

Introduction

Anna Meera Gaonkar, Astrid Sophie Øst Hansen, Hans Christian Post, Moritz Schramm

In recent years, the concept of postmigration has begun to gain traction across European academia. Journalists and politicians in Germany frequently refer to postmigration in their attempts to describe and cope with complexities of contemporary society shaped by past and ongoing migrations. In the German context, there has even been talk of the concept's "triumph march" (Piening 2017).¹ Interpretations of postmigration have also begun to circulate in countries including Denmark, the United Kingdom, France, Switzerland, Italy, Austria and Sweden, especially within the field of cultural and social studies.²

Recent studies engage the concept of postmigration as a means of addressing the social transformations and cultural struggles that are unfolding in contemporary European societies.³ Meanwhile, other approaches use the term as a marker for specific generational experiences or attempt to conceptualise and historicise the concept. The concept of postmigration thus emerges from multiple genealogies, all circulating simultaneously, and which are both distinct and overlapping. In one predominant reading, postmigration is described as a recent development within the cultural scene in Berlin, Germany. In this context, the concept is understood to have emerged primarily from artist-led activities and discussions between 2004 and 2008, when theatre director Shermin Langhoff, along with other

1 Note on translation: where translations from other languages than English were available these have been used; where this was not possible all translations from other language sources are our own.

2 See academic references in: France (Geiser 2008, 2015; Vitali 2011; Kleppinger/Reeck 2018; Luna-Dubois 2019), Sweden (Nilsson/Bunar 2016; Frykman 2017), Switzerland (Espahangizi 2016, 2018, 2021), Denmark (Vitting-Seerup 2017, 2018; Moslund 2019a; Petersen 2019a; Petersen/Schramm 2016, 2017; Schramm 2018, 2019, 2020; Schramm/Moslund/Petersen et al. 2019), Germany (Sharifi 2011, 2015, 2017, 2018; Kosnick 2015, 2018; Ritter 2018, Spielhaus 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2018; Ratkovic 2018, Tewes/Gül 2018; Foroutan/Karakayalı/Spielhaus 2018); Italy (Romeo 2006, Schramm 2020); UK (Bromley 2017; Meskimmon 2017; Stewart 2015, 2017; Gamal 2013, Moslund 2019b), Austria (Yildiz 2010, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2018; Yıldiz/Hill 2015, 2017, 2018; Hill 2018; Gaugele 2019).

3 Foroutan 2016, 2018, 2019a, 2019b; Schramm/Moslund/Petersen et al. 2019.

activists and cultural practitioners, began to label their work as “postmigrant theatre”.⁴ Much of the academic reception in Germany is directly influenced by the public success of postmigrant theatre in Berlin after 2008 (cf. Petersen/Schramm/Wiegand 2019: 3-7).

We also find attempts to connect postmigration to previous theoretical approaches, postcolonial studies in particular. On a methodological level, many scholars working with the concept of postmigration seem to be strongly influenced by postcolonial thinking, often pointing to analogies between discourses of postmigration and postcolonial studies, asserting that “postmigration presents the voice of migration” (Yildiz 2018: 22). In this sense, both postmigration and postcolonial approaches make “marginalized knowledge visible”, they challenge “national myths” and demand a new historical consciousness (ibid.). On an empirical level, however, some approaches employ post-migration, here with a hyphen, as a term to distinguish between various forms of migration movements – e.g. differences between internal European labour migration and postcolonial migration from former European colonies to their respective “motherlands” after the Second World War (Terkessidis 2017; Blanchard 2018). For example, Pascal Blanchard distinguishes between “two migrations” in France that are separated by the “colonial fracture” – a division which is often overlooked. Blanchard argues that there exists:

[...] a difficulty—or fear—in recognizing the existence of two separate “immigrations”. One of colonial origin, also coming from the near peripheries of the Empire at precise moments of our national history [...] and the other, of Western origin, which since two centuries is structured in waves (Germans, Belgians, Swiss, Russians, Italians, Poles, Spanish, Portuguese, Pied-Noirs), which experienced moments of violence and rejections, but gradually blended into the “national identity”, without experiencing a permanent return to their ancestors’ origins and situation. (Blanchard 2018: 181-182)

By emphasising the differences between migrations from the former colonies and more recent migrations from other European countries to France, Blanchard draws attention to the limitations and the specificity of postcolonial theory as a

4 See Kosnick 2015: 8, footnote 2, in reference to the organisation of the film festival Europe in Motion in 2004. Also mentioned is the festival Beyond Belonging from 2006, as well as the emergence of the Ballhaus Naunynstrasse as an arts and theatre space “that became nationally and internationally known for its focus on post-migrant cultural productions” (Kosnick 2015: 8, footnote 2). See also: Langhoff 2018 and the contributions of Lizzy Stewart and Roger Bromley to this volume.

model of explanation, arguing for the need to use concepts that refer to different, though overlapping, migration histories.

Some scholars do also focus on the empirical overlapping between postmigrant and postcolonial experiences, e.g. labelling the descendants of migrants from the former colonies as “post-migratory postcolonial minorities” – born and raised in France, but affected by “a racial and ethnic hierarchy inherited from the colonial period” (Kleppinger/Reeck 2018: 3). In this reading, postmigration is employed mainly as a generational marker, used to qualify and differentiate among the various postcolonial experiences. Meanwhile, other scholars argue for the need to expand postcolonial perspectives by including the forgotten histories of migration to Europe (see e.g. Regina Römhild’s contribution to this volume).

In this introduction, we do not seek to homogenise or obliterate the different usages of the concept of postmigration, nor do we want to trace the concept’s multiple genealogies and its contexts of emergence. Instead, we intend to provide an overview of some of the various contemporary conceptualisations of the term – indications that some of the interpretations have been developed independently.⁵ Our aim with the book is thus to allow for a substantial dialogue between different scholarly traditions on postmigration, without necessarily judging the validity of the various approaches. In our reading, the multiplicity of usages of the concept is a methodological and empirical strength, rather than a disadvantage (see also: Petersen/Schramm/Wiegand 2019: 6). To begin with, we will look at academic publications from a 1990s UK context from which the term postmigration first surfaces in European academia. While the term itself is not at the centre of these theoretical works, we argue that they nevertheless anticipate and pave the way for discussions and conceptualisations to come.

The usages of the term in the UK in the 1990s illustrate how notions of postmigration initially appeared in postcolonial negotiations of ethnicities and identities. It is clear that from the outset, the concept of postmigration challenged the field of migration studies, especially in regard to the rethinking of national identities and ideas of stable cultures and ethnicities. That is to say, the term functioned as a critical intervention in research and public debates long before it was employed in a similarly strategic vein by artists and activists in Germany in the mid-2000s. Through this intermingling of scholarly, political, cultural and artistic engage-

5 Many discussions on postmigration in France do not include the German debates in their texts, and vice versa. Likewise, the debates in the UK and other countries often seem to be unaware of the existence of other interpretations or downplay alternative interpretations as insignificant (see Foroutan 2019a: 50; see the German and French reception in Lizzie Stewart’s contribution to this volume). One notable exception is Myriam Geiser, who connects different scholarly traditions in her reading of German and French literature (Geiser 2015).

ments, the concept can offer complex, interdisciplinary understandings and conceptualisations of contemporary Europe and its challenges.

