Thomas Faist*

# The Blind Spot of Multiculturalism:

# From Heterogeneities to Social (In)Equalities

* Bielefeld University

Comments welcome to: Thomas.faist@uni-bielefeld.de

2012

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"Until a few years ago, our chosen multicultural approach allowed some cultural and religious groups to pursue an aggressive strategy against our values. The targets of this ill-conceived 'attack' were individual rights, equity of gender, respect for women and monogamy. We have to combat this dangerous attitude, which can destroy the fabric of our societies, and we have to work hard to build up and pursue a positive integration approach." (Franco Frattini, 2007; then EU Commissioner responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security; cit. in Hansen 2008: 375)

## 1. The Dearth of Empirical Research on Multiculturalism and Unacceptable Short Circuits

Since the 1990s the death of multiculturalism has been declared on many occasions. Recently there has been yet another flurry of obituaries, this time from heads of state around Europe. In April 2010, Chancellor Angela Merkel declared that "Multikulti"—the German nickname for multiculturalism—had "failed, and failed utterly". Within weeks British Prime Minister David Cameron and French President Nicholas Sarkozy seconded these and issued similar statements. They all emphasized that multiculturalism has been a divisive force in coherent national societies. In a similar way, Franco Frattini did the same for the whole of Europe (see above). The contexts of the renewed obituaries were quite different: Merkel jumped on the bandwagon in a debate on the failure of integrating "Turks and Arabs" in Germany, and Cameron contributed to the debate on multiculturalism criticizing the segregation of migrants and even terrorist threat by Islamic suicide bombers. Frattini made his remarks in a speech in which he aimed to justify the need for new labour migration to Europe in order to compete with the United States for "the best and the brightest" talent available. Nonetheless, there is an overarching context, which in Europe relates mostly to international migration[1] and its consequences. More and more, the academic and public debates have moved almost exclusively to a consideration of the unwelcome aspects of multiculturalism. Increasingly, all kinds

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[1] This paper concentrates on issues related to the consequences of cross-border migration. Needless to say, the debate is much more comprehensive and includes all kinds of national, ethnic, and other minorities.

of problems are tied to "culture", expressed in terms of economic outcomes or security concerns. The question is if and how this culturalist hodgepodge can be disentangled.

The semantic strategy of all the critics of multiculturalism just mentioned is clear: cultural markers, such as ethnicity and religion, are immediately tied to certain outcomes. This implies that the markers themselves, or what I will call heterogeneities, already imply certain social outcomes, such as non-integration of immigrants or the clash of cultures. However, this short circuit is unacceptable. After all, the institutional context, the resources available to the groups involved, and a host of other factors may determine whether ethnicity, for example, is used as a marker associated with inclusion into or exclusion from certain segments of the labour market. This short circuit is not only common among politicians who strive to attract undecided voters and rally their supporters around the party's flag. It can also be found among social scientists. For example, critics of multiculturalism have referred to 'desolidarization' as a consequence of multicultural citizenship (e.g. Wolfe and Klausen 1997), while defenders of multiculturalism have maintained that multiculturalism policies have led to increased equalities (Banting and Kymlicka 2006). Given the sweeping claims advanced by both critics and defenders of multiculturalism, it is indeed astonishing,that the bulk of this work shares something in common insofar as it has "largely revolved around normative theory." (Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008) They go on to suggest that this wealth of normative theory can be contrasted to a poverty of empirical research on multiculturalism. More specifically, and this is the focus of this paper, we know very little about how heterogeneities—such as ethnicity, religion, gender, class, professional status, educational credentials, or nationality (legal citizenship)—turn into inequalities or equalities. Although there is an abundant literature on the normative basis of multiculturalism, a framework for the systematic analysis of the genesis of (in)equalities out of heterogeneities is missing. Yet we will need to develop elements of such a framework before staging an informed discussion on multiculturalism policies and their consequences. In short, the goal of this analysis is to contribute to a sociological underpinning for evaluating the claims made in such discussions, with an emphasis on Europe (with occasional references to North America). Refocusing the view onto the linkage between heterogeneities and (in)equalities, and the genesis of inequalities and equalities out of heterogeneities, helps to place multicultural policies and rights as part of the processes of the production of inequalities and equalities (cf. Diewald and Faist 2011 for a broader framework).

In the second part of this work the central terms of the analysis—multiculturalism and multicultural citizenship, heterogeneities, and inequalities—are defined. The third section outlines the core debate on multicultural policies, presenting some of the main strands of the argu-

ments put forward by both critics and defenders. This part also identifies rudimentary mechanisms advanced by previous research to account for desirable or undesirable consequences of multiculturalism. The fourth part takes a more systematic look at conceptual tools in order to capture the link between heterogeneity and inequalities. Toward this end the concept of boundary-making is introduced. While this concept advances our understanding of the genesis of inequalities out of heterogeneities, it is the broader concept of social mechanisms that holds the promise for shedding light on the processes involved. This concept is elaborated in the fifth section. The analysis concludes in the sixth part with considerations on whether the goal of multiculturalism, namely 'citizenization' in the national realm, can be captured by thinking within the national container.

## 2. Multiculturalism, Heterogeneities, Inequalities

No matter which words we use—integration, assimilation, incorporation, or insertion— all of these normatively loaded terms hold the promise of equality for immigrants. Nonetheless, the other side of the coin reveals manifold inequalities, such as high unemployment, residential segregation, or religious extremism. Multiculturalism, along with assimilation, has been one of the main paradigms of integration and of policy aimed at addressing such inequalities and promoting further equality. And even though multiculturalism may mean many different things—a demographic description, an ideology, a set of policies, or a political theory of modern society—one can discern a core tenet in its normatively oriented intellectual lineage: to overcome social inequalities based on cultural markers (heterogeneities) by shaping cultural, civic, political, and economic relations via public policies. In essence, multiculturalism emphasizes the protection of the rights of minority groups or immigrants as a means to increase their sense of recognition and belonging. If successful, this outcome not only goes some way toward achieving a high degree of substantive equality, but would also contribute to overall national unity or social cohesion. The fundamental argument of the proponents of multiculturalism has been that the practice and recognition of cultural traditions, language, and religion is crucial to personal and group identity and therefore a precondition for successful integration into all other spheres of life and society.

