The Dutch Association for Migration Research (DAMR) & the University of Amsterdam's Institute for Migration & Ethnic Studies (IMES) invite you for the DAMR Fall Meeting 2017

Challenging Categorization in Migration Policy and Research
With a keynote by Prof. Dr. Dvora Yanow, Wageningen University

27 October 2017, 9h30 – 17h15 (drinks afterwards)

CREA Muziekzaal, Roeterseilandcampus, University of Amsterdam Nieuwe Achtergracht 170, Amsterdam. Find a map of Roeterseilandcampus here

Organized by Lea Klarenbeek, Natalie Welfens, Jeroen Doomernik, Saskia Bonjour and Laura Cleton

Policy categories are central to state power to sort, differentiate, include, and exclude. In a migration context, categorizations are used to mark and ascribe belonging, deservingness, 'willingness to integrate' or 'migration background'. Often these labels follow binary logics and do no justice to complex situations and identities. Migration scholars are often confronted with the challenge to analyze or criticize policy categories with scientific categories. The interdisciplinary field of Migration and Ethnic Studies has scrutinized categorizations in different contexts. Scholarship has highlighted the socially constructed nature of categories, and approaches such as intersectionality, superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007), groupness and groupism (Brubaker 2002), and demigranticization (Dahinden 2016) stress categories' complexity and fluidity. Yet, these critical approaches cannot provide category-free scholarship. How are we to deal with categories in our own work, so as to avoid essentialist and simplistic distinctions?

The DAMR/IMES Fall Meeting aims to bring together research that challenges categories of policy and practice, as well as categories of analysis in current migration research.
Papers can focus on but are not limited to questions like:

- What are the dynamics and effects of categorization in migration policy and research?
- How are research categories and policy categories connected, and what are the consequences of these connections?
- How can migration research study and scrutinize existing categories of policy, practice and analysis?
- What is the role of academics in the (re)production of categories?
- Does more complexity lead to better categorization?
- How to balance different indicators of good categorization in migration research? (transparency, precision, consistency, resonance, ...?)

References:

Brubaker, Rogers. 2002. "Ethnicity without Groups." *European Journal of Sociology* 43 (2): 163–89.
Dahinden, Janine. 2016. "A Plea for the ' de-Migranticization' of Research on Migration and Integration." *Ethnic and Racial Studies.*
Vertovec, Steven. 2012. "'Diversity' and the Social Imaginary." *European Journal of Sociology* 53(3): 287–312.

9.30 – 9.45	**Welcome by Saskia Bonjour**
9.45 – 11.00 Chair: Lea Klarenbeek	**Empirical migration research, epistemic exclusion and categorization** *Bas Schotel, University of Amsterdam* **Political anxieties rendered technical: How Dutch *inburgering* policies neutralise the racialization of national belonging** *Michiel Swinkels, Radboud University Nijmegen*
11.00 – 11.15	Coffee break
11.15 – 12.30 Chair: Jeroen Doomernik	**Bi-ethnic children in educational science** *Merlijn Karssen, University of Amsterdam* **Caught between the national and the transnational: EU claimants at the frontline of welfare policy** *Nora Ratzmann, London School of Economics*
12.30 - 13.30	Lunch break
13.30 – 14.30 Chair: Saskia Bonjour	**<u>Keynote by Dvora Yanow, Wageningen University</u>** **Can this category be saved?** **Reflecting on category theory and empirical evidence**
14.30 – 16.00 Chair: Beste İşleyen	**Ignorance as an aim of categorizations** *Adriana Mica, Anna Horolets, Mikołaj Pawlak, Paweł Kubicki, University of Warsaw* **Identifying 'the most vulnerable' refugees? Selection categories of humanitarian admission and resettlement programs in Europe** *Natalie Welfens & Asya Pisarevskaya, University of Amsterdam* **In the Shadow of Asylum Decision-Making: The Politics of Country of Origin Information** *Jasper van der Kist, Huub Dijstelbloem & Marieke de Goede, University of Amsterdam*
16.00 – 16.15	Coffee break
16.15 – 17.15 Chair: Natalie Welfens	**New words for the permanently temporary: exploring alternative conceptual approaches and categories for people in protracted refugee situations, and the effects on contemporary and future humanitarian governance.** *Bram Jansen, Wageningen University* **Categorization processes in Moroccan and Tunisian immigration policy** *Katharina Natter, University of Amsterdam*
17.15 –	**Drinks at CREA**

Empirical migration research, epistemic exclusion and categorization
Bas Schotel, University of Amsterdam

This paper reflects on attempts by empirical migration researchers to overcome the epistemic biases associated with the policy categories for understanding migration. A recent case of such an attempt is the multi-sited approach. Empirical migration researchers are understandably concerned about how the nation state paradigm dominates the categorization of the migration phenomenon, ie methodological nationalism. Though sympathetic to these attempts, the paper questions whether it makes sense to understand migration independently from the official categories and policies.

