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Refugees Welcome?

Difference
and Diversity
in a Changing
Germany



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The Post-migrant Paradigm

Naika Foroutan

Germany attracted major international attention for its role in the so-called European refugee crisis in 2015–16. The country's experience with migration featured prominently in debates about social cohesion, pluralism and heterogeneity. Whereas migration to Germany has a long history, migrants and their descendants used to be viewed as short-term residents and did not play an important role in discourses on Germany's national identity. However, their struggles for political and social recognition, equality and participation, as well as demographic changes, pushed the political establishment to accept officially Germany's status as a country of immigration (*Einwanderungsland*). In 2001, a German parliamentary commission suggested legal recognition of this fact and thus initiated processes to grant greater minority rights and promote participation. This shift required a national narrative to incorporate migrants and their descendants as part of a 'New Germany'. This emancipatory approach, which seeks to go beyond established migrant–native divides, became contested and led to a polarization between nativist ideologies and pluralist concepts of belonging. The more migrants and their descendants demand equal access to forms of belonging, which is the promise of a pluralist democracy, the more visible they become, with increasingly harsh responses in debates on national identity. This is the main challenge of the 'post-migrant' paradigm, which dismantles this artificial migrant–native binary. The paradigm instead emphasizes the complex dynamics of plural democracies, in which migration becomes a dominant code for any kind of plurality and

a key social division splits pluralists from nativists: those who embrace growing diversity, hybridity and ambiguity, on the one hand, and those who reject such concepts, on the other.

Data on Migration

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines 'migrant' as:

any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a state away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is.¹

By contrast, 'immigration' is defined as 'a process by which non-nationals move into a country for the purpose of settlement' (IOM 2017) while the term 'migration' points to the ongoing dynamics of a process that does not end after settlement. In addition, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) supports a terminological distinction between migrants and refugees:

Migrants choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons. Unlike refugees who cannot safely return home, migrants face no such impediment to return. If they choose to return home, they will continue to receive the protection of their government.²

In this chapter, the term 'migrant' is used according to the definition of the Council of Europe: 'to refer, depending on the context, to emigrants, returning migrants, immigrants, refugees, displaced persons and persons of immigrant background and/or members of ethnic minority populations that have been created through immigration'.³

In Germany, it is common to use the term 'migration background' (*Migrationshintergrund*) when talking about immigrants and their descendants. The German Federal Statistical Office coined the term in its 2005 annual micro-census to describe individuals who themselves, or whose parents or grandparents, moved to Germany after 1949. It is similar to the term 'migrant' as it is used by the Council on Europe and refers to first-generation immigrants as well as to second- and third-generation citizens. In the public debate, the term 'migrant' is used loosely to describe any person who does not look like a 'real German' – white – or whose family has non-German roots. The term 'migrant' in German – and even European – public discourse is not a straightforward technical term, but a category

of distinction that is used not only for the denial of belonging to a collective identity, but also to justify structural inequalities and social distance (Sidanius and Pratto 2001). Although decades have passed, the ascription of 'originally being from somewhere else', intended to mean 'remaining an outsider', is still prevalent. Migrants are not considered a 'natural' part of society, but rather are addressed as transitive aliens. This outgrouping concerns a denial of belonging and symbolic rights, but also discrimination and lower structural integration. Being a migrant signifies being treated differently and being negated of inclusive concepts of a collective identity. The term 'post-migrant' thus seeks to expose the exclusionary power of 'migration' as a dominant category of distinction when used to describe a lack of social inclusion. The post-migrant paradigm deconstructs 'migration' as a dominant marker of social difference by stressing the normality of migration and mobility in a globalized world. When, according to the German Federal Bureau of Statistics, nearly one in three young families in Germany include members with a migration background, the category loses its relevance as a marker of exceptionality.⁴

Of course, 'migration' remains a relevant category to conduct research or describe social composition, but it cannot be seen any longer as an aberrant or transitory social situation that creates anxiety or chaos. The post-migrant paradigm pushes migration and ethnicity as markers of social division into the background and seeks to describe the hybridization of societies beyond the migrant-native binary. Instead, it foregrounds political attitudes as more significant markers that create different in-and out-groups, reshuffle belonging and lead to the emergence and acceptance, on the one hand, as well as the rejection, on the other hand, of an ambiguity grounded in plurality. In post-migrant societies, in-groups and out-groups are no longer defined predominantly by ethnicity, but rather by attitudes and ideologies towards migration, plurality, heterogeneity and diversity – groups are distinguished by their positions towards plural(ist) democracies.

According to Dahl, the main conflict in pluralist democracies regards autonomy or control. It centres on the question of 'how much autonomy ought to be permitted to what actors, with respect to what actions, and in relation to what other actors, including the government of the state? Plus, the complementary question: how much control ought to be exercised by what actors' (Dahl 1982: 2). At the same time, Dahl and Shapiro describe democracies as being centred on citizens' direct or representative rule, with control mechanisms and checks and balances among executive, legislative and judicative powers, and referring to a constitutional state of law that guarantees the equality of citizens (Dahl and Shapiro 2015). Sniderman describes pluralism as a multiplicity of ideas, of institutions

and of values, while putting the conflict on the plurality of values in the centre: 'our argument, put in the broader terms, is that conflicts over democratic rights are inescapable, not simply because many citizens do not understand what the values of a democratic politics require in practice, but because many of these values clash with one another, and some of them even clash with themselves' (Sniderman 1996: 235). Isaiah Berlin and Bernard Williams argue that pluralism and liberalism equally contradict monism in questions of values (Berlin and Williams 1994). In this chapter, plural democracy is used to describe societies that rely on the understanding of equality of all, regardless of one's gender, origin, ethnicity, language, nationality, belief or religious and political orientation. The promise of equality in plural democracies also exists despite migration and is only enhanced through the increasing heterogeneity and pluralisation that migration produces. The existence of religious, cultural, ethnic and national diversity introduces a new complexity of different value systems that may clash against each other or with already established value systems. This adds hybridity, antagonisms and ambiguities, and leads to the idea of a new disorder.

