# Eighth Annual Young Scholars Forum: Migration, Gender, and the History of Sexualities

Workshop held October 21–22, 2024, at the GHI Washington Pacific Office at the University of California, Berkeley. Conveners: Benno Gammerl (European University Institute) and Isabel Richter (GHI Washington Pacific Office. Participants: Viola Alianov-Rautenberg (GHI Washington Pacific Office), Soheil Asefi (City University of New York), Giselle Bernard (European University Institute), Jamel Buhari (Leiden University), Ignacio Elpidio Domínguez Ruiz (University of Barcelona), Sandra Eder (University of California, Berkeley), Sarah Ernst (University of Southern California), Moisés Fernández-Cano (European University Institute), Agnes Gehbald (University of Bern), Elisabeth Kimmerle (University of Potsdam), AJ Kurdi (UC Berkeley), Mona Rudolph (Kiel University), Farhana Afrin Rahman (University of Cambridge), and Helen Laura Reichelt (Leipzig University).

The 2024 Young Scholars Forum focused on the intersection of migration, gender, and sexuality studies. Starting from the idea that exploring gender relations, modes of intimacy, and sexual diversity is crucial to a nuanced analysis of both the causes and consequences of migration and of mobility regimes, the forum welcomed contributions on the interconnections between gender studies, sexuality studies, and migration studies.

While sociologists and geographers began charting this important territory in the 2000s, historians and researchers in the humanities have lagged behind. As a result, historical approaches to these interconnected subjects are still few and far between. The forum's central goal was to explore the potential of gender-based analyses and queer historical perspectives on migration experiences, including

representations of femininity and masculinity constructed by actors themselves and by receiving societies; questions of how heteronormativity has shaped migrant histories; labor migration and gendered labor markets; sex work and migration; (im)migrant families, motherhood, and fatherhood; migration and gender-based violence; the mobility of transgender people; and the shifting regimes of intimacy in the places people left, traversed, and settled.

The Young Scholars Forum approached this topic in five panels from a trans-epochal and transregional perspective. The event began with a panel on "Sex Workers and Sexual Economies." In the panel's first presentation, Elisabeth Kimmerle examined gender, sexuality, and migration in 1960s West Germany. She explored how state authorities and Turkish migrant women dealt with the issue of extramarital children which arose as one of the unanticipated consequences of labor migration to West Germany from the mid-1950s onwards. Turkish newspapers in Turkey often reported on broken marriages, affairs, and jealousy among migrant workers, contributing to the scandalization of gender relations in migration processes. While extramarital affairs of male migrant workers were covered in the contemporary Turkish press, the focus of public interest was on unaccompanied female migrant workers. Their sexuality was seen as a moral dilemma. In her presentation Kimmerle focused on how state authorities, consulates, and welfare organizations addressed extramarital migrant children and defined concepts of gender, sexuality, and national sovereignty. While the migration regime politicized their sexual and reproductive agency, migrant women's intimate practices also challenged social notions of citizenship, belonging and gender in the 1960s.

In the second presentation of this panel Mona Rudolph discussed the prostitution industry and the migration of non-German prostitutes in West Germany between 1945

and 1989. After the end of World War II and the collapse of the Nazi regime, prostitution in Germany experienced a noticeable resurgence, with a significant increase after 1949 in West Germany's major cities in particular. Until the late 1960s migrant women played a marginal role in the sex trade. Rudoph highlighted a shift in the 1970s and early 1980s which saw a significant increase in the number of migrant women working in the prostitution industry in West Germany. She emphasized how migrant women in West Germany's prostitution industry were disadvantaged not only because of their gender but also due to their ethnic background and socioeconomic status. Rudoph also pointed to the causes and consequences of the migration of sex workers, arguing that they were directly linked to the development of migration policies in West Germany.

In the second panel, "Trajectories of Violence," Farhana Afrin Rahman analyzed the lived experiences of Rohingya refugee women in refugee camps in Bangladesh following the Rohingyas' expulsion from Myanmar in 2017. Addressing the topic of womanhood and gender division of labor, Rahman discussed the effects of forced migration on subjectivity. Displacement shifted the selfhood of both men and women, particularly in relation to gender expectations regarding labor both inside and outside the household in the refugee camps. The loss of male employment forced women to take on paid work, while men struggled to find work and fulfill their roles as breadwinners in the household. In many households men's reaction to the diminishment of their power and privilege was to commit violence against the women they lived with, particularly in connection to their paid work. Despite facing such violence, many Rohingya women continued to conform to traditional norms of masculinity and femininity. Rahman concluded that enduring violence from their husbands was seen a way for Rohingya refugee women to maintain the "masculine" image of their husbands and the "feminine" role of being "good wives" to prevent disrupting the household.

