

Draft of Schneider, Andreas 2002. "A Possible Link Between Stigmatization of Sexual-Erotic Identities and Sexual Violence". *Sexuality & Culture* 6,4

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Keywords: cross-cultural comparison, stigmatization, sexual violence, sexual-erotic identity

A Possible Link Between Stigmatization of Sexual-Erotic Identities and Sexual Violence

ABSTRACT

It is suggested that stigmatization of sexual-erotic identities causes shame that leads to emotions of anger and rage that, in turn, create a fertile basis for violent behavior related to the source of stigmatization. This model is tested comparatively in the U.S. and Germany. A curvilinear regression of evaluation of identities on sexual-eroticism ratings indicates stigmatization of sexual-erotic identities in the U.S. but not in Germany. It also leads to the unanticipated finding that Germans tend to stigmatize people with identities that appear extremely non-sexual-erotic. Matching their affective meaning with that of explicit sexual-erotic identities, typical sexual-erotic emotions are empirically identified. In the U.S., emotions of anger are typically associated with sexual-eroticism, compared to emotions of excitement in Germany. The stated consequence of these emotions, the different prevalence of violent sexual behavior, is tested comparing statistics of reported sexual-violent crime in both nations.

A Possible Link Between Stigmatization of Sexual-Erotic Identities and Sexual Violence

It is suggested that the stigmatization (Goffman 1959, 1963) of explicit sexual-erotic identities play an important role in the prevalence of sexual violence. Cross-cultural comparisons of identities, emotions, and behaviors are combined to suggest an explanation of sexual violence. Stigmatization of identities leads to shame, that in turn leads to reactions with anger and rage. Anger and rage provide a fertile ground for violent behavior. The identity-emotion link closely follows Scheff's (1990a, 1990b, Scheff and Retzinger 1991) idea that being shamed can boost emotions of anger and rage, which frequently evolve into violence. Scheff (1990a) distinguishes between acknowledged and unacknowledged shame. "Open or acknowledged shame is likely to be discharged, in actions like spontaneous good-humored laughter" (201). However, in many, if not most cases, it can be assumed that the stigmatization of a sexual identity is not openly addressed. Then unacknowledged shame will be likely to emerge, promoting "spirals of intra-and interpersonal shame," or shame-rage spirals "which have no natural limit of intensity and duration" (201). Triggering spirals of shame, rage, or anger, unacknowledged shame has a strong potential for causing hatred and violence. Here, I will not focus on shame and the empirically problematic differentiation of acknowledged and unacknowledged shame, but on the resulting emotions of anger and rage, that are more directly relevant for the arising violent behavior. If stigmatization occurs for explicit sexual-erotic identities, shame arises. Consequently, anger and rage will be

associated with the explicit sexual-erotic domain and part of the resulting violence will be sexual violence.

For cultures with high levels of stigmatization of sexual-erotic identities more shame will be associated in the sexual-erotic domain. There will be a stronger prevalence of sexual violence and persons with sexual-erotic identities will be more likely to be victims of sexual-violence. In the intent to contribute to a comprehensive model of sexual violence, the three components of stigmatization of sexual-erotic identities, typical emotions associated with sexual-erotic identities and sexual violence will be compared cross-culturally.

Identities are conceptualized in the structural symbolic interactionist perspective of George McCall and Jerry Simmons (1966), Sheldon Stryker and Richard Serpe (1994; Stryker 1968), and Peter Burke and Judy Tully (1977), whose roots can be traced to George Herbert Mead (1934). Identity theory (Stryker and Burke 2000: 286) states that persons have as many identities as they have social roles attached to their positions that they occupy in networks of relationships. Identities are internalized role expectations that, organized in a hierarchy of salience, comprise the self. Accepting Mead's "self reflects society dictum," identities are central units in cross-cultural comparison. The interest in stigmatization directs the focus on the evaluation dimension of identities that can be understood as social status, a central dimension for the stratification of people (Kemper and Collins 1990). Stigmatization of identities is operationalized as the attribution of negative evaluation. Prior research indicated strong differences between European and the U.S. experience of sexual eroticism (Rousseau 1999, Schwartz 1993,

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Weinberg et al. 1995, 2000). It is expected that Americans are more likely to engage in the stigmatization of explicit sexual-erotic identities than Northern Europeans.

