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The Violent Character of Sexual-Eroticism in Cross-Cultural Comparison

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ABSTRACT

Schneider (1996) found that sexual-erotic sentiments are devaluated by Americans youth, but not by Germans. This devaluation of sexual-erotic sentiments led to a merger of coercive-deviant and sexual-erotic categories and made it harder for Americans to differentiate between emotions of violence and passion. Results are now set into a theoretical perspective. Ideal types of sexual emancipated and constrained identities, developed from the literature, are used to fit the empirical data into my theoretical model. Other comparative studies of American and European youth that found cross cultural differences in emotions of shame and violence are introduced. Finally I will discuss the protestant ethic and double moral standards as potential causes for the stigmatization of the sexual-erotic domain.

The Violent Character of Sexual-Eroticism in Cross-Cultural Comparison

Emotions reflect appraisals of situational stimuli and changes in physiological sensation (Thoits 1989), but they also can be viewed as social constructions and improvisations (Averill, 1980) that reflect role-identities (Smith-Lovin, 1990). Typical emotions correspond to the affective quality of particular role-identities (Heise 1987). By confirming salient identities (Stryker 1980), people experience emotions characteristic of the role-identities (Schneider (1996). Those who validate positive role-identities experience positive emotions (a lover feels passion, for example); those confirming negative role-identities feel negative emotions (a widow experiences grief). In this way, the private emotional lives of people are a function of their identity-situated selves in social interaction.

American youth devalue sexual-erotic role-identities; and emotions associated with these identities (Schneider 1996). To illuminate the problem of the stigmatization of sexual eroticism in the U.S., I develop a theoretical framework based on the works of Giddens (1992) and Scheff (1990, Sheff & Retzinger 1991). Giddens' idea of the transformation of intimacy can be developed into a model that helps to illuminate the relative development of sexual-eroticism in different cultures. According to Giddens, Freud (1953), Reich (1961), and Marcuse (1970) are wrong in their belief that modern societies depend on sexual repression. Instead, two tendencies have led to the privatization of the sexual

erotic domain: (1) Sexuality followed the characteristic tendency in modernity, "the creation of internally referential systems -- orders of activity determined by principles internal to themselves" (Giddens 1992, p.174). Following this tendency, sexuality emancipated from the influence of church and state. (2) Further Giddens argues that Individuals, suffering from social rather than social repression, learned to withdraw sexuality from public attention. Both factors contributed to the fact that sexual self determination was unleashed, a revolutionary process that ultimately leads to the emotional reorganization of social life.

What Giddens observes as a characteristic movement in modernity is that individuals shift their focus to internal referential system and locate their sexuality in their private domain. The reflexivity, associated with modern sexuality, makes the concepts of identity and shame methodologically relevant for an investigation of sexuality. Reflexivity is a necessary prerequisite for the construction of a (role-)identity (Burke 1980; Mead 1934; Stryker 1980; Zurcher 1977) and for the emergence of shame (Lewis 1971, Scheff 1990).

Giddens describes what I call an ideal type of a sexually emancipated identity. Ideal types cannot meet the empirical reality, but they are helpful to illuminate an empirical problem, especially when contrasted with an antithetical ideal type (Weber 1924). I define the antithetical ideal type of a sexually emancipated identity as a sexually constrained individual. Someone whose sexuality is of public concern, and whose social life opposes her individual sexual self determination.

Sexual emancipation versus sexual constrain is an important dimension in the following cross cultural comparison. A constrained sexuality does not cause sexual activity to vanish, but creates shame when a sexual-erotic identity is chosen. Following Scheff's (1990; Scheff and Retzinger 1991) model of violence, this constrained sexuality will lead to unacknowledged shame that causes individuals to experience anger and violence. Scheff's roots the importance of the shame concept in Cooley (1922) who stated that we are virtually always in a state of pride or shame. Scheff sees pride and shame as critical aspects of human emotional experience that serve as motivations. For his model Scheff integrates "Lewis's model of inner contagion of shame with Goffman's outer" (1990, 18). Goffman called the outer contagion of shame embarrassment. Unlike Goffman, who used his examples of shame in an illustrative way, Lewis analyzed the shame content in controlled episodes of real interaction. She distinguished between acknowledged and unacknowledged shame. Episodes of unacknowledged shame are either overt, undifferentiated or bypassed.

