

BOOK REVIEWS

Review editor: Francisco Muñoz-Pérez
Assisted by Dominique Diguet of the INED Documentation

GENDER: HISTORY, INEQUALITIES (1)

Special topic coordinators: Marion Maudet, Gaëlle Meslay, Alice Olivier, Anne Paillet
Department “Demography, Gender and Societies” unit

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SOHN Anne-Marie, 2015, *La Fabrique des garçons. L'Éducation des garçons de 1820 à aujourd'hui* [Manufacturing boys: educating boys in France from 1820 to the present], Paris, Textuel, 160 p.

La Fabrique des garçons is an illustrated social history by Anne-Marie Sohn, professor emeritus in contemporary history at the École Normale Supérieure of Lyon specialized in the history of gender, private life and youth. Richly garnered with images, it is reminiscent of the history textbooks used in secondary school in France. Like them it presents historical analyses organized chronologically and by topic and supported by historical documents, often iconographic. The book draws on a wide variety of sources: ethnographic studies, private correspondence and photographs, advertising material, press articles and illustrations, literature, archives on public places such as schools, barracks, public spaces and areas for social gatherings. It is a good work of popularization, instructive and attractive. The text is as pleasant to read as the images are to look at.

The work is presented as the “exact counterpart” of *La Fabrique des filles: L'Éducation des filles de Jules Ferry à la pilule* [Manufacturing girls in France: educating girls from the time of Jules Ferry to the birth control pill] by Rebecca Rogers and Françoise Thébaud, published in 2010 by Textuel and drawing on the same kinds of materials. In fact, the period covered by Sohn's book is twice as long (1815 to our time), and the chronological sections – of which there are also three – are longer.

The book undertakes a synthetic overview of the social construction of masculinity in France during what is called the contemporary period, using both a diachronic and topic-centred approach. The process was revealed later than femininity, as the masculine continued to be confused with the universal, and men, despite their “monopoly over the spoken word”, were “not very talkative about their fate”. And yet, men are not born men any more than women are born women: they become men, and at the cost of a “long, often painful march”. Masculinity was and is constantly being questioned and challenged through tests sanctioned by “multiple judges” present in all spheres of society. And because masculinity depends on the social milieu and historical context in which it develops and is enacted, it too is multiple and changing. But the author emphasizes “dominant models”; that is, the model perceived to be the most legitimate in a given period. The three parts of the work correspond to three distinct periods; each discusses topics as diverse as the body, the family, sociability, leisure activities, school, work and politics. Here I shall just note the most salient components.

The first part focuses on the period from 1815 to 1879 and is entitled “From combative masculinity to the decline of same”. France at the time was mostly rural, and even children were put to work. Except during very early childhood, there was strict segregation of the sexes. Homo-sociability fostered “flamboyant, not to say combative, offensive”, masculinity. Violence was present in all aspects

of everyday life, and in private and public life alike. Older boys brutalized younger children in the family at both school and work. In the political sphere, instability went together with the use of force – the popular imagination was still dominated by war and revolution. The French population tended to approve of conscription. Going before the draft board that examined conscripts' bodies became a rite of passage that validated these young men's masculinity: they and their families hoped they would be judged "fit for service," which would also make it easier to start a family. With time, however, this model of masculinity declined, due to several factors: young boys began to attend public elementary school; the economy improved; democracy and individualism developed. Society began moving toward a "civilized" model of masculinity, one key feature of which was self-control.

The second part covers the period 1880 to 1950 and is entitled "Shaping well-behaved, educated citizens devoted to their *Patrie* [country, homeland]". During this period mores and behaviour became gentler; the use of violence receded and progress was made in social gender mixing. Schooling played an important role in these changes, and during the Third Republic it came to occupy centre stage. The stated aim of schooling was to promote the good of both the individual and the nation by way of such values as order, work and discipline. Moreover, when the laws named for the republican statesman Jules Ferry established free, compulsory schooling for both sexes between the ages of 6 and 13, education came to be perceived as a source of upward social mobility. The primary education certificate, which acquired national status during the period, was a means of promoting scholastic excellence. Girls attended school and their level rose. Education programmes focused on the masculine, however; the great male authors and heroes dominated. Public vocational schools and institutions of higher education, specifically France's *grandes écoles* elite training schools, were largely restricted to boys and young men. While gender mixing did spread, masculine still dominated feminine. But the masculinity model was no longer of the combative variety; it was more intellectual, and was constructed in situations where men were in contact with and potentially exposed to the judgment of girls and women, the effect of which was to moderate the degree of violence.

The third part covers the period from 1950 to our time and is entitled "Manufacturing boys: between gender mix and masculinity". In a context of economic prosperity, longer education and the liberalization of mores and behaviours, gender mixing continued to develop and spread, but sexual equality could not be said to be achieved in all areas. While boys were increasingly confronted with girls' strong academic performances, men were still the ones to obtain the lion's share of positions in highly regarded educational disciplines, occupational fields and leisure activities; also in politics. At the same time, norms about the body became more flexible and girls' and boys' sexual behaviours more similar. Moreover, granting women the right to vote in France (1944) and putting an end to compulsory military service worked to reduce the number of exclusively masculine areas of activity while increased mechanization of production and

information technology reduced the need for physical strength at work, further undermining the specificity of masculinity. However, the end of the *Trente Glorieuses* 30-year economic boom and the casualization of employment hit working-class men hardest. Without the framework and guidance of political parties and unions, their masculinity became agonistic once again. While masculinity overall continued to become more peaceful, a segment of the French population has readopted older, more virile attributes and markers.

Masculinity thus underwent major changes over two centuries in France. Despite variations, some of them specific to particular social milieus, we can discern a general movement toward the “pacification” of masculine mores and behaviours. Thanks to the democratization of society, the development of schooling and increased gender mixing, masculinity evolved from an “offensive” model to a model of self-control, resulting in finer boundaries between it and femininity.

