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SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS OF A SELECTED SAMPLE OF OLDER WOMEN

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth
University.

By

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the 73 women who comprise its sample and to the countless others who helped publicize the research and distribute questionnaires. Without such supportive teamwork, this study would not have been possible.

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I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Martin S. Schwartz for serving as my dissertation chairperson. His help in getting me to conceptualize models both deductively and inductively serves as a cornerstone for my future work.

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ABSTRACT

SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS OF A SELECTED SAMPLE OF OLDER WOMEN

Carol T. Tully, Ph.D.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 1983

Major Director: Dr. Martin S. Schwartz

In an effort to examine social organizational structures and support systems in the social world of the older lesbian woman, 73 self-identified lesbian women fifty years of age or older provided data on their personal interactions with the economic, political, educational, religious, social welfare and familial social systems of the heterosexual culture and the homosexual subculture. Results from this cross-sectional survey depict the sample as well educated, professional, financially secure, politically liberal women in good health who are selective with whom they reveal their sexual orientation. The knowledge of their lesbianism is shared more with female friends than with family members. While they are not terribly active members of the homosexual community, they are members of politically oriented and/or professionally related organizations. Although they utilize a variety of "helping" professionals, most reveal their sexual orientation to these professionals only if it is relevant to the helping process. Those sampled consider their formal education, ability to earn an adequate income, relationships with both heterosexuals and homosexuals and political activities important. They are involved with the heterosexual culture that provides them an education and a

professional life as well as the homosexual subculture that provides them personal relationships and support.

The women sampled seek and get support in times of personal crisis from those who are aware of the older lesbian's sexual orientation. This includes primarily homosexual and heterosexual women friends and some immediate family members, but rarely men. The religious institution is not viewed as a place to seek support, and the economic institution is perceived as an acceptable place to be professionally employed, but is not generally utilized in times of financial crisis. The formal educational system and the political system are not particularly supportive of the lesbian lifestyle, and the social welfare system may or may not provide the older lesbian needed support in times of personal crisis. In sum, it is primarily within the context of relationships with other women that those surveyed gain support in times of crisis.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose

The number of older Americans is greater than 25 million or about 10% of this country's total population (Soldo, 1980, p. 3). In addition, it has been estimated that 10% of the total American population is exclusively homosexual, and that there are other uncounted millions of Americans whose sexual orientation may be classified as being somewhere between exclusive homosexuality and exclusive heterosexuality (Gochros, 1977, p. 127). Therefore, an assumption can be made that some percentage of older Americans is also homosexual, although data are unavailable that document the total number of this minority population. While data do confirm that women tend to outlive men, and consequently there are more older women alive today than there are older men (Bengston and Haber, 1975, p. 80; Rose, 1967, p. 9), no data exist that inform us as to the numbers of surviving older American women who are lesbian.

Not only are data unavailable that define the number of older

lesbian women in this country, but data that describe this minority group are also almost nonexistent. Lack of such data is not surprising because research in the fields of both gerontology and lesbianism was begun only after World War II. It was not until the mid 1940's that the number of older persons in this country became a significant proportion of the population, and researchers began to study the characteristics and needs of this minority (Birren, 1971, p. 243). Research dealing with lesbian women has only been attempted in this country in any kind of systematic fashion since the mid 1950's.

The purpose of this research is to describe the social world of the older lesbian woman through an examination of the social structure of its social systems. The term social structure means "the patterns discernable in social life, the regularities observed, the configurations detected" (Blau, 1975, p. 3), and the research analyzes the older lesbian's social organizational structure of personal social systems that exist within the context of the major social institutions (economic, political, educational, religious, social welfare and familial) of the heterosexual culture and the homosexual subculture. This research assumes, like Blau (ibid.) that social structure is comprised of a system of interrelated, empirically identifiable social relationships and is "merely the basis for theory yet to be constructed to explain these conditions" (Blau, 1975, p. 220). Social structure then refers to differentiated, but interrelated parts of a collectivity (Blau, 1975, p. 220), and the fundamental question this study seeks to answer is what are the identifiable social organiza-

tional structures found in the social world of the older lesbian, and do these structures indicate where the older lesbian's support systems are located?

Specific questions this research addresses include: What are the older lesbian's supportive connections with the heterosexual culture and the homosexual subculture? What are the discernable patterns (regularities, configurations) found in these connections? Are the patterns interrelated? Do the patterns demonstrate that the older lesbian's support systems are located within the heterosexual system, the homosexual system or both places? What types of support are offered to the older lesbian in times of crisis? Where does this support come from? As the whole social system must be conceptualized before analysis can occur (Parsons, 1951), the conceptual framework for this research is delineated in Figure 1.

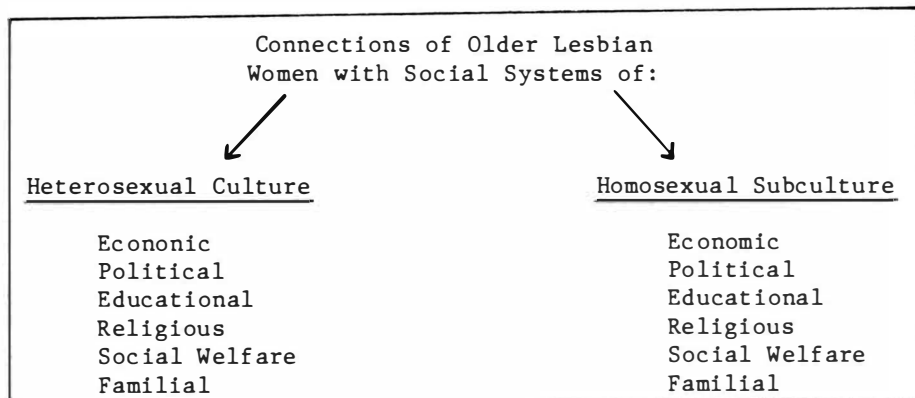


Figure 1.
Social Structure of Older Lesbians

The research describes the social organizational structures of lesbian women aged 50 years or older through an examination of their connections to the heterosexual culture of which they are assumed to be a part, and the homosexual subculture of which they may be a part. The research focuses on the older lesbian's connections to personal social systems that are found within the conceptual framework of the major social institutions (e.g. the older lesbian's personal relations with her family, her church etc. in times of crisis). Social institutions are defined as "the principle instrument(s) whereby the essential tasks of social living are organized, directed and executed" (Vander Zander, 1979, p. 621). This research assumes that the following social institutions, and hence social systems that operationalize the concepts, can be found in both the heterosexual and homosexual social systems: economic, political, educational, religious, social welfare, familial.

The assumptions inherent in this research include the following:

- that social structure is comprised of empirically identifiable parts;
- that discernable patterns exist within the social world of the older lesbian;
- that one way of identifying patterns in the social world of the older lesbian is to examine the heterosexual and homosexual social systems in which she exists;
- that the heterosexual culture and the homosexual subculture are social systems with similar social institutions.

This study does not concern itself with lesbian etiology, psychological functioning or personality patterns, but confines itself to an

examination of the social organizational structure of the world of the older lesbian in an effort to identify social support systems in that world. Research in the field of lesbianism has had a tendency to ignore social organizational structures in favor of gathering data that merely describes various samples of lesbians. This study provides a description of a heretofore unstudied group of lesbian women and provides a description of the older lesbian's social organizational structure and support systems. In doing this, this research goes well beyond what has been previously published and provides a basis for future research that can begin to assess why the older lesbian acts the way she does in various social situations.

Rationale for Study

This research adds to the limited amount of existing scientifically gathered data on older lesbian women that is available to social work practitioners (and other helping professionals) who are dealing with (perhaps unknowingly) older lesbian women, their families and/or their communities. As its theoretical base, this research relies on the assumptions of general systems theory (Blau, 1975; Egan and Cowan, 1979; Parsons, 1951). Thus, the unit of analysis is holistic and the total, bounded heterosexual and homosexual social systems are examined. Specific social institutions are the superimposed structural referents (Bertrand, 1972, p. 163) from which the research evolves. The analysis is descriptive, and the focus of the study is on individuals who have been engaged in goal oriented, specific social interactions

(seeking support) (Parsons, 1951). The research provides more understanding of the interrelated parts of the older lesbian's social world, and believes like Parsons (ibid.) that no part of the older lesbian's social world can be understood in isolation from the total system and that the individual is a totally social being filled with only what society has provided. The individual is assumed to be continuously interacting with others and it is the networking structure of these interactions that creates social systems (Parsons, 1951, pp. 20-21).

The study of the social organizational structure of older lesbian women is important for several reasons. First, since the structural, interactional approach is designed to explore the structure of group and individual relationships (Blau, 1975; Parsons, 1951), data from this research increases societal knowledge of the structural relations of a heretofore scientifically overlooked group. Second, while this research focuses on the social lives of individuals, it examines individuals in the context of a broader perspective (connections to the structures of society); thus, the research provides pragmatic focus to social workers who are concerned with having knowledge of persons in specific situations (Bartlett, 1970, pp. 34, 65). Third, this study provides data that is compared to other research on lesbian women and homosexual men. This information can help the social worker better assess the social welfare needs of this minority.

To justify the inclusion of such research in the repertoire of social work knowledge, an adaptation of Bartlett's (1970, pp. 130, 148)

model of the "Common Base of Social Work Practice" (see Figure 2) will be used as a conceptual framework for the profession of social work. This research is justified in terms of its relevancy to two major parts of this model (social work values and knowledge).

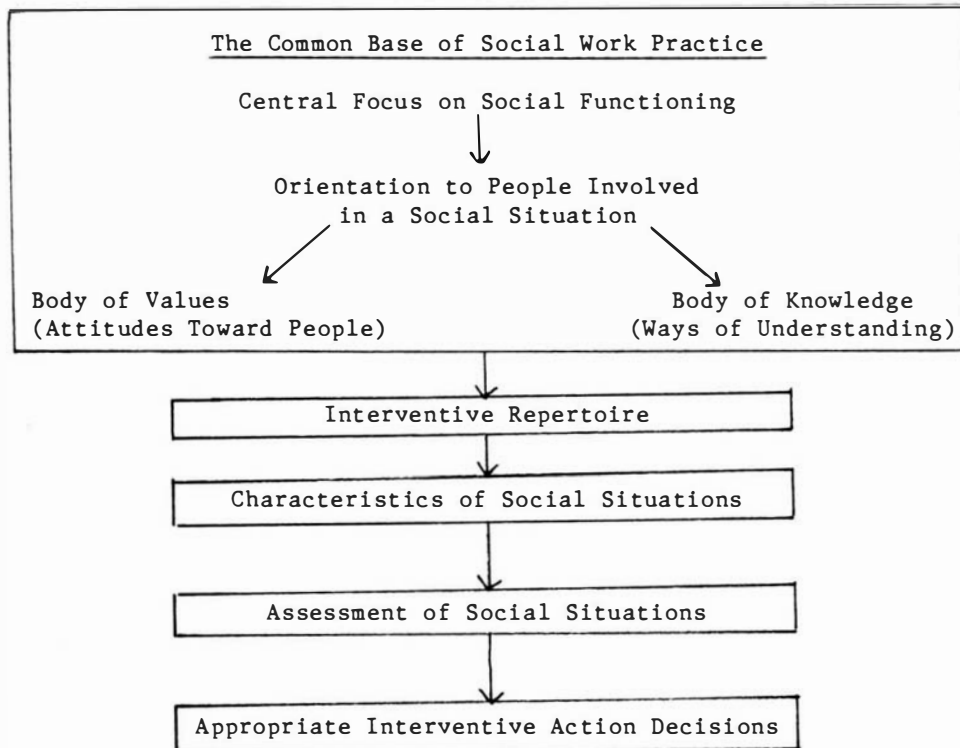


Figure 2.
Conceptual Model of Social Work

(Adapted from Bartlett [1970, pp. 130, 148])

Social work as a profession may be defined as a humanitarian, change oriented endeavor committed to an understanding of the person

in a social situation, the improvement of an individual's social functioning and the provision of adequate care for those in need (Encyclopedia of Social Work, 1977, p. 1530). The two central ideas of professional social work first, that it is a helping, person oriented profession and second, that it is concerned with the social functioning of people (Bartlett, 1970, p. 86; Hamilton, 1951, p. 22).

As noted in Figure 2, social work's core concept, upon which all else is dependent, is a focus on social functioning. As the cornerstone of the profession, this concept assumes that the social worker must be alert to people involved in various life situations and the balance between the demands of the social environment and an individual's ability to cope with those demands. This central focus on social functioning becomes operationalized through the social worker's continuing orientation to persons involved in various life situations. The primary orientation of social work toward people in a social situation is a characteristic that permeates the profession and generally appears in two forms. First is that of an attitude toward and a relationship with people (conceptualized as social work values), and second is that of an approach to knowledge that emphasizes an understanding of social situations in terms of their impact on and meaning for the persons involved (conceptualized as social work knowledge) (Bartlett, 1970, p. 127). It is within the context of social work values and knowledge that this study can be justified.

The concept of social work values is generally understood as an attitude of respect for a person's unique personal worth and individuality, a concern for an individual's growth and self-determination and an acceptance of the person in a social situation (Bartlett, 1970, pp. 34, 65; Council on Social Work Education, 1981, pp. 4-5). This research conforms to the values articulated by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) in their 1977 policy statement:

"The National Association of Social Workers realizes that homosexuality has existed under varying circumstances throughout recorded history and in most cultures. A substantial number of women and men in American society are identified with a lifestyle that includes homosexual behavior. Homosexuality may properly be considered a preference, orientation or propensity for certain kinds of lifestyles. Millions of women and men whose sexual orientation includes homosexuality are subject to severe social, psychological, economic and legal discrimination because of their sexual orientation.

NASW views discrimination and prejudice directed against any minority as inimical to the mental health not only of the affected minority, but of the society as a whole. The Association deplors and will work to combat archaic laws, discriminatory employment practices and other forms of discrimination which serve to impose something less than equal status upon homosexually oriented members of the human family. It is the objective of the social work profession not only to bring health and welfare services closer to people, but also help alter the unequal policies and practices of health and welfare institutions.

NASW affirms the right of all persons to define and express their own sexuality. In choosing their own lifestyle, all persons are to be encouraged to develop their individual potential to the fullest extent possible as long as they do not impinge upon the rights of others" (NASW, 1981).

This research helps achieve three of the nine major goals NASW established for nationwide implementation of this policy. These three goals are as follows:

- the creation of a professional environment that is conducive to the personal and professional growth of lesbian and gay male social workers;
- the assurance of quality social work services for lesbian and gay male clients;
- the realization within NASW of the minority status of lesbians and gay men (NASW, 1981).

First, data from this study provides information about the social organizational structure and support networks of women who hold triple minority status (age, sex and sexual orientation) in our society. On a personal level, such data should prove provocative for all social workers as they do interact with homosexuals both personally and professionally. Also, since the social service needs of older lesbian women have never before been examined, findings from this study provide a beginning descriptive framework from which social workers can start to better understand this minority.

Second, the personal and professional growth of social workers becomes operationalized in the quality of services they provide to clients. Findings from this study indicate that the social welfare needs of older lesbian women are similar to other older persons' needs in some respects and different in others. Such data is utilitarian to the social worker who can now begin to better assess the social service needs of older lesbian women in a more realistic light.

Third, findings from this study that describe the older lesbian within the context of the heterosexual culture and the homosexual sub-culture do set this group apart as a specific minority. Such information should encourage professional social workers to begin to define

older lesbians as a minority group worthy of special attention.

The values of social work as delineated by Bartlett (1970, pp. 34, 65), the Council on Social Work Education (1981, pp. 4-5) and the National Association of Social Workers (1981) provide only part of the rationale for the inclusion of this research in the social work repertoire. The values of social work and the knowledge base of social work are interrelated for ". . . social work is . . . a profession that rests on and will grow through its values regarding [wo/]man's potential and an increasingly scientific body of knowledge about social functioning . . ." (Bartlett, 1970, p. 192). Thus, it is also within the area of social work knowledge that this study is important.

Currently, social work has a fragmented knowledge base where ". . . a tremendous gap exists between traditional social work theories based on observations of white, middle-class, heterosexual individuals and intact families and the diverse group of clients who are in need of help . . ." (Goldstein, 1980, p. 174). This study helps achieve the three following social work knowledge needs as articulated by Goldstein:

- social workers need to develop a knowledge of the properties and the impact of specific environments in which people spend a great deal of time;
- social workers need to learn about clients and potential clients who live alternative lifestyles;
- social workers need to learn about social networks and support systems (p. 76).

This research begins to fill gaps (noted by Goldstein) in the professional knowledge base by providing descriptive data about the specific environments in which older lesbians spend a great deal of time, that details the social organizational structure of a group of women who live an alternative lifestyle and examines the social networks and support systems of older lesbians.

The purpose of social work research is first, ". . . to achieve a better fit between human needs and welfare goals" and second, "to influence the likelihood that these goals can be obtained" (Encyclopedia of Social Work, 1977, p. 1185). Further, such research should provide new ways of conceptualizing the human processes and social conditions (ibid.). This study conforms to the purposes of social work research and provides new ways of conceptualizing the social world of older lesbians.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter will present a review of the current literature relevant to this research. Since the research concerns itself with the social support systems of older lesbian women, research in the areas of lesbianism, homosexuality and aging, aging and social support systems will be discussed.

Lesbianism

As previously noted, research dealing with any aspect of lesbianism has only been attempted in this country in any kind of systematic fashion since the mid 1950's and consists of three major research phases that span the past three decades: research on the etiology of lesbianism, the psychological functioning of lesbian women and lesbian lifestyles and social functioning.

Etiology

The first phase of lesbian research, begun in the 1950's and

conducted primarily by men, dealt almost exclusively with the question of lesbian etiology. Such research continued through the 1960's and into the 1970's, but eventually yielded to other types of research questions about lesbians and lesbianism. Those studies that deal with the cause of lesbianism may generally be divided into two types: those studies that used clinical samples for study and those that did not.

Clinical and non-clinical studies dealing with the etiology of lesbianism center on three major areas: socialization and role identification learning during childhood, parental relationships and family history. Regarding the socialization and role identification process, there does seem to be agreement that lesbians may be socialized differently than heterosexual women (Poole, 1970; Thompson, 1971), and it is believed that lesbians either lack the role learning experiences that heterosexual women had during childhood (Poole, 1970) or have had these role learning experiences interfered with by their parents (Kaye et al, 1967). Regarding parental relationships, data indicate that lesbians tend to have less satisfying relationships with both parents than do heterosexual women (Kaye et al, 1967; Kenyon, 1969d; Poole, 1970; Siegelman, 1974; Swanson, 1972; Thompson, 1971); however, some of the data are contradictory. One study reported that there was no difference in lesbians' parental dominance (Siegelman, 1974) while another study reported that lesbians have more hostile and detached fathers than non-lesbian women (Thompson, 1971). Still another study found that the fathers of lesbians were more feared and

more exploitative of their daughters (Kaye et al, 1967). Regarding familial history, data show a disagreement about whether or not there is any significant relationship between birth order and lesbianism (Gundlach and Riess, 1967; Kenyon, 1968d); that there is more separation, divorce and family discord in the families of lesbians (Kenyon, 1968d; Poole, 1970; Swanson, 1972); and, that there are more homosexuals in the families of homosexuals than in the families of heterosexual women (Kenyon, 1968d).

Research to date on the etiology of lesbianism has proven contradictory and inconclusive. While the studies seem to indicate a strong tendency toward the belief that lesbianism is an acquired trait rather than an innate one, the most recent study to explore the etiology of homosexuality (Bell et al, 1981) concluded, on the basis of a path analysis of data from in-depth, face-to-face interviews with 686 homosexual men and 293 lesbians, that homosexuality may be more of an innate characteristic than previous research indicates. With this conclusion, Bell et al (1981) reintroduces the possibility of a biological foundation for homosexuality that was first suggested in the mid 1800's, became popularly believed in the latter part of the 19th Century and gradually declined as a theory as it was replaced by the psychoanalytic theories of the early 1900's. However, evidence on the etiology of homosexuality is still inconclusive, and the cause of lesbianism remains unknown.

Psychological Functioning

The second major phase of research dealing with lesbian women sought to explore the lesbian's personality and her psychological functioning. These studies, begun in the 1960's and conducted by both women and men, focused on comparisons of non-clinical samples of lesbian and heterosexual women and sought to determine if lesbianism constituted psychopathology. Instruments that measured various components of the personality were frequently utilized by researchers in an effort to determine whether or not personality differences existed between lesbian and non-lesbian women and if these differences constituted pathology.

Research compiled to date that explored the psychological functioning of lesbian women supports the idea that lesbian and non-lesbian women do have different personality characteristics (Freedman, 1967; Hassell and Smith, 1975; Hopkins, 1969; Ohlson and Wilson, 1974; Thompson et al, 1971; Wilson and Green, 1971), but these results differ as to whether or not these differences constitute pathology in the lesbian (Eisinger et al, 1972; Kenyon, 1968). Most studies find lesbian samples or lesbian and matched non-lesbian samples to be not psychologically dysfunctional and psychodynamically remarkably similar (Armon, 1960; Freedman, 1967; Hopkins, 1969; Ohlson and Wilson, 1974; Rosen, 1974; Siegelman, 1972; Thompson et al, 1971; Wilson and Green, 1971). In general, personality traits which seem to distinguish the lesbian from the non-lesbian woman are the lesbian's higher capacity for self-confidence, self-sufficiency, dominance,

assertiveness, aggressiveness and independence (Hopkins, 1969; Thompson et al, 1971; Wilson and Green, 1971).

Following the traditional disease model, such studies of lesbian psychological functioning assumed that gross differences would exist between lesbian and non-lesbian women, and that such differences would constitute psychological pathology in the lesbian. The overall results did not show either gross differences in the psychological functioning or the personality characteristics between lesbian and heterosexual women, and such research has now gradually given way to the third major phase of lesbian oriented studies.

Lesbian Lifestyles and Social Functioning

The major bulk of research on lesbian women was developed primarily in the 1970's and was conducted mainly by women who were themselves lesbian. Thus, research that explored lesbian lifestyles and social functioning emerged as the third major phase of lesbian research. This phase continued into the 1980's. The data collected thus far by researchers examining lesbian lifestyles and social functioning begins to fill in gaps ignored by the previous phases of lesbian research and can be divided into the following areas: lesbian characteristics, social functioning and lesbian sexuality.

Lesbian Characteristics

An early examination of lesbian characteristics was written by MacKinnon (1947) where she attempted to describe generic lesbian

traits from her own experiences as a lesbian. She concluded that there are various types of lesbian women, that it is lonely to be a lesbian and that depression and too much drinking are common among lesbians. She further concluded that lesbians dislike one another and that there is something embarrassing about lesbian love making. Her only positive finding was she believed lesbians were able to build successful professional careers.

Another early study was conducted in the 1920's and 1930's by a woman who was a member of the Salt Lake City, Utah lesbian community during that time. This data was only recently discovered and reported by Bullough and Bullough (1977). The researcher responsible for gathering the descriptive data remains unknown to the public. Heavily influenced by the early popular notion that homosexuality was genetically determined and hence not pathological, the author's data describe 25 lesbians in a lesbian subculture in terms of their physical characteristics and social activities. The author thought that lesbians would have masculine traits in keeping with her belief that lesbianism was genetic. In her sample, she found that 10 women acted in a masculine way, 8 in a feminine way and the remainder of the sample fluctuated between roles. As a whole, the group did exhibit typically male physical builds with many having broad shoulders, small breasts and narrow hips. All of these women were in the social mainstream in the heterosexual community and denied a societal image of themselves as "pathological entities" or "perverts." They all kept a facade of respectability and social norms within the heterosexual

world and were overtly intolerant of those women who did not seemingly conform to the norms of society. All knew they must keep their sexual orientation secret.

Such descriptive studies were not routinely conducted until the 1970's although a few studies that reported on lesbian characteristics were done in the 1960's. For example, a survey conducted by The Ladder (1960), then the official journal of the lesbian organization, Daughters of Bilitis, gathered descriptive data from 100 lesbian women. Results indicated that the lesbians sampled had a high level of education, a high professional status and a stable, responsible mode of living. Most of the women surveyed felt they functioned adequately within the larger, heterosexual society and felt their homosexuality was not noticeable. The average length of time couples had lived together was 5.3 years.

In another study that also used readers of The Ladder as a sample, Gundlach (1967) found that many lesbians were employed in well paying jobs often at the administrative level of organizations. Gundlach further reported that most respondents lived with female lovers and had been involved in an ongoing relationship with their partners for more than one year; almost 50% had been involved with the same partner for 4 years.

Loney (1972) studied demographic characteristics and sexual attitudes and experiences in a sample of lesbian women. She compared her sample to a sample of homosexual men and found that the lesbians had a higher rate of same sex "marriages", more opposite sex sexual

partners, fewer same sex sexual partners and a greater satisfaction with their sexual orientation than their male counterparts.

Belote and Joesting (1976) used a modification of Dank's (1971) questionnaire in an effort to examine the lifestyles and personal characteristics of 82 self-identified, mentally healthy lesbian women. This purely descriptive study describes a sample of young women who are well educated, in the middle socioeconomic stratum, who overwhelmingly recognize and accept themselves as lesbians, who are not involved in masculine/feminine role playing and who believe discrimination against them is real. They avoid discrimination by not publically acknowledging their lesbianism. This research further reported three stages of developing a lesbian identity (the realization of desire toward the same sex, the occurrence of the first overt lesbian sexual experience, the decision that one is a lesbian) and that these three stages occur closely in time.

While the studies described thus far examine the characteristics of lesbians as individuals, some small amount of research has been done in the area of lesbian couples. Cotten (1975) was a pioneer in this area and gathered data on 15 urban, lesbian couples. Results indicated that lesbians have long-term lover relationships and that lesbian women show considerable fidelity to their partners. Cotten's data also showed that lesbians tended to have lovers and friendship circles of women who were in the same socioeconomic stratum, of the same race and of similar backgrounds as themselves.

In an effort to examine how lesbians form and maintain a

homosexual dyadic marriage in a society that provides them no legal, social or ideological support, Tanner (1978) conducted 4 to 8 hour interviews with 24 self-identified, urban lesbians who were living in a dyadic relationship. Tanner identified relationship stages (trial stage, insulation stage, stabilization stage, termination/devitalization stage) and dyadic types (traditional -- complementary prototype [male/female role playing], flexible-nurturing caretaker -- older woman/younger woman prototype [mother/daughter role playing], negotiated -- egalitarian prototype [equal partners]) from her data. Tanner further found that lesbians meet each other in both the heterosexual culture and the homosexual subculture (e.g. lesbian friends, homophile organizations, lesbian social places etc.), and that the homosexual subculture provided a support system for these couples by supplying them with a set of interrelated friendship networks and a sense of identification.

Mendola (1980) wished to allow lesbian couples and homosexual male couples a forum to define the emotional and sexual dimensions of their lives. Through a mailed questionnaire, she elicited responses from 227 lesbians and 178 homosexual men. This study is exploratory, uses only minor statistical analysis and does no hypothesis testing. Little is done with the vast amount of data that was collected, and the reader must do all of the interpretation of the data. The data do indicate that lesbian couples generally view themselves in a permanently committed (married) relationship, that most were in monogamous relationships and that most had conflicts around jealousy but wanted

to grow old together. Couples met in both heterosexual culture and the homosexual subculture, and most couples socialized with both heterosexual and homosexual people. Those surveyed were highly involved with various organizations including religious, charitable, political, professional and women's groups. Further, those women surveyed were primarily well educated, young and in professional occupations.

While such descriptive studies have begun to provide a composite picture of the younger, white, well educated lesbian, her relationships and her personal qualities, other studies have attempted to explore the lesbian woman and her social milieu.

Social Functioning

Ponse (1978) sought to examine the social conditions that promote various understandings of what lesbianism means and what constitutes the lesbian identity. Utilizing an ethnomethodological approach, Ponse observed and interviewed 75 lesbians who had been recruited from homophile organizations and friendship networks. Ponse determined that lesbian women tended to exist in either an activist or secretive lesbian community and that irrespective of which group the women belonged, they did not isolate themselves from heterosexuals. She concluded that lesbians must wear a mask of heterosexuality in order to survive in the heterosexual world. Her data also indicate that the lesbian subculture provided its members with a support system, friendship network and a source of social activities. Further, Ponse found

various types of lesbian sexual activity which led her to conclude that there were four types of such lesbian activity: lesbian identity with lesbian activity; lesbian identity with heterosexual, bisexual or celibate activity; bisexual identity with lesbian activity; heterosexual identity with lesbian activity. While Ponse's data cannot be generalized to other races or socioeconomic strata, Ponse believes her sample to be representative of white, middle-class lesbians who have struggled with the question of identity.

Chafetz et al (1974, 1976) wished to discover how lesbians live and their sources of support and strain. Findings were drawn from extensive interviews with self-identified lesbian women. Results showed that lesbians felt strain when dealing with heterosexuals, and economic institutions were seen as not being supportive of lesbians' lifestyles. Most of those who were interviewed agreed that if their lesbianism were public knowledge, their jobs would be in jeopardy. Most also felt they had to act like heterosexual women on the job, with their families and at social events outside the homosexual subculture. Many viewed psychological "helping" professionals as not accepting of the lesbian and wanting to "cure" her rather than accept her as a biopsychosocially healthy individual. Support systems for these women seemed to come from the homosexual subculture and friendship networks and not from families, the church or the larger, heterosexual society.

