

Fellows 2024/ 2025



NIAS

Netherlands Institute
for Advanced Study
in the Humanities
and Social Sciences



Fellows 2024-2025

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Jan Willem Duyvendak is director of the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (NIAS-KNAW) since 2018, and he is also distinguished Research Professor of Sociology at the University of Amsterdam. He received his masters' degrees in both sociology and philosophy at the University of Groningen. His main fields of research currently are citizenship, belonging, and nativism. In 2021 he was elected member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and in 2022 of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His most recent book, with Josip Kesic, is *The Return of the Native. Can Liberalism Safeguard us from Nativism?* (Oxford University Press, 2022).

Welcome to NIAS

It is with pride and joy that we present the NIAS Fellows of 2024-2025. Providing an intellectual haven to our diverse year group of scholars, literati, journalists and artists is NIAS's primary mission. We aim to offer our fellows the opportunity to devote themselves to a research project of their own design.

Trusting our fellows to make their research choices freely and independently, and defending their right to do so, is what the owl persona of the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (NIAS) embodies. Giving fellows the space and time to exchange ideas, and to collectively reflect upon their ontological and epistemological assumptions is a fundamental part of our work. This *living lab* takes centre stage in our weekly seminars.

In this atmosphere of slow science, challenging and inspirational conversations can take place. Essential in this context, and building on the exchanges with and within the interdisciplinary group of fellows, is that NIAS wants to contribute to debates regarding the values of, as well as the threats to academic freedoms. Institutes for Advanced Study are often seen as the canary in the coalmine as they are usually the first in line to experience threats to academic freedoms. NIAS views academic freedoms as a prerequisite for groundbreaking research.

We are committed to defending academic freedoms, including the freedom to carry out research independently (following the 'blue sky principle'), thoroughly (thanks to the time and space a fellowship offers), and from various angles, in a transdisciplinary way. We believe these freedoms facilitate research practices that challenge established wisdoms and, by doing so, may contribute to unexpected insights.

Academic freedoms are under attack in various parts of the world. Across the globe, academic institutions experience growing political pressure. From Hungary to Poland, from Brazil to Turkey, and increasingly also in the US and Western Europe, forced closures, mass layoffs and defunding and licensing initiatives are on the increase. Along with universities and other cultural institutions, which have since long been pillars of liberal democracies, NIAS is devoted to cherish and nurture the democratising potential of academia against these threats.

But how to best defend such academic freedoms, and thus liberal democracies? What could be the specific tasks of institutes such as NIAS? These are questions we continuously ask ourselves. We are eager to work with and learn from this year's fellows about their experiences of academic freedoms, how they think these freedoms work, and how they can be protected and exercised. For NIAS, its fellows have always been an inspiration for mutual learning and reflection, even more so since our fellows' cohorts are becoming increasingly diverse in various ways.

We experience the whole world at NIAS. This truly international confluence refines our individual and collective endeavours, trains us to overcome challenges in an open and profound intellectual debate, and may show us how to make room for mutual enhancement. Even more so in unsettling times. Together. After all, we are all here to learn.

Jan Willem Duyvendak
Director NIAS



Fellows 1st semester

Steve Mrozowski
Tiina Äikäs
Jonas Monié Nordin
James Symonds

Daniela Agostinho
Nadia Aït Saïd-Ghanem
Wike Been
Frank Dobbin
Caroline Fernandes Caromano
Olívia Maria Gomes da Cunha
Amal Helles
Mingtao Huang

Wijnand IJsselsteijn
Lesia Kulchynska
Julia Lajus
Michèle Lamont
Eyo Mensah
Toine Pieters
Conny Roggeband
Mark de Rooij
Hanna Starkova
Emir Suljagi
Leendert van der Valk
Leonieke Vermeer
Dirk Vis

Nikkie Wiegink
Asante Mtenje
Andréanne Béguin
Lucie Nezri

NIAS Theme Group

Early Dutch Commerce and Indigenous Landscapes

1st Semester



Early Dutch colonialism was driven mainly by the desire for commerce. In the 17th century, the Dutch created a global economy with settlements aimed at integrating Indigenous economies, resources, land, and people into their expanding trade network.

These colonial settlements offer valuable insights into the nature of these early encounters and a better understanding of the character of these early encounters which will help restore some agency to Indigenous peoples, who continue to fight for their cultural and historical rights.

While the main focus of this research is on the global impact of the Dutch, our research also seeks to revise earlier views of Dutch-Indigenous interactions, with the goal of highlighting and revitalizing Indigenous perspectives and voices.

The Theme Group “Early Dutch Commerce and Indigenous Landscapes: A Transnational Comparative Approach” consists of scholars who have used Historical Archaeology as their main entry point into studies of colonialism in Indigenous lands. As a field of study, Historical Archaeology is highly interdisciplinary involving the examination of primary documents, extant and past architecture, landscapes, and material culture recovered from archaeological excavations.

Each member of the group brings a wealth of experience to this study. Historians and archaeologists have examined Dutch colonialism extensively, but few have sought to incorporate an Indigenous perspective, something that the Theme Group feels is essential in places such as Eastern North America or Scandinavia.

Situating Sylvester Manor in the Dutch Colonial World



Steve Mrozowski

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TYPE

NIAS Theme Group
Fellow

AFFILIATION

Distinguished
University Professor
at the University
of Massachusetts,
Boston

SEMESTER

September 2024-
January 2025

DISCIPLINE

Anthropology,
Archaeology

KEYWORDS

decolonisation,
heritage, artefacts

During the 17th century the Anglo-Dutch colonists, enslaved Africans and Indigenous workers lived and laboured at Sylvester Manor. This project is an extension of Mrozowski's continuing collaborations with the Indigenous peoples of Southern New England in the USA. Sylvester Manor helped to provision two large sugar plantations on Barbados that were owned and operated by two Anglo-Dutch brothers, Nathaniel and Constant Sylvester. Today Sylvester Manor is an educational farm and history center dedicated to preserving the heritage of the Indigenous and enslaved Africans who lived and worked at the Manor. Archaeological excavations have unearthed the remains of early buildings as well as domestic and work areas of the plantation. This material tells a complex story of cultural pluralism that counters efforts on the part of the Sylvester descendants to create a settler colonial landscape where all three groups lived separately.



Tiina Äikäs

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The purpose of the project is to analyse the effects of Dutch colonialism on the Indigenous Sámi landscapes by using interdisciplinary and participatory methods. During her research Tiina Äikäs analyses the possible material influence of the Dutch in the Sámi lived landscape. Archaeological excavations in Northern Finland have uncovered numerous Dutch artifacts, such as clay pipes, faience, and glass. These findings suggest Dutch influence in the Sámi landscape, although they might have reached Sámi areas through various indirect contacts. More direct connections between continental Europeans and the Sámi are evident in travel accounts, especially those of Dutch travelers. To broaden the study, depictions from travelers of other nationalities, such as Acerbi in 1802, are also included. A database of these written and visual accounts will support an online map where locals can contribute their own images, helping to decolonise landscape representations.

Decolonising Indigenous Landscapes in the North

TYPE
NIAS Theme Group
Fellow

AFFILIATION
Senior Research
Fellow at the
University of Oulu

SEMESTER
September 2024-
January 2025

DISCIPLINE
Archaeology

KEYWORDS
travelers,
decolonisation,
landscape, mapping

The Dutch in the North: Decolonising Sámi-Dutch Relations of the Seventeenth Century

Jonas Monié Nordin

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TYPE
NIAS Theme Group
Fellow

AFFILIATION
Associate Professor
of archaeology at
Stockholm University

SEMESTER
September 2024-
January 2025

DISCIPLINE
Archaeology

KEYWORDS
colonialism,
decolonialism, trade

In this project, Jonas Monié Nordin investigates Dutch trading companies and traders in northern Scandinavia during the second half of the seventeenth century. What was the role of Dutch investors in Sápmi - the land of the Sami? What sources from the 17th century trade with Sápmi exist in the Netherlands? What material sources can be linked to the Sámi-Dutch trade. Conversely, what role did Sápmi and the Sámi people play in structuring Dutch colonial practice and colonial ideology? And what does a decolonial approach to this history look like? To answer these questions, Nordin examines Dutch-Scandinavian-Sámi interactions within the broader context of Dutch colonialism in the 17th century. The Dutch in the north were part of a global commercial and colonial network centred on Amsterdam. His decolonial approach to Dutch Scandinavian-Sámi history embraces this global perspective while remaining grounded in local Indigenous contexts.





James Symonds

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TYPE

NIAS Theme Group Fellow

AFFILIATION

Professor of Historical Archaeology at the University of Amsterdam

SEMESTER

September 2024-January 2025

DISCIPLINE

Archeology

KEYWORDS

consumption, heritage, capitalism

New Worlds & New Commodities: Transformations of Everyday Life in 17th & 18th Century Dutch Republic

Integrating material evidence from archaeological excavations and archives, this research will investigate the emergence of the commonplace, rather than lingering on exceptional luxury items, and will seek to document how goods related to the consumption of colonial commodities grew in number to become the new norm in Dutch households. Specific research questions include: How were tobacco smoking and tea drinking received and adopted by Dutch households in the 17th and 18th centuries? Does archaeological evidence point to differential rates of uptake and use of tobacco and tea between, for example, port cities, inland towns, and rural settlements? What factors influenced the adoption and spread of tobacco smoking and tea drinking? How were these new objects tied to international networks of exchange and colonial exploitation? And finally, how should we narrate the heritage of changing consumer choices in the Dutch Republic in the context of colonial capitalism?

AFFILIATION

Assistant professor, School of Communication and Culture, Aarhus University

DISCIPLINE

Visual Culture

KEYWORDS

colonialism, art, archive, narrative

SEMESTER

September 2024-January 2025

Daniela Agostinho

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Archival Encounters: Colonial Archives, Curation and Restitutive Practices

As people around the world reexamine colonial and imperial histories, the debate over returning artifacts and documents taken during colonial times has become more important. This project focuses on the Danish colonial archives from the former Danish West Indies (now the United States Virgin Islands) to explore how these archives can help us understand the past and create new stories for the future. Combining visual culture, archival studies, artistic research, and curatorial work, she looks at how art can help *repair* the damage of colonialism. Her book project shows how art can provide new ways to view history and develop new forms of archives that enrich our understanding of the past and help us reimagine it.

Cuneiform Tablets in Dutch Museums and the Iraqi-French Antiquities Dealer Ibrahim Elias Gejou

Since the Iraq Museum was looted in 2003, many government authorities, legal experts, and activists have attempted to find stolen objects so they could be returned to Iraq. These international efforts have also led Iraqi and non-Iraqi scholars to examine the history of art smuggling in Iraq since the adoption of the 1970 UNESCO Convention. But the smuggling of Iraq's tangible cultural heritage before 1970 has received little attention. Between 1884 and 1939 antiquities dealers based in Iraq created a smuggling network specifically to sell collections of cuneiform tablets to museums in Europe and America. Many letters sent by such dealers to curators survive in museum archives and help understand the biography of objects. This study proposes to retrace the provenance of collections sold by Ibrahim Elias Gejou, one of the most active dealers of smuggled Iraqi artefacts of his generation, focusing on collections he sold after Iraq's Antiquities Law of 1936.



