



Roundtable and Workshop at the Neuchâtel Graduate Conference

—

Wednesday, 9 July 2025

How Can Demigrantization Apply to Integration Studies?

Anna Amelina, TU Chemnitz

Parvati Raghuram, Open University

**Anne-Kathrin Will, Humboldt-Universität | Hochschule Zittau/
Görlitz**

11:30 – 13:15

This event will be held in person at the University of Neuchâtel, [Avenue du 1er-Mars 26](#), Room C46 (Aula). The roundtable (11:30-12:30) is open to all and will be followed by a workshop (12:30-13:15), which is limited to 30 participants. Please register by way of the conference registration form.

Description

This side event challenges the taken-for-granted categories in migration research by exploring demigrantization—a critical approach that unsettles the binary between migrants and non-migrants, revealing how such distinctions may obscure more than they clarify. In integration studies, this shift calls us to reconsider the presumed naturalness and relevance of "migration-related difference" (Dahinden 2016; Schinkel 2017), and to interrogate the dualisms often upheld by integration discourses.

We will explore three key dimensions:

- **Analytical innovation:** How applying demigrantization—even to groups typically seen as "native"—can illuminate overlooked dynamics in economic and social integration (Yurdakul 2024);
- **Practical tensions:** The persistent constraints—methodological, policy-related, and communicative—that continue to normalize and necessitate the use of "integration" as a category (Vertovec 2020; Kvalvaag 2023);
- **Beyond methodological nationalism:** How scholars can resist nation-state logics while acknowledging the enduring role of state institutions in shaping belonging and exclusion, drawing parallels to critiques of colorblindness in racialization (Anderson 2019; Favell 2022; Abdelhady & Norocel 2023).

Integration discourses, while often framed as tools of inclusion, may in fact reinforce systems of stratification and control, reinscribing cultural and racial hierarchies under the guise of cohesion (Anthias 2014; Ennser-Kananen et al. 2023). At the same time, critiquing integration need not undermine the vital work done to support newcomers; instead, it asks us to remain vigilant about the implications and exclusions that can accompany well-meaning policies (Kvalvaag 2023).

What is gained—and what is at stake—when we rethink integration beyond the migrant/non-migrant divide?

In this Neuchâtel Graduate Conference side event, we suggest digging into some of these questions with a roundtable discussion. The side event will begin with a general discussion on demigrantization, featuring short inputs from each panelist (15 minutes each), followed by an open Q&A and discussion session (20 minutes). This segment will provide a shared foundation for understanding how demigrantization challenges conventional migration categories and integration discourses.

Next, (for those who want to deepen the topic) we will move into a hands-on workshop on the question: "How can we approach the study of 'integration' through a demigrantizing perspective?". The goal of this workshop is to engage with the practical dimensions of demigrantization - its challenges, constraints, and transformative potential. Participants will be divided into small groups, each facilitated by a panelist who will lead a focused discussion around a specific theme for 30 minutes. Themes may include methodological limitations, policy framing, or the role of state institutions in shaping categories of difference.

Following the group work, we will reconvene for a pooling session, where each panelist will briefly present the key points and insights raised within their group. This final segment will allow for comparative reflection and open up space for cross-cutting dialogue.

Bios

Anna Amelina is Professor of Intercultural Studies at the Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus (Germany). Her research areas in the field of sociology include critical-reflexive migration studies, sociology of knowledge production, gender and intersectionality, cross-border social inequalities, and studies of postcolonial and postsocialist relations. She currently co-leads of the centre on “Migration, Conflict and Social Change” at BTU Cottbus (www.b-tu.de/mikowa).

Parvati Raghuram is Professor at the Open University (UK). She has worked on the ways in which the mobility of individuals, goods and ideas is reshaping the world, trying to capture the implications of mobility for class and race politics and the ways in which postcolonial theory can provide a route into such thinking. She has specifically written about migrant categories and its implication for thinking about skilled migration, space and place and on equitability in research methodologies.

Anne-Kathrin Will is substituting a professorship at Hochschule Zittau/Görlitz and associate member of the Berlin Institute for integration and migration research, Humboldt-Universität. She worked at Carl von Ossietzky Universität Oldenburg, the DeZIM Institute and in various contexts of scientific policy advice in the fields of migration research, education, and equality. She is committed to the agenda of critical migration research including migrantization of humanities and demigrantization of migration research and uses approaches of Science and Technology Studies (STS). Her research topics are humanitarian (non)permissions in Germany, the operationalization of “migration background”, migration statistics, discourses on belonging and the representation of minorities.

Roundtable and Workshop organised by:

Valérie Baggi, University of Geneva, nccr – on the move

Méline Dinh, University of Geneva, nccr – on the move

References

- Abdelhady, D., & Norocel, O. C. (2023). Re-Envisioning Immigrant Integration: Toward Multidirectional Conceptual Flows. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 21(2), 119–131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2023.2168097>
- Anderson, B. (2019). New directions in migration studies: towards methodological de-nationalism. *CMS* 7, 36. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-019-0140-8>
- Anthias, F. (2014). Beyond Integration: Intersectional Issues of Social Solidarity and Social Hierarchy. In: Anthias, F., Pajnik, M. (eds) *Contesting Integration, Engendering Migration. Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship Series*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137294005_2
- Dahinden, J. (2016). A plea for the ‘de-migrantization’ of research on migration and integration¹. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39(13), 2207–2225. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2015.1124129>
- Enns-Kananen, J., Karimi, Z., Petäjäniemi, M., Sadatizarrini, S., Masoud, A., & Khalimzoda, I. (2023). [Introduction: Thinking Integration Otherwise](#). In *Rethinking Integration: Challenging Oppressive Practices and Pointing to Ways Forward* (pp. 15-32). Siirtolaisuusinstituutti.
- Favell, A. (2022). Immigration, integration and citizenship: elements of a new political demography. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 48(1), 3–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2022.2020955>
- Schinkel, W. (2018). Against ‘immigrant integration’: for an end to neocolonial knowledge production. *CMS* 6(1), 31. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-018-0095-1>
- Vertovec, S. (2020). Two cheers for Migration Studies. *CMS* 8, 38. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-020-00195-0>
- Yurdakul, G. (2024) Postmigrant thinking: Definition, critiques and a new offer. *International Migration*, 62, 120–123. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.13269>