"Overt, undifferentiated shame involves painful feelings which are not identified as shame by the person experiencing them. Rather these feelings are named by using a variety of terms, all of which serve to disguise the shame experience: feeling foolish, stupid, ridiculous, inadequate, defective, incompetent, low self-esteem, awkward, exposed, vulnerable, insecure, and so on"(Scheff 1990, 86).

The second pattern of unacknowledged shame, bypassed shame, is initiated by a negative evaluation of ones salient identity. Cues for bypassed shame are subtle and are avoided.

Both, overt, undifferentiated, and bypassed shame are low-visibility emotions defined as unacknowledged shame. Unacknowledged shame triggers emotions of anger and range. These emotions in turn raise unacknowledged shame. Shame-range spirals cause destructive behavior towards self and others. Sexual constraint facilitates the emergence of episodes where shame is misnamed or avoided. This unacknowledged shame causes individuals to experience violent emotions. In her case study on emotional violence Retzinger (Scheff & Retzinger 1991) finds that angry escalation in marital conflict is

always preceded by unacknowledged shame.

It would be not surprising to find cross-cultural differences in the amount of shame produced in the sexual-erotic sphere.

"Shame has a cultural component. The situations that produce shame, the labeling of shame, and the response to it show immense variation from one society to another"(Scheff & Retzinger 1991, 5).

In societies that constrain sexuality, sexual-erotic role-identities will be associated with emotions of anger and violence. I find that choosing a sexual-erotic identity, Americans are more likely than Germans to meet social resentment. Displaying identities, constrained by the general public, individuals are likely to be subject to unacknowledged shame and, therefore, will experience anger and violence.

This finding is supported by three other studies. Muehlenhard and Cook (1988) found that American colleague students are likely to experience emotions of shame and guilt after intercourse. In a cross-cultural study Schwartz (1993) finds that American undergraduates were more likely than Northern Europeans to feel fearful and guilty after their first coitus. Weinberg et al (1995) come to the same conclusion as Schwartz for the most recent intercourse.

Generally seen as a more private matter in Germany, sexuality is less likely to alert concern when displayed in public. Germans are likely to resemble Giddens' ideal type of sexually emancipated individuals, whereas Americans tend to represent the antithetical ideal type that is sexually constrained. I will give some empirical examples to illuminate the extend to which sexual-eroticism (1) is regulated by public concern and (2) withdrawn from public attention.

(1) Public interest in the sexual activities of politicians, as in the sexual harassment accusations of President Bill Clinton, is much more profound than the interest in the affairs of Willy Brandt. Strict formalization of sexual behavior is more likely to be found in North American workplaces where sexual-harassment policies are more common, formulated in more detail, and have a higher likelihood to be legally enforced than in Germany. Generally, regulation of the sexual erotic domain is not only greater in the U.S. than in Germany, but also has more severe consequences. The example of the sodomy laws show that even if regulations are unlikely to be legally enforced, they have the potential to criminalize substantial portions of the population. Sodomy laws are still on the books of 24 American States (Boszormenyi-Nagy 1993). The German equivalent of Paragraph 175 in the criminal code (Bundesgesetzbuch §175) was substantially modified in 1969 and the criminalization of specific sexual acts disappeared. In its last revision in 1994 the age of consent was set to 14 for all types of sexual relationships.

