Statement by the Chair

Happy New Year to all Sexualities Section Members!

Chairing an ASA section is an honor as well as an odd job – working primarily electronically with the elected council, the year passes far too quickly. To wit: It is time to submit your papers for the 2010 ASA meetings in Atlanta to either our section (if the topics are consistent with your work), other sections, or to the many regular sessions organized by the president’s program committee. Find the complete listing of all possible sessions on the ASA website. Papers are due on January 13, 2010. And, for those of you who plan early, Sexualities Section day this year is the first day of the annual meetings, that is, Saturday August 14, 2010.

The specifics of our section’s sessions are included elsewhere in the newsletter. The topics reflect the wishes of many members who came to the business meeting in August. The array of topics – censorship and controversy; sexualities across the life course; space, place and geographies of sexuality – allows for a wide range of possible submissions as do the many roundtables the section will organize and sponsor.

The topics are productive of important sociological dialogue surrounding issues that very quickly find both inane and profound chatter on local and national media, with far flung ramifications for people’s lives. In the last few weeks, a range of events sparked heated public debate about the sexuality of prominent adult heterosexual men (sports figures, governors, senators), the varieties of changes to public policy related to the treatment of HIV-positive persons, the victories and defeats of same-sex marriage initiatives, the threats to women’s reproductive rights, among other highly gendered and racialized sexual matters. No doubt, the work we hear at the sessions in August and our more informal dialogue with one another in the hotel halls, over drinks, at our reception, will pose thoughtful analysis of these concerns and many, many others.

With planning already underway for the 2010 meetings in Atlanta, it is nonetheless not too late to offer thanks for the great work done for the section in 2009. Special thanks first must go to Nancy Fischer who chaired the section and orchestrated an intellectually marvelous and well organized set of panels, meetings, and receptions in San Francisco. Thanks also to the organizers of the section’s well attended and remarkably intriguing sessions – Bernadette Barton, Tey Meadow, Eve Shapiro, Kristen Schilt, and Salvador Vidal-Ortiz, to the organizers of the roundtables – Dana Berkowitz, Alison Better and Reese Kelly, and to James Dean and his crew for the San Francisco reception.

Here’s to a year of thoughtful and wide-ranging intellectual and political stories and analysis!

Beth E. Schneider, University of California-Santa Barbara
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 2009-10

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Key Dates

January 13, 2010: Submission deadline for the ASA annual meeting.
March 18-21, 2010: Eastern Sociological Society meeting, Cambridge, MA
April 8-11, 2010: Pacific Sociological Association meeting: Oakland, CA.
August 14-17, 2010: ASA annual meeting (“Toward a Sociology of Citizenship: Inclusion, Participation, and Rights”): Atlanta, GA (submission deadline: January 13 2010)

Have Something to Say?
Submit your brief announcements, 500-word essays, reviews, letters, art or photos for the next issue of SexualitiesNews to: Bayliss J. Camp, bayliss.camp@csus.edu, Dept. of Sociology, CSU Sacramento, 6000 J St., Sacramento, CA 95819 Fax (916) 278-6281.
I. Introductory remarks

I want to express my deepest, heartfelt appreciation to the Section on Sexualities for deciding to give me this award. I am especially pleased to be receiving such an award that is named in honor two remarkable pioneers in sex research, William Simon and John Gagnon. While I, unfortunately, only had a chance to meet Simon on two brief occasions shortly before his death, I have had the honor and privilege to work closely with John Gagnon as a close collaborator, colleague and friend since the late 1980s. In fact, I must fully acknowledge that I am deeply in his debt for having been a wonderful mentor and teacher of nearly all that I know about matters sexual and the mysteries and challenges of doing sex research on population samples.