To test her hypothesis that social lesbianism is rooted in a historical process and that lesbians are striving for something for them-

selves and for society, Ettorre (1980) observed a lesbian group for a year, collected data from 201 lesbians who completed questionnaires and interviewed 60 lesbian women. Ettorre concluded that lesbians have moved from a position of deviance to a politically ambitious social movement. Through the concept of social lesbianism (the emergence of a public expression of one's lesbianism and a step in the process of a lesbian group identity), Ettorre described two major lesbian groups: those women who fear change and hold on to traditional social values and those who favor social change and are more public about their sexual orientation. Ettorre concluded that "social lesbianism" is a threat to the power structure of the traditional society.

Albro et al (1977) studied the social interaction of lesbian women. Through an analysis of data obtained from 91 self-identified lesbian women who lived on the east coast, the researchers found that lesbian women felt isolated from the heterosexual culture and turned to the lesbian subculture for friends, emotional support and social interaction. This survey also found that while lesbians do feel isolated from the mainstream of society, they function productively in a dual role within their environments.

In a cross-sectional survey, Gagnon and Simon (1973) wanted to gather data that examined the diversity of the lesbian experience, detailed the various aspects of the lesbian's life and determined the way the conventional world interacted with the lesbian. Through utilization of an open-ended interview with 20 lesbian women, Gagnon and Simon found that a typical lesbian in their sample discovered her

sexual orientation in late adolescence and had her first physical lesbian experience in young adulthood following an intense period of emotional involvement with her partner. Further, she was strongly committed to a professional job, had moved away from traditional religion, had been involved in psychotherapy at some point and avoided discussing her sexual orientation with her parents. Gagnon and Simon also found that the lesbian community provided the following functions for the lesbian woman: a source of social support, the facilitation of sexual union and an ideology and language that helped dispel the larger society's label of "sick," "deviant," etc. Finally, data from this study indicate that some lesbians tended to avoid the lesbian subculture and hid under a cloak of either heterosexuality or asexuality.

Lewis (1979) presented data from interviews with 25 lesbians in an attempt to portray a picture of the contemporary American lesbian woman. She found that lesbians can, and do, begin their lesbian identification process at almost any age and that many lesbian women submit to the heterosexual mode to hide their lesbianism. Her data also confirmed that the lesbian identity is acquired through a process of self-understanding and sexual experimentation. She concluded that the masculine/feminine (butch/femme) roles have disappeared in the contemporary lesbian and that the lesbian subculture provides a refuge for the lesbian woman who exists in both the heterosexual and homosexual worlds. Lesbian women meet both in the heterosexual culture and the homosexual subculture, and the homosexual subculture provides a

support system and friendship network as well as an extended family for lesbians. Lesbians sampled often opted to live in secrecy, but data show an ever increasing activist group of lesbians who are opting to become politically active.

In summary, while studies that examine lesbian lifestyles and social functioning have begun to demonstrate that contemporary lesbian women are becoming increasingly politically active and that the heterosexual culture is viewed by such women as non-threatening (Ettorre, 1980; Lewis, 1979), other data indicate that many other contemporary lesbians choose to conceal their lesbianism (Albro et al, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Ponse, 1978). Also, data gathered to date seem to indicate that lesbian women tend to find their support systems within the homosexual subculture, not within the traditional, heterosexual society. The traditionally heterosexual culture seems to provide the lesbian woman with little support, and the lesbian tends to feel isolated from the mainstream of society (Albro et al, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976). There is little evidence to indicate the lesbian's inability to cope with this dual role.

Other studies that provide more descriptive data about lesbian women are those that explore the dimensions of lesbian sexuality and sexual behaviors.

Lesbian Sexuality and Sexual Behaviors

Studies that deal with any aspects of sexual behaviors have been

routinely conducted only since the early 1950's and have centered almost exclusively on primarily heterosexual samples (Davis, 1929; Maslow, 1949; Kinsey et al, 1953) or on totally heterosexual samples (Fisher and Osofsky, 1967; Termin, 1951). While studies on homosexual lifestyles continue to appear (Kelly, 1977, p. 160), there has been little systematic research conducted that examines lesbian sexual behaviors (Califia, 1979, p. 256). Generally, the only accounts of lesbian sexuality that were reported until the late 1970's were found in studies of lesbian lifestyles where only some data describing lesbian sexual behaviors is included (ibid.). Kinsey et al (1953) did some limited amount of work on lesbian sexuality as did Davis (1929) and Masters and Johnson (1970, 1979). Additionally, Saghir and Robins (1969) and Califia (1979) have reported on lesbian sexual behaviors. Beyond these few studies, data on lesbian sexual behaviors is difficult to locate.

Studies dealing with lesbian sexual behaviors reveal that lesbianism does exist and exists in about the same percentage of the overall female population across time (Kinsey et al, 1953). Data also show that education and religion seem to be correlated with lesbianism (the more education a woman has, the more likely she is to have had a lesbian sexual experience and the more closely associated she is with traditional religion, the less likely she is to be a lesbian), that lesbians tend to be involved in long-term lover relationships and that lesbians have few sexual partners (Califia, 1979; Kinsey et al, 1953; Saghir and Robins, 1969). Most do not regret their lesbianism, yet

may feel that homosexuality is not normal and may regret having not heterosexually married (Davis, 1929; Kinsey et al, 1953). Some lesbians have encountered social difficulties because of their sexual orientation (Kinsey et al, 1953).

Studies done earlier in this century indicate a reluctance on the part of those surveyed to publically acknowledge their homosexuality (Davis, 1929; Kinsey et al, 1953; Maslow, 1942). How representative early data is of lesbian populations is unknown. There have been findings in more recent studies that describe the contemporary lesbian as more overt about her sexual orientation and her sexual practices than those lesbians sampled during the early part of the 1900's. Studies such as Califia (1979) and Saghir and Robins (1969) portray the contemporary lesbian as a sexually active, sexually functional woman involved with a broad spectrum of sexual activities. This shift from a traditionally covert posture to an increasingly overt one may be due in part to the increasing acceptance of a wide array of sexual behaviors, yet, the sample sizes of those studied remains small and biased toward white, well educated, young, professionally employed, middle-class lesbian women.

Summary

Research to date that examines lesbian lifestyles and social functioning can be divided into three interrelated categories (research on lesbian characteristics, research on lesbian social functioning and research on lesbian sexuality and sexual behaviors), and describes

lesbian women as young, well educated, professionals who have been involved with few women and who are involved in long-term, monogamous relationships (Belote and Joesting, 1976; Cotten, 1975; Gagnon and Simon, 1973; Gundlach, 1967; Saghir and Robins, 1969). While data do suggest that lesbians may have higher incidents of substance abuse (Swanson, 1972) and conflicts around jealousy (Mendola, 1980), those sampled to date overwhelmingly accept themselves as lesbians and are content with their sexual orientation (Albro et al, 1977; Belote and Joesting, 1976; Califia, 1979; Gagnon and Simon, 1973; Saghir and Robins, 1969). Other data indicate that the contemporary lesbian does not ordinarily play male/female (butch/femme) roles (Belote and Joesting, 1976; Lewis, 1979; Saghir and Robins, 1969; Tripp, 1976), but that some lesbians may role play at some point in their lives (Mendola, 1980; Tanner, 1978; Tripp, 1976).

These studies also suggest that those lesbians sampled do interact with the heterosexual culture where they gain economic support through employment and the homosexual subculture where they find emotional support, friendship groups and an extended family (Albro et al, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Gagnon and Simon, 1973; Lewis, 1979; Mendola, 1980; Ponse, 1978; Tanner, 1978). Data further indicate that lesbian women do not view the heterosexual culture as being accepting of the lesbian lifestyle (Albro et al, 1977; Belote and Joesting, 1976; Bullough and Bullough, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Gagnon and Simon, 1973; Ponse, 1978) which may cause stress for the female homosexual (Albro et al, 1977; Bullough and Bullough, 1977; Chafetz et

al, 1974, 1976; Gagnon and Simon, 1973). While the studies support the idea that lesbians seem to function adequately in both the heterosexual world and the homosexual world (Albro et al, 1977; The Ladder, 1960; Lewis, 1979), data also show that many lesbian women have sought professional counselling at some point in their lives (Albro et al, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976).

While the lesbian subculture has been characterized as providing the lesbian woman with a social network, a sense of identification and an ideology, and most lesbians do find a support system within the homosexual subculture, some lesbians isolate themselves from the homosexual subculture (Albro et al, 1977; Ettore, 1980; Lewis, 1979). Also, there appears to be resistance on the part of lesbian women to publically acknowledge their sexual orientation (Belote and Joesting, 1976; Bullough and Bullough, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Ettore, 1980; Gagnon and Simon, 1973; The Ladder, 1960; Lewis, 1979; Ponse, 1978), and most lesbians are constrained to "pass" as heterosexuals at various times in their lives (Albro et al, 1977; Bullough and Bullough, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Ettore, 1980; The Ladder, 1960; Lewis, 1979; Ponse, 1978). Yet, there is growing evidence of a gradually increasing block of politically active lesbians who, at least in some areas, are beginning to challenge the structure of the traditional heterosexual culture (Ettore, 1980; Lewis, 1979).

It has been demonstrated that sexually, lesbian women tend to have a large repertoire of sexual behaviors and appear sexually active and sexually satisfied (Califia, 1979; Kinsey et al, 1953; Saghir and

Robins, 1969). While early studies indicate that lesbians had a tendency to be emotionally involved with their sexual partners (Davis, 1929; Gagnon and Simon, 1973), more recent work indicates that such emotional involvement may not be necessary for a satisfactory sexual liaison (Califia, 1979).

Homosexuality and Aging

While research dealing with the etiology of lesbianism, the psychological functioning of lesbian women and the lesbian's lifestyles and social functioning comprises the majority of the research to date on lesbianism, some small amount of research has been conducted in the area of homosexuality and aging. This research can be easily divided into two categories -- studies dealing with older male homosexuals and studies centered around older lesbian samples.

Aging and Male Homosexuals

The overwhelming majority of the small amount of research that has been conducted on aging and homosexuality deals only with male homosexuals.

One of the earliest studies in the area of aging and male homosexuals was conducted by Francher and Henkin (1973) who studied the effects of social marginality on the aging process by examining oldergay men's family structure, socialization and adjustment to deviance. Their interviews with 9 white, highly educated, New York, self-identified homosexual men who were over 50 years of age provided

data that would serve as a foundation for studies that would follow. Their data showed that their sample did not spend much time socializing in gay bars or gay clubs, but spent leisure time with homosexual or heterosexual male friends with whom relational ties were based on shared interests -- not sexual activity. The data further indicated that older gay men tended to isolate themselves from their families as, over time, there was a gradual diminishment of familial support. Those sampled said that a major life crisis had centered around their sexual orientation and their family. They had felt rejected and isolated from their families although their families rarely discussed the respondent's sexual orientation. In place of traditional family support, those interviewed said they had gained increasing support from their homosexual male peers. They felt they were not isolated in time of stress because of support gained from the homosexual subculture. Francher and Henkin concluded that because homosexual men did not function within the role behaviors set for heterosexual men, homosexual men may have an easier time aging than their heterosexual counterparts. Life crises came early for homosexual men, and they had to learn to manage a secret identity where they were isolated and alienated from traditional patterns. Traditionally, the heterosexual man does not have to face isolation and alienation from traditional society until he is elderly.

Kelly (1974, 1977) examined stereotypes, attitudes and characteristics of homosexual men in regard to the aging process. Through participant observation, interviews and a questionnaire, Kelly gathered data from 241 self-identified, male homosexuals aged 16-76 who lived in the metropolitan area of Los Angeles. Only 15% (N=36) of those studied were over 55 years old. To dispel myths and provide substantive data on this group of men, Kelly gathered descriptive data in the following areas: gay men's membership in general society, their participation in gay social functions, their associational networks, self-identification, sexuality, salience of aging, their personal definitions of aging, their sexual desirability and their reactions toward society's policies on aging.

Generally, the older men in Kelly's study (15%, N=36) had never heterosexually married, were white and had some college education. Contrary to other studies that have demonstrated homosexuals as not religious (Albro et al, 1977; Gagnon and Simon, 1973), only 15% (N=36) of the sample were agnostic/atheistic and more than half (57%, N=137) were at least "somewhat" devout. A vast majority were politically moderate to very liberal and only 25% were Republicans.

Those who were older than 45 years of age were overwhelmingly satisfied with both their sexual orientation and their sexual lives. While they did frequent gay bars fairly regularly, they did not frequent "tearooms" (public men's bathrooms) for sexual liaisons. All of the older men in the sample were involved with the homosexual subculture and had not disengaged from society. Those sampled had both

heterosexual and homosexual friends, yet social involvements with heterosexuals decreased with age while social involvements with homosexuals increased with age. Those who were still employed feared publically acknowledging their homosexuality, but those who were retired tended to view public knowledge of their sexual orientation with indifference -- not fear.

Those older men sampled viewed the major problems of aging as loneliness, increasing isolation from other homosexual men, sexual rejection and possible institutionalization. They also feared the loss of loved ones, loss of physical attractiveness, and loss of youth and support systems. Kelly concluded that his sample did not conform to the myth of the older male homosexual as a sad, lonely, sexually frustrated, isolated person who habituated "tearooms" for sex.

To determine whether or not homosexual men anticipated an earlier onset of middle and old age than did heterosexual men, Minnigerode (1976) surveyed 95 self-identified homosexual men aged 25-68 years of age utilizing a questionnaire that included items on demographics, health, personal adjustment, life satisfaction, aging and an adjective checklist. While data did not support an accelerated aging phenomenon in homosexual men, data did suggest that homosexual men who did anticipate an early onset of old age may have poorer physical and/or psychological health than those who did not have such expectations. In terms of age-status labeling, Minnigerode concluded that homosexual and heterosexual men were more similar than different.

Kimmel (1977, 1978) interviewed 14 homosexual men aged 55-81 years

of age who were members of homophile organizations. This sample was well educated and economically well off. Kimmel's research was designed to explore the implications of more liberal attitudes toward homosexuals. Further, this study sought to determine whether or not more liberal social attitudes toward homosexuality had implications for the practice of psychotherapy with homosexual men. Kimmel wished to know if there were special issues that psychotherapists working with homosexual men should understand.

Kimmel found his sample was sexually active and, although they had sexually slowed down some from earlier years, sex continued to play an important role in all of his subject's lives. All of his subjects had been born between 1895-1920 and had grown up in a time when homosexuality was repressed. Consequently, these men had to deal with their homosexuality differently than those homosexuals who are growing up today. Several reported feeling guilty about their sexual orientation, but most had overcome their guilt as they had aged. Kimmel concluded that it is rare to see a guilt-ridden older homosexual man who represses his sexuality. His sample did note there were problems associated with being an older homosexual that included: the lack of societal support offered when a lover dies, an inability to play youthful bar games, a sense of regret at not having children to carry on the family line, the tendency to withdraw into a closed set of friends and a sadness at not having younger friends or social contacts with younger gay men. There were advantages to being an older homosexual man that included: an increased awareness of the responsibility

for one's self, the lack of the empty nest syndrome when children leave, the lack of having to follow the traditional heterosexual male role and the positive aspects of having a self-selected network of reliable friends.

Kimmel's sample did provide an interesting historical examination of the societal oppression of homosexuals. All interviewed noted that there had been extensive repression toward homosexuality during their youth. Although the 1920's was a sexually revolutionary time, subjects reported that it was only heterosexual activity that was acceptable in this country. While there were gay bars and clubs in Europe, this was not so in this country according to the sample. The men also reported that in their younger years, they met other homosexuals in railroad terminals, beach bath houses and other public places where people thronged. Over the years these men had come to terms with heterosexual society's oppression by creating their own social environments, friends and living arrangements. They all had well established support systems and the oppression from the heterosexual world seldom intruded -- they simply did not associate with those who were anti-homosexual. Kimmel concluded that older male homosexuals share many characteristics with non-homosexual older men, but do have unique psychotherapeutic needs.

Berger (1980) used a 62 item questionnaire that gathered data to describe a group of older homosexual men in light of current stereotypes. His hypothesis was that integration into the gay community, exclusively homosexual relationships and a commitment to a homosexual

lifestyle would mean a positive psychological adaptation to aging for older homosexual men. Berger wanted to identify variables that were predictive of a positive psychological adaptation to aging for older homosexual men and used a sample of 112 white, well educated, affluent homosexual men aged 41-77 years who all lived in a southern Florida, metropolitan area. While the original study also included older lesbian women, so few responded they were dropped from the analysis.

Berger's descriptive study supports the work done in this area by Kelly (1974, 1977), Kimmel (1977, 1978) and Francker and Henkin (1973). Most of Berger's sample had never been heterosexually married and an overwhelming majority (81%, N=91) were at least politically moderate with half being politically very liberal. Like Kelly (1974, 1977), these men had current religious affiliations. Slightly less than half (43%, N=48) lived with a lover and 38% (N=43) lived alone. Those sampled stated they had an active, satisfactory sex life and like other studies, these men were not socially isolated but had many friends (Francker and Henkin, 1973; Kelly, 1974, 1977; Kimmel, 1977, 1978). Only a few were depressed and lacked self-confidence. Berger concluded that good physical health and a satisfactory sex life were related to good psychological adjustment. If one hid his homosexuality, then he was more apt to feel anxious, guilty or ashamed of his sexual orientation.

Research conducted to date that examines only older male homosexuals portrays the older male homosexual as a sexually active

individual who has accepted his sexual orientation and who has insulated himself from the oppressive heterosexual culture by surrounding himself with a support system comprised primarily of other older homosexual men. While he is not particularly interested in younger sexual partners, he would enjoy having younger friends who are homosexual men. Most of his friends are close to his age and share his interests. He faces the same problems that any aging man faces: loss of employment status, loved ones, physical attractiveness and youth, and faces them in a heterosexual world that provides him little or no support.

Some limited amount of research has been conducted that compared older lesbians with older homosexual men. In an effort to gain a better understanding of how homosexual women and men adjust to aging, Minnigerode and Adelman (1978) reported on a pilot study of 6 homosexual men and 5 lesbians aged 60-77 and Adelman (1980) reported on a study of white, homosexual men (N=27) and lesbians (N=25) who were all 60 years old or older and lived in the San Francisco Bay area.

Through interviews that included a 6 item morale scale, Minnigerode and Adelman (1978) found that most of those interviewed lived alone and that men placed a higher priority on work than did women. While half of the men had lost jobs directly as a result of their sexual orientation, none of the women had, although the women felt their jobs and careers had been constrained because of their lesbianism. They all viewed retirement with a positive outlook and a sense of relief. While most were raised within a religious context, the

majority had no current religious affiliation. Most participated in social, political organizations (like Mendola, 1980) and none belonged to a senior citizen's center. Their friends were sex segregated, and those interviewed had kept in touch with their families. While not being estranged from their families, this sample maintained closer contact with their lesbian or gay male friendship networks than they did with their families.

Women interviewed tended to view homosexuality not in terms of sexual activity (as did the men), but in terms of a personal identification with it and/or interpersonal relationships with other women. The men sampled tended to place a higher emphasis on sexual activity than did the women, yet most of the women were sexually active. All of the women noticed a decrease in sexual activity with an increase in age. These women generally fulfilled their sexual needs within the context of affectional relationships and had their first lesbian experience when they were in their early 20's. The women identified themselves as lesbian following their first overt lesbian sexual encounter whereas the men defined themselves as homosexual before their first homosexual experience. Finally, all the women interviewed said that homosexuality was not proper to discuss with either their heterosexual or homosexual friends.

Adelman (1980) investigated the relationship between adjustment to a homosexual lifestyle and its effect on later life. The study took place over a 3 year period and included a sample of non-homosexual women and men in addition to the older lesbian sample (N=25) and older

homosexual male sample (N=27). Adelman found no significant differences between the homosexuals and the heterosexuals with regard to sexual orientation and aging. Possible differences were sought using the following instruments: a life-satisfaction index, a psychological functioning index, and other researcher designed questionnaire items. A composite of the typical subject would be a 65 year old homosexual person in good health who lived alone on an income sufficient to maintain a comfortable standard of living. This person would have had some college and would have been professionally employed but is now retired. S/he would never have been heterosexually married, would have no children and claim no current religious affiliation. This study concluded that homosexual people face the same developmental crises and challenges of heterosexuals, but do so under the influence of social stigma.

Data from Minnigerode and Adelman (1978) and Adelman (1980) tend to differ in some respects from other studies that examined only older homosexual men (Francher and Henkin, 1973; Kelly, 1974, 1977; Kimmel, 1977, 1978) insofar as the Minnigerode and Adelman and Adelman studies found subjects with no current religious affiliations whose high life-satisfaction was strongly correlated with a low involvement with other homosexuals. Further, these studies showed older homosexuals maintaining contact with families in a way not totally supported by the earlier work. The Minnigerode and Adelman and Adelman studies do agree with Berger (1980) insofar as both noted that positive adjustment to age is determined by one's good physical and psychological

health. Finally, all the research seems to indicate that aging homosexuals face problems in a heterosexual society that provides them little or no support.

Such studies on aging and homosexuality have included data primarily on older homosexual men. There has been a limited amount of research conducted that investigates aging and the lesbian woman.

Aging and Lesbian Women

In addition to the work already mentioned that included samples of older lesbian women (Adelman, 1980; Minnigerode and Adelman, 1978), data that describe older lesbian women are practically non-existent.

In a study that sought to examine similarities and differences in the aging process of lesbian and heterosexual women, Laner (1979) analyzed 229 assumed heterosexual personal advertisements in one issue of a "single's" register and 273 assumed lesbian personal advertisements in two issues of a lesbian oriented "contact" register. She hypothesized that more older women than younger women would advertise, that there would be more heterosexual than lesbian advertisers who were in their early middle years and that no differences would exist between heterosexual and lesbian advertisers with regard to the age requirements of the advertisement respondents.

She found that a vast majority of both the lesbian and non-lesbian women who placed ads were younger than 48 years old and that lesbian women did not advertise for younger partners. She concluded that lesbians did not seem to experience the acceleration of aging as fast as

heterosexual women and that the field of potential partners may be larger for older lesbians than for their heterosexual counterparts due to the ever increasing numbers of available older women and the ever decreasing numbers of available older men.

As of early 1982, the only published study that deals exclusively with older lesbian women was conducted by Raphael and Robinson (1980). The purpose of their descriptive study was to explore the relationship between intimacy and aging in lesbian women, to examine support patterns and to test the hypothesis that older lesbian women develop friendship networks to replace missing or weak kinship ties and that lesbian women are not without support in their later years. Through a structured interview that lasted from 1 to 4 hours, Raphael and Robinson gathered data from 20 white, self-identified lesbians who lived either in San Francisco or Los Angeles. All respondents were 50 years old or older.

Of the total sample (N=20), 11 had been heterosexually married yet most had "always" known they were lesbian. While most had their first lesbian sexual experience in their late teens or early 20's, 5 did not have their first overt homosexual sexual encounter until they were over 50 years old. Most had attended college and were or had been employed as professionals. Some (N=7) were fully retired. Slightly more than half (N=11) had no current religious affiliation (like data found in the Minnigerode and Adelman [1978] and Adelman [1980] studies) and that same number lived alone. The remaining 9 women lived in a coupled situation with another older woman.

Those sampled sought women of their same age for friends, viewed their lover as their best friend but had a need for other friends as well. They did not isolate themselves from other women and did get involved with the lesbian subculture once they knew where to find it. While 50% had close, long time heterosexual friends, these women did have a need to meet and be with other lesbian women. Although they admit it was hard to find other older lesbians, they did meet older lesbians at older women's groups, lesbian groups and women's movement activities.

An overwhelming majority (90%, N=18) had lost a partner at some point and while slightly more than half (N=11) reported getting little or no support following the loss, what support was offered came from the lesbian subculture, not from heterosexual friends and/or family. One problem encountered following the loss of a partner was that the remaining partner who was seeking support from lesbian friends sometimes found unwanted potential lovers instead.

The pattern of love relationships for these women was serial monogamy. All had been involved in at least one major relationship and sex continued to play a role in each one's life. Sexual frequency seemed to be a function of the availability of a new partner periodically as sex tended to get boring with the same partner year after year. While it was hard for lesbians over 70 years of age to find sexual partners, for many their libido remained intact. Sexual experiences for these women did continue and the women sampled continued to seek and find new sexual partners. They tended to prefer

relating socially and sexually with members of their own age cohort and felt a need to establish a strong emotional bond before having a sexual encounter with another woman. While sexual activity was strongly influenced by partner availability, uncoupled lesbians showed a high degree of sexual interest and had realistic expectations of finding suitable partners.

Raphael and Robinson found their sample to have weak kinship ties but strong friendship ties. Further, the stronger the friendship ties, the more likely the older lesbian was to have high self-esteem. The researchers concluded that older lesbians have strong friendship ties and are not lonely, isolated women with poor self-images. Further, it was felt that these women had adapted well to aging.

In summary, the picture that has begun to emerge of the older lesbian woman portrays her as a sexually active, socially involved woman who is adapting well to her aging. She apparently gets little or no support from the heterosexual culture and has developed strong friendship ties with both heterosexual women and other lesbians who are of her approximate age. She is involved with the lesbian subculture and participates in some of its activities. She is not without support; and she gains her support from her friendship network. This support system tends to replace the weak kinship system she has. She is not religiously affiliated, is well educated and has been employed as a professional.

Aging

The research that will be discussed here falls into two broad categories - attitudinal studies about older persons and homosexuals and research on the characteristics of older samples.

Attitudes Toward Aging and Homosexuality

Both older Americans and homosexual Americans face discrimination and are inappropriately stereotyped by a society that continues to be both heterosexually and youth oriented (Kimmel, 1977). Attitudinal studies done in order to describe people's attitudes about older persons and homosexual persons reveal that both groups are minorities, and both are stigmatized because of their minority status.

Harris et al (1975) documented the public's attitude toward aging, and Smith (1971), Dunbar et al (1973), Henley and Pincus (1978) and Tully (1980) examined attitudes toward homosexuality.

Using an interview format, Harris et al (1975) gathered data from 4,254 American women and men who were at least 18 years of age and not institutionalized. The researchers felt their multi-stage, random, cluster sample to be representative of a cross-section of the entire United States. Data were gathered that examined public attitudes toward older Americans and documented older American's views and expectations of themselves. This study provided an in-depth, descriptive profile of American attitudes toward older persons, although it made no mention of homosexuality. Harris et al's (1975) data showed that compared to the earlier life stages, later life is seen by the

young as not being the most desirable stage of life. Also, according to data, leisure time had more relevance for the young and less for the older person. Older persons face the same problems that younger persons face, but older Americans face the added worry of health and crime. Loneliness affects older women as 53% of women older than 65 years are widows. Sexually, those over 65 years old tend to view themselves as less sexually active than those younger than 65. Sexuality tends to peak between the ages of 25 - 39 and then gradually declines, yet 33% of women and men over 65 years old were still sexually active.

Smith (1971) sought to gather data on individuals who were particularly negative or fearful of homosexuality and tested 93 women and men college psychology students using a researcher designed homophobia scale. Smith assumed that some people are homophobic and used a convenience sample to gather data. Smith concluded that homophobic persons are status conscious, authoritarian and sexually rigid. He further concluded that such individuals probably did not view homosexuals as a minority group per se, and may view homosexuality as a disease.

Dunbar et al (1973) utilized 3 attitudinal scales on 126 male college students to determine attitudes toward male homosexuality. This descriptive study's instruments gathered data on attitudes toward male homosexuality, attitudes toward a variety of heterosexual sexual activities and attitudes toward the subject's own sexual impulses. Dunbar et al concluded that those opposed to homosexuality were more

intolerant of a wide variety of heterosexual acts, had more personal guilt about sexual activity in general and had a higher repression of their own sexual impulses than those who approve of homosexual acts between men. Further, those who were against homosexuality held stronger stereotypes of "appropriate" masculine and feminine behaviors and were more willing to label a person "homosexual" on the basis of what they considered a single feminine act. Those sampled also believed that religious and legislative bodies have a right to regulate the sexual behaviors of others, that the only function of sexual activity was for procreation and that any type of sexual experimentation was indulgent.

Henley and Pincus (1978) thought there was a relationship between a person's attitudes toward homosexuality, racism and sexism. They thought that if a person held high religious values or was politically conservative, that individual would be highly gayist, racist and sexist. Using 3 attitudinal scales, the researchers gathered data from 211 (92 women, 119 men) paid volunteers who were east coast, metropolitan, undergraduate students. Analysis using T-Test and correlations revealed that women scored lower on the racism and sexism scales, but that both women and men were equally prejudiced against homosexuals. The data also showed significant correlations between gayist, sexist and racist attitudes and that the more religious and/or politically conservative an individual, the more likely that person will be gayist, racist and sexist.

