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REVIEW ARTICLE

IMAGINARIES OF BELONGING AND IM/MOBILITY: NEW APPROACHES TO STATEHOOD AND MIGRATION IN MODERN HISTORY

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DELPHINE DIAZ and SYLVIE APRILE (eds.), *Banished: Traveling the Roads of Exile in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, trans. Adrian Morfee, Migrations in History, 1 (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2022), vii + 312 pp. ISBN 978 3 110 73731 8. €104.95/£95.00

PANIKOS PANAYI, *Migrant City: A New History of London* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022), 496 pp. ISBN 978 0 300 26472 2. US$18.00 (paperback)

STEFFEN MAU, *Sortiermaschinen: Die Neuerfindung der Grenze im 21. Jahrhundert* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2021), 189 pp. ISBN 978 3 406 77570 3. €14.95 (paperback)[1]

GIULIANA LASCHI, VALERIA DEPLANO, and ALESSANDRO PES (eds.), *Europe between Migrations, Decolonization and Integration (1945–1992)*, Routledge Studies in Modern European History (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 204 pp. ISBN 978 1 032 17288 0. £29.59 (paperback)

FORSCHUNGSPROJEKT ZUR MATERIALITÄT VON FLUCHT UND MIGRATION (ed.), *Moving Things*, trans. Henry Holland (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2022), 263 pp. ISBN 978 3 835 35190 5. €19.90

DONATELLA DI CESARE, *Philosophie der Migration*, trans. Daniel Creutz (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2021), 343 pp. ISBN 978 3 751 80317 5. €26.00[2]

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[1] Published in English as *Sorting Machines: The Reinvention of the Border in the 21st Century*, trans. Nicola Barfoot (Cambridge, 2022).

[2] Published in English as *Resident Foreigners: A Philosophy of Migration*, trans. David Broder (Cambridge, 2020).

History is in motion; the past was in motion—because history seems to be another term for a change in time. But what about space? How can we both analyse the spatial dynamics that are crucial for history and properly engage with the diachronic and synchronic dimensions of any transformation? In other words, how can we think of history in terms of mobility—of people, goods, and ideas on the move—without simply considering everything in the past as fluid, transitory, and unstable, whether physically or conceptually?[3] Histories of im/mobility and migration can be linked to these basic questions, which intrinsically depend on Johann Martin Chladenius's concept of the *Sehepunkt* (tentatively translated as 'point of view') as the anchor required for any analysis of the historical as provisional and ephemeral. These histories always refer to specific notions of belonging, temporal and spatial boundaries and borders, and practices of inclusion or exclusion. Engaging with these topics therefore aims at the core of history and of human sociality in general. Mobility as a theme is not specific to history, but it relates to people, and many disciplines have repeatedly engaged with it. Bringing together the different yet complementary perspectives of anthropology, ethnography, sociology, philosophy, and historiography can sensitize researchers to an understanding of past and present norms, forms of sociality, and (in)visible thresholds. A number of recent publications have made this overarching topic wider, and this review article will therefore discuss the imaginaries and analyses they offer of belonging and im/mobility.

To take a more nuanced approach, the broad theme of im/mobility in history can be approached from different angles. To begin with, one can follow individuals' pathways, their experiences, reflections, and motives for being on the move. In contrast to these small-scale endeavours, the state features as one of the major protagonists of the modern mobility-taming project by observing, controlling, and often limiting flows of mobility. This can be seen as a means of gaining power and therefore as antagonistic to specific forms of mobility regarded as problematic or threatening. Leaving these two poles behind, one can

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[3] Influential in this regard is the 'new mobilities paradigm' introduced by Mimi Sheller and John Urry in 'The New Mobilities Paradigm', *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 38/2 (2006), 207–26. See also Tim Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (New York, 2006).

also engage with the practice of moving itself. This is when attention turns to objects that enable and facilitate mobility, or accidentally acquire logistical or emotional importance during this process.[4] Finally, zooming out and looking from an eagle's perspective, we see mobility as integral to humankind itself, and something that must be considered not as exceptional and deviant, but as a default mode of being human. These lines of argument will be unfolded in what follows.

