

discussion of possible physiological mechanisms that inhibit sexual desire in women particularly interesting.

A chapter by Walter Everaerd and colleagues introduces a preliminary model of the generation of sexual desire and action. These researchers hypothesize that sexual motivation is "an emerging property of sexual processing" (p. 102), and that such processing is largely involuntary and unconscious.

There is a very short contribution by Dorothy Tennov: "Conceptions of Limerence". This was an unusual chapter. I am unfamiliar with the literature on limerence, but after reading this chapter I still had no idea about what research had been done on this topic.

The final two contributions, by Julia Heiman and William Marshall, focus on hypoactive and hyperactive sexual motivation, respectively. The chapter by Marshall is very brief and fairly narrow in scope, looking at attachment problems in the etiology and treatment of sexual offenders. Julia Heiman reminds us that we "... neither have a clearly articulated model of sexual desire nor answers to basic questions such as ... How do we know someone is experiencing desire and how do we measure it? What qualifies as too little, too much, or just enough desire and who has the authority to apply these labels?" (p. 117). I would agree with her view that research on humans could benefit from "systematically gather[ing] phenomenological data on the subjective nature of sexual desire" (p. 120). In this chapter, Heiman puts forward a systemic theoretical framework to identify what factors comprise sexual desire, and provides an outline of topics that might be further articulated. As well as raising a number of questions, this chapter also identifies areas important to study if we are to understand the experience of human sexual desire.

After reading this book, one is left with more questions than answers regarding the nature of sexual desire and motivation, but I found the questions raised to be the most interesting aspects of the book. For example, to what extent is peripheral feedback necessary for sexual desire and excitement? What is the distinction/overlap between desire and sexual arousal?

In conclusion, although the editors mention the discrepancy between basic research on the regulation of sexual behavior and the application of this knowledge to social problems, few of the chapters in this volume address this issue. Although some of the chapters would have wider appeal, because the chapters are so varied, I think the book would be of interest mainly to graduate students or researchers in this area who have a particular interest in sexual motivation and desire.

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## AMERICAN SEX IN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS

*Sex, Love, and Health in America: Private Choices and Public Policies*. Edited by Edward O. Laumann and Robert T. Michael. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2000, 535 pages. Hardcover, \$48.

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Laumann, Michael, and numerous other researchers present a cornucopia of findings about American sexuality. Each chapter addresses a dimension of sexual functioning and the causes or consequences of phenomena such as STDs, abortion, and childhood sexual abuse. Most striking about the book is its nestling of research findings in a policy-oriented framework. This organization places in the reader's mind the potential for sexuality research to have real-world applications. In this review, we briefly summarize each section of the book. Next, we comment on some shortcomings of the book. Finally, we highlight several contributions of the book as a whole.

## Organization and Summary

The book is organized into three parts. In the prologue, Laumann and Michael introduce the reader to the National Health and Social Life Survey (NHSLS) database used to conduct the analyses presented in each chapter. The first part of the book comprises two chapters on sexuality during adolescence. In the first chapter, Joyner and Laumann investigate the factors associated with teenage sexual intercourse. The authors examine variables such as changes in the age at first sexual intercourse from the 1930s to the 1970s. They present support for the hypothesis that post-sexual-revolution onset of sexual intercourse is better predicted by personal characteristics such as age at puberty than it is by race and socioeconomic distinctions. In chapter 2, Michael and Joyner examine the factors that influence the choice to give birth. One standout finding from this chapter is that parental education is an excellent predictor of the likelihood of bringing a child to term.

The second part of the book comprises four chapters addressing sexuality during adulthood. In chapter 3, Laumann and Youm classify adults into four modes or groups of sexual expression and investigate the causes and consequences of membership in these groups. The groups are constructed using self-reports of variables such as the number of past sexual partners. The authors argue that the ability to classify adult sexuality into distinct groupings makes public policy and future research more manageable.

In chapter 4, Browning and Laumann examine the long-term effects of early sexual experience on later sexual behavior. The authors present two hypotheses predicting higher sociosexuality (a preference for short-term sexual relationships; see Simpson & Gangestad, 1991) as a result



of early sexual exposure. The authors present a psychological hypothesis, generated from psychoanalytic theory, that early sexual trauma leads to psychological disorders. The alternative, a sociological hypothesis, predicts that early sexual experience leads to sexual activity at a young age and without the cognitive propensities to manage sexuality. The data suggest that early sexual contact leads to short-term sexual encounters for women but not men. The authors state that these results are consistent with the sociological hypothesis. These results also are consistent with an evolutionary psychological hypothesis generated and tested about a decade earlier by Belsky, Steinberg, and Draper (1991).