Nadia Aït Saïd-Ghanem

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TYPE
NIAS-NIOD-KITLV
Fellow

SEMESTER
September 2024-
January 2025

AFFILIATION
Research Associate
at the School of
Oriental and African
Studies, University of
London

DISCIPLINE
Provenance Research

KEYWORDS
art, trade,
colonialism,
museums, law,
activism, culture



Wike Been

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The Instituut Gak Fellowship offers researchers the opportunity to work on topics in the field of social security and labor market policy with the aim of producing new scientific knowledge or working on solutions to practical issues. This fellowship is a collaboration between Institute Gak and NIAS. Instituut Gak is committed to contributing to the quality of social security and the labor market in the Netherlands by investing in social projects, research, chairs and professorships.



Membership rates of employers' organisations are showing signs of decline. This jeopardises the broad coverage of employees through collective bargaining agreements. As fewer employees are directly covered by multi employer bargaining, there is a potential risk to the legal extension mechanisms. This development suggests a shift in employers' attitudes, but the reasons behind it are unclear. This project investigates the conditions and factors that motivate employers to join, refrain from joining, or leave employers' organisations, and how these have evolved in recent decades. It aims to fill the gap that remains between the bodies of literature explaining (a) why and how employers exit the system of collective bargaining, and (b) why they support this system, since neither perspective explains why support changes. The project combines quantitative secondary data sources and interviews with employers and their organisations.

The Fragility of Employers' Involvement in Collective Bargaining

TYPE
Instituut GAK Fellow

SEMESTER
September 2024-
January 2025

AFFILIATION
Assistant professor
of labour sociology
at University of
Groningen

DISCIPLINE
Sociology

KEYWORDS
collective bargaining
agreements, unions,
labour rights,
employer's attitudes

Frank Dobbin

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AFFILIATION

Henry Ford II
Professor of the
Social Sciences,
Harvard University,
Cambridge

SEMESTER

September 2024-
January 2025

DISCIPLINE

Sociology

KEYWORDS

equality, minorities,
diversity, academia



Through a transatlantic dialogue with traditional populations, this research points at the significance of the paintings and the portrayed peoples of Dutch Brazil in the 17th century. Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen, governor of the Dutch colony in Northeastern Brazil from 1637-1644, financed the work of researchers and artists, building collections and portraying the nature and peoples of Dutch Brazil as a strategy to demonstrate his political mastery. Although these scientific and artistic descriptions did not fully represent the cultural diversity in the colony, they may have scientific validity when analysed through modern anthropology. Caromano plans to engage in a transatlantic dialogue with Indigenous and Afro-Brazilian communities in Maranhão, the last area taken over by the Dutch in Brazil. Through examining basket weaving techniques, the study will explore broader issues about the historical portrayal of marginalised groups and their political influence.

(Re) Interweaving Past and Present

TYPE

NIAS-NIOD-KITLV
Fellow

SEMESTER

September 2024-
January 2025

AFFILIATION

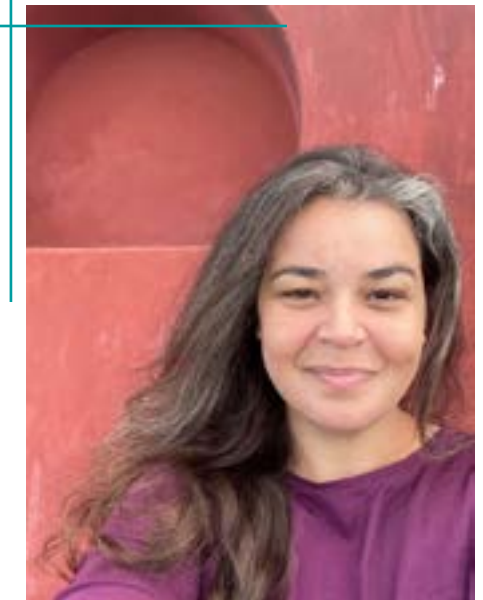
Postdoctoral
Researcher at
Naturalis Biodiversity
Center

DISCIPLINE

Archaeology

KEYWORDS

colonialism, artisans,
marginalisation,
dialogue



Caroline Fernandes Caromano

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NIAS - NIOD - KITLV Fellowship:
Moving objects, Mobilising
Culture in the Context of (De)
colonisation. This fellowship is
intended for researchers from
formerly colonised countries –
including heritage practitioners,
historians, archaeologists,
social scientists, artists,
journalists, and/or cultural
activists – with an interest in
(lost) collections or objects from
those countries or regions that
are kept in the Netherlands.



Do Faculty Diversity Programs Increase Faculty Diversity? Evaluating a Quarter Century of Initiatives in the United States

Women and people of color continue to face institutional barriers in academia. Slow progress on integrating the professoriate is undermining confidence in the university as a meritocratic institution. This project will provide the first systematic evidence about the efficacy of faculty diversity initiatives. The variance in programs in the American university system provides an exceptional experimental laboratory. With data for the period 1993-2017, this project analyses the effects of dozens of different policies on the professoriate, suggesting that many of the most popular programs, such as diversity and harassment training and grievance processes, have null or negative effects, leading to decreases in faculty diversity. But other simple measures, such as targeted hiring, formal mentoring, diversity task forces, and work-life initiatives show robust positive effects on faculty diversity. This project promises to help universities around the world to identify programs that will help them build faculties that mirror their populations.

On the Impossibility of Forgetting: Runaways and Refugees in the Sentient Maroon Landscapes



AFFILIATION

Professor of Anthropology at the National Museum, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro

DISCIPLINE

Anthropology

KEYWORDS

refugees, landscapes, slavery, violence, memory, spirituality, environment, narrative

SEMESTER

September 2024-January 2025

Olívia Maria Gomes da Cunha

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How did the Cottica Ndyuka, who moved to Moengo, Suriname, from refugee camps, reshape the places they and their ancestors created. The civil war and other forms of violence, driven by mining, logging, and capitalist development policies, have threatened and damaged traditional territories since the early 20th century, leading to the destruction of land, forests, rivers, and villages. From the Maroons' perspective, these territories are sentient landscapes where their ancestors, who escaped colonial plantations, built new societies based on matrilineal ties and solidarity. In Maroon ontology, earth and forest beings, spirits, gods, and humans are interconnected. How can existential landscapes tell the painful stories of the war and its quotidian effects? How have Maroons been coping with the memories of violence against their relatives and earth spirits? Gomes da Cunha researches how references to the time of slavery provide the language and analogies to understand and discuss the war and ongoing violence against Maroon communities.

TYPE

Safe Haven Fellow

AFFILIATION

Freelance journalist with *The Times*

SEMESTER

September 2024-july 2025

DISCIPLINE

reporting

KEYWORDS

war reporting, gender, representation, Gaza, journalism

Amal Helles

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Gazan Female Journalists, Prominent Voices in Coverage of the War

The Safe Haven Fellowship supports scholars and cultural actors at risk. It is intended for scholars, artists, writers and journalists who are not able to do their work in their current location or circumstances, because of the consequences of conflict or war.



Putting on your bulletproof vest, and leaving your children behind to go report the most recent bombardments. It is the daily reality for many female journalists in Gaza, who have become war reporters overnight since 7 October. This research project focuses on this recent development. How and why did female Gazan journalists become the most prominent voices in coverage of the war, and how has their gender impacted their journalism? Do they experience disadvantages and or advantages in comparison to their male colleagues? Amal Helles, a Gazan female journalist herself, will also explore whether the outsize number of female journalists reporting from Gaza in prominent roles impacts international perceptions of the conflict.

Mingtao Huang

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AFFILIATION

Professor of law at
Wuhan University
Law School

SEMESTER

September 2024-
January 2025

DISCIPLINE

Law

KEYWORDS

constitutional law,
legislature, judiciary



FIRST SEMESTER

China's Legislature- Centered Constitutional Review System: Promises, Challenges and Prospects

China has a legislature-centred mode of constitutional review. Should there be a procedural arrangement that bridges the judiciary and Congress when constitutional challenges are raised in cases? The current Chinese review process is unclear on how to handle specific cases and provide remedies for rights violations. There is also no clear procedure for courts to refer constitutional challenges to China's national legislature. Scholars in China disagree on whether concrete reviews should be implemented. Mingtao Huang argues there should be a way to address the need for specific reviews of constitutionality in judicial cases and create connections between the judiciary and the legislature to work together on constitutional challenges.

Psychology and Ethics Of Progressively Lifelike Embodiments in the Metaverse (PEOPLE in the Metaverse)



TYPE

Distinguished NIAS
Lorentz Fellow

SEMESTER

September 2024-
January 2025

AFFILIATION

Professor of
Cognition and Affect
in Human-Technology
Interaction at
Eindhoven University
of Technology (TU/e)

DISCIPLINE

Artificial Intelligence

KEYWORDS

virtuality,
personalisation,
eye tracking, digital
health

Virtual reality and augmented reality, known together as eXtended Reality (XR), are now widely used at home, work, and school, offering immersive experiences. When combined with artificial intelligence, XR creates realistic and personalised interactions. Avatars and environments become indistinguishable from real ones, making virtual experiences feel genuine and impactful on our real world behaviours and attitudes. XR also allows for deep personalisation through extensive tracking of user behaviour, providing AI with detailed data for psychological profiling. Companies like Meta see XR as a powerful marketing tool. For example, during a virtual political rally, your nonverbal cues could be analysed to influence your emotions and preferences through techniques like increasing eye contact or mirroring your behavior. IJsselsteijn analyses the psychological effects and ethical values at stake, and explores a number of innovative ways forward.



The Distinguished NIAS-Lorentz Fellowship is awarded to an eminent scientist working on research that brings together perspectives from the Humanities and/or Social Sciences on the one hand and the Natural Sciences and/or Technology on the other. The fellowship is part of the NIAS-Lorentz Program, a collaboration between NIAS and the Lorentz Center in Leiden. The center supports scientific communities by organizing innovative international workshops.

Wijnand IJsselsteijn

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NIAS FELLOWS 2024/25

Visuality of Violence during the Russo-Ukrainian War

TYPE

Safe Haven Fellow

DISCIPLINE

Media Studies

AFFILIATION

Independent researcher

KEYWORDS

war, media coverage, imagery

SEMESTER

September 2024-January 2025

How does the visually driven media environment shape military operations during the Russo-Ukrainian war, and how does military violence shape the operations of images? In modern warfare media coverage is very visible and intense. Images of violence circulated by the media can evoke strong emotions like guilt, fear, anger, or satisfaction, which can influence social choices, consumption habits, and political decisions. Beyond being a tool for information warfare, these emotionally charged images also play a part in the attention economy of social media and the global war-military complex. They can generate profits, open new markets, and direct the flow of capital. In her research, Kulchynska looks at how images related to the Russo Ukrainian War are produced, shared, and consumed. She explores how visibility and violence intersect in modern warfare, viewing the war as an industry driven by visuals. Her focus is on the strategies and infrastructures behind image creation, and how violence is used as a tool to produce impactful images.



Lesia Kulchynska

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The Arctic climate is currently changing at least three times faster than the climate of the planet as a whole, a phenomenon known as 'Arctic amplification'. There is no doubt that this warming has an anthropogenic cause. It is less known that a hundred years ago there was also a period of regional Arctic warming that had predominantly natural causes. Warming affected fisheries, motivated studies of glaciers and sea ice, and encouraged the exploration of the Northern Sea Route. Observations of changes affected the understanding of climate mechanisms and forced scientists to shift their views towards accepting the possibility of climate change on a historical scale that they previously rejected. The need to study changes in the Arctic became evident. However, political instability in this period, hampered Arctic research and international cooperation. Methodologically, Julia Lajus's project lies in the field of transnational history and is based on literature and archival material from several countries.