As democracies rely on the promise of granting all citizens the same political, juridical and symbolical rights, claims for recognition keep multicultural societies occupied and trigger negotiation processes and conflicts on distribution of social and symbolic resources and privileges (Taylor 1997). The main thesis of this chapter is that the dominant conflict line in post-migrant societies regards this promise of equality, which becomes politically manifest and enforceable by migrants and their descendants when societies change their narrative into being a country of immigration. This narrative regards the division along the migrant/non-migrant or migrant/native binary as politically problematic and morally wrong.

In 2015, 17.1 million migrants or people with a so-called migration background lived in Germany, or 21 per cent of the country's population of 82 million. The majority of immigrants (9.3 million people) held German citizenship; 7.8 million were citizens of other countries. Every third child under eighteen had a so-called migration background (Statistisches Bundesamt 2016). These numbers illustrate that cultural, ethnic, religious and national diversity shapes German society. Plurality and heterogeneity form the everyday experience of many residents in Germany, although not all of them manage this new reality in the same way (Foroutan et al. 2014: 38). This is due to the uneven distribution of immigrants and their descendants: approximately 95 per cent of them live in West Germany, and approximately 5 per cent in the East (Statistisches Bundesamt 2014). Cultural, ethnic, religious and national plurality differ significantly between regions.

Pluralization, Growing Heterogeneity and Hybridization Cause Uncertainty

Over time, many migrants become part of established groups and challenge boundaries and classifications into insiders and outsiders. According to the late sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, immigrants' descendants in particular can be seen as a 'third element': they are hybrids that cannot be classified. These hybrids are not simply opposed to the opposition, 'but question the principle of the opposition, the plausibility of a dichotomy' (Bauman 2005: 100). This raises an important question: is it the hybridization of society or the act of migration itself that creates uncertainty? While the first generation of immigrants, who came to Germany as guest-workers after the Second World War, seemed to be more 'controllable' through resettlement and return policies, the second and third generations claim equal belonging in political, legal and symbolical ways. Their in-betweenness confronts binary social orders built on ideas of national identity that identify between natives and non-natives (Hall 2004). This poses a challenge, especially in the determination of what is and is not 'German' in an ever more hybridized society (Foroutan et al. 2014: 26–27). Debates on national identity and on the definition of 'who we are' and a 'guiding German culture' (*deutsche Leitkultur*) gained weight in parallel to the reform of German citizenship law in 2000–1, when descent based exclusively on blood (*ius sanguinis*) was joined by descent based on birth and upbringing (*ius soli*), allowing migrants and their descendants to acquire German citizenship. Being German thus became an achievable attribute rather than an inherited privilege. The consequences have been ambivalences and dynamics that see migrants and their descendants 'othered' and excluded from a national collective identity, even if they are naturalized Germans or German-born citizens. Simultaneously and empirically, society is becoming more diverse and hybrid – a pool of culturally, ethnically, religiously and nationally heterogeneous individuals.

The insecurity caused by growing hybridity and diversity particularly affects East German regions, which have remained more homogeneous and lack opportunities for interpersonal contact involving migrants and natives. The intergroup contact hypothesis (Allport 1954; Dovidio et al. 2005) explains that interpersonal encounter reduces prejudice, which could be a reason for stronger antipathy towards diversity and migration in East Germany. In parallel to demographic, cultural and narrative changes of German society, neoliberal economic developments caused greater social inequality and unearthed questions about democracy's capacity to provide equality (Crouch 2009; Nachtwey 2010). Insecurities around visible demographic changes, growing hybridity and heterogenization merge

with rather invisible, but powerful, fears regarding one's economic and symbolic status in a society in which migrants are consciously or unconsciously held responsible for unwanted change.

Migration, it seems, has become a ubiquitous topic, covering major security and inequality debates in Germany and Europe. It has become a trigger for increasingly outspoken racism and growing nationalism. 'Migration' as a topic is connected with economic, political, social or gender insecurities. It has turned into a metanarrative to explain generic failures and challenges. The Dresden-based Pegida movement (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the Occident) became one such actor appropriating interconnected discourses through claims that disease, delinquency and despair would arrive in Germany with refugees and migrants, who are regarded as the bearers of violent and confrontational cultural behaviour. Pegida members fear Islam as a power that seeks to infiltrate Germany and undermine, or even destroy, the character of European culture and society (see also Bock's analysis of Pegida in Chapter 9 of this volume). Behind such arguments, framed in culturalist terms, there are different causes: general dissatisfaction with the political situation, a sense of being neglected by political and economic elites, the polarizing media and the impact of dominant racist discourses, shaped by ignorance and lack of antiracist education. The migration narrative frames these emotions connected to the fear of losing national identity, merging topics of social injustice, insecurity, anti-elite criticism, cultural supremacy and structural racism, on the one hand, with a utopian ideal of a Germany that returns to its good old past, on the other hand—the period before it became a country of immigration.

