**Constructing Bisexuality: The Role of Science, Law, and Politics in Crafting Political Identity**

*“Ours is a science-oriented society, and scientists are God to most people.”*

-Florence (Conrad) Jaffy, Research Director for the Daughters of Bilitis, 1965[[1]](#footnote-1)

*“Can we see differences in the brains of bisexual people using f.M.R.I. technology? How many bisexual people are there—regardless of how they identify—and what range of relationships and life experiences do they have?”*

-John Sylla, President of the American Institute of Bisexuality, 2014[[2]](#footnote-2)

*Introduction: Sexual Identities in the Web of Science*

The above quotes exhibit the longstanding relationship between science and organizations representing the identities and interests of those in what has become the LGBTQ movement. Although Florence Jaffy was involved in gay and lesbian politics prior to the American Psychiatric Association’s de-medicalization of homosexuality in 1973 when many believed that science could show that non-heterosexual persons were not “deviants” or “psychopaths,” John Sylla’s quote shows that the faith in science to help define and explain diverse gender and sexual identities has not disappeared. Rather, this conviction has been a persistent feature of the political movement since its inception, reappearing in different scientific instruments, institutions, and ideas that all adhere to the logic that there is something discoverable and innate to a person’s gender and sexual identity(ies). As Sylla’s comments above indicate, this logic has come to bear on the bisexual activist community and has created conflicts within the movement over conceptions of the intrinsic nature of male bisexual identity in particular.[[3]](#footnote-3)

This conflict is in many ways a continuation of the proliferation and politicization of “gay genetics” research and arguments in the 1990s: in fact, some of the same actors, such as psychologist Michael Bailey, have remerged thus demonstrating the iterative nature of many of these scientific actors and institutions. Even though the larger LGBTQ movement’s reliance on genetic and neurobiological sources of legitimacy has abated for various reasons, the “born this way” mantra has flourished as a biodeterministic “new essentialist” conception of sexuality and gender identity continues to be legitimated by invocations of one’s deep-seated, innate, and fixed disposition. This logic has proven persistent as it has taken form in new institutional and discursive modes in conflicts over the existence and nature of male bisexual identity. Relying on a Foucauldian notion of biopolitical citizenship, I argue that bisexuality is the most recent terrain for contestation over the proper epistemological foundations for LGBTQ political identities as activists and organizations have come to debate once again whether or not the movement should employ scientific institutional and discursive resources to their advantage or eschew the use of top-down scientific models of legitimation in favor of more radically queer notions of gender and sexuality.

I proceed from here onto my argument which takes the following form: first, I elaborate on the notion of biopolitical citizenship, focusing on the ways in which my research works within its premises but also on how it demonstrates the necessity of broadening the scope of these studies from its public health and bureaucratic orientation and into the biopolitical nature of LGBTQ identity-based interest group politics. From there I move onto a brief history of the situation of bisexuality within gay and lesbian politics from the late-nineteenth century to the late-twentieth century. I provide this history to emphasize that the historical nature of bisexuality’s “erasure” has conditioned its attention to “visibility” and “existence” that has been a central feature to the more recent debates over the nature of male bisexuality. The third section is the core of my argument in which I explore how scientific institutions and discourses from the 1990s have influenced a new debate between groups like the American Institute of Bisexuality (AIB) that privilege science and bisexual organizations that prefer a broader—oftentimes more queer—theory and practice of bisexual politics. I then conclude by explaining how my case study is situated within a broader understanding of the epistemological character of sex in our post-Fordist political economy and how that perspective predicts future contestations over the deployment of science to conceptualize contemporary political identities.

*Biopolitical Citizenship and Bisexuality*

To fully comprehend the political impulse to represent bisexuality in scientific terms, we must turn to Michel Foucault’s concept of *biopolitics* and the theory that the politics of Western modernity and late-modernity (i.e. since the mid-to-late-nineteenth century) can be characterized as shifting increasingly from a more traditional liberal form of sovereignty to one that is based on measuring and managing scientifically-defined *populations*. Foucault posited that the modern state governs according to considerations of the character and well-being of their populations and that subjects use “technologies of self” to look inward in constituting themselves with reference to hegemonic governing structures that emphasize their biological natures.[[4]](#footnote-4) The “governing” here refers to the authority and influence of both the private sphere in sites such as the hospital and the psychiatrists’ office as well as the various bureaucracies of the public sphere as the emphasis is placed on the variety of mechanisms by which subjects come to “know thy self.”[[5]](#footnote-5) This governing of the self is closely related to another Foucauldian idea that the will to knowledge is the will to power: the discourses that subjects use to form their identities are always intertwined with political power and the use of knowledge to “cut” out categories of individuals are always means by which the state comes to perceive populations (and how they come to understand themselves) in particular ways and govern them (and how they govern themselves) accordingly.[[6]](#footnote-6)

This theoretical framework has been taken up by scholars of Foucault such as Thomas Lemke who champion studies of biopolitical citizenship that analyze the “systematic connection between medical knowledge, concepts of identity, and modes of political articulation.”[[7]](#footnote-7) While Lemke’s emphasis on the medical element exhibits the biomedical and public health orientation of most of the scholarship in this field, he argues that this concept applies broadly to identity formation in contemporary Western societies as the human body has become a site and network of information rather than merely an anatomy.[[8]](#footnote-8) Lemke offers a framework for studies of biopolitical citizenship that includes asking research questions such as: “what knowledge of the body and social processes is assumed to be socially relevant,” “what alternative interpretations are devalued or marginalized,” “what scientists and experts have the legitimate authority to tell the truth about life,” “what vocabulary are processes of life described, measured, evaluated, and criticized,” and “what cognitive and intellectual instruments and technological procedures stand ready to produce truth?”[[9]](#footnote-9) These questions coalesce around the assumption that the institutional and discursive ties among political and scientific institutions and actors are the generative forces and mechanisms through which claims of biopolitical citizenship are constructed.

A brief look at some of the work of those studying biopolitical citizenship demonstrates the way in which conceptions of the self have come to be expressed in biological, genetic, and medical terms as well as what shortcomings of this literature can be addressed through this study of bisexual political identities. The Foucauldian scholar Paul Rabinow writes on the idea of “biosociality,” which emphasizes the social nature of groups thought to be entirely biological entities such as the nuclear family.”[[10]](#footnote-10) Rabinow argues that the growth of knowledge about genetic risk and disease tends to produce new socially constructed identities both in the individual as well as the collective. He emphasizes that the mechanism by which this occurs is through identifiers and their relevant expert actors such as academics, medical practitioners, and advocacy organizations.[[11]](#footnote-11) There is a complex matrix here to be identified for any population advancing scientific arguments concerning its existence and that both technologies of government (e.g. the experts and especially the public and private funding revenues they press for research dollars) and technologies of self (the identifiers as individuals but also as organized within their advocacy organizations which straddle the line between technologies of self and of government).

