

BSPS MEETINGS

BSPS Annual Conference 2006
Plenary theme: Global Migration Trends
The University of Southampton,
18-20 September 2006

The BSPS 2006 Annual Conference will be held at the University of Southampton, from Monday 18 September to Wednesday 20 September 2006. The plenary theme will be *Global migration trends*, and plenary speakers will be announced in due course.

Call for papers

BSPS invites members and non-members to submit papers and posters for presentation at the 2006 Conference. Abstracts and proposals for papers can also be accepted. Submissions in all areas of interest to demographers and population specialists are welcomed, and will be organised into three or four parallel strand sessions. Possible strand sessions include: intergenerational relations; ageing populations; migration, population mobility and ethnicity; local government and census issues; longitudinal studies (including SARS and microdata issues); families and households; fertility; historical demography; mortality; reproductive health; health and health inequalities; methods and models; posters.

Strand organisers will be announced in January 2006, with a likely deadline for submissions of April 2006.

Papers and proposals for papers may be submitted now to the BSPS Secretariat, PS201, London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE. Email: pic@lse.ac.uk 020 7955 7666 (phone), 020 7955 6831 (fax), or to the BSPS President, John Hollis, Email john.hollis@london.gov.uk

The 2004 and 2005 conferences attracted over 150 international and local participants and it is hoped the 2006 Conference will be as lively and well-attended.

OTHER MEETINGS

The 3rd International Conference on Population

Geographies

RGS/IBG Population Geography Research Group
19-21 June 2006, Department of Geography,
University of Liverpool

Participants

Although designed for geographers, contributions are welcome from those who would not regard themselves as population geographers, but are working in pertinent research areas. For example, we would welcome speakers from other disciplines including Demography, Sociology, Economics, Social Anthropology, who are interested in broadly geographical aspects of population. Postgraduates are also encouraged to attend and offer papers and there will be a Postgraduate prize for the best one. Attendance does not require the presentation of a paper, but we would strongly encourage people to submit papers.

Papers

The remit for papers is intentionally broad and papers should be submitted on any topic relevant to population geography. Please ensure that you send abstracts of papers to Darren Smith (see below) before 21st December 2005. Those who wish to organise themed sessions are encouraged to contact Darren Smith or Phil Rees (see below). The organising committee will decide the strands of the conference once they have received the abstracts. Papers will be 20- 25 minutes long, allowing for 5-10 minutes discussion in ½ hour slots.

Registration

The deadline for registration is 31 January 2006. A copy of the registration form and booking accommodation will soon be available from the PGRG website:

<http://www.geog.leeds.ac.uk/groups/pgrg>

This site will be updated regularly as more details about the programme become available.

Further Information

For further details about the academic content of the meeting, contact:

Darren P. Smith, School of the Environment, University of Brighton, Brighton, BN2 4GJ

Email: D.Smith@brighton.ac.uk Tel: +44 (0) 1273 643318

Or Phil Rees, School of Geography, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT

Email p.h.rees@leeds.ac.uk Tel: +44 (0) 113 34 33341

European Population Conference 2006

The European Population Conference will also be held in Liverpool, UK, from Wednesday 21st until Saturday 24th June, 2006. The main theme for the conference will be “**Population challenges in ageing societies**”.

International visitors in particular are encouraged to consider using a single flight to attend both meetings, and perhaps to consider presenting papers at both conferences. If you are interested in attending the EAPS meeting further information is available at:

<http://www.eaps.nl/activities/epccom/2006invitation.html>

The plenary address for this conference will be given by Professor Ian Diamond, a familiar figure to many members of EAPS as a demographer, but also currently the Chief Executive of the Economic and Social Research Council, Britain’s major agency for funding and directing research in the social sciences. He is thus ideally placed to address the central theme of the conference, to offer a perspective that links the needs and agendas of population scientists with the needs and agendas of governments and the wider society.

International Microsimulation Association

Those interested in microsimulation-based methods might be interested to note the launch of the International Microsimulation Association www.microsimulation.org. The association aims to promote the free inter-change of experience and ideas between practitioners of microsimulation worldwide. To this end the goals of the association are to provide:

- a repository of links to online microsimulation-related resources
- an email discussion list
- an email news announcement list
- a bibliography of microsimulation-related publications
- an online refereed journal

Submissions are also invited for the March 2006 launch issue of the association’s journal www.microsimulation.org/IJM/

Finally, the association is also planning a major international conference in 2007 to mark the 50th anniversary of Orcutt’s seminal paper, further details of which will be circulated to association members in due course.

