AMHN | AUSTRALIAN MIGRATION HISTORY NETWORK

Migration Histories Now – A Workshop

29 November 2019, 9.00am – 5.00pm

Room 3.02, Sir Roland Wilson Building, Australian National University

Followed by a Keynote by Prof Sneja Gunew and the launch of *Remembering Migration: Oral Histories and Heritage in Australia* by Paula Hamilton and Kate Darian-Smith (eds.)

Individual presentations should be **10 minutes long**. Each session is 1 hour: three 10 minutes presentations followed by 30 minutes of group discussion.

Australian National University
CENTRE FOR HERITAGE AND MUSEUM STUDIES
ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences

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THE FREILICH PROJECT

Migration Histories Now – A Workshop
Australian Migration History Network

29 November 2019, 9.00am – 5.00pm
Room 3.02, Sir Roland Wilson Building, Australian National University

9.00am Welcome

Alexandra Dellios (ANU)

9.10 Session One: Big Questions in Australian Migration History

Joy Damousi (University of Melbourne) – "Methodological frameworks for migration history: emotion and affect"

Gwenda Tavan (La Trobe University) – "Remembering the 'old' Department of immigration: a case for expanding public policy and administrative perspectives of Australia's immigration history"

Paula Hamilton (UTS) – "Temporal boundaries in migration scholarship"

10.10 Session Two: New Practices and Tools in Doing Public Migration History

Moya McFadzean (Museums Victoria) – "Collecting absence"

Francesco Ricatti (Monash) – "Digital and participatory research on migration: do we really need historians?"

Karen Agutter (University of Adelaide) – "The long (not so slow) death of archival research"

11.10 Short Break (Morning Tea) *provided*

11.20 Session Three: Museum and Heritage Epistemologies

Denis Byrne (Western Sydney University) – "The challenge of transnational heritage"

Kim Tao (Australian National Maritime Museum) – "The future of migration history at the Australian National Maritime Museum"

Mandy Paul (History SA) – "Amplifying impact through complexity: a challenge for museums"

12.20 Session Four: Identity Politics and Intersections

Zora Simic (UNSW) – "Stereotypes and subjectivities: ongoing challenges for migration history"

Catherine Kevin (Flinders University) – "Feminist biopolitics, histories of migration and the Australian settler-colonial state"

Karen Schamberger (AMHN) – "Intersections of Australian migration and environmental histories"

1.20 Break (Lunch) *provided*

1.50 Session Five: Definitions and Categories

Mirjana Lozanovska (Deakin University) – "'We are all migrants' and its neo-colonial historiography"

Jayne Persian (University of Southern Queensland) – "Problematic politics in transnational migration history: solidarity vs antipathy"

Ruth Balint (UNSW) – "Thinking Beyond Australia"

2.50 Session Six: Deconstructing and Reconstructing Migration History

Andonis Piperoglou (Griffith University) – "The (De)construction of 'Ethnic History'"

Katarzyna (Kasia) Williams (ANU) – "Europe's subaltern memories in Australia"

Sophie Loy-Wilson (Sydney University) – "The Chinese Australian 'ghost economy'"

3.50 Session Seven: Underexplored Dimensions of the Migrant Experience

Kate Darian-Smith (University of Tasmania) – "Histories of migration and television in Australia"

Anisa Puri (Monash University) – "Redefining Australian Childhood"

Alexandra Dellios (ANU) – "Migrant rights activism and alternative multiculturalisms"

4.50 Wrap up and Summary

Andonis Piperoglou (Griffith University)

6.00 Keynote Address by Professor Sneja Gunew (University of British Columbia) – chaired by Professor Rae Frances, Dean of CASS

"**Recollections of the future: the uncomfortable cosmopolitanism of migrant histories**" (Lecture room 1.02, SRWB)

Followed by drinks and the launch of *Remembering Migration: Oral Histories and Heritage in Australia* by Paula Hamilton and Kate Darian-Smith (eds.)

Abstracts

Karen Agutter (University of Adelaide)
The long (not so slow) death of archival research

Archival research is dying. Ongoing funding cuts and policy decisions at the National Archives of Australia have resulted in

1. Reduced opening hours.
2. Centralisation of records in single offices.
3. A restriction of 25 items for access examination at any one time.
4. The push towards digitisation through selected projects or at an exorbitant cost.