Firstly, the attempts to come up with richer and more complex understandings of migration presuppose that we can 'better understand' migration. It implies that migration corresponds to a social reality that can be understood outside the official categories. However, the paper argues that empirical researchers simply cannot *identify* migration without policymakers telling them what is relevant to look at. In effect the indicators of what constitutes migration and its effects are determined by policy makers. Any attempt to come up with a more 'real sociological' understanding of migration immediately cuts outs the salience of the phenomenon. The kind of migration that is meaningful today, is indeed an artefact of the state. Secondly, attempts to overcome epistemic biases may actually lead to a kind of epistemic hegemony. Rather than seeking an encompassing, comprehensive and coherent account of social realities, a truly multi-disciplinary approach should cater for categories that are incompatible and go against one another, or even better: simply talk past each other.

Political anxieties rendered technical: How Dutch *inburgering* policies neutralise the racialization of national belonging
Michiel Swinkels, Radboud Universiteit

Inburgering laws, being grounded in popular, scientific and political problematizations of ascribed cultural, ethnic, corporeal, religious and linguistic differences, demarcate people as racialized outsiders. Drawing on analyses of departmental policy archives and interviews with involved policy makers, I show how, despite legal objections against categorising policy subjects based on their apparent national or ethnic background, *inburgering* laws have been created using neutral language and categories in order to target those people who because of their perceived otherness are thought to pose the largest threat to the Dutch nation. Their official goal is improving the "participation" of all "newcomers", in practice entailing family migrants and refugees mainly coming from countries categorised as "non-Western" or "Islamic". They, together with "oldcomers", are demarcated as people who seem objectively "in need of *inburgering*", which is, however, determined by their a priori problematization as "non-Western allochthones" instead of actual socioeconomic marginalisation. Especially because *inburgering* laws fail to realise stated goals of better employment or education opportunities, their main effect, besides restricting migration, is constructing and isolating certain people, both migrants and Dutch citizens, as anomalies who cannot belong in the Dutch nation state. Policies, in other words, normalise the white majority

as "real Dutch" and naturalise their established, dominant position. As such integration policies are political technologies, substantiating state power by aiming to contain perceived threats posed by migration and diversity, yet at the same time appearing to be technical and neutral policy solutions that effectively depoliticise these mechanisms of power.

Question for discussion:
- To what extent are policies intentionally created as technologies of normalization.

Bi-ethnic children in educational science
Merlijn Karssen, University of Amsterdam

Changing demographics in societies through international migration have led to an increasing number of bi-ethnic individuals. The focus of this study is on bi-ethnic students with one parent with an ethnic majority background and one parent with an ethnic minority background. Most studies worldwide have grouped these bi-ethnic students with ethnic minority students or have grouped them according to the ethnic background of their mothers with the majority or minority group. However, empirical arguments for these groupings are lacking. The present study examined the educational outcomes, social functioning and citizenship competences of bi- ethnic students compared with mono-ethnic majority and mono-ethnic minority students in the Netherlands. Data on in total 12,841 sixth-grade students (age 11–12) in primary education from two consecutive measurements of the national Dutch cohort study (COOL5–18) were used in this study. To analyze the differences in educational outcomes and functioning among bi- ethnic, mono-ethnic minority and mono-ethnic majority students, multivariate, multilevel analyses were performed.
The research findings indicate that bi-ethnic students do not differ from mono-ethnic majority students while they do differ from mono-ethnic minority students in their cognitive achievement, social-emotional functioning and citizenship knowledge. Bi-ethnic students scored higher on cognitive outcomes, social-emotional functioning and citizenship knowledge than mono-ethnic minority students did. For citizenship orientation alone, it was found that bi-ethnic   students score in between mono-ethnic majority and mono-ethnic minority students. This study indicates that researchers should not assume that bi-ethnic students will be similar to mono- ethnic ones.

Questions for discussion:
- Should researchers and policy makers categorize bi-ethnic individuals apart from mono- ethnic individuals? And if so: on what basis should we categorize bi-ethnic individuals?

Caught between the national and the transnational: EU claimants at the frontline of welfare policy
Nora Ratzmann, London School of Economics

For whom does the European Union's freedom of movement, as envisioned by the European Commission, works in pratice? – This paper, being part of a larger PhD project on EU citizens' social rights in Germany, examines how the highly disputed legal categories of employees and job seekers determine who has access to a social minimum in practice. The research examines how access to subsistence benefits is granted or closed within the German jobcentres by relying on categorizing EU citizens depending on their wealth and local labour market attachment. The research thereby highlights a newly emerging dimension on inequality, whereby EU citizens not only lose their privileged status as outsiders who should be treated as insiders according to the European vision, but also become downgraded in the hierarchy of those considered deserving - established by politics and street-level bureaucrats themselves. It draws on a wealth of almost 100 interviews with legal experts, representatives from German welfare organizations, policy- makers and jobcenter employees, as well as ethnographic data from network meetings and internal workshops within the jobcenters.

