Call for Papers

Workshop, 12-14 July 2027, Istanbul, Turkey

Migranticising Native Minorities: The Making of Ethnic Cleansing *by Stealth*?

Co-organised by The IMISCOE's
Standing Committee on Migration, Citizenship and Political Participation
And the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland

The nation state has never sat easily with diversity, and liberal multiculturalism offered the most influential critique and remedy. Kymlicka (1995) sorts minorities into kinds and attaches to each a distinct bundle of rights: indigenous peoples may claim land rights and self-government; national minorities, territorial autonomy; immigrants, a path into a nation-building project that is not their own. International law assumes a comparable mosaic, less because scholarship shaped it than because both codify an implicit yet fundamental assumption of the nation state order: the collective delusion of a historical congruence between people, homeland, and political community. The premise is naturalistic. Minorities are taken to be what they claim to be, and the boundary between natives and newcomers is treated as a fact that law registers rather than a stake over which actors compete.

The Workshop starts from a distinct, constructivist premise. If categories carry rights, then categories are worth contesting. The term *migranticisation* has so far been applied to migrants and their descendants, who are held in the category of the foreign long after arrival (Dahinden 2016; Dahinden and Anderson 2021; Charsley and Hoellerer 2025). We extend it in a direction it has not yet taken, to the strategic conversion of native minorities into foreign immigrants, which is not the consequence of exclusion but its precondition. Once a native population is recast as an immigrant one, the thick international and domestic obligations owed to it become considerably thinner. Expulsion becomes migration management. Pushed to its bitter end, the process amounts to *ethnic cleansing by stealth*, tolerated because it is conducted in the language of national preservation against foreigners, rather than a sectarian war against "sons of the soil" (Weiner 1978). The power to recast is never the sole prerogative of the state. Minorities advance claims of their own, often involving kin states, diaspora organisations, domestic courts and international bodies. Sometimes the reclassification is defeated outright. The process is rarely straightforward. It typically advances by amendments and decrees, by courts and appeals, by demands for papers that were never issued or no longer recognised. **What holds these cases together is an attempt to deny that a minority is rooted where it lives. Comparing these classificatory struggles, explaining their variations across time and context, is the analytical task we propose.**

The Workshop engages a wider literature that has denaturalised the native and migrant divide (Geschiere 2009; Mamdani 2020). Instances of migranticisation are found on every continent and in every type of regime. In Kuwait, the Bidoon, long treated much like citizens, were reclassified from the mid-1980s as "illegal residents" presumed to have destroyed or concealed another nationality (Beaugrand 2018). In Côte d'Ivoire, *ivoirité* moved from presidential eligibility rules into land ownership and everyday access to nationality documents, recasting northerners as foreign, often Burkinabé or Malian immigrants (Manby 2018). The Rohingya in Myanmar, excluded from the 135 recognised "national races", or Tamils in Sri Lanka, whose ancestral presence on the island was denied after independence, also offer compelling illustrations in the South Asian context. Besides, migranticisation is not the prerogative of new or postcolonial states. In a postwar Britain faced with the arrival of East African Asians holding British passports, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1968 introduced a requirement of close ancestral connection to the United Kingdom, later translated into the partiality clause.

Expected contributions

Against this background, **we welcome contributions examining the underlying discursive and institutional process of migranticisation of indigenous minorities, from any discipline in the social sciences and humanities, in any period and any country or region**. We also consider **proposals examining the opposite process, whereby foreigners are recast as nationals through co-ethnic citizenship policies** (Harpaz 2022, Dumbrava 2019). Papers may address the process itself, its causes or its effects. They may proceed from the top down, examining how the category is proposed, propagated, institutionalised or abandoned, or from the bottom up, examining how it is internalised, evaded and resisted, by minorities themselves and by others acting alongside them.

Practical information

The Workshop is co-organised by MIGCITPOL, the Standing Committee on Migration, Citizenship and Political Participation of the IMISCOE, and by the HUMANCIT project at the University of Neuchâtel, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (Grant number: 219766), **Papers will be developed with a view to publication as a Special Issue** in **a leading journal in the field.**

The Workshop will take place in **Istanbul, Turkey, on 12-14 July 2027**.

Please send an **abstract of no more than 300 words**, together with a short biographical note **to migcitpolconf2027@gmail.com by 10 January 2027**.

Decisions will be communicated by 30 January 2027, and full drafts will be circulated in advance of the Workshop. Accommodation is covered for all selected participants, and limited travel support is available; it will be allocated on the basis of need and of our aim to assemble a diverse group of contributors.

The conference is co-organised by Debasreeta Deb (University of Hyderabad), Shamna Thacham Poyil (University of Delhi) and, Jean-Thomas Arrighi (University of Neuchâtel).

Questions regarding the event may be addressed to **migcitpolconf2027@gmail.com**.

References

Beaugrand, C. 2018. *Stateless in the Gulf: Migration, Nationality and Society in Kuwait*. London: I.B. Tauris.
Charsley, K., and N. Hoellerer. 2025. “Migrantisation: A Key Concept.” *Comparative Migration Studies* 13: 73.
Dahinden, J. 2016. “A Plea for the ‘De-migranticization’ of Research on Migration and Integration.” *ERS* 39 (13): 2207–2225.
Dahinden, J., and B. Anderson. 2021. “Exploring New Avenues for Knowledge Production in Migration Research.” *SJS* 47 (1): 27–52.
Geschiere, P. 2009. *The Perils of Belonging: Autochthony, Citizenship, and Exclusion in Africa and Europe*. Chicago: UC Press.
Human Rights Watch. 1996. *Syria: The Silenced Kurds*. Vol. 8, No. 4(E). New York: Human Rights Watch.
Kymlicka, W. 1995. *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Mamdani, M. 2020. *Neither Settler nor Native: The Making and Unmaking of Permanent Minorities*. Cambridge, MA: HUP.
Manby, B. 2018. *Citizenship in Africa: The Law of Belonging*. Oxford: Hart Publishing.
Sharma, N. 2020. *Home Rule: National Sovereignty and the Separation of Natives and Migrants*. Durham, NC: DUK.
Weiner, M. 1978. *Sons of the Soil: Migration and Ethnic Conflict in India*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Wimmer, A. 2008. “Elementary Strategies of Ethnic Boundary Making.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31 (6): 1025–1055.