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(Homo)Sexual Politics

"Identity and sexual politics are not issues defined by particular sexual preferences."

(Leo Bersani)

Theory and Practice

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On an April evening in 1997, several Hungarian gay and other human rights activists came together to listen to Agnes Heller, a Hungarian-born social philosopher who was invited by the Habeas Corpus Workgroup to speak about her views concerning sexual and gender identities. At the end of the meeting questions were raised by participants about the necessity of homosexual identities, and as far as I remember, there was only one general agreement reached: everyone should be able to create and use his or her self-definition. This paper will focus on special forms of self-definitions connected to homosexuality (gayness,

queerness, homo-ness, same-sex desire, etc.), and the context in which they can become politically activated.

I once read that "integration of homosexuality does not mean anything when the concept of homosexuality itself is not given theoretical and practical contents" (Hekma and van der Meer 1992: 128). Although in the original context integration was meant to be integration into Dutch society, I am now using it as a reminder to integrate homosexuality into this paper by attempting to provide the concept with theoretical and practical contents.

DEFINING HOMOSEXUAL POLITICS

The main question is if it is relevant at all to speak about homosexual (or gay, and maybe queer) politics, especially in Hungary. To answer this question, we should first make the question meaningful. In a broad sense homosexual politics can be defined as a symbolic space to challenge definitions, descriptions, discourses and categories which structure social space in ways disadvantageous to homosexuals, i.e., people who identify themselves and/or identified by others as homosexuals. Idealtypically the actors in homosexual politics are homosexual subjects whose homosexual identities imply necessary references to the social category and meanings of homosexuality. Homosexuality without a homosexual subject is purely a specific form of human sexual behavior which can be practiced by anyone. In this context, same-sex erotic experience is not relevant to what we call homosexual politics.

Homosexuality with a homosexual subject was first scientifically documented in modern sex research as one of the extreme poles of Kinsey's sexual orientation continuum. However, by definition it was impossible to separate this homosexuality from other transitional sexual subjects whose existence must be implied in such continuum. In addition, it can be questioned if a Kinsey-type one-dimensional approach – still centered around the basic opposition of heterosexuality and homosexuality – is sufficient in describing the complexity of sexuality.

From the 1970's, several social psychologists have suggested that "homosexuality and heterosexuality may be separate, orthogonal erotic dimensions rather than opposite extremes of a single, bipolar dimension" (Storms 1980: 785). It was also emphasized that masculinity and femininity are not exclusive attachments of one or the other sex, instead they should be conceptualized as a dualism: "each a separate, socially desirable component in both sexes" (Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp 1975: 38). According to Kessler and McKenna, the basis of hetero/homosexual classification is the gender attributing process that is rooted in the reproductive dichotomy usually claimed to be universal. They also pointed out that "scientists construct dimorphism where there is continuity" (Kessler and McKenna 1978: 163). In the light of these observations we can argue that individuals can have homosexual and heterosexual as well as masculine and feminine characteristics all at the same time, which makes it increasingly problematic to find the ideal subject for homosexual politics.

THE MEANING OF HOMOSEXUALITY

The meaning of homosexuality – like that of gender, which is formed by equally significant components: gender identity reflecting one's own feelings *vis-à-vis* gender attribution by others (cf. Kessler and McKenna 1978) – can only be fully recovered if we take into account both the *self-identification* and the *attribution* aspects.

Examining homosexuality in the context of identification, the core concept is that of *homosexual identity*. "A concept in need of definition" was the title of Vivienne Cass' article on the topic, which can be rephrased as "a concept with too many definitions." For example, in this article alone five meanings of homosexual identity are listed: 1. defining oneself as gay; 2. a sense of self as gay; 3. image of self as homosexual; 4. the way the homosexual person is; 5. consistent behavior in relation to homosexually related activity (cf. Cass 1984: 108). Examining these meanings could reveal the possibility for different sets of self-perceptions regarding the social category of homosexuals. Their main elements are knowledge of a group in society called homosexuals as well as personal interpretations of homosexual experience. Too many meanings is only one of the problems which make the concept of homosexual identity difficult to apply. Another, possibly even more bothersome question is what the homosexual identity can be contrasted with. The concept of homosexual identity implies a necessary reference to the social category of homosexuality. However if we want to focus on the social category of heterosexuality as a necessary reference for a possible concept of heterosexual identity, there is hardly anything to use. In addition, we can mention the common experience of everyday life, the needless assertion of a person's heterosexuality: "person" implies heterosexual without indication to the contrary. And yet the normal person is not 'heterosexual' in any defining sense; he engages in heterosexual activity from time to time but hardly any information about his or her character, behavior, lifestyle or interest is inferable from this fact" (Boswell 1990: 161).