(2) Sexual-eroticism is withdrawn from youth magazines in the U.S., even in the case of educational purpose. The editorial article in the *BRAVO* (Cantacuzene and Tetz 1994), the most popular German youth magazine, targeted the uncertainty of male teenagers about the appropriate form and size of their genitals. This article is illustrated by pictures of male genitals of teenagers of different ages. The article, seen as appropriate and educational for German teenagers, was seen as "emotionally distressing" to American undergraduate students because of showing male nudity. The inappropriateness to give sexual-eroticism public attention was demonstrated by university officials, responsible for sexual-harassment policies and teaching in an American university. I was strongly advised not to show samples of the German teenage magazine (*BRAVO*) as an example for cross-cultural differences in an undergraduate sociology class.

The examples above support the assumption that Americans approximate the ideal typical sexually restrained individual to a larger extent than Germans. Following the same line of reasoning, Germans approximate the antithetical ideal type of a sexually emancipated individuals.

Drawing from Giddens observations of modern sexuality, I developed an ideal type of a sexually emancipated person. Sexually emancipated individuals use internal referential systems to evaluate their sexuality. The ability to withdraw their sexuality from public attention gives them an additional buffer that keeps potentially stigmatizing individuals out of their private sphere. The antithetical ideal type of a sexually constrained individual has an external referential system and does not withdraw her sexuality from public attention. Integrating Scheff's model of shame and violence, I argue that in a society that stigmatizes sexuality, unacknowledged shame arises when sexually constrained individuals take on a sexual-erotic role-identity. This shame manifests itself in emotions of anger and violence. In contrast the sexuality of a sexually emancipated individual will not contribute to this shame violence. The extent of stigmatization has an indirect effect on unacknowledged shame and violence. The stronger the stigmatization the greater will be the unacknowledged shame that is experienced as anger and violence by sexually constrained individuals.

The view of sexual-eroticism from the diverse cultural situations of sexual emancipation or constraint will be reflected in the affective representation of sexual erotic sentiments. The qualitative examples above indicated strong cross-cultural differences in the sexual erotic domain. This supports my general that if both cultures agree on the sexual-erotic denotation of sentiments, these sentiments will differ disproportional in their affective representation (Schneider, 1996, 124).

PROCEDURES

Through the affective associations evoked by social cognitions, the cognitive complexity of external reality is emotionally experienced in simpler form. "Classifications of places, peoples, objects and behaviors get transformed into a domain of feelings, where they lose their qualitative uniqueness, become comparable to one another, and begin obeying quantitative principles" (Heise 1987, p.6). Or as Collins would say, "disparate goods do not have to be directly compared, only the emotional tone of situations in which they are available"(Collins 1981, p.1005). The affective level of sentiments can be measured on the three dimensions of affective meaning. Evaluation (E), potency (P), and activity (A) dimensions reveals that the affective meaning of sentiments is not only *bad* or *good*; they are also *strong* or *weak* and *lively* or *quiet* (Osgood 1962; Osgood et al. 1975). To the extent that EPA ratings are similar, emotions and role-identities share the same affective quality.

I used the affective representation of sentiments as a basis for an objective categorization method. Affective representations comprise "two general classes of cognition -- which, for the lack of better terms I [Osgood] will call *denotative* and *connotative*"(Osgood 1960 reprinted in Osgood 1990, p.231, italics in original). Further, Osgood suggested that affective meaning (connotation) and denotative meaning (lexical categorization) might be two sides of the same coin. This interconnection of affective meaning and denotative meaning is addressed again later by Osgood's (Osgood et al 1975) illustration of the color category. Colors, their components, as well as their associations (denotations) determine the affective meaning assigned to a color word. This strongly indicates that measurements of affective meaning capture both, denotative meaning and connotative meaning. In the case of role-identities institutional properties are denoted. I prefer to speak about institutional denotations rather than associations for two reasons: institutional implications of an identity are a more general property than the identity itself, and institutional implications of role-identities are not loose, as might be indicated by some definitions of the word association.