The affect control theory (ACT) perspective (Heise 1977, 1979; MacKinnon 1994; Schneider and Heise 1995; Smith Lovin and Heise 1988) shares the frame of identity theory (Stryker and Burke 2000) and adds considerations about behavior and emotions. Emotions can be defined generally as appraisals of situational stimuli, indicating changes in physiological sensation (Thoits 1989). Typical emotions are social constructions and individual improvisations (Averill 1980, Hochschild 1979) that confirm identities (Smith-Lovin 1990). Behaviors are chosen to produce emotions that confirm identities. If identities are confirmed in interaction, typical (Heise 1987) or characteristic (MacKinnon 1994) emotions will match the affective meaning of identities. Typical emotions are linked to identities through their common affective representation and quality (Schneider 1996). Matching the affective meanings of emotions and identities defines emotions as typical or characteristic. People with a positive self-identity will engage in action that makes them feel good. People with a stigmatized self-identity will seek to confirm their negative identities with negative behavior and consequently will experience negative emotions. Identities and their typical emotions can be matched not only on their evaluation dimension, but also simultaneously on all three dimensions of affective meaning identified as central for all cultures in the cross-cultural research of Charles Osgood (Osgood, May, and Miron 1975).

Empirical ratings of the degree of sexual eroticism attributed to identities are used to categorize identities as sexual-erotic. The influence of perceived sexual eroticism on the stigmatization of identities is then compared between the U.S. and German culture. It

is hypothesized that while explicit sexual-erotic identities are seen as negative by Americans, Germans will fail to show significant stigmatization. Consequently, people with explicit sexual-erotic identities should experience more shame in the U.S. than in Germany. Emotions typical for explicit sexual-erotic identities should imply anger and rage in the U.S. but not in Germany. The emotions of anger and rage will be associated with their cause, the sexual-erotic domain, and increase the likelihood of sexual violence. The behavioral component of the model is tested by comparing the crime reported to the police in the U.S. and in Germany.

Cross-cultural comparison of crime statistics are not used to imply value judgments, but to establish benchmarks that serve as more neutral measurement rod in a highly contested field of sexual violence (Haws 1997; Kanin 1997). Empirical studies in the U.S. report anything from finding that only 10% of the rapes are reported to an overreporting of 41% (Groner 1991; Kanin 1994; Klieman 1994). This fluctuation is objectively based on the different methodologies (police report statistics, victimization reports, or self reports) and populations used in these studies. In addition to these objective biases, political biases are responsible for the extreme differences in the interpretation of the prevalence of sexual violence in the U.S. Using the same method and comparable subjects, a cross national comparison largely controls for these biases.

Limitations

All three components of this model -- identities, emotions and behavior -- are tested empirically for the U.S. and Germany. Limitations in the available data on sexual violence of females are the main reason for focusing on sexual violence of males only.

Another reason lies in a currently widely shared perception of the problem of sexual violence in the U.S. and Germany as a problem of male perpetrators and female victims. Although this perspective is not unchallenged (see Fiebert's (2000) bibliographical overview of empirical studies on female sexual violence), it affects legal definitions and practices. For these reasons, I have to restrict my empirical investigation possible generalizations of the model to the male population.

While it is argued that persons with sexual-erotic identities will be more likely to be victims of sexual-violence, only general levels of sexual violence will be compared. Estimating cross-cultural differences in the victimization of people with identities of different degrees of sexual-eroticism is not within the scope of this study. This promising research agenda would add too much complexity to my introduction of an already complex theoretical model.

I have not found a methodology that would allow testing a model that integrates identities, emotions, and behaviors in cross-cultural comparison comprehensively. Introducing a model of sexual-violence the three major components of the model, stigmatization of sexual-erotic identities, typical emotions associated with sexual-erotic identities, and behavior consequences are tested separately. Instead, the causal relations between identities and emotions, and emotions and behavior are provided by established by well tested theories. While the affect-control-theoretical framework establishes the link between stigmatized sexual-erotic identities and typical emotions of anger and violence associated with these identities, Scheff's research provides the link between emotions of anger and rage and the consequent violent behavior.

METHODS

Measurement of Affective Meaning

For Charles Osgood (1960) cognition and affect are two sides of the same coin. Cognitive and affective responses are inextricable and complementary modes of our consciousness (Langford and MacKinnon 2000: 35). Cognitions (e.g., language descriptions), the currency of denotative meaning (e.g. categories of identities), are culture specific, and therefore very hard to be compared across cultures. Cognitive classifications of identities, emotions, and behaviors are also represented in a domain of feelings, where they lose their qualitative uniqueness, become quantifiable, and comparable to one another (Heise 1987: 6).