My current research, 'migrant soldiers' experience of service and repatriation has been seriously impacted by these factors. Three-day weeks have resulted in the need for multiple trips to NAA offices. The transfer of records to the Sydney office, lack of staff, and restrictions on access examination has resulted in hundreds of repatriation files remaining NYE or resulted in a tokenistic digitisation as in Project Albany. The consequences are not just monetary or logistical. For my current project I have been forced to utilise a restricted sample that is geographically biased, impacting the overall integrity of my research. What is the future of archival research in Australia?

Ruth Balint (UNSW)
Thinking Beyond Australia

Migrant voyages to Australia are part of much longer epics that span the twentieth century. The Australian migrant story does not begin with the moment of settlement in Australia; nor does it end with "multicultural Australia". This challenge seeks to move away from the often one-dimensional and nostalgic representation of the migrant, who, in keeping with the dominant narrative of Australia's immigration history, is celebrated for his or her "ethnic" origin, but whose political pasts and relationships to the countries from which they came and to which they occasionally returned, are rarely understood. Instead, these tend to be romanticised as "the worlds the immigrants left behind". Taking the postwar European Displaced Person as an example, I argue for a new internationalisation, deeper temporal framing and dynamism of Australian immigration history that links the history of Australian migration to global patterns of conflict, dislocation, national upheavals and human movement. In this challenge, I also seek to interrogate the Australia-centric nature of our migrant historiography.

Denis Byrne (Western Sydney University)
The challenge of transnational heritage

How does the idea of the heritage object as a distributed entity challenge the current conceptualisation of migration heritage? Take, for example, the house in a Pearl River Delta village that was built in the 1920s by a migrant from that place living in Sydney. Though its footings are sunk in the earth of China and though it is now protected as part of Guangdong's

heritage, this house was planned, dreamt of and worked for by someone in Australia. As a crystallisation of migrant labour and the social aspirations of those both at home and away, such houses are best thought of as elements of transnational assemblages rather than the heritage property of the territorialised nation-state. This conception works against the conception of migration as a one-way process and against methodological nationalism in heritage practice.

Joy Damousi (University of Melbourne)
Methodological frameworks for migration history: emotion and affect

Migration history has been framed by many methodological frameworks which include public policy, government decision making and interventions. Vital as these contexts are in understanding migration histories, there are three themes I would like to identify in moving beyond these methodological frames. First is the explanatory power of the paradigm of settler colonialism and its relevance and connectedness to othering and constructions of whiteness. Second is the centrality of transnationalism in understanding the wider web beyond the nation within which migration emerges and how it intersects with global movements of peoples and ideas. Finally, the economics of migration and questions of dispossession and displacement as economic phenomenon remain long overdue as a focus of study. All of these I would see underpinned by new developments in the history of emotions and affect which are too often absent from migration histories but are so central to understanding the migration experience.

Kate Darian-Smith (University of Tasmania)
Histories of migration and television in Australia

Although the introduction of television to Australia in 1956 coincided with post-World War II mass migration, historians have paid scant attention to the relationship between these two transformational phenonema. Yet television programs were a powerful force in introducing migrants, particularly from non-English speaking backgrounds, to the nuances of an Australian 'way of life'. Drawing on oral histories, memoirs and archival research undertaken for an ARC-funded project on television and cultural diversity, I will provide an overview of the project's key findings for the 1960s-1980s. These include the place of television in migrant households, and how it was consumed across generations; the little-known non-English variety programs made by migrant media entrepreneurs for local audiences and for international export; the representation and stereotypes of migrants in Australian mainstream television drama in these decades; and the opportunities for migrants to work in the television industry as technicians, actors and directors.

Alexandra Dellios (ANU)
Migrant rights activism and alternative multiculturalisms

The argument that migrant workers' rights and collective campaigning from ethnic minorities was erased by government-administered multiculturalism, is not a new one. Marxist sociologists since the 1980s have argued that the introduction of state-multiculturalism quelled the collective self-determination of migrant rights' discourses (Nicolacopoulos and Vassilacopoulos 2003; Jakubowiz 1984, 1989, 1993; Hage 1998)—confining struggles to demands for a greater share of

shrinking social services budgets and pitting groups against each other. I propose that historians explore the empirical detail behind these arguments—and pay attention to the community memories of this era and their links to a transnational history of social rights activism. The Workers' Leagues and Welfare Societies of the 1960s and 1970s are an understudied aspect of Australia's post-war migration history. Their work for improved access to services for ethnic-minority groups, recognition of cultural pluralism, and (eventually) representation and participation in public and political institutions was a pivotal moment in the eventual evolution of multiculturalism in Australia. Their conceptions of multiculturalism differ markedly from the eventual state-sanctioned form that it took. They resisted the depoliticization of their structural inequality, and worked within and across ethnicised groups. I return to the words and oral testimonies of some migrant rights activists and groups to offer their alternative framings of multiculturalism as a challenge to the popular amnesia that surrounds their efforts.

