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Leaving and Longing: Migration Museums as Nation-Building Sites

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Abstract

In the evolving context of new museology, museum interpretations of the nation variously contribute to and critique the nation-building discourse that continues to legitimate the contemporary nation-state. A focus on borders and cross-border migration offers another perspective on the construction of national belonging. In the last twenty years, both Catalonia and Germany have established national museums representing the nation's history as well as migration museums reflecting very different approaches to coming to terms with past dictatorships and post-war migration. The article compares four museums to discern their different perspectives on nation-building. It conceptualizes the nation-state and its borders, before looking at the extent to which narratives of nation and migration complement each other in the exhibitions. By approaching nation-building discourse indirectly through migration and borders – two concepts counterposed to, and thus constitutive of, the nation – it shows how migration mirrors the nation in museum representations. The article concludes that, far from transcending national histories, migration museums help reconfigure nation-building discourse away from an archetype of national *longue durée* dominated by a single ethnic group. Further, national museums that pay attention to the actual integration of migrant flows rather than more abstract cross-cultural flows can go some way towards doing the same.

Keywords: migration, nation, borders, museums, ideology

> *Museological ideas, as embodied in exhibition narratives and museum design […] are strongly ideological. They convey both a vision of the 'Other' and ourselves.'*

Museo de América, Madrid, Spain[1]

The quote above suggests a close affinity between museum representations and a core conceit of nationalist ideology, which is to define the nation in juxtaposition to the 'Other', or to construct the community in terms of what it is not (Knell 2011: 22). Accordingly, the concept of the nation is very closely related to the migrant 'Other'. One reflects on the other, hence the comparison between national and migration museums. Another key component of nationalist ideology is to trace the origins of the nation back into the mists of time, seeking to equate legitimacy with the longevity of a particular 'dominant *ethnie'* (Smith 1995: 115), or ethnic group. In what follows, museum exhibits will be judged against this chronological and linear nation-building narrative, and the extent to which histories of migration are combined with evocations of national *longue durée* (Aronsson 2011: 42; Knell 2011: 11). Joachim Baur (2009: 20) has examined how migration museums have contributed to 'recentring' the nation in more multicultural terms in Australia, Canada and the U.S. Baur argues contrary to the view that migration museums transcend national borders and their limitations to illuminate hybrid, global cultures (Baur 2009: 17). Instead, he shows that by examining 'the often reluctant admission of strangers into a collectivity that defines itself as nation' (Welz, cited in Baur 2009: 17), migration museums operate a multicultural 'Re-Vision' (Baur 2009: 25) of the nation itself. The present article applies Baur's proposition to European cases by comparing how representations of migration

in Bremerhaven and Barcelona and national museums in Barcelona and Berlin reflect on the nation as an 'imagined community' (Anderson 1991). In an age of migration (Castles and Miller 2003), currently characterized by EU-wide financial uncertainty and attempts to stem migrant arrivals from Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere, migration museums are particularly well placed to encourage reflection and debate on questions of integration, solidarity and national community. In turn, representations of the 'imagined community' in national museums offer an interpretation of where national 'borders of belonging' lie and how easy it is for migrants to belong to that community. The article's first section considers the nation-state construct as an all-pervasive organizing principle in contemporary politics, and presents the concept of national borders as a key means of delimiting the mutually constitutive concepts of nation and migration. The second and third sections look at how migration is addressed in the selected national and migration museums respectively. The article concludes that focusing on borders and cross-border migration offers another perspective on the construction of national belonging to the remarkably persistent notion of national *longue durée*. Far from transcending national histories, migration museums help reconfigure nation-building discourse away from an archetype of national *longue durée* dominated by a single ethnic group, while national museums that pay attention to the actual integration of migrant flows rather than more abstract cross-cultural flows can go some way towards doing the same.

Borders of Belonging

Nation-building is understood here as state-led nationalism, an elite ideological construct pursued through the manipulation of popular symbols, sensibilities, traditions and identities as part of a wider discourse designed to foster popular state legitimacy (Sutherland 2012: 7). The nation-state, then, is a product of nationalist ideology, just like any other 'imagined community' (Anderson 1991). Nationalism is a universal organizing principle because, as the legitimating ideology underpinning the nation-state construct, it gives meaning to borders as the dividing lines on the political maps we know today. Clearly, as Chatterjee (2005: 928) points out, this international order 'is not located anywhere in real space – it is utopian.' Neither do nation-state borders actually contain 'symmetrical units of imagined, communal self-love' (Kelly 1998: 844). Migration resulting from colonialism, to take but one example, disrupted the neat dichotomy between nationals and foreigners (Gregory 2004: 7). People of different cultures cohabiting in multicultural cities also collapse the distance between 'us' and 'them', which the nation-state construct seeks to maintain. The present approach accepts the abstract order of a world organized into nation-states but focuses on the extreme heterogeneity of nation-building within these states, starting with inherent hierarchies of ethnicity and belonging (Kelly 1998).

