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Migration and Diaspora Cultural Studies Network (MDCSN)

The Manchester Migration and Diaspora Cultural Studies Network is a collaborative framework for academic research into the cultural transformations brought about by the global movement of peoples, languages, objects, images, sounds, beliefs and ideas. The network embraces a wide range of disciplines, with a strong core in language-based disciplines, which gives the network a distinctive, internationally comparative dimension, and illuminates the interpenetration of cultures from within. Themes include intercultural communication, cultural memory, representation, and diasporic subjectivities, across a spectrum of modes of migration, from refugee studies, through border studies and language contact to transnational cinema and 'queer diasporas'.

Proposed output from the network

The network plans to disseminate its work by means of (a) an interactive website, (b) a conference (including photography exhibition, film screening and performance/poetry reading), (c) producing an edited book and (d) 10 journal articles by members of the network and (e) final report.

- (a) The interactive website would include a presentation of the network with a publication link to papers by network members, an events/ news section and presentation of the aims, timetable and staff of the network (including contact addresses).
- (b) The Call for Papers for the conference on "Creolising Europe" will be published and distributed in November 2006 in international journals, academic associations and e-mail lists. The selection of the participants will be between April and May 2007 and the final programme will be published in the first week of June 2007. Posters and leaflets will be sent to local and international associations and organisations.
- (c) The edited book will include a selection of the conference papers on "Creolising Europe" and would be edited in 2008 and published in 2009.
- (d) Ten journal articles will be published by the members of the network in peer reviewed journals in the areas e.g. of cultural history, linguistics, European Cultural Studies and Iberian Cultural Studies, which will be published by 2008.
- (e) The Final report will be written in the third phase of our network (winter 2007).

The Network

The strength of the proposed network, which includes the University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University, Leeds, Salford, and Sheffield Universities, lies in the collaborative deployment of a unique set of skills which contribute to a transcultural understanding of migration, diasporas and identities in a transnational context. Our current research ranges from established diasporas such as Jewish Studies, to Romani language and communities, from immigrant cultures to postcoloniality. Comparative research into the movement of people (migrants, refugees, travellers), things (films, photos, goods), cultures and ideas, is already underway. The proposed network will embrace Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities disciplines (Languages, Linguistics, History, Religions, Translation Studies, Development Studies, Sociology, Drama and Screen Studies), and will also reach beyond academic contexts to engage with local community and cultural sector partners (eg Cornerhouse Cinema, Contact Theatre, Ahmad Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Archive). The core of the network builds on an existing grouping located at the University of Manchester which studies languages, cultures and identities in transnational context, focusing on intercultural communication, cultural memory, representation, and subjectivities. The network's innovative contribution will be to bring cultural studies approaches to historical, ethnographic, literary and linguistic case studies, and to develop and refine a conceptual framework for comparative, interdisciplinary research.

Rationale and Context

The creation of the new University of Manchester in 2004 has created a propitious context for the establishment of the group at the core of this network, bringing Arts and Social Sciences together in one Faculty of Humanities. Migration and Diaspora is a key Faculty research theme, with a staged series of new appointments in Languages, Cultural Studies, Latin American Studies and Historical Studies, adding new strength to the existing critical mass, eg the introduction of Chinese Studies, and the appointment of a Chair in the Study of the Contemporary Arab World. The School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures (SLLC) already runs an MA in Cultures of Migration, Diaspora and Exile, an MA in Latin American Cultural Studies, with a strong emphasis on issues of transculturation, globalisation and postcolonial flows, and a new MA in Postcolonial Literatures and Cultures is being launched in Arts, Histories and Cultures. Preliminary collaborations have included the 2004 MMU conference 'Crossing Borders: Images of Immigration in European Film' (www.hls.mmu.ac.uk/languages/events/crossingborders/), and the 2005 Manchester University workshop: 'Migration and Diaspora: Narrative, Memory, Visibility' (www.llc.manchester.ac.uk/research/conferences). At least 20 PhDs are currently in progress in the Faculty on topics of language contact and translation, histories of migration, and postcolonial and diaspora cultures. Along with other HEIS in the region, Manchester University is proactively engaging with the cultures of migrant communities through a range of projects and key research appointments.

Aims

- (a) To enhance and enable *high quality and distinctive research* on the cultural dimensions of migration and diaspora, 'migrant' and 'diasporic' subjectivities, and the migration of desires and ideas. By building on existing strengths in History and Jewish Studies at the University of Manchester with work on contemporary cultural and material practices of migrant/diasporic communities, to expand the typology of migration to encompass a spectrum from forced migration, to diasporas without migration, and languages without nations.
- (b) To contribute to a developing body of *theory and method*, by interrogating through comparative international research terms such as transculturation, cosmopolitanism, hybridity, contact zones, creolisation, minoritarianism, diaspora space and third space.
- (c) To encourage *interdisciplinary and cross-institutional exchange* in Migration and Diaspora Studies, in collaboration with local, community-based organisations. To open up a space for investigating the representation of diasporic identities and their impact on national cultures through, for example, oral history, popular culture, literature, language contact, film, performance, commerce, ritual.
- (d) To develop *international comparative research*, based in the UK and beyond, which reflects the interpenetration of Europe with the Latin American, African and Asian continents. This includes concrete case studies such as global peddlars, francophone popular culture, undocumented migrant workers in Europe, forced migration, Bollywood in Manchester, Black British communities, Armenian diaspora, Jewish-and Turkish-German culture, Portuguese African women's writing, queer communities and migration, gender and ethnicity in Germany, Spain and Portugal, border cultures in Latin America and Europe.