Arctic Warming, The Second International Polar Year, and Political Instability in the 1930s



AFFILIATION

Independent scholar

DISCIPLINE

History of Science

SEMESTER

September 2024-January 2025

KEYWORDS

climate change, arctic warming, environment, science

Julia Lajus

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Being Unseen: Workers, Indigenous People and High Tech Experts in a Globalising World

Michèle Lamont

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AFFILIATION
Harvard University
Professor of
Sociology and of
African and African
American Studies
and the Robert I.
Goldman Professor of
European Studies

SEMESTER
September 2024-
January 2025

DISCIPLINE
Sociology

KEYWORDS
recognition,
representation,
equality

Being Unseen analyses claims for political recognition. In this book project Michèle Lamont mobilises comparative case studies to consider similarities and differences between three types of recognition: *political recognition* for the “invisible” working class youth in the US and the UK; *environmental recognition* for two Indigenous groups in Micronesia and Eastern Canada; and recognition at work for high tech creators involved in the global production of videogames and special effects. While the first study concerns the political dimension of misrecognition, the second and third address the human consequences of environmental racism and the global transformation of work through artificial intelligence and other technologies. These studies all concern recognition in a different context of uncertainty about the future. For this research Lamont plans to draw on over 300 interviews and on a global multi-sited organisational ethnography.

Eyo Mensah

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AFFILIATION
Professor of
Anthropological
Linguistics at the
University of Calabar

DISCIPLINE
Linguistics

KEYWORDS
culture,
environmental
sustainability,
onomastics, climate
change

SEMESTER
September 2024-
January 2025

Eyo Mensah’s project explores how small-scale societies in Nigeria use personal naming practices to create awareness, promote environmental resilience and minimise the depletion of natural resources such as forests, farmland, hunting grounds and fishing waters. Specific names are given to children as measures to ensure that human society operates within ecological limits to protect and preserve nature. Mensah draws on the socio-onomastic theory, which takes into account the social, cultural and situational domains in which names are given and used. The goals of his project are to investigate how personal naming practices are used to enhance knowledge of environmental sustainability and to improve understanding of nature conservation and culture in some local communities in Nigeria. He concludes that naming practices form an important keystone of traditional epistemology. And they reveal a variety of concepts of identity which are related to environmental issues.

Personal Naming Practices and Environmental Sustainability in Nigeria

TYPE

Golestan Fellow

AFFILIATION

Program director of History and Philosophy of Science at the Freudenthal Institute, Faculty of Science, Utrecht University

SEMESTER

September 2024-January 2025

DISCIPLINE

History of Science

KEYWORDS

medicine, drug research, health

The Magic Bullet Legacy and Torpedo Fallacy in Medicine

The Golestan Fellowships are funded by a legacy from the late Prof. Dr. Med. Kenower Weimar Bash, a Swiss psychiatrist and NIAS fellow from the 1973-1974 academic year and support researchers in the medical or biological sciences who have already made significant contributions to their fields. They should have a specialisation that benefits from daily interactions with scholars engaged in advanced research in the humanities and social sciences.



Toine Pieters

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In previous studies Toine Pieters has shown how miracle drug imaginaries have played an important role as drivers or barriers of drug research, development and use. The means by which healthy futures are projected, pursued or neglected - be it through policy or research focus - affect the way technologies are developed and utilised. In this project he will examine how these so-called magic bullet visions of scientific and technological progress in Western medicine carry with them implicit ideas about conceptions of disease and its treatment, individual and collective healthy futures, and the good life. This project sits at the intersection of science and technology studies, medical and digital humanities looking to three therapeutic domains in medicine: oncology, infectious diseases and mental illness.

Conny Roggeband

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The Gendered Face of Autocratisation

AFFILIATION

Associate professor at the department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam

DISCIPLINE

Political Science

KEYWORDS

gender, women, populism, autocratisation

SEMESTER

September 2024-January 2025

How does the rise of right wing populism and autocratisation affect gender equality rights and movements defending those rights? Opposition to gender equality and attacks on gender and sexual rights are a significant part of the current rise in authoritarian governments worldwide. Leaders with autocratic tendencies are trying to reverse progress in sexual and reproductive rights and often use openly sexist language against their citizens. Despite this, they still manage to gain wide public support and win elections that are more or less democratic. Interestingly, these same autocratic regimes often highlight their political representation of women and offer more generous support for families and mothers. Prominent female politicians are often part of these authoritarian systems. How do autocrats manage to simultaneously attack gender equality and promote certain women's rights, and how does this strategy develop in the context of the current rise in authoritarianism?

Mark de Rooij

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Logistic Multidimensional Data Analysis

How can we analyse and visualise complex data sets with multiple categorical variables? Multivariate data are often analysed using techniques like principal component analysis and multidimensional unfolding. Both methods require numeric data, meaning the variables should be measured on an interval or ratio scale. However, in the social and behavioural sciences, measurements are often categorical, such as binary, ordinal, or nominal. For categorical data, logistic models are the most useful. Over the past two decades, Mark de Rooij has been developing logistic multidimensional data analysis techniques. In this project, he plans to write a book and create accompanying software to make these tools accessible to a wider scientific audience.



AFFILIATION

Professor of Artificial Intelligence & Data Theory at Leiden University, Institute of Psychology, Methodology and Statistics department

SEMESTER

September 2024-January 2025

DISCIPLINE

Psychology

KEYWORDS

methods, data, software

How do internet users from Ukraine and the Netherlands use memes to highlight attitudes to the war in Ukraine? With her research Hanna Starkova wants to show that individuals should be responsible for the content they share, regardless of whether it is perceived as not serious or humorous. She will conduct an online survey on memes among young people in Ukraine and the Netherlands. The survey will prioritise the study of memes and their impact on the younger demographic and will be conducted among students of BA and MA programmes in Media and Communication Studies. Analysing and comparing the results of the two surveys will help understand how young people in Ukraine and the Netherlands assess memes in general and how memes play a role in wartime.

Internet Memes in the Context of the War in Ukraine



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Hanna Starkova

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TYPE

Safe Haven Fellow

DISCIPLINE

Media Studies

AFFILIATION

Associate Professor at Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics

KEYWORDS

memes, war, responsibility, youth

SEMESTER

September 2024-January 2025

Emir Suljagić

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AFFILIATION
Director of
Srebrenica
Memorial Center

SEMESTER
September 2024-
January 2025

DISCIPLINE
Political Science

KEYWORDS
memory, genocide,
history, narrative

FIRST SEMESTER

Voicing the Silences over Srebrenica: An Investigation of Genocide Before and Beyond the Mass Graves

The publicly known narrative of Srebrenica seems straightforward: in July 1995, the Bosnian Serb forces attacked the UN designated Safe Area, ran it over in the presence of Dutch peacekeepers and proceeded to murder the male population of the enclave, at the same time deporting over thirty thousand women and children. In a meticulously planned military operation lasting five days, from July 11 to July 16, the Bosnian Serb forces massacred at least 8372 men and boys. Following the revelation of the extensive network of mass graves in August 1995, the Bosnian Serb military and police reburied the graves between September and November and scattered them across a large swathe of eastern Bosnia. While over the last two decades the remains of many genocide victims have been exhumed, identified, and buried, over one thousand individuals are still counted as missing, and their mortal remains have not been found nor identified. In his research Emir Suljagić argues that the discrepancy lies not so much in what is mentioned but in what is not.



Atlas of the Dutch History of Slavery

The Journalist-in-Residence Fellowship is for journalists with a keen interest in scholarly research who need an extended period of time to focus on a longer piece of journalistic work. The programme is a collaboration between NIAS and the Fonds Bijzondere Journalistieke Projecten – Foundation for Special Projects in Journalism. This independent foundation aims to support journalists and authors working on time-consuming and in-depth journalistic publications.

FONDS BIJZONDERE
JOURNALISTIEKE PROJECTEN

Leendert van der Valk

leendertvandervalk@gmail.com

TYPE
Journalist-in-
residence

AFFILIATION
Freelance journalist
and journalism
teacher at the
University of
Amsterdam

SEMESTER
September 2024-
January 2025

DISCIPLINE
Journalism

KEYWORDS
Dutch slavery, bias,
narrative

Over the last few years the Netherlands is finally having a national debate about its history of slavery. The government and the royal family have issued apologies for their roles in this history. Surprisingly, we still don't have a good view on the true size and extent of Dutch slavery over the centuries and around the globe. The official number that is constantly referred to is 600,000 Africans who were traded under the Dutch flag. But this geographical bias and the focus on official trade leaves out more than two third of the actual history of Dutch slavery. At least one million, and likely more, enslaved people are left out of the history books, as are dozens of former colonies and trading posts. Leendert van der Valk will work on the 'Atlas of the Dutch History of Slavery'. The core of the book is the 30 'overlooked' colonies and trading posts, shedding light on the one million or more 'forgotten' children, women and men enslaved by Dutch traders. He will work in the tradition of narrative non-fiction.

NIAS FELLOWS 2024/25

This project centers on the biography of Sophie of Württemberg (1818-1877), queen consort of the Dutch king William III. This biography is part of the larger research project ‘Four Dutch Queens in a Time of Nation Building (1774-1934)’, aiming to publish comprehensive biographies of these four queens, originated in German and Russian royal houses. One of the most fundamental, methodological issues in biographical writing is how to deal with autobiographical texts as complex historical sources. The autobiography of Sophie of Württemberg (1818-1877), queen consort of the Dutch king William III, presents an outstanding case study for exploring this conundrum. For a biographer, her autobiography and other forms of self-narrating are both a goldmine and a pitfall. These egodocuments provide insights, but they also reinforce self-created stories or myths. Vermeer plans to complete the biography, while simultaneously developing a new methodological framework for autobiography.

The Autobiography of a Queen: Biographer’s Goldmine or Pitfall?

Leonieke Vermeer

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AFFILIATION

Assistant Professor
at the University of
Groningen

SEMESTER

September 2024-
January 2025

DISCIPLINE

History

KEYWORDS

autobiography,
biography, royals,
nation building



Dirk Vis

write@dirkvis.email

TYPE

Writer-in-residence

AFFILIATION

Independent writer

SEMESTER

September 2024-
January 2025

DISCIPLINE

Writing

KEYWORDS

natural science
fiction, narratives,
climate change,
speculative writing,
art & science

I Tree

Nederlands letterenfonds dutch foundation for literature

The Writer-in-Residence programme is a cooperation between NIAS and Nederlands Letterenfonds - the Dutch Foundation for Literature. The foundation is committed to contribute to a well-read, intelligent and creative society in which the role of literature, writers and translators, is recognized and valued. This fellowship aims to allow writers of fiction and non-fiction to work within an international, interdisciplinary academic community.

Vis writes *natural science fiction*. In *I Tree*, historical, biological and anthropological sources are combined with insights from Indigenous worldviews and artistic research. A psychologist is sent to the last tiny remnant of the Amazonian jungle. It is 2069. Improbable reports are coming from the nearest research stations. The sixth wave of extinction has passed its peak, the world’s oceans and continents have become impoverished and uniform, but at this spot in the jungle a diversity explosion is observed with increasingly exotic insect, animal and plant species never described before. From the biologists, ecologists and anthropologists studying this forest no usable data comes back. If they themselves return at all, they break off their careers. The psychologist is sent to contact the last scientists remaining. During forest walks, she is most troubled by increasingly vivid memories she is sure she cannot have experienced. She feels herself change, and all she encounters.

