

# ROOTS & ROUTES

Vol 13, No. 1, January 2024



**DIGITAL DIASPORAS**  
Identity and Transnational Engagement  
JENNIFER M. BRINKERHOFF

CAMBRIDGE

## In this issue:

### Articles

Changes to the French Immigration Law

Mexico and India collaborate in a new project on communication and diaspora diplomacy

### Book Review

Digital Diasporas: Identity and Transnational engagement.

[www.grfdt.com](http://www.grfdt.com)

Photo credit: <https://www.amazon.in/Digital-Diasporas-Identity-Transnational-Engagement/dp/0521517842>



# Editor's Note



Dear Readers,

Greetings!

## Contents

Articles  
Book Review

Editorial Information  
©GRFDT. Roots and Routes is printed,  
designed & circulated by  
GRFDT

**Editor**  
Feroz Khan

## Editorial Committee

Abhishek Yadav  
Ani Yeremyan  
Arsala Nizami  
Feroz Khan  
Felix Tombindo  
Manjima Anjana  
Michal Tengeri  
Monika Bisht Ranjan  
Rakesh Ranjan  
Sadananda Sahoo  
Smita Tiwary  
Snehal Mutha  
Unnikrishnan V

## Design and Production:

Rakesh Ranjan &  
Feroz Khan

Email: [editorinchief@grfdt.com](mailto:editorinchief@grfdt.com)

Website: [www.grfdt.org](http://www.grfdt.org)

Welcome to the first issue of Roots & Routes' viewers for January 2024, and a very Happy New Year to all our readers! As we begin this New Year, we reflect on the critical issues associated with migration, diaspora, refugees and asylum seekers. These issues often directly impact individual lives and are connected to economic and political landscapes. Throughout in our past editions, the team of Roots & Routes dedicatedly work to provide insightful analysis on these issues and we remain committed to work with the same determination and enthusiasm. Nonetheless, our journey is not complete without your support and encouragement. We invite you to be the part of our journey and keep sending your valuable feedbacks and comments.

In simpler terms, the principle underlying immigration law is to establish regulations that facilitate the movement of people across national borders. These regulations govern who can enter a country, stay, work, or study within its boundaries. Importantly, immigration law also addresses the rights and obligations of immigrants, ensuring their access to social services, healthcare, and education.

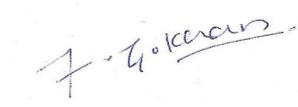
Different countries have varying immigration laws, which are shaped by their respective policies. While some nations maintain amicable policies, others impose restrictions on people's mobility. However, global scenarios often impact these laws. The complex and dynamic nature of immigration law necessitates continuous adaptation and adjustments to meet evolving needs.

Cordial immigration laws attract skilled workers, promote diversity, and strengthen diplomatic ties. Conversely, restrictive immigration laws may lead to labour shortages, create social challenges, or affect a country's reputation. Additionally, such laws can impact the economic potential of migrants. In this issue, we will investigate into the topic of immigration policy.

The current issue of Roots and Routes presents an article titled "*Changes to the French Immigration Law*" by Victor Villarreal Cabello who raised the issue of changing French immigration law. The article argued how the enactment of new law in December 2023 may restrict the immigrants. The current issue also covers the news "*Mexico and India collaborate in a new project on communication and diaspora diplomacy,*" written by Andrés

Reséndiz *and translated by* Socorro M. Torres Lopez. In addition, the current edition also carries a book review titled “Digital Diasporas: Identity and Transnational engagement” written by Satyabrata Sahoo.

We invite readers to participate and share their experiences with us for meaningful engagement. You can communicate with us through email at [editorinchief@grfdt.com](mailto:editorinchief@grfdt.com). We wish you happy reading and look forward to your suggestions and comments.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Feroz Khan", written over a light blue grid background.

Feroz Khan

## CHANGES TO THE FRENCH IMMIGRATION LAW

Major immigration countries have been deploying policies of containment and selection from the logic of securitisation in the twenty-first century. The French immigration policy has recently enacted a new law on immigration on December 19th, 2023, which represents a turning point in France's ideological and legislative approach to the migrant crisis. The Ministry of the Interior and Overseas of France published the Presentation of the Law to Control Immigration. According to the text, some key points of this measure guarantee the right to asylum to “fight against irregular migration” and improve integration (Ministère de l'intérieur et des outre-mer, 2024a); many have interpreted both as anti-immigrant actions.