Sneja Gunew (University of British Colombia)
Recollections of the future: the uncomfortable cosmopolitanism of migrant histories

My most recent book *Post-Multicultural Writers as Neo-Cosmopolitan Mediators* argues that we need to move beyond the monolingual paradigm that prevails within global Anglophone literary studies. Using Lyotard's concept of 'post' as the 'future anterior' (back to the future) the book sets up a concept of post-multiculturalism that goes back to salvage the elements within multiculturalism that have been forgotten in its contemporary denigration (hence the 'recollections of the future' in my title). Linking multiculturalism to cosmopolitanism suggests that contrary to earlier emphases, cosmopolitanism in its vernacular, demotic, and non-elitist sense imbues subjects with a sense of being uncomfortable everywhere rather than at home in the world. This critical stance intrinsically questions all notions of 'home.' In addition, when we contemplate migrant histories the emphasis most recently has been to root such histories in 'everyday multiculturalism' exclusively based on interviews as the only terrain of supposed authenticity. My paper will argue that including the (multilingual) literary and other cultural artifacts produced by migrants are an element missing from such migrant histories.

Paula Hamilton (UTS)
Temporal boundaries in migration scholarship

This paper offers a critique of the way immigration history and memory in Australia is conceptualized as a division between pre- (largely 19th century) and post 1945. The majority of scholarship in recent years has focused on the latter, particularly since the centrality of contemporary public debates relating to refugees and asylum seekers. Work in the post world war 2 period is also shared amongst a wide group of scholars, only some of whom are historians. I draw on a feminist analysis of women's migration, especially single women, to draw out context and continuities relating to the question of historical significance and historiographically defined categories.

Catherine Kevin (Flinders University)
Feminist biopolitics, histories of migration and the Australian settler-colonial state

While Agamben's theorisation of the biopolitical has been well utilised in migration studies, feminist biopolitics still promises to open up the field in ways that can bring the gendered histories of colonisation and migration together. By examining both explicit and more covert policies designed to manage the sexual, reproductive and maternal lives of refugee and migrant women we can better understand the ways in which states – past and present – have instrumentalised women's bodies to serve political and population aims. In the Australian context this approach is more developed in colonial histories of gendered frontier violence, child removal and forms sexual and reproductive control. Migration histories can look to this scholarship for models that can be adapted to analysis of migration while bringing the two fields into conversation around questions of state-sponsored reproductive coercion. This approach inevitably raises productive questions for intersectional feminist analysis in the Australian context.

Mirjana Lozanovska (Deakin University)
'We are all migrants' and its neo-colonial historiography

Slippages of the terminology 'Europe/European' and 'migration/migrant' normalises a neo colonial positioning and raises questions about a systemic 'sleight-of-hand' ambivalence in historiography. In Patrick Troy's anthology *European Housing in Australia* the term 'European' does not refer to Europe as continent, but specifically to Britain and Ireland. Despite contemporaneous scholarship on post-war migration from Europe, the term 'European' is also distanced from the Italian, Greek, Macedonian, and other 'European' migrants. Migration, it is argued is a central force shaping that housing, but the studies only examine the housing linked to migration from Britain and Ireland. In contrast, in Apperley et al's *Pictorial Guide*, a stylistic historiography, is a rare discussion on migrant architecture. Yet by dividing 'immigrants nostalgic' and 'Australian nostalgic' it reveals a non-ambivalent Australian identity. The differences within 'Europe/European' and 'migration/migrant' intersect an Anglo-Celtic hegemony in Australian (architectural) historiography and revise the motto that 'we are all migrants'.