Homosexual identity is a cognitive construction and its preliminary condition is the possibility of learning about the category of homosexuality, thus the missing conceptualization of heterosexual identity can be explained by the relative lack of knowledge about the heterosexual social category. According to Jonathan Katz, not studying heterosexuality means the admission of its privileged, normative state in comparison to homosexuality: "Such privileging of the norm accedes to its domination, protecting it from questions" (Katz 1990: 8). In consequence, it does not seem to make too much sense to talk about 'the' homosexual identity (or 'the' heterosexual identity); instead we should interpret homosexuality as a situational self-concept component. Still, there are situations in which one feels that s/he is perceived by others specifically as homosexual. These are usually conflict situations in which the extensive relational aspects of the participants are reduced to one, the sexual aspect – usually in order to relativize or highlight the power balance between the parties. The essence of this mechanism seems to be a vicious circle: reducing the whole into a salient part (the salience of which is quite relative and questionable itself), and recreating it again into a whole. This is the recipe to produce a social stigma from homosexuality and dehumanized beings from homosexuals (cf. Goffman 1963).

Thus in defining someone as homosexual, that is, in the formation of *perceived homosexual identity* (cf. Cass 1984; Troiden 1988), the emphasis is on the interaction between the defined and the definer where encounters between them can be seen as "exchanges" between groups with differential access to power" (Plummer 1975: 21), and homosexual identities as outcomes of differently interpreted power games. If we take for granted the existence of the 'homosexual' and 'heterosexual' categories, argues James Weinrich, it gives power to the creators of the definitions: "After all, 'define and conquer' is a strategy used at least since the time of Adam" (Weinrich 1990: 176). In the context of power relations, homosexual identities – even if they are only 'fictions' – can be seen not only as consequences of stigmatization but also as specific means applied to reintegrate the stigmatized part into the whole human being. This way, 'perceived homosexual identities' can become actively functioning, openly 'presented identities' (cf. Cass 1984; Troiden 1988).

There are, of course, many who do not want to play this 'dehumanization-rehumanization' game, and prefer to stay out of it (which in some cases is equal to staying passively within its frames or in other cases to refusing its legitimacy) – but surely, if one decides to win the game, one has to follow its rigid rules and make the best of it. In this sense, homosexual group identities were created by players who thought that united forces could be more effective than individual attempts. Thus homosexual group identities can be interpreted on the one hand as forms of strategy to gain resources and rights, but on the other hand as visible proof of the 'true nature' of the homo/heterosexual category division.

"How do you protest a socially imposed categorization except by organizing around the category?" (Epstein 1990: 254). In this case group formation is an especially useful strategy because a real category is not even needed to be organized around: the production of homosexual group identities is more about identifying with other group members than with the homosexual category, where the main idea is to perceive the other group members as 'one of us' – whatever this 'us' means. In this sense we can agree that "difference from the 'norm' is about all that many people in the 'gay community' have in common with each other" (Louise Sloan, cited by Duggan 1992: 18). However, this difference should not be mistaken for an omnipotent unifying force, especially if we consider how unanalyzed the norm is, and how little is actually known about the people labeled by the collective noun, 'homosexual'.

Let us now briefly examine homosexuality from another viewpoint, that of *attributing processes*. In this context I will focus on those phenomena which surround the social functioning of the term 'homosexual': stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination. We can think of stereotypes as "category-based expectations," prejudice as "personal disposition or response orientation toward a particular social group" and discrimination as "differential behavior directed toward individuals or groups as a function of category membership" (cf. Brewer 1994: 317). These phenomena have multiple functions including the promotion of *cognitive economy* (complexity reduction), *ego protection* (anxiety reduction), and *socialization*.