La Fabrique des garçons enables us to better understand how current masculine codes developed, making it fascinating reading. In this connection it would have been helpful to include a bibliography so that readers could pursue the interest thus sparked. After enjoying the book, readers will want to discover more about the history of masculinity and to have some guidance in doing so. Another point that would make the work easier for readers not necessarily familiar with the social sciences would be to include a glossary, or footnotes with definitions. This would clarify the meaning of scholarly and/or sociological terminology, making the book accessible to a wider public.

Marie Mengotti

BERENI Laure, 2015, *La bataille de la parité. Mobilisations pour la féminisation du pouvoir* [The fight for political parity: mobilizing for the feminization of power], Paris, Economica, *Études politiques*, 300 p.

Based on a doctoral thesis defended in 2007, this book contributes to both the history of feminism and women's political history. Its subject – 1990s mobilizations for political parity in France – the precision with which it was written, and the wide range of questions it discusses will make it of interest to sociologists of public policy as well as specialists of gender, mobilizations and political activism. Grounded in a multimodal socio-historical survey that combines interviews, questionnaires and archive study, the book covers the period from 1992 to 2000 in primarily chronological order.

The author begins by presenting the success of the parity cause as an enigma to be resolved: How, after a long period of lethargy in the French feminist movement, did a handful of not particularly unified feminist activists manage to obtain – in one short decade – a revision of the constitution and passage of a bill that seemed unimaginable in the late 1980s? To answer this question, Laure Bereni forges an original analytic category the scope of which exceeds the framework of her study. On the model of Lilian Mathieu's concept of "the space of social movements", she creates "the space of the women's cause", defined as "the configuration of sites for mobilization for and in the name of women in a plurality of social spheres" (p. 17). With this she can apprehend the historicity of mobilizations for political parity, their extension and their ideological and sector-based heterogeneity, integrating initiatives by political parties, trade unions, state structures, religious institutions or associations and the intellectual milieu in addition to specifically feminist mobilizations.

Bereni's study in the first three chapters of the emergence and gradual enlargement of the movement for political parity immediately demonstrates the heuristic value of her concept of the space of the women's cause. Pro-parity initiatives were hardly restricted to the feminist circles that developed in the 1970s. From as early as 1992 they arose in quite different spheres: regions (the "Femmes d'Alsace" [Women of Alsace] electoral list); the feminist intellectual milieu (publication of *Au pouvoir, citoyennes! Liberté, Égalité, Parité* [Onward to power, women citizens! Liberty, Equality, Parity]); the European Commission (Athens Conference); and others. Despite their small numbers and the profound divisions that could already be discerned within the movement, highly invested women activists were already trying to "make a movement around a marginal cause" within the various structures. While the fleeting Réseau femmes [Women's network] of 1993 failed to create a wide-ranging movement in favour of political parity, the activists Gisèle Halimi, Antoinette Fouque and Yvette Roudy, each of who launched initiatives at nearly the same time, together with the major women's associations established throughout the twentieth century, managed, despite their differences, to bring the issue to life politically.

Chapters IV and V, among the most interesting, offer a traditional analysis

of activist careers and seem to suggest the possibility of connecting analysis of social movements with analysis of political party activism. With her series of portraits of activists and intellectuals and related sociological information, the author immerses the reader in the parity movement. Her questionnaire survey of 122 women activists reveals three main characteristics: most respondents entered the space of the women's cause in the 1970s, fought for it in the framework of a political party – usually on the left – and belonged to the upper social categories. The activist convergences studied in Chapter V then lead the author to distinguish three profiles: "heirs of the second wave", "leftist party feminists" and "women committed to the feminine". The space-of-the-women's-cause concept defined in the introduction once again demonstrates its heuristic value here as the last category includes members of Catholic women's associations and women activists from right-identified political parties. Though most of them kept their distance from second-wave feminist groups, they nonetheless took part in the 1990s political parity movement.

The final two chapters examine the last reconfigurations of the battle for political parity, from getting a bill on the legislative agenda in the second half of the 1990s to seeing it passed on 6 June 2000. Steering clear of any teleological reading of this political sequence, Laure Bereni sets out to show how the political field became acclimated to parity in a context of mounting discourse about the imperative of modernization and the crisis in political representation. Parity came to look increasingly like a "magic formula for reinvigorating the world of politics." On the left, the Socialist party's conversion to parity was part of a project to win back political power and to re-centre the party on democratic and "societal" issues, a project that had gotten underway at the start of the decade at a time when the party was struggling to define its political identity.

The concept of the space of the women's cause is quite useful in conceiving continuities between social movements and political party activism (the two are traditionally analysed separately). However, the sequence of anti-conservative legislation that began recently with examination and passage of the Taubira bill [named for then Minister of Justice Christiane Taubira] legalizing same-sex marriage suggests the concept's limitations, for these last years in France have been marked by the emergence of conservative women's movements close to the counter-movement against same-sex marriage, movements whose actions all aim to preserve the feminine ideal and male-female complementarity. If we apply the author's criteria, such profoundly anti-feminist groups as the Antigones, the Mères-Veilleuses [roughly, stay-at-home mothers] and members of the group Journées de Retrait de l'Ecole [days for taking the children out of school] launched by Farida Belghoul must be given full-fledged membership in the space of the women's cause simply because these groups mobilize as and for women. As often happens, the concept's flexibility is its main weakness: while it enables the author to conceive of mobilizations for gender parity in a way that takes into account their diversity and contradictions, when applied to new research subjects it leads

to ranking radically opposed movements in the same category – and so loses heuristic value.

La bataille de la parité remains a study of rare quality that sheds new light on the mobilizations that led to one of the most important constitutional reforms of the late twentieth century in France, and an essential contribution to studies of gender, mobilization and public policy.

Simon MASSEI

GALLOT Fanny, 2015, *En découdre. Comment les ouvrières ont révolutionné le travail et la société* [Raring for a fight: How women factory workers revolutionized work and society in France], Paris, La Découverte, 288 p.

This work, which the author derived from her doctoral thesis, focuses on women factory workers hired in the late 1960s at a time when the French economy was still growing; many were laid off early in the 2000s, a time of de-industrialization and factory closures. Fanny Gallo's undertaking is ambitious: to reconstitute the contours of an entire generation of women workers using a socio-historical approach that is both cross-sectional and dynamic. Cross-sectional in that the analysis is not restricted to the factory world but extends to the continuous balancing act women had to perform between work and family life; dynamic in that studying a generation is a means not only of measuring changes in female factory work organization but also of tracking the experiences and demands of women working in conditions that grew constantly harsher over the period.