How do transnational mining companies take over the role of the state? What does it mean to become a citizen of a corporation? Corporations are among the most powerful institutions of our time. Yet we know little of how corporations act as governing bodies. This is particularly relevant in the context of extractive projects like mining. In such instances corporations often have a degree of control over territory and people living there. Wiegink's research *Frontier Governance* studies forms of governance and citizenship that emerge in the contexts of 'extractive resource frontiers', based on research conducted between 2016 and 2022 in the coal mining area of Tete province in Mozambique. She explores the discursive construction of the frontier as "empty space" and how regimes of governance change and make way for new ones. It is an ethnographic account of what frontier governance (re)produces and unsettles: institutional orders, political communities, relations to land and natural environments, and forms of citizenship and resistance.

Frontier Governance: Corporate Power, Displacement, and Coal Mines in Mozambique

Nikkie Wiegink

n.wiegink@uu.nl

AFFILIATION
Associate Professor
in Cultural
Anthropology at
Utrecht University

SEMESTER
September 2024-
January 2025

DISCIPLINE
Cultural
Anthropology

KEYWORDS
mining,
corporatisation,
extraction,
governance,
citizenship



Asante Mtenje

asantemtenje@yahoo.com

Tracing the political and the personal as expressed in Malawian popular arts, specifically in the use of a dress called the *chitenje*. This traditional wrap-around cloth is considered a respectable form of dress that upholds Malawi's cultural values. Representations of the *chitenje* in Malawian popular arts, are used as a site for examining how questions of gender, sexuality, class, and national belonging are negotiated. Focusing on representations of *chitenje* in local newspaper cartoons and popular songs Mtenje proposes a novel and critical method of reading the *chitenje* as a social text.

The Politics of Dress, Gender and Sexuality in Malawian Popular Art

TYPE
Iso Lomso Fellow

DISCIPLINE
Literature

AFFILIATION
Associate Professor
of Literary Studies,
University of Malawi

KEYWORDS
fashion, chitenje,
traditional dress,
belonging, gender,
Malawi

SEMESTER
March-June 2024



stias
STELLENBOSCH
INSTITUTE FOR
ADVANCED STUDY

Iso Lomso Fellowships enable Fellows to develop a long-term research project of their preference. Aim: facilitate and support them in becoming established scholars in their fields. Iso Lomso means 'eye of tomorrow' in isiXhosa: seeing towards the future, laying foundations for tomorrow. The Fellowship is aimed at African scholars with an academic position at a university or research institution anywhere in Africa.

Béguin's curatorial practice explores thematically the inconsistencies of the capitalist system and logistical thinking through confrontations with pre-modern historical periods, particularly the Middle Ages. Such a transhistorical approach allows new narratives and counter-discourses to emerge from the shadows of history, enlightened through the collaboration with artists. With a focus on Dutch context through the ages, she analyses the places - geographical, symbolic, narrative, artistic, spatial, and mental - that we grant to the dead, whether individual or collective, and how this can reconfigure our social relationships in the broadest sense. Amsterdam's Oude Kerk once integrated death into daily life, serving as a church, cemetery, and market. Over time, cemeteries were moved to city outskirts. This change, explored through archival research and artists' funerary practices, highlights how modern society has distanced itself from death, affecting our relationship with mortality, grief, and death-related rituals today.

Andréanne Béguin

andreanne.beguina@gmail.com

The Nouveau Grand Tour is a research-oriented programme designed for professionalisation of emerging European artists, supported by a network of sixty artistic residencies in France, Italy and the Netherlands. The fellowship gives time and space to research, reflect and connect with fellow artists and local institutions. The Nouveau Grand Tour at NIAS is co-funded by Institut français NL and Stichting France Nederland Cultuurfonds.



The Places We Grant to the Dead

TYPE

Nouveau Grand Tour Fellow

AFFILIATION

Exhibition curator and art critic

SEMESTER

July-August 2024

DISCIPLINE

Art curating

KEYWORDS

Middle Ages, architecture, funerary, cemetery, social rituals



Lucie Nezri will finalise a set of new algorithmic pieces incorporating features of the rather unknown Maghrebin-Andalusian music tradition. For many, the latter represents a kind of utopia: a musically rich and composite genre at the crossroads of Spanish and African influences. Relying on a high degree of sophistication and formalism, this music fundamentally reveals how Andalusian society may have embraced the diverse cultures and religions of its population, as well as its own contradictions. By drawing inspiration from this musical tradition, Lucie wishes to reflect on the trajectory of her Maghrebian-Andalusian family - and how it may echo aspects of the current devastating situation in the Middle East - as well as to return to the notion of music as a potentially unifying medium and vector for peace.

Lucie Nezri

lucie.nezri@gmail.com

Maghrebin-Andalusian Classical Music as a Vector for Peace

TYPE

Nouveau Grand Tour Fellow

AFFILIATION

Composer, artist, and performer. Research Associate, Royal Conservatory of the Hague

SEMESTER

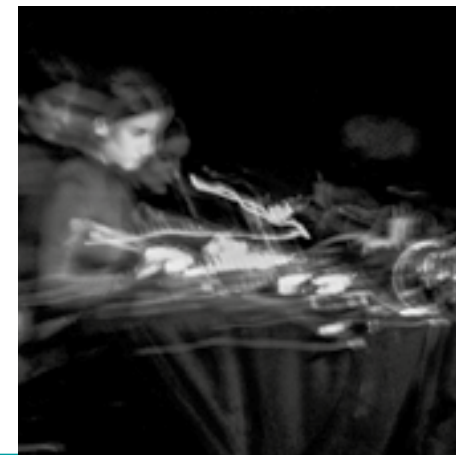
July-August 2024

DISCIPLINE

Art, music

KEYWORDS

Maghrebin-Andalusian music, confluence, peace



The Nouveau Grand Tour is a research-oriented programme designed for professionalisation of emerging European artists, supported by a network of sixty artistic residencies in France, Italy and the Netherlands. The fellowship gives time and space to research, reflect and connect with fellow artists and local institutions. The Nouveau Grand Tour at NIAS is co-funded by Institut français NL and Stichting France Nederland Cultuurfonds.



Fellows

John D. Boy
Letizia Chiappini
Philip S. Gorski
Ying-Tzu Lin
Shengyu Wang

full year

TYPE
Urban Citizen Fellow

AFFILIATION
Assistant Professor
of Sociology at
Leiden University

SEMESTER
September 2024-
June 2025

DISCIPLINE
Cultural
Anthropology,
Urban Studies

KEYWORDS
digital hubs,
citizenship,
technologists
permacomputing,
technologists

In collaboration with the City
of Amsterdam, the Urban
Citizen Fellowship was
established to promote the
use of advanced research
in political deliberation and
public policy making for
the city of Amsterdam. The
program focuses on digital
urban citizenship.



Amsterdam has long been a focal point for critical technical practices due to its history as a hub for DIY approaches to digital networks. Hacklabs, civil society organisations, art academies, and academic centers and labs in the city are breeding grounds for new imaginaries. What critical technical practices are technologists in Amsterdam experimenting with, and how can they enable meaningful citizenship in the city? Practices, such as community servers and permacomputing, have been getting increased attention. But they frequently complicate how critical technologists relate to the free and open source software movement, long a frame for critical technical practice, also by providing the vision of an open source city. This research project will map emerging critical technical practices through ethnographic fieldwork with various communities of practice, and explore ways these practices can contribute to equitable digital infrastructures.

**John D.
Boy**

j.d.boy@fsw.leidenuniv.nl

**Urban Citizenship
and Emerging
Critical Technical
Practices in
Amsterdam**



**Letizia
Chiappini**

l.chiappini@utwente.nl

In collaboration with the City
of Amsterdam, the Urban
Citizen Fellowship was
established to promote the
use of advanced research
in political deliberation and
public policy making for
the city of Amsterdam. The
program focuses on digital
urban citizenship.



Digital technologies interfere with urban citizenship, affecting the relationship of trust between governments and dwellers. Being a dweller in a city has to do with agencies, literacies and socio-spatial rituals. Considering algorithmic accountability, inclusion and transparency, this project explores digital tactics, rituals, and the degree of literacy around crucial issues such as sustainability and spatial unevenness. The digital literacy of citizens can be a crucial factor in preventing exclusion and exacerbating urban inequalities. By working closely with the Municipality of Amsterdam, the aim is to generate knowledge and productive interactions between local authorities and citizens. How can municipalities implement digital tools that are accountable and inclusive? The societal relevance of the research project lies in the collaboration with the local political ecosystem and different urban communities in the Dutch context.

**Urban Citizenship,
Rituals and
Digital Literacy:
A Psycho-Digital-
Geography Book**

TYPE
Urban Citizen Fellow

AFFILIATION
Assistant Professor
of Digitalisation and
Sustainability at the
University of Twente

SEMESTER
September 2024-
June 2025

DISCIPLINE
Urban studies

KEYWORDS
digital, geography,
literacy, rituals,
accountability

Philip S. Gorski

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NIAS FELLOWS 2024/25

AFFILIATION
Frederick and Laura Goff Professor of Sociology at Yale University

SEMESTER
September 2024-June 2025

DISCIPLINE
Sociology

KEYWORDS
culture, fragmentation, modernity, sacrality

Is the modern West as disenchanted, differentiated and rationalised as Neo-Weberian theories of secularisation claim? When seen in world-historical perspective, and in comparison with most Asian societies, the cultural pluralism that characterises the contemporary West is in fact quite normal. What stands out about Western history isn't its so-called secularity, but rather its Medieval unity. This Medieval unity was marked by a highly independent religious field with clear boundaries, a strict hierarchy, and rigid orthodoxy. It's only when we consider this background that contemporary culture can retrospectively appear unique or peculiar. Gorski wants to create a framework to better understand today's situation and to outline a historical narrative that explains it. The narrative argues that a series of unique historical events allowed the Roman church to claim a monopoly over legitimate sacred practices. This subsequently collapsed, leading to the fragmentation of the sacred.

The Fragmentation of the Sacred: An Alternative Narrative of Western Modernity

Post-Growth Cookbook: Re-Appropriating Dutch Food History towards a Post-Growth Diet

Ying-Tzu Lin

dearpinkelephant@gmail.com



FULL YEAR

TYPE
Meertens-NIAS Fellow

AFFILIATION
Guest researcher at the Institute of Network Cultures

SEMESTER
September 2024-June 2025

DISCIPLINE
History of food and nutrition, Urban Studies

KEYWORDS
food industry, diet, sustainability, colonialism, culinary ethnography, consumption, cookbooks

This ten-months fellowship for international scholars of Dutch language and culture is a collaboration between NIAS and The Meertens Institute. The Meertens Institute studies and documents language and culture in the Netherlands and Dutch language and culture in the world.



Food is essential for human survival, but today's food system is in trouble due to unsustainable practices and inequalities driven by profit-focused, modernised food industries. Amid theories and small-scale alternative practices, there's a need to figure out how individuals can adopt practical, sustainable habits in their daily lives. How can culinary ethnography on Dutch historical recipes offer theoretical and practical knowledge production to shape a post-growth food future? The Netherlands plays a key role in the global food system. Dutch food consumption, influenced by colonialism and global trade, reflects much more than just local culture. These eating habits also impact social, economic, and environmental changes around the world. Ying-Tzu plans to use historical cookbooks and recipes in participatory culinary ethnography to help create and share practical knowledge about sustainable diets in an urban Dutch setting.

