Statement by the Chair

Dear Section Members,

Happy New Year! 2012 was an exciting year in terms of section activities, marked in particular by the very first sexualities mini-conference at the Denver meetings, Crossing Boundaries, a remarkable event that was attended by nearly two hundred of our section members, including eighty-eight faculty and one hundred and five graduate students (twenty four of whom received scholarships to help defray costs). Special thanks again to Mary Bernstein, to the members of the conference steering committee, and to the event’s institutional sponsors and funders (the ASA’s Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline Award was crucial) for making this landmark event happen. Papers from the conference’s thematic working groups will be published shortly in the sexualities section newsletter. In the meantime, visit http://www2.asanet.org/sectionsex/crossingboundaries/, the archived site.

As sociologists of sexuality, this year also provided us with many intriguing opportunities to reflect upon the changing and complex landscape of sexual politics. In the U.S., 2012 was of course a major election year, which meant that themes of gender and sexuality would again cycle to the forefront of national political debates, with battles over contraception, abortion, rape, and gay marriage coming to occupy center-stage. In contrast to the 2004 elections, when a similar wave of “culture wars” issues was successfully deployed by the political Right and helped to catapult President Bush to reelection, this time voters largely cast their ballots on behalf of a liberal-Democratic sexual agenda. Most strikingly, they voted on behalf of the passage of laws allowing same-sex marriage in three additional states: Washington, Maryland, and Maine. At the same time, conservative congressmen such as Todd Akin (who made some of the most egregious statements against women’s reproductive freedoms during the election season) were voted out of office.

Though many of us celebrated these events as political victories, I think it is also important to reflect upon their meaning at broader sociological and cultural levels. For starters, it is interesting to behold how quickly some aspects of sexual politics have changed in just a few short years. Consider, for example, Thomas Frank’s influential 2004 book, What’s the Matter with Kansas, which circulated widely in sociological circles and beyond. Following the 2004 elections, Frank argued that the so-called culture wars (in particular, battles over abortion and gay marriage) had been vital to getting the disenfranchised working classes to vote against their own class interests. Yet curiously, a mere eight years later, the very same issues would come to circulate politically as losing issues for conservative constituencies. This time around, it was Mitt Romney and other Republicans who repeatedly sought to shift attention back to “the economy” and away from now “politically divisive” questions of gender and sexuality.

In 2004, many critiqued Frank’s “false consciousness” thesis by arguing that there is in fact a complex interrelationship between sexual and economic issues (noting, for example, the ways in which “family values” may provide a bulwark against a decimated welfare state, one which liberal Democrats have also done too little to mend). So too now, we ought to consider the myriad ways in which sexual politics and economic politics have come to mesh and intertwine in the contemporary moment. We might ask ourselves, for example, which particular versions of sexual freedom are likely to become ascendant when more expansive visions of gender, racial, and economic justice and social equality are increasingly receding from reach.

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We might further consider the complexity of sexual and economic intersections by contemplating questions such as the following:

- With the “fiscal cliff” now averted, future budget negotiations are nonetheless likely to reduce state benefits for poor, working, and middle class people while protecting the assets of the wealthy. What will the effects of such policies ultimately be upon people living without access to the privatized care networks of (gay or straight) nuclear families? Can we stretch our political imaginations to go “beyond marriage” in terms of the recognition of diverse kinship arrangements and the provision of support for multiple forms of intimacy?

- Within the next four years, immigration reform is likely to reappear on the political agenda. Yet immigration laws in the U.S. are premised on family ties, and defined in terms of heterosexual nuclear families. In this way, policies determining national citizenship are implicitly organized around a particular configuration of intimacy and sexuality. Will this basic familialist premise be up for renegotiation as different policy alternatives are debated?

- Is it possible to think beyond carceral responses to sexual violence, which have become political second nature with hate crimes laws, anti-trafficking measures, and punitive policies against “sex offenders”? In the current era of mass incarceration, how can we separate our struggles for social justice from the expanding domain of criminal justice? These are also pivotal questions to consider globally, as the multivalent protests and debates around the devastating rape of a 23-year old medical student in Delhi recently revealed.

- How can we think about sexual inequalities and other forms of social inequalities in intersectional ways? Given the 2008 financial crisis and its aftermath, how might we connect the reallocation of various forms of capital, state agendas of incarceration and social control, the politics of immigration, labor, and housing, and emergent forms of sexual regulation?

While there are no easy answers to these questions, their scholarly and political pursuit has, I believe, never been more pressing. I look forward to the contributions of our sections members to deciphering these and other issues in the year to come.