While the three dimensions of affective meaning -- evaluation, potency, and activity -- are universal for all cultures, ratings on these dimensions are culture specific. The universal cultural relevance of the measurement dimensions, combined with cultural distinctiveness of the measurements, makes Osgood's dimensions of affective meaning especially valuable for cross-cultural research. Affect control researchers as David Heise (1987, 2001), Neil MacKinnon (1994), Andreas Schneider (Schneider and Heise 1995), Herm Smith (Smith et al 2001), and Lynn Smith-Lovin (Smith-Lovin and Heise 1988) measure the evaluation (E) dimension using a nine-point scale that contrasts "good, nice" with "bad, awful." The potency (P) dimension is labeled "big, powerful" versus "little, powerless." The activity (A) dimension is labeled with the adjectives "fast, young, noisy" contrasted by "slow, old, quiet." For the 1998 U.S. study, the computer-based interactive interviewing program Attitude (Heise and Lewis 1988) was used. This program allows randomizing the order of stimuli, the orientation of the scale, and the

order in which the nine-point scales are presented. This interviewing instrument was translated into German for the German study in 1990.¹

In the German sample the U.S. undergraduate is replicated matching age and the number of school years (Spring 1986) in German subjects. Pupils of the last year in the *Gymnasium* (the only of three German school types that serves as a prerequisite for entering a university) were added to the lower-level university students (*Vordiplomstudenten*) to replicate the U.S. undergraduates. About 400 subjects were recruited from Mannheim University and two schools in Mannheim, a large industrial city attracting students mainly from the Rhein-Neckar region in former West Germany. the U.S. sample with 420 undergraduates was collected in 1998 in Texas.

Identities and emotions of the German study were selected using the method of blind back-translation (Krebs and Schuessler 1987). First all U.S. stimuli were translated into German by a fluent, bilingual, native German speaker. Then a bilingual person translated all German concepts back into English. This back-translation was then judged by a native U.S. English speaker. All concepts whose back-translation matched the original English word were selected for the German sample. This procedure led to a stimuli list that included the 413 identities and 64 emotion words.

Classification of Identities

All 413 identities included in the U.S. and German sample of affective meaning are tested for their sexual-erotic denotations on a three-point scale: "definitely sexual-erotic," "maybe sexual-erotic," or "definitely not sexual-erotic." The classification of

identities as sexual-erotic was conducted with 68 undergraduate students. The resulting scale of mean sexual-erotic ratings has 30 increments ranging from 0 to 1.88.

Identification of Typical Emotions

According to the affect control theoretical perspective, if people successfully confirm their identities in interaction, they experience typical emotions (Heise 1987, MacKinnon 1994, Smith-Lovin 1990, Schneider 1996, 1999b). Emotions, typical for an identity, carry the same affective meaning as this identity. Once identities with the explicit sexual-erotic meaning are identified, typical emotions can be selected by matching their affective meanings, operationalized as EPA profiles.

This identification procedure makes use of Osgood's idea that cognition and affect are two sides of the same coin. Herby the mode of analysis switches by translating from the unique cognitive meaning, to the affective meaning where concepts become general, and can be treated with general mathematical principles (Heise 1987). On the level of affective meaning, emotions are matched with identities. Switching the mode back again, to the cognitive language level, emotion words represent explicit sexual-erotic identities.

This identification procedure is analog to the psycholinguistic translation (Osgood 1974). The cognitive language meaning of a concept is transformed into its affective meaning; affective meaning of one category is then matched with an affective meaning of the second category of translation; finally, a concept associated with shared affective meaning is selected from the second category of translation. The cognitive language

meaning of the concept of the second category is the psycholinguistic translation of the cognitive language meaning of the concept in the first category.

Different from the comparison of the stigmatization of identities, where the focus lies on the evaluation dimension, the matching procedure uses all three EPA dimensions. In this procedure, the average EPA rating of identities with the highest sexual eroticism rating is used to ideal-typically define the concept of explicit sexual eroticism. Emotions with the smallest Euclidian distance to these average EPA ratings are chosen from a dictionary listing emotions and identities with their EPA ratings. This matching procedure for emotions and identities is conducted separately for both cultures. The average of U.S. explicit sexual-erotic identities is used to identify emotions that are typically experienced by Americans with salient explicit sexual-erotic identities. Conversely, the average of German explicit sexual-erotic identities is used to identify emotions in a list of German emotion ratings.

