RELIGION, MULTILINGUALISM AND HISTORY - PAST AND PRESENT
PERSPECTIVES ON MIGRATION

WORKSHOP 12-13 APRIL
FRÖLUNDA KULTURHUS

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Erez Levon (Queen Mary University of London)
Negotiating subjective conflict: Language, religion and same-sex desire in Israel

Vally Lytra (Goldsmiths University of London)
A call for recognition: faith literacies as a force for learning, socialisation and personal and collective identification in young lives

Marlou Schrover (Universiteit Leiden)
Governance of migration and diversity from a historical perspective in Europe

Seán McLoughlin (University of Leeds)
Religion and transnational migration: A ‘multi-local’ analysis of Islam in the homeland, diaspora and holy places

Arranged by Centre on Global Migration (CGM) in collaboration with Frölunda Kulturhus
ABSTRACTS, KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

*Negotiating subjective conflict: Language, religion and same-sex desire in Israel*

Erez Levon. Reader in Sociolinguistics, Queen Mary, University of London

A central tenet of recent sociolinguistic theorizing is the belief that individual subjectivity - and hence observed social and linguistic practice - results from the intersection of multiple potentially conflicting identifications (e.g., Cameron & Kulick 2003; Bucholtz & Hall 2005; Kulick 2005). In this talk I focus on the issue of identificational conflict and, in particular, how it gets materialized through language. My discussion is based on a case study of the intersection of sexuality and religion in Israel. Data are drawn from an interview I conducted with an informant I call Igal, a forty year-old Orthodox Jewish man who is married, has children, and also engages in sexual and romantic relationships with other men. I focus in my discussion on Igal’s use of creaky voice throughout the interview. Based on a quantitative and qualitative analysis of topic-conditioned style shifting (e.g., Schilling-Estes 2004; Coupland 2007), I argue that Igal uses creaky voice as a way of negotiating the conflict between his sexual and religious identifications. More specifically, I propose that Igal uses creaky voice in order to adopt a particular deontic stance (Shoaps 2004) through which he reaffirms a commitment to Jewish laws and customs despite the transgression of these laws that his identification with same-sex desire represents. I argue that in doing so Igal is able to orient to both of his conflicting identifications simultaneously, and in effect construct a dialogic and multidimensional understanding of self. In the talk, I discuss the implications of this analysis for our understandings of the role of religion in sociolinguistics and in the formation of the self more broadly.

*A call for recognition: faith literacies as a force for learning, socialisation and personal and collective identification in young lives*

Vally Lytra. Senior Lecturer in Languages in Education, Goldsmiths University of London

Faith is a crucial driving force worldwide. Yet, the investigation of faith literacies in young lives has received limited attention in educational research. Most often than not, schooling and wider society tend to ignore or disparage the role of faith in young people’s educational achievement, socialisation and identity development and unfavourably compare it to that of school literacies (Dávila 2015, Genishi & Dyson 2009, Gregory et al 2004, Long 2016, Skerrett 2013). In my talk, I will share insights from the BeLiFs project, a multi-sited team ethnography of young people’s faith literacies in four minority faith communities in London, UK (www.beliefs.co.uk). Our work takes a view of faith as an essential part of culture; a complex and multifaceted cultural practice that is embedded in specific sociocultural, historical and political contexts and is passed down from one generation to the next, providing children and adults with membership and a sense of belonging (Lytra et al 2016). I will illustrate how becoming a member of the faith community entails acquiring the necessary language and literacy-oriented skills to partake in the rituals of the faith community. Equally importantly, it entails acquiring particular ways of being, acting and seeing the world through religious frames of understanding, interpretation and belonging. Our work challenges long-held binaries between learning in religious contexts and learning in other contexts, bringing to the fore the wealth and complexity of languages, literacies, heritages and identities in faith settings, as we engage in dialogue and work collectively toward more pluralistic, democratic and equitable societies.
Governance of migration and diversity from a historical perspective in Europe
Marlou Schrover. Professor of Migration History, Universiteit Leiden

In this presentation I look at the last hundred years and at the role of voluntary organizations (later called NGOs) in the governance of migration and diversity. I pay specific attention to the intersection of religion, gender, class and ethnicity.

In the beginning of the 20th century women (mostly Western, middle class, and Christian) organized on subjects related to migration both in Europe and in the colonies. Part of their activities were in response to the interwar anti-colonial Pan-Islamic movement (in Europe and the colonies). In the immediate post-WWII years the involvement of women was less, but it returned in the 1970s. After the 1990s the first the pro-gay and later also feminist arguments were used increasingly by anti-immigrant parties.

Religion and transnational migration: A ‘multi-local’ analysis of Islam in the homeland, diaspora and holy places
Seán McLoughlin. Professor of the Anthropology of Islam, University of Leeds

This lecture will explore the study of migration, diaspora and transnationalism in relation to the study of religion and especially Islam. Drawing upon two decades of intermittent, multi-sited research among mainly South Asian heritage Muslims now settled in the UK, I argue that we should pay attention to the ongoing “awareness of multi-locality” (Vertovec 2000: 147) in migrant and post-migrant communities. Illuminating scales ‘below’, as well as ‘above’ and ‘across’, the nation-state, this more devolved and multi-centred approach, problematizes a default ‘methodological nationalism’ in migration studies (Glick Schiller and Çaglar (2011). A ‘multi-local’ analysis can be further explored too in terms of Thomas Tweed’s (1997: 93-5, 139; cf. 2006) three-fold cartography of diasporic religion (which for my own purposes I re-order thus):

i) the locative (religion is closely “associated with a homeland”);
ii) the translocative (religion is “moving symbolically [and in other ways] between the homeland and the new land”);
iii) the supralocative (“the significance of both the homeland and the adopted land in religious life” is diminished or denied).

In this lecture I will elaborate on this schema in light of the wider literature and a discussion of the ways in which Muslim-ness is transformed across three interconnected locations of a particular ‘multi-local’ network: a) the ethnic homeland of Mirpur district in Pakistani-administered Kashmir; b) the Pakistani/Kashmiri diaspora of northern England; and c) the pilgrimage destinations of Mecca and Madinah.

More information

RSVP here, no later than 29 March.

The workshop will start at 13:00 on 12 April and will finish at 15:00 on 13 April.
On the evening of 12 April (18.00-20.00) we will also organise an open panel discussion on migration, religion and norms. Both the workshop and the panel discussion will be held at Frölunda kulturhus.

Inspired by four keynote talks by international researchers, the workshop aims to showcase ongoing research on migration issues at the University of Gothenburg; this is with a view to bringing together researchers from the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences so that new research collaborations can be developed.

Participants in the workshop are not expected to deliver a whole lecture - rather you are invited to give a short presentation in which you summarise your current research and you offer ideas and suggestions about potential research synergies at the University of Gothenburg.

If you have any questions, please contact:
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