There is a long-standing tendency in the media and political discourse for the outsider, the immigrant, or the foreigner to be constructed as somehow threatening, thereby encouraging members of a national community to close ranks so as to preserve jobs, traditions, or some vague notion of national heritage. This is a product of 'imaginative geographies' (Gregory 2004: 17), which create difference through distance. Immigration thus serves to shape the 'imagined community' (Anderson 1991), making nation and migration mutually constitutive (Baur 2009: 20). Emigrants also make meaning in the national context by blurring the boundaries of national community, which nation-states purport to represent. In other words, immigration and diaspora represent the shifting boundaries between 'us' and 'them'. As museums that address border-crossing and are located on nation-state borders, migration museums have a particularly important contribution to make to evolving definitions of the nation. The article explores the mutually constitutive concepts of migration and nation in Barcelona's *Museu d'Història de Catalunya* (Catalan History Museum) and Berlin's *Deutsches Historisches Museum* (German Historical Museum), Bremerhaven's *Deutsches Auswandererhaus* (German Emigration Centre) and Barcelona's *Museu d'història de la immigració de Catalunya* (Museum of the history of Catalan immigration). The theoretical focus on borders justifies expanding the case selection beyond national museums to include museums of migration located in border cities.

Borders should not be considered marginal to nation-building, but rather as central to that process, for three reasons. Firstly, territorial borders are used to police the limits of belonging to the nation-state. These limits are enforced through passport controls, visa

requirements and asylum procedures, which determine whether migration is 'legal' or 'illegal'. Secondly, migrants and ethnic minorities, by virtue of being perceived as at the margins of the 'imagined community', serve to define where the limits of national belonging lie. Thirdly, border cities like Bremerhaven and Barcelona are central to nation-building, both as locations of cross-border flows and homes to important migrant communities. Migration museums, in representing migrant histories within the context of their cityscape and the wider nation-state, bring together all of these features in a structured exhibition narrative, thereby linking borders as physical, territorial barriers, that are constantly crossed in practice, to their figurative importance to nation-building discourse. Finally, focusing on border cities as key sites for negotiating national belonging and 'Otherness' avoids too great a bias in favour of capital cities, which are often taken to represent the nation-state as a whole. Looking at nation-building in national museums is uncontroversial, but as Baur (2009) suggests, migration museums may offer different perspectives on the nation.

Attempts to envision the state as a relational network or a form of spatialization realized through oft-repeated individual practices (Ferguson and Gupta 2002) entail a strong focus on territorial frontiers, or borders. The very stuff of neatly bounded sovereignty, borders are thereby recast as sites of social practice, which over time contribute to structuring an imagined entity called the nation-state; 'To take a simple example, international border controls are only effective for as long as those enforcing them turn up for work each day' (Painter 2010: 1105). This evokes a dynamic framework of cross-border movement or flux within or against which the 'imagined community' of the nation develops. In turn, it calls into question the very concept of territory as a means of imagining the nation-state, since territory only becomes meaningful once it is harnessed to a state-building project through the daily, mundane action of a million bureaucrats, cartographers and politicians (Painter 2007). In other words, conceiving of belonging in terms of individual actions (Isin and Nielsen 2008) rather than passive membership in a unified national community, emphasizes nation-building as a dynamic process rather than the mere maintenance of defined territorial borders. As one voice among many contributing to nation-building discourse, museum exhibits can be judged on how closely they stick to the anachronistic and hierarchical archetype of the 'dominant *ethnie'* (Smith 1995: 115), and the way migration flows are presented as part of the national heritage, if at all. The extent to which the chosen exhibits 'fit' the benchmark national narrative of *longue durée* are thus a key element of my methodological approach.

One strategy for reading museum exhibits is to focus on their pedagogic function 'by reviewing both *what* is said, and *how* it is said' (Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 3, emphasis in original). Some museums' ideological position is clearly stated, such as that of the Migration Museum in Adelaide, South Australia, which is 'sympathetic to the experience of the immigrant' (Szekeres 2002: 146). In other cases, museums have responded to critiques of 'their tendency to erase, marginalize or silence minority groups and identities' (Sandell 2007: x) by questioning and subverting received representations of difference. Still others try to integrate multiple perspectives into their exhibits or complement official nation-building sites with hitherto untold stories, such as the National Museum of the American Indian on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. (Message 2006). The shared didactic function of all these approaches justifies a reading in pedagogical terms, one that is 'structured firstly through the narratives constructed by museum displays and secondly through the methods used to communicate these narratives' (Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 3).

