

January 9, 1984

To the Editor:

Readers of *Politics and the Life Sciences* may be interested in the European Sociobiological Society (ESS). The society was founded on August 21, 1982, and has the objective of serving as a forum for the study of the role of biological factors in the behavior of animals and human beings, with special emphasis on evolutionary aspects.

The following subjects have been discussed so far:

1. Kin selection and the measure of relatedness; human sex ratio manipulation; structure and function of the human family.
2. Sex differences relating to sound perception and intelligence.
3. The relationship between biological and cultural evolution.
4. Sociological and mathematical comments on the coevolutionary gene/culture theory.
5. Sociobiology and (the evolution of) language.
6. Pitfalls in the application of sociobiology to human behavior.
7. The origins of human and animal aggression.
8. Feminism, ideology, and sociobiology.
9. Philosophical and methodological problems of sociobiology.

In other words, sociobiology is critically used as a synthetic approach to the naturalistic study of behavior in animals and humans. Sociobiology plays an important role; however, the range of interests is much broader. When I introduced biopolitics in my lecture at a meeting of the society in Brussels in December 1983, this subject met with great interest.

The broad range of topics in which the members of ESS are interested can be seen from the program of the last meeting in Brussels. These are the titles of the presentations given at this meeting:

1. "The Use of Sociobiological Knowledge in the Struggle against Racism." R. Cliquet, Department of Social Biology, University of Gent, Belgium.

2. "The Establishment of Patterns of Communication between Man and Pygmy Chimpanzee (*Pan paniscus*): Outline of a Proposed Methodology." R. Corluy, Center for Biomathematics, Vrije Universiteit, Brussels, Belgium.

3. "Four Fatal Fallacies in Defense of a Myth: The Aggression/Warfare Linkage." J. M. G. van der Dennen, Polemologisch Instituut, State University, Gronigen, Netherlands.

4. "What is Biopolitics?" H. Flohr, Department of Political Science, University of Dusseldorf, Federal Republic of Germany.

5. "Variation in Infant Mortality in Relation to Illegitimacy in Rural Galicia, Spain." V. Fuster, Department of Anthropology, Faculty of Biology, Universidad Complutense, Madrid, Spain.

6. "Uncertainty Reduction: A Fundamental Concept for Understanding a Number of Psychological Theories." Akko Kalma, Institute for Social Psychology, University of Utrecht, Netherlands.

7. "Contrasting the Evolution of Sexual Maturity in a Biological and in a Jurisdictional Sense." Christian Moerman, Department of Neurology, Brugmann Hospital, Brussels, Belgium.

8. "The Evolutionary Stability of a Bi-Stable System of Emotions and Motivations in Species with an Open-Ended Capacity for Learning." P. P. van der Molen, Institute for Personality and Developmental Psychology, State University, Gronigen, Netherlands.

9. "A Model for the Genetics of Behavioral Flexibility." F. L. Pelt, Department of Public Health, Agricultural University, Wageningen, Netherlands.

10. "A Study of the Growing Independence of Wild Chimpanzee Babies and Infants and Its Relevance for Man." F. X. Plooiij and H. H. C. van der Rijt-Plooiij, Gemeentelijk Pedotherapeutisch Instituut, Amsterdams Pedologisch Centrum, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

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11. "The Biology of Religion." V. Reynolds, Department of Biological Anthropology, Oxford University, United Kingdom.

12. "Brain Differentiation and Behavior." Weiert Velle, Department of Physiology, Norwegian College of Veterinary Medicine, Oslo, Norway.

13. "Determinants of Differential Parental Investment in a Human Population." Eckart Voland, Institut für Anthropologie der Universität Göttingen, Federal Republic of Germany.

14. "Maternal Facial Movements during Children's Speech." Jan Wind, Institute of Human Genetics, Free University, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

15. "Behavioral Flexibility and the Evolution of Language." Willem de Winter, Department of Public Health, Agricultural University, Wageningen, Netherlands.

The society holds two meetings a year (in Europe). It also organizes workshops in sociobiology at international scientific forums, publishes a newsletter, and promotes the publication of its conference papers (a recent conference will shortly be published as a special issue of the *Journal of Human Evolution*).

Members of the society are scholars with a broad variety of academic backgrounds (including several political and social scientists) originating so far from 13 different European countries including East Germany and Poland. Non-European scholars are, of course, also welcome; indeed, some from the U.S. have already joined. We are trying to increase the effectiveness of the society by increasing our membership. The fee is provisionally fixed at 40 Dutch florins or \$15 U.S. The fee for students and unemployed colleagues is half the regular fee.

For the time being, most of the meetings will take place in the Netherlands or in Belgium. Summer meetings will most likely be held in June; winter meetings, in November.

For further information please contact the Secretariate c/o Dr. Jan Wind, Institute of Human Genetics, Free University, Amsterdam, P.O. Box 7161, 1007 MC Amsterdam, Netherlands.

I would like to mention that it is possible to participate in a meeting, maybe in conjunction with a trip to Europe. Apart from the outstanding scientific level, the atmosphere at these international and interdisciplinary meetings is always pleasant.

Those who are particularly interested in members or topics coming from the social sciences could, of course, contact me. My address is Heiner Flohr, Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut, Politikwissenschaft I, Universitätsstrasse 1, 4000 Dusseldorf 1, Federal Republic of Germany.

– Heiner Flohr