

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Urban Capacities: The Migration Crisis and the Young

Venue: University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus, Durban

Date: June 23-25 2020

Organizing Bodies: International Urban Symposium-IUS and IUAES Commissions on “Urban Anthropology”, “Migration Studies” and “Children, Youth and Childhood”

Over the last two decades major urban centres throughout the world have experienced significant population inflows as a result of internal and international migration. Past literature distinguished mainly between two major types of migration; that is, economic and political migration. Since the late 1990s, a substantial body of literature across the social and political sciences has brought out a complex and diversified range of contemporary demographic movements, including life-style migrants, economic migrants from poor regions, political refugees and asylum seekers.

This Conference seeks to focus on four broad types of contemporary migration. One could be called as inclusive voluntary movement. Generally based upon mutual agreements between the migrant and the host country, this is believed to be mutually beneficial: career opportunities for the migrant, on the one hand, and addressing skills shortages in the accepting countries, on the other. A second type of demographic movement involves life-style migrants, such as self-initiated expatriates, wealthy foreign residents, international students, foreign executives in local organisations. These migrants embody a growing trend explored in recent anthropological literature. They are usually more than welcome in the host countries. A third type reflects a drive to leave behind uncertain futures in economically weak countries. These migrants are in search of opportunities for themselves and their progenies. A fourth type involves people who escape war, political turmoil or prosecution and seek refuge in far-off areas perceived to be safe havens; this movement is protected by law in most democratic countries. Most often, in the third and fourth types of migration, flows of people involve dangerous journeys and payment of bribes to get across regional and international borders and they do not always conclude with a legal entry in the host country, raising all the risks associated with an illegal stay. Media coverage of these movements often give rise to juxtaposing sentiments of acceptance and sympathy or of rejection of outsiders encroaching upon both urban and agricultural areas. The age range of migrants spans from the youngest to the oldest. Favourable reactions to immigration in receiving nations develop when there is ground to believe that the circumstances under which people leave their country of origin merit empathy; this applies especially to refugees. On the contrary, rejection may be driven by xenophobia, racism or economic reasons justified by the inability of the receiving nations to accommodate immigrants in their economy.

Countries across the world are radically revising their immigration policies in a situation marked by poor global economic performances, increasing levels of human trafficking, in many cases linked to drug, arms, organ trafficking, and growing security concerns. In some cases, their arguments are nationalistic and based upon claims of protection of the autochthonous social ethos, urban landscapes and the opportunities for their future generations. In other cases, security and human rights concerns are argued as major reasons for revised policies with a view to restrictive measures. Migrants, too, are constantly assessing and reviewing their opportunities and future possibilities.

These socio-economic, political and legal issues are of contemporary and future importance and require the empirical study of urban capacities, of the positive and negative motivations of movements of people nationally and internationally, and of the possibilities for the young as countries continue to depopulate their rural areas in favour of urbanization. Anthropologists and academics from cognate disciplines who are ethnographically engaged in these areas of research are invited to contribute to this Conference with a view to developing a comparative understanding.

Paper Titles and 250 words (max) Abstracts should be submitted to the Scientific Committee no later than Monday 20 January 2020. Applicants will be informed about acceptance of their submission by Monday 24 February 2020.

Registration

Registration Deadline: Monday 6 April 2020.

Registration Fee: €120 (Euros) Onsite Registration: €170.

Scientific Committee:

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