Though a multifaceted movement, a common theme of the 'new museology' is that museums should actively serve their communities. This breaks with a more traditional view of museums as elitist, inward-looking repositories of objects and knowledge. In the frequent cases where the museum's theme covers specific communities and questions of identity, this concern is doubly acute. Not only must the museum serve its own community, however defined, but it must also represent and interpret a specific community in its displays. In many cases, museums have to consider the local community, their visitor community, the national community and the relationship between all three (Knell 2011: 13). As an outsider belonging to none of the national or migrant communities addressed in the exhibitions, I could adopt the stance of a 'critical museum visitor' (Lindauer 2008) and undertake a personal reading embedded within the field of nationalism studies, which should be read alongside larger-

scale studies of visitor responses (Schlutow 2008). Similar to Hooper-Greenhill's approach, Lindauer's critical museum visitor 'notes what objects are presented, in what ways, and for what purposes' (Lindauer 2008: 204). He or she pays attention to the museum's architecture, the display style, the target audience, the 'museum's ability to enact new museum theory in its practice' (Lindauer 2008: 217) and, importantly, 'the political implications of written text' (Lindauer 2008: 213). My own visits paid attention to all these aspects, selected elements of which can be discussed in the limited space available. Lindauer's (2008: 221) critique 'involves recasting explorative questions into assertions that address an overarching thesis statement'. My key explorative question was: How is the exhibition narrative constructed and how does this compare to the archetype of national *longue durée*? My observations fed into the overarching thesis statement that, following Baur (2009), the interdependence between nation and immigration informs contemporary representations of the nation in migration museums as well as in national museums (which Baur did not cover.) My analysis begins with an overview of the physical and national context of the museums surveyed, before looking at the display style and the nation-building narrative in particular. A discussion of the target audience and the impact of new museum theory are outwith the scope of this article. However, privileging an authoritative national narrative clearly reflects a more traditional institutional approach than the multivocal and individualized histories that are characteristic of exhibits inspired by new museum theory.

Museums of the Nation

Widely regarded as a stateless nation (Guibernau 1999), Catalonia has long-standing experience of migration from within Spain and further afield, which is documented throughout the *Museu d'Història de Catalunya* (MHC)'s representation of the Catalan nation. The *Deutsches Historisches Museum* (DHM), on the other hand, was born of the perceived need to depict a unitary history of Germany in the aftermath of its decades-long division into East and West. As curator commentaries and the museum's layout make clear, detailed analysis of Germany's history of migration is relegated to the realm of temporary exhibits located in the museum annexe, while the permanent exhibition subordinates that story to a unified narrative of two thousand years of history (Knell 2011: 14). Germany's unique history of division helps explain why national unity is the overriding 'big idea' of the permanent exhibition (Lindauer 2008: 213), hence the need to look at migration separately as a more peripheral theme. The MHC, on the other hand, while adopting the same chronological and linear narrative as the DHM, puts more emphasis on the impact of actual migration movements on successive historical eras and the forging of a Catalan 'imagined community.'

        The MHC was a Catalan government (*Generalitat*) initiative, set in train by the governing party *Convergència i Unió* and its long-standing leader Jordi Pujol. It was inaugurated in 1996 following barely two years of preparation and in the face of strong opposition from those who variously denounced it as politically biased, historically imbalanced and an unacceptable drain on funding for other cultural projects (Santacana i Mestre and Hernàndez Cardona 2011: 120). Centrally located on the port in warehouses dating from 1902, the museum space was not allowed to overshadow the exhibition. This was an explicit attempt to set the museum apart from some of Barcelona's new architectural icons, such as the Museum of Contemporary Art designed by the 'starchitect' Richard Meier (Santacana i Mestre and Hernàndez Cardona 2011: 122). The museum enjoys a prime location on the waterfront promenade, which formed part of the regeneration plan for the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, and was clearly conceived to be an economically viable element of the city's cultural and heritage industries (Santacana i Mestre and Hernàndez Cardona 2011: 124). With foundations sunk eight metres below sea level, the museum is a potent symbol of Barcelona's maritime trade, and its once innovative design is testament to the city's early twentieth century modernist era (Venteo 2007: 37). All of these features make the museum highly evocative of the city's enduring Mediterranean and mercantile identities, an impression reinforced by the exhibition itself.

        The MHC offers a lively combination of military, dynastic, social and cultural history, combining large dioramas and beautifully executed reconstructions of aspects of daily life with large-scale illustrations and interactive exhibits inspired by science museums. This reflects the

museum's ambition, according to one of the project contributors, to be atmospheric as opposed to emotional, as well as 'instructive, playful and interactive' (Santacana i Mestre & Hernàndez Cardona 2011: 124). The 'danger' of combining emotion with politically charged national history is largely avoided, although the account of resistance to the Bourbon siege of Barcelona in 1713–14 could be identified as such. Two separate panels, one accompanying an evocative, large-scale diorama, make the point that 'Barcelona held out for thirteen months, impressing European public opinion' and that the fall of the city signalled the 'end of the Catalan state'. The significance attached to the loss of Catalan independence is also underlined in that this event closes the second floor exhibition, which begins with prehistoric times.

The exhibition has several key narrative strands (Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 3). It is chronological and linear; it features the theme of migration throughout; it emphasizes Catalonia's Mediterranean and, to a lesser extent, European context; it presents Catalonia in contrast to a range of 'Others'; it acknowledges Catalonia's political and cultural expansionism; and it relatively rarely uses the first person plural to designate the Catalan people or refer anachronistically to Catalonia or a Catalan identity. These features serve to highlight the changing, porous nature of territorial borders and the impact of immigration, trade and conquest throughout history, leaving open the possibility of an inclusively defined national community. The strong orientation towards Mediterranean influences suggests a particular perspective born of the city's border location and the maritime source of much of its prosperity. Finally, the theme of seaborne trade connects with that of migration, in that migrant workers have long contributed to the city's industrialization, economic expansion and modernization.

