

Challenging Concepts in Refugee History

Gothenburg 2-3 May 2024



Programme, Information, and Participants' Research Information

Organizers: Sari Nauman, Olof Blomqvist

Co-organizers: Susanne Lachenicht, Thomas Mareite, Megan Maruschke

Programme

Thursday, May 2, 2024

9.00 – 9.30

Welcome Address by the Organizers

9.30 – 11.00

Session 1: Challenging concepts

This session highlights the concepts that participants find the most challenging in their research and discusses why that is so. Wherein lies the problem we have with these concepts? Are the concepts themselves emic or etic ones? Are conceptual issues a critical aspect of refugee history? If so, why? Do these challenging concepts differ depending on geographic or periodical context, or research field? Is there a hierarchy of concepts in refugee history? When should we use emic concepts, when are etic/analytical concepts a better choice, and why?

Panel: Milinda Banerjee, Ana Guardião, Thomas Mareite, Thomas Pert.

Chair: Susanne Lachenicht.

11.00 – 11.30

Coffee break

11.30 – 13.00

Session 2: Historicizing concepts

This session addresses concepts from a temporal perspective. How has the meaning of specific concepts changed over time? How does the historicity of a concept affect our usage of it? Who is adopting concepts, from whom, and how does this affect their potential usage? How should we interact with colonial concepts (colonial due to their historical baggage, or colonial/Eurocentric in their current uses)? Is presentism a problem in historical research, and if so, is controlled anachronism (as suggested by Nicole Loraux and others) a way out?

Panel: Julia Bavouzet, Edward Blumenthal, Naïma Ghermani,

Jannik Keindorf, Ann-Catrin Östman. *Chair:* Hanna Filipova.

13.00 – 14.00

Lunch

14.00 – 15.30

Session 3: Interdisciplinarity, travelling concepts and the problem of double hermeneutics

For this session, we focus 1) on concepts that cross disciplines and research fields. Where do our concepts come from – which research fields? Which semantic transformations occur in these transfers? How can we create a transdisciplinary vocabulary for the field of refugee studies? 2) The problem of double hermeneutics: how do we deal with the vocabulary used to talk about (forced) migrations, as we find it among refugees themselves, lawyers, NGO's, governments and other, and how does this impact our concepts and semantics? Do historians have a responsibility to engage in debating contested concepts in forced migration studies? If so, how should we go about it?

Panel: Emma Lennhammer, Megan Maruschke, Sari Nauman.

Chair: TBA.

15.30 – 16.00

Coffee break

16.00 – 17.30

Summing-up the day

Chair: Olof Blomqvist.

19.00 –

Dinner at the restaurant *Husette*

Friday, May 3, 2024

9.00 – 10.30

Session 4: Spatial challenges

How do different geographies affect central concepts' usefulness and their connotations? How do local/national/transnational/transregional/global/glocal perspectives affect our conceptual usage? How can playing with scale (or: multiscalar approaches) help us with our analysis of refugee history? What role do the state and notions of sovereignty play in refugee history and in our terminology? What conceptual challenges do borders, borderlands, and diasporas pose? How can comparative analysis be harnessed to gain deeper insights into refugee history? How do our actors, whether the state or refugees themselves, (re)imagine and (re)organize social, political, and economic space(s) and to what end?

Panel: Juan-Luis Simal, Christoph Sperfeldt, Johanna Wassholm, Lidia Zessin-Jurek.

Chair: Thomas Mareite.

10.30 – 11.00

Coffee break

11.00 – 12.30

Session 5: Actors

Who are the main actors involved in refugee history? Who has agency in the stories we tell and the narratives we encounter? How do different actors label and categorize forced migrants, and in which situations or contexts? What role do migrants themselves take in these processes? What connotations (including emotional and ethical aspects) do these emic categorizations entail, and how do they differ from our own? How did notions of belonging impact the process of responding to forced migrants? How does political regimes enable or curtail the agency of different actors?

Panel: Elena Bacchin, Olof Blomqvist, Niro Kandasamy, Kamil Ruzsala.

Chair: TBA

12.30 – 13.30

Lunch

13.30 – 15.30

Session 6: Grappling with the present

This final session confronts the problem of the present for historical studies. How can scholars in refugee history respond to the current societal discourse of crisis and its dynamics? In responding to current societal discourses on refugees, what ethical considerations should scholars keep in mind to ensure responsible engagement with contemporary issues? How can scholars in refugee history contribute to shaping and influencing public perceptions? How to ensure a balance between drawing relevant connections to the present and preserving historical accuracy and integrity?

Panel: Michal Frankl, Susanne Lachenicht, Michael McDonnell.

Chair: Megan Maruschke.