The law presents four immediate measures and seven trends for migration policy, as follows: 1) facilitating the removal of foreigners whose behaviour represents a serious threat to public order; 2) putting an end to the detention of families with minors; 3) organising the regularization of foreigners working in professions in shortage without the employer's agreement; and 4) fighting against the trafficking and exploitation of foreigners (Ministère de l'intérieur et des outre-mer, 2024b, p. 4).

Conversely, the seven orientations or trends are: 1. Control borders at the national and European levels. 2. Expel foreigners who represent a threat to public order. 3. Sanction the exploitation of foreigners. 4. Improve integration through language, work, and commitment to respect the principles of the Republic. 5. Guarantee the right to asylum by initiating a structural reform of our organization. 6. Simplify the litigation rules related to the entry, stay, and removal of foreigners. 7. Adapt our migration policy to the specificities of Overseas Territories.

The first immediate measure builds the idea of migrants as criminals. The previous idea is that many

migrants are illegal and prone to crime. The fourth immediate measure tries to fight human trafficking; nevertheless, this means that “governments can present more restrictive immigration controls as if they were measures designed to protect and promote human rights” (O'Connell Davidson, 2005, p. 69). Human trafficking is a discourse that legitimises control and restrictive actions with the discourse of protecting victims or “possible” victims (Ruiz Muriel y Álvarez Velasco, 2019, p. 692).

The human trafficking market exists, and some people suffer its effects. In contrast, a non-regular border crossing cannot always be treated as an unwanted or wanted crossing by migrants. First, human trafficking “involves exploiting men, women, or children for forced labour or commercial sexual exploitation” (DHS, 2017). Second, human smuggling “involves providing a service—typically, transportation or fraudulent documents—to an individual who voluntarily seeks to gain illegal entry into a foreign country” (DHS, 2017). In the discursive dimension, people sometimes confuse both terms. In practice, it seeks to criminalise migration and the people who help with non-regular crossings.

Since January, thousands of people have marched across France to demand the withdrawal of the restrictive bill adopted by the Parliament (Pascual, 2024). This means social and political disapproval. Some analysts (Gatinois and Segauens, 2023) see the adoption of this law as Emmanuel Macron's open political crisis because the proposal comes from the right as a victory of the conservative political party and clear signs of xenophobic ideas around France.

It is important to mention that the law creates “quotas” set by the Parliament to limit the number of foreigners admitted to the country for the next three years. The constitutional council is expected to annul this measure as it is considered unconstitutional. Another effect is

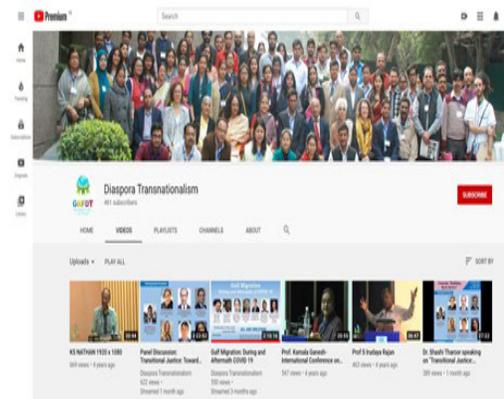
Subscribe to our  
YouTube channel



# Diaspora Transnationalism



Visit [www.grfdt.com](http://www.grfdt.com) for more information.



the restriction *jus soli*: people born in France to foreign parents will no longer obtain French nationality upon reaching the age of majority. They will now have to apply for it between the ages of 16 and 18, and foreigners born in France convicted of a crime will not be able to obtain French citizenship. Furthermore, the law also requires a student deposit, which means foreign students will have to pay a deposit to apply for a student residence permit to cover “possible expulsion costs” (Le Monde and AFP, 2023).

Legislative approval provided anti-immigrant concessions promoted by the extreme right. Marine Le Pen’s party won an “ideological victory.” This was thanks to legislative and political pressure (Le Monde, 2023). In that sense, this is a symptom of a change in the French immigration policy and of the inability of the left in power to maintain immigration policies that are less harmful to international migrants. It is worrisome that politicians within Europe use xenophobia for political election purposes. Even though the French immigration policy incorporates some restrictive measures and operates on different assumptions that exclude migrants. We still need to monitor the material and practical effects that this immigration law will have on the ordinary migrant.

