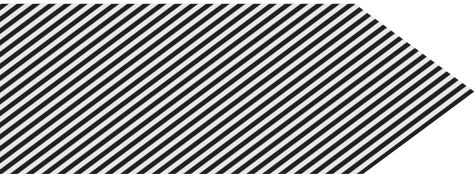


Spring 2021

# Bulletin of the German Historical Institute



# GHI Bulletin

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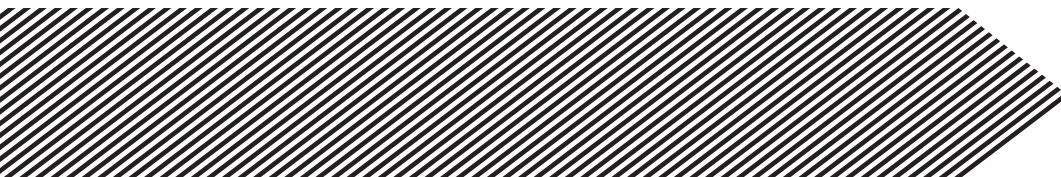
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## PREFACE

This issue's opening feature article presents the German Historical Institute's 34th Annual Lecture, delivered last November by the distinguished historian Roland Wenzlhuemer (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München). In his lecture, "Shipping Rocks and Sand: Ballast in Global History," Wenzlhuemer uses the history of ships' ballast to challenge established narratives of globalization. His examination of the economic, social, and environmental history of ships' ballast – the heavy material used to weigh ships down when they are light on cargo – calls attention to the "unwanted byproducts and unloved necessities" of globalization and thus reveals the "problems, detours, and unexpected consequences" that were an integral part of the globalization process.

The history of mobility and transportation infrastructure is also a theme in the next two feature articles, which shift the focus from shipping to automobile tourism and air travel. Both present the current research projects of GHI Research Fellows who joined the Institute last fall. Mario Peters's article examines early automobile tourism, road building, and the creation of "car-friendly nature" in the United States and Brazil in the early twentieth century. Comparing the creation of mobility infrastructures and the promotion of automobile tourism in these two countries, Peters analyzes the images of nature and recreation that were deployed to justify the construction of tourist routes as well as the critical reactions, especially from an environmental point of view, to the transformation of nature into car-centered landscapes.

The following article, by GHI Research Fellow Carolin Liebisch-Gümüş, investigates the implications that the postwar rise of commercial air travel had for migration. Using West Germany's Frankfurt airport as a case study, Liebisch-Gümüş examines how, by the 1980s, the increase of asylum-seekers arriving by air and the ensuing conflicts between immigration authorities, asylum-seekers, and airport social service agencies seeking to assist them led the West German state to develop an "air migration regime" designed to limit airborne access to the asylum process.

In this issue's final feature article, GHI Research Fellow Jana Keck, who also recently joined the Institute, presents her research in digital history, one of the GHI's research foci. Keck introduces her Ph.D. project, which applies digital text-mining tools to examine the

reprinting practices (republishing material from other publications, often without attribution) of nineteenth-century U.S. German-language newspapers in order to analyze transnational text production and circulation. Combining the history of publishing and data feminism, Keck's analysis of the portrayal of women in newspaper advertisements sheds new light on the role of women as writers and readers in the German immigrant communities of the United States.

Although the GHI's conference program continues to be curtailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Institute has organized an increasing number of virtual events. We are very pleased that this issue can report on two of the larger virtual events that took place last fall: the Fourth Annual Bucerius Young Scholars Forum, which was dedicated to the topic "Histories of Migration: Transatlantic and Global Perspectives," and the panel series "Racism in History and Context," which examined the "historical relationship between crisis and racism."

Please turn to our news section for recent GHI news. For up-to-date information on upcoming events (still virtual at this time, but we hope that this will change in the fall), publications, fellowships, and calls for papers, please consult the GHI website (<http://www.ghi-dc.org>), Facebook page, and twitter account. We look forward to the day when we can welcome you again in both Washington and Berkeley.

Simone Lässig (Director) and Richard F. Wetzell (Editor)

## SHIPPING ROCKS AND SAND: BALLAST IN GLOBAL HISTORY

34TH ANNUAL LECTURE OF THE GERMAN HISTORICAL INSTITUTE, WASHINGTON DC,  
NOVEMBER 11, 2020

### Roland Wenzlhuemer

LUDWIG-MAXIMILIANS-UNIVERSITÄT MÜNCHEN

#### I. Introduction

When you walk along the East River Esplanade in Lower Manhattan you will, at one point, stand on British soil. I am not talking about the British Consulate or some obscure British exclave that you have never heard about. No, it is British soil in the very sense of the word. The neighborhood around Waterside Plaza has also been called Bristol Basin, and there is a historical reason for that. Even before the United States officially entered the Second World War in 1941, they supported the British war effort with substantial transatlantic supply shipments. A significant share of this American supply fleet cleared its load at the important British port of Bristol – which in turn became a major strategic target for the Luftwaffe air raids. Bristol was hit severely by German bombs. Many of the city's buildings were basically reduced to rubble. When the American supply ships were due to sail back to the U.S., they loaded war debris from the city of Bristol as cargo and shipped it back across the Atlantic. On their return, the Bristol rubble was dumped into the East River as landfill to support the construction of a section of East River Drive (renamed FDR Drive in 1945). This is why Waterside Plaza, the United Nations international school and parts of FDR Drive have quite literally been built on British soil.

Already in 1942, the English-Speaking Union of the United States had a plaque mounted to commemorate this unusual British contribution to the history of New York City. In 1970, the plaque had to be temporarily removed due to the area's redevelopment into today's Waterside Plaza. When it was put back in place after construction was finished, Bristol-born actor Cary Grant gave a moving speech at the rededication ceremony. Grant's family had lived in Bristol during the bomb raids and the actor famously said that he had "a deep-seated emotion about this ceremony."



**Figure 1: Cary Grant with the Bristol Basin Plaque at Waterside Plaza, 1974. Courtesy of Waterside Plaza.**

## II. Ships' ballast

While Cary Grant's involvement adds a nice Hollywood touch to the tour guide version of this story, it is less relevant for the purpose of this article. I am much more interested in the role that the transport of ballast played in this context. Overall, the transshipment of British war debris served a triple purpose. It was a win-win-win

situation. First, the construction of East River Drive in New York required huge amounts of landfill. The parkway could not run through densely populated Manhattan, so sections of the East River had to be filled in for the purpose. Landfill material in such large quantities was in short supply in New York and had to be brought in from afar and at high cost. Thus the debris from Bristol came in quite handy. Second, the situation in Bristol was the exact opposite. The city had sustained substantial bomb damage. Its streets and infrastructure were blocked with debris for which there was no place to go. Loading the rubble on American ships was a more than welcome option to dispose of it. Third, the ships needed cargo anyway. They had crossed the Atlantic loaded to the brim with war supplies. But in wartime Britain, there was no suitable return load, no merchandise or anything that Britons could spare at that moment. At the same time, however, the ships could not sail back empty for reasons of stability and trimming. They needed some form of cargo and the rubble did the trick.

This is quite an extraordinary story. But of course, it was not the first time in history that ships had to be loaded with rocks, stones, bricks, sand or other material of little trade value. Seafarers had to ballast their vessels from ancient times. There were certain ship designs that worked without ballast, but most vessels needed ballasting for stabilization in the water. For this purpose, heavy materials were loaded into the lowest part of the ship's hold. Ballast determines how deep a ship lies in the water. In non-nautical terms, one could say that it acts as a counterweight against the forces of the wind and the waves. It improves the speed and

navigational capacity of a vessel and ultimately keeps it from capsizing in adverse conditions.

Today, most vessels are equipped with large tanks in order to use water as ballast. Up until the early twentieth century, however, other heavy material had to be used to weigh ships down. Usually, there was some form of permanent ballast on board – e.g. massive pig-iron bars that were stowed near the keel at the lowest possible part of a ship. Whether or how much ballast was required also depended on the cargo. A vessel packed with coal or timber, for instance, usually did not need any additional weight. The heavy cargo doubled as ballast. Ships that were running empty or had only very light cargo – such as tea, for example – did need additional ballasting. Rocks, stones, gravel, wet sand or other heavy materials were then loaded into the bottom of the hold to guarantee stability. Unfathomably large quantities of such ballast were loaded, transported and eventually unloaded elsewhere in the global history of shipping, as ships were running empty or half-empty much more often than one would casually assume. On many shipping routes, profitable cargo was abundantly available in one direction and ship owners often specialized on a particular cargo. But then, no suitable return cargo could be procured – or at least not in sufficient quantities. There are many examples for this. In the nineteenth century, countless colliers shipped coal from northern England to London but had no load to take back. Timber from the Baltic was in great demand in Britain, but many ships had to return in ballast. And despite its bird's-eye description as a triangular trade system, transatlantic trade was in practice subject to similar imbalances. Between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, there were many commodities that needed shipping from North America to Europe – cotton, timber or rice, to name but a few examples. But there was not always a suitable return cargo for the countless ships that plied the North Atlantic. Many of these vessels had to sail in ballast.

Hence, ships sailing in ballast were not a rare sight – quite the contrary: they were much more numerous than one would assume. For ship owners, merchants and captains alike, this situation was burdensome in at least two ways. First, when there was no sellable cargo to be had, one leg of the journey remained unprofitable and incurred running costs. Second, the need to load ballast, pay for it and later dispose of it substantially added to these costs. Therefore it is not surprising that captains tried to load such materials as





**Figure 2: Chalmers Street in Charleston, South Carolina. Wikimedia Commons, CC-BY-SA-3.0.**

ballast that had at least some use at the ship's destination. Sometimes, captains managed to substitute parts of the ballast with coal or salt. In other cases, they specifically chose rocks and stones as ballast that could be used as building material elsewhere. The Bristol Basin landfill is an example of that. And in the transatlantic trade of earlier centuries, British ballast stones were found suitable to pave the streets of North

American cities. Chalmers Street in Charleston, South Carolina, is a particularly well-known example in this context. In other cases, certain commodities were specifically produced in order to be used as ballast. My hometown of Salzburg, Austria – a place famous for music but so far without a prominent role in global shipping – provides an example of that. In the vicinity of the town, broken and largely worthless small pieces of marble from the nearby quarries were ground to make large quantities of marble balls which were then shipped all over the globe as a form of sellable ballast.

There are many examples of ships' ballast that had some subsequent use and, thus brought at least some money for those involved. Mostly, however, ballast was of no value and had to be discharged at the end of a journey. In both cases, the transshipment of ballast was an unintentional, often unwanted by-product of globalization. A by-product, however, that caused many a headache for ship owners, merchants, captains, sailors and harbor officials alike. Ballast had to be procured, handled, loaded and secured. Every so often, it contained biological matter that eventually decomposed and contaminated the ship's hold. Then it had to be unloaded somewhere near the anchorage. Captains often tried to dispose of it the easy way. Harbor officials, however, were concerned about the silting of harbors and shipping channels and implemented strict de-ballasting regulations. Hence, ballasting required a massive global infrastructure. It created a set of unintentional but nevertheless powerful global connections that had very concrete ramifications for a large number of people. Globally transshipped ballast left its traces in the cobbled streets

of port cities, in the harbor basins and in all sorts of local legislation. In short, ballast is an extremely interesting global commodity with very peculiar qualities that deserves our attention as historians.

### III. Researching ballast

Historiography has developed very limited interest in ships' ballast to date. Somewhat surprisingly, neither maritime history nor global history, with its scrutiny of global connectivity, have studied ballasting practices in a substantial way. Among the historical sciences, only archaeology nurtures a longstanding fascination with ballast, examining ballast stones and rocks from many different regions and epochs – from ancient times to the late nineteenth century, from Scandinavia to the Caribbean. Accordingly, the only book-length study of ships' ballast that I know of was written by archaeologist Mats Burström of Stockholm University. In his book, Burström follows the discovery and historical uses of ballast over many centuries, and he was the first scholar to highlight the historical significance of ballasting.<sup>1</sup> In doing so, he built on the work of several other archaeologists who have analyzed ballast found at shipwreck sites or along important trade routes. Often, ballast stones are literally all that remains of a wrecked ship when its wooden structure and all perishable contents have long gone. Therefore, to archaeologists, ballast can provide important clues about the routes, origins and destinations of ships. They are used to working with material sources and have gained amazing insights through the study of ballast. However, with very few exceptions – Burström among them – archaeologists are not really interested in the historical significance of ships' ballast itself, but rather use it as a proxy to answer a different set of questions about historical trade routes and exchange practices. Such work is admirable in many ways, but leaves us with very little knowledge about the economic, social or cultural significance of ballast; about the consequences that the need to ship ballast had for the many actors and regions involved.

I suggest that these consequences were quite substantial on a number of different levels and deserve to be studied more diligently. There are many historical contexts in which ballasting played a significant, sometimes decisive role. In the following sections, I will single out a few particularly interesting contexts and dive a little deeper into the domain of ballasting. I will try to shed some light on the economic dimension of the necessity to ballast ships. I will

1 Mats Burström, *Ballast: Laden with History* (Lund, 2017).

sound out some of the social ramifications of the practice, and I will also touch briefly on some of the more obvious environmental issues connected with ballasting. Finally, I will connect all of these strands to offer a few conceptual considerations regarding the study of ships' ballast. First, however, the economy.

#### **IV. The economies of ballast**

From a mercantile perspective, the nautical need for ballast was quite a nuisance. For ship owners, merchants or investors, it was already bad enough when a ship had to sail with an empty or half-empty cargo hold. It produced heavy costs and practically no return. The necessity to ballast empty vessels did not make things any better since it cost valuable time – and often also money. Therefore, captains tried to ballast and de-ballast their ships as quickly and cheaply as possible. This could have consequences for route planning as ship owners had an interest to ballast their vessels with material that had at least some marginal value. Regions or ports where such sellable ballast could be procured easily were attractive ports of call. In Liverpool, for instance, coal and salt could usually be loaded as ballast. In Glasgow, it was coal and iron.<sup>2</sup> At other hubs, however, and particularly in or near the big metropolises with their insatiable hunger for imported goods, sellable ballast was often hard to find. The principal example of this is the British capital. London had a massive demand for all sorts of commodities and raw materials but not much profitable cargo to offer in return. Clearing cargo in the port of London, therefore, often meant that the vessel had to be loaded with stones, gravel, sand or sometimes chalk as ballast for the return journey. In the nineteenth century, London had one of the busiest ports in the world. Where did all this ballast come from? Before I address that question, let us take a brief but instructive look at the numbers. How many ships were actually concerned by this practice and how much ballast did they need? Was ballasting really an economic factor?

Let us look at the year 1804, for which we happen to have compatible numbers for different aspects. In that year, about 8,000 British and about 4,000 foreign ships entered English ports. That's around 12,000 ships in total with a combined tonnage of about 1.75 million. Of these, 3,513 vessels arrived in England in ballast, i.e. with practically empty cargo holds. In the same year, about 12,500 cleared English ports. Of these, about 2,428 left in ballast. I'll spare you the

<sup>2</sup> House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, "Thames Conservancy Report" (1863), 18.



details of how this was distributed among British and foreign ships. Suffice it to say that foreign vessels often came with cargo and left in ballast, while British ships more often came empty and left with cargo.<sup>3</sup> In any case, the number of ships in ballast entering and clearing English ports was substantial at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

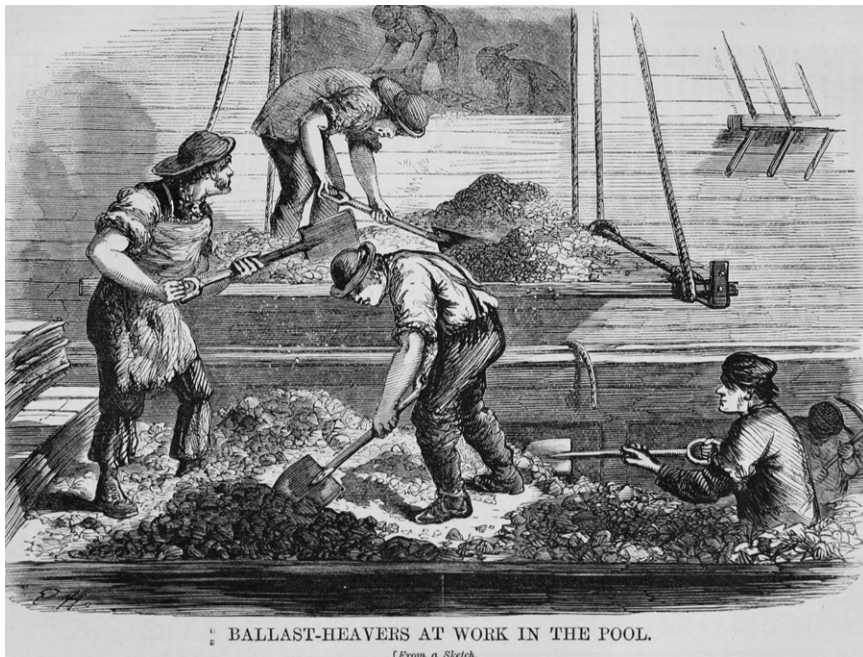
By the middle of the century, global trade and along with it the volume of maritime shipping had increased further. In 1856, almost 45,000 vessels with a total tonnage of more than ten million arrived at UK ports from outside the United Kingdom. Of these, almost 15,000 ships came in ballast. In the same year, almost 47,000 vessels cleared UK ports for the wider world. About 5,500 of them sailed in ballast.<sup>4</sup> The numbers are not completely comparable over the decades as those for 1856 include all UK ports, while those for 1804 are for England only. Nevertheless, the figures convey the general idea: about a quarter to a third of the ships calling at English or UK ports sailed in ballast. Every eighth to fifth ship left in ballast.

These figures do not include shipping within the UK such as the burgeoning coal trade from the north of England to the metropo-

**Figure 3: John Francis Salmon, *A Collier on the Thames*. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London. Oil on Canvas, 1874. © National Maritime Museum Collections.**

3 House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, "Account of Number of Vessels inwards and outwards at Ports of Great Britain" (1802-11), 65.

4 House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, "Annual Statement of Trade and Navigation of United Kingdom with Foreign Countries and British Possessions" (1856), 38.



**Figure 4: Ballast-Heavers at work in the Pool. Illustration from Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*. Vol. 3 (London, 1851), 277. Public domain.**

5 Royal Museums Greenwich. [last accessed December 3, 2020], from <https://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/111921.html>

6 Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*. Vol. 3 (London, 1851), 275.

7 John R. MacCulloch, *Universal-Lexikon für Kaufleute und Fabrikanten; oder vollständiges Handbuch des Handels-, Fabrik- und Manufakturwesens, der Schiffahrt und der Bankgeschäfte, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf National-Oekonomie und Finanzen* (Augsburg, 1835), 53.

lis, for instance. Contemporary estimates state that near the middle of the nineteenth century around 600 colliers could be seen in the Pool of London every day.<sup>5</sup> These coal transports tried to meet London's need for fuel but had nothing to bring back to the North. Colliers were comparably small, flat-bottomed vessels built for coastal navigation. But even these ships needed considerable amounts of ballast. In his famous report, *London Labour and the London Poor*, journalist and social reformer Henry Mayhem wrote about the ballast heavers of London and described the ballasting of one such collier. "The ballast heavers had established themselves alongside a collier, to be filled with 43 tons of ballast."<sup>6</sup> That's 43 tons of stones, gravel and sand for one collier alone, when there were hundreds of them in port. Bigger ships clearing port in ballast would take on much more weight. Contemporary ballast charts suggest that big warships, for instance, would need more than 400 tons.<sup>7</sup> With this in mind, it is not surprising that 253,651 tons of ballast were shipped out of London in 1804.<sup>8</sup> By 1862, volume had increased to 868,615 tons. For the procurement

8 House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, "Account

of Quantity of Ballast taken out of Vessels entering

Port of London by Trinity House" (1775-1804), 2.

of ballast captains had to pay a total of over 44,000 Pounds Sterling in so-called “ballastage.”<sup>9</sup>

As the patchiness of the figures that I have just presented to you already suggests, there is no consistent source base on ballasting. I have collected these numbers from very different sources. They are not entirely comparable and much is lacking. However, I believe that from this first glimpse alone it has become clear that ballasting was a considerable economic factor to reckon with as a merchant or captain. Most numbers and examples quoted so far come from nineteenth-century London, where the demand for ballast was particularly high. It could only be stilled with the help of a dependable infrastructure that had a substantial impact on the functioning of the port. Outside of London and the United Kingdom, ballasting quantities might have been smaller, but the principle remained the same.

## V. Ballasting infrastructure and workforce

Let us now return to the question where ballast in such large quantities came from. How was it procured? And how did it find its way into the bellies of so many ships? It is evident from the few figures I have given so far that many hands were necessary in the ballasting and de-ballasting of ships in the nineteenth century. In larger ports – and especially in ports with little return cargo on offer – this led to the development of a veritable ballasting infrastructure that provided the necessary technical means and secured the availability of manual labor in sufficient quantities. Ballasting was, therefore, an important social factor with great significance regarding the organization of labor in the bigger port cities. In the following section, I will briefly examine this for the port of London, where a particularly interesting form of ballasting organization emerged and left at least a basic paper trail that we can follow. For other ports, the source base is even more fragmentary. Piecing together their ballasting history will be a challenging but also a rewarding task. Currently, however, I am only able to present a few hints beyond the port of London.

The Corporation of Trinity House held a monopoly on ballasting in the port of London until the middle of the nineteenth century. Trinity House had been incorporated by Royal Charter under Henry VIII in 1514 to regulate pilotage on English rivers and along the coast. It was charged with ensuring their safety and navigability and secured these at its own cost. This entailed, for instance, the installation

9 House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, “Thames Conservancy Report” (1863), 18.

and maintenance of buoys, beacons or lighthouses. In turn, the corporation was entitled to charge fees for its services. In 1594, Trinity House's newly established Ballast Office took over the ballasting monopoly by another Royal Charter. In the London area, practically all ballast material came from a single source: the bottom of the River Thames. The Ballast Office held the exclusive right to dredge the Thames for ballast and supply it to the vessels in the Pool of London. In doing so, it improved the river's navigability by deepening and broadening it wherever necessary and at the same time it procured enough ballast to meet the demand of the port (and even provide building material, e.g. for the embankment of the river).

In the early years of the nineteenth century, around 240 so-called ballastmen were employed by the Ballast Office.<sup>10</sup> They lifted stones, gravel, and sand from the bottom of the river, loaded it onto ballast lighters and then transferred it from the lighters to the vessels that needed ballasting. All of this was done manually. It was extremely demanding physical labor. The ballastmen were paid by the ton, but their wages were barely sufficient to make a living. There is evidence that in the last decades of the eighteenth century, ballastmen asked Trinity House on several occasions to increase their wages – always unsuccessfully. In 1797, ballastmen even went on strike but had little bargaining power as Trinity House held the ballasting monopoly and there were no competitors that would hire them. Also, refusal to work for the Ballast Office meant that ballastmen lost the only real privilege of their profession, namely that they were exempt from being press-ganged into the Royal Navy. In 1797, Britain was at war with France. The fear to be press-ganged into this conflict was probably one of the reasons why ballastmen eventually returned to work without having been able to improve their working conditions.

These conditions had not changed much by the middle of the nineteenth century. In *London Labour and the London Poor*, from which I have already quoted, Henry Mayhew described the work of ballastmen – and particularly that of the so-called ballast heavers who manually handled the ballast – as backbreaking and in urgent need of reform. Mayhew's detailed account embeds the practice of ballasting in a broader social history of labor and poverty in London. It becomes clear that the subject of ballasting stands at the interface of the global, the regional and the local and allows us to study some hitherto neglected local manifestations of regional and global maritime trade. As such, it deserves much more attention from maritime and global historians.

10 Hilary P. Mead, *Trinity House: Its Unique Record from the Days of Henry VIII* (London, 1947), 143.

I have thus far focused on London for reasons of magnitude and source availability, but of course there were countless other settings in which ballast had to be procured, mostly under adverse conditions. When there was no port infrastructure available, there were other ways to procure ballast. On some suitable shores, vessels were beached on purpose at low tide so that ballast could be shoveled into the hold directly.<sup>11</sup> On other occasions, ballast gave rise to strenuous and even dangerous working conditions even after it had been thrown overboard. Consider the Turks Islands in the Caribbean. In the nineteenth century, these islands were well-known for their salt production. Merchant ships would sail to Grand Turk, the biggest island of the archipelago, ballasted with limestone from Bermuda. They would offload the limestone at a designated point in the shallow waters around the island before refilling their holds with raked salt. Often, the limestone was then salvaged from the water by slaves and subsequently used in the construction of buildings on Grand Turk. Mary Prince was one such slave at Turks Islands, and in her account, *The History of Mary Prince*, she refers to the fact that “another of our employments was to row a little way off shore in a boat, and dive for large stones to build a wall around our master’s house.”<sup>12</sup>

## VI. Ballast and the environment

All of these examples indicate that ballasting was a significant social and economic factor over the centuries. For some, the need to ballast their ships presented a considerable economic burden. For others, it was a business. In any case, maritime trade hubs needed a reliable ballasting infrastructure and a steady labor force that often worked under pitiable conditions with little opportunity to improve their lot. But there are further aspects of the practice that go well beyond this socioeconomic significance. Let us consider ballasting from an environmental perspective. As we have seen, over the centuries countless ships had to load and eventually unload ballast. Unsurprisingly, most captains and ship owners tried to do this as easily and cheaply as possible. Hence, in most cases ballast that was no longer needed was simply thrown overboard, as in the example from Grand Turk. Usually, this had to be done in the shallow waters close to the coast, in rivers or near (or even in) a port. And mostly – unlike in the Grand Turk example – the ballast actually remained in the water and was not salvaged. Given the sheer quantity of rocks, gravel and sand dumped in this way, this practice could have severe environmental

11 Burström, *Laden with History*, 93.

12 Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave: Related by Herself* (London, 1831), 73.



consequences. In rivers, harbors, or along important waterways, such de-ballasting practices could lead to silting and sometimes created new navigational hazards through a change in maritime topography. Therefore, many port and coastal authorities enacted regulations in order to stop the disorderly disposal of ballast.<sup>13</sup> They designated particular spots near the harbor or along a river where ships could de-ballast or take on new ballast.<sup>14</sup> In many navigational charts so-called ballasting grounds off the coast were marked.<sup>15</sup> This practice was implemented in order to safeguard the navigability of important waterways and harbor basins. Still, there could be interesting changes to the local riverine or maritime topography. Archaeologist Mats Burström mentions a small island about 200 meters off the Swedish harbor of Nyland, which has long been an important timber port. Before the Nyland port authorities built specific ballast quays in the mid-nineteenth century, most ships dumped their ballast at a particularly suitable spot, where over time a small island started to grow out of the water. As most of the ships in ballast came from Norway, the island was soon dubbed Little Norway.<sup>16</sup>

In quantities, de-ballasting could lead to significant changes in marine topography. But there were other environmental issues as well. Not all ballast was tipped overboard. Often, the stones, gravel and sand used as ballast gained a second life as building material or even gardening soil. They were brought on shore – and came with stowaways. Along with the ballast, many plants, plant seeds, small organisms or animals were loaded in the holds, traveled over shorter or longer distances and were eventually unloaded again. Therefore ballasting was a major vehicle of transregional specimen transfer. Already in the 1950s, Swedish entomologist Carl Lindroth examined such transfers between England and Newfoundland, which had been an important cod fishery destination since the sixteenth century. He found an unusually high number of introduced ground beetles which in all likelihood had traveled from South England to Newfoundland in the ballast of fishing vessels.<sup>17</sup> The transfer of plants between ports and port cities was even more widespread, as the work of Tore Ouren, a Norwegian geographer and botanist, documents. Ouren has shown how important ballast was for trans-European plant migration. He observes that in the nineteenth century, ballast heaps and their rich flora attracted considerable attention from botanists.<sup>18</sup> Today, practically all large ocean-going vessels take in water as ballast and pump it back into the sea at their destination – and with it a considerable amount of marine life that is dislocated and introduced

13 "Advance Australia," Sydney Gazette. (1830, September 9). *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser (NSW: 1803 - 1842)*, 2. [last accessed December 3, 2020], from <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2195991>

14 "Sammlung der Verordnung der Freien- und Hanse-Stadt Hamburg "(Hamburg, 1814), 85.

15 The British Library, Richard Owen, "Turks Islands surveyed by Captain R Owen in 1830, Admiralty Chart" (London, 1842).

16 Burström, *Laden with History*, 77-79.

17 Burström, *Laden with History*, 90-94.  
Carl Hildebrand Lindroth, *The Faunal Connection between Europe and North America* (New York, 1957).

18 Tore Ouren, "The Impact of Shipping on the Invasion of Alien Plants to Norway," *GeoJournal* 2 (March 1978): 124.

to regions where it has not been endemic before. Hence, ballasting is a considerable factor in global species migration to this very day.

Ballast could also change the environment of the ship itself. In some cases, relatively clean rocks and stones were brought on-board. Mostly, however, a large share of the ballast consisted of wet gravel, sand or simply mud. During a ship's journey, this wet mass began to foul and created a rather unpleasant climate on board and particularly below deck. At least in one documented case, fouling ballast has been identified as a factor in the spread of severe illness among passengers. In 1850, the *Lady Montague* was supposed to ship hundreds of so-called "coolies" from China to Peru in order to work in the guano mines there. The hygiene conditions onboard were horrible. Too many Chinese passengers had been cramped below deck. The wet ballast taken from a river in Shanghai started to foul and spoiled the water and provisions on board the ship. Dysentery spread among the passengers. So many Chinese died during the journey that the authorities officially investigated the matter. It was found that the wet ballast had a detrimental effect on the environment on board the *Lady Montague*.<sup>19</sup> Hence, the environmental significance of ships' ballast has to be taken seriously in a variety of contexts – the ship itself being one of them.

## VII. Ballast and the history of globalization

From large ocean-going ships down to relatively small boats – practically all waterborne vessels need ballast for stability. In part, such ballast remains in a ship's hold permanently. Vessels that carry cargo of significantly different size and weight, however, need to balance this difference with ballast that is loaded and unloaded flexibly. This is the sort of ships' ballast that this article has been concerned with. And we have seen that the sheer quantities of ballast needed in nineteenth-century maritime trade have been staggering. We have briefly examined the consequences that ballasting had on shipping costs and logistics. We have looked at the infrastructures and the labor force necessary to efficiently ballast and de-ballast ships in large ports. We have even considered the environmental impact of the practice. Many other interesting aspects could be added – the cultural significance of ballast or its legal context. And yet, the otherwise flourishing field of maritime history has neglected the subject almost completely – not to mention other branches of historiography such as global history or economic history.

<sup>19</sup> National Archives, "CO 885/1/20, Correspondence relative to emigration of Chinese coolies" (London 1853).

Of course, the source base is difficult, to say the least. Ballasting is mentioned here and there, but almost always as a side note. Historians interested in the practice will have to piece together their work from very diverse sources and case studies. Hence, researching the history of ships' ballast is a cumbersome business. However, I think the main reason why maritime history and other fields like global or world history have so far steered clear of the subject is because they are unsure about how the history of ballast fits into the bigger picture. After all, ballast is a non-commodity. Shipping it around the globe is an unintentional and mostly unwelcome by-product of maritime trade. What to make of an odd practice like this in the larger framework of globalization and from the perspective of a constantly "shrinking world"? It's simply not a good fit and thus has not attracted much attention so far.

I argue that this last point is precisely why global historians and others interested in globalization should take a close look at the history of ships' ballast – because doing so forces us to rethink our established narratives of globalization. It complicates things. Already two decades ago, historian of Africa Frederick Cooper criticized the term "globalization" as a one-size-fits-all denominator that suggested generalizable trajectories of global integration and glossed over the particularities of being connected (or disconnected) with the world.<sup>20</sup> Cooper's reservations reverberate in various more recent calls for a pluralization of the concept of globalization<sup>21</sup> that acknowledges globalization consists of a number of different processes that evolve at different speeds and intensities<sup>22</sup> and that work differently for different people and different regions.<sup>23</sup> Jürgen Osterhammel, for instance, has emphasized that speaking of globalizations in the plural renders the concept much more practicable for historians. The plural, says Osterhammel, alleviates the pressure to generalize about historical globalization, and at the same time it dampens the term's political edge. One need no longer be for or against globalization. In the words of Jürgen Osterhammel, the plural makes it possible to dislike the globalization of the drug trade while at the same time welcoming the globalization of gay rights.<sup>24</sup>

Indeed, the pluralization that Osterhammel and others advocate has helped to overcome the myth of "a flat world"<sup>25</sup> and to acknowledge that different areas globalize at different paces, with different intensities and along different trajectories. From this perspective, globalization is not an automatic, binary or linear development. It is full of ambiguities and contradictions. It is, after all, a human-made process. Gradually, this complexity of processes of global

20 Frederick Cooper, "What Is the Concept of Globalization Good for? An African Historians Perspective", *African Affairs* 100, No. 399, (Oxford, 2001): 189-213; Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley, 2005).

