

Migration in European History

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The 'Lampedusa Dilemma':
Global Flows and Closed Borders.
What should Europe do?
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INTRODUCTION

The **EUI Forum on Migration, Citizenship and Demography** is a joint initiative by the four departments of the EUI, the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies and the Max Weber Programme. It brings together critical analysis, informed debate and policy recommendations from the wider field of citizenship and democracy, demography, migration and asylum governance, and the management of cultural diversity.

Professor Anna Triandafyllidou is the Scientific Organiser of the Forum's Inaugural Event: The 2014 Conference on the Lampedusa Dilemma.

Policy experts and scholars from a variety of disciplines will share their views on migration governance, human rights, asylum-seeking and international protection, as well as irregular migration.

The Lampedusa disaster of October 2013 demonstrates the dramatic events taking place in the Mediterranean area which require urgent, forward-looking and well-thought out responses.

Migration has a long and varied history in Europe, but is usually treated solely as a present-day issue. It follows naturally that popular representations of history for a long time did not include migration history. Which in turn is not surprising when we look at historical research interests: Migration history is a relatively young field, and it has only recently been valued as an important characteristic of social, political and economic history. Migration history in Europe offers a way to replace narrow, national narratives with one that is properly European. To understand migration as part of European history comes quite naturally for migrations up to the early 20th century. After that, a European approach reveals as full of pitfalls and problems. The reason why, and the development of recent interest in migration history both in popular history representations and in academic research are outlined in this paper.

For about 15 years now it has been possible to watch how, in several European countries, national historical narratives have begun accommodating the history of migration. It is a slow process, often set off by a small group of enthusiasts and activists who deem the subject important enough to warrant wider public interest. Today, we can watch a multitude of projects in the field of migration all across Europe, and yet the historical dimension continues to be a regrettable absence. In many examples of public representation of migration, there is little or no historical depth to the narrative: migration is presented as something new and unprecedented, even though history offers a plethora of previous cases. In addition, regional and national perspectives predominate at the expense of what could be a European narrative.

How, then, can migration history become a fixed topic within the European narrative? It is striking how little is known even about recent migration history among young Europeans. Only very recently did the history of migration in Europe make its way into the schoolbooks. Since then, the topics of migration and integration have been treated in several different school subjects, but, interestingly, they feature least of all in history lessons. Why this reluctance to tackle the topic historically? To ask this question is to ask not only why the contemporary moment sometimes seems to exclude a

Present-day narrative of Europe treats migration as a lurking threat ("Fortress Europe")

historical perspective, but also to ask what that means for migration's place in a European narrative.

When the present-day narrative of Europe treats migration as a lurking threat ("Fortress Europe"), many Europeans with a conventional education are able to draw parallels in history. They typically think straight away of one event in late antiquity, of the Age of Migrations and of the "barbarian invasions" that heralded the collapse of the Roman Empire. Although a millennium-and-a-half separates then and now, the prevailing narrative of European history through the middle ages and modern time periods knows only a limited number of perspectives on this span of time, most of which are highly traditional. They always feature the history of struggles for territory, economic power and religious authority; wars remain a central feature of this version of history.

Migration history is overlooked

In academic research, the consideration of social and economic developments, the history of education and science, along with the gender perspective has long changed master narratives, and these new trends have been taken up by popular representations of history. Migration history, on the other hand, not only gets overlooked, it seems to vanish altogether. When the only migrations taught are those of Late Antiquity and the present day, a narrow, stereotyped view of history threatens to emerge. From this selective narrative follows a view on migration as a potentially destructive and ungovernable process. What if we would add some more extensive historic knowledge to the picture and look at the role of migration not only at the end of Antiquity as a destructive force, but as a precondition of the Roman expansion in the first place, if we would take into consideration the economic gains of the many inter-regional and international migrations in early modern Europe before industrialization, and if we would talk about the consequences of large volumes of outward migration from regions of rural poverty in Europe in the 19th and 20th century? And how can the historical knowledge be made accessible for a wider public?

