

# Chapter 2

## Migration Histories



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It is impossible to cover the history of global migrations in one chapter. Dirk Hoerder (2002) in his seminal work *Cultures in Contact* needed 800 pages to map global migrations in the past millennium (see also Bosma et al., 2013; Lucassen & Lucassen, 1997, 2009, 2010; Lucassen et al., 2014). The *Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration* takes five thick volumes to cover global migration since Antiquity (Ness et al., 2013). The literature on global migration has increased rapidly since the 1980s. This increase is more-or-less in line with the increase in publications on migration control and migration management. The number of publications about global migration *history* is much less (see Fig. 2.1).

This chapter will and cannot not cover the global migrations in the past 2000 years, but rather it will look critically at data collections, present biases in *migration history*, and will give a helicopter view of major migrations.

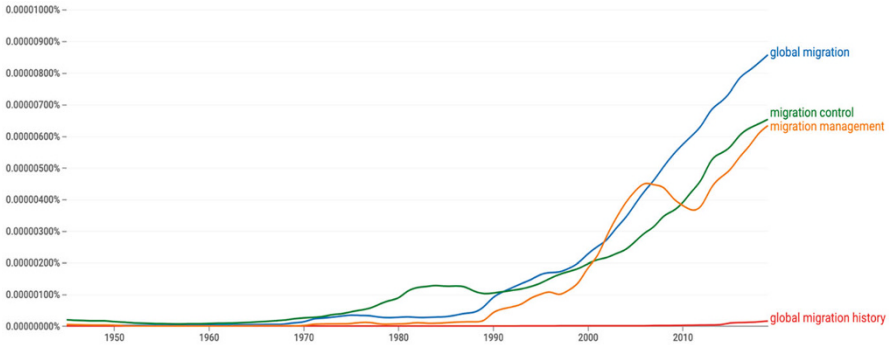
### 2.1 Biases and What Is New?

It is easy to argue—and many people have—that the migration of today is different from that of the past. In politics, this is done to pitch the ‘good’ migrant of the past against the ‘bad’ migrant of today, or to problematise current migration (Lucassen & Lucassen, 2011; Winter, 2012). Furthermore, if migration and integration are not presented as new issues, it is not news and thus not worthy of a journalist’s attention, nor is there need for new policies or government intervention.

There is a tendency to present the immigrants of the past as desired immigrants, while many of today’s immigrants are presented as not. For instance, 1 million

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**Fig. 2.1** Publications on global migration history compared to global migration, migration control, and migration management

Protestants—Huguenots—fled from France in the seventeenth century, after their right to exercise their religion was revoked, and many thousands had been killed. They fled to the Dutch Republic (and to Dutch colonies in South Africa, the Dutch East Indies and the Caribbean), England and Wales, Switzerland, Brandenburg, the Palatinate, and Prussia. They are remembered as the welcome immigrants because they strengthened Protestantism, and brought with them skills, money, and networks. However, when not all Huguenots proved to be as wealthy as the authorities had hoped they would be, the refugees were forced to [set up their own churches](#) (separate from the existing Calvinist churches) so that they could support their own poor (Briels, 1985; Gelderblom, 2002). Some of the Huguenots were welcome, others much less so. And this is similar for the migrants of today.

Today’s migrants come from and go to different countries than they did in the past. Over time, migration routes have always changed and shifted; there is continuity in change, and change in itself is nothing new. When comparing the present to the past it is important to keep in mind that currently the distances that are travelled are generally longer and the frequency of travel is higher, but the number of hours spend travelling is not: it took 3 weeks to cross the Atlantic from Europe to the US at the beginning of the nineteenth century, 5 days at the end of the nineteenth century, and 8 h now (Feys, 2016). Travel became faster, safer and cheaper and this meant that overall mobility increased (not only that of migrants). Furthermore, also knowledge ‘travelled’ faster and more easily. This begs the question which indicators we should use to compare the migrants of today to those of the past.

Overall, there is a strong Western-centric bias in the literature. Migrations to, within and from Asia and Africa are largely presented as the results of what Europeans did or did not do (Bosma et al., 2013; Lucassen, 2004). Many of the migration histories about Africa, for instance, start with European colonisation (cf. Asiwaju, 1976). This obscures the fact that there were migration trajectories that started before Europe took control, and which continued after the Europeans arrived. Contact between the Indian subcontinent and East Africa, for instance, goes back 2000 years. When Vasco da Gama arrived in Mozambique, Mombasa, and

Malindi in 1498, he was surprised at how many Arabs and Indians he found there (Oonk, 2013; Dussubieux et al., 2012). There was also migration from Hadramawt (currently in Yemen) which started before the time of Mohammed and continued for centuries after (700–1500). It connected the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf to the African shore (Bahl, 2017; Martin, 1974; van den Berg, 1886). Students from the Horn of Africa were studying in Cairo since the Middle Ages, and the students were following in the footsteps of traders and vice versa, over centuries (Loiseau, 2019). Multiple other examples of migrations that started before colonisation, and continued after it began could be given.