21 Boris Barth et al., *Globalgeschichten: Bestandsaufnahme und Perspektiven* (Frankfurt, 2014).

22 Lynn Hunt, *Globalisation and Time, Breaking up Time: Negotiating the Borders between Present, Past and Future* (Frankfurt, 2013), 199-215.

23 Roland Wenzlhuemer and Isabella Löhr, "The Nation State and Beyond: Governing Globalization Processes in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century," in *Transcultural Research - Heidelberg Studies on Asia and Europe in a Global Context* (Heidelberg, 2013), 1-23.

24 Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Flughöhe der Adler: Historische Essays zur globalen Gegenwart* (München, 2017), 12.

25 Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (New York, 2005).

integration is reaching a kind of academic consensus – on the theoretical level, not so much on the practical, empirical side. Much of global and world history is still fully occupied with searching for unexpected entanglements. Now it is time to put this more nuanced and adequate understanding of globalization into historiographical practice. It needs to be deployed, tested on the ground, adjusted, and potentially revised. When we study processes of global integration or the role of global entanglements, we need to make room for all those components that complicate things, that so far did not fit into the all-too-smooth narrative of a “shrinking world.”

First and foremost, this means we need to make room for the study of disconnections in global contexts,<sup>26</sup> of global connections that were disrupted or never quite worked in the way envisaged, and of connections that were cost-intensive or had unwanted side-effects. Such connections and disconnections exist practically everywhere in current as well as in historical processes of globalization. They form a central part of such processes especially as they interact closely with global connectivity. In many cases, considerable tension arises from such an interplay of connectedness and disconnectedness; it emerges when connections and disconnections conflate and conflict, when there is friction and confusion. It is this field of tension that provides one of the keys to really understand and interpret processes of globalization in their historical significance in all their complexity and contradiction that goes so far beyond the outdated narrative of the “global village.”<sup>27</sup>

Ships’ ballast is a particularly interesting case in point. It reminds us of the unwanted by-products and unloved necessities of globalization, of the structures and practices that facilitated global connectivity but meant nothing but work and costs for those involved, and of the problems, detours and unexpected consequences that are an integral part of all human activity. Studying ballasting and its different contexts around the globe will allow us to sharpen our understanding of the mundane and often contradictory settings in which global connectivity was (and is) produced on a daily basis.

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26 Jeremy Adelman, “What is Global History Now?” *Aeon*, 2 March 2017 [last accessed December 3, 2020], from <https://aeon.co/essays/is-global-history-still-possible-or-has-it-had-its-moment>; Sujit Sivasundaram, *Islanded: Britain, Sri Lanka, and the Bounds of an Indian Ocean Colony* (Chicago, 2013).

27 Roland Wenzlhuemer, *Doing Global History: An Introduction in 6 Concepts* (Bloomsbury, 2019). Roland Wenzlhuemer, “Connections in Global History,” *Comparativ* 29, No. 2 (Leipzig, 2019).



## AUTOMOBILE TOURISM, ROAD BUILDING, AND NATURE IN THE UNITED STATES AND BRAZIL, C. 1915-1935

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In 1923 the Californian real estate developer David Charles Collier visited Rio de Janeiro during Brazil's 100-year anniversary of independence from Portugal. Collier came to Rio as head of the U.S. delegation to the International Exposition that the Brazilian government had organized to celebrate the anniversary. In the aftermath of the exposition, Collier gave an interview to *A Noite*, one of Rio de Janeiro's most read newspapers, and emphasized how much he was enjoying his stay: "Let me say, so that all Brazilians might know, that I am absolutely delighted with the unique beauty of Rio de Janeiro, the everlasting enchantment of this city, the most appealing of so many cities I have seen ... ." <sup>1</sup> Collier said that Rio de Janeiro had the potential to become the most popular tourist destination in the Americas, provided that Brazil would establish a professional tourism industry. He compared the country to his homeland and concluded: "Brazil needs to take the same path California has taken. This state, where I have been living for forty years, spent a lot of time and money, advertising its fruits, gardens and mountains [...] Nowhere in California are there more attractive sites than in Rio de Janeiro."<sup>2</sup>

In its July issue of the same year, the auto magazine *A Estrada de Rodagem*, which was published in São Paulo, reprinted parts of the interview and added that journeys to other parts of the country would have left Collier even more enthusiastic, especially if he had "seen and admired the beautiful landscapes of other state capitals [...] and travelled on some of the many new highways."<sup>3</sup> Looking at a road map of Brazil from the early 1920s, one might say that the claim that there were many new highways to travel on was an exaggeration. However, at the time when Collier visited Rio de Janeiro, Brazilian proponents of automobility, road building, and leisure driving were gaining momentum, as were road backers in the United States.

In this article, I will examine early automobile tourism, road building, and the creation of car-friendly nature in the United States and Brazil in the early twentieth century. In the 1910s and 1920s, both countries saw a significant increase in automobiles and the rise of full-fledged car cultures. By 1929 the United States had become what the Americanist Cotton Seiler has termed a republic of drivers.<sup>4</sup> In

1 "O Rio pôde ser o maior centro de turismo da America do Sul," in *A Noite* (Rio de Janeiro, July 4, 1923): 1.

2 Ibid.

3 "As nossas possibilidades no Turismo," in *A Estrada de Rodagem* (July 1923): n.p.

4 Cotton Seiler, *Republic of Drivers: A Cultural History of Automobility in America* (Chicago, 2008), 68.

- 5 Rudy J. Koshar, "Driving Cultures and the Meaning of Roads: Some Comparative Examples," in *The World Beyond the Windshield: Roads and Landscapes in the United States and Europe*, eds. Christof Mauch and Thomas Zeller (Athens and Stuttgart, 2008), 16.
- 6 See Christof Mauch and Thomas Zeller, "Introduction," in *The World Beyond the Windshield: Roads and Landscapes in the United States and Europe*, eds. Christof Mauch and Thomas Zeller (Athens and Stuttgart, 2008), 1.
- 7 Thomas Zeller, "Editorial: Histories of Transport, Mobility and Environment," *The Journal of Transport History* 35, no. 2 (2014): iii; see also the essays in *Moving Natures: Mobility and the Environment in Canadian History*, eds. Colin M. Coates, Jay Young and Ben Bradley (Calgary, 2016).
- 8 Paul S. Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (Seattle, 2009, first published in 2002).
- 9 David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington's National Parks* (Seattle, 2006).
- 10 Christopher Wells, *Car Country: An Environmental History* (Seattle, 2012).
- 11 Joel Wolfe, *Autos and Progress: The Brazilian Search for Modernity* (Oxford, 2010); Michael K. Bess, "Routes of Conflict: Building Roads and Shaping the Nation in Mexico, 1941-1952," *The Journal of Transport History* 35, no.1 (2014):

Brazil, many still could not afford a car at the time, but automobility's power to shape social relations and culture did not depend on high ownership rates.<sup>5</sup> During the interwar years, initiatives to construct infrastructures for motorized tourism and the transformation of remote natural areas into accessible and designed landscapes flourished in both countries. U.S. and Brazilian automobile and touring clubs, tourism associations, road builders, car manufacturers, government representatives, highway engineers, transportation planners, and environmentalists all engaged in debates about road building. My comparative approach aims to identify similarities and differences in those debates and the early development of automobile tourism in the United States and Brazil.

For a long time, historians largely ignored the relationship between cars, roads, and nature.<sup>6</sup> Recent scholarship, however, has pointed to the importance of environmental concerns in the history of transport and mobility.<sup>7</sup> Several U.S. scholars have approached automobility through the lens of environmental history. Paul S. Sutter (2002) explored how the rapidly increasing use of automobiles and motorcycles for leisure touring in National Parks and Forests turned the preservation of roadless and car-free areas into a major concern for the U.S. wilderness movement.<sup>8</sup> Focusing on three iconic National Parks in Washington state, David Louter (2006) examined the National Park Service's changing attitudes toward road building and automobile tourism between the 1910s and the 1960s.<sup>9</sup> Christopher Wells's *Car Country* (2012) is the most comprehensive environmental history of automobility in the United States to date. Wells described how urban and rural spaces across the country were refashioned, first, into car-friendly and then into car-dependent landscapes, discussing many different aspects of this process including suburbanization, the zoning of towns and cities, and the engineering of highways.<sup>10</sup>

Recently, the social and cultural history of automobility in Latin America has sparked growing interest among historians and scholars from neighboring disciplines. Scholars from several Latin American countries as well as Latin Americanists from other countries have made road building the subject of their research. Most studies focus on the significance of roads for state-led modernization projects and nationalist cultural politics.<sup>11</sup> Others

78-96; Michael K. Bess, "Revolutionary Paths: Motor Roads, Economic

Development, and National Sovereignty in 1920s and 1930s Mexico,"

*Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 32, no.1 (2016): 56-82.

explore the emergence of automobile and touring clubs in the early twentieth century and the efforts of these associations to put pressure on local and national governments to invest in automotive infrastructures.<sup>12</sup> Almost no one has looked into the environmental aspects of automobility in Latin America.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, there are no comparative studies on the environmental history of automobility in the Americas.

Debates about road building and the creation of car-friendly nature are best explored through a comparative analysis of places that had an influential car lobby, spectacular landscapes which were attractive for touristic development, and a growing number of tourists taking to the road. Based on the findings of U.S. scholarship and the analysis of sources such as automobile magazines, essays written by highway engineers, and publications by environmentalists, all of which I found in Brazilian archives and libraries, I propose to compare the creation of material mobility infrastructures and the promotion of automobile tourism in the United States and Brazil. I will focus on the early development of automobility and road building in both countries, the images of nature and outdoor recreation that were employed to justify the construction of touristic routes, as well as the emergence of criticism of car travel into nature.

I will also discuss Brazilian perspectives on automobility in the United States and the importance of U.S. cultural and economic influence on road building in Brazil. Brazilian and U.S. automobile clubs, businesses, and government officials cooperated closely with each other and employed similar discourses on roads, driving, and exploring the beauty of the national landscape. Examining roads, cars, and nature in two different countries, my study expands on the linkages between historical mobility studies, environmental history, and cultural inter-American relations. My transnational comparison also allows me to take a step toward overcoming the often nationally centered narratives of automotive history.<sup>14</sup>

no. 2 (2015): 170-187; J. Brian Freeman: "Los Hijos de Ford": Mexico in the Automobile Age, 1900-1930" in *Technology and Culture in Twentieth-Century Mexico*, ed. Araceli Tinajero and J. Brian Freeman (Tuscaloosa, 2013), 214-232.

<sup>13</sup> One exception is Rodrigo Booth, "Turismo, Panamericanismo e Ingeniería Civil: La Construcción del Camino Escénico entre Viña del Mar y Concón (1917-1931)," *Historia* 47, no. 2 (2014): 277-311. Booth analyzed how and why Chilean automobile clubs and highway engineers celebrated the scenic road between Viña del Mar and Concón as a symbol for the successful integration of modern technology into nature. See also the recent book by environmental historian Shawn W. Miller, *The Street is Ours: Community, the Car, and the Nature of Public Space in Rio de Janeiro* (Cambridge and New York, 2018). Miller discusses how a motorized social elite worked to transform Rio de Janeiro's streets from a public space into motor thoroughfares over the first half of the twentieth century. See also the same author's article on the hazards of the Central American environment and the vibrancy of North American environmentalism as explanations for the failure to complete the Pan-American Highway. Shawn W. Miller, "Minding the Gap: Pan-Americanism's Highway, American Environmentalism, and Remembering the Failure to Close the Darién Gap," *Environmental History* 19 (2014): 189-216.

<sup>12</sup> Melina Piglia, "Motor Clubs in the Public Arena: The Argentine

Automobile Club, the Argentine Touring Club, and the Construction of

a National Roads System (1910-1943)," *The Journal of Transport History* 36,

<sup>14</sup> See also Mauch and Zeller, "Introduction," 10.



## I. Automobility and road building in the early twentieth century

The origins of initiatives for urban street improvement and paved roads in the United States go back to the pre-automobile era. Since the late 1880s, the country's most important bicycle association, the League of American Wheelmen, and bicycle manufacturer Albert Augustus Pope were at the forefront of a nationwide "good roads" campaign. Supported by railroad companies, whose interest lay in improving the conditions for freight transport to train stations, Pope and the Wheelmen touted proper roads and streets as a key element for prosperity and public welfare. The establishment of the Office of Road Inquiry at the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1893 and the appointment of college-educated engineer Logan Weller Page as its director in 1905 bore witness to the growing influence of the campaign and the professionalization of American road building. Yet, by 1908 road boosters still lamented that outside of the country's main cities the conditions for motorized transportation were awful and the actual results in terms of construction of new overland routes were very meager.<sup>15</sup>

As the first decade of the twentieth century ended, the good roads campaign gained new force. Coinciding with the launching of Ford's Model T in 1908, the American Automobile Association (AAA), which had been established a few years earlier, the National Road Builders Association, and the National Garage, an agricultural organization, joined forces in a new Good Roads Movement. Pope had lobbied for federal funding of highway construction in the 1890s; the AAA, motorists, and automobile manufacturers now pressed for the same cause and succeeded. The Federal Highway Act of 1916 determined that Washington would oversee the planning and funding of road building throughout the United States. After the end of the First World War, which had convinced the military that motorization and highways were essential for national defense, the development of an extensive road building program by the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) marked the beginning of a new era of expanded American automobility.<sup>16</sup>

15 Eric Rutkow, *The Longest Line on the Map: The United States, the Pan-American Highway, and the Quest to Link the Americas* (New York, 2019), 155-178.

16 *Ibid.*, 180-195.

As Christopher Wells has pointed out, the urban street reforms of the late nineteenth century and the expansion of road building after 1908 were initial steps in the remaking of the American transportation system around the car and the creation of car-centered landscapes. Beginning in the 1870s, new transportation technologies and infrastructures had changed the ways in which

people thought about and interacted with nature. Horse-drawn street cars, commuter railroads, and electric streetcars seemed to offer solutions to pressing urban problems like filth, pollution, disease, and overcrowded housing, though they soon caused new trouble as cities began to suffer from increasing traffic congestion. The reformers regarded roads as man-made instruments for the achievement of social and economic goals rather than entities governed by nature. Street improvements seemed to prove the human capability to exercise control over nature through administrative and technological knowledge. Such thinking and the physical changes wrought upon the landscape literally prepared the ground for the rapid growth of automobility in the early twentieth century.<sup>17</sup>

Environmental historian William Cronon argued that the diffusion of the automobile and the rise of U.S. car culture was “one of the most sweeping cultural and environmental revolutions in human history.”<sup>18</sup> Indeed, even before the creation of a vast highway network started to impact the natural world across the country, automobility was closely intertwined with the larger cultural-political project of evoking patriotic feelings among the population. The lack of passable roads was a major theme in travelogues written by leisure drivers who ventured upon transcontinental automobile trips across the United States in the first decade of the twentieth century. However, rather than complaining, these early automobilists who, in Rudy J. Koshar’s words, drove in the “pioneering mode,” celebrated themselves as trailblazers.<sup>19</sup> Driving on rough paths and roads in imperfect cars was seen as a strenuous form of leisure that made up for the decline of character-through-work which, in the opinion of many Americans, had marked daily life in the Gilded Age. Motorized travel writers, mostly white upper-class men and women, saw themselves as successors of nineteenth-century pioneers crossing the country and reopening the frontier which Frederick Jackson Turner had just declared closed in 1893.<sup>20</sup>

The description of the landscapes through which motorists traveled was an important element in the construction of such narratives. Accounts of early automobile journeys transmitted images of empty yet historically important landscapes and wild nature, which readers were supposed to associate with adventure. In fact, as Cotton Seiler has argued, these would-be conquerors drove through largely domesticated landscapes and the real danger they encountered was getting stuck in the mud in their unreliable cars.<sup>21</sup> As early as 1915,

17 See Wells, *Car Country*, xxx-xxxii, 22-34.

18 William Cronon, “Foreword,” in Christopher Wells, *Car Country: An Environmental History* (Seattle, 2012), x.

19 Koshar, “Driving Cultures and the Meaning of Roads,” 18.

20 Seiler, *Republic of Drivers*, 47-48.

21 *Ibid.*, 47-50.

novelist and socialite Emily Post, on a road trip from New York to San Francisco, struggled with the standardized character of towns in the Midwest, which made seeking authenticity and adventure difficult.<sup>22</sup> In the years to come, the increasing standardization and commercialization of roadside landscapes would lead many automobilists to lament the lack of authenticity. However, throughout the 1910s and 1920s, images of motorized pioneers conquering a wild America prevailed as automobile manufacturers sponsored most of the early cross-country trips, and the car lobby, including the Good Roads Movement, emphasized the links between touring the country and loving it in their advertising of roads and automobiles.<sup>23</sup>

In Brazil, urban elites were the main proponents of an early car culture. In Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, the lucky few who could afford imported cars from Europe used their vehicles to display their wealth as well as for business and joyriding. Those who were not riding in cars, including many journalists, observed the new machines and their drivers with mixed feelings. On the one hand, accidents and traffic conflicts caused opposition to the automobile and antipathy towards motorists.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, many were fascinated by speed and associated driving and automobilism with progress, science, challenge, and adventure.<sup>25</sup>

The main proponents of such ideas were automobile associations like the Automóvel Clube do Brasil (ACB), established in Rio de Janeiro in 1908, and automobile magazines, published since the early 1910s. The automobile clubs and magazines worked to make car culture popular and aimed at broader car ownership. Initially, they addressed an urban audience but soon turned their attention to the fact that the infrastructures of automobility barely reached beyond the limits of the country's largest cities. Automobile clubs and touring associations, which soon became powerful forces in municipal and state politics, were among the most ardent defenders of road building. In 1916, the ACB hosted the First National Roads Congress in Rio de Janeiro. During the congress, proponents of motorization, or *automobilistas* in their own words, criticized the rough conditions for driving outside of urban areas and presented road building as a matter of urgency. Magazines and journals like *Auto-Propulsão*, *A Estrada de Rodagem*, and *Boas Estradas* also promoted highway construction. They argued that roads promised physical speed, political freedom, and economic prosperity. Furthermore, they described automotive infrastructures as an

22 Andrew S. Gross, "Cars, Postcards, and Patriotism: Tourism and National Politics in the United States, 1893-1929," *Pacific Coast Philology* 40/1 (2005): 77-97, here 89-94.

23 See Seiler, *Republic of Drivers*, 49-50.

24 On urban traffic conflicts in Brazil in the early days of automobility see Miller, *The Street is Ours*, 149-190; see also, Mario Peters, "Desastre!: Accidents, Traffic Conflicts, and U.S. Influence in the Construction of Automobile Hegemony in Brazil, 1910-1930," *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies/Revue Canadienne des études latino-américaines et caraïbes* 45, no. 1 (2020): 104-121.

25 Wolfe, *Autos and Progress*, 14.

instrument to settle important social issues, particularly the regional disparities between the cities on the Atlantic coast and the country's vast hinterland.<sup>26</sup>

Brazilian auto aficionados believed that broader car ownership and good roads were key elements in the construction of a national identity. Automobile journeys beyond their home region would put people into contact with their compatriots and allow them to discover historical sites. Driving through impressive landscapes would give rise to patriotic sentiment and make citizens love their country. Like their U.S. counterparts, members of automobile clubs and road backers portrayed themselves as successors of eighteenth-century pioneers (*bandeirantes*). In 1925, a group of auto enthusiasts founded the Clube dos Bandeirantes (Pioneers Club) in Rio de Janeiro. In its October issue of the same year *Boas Estradas* explained that these modern pioneers were doing their country a great service by bringing progress to the vast hinterland through exploration on four wheels and highway construction.<sup>27</sup>

The Brazilian road campaign was clearly inspired by the contemporary discourse on roads and automobility in the United States. Beginning in the late 1910s, Brazilian auto enthusiasts closely studied U.S. highway construction and presented it as a model, especially with respect to construction techniques, machinery, and the national funding of road infrastructure. In contrast to the United States, Brazil did not have a domestic auto industry at the time, but the *automobilistas* were a small yet powerful minority. Moreover, as historian Richard Downes has explained, U.S. auto-related businesses eagerly invested in the expansion of automotive infrastructures in Brazil. Close ties to its namesake in the United States strengthened the Brazilian Good Roads Movement (Movimento de Boas Estradas), and the Permanent Highway Association (Associação Permanente de Estradas de Rodagem, APER), established in São Paulo in 1917, also received a great deal of support from U.S. automotive businesses. The American Chamber of Commerce, which opened a branch in São Paulo in 1920, had considerable influence in the APER, particularly after its general manager, Charles M. Kinsolving, also assumed office as secretary of the Highway Association in August 1921. Both organizations had common commercial interests and cooperated in pressing for the extension of road networks in the state of São Paulo.<sup>28</sup> Representatives of the American auto industry and Thomas H. MacDonalld, the chief of the Bureau of Public Roads, visited Brazil several

26 *Ibid.*, 36-38.

27 "Clube dos Bandeirantes" in *Boas Estradas* (São Paulo, October 1925): 18.

28 Richard Downes, "Autos Over Rails: How US Business Supplanted the British in Brazil, 1910-1928," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 24, no. 3 (Oct. 1992): 551-583, here 561-567.

times during the 1920s and published articles on road building in Brazilian auto magazines and newspapers. North American road building entrepreneurs moved to Brazil, joined the ACB, the APER, and the Clube dos Bandeirantes and soon became the spearhead of the Movimento de Boas Estradas.

In the United States, the transformation of the nation's ecosystems through automobility and its material infrastructures was well underway by the early 1920s. In Brazil, actual construction of overland routes was still very limited at the time. However, two iconic road building projects, the highway between Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo and the construction of a road from Rio to Petrópolis, a mountain resort and former summer home of Emperor Dom Pedro II, 80 kilometers north of the city, fascinated the *automobilistas* and attracted investment by U.S. businesses. Soon, both highways would also become subjects of debates that addressed nature as a space to be discovered and appreciated through the windshield.

## **II. Knowing nature through leisure**

The early development of automobile tourism in the United States and Brazil was profoundly influenced by the belief that the best way for people to get to know nature was outdoor recreation on four wheels. In both countries, road enthusiasts and supporters of motorization justified the construction of touristic routes by arguing that only roads and cars would allow tourists to discover the beauty of the national landscape. Scenic roads seemed to display the successful integration of nature and technology.

In the United States, the idea that outdoor leisure activities promised relief from the pressures of the urban industrial world figured prominently in public discourse since the last quarter of the nineteenth century. For a long time, most Americans had neither the necessary resources nor the time for weekend outings or the like, but things changed significantly during the interwar years. According to environmental historian Paul S. Sutter, the expansion of automobility, the willingness of the federal government to invest in automotive and recreational infrastructures, and the parallel development of car- and consumer cultures led to a mass embrace of outdoor recreation. During the 1920s, a growing number of Americans enjoyed the unprecedented access to nature their cars gave them and went auto camping. Many shared the belief that, contrary to the predetermined

destinations of nineteenth-century railroad tourism, nature was an open space to visit. Road builders, car manufacturers, and the American tourist industry warmly embraced this view and worked to foster the image of cars and roads as harbingers of a more democratic form of tourism.<sup>29</sup>

The transformation of natural areas into car-centered landscapes in the interwar era followed two major trends. First, beginning in the late 1910s, state agencies and the National Park Service started to build roads to and through National Parks.<sup>30</sup> Mount Rainier National Park in Washington state, which was opened in 1899, was one of the first parks to be refashioned into what environmental historians have called windshield wilderness. Roads were designed to make even the most remote areas of Mount Rainier accessible to tourists. They structured visitors' experiences of the park allowing them to appreciate scenic views of mountains, valleys, meadows, forests, and streams.<sup>31</sup> Mount Rainier's road system illustrated not only the central role of automobility in park design but also the conviction that the presence of automobiles in park areas did not threaten the preservation of nature. Some voices even claimed that the future of National Parks depended on cars and roads. Indeed, thousands of American citizens only came to know Mount Rainier and other parks due to their automobiles. However, as David Louter has emphasized, the landscapes they drove through were carefully engineered playgrounds for motorists.<sup>32</sup> National Park roads did not only offer spectacular views; in most cases they also gave access to hiking trails, canoe docks, picnic areas, campsites and other amenities that catered to tourists.<sup>33</sup>

The construction of parkways was the second major trend in the creation of car-friendly nature in the United States. The design of these roads borrowed from concepts developed by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup> The adaption of Olmsted's ideas to the automobile age first found expression in New York's Bronx River Parkway in 1925. Soon, parkways, whose main purpose was to offer a respite from urban life and make driving a pastime, began to crisscross the countryside, where drivers were supposed to engage in recreation while traveling through pastoral landscapes.<sup>35</sup> These roads were designed not only

29 Sutter, *Driven Wild*, 23-35; see also Wells, *Car Country*, 201-227.

30 William Cronon, "Foreword," in David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington's National Parks* (Seattle, 2006), x.

31 See Wells, *Car Country*, 220-222.

32 Louter, *Windshield Wilderness*, 19-35.

33 Wells, *Car Country*, 221-222; see also Sutter, *Driven Wild*, 30. According to Sutter, contemporary sources estimated that in the mid-1920s ten to fifteen million Americans visited campgrounds for automobile tourists each year. I did not find any reliable information on how many tourists went beyond just appreciating scenic views from their cars, experiencing nature by using hiking trails, swimming, hunting, or going on canoe trips. As historian Maude-Emmanuelle Lambert has shown for the case of Ontario, Canada, road builders and tourism associations often used images of automobile tourists partaking in such activities in their advertising. Such representations left the impression that cars and roads were essential for people to get to remote areas where they could enjoy non-motorized forms of outdoor recreation. See Maude-Emmanuelle Lambert, "Automobile Tourism in Quebec and Ontario: Development, Promotion, and Representations, 1920-1945," in *Moving Natures: Mobility and the Environment in Canadian History*, eds. Colin M. Coates, Jay Young and Ben Bradley (Calgary, 2016), 313-314.

34 On Olmsted's ideas see Christopher Wells, "Rebuilding the City, Leaving it Behind:

Transportation and the Environmental Crisis in Turn-of-the-Century American

Cities," *The Journal of Transport History* 35, no. 2 (2014): 183-199.



**Figure 1: Highway from White River to Sunrise in Mount Rainier National Park, WA, 1932. Roads that were extended into the heart of National Parks afforded automobile tourists access to remote areas and the opportunity to appreciate spectacular views. Source: National Park Service Archives, Records, and Research, NPS Historic Photograph Collection (HFCA 1607). Photo: George A. Grant. Public domain.**

to introduce motorists to beautiful landscapes but also to tell selected versions of American history. Thus the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, and the Colonial, Blue Ridge, and Natchez Trace parkways all led to historically significant sites and afforded views of log cabins, bridges, fences, and other features that were carefully engineered to evoke images of the nation's glorified past.<sup>36</sup>

In early twentieth-century Brazil, there was no comparable parkway movement, and the country did not inaugurate its first National Park until 1937. However, like their U.S. counterparts, Brazilian automobilists were impressed with the overwhelming sceneries that they could observe from behind the wheel. In the 1920s, they used images of their country's tropical nature to justify the investment of public funds in road construction and argued that only good roads would make mountains, forests, beaches, and lakesides accessible to the nation's citizens. Businessmen, automobile clubs, and state and federal government actors aimed to boost tourism. Auto magazines encouraged Brazilians to discover the great diversity of the country's sites of outstanding beauty<sup>37</sup> and sought to convince wealthy foreign tourists to spend their vacation traveling through Brazil by road.<sup>38</sup>

The automotive press bragged of the road from Rio de Janeiro to Petrópolis as one of the most beautiful scenic drives in the world. The idea for this road had been proposed by Brazil's foreign minister José Paranhos, known as Baron of Rio Branco, in 1906. The ACB pushed for its construction since 1916 and soon started roadwork, funded by donations from its members and local businesses. Over the following years, car journals published numerous articles, most of which included picture series, stating that the highway stretch in the Serra dos Orgãos mountain range, once finished, would offer superb views.<sup>39</sup> In 1923, a group of local businessmen established a tourism association in Petrópolis which cooperated with the ACB and

35 Wells, *Car Country*, 223-226.

36 For a detailed analysis of how parkways were conceived of as public history enterprises see Timothy Davis, "The Rise and Fall of the American Parkway," in *The World Beyond the Windshield: Roads and Landscapes in the United States and Europe*, eds. Christof Mauch and Thomas Zeller (Athens and Stuttgart, 2008), 35-58, here 45-50.

37 "As bellezas naturales da Estrada Rio-Petropolis," in *O Automovel* (April 1, 1924): n.p.

pressured the Rio state government to invest in the completion of the Rio-Petrópolis highway. Their efforts were supported by U.S. investors like David Charles Collier. In São Paulo, the local highway association stressed that future car travel depended on the Rio-São Paulo highway, established a tourism section, and pursued the mission of making the federal state's roads and the beauty and power of its landscapes known to the public.<sup>40</sup>



**Figure 2. Automobile tourists at a campground in Mount Rainier National Park, WA, 1941. Source: National Park Service Archives, Records, and Research, NPS Historic Photograph Collection (HFCA 1607). Photo: George A. Grant. Public domain.**

Brazilian auto enthusiasts and road backers did not always appreciate nature. Complicated geography and the tropical climate presented very serious challenges to roadbuilding. As early as 1913 the magazine *Revista de Automoveis* had predicted that the Rio-Petrópolis road would soon be a reality.<sup>41</sup> But over the following years, frequent heavy rainfalls, quagmires, difficulties in disposing of surpluses of excavated soil, the large number of streams and rivers, and flooded terrain made roadwork difficult and led to the failure of several attempts to build the highway.<sup>42</sup> In 1925, *O Automovel* reported that vast stretches were still impassable.<sup>43</sup> In May 1926, the ACB organized a motorcade to celebrate the opening of the Rio-Petrópolis highway, but trouble continued. In a paper on the highway presented at the Second Pan American Highway Congress in 1929, the engineer J.T. Oliveira Penteadó emphasized that keeping the roadbed in conditions that allowed car traffic cost the state government a fortune. Road workers had started paving stretches of the highway some years earlier, and Penteadó concluded that only paving kept the road from being damaged by inundations in lowlands and torrents in the mountain range.<sup>44</sup> Once the Rio-Petrópolis road was open for traffic, it became a symbol for supposed human might over nature. At the time, Brazilian

43 "A estrada de rodagem Rio-Petropolis," in *O Automovel* (May 1925): 18.

44 *Guia Rodoviário Brasileiro: contribuição do Segundo Congresso Panamericano de Estradas de Rodagem,*

*aprovado pela Comissão organizadora*, ed. Levi Autran (Rio de Janeiro, 1929), 72-75.

38 Alves de Souza, "O turismo como industria e propaganda," in *A Estrada de Rodagem*, (June 1923): n.p.

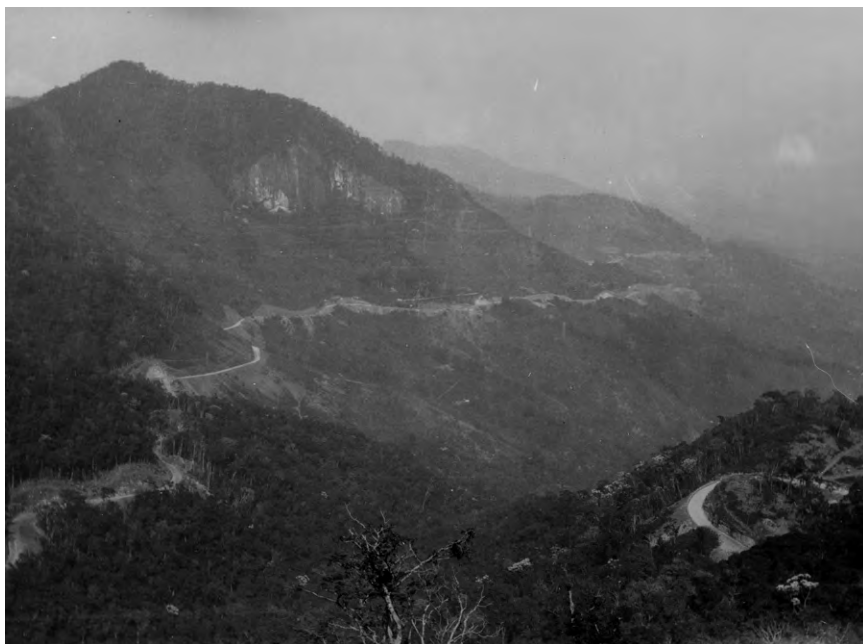
39 *O Automovel* (1 April 1924); *Boas Estradas* (October/November 1927); *Auto-Sport* (December 15, 1926): 3; *Automovel Club* (March 1926): 12 and (May 1926): 19; *Automobilismo* (September 1928): 19.