Comparison of Behavior, using Crime Statistics

Sexual violence, the behavioral effect of stigmatization and the resulting anger and rage, is operationalized as violent sexual crime reported to the police. As elaborated in my justification for the cross-cultural approach above, these statistics are far from ideal for the indication of the "true" prevalence of sexual violence. However, since the biases imposed on these statistics in both nations are supposed to be smaller than the political biases imposed by the interpretation and generation of their, the cross-cultural comparison creates a valid benchmark to evaluate the relative prevalence of sexual violence.

The legal categories of rape and sexual violence are combined in the U.S. legal definition as forcible rape. In Germany and the U.S., this category "excludes cases of statutory rape (without force) and other sex offences"(UCR 1998). Excluding statutory rape makes the comparison more conservative. Different ages of consent (fourteen in Germany, seventeen to eighteen in the United States) would make statutory rape much more likely in the U.S. Excluding "other sex offences" imposes an additional step of conservatism in the estimate of cross-cultural differences. The category of "other sexual offences" concerns mainly a variety of sexual behaviors restricted by sodomy laws, still on the books of 21 American states (Edwards, 1998). In Germany, the last regulations concerning sexual behavior between consenting adults have been removed in Germany in 1969 when §175 in the criminal code (*Strafgesetzbuch*) was dropped (*aufgehoben*).

To increase the internal validity of the model, crime reports are chosen for the years in which the survey of affective meanings was conducted for each culture. The German statistics are taken from the *Polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik of the Bundeskriminalamt* (1990). American statistics are taken from the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR 1998). Additional information about the offender-victim relationship and the demographics about the offender are taken from the U.S. National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS 1998).

RESULTS

Comparison of the Stigmatization of Explicit Sexual-Erotic Identities

Empirical Definition of Scales. All 413 identities of the U.S. and German sample are rated on the evaluation dimension that is measured on a nine-point scale with 80 increments reaching from -4.33 (bad, awful) to +4.33 (good, nice). Average ratings of identities used in the comparison range from -3.40 to 3.30 in the German sample averaging at about neutral (-.041) across all identities. In the U.S. sample the mean identity ratings range from -3.37 to 3.74 with a slightly positive average identity rating of 0.27. All identities are also rated on a sexual eroticism scale that uses the value 0 for "definitely not sexual-erotic," 1 for "maybe sexual-erotic," and 2 for "definitely sexual-erotic." The average sexual eroticism ratings for identities range in 30 increments from 0 to 1.88.

Relationship between Sexual Eroticism and Stigmatization. Following my hypothesis, sexual-erotic identities should be more likely to receive negative evaluation in the U.S. data than in the German data. However, there is no indication that the relation between sexual eroticism and stigmatization should be linear in the German or U.S. data. For that reason, explorative studies about the nature of the relationship were conducted to determine the kind of relationship suitable to be modeled in a regression analysis. Means for different sections on the sexual-erotic rating scale are compared and a graphical analysis of the data is conducted. Based on the preliminary analyses, a quadratic function $y = ax^2 + bx + c$ is chosen for the regression analysis. The estimated regression function is $y = 1.61x^2 + 2.67x - 0.23$ for the U.S.; for Germany, it is

$y = 1.42x^2 + 2.87x - 0.66$ (table 1). All parameters, except the constant in the U.S. equation are significant at $\alpha=0.01$. The constant of the U.S. quadratic regression equation reaches a significance level of $\alpha=0.05$.

To compare both quadratic regression models, confidence intervals are calculated for each coefficient. Standard errors of the coefficients are listed in table 1. While the parameters of the curve show no significant difference ($\alpha=0.05$), the difference of the constants c are significant ($\alpha=0.01$).

Since the lowest extreme of the independent variable, non-sexual eroticism, is coded as 0, the degree of stigmatization can be directly compared by comparing the constants (c) of the regression model. With -0.66 on the evaluation axis, Germans show a stronger stigmatization of non-sexual-erotic identities than Americans (-0.23). This finding, that if identities are perceived as extremely non-erotic they are less positive and even stigmatized, is not addressed in the original theoretical model.

