



**ISP- workshop, Denaturalizing Difference Today, with Sylvia Yanagisako**

**10<sup>th</sup> of June 2015, 9<sup>th</sup> floor, Fosswinckelsgt. 6**

10:00-10:15 Welcome

10:15-11:00 Kathinka Frøystad, *Denaturalizing naturalization: Conceptual reflections and a new look at caste*

11:00-11:10 Short break

11:10-11:55 Christine M. Jacobsen, *'Migrant illegality'; Controlling and Navigating Borders in the City of Marseille*

11:55-13:00 Lunch

13:00-13:45 Synnøve Bendixsen, *Manifestations of control: Irregular migrants and the social construction of boundaries and borders*

13:45-13:00 Coffee break

14:00-14:45 Anette Fagertun, *Waves of dispossession: Land conversions and the disposable workforce in Bali*

14:50-15:35 Astrid Blystad and Haldis Haukanes, *The social life of global texts. Naturalization and de-naturalization of "gender equality" and "motherhood" in development interventions in Ethiopia*

Dinner at 19:30, Litteraturhuset Bergen, Østre Skostredet 5-7

## Abstracts

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Kathinka Frøystad (IKOS, University of Oslo)

### **Denaturalizing naturalization: Conceptual reflections and a new look at caste**

Despite its promising birth as an analytical concept in Yanagisako and Delaney's *Naturalizing Power* (1995), the concept of naturalization rapidly deteriorated to a shorthand for phenomena that appear unquestionable or unchangeable to our friends in the field. This article takes a fresh look at the concept, arguing that it still holds considerable value for the anthropology of difference provided that it is (1) delinked from the view of nature as a *Ding an sich*, (2) examined across fields (nature, biology, god) and (3) framed diachronically, taking into consideration political struggles and historical processes. To illustrate these points, the latter half of the article takes a fresh look at the study of caste. Starting with 'god', represented by the karmic view of caste, this section argues that an analysis of ontological underpinnings is invaluable as a starting point and self-provincializing exercise but would be distorting as an independent analytical perspective given the stormy political struggles over caste throughout the past century. Caste must rather be analysed as subject to a long-drawn dialectics of de- and re-naturalization. To conceptualize such processes analytically, the article argues for the usefulness of applying a meta-perspective on knowledge, here exemplified by Bourdieu's dialectics between heterodoxy and orthodoxy.

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Christine M Jacobsen (The Centre for Women's and Gender Research (SKOK), University of Bergen)

### **'Migrant illegality'; Controlling and Navigating Borders in the City of Marseille**

The consequences of militarized borders and deaths related to illegalized migration have recently received much public attention in Europe. As Etienne Balibar (2003) has noted, however, borders are no longer (if they ever were) situated entirely at the outer limit of territories. Rather, they are dispersed and materialize wherever the movement of information, people, and things is taking place and is controlled - for example in cosmopolitan cities. Such dispersed materialization interrogates the notions of interiority and exteriority upon which border work relies. This paper examines how territorial border assemblages materialize throughout the interiors of the French nation state. Based on extensive fieldwork with illegalized migrants in Marseille, the paper demonstrates ethnographically how borders materialize through objects, buildings, administrative practices, and technologies of policing and detention. Inspired by Sarah Willen's (2007) call for a critical phenomenology of "migrant illegality", the paper

investigates some embodied consequences of contemporary border control regimes and the ways in which such regimes are experienced by sans-papiers and sans-papiers as they 'navigate' the city. In conclusion, the paper discusses how power and inequality is de- and re-naturalized through migration practices and the increasingly sophisticated technologies devised for controlling them.

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Synnøve Bendixsen (Department of Social Anthropology, University of Bergen)

### **Manifestations of control: Irregular migrants and the social construction of boundaries and borders**

Drawing on fieldwork with irregular migrants in the welfare state Norway, this paper problematizes the complex relationship between technologies of control, welfare state policies, and experiences of the body by irregular migrants. How do governmental and policy practices in the field of public health care come to generate ideas of the illegal body and how this is taken up by the irregular migrants? How are experiences of being denied healthcare shaping irregular migrants understanding of the self and their body? In this paper, I examine how certain discourses, restrictive policies and stricter technologies of control shapes how social interaction between irregular migrants and street-level bureaucrats are set up. Technologization of the nation-state borders, and ideas of inclusion/exclusion, contributes to the construction of underserving and illegalized bodies, a process to which migrants contributes through their practices and self-perceptions. This marking of the border is not about fences and walls, camps or detention centres. Rather, the border landscape becomes experienced and even materialised through the body: The body comes to enact 'illegality', in a process through which the border is internalized so one might say that the irregular migrant comes to embody the border. Ultimately, this paper becomes a discussion of how the border gets enacted through boundary structures and practices and what forms it takes.

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Anette Fagertun (Department of Social Anthropology, University of Bergen/ Department of Health, Bergen University College)

### **Waves of dispossession: Land conversions and the disposable workforce in Bali**

In Bali questions of land and labor are increasingly being defined in terms of the market and the widely held view of dispossession from land and subsistence is as a 'natural' precursor of desired 'development'. The rapidly expanding mass-tourism industry today dominates the province economy, employs half of the workforce, attracts global investors and work migrants from all over Indonesia and unceasingly 'demands' new land, resources and skilled manpower. I argue that land and labor conversions signify processes of 'accumulation by dispossession' and 'enclosure from below'. Waves of dispossession throughout Bali's recent history have been key moments of class

formation while the contemporary rise of a landless class of disposable workers also is indicative of a new logic of 'expulsion' in Bali.

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Astrid Blystad (Department of Global Public Health and Primary Care, University of Bergen) and Haldis Haukanes (Department of Health Promotion and Development, University of Bergen)

**The social life of global texts. Naturalization and de-naturalization of “gender equality” and “motherhood” in development interventions in Ethiopia.**

This paper takes as a starting point an understanding of the concept of naturalization that connotes “matter-of-course-making” in a broad sense. We explore the analytical power of the concepts naturalization and de-naturalization as we set out to examine the circulation of central 'global texts', and the manner in which these texts enter into national and local contexts mediating, regulating and authorizing people's thought and action (Smith, 2004). How does the content of such policy documents come to be seen as 'a-cultural' and 'universal', i.e. as 'natural', with a parallel reification of what is deemed to be the 'cultural'? Linking the naturalization concept among others to Abu-Lughod's discussions of “*strong language*” (from T. Asad), and to Lombardo et al.'s elaborations of gender equality as a travelling concept, we explore empirically how texts that guide *global gender equality policies* as well as the high profile WHO programme '*Prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV*' manifest themselves in Ethiopia, i.e. the manner in which they are made sense of by policy makers and by 'local' people. We scrutinize the simultaneously bizarre and disturbing implications of the implementation of policy texts that naturalize the understandings of 'gender equality' and 'motherhood' through processes void of reference to local gendered worlds and to gender and motherhood as embodied knowledge and culturally embedded practice. Not losing sight of the inherent power dynamics and the gross imbalance in agenda setting that these processes entail, we also suggest that the texts and policies go through a process of de-naturalization in their encounters with life “on the ground”, as their truth value and applicability become contested by local actors.