

Travel report

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Travel destination: Tokyo, Japan

Travel Period: From 13 July 2019, To 24 July 2019

Purpose: Attending the 29th International Cartographic Conference

My participation in the 29th International Cartographic Conference in Tokyo, Japan consisted of an oral presentation about the “Toponyms’ contribution to identity: The case study of Rabat (Morocco)”, and a poster presentation about “Static Risk Mapping of Forest Fires - In the case of the Province of Chefchaouen (Morocco)”.

The oral presentation session commenced with an introduction of the speakers. I had 20 minutes (15 minutes talk and 5 minutes for discussion). The presentation concluded with an exchange of questions. Some of the questions were as follow; did gender influence the results, why? In what way did age affect their answers? What other variables influenced the results? How far are the cities from each other, and did the distance alter the percentage of referring to Rabat as a place of inhabitation? Etc. Moreover, they requested additional explanations about the linguistic term of speech act, the methodology and the techniques of starting the interviews.

Conversations extended in the break where we discussed other themes such as the specific toponymic system of Morocco, and the problems of following the standard Arabic transcription in referring to city names, especially in the case of Tunisia. Furthermore, I met the delegates of the Moroccan place-names committee who had further inquiries about the results and discussed future possibilities of research and collaboration.

I was extremely pleased with the session I was in, as the other topics were equally interesting. I believe the presentation went well, as I received thought-provoking questions and got good compliments from the members of the commission.

The poster session was, on the other hand, a different experience. There were no time constraints, and the one-on-one conversations held during the session allowed me to speak about specific aspects in the maps, which may not have been possible in an oral presentation.

I had to discuss the methods and findings with other professionals and hence received constructive feedback. One of my discussions with a Ph.D. student who also works on static risk mapping led to a future collaboration where I had the chance to read his work and collectively work on maps development.

Both oral and poster sessions provided insightful discussions that will help me improve my research in the future. I also attended other presentations that have proved to be remarkably beneficial and full of novel ideas.

As a Ph.D. student, I have found this conference particularly interesting. It has helped me enrich my background with broader knowledge and improve my confidence and presentation skills. I have learned new concepts (such as exonym) and argued about various approaches. Besides, I have gained valuable learning experience that may not be obtained anywhere else. The networking encounter was also beneficial, enhancing constructive dialogue and collaboration. It has also allowed me to actively engage with other conference attendees, meet several scholars who share the same research interest, and speak with several cartographers and researchers who presented the latest research results in all areas of cartography.