All kinds of discomfort and uneasiness that are felt towards an increasingly complex global world are subsumed under the topic of migration, which manifests, for many, the loss of borders, control, the past and identity. Even criticism towards elites or the European Union (EU) is intertwined with 'migration': elites supposedly betrayed citizens because they opened borders for migrants, Islam, refugees. The EU is accused of manipulating ordinary people with their ideologies of diversity and plurality. We need to analyse the mass murder conducted by Anders Breivik in Norway 2011 in this context. Breivik killed members of a social democrat youth group as part of his fight against multiculturalism. The *New York Times* quoted a manifesto written by Breivik, in which he argued that multiculturalism destroyed European Christian civilization: 'The manifesto, entitled "2083: A European Declaration of Independence," equates liberalism and multiculturalism with "cultural Marxism," which the document says is destroying European Christian civilization' (*New York Times*, 24 July 2011). The political allies of those who favour multiculturalism hence

equally become victims in anti-diversity and anti-migration attacks. Those who argue that the rise of rightwing populism in Europe is simply a result of class conflict and not of attitudes to race and ethnicity (subsumed by the migration topic) ignore the fact that populist parties also garnered support from the middle classes, as well as from economic and academic elites who usually act as their leaders. Such parties do not represent the underprivileged, white working classes, at least in the case of the populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) party (Bergmann et al. 2016).

Post-migrant: The Term, Notion and Approaches

The term 'post-migrant' (*postmigrantisch*) was initially introduced in 2008 by the German artist Shermin Langhoff, director of Berlin's Maxim Gorki Theater. Langhoff envisioned and experimented with a new type of performance: post-migrant theatre – a theatre performing traditional German plays while adding the perspectives of migrants and their descendants, thus giving their stories a part in German narratives. Her approach aimed at reflecting contemporary German social reality, which is shaped by migration, by portraying hybridity and second-generation migrant culture in the art scene. Post-migrant theatre initially focused on the individual hybrid-migrant-descendant as a performative artist of social change. It used the actors' perspective to demonstrate that individuals labelled as migrants, despite the absence of their own personal migration experience (i.e. second-generation migrants, who constitute one-third of the people in Germany with a migration background), have different family histories, experiences, perspectives and stories from first-generation immigrants or those who do not have a migration background. 'It makes sense that their stories need to be told differently and apart from those that have actually migrated, hence post-migrant' (Langhoff 2009: 27).⁵ In this context, the post-migrant concept referred to a chronological, descriptive and actor-centred perspective: it started with the moment of migration and continued with the shifting self-perception of the migrant as a hybrid identity from the first to the second to the third generation. These stories, according to Yildiz (2013: 144f), need to be included in hegemonic narratives and the country's collective memory.

Parallel to these initial actor-focused perspectives, a new one was added by German academia. This focused on the critical meta-analysis and interpretation of society and its transformation processes after migration. The post-migrant term hence slowly moved away from the actor-centred neolabelling of second-generation migrants as post-migrants. Riem Spielhaus, an Islamic Studies scholar, wrote: 'the term explicitly

does not pertain to a person's situation or history as a new word for difference in physiognomy, accent or family history' (Spielhaus 2013: 329). Manuela Bojadžijev and Regina Römhild have also cautioned against labelling future generations of immigrants as post-migrants, which they consider a way of rehashing the migration aspect as central to ascribed identity categories (Bojadžijev and Römhild 2014: 18).

The prefix 'post' in post-migrant contains a twofold objective, as it tries to reflect the ambivalent simultaneity of migration in society: while migration is ongoing and a global phenomenon of mobility, the arrival of migrants remains contested on the basis of ethnic, cultural, religious or national backgrounds. On the one hand, migration is a demographic normality, but on the other, this demographic normality is turned into an anomaly by 'migrantizing' one part of society, which entails exclusion from a country's shared identity. The 'post' thus reflects a period and situation that follows after migration has occurred, but during which migration-based exclusion remains a common experience. The concept exposes the dominant continuity of the migration narrative as a basis for social division, while at the same time seeking to challenge and go beyond this divide. At the same time, however, the 'post' prefix creates a semantic conflict (Mecheril 2014); the term suggests that migration needs to be transcended. Mecheril criticizes the idea that if migration constitutes a particular set of circumstances – such as colonialism, nationalism or racism – the addition of 'post' would describe a process of overcoming this set's limiting conditions. This raises a question: does 'post' indicate the end of a particular situation or signal that something needs to be overcome? Both interpretations would not be fruitful, Mecheril concludes, and a terminological challenge. The term demands a rupture of migration-based division. Instead, he suggests, the focus should be shifted towards the regulation of migration-related phenomena (Mecheril 2014: 107f).

The post-migrant paradigm shares in that sense the political dimensions of other 'posts' – describing a transitional situation and analysing trajectories of the past and the present rather than knowing the directions in which society is heading. Theoretical approaches such as post-colonial (Bhabha 1994; Said 1978; Spivak 1988), postnational (Habermas 1998), postdemocracy (Crouch 2009), post-black (Touré 2011) or post-gender (Haraway 1991) have sought to question, deconstruct or rethink powerful categories (such as nation, gender, race or blackness), highlighting their empirical as well as analytical and normative limitations. 'Post-migrant' aspires to transcend 'migration' as a disguised marker for racist exclusion, on the one hand, while embracing migration as social normality, on the other. Hence, post-migrant does not seek to depict – as falsely assumed and even criticized – a state in which migration has

ended (Mecheril 2014). Rather, it provides a framework of analysis for conflicts, identity discourses and social and political transformations that occur after migration has taken place, while migrants struggle to be recognized as legal stakeholders in society. However, similarly to 'postcolonial', 'post-migrant' could be understood as a strategy for empowerment, surpassing old structures of authority and creating awareness regarding emancipation. Society as whole has experienced migration – not only those who have actually migrated. As implied by the term 'post-colonial', the colonial epoch might have ended, but this does not mean that all structures of exploitation, economic suppression, domination and political power have disappeared. On the contrary, divisions and imbalances, which existed during colonialism, continue to shape life in post-colonial settings. Nevertheless, some post-isms imply a different kind of discontinuity: the concept of post-nationalism does not suggest that nationalism has ended, but rather urges us to think beyond nationalism. Hence, the conceptual aspiration behind the term 'post-migrant' seeks to surpass divisions and rigid categories that have been constructed around the fact and history of migration. Taking inspiration from this analysis, the term 'post-migrant' seeks to change the dominant discourses on migration by (1) embracing migration as an experience and a form of cultural capital. and (2) deconstructing the migrant-native divide, while considering the importance of migration for identity-building processes. In doing so, we need to be aware that discrimination and hegemonic differences among classes and other collective bodies continue to exist – even without migration. 'Post-migrant' does not imply forgetting about migration or disregarding it as a historical phenomenon, but rather calls for a different analytical angle to describe migration.