Tully (1980) conducted a secondary data analysis of National

Opinion Research Center (NORC) data in an effort to determine whether or not certain background variables such as religion, family income, education or sex would affect an individual's current attitude toward homosexuality. Variables that seemed to affect a respondent's attitude toward homosexual acts between adults included: a respondent's religion and residential size when the respondent was 16 years old, educational level, present religion, total number of children a respondent had and age. Tully concluded that those Americans who hold more favorable attitudes toward homosexuality were members of minority religious groups or had no religion, lived in an area of more than 50,000 inhabitants when 16 years old, had more than a high school education and were less than 30 years old. Additionally, these individuals tended to have few children and incomes of more than \$15,000 annually.

Tully's data further showed that in 1977, 71.8% (N=1453) of those who responded to the NORC question about homosexual acts between adults, saw such acts as wrong. Tully concluded that her study confirmed that a majority of Americans viewed homosexual acts between adults as "always wrong."

In summary, research dealing with American attitudes toward aging and homosexuality show that both groups are not generally viewed in a positive way. Consequently, when one is both older and a homosexual, the general societal attitude may be particularly damning.

Characteristics of Older Samples

Since its emergence shortly after World War II, research on aging has become "the systematic inquiry into regularities in the structure and function of living organisms as they move forward in time in the later part of the life-span" (Birren 1971, p. 245). Typical areas for authors and researchers writing about and studying aging have further delineated Birren's definition and generally include data on: social and/or psychological issues of the older person, the role of marriage for the older person, widowhood or health issues/problems faced by the older person (Botwinick, 1964; Sourcebook on Aging, 1977). The topic of sexuality, which also delineates Birren's definition, has not been included either as an area of concern or research until recently (Hollenshead et al, 1977).

In an attempt to determine whether or not a set of behaviors identified as "senile" distinguished persons in advanced age, Carp (1969) utilized a Senility Index from Burgess, Cavan and Havinghurst (1948) and tested 295 women and men aged 52 - 92 years and 270 women and men aged 17 - 25 years. Both groups were of similar intelligence and all lived in a west coast, metropolitan area. The samples were not matched in terms of education, marital status or socioeconomic status. Carp concluded there was no relationship between the Senility Index score and chronological age. In fact, the younger sample had a statistically significant higher number of "senile" signs than the older sample. The younger sample appeared more maladjusted and maladaptive.

Some studies have focused on older, married couples. Lipman (1960) sought to discover if married, assumed heterosexual couples over 60 years old would agree on role conceptions for husbands and wives. Using a one question interview, Lipman interviewed 100 couples in Dade County, Florida. The couples had been married an average of 39.5 years and were of upper educational and occupational levels. Lipman found role expectations for women and men were similar insofar as those sampled agreed that both wives and husbands should be loving, understanding and a compatible companion. The sample agreed women should be good housewives and, men should be good economic providers. According to the data, men should also help their wives.

In an attempt to develop a marital needs satisfaction scale that measured the fulfillment of marital needs in the later years, Stinnett et al (1968) surveyed 227 wives and husbands from a sample obtained through utilization of a senior citizen's center mailing list. Two questionnaires (one for women, one for men) were developed that included a Marital Needs Satisfaction Scale, a Life Satisfaction Index Z Scale, a Self Image Scale and an Ori Scale. The researchers concluded that men had higher marital need satisfaction scores than women and that marital need satisfaction is not related to self-image or personality but is related to morale. Those who were married had higher morale than those who were single, widowed or divorced. Women noted that they needed more communication between themselves and others; men said that their most unmet need was respect -- they needed more respect from those around them.

Such studies as the above assume a heterosexual sample and examine only gross characteristics of the older persons who responded.

Studies that explore any aspect of older individual's sexuality also use samples that are largely, if not totally heterosexual.

It has only been since the 1950's that researchers have systematically begun the study of sexual behaviors in older persons (Pfeiffer and Davis 1972, p. 151). Those credited with the pioneering effort in this field include Kinsey et al (1948, 1953), those connected with the Duke Longitudinal Studies 1955 - 1969, 1970 - 1973 (Newman and Nicholas, 1960; Pfeiffer et al, 1968; Pfeiffer et al, 1972; Pfeiffer and Davis, 1972; Verwoerd et al, 1969, II1969) and Masters and Johnson (1966, 1970).

The Duke Longitudinal Studies 1955 - 1969, 1970 - 1973 have provided data that gives an in-depth portrait of the sexual behaviors of older persons and aside from the researcher's assumption that older persons are all heterosexual, the methodology surpasses studies of older samples because of its longitudinal nature. Begun in the 1950's, the first study (1955 - 1969) actually encompassed three, smaller, cross-sectional surveys. Study I was conducted from 1955 - 1957, Study II from 1959 - 1961, Study III from 1964 - 1969. The total sample size at the study's start (1955) was 131 women and 123 men (total N=254); attrition caused the sample size to decrease to a total N=190 by the start of the second study (1959) and a total N=126 by the start of the final survey in 1964. In 1955, all subjects were volunteers from the Durham, North Carolina area who were not

hospitalized, bedridden or immobilized. Most were married (60%) although more men (82%) than women (39%) were married and 33% of the sample were black. The age of subjects ranged from 60 - 93 years with a mean age of 70 years.

The first results (Newman and Nicholas, 1960), gathered from a structured interview, demonstrated that sexual activity is somewhat correlated with age, that older men reported more sexual activity than older women and that older blacks reported more sexual activity than older whites. All subjects rated their sexual urges lower in later years than they had been in earlier decades, although only 7% of those not married rated themselves as sexually active. Those who were older than 75 years had much reduced sexual activity as well as much increased chronic illness. Their illnesses placed limitations on any type of activities. Sexual feelings, even with the absence of sexual activity, were common and those who had terminated sexual activities had done so due to ill health (either their own or their spouse's). Data did confirm that the sexual drive exists throughout life and given the conditions of reasonably good health, the elderly can be sexually active into their 7th, 8th and 9th decades of life.

Data gathered from Studies II and III (1959 - 1961, 1964 - 1967) confirmed earlier findings that sexual activity gradually declines with advancing age. The sexual activity of unmarried women was almost negligible with only 4 - 5% reporting any sexual activity, yet data indicated that women in general had a declining interest in sexual activity as they aged. Women said a major reason they were not

sexually active was due to the loss of sexual interest by their male partner. Men agreed with this.

The second major study undertaken by Duke University was begun in 1970 and gathered data from 241 women and 261 men who were all white and were volunteers living in the Durham, North Carolina area. This sample was a non-institutionalized one and was chosen randomly from membership lists of a local group medical insurance plan. Subject's ages ranged from 46 - 71 years. While the earlier study (1955 - 1969) sought to describe the sexual behaviors of older persons, this study sought to discover the antecedents of sexual behavior in old age. In an effort to determine whether or not female and male sexual differences exist in middle age, at what age the sexual function decline occurs and whether or not there are factors occurring in middle age that could account for variations in sexual behaviors in old age, subjects were interviewed and completed a self-administered medical history questionnaire.

After an analysis using a stepwise multiple regression as well as measures of central tendency and other sample descriptors, Pfeiffer et al (1972) and Pfeiffer and Davis (1972) concluded that women and men differed in all indicators of sexual activity, but both experienced a sexual decline with advancing age. Women confirmed earlier findings as to the reason they stopped having sexual intercourse. Women overwhelmingly attributed the cessation of sexual activity to their husbands, and men attribute the cessation of sexual activity to themselves. Pfeiffer et al (1972) concluded that the antecedents of

sexual behavior in old age do start in middle age, and even with a decline in sexual interest and sexual activity, sex continued to play an important role in the lives of a majority of those sampled.

Data found that for both women and men those variables that explained present enjoyment of sex were: past sexual enjoyment, present age, past sexual interest and current use of amphetamines. Those variables that tended to explain present sexual interest were: past sexual enjoyment, present age, past sexual interest, current use of tranquilizers, social class, income and past frequency of sexual behavior. Those variables that explained the current frequency of sexual activity were: age, past frequency of sexual activity, income and current use of tranquilizers.

The major variables that tended to explain an older woman's current sexual enjoyment were: marital status, age and educational level. Those variables that tended to explain an older woman's sexual interest were: marital status, age, education and whether or not she was post menopausal. Her current sexual frequency was influenced by her marital status, age, future life satisfaction and if she was past menopause. A woman's past sexual enjoyment, interest and frequency was highly correlated with her present enjoyment, interest and activity. Women however, placed an important emphasis on having a socially sanctioned, sexually capable partner for sexual activity.

Health was found to be an important variable for both women and men, yet subjective and objective health ratings played a lesser role for women's sexual behavior than for men's. Also, those who looked

back on their lives with satisfaction had higher levels of sexual activity than those who were dissatisfied with their lives. This study (1970 - 1973), like the earlier study (1955 - 1969) supported the fact that sex played an important, continued role in the lives of older persons. Unfortunately, this study's definition of sexual behaviors included only heterosexual ones so the role of sexual behaviors for older homosexuals was not considered.

Cameron (1967) and Cameron and Biber (1973) conducted one question interviews that dealt with aging and the amount of time one thinks about sex and the frequency of sexual thoughts. In these two studies, a total of 2,488 persons aged 8 - 99 years were surveyed. Findings showed that there were no systematic variations on the frequency of sexual thought as a function of marital status or race, but men reported more sexual thoughts than women and the frequency of sexual thoughts were not increased in older age. In fact, data suggested that the very old and the very young displayed the least interest in sex. The conclusion was that sexual interest may decline with age in a curvilinear relationship.

While the above studies have concerned themselves with the sexuality of older heterosexual samples, two studies have been conducted that examine the sexual world of older women.

Through a secondary data analysis of the Kinsey et al (1953) interview data, Christenson and Gagnon (1965) and Christenson and Johnson (1973) described the sexual characteristics of ever married (1965) and never married (1973) women who were 50 years old or older.

The samples included 241 ever married women aged 50 - 90 years and 71 never married women aged 50 - 69 years. For those that were then married, heterosexual coitus was the primary sexual outlet. Masturbation was also an important sexual outlet for these women. For those who were not married, masturbation was the primary outlet for sexual gratification while heterosexual coitus was less frequently utilized. For both samples, the more frequent the church attendance, the lower the rates of coitus and/or masturbation during or following marital relationships. For the ever married women, education and sexual experiences were not correlated.

The women who had never married (N=71) consisted of a highly educated group of women atypical of other women their age in this country. They were generally professional women and 85% (N=60) had college degrees. Several indicated strong homosexual interests that the researchers linked to physical characteristics or deformities that made these women heterosexually unsuitable. Only 14% (N=10) indicated no desire to marry and more than 50% had said they would have liked to marry at an earlier time in their lives. One third (N=23) had had no overt sexual activity beyond simple petting and 5 women had never done that much. All of these women were "virgins," had only had minimal sexual arousal, had never had an orgasm from any source and seemed virtually "sexually blank." Eight of the never married sample reported homosexual activity, yet all 8 had stopped these activities. Thus, there was not 1 never married women 50 years old or older in the Kinsey et al (1953) study that admitted to having homosexual sexual experiences at the time of the interview.

In both the ever married and the never married samples, the data showed that the incidence and frequency of sexual behavior declined after age 55, yet sexual behavior did continue into old age for those who had both a history of homosexual activities and heterosexual marriage.

In summary, data to date tend to support the following: older women and men remain sexually active although there is a decline in sexual frequency, interest and enjoyment that appears to be age related; women attribute their cessation of sexual activity to their male partners; and women seem to place importance on the availability of a socially sanctioned partner who is sexually capable (Duke Longitudinal Studies, 1955 - 1969, 1970 - 1973; Cameron, 1967; Cameron and Biber, 1973; Christenson and Gagnon, 1965; Christenson and Johnson, 1973). Also, never married, older women appear well educated and may have had some lesbian experiences (Christenson and Johnson, 1973). Finally, there does exist an older group of women who have had little or no sexual experiences, minimal sexual arousal and may be characterized as asexual (Christenson and Johnson, 1973; Kinsey et al, 1953).

While few studies exist that examine the topic of older female sexuality, more studies have been conducted that examine the characteristics of older female samples.

Lopata (1973) and Matthews (1979) both studied older widows. Lopata utilized data from the National Opinion Research center (NORC) interviews with 301 widows aged 50 - 85 who lived in the Chicago

area. Matthews interviewed and observed 30 white widows who were older than 70 years. Both researchers wanted to gain familiarity with the lifestyles of older widows who had not remarried. Data reveal a portrait of the older widow as a woman who has some high school, who is living alone and who came from a semi-professional vocational background. She has a restricted income and has re-engaged herself with society after having isolated herself from it following her mate's death. She lives in the same home she shared with her spouse and cared for her ill husband for a period of time before his death. She has not worked through her grief although she does get support from her family members, and she has no desire to remarry. She has minimal contact with her siblings, and her friendship networks are increasingly restricted to other older widows. Her friendships are important to her and she may be sexually propositioned by male friends of her deceased mate or by husbands of friends. She is not likely to hold membership in any organization.

Lopata found that her sample had re-engaged with society in various ways following their spouse's death and devised a re-entry typology. The first type was the woman with a multi-dimensional, problem-solving personality who looks at all the possibilities available to her and then acted. The second type was the widow who tries to maintain the status quo even following her mate's death and finally, there was the widow who never re-enters society, but becomes a social isolate. She then loses contact with her former social contacts totally.

Lieberman (1977) interviewed 25 women aged 67 - 88 years and concluded in a descriptive study with no statistical analysis, that aging was a personal thing and that older women "feel" young. She further concluded that older women have developed personal survival tactics and need love.

Studying 75 religiously affiliated, middle-aged, well educated, late parental, married, Westchester County, New York women, Greenberg (1979) analyzed data gathered from administration of the Neugarten Life Satisfaction Scale, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and a researcher designed interview and identified a typology of women's lifestyles. She concluded that a woman's lifestyle reflects an involvement with either her formal support system (relationships with work, organizations, agencies and/or institutions) or her informal support system (relationships with family, friends and neighbors). According to Greenberg, such involvement relates to high life satisfaction. Finally, Greenberg concluded that the informal support systems have more of an influence on life satisfaction than the formal support systems, but both support systems helped those sampled maintain a positive outlook.

A composite of one of Greenberg's sample would be a 58 year old, religiously affiliated, college graduate in good health who was not involved with the women's movement and enjoyed being a wife and mother. Further, she got her most vital support from her husband, did volunteer work, was very "social", was taking an educational course "for fun" and socialized with her friends more frequently than her family.

In summary, many older women in this country tend to be widows and data show that usually, widows re-enter society following the death of a spouse (Matthews, 1979; Lopata, 1973), but find their friendship networks increasingly sex segregated to other older women (Matthews, 1979; Lopata, 1973). Further data suggest that older women have a need to be involved in either an informal or formal support system and such involvement is related to life satisfaction (Greenberg, 1979).

Social Support Systems

While the area of social support systems has been largely ignored by researchers examining lesbian samples, research that examines the social support systems of assumed heterosexual samples has been conducted. Generally, the research in the field of social support systems relates to an examination of social support networks, stress and psychological functioning.

Lin et al (1979) studied the potential role of social support in relation to stressful life events and subsequent psychiatric illness. Results found following interviews with 121 men and 49 women of Chinese decent, that stress is positively related to psychiatric symptoms while social support is negatively related to such symptoms. Lin et al concluded, based on an analysis of data obtained using the Holmes and Rahe Social Readjustment Rating Scale, that the more social support an individual has, the less likely s/he is to have psychiatric problems.

Andrews et al (1978) randomly sampled 83 Australian suburbanites and gathered data using a 20 item general health questionnaire and a 63 item life-stress inventory. Andrews et al sought to determine what effect an individual's social support and coping style had in relationship to stressful life events and psychological functioning. Findings indicate that the risk of psychological dysfunction varied with regard to the individual's life event stress, coping style and support networks. For those without stress, with adequate coping styles and good social support, the risk of dysfunction was substantially lower than it was for those with stress, poor coping styles and no social support. The researchers further concluded that it may be the quality of the supportive emotional relationships rather than the quantity of such relationships that lessen the chance of psychological dysfunction.

To determine the utility of the social network model, Tolsdorf (1976) used the model in a study of stress, support and coping. After interviewing 10 psychiatrically hospitalized male patients and a matched sample of 10 non-psychiatrically hospitalized male patients, he concluded that the network model can be used to investigate the larger social systems in which people interact. He further found that the psychiatrically hospitalized men had fewer social networks, more stress and got less social support than the non-psychiatrically hospitalized sample who overcame or lessened their stress by having ample social networks.

Eaton (1978) conducted a secondary data analysis of an earlier

study to examine the relationships between life events, social supports and psychiatric symptoms. Results are based on data from 720 New Haven, Connecticut resident's interviews that were conducted in 1967 and 1969. Eaton concluded that stressful life events are more likely to cause psychological dysfunction if the person has not had similar stress before and that household members provide support in times of crisis that prevent mental dysfunction. Eaton also found that unmarried persons have fewer social supports than married persons.

Carveth and Gottlieb (1979) assessed the general relationship between social support and stress to determine if unique measures and unique sources of support are differentially associated with stress indexes. Following an analysis of data collected from questionnaires that included the Proxy Measure of Health Status and the Gurin Index of Psychiatric Symptoms given to 99 mothers of newborns 8 weeks following their deliveries, Carveth and Gottlieb concluded that social support and stress are inversely related and that unique types of support are provided to the person in crisis by different network members.

Porrit (1979) sought to determine whether or not the quality or quantity of social support available following a crisis situation effects the psychologically healthy outcome of the crisis. Using, among others, the Langner Scale, the Langley Symptoms Scale and the Bradburn Negative Affect Scale, Porrit interviewed 70 men 12 to 16 weeks following a road injury that had resulted in the respondents' hospitalization for at least one week. Porrit concluded that it is

the quality of social support, not the quantity of support provided that is the determinant for a healthy psychological outcome following a crisis. For those providing the support services, Porrit determined that the dimensions necessary to aid in the subject's healthy recovery were empathy, respect, constructiveness and genuineness. Porrit noted that people in "helping" roles need specialized training to be able to provide appropriate support for those in crisis as the outcome of the crisis depends both on the individual's ability to cope as well as support provided to the individual in crisis.

Conner et al (1979) interviewed 218 (153 of whom were women), non-institutionalized persons who were 70 years of age or older and lived in Iowa. The study examined social interaction and its relationship to personal adjustment. The yearly median income for the sample was \$2,750 and 60% (N=131) stated their health was good (46%, N=100) or excellent (14%, N=31). Conner et al concluded that it is the quality of social interaction rather than the quantity of social interaction that is crucial to understanding adaptations to aging. Data showed that an older person's life satisfaction is significantly associated with the frequency of interaction with persons of the same age cohort, the number of immediate family members seen frequently, the total number of persons seen frequently and the exclusivity in confidant relations.

In summary, research on social support systems seems to be in agreement that life stress is related to social support systems (Andrews et al, 1978; Carveth and Gottlieb, 1979; Eaton, 1978; Lin et

al, 1979; Tolsdorf, 1976) and that those persons with adequate social support systems are less likely to have psychological dysfunctions than those who have poor or non-existing social supports (Andrews et al, 1978; Eaton, 1978; Lin et al, 1979; Tolsdorf, 1976). This body of research also agrees that various social support network members provide unique social support to needy individuals during times of stress or crisis (Carveth and Gottlieb, 1979; Eaton, 1978). Research also supports the idea that it is the type and quality of the social support provided to an individual in crisis or under stress rather than the quantity of social support provided that is crucial to the resolution of the stress (Andrews et al, 1978; Conner et al, 1979; Porrit, 1979).

Weaknesses and Limitations of Current Literature

The weaknesses and limitations of the research reviewed in the areas of lesbianism, aging and social support systems will be discussed in terms of the theories from which the research questions evolve, the research questions themselves, the research methodologies employed in the studies and the findings and conclusions of the research.

Theoretical Perspectives

A major problem confronted by researchers wishing to study homosexuality, older populations or social support systems is the lack

of existing, unified theory. This lack of theory creates a dilemma for the researcher who must then formulate research questions based not on proven theory, but on theoretical perspectives which may or may not be accurate. By studying issues that evolve from theoretical perspectives, researchers investigate any number of seemingly unrelated topics. Unfortunately, this pre-theoretical accumulation of data accounts for almost all of the research in the area of lesbianism and a substantial amount of the work done on older populations.

Perhaps due to this lack of a unified theoretical base, those studying lesbianism often ignore the importance of theory within their research and leave the reader to interpret the theoretical basis of the study (Bullough and Bullough, 1977; Gundlach, 1967; Lewis, 1979; Mendola, 1980). This situation has been particularly evident since lesbian research has moved away from the early etiological studies where the primary theoretical base was Freudian. Since abandoning the quest for the cause of lesbianism, researchers have developed any number of diverse, often contradictory, theoretical perspectives about lesbians that have yet to be incorporated into a unified theory or even a group of fairly well defined, testable hypotheses.

Although gerontology has yet to develop a well defined social theory of aging (Birren, 1971), researchers have developed several theoretical perspectives about aging which researchers systematically explore (Baum and Baum, 1980). Thus, with the development of a fairly well defined set of theoretical perspectives such as "disengagement", "subculture of old age", "socialization to old age", and "activity

model" (Baum and Baum, 1980), gerontological researchers are more directed in their studies than those studying homosexuality. However, even with better defined concepts, gerontological research continues to lack any well defined theoretical perspectives dealing with older, non-heterosexual persons.

Those researchers utilizing network theory to study the social support systems of individuals also approach their work with a fairly well defined set of theoretical perspectives (Tolsdorf, 1976). Again, what is missing from the theoretical perspectives posited by the network theorists is any mention of homosexuality.

Research Questions

The lack of unified theory creates confusion in the design of appropriate research questions. With the absence of theory and the abundance of theoretical perspectives and suppositions, the research questions that have been asked about lesbians have had a somewhat unpredictable evolution. Research questions in the areas of aging and social support systems however, seem to have had a somewhat more predictable development.

Research questions in the field of lesbianism tend to cluster around questions of etiology, questions of psychological functioning and questions of lifestyles and social functioning. These topic areas shift over time as new research is conducted. A major weakness in the lesbian research is due to the lack of any unified theory, each researcher approaches the development of research questions from a

different theoretical perspective, which hampers the researcher from developing research questions in a deductive manner. Lesbian research continues to evolve from an inductive level where the research questions come from the researcher's own ideas and the abundance of unproven theoretical perspectives about lesbians.

While research questions evolving from researchers studying aging and social support systems appear to be developed at an empirically somewhat higher level than those developed for lesbians, the relevancy of research questions in these fields, too, relies heavily on the inductive abilities of the researcher. As the theorists in the fields of aging and social support systems tend to ignore homosexuality, researchers, too, are generally failing to ask questions about older homosexuals or the social support systems of homosexuals.

Research Methodology

Irrespective of the lack of a well-defined, integrated theoretical base or the relevancy of the research questions being studied, research continues in the areas of homosexuality, aging and social support systems. In many of these studies, substantial deficiencies exist within the research methodologies used to study the phenomenon in question.

The overwhelming majority of lesbian studies are descriptive, cross-sectional surveys where the operationalization of key variables may frequently be left to the reader's own interpretations (Abrams, 1980; Belote and Joesting, 1976; Caprio, 1954; Mendola, 1980). While

this is a serious limitation, other weaknesses exist as well. A major weakness in the field of lesbian research is the fact that what data has been collected comes from primarily small, biased samples of young, white, middle-class, well educated women (Albro et al, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Gagnon and Simon, 1973; Gundlach, 1967; The Ladder, 1960). Further, the data gathering procedures in the majority of studies do not provide for gathering data in any type of triangulated fashion and use researcher designed instruments. Thus, the validity and reliability of the results may be questioned. Finally, the statistical analysis in many of the lesbian studies may be ignored, leaving the reader to interpret the pages of raw data (Abrams, 1980; Belote and Joesting, 1976; Mendola, 1980; Tripp, 1976). Only a few studies in the field provide any correlational analysis (Albro et al, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Brooks, 1981) and there is little recent experimental research dealing with lesbian samples.

Similar methodological problems exist in gerontological research and social support system studies. In both fields, the majority of research continues to be cross-sectional surveys that are primarily exploratory and descriptive (Andrews et al, 1978; Harris et al, 1975; Lin et al, 1979; Lopata, 1973; Matthews, 1979; Porrit, 1979). While samples of older persons and samples for social support systems research are easier to obtain for study than are samples of lesbian women, the samples used in both gerontological and social support systems research tend to be dominated by white, middle-class, well

educated, assumed heterosexual individuals (Andrews et al, 1978; Carveth and Gottlieb, 1979; Christenson and Gagnon, 1965; Christenson and Johnson, 1973; Conner et al, 1979; Greenberg, 1979; Lopata, 1973; Matthews, 1979; Newman and Nicholas, 1960; Pfeiffer et al, 1972; Pfeiffer and Davis, 1972). As with the research on homosexuality, research in the areas of aging and social support systems tend to use researcher designed instruments that are rarely well described in the published study. Also, such studies generally gather data with only one method (generally an interview or a questionnaire) which may call into question the validity and reliability of the results. While gerontological studies and social support system research tend to be more rigorous in their statistical analysis of data and more frequently provide bivariate and multivariate analysis than research on lesbians, little experimental research is being conducted.

Research Findings and Conclusions

Because no unified theory exists from which research questions should logically emerge and because there are numerous methodological problems that exist within the current literature on lesbians, older populations and social support systems, the findings and conclusions of such research must be examined with these limitations in mind. A major weakness of homosexual research is that researchers may not honestly define the narrowness of their findings (Bell and Weinberg, 1978; Caprio, 1954; Kaye et al, 1967; Poole, 1970; Tripp, 1976; Wilbur, 1965), and others may inappropriately generalize their

findings as representative of all homosexuals (Bell and Weinberg, 1978; Caprio, 1954; Tripp, 1976). Similarly, those doing research in the fields of gerontology and social support systems also may fail to adequately define the generalizability of their findings (Andrews et al, 1978; Conner et al, 1979). Finally, findings and conclusions from the research on lesbians, older populations and social support systems tends to raise more questions about the phenomena studied than are answered.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the study's methodological approach, examines the research design, operationalizes key terms and describes the sample selection procedures utilized. Further, this chapter explains data gathering procedures, details instrumentation and statistical procedures employed, and discusses limitations and weaknesses of the total methodology.

Methodological Approach

The early studies of lesbianism (1950's) tended to utilize the medical model and sought to determine lesbian etiology in cause and effect research designs. This quasi-experimental phase with its emphasis on finding a "cure" for the disease of lesbianism yielded to a more generalized phase of quantitative-descriptive research begun in the 1960's when samples of lesbian and non-lesbian women were compared on a variety of personality variables. Generally, this homosexual-heterosexual comparison research stopped in the early 1970's and was replaced by qualitative and quantitative-descriptive, survey research

that examined lesbian characteristics, lifestyles and social functioning. This type of research continues as researchers are still concerned with defining and describing the lesbian population. Most of the research done in the fields of lesbian characteristics, lifestyles or social functioning continues to be descriptive where some small amount of analysis may be conducted to determine if correlations exist between certain variables.

Although descriptive studies dealing with homosexual characteristics (homosexual women and men) are fairly common (Abrams, 1980; Albro et al, 1977; Bell and Weinberg, 1978; Belote and Joesting, 1976; Bullough and Bullough; 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Ettorre, 1980; Gagnon and Simon, 1973; Mendola, 1980; Ponse, 1978; Rosen, 1974; Tanner, 1978), so too are exploratory studies that deal with aging (Duke Longitudinal Studies, 1955-69, 1970-73; Greenberg, 1979; Lieberman, 1977; Lopata, 1973; Matthews, 1979) and women (Davis, 1929; DeMartino, 1974; Fisher and Osofsky, 1967; Kinsey et al, 1953). Exploratory studies dealing with aging homosexual men while not plentiful, comprise the only work that has been done in that field (Berger, 1980, 1982; Francher and Henkin, 1973; Kelly, 1974, 1976; Kimmel, 1977, 1978; Minnigerode, 1976). Additionally, descriptive research is the only type of research that has been conducted in the area of older lesbian women (Adelman, 1980; Raphael and Robinson, 1980). All the studies noted, with the exception of the Duke Longitudinal Studies (1955-69, 1970-73), have used a cross-sectional survey approach as their primary data gathering method and have used

either researcher designed, respondent self-administered questionnaires and/or interviews with respondents.

Because so little is known about older lesbians, this study is exploratory and no formalized hypotheses were tested. While the primary focus of this research is descriptive, findings from this study have been compared to other studies of lesbians and homosexual men, and a portion of the data analysis is quantitative-descriptive where correlations between some major variables are analyzed. This type of research is similar to other current, related research in the fields of aging, women and sexuality and is appropriate to answer the questions of what are the discernable patterns found in the social organization of the older lesbian woman and where does the older lesbian find support (Warwick and Liniger, 1975).

