Mainstreaming versus alienation: conceptualising the role of complexity in migration and diversity policymaking

Peter Scholten

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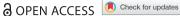Erasmus School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Rotterdam, Netherlands

ABSTRACT

Why do processes of policymaking on migration and (migration-related) diversity so often seem 'out of control'? This article proposes a new conceptual framework for understanding the role of complexity in the governance of migration and diversity. Complexity literature argues that complex problems like migration and diversity require complex approaches. However, migration literature shows that policy processes in these areas often fail to capture complexity, for instance through 'quick fixes' in migration regulation or on a strong belief in state-led 'immigrant integration.' This results in what will be conceptualised as 'alienation' from issue developments in migration and diversity, which comes in various forms: problem, institutional, political and social alienation. Alternatively, 'mainstreaming' is conceptualised as a governance approach that does try to capture rather than deny complexity. This requires, however, a rethinking of migration and diversity governance as a generic approach that does not treat migration and diversity as 'stand-alone' topics, that is oriented at the whole (diverse) population, that involves complex actor networks and a contingent and emergent process rather than a one-size-fits-all policy model. By helping actors to understand and respond to complexity, researchers can contribute to reflexivity in policy processes and help to promote mainstreaming and prevent alienation.

Introduction

Why do policy processes in the area of migration and (migration-related) diversity so often seem to be 'out of control'? Where other studies have focused on how and why migration and diversity policies 'fail' in terms of not producing intended outcomes (such as Castles 2004), in this article I will focus on why the making of these policies often tends to 'derail' in terms of the dynamics of policymaking in these areas. This is manifest amongst others in a frequent 'crisis' sensation (such as the 'refugee crisis', the 'integration crisis', etc.), contestation of (perceived) policy effects (such as the alleged failure of multiculturalism) and contestation on knowledge claims (according to some even 'fact-free politics').

CONTACT Peter Scholten ✉ p.w.a.scholten@fsw.eur.nl

This article will account for this 'derailing' of migration and diversity policies by analyzing how these policies come to terms with the complexification of migration and diversity. I will conceptualise the tension between, on the one hand, awareness of and coping with complexity, and on the other hand denying or simplifying complexity, as a tension of *mainstreaming versus alienation* in policy dynamics under conditions of complexity. This reconceptualisation builds on a systematic connection of literatures on policy dynamics (Hoppe 2011; Schneider and Ingram 1993, 1997), complexity governance (Geyer and Rihani 2012; Jessop 1997; Teisman and Klijn 2008; Verweij and Thompson 2006), migration and diversity governance (Geddes and Scholten 2016; Hampshire 2013) and the governance of other complex issues such as gender, disability and environment (Dalal-Clayton and Bass 2009; Daly 2005; Lombardo and Meier 2006; Nunan, Campbell, and Foster 2012). In contrast to many other fields, these literatures on complexity and policy dynamics have been applied only very little to the field of migration studies.

What sets policymaking in these areas apart from others, is the *complexity* of migration and diversity. This makes migration and diversity comparable to other 'complex' issues as gender and environment. Migration and diversity have increased (some frame this as the rise of 'superdiversity') and there is so much variation in terms of different configurations of diversity and mobility (there is 'no one-size fits all'), that it has become impossible to develop policies along the lines of one specific policy model or organised in a clear and coherent policy subsystem. Complexity literature argues that complex problem situations require complexity governance, which means developing policies that cut across traditional policy sectors and levels (beyond traditional 'integration policies' and 'migration policies' per se), that involve broad actor networks (including but not limited to governments), that are oriented at the whole diverse population (with as well as without migrant background) and that involve a flexible, contingent and emerging process rather than a specific policy outcome or 'model'.

To study the role of complexity in migration and diversity policymaking, this article proposes a new conceptual framework. Building on the literatures on gender and environmental governance, the concept of 'mainstreaming' is developed to understand how policymaking can respond and come to terms with complexity. Rather than referring to a specific model of (migration or diversity) policy or a specific 'solution', mainstreaming refers to a way of organising and orienting the policy process. In contrast, this article suggests to conceptualise the failure to acknowledge and respond to complexity as '*alienation*' in the form of estrangement from complexity. Four different forms of alienation will be distinguished; problem alienation, institutional alienation, political alienation and social alienation.

The conceptual framework developed in this article aims to enable migration scholars to develop a better understanding of the dynamics of migration and diversity policies. It conceptualises alienation and mainstreaming as the *dual nature* of policy dynamics in response to complexity. Also, by helping scholars and practitioners to acknowledge complexity and to recognise and understand what drives alienation or mainstreaming, this framework can contribute to the reflexivity of actors involved in migration and diversity policies in coming to terms with complexity.

The complexification of migration and diversity

A basic premise on which this article builds is that there has been a 'complexification' of migration and diversity, which requires a rethinking of the dynamics of policymaking in

these areas. Recent migration literature marks that key developments in migration and diversity relate not so much to the scale but rather to the degree of complexity of these issues. In fact, migration levels seem to have remained remarkably stable when taken as a percentage of the global population (which of course does mean that migration has increased in terms of absolute figures, and also in percentages for specific parts of the world) (Czaika and De Haas 2014). However, various scholars have revealed a transformation in issue characteristics of migration and diversity (Engbersen 2012; Vertovec 2007), which I will describe as a 'complexification' *of migration and diversity*.