40 *A Estrada de Rodagem* (March 1924): n.p.; "Quando teremos o Touring Club do Brasil?," in *Automobilismo* (June 1926): 13.

41 "A grande Avenida Rio-Petropolis," in *Revista de Automoveis* (April 1913): 567.

42 "Do Rio a Petropolis," in *Auto-Propulsão* (September 1916): n.p.





**Figure 3: A stretch of the road from Rio de Janeiro to Petrópolis in the Serra dos Orgãos mountain range. Date unknown. In the 1920s, the Rio-Petrópolis highway was one of the two most important road building projects in Brazil. Source: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. RG 30: Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, 1892-1972. 169141554. Public domain.**

45 "O bom automobilista," in *Boas Estradas* (June 1925): 27.

46 Candido Mendes de Almeida: "Estrada Rio-Petropolis," in *Automovel Club* (May 1926): n.p.; "Estrada de Rodgem Rio-Petropolis," in *Boas Estradas* (November/December 1927): 315.

auto enthusiasts continued to admire U.S. road builders for constructing arteries of civilization.<sup>45</sup> They criticized the poor state of transportation infrastructure in Brazil and emphasized that most Brazilians still traveled by horse or oxcart. Yet this line of reasoning, which aimed at federal aid for road infrastructure, did not prevent them from celebrating the Rio-Petrópolis highway and other new roads as symbols of national progress and proof for the advanced state of Brazilian highway engineering.<sup>46</sup>

In September 1925 Américo R. Netto, a member of the Clube dos Bandeirantes, went on a driving tour from São Paulo to Rio de Janeiro with several fellow club members. The road trip, which they referred to as *Bandeira*, was one of many long-distance trips which Brazilian *automobilistas* organized at the time to create public support for the Good Roads cause. They usually published detailed travel reports in auto magazines and so did Netto.<sup>47</sup> In his report, he remembered how wildlife had impressed him. Moreover, Netto explained how close contact with nature had brought the *bandeirantes* new vitality and energy. He portrayed driving, even on rough paths, as a refreshing escape from the comfort of office chairs and the artificiality and rush of modern city life. Netto's



report also transmitted visions of beautifully designed roadside landscapes, which featured tamed animals and picnic spots in picturesque settings.<sup>48</sup> Contrary to the United States, however, Brazil did not afford drivers such recreational wonderlands at the time. While drivers in the U.S. traveled on improved roads but also felt the negative impact of increasing roadside commercialization and standardization, Brazilian motorists faced quite different challenges. As Netto's *Bandeira* entered the lowlands and swampy areas of the Baixada Fluminense northeast of Rio de Janeiro, their experience of the environment changed. Netto wrote that for the first time, he and his fellow automotive pioneers found nature to be hostile. He called this stretch the most unpleasant part of their journey and complained about the unbearable heat, the unattractive roadside landscape, giant swarms of mosquitoes, and numerous quagmires on the way. For the first time, Netto felt that their trip had been a bad idea. The Baixada Fluminense drove the *bandeirantes* to despair and led some of them to quench their thirst by drinking brackish water from swamps.<sup>49</sup> Netto also lamented the withering of vegetation in the Baixada Fluminense and said that due to the dry and hot climate, slash and burn, and the devastation of

**Figure 4: Roadwork at the Rio-Petrópolis highway. Date unknown. Source: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. RG 30: Records of the Bureau of Public Roads, 1892-1972. 169141550. Public domain.**

47 Netto was the director of *Boas Estradas* and an editor of the *Estado de São Paulo* newspaper, which shows the influence that automobilistas had in the press at the time.

48 "A história da "Bandeira," in *Boas Estradas* (October/November 1925): 44.

49 *Ibid.*, 40.

forests, Brazil was turning into a desert. In fact, he borrowed this argument from prominent members of the Brazilian environmental movement, who fought against deforestation and, in the 1920s, started to deal with the roads question.

### **III. Environmentalism and critical perspectives on roads and car travel**

The construction of roads and the growth of motorized traffic imposed enormous environmental costs. It is important to consider how contemporary observers perceived the transformations wrought upon landscapes and ecosystems by the expansion of road networks and leisure driving. In what follows I will focus on environmentalists' perspectives on automobile tourism and road building. During the interwar years the United States and Brazil both had very active environmentalist movements whose members closely observed recreational infrastructure developments and commented on the impact of cars and roads on nature. A transnational comparison illustrates how diverse and sometimes inconsistent reactions to the expansion of automobility were.

The U.S. environmental historian Christopher Wells has argued that the ecological changes brought about by roads were often less obvious than the impact of automobile production, which caused pollution and extensive consumption of raw materials. Yet, roadwork and car traffic have profound impacts on ecosystems in the immediate roadside landscape. Roads divide landscapes, cause noise pollution, and destroy natural habitats. They also lead to profound changes in the natural world by affording access to remote areas and attracting commerce and new forms of land use.<sup>50</sup>

In the United States, the interwar boom in road construction and leisure driving created complex environmental problems: campgrounds for automobile tourists consumed enormous amounts of water and wood and caused soil compaction. Improper sanitation resulted in water pollution, and campers sullied roadsides with waste. The establishment of hot dog and ice cream stands, restaurants, and gas stations, all of which catered to the needs of tourists, added to pollution and profoundly altered the landscape experience of leisure motorists.<sup>51</sup>

50 See Wells, *Car Country*, 212-214.

51 Sutter, *Driven Wild*, 35-37.

During the interwar years, U.S. highway engineers studied the interaction between automotive infrastructures and their environments

but focused on soil studies, surfaces, foundations, and other aspects that were essential for the construction of good roads. While many engineers became proponents of roadside beautification, they did not consider the impact of roads and motor traffic on landscapes, fauna, and flora.<sup>52</sup> In the early twentieth century, most American naturalists had not been too worried about the destructive potential of roads and cars either. John Muir and the Sierra Club had been supporters of motorization because they believed that car travel would increase people's interest in nature and create support for the establishment of National Parks. Like many at the time, these advocates of wilderness protection were convinced that automobility and nature could be mutually beneficial.<sup>53</sup>

As U.S. environmental historian Paul S. Sutter has shown, ecologist and forester Aldo Leopold, who became known as the "Father of the National Forest Wilderness System," was among the first who voiced criticism of the rapid diffusion of automobiles, unchecked road building, and the recreational development of public lands.<sup>54</sup> Leopold graduated from Yale's forestry school in 1909 and soon started working for the recently established U.S. Forest Service in New Mexico and Arizona. In the early 1920s he developed a proposal to declare the Gila National Forest (NM) the first wilderness area in the United States, and his efforts were successful.<sup>55</sup> Since the early years of his career, Leopold was particularly concerned about the rampant increase in summer homes, municipal and private camps, resorts, and hotels in National Forests. He understood that the Highway Act of 1916 and the subsequent construction of forest roads and highways had facilitated such developments and fueled motorized tourism. Leopold also worried about the industrial extraction of natural resources, but from his point of view, road building and recreational development presented the most imminent threat to forest preservation.<sup>56</sup> At the Second National Conference on Outdoor Recreation held in Washington, D.C. in 1926 as well as in many of the articles which he wrote for popular magazines and academic journals, Leopold lashed out at the Good Roads Movement and automotive interest groups and did not spare the National Park Service, whose policies had furthered the consumerist trends of car travel.<sup>57</sup> He denounced the devastating effects of motorization and commercialization, arguing that roads, cars, and hotels also violated the rights of hikers and others who sought a retreat in nature through non-motorized forms of recreation. During the years that followed, Leopold's negative perception of roads and cars did not change. In 1938, commenting on the ongoing expansion of transportation

52 Wells, *Car Country*, 215.

53 See Louter, *Windshield Wilderness*, 26-35.

54 Paul S. Sutter, "A Blank Spot on the Map": Aldo Leopold, Wilderness, and U.S. Forest Service Recreational Policy, 1909-1924," *Western Historical Quarterly* 29, no.2 (1998): 187-214, here 187-189. The quote is from James P. Gilligan, "The Development and Administration of Forest Service Primitive and Wilderness Areas in the Western United States" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1953), 82, quoted in Sutter, "A Blank Spot on the Map," 187.

55 The Aldo Leopold Foundation: Aldo Leopold. <https://www.aldoleopold.org/about/aldo-leopold/> (last accessed February 18, 2021). See also, Sutter, "A Blank Spot on the Map," 189-190.

56 Sutter, "A Blank Spot on the Map," 209.

57 *Ibid.*, 212; see also Sutter, *Driven Wild*, 46-47.



**Figure 5. Auto-stages at the Paradise Inn in Mount Rainier National Park, WA, 1926. Aldo Leopold and other U.S. wilderness advocates harshly criticized motorized tourism and the construction of hotels and other recreational infrastructure in National Parks and Forests. Source: National Park Service Archives, Records, and Research, NPS Historic Photograph Collection (HFCA 1607). Photo: Asahel Curtis. Public domain.**

infrastructures in National Parks and Forests, he insisted that “recreational development is a job not of building roads into lovely country, but of building receptivity into the still unlovely human mind.”<sup>58</sup> By that time, other wilderness preservationists, who joined forces in the Wilderness Society, which had been established in 1935, had come to share Leopold’s conviction that it was essential to keep protected areas free from automotive infrastructures.

Over the following decades, the creation and defense of roadless areas became a central cause for U.S. environmentalists, and their efforts resulted in the Wilderness Act of 1964, which determined that wilderness areas should have no motorized travel.<sup>59</sup>

Like their colleagues from North America, Brazilian highway engineers in the 1920s promoted roadside beautification projects. Planting trees along transportation corridors was nothing new; railway companies had been obliged to do so to gain concessions since the nineteenth century. At the 1916 National Roads Congress, participants discussed ideas to plant eucalyptus and other “industrial trees” for commercial use along traffic routes.<sup>60</sup> A few years later the botanist and ardent defender of forest protection Frederico Carlos Hoehne also called for the embellishment of roadside landscapes. In an article published in the December 1923 issue of *Boas Estradas*, Hoehne voiced his support for road building in remote areas, which he, like many auto enthusiasts, described as an essential factor of progress and development. Forested roadsides, he argued, would reduce dust swirled up by cars. Hoehne wrote that roadside beautification was cheap, as it could be done by planting indigenous trees, and would increase the comfort, well-being, and pleasure for car travelers.<sup>61</sup> The following month, in another article in the same magazine, Hoehne again pushed for new roads. Writing about a forest reserve on the margins of the recently built São Paulo-Mato Grosso highway, he stressed that the highway had done no harm to the natural

58 Aldo Leopold, “Conversation Esthetic,” *Bird Lore* 40 (March-April 1938): 101-109. Reprinted in Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (New York, 1949), 176-177, quoted in Sutter, “A Blank Spot on the Map”, 214.

59 Cronon, “Foreword,” in Louter, *Windshield Wilderness*, ix-xiii.

60 “Primeiro Congresso Nacional de Estradas de Rodagem,” in *Auto-Propulsão* (November 1916): n.p.

world, rather, it had made the forest accessible and revealed its outstanding beauty. Taking Yellowstone as a role model, Hoehne called for the creation of a national park and emphasized that it was necessary to construct more roads into the reserve in order to allow people to appreciate its most picturesque sites. Hoehne's article included a series of pictures showing the new highway, and one of the captions read: "it is easy to see how the road brought a touch of civilization to the landscape without depriving it of its rustic character."<sup>62</sup>

Whereas Hoehne did not see any conflict between road building and forest protection, other environmentalists soon became aware of the negative impact of the broadened access to nature provided by automotive infrastructures. In a letter to President Getúlio Vargas, Luis Simões Lopes, an agricultural economist and government official, wrote: "Your Excellency surely did not fail to notice the criminal devastation of forests on the margins of the Rio-Petrópolis highway, where beautiful trees, which constitute one of the main attractions of this region privileged by nature, are being transformed into coal." Lopes asked Vargas to authorize the national forest service (Serviço Florestal) to plant new trees in the affected areas and called for the foundation of a forest reserve in the Serra dos Órgãos.<sup>63</sup> In 1933, the journalist and agronomist José Marianno Filho published his book *O problema florestal de Petrópolis*, in which he wrote that the opening of the Rio-Petrópolis highway had led to a sudden increase in logging. A few years later, Filho was appointed president of the new federal forest council (Conselho Florestal Federal), and during his term the protection of forest environments along that road would become one of the council's main objectives. The Friends of Trees Society (Sociedade dos Amigos das Árvores) and the National Museum organized the First Brazilian Conference on Nature Protection in Rio de Janeiro in 1934. In his opening address to the conference, the society's chairman, Leônico Corrêa, also denounced forest degradation along the Rio-Petrópolis highway: "Where roads are constructed into the backlands, forests are being destroyed, and you can be sure, that remains unpunished. To see an example of this kind of crime, it is enough to go from here to Petrópolis, or, just to Mangaratiba [100 km west of Rio de Janeiro]. These are recently inaugurated highways. On their margins there are no forests left. Everything has been destroyed without mercy. Everything transformed into coal or firewood."<sup>64</sup>

61 Frederico Carlos Hoehne, "O embelezamento das estradas de rodagem," in *Boas Estradas* (December 1923), n.p.

62 Frederico Carlos Hoehne, "A reserva florestal 'Washington Luis'," in *Boas Estradas* (January 1924), n.p.

63 Letter from Luis Simões Lopes to Getúlio Vargas, 1931/1932, Fundação Getúlio Vargas, Archive of the Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. CPDOC, LSL\_apu\_1928.08.03. The Serra dos Órgãos was declared a National Park in 1939. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the author's.

64 *Boletim do Museu Nacional* (Rio de Janeiro, March 1935): 16-17.

These sources show that in the early 1930s some Brazilian environmentalists saw a connection between the opening of new roads and the destruction or degradation of forests. Yet, the quotations above also reveal that they did not criticize the presence of roads and cars in nature per se. Instead, Lopes, Filho, Corrêia, and others worried about the fact that roads offered access to once remote areas and facilitated the exploitation of natural resources. They demanded that federal and state governments limit such exploitation and act against non-compliance with environmental protection laws. Contrary to the founders of the U.S. Wilderness movement, however, Brazilian environmentalists did not oppose road building and some even justified their call for the stricter enforcement of environmental laws by pointing to the connection between deforestation, soil erosion, landslides, and the threats that the latter presented to “the beautiful [Rio-Petrópolis] highway.”<sup>65</sup>

#### **IV. Conclusion**

We have seen that road backers in the United States and Brazil used similar arguments to promote the construction of new roads and motor travel into nature. At the same time, there were significant differences in the early development of road building and automobility in both countries. In part, these differences were rooted in the decades that preceded the accommodation of cars in daily life. In the United States, a powerful and influential cyclist movement had demanded the paving of roads since the 1880s. In the early twentieth century, leaders of the rising American auto industry backed the Good Roads cause and successfully campaigned for federal aid. In Brazil, by contrast, there was no turn-of-the-century bicycle culture and it would take decades for the country to have a domestic car industry. However, car aficionados in South America’s largest country soon found the support of U.S. businessmen and investors who worked eagerly to reshape the car debate and touted all the good things that new roads would bring. At home, the latter had successfully shifted public opinion toward the notion that bad roads did not correspond to images of American exceptionalism and the position of the United States as one of the great powers of the world. In Brazil, auto enthusiasts likewise insisted that national progress and modernization depended on the construction of a vast network of highways. Road backers in both countries understood that the use of such abstract terms as progress, modernization, and civiliza-

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

tion would not be enough to win people over to their cause. Making use of a glorified past, they propagated the notion that driving was a patriotic duty and portrayed early motorists as modern pioneers. In the United States, such images focused on reopening the frontier; in Brazil, adventurers on four wheels were laying the groundwork for the integration of the national territory and the reduction of regional disparities.

If U.S. scholarship has called the creation of car-centered landscapes an environmental revolution, it is safe to say that in Brazil things did not go that far, at least not until the 1930s. In the United States, the refashioning of the nation's ecosystems through automobility was most visible in parkways and the roads that extended into National Parks, which were the main routes for early American leisure driving and car travel. Although Brazil did not have such infrastructures at the time, the "Knowing Nature Through Leisure" theme was as important to the expansion of automobility in Brazil as it was in the United States. Like U.S. boosters, Brazilian auto backers claimed that the power and beauty of the national landscape were unique and that driving afforded an authentic outdoor experience. During the interwar years, however, the conditions that leisure motorists encountered in both countries often did not correspond to the road propaganda, be it due to the increasing commercialization and standardization of U.S. roadside landscapes or to the challenges that impassable roads, geography, and the tropical climate presented to motor tourists in Brazil.

The transnational comparison of early automobility sketched in this article has revealed one major difference: Whereas in the 1920s and 1930s some U.S. environmentalists took a clear stand against road building, in Brazil there was no such opposition. U.S. wilderness advocates like Aldo Leopold regarded cars and roads as a central issue in their disputes with proponents of motorization; and their crusade against automobiles was ultimately successful. In Brazil, foresters railed against rampant deforestation and resource extraction, which they saw as consequences of the broadened access to once remote areas. But they did not question road building and motor travel into nature. Until well into the twentieth century, many



Brazilian environmentalists shared the widespread belief that people's chances to appreciate nature depended on cars and roads.

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## AIRBORNE ASYLUM: MIGRATION BY AIRPLANE IN (WEST) GERMANY, 1945-1980S

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### I. Refugees don't fly, do they?

“Why not fly to freedom?”<sup>1</sup>, or: “Ever wondered why refugees don't take the plane?”<sup>2</sup> Since 2015, these and similar questions have frequently appeared on the websites of NGOs and pro-migration networks in Germany and Europe. Amid the 2015 European migrant crisis, activists sought to explain why media abounded with images of the strenuous journeys of migrants traveling via the Balkan route or boarding shaky boats to cross the Mediterranean, running the risk of drowning, while we saw hardly any images of refugees arriving by airplane, even though flying would be safer, faster, and much cheaper. In their answers, the activists cited a directive passed by the Council of the European Union in 2001. According to this so-called Carrier Sanction Directive (2001/51/EC), airlines are to be held financially accountable for any passenger that turns out to be an asylum seeker who is not eligible for protection and thus is rejected at the border. Anxious to avoid any risk, airline agents often refuse to sell flight tickets to potential asylum seekers and customers who lack proper documents and visas – even though, according to the UN Refugee Convention, a refugee is not required to have papers in order to seek protection. Indirectly outsourcing migration control to private companies, this strategy is intended to reduce the number of refugees and migrants that can arrive at airports in the EU.<sup>3</sup>

As a historian looking at this highly topical, normative debate and the migration policies around which it revolves, I am interested in its deeper historical roots. The trend towards outsourcing immigration control and limiting air access to Western Europe was not a genuine invention of the Council of the European Union, nor did it originate in 2001. This article, which draws on my broader comparative research on the subject, traces the historical development of airborne refugee migration<sup>4</sup> and its control. In the case of West Germany, which is at the center of this article, the idea of including airlines in a scheme for migration control goes back to the 1980s and the amendments to the Asylum Procedure Act made at that

- 1 Berliner Ratschlag für Demokratie, Warum kommen die Flüchtlinge nicht einfach mit dem Flugzeug?, September 2015, <https://www.berlinerratschlagfuerdemokratie.de/2015/09/flucht-per-flugzeug/> (last accessed January 9, 2021).
- 2 Jascha Galaski, LibertiesEU, Ever Wondered Why Refugees Don't Take the Plane?, December 10, 2018, <https://www.liberties.eu/en/news/why-refugees-do-not-take-the-plane/16529> (last accessed January 9, 2021).
- 3 The “measure is among the general provisions aimed at curbing migratory flows and combating illegal immigration.” Council directive 2001/51/EC, June 28, 2001.
- 4 In this article, I use the term “migrant” in a generic sense to denote different groups (Jewish displaced persons, German refugees from the GDR, German resettlers from the Soviet Union, and asylum seekers) who relocated under conditions that – despite wide differences between those groups – can be regarded as precarious and at least partly involuntary. When I use the term “refugee” to describe asylum seekers, this does not necessarily imply that those persons' refugee status was legally confirmed, but that the migrants themselves asked for asylum and protection.

time. This policy emerged in a specific historical context, namely in the context of rising numbers of South-North migrants since the late 1970s and the ensuing “asylum debate” in West Germany in the 1980s. West Germany was not alone in adopting such a policy. Denmark introduced similar legal provisions against carriers in 1986, Belgium in 1987, the UK in the same year, and other European countries followed. Even before the introduction of carriers’ liabilities, there were attempts to curb airborne migration by introducing new visa requirements or, on site at the airport, by rejecting refugees who allegedly failed to clearly articulate their claim to asylum at the airport or who had transited through a country that was considered “safe” by the German authorities.

The legal background and the general history of German asylum policies are well documented.<sup>5</sup> The details of their close connection to airborne migration and particularly to the local dynamics at airports, however, have largely escaped the attention of historians.<sup>6</sup> One of the few scholarly works on the topic was written by sociologist Boris Nieswand, whose article analyzes the current border regime at Frankfurt airport resulting from the 1993 Airport Asylum Procedure (*Flughafenverfahren*).<sup>7</sup> By concentrating on the period before 1993, my aim in this article is to draw on archival records to reveal deeper historical trajectories while using Frankfurt airport, (West) Germany’s largest transit hub, as a magnifying lens that allows me to trace these trajectories in connection with local dynamics and actors, including border guards, the airport operator, social workers and activists, and the migrants themselves. To put it in a slightly oversimplified way, I seek to historicize the questions posed by pro-migration activists cited at the outset of this article. Historicizing these questions means not only that my answer entails a longer historical background than the answers usually given in public debates or the social sciences. It also means that the human rights activism behind these questions is part of the historicization, since the history of humanitarianism and pro-migration activism at and about the airport becomes part of the trajectories that I outline here.

Admittedly, the title of this introductory section is somewhat rhetorical: Of course, some refugees travel by plane. This was the case before the implementation of new restrictions to air access in the 1980s and it is still so today, as some refugees travel with valid visas, while others manage to evade controls, for instance, with the help of false documents or by choosing less monitored routes.

5 Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte der Ausländerpolitik in Deutschland. Saisonarbeiter, Zwangsarbeiter, Gastarbeiter, Flüchtlinge* (München, 2017); Patrice G. Poutrus, *Umkämpftes Asyl. Vom Nachkriegsdeutschland bis in die Gegenwart* (Berlin, 2019).

6 There are a few historical studies on other countries, e.g. Bret Edwards, “Governing Global Aeromobility. Canada and Airport Refugee Claimants in the 1980s,” *Transfers* 6/3 (2016): 22-40.

7 Boris Nieswand, “Die Transitzone und die Fiktion der Nichteinreise. Das Flughafenasylverfahren im Zwielficht von Normalität und Ausnahme,” in *Migrationsregime vor Ort und lokales Aushandeln von Migration*, ed. Jochen Oltmer (Wiesbaden, 2018), 345-376.

Certain groups of refugees are also included in EU resettlement schemes and relocation flights, enabling them to get airlifted to Germany, as was the case not long ago, in September 2020, when over a hundred children and vulnerable persons were flown in from the burned-out refugee camp on Lesbos. Data on asylum seekers' means of travel, first collected in 2017 by Germany's Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, suggest that almost one third of all migrants *may* have arrived in Germany by air.<sup>8</sup> The scope and reality of migrants' experiences with air travel is underrepresented both in the general media and in activist-civic education about policies against air migration. In the public mind, there is also the widespread stereotype that refugees cannot afford airline tickets. This discourse is also reflected on the political far right. When statistics about refugees traveling by plane spread in 2018, members of the right-wing party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) did not hide the fact that they perceived migration by air as downright obscene. "They don't flee, they fly,"<sup>9</sup> wrote a member of the AfD's parliamentary group in a widely shared social media post – as if being a "real refugee" and boarding an airplane were mutually exclusive.

Observing that the phenomenon of air migration to Germany is simultaneously understated, underrepresented in both research and public, and politically highly contested, I hope that my article might contribute to a normalization of the phenomenon by revealing its hidden long existence in (West) German history. If the first aim of this article is to historicize the control of air migration through the lens of Frankfurt airport, its second aim is to situate this historicization within a general account of refugee migration by air since the late 1940s and the resumption of civil aviation after the Second World War. This article is divided into chronological phases, from the 1940s to the 1980s, which correlate with the different groups of refugees that landed at Frankfurt airport over time: Jewish displaced persons (DPs) in the late 1940s, refugees from the Soviet occupation zone of postwar Germany in the 1950s, German resettlers (*Aussiedler*) from the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s, and foreign asylum seekers, especially in the 1980s. These different groups do not have much in common except for, first, using airplanes and, second, being migrants under different, precarious, and at least partly involuntary conditions. Bringing them together in this article allows me to track changing patterns of airborne migration and with it the changes in their perception, acceptance, and management on the policy level and on site at the airport.

8 The numbers must be treated with caution, as interviewees could have been aware that air routes are theoretically the only way to legally apply for asylum in Germany since the Dublin Regulation rules that a refugee must apply for asylum in the country where s/he first sets foot on EU territory. Also, refugees might have taken a flight within the EU.

9 "Sie fliehen nicht, sie fliegen." post on Facebook and Twitter, AfD Bundestagsfraktion, March 6, 2018, <https://twitter.com/afdibundestag/status/971059035863740416> (last accessed January 3, 2021).

For the general historiography on migration, the transportation modes of migrants are not mere side aspects and merit more attention. Following political scientist William Walters, who made a similar point,<sup>10</sup> it seems important to take into analytical account that different routes – like traveling on a boat via the Mediterranean versus arriving via plane in an airport transit zone – lead to different migrant experiences. Different routes also involve different mechanisms of migration management and political control, and imply differing opportunities and agency for all actors involved, including migrants, border police, policy makers, smugglers, NGOs, and activists. By highlighting the peculiarities of airborne migration, a third aim of this article is to emphasize the potential of a focus on transportation and transit within migration history.

## II. From camps to runways: humanitarian airlifts in the postwar 1940s

During the Second World War, few people in Europe experienced aircraft as a means of humanitarian relief and rescue. Instead, for most civilians, including refugees and individuals persecuted under Nazi rule, aviation was largely synonymous with destruction and deadly air power. Memories of the bombing attacks continue to shape collective memories in Germany up to the present day.<sup>11</sup> Yet, airplanes – often the very same airplanes that had been used in the air war – also took on a fresh and positive image during the postwar years of reconstruction. Amid rising Cold War tensions, from June 1948 to May 1949, American and British planes dropped over two million tons of supplies for the population in West Berlin after the Soviet government had blocked land access to the city. The use of air transportation for humanitarian ends was not a post-1945 invention; already in the interwar decades, airplanes were used for dropping relief supplies, for instance, to victims of natural disasters. The scope of the Berlin Airlift (*Luftbrücke*), however, was unprecedented and turned out to be a political and a propaganda success for the western Allies. The famous nickname “raisin bombers” (*Rosinenbomber*), as the planes were dubbed by parts of the Berlin population, mirrors the shift from the image of Allied airplanes as fatal weapons to a heroic story of airborne relief. Both the air war and the mythologized Berlin Airlift became aviation-related *lieux de mémoire* in German commemorative culture.<sup>12</sup>

One story linked to the Berlin Airlift did not become part of heroization and public commemoration, though: the *Luftbrücke* was not only a cargo

10 William Walters, “Migration, Vehicles, and Politics. Three theses on viapolitics,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 18/4 (2015): 469–488.

11 They figure in family stories, local commemorative culture, and, since the early 2000s, increasingly in popular film and media, contributing to a narrative of victimhood, which contrasts with the national politics of memory and its focus on the Shoah. Malte Thießen, “Der ‘Feuersturm’ im kommunikativen Gedächtnis. Tradierung und Transformation des Luftkriegs als Lebens- und Familiengeschichte,” in *Luftkrieg. Erinnerungen in Deutschland und Europa*, eds. Jörg Arnold, Dietmar Süß, Malte Thießen (Göttingen, 2009), 312–331.

12 Martina Metzger, “Luftkrieg und Luftbrücke. West-Berliner Erfahrungen und Wahrnehmungen,” in *Die Berliner Luftbrücke. Erinnerungsort des Kalten Krieges*, ed. Corine Defrance (Berlin, 2018), 141–157.

lift, but also one of the first refugee airlifts in history. On their return flights from Berlin, the planes carried over 5,700 Jewish refugees out of displaced persons camps in the American and British zones of Berlin and flew them to Frankfurt airport, from where they were transferred to DP camps in the American, British, and French occupation zones of Germany.<sup>13</sup> As the city was blockaded and supplies had to be flown in, the Allied authorities thought “that it might be more practical to bring the DPs to food, rather than food to DPs in Berlin,”<sup>14</sup> as a member of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), one of the largest Jewish refugee organizations, noted. Moreover, the U.S. administration, who ran most DP camps in Berlin, struggled with a constant lack of space as more Jews, fleeing from antisemitic violence in Poland, arrived in Berlin while others did not leave, since they refused to be repatriated and instead waited in the camps until they obtained permission to move to Palestine, the United States, or other countries. When they were offered the chance to leave Berlin by air, after initial hesitation and objections, most DPs accepted. Among other reasons, many people wanted to escape the feeling of being trapped in the city.<sup>15</sup>

Although the Berlin Airlift became such a publicly celebrated and famous event, the DP’s part in the undertaking remained widely neglected – even in Jewish memory cultures. This is not surprising; although many refugees took a plane for the first time in their lives, the airlift was not their final passage to emigration, but just another transit leg within their circuitous itineraries. After their flight from Tempelhof to Frankfurt, most people arrived at yet another DP camp in Southern Germany still awaiting emigration.<sup>16</sup> What is striking about the human airlift, besides its curious absence from official memories, is the fact that it demonstrates the large humanitarian potential of air transport. This potential was not so much due to its quantitative capacities, but to its ability of flying over otherwise blockaded territories and borders.

13 Angelika Königseder, “Die Evakuierung jüdischer displaced persons über die Luftbrücke aus Berlin,” *Zeitschrift für*

*Geschichtswissenschaft* 46/6 (1998): 505-511; Robert A. Slayton, “The Most Precious Cargo,” *Commentary*, September

2009, <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/robert-slayton/the-most-precious-cargo/> (last accessed January 3, 2021).

14 Memorandum, December 10, 1948, American Joint Distribution Committee Archives [henceforward AJDCA], Item 695400 [http://search.archives.jdc.org/multimedia/Documents/NY\\_AR\\_45-54/NY\\_AR45-54\\_Count/NY\\_AR45-54\\_00059/NY\\_AR45-54\\_00059\\_00060.pdf?search=](http://search.archives.jdc.org/multimedia/Documents/NY_AR_45-54/NY_AR45-54_Count/NY_AR45-54_00059/NY_AR45-54_00059_00060.pdf?search=) (January 16, 2021).

15 Königseder, “Evakuierung,” 509.

16 *Ibid.*, 510.



**Figure 1: Iconic image of the Berlin Airlift, July 1948. Most photographs of the event capture the perspective of either German spectators and children in Berlin or the Allied pilots and cargo packers. The Jewish Refugees are as absent from the visual commemoration of the airlift as they are from its narrative. © bpk-Bildagentur.**

Air transportation also meant that even long-distance destinations could be reached faster than by train or ship (in the 1940s still with stopovers for refueling though). This also had humanitarian potential in terms of speeding up resettlement and making the transit for refugees as comfortable and short as possible. Several relief organizations in postwar Germany began to realize and use this potential. In 1947, more than 175,000 Jewish survivors and refugees still lived in Germany – many of them uprooted, stuck, in transit. Numerous parallel or overlapping attempts by states and humanitarian organizations to resettle or repatriate larger groups of Jewish DPs concurred with individual efforts to depart from Germany. This situation of pending transits and departures of refugees coincided with significant progress in civil aviation. The end of the war had led to a liberation of European airspace; technological innovations during the war and a large pool of army-trained pilots and technical experts were factors that boosted the postwar expansion of commercial aviation.<sup>17</sup> In West Germany, seven airports resumed civil operations immediately after the war, including Hamburg and Frankfurt, which from the outset offered more long-distance routes than other German airports. The literature on the history of civil aviation tells us that flying in the 1940s and 1950s was for wealthy travelers and businessmen. Some flight tickets, however, were also booked by displaced persons and NGOs to support their efforts to solve the refugee crises in Germany (and other countries).