In a similar vein to Rabinow, philosopher Ian Hacking’s concept of “looping” and identities as “moving targets” can also shed some light onto exactly how these networks work to construct identities in scientific classificatory terms.[[12]](#footnote-12) Although these actors are generally intent upon nailing down some static conception of what it means to *be* a particular identity, Hacking argues that this project is in part doomed to fail due to the fact that human beings do not exist as “natural kinds” but instead of “interactive ones,” always subject to malleability induced either internally or externally.[[13]](#footnote-13) As Hacking puts it.

“There is a picture of an object to be searched out, the right kind, the kind that is true to nature, a fixed target if only we could get there. But perhaps it is a moving target, just because of the looping effects of human kinds? That is, new knowledge about “the criminal” or “the homosexual” becomes known to the people classified, changes the way these individuals behave, and loops back to force changes in the classifications and knowledge about them.”[[14]](#footnote-14)

Both Hacking and Rabinow provide the conceptual tools for analyzing the dynamics and the consequences of this turn to a biopolitical articulation of citizenship; they make it apparent that studies of political identities must be attentive to the operations of this new style of envisioning and constructing the self.

While ideas like biosociality and biopolitical citizenship provide key insights into how governments and citizens have come to perceive and construct identities and shape the foundations of their attendant claims, much of this literature remains focused on the biomedical and public health realm and neglects to see how biopolitical discourses have emerged by interest group politics in their mobilization and claims to identity more broadly. Those who have pioneered biopolitical citizenship studies such as Adriana Petryna in her book on Chernobyl survivors have increased our understanding of how the biology of a group can become the foundation for political solidarity and their claims against the state; still, they rest primarily on medical demands and their identities come not from a belief in their scientifically-discoverable intrinsic selves but rather the effects of a technological disaster and the development of a biologically-grounded relationship between the injured citizens and relevant state bureaucratic agencies.[[15]](#footnote-15) Likewise, while Steven Epstein’s book on identity politics and medical research demonstrates how advocacy organizations representing constituents on the basis of gender, race, and sexual orientation have demanded their identities be included in research trials, the focus remains largely within the domain of public health and bureaucracy.[[16]](#footnote-16)

What the LGBT movement’s adoption of gay genetics and “born this way” discourse in its political mobilizing has demonstrated, however, is that certain contemporary identity interest groups have begun to make biopolitical claims to citizenship in an even broader sense. Not only are these activists deploying biopolitical conceptions of the self to bureaucratic agencies and public health institutions that govern according to classifications such as race, gender, and sexuality, but instead they have come to deploy them in the arena of popular political discourse and in their mobilizing efforts. As I will demonstrate, this theory explains why some bisexual activists and organizations have sought scientific standards of legitimation for two reasons: first, the biopolitical paradigm has become a powerful frame for analyzing human bodies and taxonomizing them into identities—especially gendered and sexual ones—since the nineteenth century and there have been no signs of it abating. Second, bisexual Americans have been a historically-marginalized minority *within* the broader gay and lesbian movement which previously adopted a scientific essentialist conception of homosexuality in the 1990s that has persisted in the logic of a “born this way” discourse. Particular actors, institutions, and discourses from this earlier era have proven to be iterative as they have resurfaced in bisexuality claims to identity.

In the next two sections, I will briefly trace the position of bisexuality as an idea, a behavior, and a political identity in the history of American sexuality politics and then explore a key debate beginning in 2005 over the existence and form of male bisexuality that turned on the question of science’s role in legitimating sexual identities. Through these discussions I hope to show the competing claims to identity within bisexual activism and to explain the return of these scientific institutions and discourses.

*A Brief Political History of Bisexuality: From Erasure to Inclusion*

The consistent political and scientific erasure of bisexuality as a distinct identity or behavior for much of modern American history has been a mobilizing point for many in the contemporary bisexual activist community.[[17]](#footnote-17) It is this pattern of reading bisexuality either as an innate-yet-primordial human condition or a legitimate-yet-utopian vision of a gay identity “to come” that previously foreclosed opportunities for those who are attracted to more than one gender to organize around a demand for recognition within American society. In this brief history of the always-intertwined scientific and political conceptions of bisexuality, I hope to elucidate both the various strands of bisexual activism that exist in the contemporary moment and their origins as well as demonstrate the long history of bisexuality’s denial that is at the heart of many of these activists’ political desire for recognition of their identities in the present.

Beginning in the late-nineteenth century, the early sexologists explored the notion of bisexuality in their larger treatises on sexuality and modernity.[[18]](#footnote-18) As the psychoanalyst Sandor Rado has noted, eminent researchers in this domain such as the German psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing, sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld, and Sigmund Freud all theorized bisexuality in a gendered form, stating that because both male and female genitals develop from the same embryonic structure then all persons must have parts of both genders within them.[[19]](#footnote-19) During this period, the concepts of “sex,” “gender,” and “sexuality” were not distinguished clearly from one another; therefore, those such as Krafft-Ebing were able to write about a sort of primordial bisexuality without normative implications while also pathologizing men who presented femininity or pursued sex with other men as “inverts.”[[20]](#footnote-20) Likewise, Freud simultaneously made bisexuality the biological basis of his psychoanalytic theory while also casting its existence in modernity as a sign of immaturity and improper development.[[21]](#footnote-21) In this way, the early sexologists and psychoanalysts alike identified bisexuality as an important feature of humanity’s evolutionary development, but because of their social commitments to a gender binary and Victorian sentiments regarding sexuality, they explained its presence in modernity as a sign of deviance.

The 1920s to the 1960s marked one of the darkest periods in American gay and lesbian history as notions of homosexuality, inversion, or any deviation from rigid gender and sexuality norms was interpreted as a threat to society as a whole. As Angelides recounted in his book on the history of bisexuality, post-Freudian psychoanalytic theory and other scientific perspectives cast these transgressive behaviors even further from the realm of normalized sexuality and gender, often equating them with criminal habituations and severed psychopathologies.[[22]](#footnote-22) Despite the famous Kinsey studies of the 1940s and 1950s which not only affirmed homosexuality as a normal variation but also posited a continuum of sexuality that gave credence to the idea that many American practiced what could be called bisexual behavior, Cold War anxieties about communism linked any deviation from sexual and gender norms to treason and general un-Americanism, further de-legitimating non-heterosexuality in total.[[23]](#footnote-23) While nascent organizing among mainly gay middle class men generated what became the homophile movement in the 1950s, there was not much place in the political sphere for those who strayed too far away from binaristic notions of sexuality and gender.[[24]](#footnote-24) While it is certainly true that bisexually-identified persons were present during some of the early organizing among gays and lesbians, their identities were denied by scientific and political actors alike during this period.

