

# Migration: Risk or Development?

## A Round Table Discussion

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### Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to begin this part of the programme of the 2009 annual conference of the Academia Europæa in Naples by introducing the participants in our round-table discussion.

Following the seniority rule, I start with Horst Pietschmann [HP], emeritus from the University of Hamburg in Germany, where he taught the history of the Iberian Peninsula and of Iberian America. He published several short histories, in German, of Spain, Portugal, Brazil and Mexico. In addition, he published on the early development of Spanish-American society as well as on the Atlantic economy at large. Unfortunately, Professor Pietschmann could not come to Naples and has mailed in his answers.

Second, I would like to introduce Leonard Blussé [LB], sinologist and professor of Asian History at the University of Leiden. Leonard Blussé has published on various topics in Asian-European relations and one of his areas of interest is the history of the overseas Chinese. Recently he published *Visible Cities: Canton, Nagasaki, and Batavia and the Coming of the Americans* (The Edwin O. Reischauer Lectures).

Last, but not least I welcome Leo Lucassen [LL], professor of Social History at Leiden University and a long-time student of migration movements. His PhD thesis discussed Gypsies (Sinti and Roma) and other migrant groups in Europe,

he has published various collections of essays and, in 2005, the widely acclaimed monograph *The Immigrant Threat*.

My name is Pieter Emmer [PE], I am Emeritus professor of History at Leiden University, I head the Archaeology and History Section of the Academia Europaea, and as far as my own expertise in this area of history is concerned, I have published on the free and coerced migrations across the Atlantic, published a study on the Dutch Slave Trade and collaborated with Leo Lucassen in publishing an *Encyclopaedia of Migration in Europe* with Cambridge University Press, of which an earlier version has been published in German as *Enzyklopädie Migration in Europa, vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart* in 2007. Horst Pietschmann also contributed to that Encyclopaedia.

**[PE] Rather than seniority, I would now like to switch to chronology as the leading principle in the first part of our discussion by asking Horst Pietschmann whether there is any way in which we can compare the migrations from Aragon to Southern Italy in the fifteenth century to the migration to the New World. Or was the migration from Spain to southern Italy dominated by civil servants and the military, while the migration to the New World involved Spanish migrants of a much more diverse background?**

**[HP]** Chronology is indeed very important to understand the Spanish case, because one has to build two chronological bridges: first from Aragón's Empire of the Middle Ages, which more or less controlled the western part of the Mediterranean. The second bridge goes back to the more Castilian- and Portuguese-centred expansion in the Atlantic that peaked when Philip II inherited Portugal around 1580 and reorganized his empire politically by giving the constituent parts major autonomy – which more or less is the moment when Britain and the Netherlands started to participate in the process of expansion. From the end of the Thirty Years' War in 1648 until the ascension to the Spanish throne of the Bourbon dynasty in 1700 we have a transitory phase, when the Iberian colonies acted already rather autonomously. A case in point was the expulsion of the Dutch from Brazil, which was achieved by Brazilian forces alone, going against the politics of the newly independent Braganza dynasty in Portugal, engaged in winning Dutch support against Spain, but who had no option than to follow colonial procedures. In a similar way, in the eighteenth century, Spain's new dynasty had to start a second conquest of its American possessions, which ended in independence at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Naples, Sicily and later all of Italy were crucial for the Spanish empire during all the periods mentioned until 1648. Towards the middle of the fifteenth century, Aragón's king Alphons V established himself in Naples in order to maintain control over the Mediterranean granaries, protect the western part of the Mediterranean

against the Turks, and gain influence and control over the Papacy from the south. By the way, it should be mentioned that he was the principal protector of Lorenzo Valla, who as a humanist and philologist discovered the fallacy of the so-called 'donation of Constantine', the Roman emperor who turned to Christianity, and who some centuries later was said to have given the authority over Rome and the western part of the empire to the popes. Later, when Charles V divided his possessions before resigning, the ancient possessions of the iron crown of the Langobards were given to Spain, which from then on controlled large parts of Italy from the South to the North. Meanwhile Philip II influenced the papal administration rather directly by paying salaries to the majority of the cardinals. At least until 1648 the Netherlands as well as the Mediterranean with its North African coast constituted the most important areas of Spanish imperial policy, where the crown spent most of the money it invested. Meanwhile, America and the Atlantic area were secondary fields of activity, where only small parts of the revenues from mining were spent on defence, while the major part was invested in financing Spain's European policy, which explains the rather bureaucratic and economically ineffective scheme of naval communication with America composed of two convoyed fleets crossing the Atlantic in both directions annually.

Migration between Italy and Spain was therefore continuous and impossible to quantify. What can be said, however, is that the migration process in both directions embraced more or less the complete range of social strata, from the high nobility and clergy to common people from the countryside, in addition to all kinds of professionals, soldiers, merchants, regular and secular clergy, seafaring people, and intellectuals. This migration process was partly deliberate, partly casual. Spanish students went to study in Bologna, Spanish high nobility serving in administrative positions in Italy were accompanied by part of their Spanish clients, soldiers recruited in Spain were sent to Italy often without knowing their final destination. Inter-marriage was a rather frequent phenomenon. The Order of Malta also was a permanent point of attraction, as well as the papal court for both temporal and permanent migration. We know a lot about individual life stories of all kinds of migrants, but we do not have all-embracing studies. At the same time, we find Italians everywhere in the Spanish dominions, but we are best informed about merchants, bankers, artists, (military-) architects, and intellectuals. Even in the Spanish conquest of America, Italians very often acted as money lenders, financing expeditions such as those of Columbus, Cortes and Pizarro. To a certain degree this migration continued even after Spain had lost its Italian possessions.

