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Homosexual Parents

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Summary: Does the homosexuality of parents affect the sexual orientation or experiences of their children? Seventeen of 5,182 randomly obtained adults from 6 US cities answered questionnaires indicating that they had a homosexual parent. Parental homosexuality may be related to findings that (1) 5 of the 17 reported sexual relations with their parents, (2) a disproportionate fraction reported sexual relations with other caretakers and relatives, and (3) a disproportionate fraction: a) claimed a less than exclusively heterosexual orientation (47%); b) indicated gender dissatisfaction and c) reported that their first sexual experience was homosexual. Of 1,388 consecutive obituaries in a major homosexual newspaper, 87 of the gays who died had children and registered a median age of death of 47 (the 1,267 without children had a median age of death of 38). 10 lesbians did and 24 did not have children. We estimate that less than 1% of parents are bisexual or homosexual and that <7% of gays and about a third of lesbians are parents.

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How do children fare when raised by a homosexual? Sharply different opinions are held by traditional and pre-1973 psychiatric opinion as compared to recent professional literature. Common opinion holds that, like drug use, homosexuality is a learned pathology passed from generation to generation by modeling and seduction (Levitt and Klassen, 1974). Contagion was the theory of choice for many years (e.g., “it is vain to blind oneself to the fact that the problem of male homosexuality is in essence the problem of the corruption of youth by itself and by its elders. It is the problem of the creation by means of such corruption of new addicts ready to corrupt a still further generation of young men and boys in the future” [Rees & Usill, 1956, p. 29]).

Most people believe that children of homosexuals are apt to acquire parental sexual proclivities as well as being subject to additional sexual harms (Bigner & Bozett, 1989). As a consequence, homosexuals, until recently, have been prevented from adopting or foster-parenting.

Recent professional literature and opinion, however, stresses the irrelevance of parental homosexuality. A review article on lesbian parenting by Falk (1989) in the *American Psychologist*, complained that courts “often have assumed that their children are likely to be emotionally harmed, subject to molestation, impaired in gender role development, or themselves homosexual. None of these assumptions is supported by extant research and theory.” (p. 941) Further, “there is no evidence either that homosexual parents are more likely to seduce or allow their children to be seduced than their heterosexual counterparts or that lesbian mothers or their acquaintances molest children more often than heterosexual individuals. However, research on the point is scant.” (p. 944) And “research on the sexual orientation of children of lesbian mothers does not confirm the ‘contagion’ assumption inherent in so many court decisions.” (p. 946) And, “it is important to note that no research has identified significant differences between lesbian mothers and their heterosexual counterparts or the children raised by these groups. Researchers have been unable to establish empirically that detriment results to children from being raised by lesbian mothers” (p. 946)

Similarly, a review of research on homosexual fathers stated that “[t]here is no evidence of any kind that demonstrates that living with a homosexual parent has any significant negative effects on children. In fact, it appears that gay parents are as effective and may be even more so in some ways than nongay parents” (Bigner and Bozett, 1989). Bozett (1989) contended that “[t]here is no evidence whatsoever that children reared in households in which one or both adults is homosexual are in any way at harm, either physically or psychologically.”

The American Psychological Association accepts the thrust of these conclusions sufficiently that it provided expert testimony to that effect in the joint adoption of a boy through artificial insemination by male homosexual partners in the District of Columbia in 1992 (*Washington Blade*, 6/19/92). More importantly, the American Psychological

Association joined the National Association of Social Workers in an *amici curiae* brief in *Bottoms v. Bottoms*, November 15, 1993, in which the APA asserted that: “the belief that a child raised in a household with a lesbian or gay parent is more apt to become lesbian or gay is without any basis in fact” (p. 23); “the research suggests that lesbian mothers have parenting skills that are equivalent to or better than those of heterosexual parents” (p. 12); and “there is no social science evidence that even suggests that lesbian or gay parents are more likely to sexually abuse their children, or to allow them to be molested by others” (p. 13).

Does the existing research warrant such strong statements as “no evidence,” “no evidence of any kind,” “without any basis in fact,” “no social science evidence” that even suggests” and “no evidence whatsoever?” Is the research on this issue so rigorous, compelling and definitive that it enables a prudent person or a professional association to completely disregard common or traditional opinion? It seems to us that the objectivity of the research on homosexual parenting is open to considerable question. Most, if not all of the studies have: (1) been conducted and reported by those sympathetic to the homosexual movement, (2) been drawn from samples of convenience, and (3) assessed with measures not clearly related to historic societal objections to homosexual parenting (e.g., drawings, toy and game preferences, parenting questionnaires of uncertain validity), rather than molestation experiences or possible sexual orientation ‘contagion.’ What is the magnitude of the issue, e.g., how prevalent are homosexual parents? How many homosexuals have children? We obtained some data that bear upon these issues during random sampling in six US cities and a survey of homosexual obituaries.

Method

In 1983 we gave an extensive self-administered questionnaire on sexual issues to 9,129 adults (completed by 4,340 or 47.5%) obtained via one-wave, systematic cluster sampling in 5 U.S. metropolitan areas chosen for high (Los Angeles, Washington, DC), intermediate (Denver, Louisville) and low (Omaha) levels of homosexual activity as indexed by published homosexual guides to sexual opportunities. One respondent per family unit was asked to complete anonymously an extensive questionnaire on sexuality and return it to the interviewer sealed in a provided envelope or, if more convenient, to mail it.

