

# GLOBAL MOBILITY

---

RUSTAT CONFERENCES  
2017



JESUS COLLEGE  
CAMBRIDGE

Intellectual Forum



# OVERVIEW

---

From the earliest days, humans have moved around the world, exploring and settling. Over the years and millennia, patterns of movement have changed substantially, as people have settled, with the development of nation states, and with a rise in tourism and travel. How will global mobility continue to change over the forthcoming decades?

When considering this issue in public discussion and in academic work, 'human mobility' is often assumed to be synonymous with 'international migration'. However, this coupling often acts to obscure other forms of movement. The result of this can be poorer understanding of the diversity of human movement, inaccurate data, and discrimination against migrants.

One crucial contemporary change to mobility is the increasing role of the digital. Our digital identities are becoming more and more mobile. With individuals handing over voluminous personal information to multinational corporations, our data is flowing internationally. Our digital identities are formed, and flow, across borders. Human mobility needs to therefore be discussed, considered and perhaps even reconceived in this context.

At the same time, migration itself is often poorly understood. Ever-increasing numbers of people are moving within their own countries. Around the world, there are 250 million people living outside their country of birth, and a further 40.3 million people are presently internally displaced, according to the UNHCR in 2017. However, mobility within states, both self-selected and due to involuntary displacement, remains frequently under-discussed when considering "migration".

At this Rustat Conference, we took stock of human mobility, both in the UK and beyond, while exploring potential future developments. We asked: how are we moving in the 21st Century? How might this evolve as political, economic, climate, and technological, changes occur? How can we take a wider lens on mobility than just physical transiting of a border? On the 30 November 2017, we drew together experts from business, academia, non-government organisations, the media, politics, the tech sector, and the health service to explore mobility in its broadest sense.

In discussing not just how people move physically, but also how our increasingly many identities move across international borders daily, this Conference took a wide lens on human movement. While, at least in the U.K., much of the current discussion of mobility is concerned with human movement in the post-Brexit period, at this Rustat Conference we sought to look more broadly and take stock of the current state of our knowledge and what remains to know about global mobility.

As our infographic on the next page indicates, our discussion opened up many more questions than it answered. How are humans mobile and how may this change in the next few years? How might they move differently in the longer-term future? What does the nationalist surge behind Britain's exit from the EU indicate a need to think about states and borders? How might we respond to needs for global governance and civil society in this increasingly insular world? Will technology change how we think about movement, borders, displacement, and relocation? How might we capitalise on technology in the face of increasingly inward looking national political discussions?

What our experts found from these questions was a great space for policymakers, industry, researchers, and the Third Sector to take forward the next steps in our thinking on mobility, now and in the future. For many who attended the greatest questions remaining were not just practical ones, but those that went to the heart of our political systems and human beliefs. We explore our experts' opinions on what we know, don't know, and need to know, in the sections that follow.

Dr Sarah Steele and Dr Julian Huppert  
Rapporteur and Rustat Conferences Director



JESUS COLLEGE  
CAMBRIDGE

Intellectual Forum

**Rustat Conference on Global Mobility**  
30 November 2017

8.40- 9.30 **Registration, Bawden Room.**

Refreshments served. Make way to Frankopan Hall for 9.30.

9.40-9.50 **Welcome and introduction, Frankopan Hall.**

Professor Ian White, Master, Jesus College & Dr Julian Huppert, Director of the Rustat Conferences and the Intellectual Forum, Jesus College.

9.50-10.50 **Conceptualising mobility and human movement, Frankopan Hall.**

*Over human history, people have moved around the world. How and why do people move, and how has that changed over decades and centuries? What makes someone a migrant? Do we have a clear definition for this term, compared to a tourist, overseas visitor, or any other concept? How does a sense of national or sub-national identity fit with concepts of migration?*

Chair: Professor Sarah Harper, University of Oxford.

Initial comments: Dr Brendan Burchell, University of Cambridge & Mr Abhik Sen, Commonwealth Secretariat.

