

This panel discussion is held in conjunction with the workshop on [Decolonising Migration Studies?](#), organized by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore (NUS), with funding support from the University of Auckland.

Decolonising Migration Studies? explores the relationship between colonialism and migration studies and addresses the future of the field in a time of intellectual decolonization. It responds to growing calls in migration studies to decolonize the intellectual and methodological foundations of this field of research. Echoing interventions in other parts of the social sciences, these calls highlight the colonial foundations of migration knowledge, its indebtedness to disciplines that emerged within European enlightenment traditions and the ongoing dominance of the field by Western scholars, contexts, literature and concepts. Such interventions raise crucial questions about the generation of knowledge about migration in a globalizing world that continues to be shaped by imperial and colonial legacies.

20 NOVEMBER 2023 • MONDAY

11:00 – 11:10	WELCOME REMARKS
11:00	BRENDA S.A. YEOH , National University of Singapore
11:10 – 12:10	PANEL 1A • DECOLONIALISING MIGRATION'S PAST AND PRESENT
<i>Chairperson</i>	BRENDA S.A. YEOH , National University of Singapore
11:10	Producing Borders: Migration Control and the Colonial Present RADHIKA MONGIA , York University
11:30	Migration Studies and Colonialism LUCY MAYBLIN , University of Sheffield JOE TURNER , University of York
11:50	Discussion
12:10 – 13:10	PANEL 1B • DECOLONIALISING MIGRATION'S PAST AND PRESENT
<i>Chairperson</i>	FRANCIS L. COLLINS , Waipapa Taumata Rau - University of Auckland
12:10	Creolizing Migration Studies through a Caribbean Lens MANUELA BOATCĂ , University of Freiburg
12:30	Post/Decolonialising Migration Studies: Enduring and Emergent Challenges SIN YEE KOH , Universiti Brunei Darussalam
12:50	Discussion
13:10	END

Producing Borders: Migration Control and the Colonial Present

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This chapter engages with two important recent trends in the interdisciplinary field of migration studies: First, the long-overdue attention to the relations between colonialism and migration control. This branch of scholarship not only scrutinizes the colonial antecedents of current migration regimes but, perhaps more importantly, draws attention to how aspects of colonial formations endure in our present. The second trend challenges the tendency to conceive state borders as fixed territorial demarcations and as the primary site where migration control is enacted. Instead, recent scholarship has focused attention on “practices of bordering” – or what Ayelet Shachar (2019; 2020) calls “the shifting border” – that thoroughly scramble notions of fixed territorial borders (or their analogs, such as airports, that might be located far from the physical/territorial border of a state) as the central site of migration control. Engaging with important literature in these two trajectories of migration scholarship, this chapter has three primary aims: First, focused on specific practices of bordering that organized colonial migration control, it seeks to demonstrate how colonial formations were central to the *emergence* of borders as we conceive them today. Second, by analyzing some contemporary transformations in practices of bordering, it shows how we are witnessing the refashioning or remaking of borders, or, indeed, a profound restructuring of space. Finally, the chapter argues that colonial legacies and recent iterations of migration control endure not only in the regulatory norms of former colonizing sites (such as Europe or white settler colonies) but have now been generalized and are equally evident at other sites, including in the postcolonial world. In other words, the “colonial present” referenced in the title is evident in both the former colony and the former colonizing power, in both the global North and the global South. Consequently, our attempts to decolonize migration studies will need to attend to this generalization of colonial power.

Radhika Mongia is Associate Professor of Sociology at York University, Toronto, where she has also served as Director of the Graduate Program in Sociology and as Associate Director of the York Center for Asian Research. Mongia’s research is situated at the intersection of history, law, and political theory and examines issues of migration, citizenship, and state formation. She is the author of *Indian Migration and Empire: A Colonial Genealogy of the Modern State* (Duke University Press, 2018, and Permanent Black Press (India), 2019). In addition, her work has appeared in various edited volumes and in journals such as *Public Culture*, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *Gender and History*, and *Cultural Studies*, among others. Her current research, titled “Citizenship Deprivation: Legality, Bureaucracy, and the Everyday”, explores how recent practices of identification and new citizenship legislation in India are related to broader transformations in migration regulation, citizenship regimes, and statelessness.

Migration Studies and Colonialism

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This chapter discusses the emergence of ‘migration studies’ as an established and institutionalised field of research which has, until recently, been characterised by an elision, or sanctioned ignorance, around histories of colonialism. We discuss how this sanctioned ignorance has enabled methodological nationalism, presentism, and Eurocentrism. Theoretically, the elision of colonial histories has allowed modernist and developmentalist understandings of the world to dominate. The chapter as a whole explains how dominant modes of understanding the world within migration studies have shaped how scholars understand migratory phenomena, and why the consequent understandings are unsustainable in the face of calls to understand the present as a product of the colonial past.

Lucy Mayblin is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Sheffield. Her research focuses on asylum, human rights, policy-making, and the legacies of colonialism. She is author of three books: *Asylum After Empire* (2017), *Impoverishment and Asylum* (2019), *Migration Studies and Colonialism* (with Joe Turner, 2021), and co-edited the collection *Postcoloniality and Forced Migration* (2022). She was awarded the UK Philip Leverhulme Prize 2020 for her research achievements in the area of asylum and migration.