Gallot draws primarily on an in-depth study of two companies: Chantelle, a maker of women's lingerie, and Moulinex, a home appliance manufacturer. The companies were distinct not just in terms of business sector and products but also the profile of their women workers. At Moulinex they were from rural farms in Lower Normandy, whereas at Chantelle, whose main factory was in the industrial region of Nantes, more were of working-class origin. Another major difference: whereas the Chantelle workforce was exclusively female, at Moulinex it was mixed. But despite the heterogeneity of these women's living, working and collective action conditions, the book is concerned to portray a shared experience, the "collective culture" of women factory workers. Hired as very young unskilled workers, these women aged together in the factory and experienced the same life events at the same ages. Their long careers at a single company ultimately created a feeling of attachment to the factory and its products. Strong ties were also created, though they do not seem to have withstood the shock of factory closures and "restructuration" very well.

The materials used to study Moulinex and Chantelle (and a few other companies mentioned occasionally, such as Lejaby [another women's lingerie manufacturer]) are extremely varied. They include written sources (ministerial, company and union archives; feminist archives; women workers' own written accounts); oral sources (interviews with workers, some conducted by the author herself) and audio-visual sources (documentaries and fiction films). While events are viewed primarily through the women's eyes, source diversity enables the author to apprehend changes in public policy, management stances and union debates on female employment, as well as the difficult encounter between the feminist movement and women factory workers.

Gallot combines analysis of class and gender positions. In the course of the twelve chapters, each focused on a different theme, she probes the social and gender-based divisions operative not only in factory work itself but also in union activism and the family sphere. She thus brings to light the range of constraints

these women had to cope with: their confinement to relatively low-skilled, low-paid jobs despite policies for promoting occupational equality; the devaluing of their skills, considered “natural” and remunerated less than men’s; increasingly harsh working conditions, including work pace acceleration, permanent production uncertainties, paternalism and/or the rigidity of an almost exclusively male hierarchy; the physical discomfort that comes of performing the same movements and assuming the same positions all day long; sexual harassment by male superiors, considered an ordinary occurrence; the daily strain of organizing and doing both housework and paid work; the impediment to mobilizing represented by having a new house and a mortgage to pay off; possibly having a husband who did not look kindly on an activist wife who was spending less and less time at home, spoke out in public in some cases, and who kept company with other men when occupying factories. Here we clearly discern a set of tensions between issues primarily concerned with private, conjugal and family life and issues related to the public space of work and the politicization of that space during collective mobilizations.

And yet, far from appearing passive victims of a crushing, overpowering system, the women spoke up, resisted, organized themselves into groups, protested and dissented. When a colleague of theirs had a “nervous breakdown” they launched a strike in protest against excessively harsh working conditions. They deliberately slowed the work pace to protest against overheating and the toxicity of certain substances. Some played the role of “easy woman” worker during strikes, distributing the company’s garters to the forces of law and order in charge of holding them in check, while others refused the director’s usual “buss on the cheek” during the Christmas party and demanded a bonus in place of the glass of champagne. Many mobilized actively during the 1970s against deteriorating working conditions, to defend their dignity, and to demand a re-evaluation of their know-how; later they were actively involved in struggles against factory restructurings and closures. We do of course perceive points of disagreement between women workers – this point might have been developed explicitly – depending on whether they were unionized or not, identified with feminist ideas or rejected that label, went on strike or not, approved company traditions as festive occasions or rejected them as paternalistic, sexist customs. In any case, Gallot shows us how all these women were “raring for a fight” and how they did fight, both on a daily basis and during periods of collective industrial action. And even though their production position does not seem to have changed fundamentally in the end, they did manage to shift some of the lines laid down by standard gender and class ascriptions. Their ability to act, and the many forms that action took, are a common thread that unifies the analysis and enlightens the reader.

Though the issues of naturalizing and thereby devaluing women’s occupational skills, of sexual segregation in the work place and of health problems specific to women factory workers are not new, they are handled here from a dynamic

perspective that enables us to apprehend changes. This holds for the *droit de cuissage*, i.e., bosses' or hierarchical superiors' traditional "right" to demand sexual favours from women workers, which has now become the crime of sexual harassment, and "nervous breakdowns", long seen as a typically female manifestation of nerves and now officially a symptom of workplace stress. The last example is the shift from "ordinary" rheumatism to musculoskeletal disorder, a recognized occupational disease.

There are certain limitations to the book, all of them inherent in its strengths. The content seems at points to lack coherence. Based as it is on several sources of different types it speaks from several perspectives, and there are also changes in analytic scale; in some chapters it is hard to distinguish between the women workers' point of view and the stances of various union, management, government and activist bodies. Surely the choices that had to be made to turn a doctoral thesis into a book, also the great number of areas studied, make it seem at times as if the book is moving from one subject to another too quickly, and it is regrettable that Gallot did not further develop her analysis of women workers' experience both at work and during collective actions, particularly in connection with factory closures. Last, the generational approach rigidifies the contours of the analysis somewhat, and the reader would like to learn more about what became of the collective culture so painstakingly reconstituted here when younger women, hired in the 1980s on limited-time contracts or as temps, took up the work.

These points do not seriously undermine the interest of the work or its wealth of information and analysis. It is a highly useful contribution to knowledge of a generation of women workers, and the author has successfully met the challenge of linking changes in women's factory work to developments in gender relations in the domestic and political spheres over the period studied.

Christine HAMELIN

MACÉ Éric, 2015, *L'Après-patriarcat* [Post-patriarchy], Paris, Seuil, La couleur des idées, 180 p.

Éric Macé's latest book begins with the observation that though European countries support the principle of sexual equality, and though women's and men's statuses and practices have come to resemble each other more closely in several areas, gender inequalities and discriminations persist. To explain this "inegalitarian egalitarianism" the author puts forward a historical analysis of gendered social relations in Europe and elsewhere. It is not his aim to demonstrate continuity but rather to study the different modes of gender production over time. The historical perspective is a means of highlighting the specificity of contemporary gender relations, which Macé describes as post-patriarchal.