Since 1947, different aid organizations increasingly used opportunities to include air transport in their rescue schemes; some bought tickets, others chartered entire airplanes. Thus, starting in September 1947, the British Jewish Refugees Committee booked seats for DPs on commercial flights from Berlin to London.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) ran and financed a regular passenger air service between Munich and Lod airport, near Tel Aviv, since September 1948, which comprised about twenty flights per month and brought several hundred emigrants to the newly founded state of Israel.<sup>19</sup> Another important humanitarian player, the United Nations Organization's International Refugee Organization (IRO, the successor to UNRRA) also decided, in early 1948, that, in addition to the many ship passages they booked, "the possibilities of this means of transportation [aircraft] will be still further explored."<sup>20</sup> In the case of Venezuela, the IRO reported by the end of 1948 that the "initiation of air movements to this country has already resulted in the transportation of large numbers of

17 Peter Lyth, Hans-Liudger Diemel, "Introduction," in *Flying the Flag. European Commercial Air Transport since 1945*, eds. Hans-Liudger Diemel, Peter Lyth (New York, 1998), 3-4.

18 Jewish Refugees Committee London to Jewish Relief Unit B.A.O.R., September 19, 1947, The Wiener Library HA11-I/3a8, database Post-War Europe: Refugees, Exile and Resettlement 1945-1950, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/SC5107608405/GDSC?u=weberst&sid=GDSC&xid=0dcdb965&pg=1> (last accessed January 16, 2021).

19 Memorandum, December 10, 1948, AJDCA, Item 695400 [http://search.archives.jdc.org/multimedia/Documents/NY\\_AR\\_45-54/NY\\_AR45-54\\_Count/NY\\_AR45-54\\_00059/NY\\_AR45-54\\_00059\\_00060.pdf#search=](http://search.archives.jdc.org/multimedia/Documents/NY_AR_45-54/NY_AR45-54_Count/NY_AR45-54_00059/NY_AR45-54_00059_00060.pdf#search=) (last accessed January 16, 2021).

20 Preparatory Commission for the International Refugee Organization, press release, June 22, 1948, The Wiener Library HAS-5/2, database Post-War Europe: Refugees, Exile and Resettlement 1945-1950, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/SC5107635712/GDSC?u=weberst&sid=GDSC&xid=c3be1a1d&pg=1> (last accessed January 16, 2021).

immigrants. Six hundred, for instance, are expected to be moved during the month of July and nine hundred during August in one of the biggest civilian air lifts ever undertaken.”<sup>21</sup> Other air routes booked by the IRO led from Italy and Western Germany to Brazil, Canada, and New York. In October 1950, more than one thousand DPs were airlifted from Germany to Australia. Overall, the IRO relocated substantially more people by ocean passages than by air, however, even if in some months they booked more planes than ships. In the second half of June 1949, for instance, twelve ships with over 11,000 Jewish emigrants from Europe reached destinations in the Americas, whereas twenty planes carried 993 persons over the Atlantic.<sup>22</sup>

Why, if capacities were significantly lower (and prices per passenger in most cases higher), did refugee organizations like the JDC and the IRO include air transportation in their relief schemes? For one, air movements were not a substitution, but a supplement to ship transport thus adding to a general increase of transport capacities. Sometimes the organizations also wanted to speed up the resettlement of those refugees who were already permitted to immigrate to an overseas country but were unable to book a ship passage anytime soon.<sup>23</sup> Another, perhaps more interesting answer to the question is that certain groups were perceived as particularly vulnerable, so that the organization chose a fast and comparatively less strenuous mode of transportation. In 1949, for example, the IRO organized eight flights to transport 500 pregnant or nursing mothers and their families from Naples to Brazil; a similar number of unaccompanied children was airlifted from Germany to the United States and Australia. The majority of flights from Germany to New York listed by the IRO in summer 1949 was organized by Youth Argosy,



**Figure 2: “Men and women, some holding little children, board plane destined for Israel,” Munich 1949. Often it was children and families, that is, DPs who were considered particularly vulnerable, who were transported by air to their new countries. © Joint Distribution Committee Archives.**

<sup>23</sup> Preparatory Commission for the International Refugee Organization, monthly digest, August 1948, p. 29, 1947, The Wiener Library

HAS-5/2, database Post-War Europe: Refugees, Exile and Resettlement 1945-1950, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/>

SC5107635712/GDSC?u=weberst&sid=GDSC&xid=c3be1a1d&pg=1 (last accessed January 16, 2021).

<sup>21</sup> Preparatory Commission for the International Refugee Organization, monthly digest, August 1948, p. 29, 1947, The Wiener Library HAS-5/2, database Post-War Europe: Refugees, Exile and Resettlement 1945-1950, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/SC5107635712/GDSC?u=weberst&sid=GDSC&xid=c3be1a1d&pg=1> (last accessed January 16, 2021).

<sup>22</sup> IRO Information Bulletin 19, July 1, 1949, pp. 8-9, The Wiener Library HAS-5/2, database Post-War Europe: Refugees, Exile and Resettlement 1945-1950, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/SC5107635712/GDSC?u=weberst&sid=GDSC&xid=c3be1a1d&pg=1> (last accessed January 20, 2021).



a new, private organization in the U.S. that provided affordable air travel opportunities for young people.<sup>24</sup> Here, once again, a special humanitarian potential of airplanes comes to the fore, as they were considered the preferred long-distance means of travel for vulnerable refugee groups, especially children. Their other humanitarian potential, namely the ability to cross otherwise blockaded borders via air, gained importance twice in German postwar history: for the DPs during the Berlin Blockade and then, as the next section will show, a few years later, for a different group of refugees stuck in Berlin.

### III. Changing patterns of migration and refugee relief at Frankfurt airport, 1950s-1980s

Besides emigration from Germany and the resettlement of Jewish refugees, the postwar years also saw immigration to West Germany and the Federal Republic. The main immigrant groups were ethnic German resettlers (*Heimatvertriebene*, *Aussiedler*) from the Eastern bloc as well as inner-German refugees escaping from Soviet-controlled East Germany and, after 1949, the German Democratic Republic (so-called *Zonenflüchtlinge*) to the West. Considered German, they could immigrate to West Germany as recognized citizens of the Federal Republic. Seen as a whole, travel by air played a very marginal role in these movements. Seen from the micro-perspective of Frankfurt airport, however, the fact that some refugee groups did arrive by airplane had important consequences on the ground as it sparked the development of local refugee management in and around the airport.

It was during the incipient mass exodus from the GDR that Frankfurt airport first became a transit point in the East-West migration during the Cold War. After the GDR had shut down its external borders in 1952, significantly more people than before escaped by crossing the inner-city border between East Berlin and the city's western sectors.<sup>25</sup> From reception centers and refugee camps in West Berlin such as Marienfelde, the refugees often traveled with Pan Am or other Allied airlines to the western parts of the FRG. In February 1953, two refugee flights a day reached the Rhine-Main-Airport from Berlin Tempelhof. Upon landing in Frankfurt, the migrants were brought to Frankfurt's central train station to continue their journey by train to transit camps and destinations mainly in southern Germany.<sup>26</sup> From mid-February to the end of March 1953 alone, the travelers'

24 Preparatory Commission for the International Refugee Organization, monthly digest, March 1949, p. 6; IRO Information Bulletin 19-21 (July 1949), The Wiener Library HAS-5/2, database Post-War Europe: Refugees, Exile and Resettlement 1945-1950, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/SC5107635712/GDSC?u=weberst&sid=GDSC&xid=c3be1a1d&pg=1> (last accessed January 20, 2021).

25 Presse- und Informationssamt des Landes Berlin, *Die Mauer und ihr Fall* (Berlin, 6th ed., 1996).

26 Welfare office Frankfurt, note, February 12, 1953, Archiv Caritasverband Frankfurt/Main [henceforward AArchF] 5113 1953.

aid office at Frankfurt central train station (*Bahnhofsmision*) counted more than 10,300 refugees in transit whom they supplied with basic provisions.<sup>27</sup> For the often tired refugees, among them many elderly people and families, provisioning came rather late, considering that their transfer from the terminal to the train station took quite long, since airports and train stations were not yet connected by regular transport in those days.<sup>28</sup> The fact that most of the flights arrived in the evening made direct transit even more difficult.<sup>29</sup> Back then, the airport also did not yet resemble the recreational place it became in later years, when waiting times could be comfortably bridged by visiting cafés and restaurants. The travelers' aid office at the train station, run jointly by the Catholic care organization *Caritas* and the Protestant *Innere Mission*, therefore created an on-call service at the airport. Learning about the imminent arrival of refugees, they headed to the airport and provided their services on site.<sup>30</sup> These were the early beginnings of a refugee relief organization at Frankfurt airport, even though it was not yet permanently institutionalized.

Another wave of migrants came in the 1960s, when the air route became the most frequently used migration route for *Aussiedler* from Romania. In March 1962, the Romanian government made these potential resettlers purchase tickets from the state-owned airline Tarom if they wanted to leave the country.<sup>31</sup> The political leaders in Romania generally did not make it easy for emigrants to leave the country and tried to obtain economic compensation. This way, they were able to capitalize on air emigration. At Frankfurt airport, the sudden influx of migrants posed a logistical challenge for the local authorities. Migrants often arrived without cash and orientation. Those who had neither relatives or friends in Germany who could pick them up at the airport nor a clear destination and



**Figure 3: Refugees are transported to West Germany from Berlin's Tempelhof Airport (1953).**  
© bpk-Bildagentur.

27 Travelers' aid office Frankfurt, list, March 27, 1953; Travelers' aid office Frankfurt to welfare office Frankfurt, March 11, 1953, CArchF 5113 1953.

28 Transport interconnectivity in Frankfurt only came into existence in 1972 when the airport opened its own train station. Hans-Liudger Diemel, "Foreword," in *Unconnected Transport Networks. European Intermodal Traffic Junctions 1800-2000*, ed. Hans-Liudger Diemel (Frankfurt/Main, New York, 2004), 7.

29 Welfare office Frankfurt, note, February 12, 1953; magistrate Frankfurt to the ministry of interior and the office for refugees Hesse, March 4, 1953, CArchF 5113 1953.

30 Travelers' aid office Frankfurt to welfare office Frankfurt, March 27, 1953, CArchF 5113 1953.

31 Minister for Expellees, Refugees, and War Victims to Minister of Interior Hesse, March

15, 1962, Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv [henceforward HHStAW] 508 4199.

residence permit were in particular need of support. They had to be guided by local helpers to a transfer bus to Frankfurt central train station and then travel to the transit camp for *Aussiedler* in Piding, on the Austrian-German border (which was where *Aussiedler* used to arrive when they traveled overland). Again, the airport's weak public transportation links, combined with many delayed flights, made transit difficult. As was the case for the GDR refugees, a social service was therefore set up directly at the airport. Initially, the German Red Cross took charge; a few months later, local Hessian welfare authorities took over. The social workers provided the resettlers with drinks, snacks, money, as well as train tickets to Nuremberg and organized the transfer to the train station.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, the number of resettlers rose, with Tarom increasingly using special flights. In September 1970 alone, 1,118 people landed at the airport. By the end of 1976, several hundred *Aussiedler* arrived almost daily.<sup>33</sup> In order to make their journey less strenuous, migrants occasionally stayed overnight a few kilometers away from the airport at the Hesse refugee accommodation in the town of Langen or in a room at the travelers' aid office at Frankfurt main station.<sup>34</sup>

It is interesting to note that there was no provision yet for any sort of refugee accommodation on site at the airport. Instead, in the case of both the GDR refugees and the *Aussiedler*, every effort was made to help the migrants leave the airport and proceed with their immigration as quickly as possible. To further expedite their entry into West Germany, the airport administration and the border police agreed to escort the resettlers from the plane to special passport counters and waived customs controls.<sup>35</sup> This proactive approach to migration management at the airport differs starkly from the local migration regime that developed in the decades to come in order to enhance the airport's function as a border against supposed illegal immigration. From the 1950s to the mid-1970s, German refugees and resettlers from the GDR and the Eastern bloc were the only larger groups of migrants that arrived at the airport in need of humanitarian assistance. For them, the airport was essentially not a border, but a transit point through which they could smoothly enter the country. Their border crossing was accepted and legitimized in advance because they were already considered ethnic Germans and future citizens of the FRG. Furthermore, their departure from the communist bloc pleased the anti-communist government of West Germany.<sup>36</sup> For refugees from the Middle East and the Global South, who arrived at Frankfurt airport in increasing numbers since the

32 German Red Cross Frankfurt to Ministry of Interior Hesse, March 19, 1962, HHStAW 508 4199.

33 Lists with numbers of resettlers, HHStAW 508 4200.

34 Ministry of Social Affairs Hesse, report, January 15, 1967; internal letter, January 13, 1971, HHStAW 508 4199.

35 German Red Cross to Minister for Expellees, Refugees, and War Victims, January 17, 1967, HHStAW 508 4199.

36 Klaus J. Bade, *Migration in European History* (Bodmin, 2003), 266.

late 1970s, the situation was different. For them the airport was not simply a transit point but rather a border and a barrier where they were stopped and possibly turned away.

The changing pattern of migration at Frankfurt Airport was part of a broader structural shift of refugee immigration to West Germany and Western Europe. Whereas most refugees in the 1950s and 1960s had arrived from the Eastern bloc, the 1970s and especially the 1980s saw a growing South-North trend.<sup>37</sup> One contributory factor behind this shift was the advent of new, globalized access to air travel. The 1970s marked a watershed in this regard. It was a decade of accelerated change in commercial air transport. Technical innovations such as the introduction of jumbo jets, the expansion of consumer societies, and the liberalization of aviation markets first in the United States and then in Europe leveraged the rising age of mass aviation.<sup>38</sup> The result was a pluralization of passenger milieus. New customers from the (lower) middle classes benefitted from the democratization of flying, and so did migrants and asylum seekers.

Observing the changing social composition of air passengers, *Caritas* and its protestant counterpart *Diakonie* established permanent social services at Frankfurt Airport. “Air travel is no longer only for the wealthy [...] ill travelers, the elderly, disabled, helpless foreigners, people who are stuck, have been deported or have not yet been able to enter the country”<sup>39</sup> also arrive at the airport, the *Diakonie Hessen* explained. The Airport Social Services (*Flughafensozialdienst*, FSD) was founded in 1975 and consisted of an ecumenical team of social workers. The airport operator – pleased that they could resolve an unprofitable, yet indispensable task at the airport – provided the FSD with offices and access to most areas of the airport. Refugees were not yet a major client group when the FSD started. Its social workers did assist the German Red Cross and the local welfare authorities of Hesse from time to time when German migrants from Eastern bloc countries arrived at the airport and they also looked after asylum seekers. Their main task, however, was regular passenger aid. In the 1980s, with the numbers of asylum seekers landing in Frankfurt rising, refugee work was suddenly propelled to the top of the agenda.<sup>40</sup>

One reason for the increase of refugee numbers at Frankfurt Airport was the closure of another transit route in the late summer of 1986. Up until then, many asylum seekers aiming to reach West Germany or one of its neighboring countries but lacking the necessary

37 *Ibid.*, 267.

38 For a cultural history of the transformations in aviation, see Alastair Gordon, *Naked Airport. A Cultural History of the World's Most Revolutionary Structure* (Chicago, 2008).

39 Newsletter of the Diakonisches Werk Hessen und Nassau, 1974, Zentralarchiv der Evangelischen Kirche in Hessen und Nassau [henceforward EKHNArch] 155 3409.

40 FSD annual report 1975; church services at the airport, minutes, March 3, 1976, EKHN-Arch 155 3409.

documents and visas to book direct flights had instead traveled to Schönefeld airport in East Berlin. From there they took the metro or city train to West Berlin.<sup>41</sup> Only in 1986 did the government in Bonn succeed in concluding an agreement with the GDR according to which potential refugees from the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia who wanted to cross the border from East to West Berlin had to present GDR authorities with a valid visa issued by West Germany. For many refugees, the so-called “hole in the Berlin Wall” (*Berliner Loch*) had been a transit opportunity that suddenly closed.<sup>42</sup>

With one transit opportunity closing, another one gained in importance: at Frankfurt airport, the numbers of asylum seekers skyrocketed. According to the Federal Ministry of the Interior, 88 percent of all people asking for asylum at West German borders between mid-January and June 1987 did so in Frankfurt. Nationwide (i.e. not only at the borders), the airport accounted for approximately 17 percent of all applications.<sup>43</sup> Until 1989, “the airport remained the most vital point of entry,”<sup>44</sup> the Ministry of Transport in Bonn declared. Many of the arriving migrants came from the Global South, frequently from Ghana, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka. The majority, though, were Turkish citizens – often Kurdish, Yezidi, or Christian minorities from southeast Anatolia. A general visa requirement for Turks had been introduced by the federal government in West Germany in 1980 to curb the growing asylum immigration from Turkey that followed the ban on work permits for *Gastarbeiter* in 1973. Circumnavigating this new restriction, many migrants from Turkey started to purchase plane tickets from Istanbul to places like Barcelona or Lisbon for which Turks needed no visa. During the regular stopover in Frankfurt, they could enter the airport building, because the so-called transit privilege allowed them to enter the airport transit area without any visa. They could then ask the local German border officials for asylum.<sup>45</sup> Migrants from other countries took advantage of transit privileges as well. For others, seeking asylum in transit became a spontaneous compromise rather than a planned strategy. This was the case with migrants who had hired smugglers to take them to destinations like Canada or Scandinavia, but then ended up in Frankfurt, being left by their agents during stopover, without papers or money.<sup>46</sup>

41 Ministry of Interior, internal report, December 27, 1983, Bundesarchiv Koblenz [henceforward BArch] B 106 90204.

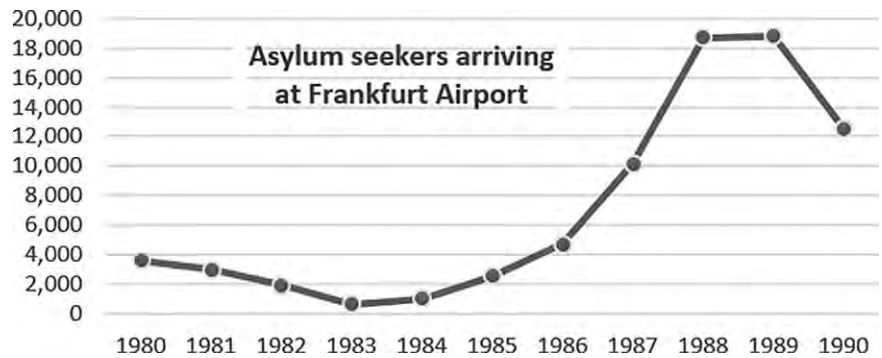
42 Herbert, *Ausländerpolitik*, 270.

43 Ministry of Interior, internal briefing, June 1, 1987, BArch B 106 207414.

44 Ministry of Traffic, notes on meeting, November 20, 1989, BArch B 108 9879.

45 Minister of Social Affairs Hesse to the Minister-President of Hesse, September 24, 1987, HHStAW 505 6008.

46 Fluchtpunkt Flughafen Frankfurt, Sozialdienst Jahresbericht 1986, p. 7, CArchF 5120-01.



In view of the growing asylum numbers in the transit zone, in 1980 the government of Hesse considered creating refugee accommodations within the airport area. The airport operator was not fond of the idea, proposing instead to set up emergency accommodations outside the fenced airport territory.<sup>47</sup> As no plan met with approval, the refugees continued to stay in the public transit area after their arrival. The Federal Border Guard (*Bundesgrenzschutz*, BGS) struggled to keep pace; the preliminary examination of each asylum petition, i.e. the interview with the individual asylum seeker and paperwork, took time. Even refugees who had already undergone the procedure were often forced to wait in the transit zone until they were brought to the Hessian refugee reception center in Schwalbach. In 1982, the FSD complained about backlogs and “inacceptable conditions”<sup>48</sup> in the transit area. Most persons could leave the transit zone after one to ten days, but in some extreme cases they stayed for weeks.<sup>49</sup> The airport operator installed a small room with 35 emergency beds within the transit zone. After being reduced in size in 1983, when refugee numbers had seemed to trend downwards, the 24m<sup>2</sup> room with ten bunk beds soon became overcrowded. An additional waiting area for refugees created in the transit zone in 1987 also failed to offer enough beds to keep asylum seekers from spending the nights on seats and floors. During their time in transit, the refugees were, as the FSD reported, “completely dependent on the FSD, since they were not allowed to leave the transit area and, for example, relatives of the newly arrived were not allowed to enter the transit area.”<sup>50</sup> The social workers provided primary care in the form of blankets, food, clothing and shoe donations, hygiene products, toys, etc. If need be, they also escorted refugees from the transit area to the airport clinic. And they helped retrieve lost luggage, since many items – unlike their owners who had quit their journey in transit – traveled on to the destination airport.

**Figure 4: Numbers based on lists prepared by Airport Social Services. From 1983 to 1988, while asylum application numbers in the whole Bonn Republic quintupled, cases at Frankfurt Airport rose by thirty times. Graph by the author.**

47 “Wenig Chancen für Lager auf Rhein-Main,” *Frankfurter Neue Presse*, July 9, 1980; “Sammel-lager am Flughafen nicht mehr aktuell?” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, July 14, 1980, ISF S3/V 22.970.

48 FSD annual report 1982, p. 2, CArchF 5120-01.

49 In 1987, the average length of stay of applicants amounted to four days according to the BGS. Ministry of Interior, internal letter, June 2, 1987, BArch B 106 207414.

50 FSD annual report 1987, p. 34, Evangelischer Regionalverband Frankfurt und Offenbach Archiv [henceforward ERFOArch], Berichte Flughafensozialdienst.

Sooner or later, most of the asylum seekers received permission to enter the country. The transit zone did not yet have the quality it acquired in 1993, when the whole asylum procedure had to be completed while the applicant stayed in the transit zone (*Flughafenverfahren*). However, for asylum seekers in the 1980s, the transit zone was not a mere waiting room or way station. Rather, it was a closed border zone in which their status was undecided and they faced the real possibility of being turned away. This frontier character of the airport was enforced by the BGS and secured by the transit zone's spatial enclosure. Over the course of the 1980s, as the next section goes on to show, asylum seekers faced increasingly sophisticated bureaucratic procedures and tightening control while in transit. In other words, the transit zone became a local migration regime, a changing "field of action for institutional actors" and a space in which these actors, border guards and government authorities, regulated access and "categorized the (potential) migrants"<sup>51</sup> into admissible or rejectable migrants.

#### **IV. From transit to camp: the emergence of an airport migration regime in the 1980s**

Much to the chagrin of the Ministry of the Interior in Bonn and the state government of Hesse, the attempt to close the "Berlin hole" had increased the number of asylum cases through the "transit hole" at Frankfurt Airport. The migrants' strategy of disembarking during transit might appear as a clever trick or a legal loophole, but it was in fact their international right. According to the 1951 UN Refugees Convention, no signatory state should reject asylum seekers on the grounds that they lacked visas or other documents. Although asking for asylum in transit was legal, the Bonn government did not consider the use of airport transit zones a legitimate access path to the basic right to asylum. "Manipulated routing,"<sup>52</sup> as they saw it, was an abuse that had to be stopped.

Their objection was based on the argument that too many applicants for asylum were not "real" refugees. Especially asylum seekers from Turkey fell under suspicion of seeking to immigrate "with no reasons eligible for asylum."<sup>53</sup> This was a key argument in the so-called asylum debate (*Asyldebatte*) that grew ever more heated and polemical in the West German public since the mid-1980s. Not only conservatives or right-wingers but people from all sides

51 Jochen Oltmer, "Einführung," in *Migrationsregime vor Ort und lokales Aushandeln von Migration*, ed. Jochen Oltmer (Wiesbaden, 2018), 6.

52 Ministry of Interior, internal letter, January 31, 1985, BArch B 106 90204.

53 Minister of Social Affairs Hesse to the Minister-President of Hesse, September 24, 1987, HHStAW 505 6008.

of the political spectrum held the view that Article 16 of the West German Constitution, which granted everybody the right to ask for asylum in the FRG, and the protection clauses of the Geneva Refugee Convention were being abused by “economic refugees” who were not fleeing from persecution, but aspiring to better life opportunities in Europe’s rich welfare states.<sup>54</sup> Pejorative terms like *Scheinasylant*<sup>55</sup> (“bogus asylum-seeker”) or *Asylmissbrauch* (“asylum abuse”) became widespread and put asylum seekers under general suspicion.<sup>56</sup> Politicians and popular media fed a widespread “asylum angst” by invoking threatening images of a “flood of asylum seekers.”<sup>57</sup> “Asylantenschwemme auf Rhein-Main,”<sup>58</sup> a headline in the tabloid *BILD* warned with regard to asylum seekers at the airport. Negative feelings towards refugees also surfaced at the airport. Sometimes the social workers of the FSD met with pejorative remarks from airport personnel or travelers who felt repelled by the image of food leftovers, piles of blankets, and “the hardly decorative human caravan”<sup>59</sup> moving down the corridors, as one FSD member put it. “Our prestige at the airport has suffered due to our unpopular commitment to the refugees,”<sup>60</sup> the board of the FSD noted regretfully in 1985. The FSD also frequently complained about some of the border police staff acting hostile. In 1984, for instance, the FSD had addressed the Federal Ministry of the Interior through the representative of UNHCR Germany: A poster of UNHCR with the slogan “Refugee go home – he would if he could” hanging in the BGS office had been scribbled over by some officers and changed into “he (never) would (even) if he could.”<sup>61</sup>

The airport and airborne migration in general became key targets in the effort to contain asylum migration. New transit visa requirements were introduced in 1987. Chancellor Helmut Kohl, in order to stress his government’s decisive stance against alleged asylum abuse, explained that the new regulations targeted passengers from “certain problem states,”<sup>62</sup> among them Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Ghana, Iran, Lebanon, and Sri Lanka. Two years later, his government also lifted the transit privilege for Turkish citizens. Political decision makers also increased pressure on airlines. The minister of finance in Hesse, Manfred Kanther, asked the airport operator whether airlines could not be “packed from an economic angle” by exposing them to “delays, controls, and costs as a result of the transportation of asylum seekers.”<sup>63</sup> The airport operator, who had

54 This was a generalization that did not take into account that the motives of migrants were often multifaceted, blurring the border between being a refugee or an immigrant. After the FRG had stopped labor immigration in 1973, many people, e.g. the relatives of “guest workers” in Germany indeed used the asylum system a back door to immigration. See, Bade, *Migration*, 268.

55 Quote from Carl-Dieter Spranger, member of the CDU/CSU fraction in parliament: German Bundestag, Plenarprotokoll 8/228, July 2, 1980, 18548.

56 On the “asylum debate” in general see, Herbert, *Ausländerpolitik*, 265–273.

57 Again, quote by Carl-Dieter Spranger, German Bundestag, Plenarprotokoll 8/228, July 2, 1980, 18548.

58 “Asylantenschwemme auf Rhein-Main”, *BILD*, January 30, 1989, ISF S3/V 22.970.

59 FSD annual report 1987, pp. 1, 7, ERFOArch Berichte Flughafensozialdienst.

60 Board meeting of the church services at the airport, March 18, 1985, ERFOArch ERV01/17.

61 UNHCR Germany to the Ministry of Interior, October 4, 1984; Ministry of Interior, internal report, November 30, 1984, BArch B 106 207414.

62 *CDU-Informationsdienst Union in Deutschland* 25/86, Sonderbeilage Nordrhein-Westfalen, September 4, 1986, 6.

63 Manfred Kanther, personal letter to Manfred Schölch, December 21, 1987, Fra-port Archiv VG05-1910.



demanding political action on the “Asylantenproblematik”<sup>64</sup> in the first place, hesitated; to punish airlines through generic controls at Frankfurt (and thus through delays) contradicted international regulations. Eventually, the FRG government embarked on the strategy of holding airlines financially and practically responsible for returning rejected persons to their country of origin. All these measures combined aimed at limiting air access to the asylum system without formally withdrawing from the Refugee Convention and violating the constitutional right to asylum. What was portrayed as a strategy aimed at individuals using the asylum system as a backdoor to immigration was purposely designed to affect everyone without a visa, including potentially persecuted persons.

This prevention strategy was one element of the air migration regime that took shape in the 1980s. As asylum seekers continued to arrive at the airport, another element was the local control of asylum seekers arriving in the transit zone. Not everyone who applied for asylum at the airport was allowed to enter the country in order to wait for a decision on his or her asylum procedure. Since the airport was a state border, asylum seekers could be rejected directly, either for having failed, in the eyes of the border guards, to articulate their request for asylum and the claim that they were persecuted, or because they came from a country that was excluded from the right to asylum. An amendment to the Asylum Procedure Act of 1987 made it easier for the BGS and the Federal Ministry of the Interior to reject asylum seekers on these grounds. Up until then, rejections had only been legal if the asylum seeker was proven to have already been granted protection elsewhere. The new law ruled more generally that a refugee could be denied entry if he or she had been safe from political persecution elsewhere.<sup>65</sup> This allowed the Ministry of the Interior to declare certain countries as safe and thus to exclude whole groups from the right to asylum, such as Afghans who had traveled to Germany from Pakistan or India, or Ethiopians who came from Sudan.

64 Board member Airport Rhine/Main AG to Manfred Kanther, January 5, 1988, Fraport Archiv VG05-1910.

65 *Bundesgesetzblatt* Teil I, Nr. 3 1987, 89.

66 Oltmer, *Migrationsregime*, 4.

The BGS and the Ministry of the Interior were not the only actors shaping migration control on the ground. Using migration historian Jochen Oltmer’s terminology, one could say that they were the leading actors of the local migration regime, while others, in particular the airport social services, influenced or even subverted the regime.<sup>66</sup> Offering its services on behalf of the churches, the FSD

remained independent of the state even though the Hessian Ministry of Social Affairs began reimbursing the FSD for its basic expenses for refugees in April 1985.<sup>67</sup> This independent position gave the FSD room for maneuver that reached beyond its social work. During the 1980s many church members and leftist groups opposed the government's restrictive asylum policy.<sup>68</sup> The FSD explicitly used "its presence in transit" to assume "a controlling role vis-à-vis the federal border guard."<sup>69</sup> Its members developed a set of strategies in order to proactively facilitate refugees' admission. They handed out information sheets in different languages that informed the refugees about the asylum procedures.<sup>70</sup> In 1984, the BGS observed that members of the FSD frequently used their access pass to the transit area to approach passengers who looked like potential asylum seekers and gave them advice. On a regular basis, the FSD called in lawyers whom they could bring into the transit area with their staff passes. Sometimes lawyers would even issue powers of attorney that enabled the social workers to present the asylum application on behalf of the refugee.<sup>71</sup> When more refugees were rejected at the airport in 1987, based on the amended Asylum Procedure Act, the FSD documented these cases and brought them to public attention.<sup>72</sup> In all this, the FSD was not acting alone, but as part of a network of pro-immigration and human rights groups.

The two leading figures behind the foundation of PRO ASYL in Frankfurt in 1986, which to this day remains one of Germany's most influential pro-refugee organizations, were members in the Catholic and Protestant churches of Hesse. One of them, Herbert Leuninger, was the spokesperson on migration within the Catholic Diocese of Limburg which held one of the chairs on the board supervising the FSD. The head of the FSD, Birgit Plank, was a member of Amnesty International and in contact with the head of UNHCR Germany who, on some occasions, such as the poster incident, supported the FSD by exerting pressure on the German government.<sup>73</sup>

Whereas the BGS and the Ministry of the Interior appreciated the FSD's social work, its systematic interventionism generated conflicts. Police officers complained about the "aggressiveness of the socially engaged persons" and about being under the "impression of complete surveillance"<sup>74</sup> by the FSD and its lawyers. In the eyes of the BGS, the FSD was "constantly making broad-brush, unfounded, unqualified and emotionally charged accusations against the border guard service."<sup>75</sup> Several airlines also united in protest against

67 Chaplain Gerhard Hoffmann, template for board meeting, January 25, 1989, ERFOArch ERV01/17.

68 Herbert, *Ausländerpolitik*, 267.

69 Gundula Schmidt, "Der Frankfurter Flughafen Sozialdienst. Ein Erfahrungsbericht," *Theologia Practica* 24/2 (1989): 85-88.

