



المركز العربي للأبحاث ودراسة السياسات
Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies

The Eighth ACRPS International Winter School

Migrant Communities in an Age of
Resurgent Nativism: Rethinking the
Questions of Citizenship and belonging

9-14 January 2027

Concept Note



In recent years, the resurgence of nativist politics across different regions of the world has brought questions of migration, citizenship, and belonging to the forefront of public and political life. Migration has become a central axis of political contestation, shaping public debates, media discourse,¹ and policy agendas,² as well as broader struggles over who belongs and on what terms.³

In the United States, shifting immigration policies and enforcement regimes – particularly under the Trump administration – have contributed to heightened uncertainty around legal status and membership, and are embedded within broader systems of racialized and stratified migration control.⁴ In Quebec, the adoption of Bill 21 – preventing certain categories of civil servants from wearing religious symbols when performing their civic duties – has reignited debates about whether formal citizenship guarantees equal belonging for visible minorities in general, and Muslim communities in particular.⁵ Across Europe, naturalization and broader membership policies have undergone increasingly restrictive changes,⁶ while the uneven reception of refugees has exposed hierarchies of deservingness in access to protection and belonging.⁷

While these debates are relatively pronounced in the media and academic spheres of the Global North, tensions related to migrant and refugee communities in the Global South have been less visible and often more localized.⁸ In the Middle East, the presence of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Turkey, and Egypt has generated increasingly politicized debates over belonging and social membership.⁹ Similarly, questions concerning the boundaries of citizenship in several Gulf states have intensified in recent years and are likely to deepen in the context of a possible economic downturn.¹⁰

These examples, among many others, point to a broader transformation in the relationship between citizenship and belonging in an era marked by intensifying pressures of exclusion and a comeback to ethnic *nationalism*.¹¹ They also reflect a broader transformation in how migration and

1 Jakob-Moritz Eberl et al., "The European media discourse on immigration and its effects: a literature review", *Annals of the International Communication Association* 42, no. 3 (2018): pp. 207–223; Jack M. Mills, Silvia Gomez, and Jessica Walzak, "'The press has gone crazy': online media and political rhetoric of immigrants in the USA", *International Journal of Migration and Border Studies* 7 no. 3 (2023): pp. 215 - 238.

2 Sarah Pierce, "Immigration-Related Policy Changes in the First Two Years of the Trump Administration" (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2019).

3 Anna Triandafyllidou, "Migration and the Nation," in *Introduction to Migration Studies*, edited by Peter Scholten, pp. 207 - 218 (Cham: Springer, 2022).

4 Leah Montange, "Political Detentions, Political Deportations: Repressive Immigration Enforcement in Times of Trump," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 40, no. 2 (2022): pp. 332–350.

5 Vrinda Narain, "How Does It Feel to Be a Problem? Inclusion and Exclusion and Quebec's Bill 21," *Constitutional Forum constitutionnel* 32, no. 4 (2024): pp. 21 - 30.

6 Karin Borevi and Nina Carlsson, "Borders, Security, and Restrictive Policy Shifts in Sweden and Finland," in *Changing Migration Patterns* (Södertörn: Södertörns högskola, 2025), pp. 33–40.

7 Joana Abrisketa, "The Activation of the Temporary Protection Directive 2001/55/EC for Ukrainian Refugees: A Demonstration of Its Uniqueness," *Peace & Security – Paix et Sécurité Internationales* 11 (2023): pp. 1 - 31.

8 Rawan Arar and David Scott Fitzgerald, *The Refugee System: A Sociological Approach* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2023).

9 Arar and Fitzgerald (2023); Didem İmnek and Nebnem Köser Akçapar, "The Politics of Syrian Refugees in Turkey: A Question of Inclusion and Exclusion through Citizenship," *Social Inclusion* 6, no. 1 (2018): pp. 176–187.

10 Zahra Babar, ed., *Arab Migrant Communities in the GCC* (London: Hurst & Company, 2017); Zahra Babar, "Enduring 'Contested' Citizenship in the Gulf Cooperation Council," in *The Middle East in Transition* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2018), pp. 115–132.

11 Anna Triandafyllidou (2022).



diversity are understood.¹² While earlier frameworks of multiculturalism and cultural pluralism emphasized recognition and inclusion,¹³ contemporary debates increasingly focus on questions of security, integration and the right to belong. Across different contexts, the legal status accorded by a state to an individual does not necessarily translate into social recognition or equal inclusion. Moreover, exclusionary political narratives increasingly shape access to rights and membership – producing "hierarchies of citizenship" and reconfiguring the boundaries of belonging across those different contexts.¹⁴

This edition of the ACRPS International Winter School (IWS) is thus anchored around a central question: **Is citizenship becoming more exclusionary, or are new forms of membership and belonging emerging beyond it?**

This question does not lend itself to a straightforward answer. On the one hand, there is growing evidence of more restrictive and conditional forms of citizenship, including tightening naturalization requirements, stratified access to rights, and the expansion of securitized approaches to migration across various national contexts. Research has also demonstrated the ways in which states use time and temporality as tools of control, through which access to rights and citizenship is delayed, suspended, or made conditional.¹⁵ At the same time, these exclusionary dynamics coexist with more selective forms of inclusion, as states increasingly prioritize economically desirable migrants through investor and business visa schemes, reflecting the growing influence of neoliberal logics alongside resurgent nativism.¹⁶

On the other hand, scholars have explored the ways in which voluntary migrants and forcibly displaced communities actively navigate, negotiate, and sometimes resist formal legal frameworks¹⁷ by articulating forms of belonging that are not reducible to legal citizenship, including those grounded in everyday social relations, identities, and transnational ties¹⁸. In this case, citizenship and belonging are seen not only as a matter of legal status, but also as social, cultural, and affective processes through which individuals negotiate multiple – and sometimes competing – forms of belonging.