Will you have Japanese population researchers with you in 2006?

The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation and the Japan Society run an acclaimed monthly seminar series with an annual theme.

For 2006, the theme chosen is: **Life's Chances - demographic change in Japan and the UK** and the aim is to cover comparisons of the circumstances of fertility and family building/fission; marriage, separation and divorce; ageing, morbidity and mortality in the two countries.

It is important to appreciate that these seminars are for a general, not a specialist audience, and an international audience also (not just Japan and UK).

The seminar planning group would be interested to learn of any Japanese researchers who might be in the UK during 2006, who are researching subjects that could be of interest to a general population and who are likely to have the skill (including English language) to explain their work and its context to a non-specialist audience. We would also be interested to hear from UK researchers with Japanese experience.

If your research institute already is hosting or is expecting to host such a person in 2006, I would be very interested to hear from you.

Professor David Cope, Director, Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, Houses of Parliament. tel: 020 7219 2848; e-mail: coped@parliament.uk

NOTICES

BSPS postgraduate student representative

For the last two years, BSPS has been fortunate to have **Dan Vickers** as postgraduate student rep, but Dan has now resigned from this position after handing in his PhD dissertation. BSPS thanks Dan for his input and sterling service, and sends best wishes for his future.

The new postgraduate student rep. is **Laura Jones** from the University of Loughborough. She can be contacted at l.l.jones@lboro.ac.uk. Welcome to Laura, who will attend BSPS Council meetings as a non-trustee member, and is the first point of contact for postgraduate student members. Laura is working on the determinants of body composition and pubertal development in South African urban adolescents.

Sponsored visits to BSPS Conference and links with LEDC universities in the population studies field

In 2004, the BSPS Council committed BSPS to a three-year trial of sponsored visits to the UK, to include the BSPS Conference, by a representative of a population studies group in a less developed country. This was inaugurated in 2005 with the visit of Sonia Catusas Cervera from Cuba, promoted by Ludi Simpson from the University of Manchester. The University of Manchester has a Memorandum of Agreement with the University of Havana. As the trial is not necessarily restricted to participants from Cuba, it would be useful to know if any other universities in the UK have similar links with

population studies work in less economically developed countries.

If you are aware of any such links, please advise the President, John Hollis (john.hollis@london.gov.uk) or the Secretariat (pic@lse.ac.uk) as soon as possible

ESRC Society Today

The Economic and Social Research Council have launched "ESRC Society Today", a major new online research resource, which may well be of interest to BSPS members. The site can be accessed at <http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk>

BSPS Prize 2005

The high standard of entries this year was remarked on by all 3 judges, who commended all the candidates for their work. They had found it difficult to judge between the entries, as different universities clearly had different criteria and word lengths for their Masters dissertations. However, after much deliberation, the judges agreed that 2 dissertations stood out in their view, and the BSPS Hon. Treasurer agreed to increase the value of the prize from £200 to £300 and to share this between two joint winners. The joint winners of the 2005 BSPS Prize, therefore, were:

Dana Leibmann from the University of Liverpool for "*Migration in contemporary Germany*" and

Sarah Walters, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, for "*Child mortality, the trend in fertility and age distribution in Tanzania, 1920-1961*"

Judges comments on the winning entries:

Migration in Contemporary Germany:

This was a very thorough piece of demographic research and makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of the important, but often under studied subject of internal migration within developed countries. The author of this dissertation correctly identifies the fact that the migration literature is vast and goes on to present a coherent review of the elements of the literature pertaining to the research question being tackled. The author uses a mixed method approach to study these issues and presents methods clearly drawing on existing literature to substantiate the use of the different methodologies used. The author succinctly summaries the results from both the qualitative and quantitative analysis. To improve this high quality piece of work further the author could have more fully incorporated his/ her own findings with those that had been presented in the extensive literature review in the opening chapters of the dissertation. We hope to see this work published in the future with this discussion added!

