

Propositions PhD defense Mieke Kox

Unravelling unauthorized migrants' legal consciousness processes

1. Unauthorized migrants believe that the law is procedurally just, yet they consider the law unjust given the Dutch state's disrespect for substantive values such as their security, liberty and human dignity to which they are entitled given human rights treaties that the state has ratified (this thesis).
2. Lawyers should reprimand the Dutch state for using the law to deliberately inflict pain on unauthorized migrants by depriving them of healthy and secure living conditions, social and geographical mobility, and citizenship at the costs of the migrants' human rights (this thesis).
3. Continuously expanding the immigration system with different actors, legal domains and geographical localities to counteract unauthorized residence increases the migrants' vulnerability but only limitedly leads to the return of these migrants as the state desires (this thesis).
4. The law disempowers unauthorized migrants over time given its severe constitutive powers and limited effectiveness, meanwhile creating a new vulnerable underclass that could easily be exploited by criminals (this thesis).
5. 'The unauthorized migrant' is usually central in societal and academic debates, but differentiation is needed to better understand how the law matters to this diverse legal category of people (this thesis).
6. Executive immigration officers have the power to make a difference for unauthorized migrants.
7. Denial of social reality comes at the costs of evidence-based policies.
8. Team ethnography poorly fits reward structures in academia.
9. Sympathy for those we study does not undermine a researcher's academic integrity.
10. There is lots to learn from unauthorized migrants' resilience.
11. We are all fortune seekers.