Moya McFadzean (Museums Victoria)
Collecting Absence

How in museums can we find ways to represent the stories of people who have actively tried to seek refuge in Australia and have been prevented from doing so? These 'absent stories' are nevertheless Australian stories and it is extremely challenging to represent them through material culture. In particular, people who are trapped in on- and off-shore detention and refugee camps, experience barriers to outside communication, and have little in terms of artefacts that they either own or don't need. Social media platforms are providing a vital form of communication and also enable advocates to act as trusted intermediaries on behalf of museums. This all raises ethical questions about how to enable refugees and asylum seekers to give voice to their own stories; how to 'safely' share publicly the stories of vulnerable people; how to obtain tangible representations of their experiences; and how to document the intangible forms of digital communications in a transient virtual age.

Many Paul (History SA)
Amplifying impact through complexity: a challenge for museums

A significant challenge for migration history museums is to amplify our interventions in in public discourse. Museums of migration have a particular form of social licence derived from our cultural position as museums, our significant audience reach, and our engagement with communities. I will argue that an effective way to be heard in the context of an increasingly simplified and binary public debate is to tell complex historical narratives, engaging with developments across a range of disciplines including history and museology. I will use two case studies: the current redevelopment of the Migration Museum's nineteenth century gallery, which is centring the disruptive potential of postcolonial histories; and the completed redevelopment of our twenty-first century gallery, which engages with emerging work in demography and migration studies on superdiversity.

Jayne Persian (University of Southern Queensland)
Problematic Politics in Transnational Migration History: Solidarity vs Antipathy

This paper discusses one of the main issues confronting migration historians writing transnational histories: the problematic politics of some migrant individuals and groups. Based on my own antipathy towards the subjects of my current research project on far-right displaced persons who settled in Australia during the post-war period, this paper will argue for Glenda Sluga's 'hope for a phalanx of engaged historians committed to airing and discussing subjects that are deemed taboo'.

Andonis Piperoglou (Griffith)
The (De)construction of Ethnic History

This paper will provide an opportunity to rethink the role of ethnicity in Australian history since the 1970s. I aim to reflect on the potential ways historical approaches to ethnicity in Australia can be revitalised and renewed. In challenging how ethnicities have been commonly represented in Australian history, the presentation will address some key questions that matter in how ethnicity is imagined today. What constituted 'ethnic history' between 1970s and 1980s? In what ways did past approaches to ethnic history in Australia differ from historical approaches elsewhere and what can such differences teach us? Can we re-centre histories of ethnicity in Australia around the essential role played by non-Anglo, and ambiguously-white, migrant groups who had their own culturally specific understandings of Australia? In addressing such questions, this presentation hopes to generate a fresh and ongoing dialogue on how to conduct a new multilayered approach to the 'history of ethnicization' in Australia that moves away from stale dichotomies of assimilation verses preservation, transnationality verses nationality, and symbolic verses real ethnicity.

Anisa Puri (Monash University)
Redefining Australian Childhood

My 'challenge' for the field is to rethink what constitutes Australian childhood. My call draws from my current research, which uses life story interviews to investigate how age and life stage shape experiences and memories of youth migration to postwar Australia (1946-1973).

I argue that Australian experiences of childhood are much more varied than have previously been established. The question of whether pre-migration lives count as part of the receiving nation's history is rarely raised in Australian historical literature. Although overseas experiences of Australian-born individuals are usually considered part of the nation's history, the same does not apply to migrant Australians' experiences before their arrival in Australia. A deeper engagement with young migrants' lives prior to their arrival in Australia can also enrich historians' understandings of youth migration to postwar Australia. Incorporating today's Australians' pre-migration pasts into the national history of childhood creates a more complex, inclusive, and accurate picture of Australian experience.

Francesco Ricatti (Monash University)
Digital and participatory research on migration: do we really need historians?

Migration studies in the past ten years have seen the exponential development of digital participatory research, as well as the production of wonderful visualisations and other design tools that can help us study, understand and manage the movement of people around the globe and their settlement in specific localities. These approaches, marvellous and useful as they are, often lack the depth that can be provided by humanistic and historical approaches. By discussing briefly two projects I am currently developing in Prato (Italy) and Melbourne, I am going to argue that historians of migration have a vital role to play in the development of digital and participatory projects.