The quadratic functions in the U.S. and Germany are similar while an insignificantly steeper curve is indicated in the U.S. ($a = -1.61$) than in Germany ($a = -1.42$). With a significantly more negative constant and an insignificantly steeper curve, or, stated conservatively, an equally steep curve, the U.S. curve will drop lower on the y -axis (evaluation) for identities that received an extremely high sexual-erotic rating. This observation leads to the failure to rejecting my hypothesis that sexual-erotic identities should be more likely to receive negative evaluation in the U.S. data than in the German data.

Table 1 Parameters of the quadratic regression $y = ax^2 + bx + c$, their standard errors (SE), and their t values (*p<.05; **p<.01 two-tailed test).

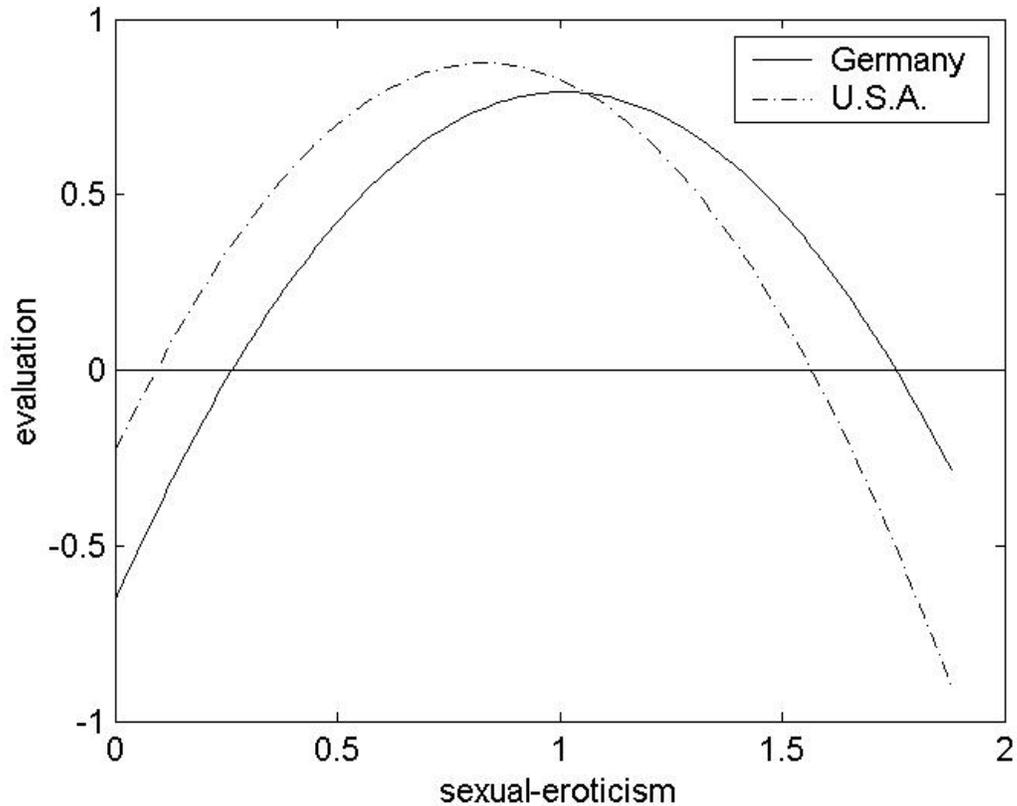
	a	t	b	t	c	t
U.S. (SE)	-1.61** (0.33)	-4.88	2.67** (0.48)	5.55	-0.23* (0.11)	-2.11
Germany (SE)	-1.42** (0.35)	-4.05	2.87** (0.52)	5.60	-0.66** (0.12)	-5.60

For the more moderate sexual-erotic identities, the comparison of the saddlepoints or vertexes reveals that in the U.S. identities have to score lower in sexual-eroticism to receive the highest evaluation. Numerically the location of the vertex on the x-axis is obtained by applying the first delineation to the regression formula, solving the equation for x. In the U.S., the vertex (0.83) lies more in the direction of "non-sexual-erotic" than in Germany (1.02).

These results can also be addressed in a graphical analysis of the regression curves (figure 1). If we compare non-sexual identities, the left ends of the curves, we see that identities without any sexual-erotic denotation are more disliked in Germany. In the section of moderate sexual eroticism, the curve tops in the direction of highest evaluation. In both cultures, the sexual ambivalence of identities labeled with the description as "maybe sexual-erotic," contributes to the positive evaluation of identities. In the German culture, the curve tops evenly in the center of the sexual eroticism scale whereas, for the U.S., the highest evaluations are achieved for identities that are more "sexless." Comparing the top of the curves indicates that in the U.S. sexually ambivalent identities receive an overall higher evaluation than in Germany. For highly sexual-erotic identities, the German curve slightly penetrates the zero line of evaluation. In contrast, for explicit

sexual-erotic identities, the U.S. curve penetrates the zero line and clearly extends into negative evaluation. In the U.S., stigmatization of identities with extreme sexual-erotic denotation is more pronounced than in Germany.

