



SWEDISH  
COLLEGIUM  
for ADVANCED STUDY

**Friday, 17 February. 14:50 – 16:20. Room: IIC New Block - Seminar Hall II**  
**REGULAR SESSION**

**Session:** Sociology of Emotions: Emotions as Invisible Threads that Bind People Together I

**Session Convener(s):** Francesc Núñez, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Barcelona; Natàlia Cantó-Milà, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Barcelona

**Chair:** Natàlia Cantó-Milà, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Barcelona

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I) *Interpreting the Social and Situated: The Role of Emotional Reflexivity*  
Lisa Procter, University of Sheffield

II) *Emotions, Death and Rituals in Public Space after Oslo/Utøya 22 July 2011*  
Ida Marie Høeg, Centre for Church Research, Oslo

III) *Islamist Groups and Recruitment in Europe*  
Mohammed Ilyas, University of London

IV) *Social Tears and (Per-)formed Sadness: The “Truth” about North Korea’s Reaction Regarding the Death of their Political Leader Kim – Jong – Il*  
Swen Seebach, IN3 (Internet Interdisciplinary Institute), Barcelona

## ABSTRACTS

### Session description

Emotions have always been central to sociological analyses. However, this centrality was seldom made explicit in the works of the classics of the discipline, and a sociology of emotions did not become a legitimised sub-discipline until the last quarter of the twentieth century.

We would like to relate the young tradition of the sociology of emotions with the works of a classical sociologist, Georg Simmel, who delivered some great insights in relation to the social, relational character of emotions. For instance, he referred to the emotion of thankfulness as the memory of society, as a main binding thread that makes society possible over time; thus establishing durable bonds between people that lead them to care for each other, think of each other, and engage in certain, more or less durable, social practices. And as much as emotions are at the basis which social bonds can be and are webbed from, they are simultaneously webbed within these social processes.

We would like to work on emotions from this precise perspective: to think of emotions as invisible binding threads between people (thus, despite taking place 'within' concrete individuals, we would like to picture emotions as socially constructed, through discourses but also repeated practices that cultivate certain emotions, and certain ways of experiencing them, over others). We would welcome papers that work in, or discuss against, this direction. We would welcome papers that explore the role that emotions play in the configuration of modern subjectivities; a process that makes us look as far back as the Enlightenment, but which over the last century became crucial: Through the interconnections between an increasingly individualistic perspective and the transformation of social relations by the logics of the market, emotions (and especially love) have become in a way easily quantifiable, comparable and merchandisable. This process of mercantilisation has been reinforced by the changes experienced in the discourses and practices of public and private spaces in liberal democracies.

At the same time, we would welcome papers that deal with the politics of intimate life and emotions, and papers that focus on the ways in which new technologies of communication articulate corporality and emotions.

### Papers

1) *Interpreting the Social and Situated: The Role of Emotional Reflexivity*

Lisa Procter, University of Sheffield

The increased recognition of the researcher in the research process has required researchers to draw upon reflexivity. The researcher's emotions are increasingly acknowledged as an important dimension of reflexivity. However, in many cases emotions are considered in respect to the challenge they present to the researcher rather than, as Coffey states, 'epistemologically productive in the analysis of fieldwork' (1999, pg. 6). Emotional reflexivity, for me, involves a commitment to identify and critique my own conscious and unconscious associations generated by feelings ignited while interpreting field-data. My felt responses are a means to re-connect with the 'emotional landscapes' I negotiated within the field. As I *feel* my way through the data I am also re-encountering these emotional landscapes – the relational flow of emotion between bodies, minds, environments and places. In this paper I will reflect upon the process of interpreting an extract of video footage to show how reflecting upon and through my emotions led to enhanced interpretations of data. I will propose that feelings move me through *moments*, *memories* and *shifts* as I engage with the data. As I write myself into interpretations of data, my felt responses in each *moment* are more present to me. My felt responses offer opportunities to both re-connect with the field, to *memories* from the field, and to *shift* towards personal and deeply held beliefs. This paper will draw upon examples to describe

these three types of feeling movements and how they shape my interpretation of the data. In doing so I aim to explore how my own emotions are entangled within the ways I interpret the social and situated field.