This 'complexification' involves various dimensions. First, a 'broadening' of migration and diversity. This means not only that migration and diversity are relevant in more and more regions and parts of the world, but also that it has become more broadly embedded in almost any facet of modern-day complex societies. Migration and diversity is not just something for classic immigration countries as the U.S. and Western-European countries or global cities as London and New York but increasingly relevant phenomena as well in a growing number of parts of the world (IOM 2017). There is even a growing number of majority-minority cities, such Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Antwerp where more than half of the population has a first or second generation migration background (Crul 2016). But perhaps even more importantly, because of this 'broadening', migration and diversity cannot be treated as 'stand-alone topics' anymore, as they have become inseparable parts more broadly of almost any part of modern complex societies and social life. This involves, for instance, the role of technologies (such as the role of social media as migration infrastructure or for debates on diversity), the globalisation of economies and of social life (such as in migrant diasporas), and the deep interconnections between issues as climate change, health and migration. In this sense, migration and diversity compare very well to issues as gender and environment, which too cannot be seen as stand-alone topics but are inseparable aspects of modern complex societies in a broad sense.

Secondly, complexification involves a 'deepening' of migration and diversity. This means that the internal complexity of both migration and diversity has increased. Migration less and less often involves a process where a person or a family leaves one place to settle permanently in another place. It involves increasing variation in terms of different mobilities (types of migration flows, migration drivers and motives and different temporalities). Some scholars even refer to 'liquid migration' (Bygnes and Erdal 2017; Engbersen 2016) where migrants have become more 'footloose'. Similarly, the complexity of diversity would have deepened in a way that defies simplifications in terms of 'the ethnic lens'. People with a migration background often combine different types of diversity, including often different ethnic identities. Hollinger (2006) refers in this regard to a 'diversification of diversity', and some scholars refer in this regard to 'super-diversity' (Vertovec 2007). Migration-related diversity has deepened along a complex set of variables, sometimes including but not limited to ethnicity and culture, but often including also socio-economic position, legal status, language, political orientation, and many others.

Thirdly, complexification means that the 'broadening' and 'deepening' of migration and diversity do not come together in one universal way; *there is no* 'one-size-fits-all'. Between various specific settings as well as across time periods, migration and diversity may take very different (situational or temporal) configurations. This speaks to the literature on 'glocalisation'; global processes of broadening and deepening of migration and diversity may lead to very different situational outcomes (Robertson 1995). This also means that 'liquid

migration' nor 'superdiversity' should be taken as universal models of complexification. Whereas in some places or phases migration may be 'liquid' and diversity 'superdiverse', complexity lies in the fact that this will not apply everywhere nor anytime.

Finally, complexification involves a growing contestation of migration and diversity. Importantly, this contestation can include but is not limited to politicisation. It also comes with uncertainty in a broader sense. Whereas 'disagreements' can often be resolved by studying 'the facts', in the case of complex problems such contestation of the facts is often a stake itself in complexification. It contributes to uncertainty about how an issue is to be defined, and what claims are to be seen as true or false. The notion of 'alternative facts' can be seen as an illustration on how contestation can contribute to uncertainty and thereby contribute to complexification.

Complex issues require a complex approach

A key premise from the literature on complexity governance is that complex problems require a complex approach (Verweij and Thompson 2006). This means that there are no clear solutions or clear policy models or templates for coping with complex policy problems. This awareness of complexity speaks to the work of migration scholars who have challenged the idea of specific models of migrant integration or models of migration management. This includes the idea of 'national models of integration' or the notion of 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2003), which both involve denials (or at least selective and biased reductions) of the much complex nature of migration and diversity (Bertossi 2011; Bowen 2007). More broadly, it challenges the use of 'grand theoretical models' to the practice of migration and diversity policymaking; the idea that one model (such as multiculturalism, assimilationism, interculturalism, superdiversity, etc.) would be able to grasp the full complexity of very specific settings. As ideal types such models would help to understand the complexity in different settings (Scholten 2016), but they will never be able to fully account for the complexity within and between settings (Bertossi and Duyvendak 2009).

Recognising complexity involves a different way of thinking of policy and policy dynamics. Rather than focusing on specific policy models, complexity governance proposes to study the dynamics of policymaking. Rather than seeing policy as a specific output or instrument used by a specific actor to solve a clearly defined problem, complexity scholars see policy as a more integral and flexible process that engages with a broad network of actors and targets often complex problem situations (Geyer and Rihani 2012; Jessop 1997; Teisman and Klijn 2008). In this view, complex (policy) problems cannot be treated as stand-alone topics; rather than pursuing one specific formal problem definition, complexity governance involves a more integral and flexible approach to often highly unpredictable and uncertain problem situations. In addition, complexity governance does not so assume the presence of clearly institutionalised policy subsystems, but rather involves complex actor networks that include various types of actors (government and non-government). Finally, complexity governance sees policy dynamics as an emergent process rather than as something with a clear output and outcome.