10.50-11.15 **Refreshment Break, Bawden Room.**

11.15-12.15 **Mobility and the UK, Frankopan Hall.**

*There are many migrant groups that make up the current population of the UK, and many Britons have moved overseas. Britain's approach to migration will be heavily affected by Brexit. The UK has heavily relied on EU workers, not just in the private sector, but also in essential public services like the NHS. Universities attract numerous EU students, staff, and research funding. We don't yet know the shape of the UK's agreement with Europe, but we are already seeing shifts in the patterns of human movement. What might Brexit mean for mobility in the immediate and longer-term future? What would a good outcome look like? What other factors are likely to change flows of people in and out of the UK?*

Chair: Dr Julian Huppert, Director of the Rustat Conferences and the Intellectual Forum, Jesus College.

Initial comments: Mr Rohitash Dhawan, KPMG & Ms Sarah Stevens, Russell Group.

12.15-13:15 **Lunch, West Court Dining Room.**

13.15-14.15 **Global Movement, Frankopan Hall.**

*There are very large population flows around the world, with people moving for both economic and non-economic reasons. The information about who is moving where, and why,*

*is often not very clear. What are the patterns of movement at the moment, and how does this affects and is affected by global security, economics and the environment? How might we better understand global flow to avoid crises, like the current refugee crisis, from emerging?*

**Chair:** Professor Loraine Gelsthorpe, University of Cambridge.

**Initial comments:** Professor Richard Black, SOAS, Rt Hon Sir Stephen O'Brien KBE, & Dr Andrew Lilico, CANZUK.

**14.15-14.40 Refreshment Break, Bawden Room.**

**14.40-15.40 Technology and the future of mobility, Frankopan Hall.**

*Futurists have long argued that technology will change the way humans interact. Has this yet had an effect on human movement, and should we be expecting it to make a larger difference in the coming days? Have virtual meetings and travel replaced physical ones, and can they? Will a physical location become a more trivial aspect of a human being? Will technology allow us to monitor or predict mobility more accurately? How might technologies, now and in the future, reshape mobility itself?*

**Chair:** Professor Peter Williamson, University of Cambridge.

**Initial comments:** Mr Giles Derrington, TechUK, & Ms Genevieve Leveille, Decentralised ID and Agriledger.

**15.40-16.00 Closing comments and discussion, Frankopan Hall.**

**Dr Julian Huppert, Director of the Rustat Conferences and the Intellectual Forum, Jesus College.**





JESUS COLLEGE  
CAMBRIDGE

Intellectual Forum

## RUSTAT CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL MOBILITY

30 November 2017

### Participant List

Mr Afshin Ahmadian	Analyst	CQS Asset Managers
Professor Madeleine Arnot	Fellow, Professor of Education, and Joint Convenor of CAMMIGRES	Jesus College and the University of Cambridge's CAMMIGRES (Cambridge Migration Research Network)
Dr Lutz-Peter Berg	Head of Science and Technology	Swiss Embassy, U.K.
Professor Richard Black	Pro-Director (Research & Enterprise)	SOAS, University of London
Dr Brendan Burchell	Reader in the Social Sciences	Department of Sociology, University of Cambridge
Mr Giles Derrington	Head of Policy for European Exit	TechUK
Mr Rohitesh Dhawan	Global Geopolitics Lead	KPMG
Dr James Dodd	Founding Member	Rustat Conferences
Ms Anne-Laure Donskoy	Founding Co-Chair	the3million
Professor Loraine Gelsthorpe	Fellow, Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, and Joint Convenor of CAMMIGRES	Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge and CAMMIGRES (Cambridge Migration Research Network)

