

# Queering Indigeneity: Indigenous Queer Intersections in the Arctic

## Abstracts

### **Emerging visibility of Alaska Native LGBTQ(+) voices on the Internet**

Maureen P. Hogan, US

Though Queer Indigeneity is a growing field globally, I find no scholarly work that is Alaska Native-specific. What I do find is a minimum number of references on the Internet, mostly in sites highlighting art and advocacy for and by Alaska Native LGBTQ people. For example, in the art world, I found a book review of collected LGBTQ short fiction and poetry, even though only a few of the contributors are Alaska Native. In an Alaska news magazine, I unearthed a feature article about a young Native queer photographer and her recent work. I also discovered an on-line article about “queer-inclusive” Alaska Native artifacts, on loan to the Anchorage Museum from the Smithsonian. Moving on to advocacy, I found a website dedicated solely to Alaska Native GLBTQ youth, adults and healthcare workers, offering education, information and resources. The Juneau Empire, the capital’s newspaper, had one 532-word story about LGBTQ life from an Alaska Native perspective. A Facebook search yielded three possibly rich activist groups that may include AN queer voices. Though no scholarship is available, the Alaska Native queer community is slowly emerging in disperse electronic spaces. What I propose to do in this preliminary paper, using a grounded- theory approach (Glaser,) is a content analysis guided by “netography” (Martin,) in order to document and analyze the material described above for themes and patterns that may indicate the common issues important to their authors, audiences and curators.

### **Queering Indigeneity in Nordic Popular Culture: Media, Nature, Sexuality**

Katariina Kyrölä, Finland

The presentation introduces my forthcoming research project called *Queering Indigeneity in Nordic Popular Culture*. The project is located in the intersections of queer, posthumanist and indigenous feminisms and indigenous media studies. The project interrogates contemporary media imageries of Sámi people as well as Sápmi land in the context of Finland, Sweden and Norway, asking how such imageries raise and mobilize questions of indigeneity in relation to non-normative sexuality and gender. This presentation will consider the conceptual and political possibilities for a more thorough enmeshment of queer feminist thought with indigenous studies in Sámi research. What can queer and feminist indigenous studies conducted in other cultural contexts, such as North America, contribute to Sámi studies in a Nordic context – and vice versa? How to produce knowledge about media imageries of Sámi in an ethical way as a non-Sámi scholar - what problems and challenges does this pose from a decolonial queer feminist perspective?

### **An archaeology of research in queer indigenous existences in Siberia**

Stephan Dudeck, Russia/Finland

This paper tries to summarize the history of research on concepts of gender and sexuality among Siberian indigenous peoples, which differed from the western heteronormative paradigm. All ethnographic evidence about indigenous gender non-conform (from a present point of view) existences from Siberia we know seem to be more than 100 years old. To assess critically these materials is one important prerequisite for further research in queer indigenous existences in present day Siberia. Partly clearly informed by homophobic stereotypes and seen through the lens of evolutionist, eurocentric and sometimes racist concepts, the descriptions shed nevertheless a light on the everyday realities of indigenous subjects in the periphery of the Russian empire. The beginning of the 20ies century saw the rise of cultural and moral relativism under the influence of Boasian anthropology, which produced the most detailed descriptions of the life of transgender individual in

the Far East of Russia in the works of Bogoraz and Jochelson. Their Leningrad school of anthropology but also many indigenous cultural practices found a violent end during Stalinism at the end of the 1930ies. The proposed paper will systematise the available sources, reveal the underlying research paradigms and their limitations and try to develop starting points for further intersectional research in indigenous concepts of sexual and gender diversity.

### **Acknowledging existence as a necessity for reconciliation: Two spirit people, homelessness and access to services in urban centres in Saskatchewan, Canada**

Ranjan Datta and Ryan Jimmy, Canada

Homelessness in Canada is an increasing concern, particularly among queer identified youth in the Aboriginal population. Systemic barriers like racism, homophobia and transphobia that exist within institutions providing housing services lead to re-victimization of Aboriginal Two-Spirit peoples, placing this group at high risk. While Saskatchewan has tried to address homelessness in urban centres, these efforts have not addressed the high rates of homelessness among Two-Spirit peoples. This paper will discuss summary findings from the project “A scoping study of two spirit people, homelessness and access to services in urban centres in Saskatchewan, 2014” funded by the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network and conducted by a team from University of Saskatchewan’s Aboriginal Education Research Centre (AERC) in Canada. Following an Indigenous Cree and Queer research methodology, we conducted an environmental scan of services available for homeless Two-Spirit peoples in Saskatchewan, analyzing how notions of sexuality, gender, ethnicity, land, and class impact access to housing services. Findings of this paper reveals that survivance via reconciliation is essential between Indigenous peoples and the larger Canadian society, but within Aboriginal communities and marginalized community members. This paper concludes by suggesting that efforts must be made to include the two-spirit community as part of any reconciliation process.

### **Queering Indigenous self-determination in the Arctic**

Rauna Kuokkanen, Finland

In my paper, I argue that Indigenous self-determination efforts will not be successful (not to mention transformative) if they replicate the erasure of two-spirit, trans and queer Indigenous people. Drawing on Indigenous queer scholarship, I suggest that queering of Indigenous self-determination in the Arctic exposes how the normalizing logic of self-government which requires emulating Western political structures, institutions and discourses which are conceptualized and constructed as universal. My specific focus is on Greenland and Sápmi (the Sámi territory in Scandinavia). Queering Indigenous self-determination further entails moving beyond analyzing self-determination through the lens of the normalizing disciplines of political science or law to interrogate the normalizing logics of self-government and self-determination. In my paper, I also address gender diversity in many Indigenous societies. In this regard, queering exposes normative assumptions of the gender binary that erases 2SQ people by being limited to only two genders of men and women.

### **Decolonizing Queerness**

Stina Roos, Finland

Colonization has affected, along with everything else, our perception of gender and sexuality. How could we look at gender and sexuality from indigenous perspectives?

### **Queer events – queering the public**

Dávvet Bruun-Solbakk, Norway

Despite his young age Dávvet become an important voice for LGBTQ+ rights and the Sami culture. He was born in 1995 and grew up in Karasjok and Tana in Finnmark. In 2016 he led Sápmi Pride, which was initiated in Kautokeino, being a huge success. He is the head of Noereh, a Sámi youth organisation and resides in Oslo where he studies art.

## **Coming In: Cree cosmology, gender and sexual diversity**

Alex Wilson, CAN

This presentation will share an understanding of Cree cosmology and discuss its contemporary application in relation to gender and sexual diversity. I will offer a brief history of how the sexuality and bodies of Indigenous, specifically Cree two spirit (LGBTQ) people became regulated through governmental and church policy and discuss how the social movement Idle No More has validated traditional understandings and practices. Through research and examples, personal observations, stories and experiences, the meaning and importance of body sovereignty and gender self-determination and expression will be presented as necessary aspects of undoing systemic forms of oppression and revisioning as a positive 'coming in' process.