The term post-migrant has therefore been developed and operationalized across the social sciences (Tsianos and Karakayalı 2014). The term has to feature both as an analytical description and an aspiration for social development. 'Post-migrant' thus describes a chronological and empirical-analytical 'after', a critical-dialectical 'behind', and an aspirational and normative 'beyond' at the same time. The concepts works in an empirical-analytical way by looking at the social effects *after* migration has occurred and *after* it has been politically considered as an irreversible fact of society; it works in a critical-dialectical way by depicting underlying conflicts of migration and looking *behind* constructed dominant conflict lines that have turned migration into a metanarrative and turn other conflict lines related to class, race and gender invisible; and, additionally, this research paradigm seeks to develop a new aspirational mission statement that gives recognition to migrants and other marginalized groups that enter the public sphere and claim rights on representation,

participation and equality. The normative approach of this research paradigm is therefore based on the democratic promise of equality and aims to overcome established inequalities and get *beyond* the dominant migrant–native divide in order to approximate the norm of equality to the empirical reality.

The empirical-analytical approach examines and focuses on the empirically existent and observable inequalities, transformations and developments, and analyses their consolidation on institutional, structural, sociopolitical and legal levels. It analyses attitudes and reactions within and towards a pluralizing society with regard to migration policy issues on symbolic and material belongings.

The critical-dialectical approach further embeds the empirical-analytical findings in prevailing social conditions and already established power structures. Empirical findings and observations further examine social inequalities in post-migrant societies and pose the following question: to what extent is it about securing privileges, maintaining positions of power and a socially established status? In addition, the critical-dialectical approach allows a (de)constructivist perspective on the very substance of the migrant–native conflict line: is it really about migration and does the overwhelming dominance of the migration discourse stand in proportion to the empirical reality, or is it rather a constructed hyper-reality that goes hand in hand with a fiction of formerly constructed storylines on homogeneity and the supposed purity of distinctive societies?

The normative-ontological approach introduces new hypotheses into empirical-analytical and critical-dialectical migration research by factoring normative aspirations into the question on what additional elements next to sociostructural dimensions block social cohesions. The ‘post-migrant’ perspective therefore has a clear stance with regard to the negotiation of equal rights, where it finds validation through the democratic principle of equality. The perceivable gap between norm and reality makes it clear that existential changes would be necessary in order to dissolve the dissonance.

The post-migrant paradigm thus has a threefold approach: (1) an empirical-analytical approach seeking to describe how societies change after migrants have entered society (acknowledgement procedures, population attitudes, narratives, knowledge, contact and more); (2) a critical-dialectical approach deconstructing the anatomy of a public discourse on migration by depicting underlying stereotypes and conflicts; and (3) a normative approach that calls for overcoming the migrant–native divide at a time when migration and mobility constitute everyday normality.

The Post-migrant (PMG) Framework

The post-migrant framework enables the deconstruction of migration as a scapegoat for social insecurities and threats by offering a counter-response to debates on migration and security that are framed around identity and cultural conflict. The new paradigm seeks to understand ambivalences and antagonism in societies by zooming out of narrow identity-politics and depicting the structural and political context of society as a whole, and by deconstructing reported fears and anxieties that are placed in the migration-security nexus. Rightwing populist parties are quick to embrace that nexus and load it with xenophobic and particularly anti-Muslim rhetoric (Decker et al. 2014; Zick et al. 2016). The combination of anti-elite, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim rhetoric occupying public discourse occurred across European societies affected by migration and pluralization, as well as by growing economic inequality. Through the emancipation of unprivileged groups, such as migrants and their descendants, who are now demanding social and political power, society experiences further resource allocation conflicts (Caselli and Coleman 2013) that lead to antagonistic opposition towards a new claim for unconditional belonging. Contested resources are not only structural and economic but also social, cultural and symbolic.

The claim for equality relies on the promise that a country of immigration and plural democracies carries a social contract to treat all citizens equally, regardless of their social, ethnic or religious origin and sexual orientation. Through the political acknowledgement of being a country of immigration, established hegemonic positions are challenged by formerly marginalized groups, demanding participation, equality and access to rights and privileges. Such demands cause conflict and fear within established social groups, which in turn deny belonging (as symbolic equality) as the denial of political and legal equality becomes increasingly difficult. The post-migrant paradigm dismantles the narrow binary of natives versus migrants as a constructed and reductive description that is empirically inconsistent, and points to deeper-rooted conflicts over power and resource allocation, which explode when subalterns finally start to speak and enter the distributive arena (Spivak 1988). While the pro-plurality-allies demand equal opportunities, the antagonists highlight the importance of ancestry and ethnic belonging. The distributive struggle is symbolically fought on the back of migration, which becomes shorthand for 'diversity'. Other marginalized groups are equally affected: women, LGBTQI+, Jews and blacks. Their claims for representation have long caused ambivalent reactions, under the guise of anti-immigration rhetoric, anti-Semitic and anti-gender discourses emerge as well.

