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Editorial

Special Issue: Sexuality in Movement: Beyond the 'Sexual Revolution'

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The so-called sexual revolution and the social movements that were a part of it have recently received renewed attention through several academic publications, such as those by Hekma and Giami (2014) and Buijs, Geesink, and Holla (2014). Particularly Buijs et al. (2014) pay attention to the uneasy relationship between the women's movement and some of the organisations active within the sexual revolution. Many groups that were a part of second wave feminism were in agreement over the availability of 'the pill' and the right to abortion. Other issues of sexuality, such as law, policy, and social acceptance regarding pornography and prostitution were issues of contention within the women's movement as well as between organisations of the women's movement and other social actors.

Importantly, however, social movements struggling to extend (or remove) the boundaries of sexual acceptability, as well as those attempting to shore up or further constrict sexual norms, are not unique to the short period now known as 'the Sexual Revolution'. Sexuality has always been a site of political struggle; even a cursory glance at *The Bible* as well as most other foundational religious tracts reveals the lively interest of ancient law givers in all things sexual. Though many religious rules restricted male sexual activity too, the focus was primarily on female activity. It is therefore not coincidental that the relatively recent waves of feminism coincided with waves of movements arguing for different laws and a different morality in sexual matters. In the nineteenth century, the reform of marriage laws was an important issue for feminists in all countries; the movement for a more humane way of treating prostitutes and against protecting men against claims of their natural children were important concerns in many countries as well. Birth control was also an important issue in the nineteenth century with, in the Netherlands, Aletta Jacobs and Jan Rutgers as prominent members of the Nieuw-Malthusiaanse Bond, founded in 1881. In England, Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh were severely criticised

for publishing a book on birth control in 1877 (see Braun, 1992; De Vries, 1997).

The wave of feminist activity of the second half of the twentieth century was preceded by 'the sexual revolution' and some commentators maintain that the invention of the anticonception pill was an important trigger for women to rebel. The core movement organisation for sexual reform in the Netherlands, the Nederlandse Vereniging voor Sexuele Hervorming (NVSH) was founded in 1946, but celebrated its glory years during the 1960s, when their membership soared to more than 200,000 and the sale of anticonception by post (and in blank envelopes) turned the association into an economic success story as well. Sexual reform was relatively early on the public agenda in the Netherlands, but the issue met with more resistance in Belgium. Van Ussel, former chair of the Belgische Vereniging voor Gezinsplanning en Seksuele Opvoeding and author of an exhaustive study of 'the sexual problem' (1968) accused his fellow Belgians of 'backwardness'. Pleas for a 'modern' view of marriage, celebrating sex – only within marriage – for the pleasure it generates, were initially adopted from the Dutch author Van de Velde (1927), and anticonception was ordered from the Dutch NVSH before it became readily available in Belgium. The Belgian Association, however, gradually followed the lead of its Dutch counterpart and modernised its platform.

In the second half of the 1970s, the relationship between the sexual and the feminist revolutions became strained as a result of the ascendance of the issue of sexual violence within the feminist movement. Organisations such as Vrouwen tegen Verkrachting (Women against Rape) and Vrouwen Tegen Seksueel Geweld (Women against Sexual Violence) were founded in 1975 and 1976, and in 1983 Tegen Haar Wil (Against Her Will) started a telephone helpline for women experiencing sexual harassment or violence. The relationship between sexual freedom and feminism became even more strained when 'the porn war' broke out in the early 1980s, with Andrea Dworkin (1979) – amongst others – producing a powerful indictment of pornography while other feminists reacted by denouncing 'vanilla sex' (see Duggan & Hunter, 2006). At the moment of writing, successful internet communities advocating asexuality (no genital sex) or polyamory (sex with multiple partners) show that sex can still be a divisive issue inside and outside of the feminist movement.

This special issue of the *Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies* specifically focuses on contemporary and historic movements that engage with sexuality. While the call for papers for this special issue invited manuscripts focusing on sexuality at large, the submissions that we received were pri-

marily studies on organising in relation to gay and lesbian (and LGBT) sexuality, either identity or practice. The relationship between the LGBT movement and the women's movement was often complementary but also at times conflictual. In 1972, a group of lesbian activists called Paarse september (Purple September) declared that they did not feel at home in the Dutch organisation for homosexuals, the COC, or in the first Dutch feminist organisation, Dolle Mina (Angry Mina). While the women's movement and the LGBT movement often shared goals of challenging standing norms around gender and sexuality, the position of lesbians was a point of conflict within and between the women's movement and the LGBT movement (Costera Meijer, 1996).

In time, conflict developed again into cooperation: within the COC, the main organisation of the LGBT movement, a separate structure was developed for women to combat what they saw as male-domination within the organisation. Organisations within the women's movement also debated the place of lesbians; as women, they belonged to the women's movement, and, as lesbians, they belonged to the LGBT movement. Ties between the movements were also visible within government circles. The Emancipation Commission, the institutionalised wing of the women's movement, often supported LGBT issues from within the realm of official politics. Hedy d'Ancona, one of the founders of a very influential feminist advocacy organisation in the Netherlands (Man-Vrouw-Maatschappij), would later become responsible for government policy on homosexuality as minister of WVC.