In chapter 5, Mayhay, Laumann, and Michael investigate differences in sexual expression by sex and by race. Relative to women, men of all racial groups report that fellatio is more appealing. The authors also report a greater preference for cunnilingus among white men and women than among the members of other racial groups, including African Americans.

In chapter 6, Waite and Joyner examine sex differences in reported sexual behaviors by commitment level (as indexed by relationship status of dating, cohabitating, or married). The authors found that women's, but not men's, reports of emotional satisfaction with a partner are positively associated with relationship commitment. The authors also report that, for both sexes, sexual satisfaction increases with emotional commitment and with the sexual exclusivity of the relationship.

The third part of the book comprises six chapters investigating the relationships between health and sex. In chapter 7, Laumann, Masi, and Zuckerman examine the effects of circumcision on health. The results suggest that there are few self-reported differences in sexual health between circumcised and uncircumcised men. Circumcised and uncircumcised men do not differ in the likelihood of reporting an STD, for example. They do differ, however, in reports of various sexual acts. Circumcised men, for example, report engaging in oral and anal sex more often than uncircumcised men.

In chapter 8, Feinleib and Michael examine changes in sexual behavior in response to knowledge about AIDS. Those at risk for HIV infection do report changing their sexual behaviors (increasing condom use, for example). Those *most* at risk for HIV infection (young men with many sex partners), however, appear to be *least* likely to have changed their sexual behaviors in the period since the onset of the AIDS epidemic.

In chapter 9, Laumann and Youm investigate race-differentiated reports of the contraction of STDs. The authors highlight the inability of socioeconomic differences to account fully for race differences in STD incidence. The authors report several intriguing findings, including the finding that African Americans have higher rates of bacterial STDs, whereas Caucasian Americans have higher rates of viral STDs. Much of the data presented in this chapter contradicts previous findings. The likelihood of

reporting an STD is positively related to the participant's education, for example. The authors attribute previous findings to biases in methodologies against uncovering viral STDs among the lower socioeconomic groups (viral infections remain asymptomatic longer than bacterial infections and thus are more likely to be discovered by individuals with greater access to medical care). This explanation is tenable; however, educational attainment also is associated with greater sexual opportunities (at least for males; see Perusse, 1993), and thus would increase the likelihood of contracting an STD.

In chapter 10, Laumann, Paik, and Rosen document that lower educational attainment is associated with poorer sexual experiences and with greater sexual anxiety. Also of interest is the finding that sexual dysfunction is more prevalent among younger women (compared to older women) and among older men (compared to younger men). Some reports of sexual dysfunction appear to be more common among men who report same-sex sexual activity compared to women who report same-sex sexual activity.

In chapter 11, Michael investigates several potential predictors of abortion, including parental education for women younger than age 18, church attendance, and maternal employment. The percentage of women who report having had an abortion before 18 years of age increases with parental education.

In chapter 12, Michael et al. compare and contrast U.S. and British sexuality, review the prevalence rates of STDs in the two countries, and highlight policy differences between the two countries that may help to explain differences between the two countries in STD prevalence rates. The authors report that there is greater diversity in self-reported sexual behavior and attitudes in the U.S. than in Britain. They argue that this makes umbrella campaigns less effective in the U.S. than in Britain.

In chapter 13, Michael brings together the topics addressed in previous chapters with the goal of informing public policy on sexual behavior. Michael calls attention to how much of private sexual behavior is shaped by public opinion. According to Michael, "The joys of sex we keep to ourselves; the woes of sex we proclaim publicly" (p. 471).

### **Shortcomings**

The majority of this book is a presentation of findings, tables, and statistics. Although the authors do an excellent job of presenting the statistical methods used to reach these findings, the reader can get lost in the flurry of statistical applications and results. Readers also may find themselves scrambling to integrate findings into a theoretical framework.