Objectives

- 1) To make a distinctive theoretical and conceptual contribution through the following research strands:
 - (a) "Creolizing Europe", focusing on critical readings of notions like "refugee"; 'minor' literature, "postcoloniality", "globalization", "transculturation", "postcoloniality", "hybridity", "cosmopolitanism", "race" and "meztizaje" (Professors Peter Gatrell, Mona Baker, Drs. Margaret Littler, Hilary Owen, Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez, Shirley Tate, Bridget Byrne, Fernanda Peñaloza, Iris Bachmann, Uma Khotari).
 - (b) The cultural, economic and political dimensions of mobile spaces focusing on: culture and transnational migration in Europe (Professor David Corkill (MMU), Drs. Uma Khotari, Shirley Tate, John Perivolaris, Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez), local diasporic communities (Dr. Rajinder Drudah, Professor Peter Gatrell), border zones and language contact (Professors Stefan Berger, Yaron Matras, Drs. Patience Schell, Tej Purewal and Iris Bachmann).
 - (c) The migration and diaspora of ideas, sounds and images (Drs. Darren Waldron, Barbara Lebrun, Carmen Herrero (MMU), Richard Cleminson (Leeds), William Hope (Salford), Cathy Gelbin, Nuria Triana-Toribo, Ursula Tidd, Professor Christopher Perriam, Rajinder Drudah). This encompasses

- transnational film, photography, music, and belief, including Muslim and Jewish diasporas in Europe.
- (d) "Queer diasporas", focusing on textuality, representation, and the notion of the translation of desire. This is an existing research project, focusing on the question of gay, lesbian, transsexual and transgender diasporas: Professor Christopher Perriam, Drs. Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez, Paulo Drinot and Richard Cleminson (Leeds), in collaboration with the Centre for Sexuality and Culture.
- 2) The network will organise three *thematic meetings*:
- (i) Minoritarianism, Creolization and Hybridity - New terms for old phenomena?
 - (ii) Spaces in Transit - Borders and Contact Zones
 - (iii) Migrating desires - Queering Spaces.
- These three meetings will lead to a *conference* entitled "Creolizing Europe - On shifting borders, minoritarian cultures and queer subjectivities".
- 3) An interactive website will be created to facilitate discussion and dissemination.
- 4) An edited conference volume, journal articles, the website, film screenings and possibly a photography exhibition, will disseminate the work of the network.

Speakers and Participants

- a) The Network draws on *high quality research* well established at the University of Manchester and international collaborations, through the work of, eg Professor Bill Williams (Jewish Studies), Professor Peter Gatrell (Refugee Studies), Professor Yaron Matras (Kurdish and Romani Languages), Professor Chris Perriam (transnational cinema), and work on postcolonial and minority cultures in French, German, Spain, Portuguese Africa and Latin America (Drs. Margaret Littler, Barbara Lebrun, Nathalie Schon, Iris Bachmann, Hilary Owen, Patience Schell, Fernanda Peñaloza, Cathy Gelbin). The recent appointment of new colleagues expands the field: Professor Stefan Berger (border studies) and Dr. Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez (Cultural Studies in Migration and Postcoloniality).
- b) The network will embrace further disciplines in the University of Manchester, such as Development Studies (Dr. Uma Khotari), Drama (Dr. Rajinder Drudah, Professor James Thomson), English Studies (Dr Anastasia Valassopoulos), and Sociology (Drs. Bridget Byrne and Tej Purewal).
- c) It will also include colleagues at Manchester Metropolitan University: Dr. Shirley Tate (Sociology), Dr Carmen Herrero and Professor David Corkill (Modern Languages); Dr William Hope at the University of Salford (Modern Languages); Dr Richard Cleminson at the University of Leeds (Spanish).
- d) It will build on existing links with partners in the cultural sector and community groups (The Goethe-Institut, the Instituto Cervantes, the Alliance Française, Cornerhouse Cinema, the Contact Theatre, the Ahmad Iqbal Ullah Race Relations Archive, The People's History Museum, and the Manchester Jewish Museum, Queer up North). We also aim to forge new links with local community artists, performers and organisations.

- e) The conference "Creolizing Europe" will include the participation of scholars, practitioners and artists (eg Manchester poet Lemn Sissay). Potential invited speakers will include: Professors Eduard Glissant (Paris VIII, France), Norma Alarcón (UCSB, USA), Nestor Canclini (Colegio del Norte, Mexico), Benigno Sánchez-Eppler, Azade Seyhan (Bryn Mawr, PA), Aristide Zolberg (NSU New York), and Dipesh Chakrabarty (University of Chicago).

Timetable of Activities

Phase 1: January-May 2006

- January Management meeting (steering committee and advisory board).
- Appointment of part-time secretary and (temporary) web designer.
- Design of website and e-mail list.
- Sub-groups meet regularly
- April 2006 Management meeting: preparation of first thematic meeting in May 2006.

Phase 2: May 2006-May 2007

- Sub-groups continue to meet
- Preparation of second thematic meeting, December 2006
- January and April 2007 Management meetings
- May 2007 third thematic meeting
- June 2007 Management meeting: conference preparation

Phase 3: September 2007:

- Conference 'Creolising Europe'
- October 2007 Management Meeting: Evaluation
- October to December 2007: Report on Network
- 2008 Editing of conference volume.

Management and Co-ordination of Network

A steering committee consisting of the applicant and the co-applicant, Professors Peter Gatrell, David Corkill, and Linda Pariser of Cornerhouse Cinema, will manage the project, including organisation of thematic meetings, up-dating website, liaising with invited speakers and conference organisation. The Steering Committee will report to the Advisory Board, which will include a variety of disciplines, postgraduate students and community-based partners. Clerical assistance will be provided by the part-time secretarial appointment, and financial management will be supported by the SLLC Research Office.