The articles included in this special issue are primarily concerned with movements in the Netherlands. While LGBT issues have received a considerable amount of attention within Dutch politics and policy-making circles, it is surprising that there is not more scientific literature on LGBT movements in the Low Countries. Another important but underresearched issue is identity formation of young people in relation to sex as well as other markers such as ethnicity, nationality, or religion. This special issue will make a small step toward filling gaps in that knowledge.

Paul van Gelder examines the organisational history of male prostitutes in Amsterdam in 'Het smalle groepsvaandel van mannelijke sekswerkers. Belemmeringen en mogelijkheden voor zelforganisatie bij M\$M in Nederland'. Male prostitutes are difficult to organise, even more so, it seems, than female prostitutes. In this article, Van Gelder attempts to answer the question why this proves to be so difficult. Male prostitution used to be concentrated in specialised clubs but has spread over different venues in the past decades and is now more and more present on the internet. Move-

ment entrepreneurs tried to gain entrance for male prostitutes to the organisations of female prostitutes such as De Rode Draad and the De Graaf Stichting, but found the culture there unwelcoming. Male prostitutes, Van Gelder shows, usually do not identify with the label because they work only part-time and for short periods in this sector and fail to feel oppressed. The internet, as a new venue for 'the business', furthermore isolates the 'boys' from each other, making organisation even more difficult.

In 'Cultural Corporatism and the COC. Gay and Lesbian Social Movement Advocacy in the Netherlands and Dutch Political Culture, 1986-1994', Robert J. Davidson analyses the first phase of the efforts of the Dutch government to instigate a policy on the emancipation of homosexuals. As a national policy on this type of discrimination was a novel phenomenon, aim, scope, and policy instruments were still elements to be discovered. The Dutch government turned to a tried way of making policy: the incorporation of civil society organisations in the formulation and implementation of policy. Davidson analyses the pros and cons of this type of policy making. On the one hand, it elevates civil society organisations to new levels of legitimacy, and a generous stream of subsidies enables them to professionalise. On the other hand, it ties them to a political culture that results in compromise.

In a pictorial essay, 'Goddelijk of Duivels', Freda Dröes talks to artist Jeanette Groenendaal about two of her works in which sexuality and religion are prominently present in widely divergent ways. In the film 'Fucking Retreat', made in cooperation with her husband, tantric sex is performed in order to explore the claim of tantrism that repeated sex without orgasm produces a blissful state of mind. Her film 'Reformation' shows a very different attitude to sexuality: inspired by her childhood as a nonreligious child in a fiercely protestant village, she portrays her neighbours' strategies of exclusion. Sexuality: how is it politicised as godly or devilish, and how do movements advocate to shift and change the politicisation of sexuality?

Elise van Alphen takes us back to the history of emancipation of LGBTs. She analyses another period in the history of the main organisation of homosexuals in the Netherlands in 'Ethiek is politiek. Homoactivisme in dienst van de geestelijke volksgezondheid en vice versa (1945-1955)'. Most historians claim that the COC was mainly inwardly oriented in the 1950s. Due to the harsh cultural climate, the organisation – disguised as a society for culture lovers – is portrayed as a safe haven for homosexuals still suffering from several forms of discrimination. The discourse of the COC is described as defensive and actions directed towards the government were reputedly scarce. Van Alphen takes issue with this view: by compar-

ing the discourse of the COC in this period with contemporary organisations, she shows that the defensive tone fits in the hegemonic humanistic discourses of movement organisations in the fifties. The COC did indeed act politically by commenting on government proposals and in sending letters and memoranda in order to gain access to the political arena. Contextualising the COC discourse, she claims, makes us aware of the fact that the COC did indeed act externally as well as internally.

In Flanders and in the Netherlands, young activists have organised relatively recently to support young people of minority origin in coming to terms with their sexual orientation. In Nella van den Brandt, Rahil Roodsasz, and Klaartje van Kerckem's article "De Weg van de Omweg is de Kortste Weg": In Gesprek met Merhaba en Respect2Love over Emancipatie op het Kruispunt van Seksuele en Etnisch-Culturele Diversiteit', BeyonG, Giovanni Viridis, and Jessica Wolda of the Dutch organisation Respect2Love and Klaartje van Kerckem of the Belgian Merhaba talk about their work. Both organisations share a view on emancipation of sexual minorities that has become unorthodox in older organisations. They emphasise the importance of recognising the multiplicity of identifications of their target groups, sometimes resulting in a reluctance to 'come out'. A careful approach enables young people to combine a minority sexual orientation with love of family, religion, and a sense of cultural belonging. Apart from a shared view on emancipation, the organisations differ in interesting ways in their strategies and in the scope of their activities.

Tim Savenije, finally, explores the workings of pink networks in his article 'Roze werknemers in beweging. Het actief burgerschap van LHBT-werknemersnetwerken'. Many firms nowadays harbour networks of homosexual and lesbian employees, and the author interviewed members of these networks in five companies to find out how they view the role and function of these networks. How do employees define themselves as active citizens? How do they view the relationship between a personal and a collective identity as homosexuals, and why do they take action and spend time on organising on the work floor? What are the aims of these pink networks and what kind of strategies are used to further these aims? Networks, Savenije argues, offer members an opportunity to generate (self) respect and influence policies on the work floor and beyond. In this sense, they promote the kind of 'republican citizenship' that emphasises the agency of citizens.

We hope that this special issue demonstrates that sexuality still deserves to be on the agenda of every reader who is interested in gender and in social movements.

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