By the end of the 1960s and the early-1970s, the more radical gay liberation movement developed out of the early homophile and lesbian organizations and began to make demands for an end to discriminatory practices such as denials of federal employment and police brutality as well as for the de-medicalization of their identities. As Merl Storr has argued, gay liberation activity led to a definitive shift from bisexuality as a masculine/feminine construct and towards a heterosexual/homosexual one in the 1970s mainly due to increased pressure to de-pathologize homosexuality as it appeared in the *DSM* until 1973.[[25]](#footnote-25) This medical definition conflated sexual desire and gender through conceptions of “masculine desire” for women and “feminine desire” for men. Gay liberationists pressed back against the notion that desire in this sense has a gendered quality at all; they tended to take a more sociological conception of sexuality and gender that centered around theories of unequal power relations.[[26]](#footnote-26)

During this same moment, some gay liberationists advanced a radical Freudian interpretation of bisexuality as a utopian goal to strive towards. Their politics were aimed toward erasing masculinity, femininity, homosexual, and heterosexual paradigms in favor of a “polymorphous perversity” approach to exploring the “bisexual potential” that had been previously repressed.[[27]](#footnote-27) This approach led to a two-fold obstacle for the development of a robust bisexual political consciousness: first, the emphasis was on the utopian and not an already-existing element of sexuality. Second and much more importantly, the early-1970s saw a backlash from gay liberationists who wished to focus on gay autonomy and solidarity in the face of an oppressive society.[[28]](#footnote-28) These two positions together characterized statements made by organizations such as the American Gay Revolution Party Women’s Caucus that argued that bisexuality could only be a workable practice for the movement *after* the abolition of gender and sex roles; until then no heterosexual elements of sexuality could be permitted into the movement until these power relations were destabilized and overcome.[[29]](#footnote-29)

This is all to say that by the 1970s, neither the nascent gay and lesbian movement nor society in general had much of a place for bisexuality as a political identity. The 1969 riot at Stonewall and other demonstrations against police violence and discrimination, however, provided sites for those who did not see themselves according to the heterosexual/homosexual binary to come into contact with one another that encouraged the development of autonomous bisexual organizations and communities. As a result, organizations such as the National Bisexual Liberation Group in New York formed in 1972 and expanded to more than 5,500 members in ten U.S. chapters in its first three years.[[30]](#footnote-30) On the other side of the country, the San Francisco Bisexual Center, a key institution in early bisexual activism, health, and counseling, was founded in 1976 and later gave rise in 1983 to BiPOL, the nation’s first primarily politically-focused bisexual organization.[[31]](#footnote-31) Throughout the 1980s, BiPOL and similar groups across the U.S. came to be both important sources for building political power to fight HIV/AIDS as well as influential sources of lobbying the gay and lesbian movement to open its doors to include bisexuals into the increasingly mainstreamed movement. On the heels of BiPOL’s Autumn Courtney historic election to co-chair of the San Francisco’s Lesbian Gay Freedom Day Pride Parade Committee, the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation marked the first time a national gay and lesbian event included bisexual activists so prominently.[[32]](#footnote-32)

This integration was not seamless, however. The gay liberation movement’s intolerance of anything that smelled of heterosexuality in addition to the subsequent HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s and the early-1990s produced rifts between gays and lesbians and the newly-organized bisexual activists that persist in many ways into the current day. The AIDS epidemic presented a site of shared struggle politically for gays, lesbians, and bisexuals but it also created suspicion among both the gay community and the rest of society toward bisexuals who were cast as promiscuous and as main agents of infection.[[33]](#footnote-33) In the late-1980s, the Center for Disease Control identified bisexual men as a category of persons likely to introduce AIDS into general populations (i.e. essentially heterosexual society as the disease then was still understood to be a “gay” one).[[34]](#footnote-34) As Weinberg, Williams, and Pryor’s have documented, this fear led to discrimination against bisexual men in particular as former bisexual men increasingly moved into heterosexual relationships and females into homosexual ones in order to prevent catching or spreading the virus.[[35]](#footnote-35) This produced a stigma against bisexual men within their own communities in particular as many reported many respondents in the Weinberg et al. study reported feeling the same degree of prejudice from homosexual persons as they did from heterosexuals.[[36]](#footnote-36)

These stigmas persisted as bisexual activists further integrated into the gay and lesbian movement into the 1990s. Even as bisexual Americans were represented in the 1993 Washington march, the title was self-consciously crafted to include “Bi” and not “Bisexual” in an attempt to direct attention away from the sexuality element which aroused fear among the march organizers that they would appear to be promoting promiscuity or non-monogamy.[[37]](#footnote-37) Existing prejudices like this and the general orientation of the mainstream LGBT movement in the 1990s and 2000s has led to the critique among bisexual activists that “LGBT” is a misnomer and the movement ought to be referred to as the “Gay, Gay, Gay, and Gay” (GGGG) movement; the criticism here stems not only from these kinds of tip-toeing around controversies as to appease the delicate sentiments of heterosexual society but also from the bisexual movement’s largely queer orientation.[[38]](#footnote-38) This queer approach can be seen in prominent bisexual activists Loraine Hutchins and Lani Ka'ahumanu’s canonical 1991 work *Bi Any Other Name* which emphasized bisexuality as fundamentally a worldview and a perspective, one that is simultaneously personal and political.[[39]](#footnote-39) Rather than being a strict identity issue based on sexual orientation (a key element to the GGGG critique), this text gives force to the more radical desires among many bisexual organizers to rethink sexuality, gender, and other power relations that—ironically—stem from a genealogy that goes back to gay liberationist theories.

