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SPECIAL SECTION: DSM-5: CLASSIFYING SEX

Becoming Gay? Immigration Policies and the Truth of Sexual Identity

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Abstract Our article is about the new relevance of the category of "the homosexual" in immigration policies. This novelty is paradoxical: while homosexuality had previously been defined exclusively in negative terms, from the point of view of the State, it has now assumed a positive value in the West—since it can be invoked to justify asylum seeking. The argument has two prongs. On the one hand, taking homosexuality into account for immigration control implies a definition of gay identity. On the other, the objects of these policies are also subjects: their own identity is caught up in this transnational process of identification. Fieldwork for this article was conducted in France on binational same-sex couples. However, the new categorization of homosexuality extends far beyond—in Europe and throughout the world. We argue that the politics of identity are not just, and not primarily about identity politics; they have to do both with politics in general and policies in particular.

Keywords Homosexuality · Sexual migration · Immigration policies · Identity · Sexual orientation · DSM-5

Introduction

According to Foucault (1978), homosexuality is a modern invention: "Westphal's famous article of 1870 on 'contrary sexual sensations' can stand as its date of birth" (p. 43). Of course, the French philosopher in no way suggests that gay sex did not exist prior to the new "psychological, psychiatric, medical category of homosexuality"; rather, homosexuality *as we know it* "appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphrodism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species" (p. x). This famous page of the first volume of Foucault's *History of Sexuality* can thus itself stand as the birth certificate of constructivist approaches to sex.

Beyond theoretical controversies about the social construction of sexuality, empirical critiques have also been leveled against this narrative. According to historian Chauncey (1985), Foucault may have exaggerated the importance of medical discourse in defining homosexuality: a half-century later, the new classification was still largely ignored in the United States. A similar question can be raised not only at the beginning, but also at the end of "one hundred years of homosexuality" (Halperin, 1990): its psychiatric declassification in 1973, when it was removed from the DSM, did not in any way lead to the disappearance of the category of homosexuality from social usage.

On the contrary, one might argue that the category has become even more rigid in the last forty years: it is more and more of a norm. This has to do first with the new social model of "coming out," i.e., publically identifying as "gay" (in this text, a generic term that includes lesbians), that has followed "homosexual liberation." It is also related to the international political debate about (so-called) "gay marriage," which implies two discrete categories of individuals defined by their potential conjugality, either same-sex or not. From this perspective, queer critiques of identity can be understood as contemporary reactions against the reinforcement of sexual identification. While in the past medical discourse never erased alternative categorizations of same-sex desire and practices, in the present, homosexuality *as we know it* has survived its psychiatric declassification.

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In 1973, many were dismayed to see homosexuality removed from the DSM by a referendum of the profession: "devising a psychiatric nomenclature turned out to be a matter of politics rather than science" (De Block & Adriaens, 2013, p. 288). But this raises a question: Why oppose the two terms? In fact, the politics of science are but a reminder of the fact that science is always political: psychiatric categories do not exist outside of the social world. This is why one should pay more attention to the role of politics in categorization: knowledge is about power, indeed, but this does not mean that power only resides within knowledge. There is power in political institutions, just as there is power in policies. Both play a role in the categorization of homosexuality.

Of course, many would argue that homosexuality is not a State category, since it has no official statistical existence in the census—neither in North America nor in Europe. However, it would be a mistake to conclude that it has no existence for the State. Homosexuality has legal meaning. For example, in 1986, the United States Supreme Court, in the *Bowers v. Hardwick* decision, for the first time restricted the broad term "sodomy" to homosexual sex, thus leaving out other "unnatural" practices in heterosexual contexts. This legal category is not limited to sexual acts: in the United States, to this day (early 2015), as was the case in France until 2013, the defense of "heterosexual marriage" has contributed to the definition of homosexuality through its exclusion from conjugality.

This article is about the new relevance of the category of "the homosexual" in immigration policies. This novelty is paradoxical: while homosexuality had previously been defined exclusively in negative terms, from the point of view of the Western State, it has now assumed a positive value—since it can be invoked to justify asylum seeking. The argument has two prongs. On the one hand, taking homosexuality into account for immigration control implies a definition of gay identity. On the other, the objects of these policies are also subjects: their own identity is caught up in this transnational process of identification. Indeed, while fieldwork presented in this article concerns France, the new categorization of homosexuality extends far beyond—in Europe and throughout the world.[1] The politics of identity are not just, and not primarily about so-called identity politics; they have to do both with politics in general and policies in particular.