Multiculturalism as a paradigm of immigrant integration essentially aims to further the process of 'citizenization' via multicultural rights, and is thus appropriately called multicultural citizenship (Kymlicka 1995). It goes beyond an understanding of formal and legal equality (nationality) and reaches toward a substantive understanding of citizenship. In this notion of

citizenship it is not only the social integration of minorities and/or immigrants which is at stake but national (societal) integration. Correspondingly, the critics of multiculturalism usually connect policies of multiculturalism with detrimental effects on national unity—for example, claims about the incompatibility between a high degree of cultural diversity (such as ethnic pluralism) and welfare state solidarity (as measured by welfare state expenditures and rights).

Here, heterogeneity is used to denote markers such as gender, class, ethnicity, or nationality because the term seems to be more neutral compared to the alternatives of diversity and difference. The term diversity already carries that which is to be explained, namely the perception and valuation of difference, and often quite positive, such as in "diversity management". In notions of diversity management or managing diversity, the issue of inequality is almost absent. It is not part of the concern. Instead, in the private sector it is hitherto "private" competencies, such as knowledge of languages useful for the company, which come to the fore. In the public sector, such as in hospitals, schools, or the police, the main goal in serving groups with migrant or minority backgrounds is improving service delivery (Faist 2010a). Furthermore, the terms diversity and difference mostly refer to cultural markers. Yet such a limitation is already part of the problem because cultural markers (e.g., ethnicity or religion) interact with non-cultural ones (e.g., class; see Gordon's [1964] early concept of "ethclass"). In order to avoid policy valuations as much as possible, it is helpful to return to a sociological use of the term heterogeneity.[2] We can distinguish various sorts of heterogeneities: heterogeneities can (a) be ascriptive, as with age, ethnicity, nationality, or gender; (b) refer to cultural preferences, dispositions, or worldviews; (c) relate to competencies or qualifications as societally legitimated mechanisms of attributing life chances; and finally (d) refer to activities, such as wage and household labour.

Inequalities in this analysis refer to boundaries between categories. In other words, inequalities arise from categorizations of heterogeneities. Such categorizations generate unequal access to resources (re-distribution), to status (recognition), and to decision-making (power). There are differential rewards based upon the categorizations of heterogeneities,

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[2] "Heterogeneity refers to the distribution of people among different groups. The larger the number of groups and the smaller the proportion of the population that belongs to one or a few, the greater the heterogeneity is in terms of a given nominal parameter, such as the ethnic heterogeneity of a community or the religious heterogeneity of a society. Cross-cutting group memberships enhance heterogeneity by making it multiform, as indicated by various combinations of ethnic and religious background—Italian and Irish Catholics, black and white protestants, Russian and German Jews." (Blau 1977: 77)

such as gendered wage differences. In short, inequalities are those categorizations of difference based upon heterogeneities that generate unequal returns and have been institutionalized (using somewhat different terms: Tilly 1998). Resulting inequalities then refer to both statistical distributions of resources (objective positions) and the perceptions of inequalities.

# 3. Critics and Defenders of Multiculturalism: Poorly Substantiated Claims

Both the defenders and critics of multiculturalism make many claims about the production of inequalities and equalities out of multiculturalism policies. The defenders focus on how equalities come about through multicultural policies, while the critics emphasize how multicultural policies foster inequalities. Quite often, the critics refer to cultural heterogeneities or characteristics more broadly, and not necessarily linked to policies of multiculturalism, such as the level of ethnic group pluralism. Nonetheless, in order to be clear about what policies of multiculturalism are, a typological overview is provided (Figure 1). Policies of multiculturalism can be differentiated into cultural, political, and socio-economic spheres (vertical axis), and refer to the individual or the collective level (horizontal axis). Most policies relevant for immigrants can be found in the cultural realm and they pertain to exemption rules regarding language and religion. On the collective level, policies are intended to encourage the representation of (immigrant) cultures in school curricula and in state institutions. In the political realm the core is constituted by special individual political rights and the institutions required to enforce them; rules affecting the collective concern the representation of immigrant groups in public bodies and institutions. Finally, in the socio-economic realm anti-discrimination rules are paramount on the individual level, while on the collective level we speak of enabling measures supporting economic empowerment. It is important to point out that many of the policies were developed with respect to national minorities and indigenous peoples, but later on some of them were made applicable to immigrant groups as well (cf. Winter 2010).

**Figure 1: Multiculturalism – An Overview of Cultural, Political, and Socio-Economic Rights and Policies**

| LEVEL / SPHERES | *PERSONS* | *COLLECTIVES* |
|---|---|---|
| *CULTURAL (recognition)* | ■ Extension of fundamental human and cultural rights, such as special rights to exercise religious practices (e.g. exemption rules; halal food in schools, ritual slaughter, Islamic burials) <br> ■ Right to mother tongue instruction in public schools | ■ Representation of the traditions, culture, religion of immigrant categories in curricula and state institutions; <br> ■ State subsidies for immigrant groups <br> ■ Representation of immigrants in state institutions such as the police |
| *POLITICAL (decision-making)* | ■ Right to vote for resident non-citizens (denizens) in local elections; dual citizenship <br> ■ State institutions for immigrant integration (e.g., ministries, commissioners for immigrants) | ■ Immigrant groups represent their interests in elective councils, advisory bodies, corporatist arrangements <br> ■ Special representation rights in public organizations such as political parties |
| *SOCIO-ECO-NOMIC (re-distribution)* | ■ Affirmative action for members of disadvantaged groups | ■ Economic privileges for disadvantaged collectives <br> ■ Restitution of land ownership |

