

The Sociology of

SEXUALITIES

June 1998

Section Newsletter

Chair:

Steven Seidman
Dept. of Sociology
SUNY-Albany
Albany, NY 12222
ss@cnsvox.albany.edu

Chair-Elect:

Secretary/Treasurer:

Melissa L. Herbert
Dept. of Sociology
Hamline University
Box 1630, Hewitt Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55104
mherbert@piper.hamline.edu

Newsletter Editor:

Emilia Lombardi
DARC-UCLA
1100 Glendon Ave, #763
LA, CA 90024
elomb@earthlink.net

Council:

Gil Zicklin
Jodi O'Brien
Peter Nardi
Tracy E. Ore
Stuart Michaels
Julia Ericksen

Graduate Student

Council Members:
Steven Kurtz
Sharon Preves

Membership

Committee:
Marianne Cutler
Jessica Fields

Nominating

Committee:
Rebecca Plante
Nancy Stoller
David Whittier

Program

Committee:
Jodi O'Brien
Vera Whisman
Steve Seidman

Election Results

The section has suffered an unfortunate loss. Vera Whisman resigned from as Chair-Elect and won't be serving as the section chair for the coming year. As such, the section officers for the coming year are:

Chair:
Arlene Stein

Chair-Elect:
Valerie Jenness

Section Council:
Donald Barrett
Christy Ponticelli

Council, Graduate Student Member:
Lionel Cantu
Christine Robinson

Meeting Information

Our section is co-hosting a reception with the LGBT caucus. At this point in time the information we have is that it is going to be held at Chris Carrington's home Saturday, Aug. 22nd from 4pm-7pm. Further details will be made available at the time of the conference.

Also, the section council and business meeting is going to be held on Sunday, Aug. 23rd from 4:30pm-6:15pm. Please remember to attend.

I also want to announce to the section membership that this will be the last newsletter I will edit. The activities within my post-doctoral fellowship precludes the time necessary to put together the newsletter. I want to thank Steven Seidman and countless others who have helped me in putting together the section newsletter.

Sexuality and Social Structure

Social structure has always been an important concept within Sociology. Many classical theorists we have read have examined social structure and how it could affect people's lives. However, these theorists have not dealt with how sexuality could also be influenced by the larger social structure. The question is how sexuality related issues are linked to the larger economy or other structures with society? Are issues of identity and other micro-processes taking precedence over structural issues in sociology? How can sociology best deal with linking sexuality to societal structures?

Forthcoming as "Theorising Homophobia" in the new journal, *Sexualities*.

By Barry Adam

Though anthropological research has not, until very recently, addressed in any systematic way the social organization of emotional and erotic same-sex bonding, it remains perhaps the most important collection of recorded observations that goes beyond the confines of western behaviors and beliefs. While a good deal of traditional anthropological references to homosexuality have been marred by ethnocentrism and moralism, these observations provide one of the richest sources for cross-cultural comparison and for the development of a sense of the fundamental cultural patterns defining kinship, gender, and sexuality. Structural theories, epitomized in the work of Claude Levi-Strauss, promised to describe the immense variability of human arrangements by a few basic paradigms, an objective that has come under heavy fire by poststructuralist critics as impossibly reductive and presumptuous. In the study of homoeroticism, the structuralist project had barely begun when poststructuralism started to move it aside, yet the potential has yet to be realized for insights into ways in which particular social arrangements of sexuality, gender, and indeed, politics and economy 'hang together' in coherent cultural forms. In terms of this paper, structuralist theories offer understanding of ways in which same-sex emotional and sexual bonding, and its opposition, inhere in particular social arrangements.