Research Design

The purpose of this research is to identify the social organizational structures of the older lesbian's social world and to see if these structures indicate where the older lesbian's support systems are located. This research assumes that one way of identifying the older lesbian's social organizational structures is to examine her in relation to both the heterosexual and homosexual social systems in which she exists.

For the purpose of this research, the term older lesbian means any woman 50 years old or older whose current overt sexual activities and/or intense emotionally intimate psychological feelings rank "4" or

higher on a modified Kinsey Heterosexual-Homosexual Rating Scale (Kinsey et al, 1953, pp. 470-472). By only including women with a score of "4" or more, this study includes only individuals who are predominantly homosexual. At the most, the subject's psychological and/or physiological sexual activities are entirely homosexual. Since sexuality cannot be assumed, only those women who self-identified appropriately on the modified Kinsey Scales were included in the sample (N=73).

The term social structure means "the patterns discernable in social life, the regularities observed, the configurations detected" (Blau, 1975, p. 3), or the number and types of patterns (regularities, configurations) discernable in the older lesbian's social life. The term social life means the older lesbian's interaction with various human members of social systems of the homosexual subculture and the heterosexual culture. Human social systems of the homosexual subculture and the heterosexual culture means the networks of personal settings in which the older lesbian socially interacts (Egan and Cowan, 1979, p. 81) and is confined to those social systems that help define the concept of social institutions.

The concept of social institutions means the "principle instrument(s) whereby the essential tasks of social living are organized, directed and executed" (Vander Zanden, 1979, pp. 367, 621) and includes the following social institutions: economic, political, educational, religious, social welfare and family (Egan and Cowan, 1979; Gilbert and Specht, 1974; Vander Zanden, 1979). For the

purposes of this study, the older lesbian's interaction with the human social systems of the heterosexual culture and the homosexual subculture was restricted to her interactions with those social systems that define the economic, political, educational, religious, social welfare and family social institutions. These institutions are definable within the structure of society, are assumed to be identifiable in both the heterosexual and homosexual social systems, and such restrictions were made to facilitate comparisons between the heterosexual and homosexual systems.

Since a frequent omission by researchers studying lesbian samples is that of not recognizing the lesbian as part of a variety of human social systems, this research examines the older lesbian in a broader context than had previously been attempted. Studying the older lesbian within the previously defined conceptual framework of social institutions and the human members of the social systems that define those systems, is thought to be an appropriate method for examining both the social organization and support systems of the older lesbian woman.

For the purpose of this study, the term older lesbian support system is defined as those social interactions in which the older lesbian participates where there is an emphasis on helping her with a personal, emotional crisis situation (any situation where her coping mechanisms are unable to return the older lesbian to a state of psychological equilibrium without outside assistance [Tully, 1979]). These support systems provide the older lesbian with a network of supportive

ties (Gottlieb, 1981, p. 24). For this research, the support systems of the heterosexual and homosexual social systems are examined in terms of where, how, and the number and kinds of support offered to the older lesbian in times of personal, emotional crises.

While it is generally accepted that the heterosexual society is structured around social institutions (Vander Zanden, 1979, p. 367), it can now only be assumed that the same institutional structures exist within the homosexual social system. Some evidence exists that shows economic, political, educational, religious, social welfare and family social institutions may be found within the homosexual subculture and that these institutions may provide the same functions for the homosexual subculture as they do for the heterosexual culture (Albro et al, 1977; Brooks, 1981; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Ettore, 1980; Ponse, 1978), but research that corroborates the actual existence of such social structures within the homosexual subculture has yet to be conducted.

The term culture means "the socially standardized ways of feeling, thinking and acting that an individual acquires as a member of society" (Vander Zanden, 1979, p. 619). Thus, the heterosexual culture is defined as all those human social systems that foster socially standardized ways of feeling, thinking and acting and will be confined to those systems that define the identified social institutions.

The term subculture means "a set of distinctive ways of thinking, feeling and acting that set members of a group apart from the larger

society" (Vander Zanden, 1979, p. 626). Thus, the homosexual subculture is defined as all those human social systems that foster a set of distinctive ways of thinking, feeling and acting that set homosexuals apart from the larger society. These social systems are confined to those social systems that define the identified social institutions and that occur within the context of the older lesbian's interactions with known homosexual people, groups, activities or organizations.

To further delineate, operational definitions are provided for each designated human social system included in this study. For the purpose of this research, only those social systems that define the six previously identified social institutions (economic, political, educational, religious, social welfare and family) are included.

First, the economic institution's primary focus is on the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services (Gilbert and Specht, 1974, p. 6; Martindale, 1981, pp. 394-395; Vander Zanden, 1979, p. 480). Human social systems that define that concept center on the individual's physical survival and maintenance (Vander Zanden, 1979, p. 480). For the purposes of describing the social organization and support systems of older lesbians, the human social systems that are examined include those heterosexual and homosexual social systems with which the older lesbian interrelates and which concern her earning or spending money. This is measured by how and where the older lesbian earns and spends her money as well as where and what kind of support she finds in time of financial crises.

Second, the political institution's major emphasis is that of social control (Gilbert and Specht, 1974, p. 6; Vander Zanden, 1979, p. 497) where the social norms are formally enforced, conflicts between groups are arbitrated and protection from other societies or peoples is offered (Vander Zanden, 1979, p. 499). For this study, the human social systems that define the political institution included organized governmental politics and politically oriented organizations. The older lesbian's interaction with those systems is measured by her involvement with such political activities and organizations.

Third, the educational institution's primary objective is the transmission of the cultural heritage from one generation to the next. Education completes the individual's socialization process, transmits specialized skills, and schools may also function as a place to select a mate and make personal contacts for the future (Vander Zanden, 1979, pp. 521-530). In this study, the human social systems that define this concept include both formal educational settings (classrooms etc.) and informal educational settings (outside the classroom). The older lesbian's involvement with formal educational settings is measured by her formal educational experiences and the kind of support such experiences provided when she had a personal, emotional crisis. Her informal educational experiences are measured by the older lesbian's recollections of learning about homosexuality and the kind of support provided her when she first started defining herself as not traditionally heterosexual.

Fourth, the religious institution's focus is on the enhancement of social consensus and solidarity and is defined as "those ways of thinking, feeling and acting by which people undertake to deal with the ultimate problems of life" (Vander Zanden, 1979, p. 367). Religion functions as a social integrator (Martindale, 1981, pp. 101-102, 135-136; Vander Zanden, 1979, p. 449), and the primary religious tenets of this country have their roots in ancient Judeo-Christian ideologies (Tully and Albro, 1979). The human social systems that define the religious institution for this research are those heterosexual and homosexual social systems with which the older lesbian interrelates that are connected with major, organized religion. This is measured by the older lesbian's personal encounters, group involvement and organizational activities with organized religion and the type of support organized religion provides in times of personal, emotional crises.

Fifth, the primary goal of the social welfare institution is mutual support. This institution may be seen "as the normal and accepted means by which individuals, families and communities fulfill their social needs and attain healthful living" (Gilbert and Specht, 1974, p. 7). To fulfill this, several public and private social welfare organizations (human social systems) function in concert to provide mutual support to society's members. The older lesbian's connection to the social welfare systems of the heterosexual culture and the homosexual subculture is measured by the number of times within the past year the older lesbian has sought and received social welfare

services, from whom these services were obtained and the kind of support social welfare services provide the older lesbian in times of personal, emotional crises.

Finally, the family institution regulates sexuality; provides a means by which reproduction occurs; socializes, shields, protects, maintains and socially places children and provides a variety of emotional and social interactions for society's members (Vander Zanden, 1979, pp. 404-411). For the purposes of this research, the human social systems that define this concept include the older lesbian's heterosexual family and kinship relationships and her personal homosexual relationships. The older lesbian's social interaction with these systems is measured by her personal encounters, group involvement and organizational activities with those systems and where and what kind of support these systems offer in times of personal, emotional crises.

Sample Selection Procedures

The sample for this study is comprised of 73 self-identified, lesbian women aged 50 or older whose current intense, emotionally intimate feelings are at least "predominately with women, but with more than incidental intense emotional intimacy with men" (modified Kinsey Scale "4") and/or whose current overt sexual activities are "predominantly with women, but with more than incidental sexual experiences with men" (modified Kinsey Scale "4"). Since it is impossible for any researcher to identify the total population of older lesbians in this

country due to the lesbian's invisibility within the heterosexual world, there has never been a study of homosexuals that has employed a random sample. This research is no exception to that tradition. This study used a nonprobability, snowball sampling technique (utilizing friendship networks) to gather some respondents (N=41, 56%) while other respondents were obtained through advertisements about the research placed in lesbian oriented publications (Lesbian Connection, Lesbian Feminist Newsletter) (N=8, 11%). Other respondents were obtained through contact with known homophile organizations for older lesbians and gay men (Senior Action in a Gay Environment [SAGE]; Older and Wiser Lesbians [OWL] and Slightly Older Lesbians [SOL]) (N=8, 11%). Finally, 16 (22%) of those who participated did so because they knew the researcher. Participation in the study was voluntary and any self-identified (according to the modified Kinsey Scale ratings) lesbian at least 50 years old who was willing to participate by either being interviewed or completing an anonymous questionnaire was included.

Data Gathering Procedures

Research that begins to gather data on previously unexplored behaviors or groups often does so by the utilization of researcher design instruments and frequently uses interviews or survey questionnaires to amass information (Adelman, 1978; Albro et al, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Duke Longitudinal Studies, 1955-69, 1970-73; Francher and Henkin, 1973; Greenberg, 1979; Kelly, 1974, 1976; Kimmel,

1977; Kinsey et al, 1953; Minnigerode, 1976; Minnigerode and Adelman, 1978; Raphael and Robinson, 1980). While interviews or questionnaires seem to be a popular method of gathering data on homosexual samples, some researchers prefer to gather data by combining various data gathering techniques within a single research project. For example, a popular triangulated data gathering technique that has been successfully used with both homosexual and heterosexual samples is one where information is collected from participant observation, researcher interviews and respondent completed questionnaires (or a combination of any two of these methods) (Bullough and Bullough, 1977; Caprio, 1954; Duke Longitudinal Studies, 1955-69; 1970-73; Kelly, 1974, 1976; Matthews, 1979; Ponse, 1978; Rosen, 1974).

Gathering data in a triangulated fashion provides the researcher with one method of checking the reliability of the data collected (Bailey, 1978, pp. 154, 186, 241) as well as providing a wide array of data that can be compared. This study employed two primary data gathering techniques in an effort to gather as much data as possible within the year long data gathering process of the project.

To begin to get a sense of the older lesbian woman, the researcher became socially active with the older lesbian community over a three month period by attending various community/social events. This phase of the research took place in the Richmond, Virginia and Washington, D.C. areas and was used only to help the researcher become better acquainted with the population she was going to study. This phase provided no substantive data for analysis but did provide the

researcher any entry into two older lesbian communities.

Following this beginning phase of the research, the researcher designed an interview format (see Appendix A) that was reviewed for structure, content and face validity by two older lesbians, one older homosexual man, three social work educators, one sociologist and one gerontologist. The researcher subsequently interviewed 10 older lesbians who were known to the researcher and who volunteered for the study once they learned about it.

Each of the interviews lasted from 2-4 hours and was conducted during one session in the home of the respondent. Only the respondent and the researcher were present during the interviews, each respondent signed a consent form agreeing to participate in the study, the same set of instructions was read to each respondent, the interview questions were presented to each respondent in the same order and the responses to each interview were recorded by the interviewer, away from the respondent, immediately following each interview. The purpose of the interviews was to help the researcher gain more knowledge about older lesbians and to assist the researcher with the construction of the questionnaire. Following a three month interview phase, a survey questionnaire that was made available to older lesbians throughout the country was developed by the researcher (see Appendix B).

Both the interview format and the questionnaire were designed to gather data on the older lesbian's social interactions within the heterosexual culture and the homosexual subculture and included seven

major topical areas: family, religion, economics, politics, education, social welfare and demographics. The interview format that was developed was a moderately scheduled one (Gorden, 1969, pp. 38-39) where specific topics were covered and where both open and close-ended questions were asked. The use of such a format allowed for a greater accumulation of data than with a rigidly scheduled format using only close-ended questions (Bailey, 1979, p. 172), and since specific content areas were covered in each interview, comparisons between subjects was facilitated more easily than if a totally unstructured format had been used. Because the data gathered from the interviews contained the same information as was subsequently gathered from the questionnaires and the interview sample was statistically similar to the questionnaire sample, the data from those interviewed were included with the data collected from the questionnaires in the statistical analysis. Those interviewed comprise 13.7% (N=10) of the total sample (N=73).

The questionnaire included mainly close-ended, standardized questions with some open-ended questions and was designed according to Dillman's (1978) method. The questionnaire included seven major topical areas (family, religion, economics, politics, social welfare and demographics). Before the questionnaire was distributed to possible respondents, it was analyzed for content, structure and face validity by three members of the Council on Social Work Education's National Lesbian/Gay Issues Task Force (two of whom were over 50 years old and are professional social work educators), one gerontologist,

three social work educators and one sociologist. The questionnaire was then pre-tested by 10 lesbian women (7 of whom were 50 years old or older).

Following incorporation of suggestions from the pre-distribution phase, 450 questionnaires were distributed. In order to get respondents from a variety of geographical locations, various distribution procedures were employed. One-hundred questionnaires were mailed in packets of 5 per chairperson, to the chairpersons of the 20 National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Lesbian/Gay Issues Committees in 20 NASW Chapters across the country (the remaining Chapters of NASW have no such committee structure). A cover letter (see Appendix B) that solicited the chairperson's help in the distribution process was included. An additional 100 questionnaires, in packets of 5 per addressee, were mailed to 20 researcher selected women who have made themselves available as "Contact Dykes" in the lesbian publications, Lesbian Connection. The researcher selected these contacts based on their geographical locale and sent packets to states other than those which had been included in the NASW mailing. Fifty questionnaires were placed at two women's stores (one in Washington, D.C. and one in Provincetown, Massachusetts) in boxes containing 25 questionnaires each and 100 questionnaires were mailed to known older lesbian/gay organizations (25 each to two chapters of Senior Action in a Gay Environment [SAGE], and 25 each to Older and Wiser Lesbians [OWL] and Slightly Older Lesbians [SOL]). Twenty questionnaires were mailed directly to respondents who had solicited them in response to

advertisements placed by the researcher in lesbian and gay publications (Lesbian Connection, Lesbian Feminist Newsletter, The Washington Blade), 20 were distributed to a lesbian/gay issues workshop leader at a professional conference and 60 were distributed by the researcher to respondents requesting additional questionnaires for their friends and her own friendship network.

Table 1

Questionnaire Distribution

<u>Distribution to</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
NASW Committee Chairs	100	22
Contact Dykes	100	22
SAGE, OWL, SOL	100	22
Researcher's Friendship Network	60	13
Women's Stores	50	11
Advertisements	20	5
Conference Workshop Leader	<u>20</u>	<u>5</u>
TOTAL	450	100%

Each questionnaire included a cover letter (see Appendix B) that explained the purpose of the study and requested help in obtaining more respondents and a stamped, return envelope. Distribution of the questionnaires was problematic as they could not generally be delivered directly to known older lesbians, but frequently had to be

delivered to appropriate respondents through an intermediary. It is unknown how many of the 450 questionnaires that were distributed actually reached an appropriate respondent.

The data collection process for the project spanned 12 months. Three months was devoted to the researcher gaining an entry to the subculture of older lesbian women in the Richmond, Virginia and the Washington, D.C. areas and three months was devoted to developing an interview format and interviewing 10 respondents. The remaining six months was spent developing, pre-testing and distributing questionnaires. The actual distribution and return of the questionnaires lasted 3.5 months (from June 30 - October 15, 1982). During that time 63 (14%) of the originally distributed 450 were returned and are included in the analysis.

Statistical Analysis Procedures

Because this research is exploratory and because of the relatively small number of responses, the major statistical analysis procedures consisted of univariate analysis where each of the study's 186 variables was independently analyzed and measures of central tendency and frequency distributions reported. In addition to univariate analysis, the researcher sought to determine whether or not eight selected independent variables (whether or not a respondent had ever been heterosexually married, sexual openness, religious devotedness, current income, whether or not the respondent was involved in a current relationship, educational level, whether or not a respondent

considered herself a member of a lesbian community and age) were associated with and significantly correlated with a variety of selected dependent variables. The specific independent variables that were selected to be used in this bivariate analysis were chosen because of their relevance to theory and prior research. Both significant and not significant bivariate cross-tabulations are reported where Phi and Cramer's V were used as measures of association. Results from this bivariate analysis indicated that because of the small sample size and the homogeneity of those studied, further multivariate analysis would provide no significant additional information.

Data collected from the interview respondents and questionnaire respondents were analyzed independently and then compared to see if there were significant differences. Because no significant differences existed between the two samples and because the interview sample was so small, the data from both samples were analyzed together making the total sample size 73.

Methodological Limitations and Weaknesses

The limitations and weaknesses of this study's methodology will be discussed in terms of the study's methodological approach, research design, sampling procedures, data gathering procedures and statistical analysis. This study is a descriptive one that tries to generally answer the question of, "What is happening?" in the social world of the older lesbian woman. While this approach is an appropriate one

given the amount of information available on older lesbians, it only provides a description of events rather than an explanatory, experimental study that would attempt to specify how or why certain events occurred (Bailey, 1978, p. 32). Such a descriptive study provides for an examination of phenomena in a realistic environment, but lacks the predictive qualities and the element of control associated with experimental studies (Bailey, 1978, p. 192). The study used a cross-sectional, survey approach and interviews as its primary data gathering methods. The principal disadvantage in using a cross-sectional approach is that it gathered data from respondents at only one point in time and historical accuracy was left to the respondent's memory which may or may not be correct.

The conceptual design of the study (examination of the older lesbian's social organization), while based on previously gathered data and theory, and thought to be an appropriate way to study the social organization and support systems of older lesbian women, is not the only way the study could have been conducted and leaves room for future research in the field. Additionally, the way the study's major terms were operationalized may or may not be inclusive and may be inaccurate. The sampling procedures were lacking insofar as a probability, random sample of the population was not available for study and the questionnaire distribution process may have created a sampling bias. By making respondents self-identify on a scale, by using interviews and questionnaires and by using a nonprobability sampling technique, a sampling bias may have been created.

The data gathering procedures included an interview phase and a questionnaire phase. While the interviews provided flexibility, some researcher control over environment and recording of data, the interviews were costly and time consuming, left room for possible researcher bias and provided the respondent with little anonymity. Since all the interview respondents were volunteers who knew the researcher, a possible bias could have occurred and errors could have been created through the interviewer recording the wrong answer or through the respondent's purposive lying, unconscious or accidental mistakes in answering or memory failure.

The questionnaire lacked flexibility, yielded a low response rate, provided the researcher no control over the environment or the order in which the questions were answered and did not allow for complex questions or spontaneous responses. The print on the questionnaire was small and there was little room for respondents to answer some of the open-ended questions.

Because the instruments were researcher designed, the validity and reliability of the tools is unknown. While the interview format and questionnaire were assessed for face validity, structure and content by appropriate measures and the findings appear comparable to other research in the field, researcher designed instruments always allow for possible research error and/or bias. Finally, the statistical analysis in any descriptive study tends to be narrowly defined. Because univariate analysis was the primary technique and bivariate analysis proved largely inconclusive and statistically insignificant, the statistics appropriate to the study were limited.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

This chapter presents results from the statistical analysis procedures. Statistical computations were performed at the Virginia Commonwealth University Computer Center utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Demographic information about the sample is presented first. Information pertaining to the older lesbian's personal heterosexual and homosexual relationships, her connection to organized religion and her economic situation will also be discussed. Additionally, data are presented that describe the older lesbian's interaction with governmental politics, the social welfare system and her educational experiences. Where the older lesbian seeks support and what kind of support various systems provide her in times of personal, emotional crises are discussed throughout the chapter.

Demographic Information

Study respondents consisted of 73 self-identified, lesbian women whose ages ranged from 50 to 77, with 55.2 as the mean age (see Table 2). All were caucasian (although three claimed a hispanic ethnic identity), and a majority (93.2%) claimed good or excellent health. The sample tended to live in urban areas (67.1%) (see Appendix C), and many of those who lived in rural areas expressed a desire to move to a more urban environment.

The following comment was not atypical about rural life:

...is a small town and I live in an even smaller community about four miles south. I can hardly wait to sell the house and move to a more accepting state and gay community. I have been trying to start or join a lesbian community here for about the last three years and am still searching.

Respondents had lived in the areas in which they currently reside from less than a year to 76 years with the mean length of time in an area being 13.6 years. Some mobility was indicated as almost one fifth had lived in their present locale for less than 4 years (19.2%) and 75.3% had lived in their present locale for less than 30 years.

Most owned (or were buying) the home in which they lived (79.5%); lived in a house (71.2%), apartment or condominium (26%) and slightly more than half (56.2%) shared their living expenses with another person. Although 39 (53.4%) of those participating acknowledged they were presently involved in an intimate relationship with another woman, only 28 (38.4%) said they currently lived with a female life

TABLE 2
Age of Respondents
(N=73)

<u>Years</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
50-54	33	45.2
55-59	23	31.5
60-64	8	11.0
65-69	2	2.7
70-74	4	5.5
75 or Older	3	4.1

Mean = 55.2
Median = 53.2
Mode = 50
Range = 50-77

partner. This means that some women (N=11) who were currently involved in an intimate relationship with another woman did not consider this woman to be a life partner or the two women did not live together.

A few women in the sample lived with relatives (12.3%) including elderly mothers (5.5%), children (5.5%) or husband (1.4%). For those respondents who lived with someone (57.5%, N=42), 81% lived with lesbians, 11.9% lived with heterosexual women (generally elderly mothers, and the remainder lived with heterosexual people (e.g. husband, business associate, children). These women had lived in their various living situations from less than a year to 56 years with the mean length of time being 18.2 years.

To sexually define themselves, half use the term "lesbian," 28.8% use the term "gay" and 12.3% use the term "homosexual." Interestingly, 3 respondents (4.1%) chose to sexually define themselves as "bisexual" although all included in the study met the researcher's definition of lesbian (see Table 3). While 15.1% of those studied had been intensely emotionally intimate more with men than women or with women and men equally during the past 20 years, 80.9% had either been exclusively or predominantly intensely emotionally involved with women during the past 20 years. Additionally, 91.8% of the respondents were currently exclusively or predominantly intensely emotionally involved with women while 8.2% were so involved with neither women nor men. Seventy-eight percent had been sexually involved primarily with women during the past 20 years and 66.1% were currently involved sexually

TABLE 3

Emotional Intimacy and Sexual Activity Scales
(N=73)

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Intense Emotionally Intimate Feelings</u>				<u>Physical Sexual Activities</u>			
	<u>Past 20 Years</u>		<u>Current</u>		<u>Past 20 Years</u>		<u>Current</u>	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
0 Only with Men	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.4
1 Predominantly With Men, but Incidentally With Women	1	1.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
2 Predominantly With Men, but More Than Incidentally With Women	4	5.5	-	-	9	12.3	-	-
3 With Women and Men Equally	6	8.2	-	-	6	8.2	-	-
4 Predominantly With Women, but More Than Incidentally With Men	3	4.1	1	1.4	5	6.8	2	2.7
5 Predominantly With Women, but Incidentally With Men	18	24.7	9	12.3	12	16.4	2	2.7
6 Only With Women	41	56.2	57	78.1	40	54.8	43	58.9
7 Neither Women Nor Men	-	-	6	8.2	1	1.4	25	34.2

with women. One respondent claimed to be sexually active only with men, but was emotionally intimate only with women, and 34.2% of the sample was not currently sexually active with another person. This data is similar to results from other studies as it reinforces the idea that lesbianism is defined not merely by sexual activity, that women who may be defined as lesbian do have a variety of sexual experiences and intense emotional intimacies and that older lesbians may or may not be sexually active with another person (Albro et al, 1977; Duke Longitudinal Studies, 1955-69, 1970-73; Kinsey et al, 1953; Minnigerode and Adelman, 1978; Raphael and Robinson, 1980).

When asked to rank themselves on a sexual orientation openness scale, respondents were more evenly distributed along the continuum than on most other demographic variables examined (see Table 4). Forty-one percent fell below the midpoint of 4 and 42% were above the midpoint (see Table 4). The mean score on the sexual orientation openness scale was 4.0 which indicates that for the most part, these women do not totally hide their sexual orientation from the world at large.

Generally, both parents of those studied were dead (61.1% had no living mother, 75.3% had no living father), slightly more than half (54.8%) had living sisters and 60.3% had living brothers. Slightly more than one quarter of those studied had been in families with two or more brothers while one fifth had been in families with two or more sisters. The women in this study tended to be fairly equally divided

TABLE 4

Sexual Openness Scale
(N=73)

<u>Sexual Openness</u>		<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Sexual Orientation Hidden with few Exceptions	1	10	13.7
	2	8	11.0
	3	12	16.4
	4	12	16.4
	5	6	8.2
	6	19	26.0
Complete Openness	7	6	8.2

Mean = 4.0
 Median = 4.0
 Mode = 6.0

with regard to birth order as 39.8% were only or eldest children, 38.4% were youngest children and 21.9% were middle children.

While a majority (58.9%) had never heterosexually married, many (83.3%) of those who had married men (N=30) had children. These lesbian mothers comprise 34.2% of the total sample.

Slightly more than half (53.4%) were involved with organized religion and 36.9% considered themselves at least moderately devout.

The sample is highly skewed toward well educated, professional women who are politically liberal. A substantial majority (75.3%) have at least a baccalaureate degree (see Table 5), are (or were) professionally employed (65.7%) (see Appendix D) and consider themselves at least politically liberal (70.9%). Additionally, a substantial majority (93.2%) found out about this study through friends (56.2%) or from the researcher (37%).

In summary, the demographic characteristics of this sample show a relatively homogeneous group of women who are generally in their early 50's, enjoy good to excellent health, live with someone with whom they share expenses in a house they own and have lived with the same people for a substantial length of time. Further, these women tend to sexually define themselves using the term "lesbian" and are predominantly both intensely emotionally intimate and physically sexually active with women. They tend not to totally hide their sexual orientation, come from families where both parents are deceased but where siblings are still alive and they tend to be the first or last born child.

TABLE 5

Educational Level
(N=73)

<u>Highest Level of Education Achieved</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Some High School	1	1.4
High School Graduate (or G.E.D.)	6	8.2
1 - 2 Years of College	7	9.7
Associate Degree	2	2.7
3 - 4 Years of College	2	2.7
Undergraduate Degree	9	12.3
Master's Degree	34	46.6
Doctoral Degree	12	16.4

Many have married and have children, many are involved with organized religion and most are well educated, professional, politically liberal women who learned of this study through friends.

Discussion of Demographic Findings

This sample with a mean age of 55.2 tends to be somewhat younger than other samples of older lesbians (Adelman, 1980; Raphael and Robinson, 1980), but includes a substantially larger number of older lesbians on whom data was collected than prior research with lesbian samples where women over 50 comprise small portions of the total sample (Adelman, 1980; Albro et al, 1977; Bell and Weinberg, 1978; Brooks, 1981; Chafetz et al, 1976; Davis, 1928; Fisher and Osofsky, 1967; Jay and Young, 1977; Kinsey, 1953; Masters and Johnson, 1966; Mendola, 1980; Saghir and Robins, 1969). The way the questionnaires were distributed may have influenced the relatively young age of respondents although all of the research in the field of older homosexuals has indicated difficulty in finding and including older lesbians and gay men (Adelman, 1980; Berger, 1980, 1982; Francher and Henkin, 1973; Kelly, 1974; Kimmel, 1977, 1978; Minnigerode, 1976; Minnigerode and Adelman, 1978; Raphael and Robinson, 1980). Prior research has indicated that many lesbian women choose not to openly acknowledge their sexual orientation (Albro et al 1977; Bell and Weinberg, 1978; Brooks, 1981; Bullough and Bullough, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974; Minnigerode and Adelman, 1978; Ponse, 1978) and that older

women frequently choose not to discuss their sexual orientation (Minnigerode and Adelman, 1978), so it is not surprising that the mean age of the lesbians in the study is not older.

This sample is comparable to other studies of homosexual women and men with regard to the respondents health where an overwhelming majority claimed to be in good or excellent health (Albro et al, 1977; Bell and Weinberg, 1978; Berger, 1980, 1982; Chafetz et al, 1974; Minnigerode and Adelman, 1978; Ponse, 1978; Raphael and Robinson, 1980) which tends to confirm Rose's (1971) finding that older persons today are healthier than in prior generations and contradict Bengtson and Haber's (1975) finding that older persons today generally have declining health.

Like virtually all studies of homosexual women and men, this study's sample is biased toward white, well educated, politically liberal professionals who live in urban areas and who generally earn substantially more than this nation's median income. While this sample's demographic profile is similar to other studies of older lesbians and gay men and of homosexuals in general, the profile is different from that of general descriptions of this country's older female population where the older woman is portrayed as economically impoverished, not well educated and heterosexually married (or widowed) (Auchenbaum, 1974; Bart, 1975; Cutler and Harootyan, 1975).