Individual life story as window on history of migration

Very important agents in opening up the historical dimensions of migration have been migration museums. Objects from the past "speak" to visitors about their histories. In many recent exhibitions and museum designs, migration history has been told via individual life histories, or histories of ethnic groups, focusing on the journey and arrival, on jobs and work, or on the places where the migrants finally settled, be it a city district or a region. Local perspectives and starting points do not, however, automatically exclude the possibility of a European narrative, any more than do the new museums which focus their presentations on the national scope. Examples are the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration in Paris, the Deutsches Auswanderhaus in Bremerhaven, which will soon feature immigration as well, the Immigrantmuseet in Copenhagen, the Population Exchange Museum in Catalca, near Istanbul, and the projects of migration archives of DoMiD in Cologne. The example of museums shows how a local or regional narrative perspective can stand for itself alone and at the same time be part of a wider trend across many nations.

The focus on the individual life story as window on migration is a conscious attempt to escape delicate perspectives on "peoples", "ethnic groups", religious groupings and nations. Individual anecdotes communicated via audio installation and offered in digital archives are popular ways to indicate the bigger picture. Such a trend might become the core of a pluralist

European narrative of migration in historical perspective. It is also, however, a convenient way to dodge the pitfalls that, when seen from a nationalist point of view, recent migration history in particular can present. Europeans still know little about their national migration histories, and even less about those of their neighbors; yet many have heard stories from older members of their family that call to mind the experience of migration. If this strand of individual memory could be woven into a historical background, it could become a European narrative. Scholarly historical research on migration can provide that background.

HISTORICAL MIGRATION RESEARCH

Migration has now entered mainstream historical research

We need to generalize in order to find European features and in order to organize the diverging national or regional histories. We can find a number of common landmarks, but we will also find a lot of exceptions to them. Academic research has taken up this challenge and opened up new ground in migration history. From the start, the historiography of migration has chosen a comparative approach that required a supra-regional and international understanding. Borders between professional disciplines such as history, demography, sociology (even geography and the laws) had to be crossed. Precisely because of its geographical multi-perspectivity, migration history has become attractive; having been a marginal field, it has now entered mainstream historical research. In many recent approaches in the field, the state's eye-view of history has long been superseded, so that today historical terminology no longer talks of "immigration" or "emigration", but simply of "migration". By doing away with the prefixes, we show that we recognize how the choice to migrate is not irreversible, and that we recognize perceptions of the direction of migration as relative.

Historical migration research in Europe initially set out with a national approach. One early example is the analysis of large collections of German migrants' letters sent back home from the US in the 1920s. After WW II, British and French historians took an interest in the respective national migration histories. From the 1980s, a European approach inspired collections of national case studies, and comparisons of two or more European countries were soon to follow. We can watch a brief appearance of historic overviews with a European scope in the 1990s. However, very soon the European perspective was replaced by the global point of view. That migration today is a global phenomenon is beyond debate. A global perspective and a national perspective make sense. But what about a European point of view?

Migration provides a European perspective on history

What should be part of a European narrative? What are the "landmarks" of migration history that any serious account of European history should include? Migration is perfectly suited to providing a European perspective on history: after all, every time cross-border migration occurs, a comparative analysis is required – and, if possible, a transnational one. To learn about the Tsarist Russia's recruitment of German craftsmen in the 18th century is to understand Catherine the Great's policy of expansion; to study the flight of the French Huguenots is to gain insight into religion and reformation in the Early Modern period; to observe the fascinating patterns of cross-border seasonal migration in the Alps or the Low Countries is to grasp the workings of Europe's supra-regional economy. The industrial revolution and

urbanization cannot be disentangled from geographical mobility among Europeans. When religious minorities were persecuted all across Europe, often with considerable violence, but when they also found in Europe places of shelter, then a tension emerges between discrimination and tolerance that may be typically European.

19th century : “The great overseas migration”

For the 19th century, we have a congruent narrative of migration history which is valid for many European countries: industrialized economies need labour, impoverished rural populations need outlets for overpopulation. New means of transport ease mass movement over longer distances, and masses are moved: the Irish and Germans to the US since the mid-19th century, joined later in the Century by Eastern Europeans and Italians. The mass migrations out of Europe in the 19th century constitute the European trend of „The great overseas migration“.