Post-migrant societies are hence characterized by a new bipolar conflict that can be described as the growing polarization between those who can (or sometimes even desire to) live with plurality and form moral majorities (Hall 1997), on the one hand, and antagonists, on the other. Pluralists craft powerful alliances to realize the structural, social, cultural and symbolic distribution of resources across society. At the other end of the spectrum, antagonists claim that equality ought to be reserved for those who belong to a narrow group. Their imagined circle of inclusion is not consistent at all; it features nativist ideas of belonging, authoritarianism, conservative ideas of family and anti-LGBTQI+ positions while defending Jews, homosexuals, gender equality and women's rights against Muslims (on the notion of postliberal, see Pieper et al. (2011)). The glue that binds these fuzzy and contradicting ideas is a deeply rooted aversive racism (Gaertner and Dovidio 1986), combined with a patronizing self-image that demarcates clearly who ought and who ought not to enter the distributive arena. While such antagonists unite against 'genderism' and same-sex marriages and reclaim masculinity, their entitled position as gatekeepers of the nation, the *Volk*, partially allows homosexuals, women and even migrants into the circle – as long as they behave in a certain manner and as long as the gatekeepers remain in their position to decide on inclusion and exclusion.

For the 'post-migrant society' framework, this means the following: migration is a twofold trigger. It is a metanarrative loaded with accusations of social conflict and insecurity, against which social antagonisms are constructed, while also serving as a currency (Clifford 1994) for identity formation that trades in the normality of diversity, hybridity and plurality as new markers of alliances and changing post-migrant peer group identities. The tension of these two positions within the contested arena of plural democracies creates ambivalences and turns the migration narrative into a symbolic battlefield for social self-description. The gap between the normative goal of equality and the empirical reality seems to reveal an instance of cognitive dissonance. Such dissonance entails openly expressed anti-migration sentiment or disguised hostility, accusing immigrants of not being able to follow local norms. Such dissonance, however, can also create new alliances to mobilize resources and adjust norms and actions. The 'post-migrant societies' paradigm has two objectives: (1) it demands a shift away from social constructions on the basis of a migrant-native divide, since this binary glosses over disparities based on class, race and gender; and (2) it produces a different framework of analysis to grasp transformations within a society that has been shaped by migration and its consequences concerning deepening pluralization.

Five Key Findings to Operationalize the PMG Framework

Operationalizing the PMG framework for social science, we can derive five key processes that describe the conflictive dynamic of migration-impacted societies. The process fields interact subsequently and simultaneously:

- 1) We observe strong ambivalences around the acceptance of ambiguity, diversity and hybridity, which are introduced as concomitant dynamics through the presence, interaction and incorporation permeation (Spivak 1988) of migrants in society. These dynamics are becoming key elements of plural democracies, and dealing with them becomes the core challenge of post-migrant societies.
- 2) The discursive reworking of plural democracies connects to questions of migration, equality and participation, and leads to new pro-plurality positions and post-migrant alliances that pursue a moral majority and seek to transcend the conservative–liberal binary.
- 3) Social ambivalences reinforce antagonistic anti-plurality positions, which centre specifically on negative attitudes towards immigrants, Muslims or other ethnic, religious or national minorities. Homogeneous and nationalist groups aim to re-install a less ambiguous order as well as re-invoke equality claims of immigrants.

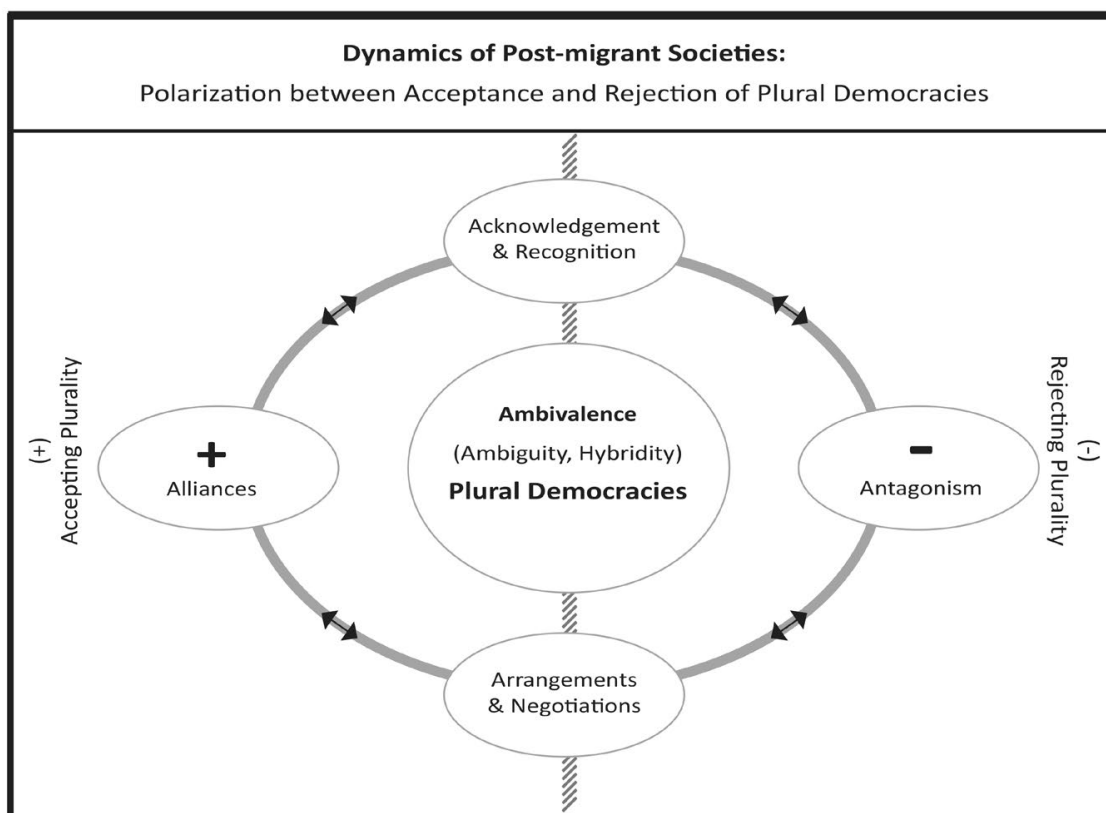


Figure 6.1 Dynamics of post-migrant societies. Figure by the author.