Among the 500+ questions were included: “How would you rate your sexual desires? not really sexual, not interested/only sexually interested in and attracted to members of the opposite sex (I’m exclusively heterosexual)/generally attracted to members of the opposite sex, but sometimes am sexually attracted to members of my own sex/equally sexually attracted to members of both sexes (I’m bisexual)/generally attracted to members of my sex, but sometimes I’m sexually attracted to members of the opposite sex/only sexually interested in and attracted to members of my own sex (I’m exclusively homosexual); I am a heterosexual/ bisexual/ homosexual.” Respondents were also asked an extensive series of questions on sexual advances from and sexual interaction with various authority figures (e.g., teachers; religious leaders) and family members (e.g., parents, siblings); and

a series of questions about their first sexual experience (their age, with whom, what transpired, et cetera). Demographic information included whether they were married, how many children they had; and “if you are married, how would you characterize your parenthood/childlessness? I'm delighted to be a parent/I'm pleased to be a parent/I'm a `reluctant parent', circumstances made me a parent, but had I my choice I wouldn't have been/ I'm `reluctantly childless', but had I my choice I would have children/I'm pleased to be childless/I'm delighted to be childless; If you are childless, do you want to have children? and background questions on their upbringing: “As you were growing up, to which parent were you closest? [mother/ father/neither/does not apply]; As you were growing up, did you want to be: a girl? [yes/no]; a boy? [yes/no]; As you were growing up, were your parents conventional in their roles (father did the male-type things, mother the female-type things)? [parents were very conventional/parents were conventional/roles were mixed and unisexed/parents were unconventional/parents were very unconventional]; As you were growing up, did you feel: treasured/accepted/ rejected/betrayed by your: mother [yes/no] father [yes/no] [asked for each item]; “Generally speaking, while you were growing up, who was dominant? [mother was dominant/father was dominant/neither was dominant/does not apply (only one parent etc.)”

After being asked whether they were “a heterosexual, bisexual or homosexual,” respondents were then asked “why do you think you became this way? (please check all that apply); followed by 42 pre-coded choices including “one of my parents was a homosexual” and two open-ended choices “I was seduced by _____” and “other (explain).” The details of the sampling are summarized by Cameron, Proctor, Coburn, Forde, Larson and Cameron (1986).

In 1984 the same questions were responded to by 842 of 1460 adults from Dallas (completion-rate 57.7%). In Dallas, the sampling frame was tilted toward homosexual areas to enlarge our sample of homosexuals for purposes of statistical comparison (the methodology is detailed in Cameron, Cameron and Proctor, 1988) and the question “was one (or both) of your parents bi- or homosexual?” was added.

Thus we got responses from 5,182 adults (of 10,115 contacted, a 51.2% response rate) from the six metropolitan areas. The median age of those who refused to complete the questionnaire was 55 and somewhat more apt to be male. Generally, we achieved about an 85% acceptance rate among those aged 35 or under and an 85% rejection rate for those aged 65 or older. Consequently, our findings from those under the age of 56, with a rejection-rate of approximately 24%, are less subject to the uncertainties of representativeness associated with a high rejection rate. The sexual survey by Michael, Gagnon, Laumann, and Kolata in 1994 avoided high rejection-rates with their extensive sexual questionnaire by not attempting to interview people over the age of 59 and reported a rejection-rate of 22%. Since we guaranteed respondents no identifiers and that the interviewer would not know his responses, we made no attempt to have respondents fill-in missing answers.

Obituary survey: The *Washington Blade*, weekly homosexual newspaper of Washington, D.C., is known for the most complete obituary section of any gay publication in the world. We examined 986 consecutive obituaries from the *Washington Blade* from January 1, 1988 through December 4, 1992 and 402 obituaries from May 7, 1993 through May 6, 1994 for children listed as survivors.

Results

We counted as homosexuals those who claimed to be bisexual or homosexual. The urban nature of the sample would tend to elevate the proportion of those with homosexual desires (since they tend to congregate in cities).

Population Estimates

Proportion of homosexuals who are parents: Homosexuals of both sexes reported lower rates of parenting than heterosexuals did. For the combined 6-city sample 59.0% (997/1690) of those males calling themselves heterosexual, 50.9% (28/55) of those calling themselves bisexual and 6.3% (5/79) of those calling themselves homosexual reported at least one child; the corresponding proportions for females were 71.2% (1922/2698), 36.5% (19/52) and 26.7% (8/30). Combining those claiming to be bisexual and homosexual yields 24.6% who were fathers and 32.9% of lesbians who were mothers.

Obituaries: 87 (6%) of the 1,354 obituaries of gays included at least one child. Ten (29%) of the 34 lesbian obituaries included at least one child.

