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Introduction to the Special Section "Migration and Diaspora"

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“Migration and Diaspora”

Introduction

By

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Migration is a deeply historical and profoundly contemporary affair. Various scholars have called it a defining characteristic of certain centuries, societies, or humanity itself.¹ Migrations and mobility at large seems not just ubiquitous, but often appear to the global historian as quintessentially transnational. But for every translocal displacement, migration also spurs highly local processes of emplacement.

In the 2020/21 winter semester, Felipe Caroca González, Joseph Duffy, and Sophie Genske attended Frederik Schröer’s seminar on “Migration and Diaspora” which approached migration and diaspora as pertinent cases and methodological challenges in global history. Their term papers all dealt with different times and places, as well as aspects of migration and diaspora. Now, they are published here together, offering new perspectives to address different intersectionalities from the local and translocal. Moreover, these pieces aim to unveil the power relationship between rulers and ruled societies² while reflecting on the (legal and cultural) creation of national belonging.

Felipe Caroca González’s text analyses current migration law in Chile, implemented in the midst of a continental migration crisis. It aims to unveil historically normalised practices within the continent that are often related to xenophobia and racism, but not from recently conceptualised practices, such as aporophobia. He proposes a transnational perspective of the migratory phenomena within the South American continent, considering the challenges and historical local positions in Chile.

Joseph Duffy’s text examines long-distance Irish nationalism during the Irish War for Independence between 1919-1921. By examining speeches of nationalist leaders and the foundational documents of the Irish nation, he argues that the Irish nation was conceived of by actors who thought globally and looked outward, both to Ireland’s diaspora and to an interconnected world.

Sophie Genske’s text retraces the history of the law on German citizenship alongside the case of the contemporary citizenship activist Gerson Liebl, who descends from a German colonial doctor in Togo. In so doing, she enquires about the intertwining of legal history, (post-)colonial forgetting, migration, and (national) identity.

NOTES

¹ Asya Pisarevskaya, Nathan Levy, Peter Scholten, and Joost Jansen, “Mapping migration studies: An empirical analysis of the coming of age of a research field,” *Migration Studies* 8, no. 3 (2020): 455-481, <https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnz031>; Adam McKeown, “Global Migration, 1846-1940,” *Journal of World History* 15, no. 2 (2004): 155-189, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20068611>.

² Nina Glick Schiller, “A Global Perspective on Transnational Migration: Theorising Migration without Methodological Nationalism,” in *Diaspora and Transnationalism*, ed. Rainer Bauböck and Thomas Faist (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 109-130; Nina Glick Schiller, “Theorising Transnational Migration in Our Times: A Multiscalar Temporal Perspective,” *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* 8, no. 4 (2018): 201-212, <http://doi.org/10.2478/njmr-2018-0032>.