In these remarks, I will feature the significant milestones and personal experiences that I shared with John and others as we undertook this challenging journey together. From a bird’s eye overview, I see my research initiatives falling into four well-defined phases: (1) the first is defined by a focus on the epidemiology of sexually transmitted infections as understood from a population and social network vantage point in response to the urgencies of the U.S. AIDS epidemic in the mid 1980s (as reported in The Social Organization of Sexuality (1994) and its lay version, Sex in America (1994) and Sex, Love and Health in America (2001)); (2) the second moves to the study of sexual conduct in well-defined social and physical spaces, with a focus on sexual markets, same- and opposite-sex partner choice, circumcision, masturbation, sexual jealousy, domestic violence, and the larger social context of race, ethnicity, religion, and class as they contextualize and regulate sexual expression (reported in The Sexual Organization of the City (2004)), (3) the third addresses the issue of sexual dysfunction as it relates to the so called “risk factors” of gender, social and psychological stresses, and physical and mental health conditions, as well as broader social and cultural contexts observed around the globe (numerous medical journals), (4) and finally, variations in sexual expression and conduct across the life course, with special emphasis in my recent work on sex among older adults (numerous medical journals). It is these latter two phases that may have dropped out of the sociological eye because of the publishing venues in which the findings were reported. I would argue that I have remained true to my sociological sensibilities and that I hope some of you will look at this work despite its oddity of publication sites because the findings have much to tell us about the complex interplay of biology, psychology and sociology in sexual expression.

II. The national sex studies

In 1985, I was appointed Dean of the Social Science Division at the University of Chicago. I was interested in encouraging the formation of more social and intellectual ties across different units of the University, and particularly the medical school. Dr. Mark Siegler, then and now director of the premier Clinical Medical Ethics program in the country, began to discuss the planning for a year-long workshop on “AIDS and Society” that would bring together social science faculty and medical school faculty to discuss the diverse challenges arising from an epidemic whose case count was at the time doubling every 10 months. In the course of this riveting series of presentations, I became convinced that there was not going to be a magic bullet that would stop the spread of the epidemic through immunization – the answer appeared to lie in behavioral interventions and here we lacked critical information on the sexual practices of the population at large that were placing us all in jeopardy. Robert Michael, an economic demographer and director of NORC at the time, and I began to talk and soon concluded that Chicago should undertake another Manhattan Project which would pool our strengths in survey and sample design at NORC to mount a national survey of sexual practices.

Having been editor at AJS, I had been at the intersection of professional communication networks about all sorts of topics and had acquired knowledge of large numbers of professional colleagues scattered throughout the US. Tapping these widely ramifying networks quickly helped me identify the key researchers in sexuality and assess their potential for collaborative work. This is a field that mainstream researchers have avoided because of the disrepute and social disapproval of such topics in “legitimate” social scientific circles. I quickly identified John Gagnon, a Ph.D. sociological from the U of C and one of the most prominent and respected sexologists in the country, and arranged to meet him and recruit him to our research team. We quickly responded to a call issued by the NICHD (NIH) for research proposals to
design the national sex survey. In winning the competition, we proposed a research strategy and survey instrument that was designed to comprehensively inquire about people’s sexual behavior and the sexual networks in which that was expressed in all its complexity.

The OMB fiasco

Because of certain technicalities in issuing the award as a contract rather than a scientific grant, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), a key bureau in the Office of the White House, had formal responsibility for approving the use of the interview instrument. By this point (1988), it was widely recognized in the scientific and medical communities that such a survey was a necessity if we were going to be able to design effective public intervention in persuading people to take appropriate defensive measures to assist in containing the spread of the disease. But the survey was going to be controversial. Right-wing religious groups had from the days of the Kinsey Reports (1948, 1953) in the late 40s and early 50s strenuously objected to such inquiries because, in their view, sex reports had the manifest effect of naturalizing or normalizing immoral sexual behavior, such as masturbation, anal and oral sex, premarital and extramarital sex. Moreover, the government had no business in invading people’s private lives, even if it were ostensibly for reasons of the public’s health.

Science magazine reported in late January 1989 that the national sex survey was under review at OMB, and we could look forward to having the much-needed data soon. Someone in the copy-editing department at Science chose, quite incredibly, to illustrate the news story with the picture from the 1970s cult film, Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice, ostensibly about married couples’ mate swapping. The Washington Times, a conservative newspaper, picked the story up with screaming headlines, and within a few days, there was a 17-page White Paper prepared by Representative William Dannemeyer (Orange County, CA) circulated to every member of the House and Senate decrying the study, accusing Michael and me of being mere figureheads and fronts for a cabal of homophiles (i.e., Gagnon and Michaels) who were attempting to legitimate the extensiveness of gay sex in the nation. Thus began an annual cycle of House and Senate Appropriation committees recommending support (Senate) or not (House) for the national survey. Since the joint conference committee on appropriates could not agree, funding for the study was deferred each year.