70 FSD annual report 1986, pp. 7-9, 18, CArchF 5120-01; FSD annual report 1987, p. 11, ERFOArch Berichte Flughafensozialdienst.

71 BGS airport office to BGS directorate Koblenz, November 28, 1984. BArch B 106 207414.

72 BGS Frankfurt to BGS directorate Koblenz, June 10, 1987. BArch B 106 207414.

73 FSD annual report 1982, pp. 2, 5, CArchF 5120-01; FSD Annual Report 1987, p. 38, ERFOArch Berichte Flughafensozialdienst

74 BGS airport office to BGS directorate Koblenz, November 28, 1984. BArch B 106 207414.

75 BGS airport office to Ministry of Interior, October 29, 1984, BArch B 106 207414.



the FSD after its members had entered some of their aircraft, a practice that not only disrupted their customer operations, but also brought them into potential trouble if an insufficiently documented person was on board. They opposed the “commitment of the local church social service,” arguing that it went “far beyond the usual” and was one reason why “Frankfurt has become an El Dorado for asylum seekers.”<sup>76</sup>

A leftist German college student who had learned about the FSD’s support for refugees “through reports in the press, television and specialist literature” decided in 1988 to apply for an internship with the FSD. He believed that it was the right place to fight growing anti-asylum sentiments and the asylum policy of the government in Bonn: “The FSD, I assumed, is at the outermost frontline in the fight for the right of asylum anchored in the German constitution.”<sup>77</sup> Indeed, all actors involved saw the airport as a front line of the “asylum debate.” However, they considered themselves to be on very different fronts. The FSD and its supporters fought against what they saw as the subversion of the constitutional right to asylum. In a radio interview, Herbert Leuninger and Birgit Plank explained that the basic right to asylum was in acute danger at the airport border.<sup>78</sup> The BGS and the federal ministry of interior, on the other hand, led a “fight against illegal entry by air.”<sup>79</sup> At some point, the BGS even accused the FSD of “increasingly acting in the lead-up to organized illegal entry” by “making massive efforts to enable the entry of alleged asylum seekers.”<sup>80</sup>

76 Airline Operators Committee Frankfurt Airport to Airport Rhine/Main AG, January 21, 1985, BArch B 106 207414.

77 FSD Annual Report 1988, p. 7, CArchF 5120-01.

78 Transcript from radio talk show, February 16, 1987, BArch B 106 207414.

79 BGS airport office to Minister of Interior, October 29, 1984, BArch B 106 207414.

80 BGS airport office to Minister of Interior, October 22, 1984; BGS airport office to BGS directorate Koblenz, November 28, 1984, BArch B 106 207414.

The officers were deeply bothered by the situation in the transit zone because it was a border that they could not control completely and in which the refugees could move freely and interact with the FSD and its helpers. As the BGS complained in 1986/87, there existed neither patrol controls in the transit area nor surveillance of the asylum seekers' accommodations. Therefore, the exchange of advice and information among asylum seekers and with the FSD went widely unchallenged. Worse still, from the BGS's standpoint, the asylum seekers were able to secretly dispose of their tickets and passports in transit and wait several hours before presenting themselves to the BGS. This strategy made it difficult for the BGS to identify the asylum seekers' country of origin and the flight they had boarded. These were crucial items of information needed for a possible rejection and for forcing the airlines to return the passenger. The fear that human smuggling could flourish in the transit zone also troubled the BGS. Indeed, transit was not only an opportunity for refugees and migrants but also for human smugglers. The BGS had caught several prospective asylum seekers using the letter box in the transit zone to send their false or manipulated travel documents and return tickets to their agents, who could then use them for another client. On several occasions, smugglers even accompanied their clients to Frankfurt. They then separated in the transit zone, where the client asked for asylum and the helper took back the documents and left.<sup>81</sup> As the director of the Federal Border Guard (BGS) in Koblenz explained to the Ministry of the Interior, "the transit zone itself [...] would remain an insecure factor even if it were to be patrolled sporadically, because transit travelers can abuse a certain freedom of movement at any time during their stopover."<sup>82</sup> When in 1988 the transit room was so overcrowded that the authorities again considered moving all refugees to a separate building, the BGS was relieved since "the mixing of applicants for asylum and passengers made their work more difficult."<sup>83</sup>

In the late 1980s, asylum applications at Frankfurt airport rose drastically from 4,723 in 1986 to 18,731 in 1988. The consequence was a serious backlog of asylum seekers in the transit area, where more people than usual had to sleep on the floors and benches in the passenger areas and existing sanitary facilities did not suffice. German government officials, the BGS, the airport operator as well as the churches and the FSD all spoke of an "unbearable situation for everybody involved."<sup>84</sup> The press reported on "chaos in the transit area," the transit area "is intended to serve the stay of air travelers and not asy-

**Figure 5: Images from press coverage of the refugee management in the transit zone: the FSD distributing food to refugees from Sri Lanka, while travelers in the back line up for boarding (A); the FSD transit office (B); refugee children in the transit bedroom (C).** Source: *Frankfurter Neue Presse*, April 29, 1986; *Sonntag* 40, 1987. Photos: KNA.

81 BGS Frankfurt to BGS directorate Koblenz, December 23, 1986, BArch B 106 207414.

82 BGS directorate Koblenz to Minister of Interior, November 28, 1986, BArch B 106 207414.

83 "Eigenes Gebäude für Asylbewerber," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, June 28, 1988, ISF S3/V 22.970.

84 Press release, November 3, 1988, Fraport Archiv Pressemitteilungen 1979-1988; Chaplain Gerhard Hoffmann, template for board meeting, January 25, 1989, ERFOArch ERV01/17.

lum seekers,” explained a politician from the Liberal Party (FDP) in a newspaper article.<sup>85</sup> Beginning in November 1988, all arriving asylum seekers were moved from the general transit zone to a separate transit building, C 183, a converted warehouse on the edge of the airfield housing a large dormitory and offices of the border police.

Whether the new building really facilitated a “more humane treatment” and a “shortened stay at the airport,”<sup>86</sup> as the airport operator claimed, seems questionable after reading the FSD’s reports about the conditions in Transit C 183. For the BGS and the Ministry of Interior, the new space was not a temporary solution. On the contrary, they appreciated the arrangement as it allowed for enhanced control and modifications of the procedure. The entrances and exits of the building were tightly controlled. The building could only be entered through a kind of double-door system that separated newly arriving asylum seekers from the already registered refugees; the BGS aimed to prevent any exchange of information between the two groups. Refugees were cut off from the public transit zone and other parts of the airport. They had to stay in the building until their status had been decided. This exceptional, almost detention-like facility remained in place even after refugee numbers began to fall significantly in 1990.

85 “Unerträgliche Zustände,” *FAZ*, April 14, 1988; “Chaos im Transitbereich. FDP kritisiert die Asylbewerber-Praxis auf dem Flughafen,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, April 15, 1988, ISF S3/V 22.970.

86 Board member of Airport Rhine/Main AG to Manfred Kanther, January 5, 1988, Fraport Archiv VG05-1910.

87 FSD annual report 1987, p. 7, ERFOArch Berichte Flughafensozialdienst.

88 Chaplain Gerhard Hoffmann, template for board meeting, January 25, 1989, ERFOArch ERV01/17.

89 FSD annual report 1986, pp. 7-9, 18, CArchF 5120-01.

The FSD, which constantly feared that its refugee work could be terminated due to the constant tensions with the BGS and the government, faced a dilemma. If they wanted to continue their “protective function”<sup>87</sup> for the refugees, they had to get permanent access to the new building, and the only way to achieve this was to continue providing primary care for the refugees.<sup>88</sup> By doing so, however, the FSD members felt their organization would change from a largely external (and oppositional), ambulant service into an integral part of the institutionalized, separated migration regime at the airport. As one member of the FSD noted, it meant the end of “outreach street work” in the transit zone and the beginning of “welfare work in a closed institution.”<sup>89</sup>

To policy makers this closed institution seemed so convenient that they even suggested holding not only the initial hearing, but the whole asylum procedure in the building, so that unsuccessful asylum seekers would never get to enter the country in the first place. To this end, Federal Minister of the Interior Wolfgang Schäuble, in cooperation with the minister of transport, the Federal Office for

Migration and Refugees (BAFl), the BGS, and authorities in Hesse aimed at setting up a branch office of the BAFl at the airport. This way, the government officials reasoned, the “flood of asylum seekers through the airport” could be “prefiltered” and “many futile applications could be swiftly decided.”<sup>90</sup> In June 1989 – years before the introduction of the 1993 Airport Asylum Procedure – the Interior Ministers’ Conference decided to test such an in-situ-procedure for Turkish asylum seekers arriving at Frankfurt airport; the implementation of the test run failed only because the airport operator, who was not fond of the plan, insisted that the BAFl would have to pay rent for the offices.<sup>91</sup> Federal and state authorities kept pressing for an agreement with the airport operator and hoped to push through their plan. However, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and declining numbers of asylum cases at the airport, the project lost its urgency. This changed in fall 1992, however, when, under the impact of the nationwide asylum campaign and strong pressure from the Hessian state government, the introduction of a special asylum procedure at the airport was put back onto the agenda and eventually became a reality.<sup>92</sup>

## V. Conclusion

Every decade in postwar German migration history witnessed airborne migration. This also means that already in its early second phase after the Second World War, the history of civil aviation was connected to refugee history.<sup>93</sup> Involving groups as disparate as Jewish displaced persons, German refugees, resettlers from the Eastern bloc, and asylum seekers from the Global South and the Middle East, migration by airplane took place against the background of changing migration policies and engendered very different experiences. Since the sections in this article have focused on the different groups as they first appeared at airports in Germany over the decades, the development described here might seem like a linear process, which in fact it was not: German resettlers continued to transit via the airport at a time when asylum seekers were held back in the transit zone, and refugees today keep being airlifted to Germany as part of humanitarian resettlement schemes faintly reminiscent of the schemes used for Jewish DPs in the late 1940s. Nevertheless, we can identify certain trends and turning points.

One significant trend was the discovery and use of the humanitarian potential of airplanes by relief organizations and political administrations in the 1940s. The capacity of airplanes to provide

90 Ministry of Traffic, minutes on meeting with other federal and Hesse ministries and the BGS, November 20, 1989, BAArch B 108 98793.

91 Ministry of Interior to other federal and Hesse ministers, December 1, 1989, BAArch B 108 98793.

92 Ministry of Social Affairs Hesse, internal note, October 13, 1992, HHStAW 505 6013.

93 A growing number of historians have recently begun to take fresh looks at the history of aviation. Going beyond technical developments and narratives of progress, some historians focused on social history to question the general view that civil aviation, until the 1970s, remained an exclusive means of travel for elites, businesspeople, and middle to upper classes. See Max Hirsh, *Airport Urbanism. Infrastructure and Mobility in Asia* (London, 2016); Anke Ortlepp, *Jim Crow Terminals. The Desegregation of American Airports* (Georgia, 2017).

rapid relocation, especially of vulnerable groups, and to fly over otherwise obstructed borders was used by organizers of airlifts. From the late 1940s to 1960s, generally speaking, the perspective on airborne migration and its management in West Germany was more about support and relief than matters of control and restriction, mainly because the refugee groups were either emigrants or already accepted as legal immigrants prior to their arrival. As regards the individual migration of asylum seekers, one might also identify a specific humanitarian potential of air routes: taking the plane allowed undocumented refugees to avoid multiple border and document checks and to land directly in a country that adhered to the Refugee Convention and might accept them without a visa or passport. In the 1980s, however, this potential was increasingly sidelined by the government's strategies to curb air access to asylum. Another trend, which the article has traced over time, was the steady development of a humanitarian infrastructure at the airport. This humanitarianism evolved from mere care work into an oppositional force that defended airborne asylum migration against the tightening migration regime.

The 1980s were a turning point. Frankfurt's Rhine-Main Airport was perceived as a frontline in the struggle against climbing asylum numbers and "asylum abuse." Not only quantitatively but also in terms of quality, the airport seemed like a frontline. Delineating a direct border with the world in the middle of Germany, the airport transit zone seemed much more closely connected to the Global South or the Middle East than, say, Germany's land borders with France or Italy. Tightened policies on air migration were accompanied by increasingly strict management on the ground, including more frequent rejections and the building of a closed facility for asylum seekers in 1988 – a crucial step towards the introduction of the Airport Asylum Procedure. As this article has sought to demonstrate, the 1993 Airport Asylum Procedure was not a top-down innovation. Rather, it arose from earlier experiences with airborne migration and local conflicts at Frankfurt airport.

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## LET'S TALK DATA, BIAS, AND MENSTRUAL CRAMPS: VOICING GERWOMANNESS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND TODAY

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An increasing amount of research in the humanities involves analyzing machine-readable data with computer software. The creation of born digitals such as social media, digital art, or e-books as well as the digitization of maps, literary works, images, government census data or historical newspapers allows scholars to study digital representations of cultural heritage data at scale and to combine close and distant, macro- and microscopic, quantitative and qualitative approaches. My PhD project “Text-Mining America’s German-Language Newspapers, 1830-1914: Processing Ger(wo)manness” (Working Title) connects methods from text mining, machine learning, network analysis, and close reading in a German-American studies context. In my project, I aim to examine reprinting practices in German-language newspapers in the United States by analyzing transnational and transcultural text production and circulation. The nineteenth century was marked by scissors-and-paste journalism, that is, editors and journalists (re-) produced material from other venues, often without attribution to the original authors or sources.<sup>1</sup> What kind of texts were reprinted in the German immigrant papers across states and decades? How did information of a political, scientific, economic, literary or religious nature circulate in the public sphere? To answer these questions, I develop and use a statistical language model to identify and cluster texts that were printed several times in the same and different newspapers. Due to the abundance and diversity of reprinted texts, or unstructured data, machine learning techniques are applied to classify texts into genres such as, for instance, hard news, ads, poems or lists. This approach has theoretical and pragmatic reasons: first, computationally classifying texts seeks to better understand the nature and role of genres, their similarities and anomalies, and how they relate to migrant groups that differ in sex, gender, age, or class. Second, the objective is to create an archive of reprinted texts and make it available for further research in the field.

This article, however, is not about “measuring” text similarity in order to find these reprinted texts, nor about explaining artificial

1 My PhD project developed out of a larger international Digital Humanities research project, which brought together a research team of scholars from seven countries in Europe and the Americas to study structural, textual, and conceptual network systems of digitized historical newspaper collections. See Oceanic Exchanges Project Team, *Oceanic Exchanges: Tracing Global Information Networks In Historical Newspaper Repositories, 1840-1914* (2017), DOI 10.17605/OSF.IO/WA94S.



intelligence – trying to teach the properties of genres to the computer – to automatically classify texts into newspaper genres.<sup>2</sup> Instead, this article is a data feminist critique of the nineteenth-century German-language press in the United States and prioritizes that which has been systematically neglected or remained hidden: migrant women’s lives and their experiences. Since the nineteenth century, scholars have emphasized the role of the immigrant newspaper as the voice and mirror of German ethnic life while predominantly focusing on the HIStories of the German-language press. Did women, their perspectives, concerns, issues or problems never figure in the pages of the immigrant newspapers? Writing HIStories may be valid when we examine the editors, but it appears to be unjustified when we dig into the newspapers’ textual realm. This article takes up the challenge of understanding feminism as a political as well as a methodological question by quantitatively and qualitatively uncovering inequalities in a structured manner in order to determine decision-making processes and to (re-)create datasets of minoritized groups.

Researchers in data science use scientific methods, processes, algorithms and systems to extract knowledge and insights from many structured and unstructured data. As data scientists Catherine D’Ignazio and Lauren F. Klein illustrate in *Data Feminism*, “[m]any people think of data as numbers alone, but data can also consist of words or stories, colors or sounds, or any type of information that is systematically collected, organized, and analyzed. The term science in data science simply implies a commitment to systematic methods of observation and experiment.”<sup>3</sup> Structured data is usually held in a database in which all values have identifiers and clear relations. They resemble clearly defined categories, such as, for instance, “sex: female” and “age: 30.” Since such data is highly organized and formatted, it is easily searchable in relational databases. However, every categorization is an act of interpretation and subject to change as the category “gender” nowadays most clearly illustrates. Plain text can be seen as an example of unstructured data because the boundaries of individual items, the relations between them, and their meaning, are mostly implicit. Unstructured data is information that either does not have a predefined data model or is not organized in a predefined manner. Both types of data – structured and unstructured – are not free from bias because “data are never neutral; they are always the biased output of unequal social, historical, and economic conditions.”<sup>4</sup> From historical case studies about women as

2 My thesis will consist of two parts: the first will describe the data and computational models developed and used for this research of computationally detecting and clustering text reuse and classifying genres. The second part will deal with specific viral events to show how sexist, racist, and nationalistic ideas spread across states and decades.

3 Catherine D’Ignazio and Lauren F. Klein, *Data Feminism* (Cambridge, 2020), 14.

4 D’Ignazio and Klein, 39.

computers to the latest Amazon scandals regarding racist AI models, *Data Feminism* offers a bracing and pithy set of intersectional feminist provocations around the political aesthetic of data science to distill and dismantle the race/class/sex and other normative parameters of data discourses. The authors' work raises attention to increase research foci on data ethics based on the observation that data reflects the same old oppression. Data can help communicate intersectional feminism as diverse projects which name, challenge and change forces of oppression and are not only concerned with women and gender, but also with questions of power.

Bias can be introduced by the source material, the collecting of the source material and, additionally, by methods of analysis. In her work, *Scholarship in the Digital Age*, information scientist Christine Borgmann emphasizes that the potential of using data for humanistic inquiry is not only a technical, but especially a theoretical, methodological and a social issue.<sup>5</sup> What scholars produce and label as bias is predominantly shaped by their own mental machinery and less by the cost of information or limited computing power. Since bias is a component of the human thought process, data collected from humans therefore inherently reflects that bias. Who gets to be remembered and historicized by ways of (digital) record creation and analysis? Who is forgotten or silenced in history by way of omission or even destruction of records?<sup>6</sup> The first section of this article lays out the opportunities presented by working with a digitized edition of historical newspapers, describes some challenges of bias from data to analysis as well as limitations of keyword searching the (digital) archive. The second part briefly describes the objective of creating a digitized archive of reprinted texts to demonstrate that studying what people shared across states and decades can be seen as focusing on diverse migrant groups. Simultaneously, this part shows that counting is not enough to both unveil normative forces and recover women's concerns. The article does not describe the algorithmic procedures and models in detail, but rather provides a selective methodological and, thus, theoretical zooming in and out of my project using the example of the genre of advertisements. In order to foreground women's representations in the immigrant newspaper and to expose the biases embedded in the GerMANness of earlier accounts, the third part is framed around a case study of GerWOMANness, a viral event about menstrual cramps, female weakness, and drug abuse. I use GerWOMANness as a category to describe the collection of reprinted texts for, by, and

5 Christine Borgmann, *Scholarship in the Digital Age: Information, Infrastructure, and the Internet* (Cambridge and London, 2010).

6 See Sam Winn, "The Hubris of Neutrality in Archives," *On Archivy* (Blog), April 24, 2017, <https://medium.com/on-archivy/the-hubris-of-neutrality-in-archives-8df6b523fe9f>. Issues of representation and power are fundamentally rooted in archival work.

7 The only study pertaining to multiple states to date is Christopher Dolmetsch, "Locations of German Language Newspaper and Periodical Printing in the United States: 1732-1976," *Monatshfte* 68:2 (1976): 188-195, which uses the statistical material in Karl John Richard Arndt and May E. Olson, *German-American Newspapers and Periodicals, 1732-1955* (Heidelberg, 1961) to create maps of the periodicals' geographic distribution as comparative material about German settlement to the maps provided by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

8 See, for instance, (1) Hermann Boeschstein, "Zum Studium der deutschen Zeitungen in Amerika," *Monatshfte für Deutschen Unterricht* 26:4 (1934): 103-08. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/30168861](http://www.jstor.org/stable/30168861). Accessed January 13, 2019; Carl Wittke, *The German-Language Press in America* (Lexington, 1957); James M. Bergquist, "The German-American Press," in *The Ethnic Press in the United States: A Historical Analysis and Handbook*, ed. Sally M. Miller (Westport, 1987), 131-160; Elliott Shore et al. *The German-American Radical Press* (Chicago, 1992); (2) Steven Rowan, "The German press in St. Louis and Missouri in the Nineteenth Century: The establishment of a tradition," *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 99:3 (2005): 459-467; Frank Boles, "Michigan Newspapers: A Two-Hundred-Year Review," *Michigan Historical Review* 36:1 (2010): 31-69; Kathleen Condray, "Arkansas's Bloody German-Language Newspaper War of 1892," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 74:4 (2015): 327-51; (3) Henry John Groen, "A Note on the German-American Newspapers of Cincinnati

about women from different genres. This article seeks to illustrate how virality and genre through close and distant reading can tell us more about collective experiences of women as well as gender roles, stereotypes, and sexism.

### I. Naming and challenging GerMANness: What do data say about inequality?

German-language newspapers in the United States flourished during the era of nineteenth-century transatlantic mass migration. These papers became the most widely read and influential non-English newspapers in the United States and, by disseminating local, national, and transnational news and information, helped immigrants both to assimilate into the new environment and to maintain ties with their country of origin. In this sense, they functioned as powerful tools for retaining language and preserving culture while influencing public opinion and setting the agenda for what (story) became news and how it was constructed (discourse). So far, research on the German-language press in the United States can be summarized as relatively outdated and limited not necessarily in terms of scope, but in terms of the connections between the individual newspapers, the diversity of genres and their relation to migrant groups that differ in sex, gender, class or age.<sup>7</sup> The majority of studies represent overwhelmingly white and male migration experiences by placing emphasis on the editors and writers and their influence on U.S. politics and economy. Research on the topic (1) was mostly published in the twentieth century, (2) focuses on individual newspapers, or (3) covers periods before the 1860s or towards the beginning of the 1900s.<sup>8</sup> Women and their issues seem to occupy comparatively little space in newspapers, or at least in the histories of these newspapers.<sup>9</sup>

As an object of analysis, media can become a powerful instrument for highlighting the inequalities in the balance of power that have historically characterized the relationships between women and men. According to historian Karen Offen, the history of feminism is political history, more specifically, it is "a more expansive history of politics that incorporates women and analyzes gender politics."<sup>10</sup> Yet, the task of recovering women's voices is complicated by normative forces that shape our access to women's histories since archives are built upon and reflect systems of imperial and patriarchal power. "Working with data from a feminist perspective requires knowing

and acknowledging this history. (...) Data are part of the problem, to be sure. But they are also part of the solution.”<sup>11</sup> Does the digital newspaper archive allow scholars access to and analysis of different stories?<sup>12</sup> How do we find textual evidence, especially since the practice of searching for information in both digital and physical archives remains a mostly “undertheorized” practice in the humanities.<sup>13</sup> Where are the women in the newspapers? They are there and you do not really have to dig very deeply. How are they represented as writers, readers, users, and news themselves? Answering these questions is a rather cumbersome task. This article is both descriptive and theoretical, starting with a keyword search in a digital archive to describe selection options and increase scholarly awareness of representational biases introduced by the labor “behind the archive.” This step is essential for a data ethical framework because documenting and reflecting on these decisions lead to clarity and to defining what we will or will not do, can and cannot do. This article therefore illustrates how we can use data as “a check-in, (...), a resource to begin and continue dialogue”<sup>14</sup> in gender studies and beyond.

Searching in a physical or a digital newspaper archive for “data” is like going on a treasure hunt. Both “searches” depend on the prior knowledge of the scholar, who decides which keywords to enter as well as that of the (digital) archivist, who collected and structured the material and entered information about the source – structured data – into the database. Even though the scholar’s as well as the archivist’s labor play a role in the analogue and the digital archive, the digitized repositories open up a different perspective on representation, comparison, and search methods. A digital newspaper archive such as *Chronicling America* brings together sources from different decades (1777-1963), places (52 states), ethnicities (33) and languages (22), and offers keyword searches of the textual content

before 1860,” *Monatshefte für deutschen Unterricht* (1945): 67-71; Peter Conolly-Smith, *Translating America: An Immigrant Press Visualizes American Popular Culture, 1895-1918* (Washington, 2004); Daniel Stein, “Transatlantic Politics as Serial Networks in the German-American Mystery Novel, 1850-1855,” in *Traveling Traditions: Nineteenth-Century Cultural Concepts and Transatlantic Intellectual Networks*, ed. Erik Redling (Berlin, 2016), 247-265.

9 There are few works on the role of women in German-language newspapers in the United States, even though there were papers published by women such as, for instance, *Deutsche Frauen Zeitung* (starting 1851) by Mathilde Franziska Anneke. “No copies of *Deutsche Frauen Zeitung* are known to exist so we cannot know what its substance was. But our records of Frau Anneke document her understanding of women’s unique collective situation and her desire for a genuine people’s movement in which women would be equal to men.” See Charles Cantrell, “Wisconsin’s First Newspaper ... by Women,” *Quixote* 8:3 (1974): 6.

10 Karen Offen, “The History of Feminism is Political History,” *Perspectives on History*, May 1, 2011.

11 D’Ignazio and Klein, 17.

12 For current projects working with digitized historic newspaper archives in Europe, see Clemens

Neudecker and Gregory Markus, eds., “Newspapers,” *Europeana Pro 16* (2020), <https://pro.europeana.eu/page/issue-16-newspapers>.

13 Ted Underwood, “Theorizing Research Practices We Forgot to Theorize Twenty Years Ago,” *Representations*, 127:1 (2014): 64-72.

14 M. Cifor et al., “Feminist Data Manifest-No,” 2019, <https://www.manifestno.com>.

15 *Chronicling America*, Library of Congress, accessed January 2, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>.

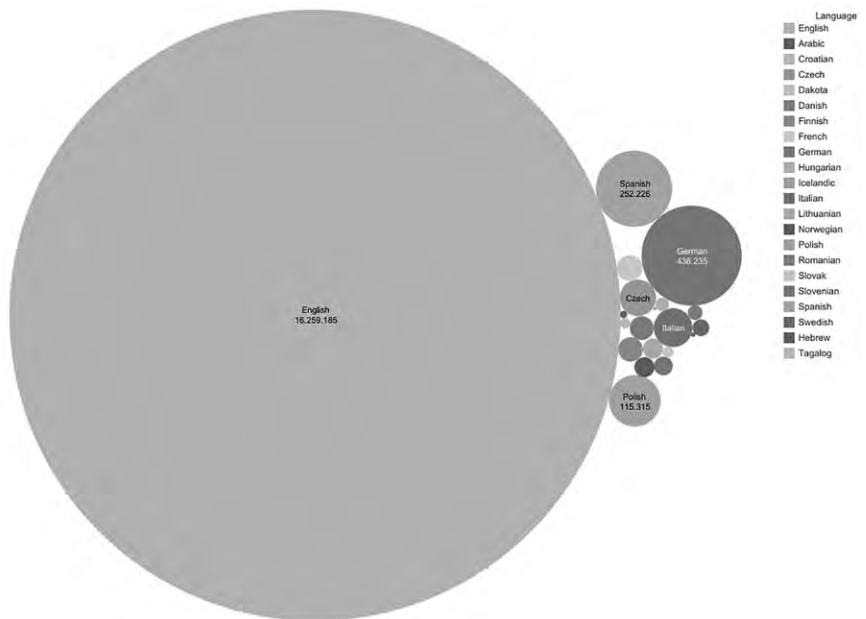
to produce one or more documents that contain those words or phrases.<sup>15</sup> Each hit corresponds to one newspaper page and typically you need to read a document to decide if it is relevant or not. Thereby, *Chronicling America* allows access to multiple digitized newspapers, that is, data (plain text as unstructured data) and metadata (date of publication, location or title). As literary scholar Ryan Cordell argues, the digitized “newspaper is not simply a surrogate for the material object, but instead constitutes a new edition of text with both new affordances – such as the ability to analyze patterns and text strings across the corpus – and limitations – such as leveling out of scale among objects that, in their printed editions, vary widely in size and format.”<sup>16</sup>

Even though using digital repositories sounds promising in terms of quantity, these new formats of nineteenth-century newspapers pose a number of additional questions related to biases ranging from investigation, analysis, and synthesis to the presentation of information in electronic form: Which methods have been used to convert the printed text into machine-encoded text? What is the quality of the data?<sup>17</sup> What has not been digitized? Which algorithms assist in extracting, processing, mining and presenting data in the digital collection? Who is represented in the data and the metadata? An ethical framework of research with digital collections refers to the process that scholars execute to decide on and document for the creation, curation and analysis of data. Even though data ethics builds on the foundation provided by computer and information ethics, it refines the approach by shifting the level of abstraction of ethical enquiries, from being information-centric to being data-centric. Information-centric approaches focus on what is being digitized and how we can search and analyze it. Data-centric approaches expand these objectives by examining who is – and who is not – represented in the corpus. Both approaches start with examining metadata to receive information about the corpus.

Different metadata such as “language” (categorical data which takes quantitative values with qualitative characteristics) and “page numbers” (numerical or quantitative data) can be used to gather information about the corpus by examining the relationship of different categories. As illustrated in figure 1, according to the metadata, the German-language newspapers make up the majority of non-English newspapers in *Chronicling America*. Earlier scholarship has already used numeric data such as sales and circulation figures to argue

16 Ryan Cordell, “Reprinting, Circulation, and the Network Author in Antebellum Newspapers,” *American Literary History*, 27:3 (2015): 417-445.

17 This step refers to Optical Character Recognition (OCR). OCR is a field of research in pattern recognition, artificial intelligence and computer vision. When records are digitized, scanning is only the first step. The software creates an image of the document, but that image, and the data that composes it, is neither editable nor searchable. OCR is a type of software that converts those scanned images into structured data that is extractable, editable and searchable. Thus, OCR involves two steps: converting print text into machine-encoded text as well as creating information about this data: metadata. In short, metadata is data about data. Many distinct types of metadata exist, including descriptive metadata, structural metadata, administrative metadata, reference metadata and statistical metadata.



that they were the most read and influential non-English newspapers. But influential for whom? Data are not just simple statements of fact. Means of visual representations, government census data or sales figures are prone to leaving out important context and meaning. In 1961, Karl J. R. Arndt and May E. Olsen published *German-American Newspapers and Periodicals 1732-1955* (1965), which is a detailed record of about five thousand newspapers and periodicals, with exact dates of changes and titles of names of editors and publishers, if possible.<sup>18</sup> This dataset provided a first conceptual framework across time and space and emphasized the value of rich statistical material. It encouraged scholarly investigation in the following decades. The majority of these studies, however, have only used this dataset and the rich archival material of newspapers (in non-digital form) for site-related and genealogical work. As historian Wolfgang Helbich wrote in 2009, “[l]arge segments of sources like German-American newspapers and other periodicals are almost terra incognita.”<sup>19</sup> While Arndt and Olson’s works provided metadata about the male-run newspaper business, *Chronicling America* allows the user to move beyond the socio-historical perspective of sales figures, individual newspapers’ publication periods or their editorship and into the newspapers’ textual realm. Although *Chronicling America* has transformed access to these newspapers, search

**Figure 1. Image of interactive visualization using metadata about “language” and “page numbers” of the corpus in *Chronicling America*. The visualization shows the distribution by language of newspaper pages published between 1690-1963. Data as of 09/12/2020.**

<sup>18</sup> Arndt and Olson.

<sup>19</sup> Wolfgang Helbich, “German Research on German Migration to the United States,” *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 54.3 (2009): 383-404.

and analysis within these big sets of structured and unstructured data still remain undertheorized.

