



## Public Lecture

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**Tuesday, 21 April 2020**

**Borders, Boundaries and Bodies in the Production of  
Non-Belonging: Regulating the Return of European Women Who  
Joined the Islamic State**

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**Prof. Anna Korteweg, University of Toronto**

**Discussant: Prof. Janine Dahinden, University of Neuchâtel**

18:15 – 19:45 h

Location: University of Neuchâtel, Avenue du 1er-Mars 26, Room B32.

## **Abstract**

Belonging is a core concept in the literature on migration, with non-belonging seen as the lack of belonging. Rather than treating non-belonging as the absence of belonging, this talk addresses how nation-states and the majority populations within them actively produce “non-belonging” as a distinct social space, a set of practices that structure the reality of those who do not belong. This non-belonging has its own gendered and racialized logic, distinct from constructions of belonging. This non-belonging produces as boundaries and borders are intertwined systems of regulation written onto the body. To illustrate this, the talk analyzes the legal and discursive treatment of women who left the UK, Germany and the Netherlands to join the Islamic State (IS) and who have been trying to return to their original home countries since the demise of IS. These European Muslim women, and their children, offer an “edge case” that places the construction of non-belonging in sharp relief. When women who joined IS attempt to return to their original home countries they are confronted with two possible responses: those who are dual nationals face the threat of citizenship revocation, a clear articulation of their non-belonging; those with singular citizenship status are either left in camps on the Syrian/Iraqi border or faced with prosecution when they return, creating different spaces of non-belonging. The children of these women occupy a liminal space of belonging, one that is shaped by presumed innocence and guilt by association. In analyzing how these women and children are rendered as non-belonging to their original home countries, the talk illuminates how gendered racialized constructions of law and symbolic discourses create gradients of non-belonging, ranging from exclusion to expulsion and death.

## **Curriculum Vitae**

Anna Korteweg is Professor and Chair of Sociology at the University of Toronto Mississauga. Her research has focused on the ways in which the perceived problems of immigrant integration are constructed in the intersections of gender, religion, ethnicity and national origin. From this critical vantage point, she has analyzed debates surrounding the wearing of the headscarf, so-called “honor-based” violence, and Sharia law. Her current research projects increasingly turn to management of border. In addition to her research on the return of women who joined IS to their European home countries, Professor Korteweg is analyzing racialization and the construction of LGBTQ/gender rights in refugee politics, and the citizenship implications of refugee sponsorship in Canada.

## **Selected Publications**

- Yurdakul, Gökçe and Anna Korteweg (2019). State Responsibility and Differential Inclusion: Addressing Honor-Based Violence in the Netherlands and Germany. *Social Politics* (online).
- Korteweg, Anna (2017). The Failures of “Immigrant Integration”: The Gendered Racialized Production of Non-Belonging, *Migration Studies* 5(3), November 2017, 428-444.
- Korteweg, Anna and Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos (2015). Is Multiculturalism Dead? Groups, Governments, and “the Real Work of Integration”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38(5), 663–680.
- Anna Korteweg and Gökçe Yurdakul (2014). *The Headscarf Debates: Conflicts of National Belonging*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Yurdakul, Gökçe and Anna Korteweg (2013). Gender Equality and Immigrant Integration: Honour Killing and Forced Marriage Debates in the Netherlands, Germany and Britain. *Women’s Studies International Forum* 41, 204-214.