Mr David Goodheart	Head of the Demography, Immigration, and Integration Unit, and Director of the Integration Hub	Policy Exchange
Ms Phoebe Griffith	Associate Director for Migration, Integration and Communities	Institute for Public Policy Research
Dr Julian Huppert	Director, Fellow, and Affiliated Researcher (POLIS)	Rustat Conferences and Intellectual Forum, Jesus College, Cambridge Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Cambridge
Dr James Hampshire	Reader in Politics (Sussex European Institute) and Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange (School of Law, Politics and Sociology)	University of Sussex
Professor Sarah Harper	Professor of Gerontology	University of Oxford
Mr Tom King	Director	Aviso
Ms Genevieve Leveille	Senior Analyst, CEO and Founder	Decentralised ID and Agriledger
Dr Andrew Lilico	Principal at Europe Economics, a Fellow of the Institute of Economic Affairs, Chairman of the IEA Monetary Policy Committee and was Chairman of Economists for Britain at Vote Leave	CANZUK
Mr Edwin Morgan	Head of Media Relations and Deputy Director of Policy	Institute of Directors
Mr Jolyon Maugham	Queen's Council	Devereux Chambers
Right Honourable Sir Stephen O'Brien KBE	Immediate past Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs & Emergency Relief Coordinator	United Nations

Professor Allyson Pollock	BMA Council Member, Consultant in Public Health Medicine, and the Director of the Institute of Health and Society	British Medical Association and University of Newcastle
Ms Zehra Qureshi	Co-founder and COO	Symmitree
Mr Abhik Sen	Head of Policy and Research (Youth Affairs)	Commonwealth Secretariat
Ms Adanna Shallowe	Manager, RSA Global	The RSA
Dr Sarah Steele	Deputy Director, Senior Research Associate, and Affiliated Researcher (POLIS)	Rustat Conferences and Intellectual Forum, Jesus College, Cambridge Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Cambridge
Ms Sarah Stevens	Head of Policy (Higher Education and International)	Russell Group
Mr Hazhir Teimourian	Analyst, Writer and Commentator	Limehouse Group
<b>Dr Nir Tsuk</b>	Visiting Professor (entrepreneurship)	King's College London and Osaka University, as well as Strategy and Business Development at Idealist.org
Mrs Niomie Warner	Head of Migration Development	Office for National Statistics
Professor Ian White	Master of Jesus College and Chair of the Rustat Conferences	Jesus College, Cambridge
Professor Peter Williamson	Honorary Professor of International Management, and Fellow and Director of Studies in Management at Jesus College	Jesus College and the Judge Business School, University of Cambridge



# PANEL ONE

## WHAT IS MOBILITY?

---

The way people think of mobility and migration are frequently highly ideological. Often, in talking about migration the meaning is narrowed to imply it indicates that a person is physically moving across an international border. Consequently, our attendees were concerned initially with discussing terminology and unpacking the meanings we often ascribe to the language around global movement.

Our experts pointed out that at any given time, only 3.3% of the global population is outside their country of birth. The vast majority of people moving are doing so within countries or in ways that mean they return to their country of birth. The rates at which people move overseas – or even travel overseas – vary significantly by different countries and by income.

However, the most mobile aspect of a person at present is not in fact their physical self, but it is their digital self. Because personal data flows within and across borders with increasing regularity, our digital identities are certainly cross-border. People are sharing content and their personal private data online more frequently, and with greater comfort. Our experts were quick to point out that many companies and platforms we interact with daily in the digital sphere are located in different jurisdictions across the world. What we produce in these interactions is mobile, but as we come to discuss later in the report, this movement is not always in ways we control.

Our experts therefore explored how by conflating mobility with migration we often limit how we conceive our identities. They pointed out that we are often pre-occupied with our identity being connected to a state or nation. If asked where they are from, many people in the U.K. would describe themselves as British or English. Our experts noted that this is wrapped up in not just self-perceived belonging but also assigned assumptions about where a person is “really” from. People are often asked follow up questions about their country of origin, even if born “here”. Such phrasing indicates that identity is often tied to a person’s skin colour or accent, but also to the state of birth. Indeed, our experts spelled out the ways in which race and ethnicity are often connected to an assumption that a person has moved from elsewhere despite the fact their country of birth may itself be where they are located.

The result was that, for many of our experts who were themselves from outside the U.K. or had parents who were born abroad, there needed to be greater space to reshape dialogues around personal identity and belonging. They suggested a rephrasing of the question as “where do you call home?”; a question that opens up space for multiple locations of belonging, alongside evolving definitions of identity and selfhood. Many people quite reasonably describe themselves as having multiple layered identities (Being, for example, European, British, English, and from Cambridge at the same time).

