



REFUFAM Final Conference

NAVIGATING THE POLITICS OF (DIS)INTEGRATION:
REFUGEE FAMILIES' PATHWAYS TO INCLUSION

23-24 April 2025

Odisee, University of Applied Sciences

Campus Schaerbeek, Brussels



Day 1 (Apr. 23rd, 2025)

8:30-9 – Coffee & Registration

9.00-9:30 [room Mimosa] - **Welcoming & Introduction** - [Prof Robin Vandevooort](#) (Ghent University) – **Beyond ‘Integration’? Towards a Research Agenda**

9:30-10:30 [room Mimosa] - **Keynote 1** - [Prof Adrian Favell](#) (University College Cork) - **Evaluating the Politics of Disintegration**

My recent book *The Integration Nation: Immigration and Colonial Power in Liberal Democracies* (Polity, 2022) offers a radical manifesto for decolonial disintegration — as the logical conclusion of a politics that challenges the order of racial capitalism and the extractive, exploitative dynamics of immigration it is built on. This, however, leads to uncomfortable questions for progressives about their accepted notion of pathways to inclusion and settlement for migrants, particularly for refugees who may never have the option of transnational return. My discussion will raise these questions for debate.

10:30-11:00 – Coffee Break

11.00-12:30 - Parallel Session 1

Panel A [room Mimosa] - **Rethinking the concept and practice of ‘integration’, discussing alternatives 1**

Chair: Berger, M. (UC Louvain)

- Rytter, M. Lind Kusk, M. (Aarhus University) – *From integration to reorientation. Refugees’ processes of orientation after resettlement*
- Shahid, A. (Polytechnic University of Milan, KU Leuven) - *Prioritizing Long-Term Integration and Inclusion: Insights from Community Research on Migrant and Refugee Experiences*
- Rybakowska, K. (UNHCR) - *Navigating Hospitality and Integration: Refugees in Egypt*

Panel B [room Fresia] - **Integration, family dynamics and parenthood 1**

Chair: Geldof, D. (Odisee University of Applied Sciences)

- Boyang, Y. (University of Sheffield) - *Replicating the Matriarchal or Patriarchal Household Structure: the subordinate Inclusion of Grandparents and Their Influence on Their Migrant Children’s Friendships*
- Ciziri, N. (Uppsala University) - *(Dis)Integrating Families: Refugees’ social histories and their encounters with education in Sweden*
- Fuchs, L. M. Hagos, S. Z. (DeZIM Institute) - *Resilience in Precarity: How Afghan and Eritrean Refugee Families Navigate Systemic and Contextual Challenges to Integration in Germany*

Panel C [room Krokus] – **Rethinking Non-Discrimination and Access to (Socio-Economic) Rights in the Context of Forced Migration**

Chair: Desmet, E. (Ghent University)

- Kienast, J. (University of Vienna) – *Differential Treatment and Temporary Protection Arrangements: Discrimination or Legitimate Distinctions?*
- van den Bogaard, R. M. (Ghent University) – *Access to Socio-Economic Rights for Persons with Temporary and International Protection in Flanders, Belgium: A Case Study*
- Ganty, S. (UC Louvain; Yale Law School) – *Integration as a Tool of Unequal Treatment: Legal and Theoretical Insights on Forced Migration*
- Ferolla Vallandro do Valle, M. (Geneva Graduate Institute) – *Making Migrants’ Access to Economic and Social Rights Services Real: Insights from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights*

12:30-13:30 - Lunch



13:30-15.00 – Parallel Session 2

Panel A - [room Mimosa] **Rethinking the concept and practice of ‘integration’, discussing alternatives 2**

Chair: Verhaeghe, F. (Ghent University)

- Ahmed, A. (The American University in Cairo) - *“Integration from Below”: Towards a Decolonization of the Debates on Migrants/Refugees’ Integration in the Global South*
- Blankvoort, N. (Maastricht University, Amsterdam University of Applied Science) Dodevska, I. (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) Manser-Egli, S. (University of Fribourg, University of Amsterdam) - *The Scientism of Integration: Colonial Modernity Logics Within the Integration Science-Policy Nexus*
- Ceylan, D. (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) - *The Hidden Agenda of Western-centric ECEC: the consequence of postcolonial, white and racist ECEC practices on the lived experiences of Turkish and Syrian families and children on the move/in exile*