It was imperative that we mobilize Congressional support for the initiative. I remembered that my close friend and colleague, James S. Coleman, one of the University’s distinguished University Professors, had close ties to the Democratic Senator from New York, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, just recently deceased, who was Chair of one of the key appropriation committees concerned with welfare and education. The Senate at that time was under Democratic control and thus had some leverage with the White House and Executive Branch. Jim effected an introduction and we three principals of the study flew to Washington to meet Moynihan in the hot summer of 1989. On entering the office, I was ushered to a leather wing-backed chair, next to which was a full-size papier-mache statue of John Hancock standing with quill pen in hand about to make a key point during the deliberations about the Declaration of Independence. He hovered over my right shoulder throughout the conversation, looming over me as a most disconcerting presence. The Senator and three or four of his key staff members, were arrayed on one side of a room furnished to look like a Harvard faculty office (which Moynihan had once been). I was asked at the outset why we had come, and I was a bit taken aback since we had told his Chief of Staff what we wanted and were hoping for a quick “in and out” visit. Thus began an hour-long conversation jumping with no apparent rhyme or reason across a wide range of topics, few having anything much to do with our quest, and including the Senator’s touching story about visiting a hospital in a poor section of New York City and being told that he should not handle a low-birth weight baby who was dying of AIDS for fear of contracting the fatal illness. At one point he glanced at the boots John Gagnon was wearing and said, “Oh, you must be the Devil Incarnate.” It was Gagnon who had been especially pilloried for his unacceptable political views by the religious right (among his sins, he had served as a faculty advisor to a college group which had some 20 years before advocated the legalization of marijuana). All of us had been subjected to a detailed investigation of our political affiliations and activities. At the conclusion of this remarkable, and I can only say, bizarre encounter, the Senator instructed his Chief of Staff to assist us in making connections on the Hill and to keep him informed of developments. Gagnon remarked once we were outside that now we knew what it meant to “rock and roll with the stars.” (Subsequently Bob and I were quietly approached and informed that if were willing to drop John and Stuart Michaels from the team, objections to the project would disappear. We weren’t prepared to do that, and the political harassment continued.)
As a follow-up, I returned to Washington a number of times to meet various Congressional staffers, Senators, and Representatives to urge their support for funding the study. In these ventures, Bill Bailey, the chief lobbyist for the American Psychological Association who was especially well connected on the Hill, usually accompanied me and coached me on what to say to various target officials. I knew that Bill was dying of AIDS, but it was his wish (expressed through third parties) not to have this acknowledged in any way. He knew that I knew and I knew that he knew that I knew, but we could not reveal this mutual understanding. One day he took me on a particularly grueling trip to visit a number of people in the Old Senate Office Building, with seemingly endless corridors that separate the clusters of offices associated with each Senator. We literally raced from one appointment to another, as scheduling was of the essence in meeting all the critical people involved in an upcoming vote. Though he looked more emaciated than I had seen him in some time, neither of us could make a move to make the effort less strenuous, or even to excuse him from accompanying me. He felt it was crucial that he be there to provide suitable guidance to help garner the support we so desperately needed. Two weeks later he died of complications from a rare form of pneumonia that characteristically afflicted persons infected with HIV.

In September 1991, two years after these lobbying efforts had been pursued without much result, Senator Jesse Helms (NC) submitted an amendment to an appropriation bill that effectively transferred the funding intended for the national sex survey to a “say no to sex” campaign. I thus have the dubious distinction of having an act of Congress passed to stop my research (the Senate voted 66 to 34 in favor of the amendment). Of course this was what we had been hoping for – the demonstration that the Congress was incapable of supporting the necessary research initiative to fund the survey. We immediately went to the private foundations, notably the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Henry Kaiser, Rockefeller, and McArthur, to get funding for the survey at a much-diminished level; we went into the field on February 14, 1992. A particularly important consequence of the private funding was that we could revert to our original survey instrument. In the effort to make it more palatable to unspecified opponents, we had been forced to gut the study of much of what would prove to be its most important queries.

