

Expectations Unfulfilled

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Expectations Unfulfilled

Norwegian Migrants in Latin America, 1820–1940

Edited by

Steinar A. Sæther



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Cover illustration: Ottar Enger, Ole V. Høiby and unknown worker resting in 'Hiet' (The Lair) at the estancia 'El Mate' in Argentina, ca. 1927. The photograph is taken with the camera of Ole V. Høiby. Photograph courtesy of Ove Høiby.

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Contents

Acknowledgements VII

List of Figures, Tables and Maps VIII

List of Contributors X

1 Introduction 1

Steinar A. Sæther

2 Making Sense of a Minor Migrant Stream 17

Steinar A. Sæther

3 From Adventurers to Settlers: Norwegians in Southern Brazil 57

Ellen Fensterseifer Woortmann

4 Migrants on Skis: Norwegian-Latin American Return Migration in the 1890s 77

Cecilia Alvstad

5 The Good, the Bad and the Rational: Desirable and Undesirable Migration to Cuba and Mexico (1907–1909) 102

Mieke Neyens

6 Opportunities for the Few and Select: Norwegians in Guatemala (1900–1940) 127

Synnøve Ones Rosales

7 Male Narratives from the Margins of the Country of Immigrants: Two Norwegians in Argentina in the 1920s 162

María Bjerg

8 Three Norwegian Experiences in Post-Revolutionary Mexico: Per Imerslund, Halfdan Jebe and Ola Apenes 184

Ricardo Pérez Montfort

9 The Blikstad Family: Saga of Emigrants in Norway, Spain, and Brazil 225

María Álvarez-Solar

List of Works Cited 241

Index 255

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List of Figures, Tables and Maps

Figures

- 2.1 Faist's model: number of migrants in each phase 21
- 2.2 Faist's model: cumulative number of migrants resident in host country by phase 21
- 2.3 Number of Norwegian arrivals in Latin America (HULA), Norwegian arrivals in Buenos Aires (CEMLA) and departures for Latin American destinations (EMIPRO) by decade 27
- 2.4 Yearly arrivals in Buenos Aires (CEMLA), and yearly departures from Norway to Latin America (EMIPRO) 27
- 2.5 Yearly registered presence of Norwegians in Latin America by HULA, 1848–1940 28
- 2.6 Registered presence of Norwegians in HULA by decade 29
- 2.7 Norwegians in Chilean censuses, 1854–1940 29
- 2.8 Norwegians in Mexican censuses, 1910–1930 30
- 2.9 Number of Norwegian vessels arrived in selected Latin American ports annually, 1865–1903 38
- 3.1 Advertisement in *Lillehammers Tilskuer*, July 30, 1850 64
- 3.2 Drawing of house built by Norwegians in Joinville 72
- 5.1 Book cover and title page of Lykke-Seest's book (1909) 109
- 5.2 Cholula 121
- 5.3 Porfirio Díaz 122
- 8.1 Fragment of *Dignidad Maya* by H. Jebe 211

Tables

- 2.1 Norwegian arrivals in Latin America in HULA by decade and country of arrival, 1850–1940 26
- 2.2 Number of Norwegian ships arrived at selected Latin American ports, 1865–1903 36
- 2.3 Runaway sailors in the port of Buenos Aires according to consular reports, 1871–98 41
- 2.4 Norwegian engineers in Chile, Bolivia, and Peru 1870–1940 45
- 6.1 Foreigners in the Guatemalan coffee industry (1913) 141
- 6.2 Norwegian immigrants in Guatemala 1900–1940 154

Maps

- 6.1 Guatemala 131
- 7.1 Train journey from Buenos Aires to La Zanja (Trenque Lauquen) 168
- 7.2 The journey from the city of Salta to Tartagal 174

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Introduction

*Steinar A. Sæther*¹

In the course of world history approximately eighty million individuals have moved from one continent to another. More than sixty million of these movements occurred in the long century between 1820 and 1940.² Latin America was a prime receptor of international migrants; around fifteen million people from Europe, Asia, and Africa went there between 1820 and 1940.³ The total population of Latin America increased from twenty-one million in 1820 to almost 210 million in 1960, a ten-fold increase in part because of the effects of mass immigration. During the same period, nearly one million Norwegians emigrated. Norway and Ireland were the countries with the highest transatlantic migration rate in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Yet, Norwegians constituted a miniscule share of the total number of migrants who came to Latin America. Indeed, while Latin American states received millions of immigrants, and Norway was one of the major sources of emigrants in relative terms, very few Norwegians ended up in Latin America. Why? That is the central question underlying the studies in this volume. How can we explain that so few Norwegian migrants went to Latin America and even fewer chose to remain?

It may be objected that the articles in this anthology cover too few migrants over a too long period within a too vast territorial space. Does it make sense to study these seemingly disparate and fragmented migratory experiences together? Migration scholars, often with good reason, tend to focus on larger movements more concentrated in time and space. In the case of Latin American immigration history, they have paid particular attention to the Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian migrants. But the study of the smaller migrant groups is also important, partly because in sum the smaller groups constituted a large proportion of the immigrants in Latin America. This volume contributes

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- 1 The author thanks María Bjerg for her generous assistance and input in the writing of the introduction.
 - 2 Pieter Cornelis Emmer, "Intercontinental migration as a world historical process," *European Review* 1, no. 01 (1993): 68.
 - 3 Eduardo José Míguez, "Introduction: Foreign Mass Migration to Latin America in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries – An Overview," in *Mass Migration to Latin America*, ed. Samuel L. Baily and Eduardo José Míguez (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2003), xiv.

to our understanding of migrant experiences by dealing with the variety of options potential migrants seized even though they could not rely on a sizeable ethnic community for social capital. Furthermore, it is important to note that not all migratory streams evolve into large floods. The articles in this anthology all address the question of why there were not more Norwegian migrants in Latin America, an issue that has significance beyond both Latin America and the period 1820–1940.

This book presents the results of the multidisciplinary research project “Desired Immigrants – Frustrated Adventurers? Norwegians in Latin America, 1820–1940” for scholars and students interested in new approaches to migration history.⁴ One of the principal objectives of our research has been to study simultaneously at micro, meso, and macro levels the experiences of the Norwegian men and women who worked, lived, and traveled in Latin America between independence and the outbreak of World War II. Balancing the pursuits of microhistorical depth and macrohistorical overview is a central concern in each of the chapters. The authors have handled this differently: some of the chapters focus on particular individuals or families, using their singular experiences as prisms to explore wider tendencies, while other chapters adopt a more general outlook and treat Norwegians in one particular country or within one particular enterprise. This introduction provides a short overview of the European and Asian immigration to Latin America, outlines some of the general tendencies of Norwegian emigration in the period, and introduces the central questions that will be addressed in subsequent chapters.

Immigration to Latin America

Latin America, especially the areas outside the old colonial centers, was along with the United States and Canada the main receivers in the nineteenth-century transatlantic migration system. Cheaper and faster transportation, especially after the introduction of steam navigation and the early development of railways, facilitated the growth of new exports in grains, tropical fruits, meat, and minerals. The new economic sectors needed large numbers of skilled and unskilled labor. Immigrants to Latin America in general sought the major ports, the areas where fertile land could be bought or claimed, and the mines and oilfields often operated by foreign companies. José C. Moya has eloquently described how the old colonial centers in the Andes and in central

4 The research project “Desired Immigrants – Frustrated Adventurers? Norwegians in Latin America, 1820–1940” was principally funded by the Latin America Program of the Norwegian Research Council from 2011 to 2015.

Mexico receded relatively to the “new” cities such as Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Caracas, and São Paulo, while Havana and Rio de Janeiro were the exceptions in this regard, as they continued to be important ports throughout the nineteenth century as they had been during the colonial period. In short, European immigration was both a cause and a consequence of the great economic shift that relocated Latin America’s place with the Atlantic economic system.⁵

When the processes of independence ended, the majority of new Latin American states eased or completely lifted the restrictions on entry that had existed during colonial times, and sought to encourage immigration, particularly by Europeans. Although there existed an incipient migration during the first half of the nineteenth century, stimulated in part by the programs of agricultural colonization like those that attracted the first Swiss and German colonists to southern Brazil, massive migration to Latin America did not really start until the 1880s. The immigration reached new heights and peaked right before the outbreak of World War I. During the war, the immigration rate again receded. It partly recovered in the 1920s but without reaching the level of the prewar years. The economic implosion of the 1930s and the outbreak of World War II led to a drastic reduction of immigration to all Latin American countries, and although there was an upswing again following the war, the general movement of migrants to Latin America lost its vigor in the 1950s. Latin America gradually became a continent of net emigration, probably for the first time in human history.

Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and Uruguay were the countries that attracted the greatest numbers of immigrants. Brazil and Argentina each received around four million immigrants between 1881 and 1930, while about 580,000 arrived in Uruguay. Cuba, whose official registration of immigration coincided with the end of Spanish rule in 1898, received 596,000 between 1902 and 1930, a number very close to that of Uruguay.⁶ However, since Cuba’s population was twice that of Uruguay’s, the demographic impact of immigration was much greater in the small South American republic than on the Caribbean island. Argentina and Uruguay received around a hundred thousand annually, though the economic downturn of the 1890s reduced the immigration rate temporarily. In Brazil the expansion of coffee production in the state of São Paulo, the policy of subsidized journeys, and the crisis of the Argentinean and Uruguayan destinations stimulated the immigration of Northern Italians and to a lesser extent of Spanish and Portuguese. In 1891, Brazil reached its peak immigration year with

5 José C. Moya, “A continent of immigrants: Postcolonial shifts in the Western Hemisphere,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 86, no. 1 (2006).

6 Hernán A. Silva, José Sebastião Witter, and Alvaro Brandão Santos, eds., *Inmigración y estadísticas en el Cono Sur de América: Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Uruguay* (México, D.F.: Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, 1990).

220,000 entries. But the fall of the price of coffee in the early 1900s caused a reduction in the number of entries and an increased level of return migration. When the negative cycle was reversed, Brazil again experienced a general migration trend similar to that of Argentina and Uruguay.⁷

There was only a very modest immigration wave to Mexico, despite the ambitious plans elaborated during the long reign of Porfirio Díaz to repopulate and strengthen the northern frontiers and increase the work force in export regions of the coastal south and east. Like their South American counterparts, Mexican authorities sought to attract “honorable and industrious” settlers to populate *tierras baldías*, state-owned vacant lands. Although some European countries were interested in Díaz’s migration policies – Italy and Belgium sent representatives to inspect the quality of the lands in question and the general conditions of the project – the results were meager. According to the statistics of Nicolás Sánchez Albornoz, only 33,980 European colonists arrived in Mexico between 1904 and 1920.⁸ Undoubtedly, political instability and the violence of the Mexican Revolution between 1910 and 1920 discouraged many potential migrants. In sum, between 1911 and 1931 there were 226,000 immigrants from different origins recorded in Mexico, a number above that of Chile, but much smaller in relative terms. Chile was politically much more stable than Mexico but received only 183,000 immigrants between 1881 and 1930.

Like other migrant destinations, Latin American countries received primarily young males who traveled alone and who had low professional qualifications. In later stages of the migration process, these men usually invited their fiancées, sisters, or wives, a mechanism that contributed to the configuration of dense networks and decreased the male domination of migrant populations, which in the initial stages had been three men for every woman, exemplified by the Italians and Spanish in Argentina.⁹ Perhaps the most important exceptions to this rule were on one hand the Italian families who migrated to the Brazilian coffee *fazendas* after the abolition of slavery in 1888, and on the other hand the Jewish immigration to the Argentinean pampas from 1891 onwards under the auspices of the Jewish Colonization Association,

7 Boris Fausto, *Fazer a América: a imigração em massa para a América Latina* (São Paulo/Brasília: Edusp Memorial/Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão, 1999); Elda E. Gonzalez Martínez, *La inmigración esperada: la política migratoria brasileña desde Joao VI hasta Getulio Vargas* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2003).

8 Nicolás Sánchez Albornoz, “La población de América Latina, 1850–1930,” in *Historia de América Latina*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Barcelona: Cambridge University Press/ Editorial Crítica, 1991), 113.

9 For instance, between 1880 and 1930 female participation in Galician migration to Argentina increased from 20 to 40 percent.

a philanthropic entity created by the banker Moritz von Hirsch for the relocation of Jewish agriculturalists from Eastern Europe to the Americas.¹⁰

The majority of European migrants who arrived in Latin America came from Southern Europe. In Brazil and Argentina, the Italians were the most numerous. There was a growth of migrants from the Iberian Peninsula to Brazil between 1869 and 1900, and from then on the proportion of Italians fell from 36 percent of migrants to 9 percent during the years of Fascism. Between 1906 and 1920, the proportion of Spanish and Portuguese increased, and by the 1920s both groups outnumbered the Italians. Although the presence of German-speaking settlers in the south of Brazil – in the states of *Río Grande do Sul*, *Santa Catarina*, and *Paraná* – dated from the early nineteenth century, the immigration from Central Europe, including Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, grew considerably in the aftermath of World War I. The war likewise caused a sizeable emigration from Eastern Europe and the Middle East, especially Syrians and Lebanese from the former Ottoman Empire.¹¹ One of the particularities of Brazil was the presence of the largest Japanese community in Latin America. The Japanese started to arrive in Brazil after 1908 with the subsidized tickets with which the state of *São Paulo* promoted the colonization of the coffee *fazendas* (and that had also benefited the Italian families mentioned above). But the unfavorable working and housing conditions gave the whole project a bad name, and many Japanese families abandoned the *fazendas* and sought work near or in the major cities. When the US Immigration Act of 1924 prohibited the entry of Japanese to the United States, Canada set a quota of just a few hundred Japanese per year, and Brazil gave up on its promotion and subsidizing, the Tokyo government assumed the financing of migration to Brazil, and about seventy thousand families from Japan arrived in Brazil between 1924 and 1930.¹²

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- 10 Thomas Holloway, "Immigration and abolition. The transition from Slave to Free Labor in the *São Paulo* Coffee Zone," in *Essays Concerning the Socio-Economic History of Brazil and Portuguese India*, ed. Dauril Alden and Warren Dean (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1977); Leonardo Senkman, *La Colonización judía: gente y sociedad*, Historia testimonial argentina (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1984).
- 11 On German-speaking migrants in Brazil, see Frederick C. Luebke, *Germans in Brazil: a comparative history of cultural conflict during World War I* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987); Adhemar L. da Silva Jr, Cláudia Mauch, and Naira Vasconcellos, *Os Alemães no sul do Brasil: cultura, etnicidade, história*, 1a ed. (Canoas, RS: Editora da ULBRA, 1994). On Syrians and Lebanese in Brazil, see Ignacio Klich and Jeffrey H. Lesser, "Turco immigrants in Latin America," *the Americas: A Quarterly Review of Inter-American Cultural History* 53, no. 1 (1996); Oswaldo Truzzi, *Sírios e libaneses: narrativas de história e cultura*, Série Lazuli Imigrantes no Brasil (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 2005).
- 12 Boris Fausto, "Expansão do Café e Política Cafeeira," in *História geral da civilização brasileira*, ed. Boris Fausto (São Paulo: DIFEL, 1975); Daniela De Carvalho, *Migrants and identity in Japan and Brazil: the Nikkeijin* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

Numerically, the presence of Germans and Japanese was insignificant in Argentina and Uruguay, and also the Portuguese were a minority.¹³ In these two republics, the Italians constituted the largest group of foreigners until the 1910s and 1920s, when the Spanish started to outnumber them.¹⁴ In the aftermath of World War I, there also arrived Eastern Europeans and Arabs to the La Plata regions that complemented other minorities who had arrived earlier in the nineteenth century, such as the French Basques and the British.¹⁵ While the immigration to the Southern Cone republics (Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and southern Brazil) was increasingly ethnically heterogeneous, the immigration in Cuba continued to be dominated by the Spanish, who represented 85 percent of the foreigners on the island.¹⁶

Common traits among the migratory flows to Latin America – and elsewhere – were the elevated indices of return migration and its seasonal character. At the start of the twentieth century, Argentina received considerable quantities of laborers who took advantage of the off-season in Southern Europe and came for the harvest in the pampa only to return to their country of origin when the harvest ended, and who in many instances repeated the cycle the following year. Other migrants simply returned to Europe after having stayed for shorter or longer periods in Latin America, or they moved onwards to Brazil or the United States. Return migration ratios varied across regions, economic cycles, and origin countries. In Argentina the return ratios fluctuated between 35 and 40 percent between 1881 and World War I, while in São Paulo only 46 percent of immigrants who arrived between 1892 and 1930 ended up as permanent residents. Of the immigrants there, the Japanese were the most likely to stay: in São Paulo, more than 90 percent of the Japanese became residents, while only 13 percent of the Italians did. In Argentina, the Spanish tended to become residents while the Italians tended to return or move on. The Italians, in general, were more likely to let short-term economic cycles influence migration decisions. Undoubtedly, the distance between the place of origin and destination, the general conditions in which the migration

13 On Portuguese in Argentina, see Marcelo J. Borges, *Chains of gold: Portuguese migration to Argentina in transatlantic perspective*, Studies in global social history (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009).

14 Fernando Devoto, "A History of Spanish and Italian Migration to the South Atlantic Regions of America," in *Mass Migration to Modern Latin America*, ed. Samuel L. Bailey and Eduardo José Míguez (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2003).

15 María Bjerg, *Historias de la Inmigración en Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Edhasa, 2009).

16 José C. Moya, "Spanish Immigration to Cuba and Argentina," in *Mass Migration to Modern Latin America*, ed. Samuel L. Bailey and Eduardo José Míguez (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2003).

took place, and the nature of the ethnic and national networks in other parts of the Americas influenced the decision to stay, move on, or return.

In contrast to the overall spontaneous migration towards the United States, in many Latin American countries the active attraction of workers and specific migratory streams was significant. This is the case for instance of the Argentinean subsidy of transatlantic journeys for Spanish and Northern Europeans between 1888 and 1891 established in order to diversify the immigrant population, which at that time consisted primarily of Italians. Certainly, the creation of juridical systems, the implementation of immigration propaganda through agents in Europe, the subsidy of journeys, and colonization policies all led to increased immigration levels. However, government policies had a limited effect compared to the information that circulated inside the dense migrant networks. Probably, most migrants trusted this type of informal information much more than what emanated from official and agent propaganda.¹⁷

The networks served to organize and structure the migration and the reception of migrants in destination societies. This explains why – despite the modest efforts by several Latin American governments to foster agricultural colonization – much of the migration to Latin America tended to have a decidedly urban character. The massive influx of immigrants prior to World War I caused a dramatic demographic growth in Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, and parts of Chile. The 1914 Argentina census displayed a very different demographic structure from that which existed only a couple of decades earlier. The population doubled between 1895 and 1914, but even more pronounced was the rate of urbanization. By 1914, 57 percent of the Argentinean population was urban. And the foreigners were even more urban than the Argentinean-born: of the Spanish immigrants, 74 percent lived in cities, while 69 percent of the Italians and 73 percent of the Arabs lived in urban settlements.¹⁸ The expansion of the cities, and especially the ports, made labor markets more dynamic and generated a host of work opportunities in construction, transport, commerce, and the processing of primary materials for export. In the case of Brazil, the urbanization of the migrant population in the state of São Paulo was remarkable. In 1912 more than 60 percent of foreign colonists abandoned the coffee *fazendas* before their contracts ended. Although some of them left Brazil to return to Europe or to migrate onwards to another country, the majority ended up in the larger cities. The industrialization of the city of São Paulo attracted not only the foreigners in the coffee regions, but just as many migrants arriving

17 Fernando Devoto, *Historia de la inmigración en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2003).

18 Bjerg, *Historias de la Inmigración en Argentina*, 28.

directly from abroad. In 1920, 34 percent of the population of the city of São Paulo was foreign-born. Urban economic expansion created a demand for labor, but also offered employment and investment opportunities for migrants with a liberal profession or involved in commerce. More than 80 percent of the employers in São Paulo at that time were Italians, while much of the textile business was on Syrian and Lebanese hands.¹⁹

Norwegian Emigration

Relative to its population, Norway was one of the main sending countries in the transatlantic migration system. Approximately one million Norwegians emigrated between 1820 and 1940, the vast majority to the United States. For a country with relatively few inhabitants – in 1801 the population was less than nine hundred thousand, rising to 2.2 million in 1900 and 2.9 million in 1940 – this volume of emigration was extraordinarily large, with only Ireland witnessing a similar emigration rate. Among those Norwegians born between 1850 and 1885, between 26 and 35 percent of the men and 18 to 22 percent of women emigrated before they reached the age of forty.²⁰

Massive immigration contributed to form a new Latin American geography based on the cities, ports, new exports, and industrialization. Yet, this “new” and emerging Latin America was not the primary goal of most Norwegian migrants. Close to 90 percent (or even more according to the official statistics) of Norwegians emigrants went to the United States and Canada. For every Norwegian who migrated to Latin America, more than eighty went to North America.

The general causes of the mass emigration from Norway are well-known. A massive demographic growth combined with little arable land and late industrialization pushed rural families to divide farms into increasingly smaller units, establish farms at higher altitudes, colonize the northern parts of Norway in competition with the indigenous Sami communities, or seek alternative employment in timber, fishing, or shipping. In 1801 85 percent of the population still lived off agriculture, and this percentage was only slowly reduced. In 1875, 60 percent of the population was rural. Internal migration tended towards the coasts and towards Northern Norway. Throughout the nineteenth century,

19 Boris Fausto, *Imigração e política em São Paulo*, Série Imigração, (São Paulo: IDESP/ Editora da UFSCar, 1995).

20 Kåre Bævre, Christian Riis, and Tore Thonstad, “Norwegian Cohort Emigration,” *Journal of Population Economics* 14, no. 3 (2001): 477.

the traditional industries of agriculture, timber, fishing, and shipping prevailed. Compared to other Western European countries, the rural population in Norway continued to be large throughout our period, with more than 46 percent of the Norwegian population still rural in 1920. Rural residence did not necessarily imply agricultural occupation, and many employed in timber, shipping, and fishing lived at least parts of the year on farms or in small hamlets.

Norway's slow and late urbanization and industrialization also affected the nature of emigration. According to Odd Lovoll – one of the leading scholars of Scandinavian immigration in the United States – the Norwegians were more conservative, rural, and agricultural than any other ethnic group in the United States:

Nineteenth-century Norwegian immigration [to the United States] was regularly a rural-to-rural movement. In some ways it might be characterized as a conservative migration, a desire to continue an accustomed way of life, to preserve traditional values associated with a rural existence.²¹

During the large emigration waves from Norway in the 1860s and 1880s, families from rural backgrounds seeking land in North America were actually the norm, while this was no longer true for the immigration to the United States in general.²² But gradually, the social and occupational composition of Norwegian emigrants also changed, and by the turn of the century, migrants from Norway tended to be younger, single males seeking salaried employment rather than land to establish farms. Increasingly they moved several times, and many more returned to Norway than what had been normal previously.

In numeric terms, there were three intense periods of mass emigration from Norway: 1866–73, 1880–93, and 1900–1910. The mean number of overseas migrants from Norway was around 12,500 in the first of these periods, and eighteen thousand during the following two.²³ Outside these periods, annual emigration from Norway fluctuated between five hundred and five thousand. While the general and structural economic and demographic developments created a general “push” towards emigration for a century from the 1840s onwards, crisis

21 Odd Sverre Lovoll, *Norwegians on the prairie: ethnicity and the development of the country town* (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2006), 31.

22 In addition to *ibid.*, see Jon Gjerde, *From peasants to farmers: the migration from Balestrand, Norway, to the Upper Middle West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Gulbrand Loken, *From fjord to frontier: a history of the Norwegians in Canada, Generations, a history of Canada's peoples* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980).

23 Nils Olav Østrem, *Norsk utvandringshistorie* (Oslo: Samlaget, 2006), 33.

years of high unemployment in Norway caused peaks of emigration in certain years.²⁴ Emigration from Norway stagnated during World War I, partly because of the ensuing disruption of passenger transportation, but also because these were years of unusually high employment rates and earnings for a neutral shipping nation like Norway. But in the 1920s, Norwegian emigration took off again. This new period of migration coincided with a yearly quota of Norwegian immigrants set by the US government that – at least in theory – restricted the number of Norwegian immigrants to 2,377 annually for the remainder of the decade. The last year before the quota was set (1923), approximately sixteen thousand Norwegians entered the United States.²⁵ As will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters, this may be one of the reasons why these were the peak years of Norwegian migration to Latin America.

While the Norwegian migration to Latin America in some ways followed trends that were common to the whole Atlantic migration system of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it also displays some peculiarities. One of these is the linkage between migration and the Norwegian shipping industry. Hundreds of small Norwegian vessels sailed between different European and Latin American ports and also made up a high percentage of inter-American maritime transport. More than half of the Norwegians who migrated to Latin America traveled or worked on commercial cargo vessels with capacity for twelve passengers or fewer. Every year between the 1860s and 1940 thousands of young Norwegian males worked on these ships, and ports such as Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Santos, Havana, Punta Arenas, and Valparaíso received between dozens and hundreds of Norwegian ships every year. The Norwegian shipping industry thus facilitated a type of emigration that was slightly different from the one carried out on the large passenger ocean liners. Sailors defied Norwegian maritime law and jumped ship, and hundreds of young men were “work-your-ways” to, between, and from Latin American ports. This structured the Norwegian migration in particular ways, making mobility easier and less costly than for most migrants. It also implied that most of the Norwegian migration went under the radar of conventional migration registration in both sending and receiving countries; the official statistics on Norwegian emigration to Latin America are thus seriously flawed. The presence of Norwegian crews on ships in Latin American waters and in Latin American ports created loose and fluid networks where rumors and more precise information about employment and housing opportunities, were spread across vast distances.

24 Ingrid Semmingsen, *Norway to America: a history of the migration* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978).

25 *Ibid.*, 157.

The largely oral communication between sailors and others involved in the maritime sector played a role similar to the travelogues and letters mentioned below in creating more or less precise images of Latin American places as migrant destinations. To migrate in the wake of Norwegian ships and sailors, without fixed networks and with little and imprecise information, was a common experience for many of the Norwegians who traveled to and within Latin America, especially before World War I.

Like migrations elsewhere and in other periods, Norwegians in Latin America were attracted to and sought niches and economic activities where skills acquired at home could come to use. Unlike their Swedish and Danish cousins, Norwegians rarely formed separate agricultural colonies or rural communities in Latin America, and those that existed were short-lived. But although Norwegian migration was fluid, mobile, and individual, it was not random. Migrant clusters were formed in certain localities and around approximately ten economic niches or types of enterprises: shipping (where Norwegians worked as sailors, captains, agents, and nautical engineers), whaling, mining, railroad construction, meteorological surveys, hydrological surveys, agricultural day-laboring, the bacalao trade, the coffee trade, and the cobblestone trade. The percentage of women was low (below 20 percent), but Norwegian women were private teachers and pioneered in the early Pentecostal congregations and dominated the first Salvation Army of Buenos Aires.

Questions and Methods

In this book we try to explain the absence of a migratory take-off by discussing the role of religion, language, government policies (in both sending and receiving countries), employment opportunities, salaries, and the information that was available to potential and actual migrants. Following Thomas Faist, we are especially interested in the social ties involved in migration networks and the information about migration opportunities that circulated within them.

From a methodological viewpoint, the relatively minor Norwegian emigration to Latin America allows the sources to be used more intensively than what is feasible for the studies of major migration waves. The exploration of particular individuals and the analysis of their close relationships (a group of families, a team of workers or professionals, a small group of individuals, etc.) suggest new, general themes to be studied and allow macroanalytical hypotheses on migration phenomena to be rethought. In this volume we seek to combine the depth of microhistory with a quest for understanding the general, overall patterns of this particular migration stream in the context of the Atlantic mass

migration system. With this purpose in mind, we have constructed a database of migratory events involving Norwegians in Latin America from nearly forty different sources located in Norwegian and Latin American archives, and collected a series of letters, memoirs, travelogues, and diaries written by Norwegian migrants. A sample of these texts has been scanned and registered so that information about persons and places may be cross-checked with the database.²⁶ Combining the events involving named migrants from the database with migrants' narratives allows us to capture parts of the specific migrant experience *and* aspects of the social, political, and economic structures within which these experiences were articulated. The capacity of agency as well as the pre- and post-migration networks analyzed in light of structural factors, such as massive population movement and the circulation of capital, goods, and services, all reveal the dynamic connections between the global, the regional, and the local.

The personal narratives constitute the principal source of information in several chapters of this book. This reliance on narratives is in part due to the objective of treating the Norwegian migration from a small-scale approach, but it is also due to the abundance of these kinds of sources given the high literacy rates of the Norwegian migrants compared to other migrants in Latin America at the same time. As is well known, the fascination with travel assumed a renewed potency in the 1870s and was followed by the necessity of producing texts that described strange and exotic regions of the world. As the number of migrants and journeys expanded exponentially during the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century, the stories and images of distant places multiplied. Whether published in books, newspapers, or magazines, such travelogues – with their social representations of regional and cultural differences in a world that was continuously becoming more connected – sometimes awakened the interest of potential migrants and stimulated migration. At other times, especially when the travelogues focused on the negative aspects of the receptor countries, the texts worked in the opposite direction, encouraging potential migrants to stay put or to consider alternative destinations. For their part, many of those who actually decided to migrate, attracted by promises of prosperity or adventure, wrote of their migratory experiences, whether from a sense of expectation or because they wanted to communicate with relatives or friends who remained on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean.

In the letters, memoirs, diaries, and travelogues, the Norwegians produced their own textual representations combining the slightly monotonous description of everyday vicissitudes (work routine, salaries, housing, food, economic

26 The HULA database may be accessed at <https://app.uio.no/hf/ilos/hula/hula.php>.

opportunities, etc.) with an ethnographic glance that underlined the exoticism of Latin America in regard to social practices, religious creeds, racial stereotypes, economic difficulties, or political upheaval. In general, it may be argued that the texts that accompanied massive migration served themselves as an instrument that increased migration both through the interchange of information and through the construction of dense, ethnicity-based migrant networks. However, this does not seem to have been the case for Norwegians in Latin America. From the migratory experiences analyzed in this book, it is possible to argue the exact opposite, namely, that the textual material produced by migrants tended to discourage further migration of Norwegians to Latin America.

Book Outline

The chapters of this book follow a chronological order. The first one, “Making Sense of a Minor Migrant Stream” presents the overall theoretical framework for the book and the three principal phases of the Norwegian migratory process in Latin America between 1820 and 1940. Using a model developed by Thomas Faist on migratory processes, it first discusses the extent to which Norwegian migration to Latin America fits the model. It then provides a general overview of the Norwegian presence in Latin America in the long pioneering phase from 1820 to World War I and in the volatile years between 1920 and 1940. Several of the key questions concerning migrants’ networks and the information about Latin American destinations available to potential and actual migrants are introduced, along with the central question of why Norwegian migration to Latin America was so limited in numerical terms.

The second chapter, by Ellen Fensterseifer Woortmann, treats a group of Norwegian settlers who rather accidentally became some of the first colonists of Colônia Dona Francisca, later to become the city of Joinville in Brazil. Their experiences in Brazil in the 1850s and beyond are seen in the context of the Brazilian empire’s immigration policies, the Norwegians’ relationships and adaptations to the Swiss and German groups who made up the majority of the colony, and the motives and mentalities that guided their decisions to stay or to leave. Although untypical in the sense that most Norwegian migrants in Latin America did not belong to larger settler colonies, they faced certain issues that also characterized the experiences of other Norwegian migrants in Latin America. Woortmann’s chapter covers the early phase of Norwegian presence in Latin America, while most of the other chapters are concerned with the decades when immigration to Latin America occurred on a massive scale and

where the official documentation on both individual migrants and migration statistics is more abundant.

In the third chapter Cecilia Alvstad analyzes the extraordinary textual corpus produced by twelve Norwegian skiers and workers who were recruited in 1890 to maintain communication between the Argentinean and Chilean bases during the completion of the Transandine Railway. Most of the skiers only worked near the Uspallata Pass for about a year, as the work was postponed partly in response to political upheavals in both Chile and Argentina. For such a small group, the size of the textual testimony they produced and that has survived is surprising and offers a rare opportunity to scrutinize ordinary migrants' perspectives with a view to how different genres reflect different realities. One of the participants wrote a book that was published in Norwegian in Chicago in 1893, another wrote several reports for the Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten*, while a third wrote a series of letters to his relatives in Norway. Applying narrative analysis and comparing how each of the testimonies used the same information to construe different stories, Alvstad highlights why so few Norwegians decided to stay and particularly how the experiences of these twelve Norwegians intertwined with political and economic instability in Chile and Argentina in the early 1890s.

Much of the Norwegian presence in Latin America must be seen as an appendix to larger foreign attempts at economic and political exploitation in the region. But after the dissolution of the Swedish-Norwegian Union in 1905, Norway in its own right attempted to assert its economic and political presence across the globe, especially in relation to endeavors connected to shipping, polar exploration, whaling, and fishing. Mieke Neyens in chapter 4 explores shipowner Gottfred Mauritz Bryde's establishment of the Mexico-Gulf Line, a shipping line that connected Norway with Havana, Veracruz, and Galveston and that was secured with annual subsidies from the Norwegian government. Bryde commissioned author Peter Lykke-Seest to write a series of reports for Norwegian newspapers and then a book in English about the line and the ports and countries it called at. Neyens pays particular attention to the type of migration the author – and presumably the sponsor – envisions this line could foster. Again, the type of information produced by Norwegians in Latin America is central for a better understanding of the actual dynamics of the migratory stream between Norway and Latin America, and as this chapter shows, governments on both sides of the Atlantic tried to regulate this information. Norwegian authorities, the new consular service set up in the aftermath of the breakup with Sweden, and the powerful shipping interests were not particularly interested in promoting large-scale emigration from Norway to Latin America.

Synnøve Ones Rosales's detailed chapter on Norwegians in Guatemala between 1900 and 1930 offers more insights into the social makeup of the Norwegian migrant networks. The group of Norwegian coffee plantation owners cannot be seen as an autonomous ethnic community in its own right. Some of them had very strong links to the British community in Guatemala, others to the populous German colony. Less concerned with the Norwegian government policies than shipowners such as Bryde, the planters in Guatemala were nevertheless skeptical about encouraging the immigration of poor Norwegian workers. Again, issues concerning weak and strong social ties and the dispersion of information about destination countries, employment, and – in this case – investment opportunities help us better understand the nature of the smaller migration streams.

Argentina, Uruguay, and parts of Brazil differed from other Latin American countries such as Guatemala with respect to the opportunities for rural labor. In chapter 6 María Bjerg discusses the diaries and letters written by two young Norwegian men who were among the many that virtually without economic capital sought their luck in Argentina in the 1920s. This chapter is important because it explores the experiences and representations of the majority of the migrants who sought employment and decent salaries wherever they could be found. Although we know little about these two migrants' original intentions and motivations for choosing Argentina, Bjerg is able to tease out important lessons on their relationships with both other migrants and the native population, lessons that in turn are useful for understanding the limits of the Norwegian migratory stream to Latin America. The chapter also takes up the issue of return migration. The reduced scale allows a sharp focus on the motives and strategies of the return, while at the same reflecting on the common notion in Norwegian historiography that associates migration to United States with workers and farmers, whereas migrants to Latin America were adventurers. Also in Bjerg's text we note the strong presence of transnational capital and business (railways, coffee, and oil) that, like a fine-meshed net, connected the globe and controlled the markets of production and labor in which the Norwegians inserted themselves more or less successfully as workers, professionals, and producers. They were often able to form privileged contact spaces with other Europeans and with local and native inhabitants. These environs of modern technology could exist side by side with old, colonial-type labor systems, and as such they replicated on a micro scale the tensions of global interconnectedness.

The Norwegians in Mexico studied in chapter 7 by Ricardo Pérez Montfort were atypical by almost any criteria. However, we should not forget that several Latin American countries attracted migrants also for political and ideological reasons. The Mexican Revolution and the violence it entailed not only forced many foreigners to leave the country, it also attracted many others, especially

those interested in revolution, nationalism, and socialism. Politically, the migrants Per Imerslund and Halvdan Jebe belonged to opposite extremes, but they nevertheless shared a remarkable fascination for Mexico *profundo*, anti-imperialism, and the quest for radical solutions to improve the conditions of mankind. Imerslund's books and Jebe's music are not easily interpreted and cannot simply be seen as migration testimonies. Nevertheless, Imerslund and Jebe – in addition to being intellectuals with an international audience – were also migrants, and they produced “texts” that affected the view of Mexico and Latin America in Norway and among potential migrants. Again, the way these migrants' personal histories must be seen in a larger geographical context not limited to Norway and Latin America resonates with themes in the other chapters.

Even more explicit in that regard is Chapter 9, which concerns a family of merchants and entrepreneurs following a migrant dynamic of its own, eventually establishing bridgeheads in Brazil, Spain, and Norway. María Álvarez-Solar not only explains the motivations of the first family members who moved to Brazil, but pays particular attention to the links between this branch of the family with the family members in Spain and Norway. This is the chapter that most closely, perhaps along with the one by Ones Rosales, involves the transnational circuits mentioned by Faist.

In sum, juggling between different scales and levels of analysis, the book illuminates both the particularities of Norwegian migration to Latin America, as well as the traits it shares with other transoceanic migratory movements in a context of global connections. Different themes and lines of interpretation converge in this work, which shows Norwegians articulating migratory strategies based on disperse, imprecise information that in general circulated in networks of weak ties. Compared to other migratory waves that have been studied in depth, the Norwegians did not predominate in one single economic niche, nor did they form lasting ethnic communities in Latin America, possibly because most of the migration from Norway to Latin America was temporary. However, it would be erroneous to conclude that this implies a lack of economic motive and a predominance of wanderlust among the Norwegian migrants in Latin America. The reasons for this particular aspect of the Norwegian migratory stream to Latin America may be sought within factors such as the sensibility to short-term economic fluctuations, the political instability of the receptor countries, the alternative opportunities for work that Norwegian migrants had outside Latin America, and the relative ease with which they could move to Latin America, benefitting from the presence of Norwegian ships and Norwegian captains in almost any Latin American port.

Making Sense of a Minor Migrant Stream

Steinar A. Sæther

The relatively few Norwegians who migrated to Latin America between 1820 and 1940 represented a miniscule share of the transatlantic migration system. More than fifty million Europeans crossed the Atlantic between 1815 and 1939.¹ Nearly one million of these were Norwegians. But only about ten thousand of them were Norwegians who went to one or more Latin American countries.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss possible similarities and differences between the small stream of Norwegians to Latin America and the other streams of the mass transatlantic movement. In order to do that, I will first present a general model of migration processes developed by Thomas Faist, which will in turn allow us to examine why Norwegian migration to Latin America between 1820 and 1940 never reached a substantial level. Using the best available statistics, the second part of the chapter discusses how this migration fits into Faist's model. The last section describes the three main phases of the Norwegian migration stream to Latin America during the same period, and introduces some of the more specific questions that will be explored in more detail in subsequent chapters.

The transatlantic migration was in itself just a small part of a major migratory trend which affected all of Europe and the Americas during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Internal migration, from rural to urban areas and from older settled rural areas to new frontiers, was the general tendency involving millions of persons who sought at first land and then increasingly salaried jobs in the main manufacturing centers of Europe and the Americas. Within both continents, new centers and new peripheries emerged. "New" industrial cities such as Berlin, Bremen, Bilbao, and Buenos Aires, which were connected to the ever-expanding modern transportation networks of railways and steam ships, replaced the "old" administrative and agricultural centers such as Madrid, and Mexico City.

Migrants responded to the economic and political shifts in various and complex ways. They moved within countries (from rural areas to cities), across borders, and across the sea. The goal of many was not to become modern or live in a city, but to acquire land and set up a farm. For most migrants, this was

1 Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millennium*, Comparative and International Working-Class History (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 332.

just a dream. The stereotypical nineteenth-century European rural families – those who left their home community and settled in the first place where they could get land cheaply in the Americas – were never actually the norm. Already by the 1840s, more than 60 percent of the immigrants to the United States went into wage labor.² Cheap land was usually only available where the soil was poor and infrastructure weak or inexistent.

Norwegians who migrated to Latin America were simultaneously typical and atypical. They shared with other migrants the decision to cross borders and oceans to try their luck elsewhere. Like other migrants, they came from all classes of society, although the laboring classes dominated numerically. Like their fellow migrants from other parts of Europe, they left largely for economic reasons, in search of better conditions for work or farming. The Norwegians who went to Latin America were also typically young, and they had relatives or more distant acquaintances forming networks of information in their new home countries. In other words, although the Norwegian stream of migrants to Latin America was small, it did form part of the great transatlantic migratory wave.

Still, the wave was composed of larger and smaller streams, and each of them had their own idiosyncrasies. One of our principal questions concerns how to explain that such a limited number of Norwegians ended up in Latin America between 1820 and 1940, when the general Norwegian rate of emigration was so high and when Latin America received so many millions of immigrants. This may seem at first sight to be a counterfactual question of the type that is highly problematical for historians to tackle. Explaining why something did not occur is even more difficult than explaining why something did occur, and the possible causes for something not happening may in principle be endless. On the other hand, the question is not *that* far-fetched – after all, there was a sizeable emigration from Norway in general, so why not to Latin America in particular? Moreover, there were Norwegians in Latin America from early on who stayed in touch with family and friends in Norway. Land and jobs were available in many areas of Latin America, and migrants from other countries in Europe and elsewhere did in fact enter on a massive scale.

At a more general level, certain questions relating to minor migrant streams are important to raise. The tendency in migration studies has been to focus on the largest groups that gave rise to the large migration waves, and to understand the mechanisms of their growth and decline. But we often forget that minor streams were more numerous and in many instances counted for more migrants in sum than the major waves. And – perhaps even more importantly

² Ibid., 336.

– if we are to understand why some streams evolve into large waves while others fizzle out or abruptly end, we cannot limit our studies to the largest migrant groups.

Faist's Model

The approach chosen here focuses on the phases or stages in migration processes as theorized by Thomas Faist.³ A migration process is seen as the cumulative movement of migrants from one country to another, often spanning several generations. Typically, the migration process includes three main phases: (1) start and acceleration, (2) climax, and (3) deceleration. This process takes on a life of its own in Faist's presentation. Although exogenous factors such as unemployment rates and relative wage differentials have some influence on the migration process, especially in the first phase, Faist holds that the endogenous dynamics of the migration process predominates once a critical threshold of migrant numbers is reached. This is because the social ties between migrants structure the flow to such an extent that the migration process unfolds in part independent of macro factors, such as demographic pressures, wage differentials, unemployment rates, and state regulations.

However, in the first phase, before migrant networks have been formed, the exogenous factors are important. The first migrants are frequently depicted as adventurers and pioneers both by themselves and by migration scholars. In part there is always some random, almost accidental, migration of a few individuals from country A to country B. But when demographic and economic factors favor migration from one country to another, the number of such migrants will increase, albeit only very gradually in the beginning.⁴ This coincides with Massey's influential and often cited distinction between explanations of why migration starts and why migration continues.⁵ In order for migration processes to really start, according to both Faist and Massey, there has to be some economic factors (typically cheaper land or better salaries in the host countries) or demographic causes (population growth in the home countries, and need for labor in the destinations).

3 Thomas Faist, *The volume and dynamics of international migration and transnational social spaces* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), 145ff.

4 *Ibid.*, 143–52.

5 D.S. Massey et al., "Theories of International Migration – a Review and Appraisal," *Population and Development Review* 19, no. 3 (1993).

In Faist's model, the critical threshold for the second phase occurs when information about migration possibilities has reached a sufficient number of potential migrants *outside* the immediate social circles of the pioneer migrants. Following Granovetter, Faist maintains that the weak ties in social relations are more important in explaining the diffusion of information.⁶ Migrants in the second phase typically receive information from accidental acquaintances, distant relatives, and friends of friends rather than from their immediate kin. Through so-called brokers or gatekeepers they are connected to the now rapidly expanding migrant networks that provide new migrants with information about housing, job opportunities, travel, and paper work, thus lowering the transaction costs of international migration. Reciprocity and solidarity between migrants and other types of economic and human capital are mobilized through social and symbolic ties. The second phase is not only characterized by an accelerating increase in the number of migrants, it also typically involves a considerable widening of the social base of migrants. While the pioneer migrants are relatively resourceful and recruited from the upper tiers of the working classes or middle sectors of society, the lowered transaction costs during the second phase, provided by the established migrant networks, help recruit migrants with less economic and human capital as well. The first critical threshold in the migration process thus marks a sort of take-off. After take-off, migration is self-sustained, and it becomes almost an automatic dynamic that feeds on itself.

Another major critical threshold heralds the third phase. In this phase, the number of new migrants decreases because nearly all the potential migrants have been informed about the migration possibility. Even though the exogenous factors favorable to migration may objectively be stronger, the migration process has reached a climax and cannot continue to accelerate, because potential migrants have already migrated or reached a final decision to stay.

Faist's model may be visualized in two different ways. If we focus on the number of migrants who move from one place to another within shorter intervals than the whole period of the migration process, for instance the number of migrants per year or per decade, it will take the shape of what Faist calls an inverse U-curve, or what we may perhaps more precisely call a Bell curve (see figure 2.1). During the first phase, the curve increases very gradually, until the first turning point is reached; in the second stage, the number of migrants increases exponentially and the slope is steep; finally, at the second turning point, the number of migrants decreases and the curve falls.

6 Mark S. Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 6 (1973).

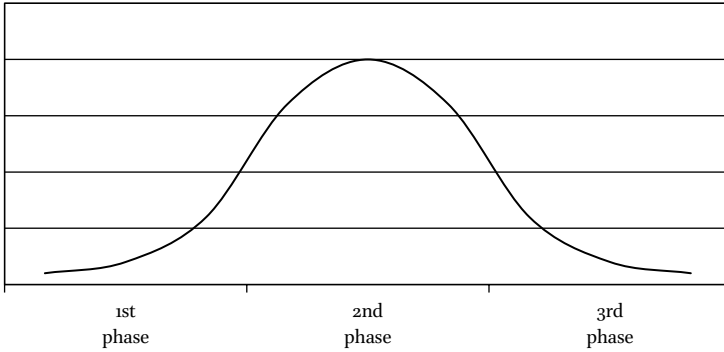


FIGURE 2.1 *Faist's model: number of migrants in each phase*
 SOURCE: THOMAS FAIST, THE VOLUME AND DYNAMICS OF INTERNATIONAL
 MIGRATION AND TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL SPACES (OXFORD: CLARENDON,
 2000), 145FF

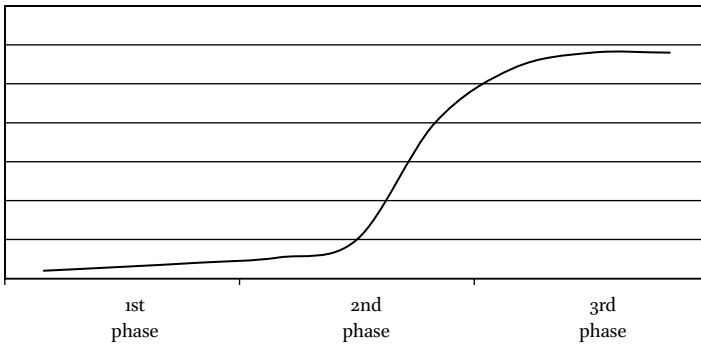


FIGURE 2.2 *Faist's model: cumulative number of migrants resident in host country by phase*
 SOURCE: THOMAS FAIST, THE VOLUME AND DYNAMICS OF INTERNATIONAL
 MIGRATION AND TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL SPACES (OXFORD: CLARENDON,
 2000), 145FF

The other way of graphically representing the migration process is based on the cumulative number of migrants in the host countries. In our case this would be the number of Norwegians resident in Latin America at any given point in time. In Faist's model, the cumulative curve will have an S-shape (see figure 2.2). The migration process or wave tends to follow an S-shaped curve with a slow and gradual increase of migrants during the first phase and a significantly higher increase in the number of migrants during the second phase, before the number remains constant and eventually levels out during the third phase.

Now, does the case of Norwegian migration to Latin America fit Faist's model? Given the relatively low number of Norwegians migrating to Latin

America throughout the period of the transatlantic mass migration, there are at least three different ways of answering that question: either that the Norwegian case followed the general dynamics of the model even though the numbers are small; or it followed Faist's curve to a certain point, but was aborted or interrupted; or it did not follow the typical migration curve at all. Once we have reached a conclusion on this question, we may proceed with the more detailed issues regarding possible peculiarities of the Norwegian migration stream to Latin America.

Statistics on Norwegians in Latin America before 1940

The best available statistics on Norwegians in Latin America prior to 1940 are based on the HULA database, which has been compiled from more than forty lists containing the names of Norwegian citizens or persons born in Norway who were registered as being present in at least one Latin American country at least once between 1820 and 1940. These lists have been collected from archives and libraries in Norway and Latin America. HULA now contains nearly nine thousand biographical events concerning Norwegians in Latin America. Each HULA event is either a movement between two places, of which at least one occurs in Latin America, or a registration of a Norwegian person in one specific place in Latin America, such as marriage involving at least one Norwegian spouse in Latin America or the death of a Norwegian in Latin America. Every event concerns an individual identified by name and is defined by a date and at least one Latin American place.⁷ Despite its many shortcomings, some of which will be exposed shortly, HULA is more comprehensive than any other single set of available statistics on Norwegians in Latin America. It includes the names of many more Norwegians than those registered as emigrants in Norway or as immigrants in Latin American countries. And it has a wider periodical scope than national statistics on migration.

Prior to the development of HULA, the number of Norwegian migrants in Latin America was thought to be very small, almost non-existent. According to the 1921 official treatise on emigration produced by the Ministry of Social Issues, "the emigration to Central and South America (especially Argentina) never reached a major level," a claim corroborated by a table where the percentage of Norwegian emigrants who sought American destinations outside

7 The HULA (*Historisk register over utvandrede nordmenn i Latin-Amerika*) database can be accessed at <https://app.uio.no/hf/ilos/hula/Hula.php>.

the United States and Canada oscillated between 0.03 and 0.11 percent in the period between 1886 and 1915, in other words just a negligible stream.⁸ The 1921 treatise was based on the emigration protocols, an instrument instated by a 1869 law on emigration that required all agents, captains, and shipowners to register contracts with migrants and have the contracts authorized by the police prior to departure from Norway. Thousands of Norwegian emigrants were registered each year in these protocols, and they have served as the most important source for research on emigration from Norway. However, as noted in the introduction of the 1921 treatise, the 1869 law exempted captains who carried twenty emigrants or fewer from the requirement, and the protocols furthermore only recorded migrants with overseas destinations. By 1915, the last year covered by the 1921 treatise, only 348 Norwegian migrants with Latin American destinations had been registered in the protocols, indeed a negligible number. Migration scholars were aware of some of the limitations and distortions in this material. In the 1950s Ingrid Semmingsen estimated roughly that approximately two thousand Norwegians had migrated to Central and South America, without providing any sources or methods for how she had reached this number.⁹ Twenty years later, Gudmund Stang stated that Semmingsen's number obviously was too low, and estimated the number to be between three thousand and five thousand, again without indicating how he had reached that number.¹⁰

More recent attempts arrive at estimates between five thousand and ten thousand.¹¹ These higher estimates are due to the incorporation of census data and immigration numbers from the most important Latin American destinations and the inclusion of estimates on the number of runaway sailors. Still, also these estimates are very uncertain, in part because it is impossible in most cases to know whether Latin American and Norwegian sources are complementary or overlapping. The only way around this methodological problem is to work with sources where migrants are identified by name.

This is the principal idea behind the construction of the HULA database. With identifiable migrants, it is feasible to follow individual migrants and to

8 Sosialdepartementet Norge, "Utvandringsstatistikk: Statistique de l'émigration," vol. 25, *Statistique de l'émigration* (Kristiania, 1921), 73.

9 Ingrid Semmingsen, "Veien mot vest : [2] : Utvandringen fra Norge 1865–1915," (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1950), 292.

10 Gudmund Stang, "La emigración escandinava a la América latina, 1800–1940," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* 13 (1976): 297 (footnote).

11 Steinar A. Saether and Nils Olav Østrem, "Norwegian emigration to Latin America: numbers, questions and methods," in *Nordic Migration: Research Status, Perspectives and Challenges* ed. Nils Olav Østrem and Christina Folke Ax (Stamsund: Orkana, 2011).

know whether the same migrants are covered in different sources. Although HULA enables better statistics than the official ones, it also has some important shortcomings and weaknesses that need to be addressed before discussing the numbers.¹² One of its main weaknesses for statistical purposes is that it is neither complete nor random. The lists of Norwegians included in the database are the ones that have been the most readily accessible, either because they are already available online, because they have been digitized, or because we have had the luck of finding them in the archives where we have worked. Unfortunately, none of the relevant Latin American censuses have been digitized, with the exception of the 1895 Argentina census. Most of the Latin American sources included in HULA are lists of passengers, immigrants, and foreigners of different sorts. We have not yet collected lists of Norwegian migrants and residents from all Latin American countries. On the other hand, we have many sources from the countries that attracted many Norwegian immigrants, such as Argentina, Chile, Brazil and Mexico (as we know from previous studies). This means that some destination countries probably are overrepresented in HULA, such as Chile and Mexico, while others – primarily Uruguay and Cuba – are underrepresented.

In terms of periods, we have many records from the 1920s, but almost none from before 1850. Although this probably reflects a real tendency in the migration pattern of Norwegians in Latin America, it certainly also reflects tighter control of migration in both Norway and many Latin American countries after World War I. It is probable that we cover a higher percentage of actual migrants after 1920 than before.

When constructing the database, we have confronted the thorny issue of how to define migrants. We have opted for an inclusive definition, and all individuals identified in the underlying sources either as born in Norway or as Norwegian citizens have been included in HULA irrespective of how long they stayed in Latin America and irrespective their intentions, as this type of information is usually not included in the underlying sources. In most cases, this makes sense from a migration studies perspective. The vast majority of Norwegians who were registered in Latin America before 1940 traveled by ship and had to stay for at least a few months, even if they had no intentions of becoming permanent residents. In order to study the real patterns of migration, it has been important for us to include as many as possible, also those who regularly fall outside the bureaucratic categories of emigrants and immigrants. In general, this has been a sound decision as it has generated information about thousands of Norwegian migrants in Latin America who for different

12 For previous attempt to tackle some of the same issues, see *ibid.*

reasons were not registered as migrants by the Norwegian or Latin American authorities. However, this broad inclusion creates a problem with the numerous Norwegian sailors present in Latin American ports. As will be explained below, Norwegian ships with largely Norwegian crews sailed between all the major Latin American ports, and between these and ports in the United States, Canada, Europe, and South Africa from the 1840s and onward. Even in the period of sail, most of the sailors only stayed for short periods of time in each port. But the sheer number of Norwegian sailors in Latin American waters meant that even if just a very small percentage of them jumped ship in Latin American ports, it would have a dramatic impact on the number of Norwegian residents in Latin America. Since such escapes were illegal by Norwegian law – and in some instances Latin American as well – neither the sending nor the receiving countries registered runaway sailors as migrants. Our problem is that it is misleading both to include them and to exclude them from the database without further information about their individual lives, information that we usually do not have.

With these caveats and shortcomings in mind, let us turn to the possible interpretations of the statistics based on the HULA database. Recall that the objective is to gauge whether Norwegian migration to Latin America corresponds to Faist's curves on migrants per year and cumulative numbers of migrants.

Of the nearly nine thousand events currently in HULA, 4,896 concern the arrival of Norwegians in a specific Latin American destination. The number of arrivals by decade is very low until the 1880s, then it increases quite rapidly from the 1890s, before virtually exploding in the 1920s and then dropping to less than half the former levels in 1930s. Although there are certain caveats, such as the serious distortions in the geographic distribution, the tighter migration control after World War I, and the overall incompleteness of the figures, the best statistics available suggest that there indeed was a take-off in the Norwegian emigration to Latin America in the 1920s, but that it ended quite abruptly in 1930. Comparing the curves in figure 2.3 below with Faist's typical model for migration numbers in figure 2.1, it seems that there is a close enough fit that it makes sense to pursue his explanations further.

In order to identify the possible timing of the two turning points in the emigration process, we need to look at individual years. The yearly records of Norwegian arrivals in Buenos Aires (CEMLA) and the annual statistics on Norwegian emigration to Latin American destinations (EMIPRO) do not converge entirely (figure 2.4). CEMLA has a single peak year in 1920, and then a marked and continual increase from 1922 through 1926, before it reaches new peaks in 1928, 1929, and again in 1930, which actually is the single year with

TABLE 2.1 *Norwegian arrivals in Latin America in HULA by decade and country of arrival, 1850–1940*

	1850s	1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900s	1910s	1920s	1930s	n.s.d	Totals
Argentina				66	113	276	485	1,635	631	17	3223
Brazil	62	7			11	29	68	411	405	13	1006
Chile					1	93	67	108	29	18	316
Mexico			7	27	4	33	19	35	19	9	153
Cuba				1	1	29	12	24		3	70
Uruguay				1	1	3		10	3	7	25
Peru						4		13	1	4	22
Venezuela							1	16	2	1	20
Bolivia						2	3	2		6	13
Guatemala							1	11			12
Colombia							2	4	2	2	10
Ecuador							1	6		2	9
Panama						1	2	3			6
Paraguay						2		1		1	4
Dom. Republic								3			3
Costa Rica								2			2
Nicaragua									1		1
Honduras									1		1
Total	62	7	7	95	131	472	661	2284	1094	83	4896

BASED ON HULA DATABASE, [HTTPS://APP.UIO.NO/HF/ILOS/HULA/HULA.PHP](https://app.uio.no/hf/iilos/hula/hula.php)

most Norwegian arrivals between 1882 and 1940. EMIPRO shows a marked increase starting in 1919 through 1921, and then the number stabilizes at a slightly lower level, before it rises again between 1925 and 1930 with 1926 as the peak year. If we may indeed speak of a turning point toward an exponential growth in the number of Norwegian migrants to Latin America, it has to be sometime between 1919 and 1925, and the following growth is indeed short-lived, lasting only four or five years.

Unfortunately, with the existing data in HULA it makes less sense to construct a graph to be compared to Faist's second, S-shaped curve on the cumulative number of migrants present in the destination (see figure 2.2). Our underlying sources do not easily lend themselves to this type of enquiry,

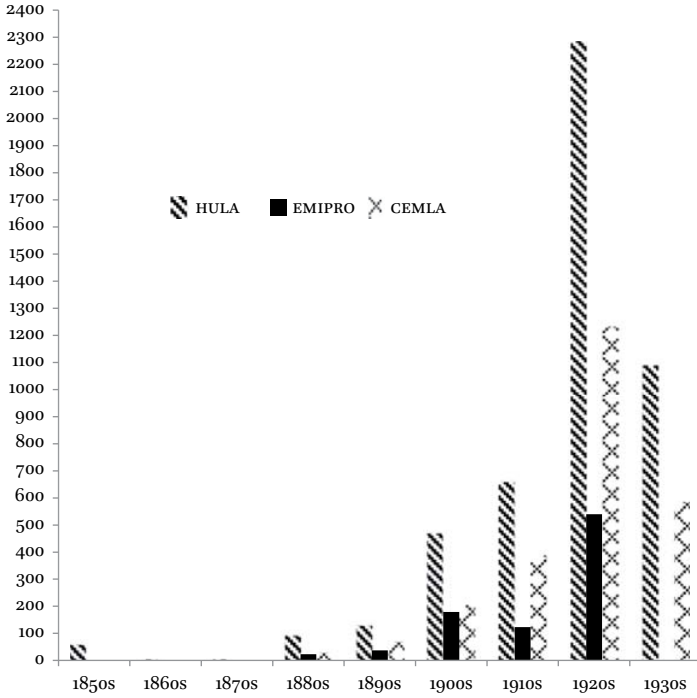


FIGURE 2.3 *Number of Norwegian arrivals in Latin America (HULA), Norwegian arrivals in Buenos Aires (CEMLA) and departures for Latin American destinations (EMIPRO) by decade*

BASED ON HULA DATABASE, [HTTPS://APP.UIO.NO/HF/ILOS/HULA/HULA.PHP](https://app.uio.no/hf/iilos/hula/hula.php)

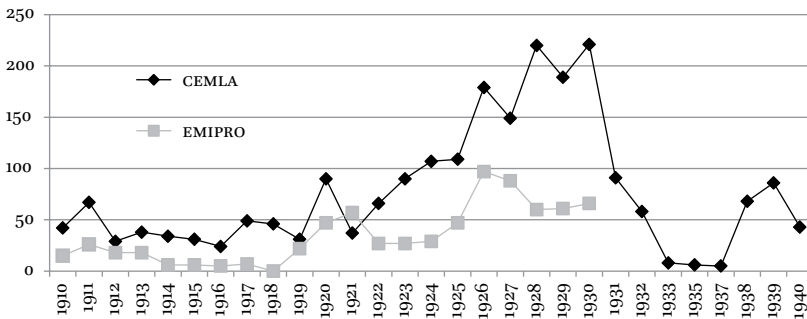


FIGURE 2.4 *Yearly arrivals in Buenos Aires (CEMLA), 1910–1940 and yearly departures from Norway to Latin America (EMIPRO)*

BASED ON HULA DATABASE, [HTTPS://APP.UIO.NO/HF/ILOS/HULA/HULA.PHP](https://app.uio.no/hf/iilos/hula/hula.php)

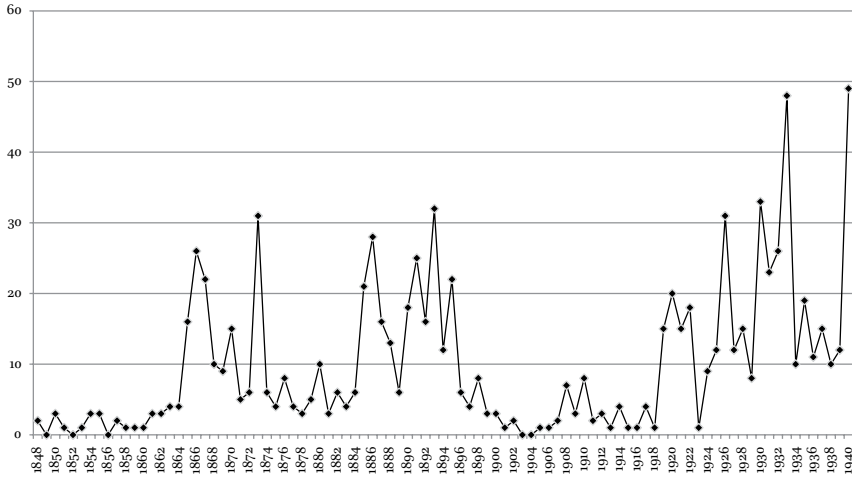


FIGURE 2.5 *Yearly registered presence of Norwegians in Latin America by HULA, 1848–1940*
 BASED ON HULA DATABASE, [HTTPS://APP.UIO.NO/HF/ILOS/HULA/HULA.PHP](https://app.uio.no/hf/iilos/hula/hula.php)

because the majority of our sources in HULA concern movement. If we include all movements, the resulting graph will probably look like the one depicted in figure 2.1 and actually reflect arrivals instead of residence. If we exclude the movements, we are left with 1,397 events of the type registration, observation, or residence in Latin America, which is a type of event where a Norwegian is listed in the sources as being present at one particular place at one particular date (or year) in Latin America. From these 1,397 events we need to subtract the 435 Norwegians listed in the 1895 Argentina census because it is the only census in HULA, and because it is a de facto census where the vast majority of Norwegians are actually sailors on board Norwegian vessels in Argentinean ports at the date of the census; the inclusion of this census would therefore distort the overall statistics. If we furthermore exclude the erroneous and incomplete events, we are left with only 918 registrations of residence. The annual graph is seen in figure 2.5, by decade in figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6 does not bear much resemblance to Faist's S-shaped curve in figure 2.2. Part of the explanation for this is no doubt the deficient nature of the statistics themselves as mentioned above. But there may also be another explanation rooted in the actual emigration process. If most Norwegians stayed in Latin America for shorter periods and did not take up permanent residence in Latin America, or if the rate of return migration and remigration to areas outside Latin America was large, we will not get the accumulation of migrants that Faist's S-curve illustrates.

To construct a curve on the cumulated number of Norwegians in Latin America, the best statistics we could use are probably series of censuses where

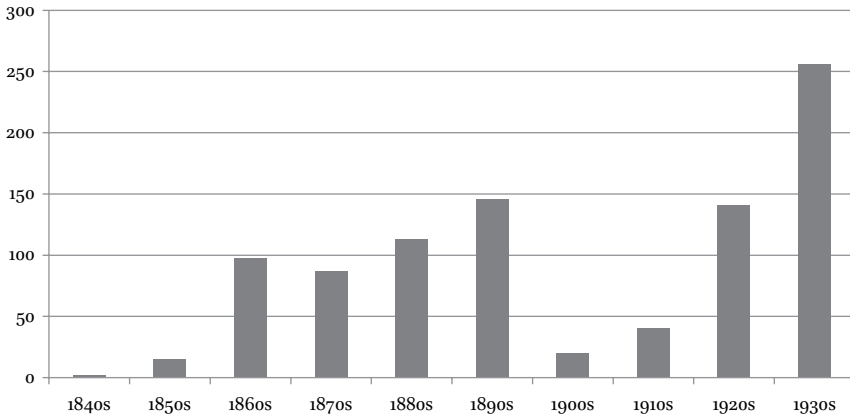


FIGURE 2.6 *Registered presence of Norwegians in HULA by decade*
 BASED ON HULA DATABASE, [HTTPS://APP.UIO.NO/HF/I/LOS/HULA/HULA.PHP](https://app.uio.no/hf/i/los/hula/hula.php)

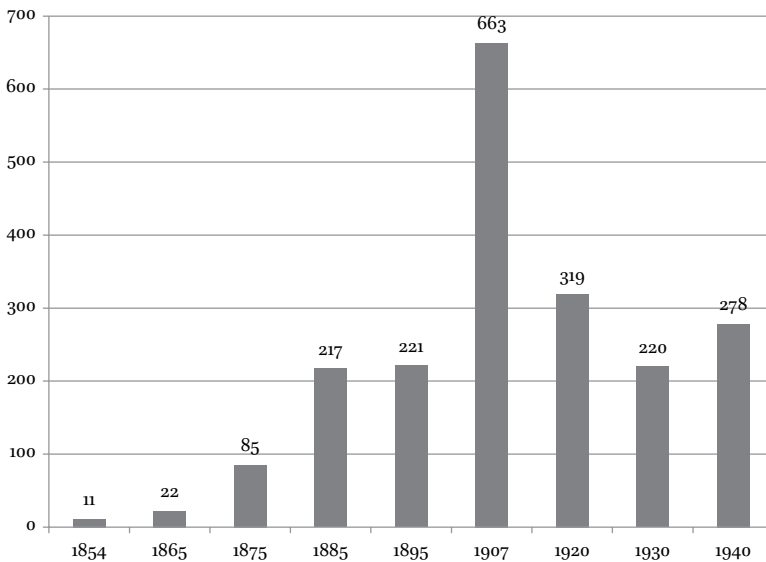


FIGURE 2.7 *Norwegians in Chilean censuses, 1854–1940*
 SOURCE: SÆTHER AND ØSTREM, “NORWEGIAN EMIGRATION TO LATIN AMERICA”, 125

the numbers of Norwegians are given for a longer period of time and according to fairly constant criteria. Unfortunately, such censuses are not available for the countries with most Norwegians, such as Argentina and Brazil, but we do have them for Chile and Mexico (figures 2.7 and 2.8).

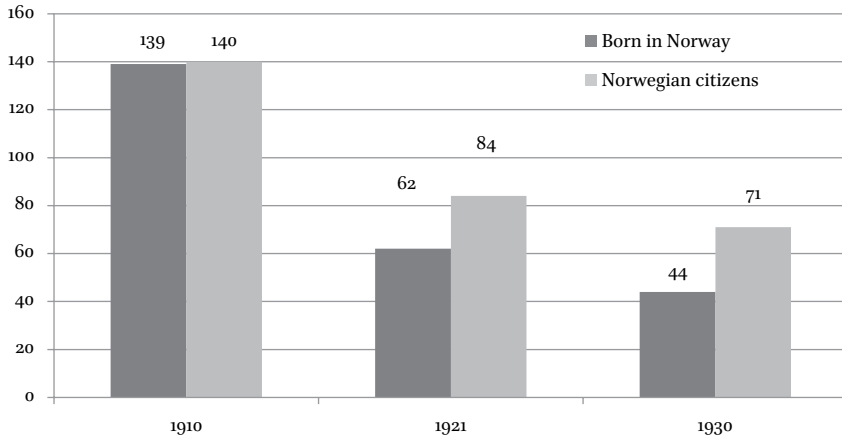


FIGURE 2.8 *Norwegians in Mexican censuses, 1910–1930*

SOURCE: SÆTHER AND ØSTREM, "NORWEGIAN EMIGRATION TO LATIN AMERICA", 130-131

Both these series suggest that the number of resident Norwegians were actually lower in the 1930s than in preceding decades. Taken together, the series suggest that despite a marked increase in the number of Norwegian migrants who arrived in Latin America during the 1920s, the number of resident Norwegians did not increase correspondingly. This may be interpreted as a consequence of very high rates of return migration and remigration. On the other hand, the censuses should be treated with care, since they generally are *de facto* censuses that include for instance sailors on foreign ships in the ports, and some of the censuses may therefore give a somewhat distorted and exaggerated impression of Norwegian presence for certain years.

In any case, the first set of figures on the number of Norwegian migrants per year and decade arriving in Latin America suggest that the Norwegian emigration process may at least provisionally be divided into three phases on the basis of Faist's schema. There is a very long pioneer phase that lasts for nearly one hundred years from the 1820s until roughly 1920. Then there is a very brief second phase during the 1920s when the number of Norwegian migrants increases rapidly, and, finally, a third decelerating phase from around 1930 when the number of migrants drops to a level slightly above the pre-1920 levels.

Returning to our initial question with three alternative answers, it is consistent with our approach to rule out alternative three, which stated that the Norwegian migration to Latin American did not follow Faist's model at all. Alternatives one and two remain, and the question of which one of these is most consistent with our empirical data cannot be adequately resolved with a

simple glance at statistics. To repeat, alternative one implies that the Norwegian migration stream generally followed Faist's model throughout the period, while alternative two suggests an abrupt end to the migration stream. In other words, it is clear that Norwegian migration to Latin America leveled around 1930, but we need to study closer the available data in order to evaluate whether this was caused by the migration wave reaching a mature phase, as Faist's model would predict (because the possibility of migrating to country A was so well-known that most potential migrants had already migrated), or whether there were other factors that caused the deceleration and eventual decrease of the curve. With this question in mind, we will now explore the three phases of the Norwegian migration cycle with a more detailed view in order to better understand the possible explanations for the ebb and flow of the migration cycle.

The Long Pioneer Phase, 1820–1920

One of the distinctive features of Norwegian migration to Latin America between 1820 and 1920 is the almost constant presence of Norwegian sailors in Latin American waters and ports. The presence of Norwegian sailors and vessels structured the migration in important ways. Sailors were not only potential migrants themselves, they also provided information about possible destinations to family, friends, and acquaintances back home. And the many small Norwegian cargo vessels that frequented Latin American harbors provided an important alternative means of transportation for those Norwegians who wanted to "try their luck" overseas.

Before the 1830s and 1840s, most Norwegian sailors in Latin America were employed on foreign ships. It was not until the mid-nineteenth century that the characteristic Norwegian merchant fleet, with its cheap, small sailing vessels, minimal crew, low salaries, and family ownership, made its way to Latin American ports. Regular sailors unfortunately left few textual traces, and it is nearly impossible at this stage to estimate the number of Norwegian sailors in Latin America before 1850 and, perhaps more importantly, to get glimpses of the stories they told about Latin America.

One striking exception is the story of Nicolai Olaus Lossius, a sailor who in 1806 left his native northwestern town of Molde at the age of sixteen on one of the many Norwegian schooners headed for Barcelona with dried cod (*bacalao*). This was the start of an eventful and dramatic life at sea that brought him first to Ireland on a Scottish ship and then to Liverpool, from where he sailed to Brazil. After returning to Britain he sailed on the Mediterranean, where he was captured by Moroccan privateers in 1809 and taken hostage. After being

released he made his way to Philadelphia from where he sailed to China, and in 1812 he became a US citizen and captain of an armed corvette. He was again taken captive in 1813, this time by the British outside Gibraltar, and he was brought to Newcastle, where he escaped. He then made his way to New Brunswick in Canada and established himself as a merchant, specializing in naval construction and the fish and timber trade. However, he soon lost his rapidly amassed fortune in 1816, and for reasons not entirely clear he ended up in the newly established Chilean navy under the command of the Scottish-born general Thomas Cochrane. He was decorated with a silver medal for his services under the battle of Valdivia in 1820, was given the rank of captain in the navy, and married the young daughter of a prominent local family in Valdivia. Between 1820 and his death in 1851, Lossius (who had now changed his name to Nicholas Oliver Lawson) lived intermittently in Valdivia, Valparaíso, and the Galápagos Islands, where he actually met Charles Darwin in 1835 and according to Darwin himself played a crucial role in the development of the theory on natural selection and evolution by providing information about species variation of tortoises on the different islands there.¹³

From a migration perspective, the most interesting part of Lossius's story is the content and effects of the letters he wrote to his family in Molde. Eleven of his letters from Chile have survived, most of them only as translated printed versions thanks to the efforts his niece, the genealogist Wilhelmine Brandt, who in 1863 published a genealogy of the families Lossius and Brandt and who presumably had received the original letters from her relatives in Molde.¹⁴ It is important to remember that his family background from prominent families on the west coast explains to a large extent why precisely *his* letters are still accessible – archives are by no means class-blind. Lossius wrote the letters in English and claimed he had forgotten how to write in Norwegian. In his letters he complains about the mail service, expects most of his letters home to have been lost on the way, and is frustrated by the lack of replies from his parents, and when he finally does hear from them, he is relieved that they still remember him. He explains furthermore that he is doing quite well in Valparaíso, and he asks them to intercede on his behalf before the court in Stockholm so that he can be named the Swedish-Norwegian consul of Valparaíso, mentioning in passing that there actually are a number of Norwegian ships calling at Valparaíso every year. Though his quest to become consul was not successful,

13 Anders Kvernberg, "Mannen som visste så mye om skilpadder at han endret verdenshistorien," *Romsdals sogelag årsskrift 2013* 77 (2013).