Proportion of parents who are homosexual: In the 5-city sample, 22 (2.5%) of 877 fathers said that they were bisexual or homosexual; 25 (1.5%) of 1705 mothers said that they were bisexual or homosexual. In Dallas, with disproportionate sampling of homosexual areas, 11 (7.2%) of the 153 fathers were bisexual or homosexual; 2 (0.87%) of the 231 mothers were bisexual or homosexual. In Dallas, 4 (0.54%) of 744 respondents explicitly reported that they had had at least one homosexual parent and 2 (or 3) others indicated that they had had one (i.e., 6 (0.81%) or 7 (0.94%) of 744 had a homosexual parent).

Proportion of children with a homosexual parent: Of the 6,169 children reported in the 5-city sample, 83 (1.3%) were claimed by bisexuals and 14 (0.22%) by homosexuals (i.e., $97/6169 = 1.6\%$ by bisexuals or homosexuals). Of the 872 children reported by the Dallas sample, 12 (1.4%) were claimed by bisexuals and 3 (0.34%) by homosexuals (i.e., $15/872 = 1.7\%$ by bisexuals or homosexuals). Homosexuals less frequently had children, and if they had them they typically had fewer children than heterosexuals did. Thus, combining the 6-city sample, 14 (42%) of gay fathers had one child, 11 (33%) had 2 children, 8 (24%) had 3 or more children. Twelve (44%) of 27 lesbian mothers reported one child, 9 (33%) reported 2, and 6 (22%) reported 3 or more children. Among heterosexuals, 27% of fathers and 27% of mothers reported only one child, 26% of

fathers and 38% of mothers reported 2 children, and 47% of fathers and 35% of mothers reported 3 or more children.

In the obituary sample, 45 (52%) of gay fathers had one child, 30 (34%) had 2 children, and 8 (9%) had 3 or more children. Six lesbian mothers had a child and 4 mothers had 2 children (one of whom was adopted).

Attitude of homosexuals toward children: In the 5-city study, of those who did not have children: for the men: 24% (135/560) of heterosexuals, 48% (13/27) of bisexuals, and 70% of homosexuals said that they did not want to have children $X^2=50.6$; $<.001$]; for the women the corresponding figures were 23% (151/667), 44% (12/27), and 68% (13/19) [$X^2= 24.4$; $<.001$]. In Dallas, 52% (23/44) of the bi/homosexual men compared to 21% (29/139) of heterosexual men [$X^2= 25.5$; $<.001$] and 57% (4/7) of the bi/homosexual women v. 19% (27/140) of the heterosexual women [$X^2= 16.0$; $<.001$] said that they did not want children.

The ratio of parenthood to having obtained an abortion would also seem to be a rough index of attitude toward children. About 21 times as many heterosexual men were parents as claimed to have obtained an abortion v. about 11 times as many bisexual/gay men; for heterosexual females almost 4 were parents for every 1 who had obtained at least one abortion, for lesbians slightly more were mothers (24) than had obtained an abortion (21).

Correlates of Homosexual Parenting

Sexual Orientation: In the 5-city sample, 4 males and 7 females explicitly attributed their sexual orientation, in part at least, to parental homosexuality. Of the males, one claimed to be 'exclusively heterosexual,' two claimed to be 'bisexual,' and one 'homosexual;' of the females three claimed to be 'exclusively heterosexual,' two 'mainly heterosexual,' and two 'bisexual.' In Dallas, 2 males and 4 females indicated that 'one (or both) of their parents was bi- or homosexual.' [Another male may have meant to indicate the same, but filled out the questionnaire in a contradictory fashion and was dropped from the analysis]. One male claimed to be 'homosexual' and the other reported that because of a homosexual parent he was "exclusively heterosexual." The Dallas females all claimed to be "exclusively heterosexual," one of whom claimed her choice was due to having had "a homosexual parent."

In the 5-city sample, less than 6% of the males claimed to be bi- or homosexual; of the females, 3% claimed bisexuality or homosexuality, and 4% said that they were 'mainly heterosexual.' By comparison, 3 of 4 (75%) of the males with a homosexual parent claimed a bisexual or homosexual orientation, and 4 of 7 (57%) of the females with a homosexual parent claimed a less than exclusively heterosexual orientation. While this suggests a strong correlation between parent and child sexual orientation, it should be noted that in the Dallas survey there were 4 individuals who reported a homosexual parent and yet made no claim that this circumstance had influenced their sexual orientation. Unfortunately, the question 'was a parent homosexual' was not asked in the 5-

city study, so estimates are not available.

Undesirable Sexual Experiences: In the 5-city sample, (partially reported in Cameron, Proctor, Coburn, Forde, Larson and Cameron, 1986) the first sexual experience reported by one of the male bisexuals was seduction by his father when he was aged 12. He reported subsequent sexual relations with his mother [of two heterosexual relations with mothers reported in the 5-city sample], a sister [of 15 heterosexual relations with sisters reported in the 5-city sample], a brother [of 15 homosexual relations with brothers in the 5-city sample], a woman for whom he baby-sat [of 15 in the 5-city sample], and a male employer [of 10 in the 5-city sample]. For the females, one of the bisexuals reported that her first sexual experience was with her stepmother at age 12. She reported subsequent sexual relations with a female relative [of 6 homosexual relations with female relatives in the 5-city sample], and a male lawyer [of 11 heterosexual relations with lawyers in the 5-city sample]. The other bisexual female also reported a sexual encounter with a female relative [of 6 in the 5-city sample], her stepmother [of 2 in the 5-city sample], a female teacher [of 3 homosexual relations with female teachers reported in the 5-city sample], and a male for whom she baby-sat [of 30 heterosexual relations with males for whom baby-sat reported in the 5-city sample]. One 'mainly heterosexual' reported sex with a female teacher [of 3 in the 5-city sample] and a male university teacher [of 37 heterosexual relations with male university teachers in the 5-city sample]; the other 'mainly heterosexual' reported her first sexual experience with a male secondary teacher [of 14 heterosexual relations with male secondary teachers reported in the 5-city sample].