- 4) The result is polarization, which stems from a dynamic process of arrangements and negotiations involving structural, social, cultural and emotional belonging of migrants and their descendants. These claims are drivers of social change and conflict, since they lead to cultural and resource allocation conflicts among socially established and socially marginalized groups.
- 5) The idea of equal political, legal and symbolic rights is a promise rooted in the acknowledgement and recognition of being a country of immigration. It has legitimized immigrants' claims for more participation, anti-discrimination policies, equality and visibility.

Five Key Processes of Interaction

As outlined above, post-migrant societies contain five main key processes of interaction that can be analysed by social scientists: (1) political or legal acceptance, and recognition of being a country of immigration; (2) negotiations of rights, positions and representations for minority groups; (3) ambivalences and ambiguities on national identity concepts and concepts of belonging; (4) alliances based on ideological positioning on diversity and migration; (5) antagonism and radicalization against those that embrace diversity.

In the following, these five key processes will be discussed briefly.

Acknowledgement and Recognition

Post-migrant societies emerge when the dominant narrative acknowledges the reality of being a country of immigration rooted in diversity and heterogeneity. This acknowledgement can be articulated through official statements. This happened in Germany in 2001 (Süssmuth 2001: 1), Canada in the 1970s and the United States in the 1960s. Such political shifts led to legal changes and adaptations, as well as to symbolic transformations regarding definitions of belonging that granted immigrants and their descendants equality and viewing them as legitimate stakeholders in society. This shift paves the way for plural democracies based on the idea of equal rights, and breaks ground for legal negotiations on positions, visibilities and privileges.

Migration is a concomitant of globalization, which needs to be considered in political, social and economic debates (Peters 2015). Migratory movements transform society in multiple directions, and it is the responsibility of politicians to adapt legal and political frameworks to reflect such changes. Accepting migrants as political and legal stakeholders in a given state means that they are legitimized to claim rights and achieve

representation. This emancipation often involves struggles. It is important to note that these struggles also exist prior to the establishment of an immigration country discourse – and they have, in fact, most likely contributed to official acknowledgement. The difference is that the political and legal acknowledgement of being a country of immigration legitimizes minorities' rights beyond moral and ethical concerns, instead establishing a political reality that allows them to challenge existing inequalities. These struggles for rights are therefore both a precursory and a constitutive element of a post-migrant society. The political recognition of being a country of immigration provides a key platform for the negotiation of positions, representation and equality. It also enables a politically and legally legitimate battle for social justice and the passing of comprehensive immigration legislation.

Arrangements and Negotiations

Once the political establishment acknowledges the status of being a country of immigration, migrants and minorities are able to put forward demands for rights and representations in the political realm, and are now in a position to start a negotiation process with the established authorities and other actors. This process is usually accompanied by arrangements and conflicts at the same time: migrants and their descendants demand more representative, visible positions in politics, culture, sports, public spaces and so on. The privileges of established native groups are questioned in claims to equality, representation and participation. This triggers the emergence of pro- and anti-diversity identities that blame migration for social changes or the dissolution of national identity. Existing values and norms of previously hierarchically constructed concepts of society are challenged, and demands for anti-discrimination action and positive discrimination legislation become more vocal. As demands for minority rights and representations increase, hegemonic actors that fear the loss of their status resist. This conflict-inducing dynamic is part of post-migrant societies. Minority groups seize the opportunity to shape a new, rival discursive hegemony that assembles a moral majority, motivated by the demand for equality as relevant elements in social discourse. Granting migrants and natives the same civil rights creates harsh battles without any guarantee of success, in which minorities confront established structures that are hard to permeate (Spivak 1988).

Ambivalences and Ambiguities

The obsession with migration as a ubiquitous, dominant debate topic creates two kinds of reaction: on the one hand, migration seems to be a

‘natural’ aspect of contemporary societies, and an empirical and demographic reality for many people going about their everyday lives. On the other hand, the lack of anti-racist political education allows imaginations of hegemonic privileges for established groups (Elias and Scotson 2002: 7) and produces fears of infiltration, population exchange by stealth and the loss of one’s own – supposedly homogeneous and easily demarcated – culture through immigration. This reveals a schism between the rational recognition of migration as normality and the emotional rejection of migrants and minorities. Cognitive acceptance and an emotional distance exist at the same time (Foroutan and Canan 2016).

In Germany, for example, this normative paradox becomes apparent in attitudes towards Muslim minorities (Foroutan and Canan 2016: 164): politically legitimized fundamental rights are attacked and questioned on the basis of emotional experience. A study conducted by the Berlin Institute for Integration and Migration Research (Foroutan and Canan 2016) showed that almost 70 per cent of Germans agreed that Muslims in the country should be legally entitled to put forward cultural, religious and social demands. At the same time, however, 60 per cent of survey respondents did not want Muslims to be able to circumcise young men, 50 per cent want to ban female Muslim teachers from wearing a headscarf and 40 per cent supported restricting permission to build mosques in Germany (see Foroutan et al. 2014: 35ff). Although all these rights are guaranteed by Germany’s protection of religious freedom, Muslim insistence on making use of their rights causes scepticism, animosity and rejection. Ambivalences also exist within minority groups: on the one hand, there exist demands for greater representation, identity politics, successful spokespersons, and the introduction of quota and anti-discrimination laws. On the other hand, there exists longing for the disappearance of categories that emphasize ethnic backgrounds (see Supik 2014). The first aspiration requires the production of official empirical data on ethnic, national and religious identities of minority groups, whereas the second aspiration implies greater anonymity and the downplaying of different identities. So, whereas plurality and heterogeneity are cognitively accepted – based on constitutional values of equality – even fundamental rights are emotionally rejected when claimed by minorities. This dissonance between cognitive acceptance and emotional distance creates conflictive ambivalences and ambiguities in societies (Foroutan and Canan 2016).