A New Immersive Aesthetic in Late Nineteenth-Century Shanghai

In what ways does 19th century Shanghai – the birthplace of a Chinese visual modernity – lend historical insights to the studies of virtual reality in our age? As we experience ever greater integration between reality and cyberspace, it is important that we look back and examine how key concepts of digital virtuality evolved from historical media environments with comparable traits. This research project focuses on a great variety of “marvelous realms” produced by the vibrant culture industries of Shanghai in the late 19th century; what these realms have in common is that they are all technology-mediated and can be experienced as if real. Through the study of these diverse secondary worlds, Wang seeks to give an account of how a new immersive aesthetic emerged in late 19th century Shanghai, against the twin backdrops of the global dissemination of technologized means of reproduction and the rapid growth of urban entertainment in China.



AFFILIATION

Independent Researcher, Ho Peng Yoke Fellow at the Needham Research Institute

DISCIPLINE

Comparative Literature, Literature

KEYWORDS

cultural industry, technology, history, Shanghai, cyberspace

SEMESTER

September 2024-June 2025

Shengyu Wang

shengyu@uchicago.edu





Fellows 2nd semester

Houssine Alloul
 Mohammed Alzanoon
 Maria Barnas
 Mita Choudhury
 Benedikt Goderis
 Yuliia Kurnyshova
 Theo Frids Marulitua Hutabarat
 Oleksandra Moskalenko
 Anja Vink
 Petra Rethmann
 Sharon Rose
 Kirwin Shaffer
 Tabona Shoko

Mathias Thaler
 Andrés Felipe Vélez-Posada
 Lauren Wagner
 Erica Wald
 Lucie White
 Paulien de Winter

Houssine Alloul

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AFFILIATION
 Assistant Professor
 of Modern Global
 History at the
 University of
 Amsterdam

DISCIPLINE
 History

KEYWORDS
 diplomacy, narrative,
 representation,

SEMESTER
 February-June 2025

Ottoman Envoys to Europe: Negotiating Difference in the Diplomatic World, 1832-1914



While the presence of Ottoman diplomats in Europe was self-evident to their Western contemporaries, they are conspicuous today by their absence in the historical literature on modern European diplomacy. This is remarkable as, for nearly a century between 1832 and 1914, Ottoman envoys continually represented their empire in the capitals of Europe. This project seeks to write Ottoman diplomats back into European history. It investigates their habitus and social networks in different European capitals and pays particular attention to the formation of intercultural bonds of amity and how various Western racialisms thwarted or complicated such relationships. Moving this multi-religious group of Ottoman officials center stage, it corrects conventional narratives paint the world of diplomats as singularly Western European.

Mohammed Alzanoon

mohammedzaanoun@gmail.com



TYPE
Safe Haven Fellow

AFFILIATION
Independent
photojournalist

SEMESTER
February-June 2025

DISCIPLINE
documentary,
photojournalism

KEYWORDS
trauma, biography,
resilience, mental
health, war

SECOND SEMESTER

Our Hearts Are Still in Gaza - Documenting the Unseen Impact of War

Photojournalists are often looking for the most gripping stories, the ones that shock. This is never more true than in wartime. Alzanoon, himself a photojournalist for 20 years, has reported these stories time and again, documenting the lives of Gazans on the narrow strip of land. After being evacuated from Gaza's war zone, he turns the camera on his own family and his own story. Alzanoon delves into the aspects of war that are less discussed amid the raging violence, such as how prolonged exposure to trauma affects the well-being of children and families. This research project will shed light on an underexposed aspect: the long-term effects of war. It aims to contribute to the broader discourse on trauma, mental health and resilience in war-torn communities, with a multimedia exhibition using materials collected during the last months of Alzanoon's war coverage in Gaza.

The Safe Haven Fellowship supports scholars and cultural actors at risk. It is intended for scholars, artists, writers and journalists who are not able to do their work in their current location or circumstances, because of the consequences of conflict or war.





Maria Barnas

barnasmk@gmail.com

Dust and Paint

The Artist in Residence is co-funded by the Akademie van Kunsten – KNAW to strengthen the relationship between art and science. This Academy of Arts is committed to represent the voice of the arts in Dutch society – including politics – and to promote interaction between the arts themselves, art and society, and between science and art.



TYPE
Artist-in-residence

SEMESTER
February-June 2025

AFFILIATION
Tutor at the Rietveld Academie, Rijksakademie

DISCIPLINE
Poetry, Visual Arts

KEYWORDS
visual art, women, labor, care, gender, representation, cleaning

How do acts of cleaning or erasure relate to art making? This research gives a voice to cleaner-assistants of the artist Jo Baer. Jo Baer has had cleaners in different stages of her career, in different countries. These were mostly young women artists. Sometimes these women were allowed to help paint her works. The aim is to speak to these women about what they remember of their encounters with Jo. Questions about their own life and work will seep through, touching upon questions about what it is to make art, what it is to leave traces; but also about what it is to clean, erase and be erased in art history. Barnas will research what 'cleaning' means and how it can be understood in the realm of visual art. Can female resistance against erasure be understood as an art form?

AFFILIATION
Evalyn Clark
Professor of History
at Vassar College

SEMESTER
February-June 2025

DISCIPLINE
Early Modern History,
Gender Studies

KEYWORDS
victims, women,
sexual violence,
methods



Mita Choudhury

michoudhury@vassar.edu

The Wayward Saint and the Repentant Historian

Focusing on early Modern France, Mita Choudhury asks how we can write a victim-centered history of clerical sexual violence that brings out forgotten voices and holds us accountable as practitioners of history. This project is a reconsideration of sexual violence in the early modern French Church. It examines historical victims found in archives throughout France. She combines meta history with microhistory: an analysis that foregrounds victims, examines structures - microhistory - and constantly questions the place of historians within this history - meta history. The fusion of these two methodological approaches strives for transparency and accountability. What do we consider history, who we consider credible when conducting research in archives, and what is the professional legitimacy of the historian. Her project will necessarily re-examine her previous work in which she ignored sexual violence. Choudhury strives for direct engagement between reader and historian, seeking to disrupt a hierarchical dynamic embedded in knowledge and objectivity.

How has Dutch minimum income support evolved over the past fifteen years, what have been its main drivers of change, and how effective has it been? Poverty reduction and minimum income protection are high on the political agenda in the Netherlands. There are concerns that a large group of people cannot make ends meet, and an increasing number is forced to turn to food banks and other charitable organizations. Minimum income support is relatively generous compared to most other EU member states but most studies have found that it has not been able to structurally reduce poverty over the past decades. Benedikt Goderis aims to empirically assess the evolution, determinants and effectiveness of Dutch minimum income protection, identify the inherent trade-offs that policymakers face, and better understand the relative contributions of state, local and private actors.

Benedikt Goderis

b.goderis@scp.nl

The Institute Gak Fellowship offers researchers the opportunity to work on topics in the field of social security and labor market policy with the aim of producing new scientific knowledge or working on solutions to practical issues. This fellowship is a collaboration between Institute Gak and NIAS. Instituut Gak is committed to contributing to the quality of social security and the labor market in the Netherlands by investing in social projects, research, chairs and professorships.



Modest but Adequate? An Empirical Analysis of Dutch Minimum Income Protection

TYPE
Instituut GAK Fellow

SEMESTER
February-June 2025

AFFILIATION
Senior researcher at The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP)

DISCIPLINE
Economics

KEYWORDS
welfare, poverty reduction, income protection, inequality



This project unpacks the overlaps and divergences of the EU and Ukraine's ethical reasoning during the current war. The concept of *post-justice* suggests that the idea of law is being replaced by the interests of powerful geopolitical players, leading to the dominance of the strongest and a decline in international law and state sovereignty. Instead, geopolitical interests are taking center stage. Kurnyshova explores new ideas in performative and interventionist ethics. Performative ethics involves political actors with fluid identities who can adapt based on the changing situation. Interventionist ethics relates to the exercise of power, leading to concrete decisions, like military support for Ukraine. Understanding the ethical reasoning is crucial for two reasons: a) It can help ensure more consistent support for Ukraine from Euro-Atlantic countries and institutions by relying on ethical arguments, and b) It can reveal the political impacts of different ethical arguments within Ukraine and among its allies.



Yuliia Kurnyshova

ikurnyshova@gmail.com

TYPE
Safe Haven Fellow

SEMESTER
February-June 2025

AFFILIATION
Researcher at the University of Soderton (Sweden)

DISCIPLINE
International Studies

KEYWORDS
ethics, geopolitics, war

Ethical Subjects and the “Post-Justice” Contenders: How to Remain Normative in Times of War?

The Safe Haven Fellowship supports scholars and cultural actors at risk. It is intended for scholars, artists, writers and journalists who are not able to do their work in their current location or circumstances, because of the consequences of conflict or war.



Theo Frids Marulitua Hutabarat

thefridshutabarat@gmail.com

Reimagining Pustaka, Re-imaging Batak Symbols

Theo Frids Hutabarat's project focuses on the Batak manuscripts known as pustaka and how museums in the Netherlands preserve them. He aims to study the life of certain spiritual symbols within the pustaka and trace their connections to various cultures across the ages.

This project seeks to deepen the understanding of the past by exploring Batak spirituality—not just focusing on ancestors and rituals, but also on political, social, and environmental histories. The findings will serve as the foundation for future artistic research, re-imaging these symbols as lived experiences (such as through the aesthetics of masking and unveiling in painting practice), and viewing this as an alternative practice of care for a shared legacy of civilizations.



TYPE
NIAS-NIOD-KITLV
Fellow

AFFILIATION
Lecturer at
Parahyangan
Catholic University

SEMESTER
February-June 2025

DISCIPLINE
Art

KEYWORDS
conservation,
archive, museum,
paleography,
Indonesia



NIAS - NIOD - KITLV Fellowship:
Moving objects, Mobilising
Culture in the Context of (De)
colonisation. This fellowship is
intended for researchers from
formerly colonised countries –
including heritage practitioners,
historians, archaeologists,
social scientists, artists,
journalists, and/or cultural
activists – with an interest in
(lost) collections or objects from
those countries or regions that
are kept in the Netherlands.



TYPE
Willem F. Duisenberg
Fellow

AFFILIATION
Visiting Professor at
the London School
of Economics and
Political Science

SEMESTER
February 2025-
January 2026

DISCIPLINE
Economics

KEYWORDS
fiscal and monetary
policy, war economy,
Ukraine

Oleksandra Moskalenko

alexi.moskalenko@gmail.com

Fiscal and Monetary Policies in Wartime Ukraine: Was it the Path to a Resilient Economy with International Assistance?



Willem F. Duisenberg
Fellowship Foundation

This fellowship is named in honour of Willem F. Duisenberg, first President of the European Central Bank. It offers researchers in applied monetary economics, macroeconomics, or public finance the chance to conduct independent research within a transdisciplinary environment at NIAS. Fellows also engage with Dutch academics, policymakers, and financial representatives. The fellowship, established in 2007, is supported by De Nederlandsche Bank, the Dutch Ministry of Finance, and major Dutch financial institutions (ING Group, Rabobank Nederland, ABN-AMRO and AEGON).

Moskalenko's research aims to investigate the fiscal and monetary policy responses to war shocks, and short run and long run effects on the Ukrainian economy. In particular, the study seeks to analyse the effectiveness of fiscal and monetary measures implemented by Ukrainian authorities to mitigate adverse macroeconomic impacts. Key objectives include assessing whether the fiscal and monetary policies adopted during wartime were truly optimal or merely reactive, as well as investigating the main decisions made by policymakers to support Ukraine's economy and preserve macro-financial stability amidst internal and external adversities. Additionally, she will explore the contribution of international financial assistance to Ukraine's financial stability. The study will utilise a New Keynesian model to assess the impact of fiscal and monetary interventions on key economic variables.