Panel B [room Fresia] - **Integration, family dynamics and parenthood 2**

Chair: Debruyne, P. (Odisee University of Applied Science)

- Hasan, F. (Osnabrück University) - *Exploring Agency- Structure Nexus in Shaping Marital Relations: Syrian Families in Germany*
- Nandi, S. (McGill University) El Abed, O. (Birzeit University) Bradley, M. (McGill University) - *In the Meantime: Family, Gender, Race, and “Para-Solutions” Pathways for Refugees in Amman, Jordan*
- Gustafsson, H. (Malmo University) Engblom, R. (Örebro University) - *Deservingness and Temporal Borders: the Reproduction of Global Mobility Hierarchies in Swedish Family Reunification*

Panel C [room Krokus] - **Infrastructuring arrival: envisioning the migration-integration nexus beyond crisis**

Chair: Beeckmans, L. (KU Leuven)

- Arnaut, K. Beeckmans, L. Meeus, B. (KU Leuven) - *How can arrival infrastructures be sites of integration?*
- Tsavdaroglou, C. (University of Thessaloniki, University of Amsterdam) - *Stasis as catalyst of mobile commons: people on the move in Thessaloniki*
- Saporova, M. (Sabancı Üniversitesi Istanbul, Erasmus University Rotterdam) - *Infrastructuring collective (and) care in arrival settings: A day off gatherings of Central Asian domestic workers in Istanbul*
- Anaraki, S. (KU Leuven) - *Sofas on the move: infrastructuring objects reflecting and acting upon politics of exclusion in brussels and Belgium*
- Lubberhuizen, C. (Utrecht University, KU Leuven) - *“I speak all the languages of the greenhouse, except Dutch of course”: Exploring minor integration in agricultural spaces of arrival*
- Guérin, L. Revilla, R. (CNRS) - *Differentiating old and new comers. How housing policies produce migrants’ temporal categories.*

15.00-15:35 – Coffee Break

15:30-16:30 [room Mimosa] - **Keynote 2** - [Prof Halleh Ghorashi](#) (Free University Amsterdam) - **The value of epistemic multiplicity to decolonize the dominant Dutch integration discourse**

In my keynote I will show the colonial legacy and nationalistic foundation of Dutch integration policy and discourse. I begin by discussing the integration discourse’s implications for research and the exclusionary practices towards researchers of colour in Dutch academia. I argue for the importance of epistemic multiplicity and, in particular, the insider-outsider position of marginalized communities and scholars of colour as essential forms of knowledge to decolonize integration discourse, policy, and research. I argue the importance of such knowledge to unravel the normalized colonial foundation of the dominant integration discourse and contributes to decolonizing its implications by doing migration research through co-production of knowledge in practice.

17:00-19 – Social Activity – [The Refugee Route](#) by Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen



Day 2

8:30-9:00 – Coffee & Registration

9:00-10:30 – Parallel Session 3

Panel A [room Mimosa] - **Rethinking the concept and practice of ‘integration’, discussing alternatives 3**

Chair: Belloni, M. (University of Antwerp)

- Berger, M. Carlier, L. (UC Louvain) - *Enabling / Disabling milieus: the grounds of refugees’ inclusion*
- Benchekroun, R. (University College London) Grondelaers, H. (Ghent University) - *The role of housing and social infrastructure in navigating friendship for mothers living in liminality*
- Setoodeh, A. Houborg, E. Thylstrup, B. (Aarhus University) - *(In)visible lives in limbo - rights in a grey zone. Policy, law, and practice in responding to substance use problems among undocumented migrants in Denmark*

Panel B - [room Fresia] **Well-being of refugee families after arrival**

Chair: Geldof, D. (Odisee University of Applied Science)

- Groeninck, M. Debruyne, P. Geldof, D. (Odisee University of Applied Science) - *Politics of care towards well-being. Understanding the effect/affect of policy gaps on refugee families’ well-being*
- Bruhn Kjeldsen, M. Roets, G. (Ghent University) - *Family reunited refugees’ class journeys and their capacity to aspire*
- Welschen, S. Lucas, P. (Amsterdam University of Applied Science) - *Arriving at Amsterdam. The interplay between migrant trajectories, differentiated migration policies and the infringement of social dignity*
- Vindevogel, S. (Ghent University of Applied Science and Arts, EQUALLITY//ResearchCollective) - *Unravelling Family Support in Superdiverse Settings: Insights into the Role of Migrant Community Resource Persons*