Paradoxically, as the more queer-oriented bisexual organizations began to be more fully integrated into the movement, mainstream gay and lesbian organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and the Lambda Legal Defense Fund began to champion studies that purported to establish genetic and neurological bases for homosexuality.[[40]](#footnote-40) Commenting on geneticist Dean Hamer’s famous 1993 “gay gene” study, HRC spokesperson Gregory J. King remarked that Hamer had improved the country’s understanding of sexual orientation and that the organization’s leaders expected the science to pave the way for increased toleration and political support for gays and lesbians.[[41]](#footnote-41) The HRC was also one of journalist Chandler Burr’s biggest supporters in his coverage of the biological studies of sexual orientation. In his famous 1993 *The Atlantic* article, Burr expressed his strong belief in the political efficacy and “truth-seeking” necessity of pursuing the biological and genetic roots of homosexuality.[[42]](#footnote-42) Shortly after its publication, HRC members lobbied members of Congress on Capitol Hill by passing out free copies of Burr’s essay. Their goal was to convince Congress of their immutability thereby increasing support for civil rights antidiscrimination laws that have historically been legitimated on the basis of an innate and immutable characteristic.[[43]](#footnote-43) Even groups such as the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, an organization that tended to hold a more balanced and skeptical position toward this research, offered approval for Simon LeVay’s 1991 study of unique structures in homosexual males’ brains. NGLTF spokesperson Robert Bray told *USA Today* that the new findings ''support what we've always believed - being gay is not a choice ... it may even be determined before birth.”[[44]](#footnote-44)

This new essentialism was not only used for strategic legislative lobbying or for making claims about gay identity to the press, but these scientific studies were also translated into legal arguments as well. As legal scholar Evan Gerstmann noted, many believed that the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Bowsers v. Hardwick* (1986), in which the Court ruled there to be no 14th Amendment substantive due process clause protections regarding the right to engage in sodomy, had negative implications for equal protection clause arguments as well.[[45]](#footnote-45) In its opinion, the Court was explicit in its understanding of homosexuality as a behavior rather than a group identity and, therefore, seemingly closed the door to LGBT demands for suspect class or quasi-suspect class distinction, which would have afforded the same constitutional protections given to sex or race.[[46]](#footnote-46) Some members of the LGBT movement, however, believed that biological evidence of their immutability could change the Court’s mind. Throughout the early 1990s, litigators in state and federal courts began challenging discrimination against homosexual defendants on equal protection grounds as well as due process ones.[[47]](#footnote-47) Litigators representing the Lambda Legal Defense Fund and the ACLU went as far as to invite Dean Hamer to serve as an expert witness during the trial proceedings of *Romer v. Evans* (1990), a case on sexual orientation and civil rights law that eventually made its way to the Supreme Court.[[48]](#footnote-48) While the legal claims here were ultimately unsuccessful, these various legislative, constitutional, and popular appeals based of these studies exhibited a gay and lesbian movement in the 1990s intent on using scientific institutional and discursive resources to “prove” their identities.

The juxtaposition of bisexual organizations integrating into a movement which increasingly featured mainstream gay and lesbian ones promoting this new biodeterministic essentialism is a curious one. After all, institutions such as the Bisexual Resource Center has historically promoted choice and diversity and vocal bisexual activists such as the Bisexual Organizing Project’s William Burleson decried the gay gene studies as recklessly narrow and ultimately superfluous.[[49]](#footnote-49) In the following section, I intend to show that the political and scientific actors, institutions, and discourses that developed and articulated these studies did not disappear entirely from the scene after their heyday in the 1990s; rather, over the last decade the long shadow of this new essentialism made its way into bisexual activist institutions and reasserted itself in a new scientific logic and discourse regarding bisexual identity that has caused a fissure in the bisexual community. These recent debates within bisexual activist circles—played out in the public sphere mainly in coverage by the *New York Times*—demonstrates that the force of the new essentialism and the material institutions and actors that give it life have been powerful enough to disrupt the bisexual community’s conception of their identity(ies) in such a way that has returned to the scientific gaze a large role in determining that conception.

*Back to Erasure and the New Way “Out”: AIB and the New Essentialism*

Although the mainstream LGBT movement began to wean itself off this reliance on the early-1990s research in the succeeding decade, neither the “born this way” discourse—i.e. the popularized rhetoric and logic of the new essentialism’s core—nor the scientific institutions and actors disappeared from the scene. Even as various developments such as conversion therapy’s loss of legitimacy, the discrediting of many studies claiming to actually have found a gay gene, and the Supreme Court’s sidestepping of the immutability issue led to the abandonment of strong scientific identity claims, this logic persisted.[[50]](#footnote-50) Public opinion researchers have demonstrated the tenacity of this logic, showing that by 2003, twice as many liberals as conservatives (46% versus 22%) say that homosexuality is innate from birth. Even on the legal front the argument has not totally diminished as evidenced in litigation over Proposition 8 in California where gay rights advocates used the language and logic of immutability to advance their claims against their opponents’ choice rhetoric.[[51]](#footnote-51) And lastly, even though the strong championing of scientific research by the movement has abated, the production of such science has not. In 2014, the largest twin study on gay men ever conducted was published in *Psychological Medicine* and quickly found its home in the press with article headlines such as “Largest Study of Gay Brothers Homes in on ‘Gay Genes.”[[52]](#footnote-52)

This is all to say that the 1990s biodeterministic new essentialism has had a long shadow in both a discursive and an institutional sense; the logic and the resources remain available and are ready to be tapped by organizations and actors eager to remobilize a strong commitment to the scientific legitimation of identities. This sets the context for the 2005 controversy in the LGBTQ movement in which Michael Bailey, a Northwestern University psychologist who co-authored two of the most influential gay genetics twin studies in the earlier 1990s, and his coauthors received coverage in the *New York Times* for their study on bisexual men.[[53]](#footnote-53) In this study, Bailey conducted “genital arousal” tests using a phallometric device (specifically a “penile plethysmograph”) on self-identified homosexual, heterosexual, and bisexual men while they watched different pornographic stimuli, some involving only men and others involving only women.[[54]](#footnote-54) The results indicated that the bisexual men did not actually demonstrate a “bisexual pattern” of arousal: the majority of these men were only aroused by homosexual sexual activity in the stimuli and a small minority were aroused only by heterosexual stimuli.[[55]](#footnote-55) Based on the premise that for men sexual arousal is equivalent to sexual orientation (and, therefore, identity), Bailey determined that bisexuality is less a hardwired sexual predisposition than it is a means of interpreting desire.[[56]](#footnote-56) In a very Foucauldian sense in which we moderns interrogate sex to force it to speak its truth in the hope that it might speak *our* truth, Bailey and his coauthors wrote that “when self-report is suspect, genital arousal may provide a more valid measure [for sexual identities].”[[57]](#footnote-57) The assumption here is that it is up to the scientist to determine the validity of bisexual identity in men when the subject cannot be trusted to report it accurately himself.[[58]](#footnote-58)