In this introduction, we seek to provide insight into the diversity and potential of postmigration studies. First, we present the initial thoughts on postmigration from the 1990s and their relation to postcolonial thinking. Secondly, we introduce recent conceptualisations of the term, which often include methodological considerations of traditional migration research and its pitfalls. Thirdly, we address some of the criticism of the concept of postmigration, and how it is possible to oscillate between its various usages. Finally, we introduce the contributions to this volume.

Early conceptualisations

Within some academic discussions, we find a persisting belief that the concept of postmigration has a singular cultural origin. Earlier academic usages of the term are sometimes downplayed as being limited to “concrete concerns, which affect migrants after they have migrated” (Foroutan 2016: 231; see also: Foroutan 2019a: 50). Contrary to this perception, our reading of several 1990s texts emphasises how postmigration emerges as part of earlier academic attempts to comprehend transformations of societies shaped by previous and ongoing migrations. The term “post-migration” – written with a hyphen initially – first surfaces in academia in the UK in the mid-1990s.⁶

Anthropologists Gerd Baumann and Thijl Sunier explore the concept in their 1995 anthology *Post-Migration Ethnicity: De-Essentializing Cohesion, Commitments, and Comparison*, which includes chapters on countries such as England, the Netherlands and Germany (Baumann/Sunier 1995a). In his studies on multiculturalism and national belonging some years later, political scientist Tariq Modood uses the expression “post-immigration ethnicities” to focus on transformations in multicultural Britain (Modood 1999: 39). Neither articulation of postmigration contextualises it theoretically, nor do they define the term specifically. The term remains at the periphery of their theoretical thinking and is used mainly to highlight general tendencies in society. From a historical perspective, the emergence of the term is telling, in particular when reading it against the backdrop of the

6 We write the terms post-migration, post-migrant etc. with a hyphen when discussing these earlier scholarly usages, but otherwise use the term without hyphen. Furthermore, we translate some of the German usages of the term – such as the term *das Postmigrantisches* – as “postmigration” or “the concept of postmigration”, in order to offer a better understanding of the conceptual intervention envisioned by those who created and embraced the term. On the translation of the term *das Postmigrantisches* into English see: Petersen/Schramm/Wiegand 2019: 8-9; for another translation of the term see the contribution by Juliane Karakayalı and Paul Mecheril in this volume.

intellectual and academic debates of the late 1980s and early 1990s. At that time, the expanding postcolonial theory and the emerging cultural studies in the UK began to engage concepts such as “culture”, “identity” and “ethnicity”. Previously, these concepts had been perceived as stable and as ahistorical dimensions, which determine individual and collective identities. Founding father and scholar of British cultural studies, Stuart Hall, challenged this predominant understanding of culture and ethnicity by focusing on the emergence of new ethnicities and new identities (Hall 1991).

While neither Hall nor other influential UK figures in postcolonial thinking or cultural studies specifically mention postmigration, Hall’s thinking directly influenced Baumann and Sunier’s and later Modood’s use of the term, albeit in different ways. Hall’s two 1989 lectures, “The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicities” and “Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities”, became particularly influential. Here, Hall challenges what he called “ethnic absolutism” in an effort to dismantle essentialist versions of ethnicity and identity, and to replace them with “multiple social identities” and an awareness of “the critical dimension of positioning” (Hall 1991: 57).⁷

In the wake of these lectures, scholars in the fields of political science and anthropology began to focus on what Modood, in direct reference to Hall, calls the “emphasis on the *historical* nature of ethnicity” (Modood 1994: 872, original emphasis). So, instead of considering ethnic identities as static and ahistorical, an increasing number of scholars come to understand the concept of ethnicity as part of ongoing conflicts and struggles unfolding in so-called multiethnic and multicultural societies in Europe. The concept of postmigration was thus developed through attempts to question established approaches to ethnicity. This is especially notable in Baumann and Sunier’s use of “post-migration” in the previously mentioned anthology *Post-Migration Ethnicity* from 1995. They observe that since the beginning of the 1990s, traditional notions of ethnicity have been largely rejected and replaced with “a recent consensus on de-essentializing our approaches to ethnicity” in academia (Baumann/Sunier 1995b: 1). While “ethnicity” has been widely dismissed as an analytical term, Baumann and Sunier acknowledge that ethnicity has simultaneously “conquered a strategic space in the language and the self-understanding of millions of people in the wake of international migration” (ibid.: 2). Addressing this tension, Baumann and Sunier focus on “post-migration ethnicity” to examine how ethnicity is used and negotiated in social life. Their “post-essentialist study of ethnicity” (ibid.: 3) explores “ambiguities of commitments and identifications that people labelled as ‘ethnic’ minorities actually enter” as well as “the cross-cutting cleavages that are so fundamental to social life in any plu-

7 See a new reading of the historical setting and its influence on the present: Espahangizi 2021 (in print); see also Hall 1992, 1993.

ral society" (ibid.: 4). The anthology focuses on different forms of "ethnic visibility", "new identities" and "mixing cultures" in countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, Greece and the UK (ibid.). It thus anticipates later approaches towards postmigration, such as more recent studies on the culture of "post-migrant youth" in contemporary Europe (e.g. Kosnick 2015: 8), and "transformation and cultural mixing processes" experienced by descendants of migrants (Geiser 2015: 127).

It is worth noting that while Baumann and Sunier are informed by postcolonial critiques, they do not focus primarily on the aftermaths of colonialism. With the term "post-migration ethnicity" their attention is on the overall negotiations of ethnicity and identity in plural societies that are shaped by past and ongoing migration movements from former colonies as well as from within and outside Europe. Their use of the term post-migration is part of the general expansion of postcolonial concepts towards other forms of migration, as mentioned above.