12 Irene Bloemraad, "Citizenship and Immigration: A Current Review," *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 1 (2000): pp. 9–37; Saskia Sassen, "Towards Post-National and Denationalized Citizenship," in *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*, ed. Engin F. Isin and Brian S. Turner (London: Sage, 2002), pp. 277–291.

13 David Miller, "Multiculturalism and the Welfare State: Theoretical Reflections," in *Multiculturalism and the Welfare State: Recognition and Redistribution in Contemporary Democracies*, edited by Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 323–338.

14 Wegahta B. Sereke, Stefan Manser-Egli, and Barbara von Rütte, "'Swiss by Ancestry': Genuine and Strategic Nativism in Naturalization Procedures," *Migration Studies* 14, no. 1 (2026).

15 Melanie Griffiths, Ali Rogers, and Bridget Anderson, "Migration, Time and Temporalities: Review and Prospect" (Oxford: COMPAS, 2013); Elizabeth F. Cohen, *The Political Value of Time: Citizenship, Duration, and Democratic Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

16 Rachel Simon-Kumar, "Neoliberalism and the New Race Politics of Migration Policy: Changing Profiles of the Desirable Migrant in New Zealand," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 41, no. 7 (2015): pp. 1172–1191.

17 Neda Maghbouleh and Laila Omar, "'Heaven without People Is Not Worth Going To': Refugee Resettlement, Time, and the Institutionalization of Family Separation," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 48, no. 12 (2025): pp. 2438–2456.

18 Alejandro Portes, Luis E. Guarnizo, and Patricia Landolt, "The Study of Transnationalism: Pitfalls and Promise of an Emergent Field," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 2 (1999): pp. 217–237; Hasan Mahmud, *Remittance as Belonging: Global Migration, Transnationalism, and the Quest for Home* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2024).



Therefore, bringing these perspectives into the conversation is crucial. Analyses that focus exclusively on institutional and policy frameworks risk overlooking the lived realities through which belonging is experienced and negotiated. At the same time, approaches that focus on everyday practices must also account for the macro-level structural and political conditions that shape these experiences and practices. Moreover, these dynamics vary from one context to another. Different regional and national contexts exhibit distinct migration policies, political trajectories, and histories of incorporation. Comparative perspectives can highlight both shared patterns and context-specific variations, while transnational approaches reveal how migrant experiences and practices extend beyond the boundaries of the nation-state.

Themes and Questions

The IWS invites contributions from advanced PhD students and early career scholars across the social sciences worldwide. Contributions may engage with, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- Transformations in citizenship regimes and migration policies
- Everyday experiences, practices, and affective dimensions of belonging
- Intersections of race, class, gender, and religion in shaping experiences of integration and belonging
- Stratified citizenship and hierarchical forms of membership
- Comparative and transnational perspectives on migration and belonging
- Recurrent and new ways of producing "the migrant" and "the native" as political categories
- Intergenerational transmission of belonging and exclusion
- Rising anti-immigrant sentiments across national contexts
- Resistance, agency, and political participation among migrant and refugee communities
- Bordering practices, migration control, and the production of inclusion and exclusion
- Temporal dimensions of migration control and migrant experiences
- New ways of understanding migrant identity
- Methodological approaches to studying migration, citizenship, and belonging

The IWS welcomes participants from a range of disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, political science, public policy, and related fields. By bringing together scholars working across different perspectives, it aims to create a space for critical reflection on the evolving meanings of citizenship and belonging in an era marked by both exclusionary pressures and emerging possibilities. It invites



participants to explore this tension empirically, theoretically, and methodologically – and to reflect on what these transformations reveal about migrant incorporation across different national contexts.

Participation

Eligibility:

- PhD candidates in social sciences and humanities
- Recent PhD graduates and early career academics

Application Procedures:

Eligible candidates interested in applying should submit the following no later than 1 July 2026:

- [Online application form](#). This should be accompanied by an up-to-date CV, an abstract of the proposed paper (maximum 500 words). The abstract should outline the research questions, context, theoretical framework, as well as the proposed methodology.
- At least one academic reference. The referee should fill out [the recommendation form](#) available on this link and send it directly to the IWS email (winter.school@dohainstitute.org).
- Optional: a writing sample (a previous research paper or published article).
- The IWS will notify all applicants about the status of their applications by email.

Please note:

- Accepted participants should submit a research project in the form of a paper (maximum 6000 words – excluding footnotes and references) by 30 September 2026. Papers published elsewhere will not be accepted.
- The initial approval of the abstract does not automatically guarantee participation in the IWS.
- The paper will be reviewed. The IWS will notify you whether your research project is accepted or not.
- Accommodation is provided for all accepted applicants for the duration of the program.
- Funding for travel expenses is available on a competitive basis.
- For inquires related to the conference, please contact: winter.school@dohainstitute.org



General Information:

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