The policies listed in Figure 1 are more or less contentious. First, anti-discrimination policies can be called the "only game in town" and it is on this level that Nathan Glazer's book title "We Are All Multiculturalists Now" (1997) is quite apt. This is not only true for the US, where civil rights legislation paved the way in the 1960s (with precursors in the 1940s), but increasingly also for Europe. For example, the anti-discrimination rules issued by the European Union (EU) in 2000 have now come to be part of the legislation of all member states: the Racial Equality Directive (204/43/EC), the Employment Directive (2000/78/EC), and the Community Action Programme against Discrimination (200/750/EC). On this level, at least in the EU, there is little political contention in the public sphere. When it comes to the rights of individuals as members of groups, however, the situation is, needless to say, quite different. As the ongoing contention around the hijab or head scarf suggests, intersecting goals of religious

and gender rights and discrimination clash in debates. Quite often, for example, the claim in favour of wearing the hijab for religious reasons is countered by allegations that the rights of women are violated. Another component of multicultural citizenship —group rights which would ensure (partial) self-government of immigrant groups—is out of the question for migrants: such rights are reserved exclusively for so-called historical-national minorities which are able to make claims dating back to the time before nation-states were established.

For all the public contention around the normative desirability of multicultural rights and the actual empirical consequences, there is precious little evidence of a wholesale retreat of the European states from multiculturalism in the sense of abolishing or rescinding  multicultural policies and rights. Instead, two elements stand out. First, while in some countries such as The Netherlands we can indeed see some policy change since the early 1990s, the claim that this is evidence of a retreat has to be qualified. While "ethnic minority policies" of the 1980s foresaw a two-pronged approach consisting of anti-discrimination rules in the socio-economic realm and more explicit policies to support religious and cultural collective identities, it was primarily the former which were actually implemented. The latter emerged as giving some latitude to Muslim institutions but no full-fledged group rights. And in other countries such as Sweden the term "multiculturalism" has simply been replaced by "integration". Second, in most European countries immigrants have been subjected to more rigorous and demanding requirements in naturalization procedures, such as language and civics tests. What we are finding increasingly is a duality of liberalization and illiberalism. On the liberalization side, multicultural policies have not retreated much and the liberalization of citizenship has progressed, for example by increasing toleration of dual citizenship. On the illiberal side, selected segments of the population have been subjected to stringent exams: they must prove their worthiness to remain in the country of immigration and to be integrated. This tendency extends from social welfare recipients who are pushed into workfare to immigrants who are the object of suspicion—unless they adapt to what is considered in some immigration states cultural essentials such as "Leitkultur".

## The Critics of Multiculturalism

The criticisms waged against multicultural policies and multicultural citizenship can be encapsulated in four sets of exemplary arguments. First, polices of multiculturalism are held to aggravate cultural distinctions and to endanger societal cohesion through the policy-induced ethnicization of migrant groups. Multiculturalism policies are thought to fuel cultural conflict and thereby increase levels of opposition to immigrant rights. For example, Sniderman and Hagendoorn suggest that multicultural policies have encouraged identity politics in The

Netherlands on the part of the majority groups (Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007). Dutch government policies had provided funding for separate schools, housing projects, broadcast media, and community organizations for Muslim immigrants. In their view, the very policies meant to persuade majority and minority groups that they are part of the same society actually strengthened the view among both categories that they belong to different societies. In the end, the authors argue, the divisions have contributed to anti-immigrant sentiment, and have made it easier for xenophobic parties to garner votes.

Second, cultural distinctions caused by policies of multiculturalism and ethnicization can lead to socio-economic segregation which in turn fosters spatial segregation and socio-economic exclusion (cf. Barry 2001: 8). Thus, for example, schooling in the mother tongue in segregated institutions might reinforce separate identities, leading to the devaluing of school diplomas and ultimately to the exclusion of migrants or minorities from attractive positions in the formal labour markets.

Third, quite a few critics hold that special group rights lead to internal oppression within culturally-defined groups. The debate around this issue has been especially pertinent regarding gender as a marker of heterogeneity. In particular, public debates have focused on the encouragement of oppression and violence through forced marriages, female genital mutilation, and honour killings (Hirsi Ali 2008). Some theorists of democracy regard these trends as particularly worrisome because, in their view, they could lead to a disregard of basic human and political rights and unravel the fabric of socio-moral resources in democracies (Offe 1998; critically: Fish and Brooks 2004). The greatest worry of these critics is that multicultural tolerance promotes radical cultural relativism.

Fourth, and here we come full circle to the first argument mentioned, the general climate of mistrust between cultural groups results in exclusionist rhetoric and a vulgar linkage between cultural traits and socio-economic and socio-political outcomes. This argument goes well beyond policies of multiculturalism and leads us back to the politicians' statements mentioned at the beginning. One of the more prominent ones is the 'decline of civilization' argument, something of a revival of Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*, written in the 1920s. "Culture" in various forms—the wrong kind of culture—is seen as incompatible with economic competitiveness and social equality. This kind of vulgar cultural determinism has gained ever more attention over the past several years, culminating, for example, in a recent public debate in Germany around the book *Deutschland schafft sich ab: Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen*, (trans. Germany Abolishes Itself: How we are putting our Country at Risk), written by a former member of the executive board of the Bundesbank, Thilo Sarrazin. He

argues that because "Turks" and "Arabs", also labelled "Muslims", are culturally unfit—they oppress women, force them to wear headscarves, and separate them spatially (for counter-evidence, see Fouratan et al. 2010)—they cannot be part of the nationally-bound population if it is to survive and thrive in an economically competitive and globalized world. Sarrazin differentiates between, on the one hand, Muslims, whom he casts as the cultural other, a demographic time bomb, and a potential underclass, and, on the other hand, the many immigrants of German origin from Eastern Europe, the Asians, and the East Europeans, who, he argues, do reasonably well at school and contribute to societies in all sorts of ways. Ultimately, Sarrazin's work is a brew of cultural essentialization with a neoliberal account in which national economic competitiveness counts, amplified by populist simplifications around cultural traits. The social democratic ideas of equality and societal modernization are turned on their head.