In the years that followed, a similar usage of the term postmigration began to circulate outside the field of anthropology. One of the most influential approaches is presented by political scientist Tariq Modood, who discusses post-migration, again with a hyphen, in relation to debates on Britishness and national identity. In his essay "New Forms of Britishness: Post-Immigrant Ethnicity and Hybridity in Britain", Modood seeks to map "new ethnicities", which have not previously been empirically described (1999: 34). In particular, he discusses Hall's assumption that new identities and ethnicities in 1990s UK can be subsumed under the political concept of "Blackness" (Hall 1991: 56-59; Modood 1999: 34-35). While Modood acknowledges the importance of considering ethnicities in Britain as fluid and hybrid to "expand the nation" (39), he is hesitant towards Hall's suggestion that ethnic groups are so internally complex that they have become "necessary fictions" – an assumption, which Modood deems to be "much exaggerated" (ibid.). Modood concludes that various empirical studies show that ethnic groups play a significant role in self-perception and group identities, especially among British Asians. In consequence, he rejects a unitary British identity based on one specific ethnicity and religion and instead embraces "British mixedness" and an "all-inclusive nationality" (ibid.). This leads Modood to pronounce a new "multicultural Britishness that is sensitive to ethnic difference and incorporates a respect for persons as individuals and for the collectivities that people have a sense of belonging to" (ibid.). Modood does not elaborate much on his theoretical use of the terms "post-migration" and "post-immigration", neither in the 1999 essay nor in his later work (Modood 2012). In his movement away from migration studies, which deals with questions of departure and arrival, and towards the study of the already existing multiplicity in European nation states, he is aligned with more recent theorisations of postmigration.

Contemporary conceptualisations

Contemporary conceptualisations of postmigration are often in line with the aforementioned early usages of the term, albeit with more theoretical focus and attempts to elaborate on the developing concept. Some research from British, French and Italian contexts centres on “postmigrant subjectivities” and on the specific experiences of “postmigrant generations” (Romeo 2006; Vitali 2011; Gamal 2013; Geiser 2015), which is also true for certain German-language conceptualisations (e.g. Foroutan 2010; Yildiz 2010). This approach is generally in accordance with early approaches from the UK in which the term “post-migration” is used as a specific label for the “third generation of migrants” (e.g. Yalcin-Heckmann 1995: 82). But as we will examine more closely now, the term has evolved in other directions in Germany in recent years. Since the 2010s, postmigration has especially developed into a critical practice within the fields of German culture and scholarship.

As previously mentioned, in Germany, the academic discussions are strongly informed by the success of so-called “postmigrant theatre”, which was established by artists and activists in Berlin in the early 2000s. The term was first used in 2004 by theatre director Shermin Langhoff together with Tunçay Kulaoğlu, Kira Kosnick and Martina Priessner during the Berlin workshop “Europe in Motion”. Later, postmigrant theatre was also employed at other cultural events such as the literature, music and film festival “Beyond Belonging” at the Hebbel am Ufer Theatre in 2006. In 2008, the term gained momentum when Langhoff and other activists and artists took over the independent Berlin theatre Ballhaus Naunynstrasse, which is situated in the multicultural neighbourhood Kreuzberg, and labelled it a postmigrant theatre. In the years that followed, postmigrant theatre became a major public success, which eventually led to Shermin Langhoff becoming head of the prestigious, state-funded Maxim Gorki Theatre in Berlin in 2013. After just one season, Maxim Gorki Theatre was named “Theatre of the Year” in 2014 by the influential theatre journal *Theater Heute* – an acknowledgement awarded to the theatre once again in 2016.⁸

In interviews, Langhoff has explained that she first came across the term postmigration in English-language academic writing.⁹ Her decision to label her

8 On the background of the postmigrant theatre see, Sharifi 2011, 2015, 2017; Nobrega 2011; Petersen/Schramm/Wiegand 2019: 33–37; Stewart 2015, 2017; Langhoff 2018; see also Lizzie Stewart’s contribution to this volume.

9 Langhoff may have been inspired by a conference organised in 1998 by Welsh literary scholar Tom Cheesman titled “Turkish-German Post-Migration Culture: Transnationalism, Translation, Politics of Representation”. German writer Feridun Zaimoglu participated, and Langhoff knew Zaimoglu from common activities and, presumably, through the Kanak Attak movement (see:

work as “postmigrant theatre” was strongly influenced by the challenges of cultural and political life in Germany. While the German film and music industries were becoming more representative of the diversity of society, the realm of theatre was still overwhelmingly white and homogenous. At the same time, labels such as “migration literature” and “immigrant films” were being discussed and inevitably rejected as external identity ascriptions by minoritised writers and artists (Ernst 2013: 291-294; Schramm 2018). For, as Langhoff explains in an interview in *Der Spiegel*, “since labelling is taking place anyway, then at least I want to take matters into my own hands” (Langhoff 2013). Langhoff elaborated on her motivation for exploring the postmigrant label in a 2019 documentary film:

The term had the effect that people now had to ask me: “What do you mean with ‘postmigration?’” It made it possible for us to define ourselves as artists and producers instead of being defined by others. [...] The term empowered us and made it possible for us to say: “No matter what we do, others will define us. Traits are ascribed to us. So, now we will take control and construct ourselves”. [...] Postmigration allowed for this. With the term we could finally decide how we want to situate and contextualise ourselves. (Post 2019)

Similar to the early debates in the UK, the postmigrant theatre was ignited by a demand to reframe one-dimensional notions of culture and belonging, and to make space for a plurality of voices and experiences. Arguably, Hall’s critical thinking on “new ethnicities” and “new identities” is mirrored in the artistic approaches by Langhoff and her contemporaries. Their self-labelling serves as a critical intervention against the persistent migrantisation of inhabitants as migrants or foreigners despite their belonging to Germany.¹⁰

The impact of postmigrant theatre led to ground-breaking academic discussions about possible conceptualisations of postmigration in Germany and in other German-speaking contexts, discussions that are ongoing. The concept was also embraced by a local artistic and cultural scene, and it took off from there, and was not directly influenced by scholarly discussions on “post-migration” or “post-migrant generations” that had been taking place in the UK and other European countries. A particularly influential academic initiative came with the founding of “Netzwerk für die kritische Wissensproduktion in der Postmigrantischen Ge-

Langhoff 2018; on the conference: Geiser 2015, Schramm 2018; on the influence of the Kanak Attak movement: Petersen/Schramm/Wiegand 2019: 35-36).

10 The artistic and cultural dimensions of the concept of postmigration, often relating to critical interventions, also stands on the shoulders of earlier activist and empowerment movements such as the *Neue Schwarze Bewegung* (the New Black Movement) and the Kanak Attack movement in Germany. See: Petersen/Schramm/Wiegand 2019: 35-36).

sellschaft” (Network for Critical Knowledge Production in the Postmigrant Society) in 2010, which included the scholars Iman Attia, Naika Foroutan, Viola Georgi, Urmila Goel, Juliane Karakayali, Birgit zur Nieden, Yasemin Shooman, Riem Spielhaus, Vassilis S. Tsianos and Gökce Yurdakul (Foroutan 2016: 230; Schramm 2020). The network was eventually absorbed into the later established section called “Postmigrantische Gesellschaft” (Postmigrant Society) in the German “Rat für Migration” (Council on Migration), a council connecting more than 150 Germany-based scholars from across migration studies.¹¹

In other words, an increasing number of scholars have begun to explore the new concept of postmigration as a critical intervention in migration studies, sociology, pedagogical studies, and in cultural and literary studies. In consequence, at least three different conceptualisations of postmigration can be distinguished within contemporary areas of study, including notions of a (I) *postmigrant generation*, (II) *postmigrant society*, and (III) *postmigration as an analytical perspective* (cf. Petersen/Schramm/Wiegand 2019: 11–25).