Truth in Sex

The preface to the American edition of *Herculine Barbin* raises a crucial question: "Do we truly need a true sex?" (Foucault, 1980, p. vii). Foucault's argument applies both to sex and sexuality and, therefore, both to the hermaphrodite and the invert. His critique of the sexual regime of truth is twofold. First, in modern times, "everybody [is] to have one and only one sex. Everybody [is] to have his or her primary, profound, determined and determining sexual identity" (Foucault, 1980, p. viii). Second, "it is in the area of sex that we must search for the most secret and profound truths about the individual" and "it is there that we can best discover what he is and what determines him." (Foucault, 1980, p. x). These two dimensions of true sex characterize not only knowledge, but also control of the self—hence, their importance in defining today's sexual politics.

"Our sex harbors what is most true in ourselves" (Foucault, 1980, p. xi), Foucault's idea applies both to individuals and to societies. Immigration policies are thus currently organized around the idea that our national (or even European) truth resides in sex, namely, that how we deal with sex (both with gender and with sexuality) reveals our ultimate truth. This has to do with what can be called "sexual democracy." We live in societies that claim to define their own laws and norms immanently, from within, and no longer from above or beyond, through some transcendent principle (be it God, Nature, or Tradition). This self-definition extends to sex; indeed, sex has become a primary battleground in our societies as it raises the question of the limits of this democratic logic: Does it apply everywhere, to everything, or is sex an exception? This accounts for the political battles about sexual liberty and equality—from same-sex marriage to violence against women, sexual harassment, prostitution, and pornography. Sex becomes our ultimate democratic truth.

Sexual democracy thus implies a critique of existing norms. However, it is a "double-edged sword" (Fassin, 2011a): it can also be used normatively. It has actually been instrumentalized for xenophobic, racist, and Islamophobic purposes to draw a line between "us" and "them" through the opposition between sexual modernity and sexual archaism: while "they" are allegedly sexist and homophobic, "we" are supposed to be good to women (as well as gays and lesbians). It has become a key element in the post-9/11 world: the (so-called) "clash of civilizations" has been reformulated as a sexual one (Fassin, 2006). This international rhetoric has translated into different political logics: while in the United States under George W. Bush it served an imperialist logic of expansion through war, in Europe, it has played a crucial role in immigration policies, that is, in a logic of containment.

Of course, nationalism has long been about sex. The exclusion of women from democratic citizenship was just one aspect among several of this broader story. Historian Mosse (1985) demonstrated in his work how race and sex have been closely intertwined in the definition of modern nations. From this perspective, Jews and homosexuals shared certain (imaginary) features—such as effeminacy. What they had in common, so to speak, was that they did not belong within the virile, modern nation. These multiple exclusions, inseparably sexual and racial, thus defined modern nationalisms at least from the Dreyfus Affair to Nazi Germany.

[1] Fieldwork was conducted in the context of Salcedo's doctoral dissertation on bi-national couples, both same-sex and different-sex, under the supervision of Fassin.

But the terms have changed since the late twentieth century, as "Jews and queers" have turned into positive signifiers of modernity (Bunzl, 2004): "new nationalisms" still racialize homosexuality, but in a completely different, if not opposite sense: it is now about "whiteness." As Dutch scholar Dudink (2011) puts it, "If we want to understand the current sexual nationalism, perhaps we need, in addition to already existing studies of how the Jews, the Italians, and the Irish became white, a study of how homosexuality became white. And it may well be that the specific ways in which the category 'homosexuals' intersected and was co-articulated with the category 'Jews' in post-World War II European culture forms an important part of the becoming white of homosexuality" (pp. 262–263).

The sexualization of the rhetoric of the "clash of civilizations" thus entails a redefinition, not only of nationalism, but also of homosexuality. As a consequence, critics of the former can become critics of the latter from a geopolitical perspective. Massad (2002) unveiled the orientalism (that is, the construction of an exotic "other") inherent in the internationalization of gay rights, parallel to that of women's rights. This is a historical reversal: "While the pre-modern West attacked the Muslim world's alleged licentiousness, the modern West attacks its alleged *repression* of sexual freedoms" (p. 375). Ostensibly, according to this historian, the movement is about liberation, as it defends homosexuals from oppression; "in doing so, however, the Gay international produces an effect that is less than liberatory" (Massad, 2002, p. 373).