In the Dallas sample, both males reporting a homosexual parent also reported having had sex with their fathers (the exclusive heterosexual also reported sex with his sister [of 6 heterosexual relations with sisters reported in the Dallas sample]). Of interest, in the combined set of respondents from the 5-city and Dallas samples, one of the 3 boys who reported sex with his father became homosexual, one became bisexual, and the other became exclusively heterosexual. Both of the girls who reported sex with stepmothers became bisexual.

The 11 respondents who claimed homosexual parents in the 5-city sample accounted for 0.3% of the total sample, yet reported 16 (2%) of the 670 undesirable sexual experiences and 9 (10%) of the 92 homosexual undesirable sexual experiences. The 6 respondents who reported homosexual parents in Dallas constituted less than one percent of the sample yet reported 3 (2%) of the 140 undesirable sexual experiences and 2 (5%) of the 40 homosexual undesirable sexual experiences. Five of the 6 homosexual relations with parents or stepparents in the combined samples were reported by this set of 17 respondents. Of note, one of the males who reported sex with his father and one of the females who reported sex with her stepmother did *not* implicate the parent as a reason for their sexual orientation.

First Sexual Experience: 8.5% of the males and 3.9% of females in the 5-city sample reported a first sexual experience that was homosexual. Four of the 6 males (i.e., 67%) and one of the 11 females (i.e., 9%) who had a homosexual parent reported a homosexual

first sexual experience.

Comfort With Gender: For the combined samples, 5.3% of men indicated that they wanted to be girls; 1.4% that they did not want to be boys. Of the 6 men reared by a homosexual who answered one or both of these questions, 1 (25%) of 4 indicated that he wanted to be a girl, and 4 (100%) of 4 indicated that they wanted to be a boy. For the combined samples 25.2% of women indicated that they wanted to be boys and 6.4% that they did not want to be girls. Of the 9 women reared by a homosexual who answered one or both questions, 1 (12.5%) of 8 indicated that she did not want to be a girl, and 3 (42.9%) of 7 indicated that they wanted to be a boy.

Family Environment: 78% of respondents in the 5-city sample reported that they lived with both parents v. 4 of 10 (40%) of those reared by a homosexual parent (most of the separations followed divorce). Three of 10 (30%) reared-by-homosexual respondents reported feeling betrayed by their mother (v. 10% of respondents-in-general in the 5-city sample) and 3 of 10 (30%) reported feeling betrayed by their father (v. 14% of respondents-in-general in the 5-city sample). Of interest, only 2 of the 3 males who reported sex with their father judged themselves “betrayed” by their father, and only one of the two females who had sex with her stepmother described herself as betrayed by her stepmother. The remaining responses regarding attitudes and feelings about parents and reports of family life appeared similar to those reported by the 5-city sample as a whole.

Obituaries: 8 (9%) of the 87 gay fathers died while married to a woman. None of the lesbian mothers died married to a man.

Lifespan of homosexual parents: The age range of the 87 obituaries of male homosexuals that listed a child was from 30 to 69 with a median of 48; 2 (2%) attained old age (i.e., 65 or older). The age range of the 1,267 obituaries of childless gays was from 21-97 with a median of 38; 10 (1%) attained old age. The lesbian mothers who died were aged 32, 41, 43, 44, 44, 45, 58, 59, 63 and 74; the 24 childless lesbians' ages at death ranged from 24 to 93 with a median age of 42.

Discussion

That only half of the potential respondents completed the schedule is a major weakness. However, at this time, this is the only known data-set addressing a wide range of life- and sexual-history material (like the Kinsey surveys), generated by a random, instead of a convenience sample, that enables comparisons between homosexuals and heterosexuals. The sexuality survey reported by Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels (1994) would seem to provide the possibility of either confirmation or disconfirmations of our results if their data-base is examined regarding similar issues.

Population Parameters Estimates:

How many parents are homosexual? Nation-wide random surveys have generated

lower parameters of homosexuality in non-urban than in urban areas. Thus Rogers and Turner (1992) reported that men who had sex with other men were twice as apt to live in cities with populations over 25,000; the rate of AIDS, a plausible surrogate for male homosexuality in the U.S. is 5 times higher in metropolitan areas with 500,000 or more people than in non-metropolitan areas (*Centers for Disease Control HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report*, October 1993); and the proportion of men who engaged in homosexuality was disproportionately concentrated in the Copenhagen area in the Danish survey (Schmidt, Krasnik, Brendstrup, Zoffmann, & Larsen, 1989). Homosexual practitioners were 5 times more concentrated in Paris in the recent large random sample survey in France (ACSF, 1992) and over 3 times more concentrated in London in the recent large random sample survey in Britain (Johnson, Wadsworth, Wellings, Bradshaw, & Field, 1992) as compared to non-urban areas. In the Laumann et al.(1994) survey, men were about 5 times and women around twice as apt to be homosexual if they lived in one of the top 12 central cities as the rest of their respondents.