Osgood's suggestion that denotative and affective meaning are interconnected is the first proposition leading to my application of cluster analysis to indicate higher order abstracts of denotative lexical categorizations that emerge from the empirical measurement of affective meaning (Schneider 1994). The second proposition is the assumption that to the extent that EPA ratings are similar corresponding role-identities share one denotation. This assumption stems from the fact that concepts with nearly identical EPA ratings are likely to be synonymous or share some structural components. For example, EPA ratings of *attorney* and *authority* have the smallest Euclidian distance to the EPA ratings of a *lawyer*. The concept of *attorney* is synonymous to the concept of a *lawyer* and *authority* is the more abstract institutional component of a lawyer. The larger the Euclidian distance of EPA ratings the less a group of concepts have in common. Boundaries of denotative meaning, in my case the structural components of role-identities, are inherent in affective meaning.

Explorative cluster analysis can indicate patterns in three dimensional data that build the center of homogeneous groups. Using exclusive clusters these groups are separated by boundaries. I used Euclidian distances as a clustering metric in a K-means cluster analysis (Wilkinson 1990). Using all 420 role-identities that match in both, the American and German data, I establish sets of EPA ratings that are maximally distinctive across sets, while being maximally homogeneous within sets.

I compare two independent cluster solutions for the same concepts in both cultures. In the American cluster solution clusters are labeled as *authority*, *sexual-erotic*, *family*, *winner*, *loser*, and the single item cluster of the hyper-authority *God*. The German analysis resulted in the same clusters with two exceptions. Since Germans did not rate *God* as extremely good and powerful, this role-identity is within the authority cluster for Germans. Secondly, an additional German cluster emerged for coercive-deviance role-identities. In this paper I will only be concerned about the sexual-erotic clusters of both cultures and the German deviance cluster.

RESULTS

Unacknowledged shame, caused by sexual constraint, leads to the negative emotions of anger and range. This negativity should be reflected in lower evaluation in the affective representation of role-identities with sexual-erotic denotation. Following the qualitative empirical examples that demonstrated that Americans follow the ideal type of a sexually constrained individual to a larger extend than Germans, Americans should show a lower evaluation than Germans if sexual-erotic denotation is interculturally agreed on. This disagreement about evaluation should be larger in the sexual-erotic domain than for other domains. In the following it will be tested if American evaluation ratings in the common component of sexual-eroticism are indeed lower than German evaluation ratings, and if inter-cultural differences of EPA ratings are larger in the common component than in the remaining components. Sentiments of the common component will be compared to remaining sentiments that are not seen as sexual-erotic in neither of both cultures.

Table 1 shows that there is stronger cross-cultural disagreement on sexual-erotic sentiments than between sentiments that have no sexual denotation in both cultures. The small gender disagreement that is found across all sentiments does not increase in the specific domain of sexual-eroticism. The cross-cultural disagreement on sexual-erotic sentiments is shared by males and females. This allows me to ignore gender differences for a moment and to simplify the comparison across culture in computing a coefficient of cultural difference that averages EPA ratings by gender: $*((U.S._{male} + U.S._{female}) / 2) - ((German_{male} + German_{female}) / 2) *$.

The very right column in table 1 shows that this index for cultural differences is higher in the common component where Germans and Americans agree on the sexual-erotic quality than

in the comparison category of sentiments that are not seen as sexual-erotic in neither of both cultures. Although the emphasis in this comparison lies on the evaluation dimension, this holds true for the potency and activity dimension as well.

Table 1 Mean EPA Ratings for American and German Role-Identities (n=420) in the Common Component of American and German Sexual Cluster (, n=20), and theRemainder of both Sexual-erotic Clusters (Non-Sex, n=261). Cultural Difference $*((U.S._{male} - U.S._{female})/2) - ((German_{male} - German_{female})/2)*$.

