

Workshop 75

Travelling Religions- Circuits of Gendered Moralities

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Over the past decade, a growing body of literature has emerged that deals with processes of transnationalism, migration and diasporic networks. Although religion seems to play an important role in constructions of social identity of many dispersed communities all around the globe, it received comparatively little attention within the field of research on processes of deterritorialisation. Transmigrants transport religious ideas, practices and sacred objects from one place to another, while simultaneously changing or redefining ideas about belief, ritual, gender roles, religious authorities or sacred places. Focusing on transnational religious networks, we suggest to explore the (,real‘ , ,virtual‘ or ,imaginary‘) connections/disconnections between sacred centres, religious leaders and dispersed moral communities. Relevant questions to be addressed in regard to travelling religions in terms of moral circuits concern

- a. the role of the media (internet, video, tv, films etc.),
- b. practices through which religious authorities/actors become global players,
- c. the politics of religion in local/national settings and
- d. contestations and power struggles within and between different religious groups across social and political boundaries.

We would encourage participants to explore these issues from a gendered perspective since the different performances of women and men in transnational religious movements (and their possible transformations) yet call for greater attention in the scholarly discourse of diaspora and migration studies.

Dalit Goes Global, Mission Goes Dalit

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This is an exploration into the multifaceted dimensions of the global Dalit struggle for recognition. Dalits went global long before India’s economic liberalisation in 1991. It began with labour migration under the indentured labour act to the plantations in South Africa, Mauritius and the Caribbean around 1830. In recent years, the political struggle of the Dalits has gained global recognition. Embedded into these global movements and struggles is a rather unknown Dalit religious community in Eastern Uttar Pradesh. The Shiv Narayanis have members in all mayor cities of northern India as well as in countries like England, South

Africa Mauritius and the Caribbean. In close vicinity is a Catholic Mission Station called St. Francispur. It was founded in 1941 by a female order “Queen of the Apostles” with headquarters in Vienna. In my paper, I will focus on the cooperation and the conflicts between the Dalit religious community of the Shiv Narayanis and the Queen of the Apostles. Special attention will be given to the Dalit struggle for recognition, social mobility and political articulation through Monastery and Mission in their strive for Dalit emancipation and uplift. Global embeddedness is used as an imaginary as well as transfer of knowledge, resources and manpower.

Migrant Women, Transnational Practices and Changing Socio-Economic Status: Senegalese Women in New York and Paris

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In this paper I will explore the religious practices of transnational Senegalese migrant women. Much attention has been drawn to the Senegalese Mouride brotherhood, especially the politics and the role of religious leaders (marabouts) and Mouride social and religious institutions and associations (dahiras) shaping the male Senegalese transnational activities. However very little is known about the religious praxis of Senegalese migrant women. In New York Senegalese women recently established their own dahira. Furthermore at the annual visit of one of the most famous Mouride religious leaders the President of the women’s dahira took great pride in pointing out that the women are always at the forefront of the fulfilment of financial duties and other economic, social and cultural obligations in New York. Thus in a social system that is traditionally highly influenced by religious brotherhoods and gendered with regard to roles, responsibilities and status there are a lot of questions which need to be addressed: How do Senegalese women devote themselves to and use religion as a means to negotiate their positions and power? How do the religious practices of transnational migrant women shape and affect this system? How do the Senegalese brotherhoods and their religious leaders shape the transnational activities of women? I will address these issues by presenting the few theoretical findings available on this topic and by providing an analytical account of explorative interviews with Senegalese women in Paris.

Religion and Conflict in Cyberspace

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This paper contributes to the research of identity politics online, the emerging of online communities and their relation to a specific local as well as global offline context, namely the Moluccan conflict in Eastern Indonesia and transnational religions. This conflict is fought out mainly between Christians and Muslims

on the Moluccan islands and is extended into cyberspace by local actors. Christians as well as Muslims use the Internet as a means to spread their views on the conflict. Thus the Moluccan cyberspace is constituted, which is dominated by male cyberactors, even if women and men are equally affected by the conflict on the local level. I want to show that the Internet not only is a means to exchange information but also to establish extended communities and to outline collective identities that are supposed to represent the religious groups involved in the conflict. I did extensive field research and participant observation in the Moluccan cyberspace analyzing the actors' mailing lists and web pages, the online strategies used and the interconnection of the online and the offline level. The Internet is used to get connected with transnational religious communities, thus essentialising local religious identities which were not that coherent at all before the conflict broke out.

