

Migrations and societies in Africa and the Middle East: a long term perspective

The 4th Global Migration History Conference (Rabat, 19-21 May 2012)

Call for papers

Aim of the conference

The conference seeks to map and understand patterns of cross-cultural migration in Africa and the Middle East from 1500 until the present. We are interested in local, internal, international and intercontinental movements of people, as well as in free and unfree migration. Following Manning's ideas on the crucial role of cross-community migration as an engine for social and cultural change (*Migration in World History*, 2005), both in sending and receiving societies, we are predominantly interested in geographical moves that involve the crossing of cultural boundaries. Such migrations, defined in linguistic, religious, class or other terms, bring people with different cultural repertoires in contact with each other and thereby has the potential to lead to innovations in various domains.

The conference seeks to assess the degree of mobility in African and Middle-Eastern societies over a longer time-frame, changes therein between periods, and, ultimately, the cultural, political, social and economic effects of migration on both sending and receiving societies.

We especially invite scholars to critically rethink widespread assumptions that portray non-Western parts of the world as essentially immobile until the 19th and 20th centuries, and interpret any forms of mobility there were as induced by the actions of violent and coercive outsiders (mostly Europeans). As a counterpoint, we put forward the hypothesis that, throughout the period under study, cross-community migration has been both part and parcel as well as a major determinant of processes of social change in the countries of Africa and the Middle-East. Therefore, we urge participants – where possible – to particularly pay attention to the human capital of migrants into their analyses.

Analytical and theoretical framework

In order to guarantee that the data presented at the conference enable systematic comparisons, we have chosen a conceptual framework and typology of different forms of migration that has been developed for Europe and since applied to Asia (discussed in the *Journal of Global History*, no. 2, 2011):

A typology of Cross-Community Migrations

- moving to cities (urbanization)
- moving to land (colonization)
- moving as soldiers and sailors
- moving as seasonal workers
- emigrating from the geographical unit under study (Middle East or Africa) • immigration into the geographical unit under study (Middle East or Africa)

Jan Lucassen en Leo Lucassen, 'The Mobility Transition Revisited, 1500-1900: What the Case of Europe Can Offer to Global History', *The Journal of Global History* 4, no. 4 (2009): 347-77.

This typology is inspired by Patrick Manning's work on global migration history mentioned above. The aim of the typology is first of all to distinguish different modes of migration and their respective impact on social and cultural change. For reasons of coherence and comparison we strongly urge participants to the conference to apply this typology to the region and period they study and secondly to reflect critically on the typology itself and come up with suggestions and modifications needed to encapsulate other types of cross-community migration (like forms of nomadism) that can be found in Africa and the Middle east in the last five centuries.

The application of this model to Africa and the Middle East implies a number of specific challenges:

- There will be a special emphasis on demography (i.e. population figures through time and migration data and/or estimates) before 1900. Such demographic key data are at the core of our global comparison, but have been less well studied for Africa and the Middle East.

- For the reconstruction of population mobility in Africa and the Middle East from 1500 onwards we solicit contributions based on written evidence produced by historians but also on archeological, linguistic, anthropological and geographical data and insights.

- As to written evidence, apart from the usual suspects (in English and French languages), we emphatically solicit contributions by historians well versed in Portuguese, Spanish and Latin sources, and in particular in Arabic, Ottoman and other non-European languages, which usually tend to fall below the radar-screen of mainstream scholarship on the issues of migration and mobility.

Call for papers

The organizational committee invites scholars to submit abstracts for papers. The deadline for submission of abstracts is **1 December 2011**. The deadline for submission of papers will be 1 May 2012. Abstracts can be sent to Mrs. Astrid Verburg, IISH secretariat (ave@iisg.nl). Guidelines for contributions:

- Paper proposals should in principal be historical in the sense that they deal with longer periods of time or compare current developments with earlier ones.
- Paper proposals should engage with the theoretical and conceptual framework as set out above.
- Where possible papers should reflect on ways to quantify types of migrations in relation to the total population of a given area as this is essential for a proper assessment of the importance of cross-community migration in its entirety and as well as in its constituent parts.

Organization

The conference has been made possible by a most generous grant from the World History Center of the University of Pittsburgh as well as by a grant of the NIMAR. This conference will extend the scope from Eurasia to Africa and the Middle East.

The Rabat conference is organized by a group of historians, committed to a truly comparative history of human mobility from a long-term and global perspective. The theoretical and empirical implications of such an endeavor have been explored in a series of conferences, of which the Rabat conference will be the fourth in line. Earlier conferences addressed the following topics:

- Wassenaar (the Netherlands), see J. Lucassen/ L.Lucassen/ P.Manning, eds., *Migration History in World History. Multidisciplinary approaches*, Brill Publishers 2010, paperback 2011;
- Minneapolis / St. Paul (USA), see U. Bosma / G. Kessler/ L. Lucassen, eds., *Migration and Membership Regimes in a Global and Historical Perspective*, submitted to Brill Publishers, forthcoming 2012;
- Taipei (Taiwan): the theme of this conference was the reconstruction of mobility in Asia over the last five centuries following the proposal made by J. Lucassen and L. Lucassen ['The mobility transition revisited 1500-1900', *Journal of Global History*, 4 (2009) 4, 347-377; see also the forthcoming discussion dossier about this article with A. McKeown, L.

Moch, J. van Lottum and J. Ehmer in the *Journal of Global History* 6

(2011) 2]. This will result in J. Lucassen / L. Lucassen, eds., *Globalising Migration History. The Eurasian Experience, 16th to 21st centuries*, forthcoming at Brill Publishers 2012/2013.

Organizational committee:

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