With best wishes to all,

Elizabeth Bernstein
Chair, Sociology of Sexualities Section, ASA

http://www2.asanet.org/sectionsex/
http://www.crossing-boundaries.org/
http://www.facebook.com/sociologyofsex

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Request from Chair-Elect, Salvador Vidal-Ortiz to Reach Membership Milestone

I am writing to you during the early stages of the ASA membership for 2013 and asking for your support in increasing the membership to the Section on the Sociology of Sexuality of ASA. I am the Chair-elect of the Section on the Sociology of Sexualities and I will begin my role as Chair right after the NYC meetings, in 2013, following the wonderful steps and programming set up by Elizabeth Bernstein. (It will be an amazing ASÃ annual meeting this year! You can't miss NYC!) As part of my duties, I will be in charge of the programming for ASA 2014 in San Francisco. Because the ASA calculates sessions for the annual conference of a given year based on the previous year's membership, I want to ask for your support. Please, consider joining the Section on the Sociology of Sexualities now, so that we can have an initial boost in the number of members in early 2013. (Continued on page 4.)

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4 See, for example, http://www.asianage.com/columnists/rape-death-349.
5 For an intriguing activist statement that explores some of these linkages, see Why Are Sex Workers And Their Allies Occupying Wall Street? (http://www.bestpracticespolicy.org/OWS20111.html).
This Section

In the last decade or so, the study of sexuality has emerged as a vibrant interdisciplinary field of social analysis. For many years, sexuality was approached as an individual, biological or psychological phenomena. Today, the idea of sexuality as a social fact or construction is the point of departure for much of the most exciting scholarship in the area...

Sections are an important mechanism for getting out information about our specialty area... Section status also affords a variety of institutional supports from the ASA, including funding for information dissemination and a guaranteed number of paper sessions at the annual conference.

In short, we believe it is in the best interests of the discipline of sociology to advance the sociological study of sexuality. One way to promote this goal is to support the... "Sociology of Sexualities" as an ASA section and to encourage you to join... when you renew your membership in the ASA.

Text written by Steve Seidman, Gil Zicklin, and Mark Hager

The Purpose

The purpose of the Section on the Sociology of Sexualities is to encourage, enhance and foster research, teaching and other professional activities in the sociology of sexuality, for the development of sociology and the benefit of society, through organized meetings, conferences, newsletters, publications, awards, and other means deemed appropriate by the Section Council.

The Section seeks to promote communication, collaboration, and consultation among scholars in sociology, the sociology of sexualities, and allied disciplines.

Officers for 2013-14

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108th American Sociological Association Meeting in New York

The 108th American Sociological Association annual meeting, “Interrogating Inequality: Linking Macro and Micro” will be held from August 10-13, 2013 at the Hilton New York and Sheraton New York in New York, NY. The 2013 Online Paper Submission System will be open until January 9th.

President Cecilia Ridgeway and the 2013 Program Committee have been working on an exciting program that will include more than 600 individual sessions on everything from the latest and greatest books in the field, section roundtables, and countless other topics. Here are some exciting Author Meets Critics sessions Sexualities section members can look forward to:

- **Counted Out: Same-Sex Relations and American's Definitions of Family** (Russell Sage, 2010) by Brian Powell, Catherine Bolzendahl, Claudia Geist, and Lala Carr Steelman. Critics include Shirley A. Hill, Nancy J. Mezey, Wendy Diane Manning and Ellen Lewin.


Key Dates

February 7-10, 2013. Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS) in Santa Ana Pueblo, NM. (www.socwomen.org)


March 21-24, 2013. Pacific Sociological Association (PSA) in Reno, NV. (www.pacificsoc.org)


April 4-7, 2013. North Central Sociological Association (NCSA) in Indianapolis, IN. (www.ncsanet.org)

April 17-20, 2013. Southern Sociological Society (SSS) in Atlanta, GA. (www.southernsociologicalsociety.org)


Request from Chair-Elect (continued)

In 2011, we reached the 500 membership milestone. This past year, we were very close to that number. I'd like to get your push early on in the membership window, so that come September 30th of next year, we have 600 members. Yep - 600 is our new goal!

Why now? Why is this important? How will this impact you?

Besides it being another milestone, it will increase our section sessions, our funding, and our visibility as a section. ASA calculates the number of sessions by the membership base, which initiates in November-December of the previous year's membership and ends September 30th for the actual year when memberships are counted.

With 400 members, the section gets 3 sessions/panels, plus the roundtables (which we allocate in part of the business/council meeting time). But the next level for another panel, more funding, and more visibility, is 600. We have been around 500 twice in a row; we clearly can, through a serious campaign, recruit others interested in learning more about our section.