	Category	males		females		Cultural Difference
		U.S.	German	U.S.	German	
Evaluation	CC	-0.86	0.08	-1.03	0.10	1.05
	Non-Sex	0.64	0.39	0.85	0.52	0.29
Potency	CC	-0.59	-0.03	-0.39	0.16	0.56
	Non-Sex	0.29	0.31	0.45	0.41	0.01
Activity	CC	1.34	0.89	1.13	0.86	0.36
	Non-Sex	0.13	0.24	0.16	0.27	0.11
Emotions with the smallest Euclidian distance to the CC		panicked irate	excited moved	impatient furious	moved excited	

Comparing EPA ratings of the common component to the remaining component shows that cross-cultural differences are especially pronounced in the sexual-erotic domain. In the inter-cultural common component of sexual denotation differences on the evaluation dimension are not only significant but substantial. American males and females devalue sexual-erotic role-identities, whereas German subjects do not show this stigmatization at all.

The shaming of sexual eroticism in the U.S. led to a devaluation of sexual-erotic identities. Highly devaluated sexual-erotic identities have not much left to differentiate themselves from deviant identities. Indeed, there was no differentiation between a sexual-erotic and a coercive-deviant category in the American data. The abstract class of sexual eroticism virtually merged what was seen by Germans as two separate concepts. Being classified as sexually-erotic and coercive-deviant, sexual erotic identities are associated with violence in the U.S. This follows Scheff's model of shame creating violence.

Typical Emotional States Associated with Sexual-Erotic Identities in Germany and the U.S.

As I argued above, typical emotions can be theoretically matched to identities. If people confirm their sexual-erotic identities, they should experience sexual-erotic emotions. Since affective meaning is the common cognitive-psychological basis of both, role-identities and emotions, both can be matched according to their EPA profiles.

I take the role-identity of a *lesbian* from the empirically generated inter-cultural sexual-erotic common component as an illustration of the emotion - identity match in both cultures. The role-identity of a *lesbian* stands as an example for the list of sexual-erotic identities. This example is not intended to serve as a generalization of the multitude of lesbian identities in both cultures. In this empirical example of a *lesbian* (U.S.: -1.29, -0.14, 0.89, Germany: 0.25, -0.46, -0.11) the first number in brackets refers to the evaluation rating; the second to the potency rating; and the third, to the activity rating of males in each culture. Those emotions whose EPA ratings of Americans are closest to the American *lesbian* are *irate* (-1.01, 0.07, 0.92) and *tense* (-1.17, -0.30, 0.60). The emotions that German should feel when taking on an identity rated like the American *lesbian* are similar to the typical emotions identified for Americans. Germans would feel *horrified*, *annoyed* and *outraged*.

Emotions whose EPA ratings of Germans are closest to the German *lesbian* are *reverent* (-0.23, -0.51, -0.57), *touched* (1.03, -0.33, -0.81), and *moved* (1.14, 0.37, -0.01). Americans should feel *awe-stuck* and *melancholic* in response to an identity with the affective representation of a German *lesbian*. As an aggregate, neither emotions nor identities show large cross-cultural differences in their affective representation. Systematic differences occur when role-identities have sexual-erotic denotation. For that reason, differences in the typical emotion associated with sexual-erotic role-identities depend on the large cross-cultural difference in the affective representation of sexual-erotic role-identities rather than on smaller discrepancies in the EPA ratings of emotions.

The EPA ratings of this common component indicates the affective representation of the interculturally agreed portion of sexual-eroticism. Following the logic of the example above, I choose the mean EPA ratings of the common component of sexual-erotic role-identities as a representation of the ideal typical sexual-erotic role-identity. Again, emotions with the smallest Euclidian distance to the common component of sexual-eroticism are selected from the data sets. According to their mean EPA ratings in the common component, the typical sexual-erotic emotions for American males are *panicked* (-0.95, -1.07, 1.51) and *irate* (-1.01, 0.07, 0.92). American females feel *impatient* (-0.61, -0.35, 0.82) and *furious* (-1.01, 0.15, 1.13). These emotional states stand very much in contrast to what Germans feel when a sexual-erotic identity is salient. Putting emotion in the order of the smallest Euclidian distance, German males feel *excited* (-0.06, 0.56, 2.03) and *moved* (1.44, 0.34, 0.01), females are *moved* (1.32, 0.84, 0.20) and *excited* (0.07, 0.61, 2.51).