The reason behind this paradox is that liberating gays presupposes "an always already homosexualized population." In contradistinction, Massad (2002) argues "that it is the discourse of the Gay international that both produces homosexuals, as well as gays and lesbians, where they do not exist, and represses same-sex desires and practices that refuse to be assimilated into its sexual epistemology" (p. 363). Indeed, the social construction of homosexuality inspired in part by Foucault's writings implies that homosexuality is a historical category: in the phrase "as *we* know it," the first person pronoun is the key; this is about *our* homosexuality, not *theirs*. For there is no universal definition of the homosexual: the historical argument easily translates into a cultural one.

Massad's critique of gay orientalism goes beyond that of the instrumentalization of sexual democracy in the new sexual nationalisms, as it specifically targets the gay movement itself. It has since reverberated among both activists and academics for whom sexual democracy, far from being "double-edged," is only normative, and not critical. While Haritaworn, Tauqir, and Erdem (2008) raised controversy through their denunciation of British gay activist Peter Tatchell as an archetype of "gay imperialism," Puar (2007) coined the term "homonationalism" to account for the new nationalist discourses that have gained ground in gay and lesbian politics. According to this specialist of cultural studies, contrary to common belief, queers are *not* inherently outlaws to the nation-state—on the contrary, they have become the emblem of its supposed "tolerance," thus justifying its actual exclusionary practices—especially in the domain of immigration (Rebucini, 2013).

The Netherlands became the heart of the new European sexual nationalism (Fassin, 2011b), starting with the rise of Pim Fortuyn at the beginning of the 2000s: this flamboyantly gay populist politician promoted a version of Islamophobia premised on the defense of sexual freedom. Dutch immigration services then introduced the suspicion of homophobia as a criterion for rejecting the application of potential migrants—in particular Muslims (Butler, 2008). In other countries, this cooptation of gay rights did not necessarily imply full equality—for example in Germany, or in French President Sarkozy's plea for a narrow, merely heterosexual version of sexual democracy (Fassin, 2010, p. 518).

The geopolitics of sexual democracy has domestic reverberations: the new sexual nationalisms, just like the old ones, are not just about nationals and aliens; they are also about the distinction between "true" nationals and "others" that are suspect on account of their foreign origin—not citizenship. The very same logic that opposes "them" to "us" can play both on the international and on the national stages. This became an issue in France with a controversy surrounding a poster for the 2011 LGBT Pride parade displaying a rooster—the Gallic symbol. Beyond this particular image, the political tension derived both from the new awareness of extreme-right leanings and racist attitudes among some (white) gays, and from the recent media insistence on homophobia in the underprivileged "*banlieues*," the outskirts of big cities where migrants and their descendants are concentrated.

In reaction, the spokeswoman for the *Indigènes de la République,* a French self-described "decolonial" movement, proclaimed in 2012: "We're not interested in the debate on marriage for all." Among non-White populations of immigrant origin, she argued, "there are ways to deal with homosexuality that are most intimate, not in the least public, without any political claims"; by contrast, "gay circles, on the whole, tend to consider that if you're gay, then, coming out is required, along with the political demands that go with it." She went on to denounce "gay imperialism," as well as "homonationalism, which I prefer to call homoracialism" (Fassin, 2014, p. 294). Clearly, whether internationally or domestically, the very definition of gay identity has become a political issue.

The Truth of Sexuality

Foucault (1980) suggested that psychoanalysis owed its "cultural vigor" to the fact that it "promises us at the same time our sex, our true sex, and that whole truth about ourselves which secretly keeps vigil in it" (p. xi). Conversely, by locating truth in sex, politics leads to another question with policy implications: the truth of sex. This is a particularly crucial issue for "sexual migrations" or, more specifically, what could be called "homosexual migrations" (in particular since a 2004 European

Council directive has included sexual minorities among groups protected from persecution). Indeed, when controlling the genuineness of binational couples, the issue is very different whether they are of the same sex or not. The question raised by authorities for heterosexual couples is that of "true love," that is, the authenticity of feelings; they are exposed to the suspicion of fake marriages (so-called "green card" unions or the French category of "*mariages blancs*"). This is why defense associations such as *Les Amoureux au ban public* insist on presenting them as "lovers" (Salcedo, 2015).