Karen Paige and Jeffery Paige's (1981) *The Politics of Reproductive Ritual* offers one of the best statements of a structuralist argument for the cultural articulation of sexuality. While neither Levi-Strauss nor the Paiges have much to say about same-sex bonding and the scholarly work of drawing their analytic strategies to understanding homosexuality has yet to be done, there are many suggestive linkages contained in their work. The Paiges review a wide range of social practices and rites around circumcision, menarche, incest, and virginity to find significant variation according to whether societies are

organized around 'weak' or 'strong fraternal interest groups.' Weak fraternal interest groups, according to the Paiges, are more often found in societies with little capital, property, or inheritance, that are dependent on foraging and more often matrilineal or matrilocal. These societies, compared to those with strong fraternal interest groups, more often show a high valuation of female reproductive potential, have public ceremonies centered around menarche, prefer evidence of fertility over virginity, and have little concern with circumcision. Strong fraternal interest groups, on the other hand, more often characterize pastoral and settled agrarian societies with patrilineal kinship systems. These societies have rituals that show greater concern with circumcision, safeguarding of female virginity, and patriarchal control over female reproductive power. Though this is not a correlation drawn by the Paiges, it is worth noting how frequently same-sex bonding takes the 'berdache,' 'two-spirited,' or transgendered form in societies with weak fraternal interest groups where gender fluidity, gender mixing, or gender migration appears to be possible for some men and a few women (Levy 1971; Callender and Kochems 1983; Williams 1986). Where male sexual bonding appears in societies with strong fraternal interest groups, it typically takes the form of hierarchical, military, age-graded, and mentor/acolyte relationships, where adult men who exercise control over women's bodies, also assume sexual rights over younger, subordinate males (Dover 1978; Herdt 1984; Adam 1985a; Halperin 1990). For young men of the privileged social class (unlike women), these relationships are a temporary way-station or apprenticeship on the way to full adult privilege. There are also a few west African examples of women, typically with sufficient wealth to pay bride price, who take wives and thus assume a male location in the traffic of women (Amadiume 1980). Some historians have detected a tendency among age-graded homosexual forms to give way over time to gender-inscribed systems in both Europe (Trumbach 1989) and Japan (Leupp 1996). Gender-inscribed systems, where same-sex desires and practices tend to flow across a boundary separating men, and some women, into 'active' and 'passive' quasi-genders, are widespread in Latin American and Islamic societies (Murray 1995; Murray and Roscoe 1997). Modern gay and lesbian worlds take another form that differentiates them from other systems of same-sex affiliation: 1. In societies where kinship has declined as a primary organizing principle determining the survival and well-being of their members, homosexual relations have developed autonomous forms apart from dominant heterosexual family strictures. 2. Exclusive homosexuality has become increasingly possible for both partners and a ground for household formation. 3. Same-sex bonds have developed relatively egalitarian forms characterized by age and gender 'endogamy' rather than involving people in differentiated age and gender classes. 4. People have come to discover each other and form large-scale social networks because of their homosexual interests and not only in the context of pre-existing social relationships (such as households, neighborhoods, schools, militaries, churches, etc). 5. Homosexuality has come to be a social

formation unto itself characterized by self-awareness and group identity (Adam 1995:7). These developments are clearly associated with the rise of the modern world-system and modernity.

Structural theories suggest that social constructions of gender and sexuality are variable but still anchored in larger socio-logics. Sexuality is structured, regulated, and shaped in all societies, and the vast majority of the evidence about sexual formations from the anthropological and historical research literature falls into a handful of patterns. Human eroticism appears to arise at a limited number of structural sites, most obviously across gender binaries, but also at predictable social fault-lines defined by age, kinship, and the division of labor. This is not to claim that everyone experiences sexual interest in socially normative ways, but it is noteworthy that socially 'deviant' attractions and bonding are not simply chaotic exceptions to socially institutionalized forms but rather also show structurally limited patterns and variations.

References

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- Paige, Karen and Jeffery Paige (1981) *The Politics of Reproductive Ritual*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Trumbach, Randolph (1989) 'Gender and the homosexual role in modern western culture' in Dennis Altman et al. (eds.) *Homosexuality, Which Homosexuality?* London: GMP.

Williams, Walter (1986) *The Spirit and the Flesh*. Boston: Beacon Press.

ASA

Friday, August 21st

12:30pm-2:30pm

61. Regular Session. *Gay Men and AIDS: The Next Generation*
Organizer: Beth E. Schneider, University of California, Santa Barbara
President: Steven Epstein, University of California, San Diego.