Child mortality, the trend in fertility and the age distribution in Tanzania, 1920-1961

This dissertation makes an excellent contribution to the field of

demography, using a range of demographic techniques to reconstruct fertility and child mortality rates in Tanzania in the post second world war period. It was an extremely coherently structured dissertation, describing the methods used well and discussing some of the limitations of these analytical techniques. The work was further strengthened by comparing estimates of fertility and mortality from the different data sources available to enhance the validity of the estimates being obtained. The dissertation concluded with an excellent discussion, using Mosley and Chen's framework for childhood survival, to consider the possible determinants of the patterns of childhood mortality observed in Tanzania. The final discussion of the proximate determinants of mortality decline could have been strengthened further by including public health measures in the discussion (e.g. Simon Szreter's work on this subject criticises McKeown's original work for not including public health factors in the discussion of mortality decline). We hope to see this work published in the future with this discussion added.

REPORTS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

BSPS Conference 2005 – Special theme: Intergenerational Relations – University of Kent at Canterbury 12-14 September 2005. Conference Report

The report is attached.

Report for BSPS International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) XXV International Population Conference Tours, France 18– 23 July 2005

In a previous BSPS Newsletter, my colleague Natalie Spark-du Preez covered several topics presented by scholars, researchers and students of population all around the world in the XXV International Population Conference in Tours, France. In this report and to avoid unnecessary repetitions, I covered other areas of research. I attended a variety of really interesting sessions, which I have summarized into four main areas of research, including induced abortion, below replacement fertility in the developed countries, male reproductive health and male sexual behaviour, and life course transition in developed countries and passages to adulthood in developing countries.

Induced Abortion

The aim of this session was to present indirect methods used to estimate abortion levels in countries where induced abortion is illegal. All papers showed creative methods. Using data from Rajasthan, India, the first paper by B. Elul compared levels of unwanted pregnancy, abortion attempts, successful abortions, abortion complications and treatment seeking behaviours for complications from the Anonymous Third Party Reporting (ATPR) method, in which women reported on

experiences among up to five unnamed members of their personal network, with those from Self-Reported Survey (SRS) data. ATPR yielded higher rates of unintended pregnancy, lower rates of attempted abortion and successful abortion, similar rates of complications and higher rates of treatment-seeking behaviours for complications than SRS.

The objectives of the second paper presented by F. Juarez and J. Cagignon were to present new national data, document the process women experienced in obtaining abortions, and assess the level of complications experienced and the degree of persistence to obtain an abortion. The paper incorporated three approaches. The first two, were 'face to face' interviews, and the third one, was a self-administered part. In this part, respondents were asked about information on all pregnancies through a birth history and a fetal loss history, direct questioning on the experience of abortion and its circumstances, and questions on abortion that the women completed on a single page, placed in an envelope and sealed, then returned to the interviewer (named by the authors the Sealed envelope method).

M. Puri, et al., explored the multiple factors affecting the decision making process regarding abortion amongst young couples in Nepal. The results showed that unintended pregnancies were quite common amongst young married couples in Nepal. The findings showed that a considerable proportion of couples thought about abortion but the majority of them did not take any action. Some of them had attempted abortion but only few of them had succeeded. Among the key factors affecting the dynamic and situation specific decision making process were husbands themselves, and health service providers.

Finally, H. David told us about the unique circumstances that made possible to organize, conduct, and continue for over 30 years a study of children born between 1961 and 1963 in Prague (Czech Republic) to women whose request for termination of an unwanted pregnancy was twice denied (once on initial request and again on appeal) and pair-matched controls born to women who accepted their pregnancy and did not request an abortion. The matching criteria included age and sex of the child, same school class, mother's age, number of children in the family, birth order, and socioeconomic status. All the children were born into complete families. The findings were presented from medical, psychological, and sociological assessments at ages 9, 14-16, 21-23, 30, and 35. The conclusion was that being born from an unwanted pregnancy entailed an increased risk for negative psychosocial development and mental well-being.

Below replacement fertility in developed countries

Given the importance of the topic, there was a debate about policies in countries below replacement fertility. The title of the debate was "Will policies to raise fertility in low-fertility countries work?". On one hand, A. Gauthier and G. Santow presented clear and enjoyable evidence arguing why policies will not work. On the other hand, P. McDonald argued in favour of the policies to raise fertility, while M. Livi-Bacci told us lovely stories about young people in developed countries and their willingness to raise fertility, and the obstacles they have to face due to governmental policies.