Ignorance as an aim of categorizations
Adriana Mica, Anna Horolets, Mikołaj Pawlak, Paweł Kubicki, University of Warsaw

To better understand what categories are, one has to question the basic assumptions about how categories work in social world, academy included. Following Dahinen's (2016: 8) suggestion 'to link migration research issues with social theory in general', we turn to an emerging field of sociology of ignorance (e.g. Gross 2010; McGoey 2012) for inspirations. The assumption that knowledge-power (e.g. Foucault 1980, 2009) is the key aim of categorizations, i.e. that categories' purpose is to make subjects or groups knowable and therefore manageable and controllable by powerful social actors is widely shared (cf. Brubaker 2002; Vertovec 2012). Yet, in ignorance studies it has been demonstrated that also the opposite of knowledge (i.e. ignorance, masking, disregard) is a powerful tool used for managing social processes and controlling social actors. Therefore not only knowing but also ignoring (e.g. social actors' features or capacities, or their very existence) is a vital part of categorization processes. The reflexive and analytical task that migration scholars should embark on is therefore the study of who ignores what, how and why, when categorizing.
Our paper proposal is a part of a research project devoted to policy and media reactions to the so called European refugee crisis in Central and Eastern Europe (http://refugee-crisis.uw.edu.pl/). In the project the empirical aim is to see how institutional social actors deal with the problem that cannot be ignored anymore. The project's theoretical aim is to study how the ignorance of such problem is reproduced or modified in policy measures and public perceptions.

Questions for discussion:
- In what ways not only knowledge (and control) but also ignorance (and overlooking some aspects of an issue's complexity) is an aim of categorizations undertaken in public policy (or academic research)?
- Is social action possible on condition that there is full recognition of an issue's

complexity, i.e. when the issue is treated in the least categorized way possible?

References

Brubaker, R. (2002) Ethnicity without Groups, *European Journal of Sociology* 43 (2), 163–89.

Dahinden, J. (2016) A plea for the 'de-migranticization' of research on migration and integration, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2015.1124129

McGoey, L. (2012) 'Strategic Unknowns: Towards a Sociology of Ignorance', *Economy and Society*, 41, 1-16.

Gross, M. (2010) *Ignorance and Surprise: Science, Society, and Ecological Design*, Cambridge, MA/London, The MIT Press.

Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, London, Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (2009) *Security, Territory, and Population, Lectures at College de France 1977-1978*, New York, Picador. Vertovec, S. (2012) 'Diversity' and the Social Imaginary, *European Journal of Sociology* 53(3), 287–312.

Identifying 'the most vulnerable' refugees? Selection categories of humanitarian admission and resettlement programs in Europe

Natalie Welfens & Asya Pisarevskaya, University of Amsterdam

The so-called refugee crisis has stimulated broad political debates about how to identify truly 'deserving' and 'vulnerable' refugees. Recent humanitarian admission and resettlement programs in Europe offer a limited number of asylum spots for those refugees that are considered to be *most* vulnerable. Categories are central selection tools in such programs: they define refugees' vulnerability and thereby draw the lines of inclusion and exclusion to regulate access. These categorizations of refugees create categorical inequalities in access to asylum in Europe and shape our ideas of who counts as most vulnerable.

To better understand European states' boundary making for refugee inclusion and exclusion a closer analysis of categories in resettlement and humanitarian admission programs is needed. Revisiting the country-reports of a recent European Migration Network study (2016), the authors provide their own systematic overview of different national selection categories and identify broader trends in European states' categorizations of refugees for resettlement and humanitarian admission. The analysis suggests that only those refugees who fit multiple selection categories can potentially be granted access to this privileged way to asylum. It also shows nation states' relative power over category making and thereby questions the primacy of international organizations, like the UNHCR, in this policy field. Overall, the authors demonstrate how selection categories do not only address needs of vulnerable refugees but also individual interests of the nation states formulating them.

Questions for discussion:
- What are advantages and pitfalls of different national selection categories in resettlement and humanitarian admission programs? Would an EU-wide harmonized set of selection categories be more desirable?
- How can we as scholars and/or practitioners study and analyze potential discrepancies between official selection categories in policy orders and selection practice?

In the Shadow of Asylum Decision-Making: The Politics of Country of Origin Information
Jasper van der Kist, Huub Dijstelbloem & Marieke de Goede, University of Amsterdam

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Country of origin information (COI) deals with a variety of themes that relate to asylum adjudication, including the treatment of ethnic or religious groups, human rights laws and their application, geographical details, recent events, etc. COI reports are not only an important resource for individual refugee status determination, but also for policy-making. The latter includes group-based procedures, where governments summarily grant protection to persons coming from a particular country of origin without ruling on each case individually. It also includes 'safe countries of origin' lists. Migrant populations whose country of origin is categorized as 'safe' are processed through accelerated procedures. Country information is used to make legitimate decisions on which countries should be added to or removed from these white lists.