Negotiating Gender: Discourses and Practices Among Young Muslims in a Scandinavian City

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Focusing on two multiethnic, gender-mixed Muslim youth and student groups in Oslo, this paper explores the importance of transnational processes in the (re)production and contestation of gender discourses and practices. In their local gender performances, young Muslims of immigrant background relate to competing gender discourses that are differently substantialised and hierarchised in different fields of interaction. Particular attention is paid to contemporary transnational Islamic discourses, and more specifically to what may be called the "discourse of authenticity", and the possibilities and limitations it entails for contesting and negotiating gender. References to "Islamic authenticity" mediate the asymmetry between an egalitarian gender vision and existing gender hierarchies. As such, they may serve both to challenge and to reproduce existing gender discourses and practices. The paper analyses how the complexities and ambivalences of gender are played out in ritual, organizational and social activities in the two Muslim youth and student organizations in question. In conclusion, it considers the possibilities and uses of communication technologies in subverting gendered and generational hierarchies.

Of Blood and Sacrifice: Korbani and the Creation of a Moral Order Among Bangladeshi Migrants

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In recent years, transnational and diasporic research has paid an increasing attention to religious issues. Analysing several religious institutions or religious political parties, authors have focused on the crossroad of religious and political issues among

immigrant populations, both in their countries of origin and in their receiving countries. Unlike this former research, this paper is mainly concerned with everyday religious practices, in particular among Bangladeshi migrants in Portugal and in Bangladesh. Based on fieldwork done in Lisbon and Dhaka, my aim is to discuss the impact of global migration movements upon religious activities of Bengali migrants. In particular, I intend to unearth the connections of the Korbani, the ritual slaughter of an animal performed during the Eid-UI-Ad'ha (the celebration at the end of the pilgrimage to Mecca), and the recreation of a moral order which implies continuities and simultaneities between family members, no matter how separated by long distances they may be.

Travelling Spirits. Transnational Healing in African Christian Churches in Germany

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Charismatic Christianity is also known as the Born-Again or Neo-Pentecostal movement ñ has become the fastest growing Christian movement worldwide and has recently received vivid scholarly attention. It is characterized by an ideological emphasis on individual promotion prospects as well as by transnational networks. In West Africa, these groups and churches are also known; not only for their specific healing practices, but also for their demonisation of what is regarded as traditional culture and religion. Here, the construction of evil is gendered: women are mostly regarded as agents of evil forces. So far, there has been little research on migrants trying to evangelize from „the rest to the west“. The paper will examine how transnational religious ties have developed from Ghana and Nigeria to Germany, and how spiritual activities are organised across continents. How are the travelling spirits involved in transnational healing? How is the (gendered) demonisation of African tradition transformed in the context of migration? How do these religious groups become “Africanized” localities for migrants? These developments will be analyzed as effects of a “re-ethnisation” which is due to (often racist) bureaucratic procedures in the host society.

Claiming the High Ground: Global Religion and God as a Pathway of Migrant Simultaneous Incorporation

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Generations of migration scholars have noted that immigrants have used religious organizations as a mode of preserving old values and identities and adapting to new settings. Using the nation-state was the operative unit of analysis, scholars portrayed religion as either impeding or facilitating of integration. More recently scholars of transnational migration have explored the

ways religion continues to link migrants to their homeland. We suggest the following as an alternative framework to the study of migrant religions. Incorporation can be simultaneous: many migrants settle in a new location and maintain ongoing incorporative transnational connections. Migrants' membership in a global religion provides them with moral authority wherever they settle. They frame their practices so as to claim the new land yet put themselves above and beyond it. These global claims reflect the dynamics of specific locations of settlement. In asserting moral authority over the receiving nation-state, women's behaviour may become important topics of discourse and practice. Yet women find social support and status through the global aspects of their religion. To develop this framework we report on a collaborative project with Evangelos Karagannis, and Thad Gulbrandsen about migrants from Nigeria, Congo, and Vietnam in two small cities, Manchester, USA and Halle, Germany.

Diaspora at Home: A Struggle to Appropriate Alternative Religiosity

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Israel was never a friendly site for religious freedom. Being a Jewish state, did not help the non Jewish religions, at the same time the Zionist Socialist foundations, did not support all Jewish streams and religious traditions. The fact that there is no separation between State and Religion, to this day ñ complicates the situation even further.

This paper is based on a fieldwork done in a Sphardi/Mizrachi (Jews from Arab countries origin) community of Orthodox people at the heart of the country, and relays in this part on lectures given to the public by a local rabbi (which were once broadcasted via "pirate radio stations", then transmitted via satellite to several other locations, and now reside in the Rabbis' Web site). The analysis of the texts (in the context of the wider field work) shows a constant effort, to reshuffle the hierarchy of "correct religiosities", to critique the Hegemonic culture in Israel and to claim a legitimate space within it. This critique and its deconstruction refer to Gender relations, to West vs. East ideologies, to Nationalism and global Fundamentalism.