We decided to get the results out as soon as possible – that is, no later than the fall of 1994 – and to make them accessible to the public as well as to the research community. To this end, we arranged for Gina Kolata, a New York Times reporter who specializes in covering science and health news stories, to write in collaboration with us a companion volume, Sex in America (1994), for the lay world as we prepared the more technical volume, The Social Organization of Sexuality (1994). Here we began to transgress yet another boundary of academic community discourse that sharply demarcates “real academic scholarship” intended for scholarly peers from publications intended to attract widespread popular attention. We felt strongly that the public needed to be fully informed about what we had discovered and we wanted to have a hand in framing the public’s understanding rather than leaving it to others to do so, and with what distortions and misinformation we didn’t want to contemplate.

In the light of the prolonged political struggles over funding, the Ford Foundation became convinced that we needed to prepare ourselves for a hostile reception and thus provided funding to have us all receive professional media training. We were all taken to New York for a weekend of intensive training at a large TV studio so that we could cope with “attack” journalists on television and radio who might want to disrupt or distort our message. An attack journalist interviewed each of us on camera in supervised practice sessions and the video was then played back with professional coaches pointing out our weaknesses in response and the tactics we needed to use in order to take charge under these circumstances. Happily this training was never really needed because of the exceptionally warm welcome the media extended to our efforts.

The public release of the books involved months of planning and preparation, with an elaborate collaboration among the news organizations of the University and our two publishers, an academic press and a commercial press. Great care was expended in devising news releases that would effectively channel the media take on the findings – that is, we were learning to be spin-doctors. I discovered that there are four independent editorial departments in most major metropolitan papers: the front page, the editorial page, the book renew section, and the temp/lifestyle/women’s/health section. In the rollout of the campaign, each of these departments was independently targeted and we counted ourselves successful if we got stories placed in all four sections, even if not on the same day! We were covered in over 300 metropolitan newspapers across the country, made the cover of TIME magazine, and were lead articles in many other magazines. Notice that we were successful in pitching the story as “sexual practices in the U.S. are not ‘kinky’ – partially in the hope of knocking the wind out of the sails of the right-wing opposition who were convinced that our agenda was to spread liberated and
pleasure-seeking sex to the masses. That is, as one critic remarked in the New Yorker magazine, Laumann and his colleagues’ discourse on human sexuality is “spermingly chilling.” Only at Chicago could we have thoroughly managed to take the fun out of sex.

This experience with the management of the media has stood me in good stead ever since. I have continued to have a regular drumbeat of phone calls from the likes of the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, the Chicago Tribune and the Sun Times, TIME, Newsweek, US News and World Report, Glamour, Cosmopolitan, and Men’s Health, to mention only the most prominent, at the rate of 10 or so calls per month, and with much heavier bursts when I publish something else linked to sex. I have learned the importance of patience and pithy quotes that effectively dominate the writing of a story with a spin of my choosing. We strongly believe that the information we have gleaned from these surveys need to be known and understood by the public at large, and we have striven to become a “trusted” source to the print media journalists.

In preparing for the media event for the release of the two books, we briefed many organizations and professionals who could serve as outside commentators on the merits of the work. This is called “salting.” Included in the briefings was a daylong presentation at the National Institutes of Health, which readily embraced the work as their own. We had assumed that they would notify other interested parties in their umbrella organization, including the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta. But organizational politics interfered with the communication link and the CDC spokesperson for the AIDS effort was suddenly confronted in his regular Monday morning press briefing with a host of questions from journalists talking about the Sunday media blitz on our study. I had asked one of his staff (lately of the National Center for Health Statistics which had just been amalgamated into the CDC), a sociologist, to have the NCHS do a critical read of our chapter on sexually transmitted diseases. They gave us very helpful feedback and were generally very supportive of the line our analysis had taken. The spokesman, the czar of AIDS for CDC, had been heard to remark on his way to the podium that “The Chicago study had more findings than they had respondents.” After the press conference, he convened his staff and ordered them to prepare a press release condemning the study as just “another untrustworthy sex report.” One of the persons assigned to the task was my contact in the NCHS, who called me to tell me of this development. I told him that he should inform his boss if they chose to “rain on our parade,” I would use the microphone in hand from the vast amount of media attention directed toward our study to do battle with them on some issues we had chosen not to feature in the press release. Moreover, I pointed out that we would win that war because of the unique data of high quality we had in hand. The CDC press release came out muttering that they welcomed any new information to help them in the war on AIDS and promptly dropped the matter.

