The question “What is the relationship between gender and sexuality?” is therefore, for me, ultimately ethnographic and historical rather than purely theoretical, because this relationship is itself possible only in historical and cultural contexts where “gender” and “sexuality” have come to be – and are able to be – conceptualized as distinct arenas of human experience. (David Valentine “The Categories Themselves”)

Dear members of the German Anthropological Association (GAA/DGSKA),

Dear Reader,

By means of this founding call, we would like to introduce ourselves and request your kind approval to form a Working Group on “Gender & Sexualities | Queer Anthropology” during the 2019 general assembly of the German Anthropological Association. We would also like to invite you cordially to our first meeting, which will take place right after the general assembly.

When and where?

Thursday, Oct. 1st, 2019, 1-2 pm (right after the general assembly)
Room D433, University of Konstanz (Snacks will be provided)

Why queer anthropology within the GAA/DGSKA?

As Gayle Rubin proclaimed in her seminal essay “Thinking Sex” in the mid-1980s, there are historical moments at which debates about gender and sexuality acquire a particular emotional intensity. At a time when Gender Studies programmes at European universities are under threat of being closed down and controversies about abortion, same-sex marriage and the #MeToo movement are triggering heated public debates, we consider it particularly important to come together and discuss our research on these themes both within anthropology and beyond disciplinary boundaries.

Scholarly networks on gender and sexuality or feminist/queer anthropology now form an integral part of many anthropological associations. The European Association for Social Anthropologists (EASA) established the “Network for the Anthropology of Gender and Sexuality” in 2009 and the “European Network for Queer Anthropology” in 2013. In both German-speaking universities and mainstream society there is a need for a more nuanced understanding of gender relations, body politics and sexualities that extends beyond a narrow Euro-American perspective. This is also becoming apparent in anthropology students’ increasing demand for seminars in this field of study.

Even though discussions about sexuality and cross-cultural considerations of gender relationships form important aspects of anthropological inquiry, these areas of expertise are barely institutionalized in the German-speaking academy, whether in the form of Chairs in the Anthropology of Gender and Sexuality or in departmental syllabuses. Moreover, the recently established subdiscipline of Queer Anthropology has questioned normative assumptions in ethnographic research, which has resulted in collaborative fieldwork designs, as well as innovative ways of representing anthropological knowledge. Queer anthropologists have also initiated a debate about methodological and ethical issues regarding anthropologists’ sexual desires and romantic relationships in the field. Taking up these impulses, our Working Group seeks to discuss and develop these concerns.
Whom we seek to address:

The idea to create a Working Group on “Gender & Sexualities | Queer Anthropology” first emerged during an anthropological workshop in 2018 with participants from different German-speaking institutions. We quickly identified a high level of demand for an institutionalized network to exchange thoughts and ideas, as well as relevant information. By establishing this Working Group, we aim to provide a platform for anthropologists working on these topics. In particular, we seek to address anthropologists who:

- conduct research on the topic of gender and sexualities, as well as their intersections with other categories of difference, such as race, ethnicity, age and dis/ability, in various settings and geographical regions.
- draw conceptually on queer and feminist theory, for instance, rethinking forms of ethno-graphic research and modes of representation.
- self-identify in terms of non-heteronormative sexualities and/or genders and, based on these identities, seek to reflect and engage their positionality in the field and in scholarship.

We hope to initiate a vivid exchange between scholars of different academic levels, which is also why we explicitly encourage students and early career scholars to come forward and contribute to this Working Group with their interests, ideas and concerns.

Our aims:

- By organizing regular meetings and panels in the context of the GAA/DGSKA conference (and preferably also on other occasions), we aim to exchange and publicly debate our research outcomes and questions.
- In collaboration with similar associations in Europe, it is also our aim to foster international research co-operations and debates, e.g. by organizing workshops, conferences and summer schools.
- A mailing list will provide members of the Working Group with information about relevant conferences, research projects, new publications and open positions in the area of the Anthropology of Gender and Sexualities/ Queer Anthropology.
- Through social media, we seek to inform both a scholarly and a wider audience about the outcomes of our members' research projects, as well as engaging in public debates on the topic of gender and sexualities with reference to empirical findings.
- Finally, we hope that the establishment of a Working Group on “Gender & Sexualities | Queer Anthropology” will consolidate the position of this relevant research field within the discipline of social and cultural anthropology in the German-speaking context.

How to contact us:

E-mail: queeranthro.dgska@gmail.com

Looking forward to meeting you in Konstanz,

Dr. Susanne Hofmann, London School of Economics
Dr. Omar Kasmani, FU Berlin
Lotte Knote, FU Berlin
Anne Kukuczka, Universität Zürich
PD Dr. Claudia Liebelt, Universität Bayreuth
Ursula Probst, FU Berlin
Max Schnepf, FU Berlin
Dr. Viola Thimm, Universität Hamburg