Earlier, especially in studies of ethnic stereotypes, more individualized explanatory models were applied with emphasis on complexity and anxiety reduction needs, and with very little or no attention paid to the social fitting function. From these studies we could learn about, for example, certain types of personality – the authoritarian, the prejudiced (cf. Allport 1958) – and their sometimes pathologically described traits. Following this pattern, most of the research on attitudes toward homosexuality centered around personalized characteristics and concentrated on the interpersonal level of analysis while the exploration of the social context (the intergroup level) was almost totally neglected. Additionally, there is a real problem with prejudice against homosexuals, which is the impossibility to define its objective meanings: "There exist only a range of different ideological positions each positing its own definition of what constitutes a 'prejudiced' attitude towards homosexuals" (Kitzinger 1987: 156). Definitions of prejudice thus very much depend on the ideological context, and the motivations of 'experts' creating the definitions are at least as important as their findings.

In comparison with prejudicial disposition, discriminatory behavior is a more 'tangible asset' to tackle. Discrimination is often viewed simply on the interpersonal level as the behavioral component of individual prejudice. According to this logic, first there must be prejudice and then discrimination follows, while in reality we have to recognize their interactions: prejudice does not only support but also stems from the institutionally restrictive arrangements of a society. As Pettigrew argues, "institutionalized discrimination is the core of the problem" (Pettigrew 1986: 172), and this underlines the importance of intergroup analysis where discrimination can reflect the different access of social groups to resources and power (cf. Brewer 1994: 319).

Problems deriving from the fluid meaning of individual prejudice can be avoided by considering discrimination more as a type of intergroup behavior than as an interpersonal one (cf. Tajfel 1978). In this context the basis of interactions is not the personality but the group membership: members of the outgroup are likely to be seen in a homogenized way, as an undifferentiated mass detached from social existence. The detachment of outgroup members from commonly shared social life is generated by (and certainly also generates) *stereotypes*. Stereotypes are descriptions about what outgroup members are like. They can function both in individual and in social contexts, but their contents mediate characteristics of intergroup behavior: applying stereotypes to someone is equal to "robbing that person of his or her individuality" and substituting it with attributes believed to be collectively shared in an outgroup (cf. Snyder and Miene 1994: 34). Gardner points out the significance of consensually defined stereotypes which have much social support because of their seemingly cognitive basis. Their contents thus can be perceived more like facts than beliefs; in this sense "cognitive factors rather than motivational ones underline stereotypes about outgroups" (Gardner 1994: 19). For example, years ago a Hungarian police department officer made the

following public statement: "One thousand homosexuals can annually seduce about 10,000 fourteen- to eighteen-year-old boys or more. It can lead to there being ever more homosexuals, i.e., those men who do not produce descendants for the future."¹ Once these kinds of stereotypes are established with a negative evaluative connotation, they can be used in justifying discrimination.

Therefore, stereotypical attributions as specific forms of categorization and part of people's usual cognitive activity can be seen as expressions of a group's cultural beliefs. These attributions seem to operate on the ready-made base of social categories, and say more in our case about the socio-cultural background of the heterosexual society than about the homosexuals. In fact, we can argue that homosexuality was created as a heterosexual concept (gaining social meanings only in relation to heterosexuality), thus in this sense the *homosexualization of homosexuality* is the main goal of homosexual politics. However, this is a valid goal only as far as sexuality is still considered to be fully heterosexualized.

ACTORS IN THE HUNGARIAN (HOMO)SEXUAL-POLITICAL ARENA

Homeros-Lambda

In Hungary there are three homosexual organizations which are officially recognized by the state. *Homeros-Lambda* is the oldest (formed in 1988) and its pioneer character determined its main task: to reduce the shock it caused in society. By now, Homeros has gained a slightly old-fashioned reputation, as its members are relatively old, and it has practically no activity at all. Homeros is best characterized by its psychiatrist president's views according to which homosexuality is a primarily psychologically and partly biologically determined condition. Starting from the Freudian concept of the "polimorph pervert child," he argues that the dominant mother figure has the greatest responsibility for involving her son in her "unhappy and usually frigid world, always complaining to him about men, and in this way forcing him to identify with her."²