Now what was this contretemps all about? Relying on the network data we had on the patterns of sexual partnering across population subgroups, we had concluded that there was literally no possibility of an AIDS epidemic in the heterosexual population of the United States, as it was then making its devastating progress in the “homosexual” subpopulation. But this flew in the face of an emerging mantra of the CDC and the AIDS-prevention community that “everyone was at risk for HIV.” This position had been developed as a political tactic in the public health community to mobilize broad public support for AIDS intervention efforts. Acknowledging the need to get more government funding behind the AIDS prevention effort, we had “buried” our discussion in the middle chapters of The Social Organization of Sexuality, which analyzed sexual networks and the epidemiology of sexually transmitted infections. Before our study, it was most certainly reasonable to have made such claims due to the lack of comprehensive, reliable empirical data to indicate anything to the contrary. Let us know turn to a brief consideration of the pertinent data.

III. Further developments of research on sexual matters.

The fruition of the theoretical strategies developed in the 1970s and 1980s may be seen in the following outline of the model of sexual exchange, which organized The Social Organization of Sexuality (1994: 545). The National Health and Social Life Survey of the adult population aged 18-60 (N = 3,169) was a remarkably successful national probability-sample survey which achieved nearly an 80 percent completion rate. It was a ninety-minute private, in-person interview in the home. Careful examination of the data suggests that sampling biases were minimal and that we were successful in eliciting high levels of candor from our respondents. A central thrust of the analysis was to demonstrate the extent of status homophily on sexual partner choice (SOS pg. 255), and the substantively critical but unexpected finding that one-night stands are almost as homophilous as marriages. Note here that we are following our dictum that we need to explore the differing social and functional logics that power the mechanisms generating ties in different relational settings. A
common intuition would have it that one-night stands involve strangers, by definition, and that such pairings should be much more apt to cross social barriers than pairings that lead to marriage. This does not appear to be the case. It is also worth noting how high the levels of homophilous choice are. This relates to my early work talking about “social entitivity,” or the variable tendency to self-target on a particular status attribute, denoting then the variable degree to which status groups are separated from one another by in-group preferences.

Another important feature of sexual partner choice is that there are quite modest accumulations of partners over the lifetime in the United States: the median is 2 for women and 6 for men, according to the NHSLS (SOS pp. 278-9). This is the sociomatrix that I sought to estimate when I first began planning for the NHSLS. It has the same format that I used in 1966 when describing friendship choices by occupational status. Now there are many important methodological and technical issues which impost significant limitations and qualifications on how one can analyze and interpret these sorts of matrices; but, for present purposes, we need only note the many empty cells in which there are no observed sexual partnerships between two given status-defined categories. In short, the U.S. adult population does not constitute a random mixing pool but a highly discontinuous set of status groups with only the most limited, indirect sexual access to one another. Since the bridging population that has sex on several discrete, socially defined islands is extremely rare and would have, in addition, to be infected with HIV to act as a vector of infection across subpopulations, transmission dynamics are effectively stalled in their tracks. Since HIV infected persons are predominantly homosexual and bisexuality in quite rate, the principal avenue by which infection could move into the heterosexual population is very limited. When you add to this the fact that HIV is difficult to transmit (unlike gonorrhea, which has an infectivity of 50/50 for each unprotected sexual encounter), you can see how we came to the conclusion that we did.

Network thinking has inspired a paradigm shift in the field of sexually transmitted infections (Aral 2000). Youm and I (Laumann and Youm 1999) were intrigued with the observation that African-Americans had 20 to 30 times higher prevalence of gonorrhea and syphilis than whites and Hispanics. In trying to explain these discrepancies, we came to a network explanation. It is well known that in large randomly mixing populations, STDs would disappear within a few generations. They are hypothesized to persist due to the presence of core groups, which are small groups of individuals (often running around 3-5% of the total population) who have many sex partners in a short period of time, say a year, and who tend to confine their partner choices to other core group members. The NHSLS afforded the first opportunity to identify core group (4 or more partners a year) adjacent (2 or 3 partners a year), and peripheral group members (one or no partners a year). In our research, we observed the strong tendency to confine partner choices. What is of special interest is the tendency to become more racially exclusive as one moves from peripheral to adjacent to core group status. In short, there is a much greater likelihood of a peripheral white to have a peripheral African-American partner than for a member of the African-American core group to have a partner who is a member of the white core. Thus, because African-Americans for some historical reason were seeded with gonorrhea or syphilis, these infections are more or less confined to African Americans relative to whites because there are no infected bridges between the two racial groups. We have thus constructed an exclusively sociological account for the differential distribution of selected diseases.

