



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers
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U Victoria’s Reuben Rose-Redwood joins +180 scholars to voice concerns around the debate about colonial rule: In a letter to the editor of *The Times* published on December 8, 2017, Reuben Rose-Redwood, Department of Geography, commented on “[Scholars and the debate about colonial rule](#)”. Colonial apologists have long sought to justify colonial rule by highlighting the supposed benefits of colonialism for the colonised, so it is hardly surprising for an Oxford theologian to urge readers to not “feel guilty for (Britain’s) colonial history” (Nigel Biggar, Comment, Nov 30). In such accounts, the “costs” of genocide and dispossession of lands are absurdly placed on a plane of equivalence with the supposed “benefits” of colonial rule. These ideological rationalisations of imperial domination have been thoroughly debunked by scholars of colonialism. Yet a recent letter (Dec 2) to *The Times* signed by 82 academics defends the publication of “*A case for colonialism*” in *Third World Quarterly*, suggesting that scholarly journals should “publish any work — however controversial” as long as it “merits exposure and debate.” More than 16,000 people signed petitions highlighting that piece’s historical inaccuracies and lack of scholarly rigour. While authors have a right to make fallacious arguments, editors of scholarly journals have a responsibility to uphold academic standards and an ethical duty to reject works advocating the violation of human rights, of which colonialism is an egregious example. Promoting the subjugation of peoples and abuses of fundamental freedoms should have no place in academic scholarship. [Open Access Link](#)

U Lethbridge’s René Barendregt follows the science when studying climate change: Dr. René Barendregt will tell you he hasn’t gone all that far in his life, but it’s relative to how “far” is defined. Barendregt is a 35-year member of the Department of Geography who has been around the world studying the natural climate cycling of our planet. In December, he will continue ongoing fieldwork in the Patagonia region of South America. While Barendregt has worked in a variety of exotic locales, and met people such as Dian Fossey while conducting his studies, the plains of Alberta were not only his original inspiration, they continue to provide a rich resource for his research. “We think of the Prairies as bald, flat and not interesting and when you drive from Winnipeg to Lethbridge you’ll come across a lot of glacial lake plain, but it’s when you dive down into the valleys, the badlands, the coulees and the slopes of the Sweetgrass hills, you realize what a fascinating history there is here,” he says. “We live in a very dynamic environment on this planet and we should expect change,” says Barendregt. “Sea level will not stay where it is today and if you’re going to build your house one metre above sea level, at some point you may have to move that house. Change is inevitable but there’s no doubt that 7.5 billion people leave a huge footprint and that is added to the natural cycle of climate. It’s important for us to understand the cycling of climate because whatever we contribute, adds to that natural cycle.”

[Lethbridge UNews](#)

U Toronto's Steven Farber and Nate Wessel on the TTC King St. pilot project: The King St. pilot project has caused dramatic improvements in travel times and reliability on the TTC's busiest streetcar route, according to data analyzed by [Spatial Analysis of Urban Systems Lab](#) at the University of Toronto. The statistics show that during the evening rush hour period of 4 to 7 p.m., the mean travel time for westbound streetcars in the pilot area has been cut by 24 per cent, to 17.3 minutes, from 22.8 minutes before the pilot began. The mean travel time for eastbound streetcars has been reduced by 20 per cent, to 16.4 minutes from 20.6 minutes. The data also shows that during the evening rush, before the Nov. 12 start of the project, 19 per cent of streetcars took longer than 25 minutes to travel the 2.6-kilometre pilot area, which stretches from Bathurst to Jarvis Sts. Since the project began, only 1.3 per cent of evening rush hour streetcars are taking longer than 25 minutes. The figures suggest a remarkable return on investment in terms of transit service for a project that cost just \$1.5 million to implement. "From a transit perspective, and an operational perspective, the pilot is achieving, I think, the goal of providing a much faster and reliable transit route to tens of thousands of people daily," said Steven Farber, an assistant professor of geography at the University of Toronto Scarborough, who is co-director of the Spatial Analysis of Urban Systems lab. Nate Wessel, a doctoral candidate and assistant at the lab, said streetcar service has improved at almost all times of day since the start of the pilot, which severely limits car traffic on King St. by compelling drivers to turn right at most major intersections. All on-street parking has also been removed from the pilot area, and most streetcar stops have been relocated to the far side of intersections to allow for more efficient boarding. "The only time where there's not substantial improvements in both speed and reliability is (around) 4 a.m., when there's not much room for improvement anyway," Wessel said, adding that improvements are most pronounced during the evening rush hour. The researchers stressed that their analysis, based on four weeks of TTC data before the pilot went into effect and 16 days after, is preliminary. The TTC is also monitoring the pilot and is expected to release its own statistics on transit service and car traffic in mid-December. [Toronto Star](#) | [Quebec Telegram](#) | [CTV NewsToronto](#) | [Global News](#)