Anja Vink will work on 'Teachers for the Working Class' as NIAS Journalist in Residence 2025

Anja Vink

info@anjavink.nl

AFFILIATION
journalist

SEMESTER
February-June 2025

DISCIPLINE
journalism

KEYWORDS
education, history, inequality, vocational training, teacher training, storytelling

In February 2025, journalist Anja Vink will begin her role as Journalist in Residence at NIAS. During her tenure, she will work on her book, Teachers for the Working Class, which explores the history of the “Nijverheidsonderwijs”, the teacher training in Dutch vocational education that existed until the mid-seventies of the past century.

“At NIAS, I hope to delve deeper into the reasons why the “Nijverheidsonderwijs” disappeared following the introduction of the so-called Mammoth Act,” says Vink. “This disappearance stands in stark contrast to the current demand for specialized teacher training in vocational education. More than half of Dutch youth pursue vocational education, yet the Netherlands faces a severe shortage of skilled workers in sectors like engineering and healthcare. The shortage of teachers in these fields is just as critical. What lessons can we draw from the history of this discontinued teacher training to address today’s challenges?”

Petra Rethmann

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Petra Rethmann uses ethnographic and archival research to explore the future of liberalism in a world facing political tensions, military conflicts, and climate change. She asks what liberalism can achieve and where it falls short in the midst of struggling economies, failed wars, and environmental crises. By focusing on Germany, a key Western-liberal country in Europe, her book project examines issues like historical and political narratives and imaginations, right-wing authoritarianism and militarism, and Green environmental politics. Rather than judging liberalism as right or wrong, Rethmann aims to understand how it opens up or limits possibilities for future politics, ethics, and societies. It’s designed to be useful for students, academics, activists, and the general public, providing socially relevant insights.

AFFILIATION
Professor of Anthropology at McMaster University Hamilton, Canada

SEMESTER
February-June 2025

DISCIPLINE
Anthropology

KEYWORDS
liberalism, politics, climate change, polarisation

The Future of Liberalism in Germany and Beyond

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DISCIPLINE

Linguistics

KEYWORDS

tone language, music, pitch

SEMESTER

February-June 2025



African Tone Languages and Musical Pitch Processing

Tone languages use pitch to convey meaning distinctions. Research shows that speaking an East Asian tone language such as Mandarin or Cantonese confers benefits in processing musical pitch. However, recent research on Akan, an African tone language, shows no such advantage. Sharon Rose researches to what this difference can be attributed. One hypothesis is the nature of the tone system. East Asian tone languages have at least four tones with contours, that rise and fall in pitch, whereas languages like Akan have two tones, high and low, with no contours. A second hypothesis is the nature of the musical stimuli used in experiments, which may not reflect the musical traditions of the speakers. Rose seeks to test these hypotheses by (1) extending the inquiry to other African tone languages with more complex tone systems; (2) designing musical stimuli that better approximate African musical systems; and (3) comparing non-musicians and musicians, particularly those who are trained in conveying language through music.

Kirwin Shaffer researches the global history of the twentieth century, written through the eyes of anarchists in Latin America. He explores how they described and analysed global events from the lenses of the Global South and from the bottom-up. The research is very timely as we see new directions in Global History that challenge traditional top-down, Eurocentric and US perspectives on global history topics. As such, the project is less interested in how anarchists examined events and issues where they lived and operated and more interested in how they described the world as they looked out upon it. This research project illustrates how anarchists across Latin America understood and portrayed key events from anti-state, anti-capitalism, anti-imperialism, and anti-religion perspectives that were shaped both by local and national forces where they lived and operated as well as transnational and global forces via interactions with anarchists across the Americas.

The World through Anarchist Eyes: Latin American Anarchism and Global History



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DISCIPLINE

Latin American and Global Studies

KEYWORDS

anarchism, global south, history

SEMESTER

February-June 2025


AFFILIATION

Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Zimbabwe

SEMESTER

February-June 2025

DISCIPLINE

Religious Studies

KEYWORDS

climate change, Shona, religion, Zimbabwe

Indigenous Religion and Climate Change Mitigation in Zimbabwe

Inspired by Tarusarira, Tabona Shoko looks into how the beliefs and practices of the Indigenous Shona religion address climate change. Based on fieldwork and qualitative interviews in Zimbabwe from 1980 to 2023, the project researches whether Indigenous religion can help tackle climate change and its impacts. What role can spiritual beliefs and conservation methods play in mitigating the problem? And can Indigenous religion help find a promising solution for climate change mitigation? Climate change is becoming one of the biggest challenges for humanity. While scientists and humanities scholars have studied this issue, there has been little focus on African religions and their role in climate change, particularly among the 9 million Shona people in Zimbabwe.

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DISCIPLINE

Political Science, Political Theory

KEYWORDS

art, climate disaster, environment, ecology, narrative

SEMESTER

February-June 2025

Other Ends of the World are Possible: Exploring the Arts and Politics of Environmental Breakdown

The escalating ecological crisis makes it imperative not only to picture positive alternatives to the status quo, but also to ponder the real possibility of systemic failure and collapse. How can artistic depictions and narrations of environmental disaster beneficially inform political responses to anthropogenic climate change? Against the view of catastrophist thinking as inherently defeatist, Mathias Thaler's interdisciplinary project examines the potential of various depictions and narrations of climate disaster across different art forms to beneficially inform political responses to anthropogenic climate change. The project brings into a conversation three academic disciplines that grapple with the broad topic of systemic failure and collapse in the context of the Anthropocene: eco-theology, political theory and the environmental humanities.



Andrés Vélez-Posada

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Tropical Ingenuity. Environments of Knowledge in Early Modern Spanish America

The building of the Spanish Empire in the Americas in the early modern age was a political and scientific project without precedent. Since most of the territory was tropical and sub-tropical, it was drastically different from the European environment and had its own specific knowledge practices. How was tropical nature experienced and studied in early modern Spanish America? How were knowledge practices of the communities that lived there, connected with their environment? Vélez-Posada will focus on the tropical Andes of the New Kingdom of Granada, currently Colombia and Venezuela. The ethnic and environmental diversity of this region gives him the opportunity to reveal why place matters and how it can shape knowledge negotiations and specific ways of knowing. Ultimately, his project aims to study the subject of the environments of knowledge in Spanish America and how the ingenuity of New Granada makers and experts were evaluated, recognised or erased in the formation of the global knowledge societies.

AFFILIATION
Professor of Humanities at Universidad EAFIT (Medellin, Colombia)

DISCIPLINE
History of Knowledge

KEYWORDS
environment, culture, knowledge, ecology

SEMESTER
February-June 2025

Intra-Active Methodologies: Exploring Entangled Ethnography

New materialism has become popular in many fields as a way to explore the role of non-human and more-than-human elements. It offers a fresh perspective on how different entities interact and influence social and environmental issues. This approach is changing how we think about global challenges, like climate change, by providing a more interconnected view of the actors and relationships involved. This project aims to examine the methodological changes that come with this new way of thinking. Focusing on ethnography as a key method suited to new materialism, Lauren Wagner asks: what does it mean to conduct ethnography within this new framework? Are diverse approaches to ethnography adapting to this paradigm, or do we need to rethink some fundamental aspects? In a world where everything is interconnected, can we develop new methods for collaborative research?

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DISCIPLINE
Research Methodology

KEYWORDS
methods, ethnography, new materialism

SEMESTER
February-June 2025



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SEMESTER

February-June 2025

DISCIPLINE

Social and Cultural
History

KEYWORDS

colonialism, India,
leisure, segregation

Over the course of the 19th century, spare time and leisure in colonial India was radically transformed, reflecting both political and social trends. In the late 18th century, European officers frequently attended the nautch performances held in the ornate Calcutta homes of the Indian elite or played Holi with their sepoy troops. However, by the early decades of the 20th century, these shared activities had been almost completely replaced by ones which were more strictly segregated, whether visits to the European playhouse or a hunt picnic organised by the tent club. How did practices and understandings of 'leisure' and spare time shape colonial rule and understandings of India? And how did shared leisure and segregated activities influence colonial rule? She suggests that a clearer understanding of the unofficial, everyday activities of those involved in the functioning of the empire is invaluable in developing our understanding of its operation.



Everyday Empire: Social Life Spare Time and Rule in Colonial India



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SEMESTER

February-June 2025

DISCIPLINE

Philosophy

KEYWORDS

crisis, policy, decision
making, trust

Crisis and Catastrophe: Science-Based Policy Justification under Urgency and Uncertainty

An unexpected crisis demands urgent, rapid action. But rapid action means acting under severe uncertainty - with a very limited idea of the implications of public policy measures. How can we make justified policy decisions in a crisis, where we need to act quickly, but on limited and uncertain information? Normal procedures for justification require long periods of evidence gathering to ensure that policy decisions are based on scientifically justified conclusions, and prolonged public consultation to establish that decisions are publicly justified. Lucie White will examine how policy can be justified in a crisis. It will center around three questions: 1) What procedures or circumstances legitimise policy action in the face of severe uncertainty? 2) How can we retain public trust in scientific expertise and scientific advice under uncertainty? 3) What are the responsibilities of scientific advisors and policy-makers when acting on highly uncertain information?

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The Instituut Gak Fellowship offers researchers the opportunity to work on topics in the field of social security and labor market policy with the aim of producing new scientific knowledge or working on solutions to practical issues. This fellowship is a collaboration between Institute Gak and NIAS. Instituut Gak is committed to contributing to the quality of social security and the labor market in the Netherlands by investing in social projects, research, chairs and professorships.



Exploring the Influence of Group Dynamics on Street-Level Bureaucrats' Enforcement Styles



Paulien de Winter looks at how group dynamics influences street-level bureaucrats and how those group dynamics can help achieve a human-centred approach to enforcement. A human-centred approach to social security sanctions necessitates active engagement of those responsible for enforcement. How officials enforce rules depends on how they apply them, whether they use persuasion or punishment, and how they respond to different situations. However, it's important to remember that these choices aren't made in isolation. Bureaucrats are affected by social structures when they enforce rules. The decisions made by street-level bureaucrats are influenced by workplace culture and informal norms, so it is important to investigate how group dynamics affect street-level bureaucrats and their role in achieving human-centred enforcement.

TYPE
Instituut GAK Fellow

AFFILIATION
Associate professor of Legal theory at Utrecht University

SEMESTER
February-June 2025

DISCIPLINE
Law

KEYWORDS
enforcement, group dynamics, social security, culture



Academic Freedom Freedom in the Netherlands – What is at stake?



There is something remarkable about the topic of academic freedom, especially when discussed within the Dutch context. No one will deny the importance of scientists being able to practice their work in freedom and independence. At the same time, there is – also among scientists – a lot of uncertainty about what exactly academic freedom means. In addition, many people know that academic freedom is under intense pressure in a large number of countries. But is this also the case in the Netherlands? The question of whether or not so-called "woke thinking" poses a threat to academic freedom occasionally attracts attention, especially in university journals. The University of Amsterdam even set up the Stolker

committee to investigate it. This is far from what the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and the Dutch Universities see as the main threats to academic freedom in the Netherlands: government and knowledge institutions steering scientific research, especially through the allocation of financial resources, and the intimidation of scientists through social media. For the record, the Stolker committee concluded delicately that it should not be about wokeness, but about a better understanding of academic freedom.