From the sixteenth century onwards, European colonisation disrupted existing migrations and later colonisers rather randomly drew international borders on the world's map, making people into to cross-border migrants although their migration routes did not change. Since the borders were important to the colonisers, but not *per se* to the colonised, some authors have argued against the use of the term 'migration' (which holds the implicit assumption that state borders are important), preferring the term 'mobility' instead. This so-called mobility turn approach underscores the need to make clear which boundaries matter to whom, when and why.

The literature pays too little attention to continuities. For instance, there were already in the nineteenth century large and long-standing Chinese immigrant communities in South Africa, Mauritius, Reunion and Madagascar (Neame, 1909). The nature of the Chinese migration to the African continent did change over time. In the 1950s to 1970s, the People's Republic of China promoted and organised migrations to African countries as part of its anti-imperialist policy of co-operation and solidarity with, what was called at the time, the Third World. In the 1980s, the number of migrants in African countries from Hong Kong and Taiwan increased, followed by an increase in the numbers from mainland China. In 2008, there were 700–800 Chinese companies in Africa employing 80,000 Chinese workers (Mohan & Tan-Mullins, 2008; Mung, 2008). It is correct to say that migration from China to Africa today is different from what it was 200 years ago. However, it is not as new as it is often made out to be.

The literature about the migration of men is still much larger than that about women, despite efforts to remedy this bias (for an overview, see Schrover & Moloney, 2013). Migration researchers and policymakers endlessly repeat the claim that a *feminisation* of migration has taken place (see, e.g., King & Zontini, 2000; Oso & Garson, 2005; El-Cherkeh et al., 2004; Kawar, 2004; OECD SOPEMI, 2001; Wihtol de Wenden, 2003). It is presented as one of the key characteristics of current migration (Castles & Miller, 2003, pp. 7–9, 188). Authors generally offer no proof for feminisation except the observation that women today form about 50 percent of the migrants. Although this is true, it was also true for many other migrations worldwide in much earlier periods, for which we have reliable data (Schrover, 2013). The claim that a feminisation has taken place in recent years, is followed by observations regarding migrant women's health hazards, the problems of women work, and to issues such as prostitution and trafficking (Wihtol de Wenden, 2003; El-Cherkeh et al., 2004; Yamanaka & Piper, 2005; Dobson, 2008). The rhetoric about the feminisation of migration is part of, on the one hand, attempts to generate

attention for the understudied migration of women, and on the other hand, it is part of the problematisation of migration (Schrover, 2013).

Over time, people moved because they had to, wanted to, were allowed to, or were forced to. They were driven out by poverty or saw better economic opportunities elsewhere. They were seeking adventure, luck, love, a family and freedom, or they fled repression, war, persecution, and disaster. Motives for moving have been the same throughout history. Frequently, reasons to move overlapped: people fled, but they directed their steps toward a country that offered both freedom and economic opportunities. Currently, there is attention for ‘[climate refugees](#)’; people who move because of drought, floods, or other environmental disasters. However, also that migration is not new. In April 1815 Mount Tambora in Indonesia erupted, and a veil of volcanic dust wrapped around the Earth, blocking the sun in 1816, 1817, and 1818. It led to 3 years without a summer and floods, droughts, storms, the spread of disease, and failed crops, thousands of kilometres away from the eruption site. Hundreds of thousands of refugees took to the road, trying to escape poverty and hunger (D’Archy Wood, 2016). Attention to ‘[climate refugees](#)’ is new, but the migration itself is not.

Lastly, the assumption has been made that the number of immigrants today is larger than in the past. To some measure this is true. The absolute number of people living outside their country of birth increased from 93 million in 1960 to 244 million in 2016. However, this increase is in line with the growth of the global population, which grew from 3.0 billion in 1960 to 7.5 billion in 2016. The global share of people living outside their country of birth is 3 percent now as it has been in the last six decades. Within the EU, the percentage of people born in another country is larger (57 million or 11.3 percent of the population) than ever before. However, 20 million of these migrants come from other EU countries. Within the EU there is [free mobility](#) and encouraging this has been a goal since the Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957. The migration within the EU has become more like [internal migration](#). If we look percentages on a worldwide scale, migration has not increased.

## 2.2 Who Counts?

There is an extensive debate about numbers when it comes to global migrations. As said above, migrations from, to, or within the Western world, have over time been described much more than other migrations.<sup>1</sup> Attempts have been made to remedy that unbalance, but it still exists (Bade et al., 2011; Ness et al., 2013; McKeown, 2004, 2010; Moya & McKeown, 2010). One reason for it is a lack of [data](#). Many migrations in the past went unrecorded. The further away from the Western world, and the further back in time, the more difficult it becomes to estimate the number of

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/todays-immigration-policy-debates-do-we-need-little-history>

people on the move. In part this has to do with definitions (Who is a migrant? Which borders are relevant?) (Urry, 2010; Cresswell, 2010; de Bruijn, 2014), and in part with authorities caring less about certain categories of migrants. States were as a rule more interested in men, as taxpayers and potential soldiers, than in women (Schrover et al., 2008). In the nineteenth century, German states forbade the migration of women who were planning to leave their children behind, but not of men who were planning to do the same (Schrover, 2001). Women left despite the restriction, but without being registered. Under-registration was influenced by gender as well as by skin colour. In the period 1946–1970, 617 thousand white people migrated to South Africa, 39 percent of them from the UK and 41 percent from other European countries. Between 1913 and 1986, black people could only enter South Africa illegally or as contract workers. They came mainly from Mozambique, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Malawi (Peberdy, 1999). The white migrants to South Africa were recorded, but the black migrants—who mostly could not move legally—were not. The lack of data is a result of a lack of interest, a deliberate choice to not register some people, and restrictions on the migration of some of the people (Manning, 2005, 2006; van Schendel & Abraham, 2005).