14 Wilhelmine Brandt, *Stamtavle over familjerne Lossius og Brandt med flere i samme indgiftede slægter* (Bergen: Geelmuyden, 1863).

his letters have another effect, one that was not intended by Lossius. Peter Andreas Brandt, Lossius's brother-in-law, was a painter and editor based in Christiania (modern-day Oslo) who went bankrupt in the early 1830s and got the idea of fleeing to South America, presumably in search for his wealthy relative in Chile. However, Brandt was unable to continue farther than Brazil, and ended up living in Santo Lagoa, where he worked as an illustrator for the Danish paleontologist and archaeologist Peter Wilhelm Lund.¹⁵ Curiously, Kristoffer Brandt, Peter Andreas Brandt's son and Lossius's nephew, also eventually migrated to Latin America, more specifically Mexico, after having corresponded with Lossius from Germany where he was working.

Lossius's correspondence, then, illustrates several key aspects of the Norwegian presence in Latin America in the early nineteenth century. First of all, Norwegian sailors were present in Latin American waters and ports from early on. Although they may not have consciously promoted migration, the effects of positive letters speaking well of the republics could trigger migration. And this migration was not necessarily directed toward the actual place where the original migrant lived. Furthermore, Norwegian migrants being few in numbers did not necessarily aim for the recreation of transplanted local communities. Lossius himself stopped using the Norwegian language, he was regularly identified as *norteamericano* or *inglés*, and he moved in international social circles. His naval career in Chile and Ecuador was itself part of the British engagement in the Spanish American wars of independence. His story underscores the need to look at migration in a global perspective, as it is not always or primarily a case of migrants moving only from one country to another.

We should not, however, exaggerate the migratory effects automatically generated by positive and optimistic texts on Latin America. About the same time as Lossius's correspondence, two other texts were published in part to encourage Norwegian emigration to Brazil. The first was the short, sober, and slightly enigmatic travel account of a round-trip voyage between Lübeck and Rio de Janeiro written by a certain W. Quellmann and published in Christiania in 1846 after the author's five-year stay in Brazil.¹⁶ The more openly propagandistic account by the priest Jonas W. Crøger, published ten years later after a similar five-year spell in Brazil, was apparently no more successful in attracting Norwegian immigrants to Brazil.¹⁷ But Crøger's text is interesting in part also

15 B. Holtén, M. Sterll, and J. Fjeldså, *Den forsvundne maler: P.W. Lund og P.A. Brandt i Brasilien* (København: Museum Tusulanums forlag, 2004).

16 W. Quellmann, *Min Reise fra Lübeck til Rio di Janeiro i Aaret 1840, og mit femaarige Ophold i denne Stad* (Christiania 1848).

17 J.W. Crøger, *En Reise til Brasilien og Uruguay, Ophold i disse Lande og en Beskrivelse over dem* (Christiania 1856).

because he describes his encounter with some of the remaining migrants from the *Sophie* expedition who ended up in Joinville and who are treated in more detail in Ellen Fensterseifer Woortmann's chapter of this book.

Sailors

Although the presence of Norwegians in Latin America by 1850 was still somewhat accidental, erratic, and numerically limited, several different factors worked together to increase its presence. One was the San Francisco gold rush, the intended destination for the Joinville settlers, and which was also remarked upon by Lossius in his last letters home. As European vessels heading for California had to go through the Strait of Magellan they thus called at Brazilian, Argentinean, and Chilean ports, and Lossius mentions the names of several Norwegian captains he met in Valparaíso in 1849 on their way to San Francisco, presumably sailing with migrants.¹⁸

In the 1840s and 1850s there are several more sporadic pieces of evidence of an increased presence of Norwegian vessels in Latin American and Caribbean waters. Norwegian captains used Charlotte Amalie, the principal port of the Danish West Indies, as a base for cargo shipping to the United States and the ports of the former Spanish colonies in the Circum-Caribbean. This trade had its heyday between 1839 and the 1870s, when the Royal Mail Steam Packet and subsequently Hamburger-Amerikanische Paketfahrt Aktiengesellschaft (HAPAG) used Charlotte Amalie as an entrepôt for their Caribbean trade, and there were regular routes between Southampton and Hamburg to the Danish colonies. The cargo was usually transferred to smaller sailing vessels in St. Thomas, from where they sailed to nearby Cuba, Mexico, and the principal South American ports.¹⁹ One of them may have been Norwegian-born merchant Juan Möller, who appears sporadically in sources from Tampico in Mexico in the 1840s, but we know almost nothing more about him except that he was born around 1812.²⁰

Another important trend in this period was the renewed interest for Norwegian *bacalao* in Latin American markets. Until the 1820s Spain and partly Portugal had been the most important markets for the salted cod of the

18 Kvernberg, "Mannen som visste så mye om skilpadder at han endret verdenshistorien."

19 Erik Gøbel, "Shipping through the Port of St. Thomas, Danish West Indies, 1816–1917," *International Journal of Maritime History* 6, no. 2 (1994).

20 Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico), Movimiento marítimo, Pasaportes y cartas de seguridad, vol. 23, expediente 45, hoja 12 and vol. 38, expediente 133, hojas 114–118.

northwestern Norwegian coast. And *bacalao* along with timber was Norway's most important export article throughout the nineteenth century. When Spain introduced new taxes on salted fish carried on foreign vessels, the Norwegians could no longer compete with the Canadians on the Iberian market or with the Spanish merchants who increasingly came to Norway to buy their *bacalao*. In the 1830s and 1840s, the larger trading companies based in the northwestern towns of Christianssund, Molde, Ålesund, and Trondhjem sought alternative markets especially in Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, and Havana, although direct trade in *bacalao* between Norway and Latin American ports was not entirely new. The first ship to be entered in the list of the Swedish-Norwegian consulate after its establishment in Rio in 1815 was the *Hinna* from Christianssund. And in 1830 the Rio consul remarks in his annual report that trade in *bacalao* is a "well-established business."²¹ But in the years between 1849 and 1855, several trading houses in Christianssund, Ålesund, and Bergen attempted to send their *bacalao* directly to Latin American ports. New methods of packaging introduced in the 1850s to preserve the fish from the hot and humid climate, combined with the successful import of coffee from Brazil and sugar from Cuba, implied that there came to exist a quite regular service between several Norwegian ports and the Atlantic ports of Latin America even though this trade was perceived to be especially risky.

In 1873 the Norwegian (and Swedish) consul in Rio de Janeiro remarked that "because of the comfort and consistence of the steam route from Hamburg, it appears that the direct trade between Norway and Brazil in beer, fish, and coffee on sailing vessels is decreasing."²² Although he was right in pointing out that Norwegian exporters of *bacalao* increasingly preferred shipment on German steam routes, the actual number of small Norwegian sailing vessels increased dramatically in the ensuing years, as seen from table 2.2 and figure 2.9.

Especially during the fifteen years between 1880 and 1895, several hundred small sailing vessels called at the major Latin American ports every year. Most of these did not go between Norway and Latin America but carried cargo between ports in the Americas. This implies that there were far more Norwegians in Latin American territories than the migration statistics reveal. Of course, most of these sailors spent little time on land, and most of them had no intention of settling in Latin America. But if even a small percentage of

21 Odd Vollan, *Den norske klippfiskhandels historie* (Førde: Øens Forlag, 1956), 169.

22 Departementet for det Indre, "Uddrag af Consulatberetninger vedkommende Norges Handel og Skibsfart i Aaret 1873," *Norges officielle Statistik* (Christiania: Departementet for det Indre), 95.

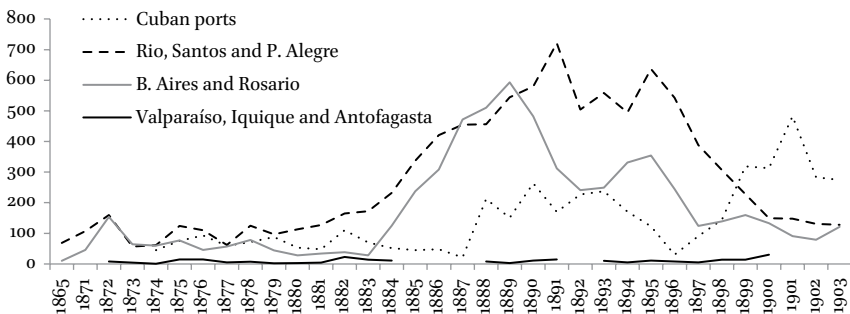
TABLE 2.2 *Number of Norwegian ships arrived at selected Latin American ports according to consular reports, 1865–1903^a*

Year	Havana and other Cuban ports	Rio de Janeiro (incl. Santos and Porto Alegre)	Buenos Aires (incl. Rosario)	Valparaíso (including Iquique and Antofagasta)
1865	43	69	10	1
1871		107	46	
1872		160	154	8
1873	n/a	57 ^b	64	4
1874	45	61	60	1
1875	75 ^c	124	77	15
1876	93	110	46	15
1877	59	62	57	5
1878	72	125	78	7
1879	88	97	44	2
1880	53	113	28	3
1881	48	127	34	4
1882	110	165	38	23
1883	70	172	28	14
1884	52	232	125	11
1885	45	337	237	n/a ^d
1886	48	421	308	n/a
1887	21	455	472	n/a
1888	212	456	510	8
1889	151 ^e	544	593	3 ^f
1890	263 ^g	580	482	11
1891	170	721	312	15
1892	227	504	241	n/a
1893	237	558	249	10 ^h
1894	171	495	331	5
1895	123	637	354	11
1896	30 ⁱ	543	245	8
1897	91	388	124	5
1898	144	307	139	14
1899	319	228	160	14
1900	313	149	133	30
1901	482	148	91	n/a
1902	283	131	79	22 ^j
1903	274	128	121 ^k	n/a

- a The sources for these numbers are consular reports by Swedish-Norwegian consuls in Latin American ports and published usually every year by the Bureau of Statistics. These have been digitized and are available on the following web pages. Numbers after semicolons refer to pages of the original documents from each year. http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3_1865.pdf; 122–25, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1871.pdf; n/a, 60, 62, n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1872.pdf; n/a, 67, 65, 70, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1873.pdf; n/a, 94, 95, 98, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1874.pdf; 100, 93, 97, 101, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1875.pdf; 101, 102, 104, 107, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1876.pdf; 122, 124, 127, 130, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_115.pdf; 272, 179, 275, 274, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_116.pdf; 381, 314 (and 358, 289, 390), http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_117.pdf; 162, 265, 199, 147, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_ii_c16_1880.pdf; 366, 314, 249, 302, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_ii_c16_1881.pdf; 383, 245, 359, 316, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_ii_c16_1882.pdf; 326, 332, 337, 343, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_ii_c16_1883.pdf; 239, 428, 409, 434, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_001.pdf; 233, 302, 305, 315, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_017.pdf; 144, 326, 186, 390, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_041.pdf; 208, 424, 442, n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_060.pdf; 59, 555, 576, n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_096.pdf; 112 and 548, 419, 305, 547, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_124.pdf; 495, 540, 373 and 609, 506, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_118.pdf; 359 and 615, 550, 1 and 491, 604, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_119.pdf; 9–407, 18–613, 23–759; 14–509; 9–375; 23–763, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_120.pdf; 8–222; 19–659; 15–542 and 25–842; n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_121.pdf; 266, 694 and 938, 845, n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_122.pdf; 9–489, 16–757 and 18–793, 11–539, 18–796, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_123.pdf; 7–239 and 22–911; 3–46, 12–540, 12–559 and 23–923; 11–483 and 20–844; 23–930, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_124.pdf; 2–48; 1,11,10,461,16–709,710,19 and 765; 13–567, 16–719 and 16–720; 821, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_125.pdf; 9–274; 1–6,14–489 and 18–768; 14–525; 852, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_126.pdf; 4–154; 10–433; 8–324 and 18–890; 18–871, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_128.pdf; 609; 2–78 and 10–520; 12–565; 18–894, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_129.pdf; 7–343; 2–58, 8–360 and 19–891; 15–673; 10–478, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_130.pdf; 9–459; 1–34, 8–370, 15–689, 15–700 and 16–796; 17–801; n/a, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_131.pdf; 16–787; 7–289; 14–655; 16–797, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_132.pdf; 17–788; 7–289, 9–429; 14–625, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1871.pdf; n/a, 60, 62, n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1872.pdf; n/a, 67, 65, 70, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1873.pdf; n/a, 94, 95, 98, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1874.pdf; 100, 93, 97, 101, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1875.pdf; 101, 102, 104, 107, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_i_c3a_1876.pdf; 122, 124, 127, 130, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_115.pdf; 272, 179, 275, 274, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_116.pdf; 381, 314 (and 358, 289, 390), http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_117.pdf; 162, 265, 199, 147, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_ii_c16_1880.pdf; 366, 314, 249, 302, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_ii_c16_1881.pdf; 383, 245, 359, 316, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_ii_c16_1882.pdf; 326, 332, 337, 343, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_ii_c16_1883.pdf; 239, 428, 409, 434, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_001.pdf; 233, 302, 305, 315, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_017.pdf; 144, 326, 186, 390, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_041.pdf; 208, 424, 442, n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_060.pdf; 59, 555, 576, n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_096.pdf; 112 and 548, 419, 305, 547, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/nos/nos_iii_124.pdf; 495, 540, 373 and 609, 506, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_118.pdf; 359 and 615, 550, 1 and 491, 604, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_119.pdf; 9–407, 18–613, 23–759; 14–509; 9–375; 23–763, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_120.pdf; 8–222; 19–659; 15–542 and 25–842; n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_121.pdf; 266, 694 and 938, 845, n/a, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_122.pdf; 9–489, 16–757 and 18–793, 11–539, 18–796, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_123.pdf; 7–239 and 22–911; 3–46, 12–540, 12–559 and 23–923; 11–483 and 20–844; 23–930, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_124.pdf; 2–48; 1,11,10,461,16–709,710,19 and 765; 13–567, 16–719 and 16–720; 821, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_125.pdf; 9–274;

TABLE 2.2 *Number of Norwegian ships arrived at selected Latin American (cont.)*

- 1-6,14-489 and 18-768; 14-525; 852, http://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_126.pdf; 4-154; 10-433; 8-324 and 18-890; 18-871, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_128.pdf; 609; 2-78 and 10-520; 12-565; 18-894, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_129.pdf; 7-343; 2-58, 8-360 and 19-891; 15-673; 10-478, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_130.pdf; 9-459; 1-34, 8-370, 15-689, 15-700 and 16-796; 17-801; n/a, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_131.pdf; 16-787; 7-289; 14-655; 16-797, https://www.ssb.no/a/histstat/div/is/is_132.pdf; 17-788; 7-289, 9-429; 14-625.
- b Only Rio de Janeiro.
- c Nineteen came directly from Norway with *bacalao*.
- d Digitized version does not include page 390.
- e Consul notes that most freights is sugar to the United States, but that there is an increase in fruit cargo especially from Baracoa.
- f Includes lengthy narrative on Chilean history, economy, and politics and information about migration to Chile.
- g Of these, 202 arrived in Baracoa.
- h Reported in 1894.
- i The consul notes problems with fruit trade to the United States because of the insurrection on the island.
- j Consul Bruno Mohr notes six Norwegian sailors escaped from Norwegian vessels in Chile in 1902.
- k The consul notes that thirty-nine of these were Norwegian sailing vessels, thirty-eight of which went with timber from US ports, p. 626.

FIGURE 2.9 *Number of Norwegian vessels arrived in selected Latin American ports annually, 1865-1903*

THE SOURCES FOR EACH YEAR ARE THE SAME AS LISTED IN TABLE 2.2

them did, this would have had a marked effect on the number of Norwegians living in Latin America. Some of the lists in HULA confirm that some Norwegian sailors did in fact stay in Latin America on a more permanent basis. In Argentina, the authorities required all adult males without property to keep a *papeleta de conchabo* documenting their association to an employer. Without it, workers in Argentina could be charged with vagrancy and sentenced to military service or forced public labor. Foreign workers obtained the document from their consular representative. The consul for Norway and Sweden kept a list of papeletas issued to Norwegians and Swedes between 1848 and 1887. The list includes 193 Norwegians, of whom 102 were sailors, captains and stevedores, thirty-three were simply listed as workers, twenty were artisans of different kinds (carpenters being dominant), eleven were merchants, shopkeepers or tradesmen, nine were specifically listed as agricultural workers, and five were engineers or machine operators, while in nine cases no occupation was registered.²³ In Chile, lists of captains in the national merchant marine tell a similar story.²⁴ Thirty Norwegians were named captains in the Chilean merchant fleet between 1873 and 1911. These may have represented only the tip of the iceberg. Presumably, many more Norwegian sailors worked on Chilean ships without ever reaching the rank of captain.

The legal and economic conditions of Norwegian sailors during the age of sail made it particularly attractive to jump ship in foreign ports and seek employment either on land or on foreign ships. Desertion from the Norwegian merchant marine was quite common during the age of sail, particularly among the ordinary and able-bodied seamen who were in fact exempted from military service but who in turn had to sign two-year contracts. Since salaries on Norwegian ships were, at least until the 1890s, considerably lower than

23 Riksarkivet (Oslo) S-2981/E/Ee/Loo26/0001: "Register of ver uti Buenos Ayres Bossatte Svenskar & Nordmän."

24 "Lista oficial de capitanes de la Marina Mercante chilena, inscritos en la Gobernación marítima de Valparaíso, a virtud de lo dispuesto en el decreto supremo No. 263 de 25 de septiembre de 1872 i que pueden mandar nave con bandera nacional, según datos obtenidos particularmente," in Archivo Histórico Nacional de Chile, Ministerio de Marina, vol. 633 (1893); "Lista oficial de capitanes de la Marina Mercante Chilena inscritos en el Registro respectivo en virtud de lo dispuesto en decreto supremo de 25 de septiembre de 1872 i que pueden mandar naves nacionales" i *Memoria del ministerio de Marina presentada al Congreso Nacional en 1901* (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Nacional, 1901); "Nomina de los diferentes clases de capitanes de la Marina Mercante Nacional, hábiles para mandar naves, de conformidad con el reglamento de 7 de setiembre de 1906" in *Memoria del Ministerio de Marina* (Santiago: Imprenta Nacional, 1911), pp. 362–70.

salaries on British, Canadian, and US ships, there was a considerable temptation to desert in ports where there was a market for their skills.²⁵ Other scholars have noted how at least some of the deserted sailors were in fact hidden migrants, especially in New York but also in Australia.²⁶ Potentially, deserted sailors made up a much larger share of Norwegian migrants in Argentina than in the United States or in Australia, given the limited legal migration there and the surprisingly high numbers of deserted sailors, especially in the 1870s and 1880s.

The annual reports where Swedish-Norwegian consuls provided information about trade and shipping also included the numbers of sailors who had deserted from Norwegian ships. Though the reported numbers may well be lower than the actual number of deserted sailors, they at least provide us both with a general tendency over time (the ebb and flow of deserters), and they can be used to compare different ports with each other. Among the Latin American ports, Buenos Aires stands out. And it is from 1885 until roughly 1900 that the numbers of deserted Norwegian sailors in Buenos Aires is remarkable, both in relation to the number of legal immigrants and compared to the number of deserted sailors in other ports (see table 2.3)

During the eleven years between 1885 and 1895, a total of 595 Norwegian sailors deserted from Norwegian vessels in the port of Buenos Aires, according to the consul. In the same years, only sixty-two Norwegians immigrants were registered by the port authorities in Buenos Aires. Clearly, then, if desertion from the merchant marine was a type of hidden migration, its numerical importance at least in those years could be great. Most of our sources indicate that the majority of deserted sailors did not stay permanently in Buenos Aires or Argentina, but sought employment on other ships, preferably British,

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- 25 Catharina B. Dyvik, "Hiding Migrants – A study of seamen deserting from Norwegian merchant vessels between 1860 and 1914" (London School of Economics, 2011); Johan Nicolay Tønnesen, "Rømning 1850–1914 fra norske skip i fremmede havner," in *Den norske sjøfarts historie fra de eldste tider til vore dage*, ed. Alexander Bugge and et al (Oslo: J.W. Cappelens forlag, 1951); Steffen Sætereie, "Sjømenn på rømmen: En studie av norske sjøfolk som forlot sine skip 1862–1913." (University of Oslo, 2014).
- 26 Lewis R. Fischer, "The Sea as Highway: Maritime Service as a Means of International Migration, 1863–1913," in *Maritime aspects of migration*, ed. Klaus Friedland, Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte. Neue Folge (Köln: Böhlau, 1989); Fredrik Larsen Lund, "A Norwegian Waltz: Norwegian Immigration and Settelement in Queensland 1870–1914" (University of Oslo, 2012); David Mauk, *The colony that rose from the sea : Norwegian maritime migration and community in Brooklyn, 1850–1910* (Northfield: Norwegian-American Historical Association : Distributed by The University of Illinois Press, 1997); Dyvik, "Hiding Migrants – A study of seamen deserting from Norwegian merchant vessels between 1860 and 1914."

TABLE 2.3 *Runaway sailors in the port of Buenos Aires according to consular reports, 1871–98*

Year	Deserters from Norwegian vessels				Norwegian vessels	Deserters pr vessel
	Norw.	Swedes	Others	Sum		
1871					46	
1872					99	
1873					64	
1874				8	60	0.13
1875				2	77	0.03
1876				0	46	0.00
1877				0	57	0.00
1878				8	78	0.10
1879					44	
1880				5	28	0.18
1881				11	34	0.32
1882				12	38	0.32
1883				21	28	0.75
1884				36	125	0.29
1885	52		62	114	237	0.48
1886	60	31	38	129	308	0.42
1887	85	23	47	155	472	0.33
1888	98	19	54	171	510	0.34
1889	51	29	43	123	593	0.21
1890	22	16	23	61	482	0.13
1891	4		12	16	312	0.05
1892	28	10	21	59	241	0.24
1893	41	23	30	94	249	0.38
1894	52	24	54	130	331	0.39
1895	82	27	49	158	354	0.45
1896	54	18	25	97	245	0.40

THE SOURCES FOR EACH YEAR ARE THE SAME AS LISTED IN TABLE 2.2.

Canadian, or US.²⁷ Following the paths of individual sailors, even when we have their full names and approximate year of birth, is a very time-consuming

27 Steinar A. Sæther, "Fordrukne ofre, rasjonelle nyttemaksimerere eller skjulte migranter: rømte sjømenn fra Stavanger i Buenos Aires 1888," in *Sjøfolks liv og arbeid* (Bergen maritime museum: unpublished, 2013).

and often frustrating endeavor. Yet in order to obtain a firmer grasp on the destinies of deserted sailors in Latin American ports, more in-depth studies are needed. Buenos Aires is a key port if we rely on the consular reports on desertion, and the years between 1880 and 1913 stand out as particularly important. From the beginning of the twentieth century, even the Norwegian shipowners turned to steam and steel, thus improving conditions on board, while the port authorities in Buenos Aires curbed the influence of crimps and runners. There may have been other factors at play, too, but in any case the numbers of desertions fell steadily thereafter.

Engineers

In addition to the sailors and the shipping industry, other work opportunities for Norwegians also opened in Latin America during the last decades of the nineteenth century. In the HULA database, more than one thousand events concern Norwegian engineers in Latin America. The engineers are a well-documented group, unlike the sailors, and most engineers are listed with more than one event in HULA. It is nevertheless clear that the engineers represented a substantial group among Norwegian emigrants to Latin America, by far outweighing their proportion of the Norwegian population at the time. The basic reason for this particular migration is quite straightforward: long into the twentieth century, Norway educated far more engineers than what the domestic economy needed – indeed, the emigration rate among newly graduated engineers was generally very high from all Scandinavian countries.²⁸

In HULA, the distribution of Norwegian engineers by country in Latin America where their life events have been recorded is as follows: Argentina (484), Chile (254), Brazil (68), Mexico (60), Bolivia (41), Uruguay (23), Cuba (17), and Colombia (12). Of the sixty-nine Norwegians registered in the Mexican register of foreign residents in the 1930s, eight were engineers.²⁹ Of the 2,523 entries of Norwegians in Buenos Aires between 1884 and 1940, 339 were listed with engineer as occupation.³⁰ And even more remarkably, of the 205 Norwegians registered in the list of foreigners by the police in the port of

28 Forthcoming study by Per-Olof Grönberg.

29 Archivo General de la Nación (México), Galería 5, Departamento de Migraciones, Varias nacionalidades, caja 7.

30 “Listado de pasajeros e inmigrantes noruegos llegados al puerto de Buenos Aires entre 1882 y 1950,” Centro de Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos (CEMLA).

Antofagasta between 1903 and 1942, sixty were engineers.³¹ Taken at face value, sources such as these suggest that somewhere between one in every four to eight Norwegian migrants were engineers. But we need to take into account that some of them exaggerated their titles abroad and that these particular migrants tended to move often and also traveled in ways that made their movements more susceptible to be registered by the authorities. A more conservative estimate is that they represented between 5 and 10 percent of the Norwegian migrant population in Latin America.

Interestingly, the engineers tended to form clusters around certain geographic locations, and some of these locations seem to have been among the favored destinations for Norwegian migrants (not only engineers) for decades or even generations. Indeed, the first Norwegian engineers behaved very much like the migrant pioneers theorized by Faist. One example is Lars (or Lorenzo) Sundt, who already in 1870 was invited by a Danish vice-consul in Chile to be the administrator of a copper mine that the latter owned in Chañaral in the Atacama Desert. Sundt was a graduate in mining from the Royal Frederick University in Christiania (today's University of Oslo) and worked for some years in the silver mines of Kongsberg in Eastern Norway. Lars/Lorenzo Sundt served in Chañaral for three years, and then worked in other silver and copper mines in Chile before he was hired in 1878 as *subgerente* of the Corocoro mine in Bolivia, which was owned by a Chilean company.³² When the War of the Pacific broke out in 1879, in part sparked by precisely the newfound ores in the Atacama, Sundt moved back to Chile where he administered nitrate mines near Iquique before he was commissioned by the Chilean government to conduct a geological survey of the Atacama Desert, obviously with an intent to discover new and exploitable mineral deposits. He later returned to Corocoro, before moving back to Santiago, where he settled in 1896 and lived until the 1930s. For our purposes, the most interesting aspect of Sundt's activities concerns his role as a migration pioneer. Not only did he bring along a mine worker from Kongsberg and the latter's family when he moved to Chile in 1879, he also recruited Norwegian engineers to the mines he administered in Chile and

31 Archivos históricos de la Universidad Católica del Norte (Antofagasta, Chile), Prontuarios de extranjeros de la oficina de identificación de la policía de Antofagasta, carpeta "Noruega."

32 S.H. Finne-Grønn, *Den vestlandske slegt Sundt: genealogisk-personalhistoriske meddelelser* (Christiania: Mallings, 1916), 140–42; Gudmund Stang, "Compañía Corocoro de Bolivia, 1873–1923: a Chilean copper-mining venture in Bolivia seen in the context of the contemporary development of the industry," *Iberoamericana: Nordic Journal of Latin American Studies/Revista Nórdica de Estudios Latinoamericanos* 23, no. 12 (1993).

Bolivia. Among those he recruited first were Ole Sandstad, who replaced him as an administrator of the Corocoro mine in 1892, and Axel Thorgersen.³³ Both Thorgersen and Sandstad were killed in 1898 during the Bolivian civil war.³⁴

Despite this tragedy, many more Norwegian engineers continued to seek work in northern Chile, Peru, and Bolivia. Among them were four recent mineralogical graduates from the Royal Frederick University: Arne Utne, Hans Nikolai Ellefsen, Kristian Lerche Bøckmann, and Leonhard Holmboe. Initially, from 1912, they all had contracts with the Braden Copper Company, which owned the El Teniente mine in northern Chile. But dissatisfied with the treatment and conditions, they all preferred working for Chilean-owned mining companies in Peru and Bolivia and later sought to locate new deposits with own licenses that could in turn be sold to the multinational companies.³⁵ From then on there was a constant stream of newly graduated engineers from Norwegian technical schools who were recruited to mines in Chile, Bolivia, and Peru (see table 2.4). Most seem to have been recruited in Norway or the United States, and they behaved more like present-day expats than permanent residents of their Latin American host countries, in how they lived, what they ate, and the length of their stays.³⁶ Still, some – like Utne, Ellefsen, Holmboe, Bøckmann, Sundt, and Sandal – seem to have preferred working for Latin American companies or governments if they got the opportunity. This was also the case for the engineers whom the skiers discussed in Alvstad's chapter met in Argentina and Chile in the 1890s.

Table 2.4 illustrates the clustering of Norwegian engineers around specific companies in Chile and Bolivia. Exactly how recent graduates were recruited is not clear from the sources consulted. But it seems obvious that there were networks that involved people in charge of hiring engineers in the larger companies, such as Braden, Guggenheim, the Chile Exploration Company, and the Anglo-Chilean Nitrate Company, and that these networks had contacts at

33 *Studenterne fra 1883: biografiske meddelelser samlede i anledning af deres 25-aars student-erjubilæum*, (Kristiania: Det Mallingske bogtrykkeri, 1908). "Compañía Corocoro de Bolivia, 1873–1923: a Chilean copper-mining venture in Bolivia seen in the context of the contemporary development of the industry."

34 See letter from Sverre Næsgaard to Martha Bromander, Nov. 15, 1946, kindly lent to the author by Lars Aasness.

35 Kristian Lerche Bøckmann, "In memoriam," *Bergmanns-jul* (1958); "Jul i Andesfjellene," *Bergmanns-jul* (1955). See also the collection of photographs with descriptions by Hans Nikolai Ellefsen, kindly lent to the author by Berit Wangenstein Haugen.

36 For a particularly detailed and vivid illustration, see the memoirs and photo album of Asbjørn Danielsen, who worked for Guggenheim at the María Elena mine from 1926 to 1931. The memoirs and album were kindly lent to the author by Jon Asbjørn Danielsen.

TABLE 2.4 *Norwegian engineers in Chile, Bolivia, and Peru 1870–1940*

Name	School	Studies	Graduation	Work in Latin America
Sundt, Lars	KFU	mining	1867	In Chile from 1870 (see main text)
Wiel Krefting, Truls	KFU	mining	1879	Peru 1880s
Sandstad, Ole	KFU	mining	1887	Corocoro mines in Bolivia from 1889 to 1898
Cappelen Smith, Elias Anton	TTL	chemistry	1892	Consultant for Guggenheim, Chile Exploration Co., and Braden from 1912. From 1925, manager and partner for Guggenheim Brothers in Chile.
Gude, Ove Christian	BTS	machine	1894	Co-owner of Minas de Carbon Rio Verde, Magallanes, Chile
Lange, Ulrik Fr. Nath.	TTL	construction	1894	In Chile from 1906
Schach, Nikolai Petter	TTL	engineering	1898	Railway construction in Chile and Peru 1907–10. Argentina thereafter.
Sohlberg, Christian Melvær, Thormod	OTS TTL	construction chemistry	1899 1900	Chile after 1904 Chile Exploration Co. from 1915
Vodahl, Andreas	TTL	engineering	1902	Chile Exploration Co. before 1916
Lossius Jørgensen, Erling	TTL /BF	chemistry/ mining	1905	Chile Exploration Co. after 1906
Koch, Otto Larsen, Alf	TTL	chemistry	1906	Chile Exploration Co. In Chile from 1907, claims to be engineer in 1940
Rønning, Peder Ansgar	TTL	machine	1906	Braden Copper Co. from 1909
Salvesen, Jens Irgens	OTS	construction	1906	Bolivia and Chile after 1906
Arnet, Fr. W.	KTS	chemistry	1908	Chemist at nitrate fields in Chile, 1908–17
Dahll, Chr. Budde	TTL	chemistry	1908	Braden 1909–12, Cía La Reina (Bol.) 1912–13, Cía Min. Gatico 1914, Braden 1915–32

TABLE 2.4 *Norwegian engineers in Chile, Bolivia, and Peru 1870–1940a (cont.)*

Name	School	Studies	Graduation	Work in Latin America
Krog, Karl Martin	TTL	chemistry	1909	Chile Exploration Co. after 1915
Balle Røyem, Claus Fredrik	TTL		1910	1910–12: Griffiters & Co.; from 1912 in Chile Exploration Co., Chuquicamata
Hofseth, Bjarne	CSM, UK	mining	1910	Northern Chile, 1923–26
Næser Sontum, Fredrik	BTS		1910	Braden Copper Co. 1915–47
Røyem, Claus Fredrik	OTS	construction	1910	Chile 1910–14 and 1919–50
Schønning, Eirik Nergaard, Gunnar	OTS	construction	1910	Chile 1910–13 Arrived in Argentina in 1910, worked in Chuquicamata in 1920 and 1924
Ellefsen, Hans Nikolai	KFU	mining	1911	Braden Copper Co. from 1912, from 1915 in Bolivia
Jørgensen, Jørgen	TTL	chemistry	1911	Braden Copper Co. from 1912
Lerche Bøckman, Kristian	KFU	mining	1911	Chile, Peru and Bolivia 1912–15, Chile 1919–20, Bolivia 1925–28
Newton Kirsebom, Gustav	KFU	mining	1911	Contract with Cappelen Smith in Chile 1913–16
Ringstad, Bjarne	KFU	mining	1911	Braden Copper Co. from 1913
Ervik Holmboe, Leonard	KFU	mining	1912	Braden Copper Co. from 1912, from 1915 in Bolivia
Melvær, Jonas	BTS	chemistry	1912	Chuquicamata, Chile from 1915
Utne, Arne	KFU	mining	1912	Chile, Bolivia 1912–50
Andresen, Arnold	THK	chemistry	1913?	Petroleum chemistry in Magallanes, Chile
Rogde, Sigurd	BTS	construction	1914	Anglo Chilean Nitrate Corp. after 1917

Name	School	Studies	Graduation	Work in Latin America
Magisås, Hans				In Chile from 1918, worked as engineer at Chuquicamata in 1926
Duborgh, Peter	THK	electro-technical	1915	Standard Oil, Argentina and Bolivia 1922–27
Urheim, Thorvald	BTS	electro-technical	1916	Braden Copper Co., 1924–27
Harje Freuchen, Thord	BTS	electro-technical	1917	Guggenheim Copper
Horneman, Jacob H.	KFU	mining	1918	Venezuela and Colombia, in Chile from 1930 at María Elena
Thomassen, Sverre Johan	BTS	electro-technical	1918	Braden Copper Co., 1932–37
Aasheim, Hans	NTH	chemistry	1919	From 1930 at Anglo-Chilean Cons. Nitrate Corp.
Grahl-Nielsen, Frithjof	KFU	mining	1919	Chuquicamata, Chile 1920–22
Hanger, Anders	KFU	mining	1919	Braden Copper Co. 1920–21, Cevio de Pasco, Peru 1921–23
Hirth, Anders	NTH	electro-technical	1919	Braden Copper Co. after 1931
Ingier Vold, Ole	KFU	chemistry	1919	Chile Exploration Co. 1922–29
Lowzow, Odd	TTL	machine	1919	Guggenheim Copper
Wee, Sverre	KFU	mining	1919	Guggenheim, Andagoya Copper in Bolivia, Peru, and Chile from 1919 to the 1940s
Bratt, Per	THDa	chemistry	1920	Assistant chief chemist Anglo-Chilean Cons. Nitrate Corp 1926–28.
Danielsen, Asbjørn	NTH	construction	1920	Anglo-Chilean Cons. Nitrate Corp 1926–32
Lundh, Fridthjof C. Gordon	NTH	electro-technical	1920	Chile Exploration Co., 1923–24
Stuenes, Kaare	KFU	mining	1920	Braden Copper Co., 1922–24
Børresen, Rolf Torgny	NTH	machine	1921	Braden Copper Co., Rancagua 1929–1932

TABLE 2.4 *Norwegian engineers in Chile, Bolivia, and Peru 1870–1940a (cont.)*

Name	School	Studies	Graduation	Work in Latin America
Korstvedt, Ole Carsten	NTH	electro-technical	1921	Braden Copper Co., Chile from 1923
Swensson, Carl Petter	NTH	construction	1921	Fountain Co and Braden Copper Co., 1929–33
Wefring, Peter Meyer	NTH	construction	1921	Guggenheim Nitrates from 1926, later Comp. Maestranzas and Galvan in Viña del Mar
Dalen, Olav	NTH	mining	1923	Cerro de Pasco Copper, Peru 1927–29
Darre-Jenssen, Lauritz	NTH	construction	1923	Anglo-Chilean Cons. Nitrate Corp
Steffensen, Bjarne	OTS	chemistry	1923	Chile Exploration Co., 1927–32
Thunæs, Arvid	NTH	mining	1923	Osoyo gold mines, Bolivia 1938–39
Heiberg Greve, William	NTH	construction	1924	Chile Exploration Co., 1925–27, Patiño Mines Bolivia 1927–31, Pedro de Valdivia Nitrate Mines 1931
Kleppe, Reidar Sæther, Hans Birger	NTH	construction	1924	Chuquicamata, 1924 Standard Oil, Argentina and Bolivia from 1925
Brygfjeld, Ragnar Bassoe, Ivar	NTH	electro-technical	1925	Chile Exploration Co., Chuquicamata 1927–28 Chile Exploration Co., Chuquicamata after 1925
Rustan, Arvid Konrad Hoff, Edward Andrew Holmsen, Sverre	OTS	construction	1925	Chile Exploration Co. 1926–32 Mechanical engineer in Chuquicamata from 1926 Chuquicamata 1926

Name	School	Studies	Graduation	Work in Latin America
Bachke, Anton Sophus	NTH	construction	1927	Braden Copper Co., Rancagua 1931–32
Petersen, Harald Ludvig	NTH	construction	1928	Cons. Nitrate in Chile from 1931
Fladby, Jens	NTH	chemistry	1929	Nitrate mining, Chile before 1935
Kloed Petersen, Hans Thomas	NTH	electro-technical	1929	Braden Copper Co. from 1931, Cerro de Pasco (Peru) from 1932
Ranum, Harald	NTH	electro-technical	1929	Cerro de Pasco Copper, Peru 1934–37
Ansgaard Moebius, Johan	NTH	construction	1930	From 1930 at Comp. Salitrera Anglo-Chilena
Grove, Ivar	NTH	construction	1930	Comp. Salitrera Anglo- Chilena 1931–32, Texas Oil in Argentina 1935–36
Garson, Henrik	HTS/ CTS		1912/1914	Braden Copper Co. after 1914
Holmboe, Fredrik B.	KTS	construction		Chuquicamata 1917
Aalborg Haugen, Erling	THD		1921	Nitrate mining, Chile before 1938

SOURCE: HULA ([HTTPS://APP.UIO.NO/HF/ILOS/HULA/](https://app.uio.no/hf/iilos/hula/))

- a Abbreviations: Bergen Tekniske Skole (BTS), Kristiania/Oslo Tekniske Skole (OTS), Trondhjem Tekniske Lærestalt (TTL), Norges Tekniske Høgskole (NTH), Kongelige Fredriks Universitet/Royal Frederick University renamed University of Oslo in 1939 (KFU), Technische Hochschule Dresden (THD), Technische Hochschule Karlsruhe (THK), Technische Hochschule Darmstadt (THDA), Camborne School of Mines (CSM), Bergakademia Freiberg (BF), and Chicago Technical School (CTS). More information about every individual in the table in HULA (<https://app.uio.no/hf/iilos/hula/>). I am particularly grateful to Kristin Ranestad and Per-Olof Grönberg for information about Norwegian engineers in Latin America, and the lists they prepared for inclusion in HULA.

Norwegian technical schools. It is also probable that once Norwegian engineers such as Cappelen Smith held higher positions within these companies, more Norwegian engineers were recruited. Mining engineering in the southern Andes developed into a specific migrant niche for Norwegian engineers between 1890 and 1930, although very little Norwegian capital was involved, and although most engineers only worked in South America before returning home or being employed elsewhere.

The engineering niche also attracted other Norwegian migrants. Not only did some of the engineers bring along wives and fiancées and other family members, they also served as magnets for other Norwegian males seeking work, as evidenced by the chapters of Cecilia Alvstad and María Bjerg in this book. Norwegians looking for work were guided in the direction of companies where compatriots held influential positions.

A list similar to table 2.4 for Argentina would be too long to include here. In Argentina, Norwegian engineers were employed in railway and port construction, in the building of dams, in hydrological surveys, and in the petroleum industry, both off-shore in Comodoro Rivadavia and in the inland exploration and production in the northern provinces. Many of the first group of Norwegian engineers in Argentina were initially hired by the geographer Francisco Pascacio Moreno, founder of the Natural History Museum of La Plata, explorer of Patagonia, and, most importantly for our purposes, head of the Argentinean Border Commission in the 1890s, a commission that was tasked with exploring Patagonia and the southernmost part of the cordillera in order to establish the exact border between Argentina and Chile. For these explorations several Norwegian engineers were hired, first and foremost the military captain Gunnar/ Gunardo Lange. Lange had previously emigrated to the United States, before following his brother to Honduras and then migrating onward to Argentina in 1886.³⁷ Moreno and Lange recruited a small army of Norwegian engineers to defend Argentinean interests in the border conflict with Chile, including Eilert Sundt (a cousin of Lars/Lorenzo Sundt), Henrik Wolff, Theodor Arneberg, Einar Soot, Alf Schjørbeck, Karl/Carlos Zwilgmeyer, Hans Peter Waag, Ulrik Greiner, Olaf Jansen, N.J. Hammer, and the same Olaf Erichsen who after having worked for Moreno became the manager of El Mate, the estancia where the workers treated in María Bjerg's chapter initially worked.³⁸

37 Kjartan Fløgstad, *Eld og vatn* (Oslo: Universitetsforl., 1999), 162–67; Joar Hoel Larsen, “Gunnar Lange,” in *Norsk biografisk leksikon* (2009).

38 Hans Sundt, *Innen alt går i glemmeboken: erindringer og selvopplevelser fra Argentina, Chile og Uruguay* (Tønsberg: Tønsbergs Aktietrykkeri, 1968), 40–45.

This group of engineers formed the nucleus of what was to become a substantial Norwegian community in Buenos Aires. They are also a group that is relatively easy to trace, in part because many of them wrote about their experiences in the form of scientific monographs, travelogues, or more fictionalized accounts.³⁹ Several were also central actors in forming and maintaining institutions such as the Norwegian Lutheran Church, the Scandinavian Rowing Club (Club de Remeros Escandinavos), and the Norwegian *La Plata Samfund* along with Norwegian shipping agents, shipowners, and trading agents based in Buenos Aires. The Norwegian communities in Buenos Aires were by far the largest one in numerical terms in Latin America, and the niches they covered were more diverse than in other part of the region, and especially during the 1920s there was a considerable increase in the number of Norwegians who sought work in and around Buenos Aires, as illustrated by the EMIPRO and CEMLA numbers reviewed at the beginning of this chapter.

The Norwegian circles in Buenos Aires included some wealthy and politically influential members. Of them, the most influential by far in both Argentina and Norway was Peter Christophersen (Don Pedro). After having worked as a shipping agent in Cadiz, Spain, he moved with his brothers to Buenos Aires in the 1870s and quickly ascended socially and economically. He married first one granddaughter of a former Argentinean president, then another, which gave him access to rich agricultural land in Mendoza. He financed the Norwegian Lutheran Church (whose architect was Alexander/Alejandro Christophersen, Pedro's brother, later to become professor of architecture at the University of Buenos Aires); financed Roald Amundsen's Antarctic expedition, as well as the grandiose reception for Amundsen's men in Buenos Aires after the completion of the expedition; founded the whaling station Grytviken at South Georgia along with Captain C.A. Larsen; and co-founded the Norwegian South America Line, a line of steam vessels that served the route between various Norwegian ports, Santos, and Buenos Aires from

39 Eilert Sundt, *Pampas og cordilleras: erindringer fra grænse-expeditionerne i Patagonia* (Christiania: Cammermeyer Boghandel, 1906); *Patagonia på kryss og tvers* (Oslo: Cammermeyer, 1942); *Patagonia på kryss og tvers* (Oslo: Cammermeyer, 1942); Pedro Rubio, *Et år i urskogen* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1935); *Et år på hesteryggen: en nordmanns eventyr i Patagonia* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1934); *Et år på pampaen* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1936); Guillermo Hoxmark, *La evolución de la meteorología*, vol. 13 (Buenos Aires: Imprenta y casa editora "Coni," 1925); Olaf J. Storm, *El río Pilcomayo y el Chaco Boreal: viajes y exploraciones* (Buenos Aires: Compañía Sud Americana de Billetes de Banco, 1892); Nils Johan Schjander, *En reise til Patagonia* (Oslo: Forlaget Press, 2000); Eilert Sundt, *Amasonfloden: fra kildene til havet : med beretninger om flodens opdagelse og gjenopdagelse 1539–1541–1639* (Oslo: Cammermeyer, 1941).

1913 until the 1930s. Although he came from a modest background, around the turn of the century he wielded influence through his brothers in the diplomatic and political circles that paved the way for the break-up of the Swedish-Norwegian union in 1905. His brother Søren Christophersen served as consul in Montevideo, and another brother, Wilhelm Christopher Christophersen, was consul in Buenos Aires, Mexico, and Antwerp before being appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1908. Don Pedro himself was honorary consul for both Russia and Denmark in Buenos Aires.⁴⁰

Don Pedro's particularly successful career nevertheless illustrates the economic and political interests of the Norwegian elites around 1905. The conflict with Sweden was to a large extent motivated by diverging interests in the consular and diplomatic services, which the Norwegian shipping community sought to control to protect their interests worldwide, and less concerned with diplomatic niceties and protocol. Like Mieke Neyens shows in another chapter of this book, the newly independent nation encouraged the establishment of Norwegian lines and supported the shipping interests, particularly in the Americas. In the first governments after 1905, shipowners and shipping agents were particularly dominant. However, Christophersen and fellow business representatives had little economic incentive to encourage Norwegians to emigrate to Latin America. The enterprises they were involved in simply did not need massive Norwegian labor in Latin American territories, with the obvious exception of Norwegian vessels and in part also the more limited recruitment of engineers. This is very similar to the attitude adopted by the Norwegian landowners in Guatemala discussed in Synnøve Ones Rosales's chapter. Why encourage Norwegians to settle in Guatemala, or in other parts of Latin America for that matter, when more qualified and cheaper workers could be found locally?

Colonization Attempts

Nevertheless, there were at least a handful of attempts to establish Norwegian colonies in Latin America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They were generally short-lived and unsuccessful by most criteria, including the number of Norwegian migrants they actually attracted. Still, they are interesting from a migration studies perspective, in part because they highlight the specific character of Norwegian migration to and within Latin America. One of the first attempts, except for the rather accidental one in Dona Francisca,

40 Joar Hoel Larsen, *Don Pedro: Norges mest vellykkede emigrant* (Oslo: Kagge, 2001).

Brazil, discussed by Ellen Fensterseifer Woortmann in the next chapter, was Arent Mathias Arentsen's proposal for the establishment of the colony Normannia near Punta Arenas in southern Chile. Arentsen was a bankrupted shipowner from Tvedestrand in Southern Norway who emigrated to Argentina in 1889 with one of his sons, found his way to Punta Arenas, and from there via the Chilean ambassador in Buenos Aires proposed the formal establishment of the colony. He promised to initially recruit no less than one hundred Norwegian families, on the condition that the colonists would govern themselves according to Norwegian laws and customs, have the right to establish their own school and church, and administer their own alcohol regulations. The Chilean authorities, probably quite wisely, never responded to this request, and the colony did not materialize.⁴¹ However, several Norwegian families, mostly from Tvedestrand, followed in Arentsen's footsteps and established themselves as sailors, whalers, shipping agents, tradesmen, and artisans in Punta Arenas in the 1890s. The Norwegian community there did not reach the size imagined by Arentsen in 1889, and after the Panama Canal opened in 1914, the number of Norwegians slowly decreased. There was also an attempt to establish a Norwegian colony some years later further north in Chile on the island of Chiloé, and some families did in fact go there between 1899 and 1901, but they were frustrated by unfulfilled promises, and they all left within a short period of time.⁴²

Slightly more successful, at least in the beginning, was the Norwegian colony established near Baracoa on the eastern end of Cuba in 1907.⁴³ This colony actually lasted until 1919, was led by arctic explorer Otto Sverdrup, and included several Norwegian families who bought land near Baracoa just before the outbreak

41 The manuscript "La familia Arentsen de Noruega 1783–1983" by Arnt Pettersen Arentsen was kindly passed on to the author by former Chilean ambassador in Norway, Juan Anibal Barria; Mateo Martinic, "El proyecto de colonia noruega 'Normannia' en Magallanes", *Apartado de Anales del Instituto de la Patagonia* (2000); Paula Contreras Puebla, *De polo a polo: La historia de la primera inmigración noruega a Chile* (Santiago: Real Embajada de Noruega en Chile/ Editorial Cuarto Propio, 2004). Archivo General del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Fondo histórico, vol. 142 A, contains some material about Arentsen's proposal, including a map delineating the territory of the proposed colony.

42 There are some sporadic traces of this project in some sources including documents in the Archivo General del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Fondo Histórico, vol 289 B, concerning warnings issued in Norwegian newspapers against the Chiloé project. See for instance *Aftenposten*, April 1, 1902.

43 There is a very good and detailed presentation of this colony based almost exclusively on Norwegian sources in Helge Stenersen, *Det norske Cuba-eventyret: koloniserings-ideen som spilte fallitt* (Brandbu 1999).

of World War I. The idea was to produce fruits for export, mainly to the United States, and there were also hopes that Baracoa in time would become an important shipping entrepôt in the Caribbean. The project was extensively propagated in Norwegian newspapers, but always with the condition that this was a colonization scheme best suited for men with capital to invest. There were several reasons why it eventually failed, including the obvious lack of expertise in tropical agriculture among the colonists and the impossible competition that the fruit producers and transporters experienced vis-à-vis the United Fruit Company.

An even more fanciful colonization project took shape in 1923 when August F. Christensen, a whaling veteran from Antarctica, Chile, and Peru, formed the company La Colonia de Floreana for the colonization of the Galápagos Islands, west of Ecuador. Christensen was by then a rather successful shipowner based in Oslo, and he was the honorary consul of Ecuador in Norway. He secured an agreement with Ecuadorean authorities that gave any settler the right to two hundred acres of land, license to fish and hunt, tax exemption for ten years, and also the right to remain Norwegian citizen. Spurred on by very optimistic views on the possibilities of whaling, agriculture, and – of course – international shipping based on the Galápagos Islands, several expeditions sailed from Norway to Galápagos with immigrants, in total probably around two hundred over the next ten years. Most of them returned to Norway or settled elsewhere when conditions did not meet expectations. But several families remained, a factory of canned seafood was built (although it burned in 1938), and there were descendants of Norwegians living on the islands until very recently.⁴⁴

The Climax of the 1920s

Part of the reason why the Galápagos project attracted a relatively high number of migrants had to do with timing. Precisely in the 1920s, the interest for Latin American destinations was higher than ever, despite the cautious and even negative attitude of the Norwegian government and the most influential and wealthy shipping magnates. After 1921, unemployment levels reached new heights in Norway and stricter US immigrant quotas made it more difficult for Norwegian migrants to reach their favored destination. At the same time, at least some Norwegians in Latin America prospered. And by the 1920s there

44 Stein Hoff, *Drømmen om Galapagos: en ukjent norsk utvandrerhistorie* (Oslo: Grøndahl, 1985).

existed networks of Norwegians in many parts of Latin America, enabling information about work and other opportunities to be dispersed more effectively and thereby lowering the transaction costs of migration, as Faist's model predicts.

The story of Ole Viborg Høiby and Ottar Enger, as discussed by María Bjerg in this volume, is more typical of the hundreds of Norwegians who crossed the South Atlantic in the 1920s and 1930s than the members of the various Galápagos expeditions. Although the information they had about Latin American societies and working opportunities was limited and distorted, they at least had names of relatives or acquaintances they could contact in Latin America. They may have been adventurous, but first and foremost they sought salaried jobs wherever they could be found. In the diaries, letters, and travelogues many of them wrote, they often attempted to represent themselves as pioneering, adventurous spirits who sought exotic experiences, but when read with care, their experiences were not that different from most migrants: they went primarily for economic motives, did their best to capitalize on education and skills, and sought support from fellow Norwegians wherever they could be found.⁴⁵

Despite the marked increase in the 1920s, the stream of Norwegian migrants to Latin America was interrupted after 1930. Contrary to what Faist's model predicts, then, the established networks themselves were not sufficient to uphold a continued incremental rise of Norwegians to Latin America. The explanation for this, I think, lies in precisely in what kind of stories the migrants told to potential migrants at home. And these stories actually reflected perceived realities. In most cases, and at least in economic terms, the crossing was worth neither the trouble nor the risks involved. When Latin American economies also went into recession after 1929, the opportunities for migrants became even more limited than before.

It is impossible in one chapter to comprehensively cover all the different strands of the Norwegian migration experience in Latin America between 1820 and 1940, even if this migratory stream was more limited than most. There are many issues that need to be researched more thoroughly, and some of them

45 Some of the most telling published travelogues from this period include Per Rostad, *Den lange veien* (Solør: Solørførl., 1994); Oddmund Ljone, *Grønt lys for eventyret* (Bergen: Eide, 1954); Kaare Gulbrandsen, *Gull og grønne skoger* (Bergen: Eide, 1956); Liv Olsson, *Piken fra Argentinas pampas: en fortelling fra virkeligheten* (Oslo: Salvata, 1948); Erling Næss, *Glade argentinadager* (Bergen: Beyer, 1943). In addition there are numerous copies of private letters, diaries, and memoirs that have been kindly offered to the author by descendants and relatives of Norwegian migrants in Latin America.

are covered in the subsequent chapters of this book. Here, certain regions and themes have been given priority to the detriment of others. More research is needed, particularly on countries such as Uruguay and Cuba, where there were many Norwegians, and the stories of women, missionaries, and whalers are also obvious lacunae. There should also be the possibility of doing better quantitative work on return migration, using HULA and the Norwegian digitized censuses. And there is obviously a lot of unexplored material both in Latin American and Norwegian archives that may throw additional light on the topic. Hopefully, future students and scholars will be able to complement and criticize the present attempt.

From Adventurers to Settlers: Norwegians in Southern Brazil

Ellen Fensterseifer Woortmann

The present article¹ analyzes, as a case study, the immigration of a group of Norwegians who in 1851 co-founded the settlement Colônia Dona Francisca, which became what is today the city of Joinville in southern Brazil.² More specifically, it aims to discuss the relationship between this form of migration, mostly made up by single men, and several important international historical contexts at that time, such as dynastic relations, Norway's socio-economic conditions, the Californian gold rush and the Brazilian immigration policy. On the other hand, it also focuses on the process of adaptation of those migrants to a community composed mainly of German and Swiss families. The issues concerning gender, kinship, and memory will be dealt with in a further article.

The analysis of the notion of immigration is the object of different fields of knowledge such as history, anthropology, demography, sociology, psychology, and health sciences, each with their own temporalities, specificities, theoretical frameworks and methods. Migration has thus been studied through several approaches, which roughly fit into frameworks such as *the melting pot theory*, *cultural pluralism*, *push and pull factors*, and so forth.³ The push-and-pull approach is frequently applied to groups that practice male primogeniture, where the eldest son inherits the family property, while the other siblings are expected to migrate, definitively or temporarily, in order to find the means for their subsistence.

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- 1 The field work was sponsored by a Grant from the Brazilian Ministry of Education.
 - 2 In Brazil the word *colônia* has several meanings: *Colônia* with a capital C is part of the designation of a specific place, such as a settlement or small town, while *colônia* with a lower case can mean a private family property or a measure of land area.
 - 3 See Valdemar Carneiro Leão, *A Crise da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil* (Brasília: IPRI, 1990); Herbert S. Klein, "Migração Internacional na História das Américas," in *Fazer América*, ed. Boris Fausto (São Paulo: EDUSP, 1999); Lelio Mármora, *Las Políticas de Migraciones Internacionales* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Paidós, 2002); Caroline B. Brettell, "Theorizing Migration in Anthropology. The Social Construction of Networks, Identities, Communities, and Globalscapes," in *Migration Theory. Talking Across Disciplines*, ed. Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield (New York: Routledge, 2008).

Migration can be conceived as a constitutive element of the *habitus* of a social group, where migrating, whether definitively or temporarily, may be part of its tradition, even if not totally naturalized.⁴ Bourdieu also shows that migration may be a “need turned virtue” when incorporated, as a “structuring structure,” into the adjustments caused by the phenomenon of modernization/globalization.

As a starting point, one can note that the Norwegians dealt with in this paper differ from those belonging to the main stream of immigrants who established themselves in Brazil, as well as from the large contingents that left Norway due to push factors, and opted for the United States and Canada, which beckoned them with significant pull factors. The small group of immigrants studied here did not intend, when they left Norway, to establish themselves at the Colônia Dona Francisca, nor did this colony offer them any attractive pull factors. On the contrary, the very harsh living conditions experienced during the initial stages of the colony came to characterize the colony itself as a push factor (difficulties related to the environment, financial and health issues, etc.), which led to the re-emigration of most of the group to other places and which did not stimulate other immigrants to follow the pioneers.⁵

Devoto shows that the initiative or intention of migrating constitutes an important element since it places the immigrant as agent of the action, in the role of protagonist.⁶ Very often, the push factors or local constraints generate the need for migration, but it is the person, or the group to which this person answers to, that defines where to go, how, and why. It is also worth noting that the issue of gender has a significant cultural component: very frequently, the men migrate while women are made to migrate, displaced according to social or labor circuits.

Østrem and Sæther point to three perspectives for the understanding of Norwegian emigration to Latin America: the quantitative data collected the implications and perspectives as well as the methods employed.⁷ Figueiredo for her part suggests that

4 Pierre Bourdieu, *A economia das trocas simbólicas* (São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1982); *Le Sens Pratique* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1980).

5 Carlos Ficker, *Historia de Joinville* (Joinville: Editora Letradágua, 2006); Maria Teresa Elisa Böbel and Raquel S. Thiago, *Joinville os pioneiros: documento e história* (Joinville: Editora Univille, 2001).

6 Fernando Devoto, *Historia de la inmigración en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2003).

7 Steinar A. Sæther and Nils Olav Østrem, “Norwegian emigration to Latin America: numbers, questions and methods,” in *Nordic Migration: Research Status, Perspectives and Challenges* ed. Nils Olav Østrem and Christina Folke Ax (Stamsund: Orkana, 2011).

When considering migration as a definite one-way move, it is possible to analyze it as two separate steps: the process of leaving the home-society, referred to as emigration, and the process of joining a new one, or immigration. Conceptually, clear boundaries can also be established between domestic migration...and international migration.⁸

It should be noted, however, that while the issue of crossing borders is from an *etic perspective* an important factor in view of national policies, from an *emic* viewpoint – that is, from the perspective of the migrating individual himself – it may solely mean to “cross a river, on the other margin of which one speaks and lives a little differently.”⁹ Such is the case with the Swedes who migrated to Brazil and, later on, “crossed” the Uruguay River and established the Colonia Oberá in Argentina. It is also the case of the German-Brazilians who established seventeen settlements along the two margins of the Uruguay and Paraná rivers, which define a political border, and formed a group of colonies articulated through ethnic, kinship, and godparenthood ties. Geographically, eleven of these are situated in Brazil, five in Argentina, and one in Paraguay. Underlying the sociological/demographic phenomenon of immigration there is a logical process of conception and organization of this displacement. As described elsewhere a man when displaced to another country may be considered as an immigrant *person* or as an immigrant *individual adventurer*.¹⁰ In terms of Dumont’s model, the former acts as part of a larger holistic system that encompasses its members, that is, as part of a constituted group.¹¹ And as such, he may be a sort of “bridgehead” for the group, which will follow him in a chain of migrations, often over several decades and generations. On the other hand, a lone migrant may be the expression of individualism, whose actions are not related to any larger group.

The Norwegians here considered seemed to be a peculiar case: they cut their social relationships in Norway and built new relationships as “ship brothers” as well as relations with the German and Swiss settlers in Dona Francisca Colony.

Furre points out that since 1825 approximately eight hundred thousand Norwegians have migrated, chiefly to the United States and Canada, and mostly

8 Clarisse Carvalho Figueiredo, “Invisible Migrants Norwegians in Brazil, 1820–1940” (University of Oslo, 2012).

9 Marvin Harris, *Theories of Culture in Postmodern Times* (London: Altamira Press, 1999).

10 Ellen Fensterseifer Woortmann, *Herdeiros, Parentes e Compadres* (Brasília: Editora UnB, 1994).

11 Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus* (London: Penguin, 1970).

in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹² The author observes that only Ireland has surpassed Norway as regards the percentage of their population that has emigrated. According to Günther roughly ten thousand people emigrated yearly from Germany alone to North America until the 1830s.¹³ This figure increased to twenty thousand after 1837 and to more than thirty thousand after 1845, and, after 1847, to over seventy thousand emigrants per year. A small fraction of these latter immigrants headed to Brazil, where, along with Swiss and Norwegians, they established Colônia Dona Francisca.¹⁴

Qualey identifies Norway's geographical characteristics as one of the factors that motivated mass emigration: three-quarters of its surface could not be cultivated because of its mountains, and the remaining one-quarter was largely covered by forests.¹⁵ He also points out that, contrary to England and Germany and other countries that used their coal and iron reserves to promote industrialization, Norway, which experienced a significant population growth during the same period, remained limited to agriculture, trade, and fishing. Qualey highlights the fact that the settling of Norway's territory was very heterogeneous. According to the 1845 census, from a total of 1,328,471 inhabitants, 53.3 percent lived in the southeast districts, 33.3 percent lived in the western districts, which include the harbor towns of Bergen and Trondheim (from where the group in question departed), and only 13.3 percent inhabited the northern districts.

On the other hand, socio-political factors contributed to the configuration and maintenance of the migratory process until the mid-twentieth century.¹⁶ Even the separation of Norway from Sweden, achieved in 1905, did not alter this strong tendency towards emigration to USA and Canada. It is interesting to note that Brazil, despite a demographically small-scale Scandinavian immigration wave, was one of the first countries to recognize Norway's independence.

According to research conducted by Barros Basto, the migration of Norwegians to Brazil was sporadic and mostly spontaneous. Statistics account for the entry from 1888 to 1968 of only 1,136 Norwegians.¹⁷ Most established themselves in urban areas after World War II, working in the commercial and industrial sectors. In the IBGE Report 1939/40 there is no mention of Norwegians, only of Swedes, who emigrated in larger groups.¹⁸ In Brazil the Quota Law of

12 Berge Furre, *História da Noruega* (Blumenau: Edifurb, 2006), 43.

13 Markus Günther, *Auf dem Weg in die Neue Welt* (Augsburg: Wissner Verlag, 2005), 78.

14 Dilney Cunha, *Suíços em Joinville: o duplo desterro* (Joinville: Editora Letradágua, 2003).

15 Carlton C. Qualey, *Norwegian Settlement in the United States* (New York: Arno Press, 1970).

16 Furre, *História da Noruega*.

17 Fernando Lázaro de Barros Basto, *Síntese da história da imigração no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: n. e., 1970), 43.

18 "Relatório 1938/40," ed. Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (Rio de Janeiro, 1941), 147.

1938¹⁹ with the intent of attracting new immigrants, actually raised the number of entry permits for Scandinavians to three thousand.²⁰

The migration of a Norwegian male group to Joinville had its singularities because of its profile. It involved a group of men who shared professional qualifications: agriculturalists, carpenters, masons, bakers, and even a veterinarian and a medical doctor. Contrary to the significant emigration of Scandinavian domestic maids to the United States, especially to New York and Chicago, after a period of “apprenticeship” in Christiania (Oslo) and Fredrikshald, there are no references concerning emigration of any groups of single Norwegian women to Brazil.²¹

According to the HULA data base, however, in Rio de Janeiro one finds twenty registered arrivals of Norwegian women, apparently isolated cases of single ones.²² Outstanding among them is the case of the Norwegian pianist Walborg Bang, who in 1893 married Alberto Nepomuceno, one of the main composers and regents of erudite music in Brazil, both students of Edvard Grieg.

Similar to other groups,²³ Norwegian emigrants ensured the social reproduction of their places of origin while also ensuring their own social reproduction with new opportunities for themselves and their families.²⁴ When they left Norway, those who came to Joinville did not necessarily share meaningful categories such as land, family, and work, but developed them once they became settlers. Three milestones may serve to indicate the passage from adventurers to settlers: acquisition of plots of arable land for cultivation, marriage to daughters of other settlers and the resulting incorporation into kinship and social networks.

All the Norwegian emigrants were, at least officially, Lutherans. According to Sassen, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, thousands of Lutherans, mainly peasants, fled Scandinavia and Central Europe because they had converted to forbidden sects and were persecuted by authorities.²⁵ This was not, however, the case of those who eventually arrived at Colônia Dona Francisca.

19 Resolução n° 7 de 24/10/1938.

20 “Relatório Rio de Janeiro,” in *Revista Nacional de Imigração e Colonização* (1940), 147.

21 Margareta Matovic, “Maids in Motion: Swedish Women in Dalsland,” in *Peasant Maids: City Women*, ed. C Harzig (London: Cornell University Press, 1997).

22 <http://www.hf.uio.no/ilos/hula>.

23 Ellen Fensterseifer Woortmann, *Significados da Terra* (Brasília: Editora UnB, 2004).

24 Bourdieu, *Le Sens Pratique*.

25 Saskia Sassen, *Migrantes, Siedler, Flüchtlinge: Von der Massenauswanderung zur Festung Europa* (Frankfurt: Fischer T. Verlag, 2000).

In the memoirs of some of these adventurers (who left Norway to join the gold rush in California) and in other sources, one observes that at least some of them were devout Lutherans. This is what one deduces from a newspaper advertisement seeking a mineralogist, a pastor, and a doctor (in this order) to accompany the group. A detailed chronogram on the Olsen Family sitieshows that on the night of October 25, 1850, the day before they were due to board, thirty-two members of the group, which totaled 106, gathered at the Lutheran Church of Our Lady (Vår Frues Kirke) in Trondheim to bid farewell and profess their faith.²⁶ This constitutes part of a clear rite of passage²⁷ with a propitiatory content, under the aegis of religious principles, comparable to those described in the letters of Swiss emigrants published by Schelbert and Rappold²⁸ and of German immigrants analyzed by Woortmann.²⁹

Some religiosity becomes evident in the letters sent to Norway. In one of these, the writer thanks God for protecting their ship from a lightning storm that had sunk a French ship. When mentioning the death of J.G. Ryther, “the old traveler of the world,” another letter-writer invokes Paradise: “He faced death in peace, and we hope that he has reached more beautiful landscapes than those the Earth has to offer.”³⁰

If the group of Norwegians who ended up in Brazil did not respond to any metaphysical calling, they surely responded to the call from the gold rush in California, news of which, according to Blegen, had first been heard in Norway during the spring of 1848.³¹ They shared with other migrants the quest to become wealthy, succeeding in America, and then return to their place of origin.³² In fact, Qualey attributes the significant rise in the emigration of Norwegians to the United States to the spreading of such news, and to the return of an enriched passenger on the ship *Restaurationen* in 1825.³³

In addition to the causal factors already mentioned, those who left Norway could be considered as part of what Mendras defines as “structurally banned” according to gender, birthright, age, or some other principle.³⁴ Each society

26 Olsen Family Site: www.familiaolsen.com.br.

27 Arnold Van Gennep, *Ritos de passagem* (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 1978).

28 Leo Schelbert and Hedwig Rappolt, *Alles ist ganz anders hier: Auswandererschicksale in Briefen aus zwei Jahrhunderten* (Freiburg: Walter Verlag, 1977).

29 Woortmann, *Significados da Terra*.

30 Olsen Family Site: www.familiaolsen.com.br.

31 Theodore Christian Blegen, “Immigrant Women and the American Frontier,” *Norwegian-American Historical Association* 5 (1930).

32 Klein, “Migração Internacional na História das Américas.”

33 Qualey, *Norwegian Settlement in the United States*, 5–16.

34 Henri Mendras, *Sociedades Camponesas* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Zahar, 1978), 5–16.

defines who may or may not leave, and who must return according to inheritance and succession rules. As far as Norway is concerned, primogeniture was a fundamental factor in the configuration of a context where the departure of non-heirs was encouraged, either making part of the migrant contingents heading for urban centers or to the so-called New World. The structurally banned are part of those who “must go” (*Wandermust*) that is, who have to migrate due to different modes of constraints that would make the social structure unsustainable. These constraints fit into what many authors define as the aforementioned *push factors*.

Very often, this *Wandermust* is (re-)construed as a virtue and (re-)labeled as *Wanderlust*, that is, the desire or longing to leave and wander across the world as a result of a spirit of adventure, a typical component of the ideals of European Romanticism in the nineteenth century. This need, again from the perspective of van Gennep, may also be seen as part of a rite of passage into the adult phase: the man detaches himself from his family and place of origin and inserts himself into the world, remaining there for a certain amount of time, so as to return to his place of origin or settle elsewhere as an adult – in other words, he must have been, although temporarily, an adventurer, to be reckoned as part of the social system.³⁵

Norway, however, did not take part in the larger circuits of seasonal workers.³⁶ Such a practice of “temporary proletarianization” was related more to economic frontiers than to political ones. It was fundamental for the sustainability of traditional rural areas.

According to the memoirs of the youngest member of the group of migrants that ended up in Brazil, this group constituted itself in 1850 because of the news about California and decided to take part in the gold rush.³⁷ It organized itself into a collective venture, where each member participated through the purchase of shares, as advertised in newspapers such as *Lillehammers Tilskuer* (figure 3.1).

According to these same memoirs, the decisions were all made in assemblies held at the town hall, and the arrangements were made through common agreement. It was at an assembly that the group decided to send the worker Rudolf Lyng to Hamburg in order to hire a vessel. Instead of that, he bought the *Sophie*, a frigate from Hamburg, and hired Captain T.V. Lessen. Thus, after a final assembly and the farewell service at the Church of Our Lady, they set sail

35 Van Gennep, *Ritos de passagem*.

36 Sassen, *Migranten, Siedler, Flüchtlinge: Von der Massenauswanderung zur Festung Europa*.

37 Cf. Olsen Family Site: www.familiaolsen.com.br Trondheim, April 4th 1927.



FIGURE 3.1 Advertisement in Lillehammers Tilskuer, July 30, 1850

from Trondheim on October 25, 1850.³⁸ The group was made up of 106 shareholders, now turned passengers, on their way to the gold mines of California.

The Atlantic crossing was not easy, with doldrums, thunderstorms, and a period of quarantine. On January 20, 1851, after a three-month-long voyage and a period of quarantine because of yellow fever, they docked at Rio de Janeiro for repairs and new provisions.³⁹ Because of the state the frigate was in, however, the captain refused to continue, arguing that the vessel was in no condition to be put out to sea. The subsequent sale of the *Sophie* (not without loss), the theft of equipment, their long stay in Rio de Janeiro, the illnesses that befell them, and the death of some of the shareholders imposed severe difficulties upon the group. In Rio de Janeiro they were re-directed by the Brazilian Imperial Government to the Colônia Dona Francisca and became part of the context regarding Brazilian immigration policies.

When the Portuguese court came to Brazil in 1808, fleeing Napoleon's troops, the country's territory opened itself up to "the friendly nations" and to European immigration. The arrival of immigrants followed the model developed by Catherine II of Russia for the Ukraine, similar to that of the agromilitary colonies of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, later on adopted by the British Empire in some areas of Australia and New Zealand. The choice of this model was attributed to the empress of Brazil at the time, Leopoldina of Habsburg and Lorraine.

38 www.norwayheritage.com.

39 See details in Böbel and Thiago, *Joinville os pioneiros: documento e história*; Ficker, *Historia de Joinville*.

This model proposed the placement of families of free immigrants, producers of foodstuff, in government lands and in close proximity to towns, and of demobilized military troops in strategic points along Brazilian borderlines. It was within this context that colonies made up of German and Swiss families, and later immigrants of other origins, established themselves in Nova Friburgo and Petrópolis close to Rio de Janeiro, in Santo Amaro near São Paulo, in São Bonifácio and São Pedro de Alcântara near Desterro (now Florianópolis), and in São Leopoldo near Porto Alegre on the southern border. The list of immigrants coming into Rio Grande do Sul between 1824 and 1853, for example, shows that there were very few of the so-called *isolated*, that is, young single men without any family ties, and that among these there were very few Scandinavians.⁴⁰ Later immigrants included demobilized military officers from the Second Schleswig War (1864), a few Swedes, and a few isolated Norwegian men, who were later married to German or German-Brazilian women.

The entry of Norwegians as founders of the Colônia Dona Francisca had its singularities. On one hand, they were part of the Brazilian government's policy of substituting slave labor for free immigrants as well as of the policy of "whitening" the Brazilian population.