Because ours was an urban sample, our findings associated with questions of how many parents are homosexual and the proportion of children who have a homosexual parent are probably higher by a factor of at least 2 and possibly 5 than actually obtain in the general population. It thus appears likely that <1% of fathers-in-general and <0.5% of mothers-in-general are homosexual. 4,640 of our subjects responded to this part of the questionnaire, and 17 (or 18, see below) (i.e., 0.4%) of them reported a homosexual parent. In Dallas, 0.9% reported a homosexual parent. Thus, generating an estimate from our samples for the nation as a whole, perhaps 0.15% to 0.5% of children have a homosexual parent.

How many homosexuals are parents? Our questionnaire results suggest that 51% of bisexual men, 6% of gays and about a third of female homosexuals have children. Six percent of homosexuals dedicated to the life-style sufficiently to be known to the homosexual subculture in Washington, D.C. at death were listed as having children. The material from the lesbians is similar from both data sets, but there is a discrepancy between the random data set and the obituary set for 'gays.' Since bisexuals reported significantly fewer male sexual partners than homosexuals did, perhaps bisexual men are less well known to the gay subculture.

The close correspondence between the proportions of those who call themselves homosexuals who are parents from a random urban sample and the proportions of those with children listed as 'gay' in a homosexual journal in one of the cities from which the random sample was taken may suggest that the same population of individuals was being tapped. Presumably only homosexuals who are known and 'out of the closet' would make it into the obituary column of a homosexual newspaper. Further, the close correspondence between estimates derived from the obituaries in a homosexual newspaper in one city and the estimates derived from questionnaires from an area sample in it and 5 other cities suggests that the homosexual experience in U.S. urban areas is similar. Since the random sample was drawn in 1983-1984 while the obituaries were recorded over 1988-1992, it would appear that the homosexual interest in

parenthood has not changed in the past decade. From 1964 to 1968, Masters and Johnson (1979) recruited "stable, committed" gay and lesbian couples nationwide. These would presumably be the most likely candidates for parenthood. Yet of the 82 lesbians, 23 (28%) had been married and 22 (27%) were mothers; for the 57 heterosexual women, 49 (86%) were mothers; of the 94 gays, 15 (16%) had been married, and 5 (5.2%) were fathers; for the 57 heterosexual men, 50 (88%) had been married at least once, and 52 (91%) were fathers. The lesbians reported 21 children and 11 abortions (37.5%), for a fertility rate of $21/82 = 0.26/\text{capita}$; the heterosexual women reported 65 children and 13 abortions (19.2%), for a fertility rate of $65/57 = 1.14$; the gays reported 11 children and 4 abortions (26.7%) for a fertility rate of $11/94 = 0.12/\text{capita}$; the heterosexual men reported 77 children and 15 abortions (16.3%) for a fertility rate of $77/57 = 1.35$ children/capita. *Overlooked Opinions* reported that of 7,500 homosexuals who frequent gay bars and establishments and/or subscribed to homosexual magazines in 1991, 4.8% of the gays and 10.2% of the lesbians said that they had "children under age 18" in their household (which apparently could be either their own child or the child of a partner -- 56% of the gays and 71% of these lesbians were "in a relationship") (*Washington Times* 4/25/93). A sample of 156 "gay couples" (McWhirter & Mattison, 1984) reported that 26 (8.3%) of the 312 men were fathers of a total of 52 children (i.e., 0.17 children each); all of the children had been born in heterosexual marriages. In a 1987 sample (40% of which was lesbian) of 649 gays in Columbus, Ohio only 12% reported having children (Beran, Claybaker, Dillon, & Haverkamp, 1992). The 1990 *Simmons Market Research* report on readers of the *Advocate*, the national gay magazine, noted that 4% of readers had a child in their home. The 1994 sex survey of over 13,000 readers of the *Advocate* reported that almost 10% of readers "are fathers, although most don't live with their children. The vast majority of men with children had them when the man was married or in a relationship with a woman. But the rest are offspring of the man's male partner, are adopted, or are products of sperm donation. Among the men who have no children, about a quarter would like to have a child someday...." (8/23/94, issue 661/662, p. 24)

How child-oriented are homosexuals?

Homosexuals in our survey registered as less child-oriented than heterosexuals were. That minority who had children generated fewer children than heterosexuals who had children did. About twice as many homosexuals as heterosexuals claimed not to want children. Of the married: 1) of those without children, a disproportionate number of homosexuals were childless and claimed not to want children; and 2) of those with children, no or small differences between homosexuals and heterosexuals were found. Over-all, it appears that homosexuals were considerably less apt to want progeny, but that those who were married and had children (a small segment of homosexuals) claimed to enjoy parenthood to almost the same degree as heterosexuals claimed to enjoy it. Since most homosexuals do not have and do not want children, the homosexual associates of homosexual parents would appear to provide less social support to the children of homosexuals than would be provided by the associates of heterosexual parents who usually want and have children.