Queen's U's Betsey Donald predicts Kingston economy protected by a large public sector and encouraged by growing private sector: Betsey Donald, professor of geography and planning at Queen's University, studies economic geography and is an urban planner. She said her forecast for 2018 is optimistic. "I'm very optimistic in that I think we have a new-found confidence in Kingston, and it seems like when we work today to address a system failure or an opportunity, we do really well," Donald said. She focused on five aspects of Kingston that will propel the city through the next year. "Obviously the new manufacturing is significant for private sector jobs, just really good jobs for people in the community, which is great," Donald said before her talk. "I'm going to be looking at population shifts, which is an interesting story; certainly we're becoming more suburban and exurban. We have not let our downtown fall though, like a lot of other medium-sized cities, so we have work to do, but that is, of course, our Golden Goose." Donald said Kingston's tourism has really come together in 2017, with every community group working together. "We're finally marketing the experience, the context, the old patina. We're marketing who we are, not trying to be somebody else," Donald said. She touched on transit and the success Kingston has achieved in increasing ridership by more than 33 per cent between 2011 and 2016. She also spoke of the success of the new Providence Care hospital and the philosophy of inclusion. She said there is still a lot to work to be done with the downtown and with those people in the community who are struggling financially. "The biggest issue that big cities are facing in Canada is equality," Donald said. "In Kingston, we have our challenges, but we are more middle-class, we are more collective. I think that is our strength, and we are still more affordable and accessible for more people, and that will be our challenge in the future. "We are being discovered a bit by Toronto, Ottawa. We're cheaper, equality of life is higher. So how is that going to work? Is this going to be a place for speculation or is this going to be a place for living? [Thewhig.com](#)

McGill U's Richard Shearmu has doubts about Montreal's Champlain Bridge: Montrealers have been promised that by Dec. 1, 2018, they'll be driving on a brand new bridge spanning the St. Lawrence River. But between now and then, builders and government officials will be holding their collective breaths, hoping no unforeseen circumstances arise. However, Richard Shearmur, a geography professor has doubts about the project and fears taxpayers will be left with a hefty bill for extras. "I don't think anyone can tell if it will be finished on Dec. 1, but it seems that the deadline will probably be missed," Shearmur said. He blamed the public-private partnership (PPP) model chosen for the bridge. Under an agreement reached between the government of Canada and the consortium, the private partner assumes the cost of any delays and cost overruns. That public-private partnership is one of the aspects of the project that some like, as making the private partner responsible for maintenance is an incentive to ensure quality materials are used. However, Shearmur said experience has shown cost savings touted for PPPs are hardly ever realized, and the penalties imposed for this project are not enough of an incentive to guarantee the deadline will be met. These fines look big, but on a (\$4.239 billion) contract, these fines are really not that big," he said. "And when we see the estimate of how much it will cost to keep the old bridge open, the fines don't come anywhere close to covering it." Shearmur said taxpayers might also be on the hook for millions in legal fees and lawsuits that will drag on for years, because private companies often use the legal system to find a way out of paying for extra costs, or for the delays of a project, and the consortium is already in court suing the federal government because of the increased transportation costs. [Montreal Gazette](#)

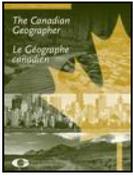
U Waterloo's Sarah Burch on Ontario's plan to double ethanol in gas: Residents in Kitchener-Waterloo are both hopeful and skeptical of the province's plans to double the minimum amount of ethanol in gasoline by 2020. "This is an interesting and promising short-term strategy," said Sarah Burch, an associate professor in the department of geography and environmental management at the University of Waterloo. "In Ontario, a third of our greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation so it is absolutely crucial that we develop not just one, but many policies to reduce those emissions," she said. However, Burch also said the plan doesn't address the "fundamental challenges" of climate change. "Increasing the amount of ethanol in gasoline actually addresses none of those underlying, deep drivers of transportation emissions," Burch said. "We need to get people out of cars that have internal combustion engines and into mass public transit or electric vehicles." [U Waterloo Environment – In the Media](#)



The Western Division of the Canadian Association of Geographers invites you to submit the title and abstract of a presentation, special session, or poster on geographic research at its 60th Annual Meeting to be held at the [University of Alberta](#), Edmonton, Alberta, on March 9-10 2018. All fields of geography and related disciplines will be considered. We are especially interested in special sessions focusing on Diversity.

Conference details at: [WDCAG 2018](#).