Additionally, this sample is similar to other samples of older

lesbians where the women were sexually active and involved in intimate relationships with other women (Adelman, 1980; Raphael and Robinson, 1980). And, like Berger's (1980) findings on older homosexual men, the women in this sample were more open about their sexual orientation than a fairly recent study's sample of much younger lesbian women (Albro et al, 1977).

Again, like most samples of lesbians, the women in this study tended to come from families with more than one child, had generally not heterosexually married and were not currently particularly religiously devout. Unlike many studies of lesbians where the findings show the women to be overwhelmingly not religiously affiliated (Albro et al, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1976; Brooks, 1981; Ettore, 1980; Tanner, 1978), half of this study's sample were religiously affiliated.

Finally, respondents learned of this study through friendship networks. As with many other lesbian studies (Albro et al, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Mendola, 1980) utilizing friendship networks seems to be almost the only way of obtaining a sample of homosexual women as other methods (e.g. advertisements, distribution of questionnaires to organizations, women's stores etc.) yield low responses. Given the illegality of lesbian acts in most jurisdictions and the frequently covert, invisible nature of lesbians within our society, it is not surprising that samples of lesbians are most easily obtained through friendship networks available to the researcher.

Familial and Social Relationships

As noted in the demographic's section, the majority of those included in this study no longer had living parents, came from families where they had both brothers and sisters and still had living siblings. While 79.5% said they knew of no other homosexual persons in their immediate family, two respondents said their mothers were lesbians, three had lesbian sisters, three had homosexual children and one respondent had married a homosexual man.

While a slight majority had never heterosexually married, 41.1% of those responding had married and three respondents had been married twice. Of those who had married men, most (86.7%) had done so before they were 27 years old and the mean marriage age was 21. Respondents reported marrying between the ages of 17 and 42. The mean length of time respondents remained married was 12.6 years, and the longest a respondent had been married was 36 years. Four women reported they were still married or separated at the time of the study. For those who were no longer married (N=26), the reasons for the termination of the marriage varied. Twelve (16.4%) explained their marriages terminated based on a mutual agreement between partners while 5.5% said their marriages ended because of disillusionment with the marriage due to immature expectations. The following response is typical of why marriages ended:

I married for all the stereotypical reasons as I had been socialized to think that was my role. My husband reinforced this and was over controlling. I came to know that one day I had to get out of the marriage and prepared myself to totally self-supporting. I left the marriage because I could no longer tolerate living with a man who was so emotionally distant.

In only 4.1% (N=3) of the marriages did the husband leave his wife for another woman and in only 6.8% (N=5) did the marriage end specifically so the woman could pursue her lesbian inclinations.

Twenty-five (34.2%) of those in the sample have children and 20 (27.3%) have more than one child. The mean number of children is 1, and those who opted to have children have produced a total of 75 children. Additionally, 23.2% of the sample have grandchildren.

While 58.9% of those responding had never heterosexually married, slightly more than half of the sample (53.4%) were presently involved in an intimate relationship with another woman. The mean duration of these relationships was 9.5 years and 71.4% had been involved with their current relationship for less than 20 years. Almost 20% had been so involved for less than 5 years. Women who were not currently involved in an intimate relationship with another woman indicated that the duration of their last such relationship had averaged 4.8 years. As other research has demonstrated that age is correlated with the duration of intimate relationships (Albro et al, 1977; Chafetz, 1974,

1976), this study also shows that the older a respondent, the longer the length of the current intimate relationship ($p = .01$).

Since it has been reported by various studies that lesbians may be covert about their sexual orientation (Bullough and Bullough, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Raphael and Robinson, 1980), several variables examined to whom the older lesbian has revealed her sexual orientation. The first set of variables centered on her openness with her family, the second set on her openness outside her family circle.

A substantial majority said that neither parent was (or ever had been) aware of her lesbianism while siblings may or may not be aware. Overwhelmingly, if the respondent had children, the children were aware of their mother's sexual orientation (85.2%) while husband's knew of their wife's lesbianism in only 4 out of 10 instances and grandchildren were the least likely to be aware of their grandmother's sexual orientation (see Table 6). An interesting finding is that 27.4% of the sample believe that no one in their immediate family is aware of the respondent's lesbianism.

All those responding stated that they had lesbian friends who were aware of the respondent's sexual orientation, and a large majority (89%) said they had homosexual male friends who were also aware. While somewhat fewer (75.3%) acknowledged that they had homosexual acquaintances who were aware of their sexual orientation, 80.8% had made their lesbianism known to heterosexual women friends.

TABLE 6

Immediate Family Members Who are
Aware of Respondent's Lesbianism

<u>Family Member</u>	<u>Aware</u>		<u>Not Aware</u>		<u>Number Responding</u>
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	
Mother	19	26.0	54	74.0	73
Father	12	16.4	61	83.6	73
Sister(s)	23	54.8	19	45.2	42
Brother(s)	25	49.0	26	51.0	51
Children	23	92.6	2	7.4	25
Grandchildren	3	17.6	14	82.4	17
Husband	12	40.0	18	60.0	30
None	20	27.4	53	72.6	73

Heterosexual male friends were less likely to be aware of the respondent's sexual orientation (46.4%) and heterosexual acquaintances were the least likely to know (21.9%). While 27.4% of the sample had not revealed their sexual orientation to immediate family members, all 73 (100%) had made their lesbianism known to some other person.

In an effort to begin to determine if associations existed between who was aware of the respondent's lesbianism and variables that have been associated with overtness of identity in other lesbian research (Albro et al, 1977; Brooks, 1981; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Mendola, 1981), eight independent variables thought to influence overtness of identity were cross-tabulated with variables that identified who was aware of the respondent's sexual orientation (see Table 7). The eight independent variables included: sexual orientation openness, whether or not a respondent had ever heterosexually married, religious devoutness, age, education, income, whether or not a respondent was in a current relationship with another woman and whether or not a respondent considered herself a member of a homosexual community.

As would be expected, those correlations which are most significant are those associated with a respondent's score on the sexual orientation openness scale. The higher the respondent's score on the openness scale (the less hidden their sexual orientation is to the world at large), the more likely family members and others outside the family were to be aware of the subject's lesbianism. The respondent's age was also significantly correlated with those who knew of her sexual orientation. For example, the older a respondent, the

TABLE 7

Correlations Between Who is Aware of
Respondent's Sexual Orientation and
Selected Independent Variables¹

<u>Who is Aware</u>	<u>Sexual Openness</u>	<u>Ever Married</u>	<u>Religious Devoutness</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Educational Level</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>In Present Relationship</u>	<u>Homosexual Community Member</u>
Mother	.425*	.114	.260	.296	.303	.207	.072	.002
Father	.412*	.145	.249	.349	.270	.065	.191	.108
Sister(s)	.492*	.173	.288	.373	.258	.116	.143	.065
Brother(s)	.500*	.175	.305	.483**	.351	.141	.058	.015
Children	.491*	.280	.598	.207	.354	.140	.256	.069
Grandchildren	.626	.309	.540	.350	.626	.409	.073	.256
Husband	.421*	.054	.428	.387*	.287	.202	.190	.256
No Family Member	.511**	.388**	.191	.291	.227	.176	.142	.266*
Homosexual Men Friends	.363	.025	.173	.646**	.181	.099	.199	.294*
Homosexual Acquaintances	.257	.154	.213	.229	.382	.175	.166	.219
Heterosexual Women	.405*	.124	.212	.425*	.360	.178	.036	.018
Heterosexual Men	.545**	.168	.256	.384*	.349	.101	.156	.143
Heterosexual Acquaintances	.560**	.095	.331	.374	.321	.125	.030	.130

¹Measures of Association: Phi, Cramer's V

*p= .05

**p= 0.1

less likely her brothers were to be aware of her sexual orientation although that did not hold true for her sisters or parents. As might be expected, if a respondent had been heterosexually married, the less likely that any member of her family was aware of her sexual orientation, and if a respondent considered herself a member of a homosexual community, the more likely that a variety of types of people outside her family would be aware of her lesbianism. This bivariate analysis proved inconsequential for the most part due to the small sample size and the homogeneity of the sample which made more informative analysis impossible.

It was thought that one way of measuring where older lesbians get personal support would be by determining the amount of leisure time they spend with various types of people. A majority (61.6%) spend their leisure time with people who are younger than they while 19.2% spend time with people who are both younger and older than they. Only 16.4% spend their leisure time with persons their own age and 2.7% spend their free time with people older than themselves. When questioned about the kinds of people with whom they spend their leisure time, a not surprising pattern emerges (see table 8) that demonstrates the women in this sample spend more time with women (lesbians and heterosexual women) than with men and that they did not usually spend a lot of their leisure time alone.

It was felt that perhaps the age of a respondent would be associated with the eight independent variables previously noted. When the variables were cross-tabulated, no significant correlations were discovered.

While the amount of time respondents spent with other lesbians was associated with whether or not a subject considered herself a member of the homosexual community ($p < .01$), whether or not a respondent was in a current relationship ($p < .03$) and age ($p < .007$); the amount of time a respondent spent alone was also correlated with age ($p < .06$), whether or not they were in a current relationship with another woman ($p < .0000$) and education ($p < .05$). Age was also significantly correlated with the amount of time a respondent spent with heterosexual women where the older the respondent, the more time spent with heterosexual women ($p < .0000$), and the more open a respondent was on the sexual orientation openness scale, the more time she spent with heterosexual men ($p < .02$).

It is not surprising that older lesbians who consider themselves members of the homosexual community and who are involved in intimate relationships with other women would spend more time with other lesbians, nor is it strange to discover that women who are not involved in an intimate relationship spend more time alone. Age seems to be an important variable as the results tend to show that the older the respondent, the more time she spends alone or with other women and the less time she spends with men.

Because the death of a loved one may be considered an emotional crisis for which people need support (Tully, 1979), respondents were asked whether or not a woman with whom they had ever been emotionally intimate had ever died. A majority (78.1%) had never had this

TABLE 8

Types of People with Whom
 Respondents Spend Leisure Time
 (N=73)

<u>% of Time Spent</u>	<u>Lesbians</u>	<u>Heterosexual</u> <u>Women</u>	<u>Homosexual</u> <u>Men</u>	<u>Heterosexual</u> <u>Men</u>	<u>Alone</u>
None	1.4	12.3	30.1	45.2	21.9
A Little	16.4	45.2	50.7	39.7	34.2
Some	19.2	30.1	13.7	9.6	13.7
Fair Amount	30.1	9.6	2.7	4.1	21.9
Great Deal	31.5	2.7	2.7	1.4	8.2
All	1.4	-	-	-	-

experience, but for those who had (21.9%) most (78.6%) got their primary emotional support from other lesbians or homosexual family members (if they had such). A secondary source of support during their grieving period came from heterosexual women or heterosexual family members. Overwhelmingly, these women who had lost their lovers did not get emotional support from men.

Results show that age is significantly correlated with the amount of support received by women who have lost lovers through death. The younger the respondent, the more likely it is that she will receive emotional support during her grieving process from other lesbians ($p = <.06$) or heterosexual women ($p = <.03$). Those respondents with more education tend to receive a lot of grief support from heterosexual family members ($p = <.002$) as do those who are not religiously devout ($p = <.009$). Those respondents who have lost women with whom they have been intimately involved seem to get some support in times of loss from the homosexual community if the respondent is a member of the community ($p = <.07$).

When asked generally from whom they get the most support in times of personal, emotional crises, respondents tended to say they got the most support from other lesbians and family members, progressively less support from heterosexual women and the least support from men (see Table 9). Interestingly, many respondents felt their primary source of support came from themselves.

Data show that if a respondent had never heterosexually married, the more likely she was to say she gets the most support from other

TABLE 9

Amount of Support Provided
By Various Types of People

<u>Amount of Support</u>	<u>Lesbian Friends (N=73)</u>	<u>Heterosexual Women Friends (N=73)</u>	<u>Homo- sexual Family (N=15)</u>	<u>Hetero- sexual Family (N=73)</u>	<u>Homo- sexual Men Friends (N=73)</u>	<u>Hetero- sexual Men Friends (N=73)</u>	<u>No One (N=73)</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Most Support 1	73.1	8.8	25.0	12.5	14.3	2.6	30.0
2	14.9	47.4	25.0	20.7	21.4	-	20.0
3	6.0	24.6	37.5	29.2	31.0	10.5	10.0
4	3.0	12.3	-	14.6	23.8	18.4	6.7
5	1.5	1.8	12.5	14.6	2.4	23.7	13.3
6	1.5	1.8	-	4.2	7.1	18.4	20.0
Least Support 7	-	3.5	-	4.2	-	-	

lesbians ($p < .07$) and the less support she gets from heterosexual family members ($p < .03$) during times of personal, emotional crises. Also, if the respondent considered herself a member of the homosexual community ($p < .01$) or if she was involved in a current intimate relationship with another woman ($p < .01$), the less support she got from heterosexual men.

In terms of the kind of support respondents wanted in times of personal, emotional crises, most (82.4%) said they wanted friends to whom they could turn for love, acceptance and interpersonal communication about the crisis situation. An additional 11.8% said they wanted professional mental health intervention and 5.9% thought they needed no support in times of personal, emotional crises.

A majority (80.9%) said they got at least some amount of support from the heterosexual world in times of personal, emotional crises, but 19.1% felt they got no support at all from the heterosexual culture in times of crisis. Interestingly, only 74.9% said they got some type of support from the homosexual subculture in times of crisis, and 25% reported getting little or no such support from other homosexuals.

When asked about the adequacy of their heterosexual and homosexual support systems, a majority of respondents (58.9%) stated they thought their homosexual support systems were at least adequate while 16.4% reported having inadequate support systems in the homosexual subculture. As might be expected, if a respondent considered herself a member of the homosexual community, the more adequately she perceived her homosexual support systems ($p < .02$).

It is interesting that 58.9% also reported having heterosexual support systems that were at least adequate although 26% reported inadequate heterosexual support systems.

All respondents considered their relationships with other homosexuals at least moderately important and 94.5% reported such relationships as being very important or important. Also, a majority considered their relationships with heterosexuals at least moderately important (86.3%) and over half (54.8%) thought such relationships were important or very important. Only 6.8% (N=5) thought relationships with heterosexuals were unimportant or very unimportant.

Income was shown to be associated with how important a respondent considered her homosexual relationships to be, but was not associated with the importance of her heterosexual relationships. Generally, the more income a respondent earned, the more important to her were her relationships with other homosexuals ($p < .04$).

In summary, respondents tended to have no living parents, but had living brothers and sisters. If a respondent had heterosexually married, she was likely to have children and was no longer married although the duration of the marriage was significant. Respondents tended to be currently intimately involved with another woman although the length of these relationships was shorter than the length of time women who had heterosexually married had remained in their marital relationships. In terms of who was aware of the respondent's sexual orientation, people within her immediate family were less likely to be

aware of her sexual orientation than anyone else in the family. Among these outside the family, a respondent's lesbian and heterosexual women friends were more likely to be aware of the subject's sexual orientation than acquaintances or men. Most respondents spent their leisure time with women younger than themselves and have not experienced the death of a woman with whom they have been intimately involved. Subjects seem to get the most support during a personal, emotional crisis from lesbians and family members who provide love and acceptance through interpersonal communication about the crisis situation. The respondents' support systems within the heterosexual and homosexual social systems seem to be adequate to these women's needs for only slightly more than half of the sample, and overwhelmingly respondents felt their relationships with both heterosexuals and homosexuals to be important.

Discussion of Findings on Familial and Social Relationships

In terms of the number of women in this study who had heterosexually married (41.1%) and had stayed in their marital relationships for an average of 12.6 years, this sample is similar to Raphael and Robinson's (1980) sample of older lesbians where 55% of the sample had been heterosexually married anywhere from 19 to 33 years. And, as with other studies of lesbians, this study further demonstrates that heterosexual marriages among lesbians are not uncommon (Albro et al, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Mendola, 1980). While heterosexual marriages are not unknown to lesbian samples, this finding differs

from studies of older homosexual men where there is much less likelihood of their ever having heterosexually married (Berger, 1980, 1982; Kelly, 1974).

Results from the present study show that like heterosexual couples, the marriages terminated for a variety of reasons most of which were unrelated to the respondent's lesbianism. This refutes Bell and Weinberg's (1978) finding that homosexuality is frequently the precipitating factor in a marriage dissolution.

As with other lesbian samples (Albro et al, 1977; Brooks, 1981; Chafetz et al, 1976; Mendola, 1980), many of the respondents in this sample had children and some had grandchildren. This tends to refute the myth that lesbian women do not have children.

With regard to who is aware of the respondent's sexual orientation, this research reinforces findings of other lesbian research where the respondent's lesbian friends and heterosexual women friends were much more likely to be aware of her sexual orientation than were family members or men (Albro et al, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Jay and Young, 1977; Tanner, 1978).

It is interesting to note that the average duration of intimate lesbian relationships is somewhat shorter than the duration of the heterosexual marriages in which respondents had been involved (9.5 years average for current lesbian relationships and 12.6 years for a heterosexual marriage). A natural question arises as to why this is so. While one could conjecture that lesbian relationships are not provided the same societal support as heterosexual marriages, research to substantiate this is not available.

The present research is also similar to other studies of lesbian samples (Albro et al, 1977; Brooks, 1981; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Ettorre, 1980; Tanner, 1978; Wolff, 1971) that demonstrate lesbian women tend to spend more time with lesbians and women than they do with men. Also, like Raphael and Robinson (1980), this study helps reinforce the idea that older lesbians seek and obtain support in times of personal, emotional crises from lesbians and women friends rather than from their families or men although interpersonal relationships with both heterosexual and homosexual persons are important.

Religion

As traditional religion has been characterized as a social integrator and a way of acting, feeling and thinking by which people undertake to deal with life's problems (Vander Zanden, 1979, p. 367), a series of questions regarding the respondent's involvement with organized religion were asked. Slightly more than half (54.8%) had been brought up in a protestant home, and 26% had been raised as Catholics. Only 9.6% grew up in a Jewish household and another 9.6% said they were raised in households where there were no religious beliefs. The sample's present religious preferences show 41% who currently espouse agnostic, atheistic or no religious beliefs while only 30.9% remain protestants, 13.7% Catholic and 9.6% Jewish (see Table 10). The majority (67.1%) attend religious worship services less than twice a year while the remainder attend such services at least several times a year.

TABLE 10
Religious Affiliations
(N=73)

<u>Religion</u>	<u>Childhood Affiliation</u>	<u>Current Affiliation</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Protestant	54.8	30.9
Catholic	26.0	13.7
Jewish	9.6	9.6
Agnostic/Atheist	9.6	41.0
Other	-	4.8

While these women seem not to attend religious worship services on a regular basis, slightly more than a third of the sample (37%) consider themselves at least moderately devout. Sixty-three percent state they are moderately to very non-devout. Results tend to show that the more income a respondent earned, the less religiously devout she considered herself ($p < .06$). It is not surprising that how devout a respondent considered herself and her age were correlated with the amount of support she felt she got from traditional religion during times of personal, emotional crisis. The less devout ($p < .0000$) and the younger ($p < .02$) a respondent, the less support from traditional religious sources.

An overwhelming majority (80.8%) of the respondents belonged to no religious organizations, and almost an equal number (83.6%) were aware of religiously sponsored homophile organizations and/or churches such as Dignity and Unity, The Metropolitan Community Church, Am Tikva or others. Only 13.7% were involved with such religiously sponsored homophile groups.

Sixty-three percent claimed to get little or no support from religion in times of personal, emotional crisis while the remainder reported having faith in a higher power who would love and accept them for who they were and who provided them with an inner strength. Only 2.7% ($N=2$) had ever sought and received support from religious counseling during a crisis.

A slight majority (54.8%) claimed that the sources of religious

support currently available to them were adequate to their needs while only 9.6% felt that homosexual religious support systems were at least adequate to their needs. Most (76.7%) said such homosexual religious systems were not available. Data show that the more devout a woman considered herself ($p < .03$), the more income she earned ($p < .04$) and the more open she was about her sexual orientation ($p < .05$), the more adequate she felt her religious sources of support during a crisis to be.

Half (52.1%) felt that religion had been at least moderately to very important in their lives although several pointed out that the reasons it had been important included both positive and negative influences. The following comments are typical of the feelings respondent's stated about traditional religion:

The best support I get is from my lesbian Christian friends with whom I can be completely open. In turn, I can provide support to my friends both as a lesbian and a leader in the church. I only wish I could be more open to the church at large, but too many are not ready/willing/able to accept/understand.

Before coming out to myself, the church was very important as a source of support. Now, I have no religious needs.

In the past religion provided me a lot of spiritual support, now it gives me little.

Religion provides me with a sense of hope.

Spiritually I have gotten some support, but the Catholic Church itself provided me nothing due to its dogma.

The Catholic Church was punitive during my coming out.

I belong to a church that accepts and supports its members by continued caring acts regardless of the member's sexual orientation.

In summary, although most respondents were raised within the conventional religious institutions of this country, many have fallen away from organized religion. Respondents tend not to belong to or attend activities associated with organized religion even if the activity has a homosexual basis. Religion seems not to provide these older lesbians with support during a personal, emotional crisis and it appears these women do not generally turn to religious sources for support during a crisis.

Discussion of Religious Findings

This sample of older lesbian women appears similar to other studies of lesbians where women who were raised with some religious beliefs tended to get less religious as they got older (Albro et al, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Jay and Young, 1977; Raphael and Robinson, 1980). Also, this research is similar to most other research on lesbian women that shows while generally half or more of a lesbian sample claims no traditionally oriented religious beliefs (Bell and Weinberg, 1978; Brooks, 1981; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Jay and Young, 1977; Minnigerode and Adelman, 1978; Raphael and Robinson, 1980; Rosen, 1974), the current sample tends to refute Gagnon and Simon's (1973) finding that most lesbians move away from traditional

religion altogether. This study does support the idea posited by Gagnon and Simon (1973) that lesbian women need to reconcile their sexual orientation and their religion and that some redefine their religion to accommodate their lesbian lifestyles.

Interestingly, this sample's religious affiliation profile while being similar to samples of older lesbians (Adelman, 1980; Raphael and Robinson, 1980), differs from profiles of older homosexual men as research tends to show such men as more religiously affiliated (Berger, 1980; Kelly, 1974). And, as might be expected, samples of assumed heterosexual women (Christenson and Gagnon, 1965; Christenson and Johnson, 1973; DeMartino, 1974; Greenberg, 1979; Kinsey et al, 1953) show that such women are more closely associated with traditional religion than are lesbians.

As with most samples of homosexual women, those in this sample generally did not consider themselves religiously devout and did not belong to religious organizations. This varies somewhat from studies done with assumed heterosexual women and older homosexual men where findings tend to show respondents are more devout (Berger, 1980; DeMartino, 1974; Kelly, 1974; Kinsey et al, 1953).

It is hardly surprising that the older lesbian women in this study do not turn to religious systems for support in times of personal, emotional crisis. Organized religion has been a traditional source of homophobia and rejection of the homosexual lifestyle as contrary to God's will. It seems that at least for the women in this study,

whatever spiritual needs they have are met in ways that do not include traditional religious ones. This seems to be so even when respondents know of religiously sponsored activities that are homosexually oriented and conducted by homosexual persons. While older persons may be seen as turning to religion as a source of comfort in old age (Berger, 1980; Greenberg, 1979; Kelly, 1974), this appears not to be true for the older lesbian women of this study.

Economics

How and where the older lesbian earns and spends her money as well as what kind of support she finds in times of financial crises comprised the section of questions dealing with economics. A majority of respondents (78.1%) were employed either full-time (65.8%) or part-time and only 19.2% were retired. Overwhelmingly these women held (or had held) professional or managerial positions (84.9%) where they had worked for someone else and had earned over \$15,000 in 1981. Only nine women (12.4%) earned less than \$9,000 while only one earned less than \$4,000 (see Table 11). Generally these women tend to see themselves as members of the middle class and tend to consider their economic situation adequate to meet their needs.

Almost all (95.9%) were aware of a homosexual community in their home town or within commuting distance of their homes, although only 61.6% considered themselves a member of that community. Social activity levels within the homosexual community varied as 65.8% stated they were moderately to very actively involved with the community while

TABLE 11

Income
(N=73)

<u>Amount of Income</u>	<u>Percentage of Respondents</u>
Under \$1,000	-
\$1,000 - 3,999	1.4
\$4,000 - 6,999	5.6
\$7,000 - 9,999	5.6
\$10,000 - 14,999	15.3
\$15,000 - 19,999	13.9
\$20,000 - 24,999	20.8
\$25,000 or More	37.5

others showed less involvement. Data indicate that if a woman considered herself a member of the homosexual community she was likely to be actively involved in that community ($p < .0000$) and the more overt she was about her sexual identity, the more actively she tended to be in the homosexual community ($p < .006$). It is interesting to note that age was not associated with whether or not a respondent considered herself a member of a homosexual community or the level of activity within that community.

While respondents tended to be aware of a homosexual community and many were active within that community, the amount of money these women spent on homosexually related activities was minimal as 63% had spent less than \$100 on such activities within the last year and only five women (6.8%) had spent more than \$500. While the amount of money a respondent had spent on homosexually related activities within the past year was associated with whether or not she considered herself a member of the homosexual community ($p < .02$) and how open she was about her sexual orientation ($p < .0008$), her income was not ($p < .50$). So, those women who seem to be financially contributing to the homosexual subculture tend to be homosexual community members who are fairly overt about their sexual identity.

A third (34.2%) of those responding stated they had never faced a financial crisis. And, as would be expected, the more income a respondent earned, the less likely she was to have had a financial crisis ($p < .02$). However, for those who had faced a financial crisis, most tended to go to traditional sources such as banks and credit

unions (22.9%) less frequently than to family members (31.3%), female lovers (14.6%) or friends (12.5%) for such things as loans or financial advice. It is also interesting that family, female lovers and friends provided the support these older lesbians needed in times of financial crisis (53.1%) more than the traditional sources (banks etc.) (16.3%). When faced with a financial crisis some of those responding (28.5%) turned only to themselves for support and frequently worked two jobs to get themselves out of financial difficulties.

Overwhelmingly these women did not know of any financial resources available to them in the homosexual community (90.4%), and if they knew of such resources most knew only of homosexual friends who would be willing to advance them small amounts of money at a low interest rate. Only one respondent knew of a "pro-gay" bank that would not discriminate against lesbians or homosexual men, and only two (2.7%) respondents had ever sought and received financial aid (small loans) within the homosexual community.

Respondents who had had financial crises (65.7%) tended to view their homosexual economic support systems as less than adequate to meet their needs (87.5%) and their heterosexual economic support systems adequate to meet their needs (70.8%).

Almost all subjects (97.3%) felt their ability to earn an adequate income was at least moderately important and most (76.7%) considered it very important.

To summarize, this sample is comprised of primarily professional or managerial women who are still employed and who earn well above

this country's median income level of \$15,000 a year. Further, these women know of a homosexual community near their homes while many are active within that community, it is not where they spend their money or get their financial support. Rather than turning to traditional sources such as banks and credit unions for financial assistance, these women tend to turn to their family, female lovers, friends or themselves for help and almost without exception the women in this sample realize the importance of being able to earn an adequate income.

Discussion of Economic Findings

Most studies of lesbian women show that the women sampled are frequently employed in professional or managerial positions where they earn an adequate amount of income to meet their needs (Bell and Weinberg, 1978; Belote and Joesting, 1976; Brooks, 1981; Bullough and Bullough, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Jay and Young, 1977; Mendola, 1980; Raphael and Robinson, 1980; Rosen, 1974), and while the present study supports such previous findings, it is comprised of more professionally employed women earning higher incomes than previous research has reported. Such a professionally employed sample differs from findings that describe assumed heterosexual samples of women. Such heterosexual findings often depict a typical respondent as either being an unemployed housewife or as being employed in less professional capacities and more in traditionally lower level occupations such as clerical or service workers (Christenson and Johnson, 1973; Davis, 1929; DeMartino, 1974; Greenberg, 1979; Lopata, 1973). The

professional status of the present sample is more like the occupational status of samples of homosexual men where many are professionally employed (Berger, 1980; Francher and Henkin, 1973). Like Gagnon and Simon's (1973) finding that most lesbians are employed and are seriously committed to their jobs, this study is in agreement with that idea. Given the fact that lesbian women who are living a lesbian lifestyle do not have the traditional male partner to whom they can turn for financial support, it is not surprising to find that economic security gained through employment is important to the sample.

It is hard to define why only 62% of those responding were active within the homosexual community. It may be that such community involvement would require too much openness on the part of the respondent or that the community may be perceived as not providing the older lesbian with anything worthwhile. Given that there has been some stigma attached to involvement with other homosexuals in an organized way, it may that older women choose not to risk such involvement. Research to examine the reasons for involvement or non-involvement in such community activities remains to be conducted.

It is interesting to discover that even those women who are involved with the homosexual community tend not to spend a lot of money on homosexually related activities or events. While it has been postulated that women may not have the economic resources to spend money on leisure activities (Albro et al, 1977), it does seem that this sample has adequate monies to spend within the homosexual subculture if they wished. Why respondents do not spend more may be associated

with a societal stigma attached to the gay subculture or with the lack of appropriate things within the subculture on which women want to spend money. Future research may more precisely examine this phenomenon.