Alliances

Societal structures show that personal relations between people of different origins and trajectories have become increasingly entangled through

personal, professional and social ties. Connections through family, friends, school, clubs, unions, political engagement or the workplace have produced new kinds of knowledge, empathy and attitudes, which construct post-migrant alliances that go beyond the abstractly defined subject and instead give rise to novel relationships based on attitudes, neighbourhood and opportunities rather than on ethnicity or colour (Foroutan 2016: 228). Immigrants and their descendants are not alone in their struggle for representation and participation. They have supporters for their cause who do not necessarily have a migration background, but share views on democracy and equality. This shapes a new moral majority embracing the values of plural democracy, which grants security, fundamental rights, mobility and participation to all its citizens irrespective of ethnic background. Post-migrant alliances are a powerful tool to challenge structures of discrimination: they enable a shared fight against racist attitudes and the isolating othering of migrants, transcending socially constructed divisions and concepts. The post-migrant perspective enables the formation of new equal relationships in the form of rising heterogeneous peer groups that are no longer paternalistically structured (Brodén and Mecheril, 2014: 15; Foroutan, 2015: 18).

Ethnicity, colour or nationality do not have dominant roles in these groups. They are replaced by a focus on shared agendas, common values and solidarity (Parsons 1967: 704; Sabatier 1993: 21). Cultural alliances appreciate diversity and the hybridization or exchange of cultural codes; political alliances create a shared fight for democracy and against discrimination and residues of racism; emotional alliances empathize against the 'othering' of citizens and their exclusion from collective identity. Empathy serves as a glue for social relationships, fosters pro-diversity behaviour and emotional alliances, and is needed for the foundation for democracy and social change (Nussbaum 1997: 90). 'Post-migrant alliances' emerge from friendships, family relationships, social interactions and professional relationships or other forms of contact. However, they are also possible without contact or interaction, on the basis of empathy and proximity. Alliances can also be more than just empathetic; they can be political or strategic, sharing have the same objective, vision or reasoning on plural democracies, heterogeneity or diversity.

These post-migrant alliances are reshuffled peer groups, in which members are no longer connected along ethnic, religious, national markers, but are forged together through similar attitudes on diversity, heterogeneity and plurality (Foroutan et al. 2015). These alliances thereby reshuffle concepts of identity and belonging that are centred on ethnicity, ancestry or homogeneity (Bauman 1992) and create new hybrid peer-group identities (Brah and Coombes 2005).

Antagonism

Post-migrant societies have a significant potential for conflict. The idea of a 'new nation' (new Germany, new Canada, new France) formed by historical and contemporary migration is contested by antagonistic groups, such as nationalistic and ethnic homogeneity group, who challenge state authorities, migrant communities and their allies in a political battle for dominance and supremacy (see, for example, the famous slogan of the French extreme-right wing party Le Front National: 'les Français d'abord' (Laurence and Goodliffe 2013: 36)). Conflicts between groups that favour plurality and those that oppose it intensify noticeably. Minorities' claims to greater access to power and resources lead to visible polarizations around the questions of belonging and national identity or hegemonic power. The dualism of plurality advocates and plurality opponents dominates the political agenda and creates a new binary conflict.

These are opposed developments in post-migrant societies: the emergence of a moral majority that accepts the reality of diversity, raised with a positive or pragmatic outlook on difference and transcending ethnic, religious and colour lines when conceptualizing belonging. This moral majority faces a vocal, antagonistic and growing minority, which opposes hybrid identities and narratives that normalize migration, instead calling for a reversed social order based on exclusive nationalism and ethnic homogeneity. As mentioned above, minority rights in post-migrant societies are more openly contested than in societies that are not officially recognized as countries of immigration. In the latter, national identity is not questioned in the same way as in post-migrant societies, where political conviction, belonging, privileges and representation are constantly negotiated and hegemonic privileges are challenged (Foroutan 2016: 241). The fight over resources and the negotiation of national identity intensify debates about the arrival of newcomers and their social position as outsiders towards established actors (Elias and Scotson 2002: 7). Migration becomes a metaphor for this resource-allocation conflict: pro- and anti-immigration groups develop polarizing positions with reference to migration, confronting one another in the political arena.

In-between these diametrically opposed groups, there is a large and undecided middle ground, shifting from side to the other side. Mobilization efforts of either camp make use of economic and demographic contexts to gain support. In France, Denmark, Hungary, Poland and the United Kingdom, where rightwing populist parties gained between 25 and 50 per cent in elections during the 2010s, the large middle ground was swayed by arguments regarding the economy, demographics and the labour market,

which both groups connect with discourses on migration. However, the popularity of rightwing parties cannot simplistically be justified by arguments about the fear of economic decline. Even prosperous European economies, such as Austria, Switzerland or the Scandinavian countries, witnessed the rise of anti-immigrant parties since the 1990s or 2000s. There seems to exist much fertile ground for extremist, anti-migration mobilization, which pushes governments further towards hard-rightwing positions (Mudde 2007).

