

Re-Assembling Democracy: Ritual as Cultural Resource 'Indigenous rituals and democracy', REDO Report, October 2015

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Status on Redo Research

Field work for the project shifted from the annual Riddu Riddu festival to the biennial Origins Festival this year. I had intended to widen my fieldwork related to Sami organised festivals to visit the Isogaisa festival near Tromsø. However, the timing of an important conference (IAHR) required re-thinking of my schedule. I used some REDO funding to support my participation in the conference of the Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAISA) conference in Washington DC, USA, in May. This enabled me to visit and talk with curators at the Smithsonian's Museum of the American Indian, thereby developing my understanding of indigenous perspectives and practice in relation to cultural and inter-cultural display. Happily, the Origins festival took place in June, bringing indigenous performers, speakers, and others to London. Participation in this festival has enriched my understanding of the intentions, perspectives, activities and networking of indigenous performers. It has also resulted in at least one short film that is shortly to be made available for open access, global viewing. This opens conversation about the key themes of my research. Further films (funded by the Open University) will be used for teaching in a module currently in production. My plan to participate in Isogaisa in 2016 to complete fieldwork concerned with Sami organised events.

Conferences

I presented my REDO research at the following conference presentations:

"Indigenous performances in the UK: ceremony or entertainment?", British Association for the Study of Religions conference, Canterbury, UK, September 2015

"Indigenous cultural events, sovereignty and inter-species relations" joint Contemporary Pagan Studies and Ritual Studies panel, American Academy of Religion conference, San Diego, USA, November 2014

Publications

An article provisionally entitled "Indigenising in a globalised world: the seeding of belonging to lands" is in preparation for a special issue of the journal *Worldviews* focussing on the interdisciplinary spatial turn. Further publications for REDO books and journal issues are planned for writing in 2016-17.

Teaching

The Religious Studies department at the Open University is currently developing a new Level 2 module and elements of my REDO research will feed into that material, e.g. discussing indigenous (Mayan and Totonac) rituals underlying or within cultural performances.

Plans

My continuing interest in "the new animism", which informs my REDO contribution, will result in conference presentations at the American Anthropological Association (Nov 2015) and that of the International Society for the Study of Religion, Culture and Nature (Jan 2016) and further events. These will be developed for publication. A final fieldwork visit to Sapmi in 2016 will enable me to talk with the Riddu Riddu festival organisers and, possibly, to compare that festival with the Isogaisa shamans festival.