In the first chapter, he presents his main conceptual tool, a term borrowed from Erving Goffman: "arrangement between the sexes", or in the author's version, "gender arrangement". He defines it as "the way each type of society culturally relates the question of sexual difference to those of sexuality and masculine and feminine identity, and how it fits this together with the social organization of work, the family, politics, etc.". This notion enables him to point up the historical, contingent nature of gender: there is nothing necessary, or necessarily permanent, about sexual inequality. The book therefore stands opposed to interpretations of gender relations that associate contemporary inequalities with those found in traditional societies. In direct contrast to Pierre Bourdieu's *Masculine Domination*, cited as a counter-example for its claim that gender relations in modern Europe are anthropologically continuous with gender relations in traditional Kabyle society, *L'Après patriarcat* insists on the historicity of social relations (in the broadest sense of that term) between the sexes.

Specifically, the book draws attention to the major historical break in continuity represented by the arrival of Western modernity in the late fifteenth century. This event divided the world into a "before" and "after". Before, there was traditional patriarchy; after, there was modern and modernized patriarchy; last came the post-patriarchal period – the present time of Western societies. He defines patriarchy as "the move to establish a necessary and legitimate asymmetry between men and women". In its traditional form, this asymmetry was based on cosmological or theological principles. While this constituted a particular gender arrangement (occurring as it did in history), it was also universal in that it characterized all traditional societies. That model was radically changed by Western modernity, which brought about the shift from one world to another. Traditional patriarchy was not abandoned at that time but rather reconfigured, "modernized": the asymmetry of feminine and masculine was no longer legitimated by religion but by science, which naturalized sexual difference and inequality. However, modernity also introduced conflict, for at the same moment as all men were declared free and equal, feminism emerged as a demand for sexual equality. Gradually, convergence between different developments worked to erode the legal, scientific and economic foundations of women's subordination, with the

result that the conditions for maintaining the patriarchy were no longer in place: gender no longer appeared necessary (sexual division was no longer constitutive of social organization) or legitimate (feminist struggles had successfully imposed the principle of sexual equality). In the post-patriarchal society characteristic of contemporary Western European countries, it is now “the equality and autonomy of individuals that appear necessary and legitimate, not only from the perspective of institutions but from that of individuals as well”. And yet sexual inequality persists. Macé reviews several types of it in the book’s longest chapter, which draws on a number of social science studies of gender inequality in different spheres of social life: family, work, school, the media, and others. He also describes the “inegalitarian egalitarianism” of the current situation in terms of both the subjective tensions and pathological breaks in continuity it causes and the political positions (progressive, reactionary and conservative) that fuel it.

The last chapter turns to countries outside Europe, which the author explains have been shaken up by Western modernity. In those societies, patriarchy is no longer traditional but neither is it modern; rather it is “modernized” patriarchy. Under the influence of colonialism and resistances against it, and later under that of postcolonial transformations (economic and cultural globalization, the globalization of legal standards represented by the dissemination of United Nations norms, for example), what we have is a hybridization of identities and practices that produces what Macé calls composite gender arrangements. The interpretative framework of his book, he explains, is meant as a means to compare contemporary gender arrangements. “Given the diversity of societies in the world, of their trajectories and ‘globalization’, we should ask first whether we are dealing with a post-patriarchal or composite arrangement between the sexes, derived from a modern patriarchy or a modernized one.”

According to some studies, gender history is nothing more than the history of how inequality has been reproduced and/or displaced onto other areas of life. However, the changes that have been observed in women’s living conditions and social status, notably in Europe over the last decades, are profound. Éric Macé’s book takes those changes seriously. In doing so, it distances itself from a critical sociological approach where the verdict is that nothing has changed. *L’Après-patriarcat* suggests the relevance of a comprehensive reading of the many changes that gendered social relations have undergone, and in this respect it is a welcome contribution. However, it can be criticized on two counts. First, the table of four arrangements between the sexes (traditional, modern and modernized patriarchy, and post-patriarchy) is based on a reading of history that homogenizes it. Whereas the author’s aim was to provide a finer-grained analysis of gender relations, more contextual and more dynamic, the end result is the opposite. Contemporary European societies are seen through a magnifying glass, described in their complexity (as societies where gender is contested, renegotiated and reconfigured) whereas earlier societies and societies elsewhere are presented as homogeneous wholes. Likewise the author’s analysis of “inegalitarian egalitarianism” is open

to question. Contemporary European societies are defined above all by their (egalitarian) values; meanwhile, a whole series of (inegalitarian) practices, presented as “resistances”, “inheritances” or “contradictions”, conflict with those values. It is as if current society did not itself generate inequalities but that they originated elsewhere. In this connection, the vocabulary used in the chapter on post-patriarchy may seem surprising. First, gender inequalities are described as “discrimination” and “stereotyping”, that is, acts that should not occur given the principles in effect in society. Second, post-patriarchal arrangements between the sexes are conceived as having “incompletely” superseded tradition, as if history were out of phase with itself. Clearly, a sociological study that began by observing practices would reach different conclusions. Contradictions would be understood as constitutive of gender relations (here and now, but surely also earlier and elsewhere) rather than a paradox to be resolved. The enigma that gave rise to *L'Après-patriarcat* seems to lie in part in the way the research question was constructed; that is, the surprising distinction between historical logic and social practices.

Marie BERGSTRÖM

PREARO Massimo, 2014, *Le moment politique de l'homosexualité. Mouvements, identités et communautés en France* [Homosexuality's political moment in France: movements, identities and communities], Lyon, Presses universitaires de Lyon, SXS Sexualités, 336 p.