In my opinion, one of the most interesting sessions was the one covering the prospects for below-replacement fertility. F. Heiland showed his investigation about the

relationship between education and desired family size in Western Europe. The paper by T. Sobotka provided a comparative analysis of major factors leading to the long-standing decline in the number of births in the European Union. He applied methods that decomposed the change in the total number of births into the following effects: changes in the "mean generation size" of potential mothers, changes in fertility quantum, and changes in fertility tempo combined with the changes in the parity distribution of women. The analytical part focused especially on the role of fertility postponement in reducing the total number of births and contributing thus to the slower or even negative population growth.

J. Casterline and R Roushdy examined factors that explained the growing attachment to a two-child norm, and factors that account for resistance to this norm in some sub-groups of the Egyptian population. They modelled the desire for two children Vs. more than two children as a function of a set of fundamental determinants, including household economics, costs/benefits of children, and attitudes about closely related factors (gender relations, family norms). The paper presented by T. Frejka and J. Sardon showed the direction of contemporary fertility trends in developed countries. Findings showed that a moderate fertility decline *is* likely to continue during the first decade of the 21st century, and a fertility increase in the foreseeable future *is* unlikely to occur. The analysis implied that increases of total period fertility rates in most countries, including those of adjusted TFRs, were not a reflection of increases in cohort childbearing, but a result of lesser postponement of births.

Male Reproductive Health & Male Fertility and Sexual Behaviour

The sessions about male reproductive health and male fertility and sexual behaviour addressed a series of important issues. All papers showed the diagnosis for developing countries. In the session on male involvement in reproductive health programmes, the paper by F. Roudi and M. El-Adawy showed how the support and participation of men in family planning programmes in Iran have significantly contributed to the success of fertility decline in that country. Currently, contraceptive use in Iran is the highest among Muslim countries, highly due to male involvement in family planning programmes. The paper about Bangladesh (U. Rob, et al) analyzed the perception of the community and religious leaders of introducing sexually transmitted infections/HIV/AIDS services in female focused health service centres for men. The information was collected through focus group discussions. The paper about India (A. Nanda and P. Thiagarajan) attempted to understand knowledge and attitudes of husbands on reproductive and child health issues in selected urban slums of Delhi. The paper by N. Galban described the commitment to male involvement in the Philippines during the past ten years and reviewed the efforts done by NGOs and GOs in terms of male involvement in reproductive health issues. Finally O. Wusu and U. Isiugo-Abanihe presented their findings on changing family structure and childbearing and the implications for male fertility behaviour in a community in Southwest Nigeria.

The session on male fertility and sexual behaviour began with a paper about Mexico (J. Contreras), in which the author analyzed the components of male reproduction from a

demographic perspective based on the states with highest fertility rates in Mexico. N. Audinarayana showed the sexual behaviour and its determinants among young never married male factory workers in a textile city in South India using semi-structure interviews. To continue S. Gross, et al. presented lifetime morbidity and mortality of men with normal and with subnormal sperm count as young adults. A study based on masculinity in Nigeria (C. Odimegwu, et al.) identified the social and health costs of gender inequities in South Eastern Nigeria. To conclude this session, C. La showed the value of partner virginity among college male Vietnamese students.

In the session about linkages between masculinity and risk behaviour, a paper about Thailand (A. Malhotra, et al.) examined the relationship between masculinity and a range of risk behaviours among Thai male youth. The authors argued that recent processes of modernization have crystallized adolescence as a life course stage for young men in which opportunities for experimentation, adventure, and thrill should be maximized. The paper about North India by D. de Vries, et al. showed how the desire to demonstrate masculinity influences risk behaviour among men living in two Indian states. The paper thematically presented life histories which illustrated the influence of chronic alcoholism, forcefulness, circle of friends, social conventions, money, cleanliness, virgins, sexual security, trust, bisexual openness, and uniqueness on sexual risk behaviours such as the [non-]use of condoms, knowing which women are risky and which are not, entitlement to uncomplicated sex, and high frequencies of sexual encounters. The paper by I. Szasz analyzed masculine stereotypes, the exercise of power and sexual practices in different groups of Mexican men. S. Swain and G. Rao showed how premarital sexual history contributed in shaping masculinity and male sexual behaviours among male workers in Indian slums.

