



## **Academic Conversation**

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**Tuesday, 10 May 2022**

**Is Immigration Really About Immigration? A Conversation with  
Janine Dahinden and Andreas Wimmer**

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**Andreas Wimmer, Columbia University  
Janine Dahinden, University of Neuchâtel**

**Moderation: Jean-Thomas Arrighi, University of Neuchâtel**

18:15 – 19:45 h

This conversation will be held in person at the Salon du Bleu Café, Faubourg du Lac 27, Neuchâtel, and online on WEBEX (<https://unine.webex.com/meet/robin.stunzi>) as well as live-streamed on our YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxWqqEvz7iXC29yZJiHaxQQ>).

### Abstract

Today, immigration seems to be on everyone's mind. On both sides of the Atlantic, it is never far from the surface of politics, recurrently climbing to the top of the political agenda. It also crossed the rubicund separating the real world from academia, as shown by the formidable rise of Migration Studies in the past thirty years, from a modest interdisciplinary sub-field to a separate subject of inquiry in its own right. The proliferation of thematic journals, dedicated research centers and specialized university programs considerably advanced our understanding of the phenomenon and its myriad consequences. Yet, the academic success story has been repeatedly disturbed by critical voices questioning its epistemological foundations. To the most virulent ones, academic research naively zooming in on immigrants actually contributed to their pathologization in society. As a result of sheer ignorance, excessive naivety, or insufficient reflexivity, the scholarship on migration may have inadvertently reinforced the widely-held belief that immigration not only is a problem, but one caused by immigrants.

In this Academic Conversation, the nccr – on the move invites two prominent scholars to address a thought-provoking question: Is immigration really about immigration? Janine Dahinden (University of Neuchâtel) and Andreas Wimmer (Columbia University) will share with us their long-standing reflections on the theoretical underpinnings of a research field that by and large remains permeated by a migrant-centric and nationalist epistemology.

### About the Speakers

Andreas Wimmer is Lieber Professor of Sociology and Political Philosophy at Columbia University in New York. His research brings a long term historical and globally comparative perspective to the questions of how states are built and nations formed, how racial and ethnic hierarchies form or dissolve in the process, and when this will result in conflict and war.

Janine Dahinden is Professor of Transnational Studies at the 'Maison d'analyse des processus sociaux' (MAPS) of the University of Neuchâtel. Her research, anchored in what has been called reflexive migration studies, develops theoretical and methodological approaches which can overcome the nation-state- and ethnicity-centred epistemology that still largely informs migration studies. She is interested in processes of (de)migrantization and racialization in their intersections with gender and class.

### Selected References

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