Joe Turner is Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of York. He is the author of *Bordering Intimacy: Postcolonial Governance and the Policing of Family Life* (2020) and *Migration Studies and Colonialism* (with Lucy Mayblin, 2021) as well as a range of articles in leading journals. His research focuses on three key themes, all oriented around colonially and the politics of mobility: migration studies and colonialism; family, intimacy and borders; and the intersection of eco-bordering and colonialism.

Creolizing Migration Studies through a Caribbean Lens

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Transregional and global migration date back several centuries. Yet it was only around the turn of the millennium that a systematic critique of methodological nationalism highlighted the extent to which migration studies, and the social sciences in general, conflated society with the nation-state, thereby cementing binary divisions of the national and the foreign (Wimmer & Glick Schiller 2002). Earlier critiques, which stressed that the relevant unit of analysis of societal processes under global capitalism is not the nation-state or any other political-cultural unit, but the capitalist world-economy (Wallerstein, 1974, 1996), never became commonplace. It was ultimately theoretical contributions, ethnographic observations, and historical analyses from the Greater Caribbean that made the critique of methodological nationalism prominent and pioneered transnationalization as a paradigm (Glick Schiller & Fouron 1999). Creolization – a theoretical notion reaching beyond the Caribbean while keeping it as its original context in mind, has proven a vital epistemic resource for the social sciences concerned with inequality and conviviality, and has been increasingly explored as such in recent years (Boatcă, 2014; Gutiérrez Rodríguez & Tate, 2015). Applying a creolized lens to migration studies in particular has however just begun (Boatcă & Santos, 2023; Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2021). I propose in this paper that the creolization of migration studies through a Caribbean perspective provides a way out of the ahistorical and Occidentalist tendencies of the field. In particular, I explore the inner-Caribbean divide resulted out of the coloniality of citizenship: On the one hand, many formerly colonized, independent Caribbean states strategically commodify citizenship rights by turning an otherwise inheritable status into a commodity for sale to investors; on the other, still colonized territories in the region grapple with colonial forms of citizenship, offering better rights but little actual mobility to the Global North to their local populations (Boatcă, 2021).

Manuela Boatcă is Professor of Sociology and Head of School of the Global Studies Programme at the University of Freiburg, Germany. Born in Romania, she received her undergraduate degree in English and German philology at the University of Bucharest and her PhD in Sociology at the Catholic University of Eichstätt, Germany. She was a research fellow at Boston College in 1999-2000, a visiting professor at IUPERJ, Rio de Janeiro (2007-2008), and Professor for the Sociology of global inequalities at Freie Universität Berlin (2012-2015). She works on world-systems analysis, decolonial perspectives on global inequalities, gender and citizenship in modernity/coloniality, and the geopolitics of knowledge in Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Her work has been published in French, English, German, Hungarian, Portuguese, Spanish, Romanian, and Swedish. She co-edited (with Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez and Sérgio Costa) *Decolonizing European Sociology: Transdisciplinary Approaches* (Routledge, 2010) and authored *Global Inequalities Beyond Occidentalism* (Routledge, 2016). With Anca Parvulescu, she recently co-authored *Creolizing the Modern. Transylvania Across Empires* (Cornell, UP 2022), which received the René Wellek Prize of the American Comparative Literature Association and the Barrington Moore Award for best book in comparative and historical sociology from the American Sociological Association in 2023.

Post/Decolonialising Migration Studies: Enduring and Emergent Challenges

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Extant scholarship on the relationship between coloniality and migration concurs that enduring colonial legacies continue to shape knowledge production and policies concerning migration and cross-border mobilities. Such colonial legacies constitute the enduring challenges that stand in the way of postcolonial and decolonial intellectual projects in migration studies. These enduring challenges stem from the continued dominance of Euro and Anglo-Western perspectives, approaches (conceptual, epistemological, methodological) and power positions in knowledge production and policymaking, which marginalise (and at times foreclose) alternative standpoints and voices. At the same time, contemporary developments such as the neoliberalisation of academia, and technological advancements in migration management and knowledge production (e.g. datafication, artificial intelligence) have led to the rise of new and emergent challenges. Importantly, these emergent challenges add to and amplify the enduring challenges. This chapter outlines the development of these enduring and emergent challenges for postcolonialising and decolonising migration scholarship. It suggests that, despite the existence of such challenges, postcolonial and decolonial intellectual projects can persevere through collective and aggregated contributions within, and, most importantly, beyond academia.

Sin Yee Koh is Senior Assistant Professor of Asian Migration, Mobility and Diaspora at the Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam. She is also Adjunct Senior Research Fellow at the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Monash University Malaysia. She is a human geographer working at the intersections of migration studies, urban studies and postcolonial geography. Her work uses the lens of migration and mobility to understand the circulations of people, capital, and aspirations in and through cities. She has published on migration and colonial legacies, diaspora strategies, academic and teacher expatriate mobilities, migration and urban intermediaries, lifestyle migration-led urban speculation, cities and the super-rich, and the globalisation of real estate. She is the author of *Race, Education and Citizenship: Mobile Malaysians, British Colonial Legacies, and a Culture of Migration* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