Life Course Transition in Developed Countries and Passages to adulthood in developing countries

Given the nature of my PhD thesis, I attended the sessions presenting research on the topic of transitions to adulthood, both in developed and developing countries.

In the session dedicated to the developed world, the paper by D. Philipov focused on the micro-level interrelationship between educational trajectories of women and the transition to motherhood in Western Europe. The paper about Italy (S. Mazzuco, et al.) analyzed the similarities and differences between two cohorts of young Italian people. The authors also presented the transition processes to a series of events of the "life course" as interrelating mechanisms, where each process was the premise for the next step, but where all were probably considered indispensable for choosing to have a child. Findings suggested a diffusion of new family forms among youth but a persistent delay in family formation. G. Bingoly-Liworo and E. Lapierre-Adamcyk explored the impact of prolonged education in becoming a parent in Canada. The last paper by K. Sienkiewicz, compared the trends in the process of leaving the parental home before and after the breakdown of the Communist regime in Poland. The paper used piecewise linear event history regressions to find the significant factors on the timing of leaving home, including demographic (cohort, number of siblings), social (composition of household) and economic factors (occupational status of parents, region of residence).

In developing countries, the transitions to adulthood

occur in different contexts than those in developed countries.

Due to the large number of abstracts received by the organizers of the session corresponding to developing countries, an additional session was included.

The first session opened with a paper about Latin America (J. Quilodran) that showed the transitions to sexual, marital and reproductive life and the most frequent trajectories for eight Latin American countries and between two cohorts of women. The findings confirmed that out of wedlock unions, as a traditional and alternative form of marriage to begin marital life, have become a distinctive trait of nuptiality in Latin America. Using longitudinal panel data from an adolescent study in rural Bangladesh, a paper by S. Amin and L. Suran analyzed the impact of programmes to delay marriage. The data suggested that, while such programmes could achieve delays in marriage, these changes could be limited to a small subset of girls with relatively unusual characteristics. The paper by M. Caltabiano and M. Castiglioni studied the changes of marital and sexual behaviour of Nepalese men and women. The findings showed that the proportion of men and women who experience their first intercourse before cohabitation was increasing as modernization of behaviours has quickened among people more exposed to social changes. N. Mondain and T. LeGrand explored the integration of the adolescent offspring of south to north immigrants in Montreal, while F. Berthe, et al. showed the vulnerability of young Malians in their transitions to adulthood in a changing world.

The second session began with the paper by M. Alexander, et al., which explored the formation of pre-marital sexual partnerships among young females and males in urban slums of Pune, India. Findings of this paper suggested that youth were aware of a variety of pre-marital relationships: romantic relationships, described as friendship or love-ship, as well as more casual encounters and sex worker relations. The paper about South Africa by D. Lam and J. Seekings used a Cape Area Panel Study to analyze multiple dimensions of the transitions to adulthood in metropolitan Cape Town. As shown by the authors, the use of both retrospective histories and repeat waves, CAPS provided data on reproductive health, sexual activity, schooling, work and living arrangements for urban youth. A Camarano presented several patterns of transitions towards adult life of young Brazilians. The paper analyzed the multiple trajectories to adulthood considering those who left parental homes to become heads of household or spouses and those who have stayed in the condition of children or other relatives. The results suggested that the process was characterized by non-linear trajectories of the life stages. The paper about Rwanda and Zambia (N. Murray, et al.) investigated whether changes in family structure, specifically transition into orphanhood, put adolescents at a higher risk of sexual initiation in those countries. The authors used discrete time hazard and multivariate models, including time varying covariates related to the family structure of the child (parents survival status and years since death of parents).

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Last but definitely not least, I want to express my gratitude to BSPS for funding my participation in the XXV International Population Conference in Tours, France. I absolutely enjoyed this great opportunity to meet the most renowned names in the field of population, and associate so many familiar [authors']

names with faces. For abstract, papers and authors, please visit <http://iussp2005.princeton.edu>.

Gabriela Mejia-Pailles
PhD student

London School of Economics and Political Science

Vieillessement et territoires à l'horizon 2030. International Conference on Human Ageing held at the Sorbonne, 13-15 September 2005.