Figure 1: Quadratic Curve Estimated in the Regression of Evaluation on Sexual Eroticism in Germany and America.



Differences in Emotions

Following the suggested theoretical model, the stigmatization of pronounced sexual-erotic identities should lead to emotions of anger and rage in the U.S. These emotions are not expected for Germans who do not substantially stigmatize explicit sexual-erotic identities. To build the construct of explicit sexual-eroticism, identities are selected that scored highest in the sexual-erotic rating. As a cutoff-point for the selection of explicit sexual-erotic identities, the upper quartile (1.5) of the sexual eroticism-scale is chosen. Since the average usage of the scale has a maximum of 1.88, this selection includes only a small number of 10 identities with extremely high ratings on sexual eroticism.

Identities identified in this procedure as most sexual-erotic can be classified in three different categories. *Call girls, whores* and *prostitutes* are professional identities of the oldest profession that is now illegal in 49 American states. *Topless dancers, pornstars,* and *strippers* are legal professional identities of the sexual entertainment industry. Identities such as *bisexual, adulterer, playboy* and *intimate* can be seen as a third category of private sexual identities. The average EPA profile of the ten italicized sexual-erotic identities above is computed to create the ideal typical explicit sexual eroticism profile (ESEP). Following the notation standard suggested by Heise (1978; Smith-Lovin and Heise 1988) for EPA profiles, this ESEP is connoted in the form of three numbers: the first referring to the evaluation dimension, the second to potency, and the third to the activity dimension of affective meaning. The profile for the ESEP is 0.42, -0.22, 1.45 for the U.S. and -0.02, -0.09, 1.01 for Germany.

Matching the typical emotions to the ESEP, Euclidian distances are used as a mathematical criterion. First, Euclidian distances of EPA profiles of emotions to the ESEP are computed. Then, emotions closest to the ESEP are selected in the order of their smallest Euclidian distance. The Euclidian distance between the ESEP and a specific identity can be written in a simple syllogism:

$$\text{Distance}_{i1 \text{ ESEP}} = \sqrt{(E_{i1} - E_{\text{ESEP}})^2 + (P_{i1} - E_{\text{ESEP}})^2 + (A_{i1} - A_{\text{ESEP}})^2}$$

E	Evaluation
P	Potency
A	Activity
i1	Identity one
ESEP	Explicit Sexual Eroticism Profile

Using the Euclidean distance value of 1.5 as a cutoff point, the following emotion words (Euclidian distances in brackets) are retrieved from the U.S. EPA dictionary: *outraged* (1.02), *anxious* (1.02), *impatient* (1.03), *furious* (1.13), *nervous* (1.42), and *angry* (1.45). In the German data, there is only one emotion word, *excited* (1.21) within this distance. The next closest emotion word is *moved* (1.60). The stigmatization of explicit sexual-erotic identities leads to emotions that express anger and hostility in the sexual-erotic domain. In contrast to the U.S. findings, emotions of anger and rage are entirely absent in the German sexual-erotic domain.

Sexual Violent Behavior Indicated in the Crime Statistics

The UCR and NCVS combine "assaults or attempts to commit rape by force or threat of force"(UCR 1998, p.23) in one category, their rape statistics. Both forms of violent sexual crime are listed separately in the German statistics. To be comparable to the UCR statistics, cases of rape (*Vergewaltigung* §177) and sexual assault (*Sexuelle Nötigung* §178) are added.² Another consideration has to be taken to make the UCR statistics comparable to the *Polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik*. In 1990, the German law still excluded offenses within marriage both of cases of rape (§177) and sexual assault (§178)³. The NCVS (1998) is employed to identify the victim-offender relationship. The ratio of rapes and sexual assaults within marriage (2.1 in 100,000) can then be subtracted from the total ratio, allowing the U.S. statistics to be comparable to the German statistics. In 1998, 34.4 of 100,000 American females reported sexual assault, rape, and attempts to commit rape independent from marital status (UCR, 1998). For the German statistics, 8.2 in 100,000 rapes and intended rapes (*Vergewaltigung* §177) and 6.0 in 100,000 cases of sexual assault (*Sexuelle Nötigung* §178) of females are added to match the American statistics of forcible rapes outside marriage. In the United States, 32.1 of 100,000 females reported an attempted or executed sexual assault or rape outside marriage, compared to the 14.2 of 100,000 females in the same category in Germany. More than twice the sexual violence is reported in the U.S. The comparison is summarized in table 2.

