NWO

Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research

Registration form (basic details)

1a. Details of applicant

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1b. Title of research proposal

Strange(r) Families. Political Contestation over Family Migration Rights for Non-Normative Families

1c. Summary of research proposal

Migration and citizenship are among the most pressing questions in contemporary politics. Family migration is the largest category of immigration by far. Admission of families which deviate from dominant norms, such as same-sex families, extended families, or polygamous families, is highly contested. Distinctions between 'Us' and 'Them' are most fundamentally drawn in the intimate sphere, between those who love and parent 'properly' (like 'we' do it) and those who do not. However, scholars of migration and citizenship have neglected family, gender, and sexuality. This project explores political contestation over family migration rights for non-normative families in Europe. How do migration law and politics deal with different kinds of families asking permission to live together in Europe?

"Strange(r) Families" will pursue three specific objectives:

- Conceptual innovation: bridging the gap between gender, queer, and postcolonial theory on the one hand, and migration and citizenship theory on the other hand

- Analytical innovation: a new interdisciplinary analysis of political contestation not only in the political arena but also in the judicial arena and the public arena

- Empirical innovation: fill a gap in existing knowledge on the politics of migration in Europe, through case studies of family migration politics in France, the Netherlands, and Switzerland from the 1960s to the present day.

I am uniquely positioned to implement this research, due to my pioneering scholarship on the politics of family migration and my experience in interacting with practitioners in collecting data and disseminating findings.

"Strange(r) Families" will provide insight in how gender and family norms intersect with conceptions of nationhood and belonging, and how these intersections shape migration politics. This will allow political and scholarly progress on some of the most troubling questions of our times: how do we deal with difference and where do we draw the boundaries of national community?

1d. Keywords (Max. five words)

Migration policy; family migration; gender; sexuality; political contestation

1e. Current institution of employment

University of Amsterdam, department of political science

1f. Prospective host institution

University of Amsterdam, department of political science

1g. NWO domain (Choose one)

Applied and Engineering Sciences (TTW)	
NWO Science Domain (ENW)	
Health Research and Development (ZonMw)	
Social Sciences and Humanities (SGW)	**X**
Cross-domain committee (DO)	

1h. Main field of research

Code	Main field of research
44.20.00	Political science
	Other fields of research (if applicable)
28.90.00	Gender studies

1i. Public summary of your research proposal

NL

'Vreemde' gezinnen herenigd?
Welke gezinnen horen thuis in Europa? Voor gezinnen die buiten de norm vallen, zoals LGBT gezinnen of polygame gezinnen, is het recht op gezinsmigratie zeer omstreden. Dit project onderzoekt hoe politiek en beleid omgaan met verschillende soorten gezinnen die toestemming vragen om in Europa samen te leven.

ENG

'Strange' families reunified?
Which families belong in Europe? The right to family migration is highly contested for families which deviate from the norm, such as same-sex or polygamous families. This project analyses how migration law and politics deal with different kinds of families asking to be allowed to live together in Europe.

Research proposal

2a. Description of the proposed research

INTRODUCTION

In the Fall of 2017, the Dutch Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs, of which I am a member, discussed 'plural parenthood'. The Dutch government is considering adapting family law to recognise more than two adults as the legal parents of a child, for instance in recomposed families where stepparents participate in children's education, or in families which consist of two same-sex couples raising children together. The Advisory Committee was asked by the government to think through the consequences of 'plural parenthood' for migration policy. A question which arose immediately was how to prevent these new regulations from being used by polygamous families to gain entry to the Netherlands. It was evident to all those around the table that this reconceptualization of what makes a 'family' was *not* intended to extend to polygamy – even though this is also a family form in which more than two parents may raise children together. This raises the question: Why queer families, but not polygamous families? How do migration law and politics deal with different kinds of families asking to be allowed to live together in the Netherlands, and more broadly, in Europe? Who decides what families belong here?