On 13 September 2005 an audience of about two hundred assembled in the elegant, but uncomfortable, Amphithéâtre Richelieu of the Sorbonne, for the launch of a *colloque scientifique européen* devoted to the inter-related themes of human ageing and spatial organization. The conference was sponsored by the French government body concerned with territorial planning (DATAR, *Délégation à l'Aménagement et à l'Action Régionale*), the *Comité National de Géographie* (commission for population geography), the *Population et Avenir* association, and several others. Staff of the *Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques* (INED) were also present, delivering papers and chairing sessions. Not only was this a sustained debate on a major issue, but it was also a meeting of scientists and politicians, of demographers and geographers, of consultants and government employees, and of medical doctors and local *animateurs*. Not surprisingly, most speakers were French but there were also contributions from Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland and Spain. Over sixty presentations – some covering other countries as well – were listed in a very busy three-day programme. To the initial concern – but ultimate relief – of the organizers, fifteen speakers failed to turn up; their presence would have made these congested days impossible to handle.

Under the able chairmanship of Professor Gérard-François Dumont (Université de Paris-Sorbonne), and with the energetic administrative support of Dr. Philippe Boulanger, the first day was devoted to broad aspects of ageing. Members of the public were invited to attend at no charge. Dumont inaugurated the proceedings by outlining the demographic facts and projections about ageing. His talk was complemented by a keynote speech from the minister in charge of aménagement du territoire who highlighted the pronounced ageing of residents in town and country alike, as the 'baby boom' generation of French men and women reached retirement age and life expectancy continued to increase. The horizon of 2030, taken for the conference as a whole, was the time frame being used by the DATAR for land-use and transport projections.

After a typically French two-hour lunch break, an equally large audience reassembled this time in the Amphithéâtre Descartes for six presentations that focused on specific parts of France. Despite its large absolute numbers of elderly people ('*séniors*' in French parlance, with pronunciation close to *señor* in Spanish), the Ile-de-France (greater Paris) remains a relatively 'young' region, as a result of relatively high birth rates, migration by students and young employees from the provinces, and the implications of immigration (both recent and more distant) from abroad. Areas in the outer Paris Basin attract the capital's 'young' retirees (55-65 years of age) whose second homes become transformed into retirement homes. The

arrival of retired British, Dutch and German citizens reinforces the elderly population of many country areas in Burgundy, Normandy and western France, reversing long local histories of rural depopulation and injecting revenues into local economies but also inflating house prices and creating problematic demands for personal services and care that will increase in the years ahead.

Such issues were explored in much more detail in the following two days of 'scientific sessions' held in the much smaller Salle des Actes (capacity 50 people) to which members of the general public were not invited. Bringing a vast amount of varied knowledge to bear on such fundamental notions as 'ageing', 'retirement' and the like, speaker after speaker stressed the importance of recognizing the varying capacities of individuals of increasing age, rather than employing arbitrary age categories to define 'the elderly', or 'the retired', or making assumptions about health conditions and medical needs. Despite these sensible pleas, many speakers then went on to massage an abundance of statistics in exactly the ways other contributors had condemned. The arguments of medical doctors and social workers among the speakers seemed to be drowned by the computational obsession of statisticians and demographers. Sometimes I felt that there was an overabundance of quantitative information and a shortage of message.

Three dozen papers provided a valuable review of ageing and associated management issues in many regions of metropolitan France, in several of the *départements d'outre-mer* (Guadeloupe, La Réunion), and in many parts of Europe but not, alas, the British Isles. Papers on rapid ageing, serious unemployment and female outmigration from post-industrial eastern Germany, and on spatial variations in age structure in Poland – explicable in part by the resettlement by young families of newly-acquired territories after World War II – were especially memorable. Attention was duly paid to the massive economic challenges that an enlarged 'retired' section of the population will pose, and to the socio-medical needs of the ageing 'baby-boom' generation in the decades ahead. Contributions by medical practitioners, local mayors and members of interest groups provided a welcome contrast with the seemingly endless stream of power-point presentations that seem to have become the staple offering of academics and researchers below retirement age. There is a great deal to be said in favour of straight talking and looking members of the audience in the eye, rather than shooting more and more words, statistics and graphics on to screens that can usually not be seen from the middle let along the back of lecture rooms.

