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10 In the corner: People have been publicly humiliated throughout history. The public aspect is a key factor.

18 Every Room Is Its Own Culture

Numerous refugees are seeking sanctuary or a new home in Germany. A project at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity is taking a look at what needs and goals the refugees have and how firm a foothold they are gaining in their new life.

26 At the Margins

It's easy to overlook the marginalized. Research, too, has so far paid little attention to the phenomenon of social exclusion. Six Max Planck Institutes have now begun to address this issue and have joined forces to study the exclusion of migrants. Their aim is to uncover exclusion and develop fair rules to regulate migration.

34 A Model for Greater Togetherness

La Convivencia is viewed as a golden age of peaceful coexistence between Muslims, Jews and Christians in medieval Spain. Researchers at the Max Planck Institutes for Social Anthropology and for the History of Science are examining the myth of this period and its possible function as a model for today's world.

ON THE COVER It's just a passport with stamps on its pages – but it is what determines who may enter a given country. In the first instance, it is bureaucracy that regulates who may come and who should stay out. Migration, however, often follows different laws when people are fleeing or searching for a better life. Science is investigating the phenomenon, questioning the rules and exploring the conditions for peaceful coexistence of different cultures.

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Rituals of degradation have been used throughout the ages as a means of exercising authority. But modern society has developed new methods for publicly stigmatizing outsiders, as our author describes.

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Wherever people live, there are mice. It thus seemed obvious to scientists at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Biology that the small rodents would make an ideal model system for investigating how evolution works.

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To date, there has been no method for observing exactly how enzymes and other biomolecules function. A group at the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Light has now succeeded in doing just that – using a plasmonic nanosensor.

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