I. *Individual Perspectives: Itineraries and Purposes*

French historians Delphine Diaz and Sylvie Aprile concentrate on the varieties of nineteenth-century exile experience, weighing up the extensive research on aspects of the twentieth-century mobility which resulted from the two world wars. This was accompanied by forced migration, imprisonment, resettlement, colonization, and later decolonization and state-building, or located in the context of labour migration.[5] Beginning with the preliminary questions of who was on the move or on the way into exile—how, when, where, and with whom—they present the lived experience of individuals of different backgrounds and ask what motivated them to leave their homelands. The main point of this approach is not to look at exile in terms of the two poles of departure and arrival, but to emphasize the many steps und ruptures that lay in between these two points. In order to present their protagonists as actors instead of mere objects of observation, tracking, and monitoring by the state, the editors adopt Stéphane Dufoix's concept of *exopolitie* (exopolitics). This allows them to grapple with the variety of political actions that expatriates engaged in as individuals or in groups (Diaz and Aprile, p. 7). In this

[4] See e.g. the conference 'Things on the Move: Materiality of Objects in Global and Imperial Trajectories, 1700–1900', held at the German Historical Institute London, 8–10 Sept. 2022. An outline of the conference can be found on the GHIL's webite at [https://www.ghil.ac.uk/events/conferences-and-workshops/things-on-the-move], accessed 19 Jan. 2023.

[5] In a similar vein, basing the phenomenon of global mobility in the nineteenth century, see Isabella Löhr, *Globale Bildungsmobilität 1850–1930: Von der Bekehrung der Welt zur globalen studentischen Gemeinschaft* (Göttingen, 2021).

way, the contributions seek to uncover the indeterminate groups of 'banished' people in Western Europe, and to differentiate between them. The editors are interested in individuals' experiences and their pathways into exile, the networks they developed there, their national and religious identities, their social status, and gender-based differences. They also look at what scope for action these individuals had in their new environments, and at the sources that often silence women's voices. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods, Diaz and Aprile present exile experiences from a comparative point of view, systematically adopting the perspective of their historical protagonists, who often compared themselves and their lives here and there, now and then. These comparisons—analytical, source-based, and spatially and temporally oriented—strengthen the impression that exile lives were fragmented and hybrid. As such, they were symptoms of a past reality of political tensions, precarious socio-economic circumstances, religious and ethnic segregation or oppression, and their consequences for group cohesion. Exile lives are the symbolic core of permanent adjustments in the notion of belonging.

This approach of comparative differentiation is the opposite of Panikos Panayi's micro-level perspective offering a local history of London as a 'migrant city'. He does not compare different origins or trace itineraries, but instead focuses on a single place: the British capital—and former centre of the British Empire—as the paradigm of a modern metropolis. He himself does not move long distances, nor leave the urban space behind. Strolling between Westminster and the East End, Brixton and Highgate, he carves out and collects the relics which people of different origins left there. He visualizes the traces deposited on the soil and inscribed into the architecture, and emphasizes the genuine contributions 'migrants' made to building a versatile city of politics and business, culture and religious practices, neighbourhoods, and everyday life that go far beyond the label of a 'melting pot'. If London can be considered an epitome of the globalized world, then Panayi further shapes this image, without romanticizing it or leaving out any inconsistencies. It is of particular charm that this well-told (hi)story, centred around specific biographies, explains the nature of migration from a perspective strongly anchored in the local. Panayi's own *Sehepunkt* does not follow people's comings and goings

or their points of departure and arrival. Rather, he is interested in the perceptions and imaginations of hybrid forms of belonging which originated in the migration processes that became visible on site, taking shape as particular culinary dishes, music genres, sports, places of worship and leisure, and much more. People's mobility becomes tangible as the very basis not just of London as an exceptional case of urban life, but of human sociality in general.[6] This is an achievement in its own right.

The other side of the coin is a longing for order, stability, and homogeneity instead of dynamism and hybridity. This is why different forms of movement were often hierarchized and finally required particular policies to maintain or strengthen the orders they incorporated, and protect various ideas of belonging. Migration histories therefore cannot be limited to individuals' experiences, whether the result of free choice or coercion.

II. *State Perspectives: Monitoring and Regulation*

It is a truism that a history of modern mobility and migration cannot leave out the state. Since the modern state's *nomos* (body of law) is territorially anchored, its policing methods were (and still are) based on being able to geographically locate and trace its inhabitants. The ability to control visible and invisible borders is central to its nature and self-understanding as a legitimate entity.[7] Given this basic definition, the German sociologist Steffen Mau's choice of topic at first sight seems rather uncontroversial: borders as *Sortiermaschinen* (sorting machines). His argument focuses on various types of borders, how they worked, and the consequences they had for different parts of society. He discusses borders as 'filters' and sees them as instruments of social

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[6] For a wider perspective that covers several periods, see also Christoph Cornelissen, Beat Kümin, and Massimo Rospocher (eds.), *Migration and the European City: Social and Cultural Perspectives from Early Modernity to the Present* (Berlin, 2022).

