

Call for papers

Locating postmigration in English-speaking debates on migration, arts and culture

DIVCULT workshop, 24-25 March 2025, Vienna

Organised by Wiebke Sievers (Austrian Academy of Sciences) and Michael Parzer (University of Vienna)

Postmigration was first used in British migration and multiculturalism studies in the 1990s (Gaonkar, Hansen, Post, & Schramm, 2021). The concept gained more prominence since the early 2000s in Germany where it was used by artists, researchers and activists alike to counter the idea of integration. Central for the term gaining general attention was Shermin Langhoff who implemented postmigrant theatre first at the Ballhaus Naunynstraße and later at the Maxim Gorki theatre in Berlin (Sievers, 2017). Initially, the term was used to put centre stage the realities of those who are born in Germany, but have migrant history and are therefore still perceived as migrants. Postmigrant theatre was a platform to air their stories with a view to imagining identities and cultures beyond the imagined homogeneous national communities. In addition, the approach has been used to counter political and media discourses on the so-called refugee crisis (Hill, 2023).

More recently, there has been a tendency to move beyond using the term for individual groups towards applying it to societies that have long immigration histories, but where migration is still an issue of contention and migrants and their descendants suffer from exclusion, discrimination and racism (Petersen, Schramm, & Wiegand, 2019). The prefix post does not imply that these societies no longer receive immigration, nor does it suggest a distancing from migration – as is the case with regard to post in post-colonialism. Rather, it hints towards overcoming the perception of migration as a threat and an emergency situation (Foroutan, Karakayali, & Spielhaus, 2018). It regards migration as a norm to such an extent that distinctions between migrants and non-migrants no longer make any sense (Römhild, 2017). Postmigrant perspectives then aim for the equality of all people regardless of their origin, ethnicity and religion: „They involve a longing for a future community in which everyone belongs and all humans are recognized as beings of equal worth, regardless of backgrounds and visible differences” (Moslund, Schramm, & Vitting-Seerup, 2019, p. 245).

In academia, the term post-migration has mainly been used in the German social and educational sciences, albeit not necessarily in studies that deal with arts and culture, as well as in literary and theatre studies. Over the last years, the concept has slowly also travelled beyond German borders.

Our workshop aims to discuss the specificity of postmigration in comparison to other terms and identify new avenues the term may open up for our discussions on arts, culture and migration. Several researchers have hinted to overlaps with concepts such as integration, cultural diversity, multiculturalism, interculturalism, super-diversity, conviviality (Petersen, 2023), demingranticisation, decolonization and indigenization (Hallensleben & Schramm, 2023a, 2023b).

We invite theoretical and/or empirical contributions that discuss one or several of these concepts in relation to arts, culture and migration. Contributors do not necessarily have to discuss postmigration and can, of course, be critical of postmigration. We also encourage to present first ideas and work-in progress. We expect to have a keynote that will introduce the concept of postmigration as a basis for a joint debate on these concepts and their use in our field of study.

Please send proposals containing a title and an abstract of no more than 300 words to Michael Parzer (michael.parzer@univie.ac.at) and Wiebke Sievers (Wiebke.Sievers@oeaw.ac.at) by **3 February 2025**. We will inform you whether your contribution has been accepted by 10 February 2025.

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