Homosexual couples also have to establish the truth of their claim to sexual migration: they have to prove that their sexual motivation is not merely a pretext to hide the real goal—migration itself. However, the issue is not "true love" (as is the case for different-sex couples) but "true identity": the point is to establish that claimants are genuinely gay. Sex is to be understood here as sexuality: when claiming asylum as a woman, establishing the reality of sexist persecution is the only requirement; by contrast, sexual minorities first have to prove their identity. What goes without saying in terms of gender becomes moot in terms of sexuality. The reason is simple: while sex seems self-evident, proving homosexuality is anything but straightforward.

At first sight, things may seem easy enough: homosexuality is defined by same-sex desire. It is true that there are arguments against this simple premise. According to Chauncey (1994), in early twentieth-century New York, gender (not sexuality) defined homosexuality: contrary to effeminate ones, "true men" could have sex with other men without identifying or being identified as "gay." However, migration authorities need not bother with the complexities of social construction. Still, a difficulty remains: for the purpose of immigration control, since minors are supposed to be protected from deportation, age is sometimes measured in the applicant's skeleton; but there is no such thing as a "gay bone." Some scientists link gayness to the brain—but only with post mortem evidence (LeVay, 1993). How is gayness to be established in vivo? In the years 2000, the Czech Republic resorted to a phallometric test to verify the gayness of applicants for asylum: being aroused by straight porn excluded them—until this treatment was firmly denounced by the European Union as degrading, regardless of consent ("The Practice of 'Phallometric Testing'", 2010).

Nevertheless, the logic is interesting, as it reveals the difficulties of such testing. Leaving aside gender (lesbians are not subjected to the test), the first point is the implication that there is no such thing as bisexuality, nor any ambiguity of desire in either group. It is assumed, first, that straight men will react positively to straight porn, despite the distaste some might express and, second, that gay men will not. This presupposes that there is nothing queer about straight porn—despite the fact that the pornographic gaze (and practice) is centered on the phallus (Trachman, 2013). Interestingly, the test does not rely on gay porn; lack of arousal is what is being tested. Could it be that the Czech authorities worried that gay porn might provoke the arousal of men who are not "truly" gay, thus opening wide the doors of the country to straight migrants?

If not desire, what else might reliably define homosexuality? If not the proof of sexual practice, such as sex videos which gay couples sometimes provide to the courts (Lewis, 2014), at least, sexual knowledge is one element: in UK courts, women have been "asked about sex positions." But if judges are to avoid intrusive questions violating the applicant's intimacy (Kobelinsky, 2012), then their queries may have to do with queer culture—albeit somewhat naively: "Several women described being asked what shows they watched, whether they read Oscar Wilde, how many Gay Pride marches they attended and which gay clubs they frequented. One woman described how the immigration judge commented that she did not look like a lesbian while another was told in court that she could not be a lesbian because she had two children" (Bennett & Thomas, 2013, p. 26). While they were previously required to remain "discrete" (even by the courts), lesbians are now expected to be recognizable as lesbians.

As a result, "under pressure to conform to Western stereotypes, some women felt under pressure to change their look and dress in a way described as 'more butch'" (Bennett & Thomas, 2013, p. 28). In order to enter the West as gays or lesbians, men and women are expected to look and behave like Western gays or lesbians. However, they should not overdo it either. In Australia, "If you are too scripted, then you are considered to be as rehearsed as a 'Kabuki actor'" (Raj, 2012). For example, "In 2011, a lesbian asylum seeker from Uganda had her claim rejected, because her relationship with another woman was considered suspect. According to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship delegate, she 'had merely adopted the persona of a homosexual' for a protection visa. The applicant, however, responded: 'I have kept my homosexuality private in Uganda because I fear for my life. It is for this reason that I did not directly associate with or join lesbian groups.' What a Catch-22," concludes a branch president of Amnesty International Australia: "either you are too gay, or you are not gay enough" (Raj, 2012). One definitely has to walk a thin line to look authentically gay.