Without doubt, the success of *Vieillessement et territoires* owed much to the efficiency and energy of the organizing team and to the hospitality extended by the Sorbonne. Academics, politicians, practitioners and policy-makers came together to share their knowledge and air differences of opinion. For example, hands-on 'carers' and activists were clearly frustrated by the showers of statistics coming from many researchers – and by the apparent lack of take-away message. Much of Europe was represented at the conference but it is regrettable that no communications were forthcoming from British or Irish colleagues. The proceedings will be edited by Professor Dumont to appear in a couple of volumes over the next two years.



Sonia Catusus and John Hollis, presidents of the Cuban and British Population Studies Societies, take a stroll by the Thames (photo Georgia Hay)

Cuba links report and appeal

BSPS invited Professor Sonia Catusus Cervera to BSPS conference, as president of the Cuban Society for Population Studies (SoCuEsPo). At BSPS conference, Sonia spoke on the Cuban demographic transition, as in the conference report. Because final confirmation of her visit was delayed somewhat, Ludi Simpson organised a last-minute itinerary for the week following the conference. It turned out to be a gruelling round of talks and meetings which Sonia managed without complaint, and which has possibly initiated a lasting relationship between the two societies.

Sonia spoke at the University of Manchester, the Royal Statistical Society and the London School of Economics. She met the Humanities Dean of Research at the University of Manchester, which has a Memorandum of Agreement with Havana University, James Nazroo to discuss design and analysis of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing, Steve Smallwood and colleagues at the Office for National Statistics including discussion of her own area of fertility and family development, officers of the Royal Statistical Society for whom she carried a letter from colleague statisticians, and Greater London Authority researchers. She had time out for walks by the Thames, Saltaire village festival in Yorkshire, and a little shopping.

By the end of the visit, she drew up a plan for further collaboration which includes persuading her colleagues to contribute to BSPS news, encouragement of promising young Cubans to apply for scholarships at British Universities, an approach to the British Council to pay for a series of courses in Cuba and in Britain, possible projects on household formation and population projections, and a great deal more that the writer doesn't know about.

Sonia's centre, Havana University's Centre for Demographic Studies (CEDEM, <http://www.uh.cu/centros/cedem/CEWEB.htm>) has some projects that are funded by Cuba's national scientific programme:

- Self-employed women and human resources and population scenarios 2000-2050, under the heading 'Economy today: challenges and perspectives'
- Demographic characteristics and skin colour, under the heading 'Cuban society: challenges and perspectives'
- Sustainable development en Guamauhaya community, under the heading 'Sustainable development in mountains'.

In addition CEDEM has its own projects, including:

- Socio-demographic change in the Cuban family
- Mortality and survival in the 1990s
- Nuptiality in the 20th century

Internationally funded projects include a national survey of internal migration, and a study of health, environmental and community development in Santa Maria del Rosari.

CEDEM's priorities for the future are

- Ageing
- Population movement and space
- Reproduction and population dynamics
- Population and sustainable development
- New methodologies

Thanks to Anne Shepherd for worrying about Sonia's air tickets, and to all involved in her visit for making it so successful.

There are many ways in which BSPS members can help to maintain the links with Cuba which both BSPS and SoCuEsPo would like to continue. If any member has engaged professionally with Cuba please could you share your experience and contacts? Secondly, can you spare any recent or classic texts in postgraduate population studies or related development studies? The interests and projects are broad, but research budgets include no foreign currency, so anything in good condition will be appreciated. Let me know what you have and I will arrange transport from London.

Ludi Simpson (ludi.simpson@manchester.ac.uk)

"Ageing Britain: Shades of Grey. An informed public debate sponsored by the Economic and Social Science Research Council." Tuesday 22nd November 2005.

This was an interesting meeting that began with a series of short (5 minute) talks by each of four speakers, followed by a lively question and answer session. The event was initiated by **Frances Cairncross (Chair of ESRC)** who introduced the chair for the evening - **Malcolm Dean, Assistant Editor Social Affairs Leader Writer, *The Guardian***. His opening remarks were about pensions concerns, the risk of there not being enough workers in the future to support the growing older population, exacerbated by the fact that younger people are not saving enough now for their retirement. He summarised

three recommendations to solve the looming problems: raise taxes, raise pension contributions and raise the retirement age. He ended his opening remarks by making the point that when retirement pensions were first implemented they applied from age 70 but this was at a time when life expectancy at birth for men was around 45 years!