## References

- Garinois, C. and Segauines, N. (2023). *Loi sur l’immigration : le texte adopté, crise ouverte au sein du camp Macron*. Le Monde. [https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2023/12/20/loi-immigration-l-executif-affiche-sa-satisfaction-d-avoir-traverse-la-tempete-mais-n-eteint-pas-le-malaise-au-sein-de-la-majorite\\_6206814\\_823448.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2023/12/20/loi-immigration-l-executif-affiche-sa-satisfaction-d-avoir-traverse-la-tempete-mais-n-eteint-pas-le-malaise-au-sein-de-la-majorite_6206814_823448.html).
- Le Monde (2023). *Loi sur l’immigration : une rupture politique et morale*. Le Monde. [https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2023/12/20/loi-sur-l-immigration-une-rupture-politique-et-morale\\_6206843\\_3232.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2023/12/20/loi-sur-l-immigration-une-rupture-politique-et-morale_6206843_3232.html).
- Le Monde and AFP (2023). *What’s in France’s controversial immigration law?*. Le Monde. [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/france/article/2023/12/20/what-s-in-france-s-controversial-immigration-law\\_6361995\\_7.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/france/article/2023/12/20/what-s-in-france-s-controversial-immigration-law_6361995_7.html).
- Ministère de l’intérieur et des outre-mer (2024a). *Présentation de la loi pour contrôler l’immigration et améliorer l’intégration*. Ministère de l’intérieur et des outre-mer. <https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/actualites/actualites-du-ministere/presentation-de-loi-pour-controler-limmigration-et-ameliorer>.
- Ministère de l’intérieur et des outre-mer (2024b). *Loi pour contrôler l’immigration et améliorer l’intégration*. Ministère de l’intérieur et des outre-mer. [https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/sites/minint/files/medias/documents/2024-01/Presentation\\_loi\\_immigration.pdf](https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/sites/minint/files/medias/documents/2024-01/Presentation_loi_immigration.pdf).
- O’Connell Davidson, J. (2005). *Children in the Global Sex Trade*. Cambridge, UK and Maiden, US Polity Press.
- Pascual, J. (2024). *Opponents of France’s immigration law take to street protests*. Le Monde. [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/france/article/2024/01/15/opponents-of-france-s-immigration-law-take-to-street-protests\\_6433872\\_7.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/france/article/2024/01/15/opponents-of-france-s-immigration-law-take-to-street-protests_6433872_7.html).
- Ruiz Muriel, M. C. y Álvarez Velasco, S. (2019). *Excluir para proteger: la “guerra” contra la trata y el tráfico de migrantes y las nuevas lógicas de control migratorio en Ecuador*. *Estudios sociológicos*, 37(11). <https://doi.org/10.24201/es.2019v37n11.1686>.
- US Department of Homeland Security (2017). *Human Trafficking vs Human Smuggling*. <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report/2017/CSReport-13-1.pdf>.

---

**Victor Villarreal Cabello** is a graduate student at the National Autonomous University of Mexico and teaches International Migration at the Rosario Castellanos University, Mexico City. This article is part of the collective research project PAPIIT IN302324 *Diaspora Communication and Diplomacy. Perspectives from Reception Contexts in the Americas, Europe, and Asia*, supported by DGAPA – UNAM, coordinated by Prof. Camelia Tigau. Revised by Abril Aguilar, affiliated with the same project. Contact [papiit302324@unam.mx](mailto:papiit302324@unam.mx)



# MIGRATION AND DIASPORAS: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

For more details, email to:  
Email: [migrationanddiasporas@grfdt.com](mailto:migrationanddiasporas@grfdt.com)

## *Call for Paper*



[www.grfdt.com](http://www.grfdt.com)

## MEXICO AND INDIA COLLABORATE IN A NEW PROJECT ON COMMUNICATION AND DIASPORA DIPLOMACY

The Center for Research on North America at the National Autonomous University of Mexico inaugurated a new collective project on communication and diaspora diplomacy, cooperating with the Global Research Forum on Diasporas and Transnationalism, India. The PAPIIT IN 302324 project, “Communication and diaspora diplomacy. Perspectives from the contexts of reception in the Americas, Europe, and Asia”, counts with the support of DGAPA and will have a monthly seminar on diaspora diplomacy, with alternating sessions in English and Spanish.