The backlash from the LGBTQ movement was immediate. The day after the *New York Times* published the story the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force began coordinating allied organizations such as the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) as well as bisexual organizations such as BiNet USA, The National Bisexual Network, and the Bisexual Resource Center of Boston to denounce the study as well as the *Times’s* coverage.[[59]](#footnote-59) The Task Force’s coalition produced a three-page fact sheet to critique the Bailey study on both scientific and ethical grounds.[[60]](#footnote-60) On the scientific front, the Task Force criticized phallometric testing as methodologically controversial and that the assumption it was used to test—that arousal is equivalent to orientation in men—was suspect at best among other scientists who largely agreed that sexual orientation is the effect of both cognitive and physical factors.[[61]](#footnote-61) The Task Force also linked Bailey to his previous work on transsexuals in which he was both accused of relying on what is widely seen as a transphobic theory of transsexuality in which transsexuality is conceived of as a sexual desire to have a female body and nothing more.[[62]](#footnote-62) In addition to the this coalition, autonomous bisexual organizations also responded negatively to Bailey study. Speaking on behalf of the Bisexual Resource Change, Sheeri Kirtzer stated plainly that “[b]isexuality exists and identity doesn’t need science to back it up.”[[63]](#footnote-63) Kirtzer summarized the general sentiment in the community by citing prominent bisexual activist Loni Ka’ahumani’s dictum, “It’s not about the plumbing, it’s the electricity.”[[64]](#footnote-64)

Although this rapid response to the Bailey study represented both wide and diverse elements of the bisexuality community as well as the larger LGBT movement, some activists were not satisfied with the demonization of Bailey and scientific inquiry into the origins of identity more generally. The American Bisexuality Institute (AIB) in particular took a more sympathetic approach to Bailey’s research and its members and leadership read this moment as an opportunity to integrate scientific evidence into their political project of bisexual advocacy. This in part has to do with the origins of AIB and its founder, the psychiatrist Fritz Klein. Klein gained notoriety in the early bisexual movement in 1978 by publishing a book that updated the Kinsey continuum model of sexuality to including seven new variables (ranging from sexual behavior to emotional preference) that purported to better identify bisexual characteristics in a person’s sexuality as well as their relationships.[[65]](#footnote-65) Founded in 1998, the AIB’s mission reflected Klein’s work as it was established to assist and fund research into bisexual issues ranging from health disparities to psychological qualities of identity.[[66]](#footnote-66) Importantly, the AIB is not singularly-focused on biology, it provides funds for diverse projects, and its *Journal of Bisexuality* is ecumenical in that it publishes literary and cultural studies work, psychological studies, and even essays by those such as bisexual activist Loraine Hutchins who opposed narrow scientific inquiries into identity.

While other organizations denounced Bailey, AIB’s president John Sylla courted him with dinners and research funds in the hope that he could convince the scientist to probe further into the existence of male bisexuality. In a *New York Times* article on the relationship between AIB and Bailey, Sylla recounted explaining to Bailey that he simply had not “found” any bisexual men yet—of course discounting the fact that self-identified bisexual men made up a third of the participants in the original study.[[67]](#footnote-67) Sylla and AIB board members found fault not so much with the premises nor the logic of the Bailey study, but instead took issue with the particulars of his methodological approach. For example, one board member noted the quality of pornography that the study had used, claiming that the women looked “cracked out” and that no one who truly loved women would have felt aroused viewing such content.[[68]](#footnote-68) Ultimately, AIB decided to grant funds from its $17 million endowment to support a new Bailey study explicitly with the aim of finding evidence to counter the 2005 research.

In 2011, Michael Bailey published this AIB-funded follow-up study led by his graduate student Allen Rosenthal titled “Sexual Arousal Patterns in Bisexual Men Revisited.”[[69]](#footnote-69) Addressing the methodological errors AIB had helped identify, the participants were more carefully selected from online bisexual forums instead of through advertisements in general LGBTQ publications in the hope that “truly” bisexual men would be recruited to participate.[[70]](#footnote-70) Additionally, each subject was required to have had sexual experiences with at least two members of each sex as well as romantic relationships with members of each sex lasting at least three months.[[71]](#footnote-71) Wanting to be politically well-positioned for the impending backlash from certain elements of the bisexual community as well as various anti-Bailey and scientific skeptics in the broader LGBTQ movement, AIB set up an independent website, BiBrain.org, with a video of Bailey explaining the new research accompanied by a twenty-page PDF defending Bailey as an academic and the scientific approach to exploring the existence of identity.[[72]](#footnote-72) In this document, AIB criticized the Task Force for their 2005 attack on phallometric testing on the basis that they did not recommend any better method with which to measure bisexuality. The AIB’s repeated insistence on the use of physiological indicators (they also referenced fMRI brain scans as a fruitful approach for future studies[[73]](#footnote-73)) demonstrates that this scientific discourse centers around an ideology of technicism where the first premises regarding the conception of identity are always fixed and the primary focus is on developing technology that can more accurately pinpoint something already assumed to be “there.” Due to this technicist perspective where self-reported experiences are treated as scientifically invalid, there appears to be a degree of incommensurability endemic to these debates as the foundational logics and priors of each side often engender arguments that run past one another rather than meeting each other head on.

Although the popular press gave much credence to this new study, some leaders and activists in the bisexual community expressed skepticism and others outright hostility at this continued emphasis on scientific legitimation. Robyn Ochs, a bisexual activist and leader involved in groups such as the Boston Bisexual Women's Network, the Bisexual Resource Center of Boston, and BiNet USA, argued that the sexuality component of bisexuality is far too complex to capture so statically and within the confines of a laboratory; additionally, she claimed that bisexuality should not be reduced merely to sexual arousal but rather should entail notions of diverse emotional attachments and approaches to relationships.[[74]](#footnote-74) Taking a more balanced outlook, Chairman Jim Larsen of the Bisexual Organizing Project stated that the new study could potentially help those struggling to accept their bisexuality but that this scientific approach that did not see self-reporting as a valid measure was insulting to bisexuals who do not need evidence that they do in fact exist.[[75]](#footnote-75) Ellyn Rushstrom, president of the Bisexual Resource Center in Boston, criticized the study for positing all bisexual attraction as a homogenous same “kind” and said that bisexuality is about diversity and fluidity and cannot be placed into one single box.[[76]](#footnote-76)

Not every bisexual organization or LGBTQ group was so critical of AIB’s approach here, however. BiNet USA’s blog congratulated AIB for achieving their goals in funding the study as well as the “brave folks” who opted to participate.[[77]](#footnote-77) Truth Wins Out (TWO), an organization that fights against ex-gay therapy institutions such as Exodus International and National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), posted these studies and conducted interviews with their authors on their LGBT Science page. Employing the technicist perspective, TWO claimed that the original 2005 Bailey study was methodologically-flawed and “the latest scientific research is explicitly clear that bisexuality is a very real sexual orientation that can be tested and measured.”[[78]](#footnote-78) Among some of the most vocal supporters was Adrienne Williams, founder of the Bi Social Network, who hosted a podcast episode with an AIB spokesperson in which she announced that she had a relationship with higher powers in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services who were interested in conducting more studies in order to provide additional validation for bisexual Americans.[[79]](#footnote-79) Williams voiced some skepticism toward Bailey’s approach throughout the interview but ultimately she expressed the belief that the general public and in-the-closet bisexual persons could use science to better understand bisexual identity and that future studies should include women so as to expand the role of science in legitimating identity.[[80]](#footnote-80)