New in [The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien](#)



Robert McLeman, Mohammad Moniruzzaman and Nasima Akter. 2017. [Environmental influences on skilled worker migration from Bangladesh to Canada](#). *The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien*. DOI:10.1111/cag.12430

We conducted focus groups in Toronto with 44 recent skilled worker immigrants from Bangladesh to explore whether their decisions to migrate to Canada may have been influenced by environmental problems. Previous research has documented how floods, cyclones, droughts, and seasonal precipitation variations affect rural-urban migration patterns within Bangladesh, and to its neighbours. Most participants had not experienced such environmental hazards, having lived in Dhaka prior to migrating. However, Dhaka's ongoing problems with air and water pollution, sanitation, lack of green space, and food adulteration were cited by 70% as being relevant considerations for the decision to migrate. The degree of influence varied considerably among participants. Roughly 16% said pollution was their primary motivation for leaving, household members having suffered from illnesses traceable to air pollution or poor sanitation. Another 54% stated that Dhaka's environmental problems were part of a wider range of quality-of-life concerns that had some influence on their decision. The findings suggest that current migration to Canada is not connected with environmental migration that takes place within Bangladesh, but that urban environmental problems combined with other social, economic, and political factors can help drive migration.

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Maleea Acker. 2017. [On not traveling up Tod Inlet \(SNITØEŁ\)](#). *GeoHumanities*. doi.org/10.1080/2373566X.2017.1386076

Allison A. Byrne, Christopher M. Pearce, Stephen F. Cross, Simon R.M. Jones, Shawn M.C. Robinson, Marilyn J. Hutchinson, Matthew R. Miller, Colleen A. Haddad and Devan L. Johnson. 2017. [Planktonic and parasitic stages of sea lice \(*Lepeophtheirus salmonis* and *Caligus clemensi*\) at a commercial Atlantic salmon \(*Salmo salar*\) farm in British Columbia, Canada](#). *Aquaculture*. doi.org/10.1016/j.aquaculture.2017.12.009

Richard Carew, Ting Meng, Wojciech J Florkowski, Ryan Smith and Danny Blair. 2017. [Climate change impacts on hard red spring wheat yield and production risk: Evidence from Manitoba, Canada](#). *Canadian Journal of Plant Science*. doi.org/10.1139/CJPS-2017-0135

Susan Chatwood, Francois Paulette, G. Ross Baker, Astrid M. A. Eriksen, Ketil Lenert Hansen, Heidi Eriksen, Vanessa Hiratsuka, Josée Lavoie, Wendy Lou, Ian Mauro, James Orbinski, Nathalie Pambrun, Hanna Retallack and Adalsteinn Brown. 2017. [Indigenous values and health systems stewardship in circumpolar countries](#). *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 14:1462. DOI:10.3390/ijerph14121462

Shijuan Chen, Gregory J. McDermid, Guillermo Castilla and Julia Linke. 2017. [Measuring vegetation height in linear disturbances in the boreal forest with UAV photogrammetry](#). Remote Sensing 9:1257. DOI:10.3390/rs9121257

Tengfei Cui, Lawrence Martz and Xulin Guo. 2017. [Grassland phenology response to drought in the Canadian Prairies](#). Remote Sensing 9:1258. DOI:10.3390/rs9121258

Jordan B.R. Eamer, Daniel H. Shugar, Ian J. Walker, Christina M. Neudorf, Olav B. Lian, Jennifer L. Eamer, Jordan Bryce and Libby Biln. 2017. [Late Quaternary landscape evolution in a region of stable postglacial relative sea levels, British Columbia central coast, Canada](#). Boreas. DOI:10.1111/bor.12297

Scott Jasechko and Debra Perrone. 2017. [Hydraulic fracturing near domestic groundwater wells](#). PNAS. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America. DOI:10.1073/pnas.1701682114

Kristen L.D. Marini, Matthew W. Reudink, Stefanie E. LaZerte and Ken A. Otter. 2017. [Urban mountain chickadees \(*Poecile gambeli*\) begin vocalizing earlier, and have greater dawn chorus output than rural males](#). Behaviour 154:1197–1214.

Francine M.G. McCarthy, Nicholas L. Riddick, Olena Volik, Donya C. Danesh and Andrea M. Krueger. 2017. [Algal palynomorphs as proxies of human impact on freshwater resources in the Great Lakes region](#). Anthropocene. doi.org/10.1016/j.ancene.2017.11.004

Obinna P. Nzekwe, Pierre Francus, Guillaume St-Onge, Patrick Lajeunesse, David Fortin, Antoine Gagnon-Poiré, Édouard G.H. Philippe, and Alexandre Normandeau. 2017. [Recent sedimentation in three adjacent fjord-lakes on the Québec North Shore \(eastern Canada\): facies analysis, laminae preservation, and potential for varve formation](#). Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences doi.org/10.1139/cjes-2017-0070

Andrea Olive and Katie Valentine. 2018. [Is anyone out there? Exploring Saskatchewan's civil society involvement in hydraulic fracturing](#). Energy Research & Social Science 39:192–197.