On Monday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the inaugural conference of the aforementioned project was presented by Prof. Antonio Alejo from the University of Granada. This was the first in a series of conferences that will permit us to reflect upon the importance of the topic, which will bring together specialists on the subject from different latitudes, specifically from Mexico and India.

Prof. Antonio Alejo emphasized the need to think about the concept of alternative diplomacies beyond the international sphere, where the nation-state is the predominant agent. However, there exists a non-state-centric agency with relevance in our contemporary reality that has epistemic, political, and ideological implications. Prof. Alejo urged looking at the concept from global studies, thus, parting from this perspective, “*the study of diaspora diplomacy counts with a relevant development for the study of policy analysis and the institutional frameworks of states in the face of the processes and the challenges of migrants*”.

In this sense, diasporas are *instrumentally* situated as strategic recourses to strengthen negotiations and presence between countries of origin, transit, and destination because they are thought of as subjects that form a part of a nation-state, and the challenge is to question whether these frameworks are sufficient to comprehend diasporas/migrants.

Making this reflection, the question arises, *how do we*

*rethink diplomacy in the face of contemporary human mobilities?* To this question, Dr. Alejo considers that it is important to think about diplomacy not in a traditional sense, whose origin is the Treaty of Westphalia, but rather to approach it from critical perspectives that allow the concept to be approached from alternative perspectives because the traditional perspective implicitly entails a naturalization of hierarchies between states that leads to the exercise of disproportionate power even through peaceful mechanisms.

Among critical studies on diplomacy, authors such as Costas Constantinou, Sam Opondo, Jason Dittmer, and Fiona McConnell stand out, who work on issues of minorities, indigenous rights, and the limits of diplomacy.

One of the fundamental concepts in critical studies is that of *Nomadic Thought*, where the works of Braidotti and Levin stand out, who think of this category beyond a permanent stage of humanity, but rather as a distinct possibility of human coexistence in a contemporary environment of the nation-state. This category paves the way for thinking about other categories proposed by Ulrich Beck and Saskia Sassen, such as *detritorialization* and *methodological nationalism* to analyze the processes, think about subjects beyond the nation-state and complexify who these lives in ductile movements are.

Dr. Alejo articulates the category of *Nomadic Thought*, with others such as *translocality*, *multiple belongings*, *old and new diasporas (spatial)*, and *permanent virtual connections (temporal)*, to analyze two contemporary phenomena in a more concrete or empirical way: *The new American diaspora of the United States*, and the *Nova Galician diaspora from the United Kingdom*. These two examples show the construction of new diasporas through lives in ductile movement that in turn transform their environment. Under this context, Dr. Alejo carried out an analysis of transnational dynamics using as an example the life of Eduardo Verástegui

and migrant congressman Raúl Torres who coincide in nativist thought.

To close the conference the Dr. leaves the question of how nativism impacts diplomacy through conservative narratives and how it is reconfigured and in turn, makes sense to think about it in terms of *who it serves and what it serves for*. With this, diaspora diplomacy makes sense as a way to understand our global environment and the dynamics of plural mobility. Questions that remain open to be discussed in the next sessions of this seminar and this project.

*Prof. Antonio Alejo with members of the PAPIIT IN302324 Project*

**Andrés Reséndiz** is a PhD in Social and Political Sciences at UNAM, member of the PAPIIT IN302324 project, “Communication and diaspora diplomacy. Perspectives from the contexts of reception in the Americas, Europe, and Asia”, coordinated by Camelia Tigau.