Another example of the powerful explanations afforded by network approaches is provided in a study of sexually transmitted diseases in China. Parish and I with a Chinese co-principal investigator, Professor Pan Suiming (2003), conducted a national area probability-survey of China (N = 3,828), ironically funded by NICHD, which had not been permitted to fund the U.S. survey (the 1992 NHSLS). We added a new wrinkle – a collection of urine samples, biomarkers, so that we could test for the presence of several sexually transmitted diseases. Noteworthy here was the opportunity to test for an STI, Chlamydia, which is asymptomatic in 90% of the cases, so that one cannot rely on self-report to track the prevalence of the infection.

The Chinese public health authorities are convinced the principal vector for the rapidly rising levels of STIs are the migrants from the countryside to the cities. Our sample tells a very different story. First, it is true that Chlamydia prevalence approximates 9% of the female population in the south coastal region (where the principal take-off of the Chinese economic miracle occurred). Again ironically, the US at the time had no nationwide data on Chlamydia prevalence, only some scattered city data with which to make a cross-national comparison. Second, we found that the highest risk for infection for women was being married to a man in the top quintile of the income distribution. In this subpopulation upwards of 30% of the men have sex with commercial sex workers, get infected, and then infect their wives (85% of women have only one lifetime sex partner. For comparison purposes, somewhat less than 1% of U.S. men had sex with a paid partner last year.). Thus, we are observing a two-step transmission chain, from CSW to john to wife,

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which also allows us to delineate quite precisely the contours of its spread and the limited extent to which the population at large is at risk. One important public health intervention is that one should go to airports rather than bus stops to get the message out about safe sex practices.

I have many more war stories of more recent vintage, but I am sure that your patience has been thoroughly exhausted and the point I have been trying to make should now be clear. To wit, academic knowledge can and will command public attention from the most diverse of audiences. It is never neutral, nor does it speak with only one self-evident meaning. It inevitably plays a political role, supporting some stakeholders’ preferences and denigrating others. The notion that you should leave it to others to offer interpretations of what you have learned from scholarly inquiry is a serious mistake. One must take responsibility for what one discovers and must concern oneself with how it will be diversely understood. It does expose oneself to some potentially painful experiences, but it can also be fun and exhilarating.

Edward O. Laumann
San Francisco, CA
August 10, 2009

References:

In Print – Recent Books


Sociology of Sexualities Section Awards – Call for Nominations for 2010

2010 Simon-Gagnon 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 recipient of the award will make a presentation to the Sexualities Section at the 2010 Annual Meeting, in Atlanta.

Please submit letters of nomination electronically to Nancy Fischer at: fischern@augsburg.edu.

Deadline for nominations is Monday, February 1, 2010.

2010 Distinguished Book Award

Submit your nominations for the best book in the Sociology of Sexualities! Nominated books must have been published in the years 2007-2009 calendar years, and may be self-nominated by the author, another scholar or by publishers. A committee of five members appointed to the Book Award Committee will review the nominated books.

If you wish to nominate a book, please send a brief nomination letter electronically to the committee co-chairs: Mary Bernstein at mary.bernstein@uconn.edu AND Eve Shapiro at eshapiro@ws.ma.edu. Those nominating books should also arrange for the publisher to send five copies of the book to: Mary Bernstein, Department of Sociology, University of Connecticut, Unit 2068, 344 Mansfield Rd., Storrs, CT 06269-2068

Deadline for nominations is Monday, February 1, 2010.

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; the committee therefore evaluates dissertation proposals rather than completed work.

Please send your proposals electronically to: Michael Kimmel at: Michael.kimmel@sunysb.edu.

The deadline for submissions is April 1, 2008.

