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**2015 WUN Migration Conference, Hong Kong  
25-26 April 2015**

**Titles and abstracts**

**Stephen Castles**, University of Sydney

‘Migration and culture: A challenge for Asian nations in an era of transnationalism’

Abstract: Cultural factors play a part at every stage of the migratory process. In some origin countries a ‘culture of migration’ develops, in which emigration to escape poverty is a normal part of the life-cycle. Shifts in destination country culture can also be a cause of migration: for example the collapse of fertility and land flight during industrialisation can lead to high rates of marriage migration. The presence of migrants with their own languages, customs and religions can affect culture and identity – a particular challenge for nations with a strong belief in ethnic homogeneity. Some migrants see themselves as temporary sojourners, while authorities often seek to ensure that migrants stay for a limited period. The result can be complex patterns of movement through which migrants develop transnational affiliations, with belonging to two or more nations. Return migration can also have cultural effects: returnees may bring with them ideas learnt in the destination country, and question traditional hierarchies and practices. Research on cultural aspects of migration is therefore crucial. International migration affects all aspects of human life both for individuals and for societies. That is why migration studies should be interdisciplinary, and should combine analysis of macro-structures (the state, the economy, law and politics) with understanding of individual experiences and biographies – both of migrants and non-migrants. Nor can policy-makers ignore the cultural dynamics of migration. The idea that migration is purely an economic expedient must give way to the realisation that cultural change is an inevitable part of greater openness.

**Nicholas Harney**, University of Western Australia

‘The art of dis-integration: migrants and sociality in neoliberal times’

Abstract: It's common in the history of both settler colonialism and European nationalism to associate integration of peoples with peace, prosperity, and civility, understood as the characteristics of civilisation. Recent ideological works from Huntington to Ferguson confirm this integrationist philosophy is as dominant now as it was in the era of imperialism, where colonial integration was emphasised. Multiculturalism is an internal version of colonial integration, as are all forms of state pluralism. Neoliberalism is amongst the latest forms of forced integration (forced because the alternatives are camps and expulsion or the prison-industrial complex). But so too are resilience, critical infrastructure, and financialisation contemporary versions of forced integration. Of course, forced integration is oxymoronic, and contradictory in its practice. Like the break up of societies producing colonial integration, neoliberalism attempts to break up older solidarities to integrate labour and capital on an expanded scale. As the wars for oil and democracy make clear, this form of forced integration does see itself as bringing peace, prosperity and civility even as it does the opposite. So given the historical fact that integration is actually anti-civilisational, where would we look to find actual practices of building social life - where else than amongst what is designated as disintegrated - amongst those said to be disintegrated or disintegrating in their effect - migrants especially, refugees, those whose lives refuse integration. In other words integration=anti-sociality and disintegration=sociality, or another way to see this is as Ranciere - dissensus versus so-called democracy - it is only in this dissensus, or in what Lyotard called the differend that we find advances in social life.

**Qiaobing Wu**, CUHK

‘What Really Matters? Who You Are, Where You Live, or What You Have’

Children migrating to the urban cities with their parents and children left behind in the rural counties by their migrant parents are two vulnerable populations resulting from the rural-urban migration in mainland China. According to the most recent statistics, the number of migrant and left-behind children has reached 35.8 million and 61 million respectively by 2010. Either migrating to the city or left behind in rural areas,

children are faced with unique challenges adapting to a new urban environment or a life with one or both parents being absent, which pose potential threats to their education and psychological well-being. However, given the lack of research that simultaneously compares the four groups of children—migrant, left-behind, native urban and native rural children without any migratory experience, it remains unclear whether it is the identity of being migrant or left-behind, or the place of residence as urban or rural, that leads to the disparities in educational and psychological outcomes. Even less known is the effect of social and contextual factors on the educational and psychological outcomes of these different groups of children. Using data from a large-scale cross-sectional survey in China in three metropolitan cities where most migrants concentrate and three provinces where more migrants originate, this study aims to examine the disparities in education and psychological well-being across various groups of children as a function of their identity (who you are), residential status (where you live), and of social capital within a range of social contexts (what you have). The research findings will provide valuable insight into what really matters for the well-being of children in the context of migration, thus informing the design and delivery of social services and the improvement of social policy for the children's benefits.