What Are the Effects of Homosexual Parenting?

Traditional opinion holds that homosexual parents would tend to have the following effects upon their children: 1) provide a model, associates and experiences that would make a child more apt to engage in homosexuality and therefore become homosexual, 2) increase the probability of various forms of childhood sexual victimization (from the parent and from his associates), and 3) because the parent's world-view and behavioral standards are disturbed, the child would be more apt to be socially and psychologically disturbed than children raised by nonhomosexual parents.

The strengths of our questionnaire sample lie in the random selection of respondents and that, since they were adults, the course of childrearing had been completed. Major weaknesses of our study include the inability to determine which parent (or whether both parents) was homosexual (although it appears reasonable to assume that the 5 who had homosexual relations with a parent had them with a homosexual). Further, since only 2 of the 6 Dallas respondents who reported a homosexual parent indicated that that parent's homosexuality influenced their sexual orientation, it appears likely that there were other respondents with homosexual parents in the 5-city sample whom we did not identify. Finally, our findings, based on only 17 childhoods, is too small to prove or disprove these contentions. Within these severe limitations, however, our results are consistent with all three traditional beliefs.

1) Contagion: We are not surprised if religious parents produce disproportionate numbers of religious children, nor if parents who enjoy beer produce disproportionate numbers of beer-drinking children. In the relatively noncontroversial area of tobacco smoking, it has become an article of faith and empirical finding that parental smoking is strongly associated with smoking by children (Flay, Koepke, Thomson, Santi, Best, & Brown, 1989). It would be rather surprising, therefore, if parental sexual orientation and behavior had no influence on progeny. Yet Bigner and Bozett (1989) contend that "the loving attention of a gay father also should contribute to [the] heterosexuality of their children" (p. 169). Our results suggest that the sexual preference or orientation of the parent influences the preference of the child, and that, whatever the mechanism, homosexual parents are associated disproportionately with homosexual children.

In the Hays and Samuels (1989) convenience sample investigation of 21 mothers who had been or were married to homosexual men, 3 of the 26 (12%) children aged 16 or older (2 sons and a daughter) were reported as gay. In the de Young (1982) series, the 6 sons who were sexually abused by their father all had doubts about their sexuality, and at least some have subsequently had other homosexual experiences. Bozett (1987) records that at least 7 (8%) of 92 children being raised by male homosexuals became bi- or homosexual. Gottman (1989), writing in a volume edited by Bozett (so presumably he would concur with her characterizations), summarized Paul's 1986 study of children with a gay or bisexual father (and two of the children had a lesbian mother) as "16 subjects had an average age of 22 years old, about 60% of the subjects reported at some time questioning their sexual identity. ... Seventy-six percent of the sample identified themselves as

heterosexual but perceived sexual orientation as fluid, that is, it could shift in the future.” (p. 181) Gottman summarizes Bozett's research with 19 children of gay fathers as “the subjects were 13 females and 6 males ranging in age from 14 to 35. Two of the males identified themselves as gay, and one female reported that she was bisexual. The remainder stated that they were heterosexual” (p. 183). On the face of it, 2 (33%) of 6 boys and 1 (8%) of 13 girls became homosexual. On the other hand she also summarizes another Bozett study as “interviewed fathers who said that of their 25 children overall, none were gay (although not all children were old enough to have their sexual orientation assessed)” (p. 184). Gottman's summary of Miller's study about gay fathers was “fathers reported that one son [of 21] and 3 daughters [of 27] were gay.” At least 6 (35%) of our 17 respondents became “gay” (4 sons and 2 daughters) and 2 daughters became less than exclusively heterosexual.

Since less than 3% of the adult population is homosexual (Cameron & Cameron, in press), with the exception of one of the Bozett investigations, these studies all suggest that homosexual parent(s) have a disproportionate fraction of children who become homosexual. Additionally, Dr. Jerry J. Bigner, himself a homosexual parent who is quite active in studying this issue, summarized his extensive research as finding “that the sexual orientation of children raised by homosexual parents tends to follow the statistical percentages found in the general population: About 88% tend to develop a heterosexual orientation while 12% tend to develop a homosexual orientation” (“Sexual orientation has little effect on good parenting,” Letter, *Rocky Mountain News*, 1/30/91). Additionally, in the set of 7 young adults “who were reared by lesbian mothers”, 3 (43%) became lesbian (Other Families video by Dorothy Chvatal, as reviewed by E. J. Dunne, 1994). In the only longitudinal study of lesbians' children (Golombok & Tasker, 1996), some of the children engaged in homosexuality in 5 (29%) of the 18 lesbian families and 2 (13%) of these families produced at least one children who called himself homosexual. None of the children from the 16 heterosexual family controls reported engaging in homosexuality nor called himself homosexual.