The MHC's exhibition makes a historical distinction between 'Old' and 'New' Catalonia and highlights the Aragonese crown's expansionism north across the Pyrenees, east to the Balearic Islands and south towards Valencia, thereby clarifying the lack of territorial continuity between Catalonia past and present. However, it also asserts cultural continuity based on this very expansionism; Panel 12 states that 'the political bonds beyond the Pyrenees would soon also lead to cultural ones, and Catalonia became fully incorporated into troubadour culture'. This is not an anachronistic projection of some sort of proto-national identity on the past, since the reference is to troubadours and not national culture. Even so, the immediate context of panels 11 and 11a, entitled 'The consolidation of a country' and 'the awakening of a nation' respectively, assert the 'crystalization' of certain national identity traits in the twelfth century. This is evidenced by the first documented uses of the name 'Catalonia', of Catalan as a written language and of the heraldic shield of the Counts of Barcelona (the origin of Catalonia's yellow and red striped flag). The 'crystalization' claim is reiterated in a subsequent panel covering 'The Catalan-speaking countries', including Mallorca, Valencia and Sardinia. Again, the expansionist origins of this cultural confraternity are acknowledged and the Catalan language, albeit 'in a number of variant forms' is presented as a key element of Catalan identity. This is the only example in the exhibition of an outline, unannotated map cut from its European context, which could be taken to represent the Catalan cultural nation. Its outlier status is underlined in that the panel is not numbered and therefore not integrated into the exhibition's narrative flow. A more literal translation of the Catalan and Spanish panels than the museum's own English text reads; 'As well as the bond of language, political and cultural solidarities also lent cohesion to the whole'. These solidarities, in turn, are the basis for the claim that Catalonia's 'unity was ruptured' in the seventeenth century when France occupied Roussillon and part of Cerdanya. This time, France's annexation of the territories is not put in the context of Aragonese expansionism five centuries previously (or the Visigoths before it) but instead within a proto-nationalist narrative. The bonds of solidarity apparently established are deemed sufficient to present this as the division of some sort of imagined community, though little evidence is presented in support of a seventeenth century national consciousness, as opposed to a twenty-first century one projected back into the past. Thus, the exhibition clearly follows the archetypal national narrative of *longue durée*. The exhibition explicitly 'culminates' with the election of the first post-Franco Catalan parliament in 1980, and the subsequent decades are summed up as 'an uninterrupted process of autonomous development and institutional consolidation'.

In keeping with a tendency identified in Canada and Scotland vis-à-vis the United States and England respectively (Winter 2009, Watson 2011: 752), reference to the Spanish

'Other' is generally conspicuous by its absence. The exhibit does prominently identify a series of constitutive others, including the Romans, Greeks, Ottomans and Bourbons but, with the significant exception of Al-Andalus, developments across the rest of the Iberian peninsula remain quite vaguely defined. References to Spanish affairs often revolve around seafaring, including the voyages of Christopher Columbus, the logistical difficulties of exploiting Atlantic sea routes and thus South American colonization, and the loss of remaining Spanish colonies in 1898 as a spur to Catalan nationalism. The clear implication is that Catalonia was primarily oriented outwards to the Mediterranean, and that the fortunes of Genoa, Venice and its other maritime rivals long preoccupied it more than its landward neighbours.

However, the one exhibition theme that clearly links Catalonia with the rest of the Iberian peninsula is migration, from the eighth century 'repopulation' of 'Old' Catalonia's lowlands by 'anonymous peasant families' leaving the overcrowded Pyrenees, to the post-World War II arrival in Catalonia of Andalusian immigrants. Migration is thus a recurring theme throughout the exhibition. It features in early panels on Roman and Greek conquest and cultural mixing and is acknowledged as key to transforming Catalonia's cities and 'mentalities' during the nineteenth century industrial revolution. Migration is also embodied at the entrance to the exhibition's final section in the shape of a man with a suitcase, setting off to contribute to the 'second industrial revolution' at the turn of the twentieth century. The penultimate and final rooms are covered in a series of life-size panels depicting key Catalan political and cultural figures as well as a multicultural cross-section of the population. Like the DHM, the MHC offers a chronological, linear narrative of national history, but one that documents the actual integration of immigrants into the national community, as opposed to the more abstract depictions of 'the historical evolution of transnational relations' (Beier-de Haan 2011: 190) guiding the DHM's displays. Befitting its location on a maritime port, the MHC seems less concerned with its significant, Spanish 'Other' than with the impact of successive migration 'waves' from across the Mediterranean. The undoubted impact of maritime exchange throughout Barcelona's history and the continued importance of its recently enlarged port to the Catalan economy chime with the MHC's interpretation of Catalan history as oriented towards the sea (rather than Spain) and recognition of migrant flows as constituent components of Catalan national identity. The DHM's national narrative, though it chronicles international influences, refers to a European cultural context 'beyond national histories' (Beier-de Haan 2013: 187) as opposed to trying to 'Re-Vision' (Baur 2009: 25) the nation itself in terms of its multicultural makeup. This reflects a conservative strand of public debate, which until recently rejected the descriptor *Einwanderungsland* (land of immigration) for Germany (Green 2004).

