip was offered by the organizers. It was the organizers' priority to make the meeting accessible to a greater number of colleagues therefore all the sessions were streamed live on the "digilab" website (<http://digilab.uniroma1.it/>) of the University of Rome "La Sapienza". This meant a real innovation, which provided an excellent opportunity for everybody to follow the program of the conference live all over the world.

The conference started with greetings from Prof. Francesca BERNARDINI, director of Department of European, American and Intercultural Studies, University of Rome "La Sapienza"; Prof. Carlo BRUSA, chairman of the PRIN 2008 on migrations and cultural interactions. Integration and territorial setting in Italy, and from Prof. MONTANARI, chairman of Globility Commission. In his presentation, Prof. MONTANARI gave a brief summary of the history and major achievements of the commission since its foundation. He emphasized that this commission had always been a small and family-like group, where members were not just colleagues but also friends. He pointed out that the topics discussed were particularly current and important, since the recent global changes had resulted in a shift from traditional (production and/or consumption led) mobility patterns towards information based mobility.

The first session of the conference chaired also by Prof. MONTANARI, addressed the topics of international mobility of university students (by Clarisse DIDELON, Le Havre University & Yann RICHARD, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University and Filippo BELLOC & Barbara STANISCLA, University of Rome "La Sapienza"), the second-hand car trade between Belgium and West Africa (by Martin ROSENFELD, Université Libre de Bruxelles) and the application of neural network models to human mobility (by Luca DERAVIGNONE, Alessandro DI LUDOVICO & Marco RAMAZZOTTI, University of Rome "La Sapienza").

The second session was chaired by Prof. Klaus FRIEDRICH (Martin-Luther-University, Halle), where the first lecture was given by two Italian colleagues (Prof. Carlo BRUSA and Davide PAPOTTI) on the international mobility of university students through the example of two North Italian cities (Parma and Vercelli). After that two intriguing presentations were made by Professor YOSHITAKA Ishikawa, secretary of Globility Commission, Kyoto University and YUZURU Isoda, Tohoku University (Japan) on the issues of evacuation and human mobility in the wake of the devastating earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear plant accident that hit Japan in March, 2011. The first presentation concentrated primarily on theoretical issues and on the difficulties of maintaining and harmonizing statistics concerning evacuees in different prefectures. The second presentation gave an insight into the demographic features and everyday lives of evacuees.

Following lunch, the program of the conference continued with the third session chaired by Prof. YOSHITAKA. The session started with a lecture delivered by Prof. FRIEDRICH, who presented the problems of the German reunification and the economic recovery in East Germany generating significant migration between the territories of the former West and East Germany. The next presentation was made by colleagues from Latvia- Prof. Zaiga KRISJANE, Maris BERZINS and Andris BAULS - on employment mobility patterns and its determinants. The last speaker was GUOQING Du from Rikkyo University, Saitama, Japan, who introduced the changes and regional differences of naturalized population in Japan.

The fourth and last session of the meeting was chaired by Prof. KRISJANE, University of Latvia, Riga. Firstly, the author of the present report introduced the results of an empirical study aimed to explore the major features of cross-border shopping flows in two

cities (Debrecen and Oradea) on opposite sides of the Hungarian–Romanian border. The co-author of the paper was Prof. István SÜLI-ZAKAR, Department of Social Geography and Regional Development Planning, University of Debrecen, Hungary. A lecture was held by Italian colleagues (Salvatore CANNIZZARO, Catania University and Gian Luigi CORINTO, Macerata University) on the impacts of migrant workers on the South-East Sicily horticultural district. Finally, the last presentation also reported on Italy (Bernardo CARDINALE & Rosy SCARLATA, Teramo University), discussing the impact of international migration on the population dynamics in the Ascoli Piceno–Teramo urban system.

The second day of the meeting comprised a full-day field trip, which enabled participants to directly experience the past and present aspects of human mobility in Rome and its surroundings. The field trip was guided by Prof. MONTANARI, Barbara STANISCIÀ, member of the PRIN 2008 Project, and by Marco RAMAZZOTTI, researcher of the Department of Near East Archeology and Art History at the La Sapienza University.

In the morning the excursion led to the south-western part of Rome called the EUR district. The EUR is a strange residential and business district of Rome representing the urban development ambitions of Mussolini and his Fascist party. The area was originally planned as the site for the 1942 world exhibition, which had been eventually cancelled owing to World War II. Today the EUR district is full of office buildings, business headquarters, convention centres, museums, as well as shops and bars visited by and people working and living there.

Following the short visit to the EUR district, the group arrived in Lido di Ostia, which is a town located on the Tyrrhenian Sea. The town and its neighbourhood were founded in 1884, after the reclaiming of the nearby marshland. Soon the new village became the favourite seaside resort of the Romans. Many recreation facilities were built after World War II, and Ostia experienced a tourist boom. However, the environmental burden imposed by overcrowding (e.g. sea pollution, erosion of the coastline, sea level rise) is also apparent in the context of limited natural and cultural resources.

In the afternoon Ostia Antica, a huge archaeological park in the place of ancient Rome's port was visited. The ancient city was situated at the mouth of the River Tiber, but because of silting and a drop in sea level, the site now lies 3 km from the Tyrrhenian Sea. Ancient buildings, magnificent frescoes and impressive mosaics were excellently preserved in the area. Ostia Antica is an outstanding testimony of human mobility during the ancient times.

The 2011 annual meeting of the International Geographical Union (IGU) Globility Commission was fruitful and well-organized, where participants managed to experience new aspects of human mobility in theory and practice. The Globility Commission is planning to hold its next sessions in the frame of IGU Regional Conference in Santiago, Chile between November 14–18, 2011. In 2012, the commission will hold its meeting in Cologne, Germany.

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