**[PE] Coming back to the migration to the New World, there are two remarkable observations to be made. First of all the Spanish and the Portuguese had the New World to themselves for more than a century. They could settle everywhere and seem to have chosen the most attractive parts, i.e. those that were**

**densely populated and had plenty of precious metals. Over time, however, it seems that North America, rather than the Caribbean or South America, became the premium immigration region. Why did the Iberians select areas that became less prosperous? And secondly, the number of emigrants to Brazil among the Portuguese must have been considerable, on a par with that of the emigration from the British Isles, i.e. the highest in Europe. However, when we take stock around 1800, Portugal is well on its way to becoming the poorest country in Western Europe, while the UK is perhaps not the richest, but certainly the most dynamic country at the time. Could you explain the choice of destinations of the migrants and the effects on the Iberian countries?**

[HP] Spanish migration to the Americas during the sixteenth century is calculated to have been of the order of more or less 60,000 people, coming from the lower third of the nobility, clergy and commoners. These three social groups all seem to have encompassed similar social hierarchies, except for those sent to the New World in order to take up higher administrative positions. Despite an administrative system of migration control, such as the necessity to obtain a licence, it seems that the overwhelming majority of migrants left Spain illegally. In America, very often they continued to move to the regions that offered the best conditions for obtaining an adequate position in society. Very soon both the regions of the great pre-Columbian Indian empires, i.e. the Aztecs and the Incas, as well as the newly created Spanish cities became the most attractive areas of settlement for these migrants. Social control in these regions functioned much better since Europeans generally were not allowed to settle among the municipalities of the Amerindians controlled by their own authorities. Spanish urban centres and Indian municipalities controlled by their former nobility had a common interest in supervising – and in receiving their respective share of – the Indian labour force, which could be mobilized best by employing pre-Spanish mechanisms of labour control. Thus, Lima and Mexico City became major colonial metropolises, controlling a hierarchical system of cities and Amerindian municipalities, while the old central functions of the Indian municipalities declined and became increasingly more and more rural. At the same time, a mixed culture with a strong Christian religious influence developed in spite of the continued use of indigenous languages and elements of old folk-traditions. In fact, the Spanish cities functioned as ‘islands of development’ a phenomenon that was widely discussed during the 1960s and 1970s. In addition, we find successful conquerors and settlers, sometimes married to noble Amerindian women, re-migrating to Spain, such as those who profited from the ransom paid in precious metal by the imprisoned Inca Atahualpa. However, to date, comprehensive studies of remigration to Spain are lacking. Also, there are no studies regarding Amerindians travelling or migrating to Spain, except for some individual cases.

Yet, there are indications that members of the indigenous elite travelled to Spain in order to claim privileges or rewards for services rendered to the crown, for participating in further conquest enterprises and for settling activities in frontier regions.

During the early period, Portugal, with its small population of between 1 and 2 million people, never sent great numbers of migrants to Brazil or to the African coast and one may doubt whether more Portuguese went into the Atlantic area than to Asia. Its colonization system in the Atlantic was quite different from that in Asia and much more oriented towards a plantation-based colonization, which differed strongly from that of Spain with its concentration on urban development. In Brazil, the coast was made into a large and extended plantation complex for the production and exportation of sugar, tobacco and related agrarian products. These plantation regions were often much more densely populated than the small towns founded near the coast, except for the colonial capitals such as Bahia. The expeditions led by the *Bandeirantes* to the interior in order to find precious metals and/or enslave natives in order to use these as a labour force in coastal areas were mostly composed of persons of mixed race, who often hardly spoke any Portuguese. This expansion into the interior created an extensive type of colonization dominated by very large cattle farms, where feudal traditions survived until recently. Very soon, Brazil was characterized by the dichotomy between a modern – in terms of the respective period – sector on the coast, oriented to the production of exports to Europe, and the more traditionally structured interior regions. That was the result of the progressive advance of the settlement frontier into the interior, a frontier that still exists.

**[PE] I now turn to Leo Lucassen, who recently published an interesting article co-authored with his elder brother on mobility in Europe in the long run, i.e. from 1500 to 1900. In that article the two of you provide evidence that Europe was an extremely mobile continent, not only after 1800 when more than 60 million Europeans migrated to overseas destinations, but also in the centuries before 1800. We knew that the overseas migration from Europe in those earlier centuries across the Atlantic between 1500 and 1800 did not exceed 2 to 3 million, but you claim that, instead, migration within Europe was much more voluminous than previously assumed, especially when you include temporary migrants such as sailors, mercenaries and journeymen. Yet, the propensity to migrate (as it is called) differed widely across Europe as the higher rates of mobility occurred in the Northwest of Europe. It was the British Isles that sent most of the migrants across the Atlantic before 1800, while England might also have been the country with the highest internal migration rate. Perhaps as many as 40% of the inhabitants died in places different from where they had been born. Can we assume that similar mechanism operated in Portugal**

**and – to a lesser extent – in Spain or was overseas migration in those countries not connected to high international mobility?**