Families which include **"strangers"** – i.e. non-citizens – require state permission to live together in Europe. For families which are **"strange"** – deviant from the norm – such state permission is not self-evident: same-sex families or polygamous families are commonly denied family migration rights. The discussions in the Advisory Committee illustrate that **the politics of belonging are intrinsically connected to the politics of intimacy**, as distinctions between 'Us' and 'Them' are most fundamentally drawn in the intimate sphere: between those who love, have sex, marry, and raise their children 'properly' (like 'we' do it) and those who do not. These discussions also illustrate that there are **two ways in which families may be considered 'strange'** in contemporary Europe. First, families may be seen as **'queer'**, i.e. as a modern, progressive break with traditional family forms, for instance same-sex families, polyamorous families, or families with transgender parents. Second, families may be seen as **'culturally different',** i.e. a product of non-European tradition, for instance polygamous families, matrifocal families, or extended families where more than two generations live together. This project compares political contestation over family migration rights for 'culturally different' families on the one hand and 'queer' families on the other hand.

The **overarching aim** of this project is to provide insight in how gender and family norms intersect with conceptions of nationhood and belonging, and how these intersections shape migration politics. This aim will be accomplished by pursuing **three specific objectives**:

1) **Advance the <u>conceptual</u> understanding of the intersection between politics of belonging and politics of intimacy**, by bridging the gap between gender, queer, and postcolonial studies on the one hand, and migration and citizenship studies on the other hand
2) **Develop a new <u>analytical</u> approach to political contestation over migration rights,** by drawing on interpretative policy analysis, socio-legal scholarship, and social movement studies to explore conceptions of 'nationhood' and of 'family' as *subject to ongoing political contestation* which occurs not only in the political arena but also in the judicial arena and the public arena. It is unique in the scholarship on migration and citizenship – and extremely rare in political science more broadly – to study these three arenas together.

3) **Deliver <u>empirical</u> insight in political contestation over family migration rights** for non-normative families in France, the Netherlands, and Switzerland from the 1960s to the present day, thereby filling a gap in our knowledge of the politics of family migration in Europe.

To reap the benefits of both comparative analysis and in-depth case studies, **this project will consist of two paired comparisons, one single-case study, and one overall comparative synthesis**.

- Sub-project 1: Political contestation over family migration rights for 'culturally different' families in France and the Netherlands, 1960s – present (PhD candidate 1)
- Sub-project 2: Political contestation over family migration rights for 'queer' families in France and the Netherlands, 1960s-present (PhD candidate 2)
- Sub-project 3: Political contestation over family migration rights for 'queer' and 'culturally different' families in Switzerland, 1960s – present (PI)
- Sub-project 4: Synthesis: Political contestation over family migration rights for non-normative families in France, the Netherlands and Switzerland, 1960s-present (PI)

Sub-projects	France	Netherlands	Switzerland
'culturally different' families			
'queer' families			
Synthesis			

PhD1
PhD2
PI

OBJECTIVES

Objective 1
Conceptual innovation: the politics of belonging and the politics of intimacy

"Strange(r) Families will provide insight in the fundamental role of gender, sexuality, and family in shaping conceptions of nationhood, citizenship, and belonging. Existing scholarship has produced a wealth of conceptual and normative insight in the ways in which conceptions of national identity, political community, and belonging have shaped the politics of migration and citizenship in Europe (e.g. Brubaker 1992, 2010; Geddes & Favell 1999; Joppke 1999, 2010; Schnapper 1994; Kymlicka 1998; Modood 2007; Wimmer 2008), but has all but ignored gender, family, and sexuality.

Thus, this migration scholarship has neglected the insights of scholars working at the intersection of gender and queer studies on the one hand and postcolonial studies on the other hand. Feminist students of nationalism and empire have shown that from colonial times to the present day, defining collective identities and boundaries – be they cultural, racial, or national – inevitably involves reference to proper roles of men and women, proper dress, proper parenting, proper loving, and proper sex (Yuval-Davis 1997; McClintock 1995; Stoler 2001; Fischer & Dahinden 2016; Hajjat 2012; Ertman 2010; Turner 2015). Queer scholarship on 'homonationalism' (Puar 2007) has shown that in recent years, acceptance of homosexuality is presented as a key characteristic that distinguishes 'the West' from 'the Rest', notably the Muslim world (Fassin 2008; Fassin & Salcedo 2015; Dudink 2011; Massad 2002; Mepschen et al. 2010; Povinelli 2006).