In this book derived from the doctoral thesis he defended in 2011, Massimo Prearo studies the history of the politicization of homosexuality in France from the mid-nineteenth to the early twenty-first century. The author is opposed to the notion of a great narrative of gay activism that would trace “a linear trajectory of gradual liberation, emancipation, resistance or normalization”, showing instead that the history of the “homosexual movement” in France is made up of breaks in continuity, *ruptures*, each marking a historical sequence or moment in a series of different activist configurations. His theory and method are Foucauldian, and he has taken a “detour through history” in order to situate current types of inter-association LGBT activism in a long-term perspective. He sets out to conduct an “archaeological political analysis” of activist knowledge, drawing on a corpus of journals, newspapers, political tracts, manifestoes, etc. As he sees it, discursive production of this sort offers an excellent observation point for apprehending the different historical sequences that constitute the process by which homosexuality became politicized.

In the second chapter he takes up the “emergence of the homosexual question” (p. 47) in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Citing Foucault’s hypothesis that homosexuality originated as a category of discourse,⁽¹⁾ he sets out to show that the first activist knowledge, which he terms *scientia militantis* in opposition to physicians’ *scientia sexualis*, was in fact based on scientific knowledge. At the end of a quite technical line of argument, he considers the writings of the German sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld (1868-1935), which made possible “a shift from a scientific to a social semantics of homosexuality”, opening the way for the first types of collective mobilization.

He then pursues this analysis of the historical and political prerequisites for the birth of a homosexual movement in France, studying the production of the journal *Arcadie* (1954-1982) and the Front homosexual d'action révolutionnaire or FHAR (1970-1974). Citing studies by Julian Jackson⁽²⁾ and Michael Sibalis⁽³⁾, he expresses reservations about the long-accepted idea that there was a radical break between these two organizations, showing instead that they both further,

(1) Michel Foucault, 1976, *Histoire de la sexualité I. La volonté du savoir*, Paris, Gallimard, 224 p. Published in English as *The History of Sexuality*, vol. I, *The Will to Knowledge*, London, Allen Lane, 1979.

(2) Julian Jackson, 2009, *Arcadie. La vie homosexuelle en France de l'après-guerre à la dépenalisation*, trans. Arlette Sancery, Paris, Autrement. Originally published as *Living in Arcadia: Homosexuality, Politics and Morality in France from the Liberation to AIDS*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2009.

(3) Michael Sibalis, 2010, “L'arrivée de la libération gay en France. Le Front homosexual d'action révolutionnaire (FHAR)”, *Genre, sexualité & société* 3, online at <http://gss.revues.org/index1428.html> (visited in May 2016). Originally published as “Gay Liberation comes to France: The Front homosexuel d'action révolutionnaire (FHAR)”, papers from the George Rudé seminar, vol. 1, 2005; online at <http://www.h-france.net/rude/2005conference/Sibalis2.pdf>

and critically, developed existentialist philosophy. As he sees it, they belonged to the same “existential moment”, though *Arcadie* was more homophile and FHAR more revolutionary. Despite radically different action strategies, they both helped to free homosexual knowledge from the science referential. When the FHAR dissolved in 1974, a new historical sequence opened, marked by the development of new groups, among them the Groupes de libération homosexuels (GLH; homosexual liberation groups). When revolution ceased to be the political objective in a context marked by postmodern thinking, the GLH chose to adopt a new concept of political action as action resolutely engaged in the present. This produced what the author calls the “75 moment”, particularly significant in this connection. Rejection of the GLH application to participate in the May Day procession and the ceremonies commemorating the deportations of WWII led those activist organizations to assert their political autonomy, manifested by the use of a new word in their rhetoric: “homophobia”. According to the author, 1975 was a key moment in the “political instituting of homosexuality as a movement”. That “institution”, then, should be understood as a strategy of the activist groups to unify their actions and free themselves from traditional political and unionist frameworks.

This means that the activist referential changed significantly during the 1970s. The decade was characterized by the adoption of a new identity rhetoric that superseded the homophile and revolutionary discourse of the 1950s and 1960s. Gay and lesbian “militance” took over from traditional homosexual activism, introducing a new action strategy: “the territorialization of homosexuality in spaces of autonomous action and identity assertion”. For the author, the 1978 creation of Comités homosexuels d’arrondissement (CHA; district homosexual committees) is exemplary of this new way of deploying collective action – a process that continued through the early 1980s with a remarkable proliferation of new associations, which then gained institutional recognition and financial assistance from the left, in power at the time.

Contrary to the longstanding assumption that the 1981 election of the socialist François Mitterrand as president and the decriminalization of homosexuality in 1982 led gays to demobilize, the author claims that in fact a new phase of politicization got under way at precisely that time. However, the movement was in political crisis throughout that decade due to increasing tension between two antagonistic dynamics within it: recognition of the movement by the authorities led to political union at the national level while local community involvement led to a multiplication of initiatives and gathering places, and here the driving force was differentiation. The term movement came to seem less appropriate, or at least was now in competition with a more flexible, less unitary structure. As the author sees it, that crisis, accentuated by the context of HIV/AIDS, was temporarily solved by the creation of Act Up-Paris in 1989, which helped existing community groups form networks to combat the epidemic more efficiently.

The 1990s, Prearo explains, were marked by the emergence of a new activist configuration. The implementation of public policy to stop the spread of AIDS and the assertion of bisexual and transsexual identities over the decade led to strong community dynamics of differentiation and specialization. Rejecting recurrent criticism of communitarianism and identity-based withdrawal, the author shows how the arrival of inter-association LGBT activism at the turn of the twenty-first century represented an unprecedented mode of collective organization. He uses the notion of “community type” to account for the way the different activist organizations assert their own autonomy, all the while drawing on the principle of inter-association as a symbolic resource. The mobilization in the late 1990s in favour of the government bill on civil unions and the annual Prides Parade are exemplary manifestations of the “balance, albeit unstable and subject to permanent tension, between strong symbolic unity and strong community division” within the “space of LGBT activism”.