In the panel's second paper, Sarah Ernst discussed another aspect of forced migration by examining the lives of queer German Jewish Holocaust refugees and how their intersecting identities shaped their experiences before, during, and after the Holocaust. The three cases of Annette Eick (1909–2010), a poet and writer who emigrated to England after the November Pogrom of 1938; Charlotte Wolff (1897–1968), a physician who wrote pioneering academic works on lesbianism and bisexuality; and Richard Plant (1910–1998), a literature scholar who published *The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War Against Homosexuals* in 1986 shed light on the experiences of refugees in terms of personal, familial, and professional (un)belonging.

The third panel was dedicated to "Mapping Intersections between Gender, Sexuality, and Race." Giselle Bernard presented the French and German writer and journalist Minna Wettstein-Adelt whose novel *Sind es Frauen? Roman über das dritte Geschlecht* in 1901, published under the pen name Aimée Duc, rose to prominence again in the feminist movement of the 1970s. Wettstein-Adelt moved with her husband, Lutheran pastor Theodor Konrad Riebling, to Cairo in 1903, and then in 1904 to Calcutta, where she published journalistic and literary texts reflecting her encounters with colonial society in India. Bernard's close reading of these texts showed how Duc participated in the colonial project by reproducing hegemonic Orientalism and simultaneously engaged with feminist and queer imaginaries of the Orient which at times challenged its most hegemonic forms. In the next presentation, Jamel Buhari discussed Dutch perceptions of gender and sexuality politics on the African continent and the emergence of the queer African migrant in Dutch public debates on refugee migration from 1980 to the present. The Netherlands was the first country in the world to recognize sexual orientation and gender identity as grounds for an asylum claim in the 1980s. By zooming in on the Dutch context and analyzing newspapers and

media coverage Buhari raised questions about the Dutch self-image of tolerance. Queer black migrants encountered a variety of challenges upon arrival, including exclusionary mechanisms such as racism and queerphobia.

The fourth panel focused on "Female Trajectories around 1900." Agnes Gehbald examined the multiple migratory movements of women who crossed the sea to the Americas in the decades around 1900. Using a biographical approach and connecting migration and labor history she explored three cases of women migrants who traveled on their own: an Italian immigrant mother who returned to her husband in Argentina after a stay at home in 1887, an unmarried German teacher who had to leave Brazil in 1913 to return to her home country, and a Chinese woman separated from her husband who in 1920 applied for a certificate of return to reenter the United States by reason of her claimed "merchant" status. Comparing their migration experiences revealed the social construction of family roles and contributed to understanding female mobility within the patriarchal structures of the global migration system around 1900. In the panel's second paper, Helen Laura Reichelt, like Gehbald, underlined the long-standing disregard for women's experiences in labor and migration history. Arguing that traditional labor history is mainly still presented as a male narrative, Reichelt examined female trajectories in the transnational history of the early workers' movement in the second half of the nineteenth century. Seeking traces of female political activists in the international workers' movement revealed different mobility patterns as well as various triggers to migrate: access to higher or better education, better employment, and also political reasons. These female trajectories would be crucial for the evolving international "proletarian women's movement."

In the fifth panel, "Diasporas and Queer (Un)Belonging," Soheil Asefi analyzed two Queer People of Color (QPoC)

case studies within Latinx queer activist communities in New York and Chicago, highlighting activists' experiences with leftist political parties and their relationship with the broader queer community. Asefi argued that examining his topic within the framework of Transgender Marxism makes the intersection of queer identities with broader socio-economic and political struggles more apparent. He advocated for a more integrated approach in queer historiography to understanding QPoC identities within an anti-imperialist context. The final paper, jointly written by Moisés Fernández-Cano and Ignacio Elpidio Domínguez Ruiz, examined the concept of "sexilio." In the following presentation, they analyzed LGBT individuals in Spain abandoning their places of residence due to experiences of harassment, discrimination, or violence, especially in rural areas. By testing the narrative pattern of "sexilio" as a rural-to-urban trajectory, they questioned the assumption that densely populated metropolitan areas like Madrid or Barcelona were the primary "queer Meccas," or the most livable spaces for queer people in contemporary Spanish history. Drawing upon cases from the "Madrid Archive of Vagrants and Criminals" during the 1950s and 1960s, as well as oral histories, they demonstrated that variables such as class, economic opportunities, and networks of affection and kinship led many queer individuals to travel across Spanish territory. Contrary to prevailing metronormative narratives, they showed that there was more than one place queer people on the move could call home.

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