10:30 -11.00 - Coffee break

11.00-12:30 – Parallel Session 4

Panel A [room Fresia] - **Going local: studying (dis)integration at the municipal level**

Chair: Carlier, L. (UC Louvain)

- Schweitzer, R. Garcés-Mascreñas, B. (Abat Oliba CEU University) - *Local policy dilemmas regarding migrants’ access to housing and employment across the EU*
- Orsini, G. (Ghent University) - *Policy gaps and support services across complex policy environments: comparing “integration” policies targeting refugee families in Belgium and Italy*
- Maeve Powlick, K. Vlasman, E. Briar, G. (Free University Amsterdam) - *Finally In? Or still out...? Experiences of Young undocumented adults transitioning into Dutch higher education*

Panel B [room Krokus] - **Gendering Integration**

Chair: van den Bogaard, R. M. (Ghent University)

- Cruz, T. Denis, R. Villalba, E. Mancilla, M. (Siempre NGO) - *Marginalization and discrimination in Child Custody Arrangements: The Struggle of Latin American Migrant Women in Family Court System*
- Mguni, M. (University of West London, University of Brighton) Livaha, P. (Erasmus University Rotterdam) - *Respect of family relations in the EU: Safeguarding this right for women and girls from communities that practice female circumcision*
- Hassan, N. (University of Peshawar) - *Excluded to be Included: The nexus of language and (dis)integration for Afghan women*

Panel C [room Mimosa] - Family Reunification in Europe: Exposing Inequalities (Book Presentation)

- Desmet, E. (Gent University) Belloni, M. (University of Antwerp) - *Exploring Inequalities in Family Reunification in Europe: Perspectives from Legal and Social Sciences*
- de Hart, B. (Free University Amsterdam) - *How Race and Gender Function in European Family Migration Law*
- Arapiles, S. (Lund University) Mekonnen, D. (Independent Consultant) - *Family reunification efforts by Eritrean refugees in Europe: Examining the role of expert reports*
- Ancite-Jepifánova, A. (King's College London, Queen Mary University of London) - *Your Relationship is Genuine, but Your Marriage is Not: Defining Marriages of Convenience in EU and UK Law*
- Penna, G. Belloni, M. (University of Antwerp) - *Unfixable errors? Paperwork mistakes in refugee family reunification and their implications*

12:30-13:30 – Lunch

13:30-14:30 [room Mimosa] – Plenary Session – REFUFAM Policy Recommendations & Lived Experiences

For four years, the REFUFAM consortium examined the effects of government policies on the lived experiences of refugee families in Belgium. In this plenary session we present our findings in the form of 10 Policy Briefs that contain more than 100 Policy recommendations, as well as a book that offers a nuanced account of refugee families' lived experiences.

14:30-15 – Coffee Break

15-16:30 [room Mimosa] – Plenary Session - Roundtable on Forgotten practices of welcoming newcomers in Belgium

As newcomers have arrived in Belgium in different historical moments, they experienced diverse migration regimes and different forms of (formal and informal) support. In this panel, speakers shift our gaze towards practices of welcoming newcomers that are typically written out of our collective histories.

- Amal Miri (University of Antwerp) - *Affective Citizenship and Solidarity: Exploring the Experiences of Migrantised Women*
- Elsa Mescoli (University of Liege) - *Urban coalitions with/for undocumented migrants in Liège*
- Pascal Debruyne (Odisee University of Applied Science) - *Intra-European migrants in Flanders*
- Ilke Adam (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)- *Antiracist social movements in Belgium Closing Remarks*

16:30-16:45 [room Mimosa] – Closing Remarks



More information:

This is the final conference of REFUFAM, an interdisciplinary consortium examining the impact of Belgian migration-related policies on the social inclusion of refugees and their family members. The consortium is funded by Belspo Brain.be 2.0, and includes partners from Ghent University (coordinator), Odisee University of Applied Sciences, Université Catholique de Louvain (UC Louvain) and the Catholic University of Leuven (KU Leuven).

www.refufam.be

Practicalities:

The conference which is organized by the entire REFUFAM consortium, will be held in the premises of the Odisee University of Applied Sciences, in the Schaerbeek Campus (Address: Av. Huart Hamoir 136, 1030 Brussels)