This study's findings also point out that those surveyed tend to seek and get financial support from informal sources such as family members, female lovers, friends or themselves more frequently than from formal sources such as banks or credit unions. Why this is so can only be speculated about at this point, as research that examines the issue is lacking. One possible reason may have to do with the non-heterosexual lifestyles of the lesbian which might have to be revealed to a bank or credit union in order to obtain a loan.

Politics

Another major area on which data were collected focused on the older lesbian's involvement with politics and politically oriented organizations. A majority of those surveyed (57.5%) said they preferred the Democratic political party while only 13.7% said their political party preference was Republican. Another 21.9% preferred being independents and only 5.5% stated they had no political party preference. When questioned about their degree of political liberalism, a fairly substantial majority (71.2%) ranked themselves as liberal or extremely liberal, and few (13.7%) considered themselves political conservatives (see Table 12).

TABLE 12
Degree of Political Liberalism
(N=73)

<u>Degree of Political Liberalism</u>	<u>%</u>
Extremely Conservative	1.4
Conservative	9.6
Slightly Conservative	2.7
Moderate, Middle of the Road	8.2
Slightly Liberal	6.8
Liberal	45.2
Extremely Liberal	26.0

Most women in the sample (89%) stated that a political candidate's positive stand on homosexual issues would positively influence their decision to vote for that candidate. Not one respondent said that a candidate's pro-homosexual stand on political issues would negatively influence their decision to vote for the candidate. With regard to specific ways this country's political system could be more supportive of the homosexual lifestyle, the following comments were typical:

Congress should pass anti-discrimination laws to protect gays.

Sodomy laws should be abolished and there should be no laws regulating private sexual acts between consenting adults.

Non-discrimination should be implemented in employment, housing, immigration, health services, insurance, etc.

Everyone should recognize and understand homosexuality as an acceptable alternative lifestyle.

More gay candidates should be elected.

Homosexual marriages should be made legal.

There should be more liaisons between gay political groups and political organizations and elected officials.

Those surveyed did tend to consider politics to be at least moderately important to them (30.1%) while 43.8% thought politics important or very important. Many (71.2%) said they belonged to some type of politically oriented organization (e.g. National Organization for

Women, various political party memberships, lobbying groups etc.), and a majority (63%) belonged to various professional or academic organizations (e.g. National Association of Social Workers, American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Association of University Professors etc.). Most did not belong to any hobby or garden clubs (69.9%) or any literary, art, discussion or study groups (72.6%). While 87.7% knew of homosexually oriented groups, only 46.6% belonged to such groups (e.g. National Gay Task Force, Gay Rights National Lobby, Senior Action in a Gay Environment etc.).

Since older lesbian women belong in a triple minority position (age, women and sexual orientation), they face various situations where their civil and/or human rights may be denied. In order to determine where these women would turn if they thought their rights were being denied, they were asked to identify to whom or where they would turn for assistance if they perceived their rights being denied on the basis of age, sex or sexual orientation (see Table 13). The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and personal lawyers seemed to be the most popular places to turn for aid; and while most had some ideas as to where they would find help in case of personal discrimination, some said they would not know where to turn for such aid. A few said they would not seek aid if they were the victim of discrimination and one woman said, "At my age I have no rights." Those responding tended not to turn to homosexual organizations, professional organizations, women's organizations, human rights councils or the federal

TABLE 13

Where Respondent Would Turn for
Aid if Being Denied Civil Rights

<u>Turn to For Help</u>	<u>Discrimination on the Basis of:</u>		
	<u>Age</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Sexual Orientation</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
American Civil Liberties Union	27.4	24.7	23.3
Personal Lawyer	23.3	23.3	28.8
Federal Governmental Anti-Discrimination Groups	5.5	5.5	2.7
Human Relations Councils	12.3	11.0	1.4
National Organization for Women	4.1	12.3	9.6
Homosexual Organizations	6.8	5.5	9.6
Professional Organizations or Unions	1.4	1.4	2.7
Nowhere	4.1	4.1	6.1
Do Not Know	15.1	12.3	15.1

government for help in the case of discrimination on the basis of age, sex or sexual orientation.

As might be expected from a sample where only 61.6% are involved with a homosexual community, only 35.6% were moderately to actively involved with the homosexual civil rights movement and that 24.7% were very uninvolved in the movement. Interestingly, how open a respondent was on the sexual orientation openness scale ($p < .13$), her age ($p < .63$), her education ($p < .30$), her religious devoutness ($p < .48$) and whether she considered herself a member of the homosexual community ($p < .27$) were not significantly associated with how actively she was involved in the homosexual civil rights movement.

Generally, the women sampled had either not sought legal aid at all within the past year (52.1%) or had sought lawyer's services only 1-4 times within the past year (43.8%). For those who had ever sought legal services ($N=58$), 48.2% had purposely sought out homosexual lawyers to help with legal problems.

In summary, respondents tend to prefer the Democratic political party, are politically liberal and support candidates who take a positive stand on homosexual issues. They generally believe that federal and state legislation should be enacted to protect the rights of homosexuals and end discrimination based on sexual orientation, and they consider politics to be important to them. Most belong to political or professional organizations, few belong to hobby clubs or discussion groups and almost half belong to homosexual organizations although most knew of the existence of such homophile groups. Respondents

preferred turning to the ACLU or personal lawyers if they had been discriminated against on the basis of age, sex or sexual orientation, but almost one-fifth either would turn to no one or did not know where to turn if such discrimination occurred. Most had not sought legal services within the past year, but if legal services had been obtained, there was a fair chance the woman had sought services from a homosexual lawyer.

Discussion of Political Findings

As with many homosexual samples (Albro et al, 1977; Bell and Weinberg, 1978; Berger, 1980; Brooks, 1981; Kelly, 1974), this sample, too, tends to prefer the Democratic political party to the Republican one and maintains a liberal political ideology. It is no surprise to discover that liberally oriented women would prefer the Democratic Party rather than the more conservative Republican Party.

It is interesting that the women in this sample are as politically liberal as they seem to be as samples of older, assumed heterosexual women depict them as a rather politically conservative group (Greenberg, 1979; Lopata, 1973; Matthews, 1979). Also, it seems the women in this study are willing to politically support a candidate who will overtly take a positive stand on homosexuality oriented issues. And while most surveyed are not overtly involved with the homosexual civil rights movement, most have thought about the ways this country's political system could be more supportive of the homosexual's life-style and most favor some type of protective civil rights legislation

for homosexuals. Data do show that although this group of women may not be terribly overt about their support of homosexual civil rights, they do consider the issue when covertly casting their ballots.

As with Mendola's (1980) findings, the data of this research show respondents to be relatively active with a variety of political and professional organizations. While organizationally involved in some groups, the women surveyed tended not to belong to homosexually oriented groups. This may be associated with the societal stigma frequently attached to membership in such organizations and the overtness of sexual identity associated with such membership. Further research is necessary to determine why and what benefits older lesbians gain from membership in homophile organizations.

It is no surprise that data indicate the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and personal lawyers as being the places a respondent would turn if she felt she was being discriminated against on the basis of age, sex or sexual orientation. The ACLU has a reputation for being a staunch defender of all civil and human rights issues, and personal lawyers may have been selected as a source of support because of their relative accessibility. What is disturbing is that the data that show almost one-fifth of the sample either not knowing where to turn for help or turning to no one in the case of discrimination. Again, this may be linked to the respondent's unwillingness to put herself in a position where her sexual orientation could become public knowledge.

Data were unavailable to determine what specific factors influence an older lesbian's active involvement in the homosexual civil rights movement. This is due in part to the small sample size and the relative homogeneity of the group studied. While other research has shown associations between such things as age, education, religious devoutness and sexual orientation openness and homosexual political involvement (Albro et al, 1977), the present study found no such associations. This contradiction needs further clarification from more empirical evidence.

Finally, it is interesting that 38.4% (N=29) of the sample has specifically sought out homosexual lawyers to aid with legal problems. Since lawyers traditionally do not advertise or make their sexual orientation known, this finding tends to support the idea that those who sought out homosexual lawyers did so through some kind of an informal, friendship or support network or asked the lawyer her/his social orientation before obtaining the service.

Social Welfare

Because the primary goal of the social welfare institution is mutual support and social services are generally thought to provide a support system for individuals (Gilbert and Specht, 1974), respondents were asked a series of questions about their relationships with "helping" professionals. Table 14 shows that respondents chose professional helpers based on the helper's professional expertise and the respondent's personal knowledge of the helper more frequently than

TABLE 14

Priorities for Selecting a Helping Professional
(N=73)

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Professional's Expertise</u>	<u>Personal Knowledge of Professional</u>	<u>Homosexuality of Professional</u>	<u>Other's Recommendations of Professional</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Highest 1	38.4	37.0	8.2	16.4
2	39.7	24.7	15.1	20.5
3	15.1	13.7	34.2	37.0
Lowest 4	6.8	24.6	42.5	26.1

on other's recommendations of the helper to the respondent. Helping professional's homosexual sexual orientation was found not to be a high priority for these women when selecting helping professionals.

As is evident from data presented in Table 15, respondents do utilize helping professionals such as medical doctors, nurses, social workers, psychiatrists and psychologists. Those sampled tended to be less involved with social workers, psychiatrists and psychologists than they were with medical doctors and nurses although even their involvement with doctors and nurses seems minimal as 69.9% had visited a doctor less than 5 times in the past year and 89.1% had visited a nurse less than 5 times also. This tends to confirm respondent's ranking of their health as generally good to excellent.

When asked which helping professionals knew of the subject's sexual orientation only 10.8% said that all helping professionals from whom services had been received were aware of the respondent's lesbianism. More typically, none of the helping professionals were aware of the client's sexual orientation (41.5%) or only some helpers knew (47.7%). For those women who had made their sexual orientation known to all or some of the helping professionals (58.5%), medical doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists were the most likely helpers to have been informed of their client's sexual orientation and social workers and nurses were the least likely to know. Generally, respondents opted to tell helping professionals of their sexual orientation because the respondent saw it as an important part of their personal identity they did not want to hide (65%), it was important to the

TABLE 15

Number of Times Within the Past Year Services
Were Received From Various Helping Professionals
(N=73)

<u>Number of Times Services Were Recieved</u>	<u>Doctor %</u>	<u>Nurse %</u>	<u>Social Worker %</u>	<u>Psychiatrist %</u>	<u>Psychologist %</u>
None	17.8	65.8	84.9	91.8	80.8
1 - 4	52.1	23.3	8.2	2.7	6.8
5 - 9	17.8	6.8	1.4	-	-
10 - 14	8.2	1.4	-	-	2.7
15 - 19	2.7	1.4	2.7	1.4	2.7
20 or More	1.4	1.4	2.7	4.1	6.8

therapeutic process to so identify themselves (22.5%), or it was seen as being dishonest not to share their sexual identity with those trying to help them (12.5%). If respondents had not shared their sexual orientation with helping professionals, it was primarily because they felt that doing so was not relevant to the reason they were seeking help (78.7%). Only 14.8% had not told helping professionals of their lesbianism due to a fear of not being accepted by the professional, and 6.6% had not made their sexual orientation known due to the fear that such a revelation to a helping professional might result in the respondent's losing a job.

Most (64.3%) had not had a personal, emotional problem for which they received support from helping professionals within the past year, but for those that had (N=26), almost all (97%) had gotten psychotherapy or counseling support from helping professionals. While only 46.6% knew of medical services available to them in the homosexual community, 76.6% knew of emotional counseling services provided by the lesbian/gay subculture. Only 43.9% were aware of the provision of any kind of social services within the homosexual community and most (75.3%) had never received helping services from the lesbian/gay community during times of personal crises. The types of services the homosexual community did provide some few respondents included professional counseling, support groups and emotional support from friends. Interestingly, whether or not a respondent considered herself a member of a homosexual community was not significantly associated with her awareness of medical services ($p=0.98$), emotional counseling services

($p < .11$) or social services ($p < .33$) provided within the homosexual community.

When faced with an emotional crisis, a majority (75.3%) had never sought support from homosexual helping professionals. For those who had ($N=18$), most found the sources of support from such professionals at least adequate (70.6%) and only 5.9% who sought out such support systems found them inadequate. How adequate a respondent considered her homosexual helping professional support systems was associated with how open she was about her sexual orientation ($p < .01$) where the more overt a respondent was about her lesbianism, the more adequate she found homosexual helping professionals. Whether or not a respondent had ever married ($p < .33$), how religiously devout she was ($p < .76$), her age ($p < .08$), her income ($p < .16$), whether or not she was currently intimately involved with another woman ($p < .39$) or whether or not she considered herself a member of a homosexual community ($p < .17$) seem to have no bearing on how adequately she perceived her sources of support from lesbian/gay helping professionals.

Many (65.8%) had sought and received some type of support from heterosexual helping professionals at some point in their lives, and of those ($N=48$), 72.9% found such support to be adequate or more than adequate for their needs. However, there remains 27.1% who found such support from heterosexual helpers only barely adequate or inadequate to their needs.

While a majority (60.3%) of the sample perceived helping professionals to be at least moderately important to them throughout the

courses of their lives, 24.6% viewed helping professionals as unimportant or very unimportant.

In summary, respondents choose professional helpers based primarily on the helper's professional expertise and the respondent's personal knowledge of the helper rather than on the helper's homosexual sexual orientation. Additionally, respondents tend to utilize a variety of helping professionals and are not apt to disclose their lesbianism unless they feel it relevant to the helping services being provided them. Respondents tended not to have had any emotional problems for which they received support from helping professionals within the past year, and they were more likely to be aware of emotional counseling services being provided in the lesbian/gay community than they were to know of medical or social services available to them in the homosexual subculture. For those who had ever sought support for an emotional problem, the sources of support available to them within the homosexual subculture and the heterosexual culture seem adequate to their needs and most believed helping professionals to be important to them.

Discussion of Social Welfare Findings

Assuming that at least 10% of the American population may be considered predominately homosexual (Gochros, 1977) and that other research indicates that lesbians and gay men utilize helping professionals (Albro et al, 1977; Bell and Weinberg, 1978; Belote and Joesting, 1976; Berger, 1980; Gagnon and Simon, 1973; Kimmel, 1977; Mendola, 1980), it is no surprise to find this study's sample utilizing helping

professionals such as medical doctors, nurses, social workers, psychiatrists and psychologists. Given that some prior research indicates that many lesbians are in psychotherapy (Bell and Weinberg, 1978; Gagnon and Simon, 1973), that only 5.5% of this sample are regularly involved with psychiatrists and 12.2% regularly see psychologists helps erase the myth of lesbianism as a mental illness. Additionally, given that the women who are part of this study consider themselves to be in good to excellent health, it is not odd to find few reported visits to the doctor within the past year.

Why respondents seemed to seek out the services of social workers and nurses less frequently than they sought aid from medical doctors, psychiatrists and psychologists may be representative of this sample of middle-class, professional women whose incomes allow them to pay for care provided primarily by doctors rather than by nurses or social workers. Had this sample's economic situation been different, so too might their utilization of helping professionals. Further research to explore this seems indicated.

Another finding that may be associated with this sample's demographic profile is the tendency of respondents to choose their helping professionals based on personal knowledge of the professional's expertise and their own knowledge of the provider. A less educated sample may not have yielded the same findings. Additionally, the homosexual sexual orientation of the helping professional seems much less important to respondents than a professional's ability to professionally provided the necessary services.

As might be expected, if respondents thought that revealing their sexual orientation to a helping professional helpful to the service provided, they would reveal their lesbianism. This tended to happen generally when a woman was in some type of psychotherapy where sharing her sexual orientation appeared necessary to the therapeutic process. Revealing her sexual orientation to a helping professional when not necessary to the treatment was seldom done. What seems interesting is that most helping professionals should treat patients as part of a larger social system and the general idea held by this sample that one's sexual orientation should not be shared routinely with those trying to provide help may tend to alienate the provider from the patient. It is also interesting to note that social workers who traditionally deal with the person in a social situation are among the least likely to know about a respondent's lesbianism. These findings tend to support DeCrescenzo and McGill's (1978) findings that show many helping professionals to be so homophobic that the topic of homosexuality is never brought up and all those seeking help are assumed by the helper to be heterosexual. Because fear of self-identification does not seem to be the main reason for non-disclosure of sexual orientation, there seem to be other yet unidentified reasons why more respondents do not reveal their sexual orientation to those who are trying to provide them services.

Since the medical profession does not advertise and doctors do not generally make their homosexual sexual orientation or their acceptance of homosexuals known to the public, it is surprising that almost half

knew of medical services available to them in the homosexual community. It is equally interesting that more than two-fifths also knew of the availability of social services within the lesbian/gay subculture as such are not generally advertised. It is not odd, however, that three-fourths were aware of emotional counseling services provided by the homosexual community simply because such services are frequently more widely advertised and discussed than either medical or social services.

What is optimistic is that of those who sought social services, such services were found to be generally adequate whether they were obtained from homosexual or heterosexual helping professionals. What is not so optimistic is the finding that almost one-third of those who had sought help from heterosexual or homosexual helpers found the services provided to them inadequate.

Education

As education is considered an important part of growing up and the educational institution's primary objective is to socialize the individual and transmit specialized skills (Vander Zanden, 1979, pp. 521-530), a series of questions were asked that explored the respondent's formal educational experiences (classroom etc.) as well as more informal educational experience outside the class where she

found out about homosexuality. As reported in the section on demographics (see Table 5), this sample of older lesbian women is highly educated with more than half having earned a master's degree or higher and all but one had completed high school. As would be expected from such a well educated group, most in this study considered formal education to be important (26%) or very important (60.3%) to them.

An overwhelming majority had attended coeducational elementary schools (94.5%) and high schools (90.4%) and most had attended coeducational colleges (89.1%). Additionally, most had attended public elementary (83.6%) and high schools (80.8%) while a majority had also attended public colleges or universities (67.2%). Most had not attended religious elementary schools (83.6%), high schools (83.6%) or colleges (82.8%) and overwhelmingly these women did not belong to sororities (94.5%). While a substantial majority (89%) believed that the educational systems with which they had been associated provided them no support in times of emotional crises, for some, aid in the form of intellectual stimulation to work through a crisis or financial aid to help with an educationally related expense were provided. It is interesting to note that at what age and at what period of time a respondent got support from educational systems may be important as many noted that during the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's (when most were in school), school systems were perceived as being there to provide students with an education not emotional support in times of crisis.

An overwhelming majority (91.8%) learned about homosexuality before they were 20 years old (the mean age was 15.3 years), and half claimed to have become intensely emotionally intimate with other women before their twentieth year although 27.4% said they did not become so emotionally involved until they were over 30 years old. Four women (5.5%) did not become intensely, emotionally intimate with other women until they were over 50 years old (see Table 16). The mean age at which this sample became intensely, emotionally intimate with other women was 24.7 years. As would be expected, the younger a respondent was when she learned about homosexuality, the younger she was when she became intensely, emotionally intimate with other women ($p < .02$).

One-third of those responding had their first lesbian sexual experience before they were 20 years old and almost two-thirds had this experience before they were 30 years of age. The mean age at which women in this sample tended to have their first lesbian sexual experience was 27.3 years, although these first lesbian sexual acts occurred anywhere from age 12 to age 55. It is not odd that data indicate that the younger a respondent was to become intensely, emotionally intimate with other women, the younger she was when she had her first lesbian sexual experience ($p < .0000$), nor is it surprising that the age at which a respondent learned about homosexuality is positively correlated with the age at which she had her first lesbian sexual experience ($p < .03$). The age at which she had her first sexual experience was not, however, associated with how open she currently is about her lesbianism ($p < .28$).

TABLE 16

Ages at Which Respondents First Became
Emotionally Intimate and Sexually Active with Women
(N=73)

<u>Age</u>	<u>First Intense Emotional Intimacy with Women</u>		<u>First Lesbian Sexual Act</u>	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
6 - 9	2	2.7	-	-
10 - 19	35	47.9	25	34.2
20 - 29	16	21.9	23	31.5
30 - 39	3	4.1	9	12.3
40 - 49	13	17.8	11	15.1
50 - 55	4	5.5	5	6.8

When respondents first learned about homosexuality more than one-third said it had a positive effect on them as they no longer felt isolated but relieved to know they were not the only persons with such feelings. Almost a third (28.8%) said the information had no impact on them and 17.8% said the concept had some meaning for them but they chose to deny its applicability or importance to themselves. Another 16.4% said learning about homosexuality had a negative effect on them because they were aware of the societal stigma attached to homosexuals and had learned that homosexuality was not an acceptable lifestyle.

When asked what kind of support they needed once they started to define themselves as not traditionally heterosexual, most reported needing friends or someone to talk to who would be accepting and loving (76.3%). Only 24.7% said they wanted no support during this coming out phase. To get the support they needed during their coming out process, the women of this study turned to a variety of sources. Many (47.9%) turned to their lesbian lover or female friends (heterosexual or homosexual) and only 5.5% turned to professional helpers or books (2.8%). Some (13.7%) went to more than one source for support and almost a third (30.1%) turned to no one for support during this life phase.

A majority (67.1%) did not know of a homosexual community when they started to define themselves as not traditionally heterosexual and said that during the time they were coming out, such a community was not available to them. For those who were aware of a homosexual community during their coming out phase (N=24), 75% had gotten some

type of support from that community during the time they had started to define themselves as not traditionally heterosexual. Support from the homosexual community centered on the acceptance of the person in the coming out phase by the rest of the homosexual community and was generally provided to the respondent through friends and/or discussion groups.

When asked about the adequacy of their personal support systems when they first started to define themselves as not traditionally heterosexual, a majority of respondents (54.8%) said such support systems were inadequate (41.1%) or just barely adequate (13.7%) to meet their needs while only 12.3% thought their personal support systems were more than adequate to them during this phase of their lives. Interestingly, whether or not a respondent had ever heterosexually married was associated with how adequately she perceived her support systems during her coming out phase ($p < .002$). If a respondent had heterosexually married, she was more likely to perceive her support systems as inadequate when she started to define herself as not traditionally heterosexual.

In summary, respondents in this study tend to have at least an undergraduate degree, a majority have earned at least a master's degree and most consider formal education important. Almost all attended coeducational, public schools that were not religiously affiliated, few belong to sororities and most feel that the educational system provided them little or no support in times of personal, emotional crises.

The average age at which these women learned about homosexuality was 15, the average age at which they became intensely emotionally intimate with other women was 25 and the average age at which they had their first lesbian sexual experience was 27. When respondents learned about the concept of homosexuality, the information had various impacts. Some said it was a positive impact, others said it was a negative impact, still others denied its importance and some said the knowledge had no impact on them. Once they started defining themselves as not traditionally heterosexual, most wanted someone to talk to who would accept their lesbianism and many turned to other lesbians or female friends for that support. Homosexual communities were generally not available for support when most of the respondents in this study were coming out, and many felt their personal support systems during this phase of their lives inadequate to meet their needs.

Discussion of Educational Findings

In terms of the high level of educational attainment achieved by women in this sample, this sample tends to be more educated than other samples of women (heterosexual and homosexual) and has a higher level of educational attainment than DeMartino's (1974) sample of intellectually gifted women. Prior research does, however, show that lesbians tend to be generally better educated than samples of assumed heterosexual women. The sample of this present research is somewhat similar to Brook's (1980) sample where 44% of the lesbians surveyed had at least a college degree and Jay and Young's (1977) lesbian sample where

64% of those surveyed had at least an undergraduate degree. Educationally this sample is most similar to Raphael and Robinson's (1980) sample of older lesbian women where 65% of those studied had at least some college and 30% had earned at least a master's degree. While the educational attainment findings of this study seem to be similar to other studies of lesbian women, they are similar to findings of studies on homosexual men where there is frequently a high level of educational attainment (Berger, 1980; Kelly, 1974). These findings, however, differ from findings of research on general studies of women where it may be assumed that those surveyed were heterosexual. Such studies of women show a level of educational attainment for women aged 50 or older to be far below the present study's (Greenberg, 1979; Kinsey et al, 1953; Lopata, 1973; Masters and Johnson, 1966). In studies which differentiate between married and unmarried women (Christenson and Gagnon, 1965; Christenson and Johnson, 1973; Davis, 1929; Kinsey et al, 1953) and studies that differentiate between lesbian and non-lesbian women (Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Wilson and Green, 1971), the unmarried women and the lesbian women tend toward higher levels of educational achievement than married or heterosexual women. Such findings of high educational attainment in a group of older women start to contradict the idea presented by Bengtson and Haber (1975) that older persons are likely to be functionally illiterate. Exactly why older lesbians tend to be well educated needs further investigation.

While those surveyed considered their formal educational experiences important, it is interesting to note that they usually neither used the formal educational structures available to them (such as sororities) for support nor generally gained any type of emotional support in times of personal crises from the traditional educational systems.

While the present sample is similar to other lesbian samples with regard to when most had their first lesbian sexual experience, the findings also support other findings that show women can and do have their first lesbian sexual experience at varying ages (Albro et al, 1977; Bell and Weinberg, 1978; Belote and Joesting, 1976; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Davis, 1929; Jay and Young, 1977; Ponse, 1978; Raphael and Robinson, 1980). This sample also tends to reinforce Gagnon and Simon's (1973) ideas that the commencement of overt sexual acts between women may follow an intense emotional involvement and that first emotional attachments were not always followed by physical sexual acts. With the disparity between when these women first became aware of homosexuality (mean age of 15), when they first became intimately emotionally attached to other women (mean age of 25) and their first overt lesbian sexual experience (mean age of 27), Belote and Joesting's (1976) idea that the coming out process for lesbians occurs in stages that are close in temporal proximity needs further investigation.

Given that all of the women surveyed were born before 1933 when homosexuality was viewed as a mental illness and strict homosexual

proscriptions existed throughout the country, it is interesting that any respondents viewed homosexuality positively once they learned about it. What also seems noteworthy is that most, irrespective of how they felt about homosexuality when they first learned about it, needed some type of support once they started to define themselves as not traditionally heterosexual. While they needed support they generally turned to women friends or no one for support rather than to helping professionals. While there is some indication that they could have obtained support from a homosexual community during that phase of their lives, such communities were not usually available to them. Not surprisingly, adequate support systems were unavailable when these older women started to define themselves as not traditionally heterosexual and while they needed support, there was frequently nowhere to turn for aid. Since these women were growing up in the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's before the gay rights movement, it is not odd that such support was lacking. Further research to determine if differences exist between women who came out before the gay rights movement and those who came out since the movement seems warranted.

Summary

The demographic profile of a typical woman in this sample shows a well educated, politically liberal, professionally employed woman in her early 50's who is in good to excellent health. She tends to live in her own home with a female life partner with whom she has lived for a significant amount of time. She opts to define her sexual

orientation using the word "lesbian" and is predominantly both intensely emotionally intimate and physically sexually active with women. She does not totally hide her sexual orientation, but is selective with whom she shares the knowledge of her lesbianism. Her family is less likely to be aware of her sexual orientation than female friends. Her parents are deceased, but she still has living siblings. She tends to spend her leisure time with women who are younger than herself, and she has not experienced the death of a woman with whom she has been intimately involved. She was raised with some type of religious ideology, but has generally fallen away from traditional religion. She is aware of a homosexual community in her home town or within commuting distance of her home town and considers herself a member of that community although not a terribly active member.

While she earns more than \$15,000 annually, she does not spend much of her money within the homosexual community. She is a political liberal who supports the Democratic Party and is positively affected by a political candidate's pro-homosexual stand on issues. She belongs to politically oriented and/or professional organizations rather than hobby clubs or discussion groups and although she is aware of homosexually oriented organizations, she may not be a member of such. She has need of and utilizes a variety of helping professionals to whom she will reveal her sexual orientation only if it is relevant ✓ to the helping process. She chooses her helping professionals based on the helper's professional expertise and her own knowledge of the professional. While she knows of emotional counseling services within

the homosexual community, she has not had an emotional problem within the past year for which she has sought support from helping professionals.

She learned about homosexuality when she was 15, became intensely emotionally intimate with other women when she was 25 and had her first lesbian sexual experience when she was 27. She considers her formal education, her ability to earn an adequate income, her relationships with heterosexuals and homosexuals and her political activities important. In sum, she is actively involved with the world around her.

In terms of where the typical woman seeks and finds support in times of personal crises, the following picture emerges. The typical respondent gets support in times of crisis from those who are aware of her sexual orientation. This includes primarily homosexual and heterosexual women friends and some immediate family members, but rarely men. She views these heterosexual and homosexual familial social support systems as adequate to her needs. She does not view the religious institution and the support systems it provides as a place she would seek support during a crisis situation, and she turns to family members and friends for aid in financial crises rather than the traditional financial aid sources such as banks and/or credit unions.