Scholars disagree on the relation between rights claims by 'queer' families on the one hand and 'culturally different' families on the other hand. On the one hand, Van Walsum

et al. (2013) suggest that decolonisation and the sexual revolution may have strengthened each other in the Netherlands. In colonial times, the Dutch considered Black Caribbeans inferior to white Europeans, partly because of their family practices which included non-marital relationships, matrifocal families, and same-sex relationships (cf. Wekker 2006). As Suriname gained independence in the mid-1970s, claims for respect of Surinamese culture and claims for respect for non-marital, same-sex relationships overlapped and strengthened each other. Specifically, Surinamese negotiators demanded the admittance of Surinamese non-marital partners as part of the post-independence migration agreement of 1975. Van Walsum et al. (2013) argue that this accelerated the acceptance of (gay) non-marital partners in Dutch family migration policies more broadly.

This account contrasts with the literature on 'homonationalism', which posits that gay rights in Europe have been won at the expense of the continued or even increased exclusion of Muslims and others perceived as 'culturally different'. As queerness 'became white' (Dudink 2011: 262), thinking of 'culturally different' families *as* 'queer' or similar to 'queer' has become impossible. In this scenario, the successes of queer families in winning family migration rights would have *undermined* efforts of families perceived as 'culturally different' to gain similar rights. The discussions in the Advisory Committee described in the introduction appear to illustrate this dynamic: plural parenthood yes, polygamy no.

Thus, one strand of literature leads us to expect that 'queer' family migration rights claims and 'culturally different' family migration rights claims overlap and reinforce each other, while another strand suggests that they undermine each other. This project aims to ascertain which of these two accounts is accurate – or whether both might be accurate depending on circumstances. In doing so, it will yield an understanding of how political struggles over family and gender norms and political struggles over national identity and belonging have intersected in Europe.

Objective 2
Analytical innovation: political contestation in the public, judicial, and political arena

'Strange(r) Families' explores both conceptions of 'nationhood' and of 'family' as **subject to ongoing political contestation**. The definition, meaning and value of 'nationhood' and 'family' are subject to change because they are the product of ongoing political struggles. This political contestation is an encompassing societal process, which happens not only in parliaments and ministries, but also in the media, in street protests, and in courts. This project aims for a comprehensive understanding of political contestation over family migration rights, capturing the societal roots of different claims about family and nationhood as well the formal and informal channels through which such claims travel. It therefore includes **the three main arenas where political claims are made:**

1)   The public arena: mass media and the streets

2)   The judicial arena: the courts

3)   The political arena: ministries and parliaments

A broad range of actors may be involved in making (or resisting) family migration rights claims, ranging from the individual family that goes to court or takes their story to the press, to civil servants, members of government, and parliament; from lawyers and judges to civil society organisations, be they migrant organisations, religious organisations, employers organisations or trade unions. Claims first expressed in court may be picked up by parliamentarians, claims expressed in the media may be used by lawyers in court – and the meaning and impact of claims may change subtly or radically

as claims travel. Success in one arena may translate into success in another arena – or not. **The analytical questions to be answered in each of the sub-projects are:**
- Which actors were involved in claiming or opposing family migration rights for non-normative families?
- How did these actors frame their claims?
- In which arena(s) did they make their claims?
- When and how do claims travel between different arenas?
- When and how does claimsmaking in the judicial, public, and political arena result in legal and/or policy change?

While these arenas are intricately connected, they also have distinct logics and rules. An **interdisciplinary approach** will be developed to understand the specificities of dynamics in each arena, as well as the connections between them. Synergy among the different disciplinary approaches mobilized in the analysis will be ensured by an **epistemological commitment to a constructivist perspective**, which conceptualizes politics as meaning-making and focuses on analysing how political contestation produces identities and policy problems.

Administrative and parliamentary decision-making **in the political arena** will be studied through **interpretative policy analysis**, to identify which actors were involved in the struggle over family migration rights, how they framed the issue, and what their relative influence on decision-making was (Schön & Rein 1994; Hall 1993; Bonjour 2009, 2011, 2016). Data collection and analysis will start with online parliamentary records, which have almost entirely been digitalised for the period under study. Administrative decision making from the 1960s until the 1990s will be studied through research in archives of the relevant ministries, notably the archives of the Dutch ministry of Justice at the *Nationaal Archief*, the French ministries of Interior and Labour at the *Archives Nationales*, and the *Bundesamt für Ausländerfragen* at the Swiss Federal Archives. More recent developments will be studied through interviews with civil servants and politicians.