[LL] To some extent yes, although we have to realize that Great Britain and the Netherlands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were already quite modern countries when it came to economic growth and labour migration dynamics. In contrast to the Iberian Peninsula, migration in and from North Western Europe shows some quite distinct patterns. First of all, these highly developed economies attracted tens of thousands of migrants to their core areas, being the greater London region and the coastal provinces of the Dutch Republic, with Amsterdam at its centre. This concerned both permanent and seasonal migrants. Whereas England recruited its migrants basically from the British Isles (Ireland, Scotland, Wales, as well as England), the main sending areas for the Dutch Republic were the (North-West) German states and Scandinavia. At the same time, millions of migrants were recruited to man the thousands of ships both countries sent to Asia and the Americas, and which were used for trade in slaves and tropical commodities. In the case of the Netherlands, half of the one million sailors and soldiers who left Dutch ports between 1600 and 1800 were foreigners, most of whom died of tropical diseases and did not return. Britain barely recruited its migrants from the continent and sent off its own inhabitants. Moreover, Great Britain, different from the Dutch Republic (with the exception of small settlements in Brazil, New York and Surinam) aimed to populate its overseas possessions, especially in North America, which added to those who manned the shipping routes.

In the case of Portugal and Spain, the bulk of the emigrants seem to have left their home countries in order to work on ships and settle in the Americas, without at the same time attracting large scale migrants from other countries. The main reason is that their home economies were not very developed, and had not reached a high level of commercialization (especially not in agriculture). The only two exceptions to this rule were the importation of African slaves and the immigration of French migrants. The slaves from Africa were imported in both Spain and Portugal in order to work mainly as domestic workers and in the urban economy. For the sixteenth century some 10% of the population of Lisbon consisted of these newcomers from the West Coast of Africa (Benin, Guinea, Congo), and the same applied to Seville and Valencia. A second foreign immigration movement consisted of French migrants from the Auvergne. This system reached its peak already in the sixteenth century and consisted mainly of seasonal workers. The need for these emigrants was closely linked to emigration, but also to the large scale military activities that involved large numbers of Spanish men who fought in various parts of Europe, especially the Low Countries. In this respect, Spain clearly differed from Portugal, where the bulk of the mobility was caused by emigration.

**[PE] Back to Horst Pietschmann and to the creation of Iberian America. How was the migration from Portugal and Spain to the New World organized? Obviously, two groups that were important in the migration to North America, i.e. indentured servants and religious refugees, were absent in the Iberian migration. There was no such thing as a contract of indenture in Spain and Portugal, while more than a quarter of the English migrants indentured themselves in order to get to the New World, and I would say that the equivalent of the religious minorities in England and France, such as the Puritans and the Catholics, were absent in the Iberian Peninsula. Who was recruited and who paid for the passage?**

**[HP]** As I pointed out before, the system that was supposed to control and regulate Spanish migration to the Americas failed from the beginning, while the control over the settlement of the colonial urban centres functioned quite well. Only very rarely during the Habsburg era were efforts made by the crown to organize migration to particular American regions, since the Spanish authorities knew quite well that once the migrants had arrived in America there was little chance to keep them in those places where the crown wanted development. Only during the eighteenth century did the crown succeed in creating some settlements in more marginal areas by providing favourable conditions for agriculture. As time went by, however, it proved to be better to allow the migrants to settle in or around the colonial metropolises. These concentrations of settlers had more human capital at their disposal for development than was available in the thinly populated areas, and they allowed the colonial authorities to be more effective in promoting settlement activities. Since Philip II gave more authority to the centres of vice-regal power, these centres became the motors of further expansion, colonization and even of extending the settlement frontier. Madrid refrained from developing a policy of settlement of its own until the Bourbons came to power. As a result, the continuous flow of illegal migration strengthened the centres and left the marginal areas in South America or the Caribbean dependent upon the importation of African slaves, very often also via illegal contacts with representatives of foreign powers. The Spanish Habsburg authorities knew quite well that their own American colonies could not compete with the products of the Portuguese plantation economy, since shipping from Brazil to Portugal was about a third shorter than the time it took to send goods to Europe from the Spanish Caribbean or from the Rio de la Plata region, especially in times of reduced demand in Europe. As a result, even the more developed colonial metropolises in Spanish America only exported very expensive, rare and special agrarian products, such as dyes like indigo or cochineal or medical plants. And once the enormous demographic losses of the Amerindian population after the devastating epidemics of the sixteenth century had given way to a more stable demographic



development and even to a recovery of the Amerindian population, there was no further need to continue the large-scale importation of African slaves. As a result of this change, Peru and Mexico only had a very small minority population of African descent. Only during the eighteenth century, with its increasing demand for tropical products in Europe, did it become more profitable to create plantations for export in areas that had been previously neglected, such as the Caribbean, which could benefit from the lower transportation costs as compared to the old colonial metropolitan regions. In view of the high transportation costs, some of the older regions, such as Mexico City, turned to the large-scale production of cacao, started to substitute previously imported goods, and became nearly self-supporting in the production of weaponry after Independence. Transportation costs, combined with weather conditions, such as hurricanes, in addition to more expensive labour, were decisive economic factors in Spanish America. Cuba, for example, could much more cheaply be provided with wheat from British colonies in North America than from the nearby Mexican highlands. That same mechanism also favoured European commercial penetration of independent Spanish America during the nineteenth century.