With its analysis of the key moments in the politicizing of homosexuality in France, Prearo’s book succeeds in its stated aim of endowing current LGBT activism there with some historical depth. The identity-based differentiation within the contemporary inter-association movement – which has been enriched since the 2000s with new acronyms: Q for queer, I for intersexual, A for asexual – attests to the relevance of his conclusions. Though the question does not pertain directly to the author’s subject, one would like to know to what degree the production and circulation of the discourses he examines are based on specific trajectories and modalities of *engagement* or commitment to the cause – a question that has not been sufficiently studied in connection with gay activism.⁽⁴⁾

Matthias THIBEAUT

(4) Cf. the following studies: Christophe Broqua, 2006, *Agir pour ne pas mourir! Act Up, les homosexuels et le sida* [Taking action so as not to die! Act Up, homosexuals and AIDS], Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 406 p.; Olivier Fillieule and Christophe Broqua, 2002, “Les mouvements homosexuels” [Homosexual movements], in Isabelle Sommier and Xavier Crettriez, eds., *La France rebelle*, Paris, Michalon, 569 p.

BURGNARD Sylvie, 2015, *Produire, diffuser et contester les savoirs sur le sexe. Une sociohistoire de la sexualité dans la Genève des années 1970* [Producing, disseminating and contesting established knowledge about sex. A socio-history of sexuality in Geneva in the 1970s], Bern, Peter Lang S.A. Éditions scientifiques internationales, Population, famille et société, vol. 20, XVI+368 p.

Sylvie Burgnard's work is situated at the intersection of history and sociology. She puts forward an analysis of knowledge about sexuality at a given time – the 1970s – and place: Romandy, or the French-speaking part of Switzerland, specifically, the city of Geneva. Her analysis is based on public and private archives as well as medical publications, women's magazines of the time, and a few interviews. She set out to account for four distinct types of discourse on sexuality: sexology, sex education, family planning (in Switzerland, the relevant institution was the Cifern, Centre d'information familiale et de régulation des naissances [Centre for family information and birth regulation]) and activist discourses, both feminist and gay. The first part focuses on the emergence of sexology in this part of Switzerland. Studies of sexuality developed timidly at first and were grounded in gynaecology and psychiatry. But sexology in Geneva was launched by an unexpected event. In 1970, a private citizen named Maurice Chalumeau bequeathed over two million Swiss francs for the creation of a sexology institute in the hope that its researchers would be able to scientifically "legitimate" homosexuality. In fact, the research thus subsidized quickly came to centre on sex in heterosexual couples. The aim was to determine the "proper" sexuality and to encourage it. In terms of practice, this was defined primarily as coitus between spouses; couples were told to avoid abortion, etc. This choice of "legitimate" research subjects enabled the actors in this field to legitimate themselves. Meanwhile, types of sexuality considered "pathological" (homosexuality, sex between young people or between old people, etc.) and that had once been studied medically were gradually neglected.

Brugnard then turns to family planning at the Cifern, particularly the issues of abortion and contraception. She shows how that institution's vision centred once again on the couple and the promotion of a certain family ideal that had to be preserved. Clearly the institute was not in tune with women's contemporaneous demands for "freedom" and an improvement in the female condition. One of the Centre's missions was to keep abortions to a minimum (though the procedure was legal under some conditions), and contraception was understood as a tool for "responsible" couples only. Young women who came to the Centre of their own volition seeking information on contraception for "preventive" purposes were met with astonishment. Here again, the couple, not sexuality, was at the centre of this discourse, especially as the Cifern soon adopted a psychosocial perspective.

The author then turns to sex education, gradually institutionalized from the 1960s to the 1980s. Here the point was to make adolescents aware of their "individual responsibility", a 180-degree turn from the view at the start of the century emphasizing concern for the community. Sex education classes did

present contraception methods (again in the framework of the couple) and the mechanisms of reproduction; no mention was made of pleasure. As the author points out, “sex education in no way derived from the dissident movements that arose out of '68 or were in favour of ‘sexual liberation’, nor from 1970s feminist battles”. Rather it represented an attempt to limit the effects of such social change, emphasizing as it did both fundamental differences between men and women and the centrality of the couple, put forward as a “prerequisite” to any sexual experience.

In the last part of the book, Burgnard switches perspectives, turning to discourses aimed not to maintain and regulate the social order but to subvert it; i.e., feminist and gay activist discourses. In those discourses, sexuality appears not as a drive to be controlled but rather a social construction and therefore a political issue. The author shows how the Mouvement de libération des femmes (MLF; women's liberation movement) in Geneva focused its demands on private life, sexuality, the intimate, and in so doing ran afoul of earlier Swiss feminist movements that were still fighting for women's right to vote at the federal level (granted at last in 1971) and whose members feared that the newcomers would discredit them. Together with MLF-Geneva demands for abortion and contraception rights and feminist movement discourse calling into question the centrality of heterosexual coitus, promoting self-help practices, etc., homosexual demands emerged aimed at “dismantling heterosexuality”. Brugnard presents several examples of battles waged by the various activist groups (for media visibility, in opposition to the Certificate of proper conduct and morals, etc.), bringing to light the specificity of these discourses, which, contrary to the first three (sexology, sex education and family planning), drew on the actual experiences of the women and men who uttered and used them.

The conclusion efficiently recalls the outline of the work while indicating points that the various discourses have in common. The theme of change, for example, resounds like a threat in the first three types of discourse and a demand in the last, a demand for individual responsibility – a notion that emerged as central over the period. The author also highlights the fact that these discourses on sexuality did not suddenly appear in the 1970s but drew instead on knowledge disseminated and statements made at the beginning of the twentieth century. She concludes with a plea for preferring circumscribed studies on the recent history of sexuality – studies of which there are still too few, in her opinion – over a sociological or historical approach to sexuality based on the opposition “liberation vs. repression”.

Sylvie Burgnard's work is interesting in several respects. First, it provides a number of perspectives on the same topic, whereas often only one is explored in any depth. Her description and analysis of contradictory discourses give the reader a sense of the complexity of the subject and highlight the diverse range of actors who produced and disseminated them, actors whose positions, motivations and legitimacy implied different perspectives: scientific, preventive, and social,

activist, dissenting and demanding of new rights. Furthermore, each section of the book begins with a historical overview that situates each type of discourse in long-range history and explains its genesis. Last, the use and cross-referencing of different types of sources produces rich, varied material and makes the book a pleasure to read through.