Analysis of contestation in the **public arena** will be guided by insights from **social movement studies**. We will explain which actors succeed in voicing their claims and influencing the dominant framing, by assessing both institutional and discursive opportunities (Marx Ferree et al. 2002; Koopmans & Olzak 2004; Bröer & Duyvendak 2009). First, the analysis will focus on written media. Relevant articles will be found through keyword search in online databases, namely LexisNexis for the most recent period and the digital press collections of the French, Dutch and Swiss National Libraries for earlier decades. Second, research will cover relevant civil society organisations, including for instance *Association pour la reconnaissance des droits des personnes homosexuelles et transsexuelles à l'immigration et au séjour (ARDHIS)* and *Amoureux au Ban Public* in France, the COC and the *Suriname Comité* in the Netherlands, and the *Dachverband Regenbogenfamilien* and Caritas in Switzerland. Data collection will include research in the archives of these organisations, interviews with members, and possibly (non)participant observation of activist campaigns.

Finally, contestation in the **judicial arena** will be analysed through a **constructivist socio-legal approach**, in particular the 'dispute-centered approach' to legal analysis (McCann 1992). This approach conceptualises litigation as a form of social struggle and therefore focuses on the different participants in a court case and the way they frame their arguments, rather than looking exclusively at judges and their rulings. Except for recent work by Kawar (2015) and myself (Bonjour 2016), this approach to the judiciary is new in migration studies. Cases analysed will include high profile cases such as the 2018 EU court case which obliges all member states to allow entry to foreign same-sex partners of citizens, but also less well-known cases, such as local court rulings about the implementation of the migration agreement between the Netherlands and Suriname in the 1970s. Data will include the records of relevant court cases, as well as archive research and interviews with lawyers and legal activists, such as GISTI in France, the

Werkgroep Rechtsbijstand aan Vreemdelingen in the Netherlands, or the *Centre Suisse pour la Défense des Droits des Migrants* in Switzerland. This will yield insight in the strategies they deployed not only in court but also in the media or in lobbying with policymakers.

Each of the sub-projects will analyse all three arenas over a period of sixty years. This is **feasible** because "Strange(r) Families" is thematically very focussed: it studies contestation over a crucial but specific question (what is "family"?) within a subfield of migration politics (family migration).

All data from the different sub-projects will be collected and analysed in one integrated dataset, using the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti and a common coding system, which we will develop collaboratively (following Weston et al. 2001).

Objective 3
Empirical innovation: the politics of family migration in Europe

Family migration is the largest migration category by far, representing 40% of immigration to OECD countries between 2007 and 2015 while the *combined* share of labour and asylum immigration was never above 30% (OECD 2017a: 110-111).[1] Thus, the question which relationships qualify as 'family' in migration policy is key to defining who gets to migrate to Europe. However, scholarship on the politics of migration and citizenship has barely given any attention to family migration, which is all too often considered a negligible side-effect of 'autonomous' migration flows such as labour or refugee migration (Kofman 2004).

With the exception of the pioneering work of Bhabha and Shutter (1994), analyses of family migration policies in Europe have only been forthcoming as of the mid-2000s (for an overview, see D'Aoust 2018). A substantial part of this literature is dedicated to showing that distinctions between desirable and undesirable migrants are decisively shaped by gender and family norms (e.g. Abrams 2005; Block 2012; Bonjour & Block 2016; Bonjour & De Hart 2013; Eggebø 2010; Gedalof 2007; Horsti & Pellander 2015; Lavanchy 2013; Messinger 2011; Myrdahl 2010; Odasso 2017; Schmidt 2011; Strasser et al. 2009; Van Walsum 2008; Wray 2011).

"Strange(r) Families" will build on this scholarship and complement it in three ways:

First, it will yield new insight in how *different* conceptions of nationhood interact with *different* conceptions of family, and how these intersecting conceptions change over time to shape the politics of family migration. Existing scholarship consists almost exclusively of single-country case studies which mostly cover only the most recent developments.