It is a movement of opportunities, much stronger than inner-European migrations like the Polish workers’ migration to the coal mines of the Ruhr, Belgium and France. Although for some there are only few alternatives, it is largely a movement of choice. And suddenly, just as we were about to proceed to the 20th century in the narrative of main migration trends, we are in the middle of categorizing migration as to the motives of migrants. Can motives be referred to a regional category? Were the brave sons and daughters of impoverished peasants who looked for opportunities overseas typically European? Some migrants have political reasons to leave their countries, for example Italians and Germans prior to nation building. Only very few migrate due to religious discriminations, a consequence of enlightened reforms of the post-revolutionary era. Only at the end of the century, religion reappears as a motive for migration: anti-Semitic pogroms in Russia make people flee from violence to Western Europe. There are various motives for migration in the 19th century, but none of them will compare to the volume of the overseas emigration. It is a forceful pan-European trend and certainly part of a narrative of European history. What follows in European migration history is much more difficult to put into a European narrative. Due to different dynamics of economic growth and the effects of totalitarian and dictatorial regimes, European nations diverge. In the first half of the 20th Century, the world wars unleash a surge of migrations between European countries. Forced migration and expulsion is an experience shared by many Europeans during this period. The Greek-Turkish "population exchanges" in 1922, expulsions and refugee movements after the Russian revolution, refugees from national socialist Germany in the 1930s, the expulsion of Germans from what became western Poland after the Second World War are some examples of this trend in European migration history. Forced migrations, expulsions due to shifted national borders are a painful memory for the victims and traumata are often handed down over generations. It is an experience shared by many Europeans, but has a lot of pitfalls as a part of a narrative of European migration history.

First half of the 20th Century: world wars migrations in Europe

PERIODS, TRENDS, REGIONS, LANDMARKS

Historians now value the importance of migration as a part of a master narrative of European history. Where texts on national history for a long time could quite easily skip labor or refugee migration as a “marginal” field, similar to gender history, it has now become quite unthinkable not to

mention the topic in social and political history overviews. However, the uncontroversial instances are migrations that typically lie so far back in time that everybody can agree on their impact on European history. It is much harder to agree about migration in recent history and the present. Whenever and wherever the consequences of migration are felt in the present, even in individual national historiographies, questions arise of minority rights, group rights, inequality and discrimination, and authors of school textbooks or curators of museums will be in trouble to accommodate the various demands.

Postwar migration in Europe : labour recruitment

Postwar migration in Europe has a lot of characteristics which fit into common trends. During the postwar economic boom period the recruitment drives of the 1950s and 1960s, which saw Europe's industrialized north draw workers from the agrarian south, involved all of the six EEC's member states and many more like Portugal, Yugoslavia, Greece, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey. The 1970s recruitment stop was common to Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland and Sweden. In academic research, labor recruitment is seen as an important postwar trend in Europe and is easily fit into a common narrative. As to refugee migration before the end of the cold war, some nationally quite specific cases are much harder to integrate into common trends. The reason for this lies not only in the particularity of the specific cases. The story of the past and its migrations can also offend international loyalties, whenever shifting borders and the formation of new states have forced people to move. Historians of forced migrations have a hard time to avoid a simplistic bifocal perspective of victim and perpetrator/executioner, even more risky is a public representation of refugee migrations. To remember past migrations often reveals as difficult and painful. One example is the protracted stand-off between German and Polish organizations, growing over the years into diplomatic crises, about the foundation of a museum that would focus on forced migrations after WWII. Another example is the discussion in France about the privileged integration of the *pieds noirs*, representants of the former colonial elite of French origin who migrated to France after Algerian independence in 1962, as compared to the treatment of Algerian collaborators, the *Harkis*. In both cases, difficult memories and political considerations have given rise to parallel narratives, conflicting points of views have excluded a common narrative and foreclosed a common memory. The existence of such parallel narratives is, however, in itself a pan-European phenomenon, one that should be included in any European narrative of migration history.