From the statutes of Homeros we learn that "about five percent of our country's population is homosexual (including lesbians), differing from the rest of society only in their sexual habits. In the case of such a sizable minority, hiding sexual tendencies is not desirable in any case, but in the present situation it is especially dangerous considering the fact that AIDS first appeared exactly in this minority's circles" (Homeros Statutes 1988). The main purpose of the association was to promote the social integration of homosexuals by organizing leisure activities as well as introducing AIDS prevention measures. Homeros has entered Hungarian public life by using a set of essentialist arguments focusing on the biologically and/or universally given essence of homosexuality (connected to psychological defects, genes, hormones, temptations, etc.). This set of claims, inherited from theology and medical science, seemed to be a useful compass to navigate the "swampy sexual landscape" (Weeks 1995: 3). Additionally, there is a double function of essentialism: on one hand, it can play a

1 The quotation is from a book with the tendentious title *Homosexual Murderers*, written in 1990 by Károly Martinkó who – according to his own introduction – was led "only by the wish to warn parents and teachers because if they pay more attention in the future, fewer boys will become homosexual."

2 Interview with Dr. Lajos Romsauer, psychiatrist (*Homeros* 1991: 3).

strategic role in homosexual legitimization, but on the other hand, it can also strengthen people's "dependence on experts and authorities for guidance" (Tiefer 1990: 320). The precondition for this 'good for gays – good for experts' function is that categories of sexual orientation are not questioned, but based on objective and stable properties.

Lambda-Budapest

The second organization, *Lambda-Budapest*, was founded in 1991 by a small circle of younger people who parted from the Homeros mainly because they wanted to publish their own magazine, *Mások*. Their main concern is still to publish the magazine and thus their major role is to serve the gay public by spreading information in the form of news, ads and advertising. The magazine, the only one of its kind in the country, provides gays with possible means of creating their symbolic environment and of maintaining the appearance of a gay movement.

The original program of *Mások* published in the first issue could be summarized as follows: the magazine wanted to represent homosexual life in its entirety, and in a manner which could empower those who face their otherness only with great difficulty. In a later issue of the same year, the five main forms of discrimination were listed with which Hungarian gays had to cope. These were: limited career opportunities (homosexuals cannot be teachers or soldiers in Hungary); different age of consent for heterosexual and homosexual relations; records on homosexuals at official places (like police departments, venereal disease clinics); publications generating hatred against homosexuals; no state subvention for homosexual organizations leading to the impossibility of representing a Hungarian 'minority of a few hundred thousand people'.

Since then, the debates over discrimination have lost their dynamic: by 1997 the basic tone of *Mások* describing the Hungarian situation seems to be more optimistic (and there are more imported bad news stories from other countries). The structure of grievances has also changed. Claiming state subvention for minority groups (and in this case the ethnically modeled minority status itself can also be disputed) does not seem to be a valid reference point any more in a situation where minority interests are mainly represented in and mostly referred to by private foundations and NGOs. Claims for protection against hate-inciting publications can be rejected by claims for freedom of expression. The problem with those allegedly extant official records on homosexuals seems to be decreasing because they are partly transferred to the agencies of AIDS prevention organizations. Limited career opportunities remain, but there is slightly less emphasis on them. The different age of consent is the only old grievance which preserved its full force, especially because nothing has changed with it. Moreover, it became something like a general metaphor for Hungarian homosexuality-related problems: the state legally and publicly discriminates homosexual relations and at the same time privileges heterosexual ones. This way the state intrudes not only into the bedroom but also into the private life strategies of the concerned individuals.

As mentioned above, *Mások* wanted to represent homosexuality in its entirety which included the publication of 'homosexual pictures' portraying naked and half-naked men including penises.³ This 'sexy element' made the character of *Mások* a bit controversial. Some people could never reconcile the serious ideas of representing homosexual

interests with the lascivious images of proudly erect penises.⁴ *Mások* is an open forum for struggling against social stigmatization and discrimination, and Lambda-Budapest, the association whose members produce the magazine, is mainly organized around a socio-cultural identity "constructed from ingredients outside the individual such as social intolerance, legal persecution and the gay subculture as refuge and hospice" (De Cecco and Shively 1984: 10).