Complexity governance takes, as Geyer and Rihani (2012) argue, a middle ground between 'orderly' and 'disorderly' or 'chaotic' policymaking. It rejects the idea that, when confronted with complex problems, policymaking can be fully rational and based

on assumptions of predictability and controllability. However, it also rejects that complexity means relativism or chaos that nothing can be done in response to complexity. In contrast, it argues that for coping with complexity, policymaking requires 'reflexivity' as a characteristic of the quality of the policy process (Schön and Rein 1995). Reflexivity means that actors become aware of the causes and consequences of problems and of their actions regarding these problems and that they can adjust their actions responsively (Beck 1992; Bourdieu 2004). For policy dynamics, reflexivity requires awareness of and responsiveness towards complexity, enabling them to respond (hence *reflex*) accordingly. In the words of Schön and Rein (1995, 37)

> human beings can reflect on and learn about the game of policymaking even as they play it, and, more specifically, (..) they are capable of reflecting in action on the frame conflicts that underlie controversies and account for their intractability.

However, policy literature, as well as the literature on complexity governance, shows that, especially when dealing with complex issues, there are many factors that may inhibit reflexivity. Dunlop (2017) argues that, when faced with complexity, the role of knowledge and 'policy learning' in policy dynamics tends to become contested as well, leading to what she describes as 'policy pathologies' or situations in which policy processes involve a perverse logic not oriented at a problem situation or at a specific problem resolution. Schneider and Ingram (Schneider and Ingram 1993, 1997) argue that, when faced with complexity, policy designs tend to become 'degenerative' due to the self-reinforcing logic of power relations, institutional structures and policy discourses. Furthermore, several studies have highlighted what the consequences may be of the failure to cope with complexity. Engbersen speaks of 'fatal remedies', or remedies that when faced with complexity produce unpredictable and uncontrollable outcomes (2009). According to Bovens and 't Hart, the inability of actors to cope with complexity often leads to what they describe as 'policy fiascoes' (Hart 2017).

Alienation

In spite of the simplicity of the argument that 'complex problems require complex solutions', literature shows that complexity also brings many inclinations for actors involved in policy processes not (to be able or willing) to cope with complexity. Addressing the key question 'why migration and diversity policy so often tend to derail', this article argues that this deraiing often involves a failure to come to terms with complexity, which will be conceptualised as 'alienation'. A distinction will be made between various forms and drivers of such alienation. The concept of alienation has been applied more broadly in the social sciences to situations where structural elements of society trigger forms of estrangement ('Entfremdung'), such as between the workers and the fruits of its labour (Marx 1844), between an individual and broader societal expectations of this individual (Seeman 1959), or between the actions and deeper professional beliefs of public professionals (Tummers, Bekkers, and Steijn 2009). Here, alienation will be defined as a characteristic of policy dynamics, as estrangement of policy processes from complexity. Importantly, alienation is defined not as something actors pursue on purpose, but as an inclination in actor behavior that originates in broader structural settings (reflecting the broader use of the concept alienation).

Alienation in the face of complexity can occur for various reasons. As alienation is conceptualised at the level of the policy process, I will also explore the reasons for alienation by addressing various factors that (according to policy science literature) drive policy dynamics. Speaking to the four schools of thinking in policy sciences (rationalism, institutionalism, political or critical perspective, and constructivism), this involves the role of knowledge, institutions, power and discourses respectively (Bekkers, Fenger, and Scholten 2017; Guba 1990). Based on this differentiation between four dimensions of policy dynamics, I will differentiate respectively between problem alienation, institutional alienation, political alienation and social alienation.

Problem alienation

With reference to the role of knowledge in policy dynamics, problem alienation involves estrangement in the problem understandings of actors from the complexity of the problem situation. It becomes manifest in what Blauner (1964) and Tummers, Bekkers, and Steijn (2009) describe as 'meaninglesness' in policies. Referring to the role of knowledge, expertise and information in policymaking, problem alienation occurs when there is, in the words of Rein and Schon, no 'serious conversation with the problem situation'. This means for instance that knowledge, information and expertise are not used, or only selectively, or when knowledge for other reasons does not enable actors to cope with the complexity of a problem situation.

An illustration of problem alienation is the failure to engage in a 'serious conversation' with a complex problem situation by ignoring or selectively using specific knowledge claims. Studies have shown that in the fields of migrant integration and migration knowledge utilisation often had a more symbolic than instrumental character (Boswell 2009; Scholten et al. 2015), as in many other policy fields (Majone 1989). For instance, Boswell (2009) shows how the German BAMF (Bundesamt fur Migrationsforschung) tended to produce data to legitimate and substantiate the already existing German policy approach. In a similar way, earlier studies on Germany revealed how research on immigrants was even ignored until the late 1990s, so as not to disturb the myth of not being a country of immigration (Bommes 2010). A more current example is how research and data quite consistently show a link between environmental change and migration, whereas in policymaking this link tends to be ignored; for instance, environmental migrants or environmental refugees are not a recognised category (Laczko 2010). This is clearly a form of problem alienation that could undermine the potential for, for instance, EU migration policies to respond to today's complexities of migration.