Of course, there is something profoundly paradoxical about this new requirement. Until recently, homosexuality was not assumed to have anything to do with "truth;" on the contrary, it was supposed to be "false." It was about masks, secrets, and deceptions. Of course, this was not due to some "nature" of homosexuality but the logical consequence of homophobia: the "double life" was a way to avoid the stigma of homosexuality. But the result was that homosexuality could be associated with treacherousness—if not treason: some historians have recently revealed the homosexual (or homophobic) dimension of the Dreyfus Affair, alongside its well-known Jewish (or anti-Semitic) one (Gervais, Huret, & Peretz, 2008), just as others have shown similar parallels in the United States in the context of McCarthyism (D'Emilio, 1983; Johnson, 2004). Homosexuals

were untrue and their untruthfulness made them suspects, if not traitors.

In the past, the suspicions thus concerned seemingly straight men who were actually homosexual. But now that the new imperative is for gays and lesbians to step out openly into the world, instead of remaining closeted, the suspicion is reversed: it is directed against self-claimed gay men who are, in fact, heterosexual. The problem is not "fake heterosexuals" any longer, but "fake homosexuals," as if pretending to be gay was now more likely than the opposite. The novelty of this search for "true homosexuality" has to do with the new nationalisms evoked earlier, and with the parallel surge in political homophobia in the South, in particular in Africa (Broqua, 2012). Instead of a handicap, homosexuality can thus become an asset, albeit a paradoxical one, in migrations towards the North, which explains the inversion of the politics of truth.

Imposing Identities

The politics (and geopolitics) of identity serve as a reminder that truth is about power and power about truth. However, one should bear in mind Foucault's own definition: power does not only say no. It should not be defined solely in negative terms; it is to be understood positively. It is not just repressive but also creative; today, it has to do, not so much with prohibition, but with production. For this definition makes even more sense as we shift, to borrow Foucault's terms, from the old regime of sovereignty (the power to "make die") to the modern one of biopolitics (the power to "make live"): regulating populations and disciplining bodies implies fashioning and refashioning subjectivities (Foucault, 1978). The question of sexual truth is not to be understood merely as an obstacle erected by authorities on the path to migration; at the same time, it functions, as modern power always does, in a way that informs and transforms subjects—in this instance, "homosexuals."

What does it mean to identify as "gay," "lesbian," or "queer" in the contemporary context of migrations? In order to answer this question, one needs a shift of emphasis—from the perspective of the State to the experience of the subject. This is not about the truth of identity, but rather about the reality of identification. The point of view is not that of the judicial expert trying to determine authentic, genuine gayness, but that of the ethnographer, attempting to assess what it means for migrants to be exposed to the "police of identity" in charge of establishing the truth of their sexual orientation—just as bi-national heterosexual couples are submitted, in particular in France, to the investigations of the "police of love" that controls amorous truth.

"And suddenly I became a lesbian!" A young Jamaican woman ironically marvels at the brave new identity imposed upon her by the legal logic in Britain when she applied for asylum (Giametta, 2014). What her exclamation reveals is that sexual truth has meaning, not only for authorities, but also for the women (and men) who have become sexual refugees in the West (or North): they have to fit categories that make sense from an administrative perspective, though not necessarily from their own. As far as they are concerned, the problem with truth is not lying or being lied to, as would be the case from the point of view of immigration authorities, but being denied their own terms of self-definition and having to comply with expectations of gayness.

This is a crucial issue in the political interpretation of the new sexual tolerance (at least in official discourse) of countries of destination for these migrants. Two opposite narratives are currently available (Awondo, 2010, 2012), which both have to do with truth. The first one is consistent with this liberal discourse: sexual migration is about emancipation and authorities only need to check whether sexual orientation is the real motivation of migrants. There is "truth" in this first narrative: many flee persecution incurred on account of their sexual mores, regardless of definition. However, the alternative narrative highlights, not only the self-serving (and condescending) logic of such a "liberation," but also its costs in terms of personal identity for subjects who are the objects of these policies. And indeed, there is "truth" in this second narrative as well: subjects do feel obligated to betray what they sometimes call their "real nature" to play the (Western) part of the homosexual.

In parallel to these two opposite political narratives, there are also two different theoretical models available in the social sciences. The first one emphasizes cultural difference. This anthropological perspective is consistent with the theoretical premises of "social construction": there is no universal meaning of gayness, transcending history and context, and definitions differ depending on understandings of sexuality, as well as gender. Among men in particular, studies of same-sex practices and desires in non-Western societies, as well as in the West prior to "homosexual liberation," delineate a model based on the opposition between passive and active roles, rather than on object-choice. This is true from Mexico (and more broadly Latin America) to Morocco (and more generally the Maghreb) (Murray, 1995; Rebucini, 2009). Speaking of "men having sex with men" is thus a way of avoiding the imposition of categories that are foreign to the experience of subjects from other cultures.