First conceived by then Chancellor Helmut Kohl in the wake of Germany's unification in 1990, the DHM project was long criticized from the left for its perceived potential to promote dangerous, chauvinistic national pride (Reuth and Schwilk 2006). For instance, a Green Party member attended the DHM's opening ceremony wearing sackcloth to show his embarrassment and disgust at Germany officially celebrating its – to him – irremediably tainted national history. A neo-conservative concern with creating a national narrative is thus associated with Kohl's project, which sets out to document 2000 years of German history. When the permanent exhibition finally opened in 2006, inside the early eighteenth century armoury that once housed East Germany's Museum of German History, the DHM's director described the museum's central aim as to promote national 'self-assurance' (*Selbstvergewisserung*) (Matussek and Schulz 2006). Interestingly, Chancellor Angela Merkel's speech at the opening ceremony highlighted the DHM's ideological underpinnings, something that the curators themselves were more reluctant to countenance (see Sutherland 2010: 110-13). Merkel pointed out that the DHM's exhibition was a 'historico-political' (*geschichtspolitisch*) undertaking and stated that East Germany's 'Marxist interpretation of history' had been replaced by a 'free and democratic' one, thereby clearly signalling that the DHM symbolized the triumph of one ideology over another (Merkel 2006).

The DHM's temporary exhibitions are located in the new wing of the museum, designed by the international 'starchitect' I. M. Pei. Perhaps as a reflection of the post-modern architectural space, the conception and design of these exhibits tends to escape the linear, chronological narrative of the main building's permanent collection (Sutherland 2010: 116-7). In early 2005, an ambitious DHM exhibition entitled *Zuwanderungsland Deutschland* (Germany as a country

of in-migration) set out to trace the history of immigration to Germany since 1500. The exhibition showed how victims of religious persecution, journeymen, entrepreneurs, seasonal workers and refugees from all over Europe have played an important part in German life for over 500 years. Successive West German governments long maintained that theirs was *not* a country of immigration (*Einwanderungsland*), in spite of the lasting trend amply illustrated in the exhibition (Joppke 1999: 62, Whitehead *et al* 2012: 26). This attitude was most famously embodied in the so-called *Gastarbeiter* ('guest workers'), who were invited to work in post-war West Germany for only a limited time and without any prospect of gaining citizenship. The exhibition's use of the term *Zuwanderung* (*in*-migration) rather than *Einwanderung* (*im*migration) indicates a subtle distinction of principle between in-migration that is merely tolerated and immigration that is welcomed or solicited (Joppke 1999: 97; Unispiegel 2006). Although this may be considered a linguistic nicety, it is a crucial indicator of post-war nation-building in (West) Germany (Green 2004, Sutherland 2010: 55).

Like the MHC, the DHM offers a chronological overview of national history. Both museums also culminate in defining political events, namely Catalan autonomy within Spain and German reunification. The DHM's name, its overall spatial organization and its core aim of surveying two millennia of history offer a clear vision of Germany as a continuous cultural entity in which Cold War division was a mere blip or aberration (Sutherland 2010: 112). The DHM's official guidebook portrays the museum as a 'non-partisan chronicler' *(unparteiischer Chronist)* (Vorsteher 2006: 18, author's translation) and describes how, after rescuing them from the East German Museum of History's '"arsenal" of class struggle', the exhibits returned to storage. A place, where each object in the collection is neutralised and 'de-ideologised' in the first instance through its isolation. This is where cataloguing and research, preservation and conservation take place' (Vorsteher 2006: 13). The evocation of the museum as a place of objective, scientific enquiry (Ottomeyer and Czech 2006: 9) is hard to square with the DHM's apparent commitment to the principles of new museology and its use of 'milestones' to plot a 'visible, orienting marked line along the main way'. Its professed lack of bias also seems at odds with its scathing view of the '"arsenal" of class struggle,' its explicit commitment to Enlightenment values (Vorsteher 2006: 15) and to the political project of embedding German history within European history. The museum's guiding themes, including 'What held the Germans together?' and 'How do Germans understand themselves?' (Ottomeyer and Czech 2006: 10) are based on the assumption that a unified community of Germans has existed across the two millennia covered in the museum. This unitary myth is summed up in the information panel covering the rapprochement between East and West Germany in the 1970s, which carries the title 'two states – one nation'. The DHM's overriding rationale of creating a single national narrative leaves little room for addressing the still controversial theme of modern Germany as a land of immigration, a topic left to a temporary exhibit that conveyed some remaining ambivalence in its very title. This is not to say that migration is ignored or undocumented, but rather that the museum's remit of establishing a clear national narrative in Germany's post-war and post-reunification landscape currently trumps a multi-perspectival, new museological approach to the national imagined community.