While these general criticisms have often been vague and lacking in solid empirical supporting evidence (except perhaps the first one), the debate on multiculturalism and the welfare state has been more specific both theoretically and empirically.[3] The contentious issue between defenders and critics of multiculturalism has been the trade-off or incompatibility between heterogeneity and solidarity. The critics have alleged that policies of multiculturalism privilege "diversity" over solidarity and have argued that negative impacts of multicultural policies occur through the following mechanisms. First, there is a crowding out effect which is reminiscent of vulgar Marxism: Multicultural policies and their consequences reroute time and resources from redistribution (necessary to fight inequalities) to recognition. Put another way, multiculturalism derails time and other resources from the 'right' kind of struggle over redistribution to the 'wrong' kind of involvement with multicultural recognition. Second, there is a corroding effect: policies of multiculturalism contribute to cultural heterogeneity and thus divide the welfare state. The result is declining solidarity with co-citizens (Wolfe and Klausen 1997). The corroding effect can be substantiated by statistical evidence. Looking at Europe and the US, Alesina and Glaser (2004) find that public spending tends to be lower in countries with higher levels of ethnic and racial heterogeneity, even if other factors are held constant. These authors suppose that the majority public in ethnically more heterogeneous countries more easily withdraws support from social programs that redistribute material resources to persons they conceive of as "strangers" and not part of "us".

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[3] This paragraph heavily draws on the discussion in Banting and Kymlicka (2006).

In sum, the critics have made numerous claims but there is still a surprising silence when it comes to dealing systematically with the underlying relationship between heterogeneities and inequalities, more precisely the odyssey from heterogeneities to inequalities. Even those studies using rigorous empirical methods, such as Alesina and Glaser (2004), offer statistical correlations but no sound empirical validation of social mechanisms such as corrosion and crowding out, which account for the processes of de-solidarization. In short, there are statistical correlations but no explanations. By contrast, the defenders tend to deny an inherent trade-off between diversity/heterogeneity on the one hand and solidarity, civicness, and democracy on the other hand. Quite the reverse: Banting and Kymlicka (2006) even argue for mutual reinforcement of diversity and solidarity. They also contend that the effect of multicultural policies does not depend simply on the policies themselves but also upon the larger institutional setup. Often, policies of multiculturalism are part of historical settlements in nation-building, as is the case in Canada or Belgium, and immigrants have been the later beneficiaries of such policies, not unlike Civil Rights legislation in the US which was directed first at African-Americans but later on also included categories such as Hispanics. This proposition can be derived from a close reading of comparative-historical studies on North America and Europe, which shows how national minority groups and first nations sometimes paved the way for immigrants (Winter 2010).

The proponents of multiculturalism have developed their defence along three lines. The first generation produced political-philosophical arguments. There is thus an abundant literature on philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of multicultural rights and citizenship (e.g. Kymlicka 1995, Taylor 1992, Young 2000). These deliberations focus either on national minorities and first nations, or provide general musings on the benefits of diversity. In none of them do immigrants figure prominently. Yet in Europe public debates about multiculturalism took place precisely in a context of immigration. This is significant because there are practically no group rights for immigrants, not to speak of rights to self-government.

Nonetheless, there are, second of all, conceptualizations of multiculturalism that emphasize groups. There has been an effort to extend liberal citizenship to include collectives. For example, Tariq Modood focuses on religion and argues that integration of Muslim immigrants in the Western world is not possible within some narrow forms of liberalism (Modood 2007). His focus is not on the rights of individual believers but on collectivities, that is, religious communities. It is worth noting that Modood does not place equality at the centre but defines civic respect as the main goal. In this view civicness as an attribute of collective groups is a prerequisite for civic respect. This change in emphasis and semantics parallels the seismic shift in public discourses from a language of multiculturalism to one of "civic integration" in Eu-

rope. For instance, official documents of the European Union (EU) have lately launched the concept of "civic citizenship" (cf. British Council Brussels 2005).

Third, while Modood focuses on collective agents and religion as culture, other thinkers have tried to rethink multiculturalism and shift away from culture toward rights. Along these lines Anne Phillips (2007) contends that critics of multiculturalism misrepresent culture as the explanation of everything persons from minority and non-Western groups do; and as we have seen, this applies to critics and some defenders alike. She puts forward a spirited defence of multiculturalism that dispenses with the notion of culture and proclaims a "multiculturalism without cultures". In her analysis of gender relations, Philipps sees groups as the manifestation of inequality. Instead, individuals themselves need to be placed at the core of multiculturalism. A comparison of Modood and Philipps raises the interesting question as to whether all heterogeneities can be treated the same way, in this case religion and gender. This is not to argue that there are no functional equivalents. As Zolberg and Woon (1999) found in their comparative work on the US and Europe, the focus of contention in the US on the Spanish language and in Europe on Islam provides for somewhat different dynamics in public debates and politics but both debates demarcate clear boundaries and associated strategies of boundary-making. This would suggest that historical and institutional context would also play an important role in understanding which kind of heterogeneity is debated and connected to which kind of consequence, and why. We thus have yet another reason to look more closely at how heterogeneities relate to inequalities/equalities.

# 4. Toward Social Mechanisms: Boundary-Making

We need to go beyond an impressionistic look at the consequences of multicultural citizenship and look at the mechanisms which account for the production of inequalities and equalities out of heterogeneities. Unearthing these mechanisms will help us to explore both the effects of public policies of multiculturalism and, even more broadly, the nexus of cultural heterogeneities and (in)equalities. I approach this challenge with the help of the concept of social mechanisms. Before introducing the concept of social mechanisms, I discuss another concept which moves in this direction, namely boundary-making.