Gay Youth's Sexual Stories: Learning about Sex and AIDS.
Matt Mutchler, University of California, Santa Barbara.

Contextualizing Survey Research: "Negotiated Safety" and the Sexual Behaviors of Men Who Have Sex with Men in South Beach. William W. Darrow, Robert D. Webster, Steven P. Kurtz, and Abraham K. Buckley, Florida International University.

The Politics of Silence: Communicative Rules and HIV Prevention Issues in Gay Male Bathhouses. William N. Elwood and Mark L. Williams, University of Texas, Houston.

6:30pm

LGBT Caucus business meeting

Saturday, August 22nd

8:30am -10:30am

123. Regular Session. *Gay and Lesbian Studies: Discourses on and the Consequences of Human Sexuality*
Organizer: Leon E. Pettitway, Indiana University, Bloomington
President: Paula C. Rust, Hamilton College and State University of New York, Geneseo

Constructing Differences, Subordinating Subjects: Social Science Discourses on Latino Homosexualities. Israel Cardona, Columbia-Greene Community College

Discourses on Transgenderism: Dichotomy vs. Continuum. Jan Wickman, Abo Akademi University, Finland

A Longitudinal Test of the Generalizations about Lesbians, Social Class, Feminism, and Butch and Fem. Sara L. Crawley, University of Florida

Purifying the Nation: Increasing State Control of Prostitution and Homosexuality in Britain and the Netherlands in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries. Paula A.N. Frederick, Harvard University

The Troubled Career of an "Ex-Gay" Healer: Colin Cook
Seventh-day Adventists and the Christian Right. Ronald
Lawson, Queens College, City University of New York

Discussion: Paula C. Rust, Hamilton College and State
University of New York, Geneseo

10:30-12:30

138. Special Session. Lesbian and Gay Inequality and
Social Policy to Address Inequality (co-sponsored by the
Sociologists' Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered
Caucus)

Organizer: David Knapp Whittier, University of Houston
Presider: Stephen O. Murray, Instituto Obregon

Chasing Rainbows: Americans, Queers, and U.S. Immigra-
tion Policy. Lionel Cantu, University of California, Irvine

Having Just Broken the Water Pitcher: State, Place, and
Cruising the Parks. John Hollister, State University of New
York, Binghamton

The Effects of Antidiscrimination Policies on Earnings for
Same-Sex Couples. Marieka Klawitter, University of Wash-
ington

"Talking the Talk and Walking the Walk": Explaining Gay-
Inclusive Policies in the Corporate Workplace. Nicole
Raeburn and Verta A. Taylor, The Ohio State University

Measuring Lesbian and Gay Political Power in the United
States. Kenneth Sherrill, Hunter College, City University of
New York

Discussion: Mary Bernstein, Arizona State University

4:00pm-7:00pm

Sociology of Sexuality section/LGBT Caucus Reception

**Sunday, August 23rd
10:30-12:30**

255. Open Refereed Roundtables
Organizer: Bruce W. Bellingham, Florida State University

4. Gay and Lesbian Studies

Exploring the (A)Political Nature of Gay Fraternities and Its
Implication for the Gay Liberation Movement. King-To Young
and Mindy Stompler, Texas Tech University

The Quest for Pregnancy: Lesbian Experiences with
Donor Insemination. Laura Mamo, University of California,
San Francisco

Experience versus Meaning: Interpreting Sexual Intimacy
as Being Lesbian. Kristen Miller, University of Delaware

5. Gay and Lesbian Studies II

Extraordinary Desire: Self-Identities of Women Who Love
Women in India. Paola Bacchetta, University of Kentucky

Sexual Identity: Truth and Consequences. Gilbert Zicklin,
Montclair State University

The Transcendent Ideal of Heterosexuality: In-church De-
bates over Same-Sex Marriage. Dawne Moon, University
of Chicago

A Group of Lesbians Who...: Expressions and Dimensions
of a Lesbian Community. Tiffany Hogan, Rhode Island Public
Health Foundation; and Karen A. Holler, Bradley Hospital