It was also the result both of fortuitous circumstances and of dynastic policies and other factors characteristic of the era's international policies. These factors date back to 1843 and to the marriage of prince François of Joinville (son of king Louis Phillippe of France and of queen Marie-Amélie of Bourbon and Naples) to princess Francisca Carolina de Bragança (daughter of Pedro I of Brazil and Leopoldina of Habsburg and Lorraine), sister of the reigning emperor of Brazil, Pedro II. The fourth article of the Marriage Treaty (Law no. 166 of September 29, 1840) established that the bride's dowry should include "assets in the form of lands belonging to the Nation," specified in its third paragraph as comprising "twenty-five square leagues, which may be chosen in the best locations...in the Province of Santa Catarina," totaling twelve square kilometers.⁴¹ In the years to follow, these lands were duly chosen and demarcated.⁴² This personal dynastic proximity between the Brazilian imperial family and the French royal family contributed to the Colônia Dona Francisca being contemplated later on with significant structural projects such as the opening of roads (to transport its products and to interconnect it with new colonies) and

40 Carlos H. Hunsche, *O Biénio 1824/25 da Imigração e Colonização Alemã no Rio Grande do Sul* (Porto Alegre: A Nação, 1975); Gilson Justino Rosa, *Imigrantes Alemães 1824–1853* (Porto Alegre: EST Edições, 2005).

41 Maria Luiza Renaux, *O papel da mulher no Vale do Itajaó* (Blumenau: Editora FURB, 1995).

42 For more details Böbel and Thiago, *Joinville os pioneiros: documento e história*; Ficker, *Historia de Joinville*.

the installment of telegraph lines and railroads. The Catholics of Colônia Dona Francisca also received from the princes who owned the land and from the Brazilian imperial family personal and symbolically important forms of support regarding religious and educational issues, which were very highly appreciated by the settlers.

Because of this personal dynastic relation, neighboring lands were later purchased by other members of the nobility, such as the duke d'Aumale, brother to prince François, and prince of Waldenburg-Schönburg of Saxony, who in 1853, according to an advertisement in the *Allgemeine Auswanderungs-Zeitung*, "purchased twelve thousand *morgos* of land...which he intends to be settled with laborers from his own county."⁴³ Note that a *morgo* is equivalent to 2,500 square meters.⁴⁴

Combining dimensions of macro and micro history, one finds that the impacts of the Liberal Revolution of 1848, which began in France and spread all over Europe, were fundamental to the conception of the project and the establishment of the Colônia Dona Francisca, thus named in homage to the princess, and, later, the urban center named Joinville in honor of the prince.

The 1840's in Europe were a particularly difficult period, and a group of negative factors stimulated emigration. Among these, one may point out the severe crisis in the industrial sector, with high unemployment rates. Problems involving agricultural production, resulting in the so-called Potato Famine in 1846 and 1847, also motivated mass emigration of families and individuals of lower rural and urban social classes. To these factors may be added the French bourgeoisie's growing dissatisfaction with their being denied old political gains and with the aristocracy regaining former privileges. This context of generalized dissatisfaction led to violent uprisings, to the outbreak of the Revolution of 1848 and to king Louis Phillipe being deposed. As a consequence, the French royal family was exiled in Clermont (England) with few resources and in precarious living conditions.⁴⁵

The difficulties faced by France and England had repercussions in Brazil. They prompted the princes to speed up the establishment of the Colônia Dona Francisca, so as to ensure a source of income. In 1848, through their representative, the French military engineer Louis Aubé, a contract was signed with the *Hamburger Colonisations Verein* that belonged to Christian Mathias Schroeder, senator of Hamburg. He led a group made up of wealthy businessmen and

43 Böbel and Thiago, *Joinville os pioneiros: documento e história*, 128.

44 Ficker, *Historia de Joinville*, 83.

45 Ibid.; Böbel and Thiago, *Joinville os pioneiros: documento e história*.

importers, who were interested in the settlement project that was being proposed.

Within the framework of nineteenth-century colonialism, this group from Hamburg, who had already developed some business in Rio de Janeiro, agreed to take part in the enterprise.⁴⁶ As owners of several ships, they were interested in the profits to be made through the transport of immigrants to the colony, and on the way back, the transport and sale of raw materials in Europe.⁴⁷ Moreover, as representatives of the growing European process of industrialization, the colonization companies were responsible for and maintained what was almost a monopoly over the distribution and trade of industrialized products with the developing markets in the New World. In Ferro's view they were part of a growing phenomenon in which the world as a whole and the colonies in particular were subjected to the dominating economic mechanism.⁴⁸

Still at a macro level, it is worth mentioning that the Liberal Revolution of 1848 spread through the streets of Germany, where there were upheavals and a bloody repression, where liberals were arrested and violently repressed. The victory of conservatives and the surge of a counter-revolution made it unbearable for the liberal elites, forcing them to flee. Some of them migrated to the Colônia Dona Francisca in pursuit of new opportunities and the achievement of their ideals.

On the other hand, in Switzerland, the failure of the rural putting-out model, substituted by industrial weaving and successive agricultural crises, clearly referred to in the letters from peasants who had emigrated, led to the emigration of thousands of peasants.⁴⁹ Part of these made up the Swiss contingent that, together with Germans and Norwegians, founded the Colônia Dona Francisca.

One should observe that, contrary to what generally happened to German, Swiss, and other immigrants, who were identified at the Brazilian registers by first name, surname, age, place of origin (city, region, and country), religion, and other (at times random) aspects, the records containing lists of Norwegian immigrants are, curiously, not very detailed. They contained only references to their surnames, first names, age, profession, and country. There are no references to cities, or regions of origin, nor to religion, which would, presumably, be Lutheran. This lack of information makes it difficult to discuss the context

46 Ficker, *Historia de Joinville*.

47 Ibid.; Böbel and Thiago, *Joinville os pioneiros: documento e história*.

48 Marc Ferro, *História da Colonização* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1996).

49 Schelbert and Rappolt, *Alles ist ganz anders hier: Auswandererschicksale in Briefen aus zwei Jahrhunderten*.

from which they came. Their memoirs and other sources lead us to believe that they came from the Trondheim (Trondhjem, at that time) region, even though the advertisement shown above was published in Lillehammer.

*Sophie set sail in 1850 with 106 shareholders on board.*⁵⁰ After the difficulties faced, and the loss of the vessel in Rio de Janeiro, part of the group subsequently continued to California. According to the accounts of the representative of the Hermann Liebich Colonizing Society of Rio de Janeiro, seventy-four were sent to the Colônia Dona Francisca. Only sixty-one remained there. The other thirteen returned to Rio de Janeiro on the Norwegian ship *Colon* – the same vessel that had brought the first group of German and Swiss immigrants, co-founders of the Colônia.

According to the original list transcribed in Böbel and Thiago, the immigrants from Norway were, as a rule, young men.⁵¹ The sixty-one men were aged 19–45. Two of them (3.3 percent) were aged nineteen, thirty-nine (63.9 percent) were in their twenties, sixteen (26.6 percent) were in their thirties, and four (6.6 percent) were in their forties. This suggests a coherence with the initial purpose: a group of single young men, many of whom were celibate for some time, who had left their places of origin with the intent of finding gold, and, if successful, returning to Norway or establishing themselves in a new country, getting married, starting a family, and ascending socially.

When considering the professional background of the Norwegian group of men, one observes that they form a *workteam* as defined by Galeski to express the complementary nature of intra-familiar work, that is, a team that makes up an organic and highly qualified functional group that brought along with it a strategic cognitive capital, even if ecologically different, to the new colony.⁵² The professionals chosen in Trondheim included, for example, the medical doctor Wilhelm A.W. Möller, graduated at Heidelberg, aged 24, who for two years acted as the doctor responsible for setting up the first hospital in Dona Francisca.

In the aforementioned list, thirty-eight men defined themselves as agriculturalists, capable of opening up clearings and pathways besides preparing the soil for cultivation. There was also a diversified group of 23 whose professions contributed to the building of houses and other edifications as well as other qualifications such as draining swamps, strategic to improve the living conditions of the settlers of the new colony: two carpenters, one cabinet maker, one

50 Böbel and Thiago, *Joinville os pioneiros: documento e história*.

51 *Ibid.*, 57–58.

52 Boguslaw Galeski, *Basic Concepts of Rural Sociology* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975).

house-covering specialist, and one brick mason; two others were capable of dealing with hydraulic energy and steam engines. In addition, there were three sailors and two merchants, useful for beginning a colony whose only way of communication and transport was through rivers. Other professions in the group complemented that organic system: two bakers, one shoemaker, and the already mentioned Rudolf Lyng, who opened up the first brickyard. As Rodowicz-Oswiecimski points out:

This group, with a few exceptions, was made up by veritable models from the point of view of the economy, order and labor, besides being, in a general sense, some of the more qualified settlers.⁵³

Thus, the group of Norwegians, as opposed to the Germans and Swiss who came with families and many children, could be considered as *full producers*, according to the profile described by Chayanov⁵⁴ and Tepicht⁵⁵ – male adults at a “productive age” able to develop full-time jobs and a variety of alternatives in the local labor market.

The arrival in March 1851 of the Norwegian ship *Colon*, with 118 German and Swiss passengers, and the remaining sixty-one Norwegians of the German frigate *Sophie* can be considered the starting point of Colônia Dona Francisca, as can be seen by the following description:

Mr. Schroeder [son of Christian Mathias Schroeder, director of the Hamburger Colonisations Verein and senator of Hamburg] took care of everything. He ordered the purchase of thirteen steers, as well as dried meat, wine, brandy, and fruits in great quantities...a banquet to commemorate the immigrants' arrival... Mr. Schroeder, Mr. Aubé, and Colonel Vieira presided the table, and thus Germans, Swiss, Norwegians, Frenchmen, and Brazilians met in great cordiality. One toast followed the other, and with applause and the war songs “Schleswig-Holstein” and “Der Brave Soldat,” which Norwegians never do without, the banquet came to its end. ... After the merry “fandango” at Mr. Aubé’s home, they went back to the town. ... With the Norwegians came an excellent MD,

53 Theodor Rodowicz-Oswiecimsky, *A Colônia D. Francisca no Sul do Brasil* (Florianópolis: Editora da UFSC, 1992); Elly Herkenhoff, *Era Uma Vez um Simples Caminho: fragmentos da História de Joinville* (Joinville: Fundação Cultural, 1987).

54 Alexander V. Chayanov, *The Theory of Peasant Economy* (Illinois: American Economic Association, 1966).

55 Jerzy Tepicht, *Marxisme et agriculture: le paysan polonais* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1973).

Dr. Moeller, very much welcome. Dr. Moeller and his young companion Christendahl from Königsberg became later on our daily companions at the table.⁵⁶

The above description points out several interesting aspects: the abundance of food offered to the newcomers by the authorities, mostly two items highly valued in Europe both then and now: beef and tropical fruits. Both were rare and expensive ingredients of meals that, along with wine, were usually present only in special rituals. *Cachaça*, or Brazilian brandy, was certainly unknown to the immigrants. On the other hand, the banquet presided by those authorities replicated the tripartite hierarchy to which the immigrants would, from then on, be subordinated: German (Colonisations Verein), French (the representative of the princes), and Brazilian (the municipality of São Francisco do Sul, to which the Colônia would be juridically and politically attached). In this hierarchy all the immigrants (Germans, Swiss, and Norwegians) were socially classified as members with the same status, with the exception of the Norwegian MD, Dr. Moeller, who, given his superior status compared to most immigrants, would share the everyday life of the Colônia's director and would be hired by him.⁵⁷ Having studied at Heidelberg, he was quite familiar with the German language and became able to interact with the German and Swiss settlers.

The fandango points to the matter of gender, as in the following observation: "The arrival of young women motivated a general cheerfulness. They were Germans and Swiss. The placid Nordic sailors courted them quite a lot."⁵⁸

The three groups received their plots of land, starting from a central clearing, along three different pathways: the Swiss to the west (the Schweitzer Pikade), the Germans to the southwest (the Deutsche Pikade), and the Norwegians to the north (the Nordstrasse).⁵⁹ From a symbolic point of view one may observe that the three ways converged at the place where the Stadtplatz would be built, that is, the square of the future town of Joinville – nowadays the economically most important city of the State of Santa Catarina.

The Norwegians, following their traditional "spirit of association,"⁶⁰ divided themselves in several groups, cultivated their lands of more or less eight *morgos*

56 Herkenhoff, *Era Uma Vez um Simples Caminho: fragmentos da História de Joinville*, 32.

57 Ficker, *Historia de Joinville*, 84.

58 Herkenhoff, *Era Uma Vez um Simples Caminho: fragmentos da História de Joinville*, 31.

59 Ibid., 11; Ficker, *Historia de Joinville*, 90.

60 Furre, *História da Noruega*, 40–44.

per capita, but working collectively. As usual in their homeland, they built their houses and put their incomes in a common safe.⁶¹

In his speech, *Falla* of March 2, 1852, only one year after the arrival of the Norwegians, the president of the Province of Santa Catarina mentioned three of their important initiatives: preparing the land for agriculture, opening paths, and constructing small bridges. Furthermore he mentions that

There is a brickyard [Lyng], a bakery [Pettersen or Hansen], and the production of vinegar [Ulrichsen]. There is already some production of rice, corn, sugar cane, coffee, orange, and banana trees and they opened more than eight thousand fathoms [*braças*] of paths.⁶²

The Norwegians did not have any economical capital, for it had been invested and lost in the purchase of the *Sophie* and of all the mining equipment. They did, however, as already mentioned, possess a cognitive capital: the technical know-how that they had brought from Norway that could be strategically adapted to new circumstances allowing them to develop several initiatives and working opportunities. They worked for the Colônia's directors as free laborers – in a context where slavery was still predominant in Brazil. As such they had access to food and other resources. Also, their abilities as masons or carpenters allowed them to build the first two-storied house of the Colônia, later on bought by their ex-director:

Nine Norwegians bought a plot of seventy-two *morgos* along the Nordstrasse. They then built through collective labor a house with two stories. When a part of them left the Colônia, in March 1852, Mr. Benno von Frankenberg bought that property...and a further 150 *morgos* of land.⁶³

The same author observed that this house was of outstanding quality when compared to the other ones, having window glass in both the kitchen and the sitting room (See figure 3.2).

Using their technical know-how under the supervision of Rudolf Lyng, the Norwegians built the first industry of the small colonial nucleus – a brickyard that provided brick-stones and tiles and gave name to a new street, the Ziegeleistrasse. The brickyard is also mentioned by the newly arrived Captain Frankenberg (Officer of the dissolved Army of Schleswig-Holstein), appointed director by the Colonisations Verein in Hamburg: "...a really nice establishment

61 Ficker, *Historia de Joinville*, 85.

62 "Falla do Presidente da Província de Santa Catarina: anno 1852," ed. Relatório de Presidente (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, 1853).

63 *Historia de Joinville*, 104.

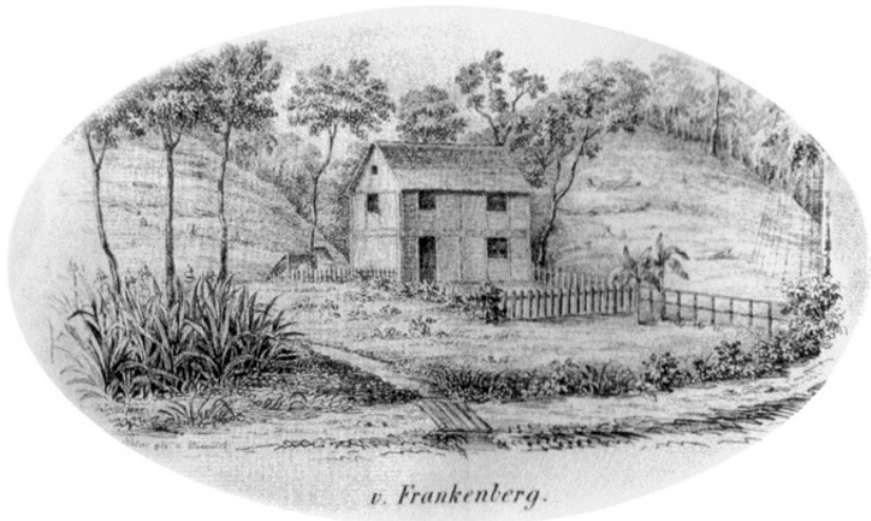


FIGURE 3.2 Drawing of house built by Norwegians in Joinville
SOURCE: FICKER, HISTORIA DE JOINVILLE

is the brickyard of those 11 Norwegians.”⁶⁴ It is also described by an officer of the customhouse at São Francisco on October 10, 1851, and by Croger.⁶⁵ Norwegians were also responsible for building the house of the Prussian army’s captain-engineer Rodowicz-Oswiecimsky, stockholder of the Colonisations Verein and author of detailed illustrations (as the one above) and descriptions of the initial stage of the Colônia that were published in 1853.⁶⁶

Thus, of the 106 Norwegians who boarded the *Sophie*, seventy-four went from Rio de Janeiro to Colônia Dona Francisca, with thirteen of them returning to Rio de Janeiro on board the *Colon*. Of the sixty-one immigrants who thus took part in the founding of the Colônia Dona Francisca, forty-four moved away in the first two years and only nine effectively settled there.⁶⁷ The remaining eight died in the first biennium. Such a high rate of mortality (13 percent) was also found among German and Swiss immigrants who arrived on the *Colon*: from a total of 118 who landed, eighteen (15 percent) died in the first years. The causes of such deaths included various accidents, drowning, and an

64 Böbel and Thiago, *Joinville os pioneiros: documento e história*, 68.

65 Jonas W. Crøger, *En Reise til Brasilien og Uruguay, Ophold i disse Lande og en Beskrivelse over dem* (Christiania: Chr. Schibsted, 1856).

66 Rodowicz-Oswiecimsky, *A Colônia D. Francisca no Sul do Brasil*; Herkenhoff, *Era Uma Vez um Simples Caminho: fragmentos da História de Joinville*.

67 *Era Uma Vez um Simples Caminho: fragmentos da História de Joinville*, 37.

epidemic of tropical fever and typhus throughout the Colônia that killed forty-five settlers, including two Norwegians.

These deaths required the definition of a new space for the immigrants: the cemetery. After several improvised places (one of them serving both Lutherans and Catholics), an Evangelical (Lutheran) Cemetery, nowadays called the Immigrant's Cemetery, was established as well as another one for the Catholics.

The following observation concerning the joint efforts of the local medical corps is interesting:

Thanks to the tireless efforts of the medical doctors Dr. Moeller [Norwegian] and Dr. Krebs [German], with the help of Dr. Deyrolle [French], an old resident of São Francisco, ...the epidemic...was significantly reduced.⁶⁸

Norwegian immigrants contributed decidedly to the creation of the Colônia's infrastructure, as well as to its religious organization. They built both Joinville's Evangelical and Catholic churches, as pointed out by Rodolpho Olsen, grandson of the Norwegian immigrant Gjerth Olsen. His father, however, worked less because he was already dealing with cattle and horses.⁶⁹ Norwegians were among the leaders of such initiatives as the creation of the local Masonic lodge and of the newspaper *Kolonie Zeitung*. It is important to note that they built the first hydraulic mill, the sawmill and the hospital, again making evident the importance of the cognitive capital that they brought with them. Also, some of those who came with the *Sophie* helped defend settlers' demands, as happened in situations such as in November 1851, when a power dispute erupted between the representatives of the Colonisations Verein and those of the princes. The directorate of the Colônia called for a meeting that included Norwegian settlers and named eleven elected representatives of the people: Captain Rodowicz-Oswiecimsky; Lieutenant Otto Niemeyer; Dr. Moeller, MD (Norwegian); Lieutenant M. Meyer; Dr. Krebs, MD; Hasselmann; Dr. Jur. Haltenhoff; B. Poschaan; veterinary Goerresen (Norwegian); Meyer; and Junghans.⁷⁰

It was a rather representative constituency: out of eleven members, who included settlers of the three ethnic groups, there were both common settlers and outstanding personalities. It also showed the high degree of integration of the remaining Norwegians, now a minority of only nine individuals, of whom

68 Ficker, *Historia de Joinville*, 106.

69 Böbel and Thiago, *Joinville os pioneiros: documento e história*, 52.

70 Ficker, *Historia de Joinville*, 114.

two were elected. In the following year new counselors were chosen, one of them the above mentioned Goerresen, and half a year later the Norwegian carpenter Kjelstrup was also appointed.

Thus, some of the Norwegians who came with the *Sophie* and their descendants stood out because of their quick integration in the larger community and their proficiency in both German and Brazilian-Portuguese, allowing them to fulfill the role of cultural broker relative to other colonies, trading companies, and local as well as national political structures.⁷¹ Their proficiency in German was possibly associated with a previous learning process in Norway. More important, however, was the fact that they married daughters of German and Swiss settlers, thus integrating them into wider social networks.

The foundation of the afore mentioned local German-language newspaper *Kolonie Zeitung* in 1852, initially handwritten and later on printed, provided the Colônia with a new means of communication, a written common denominator for the community and a factor in integration. The participation of Norwegians was important whether as subscribers or more actively as advertisers, collaborators or newscasters...

In the *Kolonie Zeitung* there were frequent ads in which Ulrich Ulrichsen, for example, as trader and owner of small industries, divulged the high quality and the reasonable prices of his products: "Ächter Weinessig, pro Flasche 240 Reis, zu haben bei Ulrich Ulrichsen." In another ad he announces that he has for sale *tendozen cavacos*, or *Dachlatten* (splitters of wood for roofs). All his products were made using the labor-force of free wage earners. He also announced in the *Kolonie Zeitung* of July 9, 1864, the arrival of "high quality imported grains, better than the ones here produced." Ulrichsen was a constant protagonist in the community, and in 1868 he became judge of peace and organizer of the process that chose local electors (called *homens bons*, or "good men" in nineteenth-century Brazil).

There are also ads that express the intense strategic process of ecological adaptation and knowledge concerning potential natural tropical resources, such as the one in *Kolonie Zeitung* of 1862, no. 12, about a decade after the arrival in Brazil:

A lot of land, especially good for the cultivation of rice and sugar cane, at the margin of the Biguasú River, in front of Beraverava, with about 140 *braças* of front and 1500 *braças* of back, with a lot of water for mills; soil adequate for the installation of a brickyard, a lot of hardwood, mostly *canela* and *peroba* and an excellent place for a future quay. It will be a cheap sale. More details available from Ulrich Ulrichsen.

71 Eric Wolf, *Sociedades camponesas* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Zahar, 1970).

Goerresen is another example of ecological adaptation and the integration of immigrants in international circuits as consumers of European raw materials and manufactured goods. Also, although in smaller scale, he began producing raw materials for export, such as hardwood and *erva mate* tea, to Argentina, Uruguay, and even Europe. He became quite rich and expanded his political and economic relations beyond the limits of the Colônia, setting up an important wholesale export company next to the port of São Francisco – the original building is still there.

Besides Ulrichsen and Goerresen, others participated actively in the community's life, such as Olsen, who advertised for the well-remunerated hiring of a *Steinsprenger* (a specialist in exploding rocks). These ads are interesting because they point to the immigrants' change in social status: first they were hired to do manual work such as building houses, opening paths, and preparing the soil, and after only a decade they became themselves employers both of specialized workers, mostly poor German and Swiss immigrants, and of Brazilian peasants.

The *Kolonie Zeitung* also shows the participation of Norwegians in local and national public activities, such as noticed in the November 21, 1863, edition which mentions Markus Goerresen as donator of a significant sum of money for the building of the Lutheran church. The November 5, 1864, edition mentions his nomination as a jury member by the national juridical system. Ulrichsen also had important political roles such as public notary and deputy sheriff at Dona Francisca.⁷²

Several Norwegians who played important roles in the Colônia later on invested resources in other places: Olsen bought land from the duke d'Aumale and founded the present-day Colônia Olsen; Peter Gustav Pettersen, after having created the first bakery on the Nordstrasse, moved on to Curitiba, the capital of Paraná Province, where he established a renowned bakery, while the shoemaker Poul Wetten moved to Desterro, the capital of Santa Catarina Province.⁷³

Finally, one can observe that as a group of qualified professionals, the Norwegians played a strategically important role in Colônia Dona Francisca, both at its beginning and later on, as a well-integrated minority. Rather successfully, they passed from a condition of adventurers to settlers, some of whose descendants are still living in Joinville. Thus, the Norwegian migrants contributed significantly to the development of Joinville during its initial

72 Ficker, *Historia de Joinville*; Böbel and Thiago, *Joinville os pioneiros: documento e história*.

73 Juliana Cristina Reinhardt, *A Padaria América e o pão das gerações Curitibanas* (Curitiba: Editora do Autor, 2010).

stages. Nowadays, it has more than 500 thousand inhabitants but many of them do not even know that Norwegians immigrants ever existed. For others they were part only of the multicultural myth of origin of Joinville or became part of the German-Brazilian population, such as other minor groups of immigrants. Even the few descendants who know about those pioneers know in fact very little about them.

Migrants on Skis: Norwegian-Latin American Return Migration in the 1890s

Cecilia Abvstad

But I reached the conclusion that the best thing I could do was to get out of South America as soon as possible.¹

Introduction

On January 18, 1890, about two months after having read a highly unusual job advertisement, twelve young men left Norway for Argentina.² The Chilean railway company Clark & Co. had employed them to ski with letters and telegrams over the Andes. The top tunnel of the Transandine Railway was under construction, and postal service between the Argentinean and the Chilean sides of La Cordillera was therefore necessary, also during the winter months. The Norwegians were contracted in order to solve this problem. Less than two years later, only one of the Norwegians was still in Latin America; he had married a Chilean woman, and they were expecting their first of four children.³ Eight of the twelve Norwegian skiers had returned to Norway, two had continued to the United States, and one was deceased.

The aim of the present book is to shed light on why so few of the Norwegians who went to Latin America from 1820 to 1940 decided to stay. This chapter will exemplify the issue through the decision of the twelve Norwegian skiers to stay, move on, or return. The skiers were employed to do manual work in Argentina right in the middle of this period. Their motivations for leaving Norway, as I will develop further on, seem to have been predominantly economic. Their case presents the typical combination of an adverse condition

1 “Men jeg kom til den slutning at det bedste jeg kunde gjøre var at se og komme mig fra Sydamerika snarest mulig.” K.J. Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika. Reiseskildringer* (Chicago: John Anderson Publishing, 1892), 129.

2 Ole Hannibal Lie to father, Liverpool, England, January 28, 1890; Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 14.

3 Anne Heidi Røstad, e-mail message, November 21, 2013. Røstad is a relative of Gert/Gerardo Lindh and gives this information based on family searches in birth and church registers.

(economic distress) that pushed them to leave the old country and an attraction (the work contract) that pulled them to the new country, described by for example Loken as typical for Norwegian migration to Canada and the United States.⁴ Nevertheless, when it comes to their decision to stay, move on, or return to Norway, there seem to be two additional sets of factors that influence their decision-making: networks and the conditions at the venue. The network factor relates to the quality of the contacts with other Norwegians they meet, their interaction with other immigrants as well as with the local population. The second factor relates to their material working and living conditions and how historical events may have influenced these. The early 1890s was a turbulent era in both Argentina and Chile, and the narratives that I will analyze further on tell both about the 1890 civil war in Chile and about political and economic instability in Argentina.

The case of the Norwegian skiers in the Andes is very well documented. Not only has the advertisement for the skiers, published in several Norwegian newspapers such as *Verdens Gang*, been conserved, so have several related articles published in *Aftenposten* in 1889–91.⁵ The Norwegian consul general in Buenos Aires either authored or provided information for some of these articles. The skiers themselves also wrote about the event. Theodor Østgaard published five articles in *Aftenposten* written in Argentina and Chile about the construction of the railway and the experiences of the skiers.⁶ Another of the skiers, K.J. Johansen, who left Norway as Kristen J. Knygg, published the book-length travel account *Norske skiløbere i Sydamerika* (Norwegian skiers in

4 Gulbrand Loken, *From Fjord to Frontier* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980), 28.

5 The advertisement, entitled “God fortjeneste” (Good earnings), appears in *Verdens Gang*, November 28, 1889, 4. From what others write it seems to have been published more widely, for example in *Aftenposten*, but I have not found it there. Related articles are “Skiløbere til Argentinien. En Advarsel,” *Aftenposten*, December 18, 1889, morning edition, 1; “Skiløbere til Argentinien,” *Aftenposten*, December 19, 1889, morning edition, 1; “Norske Skiløbere til Argentina,” *Aftenposten*, January 17, 1890, evening edition, 2; “De norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika. Svar fra den norske Generalkonsul,” *Aftenposten*, August 25, 1891, morning edition, 1; “De norske Skiløbere i Argentina,” *Aftenposten*, October 15, 1891, morning edition, 2. See also note 6.

6 Østgaard’s articles were published in *Aftenposten* on April 10, 1890 (evening edition), May 24, 1890 (evening edition), July 15, 1890 (evening edition), June 2, 1891 (evening edition), and August 16, 1891 (morning edition). Three of the articles are signed T.Ø. (April 10, 1890, July 15, 1890 and June 2, 1891). The article of May 24, 1890, is presented as “from *Aftenposten*’s correspondent in Argentina,” and the one of August 16, 1891, is not signed. It is possible that Østgaard wrote more articles. I have found these five searching relevant key words in the digitalized edition available from the national library.

South America) already in 1892.⁷ A third skier, the farmer Ole Hannibal Lie, wrote a series of letters to family members in Norway. Fourteen of these letters are now part of the HULA database.⁸ A fourth skier, Gert/Gerardo Lindh – who was incidentally the only of the twelve who decided to stay in South America – sent a letter to his sister from Puerto Montt in 1913.⁹ Therefore we know that Lindh was still in Chile twenty years after the events that will be recounted here took place.

The richness of the documents concerning the skiers makes it an interesting case to study. Just like most Norwegian migrants who went to Latin America, the skiers went to Latin America to do manual work. And the material we have about manual workers is generally very scarce.¹⁰ The material about the skiers however is rich in terms of both authors and genres, making it possible to compare different perspectives. We know that not only the personal point of view influences how individuals describe an event, but that also the textual genre is crucial for what information is presented and how.¹¹ In this case we have access

7 Knygg/Johansen had continued to the United States from South America, and the book was therefore published in Chicago by a Norwegian language publisher.

8 The HULA database entry is available from <https://app.uio.no/hf/ilos/hula/korpusliste/>. The following letters from Ole Hannibal Lie are registered in HULA: To father, Liverpool, England, January 28, 1890; to father, Mendoza, Argentina, March 4, 1890; to brother, May 26, 1890; to father, Los Cuevas [sic], Argentina, June 8, 1890; to brother, Los Cuevas [sic], Argentina, July 7, 1890; to father, Los Cuevas [sic], Argentina, July 26, 1890; to father, August 1, 1890; to father, Los Cuevas [sic], Argentina, August 13, 1890, this letter must be incorrectly dated because it refers to the content of the next letter as of one already sent; to brother, Los Cuevas [sic], Argentina, August 25, 1890; to father, September 18, 1890; to brother, Mendoza, Argentina, October 21, 1890; to mother, Las Cuevas, Argentina, December 11, 1890; to father, Las Cuevas, Argentina, December 17, 1890; to father, Buenos Ayres [sic], Argentina, March 5, 1890.

9 This letter has also been preserved, and a transcription was submitted to the HULA database by the sister's great-granddaughter.

10 See the first chapter of this book for discussion of class composition of Norwegian migration to Latin America and the problem of class bias in primary sources on migration. Similar research show that the educational level of donors of emigrant letters to public repositories in Germany is very high, where more than half of the donors in the study were at least college educated. Wolfgang Helbich and Walter D. Kamphoefner, "How Representative are Emigrant Letters? An Exploration of the German Case," in *Letters across Borders: The Epistolary Practices of International Migrants*, ed. Bruce S. Elliott et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 33.

11 See for example H. Arnold Barton's discussion of the generic differences between letters, diaries, fiction and poetry written by immigrants "As They Tell It Themselves: The Testimony of Immigrant Letters" *Nordics in America. The Future of Their Past* ed. Odd S. Lovoll (Northfield, Minnesota: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1993), 138–45.

to letters, a travel account and newspaper articles, genres that typically differ. About the difference between immigrant letters and immigrant fiction Barton, for example, points out that whereas immigrant letters typically express “enthusiasm, satisfaction, a dogged cheerfulness, and optimism in the new land,” fictive writers tend to explore the contrary “a sense of loss, alienation and nostalgia.”¹² In the case of the skiers, the different sources largely confirm each other as regards dates, places, and so forth, but there are also noteworthy differences in what and how they write that I will discuss further on.

The question is then why this is such a well-documented event, even though it concerns workers? One reason may be that the skiers received public attention in Norway already before they left. Clark & Co.’s advertisement was discussed in the press, and the interest this discussion generated in the general public may in turn have paved the way for Østgaard to write and publish his articles in *Aftenposten* and for Johansen to write and publish his travel account. From what Lie wrote to his family, the workers also seem to have plenty of free time at their disposal, an essential condition for writing. As pointed out by Barton both practical and psychological circumstances are in play when it comes to who writes and who does not.¹³ The same applies of course for the preservation of the texts.

There has been a long tradition in research to use letters for studying the life of migrants and their motives for leaving their home country and for staying in (or leaving) the new country. As already suggested above it is however not unproblematic to use migrant letters as a historical source, as it is not an easy task to make sense of their meaning.¹⁴ Immigrant writers were immersed in cultures that informed their tentative writing.¹⁵ Letters are in other words not the unmediated voice of immigrants. The same difficulties, related to both genre conventions and how the reader is addressed, apply to the other sources as well.

All the migrant voices that are studied here are furthermore directly mediated by others who may have changed what they wrote: decision-makers in Norway have most probably edited Østgaard’s original formulations in his *Aftenposten* articles; an editor presumably helped shape Johansen’s book; Lie’s and Lindh’s letters were handed over to the HULA database by his relatives and were also transcribed by them, and therefore potentially selected, censored and/or mistranscribed. None of the sources can thus be considered to be

12 Barton “As They Tell It Themselves,” 144.

13 Barton “As They Tell It Themselves,” 139.

14 Barton “As They Tell It Themselves,” 138–45; Elliott et al., *Letters across Borders*, 4.

15 Elliott et al., *Letters across Borders*, 7.

historically reliable as an account of the exact events, nor of what their individual motives for not staying in South America might have been. The access to three important sources mitigates this problem, especially as their narratives largely corroborate each other. Furthermore, the three genres and the three authors enable a deeper reading and thus a better understanding not only of these individuals, but also of the skiers as a group and the Norwegian migration in a larger perspective. We know from earlier research that even husbands and wives can provide diametrically opposite accounts of the “same” situation, and the access to several public accounts is therefore rewarding.¹⁶ To some extent this may have to do with idiosyncratic differences, but as I will show further on, it has also to do with genre conventions and the internal logic of each narration. Johansen is already early on in his book rather negative towards South Europeans, especially Italians, and it is clear that this negative portrayal prepares the narrative peak of his book, a conflict with the skiers’ Italian boss, which leads to Johansen’s dismissal and also to him leaving South America.

The story about the Norwegian skiers is also interesting because it is a case that has survived in popular accounts about Norwegians in Latin America, such as Jakob Vaage’s *Norske ski erobrer verden* (1952), Joar Hoel Larsen’s *Latinamerikanske bilder* (1997), and Kjartan Fløgstad’s *Eld og vatn* (1999).¹⁷ The skiers are also mentioned a couple of times in articles published in *Nordmannsforbundet*, the journal of an association for Norwegians living abroad. For example, in 1922, more than thirty years after these events took place, Gunnar Nergaard wrote the following in an article about Norwegians in Chile:

On another occasion a group of Norwegians had also been sent to South America. – In order to carry mail and so forth, twelve skiers had been sent to the Transandine Railway, which was under construction. – Nor was this “expedition” particularly successful. – Apparently, only one of them secured a good position and remained in the country.¹⁸

16 Leo Schelbert, “On Interpreting Immigrant Letters: The Case of Johann Caspar and Wilhelmina Honegger-Hanhart,” *Yearbook of German-American Studies* 17 (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1981), 141–52.

17 Jakob Vaage, *Norske ski erobrer verden* (Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1952), 193–99; Joar Hoel Larsen, *Latinamerikanske bilder* (Oslo: Pax Forlag, 1997), 467–70; Kjartan Fløgstad, *Eld og vatn. Nordmenn i Sør-Amerika* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1999), 163.

18 “En anden gang var ogsaa en gruppe nordmænd sendt ut til Syd-Amerika. – Til posttransport etc. blev 12 skiløpere sendt ut til Andesbanen, som var under bygning. – Denne ‘ekspedition’ blev heller ikke særlig vellykket. – Vistnok bare en opnaade en god stilling og blev i landet.” Gunnar Nergaard, “Nordmænd i Chile,” *Nordmannsforbundet* 15 (1922): 307.

This reference to the Norwegian skiers is not only that they are still part of the narrative about Norwegians in Chile. However, it is also worth noting that they are remembered as a collective without names, and that the anonymity also applies to the one member of the group who stayed. This goes against the general tendency in *Nordmannsforbundet* which was to write about individual Norwegians and their achievements abroad and there is most probably a link here to the skiers being manual workers, and therefore not the typical Norwegian to be mentioned in the journal *Nordmannsforbundet in the first place*.¹⁹

The Twelve Skiers and their Motives for Leaving Norway

Clark & Co.'s job advertisement was published with the heading "Good earnings."²⁰ Since the men in question responded to this advertisement, they were presumably not indifferent to the possibility of making good money, but they may also have had other motives for leaving Norway for Argentina. In this section I will therefore address the following set of questions: Were the twelve men forced by economic or other circumstances to leave their homeland? Was the choice of Argentina deliberate or arbitrary? Do the men present themselves as voluntary migrants? And if so, were they drawn by the handsome pay, the sense of adventure, or both?

Before looking at the skiers' personal motives and motivations for answering the advertisement, I will address the question of why this advertisement was published in Norway in the first place. The extant sources do not provide any clear answers, but two circumstances ought to be noticed. First, we know that Norwegian engineers were already working in the Andes on the construction of the Transandine Railway. It is therefore likely that the idea about hiring Norwegian workers as skiers originated in relation to them.²¹ Secondly, as I will comment further on, it is clear that the Norwegian consul general in Buenos Aires was involved already at an early stage: after the advertisement was

19 See, for example, Gunnar Nergaard, "Nordmænd i Chile," 306–308. Nergaard also briefly mentions the unlucky venture with the Norwegian skiers in an article written ten years later: Gunnar Nergaard, "Over Andesfjellene," *Nordmannsforbundet* 25 (1932): 10–12.

20 "God fortjeneste," *Verdens Gang*, November 28, 1889, 4.

21 Vaage, *Norske ski erobrer verden*, 198, claims that it is "beyond doubt" ("hevet over enhver tvil") that it was the Norwegian consul general in Chile at that time, Rosenqvist, and the Norwegian engineers that made Clark & Co. advertise for Norwegian skiers.

published, he defended Clark & Co.'s reliability in an article in *Aftenposten*,²² and he also met personally with some of the skiers when they passed through Buenos Aires on their way to the Andes.²³ The reason that these migrants went to Argentina was therefore not because of personal relationships, but because of unrelated Norwegians who were already in Argentina.

The job advertisement in *Verdens Gang* specified that the company Clark & Co. was searching for fit and strong men to help construct the railway between Buenos Aires and Valparaíso, in South America. The candidates were to be between twenty-five and thirty-five years old and good skiers, and knowledge on how to preserve fish and meat with salt would furthermore count in their favor. Not only the heading, "Good earnings," but the rest of the advertisement emphasized the financial aspect. The trip was to be paid for, and the skiers were to be paid a good salary: "The monthly salary varies from 150 to 180 kroner. The position includes free travel per steam ship, including meals, from Christiania to the point of destination."²⁴

Since no training was required, this must have appeared to be a good opportunity for young men, especially for those who did not have an education or the means to pay for a transatlantic ticket. At the same time, this work might of course be too good to be true. On December 18, 1889, *Aftenposten* published a warning, signed anonymously by a Norwegian who claimed to know the Andes and the railroad under construction well.²⁵ He declared that the work would be very dangerous and the salary far too low, and also suggested that the sum of 150–180 Norwegian kroner probably meant 150–180 Argentinean pesos, and that the correct equivalent would be only 60–70 Norwegian kroner, which was very little in Argentina.²⁶ The following day saw a response in *Aftenposten* from the Norwegian consul general in Buenos Aires, who declared that Clark & Co. had sought their assistance in contracting fifteen Norwegian men who could transport mail by ski. The response highlights the importance of the Transandine Railway and of Clark & Co.'s standing as a solid, responsible firm that would look after the potential emigrants.²⁷

22 "Skiløbere til Argentinien," *Aftenposten*, December 19, 1889, morning edition, 1.

23 Ole Hannibal Lie to father, Mendoza, Argentina, March 4, 1890; Theodor Østgaard, "Hos Mr Clarc & Co. og Generalkonsul Christophersen," *Aftenposten*, April 10, 1890, evening edition, 2; Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 39–40.

24 "Lønner per Maaned varierer fra 150–180 Kroner og faaes fri Reise per Dampskib inclusive Kost fra Christiania til Bestemmelsestedet." "God fortjeneste," *Verdens Gang*, November 28, 1889, 4.

25 "Skiløbere til Argentinien. En advarsel," *Aftenposten*, December 18, 1889, morning edition, 1.

26 "Skiløbere til Argentinien. En advarsel," *Aftenposten*, December 18, 1889, morning edition, 1.

27 "Skiløbere til Argentinien," *Aftenposten*, December 19, 1889, morning edition, 1.

The interest in the advertisement seems to have been immense, and the warning and subsequent response probably increased it. According to Johansen, over two hundred men applied for the position.²⁸ His account is nevertheless slightly contradictory here, because in spite of what he writes, Johansen himself was accepted as a reserve although he applied far too late. Also, only twelve men left, but the advertisement was for fifteen. Johansen mentions the warning and that there were different views about whether this was a good opportunity.

Also the skiers' departure received attention in the Norwegian press at the time. On January 17, 1890, *Aftenposten* published a short article, entitled "Norske Skiløbere til Argentina" (Norwegian skiers to Argentina), about the departure of the skiers. All the names of the skiers were stated in the article, together with their age, place of residence, and (for some of them) occupation. Most of them had worked in Stockholm as part of His Majesty The King's Guard and they were therefore already migrants in Scandinavia.²⁹ The union between Norway and Sweden lasted from 1814 to 1905, and there had been Norwegian royal guards in Stockholm since 1856. In 1888, towards the end of the union with Sweden, the Norwegian guard was transferred from Stockholm to Kristiania (present-day Oslo).³⁰ It seems that the changes related to the transfer of the main guard to Kristiania may have forced some of the guards to look for new job openings.

The twelve skiers were also registered in the emigration protocols.³¹ Their names, ages, places of residence, and occupations are stated, and they are registered as leaving Kristiania on the ship *Rollo*. The information here is more or less identical to that given in *Aftenposten*, but there are some minor differences. It can therefore be assumed that *Aftenposten's* source was not the emigration register, so that the two sources corroborate each other.

The information in the emigration protocols provides a good idea about the skiers, none of whom seemed to have higher education:³²

28 Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 10.

29 "Norske Skiløbere til Argentina," *Aftenposten*, January 17, 1890, evening edition, 2.

30 "His Majesty The King's Guard," last modified November 11, 2013, <http://www.kongehuset.no/artikkel.html?tid=29281&sek=28607>.

31 "Emigrantar frå Kristiania 1867–1927 tillegg," Digitalarkivet, Riksantikvaren, accessed April 23, 2014, <http://gda.arkivverket.no/cgi-win/webcens.exe?slag=visbase&sidenr=8&filnamn=emo3011867tillegg&gardpostnr=24748&personpostnr=24748%20-%20nedre>. The twelve skiers are listed with identification numbers from 24742 to 24753.

32 "Emigrantar frå Kristiania 1867–1927 tillegg."

- Johannes L. Haug (25), Gert Lindh (25), Kristoffer Berg (27), and Ove Løvvik (30), former constables from Kristiania
- Nikolay Sund (26), former constable from Sund in Nordland
- Adolf Mosheim (26), office clerk from Brønnø
- Kristen J. Knygg (26), worker from Brønnø [later named Kristen Johansen]
- Theodor Østgaard (24), errand boy from Kristiania
- Johannes M. Helland (22), shoemaker from Bergen
- Hans Dags Berge (23), sailor from Bergen
- Hans Fougner (29), merchant from Ringebu
- Ole H. Lie (32), farmer from Søndre Land

The emigration protocols furthermore specify the name of the agent, Fredrik Lie, and that the cost of each ticket was 220 kroner. Two of the skiers, Fougner and Lie, carried money with them: Fougner forty kroner and Lie three hundred kroner. This means that ten of the skiers left Norway without any financial means.

Also Johansen's travel account confirms the identity of the skiers, although he only gives the first and last letter of the skiers' surnames. The information he provides about ages and occupations is not completely identical to the other two sources. Østgaard is not referred to as an errand boy, but as a "washed-up student" and a "skier without skis."³³ Berge, the sailor from Bergen, is according to Johansen only nineteen years old (rather than twenty-three);³⁴ it is possible Berge lied to the agent about his age to get the position. The sources also disagree slightly on his name: whereas he emigrates as Hans Dags Berge, *Aftenposten* later uses the name Hans Dagsen Berg.³⁵ Johansen calls him "D...n." Lie did not mention the name of this particular person in his letters, but as he mentions most of them at some point, his letters serve in general to corroborate the information given in the other sources.

Judging by the professional profile of the skiers, personal finances may very well have played an important role in their decision to leave. Five of the skiers are listed as "former constables," which implies that they were presently unemployed and that they had been part of the Norwegian guard. That personal finances did play a role is further suggested by what Johansen and to a certain extent Lie write about their own personal circumstances. Kristen Johansen came from a poor family in Hålogaland in Northern Norway. His mother had died when he was seven, and he had to leave home to work when he was nine;

33 "...afdanket Student, Skiløber uden Ski." Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 17.

34 Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 66.

35 "De norske Skiløbere i Argentina," *Aftenposten*, October 15, 1891, morning edition, 2.

he became an orphan at an early age.³⁶ Johansen was not married and had been four years in Stockholm as part of His Majesty The King's Guard. He claims to have left the guard when he realized that he would not have a future there. He describes the autumn of 1889 as a very hard time, saying it was "an experience I wouldn't wish upon my worst enemy, if I had any."³⁷ He could not find work, was often hungry, and considered ending his own life. When he was given the opportunity to be one of the skiers, however, he had just been hired by the fire brigade, so leaving was in the end not his only chance to lead a reasonably good life.³⁸

Johansen writes that there was much talk about the skiers in Kristiania and that some people advised in favor of going, and others against:

However, there was indeed quite some talk about the town about the skiers bound for Argentina. The various papers wrote about them, some advising them to go, others advising them not to – all in all, it seemed like quite an escapade, but that was what I found so appealing, along with the good pay.³⁹

The motives he states for leaving Norway are thus both related to adventure and to his financial situation. Or as he himself sums it up some pages further on, "Wanderlust and the social conditions at the time compelled me to leave."⁴⁰

Ole Hannibal Lie, in his nine letters to his father, four to his brothers, and one to his mother, does not directly address his motives for leaving. Since the letters are addressed to members of his intimate family, the targeted readers would presumably already be acquainted with his reasons for leaving. A book about the farms of his native region provides more information than he himself does.⁴¹ Ole Hannibal Lie had been the owner of a farm called Øystad since 1886, a farm that his father, Otto Lie, had bought in 1871. Since 1872 Otto Lie had also been the owner of a farm called By, which he had inherited from his father;

36 Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 19–20.

37 "...en tid, jeg ikke vilde ønske min verste fiende, om jeg havde nogen." Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 7.

38 Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 3–10.

39 "Imidlertid var der ikke saa lidt Snak i Byen om disse Skiløberne til Argentina. De forskjellige Aviser skrev om dem, nogle raadede til, andre fra – alt i alt – det saa adskillig eventyrligt ud, men netop det og at det var god Betaling, var det som trak mig." Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 10.

40 "Reisetrang og samfunnsforhold havde drevet mig ud." Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 20.

41 C.S. Schilbred, *Gårdshistorie for Søndre Land* (Oslo: Cammermeyers, 1962), 24.

this explains why Ole Hannibal Lie (for the sum of 32,600 kroner) took over Øystad long before his parents died.

Ole Hannibal Lie had been married to Ellen Marie Hornslien since 1880, but she died on New Year's Eve in 1887, that is, about two years before he left for Argentina. They had four daughters born between 1882 and 1887. A few references are made to these girls in the letters, and the oldest of them is also mentioned by her name, Maren. The farm Øystad was passed on to the four daughters in 1889 for the sum of 30,200 kroner.⁴²

To an outsider who reads his letters, Lie first appears to be a voluntary migrant who enjoys his spell in the new country. There are many descriptions of the impressive landscape, and he also mentions the good, inexpensive horses and the hunting possibilities. A good example of his positive tone is when he writes to his father on March 4, 1890, shortly after his arrival to Argentina: "By the way, I really like it here. My [Norwegian] friends are all good guys, and we have developed a deep bond of friendship."⁴³

In other letters Lie writes about the adventurous aspect of his work:

A tollhouse will now be built here on the mountain. The five of us stationed here were selected to serve as mounted toll officers quite some time ago. It certainly won't be risk-free, but there will of course be many interesting adventures.⁴⁴

From these formulations it would not be far-fetched for an outsider to believe that Lie was there only because he himself had chosen to be there. However, there are also some dark undertones in his letters, and these are difficult to interpret for a reader not familiar with his situation. He thanks his parents for taking care of the small girls, sends them his regards, and also asks his father for forgiveness for being a bad son who has caused him so many troubles; in

42 Schilbred, *Gårdshistorie for Søndre Land*, 24 and 244–45. There are photos of the two farms Øystad and By on pages 15 and 240.

43 "Jeg liker mig forresten ualmindelig godt. Kammeraterne er alle kjække Karer, og et rørende venskapsforhold er opstaaet mellem os." Ole Hannibal Lie to father, Mendoza, Argentina, March 4, 1890.

44 "Det skal nu oprettes en Toldstation her paa Fjeldet, til ridende Toldopsyn er forlængst udtaget vi 5 som er her, det vil jo ikke blive ganske farefrit, men der vil jo blive mange interessante Eventyr." Ole Hannibal Lie to father, June 8, 1890. A similar formulation can be found in a letter sent to his brother a couple of weeks earlier: "As you can see, there is no lack of adventures here, and they can be fairly interesting once they are finally over" ("Som du ser er her ikke vondt for Eventyr, og de kan jo være noksaa interessante naar de vel er over"). Ole Hannibal Lie to brother, May 26, 1890.

another letter, he asks his brother about the last auction at Øystad.⁴⁵ Lie frequently discusses what he earns, as well as the economic pros and cons of breaking his contract, and also what he could earn elsewhere, for example in Panama. At the same time he asks his brother twice to make sure that his dog Lona has puppies before getting too old, which indicates that he is planning to come back, but not very soon.⁴⁶

In many ways Lie seems to differ from the other skiers. According to both himself and Johansen, the engineers appointed him as the leader of the group when they arrived in Las Cuevas, and although he does not seem to have higher education, he had another class background than the others. The two family farms are important farms, and he himself was the oldest son. His father had an education in law, and his grandfather was a military captain.⁴⁷ According to the emigrant protocols, Lie was furthermore one of the two who carried money with him, and he had considerably more than Fougner. In other words, although we do not know exactly why he left Norway, his motives seem to be rather complex, probably more so than those of the others. Whereas most of the skiers returned to Norway, both Johansen and Lie continued to the United States, which perhaps suggests that they were the most motivated migrants of the group, whether for financial reasons, the sense of adventure, or other reasons.

The Journey and Arrival to Argentina

Theodor Østgaard, Kristen Johansen, and Ole Hannibal Lie all write about the journey and the arrival to Argentina. They travelled from Kristiania to Hull on the steamship *Rollo*; the weather was rough, and when they arrived in Hull, a certain Mr Lazarus, who spoke Norwegian, helped them to a boarding house. The day after, they took the train to Liverpool, where they spent a few days before continuing on the *Rosse* for Montevideo. The *Rosse* stopped at St. Vincent before arriving at Montevideo, from where a pilot took them to Ensenada in the province of Buenos Aires. From Ensenada, they continued by train to Buenos Aires, where they met Mr Clark himself; some of them also met with Mr Christophersen, the Norwegian consul general. Finally, the company completed its long journey by taking the train to the city of Mendoza among the eastern foothills of the Andes, where Clark & Co. had its regional office.

45 Ole Hannibal Lie to brother, August 25, 1890.

46 Ole Hannibal Lie to brother, May 26, 1890, and August 25, 1890.

47 Schilbred, *Gårdshistorie for Søndre Land*, 244–45.

Even though Østgaard, Johansen, and Lie do not tell exactly the same story about these events, their narratives generally coincide. This also applies to many of the details. For example, the three of them all relate that they were told to drink wine instead of water. In Østgaard's phrasing: "A bottle of fine wine is served for dinner and evening supper here; we have been instructed to drink as little water as possible now in the beginning. The climate here demands this."⁴⁸

They also provide a similar idea of how difficult it is for them to understand others and to make themselves understood. Lie even recounts that on the train from Buenos Aires to Mendoza, the group only managed to communicate that they were hungry when one of them pointed at his belly and made gestures. But their language problems started already in England, with Johansen and Lie telling of such difficulties in both Hull and Liverpool. All three sources mention that Østgaard was the only one with some knowledge of English. Lie and Johansen write that they spent some time studying Spanish on the *Rosse*, and Lie later writes that he continues to study Spanish after the group's arrival.

Notably, the three writers differ in how they present and emphasize this information, and these differences are important for the internal logic of their respective narratives. The differences between what Johansen and Lie write about the same events (or the same day or week) are the most striking ones. Whereas Johansen in his book tends to focus on hardships, Lie in his letters writes about pleasures and leisure. A telling example is what they write about their stay in Hull: in Johansen's account, the bed bugs at the local hostel cause all of them to leave the clothes they were wearing behind, but this episode is not mentioned in Lie's letters.

Østgaard, who writes for *Aftenposten*, naturally has more of the tone of a reporter, as in the following quote:

The second day we were in Buenos Aires, some of us enjoyed a conversation with the Norwegian consul general, Mr Christophersen. The consul said he believed our stay here would be highly advantageous to us. Our wages, £10 per month, were very good, given the current state of affairs in Argentina. For half of what we are to be paid, Clark & Co. could have found enough men to carry out the same services that we are to perform.

48 "Til Middag og Aften serveres her 1 Flaske god Vin; man har paalagt os i Begynnelsen at drikke saa lidet Vand som muligt. Klimaet her fordrer det." Østgaard, "Hos Mr Clarc & Co. og Generalkonsul Christophersen," 2. Also in Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 47, 140; Lie mentions the wine in various letters, for example to father, Mendoza, Argentina, March 4, 1890, and to brother, May 26, 1890.

However, the company needed a few outstanding and temperate men, so they had made enquiries in Norway. But it was also demanded of us that we were used to skiing.⁴⁹

In other articles Østgaard provides data about the railway and the construction of the tunnel. He depicts the Norwegian skiers very favorably as strong and heroic men who, for instance, impress the locals with their ability to pass the Andes in the snow: "The natives are poor at traversing the snow. The Norwegians' skis have therefore amazed the natives."⁵⁰

Østgaard's accounts of the locals are considerably less glowing. Argentinians are described almost as barbarians. One example of this is when he describes how the natives slaughter animals. As in the previous example, Østgaard here establishes a clear difference between Norwegians and South Americans: "Something I believe I should mention in particular for Norwegian readers is the technique of butchery used here."⁵¹ He then describes how two men would ride after the animal, catch it with a lasso after it had become exhausted, and then kill it with a knife by cutting open the abdomen and going for the heart, which differed significantly from the Norwegian procedure. Østgaard concludes that "the entire process is brutal and disgusting."⁵² The article ends with a supercilious and generalizing statement about the South American republics: "Even with their freedom and their rich resources, the republics of South America are at a much lower level of genuine civilization."⁵³

49 "Med den norske Generalkonsul, Hr. Christophersen, havde nogle af os en Samtale den anden Dag, vi var i Buenos Aires. Konsulen mente, vi vilde faa megen Fordel af Opholdet her. Vor Gage, 10£ maanedlig, var efter de nuværende Forhold i Argentina, meget god. Clark & Co. kunde faa fuldt op af Folk til samme Tjeneste, som den vi skal gjøre, for Halvparten af den Gage, vi skal have. Sagen var, at Kompagniet havde brug for endel udsøgte og ædruelige Mænd. Derfor havde de henvendt sig til Norge. Men vi maatte ogsaa være vante til at bruge Ski." Østgaard, "Hos Mr Clarc & Co. og Generalkonsul Christophersen," 2.

50 "De indfødte er daarlige til at komme frem i Sneen. De norskes Ski har saaledes vagt de Indfødtes forbauselse." Theodor Østgaard, "Ferro Carril Trasandino," *Aftenposten*, May 24, 1890, evening edition, 1.

51 "En ting finder jeg specielt at burde omtale for norske Læsere, og det er den Maade, man her slagter paa." Østgaard, "Ferro Carril Trasandino," 1.

52 "Den hele Fremgangsmaade er baade raa og modbydelig." Østgaard, "Ferro Carril Trasandino," 1.

53 "Selv med sin Frihed og sine rige Hjelpeskilder staa Syd-Amerikas Republikker meget langt tilbage i sand Civilitation." Østgaard, "Ferro Carril Trasandino," 1.

Also Johansen is from the start very negative about both Argentina and Argentineans, and he frequently emphasizes how dirty everything is. The first place he describes is Ensenada, and the account he provides is everything but positive and respectful:

The streets – which incidentally do not at all deserve to be referred to as such – were strewn with dead dogs, cats, the entrails of dead animals, trash, and all sorts of nasty things rotting away under the scorching heat of the sun.⁵⁴

The way he depicts the inhabitants of Ensenada, the first South Americans he meets, is no more positive, as they are described as “lazy pigs that only need fruit, meat, and wine to live and can’t be bothered with procuring more than they need themselves.”⁵⁵

His first description of Las Cuevas also emphasizes the dirtiness of the place and its inhabitants:

Thereafter we were shown to a talus with a zinc roof above it to live together with four or five dirty natives. ...Horse feed, human food, pots and pans, cups, riding equipment, dogs, Indians, and Europeans all lay helter-skelter in motley confusion – dirty outside, dirty inside, dirty at the top, dirty on the bottom – dirty people and dirty surroundings.⁵⁶

From the start, Johansen describes the skiers’ work as hard. Their first task was to carry stones to build the house they were to live in: “I believe we were all happy when the working day was over, and many seemed to dread the upcoming days. It certainly was a harsh form of work.”⁵⁷

54 “I Gaderne, der forresten aldeles ikke fortjener saadant Navn, laa døde Hunde, Katte, Indvolde av døde Kreaturer, Søppel og alslags Uhumskheder og raadnede i den brændende Solhede.” Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 35.

55 “...dovne Grise, der kun trænger Frugt, Kjød og Vin for at leve og ikke gider tilveiebringe mer, end de selv trænger.” Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 34.

56 “Derpaa blev vi anvist en Stenrøs med Zinktag over til at bo i sammen med en 4–5 skidne indfødte. ...Hestemad, Folkemad, Gryder, Kopper og Kar, Ridegreier, Hunde, Indianere og Europæere laa om hverandre i broget Forvirring – skident ude, skident inde, skident oppe, skident nede – skidne Mennesker og skident rundt om.” Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 68–69.

57 “Jeg tror, vi alle var glade, da Arbeidstiden var til ende og mange imødesaa vist de kommende Dage med Gru. Det var sandelig strengt Arbeide.” Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 70.

Lie, especially in his early letters, is much more positive to Argentina than Johansen. He writes more about beautiful places and does not depict places or people as dirty. Mendoza, for instance, was “the most wonderful place I have ever been, with its wonderful air and magnificent parks and trees – it is mid-summer here, so it is of course the best time of year.”⁵⁸ In a letter to his brother dated May 26, 1890, Lie writes that

Valparaiso is a beautiful town, the most gorgeous I have seen, completely European. It extends about five kilometers in the shape of a horseshoe upward toward the mountain, with many wonderful parks with fountains and music the whole day through.⁵⁹

Lie does not describe the work as especially hard. Instead he highlights the adventurous aspects of their life, the riding and the skiing, and their abundance of free time, which he partly used at the time to improve his Spanish. He writes frequently about how easy their life is and that they are having a good time and making good money at the same time.⁶⁰ Lie even encourages his relatives back home and in the United States to come to Argentina. He writes that if his brother wants to come, he will find work, and he also asks his father to convince Aksel (a relative who is unemployed in the United States) to come to Argentina, precisely because he will be able to find work there.⁶¹ However, as time passes and conditions worsen, Lie warns others and tells them not to come. He even tells about life-threatening situations he has been in, albeit in an entertaining way, which makes it sound almost like fiction.

The differences between Johansen’s and Lie’s depictions of their first months are striking. Whereas Johansen is very negative about his initial experiences in Argentina and highlights their work as extremely hard and dangerous, Lie paints a completely different picture. He seems to be having a good time with lots of time for hunting, studying, and excursions. It may very well be that their conditions differed considerably: unlike Johansen, Lie had been designated as the head of the group. They may also have slept in different houses (Johansen

58 “...det deiligste Sted jeg nogensinde har været, deilig Luft, prægtige Parker og Træplantninger, der er jo her Midtsommer saa det jo er den bedste Tid.” Ole Hannibal Lie to father, Mendoza, Argentina, March 4, 1890.

59 “Valparaiso er en nydelig By, den smukkeste jeg har seet, fuldstændig Europæisk. Den strækker sig ca ½ mil i Hesteskoform opover mot Fjeldet, i en masse deilige Parker med Springvand og Musik hele Dagen.” Ole Hannibal Lie to brother, May 26, 1890.

60 For example in letter to brother, Los Cuevas, Argentina, July 7, 1890.

61 Ole Hannibal Lie to father, June 8, 1890, and to brother, July 7, 1890.

writes that there was room for some of the skiers in the engineers' house but that he himself did not stay there). It may also be that they perceived the same situations in different ways, that is, that Johansen suffered from the bugs and squalor more than Lie did.

However, the differences may also be related to genre and intended readership. On the one hand, Johansen, who published his book some time after these events took place, may have added a more negative filter afterwards. This would serve a purpose in the context of the book as a whole, since the negative experiences of the first months contributes to the narrative logic of the book. On the other hand, Lie may also have had good reasons for choosing to recount the good experiences rather than the bad ones. For example, he may not have wanted to worry his family, or if they had advised him against going, he may not have wished to prove them right. Also, Lie's letters were dispatched after he wrote them, so he could not go back and retroactively alter his first impressions.

A letter from July 26, 1890, marks a turning point in Lie's narration. In this letter he describes recent uprisings in nearby Chile, also communicating that the company has problems and that it is not a good idea for others to come:

The reason I am writing you now is to tell you a little about the conditions here. The situation is as dire as it could probably be. In Chile – we live two kilometers from the border – there is a total revolt because of the presidential election. Last week ten thousand soldiers marched into Valparaiso, there is warfare everywhere in the country, the railroad has stopped, everything is in a state of siege, and many rebels are shot down every day. It is said that this will also spread to Argentina – there is also an upcoming presidential election here, so yes, there will be bedlam here. If you haven't yet written Aksel, then do so – I wouldn't advise anyone to come here as things currently stand. The situation is also as tough as possible here on the railroad. Rosenquist [a Norwegian engineer] has been fired, though we don't know why.⁶²

62 "Hvorfor jeg egentlig skriver nu er for at fortælle dig lidt om Forholdene. De er saa kritiske som vel muligt. I Chile, vi bor 2 km. fra Grændsen, er de fuldstændig Oprør i Anledning Præsidentvalget, i forrige Uge marchered 10.000 Soldater ind i Valparaiso, fuldstændig Krig over hele Landet, Jernbaerne ere standsed, alt er i Beleiringstilstand, en Masse Oprørere bliver nedskudte hver Dag. Der siges at dette ogsaa skal smitte paa Argentina, her er ogsaa forestaaende Præsidentvalg, ja da skal det bli Leven her, Har du ikke skrevet til Aksel, saa gjør det, jeg vill ikke raade nogen til at reise hid, slik som det nu er. Her paa Linien er ogsaa Forholdene saa vrang som muligt. Rosenquist har faaet Avskjed, Grunden hvorfor ved ikke vi." Ole Hannibal Lie to father, Los Cuevos, Argentina, July 26, 1890.

In his next letter Lie describes the new engineer, an Italian who has replaced Rosenquist, the Norwegian engineer who had been there since they arrived. Lie says that things have now changed for worse in Las Cuevas: there is not much of either work or food, and on top of this they do not get paid. He also writes that some of the Norwegians are discussing the possibility of breaking their contract and going elsewhere, possibly Panama.⁶³ But in a later letter, dated August 25, 1890, he writes to his brother that everything is “excellent as always.”⁶⁴

Weak Norwegian Networks

In his book, Johansen opens the chapter about their arrival to South America by telling how dear the sight of no less than ten Norwegian flags among the ships in the harbor of Montevideo was to them as expatriates: “How these dear colors of the flag speak poignantly to the most profound and noble parts of oneself, especially when one is out and about in the world!”⁶⁵ Johansen, Lie, and Østgaard all write very positively about Norway and the Norwegians they meet. They clearly feel associated to other Norwegians, to other Scandinavians, and to some degree also to Germans. There is only one exception to this in their narratives: when they first arrive to Argentina, Johansen describes a meeting with an assumptive Norwegian in Ensenada, who almost did not condescend to speak to them in Norwegian, even though he was paid by the company to take care of their travel arrangements.⁶⁶

Generally, however, all the authors write very positively about other Scandinavians. This is especially clear in what Johansen writes about the time after his dismissal from Clark & Co. He then traveled to Chile and Peru and from there to the United States, before staying with a Swede in Valparaíso⁶⁷ and in Callao with a Captain Jensen from Bergen, “who without knowing me bade me reside as a guest with him and his family for the duration of my stay in Callao. ...I was given my own, comfortable room and enjoyed Norwegian

63 Ole Hannibal Lie to father, Los Cuevos, Argentina, July 26, 1890.

64 “...som sædvanlig ualmindelig godt.” Ole Hannibal Lie to brother, Los Cuevas, Argentina, August 25, 1890.

65 “Hvor disse kjære Flagfarver taler et dybtfølt Sprog til det dybeste og ædlest i en – naar man er ude i Verden isærdeleshed.” Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 33.

66 Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 34.

67 Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 147.

food, Norwegian conversation, and true Norwegian hospitality.”⁶⁸ On the ship to the United States he was lucky enough to meet another Norwegian who gave him extra food in exchange for a sum of money.⁶⁹ These references to other Norwegians in Johansen’s book demonstrate solidarity between Norwegians (and other Scandinavians). Implicitly, however, these references also indicate that there did not exist any strong Norwegian networks that could help Norwegians to reestablish themselves in South America when they got in trouble.⁷⁰

There also seems to be strong bounds between the skiers, and they are quite direct in what they write about each other. Johansen writes that Lie is a drinker, while Lie for his part writes that Østgaard is a drinker.⁷¹ Lie furthermore subtly indicates that Østgaard at one point is hospitalized because of a venereal disease;⁷² Johansen is more delicate and does not give away the reason for Østgaard’s hospitalization.⁷³ To a certain extent these differences may not only have to do with their opinions about one another, but also with the intended readership. Johansen and Østgaard both seem keen to produce an image of the Norwegian skiers as strong and impeccable men who sometimes have a drink or two, but who hardly ever transgress the limits of good behavior, whereas Lie seems to be invested in the image he produces of himself.

When it comes to how Lie and Johansen write about the Norwegian engineers, there is a similar divider between the two. Whereas Lie stresses that he spends time with them, plays cards, and so forth, Johansen writes about the card playing with the engineers as something that happens exceptionally.

68 “...der uden at kjende mig, bød mig tage tiltakke hos ham og hans Familie som gæst den Tid jeg maatte standse i Callao. ...Jeg fikk eget hyggeligt Værelse norsk Mad, norsk Sprog og nød ægte Norsk Gjæstfrihed.” Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 150.

69 Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 152.

70 See Thomas Faist, “Transnationalization in international migration: implications for the study of citizenship and culture,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 23:2 (2000), 189–222. According to Faist, “transnational social spaces and the other names we have given these phenomena are characterized by a high density of interstitial ties on informal or formal, that is to say, institutional levels” (190). Such dense ties do not seem to exist in the spaces described in the documents about the skiers. There is an undeniable collective “we-feeling” (Faist, 193), but the ties are not dense enough to classify within any of the three types of migratory networks identified by Faist, namely “transnational reciprocity in small groups (usually kinship collectives), transnational exchange in circuits; and solidarity within transnational communities” (194–195). See also Sæther in this book.

71 Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 67.

72 Ole Hannibal Lie to father, Los Cuevas, Argentina, August 13, 1890.

73 Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 115.

Instead he emphasizes the social differences between himself and the engineers. For instance, he describes how he travels to Chile with the engineer Rosenquist and how they, when they stop for lunch, do not eat together: “The engineers, four or five in number, ate a large dinner. I was of course also given food, though not together with them.”⁷⁴ Later the engineer stayed overnight at a hotel in Los Andes, whereas Johansen ended up in jail with his belongings confiscated. He was only released upon mentioning engineer Rosenquist’s name, at which point he also got his knife and his purse back. Later, with Rosenquist’s assistance, he also retrieved a revolver – not the one that had been confiscated, but a bigger and better one.⁷⁵ Once again these examples show that the skiers interacted with other Norwegians and that there is solidarity among them, but that at the same time it becomes clear that there are no strong networks in place that could have helped them to reorient their lives in South America when their conditions worsened. Gert Lindh, the only one of the skiers who stayed in South America, could do so not because of the other Norwegians, but because of his lasting relationships with locals.

The Social Situation

Throughout his book Johansen emphasizes the tough conditions in South America. He writes that they had met poverty and distress earlier but that what they met in Las Cuevas was worse than what they had met before: “We had seen want and misery before, but we had not seen anything like the miserable conditions we witnessed here almost every day for two or three months.”⁷⁶ He depicts the Italians and Frenchmen as being particularly badly dressed for the cold weather: “It’s not that strange that these poor souls either froze to death or froze themselves senseless.”⁷⁷

But Johansen is not always compassionate about the distress he observes. He is frequently condescending both towards South American societies and towards their inhabitants. The following quote exemplifies this attitude:

74 “Der spistes stor Middag, det vil sige Ingeniørerne som der var 4 eller 5 Stykker af. Jeg fik naturligtvis ogsaa Mad, dog ikke sammen med dem.” Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 86.

75 Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 92–93.

76 “Vi havde set Nød og Elendighed før; men den, som her frembød sig i en 243 Maaneder, næsten hver Dag, havde vi ikke seet Magen til.” Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 113.

77 “Det var ikke saa rart, at de stakkels Mennesker frøs i hjel eller frøs sig fordærvet.” Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 114.

First of all, there is not much civilization in South America; second of all, the South American republics are being inundated with the worst people from Europe and Asia. When you then consider that everyone from the president to the vagabond, whether native or immigrant, educated or uneducated, only has a single thought on their mind – acquiring gold – no one can be surprised that the concept of “mine” and “yours” does not carry much weight. It is by no means peculiar that crude people use any means possible to obtain money without working.⁷⁸

Johansen presents this as more or less a permanent situation typical of South America. Further on in the text he has a very similar formulation:

Ever since the wars of independence, inner turmoil has disturbed the social order of the various republics and will probably do so for a long time to come. It is so easy to incite uprisings and revolutions here. Those in positions of power in the state, the city, or the province always make sure to steal, so that the disgruntled always have a legitimate grievance and a reason for chasing them out the door. When these disgruntled people then come to power, they do the same thing, so as to give the next flock of disgruntled people a chance to plunder the public treasury for a few years.⁷⁹

These passages are so stereotypical that it may very well be that they have been inspired by what other authors have written about South America. However, what is striking is that Johansen immediately after the second of these rather stereotypical analyses of a socio-political situation describes a political meeting

78 “For det første er Civilisationen liden i Syd Amerika; for det andet oversvømmes de sydamerikanske Republikker af de daarligste Mennesker fra Europa og Asien. Naar man saa betænker, at allesammen, fra Præsidenten til Dagdriveren, indfødte og indvandrede, dannede og udannede, kun har én Tanke – at skaffe sig Guld; saa kan ingen forundre sig over, at Begrepet om mit og dit ikke har stort at sige. Det er intet underligt i, at raa Mennesker ved hvilket som helst Midler søger at skaffe sig Penge uden Arbeide.” Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 119.

79 “Indre Uroligheder har helt siden Uafhængighedskrigene oprevet de forskjellige Republikers Statssamfund og vil vel endnu i lang Tid komme til at gjøre det. Det er saa let att faa istand Oprør og Revolution her. De, som har Magten i Staten, Byen eller Provinsen passer bestandig paa at Stjæle, saa de misfornøiede atter har noget at bestride og jage dem paa Porten for. Naar saa de misfornøiede kommer til Magten, gjør de det samme, for at give den næste flok af mifornøiede Anledning til i nogle Aar at plundre Statkassen.” Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 132.

that he himself attended at the Mendoza theater. He was there with two other Norwegians, and one of the others explained to him what was being said. The political plan was to produce an uprising and overthrow the governor of the province: "A former minister of war, who had stolen two cannon batteries and five hundred of the best rifles, was the hero of the evening and spoke grandiosely."⁸⁰ But as also some loyalists attended the meeting, the situation got ugly: "During these events a scuffle broke out. ...No less than five revolver shots were fired. Then the police-soldiers moved in."⁸¹ Johansen and his friends found a backdoor and left the meeting. One person died and five were injured.⁸²

Johansen continues to explain that whenever there is a risk of a revolution, the money loses its value, as also the banks tend to go bankrupt. He describes in other words a socio-political situation that is rather complicated and probably not very tempting for prospective migrants. In Johansen's account this socio-political analysis is presented in one of the final chapters, in which he also provides a rather negative description of Argentinians and how badly they treat their animals. As Argentina and its inhabitants are depicted in such a negative way, it is a chapter that clearly prepares his departure and also serves to affirm his self-image. If he did not succeed as a migrant in Argentina, it was because of Argentina, not because of him.