The boundary-making approach is helpful since it addresses directly the danger of essentializing categories and thus the tendency toward "groupism" (Brubaker 2004). Too often social scientists have used politicized categories for analysis to denote persons and groups. In es-

sence, the boundary-making approach heeds the call of "doing gender" (West and Zimmermann 2002) and thus engages in "doing ethnicity". Boundary-making refers to dynamic processes. Boundaries define specific patterns of relations and representation between sites located on one or the other side. Thus boundaries denote not only social relations but above all social representations, perceptions, and evaluations (Barth 1969; Wimmer 2008). It is in this way that boundaries relate to the subjective perception of inequalities and not simply to the statistically measurable differential distribution of resources. Boundaries are based upon categorizations of heterogeneities. Therefore, boundary-making is significant for inequalities because categorizations of heterogeneities are a basis for perceiving and evaluating inequalities. At the same time, boundaries are important as legitimizing unequal resource distribution (Tilly 1998).

Various strategies are involved in boundary-making (Zolberg und Woon 1999). First, there is boundary-crossing, which can be conceived of as an individual strategy, when persons of a minority group are accepted as belonging to the majority (cf. Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*). Second, there is boundary-shifting: entire groups are perceived now to belong to the whole of (national) society. A case in point is the observation that when questioned in surveys German respondents consent to the notion that former labour migrants from Spain, Portugal, or Italy are nowadays regarded as belonging to "us" (see below). Third, there is boundary-blurring, when boundaries of access to the dominant group become porous, as has occurred with the liberalization of citizenship rules, such as the increasing toleration of dual citizenship (Faist 2010b).

The fundamental question then is: Which boundaries and boundary-making processes are relevant for the genesis of (in)equalities? Not all of them are equally important and they are certainly subject to change. From the late nineteenth century and throughout much of the twentieth educational inequalities in Germany could be connected to religious belonging, and the boundary of inequality ran between religions, more specifically between Catholics and Protestants (Weber 1980: 21, fn 1). Over the past several decades, however, the significance of Christian religious denomination as a marker of educational inequality has declined. In the meantime new signifiers have entered—Islam, for example,  a codeword for (under-)class in debates on educational credentials. Again, this raises the question of how we move analytically from heterogeneities to (in)equalities.

Heterogeneities usually interact (cf. Collins 2000: 42), and they also interact with non-cultural ones, such as professional categories or social class. Migrants have frequently been viewed through an ethnic lens that assumes migrants' activities to be centred in ethnic and national

categories of identity, whether as a culture of home and family or (as in the transnational migration literature) a culture that is homeland-oriented. More recently, primarily religious categories such as Muslims have been added. As a result of this privileging of ethnic and religious identities, many studies have failed to theorize social practices and activities not congealing around common ethnic or ethno-religious identities—take gender, age, or professional affiliation, for example. In sum, boundary-making is a helpful approach to the idea and dynamic of social mechanism. It can be considered as a general mechanism which accounts for the perception and evaluation of heterogeneities and how they are tied to inequalities. Yet this needs to be complemented by a more comprehensive set of social mechanisms.

# 5. Social Mechanisms: From Heterogeneities to Inequalities and Equalities

Social mechanisms can be defined as "a delimited class of events that alter relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations" (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001: 24). And "(p)rocesses are frequently occurring combinations or sequences of mechanisms" (Tilly 2005: 28). The term social mechanism thus refers to recurrent processes or pathways, linking specified initial conditions (not necessarily causes in the strict sense) and specific outcomes, the latter of which can be effects produced or purposes achieved. Formally, one can thus define social mechanism (M) as a link between initial conditions (input I) and effect (outcome O). M explicates an observed relationship between specific initial conditions and a specific outcome. The short formal expression then is: I-M-O.

A social mechanism-based kind of explanation aims toward causal reconstruction of processes leading to defined outcomes. Mechanism-based statements—not to be confused with mechanistic statements, since most social mechanisms are not mechanical, as in machines—are generalizations about recurrent processes (Mayntz 2004). Mechanism-based explanations do not look for statistical relationships among variables (Bunge 2004) but seek to explain a given social phenomenon—an event, structure, or development—by identifying the processes through which it is generated. There is no necessary claim that such mechanisms are akin to covering-laws. A social mechanism-based explanation would claim that certain outcomes occur sometimes. Mechanisms can be analyzed on various levels of aggregation (Hedström and Bearman 2009); for example, socio-psychological mechanisms

such as agenda-setting or stereotyping, social-relational ones such as opportunity-hoarding, or macro-structural mechanisms such as "structural violence" (Galtung 1969).

Examples of social mechanisms significant for the (re-)production of inequalities are—in addition to boundary-making—exclusion, opportunity-hoarding, exploitation, and hierarchization (see Figure 2), while inclusion, redistribution, de-hierarchization, and 'catching up' constitute mechanisms which can further equality between categories of persons and groups (Figure 3). The following discussion sketches selected general and specific social mechanisms. The preliminary list of general mechanisms presented here draws on old and new classics in the social sciences, such as inclusion and exclusion and opportunity-hoarding (Tilly 1998) as variations of social closure (Max Weber) [4], exploitation (Karl Marx) and redistribution, and hierarchization and de-hierarchization (Therborn 2006: 13). These general mechanisms are specified by concrete mechanisms in order to link them to empirically observable processes.

## Social Mechanisms: The Production of Inequalities

In addition to the general social mechanisms described above, there is another general mechanism that should not be forgotten, namely boundary-making. The perception and evaluation of heterogeneities is important, as heterogeneities are always perceived and evaluated, and actors use such valuations in the process of producing inequalities. [5]

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[4] In the Weberian understanding of social closure, exclusion and also inclusion are not used simply as dichotomous codes—such as insider/outsider or in a systems theoretical understanding—but as gradual forms, which also capture the degree of exclusion and inclusion (Weber 1972: 201-203, 420, 433).

[5] What cannot be achieved here is an exemplary embedding of these mechanisms in applying comprehensive theories (e.g., rational choice, neo-institutionalism, actor-oriented institutionalism, etc.). Also missing is a detailed description of the context in which such mechanisms work. This is a task for empirical analysis.

