



**Cesla Amarelle and  
Gianni D'Amato (Project Leaders),  
Jean-Thomas Arrighi and  
Stefanie Kurt (PostDocs),  
Valentin Zuber (doctoral student)**

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**Unity and Diversity in Cohesion:  
Immigration, Citizenship and Federalism**

University of Neuchâtel,  
Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies, Faubourg de l'Hôpital 106 and  
Center for Migration Law, Rue A.-L. Breguet 1, 2000 Neuchâtel, Switzerland

Contact: Cesla Amarelle, amarelle.cesla@unine.ch  
Gianni D'Amato, gianni.damato@unine.ch

**The quest for social cohesion in a context of protracted international migrations has become a major field of contestation, in Switzerland as well as in other liberal democracies that have *de facto* evolved into countries of immigration. However, what is meant by *social cohesion* or *integration* in a multilingual and multiconfessional confederation made of 26 cantons leaves significant room for controversy. Our project proposes to examine how issues surrounding immigrant integration are being negotiated in the Swiss federal context, from a legal as well as socio-political perspective.**

**Abstract**

Over the past forty years, issues surrounding the integration of immigrants have become increasingly politicized and divisive, in Switzerland as well as in the rest of Europe. Unlike most of its neighbors, immigrant integration policies and discourses in Switzerland are characterized by profound territorial variations, resulting from the comparatively broad degree of autonomy of its cantons and municipalities and mediated by historically rooted religious and linguistic cleavages. In spite of successive efforts to introduce a common federal framework, cantonal differences in regards to crucial aspects of immigrant integration, such as naturalization laws and procedures, the exercise of political rights or the legal incorporation of immigration-induced pluralism, have persisted to this date. In this context, our main objective is to examine how immigrant integration is being negotiated in the Swiss confederal context, through a systematic comparison of policies and discourses in each of the 26 cantons. Moving beyond descriptive analysis of legislations and debates,

the project seeks to explain these territorial variations, as well as to shed light on the political dynamics driving policy changes at the federal and cantonal level. Last but not least, it places the findings in a broader comparative perspective by contrasting the Swiss experience with other federal or regional democracies, thereby transcending the pervasive methodological nationalism that has permeated migration studies.

**Methodology**

The project brings together scholars from a variety of backgrounds, chiefly law, political science and sociology. As such, our approach is essentially interdisciplinary, seeking to reconcile the rigor of a thorough legal analysis with the explanatory ambitions more akin to the social sciences. The results will be made available online through user-friendly databases compiling all past and present cantonal legislations as well as indicators measuring the relative inclusiveness of cantonal integration laws and policies.

### The Territorial Rescaling of Citizenship: A Comparative Perspective (Jean-Thomas Arrighi)

This subproject is researching the territorial rescaling of citizenship – or the migration of citizenship debates and policies from the state to other levels of government – in a broad comparative perspective. Of particular interest are the cantonal variations in regard to the electoral rights of immigrants and emigrants, and their implications for democratic theory.

### The Citizenship Regimes of Swiss Cantons: Between Historical Inertia, Politicization and Postnational Change (Valentin Zuber)

The second subproject examines the developments of cantonal citizenship regimes in Switzerland from a historical perspective. Besides shedding light on the broad diversity in regards to naturalization and integration laws within the confederation, it aims at explaining why they have persisted to this date. It will do so by conducting a systematic comparative analysis of the Zurich, Ticino and Jura cases. The dissertation also interrogates the relationship between federalism and immigration and their link to nation-building processes in the Swiss multilevel context.

### The Legal Situation of Religious Minorities in the Context of Swiss Federalism: Freedom of Religion and Religious Non-Discrimination (Stefanie Kurt)

The third subproject focuses on the legal challenges to the fundamental rights of freedom of religion and principle of non-discrimination resulting from immigration-induced diversity. It examines the varying and, sometimes, contradictory ways in which the Confederation as well as Cantons have addressed issues related to the incorporation of religious minorities and interpreted the notion of integration. It also sheds light on important decisions and current debates beyond Switzerland, in Germany, France, Greece, Italy and Austria.

### Publications

- Amarelle, Cesla, and Minh Son Nguyen. *Code annoté en droit des migrations*, Volume IV (Loi sur l'asile). Bern: Stämpfli, 2015.
- Arrighi, Jean-Thomas. "Immigration in a Plurinational Context." In *The Politics of Immigration in Multi-Level States*, edited by Ricard Zapata and Eve Hepburn. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014.
- D'Amato, Gianni, Ruedin, Didier, and Camilla Alberti. "Immigration and Integration Policy in Switzerland, 1848 to 2014." *Swiss Political Science Review* 21, no. 1, (2015): 5–22.
- D'Amato, Gianni. "How Foreigners Became Muslims: Switzerland's Path to Accommodating Islam as a New Religion." In *After Integration. Islam, Conviviality and Contentious Politics in Europe*, edited by Marian Burchhardt and Ines Michalowski. 285–302. Wiesbaden: Springer, 2015.
- D'Amato, Gianni, van den Brug, Wouter, Ruedin, Didier, and Jost Berkhout. *The Politicization of Migration*. London: Routledge, 2015.
- Kurt, Stefanie and Valentin Zuber. "Les droits politiques octroyés dans les cantons et la nouvelle loi sur la nationalité Suisse." In *Jusletter*, 2015/03/16.