DISCUSSION

The data is collected in one geographical region each nation. Regions were chosen for convenience, not for theoretical rational. The data collected in each culture cannot represent the entire geographical/sociodemographical heterogeneity in both nations. Osgood's (et al 1975) study on semantic differentials was one of the largest comparative studies ever done in social science. Still, he and his collaborators could not produce a study of different social strata that is representative of the compared societies. I took the same route, but I made sure that the sociodemographic composition of subjects in the American and German culture is comparable. Employing blind backtranslations, the

authentic replication of an existing American data set is another effort to optimize comparability and to make innovative use of the sparse resources available in today's academic environment. When I speak of Americans and Germans in my comparison, I use a convenient generalization to stress my main independent variable: culture.

Cluster analysis of affective responses, a method of creating emergent denotative components, reveals cross-cultural differences in the composition of sexual-erotic clusters. The American data show sexual-erotic identities being absorbed into coercive-deviant role-identities. What is found is that it is not only the emergent clustering that indicates strong disagreement in the sexual-erotic domain, but also the different affective meaning of identical role-identities. Indicating deviant denotation, Americans rate sexual-erotic role-identities as more negative and active than their German counterparts (Schneider 1996).

Constructing an antithetical ideal type to complement Giddens' sexually emancipated individual allows the empirical application of a dynamic cultural model of sexuality. The sexually constrained and emancipated ideal type distinguish themselves through the amount of institutional pressure upon their private sexual lives, and their ability to evade this pressure. Examples demonstrated that ideal typically Americans tend to be sexually constrained, whereas Germans are inclined to be sexually emancipated. This makes American undergraduates more likely be subject to unacknowledged shame that according to Scheff leads to violent emotions. It is shown empirically that sexual-erotic role-identities are associated with emotional states, like being *panicked*, *irate*, *impatient*, and *furious*. These empirical results demonstrate emotions of anger and violence experienced by Americans. This stands in contrast to the emotions like *excited* and *moved*, seen by Germans to correspond to sexual-erotic identities. German sexual-erotic role-identities show no indication of anger or violence.

Alternative explanations implicitly or explicitly see the combination of sex and violence in the behavioristic context of Bandura's (1977) social learning theory. It is argued that being exposed to pornography wakes the inner truth of male violent sexuality (Dworkin 1991). Others see that nonviolent sexual encounters carry the same cues as violent forms of rape and battery (Kelly 1988). These approaches are not sufficient to explain why females are just as likely as men to engage in domestic violence (Buzawa&Austin 1993; Lobel 1986; Stets and Straus 1989; Sugarman & Hotaling 1989.) and why gender differences in my study are marginal compared with cultural differences. Comparing availability and consumption of pornographic material in German and American adult bookstores, video shops, and on television, I cannot confirm a higher exposure of Americans to pornography. It is not the consumption of pornography that merges the sexual-erotic and the violent domain for Americans, but unacknowledged shame that emerges in the confrontation with sexual-erotic role-identities. Lansky's (1984, 1987, 1989) studies on family violence give strong support that unacknowledged shame resulting from the sexual-erotic domain is an important explanation of domestic violence. Undercutting of the husband's sense of manliness (1984), or dressing in a sexually provocative way (1989), triggers unacknowledged shame.

I have to acknowledge that in contrast to the analysis of role-identities, where only role identities were used that were in both, the American and German sample, there were more emotional states available for Americans (n=89) than for Germans (n=67). Since the German emotional states are a subset of the American emotional states, the use of Euclidian distances to select emotions whose EPA profiles are closest to sexual-erotic identities results in larger increments for German than for American emotions chosen to represent sexual-eroticism.