**[PE] An interesting feature of the trans-Atlantic migration to the New World is the difference in ethnic composition. Let us compare the British and Spanish case. The first important difference pertains to the number of imported African slaves. Of the 12 million slaves shipped across the Atlantic between 1500 and 1850, about 10% went to the Spanish colonies, while about 30% landed in the British colonies. The reason for this is not difficult to discover: the agricultural export sector in Spanish America only started to grow after 1750, when the cultivation of sugar cane on Cuba increased rapidly. Until then immigration to Spanish America had been dominated by Europeans, a unique feature. Yet, in absolute numbers European migration to British America was larger and it included German, Scandinavian and many other European nationalities. Was the migration to Spanish and Portuguese America only composed of nationals of these two mother countries, and why was Iberian America less attractive to non-Iberian migrants from Europe than North America?**

**[HP]** A comparison between Spanish America and the English colonies in the New World only makes sense starting from the beginning of the eighteenth century onwards, when the Bourbon dynasty adopted a strict mercantilist policy and employed it in the reconquest of its American Empire. One of the most important aspects of this policy was to promote the development of the more marginal areas in and around the Caribbean, such as present-day Colombia, and the Río de la Plata region. For a long time, economic historians have criticized this policy as outdated or as a belated imitation of foreign models, such as the



large number of commercial companies created during the eighteenth century. Such criticism neglects the fact that the creation of these companies was motivated as much by political and military considerations as economic ones. These companies became the instruments for separating these marginal provinces from the largely indirect control exercised by the colonial metropolitan regions and for integrating these exporting regions directly with Spanish commerce and shipping as well as to protect them from foreign penetration. Until the creation of the companies, these poorly developed regions had relied on commercial relations with the central administrative entities in Spanish America, because they had no direct commercial and shipping links to Europe due to the Habsburg system of the two annual fleets between Spain and the Isthmus of Panamá and the port of Veracruz. At the same time they had to rely on the financial aid from the two vice regal capitals Lima and Mexico that controlled almost the entire production of precious metals.

This new policy of the Bourbon dynasty contributed to an enormous increase in the migration of nationals to America from nearly all parts of Spain, because it circumvented the control of the creole oligarchy in Spanish America and provided European Spaniards with new opportunities. This migration could be typified as a chain migration as relatives from America usually invited younger relatives from Spain to join them. Once arrived, these newcomers were accommodated in business activities requiring much dedication and fidelity to their patron, allowing only slow advancement, but later perhaps a favourable marriage. Compared with this, foreigners continued to have many more difficulties in travelling to and settling in the Ibero-American colonies.

The central administration in Spain did not promote foreign migration, and individuals who managed to get there by whatever means had to immigrate via the cities in Spanish America, where social and religious controls were strong and where newcomers had to be on their guard not to arouse suspicions about their religious beliefs in view of the Inquisition. In order to succeed, these foreign immigrants needed patronage. At the same time, however, the migration policies of the crown, in addition to the higher number of affluent immigrants in Spanish America contributed a lot to increase the antagonism between American Spaniards and European Spaniards, especially after the outbreak of the North American War of Independence.

**[PE] I now turn to Leonard Blussé who has studied the only country that could match Europe in its overseas expansion: China. Yet, China did not formally conquer and administer overseas colonies, but rather it sent Chinese migrants overseas. Was this type of expansion based on a conscious cost-benefit analysis, or were other factors at work?**

**[LB]** Before we start to discuss the Chinese overseas migration we should realize that China proper knows a long history of overland migration of the rural Han

people from the bend of the Yellow river in the north towards the south, a *tache d'huile* movement, which has been characterized by Harold Wiens as 'China's March towards the Tropics'. That is only partly right because the Han people moved into all directions south of the ecological frontier of the steppes, settling down wherever agriculture was possible. As late as the second half of the nineteenth century, for instance, a mass migration of Han Chinese occurred into Manchuria, which until then had been a 'no go area' that was preserved by the Manchu dynasty for its own people. Here we should also discern spontaneous migration movements of groups of people in search of 'virgin territory' (in most cases they actually pushed aside or replaced native populations) or centrally-directed more-or-less forced mass migrations, as happened both in the Ming and Qing dynasties. Don't forget in this context that under the expansive policies of the Qianlong emperor in the eighteenth century, China's territory was almost doubled in size toward the west. It is important to note, however, that both planned and spontaneous overland migration to areas where agricultural development was feasible, was always followed by the establishment of local administrative organs connected with, and directed from afar by, the central imperial administration.

The overseas migration by Han Chinese from China's south-eastern coastal provinces to Southeast Asia was a different ball game. These sojourners went abroad to look for new opportunities in trade, and in connection with this tropical agriculture (pepper gardens, sugar plantations and so on), logging for ship-building, mining (tin and gold mines in the Malay archipelago) or fishing. By venturing overseas they withdrew themselves (in contrast to those who migrated overland) from the supervision and the taxation of the Chinese imperial administration. As a result, they were branded as outlaws by the government. The illegal overseas migration of Chinese adventurers, first as sojourners, later as settlers from the sixteenth century onwards, should be explained in terms of the overseas expansion of the south-eastern coastal economies of China, which sought to tap the economic opportunities of the tropical regions. Only in rare cases did this overseas migration result in the formal incorporation of overseas territory into the Chinese empire. The only example that I can think of is the island of Taiwan that was integrated into the Qing Empire in 1683 after the last holdout of Ming loyalists on that island was defeated.