When he in the next chapter, the final one, describes how he leaves Argentina in January 1891 and goes to Chile, he presents the political situation with uprisings there as a surprise: "It was first then that I heard that a revolution had broken out in the whole of Chile."⁸³ That this comes as a surprise fits very well into his account of hardships in which he himself is not responsible for what happens to him, but rather a victim of unfortunate circumstances. Likewise, he never writes directly that he was dismissed because of the argument with the engineer, but rather presents it as if he left voluntarily.⁸⁴ Moreover, a reader who is acquainted with the political situation in Chile 1890–91 would know

80 "En forhenværende Krigsminister, der havde stjålet to Batterier kanoner og 500 af de bedste Geværer var Aftenens Helt og førde det store Ord." Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 133.

81 "Under dette opstod der et helt Slagsmaal (...) der affyredes ikke mindre end 5 Revolverskud. Saa trængte Politisoldaterne ind" Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 133.

82 Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 133.

83 "Jeg fikk nu først høre, at der var udbrudt Revolution over hele Chili." Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 144.

84 In *Aftenposten*, a communication from the consul general in Buenos Aires nevertheless states very clearly that Knygg/Johansen was indeed dismissed. "De norske Skiløbere i Argentina," *Aftenposten*, October 15, 1891, morning edition, 2.

that the uprisings started much earlier. Moreover, as mentioned above, Lie writes about these uprisings already in a letter from July 26, 1890, the letter that marked the turning point in his narrative. The situation in Valparaiso that Johansen describes for January 1891 is strikingly similar to the one that Lie described already in July 1890. It thus seems that Johansen has adapted some of the historical events to fit better into his narrative.

Be that as it may, there is no doubt that the real events that took place in Chile and Argentina when the skiers were there in 1890 and 1891 did affect both the company Clark & Co. and the skiers themselves. If it were not for the political instability in the two countries, it would presumably have been much easier for the Norwegian skiers to give South America a second chance when the company went bankrupt.

The Majority Returned to Norway

One of the skiers, Johannes M. Helland, died shortly after arrival at a hospital in Los Andes.⁸⁵ Another of the company, the young sailor Hans Dags Berge, got dismissed from Clarke & Co., whether for refusing to work on Good Friday (as Johansen states) or for drinking and scuffling (as Lie states), and as far as we know he returned to Norway.⁸⁶ Only three of them remained in the Americas: Gert Lindh changed his first name to Gerardo, decided to stay in South America, and married a Chilean woman named Maria Isabel Clavel, with whom he had two daughters and two sons.⁸⁷ Kristen J. Knygg moved to the United States and changed his name to Johansen. Ole Hannibal Lie also moved to the United States, before returning to Norway and marrying a Stefanie Berg, with whom he had two children in 1897 and 1899. In 1900 he took over the family farm By, which he sold already in 1904. He then remigrated to the United States and died there.⁸⁸

Of the seven others, Johannes L. Haug, Kristoffer Berg, and Nikolay Sund traveled to Buenos Aires in February 1891 along with Ole Hannibal Lie, and with the consul general's assistance they (as well as Hans Fougner) received their salaries from Clark & Co.;⁸⁹ with the above noted exception of Lie, they

85 Ole Hannibal Lie to brother, May 26, 1890; Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 85; Theodor Østgaard, "Vinterliv i Anderne," *Aftenposten*, July 15, 1890, evening edition, 2.

86 Johansen, *Norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika*, 74; Ole Hannibal Lie to brother, May 26, 1890.

87 Anne Heidi Røstad, e-mail message, November 21, 2013.

88 Schilbred, *Gårdshistorie for Søndre Land*, 244–45.

89 "De norske Skiløbere i Sydamerika. Svar fra den norske Generalkonsul," *Aftenposten*, August 25, 1891, morning edition, 1.

all returned to Norway. Adolf Mosheim, Ove Løvvik, and Theodor Østgaard arrived in Buenos Aires after the others, and with the consul general's assistance they also got paid and returned to Norway.⁹⁰ The last article published about the skiers in *Aftenposten* ends with the declaration that "none of the skiers has the slightest interest in making that trip again."⁹¹

Conclusion

In leaving their home country to do manual work, the twelve skiers discussed here are typical Norwegian migrants to Latin America. But in some other important respects the skiers differ from most of the Norwegians who went to Latin America from 1820 to 1940. They were for example probably both the first and the last Norwegians to be hired to work in South America for their skiing skills. More importantly, they were contracted in Norway, the company paid for their passage, and they left as a group. Migrants would usually not have a work contract until after arrival, and they would either pay for their tickets themselves or work their way over the Atlantic. In spite of these special circumstances, this case is a prime one for studying the motives and motivations that Norwegian migrants might have had for going to Latin America and for either staying or not staying there, not least because the case is extremely well documented. Many sources depict this event, so that although this story almost sounds too good to be true, there is no doubt that the twelve men actually existed, that they left Norway in January 1890, and that they were employed as skiers by Clark & Co. in Argentina and Chile in 1890–91.

In this chapter I have examined in particular what three of these skiers wrote about their stay in Argentina and Chile, attempting to find out why the skiers left Norway for Argentina and why so few of them decided to stay once they had arrived. The prospect of being able to make good money seems to have played an important role in their decision to go to Argentina, but they also seem to have been attracted by the adventurous aspects related to going off the beaten track. Nothing in what they write suggests that they had any particular personal reasons for going to Latin America. Clark & Co.'s advertisement seems to have been of decisive importance, and its publication in Norway and the consul general's subsequent defense of it demonstrate that there were some active Argentinean-Norwegian relations that allowed for this to happen.

90 "De norske Skiløbere i Argentina," *Aftenposten*, October 15, 1891, morning edition, 2.

91 "Ingen af Skiløberne har den mindste Lyst til at gjøre den Tur om igjen." "De norske Skiløbere i Argentina," *Aftenposten*, October 15, 1891, morning edition, 2.

The narratives studied here also reveal that several Norwegians already worked for Clark & Co. in the Andes, such as the engineers in Las Cuevas and a clerk who worked at the office in Mendoza. These Argentinean-Norwegian relations may have opened up for the skiers' positions being created, but they do not seem to have been dense enough to make it possible for the skiers to re-establish themselves professionally when they lost their positions at Clark & Co. This probably contributed to the skiers' decision not to stay. There were not many Norwegians in the Andes, and from what they write, the skiers did not seem to interact well with the locals or with other migrants. The exception is Lindh, who shortly after the group's arrival met a Chilean woman whom he later married.

The social conditions probably also played a decisive role in the decision not to stay. A revolution had broken out in Chile, the political situation in Argentina was also very unstable, and the company they worked for went bankrupt. Both Johansen and Lie write about these political and economic events and about how they affect their situation. The lack of a Norwegian network and the unstable situation made it difficult for the skiers to make money. And as making money was their main motive for going to South America in the first place, it is not strange that most of them decided to go back or to move on to the United States.

The Good, the Bad and the Rational: Desirable and Undesirable Migration to Cuba and Mexico (1907–1909)

Mieke Neyens

From 1814 to 1905, Sweden and Norway were two sovereign states under one king and with a common foreign service. In 1905, Norway unilaterally established its own corps of consuls – a crucial factor in dissolving the Swedish-Norwegian union. Thus, in an important sense, it was ships – or more precisely, the wish to appoint the country’s “own” consuls for Norwegian ships – that made Norway move. The young independent nation decided in 1907 to sponsor its first own transatlantic line, the Norway Mexico Gulf Line, whose owner, Gottfred Mauritz Bryde, understood that maritime events are not just ships but also *stories* about what these ships do. So he put the well-known writer Peter Lykke-Seest on his very first vessel to Cuba and Mexico. In his accounts on travel, trade, and migration, published in Norwegian newspapers and then collected in an English-language book, Lykke-Seest inscribed himself into the logic of the Norwegian – and Mexican – elites. The texts translated existing discourses on migration and international business into tangible observations. In this chapter, I will study how Lykke-Seest presents Norwegian presence in Cuba and Mexico and how his depictions draw on contemporary conceptions of “preferred” and “undesirable” migrants in both countries. It is hardly schematizing to say that for Lykke-Seest the Norwegian farmers in Cuba were the bad: they meant failure and poverty, an example not to follow. The colony of ship captains and businessmen in Veracruz represented the good: they meant money, success, and the preservation of Norwegian traditions. And in Lykke-Seest’s last writings of Mexico, Porfirianism had become the word for the rational, the modern: businessmen, trade agents, and even farmers should seize the opportunities the country had to offer. Through the Norway Mexico Gulf Line, the rich virgin soil of Mexico had to be turned into a newly independent nation’s goldmine, sooner rather than later. Yes, ships were meant to move Norway, or better, its money and the “best” of its people.

Agents of Norwegian Trade: Bryde and Lykke-Seest

Peter Lykke-Seest was not just any travel writer reporting on an exotic trip. He traveled with the first vessel of a state-sponsored shipping line, on the invitation

and at the expense of its owner, Gottfred M. Bryde; in 1909 the shipowner would also finance the translation and publication of the newspaper “travel letters” as a book.¹ Moreover, Lykke-Seest acknowledged Bryde’s contribution to the content of the accounts: “My thanks are due to the shipowner, G.M. Bryde, for the mercantile information with which he has supplied me,” we read in the preface. Lykke-Seest was a travel writer on a clear mission:² promoting Norwegian export through the Norway Mexico Gulf Line, in the book systematically referred to as “our direct line of steamers.”³

The Norway Mexico Gulf Line was Norway’s first “own” transatlantic shipping line. Of course, the country had been connected to the Americas before. A great number of cargo vessels exported cod and other Norwegian products, and sailors, businessmen, emigrants, and adventurers crossed the ocean on foreign passenger lines that called at Norwegian ports (e.g., the Danish Thingvalla line) and on occasional emigrant ships under Norwegian flag.⁴ Yet no Norwegian company established a regular and direct transatlantic route until 1907.⁵ The fact that such a company was founded then with state funding has to be understood against the backdrop of events leading to Norway’s independence from Sweden only two years before.

Indeed, one of the main factors contributing to the dissolution of the Swedish-Norwegian union – which in 1814 had established the two nations as sovereign states under one king and with a common foreign service – had been a longstanding difference regarding the organization of the consular

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- 1 Peter Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana Galveston & Galveston: A Voyage with the First Steamer of the Norway Mexico Gulf Line with Illustrations and Trade Statistics* (Kristiania: Cammermeyer, 1909). This chapter focuses on the accounts of the Latin American countries on the Norway Mexico Gulf Line route, that is, Cuba and Mexico. My analysis is based on the existing English translation of the accounts. In the quotations, I will retain the accounts’ punctuation, grammar and spelling (including proper names, e.g. Christiania, Vera Cruz).
 - 2 On the close relationship between journalism, travel writing, and imperialism, see, e.g., Edward Said *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978), Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London, New York: Routledge, 1992), David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing and Imperial Administration* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993).
 - 3 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, Preface, 36, 134, 142, 160.
 - 4 Ingrid Semmingsen, *Utvandringen fra Norge 1865–1915* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1950), 103–105.
 - 5 In the 1870s an unsuccessful attempt had been made to establish a direct steamship passenger line between Norway and the United States, but this company (Det Norsk-Amerikanske Dampskibsselskabet) had lasted only a few years. On the topic, see Dag Bakka Jr., *Linjer rundt jorden: historien om norsk linjefart* (Bergen: Seagull, 2008), 10; Odd S. Lovoll, “For People Who

service.⁶ If Norway had sought to obtain more control in matters of foreign politics from the very creation of this union, gradually the debate shifted from political to economic questions. As Norwegian shipping and trade took an upturn in the 1850s, the country's leading businessmen and shipowners began to demand that their overseas interests be better served. They complained that many Swedish consuls had little experience in the shipping business, and that consulates were not located where most needed. They expressed the need for a more commercially oriented consular service, that is, for more consulates located in ports Norwegian cargo ships called at. In the early 1890s, their demands were picked up by Norwegian politicians, particularly by the Liberal Party (*Venstre*), where many called for a Norwegian consular service independent from the Swedish Foreign Affairs Ministry. For the Swedes, however, this was a no go. Several committees and consultation rounds notwithstanding, the matter remained unsolved, even when in 1903 a joint Swedish-Norwegian committee recommended that both countries had their own consular service, for Norwegians and Swedes had different views on how exactly these national services should relate to the union's Minister of Foreign Affairs. Negotiations stranded, and in 1905, the new Norwegian government led by shipowner Christian Michelsen was determined to finally settle the affair, unilaterally if needed. In May of that year, the Norwegian parliament passed a law to establish a Norwegian corps of consuls. When King Oscar II of Sweden refused to sign the law, events followed in quick succession: Michelsen's government resigned, the king declared himself unable to form a new government, and the Norwegian parliament took this act as his factual resignation as king of Norway, announcing June 7 that the Swedish-Norwegian union was dissolved. Norway's independence was thus a fact, and the organization of its overseas commercial activities was high on the national agenda.

This is when Gottfred Mauritz Bryde (1865–1939) stepped in. The son of a successful shipowner and businessman from the Vestfold region, Bryde began his career sailing a Norwegian cargo ship in the Mexican Gulf in the late 1890s. In 1900 he settled down in Kristiania (Oslo) and established himself as a ship

Are Not in a Hurry': The Danish Thingvalla Line and the Transportation of Scandinavian Emigrants," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 13(1) (1993): 48–67.

6 On the topic, see e.g. Charlotte W. Syversen, "Konsulatsaken og unionsoppløsningen i 1905," in *Årbok*, Norsk Sjøfartsmuseum (Oslo: Museet, 2005), 95–100; Espen Storli, "Hva ville egentlig Venstre med konsulatsaken?," *Historisk tidsskrift* 86(02) (2007), 226–47; Iver Neumann and Halvard Leira, *Konsulatsaken og rederne* (Oslo: Rederiforbund, 2005).

broker for cargo transport between Havana, Galveston, and New Orleans.⁷ Competition with American lines was fierce, and Bryde began to make plans for a regular line between Norway and the Mexican Gulf ports he knew well by then. In 1907, after being turned down by his country's Ministry of Commerce, Shipping, and Industry, he sought state funding directly through the parliament. The advisory committee that examined the proposal concluded that Norwegian export was likely to benefit from a regular transatlantic line and recommended state funding.⁸ Bryde's proposal and the committee's report were heavily debated in the parliamentary meetings of June 29, 1907.⁹ Norway risked falling behind on the worldwide trade market, proponents argued, as many other countries already had their "own" regular lines. Without a shipping line of our own, Member of Parliament Sigvald Bergesen (a shipowner himself, as many others in the parliament) admonished, "we are bound to become what we do not want to be, a commercial province of our neighboring countries."¹⁰ Some representatives objected that the planned route along Eastern and Southern Norway would not serve the needs of the cod exporting cities on the western coast, but Bryde got what he had applied for: a three hundred thousand kroner subsidy over three years to establish the Norway Mexico Gulf Line.

Lykke-Seest's Writings: Travel, Trade, and Migration

Less than three months later, on September 15, 1907, the first vessel of the new shipping line, the SS *Kristiania*, left the Norwegian capital of the same name. The ship was fully loaded and also carried ten passengers, including writer Peter Lykke-Seest and his wife Lila. In his younger years, Lykke-Seest's interests had lain in commerce – as a student, a teacher, and founder of a private school

7 Bakka, *Linjer*, 122.

8 Stortingsforhandlinger, Storting 1906/1907, Tema: Sjøfart, Tillæg 2 til indst. S. iv.: Indstilling fra veikomiteen angaaende andragende fra skibsreder G.M. Bryde om statsbidrag til en dampskibsrute Norge-Cuba-Mexiko og de amerikanske sydstater, accessed February 12, 2014, https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Stortingsforhandlinger/Lesevisning/?p=1906-07&paid=6&wid=a&psid=DIVL1751&pgid=a_0647&vt=a&did=DIVL1759.

9 Stortingsforhandlinger, Storting 1906/1907, Tema: Sjøfart, *Stortingstidende*, beh. S.tid. (7 d.): 3667–3703, accessed February 12, 2014, https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Stortingsforhandlinger/Lesevisning/?p=1906-07&paid=7&wid=a&psid=DIVL735&pgid=b_1519. Hereafter referred to as *Stortingstidende*.

10 *Stortingstidende*, 3670.

of commerce – but since the late 1890s he had dedicated himself to writing. He was a prolific and all-round author, and by 1907 he had published four novels (including the bestseller *Livets slump* [Life's Fortunes] in 1900),¹¹ a poetry collection, a children's book, and two comedies. He was a public figure in his time, listed in the first edition of the *Handbook of Contemporary Norwegian Men and Women* in 1912.¹² When he crossed the Atlantic with Bryde's first ship, Lykke-Seest was to engage in yet another genre – travel writing. He combined light-hearted impressions of the places he visited and the people he met, with more impersonal accounts of Cuba's and Mexico's history, society, and culture. The book also offered trade statistics and market analysis, “good” and “bad” examples of foreign undertakings in Mexico, and lists of possible Norwegian export products and profitable investments. It is this dual focus on travel and trade that is highlighted in the book's paratexts, including the author's preface, the front cover and title page (see figure 5.1).

The book's self-presentation notwithstanding, migration is a central topic in the accounts too, as the author describes and evaluates the living and working conditions of a number of countrymen in Cuba and Mexico, and comments at length on job opportunities for Norwegians in these countries, especially in Mexico. This was, indeed, an era when thousands of Norwegians left the country in search for a better life, mostly in the United States. Emigration was an issue in Norway: people everywhere spoke of America, newspapers wrote of it, and letters told stories of success and failure. Meanwhile, Norwegian authorities had abandoned their *laissez-faire* stance from the 1860s and had returned to the predominantly negative attitude that had accompanied emigration from its very beginning. From the 1880s onwards, emigration was again considered a problem, and politicians in Norway, as elsewhere in Europe, took measures to reduce the number of emigrants and to encourage those abroad to come home.¹³ Lykke-Seest's writings took part in this national debate on the consequences of emigration for society. We will nevertheless see that his book

11 Sverre Tusvik, “Bestseljarar 1900–1993. Tåketale med opplagstal,” in *Bestseljarar*, ed. Sverre Tusvik (Oslo: Noregs Forskningsråd, 1994), 94.

12 Chr. Brinchmann, Anders Daae, and K.V. Hammer, *Hvem er hvem? Haandbok over samtidige norske mænd og kvinder* (Kristiania: Aschehoug, 1912), 168–69.

13 See Semmingsen, *Utvandringen fra Norge*, 405–44; Nils O. Østrem, “Myten om Amerika: ei drøfting av ‘Amerika-forteljinga’ og ‘-myten’ i norsk migrasjonshistorie: vitskapsteoretisk essay,” in *Migrasjon som kultur: artikkelsamling*, eds. Dan D. Daatland and Hans E. Aarek (Stavanger: Migrasjonsprosjektet i Rogaland i samarbeid med Rogaland forl., 2003), 44; Nils O. Østrem, *Norsk utvandringshistorie* (Oslo: Samlaget, 2006), 9–11, 38–39.

does not speak with one voice; it relates to different, partially overlapping, discourses on emigration and immigration, and includes accordant representations of “undesired” and “preferred” emigrants and immigrants.¹⁴

The Undesirable Emigration of Norway’s “Youngest Sons”

Lykke-Seest’s accounts of the transatlantic crossing and his first encounter with “the Tropics” recollect, in the first place, the traveler’s impressions and daily experiences. They exude his longing for the exotic, the authentic, and the natural. Boarding on the *Kristiania*, Lykke-Seest found himself “rejoicing in the thought of getting the Christiania smell thoroughly aired out, for [he] was simply sick and tired of the whole town.”¹⁵ Happy to find harmony and rest on the “mighty Atlantic,” he surrenders to poetic musing. “Oh, beautiful Graziosa!” he exclaims, for instance, when passing the Azores islands:

The emerald of the Azores, wonderful dream of Atlanta! Thy towns, white as a swan’s breast, lie basking in the sun, guarded from the world’s temptations by the mighty ocean and by the Ave Marias of the Black Friars. In thy dim olive groves, the lips of young lovers meet in passionate kisses; and beneath thy gold-laden orange trees they wander hand in hand in mute happiness.¹⁶

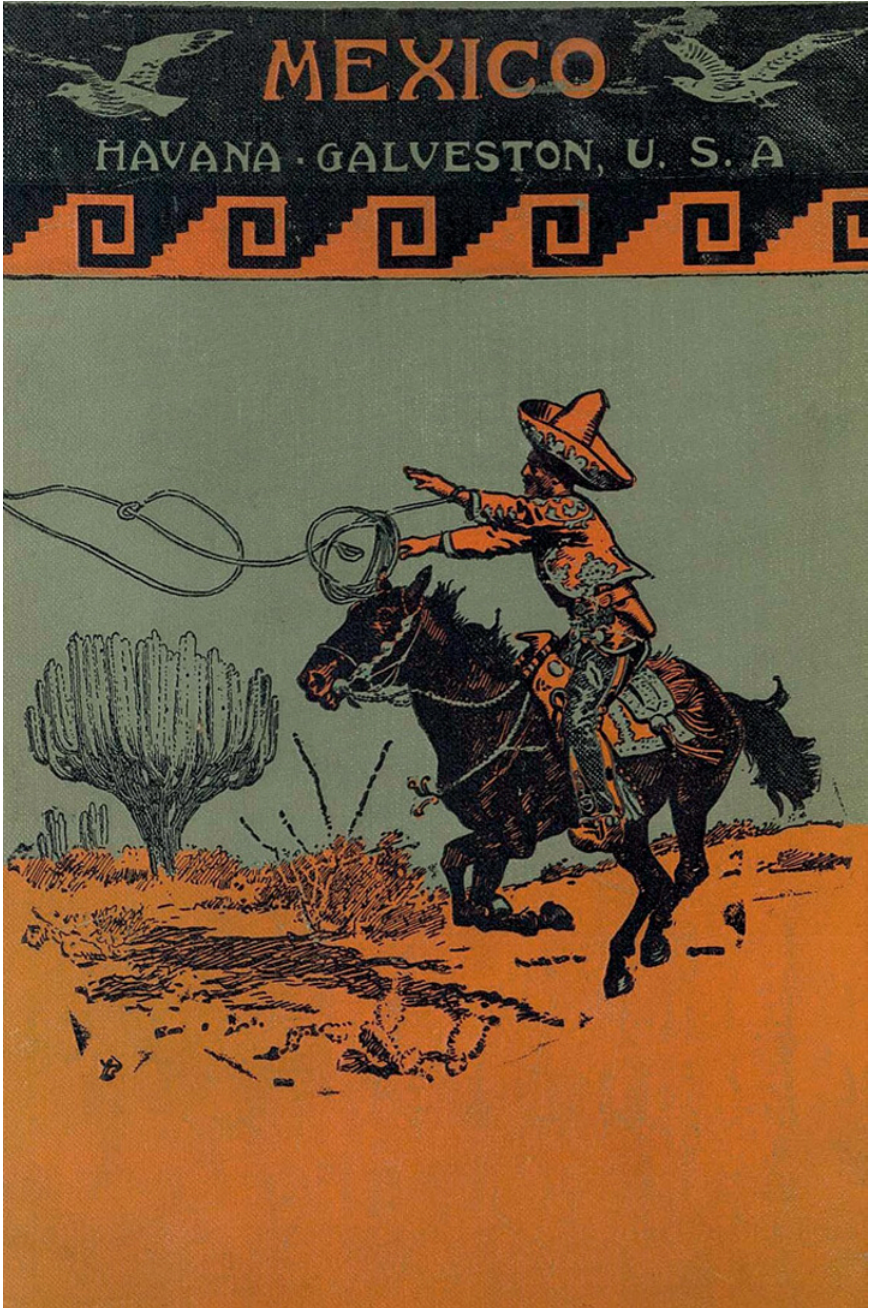
In a similar vein, the depictions of Havana, Veracruz, and Mexico City tell of tropical nature and volcanoes, of crowded market places and colonial churches, of sensual women, of “Indians,” “negroes,” and “mestizos.” In addition, the travel writer engages with contemporary debates on massive emigration. In one of the accounts of the Atlantic, for example, he describes a big emigrant steamer he observes from the deck of the *Kristiania*:

[The ship] was full of fortune-seeking emigrants, who waved their handkerchiefs and shouted Hurrah. They were packed together like sheep in a pen, many hundreds of men, women and children, fore and aft, while the

14 I understand “discourse” as conceived by Michel Foucault in *L’archéologie du pouvoir*, that is, as the body of knowledge and imagery that regulates what people think, say feel, and behave. Discourses are historically and culturally specific, and they usually reflect and strengthen existing patterns of power. See Michel Foucault (1969) *L’archéologie du pouvoir* (Paris: Gallimard).

15 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 7–8.

16 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 8.



MEXICO HAVANA & GALVESTON

A VOYAGE WITH THE FIRST STEAMER OF
THE NORWAY MEXICO GULF LINE"
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND
TRADE STATISTICS



Robert Myrnes Steen.



KRISTIANIA
ALB. CAMMERMEYERS FORLAG

FIGURE 5.1 *Book cover and title page of Lykke-Seest's book (1909)*

first-class passengers reclined in their deck-chairs upon the promenade deck. The emigrants looked like southerners – Italians, Portuguese, Poles, Hungarians and Jews, bound for Brazil and the Argentine Republic, to seek, in the great forests and pampas, for the golden bird that is said to dwell there, and may easily be caught. Oh, how little they know!¹⁷

The emigrants Lykke-Seest portrays in this passage are mostly poor families – the people traveling in first class are not to be counted among them, they are “passengers,” located on a different deck. The emigrants appear to come from Southern Europe and are hoping to get a piece of land in South America and become rich farmers. In Lykke-Seest’s eyes, they are naïve to believe so, as their dreams of easy money or “golden birds,” as he calls it, will most probably not come true.¹⁸ Moreover, these crowds of emigrants leaving for America are a loss for Europe, we read:

Week after week, thousands of young fortune-seekers disperse in all directions across the boundless plains – week after week, month after month, year after year, the strength and youth of Europe.¹⁹

Here Lykke-Seest takes quite a negative stance on emigration, reproducing Norwegian authorities’ official standpoint: leaving one’s country behind is problematic both on a personal level, as it is likely to lead to disappointment, and on a national level, as it causes the home country to lose its most talented citizens.

We will now see that the author repeats this unfavorable representation of emigrants as naïve farmers, bound to be disappointed, in other travel letters, most clearly in the one devoted to a Norwegian plantation project in Cuba. At the same time, his depictions of the members of the so-called Norwegian colony in Veracruz seem to favor a different kind of emigration – although Lykke-Seest is careful never to use the term “emigration” in this second context.

As for the Norwegians in Cuba, Lykke-Seest portrays them as an example *not* to follow. He develops his overtly anti-emigration stance in one travel letter

17 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 11.

18 The image of the “golden bird” refers to a popular Norwegian folk tale and is repeated throughout Lykke-Seest’s book. I will return to this tale later in the analysis.

19 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 11.

from 1908, translated in the book as “Emigration to Cuba.” This is the only time the author explicitly frames Norwegian presence in the region as “emigration” – we will see that he most often avoids referring to Norwegians abroad as “emigrants.” “The emigration of Norwegian farmers to Cuba is a fantastic idea,” the account sets off, “and with the weakness we Norwegians have for the fantastical, the idea began to haunt a good many minds. I must say at once, that the emigration of Norwegian farmers to Cuba is a very poor joke.”²⁰ Lykke-Seest explicitly distances himself from the “fairy tale” stories Norwegian newspapers had written about “a man from the North” who had started a plantation in Cuba. The English translation does not mention any details about this “man from the North,” but for a Norwegian audience it was clear that the author referred to polar explorer and national hero Otto Sverdrup and his much commented colonization project in the Baracoa region in eastern Cuba.²¹ The “man from the North” was soon followed to Cuba by other “possessed” fortune-seekers, Lykke-Seest ironically comments:

[H]e happened to think of Cuba, and there he got land somewhere in the east in a narrow valley, to which there was neither road nor path, only a partially navigable river, up which he had to punt himself in a flat-bottomed boat. This fantastic purchase of land was written about in the newspapers, and instantly some persons were possessed with the idea. It appealed to the “youngest son” nature in our people. Their golden bird was to be found there, there was a fortune to be gained there in a short time; this was a thing to take part in. To Cuba! How mad the whole thing is!²²

For the second time, Lykke-Seest refers to the Norwegian folk tale *Gullfuglen* (The golden bird).²³ This is one of many tales about the youngest and most adventurous of three brothers, often called Espen Askeladd. Scorned and

20 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 40.

21 The original travel letter from 1908, published in the Norwegian paper *Fri Presse*, did name Sverdrup. The tone of this letter was even more negative than that of its English translation. Peter Lykke-Seest, “Cubanske breve. Udvandring til Cuba,” *Fri Presse*, March 6, 1908.

22 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 41.

23 Folk tales belonged originally to an oral tradition of storytelling. In the 1840s, Peter Chr. Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe published a famous four-volume collection of tales in Norway; the story of the golden bird appears in these *Norske folkeeventyr* (*Norwegian folk-tales*, 1841–44).

derided by his family, he invariably triumphs in the end, without much effort, almost accidentally. In the story of the golden bird, Askeladd wanders out in the world, catches a golden bird, and ends up marrying a beautiful princess and living in a castle. In the real world, Norway produces a lot of these “youngest sons,” Lykke-Seest writes, it is “in the nature of the country.”²⁴ Cuba, however, is no place for them:

Can a Norwegian farmer cultivate tropical fruits? Can a Norwegian farmer speak Spanish? How would he be able to manage the black fellows that he must of necessity have to help with the clearing and field work? What would he live on while the “grass was growing?” What would not every bit of klip-fish, every potato cost to bring up to his clearing? “Get work?” No one but the negroes and Chinese can “work” under the sun of Cuba. Any one else would succumb in the course of a few years.²⁵

Compared to the unlucky Southern European emigrants from the earlier account, Norwegians dreaming of Cuba are depicted in an even more negative way. For Lykke-Seest, they are not just naïve dreamers, they suffer from a mental disease: they are presented as “mad,” “possessed,” and “haunted” by “fantastical” ideas. And even though he appears unsure about a number of things, using modifiers as “it is not known,” “I believe,” and “I think,” Lykke-Seest seems sure enough to frame the plantation project not just as a disappointment, but as plain failure. The Norwegians in the Cuban area of Baracoa have worked hard and invested large sums in the foreign land, he writes, yet they are not making much money; floods have destroyed some of the properties; to others, roads are scarce and in bad conditions. In short, these Askeladds did not catch the golden bird and build a castle; they live an extremely tough life in an undesirable, far-off place.²⁶ For some engineers there might be work in Cuba, the travel writer admits, but common farmers should give up the “insane” idea of migrating to Cuba, and rich capitalists would do better investing their money at home.²⁷

24 Lykke-Seest associates “youngest sons” leaving their country with the adventurous nature of Norwegian young men. Yet the image can also be linked to the prevailing rule of primogeniture, which forced many “youngest sons” to leave Norway where available land was scarce. See Ellen Fensterseifer Woortmann in this volume.

25 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 41.

26 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 42–44.

27 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 42.

The Exemplary “Colony” of Gentlemen

Lykke-Seest’s travel letters from Veracruz, Mexico, are a different story. They do not treat emigration explicitly as a topic. Rather, they are day-to-day accounts of the writer’s experiences and impressions, including his meetings with a number of fellow countrymen living in the city. Unlike the naïve fortune-seekers on the steamer and the “mad” Norwegian emigrants in Cuba, the author’s countrymen in Veracruz are respectable ship captains and successful businessmen, at all times aided by a capable Norwegian consul:

We had scarcely set foot upon Mexican land, when we were welcomed in good East-Country Norwegian by a man dressed in white. This was Herr Otto Whist, who in company with two brothers and a fourth Norwegian has started an agency business in Vera Cruz in Norwegian exports. He asked us to go up with him to his office, where the whole Norwegian colony in Vera Cruz was gathered, and wished to drink a glass with us in welcome. On the way we were met by a fresh surprise. This was the Norwegian consul in Mexico City, who had come down to receive us and accompany us to the capital. He had traveled all night, and was now sitting having his boots polished, when we suddenly came upon him.²⁸

Despite living abroad, the members of the Norwegian “colony” in Veracruz are true Norwegians, speaking a “good” type of Norwegian. They are educated “gentlemen and ladies,” always dressed impeccably, the quoted passage insists; “the Norwegian colony came to escort us [Lykke-Seest and his wife] to the railway station, every one of its members in freshly starched white suits and in good spirits,”²⁹ we read in another account. Norwegians in Veracruz live comfortable lives in a modern city, have “clean” jobs in offices, and gather regularly at fancy parties where they hold traditional speeches and sing patriotic songs, celebrating Norwegian symbols, including Bryde’s shipping line:

There were sixteen of us, Norwegian ladies and gentlemen, gathered round the festal board, including the excellent vice-consul for Norway. ... The whole entertainment was marked with a spirit of the outmost heartiness.

²⁸ Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 58.

²⁹ Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 68.

It was stylish and successful, and from my acquaintance with tropical prices, I can answer for it that it was not cheap. Captain Bodom, on behalf of the Norwegian colony, wished the guests welcome, and soon after the various speakers were in full swing. Consul Larsen said some nice things about the Norwegian seaman, and called upon us to drink to the Norwegian flag. ... [The vice-consul] rose, and made a good speech in English for the new Royal House of Norway. Once more nine hurrahs, and the national anthem. After these official healths, with their accompanying patriotic enthusiasm and numerous hurrahs, there was a little pause sufficient to allow of our putting a small quantity of food into our mouths, and then Captain Nielsen rose, stroking his white beard. This time it was for Bryde's Steamship Line. Of course Bryde's health was drunk, and then "Sons of Norway" was sung; so Bryde had every reason to be satisfied.³⁰

In short, Lykke-Seest's accounts of Veracruz show nothing but approval, even admiration, for these people and their way of living. Compared to the naïve farmers and failed plantation owners, they seem to exemplify a more desirable type of expatriates. Once more, Lykke-Seest's accounts fit the discourse of the Norwegian authorities. The country's consul and vice-consul are much praised for their work, which seems to consist mainly of assisting Norwegian shipping captains and entrepreneurs, accordingly portrayed in a highly favorable light. Men like Otto Whist in Veracruz were, indeed, the ones who could make way for Norwegian trade and business, the ones who could open the market for Norwegian products and investors.

Lykke-Seest never calls the Norwegians in Veracruz "emigrants" – a term he reserves for farmers leaving their country behind – rather he repeatedly refers to them as a "colony." A bit surprisingly, however, Lykke-Seest at no point speaks of a "colony" of Norwegians in Cuba, even if this was how they were commonly referred to in the Norwegian press – in the sense that they were a group of countrymen "colonizing land," that is, buying land in some desert place and building their farms from scratch. The following passages from newspaper comments on Sverdrup's colonization project in Baracoa illustrate this:

[Captain Sverdrup] is going to found a Norwegian plantation there. Perhaps a Norwegian colony will arise in Cuba! ... The United States will soon be full with the stream of emigrants. Also, Norwegians disappear so easily in the States, they get lost in the mass, are wiped out over the course

30 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 59.

of years. So what if, instead, the Norwegian emigration stream were led to Cuba, for example, if a large Norwegian colony were established there, respecting Cuban law, of course, but still in a way that the Norwegian distinctive character, the language and so on, were to be preserved over the generations?³¹

[Otto Sverdrup, asked to comment upon recent social unrest in Cuba,] would neither advise nor dissuade fellow countrymen to emigrate to Cuba. All the places in his colony are taken.³²

In Lykke-Seest's accounts of Veracruz, the word "colony" is used in a broader sense, meaning "community of countrymen living abroad," and it bears a number of positive connotations, one of them being loyalty to the language and traditions of the homeland, as also in the *Aftenposten* article. The Veracruzian colony, moreover, consists exclusively of educated, well-off, and urban individuals. It is striking that more humble Norwegians, like for instance sailors working on the ships or in the harbor, are not referred to as part of the colony – in fact, the accounts do not mention them at all. By excluding farmers, sailors, and artisans from the colony, while simultaneously praising the life and work of its successful members, the text suggests that this was the new kind of emigration Norway envisioned, an emigration not seeking to colonize new land but new markets. Once more Lykke-Seest adopts the Norwegian authorities' standpoints on emigration: whereas the Cuban migratory experience is said to be a fairy tale with a bad ending, a story of the past, the Veracruzian expatriates exemplify the successful Norwegian colony of the modern times.

The Immigration of Rational Farmers

While his writings of Cuba and Veracruz had been very personal, often day-to-day accounts of his experiences and observations, in the later Mexican accounts, published from late April 1908 onwards, Lykke-Seest switches to an apparently more objective tone. He is seldom explicitly present in the text as an eyewitness, romantic daydreaming passages become rare, and the depictions become less impressionistic and more factual. Whether the author reports on the country's history, politics, or social groups, and

31 *Aftenposten* March 26, 1906, quoted in Helge Stenersen, *Det norske Cuba-eventyret: koloniserings-ideen som spilte fallitt* (Brandbu: H. Stenersen, 1999), 11–12, my translation.

32 *Stavanger Aftenblad*, August 1, 1907, my translation.

whether he comments on the economic situation or trade statistics, he sends a clear message to his countrymen back home – a message that also fits the shipping company's commercial goals, namely, that Mexico under President Porfirio Díaz is a modern nation with a stable economy and a growing consumer market. Like other foreigners, Norwegians should seize the countless opportunities the country offers, especially now that it had a direct connection with Norway through “our own steamers.” Norwegians should trade *with* Mexico, they should engage in all kinds of businesses *in* Mexico, and they should do it before it is too late, Lykke-Seest repeatedly urges his readers:

There will be room in this country for many men with foresight and capital. The Americans have long understood this, and have established themselves in many large businesses. Norwegian enterprise might also assert itself in many ways.³³

It is a country with such great possibilities for the future for Norwegian enterprise too – that if we do not do something here to work up our position, we can hardly know the time of our visitation.³⁴

Lykke-Seest provides his readers not only with a general overview of profitable sectors of the Mexican economy (like mining and fishing), he also lists the possible factories Norwegians could build there, producing glass, motor engines, and wooden houses, for example.³⁵ Now, starting a business on the other side of the ocean most naturally involves settling down there, so it seems that the author had come to add entrepreneurs and investors to his list of “favored” expatriates.

At other times, Lykke-Seest seems to move even further away from previous negative viewpoints, as his last writings offer a clear opening for the immigration of farmers to Mexico.³⁶ Lykke-Seest reports, indeed, that the Mexican government wants to attract European farmers to cultivate the land – the country's “uncivilized Indians” are, after all, not up to the task:

33 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 126.

34 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 141–42.

35 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 122–38.

36 Some of these Mexican accounts were not published in *Fri Presse*, which ceased to exist from May 30, 1908 (yet shortly reappeared in 1929–30). They might have appeared in other local newspapers – in the book's preface, Lykke-Seest mentions that his travel letters were published in a number of newspapers – but I have not been able to trace them. It is also possible these accounts (or some of them) were written specifically for the book in 1909.

[Mexico] is only thinly populated. There are altogether about fourteen million persons, about six million of these being half civilised, or wholly uncivilised Indians, who cultivate nothing but a little maize, potatoes and barley for their own simple requirements. Some of them move from place to place, and are a hindrance to rational agriculture. ... The Government are also turning their attention to the question of the immigration of farmers from Europe, and the time cannot be far distant when large portions of Mexico's hills and dales in the temperate zone will be open to cultivation by capable farmers. At present, however, this matter has only arrived at a preparatory stage.³⁷

Lykke-Seest does not explicitly mention Norwegian farmers, but compared to the Cuban travel accounts, he now speaks in a surprisingly positive way of immigration and tropical agriculture. No reference here to mentally ill migrants – European farmers in Mexico are portrayed as “capable” and “rational.” No illusionary golden birds – Mexico offers plenty of good land, waiting for immigrants to cultivate it: “How will it be,” Lykke-Seest dreams away, “when this enormous country is cultivated, when immigration begins to increase, and the rich, virgin soil comes under the plough?”³⁸ Indeed, at times it seems that it is not the immigrants but the writer himself who now fantasizes of “golden birds,” for example when he claims that “an orange grove will spring up if you only drop a pip on the ground”³⁹ and that large amounts of forest are just “lying useless, waiting to be turned into gold.”⁴⁰ No mention either of the possible difficulties of cultivating tropical fruits, learning a new language, or working in tough conditions under a burning sun. Moreover, contrary to the rather primitive Cuban plantations, agriculture in Mexico is associated with science, rationality, and modernity:

A large part of the good land in Mexico has too little water to allow of its being cultivated, but to remedy this the Government has in the meantime voted twenty-five million pesos for irrigation, while experiments are being made at various places in rational cultivation. For the encouragement of agriculture, the various states have established large, well arranged agricultural schools under capable management, and new roads to the connecting points

37 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 123.

38 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 141.

39 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 106.

40 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 122.

are continually being laid. The construction of railways must also be mentioned in this context.⁴¹

Agriculture in Mexico is the agriculture of the future. And again the word “colony” appears,⁴² this time referring to farming projects (as the ones in Cuba), yet also clearly associated with modern types of agriculture (unlike the ones in Cuba).

So, why this turn away from the previous straightforward anti-emigration position? I will now argue that, through his readings and encounters in the Mexican capital, Lykke-Seest became acquainted with the image that the local political and economic elites presented of their country and its leader for more than thirty years by then, president Porfirio Díaz: Mexico as a country with countless opportunities for immigrants. At the same time, the later Mexican accounts bear a striking resemblance to popular contemporary English and American travelogues of the country, which are said to have popularized the image the country sought to spread of itself – an image that also fit Bryde’s and Lykke-Seest’s message.

Commissioned by shipowner Bryde, Lykke-Seest’s travelogue inevitably promotes the shipping company’s trade and business interests, particularly in Mexico. Attracting foreign investors and a skilled workforce had become the Mexican government’s main strategy for stimulating the economy, and President Díaz and his ministers actively construed an image of Mexico as a modern country of unlimited opportunities for immigrants.⁴³ Lykke-Seest lived in Mexico for more than six months, and during his stay he spoke with several state officials, even meeting with the president himself.⁴⁴ His book happily integrates information and statistics that he reports to have received directly from the president’s “departments.”⁴⁵ His local written sources seem to have been predominantly supportive of the US-friendly Díaz regime: his readings⁴⁶ include the state-subsidized *El Imparcial*, the *Mexican Daily Record*, financed by the owner of the United States Banking Company,⁴⁷ and the *Mexican Herald*,

41 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 124.

42 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 123.

43 Jürgen Buchenau, “Small Numbers, Great Impact: Mexico and Its Immigrants, 1821–1973,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 20(3) (2001), 31–35.

44 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 106–10, 119–22.

45 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 110, 138, 143.

46 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 118.

47 Schell, William, *Integral Outsiders: The American Colony in Mexico City, 1876–1911* (Denver: SR Books, 2001), 99.

said to be closely intertwined with the Diaz regime, perhaps even subsidized by it.⁴⁸ If, as Paul Garner points out, “dissident voices were constantly heard and opposition papers continued to publish” throughout the Porfiriato,⁴⁹ Lykke-Seest seems to have been either unaware of their existence or reluctant to cite them, claiming that “there is no real opposition press in Mexico.”⁵⁰ In short, Lykke-Seest’s sources seem to have been mainly Mexican, and mainly allied to Porfirianism. The Mexican “insider’s position” he had come to adopt is reflected, for example, in his using the term “immigration” in the Mexican book chapters, and not “emigration,” as in his previous accounts of Cuba.

Lykke-Seest’s fairly uncritical integration of a Porfirian discourse can thus be understood, in the first place, in the context of the commercial interests his sponsor had in Mexico – interests that were well served with the Porfirian message of “countless opportunities for immigrants.” Yet there might be another possible explanation for the shift to a more positive image of the migration of farmers to Mexico. Bryde’s correspondence – whether with his Mexican representatives and advocates, with Minister Michael Strøm Lie of the Norwegian legation in Mexico City, or others – suggests that the Norway Mexico Gulf Line actually planned to ship Norwegian farmers to Mexico.⁵¹ Well aware of the Mexican government’s colonization projects, the company offered to ship emigrants at preferential rates, in exchange for a subsidy of fifty-five thousand pesos over three years. In 1912, after five years of negotiations, in which also Minister Lie and other representatives of the Norwegian government had participated, a contract between the Mexican government and the Norway Mexico Gulf Line was drawn up, specifying, among other things, that the company would ship Norwegian “colonists” and temporary wooden houses from Kristiania to Puerto Mexico and Veracruz. However, because of the Mexican Revolution, which had come to shake the country in 1910 and which would last more than a decade, the agreement was never signed. But it is not unlikely that Lykke-Seest at some point had learned of the plans of his benefactor and pragmatically opted for a less negative stance towards colonization projects in Mexico.

At the same time, Lykke-Seest might have found inspiration for his Mexican accounts in some of the many best-selling travelogues of the country, such as

48 Jerry W. Knudson, “The Mexican Herald: Outpost of Empire, 1895–1915,” *International Communication Gazette* 63(5) (2001), 387–98.

49 Paul Garner, *Porfirio Díaz* (Harlow: Routledge, 2001), 123.

50 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 118.

51 Archive of the Norwegian Legation in Mexico, Department of Foreign Affairs, A2065, L0011 HAN, nr. 0002.

those by British-American Mrs Alec-Tweedie and American William Carson. These texts sang the praises of President Porfirio Díaz and spread the image of a modern country, welcoming foreign investment for the extraction of the natural wealth – an image Díaz and his advisors sought to spread. According to Jason Ruiz, American travel writers “played a crucial but overlooked role in popularizing the image of Mexico as an object of the cultural and economic forms of US imperialism that flourished around 1898.”⁵² Lykke-Seest’s texts seem to follow these models: he dedicates pages and pages to the glorification of President Díaz, admires the country’s modern facilities, and enumerates its unlimited natural resources – and he does so in much the same words and images as his American colleagues. William E. Carson, for example, writes the following in *Mexico, Wonderland of the South* (1909):

Under his [Porfirio Díaz’s] stern rule, the progress of Mexico has been marvellous. The old Mexican cities have suddenly become busy places, with new public buildings, fine shops, asphalted streets, electric lights, electric street-cars and other visible evidence of modern progress. ... Welcomed by the government, men with money are swarming into Mexico from all parts of the world to engage in business, particularly mining; for the mineral riches of the country, its gold, silver and copper, have not been half developed.⁵³

Compare that description with how Lykke-Seest portrays Mexico City as a modern capital attracting enterprising men from abroad:

The old Aztec city on the table-land has now become a modern capital, with electric lighting, asphalted streets, an extensive system of electric tramways, handsome shops, beautiful parks, and broad avenues. It has about 400,000 inhabitants, and is steadily increasing. People flock to it from the United States and from all the countries of Europe; for Mexico is a country with great possibilities for the future, and as the country’s natural sources of wealth are utilised more and more the city on the table-land will also increase in population and in the accessories of modern life.⁵⁴

52 Jason Ruiz, “A New Factor in American Destiny: Visions of Porfirio Díaz and the Politics of ‘Logical Paternalism,’” *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 3(2) (2011), 2.

53 William E. Carson, *Mexico, Wonderland of the South* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1909), 206.

54 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 79.

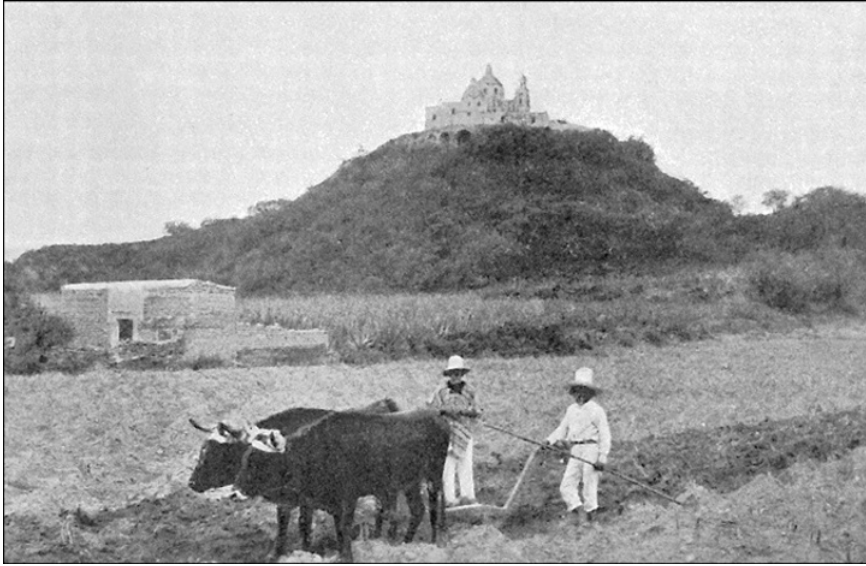


FIGURE 5.2 *Cholula*⁵⁵

The 1909 book also includes many pictures that seem to have been popular in other travel books of Mexico, like the one portraying two farmers plowing the land against the background of the Great Pyramid of Cholula, on top of which the Spanish had built a church in the sixteenth century (figure 5.2); this same picture is used in both Carson's and Tweedie's works. Like many other travelogues of Porfirian Mexico,⁵⁶ Lykke-Seest also chose a portrait of President Diaz as a frontispiece for his book (figure 5.3). For Anglo-Saxon travel writers, it was, indeed, often President Diaz himself who embodied Mexico's progress, stability, and future opportunities for foreign investment.⁵⁷ Again Lykke-Seest seems to follow their example, often turning to an image of the "great statesman" Diaz "laying the lines" for present and future development, or "conducting the train or the ship" that is Mexico,⁵⁸ like in the following example:

55 In Alec-Tweedie, *The Maker of Modern Mexico. Porfirio Diaz* (New York: John Lane, 1906), 88; Lykke-Seest *Mexico Havana*, 73; Carson *Mexico, Wonderland*, 238.

56 Ruiz, "A New Factor," 5.

57 Ruiz, "A New Factor"; Garner, *Porfirio Diaz*, 7–12.

58 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 101, 105, 122.

FIGURE 5.3 *Porfirio Díaz*⁵⁹

The line has been laid, and the engine, which had left the rails, has now been rerailed, and is steaming away at a good, steady, irreproachable pace; and Porfirio Diaz himself stands by the lever. It is not as a war-hero that Porfirio Diaz will gain posthumous renown, but as a state organiser.⁶⁰

This echoes the praise from other travelers, such as Mrs Alec Tweedie in her 1906 book *The Maker of Modern Mexico*:

Porfirio Diaz has been allowed to build up the modern State of Mexico on the lines that he himself laid out, undisturbed by the rivalries of other would-be constructors, and it will be an imperishable monument of his fame.⁶¹

Mexico, in short, had no credit. But it possessed a man [i.e., Diaz], known to the world at that time as a brilliant soldier, but who was to prove himself even greater as a statesman and administrator.⁶²

⁵⁹ In Alec-Tweedie, *The Maker*, 348; Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, frontispiece.

⁶⁰ Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 106.

⁶¹ Alec-Tweedie, *The Maker*, 337.

⁶² Alec-Tweedie, *The Maker*, 272.

What makes the similarities between these writings interesting is not so much that Lykke-Seest might have actually read Carson's and Tweedie's texts and copied them – which in the case of Carson is most unlikely, as his book came out in the same year as Lykke-Seest's – but rather that Lykke-Seest seems to have inscribed himself in a tradition of travel writing that reproduced the image the Mexican government carefully crafted of the country and its leader.⁶³

Lykke-Seest's book, however, also differs from the Anglo-Saxon tradition in that the success of future Norwegian business projects in Mexico is not taken for granted. Time is running out, Norwegians might arrive too late, the author insists. Unlike the British and American travelogues, the tone of the Norwegian book is a combination of exhortation and despair:

The thing is to take time by the forelock, to seize the chances before they vanish. There are many hands stretched out for them. Here in Mexico, the various nations are pushing in with strength, energy and capital, in order to profit as much as possible by the development of the country. And we too could assert ourselves if we can and will venture in where so many that are stronger are trying to get everything.⁶⁴

An interesting detail is that Lykke-Seest also seeks to “Norwegianize” the image of Porfirio Diaz, turning once more to the image of the “youngest son”, “He was a modern ‘younger son’ of the fairy tales, who attained his object, not when asleep, like some of the fairy tales’ ‘younger sons’: but through fighting, exertion, and strength of will.”⁶⁵ Unlike the fictional youngest son who just happens to succeed in life, unlike the real-life migrating youngest sons dreaming of easy money, Porfirio Diaz embodies a “modern young son,” one who all the way knew perfectly well what he was doing, one who fought and struggled and reached his goal: “He set himself a task, and he accomplished it. His indomitable will, his political wisdom, his untiring energy, were the qualities that saved Mexico from a self-consuming fire.”⁶⁶ If the fairy tales of emigration inevitably failed to have a happy ending in the original travel letters from 1907–8, such endings do exist in 1909 – thanks to Porfirio Diaz's efforts. For Lykke-Seest,

63 Garner, *Porfirio Diaz*, 2, 12.

64 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 135.

65 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 105.

66 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 105.

Mexico in 1909 is a “wonderful fairy-land,”⁶⁷ but one where an improved version of the Norwegian youngest son makes dreams come true.

Concluding Remarks

Lykke-Seest’s texts were very much a product of their times. Partly conceived as personal impressions of a escapist journey to “the Tropics,” they also engaged in contemporary debates on emigration, shipping, and trade. The depictions of the emigrant steamer and Norwegian plantations in Cuba voice Norwegian authorities’ highly negative stance towards the emigration of Norwegian farmers. Furthermore, the accounts of the writer’s festive stay with the Norwegian “colony” in Veracruz can be related to Norway’s dispute with Sweden over having its “own” consular representation abroad and to the assumedly “natural” alliance between Norwegian consulates, shipping, and export.

Yet the texts were also very much an expression of their author’s personal longings – of a late romantic travel writer on an exotic trip and an amateur market analyst on a mission, namely, promoting Norwegian trade and investment in Mexico through “our own line of steamers.” Possibly inspired by a tradition of American and British travel writing of Mexico, and perhaps aware of the shipping company’s plans to carry Norwegian farmers to Mexico, Lykke-Seest gradually abandoned his overt anti-emigration stance and moved towards an image of the country as a “fairy-tale land” for foreigners, wholeheartedly integrating the Porfirian discourse of a “modern Mexico for all immigrants.”

Still, Norwegians did not massively move to Mexico with the Norway Mexican Gulf Line or otherwise, neither to seek new land nor to seek new markets. Steinar A. Sæther and Nils Olav Østrem have estimated that between three hundred and six hundred Norwegians migrated to the country before 1940 – a small number compared to the ten thousand or so who migrated to the whole of Latin America.⁶⁸ Porfirian rhetoric notwithstanding, Mexico was by no means a fairy-tale land for immigrants: wages were low, the best lands were

67 Lykke-Seest, *Mexico Havana*, 106.

68 Steinar A. Sæther and Nils Olav Østrem, “Norwegian Emigration to Latin America: Numbers, Questions and Methods,” in Christina Folke Ax and Nils Olav Østrem (eds.), *Nordic Migration. Research Status, Perspectives and Challenges* (Stamsund: Orkana Akademisk, 2011), 130–31.

already taken, and colonization programs were scarce.⁶⁹ The Mexican Revolution (1910–20), which plunged the country into chaos, did not make it more attractive to foreigners, and Norwegian presence was more than halved between 1910 and 1921.⁷⁰ As shown by Sæther in the first chapter of this book, the number of arrivals in Mexico increased again in the 1920s, while the number of resident Norwegians continued to decline, suggesting that many either returned to Norway or moved on to their next destination, for instance the nearby United States. This pattern was not unique to Norwegians in Mexico: Pablo Yankelevich points out that, in the late 1920s, less than a third of the total number of immigrants who entered Mexico each year actually settled in that country. Most considered it an antechamber to the United States, where immigration policies had become more restrictive.⁷¹

Lykke-Seest's texts do indicate that small Norwegian networks were in place in Cuba and Veracruz at the beginning of the twentieth century, and that information about job opportunities *was* circulating – Lykke-Seest's own stories of failure and success, for one, but also the newspaper “fantasy” stories about the plantations in Baracoa that he refers to. Still, migration from Norway to these places never really took off. In the case of Mexico, the aforementioned numbers suggest that the Mexican Revolution interfered with the endogenous dynamics that for Thomas Faist are crucial for any migration process to reach a climax.⁷² As for the plantation projects in Eastern Cuba, Helge Stenersen attributes their failure to exceptional climatic circumstances in 1907–9 and the lack of transportation routes from the region – a long-expected train connection with Santiago was never established, nor did steamship routes regularly call at Baracoa port.⁷³ More than network dynamics, macro factors (political, climatic, economic) may, thus, have had an impact on the Norwegian migration stream to Mexico and Cuba at the beginning of the twentieth century.

69 Buchenau, “Small Numbers, Great Impact,” 31–36; José C. Moya, “A Continent of Immigrants: Postcolonial Shifts in the Western Hemisphere,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 86(1) (2006), 19.

70 Sæther and Østrem, “Norwegian Emigration to Latin America,” 130–31.

71 Pablo Yankelevich, “Mexico for the Mexicans: Immigration, National Sovereignty and the Promotion of Mestizaje,” *The Americas* 68(3) (2012), 411–12.

72 Thomas Faist, *The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), 145ff. See also the introduction of this book.

73 Helge Stenersen, *Det norske Cuba-eventyret*. According to Stenersen, the “Norwegian Age” in the Baracoa region lasted from 1906 to 1919. During those years, altogether ninety-seven Norwegians lived for a shorter or longer period in the Baracoa district. Many left Cuba for the United States. None stayed.

All in all, Lykke-Seest's (and Bryde's) discursive efforts to mobilize people and money from Norway to Mexico may have had a limited effect on the history of migration. Yet the texts have proven interesting: first, in that they testify to the close relation between shipping, state politics, and migration in the Norway of the early 1900s; second, in that they recollect Norway's attempts to assert its position in an increasingly globalizing market; and third, in that they reflect, support, and preserve conceptions of desirable and undesirable migrants that existed on both sides of the Atlantic.

Opportunities for the Few and Select: Norwegians in Guatemala (1900–1940)

Synnøve Ones Rosales

Norwegian presence in Guatemala is closely linked to two dominant and interconnected features of the country in the liberal age in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century: the coffee boom and the modernization of infrastructure. The Norwegians were, however, latecomers in the foreign immigration in Guatemala, preceded by British, North Americans, Swiss, Belgians, French, Spanish, Italians, and most importantly by the Germans. But whereas the Germans came to constitute a relatively numerous presence in Guatemala, and a most important one in economic terms, Norwegians never seem to have numbered more than twenty, not even at the peak of Norwegian presence around 1930. Why did Norwegian presence remain so limited? And why didn't Norwegian communities form to attract more Norwegians, as was the case with the Germans in Guatemala, or with the Norwegians in the United States? This chapter looks at the role the Norwegian immigrants played in Guatemala between 1900 and 1940, traces the networks that may have brought them there, and explores their place in and relationship to contemporary Guatemalan society.

Guatemala did, as did several Latin American countries, encourage European immigration in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. However, given the structure of Guatemalan society, with a small, white, economic and political ruling elite, proprietors of large extensions of land, and an almost unlimited access to cheap indigenous labor, real opportunities for immigrants were few. Mostly, they were reserved for those who had the possibilities of inserting themselves into the elite. Making a living as a farmhand or the owner of a small plot of land was virtually impossible. Thus, the typical successful immigrant in Guatemala, Norwegian or other, was he who arrived with capital to invest and contacts within the economic and political elite.¹ The occupation of the successful immigrant in

1 See for example David J. McCreery, "Coffee and Class: The Structure of Development in Liberal Guatemala." *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Aug., 1976), 452. There was, of course, also an extensive immigration from Mexico, Honduras and El Salvador with properties different from those of the European and North American influx.

Guatemala was generally within activities closely linked to the coffee boom, such as agriculture, commerce, banking and not least the development of new and modern infrastructure. These were also activities closely linked to transnational capitalism, as many of them were in the hands of foreigners and foreign companies.

The Norwegian Coffee Planters in Guatemala's Foreign Immigration 1900–1940

Norwegian presence in Guatemala dates at least as far back as 1886, when Ernesto Anderzon of Norwegian nationality was listed as a resident in Antigua.² He might have been the only Norwegian in Guatemala until 1901, when a British citizen of Norwegian descent, Walter Lind, arrived in Guatemala to become probably the first Norwegian to settle as a coffee planter there.³ He

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- 2 Archivo General de Centro América (AGCA), Sección del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (SRE), B6803, "Nómina de los extranjeros residentes en el departamento de Sacatepéquez, diciembre 14, 1886." Possibly this was the same man who in 1915 was listed in the commercial directory of Guatemala as "Ernesto Anderson, ingeniero, Empresa Eléctrica del Norte." Marroquín Hermanos, ed., *Directorio Oficial y Guía General de la República de Guatemala, año de 1915–1916* (Guatemala: Casa Colorada, 1916), 128 and 207. In 1903, four Norwegians and one Swedish-Norwegian appear in the Guatemalan government's index of foreigners residing in the country. However, given the union between Norway and Sweden until 1905, questions of nationality were sometimes a bit unclear around the turn of the century. Thus, the "Norwegians" Manuel Teodoro Möller, Hugo E. Nordberg, Axel Fabián Pira, and Federico Berck Thomsen, and the Swedish-Norwegian Hugo Peterson, were all Swedish-born, as confirmed by a search in the sources available through www.ancestry.com. AGCA, SRE, B5683, "Índice de Ciudadanos Extranjeros Inscritos como tales, 31 de Octubre de 1903."
- 3 Information on Walter Lind (Petersen) and Randi de Lange is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B5683, "Índice de Ciudadanos Extranjeros Inscritos como tales, 31 de Octubre de 1903." www.digitalarkivet.uib.no, Bergen, «Korskirken 1885–1912, skannet residerende kapellans bok», p. 84: Confirmation of Randi de Lange, October 4, 1896; Censuses for Bergen for 1885, 1891, 1900 and 1910; "Emigranter fra Bergen 1874–1930": departure from Bergen September 6 1921; "Kristiania, Rikshospitalet, skannet fødselsregister 1918–1918," p. 78: birth of Erik Hall Lind, July 10 1918; "Domkirken 1916–1923, skannet fødselsregister," p. 149: birth of Norman Petersen Lind, June 2, 1921. www.ancestry.com, "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837–1915, Births registered in October, November and December 1876," p. 306: Birth of Walter Oliver L. Petersen; "1891 England Census": 5 Wheathill Road, Penge Parish, London; "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837–1915, Marriages registered in October, November and December 1915," pp. 66, 266 and 342: Marriage of Randi de Lange and Walter L. Petersen/Walter P. Lind; "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1966": Deaths of Walter Petersen Lind, November 2, 1948, and Randi

was born Walter Lind Petersen in London in 1876 by Norwegian parents and grew up in England, but after a quarrel with his father he took British citizenship and removed “Petersen” from his surname. Walter Lind moved to Guatemala as a representative of Rosing Brothers & Co., one of the largest coffee importers of London, and subsequently became important British coffee planter Gordon Smith’s business partner, as well as the owner of his own company, Lind & Co. Smith and Lind bought their first property together in 1910, Finca Mocá in Santa Bárbara, and the two came to play an important role in the Guatemalan coffee industry. In 1919, Gordon Smith & Co. owned the fincas Helvetia, Tambor, Dolores, and Palimira and received financial support from Norwegians John Poulson and Harald Stange to administer them.⁴ Poulson and Stange sold their share to Christian Sonne of New York in 1927, but as we shall see, they did not withdraw from the Guatemalan coffee industry. In 1933, Finca Helvetia was among the nine largest coffee farms in the country, and Gordon Smith & Co., with seven fincas, was the third most important coffee firm in Guatemala.⁵ Such important fincas “had their own modern processing plants, ...owned export houses and were involved in banking and crop finance.”⁶ Moreover, Lind & Co. was listed among the twenty-six largest coffee exporters in Guatemala.⁷ Their coffee was sold also to the Scandinavian countries, and in the 1920s the Helvetia coffee was reported to be well known as Guatemala’s finest in Norway and Sweden.

Furthermore, Lind in many ways is representative of the classic pioneer, being the reason for several Norwegians to travel to Guatemala. He married

Lind December 8, 1949. Interview with Ingrid Lind Sverdrup de Herold, Guatemala City, August 8, 2013; F.W. Holtermann, “Paa Reise i Guatemala. Visit paa nordmanden Walter Linds store kaffeplantage,” *Oslo Aftenavis*, July 5 1926; Marroquín Hermanos, *Directorio Oficial 1915–1916*, 167; Regina Wagner, *Historia del café de Guatemala* (Bogotá: Villegas editors, 2001), 131. This book is also published in English, as *The History of Coffee in Guatemala* (Bogotá: Villegas editors, 2001).

4 Interview with Mark Leonowens, Guatemala City, August 6, 2013; interview with Louis Leonowens, Guatemala City, August 8, 2013; Johan Tufeland, Leif Lind Pettersen and Carmen Gehrke Pettersen, *Kvalvaag. Man and Ocean*. (Stavanger: Dreyer Aksjeselskap, 1975), 17; Wagner, *Historia del Café*, 131. The spelling of their names vary, but I have chosen to use that employed in *Kvalvaag*. According to Mark and Louis Leonowens, they always lived in Norway, but their involvement in the Guatemalan coffee industry lasted until the 1960s.

5 Robert G. Williams, *States and Social Evolution. Coffee and the Rise of National Governments in Central America* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 319. See also Regina Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala 1828–1944* (Guatemala: Afanes S.A., 2007), 284–91.

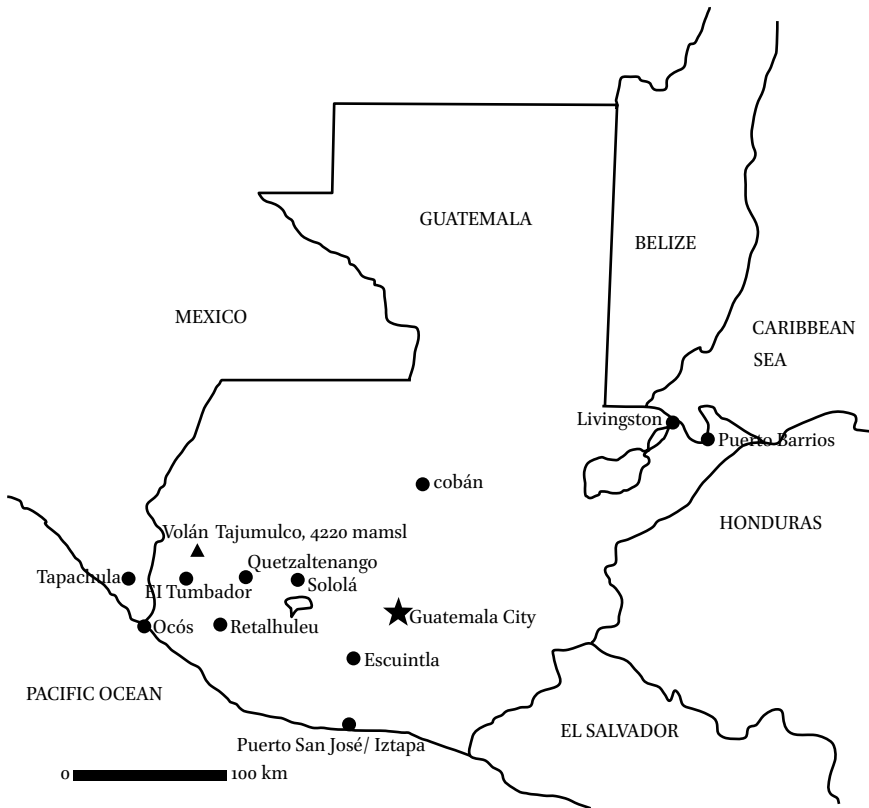
6 Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 170–71.

7 Wagner, *Historia del café*, 169.

Randi de Lange from Bergen in 1915, and both their sons were born in Norway, Erik in 1918 and Norman in 1921. Despite spending a large part of their early lives between England and Norway, both brothers returned to Guatemala to live. Erik eventually married a Mexican and moved to Mexico, but Norman settled permanently in Guatemala with his Norwegian wife Berit Sverdrup after World War II.⁸

Also Mrs. Lind's sister, Hjørdis, lived in Guatemala.⁹ An adventurous and spirited woman, she traveled as their governess when she made the journey together with the Linds in 1921. While in Guatemala, she married British citizen Percy O. Davies, who lived in Retalhuleu and was a manager of one of Gordon Smith's fincas (see map 6.1). Percy and Hjørdis Davies were well settled at the time of Norwegian adventurer Edgar Kullmann's travels in Guatemala in 1924. Kullmann worked at Finca Helvetia for a few months, and in his diary he refers to almost weekly dinners at the Davieses' home.¹⁰ The couple had three sons, Edgar, Victor, and Lloyd, and around 1930, when their sons were aged around two to seven, they decided to employ a Norwegian nanny. Agnete from Bergen arrived with the family only to become the reason for its dissolution, as Mr. Davies fell for the nanny and later married her. Mrs. Davies returned to

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- 8 Erik died in Mexico at the age of eighty-eight. Norman was part of the British forces during World War II and acted as liaison officer between London and the group that bombarded the heavy water plant at Rjukan, Norway. In connection with the operation he also met his future wife, Berit Sverdrup, who moved to Guatemala with him. By 1967, Norman Lind was a finca owner and Norwegian consul. He was killed in a guerrilla attack in 1985. Interview with Ingrid Lind Sverdrup de Herold; Víctor Soto de Avila, "El Señor Norman Lind Cónsul General de Noruega," *Horizonte Revista Interamericana*, no. 173–74, abril-mayo 1977, 8–10; "Un consul entre los muertos. Cuatro víctimas al estallar avioneta," *Prensa Libre*, October 24, 1985, 8.
- 9 Information on Hjørdis de Lange and Percy Oswald Davies is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B6839, "Nómina de los extranjeros inscritos en el Departamento de Retalhuleu, hasta el día 15 de Agosto de 1928"; B6839, "Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contienen los libros Retalhuleu 1, 2, 3, 4 y 4a de la Oficina de Pasaportes, s/f"; B8872, "Pago de derechos, 23 de Noviembre, 1932." www.digitalarkivet.uib.no, Bergen, "Korskirken 1889–1899, skannet ministerialbok," p. 23; Baptism of Hjørdis de Lange, February 2, 1890; "Emigranter fra Bergen 1874–1930": departure from Bergen September 6, 1921; "Døde i Bergen 1912–1972": Death of Hjørdis de Lange Davies, November 11, 1969. www.ancestry.com, "U.K. Outward Passenger Lists 1890–1960": Departure of *Motagua* August 16, 1929 from Avonmouth via Kingston, Jamaica, to Santa Marta, Colombia. Interview with Catharina de Lange Davies, telephone, February 7, 2014; interview with Ingrid Lind Sverdrup de Herold; Th. Lea, "Rundt omkring Panama," *Nordmanns-Forbundet* 1931, 43–46.
- 10 Diary of Edgar Kullmann, pp. 1612–1615. Kullmann describes his travels around Guatemala, Mexico, and El Salvador between January 1924 and March 1927, visiting each country several times.

MAP 6.1 *Guatemala*

Norway with her three sons in 1935, never to set foot in Guatemala again. She died in Bergen in 1969. Of her three sons, Victor settled in Norway and Lloyd in the United States, and only Edgar returned to Guatemala, where he inherited Finca Dolores from his father.

Whereas Walter Lind and the de Lange sisters were connected to the British-owned part of the coffee industry, another Norwegian who arrived around the same time as Lind, in 1903, became part of the German segment. Henrik Thomsen Blanc was born in Bergen in 1874 and left Norway for Germany in 1892.¹¹ Eleven years later, he set sail for New York to continue onwards to

11 Information on Henrik Thomsen Blanc is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B6805, "Cuadro que demuestra las inscripciones de extranjeros efectuadas en la jefatura política del departamento de Sololá, 1928"; B6839, "Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro No. 1 Puerto de Champerico de la oficina de Pasaportes", s/f; B8872 "Pago de derechos, 23 de Noviembre, 1932"; AGCA, Defunciones Marzo 1931. Archive of the

Guatemala. In 1911, he declared his intention to work at Finca El Zapote, which then was owned by the German company Hanseatische Plantagen-Gesellschaft Guatemala-Hamburg. By the 1920s, he was known as Enrique Blanc and was reported to own a small coffee plantation in the Sololá area. It is, however, more probable that Blanc was employed as an administrator of a finca, because at his death he left only a small and simple house in the village of Sololá and nothing else of any value. Although his fellow countrymen in Guatemala knew of him, he does not seem to have had any contact either with them or with the Norwegian consulate. Edgar Kullmann, for instance, stayed in the Sololá area at Swede Axel Fabián Pira's Finca Chichavác in October–November 1925, but makes no mention of Blanc in his diary.