However, those sources are not without weaknesses, as Brugnard herself points out. First, the discourses produced seem excessively “smooth”, as printed documentary material (the majority of sources) only seldom integrates disagreements and internal power balances. Second, little if anything is mentioned about how these discourses were received. The author analyses the school textbooks used in sex education, for example, but this does not tell us how students or their parents reacted to that material. Also, was there a reason for limiting the analysis to the four discourses chosen, and why was nothing said about the religious perspective? Though the author recalls that the influence of religion is weaker in Geneva than elsewhere in Switzerland, it seems reasonable to assume it was not entirely absent there.

The book remains a fascinating study; each type of discourse is contextualized and finely analysed. And it informs not only on sexuality in Geneva in the 1970s but also and above all on the social and political issue it represents.

Cécile THOMÉ

FINCHER Leta HONG, 2014, *Leftover Women. The Resurgence of Gender Inequality in China*, London/New York, Zed Books, 192 p.

In this work, developed out of her PhD thesis in sociology, Leta Hong Fincher analyses gender inequalities in urban China, linking the issue of pressure on young women to get married to that of wealth accumulation through real estate investment. This original approach represents an important contribution to literature on gender relations in China.

According to the author, Chinese women's urgent quest to find a husband by age 27, age 30, is the result of a government propaganda campaign on *shengnu* or "leftover women" orchestrated since 2007 and relayed by the state's All-China Women's Federation. In stigmatizing women who remain single beyond age 27, putting them in a specific category derogatorily named in reference to spoiled food, this problem is part of a wider resurgence of gender inequalities in contemporary Chinese society. As we know, the state birth control policy in effect since the early 1970s brought about a drastic fall in fertility rates and worked to skew the sex ratio at birth in favour of boys. This situation, according to the author, has not actually improved women's position in society as they now have to confront a paradox: encouraged as young girls to become educated, cosmopolitan and independent, they are later subjected to heavy pressure to get married by age 30 at the latest to ensure perpetuation of the family line. Leta Hong Fincher also explains how many surrender power to their spouse-to-be during marriage negotiations, particularly when it comes to inscribing their name on the property deed for their "marital home" and therefore officially sharing ownership. She contends that in contemporary Chinese society, the inflation of real estate prices, resurgence of traditional norms, the fall in women's participation in the labour force and a 2011 interpretation of the Marriage Law specifying that upon divorce, the couple's real estate property belongs exclusively to the person(s) whose name(s) are on the property deed have all worked to tip gender power balances in favour of men. This deepens young women's vulnerability within the couple, particularly those who marry young, as they are often financially dependent on their spouse.

Hong Fincher's analysis is supported by data from interviews with 151 women and 132 men aged 25 to 30 living in nineteen different cities, who contacted her through her microblog. All interviewees are university-educated and middle class. Hong Fincher also draws on 60 in-depth interviews with 36 women and 24 men living in Beijing, Shanghai and Xi'an. And she has analysed an entire corpus of secondary literature, including media content. It is nonetheless frustrating for specialized readers that this last aspect was not given greater emphasis. In fact, there is a problem with the notes: the numbers in the endnotes refer to pages but no note numbers appear in the body of the text.

Hong Fincher begins the book with portraits of young "leftover" women. Once again, these are women with a university education or who have succeeded so well professionally that they have the financial means to purchase an apartment

themselves. As the author explains, the official campaign targets just such independent women, glorifying the roles of spouse and mother, the aim being to bring these women back to the domestic sphere. As she sees it, the Party-State promotes marriage both to counter the risk of social instability that might result from the forced singlehood (due to the skewed sex ratio at birth) of an increasing segment of the male population, and to ensure that the most educated segment of the population will marry, with the understanding that their children, being born of “high quality” parents, will further strengthen the country’s economic position.

But as Fincher explains, returning to the domestic sphere tends to weaken these women’s economic position since few own their home. This argument, central to her thesis, would certainly be stronger if supported by academic primary sources. It is hard to assess the credibility of the sources she uses given that no mention is made of either survey procedures or the number and profile of persons questioned.

Not only does the imbalance in official property ownership between husbands and wives prevent women from benefiting from the profits accruing to real estate property usually purchased in part with contributions from the woman or her family, but this in itself promotes unequal conjugal relations because it puts the women in a vulnerable position. Fincher shows how in certain cases, out of respect for or obedience to patriarchal norms, women with a higher income than their spouse agree not to put their name on the property deed, even though they contributed to purchasing or outfitting the home.

She then analyses how parents tend to help sons to the detriment of daughters when it comes to buying property; they may even ask their daughter to help a brother or male cousin purchase property. She also contends that to stimulate the economy, the state has joined forces with private companies (real estate developers and matchmaking agencies) to create and promote the myth that becoming a homeowner is necessary for all middle-class persons wishing to found a family. In a context of limited investment opportunities, home buying is an investment that works to maintain social stability and reduce the risk of social unrest by giving the population the impression that they can climb the social ladder.

Fincher also retraces developments in property ownership law for women in China since the Song period. Drawing on studies by Bernhardt⁽⁵⁾ and Birge,⁽⁶⁾ she shows that in the eleventh century women’s property rights were better protected than they are today. Female ownership rights have gone through periods of improvement – under Mao, for example – and erosion, such as the present period, as the author sees it. However, this ambitious chapter does not

(5) Kathryn Bernhardt, 1999, *Women and Property in China, 960-1949*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 256 p.

(6) Bettine Birge, 2002, *Women, Property, and Confucian Reaction in Sung and Yuan China (960-1368)*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 368 p.

succeed in explaining the forces that continue to push young women to marry even before age 27 today. It says nothing about the new types of cohabitation being practiced by young adults born after 1980, or continuing pressure on women to conform to the marriage norm. The term “resurgence” in the title is also a problem since equality was never definitively reached, even during the Maoist period.⁽⁷⁾

Hong Fincher writes in an accessible style; her book is surely not addressed to a specialist public alone. It does the immense service of opening a window for non-specialists on the dynamics of gendered social relations among young Chinese adults born after 1980. Despite the reservations expressed above, however, it is important to highlight the wealth of material presented in the work, a book that points up the persistence of gender inequality in contemporary Chinese society, makes it tangible through interview excerpts, and explores the way Chinese women attempt to “fight back” against this kind of discrimination. It would have been interesting to compare the analyses presented here with dynamics observed in other Asian countries.⁽⁸⁾

Sandra V. CONSTANTIN

(7) Cf. Elisabeth Croll, 2011 [1978], *Feminism and Socialism in China*, Oxon, Routledge, 378 p., and Gail Hershatter, 2007, *Women in China's Long Twentieth Century*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 170 p.