Second, it will explore the intersections between the regulation of "postcolonial migration" and "family migration", rather than following mainstream migration scholarship in conceiving of these as two separate legal categories.

Third, it will shed light on how queer family migration rights have been won in Europe – and whether or not this has been at the expense of 'culturally different' families. The scarce existing scholarship on the regulation of queer family migration focuses mostly on the US (Canaday 2013; Luibheid 2008; Stychin 2000), Australia (Holt 2004) or Canada (LaViolette 2004). The only European studies that I am aware of are Simmons' 2008 study of UK and EU regulation of same-sex marriage migration rights, and Salcedo's 2015 PhD research on bureaucratic migration controls of same-sex couples in France.

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[1] The remaining 30% is free movement.

SUB-PROJECTS

Sub-project 1: Political contestation over family migration rights for 'culturally different' families in France and the Netherlands, 1960s – present (PhD candidate 1)

Political contestation over family migration rights for non-normative family forms perceived as 'culturally different' will be studied with a focus on postcolonial (dis)continuities in the regulation of family migration. First, based on a literature study of family law in French and Dutch colonies in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean, it will ask whether and how specific ways of governing ethno-racial difference through family and gender norms have travelled from different colonial contexts to the contemporary context. Second, it will zoom in on the post-independence migration agreements which France and the Netherlands concluded with their respective colonies in the 1960s and 1970s, to assess whether decolonisation and the sexual revolution have indeed reinforced each other. Fieldwork will be done in the Netherlands and France as well as in Suriname and a selected former French colony which gained independence between 1960 and 1980.

Scientific output:

- Dissertation (book version to be submitted to an international publisher)
- Two international peer-reviewed articles (one single authored, one with PI)
- Three paper presentations at international academic conferences

Sub-project 2: Political contestation over family migration rights for 'queer' families in France and the Netherlands, 1960s-present (PhD candidate 2)

This project will study political contestation over family migration rights for 'queer' family forms in the Netherlands and France from the 1960s until the present day. When and by whom were claims for queer family migration rights voiced? By whom were these claims resisted? What conceptions of membership, community, and nation were mobilized in claiming and resisting queer family migration rights? Under which circumstances have they been able to make an impact, in the media, in court, and in law and policy? Fieldwork will cover the public, judicial, and political arena in France and the Netherlands.

Scientific output:

- Dissertation (book version to be submitted to an international publisher)
- Two international peer-reviewed articles (one single-authored, one with PI)
- Three paper presentations at international academic conferences

Sub-project 3: Political contestation over migration rights for 'queer' and 'culturally different' families in Switzerland, 1960s – present (PI)

This project will study political contestation over family migration rights for non-normative families in Switzerland from the 1960s until the present day, with a particular eye on how non-normative family forms perceived as 'queer' have fared in comparison to family forms perceived as 'culturally different'. Fieldwork will be done in Switzerland.

Scientific output:
- Two single-authored international peer-reviewed articles
- Two paper-presentations at international conferences

Sub-project 4: Synthesis. Political contestation over family migration rights for non-normative families in France, the Netherlands and Switzerland, 1960s-present (PI)

The PI will promote synergy between the sub-projects by ensuring that data is collected and analysed in a way that allows for common data use as well as comparison across projects, and by taking the lead in the common theoretical reflection process. Once the three empirical sub-projects are in the concluding phase, the PI will synthesise the findings by formulating new theoretical insights about intersecting conceptions of belonging and intimacy which shape the meaning and function of citizenship in European societies.

Scientific output:
- Academic monograph
- Two international peer reviewed articles 1) theoretical, synthesizing conceptual findings 2) methodological, developing interdisciplinary analytical approach to political contestation
- Two thematic panels at international academic conferences
- One academic conference

CASE SELECTION

The selection of case studies is aimed at exploring variety in:
- gender and family norms,
- conceptions of nationhood
- post-colonial (dis)continuities

First, Switzerland, France and the Netherlands vary in terms of gender and family norms, in particular with regard to homosexuality. The Netherlands were the first country in the world to legally allow same-sex marriage as of 2001 and also, to the best of my knowledge, the first country in the world to recognise same-sex relationships as grounds for immigration rights as of 1973 (Bonjour 2009: 119-121). In the literature on homonationalism, the Netherlands is considered 'the heart of the new European sexual nationalism' (Fassin & Salcedo 2015: 119). France has recognized same-sex marriage in 2013, in spite of mass-mobilisations contesting this reform of marriage law. Switzerland finally has recognised same-sex partnerships in 2004, including migration rights for transnational same-sex couples, but has not yet legalised same-sex marriage.