There is a particular challenge for political discussion and statistical consideration arising from these complex and layered notions of identity. The data collected for migration – and the consequent policy decisions – will vary significantly whether short term, transient mobility is grouped in with more permanent settled. One example raised was students. If we count them as migrants, net migration figures in the U.K. look very high. On the other hand, if we consider that many will return home to their country at the end of their courses or move elsewhere, and therefore discount them from net migration figures while a student, the net migration figures are substantially lower. Overall, the choice about who to measure, why to measure them, and when to measure them influences what we know about migration, and hence the responses to it.

The age profile of those who move is different from those who do not. Notably, across the world we have reached “peak youth”; for the first time there are now more people over 30 years old in the world than those younger. This has dramatic consequences for movement, and for the connections it has with family life, community, work and care.

At past Rustat Conferences on the Future of Work and Ageing, our experts emphasised how population shifts are impacting how we live our daily lives and formulate policy. At this Rustat Conference, we heard how it is also integrally reconfiguring mobility, impacting everything from workforce recruitment to family relocations.

But even as populations are changing, it is irrefutable that our increasingly interconnected world is changing how we behave and therefore how our identities move. Our participants proposed a departure from traditional notions that wrap mobility up with people transiting internationally-recognised borders between sovereign states, and instead exploring movement of our digital and physical selves. One summary questions that were raised included:

- Why are we so stuck to the concept of borders?
- Whose interests do these borders serve?
- Might they be reconfigured in the future?



# PANEL TWO

## MOBILITY POST-BREXIT

---

With more abstract questions about the concept of sovereign states and nations concluding the previous discussions, we moved to a more concrete discussion of the nationalist surge that drove the UK to vote for Brexit, and to consider what it will mean for people moving to and from the country in the future. Our experts also considered how changes to physical crossing of the UK border may lead to technology playing an increasing role in keeping people connected. The session was very focused on the need to move from just questioning and challenging the Brexit vote, and instead focusing on what it will likely mean for the future.

It was noted that surveys of EU nationals suggested the UK would witness both a substantial departure of those from the EU presently here, and also a reduction in the number of people coming to the UK from the EU. It was noted that this was influenced not just by the present uncertainty around the rights of EU nationals after the UK leaves the EU, but also by people feeling that “this isn’t the country they thought they lived in”. It was noted, however, that just because people say they might leave does not mean they will do so. In a typical year, a number of EU citizens do in any case leave the UK, and as such this cannot be taken as simple evidence of a more hostile environment. The way employers respond, by making it clear that EU citizens are wanted or otherwise, and the final form that Brexit takes, will have a large effect on what happens ultimately.

For example, we discussed whether Indefinite Leave to Remain – a revocable agreement to settlement rights – would give sufficient confidence to EU nationals who currently consider the UK as a more permanent home. Other experts disagreed, suggesting that Brexit offered an equalising opportunity for all those from abroad that would allow treatment of all international visitors or migrants coming to the UK to do so on the same footing, rather than privileging those from European countries at the expense of others.

The discussion then moved to consider whether post-Brexit, new schemes could be brought in to allow for greater opportunities of transient movement into the UK. Rather than leading to the contraction and loss of global influence that some have predicted, could new approaches to encourage people from around the world to come here bring benefits? For example, improved temporary worker and youth mobility schemes, could expand the UK's influence abroad. Our experts disagreed on whether perceptions of Britain as "closed" or "open" were preferable, and the extent to which one should prioritise the citizens of one's own country. It was noted that economically, the Brexit decision was impacting the economy, businesses, the healthcare sector and even higher education, widely.

With regard to healthcare, it was emphasised that the impacts of Brexit were already being felt and indicated a fundamental need to reconsider policy around the future healthcare service. Our experts emphasised that the NHS workforce relies heavily on migrant staff to deliver services, with around 130,000 EU nationals working in the NHS in 2017. Our experts noted that over a quarter of doctors working in the UK were trained abroad, and while many overseas trained came from Commonwealth countries, the continued rhetoric around those from abroad that accompanies Brexit may also have wide sweeping consequences of staffing and recruitment both from the EU and beyond.