Translated by **Socorro M. Torres Lopez**, Fulbright García-Robles grantee in the Mexico-United States Studies Master’s program at UNAM, member of the same PAPIIT project. Contact [papiit302324@unam.mx](mailto:papiit302324@unam.mx)



**5** Thursday Forum Seminar Series



\*PAPIIT Project IN302324



# Sri Lankan Diaspora

**Dr. Piyasiri Wickramasekara**

Vice-President,  
Global Migration Policy Associates (GMPA)  
Non-Resident Fellow, World Trade Institute (WTI), and  
Former Senior Migration Specialist, ILO

**8th February 2024**

7:30 pm IST/ 3:00 pm Geneva/ 9:00 am New York/  
8:00 am Mexico/ 10:00 am Port of Spain/ 6:00 pm  
Dubai

<https://shorturl.at/intGR>



\*PAPIIT Project IN302324–Diaspora Communication and Diplomacy, Perspectives from Reception Contexts in the Americas, Europe, and Asia”. , DGAPA–UNAM

DIGITAL DIASPORAS: IDENTITY AND TRANSNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff’s scholarly publication titled “Digital Diasporas: Identity and Transnational Engagement” offers a comprehensive analysis of the complex interplay among digital technologies, diasporic identity, and transnational involvement. This literary work offers an extensive examination of the ways in which the internet and digital communication tools have facilitated the empowerment of diaspora populations, enabling them to preserve their cultural identities and engage in international endeavors.

Brinkerhoff’s publication underscores the significance of “digital diasporas” as a pivotal issue inside our globally networked society. Digital diasporas refer to fragmented communities of people who employ digital platforms to establish connections, engage in communication, and collectively manifest their cultural heritage. By engaging in these activities, individuals surpass geographical limitations and create digital spaces in which their identities and relationships can thrive.

The central focus of the book revolves around the examination of the Impact of digital technology on the preservation and perpetuation of diaspora identity. According to Brinkerhoff, the internet presents diaspora people with unparalleled prospects to commemorate and disseminate their cultural heritage. Digital platforms, like as social media and online forums, provide dynamic environments in which members of diaspora communities can engage in the exchange of traditions, narratives, and personal experiences. Digital platforms serve as repositories for cultural memory, enabling persons in the diaspora to cultivate a robust sense of belonging and cultural continuity.

Brinkerhoff’s research underscores the essential role that digital technologies play in enabling transnational

engagement among diaspora populations. In the contemporary era of digital advancements, individuals belonging to diaspora communities have transitioned from being just spectators of events occurring in their countries of origin to assuming active roles as participants in the political, social, and economic domains of both their host and home nations. The utilization of virtual networks enables diaspora individuals to actively participate in political action, champion human rights, provide assistance to development initiatives, and make valuable contributions to the socio-economic progress of their country of origin.

The book is supported by a strong theoretical foundation that incorporates themes such as transnationalism, identity formation, and social capital. Brinkerhoff’s scholarly contribution extends beyond simply descriptive analysis, since it provides a more profound theoretical comprehension of the influence exerted by digital technology on diaspora experiences. The theoretical framework presented in this study challenges readers to critically reflect on the wider ramifications of digital diasporas in relation to our comprehension of migration, globalization, and the intricate dynamics of identities within the digital age.

Brinkerhoff employs a comprehensive array of case studies in her book to exemplify her arguments. The case studies included in this analysis encompass a range of diaspora communities and geographical areas. These include the Ethiopian diaspora residing in the United States, political involvement observed within the Indian diaspora, and the utilization of social media platforms by the Armenian diaspora. The aforementioned instances serve as compelling illustrations of how various diaspora communities have effectively utilized

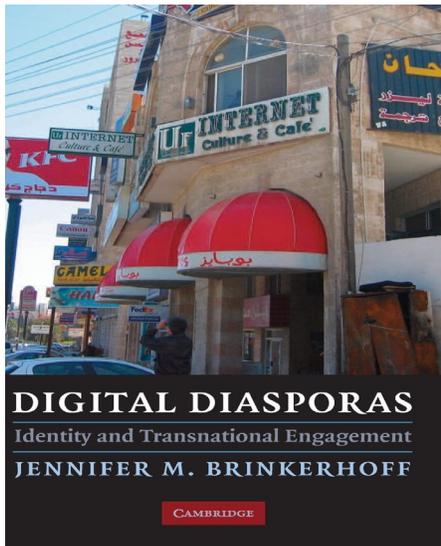


Photo credit: <https://www.amazon.in/Digital-Diasporas-Identity-Transnational-Engagement/dp/0521517842>

digital technologies to safeguard their cultural identities and participate in international endeavors.