As D'Ignazio and Klein have written, a "key way that power and privilege operate in the world today has to do with the word data itself."<sup>20</sup> Data is predominantly not seen as information, but rather as fact or evidence to serve a rhetorical purpose. Visual theorist Johanna Drucker has argued that the etymological root of the term data, "that which is given," does not adequately represent its meaning, and prefers to speak of "capta," which literally means "that which has been captured or gathered."<sup>21</sup> Every act of capturing data, both textual and numeric, is already oriented toward certain goals, performed with specific instruments and driven by a specific attention to a small part of what could have been captured, given different goals and instruments. To some degree, we can trace these processes by examining, for instance, the metadata of the corpus. Using a digital archive does not only imply the investigation of data but presupposes that we reflect on algorithmic performance as well. On the page "All Digitized Newspapers 1777-1963," *Chronicling America* allows users to select "language" and "ethnicity" in order to examine which newspapers the project has digitized and made available on the site: (1) if we choose "location: all states," "ethnicity: German," and "languages: all languages," we receive the following information: "59 newspapers filtered on German are available for viewing on this site."<sup>22</sup> (2) If we select "all states," "all ethnicities," and "languages: German," the returned results are 74 newspapers and (3) if we combine the two approaches by selecting "all states," "German," and "German," the result lists 59. Why do the first and the last selection option return the "same" result even though each of the three steps is different? While in general, algorithm refers to any special method of solving a certain kind of problem, in computer science it stands for a computable set of steps to achieve a desired result. The sequence of steps is based on performing decisions, which are dependent on order. The reason for (1) and (3) returning the same results even though we have three distinct selections is hierarchical organization of procedures in programs. The command does what it is documented to do, which is always prioritizing "ethnicity" when selecting several features. Moreover, there can be missing metadata in digital archives such as, for instance, information about the language of a newspaper title.<sup>23</sup> Since there is the potential of unreliable results due to missing or

20 D'Ignazio and Klein, 10.

21 Johanna Drucker, "Humanities Approaches to Graphical Display," *DHQ: Digital Humanities Quarterly* 5:1 (2011).

22 *Chronicling America*, accessed December 23, 2020.

23 *Chronicling America's* data and metadata can be accessed through the site's API. The Library of Congress also provides access to bulk data, which can be retrieved through web crawling tools.

incorrect data, the dataset for my project was preprocessed using a language classifier to extract only German-language texts.

Apart from examining the metadata, users can use full-text search by entering keywords or phrases and select some features (time frames, newspaper titles or languages), but no longer ethnicity. This shows a further example of hierarchical organization in *Chronicling America*. For the full-text search, the machine-readable text of the newspapers (OCR-derived, page-level text data is provided in both TXT and XML formats) is used. Additionally, users have the possibility to study the page images (PDF and JPG2). Even though researchers have the possibility to study several representations of the newspaper page, the first results, after entering a word or phrase, that the user sees are the digitized images, even though the latter is used for information retrieval. This prioritization can be seen as an act of manipulation because the image recalls memories of the user reading the paper in the physical archive. When keyword searching the archive, all representation options result from a specific data structure and offer both advantages and disadvantages. The image, for instance, can be very useful for a first analysis of word hits in documents and the location of their occurrences. If we select “language: German,” “time frame: 1830-1914” and “search term: *Frau*,” it returns 257,107 hits, where one hit refers to the number of newspaper pages, in which the word occurs at least once.<sup>24</sup>

As the red spots in figure 2 illustrate, the word does not occur once, but several times on one newspaper page. If I use the same filters, but enter *Mann*, it returns 298,547 hits. As regards hits, the search terms only have a difference of 13.88%. *Mutter* (142,839) to *Vater* (147,807) has a reduction of 0.82%. While the machine-readable textual depiction provides the “numbers” of occurrences (all documents), the digital images provide a first overview into the textual realm and where the terms are embedded in the newspaper page. This analysis shows that, as regards occurrences in the corpus and even the individual newspaper page, there is not a huge gap between the “binary” sexes and there seems to be quite a massive amount of evidence available to be studied.

In *History in the Age of Abundance?* the historian Ian Milligan has argued that we must be prepared to understand and evaluate the tools and platforms we use and adapt to a research environment

24 Currently, there are 436,235 newspaper pages from 1834 to 1954 according to the metadata “language: German.” See *Chronicling America*, accessed December 23, 2020.





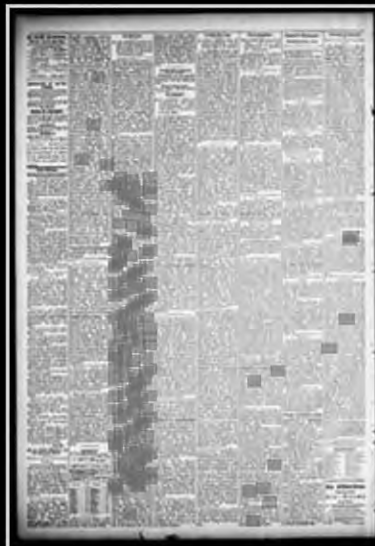
Detroit Abend-Post. (Detroit [Mich.]), December 04, 1914, Page 10, Image 10



Detroit Abend-Post. (Detroit [Mich.]), August 05, 1914, Page 3, Image 3



Der Deutsche correspondent. [volume] (Baltimore, Md.), October 09, 1906, Page 6, Image 6



Der Deutsche correspondent. [volume] (Baltimore, Md.), June 24, 1901, Image 6

Figure 2. First images displayed of 257,107 hits when entering *Frau* in Chronicing America, sorted by “relevance” (accessed December 31, 2020).

characterized not by the scarcity of primary sources but by quantities of data too vast for any human to read.<sup>25</sup> Keyword searches possess the seemingly contradictory weaknesses of finding too few documents (under-inclusion) and finding too many documents (over-inclusion). Using the search term *Frau*, for instance, results in a case of over-inclusion. If we assume that one needs ten minutes in order to read a newspaper page, to read all documents that contain the word *Frau*, one needs approximately 42,851 hours (5 years of reading without breaks). Apart from these “time issues,” there are several more obstacles that can exacerbate corpus creation and analysis when keyword searching the digital archive: there is, for instance, the likelihood of missing some documents because of OCR errors, the problem of selecting the “right” terms due to ambiguity, or diachronic language change. Most importantly, reading the plain text can be tedious because there is no separation between articles due to page-level OCR.

The first steps of searching in and analyzing the digitized newspaper as a historical source already involve a variety of quantitative methods such as using search algorithms and filtering options. The objective of documenting and reflecting on the datasets and diverse decision-making processes is to investigate biases – even our own – in order to conceptualize or rethink the next (re-)search steps. This analysis shows that women – in terms of the occurrences of the word that represents this sex – are visible in the newspapers’ textual realm and not really underrepresented compared to men. However, the figures do not say anything about how women are represented: are they mentioned or described in hard news about crimes, advertisements of beer products, nationalistic poems about Germania or lists of newly arrived immigrants? As this example has shown, keyword search algorithms can become problematic in the case of over-inclusion and complicate finding relevant texts for, by and about women.

## II. Creating an archive of GerWO/MANness

Many scholars in nineteenth-century periodical studies emphasize the high level of exchange between different publications and advocate for studying what was reprinted in order to understand what editors and readers of the period valued.<sup>26</sup> Scholars have not, however, until very recently, explored the nature of these reprinting practices due to simple pragmatism. Research in periodical studies

25 Ian Milligan, *History in the Age of Abundance?* (Montreal, 2019).

26 See Meredith L. McGill, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-1853* (Philadelphia, 2007).

has started to use computational methods because no one can read every newspaper ever printed along with the personal insight of the editors or printers.<sup>27</sup> Since I do not have five years to read (without breaks) all pages that contain the word “woman,” how can I use quantitative methods (which does not exclude qualitative ones) using the data from *Chronicling America* and Arndt and Olson to both examine the reprinting practices in these newspapers and focus on multiple social categories? To trace such a circulation system is to map a migrant social network.<sup>28</sup> In my project, I conceptualize historical phenomena in contemporary contexts by developing a model that seeks to study “viral events” in the German immigrant community, applying Ryan Cordell’s terminology for describing reprinting practices in the nineteenth century.<sup>29</sup> A text becomes viral since editors do not only reprint it but also change and modify textual properties for various political, economic or social purposes. This section will briefly describe the underlying mechanisms for identifying and clustering reprinted texts and elaborate on the need for an automatic genre classification of these clusters. Additionally, this section is followed by an exploratory data analysis – a distant feminist reading – designed to recover texts for, by, and about women. A data feminist approach seeks to expose and challenge unequal power by looking at many axes of inequality and focuses on (algorithmic) subjectivity and the role of the human and non-human in data science. In my project, I am not only interested in detecting which texts had the longest journeys, but especially if and how these traveling texts of political, economic, scientific, or literary nature can provide information about a rather comprehensive network of immigrants that differed in sex, gender, class, age or (national) identities. Therefore, the digital archive of reprints will consist of texts for, by and about women, men, children, young and old, fiction writers, business owners, and many more.

I use *passim* software to curate the dataset of German-language newspapers from *Chronicling America* into a dataset that only contains reprinted texts. The program aligns similar passages of text by detecting passages of similar textual content.<sup>30</sup> Basically, the algorithm looks into each document and if it finds that similar sequences of characters occur in different documents, it takes out these different “textual snippets” and combines them into a cluster. When it clusters these texts, it also copies the metadata, that is, information about the text’s source such as the name or place of publication, date or the link to *Chronicling America*. The reprinting

27 In 2014, the Viral Texts Project, which at the time was the largest-scale study of how content spread through the news networks of the nineteenth century, started to develop a text reuse detection algorithm to analyze 500 digitized English-language newspapers in the U.S. They found that about 650 articles were reprinted 50 times or more, which is a working definition of “viral” in the industrial age. See Ryan Cordell and David Smith, *Viral Texts: Mapping Networks of Reprinting in 19th-Century Newspapers and Magazines* (2017), <http://viraltexts.org>.

28 See Ruth Ahnert et al., *The Network Turn: Changing Perspectives in the Humanities* (Cambridge, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108866804>. Networks are a category of study uniting diverse disciplines through a shared understanding of complexity in our world.

29 Ryan Cordell et al., *Going the Rounds: Virality in Nineteenth-Century American Newspapers* (Minneapolis, 2020), <https://manifold.umn.edu/projects/going-the-rounds>.

30 The model uses shingling techniques, based on indexing n-grams to find document pairs that share a large number of n-grams. See David A. Smith, Ryan Cordell, and Elisabeth Maddock Dillon, “Infectious Texts: Modelling Text Reuse in Nineteenth-Century Newspapers,” *Proceedings of the Workshop on Big Humanities* (2013), 86–94.

dataset is now smaller than the *Chronicling America* corpus and, more importantly, the non-existent complete corpus of German-language newspapers, which would make up approximately 2,000 newspapers for this time frame.<sup>31</sup> Even though *Chronicling America* is still digitizing more newspapers, the current corpus (approx. 500,000 texts) can be considered representative for the analysis of viral content because it encompasses several states (17) and decades (1830-1914).

Why is one of my goals to create a digital archive of reprinted texts? As it turns out, German-language newspapers shared a huge amount of information even though publication locations were far apart. The sheer quantity of reprinted material makes it a daunting task to do empirical research and to close and distant read reprinted texts. As Cordell identifies the challenge: “When every nineteenth-century newspaper brims with original and reprinted content of all kinds, it is difficult to know where to even begin studying that content.”<sup>32</sup> Moreover, examining texts that have the highest number of reprints or the longest reprinting period reveals that these are not necessarily texts about women’s concerns. This comes as no surprise, because the majority of reprinted texts belong to the genre of hard news: in other words, predominantly texts by, for, and about men. However, when digging further, there are also reprint clusters that I would classify as ads, poems, jokes, factual texts, or lists to study women’s representations. In order to recover these texts and add more metadata to the reprinting clusters, I develop and use a classification model to automatically categorize texts into genres.<sup>33</sup> As mentioned earlier, this approach has a theoretical implication because genre is a key category in the construction of social reality through the news, thereby providing ways of seeing how communicants perform identities and mediate situations and to analyze power and difference. Genre is not a fixed or clearly defined idea but a reflection of an audience’s assumptions and wants at a certain point in time. Some genres presuppose a stronger sense of factuality, while others are expected to be entertaining instead. Additionally, there is a pragmatic reason for analyzing style and classifying texts into genres using machine learning techniques. Similar to streaming platforms such as Netflix, this additional metadata will offer users an expanded search through genre filtering.

This article does not explain the details of the genre classification model using different unsupervised and supervised machine

31 Arndt and Olson.

32 Ryan Cordell, “Reprinting, Circulation, and the Network Author in Antebellum Newspapers,” *American Literary History*, 27:3 (2015): 417-445.

33 I am developing the genre classifier in collaboration with André Blessing, Institute for Natural Language Processing, University of Stuttgart.

learning techniques, which means that I am switching between annotating and allowing the model to work on its own to discover patterns. However, I want to emphasize that computationally classifying genres does not mean that a text will be 100% categorized as belonging to one type.<sup>34</sup> The model does not provide binary results such as text A is or is not hard news, but rather describes that a text may have the likelihood of belonging 0.1 to genre X, 0.2 to genre Y and 0.7 to genre Z. Investigating these properties is essential to comparing genres and to understanding how they develop over time because genres change and fall out of fashion while new ones emerge. The genre that receives the highest score will become decisive for the publication process of the reprinting archive. Similar to digital film, book, or music stores, which offer genre categories that define the entire search and selection process, this classification has to be seen as an act of my interpretation of genre because “learning algorithms rely on examples rather than fixed definitions.”<sup>35</sup> With this method, I have identified ten different genres: hard news, ads, factual texts, lists, notifications, religious texts, jokes, poems, short stories, and novels. Once digitally published, this new edition of German-American literature can be read by the public or used for further research in the field.

Do we expect genres to favor the representation of, for instance, a specific gender? To illustrate a distant feminist reading, let us look at the frequencies of the terms *Frau*, *Dame*, *Mann*, and *Herr* as well as some adjectival complements to these nouns in the non-genre classified reprinting dataset first. The most frequent occurrences of the four nouns and their adjectives (figure 3, row no. 1) show a similar balance between woman and man as to the one found in keyword searching *Chronicling America*. However, examining the 29 next most frequent occurrences unveils that women prevail. In terms of adjectival complements, both sexes share characteristics of the categories age, manners, status, appearances, nationality (*deutsche/r*) as well as race (*weiß/e*). However, there are many differences as to how they are described within those categories. As regards appearances, while women are described as beautiful or pretty, small, veiled, men are depicted as strong and powerful. When examining the manners, the sexes seem to share attributes such as being kind, educated, or unhappy, but unlike men, women are not accompanied by adjectives relating to honesty and goodness. Additionally, there are three categories, which are not found in

34 This reflects Derrida's approach, who argues that texts do not belong to a genre, but they participate in at least one genre. See Jacques Derrida, "The Law of Genre," *Critical Inquiry* 7:1, trans. Avital Ronell (1980): 212.

35 Ted Underwood, "Machine Learning and Human Perspective," *Varieties of Digital Humanities* 135.1 (2020): 92-109. I will also let other scholars manually classify genres to see how they differ from my conceptualization.

Word Frequencies of the Terms Frau, Dame, Mann and Herr in the Unclassified Reprinting Dataset (pos. 1-30 of 4085 in total)

No	Search Result Frau	No. of occurrences	Search Result Dame	No. of occurrences	Search Result Mann	Search Result Herr		
1	junge Frau	3171	junge Dame	3108	junge Mann	4350	Äu Herr	3142
2	gn./sdige Frau	2264	jungen Dame	1236	junger Mann	3442	alte Herr	2172
3	alte Frau	1479	alte Dame	1086	jugen Mann	2020	lieber Herr	1037
4	jugen Frau	1247	alten Dame	327	alte Mann	1131	werther Herr	503
5	feine Frau	930	./stere Dame	152	alter Mann	617	Gn./sdiger Herr	417
6	feiner Frau	717	gekleidete Dame	129	alten Mann	516	Geehrter Herr	398
7	arme Frau	653	vornehme Dame	125	reicher Mann	460	junge Herr	386
8	sch./öne Frau	555	sch./öne Dame	118	lieber Mann	369	alter Herr	387
9	Frau	505	reiche Dame	66	Ter Mann	278	junger Herr	263
10	liebe Frau	498	vornehmen Dame	62	gro./uer Mann	247	gn./sdige Herr	232
11	alten Frau	474	./sterten Dame	56	ehrlcher Mann	238	verehrter Herr	171
12	gute Frau	417	verschleierte Dame	55	Armer Mann	237	Ter Herr	163
13	kleine Frau	365	gro./ue Dame	54	gute Mann	235	bestער Herr	144
14	ungl./ckliche Frau	309	feine Dame	47	arme Mann	230	gekleideter Herr	143
15	gn./sdigen Frau	303	h./bsche Dame	47	sch./öner Mann	191	hohe Herr	135
16	sch./önen Frau	231	./stliche Dame	47	braver Mann	186	ber Herr	118
17	armen Frau	222	bie Dame	45	ber Mann	152	Äu Herr	113
18	erste Frau	211	erste Dame	44	armen Mann	148	fremde Herr	103
19	deutsche Frau	188	betreffende Dame	44	wohlhabender Mann	147	!'' Herr	101
20	zweite Frau	184	hochgeachteten Dame	43	ungl./ckliche Mann	146	guter Herr	97
21	bie Frau	182	elegante Dame	42	kr./stiger Mann	146	dicke Herr	91
22	ungl./cklichen Frau	168	fremde Dame	42	freier Mann	139	./steter Herr	90
23	ersten Frau	165	Äu Dame	40	gekleideter Mann	136	genannter Herr	81
24	kranke Frau	158	sch./önen Dame	39	gebildeter Mann	135	gestrenge Herr	75
25	zweilen Frau	144	gebildete Dame	37	Äu Mann	134	o Herr	72
26	wohnende Frau	141	hohe Dame	36	stattlicher Mann	131	gestrenger Herr	72
27	h./bsche Frau	140	Notre Dame	35	guter Mann	130	eigener Herr	62
28	geschiedene Frau	124	reichen Dame	34	reihen Mann	119	fremder Herr	60
29	erwiderte Frau	123	wei./ue Dame	34	kleine Mann	117	erwiderte Herr	56
30	ber Frau	123	j./ngere Dame	34	wei./uer Mann	106	kleine Herr	53

the Mann/Herr datasets: sickness (*krank*), marriage status (*geschieden*), and affiliation (*seine Frau/Dame*).<sup>36</sup>

Now what to do with these results? While the number of occurrences shows the visibility of women in the German-language press, their adjectival complements indicate that they are represented in different social contexts. Frequency analyses of the entire dataset without looking closely into the “data” are questionable because newspapers include diverse information: from political reports to nationalistic poems. The dataset is asymmetrical because it consists of different genres that vary in length and proportion within the dataset. When using the entire non-genre classified reprinting archive for such an analysis, representational bias plays an important role because the genre prediction model reveals that the majority of texts are hard news. There is a high probability that women, for instance, are not the topic in hard news of political events. As D’Ignazio and Klein have noted, “as is true in so many cases of data

**Figure 3. Word frequencies of the terms Frau, Dame, Mann and Herr in the unclassified reprinting archive (pos. 1-30 of 4085 in total). As one can see, there are quite a few OCR errors, which shows how questionable analyses are when the search depends on individual words, rather than phrases.**

<sup>36</sup> I want to thank Martin Krupp, who was an intern at the GHI (2020/2021) and assisted me with analyzing and interpreting these datasets.

collected (or not) about women and other minoritized groups, the collection environment is compromised by imbalances of power.”<sup>37</sup> I consider such results as starting points that guide me to ask further questions: Do I receive different results when taking genre into consideration?

### III. GerWOMANness makes the viral ads

Studying genre provides an interesting lens for investigating asymmetrical power by focusing on the intersection between gender and other dimensions of identity such as sexuality, geography, and ability and how they are linked to economic profit. Linking virality, that is the publication, circulation, and modification of a text, to genre in periodicals implies overcoming the boundaries between the textual and the social to investigate representational bias. Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins calls the realm of culture and media, where oppressive ideas circulate, the hegemonic domain.<sup>38</sup> This is taken from her matrix of domination, consisting of four domains – the structural, the disciplinary, the hegemonic, and the interpersonal. The matrix is a concept used for studying the several intersections between power, social categories, and realms. Even though the analysis presented in the previous section is based on the archive of reprinted texts, it does not reveal anything about viral texts per se nor does it show how virality functions as a system to circulate oppressive ideas and how they are constructed and experienced. How does viral GerWOMANness in ads, poems, lists or factual texts provide insight into questions of the legal and social equality of women, democracy and nationalism, violence, remembering and forgetting, and above all, migration or the arrival in a new culture and a new everyday life? Reading topologically, as literary scholar Andrew Piper frames it, implies the use of computational methods to map relationships among multiple elements and categories such as genre and publication information of multiple texts.<sup>39</sup> My goal is not so much to find the “original” version of a text, or the source, but primarily to find, collect, and read texts that have been printed several times (and in different locations), and analyze how these texts, and their modifications, relate to different social categories. This section of my article provides one example of GerWOMANness, which is quite prevalent in the viral texts belonging to the genre of advertisements, and it shows how zooming in on “ads” allows us to better understand the relation between genre and gender. I use the concept of GerWOMANness both as an argument against dominant foci on men’s bodies, con-

37 D’Ignazio and Klein, 35.

38 Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York, 2008).

39 Andrew Piper, “Reading’s Refrain,” *ELH* 80 (2013): 373–99.

Term	Genre	Hits in Genre	Frequency per million words in genre	Selection of adjectival complements to term X (pos. no. 1-100)
<i>Frau</i>	Advertisement	6624	506.45	Junge, seine, leidende, meine schwächliche, kränkliche, zarteste, arme, sonderbare, sterbende, zitternde X
<i>Mann</i>	Advertisement	2096	160.25	Junger, gesunder, weiser, solider, geschwächer, ehrlicher, lieber, glücklicher, starker, kränklicher, reicher X

cerns, and perspectives in earlier accounts and as an umbrella term for collecting data: stories about girls, women, and mothers.

As figure 4 illustrates, according to word hits, women appear more often than men using all reprint clusters (6624 > 2096). Additionally, a selection here of some of the complements to the nouns provides a first representation of the sexes within this genre. While *Frau* is preceded by modifiers such as feeble, tender, strange, or dying as well as (male) possessive pronouns, *Mann* is accompanied by adjectives such as healthy, wise, honest or happy.<sup>40</sup> Zooming in—close reading—on some of the reprint clusters with the highest numbers and widest circulation reveals that these ads are for patent medicines marketed in a way that was not gender specific. However, even though these products target both sexes, women are dominant in these ads because they are used as marketing strategies, often with the underlying storyline: woman A was suffering from B; subsequently she took medicine C; now she feels reborn; you need to buy product C or visit doctor D. The narratives usually end with listing the name, price, and seller of the product, thereby featuring the men as the ones to cure male and female suffering. In their few lines, these ads demonstrate how widely reprinted periodical texts reflect the values of the larger culture. They depict women as the ones who need to be protected, thereby reinforcing their status as second-class citizens. Advertisements like these, as information designed to be spread for scientific and economic purposes, reinforced preexisting societal views about the place of women in society.

**Figure 4. Number of hits for the terms *Frau* and *Mann* in the genre-classified subset “advertisements” as well as a selection of adjectival complements to both**

40 A similar representation arises when I use the terms *Dirn*, *Kerl*, *Fräulein*, *weiblich*, or *männlich*.



Even though most of the ads refer to products targeting both women and men, there are also quite a number of reprinted ads of products for women, specifically pain relief medicine for menstrual cramps. Even though these texts were written and published by men, creating and analyzing these datasets reveals typical clichés about femininity and masculinity and to some degree allows access to women’s voices. Even nowadays, misrepresentations of the menstrual cycle are quite prevalent in the media because many ads about pantyliners, for instance, show narratives about how women are suffering from a certain feminine condition, while they suddenly feel happy once they use the “right” product.<sup>41</sup> In the nineteenth century, one of the most frequently reprinted texts about regulating the menstrual function deals with a product to cure “female weakness” produced by Ray Vaughn Pierce (1840-1914), a Buffalo physician and U.S. Representative from New York (1879-1880). Pierce manufactured several medicines – many of them were little more than alcohol or opium solutions – and nearly one million bottles of his elixirs were shipped from Buffalo annually, but his product “Dr. Pierce’s Favorite Prescription” marketed to women to cure female weakness became his best seller. As he wrote in *The People’s Common Sense Medical Adviser in Plain English: or, Medicine Simplified*: “In all diseases involving the female reproductive organs, with which there is usually associated an irritable condition of the nervous system, it is unsurpassed as a remedy.”<sup>42</sup> The product was a tonic to quiet nervous irritation and strengthen the enfeebled nervous system. Pierce was a master of the media, using his medical works, broadsides, billboards, and above all newspapers, to saturate the country with word of his success. “Favorite Prescription” can be seen as a prime example of a viral event and, specifically, viral marketing in the industrial age, a business strategy that uses existing social networks such as newspapers to promote a product.

The ad for the tonic was not only featured in thousands of English-language newspapers in the U.S., but also in hundreds of the German-language ones (1877-99).<sup>43</sup> The creative nature of viral marketing enables an endless variety of potential forms: there is not one single story about Pierce’s product, but many different textual and visual representations in different but also in the same newspaper titles. Even though the majority of distinct reprinted ads became front-page material, they differed in headlines (“Die Dame,” “Mütter,” “Ein heruntergekommenes” or “Ne sonderbare Frau muss es sein”) and with regard to the information about the female body, related symp-

41 See, for instance, “Sofy Pantyliner - How’s your Day?” June 19, 2018, video, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p28-5c1s\\_c8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p28-5c1s_c8).

42 R. V. Pierce, *The People’s Common Sense Medical Adviser in Plain English: or, Medicine Simplified* (Buffalo, 1895), Project Gutenberg, May 28, 2006.

43 Many thanks to Moritz Knabben from the Oceanic Exchanges team, Institute for Visualization and Interactive Systems, University of Stuttgart, who extracted “Favorite Prescription” (1840-1914) from the English-language dataset (United States, Chronicling America; United Kingdom, British Library 19th Century Newspapers and Times Digital Archive; New Zealand, Papers Past; and Australia, Trove). For more information about the databases, see M.H. Beals and Emily Bells, *The Atlas of Digitized Newspapers and Metadata: Reports from Oceanic Exchanges* (Loughborough, 2020).

toms, and causes for “female weakness,” but also in terms of storyline and accompanying images, which illustrated diverse marketing strategies. This viral event showcases GerWOMANness because it is a story about the misrepresentation and abuse of the female body in the nineteenth century and it is a missing dataset because, so far, scholars’ narratives have prioritized representations of Pierce, his success, and of the individual products.<sup>44</sup> Studying such reprinted ads, their textuality and circulation, gives us an insight into the lives of women at that time.

One of the most frequently reprinted ads for “Dr. Pierce’s Favorite Prescription” in the corpus is titled “Ein Frauenantlitz” and was predominantly published in the *Freie Presse für Texas* (San Antonio, Texas), a weekly newspaper run by Robert Hanschke (1879-1906).<sup>45</sup> Hanschke’s company claimed that the *Freie Presse* had “undoubtedly the largest circulation of all the German papers in the State” and was “the best advertising medium.”<sup>46</sup> “Ein Frauenantlitz” (70 reprints from 1897-99), does not simply provide information about Pierce’s flawless reputation and the product’s cure for insomnia, fatigue, and all maladies caused by disorders of the female organs.<sup>47</sup> The ad begins with a romantic depiction of women, whose age-related transformations are metaphorically imagined as the natural fading of flowers. The color red, compared to roses, disappears from the female glowing *Antlitz* (face) because the organs of the female sex start to malfunction as the years go by. These viral texts “in the best advertising medium” represent not only information about ways to relieve pain: these ads are stories about beauty or rather societal expectations of beauty, gender injustice and how the economy creates images about women, ranging from vulnerable to dysfunctional, in order to sell their products. They mirror and (re-) produce society’s understandings of making the condition of female weakness – and age – responsible for every complaint of mind and body that a woman might have experienced.

This viral event represents one of the nineteenth century’s biggest drug abuses perpetrated on women. Although advertised as “botanicals,” such tonics promising to cure female weakness, recommended for young girls as well as nursing mothers, contained alcohol in double-digit percentages and even opium. Prior to the 1906 Federal Pure Food and Drug Act, the product labels of patent medicines did not have to list the ingredients that were addictive or dangerous such as morphine, opium or alcohol. Six years ear-

44 The “Nickell Collection of Dr. R.V. Pierce Medical Artifacts” (*New York Heritage*) includes prescription bottles and packaging, advertisements, and a book of medical advice by R.V. Pierce. Many of the materials are undated. The rest date between 1885-1890 and 1928-1938.

45 Arndt and Olsen, 630.

46 “Freie Presse für Texas,” The Portal to Texas History, accessed January 29, 2021, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/explore/collections/FRPRTX/>

47 See, for instance, *Freie Presse für Texas*, April 17, 1899, Page 2, CA.

lier, in a reprinted ad in the U.S. English-language press that was published in DC, Texas, and North Dakota (1898-99), the text even negated the alcoholic substance: “‘Favorite Prescription’ contains no alcohol or whisky.” I have not found this information in the German-language newspapers, but there is another common marketing strategy in both languages, which shows that advertising is personal. Along with the causes and symptoms, these texts include personal stories by women who testify to feeling so much better after drinking more than one bottle at once while they were pregnant or even while they were breastfeeding. These ads provide material and informational content about the female body, but they are directly accompanied by sociopolitical rhetoric and strategies embedded in their content: you need to get healthy as soon as possible to be able to fulfill your duties as a wife, housewife, and mother and no longer be a burden to your husband. These textual snippets – data about women – did not derive from their individual creators – Pierce and the editors – but from their passage through the exchange system. These ads illustrate how powerful virality, durability, and statistics of narrating “personal” experience are for marketing strategies: the product “ist seit vielen Jahren, wie Tausende bezeugen, mit völligem Erfolge gebraucht worden”<sup>48</sup> or “90,000 women have testified, over their own signatures, to its wonderful merits.”<sup>49</sup>

These different viral ads about “Dr. Pierce’s Favorite Prescription” not only provide a case study of successful viral marketing in nineteenth-century newspapers by placing women as witnesses in the center of attention, but they also show how bias against these women was practiced in reporting their issues and how they are directly connected to profit. While the distant readings documented in figures 3 and 4 have shown that women were predominantly represented in terms of their physical appearances (*schön, hübsch* or *zarteste*), examples such as “Ein Frauenantlitz” demonstrate how medical products were promoted in a powerful way to restore these features. In other publications, targeted at a “scientific,” in other words, male audience, Pierce provided further information about the female weakness as being predominantly caused by “rheumatic affections, constipation, a morbid state of the blood, suppression of the menstrual function, uterine difficulties, masturbation, or self-abuse, or blows.”<sup>50</sup> These detailed descriptions, which link female sexuality to violence inflicted by men, do not appear in the newspapers: a medium that was read by both sexes.

48 See, for instance, *Der Nordstern*, September 29, 1880, Page 4, CA.

49 See, for instance, *Evening star*, January 11, 1898, Page 8, CA.

50 Pierce.

# Der Deutsche Beobachter.

Fortgang 26.

Neu Philadelphia, O., Mittwoch, den 9. Mai, 1894.

Nummer 1.

**J. H. Mitchell,**  
Redaktion.

**John W. Ward,**  
Verleger und Eigentümer.

**Dr. med. V. Stelzer,**  
Berater.

**Dr. med. V. Stelzer,**  
Berater.

**Dr. med. V. Stelzer,**  
Berater.

**Der erste Artikel**  
ist ein Bericht über die Verhandlungen der Nationalversammlung in Philadelphia. Der Bericht enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der Verhandlungen und der Beschlüsse der Versammlung. Der Bericht ist von großer Wichtigkeit für die Leser des Beobachters.

**Der zweite Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Einbürgerung der Fremden in den Vereinigten Staaten. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Einbürgerungsgesetze sprechen.

**Der dritte Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Abolition der Sklaverei. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für die Abolition der Sklaverei sprechen.

**Der vierte Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Staatsverwaltung. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Staatsverwaltung sprechen.

**Der fünfte Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Justiz. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Justiz sprechen.

**Der sechste Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Armee. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Armee sprechen.

**Der siebte Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Marine. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Marine sprechen.

**Der achte Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Eisenbahn. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Eisenbahn sprechen.

**Der neunte Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Post. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Post sprechen.

**Der zehnte Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Telegraphen. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Telegraphen sprechen.

**Der elfte Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Telephonie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Telephonie sprechen.

**Der zwölfte Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Eisenindustrie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Eisenindustrie sprechen.

**Der dreizehnte Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Textilindustrie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Textilindustrie sprechen.

**Der vierzehnte Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Holzindustrie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Holzindustrie sprechen.

**Der fünfzehnte Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Landwirtschaft. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Landwirtschaft sprechen.

**Der sechzehnte Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Bergbauindustrie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Bergbauindustrie sprechen.