One problem with historical sources relating to non-Western countries is that many of them have been made by colonial authorities, or organisations strongly aligned to them. This, however, does not mean the information has to be discarded. A critical view on who collected material, when, and why is standard practice for historians. Information that has been gathered by colonisers can still provide us with information about the colonised, and others. Furthermore, part of the material remains underused because the focus in research is on movement between the Metropolis and the colony. Other movements receive less attention, although information is available. For instance, in 1952, the British made plans to resettle the Kazakhs, who had fled from Tibet to Kashmir, in Turkey, and in 1955, British authorities made a plan to resettle Chinese refugees in Hong Kong in Paraguay.<sup>2</sup> A Eurocentric focus on working with these types of sources often means these migration plans are ignored.

Regime changes lead to breaks in data collections. For the Russian Empire-USSR there is, for instance, a gap between 1920 and 1990 (Siegelbaum & Page Moch, 2014). From the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, the Imperial Russian Government, which included eastern Poland and Finland, had consulates throughout North America. These consulates collected data on migrations from the Russian Empire to the US and Canada. An online database provides access to about 11,400 references to the passport and identity papers. After 1920 this information stops, because of the Russian Revolution and the creation of the Soviet Union. From 1990 onwards, data about migration in the (former) USSR are again available.<sup>3</sup> Data

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<sup>2</sup><http://www.archivesdirect.amdigital.co.uk/>

<sup>3</sup>USSR statistics on migrations in the period 1987–2009 [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1QKWkxJaBDYXGmWuZUMg-fLE0iIKMyzvhpCknp\\_4NQZk/edit?hl=en\\_US&hl=en\\_US#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1QKWkxJaBDYXGmWuZUMg-fLE0iIKMyzvhpCknp_4NQZk/edit?hl=en_US&hl=en_US#gid=0)

for the gap in between can be pieced together. The Electronic Repository of Russian Historical Statistics, for instance, brings together data extracted from various published and unpublished sources with a focus on Russian history from the eighteenth until the twenty-first century.<sup>4</sup>

When it comes to global migrations, it is interesting to have data covering long periods of time. These types of [data](#) have been collected, for instance, via censuses, and by SOPEMI (Système d'Observation Permanente sur les Migrations), by Ferenczi and Willcox, and in the UN's Demographic Yearbooks (Salt, 1989).

Statistics that relate to [nationality](#) (i.e. in the censuses) are problematic because migrants can and do sometimes have more than one nationality, and it is often not clear how these migrants were dealt with in statistics. Data on flow (arrivals and departures) make it possible to see year-to-year changes. Not all countries, however, use the same length of stay as a measure [to distinguish migrants from, for instance, tourists](#), and the indicators used tend to change over time (Simmons, 1987). A matrix of data on migration, constructed in 1972, showed that figures for a particular flow reported by the country of immigration were substantially higher than the figures for the same flow reported by the country of emigration (if data were correct and immigrants were defined in the same manner the numbers should be the same). Of the 342 flows between pairs of countries in the matrix the total reported number of immigrants was 57 percent higher than that of the number of emigrants (1,072,500 versus 683,200) because countries used different definitions of migrants with varying measures for the minimum duration of stay (Kelly, 1987).

In 1973, SOPEMI was established to provide the European Member States of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) with mechanisms to share information on international migration. SOPEMI annually publishes Trends in international migration.<sup>5</sup> Data in these reports are not comparable (as is true for all other sources) (Salt, 1987).

Imre Ferenczi and Walter F. Willcox, in their 1929 publication *International Migrations* published data on migrations in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Imre Ferenczi was the Technical Adviser on Migration and Population Questions at the International Labor Office (ILO) in Geneva since 1920, and acting chief of its Migration Section. The emphasis in this work is on emigration, mostly from Europe, but it includes a wealth of other data. The ILO has collected massive data on labour migration, since 1920, and this includes extensive data for labour migrations between African countries during colonialism.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup><https://ristat.org/topics#>

<sup>5</sup><http://www.oecd.org/general/trendsinternationalmigrationreflectincreasinglabour-relatedimmigrationandpersistentintegrationproblems.htm>

<sup>6</sup><https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/>

For the last 60 years of the twentieth century, data can be extracted on immigration to European countries from the United Nations Demographic Yearbooks (UN, 1949; 1951; 1953; 1955; 1958; 1960; 1963; 1967; 1971). The tables in the Yearbooks come with very long explanatory footnotes regarding the comparability of numbers. In the *Demographic Yearbooks* data on flow (arrivals) are only available for some countries over any length of time. Albania, Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic, Greece, Malta, Romania, and the USSR never supplied data on immigration or emigration well into the 1980s or later. Data on Eastern European countries and the USSR are missing for almost all years, except the most recent. Portugal only supplied data on emigration, not immigration.