In plotting an approved path through 2000 of history, the DHM is primarily concerned with establishing its credibility in the fraught political arena of national memory and belonging. This is an arena in which the extension of the federal republic's citizenship to all East German citizens and ethnic German *Aussiedler* eclipsed consideration of citizenship for *Gastarbeiter* until 2000, where the capital's main Holocaust memorial is but a decade old, and where commemoration of Germans expelled from Eastern Europe at the end of World War II remains a matter of controversy to this day. Germany is still coming to terms with the impact of the twentieth century's 'totalitarian ideologies' on its 'imagined community' (Sutherland 2010), let alone its de facto status as an *Einwanderungsland*. One of the DHM's curators clearly suggests that it is the role of the museum's special exhibitions, such as *Zuwanderungsland Deutschland* and *Mythen der Nationen* to examine 'disparate positions of consciousness and cultural limits' (Beier-de Haan 2011: 190), leaving the main exhibit to chart a less controversial or innovative course. The same curator believes that 'the German Historical Museum attempts to view the nation-state as a system that has always been watered-down by transnational references and influences'. She explicitly does not refer to representing 'the integration of many different ethnic

groups', however, but rather 'an understanding of community above and beyond persisting national borders' (Beier-de Haan 2011: 190). This chimes with the DHM's explicit ideological commitment to writing German unity within an international – principally European – context that is less laden than nationalist signifiers and relatively uncontroversial (until the recent founding of the *Alternative für Deutschland* party). The MHC, whilst following the same linear national narrative within a wider context – in this case Mediterranean – is more explicit in depicting immigrant integration; from the model of the nineteenth century labourer, suitcase in hand, to the last room containing life-size photographs of 'New Catalan' immigrants (Lanzarote Guiral 2011: 871). How does this compare to museums of migration in each country case?

Museums of Migration

Germany's emigration museums in Bremerhaven and Hamburg (*Ballinstadt*), like the museum quarters in Liverpool, Genoa and Antwerp among others, have been explicitly designed to help revitalise disadvantaged or deindustrialized neighbourhoods as focal points for culture and tourism. Unlike the *Museu d'història de la immigració de Catalunya* (MhiC), which is completely surrounded by a busy ringroad, the *Deutsches Auwandererhaus* (DAH) is a focal point in Bremerhaven's pedestrianized redevelopment of its port for leisure and tourism, sitting alongside a sail-shaped hotel, a science museum and a Mediterranean-themed shopping centre. The DAH has proved to be economically successful as well as being awarded Museum of the Year in 2007. Much less high-profile, Catalonia's migration museum lies on the outskirts of Barcelona, far removed from the tourist centre. Inaugurated in 2004 but with aspirations to have its own, purpose-built museum, the MhiC is situated in Sant Adrià de Besòs, a municipality that co-funds the museum and has been shaped by the kind of migration documented there. The MhiC currently consists of a nineteenth century farmhouse with a documentation centre and space for temporary exhibitions, together with two outdoor, permanent exhibitions housed in a vintage train carriage and a container respectively. The emigrants evoked in Bremerhaven's DAH were going West, and many came from beyond Germany's eastern borders. By contrast, Barcelona's migration museum is principally devoted to Spanish immigrants who came to work in Catalan industry following the Spanish Civil War, alongside a newer exhibit on more recent arrivals. Placing the dynamic of border crossing at the centre of the analysis questions its conventional role as a fixed boundary between foreigners and nationals, one that underpins the nation-state construct as a whole. For example, many nineteenth century migrants left their German homeland behind, but also reconstituted the nation through their mementos, longing and nostalgia for that *Heimat*. Following Baur (2009), this section asks how museums of migration reflect on the nation. Given the interconnectedness of nation and migration, to 'reflect on' is understood here in its dual sense of mirroring and pondering.

In terms of display style (Lindauer 2008: 209), both the DAH and the MhiC seek to help visitors imagine the journey migrants experienced. The DAH invites each visitor to follow the story of an actual emigrant, whose 'identity card' is issued alongside the entrance ticket. The MhiC exhibition 'El Sevillano' takes its name from the genuine train carriage it occupies, which originally carried migrants from Seville to Barcelona in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War (1936–39). Visitors can sit in the first two compartments with their original furnishings and look out onto a lush allotment garden before moving further down the carriage into exhibition spaces. Background sound effects evoke a train rolling along the track, people talking and a baby crying. The long duration of the journey is emphasized through a touch screen map, and migrants' hopes and expectations are told through personal vignettes and artefacts, such as a pair of shoes borrowed to make the wearer look 'respectable'. Similarly, visitors to the DAH are encouraged to follow in the footsteps of people preparing to undertake a transatlantic voyage, leading from a reconstructed pier – complete with luggage and life-size mannequins – up the ship's hull forming the backdrop to the scene, and into a series of reconstructed cabins.

