

# Globalizing/ De-provincializing the critique of heterosexuality

**Stevi Jackson**

(Professor of Women's Studies at the University of York)

18:30-20:00

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Within western sociology there is an increasing emphasis on the loosening of normative constraints on sexuality and the increased visibility of forms of sexuality that transgress, subvert or unsettle the heterosexual norm. At the same time the sociological lens has been applied to the institution and practice of heterosexuality itself. This marked a departure from earlier sociological and even feminist work, which may have subjected marriage and family to critical scrutiny but rarely even named heterosexuality as an object of inquiry. The theorisation of heterosexuality has, however, been markedly Eurocentric. In the context of recent challenges to the parochialism of western theory this presentation will consider how the analysis of heterosexuality could benefit from widening its scope beyond the current Eurocentric focus. It cannot be assumed that what we identify as heterosexuality is everywhere the same. If we are to develop a critical perspective that is less Eurocentric, we need to do so flexibly and perhaps eclectically and be open to questioning our assumptions. This seems essential in order to appreciate the diversity of changing practices of intimacy throughout the world. As a first step, I will

consider whether my own approach to heterosexuality, which locates it within a multi-dimensional conceptualisation of the social, is flexible enough to work cross-culturally or whether it is too strongly marked by its western origins to have wider applicability.

Stevi Jackson is Professor of Women's Studies at the University of York, UK. Her research interests centre on the sociology of gender, sexuality and intimate relationships. She is the author of a number of books including *Heterosexuality in Question* (1999), co-author, with Sue Scott of *Theorizing Sexuality* (2010) and, with Momin Rahman, *Gender and Sexuality: Sociological Approaches* (2010). She has also co-edited a number of collections including, with Sue Scott, *Gender: A Sociological Reader* (2002) and with Liu Jieyu and Woo Juhyun, *East Asian Sexualities: Intimacy, Modernity and New Sexual Cultures* (2008).

Lecture in English / No RSVP necessary

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