She may turn to the American Civil Liberties Union or a personal lawyer for help with discrimination issues, but may not be willing to take such an overt stand and allow the discrimination. The homosexual subculture and the heterosexual culture provide her adequate support

when she has an emotional crisis for which she seeks support. The formal educational system provides her little or no support and once she started to define herself as not traditionally heterosexual, she felt a need for some type of support. To get the support she needed during her coming out phase, she turned to other lesbians and female friends and not to family members or men. She is likely to feel that during her coming out phase, the sources of support available to her were not adequate to meet her needs.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This chapter reviews the study's purpose and examines the findings in light of the study's conceptual framework and what is known in the areas of lesbianism, homosexuality and aging, aging and social support systems. The importance of the findings to social work practice and social work education are examined and recommendations for further research are discussed.

Review of the Study's Purpose

This study was conducted to increase the limited amount of knowledge about a minority group with a triple minority status -- older lesbian women. Specifically, the research sought to provide a detailed picture of the older lesbian woman that would help social work practitioners (and other helping professionals), who routinely (although perhaps unknowingly) provide services to older homosexual women, more realistically assess this minority's service needs. Thus,

the research was designed to add knowledge to the social work profession. It was felt this knowledge would begin to help assure that quality services be provided to older lesbians who seek such services from social workers. Tangentially, the research sought to help the National Association of Social Workers become more aware of the minority status of homosexuals and to help begin to create a more open professional environment for the professional development of lesbian and gay male social workers.

In an effort to meet these objectives, the study was conceptualized within the holistic framework of general systems theory where the older lesbian woman was examined within the context of the heterosexual and homosexual social systems in which she functions. The study sought to describe the social world of the older lesbian through an examination of the social structure of that world's social systems. In an effort to define discernable patterns within that world, the six commonly referred to social institutions (family, religion, economic, political, social welfare, education) were used as structural referents for the study.

The study was designed to answer what are the identifiable social organizational structures found in the social world of the older lesbian and do these structures indicate where the older lesbian's support systems are located? Additional questions addressed include what are the older lesbian's supportive connections to the heterosexual culture and the homosexual subculture, what are the patterns in these connections, where do the patterns show the older lesbian's support

systems to be located and where and what types of support are provided the older lesbian in times of personal crisis?

The research was designed as exploratory with some elements of quantitative-descriptive analysis and no formal hypotheses were tested. This methodological approach is similar to current, related research in the fields of aging, women and sexuality and is an appropriate way to answer the research questions posed.

As a random sample of older lesbian women is impossible to obtain, the study used a nonprobability, snowball sampling technique to obtain some respondents while some respondents were obtained through their contacting the researcher directly and others were obtained through the researcher's contact with known homophile organizations. All subjects were self-identified lesbians. Data were gathered in two primary ways -- through interviews with some respondents and mailed survey questionnaires to the remainder of respondents. The interview format and the survey questionnaire were researcher designed and gathered the same data. Though 450 questionnaires were distributed only 63 (14%) were returned and are included in the analysis. The data from the 10 interviews were analyzed with the data from the questionnaires so the total sample size is 73. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, the major statistical analysis procedures consisted of univariate analysis although some, mostly inconsequential bivariate analysis was also conducted to determine if significant correlations existed between some major variables.

This study sought to generally answer the question of "What is

happening?" in the social world of the older lesbian and hence merely provides a cross-sectional description of one small, homogeneous sample. It did not attempt to specify how or why events occur and thus does not provide a predictive quality. Because of the weaknesses of any exploratory methodological design, the lack of a random sample and the instruments used to gather data, findings from this study are generalizable only to the present study and its sample. Findings, while in some instances similar to findings from other research on lesbians, are not generalizable to all other lesbian women.

Major Findings and Linkages to What is Known

Due to the lack of a unified theoretical base in both the fields of lesbianism and aging, the major findings from this study are examined in light of what is already known in the fields of lesbianism, homosexuality and aging, aging and social support systems. The major findings are also discussed in terms of the study's conceptual framework.

Lesbianism

Demographic data from this study support data from other studies of younger samples of lesbian women that show lesbian women achieving a high level of education coupled with high professional status and a stable, responsible mode of living (Belote and Joesting, 1976; Gagnon and Simon, 1973; The Ladder, 1960; Mendola, 1980). Further, the women

in this sample are comparable to other study's findings that show younger lesbians to be politically liberal, actively affiliated with professional and political organizations and not particularly involved with organized religion (Albro et al, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Ettorre, 1980; Gagnon and Simon, 1973; Mendola, 1980). Given the liberal political stand of the present sample and their favorable views on a political candidate's positive stand on homosexual issues, Ettorre's (1980) hypothesis that lesbians are moving from a position of deviance to a politically ambitious social movement may be supported.

The older lesbians described in this study are, like most lesbians described in other studies of younger homosexual women, involved with the mainstream of heterosexual society, live in virtually every part of this country, span the socioeconomic strata and are generally involved in long-term relationships with other women in their age cohort (Albro et al, 1977; Bullough and Bullough, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; The Ladder, 1960; Mendola, 1980). Although the women in this study were all born in or before 1932, their demographic characteristics appear similar to the characteristics of lesbian women who were born much later. While an inference could be made that irrespective of the era lesbian women know that because of their lack of attachment to a male certain patterns of educational, professional and political attitudes emerge, this is now only a question for further thought.

Homosexuality and Aging

Although this sample is fairly similar to samples of younger lesbians, it is strikingly similar to samples of older lesbian women and generally similar to samples of older homosexual men.

Older lesbians have been described as generally having their first lesbian sexual experience in their late teens or early twenties although this experience could occur at any time if a strong emotional bond existed between the women (Adelman, 1980; Raphael and Robinson, 1980). Also, older lesbians tend to prefer to relate socially and sexually with their own age cohort although they have friends of varying ages (Adelman, 1980; Raphael and Robinson, 1980). While older lesbians generally have been brought up within a standardized religious context, many fall away from organized religion (Minnigerode and Adelman, 1978). Finally, older lesbians have been described as not experiencing the acceleration of aging as fast as heterosexual women (Laner, 1979) and adapt to aging well (Raphael and Robinson, 1980).

Data from the present study support the findings on older lesbians of Adelman (1980), Minnigerode and Adelman (1978) and Raphael and Robinson (1980). The sample size of the present study is considerably larger and more geographically diverse than prior studies examining older lesbians which tends to suggest that irrespective of geographical locale similarities between older lesbians seem to exist.

Research on older homosexual men portray them as generally never having heterosexually married, being well educated, politically liberal, actively involved with political organizations and often

religiously affiliated (Berger, 1980, 1982; Francker and Henkin, 1973; Kelly, 1974, 1977; Kimmel, 1977, 1978; Minnigerode and Adelman, 1978). The women of the present study are similar to samples of older gay men insofar as the women are generally well educated, politically liberal and actively involved with a variety of organizations. However, while most older homosexual men have never married a woman, older lesbian women may very well have been heterosexually married at some point in their lives and frequently have children. Such is substantiated by the current data as well as data from Adelman (1980) and Raphael and Robinson (1980). Also, studies of older homosexual men may portray them as being connected to organized religion (Berger, 1980, 1982; Kelly, 1974, 1977) while the present study, and studies of older lesbians in general, tend to show older homosexual women as not being religiously affiliated in a formal way (Adelman, 1980; Minnigerode and Adelman, 1978; Raphael and Robinson, 1980).

In summary, the data presented in the present study generally substantiates and supports previous findings as compiled by other researchers in the field of aging homosexuals.

Aging

Research compiled that describes samples of older women describes them as having been or currently heterosexually married (although frequently widowed) (Greenberg, 1979; Harris et al, 1975; Lieberman, 1977; Lipman, 1960; Lopata, 1973; Matthews, 1979; Stinnett et al, 1968), sexually active (Christenson and Gagnon, 1965; Christenson and

Johnson, 1973; Newman and Nicholas, 1960; Pfeiffer and Davis, 1972; Pfeiffer et al, 1972; Verwoerd et al, 1969; Verwoerd et al, 1969), not overly well educated (Lopata, 1973; Matthews, 1979), non-professional women who were not involved with professional or political organizations (Greenberg, 1979; Lopata, 1973; Matthews, 1979) but who tended to be religiously affiliated (Greenberg, 1979). As previously described, the current sample, and descriptions of lesbian samples in general, depict a composite picture of older lesbians that is dissimilar to the profile of the older, assumed heterosexual woman. While some lesbian women have assumed the heterosexual role of wife at some point in their lives, data from the present study and other studies show almost all older lesbians are no longer married to men, but are living in ongoing, sexually satisfying relationships with other older lesbians (Adelman, 1980; Raphael and Robinson, 1980). Further differences emerge as the assumed heterosexual older woman, unlike the older lesbian, is traditionally portrayed as not well educated, not professionally employed and not organizationally involved. Also, the older heterosexual tends to be religiously affiliated whereas older lesbians have retreated from traditional religion.

What accounts for the differences between older lesbians and older heterosexual women is, for now, merely speculation. Several researchers (Hopkins, 1969; Thompson et al, 1971; Wilson and Green, 1971) have noted that lesbian personalities differ from heterosexual women's personalities insofar as lesbian women tend to have a higher capacity for self-confidence, self-sufficiency, assertiveness, aggressiveness

and independence. It may be that such personality differences account for the lesbian's ability to adequately function in a heterosexual world without a heterosexual mate.

Social Support Systems

Although little research has been conducted that specifically dealt with lesbian support networks and the lesbian subculture, the topic is discussed tangentially by many researchers dealing with lesbian samples. Generally, the lesbian subculture is thought to provide a support system for lesbians by supplying them with a set of inter-related friendship networks and a sense of identification (Albro et al, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Gagnon and Simon, 1973; Lewis, 1979; Mendola, 1980; Ponse, 1978; Tanner, 1978). Further, the lesbian subculture is thought to provide emotional support and extended family and social activities for those connected to it (Albro et al, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Ponse, 1978; Tanner, 1978). It has been concluded that both young and old lesbians do turn to the lesbian subculture for friends, emotional support, social interaction as these women tend to feel isolated from the heterosexual world (Albro et al, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; Raphael and Robinson, 1980).

Although most of society's social institutions (economic, religious, social welfare, political, familial) are viewed by the lesbian as not being supportive of her lifestyle, it has been demonstrated that lesbian women, no matter what their age, do not isolate themselves from the heterosexual world. Lesbians tend to keep a

facade of social respectability, maintain conventional social norms when interacting with the heterosexual culture and function adequately within the heterosexual world (Albro et al, 1977; Bullough and Bullough, 1977; Chafetz et al, 1974, 1976; The Ladder, 1960).

To cope with this lack of societal support homosexual women and men tend to develop strong friendships and peer relationships with other homosexuals and become increasingly estranged from family members or others who are not supportive of the homosexual lifestyle (Francher and Henkin, 1973; Kelly, 1974, 1977; Kimmel, 1977, 1978; Minnigerode and Adelman, 1978; Raphael and Robinson, 1980). It is within these friendships and close peer relationships rather than from traditionally socially sanctioned sources of support that homosexuals gain their support. The present findings substantiate findings of previous studies -- older lesbians are involved with the homosexual subculture and the heterosexual culture although their emotional support comes not from heterosexuals but from other homosexuals.

Social supports are thought to be important to mental health as the more social support a person has, the less likely s/he is to have psychiatric problems as life stress is related to social support systems (Andrews et al, 1978; Carveth and Gottlieb, 1979; Eaton, 1978; Lin et al, 1979; Tolsdorf, 1976). It could be argued that homosexual persons generally exist in a more stressful environment than do heterosexuals simply because of the societal proscriptions against homosexuality. Given the lack of psychological problems manifested by the present sample and most other recent samples of homosexuals, it

seems that the support system provided by the homosexual subculture is acting adequately in place of many socially sanctioned support systems for homosexual women and men who use the network.

Link to Conceptual Framework

Generally, the women in this study seem to be well integrated into the heterosexual culture and somewhat less well integrated into the homosexual subculture. They appear actively involved with the human social systems that have been used in this study to define the six social institutions and they consider their relationships with heterosexual and homosexual persons important. Respondents seek and gain support both in the heterosexual culture and the homosexual subculture although in times of crisis, they turn to other lesbians, family members and women friends who are aware of their sexual orientation for assistance rather than to helping professionals and/or men.

This informal support system is also used by these women in times of financial crisis, where loans are often obtained from a family member, lover or friend not from a bank or credit union. While respondents acknowledged the adequacy of financial support within the heterosexual culture, they frequently opted not to use that as a source of support when in financial crisis.

Women in this study knew the importance of being able to earn an adequate income, and all were (or had been) employed within the heterosexual culture, not within the homosexual subculture. They were a fairly self-sufficient group who generally had never faced a

financial crisis for which they needed support.

The heterosexual culture provided these women with the educational and professional opportunities to earn an adequate income, but did so within a religiously and politically proscriptive environment. Although the women studied were highly educated and each valued her own formal educational experiences, the educational system was generally not considered a source of support. Equally, while religion played some role in each of the respondent's early life, traditional religion (even if it offered homosexually run and oriented groups) was not considered a place for these women to turn when in crisis. Also, while being generally politically active and members of various politically oriented organizations, respondents were aware of the illegality of homosexual acts (in most jurisdictions) and would vote for pro-homosexual candidates but would not be actively involved with the homosexual civil rights movement. Data suggest that the religious institution provides little or no support to many of these women during a crisis; that the political institution has some potential for providing support by changing existing laws, but provides no support during a personal crisis; that the educational system provides little or not support during a crisis, but provides a means of training which enables women to gain professional employment within the heterosexual world; and that the economic institution provides these women with a way of earning a good income, but is seen as not providing the support necessary during a financial crisis.

Although respondents utilize and see the importance of helping

professionals, they are selective when it comes to revealing their sexual orientation and will do so only when they feel it is beneficial to the therapeutic process. Generally, social workers are not likely to be made aware of the older lesbian's sexual orientation. Since social workers tend to view the person in a situation which requires having an adequate frame of reference for the total situation (see Figure 2), it seems that the proper assessment of the social situation and hence the appropriate interventive action decisions would be difficult if not impossible without the knowledge of the client's sexual orientation.

Data show that older lesbians do have need for support during the coming out phase of their life. However, most turned to other lesbians or women friends for support during this phase of their life as other sources of support were unavailable to them. The implication now is that since lesbians do start to define themselves as not traditionally heterosexual at any time during their lives and do require support during that time, social workers should take an active role in being service providers to lesbians who are in the process of coming out.

While social work and other helping professions have the potential to provide a support system to older lesbian women, this support system is not traditionally used by these women. In times of crisis, the older lesbians of this study tended to rely heavily on the informal social support systems of other lesbians, heterosexual women friends and family rather than on men or the religious, economic, political

and educational institutions' social support systems.

Implications for Social Work
Practice and Social Work Education

Social Work Practice

This research sought to provide a detailed picture of the older lesbian woman that would help social work practitioners, who routinely provide services to older homosexual women, more realistically assess this minority's service needs. The data presented by this research demonstrates that older lesbian women spend time in both the heterosexual culture and the homosexual subculture and that each environment seems to provide unique elements.

The heterosexual culture is where the lesbian is formally educated and where she becomes professionally employed. It is within the larger, heterosexual society that lesbians tend to gain their economic independence and financial security. This heterosexual culture then provides the lesbian with the means of gaining professional employment through formal education, and the lesbian in turn utilizes the system to achieve economic independence through first becoming well educated and then entering a professional career. The opportunity to become financially independent seems to be the primary thing that older lesbians derive from the heterosexual society as the larger culture is generally not supportive of the lesbian lifestyle. It may be that because of the heterosexual culture's proscriptions of the lesbian lifestyle, as manifested primarily in religious tenets and political ideologies, that the older lesbian seeks and gains personal support

from the homosexual subculture -- not the heterosexual culture.

Older lesbians seem to function in two worlds -- one that provides them a professional role, professional identity and often financial independence and one that provides them a personal life and a personal support network. These two worlds seem to overlap infrequently, and the older lesbian seems to utilize each for differing personal functions.

Such a duality tends to separate older lesbian women from older heterosexual women who are generally portrayed as functioning only within the heterosexual society where they derive economic support from their husbands, religious support from the traditional church and familial support from their children and other immediate family members. Such older women seem to exist in a lifestyle that is neither professionally and personally divided nor culturally heterosexually and homosexually divided.

These findings that differentiate older lesbians from other older heterosexual women seem not to be taken into account by helping professionals and social policies that tend to reinforce the "heterosexual assumption" (that all people are heterosexual).

What this study and previous research demonstrate is that at least some portion of the older population is not heterosexual, which means that policies and practices that reflect a singular rather than a pluralistic approach toward sexual orientation must be rearticulated to more accurately portray the populations at risk. Thus, policies that discriminate (overtly or covertly) on the basis of sexual

orientation (such as health care policies where the lesbian partner is prevented from entering the intensive care unit to be with her ill companion, nursing/adult home policies where the lesbian couple is denied "couple" status, legal policies where a distant "blood" relative is accorded more legal rights over the disposition of a deceased lesbian's body than is the grieving partner etc.) must be changed and the heterosexual assumption challenged.

As a profession concerned with social change and committed to an understanding of an individual in a social situation, social work practitioners who deal with older clients should never assume that their clients are all heterosexually oriented. Unfortunately, this study as well as prior research demonstrate that policies and practices continue to reinforce the heterosexual assumption rather than change it. Social work practitioners, as data from this study suggest, frequently do not know of their client's lesbianism which jeopardizes the correct assessment of the client's social situation which in turn makes appropriate interventive decisions almost impossible for the practitioner (see Figure 2). This situation prevents the older lesbian client from obtaining the best possible services from the social work practitioner. Since this study suggests that older lesbians will reveal their sexual orientation to helping professionals if doing such is seen as relevant to the helping process, social work practitioners need to routinely include issues of sexual orientation as relevant to the therapeutic process.

Because data from this study show older lesbians to be both

similar and dissimilar to their heterosexual counterparts, social work practitioners could provide better services to older lesbian clients if they would consider the following guidelines for providing professional services:

- Do not assume that all clients are heterosexual;
- Be aware that the older lesbian faces triple discrimination -- age, sex and sexual orientation;
- Combat overt and covert homophobia and ageism in social policies and practices;
- Understand how the older lesbian functions in both the heterosexual and homosexual systems;
- Be aware of community resources and support systems available to the older lesbian.
- Evaluate personal feelings, values and beliefs about homosexuality and aging.

Social Work Education

In order to accomplish far reaching effects in the profession of social work, educational systems that train professional social workers need to confront the issues of homosexuality and aging within their curricula. At this time, there are fewer than a dozen CSWE accredited schools of social work within this country that routinely include homosexually oriented course content in curricula and only a few more whose curricula routinely include content on older populations.

Data from this research and other studies point out the need for adequately trained practitioners and educators to deal with the needs of older homosexuals. Findings from this study have relevancy in

human behavior, social policy, professional practice and research courses taught in schools of social work.

How the older lesbian functions within the heterosexual culture and the homosexual subculture, her social interactions and support networks as well as her personal and professional duality have relevancy for human behavior courses. The multitude of social policy issues emanating from discriminatory, ageist and homophobic laws and practices should provide important discussions for social policy classes, and the discrimination issues faced by women of a triple minority status should be addressed by all future social work practitioners. Exactly how social workers can provide relevant social services to a pluralistic society that encompasses a variety of minorities, including older lesbians, should be assessed and analyzed in every social work practice class and field experience. Finally, social work research classes need information on how to gather data on various populations that are not easily attainable for study. This study provides one example of how to methodologically approach this problem as well as providing an area of unexplored possibilities for future research. In sum, data from this research has relevancy to a broad range of topics that should be diffused across the entire social work curricula.

Since social work education must reflect the needs of social work practice which must reflect the needs of society at large and since this study indicates a need for professionally trained social work practitioners skilled in providing services to older lesbian women,

schools of social work must begin to:

- Routinely include homosexual and age oriented course content across the social work curricula;
- Provide field placement opportunities where students will have a chance to deal with older homosexual clients;
- Encourage students to confront their own feelings, values and beliefs about homosexuality and aging;
- Provide a forum for discussion and research about homosexuality and aging.

By providing future social work practitioners with such opportunities, the profession starts to move toward its policy objective of providing adequate services to lesbian women and homosexual men.

Recommendations for Further Study

As with any research, this study tends to raise more questions about older lesbians than it answers. Since so little is still known about this group of women and since they do tend to differ from samples of presumably heterosexual older women, future research is necessary. Specific questions raised by this research are numerous and should not be overlooked by future researchers. The following questions have yet to be empirically examined:

- What are the demographic characteristics of older racially and ethnically identified lesbian minorities?
- Are there differences between lesbians who are older than 65 and younger lesbians?
- What differences exist between older lesbians and older heterosexual women?

- How do older lesbians and older homosexual men differ?
- Why do the marriages of lesbians to men last longer than lesbian relationships?
- Why does the older lesbian not turn to homophile sources of support available to her within the context of organized religion?
- What specific variables account for the older lesbian's involvement in politics, religion, organizations, the homosexual community?
- Why does the older lesbian tend not to spend money in the homosexual subculture?
- Why does the older lesbian seek support from informal sources (e.g. friends, family) rather than from more formal sources?
- What are the stages of the lesbian's coming out process?
- How does the lesbian integrate her personal and professional lives?
- Does the lesbian have difficulty managing a dual lifestyle where she interacts with both the heterosexual and homosexual social systems?
- What specific social services is the older lesbian in need of?
- How do social services provided to older lesbian women differ from social services provided to older heterosexual women?
- How are the housing needs of older lesbians different from those of older heterosexual women?

While this study has provided some small amount of information to the knowledge base of social work as a profession, much more research is needed to assure that quality services are provided routinely to every older lesbian requesting them.

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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE



VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
901 West Franklin Street • Richmond, Virginia 23284

May 1, 1982

Lesbian Feminist Flyer
[REDACTED]

Dear LF:

I am in the process of doing my PhD dissertation on the social organization of lesbian women age 50 years or older and am in need of women who would be willing to be interviewed by me. The interview is divided into eight major topics and seeks information in the following areas: demographic, economic, political, social welfare, education, religion, family and overview. I am particularly interested in determining where the older lesbian finds personal support during times of stress/crisis and the questions reflect this intent.

Data from these interviews will be statistically analyzed with data from a nationwide questionnaire survey that I am conducting on the social organization of older lesbian women. The final report will be my doctoral dissertation from VCU's School of Social Work. Data will also be used in the publication of several scholarly articles in various social work journals and perhaps in the publication of a book. As there is almost no research currently available on older lesbians, this study will help provide a description of this minority.

I am hopeful you will include notice of my research in your next issue of the Flyer and let your readers know of my need for women willing to be interviewed by me. Anyone interested should contact me at either:

Virginia Commonwealth University
School of Social Work
Raleigh Building
Richmond, Virginia 23284
[REDACTED]

Thanks. Here's a small check to help with your work.

In Sisterhood,
[REDACTED]

Carol Tully, M.S.W.
Doctoral Candidate

Interview Consent Form

Investigator: Carol T. Tully, M.S.W.
Doctoral Candidate
Virginia Commonwealth University
School of Social Work
Richmond, Virginia 23284
[REDACTED]

I agree to participate in this research project to describe my interactions with the economic, political, religious, social welfare, educational and familial social systems of this country and to describe my sources of support from these social institutions.

I understand that my participation in this study will consist entirely of my being interviewed by Ms. Tully. I agree to participate in this interview. I understand that Ms. Tully will maintain confidentiality of my responses. Further, I understand that this consent form will be kept in a locked safety deposit box in a bank known only to Ms. Tully and that once my interview responses have been statistically analyzed with other respondent's answers, my responses will be destroyed.

I also understand that I can ask questions prior to consenting or anytime thereafter, that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my participation in this research at any time.

Signed:

Subject

Date

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

As I have indicated to you, I am interested in gathering information about your social interactions and your support networks. I am specifically interested in how you interrelate with the heterosexual and homosexual social systems and the kinds of support you get from these systems in times of personal stress and crises. The interview is divided into eight major sections and includes questions on demographic, economic, political, educational, religious, social welfare, family and general information. You may feel free to not answer specific questions or to terminate the interview at any point. Please ask me to explain anything you find confusing. This interview should take approximately two hours.

I. Demographics

First, I would like to ask you some general questions about yourself.

Where were you born?

What was the date of your birth?

What is your racial or ethnic identification?

How would you classify your present health?

In what type of housing do you presently live?

Do you own (are you buying) or do you rent your living space?

With whom do you presently live?

What is the sexual orientation of the person (people) with whom you live?

How long have you lived with the person(s) you currently live with/alone?

In what city/town do you currently live?

How long have you lived in this city/town?

How did you learn of this study?

II. Economics

Economic security has been identified as providing support for women. The next series of questions will explore your economic situation.

What is your current employment status?

Do you work for someone else or are you self-employed? If retired, did you work for someone else or were you self-employed?

If you are currently employed, what is your present job title?

If you are not employed, what was your last job title?

Please tell me according to the following scale where your income from last year fell (that is before taxes or other deductions). Just tell me the letter.

Income Scale

- A. Under \$1,000
- B. \$1,000 to 3,999
- C. \$4,000 to 6,999
- D. \$7,000 to 9,999
- E. \$10,000 to 14,999
- F. \$15,000 to 19,999
- G. \$20,000 to 24,999
- H. \$25,000 or over

Of what social class do you consider yourself a member?

How do you perceive your present economic situation?

As you know, I am particularly interested in your interactions with the homosexual (lesbian/gay) community. Are you aware of a lesbian/gay community in your home town or within commuting distance of your home town?

If yes, do you consider yourself a member of that community?

In the past year, roughly how much have you spent on homosexually related activities (for example, books with homosexual themes, records by lesbians, lesbian journal subscriptions, dues paid to homosexually oriented groups etc.)?

To whom or where have you turned when faced with a financial crisis?

What kinds of support have you needed when you have had a financial crisis?

Specifically who provided you support when you have had a financial crisis?

Are you aware of any resources within the homosexual (lesbian/gay) community that could provide you support when you are having a financial crisis?

If aware, what financial resources do you know of?

Have such resources provided you support in times of financial crisis?

Specifically what kinds of support have these resources provided?

How adequate have your homosexual economic support systems been to you when you have had a financial crisis?

How adequate have your heterosexual economic support systems been to you when you have had a financial crisis?

During your life, how important has your ability to earn an adequate income been to you?

III. Politics

Involvement with politics and organizations has also been viewed as a way of gaining support. I would like to now ask you some questions about your political involvement and your organizational memberships.

What is your political party preference?

Where would you rank yourself on the following scale: Just tell me the appropriate number.

Liberalism/Conservatism Scale

1. Extremely conservative
2. Conservative
3. Slightly Conservative
4. Moderate, Middle of the Road
5. Slightly Liberal
6. Liberal
7. Extremely Liberal

How does a political candidate's positive stand on homosexual (lesbian/gay) issues influence your decision to vote for her/him?

How could this country's political system be more supportive of the homosexual lifestyle?

How important has politics been to you in your life?

To what political clubs do you currently belong?

To what hobby or garden clubs do you currently belong?

To what professional or academic clubs do you currently belong?

To what literary, art, discussion or study clubs do you currently belong?

Are you aware of any homosexually oriented groups?

If yes, to what homosexually oriented groups do you currently belong?

To what other political action groups do you currently belong?

To whom or where would you turn if your rights were being denied on the basis of a) age, b) sex, c) sexual orientation?

Within the past year, how often have you sought legal services?

Have you ever sought out homosexual (lesbian/gay) persons to help you with a legal problem?

IV. Education

Education is considered an important part of growing up. In this next series of questions I would like to first ask you some things about your formal education and then some things about your more informal educational experiences.

What is your highest level of education?

What academic degrees have you earned?

Was your a) grade school, b) high school, c) college: coeducational? public? religiously affiliated?

To what school sororities do you currently belong?

What kinds of support have educational systems provided you in times of personal, emotional crises?

How important has formal education been to you in your life?

How old were you when you first learned about homosexuality?

What you first learned about homosexuality, what influence did that information have on you?

At what age did you become intensely, emotionally intimate with other women?
At what age did you have your first lesbian sexual experience?
What kinds of support did you need after you started to define yourself as not traditionally heterosexual?
To whom or where did you turn for support when you started defining yourself as not traditionally heterosexual?
Were you aware of a homosexual (lesbian/gay) community at the time you first started defining yourself as not traditionally heterosexual?
If yes, did this community provide you any support during this phase of your life?
Specifically what kinds of support?
When you first started to define yourself as not traditionally heterosexual, but homosexual, how adequate were your personal support systems?

V. Religion

Another traditional source of support has been identified as religion. Because of this, I would like to now ask you some questions about your involvement with organized religion.

In what religion were you raised?
What is your current religious preference?
How often do you attend religious worship services?
How religiously devout do you consider yourself?
To what religiously sponsored groups do you currently belong?
Are you aware of any religiously oriented activities sponsored by homosexuals (lesbians/gay men)?
If yes, what activities are you aware of?
Are you involved with such activities?
Generally, what kinds of support has religion provided you in times of personal, emotional crises?
Are the sources of religious support currently available to you adequate to meet your religious needs?
How adequate have your homosexual religious support systems been when you have had a personal, emotional crisis?
How adequate have traditional religious support systems been to you when you have had a personal, emotional crisis?
How important has religion been to you in your life?