The data in the UN Yearbooks and other sources only include people who were regarded as foreigners. This means that people who returned from former colonies, such as the *pied noirs* in France and repatriates in the Netherlands, are not included, and neither are the *Aussiedler* or *Spätaussiedler* who came to Germany. Since 1950, 4.5 million *Aussiedler* or *Spätaussiedler* moved to Germany, about half of whom came from the Soviet Union and successor states. In recent years, new EU Member States mirrored these policies of return and gave preferential rights to ‘returnees’, frequently descendants of people who left generations ago, or were deported under Soviet and communist rule. Poland grants rights to co-ethnic returnees from Kazakhstan; Greece for co-ethnic returnees from the former republics of Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Armenia; and Hungary does so for co-ethnics from Romania, Ukraine, and former Yugoslavia. Numbers are substantial. Finland, for instance, encouraged 60,000 Ingrian Finns to ‘return’ from the former Soviet Union. In statistics they are frequently not visible.

As said, the information on older migrations is scant. There are exceptions. There is for instance an interactive map portraying Jewish migrations during Antiquity.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, there is a digital collection of so-called prize papers: documents pertaining to tens of thousands of seized ships (“prizes”) making it possible to analyse who travelled on them in the Early Modern and Modern period. An option in the Map Tool allows users to see in what places emigrant sailors from Scandinavia ended up,<sup>8</sup> or from where for example Boston drew its foreign sailors.<sup>9</sup> It can identify the birthplaces of illiterate mariners,<sup>10</sup> or generate a visual representation

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/story-jews/explore-the-diaspora/interactive-map/>

<sup>8</sup> [https://prize-papers-atlas-online.brillonline.com/map;jsessionid=F7256C8A52853E1EB25E2DCF7DE06D1D?bpl\\_country=Sweden%20or%20Norway%20or%20Denmark%20or%20Finland&res\\_country=not%20Sweden%20not%20Norway%20not%20Denmark%20not%20Finland&searchfilter=res](https://prize-papers-atlas-online.brillonline.com/map;jsessionid=F7256C8A52853E1EB25E2DCF7DE06D1D?bpl_country=Sweden%20or%20Norway%20or%20Denmark%20or%20Finland&res_country=not%20Sweden%20not%20Norway%20not%20Denmark%20not%20Finland&searchfilter=res)

<sup>9</sup> [https://prize-papers-atlas-online.brillonline.com/map;jsessionid=F7256C8A52853E1EB25E2DCF7DE06D1D?or\\_place=Boston,%20MA&bpl\\_country=not%20United%20States%20of%20America&searchfilter=birth](https://prize-papers-atlas-online.brillonline.com/map;jsessionid=F7256C8A52853E1EB25E2DCF7DE06D1D?or_place=Boston,%20MA&bpl_country=not%20United%20States%20of%20America&searchfilter=birth)

<sup>10</sup> <https://prize-papers-atlas-online.brillonline.com/map;jsessionid=F7256C8A52853E1EB25E2DCF7DE06D1D?crewlit=Cross&searchfilter=birth&iconsizefilter=small>

of the places of residence of married seamen.<sup>11</sup> The data are enormously rich, but they cover only a small percentage of the migrants.

For recent periods there is much more material to work with. Information about migration to the US is especially abundant. Shipping companies, rather than state authorities, collected data on who migrated across the Atlantic (Feys, 2010; Brinkmann, 2008). Much of the material of the shipping companies is available digitally.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, digitised information is available (also visualised in maps) about everybody who migrated to the US since 1820.<sup>13</sup> For the US there are in addition large online archival collections on migration.<sup>14</sup> This includes the 1911 full report of the US Dillingham Commission (41 volumes) on migration, with extensive data on immigrant groups in the US. The Library and Archives of Canada similarly hold immigration records and travel guides, passenger lists, letters, diaries, journals, memoirs, newspapers, maps, art, photographs, music, and films.<sup>15</sup> The Immigration History Research Center Archives in Minneapolis holds an enormous amount of information on immigration, including digitised immigrant letters.<sup>16</sup> There is also systematic information on, for instance, migration to and from Germany in the period 1950–2017.<sup>17</sup>

The World Economic Forum published an interactive map covering the period 1990–2017 and including migrations to the US from all countries in the world.<sup>18</sup> Similar information is provided based on data from the UN Population Division, providing a map with the net number of migrants per country for the period 1950–2015.<sup>19</sup> The Migration Policy Institute has mapped the largest refugee populations by country of destination for the period 1960–2019. The map displays which countries report refugee populations greater than 500,000 in each decade since 1960 and in 2015 and 2019. Furthermore, it lists the 25 largest refugee populations by the country of destination and the refugee share of the total