Problem alienation does not only involve the question whether knowledge is used but also what it is used for. For instance, whether knowledge is used for controlling a problem situation (or upholding the idea of control) rather than understanding and responding to complexity. A key example is the coproduction of data and knowledge on 'integration', which is manifested in often very elaborate statistical monitoring of integration, including data on the socio-economic and socio-cultural position of migrants (Bijl and Verweij 2012; Fassmann, Reeger, and Sievers 2009). This data helps substantiate the idea of state-led integrationism in the form of 'integration policies' (Favell 2003; Schinkel 2017, 2018). However, this can be seen as a form overestimating the controllability and predictability of complex problem situations, in this case overestimating the extent to which states would

be able to 'rationally engineer' migrant integration. Furthermore, integration data often tends to simplify complex social patterns and reify for instance the cultural, ethnic or national background on which data is compiled.

Institutional alienation

Institutional alienation involves estrangement of institutional structures and processes from the complexity of problem situations. It involves a failure of institutions to accommodate and respond to complexity. Speaking to institutionalist policy literature, this form of alienation can be driven by the fact that institutions tend to follow their own (internal) dynamics, rather than trying to be responsive to complex circumstances. For instance, path-dependency can prevent institutions from responding to complexity (Pierson 2011). Alternatively, institutional alienation can be driven by a lack of coordination between institutions and institutional processes in the face of complex situations. This can lead to institutional decoupling or an incapacity to form the complex and flexible institutional connections that complex problems will often require. For instance, this can involve a lack of adequate governance networks (meaning that relevant actors will be left out) or the absence of adequate multi-level governance processes.

A much studied example in migration studies concerns the transformation of welfare states in the context of the complexification of migration and diversity. Banting and Kymlicka (2006) reveal various areas of tension between migration and welfare states, such as the need for a clear demarcation of those who are eligible for benefits and for a form of national solidarity as a foundation for welfare states. The path dependency of established welfare states can cause a failure to adapt to the complexification of migration. This is illustrated by studies of welfare tourism, where welfare regimes could become a magnet for migration, as well as welfare chauvinism where the fear of welfare tourism becomes a driver behind anti-immigration sentiments (Geddes and Scholten 2016; Kymlicka 2015). Importantly, this form of institutional alienation should not be seen as something that is exceptional to migration and diversity governance; rather it refers to a broader observation in the literature on complexity governance that path dependency of institutions may cause difficulties for institutional resilience in the face of complexity. Similar examples include citizenship regimes, which as various scholars have shown also often have difficulties in adapting to the changing circumstances of migration and diversity.

The complications in the multi-level governance of migration in Europe are an illustration of the other form of institutional alienation; the lack of connection between institutions in complex setting. This manifests itself amongst others in the debate on intra-EU mobility, where the European approach to this form of mobility by EU-citizens making use of their right to free movement, sometimes clashes with national and local approaches that perceive these fellow EU-citizens as migrants who also face integration issues. More in general, various studies have shown a decoupling or even institutional friction between how migration and diversity is governed at the local (city) level and the national level (Spencer 2017; Scholten 2016). Take for instance how city-networks as Refugee Cities, Welcoming Cities but also Intercultural Cities have organised their approach to migrants and diversity in a way that puts them sometimes in direct opposition to national policies

Political alienation

Alienation can also be driven by broader power structures, power relations and interest-driven tensions Political alienation can be defined as estrangement of complexification driven by the reproduction of structural inequalities and conflict. Rather than coming to terms with complexity, political alienation involves interest-driven and selective ways of denying or reducing complexity. Importantly, this can involve but should not be considered limited to politicisation in a more narrow sense (Brug et al. 2015). It can also be driven by the selective mobilisation of interests. Or, it can involve the reproduction of broader structures of social stratification, such as inequalities between groups, between migrants and non-migrants, or gendered inequalities.

Client politics constitutes a key illustration of political alienation (Freeman 1995; Hampshire 2013), as a mode of policymaking driven by the selective mobilisation of interests. For instance, research by Guiraudon has shown has the expansion of social rights of migrants in Western Europe has been strongly influenced by civil society organisations mobilizing on migrants' behalf, and often strategically shopping for the venues where migrants' rights could be most effectively advocated (Guiraudon 1997). Also on a global level, it is often organised business interests (especially multi-national corporations) who benefit from relatively open migration regimes and also have the resources to have their interests mobilisced in policymaking (Guiraudon and Lahav 2013). Especially relevant in the field of migration and diversity governance is that migrants themselves are often not organised in a way that allows them to mobilise their interests in a similar way as other interests (Martiniello 2005; Morales and Giugni 2016). Driven by such selective and well-organised interests, policymaking tends to reproduce broader (economic, social) power structures rather than respond to complexity per se, which can include the reproduction of inequalities of migrants.