II) *Emotions, Death and Rituals in Public Space after Oslo/Utøya 22 July 2011*

Ida Marie Høeg, Centre for Church Research, Oslo

The Norwegian people's capacity for emotions was triggered by the brutalities of the twin tragedy on 22 July in Oslo and on the island of Utøya. Rather than being numbed by the horror, the Norwegian people in districts and towns all over the country poured into the streets and public places to express their emotions. Many of the responses to these extreme events were social actions that were exercised within the framework of rituals. In this paper I will examine a broad range of the public rituals from 22 July to 21 August, with reference to spontaneous rituals, such as lighting candles, decorating public places with flowers, toys and written greetings, and prepared rituals organised by the central government or the local council, the Norwegian Labour Party (AP), the monarchy, the Church of Norway and other faith and world-view institutions. Human compassion has socio-historical limits determined by geographical, ethnic and social distance to the people affected by the suffering. An import function of ritual action is to make distinctions through integration and separation. From a ritual point of view, this paper will explore the capability of these highly emotional rituals to contribute to unifying the Norwegian society across ethnic, political, social and religious lines by investigating the question: Which rituals have promoted attitudes of unity, commitment to reconciliation and renewed faith in a national community where different cultures and religions are represented, and which rituals have had the opposite effect? The analyses are based on participant observations and filmed public rituals.

III) *Islamist Groups and Recruitment in Europe*

Mohammed Ilyas, University of London

Islamism has become a popular topic of debate within Europe in the last two decades. Consequently, it has raised a number of issues ranging from, how to understand Islamism, radicalisation and why individuals join such groups in Europe. The latter two questions are intertwined and have received much attention, especially in countries which have large Muslim populations such as United Kingdom, France and Germany. Much of the literature that covers radicalisation and recruitment presents a narrative that suggests that poverty in the Muslim community leads some to become radicalised and join groups, or that the Muslim community is alienated and does not share the values of the rest of society and Muslim children are taught a radical interpretation of Islam.

However, in this paper I propose an alternative approach to those mentioned above and focus on the recruitment process in Europe. In doing so I am not suggesting that the aforementioned narratives have no validity. Instead, I argue that the aforementioned narratives only consider the external environment in providing the reasons to why individuals join Islamist groups. This maintains the invisibility of the underlining processes, which are the kernels of radicalization, the recruitment, the disengagement from and engagement in activities. The process of radicalization and recruitment to, and disengagement from Islamist groups is more complicated, ambiguous, vague and different for each individual. In this paper I forward a conceptual framework that makes visible the kernels that are located within the processes and discourses that are constructed by the various Islamist groups to motivate individuals to join them.

Keywords: Islam, Muslim, Islamism, Islamist groups, radicalization, recruitment, Europe, Community and Motivation.

*IV) Social Tears and (Per-)formed Sadness: The “Truth” about North Korea’s Reaction Regarding the Death of their Political Leader Kim – Jong – Il*

Swen Seebach, IN3 (Internet Interdisciplinary Institute), Barcelona

After the death of Kim Jong-il many people asked critically how it can be that after the death of a dictator people can really cry, can really suffer. Some videos on youtube show people crying and being hysterical about the death of their North Korean leader. In the comments of those videos people reacted very emotionally, calling the North Koreans “stupid” or “brainwashed”, discussing about the “realness” of their tears. Comments referred to the pressures in North Korea as responsible for the sheer possibility of these tears, trying to explain them somehow. Our study was focusing on the underlying idea of these comments. If those tears, those weeps and expressions of sadness are called false and criticized for being performances, being false what does that mean? All these comments are based on the idea that emotions are something personal that we express, that we represent when we are really showing our feelings. The expression of emotions appears as an expression of our inner self. What we forget is the deeply social and socially constructed character of emotions and the meaning of social rituals like mourning rituals in this case. The line between real and false becomes blurred when we start to see emotions not as a pure expression of the self but as a form of social interaction constructing and constructed by social bonds. We have analysed the emotions in North Korea and compared the mourning ritual for Kim Jong-il with the mourning ritual of Princess Diana to critically look at the constructed-ness of grief and of emotions in general, on our general assumptions and beliefs on what emotions are.