

2008 BORRIE PRIZE REPORT

The 2008 Undergraduate Borrie Prize goes to Erin Leggat of Flinders University for ‘Housing for the poor: the Bangkok experience’.

The 2008 Postgraduate Borrie Prize goes to Liz Allen of the Australian National University for ‘Ageing out? Socio-demographic determinants of retirement in Australia’. Liz previously won the Undergraduate Borrie Prize while a student at Macquarie University.

Congratulations to both Erin and Liz.

Each year the Australian Population Association awards an Undergraduate Borrie Prize (\$400 and a certificate) and a Postgraduate Borrie Prize (\$600 and a certificate) for the best student paper on a population-related topic. Review articles, essays, and papers reporting empirical analyses are all welcome.

The closing date for 2008 entries was 31 January 2009. There were three entries for the Undergraduate Prize, all from Flinders University, and eleven entries for the Postgraduate Prize, ten from the Australian National University and one from the University of Adelaide, with four entries from PhD students and seven from masters students.

Author names and affiliations were removed from papers before they were passed on to the judging panel. Many thanks to this year’s judges—Alison Taylor and Ross Barker of the Queensland Department of Infrastructure and Planning (undergraduate) and Dharma Arunachalam and Ernest Healy of Monash University (postgraduate). Also great thanks to APA members who encouraged their students to submit papers, and to the entrants who ensure the continuing high standard of competition.

Undergraduate Borrie Prize Report

We recommend 'Housing for the poor: the Bangkok experience' for the Undergraduate Borrie Prize [Erin Leggat, Flinders].

This report is written with reference to the assessment criteria given in the Borrie Prize rules.

a,b. The topic was adequately defined and its importance outlined. Discussion of the urban poor in Bangkok included commentary on why it is a world issue thus well positioning the topic within the broader context. The author described the topic clearly and used a range of references to illustrate aspects of the problem or particular perspectives being put forward. The use of references was appropriately weaved into the narrative and interpreted effectively.

c,d. There was an appropriate level of coverage of population material. The argument was put together in a logical sequence and appropriate evidence provided. We liked the fact that the author provided an example of what seems to be a relatively successful strategy to empower slum residents in Bangkok. The conclusion was well constructed and related back to the body of evidence provided earlier in the paper.

e,f,g. Good level of scholarship in evidence. An appropriate use of references to supplement the author's own views was effectively woven together to form the argument. A clear outline of the issues and a possible solution was provided. The paper was well written and well structured, with appropriate section headings. We liked the use of a couple of graphics and were also impressed at one reference to a collection of photographs. This use of a variety of sources and types of information to understand an issue should be encouraged.

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Postgraduate Borrie Prize Report

We are very impressed by the quality of ALL the papers submitted for the Borrie Prize this year. Most papers were well-written and addressed important topics of policy relevance to Australia and other countries.

We commend the authors of the following three papers which were of high quality:

- 1) Is there a wage penalty for parenthood in Australia? [Mandy Wales, ANU]
- 2) The medicalisation of female genital mutilation. [Lisa Thompson, ANU]
- 3) 'Migration fever' and 'return fever': Australia's competition for China's overseas talents. [Fiona Hanrahan, ANU]

The paper that was exceptional in quality, methodological rigour and originality is 'Ageing out? Socio-demographic determinants of retirement in Australia' [Liz Allen, ANU]. The paper addresses a very important policy and theory-relevant topic: ageing and labour force participation. Grounded in a thorough literature review and socio-policy context, this paper develops a scholarly argument to establish with clarity the link between financial, social and physical factors and retirement from labour force. The task is made relatively easy by the use of high-quality and relevant data from the recent wave of the Negotiating the Lifecourse survey. This paper is the well-deserving winner of the Postgraduate Borrie Prize for 2008.

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