**Huso Yi, CUHK**

'Migrants and Health in Hong Kong, and Its Neighbouring Countries: Putting It in the Context Global Health Justice and Ethics'

**Abstract:** Who is accountable for the healthcare of *sick* migrants in the time of globalization? On what basis can a claim for the global justice and ethics be made? It is argued that migrant receiving (or hosting) countries should provide healthcare for migrants as equally as citizens because migrants contribute to economic growth as much as citizens. Some argue that migrants' economic contribution is not counted significantly because the majority of migrants engage in the market of 3D – dirty, dangerous and demeaning (or demanding or difficult), including domestic household, and construction. Such an argument is valid based on cost-benefits notion. If migrants are not covered for healthcare and if they are sick, the social-economic costs for treatment would be greater than the loss of costs from their productivity. But, this justification would become further complicated as to whether healthcare access is applied to irregular, undocumented and over-staying migrants, or asylum seekers. There has been a debate between market-based and humanitarian approach in healthcare access among migrant populations. With this research question, we conducted a comparative study of social and economic costs of healthcare and productivity among migrants in Hong Kong, Singapore, Austria and Italy. In Hong Kong, our case studies included foreign domestic helpers from neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia, and one-way and two-way permit migrants from mainland China. Cost-benefit analysis of healthcare among migrants in a country context will not adequately address the problem. For example, when migrants are sick, they are often forced to leave and return to their home countries. In the case, analysis of direct and indirect cost-benefit of the loss of productivity among migrants can be misleading. This case is especially relevant when sending and receiving countries are geographically close like Southeast Asia, where Singapore and Hong Kong receiving many migrants from neighbouring countries. To call for health and well-being of migrants in receiving countries distributive justice in the context of global health should be ensured. Mutual responsibility between countries and even by global governance should be addressed.

**Melissa Siegel, Maastricht University**

'Understanding the linkages between migration and health: An overview'

The linkages between migration and health are vast and multi-faceted. Many of these linkages are understudied. However, probably the most studied link is on migrant's access to health care and their more general health in the destination country. Another key linkage between migration and health is how the migration of a household member affects the access to health and health outcomes of those left behind, which is usually affected by additional resources and knowledge. Additionally, disease transfer of migrants (particularly upon return) is a key issue generally studied by public health experts but relative untouched by migration scholars. Nutrition and food security both of migrants in the country of destination and those left behind in the country of origin is another area of interest. Refugees and forced populations are often a particularly vulnerable group with regard to both mental and physical health. Health hazards during travel and the migration of health works are other areas where migration and health come together as well as medical tourism. This session examines all of these linkages and more.

**Loretta Baldassar, University of Western Australia**

'Who Cares? The unintended consequences of migration policy'

Abstract: In this paper I focus on care and caregiving to examine the unintended consequences of migrant and refugee policy for both settlement and transnational relations. Migration – and even refugee policy – are rarely designed around care practices and needs. And yet, care and caregiving are often key drivers of mobility: increasingly visible in the ‘care-chains’ of the ‘global south’, but largely invisible in the temporary forms of mobility characteristic of the ‘global north’. Not surprisingly, when care is a central motivation for mobility, women are the major actors involved, hence the dramatic feminisation of migration (including of domestic workers, middling migrants and flying grandmothers). A focus on the portability of care offers a fresh perspective on the more prominent political, economic and legal migration agendas, extending our assessment of migrant precarity beyond that directly related to employment. It shifts our attention from the behaviour of individuals to the pattern of relations between people, institutions and the policies that govern them (including migration, welfare, gender-care and working-time regimes and their histories). These must each be located in the context of local and transnational families, communities and states. It also highlights the increasingly important role of our relations with and access to the material world of technologies, including their reliability and affordability. Thus, access to the internet – not for freedom of information but for the freedom to care and be cared for – is an important new human rights issue that must be added to global governance and citizenship as central to an ethics of care.

**Tim Benton**, UK Global Food Security Programme and University of Leeds  
‘Food-water-land and climate change. Impacts on people’

Abstract: It is very clear that climate change is impacting on the resilience of food production and distribution systems worldwide, and the impact of extreme weather creates systemic risks for agriculture and water availability. At the same time, food markets are increasingly globalised, and countries often implicitly or explicitly assume that needs can be met via access to international markets. Furthermore, demand for food and water is increasing all the time with economic and population growth, putting ever more pressure on the food-water-land nexus. How will these factors interact, and how will they impact upon rural-to-urban, and trans-boundary migration?