Table 2: Crime reported per 100,000 Females. Sources: *Polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik* of the German *Bundeskriminalamt*, and the Uniform Crime Reports. National Crime Victimization Survey to control for victim-offender relationship.

	Germany 1990	U.S. 1998
Rape and attempted rape	8.2	34.4
Sexual assault	6.0	
Forcible rape within marriage	not recorded	2.1
Forcible rape outside marriage and sexual assault	14.2	32.3

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

It should be obvious that speaking of the U.S. and German culture is a convenient generalizations for the sake of theoretical reasoning. They are ideal types (Weber 1922) or *gestalten* (Goethe, 1790)⁴, specimens that are critical in the morphological method of inquiry (Scheff 1997). There is no intention to engage in generalizations about Americans or Germans from the data.

The stated cross-cultural differences of all three components of my model, identities, typical emotions, and consequent behavior, are not challenged by the empirical data. In the U.S., people with identities that are perceived as highly sexual-erotic are stigmatized. This stigmatization is absent in the German data. Following the model of Scheff, stigmatization leads to shame that triggers emotions of anger and rage. These emotions are identified for sexual-erotic identities in the U.S., but not in the German data. Emotions, associated with the source of stigmatization, make sexual violence more prevalent in the U.S.

The unanticipated finding of the curvilinear relationship between the sexual eroticism rating of identities and their evaluation opens potential for new research. Whereas Americans tend to stigmatize people with explicit sexual-erotic identities,

Germans tend to stigmatize people with identities that appear extremely non-sexual-erotic. Since it is demonstrated that by successful shaming, stigmatization leads to emotions of anger, people with identities that lack any hint of sexual eroticism might be more prone to show violence in Germany. Before this question can be investigated, the object and nature of violence has to be elaborated and operationalized.

If a study uses crime statistics on sexual violence against women, reporting behavior is of central concern (Bryden and Lengnick 1997). While it is not necessary for my investigation to focus on the absolute accuracy in each culture for reporting violent crime, it is important for both statistics, the U.S. UCS and the German *Polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik of the Bundeskriminalamt*, to be comparable in their biases. Factors imposing biases on reporting behavior are quite similar in Germany and the U.S. In both countries, reporting of sexual violence against women is mainly influenced by organizational responses towards the crime. Here, the two most prevalent institutional variables are the organizational support that women receive in their prosecution of sexual violence and the training of the officer to whom the crime is reported.

Today, rape crisis centers (often integrated in *Frauenzentren* in Germany), women shelters (*Frauenhäuser*), and other specialized agencies support rape victims in the U.S. to the same degree as in Germany (Harvey 1985). There are agencies in both countries that assist women in reporting the case to the authorities, and in court procedures. Law enforcement agencies in both countries make strong efforts to accommodate the special needs of females reporting sexual violence that often coincide with sensitivity training for domestic violence.

What can differ in both countries is the status of the officer to whom the crime is reported. In Germany, every prosecution of a criminal case is exclusively in the hands of the public prosecutor (*Staatsanwalt*) and his/her assisting officers, the police (*Polizeibeamte*).⁵ In the U.S., however, crime might be reported to a civilian employee who is not a public attorney or a sworn police officer. The proportion of civilians in the U.S. police force increased from about 10% in 1960 to 28% in 1998. In an over time study Jenson and Karpos (1993) found a dramatic relationship between the number of civilian employees managing rape cases and the rape rate reported in the UCR.

While I rule out institutional support of females as major alternative explanation for cross-cultural differences, the employment status of officers involved in managing cases of violent sexual crime might contribute substantially to the cross-cultural differences I found in the violent sexual crime reported to the police in both nations. In-depth cross-cultural studies might help the highly controversial and politically charged issue of reporting violent sexual crime (Klieman 1994, McDowell 1985, Kanin 1994).