Blanc was single when he died from uremia related to prostate cancer at the age of fifty-seven at the Hospital General in Guatemala City on March 15, 1931. The following day,

he was buried...in the Cementerio General at 11:50, and the religious ceremony was conducted by the German Protestant pastor. The grave is situated in the plot belonging to the German colony. Mr. A.J. Gundersen represented the consulate, and there were a number of the German colony present, besides some natives.¹²

The Norwegian consulate, represented by the consul Arthur Henry Gehrke, rather reluctantly assumed the task of sorting out the deceased's estate in Sololá, a location that Gehrke considered to be quite distant. The only Norwegian connection he could find to notify of Blanc's death was curiously Finn de Lange, brother of Randi and Hjørdis and also a friend of Gehrke himself. De Lange then notified Blanc's relative and only heir, his sister and famous

Norwegian Legation in Mexico, Department of Foreign Affairs, Norway: File regarding "Henrik Thomsen Blanc, Sololá, Guatemala, avg. ved døden i Guatemala 15. mars 1931". www.digitalarkivet.uib.no, "Emigranter fra Bergen 1874–1930": departure from Bergen March 29, 1892; "Domkirken 1869–1876, skannet klokkebok," p. 89: birth of Henrik Thomsen Blanc, May 27, 1874. www.ancestry.com, "Hamburg Passenger Lists 1850–1934": departure of the s.s. *Moltke* from Hamburg August 20, 1903; "New York Passenger Lists 1820–1957": arrival of the s.s. *Moltke* at Port of New York, 1903; "New York Passenger Lists 1820–1957": arrival of the s.s. *President Lincoln* at Port of New York, November 2, 1911. Diary of Edgar Kullmann, pp. 1641–1643; Lea, "Rundt omkring Panama"; "Nordmænd Jordan rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1925, 543.

12 A.H. Gehrke to N. Fossum, March 16, 1931. Archive of the Norwegian Legation in Mexico, Department of Foreign Affairs, Norway.

actress Magda Blanc Jordan.¹³ However, alleged heirs also appeared in Guatemala, as a number of women presented claims on behalf of their children, supposedly all Blanc's illegitimate offspring, though seemingly without being able to produce satisfactory proof of paternity.

At the time Lind and Blanc arrived just after the turn of the century, the Guatemalan government, as many contemporary Latin American governments, worked to promote foreign immigration. As early as 1834, a law was passed to encourage colonization, promising a series of favorable conditions to those tempted to settle in certain areas of the country. Various applications to form colonies were submitted to the Guatemalan government shortly after the publication of the law, but the first attempts failed.¹⁴ One of these was nevertheless of importance, namely the Santo Tomás colonization in the 1840s, which constitutes the real start of the significant German immigration to Guatemala.

Further legislation to encourage foreign immigration was passed in 1868, 1873, 1879, and 1893.¹⁵ In 1877, an immigration society, the Sociedad de Inmigración, was established, with agents in Guatemala and abroad, and in 1895, an immigrants' guide to Guatemala was published.¹⁶ It gave detailed

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- 13 His parents were dead, but he also had a brother, Birger Blanc. He, however, was mentally ill and by 1931 he had been in a mental hospital for thirty years. "Rapport avgitt til politimesteren i Bergen av politikonstabel Th. Molland ang. Henrik Thomsen Blanc som døde 15/3-31 i Guatemala", May 11, 1931. Archive of the Norwegian Legation in Mexico, Department of Foreign Affairs, Norway.
- 14 Wagner, *Los alemanes in Guatemala*, 17-54. The Archivo General de Centro América contains ample documentation regarding the establishment and failure of the Santo Tomás colony, see for example AGCA, SRE, B7557. It also contains documentation of other attempts, as abundant applications to establish colonies were submitted to the Guatemalan authorities at least until 1934. The applications originated from initiatives in countries as diverse as the United States, Sweden, Lithuania, and Spain, but applications were either declined or the attempts failed. See, e.g., AGCA, SRE, B 7555 and 7556. On Italian immigration attempts, see McCreery, "Coffee and Class: The Structure of Development in Liberal Guatemala," 453-55.
- 15 Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 72-73; Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 165. The whole 1893-law is printed in Víctor Sánchez O. and Emilio Gómez Flores, *Primer Directorio de la Capital y Guía General de la República de Guatemala* (Guatemala: Tipografía Sánchez y De Guise, 1894), 33-46. It was still valid in 1915, see Marroquín Hermanos, *Directorio Oficial 1915-1916*, 94-99. The laws granted, among other rights, freedom of religion, and the fact that most of the immigrants were Protestants in a Catholic country does, surprisingly, not seem to have been an issue at all, neither for the immigrants themselves nor for the Guatemalan authorities.
- 16 J. Méndez, *Guía del Inmigrante en la República de Guatemala* (Guatemala: Tipografía y Encuadernación Nacional, 1895).

information on subjects such as legislation, infrastructure, climate, agricultural opportunities, facilities and businesses, and lists of ambassadors and consuls. From 1896 onwards, however, the government started restricting immigration on the bases of origin and age, introducing various measures to control the entry and presence of foreigners in the country.¹⁷

In the 1920s and 1930s, approving accounts of Guatemala as a country for traveling and living were given by contributors to Norwegian newspapers and *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, the monthly magazine of the Association of Norwegians Abroad that was read by emigrants and their Old World relatives alike. Accounts from both 1926 and 1939 describe the climate in the Guatemalan capital as wonderful and living costs and tax levels as very low.¹⁸ Guatemala City was in the mid-1920s reported to have 110,000 inhabitants and to be a modern city with large hotels, clubs, and banks. Fruit, vegetables, and poultry were offered in abundance at the markets, although fish was, not surprisingly, scarce. Guatemala City had lovely parks with tropical vegetation, and the older houses all in Spanish style. Both accounts also stated that the Guatemalan government did not put any obstacles in the way for immigrants wishing to enter into the Guatemalan agricultural business, as it considered that foreigners could contribute favorably to agricultural development in the country. Others, however, did not have such a positive impression, but nor did they have such an extensive audience for their complaints. Edgar Kullmann confessed to his diary during his 1925 stay in Guatemala that “the longer I stay in this country, the less tolerance I have for the rabble that lives here.”¹⁹

There is no doubt that the Germans constituted the most important group of foreigners in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition to European groups and North Americans, numerous Mexicans, Salvadorans, and Hondurans also settled in Guatemala, but although significant in numbers, their importance was far exceeded by the Germans in terms of economic power and influence. In 1897, close to a thousand Germans lived in Guatemala.²⁰ In the decade after World War I, the number was around three thousand, but this fell to two thousand by the end of the 1930s because of remigration spurred

17 Marroquín Hermanos, *Directorio Oficial 1915–1916*, 99–101; Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 265–66. A 1927-law specified persons of Turkish, Palestine, Arabic, Libyan and Syrian origin. Restrictions also applied to the Chinese. None of the measures affected Northern Europeans, though.

18 Holtermann, “Paa Reise i Guatemala”; Th. Lea, “Her er det evig vår,” *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1940, 112–14. The article was written in 1939, but was published in 1940.

19 Diary of Edgar Kullmann, p. 1642.

20 Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 112 and 244. In her book, Wagner gives a very good account of the Germans’ activities and influence.

by better living conditions in Germany.²¹ The Germans practically monopolized commerce, setting up importing and exporting businesses all over the country, most with representatives also in Europe. According to a 1926 report in a Norwegian newspaper,

they are highly respected for their laboriousness, adherence to the law, and order. The Germans in Central America have an ability to adapt that their competitors from the United States completely lack. The Germans immediately learn the language (Spanish), mingle with the natives, marry their women, and in other words blend completely in. This, an American cannot do. Or will not.²²

As late as 1939, the Germans were reported to control most of Guatemala's small market for imported goods with their closely knit commercial networks.²³

However, at least one Norwegian managed to offer the Germans some competition in this field. Bjarne Thorsen Ness, born in Bergen in 1899, arrived in Guatemala around 1927.²⁴ By then, he had lived about ten years in the United

21 Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 294. For the relationship between the Guatemalan authorities and the German Empire and immigrants during World War I, see pp. 252–64.

22 Holtermann, "Paa Reise i Guatemala."

23 Lea, «Her er det evig vår». This was to change during World War II, when merchants and coffee planters alike saw their property embargoed by the Guatemalan government, which considerably reduced German influence in the country. As much as 75 percent of German coffee farms and other assets were expropriated and not returned after the war. Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 171. See also J. Fred Rippy, "German Investments in Guatemala." *The Journal of Business of the University of Chicago*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Oct., 1947), 212–19.

24 Information on Bjarne Thorsen Ness is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B6839, "Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro G2 de la Oficina de Pasaportes, Junio 14, 1934"; B5688, "Inscripción de extranjera de Brunhilde de Ness, 11 de Junio de 1928"; B6734, "La Secretaría de Gobernación y Justicia al Secretario de Estado en el Despacho de Relaciones Exteriores," December 9, 1932. www.digitalarkivet.uib.no, Censuses for Bergen, 1900, and Vik in Sogn, 1910; "Emigranter fra Bergen 1874–1930": departure from Bergen September 4, 1918. Interview with Einar William Klanderud, Guatemala City, August 7, 2013. *Memoria de las Labores del Ejecutivo en el ramo de Relaciones Exteriores durante el año de 1932, presentada a la asamblea legislativa en sus sesiones ordinarias de 1933* (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1933), 43; Th. Lea, "Rundt omkring Panama," *Nordmanns-Forbundet* 1931, 43–46; Kr. Fivelstad, "På farten i tropene," *Nordmanns-Forbundet* 1939, 209–10; José A. Quiñonez, *Directorio General de la República de Guatemala* (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1930), 226. In 1900, Ness lived with his parents and baby

States, held US citizenship, and was married to Czech-born Brunhilde Hindermann.²⁵ In 1932, he was granted Guatemalan citizenship. He set up a successful business in Guatemala City, Ness & Co. Representaciones, and among other products sold office equipment and Japanese china in his large store. Bjarne and Brunhilde had four children, Leif, Dagmar, Sølvi, and Dag, all four of whom were born and lived in Guatemala, and Leif continued the business after his father's retirement and death.

For the Norwegian immigrant Thomas Washington Lea, on the other hand, German competition became too fierce, and his small business importing and selling Norwegian tiles, concrete, paper, and cod liver oil did not last long.²⁶ Lea was born in Bergen in 1889 and had lived both in Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro, working as a bookkeeper, before moving to Venezuela to work for an oil company. When he was laid off there, he traveled overland to Barranquilla in Colombia and from there on a German ship to Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, where he arrived in 1930. He originally intended only to transit, but set up the above mentioned business. After six years in the country, having learned to know both the Spanish language and the Guatemalan culture well, he bought land and entered into the agricultural business. By 1939, he wanted to buy more of the beautiful properties for sale, but was looking for a Norwegian business companion with capital and connections, with whom he could invest. Lea was still single in 1930, and it is not known what happened to him after 1939.²⁷

sister in Bergen. By the 1910 census, he lived with his grandparents at their farm in Vik in Sogn where he still lived at the time of his emigration. In most Norwegian sources, his surname is spelled Nesse, but in Guatemala he used Ness.

- 25 Czechoslovakia did not exist until 1918, when Brunhilde Hindermann was 16 years old, but is nevertheless given as her place of birth on the registration form she filled out in Guatemala. AGCA, SRE, B5688, "Inscripción de extranjera de Brunhilde de Ness, 11 de Junio de 1928."
- 26 Information on Thomas Washington Lea is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B5402, "Declaración de Thomas Washington Lea, Barranquilla, 17 de octubre de 1930"; B 6839, "Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro G53 de la Oficina de Pasaportes, Junio 14, 1934"; B9131, "Manifiesto General de las mercaderías embarcadas Oslo, 2/7 1935, a bordo del vapor m.s. Granville de la línea Norway Pacific Line." HULA: CEMLA, "Listado de pasajeros e inmigrantes noruegos llegados al puerto de Buenos Aires entre 1882 y 1950": arrivals August 19, 1924. Lea, "Rundt omkring Panama"; Lea, "Her er det evig vår"; "Nordmænd Jordan Rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet* 1933, 60; "Nordmenn jorden rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet* 1938, 61; Fivelstad, "På farten i tropene"; M.A. Pilon, ed., *Commercial, Industrial and Professional Directory of the Republic of Guatemala* (Guatemala: 1935), 57–58.
- 27 None of the descendants of Norwegians interviewed have heard of him.

German presence was spurred by the good relations between Guatemala and Germany, and the German immigrants' position was favored by trade treaties.²⁸ Relations between Guatemala and Norway, however, were by no means as close as those between Guatemala and Germany. Although Norway did not have an embassy in Guatemala until 1976, Norwegian consular representation in Guatemala dates at least as far back as the early 1880s. German and British citizens held the position as Norwegian consul general in Guatemala – and at times also vice-consul in Puerto Barrios – between the 1880s and the early 1940s.²⁹ Two exceptions were Norwegians Michael Strøm Lie in 1915–16 and Lars Gravem in 1918–20.³⁰ In 1928, Englishman Arthur H. Gehrke was appointed Norwegian consul in Guatemala, a position he held until the early 1940s, when his Norwegian son-in-law Leif Lind Pettersen took over.³¹ Conversely, Guatemalan consular representation in Norway was established in Kristiania around 1900 with mainly Norwegians being appointed consuls, and by 1924 there was a Guatemalan consulate in Bergen, too.

The infrequent consular correspondence seems to have been mainly polite notes of no substantial content, as well as information about consuls' whereabouts, appointments, and renouncements. There are, however, a couple of notable exceptions, such as in 1911 when Norwegian companies asked about the possibilities of hunting whale in Guatemalan waters, an inquiry that does not seem to have been followed up.³² In 1912, a project to establish a direct route between Norway and Guatemala once the Panama Canal had opened

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- 28 E.g., the *Tratado de Amistad, Comercio y Navegación*, valid from 1887 to 1915, and the *Convención de Comercio*, valid between 1925 and 1935. Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 243 and 268–72.
- 29 Various documents in AGCA, SRE, B4166, B4168, B6839, B8640, B8790, B8797, B8930, B9131 and B9384 deal with the consular service. The *Directorios* published in 1894, 1908, 1916 and 1930 also have lists of consuls.
- 30 The former was Norwegian ambassador to Mexico 1910–21, and only visited Guatemala briefly in 1912. See Michael Lie, *Fra mit liv som diplomat* (Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1929), 188–91. Gravem had come to Guatemala as a representative of the San Francisco-based Otis McAllister & Co., and was appointed consul in 1919. In 1920, the Guatemalan Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a note to the Guatemalan consul in Oslo, Christian Edward Sontum, making clear that there was much to be desired in the conduct of Consul Gravem. The Norwegian authorities relieved Gravem of his duties at the same time as he returned to California in 1920. Various documents in AGCA, SRE, B4168. See also AGCA, SRE, B8640, 8790 and 9384.
- 31 “Nordmenn jorden rundt,” *Nordmanns-Forbundet* 1942, 282; Kristian Fivelstad, “Norske Interesser i Mellemerika. Idag og i Fremtiden,” *Nordmanns-Forbundet* 1943, 115–17.
- 32 AGCA, SRE, B8640, Michael Lie to Luis Toledo Herrarte, December 5, 1911 and January 20, 1912.

was mentioned in a letter from the Guatemalan foreign minister to the Guatemalan consul in Norway.³³ This project did not materialize at the time, but Norwegian ships did travel relatively frequently to Guatemala via other ports and countries.³⁴

Trade between Guatemala and Norway was of a small volume, but nevertheless established in the period under investigation. Norwegian imports from Central America were almost exclusively coffee, cocoa, and bananas, and, as mentioned above, Guatemalan coffee was well known in Norway in the 1920s.³⁵ Norwegian products promoted in Guatemala included hydrogenated oils, canned fish, cod liver oil, paper, concrete, and dried cod (*bacalao*). But many agreed that there was potential to increase trade, that Norwegian interests in Central America should be an issue of priority for Norwegian authorities, and that one should work thoroughly and systematically to enter into business. In 1929, Fredrik Wilhelm Holtermann, a Norwegian businessman based in Cuba, fiercely criticized the Norwegian consular system in Central America, practically putting all the blame for the scarce Norwegian business interests in the region on corrupt and inefficient consuls.³⁶ The same Holtermann also contended that the region's living standards, business morale, and financial systems were of a kind that they invited foreign interest and investment. Whether as a consequence of the criticism or for other reasons, several changes were made to the official representation in Central America in 1937–39.³⁷ Kristian

33 AGCA, SRE, B4166, Luis Toledo Herrarte to T. Chauvin, Guatemala, [illegible] 5, 1912.

34 Among consular papers in AGCA, SRE, B9131, there is evidence of this traffic, such as the bills of health given to the various ships leaving Oslo to stop by Puerto Barrios or Puerto San José. Between August 1932 and March 1934, the average was a little more than one ship a month.

35 AGCA, SRE, B9131, various documents concerning export tolls paid to the Guatemalan consulate in Oslo in 1935–1936; Holtermann, "Paa Reise i Guatemala"; Fivelstad, "Norske Interesser i Mellem-Amerika"; "Gode muligheter for øket eksport til Mellem-Amerika," *Tidens Tegn*, December 1936.

36 «Skandaløse norske konsulatforhold i latin-Amerika," *Morgenavisen*, January 26, 1929; "Er det bare spilt tid for forretningsfolk å søke hjelp i konsulatene?" *Oslo Aftenavis*, January 23, 1929; "Våre konsulter i Syd-Amerika," *Tidens Tegn*, January 1929; "Vaar diplomatiske og konsulære representasjon i Syd- og Central-Amerika," *Morgenbladet*, April 15, 1929. Th. Lea, on the other hand, in 1933 expressed his gratitude for the excellent help he had been given by the Norwegian consulate in Guatemala. "Nordmænd Jordan Rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1933, 60.

37 Archive of the Norwegian Emigrant Museum, Questionnaire «Nordmenn jorden rundt," filled out by Kristian Fivelstad on October 15, 1935; "Decreto número 2355, 30 de Marzo de 1939," en Rosendo P. Méndez, *Recopilación de las Leyes de la República de Guatemala* (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1941), 22–23; "Gode muligheter for øket eksport til Mellem-Amerika"; Fivelstad, «Norske Interesser i Mellem-Amerika»; «På farten i tropene,"

Fivelstad was appointed Norwegian trading representative for the region in 1937 and was one of two Norwegian representatives who signed a trade agreement with Guatemala in 1938. Also in 1938, new diplomats were appointed to both Mexico and El Salvador.

Not only foreign immigration was well under way when Walter Lind and Henrik T. Blanc arrived in Guatemala just after the turn of the century, but also the coffee boom, where the Germans again were heavily involved (See Table 6.1). As with the other four Central American countries, coffee dominated economy and politics in Guatemala in the second half of the nineteenth century and in the twentieth century, and the Guatemalan coffee-growing elite had near absolute political and economic power.³⁸ The commercial growing of coffee began in Guatemala in the 1840s, but it was to take three decades and the liberals' victory over the conservatives before coffee really became an important agricultural product. The liberals introduced a banking and credits system as well as tax reforms, all measures which made it easier to assume long-term investments such as the cultivation of coffee required, and liberal governments thus spurred the commercial development of coffee.³⁹ In addition, the increased importance of coffee coincided with the invention of synthetic dyes and the decline in cochineal production in the 1850s and 1860s.⁴⁰

Nordmanns-Forbundet 1939, 209–10; “Nordmenn jorden rundt,” *Nordmanns-Forbundet* 1938, 61 and 308; “Nordmenn jorden rundt,” *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1939, 187. Hans T. Fay became Norwegian ambassador in Mexico and was also made Norwegian representative in San Salvador, San José, and Guatemala. Thorleif Thoresen was appointed Norwegian consul in El Salvador.

38 Honduras being the slight exception as it entered into the coffee industry much later than the other four countries (Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica). For accounts and analyses of the importance of coffee and the coffee elites in Central America, see Jeffrey M. Paige, *Coffee and Power. Revolution and the Rise of Democracy in Central America* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1997). See pp. 53–95 for a comparison of the coffee elites of Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. On the characteristics of the Guatemalan elite, its relation to political power and the lack of democratization, see pp. 86–87. Also see McCreery, “Coffee and Class: The Structure of Development in Liberal Guatemala,” for a good account of how liberal politics in the second half of the 19th century encouraged coffee production and the modernization of infrastructure while preserving the traditional class and economic structure. On coffee in Guatemala, see also Williams, *States and Social Revolution*, and Ralph Lee Woodward Jr., *Central America. A Nation Divided* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University press, 1999), 149–76.

39 Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 165.

40 In 1857, cochineal constituted 77 percent of Guatemala's export and coffee 0 percent; in 1871, the cochineal exports only made up 32 percent of the country's exports whereas coffee had increased to 49 percent. See Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 68; and Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 167.

However, Guatemala differed from its Central American neighbors in that it had abundant access to an indigenous labor force that in many cases was forced to work on the coffee estates.⁴¹ This almost unlimited access to virtually free labor gave little incentive to rationalize through the use of machines, and the rationalization that actually took place was almost exclusively among German planters. Also, in terms of coffee variety, fertilization, and planting density, Guatemala had a much less modern production system than El Salvador and Costa Rica.⁴² Moreover, comparing Guatemala to El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica, Guatemala was exceptional in that almost all coffee was produced on large estates.⁴³ This meant, too, that a decentralized system of processing plants was possible. In addition, it was necessary: coffee is delicate and must be processed quickly after harvesting if it is not to be ruined, and because of the poor infrastructure in Guatemala and the need to transport the harvested coffee berries on mules or even human bearers, the distance from field to processing plant had to be short.

The Guatemalan coffee-growing elite may have been extremely traditionalist, but it was by no means static. The fluctuating coffee prices, the numerous economic crises in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and not least the global crisis sparked off by the Wall Street Crash of 1929 affected its members gravely.⁴⁴ Fincas changed hands due to their owners' financial problems, and one consequence was the increase of German power. Many a

41 For a description of the labor systems used, see Paige, *Coffee and Power*, 69–70 and 80; Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 112–23. On the labor system in Guatemala in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in general, see, e.g. Arturo Taracena Arriola, *Etnicidad, estado y nación en Guatemala, 1808–1944. Volumen I.* (Antigua Guatemala: CIRMA, 2009), 267–339. For an interesting case study on how the coffee economy affected indigenous living and working conditions, see Michaela Schmölz-Häberlein, “Continuity and Change in a Guatemalan Indian Community: San Cristobal-Verapaz, 1870–1940.” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 76, No. 2 (May, 1996), 227–48.

42 Paige, *Coffee and Power*, 71.

43 On the distribution of land in Guatemala in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see, e.g., Taracena Arriola, *Etnicidad, Estado y Nación*, 341–90. For the process that led to the restructuring of the possession of land in Guatemala during the Barrios government (1892–1898), see also Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 59–69. He also describes the size of Guatemalan coffee plantations, as does Paige, *Coffee and Power*, 66–67. For a description of the process in San Cristóbal, Alta Verapaz, see Schmölz-Häberlein, “Continuity and Change in a Guatemalan Indian Community: San Cristobal-Verapaz, 1870–1940,” 230–37.

44 For an overview of coffee prices 1832–1986, see Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 265–73. For the effects of the crisis of 1929 on the Guatemalan coffee industry, see, e.g., Wagner, *Historia del café*, 163–68. On the increase of German power, see Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 156, 244–51 and 267, and Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 166 and 169–70.

TABLE 6.1 *Foreigners in the Guatemalan coffee industry (1913)*^a

Nationality	No. of fincas	Area <i>caballerías</i> ^b	% of total production
Total	2076	7904	100
Guatemalans	1657	4158	50,21
Foreigners	419	3746	49,78
Foreigners			
Germans	170	2118	34,26
Spaniards	84	546	5,48
North Americans	16	114	0,02
British	20	269	1,47
Swiss	9	66	1,35
French	21	116	1,20
Mexicans	29	81	1,15
Mixed nationality firms	6	14	1,13
Others	64	414	1,78

a Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 168. See also Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 170.

b In Guatemala, 1 *caballería* was the equivalent of a little over 45 hectares or 451 256, 54 m². Quiñonez, *Directorio General de la República de Guatemala*, 389–393.

finquero was forced to see his finca fall into the hands of his German creditors when finding himself unable to pay his debts; indeed, Williams notes that “by 1932–33, five of the top eight coffee producers in Guatemala were of German origin.”⁴⁵ However, the Germans, too, were of course affected by the fluctuating coffee prices, and also in the German segment of the coffee-growing elite changes occurred.

One example is the acquisition of the German-owned fincas El Zapote and El Trapiche by the Norwegian Leif Lind Pettersen.⁴⁶ Pettersen was born at

45 Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 170.

46 The Hanseatische Plantagen-Gesellschaft Guatemala-Hamburg was founded in Hamburg in 1889 and received the authorization to operate in Guatemala in 1892 with the fincas Las Viñas, Los Diamantes, and El Zapote, of seventy-three *caballerías*. By 1897, the fincas were up and running. Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 149–51, and Wagner, *Historia del café*, 126–27. As for the Trapiche Grande, of an immense 1.200 *caballerías*, this had been one of the first coffee fincas in the country while property of José Tomás Larraondo, but by 1897 it belonged to *El Consorcio de Hamburgo*. Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 159; Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 53. Curiously, Finca El Zapote was the same one

Stolmen just South of Bergen in 1899, and was the son of Walter Lind's cousin.⁴⁷ In 1919, he traveled from Bergen to Guatemala, ostensibly for business and pleasure, but in reality (according to his own memoirs) because of a certain Carmen Dorotea Gehrke. She was the daughter of the aforementioned Arthur H. Gehrke, British citizen and later Norwegian consul, and the Guatemalan Magdalena de Márias y Hoffmann, and met Pettersen at Walter Lind's holiday home in England when they were both visiting there. While in Guatemala, Pettersen's first business transaction in the country was to buy five hundred sacks of coffee, by which he was introduced to the coffee industry. Pettersen stayed in Guatemala for a year and then traveled to Norway to settle his affairs before returning to Guatemala to live in 1923. There, he was to become the most constant and perhaps the most successful Norwegian presence in all of Central America for more than five decades until his death in 1977.

While gravely ill from malaria, Pettersen married Carmen in 1925, during the peak years for coffee prices from 1924 to 1928.⁴⁸ By then, Pettersen was the owner of the Finca La Colonia near El Tumbador, where he grew what was, according to himself, the only desirable and sensible product to grow in those days: coffee. However, Pettersen was to acquire several more fincas. In 1928 he also bought the large Finca El Zapote y Anexos in Escuintla through his company Overseas Estates Ltd., which he owned together with Lind and Smith's old business partners Stange and Poulsen. In due course, Overseas Estates Ltd. acquired other fincas, too, among them the immense El Trapiche in Cuyotenango. In 1930, Finca El Zapote produced 263 tons of coffee and 136 tons of sugar cane as well as brown

where Blanc came to work in 1911, but by the time Pettersen bought the property, Blanc had moved on to Sololá.

- 47 Information on Leif Lind Pettersen is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B5326, "Declaración de Leif Lind Pettersen," New York, September 19, 1932; B8466, "Departamento de Escuintla, Detalle de extranjeros residentes en este Municipio, Diciembre 28 de 1931"; B6839, "Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro G23 de la Oficina de Pasaportes, Junio 14, 1934"; AGCA, SF, B22452, "Año de 1938: Leon Lind Pettersen, Permiso para usar explosivos en trabajos de caminos en su finca 'El Zapote', jurisdicción de Escuintla." www.digitalarkivet.no, "Emigranter fra Bergen 1874–1930": departure from Bergen October 15, 1919; interviews with Mark and Louis Leonowens; Nordmenn jorden rundt, *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1946, 253–54; "Nordmenn jorden rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1961, 124; Jerman, Gunnar, "Norsk kinin og kaffe. Leif Lind Pettersens finca i Guatemala.," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1967, 63–64; Quiñonez, *Directorio General de la República de Guatemala*, 156 and 196; Tufteland, *Kvalvaag*, 5–21 and 138–60.
- 48 For an account of these excellent years for coffee producers, see, e.g., Wagner, *Historia del café*, 154–58.

sugar, cattle, and corn, and in 1933 Overseas Estates Ltd. was listed among the twenty-six largest coffee exporters in Guatemala.⁴⁹

By 1946, coffee production at Pettersen's fincas was almost doubled, but the unstable coffee prices had still led Pettersen to diversify. At different times he produced pine, rubber, cotton, rice, corn, sugar, beef, mahogany, and cardamom, but his most successful product was no doubt quinine, which fetched very high prices during World War II and in the decades after.⁵⁰ Because quinine production required major investments, competition was scarce. Another advantage was that it was less labor-intensive than the growing of coffee. By the mid-1970s, Pettersen had one million cinchona trees at Finca El Zapote, estimated enough to keep the production going for a hundred years.

Pettersen had an extensive social and commercial network including both Guatemalans and foreigners, and was highly appreciated by his friends and business relations. Nevertheless, he was not very favorably described by Edgar Kullmann, who perceived him as arrogant and conceited during Pettersen's visit to the Davieses' home in April 1924.⁵¹ Still, a sign of his privileged position in Guatemalan society is the fact that he was awarded the Order of the Quetzal in 1960 for his personal qualities and his efforts to promote the production of coffee and rubber.⁵²

Although Kullmann was not on good terms with Pettersen, other Norwegians benefitted from his success and network, and one of them was Albert Johan

49 Wagner, *Historia del café*, 169.

50 The idea to start growing the cinchona tree, from which one can extract quinine, arose shortly before World War II, when it was feared that Indonesia, the world's largest producer of cinchona, would fall under Japanese control, thus cutting short the United States' access to the product. Walter Lind, Gordon Smith, Leif Lind Pettersen, and one or two other Guatemalan *finqueros* were given the option by the US government to start growing cinchona in Guatemala, and seeds were duly smuggled out from Indonesia and sowed in Guatemala. The product became a huge success, and both the US and British armed forces depended on the Guatemalan supply of cinchona bark for the extraction of quinine. Pettersen later sold his bark to the German pharmaceutical company Buckler, with which his descendants still do business and to whom they sell the cinchona bark still produced at El Zapote. Interviews with Louis and Mark Leonowens; Tufteland, *Kvalvaag*, 160.

51 Diary of Edgar Kullmann, pp. 1612–13.

52 "Decreto de 18 de enero de 1960," in Roberto Azurdia Alfaro, *Recopilación de las Leyes de la República de Guatemala 1959–1960* (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1962), 824–25. Percy O. Davies was also given the Order of the Quetzal on the same occasion, also for his contribution to the coffee industry. Anecdotal material on Pettersen's varied involvement with the Guatemalan elite abound, such as the story of how he was persecuted by President Ubico, who had decided that he wanted Finca El Zapote as a birthday present. Interviews with Louis and Mark Leonowens.

Gundersen.⁵³ He was born in Bergen in 1900 but grew up in Espevær. After receiving an education in Bergen and living in London for a time, he traveled to Guatemala in 1928, where he obtained a position on one of Arthur Gehrke's coffee fincas in Mexico. For seven years he worked for Gehrke and Pettersen at their fincas in Mexico and Guatemala, and only until after 1935 did Gundersen start his own business buying and selling coffee all over the world. The company was based in Tapachula on Mexico's Pacific coast, and he still maintained close contact with nearby Guatemala, but his main office was in Mexico City, where he also lived. By 1945, his firm had grown to become – according to Gundersen himself – one of the largest of its kind in Mexico. Gundersen was also involved in the Norwegian and British consular service and was director of a shipping company in Mexico City. He married the Mexican Marta Catalina Reid and they had two girls, Jenny Lyra (b. 1937) and Ingrid Lucy (b. 1939). Gundersen died in Oslo in 1974.

It was crucial to have access to both capital and networks in order to have success in the Guatemalan coffee-growing industry. In the case of the Germans, by the late nineteenth century the vast majority arrived in Guatemala through already established contacts with *finqueros* or proprietors of commercial houses.⁵⁴ Such was the case of the many very young Germans with whom Thomas W. Lea traveled from Puerto Colombia to Puerto Barrios in 1930.⁵⁵ Almost all had contracts to work on German coffee fincas. The managers of the fincas were always German,

53 Information on Albert Johan Gundersen is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B6839, “Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro G45 de la Oficina de Pasaportes, Junio 14, 1934”; B8290, “Oficina de Malacatán, Departamento de San Marcos, movimiento de pasajeros del día 3 de febrero de 1940 y del día 9 de febrero de 1940”; B8291, “Oficina de Malacatán, Movimiento de viajeros del 13 de Marzo de 1943”; B8872, Ferdinand Berg-Olsen to Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores de Guatemala, February 26, 1929. A.H. Gehrke to N. Fossum, March 16, 1931; File regarding “Henrik Thomsen Blanc, Sololá, Guatemala, avg. ved døden i Guatemala 15. mars 1931.”, Archive of the Norwegian Legation in Mexico, Department of Foreign Affairs, Norway. HULA: Archivo General de la Nación (México), Galería 5, Departamento de Migraciones, Varias Nacionalidades, caja 7, expediente 101: “Nordmenn registrert i mexicansk utlendingskontroll (1930–1940),” June 12, 1931, June 22, 1931 and September 9, 1933. Interviews with Mark and Louis Leonowens and with Einar William Klanderud. www.ancestry.com, “Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New Orleans, Louisiana, 1903–1945”: Arrival of s.s. *Honduran Morazán*, June 19, 1940; and “UK Incoming Passenger Lists 1878–1960”: arrival at Southampton of s.s. *United States*, July 3, 1957; and “New York Passenger Lists 1820–1957”: arrival of S.S. *Stavangerfjord*, October 1, 1946. www.disnorge.no, “Gravminner i Norge”: Death of Albert Johan Gundersen, Oslo, November 21, 1974; “De norske i Mexico gjorde sin innsats,” *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1945, 354–55; Lea, “Rundt omkring Panama”; Fivelstad, “På farten i tropene”; “Sett på strøket,” *Aftenposten*, October 21, 1947.

54 See Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 119–215.

55 Lea, “Rundt omkring Panama.”

and so, too, were normally those in charge of the different subdivisions of the production, as well as bookkeepers and technicians working with the machinery used in the production of coffee as well as sugar.

The Norwegians, however, do not seem to have been too keen on attracting fellow countrymen. Thus, they differed not only from the Germans in Guatemala, but also from other migrant groups of seemingly similar qualities, such as for instance the Danes in Argentina.⁵⁶ There are of course scattered examples, given that also the Norwegians employed both Norwegian and foreign foremen.⁵⁷ But in general, Norwegians stressed the difficulties in settling in Guatemala. Pettersen warned his countrymen in 1925 that it was nearly impossible to make it in Guatemala without capital to invest and good connections.⁵⁸ Holtermann put forward some of the same points in 1926, and Lea gave a similar warning as late as 1939.⁵⁹ According to all three, opportunities for Norwegian immigrants were few. A living as an agricultural worker was impossible, as a Norwegian never could compete with a native Guatemalan in a tropical climate. As the Guatemalan production systems were 100 percent manual, mainly because of the access to the extremely cheap indigenous labor force, the variety of jobs on offer in agriculture was limited. Other careers were also difficult, as the Germans by the mid-1920s had monopolized a large part of the coffee, engineering, and trading businesses. In addition, according to Holtermann, the Germans operated so cheaply that a Norwegian would not be content with that kind of earning. Pettersen calculated that if Guatemalan coffee harvesters were to earn the same as a North American farmhand, finca owners would have to sell their coffee at \$8 per kilo, which no consumer would pay. Thus, it was crucial to keep salaries low and at a traditional level.⁶⁰

In 1937, the Honduras-based Andreas H. Lindelie joined those who warned Norwegians against coming to Central America, claiming that there were only three possible ways to make money: gold, cassava, or arrowroot (*yuquilla*). A fourth would be the growing of bananas on land close to the railway, but by the mid-1930s, all the land was taken, and if it was for sale, it was extremely

56 Maria Bjerg, "The Danes in the Argentine Pampa: The Role of Ethnic Leader in the Creation of an Ethnic Community." In *Mass Migration to Modern Latin America* ed. Samuel Baily and Eduardo Míguez (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 2003), 147–66.

57 Interview with Louis and Mark Leonowens. Examples are the aforementioned Albert Johan Gundersen and Reidar Halfdan Iversen, who headed for El Zapote in 1934. AGCA, SRE, B5331, "Hoja de identidad de Reidar Halfdan Iversen," June 20, 1934.

58 "Nordmænd Jorden Rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1925, 543. See also "Nordmænd Jorden Rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1926, 481–82.

59 Holtermann, "Paa Reise i Guatemala"; Lea, "Her er det evig vår."

60 Jerman, "Norsk kinin og kaffe".

expensive.⁶¹ Holtermann, Lea, Pettersen, and Lindelie all agreed that a good knowledge of Spanish and of the local culture was absolutely essential to be able to conduct business in the region. Nevertheless, this was not always sufficient. In 1930, an example was given of two young, unnamed Norwegians, experienced plantation workers from Guatemala and Mexico, who arrived in Nicaragua to seek work on the rumored new canal to be built through the country.⁶² Despite their knowledge of Spanish and experience from the region, they were unable to find work, and yet another warning was issued to Norwegians who might plan to try their luck in Central America.

The five young men from the Norwegian town of Hokksund who arrived in Guatemala looking for opportunities in 1926 certainly experienced that such opportunities were not too easy to find.⁶³ The group consisted of Thorvald Torgersen (22), Ole Peder Fagerli (24), Karl Akre Dahl (23), Hans Edvardsen

61 A.H. Lindelie, "Dit og dat fra Honduras," *Decorah-Posten*, April 9, 1937. Lindelie is an interesting person who lived in the United States, Cuba, and Honduras, and was involved in the attempt to establish a Norwegian agricultural colony at Baracoa in Cuba between 1906 and 1919. See Helge Stenersen, *Det norske Cuba-eventyret. Koloniserings-idéen som spilte fallitt* (Jaren: Vigma-Trykk bok- og aksidenstrykkeri, 1999).

62 "Ogsaa i Nicaragua -!", *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1930, 370–71.

63 Information on the five is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B8290, "Copia del Libro de pasajeros que salieron de este país con destino a territorio mexicano durante el mes de agosto de 1926"; B5431, "Declaración de Ole P. Fagerli, Consulado de Guatemala en Tapachula, 28 de Noviembre de 1929" and "Declaración de Hans E. Hansen, Consulado de Guatemala en Tapachula, 28 de Noviembre de 1929"; B6839, "Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro Retalhuleu 5 de la Oficina de Pasaportes, s/f." www.digitalarkivet.no, "Skannet klokkerbok for Eiker prestegjeld, Haug sokn 1903–1914," p. 23: Baptism of Torvald Torgersen, October 2, 1904; and p. 46: Baptism of Hans Edvardsen Hansen, July 8, 1906; and p. 50: Baptism of Per Eugen Laurud, September 30, 1906; "Skannet ministerialbok for Eiker prestegjeld, Haug sokn 1908–1928" p. 60: Confirmation of Ole Peder Fagerli, 9 April 9, 1916; and p. 78: Confirmation of Karl Akre Dahl, October 6, 1918; and p. 85: Confirmation of Thorvald Olsen, October 12, 1919; and p. 90: Confirmation of Hans Hansen, October 10, 1920; and p. 101: Confirmation of Per Eugen Laurud, October 1, 1922; "Skannet klokkerbok for Ofoten/Narvik 1902–1909," p. 19: Baptism of Karl Akre Dahl, July 19, 1903; "Skannet klokkerbok for Eiker prestegjeld, Haug sokn 1925–1934," p. 211: Death of Karl Akre Dahl, April 2, 1927; "Gravminner i Norge": Death of Ole Peder Fagerli, Skedsmo, December 8, 1956; "Emigranter fra Oslo 1867–1930": departure June 11 and June 12, 1926. www.ancestry.com, "U.K. Outward Passenger Lists 1890–1960": *Orita* departing from Liverpool for Valparaiso on June 17, 1926 (The five were planning to disembark at Colon and from there go on to Guatemala.). "Nordmænd Jorden Rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1926, 481–82; Lea, "Her er det evig vår"; Bent Ek, "Minner fra Gamle-Hokksund" in *Årbok for Øvre Eiker 1990*, 44–46. "<http://www.eiker.org/Arkiv-Oe/Litteratur/Tidsskrift/Aarbok-OE/1990/Aarbok-1990-s44-46.pdf>". Accessed October 21, 2015. The names are spelled in different ways in different sources. Thus, Torgersen appears both as Thorvald Torgersen (his mother's last name) and Thorvald Olsen (his father's last name). Laugerud

Hansen (20), and Per Eugen Laugerud (20). Whereas the latter became a prominent member of Guatemalan society, the others have been more difficult to trace. Dahl's Guatemalan experience lasted only a few months, and in April 1927 he died from tuberculosis back in Hokksund. Both Fagerli and Torgersen eventually returned to Norway, although not immediately. They first tried their luck in Tapachula, Mexico, working as a farmer and mechanic, respectively, and in 1929 they both headed for Nicaragua. Torgersen lived in Retalhuleu around 1934, probably working on a finca. Hansen's fate is not known.

Per Eugen Laugerud, however, ascended quickly and spectacularly in the Guatemalan social hierarchy, and only ten years after his arrival in the country he was reported to be a popular and very well-known man in the capital.⁶⁴ In 1936, he applied for and was granted a Guatemalan citizenship. He started his career in Guatemala working on a finca, but after a couple of years moved on to work at the office of the Guatemalan Railway in the capital. By 1931, he was room clerk and assistant manager at the city's finest hotel, Palace Hotel, where he continued to work until 1952, when he moved to Honduras. For over two decades he lived there, in San Pedro Sula, as Guatemala's consul general.

Pedro Eugenio Laugerud, as he came to be called in Guatemala, married the Guatemalan Catalina García in 1929. They had three children: Kjell, Hans, and Silvia. The most famous of the three was to be Kjell, who was Guatemala's president between 1974 and 1978, and consequently Pedro and Catalina's fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1979 was a huge social event in Guatemala City.

Another Norwegian to briefly try his luck in Guatemala at this time, apparently without much capital nor much of a network, was Lauritz Martin Nærbø, born in Stavanger in 1875.⁶⁵ In 1890, he traveled to the United States for the first

appears as Laurud in several Norwegian sources. I have used the spelling as it is in the sources related to Guatemala.

64 Information on Per Eugen Laugerud is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B6839, "Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro G13 de la Oficina de Pasaportes, Junio 14, 1934"; interview with Einar William Klanderud. "Don Pedro Eugenio Laugerud B. y Su Distinguida Esposa Celebraron Sus Bodas de Oro Matrimoniales," *Diario de Centro América*, April 24, 1979, 4–5; *Memoria de las Labores del Ejecutivo en el ramo de Relaciones Exteriores durante el año de 1936, presentada a la asamblea legislativa en sus sesiones ordinarias de 1937* (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1937) 99; Lea, "Rundt omkring Panama"; "Skattegraveren fra Copan," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1936, 365–66; "Meddelelser fra Nordmanns-Forbundet," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1942, 81; "Nordmenn jorden rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1972, 209; "Nordmenn jorden rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1974, 73 and 97; "Nordmenn jorden rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1978, 74.

65 Information on Lauritz Martin Nærbø is drawn from the following sources: www.digitalarkivet.no, "Emigranter over Stavanger 1903–1928": departures August 4, 1905.

time, and by the time of his stay in Guatemala around 1925 he had lived for decades in the United States, although he had also visited Latin America before. Both Pettersen and Kullmann mention him, the latter reporting that he had a job cutting kerosene cans in half. In 1926 he returned to the United States, and died in Michigan in 1965.

Norwegian Engineers and the Modernization of Guatemalan Infrastructure 1900–1940

Important advancements were made to Guatemalan infrastructure during the coffee boom. Pre-1871 conservative governments paid little attention to improving the country's infrastructure, and when the liberals came to power in 1871, it still mainly consisted of mule trails and footpaths, many of which could not be used during the rainy season. An exception was the road between Guatemala City and the Pacific port of Iztapa/San José, used for exporting cochineal, which also benefitted the coffee growers of Escuintla. In 1871, the Ministerio de Fomento was established "with a budget to build roads and ports and to promote coffee and other commercial ventures." One of the first projects was "the improvement of the port facilities at Champerico, which would serve the expanding coffee economy of Retalhuleu and Suchitepéquez."⁶⁶ From 1873, the modernization of infrastructure took off with the construction of roads, ports, and railways. Foreign companies and investors were in charge, but huge capital requirements as well as difficult weather and geographical conditions made the work difficult. By 1912, the principal ports were linked to the most important coffee zones of Guatemala through railroad lines. During the 1920s and 1930s, the network of roads was also expanded, although Pettersen reported

www.ancestry.com, "UK Outward Passenger Lists 1890–1960": departure of *Anchoria* from Glasgow, March 20, 1890; and departure of s.s. *Baltic*, August 9, 1905; "New York Passenger Lists 1820–1957": arrival of s.s. *Baltic*, August 18, 1905; "California Passenger and Crew Lists 1882–1957": arrival of *Mexico* at San Francisco, January 15, 1922; "Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New Orleans, Louisiana, 1903–1945": arrival of s.s. *Suriname*, December 29, 1926; and "Michigan Deaths and Burials, 1800–1995." Diary of Edgar Kullmann p. 1612; "Nordmænd Jordan Rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1925, p. 543.

- 66 Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 57. See also pp. 54–55 and 59. On the development of infrastructure in Guatemala in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, see Delmer G. Ross, "The Construction of the Interocceanic Railroad of Guatemala." *The Americas*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (Jan., 1977), 430–56. also Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 67–74, 217–42, 281–82.

in 1925 that still the only possible way of transporting coffee from his Finca La Colonia was on mule.⁶⁷

The Ferrocarril del Norte between Guatemala City and Puerto Barrios was built half-finished with Guatemalan funds between 1884 and 1897, but in 1898 the lack of funds made the government sell the contract to finish the line to a foreign company. Initially, the wish was to contract German capital, but as this proved impossible, the contract was eventually signed with the US-based United Fruit Company in 1904. The line was opened in 1908, after which the company also acquired the lines of the Ferrocarril de Occidente and the Ferrocarril de Ocós, both owned mainly by Germans. Thus, the whole railway network along the southern coast passed to North American ownership. In April 1912, the ownership of the different lines was gathered in the International Railways of Central America (IRCA).⁶⁸

IRCA sought qualified labor outside Guatemala, and in 1927, young Fritz William Klanderud, recently arrived from Bergen to Canada, saw an advertisement in a Canadian newspaper and decided to try his luck.⁶⁹ Klanderud was born in Tønsberg in 1902, but had moved with his family to Bergen and had finished his engineering studies at Bergen Tekniske Skole in 1924. He arrived at Puerto San José on the Guatemalan Pacific coast in September 1927 and continued by train to Guatemala City. Within a month he was working for IRCA, where he held several positions in the following ten years.⁷⁰ A couple of years after arriving in Guatemala, Klanderud went to Norway to complete his pilot's training with the Royal Norwegian Air Force, and upon returning to Guatemala

67 Nordmænd Jorden Rundt, *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1925, p. 543. On road construction during Ubico's government (1931–1944), see Carlos Sabino, *Tiempos de Jorge Ubico en Guatemala y el mundo* (Guatemala: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2013), 170–78.

68 Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 231–33 and 246–48.

69 Information on Fritz William and Aage Klanderud is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B5397, “Declaración de Fritz William Klanderud, Consulado de Guatemala en Bergen,” October 10, 1929 and “Declaración de Aage Klanderud, Consulado de Guatemala en Bergen,” October 10, 1929; B6839, “Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro G47 de la Oficina de Pasaportes, Junio 14, 1934”; AGCA, Defunciones Octubre 1937. Statsarkivet i Bergen, Book of registration for Bergen Tekniske Skole 1923–1924. www.digitalarkivet.no, “Emigranter fra Bergen 1874–1930”: departures November 4, 1926. Archive of the Norwegian Emigrant Museum, Questionnaire “Nordmenn jorden rundt,” filled out by Fritz William Klanderud on July 14, 1935. Interviews with Einar William Klanderud and Ingrid Lind Sverdrup de Herold; Lea, “Rundt omkring Panama”; “Nordmenn jorden rundt,” *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1938, 61.

70 Slightly varying accounts of his career in IRCA are found in his obituary in *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1938, 61; and Leif Eskedal, *BTS-matrikkelen. Ingeniører uteksaminert ved Bergen Tekniske Skole 1875–1975* (Bergen: A.S John Grieg, 1975), 100.

in 1929, he brought his younger brother Aage (b. 1912) with him. He, too, was employed by IRCA, but in the drawing department.

Fritz married Emilia Cáceres in 1934, and their son Einar William was born in 1935. Only two years later, in October 1937, Fritz died unexpectedly, leaving behind his wife and child as well as his younger brother.⁷¹ Aage traveled to Norway with his widowed sister-in-law and nephew in April 1938 and the three stayed for six months. He later married the Guatemalan Chita Hurtado Marroquín and had three children, Eric Eduardo, Astrid, and Harold, all three of whom settled in Guatemala. Einar William became an engineer like his father, making a career in the Guatemalan oil industry.

Another Norwegian to be employed by IRCA was Sigurd Leif Møklebust, born in Bergen in 1905, who by 1939 held a position as an engineer.⁷² He traveled from Bergen in November 1929, a month later than the Klanderud brothers. Møklebust married a Guatemalan nicknamed Chúa, and they had two sons, Sigurd, who became an engineer, and Norman, who became a lawyer, both of whom settled in Guatemala.

But IRCA was not the only foreign company to seek qualified labor abroad. The US company in charge of repairs to the Puerto San José pier sent the Norwegian Thor O. Walle from New York to supervise the works in 1931.⁷³ Walle was born in Oslo in 1894, and emigrated to the United States at the age of sixteen. He briefly returned to Norway, but in 1916 settled permanently in New

71 Although his death certificate states peritonitis as the cause of death, his son tells that he had eaten a can of bad Spanish chorizo far from any hospital and that he probably died from botulism.

72 Information on Sigurd Leif Møklebust is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B5397, “Declaración de Sigurd Leif Møklebust, Consulado de Guatemala en Bergen,” November 11, 1929; B6839, “Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contienen los libros G57 y G58 (dos libros en un solo volumen) de la Oficina de Pasaportes, Junio 14, 1934.” www.digitalarkivet.no, “Emigranter fra Bergen 1874–1930”: departures November 21, 1929. Interview with Einar William Klanderud.

73 Information on Thor O. Walle is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B6840, “Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro con inscripciones de varias localidades (Alta Verapaz, Suchitupéquez, Izabál, Retalhuleu, Escuintla) de la Oficina de Pasaportes, s/f”; B6808, Correspondence regarding the payment of taxes for foreigners in 1931. www.ancestry.com, “Petitions for Naturalization of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York, 1865–1937”: Certificate of arrival of Thor Walle, April 16, 1935; Oath of allegiance of Thor Walle; Declaration of Intention of Louise Walle, April 20, 1934; Certificate of arrival of Louise Walle, March 22, 1934; Petition of Naturalization of Louise Walle, November 20, 1936; Petition of Naturalization of Thor Walle, September 13, 1937; “New Orleans Passenger Lists 1813–1945”: arrival of the s.s. *Montana* on November 15, 1926; “U.S. Social Security Death Index, 1935–Current”: Death of Thor Walle, Florida, July 1976. Lea, “Rundt omkring Panama.”

York with his first wife and, in due course, three sons. He worked in construction around the Caribbean basin, and in 1930 worked in Panama, where he married his second wife, French citizen Louise Le Lann. It seems like the Walles spent some three years in Guatemala before returning to live in the United States. Thor Walle died in Florida in 1976.

Walle's assistant in San José, Holm Sørum, was also Norwegian, born in Kråkstad in 1906.⁷⁴ He had an interesting history as participant in the failed Norwegian expedition to Galápagos and later as a construction worker on the Ecuadorian coast. By 1937, Sørum lived in Panama, working as a dragline operator.

Norwegian Travelers in Guatemala 1900–1940

As opposed to the other Norwegians mentioned above, Walle and Sørum arrived in Guatemala with a work contract for a limited period of time and never had the intention to settle in the country. In a way, they belonged to the group of Norwegians in Guatemala in the period under investigation who passed through the country on their travels and on some occasions shared their impressions and adventures. The three most prominent members of this group have all already been mentioned: Fredrik Wilhelm Holtermann, Kristian Fivelstad, and Edgar Kullmann. Fredrik Wilhelm Holtermann, born in Bergen in 1887, traveled to Mexico as a young man without much in his pocket, and took a variety of employments before finding a way into the business world.⁷⁵ While living in Mexico, he visited Guatemala, vividly describing his entrance to the country and claiming that about the only accurate information in his traveler's guide was that "travelers have to rough it considerably."⁷⁶ Later, he moved to Cuba and

74 Information on Holm Sørum is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B6839, "Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro G51 de la Oficina de Pasaportes, Junio 14, 1934." www.digitalarkivet.no, "Folketelling 1910 for Kråkstad herred"; "Ministerialbok for Kråkstad prestegjeld, Kråkstad sokn 1893–1931," p. 49: Baptism of Holm Sørum, April 15, 1906; "Emigranter over Kristiania 1867–1927, tilleggsliste": departures September 2, 1926. www.ancestry.com, "UK Outward Passenger Lists 1890–1960": departure of *Cavina* from Avonmouth, August 9, 1934; and "New York Passenger Lists 1820–1957": arrival of s.s. *Calamares*, June 16, 1937; Lea, "Rundt omkring Panama."

75 Information on Fredrik Wilhelm Holtermann is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B5413, "Declaración de Fredrik W. Holtermann, Embajada de Guatemala en México D.F.," October 31, 1929. www.digitalarkivet.no, "Døde i Domkirken sokn i Bergen 1912–1980": Death of Fredrik Wilhelm Holtermann, resident of San José, Costa Rica, in Santos, Brazil, March 31, 1947. HULA, "Norske pass utskrevet i Lima 1931–1940", 1926 and May 12, 1935. "Nordmænd Jordan Rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1931, 21.

76 Holtermann, "Paa Reise i Guatemala."

established an import business for Norwegian goods such as fish, cod liver oil, canned foods, and paper. The company grew to include a larger variety of Norwegian goods and came to supply large parts of Central and South America as well as the Caribbean. He himself traveled most of the continent, introducing and promoting Norwegian products and maintaining and expanding his Norwegian network in Latin America. This was also what Kristian Fivelstad did through his job as Norwegian trading representative from 1937, and he, too, left valuable evidence of his travels in various newspapers and magazines.⁷⁷

Whereas both Holtermann and Fivelstad conveyed their experiences and opinions through media readily accessible to a large audience, Edgar Kullmann confined his thoughts to his diary. In general, his observations are negative. Neither people nor climate nor food seem to have agreed much with him, and he felt unjustly treated for most of the time. Nevertheless, he traveled around Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador for several years. When in Guatemala in 1924, he contacted Gordon Smith to ask for work, which he was initially given for six months. Kullmann did not like the work itself, the place, or the people, though, and after only three and a half months he left for Mexico. Still, he did return to Guatemala several times.

Other Norwegian travelers also left evidence – albeit scarce – of their presence in Guatemala. Some, like Christopher Magnus and Bjarne Skarbøvik, were well settled in Mexico, and their visits to Guatemala, as evidenced by the border records, help confirm that contact and networks existed across the Mexican-Guatemalan border.⁷⁸ Some were also listed as residents, although the lack of data on their presence in Guatemala rather suggests that they were passing through.⁷⁹ The 1934 census of foreigners lists some six thousand names, all men,

77 See, e.g., Archive of the Norwegian Emigrant Museum, Questionnaire “Nordmenn jorden rundt,” filled out by Kristian Fivelstad on October 15, 1935; “Gode muligheter for øket eksport til Mellem-Amerika”; Fivelstad, “Norske Interesser i Mellem-Amerika”; “På farten i tropene”.

78 AGCA, SRE, B8290, “Salidas de pasajeros durante el mes de julio de 1926, Ayutla, Julio 31 de 1926”: Bjarne Skarbøvik; and “Copia del Movimiento de Entradas de Pasajeros correspondiente al mes de la fecha, Ayutla, 31 de Diciembre de 1926”: Christopher Magnus. Magnus was from Bergen and arrived in Mexico in 1924. By 1931, he was the assistant manager of a Chiapas plantation. Skarbøvik, an electrical engineer from NTH in Trondheim, worked for the Mexican Light and Power Company from the early 1920s and until his retirement in the early 1960s. Lea, “Rundt omkring Panama”; “Hjem efter 40 år i Mexico for å studentjubilere,” *Aftenposten*, August 14, 1964.

79 This is the case of Hans Tudal, Axel Cappelen, Johan Arnt Wold, and Thor Gundersen, all listed as being resident in Guatemala in a 1934 census of foreigners. AGCA, SRE, B6839, “Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contienen los libros G17, G43, G47 y G53

and is a good example of how official documentation makes it considerably easier to track men than women. For instance, A. Loynaz del Castillo, Cuban consul in Guatemala in 1927, was married to a Norwegian woman, but proof of her presence is hard to find.⁸⁰ This is also the case of Sigurd Leif Møklebust's sister Maria, who was brought to Guatemala by her brother, and of the Davieses' nanny Agnete.⁸¹ However, it is probable that the number of Norwegian women in Guatemala in the period under investigation was very low. The importance of women as the creators of networks and communities has been the focus of recent studies in migration history, and it is possible that the lack of Norwegian female immigrants might have decisively hindered a strong Norwegian community from forming in Guatemala between 1900 and 1940.⁸²

Common Characteristics of the Norwegian Immigrants, Their Networks and the Lack of a Norwegian Community in Guatemala 1900–1940

After now having made the acquaintance of the entire small group of Norwegians present in Guatemala between 1900 and 1940, some common characteristics can be identified. First, it was a very international group in its experience, relations, and networks. Before arriving in Guatemala, many had lived outside Norway, whether in Germany, Britain, the United States, or in other Latin American countries. Once in Guatemala, they related to people of a whole variety of nationalities rather than working to form a close-knit Norwegian community. The Linds, the Davieses, the Pettersens, and the Gundersens were well embedded among the British coffee planters, and Blanc among the German ones. All five Norwegians working in the engineering business related to a North American ambience. Moreover, half of those included in Table 6.2 had non-Norwegian

de la Oficina de Pasaportes, Junio 14–1934.” Albert Johan Gundersen had a younger brother named T(h)or. It is not unlikely that the one in the Guatemalan census is he. www.digitalarkivet.no, 1910-census for Finnaas.

80 AGCA, SRE, B9131, C.E. Sontum to Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores de Guatemala, Oslo, January 20, 1927. She was the daughter of Annie Mercer Holmboe and Johan Henrik Holmboe.

81 Interviews with Einar William Klanderud and Catahrina de Lange Davies.

82 Caroline B. Brettell gives a good overview of works dealing with the topic in the field of anthropology in Caroline B. Brettell, “Theorizing Migration in Anthropology. The Social Construction of Networks, Identities, Communities, and Globalscapes.” In *Migration Theory. Talking Across Disciplines*, ed. Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield (New York: Routledge, 2008), 126–31.

TABLE 6.2 *Norwegian immigrants in Guatemala 1900–1940^a*

Name	Born Place/year	Father's occupation	Arrival in Guatemala
Walter Lind	London/1876	Merchant	1901 ^b
Randi de Lange	Bergen/1879	Soda manufacturer and auditor	1919
Hjørdis de Lange	Bergen/1890	Soda manufacturer and auditor	1921
Henrik T. Blanc	Bergen/1874	Head bookkeeper at <i>Kreditbanken</i>	1903
Bjarne T. Ness	Bergen (Vik)/1899	Office clerk	Approx. 1927
Thomas W. Lea	Bergen/1889	Private teacher and translator	1930
Leif Lind Pettersen	Bergen (Austevoll)/1899	Merchant	1919/1923
Albert J. Gundersen	Bergen (Espevær)/1900	Merchant	1928
Thorvald Torgersen	Hokksund/1904	Employed in the paper industry	1926
Ole Peder Fagerli	Drammen/1902	Fishmonger and bicycle repairman	1926
Karl Akre Dahl	Narvik/1903	Pharmacist	1926
Hans E. Hansen	Hokksund/1906	Fisherman	1926
Per E. Laugerud	Hokksund/1906	Saw mill and paper-worker	1926
Fritz W. Klanderud	Tønsberg/1902	Plumber	1927
Aage Klanderud	Oslo/1912	Plumber	1929
Sigurd Leif Møklebust	Bergen/1905	Salesman in a textile store	1929

Last residence before arrival in Guatemala	Occupation in Guatemala	Nationality of spouse	Left Guatemala when/why
Bergen	Coffee planter	Norwegian	1948/died
Bergen	Wife of coffee planter	Norwegian/ British	1949/died
Bergen	Wife of coffee planter	British	1935/divorced
Germany	Coffee planter	Not married	1931/died
U.S.	Merchant	Czech	?/died
Venezuela	Merchant/coffee planter	?	?
Bergen	Coffee planter	Guatemalan	1977/died
Norway (Bergen?)	Merchant/coffee planter	Mexican	?/return to Norway (from Mexico)
Hokksund	Farmer	?	?/return to Norway
Hokksund	Farmer and mechanic	?	?/return to Norway
Hokksund	–	Not married	1926 or 1927/ return to Norway
Hokksund	?	?	?
Hokksund	Hotel manager	Guatemalan	?/died
Canada	Engineer	Guatemalan	1937/died
Bergen	Engineer	Guatemalan	?/died
Bergen	Engineer	Guatemalan	?/died

a Here, I do not include Walle and Sørum, employed by a U.S. Company and stationed in Guatemala for a limited time, nor the three travelers mentioned, i.e. Holtermann, Fivelstad and Kullmann, as these were also only in the country for a limited time. I also exclude Lauritz Martin Nærbø due to his short stay in Guatemala.

b Although Lind had emigrated to Guatemala in 1901, he lived in England for some time around 1911 and until his marriage with Randi de Lange in 1915. The family then seems to have divided their time between Guatemala, England and Norway in the years between 1915 and 1921. Various records available through www.ancestry.com such as censuses and emigration/immigration registers, make it possible to trace their movements. In the Emigrants' register for Bergen for September 6, 1921, a note by Mr. and Mrs. Lind's names reveal that they had been home to visit.

spouses, many Guatemalan. This was probably a decisive reason why seventeen of twenty-one known children settled in Guatemala.⁸³

The fact that they were international does not mean, however, that Norway and their Norwegian roots were not important. Walter and Randi Lind, for example, lived six months of the year in Guatemala and six months in Norway. Their boys were sent to British boarding schools at the age of seven and spent all their summer holidays in Norway. Leif Lind Pettersen, too, maintained a strong link to Norway, never giving up his Norwegian citizenship and on several occasions visiting Norway and his native village of Kvalvaag at Stolmen. He even had a book written about Kvalvaag for his only daughter and six grandchildren, in order for them to become more familiar with their Norwegian roots.⁸⁴

A clear expression of the link to Norway was the names that some of the Norwegian immigrants in Guatemala chose for their children. It is curious that they decided on names such as Kjell, Hans, Einar, Astrid, and Sigurd, some of which are virtually impossible to pronounce in Spanish. In the case of Bjarne Ness, not only did he choose common Norwegian names for his children (Leif, Dagmar, Sølvi, and Dag), but he even lived in a Norwegian-style wooden house most atypical for Guatemala City.⁸⁵

Through the Association of Norwegians Abroad (*Nordmanns-Forbundet*), many found a way to keep in touch with and up to date on Norwegian issues. Both Laugerud and Pettersen served as the association's contact in Guatemala.⁸⁶ Moreover, both the association's newsletter and its questionnaires provided opportunities to share impressions and express opinions. For instance, both Fivelstad and Pettersen expressed concern for the socialist political development in Norway,⁸⁷ whereas Fritz Klanderud considered Norway the best place on earth, was proud to be a Norwegian and hoped to one day return to Norway.⁸⁸ With the outbreak of World War II, Norwegians welcomed a new opportunity to show their patriotism, and both Pettersen and Gundersen made

83 Two of the ones who did not settle there were Gundersen's daughters, who were born and raised in Mexico.

84 Tufteland, *Kvalvaag*.

85 Interview with Einar William Klanderud.

86 See, e.g., "Meddelelser fra Nordmanns-Forbundet," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1942, 81; and "Meddelelser fra Nordmanns-Forbundet," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1942, 81.

87 Archive of the Norwegian Emigrant Museum, Questionnaire "Nordmenn jorden rundt," filled out by Kristian Fivelstad on October 15, 1935. Tufteland, *Kvalvaag*, 14. See also p. 20.

88 Archive of the Norwegian Emigrant Museum, Questionnaire "Nordmenn jorden rundt," filled out by Fritz William Klanderud on July 14, 1935.

generous contributions to Camp Little Norway, the Norwegian military base in Canada.⁸⁹

The immigrants' strong links to their native country are also expressed in the descriptions of the celebration of May 17, Norwegian Constitution Day, although in Guatemala an annual celebration was only established after 1940.⁹⁰ In 1937, Laugerud reported that for the first time since his arrival in Guatemala, Norwegians had come together to celebrate May 17.⁹¹ The party was held at Aage Klanderud's office, and only some of the Norwegians resident in the country at the time attended, namely Aage Klanderud himself, Sigurd Møklebust, Per Laugerud and wife, Bjarne Ness and wife, and a couple of ladies invited by the bachelors. The menu was "practically Norwegian," and there was both violin music and music on the radio to dance to until the wee hours.

Another common characteristic of the Norwegian immigrants in Guatemala at the time is the fact that the vast majority were from the middle or upper layers of Norwegian society. These were not the average emigrants from Norway to the United States.⁹² They were people with an education and with access to at least some capital, and thus perhaps people who were in a position to consider a wider range of opportunities in life. In Guatemala, almost all became part of an upper layer of society and had a high degree of professional success.

89 Pettersen donated coffee, sugar, quinine, and about \$40,000, leading the Norwegian authorities to decorate him after the war. Gundersen led the Norwegian Committee in Mexico during the war, and he, too, donated a large sum to Camp Little Norway together with his Mexican business associate. "Nordmenn jorden rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1942, 46–47, 188 and 282. Tufteland, *Kvalvaag*, 21.

90 According to Ingrid Lind Sverdrup de Herold, a tradition to celebrate May 17 was established sometime after World War II. For descriptions of other celebrations, see, e.g., "Nordmænd Jorden Rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1930, 231–32; and "Nordmenn jorden rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1943, 155.

91 "Nordmænd Jorden Rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1937, 319–20. The article explicitly mentions that those who missed the celebration were Fritz Klanderud and wife, who were in El Salvador on business, Leif Lind Pettersen and wife, who were busy with work on the finca, and Gustav Strømsvik, who was busy with excavations in Copán, Honduras. Strømsvik lived in Honduras for several years in the 1930s, participating in the excavations of the Mayan ruins at Copán. For an account of Strømsvik's activities in Central America, see "Skattegraveren fra Copan."

92 See Odd Lovoll, *Det løfterike landet. En norskamerikansk historie*. (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1997), f.ex. pp. 23–24, for characteristics of the Norwegian emigrants to the United States. The book has also been published in English as *The Promise of America. A History of the Norwegian-American People*. (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

Moreover, given that the emigrants came from only a few geographical zones in Norway, it is probable that the families knew or knew of each other.

The importance of networks and the spread of information in migration processes are well studied, and their importance is irrefutable. In the case of Norwegians emigrating to the United States, both Odd Lovoll and Jon Gjerde have demonstrated the importance of the flow of information from those already in the United States to those thinking of going there.⁹³ As for the Norwegians in Guatemala, it might be useful to draw upon Mark Granovetter's and Margaret Grieco's theoretical frameworks, even though these were initially applied to employment processes.⁹⁴ The two scholars each stress the importance of different types of ties, Granovetter's weak ones versus Grieco's strong ones. Whereas the former are relations between acquaintances or friends of friends, the latter are relations between persons who know each other well, such as family or close friends.

The migration process from Norway to Guatemala between 1900 and 1940 shows examples of both kinds of ties. Some are clearly strong ones, such as the relation between the de Lange sisters or the Klanderud brothers. Others are equally clearly weak relationships, such as that between Lind and Pettersen, who were cousins once removed. Another example is that between Gundersen and Pettersen: only one year separated the two in age, and both were sons of important merchants on islands in the same area south of Bergen. It is thus likely that they were acquainted before meeting in Guatemala although there is no evidence that they were close friends.

Granovetter observes that those in an insecure situation in life are more likely to rely upon strong ties.⁹⁵ This would be the case of most of the Norwegians who went to the United States, who were mainly from a lower socio-economic position and who very often had a close relative, intimate friend, or next-door neighbor who had already been through the migration process and could advise them and help them upon arrival in the United

93 Jon Gjerde, *From Peasants to Farmers. The Migration from Balestrand, Norway, to the Upper Middle West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 116–17 and 128–34; Lovoll, *Det løfterike landet*, 19–22.

94 Mark S. Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties." *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 78, No. 6 (May, 1973), pp. 1360–80; and "The Strength of Weak Ties. A Network Theory Revisited." *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 1 (1983), pp. 201–33. Margaret Grieco, *Keeping it in the Family. Social networks and employment chance* (London and New York: Tavistock Publications, 1987).

95 Granovetter refers to several studies on the subject in "A Network Theory Revisited," 212–13.

States.⁹⁶ Those who went to Guatemala, on the other hand, were, as we have seen, from a relatively privileged position in Norwegian society, and were thus in a position to consider a wider range of options for their lives. Rumors or information from acquaintances or the friends of friends, people to whom they would only have weak ties, could therefore have been of importance.

There is, for instance the case of Møklebust and the Klanderuds. Møklebust did not travel together with them, but it is quite unlikely that three young men from Bergen would have traveled to Guatemala to be employed by IRCA at almost exactly the same time without Møklebust and the Klanderud family at least having known of each other. So where is the link? Growing up, Møklebust and the Klanderud brothers did not live particularly close to each other, although they both lived in or near the center of Bergen, and their heads of family were in different lines of business.⁹⁷ The three were not the same age, and would not have gone to school together. However, Bergen was a relatively small town of around ninety thousand inhabitants in 1921 and with a geographically concentrated urban center.⁹⁸ In addition, Møklebust is registered as a pilot in the emigration records, and Fritz W. Klanderud had been home to finish his pilot's training. It is not unlikely that they came to know each other through activities related to flying.

Another case is that of the Blanc and de Lange families, who did live relatively close to each other in Bergen.⁹⁹ They were both members of high society in Bergen and surely must have been at least acquaintances, a supposition that is confirmed by the fact that information relating to Finn de Lange was found at Blanc's home in Sololá. Only five years separated Henrik T. Blanc from Randi and Finn de Lange, who were twins, and Magda Blanc was the same age as the two. It is also probable that they would have transplanted their contact to Guatemala and that they would have been part of a network of ties there, whether weak or strong. However, given the difficult infrastructure and the fact that they lived in different parts of the country, contact was most likely quite rare.

96 See Lovoll, *Det løfterike landet*, 23–25.

97 The Møklebusts lived in Skottvegaten 28, both in the 1910 census for Bergen and in *Bergens Adressebok 1920*, both available through www.digitalarkivet.no. The Klanderuds appear only in the 1920 directory, and then lived in Årstad Barak in Solheimsviken.

98 In 1890, Bergen had 57,703 inhabitants. By 1920 the number had grown to 91,443. Det Statistiske Centralbyrå, *Folketellingen i Norge i desember 1920. Første hefte. Folkemengde og areal i Rikets forskjellige deler. Hussamlinger på landet* (Kristiania: H. Aschehoug & Co., 1922), 15*.

99 In the 1912 census for Bergen, the de Langes lived in Kong Oscarsgate 2, whereas the Blancs lived in Kaigaden 22. The 1912 census is available at Statsarkivet in Bergen.

The small group of Norwegians all knew of each other, though, and some close friendships emerged, in Guatemala if not before.¹⁰⁰ The Klanderuds were on greeting terms with the Laugeruds when they coincided at church, for instance, and the Pettersens greeted both the Klanderuds and the Nesses whenever they met. Aage Klanderud became a good friend of Norman Lind's wife, Berit Sverdrup, and Hjørdis de Lange Davies maintained a close friendship with Carmen Pettersen. Still, being Norwegian or connected to the Norwegian group through marriage was not a sufficient basis for forming strong ties that again might have led to the establishment of a proper Norwegian community.

What about the rest of those born in Bergen, that is, Ness, Lea, and Holtermann? Bjarne Ness grew up in Vik in Sogn, a fair bit north of Bergen, with his grandparents, and thus his family was not part of the same socio-economic stratum in Bergen as were the other families. As for Thomas W. Lea, despite being another case of no evident links, it is probable that his family would know of the Blancs and the de Langes. Both the Lea and the Blanc families lived in Domkirken parish, and the de Lange family also lived close by.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, Lea was only a year older than Hjørdis de Lange. Moreover, by the time Lea arrived in Guatemala, Pettersen's success there would probably be well known by his relatives, owners of the exclusive department store Kløverhuset and no doubt spreaders of information among Bergen's elite. As for Holtermann, although he was not an immigrant in Guatemala and was only there for business for short periods of time, he surely drew upon connections from Bergen when there. His family, too, lived in the center of Bergen, and through his father's position as a ship broker they would have formed part of Bergen's elite.¹⁰² Moreover, Holtermann was born in 1887, and was thus between the de Lange twins and Lea in age.

As for the five young men from Hokksund who arrived in 1926, they were evidently a group of friends from a small village that in 1920 had around a thousand inhabitants.¹⁰³ These friends were roughly the same age, all were confirmed at the same church between 1916 and 1922, and they made the journey to Guatemala together. How they came to make the decision to go there, however, is not known. With the exception of Laugerud, the group had much less economic success in Guatemala than most of the others mentioned, possibly due to a humbler socio-economic background and the lack of contacts in Guatemala.