Andrea M. Price, Melissa M. Baustian, R. Eugene Turner, Nancy N. Rabalais and Gail L. Chmura. 2017. [Dinoflagellate cysts track eutrophication in the northern Gulf of Mexico](#). Estuaries and Coasts. doi.org/10.1007/s12237-017-0351-x

Jesse Proudfoot. 2017. [The libidinal economy of revanchism: Illicit drugs, harm reduction, and the problem of enjoyment](#). Progress in Human Geography. doi.org/10.1177/0309132517739143

Randall K. Scharien, Rebecca Segal, Sasha Nasonova, Vishnu Nandan, Stephen E. L. Howell and Christian Haas. 2017. [Winter Sentinel-1 backscatter as a predictor of spring Arctic sea ice melt pond fraction](#). Geophysical Research Letters. DOI:10.1002/2017GL075547

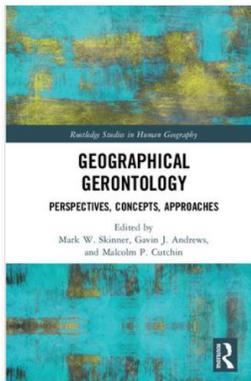
Nigel Waters. 2017. [Review: A Primer of GIS: Fundamental Geographic and Cartographic Concepts, Second Edition, by Francis Harvey, The Guilford Press, New York](#). The Canadian Geographer 61:e63-64. DOI: 10.1111/cag.12418

Chelsea E. Willis, Jane L. Kirk, Vincent L. St.Louis, Igor Lehnerr, Parisa A Ariya, and Rodrigo Benjamin Rangel-Alvarado. 2017. [Sources of methylmercury to snowpacks of the Alberta Oil Sands Region: A study of in situ methylation and particulates](#). Environmental and Science & Technology. DOI:10.1021/acs.est.7b04096

Bernard Yang, Joelle Young, Laura Brown and Mathew Wells. 2017. [High-frequency observations of temperature and dissolved oxygen reveal under-ice convection in a large lake](#). Geophysical Research Letters. DOI:10.1002/2017GL075373

New Book

Mark W. Skinner, Gavin J Andrews and Malcolm P Cutchin (Editors). 2018. [Geographical Gerontology: Perspectives, Concepts, Approaches](#). Routledge. 332 p.



Understanding where ageing occurs, how it is experienced by different people in different places, and in what ways it is transforming our communities, economies and societies at all levels has become crucial for the development of informed research, policy and programmes. This book focuses on the interdisciplinary field of study – geographical gerontology – that addresses these issues. With contributions from more than 30 leading geographers and gerontologists, the book examines the scope and depth of geographical perspectives, concepts and approaches applied to the study of ageing, old age and older populations. The book features 25 chapters organized into five parts that cover the field’s theoretical traditions and intellectual evolution; the contributions of key disciplinary perspectives from population geography, social and cultural geography, health geography, urban planning and environmental studies; the scales of inquiry within geographical gerontology from the global to the embodied; the thematic breadth of contemporary issues of interest that define the field (places, spaces and landscapes of ageing); and a discussion about challenges, opportunities and agendas for future developments in geography and gerontology.

Other “Geographical” News

Dramatic change through 150 years of mountain photos: University of Victoria researchers are raising alarms of climate change impact based on 150 years of mountain landscape pictures. The Mountain Legacy Project has documented ecological and cultural changes through historic pictures taken from mountain surveyors from 1861 to 1958. Modern cameras have been used to capture images of the same vistas in exactly the same locations. Comparing the results shows a big change between the historic and recent photos. “We now have more than 7,000 repeat pairs of images gathered over 19 summers working with graduate and undergraduate students,” UVic environmental scientist Eric Higgs said, who leads the project. “People can clearly see the significant changes brought about by a shifting climate, human activity and development, and ecological processes.” [CHEK News](#)

On Haida Gwaii, logging plans expose rift in reconciliation: The B.C. government is "pursuing profit over culture and community" by selling logging rights on Haida Gwaii without permission, the president of the Council of the Haida Nation says. Kil tlaats 'gaa, whose English name is Peter Lantin, compared the current mood among Haida people to 1985, when members of the Haida nation erected blockades to prevent the harvest of old-growth forests on Lyell Island. "The pent-up frustration on Haida Gwaii has built up to the place where it's going to blow out," he said. [CBCNews | British Columbia](#)

Some Not So "Geographical" News



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