The study of Chinese overseas migration has discerned several successive waves of overseas migration. To put it very simply, we discern from the sixteenth until the late eighteenth century the migration of traders and entrepreneurs to Southeast Asia on Chinese junks, followed immediately after the first Opium War in 1842 by a tsunami of (contract) labourers, mainly on foreign ships, to destinations wherever labour forces were needed, plantations (Sumatra or Cuba) guano mines (Chile), mines and railways (US), and in the twentieth

century another wave of businessmen and students riding the surf of the globalization process.

**[PE] As you know, in recent years China has become the object of a frantic search for the factors that contributed to ‘The Great Divergence’. A sinologist colleague of yours, Kenneth Pommeranz, has pointed out that, towards the end of the eighteenth century, China and not Europe was the best candidate for the big leap forward. China’s development was not slowed down by multiple borders, wars, and language differences, and the country possessed an immense internal market. China should have become the first industrial nation on earth, not the UK or any other country in Europe. Now it is obvious that we cannot solve this riddle here, but one of the factors that contributed to the rapid rise in the manufacturing industries in Britain was both internal and overseas migration. The UK had a comparatively mobile population, consisting of a growing number of landless people and of farmers with a marginal income that could be enticed to work in the new industries. So Britain’s success was in part based on high internal mobility and the possibility to get rid of excess population by sending them overseas. Could China match that?**

**[LB]** In Europe it was really the coastal nations that moved forward first. Such a ‘coastal break out’ never happened, or was never allowed to happen in Imperial China. It has occurred though over the past few decades.

As I briefly explained already, China offered a lot of territory and opportunities for inland migration of the Han people to sparsely populated regions and that is what has happened in the past and actually still happens in the ‘Far West’ regions of Xinjiang and Tibet with their ethnically different populations. Although I admire Pommeranz as an economic historian, there are some basic points where I beg to disagree with him. First of all, it makes little sense to compare ‘China’, an enormous territorial empire larger than Europe, with an island such as Britain. That was not Pommeranz’s idea anyhow. He essentially compared the prosperous Jiangnan (lower Yangzi River) estuary with England. It would probably have made more sense to compare the economies of the Jiangnan region with the lower Rhine regions. Then suddenly the similarities become larger than the divergences.

But what is more important, since the seventeenth century the British government was in one way or another closely involved in the imperial enterprises overseas by encouraging overseas settlement, while the Chinese imperial administration looked inwards and turned its back towards the sea. Not until the late nineteenth century did the Peking government start to watch the overseas Chinese, basically because it considered them as a threat. Deservedly so, because

the Chinese Revolution of 1911 was started and was financed by overseas Chinese – the ‘mother of revolution’ as Chinese overseas society has been styled.

Now – and here I am speaking somewhat heretically as a sinologist – I do believe that the south-eastern coastal provinces of China, from the Yangzi estuary in Zhejiang province south to the Zhujiang estuary in Guangdong province, have always shown a propensity to look outwards, and occasionally they have even shown the tendency to economically break apart from the reins of the central government. This is also what is happening right now. Deng Xiaoping’s daring experiment to loosen up the xenophobic and centrally planned economy of the 1950s and 1960s gave free reign to the export economies of China’s coastal provinces. As a result, tens of millions of workers have moved from central China to the coast over the past decades. Ironically, this upsurge of the coastal economy was kick-started by a large infusion of investment and managerial genius from overseas Chinese and nearby Taiwan. The Chinese government is now making a great effort to spread prosperity all over the country and redirect the economy inland.

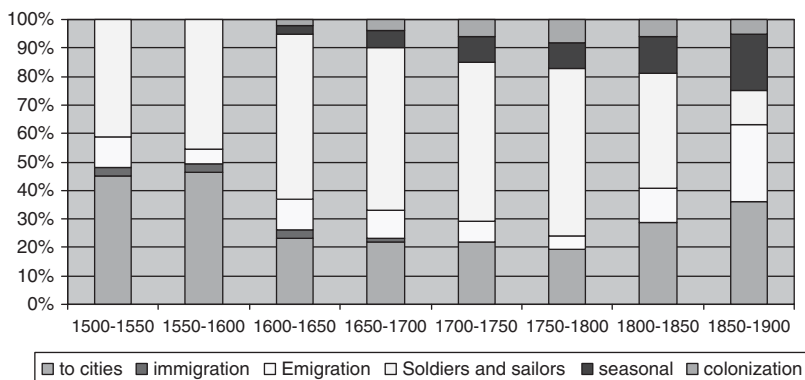
**[PE] Leo, in constructing your argument about the constant high mobility in Europe, you stress the importance of an integrated set of labour markets for mobile labour from an early date on, such as the North Sea system involving millions of migrants. And there were other systems like it, centring on the big cities in Europe. Would you then agree that from an early date onwards, Western Europe stood out as a continent where an individual might decide where to make a living based on the fact that he or she would not be stopped by people higher up on the social scale such as landlords, local rulers or government officials. At the same time, a migrant in Europe could rely on the authorities to create public safety on the roads, and to make individual long-distance travel feasible, while in spite of all Europe’s divisions, national, religious and otherwise, everywhere in Europe employers seem to abide by the principle that work should be paid for. Unlike the practice in other parts of the world, European nations did not enslave the nationals of other nations. In sum, would you agree that free migration based on an individual decision was one of the major building stones of the European miracle?**