When the DAH originally opened in 2005, its 'experiential' exhibition culminated with a reconstructed Ellis Island arrival hall, and an interactive exhibit asking the kind of quick-fire questions that determined migrants' entry into the USA. There followed a room of maps and mementos charting migrants' destinations across the American continent, a cinema, and a resources room for researching family history, which also featured a quiz to test participants'

tolerance of multiculturalism. This last room was rather disconnected from the rest of the exhibition, though it clearly represented an attempt to link past emigration with contemporary immigration in visitors' minds (Schlutow 2008: 61). The DAH's approach has now changed, thanks to a federally co-funded museum extension devoted to chronicling the experience of arrival and integration. This already features prominently in its Hamburg counterpart, the *Ballinstadt* emigration museum. It is a strong indication that the DAH's potential to impact on Germany's current immigration debates has been recognized at the highest levels. Former German president Christian Wulff explicitly sought to make this connection, using visits to the DAH as a platform to call for a more inclusive, two-way approach to migrant integration. Elsewhere, in a speech commemorating 20 years of German reunification in Berlin, Wulff stated that 'Islam is part of Germany [*Islam gehört zu Deutschland*]'. This attracted much comment in a country where conservatives use the term *Multikulti* dismissively of 'lefties' and Chancellor Angela Merkel declared multiculturalism to have 'utterly failed' in 2010 (Weaver 2010: no page). In May 2012, the new German president Joachim Gauck also partially distanced himself from Wulff's claim (Spiegel 2012). Thus, the DAH extension is an important symbolic step, which also has the pedagogic potential to contribute to the ongoing debate surrounding German nation-building. The new wing's reconstruction of a German shopping centre and office from the 1970s evokes the period of the *Anwerbestopp*, when Germany's *Gastarbeiter* policy was halted due to the economic slowdown associated with the oil crisis of 1973. In a clear parallel with how emigrants' stories are told in the older wing, visitors are encouraged to follow the personal stories of migrants to Germany. The DAH's new exhibition space, situated across a walkway from the main building, literally bridges the gap between Germany's history of emigration and the impact of immigration, thereby encouraging visitors to consider the borders of belonging from migrant perspectives. The multivocal nature of the exhibits contrasts with the single, institutional narrative proffered by the DHM and MHC.

The words picked out in neon lights above the DAH ticket office read – in English – 'Over 7 million departed from here to an unknown world.' The English language text points to the fact that the museum is oriented as much towards emigrants' descendants returning to their 'roots', as it is to visitors from Bremerhaven or Germany. This was highlighted on the museum's opening night by references to its importance for transatlantic relations and messages from then US president George W. Bush and Hollywood stars (Schlutow 2008: 50; Whitehead *et al* 2012: 34). The primary emphasis of an emigration museum is less about documenting the 'here' of the neon sign and more about depicting departure and sometimes arrival in the 'unknown world'. Nevertheless, the DAH's new wing does explicitly aim to raise awareness of long-standing and ongoing migration to Germany, thereby contributing to contemporary debates surrounding integration and, by extension, the nation (Schlutow 2008: 61). It thus comes much closer to Baur's idea of a national 'Re-Vision' than its counterpart, the DHM. The DAH's collections of sepia postcards depicting the long-lost German *Heimat* thereby take on a new meaning, as visitors are encouraged to reflect not only on reasons for migrating then and now, but also on Germany's dual identity as a country of emigration and immigration (or *Einwanderungsland*). One panel quotes the ambivalence of an anonymous nineteenth century migrant regretfully turning his or her back on a home that had offered only hardship;

> I will bravely board the ship, only Westfalia could draw my tears, never to dry, I no longer have a Fatherland, the wide world is open before me [*Ich werde das Schiff muthig besteigen, nur Westfalen entlockte mir Thränen, die nie mehr trocknen, Ich habe nun kein Vaterland mehr, die weite Welt steht mir offen*].

These lines associate the Fatherland with both nostalgia and bitter disappointment, thereby conjuring a nation from leaving and longing. This is just one example of the wide range of perspectives that is offered throughout the museum, which encourage visitors to reflect on the meaning of belonging to the *Heimat* or nation.

Contrary to Germany's decades of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, or coming to terms with its Nazi past, Spain has yet to look back in earnest at the legacy of General Franco's dictatorship, which ended with his death in 1975. The process has begun with the search for remains of those murdered during the Civil War and Franco's regime (Sociedad de Ciencias Aranzadi 2012) and through academic studies of the era, often by non-Spanish historians

(Preston 2012). However, the incipient process of remembrance and reckoning faced a setback when the prominent human rights lawyer Baltasar Garzón was prosecuted for investigating crimes subject to a 1977 amnesty law, a law described at his trial 'as one of the key elements of Spain's peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy' (Tremlett 2012, no page). The legislation remains in place, despite Garzón's eventual acquittal and calls by the United Nations Human Rights office and Amnesty International for its repeal. In the context of researching the Franco era, it is important to note the MhiC's co-publication of a book entitled *Memòries del Viatge [1940-1975]* in collaboration with Sant Adrià de Besòs local council (Marín 2009). The book ends with a chapter detailing how the migrants who flocked to Catalonia in search of a better life created a new sense of community through and within their municipality, often building up neighbourhoods out of wasteland. This highlights how their life stories are intertwined with the urban fabric of their adopted homes, and the widespread privations and poverty during Franco's rule. In its book and 'El Sevillano' exhibit, the MhiC thus squarely addresses the theme of migration in the context of one of the most difficult chapters in Spain's recent history, with some regard for the museum's local, urban setting. This is also clear in the introduction to its second permanent exhibition, simply titled *Migrate (Migrar)*, which evokes 'the metropolitan landscape of Sant Adrià, the river Besòs, the various neighbourhoods, the fecsa towers, the Ronda ring road […] as the real territory that is the setting for the particular experience of immigration in the city' (MhiC 2012). Though framed within an urban as opposed to national context, this is an excellent example of examining the integration of migrants themselves, rather than privileging a more abstract, transnational look at 'the diversity of cultures and identities' (Beier-de Haan 2011: 188).