[7] Still relevant to the discussion on the impact of globalization on nation states is Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton, 2008).

differentiation (Mau, p. 15). In his view, globalization stimulated states' ambitions to control their borders in two contradictory ways. First, *Öffnungsglobalisierung* (the globalization of opening) asked for more porous borders. It eased controls and promoted worldwide trade and transnational interactions, accompanied by people on the move. Yet, second, the lack of visible borders went hand in hand with reinforced border practices, an example of *Schließungsglobalisierung* (the globalization of closure; Mau, p. 16).

Mau's nuanced praxeological analysis highlights the subtle ways in which state actors continued to monitor and regulate mobility by gathering information, selecting and classifying people. Ultimately, the present appears to be a heyday of borders, whether physical or smart and digital, and globalization itself must be regarded not as a process of flattening boundaries, but as a driver of their reinforcement.[8] This Janus-faced form of globalization has led to positive and negative notions of mobility and a way of handling it that ensures that the opening and closing of borders are mutually dependent. Monitored borders create an awareness of mobility that requires nuanced regulation and hence the hierarchization of people on the move. The border, as the title of Mau's study shows, is by no means a neutral demarcation line, but rather a sophisticated generator of social, political, and even ethnic and religious inequality (an *Ungleichheitsgenerator*; Mau, p. 163). The border not only makes inequalities visible at different levels, but perpetuates them and even produces additional hierarchies through biometric analysis and other digital tools. Deciding who is 'in' and who is not — when, where, and for what purpose — is not a question of mere geographical localization but, in a wider and deeper sense, one of socio-political and cultural belonging. Although it takes account of contemporary transformations and challenges, Mau's nuanced study invites us to re-engage with the theme of the border, not as a niche phenomenon of territorial encounters or as a by-product of statehood, but in order to embed it and its ongoing

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[8] On the implementation of borders and especially the modern barbed wire fence as a 'modest instrument of power' and metaphor for division, separation, and visible and practical exclusion, see Olivier Razac, *Politische Geschichte des Stacheldrahts: Prärie – Schützengraben – Lager*, trans. Maria Muhle (Zurich, 2003), 8; originally published as *Histoire politique du barbelé* (Paris, 2000).

internal societal and global negotiations into the wider historical context of changing norms of social belonging.

Although borders did not disappear during the processes of globalization—not even within the Schengen area—Europe remains crucial when it comes to the topic of migration, particularly regarding the parallel concepts of the nation state and the citizen that were both challenged by people on the move.[9] Reaching out to contemporary discourses, the volume edited by Giuliana Laschi, Valeria Deplano, and Alessandro Pes brings together views from the fields of history, international relations, and sociology. The contributions analyse Europe as a paradigmatic space which stimulated migration movements during the era of decolonization and integration in the second half of the twentieth century. Presenting Europe as a primary destination for people migrating from other regions of the world, they complement the views of Diaz and Aprile, who introduced Europe as a region of departure, not arrival. Thus both help to break up the narrow impression of migration as a recent phenomenon and a one-way process from the Global South to the northern hemisphere, as it is presented in public discourses that are stimulated by ongoing migratory movements especially, yet not exclusively, in the Mediterranean. The essays in this volume emphasize the importance of Europe for understanding and defining migration.[10] European actors colonized the world, imposed a territorial code of power, and promoted the ideal of homogeneity in non-European contexts. And when decolonization processes began, Europe featured as (an often implicit) role model for nation-building efforts. The bitter irony of this history is that Europe feared a backlash against these overarching transformations. Movement within a region and transgressing its borders are two entirely different things. Whereas Schengen is the most symptomatic example of a genuinely European idea of freedom of movement, this freedom

[9] For the ambivalent perpetuation of inequalities resulting from, and inscribed into, the concept of citizenship, see Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship, Inequality, and Difference: Historical Perspectives* (Princeton, 2018).