(I) In some German-language usages of the term, we find an idea of a specific *postmigrant generation*, which scholars argue has been neglected in public debates and research. This approach is, as we have discussed above, very much in accordance with the early usages in the UK and other European countries. The postmigrant generation is mainly defined by their experiences as descendants of migrants, who are being silenced in public discourse. More specifically, the postmigrant generation's experiences of having multiple, often transnational, belongings and mixed cultural heritages are not widely represented anywhere. As historian Kijan Espahangizi notes, the predominant discourse on matters of migration and integration failed to recognise and acknowledge these experiences (Espahangizi 2016, no page-number). Shifting the focus onto the identity of belonging to a postmigrant generation – and exploring the concept theoretically – can be understood as a reaction against this lack of recognition and representation.

Austrian sociologists Erol Yildiz and Marc Hill were among the first scholars in a German-language context to articulate the concept of postmigration as a “discursive approach against the ‘migrantization’ and marginalization of people who see themselves as an integral part of society” (Yildiz/Hill 2017: 277). In this way, they also contributed to highlighting specific experiences of the postmigrant generation in contemporary Europe. For instance, Yildiz addresses the postmigrant generation's multiplicity of transnational experiences and shifting subject positions (Yildiz 2010). The conceptualisation of a postmigrant generation thereby challenges the predominant public discourse that “continues to treat migration as specific, exceptional, historical phenomena and in which it is habitual to differentiate between native normality and ‘immigrant problems’” (Yildiz/Hill 2017: 277).

¹¹ See: <https://rat-fuer-migration.de/about-us/>

As is the case in the studies by Baumann and Sunier, as well as those conducted by Modood, the focus is on a postmigrant generation's transnational relationships, their life stories and ways of living (Yildiz/Hill 2017: 274).

The different articulations from both the UK and Germany contribute equally to the extensive attempts to move beyond the binary logic of e.g. leaving and arriving, and to acknowledge the existing diversity and multiplicity in European societies.

(II) In the 2010s, the focus on postmigrant subjectivities shifts to society as a whole, generating the notion of a *postmigrant society*. The concept of the postmigrant society emphasises conflicts, obsessions and negotiations taking place in societies shaped by migrations, including conflicts around representation, racism and structural exclusion. In a series of empirical studies titled *Deutschland postmigrantisch* I, II and III, political scientist Naika Foroutan and her research team examine Germany as a postmigrant society, as well as how postmigrant aspects materialise across its various federal states such as Berlin, Hamburg, Baden-Württemberg.¹² In those studies, as well as in Foroutan's individual research, the scope of postmigration expands to better address the conflicts, ambivalences and antagonisms unfolding in societies shaped by previous and ongoing migrations (Foroutan 2019a). Sociologists Juliane Karakayalı and Vassilis S. Tsianos propose a broad definition:

With the cipher "postmigrant society" we refer to the political, cultural and social transformations of societies with a history of post-colonial and guest worker immigration. The adjective postmigrant does not seek to historicise the fact of migration, but rather describes a society structured by the experience of migration – which is also relevant for all current forms of immigration (such as flight, temporary migration), both politically, legally and socially. (Karakayalı/Tsianos 2014: 34)

The movement away from a conceptualisation of a postmigrant generation and toward postmigrant societies marks a significant shift from singling out an individual social group to broadening the scope to transformations throughout the society. This shift is a result of crucial methodological questioning and can be interpreted as a reaction against what ethnologist Regina Römhild calls a "fundamental dilemma" for critical migration research (Römhild 2017: 70). According to Römhild, critical migration research seeks to identify migration as "a productive societal and cultural force" to counter anti-immigration discourses in the public sphere (*ibid.*). However, the strategy of "endlessly repeating this narrative of alternative, transnational, hybrid migrant worlds" leads to an impasse (*ibid.*). Römhild argues that while the life-worlds of migrants and their descendants are often de-

12 Foroutan, Naika/Canan, Coşkun et al. 2014a, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b, 2016, 2018a, 2018b.

scribed as “especially dynamic and mobile”, research often considers these life-worlds “fixed on the periphery, as a ‘special research area’ outside the ethnically unmarked, immobile ‘majority society’” (ibid.). Furthermore, she identifies a “migrantology”, which, by focusing on migrants and their descendants constantly, and possibly unintentionally, reproduces and reinforces the binary distinction between migrants and a “national society of immobile, white non-migrants” (ibid.).

In the 2014 essay “Was kommt nach dem transnational turn?” (What Comes after the Transnational Turn?) Römhild and fellow anthropologist Manuela Bojadžijev argue for the need to overcome this “migrantology” by shifting the research perspective to society itself. In relation to the growing interest in postmigration, they write:

In an increasingly popular interpretation, the term postmigration is currently being used and appropriated as a label for, and by, people who have not had any direct migration experience but who are still marked as migrants, sometimes for generations. (Bojadžijev/Römhild 2014: 18)

Postmigration thus becomes “a politically useful catchword” that helps highlight the “continual hierarchical inclusion of persons as migrants” (ibid.). It also shows how such hierarchies support the powerful and widespread “imperative of integration” dominating public discourse (ibid.). However, this interpretation of the term also bears the danger of reviving the old label, i.e. migrant, but now including young “post”-migrants of various generations (ibid.). Consequently, Römhild and Bojadžijev advocate a widening of the postmigration perspective:

For a radical renewal of this perspective, it seems more interesting to us to expand the term beyond the narrow circle of those who are marked as migrants, and rather use it in relation to the concept of a postmigrant society, which considers everyone to be “affected” by migration and as part of shaping and developing this new condition. (14-15)

Centring on postmigrant societies involves taking a closer look at the societal negotiations linked to migration movements. Postmigrant societies are seen as conflictual spaces characterised by polarisation, ambivalence, antagonisms and new alliances (Foroutan 2019a). From this perspective, the aim is to avoid singling out and scrutinising migrating and migrantised people, and to instead focus on the power relationships and struggles unfolding in society as a whole. Pointing to the potentials of postmigration research, Römhild asserts: “What is lacking is not yet more research about migration, but a migration-based perspective to generate new insights into the contested arenas of ‘society’ and ‘culture’” (Römhild 2017: 70).

