

Report on the Migration and Mobility Working Group: 2024-25

12 months have passed since the revival of the Migration and Mobility Working Group, and we are proud to look back on a series of great events. Starting with a couple of single-event workshops, we could finish the year with a bang and the collaboration with the Padova MoHu center. Below you find a brief recap.

Fascism abroad: migration, mobility, or transnational circulation?

In this workshop with Claire Lorenzelli PhD student at the École Normale Supérieure de Lyon, we tackled the question of fascism as a phenomenon moving across borders - through people and their networks, through material infrastructures and communicative processes. In our discussion, we asked: how can historical fascism be studied as a transnational phenomenon, while it is still defined as an ultranationalist phenomenon? How can the focus on migration, mobility, and transnational circulation contribute to a better understanding of fascism (in history)?

16th of September 2024, Sala del Camino, Villa Salviati

Shopping trips and female travel – practices and politics of tourism in Central Europe, pre- and post WW1

What was it like to travel as a female tourist prior to the outbreak of the First World War? How were tourist practices shaped by economic crisis and the passport system in the early interwar period?

In the next event of the Migration and Mobility Working group, we focused on practices, materialities and conditions of leisure travel in Central Europe, before and after the First World War. Louisa Niesen (EUI) presented her research on female tourists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, focusing specifically on the aspect of hygiene and health during travel.

Anna Breidenbach (EUI) focused on international shopping tourism to Germany at the height of the Hyper-Inflation (1921-23). Her presentation challenged the notion of surveillance and control of mobility within the “passport system” and instead highlighted the possibilities of international travel in this period.

24th of October 2024, Sala del Camino, Villa Salviati

Polish women in postwar America - Female agency, migration, and knowledge transfer

In the last event in 2024, the Migration and Mobility Working Group hosted a workshop with Beata Halicka, Professor of Contemporary History at Adam Mickiewicz University (Poznan) and Fernand Braudel Fellow, who presented her current research project.

Women who left Poland during World War II and came to the United States in the postwar period brought with them significant experiences of war, occupation and forced migration. Many of them also witnessed the emancipation and changing roles of women in Poland during the interwar and wartime periods. Well-educated women particularly struggled to find their place in the still patriarchal American middle class in the late 1940s and 1950s. The goal of Beata Halicka's project is to examine their agency and contributions to the social life of the Polish American community and society at large. The focus is on female journalists, writers, and scholars who have achieved professional success in the U.S.

9th of December 2024, Sala del Torrino, Villa Salviati

Moving into 2025, we embarked on a collaboration with the Mobilities & Humanities Center in Padova.

“Research on the Move. A Bi-lateral Workshop between Padua and Florence” was a series of seminars held at the European University Institute (EUI) – Department of History and Civilisation (HEC) on 30 April 2025 and in Padova at the Centre for Advanced Studies in Mobility & Humanities (MoHu) on 12 June 2025.

The event invited PhD students from the HEC department at the EUI, as well as advanced Masters students and PhD students from the MA Mobility Studies and PhD programme in Historical, Geographical and Anthropological Studies at the Universities of Padua and Venice Ca’ Foscari, to present and discuss their ongoing projects on various aspects of the history of mobility and migration. The workshop provided advanced Masters students and PhD students with a forum for academic discussion and additional external feedback on their work.

The project series

The project included a series of events organised by the Migration and Mobility Working Group of the HEC Department and the MoHu in the first half of 2025:

- (1) A lecture on 30 January 2025 by Paola Molino, Professor of Early Modern History and Coordinator of the MA in Mobility Studies.
- (2) The official participation of two members of the working group in the Mobility Fest, where they presented the working group and promoted the EUI PhD programme (21 February 2025).
- (3) Two workshops (30 April and 12 June 2025): During the workshops, panels were moderated by members of the working groups from the two institutions. Commentators provided feedback to stimulate discussion and intellectual exchange between participants.