The second one insists on the globalization of sex (Altman, 2001)—and therefore of sexual identities. Indeed, "gays" are on the forefront of this movement: not only has tourism long been an integral part of homosexual culture, even prior to "gay liberation," but today, the culture of the internet offers anonymous expression to those who are publically repressed. In and out of the closet, homosexuality (especially male) has thus gone global: does it not speak the language of globalization, as attested by the spread of an American English lexicon (from "queer" to "pride," not to forget the word "gay" itself)? The internationalization, not only of sexual scripts, but also of sexual identities, can become an object of study.

While the risk of the former model is culturalism (as if homosexuals from different countries lived on different planets), the

danger of the latter is cultural imperialism (as if local cultures dissolved in the cosmopolitan wave of globalization). Of course, social scientists have been aware of these twin perils mirroring each other and they have tried to develop more sophisticated, "glocalized" models that go beyond this binary opposition. Sociologist Carrillo (2002) has thus pursued his earlier work on "cultural change and hybridity" in Mexico to emphasize the complexity of sexual identities in the context of male migrations to the United States (see also Carrillo & Fontdevila, 2014).

First, Carrillo argues that pre-migration homosexuality is more diverse than has generally been assumed: it cannot be reduced to a "pre-modern" model. While some men who have sex with men are indeed defined in terms of gender, others are already "gay," that is, defined by their sexuality. Second, post-migration homosexuality also remains diverse: while many transform or adapt to "modern" gayness (by United States standards), others resist such changes. The consequences are twofold: on the one hand, there is no cultural homogeneity, whether pre- or post-migration; on the other, migration does not impose a "gay" definition of homosexual identity. In a word, according to Carrillo, thinking in terms of the opposition between "modern" and "pre-modern" definitions of gay identity becomes irrelevant—if not counterproductive.

Negotiating Identification

While this effort to make room for fluidity and complexity is particularly welcome, as it helps to undo binary classifications, it also suggests that one might go further: Is it not possible to think about identity without resorting to the notion of truth which underlies classificatory thinking? Indeed, the object of study may become what people do—not any longer who they are. As a consequence, if what we analyze are practices, rather than cultures, can we not shift towards a different model as we move from "identities" to "identifications"?

If we start with an attempt to rethink the status of interpretation, truth is not just the concept that underlies immigration policies; it is also at work in the social science studies of sexual migration. In both cases, however, truth requires interpretation. But what if, instead of being mere objects of interpretation, migrants were to be considered as interpreting subjects as well? They classify themselves just as they are classified. They interpret who they are as much as they are interpreted. Furthermore, interpretation is not to be understood only in hermeneutic terms; it also has to do with performance. Migrants interpret a role as they try to embody a part for those who interpret and categorize them—not only in public, but also in their private lives. Performing is part and parcel of intimacy (Butler, 1990).

In order to elaborate this point, it is time to present two interviews we conducted jointly in 2010 in Paris, as part of Salcedo's doctoral fieldwork. The idea is to treat the interview ethnographically, that is, to analyze not only the information provided but also the scene unfolding before our eyes—paying attention both to the relationship between the two interviewees and to the rapport established with both interviewers. It is worth emphasizing the methodological choice to conduct the interview with a couple *as such,* together instead of separately. The question of identity can thus be approached without the illusion that it is purely individual; here, it is staged relationally. Homosexuality, just like heterosexuality, has to do with relationships.

This is especially true in the case of bi-national couples: the legal recognition of the migrant as a homosexual involves both members of the couple. Actually, it can become one of the issues that define the couple—as is apparent in our conversation with Karim and Damien. The latter, a Frenchman, is somewhat younger than the former, his Algerian partner (at the time, 39 compared to 46), contrary to most of the same-sex couples encountered during Salcedo's research: older Frenchmen with much younger migrants (Salcedo, 2013). To fully grasp the difference, we can start with another interview we conducted at the time, also with two men—Christian, a well-to-do Frenchman who used to live in West Africa, and Ayo from Benin, then respectively 55 and 27. While Salcedo encountered many others during fieldwork, these two same-sex couples serve to illustrate distinct models—and the fact that both are male eschews the misleading assumption that this difference is due to gender.