[10] See Leo Lucassen, David Feldman, and Jochen Oltmer (eds.), *Paths of Integration: Migrants in Western Europe (1880–2004)* (Amsterdam, 2006) and Peter Gatrell, *The Unsettling of Europe: The Great Migration, 1945 to the Present* (London, 2019).

is not granted to everyone. Thus it perpetuates the inequalities produced by movement (chosen freely or enforced), territorial closures, and policing practices that monitor mobility.

III. *The Object's Perspective: Material Companions*

The extent to which movement is not just about people and their interactions with the state, but about their everyday lives, becomes clear when considering the material objects that accompanied them. That objects should be regarded not just as trivia but as essential facilitators of movement is a theme of more recent research. The interdisciplinary project 'On the Materiality of (Forced) Migration', jointly conducted by the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Göttingen, the Museum Friedland, and the exhibition agency Die Exponauten in Berlin, is an excellent example of how the academic discourse can be opened up by also considering activist and artistic perspectives, and carefully integrating the views of the 'object of study'—migrating people and their own experiences—with individual material companions. The project looks at the relationship between migration and materiality. People on the move took rare yet essential belongings with them, and the project tries to make these objects speak. Personal, often intimate objects—from books, keys, and passports to toys, smartphones, and menstrual products—were regarded not as mere functional things, but as representatives and perhaps even actors of culture, identity, emotions, and communication. During the process of migration—in the cases examined mostly involuntary—additional meaning was attributed to these objects, which could be considered either as memorable remnants of a past life or as travel companions. Approaching the complex of migration via its material boundaries and periphery therefore offers new insights, as people on the move are always 'in touch' with their objects—literally and emotionally (*Moving Things*, p. 16). The whole spectrum of migration that lies beyond mere rational decisions—practical challenges whether individual or collective—opens up when we take into account these material, more-than-human dimensions in which memories, emotions, and traumatic experiences are inscribed and stored.

IV. *The Eagle's Perspective: From Migration to Humankind*

The other way around, zooming not in but out, widens the horizons of migration as an all-inclusive theme. If mobility and migration could be seen as covering everything, what can be described, explained, or discussed that is specific to them? It is possible to subsume many historical and social phenomena under the broad umbrella of mobility. And today it seems to be regarded as a master key to almost every challenge individuals and societies still face. But if so, what is the point of such a perspective? Where do the explanatory core and advantage of it lie? In this regard the intervention by Donatella Di Cesare is invaluable, and not only because to this day a philosophy of migration remains to be written.[11] Starting from the inherent danger that the figure of the migrant poses to the state, representing as it does deterritorialization as well as the fluidization and hybridity of identity, she discusses the paradoxical circumstance that the territorial nation state is not only an entirely modern phenomenon, but that it was what first made the migrant into a migrant. From the moment when the identity of a social group was aligned with the space it inhabited, anyone who tried to transgress this space or ignore its boundaries became an enemy, a potential threat, a deviant whose mobility was disruptive to stability and order, requiring observation, restriction, or immediate prevention. What Di Cesare offers is not merely a repetition of the well-known story. The merit of this book and its approach comes from her questioning of this state–migrant dependency. She asks why we continue to allow states to control territories. She also exposes all the ambivalent and contradictory norms that are bound to the ideal of territorial homogeneity, presumably mirroring that of a social group called society. Among them, one of the most confusing is the idea of

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[11] Instead, there is growing interest in bringing together perspectives from different fields of academic and practical engagement with migration. See e.g. the interdisciplinary compendium by Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield (eds.), *Migration Theory: Talking across Disciplines* (Abingdon, 2022) and the recent sociological–conceptual project which aims to fill this gap with an encyclopedia of migration terms: Inken Bartels, Isabella Löhr, Christiane Reinecke, et al. (eds.), *Inventar der Migrationsbegriffe,* at [https://www.migrationsbegriffe.de], last accessed 18 Jan. 2023.

universal human rights based on territorially coded power structures. They can only be granted within specific boundaries and cannot be applied to humanity in the abstract. In theory, human rights are held up—and praised—as a universal standard, but in practice, they fail to be the lived experience of all people. And the focus on (or one might even say: the modern fetish for) territorial borders and their intricate links with power structures on multiple levels can help explain why human rights are rights for some, but not for all.