It was demonstrated that there is more public interest in sexual activities in the U.S. than in Germany which leads to regulations and criminalization of sexual behavior, and to the reluctance to display

sexual-erotic identities publicly. What I have not yet addressed is the question of what makes Americans impose regulations on the private sexual life and why they are reluctant to display these identities in public.

I assume that there is a double moral standard in the U.S. which makes the public display of sexual erotic role-identities problematic. One moral standard is rooted in the traditional norms related to the Protestant ethic. Shame and embarrassment associated with eroticism might be triggered by the reaction of religious or political fundamentalists who find fertile ground in the American religious heritage. This argument can be traced back to Weber (1930) who described the Protestant ethic as a basic determinant of the American culture, which considers earthly indulgence, and sexual indulgence in particular, as sinful. Another contradicting moral standpoint is manifested in the social pressure to make sexual-erotic identities explicit. In the case of American undergraduates, sexual-erotic role-identities are shown selectively within the peer group that is most likely to be the source of sexually permissive attitudes. This explains why Americans are more likely to restrict the display of sexual-erotic identities to more specific audiences than Germans. However, since the peer group is also aware of the general traditional norms, keeping the display of sexual-erotic role-identities to the peer group cannot fully prevent stigmatization. This creates a catch 22 situation, especially for females who give in the pressure and appear sexually permissive (Schneider forthcoming).

Empirical studies support not only the existence of the double moral standard in the U.S., but also show shame and guilt as an emotional outcome of the Americans who display their sexual-erotic identities. In the undergraduate population from which my samples are drawn, peer pressure increases the likelihood to engage in sexual acts. This engagement, stigmatized by other moral standards, causes unacknowledged shame that, in turn, leads to emotions of anger and violence. This explanation is supported by the cross-cultural study of Muehlenhard and Cook (1988) who found that American college students experienced unwanted intercourse largely due to peer pressure, popularity, and the fear of appearing inexperienced or shy. The two contradicting moralities in the U.S. are likely to cause emotions of shame and guilt, following the moral standard of sexual permissiveness, one violates the other constraining moral standards rooted in the Protestant ethic. In another cross-cultural study Schwartz (1993) found that American more likely than Swedish female undergraduates report negative affective reactions such as feeling guilty or fearful after their first coitus. Similar results are reported for males and females in another cross-cultural study by Weinberg et al (1995). Here it is not only the first but also the recent coitus in which "the Americans stand out in reporting the highest percentage of feeling guilty and the lowest percentage of feeling happy" (p.422). In their comparison of Swedish and American undergraduates, Weinberg et al find that differences in the sexual erotic domain, including the reported feeling of guilt caused by sexual experiences, are larger when compared across cultures than if compared across gender. Using a different European culture, this supports my findings that cultural influences on the experiences in the sexual-erotic domain are more profound than influences of gender.

My explanation of the cross-cultural differences caused by the prevalent double moral standard in the U.S. is compatible with the idea that the sexual-erotic domain is more regulated in the U.S. than in Germany, and that partly because of this overregulation, Americans are more likely to hide their sexual-erotic identities from public attention. The Protestant ethic, the first component of the double moral standard shared by the general public, might be responsible for the extensive regulation of the sexual-erotic domain in the U.S. The second component of the double moral standard, the peer pressure to be permissive, causes individuals to selectively demonstrate their sexual identities even if they violate existing regulations.

American undergraduates are unlikely to rationalize the peer pressure. If they give in to the peer pressure, they will attribute their display of sexual-erotic role-identities to be internally motivated.

Taking responsibility for breaching moral norms and official regulations creates emotions of shame and guilt that, following Scheff's model of violent emotions. My analysis supports Scheff's argument that if shame is created violence will follow.

I identified the mechanism for this shame-violence spiral. Cultural variables stigmatize sexual-eroticism. Stigmatization creates shame in the individual who displays of sexual-erotic identities. Shaming keeps up the stigmatization. The cause for violence is not the shaming itself, but the fact that the parallel occurrence of devaluation merges shamed concepts with a coercive deviant category.

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