The year before the interview, Christian transferred to Paris with Ayo; he now financed the young man's studies in the field of tourism in a private school. In Cotonou, the capital city of Benin, Ayo worked in construction. He was part of the "gay community": he organized parties such as "Mr. Gay" and "Miss Gay." When he met Christian through a website (Gayromeo), he already led the gay life—in fact, a "double life": while it was impossible to be openly gay, one could live with other young men who passed as "cousins." Not so with a white man. Whiteness is associated with gayness because it makes gayness visible: "bad manners" are allegedly "white manners," foreign to African culture. Moving in with Christian made him gay in the eyes of his family and friends and thus alienated him from them. This is why he left Benin with Christian: Ayo knew he "had nothing to lose any longer." While, "contrary to many Africans," he never had "fantasies" about Europe, Paris then became an opportunity for him: he need not hide anymore. Ayo's story thus fits the classic narrative of "gay liberation" from his culture, though it complicates it: he was "gay" before he met Christian—which means that he had already "come out" in the gay world. He now had to "come out" to (and also of) the straight world.

Karim and Damien's narrative is quite different—just like their relationship. First, is Karim a sexual migrant? He first left Algeria in 2004 for political reasons (due to threats related to his involvement in a Berber movement). Homosexuality only came second—if not later: he met Damien (an artist in show business with high connections) in 2007, and they contracted a civil union (*PaCS*) in 2009. While in Algeria, Karim was not openly "gay"—but people knew he was "interested." At the same time as he fled his country, Karim apparently quit politics: migration (so to

speak) privatized him. Damien reminds him of his words at the time: "As you told me many times, 'now I'm going to start taking care of myself'." At the same time, the French partner does take care of the Algerian one—in particular for the paperwork. Karim failed to obtain refugee status on political grounds but at the time of our interview, he is about to be granted a "green card" on grounds of "private, family life" thanks to his civil union with Damien.

In that sense, he has become, or he has to become gay—which definitively closes the door to life in Algeria: there is no turning back. But does Karim *identify* as gay? One thing is clear: while some in his family must suspect that his French roommate is also his partner, he still has not said a word to his mother: "On the phone, she says: 'Son, you should get married'." Does this mean that he is "in the closet"? That is clearly Damien's point of view: "When you came to France, the homosexual issue was very much hidden." And even now, Karim barely utters the word: "He's only started saying it a year ago. He didn't dare—even in discussions with the attorney. I had to tease him—and eventually he said it." It is worth bearing in mind that Karim is expected by the administration to produce evidence of his homosexuality. Joining a gay association that supports homosexual migrants was part of the process. "We were almost at the stage of 'I'm gay,' Damien explains; speaking for Karim (once more), he adds: "It now feels good to say 'I am gay'."

According to Damien, the problem is cultural homophobia, despite the prevalence of sex between men in Algeria: "The way they do it there—hypocritically." Karim does not deny this: "Men in my generation, they marry and more than 50 % have sex with other men while married." But for him, this is not mere hypocrisy: beyond repression, there is a cultural difference. In Algeria, "There are no homosexuals. It's as if you said you love children. Gay? That does not exist. What we have are so-called transvestites, who are very effeminate." Damien compares Algeria to the traditional Corsica of his childhood: both are macho cultures. To him, this explains why women in the French suburbs wear Islamic veils as a form of protection against men. Gender reflects (but also reverberates on) sexuality: "The way they experience it over there, unsophisticated and macho." Does this mean that a cultural gap separates the two men? "Part of him is universal, so I've understood him from the start," marvels Damien: "It's more like mutual recognition, we are a little like brothers."

When Karim acknowledges his reluctance, something else surfaces: "I cannot say this: 'I am a homo.' I lie." ("Sometimes he lies," rejoins Damien.) "I say I am bisexual. I like both." During the interview, however, this "bisexuality" becomes much more than a word—it cannot be reduced to (what both men call) a "lie." Sex with women has played and still plays an important role in Karim's life. However, both men claim this heterosexual life has to do with self-interest: Damien talks about "telling women he was bisexual to get work," while Karim evokes sex "with people in high positions who can give me a job. I meet women who run cafés or restaurants—they're the bosses. I lie, but in order to get something." It is worth noting the difference in understanding: for Damien, who suggests that these confused women are anything but desirable, straight sex is dictated by Karim's interest, while gay sex is a matter of desire. But interest in men is not disinterested either, according to Karim's narrative: he evokes a Frenchwoman that "raised" (and brutalized) him for over 2 years, while he "made love" with her husband, a rich Kabyle man (who employed him).

