



Keynote Lecture at the Neuchâtel Graduate Conference

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Tuesday, 8 July 2025

Has Trump resolved the Liberal Paradox?

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James Hollifield, Southern Methodist University

Discussant: Sandra Lavenex, University of Geneva, nccr — on the move

17:15 – 18:45 h

This keynote will take place in person at the University of Neuchâtel, [Avenue du 1er-Mars 26](#), room C46 (Aula), on WEBEX ([link](#)) as well as live-streamed on the nccr — on the move YouTube channel ([link](#)).

Abstract

The Neuchatel Graduate Conference is proud to welcome Professor Jim Hollifield to give a lecture reflecting on the Liberal Paradox in the current climate in the US where President Trump pursues a nationalist and nativist agenda. Hollifield developed several key concepts in migration studies including the 'Migration State', the 'Missing Regime', and the 'Liberal Paradox'. The latter describes the tradeoffs that liberal democracies face in their immigration policies—to maintain economic competitiveness and high levels of non-inflationary growth, liberal states must keep their economies open to immigration, while maintaining border control and respecting migrant rights. In the 2024 US Presidential election, immigration, asylum seeking, and border control were lightning rods mobilizing the electorate. Trump promised to restore border control, stop asylum seeking, and roll back the rights of immigrants and minorities. Has Trump with his illiberal and restrictive approach to immigration found a way out of the Liberal Paradox, and what will the consequences of his policies be for the American polity, the economy, and society? Hollifield will draw on decades of research into the political economy of immigration to explain the effects of Trump's policies. Is this the end of the liberal interregnum in US and world politics (1945-2025 RIP) and if so, what next?

About the Speaker

James F. Hollifield is Ora Nixon Arnold Professor of International Political Economy in the Department of Political Science and Director of the [Tower Center](#) at SMU. He also a member of the New York Council on Foreign Relations. Hollifield is a scholar of international and comparative political economy, and he has written widely on issues of political and economic development, with a focus on migration. Among his major works are *Immigrants, Markets and States* (Harvard UP 1992), *L'Immigration et l'Etat Nation* (L'Harmattan 1997), *Pathways to Democracy* (Routledge, 2000), *Herausforderung Migration—Perspektiven der vergleichenden Politikwissenschaft* (Lit Verlag 2006). Recent books include [Understanding Global Migration](#) (Stanford UP 2022) and [Controlling Immigration](#) 4th edition (Stanford UP 2022), [Migration Theory](#) 4th edition (Routledge 2023), and *International Political Economy: History, Theory and Policy* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). Hollifield has served as an advisor for governments around the world and for many international organizations on matters of migration and human and economic development. In 2016, Hollifield received a Distinguished Scholar Award from the International Studies Association; in 2021-22 he was named as a Fellow of the French Institute for Advanced Studies in Paris; and in 2023 he received a Career Achievement Award from the American Political Science Association.

Lecture organized by **Karin Vaagland**, University of Geneva, nccr — on the move