Politicisation can be an important driver of alienation as well. Studies have shown that the politicisation of migration and diversity has made these fields into issues of symbolic politics, where migration and diversity are taken as representative for a broader political agenda (Entzinger 2006); as issues that are debates to address other broader concerns rather than to respond to the actual complexities of the problem situation. For instance, Mudde shows that the populist radical right parties have often used migration and diversity as symbolic topics for their broader agenda against established political elites (Mudde 2018). An illustration is how in the EU, many populist parties such as the Front National, Alternative fur Deutschland and UKIP associated an anti-immigration with an anti-EU agenda. Schinkel (2013) argues that public and political debates on migration and diversity reflect broader uncertainties in society, such as about the impact of globalisation, individualisation and the role of technology in modern societies. Somewhat paradoxically, this means that whereas politicisation means drawing attention to migration and diversity, it actually also draws attention away from a serious conversation with the complex problem situation.

Social alienation

Finally, social alienation is driven by discourses about specific groups or actors involved in migration and diversity policy. Discourses, such as policy narratives or social constructions of specific groups, can have an estranging effect on the role and position of these

Table 1. Summary of the four manifestations of alienation in policy dynamics.

Alienation	Problem alienation	Estrangement of policymaking from complex problem developments, involving meaninglessness and simplifications or denials of complexity
	Institutional alienation	Estrangement from complexification driven by the internal logic of institutions (path-dependency) or lack of institutional connections (decoupling), leading to failures in keeping up with complexification (normlessness)
	Political alienation	Estrangement from complexification driven by structural inequalities and conflict, leading to interest-driven and selective reductions of complexity, which further reproduces inequalities
	Social alienation	Estrangement from complexification driven by discourses about specific groups or actors, bringing about selective exclusion of some and inclusion of others

groups and actors in policy processes. This can involve groups at which policies are targeted, such as specific migrant groups or communities, as well as other actors that are somehow involved in the making of migration and diversity policy, such as frontline workers or street-level bureaucrats.

One of the most obvious forms of social alienation in migration and diversity governance involves the issue of social categorisation. However finely developed, any form of categorisation almost necessarily refutes the possibility of fully grasping the complexity of group structures and identification. Both the color-blind denial that migrant groups exist (such as in the French republican approach with no data on ethnicity or culture) as the color-focused approach that assumes the presence of distinct ethnic or cultural minority groups (also described as 'ethnic lensing', such as the U.K. race-relations approach, or the traditional multiculturalist approach), deny the complexity of migrant groups. Migration scholars have shown how both the institutionalisation as well as the denial of migrant groups have reproduced prevailing discourses of inclusion and exclusion (Amiraux and Simon 2006; Zapata-Barrero 2017).

Another form of social alienation involves how policy discourses can alienate policy actors themselves by depriving them of a meaningful framework for making sense of complexity. In fact, Boswell (2011) shows how policy actors (especially street-level bureaucrats) often face a strong inclination to develop and maintain simplifying narratives that provide meaning to policy and that can be easily communicated to a broad range of actors. Although these narratives may provide direction to actions, they also alienate the actors involved in policymaking (and implementation) by helping them deny or simplify rather than address complexity.

The main characteristics of the four different types of alienation are summarised in Table 1.

Mainstreaming

Whereas alienation signals the failure to cope with complexity, mainstreaming offers an approach to come to terms with complexity in policymaking. Together they constitute the dual nature of policymaking in the face with complexity. In the words of Verweij and Thompson (2006), it represents a complex approach to complex issues.

The concept of mainstreaming has been developed in literature on the governance of other complex issues, in particular, gender mainstreaming (Daly 2005; Lombardo and Meier 2006; True and Mintrom 2001; Walby 2005), disability mainstreaming (Jones and Webster 2006) and environmental mainstreaming (Dalal-Clayton and Bass

2009). These literatures show that complex issues as gender, disability and environment cannot be treated as stand-alone topics that can be addressed within one narrow policy sector of policy subsystem, but rather as issues that are deeply entwined with 'mainstream' issues such as economics, politics and society. When conceptualising mainstreaming as a policy approach to migration and diversity, several characteristics can be deduced from the literatures on mainstreaming in other complex issue areas and from complexity literature. Speaking again to the four basic dimensions of policy dynamics (knowledge, institutions, power and discourses), these characteristics will be conceptualised respectively as an integral approach to a problem situation, involving a flexible and adaptive process, within complex actor networks, and oriented at the whole (diverse) population.

An integral approach to a complex problem situation

First, mainstreaming involves the embedding of an issue approach into 'mainstream' policies, institutions and structures. It is based on the belief that when complex issues are treated as 'stand-alone' issues, this will lead to problem alienation. In contrast, mainstreaming defines complex issues as integral to the mainstream. This requires an 'integral' approach that cuts across traditional policy sectors and levels; complex issues as migration and diversity do not stop at borders nor do they stick within clear departmental silos (Spencer 2011). This means that mainstreaming involves a shift from a problem-specific approach with a clear policy subsystem (Baumgartner and Jones 1991), to a poly-centric approach oriented at complex problem situations (Rhodes 1997).

Mainstreaming means that policies regarding migration and diversity cannot be considered limited to the institutional domains of 'migration policy' or 'diversity' or 'integration policy' per se. Whereas traditional 'migration policy' focuses on the regulation of entry and exit, mainstreaming migration policies address migration in a much broader sense. For instance, this is manifested in growing interconnections between migration policies and broader economic policies, development policies and international relations, which embeds the issue of migration into a broader approach. A very concrete illustration is how the World Health Organisation is increasingly connecting its activities in various parts of the world to the broader approach to migration, in collaboration of course with UNHCR and IOM.