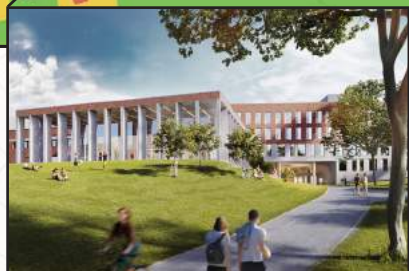
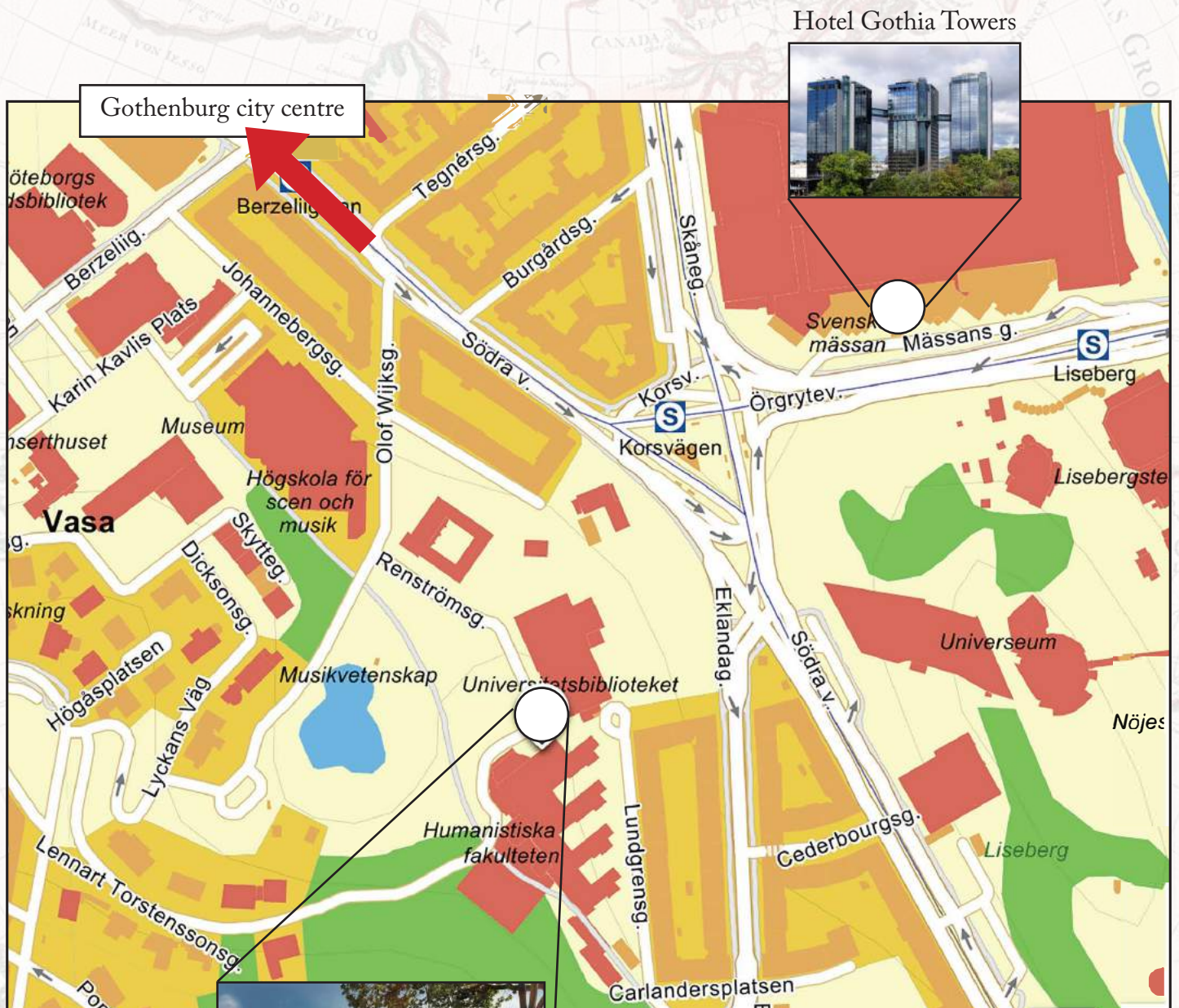
15.00 – 16.30

Coffee break and joint discussion

Chair: Sari Nauman.

Map

The workshop will take place at the Faculty of the Humanities, University of Gothenburg, where lunches will also be provided. All participants are accommodated at the Hotel Gothia Towers, which is a short walk from the hotel. If you're arriving by flight, you can easily take the flight bus to Gothenburg, with the first stop being Korsvägen (right in front of the hotel). The bus ride takes c. 20 minutes and you can purchase tickets from a vending machine at the airport or online prior to arrival. The city centre is within walking distance from the hotel. On May 2nd, we will meet you at the Hotel at 08.40 to guide you to the Faculty of the Humanities.



Faculty of the Humanities