Szivárvány-Háttér

The third officially registered organization, the *Háttér (Background) Support Group* was organized around a gay help-line in 1995. Originally, *Háttér* was a subgroup of the gay rights organization *Szivárvány (Rainbow)* but their practical plans could not be realized within the institutional framework of the umbrella group since the state rejected its registration. The story of this rejection became an infamous one. In Hungary non-governmental organizations have to be registered at court, but courts do not have the right to intervene in internal organizational rules: their only function is to keep the organization operating in accordance with the law. However, in the case of *Szivárvány* the registration was refused, at first on the grounds that the organization did not introduce an 18 year age limit for applicants. No one seemed to pay attention to the fact that there are no laws or regulations in Hungary which would provide legal support for this condition of the court. In the first round there was yet another serious obstacle allegedly preventing the court from registering *Szivárvány*, and it was its name. Instead of using the term 'homosexual', they called themselves a 'meleg' (meaning literally 'warm', figuratively 'gay') group. The court did not want to accept this self-definition, referring to it as ambiguous. This argument was not used later on, but it indicates the nature of the court's negative preconceptions concerning homosexuality.

The court of first instance argued that it would constitute criminal behavior if under-age youth and adults established sexual relations within this organization. Surprisingly, the court of appeal arrived at a different conclusion and reasoned that the danger in officially registering a group like *Szivárvány* would derive from the bad personal examples adult gays would set for the youngsters by their 'immoral and unhealthy' lifestyle. Finally, the constitutional court rejected the registration on the basis of yet another argument: here the potentially 'serious future consequences' were emphasized of youth making decisions for which they were still too immature and inexperienced; it was thus deemed absolutely necessary to prevent them – by legal force if required – from the irresponsible steps leading to membership in an organization related to homosexuality.

In fact, *Szivárvány* (with its full name: *Rainbow Association for the Rights of Gays*) was formed in 1994 in order to fight discrimination. In their view homosexuals would be able to achieve their aims only if they introduced their situation not as a particularly homosexual issue but as a general human one: the central problem was not homosexual emancipation but the contradiction between official social and individual interpretations of what is understood as homosexuality. They perceived the different forms of discrimination not only as negative actions calling for reactions, but also as symptoms

4 According to David Morgan erection can also communicate rebellious social meanings as it has "an irrationality about it which contrasts markedly with Western, and especially middle class, one might assume, themes of control and predictability. The erection is a jester in the wings of the civilizing process" (Morgan, 1993: 75–76).

3 This ended quite recently when a new legal regulation broadened the definition of sex products to include pictures of sexual organs. Sex products are penalized by tax and other fees.

of a broader social situation to be analyzed and possibly changed. It is probably not an accident that this organization generated the most intensive public attention: maybe this was/is the only group with real political potential. After the shameful Hungarian court experience, two founding members of Szivárvány have turned to the Human Rights Committee of Strasbourg for support claiming that the Hungarian authorities have violated the European Convention on Human Rights.

Today, the *Háttér Support Group* seems to be the most active (and interactive) of the Hungarian gay organizations: its services are based on the experience of members who realized the potentials of the protected environment offered by the telephone. Thus, to contact them one does not have to 'come out' or be involved in real homosexual activities. This support group concentrates on mental health issues, crisis intervention, dealing with both self-attributed and externally attributed homosexuality, as well as spreading practical information. Consequently its main goal is to comfort and inform – and not to politicize.

Other Initiatives

Following the official setback of *Szivárvány* there were a few initiatives in trying to reflect on the problematic character of the homo/heterosexual categorization itself. One of them was *NINCS (Non-Existent)*, a group for people 'without sexual/gender identity', and another was called *Diákok a Nemi Sokszínűségért (Students for Sexual/Gender Multi-Coloredness)*. In 1996, a group consisting primarily of members of *NINCS*, *Szivárvány* and other organizations, established the *Habeas Corpus Munkacsoport (Habeas Corpus Workgroup, HCM)* whose main field of practical activity is to organize legal protection against all kinds of discrimination deriving from one's sex, form of family, bodily traits, sexual interest, nourishment, smoking or non-smoking habits, and so on. The guiding principles of HCM include respecting everyone's right of self-definition, respecting each other's taste, and emphasizing the "originality of love and sexual fantasy" instead of always applying a dichotomous formula, the bipolar myth of homo/heterosexuality.