An exception to this apparent disinterest in theoretical framing appears in Chapter 6, in which Waite and Joyner present an evolutionary perspective on human sexuality. Their application of evolutionary psychology is lacking in several places, however. Waite and Joyner state, for exam-



ple, that men optimize their reproductive output by forming relationships with women who display cues to sexual exclusivity. Although this may be true for men seeking long-term relationships, it is less relevant for men seeking short-term sexual relationships (see Buss, 1994, for a review of this research). Readers interested in an accurate and readable presentation of modern evolutionary psychological theory and research are encouraged to consult Buss (1999).

### Contributions

Throughout the book, the authors are careful to note the limitations of self-reported sexual behaviors and are quick to offer the caveat that much is not known about the validity of the self-report methodology used by the NHLS. The NHLS has been touted because of the nationally representative nature of the sample. So, this careful attention of the authors to recognize the limitations of this data set is a breath of fresh air.

The professional breadth represented by potential readers may best indicate the contributions of this book. Sociologists, psychologists, policy makers, and educated lay audiences will find this book interesting and helpful. The authors have taken on a daunting task of opening the eyes of researchers and policy makers to the value that research can have at a societal level.

The remarkable amount of work that went into this book is apparent. Although at times readers may get lost in the flurry of findings, careful attention to what is reported will prove valuable. We will keep this book as a key reference and we recommend to sexuality researchers, educators, and policy makers that they do the same.

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### ENLARGING THE LANDSCAPE OF SEXUAL PLEASURE

*Good Sex: Feminist Perspectives from the World's Religions*. Edited by Patricia Beattie Jung, Mary E. Hunt, and Radhika Balakrishnan. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001, 220 pages. Cloth, \$50.00; paper, \$20.00.

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That sexual pleasure includes physical and erotic satisfaction is a matter of universal agreement, but can sexual definitions expand to include other pleasures, such as

meaningful work, healthy children, and delivery from racism and violence? "Surely," writes Mary E. Hunt, one of the editors of *Good Sex, Feminist Perspectives from the World's Religions*, "these linkages can only deepen sexual pleasure as commonly appreciated, whereas the severing of them from sex steals energy from struggles for social justice" (p. 172). For example, how "good" can sex feel to a wife trapped in an arranged marriage? Or to a woman forced to conceal herself beneath *hijab* and *chador*? How does not having enough to eat affect the quality of her sexual pleasure? What about fear of excommunication or being beaten, sold, or killed? Can lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered women create conditions for thoroughly good sex in a world that marginalizes them? Questions like these inform this provocative collection of essays, and the emerging discussion exponentially enlarges the navigable landscape of sexual pleasure.

This is not your usual collection of feminist essays. It ventures well beyond deconstructing traditional sexual scripture: that often-revisited litany of genital stimulation and orgasm, intercourse and reproduction, abuse and dysfunction. Rather, this collection views sexual relationship and pleasure through a multidisciplinary, interreligious, global lens. If this sounds like a grand vision, it is. For the most part, it works, producing a kind of intergalactic discourse on good, if not virtuous, sex.

This is not your usual collection of essayists, either. Eleven women from seven faith traditions and eight cultures (Brazil, China, India, Nigeria, Thailand, Turkey, the U.K., and the U.S.) formed a "Good Sex Group," an intellectual collaboration whose focus was "feminist/womanist/mujerist." Meeting periodically at conferences in various parts of the globe, they shared their thinking about sexual norms and practices and critiqued each others' evolving work. The resulting book is divided into three parts: "Creation of Desires," "Prices of Sex," and "Reconstruction of Sexualities." Essay topics range from the sexual implications of dress codes, motherhood, and capitalism to inside perspectives on how the world's major religions conceptualize women as sexual beings. Detailed references and an index make the book particularly useful to scholars.

Several essays concern traditional Roman Catholic sexual scripts. Mary Hunt, a Catholic feminist theologian and author, is cofounder of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER) in Silver Spring, Maryland. She tackles Vatican logic on a number of sexual issues, including the evils of homosexuality and the sanctity of motherhood. For instance, she argues on behalf of lesbian rights, "if one mother is great, why aren't two mothers greater?" (p. 160). Patricia Beattie Jung, another of the book's editors and an associate professor of moral theology at Loyola University, Chicago, points out that the Church's devaluation of sexual pleasure for women represents a deep cultural anomaly well beyond the private sphere of sexual relationships. It undermines women's *jouissance* and ability to relate creatively to the world. A true sexual revolution, she opines, would mean recon-