Conclusion

In the mid 2010s, Europe experienced a rightwing shift (Greven 2016) and social antagonism towards minorities (and Muslims in particular). The increase of anti-migrant attitudes in Europe was accompanied by post-migrant alliances fighting for a different Europe that recognizes diversity and hybridity as a new kind of normality and desirable social reality. The refugee crisis of 2015 and 2016 rekindled debates not only on migration, border security, increasing diversity, and anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim attitudes, but also on questions of asylum and resource allocation for humanitarian causes. The polarization of pro- and anti-refugee positions, rooted in pro- and anti-diversity attitudes, was accompanied by questions regarding economic benefits or disadvantage, the allocation of housing and public space, and other related concerns about resources. The German economy benefited not only from incoming labour power, but also through investments in sectors related to refugee care and aid (such as urban development, vocational training and educational services; Fratzscher and Junker 2005: 615). Nonetheless, the reality that Muslim refugees might stay in Germany intensified debates on immigrant participation and equality, creating a new bipolar conflict around 'migration'. Previously established differences, based on notions of race, class and gender, were increasingly woven into this new conflict line, dividing Europe into countries in favour of strong protectionism, making use of the rhetoric of individual national interests and rigid patriotism, on the one hand, and those in favour of European solidarity, cooperation and openness, on the other. Once again, harsh debates and parliamentary decisions to tighten asylum and immigration laws entered the political mainstream, evaluating critically realities of multiculturalism and plural forms of belonging. European policies became progressively ambivalent in response to this impasse.

These dynamics are inherent to the post-migrant society paradigm: post-migrant societies are marked by the political acknowledgement of

being a country of immigration. They recognize migration as a foundational element of their societies and therefore permit legal and political negotiations to create equality. This does not mean that society as a whole embraces migration; on the contrary, many people can perceive it as threatening. However, the political act of recognition is like a social contract that enables the legitimation of demands on equality and participation. While equality is cognitively accepted, emotional and affective responses can block policies aimed at guaranteeing it. Ambiguities and ambivalences are the consequences of this cognitive–emotional divide. This ambivalence complicates political processes. Politically, post-migrant societies are a battlefield of negotiation procedures of marginalized groups seeking to become part of the hegemonic structures. Those who endorse migration and plurality challenge their opponents in a fight over regulatory policies, as migration turns into a metaphor for social disorder that hybridity and plurality supposedly entail. Rightwing populist parties emerged alongside a political narrative of ‘cleaning up’ in Europe. In the mid 2010s, such parties entered many European parliaments. They led a discourse on ‘order’ to blame social problems on migration, while promising the return to a nationalist social harmony by curbing or rigidly steering migration.

These challenges of post-migrant societies can be observed in the following five main dynamics, processes and constitutive elements: (1) political acknowledgement; (2) negotiations and arrangements concerning minority rights; (3) post-migrant alliances formed beyond ethnic, religious and national markers; (4) antagonisms against the pro-diversity camp; (5) ambivalences and ambiguities that are the result of these. Post-migrant societies thus witness a polarization that can be described as a new bipolar conflict. The two opposite poles form two camps: those who demand equal rights for each citizen and those who seek to maintain the hegemonic power of their own group. Post-migrant societies are societies in transition. One group’s aim is to abolish hegemonic markers, structures and processes – such as dichotomizations, culturalization, ethnicization, racism, stereotyping and other perceptions – to dissolve the dogma of ‘otherness’ ascribed exclusively to those whose ancestors migrated to Germany. This clashes with revisionist imaginations of the nation as composed of those who have always been there.

The theoretical framework of post-migrant societies seeks an alternative rationale behind antagonism and polarization that goes beyond social and economic explanations. It asks for new perspectives to describe and understand anti-immigrant attitudes, noticing that they are not only linked to economic wealth or social status. Research shows that

Islamophobic attitudes also exist among elite and middle-class groups that are not affected by insecurity (see Gross et al. 2010; Heitmeyer 2012: 33). Anchored hostility towards the upward mobility of minorities became apparent, fostered by the growing support minority groups have received from the establishment through anti-discrimination laws and diversity concepts (see Sutterlüty 2010).

Furthermore, anti-plurality reactions can be seen as an effort to fight ambiguity. For many people, ambiguity causes insecurity because, like hybridity, it questions established borders that are social-psychologically needed to grasp abstract concepts, such as nation, identity, ethnicity or gender. Counter-ambiguity responses offer concepts that are rooted in the idea of purity, exclusivity and clear borders – whether national, religious or ethnic. As a consequence, more people feel attracted to simple responses to complex problems that rightwing populist parties or Islamic extremists offer. The idea of reversing the social order back to homogeneity is rooted in the promise to resolve ‘disorder’ or ‘chaos’. The result of such polarization can be growing violence directed not simply towards minority groups, but also against those who support them. The terror attacks carried out by Anders Breivik revealed how accusations that ‘cultural Marxism’ enables foreign infiltration can be directed towards those who support migrants politically – in this case, liberal social democrats with their history of pro-migration attitudes. These ‘migration allies’ are likewise, and perhaps even to a greater extent, held responsible for the loss of cultural identity because of their influential positions and policies on immigration. The term ‘post-migrant alliances’ captures such novel political forms, since sharing a migration background does not necessarily determine that different individuals would fight for the same cause. Similarly, not having a migration background does not mean that one is necessarily anti-immigrant – and self-identifying as a democrat or a liberal also does not automatically guarantee that someone cannot also harbour racist views.

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Notes

1. <http://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms#Immigration> (retrieved 8 July 2018).
2. Edwards 2016.
3. Council of Europe 2017.
4. https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/STATmagazin/Bevoelkerung/2012_03/2012_03Migrationshintergrund.html (retrieved 8 July 2018).
5. In German: 'Es scheint mir einleuchtend, dass wir die Geschichten der zweiten und dritten Generation anders bezeichnen. Die stehen im Kontext der Migration, werden aber von denen erzählt, die selber gar nicht mehr gewandert sind. Eben postmigrantisch.'

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