[LL] Well, to start with, as I told you earlier, it is not entirely true that European nations did not enslave other people within Europe. The Mediterranean, in particular, was full of slaves in the early modern period. Not only from Africa, but people who were enslaved by slave raiders in the Balkans and along the Mediterranean shores. Until the 1460s, significant numbers of these slaves ended up in Italian cities like Genoa, Venice and Florence as domestic slaves through slave markets in Black Sea ports such as Kaffa and Tana. Yet another form of

slavery was the millions of Christian Europeans and Muslims from Mediterranean countries who were taken captive by various sorts of raiders between 1500 and 1800 as a consequence of the power struggle in the Mediterranean between the Ottomans and Christian states. A proportion of these captives were used as rowers on the galleys that were widely used as war ships until the end of the seventeenth century by the Ottomans, the Italian City states, the Habsburg empire, France and Portugal. Others were locked up, or put to work, awaiting ransom from their respective home country. It has been estimated that between 1530 and 1780 some 1,250,000 Christian slaves were taken to the Maghreb region, 5% of whom were ransomed or fled. Algeria alone imported 625,000 slaves in the period 1520–1830. Conversely, about half a million Muslim slaves, predominantly from Northern Africa, were taken as slaves to Italy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and also often put to work on the galleys. During the sea battle at Lepanto (in 1571) 80,000 rowers were involved, many of whom were slaves who were publicly owned by states and who also were put to work on state projects such as fortifications when the fleet was wintering in port. These Muslim slaves were ‘harvested’ by the Christian counterpart of the Barbary raiders in Naples, Malta (since 1530 in the possession of the Knights of St John) and Livorno (since 1561 in the possession of the Knights of St. Stephan). Both orders were very active in preying on Muslim ships in the Eastern Mediterranean and in raiding the North African coast.

As for your main proposition, I think that this is – to a large extent – right. In China, and in Asia in general, the state very much distrusted spontaneous migration and tried to regulate and monitor geographical moves as much as possible. Only during state-led colonization projects, such as those in Northern China, where some 10 million Chinese settled in sparsely populated areas in the eighteenth century, was large scale migration enabled. In contrast to North Western Europe, however, this was basically labour to land migration, and not labour to capital, which prevailed in Western Europe. As far as this happened in the largely agrarian society of the Chinese Qing empire, it concerned women who had to move to the households of their husbands, where they were put to work, especially in the production of textiles. These household dynamics fundamentally differed from Europe, where children were free to leave their parental home, and thus were much more independent from their parents and free to set up new households with their spouses. Owing to the widespread proletarianization in North Western Europe since the sixteenth century (and earlier) most of these young men and women were free to migrate to where they hoped to find work, either as paid domestics, seasonal workers, journeymen, or soldiers and sailors. [See Figure 1.]

**[PE] Leonard, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, China became an important source of migrant labour, on a par with India, Japan and Polynesia.**



**Figure 1.** The share of migration types in the total migration rate 1500–1900 (%). *Source:* Lucassen and Lucassen (2009, p. 375).

**While the onset of mass migration out of Europe is linked to urbanization, agricultural crises, improved transport and lower fares – allowing, for instance, Italian migrants from the South to do seasonal work in Argentina – migration out of China seems less based on individual decisions and more on force exercised by clans, secret societies and the like, perhaps comparable to the mechanism operating in the supply of African slaves. Would you agree, or do you feel that the migration of Chinese indentured labourers was similar to the contemporaneous migration of the Europeans?**

[LB] Here we have the classic conundrum of push and pull. The Chinese migration overseas in the shape of contract labour or coolie labour had as much to do with developments within China – the Taiping Rebellion, chronic feuding about land between lineages – as with an enormous demand for Chinese labour abroad – railroads in North America, Guano mines in South America, sugar plantations in Cuba, tobacco plantations in Sumatra, tin mines on Banka, Billiton and the Malay peninsula to name just a few hotspots. Chain migrations via lineages played indeed a prominent role, but I do not see the secret societies as organizers of migration. I would rather see them as parasites of the chaotic overseas world, where deracinated individuals found some kind of brotherhood. Organizers of crime, kidnapping and, cynically speaking, imposing on overseas society some social order, yes; but organizers of migration? I doubt it.

[PE] **Some migrants do not leave permanently, they come back. The reasons for return migration vary. Sometimes, the return home is part of the contract as with the indentured labour migrants from India in the nineteenth century. Sometimes, return migration is caused by the failure to improve upon the migrant's position at home. That is why I would like to ask all**

**three of you to (i) indicate whether return migration in your view was an important phenomenon and (ii) whether the rates differed over time and according to age and sex of the migrants.**

[HP] Remigration on a modest scale was a regular phenomenon between Spain and Spanish America. Return migrants were mainly administrative and religious personnel, mariners and military officers. For others, migration to Spain was mostly temporary and depended on individual decisions. Travelling from the Americas to Spain was such a regular phenomenon that many people crossed the Ocean more than once, came to Spain, and went back and so on. We should not forget that even some of the second generation immigrants in Spanish America maintained close connections with the places of origin of their parents and very often donated money to social or religious establishments there. Private communication by letters was rather frequent on both sides of the Ocean as some recent publications of such correspondence demonstrate. Return migration became particularly important during the second half of the eighteenth century, when the Spanish government favoured return migration as part of its concept of a Spanish nation bridging the Atlantic. The Spanish government also tried to attract Spanish Americans to Spain for a limited period, having them start a career in Spain and then sending them back to America. During the nineteenth century, after independence, return migration became even more important and turned into a factor of economic significance for Spain. The return migration to Portugal developed in a very similar way, although the overseas Portuguese of the higher social ranks had much closer direct connections with Portugal than the Spaniards. If a member of the Portuguese overseas elite wanted to go to university, he had to migrate to Coimbra; while, starting in the sixteenth century, the Spanish elites in Latin America created universities of their own. In any case we have to accept that migration in both directions never was a definitive and static process, and that the exchange of personnel and migration continued after independence. Already during colonial times the poor migrants who had migrated to the Americas used to come back to Spain once they had achieved a higher social position. Such a voyage was important in order to increase their social status, both at home, in Spanish America, as well as in Spain, where they had originally come from.