Another illustration is how many countries and cities have, especially over the last decade or so, been de-institutionalising their 'integration policies' (Scholten and Van Breugel 2017; Zapata-Barrero 2015). Instead, migrant incorporation is increasingly part of, for instance, a broader 'diversity policy' or it is embedded into other mainstream policies (such as education, health, housing), structures (such as the political system) and institutions (such as the welfare state) in a very similar way to gender.

An integral approach to the complexity of migration and diversity involves a 'diversity' and 'mobility-proofing' of mainstream policies, institutions and structures to enable these to cope with the complexities of diversity and migration. Importantly, this can come with different substantive policy aims and choices. Regardless of whether a country seeks to pursue an active or restrictive immigration policy, or a multicultural or an assimilationist approach, the central point is that the complexification of migration and diversity requires a mainstream approach to achieving such policy objectives.

A process rather than a solution

Secondly, mainstream*ing* refers to a situational process rather than a specific one-size-fits-all solution or model. Coping with complexity means reconceptualising policymaking as an emergent process, requiring flexibility and responsiveness. Mainstreaming requires that institutions and structures are constantly recalibrated in the light of situational and temporal developments. Complexity lays in the fact that every situation and every period may require its own contingent approach.

In the field of migration studies there are many illustrations of the importance of responsiveness to different and changing circumstances (as well as of the difficulties in achieving this). For instance, the literature on the 'local turn' in migration studies, draws attention to the large variation in local contexts for migration and diversity (Zapata-Barrero 2017); some cities are characterised by what is described as 'superdiversity', whereas in other cities diversity takes very different configurations. Even in one country, such as Spain, different cities, such as Madrid and Barcelona, may go for very different governance approaches (Zapata-Barrero 2017). This is one of the reasons why many scholars have argued that 'methodological nationalism' or imposing a one-size-fits-all to a specific country, would lead to institutional alienation. In a similar way, migration 'contingencies' can vary significantly across place and time. Take for instance the differences between Scotland and England, with England proposing a restrictive immigration policy while Scotland proposes a more active immigration policy for demographic and for economic reasons. Here too, a one-size-fits-all approach would fail to capture the complexities of policymaking.

Complex actor networks

Thirdly, mainstreaming involves complex actor networks (Klijn and Koppenjan 2014; Koppenjan and Klijn 2004). In contrast to the traditional view on policymaking within clear policy subsystems with a clear set of actors, clear power relations, and a clear distribution of responsibilities, complexity tends to involve complex actor networks with diffuse roles and positions. This can include but will mostly not be limited to 'governments'. Precisely because of the complexification (here in particular the broadening) of migration and diversity, it is no longer possible to demarcate a group of actors that is responsible for migration and diversity; mainstreaming means that migration and diversity (just as with issues as gender, environment and disability) has become relevant to (almost) anyone.

As an illustration of such complex actor networks, Guiraudon and Lahav (2000) argue that migration and diversity policies have moved upwards (such as Europeanisation, internationalisation), sidewards (role of NGOs, businesses) and downwards (local communities, decentral governments). This has invoked many questions in migration studies on 'multi-level governance' (Scholten 2016; Spencer 2017), such as the complex interactions between national and international governments and organisations in migration governance (including the impact of international treaties and the role of international organisations such as IOM), or the relation between national and local governments in diversity policies.

Power clearly plays a role in such complex networks. However, power relations do no longer involve a specific actor (or actor constellation, such as a 'policy monopoly') who is

'in control'. In complex actor networks, power is embedded in the complex interdependencies between actors. This diffusion of 'power' in complex actor networks is also one of the reasons why policy processes can be seemingly 'out of control', which can lead to 'political alienation'. However, awareness of interdependencies in complex networks, and a proper management of relations between actors in these networks, are required to cope with complexity (Klijn and Koppenjan 2014). Precisely because of the complexification of migration and diversity, the ideas and resources of a broad set of actors are required to cope with complexity.

A whole society approach

A final characteristic is that mainstreaming is an approach oriented at the whole (diverse) population. Precisely because of complexification, it is not possible to target policies only at those migrants directly involved or at specific migrant groups or communities. Furthermore, policy scientists have shown that the use of social categorisations under conditions of complexity, may inadvertently lead to a reification of these categories (Schneider and Ingram 1993), and thus to social alienation. Therefore, just as environmental mainstreaming targets everyone, and gender is relevant to men and women, the mainstreaming of migration and diversity applies to migrants as well as non-migrants, and individuals regardless of specific ethnic or cultural background.

This speaks to the problematisation of social categorisation in migration studies more generally. Various scholars have argued that migration research using an 'ethnic lens' tends to deny or misrepresent the complexity of migrant (and non-migrant) groups and identification (Glick-Schiller, Çaglar, and Guldbrandsen 2006), or of what Hollinger described as the 'diversification of diversity' (Hollinger 2006). However, the use of government statistics or the urge of policymakers to target policies at specific groups (Fassmann, Reeger, and Sievers 2009; Simon, Piché, and Gagnon 2015) tends to deny this complexity (and can lead to social alienation). The broadening and deepening of diversity means that the whole diverse population should be the 'target' of diversity policy (once again, even regardless of the substantive policy aims).