The excess of homosexual children emerging from being parented by homosexuals could have a number of explanations, but it should be noted that homosexual victimization frequently leads the victim to become homosexual. Thus Johnson & Shrier (1987) note that in their two series “approximately one-half of the boys who had been molested by males currently identified themselves as homosexual and often linked their homosexuality to their sexual victimization experience(s)”(p. 651). They note that nearly “half of the males who reported `a childhood sexual experience with an older man were currently involved in homosexual activity” in Finkelhor's research (p. 652). These findings are consistent with the reanalysis of the original Kinsey data by Van Wyk and Geist (1984) that “[l]earning through experience seems to be an important pathway to later sexual preference. Those who learn to masturbate by being masturbated by a person of the same sex, those whose first orgasm is in homosexual contact, and those who have arousing or uncomfortable early sexual experiences” tend to homosexuality (p. 541). Homosexual contact with an adult was highly related to a homosexual outcome. (pp. 520-21).

2) Victimization: Freund, Heasman, Racansky & Glancy (1984) calculated that 32% to 34% of pedophiles in the data-sets of others and 36% of their 457 Toronto pedophiles were homosexual. A survey of the literature indicated that between a quarter and a third of molestations of children are homosexual molestations (Cameron, 1985) and the results from the 5-city sample's claims about involvement with adults indicate that about a third of molestations are homosexual (Cameron, Proctor, Coburn, Forde, Larson, & Cameron, 1986). Psychiatrist Adrian Copeland (1988) said that from his experience working with sex offenders at the Peters Institute in Philadelphia, "40% to 45%" of pedophiles have had "significant homosexual experiences." Marshall, Barbaree & Eccles (1991) examined the 129 men attending the Kingston Sexual Behaviour Clinic for assessment and treatment over a 7-year period (1978-1984). 31 of these men (24%) had exclusively molested boys, 53 (41%) had exclusively molested girls, and 10 (8%) had molested both boys and girls, thus 32% had engaged in homosexual molestation. Given this disproportionate association of homosexuality and pedophilia, a correspondingly disproportionate risk of homosexual incest might be expected for children reared by homosexuals.

Homosexual and bisexual incest by fathers is common in the incest literature. At least 2 of the 112 homosexuals in Berger's (1965) series were provided their first sexual experience through incest with their father or stepfather. Kaufman, Divasto, Jackson, Voorhees, & Christy (1980) reported that one of 14 New Mexico male rape victims was sodomized by his stepfather. De Young (1982) documents 7 cases of paternal/son incest that resulted in neurotic or psychotic confusion on the part of the sons (pp. 77-78). One of the victimizing fathers claimed that he had also been the victim of paternal incest. Johnson & Shrier (1985) reported that at least 2 fathers and an uncle were involved in sexually abusing their series of 40 New Mexico male victims. Of 31 consecutively referred young boys in Washington, Friedrich, Beilke, & Urquiza (1988) found that the assaults were committed by fathers in 15 instances, stepfathers in 5, other male relatives in 9, a male neighbor and a mother. Williams (1988) noted that 57% of 757 sexually abused boys had been sexually involved with their father. He also assembled 17 clinical cases of sex between fathers and sons, 13 of which also involved father-daughter incest. Dimock (1988) reported that of 25 male victims in Minnesota, 5 were victimized by their father and another by a stepfather. Of 13 men treated in New Jersey, one was victimized by his stepfather (Singer, 1989). Gilgun and Reiser (1990) report a case of sexual abuse of a son by a father. Of 11 incest victims over a 4-year period in a psychiatric acute care unit, 5 (45%) were victims of homosexual incest by their father (Bigras, Leichner, Perreault & Lavoie, 1991). Father-son incest is frequent enough that Silverstein, an openly homosexual researcher, upon recounting two sexual interactions between homosexual fathers and their children opined that "[p]resumably not all gay fathers have sex with their sons" (1981, p. 48).

Our survey, being population-based, enables a limited estimate of how frequently sexual molestation of children by homosexual parents occurs. 5 (29%) of the 17 raised by a homosexual parent reported sex with the homosexual parent and these 17 respondents

reported 6 (18%) of the 34 sexual interactions between children and parents or stepparents in the combined samples, though they accounted for less than 0.4% of the sample. If we ascribe the remaining 28 parent-child sexual interactions to heterosexual parents (which is conservative in that it does not include that fraction of parents who were possibly bisexual), the incest-with-a-parent risk to individuals being raised by heterosexuals would appear to be about 0.6% (28/4623). From this perspective, homosexual parent(s) appear to increase the risk of incest with a parent by a factor of about 50. It also appears that children raised by homosexuals are unusually susceptible to having both homosexual and heterosexual relations with other authority figures. Males, as compared to females, appeared to fare especially poorly in terms of experiencing sexually undesirable events when parented by a homosexual. This 'clustering' of sexual dysfunction around homosexuals' families appears in Martin's (1988) convenience sample study of 37 male homosexuals where 20% claimed that there were other homosexuals in the family where he was raised, 15% claimed to be incest victims (variety not specified, although at least one reported sex with his father), and 25% said that they had initiated incestuous relations with siblings. Of note, Ronald Arndt died of AIDS at age 46 in 1994. His son, Richard died of AIDS in 1992 (*Washington Blade*, 1/14/94, p. 26).