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<sup>11</sup> <https://prize-papers-atlas-online.brillonline.com/>; <https://prize-papers-atlas-online.brillonline.com/map?jsessionid=F7256C8A52853E1EB25E2DCF7DE06D1D?crewmstat=Married&searchfilter=res&iconsizefilter=small>

<sup>12</sup> Database for new arrivals on Ellis Island in New York:  
<https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://metrocosm.com/animated-immigration-map/> The same information is also used for other websites: <http://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/foreignborn/#decade=1960&country=Germany>

<sup>14</sup> For instance: [https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/immigration-to-the-united-states-1789-1930?utm\\_source=library.harvard](https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/immigration-to-the-united-states-1789-1930?utm_source=library.harvard)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/Pages/introduction.aspx>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.lib.umn.edu/ihrca>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bevoelkerung/Wanderungen/Tabellen/wanderungen-werte.html>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/05/diversity-in-the-us-mapped>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/net-number-migrants-country-1950-2015-five-year-intervals?width=1000&height=850&iframe=true>



population.<sup>20</sup> The UNHCR provides historical refugee data from 1960 onwards.<sup>21</sup> The flow of people across the world in the period 1990–2010 has been mapped, this time trying to take a global approach.<sup>22</sup>

Overall, there have been numerous projects on mapping human migration across time and space, although mostly focused on recent migrations (Zambotti et al., 2015).

### 2.3 A Helicopter View

This section will provide a helicopter view of global migrations, focusing on major moves. As long as there are people, there has been human migration, starting with the migration of *Homo sapiens* across the African continent 300,000 years ago, their dispersals to the southern coast of Asia and Oceania 70,000–50,000 years ago, and into Europe 40,000 years ago. As with all later migrations, also the ‘Out of Africa’ migration has led to extensive debates about when, in which numbers, how and why people migrated. Currently climate change is being offered as an explanation for why the *homo sapiens* started to move (Rito et al., 2019). The ‘Out of Africa’ migration led to the creation of several interactive maps.<sup>23</sup> The *Interactive Human Migration Map* retraces the paths of the first humans across the world.<sup>24</sup>

Skipping ahead ten thousands of years, brings us to the period between 3000 and 2000 years ago, when 60 million Bantu speakers from West and Central Africa, moved South and East across the African continent. Linguists, archaeologists, and DNA specialists provided the information, which allowed for the reconstruction of this large-scale migration (de Luna, 2014; Li et al., 2014).

From 500 BCE onwards the Silk Road started to develop, which connected Southern Europe to East Asia, with traders, troops, scholars, goods, and ideas moving from East to West and vice versa. Imperial Rome, in turn, housed migrants from all parts of the Roman Empire, including Gauls, Spaniards, Syrians, Persians, Britons, Greeks, Libyans, and Egyptians, as well as migrants from India and Africans from unspecified countries. After the onset of decline of the Western Roman Empire, 750,000 Germanic people moved into the Roman Empire. The number of these migrants, and the nature of the migration, are highly contested (Geary, 2012). Their migration is usually presented as a destruction narrative, in

<sup>20</sup><https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/largest-refugee-populations-country-destination?width=1000&height=850&iframe=true>

<sup>21</sup>[https://data.unhcr.org/en/search?type%5B%5D=document&global\\_filter%5Bdoc\\_type%5D%5B%5D=7&maps=1](https://data.unhcr.org/en/search?type%5B%5D=document&global_filter%5Bdoc_type%5D%5B%5D=7&maps=1)

<sup>22</sup>[http://download.gsb.bund.de/BIB/global\\_flow/](http://download.gsb.bund.de/BIB/global_flow/)

<sup>23</sup>See the interactive maps to illustrate this  
<https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/interactive-human-migration-map/interactive-map/>  
<http://atlasofhumanevolution.com/Maps.asp>

<sup>24</sup><https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/interactive-human-migration-map/interactive-map/>

which Germanic masses immigrated from the North and East into Central Europe, causing the end of the civilised world of classical antiquity (Wiedemann, 2020). The same destruction narrative is applied to Muslim migrations into Europe from the South, and Vikings coming from the North, from the eighth century onwards. The Vikings reached the Mediterranean and North America, and the Muslims governed most of Spain and Portugal. In the same period there were also other large migrations. In the ninth and tenth century, for example, large numbers of people moved South in what is now China and mixed with the Han people already living there. There is no consensus on how large these various groups of migrants were (Hoerder, 2012).

As is true for today, also in the past motives were mixed. As a rule, pilgrimage and trade intertwined (Bahl, 2017). West African Muslims, for instance, travelled to Mecca already in the early twelfth century. Rulers of Mali made the pilgrimage in the 1260s. Most famous was Mansa Musa, who made his pilgrimage with 60,000 people in 1324, as witnessed and recorded by Italian traders. Mansa Musa was born in 1280 and ruled the kingdom of Mali from 1312 to 1337. His regime controlled the routes to the Bambura and Bambuhu gold fields. His fame, especially because of his pilgrimage, led to stories in the Middle Ages in Europe and the Arab world about an Island of Gold in central Africa (Keech McIntosh, 1981). Many explorers set out to find it, paving trade routes while doing so (Masonen, 1997).