**Der siebzehnte Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Schiffbauindustrie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Schiffbauindustrie sprechen.

**Der achtzehnte Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Maschinenbauindustrie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Maschinenbauindustrie sprechen.

**Der neunzehnte Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Papierindustrie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Papierindustrie sprechen.

**Der zwanzigste Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Zuckerindustrie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Zuckerindustrie sprechen.

**Der einundzwanzigste Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Getreideindustrie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Getreideindustrie sprechen.

**Der zweiundzwanzigste Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Weinindustrie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Weinindustrie sprechen.

**Der dreiundzwanzigste Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Branntweinindustrie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Branntweinindustrie sprechen.

**Der vierundzwanzigste Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Tabakindustrie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Tabakindustrie sprechen.

**Der fünfundzwanzigste Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Seidenindustrie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Seidenindustrie sprechen.

**Der sechsundzwanzigste Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Wolleindustrie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Wolleindustrie sprechen.

**Der siebenundzwanzigste Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Lederindustrie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Lederindustrie sprechen.

**Der achtundzwanzigste Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Textilindustrie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Textilindustrie sprechen.

**Der neunundzwanzigste Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Papierindustrie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Papierindustrie sprechen.

**Der dreißigste Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Eisenindustrie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Eisenindustrie sprechen.

**Der einunddreißigste Artikel**  
behandelt die Frage der Reform der Textilindustrie. Der Artikel enthält eine ausführliche Darstellung der verschiedenen Ansichten über diese Frage und der Gründe, die für eine Reform der Textilindustrie sprechen.

Investigating the textual content and circulation figures is one way to analyze the representation - and abuse - of women. The majority of ads about "Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription" come with images. While the image in "Ein Frauenantlitz" depicts a young woman holding a flower in her hand, another ad titled "Zu Hülfe" (figure 5), which had a longer circulation period (1883-1894) and wider distribution (from Texas to Ohio), shows - textually and visually - a more sinister depiction of the female condition.

Figure 5. One example of "Zu Hülfe" (top right) in *Der Deutsche Beobachter*, New Philadelphia, Ohio, May 9, 1894, p. 1. <https://chronicling-america.loc.gov/lccn/sn86063815/1894-05-09/ed-1/seq-1/>.

While “Ein Frauenantlitz” starts with the metaphorical relation between the female sex and springtime, “Zu Hülfe” begins directly with a narrative about a woman’s cry for help whose savior can only be a man: Dr. Pierce. Such textual and visual representations of women and Pierce’s product as a restoring stimulant for the nervous system mirror contemporary fictional writings such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “The Yellow Wallpaper” (1892). In Gilman’s short story, which is regarded as an important early work of American feminist literature for its illustration of the attitudes towards women’s mental and physical health, the narrator suffers from post-partum depression and is therefore locked up in the attic. Similar to the woman behind the wallpaper, the “black” woman without any facial expression in “Zu Hülfe” (figure 6, right) seems to be trapped – or locked up – and in need of help, suffering from mania, delirium or madness. In contrast to other ads, the woman in “Zu Hülfe” does not even have a face. These images produced public stigma in the hegemonic domain such as stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination of women, who are depicted as sad and hysterical, holding their malfunctioning bodies responsible for their “female weakness.” While the number of reprints as well as their wider circulation in both the German- and English-language newspapers clearly shows Favorite’s Prescription’s popularity as well as Pierce’s and the editors’ HIsTories, the representation of women in these ads reflect the dominant narratives of the relation between the menstrual cycle, mood fluctuations, and mental illness. Writings such as Gilman’s short story, which was also widely reprinted in the newspapers, not only represent fictional challenges to the patriarchal diagnoses of women’s condition, but also embody a public critique of a real medical treatment that was popularized through these viral ads. They created a sense of an imagined community – within the imagined immigrant and the larger American republic and offered a sense of participation.<sup>51</sup> These observations about patriarchal biases, misrepresentations of the female body, the rational man and the imaginative woman, lead me to further investigate the representation of GerWOMANness in other genres as well as their relation to one another.

The current analysis of the genre classification assumes that the three “dominating” genres that have the highest number of reprint clusters in the archive of reprinted texts are news, ads, and short stories. Examining advertisements as well as the correlation to other genres gives insight into different representations and shows

51 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 2016).

the blurred lines between fact and fiction, information and data, dominant and minoritized groups. Seriality and virality enable continuing movement and rely on the commercial affordances of capitalist production such as low-cost printing technology and advertising. The patterns of textuality, circulation, and categorization point us back toward the (digital) archive, suggesting new theoretical and descriptive questions about visibility, the body, and women's rights when using data-rich, "computer-assisted" approaches.

In this article, I have shown an analysis of women as the minoritized group in contrast to men in order to, as D'Ignazio and Klein have formulated it, "describe groups of people who are positioned in opposition to a more powerful social group."<sup>52</sup> Studying virality historically by computationally analyzing and enriching data and metadata about migrants sheds light on the social, political, economic, and personal aspirations of readers and writers. The resulting data in this project can be considered a substantial set of German-American literature to provide insight into the reprint history of texts as well as editorial and reading practices. A more comprehensive study of Ger(wo)manness will include examining the representations of women and men in other genres and the interaction between different social categories. Data feminism, that is, applying intersectional feminism to data science, implies changing perspectives by investigating the matrix of domination in terms of women as migrants, subordinated to the dominant group of "American" women or within the group of migrants included in the dominant group due to their whiteness. There are many more examples to investigate the intersection of sex and race, for instance: in a viral factual text about the true nature of a woman's beauty ("Die Wahre Schönheit der Frau"), the author mansplains that women's most fertile years in terms of beauty are between 30-45.<sup>53</sup> While providing details about how to be the best version of yourself through contentment and physical activity in order to retain one's beauty until the age of 50, the text emphasizes the imperative of pure blood - race - visible through a woman's skin color. In the beginning, however, the author lists Cleopatra - an Egyptian woman - as an argument for his age thesis because she was over 30 when she met Antony. Used in this way, intersectionality affords a necessary optic on the uneven ways in which power operates across social groups as well as a set of practices to collectively contest these distinct forms of domination.

52 D'Ignazio and Klein, 26.

53 See, for instance, *Der Deutsche Beobachter*, August 15, 1894, Page 2, CA.

#### IV. Conclusion

A recent blog post titled “Whose History? AI Uncovers Who Gets Attention in High School Textbooks” discusses a new study of American history textbooks used in Texas. The project conducted by Stanford University researchers who also use machine learning techniques revealed that “high school history textbooks pay much more attention “to white men than to Blacks, ethnic minorities, and women.”<sup>54</sup> As regards quantity, “five of the 50 most-mentioned individuals were white men” and “[o]nly one woman made that list – Eleanor Roosevelt.”<sup>55</sup> While men were more likely to be associated with words denoting power, women were more likely to be associated with marriage and family. The conclusion is, at this point, that many textbooks focus on formal political events and (male) leaders rather than on the lives of people. Only accessible datasets can be passed on to future generations. Uncovering biases through computational methods has the potential to name, challenge, and change underrepresentation in textbooks and beyond. As D’Ignazio and Klein note, “addressing bias in a dataset is a tiny technological Band-Aid for a much larger problem.”<sup>56</sup>

My work calls for increased consciousness of bias in historical research and simultaneously challenges the analysis of bias on different levels: from historical or archival labor to data science practices. This addresses the fourth part of the matrix of domination, which deals with the interpersonal, that is, the domain that concentrates on the influences of the everyday experience of individuals in the world. How would you feel if you were a woman, with monthly cramps, who read these ads? Using the concept of virality and genre, the matrix of domination and the distinction between dominant and minoritized groups, we can begin to examine how power unfolds in and around data. Asking these data-centric questions – such as who is represented by whom, where, and how – allows us to see how discrimination is baked into our data practices and products. By illustrating biases in the genre of information literature, specifically the quantitative and qualitative analysis of texts representing this genre, this article has sought to revise our understanding of the role of women as writers and readers in the German immigrant communities. As D’Ignazio and Klein have argued, “machine learning algorithms don’t just predict the past; they also reflect current social inequities.”<sup>57</sup> By becoming aware of these different levels as well as by statistically and non-statistically analyzing them, I want to show how to use humanities data science to diagnose those

54 Edmund L. Andrews, “Whose History? AI Uncovers Who Gets Attention in High School Textbooks,” *Stanford University Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence* (Blog), November 17, 2020.

55 Ibid.

56 D’Ignazio and Klein, *Data Feminism*, 60.

57 Ibid, 55.

problems and suggest solutions by offering a new window into the hidden histories and mysterious mechanisms of human cultures. In charting this process of data ethics when using digitized collections as well as methods for text mining and classification, I hope to offer contributions to (German-)American Studies, Gender Studies as well as Digital Humanities.

Jean Lee Cole, editor of *American Periodicals*, has convincingly argued that if we rethink periodical studies transnationally as vessels of national ideologies, we have to come back to questions concerning people and thus, inclusion and exclusion, migration and xenophobia.<sup>58</sup> Data science provides analytical leverage for studying these phenomena of discrimination and likewise opens up new ways of addressing and answering these questions because it provides tools to interpret the beliefs and behaviors of people, groups, and organizations at large. Both the data itself and scholarship to make sense of it are critical for advances across disciplines. Methods of statistical reasoning, natural language processing, classification, textual analysis, machine learning, and other data science approaches that developed largely yet not exclusively in the computer science professions have all become essential tools for scholars across the disciplines. Nowadays, this interdisciplinarity goes in both directions: data science has benefited from the complex, critical and, thus, consequential research questions targeting the rich history of human cultures, societies, and histories. Likewise, research in the humanities, not only under the umbrella of digital humanities, has benefited from computer and data science as regards digitization, content management, processing, and information retrieval and extraction.

Even though there is no commonly agreed definition of the term digital history, it generally seems to subsume two main orientations: it is concerned with the “constitution, management, and processing of digitized archives” and thus the transformation and preservation of cultural heritage.<sup>59</sup> And yet, as Ted Underwood writes in *Distant Horizons*, a digital collection “doesn’t replace one version of the past with another,” but rather “provides an enlarged repertoire of options.”<sup>60</sup> These options consist in combining state-of-the-art computational methods, which focus on mathematical abstraction and the development of numerical and formal models, with state-of-the-art theories in the humanities. “Digital” does not simply mean algorithms, statistics or computing power or presupposes

58 Jean Lee Cole, “What’s so American about American Periodicals,” (presentation, Transnational Periodical Cultures - Interdisciplinary Perspectives, Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz, Germany, January 30, 2020).

59 See C. Roth, “Digital, digitized, and numerical humanities,” *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, 34.3 (2019): 616-632.

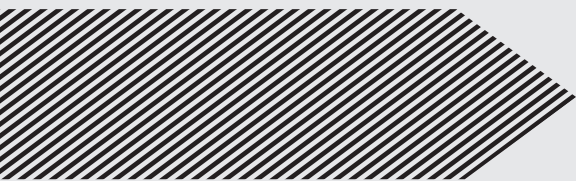
60 Ted Underwood, *Distant Horizons* (Chicago, 2019), 177.



the absence of theory, as data feminism illustrates, but helps translate humanistic thinking into computational practice. Would I have found these texts without computational methods? The answer is no.

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# Conference Reports



## **FOURTH ANNUAL BUCERIUS YOUNG SCHOLAR FORUM. HISTORIES OF MIGRATION: TRANSATLANTIC AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES**

Virtual Workshop held on October 12-14, 2020; organized by the Pacific Regional Office of the GHI Washington at the University of California, Berkeley. Sponsored by ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerus. Conveners: Isabella Löhr (University of Osnabrück), Christiane Reinecke (University of Osnabrück), Andrea Westermann (Pacific Regional Office of the GHI Washington, PRO). Participants: Alexander Collin (University of Amsterdam); Stacey Fahrenthold (UC Davis); Peter Gatrell (University of Manchester); Sasha Gora (Amerika-Institut, LMU München); Jonathan Holst (University of Lübeck); Emma Meyer (Emory University); L. Ohad Reiss Sorokin (Duke University); Andrea Ringer (Tennessee State University); Marjan Wardaki (UC Los Angeles); Judith Weltz (University of Innsbruck).

With eight pre-circulated papers, precise, compact, and generous peer comments on these papers given on the spot, and two fantastic chairs, the workshop group created and inhabited a space of creative scholarly exchange. Two entangled questions emerged as overarching concerns: How do we tell stories about migration that do not mirror or reproduce the categorizations of the state or former restrictive migration regimes? And does a focus on knowledge help to unsettle established and influential narratives about migration? If epistemic sensibility is what characterizes historical research in general, and, maybe, historians' engagement with ideas, world-making practices, working skills, academic landscapes, archives, law making, and other forms of knowledge as objects of research, in particular, the second question stood at the center of our discussion. Moreover, two other notions came to the fore that pointed beyond the register of the epistemological and conveyed the urgency and *engagé* spirit that may turn scholarly debates into meaningful public interventions: participants recurrently highlighted both the lived and empirical messiness of migration processes or refugee-making. Fittingly, perhaps, Judith Weltz's argument that there is "enjoyment of/in law," i. e. collective enjoyment in seeing order or neat distinctions established, underscored that emotional aspects loom large on migration policies and need to be studied when it comes to the history of (forced) displacement, diaspora, refugees, or in general to the contested history of movements in space.

The first day saw environmental histories of the circus and the restaurant, or more specifically: histories of human animal relationships. As Sasha Gora put it plainly: in the circus, animals are arranged on stage, in the restaurants, dead animals are arranged on a plate. In the panel titled “Migrating Knowledge: Spaces, Bodies, and Economies,” the papers presented commodity histories and its colonial legacies, they elaborated on the role of skilled and unskilled labor in these migration processes and they reflected upon the gendered dimension of work both in circuses and in restaurants. Andrea Ringer analyzed the circuses as particularly global workplaces. This transience created networks of knowledge connecting the different show operators. Horse trainers, canvassmen, candy butchers, and elephant keepers brought with them a whole host of knowledge as they traveled between shows and around the world. Records from circus archives, personal accounts, government records, and trade journals provide a unique look at migrant entertainers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They demonstrate how animal trainers transferred knowledge between shows and among themselves. They brought their experiences from animal dealer Carl Hagenbeck’s headquarters in Germany, traveling shows in the U.S., and animal holding pens in colonized spaces in East Africa to perform some of the most dangerous and controversial acts ever put on stage.

From pursuing prey and plants to fleeing drought and crop failures, migrants have often been motivated by the quest for food, and they continue to do so in our current era of climate change. Simply put, hunger feeds movement. L. Sasha Gora started to explore the entangled relationship between migration, power, and food in her paper “A Sweeter Milk: Food, Knowledge, and Migration” on culinary knowledge in the United States with a focus on restaurants and labor. Gora viewed culinary practices as a means of knowledge production and dissemination. The paper highlighted food’s central role in experiences of migration, from the preservation of culinary knowledge to economic entrepreneurship. By exploring various ways of acquiring and employing culinary knowledge, Gora presented food as a complex intersection between the transfer of food knowledge, its performative “re-enactment,” entrepreneurship, colonial path-dependencies and racial segregation.

The second day shifted attention from those who create knowledge in practice to those who produce academic knowledge on our

contemporary world. The first paper of the panel titled “Migrant Knowledge and Intellectual Infrastructures: Circles and Think Tanks” analyzed highly selective academic circles as specific sites of knowledge production, while the second paper introduced the other participants to the intellectual history of a 1987 essay and argument on open borders and its reception in several academic circles or disciplines. Ohad Reiss Sorokin argued that, alongside their ideas and social networks, émigré intellectuals brought with them a certain understanding of how intellectual work was done, for instance, via the semi-private scholarly forum known as a *Kreis* (circle). In his paper, Sorokin focused on one intellectual circle, the *Geistkreis* in Vienna. The *Geistkreis* was a long-standing interdisciplinary event accommodating economists (Hayek, Morgenstern), sociologists (Schutz), political scientists, art historians, businessmen, and lawyers. Most of the members fled to the United States after 1938. Some of them became successful scholars and still felt they had never truly arrived because they recurrently failed in reviving circle-like institutions at their new domains such as the University at Buffalo or the University of Chicago. Based on archival research, Sorokin followed these attempts and inquired into the difficulties to migrate academic institutions. He pointed to the challenges of reconciling different academic cultures for the scholars involved.

Rather than focusing on the circulations of a particular academic form of knowledge production, the second paper traced the history of a particular academic debate about migration. It takes its starting point in the political now. A current controversy in the social sciences deals with the idea of global freedom of movement – an idea that promotes everyone’s right to decide for themselves where in the world they want to reside. Jonathan Holst looked into the first phase of this debate in North America and discussed how it was started by Joseph Carens’ 1987 essay “Aliens and Citizens: the case for open borders.” He explored the intellectual contexts in which the plea for open borders was made and asked if the idea of global freedom of movement should be understood as an expression of neoliberalism. Counterintuitively, perhaps, advocates of this idea tended to perceive themselves as critics of neoliberalism. Holst examined the historical conditions that led to the scholarly debate about open borders. Exploring the interconnection between scholarly debates and the negotiations within wider society, Holst argued that the institutionalization of the open borders debate was due to societal, cultural, and political changes in the 1970s. He referred especially

to the interplay between the so-called rebirth of political theory and an expanding public interest in the topic of migration.

Our third panel, “Migratory Subjects in the Making: Of States, Refugees and Deportees,” turned to governments and administrations and asked how they produce a specific, regulatory knowledge on migration and how this knowledge affected the lives of migrant and refugees throughout the twentieth century. Emma C. Meyer engaged with the *longue durée* history of Indian migrants to Burma (Myanmar). In the period between 1840 and 1940, an estimated 12 to 15 million people, the vast majority of whom were laborers, were both the subjects and objects of this history. On the eve of the Second World War, Indian diasporic communities in colonial Burma composed one of the largest populations of “Indians overseas” anywhere in the world. The outbreak of fighting between the imperial Japanese military and Allied forces in December 1941 led hundreds of thousands of people to leave Burma, seeking shelter in neighboring lands. Approximately half a million of these evacuees, mostly people of Indian descent, made their way to British India. The south Indian district of Visakhapatnam took in more than 68,000 evacuees and eventually became the site of numerous government-run work projects designed to offer “relief” and “rehabilitation” to the displaced, most of whom arrived destitute. Meyer examined programs and policies used to resettle Burma evacuees in Visakhapatnam during the 1940s and early 1950s and explored the origins of refuge-making for displaced people in twentieth-century India. She investigated the colonial underpinnings of refuge in South Asia by focusing on the connections between earlier methods of managing migrants who crossed the Bay of Bengal and later systems of dealing with mass displacement. Meyer argued that colonial-era forms of producing knowledge on migration and categorizing migrants—particularly “unskilled” labor migrants—in the Bay of Bengal region were central to later systems for managing displaced populations.

Judith Welz investigated the relationship between knowledge production and the management of refugee populations in late twentieth-century Austria. The early 1990s marked a restrictive turn in migration policies in most of Europe. Mirroring this trend, laws and political debates concerning the deportation of non-citizens multiplied in Austria. Welz explored the construction of “deportable subjects” (Nicholas De Genova) in two episodes of policy-making. Her first case study is set in the year 1990 when the figure of the “illegal

migrant” appeared in Austrian political discourse, and deportation policies and practices were transformed to target migrants lacking documentation. The second case explores how asylum claimants were rendered more easily deportable in 2005 when a number of procedural rights and liberties were cut back. Welz argued that deportation policy-making is a moment when society is negotiated and produced. By encoding who remains an outsider and can therefore forcibly and physically be excluded, policy-makers are defining not only the boundaries of the body politic, but society itself. She framed the production of knowledge in deportation policy-making as a form of political crisis management that aims to sort out and simplify complex social realities. Accordingly, Welz argued that deportation policies have contributed to the reproduction of neoliberal capitalist societies, where a growing inequality weakens social cohesion. She showed how political actors continuously managed to frame immigration as a domestic issue, thus disconnecting it from counter-hegemonic claims that were based in a more transnational reading of Austria’s present moment.

Just like Reiss Sorokin’s research on exiled Central European scholars in the U.S., the fourth panel, titled “Shaping Institutions: Migrants and Networks,” dealt with academic migration, this time across historical epochs. Alexander Collin considered evidence of the education and political culture of decision makers in the government of the city of Bremen in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Collin concentrated on the influence of migration on that culture. An important feature of life in city-states or other small states was their reliance on the world beyond their borders for various resources, not only material but also resources of knowledge and information. Drawing on the collections of the Bremen State Archive, Collin traced geographical, quantitative, and milieu-related patterns of early life migration and their changes during the early modern period. In his paper, he examined the impact these patterns had on the governance practices of the Bremen Senate. Beyond their immediate impact on the municipal politics of one city, changing numbers and destinations of university travels might help explain the economic and political development of the North Sea and Baltic region after the decline of the Hanseatic League, as well as contribute to a more nuanced picture of cultural and political life in the early modern city at large.

Exploring the link between knowledge and migration practices in the twentieth century, Marjan Wardaki’s paper focused on a heterogeneous



group of South Asian students, their experiences, and intellectual formation during their sojourn at German and Scottish universities. In particular, Wardaki highlighted how migrants drew on different concepts such as *akademische Freiheit* or academic mobility to produce new ideas about medicine, technology, and science and to negotiate their new training around an ever-changing political landscape across Eurasia. The set of questions that her paper asks involved the use of “migration” as an analytic framework. Shedding light on different patterns of mobility helped her show that migration can include both temporary and sedentary settlements and does not always stem from conditions of exile and displacement. By focusing on how Afghan and Indian students drew on intellectual “contact zones” to produce, synthesize, and transform knowledge into new meaning, the paper sought to highlight the role of non-Europeans in rendering knowledge applicable to new local settings and shaping the history of “modern” sciences in the course of the twentieth century.

Taken together, the rich discussions about the role of knowledge in the labeling and practicing of migration brought up a set of questions addressing the aims and objects of historical migration research in general. First, the participants avoided the trap of reproducing official or state categories to order migration by not singularizing the migration process as such. Rather, they preferred to embed their objects of research in a dense description that took the everyday experiences of the historical actors into consideration – be they refugees, skilled or unskilled migrant workers, racialized subjects, intellectuals, or state officials. In this way, they highlighted the many intersections of knowledge making in, through and by migration with colonial knowledge production, professional career making, bureaucratic procedures, or resistant subaltern practices. While, at first glance, such an approach might seem to decenter the history of migration, it brings other categories to the fore such as race and race relations, social (upward and downward) mobility, labor, or (subaltern) practices of claim making and resistance. Analytically, this proves to be rewarding, as migration transforms into a cross-sectional field that connects a number of different fields, such as social, cultural or political history. In a similar vein, the papers used the term knowledge in a broad sense that includes professional knowledge, institutional knowledge, scientific knowledge and a kind of intuitive or everyday knowledge. The papers ask how these different forms of knowledge become visible in certain

situations related to the migration process and how they support or hinder the mastery of migration-related situations. At the same time, however, the papers showed the difficulties to pin down the very process of knowledge making, especially with regard to historical actors that are normally not perceived as knowledge producers such as laborers, refugees or students. Taken together, they made us aware of the variety of “knowledges,” of the different forms of knowledge production and of its multiple uses to govern people, to develop or unfold skills or to remember and translate cultural practices and shape cultural identities. They also helped us to critically reflect on our own knowledge production and our use of categories. Against this background, the Young Scholars Forum served as an excellent reminder to historians to stay aware of the analytical complexity and empirical messiness of migration processes and to remain epistemically sensible for the various forms knowledge may take in historically specific contexts.

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## **RACISM IN HISTORY AND CONTEXT: A VIRTUAL PANEL SERIES ON THE HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CRISIS AND RACISM**

Held in two parts, on September 15, 2020, and October 29, 2020. Presented by the Verband der Historiker und Historikerinnen Deutschlands (German Historical Association), the German Historical Institute Washington and its Pacific Regional Office, and the Institute of European Studies at University of California, Berkeley. Moderators: Elisabeth Engel (GHI Washington), Francisco Bethencourt (King's College London), Akasemi Newsome (UC Berkeley), Leti Volpp (UC Berkeley). Participants: Ana Lucia Araujo (Howard University); Manuela Bauche (Free University Berlin); Teresa Koloma Beck (Bundeswehr Universität München); Manuela Boatcă (University of Freiburg); Norbert Frei (University of Jena); Monica Muñoz Martinez (UT Austin); Kathryn Olivarius (Stanford University); Michael Rothberg (UC Los Angeles).

The COVID-19 pandemic has acted as a catalyst for existing areas of societal conflict. Open or hidden inequalities, which are often the result of long-term historical processes, are becoming much more visible under the conditions of the pandemic – as if in a crucible. The topic of racism forms one of the central aspects of discussions since the pandemic broke out in the spring of 2020 in the U.S. and Europe. The virtual panel series “Racism in History and Context,” held in the English language in the fall of 2020 with a total of more than 500 participants via Zoom, took up these debates as a central challenge for our societies. The series elaborated historical and sociological perspectives on the various contexts and pasts of the present crisis.

The pandemic crisis has been accompanied by a broad debate about racist inequalities and discrimination in the societies on both sides of the Atlantic. Spurred by the death of U.S. citizen George Floyd at the hands of police officers in early June, people around the world have taken to the streets to protest racism and police brutality. In the U.S., movements like *Black Lives Matter* have been strengthened. In addition, the U.S. African American population continues to be disproportionately affected by the pandemic. In Europe, too, and beyond, anti-racist protests have prompted a critical engagement with the remnants of colonial and slavery traditions. In Germany, the issue of addressing the country's colonial past from

a historical-political perspective has gained momentum, crystallizing, for example, in a sometimes fiercely polarized debate about renaming streets and public squares and buildings or about the no less disputed question of just how widely and deeply racist attitudes are anchored in the majority society or concretely within police departments. In many contexts, the crisis has uncovered modern racism, which has specific causes and can be traced to various historical contexts in each society where it finds its own expression.

The Verband der Historiker und Historikerinnen Deutschlands (VHD), the German Historical Institute Washington (GHI) and its Pacific Regional Office (PRO) in Berkeley, as well as the Institute of European Studies at UC Berkeley took this transatlantic diagnosis of the times as an occasion to illuminate present societal forms of racism from a historical perspective. The participating institutions invited sociologists and historians from North America and Europe to join the panel.

The first panel, “Rethinking Memory and Knowledge during Times of Crisis,” took place on September 15, 2020 and dealt with the questions of how the memory of and knowledge about racism, racist inequality, and racist violence have changed since the end of the Second World War, and which actors have played a role in knowledge production in each case.

Critical engagement with racist pasts has always been largely determined by political and cultural developments, and it varies from country to country. A comparative view, however, makes transnational patterns and intersectional entanglements apparent, with the memory of the Holocaust and decolonization, especially, playing a central role – the latter understood as a political process that even today is an ongoing cultural (knowledge) process. In the Federal Republic, Norbert Frei and Manuela Bauche averred, the memory of the Holocaust only became a central anchoring point of national self-understanding in the 1980s after decades of repression. And only in the last several years has there been an increasing awareness of critical engagement with racist violence in the colonial era of the German Empire or in the Federal Republic and in the GDR as more than a mere remnant of the Nazi era. In France, by contrast, as Michael Rothberg explained, political decolonization, and particularly the Algerian War of Independence, called for critical engagement with the Holocaust and the occupation period as early as the 1960s. Ana Lucia Araujo pointed out that the memory of the

Atlantic slave trade and slavery from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries did not follow a linear development of ever-expanding historical consciousness in the societies that participated in these historical processes. Rather, it was highly dependent on regional contexts: In the U.S., the civil rights movement played a decisive role in the 1960s; in Latin America, the military dictatorships and, in South Africa, the Apartheid regime long suppressed any critical, memory-culture engagement with these topics. The panelists regarded the late 1980s, and above all the 1990s, shaped as they were by the end of the Cold War, as a turning point because at that juncture, global spaces of memory for the Holocaust and slavery were able to become established.

An overarching pattern in the more recent history of knowledge about racism in the transatlantic world seems to be the perpetual challenge of national narratives of memory “from below.” According to Norbert Frei, the need to break through the broad collective silence about the Nazi past in the Adenauer era presented an important point of crystallization for the protests of 1968. In the 1980s, the history workshops decisively shaped the memory of the Holocaust above all at the local level and often from a life-world perspective. The memory of slavery, too, Ana Lucia Araujo noted, was (and continues in many cases to be) made more visible by means of identity-forming memory narratives of family history. Similarly, Manuela Bauche pointed out, today numerous postcolonial groups and movements shine a spotlight on the long-forgotten racist violence of the colonial era, thus contributing meaningfully to the recalibration and differentiation of national memory narratives. The point of departure for the second panel of the series was the fact that racism constitutes a reality of the present, as well as of recent history, and has in no way been overcome; it manifests itself not only in intentional acts of violence but also as pragmatic, historical, institutionalized everyday knowledge. As such a phenomenon, it has only come to be more widely discussed in the last few years, at least in Germany.

Entitled “Rethinking Health and Power during Times of Crisis,” the second panel, which took place on October 29, 2020, explored the historical and present intersections of racism, health, and state power. From the perspective of her research on experiences of violence in wartime societies, Teresa Koloma Beck examined the reorganization of everyday life during times of pandemic, revealing that

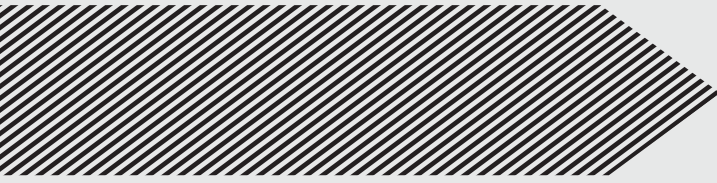
considerations of security and risk take on a new centrality around which people increasingly orient fundamental rules of behavior. For example, by constructing dangerous situations and characterizing certain persons or groups as risky, one can call up historically developed racialized attributions in the promise of providing orientation in a muddled conflict situation. For instance, the information that COVID-19 first appeared in the Chinese city of Wuhan was translated in practical everyday terms into the rule, built upon existing racist stereotypes, to be “cautious around people who look Asian” – *racial profiling* as a meaning-generating, socially enacted *othering* in everyday life. Another example that Manuela Boatcă highlighted reveals the effectiveness of racist structures and the reservoir of well-established lines of argument available in society for characterizing Eastern European seasonal workers as uncivilized, less domesticated groups that are robust in body and accustomed to illness. This argument allows their labor to continue to be exploited as usual in the German food industry under pandemic conditions without further concern.

Such forms of practical everyday racialization of groups of people are not new phenomena in the present, nor are they restricted to times of crisis, but rather, they have been documented in the historiography in their function of creating order. Monica Muñoz Martinez demonstrated how actors in Texas and other U.S. states in the early twentieth century tried to legitimize racist violence and mob law, among other things, by characterizing immigrants from Mexico as a risk to the “nation’s health.” And, as Kathryn Olivarius explained, in the context of yellow fever epidemics in the American South in the early nineteenth century, the concept of “immunity capital” – built upon the racist hierarchy of slavery – made both the rights and privileges of whites, but also the market value of slaves for their owners, dependent on their “acclimatization” status. Since it had not been discovered yet that mosquitoes transmitted yellow fever, the usual preventive measures largely failed to have any effect. Consequently, immunity by means of natural infection remained the only way one could “acclimatize,” so that having had an infection came to be a sort of entry ticket into the world of the “Cotton Kingdom.” In this way, the white plantation owners’ attempts to generate meaning through these powerful interpretations of the yellow fever epidemics strengthened existing racial inequalities between poor and rich, thus cementing the social and economic order as natural and thus logical and just.

Present considerations to secure economic vitality by achieving “herd immunity” or by issuing “immunity passports” show that the “immunity capital” chapter of history has not yet come to a close. In these approaches, the state once again assumes the role of a central distributor of privileges, largely leaving already marginalized groups out. These groups, moreover, often have no opportunity to avoid the virus. However, the beginning of a transformation of structural inequalities has always taken place within the context of crisis situations, and this insight, too, all the panelists believe, is essential to understanding the entangled dynamics of the pandemic, racism, and state violence in historical perspective.

Video and audio recordings of all the panels of the series are available at *L.I.S.A. - Das Wissenschaftsportal der Gerda Henkel Stiftung*.

Frank Kell (German Historical Association)



# **GHI News**





## GHI NEWS

### 2020 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize

The 2020 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize, which is awarded annually by the Friends of the German Historical Institute for the best dissertation in German history completed at a North American university, was awarded to Emma L. Thomas (University of Michigan). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the award ceremony had to be postponed until May 2021. The selection committee was composed of: Tanya Kevorkian (chair, Millersville University), Frank Biess (University of California, San Diego), and Lisa Fetheringill Zwicker (Indiana University, South Bend).