100 This is confirmed by all of those interviewed.

101 In the 1912 census for Bergen, the Lea family lived in Haakonsgate 28a.

102 In the 1912 census for Bergen, the Holtermann family lived in Sydneshaugen 21.

103 Det Statistiske Centralbyrå, *Folketellingen i Norge i desember 1920*, 18*.

From 1900 to 1940, Guatemala, with its coffee boom, expanding infrastructure, and mostly favorable immigration policies, should have made for an attractive receptor country, despite its sometimes unstable political conditions, changing legislation, and fluctuating economy. Moreover, as seen above, there was an evident network both between Norway and Guatemala and among Norwegians in Guatemala. So why didn't Norwegian immigration take off? Some of the first Norwegian immigrants in Guatemala did to a certain extent have the function of bearers of information and creators of networks. But as we have seen, opportunities were for a few, well-educated, and well-prepared men with access to capital and contacts. This was a piece of information Norwegians already in Guatemala took great care to disseminate, along with the necessity of knowing both a language not common in Norway and a quite foreign culture. There was in general no room for poor farmhands in Guatemala, given the structure of land tenure and the abundant access to cheap indigenous labor. The coffee industry was already in the hands of local as well as German and some British owners. Gaining access required large amounts of capital and an already established network. The modernization of infrastructure needed competent labor and thus created opportunities for engineers, of whom Norway had a surplus, but there was a limit to how many were needed, and they had to compete with engineers of other nationalities for the jobs. As for commerce, that, too, was a field largely occupied by other foreigners.

The few Norwegians who did settle in Guatemala from 1900 to 1940 never formed a close-knit Norwegian community. They all knew of each other, and some close relations between family and friends existed. But poor infrastructure and the fact that they settled all over Southern Guatemala allowed little contact and thus made it difficult to form communities. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, other groups of foreigners offered the functions a Norwegian community could have fulfilled, and there was thus no great need to form one.

This brings us to a final, but important, point, which is that the Norwegian immigrants were highly integrated into other groups of foreign immigrants, and also into Guatemalan society. They related to German and British coffee networks and North American companies dedicated to the construction of ports and railroads. In other words, they were closely linked to transnational capitalism. And those who married Guatemalans or even took Guatemalan citizenship soon became part of Guatemalan society. Thus, even though Guatemala had offered them good opportunities in life, they neither needed nor wished to attract fellow Norwegians there.

Male Narratives from the Margins of the Country of Immigrants: Two Norwegians in Argentina in the 1920s

María Bjerg

This chapter analyzes the personal narratives of two Norwegian immigrants who arrived in Argentina at the end of the 1920s, namely, the diaries of Ole Viborg Høyby and of his friend and fellow traveler, Ottar Enger, who also wrote a series of twenty-six letters addressed to his parents.¹ At the beginning of their stay, the authors of those narratives worked for over half a year as hired laborers on a farm in the west of Buenos Aires province, and later they set out on a long journey to the *Chaco salteño*, a wooded area in Salta province in the far north of the country, where they found employment at the Standard Oil refinery.

In different registers, the accounts of Ole and Ottar describe the same migration but two different experiences; they enable a complementary reading as well as an independent one, and through both a “public” narrative (the letters) and an intimate one (the diaries)² they provide access to the authors’

- 1 Ole Viborg Høyby’s diary from September 24, 1927, to March 29, 1928; the letters written by Ottar Engar to his mother from January 1, 1927, to March 3, 1938; and Ottar Engar’s diary from September 24, 1927, to March 31, 1928, are found in the HULA II database at the University of Oslo.
- 2 Letters in particular and personal narratives of migrants in general have enjoyed a surge in interest by scholars since the publication in 1918–1920 of the sociological analysis, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* by William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki. Among the several historical studies based on immigrants’ letters, see Eduardo Ciafardo, “Cadenas migratorias e inmigración italiana. Reflexiones a partir de la correspondencia de dos inmigrantes italianos en la Argentina, 1921–1938,” *Studi Emigrazione* 38, 102 (June 1991): 233–56; Sonia Cancian, *Families, Lovers and their Letters. Italian Postwar Migration to Canada* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2003); María L. Da Orden, *Una familia y un océano de por medio. La emigración gallega a la Argentina: una historia a través de la memoria epistolar* (Barcelona: Anthropos, 2010); Bruce S. Elliot, David A. Gerber and Suzanne M. Sinke, *Letters Across Borders. The Epistolary Practice of International Migrants* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); David A. Gerber, *Authors of their lives The personal correspondence of British Immigrants to North America in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2006); Walter Kamphoefner, Helbich Wolfgang and Ulrike Sommereds, *News from the Land of Freedom: German Immigrants Write Home* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991). Some

representations and subjectivity.³ Thus, the analysis of this migratory experience will address two interrelated dimensions. In the first narrative, the route of the migrants will be rebuilt so as to reflect on the capacity of agency, the role of social networks in market access, and the links between overseas migration and internal and seasonal migrations. The second narrative, focused on subjectivity, will address their motivations and wishes, along with their representations and the way the social and cultural contexts affected their choices and influenced their strategies.

The case of Ole and Ottar has some particulars that make its study interesting. The first one is that their overseas migration was followed by a number of moves within the Argentine territory, one of which was especially relevant. As is widely known, between the 1880s and the 1930 financial crisis the big cities and the rural world of the pampean-coastal area were the geographical spaces of reception and settlement for the majority of immigrants.⁴ Contrarily, other regions in the country, like the *Chaco salteño*, whose population was predominantly indigenous, Creole, and Bolivian, received only small contingents of European immigrants, and it was precisely in such a marginal region that Ole and Ottar's journey led them.

Another singularity is the duration of Ole and Ottar's stay. They arrived in Buenos Aires in February of 1927 and returned to Norway at the end of March 1928. Although their diaries and letters say little about why they emigrated, they enlarge upon the reasons for returning and the changing representations of Argentina formed by them at different moments of their stay.

The Argentine migration statistics show both the spectacular number of immigrants and the considerable percentage that returned. For example, in a broad period of time (1857–1914), and considering the whole of the immigration

studies use a combination of immigrants' personal narratives such as letters, diaries, journals, and memoirs. See for example Kerby A. Miller and Patricia Mulholland Miller, *Journey of Hope: The Story of Irish Immigration to America* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2001). Others are based only on diaries. See for example María Bjerg, *El Mundo de Dorothea. La vida cotidiana en un pueblo de la frontera de Buenos Aires en el siglo XIX* (Buenos Aires: Imago Mundi, 2004).

- 3 For an analysis of the uses of personal narratives and the problem of subjectivity, see Mary Jo Maines, Jennifer L. Pierce, and Barbara Laslett, *Telling Stories. The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008).
- 4 According to the national census in 1914, almost 80 percent of the immigrants lived in the city of Buenos Aires, the eponymous province, and the province of Santa Fe, whereas in the northwest of Argentina percentages fluctuate between 2 percent and 7 percent.

flow, those who returned comprised 44 percent of the entries.⁵ The return migration has attracted little interest among historians, though, and its treatment has been exclusively quantitative. It still awaits a micro-analytical approach that delves into the connection between return and the agency of social actors, and the way in which these latter experienced circumstances that confronted them with the dilemma of staying or leaving.

Finally, another detail is that the accounts of Ole and Ottar allow us to recreate their whole route, from the departure from Norway to the return journey. In his diary, Ole mentions letters written to his family; we do not have these letters available but only those of Ottar, who corresponded with his parents throughout his migration. His first letter was sent during the travel from Norway, and the last one from the northern province of Santiago del Estero, twenty days before his return to Europe. The average regularity was a letter every fifteen days, even if sometimes (during his moves within Argentina, for instance) he went a month without writing.

The diaries cover a briefer period. They both start on September 24, 1927, when Ole and Ottar departed by train from Buenos Aires to Salta, and culminate at the end of March 1928, during their return journey. But they differ in their narrative density and their regularity. Ottar is very concise, and he doesn't write daily, often summarizing a number of days in a single entry. Besides, he interrupts his writing in early November 1927, to resume it only in March of the following year. On the contrary, Ole writes regularly, and though some entries are succinct, in general his accounting is quite scrupulous. Beyond the contrasts, both diaries open a window to the daily life of a region at the margins of the Argentina of mass immigration and cast light on the way in which the authors cognitively and emotionally perceived that stage in their lives.

Jumping without a Net

Ole Viborg Høiby was thirty years old and single when he left Norway. According to the emigration record, he was an office worker in a margarine manufacturing company in Oslo, whereas his friend, Ottar Enger, stated to be a twenty-three-year-old carpenter born in Rjukan, a town in the south of the country. Although we lack data as to how they met, we think it is possible that Ottar was

5 The percentage includes those who migrated a number of times in their lives, as in the case of the so-called swallow workers. On the topic, see Fernando Devoto, *Historia de la inmigración en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2003), 73–74.

an internal migrant in Norway who, in search of a job opportunity, had arrived to the capital city, Oslo, where his path crossed with that of Høiby.

As we have already mentioned, Ottar's letters begin with the account of the transatlantic journey, and give few hints to the reasons for the migration and its planning. But they provide valuable information about their arrival in Buenos Aires and about how the Norwegian emigrants deployed their capacity of agency and how they subjectively experienced an economic context that had not succeeded in maintaining the spectacular growth rates of the years prior to the Great War.⁶

When studying the connection among immigration, work and information availability, Argentine historiography has paid much attention to relational capital. The reconstruction of dense pre-migratory networks has been useful to explain the composition and variation in the flows throughout time, along with the relevance of contacts with relatives, friends, and acquaintances to the transatlantic migration as well as to the formation of ethnic communities. The analysis of the interpersonal mechanisms in migration has shed light on the operation of processes of linking that facilitated the access to opportunities (information) and provided the assistance to emigrate and find employment.⁷ Nevertheless, it has underestimated the weight of the migration occurring outside this system of links, that of those who migrated with no network but only information obtained from impersonal channels (e.g., travel agents, ocean liner brochures, press articles, and rumors), and who would build their relationships after arriving in the country.

The first thing that attracts attention in Ole and Ottar's migration is the weakness of the pre-migratory networks. Their accounts show the conditions of uncertainty and the exiguity and inaccuracy of the information they had at their arrival in Buenos Aires. In Norway, Ottar had read a newspaper article on Argentina that advised people to emigrate in February since the start of the harvest season increased the demand of workers. But in a letter written a few

6 On the economic history of the period, see Barbero María Inés and Fernando Rocchi, "La industria argentina en el período de entreguerras" in *Academia Nacional de la Historia, Nueva Historia de la Nación Argentina* Vol. IX (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2002); Mariano Berroetaveña, Guillermo Parson, Liliana Román and Hernán Rosal, *Ideas, política, economía y sociedad en la Argentina, 1880-1955* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2007); Pablo Gerchunoff and Lucas Llach, *El ciclo de la ilusión y el desencanto. Un siglo de políticas económicas argentinas* (Buenos Aires: Ariel, 2003); Mario Rapaport, *Historia económica, social y política de la Argentina, 1880-2003* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 2007).

7 The problem of social networks and immigration in Argentina has been intensively studied by scholars. For a comprehensive analysis of the different historiographical approaches to the issue, see Devoto, *Historia de la inmigración*, Ch. 3.

days after his arrival, he regretted having trusted such wrong information because, far from starting, the harvest season was already finishing. Nevertheless, other data turned out to be true (and useful), although it is not clear if they were collected from the same source. For example, both friends knew about the existence of the Norwegian church and the Norwegian Sailors' Home in Buenos Aires, and were informed about the possibility of free lodging at the Immigrants' Hotel in the port of the city.⁸

With inaccurate information, and lacking strong pre-migratory links, Ole and Ottar began to create a network after their arrival. The Norwegian pastor helped them to get their first job, and put them in contact with the Danish community in the town. During the first week in Buenos Aires, they deployed all their skills to build up a meager social capital. Their days were passed in a geographically confined setting near the port, in the neighborhood of San Telmo. There were located the Danish and Norwegian churches, the Skandinavien hotel where they stayed, and the Norwegian and German Sailors' Homes,⁹ places that they frequented at different moments of their stay in Argentina. In those places they heard about salaries and areas of the country that offered more work opportunities, but they did not manage to establish any firm contact. So the pastor wrote a recommendation letter to the Norwegian foreman of El Mate, a ranch close to the village of La Zanja in the district of Trenque-Lauquen, 445 kilometers west of Buenos Aires city (See map 7.1).

At the end of February 1927, Ole and Ottar started the first stage of their migratory route in Argentina. Among descriptions of the pampean landscape and working days shared with Italian, Spanish, and local laborers, Ottar's letters reveal the change in his image of Argentina throughout the almost seven months they remained in El Mate. The land of opportunities gradually turned into a chimera, and the reality of the situation was far less enticing than the one he expected to find when emigrating from Norway. In the transition between these two representations of the country, Ottar begins to conceive the idea of returning home.

After two months working at the ranch, he writes: "Argentina is not Eldorado as we thought and as so many others still think." At the beginning of winter, in

8 The Immigration and Colonization Law of 1876 granted five days of free lodging at the Immigrants Hotel, as well as state aid to place the immigrant in the work and transfer him to the residence place at expense of the state.

9 It is possible that they obtained the information about the sailors' homes (directly or indirectly) from the crews of the whalers that sailed from Norway to the ports of Buenos Aires and Santos, Brazil. As we will see further on, in Buenos Aires Ole and Ottar met with sailors from Norwegian whalers with whom they established casual relationships.

response to a letter in which his parents had told him about the plans some youths from Rjukan had of emigrating, Ottar says: "Argentina is the last place a Norwegian should go to."

As a corollary to that, he expresses his intention of going back to Norway (he will reiterate this in subsequent letters), and, at least in the rhetorical dimension, he starts outlining his return. But in reality, the lack of money alters the return into an unattainable goal he perhaps writes about to relieve homesickness. It is significant that in his letters from May and June he talks less and less about himself and the context that surrounded him. Instead, his account focuses on Norway, whether it is by responding to family matters that his parents write about, or by asking them to send him magazines and papers, to whose contents he often refers in his correspondence.

The inclusion of the return in his account was surely also due to his precarious position in El Mate. Ottar often expressed his discontent with his salary, claiming that it was much lower than what he had heard while staying at the Skandinavien hotel, and than the one earned by laborers in the south of the province, where some colonies of Danish farmers had settled since the late 1800s. The letters written towards the end of winter show how the precariousness of his position transformed El Mate into a passing place while at the same time the "Danish district" became a goal.

It has often been said that in letters the author represents himself while simultaneously configuring the recipient, and that the sender-recipient relationship determines both the form and the content of what is written: what is said and what is unsaid, and the way in which truth is masked or in which emotions are expressed. The sender's representations may also establish a dynamic on that long-distance dialogue as well as a priority order for the topics. In Ottar's correspondence, the idea of returning was for several months the commonplace of the account and ended up by colonizing the writing of his parents, who passed from being passive recipients of the disappointed and pessimistic images with which Ottar represented Argentina to appropriating to themselves the topic and assuming a discursively active role by urging their son to come back home. But while the family situation in Rjukan was relatively stable, that of Ottar changed from one letter to the next, and surely his parents would read with bewilderment this passage of a letter from July 24, 1927:

I know you think I have to come back home as soon as possible, and I am of the same opinion, but I think that, having come here, it is better for me to stay some time longer and try.



MAP 7.1 *Train journey from Buenos Aires to La Zanja (Trenque Lauquen)*
 BASED ON “MAPA DE LA PROVINCIA DE BUENOS AIRES” BY INSTITUTO
 GEOGRÁFICO NACIONAL ([HTTP://WWW.IGN.GOB.AR/IMAGES/MAPASFISICOS/
 BUENOSAIREAS4.JPG](http://www.ign.gov.ar/imagenes/mapasfisicos/buenosaires4.jpg))

Ole had been exchanging letters for over a month with Dansk Hjelpeforening, a mutual aid society established in 1892 by the Danish congregation in Buenos Aires. This association, whose existence he had learned of at the Norwegian church, worked as a job bank for the numerous immigrants who arrived in Argentina without a net to support them. The society, whose visible face was the pastor, accommodated immigrants in the same boarding house of San Telmo where Ole and Ottar had stayed during their first days in Argentina, and got them jobs in the rural settlements of the Danish community.¹⁰

In early September, Ole received a letter from the Dansk Hjelpeforening with a dozen of names of Danish farmers to whom ask for a job. A few days later, the Norwegians left El Mate and spent some days in Buenos Aires on their way from the rural world of the west to that of the south of the province. But fate would change that course.

During their stay in the city, they were doing some paperwork at the consulate when a casual encounter with a Norwegian engineer who worked for a British railroad company opened a new work perspective for them. Without dwelling on thoughts or calculations, Ole and Ottar decided to go to Salta, a city about 500 kilometers north of Buenos Aires, and follow the advice of their fellow countryman to ask for a job at the works of the Central Norte railroad, a line that would connect Argentina with Bolivia and that was in full expansion in the 1920s.

After a month of silence, Ole writes again before the departure. The letter in which he describes the change of plans shows him to be euphoric. The downcast tone and the money anxiety that tinged his representations of Argentina with pessimism give way to a lively and excited account. With the certainty that a good job was waiting for them (with a better salary than the one they expected to get in the Danish colonies), with their tickets already bought, and about to set out on the journey, Ole and Ottar now had the opportunity to go all over Buenos Aires and look at it with travelers' eyes for the first time. Ottar tells they interspersed their social life at the Norwegian church and the German Sailor's Home with long walks through the modern urban pattern of the "Paris of the South." They wandered through the elegant avenues, visited the zoo, and stayed in cafes observing the locals. Once again the city is a departure point, not now to a precarious rural job but to a company that carries out "a monumental work of thousands of kilometers of tracks and millions of *pesos* in cost,"

10 On the Danish mutual aid society, see María Bjerg, "The Danes in the Argentine Pampa: The Role of Ethnic Leader in the Creation of an Ethnic Community" in *Mass Migration to Modern Latin America* ed. Samuel Baily and Eduardo Míguez (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 2003), 147–66.

as he proudly told his parents. The optimism of the account leaves no place for the return. The journey to the north is a turning point and a promise of a new beginning.

Once in Salta, following the coordinates given by their contact in Buenos Aires, Ole and Ottar met an engineer from the company who hired workers for the building of a bridge in the outskirts of the city. But those works were coming to an end and the company was not hiring anymore. So, the engineer suggested they continue on to Embarcación, a town on the borders of the subtropical region of the *Chaco salteño*, 260 kilometers northeast of Salta. Several branch lines of the Central Norte converged at that point, and the railway's repair shops and warehouses were there. Different works were being carried out in the place, and they would probably get a job at some of them.

The Way to Tartagal

In Salta, a new course began for Ole and Ottar, who recorded it in their diaries. Two accounts that, oscillating between detailed description and laconic narrative, offer information about the capacity of agency, work opportunities, money, networks, sociability, and rituals that regulated the time for work and for leisure.

The dominant topic in the diaries is work. The search for it organizes the route from Buenos Aires to the north of the country. The course of the travelers follows the railroad line and takes them into the *Chaco salteño*, where the forest exploitation, the sugar mills, and the brand-new oil drillings demanded a workforce. But before addressing the pilgrimage of the two friends, let us delve briefly into the features that characterized the economy of this region of the Salta province.

In the 1920s the region had four productive niches, which hired mostly indigenous workers and Bolivian migrant workers. The first niche, whose origins date back to the 1700s, was the sugar industry, characterized by a strong seasonality in the workforce demand and by the use of mechanisms of exploitation and coercion such as the debt peonage, or truck system, on which we will return later. Another sector that demanded workforce was the construction of the Central Norte railroad that, in turn, had invigorated the third niche, the forest industry. This latter produced timber for the railway infrastructure and supplied the wood for the locomotives. Finally, in the mid-1920s, the American company Standard Oil started oil extraction in the area and set up its offices in Tartagal (one of the stations of the Central Norte railroad). In parallel with the expansion of the foreign oil company, the Argentine state

launched an aggressive policy of monopoly control of hydrocarbons and started its own oil exploitation in the region through the state company Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales (henceforth YPF). By the end of the 1920s, the official discourse pinned its hopes of prosperity of the nation on the “black gold” and deployed an anti-imperialist campaign whose main target was the American company.¹¹ As we will see, it was in this atmosphere of hostility towards Standard Oil that Ole and Ottar entered the offices in Tartagal searching for a job.

Let's return now to the departure point: the city of Salta. The journey from Buenos Aires had used up their savings. To go on to Embarcación, Ole and Ottar had to sell their watches and the Kodak camera they had used to record their days in El Mate,¹² and with which they probably expected to record their journey through the margins of Argentina.

On September 29, 1927, the Norwegians were again en route. With little money, vague references, and no networks, they groped their way forward, depending on casual encounters and fleeting relationships to get a job. At the end of September 30, they arrived at Betania, a town in the department of General Güemes, some forty kilometers from the city of Salta. Night fell on them there, and according Ottar's diary,

As we were trying to install ourselves in an abandoned coach, the superintendent appeared, and after interrogating us he invited us to spend the night at the police station...and told us that in the next [railroad] station we could get a job paying two *pesos* a day plus food and boarding.

The superintendent was referring to the nearby town of Campo Santo and the San Isidro sugar mill, one of the oldest in the province, where, according to Ole,

11 On the oil policy of the Argentine state and its relation to the Standard Oil Company, see José Daniel Benclowicz, “Aportes para una Historia del Norte de Salta. Conformación y desarrollo de las localidades de Tartagal y General Mosconi en la primera mitad del siglo XX,” *Andes* 22 (2011); Nicolás Gadano, *Historia del petróleo en la Argentina. 1907–1955: Desde los inicios hasta la caída de Perón* (Buenos Aires: Edhasa, 2006); Marcos Kaplan, “Política del petróleo en la primera presidencia de Hipólito Yrigoyen (1916–1922),” *Desarrollo Económico* 45 (Apr.-Jun- 1972): 3–24; Carl Solberg, *Oil and Nationalism in Argentina. A History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979).

12 In several letters, Ottar alludes to the photographs he would send to his family. For his part, Ole bought a new camera with one of his first salary from Standard Oil, and there are references in his diary to the photos he took in Salta.

We waited for a couple of hours, eating sugarcane, and we got a job. We met a Danish electrician who had been working there for fifteen days. He asked the boss if there was work, and he was told yes right away, and that we have to start tomorrow. Ottar as a cart driver, and I as a machine driver.

To Ole and Ottar, San Isidro was just a temporary job to save up for the train tickets to Embarcación. In that place, where they were socially isolated, living almost without communication with a large mass of indigenous workers, Ottar speaks again about returning home. On October 10, 1927, he writes, Homesickness comes back, and if I had the money now I'd probably turn my back on Argentina.

During their stay in San Isidro, the entries in both diaries are brief but revealing as to the work conditions in the factory. The fatigue, the long working days, the variety of tasks, the tiny and dirty hut they shared with two Bolivian workers, and the discontent with the salary do nothing but confirm, from the individual perspective of personal accounts, the work conditions characteristic of the sugar economy of Salta.

In the indigenous communities, the sugar mills had been an inexhaustible source of cheap workforce, since thousands of indigenous workers were brought by force from their communities, especially for the sugar cane crop. While the "white"¹³ laborers worked in the production and transport of sugar and in the maintenance of the mill, the indigenous worked in the cane field. Their pay was lower than that of the "whites" and consisted of a combination of provisions and a private currency issued by the sugar factory (vouchers) usable only at the company-owned store. There the food, tobacco, and alcohol were very expensive, so they often got into debt with the employers, who forbade them to abandon the mill. For their part, the "white" employees, better remunerated and with shorter working days, were paid in cash but, just like the cane field laborers, they could not evade the truck system, since a considerable part of their weekly salary was paid in the form of credit to purchase at the company store.¹⁴

13 For the most part the so-called white population comprised Creole people, though this denomination also included Syrian-Lebanese and Europeans immigrants.

14 For the organization of work in sugar plantations of Northern Argentina, see Daniel Campi and Marcelo Lagos, "Auge azucarero y mercado de trabajo en el Noroeste argentino, 1850–1930," in *Circuitos mercantiles y mercados en Latinoamérica. Siglos XVIII y XIX* ed. Jorge Silva Riquer, Juan Carlos Grosso and Carmen Yuste (México, Instituto Mora/UNAM, 1995); Ana Teruel, "El Borde Occidental del Chaco Argentino. Políticas de sometimiento indígena e integración al Estado Nación. Segunda mitad del siglo XIX" in *La nacionalización de la Amazonia* ed. Pilar García Jordán and Nuria Sala i Vila (Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 1998).

In spite of these unfavorable conditions, with two weeks' work Ole and Ottar saved up the money for the tickets and left Campo Santo. They arrived in Embarcación on the evening of October 16. But there were no jobs, because the start of the railroad works was delayed. Then an employee of the train station told them that in General Ballivián, forty kilometers to the northeast, the Standard Oil company was recruiting workers (See map 7.2).

The diaries and letters reveal the discrepancy between the times of the journey and the work opportunities. Ole and Ottar arrived in Argentina when the harvest was coming to an end, in Salta when the construction of the railway bridge was completed, and in Embarcación when it was too early, because the works had not started yet. The vagueness of information prevented them from getting a job, but at the same time the casual encounters and the fleeting relationships influenced them to refocus their search and change the route. Wandering around unknown places, asking in bars and hotels, railway, and police stations, they acquired approximate, but ultimately effective information.

On October 17, their first day in General Ballivián, Ole writes:

While we are drinking, a Norwegian approaches; his name is Ødegaard, and he asks us if we are Norwegians too. He tells us that he's been working at the Standard Oil offices for a year. He invites us and we go to the hotel, drink more beer and chat. Tomorrow he will help us get a job.

This casual encounter with a compatriot becomes the first rope of a net. With Ødegaard's help, Ole and Ottar go to the oil company offices and get a job. Ole is sent to a camp in Lomitas, ten kilometers from Tartagal, where he will work as an administrative assistant, while Ottar is employed as a cook assistant in Cerro Tartagal, an oil well three kilometers north of Lomitas.

Writing the Experience

When Ole and Ottar settle on their respective jobs, their writings show a change in subjectivity. Food, generous drink, frequent social intercourse, and modest welfare replace anxiety, frugality, social isolation, scarcity, and untidiness. The improvement in their material condition produces a change in mood that is reflected in the larger density and the different tone of their writings.



MAP 7.2 *The journey from the city of Salta to Tartagal*

BASED ON "MAPA DE LA PROVINCIA DE SALTA" BY INSTITUTO GEOGRÁFICO NACIONAL ([HTTP://WWW.IGN.GOB.AR/IMAGES/MAPASFISICOS/SALTA44.JPG](http://www.ign.gob.ar/images/mapasfisicos/saltaaa.jpg))

The generosity and details of food are minutely described. Ole writes in his diary: "We had the best meal since we've been in Argentina. A soup, three dishes, chocolate cake, and coffee."

Ottar, in turn, tells his parents of the change in situation. The following passage of a letter written during his first weeks in Cerro Tartagal shows a new shift in the fluctuating image he has of Argentina: "Now I am better than I ever thought I could be in Argentina, I earn \$90 a month, good food."

The diaries and letters allow us also to delve into their authors' relationship with the social and cultural contexts at different moments in their journey through the north of the country. As we have already mentioned, Ottar's diary is laconic and discontinuous, two traits that become more accentuated with his settling in Cerro Tartagal, where he spends his days in relative social isolation. As for Ole, he is a scrupulous diarist, but focusing his eye on the familiar rather than the alterity. He is a walker whose path (transformed into daily writing) is roughly sketched. The strangeness of the quotidian and the observation of the variety of social and cultural textures (where the extremes of ambitious and modern projects such as the oil extraction at the Standard Oil sites coincide with old-time practices such as the debt peonage in the sugar mills) are often left out of his frame.

For example, it is suggestive that all through the fifteen days he spent at San Isidro he did not speak about the indigenous laborers. A brief sentence that shows a certain annoyance puts them marginally in the final scene of his stay in Campo Santo. While waiting for a train to take him to Embarcación, he writes, “there are many indigenous people screaming and howling monotonous songs.”

The same scene appears in the diary of Ottar, who presents a more conscious view of the details that show the distance between himself and the social context in which he was immersed. And this distance was expressed in the use of two diacritics, the indigenous and the Catholic:

The train runs through sugarcane plantations, and almost all the passengers are indigenous, with their bowed heads, their slanted eyes, broad nose, and a large mouth with thick lips. Women are barefoot, dressed in flashy clothes, and with collars covering their entire neck. We saw many priests, but I find them disagreeable, with their beer belly, their pig face, and their saintly appearance.

The relief experienced by Ole at the Standard Oil with regard to his material condition results in a greater narrative density and a more conscious view of the context. His account intersperses abundant references to the work routine with descriptions of the social life at the camp, an eminently masculine world in which local and foreign workers lived together.

It is obvious that Ole must have had daily interactions with the Argentine and Bolivian workers of Lomitas, but his account does not linger on them. During the first weeks in the camp, he shared lodgings with two Salta laborers whom he mentions only incidentally, whether it is because he had no interaction with them other than the casual living together, or because there was nothing extraordinary in the experience so as to put it in writing. So, in Ole's narrative the locals appear as actors of a compact supporting cast, amorphous, and silent, and only occasionally do they gain attention:

In the afternoon Carlstrøm was ready to pay the wages. He was at a table with the payments, and the niggers came and stamped their thumbs because most of them cannot write their name.

This is one of the few episodes in which Ole's conceptual world incorporates the experience of estrangement and tells of the articulations of meaning stemmed from the contrast between the known and the different.

For his part, Ottar does not dedicate a single line of his diary to the social life in the Cerro Tartagal camp. And in his letters he complained about his isolation, saying that “young men who work here are not good company to me. Most of them are indigenous and a vile race in my opinion.” The language was possibly influential on the images of the locals that Ole and Ottar constructed in their own mind, and on the distance they took from them. To their poor knowledge of Spanish was added the fact that the Bolivian workers (and some of the locals of indigenous origin) spoke in their native tongues.¹⁵ This double language barrier was undoubtedly difficult to escape. But it is also true, as is demonstrated by the personal narratives of other European immigrants, that the ignorance (or the poor knowledge) of language and the lack of verbal communication are not always obstacles for describing what is physically near even if culturally distant.¹⁶ Instead, Ole and Ottar kept themselves distant from the otherness embodied in the local society and, as we will see next, they limited their account to what happened in the narrow circle of European and American employees of the camp.

Drinking and Hunting: Repertories of Masculinity

Ole’s diary reveals that in the oil enclave, the culture of work was accompanied by forms of sociability identified with places and practices. The pleasures of the table and conversation regulated leisure time. The working day did not end without the diarist going to the camp mess hall to feast on great dishes. Dinner was one of the moments of encounter that allowed the pastime of conversation. But in matters of recreation, the most common practice was the alcohol consumption that followed from sudden invitations (thus prolonging the chat), from occasional visits to the city of Tartagal, and from social reunions with beer, wine, and whisky in abundance.

It is well known that work and alcohol have always had a conflictive relationship. Ever since the early concern of the industrial economy about

15 The northeast area of the province of Salta is divided, by its language variety, into two large linguistic families characteristic of the Big Chaco: the *tupí-guaraní*, and the *matacomatuaguaya*, among which are included the original languages of the Bolivian migrants who crossed the border in search of work.

16 That was the case of two European female immigrants whose cases I have studied: Dorothea Fugl and Ella Brunswig. See María Bjerg, *El mundo de Dorothea. La vida en un pueblo de la frontera de Buenos Aires en el siglo xix* (Buenos Aires: Imago Mundi, 2004); idem. *Historias de la Inmigración en Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Edhasa, 2009) Chap.6.

disciplining the workforce, working and drinking became antagonistic practices. Alcohol and alcoholism were, in turn, cause and consequence of the so-called social question and of the construction of hegemonic discourses by which to represent both the drunkenly, lazy, disorderly, and unproductive worker, and his virtuous opposite: the sober, responsible, and productive worker. However, despite the effort to make work into a virtue and alcohol into a vice, the consumption of alcohol has been part of the popular sectors and working-class identities. Rituals of conviviality and *languages* of class and of masculinity have been developed around alcohol.¹⁷

As Sandra Gayol points out in her work on masculine sociability in Buenos Aires cafes during the period of massive immigration, inviting to drink was a legitimate excuse for starting the dialogue, a form of mediation between solitude and company, between the lack of referents and the point of support that might allow networks to expand.¹⁸ The rituals of drinking demand reciprocity, in which ties gradually develop; they embody notions of masculine honor (knowing how to drink, the good drinker), and incidentally lessen the social differences.

A good deal of those dimensions encompassed by rituality and the morals of drinking are present in Ole's diary. The following entries are just a few examples of his many references to alcohol:

I came across Olsen at the warehouse and we drank some beers!

George has a hangover today. ...He invited me for a drink of Black Label before dinner, it warms you up.

Carlstrøm and I went to Herman's place after dinner. ...They gave us beer. Olsen was there, really drunk.

Drinking was not only a brief opportunity to construct artificial paradises. The frequency and routine of the practice reveal the cultural conception of alcohol as a symbol around which workers regulated sociability and represented hierarchies. Minor employees like Ole and the German carpenter Herman would share the drink with their superiors, Carlstrøm and George, the chief of the camp and responsible for the warehouse. While drinking together, differences were put aside, but this interruption was more apparent than real, because it

17 Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of class. Studies in English working class history, 1832–1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

18 Sandra Gayol, "Conversaciones y desafíos en los cafés de Buenos Aires, 1870–1910" in *Historia de la vida privada en la Argentina* ed. Fernando Devoto and Marta Madero (Buenos Aires: Taurus, 1999), 58.

was the superiors who usually paid the first round of drinks, and those drinks were expensive (rum or whisky). Standing the round implied a reciprocity that forced the employees to treat their bosses to another one. But workers could only pay for cheap beverages like beer. So, in that second round hierarchies would re-appear.

Whether vice, recreation, or equalizing practice, some would drink just to show pleasure and some to get drunk. Without falling into the extreme of saying the people in the camp worked only to drink, we may think that (partially at least) the contrary might be true, that is, that they drank to work, as a part of a rituality related to the creation of social spaces for leisure. Certainly, Ole neither speaks of inveterate drunkards nor alludes to work absenteeism caused by alcohol consumption. He just speaks of “dizzies” and casual drunkards. The drinking mentioned in the diary alludes to a limited social space: that of the European and American employees of the camp. But we know little about this practice among local workers, apart from some episodes of violence fleetingly mentioned (and attributed by Ole to excessive drinking), such as the quarrels of men who fought over the same woman at brothels (episodes that often ended up in murders), or the frequent use of bladed weapons in fights among workers.

Moreover, this violence materialized in quarrels and deeds of blood, there was a ritual violence that, like drinking, regulated the social life and at the same time was a reference of virility. Tartagal was located in an area noted for its rich flora and fauna, with ferocious animals like the jaguar, the hunting of which was a local tradition and one adopted by the European and American employees of the camp. Although there are few references to this hunting, the way in which Ole alludes to it reveals that it was a common practice. The invitation to hunt was possibly part of a language of honor that expressed a challenge to virility:

Captain Delgadillo asks me in front of everyone if we want to go tiger [i.e., jaguar] hunting one of these days, and I answered, “Yes, of course.”

Agile, strong, and with a keen sense of smell, the jaguar constituted the symbol of power and fortitude, qualities that were transferred to its hunter, confirming a physical ideal based on aggressiveness, strength, and masculine sexuality. If drinking exposed a civilized dimension of masculinity, hunting brought into play the fantasy of returning to an authentic and primitive virility.

Despite the several allusions in the diary, the only detailed description of a hunting expedition shows that, as a ritual that summarizes virility, it wasn't part of a plot of meaning with which Ole would fully identify himself:

Advancing through the thicket was very arduous. We walked for a couple of hours to the perforation station number six and continued higher up. We found some water here and there, and noticed that different kinds of animals had been drinking, but the only things we shot at were a partridge and a woodpecker. We had to perform acrobatics to get to many of the places. We climbed up and slid down slopes. Hermansen had a good rifle (small caliber, 22, fifteen shots, an automatic Remington), ...but there were almost no animals.

The anticlimactic end to the hunting party is the expression of a simulacrum in a masculine world where the male had to prove his virility by hunting and his masculinity by drinking. Even if Ole did not seem to share the ritual meanings of hunting, he understood that masculine honor always had to remain safe. So, the failure of the expedition was not attributed to the hunters' inexperience but to the absence of animals.

The Return

The decision of going back to Norway comes up suddenly in Ole's account, in the middle of a routine that combined work with a sociability fluctuating between spontaneity and rituals. We know from Ottar's correspondence that they had been talking about it since their days at El Mate, but the letters show that returning was a priority for Ottar, whereas Ole was more hesitant.

Like his friend, Ole received packages with magazines and books, the reading of which, in the solitude of the nights in Lomitas, possibly took his imagination back to his place of origin. However, Norway was not part of his narrative repertoire, neither as a synthesis of nostalgia nor as a summary of desires of returning. In fact, mentions of his country are few and brief. In early December 1927, he received an unusual letter in which his mother (alluded to only once in the whole diary) informed him about an illness his father had contracted. A couple of weeks of affliction throw him into a state of anxiety, and Norway became the focus of his waiting: "I wish to have news from home soon and to know how everything is with papa."

But this expectation stops when he is told about his father's improvement. Then Norway disappears from the account until he writes, two weeks later, "Today is *Christmas Eve* in Norway, here it is just Saturday 24t/12."¹⁹ Two days

19 Underlined by the diarist. The focal point of Christmas in Norway is Christmas Eve rather than Christmas Day.

later, when Ottar, with whom he had celebrated the Christmas in Tartagal, returns to his camp, Ole writes, "He left with Columdsen, so now we'll only meet again when we go to Norway. I rejoice with the idea of coming back home."

Christmas, and a celebration with plenty of alcohol, was possibly what triggered Ole's nostalgia. But the routine of Lomitas blurred Norway once again until mid-January, when he received a letter from Ottar saying he had quit the company and was returning to Europe. At the beginning of 1928 the company had reduced its personnel in Cerro Tartagal, leaving Ottar without employment and offering him instead a transfer to a camp in Bolivia. Tired of the isolation and solitude that had accompanied his job at the Standard Oil, Ottar traveled to the province of Santiago del Estero and joined a threshing team at the wheat harvest, a temporary job by which he expected to save up the money for the ticket to Norway.

For his part, in early January 1928 Ole had been promoted to timekeeper and received a salary raise. Why would he give up a good position at the company? Was it perhaps Ottar's leaving that prompted his return? Probably. But the effects of the escalation in the conflict between Standard Oil and the national government also has to be considered. In September 1927 the Argentine Chamber of Deputies had passed a state monopoly of hydrocarbons. But despite the law, YPF faced serious operational difficulties, since the oil areas had been already awarded to the American company. In fact, when YPF's first operations center was established, a few kilometers from Tartagal, the drilling sites overlapped with areas licensed to Standard Oil, and the government had to order the suspension of YPF activities. But when in March 1928 the election results brought a change of government in the province of Salta, the new governor, who supported the nationalization project, ordered the suspension of the Standard Oil operations and cleared the competitors out of the YPF's way.

Ole probably did not comprehend the magnitude of the conflict, but some of the entries in his last two months at the company reveal the effects of an alien political dispute that he could not withdraw from. Discontented with the company's new situation, on February 1928 some of his superiors told him they were leaving the camp. A few weeks later, Ole speaks of a radical change in the personnel in Lomitas. A new warehouse manager, a new foreman, and two engineers were coming from Bolivia to replace those who were quitting and departing to Buenos Aires. The dramatic speed of changes in the camp attracted the attention of Ole, who wrote on 28 February, 1928: "Changes fall like bolts of lightning from the sky here at Standard Oil."²⁰ A few days later, the

²⁰ Underlined by the diarist.

company announced a wage cut for timekeepers. His friend had left the company, and the Swedish foreman and the German warehouse manager, two of Ole's closest co-workers in the camp, were leaving, too. So he decided to hasten his departure. In early March he came back to Buenos Aires, where he would meet Ottar at his return from Santiago del Estero.

The two friends spent two weeks in the city. They divided their time between preparations for the return journey and social life at the Norwegian church and the German and Norwegian Sailors' Homes. While waiting for the departure of the *Bayern*, a German ship that would take them to Europe, they wandered through Buenos Aires like they had done a few months before when they were in transit to Salta. They felt relaxed and safe. They again behaved like travelers who enjoyed the pleasure of movietheaters, chessgames at the Skandinavian boarding house, and casual encounters like the one with the sailors of a Norwegian whaler with whom they drank beer at a bar in the port. On 23 March, 1928, they departed Buenos Aires, and a few days later, while the *Bayern* sailed along the coast of Brazil, they ended their diaries.

Conclusion

The experiences of Ole and Ottar reveal the strength of the weak ties²¹ in immigration and in the construction of the relational capital that provides access to the work market, and the way in which a limited amount of information allows people to act, elaborate strategies, and face the costs that result from decisions made under conditions of uncertainty (of extreme uncertainty sometimes).²² In the case of Ole and Ottar, who had practically no pre-migratory networks, the information was not only insufficient but also wrong. However, a handful of precise references allowed them to access a bigger volume of data from which to develop their first post-migratory nets. Thus, the Norwegian church, the Norwegian Sailors' Home, and the Skandinavian boarding house, constituted, each on its way, social spaces that facilitated the introduction of the newcomers into the host society, and indirectly guided and re-guided their path through Argentina.

21 Mark S. Granovetter, "The strength of weak ties" *American Journal of Sociology*, 78, 6 (May 1973): 1360–80.

22 On the decision-making under conditions of uncertainty and limited information, see Giovanni Levi, *L'eredità immateriale. Carriera di un esorcista nel Piemonte del Seicento* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1985).

The absence of pre-migratory social ties made their access to the work market more difficult, placed them in a precarious work situation, and had an influence first on their successive internal migrations and later on their decision to return to Norway. On this point, we could ask about the meaning of return in the representations of migrants. Is it a goal from the beginning of the journey, or is just a rhetorical resource to help maintain an imaginary link with the place of origin? Is return the result of a failure,²³ or is it part of a circuit of temporary migrations?

Even if the accounts of Ole and Ottar say little about why they migrated, we know they arrived with the idea of working in the harvest, a typical employment for the seasonal migrants known as “swallows.” But we cannot thereby conclude that they departed from Norway with the goal of returning. Their personal narratives suggest that the return gradually imposed itself as a response to the failure of their expectations about job availability and wage levels. At the same time, the return was used (especially by Ottar) as a resource to lessen the unease caused by disappointment, and as a rhetorical figure that accompanied the expression of change in his representations of Argentina.

In this case, the return allows reflecting on one of the topics examined in the introduction of this book. As is pointed out there, one of the dominant conceptions in the bibliography on Norwegian emigration was that, unlike what happened with those who went to the United States, the Norwegians who traveled to Latin America were adventurers. Young men, without a family and with a certain level of education who did not expect to live in their places of destination but only to capitalize on experiences, immersed themselves into the unfamiliar and then returned to the Old World. Ole and Ottar did have some of the characteristics supporting this image. Both were young, single, and educated.²⁴ Both took photographs of their experience. And both narrated their passage through the *Chaco salteño*, a stretch of the migration that in their opinion, perhaps on account of the unusual and exotic, deserved to be recorded in a personal diary. However, they did not migrate in search of exotic places and experiences, nor did they imagine Argentina as a sort of last natural frontier and reservoir of alterity.

Ole and Ottar were not adventurers but migrants in search of employment, who through their personal narratives proved to be pretty much resistant to otherness. But they could not completely withdraw from the cultural

23 The opposite could also be true, that is, that the reason for returning is the economic success and the possibility of investing in the purchase of property in Europe.

24 Both of them are fond of reading and take an interest in photography and in symphonic music. Ole was fairly fluent in English and German.

repertoires of their time, and like other travelers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they went to Latin America and, once there, they moved away from the urban and cosmopolitan modernity to go into a farm at the borders of the Humid Pampa, and later in a border and subtropical region inhabited by indigenous people. And although they did so not by choice, but because it was imposed on them by the circumstances of the work market in Buenos Aires, the experience was expressed in their accounts with a combination of resources featuring a certain *flâneurism*, typical of the period: that of the travelers, tourists, and bourgeois adventurers from the capitalist world who recorded in writing and photography the personal perspectives of their transit through the unfamiliar.

Three Norwegian Experiences in Post-Revolutionary Mexico: Per Imerslund, Halfdan Jebe and Ola Apenes

Ricardo Pérez Montfort

Introduction

At the beginning of the 1940s, Mexico's Migration Service had in its registry of foreigners about 120 Norwegians. Most arrived in the country in the early 1920s and a smaller percentage did so during the following decade.¹ The 1930 census recorded only seventy-one nationwide, so generally speaking, in a country with approximately 16.5 million inhabitants, the number of Norwegian immigrants was truly insignificant.² Indeed, it appears that Mexico was rarely considered as a destination for Norwegians in the early twentieth century, if we compare it with the United States of America or other countries on the American continent, such as Argentina or Chile.

The three Norwegians described in this chapter were very different individuals who had very diverse experiences and adventures in a country that was emerging from a revolution and entering its first stage of modernization in the twentieth century. For Mexico, the post-revolutionary years from 1920 to 1940 represented a complex process of establishing peace and entering into a world involved in a debate over socialist and capitalist currents, each with particular hints of pure nationalism. Between outbreaks of violence and recognition of a national art and a vigorous past, which was no less exotic, modern, and eager for discoveries, the three Norwegians knew how to assimilate effectively during those twenty years. Despite their dissimilarities, their Mexican experience

1 I owe this information to Delia Salazar, who was kind enough to send me a list of Norwegian citizens found in the National Registry of Foreigners of the Ministry of the Interior 1917–47 kept in the National Archives, and to the detailed work of Steinar Sæther, coordinator of the research project “Desired Immigrants – Frustrated Adventurers? Norwegians in Latin America (1820–1940),” who also provided me with valuable information on the other Norwegians mentioned in these pages. I would also like to thank Dr. John Dagfinn Bergsagel for his accurate suggestions and corrections on Halfdan Jebe's story.

2 Delia Salazar Anaya, *La población extranjera en México (1895–1990): Un recuento con base en los Censos Generales de Población* (México: INAH 1996), 294.

was decisive in the paths of their lives. All three contributed to the knowledge and art of their time, although each was recognized independently since their spheres of action could not be more distant.

First, we will follow the adventures of Nils Per Imerslund, a restless young man who after visiting Mexico and publishing a pair of fictionalized autobiographical accounts, would become an important figure within Norwegian Nazism until he died during World War II. Second, we will review the life and work of musician Halfdan Jebe, who would end his long and eventful experience on Mexican soil after a troubled stay in Yucatán full of teaching and creating music. Finally, we will recount the experiences and contributions of the engineer and mathematician Ola Apenes amid the reconstruction of the Mexican past during the 1930s. Like Imerslund, Apenes died unexpectedly during World War II, although his political sympathies were clearly the opposite of his compatriot.

The regions in Mexico where the three spent their time were equally contrasting: Imerslund's experiences took place mainly in the state of Colima, in the country's midwestern region; Halfdan Jebe was active in Mérida, capital of the state of Yucatán, in the far southeast corner of the country; and Ola Apenes did his research and made his contributions in Mexico City and the surrounding area. The trio's activities were also very different, as they ranged from teaching, artistic research, and technical service to commerce, plunder, and war. Therefore, their adventures in Mexico are particularly interesting and to some degree atypical, if one thinks about migration as a phenomenon that is strictly about adventure or work.

Imerslund, Jebe, and Apenes all developed a particular interest in the exotic and mythical pre-Hispanic world. While the former saw it as a possible source of wealth and adventure, the latter two viewed it as an inspiration, and an area of knowledge and research.

Mexico – during these post-revolutionary years and in the process of modernizing – was a key influence on the lives and works of these three Norwegians.

Nils Per Imerslund and His Family in Mexico

Also called the "Aryan Idol" (*Det ariske idol*), Nils Per Imerslund was born on May 9, 1912, in Kristiania and died on December 7, 1943, at Aker University Hospital in Oslo. Tall, blond, and athletic, an adventurer and reputed homosexual, he was a prominent figure in the Norwegian Nazi scene shortly before and during World War II. As a promoter of certain ideas linked to ethnic purity, racial superiority, and anti-communism, he was well known from the second

half of the 1930s as a local leader who shared many affinities with German National Socialism. While maintaining a critical look at radicalism itself and the irrationality of Nazism, especially at the end of his life, his Pan-German ideas linked him more with the populist and traditionalist justifications of nationalism prevailing in some affluent sectors of Norwegian society of his time. Supporting himself on the *völkisch* ideas that appealed to the popular values of his racial doctrine, he had a close relationship with Hans Solgaard Jacobsen, one of its main promoters through the Ragnarok organization and its magazine.³

Per Imerslund lived an intense life in Berlin and in nationalist circles in Norway during the 1930s. He was, however, a constant opponent of Vidkun Quisling and his party, even though their interests converged in favor of the emerging Nazism. Between 1937 and 1938, he joined the Spanish Falange army, but his participation in the Spanish Civil War seemed to be uneventful. After World War II began, he decided to fight in support of Nazism, although with a particularly critical position because of the alliance between Hitler and Stalin. Once the alliance was broken, with certain reservations against both German imperialism and the coup d'état perpetrated by Quisling in 1940, Imerslund participated in the resistance against the Soviet invasion of Finland and in the Nazi attacks against Ukraine. Shortly after, he returned to his political activities, bolstered in part by the main leaders of German National Socialism and partly by his own followers and fellow Norwegians. Wounded twice at the front, he used his recovery time to write and disseminate his Pan-German ideas in magazines and radio broadcasts. His reputation as a daring, brave, and passionate young Aryan grew exponentially – although his criticism of what was happening in Norway with Vidkun Quisling and Josef Terboven at the head led to more confrontations and misfortunes. His participation in a group that conspired against Quisling, as well as his own disillusionment with the Nazi atrocities committed in Norway as of 1941, brought him ever closer to the formation of a resistance front against those who governed his country. At the end of 1943, it appeared as though the front was now in a position to act. However, a number of complications from his injuries led to Per Imerslund's death on December 7 of that year, at the age of thirty-one.

Per's father was Thorleif Imerslund, a member of a wealthy bourgeois family from Elverum. Thorleif was a successful young businessman, but also a

3 An excellent biography of Per Imerslund can be found in Terje Emberland and Bernt Roughvedt, *Det Ariske Idol. Forfatteren, Eventyreren og nazisten Per Imerslund* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2004). The majority of the information presented here, except for that about his stay in Mexico, comes from this biography.

gambler and a philanderer. Per's mother, Anna Maria Drogseth, was also a somewhat controversial figure with a libertine lifestyle who would have a particular influence on her two children. Per had a sister who was two years older named Eva, with whom he maintained a close, but stormy relationship. In 1920, the family moved to Germany, where Per attended the Königliche Paul-Gerhardt Schule in Lübben am Spreewald near Berlin. It was an aristocratic school that emphasized Prussian militarism and discipline, but also praised courage and adventure. During his vacations, Per returned to Norway to Elverum, to the home of his grandfather, who was also a prominent local figure. In Berlin, Per's private tutor was Hans Dietrich Disselhof, a Prussian veteran of World War I, who reportedly was his mother's lover and perhaps also his father's. The relationship between Disselhof and Per was described years later as "nicht männlich" (improper for men).⁴ In 1923, Thorleif's companies went bankrupt, and his failed business dealings resulted in a remarkable social decline for his family. Slowly, and with the support of his father's family, the businessman replaced part of his lost capital, and a few years later again enjoyed a certain economic boom.

In 1925, on a trip to Paris, Thorleif Imerslund met Jorge Michel, a young Mexican from a landowning family in the state of Colima who invited him to Mexico, offering him a possible answer to his continuous economic crises. Colima, the smallest state of the Mexican republic, is bordered by the Pacific coast and the states of Jalisco and Michoacán in central western Mexico. During the 1920s, the state of Colima had a population of approximately ninety thousand inhabitants. Around twenty-eight thousand people lived in the state capital of the same name. Manzanillo, the second largest city in the state, is on the coast, and at that time it was a medium-size port with just over six thousand inhabitants.⁵ In the state of Colima, two large rivers – the Salinas and the Coahuayana – flow down from the highlands of the Sierra Madre Occidental toward the Pacific Ocean. Passing through large ravines, one finds a tropical climate that remains that way during most of the year. The heat and humidity have made the land of Colima very fertile to this day. Grains, grass, coffee, cotton, tobacco, indigo, and palm fruits are grown there. The main exploitation on the coast was of the salt beds of Cuyutlán and San Pantaleón. In the highlands, the double cone of the so-called Fire Volcano of Colima still dominates a large part of the region. It is an active volcano, just over 3,800 meters above sea

4 Interview with Terje Emberland, September 18, 2013.

5 Jesús Galindo y Villa, *Geografía de la República Mexicana* (México: Sociedad de Edición y Librería Franco Americana, 1927), vol. II, 455.

level.⁶ In the late nineteenth century, the railway joined Colima and Manzanillo with Guadalajara, the most important city of western Mexico. Thorleif Imerslund, led by Jorge Michel, came to this tropical corner of Mexico in 1926.

After visiting Colima and touring the Michel family's land, Jorge offered Thorleif half of a huge property in exchange for a loan, which he would pay interest on for five years, and the priority for purchase of the land once the deadline expired. They entered into a partnership agreement, which stipulated that Jorge Michel would receive from Thorleif Imerslund twenty-five thousand pesos in national gold as an investment to rehabilitate a coconut plantation near the city of Tecomán, Colima, under the responsibility of the Michel y Cia. company, newly created by the two interested parties.⁷ The plantation was named Las Humedades and together with two other properties named Armería and Cualta, which were added later, it comprised about thirty thousand hectares. Between 1929 and 1930, 150,000 palm trees were planted on that land, with the intention of soon increasing the number to 250,000. Since Thorleif was a foreigner and the plantation lands extended through areas "reserved for nationals only" and even reached the coast of the Pacific Ocean, the contract signed in May 1926 had no official status.⁸ In subsequent years, this worried Thorleif because he never had any possession or guarantee of ownership of the acquired properties.

At the beginning of 1931, he wanted to apply for Mexican nationality – trying not to lose his rights as a Norwegian citizen – to protect his status as a property owner, probably because he felt that the Michel family would not honor its commitment.⁹ In fact, a year earlier, in July 1930, the governor of Colima, Laureano Cervantes, authorized the dissolution of the Michel y Cia. company, granting Thorleif Imerslund and Jorge Michel 50 percent of the properties each.¹⁰ However, in August 1931, a dispute erupted between the two, a disagreement that ended in the imprisonment of Jorge Michel, who was accused of massive fraud.¹¹ Thorleif filed a suit not only for the twenty-five thousand pesos that he had originally given to Michel at the time when they formed the

6 Servando de la Cruz Reyna, "El Volcán de Fuego de Colima," in *Los volcanes de México*, ed. Hugo Granados Delgado (México: UNAM, 2002), 87–97.

7 Archive of the Norwegian Foreign Ministry in Oslo (AMNRNO) Koloni i Mexico og Centralamerika Journ. Nov nr. 18, 1928.

8 The Constitution of 1917 prevented foreigners from owning land and emphasized the impossibility of their purchasing land in coastal and border areas. See *Constitución política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, comentada* (México: UNAM, 1985), 74.

9 AMNRNO Koloni i Mexico og Centralamerika Journ. N + NF nr.36, October 21, 1931.

10 AMNRNO Koloni i Mexico og Centralamerika Journ. N + NF nr.36, 1928.

11 "Un proceso que promete ser ruidoso" in *Ecos de la Costa*, Colima, September 27, 1931.

company, but he also demanded another twenty-five thousand pesos for payment of revenues and the investment in the coconut palm plantations, plus thirteen thousand in expenses for the purchase of corn, sale of pigs, machinery, and other earnings that Michel had collected since the beginning of 1929. In total, he claimed 73,350 pesos.¹²

Even though before long he was denied an injunction, Jorge Michel was released by the attorney general of the state of Colima in November. Thorleif immediately wrote the consul of Norway in Mexico and the federal attorney general to protest and to make the chief prosecutor in the country aware of the case. He asked him to do everything possible to guarantee that justice be respected and in particular that “the defendant and the now-accused state attorney general be held accountable for their mistakes.”¹³

In early 1932, Thorleif’s situation in Colima appeared to be unresolved, but he kept fighting. He even took part in the electoral campaign of that year that ended with Salvador Saucedo being elected governor. Saucedo stood out as particularly corrupt and authoritarian, and apparently this worked in Thorleif’s favor. But in this process it became clear that as a foreigner, he could expect little from the Mexican justice system. For that reason, it did not take long for Thorleif Imerslund to begin his process of naturalization. The process took several years and was not completed until 1943.¹⁴

Meanwhile, the Imerslund family, which included wife Ana Maria and children Eva and Per, along with Hans Dietrich Disselhof, had traveled several times between 1927 and 1932 from Norway to Mexico and back, with some ups and downs. Perhaps the most serious, in addition to the conflict between the Imerslund and Michel families, was the death of Per and Eva’s mother. Shortly before the end of the family’s first trip in 1927–28, Ana Maria suffered from food poisoning while aboard the ship during their return and died unexpectedly.

12 AMNRNO Koloni i Mexico og Centralamerika Journ. N + NF nr:36, October 21, 1931.

13 AMNRNO Koloni i Mexico og Centralamerika Journ. N + NF nr:36, November 9, 1931.

14 Archivo General de la Nación (AGN) (General Archive of the Nation) Ramo Gobernación: Foreign Registry: Exp. 2.361.11920. In 1936, he was still registered as a foreigner, although by then he was recognized as a landowner. Thorleif Imerslund continued living in Mexico during the 1940s. He obtained his immigrant status in 1943. During the 1950s he had a farm in Colima, which he called Oslo and which mainly produced flowers and vegetables. He also had other businesses that were registered through a limited company that acted first under the name of Imerslund y Villanueva, and then as Cine-Mex de Occidente. Apparently he was co-owner of a store that purchased and sold film and electrical, photographic, and audio equipment. The last record of him in Colima in Norway’s Archives is from 1957. AMNRNO Koloni I Mexico og Centralamerika Exp. 2065 Loo1, Loo2 and Loo3.

The details of her indulgent life were revealed on her deathbed and apparently the two young Imerslund children were particularly affected.¹⁵

That trip in 1927 was the first for Per, when he was just fifteen years old. His distance from Norway seemed to increase his nationalism, as well as his view of ethnic differences. The exotic and tropical world also stimulated his adventurous spirit and his contact with nature. But this was not the only visit to Mexico that influenced him. In 1930 he returned to Colima to visit his father, who was beginning to experience the turbulence of his conflicts with the Michel family as a result of the Las Humedades fraud. In this second trip, he started to become interested in certain topics of Mexican history, particularly those involving the revolutionary figures of Emiliano Zapata and Francisco Villa. Their popular demands fit into the *völkisch* ideas that he would develop later on. However, the goal of this second trip was much more earthly, although no less romantic. In the company of Disselhof, Per began to search pre-Hispanic tombs and treasures to supply the expansive European market for antiques and exotic objects. It does not appear that he was very successful, although a third trip in 1939, accompanied by his wife, Liv, would also have this pretext, in addition to visiting the properties that his father was trying to save from the Colima pillage. That would be the last time that Per would step on Mexican soil.¹⁶

The experiences in Mexico were especially important for Per, who devoted many of his reflections on them in his writings. Perhaps the most important trip was the first, of 1927–28, as it was to that one that he dedicated his book *Das Land Noruega: Erlebnisse in Mexico* (The country of Noruega: Experiences in Mexico), which was published in German in 1936 by the publishing house Insel Verlag of Leipzig. Surprisingly, the book was moderately successful. Per was then twenty-four years of age, and *Das Land Noruega* became a reference point of the passionate, adventurous, and nationalist youth, as extolled by the Nazi ideology.¹⁷ In this account, in which fiction coexists with reality, Per managed to expound on some of the key ideas of his youth. Both the geography and recent history of Mexico served as a pretext to reflect on the superiority of the white man over the indigenous and mestizo world. The idea of a “Norwegian” model of strength, wisdom, passion, and willingness for adventure, acting against an alienated, taciturn, and inferior population, extends throughout the entire text. It is also a kind of journey into the unknown – an excuse to delve

15 Terje Emberland and Bernt Roughvedt, *Det Ariske Idol. Forfatteren, eventyreren og nazisten Per Imerslund* (Oslo: Aschehoug,), 118–119.

16 *Ibid.*, 337–340.

17 *Ibid.*, 224–241.

into the consciousness and intuition of the author. The confrontation between fiction and reality was used to insert various images and dimensions of representation and memory, confronted with the certainty of danger and death.

The Mexico of Das Land Noruega

The book begins with the arrival of young Per Imerslund in Colima, at the Las Humedades plantation, located on the coastal area near the city of Tecomán on the banks of the Almería River.¹⁸ All of this land is watched over by the huge mass of the Colima Volcano, showing its igneous activity with the continual tuft of white smoke.

The text never stated who owned the plantation. But the administrators were Mr. Arrow, from the United States, who was a reserved, hunting enthusiast and great drinker of whiskey, and the German accountant Papenhofer, an excellent bookkeeper and a highly educated man. It is likely that this character was inspired by the figure of Hans Dietrich Disselhof.

The plantation was adjacent to a cattle ranch and salt bed owned by Eliseo Castañeda, a Mexican mestizo “gentleman.” When the main character, Per himself, arrived in Colima, Papenhofer was lodged at the Castañeda hacienda because he had been stricken by a malaria outbreak.

Per arrives at Las Humedades with a one-year contract as foreman, in charge of forty coconut cutters. When he goes to the adjacent hacienda to present himself to Papenhofer, the man tells Per:

This hell is extraordinarily beautiful and that is what is dangerous. Here one dies without knowing it. When you know it, then it’s already too late, because you can stay here all your life and curse this hell, which so resembles a paradise. Go away from here before you lose the ability to laugh. You’re too young for this paradise.¹⁹

The idea of the paradise/hell duality appears throughout the book as a central element that constantly adds tension to the plot.

Don Eliseo and Papenhofer spent their days playing chess and drinking lots of tequila. But they also read and discussed Schopenhauer, Calderón, Goethe, Kant, and Nietzsche. All this seems somewhat implausible, but it allowed the author to demonstrate his knowledge and discuss certain philosophical issues,

18 All the references to *Das Land Noruega: Erlebnisse in Mexiko* correspond to the first edition published in German by the publishing house Im Insel, in Leipzig, in 1936.

19 *Ibid.*, 34.

such as the superiority of the Western intellect, and the importance of passion, civilization, and nature. Per described his early days as follows:

I had plenty to do in my daily life. Horseback riding and watching over the workers was the least of it. I took that as a sport. While I trained to keep the horse at a steady pace, I admired the incredible abundance of the landscape. It was not a feeling of sheer joy. Rather it was a strange serenity. The life that unfolded around me was overwhelming.²⁰

In those first pages, Per emphasized the importance of the landscape as a completely wild and untamed world. The jungle, the river, the ocean, the sunsets, the colors, and the flowers impressed him enormously. Nature appeared so formidable that the author ended his reflections by acknowledging that “this landscape is much more alive and powerful than any other I know,” including that of Norway.²¹ An ocean phenomenon that especially drew his attention was “the green wave.” It was a huge wave, perhaps a tsunami, which occasionally ravaged the beaches of the region and that for a long time had given rise to many myths and legends.²²

In terms of the human landscape, Per described Francisco, the butler of Las Humedades, as follows: “He is more than a brown mestizo, more than a well-grown and articulated animal.”²³ He had the skin of an Indian, but the face of a Spaniard. He always spoke badly of the Americans, the “gringos.” He told stories about having gone north to work, but he always returned to his country and to his plot of land because he missed the tortillas.

The author seems very impressed by the fact that Mexico is in constant revolution, and he expresses admiration for men who fight for their “honor.” He also extols the fury of nature, as represented by the floods, waves, and

20 Ibid., 43.

21 Ibid., 51.

22 Tidal waves that produced these huge waves, generically called “green waves,” were recorded since the end of the nineteenth century. In 1925 there was a green wave that was so big that it virtually wiped out the town of Cuyutlán. But probably the most catastrophic occurred on June 22, 1932. The *Excelsior* newspaper described it as follows: “The waters of the ocean retreated in a violent manner, forming the appearance of a monumental wall that did not look like a wave but rather a vertical front. This avalanche withdrew three hundred to four hundred meters offshore and soon advanced with unprecedented force in the direction of the village. The Dantesque avalanche advanced destroying and razing everything in its path.” *Excelsior*, June 23, 1932. See José Salazar Cárdenas *El maremoto de Cuyutlán* (México: Sociedad Colimense de Estudios Históricos, 1989).

23 Imerslund, *Das Land Noruega*, 55.

earthquakes produced by the volcano. But what seems to interest him most is horseback riding in the jungle, swimming in the ocean, and, above all, hunting jaguars.

As the story advances, Per gradually discovers that he has begun to get bored, and he realizes that the Mexican Indians do not accept him. He has the impression that Las Humedades has conquered him:

I could hear the roosters crow and the donkeys bray. This cursed homogeneity. I lay waiting for the next cock crow and the next bray. I counted the hours and could not sleep. I felt that time went by and left me behind. ... With every cock crowing, years of my life were being consumed.²⁴

When asked about Norway, Per expressed pride in his country, saying that it was a great nation. He presented an idyllic image that seemed to impress his listeners, who, according to him, formed a noble idea of that country, although for the experienced reader it seemed that the author was full of irony:

In my country there were no robberies, nor murders; the police had nothing to do. Unity and peace reigned in the parliament. Politicians only thought of the good of the country. ... Norway has had 130 years of lasting peace...because no one dares to attack us... We have an army whose soldiers do not earn money, each one serves the country for a full year... There is always a rifle at home, and if someone attacks the country, all Norwegians, from the oldest to the youngest, would give their last drop of blood for freedom.²⁵

According to the author, Mexicans were more impressed when he told them that Norway had fought against the United States and had won. He said that the “gringos” paid tribute to the king of Norway and that the king would soon come to Mexico on a warship that was much larger than those in the United States to talk with the president.²⁶

The fantasies about his country seemed to convince his audience. Each time Per mentioned Norway while he was speaking, he presented the country as a nation he wanted to believe in – not the Norway where he had lived and that had nothing to do with his dreams and utopias. Only once did he write about receiving a telegram from the consul of Norway asking him if he was doing

24 Ibid., 114.

25 Ibid., 153.

26 Ibid., 127.

well. But then he acknowledged that he did not want to know anything about this homeland.²⁷

On his trips to Tecomán and to the beach, Per gradually felt a kind of love for the Colima Volcano, which he evoked in the following way:

Perhaps one is lucky enough to have such a great desire, an unattainable longing that eventually causes one to trust in oneself. And I thought about the meaning of longing for the unattainable, because I myself was in love with the Volcano.²⁸

From that moment on, the volcano acquired the meaning of a longing, a kind of utopian destination that would push him to go ahead and opt for the adventurous and passionate life, consistent with the designs of nature.

In the second part of *Das Land Noruega*, Imerslund put aside his impressions of the geography and the environment to give way to a story filled with adventures and reflections. Leaving his boredom behind, Per befriended a mule driver named Rodrigo Guzmán and decided to join the street vendors who sold goods and horses, abandoning Las Humedades. When he said goodbye, he was paid 853 silver pesos and he rode off with his friends toward the mountains. Thus, they became the “night riders.”²⁹

They took the route to Tepames and decided to dedicate themselves to mule driving and trade. Per and his friend Rodrigo appeared as the leaders of that gang:

Rodrigo was as tall as me. With his gray-blue eyes, sharp gaze, and fire-red hair, he looked more like a Norwegian farmer than a Mexican. He told the other muleteers that we were relatives, except that I had grown up abroad.³⁰

The authority of both men seemed to rest mainly on their image as foreigners – white with light eyes, irradiating their superiority over the Mexican Indians and mestizos. In their wanderings they began learning about the Cristero War then sweeping through the region near the volcano and the western Sierra Madre

27 Ibid., 98.

28 Ibid., 121.

29 “Nacht Reiter die weder Genspenster noch Menschen fürchten” Ibid., 139.

30 Ibid., 144.

Mountains.³¹ At the El Zarco ranch they were told that in Colima several massacres had occurred and that the insurgents had united under the cry “Long live Christ the King!” The war between the Catholic Church and the postrevolutionary government would then become the scene of the adventures of Per and his friends. The author used this to comment on religion, particularly Catholicism, which he did not admire at all. Rather, he felt that Mexican Catholicism was an example of a particularly negative fanaticism that permitted the exploitation and misery of most indigenous and mestizo Mexicans. In that sense, Imerslund expressed an insight that identified him more with the revolutionaries than with the Catholics.

But back to the story and to the insecurity that persisted on the mountain roads, Per and Rodrigo decided to go to Colima to buy products for the mule trade and to remain for some time away from the region where the Cristeros were. When they arrived in Colima, they found the city full of soldiers. The fight did not seem to be only between the church and the revolutionary government, but between agraristas³² and Cristeros. The narrative then stops for comments on certain aspects of the land distribution by the government, which Per appeared to support. He argued that land gave meaning to the people and the nation, just as the southern forces of Emiliano Zapata and the northern militias led by Pancho Villa proclaimed. At one point Francisco, “an agrarian,” even tried to convince Per and Rodrigo to join the government forces. But they refused and decided to wait on the outskirts of Colima for the arrival of the tools and goods they had ordered from Guadalajara to supply themselves and continue their travels through the mountains.

In another digression, the author recounted some of the everyday, popular, and traditional activities of Colima in a tone similar to that of a folk chronicler. Cockfighting, encounters between men and women in the plaza, having a drink in the plaza, and sitting back and watching the entry of the troops and observing *las galletas*³³ were interspersed in Imerslund’s descriptions. A special mention was devoted to eating tacos, which was regarded as the national dish (“Nationalgericht”), as well as watching girls carrying water. Per seemed to

31 This war broke out between the Church and the postrevolutionary Mexican state between 1926 and 1929. It was especially fierce in the western part of the country. In Colima it gained some importance due to the ruggedness of its geography and proximity to the coast. See: J. Jesús Negrete Naranjo, *Guerrilla Cristera. Sur de Jalisco, Volcán de Colima y Michoacán* (México: Ed. Glamourama, 2009).

32 The agraristas were the peasants to whom the government had granted a parcel of land, or *ejido*, as payment for their services during the revolution or in response to their demand for land to be able to survive.

33 *Las galletas* were the women who accompanied the troops, the *soldaderas*.

be fascinated with this scene, and he evoked it with romanticism in the following manner:

How beautiful are the women who carry water jugs on their heads. They know they are beautiful. When we ride alongside them, they move their hips and raise their chest. They smile when we prod the horses with spurs, and they lower their shawls to bare their shoulders. They bring water from the same fountains where we swam like excited children. Water that gives life when the roots of the palm trees drink it.³⁴

The two friends ended up settling in an abandoned church outside Colima. After burning the wood from the pews, they discovered that the neighbors were afraid of them. They told the two men that they were Protestants and allies of the devil. While they were killing time, Per and Rodrigo found a small burial site in the church courtyard. They thought that they were pre-Hispanic pieces because there were “painted monkeys” on them. This allowed the author to mention the legends of treasures and superstitions that he had heard at Las Humedades. Per had been very impressed by the story of a landowner who had made a pact with the devil so that he could find out where the pre-Hispanic treasures were and thus become immensely rich.³⁵

Following a certain fascination with Mexican nationalist mythology, Per interpreted the Cristero War as the battle between the serpent and the eagle that made up the Mexican national shield. He also commented on the importance of the Virgin of Guadalupe as another symbol of national unity. He even went so far as to say in a somewhat simplistic way, much in the way of a *Volk* story, that the “eagle and the Virgin of Guadalupe are friends, but the bishops want them to always be fighting.”³⁶

Finally, the two friends received their products from Guadalajara and resumed their mule trading trips. They bought twenty-two oxen with their earnings. But during a holdup, the Cristeros stole everything. Per and his partner were imprisoned and kept isolated, but they managed to get the guards drunk and escaped, heading toward the El Platanar hacienda.

In the midst of so much danger, of so much “Long live Mexico!” and “Long live Christ the King!” the author wondered for whom or why would he shout “Long live!” He realized that he had nothing to give his life for because he had lost his faith, his land, his conscience, and the only thing he seemed to have left

34 Imerslund, *Das Land Noruega* 201.

35 Curiously, Per Imerslund himself, far from the fiction, will try to follow these fables and legends so he can take advantage of them on his future trips to Mexico.

36 Imerslund, *Das Land Noruega* 217.

was his freedom. But this, without the above, had no meaning. One of the daughters of a landowner friend asked him:

“Norwegian, do you want to return to your country?... Norwegian, isn’t it beautiful here?”

“Yes, it is very beautiful,” I answered and looked again at the view of the landscape.

In the distance, there was the ocean, then a thin strip of land, there was Las Humedades. To the south, the endless mountain ranges stood. To the west, the land, hills with pine and fir trees. And to the north, the Sultan, the Colima Volcano. ...

“Why do you want to return to Norway?”

“It’s very easy: I want to go back to feel a bit more relaxed, at least for a few hours. ...”

In Norway, they’ve forgotten who they are. ... The land and those who died for it have also been forgotten. ... They have forgotten everything except their own weakness. ... That is why I want to return. ... To try to find those who also return to Norway and also lied for her.³⁷

Per realized that he had lied to himself by claiming that he did not have a reason to go back. Now he had one: He wanted to restore his faith in his country and its destiny. At that moment, he decided to begin his return.