The first speaker was **Professor Alan Walker, Director ESRC New Dynamics of Ageing Research Programme**. He spoke first against age discrimination and about the need for a policy towards active ageing. Age discrimination not only leads to social exclusion but is also a serious threat to economic progress and prosperity. Employers need to recognise the contribution that older people can make in the work place. There is currently an “age-employment” paradox: that the average age of leaving the workforce is decreasing at a time when longevity is increasing. A cultural shift is necessary in attitude, employers need to recognise that older workers can be productive. They also need to adopt a life-long learning policy for all their workers otherwise it becomes inevitable that older workers will eventually lack the requisite skills. These changes need to take place in the social context of active ageing with, for example, people adopting more healthy life styles with good diets and ample exercise.

Prof. Walker also stressed the need to take a life-course perspective in studying ageing bearing in mind that outcomes at the individual level are often the product of the life experiences of those people. Finally he talked about the important role that science can play in contributing to policy and practice on ageing.

The second speaker was **Mervyn Kohler, Head of Public Affairs, Help the Aged**. He spoke about a tilt towards the emergence of a different attitude to older people these days. Old age is an “age of opportunity”, a period when people have more spare time which could usefully be harnessed in a number of ways to mutual benefit in local communities and in society e.g. by participation in local regeneration schemes or through joining local or health service advisory panels. Older people have a contribution to make to society and they should not be seen just as a burden.

However, set against this positive message was the other side of the coin in terms of the financial status of many pensioners in the UK. The UK has a polarised older population, e.g. 20% live below the poverty line, the majority of who are in persistent poverty. Mervyn Kohler ended with the message: “The rich have choices, voices, health and opportunities. The poor have none of these things. Health inequalities in society will lead to poor people enjoying less pension years and the rich reaping the benefits of any savings made if the retirement age were to be increased.”

The third speaker was **Sarah Newton, Director of the International Longevity Centre** who stressed the importance of a life-course approach when analysing data on older people. As more people survive to old age there will be much more diversity among the population of those aged 65 or over than in the past. Longitudinal surveys such as ELSA and the BHPS are powerful analytical tools and more longitudinal analyses are required to help researchers gain a better understanding of the lifestyles, health, income and living arrangements of this

diverse group. Such research would help us to understand the drivers behind favourable outcomes in old age and thus, potentially, help inform decision making at the individual level before people get old. More research and evaluation is needed of the impact of reforms and policy changes, such as pension and benefit reforms or programs intended to benefit the older population at the local level.

The final speaker was **Tim Bull, the Group Strategic Planning Director of the Saga Group** and he started his short talk by introducing the commercial implications of people living longer. Older people are consumers but this is a fact that is not well-recognised by businesses. For example, at present the upper age limit for many market research surveys is age 54. There is a challenge to the business sector for them to do more to recognise the value of the older consumer, particularly anticipating the ageing of the baby boomer generation. A second strand to this last presentation was around the issue of how best to take advantage of the desire of some older people to remain in the labour market for longer. This will become increasingly necessary to fill the gaps which will be created in the future by the reducing numbers of school-leavers. Some older people may want to work on past the retirement age, not just for economic reasons but also for the fulfilment of their ambitions. However, some adaptation might be necessary in the workplace to accommodate such a change. Older people may want to work shorter hours or work from home, for example. Finally the speaker endorsed the point made earlier about the diversity of the older population. Today’s Saga customers are, apparently, radically different to those of 25 years ago. As the baby boomers join the older population then more diversity might be expected. However, there is similarity too, which is among the aspirations of older people as none of them want to be poor, unhealthy or socially excluded in old age.

There followed a lively question and answer session which gave rise to a wide range of brief discussions and this last paragraph gives a flavour of some of those. The question was asked as to whether or not life expectancy might continue to rise or whether health issues will set a limit in practice. There was talk of the implications of a structural lag whereby policy changes lag behind demographic change. Funding issues were noted whereby local and social services are expected to deliver services to a growing population with no increases in budgets. There was discussion about the role of society in helping people to achieve positive outcomes in old age. For example, by promoting healthy lifestyles. There was substantial debate about the issues around raising the pension age and whether this would discriminate against those in manual occupations. Also whether there should be more imaginative solutions such as a gradual or more stepped transition from full-time work into retirement rather than the current “cliff-edge” where workers are full-time one day and then retired and working no hours at all the next.