Taking academic freedom for granted

While not surprising – academic freedom, in all its complexity, is hardly a media- friendly topic – the obscurity of the term and its importance is regrettable. A limited or hampered understanding of academic freedom can lead to erosion of the term's meaning, and to its significance being insufficiently recognized. It can also cause one of the foundations of good science ("free and independent research") to become the stake in a political-ideological game. Consider, for example, of the House of Representatives who wants to protect "right-wing scientists" from left-wing "ideological bias" under the banner of academic freedom, but is opposed to scientists using that same freedom to take to the streets on climate issues.

Not, or not sufficiently accounting for the fact that academic freedom is not a given in the Netherlands, mistakenly causes it to be taken for granted. Prioritizing a deeper understanding of this cornerstone of scientific inquiry is essential to effectively press home its importance. After all, you can not protect what you do not comprehend. Nor can you communicate its relevance to others.

Data from fifty years ago gives an optimistic impression with academic freedom expanding in 56 countries, but recent trends are worrisome. They show that academic freedoms are under threat globally. The Academic Freedom Index, which uses the concept of growth and decline episodes at country level, shows that 23 countries are in episodes of decline in academic freedom, including the Netherlands, while increasing in only 10 countries. 3.6 billion people now live in countries where academic freedoms are completely restricted.

If we really care about science, we must do better. For a richer understanding and fuller picture of academic freedom, it is important to recognise that it is not necessarily a singular concept, but also a plural one. A fundamental but constructive debate about academic freedom, should always start with the question: what exactly are academic freedoms about? After all, the term takes on different meanings within different contexts.

Take the context of official definitions of academic freedom, such as the authoritative UNESCO definition. That states that academic freedom is not only about the absence of external influence, but also, for example, about the freedom to criticise one's institution and participate in "professional and representative" bodies. The KNAW concurs that academic freedom is about much more than scientists being able to do their research independently, free from pressure from politics, business or public opinion. This *is* an important condition. However, the actual exercise of academic freedom is closely linked, to the responsibility of scientists to adhere to professional standards and values.

Freedoms and responsibilities

Academic freedom as such is not absolute. A scientist is not free to just do whatever he, she or they want, but must act honestly, carefully, transparently, independently and responsibly. This sounds fairly obvious, but it does imply that academic freedom inevitably clashes with other freedoms, such as freedom of speech. A scientist is free to choose his or her own research topic as long as this choice is not primarily motivated by extra-scientific beliefs. At the same time, as an individual, a scientist has the freedom to hold an opinion "without interference from public authority and regardless of limits". As inevitable as such tensions may be, they also inevitably remain problematic. The freedoms and responsibilities of scientists must sometimes be balanced against each other. And existing professional codes of conduct often provide little guidance in how to make such trade-offs. This is most obvious in the case of "independence," which in a sense is both a right ("free from interference") and a duty ("to be independent") of scientists. In addition, as a duty, it is not very concrete.

These and other examples raise a host of questions. One is whether the responsibility of the individual scientist is commensurate with that freedom's legal protection. Which brings us to the (basic) legal context and legal meaning of academic freedom. First, some facts. Unlike in Germany, for instance, in the Netherlands academic freedom is not explicitly enshrined in the Constitution. It is a "historically developed principle" the core of which is protected by national legislation and international treaties by which the Netherlands is bound: among others, freedom of expression, enshrined in Article 7 of the Constitution; Article 10 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Academic freedom is also recognized as a fundamental social right in Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and in Article 1.6 in the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act obliges universities to observe academic freedom. Finally, there are a number of so-called "soft law declarations," which contain certain aspects of academic freedom but from which no further rights can be derived.

Clashing freedoms

As in the case of official, non-legal definitions, tensions arise within this legal context. In 2020, the Court of Justice of the European Union ruled that academic freedom must be understood broadly, in the sense that it does not relate only to individual scientists but also has an "institutional and organisational" dimension. This is because the autonomy of scientific institutions is a prerequisite for individual scholars to conduct their research freely. However, these collective and individual academic freedoms can clash, for example, when an institution wants to prohibit a particular research technique or topic that is considered useful or important by one or more of its own staff.

Another example concerns Article 1.6 of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act, apparently one of the few places in Dutch law where academic freedom is explicitly named. This provision has a protective function for scholars, including the freedom to initiate research and choose its content and method. But, in practice, this is not always how it works out. Indeed, in labour disputes, it works to the disadvantage of scientists to invoke their academic freedom. The main reason is that ac-

ademic freedom is not absolute or unlimited, and is always weighed as a principle against other principles that may carry more weight. The issue here is not just scientists' own responsibility to adhere to professional standards and values, but, for example, the fact that their research topic must fit within the broader research policy of their institution

Freedom from and freedom to

This brings us to the most important context: the theoretical or philosophical one, which revolves around the question on which concept of freedom academic freedom is predicated. Philosophy traditionally distinguishes between negative and positive freedom: the former is about freedom “from” interference, the latter about freedom “to achieve” self-development. Or, more specifically: in their research scientists should not only be free ‘from’ external restrictions and opposition (by government or industry) but also free ‘to determine’ for themselves how to use that freedom within science. The former involves, roughly speaking, (legal) preconditions and the latter involves (material) conditions and resources.

Nowadays, when academic freedom is spoken of, it is still often in one specific meaning, namely the negative right to be safeguarded from external interference, for example by politicians or financiers. This image goes back to the nineteenth century, and rests on the idea of a strict separation between what lies ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ science. For several reasons, this separation has become problematic in the twenty-first century. To begin with, insights from the sociology of science and other disciplines have emphasized that scientific knowledge is also socially constructed. The socialisation of science of the second half of the twentieth century, encompassed a democratisation of the university and a growing emphasis on social relevance. And recent phenomena, such as the economization, politicisation, or neoliberalisation of science, as in national knowledge security, open access publication of publicly funded research, and the increasingly competitive scholarly practice. These and many other shifts have resulted in *positive* academic freedom becoming more central.

As a result, the concept of academic freedom inevitably takes on new meanings, and concerns surrounding it multiply in new directions.

Increasingly, the central question becomes: what concrete conditions are necessary for academic freedom to be truly free? What conditions are necessary for scholars to actually exercise the academic freedom they possess as they see fit?

How can academic freedoms become truly free?


All of a sudden, academic freedom now takes on entirely different form. For instance, the high workload and frequency of burnouts among scientists become of great relevance to it. As do the publish-or-perish climate at universities, the increasing emphasis on large-scale, international consortia and interdisciplinary collaboration, the dominant influence of (inter)national science agendas, and the precarisation of work, especially among young academics within the humanities and social sciences. When academic freedom is understood as a positive freedom, its interconnectedness with Dutch science in its current state again becomes apparent.

So far, we have mainly discussed the versatility and plurality of the concept of academic freedom. Recognising the difference can significantly advance the debate about it. Not only because it avoids the confusion of concepts, but also because it puts into focus why it should be high on the agenda. On the one hand, the legal context shows that (“negative”) academic freedom is under continuous pressure, while at the same time enjoying little effective protection. On the other hand, the philosophical context shows that the promotion of (“positive”) academic freedom can only be understood in relation to the entire science system. All these concepts and all these contexts must be kept in mind when academic freedom is questioned, discussed and debated.

+ To explore academic freedoms further, you might consider the book *Academic Freedom Freedoms in the Netherlands – What is at stake?*, published by NIAS with Amsterdam University Press in 2023, in Dutch.



Don't ban scholars anywhere, say these scholars at risk



Interview with NIAS Safe Haven
Fellows in de Volkskrant
of 14 June 2024,
by Margriet Oostveen

Some 20 years ago, these two thirty-somethings listened to the same post-Soviet punk rock, both liked salad 'Olivier' with sausage and pickle and saw the same popular film comedy titled *The Irony of Fate*.

Egor Isaev (35) was living in Moscow at the time. He would go on to study history and film direction there and eventually become an associate professor at the media department of the Higher School of Economics.

Dmytro Fedchyshyn (34) lived in Kharkiv, Ukraine. He would go on to get a PhD in agricultural law and a job as a lecturer and researcher at the National University of Zaporizhzhya.

Then: war.

Now Isaev and Fedchyshyn sit side by side in the heart of Amsterdam in an office at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIAS-KNAW). NIAS provides over 50 fellowships each year that allow international scholars, writers, journalists and artists to work on their projects at the institute for a while in peace and quiet.

For over two years now, this has included the Safe Haven Fellowship Programme, for researchers from Ukraine and for Russian



and Belarusian dissidents. Over that time, NIAS has already hosted twelve Safe Haven Fellows, each for five months, including Isaev and Fedchyshyn.

The latter managed to flee to Poland with his father and wife Iryna in June 2022 after ‘four terrible months’ in Kharkiv (‘my father is in need of care, that's why I had permission’).

INDEPENDENT FILMMAKER

Egor Isaev left Russia a month before, as he was increasingly at risk of persecution as an independent filmmaker working with Mediazona, the Russian media outlet in exile that reports on the war and repression and was founded by the Russian protest group Pussy Riot. Isaev then worked as a guest lecturer at universities in Vilnius, Lithuania and Bochum, Germany.

Just a few hundred metres from the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study, UvA students occupied the Binnengasthuisterrein last month, demanding that the university disclose ties with Israeli universities. ‘That demonstration is a great way for young people to express their views’, says Isaev. ‘I myself participated in Occupy in Moscow at the time.’

But don’t let the university cut ties with individual scientists, Isaev and also Fedchynshyn think, whether these are employed by a university or not: ‘The totalitarian state outside is usually really different from the individuals working inside.’

NEVER GO TO A CONFERENCE AGAIN

Never forget, says Isaev, that Russian scientists who would speak out against Putin also risk a prison sentence of up to 15 years. ‘And then imagine for a moment how they feel now that their last ties to the outside world are cut. Never being able to go to a conference again, no one to exchange knowledge and experiences with.’

In late May, under pressure from increasing polarisation around the war in Gaza, Harvard University announced that it would hence-

forth publicly 'refrain from controversial statements on current issues'. Scientists are better off making well-founded comments based on their own expertise than expressing feelings of sympathy that get in the way of an open debate, is the reasoning.

This is also NIAS' position: there are better ways to facilitate academic debate. NIAS would also like to invite individual researchers working at Russian universities.

FROZEN TIES

But this is no longer allowed, as Dutch knowledge institutions have rigorously frozen partnerships with universities in Russia and Belarus for two years now. NIAS therefore only provides scholarships to dissident Russians and Belarusians without appointments.

Two additional Safe Haven scholarships will be added next year for applicants affected by the war in Gaza. An assessment committee has already shortlisted from 27 applications, says historian Aysenur Korkmaz, herself a NIAS Fellow and committee member.

Because of their security, she cannot tell much about the shortlist yet. There were applications from Gaza and Israel: researchers whose university had been bombed, or who had been thrown out on the street in Israel because of their origins. And journalists trying to report and make a documentary.

Egor Isaev is also outspoken about engagements with Israeli researchers. 'Among them you often find the only bright spots that can point a way out in the darkness. It is incredibly important not to stifle that discussion.'

At NIAS Dmytro Fedchyshyn is now researching food security in Ukraine and the EU in light of the Russian invasion. And Egor Isaev is working on a documentary about the shelling of the White House in Moscow in 1993, where then-Russian President Boris Yeltsin and parliament faced off after economic reforms. 'I brought an archive. You can see there that market thinking is not necessarily good for democracy.'

BUILDING A NEW NETWORK

Fedchyshyn and Isaev have a month to go until new fellows take their place. And then? The chance to work hard at NIAS in relative isolation also has disadvantages for a refugee: you have to go out of your way to go public and build a new network for the future.

'That remains stressful for these NIAS fellows,' agrees slavist Ellen Rutten, who supported the NIAS assessment committee in previous rounds. She gathered potential mentors with whom fellows could seek further connection. 'But five months remains terribly short in these circumstances.'