Importantly, a whole society approach does require an active approach, just as the mainstreaming of gender mainstreaming required an active approach to raising consciousness on gender issues amongst the whole population. It is precisely in this regard that studies of the recent trend to 'deconstruct' integration policies show a lack of attention; traditional 'integration policies' are being abandoned throughout Europe, but not being replaced by

Table 2. Summary of main characteristics of mainstreaming.

Mainstreaming	Integral approach to a complex problem situation	A shift from a problem-specific approach to a cross-sectoral and multi-level approach that embeds a policy issue into mainstream (generic) policies, institutions and structures
	A process rather than a solution	Mainstreaming as a process rather than a specific policy outcome or model, which can take different shapes in different situational and temporal settings (no one size fits all)
	Complex actor networks	A shift from a state-centric approach to a mainstream approach that involves complex actor networks (including but not limited to governments)
	A whole society approach	A shift from a targeted or group-specific approach to a whole society approach

an active approach oriented at diversity mainstreaming. This shows that what some governments may frame as 'mainstreaming', may, in fact, be a form of government retrenchment (Scholten and Van Breugel 2017), which can lead to social alienation (Table 2).

Reflexive research-policy dialogues

The conceptualisation of mainstreaming versus alienation enables an understanding of the dual nature of policymaking in the face of complexity. It seeks to contribute to reflexivity amongst scholars (and policymakers) by enabling them to recognise alienation and mainstreaming in how actors cope with complexity. As such it allows for a deeper heuristic understanding of policy dynamics, applied to the issue of migration and diversity but generalisable to similar complex problems.

However, this does not immediately say anything about how scholars can actually contribute to averting alienation and promoting mainstreaming. Precisely because of the importance of reflexivity to mainstreaming, an important contribution lays lies in the configuration of reflexive research-policy dialogues. In contrast to alternative modes of research-policy relations, such as technocratic modes where academics are directly involved in policymaking, or bureaucratic modes where scholars provided 'mandated' knowledge and information to policymakers (Halffman and Hoppe 2005; Wagner et al. 1991), configuring research-policy relations as 'dialogues' provides opportunities to generate the type of reflexivity that is required for coping with complexity. Several conditions can be distinguished for the configuration of reflexive research-policy dialogues.

First, to prevent problem alienation and promote mainstreaming, there is a need for more *systematic knowledge accumulation and theory building* in migration studies. Schön and Rein (1995) speak in this regard of reflexivity requiring a 'serious conversation with the problem situation'. This does not involve a step towards pure objectivism, or 'speaking truth to power', but also not an acceptance that complexity would mean relativism or 'anything goes'. Coping with complexity can be facilitated by a systematic accumulation of what is known in migration studies, which also reveals what is uncertain or simply unknown. The absence of efforts to accumulate knowledge and construct theory can contribute to problem alienation, by legitimising fact-free politics or 'alternative facts'.

Secondly, reflexivity requires *reflexive dialogues* between researchers and actors involved in the policy process. Complexity requires that actors have access to relevant knowledge and information to be able to respond ('reflex') to emerging situations. Such dialogues do not need to involve institutionalisation; in fact, studies have shown that the institutionalisation of research-policy relations can contribute to paradigmatic closure and to institutional alienation (Scholten et al. 2015). However, it does mean interaction; in the words of Schön and Rein (Schön and Rein 1995), there must be a basic level of trust and willingness to engage in dialogue in order to promote reflexivity. Such interaction leads to the production of 'socially robust knowledge' (Nowotny, Scott, and Gibbons 2001), in a way very comparable to how research-policy relations are configured in technical areas to promote innovation.

Thirdly, a condition for reflexive research-policy dialogues is *reflexive knowledge production*. To prevent political alienation, reflexive knowledge production means constant awareness of the roots and potential bias of existing concepts and theories in the face of complexity. Complexity requires constantly challenging the existing conceptual and

theoretical apparatus of migration studies, to prevent migration studies from reproducing political alienation. A key illustration for migration studies is reflexivity regarding the concept of 'integration' that for a long time legitimised a state-centric and interventionist tradition towards migration-related diversity (Favell 2003; Schinkel 2017, 2018), and impeded a more reflexive position to how diversity policies could respond to the complexification of migration and diversity and the boundaries of societal steering.

Finally, to grasp complexity, reflexive research-policy dialogues must be able to systematically connect issues of migration and diversity to broader societal developments. Focusing only on what is specific to migrants or to specific minorities does, as mentioned, deny complexity and can inadvertently contribute to the reification of an 'ethnic lens' (and thus social alienation). Dahinden (2016) calls in this regard for a 'de-migranticization' of migration research. This requires an 'academic mainstreaming' of migration research, systematically connecting studies of migration and diversity to work in mainstream disciplines (such as economics, sociology, law, history, political science) on a diverse range of relevant issues (such as participation, cohesion, citizenship, inclusion and legitimation).

