

# Sex' vs 'sexuality

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Assembling an Understanding of ' Sex' Verses ' Sexuality' " Biologists and psychologists who have accepted the doctrine that the only natural function of sex is reproduction have simply ignored the existence of sexual activity which is not reproductive" Alfred Kinsey (The Invention of Sexuality 40) The terms ' sex' and ' sexuality' have not always had a clear differentiation, but as the study of sexuality (sexology) has continued and become more commonly studied and recognized, these terms have adapted their own definitions.

However, each does not have a perfect definition, because people will have their own opinions regarding the terms. The above quote by a historian of sex was interesting to me because it brings up the aspect of biology within the understanding of the terms ' sex' and ' sexuality'. My personal idea, or understanding, is that ' sex' constitutes the more biological side— ones physical features, gender, reproduction (' sex' is also the abbreviation for sexual intercourse); and the term ' sexuality' makes up everything else that surrounds an individual's definition of their sexual identity, orientation, and feelings.

When reading articles online, I came across this quote: " sexuality is about who or what you are attracted to, not where you put your dick" (bitheway), which I found to be a very blunt but interesting way to think about what constitutes ' sexuality'. " Where you put your ..." is your personal preference, but that preference is a compilation of the aspects of one's personal world and how they have come to define and understand their individual inclination. All of the parts that are compiled in order to form ones individual definition are aspects of ' sexuality' within our culture.

Another page online gives definitions for 'sex' and 'sexuality' that I have found to be the most clear and complete: Sex refers to whether or not a person is male or female, whether a person has a penis or vagina. Sexuality refers to the total expression of who you are as a human being, your femaleness or your maleness... Your sexuality is an interplay between body image, gender identity, gender role, sexual orientation, eroticism, genitals, intimacy, relationships, and love and affection... includes his or her attitudes, values, knowledge and behaviors.

How people express their sexuality is influenced by their families, culture, society, faith and beliefs. (Sex and Sexuality: Understanding the Differences) The influence from all aspects of our lives that guide us to define our sexuality is a major component in sexology. The italicized words in the definition above are some I think are very significant in understanding what constitutes 'sexuality'.

Since the study of sex started to dramatically change, there has been more understanding within so many topics of sexuality, such as gender (roles and variance), marriage and the family, homosexuality, heterosexuality, bisexuality, intersex, trans-gender/sex/vestite, evolution of sexual identities, legal and medical regulation, religious roles/codes, phallogocentrism, women's bodies and health, illegitimacy, "and the importance of social networks and oppositional sexualities" (The Invention of Sexuality 39).

This is only the first week that I have studied sexuality and culture in an educational environment, and after enjoying many sources of new material I have begun to compile my own understanding of 'sex' and 'sexuality', which is just the beginning of my learning on the subject. One of the most

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important aspects to take away from these introductory lessons is how grand of a role society and culture have on sexuality.

It is so important to be aware of and take into account culture's influence on sexuality now and within the history of sex. In our US society (and this is a generalization) some vital influences are class, race/ethnicity, gender, age, family history and how one was raised, physical ability, religion and region. Now that I have collected a better understanding of 'sex' and 'sexuality' as educational terms, I can further my knowledge of everything that makes up sexuality within cultures around the world.

Bitheway. Sex Verses Sexuality. Bi The Way: An exploration of Male Bisexuality. 6 May 2008. <http://www.bitheway.co.uk/2008/05/06/sex-versus-sexuality/>. Sex and Sexuality: Understanding the Differences (Learning Activity). RECAP 2007-2009. <http://www.etr.org/recapp/index.cfm?fuseaction=pages.LearningActivitiesDetail&PageID=167> The Invention of Sexuality. Sexual Lives: A Reader on the Theories and Realities of Human Sexualities. McGraw-Hill, 2003.