272. Section on Sociology of Sexualities. Contemporary
Perspectives on the Study of Sexualities: Significance,
Obstacles, Directions
Organizer and Presider: Jodi O'Brien, Seattle University

Panel: Tomas Almaguer, University of Michigan
Wendy Chapkis, University of Southern Maine
Steven Seidman, State University of New York, Albany
Ken Plummer, University of Essex, England
Discussion: Vera Whistman, Hobart and William Smith Col-
lege

2:30pm-4:30pm

300. Section on Sociology of Sexualities. Cross-Cultural
Sexualities: National and Global Practices
Organizer and Presider: Peter M. Nardi, Pitzer College

Raging Hormones, Regulated Love: Adolescent Sexuality
and the Constitution of the Modern Individual in the U.S.
and the Netherlands. Amy Schalet, University of California,
Berkeley

Attitudes toward Non-Marital Sex in 24 Countries. Eric D.
Widmer, Judith Treas, and Robert L. Newcomb, University
of California, Irvine

Chinese Discos: Global Sexual Culture and Local Sexual
Practice. James Farrer, University of Chicago

Some Aspects of the Organization and Experience of Ho-
mosexual Prostitution in Belgium. John Vincki, University
of Gent, Belgium

Deconstructing the Phallocracy: Rethinking Circumcision and
Gender. Daniel M. Harrison, Florida State University

4:30pm-5:30pm

Section on Sociology of Sexualities Council Meeting

5:30pm-6:15pm

Section on Sociology of Sexualities Business Meeting

6:30pm-8:30pm

Sociologists' Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Caucus Community Activist Panel

**Tuesday, August 25th
8:30am-10:30am**

479. Section on Sociology of Sex and Gender. Refereed Roundtables on Sex and Gender
Organizers: Carrie Y. Lee, Vanderbilt University; and Kate Linnenberg, Northwestern University

18. Gender and Sexuality

Table Discussant: Mindy Stompler, Texas Tech University

Constructing the Female Orgasm: A View from Goffman. Lara Foley and Chris A. Faircloth, University of Florida

10:30am-12:30pm

501. Section on Sociology of Emotions. Refereed Roundtables:
Bridging the Gap of Methods and Subfield
Organizers: Jerold Heiss, University of Connecticut; and Lyn Lofland, University of California, Davis

2. Emotion and Sexualities

Table Organizer/Presider: Christy Ponticelli, University of South Florida

Inside Outside: Emotions and Bodies. Terese Scherzer, University of California, San Francisco

When Age and Illness Converge: A View of Sexuality among Prostate Cancer Patients and Their Partners. Michael Arrington, University of South Florida

2:30pm-4:30pm

524. Section on Sociology of Sex and Gender. Sexuality in the Military (co-sponsored by the Section on Peace and War) Organizer and Presider: Lynda J. Ames, State University of New York, Plattsburgh

Without Certain Inalienable Rights: A Critical Evaluation of Sexuality in the U.S. Army. Justin Bower and Denise Scott, State University of New York, Geneseo

Gender and Sexual Orientation Diversity in Modern Military Forces: Cross-National Patterns. David R. Segal and Bradford Booth, University of Maryland, College Park

Discussion: Melissa S. Herbert, Hamline University; and Laura L. Miller, University of California, Los Angeles

SSSP

**Thursday, August 20th
12:30pm-2:15pm**

Session 16: Sexual Behavior, Politics, and Communities Division
Adolescent Behavior and Sexual Decision-Making Processes
Organizer: Lloyd Klein, Medgar Evers College
Presider and Discussant: J. Michael Cruz, Texas Woman's University

Graduate Student Paper Competition Winner (TBA)

Social Policies Directly and Indirectly Affecting Teenage Sexual Behavior in Finland:
Implications for Scotland and the USA, Alison Hosie, University of Stirling

The role of Alcohol and Illicit Drugs in Adolescent Sexual Initiation, Thoroddur Bjarnason, University of Notre Dame

Factors Influencing Virginity Lost Prior to High School Graduation, Martin Barron, State University of New York-Stony Brook