It was noted that such concerns are mirrored in the education sector. Our experts noted that there were over 120,000 EU students across the UK at the time of the referendum, equating to more than 6% of all full-time students in Britain's universities. Not only do these students generate over £3 billion for the UK's economy, they also create critical jobs.



Our experts questioned how Brexit might affect diversity in the educational setting, while also impacting on staffing with stories already emerging of staff being denied entry to the UK or finding the cost of visas prohibitive on the low incomes teachers and university lectures often received.

Generally, it was noted that the impact of Brexit on businesses was expected to be strongly negative, especially in the shorter term. Many employers were concerned that they would find it very difficult to recruit the staff they needed for a wide range of roles, from agriculture to healthcare to high technology. However, it was agreed that the problems should not be overstated – businesses in the UK would not be unable to operate, although they would have to be more creative about how to achieve their goals.



## RUSTAT CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL MOBILITY

There are currently **1 BILLION** migrants in the world

**3.3%** of people live outside their country of birth

We have reached **PEAK YOUTH**. For the first time, there are more people over 30 than under 30

### Identity and Migration

People often have many identities at once

Identities may be: **perceived**, **statistical**, **political**

**Rural to urban flow MUST BE CONSIDERED alongside global and internal flows**

**Flow vs stocks:**  
We often measure the number of migrants in place but we don't track the flow globally or in countries very well

### Mobility in post-Brexit UK

Presently **2.4m** EU workers in the UK, making up 8% of the total UK working population

**43%** of EU workers in UK sampled either have decided to leave or are thinking about leaving, identifying that they "feel less welcome or valued" or that "it's not the place they thought they lived in"

**29%** increase in the number of EU citizens leaving the UK since the referendum

Falls both in the numbers of EU citizens (down 19% on the previous year) and as well as non-EU citizens (down 10%) coming to the UK

But what would have left in a typical year anyway?

Source: KPMG, ONS

### Global movements

**143m** people in humanitarian need  
**63m** displaced persons  
**22m** refugees  
**37** countries identified as having acute needs

**Global climate change will play a role:** The Republic of Kiribati has bought land in Fiji to move to

Illicit financial flows from developing and emerging economies is **US\$1-2 TRILLION**

Source: UN, OCHA

### Technology

Data is more mobile than people

It is now easier to move further away and stay in touch thanks to technology

can **enable, substitute** or **prevent mobility**

People are handing over more data than ever on themselves. How will they be able to control their own identity?

Estonian citizenship **citizen of the world?**

### KEY QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED

- Why do we have borders, and whose interests do they serve?
- What can we do to encourage social cohesion when humans move?
- What is the vision for the UK in 2030?
- How can we enhance global governance?
- How can we get better data on human flows?
- What will technological change do for and to mobility?
- How can people control the mobility of their data?



# PANEL THREE

## THE GLOBAL OUTLOOK

---

In recognising the issues facing Britain, our experts moved to consider a more international view of mobility. We moved between exploring trends in human movement around the world, to the shifting understandings of mobility as connected to future issues like climate change and conflict.

Our experts acknowledged that for the vast many people moving internationally, the choice paradigm that formed the focus of the previous discussion did not operate in the same way. With 143 million people in humanitarian need, often migrations there are predisposing events and external drivers of migration that must be discussed and considered. Our experts explored how there are 63 million people currently displaced, and 22 million refugees. Our experts emphasised the often-fuzzy boundaries between choice and compulsion, distinguishing between proactive and reactive migration, while challenging the oft-used “forced migration” language.

In exploring the diversity of experiences that drive migration on the reactive end of the migration continuum, our experts explore how the impact of global climate change was also an issue we need to consider. It was detailed how the President of Kiribati had purchased land in Fiji based on sea level increases experienced and predicted to continue across coming decades, which would leave the small island nation under water. Our experts noted that in coming decades, climate change may not only displace people but also change the nature of land use leading individuals to be more mobile.