Moreover, most of us collaborate and develop research in conversation with other sections. Our section has often made links to sex/gender, social movements, medical sociology, newer sections such as Body and Embodiment, and work with non-ASA sections and other units such as the Caucus on Transnational Approaches to Gender and Sexuality, and the LGBT Caucus. We can expand our network to address more of the connections our members have with various sections, and strengthen our ties to those with whom we already work. Over the past 10 years, I have supported the section in bringing workshops (not only to or through the Sexualities section, but also through ASA) with thematic and special sessions like Queer Utopias; Sociology in Sexuality, Sexuality in Sociology; Sexuality, Culture, and Migration: the Life Work of Lionel Cantú; and Transnational genders and sexualities in religious contexts. I seek to expand the panels to more fully address our membership's needs, and hope to have more of an international exposure in our programming.

In sum, our section needs your support:

- Sponsor a student.
- Suggest joining the Sexualities section to a colleague over coffee.
- Send this newsletter, highlighting this request, to your Department's listserv.
- Persuade interested people to become members as soon as possible.
- Share the latest newsletter or share the link to our website (http://www2.asanet.org/sectionsex/information.html) with colleagues.
- Tell them about the wonderful work done at the Workshopping Sexualities pre-conference (http://www2.asanet.org/sectionsex/crossingboundaries/) and at the ASA conference itself.

Kudos!

Eric Grollman recently accepted a tenure-track position in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Richmond beginning in August 2013! Congrats, Eric!

If you have something you’d like to announce or someone you’d like to recognize in the next newsletter, please email clm73@stanford.edu with that information.
Sociology of Sexualities Section Award Nomination Announcements

2013 Simon-Gagnon Lifetime Achievement Award

The Simon and Gagnon Award honors career contributions to the study of sexualities as represented by a body of work or a single book. This award commemorates decades of research and writing on sexualities by Professor William Simon (University of Houston) who died on July 21, 2000, and his longtime collaborator, Professor John Gagnon (SUNY-Stony Brook). The winner will receive the award at the annual meeting of the ASA in New York City in 2013. Nominations must include a letter that details how the nominee has made a significant contribution to the field of the sociology of sexualities. Nominations without such a letter will not be considered.

Please submit letters of nomination via email to: Kristen Schilt, kschilt@uchicago.edu

Deadline for nominations is February 1, 2013.

2013 Distinguished Article Award

A prize for the best article in the Sociology of Sexualities published in the 2011 through 2012 calendar years. Chapters in edited volumes will also be considered. Winner(s) will receive the award at the annual meeting of the ASA in New York City in August 2013. Articles/chapters may be self-nominated or nominated by another scholar.

If you wish to nominate an article/chapter, please send a brief nomination letter and an electronic copy of the article to: Salvador Vidal-Ortiz, vidalort@american.edu. Please do not send hard copies.

Deadline for nominations is March 15, 2013.

2013 Best Graduate Student Paper

Papers are currently being accepted for the 2012 American Sociological Association's Sociology of Sexualities' Graduate Student Paper Award. This award is given to a paper authored by a student currently enrolled in a sociology graduate program. A paper may be coauthored by two or more students who would share the award. Papers co-authored with faculty are not eligible. The focus of the paper should be sexualities broadly defined. Winner(s) will receive the award at the annual meeting of the ASA in New York City in 2013.

Papers should be manuscript length and no longer than 35 typed, double-spaced pages. Self-nominations will be accepted. Please send a letter of nomination and a copy of the paper (PDF or Word format) via email to: Amin Ghaziani, amin.ghaziani@ubc.ca and Carla Pfeffer, cpfeffer@purdue.edu

The deadline for nominations is February 1, 2013.

2013 Martin P. Levine Memorial Dissertation Fellowship

The Martin Levine Memorial Dissertation Award was established to honor the memory of Martin Levine, who died of AIDS in 1993. It provides $3,000 to a graduate student (and $500 to an honorable mention) in the final stages of dissertation research and writing, who is working on those topics to which Levine devoted his career: 1) the sociology of sexualities, 2) the sociology of homosexuality, and 3) HIV/AIDS research. It is designed to help students complete their dissertations, and as such the committee evaluates dissertation proposals rather than completed work.

Send your proposals to: Michael Kimmel, Department of Sociology, SUNY at Stony Brook, Stony Brook, NY 11794.

The deadline for submissions is April 1, 2013.
In Print

Recent Articles and Books


Don’t forget to notify the newsletter editor of your recently published articles and books to be included in this section! Email clm73@stanford.edu.
