Nicola Piper got a feeling of this during a period of study in Tokyo. The Japanologist and Political Sociologist is fully aware how privileged her experience as a migrant was, as a well-educated, white European. It is not at all comparable with an African trying to escape across the Mediterranean to Europe. Nonetheless, when she wanted to extend her visa in Tokyo, she did experience the interroga
tion, the mistrust. “You don’t have the same rights as everyone else and you always have to legitimise yourself.” An experience she shares with migrants all over the world. Born in 1966 in Munich, the cosmopolitan has spent more than half of her life living outside Germany: Great Britain, Denmark and Singapore were only some of the numer-
ous stops along the way. Professor for Migration and Human Rights at the University of Sydney in Australia for five years now, a fellow at FRIAS since the start of June, she has had to split the nine-month Marie Curie Fellowship into two stages because of her limited availability. The professor of migration studies has not only brought her English partner with her to Freiburg, but also her unpreten-
tious manner shaped by Anglo-Saxon culture: Honorifics such as ‘Dear Professor’ can be cast aside from the very start.

“I live what I research,” she says. Global migration flows: This is no abstract concept for her – it concerns people who are denied the most basic human rights, a subject which moves her. She is convinced that, “A society does not only need highly qualified immigrants. New York would descend into absolute chaos if all the foreigners who perform the so-called low-skilled jobs were deported.” She used to greet all the cleaners at her university in Sydney, wanting to “haul them out of invisibility”. She also utilises her research for this, which firmly de-
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