(III) The conceptualisation of postmigrant societies is applied in conjunction with the notion of postmigration as an *analytical perspective* (Yildiz 2013: 177; Römhild 2017; Schramm 2018; Petersen/Schramm/Wiegand 2019: 13-14). This third perspective has been taken up and discussed in cultural studies in the late 2010s by cultural theorists Anne Ring Petersen and Sten Moslund. In their essay “Towards a Postmigrant Frame of Reading”, they explore the idea of a postmigrant perspective as “a chosen research perspective” (Moslund/Petersen 2019: 67)¹³. Such a perspective, they argue, introduces a new mode of interpretation, which can be applied to any cultural or artistic phenomenon. Petersen and Moslund elaborate: “While some researchers try to define a corpus of ‘postmigrant literature and art’, and, by doing so, risk defining ‘postmigration’ as something reserved (in this regard) to cultural productions by migrants and descendants, we prefer to work with the idea of postmigration as an analytical perspective that can be applied to every art product” (ibid.: 68). Instead of reproducing the focus on a specific societal group – or even reaffirming what Bojadžijev and Römhild have deemed a “migrantology” – their analytical approach shares common ground with the perspective on postmigrant societies, as put forward by Foroutan, Spielhaus and others.

In a similar vein, cultural theorist Moritz Schramm argues that a postmigrant analysis should not be defined by its subject matter, but rather by its capacity to offer “an analytical view of the negotiations about migration and its consequences, which appear in the literary texts and cultural products themselves” (Schramm 2018: 89). As a consequence, the postmigrant perspective allows for what Foroutan has called a “critical-analytical meta-analysis” (Foroutan 2016: 237), which challenges prevalent perspectives. The postmigrant perspective thus makes apparent how dichotomies, which often go unchallenged, are “contingent and can therefore be changed” (Schramm 2018: 91). As Yildiz and Hill argue, the concept thereby helps “to counter the polarizing patterns of thinking that underlie common classifications like ‘native/migrant’ and ‘us/them’” (Yildiz/Hill 2017: 274). As seen in the discussions on de-essentialising ethnicity and culture in the UK context of the 1990s, contemporary conceptualisations of a postmigrant perspective can be understood as critical interventions in the public and academic discussions, offering, Yildiz asserts, a “radical questioning of the conventional view on migration” (Yildiz 2013: 178).

From an even broader perspective, we can place both early and current attempts to articulate postmigrant perspectives as part of what sociologist Boris Nieswand and ethnologist Heike Drotbohm have referred to as the “reflexive turn” of migration studies during the last decades (2014). In early migration studies, concepts such as “culture”, “society” and “ethnicity” were often considered unambiguous analytical tools and used as such. However, the reflexive turn was ignited

13 See also: Petersen 2019a; Moslund 2019a.

by an “intellectual crisis”, which led to a deeper examination of such concepts and their use. Since the 1990s, these concepts have become widely regarded as charged topics of political discourse, rather than neutral descriptors. They have lost their innocence and, accordingly, their persuasiveness (Nieswand/Drotbohm 2014: 1-2). The concept of postmigration is, in its different variations, an attempt to overcome this intellectual crisis and offer new critical analyses and perspectives in multiple academic fields. Despite any differences of interpretation or application, the concept allows for focus to be directed onto the struggles and conflicts around concepts such as “migration”, “ethnicity”, “society” and “culture”, without reverting to outdated, and in many ways problematic, notions of migration and its consequences.

Criticism and future perspectives

The concept of postmigration has, as we have seen, emerged in different ways: it has been adopted in artistic and cultural interventions, often with a clear political agenda, and has been used to provide an analytical perspective on transformations and struggles in contemporary society. In the 1990s, approaches to postmigration questioned the methodological potentials and pitfalls of migration research. While the plurality of approaches can arguably be considered a strength, the widespread usage of the term postmigration has also triggered various forms of criticism, mostly from within the field. Such criticisms are mainly concerned with normative uses of postmigration and especially how normative understandings may imply idealised societal improvements.

One critical response to the concept argues that it is the prefix “post” in postmigration that harbours a risk of being associated with progression and overcoming. In her 2016 work *Undeutsch. Die Konstruktion des Anderen in der postmigrantischen Gesellschaft* (Un-German. The Construction of the Other in the Post-migrant Society), cultural theorist Fatima El-Tayeb interjects that some uses of the term postmigration may have us believe that Germany has solved its issues with migrantisation and exclusion of certain parts of the population. Against this backdrop, she argues:

If we see “postmigrant” as analogous to “post-racial” as a description of a condition, as a claim of overcoming, of taking the next step in a continuous process of societal development and progression, then it can be ascertained that Germany, in the best case, has only taken the very first step to confront matters of migration, but that it is not reasonable to speak of “postmigration” (El-Tayeb 2016: 12).

El-Tayeb's argument that analogous uses of "postmigrant" and "post-racial" are misguided euphemisms for progression is contextualised by referring to notions of a post-racial society in a US context. After Barack Obama was elected president, there were controversial claims insisting that America had finally become post-racial (ibid., see also e.g.: Valluvan 2016; Bojadžijev 2016). Here, "post-race" implied that the US had moved beyond the notion of race and had thereby overcome structures of racism and exclusion – a conclusion, which El-Tayeb disagrees with and which forms the basis of her comparative criticism of postmigration. El-Tayeb's rejection of the term's idealistic and unrealistic aspects corresponds in part with other criticisms directed towards the notion of postmigration, in particular film and media scholar Nanna Heidenreich's reading of postmigration as a cipher for "progression" and "arrivedness" (2015: 300). While Heidenreich acknowledges that the term "expresses the certainly long-overdue acceptance of migration as fundamental fact for contemporary society", she criticises the term's often one-dimensional use in cultural and social studies (ibid.: 297). Simply put, the "post" in postmigration becomes the migrant's semantic integration into society. The problem with postmigration-as-arrivedness, Heidenreich argues, is that it does not accept the plurality and diversity of perspectives and experiences. Rather, this understanding of the concept advocates a linear history of integration, which presumes that former "migrants" become "postmigrants" to thus "arrive" in society (ibid.: 297-302; for more on Heidenreich's criticism see also: Petersen 2019b: 79).

The question remains: if critics of the "post" in postmigration are not on to something, then what can this "post" potentially do? While Sara Ahmed does not specifically address postmigration, she offers fitting criticism, which makes us aware of the danger of "overring" the past by noting: "In assuming that we are 'over' certain kinds of critique, they create the impression that we are 'over' what is being critiqued." (Ahmed 2012: 179). As we have set out to highlight, the majority of contemporary conceptualisations of postmigration acknowledge that migration is neither something that has ceased nor something to be overcome, to borrow from educational scholar Paul Mecheril (Mecheril 2014). This goes for scholars using postmigration as a descriptor for a *postmigrant generation* (I), scholars working with the concept of *postmigrant societies* (II) as well as scholars applying postmigration as an *analytical perspective* (III). On the contrary, in theoretical discussions, it is repeatedly argued that the notion of postmigration does not indicate that migration has been overcome, nor does it indicate a historical determination of a definitive period of migration. Rather, the different usages of the concept seem to converge around the fact that migration is a historically and continuously formative part of European societies, while the consequences of migration movements are often negotiated belatedly, both on individual and societal levels. Additionally, the concept is used to de-essentialise migrantising understandings of ethnicity

and identity, and also serves as a cipher for understanding the struggles and conflicts unfolding around migration and its aftermaths.