Between 1547 and 1860, European ships carried 11–14 million enslaved people from Africa across the Atlantic (Lofkrantz & Ojo, 2012; Matlou, 2013). African people were also brought to Asia as enslaved people. It is estimated that between 800 and 1900, 12 million enslaved people were transported across the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. This migration started earlier – in 2900 BC when Nubian captives were moved to Egypt – and continued longer. Between 800 and 1600, 4.7 million enslaved people moved North across the Sahara, and 2.7 million did so between 1600 and 1900, part of whom were moved East from there (Ralph, 1992). The literature on this forced movement is overshadowed by that on the transatlantic slave trade, also in the debates about numbers (Collins, 2006). After the formal abolition, slavery was partly replaced by indentured labour. In total, 1 million indentured workers were brought from India to the Caribbean (Lal & Jahaji, 2000; Kaur, 2012).

In the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth migration increased. Between 1840 and 1940, 60 million people left Europe, 21–23 million left South China, 30–33 million moved from China to Manchuria, 43–50 million moved within or left India, 20–40 million moved within China, 9–13 million left from the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Asia, 74 million moved within Europa and 35 million within the Americas (Moya & McKeown, 2010; McKeown, 2004; Gottschang, 1982). Over 4 million people left Ireland between 1841 and 1911. Between 1846 and 1932, 52 million people in total left Europe. Between 1880 and 1914, 4.3 million Russians migrated to Siberia (Anderson, 1980). In 1910, there were officially 111 thousand of Chinese subjects in Russia (according to estimates, there were 1.5–2 times more). In 1923 there were 250 thousand Russians in China (according to some authors, 400 thousand—see Kireev 2016)). In 1907, after a treaty had been concluded between Japan and Brazil, thousands of people moved from

Japan to Brazil, mostly to work on coffee plantations (Tsuda, 2003). Overall numbers were higher than in previous eras.

Mobility increased because travel became cheaper, faster, and safer (after the introduction of railroads and steam ships). It affected travel all around the world (Feys, 2010; Neyens, 2016), including crossing the South Chinese Sea and the Arabian Sea (Kaur, 2009). This led to a sharp rise in the number of pilgrims from the European colonies in Asia to Mecca; a trip that previously had been made by much fewer people, and also a trip from which many did not return because they died on the way (Moch Nur, 2008; van Bruinessen, 1995). The number of pilgrims returning led to a rise in pan-Islamism, which created fears among colonial authorities, who in response started to register and monitor pilgrims much closer than before.

After the start of the Russian Revolution in 1917, 1–2 million Russians fled (Simpson, 1939). During the First World War, 20 million people became refugees and internally displaced persons in Europe (Lissner, 1977). In the First World War, there were large-scale forced migrations. Germany deployed 1.5 million Prisoners of War (POWs), and Austria-Hungary put to work more than 1 million Russian POWs. 2.1 million Austrian-Hungarian and 0.17 million German POWs worked in Russia, and tens of thousands of German POW worked in France and Britain. In 1916, the German occupation forces deported 5000 Polish workers from Lodz, mostly Jews, and 61,000 Belgian workers to Germany. Part of these migrations or deportations were meant to be temporary, but they ended up to be permanent, because POW stayed or died in the countries they were brought to.

Immigration restrictions, introduced in the US in the 1920s, greatly reduced migrations to the US. Other countries that received large numerous migrants in the past decades followed suit (Cook-Martin & Fitzgerald, 2010). The onset of the economic crisis of the 1930s reduced possibilities for labour migration, although not all labour migration came to a halt. In France employers cooperated in a *Société Générale d'Immigration*, which between 1920 and 1930 recruited 490,000 Polish migrants, to work as miners (Knotter, 2015). In the 1920s and 1930s, the discovery of oil led to migrations into the Gulf region. The migrants were senior staff of the oil companies from the US and UK, high-skilled workers from India, and low skilled migration from countries in the region (Errichiello, 2012).

In the 1930s there was a sharp rise in refugee migration. Poles fled in large numbers, as did the Chinese, and 500,000 Spaniards fled to France during the Civil War. After Hitler's rise to power, Jews and others sought to escape Nazi Germany. During the Second World War, the scale of forced labour migration increased dramatically. Two Soviet decrees of 1942 forced 316,000 ethnic Germans living in the Soviet Union into so-called labour armies and moved them to far away sites to cut timber, build factories and railroads, work in coal mines, and in oil industries (Mukhina, 2014). In 1944, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin accused the Chechen people of helping the Nazis and forced 700,000 people to migrate to Central Asia. During the Second World War, Japan established a forced labour regime and deported 1 million Korean men and women and 40,000 Chinese to Japan. Many more examples of these large forced migrations could be given.

In Nazi Germany differences were made between forced labour migrants. The German word for guest worker—*Gastarbeiter*—was coined in Nazi Germany in order to distinguish the more or less voluntary temporary labour migrants from other migrants – *Zwangsarbeiter* and *Ostarbeiter* – who were forced to migrate and work, and who were deemed racially inferior and not capable of doing all tasks (Herbert, 1986; Didier, 1943; Hachtmann, 2010). Between 1939 and 1945, there were 13.5 million foreign forced labourers in Nazi Germany, of whom 12 million were coerced to move (Spoerer & Fleischhacker, 2002).