[LL] Return migration has always been important, and a much neglected topic among historians. The extent, however, diverges widely from group to group. Seasonal migrants for example almost per definition return (yearly) while at the other end of the spectrum colonists very seldom return. In between we have to make a distinction between intention and result of migrations. Most soldiers and sailors who migrated in Europe had the intention to return, but most either died or



changed their plans. Furthermore, many people do not realise that more than one third of the classical European emigrants to the Americas in the period 1850–1920 returned to Europe, especially from Southern and South Eastern Europe. Many of them considered North America, after the transport revolution in the 1860 (sail to steam), as an extension of the internal European labour market and had no plans to settle definitively at the other end of the Atlantic. As for the impact of return migration, this also depends. Many return migrants invest in their regions of departure, but often in status symbols, such as houses, which only temporarily stimulates the local economy. Moreover, in the case of labour migrants who did not do that well, these investments in stone would often have better been used for the education of their children who remained abroad. On the other hand, in the cross-community theory of Patrick Manning, who views this type of human mobility as an important engine of social and technological change, return migration can infuse new ideas and practices in the region of departure and stimulate change.

**[LB]** Remigration was actually the traditional pattern of the Chinese who went overseas. The last wish of many coolies, who passed away overseas, was to be interred in the hill slopes of their own villages: *Luoye guigen*, the falling leaves return to the roots. Consequently, the Dutch novelist and poet Jan Jacob Slauerhoff, who served as a medic on the ships of the Java–China–Japan Line, ironically observed that while Chinese coolies would be shipped abroad vertically as living creatures, they often would be shipped home horizontally in coffins.

There always remained the desire among the Chinese abroad to return home some day, and this wish was also expressed by the large amounts of remittances that were annually sent home. Yet for all kinds of reasons, economic or social, many actually chose to stay, with the result that there are very large minorities of Chinese living in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. Contrary to what the overseas Chinese museums in China want us to believe, the quality of life abroad, especially in Southeast Asia, was much better than in China itself. Nowadays, there is a new trend of homecoming among specific groups of people: well-educated Chinese, reared and trained abroad, return to the mother country for the simple reason that China is the country where it is all happening today and they want to be part of that. Ethnic Chinese living abroad with foreign passports often move from one country to another (transmigration) but tend to stay culturally oriented towards China, not unlike the way in which Turks and Moroccans in Western Europe will never completely give up their ties with the country of origin.

**[PE]** Now that we have discussed various aspects of migration, I think it is about time that we tackle one of the most controversial issues in this

**field: the relationship between culture (including religion) and migration. There is no doubt that there exists a positive relationship between education and the success of an immigrant. The better educated will usually earn a higher income, create more jobs, pay more taxes and make less use of state subsidies than the migrants with little formal education. In migration history, the classic examples of such migrants are the Huguenots, the Sephardic Jews and – more recently – the university graduates migrating from the Third World countries, especially if they hold a medical degree. The link between the level of education and successful migration seems beyond dispute.**

**However, these days, the discussion centres not on education or rather the lack of it, but on religion. The main question is whether Muslims can be successful immigrants. Is it true that their religion makes them less suitable migrants or is it their low socio-economic background that explains their lowly status in the host society? Again, I would like to call on all three of you for an answer as the migration from Latin America to Spain seems to evoke far less upheaval than does the migration from Morocco to Spain, in spite of the fact that both groups have had little education before they migrated. Similarly, there seem to be few complaints about Chinese immigrants, even if they are not well educated. And to complicate matters further, Muslim immigrants in Europe might be at the bottom of the success list, while that is not the case in the US.**

[HP] American-born people of the higher social levels always travelled to Spain in order to increase their social status by continuing their studies, by contacting relatives, authorities and so on. This went on after independence until today. In spite of the independence of Latin America, people moved from one side of the ocean to the other in both ways, since they had relatives everywhere and maintained strong ties with their places of origin. All the time after independence, Spaniards coming from Europe exercised a strong influence on the economic development of Latin America. And since the protracted opposition of the liberal movement in Latin America to the old colonial educational institutions created an educational vacuum, Latin Americans continued to study in Spain. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, it became a political decision whether one went to study in Europe. The conservatives preferred Spain, while the liberals turned to France or Italy and, during the twentieth century, to the US, England, Germany and other European countries. After the return to democracy in Spain, Latin Americans once again turned to that country, at least after having obtained their PhD in one of the English speaking countries. To have studied abroad still constitutes a token of social distinction in most Latin American countries, despite considerable improvements in academic standards of the

universities in Latin America, at least in the major countries. The common cultural Iberian traditions continue to be a strong link between the former colonial metropolis and the former Spanish American colonies and, increasingly, as a consequence of the south–north migration within the Americas, also between Portugal and Spain on one side, and the US and Canada on the other.