**Figure 2: General and Specific Mechanisms in the Genesis of Inequalities out of Heterogeneities**

| *General Social Mechanisms* | *Specific Social Mechanisms (Examples)* |
|---|---|
| **Boundary-Making** | Distantiation (e.g., nationality → religion); Stereotyping (e.g., status matters) |
| **Exclusion** | Human and political rights (e.g., restriction of dual citizenship) |
| **Opportunity-Hoarding** | Corrosion (de-solidarization) |
| **Exploitation** | Informal & irregular work (e.g., household & care work) |
| **Hierarchization** | Genderization; Ethnicization; Hiring rules |

One pattern of boundary-making is of particular relevance here, namely boundary-shifting. In Germany, for example, data from the General Survey in the Social Sciences (*Allgemeine Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaften*, ALLBUS) suggest that between 1996 and 2006 significant shifts took place in boundaries between migrant groups and the dominant group ("German-Germans"). The dominant group in 2006 clearly perceived certain migrant groups—Italians, Spaniards, and Greeks—as being part of its own. Rapprochement seems to have taken place (see Figure 3). However, there were also categories toward which no change occurred or which experienced even an increase in dissimilarity, namely "Muslims." (Fincke 2009). Quite to the contrary, the reverse seems to have occurred in the case of the category "Muslims"—there is evidence for greater social distance and the mechanism of distantiation (see Therborn 2006: 12) seems to have been at work. In a way, one could even speak of a new boundary, as "Turks" have during this time metamorphosed into "Muslims". This mechanism of distantiation has created social distance between the dominant group and minority groups by way of defining the 'other' as culturally distinct in religious ways. This has probably been reinforced by mechanisms such as stereotyping, but also by thematization and agenda setting: the "Muslim" has variously served not only as an object of social integration but also as the "other" in the context of terrorism, securitization, and an impending "clash of civilizations".

An intersectional analysis is important to overcome unjustified simplifications. The changes just indicated by the shifting of boundaries and the concrete mechanisms involved do not yet answer the question of which interactions are regarded by the various groups as equal or

unequal. Social status, among other markers of heterogeneity, makes a difference in how, for example, ethnic or religious categories are evaluated by dominant groups. Field experiments—quasi-experimental research regarding hiring in labour markets—suggest that discrimination is starkly reduced if the interaction partners are perceived to be equals with respect to social status. Socio-economic positions and majority group language skills are strong predictors (de Beijl 2000 on discrimination in recruitment processes). We thus encounter intersections of ethnic belonging, status, and language competencies.

Since it is usually much easier to exit from groups, organizations, and states than to enter them, mechanisms of closure assume an important role in accounting for the genesis of inequalities. One of the central questions involved is: Who belongs to "us"? This can be seen in rules of admission and membership. As to admission on the state level, immigration policies make the differential inclusion and exclusion of categories quite obvious. Nowadays, in most Western immigration countries, the so-called highly-skilled are bound to experience a fast track to residence and citizenship, while the low-skilled service population is expected to rotate. Again, this is pushed one step further in neo-liberal, populist discourses of boundary-making: it is only the economically active population—high achievers in formal labour markets—which is valued (Sarrazin 2010). As to membership on the state level, citizenship rules constitute a rather mixed bag and refer to contradictory developments. On the one hand, the liberalization of rules has been quite visible in the past few decades (e.g., eased access to citizenship in terms of requirements such as length of stay, shorter waiting times). On the other hand, the requirements for those "wanted but not welcome" (Aristide Zolberg) have been stepped up, as can be seen, for example, in labour market activation policies ("fordern & fördern"). The latter are clearly exclusionary and have led from a social right to welfare to workfare. Interestingly, this broader pattern applies not only to immigrants but also to those dependent on subsidies from the welfare state.

Opportunity-hoarding, in the words of Charles Tilly (1998), occurs "when members of a categorically bounded network acquire access to a resource that is valuable, renewable, subject to monopoly, supportive of network activities, and enhanced by the network's modus operandi." In a way, even (international) migration could be labelled an overall strategy of opportunity-hoarding. Numerous examples in the literature suggest how migrant groups have successfully occupied and monopolized economic niches (e.g., Light, Parminder, and Karageorgis 1990). Nonetheless, by bringing in co-villagers or co-ethnics, dependencies are also established, such as indebtedness, which can lead to increasing hierarchization within such groups.

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Another concrete mechanism of opportunity-hoarding is brokerage, namely migrants serving to fill structural holes by connecting persons and organizations which have no direct links. As the new "mantra" of migrants-as-development-agents suggests, international migrants' financial remittances are greater than the funds for Official Development Aid (ODA) (though reverse remittances flowing from developing to developed countries are conveniently forgotten). It is clear that opportunity-hoarding occurs when organizations in the development co-operation sector try to co-opt migrant associations to serve their need to ensure a constant flow of public resources for their own work (Østergaard-Nielsen 2011; Faist, Fauser, and Kivisto 2011). Of interest in this case is not only opportunity-hoarding but also a "new" kind of heterogeneity usually not regarded as such: transnationality. Transnationality, that is, persons, groups, or organizations building and maintaining relatively continuous cross-border transactions, is not—contrary to many claims—simply a resource which is either positive (e.g., enhancing educational careers by shifting children to the most appropriate location) or negative (e.g., transfers from one educational system to another as a dead end). Instead, we need to account for how transnationality *becomes* a positive or negative resource, i.e., how it turns from a heterogeneity marker to a characteristic of social inequality.

Normally we speak of exploitation when powerful persons command resources from which they draw significantly increased returns. These dominant agents pool these returns so that they exclude those outside their group from the full value the latter add to the effort (Tilly 2005). Exploitation occurs, for example, in the case of employment of migrant women in irregular conditions through the imposition of rules (e.g., working hours and the working schedule; Orozco 2007). In particular, in irregular care work, power asymmetries between employer and employee have repercussions for family relations of the employer and employees. The employers' labour market participation is enhanced, whereas for the migrants problems arise in managing transnational families.

