

KONF: The Normal and the Weird. Politics and Cultures of (Ab)normality in Contemporary Europe, Amsterdam/online (11.05.2022)

Discussion published by Florian Lippert on Tuesday, May 3, 2022

NIAS Expert Workshop

The Normal and the Weird.

Politics and Cultures of (Ab)normality in Contemporary Europe

Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences, Amsterdam

Presented by NIAS Amsterdam, ICOG Groningen and ASCA Amsterdam

Korte Spinhuissteeg 3

Wednesday, May 11th 2022

Hybrid Format - onsite and online

Programme and Registration:

<https://nias.knaw.nl/events/the-normal-and-the-weird-politics-and-cultures-of-abnormality-in-contemporary-europe/>

Idea(l)s of cultural normality and constructions of the abnormal, the weird, and the deviant have always been elements of political power struggles as well as objects of cultural controversies. In today's Europe, they have become more virulent, but also more ambivalent in many contexts: populist radical right parties and nativist movements appeal to cultural normativity and 'a common sense Europe' for the 'common people', but also present themselves as national 'defenders' *against* Europe and as 'alternatives' to the 'mainstream'. Crisis- and pandemic-ridden governments promise a 'new normal' that will mend the social fabric, but struggle to resolve the latent conflict between 'newness' and normality. The contradictions inherent to these and other constructions of (ab)normality are addressed by new forms of political protest and artistic activism, which, in turn, cause new controversies about limitations of the 'sayable'.

In this NIAS expert workshop, organized by the Theme Group *The Politics of (De)familiarization*, cultural scholars,

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<https://networks.h-net.org/node/79435/discussions/10202234/konf-normal-and-weird-politics-and-cultures-abnormality>

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political and social scientists, philosophers and cultural practitioners investigate the shifting ground of normalcy, normativity, abnormality, weirdness, and deviance in Europe's current cultural and political landscapes, and discuss them with the public. How is the (ab)normal constructed and experienced within the current neoliberal governmentality in Europe, and which (new) approaches to the shifting ground of the normal can we articulate as scholars, activists, or artists in order to understand the current conjuncture and respond to it?

Audience: Online access is free for interested scholars and students; if you want to attend, it is mandatory to [register here](#) before May 9th. Onsite participation in Korte Spinhuissteeg 3 is also possible ([registration](#) is required as well for onsite participation). Please note that space is limited, and onsite priority will be given to members of NIAS, ICOG Groningen, and ASCA Amsterdam. If you would like to participate onsite, please indicate this during registration.

Programme

10:00 **Welcome** by **Jan Willem Duyvendak**, Director of NIAS

10:10 **Introduction** by the **members of the Research Group *The Politics of (De)familiarization***

10:20 **Keynote Lecture 1 with Q&A** by **Jürgen Link**, University of Dortmund (em.): ***Back to Normalcy? Disruptive New Normal? Or Irreversible Denormalization? - A Theory of Normalism as a Tool for Crisis Analysis***

11:20 Break

11:30 **Presentations with discussions: Current Discourses of Cultural Normality and Normativity in Europe** (papers of ca. 15 minutes, then 10 minutes moderated discussion on each paper)

Moderation: **Florian Lippert**, NIAS/University of Groningen

Speakers:

- **Chiara de Cesari**, University of Amsterdam: ***Cultural Fundamentalism and Cultural Racism in Populist Discourse*** (online)
- **Lisa Gaufran**, University of Groningen: ***Damsels in Distress, Sissy Boys and Toothed Vaginas: Feminization in Grass Root Foreign Policy Discourse***
- **Peter Knight**, NIAS/University of Manchester: ***Conspiracy Theories, Normies and Weird Beliefs***
- **Dimitris Soudias**, NIAS/University of Amsterdam: ***Alter-Neoliberal Analysis: Abduction, Critique, Radical Imagination***

13:15 Lunch break

14:00 **Roundtable discussion: Cultures of Weirding** (introductory project presentations or art presentations of ca. 10 minutes, then open moderated discussion)

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Moderation: **Maria Boletsi**, NIAS/University of Amsterdam/Leiden University

Participants:

- **Ricardo Domeneck**, NIAS, poet & artist, *A Dictionary of Weirdness*
- **Alberto Godioli**, NIAS/NWO/University of Groningen: *Who's the Normie? Humor, Ambiguity and (De)familiarization*
- **Nat Muller**, curator, writer and PhD researcher at Birmingham City University: *Contemporary Art from the Middle East and the (New) Weird*
- **Bahar Noorizadeh**, artist and PhD researcher at Goldsmiths, University of London: *Stranger Than Sci-fi: Towards Weirding Our Economies* (online)

16:00 Break

16:15 **Keynote Lecture 2 with Q&A** by **Ellen Rutten**, University of Amsterdam: *Mistakes in the Machine & Dreams of Imperfection*

17:15 **Closing Reflections** - Alexander Kazamias, Coventry University

17:45 **End of the workshop**

Redaktion: Constanze Baum - Lukas Büsse - Mark-Georg Dehrmann - Nils Gelker - Markus Malo - Alexander Nebrig - Johannes Schmidt

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