

## Moving Migration History Forward

As our aim is to relate migration history to contemporary political debates, we start by reflecting on why the former is currently not illuminating the latter, why this needs to change and how change might come about. It is not enough to just blame policy makers and the general public for not being sufficiently informed or expert to gain the level of understanding that scholarly researchers have. It is also important to interrogate scholarly assumptions, challenge traditional approaches to migration history and think about how to make connections with contemporary debates.

Henrich and Simpson's 'From the Margins of History to the Political Mainstream: Putting Migration History Centre Stage' makes the case for this paradigm shift. They argue that historical understanding has a major role to play in reframing immigration debates and that a number of historians have already demonstrated the relevance of historical research. Moreover, there is a long tradition of relating historical enquiry to contemporary concerns which has taken on new forms recently and has the potential to further evolve as new means of communication develop. This also implies that migration history needs to play a more central role in the discipline of history. Chapter 3, Leo Lucassen's 'Beyond the Apocalypse: Reframing Migration History' addresses itself specifically to this question. Noting the apocalyptic tone of much contemporary discourse about migration, he argues that this is fundamentally anchored in a misunderstanding of the nature of population movement. He shows how tracking historical movement across cultural boundaries rather than across national borders can reframe our understanding of the role of migration in the making of modern Europe.