Postmigration thereby implies a steady focus on the complexity of contemporary societies in which the obsession with migration in the public sphere correlates with patterns of exclusion, racism as well as a multitude of life-worlds and experiences (Spielhaus 2018). In this context, the prefix “post” signals a theoretical troubling of the word rather than an idealised overcoming. Used in this sense, the term allows a focus on how migration is framed, negotiated or even silenced in public and academic discourse, without affirming the distinction between “migrants” and a white, and allegedly “non-migrating”, majority. From this perspective, border regimes, discourses on the subjects of migration and integration, as well as political obsessions with migration are all part of the contested struggles unfolding within postmigrant societies (Römhild 2018, Foroutan 2019a).

Islamic studies scholar Riem Spielhaus argues that the concept of postmigration even allows us to ask whether “debates and research on migration actually are about *migration*?” (Spielhaus 2018: 139). Spielhaus asserts that postmigration makes it possible to challenge the supposedly self-evident conjunction between “Muslim” and “migrant” and to reinforce the fundamental differences between categories such as “migrant”, “migration background”, “(former) nationality”, “ethnicity” and “religious affiliation” (ibid.). Following Foroutan, one strength of the concept of postmigration is precisely that it can expand on the complexity of modern societies, including ambivalences, ambiguities, antagonisms and the emergence of new alliances and solidarities beyond notions of ethnicity, gender or cultural heritage (Foroutan 2019a: 198–209). As is the case with other theoretical approaches that make critical use of the prefix “post”, such as postcolonial studies, the concept of postmigration thus seeks to question, deconstruct and rethink powerful categories, as Foroutan puts it, by “highlighting their empirical as well as analytical and normative limitations” (2019b: 149). She concludes:

“Post-migration” 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, the term post-migrant does not seek to depict – as falsely assumed and even criticized – a state in which migration has ended [...]. Rather, it provides a framework of analysis for conflicts, identity discourses and social and political transformations that occur after migration has taken place (ibid.: 150).

The concept of postmigration enables us to direct attention on the postmigrant reality of Europe and European societies, without reinforcing a problematic and distracting distinction between an presumably sedentary non-migratory in-group into which newcomers and immigrants have to integrate. Rather, the concept allows for new perspectives on the struggles and conflictual spaces unfold-

ing in relation to migration, whether from former colonies or from European or non-European countries. With the different usages applied to it, the term opens up for new and different approaches to examining societies that have been fundamentally shaped by earlier migration movements and are still being shaped by ongoing migration.

In this anthology we focus primarily on postmigration as critical interventions within the arts as well as in social and cultural studies. There are, however, an overwhelming variety of approaches, which extend beyond the scope of this book. Some of these approaches include a focus on the structure and influence of a “post-migration ecology” in educational studies (Nilsson/Bunar 2016), others focus on social mobility in postmigrant societies (Tewes 2018), and on the novel dynamics of postmigrant spaces (Tewes/Gül 2018; Nohl 2018). Cultural studies have also produced research on postmigrant club cultures (Kosnick 2015), Muslim comedians in Europe (Spielhaus 2018), postmigrant media (Ratkovic 2018), anti-racist curatorial work in museums (Bayer/Terkessidis 2018; Frykman 2017) and the politics of diversity in cultural institutions (Vitting-Seerup 2017; Vitting-Seerup/Wiegand 2019). Additionally, literary studies have focused on postmigrant experiences and forms (Lornsen 2008; Peters 2011; Geiser 2015; Moslund 2019b; Schramm 2018), philosophical scholarship has discussed “postmigrant reason” (Schmitz/Schneickert/Witte 2018b), while the political sciences have attended to discussions on postmigrant concepts of democracy (De La Rosa 2018) as well as emerging solidarities in postmigrant alliances (Stjepandic/Karakayalı 2018). This list of diverse approaches is not exhaustive and represents only a few examples which offer insight into the plurality and analytical productivity of the continuously developing concept of postmigration.

Contributions

In this volume, all of the contributions deal with art, culture and/or politics in contemporary Europe. The different chapters address distinctive, yet overlapping issues, which we believe are crucial for future research in postmigrant societies and postmigrant Europe. The contributions respond to theoretical questions arising from scholarly debates on postmigration by addressing cultural expressions and exploring the notion of a postmigrant condition, as well as contemporary issues such as visions of inclusive public spheres and urban spaces. The anthology is divided into three main sections dealing with 1) discourses and interventions, with 2) how postmigrant struggles and experiences are represented in cultural and aesthetic expressions, and with 3) the spatial dimension of the postmigrant condition, particularly in relation to postmigrant spaces and public spheres.

The contributions assembled in the first section of this book deal with discourses on postmigration, as well as with interventions into existing discourses on migration and integration. This section sets out with Regina Römhild's vision for a new research agenda in reading Europe as a postmigrant space. In her contribution "Postmigrant Europe: Discoveries beyond ethnic, national and colonial borders", she advocates a European dimension in studies on postmigration, including the conjunction between postcolonial and postmigrant influences and background stories. It is important, she argues, that the postcolonial realities of Europe are viewed in conjunction with the often silenced histories of migration, including the postmigrant presence in contemporary Europe.

Another theoretical approach is offered by historian Kijan Espahangizi in "When do societies become *postmigrant*? A historical consideration based on the example of Switzerland", where he discusses the historical specificity of postmigrant societies. While some researchers have argued that societies can be characterised as postmigrant the moment they politically recognise their migration reality, Espahangizi focuses on a "process of transformation during which different social or institutional organizations and actors – each with their own interests – realize that society is changing due to immigration and acknowledge the existence of a change that had hitherto not been part of their self-perception." Espahangizi determines that this process is contested and non-linear. It unfolds in the context of an expansive discourse on migration and integration that includes both anti-immigration sentiments and the recognition of societal changes caused by migration.

Societal negotiations and conflicts around migration are also addressed in the contribution by sociologists Juliane Karakayalı and Paul Mecheril, "Contested crises. Migration regimes as an analytical perspective on today's societies". Taking as their point of departure the recent social disputes on migration and flight in Germany, they discuss the societal function of "crises" and "crisis-orchestration" in relation to migration. According to their reading, the proclamation of a crisis is of particular significance, given that it allows competing actors to persuade others that their own interpretation of the social reality is valid. Various actors develop diverging and conflictual interpretations of crises, which make up part of the general conflicts taking place between politically opposed groups and different and temporary alliances. Karakayalı and Mecheril analyse those conflicts through the concept of a "migration regime" which allows for the analysis of the complexity of social negotiations and struggles that typically unfold around the proclamation and orchestration of a crisis.