The committee's prize citation for Emma Thomas' dissertation "Contested Labors: New Guinean Women and the German Colonial Indenture, 1884-1914" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, advised by Kathleen Canning) reads:

We are delighted to honor Emma Thomas with the 2020 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize. Her clearly and compellingly argued thesis recovers the lives of New Guinean women as they made their way through periods of German colonial indenture. Thomas assimilates, challenges, and extends a range of approaches by historians, anthropologists, and other scholars: an impressive analytical range. She provides a fresh perspective on the German colonial project by showing how closely sexual and economic exploitation were linked in everyday life. The women's reproductive and productive labor were likewise linked. Thomas' combining of analyses of representations and actual practices is enlightening. She also demonstrates the gendered nature of this project's resonance in the metropole. She starts by reconstructing colonizers' sexualization of New Guinean women and preoccupation with vernacular marriage practices, and then explores a range of sites of contact between New Guinean women and German colonial men, from plantations to colonists' homes to colonial courts: well beyond the formal and expected.

Thomas undertook imaginative and impressive research to build this picture. Many imperial records fail to mention women, but she pieces together a fuller picture by working with sources from numerous Australian and New Guinean libraries and archives, as well as missionary archives in Germany and beyond. Thomas' research allows her to uncover a wide spectrum of everyday interactions and types of labor. Interactions included routine sexual violence, which courts processed as sexual promiscuity on the part of the women. Thomas investigates the actual dynamics involved in relations that colonists (and some historians) characterized as

“cohabitation,” “marriage,” and “prostitution.” For example, what colonizers presented as prostitution was actually sexual violence against New Guinean women. However, the women did maintain agency, including active social and personal networks, marriages to New Guinean men, and litigation in colonial courts. The picture Thomas develops thus is nuanced as well as original.

## NEW STAFF PUBLICATIONS

### Monographs

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Schmidt, Susanne. *Midlife Crisis: The Feminist Origins of a Chauvinist Cliché*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020.

Theilhaber, Amir. *Friedrich Rosen. Orientalist Scholarship and International Politics*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020.

Urbansky, Sören. *Beyond the Steppe Frontier: A History of the Sino-Russian Border*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020.

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Schmidt, Susanne, Max Stadler, Niki Rhyner et al., eds. "Gegen/Wissen." Special Issue, *Cache: Magazin für die Geschichte und Gegenwart der wissenschaftlich-technischen Welt* 1 (2020).

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Ananieva, Anna. "Intelligence, Diplomacy, Entertainment: Catherine II's Son Tours Europe Incognito." *Journal of Modern Russian History and Historiography* 12 (2019): 149-168.

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them?” *Transatlantic Take*, German Marshall Fund of the United States. October 2, 2020.

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## STAFF CHANGES

**Andreas Greiner** joined the GHI Washington in January 2021 as a research fellow in Global and Transregional History. His research specializes in infrastructure networks, their spatiality and materiality in the long 19th and early 20th centuries. He received his PhD in history from ETH Zurich in 2019 where he also worked as a research assistant at the Chair for History of the Modern World. Before joining the GHI he was a postdoctoral fellow in the Max Weber Program at the European University Institute in Florence. His first monograph, *Human Portage and Colonial State Formation in German East Africa, 1870–1914: Tensions of Transport* (forthcoming 2022), explores the shifting role of caravan transport and human portage in colonial East Africa, unveiling the resilience of precolonial structures in the era of “high imperialism.” His current research project examines the entangled history of intercontinental airline networks in the interwar period.

**Mark R. Stoneman**, an editor since February 2010, left the GHI’s regular staff in April 2021 to take up freelance work (<https://markstoneman.com>). He continues to collaborate on some GHI projects, in particular the *History of Knowledge and Migrant Knowledge* blogs.

## **GHI FELLOWSHIPS AND INTERNSHIPS**

### **Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships**

The GHI awards short-term fellowships to European and North American doctoral students as well as postdoctoral scholars to pursue research projects that draw upon primary sources located in the United States. We are particularly interested in research projects that fit into the following fields: German and European history, the history of German-American relations, the role of Germany and the USA in international relations, and American history (European doctoral and postdoctoral scholars only). The proposed research projects should make use of historical methods and engage with the relevant historiography. We especially invite applications from doctoral students and postdoctoral scholars who currently have no funding from their home institutions. The fellowships are usually granted for periods of one to five months.

The GHI also offers a number of other long-term doctoral and postdoctoral fellowships with more specific profiles to strengthen key research interests at the institute, including: the history of knowledge, the history of race and ethnicity, the history of religion and religiosity, the history of family and kinship, the history of migration, and North American history. In addition to these opportunities, several new fellowships programs have been introduced: The Binational Tandem Research Program for “The History of Knowledge” and “Global and Trans-regional History,” and the Gerda Henkel Postdoctoral Fellowship for Digital History. For further information about these programs and current application deadlines, please check our website at [www.ghi-dc.org/fellowships](http://www.ghi-dc.org/fellowships).

### **GHI Internships**

The GHI Internship Program gives German and American students of history, political science, and library studies an opportunity to gain experience at a scholarly research institute. Interns assist individual research projects, work for the library, take part in the preparation and hosting of conferences, and help with our publications. They receive a small stipend. The program is very flexible in the sense that the GHI tries to accommodate the interns’ interests, abilities, and goals. A two-month minimum stay is required; a three-month stay is preferred. There is a rolling review of applications. For further information, please check our website at [www.ghi-dc.org/internships](http://www.ghi-dc.org/internships).

## **GHI FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS FOR 2020/21**

### **Tandem Fellowships in the History of Migration at the German Historical Institute Washington's Pacific Regional Office in Berkeley**

**Robin Buller**, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
*Sephardi Immigrants in Paris: Navigating Community, Culture, and Citizenship between France and the Ottoman Empire, 1918-1945*

**Anne Klotz**, Leibniz-Institut für jüdische Kultur und Geschichte – Simon Dubnow  
*Polish-Jewish Journalists and the Production and Movement of Knowledge before, during and after the Holocaust*

### **Horner Library Fellows**

**Ariane Fichtl**, Universität Augsburg  
*The Declaration of the Rights of Man and its Reception within the Democratic-Republican Societies of Pennsylvania (1790-1800)*

**Timothy Grieve-Carlson**, Rice University  
*American Aurora: Environment and Apocalypse in Early Pennsylvania*

**Sebastian Willert**, (Technische Universität Berlin)  
*Die "Peters-Hilprecht-Kontroverse" an der University of Pennsylvania. Eine Geschichte transatlantischer Rivalität und ihrer Auswirkungen auf die deutsch-amerikanische Öffentlichkeit zwischen 1889 und 1911*

### **Short-term Research Fellowships**

Due to the pandemic the application process for short-term research fellowships was temporarily placed on hold.

**GHI RESEARCH SEMINAR AND COLLOQUIUM, FALL 2020**

- September 9**     **Still Lives: Jewish Photography in Nazi Germany**  
Ofar Ashkenazi (Hebrew University)
- September 24**   **Locating the Central Asiatic Expedition**  
Lukas Rieppel (Brown University)
- October 7**        **Historicizing Immigration Control at Airports:  
The Case of Frankfurt**  
Carolin Liebisch-Gümüş (GHI Washington)
- November 4**      **Pan-American Mobility Infrastructures and the  
Cooperation Between Experts from the United  
States and Latin America**  
Mario Peters (GHI Washington)
- November 18**    **Mass Migration, Mass Digitization: Studying  
Viral Texts in German-Language Newspapers in  
the U.S., 1830-1914**  
Jana Keck (GHI Washington)

## **DIGITAL CULTURAL HERITAGE DC MEETUP #DCHDC**

**August 18**

### **Digitizing the Black Experience**

Lopez D. Matthews (Howard University Libraries and the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center)

### **African American Digital Humanities initiative (AADHUM)**

Marisa Parham (University of Maryland)

**October 20**

### **The People's Archive**

Kerrie Cotten Williams (DC Public Library)

**December 15**

### **Putting Accessibility First**

Tiana Trutna (Metadata Cataloger for the Digital Preservation Archive of the Library + Archives at National Geographic Society)

## GHI CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2021

- January 22**      **Virtual Postgraduate Forum Get-Together**  
 GAAS Virtual Get-Together organized by Jana Keck (GHI Washington), Whitney Peterson (University of Stuttgart), and Melissa Schlecht (University of Stuttgart)
- January 27**      **Ruin and Renewal: Civilizing Europe after the Second World War**  
 Lecture (virtual)  
 Speaker: Paul Betts (St Anthony's College, Oxford)
- January 29**      **Migration and Racism in the Americas: The Case of Migrants in the United States**  
 Lecture (virtual)  
 Speakers: Ramón Grosfoguel (University of California, Berkeley); Comment: Julia Roth (Bielefeld University)
- February 10**      **Third Annual West Coast Germanists' Workshop: Facts, Fakes, and Representations (Panel I)**  
 Virtual Workshop  
 Conveners: Sheer Ganor (Pacific Regional Office of the German Historical Institute Washington), Isabel Richter (UC Berkeley)
- February 26**      **Mexico and the United States: Frontierization and Migration Policies**  
 Lecture (virtual)  
 Speakers: Kateřina Březinová (Metropolitan University Prague) and Luicy Pedroza (El Colegio de México); Moderators: Albert Manke (GHI PRO) and Stefan Rinke (FU Berlin)
- March 3**      **A Demon-Haunted Land: Witches, Wonder Doctors, and the Ghosts of the Past in Post-WWII Germany**  
 Lecture (virtual)  
 Speaker: Monica Black (University of Tennessee, Knoxville); Moderator: Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann (University of California, Berkeley)



- March 5**                    **Town Hall Meeting of the German Association for American Studies (GAAS)**
- Panel Discussion (virtual)
- Organized by PGF Team Stuttgart and GHI Washington
- March 5**                    **Layers of Untold Stories: Sharon Dodua Otoo in Conversation with Translator Jon Cho-Polizzi and Deniz Göktürk**
- Panel Discussion (virtual)
- Featured Speaker: Sharon Dodua Otoo;  
Discussants: Jon Cho-Polizzi and Deniz Göktürk (University of California, Berkeley)
- March 9**                    **Vaccines and (Dis-)trust in Medical Science in Times of Crisis**
- Part 3 of Virtual Panel Series “Racism in History and Context” Panelists: Ute Frevert (Max Planck Institute for Human Development), Samuel K. Roberts (Columbia University), Sarah B. Rodriguez (Northwestern University), Malte Thießen (LWL-Institut für westfälische Regionalgeschichte); Moderator: Johannes Paulmann (Leibniz Institute of European History)
- March 10**                    **Third Annual West Coast Germanists’ Workshop: Facts, Fakes, and Representations (Panel II)**
- Virtual Workshop
- Conveners: Sheer Ganor (Pacific Regional Office of the German Historical Institute Washington), Isabel Richter (UC Berkeley)
- March 11**                    **Eurafrica: The Colonial Origins of the European Union**
- Lecture (virtual)
- Speaker: Peo Hansen (Linköping University); moderated by Akasemi Newsome (UC Berkeley)
- March 11**                    **Geographical Information Systems (GIS)**
- DH@GHI Workshop
- Speaker: Sebastian Bondzio (GHI Washington/ RRCHNM)

- March 26**      **Public Transport in the Americas: Mobility and Transatlantic Scientific Exchanges**  
Lecture (virtual)  
Speakers: Andra B. Chastain (Washington State University Vancouver); Dhan Zunino Singh (National University of Quilmes); Moderators: Bianca Freire-Medeiros (Universidade de São Paulo/Brasilien), Mario Peters (GHI Washington)
- April 2**      **Unreadable Archives: Zafer Şenocak in conversation with Deniz Göktürk and Kristin Dickinson**  
Panel Discussion (virtual) | Speaker: Zafer Şenocak; Discussants: Kristin Dickinson (University of Michigan); Deniz Göktürk (University of California, Berkeley)
- April 7**      **Third Annual West Coast Germanists' Workshop: Facts, Fakes, and Representations (Panel III)**  
Virtual Workshop  
Conveners: Sheer Ganor (Pacific Regional Office of the German Historical Institute Washington), Isabel Richter (UC Berkeley)
- April 8**      **Digitization and Digital Humanities: What is the Role of Libraries?**  
DH@GHI Workshop  
Speaker: Clemens Neudecker (Berlin State Library)
- April 16**      **The Language of Dreams: Yoko Tawada in conversation with Elisabeth Krimmer and Jonas Teupert**  
Panel Discussion (virtual)  
Featured Speaker: Yoko Tawada; Discussants: Elisabeth Krimmer (University of California, Davis) and Jonas Teupert (University of California, Berkeley)

- April 19-20**      **Climate Change, Energy, and Sustainability in the Pacific Region: Knowledge, Policies, and Transfers (1970s-present)**
- Conference at the German Institute for Japan Studies, Tokyo (virtual)
- Conveners: Sarah Beringer (German Historical Institute Washington D.C.), Benjamin Beuerle (German Historical Institute Moscow), Sonja Ganseforth (German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ)) and Yufei Zhou (DIJ); in collaboration with the Max Weber Foundation Research Group at the National University of Singapore and the Max Weber Foundation China Branch Office in Beijing
- April 22**      **Migration and Racism in the United States and Germany in the Twentieth Century**
- Virtual Workshop
- Conveners: Maria Alexopoulou (Technische Universität Berlin), Elisabeth Engel (GHI Washington)
- April 26**      **Change in Motion: Environment, Migration, and Mobilities**
- Workshop at the Pacific Regional Office of the GHI in Berkeley (virtual) Conveners: Sarah Earnshaw (Pacific Regional Office of the German Historical Institute Washington, Berkeley) and Samantha Fox (Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility, The New School, New York)
- April 29**      **Transmission of Intelligence and Information: A History of Artificial Intelligence**
- Lecture (virtual)
- Speaker: Rudolf Seising (Deutsches Museum)
- April 30**      **Flying Down to Rio: Aviation, National Identities, and Hemispheric Relations in the Americas**
- Lecture (virtual)
- Speakers: Melina Piglia (National University of Mar del Plata); Leonie Schuster (Kiel University); Peter Soland (Southeast Missouri State University); Moderators: Stefan Rinke (Freie Universität Berlin) Mario Peters (GHI Washington)

- May 5**                    **Third Annual West Coast Germanists' Workshop: Facts, Fakes, and Representations (Panel IV)**
- Virtual Workshop
- Conveners: Sheer Ganor (Pacific Regional Office of the German Historical Institute Washington), Isabel Richter (UC Berkeley)
- May 6**                    **A Backstage Perspective on Digital Archives, Collections and Libraries**
- DH@GHI Workshop
- Speaker: Katharina Hering (Digital Librarian, GHI Washington)
- May 13**                 **The History of the Second Half of the Twentieth Century as Shown in Six Groups of Graphs, Charts, and Maps**
- 12th Gerald Feldman Lecture (virtual)
- Speaker: Jonathan Sperber (University of Missouri); moderated by Kenneth Ledford (Case Western Reserve University)
- May 14**                 **29th Annual Symposium of the Friends of the GHI**
- Award of the 2020 & 2021 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize (virtual) Prize Winners: Emma Thomas (PhD., University of Michigan, 2019) and Richard Calis (PhD., Princeton University, 2020)
- May 15**                 **Reflecting on German Heritage in the United States in the Twenty-First Century: A Panel Discussion with German Scholars**
- Panel Discussion (virtual)
- Speakers: Sarah Panter (Leibniz Institute of European History, Mainz) and Sebastian Bondzio (GHI Washington/Roy Rosenzweig Center for New Media and History), Moderator: Jana Keck (GHI Washington)

- May 18-19**      **In Search of the Migrant Child: Global Histories of Youth and Migration between Knowledge, Experience, and Everyday Life**  
Virtual Workshop  
Conveners: Friederike Kind-Kovacs (Hannah-Arendt-Institute for Totalitarianism Research, Dresden), Sheer Ganor (University of Minnesota, Minneapolis), and Swen Steinberg (Carleton University, Ottawa/German Historical Institute Washington with its Pacific Regional Office at University of California Berkeley)
- May 20**      **The Golem: The Artificial Anthropoid from Enlightenment Monster to AI**  
Lecture (virtual)  
Speaker: Cathy Gelbin (University of Manchester)
- June 7-9**      **Mobilities, Exclusion, and Migrants' Agency in the Pacific Realm in a Transregional and Diachronic Perspective**  
Conference at the University of California, Berkeley  
Conveners: Albert Manke (GHI's Regional Office at UC Berkeley) and Sören Urbansky (German Historical Institute Washington)
- June 15-19**      **26th Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar: German History in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries**  
Virtual Seminar  
Conveners: Anna von der Goltz (Georgetown University) and Richard F. Wetzell (GHI Washington)
- June 17**      **Text Mining with Voyant Tools**  
DH@GHI Workshop  
Speaker: Jana Keck (Research Fellow in Digital History, German Historical Institute Washington)

**September 23-25    Environments of Exile: Refugees, Nature, and Representations**

Biennial Conference of the North American Society for Exile Studies at Queen's University, Kingston, ON

Conveners: Swen Steinberg (Queen's University, Kingston/GHI PRO) and Helga Schreckenberger (University of Vermont, Burlington)

**September 30 -    12th Medieval History Seminar  
October 3**

Seminar at GHI London

Conveners: Paul Freedman (Yale University), Bernhard Jussen (Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main), Simon MacLean (University of St Andrews), Fiona Griffiths (Stanford University), Len Scales (Durham University), and Dorothea Weltecke (Goethe University Frankfurt); organized by the German Historical Institute London in co-operation with the German Historical Institute Washington

**September 30 -    Sexuality and the Law in German-Speaking  
October 4            Europe**

Seminar at Forty-Fifth Annual Conference of the German Studies Association, Indianapolis, Indiana

Conveners: Martin Lücke (Freie Universität Berlin), Veronika Springmann (Freie Universität Berlin), and Richard F. Wetzell (German Historical Institute Washington)

**October 12         Historicizing the Refugee Experience,  
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- October 18-21**      **Histories of Migration: Transatlantic and Global Perspectives**
- Fifth Annual Bucerius Young Scholars Forum at the Pacific Regional Office of the GHI in Berkeley
- Conveners: Franziska Exeler (Department of History, Free University Berlin; Centre for History and Economics, University of Cambridge) and Sören Urbansky (Pacific Regional Office of the German Historical Institute Washington, Berkeley)
- November 15-16**      **Contested Meanings of Migration Facilitation: Emigration Agents, Coyotes, Rescuers, and Human Traffickers**
- Annual Academic and Policy Symposium: Innovation through Migration at GHI PRO
- Conveners: Ulf Brunnbauer (Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies & Regensburg University) and Andrea Westermann (GHI PRO)
- December 9-11**      **Datafication in the Historical Humanities: Reconsidering Traditional Understandings of Sources and Data**
- International Conference and Workshop at GHI Washington Conveners: German Historical Institute Washington in collaboration with Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C2DH), Chair of Digital History at Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Consortium Initiative NFDI4Memory, Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, and Stanford University, Department of History
- December 13-15**      **Antisemitism and Sexuality Reconsidered**
- Conference at the Center for Research on Antisemitism, TU Berlin Conveners: Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (Center for Research on Antisemitism, TU Berlin), Anna-Carolin Augustin (GHI Washington), Sebastian Bischoff (Paderborn University), Kristoff Kerl (University of Copenhagen), in cooperation with the German Historical Institute, Washington DC (GHI) and the Center for Research on Antisemitism, TU Berlin

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The collection includes books on American history written by German authors as well as historical literature of the institute's past research foci: global history, religious studies, exile and migration studies, environmental history, and economic history. The collection includes only print materials, mostly secondary literature; there are no archival holdings.

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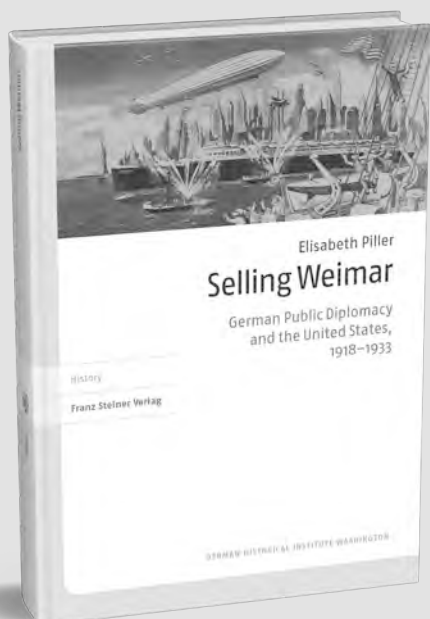
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In early America, the notion that settlers ought to receive undeveloped land for free was enormously popular among the rural poor and social reformers. Well into the Jacksonian era, however, Congress considered the demand fiscally and economically irresponsible. Increasingly, this led proponents to cast the idea as a military matter: land grantees would supplant troops in the efforts to take over the continent from Indian nations and rival colonial powers. Julius Wilm's book examines the free land debates from the 1790s to the 1850s and reconstructs the settlement experiences under the donation laws for Florida (1842) and the Oregon Territory (1850).

In the 1960s, Operation Crossroads Africa (OCA) was in the largest private volunteer organization in Africa. Founded in 1957, OCA initiated numerous aid projects in various regions of Africa. On the basis of extensive archival research and interviews with contemporary witnesses, Katharina Scheffler examines the early years of the organization. In this German-language study, Scheffler illuminates OCA's founding, as well as the institutional and social hurdles that had to be overcome in the beginning. She pays special attention to the experiences of volunteers themselves and their role as unofficial ambassadors of America, on the one hand, and as pioneers for intercultural understanding, on the other.



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In *Encountering Empire*, Elisabeth Engel traces how black American missionaries – men and women grappling with their African heritage – established connections in Africa during the heyday of European colonialism. Reconstructing the black American 'colonial encounter', Engel analyzes the images, transatlantic relationships, and possibilities of representation African American missionaries developed for themselves while negotiating colonial regimes. Illuminating a neglected chapter of Atlantic history, Engel demonstrates that African Americans used imperial structures for their own self-determination. *Encountering Empire* thus challenges the notion that pan-Africanism was the only viable strategy for black emancipation.

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From the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, regional Protestant churches became increasingly involved in the Atlantic region, fundamentally changing the North Atlantic world of Protestantism – a process that also transcended ecclesiastical and sovereign boundaries. In this German-language study, which positions itself beyond the usual track of national historical interpretations, Alexander Pyrges addresses this process with a focus on the Ebenezer colonial project: Founded in 1734, the Ebenezer congregation in the British colony of Georgia was supported for decades by Anglican and Lutheran-Pietist church reformers in England and in the Holy Roman Empire. The study sheds light on the growing density of religion in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century North Atlantic world.



Alexander Pyrges

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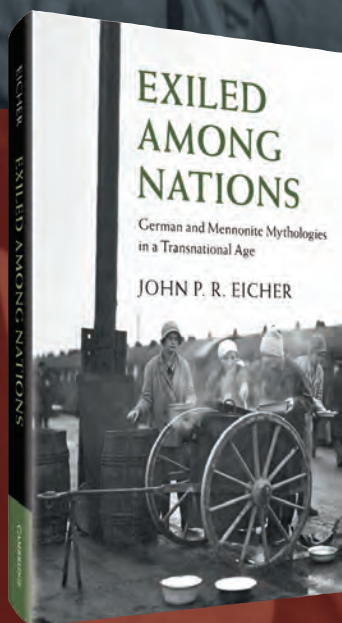
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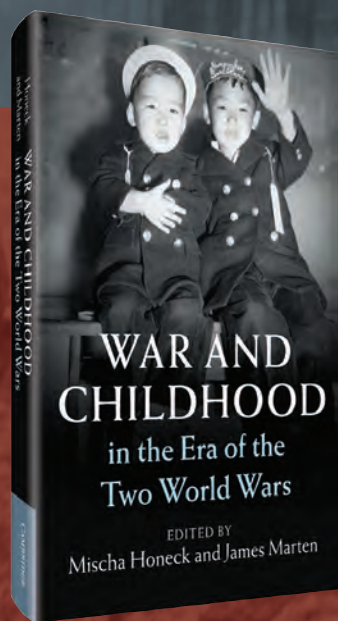
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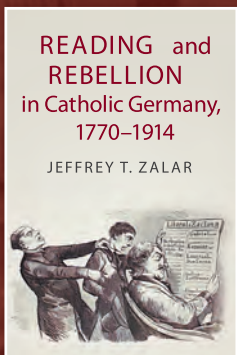
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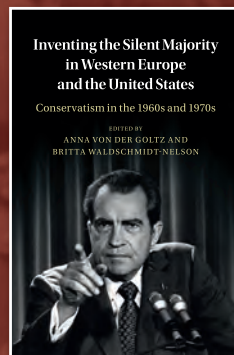
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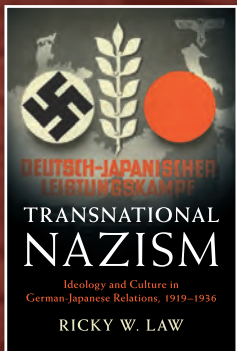
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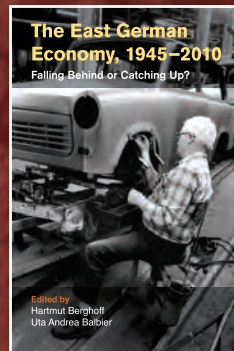
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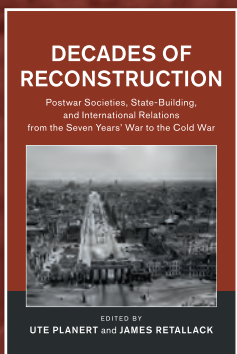
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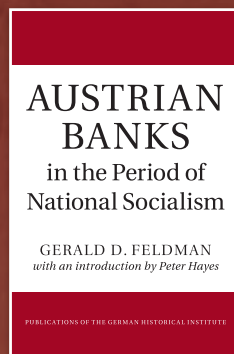
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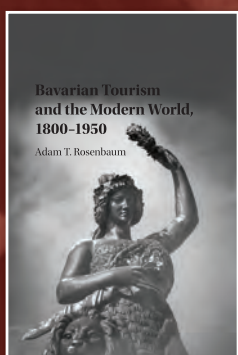
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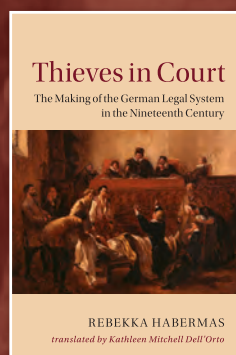
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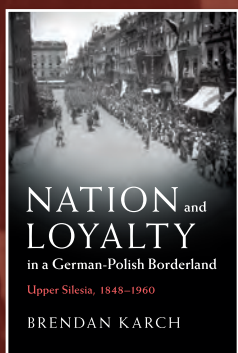
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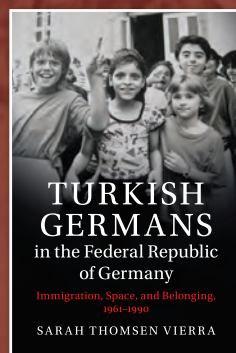
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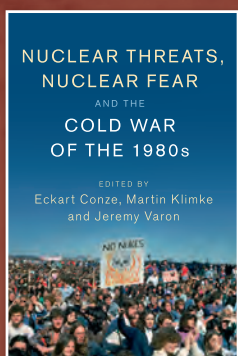
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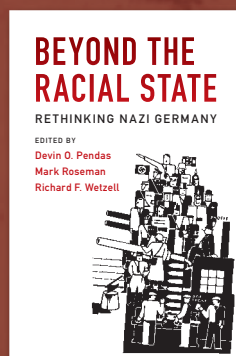
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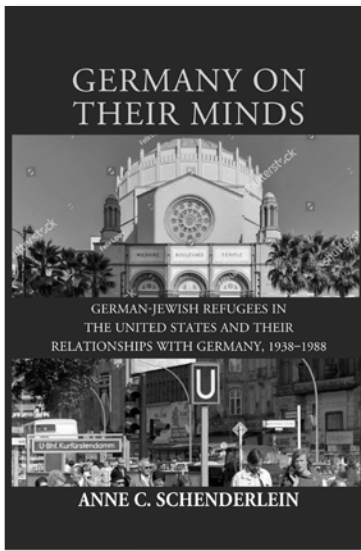


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## GERMANY ON THEIR MINDS

**German Jewish Refugees in the United States and Relationships with Germany, 1938–1988**

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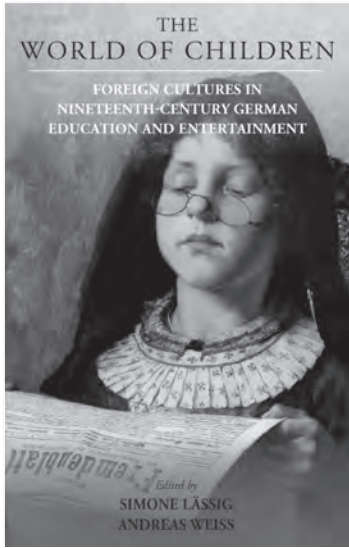
Throughout the 1930s and early 1940s, approximately ninety thousand German Jews fled their homeland and settled in the United States, prior to that nation closing its borders to Jewish refugees. And even though many of them wanted little to do with Germany, the circumstances of the Second World War and the postwar era meant that engagement of some kind was unavoidable—whether direct or indirect, initiated within the community

itself or by political actors and the broader German public. This book carefully traces these entangled histories on both sides of the Atlantic, demonstrating the remarkable extent to which German Jews and their former fellow citizens helped to shape developments from the Allied war effort to the course of West German democratization.

**Anne C. Schenderlein** is the managing director of the Dahlem Humanities Center at Freie Universität Berlin. After receiving her doctorate in modern European history at the University of California, San Diego, she was a research fellow at the German Historical Institute from 2015 to 2019. Her research has been supported by numerous fellowships, including the Leo Baeck Fellowship and, more recently, a grant from the American Jewish Archives, where she conducted research on American Jewish boycotts and consumption of German products. She is the coeditor, with Paul Lerner and Uwe Spiekermann, of *Jewish Consumer Cultures in Europe and America* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

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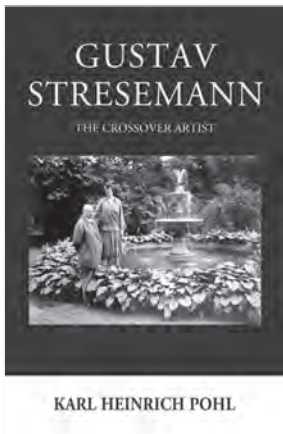
In an era of rapidly increasing technological advances and international exchange, how did young people come to understand the world beyond their doorsteps? Focusing on Germany through the lens of the history of knowledge, this collection explores various media for children—from textbooks, adventure stories, and other literature to board games, museums, and cultural events—to probe what they aimed to teach young people about different cultures and world regions. These multifaceted contributions from specialists in historical, literary, and cultural studies delve into the ways that children absorbed, combined, and adapted notions of the world.

**Simone Lässig**, since 2006 Professor for Modern History at Braunschweig University, has been the Director of the German Historical Institute in Washington, DC, since 2015. Prior to that, she was the director of the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Braunschweig, Germany.

**Andreas Weiß** is a historian based in Berlin. A former research fellow of the Georg Eckert Institute in Braunschweig, Germany, he was also a research fellow at University College London from October 2016 to April 2017.

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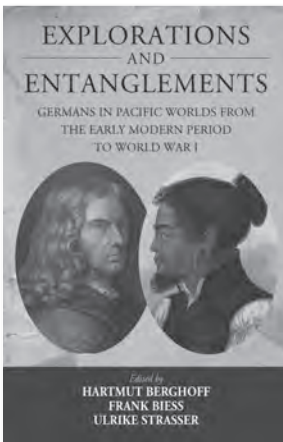
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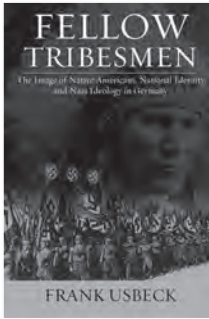


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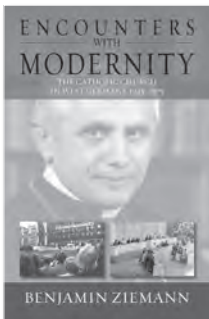
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