In some ways it is unsurprising that the LGBTQ movement and bisexual organizations in particular have not entirely abandoned this reliance on science. Truth Wins Out’s strategy demonstrates the longstanding belief that science is the best tool to fight against ex-gay therapy by labeling it a “pseudoscience.” Additionally, TWO’s LGBT Science project broadcasts interviews with the godfathers of the gay genetics turn including Michael Bailey as well as Dean Hamer and Simon LeVay, thereby proving that there is an important iterative dimension to the discourses and institutions that keep these ideas alive and politicized. Lastly, the bisexual community’s emphasis on “visibility” such as the Bi Social Network’s “I am Visible” campaign which began in the 2000s works well with the new essentialist emphasis on scientific legitimation of identity – hence the outrage on behalf of the larger LGBTQ community toward the 2005 study and the refusal to fully ignore or denounce Bailey’s 2011 study that lent scientific credibility toward the existence of male bisexuality.[[81]](#footnote-81) The diverse array of responses to both of these studies reveal an internally-conflicted bisexual activist community that has been forced to wrestle with the legacy of politicized science within the American LGBTQ movement.

*Conclusion: Buying Scientific Identities and Abandoning Queer Ones?*

My hope is that this case study gives credence to the project of expanding the scope of biopolitical citizenship beyond the realms of public health and bureaucracy and into studies of identity-based interest group politics. This study of contestations over bisexual political identity speaks to two overarching and interrelated biopolitical trends here that make this a worthy pursuit toward better comprehending the overall epistemological character of late capitalism as well as the tenacity of scientific logic in gender and sexuality politics since the nineteenth century more specifically. The first of these trends is best articulated by Kaushik Sunder Rajan who has employed a reading of Marx and Foucault to argue that as the capitalist political-economic system has become increasingly naturalized and taken as a given for all human societies, the life sciences have become a central epistemological foundation for conceptualizing key features of our political life such as our behaviors, values, and identities.[[82]](#footnote-82) As bioscientific knowledges and politico-economic regimes have come to increasingly co-produce one another, it has become gradually more difficult to perceive identities and behaviors in the present moment as being anything other than a reflection of something intrinsic to human nature and society rather than what they truly are: a product of historical contingencies that makes them in their own essence contingent upon the materiality of society and the epistemologies that are conditioned by that materiality.[[83]](#footnote-83)

Secondly, Roger Lancaster’s work demonstrates the implications that this epistemological turn has begun to have on conceptions of gender and sexuality that are at the heart of this research.[[84]](#footnote-84) Lancaster argued that reductionist scientific discourses, actors, and institutions are not new to the moment that I have analyzed and that an earlier version of them came onto the scene in the 1970s and 1980s with sociobiological conceptions of identity and human behavior.[[85]](#footnote-85) Over the last several decades, however, the media outlets for this kind of bioreductivism have grown in quantity and in boldness—as exemplified by the role of the Health and Science sections of the *New York Times* at the center of this case study. This change in media and our popular imagination is more broadly due to the development of a post-Fordist political economy where gender roles are destabilized due to the diminished necessity of the nuclear family for the economic order.[[86]](#footnote-86) Scientific elites and other interested political actors have worked in tandem, often through these new media channels, to ground traditional distinctions among gender and sexualities in the language of science, especially biology.[[87]](#footnote-87) As I have shown here, this has had significant consequences for the LGBTQ movement as its increasingly influential mainstream elements have followed this trend and have sought to legitimate their identities in a scientific logic.

The trends I have identified above exhibit why despite our living in the wake of the 1973 decision by the American Psychiatric Association to de-medicalize homosexuality and other late-twentieth century liberationist and queer political victories and visions, we are still beholden to the aura and the shimmer of science.[[88]](#footnote-88) The iterative nature of actors and institutions such as Michael Bailey, phallometric testing instruments, and the *New York Times* are merely the most recent instantiation of a much older tendency to relinquish what ought to be an autonomous right of individuals and communities to define their own identities, values, and behaviors without the overbearing hand of science guiding the process. While one might emphasize the agency of AIB, the 2011 Bailey study’s participants, or the bisexual activists who supported the science once it was framed favorably, the evidence from this recent conflict shows that the entrance of science into these situations shrinks and narrows the boundaries of the identity at hand and empties it of nearly all its radical potential before filling it back up with the epistemological common sense of our contemporary moment’s bioreductivist biases.

Perhaps the most consistent feature of this process is the propensity for much identity-affirming science to be discredited shortly after its political mobilization. After all, Dean Hamer’s influential gay genetics study was infamously unable to be replicated by researchers at the University of Western Ontario only several years after its initial publication. For this reason, perhaps it makes more sense to not think of AIB and others as “buying” their identities with their political demands and research grants but rather as borrowing them for a brief moment only to be left with the consequences of their disappearance shortly thereafter. Hinting at this possibility, the *New York Times* piece on AIB showed Bailey presenting plans to test whether or not some self-identified bisexual men were actually merely gay and had misinterpreted their lack of “repulsion” toward women as sexual desire.[[89]](#footnote-89) It thus remains to be seen what the return of the new essentialist logic here portends for LGBTQ politics in the near future.