Second, these three countries are commonly taken to represent three ideal-typical 'national models': the Netherlands for the 'multicultural' or 'plural' model, France for the 'republican' or 'assimilationist' model, and Switzerland for the 'ethno-national' model (Castles 1995; Koopmans & Statham 2005; D'Amato 2011). I take to heart the critique of Bertossi and Duyvendak (2012) that such 'national models' have too often been taken as homogenous static facts and used as direct explanation for policy difference. Rather than facts, 'national models' are discursive resources: stories about national identity and citizenship that are perceived as 'making sense' in a particular context (cf. Bonjour & Lettinga 2012). These stories can be told in different ways to achieve different outcomes. It is precisely the adaptability of 'national models' as they are invoked by different actors in different institutional contexts and as they interact with other discourses, most notably changing family and gender norms, that will be explored in this project.

Finally, the cases are selected to explore colonial (dis)continuities. The Netherlands and France were major colonial powers in the 19th and 20th century, both in Caribbean contexts where family forms are shaped by the heritage of slavery, and in contexts

where the colonised population's family practices are largely governed by Islamic law. In contrast, Switzerland has never ruled territories outside Europe.

While the analysis focuses on the nation-state level where family migration policies have primarily been made and debated, the European level - European Union as well as European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg – will be included wherever it is relevant.

LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

The political science department of the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR) at UvA is the optimal location for a research project at the cross-roads of migration studies and gender & sexuality studies. For the last three consecutive years the Times Higher Education Ranking labelled the AISSR the most important social sciences research centre in continental Europe. AISSR is home to the Amsterdam Centre for European Studies (ACES) Migration Network, which I lead; the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES) of which I am an active member; and the Amsterdam Research Centre for Gender and Sexuality, of which I am a board member. AISSR includes a great number of scholars of the politics of migration, citizenship, gender, and sexuality at different levels of seniority and regularly attracts renowned scholars from abroad for visiting fellowships. The AISSR offers cutting-edge PhD training.
Researchers in this project will participate in national research networks (Dutch Association for Migration Research) as well as in international networks (ECPG; IMISCOE; APSA section on migration and citizenship; CES migration and gender & sexuality sections). Moreover, my strong networks among scholars working on the politics of migration, citizenship, family, and gender in Europe and North-America, especially in Switzerland (Sebastien Chauvin, Janine Dahinden, Anne Lavanchy) and France (Manuela Salcedo, Laura Odasso), will be of crucial value to this project.

TIME LINE OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES (see also 2b for knowledge utilisation)

	Sub-project 1 (PhD candidate)	Sub-project 2 (PhD candidate)	Sub-project 3 (PI)	Sub-project 4 (PI)
Y1	develop common coding system, data collection in online databases, exploratory archive research	develop common coding system, data collection in online databases, exploratory archive research	develop common coding system, data collection in online databases, archive research, interviews	Finalise theoretical framework, develop common coding system, PhD supervision
Y2	Archive research, interviews, first article	Archive research, interviews, first article	Archive research, interviews, first article	PhD supervision; panel at international conference
Y3	Finalise data-collection and analysis, second article	Finalise data-collection and analysis, second article	Finalise data-collection and analysis, second article	PhD supervision; panel at international conference
Y4	Finalise dissertation	Finalise dissertation	/	PhD supervision, academic conference, synthesise findings, write monograph
Y5	/	/	/	Synthesise findings, write monograph

2b. Knowledge utilisation

(Max. 1,000 words on max. two pages)

☑   Yes, this proposal has the potential of knowledge utilization
☐   No, this proposal has no direct knowledge utilization

Migration and citizenship are among the most salient and controversially debated political questions of our times. Family migration policies in particular impact crucially on the lives of individual families as well as on societies as a whole.