Hierarchization (Therborn 2006: 13) refers to the existence of positions in formal organizations differentially endowed with rights, duties, and resources, and can go well beyond, as seen in informal systems of roles and cultural hierarchies. Not only do organizations themselves create hierarchies through the layering of positions, reward, and remuneration systems and career ladders; there is also an interplay of organizations and informal networks. For instance, if children of labour migrants compete with German youth on the basis of equal educational (high school) credentials, informal hiring networks assume importance. For many young persons of Turkish descent (so-called second generation), parental networks no longer function because of de-industrialization. Their parents' employment concentration a small number of economic sectors, such as the manufacturing and steel industries, has become

detrimental over time, as there are often no informal networks reaching into new and attractive sectors of the labour market (Faist 1995). Again, an intersectional approach becomes relevant. For example, in organizational hierarchies in firms or even labour markets, the confluence of ethnic and occupational or class hierarchies can be decisive. In "split labour markets", a concept which has been usefully applied to white settler colonies with slavery in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (e.g., the American South or South Africa), labour markets are divided along ethno-racial lines. Ethnic antagonism and ethno-racial hierarchies resulted from this kind of hierarchization, as well as outright exclusion of groups from certain labour market segments (Bonacich 1972).

## Social Mechanisms: The Production of Equalities

Multicultural citizenship promoting equalities is very much tied to public policies of an intervening welfare state. This relationship is a complex one because we are dealing not only with negative rights ("freedom from") but also so-called positive rights ("freedom to") and thus the enabling aspect of citizenship. As in the above analysis, we also need to consider a broader universe of policies and politics than those imagined by multiculturalism. Networks of trust, such as rotating credit associations, mutual aid societies, and *Landsmannschaften*, are also important.

**Figure 3: General and Specific Social Mechanisms in the Production of Equalities out of Heterogeneities**

| *General Social Mechanisms (Selection)* | *Specific Social Mechanisms (Examples)* |
|---|---|
| **Boundary-Making** | Rapprochement[6] |
| **Inclusion** | Liberalization of citizenship acquisition (e.g., dual citizenship); human rights enforcement; denizenship |
| **Redistribution** | Subsidies for public institutions (e.g., child care, educational institutions) |
| **Catching up** | Anti-discrimination, affirmative action |
| **De-hierarchization** | Special representation rights in political parties, unions, etc. (claim-making) → de-intersectionalization |

On the societal level, inclusion points toward formal equality and substantive equality (equality of outcomes). Opportunities for achieving legal equality for resident migrants, such as the possibility of acquiring citizenship, seem to have improved. Citizenship rules have been liberalized; for example, some European countries complemented *ius sanguinis* with *ius soli* laws for persons born in the country, reduced the time of residence required for application for citizenship; and/or have increased toleration of dual citizenship. Another example is the introduction of far-reaching social rights for resident immigrants (denizenship). Yet inclusion in the legal sphere does not necessarily imply inclusion in substance, as the example of informal networks for getting access to organizations in the labour market suggest. For organizations, there is also the demand of equality (meta-norm) which is an aspect of incorporation on a substantive level. Organizations may take account of equality explicitly in applying anti-discrimination rules, or may simply pretend to do so, or ignore it altogether.

Positive rights usually demand redistribution through taxes. Intervention in schooling, such as the provision of comprehensive schools or day-long instruction, requires additional resources. These universal policies are most often "colour blind", however, and it is an empiri-

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[6] This specific mechanism is discussed above in the section on inequalities.

cal question whether certain universal policies favour privileged groups (e.g., child allowance in Germany). While most policies of multiculturalism (see Figure 1) require state intervention, they do not depend heavily on redistribution via tax resources (income redistribution), as, for example, in the case of affirmative action. Overall, the consequences of multicultural policies cannot be analyzed in isolation from larger policy packages.[7]

Another general mechanism advancing equality is 'catching up'. Again, in this case we need to consider not only official public policies, such as affirmative action, but also trust networks, such as professional networks and cliques. Affirmative action explicitly takes heterogeneities such as gender, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation as a point of departure. The basic idea is that there has been a historical injustice which calls for remedial action, and/or that there is empirical evidence that (institutional) discrimination along the lines of such heteroge-neities is still prevalent. In its weak form, such as the EU directive dealing with anti-discrimination, the idea of 'catching up' is not fiercely contested in public debates. It is im-plemented into national law and often upheld by the respective courts. Nonetheless, there is wide latitude in implementing the directive and corresponding national legislation, and the questions revolve around whether such legal instruments advance the goal of anti-discrimination effectively. In addition to public policies, trust networks are decisive for less represented categories to catch up with established and dominant ones (see also opportuni-ty-hoarding). Even if anti-discrimination policies contribute to a higher degree of equality for historically underrepresented groups, the effects of public contention are worth considering. The strong claim by the critics of multiculturalism is that cultural pluralism and the perception of cultural relativism may undermine solidarity with certain groups; one has only to think of the charges against affirmative action as "reverse discrimination". Here we are back to the claims about corroding and crowding out effects which, however, cannot be derived simply from contentious political debates. Nonetheless, the contention goes to the heart of citizen-ship, namely the ever precarious cultural-moral foundations of citizenship.

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[7] ". . . it is a mistake to view MCPs [multicultural policies] in isolation from the larger context of public policies that shape people's identities, beliefs and aspirations. Whether or not MCPs encourage trust or solidarity, for example, will heavily depend on whether these MCPs are part of a larger policy package that simultaneously nurtures identification with the larger political community. In the absence of appropriate nation-building policies, a particular MCP may reduce solidarity and trust, by focusing exclusively on the minority's difference. But in the presence of such nation-building policies, the same MCP may in fact enhance solidarity and trust, by reassuring members of the minority group that the larger identity promoted by nation-building policies is an inclusive one that will fairly accommodate them." (Banting and Kymlicka 2004: 251-252)

De-hierarchization as a general mechanism certainly is very much connected to claims-making of immigrants. Two classic examples are unionization and the setting up of political organizations to achieve political empowerment. The mechanism of de-hierarchization is particularly important because it reminds us that debates on multiculturalism need look not just at redistribution and recognition but also at participation in political decision-making as a third dimension of equalities and inequalities. Mobilization around religion, religious freedom, and representation in public life is a prominent current example of efforts at de-hierarchization on the part of certain immigrant groups. The above section on the production of inequalities showed that boundary-making has resulted in social distantiation vis-à-vis the category "Muslim". It is around this category that substantial mobilization has occurred in European countries. In Germany, for example, one of the central issues has been the representation of Muslim organizations in the corporatist system of interest articulation. Note that this mobilization has been paralleled in public discourses by a seminal shift of the marker of heterogeneity from ethnicity/nationality to religion. Quite a few Muslim organizations have tried to become incorporated as a "corporation of public law" (*Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts*) which would entitle them to practices of inclusion such as the state collection of taxes by the state from registered believers, representation on the boards of public mass media, and extension of religious instruction in public schools.