Another take on discursive interventions and conflicts is brought forward in Lizzie Stewart's contribution, in which she draws attention to questions of the "brand value" of postmigration in theatrical and public spheres. With "'The cultural capital of postmigrants is enormous': Postmigration in theatre as label and

lens”, Stewart explores the ambivalence of the term postmigration among theatre practitioners often associated with it, and focuses on the tension between its potential to serve as a “lens” that offers new perspectives in the social sciences, versus serving as a “label” in the competitive cultural scene. By taking a step back from the more celebratory discussion of the term as a lens and returning to the term as a label, and by drawing on analogies to postcolonialism as “brand value”, Stewart discusses the entanglement of activism with the production of culture in a capitalist context, as well as providing important insights into the developing application of the term postmigration in the academic sphere.

The significance of artistic interventions in public discourse is also central to the last contribution of this first section, Marc Hill and Erol Yildiz’s “A postmigrant contrapuntal reading of the refugee crisis and its discourse: *‘Foreigners out! Schlingensief’s Container’*”. Here, Hill and Yildiz engage with the much-discussed “container action” by the German film and theatre director, author and performance artist Christoph Schlingensief, staged during the Wiener Festwochen (Vienna Festival) in 2000. They read Schlingensief’s art performance – confining twelve “asylum seekers” in a container in front of the Vienna State Opera, and letting the Austrian public deselect individuals among them for deportation – as an intervention into everyday routines and public discourse, disrupting the power of the asylum dispositive. Inspired by postmigrant theory, they propose a contrapuntal reading of the art performance, interpreting the performance as an inversion of the hegemonial apparatus of power, questioning exclusionary practices and logics.

While the chapters included in the first section deal with discourses and interventions, the contributions that make up the second section of this anthology all focus on how postmigrant struggles and experiences are represented in cultural and aesthetic expressions, particularly in the field of literature. What unifies these contributions is the specific attention to the ongoing negotiations and conflicts depicted in cultural and artistic expressions.

Such conflicts and tensions become visible in this section’s first contribution, Roger Bromley’s “Class, knowledge and belonging: Narrating postmigrant possibilities”. Bromley offers a reading of two contemporary novels from the UK, Guy Gunaratne’s *In Our Mad and Furious City* (2018) and Zia Haider Rahman’s *In the Light of What We Know* (2014). In Bromley’s readings of the novels, he observes the necessity to broaden the postmigrant perspective by emphasising the importance of class structures and social inequalities. In his view, a postmigration narrative must be based not only upon a full acknowledgement of the empirical reality of heterogeneity, but also upon the removal of social inequalities and injustices at all levels.

Negotiations and conflicts of postmigrant writers are addressed in the second contribution included in this section, Anja Tröger’s chapter “Postmigrant remembering in mnemonic affective spaces: Senthuran Varatharajah’s *Vor der Zunahme*

der Zeichen and Pooneh Rohi's *Araben*". In her reading of the novels, Tröger draws attention to the protagonists' experiences of marginalisation and othering, often engendering affective resonances between past and present. Tröger presents the different reactions to these experiences of marginalisation and shows how the protagonists' conflicts are embedded into, and induced by, the societies in which they live. By connecting their affective experiences to societal structures, Tröger depicts the need to shift the focus away from relating the protagonists' struggles to migration, and instead to focus on scrutinising prevalent exclusionary mechanisms in the societies themselves. As in the case of Bromley's contribution, Tröger uses her reading of the novels to challenge prevalent academic traditions, arguing for the need to reconsider and address interrelated patterns of exclusion and marginalisation.

Other forms of exclusion and marginalisation are addressed in Maïmouna Jagne-Soreau's chapter "'I don't write about me, I write about you'. Four major motifs in the Nordic postmigration literary trend". In her contribution, Jagne-Soreau addresses the racialising category of "migrant writers" and discusses the problematics connected to the thematisation of non-whiteness in contemporary Nordic literature, including novels and poems from Swedish, Finnish, Danish and Norwegian contexts. Her reading proposes shifting the focus from the authors' backgrounds to the literary content. By referring to a range of selected literary works, Jagne-Soreau instead shows how similar themes and strategies are used to portray a so-called *postmigration generation*.

In "Towards an aesthetics of migration: The 'Eastern turn' of German-language literature and the German cultural memory after 2015", Eszter Papis develops a comparative overview of contemporary developments in German-language literature, especially in relation to a recent tendency often labelled "the Eastern turn". This concept was coined by literary scholar Irmgard Ackerman to describe the growing influence of writers with Eastern European backgrounds in Germany. Papis examines the notion of an "Eastern turn" in German literature from a critical perspective, arguing that this concept does not always imply a change in perspective, or even a change of paradigm. Rather, it often reaffirms existing binary dichotomies such as the distinction between "migrant literature" and "German literature", sometimes even reinforcing ethnic categories of belonging. Accordingly, Papis proposes a different reading, combining elements of what is sometimes referred to as "the ethics of memory" with aesthetic dimensions. Following cultural theorist Mieke Bal's concept of "migratory aesthetics", she argues that all aesthetics are necessarily migratory, and that the "ethics of memory" should be expanded through research into the aesthetics of migration, in order to support the understanding of the complexities of the postmigrant condition.

Similarly, Markus Hallensleben's "Towards an aesthetics of postmigrant narratives: Moving beyond the politics of territorial belonging in Ilija Trojanow's *Nach*

der Flucht (2017)” also centres on the work of a German-language writer with an Eastern European background. Here, Hallensleben examines Trojanow’s collection of aphorisms *Nach der Flucht* (After the Flight, 2017), which he reads as a critical stance against current politics and societal processes of global (im)mobilities and forced migration. In Trojanow’s collection of aphorisms, Hallensleben finds a positive acceptance of exile and migration, which is seen as a transformative force, establishing and supporting “a new core narrative of plural societies”. Hallensleben reads *Nach der Flucht* as an attempt to replace a Eurocentric, linear narrative of territorial belonging with “one that aims to create multidirected memories and transitional spaces of belonging.”

This section is closed with Hans Christian Post’s “*We Are Here*. Reflections on the production of a documentary film on the theatre in postmigrant Denmark”, which presents the film project *We Are Here* and offers reflections on the production process as well as the finished product. Directed and produced by Hans Christian Post – as part of the collaborative research project “Art, Culture and Politics in the ‘Postmigrant Condition’” at the University of Southern Denmark between 2016 and 2018 – the film focuses on the concept of postmigration and on postmigrant developments in contemporary Danish theatre. In his contribution, Post discusses the considerations and challenges visualising and representing postmigrant developments in cultural expressions and also considers the reception of the documentary. A link and password are included, so that the documentary can be accessed online (with English subtitles) for teaching and conference purposes.