Emphasis of North-south divide of labor recruitment

For a long time, the emphasis on the north-south divide of the labor recruitment has blocked other perspectives. Seen from a distance, it is certainly a common European experience, with repercussions to almost all European nations. All European receiving countries watched the establishment of diasporas, all European sending countries watched the investment of remittances and return migration, and both developments are part of the same process. But it is not the only European experience in migration history during the postwar years. With the increasing migrations from their colonial territories, the United Kingdom and France differ from the European mainstream, but they show enough common characteristics as to constitute a distinct trend in recent European migration history. Postcolonial migration to Britain and France and the respective policy responses are defined by three features: 1) Migration at this scale from colonial origins was not planned, it came as a surprise to the governments concerned. In the UK, the arrival of the first steamer from Kingston with Jamaican migrants has led

to such a shock in the receiving country that the ship's name is still quoted: "Empire Windrush", it has since become a kind of "lieux de memoire", an incidence of a shared (collective) memory of the receiving society. 2) Very early after the first rise of migration numbers, efforts to control the colonial migration were taken. As the arrival was unexpected, so was the constant growth of the numbers of migrants. Governments perceived this movement as beyond their control and sought to regain control over them. 3) These efforts did not bring about effective control. Stopping postcolonial migration was not so much a matter of border control, but of ideology and self-perception. Both Britain and France in the early 1950s still had a markedly imperial identity. In the late 1940s, both states had emphasized their imperial claims in facilitating entry regulations for colonial subjects. Closed borders for colonial subjects were feared to signal sudden withdrawal of the imperial power, while at the same time colonial policies aimed at stabilizing self-government while preserving the political and economic influence.

Postcolonial migration

A fourth common feature is the difficult memory of postcolonial migration. Associations with lost imperial influence and power on the one hand, with imperial violence and racism on the other hand, repercussions like the establishment of anti-immigrant extremist political parties and the challenges of ethnic diversity complicate the inclusion of postcolonial migration into the historical narrative of the nations concerned. However, with all these characteristics, it is certainly part of European history. Imperialism is a European trend, and so are its consequences.

Today, migration is clearly a global issue. History has brushed over period titles such as „the great overseas migration“, which referred to the migration from Europe to the Americas in the 19th century, as overseas migration has ceased to be exceptional. However, in the global perspective, Europe as a continent has substituted the single European country as a destination for migrants. The end of the cold war triggered a new migration and a new geographical divide. 1990 is the most recent landmark in European migration history – international borders are redefined, and the common EU policy approach towards asylum and border control is launched. But is it true that a progressive and all-encompassing "Europeanization" gives rise to a clearer understanding of the European dimensions of trends and processes in migration history? Europeanization has made us blind for the massive inner European migrations between the Schengen member states, which have become so common as to be taken for granted. We need to include these migrations into the European narrative. The common asylum policy has helped to perceive Europe as a region with a common approach to refugee immigration, so we have a very recent working common European narrative. However, it will remain dangerously incomplete if we avoid the historical perspective, the European values on which asylum policies are founded, and the melting pot histories of the European nations.

From outside Europe, a European narrative of migration history seems quite natural. Inside Europe, we have started out working on it, but much remains to be done in order to establish a European point of view and a common narrative of migration history.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the EUI's Forum, its constituent parties or scientific directors and organisers.

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Mission Statement

The **EUI Forum on Migration Citizenship and Demography** is a 2-year programme (2014-2016) that brings together professors, senior fellows, post-doctoral researchers and PhD students from the four EUI departments, the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies and the Max Weber Programme, over a set of themes of common expertise and interest.

Building on a wealth of academic publications, policy papers, conferences and workshops, produced by EUI scholars in the wider field of citizenship and democracy, demography and migration management, cultural diversity and ways to address it, the Forum offers critical analysis, informed debate and policy recommendations.

Topics to be addressed by the Forum activities in the form of Oxford debates, policy workshops and academic conferences include:

- The management of cultural and religious diversity in Europe at times of intensified globalisation trends and increased migration flows
- Balancing demographic and labour market challenges. How to build an effective and efficient migration and migrant integration policy in Europe?
- Upholding our asylum commitment in an increasingly volatile geopolitical framework: Ethical and political considerations.
- EU law and policy on migration and asylum: Fit for purpose for 2030?
- Europe: a continent of emigration, immigration and mobility. Past experiences, present challenges and future trends.

FORUM website

<http://www.eui.eu/Projects/TheForum/Home.aspx>