

Call for Papers

Archiv für Sozialgeschichte 64 (2024)

Migration in Modern Times: Systems – Routes – Experiences – Conflicts

The next issue of Archiv of Sozialgeschichte will pertain to the history of migration, a research field that has fundamentally changed in recent years. Its struggle for recognition was initially marked by the need to emphasise the potential ‘achievements’ of migrants and migrant receiving countries. It evolved into an area of research rich in different methodological debates and epochal approaches. The issue aims to consider current research trends and invites contributors from different (social-) historical disciplines to reflect on the future of the history of migration, both empirically and theoretically. The issue focuses on the time from the 18th century onwards, without excluding contributions on earlier periods.

Migration systems

The term migration system, which in our understanding implies no more than stable connections between (world) regions through mobility over the course of long periods of time, has long been established in research. Since the 15th century the movement of Europeans to the Americas and to colonies in other regions of the world has formed a pattern well into the 1950s. Likewise, the centuries-long deportation of Africans to Latin America and the South of the (later) USA until the second half of the 19th century referred to as the ‘Black Atlantic’ describes a similar process. Systems of migration do not only apply to the voluntary movement of migrants. Rather, it would be desirable to include indenture and contract labor (peonage) relationships, which have been the focus of much recent research and which affect numerous migrants from Asia. The nature of these relationships, which was de jure but not always de facto limited in time, alludes to the temporary dimension of migration, which is not necessarily permanent. We are interested in return migration movements as well as seasonal patterns, regardless of whether they were controlled by harvest cycles or residence regulations, the importance of which is obvious, for example, for care workers from Eastern Europe working in Germany. On the one hand, the search for patterns requires the inclusion of the demo-economic situation in the regions of origin and the differently organised labour market in the target regions. This puts emphasis on the state as an important steering body that must be taken into account, without migration policy being the primary interest of the volume. On the other hand, it is important to take into account the actors who organise the movement between the region of origin and the target region, formally or informally, legally, semi-legally or illegally. Only by bringing both sides together will we be able to understand, for example,

the long-term and stable recruitment of care workers from the South East Asian island countries to work in Europe and North America.

Routes, means of transportation, networks

The actors mentioned above consequently raise the questions of the means of transportation available to migrants, the routes they used and the networks they were supported by or remained trapped in. Footpaths are still important today (and the knowledge about them is a key to illegal border crossing), but shipping, rail and air links have fundamentally changed the infrastructure of migration. Ports, railway stations and airports have become central relay stations that do not only serve as interfaces between different sections of migration but also often block the latter because epidemic regulations enforce quarantines or entail forced accommodation in sometimes extraterritorial shelters under asylum law. The volume particularly addresses this tension between mobility and immobility, emphasising that regions of origin and target regions are not clear-cut starting and ending points of migration, which in some cases – such as migrant labour – remained closely linked.

Experiences, knowledge and conflicts

Above all, on arrival it is often uncertain whether a place – usually a city – will or even should become the final destination. Timeframes, largely determined by the potential wish to return, also shape migrants' strategies. It is no coincidence that they often try to find employment in trade and gastronomy. Such strategies need to be examined more systematically, also taking the importance of ethnic or religious networks into account. Last but not least, we are interested in these participation rights, including the right to vote, are claimed and when, and what reactions can be observed in the majority society. Local workers have often denied migrants participation in the labour market – a constant challenge for trade union organisations, especially as employers have often used ethnically or racially discriminated groups as strike breakers. In addition to the labour market, the housing market is particularly prone to conflict, but occasionally also showing that migration does not invariably equate to poverty. The Russians who have fled to Georgia are sometimes viewed with suspicion because their above-average professional qualifications enable them to pay very high rents. While the volume will not be able to systematically analyse all of these fields of conflict, we do hope for conceptual and empirically rich contributions.

The Friedrich Ebert Foundation will host a conference, expected to take place in October 2023, to discuss ideas, themes and questions for contributions on the subject of AfS 64 as outlined above. We invite scholars to submit proposals of no more than 3,000 characters by 5 June 2023. Abstracts, conference papers and subsequent contributions may be submitted in German or English. Subsequently, the editors of the *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* will select contributions, which should be approximately 60,000 characters (including footnotes). The submission deadline for contributions is 31 January 2024.

The Archiv für Sozialgeschichte is edited by Claudia Gatzka, Kirsten Heinsohn, Thomas Kroll, Anja Kruke, Philipp Kufferath (managing director), Friedrich Lenger, Ute Planert, Dietmar Süß and Meik Woyke.

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