The Second World War created 60 million refugees worldwide, 30 million of whom in Europe (Davies, 2006). After the war, most of the European refugees returned home voluntarily. However, some of the people refused to return to their countries of origin. Poles, “Balts”—Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians—and Jews comprised the three largest groups among them (Dinnerstein, 1982). The UNHRC states that its ‘most recently estimated for 30 June 2020 shows that, for the first time in recorded history, the number of people forcibly displaced is now 80 million, and over 26 million refugees.’ The data for the period around the Second World War provided above and below question this observation.<sup>25</sup>

In the immediate post-war period, there were, in addition to the 60 million refugees, 14 million Displaced Persons (DPs) in Europe, plus 12–16.5 million expellees (ethnic Germans from countries that had been under Nazi rule and who were expelled to Germany after the war) (Cohen, 2011). The expellees were explicitly defined as non-DPs and non-refugees by the parties discussing an international solution to the DP or refugee problem (Schrover, 2015). In addition, there were other movements. The Partition of British India in 1947 into India and Pakistan, for instance, displaced 17 million people.<sup>26</sup>

In the post-WWII years, authorities in Western European countries regarded their countries as too full. There were severe housing shortages, and it was feared that the pre-war unemployment would return. In the US it was feared that dissatisfaction would increase the support for communism in Western European countries. European authorities therefore encouraged emigrations from Europe. About 2 million people migrated to Australia in the immediate post-1945 years from the UK, the Netherlands, and Germany. From Germany 80,500 people migrated to Australia as labour migrants (Schmortte, 2005; Jones, 2002), and 200,000 to Canada between 1951 and 1957 (Schmalz, 2000). From the Netherlands about 400,000 people left. Most of these post-war European emigrants moved within assisted passage schemes: this means that their journey was paid by their country of origin, provided they had been selected for emigration (Schrover & van Faassen, 2010). Authorities encouraged, organised and financed large-scale mobility.

The countries of origin selected the people whom they thought they could miss, and countries of settlement such as Australia selected the people whom they wanted

<sup>25</sup><https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/how-many-refugees/#:~:text=UNHCR%20most%20recently%20estimated%20for,and%20over%2026%20million%20refugees.>

<sup>26</sup>For an oral history archive and interactive map see: <https://www.1947partitionarchive.org/>

to come. Bilateral treaties regulated the support the migrants got before, during and after their journey, as well as the criteria for selection. Over a four-year period, Australia entered into agreements with Italy and the Netherlands in 1951, Austria, Belgium, Greece, Spain and West Germany in 1952, and with Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States in 1954. In 1955 Australian authorities, implemented 'Operation Reunion' which was intended to assist family members to migrate to Australia. Within a decade, 30,000 people migrated from countries such as Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Canada in a similar manner sought to attract people from Europe.<sup>27</sup> In the period 1946–1980, 4.8 million people migrated to Canada, including 1.1 million from Great Britain, 0.5 million each from the US and Italy, 326 thousand from Germany and 185 thousands from the Netherlands.<sup>28</sup> Ideas about how to best organise emigration from North-Western European countries in the 1950s - via bilateral treaties and based on selection – formed the blueprint for the organisation of guest worker migration a few years later. Civil servants organising emigrations, moved to new positions in which they organised the new immigrations. Countries were different but underlying ideas were the same.

In the period of 1958–1972, about 8 million work permits were issued to guest workers to work in Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany. Initially, they were recruited to fill vacancies in mining and the steel industry, and as a result 80 percent of the guest workers were men. It led to a masculinisation of migration, although the word was never used, not at the time, nor in later publications. In the UK, which was outside the European Coal and Steel Community (established in 1951) and the European Economic Community (est. 1957) workers from its (former) colonies were used in as similar manner to fill vacancies.

Authorities emphasised the circular nature of the guest worker migration to pacify the labour unions, who feared that the guest workers would stay and compete with local workers, when economic growth would slow down. The emphasis on the temporariness of the guest worker migration was a way to make this migration acceptable, so shortly after hundreds of thousands of people had been stimulated to migrate from Europe. When the guest worker migration system came to an end in the mid-1970s, guest workers reduced the number of trips back and forth, fearing (correctly) that they would not be able to re-enter the recruiting countries once they had left. The economic crisis, which was the reason to stop the recruitment of guest workers, also hit the countries of origin. Migrants did not want to return to their countries or origin in the midst of an economic crisis, and especially when this coincided with a period of political instability (Grotti & Goldstein, 2005).

Among the **labour migrants** there were people who could have applied for **refugee status** but did not: people were **fleeing the regime** of Franco in Spain, of Salazar in

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2016006-eng.htm>

<sup>28</sup> <http://faculty.marianopolis.edu/c.belanger/QuebecHistory/readings/SourceofCanadianImmigrants1921-1945.html>

Portugal, the Colonels regime in Greece, the coups in Turkey and the repressions in Morocco. Most of them simply chose to move as labour migrants, which was easy under the guest worker migration regime. Those who did apply for refugee status were turned down and allocated by the authorities to the category of labour migrants (Walaardt, 2013).