The Dialectics Between Collectivistic Communities and Individuality: Narratives of Gay Kibbutzim, Adital Tirosh Ben-Ari, University of Haifa

Friday, August 21st

9:00am-10:45am

Session 30: Sexual Behavior, Politics, and Communities Division
Sex/Gender/Desire Identities and Social Change
Organizer and Presider: PJ McGann, St. Lawrence University
Discussant: Henry Rubin, Committee on Degrees in Social Studies

HIV Risks Among Male to Female Transgenders within Hollywood, CA, Cathy J. Reback, Van Ness Prevention Division and Emilia L. Lombardi, University of California-Los Angeles

Transgender Politics: A Challenge to the Binary Gender System? Jan Wickman, Abo Akademi University, Abo Finland

Transgendered Bisexuals: An Identity Quadri-lemma, Paula C. Rust, SUNY-Geneseo

11:00am-12:45pm

Sexual Behavior, Politics and Communities Business meeting

1:00pm-2:45pm

Session 49: Family Division and Sexual Behavior, Politics, and Communities Division
Family Dynamics, Sexuality, and Health
Organizer and Presider: Leah Robin, Center for Disease Control
Discussant: TBA

Power Dynamics, Sexual Decision-Making and Condom Use: The Influence of Relative Resources and the Intra-Household Economy, Kara S. Riffman and Noella Dietz, Florida State University

Adolescent Sexual Behavior in Two Minority Samples: The Role of Family Variables, Kim Miller, Center for Disease Control, Beth Kotchick, University of Georgia and Rex Forehand, University of Georgia

Family Integration, Conflict, and the Emotional Well-being of Non-kin HIV-AIDS Caregivers, Andrew S. London, Kent State University and Laura Nichols, University of Akron

Saturday, August 22nd

2:30pm-4:15pm

Session 30: Sexual Behavior, Politics, and Communities Division Transformation of Sexuality and Sexual Expression
Organizer: Lloyd Klein, Medgar Evers College
Presider and Discussant: Alison Hosie, University of Stirling

Bureaucratizing Seductions: McDonaldizing the Sex Industry, Sexuality, and Post-Modernism, Kate Hausbeck and Barbara Brents, University of Nevada – Las Vegas

Technological Expressions of Masculinity and Male Sexuality, Andrew Harper, University of Nevada – Las Vegas

The Imperfect Match: Serial Sexual Incompatibilities on Daytime Talk Shows, Lloyd Klein, Medgar Evers College

International Accords and Domestic Criminal Law: Ghana's Abortion Law as it Exists Vis-à-vis the Cairo UNESCO Conference on Population Development, Ishmael Kofi Turkson, F.M.A. and Associates

Birkenstocks in the Bottom Drawer: Lesbian Identity and Workplace Strategy, Kathleen Asbury

Announcements

University of Kansas Gay and Lesbian Academic and Staff Advocates and Queers and Allies: LesBiGayTrans Services of Kansas are co-sponsoring AND JUSTICE FOR ALL, a weekend conference on university/college policies in Kansas regarding sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, on November 7 and 8, 1998.

The conference program will include workshops, presentations, and panel discussions on domestic partnership policies; non-discrimination policies; anti-harassment policies; academic freedom; campus hate crimes; a queer mentoring program; queer curriculum issues; federal, state, and city legislation which affect colleges and universities; and other issues affecting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in higher education. Dr. Sue Rankin, Coordinator of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Equity at Pennsylvania State University and the National LGBT Campus Directors liaison to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, will be the keynote speaker.

The conference will be held at the University of Kansas in Lawrence and has a target audience of faculty, staff, and students in Kansas and across the Midwest.

PRE-REGISTRATION for the conference is FREE - the deadline to pre-register is: October 15, 1998. To find out more about the conference, including registration, child care, community housing, and the schedule of presentations, visit the website at <http://www.turnleft.com/conference> or contact Christine Robinson, Conference Chair, at the address, phone, or e-mail below.

Christine Robinson
Department of Sociology
University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS 66045
785/ 841-0992
robinson@falcon.cc.ukans.edu