

How to Define Postmigrant Societies Historically?

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The notion of postmigrant society implies a temporal dimension: it refers to societies »after migration«. But if migration is an anthropological constant, as migration scholars tend to emphasize, aren't then all societies postmigrant, or at least all modern nation states that co-created the modern notion of migration in the 19th and early 20th century? Or should we rather limit the notion of postmigrant societies to societies that have officially, for example by a proclamation by the government, recognized the social reality of immigration, like in the case of Germany in 2001? These two alternative answers to the question "when do societies become *postmigrant*?" highlight the need for a more elaborated historiographic approach to postmigrant societies. The focus on the temporal dimension allows to rethink the concept of postmigrant societies. In my paper I will argue to contrue postmigrant approaches as "histories of the present« with multiple contested genealogies rather than stories of linear temporality with an unambiguous political act or moment in time when societies become (or not) postmigrant.