A question could be raised, though: Why presuppose that love must be disinterested? And why presume that interest is necessarily devoid of desire? (Zelizer, 2009). On the one hand, the love shared by the two men does not mean that either forgets how useful the Frenchman can be for his Algerian partner. Damien jokes that, in dealings with the administration, he conveniently looks like the perfect "son-in-law"! Conversely, the fact that Karim instrumentalizes sex with women (and men) does not mean he cannot also be generous with them: "There is a woman who likes him very much, the wife of a colleague, he used to go to her place because it was easier for work; now he is the one helping her to put together an application for a disability pension." Could it be that, from Karim's perspective, heterosexual and homosexual relationships are not entirely different—they both combine love and interest? This was implied by Damien's decision once his lover was denied asylum on political grounds: "Ok, let's stop this woman thing, let's get a civil union (*Pacs*)!"

What both men recognize is that married men can be interested in women. What Damien has more difficulty acknowledging is that a gay partner can also be interested in women. He wants to believe that his lover is *truly* gay so that theirs is a *true* relationship—based on desire, not interest. Karim's hesitation to embrace a gay identity may thus question their relationship: "Sometimes in our intimate moments, I say, 'Hey, who are you with, now, how am I? Am I a woman? Do I wear a wig?" That Karim should identify as gay is not just about himself; it is also about his couple with Damien. Identification is not merely individual; it is also conjugal. It defines a relationship as well as a subject. This accounts for the importance of performance: Karim has to perform gayness, not only for the sake of the administration and the legal system, but also for the lover who enables him to legalize his status in France through their gay relationship—and when we meet, for both interviewees, our presence as interviewers validates the truth of the performance.

Discussion

Beyond Truth

Categories such as homosexuality exist outside the DSM and beyond sexology. They have to do not only with knowledge, but

also with power—including that of the State, which was the starting point of this article focusing on the (gay) subjects of immigration policies. Even outside the psychiatric logic, however, the question of truth remains crucial. Our article is thus an attempt to reflect on the politics of truth in the context of so-called "sexual migration." In so doing, we have tried to qualify the argument about "gay imperialism." While it is important to acknowledge how immigration policies do tend to universalize gayness, and thus impose their (Western) "truth," it is also necessary to avoid assuming that this political truth distorts a cultural one—that of the origin, considered as "truly" true. Gayness is not universal; but the categorization of homosexuality is universally about power. This is what "liberationist" ideologies deny; but culturalist versions of "anti-imperialism" are under the spell of a symmetrical illusion. For such is the lesson of Foucault: sex is never outside power.

In addition to this critical argument, we have sketched an alternative theoretical approach in order to avoid the discourse of truth—or rather, by including it in our object. Interpreting the truth of sexuality is not just a problem for psychiatry and the State; classifying sex is not only a question for the social sciences. It is also relevant for the subjects that are the objects of all these discourses: defining themselves is at stake, since self-interpretation and mutual interpretation are crucial for them as well. This explains our shift of focus from identity to identification. We do not claim to know what people truly are; we do not classify them. For example, we have no answer to the question: Is Karim truly gay or genuinely bisexual? We cannot say whether he belongs to the Algerian sexual culture he came from or the French one that he has migrated to. What we do analyze, though, is how people like him negotiate their identities, not only with the State, not just with their cultural environment, but also through their relationships. We do not assume that subjects have a "true" sexual identity prior to their practices of identification nor do we suppose that their identities are imposed by cultural norms. Identification is a matter of negotiation. However, it is not a compromise between a personal truth and a social constraint. What we suggest instead is that identification is how subjectivation works.

This is why we borrow the concept of "performance" from feminist philosopher Butler: performing sex (be it gender or sexuality) does not mean that the performance is merely a part, a role, like a garment that one can just don or discard. Performativity means that the subject is transformed by his or her practices: such is the meaning of subjectivation. Truth does not precede the performance, no more than identity preexists identification. We neither claim nor deny that Karim was, or became, "truly" gay. We have no desire to categorize him. We propose a different perspective. The particular context of sexual migration reveals a different logic that applies more generally: subjects are what they do. Their "truth" is defined, not by an essential identity, but by their practices of identification.

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