3) Social-psychological disturbance: The limited evidence we assembled is consonant with the notion that children raised by homosexuals disproportionately experience divorce and that the circumstances of childhood may be disproportionately reported as emotionally harmful by the respondent. Of the Bigner & Jacobsen (1989) sample of 33 homosexual fathers 28 (85%) were separated or divorced (the children of these parents were not interviewed, consequently we do not know their reactions). There was also a hint in our sample that children raised by homosexuals might be more frequently dissatisfied with their gender. Four of the 12 mothers of older children in the Hays and Samuels (1989) study reported that their children had sexual problems which the mothers related to the father's homosexuality. Similarly, in the **Other Families** video, the seven young adults who were reared by lesbian mothers reactions' "ranged from blasé acceptance to anger at being burdened by their mothers' choices. Although their experiences have been varied, all shared the necessity of helping their parents hide their homosexuality,... Most of these young people report having had real fears that disclosure would bring about disaster in terms of social ostracism, loss of jobs, or loss of custody....They disclose some of the small incidents of pain and panic to which the children of gay parents are often exposed." (Dunne, 1994, p. 158). And Benkov, an openly lesbian parent, reveals the same kind of confusion and pain on the part of a number of children of homosexuals (e.g., "Steve, a once proud and open five-year-old, is now a fifteen-year-old struggling with fears of ostracism.... p. 205; 1994). These childhood social-psychological trauma are not the only extra burden of such children. Thus, the first child placed with openly homosexual foster parents in Washington, D.C. committed suicide at age 30 (*Washington Blade*, October 28, 1988). In another first, the first child to be jointly adopted by a lesbian was orphaned when her mother died in an auto accident at age 43 (*Washington Blade* 9/17/93). At least two children born in the current wave of artificial insemination amongst lesbian couples have been murdered by one or both of their parents (*Houston Post* 4/16/92; *Associated Press* 4/17/92).

Additionally, one of the first single men to adopt children in Florida, David Lindsey, got a 15 year prison term for homosexually abusing at least 3 of his 11 adopted sons (*Muskegon Chronicle*, 1/12/90).

Our study of obituaries suggests that, even if the marriage endures (which only occurred 9% of the time), gay fathers (and very possibly lesbian mothers) are not apt to be around for much of the child's life (one of the reasons that older couples are barred from adoption). For instance, when homosexual Robert Tucker in died in 1991 at the age of 57, he orphaned 17 boys and young men whom he had been allowed to adopt (*Philadelphia Gay News*, 3/8-14/1991). In the series of 87 obituaries of gay fathers, Artie Wallace, a homosexual with AIDS, won a child-custody battle with his wife in June, 1988. He thus became the first person with AIDS to be granted full custody of a child. California court-appointed experts recommended that he be granted sole custody of his 10-year-old son, in part because the mother had fled the state to keep the son from being exposed to HIV. Artie died of AIDS 7 months after the decision (*Washington Blade* 2/10/1989). Wayne Tardiff died at age 44 (*Washington Blade* 2/14/92). Tardiff and his homosexual partner, Allan Yoder, had been the first homosexual couple permitted to become adoptive parents (of a 3 yr-old boy) in New Jersey. Yoder died a few months later (*Washington Blade*, 7/16/92), so the orphaned 5 year old had to be placed elsewhere. These rather bizarre cases and that of Arndt are 4 (5%) of the 87 gay father accounts in 6 years of obituaries. At least one of the children left orphaned by the 10 lesbians in our obituary sample had been adopted.

Some situations have the appearance of making children bear a political statement, rather than seeking 'the best interests of the child.' For instance, two lesbians in D.C. had one child through artificial insemination and then were permitted to adopt another 2-year-old girl (*Washington Blade* 9/27/91). Likewise, two homosexuals publicly advertised for surrogate mothers, paid a woman between \$10,000 and \$20,000 to be the surrogate, and then, after the American Psychological Association provided an expert witness in favor of the procedure, were permitted by the District of Columbia jointly to adopt the child who ensued (*Washington Blade* 6/19/92).

It would appear imprudent to disregard such events as we consider the validity of traditional views of child rearing. Further, since the associates of homosexual parents are apt to disproportionately be themselves homosexual, the social-psychological environment that a homosexual parent could provide would appear less child-oriented than it would likely be among conventional parents.

Conclusion: Bozett misquoted Green's (1978) conclusion from a preliminary study of 37 children being reared by 14 homosexual or transsexual parents as "the courts have removed children from their gay/lesbian parents solely because of parental homosexuality, not because of any deficiency on the part of the parents or the household. This is the case regardless of research findings that indicate that, 'Children being raised

by transsexual or homosexual parents do not differ appreciably from children raised in more conventional family settings on macroscopic measures of sexual identity' (Green, 1978)" (Bozett, 1989, p. 193). Given the importance of the topic, the numerous weaknesses of the other published studies in the area, coupled with the fact that a cursory examination of the children of 14 rather casually-obtained transsexuals/homosexuals is being employed not only as 'a classic' effort, but somehow also as a definitive study, it appears appropriate that our small, randomly-obtained sample be factored into the equation.

We make no claims that ours is 'representative' of homosexual parenting -- but others have been permitted to make such claims with considerably less data. More extensive research is required before traditional opinion or common sense is discarded in favor of the rather extravagant contentions of sexual activists.

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Note 1: The questionnaire is on file in Document NAPS-04362. Remit \$7.75 for photocopy or \$4.00 for fiche to Microfiche Publications, POB 3513, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10017.