Karen Schamberger
Intersections of Australian migration and environmental histories

According to Deborah Bird-Rose, settler societies 'are built on a dual war: a war against Nature and a war against natives' (Rose, 2004). Settlers, and thus migrants, hoped to make better lives for themselves and their families in new lands. Public, community and family historians in Australia have often used the tropes of migrant rebirth or contribution to tell their stories (McShane, 2001). But migrants' hopes for the future, their 'rebirth' and contributions to their new homes are predicated on the destruction of local ecosystems and Indigenous peoples. How might public historians begin to weave migration narratives, utilising the environmental humanities, in ways that sensitively broach these connections? What role could migration history play in helping people understand and respond to the challenges of the Anthropocene and climate change?

Zora Simic (UNSW)
Stereotypes and subjectivities: ongoing challenges for migration history

How do we write migration history without reproducing stereotypes about 'migrants'? How do we access migrant subjectivities, given archival (and other) limitations? How do those of us who

identify with this loaded term 'migrant' reckon with our own subject position when writing and researching migration history? These questions might strike some of us as outdated, a relic of the 1980s when sociologists and anthropologists and other scholars of multicultural Australia first posed them in relation to their own practice; with the default 'migrant' as a non-English speaking person of southern European, or at a stretch, south east Asian background. My argument is that these questions still present ongoing challenges for historians, who, compared to scholars in other disciplines, have been less theoretical and self-reflexive in their methodologies. I do not exempt myself here and pose these questions with specific reference to my current research into domestic violence and migrant women; as well as my own subject position as a first-generation Australian-born daughter of 'stereotypical' post-World War II migrant parents.

Kim Tao (Australian National Maritime Museum)
The future of migration history at the Australian National Maritime Museum

This paper will discuss the Australian National Maritime Museum's approach to representing migration stories and also consider some key questions that will inform the future direction of migration history at the museum. How can we build stronger connections between migration research and curatorial practice, to bridge the gap between academic and public histories? How can the museum engage with contemporary discourses on mobility, mutual heritage and return migration? And how can we leverage the government's cultural diplomacy agenda to develop dynamic new models for migration studies that are cross-cultural, intergenerational, and better represent the richly entangled local histories of global migration that have shaped Australia's identity?

The paper will pose a challenge for the field of migration history in the context of the museum's Welcome Wall, exploring the concept of entangled histories and how to locate personal immigrant experiences within broader transnational narratives of migration and diaspora.

Gwenda Tavan (La Trobe University)
Remembering the "old" Department of immigration: a case for expanding public policy and administrative perspectives of Australia's immigration history

The merger of the Commonwealth Department of Immigration with Customs and Border Control in 2015, followed by its eventual absorption into Home affairs in 2017, represented one of the most radical changes to the organization and functions of the old department in its 70 year history. Justified in terms of enhancing national security and updating machinery–of-government to better manage population flows across the Australian border in the 21st century, it effectively spelled the end of the nation-building ethos and confirmed the securitisation and para-militarisation of Australia's immigration and border control functions. This shift, I would argue, has severely constrained Australia's capacity for effective migrant integration and undermined the health of its liberal democracy.

The fact that these radical changes raised barely a ripple in the media, the parliament and the general public confirms what immigration experts and historians have always known – that despite Australia's settler state status and its centrality to national development, immigration

remains peripheral to the way its many of its citizens understand questions of identity, belonging and society. It also reflects a general lack of interest in Australia's administrative history, in particular the powerful role that the Department of Immigration has played in shaping contemporary Australian society. This paper reminds us of these important, globally distinctive pioneering efforts and argues the urgent need for current and future historians to pay close attention to the public policy and administrative aspects of this history in the pursuit of justice and equity for all Australians.

Katarzyna K Williams (ANU)
Europe's subaltern memories in Australia

Between 1945 and 1965 more than two million migrants came to Australia from various parts of Europe. They brought with them different often competing memories some of which have become incorporated into Australia's cultural history. Yet, despite a particularly large number of Eastern European DPs settling in Australia after the WWII, their stories of deportations to gulags, to Siberia or Kazakhstan, remain "almost completely unknown in Australia" (Kresy-Siberia Foundation, 2017). This paper examines the presence of these memories in Australia's culture, particularly in life narratives – written, performative and filmic. I use the term "subaltern memories", which in the European context refers to Stalinist repressions, mass murders or deportations and more generally describes memories that have been marginalized, suppressed or denied. I focus on the questions of how these memories are expressed and represented in Australia, how they are remembered within diasporas, and why – given the amount of life narratives produced on the subject in Australia – they remain subaltern.