On the way back to Colima, the muleteers followed the tracks of a jaguar and hunted it down. This made Per reflect on the wild world and his fascination for blood and death. The jaguar was a hunter, and therefore it had to contend with other hunters, such as human beings, but not with the Indians whose humanity was constantly questioned, but with white people, who were bigger, and “those with blue eyes” were the best and the most powerful.³⁸

Finally, after killing the jaguar, they ran into Francisco “the agrarian,” who had left the fields to pursue the Cristeros. And even though they were unable to recover the oxen that had been stolen, the two muleteers were happy because the severely beaten Cristeros had retreated to the slopes of the volcano and barricaded themselves there.

After arriving in Colima, Per received word at the post office that there was a Norwegian ship in Veracruz and that he could soon return to his homeland. He immediately took the train to Guadalajara, and from there he headed to Veracruz to reach the ship that would take him back to Norway. On the way, the

37 Ibid., 239.

38 Ibid., 246.

last image that remained of the time he spent in Colima was that of the majestic volcano he called “Der Sultan.”³⁹

So the adventures Per narrated in these somewhat fictionalized autobiographical passages present a country that, more than a reality, served as a pretext for claiming his status as a passionate, bold, and determined youth. The conviction that Norway, his native land, would offer itself to him as his destiny appeared as a contrast to the exotic, the inferior, and the unusual. His book was like that, not only an adventure story in a world where nature seemed to govern by itself and in which the unknown and distant corroborated much of its strangeness, but it was also a story of a journey to the interior of a young man who found in the popular, nationalist, and Euro-centric assertions an answer to satisfy his own destiny. The emptiness that left Nordic youth shattered during the period between wars could be filled with many of the expectations that appeared in this text, which no wonder was titled *Das Land Noruega: Erlebnisse in Mexiko*.

After the book was published with relative success, Per continued with his nationalist assertions that claimed the Aryan and Nordic ideal. His life, like that of many of his comrades in the struggle, was cut short in 1943 in the midst of a war that was both irrational and cruel.

Halfdan Jebe in Yucatán: Antecedents and the Bohemian Life

The violinist and composer Halfdan Frederik Jebe Klingeberg was born on November 3, 1868, in Trondhjem (modern-day Trondheim), Norway, and died in Mexico City on December 17, 1937.⁴⁰

His father, Håkon Gabriel Jebe, was born on February 1, 1831, and his mother Hedvig Jorgine Klingeberg on February 23, 1846. While the death of his father remains a bit of a mystery, it is known that his mother died on December 6, 1925. They married on December 5, 1866. The Jebes were a middle class family with some bourgeois ancestry. Also standing out among the three children was Martha Caroline (“Tupsy”), who would become an artist and the lover of a notable friend of Halfdan: the famous painter Edvard Munch.⁴¹

39 p. 254.

40 Some biographical facts about Halfdan Jebe can be found in John D. Bergsagel, “Halfdan Jebe,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001). One can also consult John D. Bergsagel, ‘Scandinavia: Unity in Diversity’ in Jim Samson (ed.), *The Late Romantic Era: From Mid-19th Century to World War I* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991).

41 Sue Prideaux, *Edvard Munch. Behind The Scream* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2007), 182–183.

Halfdan studied music in Germany, France, and England. He was a very close friend of Fredrick Delius, who like Jebe had studied in Leipzig. The two would be inevitably influenced by the romantic and nationalist work of Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg. In Leipzig, Jebe, along with Gustaf Dalman, published his first works linked to the era's romanticism, *Jüdische Melodien aus Galizien und Russland*, taking folk tunes providing them with piano accompaniments.⁴²

Between 1894 and 1897, he belonged to the Cologne Orchestra in Paris. Around 1897 he traveled with Delius to Florida, where Delius had an orange plantation. Aboard the ship to New York, one of Delius's lovers, Princesse de Cystria who was Marie Leonie Mortier, daughter of the Duchesse de Trévisse, a great patron of the musical life of Paris and whose husband had a large plantation on the island of Guadeloupe, was reunited with Delius. The three gave recitals, announcing themselves as Mr. Delius, Madame Donodossola (Marie Leonie) and Mr. Lemanoff (Jebe) – “one of the more eccentric of European artistic excursions into the New World.”⁴³

Jebe and Delius lived together for three months in Florida, strengthening their friendship. In 1899 Delius wrote about Jebe, “He is the only one that is worth something, and the only man I really love.”⁴⁴ In that year Jebe led an orchestra in London in the first concert of Delius' music in England and in August returned to Christiania by way of Copenhagen. In 1900 he married Sofie Bernhoft, with whom he presented concerts in which she declaimed and personified fragments of poetry and plays. In early 1901 he traveled back to Berlin, where he joined up with Delius again and met Ferruccio Busoni.⁴⁵

In 1902 Jebe undertook a long journey to the Orient. In Ceylon, (Sri Lanka), he wrote a long letter to Delius suggesting that he (Jebe) used a revolver more often than pen and paper. In a relaxed manner, he added, “I only wish I could use it freely and that I could send you a couple of tasty human hams.”⁴⁶ He also stated that he had traveled much farther than China or Japan. “I have gone out into the world;” he stated “...I have carried an idea to its logical conclusion, I have brought a life to an end, I have died, finished with it – this is the transmigration of the soul.”

42 This work is dated Leipzig, 1893.

43 Lionel Carley, *Delius, A Life in Letters, 1862–1908* (London: Scholar Press/ The Delius Trust, 1983), 112.

44 *Ibid.*, 144.

45 *Ibid.*, 163.

46 *Ibid.*, 228.

He said he arrived in Ceylon from Calcutta, and that he had given concerts in Colombo and Kandy, a place where, according to Jebe, the newspapers stated that he was the first violinist to set foot in those lands. He said he had lived among the natives, and for that reason he was very healthy, because while going through Canton and Shanghai he had focused on the gardens and the opium houses. In this letter he emphatically summarized his position about life: He preferred the libidinous and decadent world over that of discipline and work. With a somewhat obscene phrase talking about Japan he concluded, "Give me a refined old whore, I don't mean fucked out old cows, but faded roses with delicate perfumes."⁴⁷

In 1904 Jebe was back in Norway and trying to settle down in Kristiania. Between 1904 and 1905 he worked again with Delius in the concerts of the Delius Orchestra in England and Denmark. After 1906 and until 1916 Jebe and his wife Sophie can be traced in various places in the United States. The beginning of World War I kept them in America. Between 1915 and 1916 Jebe lived in the city of Atlanta, giving concerts managed by Karl von Lawrenz and accompanied by the contralto Emma Van de Zande.⁴⁸ But World War I created enough ill will against anything that sounded Germanic to cause von Lawrenz' concert activity to be discontinued, and the Jebees had to leave Atlanta to possibly move to New York.

After March 1916 he disappeared from the map, although it is likely he traveled through the Gulf of Mexico and perhaps even to some South American setting, because in 1920 he reappears alone in New York, coming from Santiago de Cuba.⁴⁹ Mysteriously, Halfdan's wife Sophie had returned to Norway during this time, and by the end of 1922 he again journeyed south on his own.

Apparently Halfdan arrived alone in Mexico on December 1922 or January 1923. By the end of that month a woman who signed as Jetti Jebe, probably a new companion Jebe had met shortly after he separated from his wife, wrote to the consul of Norway in Mexico asking if anything was known about Halfdan, because he had disappeared as of October 1, 1922, and the only news she had was from the Hotel Moctezuma and Bellavista in Cuernavaca with an address of 17 Matamoros Street. In March the consul informed Jetti that he had no news of her alleged husband.⁵⁰ By then Halfdan had already decided to stay in Mérida in the Yucatán Peninsula. Just a few months earlier he had turned fifty-four years old.

47 Ibid., 229.

48 Don Gillespie, "Halfdan Jebe in Atlanta" in *The Delius Society Journal*, No. 149, (Spring 2011), 34–40.

49 Ellis Island/Port of New York Records "Halfdan Jebe" Oct, 14, 1920.

50 AMNRNO Koloni i Mexico og Centralamerika Exp. 2065 L.0005.

The Yucatán that Halfdan Jebe Experienced: Music, Mythology, and Education

During the first years of the 1920s, that is, during the first post-revolutionary years, Yucatán went through unprecedented political and social turmoil. The Socialist Party of the Southeast governed the state, led by Felipe Carrillo Puerto, who according to Halfdan Jebe was the “Lenin of America.”⁵¹ While radicalism took over the discourse, important reforms had been undertaken, including land distribution, the organizing of farmers, and the establishment of an anti-clerical, rationalist school. A regional awareness reclaimed local cultural values, with art, archaeology, and especially Yucatecan music acquiring special importance. By 1923 the government of Carrillo Puerto promoted the development of local radio, and popular Yucatecan music was intensely disseminated both regionally and across the whole country.⁵²

The rebellion by Adolfo de la Huerta in 1923 shook the precarious postrevolutionary political unity on a national scale, and Governor Carrillo Puerto was one of its victims. At year’s end he was overthrown, and on January 3, 1924, he was executed.⁵³ The De la Huerta rebellion failed, and the regime of President Plutarco Elías Calles considered Carrillo Puerto as one of its martyrs. The reforms in the state of Yucatán continued after the death of Carrillo Puerto, as did the propagation of art, archaeology, and Yucatecan music.

The region became a powerful magnet that attracted scholars, politicians and artists from many parts of the world. Popular Yucatecan music became fashionable in much of the country, with the likes of Guty Cárdenas, Ricardo Palmerín, and Pepe Domínguez. In the late 1920s the archaeological sites of Uxmal and Chichén Itzá were rebuilt and became prime tourist attractions.⁵⁴ At the end of 1930, Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein arrived in Mexico; he filmed scenes within the Yucatecan peninsula that would circle the globe, particularly those that established a direct relationship between the contemporary and the pre-Columbian indigenous Mayas.⁵⁵

51 “En norsk komponist som har vært hjemefra i 25 år” *Nationen*, January 18, 1932. The title of this article: “A Norwegian composer who has been away from home for 25 years” makes clear that Jebe left Norway in 1906 and hadn’t been back since.

52 Miguel Civeira Taboada, *Sensibilidad yucateca en la canción romántica* 2 vols. (Toluca: Gobierno del Estado de México, 1978).

53 Francisco José Paoli and Enrique Montalvo, *El socialismo olvidado de Yucatán* (México: Siglo XXI Editores, 1977).

54 Gerónimo Baqueiro Foster, *La canción popular en Yucatán (1850–1950)* (México: Editorial del Magisterio, 1970).

55 Aurelio de los Reyes, *Medio siglo de cine mexicano (1896–1947)* (México: Editorial Trillas, 1987), 99–114.

During the 1930s Yucatán would return to revolutionary radicalism. General Cárdenas would foster the creation of the communal agave lands, known as the Gran Ejido Henequenero, distributing the largest amount of land in the history of the peninsula. The vitality of the Yucatecan culture would continue to rise until the late 1930s and early 1940s.⁵⁶

While the exact date cannot be ascertained, Halfdan Jebe must have arrived in Yucatán between late 1922 and early 1923.⁵⁷ He established himself in Mérida and began to give music and violin lessons at the local conservatory. He also gave private lessons, “which are the ones that pay the best.”⁵⁸ It seems that he was very poor when he arrived in Mérida, because in an interview in 1932 he said that when he reached Mexico, he had no money to pay rent for a house, and therefore he had to live in an abandoned church that was loaned to him by some neighbors. Initially he settled in Yucatán, “with an archaeological purpose, to see the wonderful old ruins that are there,” but he ended up teaching at the conservatory.⁵⁹

Evidently he had some degree of friendship with Felipe Carrillo Puerto, which made him a political enemy of the De la Huerta followers in 1923. Ten years later, during a visit to Norway, he told a local journalist that he had been jailed and tortured.

What saved me was that I was a foreigner. But I was imprisoned twice. For weeks I waited to be taken to the solitary cell – a sure sign that I would be executed the next day. The guards tried to allay me with morphine and cocaine – but luckily I did not need them. It was no fun at all to live in Mérida at the time. ... The bodies of those who had been hanged swayed in all the trees of the city park; they tied their heads to a branch and then made a horse pull on their legs.⁶⁰

Jebe was the teacher of several important Yucatecan musicians, such as Vicente Uvalle Castillo, Amilcar Cetina Gutiérrez, Gustavo Río Escalante, and Daniel Ayala. The latter stated in his unpublished memoirs that “drawn to the Maya

56 A clear example of this vitality is the publication of the eight volumes of the *Enciclopedia Yucatanense*, published in 1945, and which have since become a key reference for the history and culture of the Yucatán Peninsula.

57 The date of his entry into Mexico in his immigration record is January 28, 1923, although based on the previously mentioned letter from his alleged wife, Jetti, it is probable that Jebe arrived in Mexico in late 1922. AGN Migration Service, Registry of Foreigners. No. 98647 and AMNRNO Koloni i Mexico og Centralamerika Exp. 2065 L.0005.

58 “En norsk komponist som har vært hjemefra i 25 år” *Nationen*, August 18, 1932.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

ruins by virtue of also being a specialist in archaeology,” the teacher Halfdan Jebe “agreed to teach violin at the conservatory, and it was then that a large number of future violinists enrolled in his class.” Daniel considered himself the teacher’s “favorite,” and Jebe passed on to him “many secrets of the instrument” and turned him into a capable soloist.⁶¹

Between 1925 and 1935 Halfdan Jebe served as first violinist, occasionally as viola player, and sometimes as conductor of the Mérida Symphonic Orchestra. From his very first performances he was considered “a tireless promoter of Yucatecan music.”⁶² Little by little his talents as a composer and music critic were also discovered. During those years Jebe also wrote several articles and commentaries in the *Diario de Yucatán* about the Yucatecan music scene. This allowed him to witness the rise of national and regional music, both Mexican and Yucatecan. While his music was closer to contemporary trends, his romanticism led him to focus on the music that was being played in local academic compositions, comparing them with some European authors.

For example, in 1924 he reviewed one of the first works with a Maya topic that was presented in Mérida. This was the opera *Kinchí* by Gustavo Río Escalante, which premiered on September 27, 1924, at the Peón Contreras Theatre.⁶³ While critics generally felt very dissatisfied with this work because of its technical and historical shortcomings, Jebe defended the piece, pointing out that the music was worth much more than the script. He supported the idea that Río Escalante was seeking a philosophical and dramatic musical language in which instruments acted as interpreters to outdo human power of speech “in the expression of terror and of passions,” much in the same way as what leading Mexican composer Julián Carrillo was experimenting with at the time. He also stated that Río Escalante’s work had characteristic regional tones, although he still denied the existence of Maya features in the music, in great part because of the enormous ignorance that prevailed then about the art of music cultivated by pre-Hispanic peoples. Nevertheless, Jebe’s enthusiasm for the evocation of the Maya world led him to write the following paragraph:

In the opera *Kinchí*, Gustavo Río has moved away from Donizetti and Verdi, looking for models among more modern authors, and inspiration

61 Daniel Ayala, *Memorias inéditas* archived in the Regional Center of Music Research, Documentation and Diffusion “Gerónimo Baqueiro Foster” (CRIDDMGBF) in Mérida, Yucatán, 90 and 106.

62 Jesús C. Romero, “Historia de la música” in *Enciclopedia Yucatanense* Vol. IV (México: Gobierno del Estado de Yucatán, 1944), 740.

63 Gustavo Río Escalante, *Mis memorias* (Yucatán: CONACULTA, 2012), 168.

in artistic moments of a forgotten past, worthy of resurrection and remembrance. I want it to be known in my old Norway, where a work of art, if it is sincere, is always received with affection.⁶⁴

Four years later Río Escalante composed another opera entitled *Xtabay*, which premiered on July 31, 1928, again at the Peón Contreras Theatre in Mérida. Jebe commented on the musical style that followed the guidelines of Achille-Claude Debussy, and this time he acknowledged the inspiration of the “pre-Hispanic airs.” On this occasion he became very excited by Río’s inspiration to turn to the Maya myths, particularly to that of *Xtabay*, that beautiful woman who hides in the jungle, under a large ceiba tree, and calls the men to lead them astray.⁶⁵ Jebe himself also turned to Maya themes, composing some important pieces with such themes for his repertoire. He premiered those compositions in Mexico and Norway between 1929 and 1932.

During those first years in Mérida, Halfdan Jebe had a romantic relationship with Sara Molina Font, a beautiful young writer. Heiress of a high-status Yucatecan family – of the kind of families known as the “divine caste” – Sara was also one of the first women in Yucatán to seek a divorce from her first husband, abiding by the feminist laws promoted by Carrillo Puerto’s government, and she became a liberated woman, promoter of the peninsula’s art and literature. After her divorce, which took place almost at the same time of Jebe’s arrival in Yucatán she went to live with her parents. The head of this family was Juan F. Molina Solís, a very prestigious jurist and historiographer, brother of Olegario Molina Solís, who was governor of Yucatán and Development Secretary in the government of Porfirio Díaz.⁶⁶

Juan F. Molina took Sara in after her marriage failed, and he demanded that she follow the codes of a rigid Catholic morality. However, Sara continued her vocation as a writer and as a liberated woman. In 1926 she published a book entitled *Siluetas* (Silhouettes), which brought her some prestige in the learned circles of Mérida. In one of the book’s stories, she presented a brief sketch of an absent-minded and passionate musician, probably inspired by Jebe, and she indicated a deep admiration for his work. She described him as follows:

He has the name of a star and works at the altar of Euterpe. He writes music with amazing ease. Does he bear a resemblance to the bust of

64 *Revista de Yucatán*, October 14, 1924.

65 *Diario de Yucatán*, August 4, 1928.

66 José María Valdés Acosta, *A través de las centurias* vol. II (Mérida: Talleres Pluma y Lápiz, 1926), 11–12 and 22.

Chopin, Berlioz, Liszt?... I am not certain to whom, but he has an unquestionable likeness to one of them. A balding forehead, an unfocused gaze, almost distracted, an air of those who know how to delve into the world of imagination, and one that most people do not understand because it is essential to have an intense interior life.

The dialogue with the character led her to ask him if he had ever forgotten an appointment and had not gone to conduct an orchestra. To which the maestro replied, "I get distracted sometimes, but not so much." What happened was that he let himself get carried away by inspiration, and concluded:

Love! Love! Taken in its sensitive essence, spiritualized – that is what music is. Its intense sweetness is diluted in kisses that go to the heart of Humanity, singing. ... Why should the creators of these wonders not live dazed, outside of time and space, if they touch the divine?⁶⁷

Sara Molina's prose indicated that she had a particular fascination with the composer, but she did not fully admit to the love bond.⁶⁸ On the other hand, Daniel Ayala asserted that "the great love affair" that Jebe and Sara had was the main reason that the Norwegian remained in Yucatán. He even said in his memoirs that it was Jebe who encouraged him to act on his love for the young violinist Amelia Medina Herrera. His recollection evoked Jebe advising him that "a great love is good, because it helps to stimulate the artist's inspiration; he said this about his young students, but perhaps he really ascribed it to himself in regard to his great romance with Sara Molina."⁶⁹

The relationship between Halfdan and Sara had its ups and downs. As will be seen later in this text, the romance also had artistic consequences given that the two collaborated on several occasions; she as a writer and patron, and he as a musician and composer. In a 1930 document, Jebe mentioned that he was married to Sara Molina,⁷⁰ although other versions deny the existence of such a marriage.⁷¹ However that may be, though Sara's parents never approved of

67 Sara Molina, *Siluetas* (Mérida: n. e., 1926), 87–88.

68 One of her granddaughters assured me in an interview that she was not certain that there had been a romantic relationship between Jebe and Sara, although a friend of hers had assured her that there had been one. Interview with Mrs. Isolina Molina Duarte de Sánchez, Mérida, February 13, 2014.

69 Daniel Ayala, *Memorias inéditas* archived in CRIDDMGBF in Mérida, Yucatán. p. 100–101.

70 AMNRNO Koloni I Mexico og Centralamerika Exp L.0006 December 18, 1930.

71 Interview with Mrs. Isolina Molina Duarte de Sánchez, Mérida, February 13, 2014.

such a relationship, she not only provided him with a place to live, whether on the Los Capules farm or on 502 50th Street in Mérida, but she also occasionally brought him the Molina home's leftovers so that the "poor Norwegian professor" would have something to eat.⁷²

The romance, in effect, does not seem to have had much consistency given that Jebe's life in Yucatán was characterized more by disorder and dipsomania. Daniel Ayala said in his memoirs that

he was always disheveled, dirty, very drunk most of the time, and many times he forgot his engagements as orchestra conductor or violinist. ... He lived alone in a small cottage – a country-house – provided by Sarita, where he composed his works with a surprising mastery, working almost the way real geniuses do. The natural disorder of the "Study," with sheets of music strewn on the floor, a bad odor from the jumble of wrapping paper bearing decomposed food – tins, mostly – and his overall appearance in his daily life gave him the appearance of a true "bohemian." Many times in a rehearsal or performance, upon opening his instrument case a bad smell assaulted the noses of his companions because along with the violin or viola, in the case there were also some bits of rotten raw meat, stored and forgotten as his food.⁷³

Nevertheless, even with all this anarchy and confusion, Halfdan Jebe managed to produce in Yucatán a remarkable body of work that still awaits his vindication as an artist and creator. Toward the end of the 1920s, "captivated by the ancient Maya civilization or what he thought that culture was, he began to compose Mayan music," until years later when it was acknowledged that "there was no serious musical expression in Yucatán, in which... Norwegian Professor Halfdan Jebe was not involved."⁷⁴

The Yucatecan Work of Halfdan Jebe

The Maya ruins and the legends, contemporary history, and landscapes of Yucatan became the favorite themes of Jebe's compositions. Constant references to archaeological sites, sinkholes and caves, characters from myths or from Yucatán's recent history, regional carnival traditions, and the peninsula's

72 Interview with Mrs. Isolina Molina Duarte de Sánchez, Mérida, February 13, 2014.

73 Daniel Ayala, *Memorias inéditas* archived in CRIDDMGBF in Mérida, Yucatán. p. 101.

74 *Enciclopedia Yucatanense* Vol. IV (México: Gobierno del Estado de Yucatán, 1944), 741.

fauna and flora were woven into symphonic works, operas, and ballets that Jebe composed from the late 1920s and during the 1930s.

In the early 1930s, Jebe, a composer, orchestra conductor, and violinist who was relatively well known in Yucatán, made a trip back to the Old World. He arrived unexpectedly at the home of his old friend Frederick Delius in Grez-sur-Loing in France “in a terrible state like the most abject dirty beggar...” and was briefly put in hospital.⁷⁵

Once he recovered he went to Norway, where, besides trying to renew some old relationships, he presented several of his Yucatán compositions in a chamber music concert at the music conservatory and a concert devoted exclusively to his music given in the auditorium of Oslo University by the Philharmonic Society Orchestra, conducted by Olaf Kielland. The program from that concert held on January 21, 1932, included eloquent notes about the works played, which were the following:

1. *Entrance to Uxmal* (the composition is inspired by the architecture of the Maya ruins)
2. The symphony *The Path of Destiny toward the Ideal* (dedicated to Felipe Carrillo Puerto – “not the fallen politician, but the man, the idealist”)
3. Romance entitled *The Sacrifice of the Virgins* (“During religious festivals, the country’s most beautiful virgins were sacrificed. The romance accompanies the virgins on their walk from the temple to the sacred sinkhole where Yum-Chac, the god of water, awaits his new bride”)
4. Music for the ballet *The Caves of Lol-Tun* (“appearing in this work in addition to the Lol-tun that is, ‘Stone-flowers’, are the mythical figures of Xtabay and the dwarf Homschuk”)⁷⁶

According to some Norwegian newspaper reviews, Halfdan Jebe’s work was fairly well received by local critics, but what was most interesting upon his return to Norway was what the composer had to say about his adventurous life and his opinions of what was going on in Mexico at that time. A few days before the Oslo concert, Jebe was interviewed by the *Nationen* newspaper, which on January 18 published a long article. A few excerpts follow below:

Yes, quarter of a century! Indeed, it is twenty-five years since conductor and composer Halfdan Jebe left Norway. Now he is back – a bit awestruck, but not discontented – to see if his compatriots also want to give him a

75 Lionel Carley, *Delius, A Life in Letters, 1908–1932* Vol. II (London: Scholar Press/The Delius Trust, 1983), 376.

76 Concert program consulted in Nasjonalbiblioteket in Oslo.

chance, as the Mexicans have done. ... His music has been performed on radio broadcasts and by various philharmonic orchestras. He is a man from whom one can patiently wait for an answer. ... And now he is sitting here waiting for us to ask a question.

[Interviewer:] “Where have you been all these years?”

[Jebe:] “First in the United States and then in Mexico. For eight years I have been a professor at the State Musical Conservatory in Mérida, the capital of the state of Yucatán, a city the size of Bergen. When I arrived there, it was not to find work, but rather it was with an archaeological purpose, to see the wonderful old ruins there. And I stayed. I was hired at the conservatory, where I taught composition, and also violin and piano. I also had many private students – it is what pays the best.”

“What is it like to live in Mexico?”

“It is a beautiful country. I wish it were not so troubled. In the last twenty years it has been devastated by revolutions. In Mérida I met one of the best men I have ever known, the anarchist Felipe Carrillo; they called him the red governor...the Lenin of America. He was an honest man. That’s why they put him up against the church wall and executed him along with his brothers and friends. When he died, he did not leave behind a penny, while those who succeeded him have been enriching themselves without stopping in the name of socialism. I have written a symphony in honor of that hero.”

“What is it like for an artist to live in Mexico?”

“The artistic level in the country is high, especially in literature. One of every two people writes verses and some are very good. Newspapers are also first class. And now Mexico has a composer that may signal a new era in the musical history of the world: the Indian Julián Carrillo. He is not a relative of the liberation hero. The name Carrillo is as common there as Olsen and Hansen are here. Carrillo continues the path indicated by Delius and Schoenberg: toward micro-chromaticism. Carrillo could represent a musical revolution, and it is only natural that such a revolution comes from Mexico, which is imbued with music. It is truly disturbing that the same country that threatens Mexico politically, also does so musically: The United States is the terrible country of jazz.”⁷⁷

While Jebe’s compositions were well received by the Norwegian public, at the end of 1932 he decided to return to Yucatán. Once he settled in Mérida, he dedicated himself again to promoting and encouraging the local musical activity. His enthusiasm reached the point where he insisted that Mérida should become “the Bayreuth of the New World.” He stated eloquently, “And I, who am

77 “En norsk komponist som har vært hjemefra i 25 år” *Nationen*, January 18, 1932.

in love and grateful to this land that has evoked within me so many artistic feelings, place a humble stone in the great monument to Yucatán.” His passion for everything Yucatecan spilled over as he stated the following: “Yucatán, center of all that is America, as Germany, is the heart of Europe, has the divine mission to erect a temple of art, promise, and welcome to every traveler or tourist who arrives to see its greatness!”⁷⁸

In 1933 Jebe presented his first opera in Yucatán. It was titled *Maya Dignity* and its central theme was the conquest of the Yucatán peninsula by Spanish soldiers. The music, arrangements, and part of the lyrics were by Halfdan Jebe, while other portions of the lyrics were by Sara Molina.⁷⁹ The main characters were Zuzul and Zacnicté, prince and princess of the Mayab. They were getting married when “the only cloud that could taint the sky of our people and the dream of happy engagements would be the approach of the white people.” And right in the middle of the ceremony the conquerors burst in and destroy the town, abducting the women. Zacnicté is abused by the captain of the conquistadors. In a short while, Zuzul and the Maya peasants surprise them in the middle of an orgy. Zacnicté asks Zuzul to save her, but he refuses and kills her after slaying the captain. The people rebel and kill Zuzul.

The opera included very romantic and dramatic moments. For example, during the wedding ceremony, Zuzul sang these lines to his beloved:

You are the dawn of my existence
The pure and radiant light
And my path is enchanting
If illuminated by your love.⁸⁰

In that same ceremony, a vestal sings the following lines to Zacnicté:

Born on a divine moonlit night
Her eyes kissed by the ardent sun
That is why there is nectar upon her rosy lips
And burning fire in her heart.⁸¹

The same opera had some scenes aimed at showing the Spaniards in a bad light. For example, when the conquerors burst into the temple where the marriage was taking place, they did so with the following refrain:

78 *Arte y Turismo* brochure fall issue 1933 consulted in CRIDDMGBF in Mérida, Yucatán.

79 The unpublished score is in Nasjonalbiblioteket in Oslo 2004, eske 152.

80 *Ibid.*, 12.

81 *Ibid.*, 15.

We arrived and conquered, without killing or dying,
 All enemies have fled from here
 Without fear or worry, let us now drink
 Now we give in to the pleasure of living.⁸²

The orgy was accompanied by coarse soldiers choruses:

Women, delicious women
 Let's enjoy the triumph and the victory
 That they will give us,
 For they are the glory
 The glory of Mayab.⁸³

At the end of the opera there appeared a strange reference to a so called "forgotten socialism" in the postrevolutionary Yucatán peninsula. After the death of the main characters, a chorus of farmers sang the following verses:

The tyrants died in the sacred Temple,
 Dignity avenged, duty consecrated;
 Let's open our eyes wider to the sublime truth:
 The joy of work is a greater dignity. ...
 Long live the Mayab sun! Let freedom arrive!
 Long live the Mayab sun! Long live brotherhood!
 Let the new era for humanity arrive!⁸⁴

This would not be the only reference in Jebe's work to fraternity, liberty, and the new era for humanity. As will be seen later, these ideas seem to have been aroused in the composer's mind on his return to Yucatán. Perhaps his own decadent life had brought him closer to those notions linked to anarchism, although it is fair to say that Jebe's work never avoided political issues or libertarian messages. Maybe these ideas were even reinforced by the free spirit of Sara Molina, but especially by the atmosphere and the socialist discourse that would soon reappear in Yucatán with the arrival of the Cárdenas ideology on a national level in 1934.

Indeed, between 1934 and 1940, during the administration of President and General Lázaro Cárdenas del Río, the winds of radical socialism blew across almost the entire country. And while for many it was more about speeches and demagoguery than about implementing socialist reforms, Yucatán

82 Ibid., 16.

83 Ibid., 21.

84 Ibid., 24.



FIGURE 8.1 *Fragment of Dignidad Maya by H. Jebe*
ORIGINAL SCORE AT NASJONALBIBLIOTEKET, OSLO

was particularly sensitive to this shift to the left being carried out by post-revolutionary Mexico.

On December 26, 1934, the symphonic poem *Uxmal* by Halfdan Jebe was presented again in Mérida, and it was received with great enthusiasm by the local public. The report of this performance stated that the Mérida Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Francisco Sánchez Rejón, first played the overture of *Helios* by Carl Nielsen, and then, conducted by Luis G. Garavito, a *Serenade* by Mozart. Next appeared “before the orchestra the likeable Halfdan Jebe, the great Norwegian musician who has made of Yucatán a suitable little corner for his dreams as an artist.” After describing his passionate way of directing the opening chords of his symphonic poem *Uxmal*, the reporter said that the Norwegian conductor seemed to grow while on the podium: “The orchestra is all his. It has yielded to him as would a passionate girlfriend, trembling with multiple feelings, soft and affectionate toward the hand that commands but at the same time caresses with youthful impulsiveness and infinite human warmth...” The literary description of his music was also a bit exaggerated. According to the reporter, “His music, which adds admirable modernisms to certain details of deep romanticism, beautifully constructed, possessed of a teenager’s temperament, ardent, passionate, the soul of a true artist.”⁸⁵

85 *Diario del Sureste* December 27, 1934.

In 1935 musician Samuel Martí traveled from El Paso, Texas, to Yucatán to collect Maya musical folklore. In Mérida, Martí met several notable Yucatecan musicians such as Amilcar Cetina, Luis Garavito, and Halfdan Jebe. At their initiative and sponsored by Clemente López Trujillo, editor of the newspaper *El Diario del Sureste*, the Yucatán Symphony Orchestra was established in early 1936 and the conductor was Martí. Halfdan Jebe shared the first-chair violin with Luis Garavito. During the orchestra's two seasons from 1936 to 1938, several of Jebe's works were performed, notably his symphonic poems *The Caves of Loltún* and *Chichén Itzá*. The opera *Maya Dignity* was also staged again.⁸⁶

In the score for *The Caves of Loltún*, which incidentally appeared on the program under the title *The Rain Parties*, Jebe included a composition titled "Xtabay" in which a soprano, a counter-tenor, a tenor, and a bass sang in the Mayan language. The very languid melody included these lines:

Tuux cu tipil kin, Ti yan ya'mail
 Jac u tokil tún
 Bey lool cuxi thil ¡Loltún!

And later a choir sang in Spanish the following simple lines:

As soon as the sun's gleam gilds the East
 The worker grabs his axe and heads toward the field.
 Very happy and satisfied he goes with great devotion,
 Because he knows that work is the best religion.⁸⁷

The inclusion of texts in Maya and Spanish provided material for Jebe's lyricism, which by the mid-thirties seemed to include elements of modernism. While he had not entirely abandoned the nostalgic evocation of his homeland,⁸⁸ a definite emphasis on his Yucatecan and Maya themes rooted him to the Mexican regional and national music of that moment.

86 Jesús C. Romero, "Historia de la música" in *Enciclopedia Yucatanense* Vol. IV (México: Gobierno del Estado de Yucatán, 1944), 735–736.

87 Nasjonalbiblioteket in Oslo, 2001c, eske 150–155.

88 Musicologist John Bergsagel observed that a piece by Jebe entitled "Primavera" [Spring], which appeared amongst his Yucatan papers, was a translation into Spanish of his cantata "Lad Vaaren komme," based on a poem by J.P. Jacobsen. It appears that Jebe himself, in an outburst of nostalgia, decided to translate those lyrics into Spanish to try to spread his work as well as that of Jacobsen among the Spanish-speaking public. The work began, "My heart will have its rare spring – when?" According to Bergsagel, Jebe's translation does not seem to do Jacobsen's Danish original full justice. See John Bergsagel,

In 1936, Jebe dedicated himself to composing and arranging a new suite titled *Mérida Carnival*, which, though sometimes performed as a suite of five parts (“The Corsair,” “The Queen,” “Soul of the Guitar,” “The Dirty Old Men,” and “The Passions”), actually consists in the full score of at least eight more movements. In total it had thirteen relatively independent parts: 1. “The Corsair” (also titled “The Governor”), 2. “Soul of the Guitar,” 3. “The Dirty Old Men,” 4. “The Drunkard” (“Silhouettes”), 5. “Hostesses” (or “Pretty Mérida Natives”), 6. “The Queen,” 7. “Mestiza,” 8. “The Blind Man,” 9. “Mexican Matters,” 10. “Passions,” 11. “Top Rooster,” 12. “The Parish Priest,” and 13. “The Dance.”⁸⁹

The compositions tried to represent some of the key moments and people of the Mérida carnival. Again using some elements of the popular world, Jebe musically recreated various aspects of the celebration. For example, the scene in *Top Rooster* asked participants in the carnival represented in a choir to sing the next chorus at a martial rhythm:

Ten-te-re-sé
 Le-van-ta-té
 Eh-Oh-Eh
 I am the top rooster
 Protector of my hens.
 Friend of the home
 The sun rises upon my call
 To give light and color
 To my deeds of love.
 Ten-te-re-sé.⁹⁰

A sort of political awareness reappeared in Jebe in this suite. It seemed that he wanted to title his scenes as *The Proletarian* or *Global Indignation*; however, he crossed out those titles yet maintained the social criticism. In the last scene corresponding to *The Dance*, the composer suggested that “mixed in with the hubbub of the party in which everyone takes part, is the clamour of the dispossessed for their inheritance, asking for food, if not for happiness.” The final chorus states:

I have not seen you, nor have I heard you
 Heartbeat of new humanity

“J.P. Jacobsen and music” in *J.P. Jacobsens Spor i ord, billeder og toner. Tolv afhandlinger* (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzels Forlag, 1985), 305–306.

89 Nasjonalbiblioteket in Oslo, 2002, eske 151.

90 Ibid.

But I feel you inside my chest
 With thumping, thumping, thumping anxiety.⁹¹

During this period, Jebe's creativity was stimulated by a new collaboration with Sara Molina. The writer had proposed to create a work for children that unfortunately the composer would not live to hear, for it would be premiered after his death. What was originally presumably a children's ballet – perhaps even a little opera – has survived as an orchestral suite, "The Squirrel," composed of twenty-one parts. Each one represented an example of fauna with a certain link to the culture of Yucatán or Mexico. The work began with a parade of animals and continued with little vignettes of birds such as vultures, cardinals, or mockingbirds, proceeding with a cat, a pig, a monkey, a squirrel, and a toad. One piece referred to a Maya children's song titled "The Xtoles" and others concerned endemic birds of Yucatán such as the *xcoquita* and *chinchimbo-cal*. Halfdan Jebe included the composition of a foxtrot which was titled "The Pig's Foxtrot." Another vignette bore the name of "History of Pérez the Mouse," which referred to an animated character very popular in Mexican children's stories. The last part consisted of two pieces: "Beautiful Childhood" and "Death of the Squirrel."

The complete score of this orchestral suite demonstrated a work that was thorough and caring, characteristic of a sensibility akin to a tenderness for and a love of children. This was a different phase of Jebe's work, which revealed a strong influence from Sara Molina. Surely Jebe knew *The Carnival of the Animals* by Camille Saint-Saëns, and it probably served him as a reference. However, one must recognize that *The Squirrel* is contemporary with *Peter and the Wolf* by Sergei Prokofiev. The orchestral suite from a Norwegian and a Yucatecan – amid Mexican musical nationalism – thus took its place between *The Carnival of the Animals* and *Peter and the Wolf* as a contribution to "classical" music for young audiences.

In this last year of his life Halfdan Jebe continued to contribute to Mérida's musical society with the formation of The Modern Singing Maestros. By using this title Jebe was presumably making a reference to the medieval German "Meistersinger," as in Wagner's "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg." A manuscript of that year titled "The Red Hand: Hymn," which was found among his works, was dedicated to this society. It was a sort of march that had particularly militant lyrics that read:

This is the red hand that represents freedom.
 The noble exploits us, so against the noble we are ready to fight.

91 Ibid.

This is the red hand, fighting hand
 hard furrow that gives us bread.
 No more exploitation!
 Neither Nucuch and masters, nor slaves evermore.
 Whoever wants to be a tyrant, the red hand will crush him.
 Hand that fertilizes, hand that hurts,
 Hand that strengthens brotherhood.
 Hand that signals new directions,
 Calloused, it is always friendly.⁹²

It is not very clear if the idea of the “red hand” was a reference to some symbol of anarchism or if it had some connotation linked to Maya mythology.⁹³ What is striking is the vehemence with which, at this point, Jebe expressed his liberal ideals or those of his co-writers. In any event, in this piece there seems to be a strengthened vigor and impetus to continue promoting freedom and the struggle.

Apparently *The Modern Singing Maestros* did not attain the importance that Jebe and some its members hoped for. Perhaps their music appeared too radical for the Yucatecan society of that time, although it is fair to say that it was a reaction to the environment of radicalism that the Cárdenas regime was imposing – as has already been said – on a great part of the political and agrarian discourse of the day. The night that they made their first presentation, only a small group of people went to the auditorium. One participant recalled: “What sadness there was in the soft blue eyes of the maestro on the evening of our presentation to an audience of two dozen people! He declared himself defeated.”⁹⁴

In early 1937 he went to Mexico City, where he worked doing some orchestrations for XEW. On several occasions Jebe himself had written some panegyrics about radio, and it was known that he admired this medium, which to him had a huge future responsibility. He wrote pronouncements such as this:

Radio is the latest musical instrument of artistic, practical and commercial communication. ... We call on the artists, those who are true artists,

92 Nasjonalbiblioteket in Oslo, 2018, eske 154.

93 Cinnabar red is the colour of glorious death in Maya mythology. According to John D. Bergsagel, *La Mano Roja* (The Red Hand) seems to have been a Mayan play, subtitled “Emotivismo legendario en tres estampas, original del Prof. Victor M. Martínez H. con música de Haldan Jebe y Rubén D. Herrera.” Jebe seems to have made a suite from the music, perhaps a ballet but he allegedly is not responsible for the text.

94 *Diario del Sureste* December 22, 1937.

to attain dominance over this heavenly medium, product of the human mind and a tool that is representative of our era. ... As the piano is the soul of the home, the Radio should be the soul of the Universe.⁹⁵

But upon arriving at the capital, he did not adjust to the life of the city. He said, "Here I cannot daydream as in Mérida!" But "by then alcohol was for him an imperative demand and his health declined visibly because of it."⁹⁶ Pneumonia sent him to the General Hospital, where he died on December 17, 1937. When friends tried to see him, his body had already been sent to the Dolores Cemetery.

On December 22, 1937, Jacques de Bourges – probably a pseudonym for Fernando Burgos Samada, a Mérida conservatory teacher and Jebe's friend and colleague – wrote an article in the *Diario del Sureste* newspaper titled "Halfdan Jebe has died." In the article he recalled the musician and teacher. After a general description of his shortcomings – stating that he was "the perfect model of last century's bohemian" and someone "who fortified the flow of his musical culture and of all genres, for Jebe was a true scholar" – he acknowledged that a devil had possessed his soul from his early days:

Jebe was born afflicted with bohemianism, attacked by that incurable ailment, which is fatal in some of its manifestations. The Norwegian musician's sickness was like one of those neoplasms that destroy the miserable body without anyone being able to do anything about it...

Indeed, Jebe had arrived in Yucatán with that affliction:

That man to whom clothing mattered not a whit, who lived only within sharps and flats, despite his neurosis that separated him very frequently from the realities of life, he worked with courage. He played in orchestras, gave some classes, and he composed, attracted particularly by the enchantment of the Mayab he loved.⁹⁷

De Bourges then summarized the pessimism at the end of Jebe's life when Jebe felt defeated by the failure of *The Modern Singing Maestros*. He said that Jebe died in a hospital bed, "Sad. Alone. Or perhaps with Mimí at his side. A Mimí

⁹⁵ *Arte y Turismo* brochure fall issue 1933 consulted in CRIDDMGBF in Mérida, Yucatán.

⁹⁶ Jesús C. Romero, "Historia de la música" in *Enciclopedia Yucatanense* Vol. IV (México: Gobierno del Estado de Yucatán, 1944), 741.

⁹⁷ *Diario del Sureste*, December 22, 1937.

who undertook the heroic task of sweetening the musician's loneliness."⁹⁸ And who was that Mimi? The truth is that we do not know: Bourges may have been referring poetically to the tragic Mimi of Puccini's *La Bohème*, but more probably to Jebe's Yucatecan lover, Sara Molina Font. What is certain is that Sara Molina took care of organizing the performance of their shared work, *The Squirrel*, on July 16, 1938, in the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City.⁹⁹ The suite was presented under the title *The Squirrel: Maya Fable*, and critics treated it fairly well. The *Excelsior* newspaper said it had been a "lucid festival" that was "rewarded by the public's encouraging reception, thrilled by the work and its minuscule performers." Students from the Benito Juárez School and the Fine Arts Dance School, directed by Lily Cornils, staged the simple story line about "the party of the squirrel, who when it abandons its refuge, falls prey to the hunter." Antonio Mediz Bolio, a celebrated Yucatecan writer living in Mexico City, praised

the conception of the matter, full of originality and simple and pleasing beauty, an artistic vehicle of a sweet philosophy and delicate emotions. ... This beautiful work also has...the singular characteristic of being made with the ever mysterious spirit of the ancient land of the Mayas.¹⁰⁰

The children's warm applause for the author of the fable, the director, and the performers capped this posthumous tribute from Yucatecans and Mexicans to the late Norwegian composer Halfdan Jebe.

Ola Apenes in the Valley of Mexico: Between Engineering and Archaeology¹⁰¹

Ola Apenes Morch was born on August 23, 1898, in Fredrikstad and died in Canada on April 6, 1943. He was the son of Georg Apenes (1869–1902) and

98 Ibid.

99 *Excelsior*, July 14, 1938.

100 *Excelsior*, July 21, 1938.

101 Lars Lervik Langås did a master's thesis at the University of Oslo in 2012 titled *Ola Apenes: En norsk migrants forhold til Mexico, 1929–1943*. To date, it remains unpublished. For those interested in the letters that Apenes wrote from Mexico, as well as his intimate impressions, views, and opinions about the country, this work is essential. Also in 2012 the production company Flimmer Film made a documentary series for Norwegian television called *Glemte helter* (Unsung heroes). The segment made by Paulo Chavarría Serrano, a young Costa Rican filmmaker based in Bergen, was dedicated to Ola Apenes. This documentary, which was very well researched and excellently directed, gives a fairly complete

Cathinka “Kitty” Morch (1872–1958). They had two sons, Ola and Christian. The Apenes family was upper-middle class – their father was a shipping agent with some degree of solvency. Ola’s brother would be a noted judge who became involved in politics near the end of the 1930s.

In 1916 Ola finished high school and decided to study engineering, supported by the Swedish company ASEA. In 1921 he joined the military and in 1922 he worked for the Kings Bay Co. on the island of Spitsbergen. He completed his studies in Zurich in 1923 at the *Ergenössische Technische Hochschule*, and in 1927 he was sent to the United States to work on railway electrification for Gibbs & Hill. In 1929 he went to Mexico to work for the Swedish telephone company Ericsson. This company was established in Mexico in 1905, and in the 1920s it was the second most important telephone company in the country.¹⁰²

The first years Ola Apenes spent in Mexico were not entirely satisfactory. In letters that he wrote to his mother Kitty, he often complained about the character and follies of Mexicans.¹⁰³ When he first came to Mexico, he spent several months in the state of Chihuahua, where he felt nostalgic and lonely; this caused him to return to the capital, where he settled permanently.

During the late 1920s and early 1930s, Mexico City had just over a million inhabitants, and in 1928 it gave up its municipal government system.¹⁰⁴ In addition to some very tangible consequences of the economic crisis of 1929, such as certain shortages and a particular restriction on the circulation of currency, the city in those years experienced very intense political turmoil. The presidential succession in 1929 – in which Pascual Ortiz Rubio, official candidate of the newly formed National Revolutionary Party, ran against José Vasconcelos, the opposition candidate – aroused emotions in the political world, the intellectual environment, and the various social sectors at the beginning of the 1930s.¹⁰⁵ The Cristero War had come to an unconvincing end by

idea of the archaeological discoveries, photographs, and films that Ola Apenes made in Mexico. It also mentions his relationship with Frances Gillmor and his early death. It is a wonderful introduction to the life and work of this little-known Norwegian. In this section, I wish to emphasize only his activity as an archaeologist and humanist, and his contributions to the knowledge of indigenous pre-Hispanic Mexico.

102 Gabriel Székely *Ericsson en el tercer milenio* (México: Editorial Planeta-Ericsson, 2000), 126–131.

103 Lars Lervik Langås, Ola Apenes. En norsk migrants forhold til Mexico, 1929–1943 (University of Oslo, 2012), 31–35.

104 Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, “Ciudad oficial 1930–1970” in *Historia política de la Ciudad de México (Desde su fundación hasta el año 2000)*, ed. Ariel Rodríguez Kuri (México: El Colegio de México, 2012), 423.

105 John Skirius, *José Vasconcelos y la cruzada de 1929* (México: Siglo XXI Editores, 1978).

establishing the *modus vivendi* between the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and the postrevolutionary government, then led by Emilio Portes Gil. He was serving as interim president following the assassination of president-elect General Álvaro Obregón in July 1928. The iron hand of former president Plutarco Elías Calles, top leader of the Mexican Revolution, was felt to such an extent that the period from 1928 to 1934 was called “El Maximato.”¹⁰⁶

That era was characterized by a continuous political crisis and the main scenario was Mexico City. An exacerbated nationalism came up against the cosmopolitan pretensions of the intellectual elites, and a vigorous stream of self-awareness and self-discovery of what it meant to be Mexican at that time and throughout history, took place in the academic and cultural circles of the Mexican capital.¹⁰⁷ Art and literature, as well as historical, sociological, archaeological, and anthropological research were especially oriented toward the indigenous and pre-Hispanic Mexico.¹⁰⁸ Ola Apenes arrived in this environment plagued by street fighting, administrative restructuring, and conflicts between Mexican nationalists and cosmopolitans bolstered by much foreign scrutiny.

While he integrated with relative ease into the activities of the Ericsson company, in his free time he became particularly interested in Mexican archaeology and ancient Mexican history. He developed a special interest in photography and iconography of both pre-Hispanic ruins and the contemporary indigenous. He also took advantage of the opportunity to write about Mexico as a correspondent for the Norwegian newspaper *Aftenposten*.¹⁰⁹

In the early 1930s, he joined the research being done then on pre-Hispanic topics under the direction of Mexican scholars Alfonso Caso and Rafael García Granados. Between 1930 and 1933, he attended classes on pre-Hispanic culture and archaeology at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). At first, he was most taken by the Maya culture. His vocation for mathematics and his new interest in pre-Hispanic archaeology led him to work on the Maya

106 John W.F. Dulles, *Ayer en México. Una crónica de la Revolución (1919–1936)* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1977).

107 Henry C. Schmidt, *The Roots of Lo Mexicano. Self and Society in Mexican Thought, 1900–1934* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1978) and Ricardo Pérez Montfort, *Avatares del nacionalismo cultural. Cinco ensayos* (México: CIESAS-CIDEHM, 2000).

108 Mary Kay Vaughan and Stephen E. Lewis, eds., *The Eagle and the Virgin: Nation and Cultural Revolution in Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006) and Ricardo Pérez Montfort, *Estampas de nacionalismo popular mexicano. Diez ensayos sobre cultura popular y nacionalismo* 2nd ed. (México: CIESAS-CIDEHM, 2003).

109 Lars Lervik Langås, *Ola Apenes. En norsk migrants forhold til Mexico, 1929–1943* (University of Oslo, 2012), 31–35.

and Aztec calendars. He was, along with Alfonso Caso, one of the first academics to publish articles that related these calendars with the Gregorian and Western ones.¹¹⁰ However, his interests in archaeological subjects were quite varied. According to Pablo Martínez del Río, every Sunday he went on expeditions around Mexico City, and he soon became a specialist in the areas of the ancient shores of Lake Texcoco, from Chimalhuacán to Xochimilco.¹¹¹

Together with other Scandinavians, such as Sigvald Linné, Holger Graffman, Helga Larsen, and the young Bodil Christensen, he wanted to make known, both in Northern Europe and in the United States, a wide variety of topics relatively unpublished in scholarly and popular publications.¹¹² Like his colleagues, Apenes also wrote articles about archaeology, ethnography, and even simple folkloric descriptions, often accompanied with his own photographs and graphics.¹¹³ A notable example was the article “The Pond in Our Backyard,” which was published in the magazine *Mexican Life* in March 1943.¹¹⁴ In this piece, Apenes admitted that it was very difficult to acknowledge at first glance the existence of the huge lake that was once part of the Valley of Mexico. After describing how he began to recognize its existence by way of some old maps and to discover some of the lake-based practices that could still be found in the towns surrounding the capital, such as catching fish and birds or collecting salt and *tequesquite* (a natural mineral salt), Apenes concluded that “what is still left of the once great Lake of Texcoco is likely to vanish in the course of a few more years.” He therefore called the readers’ attention to how close this “pond

110 Ola Apenes, “Tabla de lectura para el cálculo de fechas mayas” in *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Antropológicos* Volume III, No. 1 (January-April 1939) and “Tabla de cálculo y correlación del calendario mexicano” in *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Antropológicos* Volume III, No. 3 (September-December 1939). Variations of the first of these articles had already been published in the magazine *Ethnos* of the State Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm, Sweden. See Ola Apenes, “Possible derivation of the 260 day period of the Maya Calendar” *Ethnos* 1 (1936); “Abbreviated Method for calculating Maya calendar dates” in *Ethnos* 1 (1937) and “Table for determination of Maya Calendar Round positions” *Ethnos* 4 (1937).

111 Ola Apenes, *Mapas Antiguos del Valle de México*, prologue by Rafael García Granados and biographical note by Pablo Martínez del Río (México: UNAM, 1947).

112 See for example Sigvald Linné, *Archeological Researches in Teotihuacán, Mexico* (Tuscaloosa, University of Alabama Press, 2003), Helga Larsen, “The Mexican Flying Pole Dance” in *National Geographic Magazine*, Vol. LXXI–3, (March 1937), 387–400 or Bodil Christensen, “The Acatalxqui Dance of Mexico” *Ethnos* vol. 2,iss. 4 (1937) published by Statens Etnografiska Museum, Stockholm, Sweden.

113 An important collection of his photographs are found in the Linné Archive at the Ethnography Museum of Sweden in Stockholm.

114 Ola Apenes “The Pond in Our Backyard” in *Mexican Life* XIX No. 3 (March 1943).

in our backyard” once was.¹¹⁵ This article also had extraordinary photographs of the catching of birds and insects, as well as a very well-kept reproduction of an ancient map attributed to Alonso de la Santa Cruz.

Another article on a similar topic was published in *Ethnos Magazine* shortly after his death. It was about the production of salt in Lake Texcoco. Boasting specific knowledge of Nahuatl, Apenes described the primitive ways in which the *iztatleros* collected salt water from the lake, which was evaporated to produce the crystallization of its residues through solar heating or in an adobe oven. The article was accompanied by three magnificent photos taken by Apenes himself.¹¹⁶ Thus, the Norwegian engineer demonstrated that he was not only a particularly capable ethnographer, but a generator of specific knowledge, who was convinced of the need to disclose it.

These interests not only brought him closer to his Scandinavian colleagues, but also to several Mexican specialists in addition to his already well-known teachers, Alfonso Caso and Rafael García Granados. During his academic and communication activities, Apenes met Manuel Gamio and Miguel Othón de Mendizábal, two essential figures of Mexican anthropology; Pablo Martínez del Río and Wigberto Giménez Moreno, both historians and archaeologists; and some Maya specialists, such as Alfonso Villa Rojas, or experts in Oaxacan and Toltec cultures, such as Jorge Ruffier Acosta. Among themselves, they considered each other as colleagues or collaborators, and in 1937, with the creation of the Anthropological Society of Mexico, Ola Apenes was one of its founding members.¹¹⁷ From that moment, his activity as an archaeologist and ethnographer intensified to the point of promoting excavations that he financed at the sites of El Tepalcate, not far from Chimalhuacán, and in Teplaoxtoc, which he described as “a miniature Xochicalco,” while he launched the initiative to create a museum about Lake Texcoco in Chimalhuacán. Some of his discoveries and initiatives appeared in the journal *American Antiquity* in an article titled “The ‘Tlateles’ of Lake Texcoco,” which was not published until after his death in 1943.¹¹⁸

115 Ibid, 60.

116 Ola Apenes, “The primitive salt production of Lake Texcoco, Mexico” in *Ethnos* IX (1944), 35–40.

117 Pablo Martínez del Río “Nota biográfica” in Ola Apenes, *Mapas Antiguos del Valle de México* (México: UNAM, 1947). Eusebio Dávalos Hurtado, “La Sociedad Mexicana de Antropología y la v Reunión de Mesa Redonda” in *Boletín Bibliográfico de Antropología Americana*, 14, no. 1 (1951).

118 Ola Apenes “The ‘Tlateles’ of Lake Texcoco” in *American Antiquity* 9, no 1. (July 1943), 29–32. Xochicalco is a spacious arqueological site located in the state of Morelos. It is considered one of the most important strategic and commercial centers of pre-hispanic Mexico.

But going back to his stay in Mexico during the second half of the 1930s, Apenes also worked with folklorist and author Frances Gillmor from the University of Arizona, with whom he maintained a very close relationship. Apenes met her in Alfonso Caso's class during the mid-1930s. Gillmor had done research on the Navajo Indians in Arizona and New Mexico. She fell in love with Ola and went back to Mexico every summer to attend the National School of Anthropology and History and the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Frances and Ola traveled together on the outskirts of Mexico City and to other regions of the country. Frances appears in several of Ola's photographs as a very attractive young woman in the middle of the desert landscape, among *huizache* trees, and even seated on the huge statue of Tláloc of Cuauhtinchan. Without a doubt, during the time they spent in Mexico, their love – not only for pre-Hispanic and ethnic Mexico but for each other – was more than evident.

If Gillmor mixed her knowledge of Mexican history and folklore with a particular literary intensity, the link between the Norwegian and the American remained to such an extent that in several of Gillmor's works she mentioned him as a careful reader and an enthusiast of her literature.¹¹⁹ At least two of Gillmor's books were illustrated by Apenes, which unfortunately were also not published until after his death.¹²⁰ She referred to him in one of her texts as "the closest friend I ever had," and she was the one who sadly notified Apenes's family about his early death.¹²¹

But during the 1930s, Apenes also worked directly with Ricardo García Granados and with Charles E. Dibble from the University of Utah in the search for Mesoamerican and colonial literary and historiographical sources in order to collect old maps of the Valley of Mexico. In 1947, the UNAM published his posthumous work *Mapas Antiguos del Valle de México*, which he annotated and identified with particular accuracy. Rafael García Granados wrote the prologue to this edition and emphasized the keenness of Apenes's research. In his introduction, Apenes confirmed that the study of the Valley of Mexico was important to many areas of knowledge: geology, archaeology, history, biology, ethnology, and folklore. He had befriended the director of the General Archive of the Nation, Rafael López; the director of the National Library, José

119 Frances Gillmor, *Flute of the Smoking Mirror* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1949), vi.

120 See also Frances Gillmor, *The King Danced in the Market Place* (Phoenix: University of Arizona Press, 1964).

121 Sharon Whitehill, *Frances Gillmor, Aztec and Navajo Folclorist* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005).

Vasconcelos; and the young Antonio Pompa y Pompa, then secretary general of the National Academy of Sciences. Apenes obtained the collection of maps that were part of this publication partly through his research of different international collections. However, he also found them in private collections in Mexico, like those of José Porrúa and Guillermo M. Echarriz. He also acknowledged in the prologue that this work had been linked to Mexican academics and artists like Jorge Enciso, Edmundo O'Gorman, and Santos Balmori. *Mapas Antiguos del Valle de México* was initially promoted by the rector of the UNAM at that time, Rodolfo Brito Foucher, afterwards by Apenes's teacher, Alfonso Caso, and then by Salvador Zubirán, both rectors of the UNAM as well. It was another one of Ola Apenes's works that was published after his death.¹²²

In 1942 the developments in Norway caused by World War II forced him out of Mexico. In the prologue to that posthumous book, Rafael García Granados wrote:

Ola Apenes did not live peacefully in Mexico. It tormented him to think that while he was not in need of anything, his mother back in Norway lacked even the most indispensable things and suffered humiliations by the German invaders.¹²³

Apenes therefore decided to join the Norwegian Armed Forces in exile that were concentrating in Canada, and in April of 1943, an acute appendicitis ended his life, before he could even reach the front.

His work, however, left a legacy of singular importance for the archaeological and historical knowledge of both the Valley of Mexico and Lake Texcoco, and of the pre-Hispanic world in general. Ola Apenes was another Norwegian whose presence in Mexico not only had an impact on himself as a person and on his spirit, but also left an indelible mark in this country that still can be unquestionably confirmed in some areas that do not necessarily appear to the naked eye.

The quality, commitment, and passion implicit in the work of Ola Apenes, as well as in the compositions of Halfdan Jebe and the writings of Per Imerslund, have remained as testimony not only of the Norwegian presence in Mexico, but also of the impact that Mexican history and culture had on these three Norwegians who, while contemporaries, were at the same time so divergent and unique.

122 Ola Apenes, *Mapas Antiguos del Valle de México* (México: UNAM, 1947).

123 *Ibid.*, 5

In these three migrant's journeys from the homeland to an unknown land, the individual experience provided key elements for understanding these processes. Imerslund's, Jebe's and Apenes' involvement and exposure to post-revolutionary Mexico became not only a personal transformation, but it also meant a specific contribution to the arts and knowledge of their time. While Imerslund's writings caught more attention in the European public, specially in Germany and Norway; Jebe's music and Apenes' research had much more influence in Mexican and Yucatecan circles.

Generally, a migrant travels from a known area to one that is unknown, which may involve adventure and discovery, although not always in a conscious manner. But migration also poses a voyage within the very person, a trip that impacts both the individual and the space that he creates in the locale to which he arrives. Thus, the description and the analysis of the processes of interpretation, representation, and learning that is provided by travel from one place to another – particularly from Norway to Mexico, both in geographical and spiritual terms – end up being extremely significant.

The rather unknown experiences that these three travelers represent in post-revolutionary Mexico can be considered as part of a fundamental contribution of this Norwegian migration to the Americas in the first half of the twentieth century.

The Blikstad Family: Saga of Emigrants in Norway, Spain, and Brazil

María Álvarez-Solar

Introduction

My purpose is to write about a Norwegian family named Blikstad, characterized by several generations of emigrants throughout a period of over two hundred years. The last one of these generations, to which I will refer in this research, settled around 1940 in Brazil, where many of its descendants still live. I will also refer to other generations that had previously emigrated both within Norway itself and especially to Spain.

I was interested in studying the migratory route of this family for several reasons, including the strong ties that I observed, the migratory decisions of its members, the migratory chains created to help the members develop their careers in the countries of settlement, and the strategies that they developed in the different economic settings with their diverse employment or capital investment possibilities. It was also of great interest to me to know how the family members created not static but fluid migratory spaces through the borders: their interaction with the societies they settled in Spain and Brazil are linked to the Norwegian society of origin. These ties are economic in nature, both in the transnational economic space, as created by the internationalization of the financial and commerce systems, and in the social space, with the designing of networks. The various migrations of the Blikstads started at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, when members of the family emigrated from the countryside in Eastern Norway to the city of Christiania (now Oslo), and in the process they changed from farmers to craftsmen. Some members of the following generation moved to Copenhagen to study more specialized trades, and then they settled in other Norwegian cities, like Trondhjem (now Trondheim) in the west or Christianssand (now Kristiansand) in the south, to practice their profession. Around 1880 a third generation of the Blikstads emigrated to Spain, where they established timber companies and later entered the shipping industry, purchasing some ships for that purpose. By 1905, they had invested part of the capital obtained from those activities in the Norwegian textile sector, and

became major shareholders of Nydalen, the biggest Norwegian textile company at that time. At the beginning of the 1940s, the fifth generation of the Blikstads emigrated, to Brazil in this case, not as entrepreneurs but as specialized workers employed by international companies. So, the migratory routes of the family over this extensive period were characterized by occupational and business diversification and by the frequent relationships with international companies and global commerce. In this sense, it can be said that the Blikstads moved in the world of transnationalism, in the economic sense of the term, a trend much discussed in the academic sphere in recent years and addressed further below. Among those descendants of the Blikstads I got in touch with, and to whom I will later return, this repeated migratory activity through different generations has produced a narrative about the family identity that can be viewed as a saga, in the sense of an epic of travelers, of migrants who, through the centuries, moved and move nimbly in the international spaces thanks to their migratory experience, their networks, and the economic and social capital that they gradually accumulated.

Different generations of the Blikstads moved, and still move, in those spaces without ever losing contact with Norway and the part of the family living there. In their comings and goings, they designed networks of strong ties that helped them in their migrations by forming real chains of support and exchange of experiences and work opportunities. In this, they differ from those Norwegians who emigrated to Latin America with limited contacts in the countries they settled in, and with only weak-tie networks, which sometimes gives an air of adventure to their migrations, an air that such Norwegians were aware of themselves and recorded in their traveler books and personal diaries. The Blikstads, on the contrary, are not frustrated adventurers but rather have several generations' worth of experience of migratory processes. Both this expertise and their networks – not only of strong family ties, as mentioned above, but also of weak ties with people they contact in their entrepreneurial itineraries – led them to undertake planned and seasoned migrations. In this respect, the individual Blikstads I will cite in this paper did not write diaries or traveler books. Though they seemed to control their migratory movements themselves, the study of their itineraries will show that this seeming control was apparent only; like other workers and entrepreneurs in the international spaces, they were affected in their migratory decisions by changes in the global economy, which were very significant between 1880 and 1940, and which impacted on their enterprises and their chances to get work, sometimes positively and sometimes adversely.

The Blikstads are, in this sense, transnational migrants, what has come to be known since the last century as transmigrants. In the academic sphere the

approach to migrations as transnational phenomena was defined with authority by Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Szanton-Blanc, who defined transmigrants as those who

construct social fields that connect their country of origin to their country of settlement. Transmigrants develop and maintain multiple relationships – family, economic, social, organizational, religious, political – that transcend borders. Transmigrants act, make decisions, and feel involved, and they develop identities within the social networks that connect them simultaneously to two or more societies.¹

The main goal of this research on the Blikstads was originally to study those family members who had emigrated to Brazil. Later, however, when coming into contact with their stories, I realized that the picture of their migratory experience could not be understood without seeing them in the context of the migratory experiences of previous generations of the family. I therefore mapped out their relational networks and created transnational spaces transcending the concepts of countries of emission and reception as well as the state perspectives of their migratory movements. The theoretical approach to transnationalism applied to the study of migrations was of great help to acquire this image.

In this sense, the Blikstads are not a unique case; other Norwegian families settled in both Spain and Brazil around the same time, and we can see that there were important parallels in their career paths. The period favorable to the development of businesses in the Europe of 1870–1900, characterized by the economic growth in spite of the cyclical crisis, led to a boost in business and entrepreneurial activities that attracted families like the Blikstads and the Sörensens. These families were entrepreneurs with their own capital who founded companies favored by the demand of raw materials such as wood. They are not emigrants who settle in a country and lose contact with the countries they come from; on the contrary, they generate economic, social, and cultural links in both countries, and exemplify what in the study of migrations has come to be known as transnationalism.

1 Nina Glick Schiller et al., “Towards a Definition of Transnationalism. Introductory Remarks and Research Questions” in *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity and Nationalism Reconsidered*, ed. Nina Glick Schiller, L. Basch and C. Szanton-Blanc (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1992); Spanish version in Carlota Solé, Sonia Perellá and Leonardo Cavalcanti (eds.) *Nuevos retos del transnacionalismo en el estudio de las migraciones* (Madrid: Ministerio de Trabajo e inmigración, 2008).

Since the end of the 1980s, Glick, Basch, and Szanton-Blanc have made it clear that it is not possible to study the emigrants just on the territory of a nation-state of settlement,

because their lives take place at both sides of the borders. And when Linda Basch, Cristina Szanton-Blanc, and I said that they live at both sides of the border, we didn't mean that they were in constant move from one country to another, but that their lives take place within social environments – networks of networks – that connect them to the social, economic, political, and religious institutions from two or more state-nations. To this, we analyzed the formation processes of the state-nation, as well as the family and commercial ties, and the cultural and religious organizations and activities that transcended the national borders.²

In the academic discussion on transnationalism the concept of transnationalism has been often associated with that of globalization, in the sense that faster and lower-cost transportation would make easier the transnationalization of migrants, whom we denominate transmigrants, as I have already mentioned. Nevertheless, Glick herself made it perfectly clear that transnationalization is not a phenomenon associated with globalization but a study approach to migrations in the era of globalization.

I was also interested in knowing more about the networks established by the Blikstads in Brazil and what their ties in Norway were like. As mentioned above, I think it is necessary to consider the migratory behaviors of the ancestors of these immigrants to Brazil. This will lead me to study the migration, around 1880, of the patriarch of the Blikstad family to Asturias in Spain. In short, the choice of the Blikstad family as the object of this research is aligned with the view of transnationalism as a theoretical tool for studying the migratory movements of the family. In this sense, determining the design of the family networks and contacts on both sides of the Atlantic will be an objective in this chapter.

There are three members of the Blikstad family mentioned in this work who share the same first name and surname: Magnus Torbjørnsen Hauff Blikstad (1862–1926), his son Magnus Torbjørnsen Blikstad (1897–1979) the latter's son Magnus Torbjørnsen Blikstad (1921–2002); in order to ease the reading I will refer to them as Blikstad I, II, and III respectively. I consider the grandfather, a great entrepreneur, as the patriarch of the Blikstads, as he laid the foundations of the family capital and economic ascent, and also because in his migratory

² Ibid.

traveling he created a transnational space that enriched his family both culturally and financially, as well as the countries where he settled in, as we will shortly see. The other Blikstad I will highlight is Blikstad III, the grandson of the patriarch; with an itinerary covering Spain, Norway, and Brazil, he is the center of our study and the focus of the following section. As this anthology is about Norwegians who emigrated to Latin America, I will start with those Blikstads who moved to Brazil.

The Migration to Brazil of Magnus Torbjørnsen Blikstad and other Relatives

In the 1940s Magnus Torbjørnsen Blikstad (Santander, Spain, 1921–São Paulo, 2002; henceforth Blikstad III) traveled from Norway to Spain in search of work, relying on the contacts established by his father and especially his grandfather through their previous business activity in that country. The economic isolation of Spain after the Civil War (1936–39) prevented the young Magnus from accomplishing his plan. He then traveled to Brazil, where he arrived in 1948 for a job offer from the American company Anderson Clayton.³ He would work there for that company all through his working life, first in the coffee division in Santos and then from 1960 on in the margarine division in São Paulo. In the 1950s, his brother Bernhard and his cousin Alf Blikstad also emigrated to Brazil; however, this family migration to Brazil was definitive only in the case of Blikstad III, since both his brother and his cousin returned to Europe years later.⁴

Magnus T. Blikstad III was married in 1950 in Brazil to the Brazil-born Kirsten Emilie Sigmond, the daughter of Harald Sigmond and Ablaug Sigmond (née Barfod),⁵ who were Norwegian immigrants to Brazil (curiously enough, they happened to meet in Norway on a coincidental trip there). Harald Sigmond had been born in Zumbrota, Minnesota, in 1884, the son of Norwegian immigrants to the United States. Years later his family returned to Norway,

3 All the biographical details about Magnus Torbjørnsen Blikstad were given to me in the autumn of 2012 by his eldest daughter Vivien Blikstad, who lives in Brazil, over a series of very valuable interviews through Skype and e-mail that allowed me to know about the lives of her parents and of herself in Brazil.

4 My main source of information, Vivien Blikstad, did not remember exactly how many years they lived in Brazil.

5 The surname Barfod comes from Langesund in Telemark, Norway. Interview with Vivien Blikstad, October, 2012.

from where Harald emigrated to Brazil⁶ in the 1930s in response to a job offer as an engineer for the construction of the Swedish-financed Fiat Lux match factory. Magnus and Kirsten maintained links with Norway all through their lives, sending their four children to study there, but remaining themselves permanently in Brazil. Of their children, only one daughter came back and still lives in Norway. As for the rest of the Blikstad immigrants to Brazil, there is a son of Bernhard Blikstad still living in that country. A photograph which Vivien sent me shows Magnus and Kirsten, just married, on a beach day in Brazil. For their daughter Vivien Blikstad this photo represents the happiness her parents felt in Brazil.

Instrumental in the success of this immigration were the possibility of work and the immigration policy of Brazil at that time. People with a higher education were much in demand, as was the case with Harald Sigmond. In the 1930s, during the administration of Getulio Vargas, the intellectuals, with the approval of the government, had formulated a policy on immigration strengthening the Brazilian elements based on the Portuguese language and on the local culture. This idea would crystallize in the Constitution of 1946, where article 162 determined that “the selection, entry, distribution, and settlement of immigrants were subjected under the law to the demands of the national interest.” The goal pursued at that time was the arrival of immigrants who could serve the progress of the country.⁷

The Brazilian economic policy at the time also encouraged the establishment of foreign companies in the country. This was the case of the Anderson Clayton Company, which had started its commercial activity in the cotton sector in 1910, expanding into the coffee and margarine sectors years later. The company had been operating in Mexico since 1921, and later incorporated other Latin American countries, like Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and Paraguay.⁸ Anderson Clayton had agents in several European countries, one of them Spain, where the company frequently appeared in advertisements of the time.⁹ Forty years later, the American company had diversified its production, and like other foreign companies, mostly British and American, it invested in Latin

6 Harald Sven Sigmond arrived in Brazil in 1935, heading from Rio de Janeiro to Santos. *Arquivo Público del Estado de Sao Paulo, Centro Histórico do Imigrante, SIST-MCF. Lista General de Desembarque de Passageiros. Microfilm 003/LDP HULA. 19490-*

7 Elda Evangelina González Martínez, *La inmigración deseada: La política migratoria brasileña desde João VI hasta Getúlio Vargas* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2003).

8 William Argue, “History of Anderson, Clayton and Company,” *Journal of the American Oil Chemists Society* 37:6 (1960), 4–8.

9 For instance in *Industria textil* (Barcelona).

America and needed workers with technical, administrative, and commercial training.

Magnus T. Blikstad III spoke fluent Norwegian, English, and Spanish and had studied at Oslo Handelsgymnasium in Norway, which made him a good candidate for Anderson Clayton.¹⁰ In the nineteenth century many countries in Europe, including Norway, had a surplus of highly qualified workers. In this respect, Stang concluded that the Norwegian labor market could not absorb technicians and other professionals with a higher education during that period.¹¹ Mörner points out that the same occurred in Belgium, and possibly in other European countries:

While the vast majority of European immigrants to Latin America...were poor and uneducated, this has always coexisted with another element, small in number but qualitatively significant, of advanced-trained technicians and professionals.¹²

As for Norway, the situation had not improved in the 1940s.

In a few words, the Blikstads and the Sigmonds were well accepted in Brazil both by the international companies and the government, and can be therefore considered as desired immigrants. Besides, Magnus Blikstad III was nothing of an adventurer immigrant guided by chance, since he had networks of contacts and a long family tradition of migration.

Routes and Ascent of the Blikstads

The Blikstads' migratory tradition dated from almost two hundred years before the arrival of Blikstad III to Brazil and his working for the Anderson Clayton company. The Blikstads had begun by emigrating from the countryside to the city at the end of the eighteenth century and the first years of the nineteenth century. They moved from the southeast of Norway, where they were farmers,

10 The commercial and business education in Norway was imparted at that time in high school institutes specialized in those subjects, which were called *handelsgymnasium*. The Oslo Handelsgymnasium started its activity in 1877.