In a variety of ways, the contributions assembled in the second section of the anthology all try to map and discuss struggles and conflicts, which are at the heart of postmigrant societies, through artworks and cultural expressions. In this context, aesthetics are not perceived as a form of escapism, but rather as a specific form of knowledge production, which can help us understand, or even transform, prevailing structures and experiences.

The third section draws attention to the spatial dimension of postmigrant society, in particular in relation to postmigrant spaces, such as public art, shantytowns, cafés and refugee centres. The concept of postmigrant spaces has drawn attention in academia in recent years, including the fields of urban studies, art studies and philosophy (Yildiz 2013; Tewes/Gül 2018). The contributions in this section expand on such studies, in part by looking at art products and their role in contemporary society.

The final section opens with Anne Ring Petersen’s “The square, the monument and the re-configurative power of art in postmigrant public spaces”, where she engages with art in public spaces, taking her starting point in the demonstrations led by the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and the ongoing debates on whether monuments depicting colonial hierarchies should be demolished. She goes on to examine two art projects and the debate around art in public spaces: the

award-winning public park *Superkilen* (The Super Wedge) from 2012 situated in the multicultural Nørrebro district of Copenhagen, and Jeannette Ehlers and La Vaughn Belle's collaborative sculpture *I Am Queen Mary*, which is the first monument in Denmark to critically commemorate Danish colonialism and complicity in the transatlantic slave trade, and which was installed at the historically significant location of the Port of Copenhagen in front of the West Indian Warehouse. In her reading of these art projects, Petersen focuses on how "art in the public spaces of a society transformed by (im)migration can shape and is, in turn, shaped by the disagreements and negotiations resulting from the need to accommodate increasing cultural diversity and new claims for participation, visibility and the recognition of difference."

Álvaro Luna-Dubois' contribution also focuses on the spatial dimension of migration heritage. In "Recovering migrant spaces in Laurent Maffre's graphic novel *Demain, Demain*", Luna explores a recent narrative commemorating migrant housing in France. In reading the two-volume graphic novel *Demain, demain* (Tomorrow, Tomorrow, 2012, 2019) by Laurent Maffre, as well as engaging in theoretical discussions on the relationship between space and place, he examines the sociomaterial transformations in the greater Paris area from the 1960s to the 1970s, when people living in the shantytowns on the outskirts of Paris were relocated to a *cité de transit* (transitional housing estate). By exploring the hybrid visual and textual form of the graphic novel, Luna contributes to our understanding of France as a dynamic space marked by past migrations, a component that is central to the concept of postmigration.

In their contribution "Zamakan: Towards a contrapuntal image", Katrine Dirckinck-Holmfeld, Amr Hatem and Abbas Mroueh focus on another art project from Copenhagen. They revisit the video installation *Zamakan (TimeSpace)*, which they produced in 2017, and reflect on the process behind the production. They frame the video as a contrapuntal image, which is not only a representation of migration and flight, but which also forms a certain image where "the image in itself enfold the line of flight, the route of migration, in its very materiality and in the means of production". In this sense, they explore how the image of migration is dissociated from its current representation in society and "begins to form other affective assemblages, other modes of production, to become the very condition for the cinematographic image". Migration is thus seen as the very material condition of imagination, production and circulation. Finally, Dirckinck-Holmfeld, Hatem and Mroueh conclude by discussing the importance of the cultural venue and café Sorte Firkant (Black Square), which they co-established in 2016 in collaboration with filmmakers, writers, and cultural producers from Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq, who came to Denmark during the period from the 1980s up to the present. The intimate space of the venue is able, they assert, "to attract various people across generational, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds", and thus

to create a place defined by pluralism and affect. In this context, the authors argue, it is no longer a question of making art that represents a migrant community or which addresses migration as a theme. The intention is to create spaces and infrastructures or “relational geography” (Irit Rogoff) that help to dislocate forms of migrant representations in a given space and to expand and push the limitations of the current hegemonic political climate.

In “‘Tense encounters’: How migrantised women design and reimagine urban everyday life”, Elisabeth Kirndörfer and Madlen Pilz draw attention to other venues dealing with plurality and diversity in urban spaces. Against the backdrop of a postmigrant perspective, which they combine with María Lugones’ works on decolonial feminism, they focus on different practices of migrantisation and subalternisation that women with migration experiences encounter in urban public and semi-public spheres in the cities of Leipzig and Munich. In particular, they focus on social settings created in order to foster encounters between urban residents with and without migration histories, such as neighbourhood centres or women’s cafés, and elaborate on how migrantised women resist the experiences of othering and differential inclusion. Kirndörfer and Pilz also explore the women’s repertoire of “infrapolitical practices” in the form of everyday practices of resistance and reimagination. The role of neighbourhood centres or women’s cafés are thus understood as spheres of critical negotiations, enabling the reimagination of urban life, based on multiplicity and diversity.

In the final contribution, “Contemplating the corona crisis through a postmigrant lens? From segregative refugee accommodations and camps to a vision of solidarity”, Claudia Böhme, Marc Hill, Caroline Schmitt and Anett Schmitz address visions of inclusive urban spaces. They take the coronavirus that first emerged in December 2019 as a point of departure for reflecting on how society deals with forced migration from a postmigrant perspective. Examining and discussing the living conditions in refugee accommodation centres and camps in Greece, Germany and Kenya, they demonstrate that the deficient housing circumstances of refugees constitute a global problem. Böhme, Hill, Schmitt and Schmitz propose that this problem can be overcome by exploring the potentials of living together in solidarity, negotiating “concepts of cosmopolitan, open and inclusive urban spaces as starting points for imagining a different future.” Accordingly, they present their vision for a plan to achieve a state in which belonging to an urban space is not viewed as being based on the criterion of national citizenship, and instead imagine a space beyond the politics of separation and exclusion, and conceptualise postmigrant visions of urban, cosmopolitan, inclusive societies.

Perspectives and acknowledgments

What unifies the various contributions that make up this anthology is their shared focus on art, culture and politics in contemporary Europe, as well as the understanding of the concept of postmigration as being a dynamic and conflictual state of negotiation. In multitudinous ways, all the contributions perceive postmigration as an open-ended concept that can help us better comprehend the dynamics, conflicts and struggles of contemporary societies. This convergence is shared, even as the contributions cover as wide ranging matters as the power of migration regimes and the opportunities to intervene and to potentially reframe existing discourses, cultural expressions and the representation of postmigrant affective memory structures and patterns of exclusion, as well as spatial dimensions such as the housing conditions of refugees and immigrants in postmigrant societies. As was already pointed towards in the early conceptualisations of the term, the contemporary focus is not on presumably stable identities, or on struggles between cultural groups or ethnicities. Rather, the focus is on the antagonisms and ambivalences in contemporary societies, which have been inevitably shaped by former and present migrations. This anthology therefore centres on the related struggles and dynamics of the ongoing negotiations unfolding in the wake of migration.

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