East Germany also had a guest worker migration regime, albeit with smaller numbers of labour migrants than West Germany. Labour migrants were called *ausländischen Werktätigen* and *Vertragsarbeiter*. Until the German reunification, there were 69,000 Vietnamese, 50,000 Poles, 40,000 Hungarians, 25,000 Cubans, 22,000 migrants from Mozambique, 8000 from Algeria, 2000 from Angola and several hundreds from China and North Korea. About 70 percent of them were men. Bilateral treaties were concluded between the countries of origin of the labour migrants and the DDR (Rabenschlag, 2014; Ireland, 1997). In the 1980s, there were in total 300,000 mostly unskilled workers who worked in Communist Bloc countries, including the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany (Schwenkel, 2014). Although the East and the West of Europe seemed to be worlds apart, the way labour immigration was organised was not that different.

Between 1942 and the 1960s, the US had the rather similar the so-called Bracero Program, which regulated migration from Mexico (Blank, 2013). Canada also had a similar programme for the recruitment of temporary workers, mainly from the Caribbean. The Bracero Program was established in 1942 as a temporary wartime measure. It was extended by US Congress and expanded in the latter half of the 1950s. The migration was meant to be temporary and circular, as the labour migration in Europe was perceived to be. In the period 1955–1959, half a million Mexicans were entering the USA each year. In total the program brought 4–5 million people into the US, 89 percent of whom came from Mexico and 4 percent from the British West Indies or Jamaica (Massey & Pren, 2012).

Organised labour migration, based on selection, did not stop after the economic crisis of the 1980s. In the Philippines, the government since the 1960s organised the ‘export’ of nurses to other countries, hoping that remittances would stimulate the Philippines’ economy (Yeoh et al., 1999; Panayiotopoulos, 2005; Urbano, 2012; Nesadurai, 2013). This continued beyond the period of guestworker migration. Currently, the total number of overseas workers from the Philippines is 10 million, of whom 3.5 million are in the US and 1 million in Saudi Arabia. The remittances of the Overseas Contract Workers—the official Philippine policy category—constitute 30–40% of the Philippine’s BSP (McKay, 2007).

The economic growth that led to the migration to North-Western Europe, also caused the migration of large numbers of construction workers to the Middle East, during the oil boom of the 1970s and 1980s (Dito, 2013). Furthermore, in the 1960s, Mauritania, Ghana or Côte d’Ivoire attracted Senegalese, Malian, Guinean and Gambian migrants to fill vacancies. In 1969, after the 1966 coup, Ghana expelled 155,000–213,000 immigrants, mainly from Nigeria, Togo, Burkina Faso and Niger. In 1983 and 1985, during the economic crisis, Nigeria similarly expelled two million west-African migrants, mostly Ghanaians, who had come during earlier periods of

economic growth. In the 1970s and 1980s, people from Mali, Niger and Chad migrated to construction sites and the oil fields in Algeria and Libya (de Haas, 2007).

As before, there were refugee migrations as well as other migrations. In 1962, Chinese refugees fled to Hong Kong at a rate of 2000 per day. In 1967, 1.8 million people fled from other parts of Nigeria to Biafra, after persecutions and mass killings. After the start of the Civil war in 1968, Nigerian authorities tried to starve the Biafran population to death, resulting in the death of 1000 children per day at the height of the conflict. Some of the Biafrans fled to neighbouring countries, but most were unable to do so. In 1971, after the start of the war between India and Pakistan, 10 million people fled from Pakistan (Bangladesh) to India. In the 1970s, 1–2 million people fled from Vietnam, and in the 1980s 2.5 million people fled from Afghanistan. The outbreak of the civil war in Yugoslavia in 1991 led to new refugee migration in Europe. By August 1992, approximately 2.5 million people had fled their homes as fighting in the Balkans spread. Almost 2 million were displaced within former Yugoslavia and 633,938 sought asylum in Western European countries by 1994 (Helfer, 2006). The civil war in Syria, which began in 2011, led to the displacement by 2018 of 6.6 million people within Syria, while 5.6 million were registered as refugees in neighbouring countries. Between 2011 and 2017, over one million Syrians applied for asylum in the EU.

## 2.4 Conclusion

The brief overview presented above, with its dazzling numbers, makes clear that global migration is by no means new. The largest problem with the literature on global migrants in the past is that it is Western-centric, as has been observed above. The reason for this is that there is much more source material on migrations to or from Western countries. The material that is available is frequently not studied from a comparative perspective. This creates the image that migration to, from, and in the West, was and is different from that in the rest of the world. Awareness of these biases will help us find new material, or look at existing material from a different perspective. The overview also showed the many aspects of how migrations were organised or problematised were not new either. Attempts to monitor, manage and control migrations always built on practices and ideas from the past. Lastly, the overview showed that numbers are rather unreliable (especially is who go further back in time, or away from Western countries), and that counting is influenced by gender, ethnicity and class. Yet, numbers are frequently used to claim the newness of current migrations.

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