11 Gudmund Stang, "La emigración escandinava a la América latina, 1800 – 1940," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* 13 (1976), 293–330.

12 Magnus Mörner, *Historia social latinoamericana (Nuevos enfoques)* (Caracas: Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, 1979), 102.

to the city of Christiania to work as artisans. Ole Peter Blechstad,¹³ born in 1794,¹⁴ learned the craft of blacksmith¹⁵ in Christiania, where in 1820 he married Anne Magdalene Lutken/Lütken (b. 1799).¹⁶ One of their children, Hakon Napoleon Blikstad (1827–90),¹⁷ moved to Copenhagen to learn the craft of his father. Once he mastered it, he specialized in cutlery and surgical instruments, producing high quality pieces.¹⁸ Some years later, Hakon Napoleon moved to Trondhjem, maybe to get a bigger and better clientele, and he seems to have succeeded, since the census of 1865 shows him with a house of his own on 15 Tordenskjold Gate, where he lived with his wife Engelbærtine Bente Antonæte Hauff (1827–1891), from Christianssund (now Kristiansund), and their five children. From the same census, we know he had three apprentices and two female servants.¹⁹ He must have been a man with a liberal frame of mind, interacting with people from different places.²⁰ Around 1880, one of his children, Magnus – that is, Magnus Torbjørnsen Hauff Blikstad (1862–1926), the future Blikstad family patriarch²¹ – traveled to Spain. In those years the wood import business was blooming in Spain, and several Norwegians had gone into what looked like a promising activity.

As stated, Blikstad r's father, Hakon Napoleon, was an open-minded man who very likely came into contact with people from different countries who arrived in the city of Trondhjem to go fishing (besides his specialties in cutlery and surgical instruments, Hakon Napoleon Blikstad was also a specialist in

13 Blechstad would be the Danish for Blikstad.

14 The son of Knud Blechstad, a blacksmith from Allunværket (an area or neighborhood of Christiania). Ole Peter was born in Allunværket in 1794. Ministerialbok Oslo hospital. Gamlebyen prestegjeld 1734–1818 (039 t M13) <http://digitalarkivet.no>.

15 Kolstad, *Knivbladet* 5 (1991).

16 According to Per Thoresen, in *Knivprat*, Ana Magdalena Lutken was the daughter of the manager of Hurdal Glassverk, a glass manufacturer. <http://kniver.blogspot.no/>.

17 “Norway, Baptisms, 1634–1927,” index, *FamilySearch* <https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/NHSR-8R7>; accessed 24 Sep 2012), Hakon Napoleon Petersen, 06 May 1827; citing reference 2:2SDQ7N9, FHL microfilm 125786.

18 Koldstad's work offers a very detailed summary of the cutlery work of Hakon Napoleon Blikstad. See Harald Kolstads introduction in *Knivbladet* 6 (1992).

19 Digitalarkivet. Census of 1856. Trondheim.

20 See Thoresens blog <http://kniver.blogspot.no/search/label/Blikstad>.

21 Magnus Torbjørnsen Hauff Blikstad (1862–1926), the grandfather in this saga, married Ane Olava/Anita Blikstad (née Kulø, 1861–1950) with whom he had the following children: Eduardo (b. Gijón, 1888), Angelita (b. Gijón, 1891), Marie/Minni/Mimi (b. Gijón, 1894), Haakon (b. Gijón, 1895), Magnus (b. Gijón, 1897), Augusta/Anita (b. Bærum, Akerhus, 1900), and Alf (b. 1902).

hooks and fishing implements). It was probably through those casual networks of weak ties that the young Magnus T. Blikstad I would be inspired to settle in Spain in a business that promised to be very lucrative and interesting. Besides, his father-in-law was also engaged in the fishing sector and the fishing ship industry. The contacts between the north of Spain, where Asturias is located, and the west coast of Norway, where the Blikstads lived, had been traditionally numerous already since the Middle Ages, because of the fishing and trade of cod, which at the time was a highly appreciated product in Spain, where he was appointed consul of Sweden and Norway and started a timber and mechanics company in Gijón in Asturias. He later became the director and main owner of the Madrid-based timber company Compañía de Maderas, which various branches throughout Spain, including Gijón.²²

Between 1870 and 1890, Norway was a big exporter of timber. It is a country rich in conifer trees, which grow profusely in the boreal areas and whose wood was highly sought after at a time when the Industrial Revolution demanded the exploitation of coal mines and the construction of railways.²³ Between 1850 and 1900 the mining area in the north of Spain required a railway to carry the mineral to the exportation ports in the Cantabrian Sea: Bilbao, Santander, and Gijón. The economic situation was favorable to the timber industry at that time, both in Norway and Spain, encouraged by the Commerce Treaty signed by King Oscar II of Sweden and Norway and King Alfonso XII of Spain in 1883 to promote the commercial exchange and the relationships among these countries.²⁴ Apart from Consul Blikstad, other Norwegian entrepreneurs had established themselves in Spain in those years to enter the timber business, such as Birger Sörensen, from Fredrikstad, who established himself in Madrid in 1878 to run his father's timber company, the Compañía de Maderas Sörensen. This company was one of five plants operating in Bilbao in the last third of the nineteenth century, some of them being imported wood warehouses.²⁵ The company's full name was Sörensen Yakhelnn & Compañía. Other Nordic timber companies included the one owned by Hilario Lund y Clausen (in Ripa), who was a cod trader and consul of Sweden and Norway in Bilbao.²⁶ As seen from

22 Nordmanns-Forbundet, 130.

23 For a detailed article on this point that treats the timber trade, see Iñaki Iriarte Goñi, "La inserción internacional del sector forestal español 1849–1935," *Revista de Historia Industrial* XVI:27 (2005), 13–46.

24 Boletín Oficial de la Provincia de Tarragona, 159.

25 N. de la Puerta Rueda, *La Compañía de maderas*. (Bilbao: Diputación Foral de Bizcaia, 1994), 25.

26 Susana Serrano Abad, "Paisaje e industria en el Bilbao del despegue (1860–1930)," *Historia contemporánea* 24 (2002), 223–42.

the above, the entrepreneurial activity of those Norwegians went together with their diplomatic activity as consuls. As Norway was in a personal union with Sweden at that time, these men served as consuls of both Sweden and Norway, and were sometimes taken for Swedish in the documentation, as in the case of Sörensen, who sometimes appears as Swedish and sometimes as Norwegian. So, it is clear that, as a minority (of Nordic immigrants), there were surely contacts among these entrepreneurs on account of consular, entrepreneurial, and commercial issues.

The capital accumulated by Consul Blikstad through his business activities in Spain would allow him to make new business investments during the period prior to World War I. He then returned to Norway in 1905, and invested in the textile industry, purchasing the majority of shares of Nydalen, a textile manufacturer founded in 1845 and the one that employed the most workers in Norway at that time. His three male children would join the company's board of directors at different moments in time: Eduardo (the eldest), Haakon, and Magnus (i.e., Blikstad II).

Blikstad I invested in the shipping sector, founding two companies in 1915: DS Gijonés and DS Maderas, with two steamboats named after each one of them. Subsequently he founded the company DS Vale in 1916, with the steamboat *Vale*.²⁷ In 1919 all the three ships were finally brought together into a company called Skibs-AS Maderas based in Hølen, Akershus (Norway).²⁸ The *Vale*, which he had bought in 1916, was sunk by the Germans on the Newcastle-Bergen route during World War I, in 1917; three men died in the wreck.²⁹ Another of the company's ships, the *Carlos*, stranded in Kullebunden, Jeløya, on the Kristiania-Moss route in 1919.³⁰ When the war was over, the shipping company continued to operate until 1926, two years after the death of the family patriarch.

Blikstad I considerably increased his family's capital. Returning to Norway, he lived in Bærum, one of the most affluent suburban districts of Kristiania, enjoying a comfortable but not lavish lifestyle. A family photo from those years shows the Blikstads with a respectable but unpretentious appearance.³¹ The photo focuses on the family bond rather than on luxury; Mrs Blikstad is wearing not a single jewel, which could make us suspect a pietist family, but there is no data on this in the family memory. In my view, considering the social and

27 Interview with Vivien Blikstad. Skype. October, 2012.

28 Ibid.

29 Norwegian wrecks in 1917, and in 1919. *Norsk Skipsfartshistorisk Selskap*.

30 *Norsk Skipsfartshistorisk Selskap*. The ship ran aground because of risky navigation in the mist.

31 See photograph of Magnus T. Hauff Blikstad (Blikstad I) with wife and children by Phos Foto at Oslo byarkiv (<http://www.oslobilder.no/BAR/A-10093/Ua/0001/154>).

cultural work carried through by Blikstad I in Gijón as well as his local press statements, he was an entrepreneur with a humanist mindset and a liberal attitude, most assuredly inherited from his father Hakon Napoleon and his grandfather Ole Peter. It is very likely that he was a Mason, since many of the Gijón bourgeoisie who helped found the Ateneo Obrero (Workers' Athenaeum) were liberal Masons. The interest in the cultural promotion of workers is also shown by other immigrants in Gijón, with whom Blikstad I had contact, like Ernesto Winter Blanco, the son of an Alsatian immigrant who had come to Gijón to work at the Cifuentes, Pola y Cía glass factory. Ernesto was an engineer and much concerned with the subject of education. He also had contacts with entrepreneurial families in Asturias, like the Figaredo, Bustelo, and Orueta.³²

To the economic capital contributed by Blikstad I must be added the social capital accumulated through ties created in Spain (and perhaps previously in Trondhjem with the help of his father, Hakon Napoleon).³³ These ties, both at a local and national level in Spain, can be considered as weak, yet important in order to get relevant information in the work field so as to get an employment, or in business.³⁴ One example of this social activity was his civic involvement by collecting signatures from Gijón entrepreneurs and businessmen, calling for the government to construct a new and deeper harbor in Gijón (El Musel) where large ships could dock.³⁵ His civic engagement with social and cultural projects like the creation in Gijón of the Workers' Athenaeum, of which he was a great benefactor, led him to establish bonds with the liberal bourgeoisie and the intellectual Left that supported and had founded the Athenaeum. During the years he lived in Asturias, other international companies had established themselves in the region, like La Compagnie Royale Asturienne des Mines, which focused on the mining of zinc, iron, and coal, and of which the Norwegian company De Norske Zinkverker, located in Odda, Hordaland (Norway),³⁶ was a branch. In his capacity as consul of Sweden and Norway, Blikstad I would have relationships with this company, and the business relationships with Spain continued after his death. For instance, his eldest son,

32 María Fernanda Fernández Gutierrez, "Estudio histórico artístico del orfanato minero," *Boletín de letras del Real Instituto de Estudios Asturianos*, 157 (Enero-Junio 2001), 127–245.

33 Pierre Bourdieu, "Le capital social. Notes provisoires," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 31 (Janvier 1980); James Coleman, "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," *American Journal of Sociology* 94 (1988), 95–120.

34 Mark S. Granovetter, "The strength of weak ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78:6 (1973), 1360–80.

35 Signatures for the new port of *El Musel* (Gijón).

36 Nordmanns-Forbundet: 131.

Eduardo Blikstad, hosted the Navy officers in his house on occasion of the visit to Oslo of several Spanish warships in 1929.³⁷

In addition to both their economic and social capital, the Blikstads had a cultural capital provided by the education they had received. The interest in education also expressed itself in the philanthropic work of Blikstad I in Spain. Much of his work there was that of supporting workers' education, with the creation of libraries and cultural magazines. The consul gave his children a commercial education like the one he had himself (we know very little about his daughters). All of them studied in Norway at the Norwegian School of Economics, and spent study periods in other European countries like England and France.

In summary, the economic ascent was strongly determined by both the economic contexts and the Blikstads' weak ties with other companies or economic or social groups. This benefited the family companies and strengthened the already strong family ties, since all of the consul's sons worked in those companies at some point. On his return to Norway, nevertheless, it is more doubtful that the social ascent paralleled the economic one. The Blikstads did not belong to the elite of civil servants from the Norwegian high bourgeoisie. Blikstad I participated in the political life of the country for a short time, and was the mayor of Bærum from 1917 to 1919. During his term in office, he founded a scholarship for young students.³⁸ If the global economic context had shaped the possibilities of success for Blikstad I in his migration to Spain and in his investments in Spain and Norway, the financial crisis of 1930 would mean a hard hit that, in the case of Spain, worsened with the Civil War in 1936–39, and, in the case of Norway, with World War II. Soon before, the Blikstads started to face the British competition in the shipping of goods, and British protectionism meant more obstacles for their companies. The prospects at that time were not very promising for Blikstad I's grandsons, Magnus (Blikstad III), Bernhard, and Alf, who decided to emigrate to Brazil.

Identity and Family Memory of the Blikstads

Were they Norwegian, Brazilian, or world citizens? The first members of this family I got in touch with were Sara and Marta, the granddaughters of Blikstad III, both living in Norway. They very kindly answered my letters asking for information and advised me to contact their aunt, Vivien Blikstad (the daughter

37 *Vida marítima* (1929), 10 in: Hemeroteca Digital, Biblioteca Nacional de España.

38 www.baerum.kommune.no.

of Blikstad III), who lived in Brazil and, who could help me in my research. So I conducted a series of Skype interviews and an e-mail correspondence with Vivien Blikstad in 2012. I am very grateful to her for the information she contributed and for her kind disposition. Much of the information I have received refers to her experience as daughter and granddaughter of Norwegian emigrants in Brazil, and to her stays in Norway as a young student. The phone conversation I had with Sara Blikstad was also important to my work, since I got details about the Blikstads that helped me greatly to understand the space of the family memory.

When asked if she or her parents considered themselves Norwegian or Brazilian, Vivien Blikstad found it difficult to answer; when she was a child, she said, she felt “like a fish without water.” Today, she considers herself to be a Western person but a citizen of the world. Her parents arrived to Brazil as adults, even if young, but she and her brothers were born there. The ties with Norway were nevertheless very strong in their childhood and youth. Their parents seem to have had an interest in preserving the Norwegian identity. The family spoke either Norwegian or English in the house, she said, and she learned Portuguese from other people, such as the servants.³⁹ When they lived in Santos, they maintained social relationships with Norwegians living there. They attended church once a month, when there were religious services for the Scandinavian community.⁴⁰ According to her, many of the Norwegians in Santos were seamen’s wives who stayed in Brazil for two or three years, in order to be closer to their husbands while their babies were small. Sometimes they would stay longer until their children had to enter the school, and then they returned permanently to Norway.⁴¹ The migration of these women and children was a temporary one. On the contrary, the migration of Vivien Blikstad’s parents would be definitive: she and her children live today in Brazil.

Here I think that Vivien contrasts those who live only for some years in Brazil with her family, which had settled in that country even while maintaining networks and strong ties with Norway. Those seamen’s wives were temporary immigrants who, because of their husbands’ work, lived for some years outside of Norway. The case of Vivien and her family was quite different, and that is why she seems to point out this contrast between their life situations as immigrants.

Language was crucial for the construction of the Norwegian identity. At fourteen, Vivien therefore went to Norway to study, as did also her brothers,

39 Interview with Vivien Blikstad. October, 2012.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

Eirik and Svein, and her sister, Birgit. Of the four, only Birgit would remain in Norway; she is the mother of Sara and Marta, both residents in this country. During those years, Vivien recalls, they maintained contact with some members of the family who lived in Norway. Those family gatherings created a blend of the cultural influences of the Blikstads. She gives an example: "We used to gather for some special celebrations at my great aunt's, Angelita [born in Gijón, Spain, and the daughter of Blikstad I], who would prepare Spanish-style African chicken."⁴² The cultural blending is highly evident here: the Brazil-based Vivien is speaking in Norwegian, the "African chicken" is a tropical recipe, and the "Spanish style" denotes the Spanish influence on the family.

There is no doubt that the internationality of the Blikstads' migration led them to assume identities involving more than one society, and as such transmigrants they "develop identities within the social networks that connect them simultaneously with two or more societies."⁴³ Gathering for Christmas with other Norwegian temporary immigrants to Brazil, like the families of seamen resident in Santos, or visiting the family members residing in Norway when going to study in there, as in the case of Vivien and other Blikstads living in Brazil, reinforces the Norwegian ties and networks. But the Blikstads also incorporate the Spanish dimension into their social space, like when Magnus Blikstad III takes his children on a trip around Spain and shows them the places where he was born and lived as a child, where he worked, and where his parents and grandparents lived.

It is also interesting to notice the choice of names, because I think that choosing names typical of the country they reside in entails a wish to integrate into the country where they are immigrants. Many of the children of the Blikstads bear Spanish names, like Eduardo and Angelita, but also Norwegian names like Magnus. From the Norwegian census of 1900, I was able to find out that, when returning from Gijón, the Blikstads brought a Spanish employee, Trinidad Consejo (surely a babysitter, and perhaps also a cook), who stayed in Norway for the rest of her life.⁴⁴ It is possible that she did not speak Norwegian or English, so it is most likely that Spanish was the language of domestic use at the Blikstads' house in Bærum, like Norwegian would be later for the generation of Blikstads in Brazil, where at the house of Blikstad III the same story would repeat itself with other protagonists and another language: there, the servants speak Portuguese, and the young Blikstads learn from them.

42 Interview with Vivien Blikstad. October, 2012.

43 Glick Schiller, Bach and Szanton Blanc, 1992: 1–2.

44 Census 1900, Folketelling 1900 for 0219 Bærum herread. In Digitalarkivet, Norway: Internet: <http://digitalarkivet.arkivverket.no/ft/person/pfo1037029001253>.

As for Norwegian traditions, Vivien recalls that on Christmas they prepared Norwegian Christmas pastries, *julekaker*, and sang Norwegian carols, *julesanger*, and many times, after attending the Christmas service at the church, they invited Norwegians to their house where they danced and caroled around the Christmas tree.⁴⁵ The preparations for the celebration of Christmas started as early as November with the making of Christmas ornaments and the Christmas pastries. It is worth mentioning that these traditions were passed down to Vivien by her mother, born in Brazil, and by her grandparents on her mother's side, who emigrated first to the United States and then to Brazil.

In Vivien's case, the Christmas traditions seem mainly related to the memory of her childhood and her life in Santos. At ten she moved to São Paulo, and her father bought a farm in Junediai, sixty kilometers from São Paulo. Two of her brothers still live there, although the farm was expropriated by the state to turn it into a park. As for the celebration of May 17, the Norwegian National Day, she says that "it was easier to celebrate it in Santos because São Paulo was a huge city, and the Norwegians were more scattered."⁴⁶

As to the memory of her grandfather and her great-grandfather (that is, Blikstad II and the patriarch Blikstad I), Vivien's memory has less to tell. She finds it difficult to point out the family businesses of her grandfather in Spain, but remembers touring the north of Spain with her father when she was very young. "He wanted to show us where he had lived," she recalled, "We went to Bilbao, Castro Urdiales, Santander, etc."⁴⁷ About Consul Blikstad, her great-grandfather, she remembers some specific details but seems to know little about his life in Spain. Finally, at my request, she adds that the only person who could tell something about her grandfather would be his cousin Alf Blikstad, who lives with his wife, Bettina, in Gibraltar.⁴⁸

Conclusions

The Blikstads' migratory tradition and the establishment of networks of weak ties, especially by the patriarch in this family saga, Magnus T. Hauff Blikstad (Blikstad I), meant an economic boost for the family and made possible the accumulation of economic, social, and cultural capital. Over the years, the

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Interview with Vivien Blikstad. October, 2012.

48 Interview with Vivien Blikstad. I tried to locate him in November 2012, on occasion of a visit to Malaga, without success.

Blikstads had also created a network of strong family ties, all of which enabled their economic ascent to take place in periods when the economy favored commerce and global business. This was at first an ascent as entrepreneurs of national and international companies, and later as qualified employees of international companies in Brazil. The identity of the Blikstads goes from Norway, through the language and habits, to the Brazilian identity, language, habits, and residence. Their identity is more global than national, and is traversed by *the comings and goings* through the spaces they have covered as emigrants.

The Blikstads can be considered as an example of transnationality and of what being transmigrants means; they develop identities that connect them with two or more societies, just like Glick describes as typical of transmigrants.⁴⁹ There is a nexus between these elements, and this nexus is the Norwegian language. But they nevertheless took an interest in learning the local languages in the places where they lived, and moreover, they participated in the social and cultural lives of those countries. In this sense, Blikstad I developed an important work of cultural and social support in Asturias in Spain, but he also took part in the political life of Norway as mayor of Bærum. This internationality is also visible in the study stays abroad he secured for his children, something that allowed them to create new links and relationships in other environments. The creation of links in the business and entrepreneurial society in Spain no doubt allowed Blikstad I to carry out a profitable entrepreneurial activity.

Among the Blikstad family in Brazil, the Norwegian language and customs have been woven together with the language, customs, and behaviors acquired in that country. The national Norwegian or Brazilian is overcome and replaced with a new space, not only of shared activities but also of shared identities, and is marked by the *comings and goings* through the spaces they traversed as emigrants. In Brazil, Blikstad III designed a series of both family and friendship networks with other Norwegians, whether they came from the United States, as was the case with his parents-in-law, or from Norway itself, like the other Norwegian immigrants belonging to the Blikstad family, or simply with other Norwegians residing there either temporarily, like the seamen's families, or permanently.

49 Glick Schiller, et al., (1992), 1–2.

List of Works Cited

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Index

- Adventure 2, 2n4, 12, 15, 19, 57–76, 82, 86, 87, 87n44, 88, 103, 130, 151, 182–185, 187, 190, 194, 195, 198, 224, 226, 231
- Adventurer 2, 2n4, 12, 15, 19, 55, 57–76, 82, 86, 87, 87n44, 88, 92, 100, 103, 111n24, 130, 131, 182, 183–185, 184n1, 187, 190, 194, 195, 198, 207, 224, 226, 231
- Adventurous 55, 87, 92, 100, 111, 112n24, 130, 190, 194, 207
- Aftenposten* (Norwegian newspaper) 14, 53n42, 78, 78n5, 78n6, 80, 83, 83n22, 83n23, 83n25, 83n26, 83n27, 84, 84n29, 85, 85n35, 89, 90, 98n84, 99n85, 99n89, 100, 100n90, 100n91, 115, 115n31, 144n53, 152n78, 219
- Agave 202
- Agency 12, 113, 163–165, 170
- Agents 7, 11, 23, 51–53, 58, 85, 102–105, 133, 165, 218, 230
- Agricultural 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 17, 39, 51, 61, 66–68, 117, 134, 136, 139, 145, 146
- Agricultural workers 39, 145
- Agriculture 8, 9, 54, 60, 69n55, 71, 117, 118, 128, 145
- Akershus 234
- Alcohol 53, 172, 176–178, 180, 216
- Alec-Tweedie, Mrs. 120, 120n55, 122n59, 122n61, 122n62
- Ålesund 35
- Amundsen, Roald 51
- Anderson Clayton 229, 230, 230n8, 231
- Angelita 232n21, 238
- Anglo-Chilean Nitrate Company 44
- Anthem, Norwegian anthem 114
- Antofagasta 36, 38, 43, 43n31
- Antwerp 52
- Apenes, Georg 217
- Apenes, Ola 184–224, 218n103, 219m109, 220n110, 220n111, 220n114, 221n116, 221n118, 222n117, 223n122
- Arentsen, Arent Mathias 53, 53n41
- Argentina 3, 3n6, 4, 4n9, 5, 5n10, 6, 6n13, 6n15, 6n16, 7, 7n17, 7n18, 14, 15, 22, 24, 26, 28, 39, 40, 42, 44–51, 50n38, 55n45, 59, 75, 77, 78, 78n5, 79n8, 82–94, 83n23, 84n29, 85n3, 86n39, 87n41, 92n58, 92n60, 93n62, 94n64, 95n72, 98–100, 98n84, 100n90, 100n91, 101, 145, 162–183, 162n2, 163n4, 164n5, 165n6, 165n7, 171n11, 172n13, 176n16, 177n18, 184, 230
- Arizona 222, 222n120
- Armería 188
- Arneberg, Theodor 50
- Artisans 39, 53, 115, 232
- Asbjørnsen, Peter Chr. 111n23
- ASEA (Swedish company) 218
- Assistance 111, 83, 96, 99, 100, 165
- Asturias 228, 233, 235, 240
- Atacama 43
- Ateneo obrero 235
- Atlanta 107, 200, 200n48
- Atlantic Ocean 12
- Australia 40, 64
- Austro-Hungarian Empire 64
- Auswanderungs-Zeitung* 66
- Ayala, Daniel 202, 203n61, 205, 205n69, 206, 206n73
- Azores 107
- Aztec 120, 220, 222n21
- Bacalao* 11, 31, 34, 35, 38, 138. *See also* Cod and Fishing
- Baker 61, 69. *See also* Artisan
- Bang, Walborg 61
- Baracoa (Cuba) 38, 53, 111, 112, 114, 125, 125n73, 146n61
- Barcelona 4n8, 31, 162n2, 172n14, 230n9
- Bærum 232n21, 234, 236, 238, 238n44, 240
- Bayern 181
- Beer 35, 173, 175–178, 181. *See also* Alcohol
- Berg, Kristoffer 85, 99
- Berge, Hans Dags 85, 99
- Bergen 32n14, 35, 35n27, 55n45, 60, 85, 94, 103n5, 128n3, 130–132, 130n9, 132n12, 133n13, 135, 135n24, 136, 136n24, 137, 142, 142n47, 144, 149–151, 149n69, 149n70, 150n72, 151, 151n75, 152n78, 154, 155, 158–160, 159n97, 159n98, 159n99,

- 160n101, 160n102, 208, 217n101, 234, 445n3
- Bergesen, Sigvald 105
- Berlin 17, 186, 187, 199
- Betania 171
- Blacksmith 232, 232n14
- Blanc Jordan, Magda 133
- Blanc, Enrique 132
- Blanc, Henrik Thomsen 131, 131n11, 133n11, 133n13, 144n53
- Blechstad, Ole Peter 232, 232n13, 232n14
- Blikstad, Alf 229, 239
- Blikstad, Bernhard 230, 236
- Blikstad, Hakon Napoleon 232, 232n17, 232n18, 235
- Blikstad, Magnus Torbjørnsen (1897–1979) (referred to as Blikstad II) 228–231, 229n3, 232n21
- Blikstad, Magnus Torbjørnsen (1921–2002) (referred to as Blikstad III)
- Blikstad, Magnus Torbjørnsen Hauff (1862–1926), (referred to as Blikstad I)
- Blikstad, Sara 237
- Blikstad, Vivien 229n3, 229n4, 229n5, 230, 234n27, 236–239, 237n39, 238n42, 239n48
- Blikstads. *See* Bliktand family
- Böckmann, Kristian Lerche 44, 44n35
- Bodom, Carl 114
- Bolivia 26, 42–48, 43n32, 43n33, 169, 180
- Bolivian 44, 163, 170, 172, 175, 176, 176n15
- Bourdieu, Pierre 58, 58n4, 61n24, 235n33
- Braden Copper Company 44
- Brandt, Kristoffer 33
- Brandt, Peter Andreas 33
- Brandt, Wilhelmine 32, 32n14
- Brazil 3–5, 5n10, 5n11, 5n12, 6, 7, 13, 15, 16, 24, 26, 29, 31, 33–35, 42, 53, 57–76, 57n1, 57n2, 59n8, 110, 151n75, 166n9, 181, 225, 225n3, 225n4, 230n6, 231, 236–240
- Brazil, Constitution of 1946, article 162
- Brazilian immigration policy 57
- Brick mason 69. *See also* Artisan
- Bridgehead 16, 59
- Brito Foucher, Rodulfo 223
- Bryde, Gottfred Mauritz 14, 15, 102–105, 105n8, 106, 113, 114, 118, 119, 126
- Buenos Aires 3, 5n10, 6n15, 7n17, 10, 11, 17, 25, 27, 35–38, 39n23, 40–42, 40n27, 42n30, 51, 51n39, 52n40, 53, 53n3, 58n6, 78, 78n8, 82, 83, 88, 89, 90n49, 98n84, 100, 136, 136n26, 162n2, 163–166, 163n4, 164, 164n5, 164n6, 165n6, 166n9, 168–171, 171n6, 177, 177n18, 180, 181, 183
- Burgos Samada, Fernando 216
- Bustelo family, the 235
- Cabinet maker 68. *See also* Artisan
- Cachaça 70. *See also* Alcohol
- Calcutta 200
- Calendar 128n3, 220, 220n110
- California 34, 57, 62–64, 68, 137n30, 148
- Callao 94, 95n68
- Calles, Plutarco Elias 201, 219
- Camera 171, 171n12
- Campo Santo 171, 173, 175
- Canada 2, 5, 8, 9n22, 23, 25, 32, 58–60, 78, 149, 155, 157, 162n2, 217, 223
- Canton 200
- Cappelen Smith, Anton 44–46
- Captains 11, 16, 23, 32, 34, 39, 50, 51, 63, 64, 71, 94, 102, 113, 114, 178, 209
- Caracas 3, 3n12
- Cárdenas, Guty 201
- Carillo, Julián 203, 208
- Carlos 50, 58n5, 65n40, 149n67, 172n14, 234
- Carpenter 39, 61, 68, 71, 74, 164, 177. *See also* Artisan
- Carrillo Puerto, Felipe 201, 202, 204, 207
- Carson, William 120, 121, 121n55, 123
- Caso, Alfonso 219–223
- Catherine II of Russia 64
- Cemetery 73, 216
- CEMLA. *See* Centro de Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos
- Centro de Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos (CEMLA) 25, 27, 42n30, 51, 136n26
- Centro Norte Railroad 169
- Cervantes, Laureano 188
- Cetina, Amilcar 202, 212
- Ceylon (Sri Lanka) 199, 200
- Chaco Salteño 162, 163, 170, 182
- Chain migration 59
- Champerico 131n18, 148
- Chañaral 43
- Charlotte Amalie 34
- Chicago 14, 45n3, 61, 77n1, 79n7, 135n23

- Chichen Itzá* 201, 212
 Chile Exploration Company 44
 Chilean merchant fleet 39
 Chiloé 53, 53n42
 Chimalhuacán 220, 221
 China 32, 136, 199
 Cholula (Mexico) 121
 Christensen, August F. 54, 220, 220n112
 Christensen, Bodil 220
 Christiania 33, 33n16, 33n17, 35n22, 43, 43n32, 50n39, 61, 72n65, 83, 83n24, 103n1, 199, 225, 232, 232n14. *See also* Oslo
 Christmas 179, 179n19, 180, 238, 239
 Christophersen (Norwegian consul general in Buenos Aires) 51, 52, 83n23, 88, 89, 90n49, 889n48
 Christophersen, Alexander (Alejandro) 51
 Christophersen, Peter (Don Pedro) 51
 Christophersen, Søren 52
 Christophersen, Wilhelm Christopher 52
 Cifuentes, Pola y Compañía 235
 Civil War, Spanish 186, 229
 Clark & Co. 77, 80, 82, 82n21, 83, 88, 89, 90n49, 94, 99–101
 Clark, Mr 77, 80, 82, 82n21, 83, 88, 89, 90n49, 94, 99–101
 Clermont 66
 Climate, climatic 35, 89, 125, 134, 145, 152, 187
 Club de Remeros Escandinavos 51
 Coahuayana 187
 Coal 60, 233, 235
 Cobblestone 11
 Cochrane, Thomas 32
 Cockfighting 195
 Coconut plantation 188
 Cod 31, 34, 103, 105, 136, 138, 152, 204, 233. *See also* *Bacalao* and Fishing
 Coffee 3–5, 5n10, 7, 11, 15, 35, 71, 127–129, 127n1, 129n4, 132, 133n14, 135n23, 138–145, 139n38, 139n40, 140n41, 140n42, 140n43, 140n44, 141n46, 142n48, 143n52, 148, 149, 152, 155, 157n89, 161, 174, 187, 229, 230
 Colima 185, 187–191, 188n6, 188n11, 189n14, 195n31, 196, 197, 198, 244, 249
 Cologne Orchestra 199
 Colombia 26, 42, 47, 130n9, 136, 144
 Colombo 200
 Colon 69, 72, 146
 Colonia de Floreana, La 54
 Colônia Dona Francisca 13, 57, 58, 60, 61, 64–69, 72, 75
 Colonisations Verein 66, 69–73
 Colonization policies 7
 Colony, colonization, colonize 13, 15, 40n26, 53, 53n43, 58, 59, 67–69, 102, 110, 113–115, 118, 118n47, 124, 132, 133n14, 146n61
 Commerce 7, 8, 105, 128, 135, 161, 185, 225, 226, 233, 240
 Compañía de Maderas 233, 233n25
 Composer 61, 198, 199, 201n51, 203, 205, 207, 208, 210, 213, 214, 217
 Consul 32, 35, 37–40, 43, 52, 54, 78, 82, 82n21, 83, 88, 89, 98n84, 99, 100, 113, 114, 130n8, 132, 137, 137n30, 138, 139n37, 142, 147, 153, 189, 193, 200, 233–236, 239
 Consular service 14, 104, 137n29, 144
 Cook assistant 173
 Copenhagen 199, 213n88, 225, 232
 Copper mines 43
 Corocoro 43, 43n32, 44n33, 44, 45
 Costa Rica 26, 139n38, 140, 151n75, 217n101
 Crew 10, 25, 31, 138n65, 166n9
 Cristero War 194, 196, 218
 Critical threshold 19, 20
 Crøger, Jonas W. 188
 Cualta 188
 Cuba 3, 6, 6n16, 26, 34–36, 42, 53, 56, 102–126, 146, 151, 153, 200
 Cuban 36–38, 111, 112, 115, 117, 153
 Cuernavaca 200
 Cultural pluralism 57
 Cutlery 232, 232n18
 Cuyutlán 187, 192n22
 Dahl, Karl Akre 146, 146n63, 154
 Dalman, Gustaf 199
 Danielsen, Asbjørn 44n36, 47
 Danish 11, 33, 34, 34n18, 43, 103, 104n5, 166, 167, 169, 169n10, 172, 212n88, 232n13
 Danish West Indies 34, 34n19
 Dansk Hjelpeforening 169
 Darwin, Charles 32
 Davies, Hjordis 130, 130n9, 143, 143n52, 153, 153n81, 160
 Davies, Percy O. 130, 130n9, 143n52, 153, 160

- de la Huerta, Adolfo 201, 202
 de Lange, Finn 159
 de Lange, Randi 128, 128n3, 130, 130n9, 154
 De Norske Zinkverker 235
 Death 22, 32, 62, 64, 96, 128, 130, 132, 136, 142, 144n53, 148n65, 150n71, 150n73, 151n75, 186, 189, 190, 191, 197, 198, 201, 210, 214, 215n93, 218, 221–223, 234, 235
 Debt 141, 170, 172, 174
 Delius, Fredrick 199, 200, 207, 208
 Desertion 39, 42. *See also* Jump ship
 Desired Immigrants – Frustrated Adventurers? 2, 2n4, 184n1, 231
 Diaries 12, 15, 55, 55n45, 79n11, 162, 163, 163n2, 164, 170, 172–174, 181, 226
 Diario de Yucatán 203, 203n65
 Diary 130, 130n10, 132, 132n11, 134, 134n19, 143n51, 148n65, 152, 162n1, 164, 171, 171n12, 174–177, 178, 179, 182
 Díaz, Porfirio 4, 116, 118–121, 119n49, 121n55, 121n57, 123n63, 204
 Dibble, Charles E. 222
Dignidad Maya (Maya Dignity) 211
 Diplomacy, diplomat 52
 Discourse, discursive 102, 107, 107n14, 119, 124, 126, 177, 201, 210, 215
 Disselhof, Hans Dietrich 187, 189–191
 Dolores cemetery 216
 Domínguez, Pepe 201
 Dona Francisca, colony 13, 52, 57–61, 64–69, 72, 75
 Drinking 99, 173, 176–179, 191. *See also* Alcohol
 Drogseth, Anna Maria 187
 Dumont's model 59, 59n11
 Dynastic relations 57, 66

 Echarriz, Guillermo M. 223
 Economy, economic 42, 69, 69n54, 116, 118, 139, 140n41, 148, 161, 170, 172, 176, 226, 240
 Ecuador 26, 33, 54
 Eisenstein, Sergei 201
El Diario del Sureste 212
El Imparcial (Mexican newspaper) 118
 El Mate (estancia) 50, 166, 167, 169, 171, 179
 El Musel 235, 235n35
 El Paso (Texas) 212
 El Salvador 127n1, 130n10, 139, 139n37, 139n38, 140, 152, 157n91
 El Teniente (mine) 44
 El Tepalcate 221
 El Tumbador 142
 Elites, elite discourse 52, 67, 102, 118, 139n38, 219
 Ellefsen, Hans Nikolai 44, 44n35, 46
 Elverum 186, 187
 Embarcación 170–173, 175
 Emigrants 1, 8, 9, 22, 23, 24, 42, 52n40, 60–62, 79n10, 83, 84n31, 84n32, 88, 103, 104n5, 106, 107, 110–114, 119, 124, 128n3, 130n9, 132n11, 134, 135n24, 138n37, 142n47, 146n63, 147n65, 149n69, 150n72, 151n74, 152n77, 156n87, 157, 157n92, 158, 165, 225–240
 Emigration 2, 3, 5, 8–11, 8n20, 14, 18, 22, 22n8, 23, 23n11, 25, 28, 30, 33, 42, 58–62, 58n7, 66, 67, 84, 85, 106–107, 110, 111, 113, 115, 118, 119, 123, 124, 124n68, 125n70, 134, 136n24, 159, 164, 182
 Emigration protocols (EMIPRO) 23, 84, 85
 Enger, Ottar 55, 162, 164
 Engineers 11, 39, 42–52, 66, 72, 82, 82n21, 88, 93–96, 98, 101, 112, 145, 150, 152n78, 153, 155, 161, 169, 170, 180, 185, 217–224, 235
 Ensenada 88, 91, 94
 Ergenössische Technische Hochschule 218
 Erichsen, Olaf 50
 Ericsson 218, 218n102, 219
 Escuintla 142, 142n47, 148, 150n73
 Espen Askeladd 111. *See also* Adventure
 Ethnic communities 16, 165
 Etic 59
 Exotic 12, 13, 55, 102, 107, 124, 182, 184, 185, 190, 198
 Exoticism 13
 Experience 1, 2, 4, 11–15, 51, 54, 55, 58, 60, 78, 86, 92, 93, 104, 107, 113, 115, 146, 147, 152, 153, 162–165, 173–175, 179, 181–224, 226, 227, 237
 Export 2, 4, 7, 8, 35, 54, 75, 103, 105, 106, 113, 124, 129, 135, 138n35, 139n40, 143, 148, 233

 Fagerli, Ole Peder 146, 146n63, 147, 154
 Fairy tale 111, 115, 123, 124

- Faist, Thomas 11, 13, 16, 17, 19–21, 19n3, 25, 26, 28, 30, 31, 43, 55, 95n70, 125, 125n72
- Family 16, 31, 32, 43, 50, 57, 57n2, 61, 62n26, 62n30, 63, 63n37, 65, 66, 68, 77n3, 79, 80, 85, 86, 88, 93, 94, 99, 112, 130, 149, 154, 158, 158n94, 159, 160, 160n101, 160n102, 164, 167, 167n12, 182, 185–190, 204, 218, 222, 225–240
- Farmer 9n22, 15, 79, 85, 102, 110, 111, 112, 114–117, 119, 121, 124, 147, 155, 158n93, 167, 169, 194, 201, 210, 225, 231
- Farming 18, 118
- Fiat Lux factory 230
- Figaredo family, the 235
- Finca Dolores 131
- Finca el Trapiche 132, 142
- Finca El Zapote 132, 141n46, 142, 143, 143n52
- Finca Helvetia 129, 130
- Finca La Colonia 142, 149
- Finca Mocá 129
- Finca Palimira 129
- Finca Tambor 129
- Finland 186
- Fishing 8, 9, 14, 60, 116, 232, 233
- Fivelstad, Kristian 135, 136n26, 137n31, 138n35, 138n37, 139, 144n53, 151, 152, 152n77, 156, 156n87
- Flag 94, 94n65, 103, 114
- Florianópolis 65, 69n53
- Florida 5n10, 150n73, 151, 199
- Folk tale 110n18, 111, 111n23
- Folkeventyr* 111n23. *See also* Adventure and Espen Askeladd
- Food 12, 70, 71, 91, 94–96, 114, 152, 171, 172, 174, 189, 206, 213
- Food poisoning 189
- Foreign service 102, 103
- Fougner, Hans 85, 88, 99
- Francisca Carolina de Bragança 65
- François of Joinville 65
- Fraud 188, 190
- Fredrikstad 217, 233
- French Basques 6
- Fri Presse* (Norwegian newspaper) 111n21, 116n36
- Galapagos islands 32, 54
- Galveston (Texas, USA) 14, 103n1, 105
- Gamio, Manuel 221
- Garavito, Luis G. 211, 212
- García Granados, Rafael 219, 220n11, 221–223
- Gatekeepers 20
- Gehrke, Arthur Henry 129n4, 132, 132n12, 137, 142, 144, 144n53
- Gehrke, Carmen Dorotea 129n4, 132, 132n12, 137, 142, 144, 144n53
- General Ballivián 173
- General Güemes 171
- German 3, 13, 15, 35, 57, 59, 62, 65, 67–70, 72–76, 79, 131, 132, 135, 135n21, 135n23, 136, 137, 140, 140n44, 141, 143n50, 144, 149, 153, 161, 162n2, 166, 169, 177, 181, 182n24, 186, 190, 191, 191n18, 214, 223
- Gibbs & Hill 218
- Gijón* 232n21, 233–235, 235n35, 238
- Gijónés* 234
- Gillmor, Frances 218n101, 222, 222n119, 222n120, 222n121
- Giménez Moreno, Wigberto 221
- Glass 71, 113, 116, 232n16, 235
- Goerresen, Markus 73–75
- Gold Rush 34, 57, 62, 63
- Golden bird (Gullfuglen) 110, 110n18, 111, 111n23, 112, 117
- Graffman, Holger 220
- Gran Ejido Henequenero 202
- Granovetter, Mark 20, 20n6, 158, 158n94, 158n95, 181n21, 235n34
- Gravem, Lars 137, 137n30
- Graziosa (Azores) 107
- Greiner, Ulrik 50
- Grieg, Edvard 61, 149n70, 199
- Grytviken 51
- Guadalajara 188, 195–197
- Guatemala 15, 26, 52, 127–161
- Guggenheim 44, 44n36, 45, 47, 48
- Gullfuglen (Golden Bird) 111
- Gundersen, Albert Johan 132, 144, 144n53, 145n57, 152n79, 153, 153n79, 154, 156, 156n83, 157n89, 158
- Gutiérrez, Cetina 212
- Gúzman, Rodrigo 194
- Habitus 58
- Hamburg 34, 35, 63, 66, 67, 69, 71, 132, 132n11, 141n46
- Hamburger Colonisations Verein 66, 69

- Hamburger-Amerikanische Paketfahrt
Aktiengesellschaft (HAPAG) 34
- Hammer, N.J. 50, 106n12
- Hansen, Hans Edvardsen 71, 146n63, 147,
154, 208
- Harbor 31, 60, 94, 115, 235
- Hauff, Engelbærtine Bente Antonæte 232,
232n21
- Haug, Johannes L. 85, 99, 146n63
- Havana (Cuba) 2, 10, 14, 35, 36–38, 103n1,
103n3, 105, 107, 107n15, 107n16, 110n17,
110n19, 111n20, 111n22, 112n25, 112n26,
112n27, 113n28, 113n29, 114n30, 116n34,
116n37, 116n38, 116n39, 116n40, 117n40,
118n42, 118n44, 118n45, 118n46, 118n50,
120n54, 121n55, 121n58, 122n59, 122n60,
123n64, 123n66, 124
- Heidelberg 68, 70
- Helland, Johannes M. 85, 99
- Hermann Liebig Colonizing Society 68
- Hinna* 35
- Høiby, Ole Viborg 55, 162, 162n1, 164, 165
- Hølen 234
- Holmboe, Leonhard 44, 46, 49, 153n80
- Holtermann, Fredrik Wilhelm 129n3,
134n18, 135n22, 138, 138n35, 145, 145n59,
146, 151, 151n74, 151n75, 151n76, 152, 160,
160n102
- Honduras 26, 50, 127n1, 139n38, 145, 146n61,
147, 157n91
- Hotel Moctezuma 200
- Hotel Skandinavien 166, 167, 181
- HULA database 12n26, 22, 23, 25, 42, 79,
79n8, 79n9, 80
- Hunt 54, 178
- Hunting 87, 92, 137, 176–179, 191, 193
- Imerslund, (Nils) Per 16, 184–224
- Imerslund, Eva 189
- Imerslund, Liv 55n45
- Imerslund, Per 16, 184–224
- Imerslund, Thorleif 186–189
- Immigrants 7, 54, 58, 59, 62n31, 73, 80,
81n16, 127, 136, 160, 166n8, 189n14,
231, 235
- Immigrants'Hotel 166, 166n8
- Immigration 1–6, 5n10, 6n16, 7–9, 13, 15, 23,
40n26, 57, 59, 60, 64, 107, 115–119, 125,
125n71, 127–148, 127n1, 133n14, 161, 163n2,
164, 165, 165n7, 166n8, 177, 181,
202n57, 230
- Immigration propaganda 7
- Impression 30, 93, 106, 107, 113, 115, 124, 134,
151, 156, 193, 194, 217n101
- Independence 2, 3, 33, 60, 97, 103, 104
- Indian 91, 91n56, 107, 116, 117, 140n41, 140n43,
192–194, 197, 208, 222
- Indigenous 8, 140, 140n41, 145, 161, 163, 170,
172, 175, 176, 183, 190, 195, 201, 218n101,
219
- Indigo 187
- Informal information 7
- Information 7, 10–16, 18, 20, 24, 25, 31, 32,
37n1, 40, 45n3, 55, 67, 77–79, 77n3,
84–86, 89, 103, 118, 125, 128n3, 130n9,
131n11, 134, 135n24, 136n26, 137, 142n47,
144n53, 146n63, 147n64, 147n65, 148n69,
150n72, 150n73, 151, 151n74, 151n75,
158–161, 165, 166, 166n9, 170, 173, 181,
181n22, 184n1, 186n3, 229n4, 235–237
- Insel Verlag 190
- Internal migration 8, 17, 182
- International Railways of Central America
(IRCA) 149, 149n70, 150, 159
- Investment 8, 15, 106, 120, 121, 124, 135, 138,
139, 143, 188, 189, 225, 234, 236
- investor 114, 116, 118, 148
- Iquique 36–38, 43
- Ireland 1, 8, 31, 60
- Iron 60, 219, 235
- Italian 1, 4, 5, 6n14, 81, 84, 133n14,
162n2, 166
- Jaguar 178, 193, 197
- Jalisco 187, 195
- Jansen, Olaf 50
- Japan 5, 5n12, 199, 200
- Jebe, Håkon Gabriel 198
- Jebe, Halfdan 198–217, 223
- Jebe, Jetti 200
- Jebe, Martha Caroline 198
- Jebe, Sophie 34, 63, 64, 68, 69, 72–74, 200
- Jensen, Captain 94
- Johansen, K.J. 77n1, 77n2, 78–81, 79n7, 81,
83n23, 84n28, 85n33, 85n34, 86, 86n36,
86n37, 86n38, 86n39, 86n40, 88–91,
91n56, 91n57, 92–94, 94n65, 94n66,
94n67, 95, 95n68, 95n69, 95n73, 96,

- 96n75, 96n76, 97, 97n78, 97n79, 98,
98n80, 98n81, 98n82, 99n85, 99n86, 101
- Joinville 13, 34, 57, 58n5, 60n14, 61, 64n39,
65, 65n42, 66, 66n43, 66n44, 66n45,
67n46, 67n47, 68n50, 69n53, 70, 70n56,
70n57, 70n58, 71n61, 71n63, 72, 72n66,
72n67, 73, 73n68, 73n69, 73n70, 75,
75n72, 76
- Kandy 200
- Kielland, Olaf 207
- Kinchí* 203
- Kings Bay Co 218
- Klanderud, Aage 149n69, 154, 157, 160
- Klanderud, Fritz William 149, 149n69,
156, 156n88
- Klingeberg, Hedvig Jorgine 198
- Knygg, Kristen J. [later named Kristen
Johansen] 78, 79n7, 85, 98n84, 99
- Kolonie Zeitung* 73–75
- Kongsberg 43
- Königliche Paul-Gerhardt Schule 187
- Kristiania. *See* Christiania and Oslo
- Kullmann, Edgar 130, 130n10, 132, 132n11, 134,
134n19, 143, 143n51, 148, 151, 152
- La Compagnie Royal Asturienne des
Mines 235
- La Plata 6, 50, 51
- La Plata Samfund* 51
- La Zanja 166, 168
- Lake Texcoco 220, 221, 221n116, 221n118, 223
- Land 2, 8, 9, 17–19, 35, 39, 51, 53, 54, 57n2, 61,
66, 70, 71, 74, 75, 80, 85, 86n41, 87n42,
88n47, 99n88, 110, 111, 111n24, 113–117,
120, 121, 124, 127, 136, 136n43, 145, 161,
162n2, 166, 187, 188, 188n8, 190, 191, 192,
192n23, 194, 195n32, 196–198, 196n34,
201, 202, 209, 217, 224
- Lange, Gunnar (Gunardo) 45, 50, 50n37,
55n45, 128n3, 130, 130n9, 131, 132, 153,
154, 158, 159, 159n99, 160
- Larsen, C.A. 40n26, 45, 50n37, 51, 52n40, 81,
81n17, 114, 120, 220n12
- Larsen, consul 114
- Larsen, Helga 220, 220n12
- Las cuevas de Loltún* (The Caves of
Loltún) 79n8, 89, 91
- Las Cuevas, Argentina 79n8
- Las galletas 195, 195n33
- Las Humedades (plantation) 188, 190–194,
196, 197
- Laugerud, Per Eugen 146, 147, 147n64, 154,
156, 157, 160
- Law on emigration 1869, 23
- Lawson, Nicholas Oliver. *See* Lossius
- Leipzig 190, 191n18, 199, 199n42
- Leopoldina of Habsburg 64, 65
- Lessen, T.V. (Captain) 63, 177
- Letters 12, 14, 15, 32–34, 43n34, 55, 55n45, 62,
67, 79, 79n8, 79n9, 79n10, 79n11, 80,
80n14, 80n15, 81, 85–87, 87–89, 87n44,
89n48, 92–94, 92n60, 99, 103, 106, 110,
111n21, 113, 116n36, 123, 138, 156, 162,
162n2, 163, 163n2, 164–167, 169, 171n12,
173, 174, 176, 179, 180, 199, 199n43, 200,
202n57, 207n75, 217n101, 218, 236
- Lie, Fredrik 85
- Lie, Michael Strøm 119, 137
- Lie, Ole Hannibal 77n2, 79, 79n8, 83n23, 86,
87, 87n43, 87n44, 88n45, 88n46, 92n58,
92n59, 92n61, 93n62, 94n63, 94n64,
95n72, 99, 99n85
- Lillehammers Tilskuer 63, 64
- Lind Pettersen, Leif 129n4, 137, 141, 142n47,
143n50, 154, 156, 157n91
- Lind, Walter 128, 128n3, 129, 129n3, 131, 139,
142, 143n50, 154
- Lindellie, Andreas H. 145, 146, 146n61
- Lindh, Gert 77n3, 79, 80, 85, 96, 99, 101
- Linné, Sigvald 220, 220n12, 220n13
- Literacy rates 12
- Liverpool 31, 77n2, 79n8, 88, 89, 146n63
- Lomitas 173, 175, 179, 180
- López Trujillo, Clemente 212
- López, Rafael 212, 222
- Los Capules 206
- Lossius, Nicolai Olaus 31–34, 32n14, 45.
See also Lawson
- Lovoll, Odd Sverre 9, 9n21, 157n92
- Løvvik, Ove 85, 100
- Lübeck 33, 33n16
- Lund y Clausen, Hilario 233
- Lund, Peter Wilhelm 33, 33n15, 40n26, 233
- Lutherans 61, 62, 73
- Lütken, Anne Magdalene 232, 232n16
- Lykke-Seest, Peter 14, 102–116, 116n34,
116n35, 116n36, 117, 117n37, 117n38,

- 117n39, 117n40, 118, 118n42, 118n44,
 118n45, 118n46, 118n48, 119, 119n50, 120,
 121, 121n55, 122n59, 122n60, 123, 124–126
 Lyng, Rudolf 63, 69, 71
- Machine operators 39
 Maderas 233, 233n25, 234
 Magellan, Strait of 34, 53n41
 Magnus, Christopher 152, 152n78
 Main phases 17, 19
 Male primogeniture 57
 Market 7, 15, 34, 35, 40, 67, 69, 105–107,
 114–116, 124, 126, 134, 135, 163, 181–183,
 190, 222n120, 231
 Martí, Samuel 212
 Martínez del Río, Pablo 220, 220n111, 221,
 221n117
 Masculine 175, 177–179. *See also* Masculinity
 Masculinity 176–179
 Masonic lodge 73
 Masons 61, 69, 71, 73, 235
 Massey, Douglas 19, 19n5
 Mathematics 219
 Maya 157n91, 201–204, 206, 207, 209–212,
 214–217, 215n93, 219, 220n110, 221
 Mayab 209, 210, 216
 Medina Herrera, Amelia 205
 Melting pot theory 57
 Memoirs 12, 12n35, 44n36, 55n45, 62, 63, 68,
 142, 163n2, 202, 205, 206
 Mendoza 51, 79n8, 83n23, 87n43, 88, 89n48,
 92, 92n58, 98, 101
 Merchants 16, 31, 32, 34, 39, 39n25, 40,
 40n26, 69, 85, 135n23, 154, 155, 158
 Mérida 185, 200, 202, 203, 204, 204n66,
 205n67, 205n68, 205n69, 205n71,
 206, 206n72, 206n73, 208, 209n78,
 211–214, 216
 Mérida Carneval (Mérida Carnival) 213
 Mérida Symphony Orchestra 211
 Mestizo 107, 190–192, 194, 195
 Mexican 4, 15, 30, 102, 104, 105, 113, 116,
 116n36, 118, 119, 119n48, 120, 123–125, 130,
 134, 141, 144, 146, 152, 152n78, 155, 157,
 185, 187–191, 188n8, 196, 201n55, 203,
 208, 212–214, 217, 219, 219n107, 220n110,
 221, 221n117, 222–224
Mexican Daily Record (Mexican
 newspaper) 118
Mexican Herald (Mexican newspaper) 118,
 118n48
 Mexican Revolution, the 4, 15, 119, 125, 219
 Mexico 3, 4, 14, 16, 24, 26, 29, 33, 34,
 42, 52, 102–126, 130, 139, 144, 144n53,
 147, 151, 151n75, 152, 152n78, 184, 184n1,
 185, 187, 188, 188n8, 189, 189n12,
 190–224, 230
 Mexico City 17, 107, 113, 113n47, 119, 120, 144,
 185, 198, 215, 217–219, 222
 Mexico's Migration Service 184, 202n57
 Michel y Cía 188
 Michel, Jorge 187–190
 Michelsen, Christian 104
 Michoacán 187, 187n31
 Microhistory 11
 Migration stream 11, 15, 17, 31, 125
 Migratory chain 225
 Mine 43, 44, 44n36, 97
 Mining 11, 43–49, 71, 116, 120, 233, 235
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 (Sweden-Norway) 137
 Minnesota 9n21, 10n24, 79n11, 157n92, 229
 Missionaries 56
 Modern 6n14, 6n16, 15, 17, 102, 113, 115–118,
 120–124, 127, 128, 129, 134, 140, 145n56,
 169, 169n10, 174, 194, 203, 214–216
 Modern Singing Maestros, the 214–216
 Modernity 117, 183
 Moe, Jørgen 11n23
 Møklebust, Sigurd Leif 150, 150n72, 153, 154,
 157, 159, 159n97
 Molde 31, 32, 35
 Molina Font, Sara 204, 217
 Molina Solís, Juan F. 204
 Molina Solís, Olegario 204
 Möller, Juan 34, 68, 128
 Möller, William A.W. 68
 Montevideo 3, 10, 52, 88, 94
 Morch, Cathinka (Kitty) 217, 218
 Moreno, Francisco Pascacio 50, 221
 Mortality 72
 Mortier, Marie Leonie 199
 Mosheim, Adolf 85, 100
 Moss 234
 Munch, Edvard 198, 198n41
 Music 16, 61, 92, 157, 182n24, 185, 198n40, 199,
 201–209, 211, 212, 213n88, 214, 215,
 215n93, 224

- Musical folklore 212
- Musician 185, 198n40, 202, 204, 205, 211, 212, 216, 217
- Nahuatl 221
- Nærbø, Lauritz Martin 147, 147n65, 154na
- Narratives 12, 78, 81, 89, 94, 101, 162–183
- Næsgaard, Sverre 43n34
- National Socialism 186
- Nationalism 16, 171n11, 184, 186, 190, 214, 219, 227n1
- Nationalist 186, 190, 196, 198, 199, 219
- Nationen* 201n51, 202n58, 207, 208n77
- Nature 7, 9, 15, 28, 68, 107, 111, 112, 112n24, 190, 192, 194, 198, 225, 235
- Navajo 222, 222n21
- Nazi 185, 186, 190
- Nazism 185, 186
- Nepomuceno, Alberto 61
- Ness, Bjarne Thorsen 135, 135n24, 136, 136n24, 136n25, 154, 156, 157, 160
- Network 4, 7, 10–13, 15, 16–20, 44, 55, 57n3, 61, 74, 78, 94–96, 101, 125, 127, 135, 143, 144, 147–149, 152, 153n82, 158, 158n94, 158n95, 161, 163, 165, 165n7, 166, 170, 171, 177, 181, 225–228, 233, 237–240
- New Mexico 222, 222n1
- New Orleans, USA 108, 144n53, 148n65, 150n73
- New Zealand 64
- Newspaper 12, 14, 54, 53n42, 62, 63, 73, 74, 78, 102, 103, 106, 111, 114, 116n36, 125, 134, 135, 149, 152, 165, 192n22, 200, 207, 208, 212, 216, 217, 219
- Nicaragua 26, 139n38, 140, 146, 146n62, 147
- Niches 11, 51, 170
- Nielsen, captain 114
- Nielsen, Carl 211
- Nitrate mines 43, 48
- Nordmannsforbundet 81, 81n18, 82, 82n19
- Norges Handelshøgskole (NHH) 35n22
- Normannia 53, 53n41
- Norway 1, 8–10, 14, 16, 18, 22–24, 27, 35, 38, 42–44, 51, 53, 53n41, 54, 57–63, 68, 71, 74, 77–80, 82, 84–86, 88, 90, 94, 99–100, 102, 103n1, 103n5, 104–108, 111n23, 113, 116, 119, 124–126, 128–132, 130n8, 132n12, 133n13, 136n26, 137, 138, 142, 144n53, 147, 149, 150, 153, 154nb, 155–157, 157n89, 158n93, 161, 163–167, 179, 179n19, 180, 182, 186, 187, 189, 189n14, 190, 192, 193, 197, 198, 200–202, 204, 207, 223, 224, 225–240
- Norway Mexico Gulf line 102, 103n1, 105, 119
- Norwegian Lutheran Church (Buenos Aires) 51
- Norwegian Sailors' Home 166, 181
- Norwegian School of Economics. *See* Norges Handelshøgskole (NHH)
- Nova Friburgo 65
- Nydalen 226, 234
- Oberá 59
- Obregón, Alvaro 219
- Odda 235
- Ødegaard 173
- Official statistics 8, 10
- Oil 15, 47–49, 136, 138, 150, 152, 162, 170, 171, 171n11, 171n12, 173, 174–176, 180, 230n8
- Olsen family 62, 62n26, 62n30, 63n37
- Olsen, Gjert 73
- Olsen, Rodolpho 73
- Opium 200
- Ortiz Rubio, Pascual 218
- Orueta family, the 235
- Oscar II, King of Sweden and Norway 104, 233
- Oslo Handelsgymnasium 231, 231n10
- Østgaard, Theodor 78, 83n23, 85, 88, 90n50, 99n85, 100
- Othón de Mendizábal, Miguel 221
- Overseas Estates Ltd 142, 143
- Palm fruits 187
- Palmerín, Ricardo 201
- Pampa The 145n56, 169n10
- Pan-German 186
- Panama 26, 53, 88, 94, 130n9, 132n11, 135n24, 136n26, 137, 144n53, 144n55, 147n64, 149n69, 150n73, 151, 151n74, 152n78
- Papeleta de conchabo* 39
- Paraguay 26, 59, 230
- Paraná river 59
- Paratext 106
- Paris 58n4, 69n55, 107n14, 169, 187, 199, 213
- Parliament, Norwegian Parliament 104
- Patagonia 50, 50n39, 51n39, 53n41
- Patron 199, 205

- Peón Contreras Theater 203, 204
 Permanent residents 6, 24, 44
 Peru 26, 44–49, 54, 94, 230
 Pettersen, Peter Gustav 75
 Philharmonic Society Orchestra 207
 Photography 182n24, 183, 219
 Plantation 15, 110–112, 114, 117, 124, 125, 132,
 140n43, 146, 152n78, 172n14, 175, 188, 189,
 191, 199
 Plaza 195
 Plunder 97, 185
 Political 4, 12–17, 51, 52, 59, 63, 66, 74, 75, 78,
 97, 98, 101, 104, 118, 123, 125, 127, 139, 156,
 161, 180, 185, 186, 201, 202, 210, 213, 215,
 218, 219, 228, 236, 240
 Politics 37n55, 104, 115, 120n52, 126, 139,
 139n38, 218
 Pompa y Pompa, Antonio 223
 Porfirio Díaz, Porfiriato, Porfirianism 4, 116,
 118, 120, 120n52, 121n55, 122, 123, 123n63,
 204
 Porrúa, José 223
 Portes Gil, Emilio 219
 Porto Alegre 36–38, 65, 65n40
 Ports 2, 3, 7, 8, 10, 14, 16, 25, 28, 30, 31, 33–42,
 50, 51, 75, 103–105, 125, 132n11, 148, 161,
 166, 181, 233, 235n35
 Portuguese 1, 3, 5, 5n10, 6, 6n13, 64, 74, 110,
 230, 237, 238
 Portuguese court (in Brazil) 64
 Postal service 77
 Potato famine 66
 Poulson, John 129
 Progress 120, 121, 230
 Prussian 72, 187
 Puerto Barrios 136, 138n34, 144, 149
 Puerto México (Mexico) 119
 Puerto Montt 79
 Punta Arenas 10, 53
 Push and pull factors 57
- Quisling, Vidkun 186
- Radicalism 186, 201, 202, 215
 Radio 157, 186, 201, 208, 215, 216
 Ragnarok 186
 Railroad construction 11
 Railways 2, 14, 15, 17, 45, 50, 77, 78, 81–83, 90,
 113, 118, 145, 147–149, 170, 173, 188, 218, 233
- Rational 102–126
 Rationality 117, 186
 Relational capital 165, 181
 Remigration 28, 30, 134
 Representation 12, 15, 107, 110, 124, 137, 138,
 163, 166, 167, 169, 182, 191, 224
Restaurationen 62
 Retalhuleu 130, 130n9, 131, 146n63, 147, 148,
 150n73
 Return migration 4, 6, 15, 28, 30, 56,
 77–101, 164
 Revolution 4, 15, 16, 66, 67, 97n79, 98, 98n83,
 101, 119, 125, 139n38, 184, 192, 195n32,
 208, 219n38, 233
 Revolution of 1848 66, 67
 Rio de Janeiro 3, 33, 35–38, 60n18, 61, 61n20,
 62n34, 64, 65, 67, 68, 71n62, 74n71, 136,
 230n6
 Río Escalante, Gustavo 202, 203, 203n63, 204
 Rio Grande do Sul 5, 65n40
Rosse 88, 89
 Royal Frederick University (University of
 Oslo) 43, 44
 Royal Mail Steam Packet Company 34
 Ruffier Acosta, Jorge 221
 Rural backgrounds 9
 Rural communities 11
 Rural existence 9
 Rural families 8, 18
 Russia 52, 64
 Ryther, J.G. 62
- Sailors 10, 11, 23, 25, 28, 30, 31, 33–42, 53, 85,
 99, 103, 115, 166, 166n9, 169, 181
 Salaries 11, 12, 15, 19, 31, 39, 40, 99, 145, 166
 Salinas 187
 Salt 83, 187, 191, 220, 221, 221n16
 Salta 162, 164, 169–171, 171n11, 171n12, 172–175,
 176n15, 180, 181
 San Francisco 34, 148n65, 163n2
 San Isidro sugar mill 171
 San José 138n34, 139n37, 148–151, 151n75
 San Pantaleón 187
 San Telmo 166, 169
 Sandstad, Ole 44, 45
 Santa Catarina 5, 65, 70, 71, 71n62, 75
 Santiago 39n24, 43, 53n41, 125, 164, 180,
 181, 200
 Santiago de Cuba 200

- Santo Amaro 65
 Santo Lagoa 33
 Santos 3n6, 10, 36–38, 51, 151n75, 166n9, 223, 229, 230n6, 237, 238, 239
 São Bonifácio 65
 São Leopoldo 65
 São Paulo 3, 4n7, 5–8, 5n11, 5n12, 8n19, 57n3, 58n4, 65, 67n48, 229, 230, 239
 São Pedro de Alcântara 65
 Saucedo, Salvador 189
 Scandinavian 9, 42, 51, 60, 61, 65, 94, 95, 104n5, 129, 220, 221, 237
 Schjørbeck, Alf 50
 Schroeder, Christian Mathias 66, 69
 Seasonal migrations 163
 Semmingsen, Ingrid 10n24, 23
 Settlers 4, 5, 13, 34, 54, 57–76
 Shanghai 200
 Shipowners 10–105, 14, 15, 23, 42, 51, 52, 54, 118
 Shipping 8–11, 14, 34, 34n19, 40, 42, 51–54, 102–105, 113, 114, 116, 118, 124, 126, 144, 218, 225, 234, 236
 Shipping agents 51, 52, 53, 218
 Shipping line 14, 102, 103, 105, 113
 Shoemaker 69, 75, 85. *See also* Artisan
 Shopkeepers 39
 Sierra Madre Occidental 187
 Sigmond, Ablaug 229
 Sigmond, Harald 229, 230
 Sigmond, Kirsten Emilie 229
Siluetas 204, 205n67
 Silver mines 43
 Skarbøvik, Bjarne 152, 152n78
 Skiers 14, 44, 77–86, 88, 90, 91, 93, 95, 96, 98–101
 Skills 11, 40, 55, 100, 166
 Slavery 4, 71
 Smith, Gordon 129, 130, 143, 152
 Social networks. *See* Network
 Socialism 16, 186, 201n53, 208, 210
 Solgaard Jacobsen, Hans 186
 Sololá 131n11, 132, 132n11, 142n46, 144, 159
 Soot, Einar 50
Sophie 34, 63, 64, 68, 69, 71–74, 200
 Sörensen family 227, 233
 Sörensen Yakhelln y Compañía 233
 Sörensens, the 227
 Sørum, Holm 151, 151n74
 South Africa 25
 South America(n) 3, 4, 22, 23, 33, 34, 51, 79, 79n7, 81, 83, 90, 91, 94–97, 99–101, 110, 152, 200
 South Georgia 51
 Spain 16, 34, 35, 133, 133n14, 225–240
 Spanish 3–6, 6n16, 7, 33, 34, 35, 89, 92, 112, 121, 127, 134–136, 146, 150n71, 156, 166, 176, 186, 209, 212, 212n88, 227n11, 231, 236, 238
 Spanish Civil War 186
 Spanish Falange 186
 Spitsbergen 218
SS Kristiania 105
 Standard Oil 47, 48, 162, 170, 171, 171n11, 171n12, 173–175, 180
 Stang, Gudmund 23, 23n10, 43n32, 231
 Stange, Harald 129
 Steamer 103, 103n1, 107, 113, 116, 124
 Stevedores 39
 Stockholm 32, 84, 86, 220n110, 220n112, 220n113
 Strong tie 225. *See also* Granovetter
 Subsidy 7, 105, 119
 Suchitepéquez 148
 Sugar mills 17–172
 Sund, Nikolay 85, 99
 Sundt, Eilert 50, 50n39, 51n39
 Sundt, Lars (or Lorenzo) 45
 Surveys, hydrological 11, 50
 Surveys, meteorological 11
 Sverdrup, Otto 53, 111, 115
 Sweden 14, 39, 52, 60, 84, 102–104, 124, 128, 129, 133n14, 220n110, 220n112, 233–235
 Swedish-Norwegian consulate 35
 Swedish-Norwegian Union 14, 52, 102–104
 Swiss 3, 13, 57, 59, 62, 65, 67–70, 72, 74, 75, 127, 141
 Switzerland 5, 67
 Tacos 195
 Tampico 34
 Tapachula 144, 146n63, 147
 Tartagal 170–174, 176, 178, 180
 Teaching 185, 202
 Tecomán 188, 191, 194
 Telephone 130n9, 218
 Teplaoxtoc 221
 Tequesquite 220
 Terboven, Josef 186

- Textile industry 234
 The Andes 2, 77, 78, 82, 83, 88, 90, 101
 Thorgersen, Axel 44
 Timber 8, 9, 32, 34, 38, 170, 225, 233, 233N23
 Tobacco 172, 187
 Torgersen, Thorvald 146, 146n63, 154
 Trade 11, 17–139, 32, 34, 35, 38, 40, 60, 67, 74, 102–106, 114, 116, 118, 124, 194, 195, 225, 233, 233n23
 Tradesmen 39, 53
 Train. *See* Railway
 Transaction costs 20, 55
 Transandine Railway, the 14, 77, 81–83
 Transmigrants 226–228, 238, 240
 Transmigration 199
 Transnational capital 15, 128, 161
 Transnational capitalism 128, 161
 Transnationalism 226–228
 Travel accounts. *See* Travelogues
 Travel writer 102, 103, 107, 112, 120, 121, 124
 Travel writing 103n2, 106
 Travelogues 9
 Trenque-Lauquen 166
 Trondheim 60, 62n37, 64, 68, 152n78, 198, 225, 232n19
 Trondhjem. *See* Trondheim
 Tropical 2, 54, 70, 73, 74, 107, 112, 114, 117, 134, 145, 187, 188, 190, 238
 Tropics 107, 124
 Turning points 20, 25, 26, 93, 99, 170.
 See also Critical thresholds
 Tvedestrand 53
 Typhus 73

 Ukraine 64, 186
 Ulrichsen, Ulrich 71, 74, 75
 United Fruit Company 54, 149
 United States of America 184
 Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) 172n14
 University of Arizona 222, 222n120
 University of Utah 222
 Uruguay 3, 3n6, 4, 6, 7, 15, 24, 26, 33n17, 42, 50n38, 56, 59, 72n65, 75
 Uruguay river 59
 Uspallata Pass 14
 Utne, Arne 44, 47
 Uvalle Castillo, Vicente 202
Uxmal 201, 207, 211

 Valdivia 32, 48
Vale 65n41, 234
 Valparaíso 10, 32, 34, 36–39, 83, 92n59, 93, 93n62, 94, 99, 146
 Van de Zande, Emma 200
 Vargas, Getulio 4n7, 230, 230n7
 Vasconcelos, José 218, 223
Venstre 104, 104n6
 Veracruz 14, 102, 107, 110, 113–115, 119, 124, 125, 197
 Villa Rojas, Alfonso 221
 Villa, Francisco (Pancho Villa) 34, 50, 72, 73, 190
 Violin 157, 202, 203, 206, 208, 212
 Violinist 198, 200, 203, 205–207
 Virility 178, 179
 Volcano of Colima 187
Völkisch ideas 190
 Von Frankenberg, Benno 71
 von Lawrenz, Karl 200

 Waag, Hans Peter 50
 Wage labor 18
 Walle, Thor O. 150, 150n73, 151, 154
 Wanderlust 16, 63, 86
 Wandermust 63
 War of the Pacific 43
 Washington Lea, Thomas 136, 136n26
 Watch 171, 191, 192, 195
 Weak ties 16, 20, 20n6, 158n94, 159, 181, 226, 233, 235n34, 236, 239. *See also* Granovetter
 Wetten, Poul 75
 Whaler 53, 55, 166n9, 181
 Whaling 11, 14, 51, 54
 Whisky 176, 178. *See also* Alcohol
 Whist, Otto 113, 114
 Wine 69, 70, 89, 89n48, 91, 119, 176. *See also* Alcohol
 Winter Blanco, Ernesto 235
 Wolff, Henrik 50
 Wood 74, 170, 196, 227, 232, 233
 World War I 3, 5–7, 11, 13, 24, 25, 54, 134, 135n21, 187, 198n40, 200, 234
 World War II 2, 3, 60, 130, 135n23, 143, 143n50, 156, 157, 185, 186, 223, 236
 Writer 62, 102, 103, 105, 107, 112, 117, 124, 204, 205, 214, 217

- Xochimilco 220
Xtabay 204, 207, 212
- Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales (YPF) 171
Youngest son 107–108, 111, 112, 112n24,
123, 124. *See also* Espen Askeladd
Yucatán 185, 198–216
Yucatan Symphony Orchestra 212
- Zacnicté 209
Zapata, Emiliano 190, 195
Zinc 91, 235
Zubirán, Salvador 223
Zurich 218
Zuzul 209
Zwilmeyer, Karl (Carlos) 50