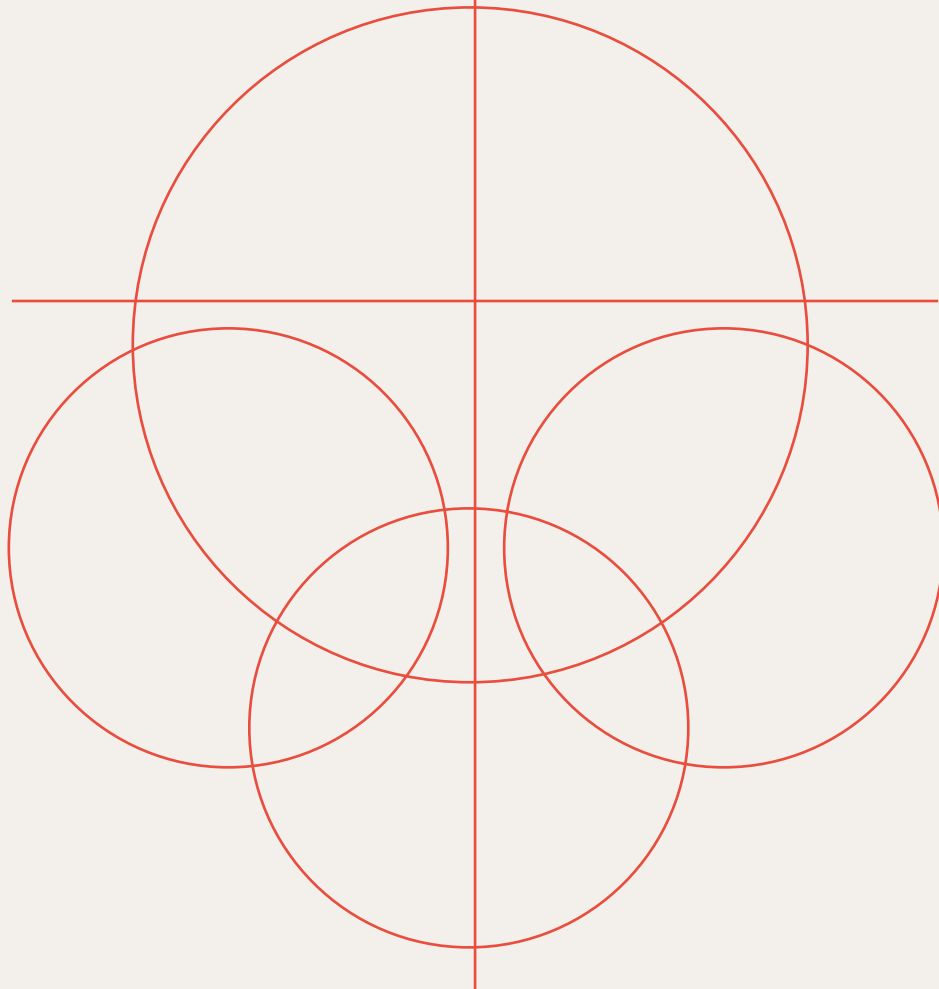
So after this? Egor Isaev returns to his visiting professorship in Germany for the time being. Dmytro Fedchyshyn is still keen to visit Wageningen University. With his wife, he was already granted refugee status in the UK, but in his field he is still looking for work there.

A NOTE FROM NIAS

Egor and Dmytro left NIAS after their five-month fellowship. Each of them has now gone their separate ways. In 2024-2025, NIAS will host a total of six Safe Haven Fellows. Four from Ukraine and two from Gaza. In January 2025, NIAS will launch an ongoing call for the Safe Haven Fellowship, so that scholars in distress can always send in an application.



Support NIAS, support a NIAS fellow(ship)



NIAS is the oldest 'Institute for Advanced Study' in continental Europe, dedicated to fostering curiosity-driven research for established and promising early career scholars. Committed to academic freedoms, we publicly advocate their urgency, we publicly advocate their urgency, and offer time and space for untied and undisturbed research.

MEET OUR FELLOWS

Each year, NIAS hosts up to fifty fellows from around the world. These scholars benefit from the facilities and services provided to fully focus on their projects. For a period of one or two semesters, they are part of our community. They work and have daily lunches together. The majority are even lodged together at our Fellows House. You can find our current fellows in this booklet, and check out our website for our NIAS alums.

WHY DO WE NEED YOUR HELP?

Academic freedoms are increasingly under threat. Challenges like limited access to research infrastructure, job insecurity for young researchers, heavy administrative burdens, and risks from political or armed conflict are growing. These challenges increase the demand for NIAS fellowships, mentoring, and support. But without your help NIAS cannot provide all the necessary funding to do this. From its creation in 1970, NIAS has been supported by the Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), since 1988 via the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). These funds have, however, become insufficient in relation to the rising needs.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

We would be most grateful for your donation of any size to the NIAS Solidarity Fund, NIAS fellowships in general, or to a specific NIAS fellowship of your choice. You may consider leaving a gift in your will, or creating a partnership by establishing your own NIAS fellowship. Also there are specific funding options – smaller and larger – that may be of interest to NIAS Fellows and NIAS Alums.

+ The NIAS Solidarity Fund

NIAS works on realising equitable participation of all fellows in our community. For equity is not self-evident. All fellows are offered the same stipend and emoluments. But some require specific extras, such as childcare (particularly if they are single parents) or individual transport if they are physically challenged. In the spirit of fellows for fellows all new fellows are introduced to the Solidarity Fund, and we kindly request fellows to consider (partially) waiving their stipend to foster a fellows' community in which all fellows can fully participate and thrive.

+ Help fund Safe Haven Fellowships

Safe Haven Fellowships are awarded to renowned as well as talented researchers, who are in danger from armed conflict or political violence. These are 'Blue Sky' fellowships, meaning that they are not labelled with a specific theme. If you share our conviction that the autonomous curiosity of all excellent researchers is to be cherished – especially when circumstances are difficult, support our fellows by making a donation.

+ Donate to a fellowship

You may want to support a fellowship which reflects your own (professional) field or interest, or even better: support NIAS fellowships in general. During a period of one or two semesters, selected talented individuals and experienced researchers can work at NIAS with a minimum of interruption by external obligations and are free to challenge boundaries, explore detours, deviate from the status quo and to approach intellectual confrontation head on. These researchers are given the time and space to focus on any subject. Their curiosity and experience guarantees commitment to global or local urgencies. 'Blue Sky' also goes for the flagship NIAS Fellowships. These are awarded to projects of excellent academic merit, that are difficult to fit into other funding schemes and priorities.

+ Set up your own NIAS fellowship

NIAS would be delighted to sustainably expand our fellowship programme with your support. We would particularly welcome the establishment of new fellowships for researchers who are currently underrepresented at our institute. We hope for instance to include more young academic researchers; more academics in the field of artistic research; and more researchers from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have other suggestions. Your fellowship at NIAS can be established through an endowment or a partnership of at least five years.

Should you wish to discuss making a bequest or initiating a partnership, please contact Annette Mullink at partners@nias.knaw.nl for further information and inquiries.

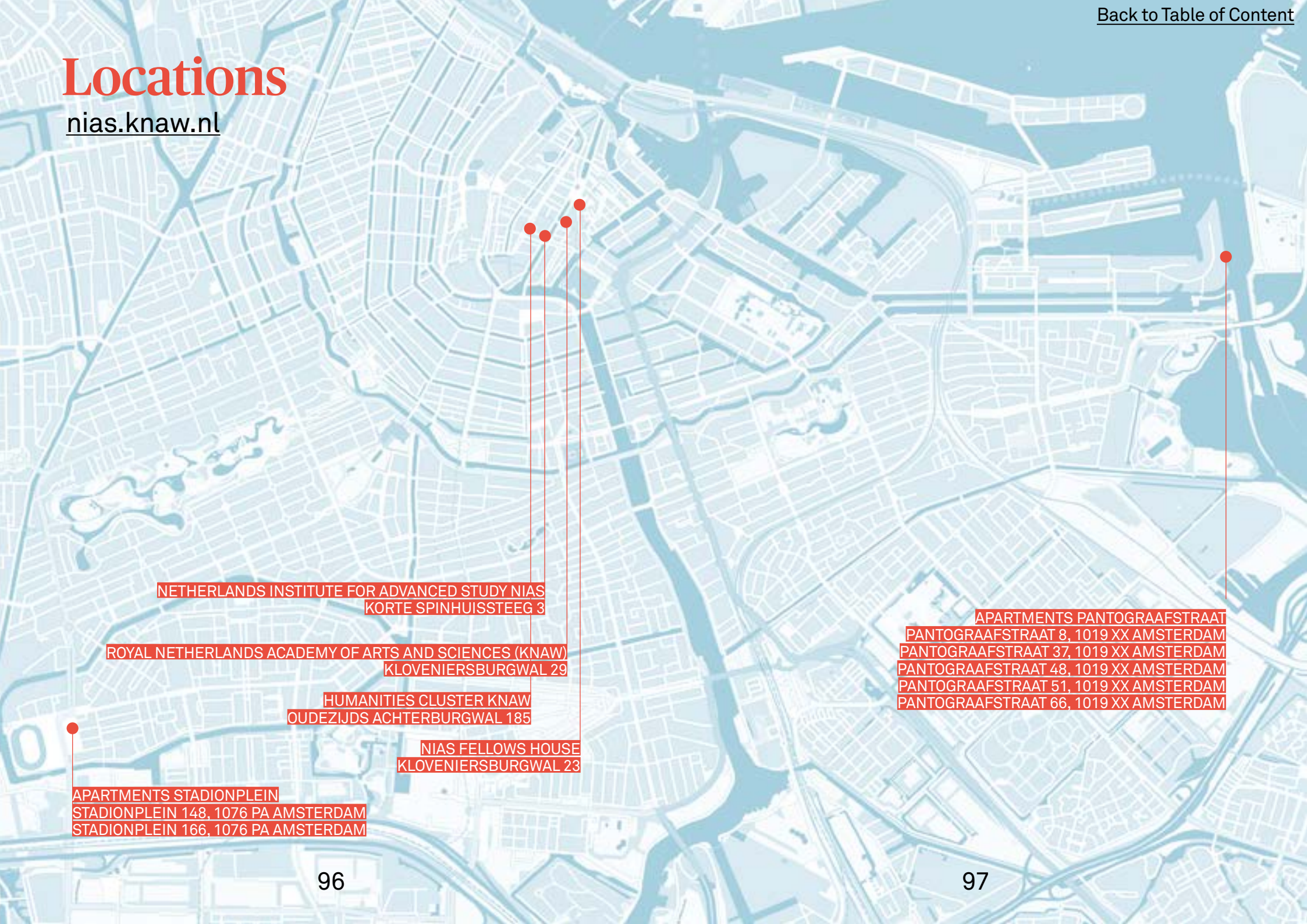
Donations can be made to NIAS-KNAW, bank account number NL19 ABNA 0119 7325 56, BIC/SWIFT code: ABNANL2A. Please specify 'Solidarity', 'Safe Haven,' or 'NIAS fellowship' as a reference, along with your name and email address. Find more information and download our policy on accepting donations on our website.

For more information consult nias.knaw.nl/support



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OUDEZIJD'S ACHTERBURGWAL 185

NIAS FELLOWS HOUSE
KLOVENIERSBURGWAL 23

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Contributing photographers: Almichael Fraay, Dennis van de Winter, Erik Smits



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