Di Cesare's strength is combining practical descriptions of challenges and ethical ideals, and meticulously pointing out their shortcomings and the contradictions between the two. As a result of these, the protagonists of mobility—the migrant, the expatriate, the asylum seeker, and the stateless[12]—were confronted with their counterpart: our modern ideal of territorial statehood as a symbol or even a guarantor of our laws, where political acts are fundamentally divided between domestic and foreign affairs. In short, they faced the logos of the political based on the unquestioned assumption of being settled. The end to which Di Cesare's argument inevitably leads is an erosion of the widespread habit of equating migrants with the abnormal or pathological. She wants us to start thinking of migrants as fellow human beings, not as people either requiring relief and support, or evoking acts of control.[13] In theory, this is both simple and logical. Yet when it comes to practical action and consequences, it is a challenging and complex argument, one in which the value of this book resides. Keeping the notion of the migrant at an analytical level would mean a perpetuation of territorial power structures and all their resulting inequalities and inconsistencies. Abandoning the concept of the migrant would open up new landscapes of genuine humanity for all humans. Although this is not a primarily academic appeal but a broader ethical, moral one, according to Di Cesare, it is a step that is necessary and overdue.

Arguing without the word 'migrant' would not mean the end of research on this prominent figure in the study of im/mobilities;

[12] On statelessness, see Mira L. Siegelberg, *Statelessness: A Modern History* (Cambridge, Mass., 2020).

[13] For a parallel discussion of migration as part of the human condition, see Christiane Harzig and Dirk Hoerder with Donna Gabaccia, *What is Migration History?* (Cambridge, 2009), 8–52.

rather, the advantage of this step would be conceptual in nature: an inner, mental shift towards recognizing humans as humans without needing to classify them. And during this process, the popularity and frequent appearance of the figure of the migrant in public and academic discourses can remind us of our task. It may remain an un-achievable ideal, but it is one that individuals—whether politicians, intellectuals, researchers, or activists—should strive for.

What this sample of recent contributions to the highly interdisciplin-ary field of mobility studies offers is by no means coherent with regard to their objects of investigation, their sources, their temporal and spatial scope, their methodological approaches, and least of all their underlying implicit ethical impetus and explanatory goals. Yet there are some shared insights that allow the arguments to be summarized.

First, turning to the figure of the migrant and the term itself, Di Cesare argues for the dissolution of the analytical concept as it in-herits a fundamental hierarchization. This would not (and should not) mean denying the existence of the migrant as a prominent historical actor, traceable in the sources and, as such, a relevant topic for on-going research on the changing norms of human sociality and general policing practices.

Second, even though migration or movement must be regarded as something affecting all humans and not context-specific, its particu-lar relevance in driving adjustments to different forms of belonging, their reasons and imaginaries, remain influential topics worthy of further investigation. To widen the subject temporally and spatially does not necessarily mean levelling all its analytical contours; rather, it means seeking to conduct nuanced studies of distinct settings which allow the varying constitutions of human sociality to be understood. This would again include looking at the links between modernity and mobility, and the role of Europe and other world regions and their views about movement and how it should be handled, in order to sharpen and refine the core idea of mobility.

Third, looking at relations between the individual (rather than an anonymous collective) on the move, and a presumably stable and spatially defined power structure—regardless of whether this is the nation state, an international order, or any other form of socio-political manifestation—allows us to visualize mobility. To consider everyone

and everything in motion would hide movement itself and prevent nuanced analysis and qualitative differentiation.[14] This contrast between the immobile and the mobile makes it possible to engage with notions of 'normal', 'deviant', 'problematic', 'threatening', or 'voluntary' movement, and to look for their respective historical meanings. Arguing with concepts and counter-concepts, for example, by pairing figures which display a 'problematic' mobility—the refugee, the asylum seeker, the traveller, and so on—with figures of presumably legitimate belonging—the citizen, the resident, the family member—may open up ways of contouring the field in a productive way.

Finally, investigating these—and other—subtopics of the broad theme of mobility and migration requires a shift in the S*ehepunkt* from which we grasp some aspects of past and present movement, while others remain out of sight.[15] And what particular *Sehepunkt* we choose for our engagement with the imaginaries of which forms of mobility is itself a product of our internalized modes of belonging.

[14] Peter Adey, 'If Mobility is Everything Then it is Nothing: Towards a Relational Politics of (Im)Mobilities', *Mobilities,* 1/1 (2006), 75–94.
[15] See Jan de Vries, 'Playing with Scales: The Global and the Micro, the Macro and the Nano', *Past & Present,* Supplement 14, 242 (2019), 23–36.

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