**[LL]** I don't think religion has anything to do with economic success. Look at how well most Muslim migrants in the United States are doing. The main problem that Western European countries are struggling with, when it comes to the slow and partially failing integration of migrants from Muslim countries is a combination of (1) on average low human capital of the first generation, both pertaining to the former guest workers from Morocco and Turkey and to the colonial migrants from Pakistan in Great Britain and from Algeria in France, and (2) the timing of their migration, especially of family members, which took place in the late 1970s and 1980s, when the economy took a downturn and many of the first generation migrants lost their jobs. Never before did Western Europe experience such a massive immigration in a period of recession, which is largely explained by a combination of the unintended effects of restrictive aliens' policies after 1973 and the building up of social rights by migrants who had contributed for years to the welfare state. Given the fact that in their home countries the economic situation looked even grimmer, and the fact they had the right to bring over their families, this migration is fully understandable, but with the benefit of hindsight, it could not have been timed more badly. The result is that the second generation grew up in poor neighbourhoods, with many parents unemployed and unable to provide guidance for their children in the new host society. Thus, part of the second generation does badly at school, is disproportionately engaged in criminality, and is bound to become part of a new underclass. Given the low human capital of their parents and the bad timing, however, it is surprising to see so many (especially women) in forms of higher education. Finally, it is interesting to note that similar problems are found with children of (Southern) Italian guest workers in Germany. Not being Muslims, their fate has so far not attracted much attention.

**[LB]** Religious fanaticism is hardly a matter of concern among Chinese immigrants. But allow me to make a few remarks on this. Within China itself there is a large Islamic minority, mostly in the fringe areas in the northwest. These are not necessarily ethnic Turks or Uighur people but also Han Chinese. The global Islamic religious revival does worry the Chinese government because it obviously concerns order and peace in the border areas. The Chinese government from imperial times to the present day communist regime has always been fearsome of religious movements or sects, witness its stern policies towards the *falungong* movement, which of course has nothing to do with Islam.

In predominantly Islamic countries in Southeast Asia, such as Malaysia and Indonesia, where large Chinese minorities are living, we see a problem. Strong pressure is exerted on these ethnic Chinese to convert, but ironically the result is that most of them will choose Christianity, turn to new Buddhist sects or even invent a particular brand of Confucian religion, *Agama Confucu*, to preserve their own cultural identity.

**[PE] I think we should draw this round table on migration to a close. Usually, this means looking ahead, but making predictions is bad taste among historians. Nevertheless, I think we can say a few words about the future of certain trends. In the case of Latin America, the question is whether the present outflow, mainly to the USA and to Spain, will continue or whether economic growth in Spanish America will halt the migration drain or possibly redirect it from destinations outside of the South American continent to internal migration as economic development tends to be uneven. The same question can be asked about China. And – last, but not least – will Western Europe rid itself of the ‘migration threat’ that has never before been so strong, and this in spite of the fact that permanent migration from poorer countries is now virtually impossible with the exception of strictly regulated family reunion migrants and asylum seekers, and in spite of the fact that most labour migrants no longer come from outside the EU, but from inside (move from East to West), with a high percentage of temporary migration.**

[HP] Despite the fact that Portugal and Spain entered the European Community, their links to the former colonies continue to be strong. The fact that the Latin American banking system is largely influenced by the Spanish banking sector, and that Spain has invested heavily in the telecommunication and aviation sectors in Latin America, in addition to the fact that Spain is said to be one of the most important countries for ‘laundering’ dirty money from Latin America earned by producing and trading drugs, give ample reason to suppose that migration between America and the Iberian Peninsula will be an important factor in the future. At least twice Spain has resorted to legalizing hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants, always ‘with great success’. As immigrants from Latin America normally have no linguistic problems in Spain, it seems certain that this process will continue. This author has personal knowledge of a number of Latin American immigrants who managed to establish themselves in many countries of the European community after having entered via Spain. It seems also that this migration is stimulated by a shortage of labour in Spain and by the lack of public security in many Latin American countries. In addition, female emancipation and more personal freedom seem to have become factors for Latin American women to move to Europe, mostly women from urban contexts and with higher educational qualifications.

**[LB]** Certain regions in China, such as for instance the city of Wenzhou in Zhejiang province, will continue to send out people by the well-proven method of chain migration. Wenzhou people almost monopolize the Chinese restaurants in the Netherlands and they are well on their way to do the same with the Italian leather industry. Many Chinese export firms also focus on the Southeast Asian markets and send salesmen overseas. But the most remarkable new phenomenon is the following: instead of hiring local labour, the Chinese government and large Chinese business concerns are sending tens of thousands of Chinese workers to Africa and other developing regions to carry out large-scale infrastructural works such as road construction, electricity plants, flood control dams and so on. These well-managed projects involve the lock-stock-and-barrel moving of ex-pat workers communities, with their own housing, shops and even schooling, which are implanted like small colonies on foreign soil. It remains to be seen whether the settlements are of a temporary nature.

**[LL]** Well, predictions are not what historians are good at, although social scientists do not fare much better. Given the ageing of European societies, I expect that, especially in the service sector, many migrants will be needed in the coming decades, simply because much of this work cannot be outsourced and it is increasingly difficult to lure natives to certain sectors of the economy. As for Asia, it is interesting to observe how the current Great Migration to the many (new) big cities will develop, especially when it comes to giving these migrants from the countryside equal social rights, which are now largely denied to them and which produces a grave social and possibly also political problem.

### Suggestions for Further Reading

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