Our paper explores the connection between the collection and processing of information about country conditions on the one hand and the political authority to distinguish and make decisions on refugees who deserve protection – and other migrants who do not – on the other. Using the analytic framework of Science and Technology Studies (STS), and Actor-network Theory (ANT) in particular, we focus on governmental sites of country of origin knowledge production, also known as COI units. By exploring its three stages 'translation' (investigation, standardization and validation), we challenge the supposed objectivity and neutrality of country research. We argue that the construction of COI reports by specialized units is a precarious socio-material endeavor geared towards making decisions on (groups of) asylum seekers – thereby displaying what we like to call a 'pulsional normativity' in bordering practices.

Questions for discussion:
- Categorization take place in networks of experts and are supported by technologies of all sorts (e.g. databases, techniques of visualization, decision tools). Which analytical and empirical perspectives help us to understand the transformations and interpretations these devices bring about?
- How can we make sense of the connection between sites of (scientific) knowledge production and the governmental domains of asylum adjudication?

New words for the permanently temporary: exploring alternative conceptual approaches and categories for people in protracted refugee situations, and the effects on contemporary and future humanitarian governance.
Bram Jansen, Wageningen University

Refugees and forced migrants, their camps and settlements and the interventions aimed at governing them, are increasingly permanent parts of 'normal' socio-political orders, either because refugees become part of routine networks and trajectories, or because they simply remain in refuge for a prolonged period of time.

The result is a routinization of exceptional, irregular and temporary socio-spatial arrangements to settle and govern migrants and refugees. Emblematic for this are protracted "city-camps" in places such as Tanzania, Jordan, and Kenya, and increasingly also settlements in and around Europe. The situation in which people in these spaces find themselves has been referred to as a permanent temporariness. In the past few years, new concepts and labels have emerged that seek to come to terms with the increasing normality of "permanently temporary" people and the realities and economies in which they exist. This paper traces this new conceptual vocabulary and explores how these relate to new approaches in policy and refugee governance. More specifically, it asks how new and alternative categorization of forced migrants informs or legitimizes refugee policy and practice, and vice versa.

Question for discussion:
- Is there a risk that an alternative language and perspective on the normalisation of refugee situations legitimizes more elaborate encampment and exacerbate exclusion?

Categorization processes in Moroccan and Tunisian immigration policy
Katharina Natter, University of Amsterdam

This piece reflects on the categorization processes that have emerged during my PhD field research on the politics of immigration policy in Morocco and Tunisia. It draws on over hundred interviews and many more informal conversations conducted between October 2016 and May 2017 with Moroccan and Tunisian respondents involved in immigration policy-making and implementation. In Tunisia, 'immigrants' are understood by respondents in the first place as Tunisians residing abroad, not as foreigners residing in Tunisia. Also, the largest migrant population in Tunisia, Libyans, are not considered as 'immigrants' or 'refugees' - they are coined as 'guests' or 'brothers', herewith justifying the laissez-faire approach towards them. In Morocco, 'immigrants' are almost exclusively referring to sub-Saharan migrants, while the equally numerous group of European migrants is never mentioned. Also, as a consequence of the most recent policy reform in Morocco that included a regularization campaign, a new category has emerged: the 'regularized' migrant, target of a number of integration measures from which both regular and irregular migrants are excluded. These categories are not purely discursive tools, but very powerful policy instruments, as each 'migrant type' is subject to a different policy response: In Morocco for instance, Syrian refugees are treated through the security lens, foreign housemaids through the victims of trafficking lens, and regularized migrants through a foreign policy lens - disregarding the fluidity and overlap of these categories on the ground. In Tunisia, the generalized absence of 'immigrants' (i.e. foreigners) in political discourse as a target group for policy-making highlights the authorities' lack of willingness to address the fragile administrative situation with which most foreigners - Libyans, students and workers alike - are confronted.

Questions for discussion:
- While most research focusses on the exclusionary character of categorization, categories can also lead to more protection for certain migrants. The refugee category

is one of them, next to victims of trafficking or unaccompanied migrants. What is the socio-political role of research in granting equal attention to these rights-yielding categorization processes? Is an ever-more differentiated/selective treatment of migrants a way to increase protection for the most vulnerable or is it counterproductive?

- In qualitative research, respondents will inevitably resort to categories and fill them with their own meaning. How can researchers overcome the different understandings of certain categories - as well as the assumptions that lie behind their use - between him/herself and the respondent? Should they be silently accepted or actively questioned during interviews?