**Andrea Milan**, UNU-EHS Bonn  
‘Climate-related stressors and human mobility: Insights from recent empirical work in the global South’

Abstract: This presentation is based on recent empirical work conducted by UNU-EHS on climate-related stressors and migration in Africa, Asia, Southern and Central America and the Pacific Islands. In the first part, Mr. Milan will present empirical results from the “Where the Rain Falls” (Rainfalls) (2011-2013) project, a multi-country empirical study on the relationship between rainfall variability, food security and human mobility. In the second part, he will present the latest methodological developments aimed at enhancing understanding of human mobility in areas where people are highly exposed to climatic stressors. In this context, he will then share some insights from UNU-EHS’ current work in Haiti and several Pacific Islands. Building on these methodological reflections and empirical results, Mr. Milan will then conclude by presenting some policy implications of the influence of climate change on different forms of human mobility.

**Susan Parnell**, University of Cape Town  
‘Sub-Saharan African urbanisation and global environmental change’

Abstract: Scientific evidence for global environmental change (GEC) in Africa presents a *prima facie* case for increased human migration and displacement. Closer scrutiny of the evidence on demographic change, however, suggests that migration and displacement are less important variables in explaining the human dimensions of GEC on the continent than is commonly thought. Natural population growth in cities is a more important dynamic in the evolving system of human settlement in Africa, and this significant shift in where people live, both now and in the future, is overlooked because of the emphasis on the potential impact of environmentally induced migration. Even without any movement from the countryside, cities represent the fastest growing sector of the sub-Saharan African population and are thus an appropriate focus of the forthcoming Sustainable Development Goals. The existing vulnerability of African cities, with their rapidly growing populations and weak management, means that any environmental change is likely to have significant consequences for cities. Taking the sub-Saharan African demographic evidence seriously means that the scholarly and policy emphasis currently directed to GEC migration and displacement might be more effectively redirected to questions relating to the interface between GEC and urban areas, offering a more fruitful emphasis than the narrow focus on migration.

**Hildegard Schneider**, Maastricht University

‘Student mobility and the recognition of qualifications: a European perspective’

**Ben Wildavsky**, State University of New York

‘Mobility and the global university ecosystem’

Abstract: The phenomenon of higher education globalization is moving more quickly and is more far-reaching than ever before in history. Growing mobility is a very big part of this story. Broadly defined, it includes not only mobility of students, but of faculty, of campuses themselves (which extend their presences internationally by opening branch campuses), and of research, which is increasingly a cross-border enterprise. Old patterns of mobility are changing, however, meaning that fears of brain drain are in some cases giving way to “brain exchange” and “brain circulation.” At the same time, in a mobile academic world, closely followed university rankings have proliferated. These controversial league tables are used by students, by universities, and by governments to assess the relative quality of universities and departments around the world. The popularity of rankings is due in large part to global efforts, from China and South Korea to Western Europe, to create world-class universities that can compete with the best. Along with the mobility of students, faculty, campuses, and research; the advent of global rankings; and the quest to create world-class universities; another transformational aspect of academic globalization, is the rise of educational technology to transcend barriers of time and place – a transformation that provides students and faculty another form of educational mobility. Even as academic mobility grows exponentially, it has given rise to a variety of anxieties, in particular the concern that the West is losing its edge in global competition. But the global knowledge economy is not a zero-sum game: our collective store of knowledge can grow, which means that alarmism about academic mobility is badly misplaced.

**Metka Hercog**, Basel University

‘What’s the best place for me? Choice of a destination country for the highly skilled’

Abstract: Faced with a situation in which countries compete for the global talent, it becomes especially important to understand migration preferences. This presentation examines how national migration policies and country-specific factors in receiving countries attend to a potential highly skilled migrant when one is deciding among several possible locations. While continental European countries recognize the need to attract migrants as a key component of their economic strategies, it remains unclear to what extent the more open immigration policies lead to an increase of attractiveness of European countries to perform better at the global competition for the skilled. The survey among prospective migrants in India shows that while European countries appear to be relatively attractive for study purposes, they are not perceived equally attractive as a place for a long-term stay. To overcome the risks and pick Europe as a destination, more resources and skills are necessary than for traditional immigration countries; be it in terms of existing networks abroad, higher educational level or better language skills. With less long-term migration initiatives to Europe, immigration policies and destination country-specific factors, chances to obtain citizenship and amenities of local environment become less relevant. European governments place considerable effort on integration of student migration as a part of a wider immigration strategy. This strategy is likely to prove ineffective if “probationary migrants” clearly do not see European countries as prospective work destination after their graduation.