Conclusions

The key motivation behind this article is the urge to understand why processes of policymaking in the areas of migration and (migration-related) diversity so often tend to derail or spin out of control. It systematically connects insights from policy literature (policy sciences, complexity governance, gender governance) and migration literature (studies focusing on the complexification of migration and diversity, and on policy processes in these areas). Migration and diversity stand as key examples (revelatory cases) of 'wicked' or complex policy issues, or intractable issues that somehow defy resolution. In migration literature this is reflected in recent literatures on the diversification of migration patterns (or 'mobilities'), on the diversification of diversities (or 'superdiversity'), on the regional and temporal variation in mobility and migration configurations (such as in the literature on 'the local turn'), and on the contestation of migration and diversity (not only in political terms). These developments in issue characteristics are described as the 'complexification' of migration and diversity.

The central thesis developed in this article is that policymaking often derails due to failure to cope with the complexification of migration and diversity. Complex policy issues, as migration and diversity, require complex approaches. However, there are many inclinations in policymaking in the face of complexity to ignore, deny, simplify or fail to respond to complexity. This is conceptualised as 'alienation', which comes in various forms: problem alienation, institutional alienation, political alienation and social alienation.

Mainstreaming is conceptualised as an alternative approach which does promise to capture complexity as an inherent part of policymaking. The concept derives from literatures on other complex policy issues (gender, environment, disability) and from complexity governance literature. It attempts to capture complexity through a generic approach that does not treat migration and diversity as 'stand-alone' topics but as complex cross-sectoral and cross-level problem situations, that is oriented as the whole (diverse) population, that involves complex actor networks and a contingent and emergent process rather than a one-size-fits-all policy model. Unlike the many studies on specific models or paradigms of migration and diversity policies (such as 'methodological nationalism',

'national integration models', 'migration regimes'), mainstreaming refers to an approach to capture complexity that can go together with very different substantive policy choices.

Understanding mainstreaming versus alienation as the dual nature of migration and diversity policymaking provides a heuristic understanding of policymaking in the face of complexity. This can contribute to reflexivity on the part of policy actors, but also calls upon scholars to contribute to reflexivity on how to promote mainstreaming and how to tame the inclinations of alienation. This requires a clear understanding of what is known and what is not known, by systematic knowledge accumulation and theory building (to help avert problem alienation). It also requires the configuration of research-policy relations as 'reflexive dialogues' which involve interaction but from a clear division of labour. Furthermore, it requires reflexive knowledge production within migration studies, including awareness of potential bias embedded in the concepts and theories. Finally, it requires that the understanding of migration and diversity is not too much from our understanding of broader societal trends and developments that are relevant for migrants and non-migrants alike ('de-migranticization' or 'academic mainstreaming').

The conceptualisation of mainstreaming and alienation allows not only for a better understanding of the realities of migration and diversity policymaking in the face of complexity. It also contributes in a very specific way to the debate in migration literature on why migration and diversity (or 'integration') policies so often fail. Rather than posing from a more sociological, economic or legal perspective that policies are based on false problem assumptions and therefore 'fail', this article addresses why these policies tend to be so persistently based on assumptions that defy (academic and non-academic) knowledge claims. Policy fiascoes are not (only) due to a failure to understand migration and diversity objectively, but also to a broader logic of policymaking in these areas in the face of complexity. To avoid a relativist trap, it is, of course, important that scholars (as well as non-scholars) do their utmost to develop a better objective understanding of migration and diversity per se. However, this article shows that an objective understanding of migration and diversity does not provide a sufficient understanding of the dynamics of policymaking. This calls for more systematic attention in migration studies to the logic of policymaking on migration and diversity, to which this article is a contribution.

Furthermore, the conceptualisation of mainstreaming and alienation has been derived from broader policy literature and also claims generalisability beyond the issues of migration and diversity. By systematically connecting migration studies to the broader policy literature (an illustration of 'academic mainstreaming'), this article shows that the logic of policymaking on migration and diversity is not exceptional but rather typical for policymaking in the face of complex or 'wicked' policy issues. Therefore, policymaking requires not only a better understanding of migration and diversity per se but also a better understanding of the logic of policy processes in the face of complexity; what drives actors to recognise or deny complexity, how can reflexivity in the face of complexity be promoted, what are the consequences of failures to come to terms with complexity? In this sense, this article is an attempt to shape a research agenda and contribute to reflexivity amongst migration scholars on the logic of policymaking on migration and diversity, in direct connection with a broader policy research agenda on the role of complexity in policymaking more in general.

Conceptualization of complexity and migration/ diversity policy Dimension of policy dynamics	Mainstreaming	Alienation	Reflexive research-policy dialogues
Knowledge	An integral approach to a complex problem situation	Problem alienation as alienation from a complex problem situation	Systematic knowledge accumulation and theory building enabling a conversation with the problem situation
Institutions	An emergent process rather than a policy solution	Institutional alienation as a failure of institutions to accommodate complexity	Reflexive dialogues
Power	Involving complex actor networks	Political alienation as interest-driven and biased complexity reductions or denials	Reflexive knowledge production
Discourses	Oriented at the whole society	Social alienation as selective inclusion or exclusion of groups	Academic mainstreaming (or 'de-migranticization')

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ORCID

Peter Scholten ⬤ http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5745-9531

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