



Public Lecture

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Thursday, 6 May 2021

**Hierarchies Through Categories? The Role of Categories in
Migration Policies and Lived Experiences – A Research Dialogue**

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Saskia Bonjour, University of Amsterdam
Sarah Kunz, University of Bristol

Moderation: Paula Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik, University of Geneva

13:00 – 14:30 h

The Public Lecture will be held online on Webex and streamed on the nccr – on the move YouTube channel

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The migration-mobility nexus brings together different perceptions of human movement. While “migration” and “mobility” are often used as neutral categories of analysis, a hierarchy-sensitive approach pays attention to how migration and mobility are used as labels that reflect and produce inequalities of power and determine different opportunities to move or to stay. In this dialogue, we want to further explore the hierarchical relationship between migration and mobility categories. We aim to look at how categories come to be central pillars of migration policies, by whom and how they are constructed, and how this, in turn, affects those who are subject to them.

Abstract Saskia Bonjour

How do politicians create hierarchical distinctions between more and less desirable forms of migration? In this lecture, I explore this issue by starting at the bottom of the hierarchy, with what Dutch politicians call “migrants with poor prospects”. I argue that the recent trend towards selective immigration policies is based on the racialization of certain categories of migrants into irretrievably unassimilable Others. In Europe, this trend has materialized largely through the application of integration requirements to the immigration of foreigners, the so-called “civic integration turn”. Based on an analysis of parliamentary debates about civic integration policies in the Netherlands, I identify which migrants are considered likely or unlikely to “integrate”, based on which presumed characteristics. I find that Dutch civic integration policies aim at barring “migrants with poor prospects”, who are discursively racialized as unassimilable. This racialization allows politicians to deny state responsibility for migrants’ emancipation, a move which stands in sharp contrast with a long history of Dutch social policies. While class has hitherto been largely ignored in the literature on migration and the politics of belonging, I show that class, intersecting with attributed cultural characteristics and gender, is key in this process of racialization.

Abstract Sarah Kunz

How are different and differentially valued categories of mobility created in organizational and everyday discourses and socio-spatial practices? In this talk, I will draw on ethnographic research conducted in Nairobi, Kenya to explore how the category expatriate is narrated, embodied, but also challenged in diaspora space. In Nairobi, the social and professional networking platform ‘InterNations’ assembles a loose and shifting ‘expat community’. Here, ‘expats’ and ‘locals’ meet at events or connect online, enjoy shared interests or a night out, make friends or meet potential business partners. Through InterNations’ organizational discourses and the nature and geography of its events, as well as through individual’s own narratives, relationships and socio-spatial practices, an ‘expatriate’ is produced. While the expatriate is a label embraced by many migrants, it is also a contested term and, ultimately, an elusive one. Rather than denoting a clearly delineated group of migrants, the expatriate emerged as a powerful discursive and performative category that takes part in the fashioning of unequal subject positions and social relations. As such, the expatriate draws on and (re)produces racialized and classed distinctions that originate in the colonial past, without being a simple reproduction of it. As this expatriate shows, migration has become a central material and discursive space for the production of social difference and inequality and necessitates an interrogation of the power relations structuring migration categories and concepts.

Short Biography Saskia Bonjour

Saskia Bonjour is Associate Professor in Political Science at the University of Amsterdam. She studies the politics of migration and citizenship in Europe, with a particular interest in the role of gender and family norms. She has published on the politics of family migration and civic integration, as well as on the role of the judiciary in policy making, and the impact of EU policies on domestic politics.

Selected Publications Saskia Bonjour

- Bonjour, Saskia & de Hart, Betty (2020). Intimate Citizenship: Introduction to the Special Issue on Citizenship, Membership and Belonging in Mixed-Status Families, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*.
- Welfens, Natalie & Bonjour, Saskia (2020). Families First? The Mobilisation of Family Norms in Refugee Resettlement, *International Political Sociology* 15(2), 212–231.
- Weinar, Agnieszka, Bonjour, Saskia & Zhyznomirska, Lyubov (Eds.) (2019). *The Routledge Handbook of the Politics of Migration in Europe*. (Routledge international handbooks). London: Routledge.
- Bonjour, Saskia & Duyvendak, Jan Willem (2018). The “Migrant with Poor Prospects”: Racialized Intersections of Class and Culture in Dutch Civic Integration Debates, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41(5), 882–900.
- Bonjour, Saskia & Chauvin, Sébastien (2018). Social Class, Migration Policy and Migrant Strategies: An Introduction, *International Migration* 56(4), 5–18.

Short Biography Sarah Kunz

Sarah Kunz is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies at the University of Bristol. Her research sits at the intersection of human geography and sociology, with a focus on privileged forms of migration, the politics of migration categories, and the relationship between mobility, coloniality and racism. Sarah is currently working on a monograph on the postcolonial history and politics of the category expatriate. She is also conducting research into the global Citizenship Industry, the corporate sector developing, managing and promoting citizenship-by-investment. Sarah received her PhD in Human Geography from UCL and an MSc in Sociology from the LSE.

Selected Publications Sarah Kunz

- Kunz, Sarah (2020). A Business Empire and its Migrants: Royal Dutch Shell and the Management of Racial Capitalism, *Transactions of The Institute of British Geographers* 45(2), 377–391.
- Kunz, Sarah (2019). Expatriate, Migrant? The Social Life of Migration Categories and the Polyvalent Mobility of Race, *The Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46(11), 2145–2162.
- Kunz, Sarah (2018). ‘Making Space’ in Cairo: Expatriate Movements and Spatial Practices, *Geoforum* 88, 109–117.
- Kunz, Sarah (2018). Post-Colonial Liminality: ‘Expatriate’ Narratives in the East Africa Women’s League. In: Walsh, K. & Leonard, P. (Eds.) *British Migration: Privilege, Diversity and Vulnerability*. Routledge.
- Kunz, Sarah (2016). Privileged Mobilities: Locating the Expatriate in Migration Scholarship, *Geography Compass* 10(3), 89–101.