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## **Deprovincializing Contemporary Austrian History.**

### **Migration and the transnational challenges to national historiographies (ca. 1960-today)**

In 1944 the Austrian emigrant and sociologist Alfred Schütz defined "the stranger" (immigrant, newcomer) as "a man without history" who is allowed to be exotic but nothing more: "Seen from the point of view of the approached group, he [the stranger] is a man without history." In current discourses in European immigration societies, the commitment of migrants to becoming familiar with the history of mainstream society is demanded as a prerequisite for successful integration. The involvement of mainstream society with the history of immigrants, their historical experience and memories (not only, but also, of the migration itself) is, however, still lacking. Here, one could extrapolate Schütz's statement: "strangers" will remain strange for as long as they are denied their own history. But even the second and third generation of migrants has almost no broad knowledge about the history of migration apart from family memories.

The project takes Austria as a paradigmatic case. It is aiming for a transnational history of post-war Austria since the 1960's that is understood here as being a migration society. How that up-to-date Austrian history might be written is to be considered by employing the theories and tools of transnational history and postcolonial studies. This will reflect the realities of our present-day society which productively absorbs and mirrors – not only, but by no means insignificantly – the influence of migration which undermines and transcends the national framework at various levels. Since the essential basis for a history of this nature, one that includes and integrates migration and minorities, is especially lacking with regard to archival sources, an important part of the project is dedicated to empirical and archival research in Austria and the countries of origin. Along with the research, the relevant documents and sources for a history of this kind will be identified for the first time and also made available for further research by means of an online repertory. Attention will not only be directed to state archives with their dispersed holdings, but also to institutional archives which have been distinctly underutilized by researchers and, in addition, it will be supplemented by private holdings and oral history sources.

Starting from the subject of migration which institutionalized contemporary history has marginalized up till now, a new Austrian, and thus also European contemporary history can be developed and, above all, reconfigured both spatially and chronologically. The most important task here will be to link the spaces and narratives of the countries of origin with Austrian history. The project will open up new European and global horizons for contemporary history and, simultaneously, opportunities for collaborative work within the field of history along with intensive transdisciplinary networking.