1. Marcia M. Gallo, *Different Daughters: A History of the Daughters of Bilitis and the Rise of the Lesbian Rights Movement* (Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2007), 104. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Benoit Denizet-Lewis, “The Scientific Quest to Prove Bisexuality Exists,” *New York Times Magazine* (March 20, 2014), http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/23/magazine/the-scientific-quest-to-prove-bisexuality-exists.html?\_r=0 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For gendered reasons for which this paper does not explore, female bisexuality has become to be understood by the scientific community as something more conditioned by environmental variables whereas male bisexuality has been presumed to be much more innate. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977—1978*, ed. Michel Senellart (New York, NY: Picador, 2009); Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* *Volume I*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York, NY: Vintage, 1990); Thomas Lemke, *Bio-politics: An Advanced Introduction* (New York, NY: NYU Press, 2011); As Thomas Lemke has argued, Foucault’s biopower does not replace the liberal sovereign power but instead it rearticulates it through a new legitimating discourse and rationality (p.34). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978—1979*, ed. Michel Senellart (New York, NY: Picador, 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” originally in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 79-80, 95. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Lemke, *Bio-politics*, 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Lemke, *Biopower*, 118-9; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, NY: Vintage, 1995); Kaushik Sunder Rajan, *Biocapital: The Constitution of Postgenomic Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); As Rajan argues, this has extended beyond the West and now helps explain dynamics in areas such as the pharmaceutical industry in India. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Lemke, *Bio-politics*, 119. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Paul Rabinow, “Artificiality and Enlightenment: From Sociobiology to Biosociality,” in Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter, eds., *Incorporations* (New York: Zone Books, 1992); reprinted in Paul Rabinow, *Essays on the Anthropology of Reason* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 91–111. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Ian Hacking, “Genetics, Biosocial Groups, and the Future of Identity,” *Daedalus 135*, no.4 (Fall 2006): 96-103; Ian Hacking, “Making Up People,” *London Review of Books 28*, no.16-17 (August 2006): 23-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?*, 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Adriana Petryna, Life Exposed: Biological Citizens after Chernobyl (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Epstein, *Inclusion*; See also Jonathan Kahn, *Race in a Bottle: The Story of BiDil and Racialized Medicine in a Post-Genomic Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Gil Eyal, “For a Sociology of Expertise: The Social Origins of the Autism Epidemic,” *American Journal of Sociology 118*, no.4 (January 2013):863-907. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Kenji Yoshino, “The Epistemic Contract of Bisexual Erasure,” *Stanford Law Review 52* (January 2000): 356-460. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Steven Angelides, *A History of Bisexuality* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 2001), 25-47. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Sandor Rado, “A Critical Examination of the Concept of Bisexuality, *Psychoanalysis of Behavior: Collected Papers* vol. I: 1922-1956 (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1956): 139-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis* (Charleston, SC: Nabu Press, 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey (Eastford, CT: Martino Fine Books, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Angelides, *History Bisexuality*, 191-2; Estelle Freedman, “Uncontrollable Desires”: The Response to the Sexual Psychopath 1920-1960,” The Journal of American History *74* (June 1987): 83-106. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Alfred C. Kinsey, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998); Alfred C. Kinsey, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998); John D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, *2nd ed.* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics*, 81; Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* (Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Merl Storr, *Bisexuality: A Critical Reader* (London, UK: Routledge, 1999), 3-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Angelides, *History of Bisexuality*, 121-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Ibid., 125-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Ibid., 127-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. BiNetUSA, “A Brief History of the Bisexual Movement,” *BiNet USA*, (Accessed February 22, 2016), http://www.binetusa.org/bi-history [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Amin Ghaziani, *The Dividends of Dissent: How Conflict and Culture Work in Lesbian and Gay Marches on Washington* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 177-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. For more on the anti-promiscuity discourse see the debates surrounding the content of Larry Kramer, *Faggots* (New York: Random House, 1978). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Ibid., 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Martin S. Weinberg, Colin J. Williams, Douglas W. Pryor, *Dual Attraction: Understanding Bisexuality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Ibid., 19, 117. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Ghaziani, *Dividends of Dissent*, 177-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Kathryn L. Nutter-Pridgen “The Old, the New, and the Redefined: Identifying the Discourses in Contemporary Bisexual Activism,” *Journal of Bisexuality* 15, no.3 (July 28, 2015): 383-415. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Loraine Hutchins and Lani Ka'ahumanu, *Bi Any Other Name* (New York: Alyson Books, 1991); It is worth noting that although the first section of this text is titled “Psychology,” perhaps signifying the specter of the scientist’s gaze, this collection of essays appears to consciously avoid any fine pin-pointing as to exactly what bisexuality means for a person in a strict identity sense. Rather, the text is about multiple and varying experiences, which are never taken to encompass the range of what bisexuality does—or importantly *could*—signify. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Dean H. Hamer, Stella Hu, Victoria L. Magnuson, Nan Hu, Angela M. L. Pattatucci, “A Linkage Between DNA Markers on the X Chromosome and Male Sexual Orientation,” *Science* 261, no.5119 (July 16, 1993): 321-7; Michael Bailey and Richard Pillard “A Genetic Study of Male Sexual Orientation,” Archives of General Psychiatry 48, no.12 (December 1991): 1089-96; Simon LeVay, “A Difference in Hypothalamic Structure Between Heterosexual and Homosexual Men," *Science* 253, no.5023 (August 30, 1991): 1034-1037. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Natalie Angier, “Report Suggests Homosexuality Is Linked to Genes,” *New York Times* (July 16, 1993), A1. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Burr, “Homosexuality and Biology.” [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Lancaster, *The Trouble With Nature*, 275. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Marilyn Elias, “Difference Seen in Brains of Gay Men,” *USA Today* (August 3, 1992), 8D. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. *Bowers v. Hardwick*, 478 U.S. 186 (1986) [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Evan Gerstmann, *The Constitutional Underclass: Gays, Lesbians, and the Failure of Class-Based Equal Protection* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 67-70; Of course sex requiring only intermediate scrutiny and race being afforded the highest level of scrutiny. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Janet Halley, “Sexual Orientation and the Politics of Biology,” *Stanford Law Review* 46, no.3 (February 1994): 503-68; Nancy J. Knauer, “Science, Identity, and the Construction of the Gay Political Narrative,” *Law & Sexuality* *12* (2003): 1-87. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Carlos A. Ball, *From the Closet to the Courtroom: Five LGBT Rights Lawsuits that Have Changed Our Nation* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2010), 126. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. William E. Burleson, *Bi America: Myths, Truths, and Struggles of an Invisible Community* (New York: Harrington Park Press 2005), 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Tom Waidzunas, *The Straight Line: How the Fringe Science of Ex-Gay Therapy Reoriented Sexuality* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2015); Erica Goode, “Study Questions Gene Influence on Male Homosexuality,” *New York Times*, (April 23, 1999), http://www.nytimes.com/1999/04/23/us/study-questions-gene-influence-on-male-homosexuality.html; For relevant court cases see *United States v. Windsor*, 570 U.S. \_\_\_ (2013); *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. \_\_\_ (2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Suzanna Walters, *The Tolerance Trap: How God, Genes, and Good Intentions are Sabotaging Gay Equality* (New York: New York University Press, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Alan R. Sanders et al., “Genome-Wide Scan Demonstrates Significant Linkage for Male Sexual Orientation,” *Psychological Science* *45*, no.7 (May 2015): 1378-88; Andy Coghlan, “Largest Study of Gay Brothers Homes in on ‘Gay Genes,” *New Scientist*, (November 17, 2014), https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn26572-largest-study-of-gay-brothers-homes-in-on-gay-genes/. It must be noted, however, that mainstream organizations have approached these new studies with a heavy degree of scrutiny. See the Human Rights Campaign’s comments on the statistical weakness and inconclusive nature of this study in Hayley Miller, “Study Attempts to Connect Genealogy to Sexual Orientation,” *HRC Blog*, (November 17, 2014) http://www.hrc.org/blog/entry/study-attempts-to-connect-genealogy-to-sexual-orientation. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Benedict Carey, “Gay, Straight or Lying? Bisexuality Revisited,” *New York Times*, (July 5, 2005), http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/05/health/straight-gay-or-lying-bisexuality-revisited.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Gerulf Reiger, Meredith L. Chivers, and Michael J Bailey, “Sexual Arousal Patterns of Bisexual Men,” *Psychological Science 16*, no.8 (August 2005):579-84. For more on phallometric testing, see Tom Waidzunas, *The Straight Line*; Tom Waidzunas, “Intellectual Opportunity Structures and Science-Targeted Activism: Influence of the Ex-Gay Movement on the Science of Sexual Orientation,” *Mobilization: An International Journal 18*, no.1 (2013): 1–18; Tom Waidzunas and Steven Epstein, “‘For Men Arousal is Orientation’: Bodily Truthing, Technosexual Scripts, and the Materialization of Sexualities Through the Phallometric Test,” *Social Studies of Science 45*, no.2 (April 2015):187-213. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Ibid.; The interesting contradiction here is that a narrow scientific theory and approach led to what at least sounds like a queer theory of bisexuality: for these researchers, male bisexuality is not so much defined by arousal than it is by the interpretation of particular desires. Lest proponents of queer theory be too enthused, recall that the baseline assumption here is that orientation and identity for *men* in particular is directly related to how external stimuli directs blood flow to the penis (a decidedly ­*not* queer theoretical premise). [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Foucault, *History of Sexuality Vl. I*, 69; Reiger et al., “Sexual Arousal,” 580. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Ibid.; This point is reinforced by the line following the previous quote: “For example, genital arousal to stimuli depicting children is an effective method of assessing pedophilia, even among men who deny attraction to children.” [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Loraine Hutchins, “Sexual Prejudice: The Erasure of Bisexuals in Academia and the Media,” *American Sexuality Magazine* *3*, no.4 (2005), http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/Bailey/Bisexuality/American%20Sexuality/American%20Sexuality%20magazine%20-%20The%20erasure%20of%20bisexuals.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, “The Problems with ‘Gay, Straight or Lying,” *thetaskforce.org*, (July, 2005), http://www.thetaskforce.org/static\_html/downloads/reports/NYTBisexualityFactSheet.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Ibid.; Michael Bailey, *The Man Who Would be Queen: The Science of Gender-Bending and Transsexualism* (Washington, D.C.: Joseph Henry Press, 2003); This theory of *autogynephilia* was developed by Ray Blanchard in the 1980s and has become increasingly suspect. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Andy Humm, “Firestorm Over Bisexuality in Times: GLAAD, Task Force Assail Story Suggesting Most Bis Not Owning Up to Their Orientation,” *Gay City News 75*, no.28 (July 2005), http://gaycitynews.nyc/gcn\_428/firestormover.html [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Fritz Klein, *The Bisexual Option: A Concept of One Hundred Percent Intimacy* (New York: NY: Harrington Park Press, 1978). [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. American Bisexuality Institute, “About Fritz Klein,” *AmericanInstituteofBisexuality*.org (Accessed March 1, 2016), http://www.americaninstituteofbisexuality.org/fritz-klein/ [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Denizet-Lewis, “The Scientific Quest to Prove Bisexuality Exists.” [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Allen M. Rosenthal et al., “Sexual Arousal Patterns in Bisexual Men Revisited,” *Biological Psychology 88*, no.1 (September 2011): 112-5. It should be noted that Kinsey Institute researchers published a similar study in the same year *See* Jerome A. Cerny and Erick Janssen, “Patterns of Sexual Arousal in Homosexual, Bisexual, and Heterosexual Men,” *Archives of Sexual Behavior 40*, no.4 (August 2011): 687-97. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. American Bisexuality Institute, “Controversy over Professor Bailey and the Existence of Bisexuality,” *BiBrain.org* (2010); While BiBrain.org is no longer accessible, the original website’s layout and content can be found by using the Way Back Machine. I contacted AIB President John Sylla to ask why the site was no longer available and was told that it was a simple matter of YouTube changing its parameter requirements for hosting videos and that in the near future the site would be up and running again. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Gerulf Reiger and Ritch Savins-Williams, “The Eyes Have It: Sex and Sexual Orientation Differences in Pupil Dilation Patterns,” *PLOS One* (August 3, 2012) doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0040256; Additionally, AIB has funded research by psychologists Ritch Savins-Williams and Gerulf Reiger who use pupil-dilators to measure bisexual arousal and sexual curiosity. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Denizet-Lewis, “The Scientific Quest to Prove Bisexuality Exists.” [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. David, Tuller, “No Surprise for Bisexual Men: Report Indicates They Exist,” *New York Times* (August 22, 2011), http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/23/health/23bisexual.html [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Faith Cheltenham, “Real To Everyone: Bisexual Study Sponsored by AIB Makes The News,” *BiNet USA Blog* (August 25, 2011), http://binetusa.blogspot.com/2011/08/just-this-week-journal-of-biological.html [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Truth Wins Out, “Bisexuality,” *LGBTScience.org*, (Accessed March 4, 2016), http://www.lgbtscience.org/bisexuality/ [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Adrienne Williams, “The American Institute of Bisexuality on Bi Men, Part 1,” *Bi Talk* (August 30, 2011) http://podbay.fm/show/304830098/e/1314741600 [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Shiri Esiner, *Bi Notes for a Bisexual Revolution* (Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2013), 306. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Rajan, Biocapital, 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Ibid.,; Sheila Jasanoff*, States of Knowledge: The Co-Production of Science and the Social Order* (London: Routledge, 2006); While Rajan delves into the debates over Althusser’s theoretical legacies and what they bring to bear on discussions and debates regarding overdetermination and other conceptions of the relationship among economic and cultural features of human society, one of the best treatments of these debates can be found in Rosemary Hennessey, *Profit and Pleasure: Sexual Identities in Late Capitalism* (London: Routledge, 2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Roger Lancaster, “Sex, Science, and Pseudoscience in the Public Sphere,” *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power 13* (2006): 101-38. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Ibid., 107; Michaeli di Leonardo, *Exotics at Home: Anthropologies, Others, American Modernity* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998). [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Lancaster dubs this “sexual post-fordism.” [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Roger Lancaster, *The Trouble with Nature: Sex and Science in Pop Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. As Foucault states in the *History of Sexuality Vl. I*, it is this “dark shimmer of sex” that is married to an essentialist model (indebted to science to begin with) that holds the liberationist back by committing him to the repressive model rather than a more emancipatory political disposition. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Denizet-Lewis, “The Scientific Quest to Prove Bisexuality Exists.” [↑](#footnote-ref-89)