Yet, and this is leading us to the duality of mechanisms producing equalities and inequalities, de-hierarchization may go along with essentialization and identity politics. The *Deutsche Islamkonferenz* (DIK) is a convenient lens through which one may analyze de-hierarchization through the inclusion of groups, in this case through religious organizations (cf. Modood 2007), and the possible re-essentialization of collective identities. Obviously, the inclusion of Muslim organizations refers not only to the legal-political inclusion of Islamic groups and organizations into the corporatist system, which has been an ongoing concern for state and religious associations and established churches alike.[8] Through DIK religion is co-constituted as the main axis of immigrant integration politics and policy (Tezcan 2011). The focus on Islam in the context of a specific corporatist mode of religious institutionalization denotes an entire population of persons, namely those who (allegedly) hold Muslim belief. As a result, in public debates the individuals in question are not Muslims who have a religious identity in

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[8] Religion is of prime importance in the German context. Though German policies as a whole would probably rank comparatively low on a multiculturalism scale built on the measures mentioned in Figure 1, Germany's religious policies and politics can be labelled multicultural – a result of settlements after centuries of strife among Christian denominations.

addition to their class, gender, or ethnic identity. Rather, their entire collective identity is defined by religious belonging. We could call this process one of de-intersectionalization. It is well worth studying the actual effects of specific interfaces such as the DIK. The question would be whether members of the category in question withdraw their commitment from other boundaries, for example those defined along class or national lines, as they focus increasingly on allegiance to the boundary defined in religious terms.

# 6. Outlook: 'Citizenization' and the Transnational puzzle

To understand the results of multiculturism  and citizenship policies, we need to make a clear distinction between heterogeneities and equalities / inequalities. It is only by means of a close examination of how initial conditions of heterogeneities turn into equalities and inequalities that we can begin to understand the social mechanisms involved. The approach presented here allows us to move beyond both the celebration of (static) cultural differences on the one hand and the manifold criticisms waged at very diverse multicultural policies and rights on the other hand. It helps us to determine their significance for equalities and inequalities, and it allows for the consideration of overlapping and multiple socialities and the intersectionality of various representations. Needless to say, the distinction between heterogeneities and (in)equalities is an analytical one since heterogeneities such as gender and ethnicity always come with a history and are loaded with meaning and evaluation in one form or another. It should also be emphasized that we are dealing with recursive processes. The perceptions of heterogeneities are also a product of inequalities and equalities, and heterogeneities are the basis for boundaries between categories. Nonetheless, the differentiation allows us to specify the claims of critics and defenders of multicultural citizenship.

Multicultural citizenship is a nation-state centred approach. However, the approach roughly outlined here to analyze 'citizenization' around multicultural policies and claims has to pry open the national container. It is also necessary to bring in 'new' heterogeneities such as transnationality. Transnationality means that some agents are characterized by relatively dense and continuous cross-border transactions. This could have implications for other heterogeneities and raises the question whether and to what extent markers such as ethnicity, nationality, religion,  etc. are all (also) constituted across borders of national states (cf. Bauböck and Faist 2010). If the question is answered affirmatively, we arrive at a transnational puzzle: cross-border transactions among categories such as migrants (both mobile and non-mobile) constitute a significant part of overall ties and practices. Yet public resources

and institutions such as redistribution and institutional regulation intended to address the implications of "super-diversity" (Vertovec 2007) are mainly national.

At the very least researchers need to acknowledge cross-border transactions and life-worlds, and the questions they raise for national policies. At first glance, the linkage between trans-nationality and equalities/inequalities is marked by a dualism. On the one hand, for high status groups such as professionals and managers, geographic mobility and transnational net-works are seen as part of their social (upward) mobility. On the other hand, for persons with low social status, transnationality is often seen as detrimental to their ability to integrate so-cially into countries of immigration, and their transnationality  is sometimes associated with downward social mobility. Travels to countries of origin and television broadcasts from coun-tries of origin in the mother tongue are but two examples of many practices signifying social segregation and dis-integration (Esser 2004). However, a number of studies have shown that transnationality and its potentially attendant resources may contribute to improvement of the social positions of low income and low status persons (Portes 2003). This controversy, inter-estingly enough, is seriously limited in three respects. First, transnationality is immediately associated with certain outcomes, as if it already constituted a resource in itself. Yet, as we have seen in the above examples, transnationality as heterogeneity needs to be carefully distinguished from outcomes by way of mechanism-based accounts. Second, all empirical results in the studies mentioned by Esser (and to a degree also by Portes) refer to data col-lected in countries of immigration: the other side of transnational transactions (emigration context) is not considered—an odd omission indeed. Third, in order to overcome this kind of methodological nationalism, one needs to consider (in)equality dynamics in  multiple sites within cross-border social fields. From this perspective it will then be possible to see how transnational ties may eventually result in increased resources—or bring new restrictions and conflicts. It is crucial to also take into account that the perception of inequalities may change as a result of transnational processes. For example, persons may use different criteria to evaluate inequalities, depending on the location they refer to—the country of immigration or emigration. This example provides only a glimpse of the considerable conceptual and meth-odological challenges in analyzing the nexus between heterogeneities and (in)equalities in a transnational age.

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