Best Graduate Student Paper

Papers are currently being accepted for the 2008 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. 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, electronically to the committee co-chairs: Juan Battle at jbattle@gc.cuny.edu AND Ann Meier at meierann@umn.edu

The deadline for nominations is March 1, 2008.
Sexualities Section 2010 ASA Sessions

Session I
Session Title: Sexual Censorship and Sexual Controversy
Session Description: Censorship and controversy are regular features of the sexual realm in the United States. Sex is very much on the frontline of public discourse in educational institutions, in business settings, in social relationships, and in the political world itself. Panelists will discuss recent cases of sexual censorship and controversy to delineate its main empirical features, examine the sources of its contestation, and analyze the meanings each case imparts to the dynamics of erotic life in 21st century.

Session Organizers: Joshua Gamson, University of San Francisco

Session II
Session Title: Sexualities Across the Life Course
Session Description: How sexualities are talked about, depicted, experienced, and managed varies over the life course. Panelists will discuss how earlier sexual experiences affect later ones and explore how age and generation matters to the sexual lives of persons of varying identities and relationships.

Session Organizer: Laura Carpenter, Vanderbilt University

Session III
Session Title: Space, Place and the Geographies of Sexuality
Session Description: Taking seriously the importance of physical locale to the production of the erotic, panelists will discuss the social, political, and economic conditions that structure sexual desire, sexual meanings, and sexual institutions.

Session Organizers: Adam Isaiah Green, University of Toronto

Roundtable Organizers: Anna Sorensen, University of California-Santa Barbara and Lorena Garcia, University of Illinois-Chicago

Call for Applications

The National Mentoring and Training Program of the Center for Population Research in LGBT Health.

The Center is seeking applications from doctoral and advanced masters’ students interested in careers in LGBT health research. The program connects students with expert faculty mentors from the national network of faculty of the Center. Mentors are closely matched to students’ research interests and will assist students who are developing or working on a research project in the study of LGBT health or same-sex families/households. An ideal candidate will have an interest in working with a mentor to better incorporate population health research methods and/or concerns in their projects.

Please visit icpsr.umich.edu/FENWAY/training/ to learn more and download an application.

Contact Aimee Van Wagenen (mentoring@lgbtpopcenter.org) for further information. Applications for pre-doctoral mentoring are accepted on a rolling basis until February 15, 2010.
Kudos!

The classic lesbian S/M collection Macho Sluts by Pat (now Patrick) Califia has been republished by Arsenal Pulp Press. Macho Sluts was a focal point for the infamous legal battles between Canada Customs and Little Sister's, the gay and lesbian bookstore in Vancouver.

The new edition, part of Arsenal's Little Sister's Classics series resurrecting classics of LGBT literature, includes a new foreword by the author and an introductory essay by section member Wendy Chapkis (Professor of Sociology and Women & Gender Studies at the University of Southern Maine). The new edition also includes essays by Jim Deva, co-owner of Little Sister's Bookstore and Joseph Arvay, chief counsel for the bookstore during its trial against Canada Customs.

Call for Books and Reviewers

Sexualities section member Rebecca Plante is soliciting reviewers and book suggestions for the Journal of Sex Research (published by Routledge/Taylor & Francis). As the Book Review Editor for the journal, she hopes to see all aspects of sexualities represented.

Please contact her for more information, to suggest books for review, and/or to add yourself to the reviewer pool (please include information on your specialties and interests): Rebecca Plante at: rplante@ithaca.edu.

Kudos and Call for Submissions

John P. Elia, has been appointed as the new Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Homosexuality, now publishing in its 56th year. Dr. Elia is the Professor & Associate Chair of the Department of Health Education at San Francisco State University. Prior to becoming Editor, Dr. Elia served as the Associate Editor and Book Review Editor for the journal. Dr. Elia succeeds Dr. John P. De Cecco, who continues as Editor-in-Chief Emeritus after 34 years of service.

One of Dr. Elia’s new focuses as Editor will be to update the Manuscript Submission process to a more streamlined electronic approach, resulting in a decreased publication lag time. The frequency of the Journal will also be increased from 8 to 10 issues beginning in 2010. For more information, please contact Dr. Elia at jelia@sfsu.edu.

Kudos!