Like the DAH, the *Migrate* exhibit adopts the journey as its guiding theme but unlike 'El Sevillano,' it takes a contemporary perspective and does not end the story on arrival. Rather, the journey is divided into four sections entitled *migrate, borders, arrival* and *settlement*, each considered from migrants' personal viewpoints. Interactive exhibits include short films of migrants from many different countries recounting aspects of their experiences, copies of official Catalan publications and guides on migrant integration, as well as a selection of longer documentaries shown on a large screen. The first, introductory film begins with the words; 'Man is not a tree. He has feet and moves'. It goes on to provide evidence of human migration between 150,000 and 200,000 years ago and to state that Catalonia was always a country of immigration. This depiction of migration as an inherent human characteristic is reinforced by the very practical tone of the panels, covering basic, shared human needs like housing, work and education. Outside, inventive visual displays serve to illustrate these themes. For example, a game of hopscotch painted on the ground charts the stages following an immigrant's arrival, such as finding housing, finding work and achieving citizenship. Nearby, a large metro map is modified to include stations from all over the world, with each coloured route symbolizing issues like documentation, dwelling, language, work, orientation and prejudice. Elsewhere, the exhibition thoughtfully defines a border as a 'highly-coded limit', breaking it down into administrative, physical, conflictual, urban and psychological components. According to an exhibition panel, this perspective explicitly sets out to 'represent and explain the border from the normative, regulatory viewpoint of flows,' recalling the introductory portrayal of migration as a core human characteristic as opposed to the tree-like embeddedness evoked by notions of rootedness. As an immigration museum, the MhiC's exhibition is clearly, if not explicitly, linked to a nation-building project. The fluidity it ascribes both to borders and to humans as essentially 'on the move' is based on a very open understanding of the nation designed to appeal to migrants and nationals alike (Van Geert 2010: 147), one which fits rather well with the MHC's depiction of migration as integral to Catalan history. Thus, the DAH and the MhiC each bring together a historical and a more contemporary exhibit that evoke journeys and flux across borders, privileging the perspective of the individual who 'has feet and moves' over the archetypal nation-building narrative of *longue durée*.

Conclusion

Benedict Anderson's widely-cited analysis of the nation as an 'imagined community,' though enormously important and influential, has also been criticized for overlooking the hierarchies

inherent in nation-building (Kelly 1998; Chatterjee 2005). This is particularly relevant to migrants and minorities, who may not fit the dominant definition of the national community. Museums that place migrants not at the margins but at the centre of their narrative make an implicit statement about the nation-state as an 'imagined community.' Joachim Baur argues that migration museums offer an alternative vision of the nation to the increasingly untenable narrative of *longue durée* presided over by a dominant ethnic group (Ostow 2012: 154). This article has shown that both the MHC and the DHM take a linear, *longue durée* approach to national history, privileging the authoritative institutional voice over the multivocality that characterizes the MhiC and the DAH. In the case of the MHC, Barcelona's Mediterranean heritage and long-standing, large-scale migration to Catalonia appears easier to thematize than its ongoing difficult relationship with the Spanish 'Other', though this may not reflect popular Catalan attitudes to immigration (Fekete 2011). The DHM, on the other hand, mindful of Germany's difficult post-war relationship with nationalism, cushions its permanent exhibition's 'Re-vision' (Baur 2009: 25) of the nation within a European context of cultural flows (Beier-de Haan 2011). The museum's 'allocation of space' (Knell 2011: 14) and time are revealing; *temporary* exhibitions questioning national myths and chronicling Germany's immigrant experiences are to be found in the modern annexe so as not to disrupt the guided narrative of national unity that fills the museum's historic core. Despite Germany's long-standing reluctance to recognize itself as a country of immigration, however, the recently extended DAH has emerged as a form of 'bridging institution' (Knell 2011: 14) that encourages visitors to consider and compare migrant in-flows and outflows across the centuries. Both the DAH's juxtaposition of emigrant and immigrant stories, and the MhiC's locally embedded exhibits offer potentially more inclusive models for nation-building in the sense that, like the MHC, they integrate migrant experiences into their exhibition narratives. When considering their collections in the context of evolving nation-building discourse, national museums could look to museums of migration in order to break away from a narrative of *longue durée* that privileges the designated ethnic core over myriad other contributors to the contemporary 'imagined community.'

Notes

[1]   Author's translation from an interpretive panel in the Museo de América, Madrid, Spain. All further translations of museum panels are by the author.

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