These initiatives can be seen as exciting intellectual adventures with very little likelihood to induce any change. The reasons for this are multiple: it seems that the social claims based on sexual orientation categories are more intelligible for many people than "the gospel that the hetero/homosexual distinction is a social fiction" (Epstein 1990: 243). For some it must also be difficult to realize how the category of heterosexuality or homosexuality is gaining its "culture-dependent, relational and perhaps, not objective" meanings from the surrounding socio-cultural environment (Stein 1990: 325). Additionally, the idea that "we want to be recognized but not as homosexuals" can be interpreted as ambiguous, and therefore to claim that "we are different" without being willing to define that difference may seem disturbing for many (cf. Bersani 1995: 68–69).⁵

⁵ Besides the larger scale organizations there are smaller specialized gay groups without public goals, like the Jewish group, the Christian group, the group for married gays and the gay excursion group. Within these usually very small communities it is difficult to decide what is the more dominant group formation force: being gay or being, for example, Jewish.

By looking over what has been said we can discover traces of vulnerability in our original definition of homosexual politics. In that definition (i.e., symbolic space to challenge definitions, discourses, categories which are structuring social space in ways disadvantageous to homosexuals) the weakest element seems to be the definition of 'homosexual' itself. There are various valid answers to the question 'who are the homosexuals?' – many of which are totally incompatible with each other. The indescribability of homosexuality is the result to the inadequacy of the category 'homosexual': "Inadequate, that is, in that we can't really classify behavior on the one hand, and the term can't restore a type of experience on the other" (Foucault 1982: 15).

It is also tempting to forget that homosexual politics is not only a symbolic field but also a very realistic venture which includes practical decisions, strategies for survival, competition for social recognition, distribution of resources, and so on. In theoretical research it might be sufficient to uncover, analyze and deconstruct the structures dominating a given social space. Here deconstruction signifies a mode of reorganizing our logic of perception: for example, queer theory becomes activated by shifting the focus from homosexuality to heterosexuality, from the marginal to the central feature – where heterosexuality is the compulsory expression of a normative sexual regime. However, in the context of politics mere deconstruction is not enough for transforming either symbolic or non-symbolic structures. We might be able to reorganize our own logic of perception successfully but the same success cannot be guaranteed in the case of our political opponents, and even in the unlikely case of success, "to demystify the hegemonic regimes of the normal doesn't render them inoperative" (Bersani 1995: 4).

In terms of local needs and inventions, we can observe different – however sometimes coexisting – sexual-political trends. For example, in Hungary, like in other parts of Central and Eastern Europe, "gays and lesbians are organizing and trying to manifest an identity and a lifestyle publicly" (Bech 1993). In North-America, all of those who resist a male-dominated, white, capitalistic, hetero-sexist culture are put into the "same queer bag" (cf. Bersani 1995: 71) where queer is "by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing particular to which it necessarily refers" (Halperin 1995: 62). In various Scandinavian countries, on the other hand, we can witness the vanishing of the modern homosexual subject who is "a kind of time bomb, encoded with its own explosion. Or perhaps rather its own discreet disappearance. The very circumstances which form the background of his existence also act towards eliminating him; at the same time, he himself helps this process along" (Bech 1997: 195).

In conclusion, it is relevant to speak about homosexual politics – in Hungary, as well – especially because analyzing its different forms and meanings will direct our attention to its broader context: the social organizing principles of sexuality and gender. For example, answering the question 'What makes a person either a homosexual or a heterosexual?' can be just as problematic as answering 'What makes a person either a man or a woman?' We have to realize that the questions themselves appear to give support to assumptions that a person is either a homosexual or a heterosexual, a woman or a man, and that there is no problem in differentiating between them (cf. Kessler and McKenna 1978: 163). Still, in both cases we have the option of examining the arbitrary character of the traditional bipolarities and interpreting the apparent counterpoles as sets of interwoven, inseparable meanings. It can also come to mind that there are cultures which have not formulated their concepts of gender in terms of the well-known symmetrical dualism, and there are others which do not have formal notions of sexuality

at all (cf. Ortner and Whitehead 1981). As Pat Caplan argues, "what is sexual in one context may not be so in another: an experience becomes sexual by application of socially learned meanings" (Caplan 1987: 2; cf. Ross and Rapp 1983).

In this field, therefore there are several further connections to make and various possibilities to discover. It is a bit like peeling Clifford Geertz's onion: "One may have the illusion that by peeling off one layer after another one comes nearer to the core of sexuality, after which one realizes that all the different layers [i.e., economics, politics, families, identities, preferences, and so on] together form its essence" (Wekker 1993: 152; cf. Ross and Rapp 1983).

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