Moreover, the book explores the notion of “identity work” in the context of digital diasporas. Brinkerhoff examines the ways in which individuals of diaspora utilize digital platforms to actively shape, negotiate, and proclaim their identities. The internet offers a distinct platform for people of diaspora communities to actively question prevailing preconceptions, exchange personal narratives, and participate in meaningful debates regarding their experiences as transnational persons. By doing so, the book emphasizes the active role of diaspora groups in constructing their own narratives and questioning prevailing ideologies.

One notable facet of the book pertains to its scrutiny of the political aspects inherent in digital diasporas. Brinkerhoff places significant emphasis on the pivotal role played by internet platforms in facilitating political activism among diaspora communities. Diaspora populations have the capacity to engage in many forms of activism, leveraging internet platforms to advance human rights agendas, exert influence on policy-making processes, and galvanize backing for political initiatives pertaining to their countries of origin. The aforementioned element of the literary work underscores the capacity of digital diasporas to exert an impact on worldwide political dynamics and actively contribute to the advancement of societal transformation.

In addition, Brinkerhoff delves into the notion of “development diasporas.” The author posits that the utilization of digital technologies has brought about a significant transformation in the involvement of diaspora communities in development endeavors inside their countries of origin. Diaspora populations have emerged as influential participants in the developmental endeavors of their countries of origin, mostly through the channels of remittances, philanthropic initiatives, and the exchange of knowledge facilitated by digital platforms. The book highlights the capacity of digital technologies to facilitate and amplify the contributions of diasporas towards development endeavors.

Despite the fact that this book offers substantial contributions to the area. Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognize that the book does possess certain constraints. A noteworthy constraint of the book lies in its fairly sanguine viewpoint, primarily on the favorable consequences of digital technologies on

diaspora communities. The analysis provided lacks an in-depth exploration of the potential drawbacks or adverse outcomes associated with digital participation. Insufficient attention has been devoted to the comprehensive examination of pertinent concerns, such as online harassment, misinformation, and the improper utilization of digital platforms, so creating a notable void in the ongoing discourse. Moreover, the case studies included in the book, although they serve as examples, may be perceived as lacking in terms of their scope and thoroughness. Critics contend that the scope of case selection is restricted, so failing to encompass the whole spectrum of variation among diaspora experiences. A broader and more varied array of illustrations would contribute to a more comprehensive comprehension of the ways in which different diaspora communities employ digital technologies. Another aspect of criticism is the temporal pertinence of the text. Due to the swift progression of digital technologies, the content has the potential to swiftly become obsolete. The potential consequence of this is that it may impede the enduring worth of the reference inside the discipline, since readers aspire to acquire knowledge regarding contemporary trends and advancements. Furthermore, certain readers might perceive the book’s theoretical framework as excessively scholarly, which could discourage individuals in search of more pragmatic advice or policy suggestions on efficiently assisting digital diasporas.

In summary, Jennifer M. Brinkerhoff’s book titled “Digital Diasporas: Identity and Transnational Engagement” is a significant contribution to the field, offering a thorough and insightful examination of the intricate interplay between digital technologies, diaspora identity, and transnational engagement. This book offers a comprehensive exploration of digital diasporas, drawing upon a robust theoretical framework and captivating case studies. It delves into the intricate dynamics of these diasporas in the context of an ever more linked global society, revealing their capacity for revolutionary impact. Brinkerhoff’s research highlights the significant role played by diaspora populations in establishing their own identities, contesting prevailing narratives, and actively engaging in global politics and development endeavors. However, it exhibits certain limitations, including a narrow emphasis on the positive dimensions of digital engagement, a restricted number of case studies, potential temporal relevance concerns, and a somewhat limited theoretical framework. This

book provides unique insights into the changing nature of diaspora groups and their dynamic interaction with digital technology in an era characterized by connection and digital innovation.

---

Satyabrata Sahoo[1]

MA Folklore and Culture Studies

SOITS, IGNOU, New Delhi

[1] Satyabrata Sahoo is a Master student in IGNOU, New Delhi pursuing MA Folklore & Culture Studies, School of Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Studies. He is an independent researcher, conducting studies on Transhuman philosophy, Digital Cultures, Studying bodies & their discourses, and LGBTIQ+ Studies.

## GRFDT Publications