(8) Cf. Gavin W. Jones, Terence H. Hull and Mohamad Maznah, eds., 2011, *Changing Marriage Patterns in Southeast Asia: Economic and Socio-cultural Dimensions*, Oxfordshire and New York, Routledge, 256 p.

DUSSY Dorothée, 2013, *Le Berceau des dominations. Anthropologie de l'inceste, Livre 1* [The cradle of domination. Anthropology of incest, book 1], Marseille, La Discussion, Familles, genres, générations, 268 p.

The anthropologist Dorothée Dussy here describes the practice of incest in French families – a practice prohibited and condemned in our society. At the time of writing, incest was not mentioned as such in French law, though being a close older relative or having a position of authority did and does constitute an aggravating circumstance in cases of rape or sexual violence. Since then, incest has been introduced into the penal code by way of Law no. 2016-297 of 14 March 2016 on child protection.

This book, the first of three volumes, focuses on incest perpetrators. The second will study victims and the third, legal trials involving incest. Drawing on an ethnographic survey conducted with 22 men aged 23 to 78 serving prison sentences in the Grand Ouest region of France for rape of a child or children in their family, Dussy reveals how incest contributes to the process of producing and reproducing dominant persons (incest perpetrators) and dominated ones (victims). In addition to this fieldwork, she questioned family members of prisoners whenever possible, interviewed adults who had experienced incest, attended trials for the crime of incest and collected investigation files used in them. She has also been active for the last five years in mutual assistance associations for incest victims in France and Quebec.

The first two of the book's seven chapters present an overview of statistical knowledge on incest and sexual abuse of minors, as well as perpetrator characteristics. The next two plunge us into the destabilizing world of the incest perpetrator, while the last three focus on the history of sexual abuse in families, the freedom to speak – or lack thereof – within families, the general silence about incest, and last, how the judicial system and society at large deal with cases of incest.

Dussy observes that incest perpetrators are not “extraordinary” individuals or “psychopaths” but rather people who are “well integrated in life”. Most are men (father, older brother, cousin, uncle), which explains why there is a much greater amount of scientific literature on male than female perpetrators. In fact, this work provides no information on women perpetrators because according to the anthropologist, no reports accusing women of incestuous rape have ever been filed in France during the period under study.

In retracing the family histories of the prisoners interviewed, Dussy reveals that “incest occurs in a context where it exists already”. The majority of the 22 men interviewed in prison reported being aware of other incestuous situations in their family. Though they refuse to think that they acted in a way that imitated their past, seven men also reported having been sexually abused in childhood. The author remarks that there are a great variety of incest configurations and that there can be no single “typical portrait or even profile of an incest perpetrator”. It would be useful to corroborate this statement statistically by analysing family

characteristics (age difference between spouses, kinship tie between perpetrator and victim, number of perpetrators implicated, etc.) and checking whether other types of domestic violence associated with incest (intimate partner violence, voluntary negligence, verbal, psychological or physical violence against children, etc.) also occurred. Moreover, though the profiles of the convicts in the author's sample vary widely, she shows that all the cases have points in common: the exercise of domination, the victim's silence, the perpetrator's lying, not to mention possible complicity of other family members.

Child or adolescent victims are always younger than their aggressor and "do not necessarily think of incest". As the author explains, there is no possible comparison with one's friends' experiences, no space of dialogue or support (a film, a story) that would enable the child to express the abnormality or seriousness of the experience. In other words, "the practice of incest is protected by the absence of words to describe it". Some victims only reveal to their family what happened to them years after the abuse has stopped; very few file charges and start judicial procedures, and then only if their word is not discredited by the perpetrator. Others remain mute: "socialisation through enacted incest prevents people from revealing incestuous behaviour even to themselves".

Aggressors know that the social order prohibits incest, but they minimize the seriousness of their acts and the effects of those acts on the victim. The vocabulary used by incarcerated perpetrators to describe the sexual abuse they have committed is highly revealing; they speak of "caresses," "little kisses," "doing naughty little things." And in cases of fellatio or anal sex they do not have the sense that they have committed rape because they do not conceive of those acts as rape; also because the child seldom manifests non-consent.

The ethnographic survey is admirably clear on the practice of incest and how it goes unspoken within the family; statistical surveys, meanwhile, make it possible to quantify intra-family sexual abuse. According to the anthropologist, the first incidence studies (assessing the number of new cases of sexual abuse during a given period) were conducted by the American Humane Association (dedicated to the welfare of animals and children), and the first prevalence studies (assessing the proportion of persons sexually abused in childhood) were conducted in the United States and Canada, then in Europe and on other continents. Though wide gaps were found, due among other things to differences in definitions or heterogeneous survey protocols, all statistical studies conclude that "being a girl is everywhere a factor of vulnerability to sexual violence, including during childhood". These findings are confirmed by the Contexte de la sexualité en France survey of 2006, according to which 8.8% of women and 2.8% of men aged 18 to 69 reported having been subjected to at least one attempted or forced sexual relation before the age of 18, as opposed to 7.4% and 1.6% respectively over age 18. Perpetrators of sexual violence against minors are most often the victim's father, stepfather, another person in the family or a person known to the victim (Bajos and Bozon 2008).

As a precious complement to these statistical data, Dorothée Dussy's remarkable book manages to draw incest out of its protective silence. She also, indirectly, shows the discrepancy between the incest prohibition theory put forward by Claude Lévi-Strauss and very real practices of having sex with children in one's own family. I therefore strongly recommend this book, particularly to professionals working in the fields of child protection and researchers studying sexuality and violence or, at a more general level, gender issues and problems in family functioning.

Amélie CHARRUAULT