My study indicates a potential remedy for reducing the dramatic level of sexual violence in the U.S.: removing the stigma from explicit sexual-erotic identities would affect sexual-violence at its roots. One of the problems in implementing this remedy is that people in responsible positions might be subject to the same bias as the U.S. subjects of my study: they will merge the concepts of sexuality and violence (Schneider 1999a, 1999b), and they will stigmatize highly sexual-erotic identities and hereby legitimate their persecution. It might be a first step for the remaining 49 states to follow Nevada and Germany in their efforts of legalizing the oldest profession, which made up three of the ten most stigmatized identities in this study. Identities of the legal sexual

entertainment industry, *topless dancers*, *pornostars*, and *strippers*, make up another three of the ten of the identities identified as highly stigmatized. According to Jody Freeman (1997), "liberal feminists see sex-trade workers as respectable women doing dignifying work" (p.209). This perspective is contested in the feminist literature. Although radical feminists (Dworkin 1997) see sex-trade workers as victims of coercion, they would agree with liberals on the short-term goal of destigmatizing women in these professions.

Contrasting the radical and the liberal strain of feminism, the feminist-conservative alliance supports the current U.S. trend of stigmatizing and persecuting sex-trade workers (West 1987). The current trend to political conservatism in the U.S., and the scattered front of feminism, make it unlikely that sex-trade workers will be destigmatized.

Identities empirically selected as being extreme sexual-erotic, refer to professions in which people, predominantly women, face the high rates of sexual violence (Bowie 2000, Bridgett 1999). This observation underlines the connection between perceived sexual-eroticism and violence in the U.S. To lessen the stigma of the remaining sexual-erotic identities, the *bisexual*, *adulterer*, *intimate*, and the *playboy* might involve changing the influence of the religious right on the education of young Americans.

Approaches intended to destigmatize sexual erotic-identities and hereby lower the rates of sexual violence raise the questions of feasibility of social change. Change has to happen in an area where cultural biases support stigmatization, and hereby create anger and hostility that are channeled into the lust for power (Foucault 1975) that emerges from the process of social control -- a social control process in which the stigmatization of sexual-erotic identities is an integral part of a self-perpetuating culture of violence.

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ENDNOTES:

¹ The poles of the evaluation scale are defined as: *angenehm* -- *unangenehm*, *gut* -- *schlecht*, *freundlich* -- *unfreundlich*, and *schön* -- *hässlich*. Poles of the potency scales are translated as *klein* -- *gross*, *leicht* -- *schwer*, *zart* -- *kraftvoll*, and *schwach* -- *stark*. The activity dimension is represented as *bewegt* -- *ruhig*, *lebhaft* -- *gemessen*, *geräuschvoll* -- *still*, and *schnell* -- *langsam*.

² In the UCR the rape is defined as "carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will" (p.23). In the German statistics rape is defined according to §177 of the Strafgesetzbuch (StGB) as "Wer eine Frau mit Gewalt oder durch Drohung von gegenwärtiger Gefahr für Leib und Leben zum außerehelichen Beischlaf mit ihm oder einen Dritten nötigt." Sexual assaults are defined as Sexuelle Nötigung in the German StGB §178: „Wer einen anderen mit Gewalt oder durch Drohung von gegenwärtiger Gefahr für Leib und Leben nötigt, außereheliche sexuelle Handlungen des Täters oder eines Dritten an sich zu dulden oder an dem Täter oder einem Dritten vorzunehmen.“

³ Since July 1997, categories of rape and sexual assault are recognized also within marriage in the German law.

⁴ I am indebted to Thomas Scheff, who encouraged me to investigate on the similarities of the Weber's concept of ideal types and Goethe's idea of *gestalten*. "You seem to have a point about Weber. It might be a good idea for you to publish a comparison of Weber and Goethe on ideal types and gestalten (personal e-mail conversation July 28, 2001)."

⁵ The status of police agencies engaged in the process of violent sexual crime being reported is investigated in different states in Germany. In the following, I list one of the typical responses that I received from the police headquarter in the state of Baden Württemberg: "Die Strafverfolgung ist nach deutschem Recht ausschließlich der Staatsanwaltschaft oder den Hilfsbeamten der Staatsanwaltschaft (Polizei) vorbehalten. Alle mit dieser Materie befassten haben ausdrücklichen Beamtenstatus". Günter Loos, March 26, 2001. Landespolizeidirektion Stuttgart II, Öffentlichkeitsarbeit, Hahnemannstraße 1, D 70191 Stuttgart.