The societal value of this research project lies chiefly in its potential to improve the quality not only of policy debates about family migration, but also of broader debates about migration, citizenship, sexual and cultural diversity, national identity, and social cohesion. In particular, this project aims to enhance the reflexivity of those engaged in these debates. The "Strange(r) Families" project will enable a broad range of actors – politicians, civil servants, nongovernmental organisations, lawyers, media – to reflect on the assumptions and perceptions underlying their own and their opponents' positions, to understand how debates are shaped by historical and national context, to identify the blind spots in the debates and thereby, perhaps, to discern new possible courses of action.

For instance, European policymakers and publics tend to assume that families from "non-Western cultures" are conservative and patriarchal. Challenging this assumption by showing that "culturally different" family forms may include "queer" families – such as so-called "*mate"* relationships between women in Surinam - might enable new dialogues and alliances among politicians and non-governmental organisations which now tend to keep a distance from each other, such as LGBTQ organisations and ethnic minority organisations. It may also contribute to challenging the assumption that "non-Western" families do not belong in Europe.

Potential non-academic audiences of the project include:

- politicians and civil servants
- law professionals
- journalists and opinion-makers
- civil society organisations
- the wider public

In the past, my research has been used by all these audiences, for instance by the [Dutch Repatration and Departure Service](#) and the [Research and Documentation Centre](#) of the Dutch Ministry of Justice, by the [Netherlands Institute for Human Rights](#), by [Human Rights Watch](#) and by [Andere Tijden](#), a history programme on Dutch public television. I am regularly called upon by policymakers to share my expertise with them, not only through my membership in the **[Dutch Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs](#)**, but also for instance by delivering a keynote at the 2016 meeting of the Immigration Working Group of the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum, and Refugees (IGC) in Geneva. I write online blogs (e.g. on [Stukroodvlees](#)) as well as op-eds in national newspapers (e.g. in [NRC](#)) and I am regularly invited by journalists working in national audio-visual and written media such as [Buitenhof](#) or [Metro](#) to share my expertise with their audiences.

Dissemination practices in the "Strange(r) Families" project will create linkages between publics, enhance cooperation and deepen practical knowledge. Under my experienced guidance, the project team will facilitate knowledge utilisation by non-academic audiences in the following ways:

(a) The intended audiences of this project are also its informants. The two PhD researchers and I will engage regularly with policymakers, journalists, lawyers, and civil society organisations in the course of our data collection, i.e. during interviews, archive research, and observations. As part of this interaction, we will share (preliminary) findings with informants and invite them to voice their ideas and actively engage in reflection on the ongoing research together.

(b) A project website will be set up, which will present the design and aims of the project as well as the team members. Blog posts summarising (preliminary) findings, working papers and finalized publications will be made available through this website.

(c) Stakeholder workshops will take place in each of the countries studied in the two final years of the project. Politicians, civil servants, journalist, lawyers, and representatives of civil society organisations will be invited not only to be informed about the results of the project, but also to participate in interactive sessions on strategically selected issues that have come out of the research. Participants in these sessions will reflect together on if and how public policy can respond to these issues.

(d) A national report will be written for each country studied, summarising the research findings as well as the lessons learned at the stakeholder workshop held in the respective country. In addition to these three national reports, the comparative synthesis will also be summarized in report for practitioners. These reports will be made publicly available in English and the national languages on the project website.

(e) A dedicated twitter-account will be launched from the beginning of the project that will regularly publicize the proceedings of the project and will be used to promote outputs.

(f) Traditional (national and international) leading media will be approached via targeted op/eds (journals, magazines), and interviews (journals, radio, tv). The research team will write articles for popularizing political and social science weblogs that relate social science research to ongoing societal debates, such as MonkeyCage.com or its Dutch equivalent StukRoodVlees.nl.

While this project will be located institutionally in political science, it will draw on and speak to adjacent academic disciplines, most notably law, history, sociology, public administration, and political communication. It will target interdisciplinary conferences, such as those organised by the Council for European Studies and IMISCOE, as well as interdisciplinary journals, such as the *International Migration Review* or *Gender and Society.*

2c. Number of words used

Section 2a: 3996 (max. 4,000 words)

Section 2b: 856 (max. 1,000 words)

2d. Literature references

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