Indeed, our experts noted how reactive migration is often driven by human-created forces, including conflict. Our experts detailed how forty million people—two-thirds of the world’s forcibly displaced—are displaced within their own countries by conflict and violence. Since March 2011, the Syrian war alone has accounted for one-fifth of the world’s total displaced and over half of the country’s population. Our experts therefore noted that the conflicts driving the so-called “refugee crisis” are symptomatic of issues facing the international system and breakdowns in global governance mechanisms around conflict management.

Our experts called for consideration of how we might work as both national and international actors to prevent and contain local crises, while responding to the individual need and experiences of the diverse populations currently displaced. It was noted that the current refugee crisis is not just a human tragedy, but also is a symptom of core challenges facing the global order, which require us to adopt a long-term mind-set. We noted that this presents difficulties for UK policymakers, who are often under pressure to find immediate responses and to respond to local perceptions and pressures.

But we did not just focus on the movement of people as a central issue for global governance; we also considered international illicit financial flows. It was noted that US\$1-2 trillion moves from developing and emerging economies and that global money laundering transactions accounted for between 2-5% of global GDP in any given year. Meanwhile, authorities only are managing to seize about 1% of this global illicit finance. Our experts noted this remains a significant issue for the international community and the UK as these illicit outflows take away critical financial resources that could improve lives around the world and move the international community towards greater achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.



# PANEL FOUR

## TECHNOLOGY & FUTURE MOBILITY

---

One of the features of our contemporary society is rapidly changing technology. We therefore looked into how these changes would affect global mobility.

Communications have changed dramatically over the last decades, allowing easier contact with family, friends and even the workplace from remote locations. Indeed, for some, email, Voice Over Internet Protocol, and secure data connections allow them to work anywhere in the world for most of the time, with only rarely a need for direct personal interaction. This kind of digital mobility is not only reshaping our workplaces but also making long-distance movement less jarring, allowing on-going connections with any or all of the places we may call home. At an extreme case, there are people in Gaza, unable to leave the country to work, but able to secure employment as IT professionals or consultants, working entirely remotely. As virtual reality systems develop further, this trend to digital interaction is likely just to strengthen. However, it is not clear if this will lead to more physical mobility – because people can stay in touch from anywhere – or less – as people will not need to travel to find work or to explore other places and people.

Where people do travel, it has led to new ideas and new businesses. UK-based entrepreneurs are very likely to be from elsewhere in the world, and anecdotally, this fusion of international ideas seems to be very powerful at generating ideas. One example given was that of a Kenyan student in the UK who came up with the idea of an Uber for cows – matching up vehicles with animals that needed to be moved to market.

UK technology companies have been very clear that they rely on the continued ability to recruit people from around the world – but is this because of the need for a global diversity of views and skills, or because we have failed to appropriately train people domestically?

We also discussed extensively the growing importance of digital identity. As one of our attendees said: "If you look at the new wave of refugees, their most precious item is not their passport, it's actually their cell phone. They will lose everything before they lose that cell phone. It gives them two things. It gives them an ability to be able to understand where they are going, and find their way, and to be able to keep in touch with their family". In India, almost 80% of citizens have a digital identity. Dubai is routinely using biometrics rather than passports for immigration checks. Estonia now offers a fully digital e-Citizenship category. How will this develop? Can there be a global identity system? How can any government ensure that everyone has one – and only one – identity? There was also substantial discussion about how privacy could be secured for an identity database, a problem that only becomes more acute if it is coupled with additional data, such as medical or financial information.

In summary, technology can have highly varied effects – it can enable mobility, making it easier for people to move around. It can substitute mobility, providing preferable alternatives. Or it can be used to constrain mobility, by tightening how people are monitored. Key policy decisions will be the extent to which each of these is encouraged.

Intellectual Forum  
Jesus College, Jesus Lane  
Cambridge CB5 8BL

Twitter: @intellforum  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/intellforum/](http://www.facebook.com/intellforum/)

Registered charity no. 1137462

© 2018