VI. Social Welfare

Because social services are thought to be a support system for some individuals, I would like to now ask you some questions about your relationships with helping professionals.

On what basis do you select helping professionals to provide you services?

Within the past year, how frequently have you received services from a) medical doctors, b) nurses, c) social workers, d) psychiatrists, e) psychologists, f) others?

Of those helping professionals you have dealt with in the past year, which knows of your sexual orientation?

Why have you chosen to tell (or not to tell) helping professionals of your sexual orientation?

During the past year, have you had a personal, emotional problem for which you received support from helping professionals? If yes, specifically what kinds of support were provided?

Are you aware of a) medical services, b) emotional counseling services, c) social services being offered in the homosexual (lesbian/gay) community?

What types of professional helping services has the homosexual (lesbian/gay) community provided to you when you have had a personal, emotional crisis?

How adequate have your sources of support from homosexual (lesbian/gay) helping professionals been to you when you were faced with a personal, emotional crisis?

How adequate have your sources of support from heterosexual helping professionals been to you when you were faced with a personal, emotional crisis?

How important have helping professionals been to you in your life?

VII. Family

Personal relationships have been identified as one source of support for women; so now, I would like to ask you some questions about your personal relationships.

Is your a) mother, b) father still alive?

How many a) sisters, b) brothers did you have?

Of your sisters and brothers, how many a) sisters, b) brothers are still alive?

Where do you fit in the birth order of your family?

Are any members of your immediate family homosexual? Specifically which members?

Have you ever been married to a man? If yes, how old were you when you married? How long did the marriage last? Why did the marriage end?

How many children have you ever had?

How many grandchildren have you ever had?

Who in your family is aware of your sexual orientation?

In general, how old are the people with whom you spend the majority of your free (leisure) time?

Roughly, how much of your free (leisure) time do you spend with
a) homosexual women, b) heterosexual women, c) homosexual
men, d) heterosexual men, e) alone?

Are you currently involved in an intimate relationship with
another woman?

If yes, how long has the relationship lasted?

If no, how long did your last intimate relationship with a
woman last?

Has a woman with whom you have been either emotionally or
physically intimate ever died?

If yes, who provided you support to help with your grief?

Generally, to whom have you turned for support in times of
personal, emotional crises?

How adequate have your a) homosexual support systems, b)
heterosexual support systems been when you were faced with a
personal, emotional crises?

How important have personal relationships with a) homosexuals,
b) heterosexuals been to you in your life?

VIII. General Information

Finally, I would like to ask you some general questions about
yourself.

Generally, what kinds of support have you wanted when faced
with a personal, emotional crisis?

Generally, what kinds of support have you found in the tradi-
tionally heterosexual world when you have been faced with a
personal, emotional crisis?

Generally, what kinds of support have you found in the homo-
sexual subculture when you have been faced with a personal,
emotional crisis?

Please rank yourself on the following scales. Just give me the
number of the answer that best applies to you.

A. Modified Kinsey Scales

1. Please rank yourself on the following scale based on your physical sexual experiences for the past twenty (20) years.
 - 0 Sexual experiences only with men.
 - 1 Sexual experiences predominantly with men, but with incidental sexual experiences with women.
 - 2 Sexual experiences predominantly with men, but with more than incidental sexual experiences with women.
 - 3 Sexual experiences with women and men equally.
 - 4 Sexual experiences predominantly with women, but with more than incidental sexual experiences with men.
 - 5 Sexual experiences predominantly with women, but with incidental sexual experiences with men.
 - 6 Sexual experiences only with women.
 - 7 Few or no sexual experiences with either women or men.

2. Please rank yourself on the following scale based on your intense, emotionally intimate feelings for the past twenty (20) years.
 - 0 Intense emotional intimacy only with men.
 - 1 Intense emotional intimacy predominantly with men, but with incidental intense emotional intimacy with women.
 - 2 Intense emotional intimacy predominantly with men, but with more than incidental intense emotional intimacy with women.
 - 3 Intense emotional intimacy with women and men equally.
 - 4 Intense emotional intimacy predominantly with women, but with more than incidental intense emotional intimacy with men.
 - 5 Intense emotional intimacy predominantly with women, but with incidental intense emotional intimacy with men.
 - 6 Intense emotional intimacy only with women.
 - 7 Intense emotional intimacy with neither women nor men.

3. Please rank yourself on the following scale based on your present physical sexual experiences.

- 0 Sexual experiences only with men.
- 1 Sexual experiences predominantly with men, but with incidental sexual experiences with women.
- 2 Sexual experiences predominantly with men, but with more than incidental sexual experiences with women.
- 3 Sexual experiences with women and men equally.
- 4 Sexual experiences predominantly with women, but with more than incidental sexual experiences with men.
- 5 Sexual experiences predominantly with women, but with incidental sexual experiences with men.
- 6 Sexual experiences only with women.
- 7 Not now sexually active with another person.

4. Please rank yourself on the following scale based on your present intense, emotionally intimate feelings.

- 0 Intense emotional intimacy only with men.
- 1 Intense emotional intimacy predominantly with men, but with incidental intense emotional intimacy with women.
- 2 Intense emotional intimacy predominantly with men, but with more than incidental intense emotional intimacy with women.
- 3 Intense emotional intimacy with women and men equally.
- 4 Intense emotional intimacy predominantly with women, but with more than incidental intense emotional intimacy with men.
- 5 Intense emotional intimacy predominantly with women, but with incidental intense emotional intimacy with men.
- 6 Intense emotional intimacy only with women.
- 7 Intense emotional intimacy with neither women nor men.

B. Overtness Continuum

Please rank your present openness about your sexual orientation on the following scale.

Sexual Orientation								Complete Openness
Hidden with Few								about Sexual
Exceptions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Orientation

C. Sexual Definition

What word do you use to sexually define yourself?

1. Homosexual
2. Gay
3. Lesbian
4. Bisexual
5. Heterosexual
6. Asexual

APPENDIX B
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE



VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

901 West Franklin Street • Richmond, Virginia 23284

THE CAMPUS SCHOOLS

Sciences

Community Services

in

York

COLLEGE OF VIRGINIA

SCHOOLS

Health Professions

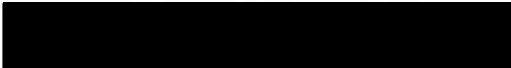
Services

Wanted: Lesbian women 50 or older to complete dissertation survey on social interaction and support networks. Questionnaire takes less than one hour to complete. Anonymity guaranteed. Please write for a questionnaire. Carol Tully, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work, Richmond, Virginia 23284



VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
901 West Franklin Street • Richmond, Virginia 23284

June 25, 1982

Ms. Beverly



Dear Ms.


I am in the process of working on my PhD dissertation which explores the social support networks of lesbian women who are 50 years old or older. I got your address from a friend of mine who is involved with OWL.

I am anxious to make my research questionnaire available to as many older lesbian women as is possible which is why I am contacting you. I have enclosed a few copies of my research questionnaire with the hope you will make them available to appropriate respondents.

Responses from this nationwide survey will provide data that will be useful in training "helping" professionals (e.g. psychologists, counselors, social workers, medical staff etc.) to better respond to the needs of older lesbian women.

I deeply appreciate your making my questionnaires available and my research known. If you have any questions or wish further information, please feel free to contact me.

Cordially,


Carol T. Tully
Doctoral Candidate
School of Social Work


Home:




VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
901 West Franklin Street • Richmond, Virginia 23284

Lesbian Connection
Helen Diner Memorial Women's Center
Ambitious Amazons

May 1, 1982



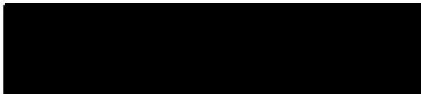
Dear Sisters:

I am in the process of doing my PhD dissertation on the social organization of lesbian women age 50 years old or older and am in need of women who would be willing to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into seven major areas and seeks information in the following areas: demographic, economic, political, familial, religious, social welfare and educational. I am particularly interested in determining where the older lesbian finds personal support during times of stress/crisis and the questions reflect this intent.

Data from this nationwide research will be statistically analyzed with data from in-depth interviews I am now conducting with older lesbians. The final report will be my doctoral dissertation from Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Social Work. Data will also be used in the publication of scholarly articles in various social work journals and perhaps in the publication of a book. As there is almost no research currently available on older lesbians, this study will help provide a description of this minority.

I am hopeful you will include notice of my research in your next issue of LC and let readers know of my need for women willing to complete a questionnaire. Anyone interested should contact me at either:

Virginia Commonwealth University
School of Social Work
Raleigh Building
Richmond, Virginia 23284



Thanks. Here's a small check to help with your work.

Cordially,



Carol Tully, M.S.W.
Doctoral Candidate



VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
901 West Franklin Street • Richmond, Virginia 23284

June 15, 1982

Lesbian/Gay Workshop Leaders
Unitarian Conference

Dear Mr. Chancey and/or Other Workshop Leaders:

I am presently involved in doing my PhD dissertation in the area of the social organization of older lesbian women. I am interested in making my questionnaire available to as many lesbian women age 50 or older as possible which is why I am contacting you. I read about this workshop in the Conference registration materials and hoped you might be willing to make my questionnaires available to suitable respondents at the workshop (or elsewhere).

I am sending some of my questionnaires to your workshop through Dr. Julie Honnold who will be attending the Conference. She is one of my dissertation committee members and agreed to deliver a few of my questionnaires to your workshop.

he responses to this nationwide survey will begin to clarify the social networks and support systems of a long overlooked minority. I deeply appreciate your cooperation in making my questionnaires available and making my research known.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions.

Cordially,

[Redacted signature]

/ Carol T. Tully, M.S.W.
Doctoral Candidate
School of Social Work

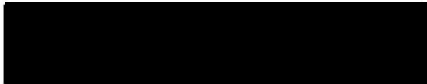
[Redacted address]



VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
901 West Franklin Street • Richmond, Virginia 23284

June 25, 1982

Ms. Hilda
D. C. SAGE



Dear Hilda:

I am in the process of working on my PhD dissertation which explores the social support networks of lesbian women 50 years of age or older. I am anxious to make my questionnaire available to as many older lesbian women as is possible which is why I am contacting you. I have enclosed a few copies of my questionnaire with the hope you will make them available to appropriate respondents.

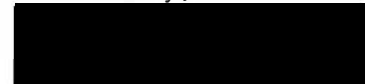
Responses from this nationwide survey will provide data that will be useful in training "helping" professionals (e.g. social workers, psychologists, counselors, medical staff etc.) to better respond to the needs of older lesbian women.

I deeply appreciate your making my questionnaires available and my research known. If you have questions or wish further information please contact me. I get to Washington, D.C. fairly regularly and would be more than delighted to speak with you if you would like to discuss my work in more detail.

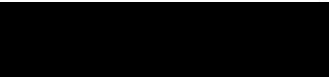
I am currently a member of the New York Chapter of SAGE. I am planning on moving to the Washington, D.C. area in the Fall of 1983 and would like very much to get involved with the D.C. Chapter (if you are willing to have a youngster of 36 be a volunteer!).

Thank you for your help with my research.

Cordially,



Carol T. Tully
Doctoral Candidate
School of Social Work



Home:





Virginia Commonwealth University

July 22, 1982

There is a lot of confusion and misinformation about homosexual (lesbian/gay) women who are 50 years old or older. Results from this research will present a more realistic picture of the older homosexual woman that will enable "helping" professionals (for example social workers, nurses, doctors, psychologists, ministers and the like) to have a better understanding of who the older homosexual woman is and where she finds support.

This study is one of the first that deals only with older homosexual women. Because of this, your responses to this completely anonymous and confidential questionnaire are very important. The questionnaire may be answered by any homosexual woman who is at least 50 years old and is willing to complete and return it.

This questionnaire is being distributed nationwide through friends and organizations. Since I would like to make copies of the questionnaire available to as many women as possible, feel free to write and request copies for you to distribute to others.

The results of this research will be made available to social workers, nurses, doctors, psychologists, ministers and other helping professionals who routinely work with and make social policies about older women. You may receive a summary of the results of this study by writing "copy of results requested" on the back of the return envelope, and printing your name and address below it. Please do not put this identifying information on the questionnaire itself.

I will be most happy to answer any questions you might have. You may call me at Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work [REDACTED] and I will return your call, or you may write to me at my home address:
[REDACTED]

Thank you for your help in this research project.

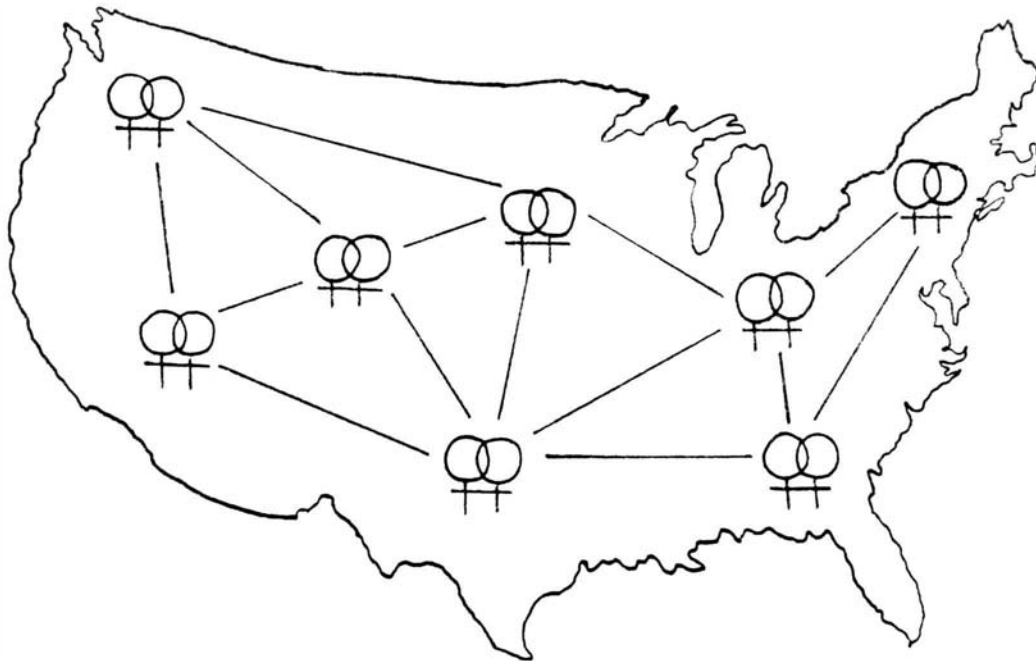
Cordially,

Carol T. Tully, M.S.W.
Doctoral Candidate

OLDER LESBIAN WOMEN AND
THEIR SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS

This nationwide survey explores the social support systems of older lesbian women. Please answer all of the questions. If you wish to comment on any questions or qualify your answers, please feel free to use the space in the margins or on page 18. Your comments will be read and taken into account. Your answers are anonymous and confidential.

Thank you for your help in this research project.



Carol T. Tully, M.S.W.
Doctoral Candidate
Virginia Commonwealth University
School of Social Work
Richmond, Virginia 23284

I. Personal relationships have been identified as one source of support for women; so first, I would like to ask you some questions about your personal relationships.

Q-1 Are your parents still alive? (Circle the appropriate number in each column)

MOTHER	FATHER
1 YES	1 YES
2 NO	2 NO

Q-2 How many sisters and brothers did you have? Please count all those born alive but no longer living, as well as those alive now. Also include stepsisters and stepbrothers and children adopted by your parents. (Fill in the appropriate number)

SISTERS	BROTHERS
_____	_____

Q-3 Of your sisters and brothers, how many are still alive? (Fill in the appropriate number)

SISTERS	BROTHERS
_____	_____

Q-4 Where do you fit in the birth order of your family? (Circle number)

- 1 OLDEST CHILD
- 2 MIDDLE CHILD
- 3 YOUNGEST CHILD
- 4 ONLY CHILD
- 5 OTHER -- PLEASE SPECIFY _____

Q-5 Are any members of your immediate family (for example parents, sisters or brothers, children) homosexual? (Circle number)

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 3 DO NOT KNOW

→ (If some members of family are homosexual)
Q-5a SPECIFY WHICH MEMBERS _____

Q-6 Have you ever been married to a man? (Circle number)

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

→ (If you have been married to a man)
Q-6a How old were you when you married? _____
YEARS
Q-6b How long did the marriage last? _____
YEARS
Q-6c Why did the marriage end? _____

Q-7 How many children have you ever had? Please count all that were born alive at any time? (Fill in the appropriate number. If none, write "0".)

NUMBER OF CHILDREN

Q-8 How many grandchildren have you ever had? Please count all that were born alive at any time. (Fill in the appropriate number. If none, write "0".)

NUMBER OF GRANDCHILDREN

Q-9 Who in your family is aware of your sexual orientation? (Circle the numbers of all those who are [or were] aware.)

- 1 MOTHER
- 2 FATHER
- 3 SISTERS
- 4 BROTHERS
- 5 CHILDREN
- 6 GRANDCHILDREN
- 7 HUSBAND
- 8 OTHER RELATIVES -- SPECIFY WHICH _____
- 9 NONE IS

Q-10 Which of the following people outside your family are aware of your sexual orientation? (Circle the numbers of all categories below who are aware.)

- 1 HOMOSEXUAL FEMALE FRIENDS
- 2 HOMOSEXUAL MALE FRIENDS
- 3 HOMOSEXUAL ACQUAINTANCES
- 4 HETEROSEXUAL FEMALE FRIENDS
- 5 HETEROSEXUAL MALE FRIENDS
- 6 HETEROSEXUAL ACQUAINTANCES
- 7 NO ONE IS AWARE

Q-11 In general, how old are the people with whom you spend the majority of your free (leisure) time? (Circle the appropriate number)

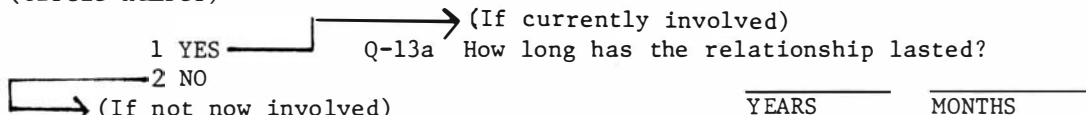
- 1 MORE THAN TEN YEARS OLDER THAN YOU ARE
- 2 FROM FIVE TO TEN YEARS OLDER THAN YOU ARE
- 3 ABOUT THE SAME AGE AS YOU ARE
- 4 FROM FIVE TO TEN YEARS YOUNGER THAN YOU ARE
- 5 MORE THAN TEN YEARS YOUNGER THAN YOU ARE
- 6 OTHER -- SPECIFY _____

Q-12 Roughly, how much of your free (leisure) time do you spend with the types of people listed below?

- NONE means you spend no free time with them
- A LITTLE means you spend up to 25% of your free time with them
- SOME means you spend more than 25% of your free time with them but less than 50% of your free time
- A FAIR AMOUNT means you spend at least 50% of your free time with them, but less than 75% of your free time
- A GREAT DEAL means you spend at least 75% of your free time with them, but less than 100% of your free time
- ALL means you spend all (100%) of your free time with them

	Amount of free time spent (Circle your answers)					
	NONE	A LITTLE	SOME	FAIR AMOUNT	GREAT DEAL	ALL
1 Homosexual Women...	NONE	A LITTLE	SOME	FAIR AMOUNT	GREAT DEAL	ALL
2 Heterosexual Women..	NONE	A LITTLE	SOME	FAIR AMOUNT	GREAT DEAL	ALL
3 Homosexual Men.....	NONE	A LITTLE	SOME	FAIR AMOUNT	GREAT DEAL	ALL
4 Heterosexual Men....	NONE	A LITTLE	SOME	FAIR AMOUNT	GREAT DEAL	ALL
5 Alone.....	NONE	A LITTLE	SOME	FAIR AMOUNT	GREAT DEAL	ALL
6 Other -- Specify....	NONE	A LITTLE	SOME	FAIR AMOUNT	GREAT DEAL	ALL

Q-13 Are you currently involved in an intimate relationship with another woman?
(Circle number)

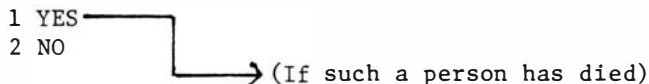


YEARS MONTHS

Q-13b How long did your last intimate relationship with a woman last?

YEARS MONTHS

Q-14 Has a woman with whom you have been either emotionally or physically intimate ever died? (Circle number)



Q-14a Who provided you support to help you deal with your grief? (Please rank order the following where "1" provided you the most support and "7" provided the least support)

- _____ HOMOSEXUAL FEMALE FRIENDS
- _____ HOMOSEXUAL MALE FRIENDS
- _____ HOMOSEXUAL FAMILY MEMBERS
- _____ HETEROSEXUAL FEMALE FREINDS
- _____ HETEROSEXUAL MALE FREINDS
- _____ HETEROSEXUAL FAMILY MEMBERS
- _____ NO ONE HELPED
- _____ OTHER -- SPECIFY _____

Q-15 Generally, to whom have you turned for support in time of personal, emotional crises? (Please rank order the following where "1" provided you the most support and "7" the least.)

- _____ HOMOSEXUAL FEMALE FRIENDS
- _____ HOMOSEXUAL MALE FRIENDS
- _____ HOMOSEXUAL FAMILY MEMBERS
- _____ HETEROSEXUAL FEMALE FRIENDS
- _____ HETEROSEXUAL MALE FRIENDS
- _____ HETEROSEXUAL FAMILY MEMBERS
- _____ NO ONE
- _____ OTHER -- SPECIFY _____

Q-16 How adequate have your homosexual support systems been when you were faced with a personal, emotional crisis? (Circle the most appropriate number)

- 1 INADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 2 BARELY ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 3 ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 4 MORE THAN ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS

Q-17 How adequate have your heterosexual support systems been when you were faced with a personal, emotional crisis? (Circle number)

- 1 INADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 2 BARELY ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 3 ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 4 MORE THAN ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS

Q-18 How important have personal relationships with homosexuals been to you in your life? (Circle number)

- 1 VERY IMPORTANT
- 2 IMPORTANT
- 3 MODERATELY IMPORTANT
- 4 MODERATELY UNIMPORTANT
- 5 UNIMPORTANT
- 6 VERY UNIMPORTANT

Q-19 How important have personal relationships with heterosexuals been to you in your life? (Circle number)

- 1 VERY IMPORTANT
- 2 IMPORTANT
- 3 MODERATELY IMPORTANT
- 4 MODERATELY UNIMPORTANT
- 5 UNIMPORTANT
- 6 VERY UNIMPORTANT

II. Another traditional source of support has been identified as religion. Because of this, I would like to now ask you some questions about your involvement with organized religion.

Q-20 In what religion were you raised? (Circle number)

- 1 PROTESTANT
- 2 CATHOLIC
- 3 JEWISH
- 4 AGNOSTIC/ATHEIST
- 5 NONE
- 6 OTHER -- SPECIFY _____

Q-21 What is your current religious preference? (Circle number)

- 1 PROTESTANT
- 2 CATHOLIC
- 3 JEWISH
- 4 AGNOSTIC/ATHEIST
- 5 NONE
- 6 OTHER -- SPECIFY _____

Q-22 How often do you attend religious worship services? (Circle number)

- 0 NEVER
- 1 LESS THAN ONCE A YEAR
- 2 ABOUT ONCE OR TWICE A YEAR
- 3 SEVERAL TIMES A YEAR
- 4 ABOUT ONCE A MONTH
- 5 TWO OR THREE TIMES A MONTH
- 6 NEARLY EVERY WEEK
- 7 EVERY WEEK
- 8 SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK
- 9 DO NOT KNOW

Q-23 How religiously devout do you consider yourself? (Circle number)

- 1 VERY DEVOUT
- 2 DEVOUT
- 3 MODERATELY DEVOUT
- 4 MODERATELY NON-DEVOUT
- 5 NON-DEVOUT
- 6 VERY NON-DEVOUT

Q-24 To what religiously sponsored groups do you currently belong?

Q-25 Are you aware of any religiously oriented activities sponsored by homosexuals (lesbians/gay men)? (Circle number)

- 1 YES _____ Q-25a (If aware of such activities) What activities are you aware of?
- 2 NO

Q-25b Are you involved with such activities? (Circle number)

- 1 YES -- SPECIFY WHICH _____
- 2 NO

Q-26 Generally, what kinds of support has religion provided you in times of personal, emotional crises?

Q-27 Are the sources of religious support currently available to you adequate to meet your religious needs? (Circle number)

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

Q-28 How adequate have your homosexual religious support systems been when you have had a personal, emotional crisis? (Circle the most appropriate number)

- 1 INADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 2 BARELY ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 3 ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 4 MORE THAN ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 5 SUCH SUPPORT SYSTEMS ARE NOT AVAILABLE
- 6 NOT APPLICABLE

Q-29 How adequate have traditional religious support systems been to you when you have had a personal, emotional crisis? (Circle number)

- 1 INADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 2 BARELY ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 3 ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 4 MORE THAN ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 5 NOT APPLICABLE

Q-30 How important has religion been to you in your life? (Circle number)

- 1 VERY IMPORTANT
- 2 IMPORTANT
- 3 MODERATELY IMPORTANT
- 4 MODERATELY UNIMPORTANT
- 5 UNIMPORTANT
- 6 VERY UNIMPORTANT

III. Employment and economic security have also been identified as providing support for women. The next series of questions will explore your economic situation.

Q-31 What is your current employment status? (Circle number)

- 1 EMPLOYED FULL-TIME FOR PAY
- 2 EMPLOYED PART-TIME FOR PAY
- 3 RETIRED
- 4 OTHER -- SPECIFY _____

Q-32 Do you work for someone else or are you self-employed? (If retired, were you self-employed or did you work for someone else when you retired?)

- 1 WORK(ED) FOR SOMEONE ELSE
- 2 SELF-EMPLOYED

Q-33 If you are currently employed, what is your job title?

Q-34 If you are not employed, what was your last job title?

Q-35 In which of the following categories did your income from last year fall?
(That is before taxes or other deductions) (Circle number)

- 1 UNDER \$1,000
- 2 \$1,000 - 3,999
- 3 \$4,000 - 6,999
- 4 \$7,000 - 9,999
- 5 \$10,000 - 14,999
- 6 \$15,000 - 19,999
- 7 \$20,000 - 24,999
- 8 \$25,000 OR OVER
- 9 DO NOT KNOW

Q-36 Of what social class do you consider yourself a member? (Circle number)

- 1 UPPER CLASS
- 2 MIDDLE CLASS
- 3 WORKING CLASS
- 4 LOWER CLASS

Q-37 How do you perceive your present economic situation? (Circle number)

- 1 INADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 2 BARELY ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 3 ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 4 MORE THAN ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS

Q-38 Are you aware of a homosexual (lesbian/gay) community in your home town
or within commuting distance of your home town? (Circle number)

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

→ (If aware of homosexual community)
Q-38a Do you consider yourself a member of that
community? (Circle number)

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

Q-39 In the past year, roughly how much money have you spent on "homosexually"
related activities (for example books on homosexual themes, records by
lesbians, lesbian journal subscriptions, dues paid to homosexually oriented
groups etc.) (Circle number)

- 1 LESS THAN \$50
- 2 \$50 - 99
- 3 \$100 - 499
- 4 \$500 or more

Q-40 To whom or where have you turned when faced with a financial crisis?

Q-41 What kinds of support have you needed when you have had a financial crisis?

Q-42 Specifically who provided you support when you have had a financial crisis?

Q-43 Are you aware of any resources within the homosexual (lesbian/gay) community that could provide you support when you are having a financial crisis? (Circle number)

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 3 DO NOT KNOW

→ Q-43a (If aware of homosexual financial resources)
What resources do you know of?

→ Q-43b Have such resources provided you support in times of financial crisis? (Circle number)

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

→ Q-43c Specifically what kinds of support have these resources provided you?

Q-44 How adequate have your homosexual economic support systems been to you when you have had a financial crisis? (Circle number)

- 1 INADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 2 BARELY ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 3 ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 4 MORE THAN ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 5 SUCH SUPPORT SYSTEMS ARE NOT AVAILABLE

Q-45 How adequate have heterosexual economic support systems been to you when you have had a financial crisis? (Circle number)

- 1 INADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 2 BARELY ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 3 ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 4 MORE THAN ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS

Q-46 During your life, how important has your ability to earn an adequate income been to you? (Circle number)

- 1 VERY IMPORTANT
- 2 IMPORTANT
- 3 MODERATELY IMPORTANT
- 4 MODERATELY UNIMPORTANT
- 5 UNIMPORTANT
- 6 VERY UNIMPORTANT

IV. Involvement with politics and organizations has also been viewed as a way of gaining support. I would like to now ask you some questions about your political involvement and your organizational memberships.

Q-47 What is your political party preference? (Circle number)

- 1 DEMOCRATIC
- 2 INDEPENDENT
- 3 REPUBLICAN
- 4 NONE
- 5 OTHER -- SPECIFY _____

Q-48 Where would you rank yourself on the following scale? (Circle the appropriate number)

- 1 EXTREMELY CONSERVATIVE
- 2 CONSERVATIVE
- 3 SLIGHTLY CONSERVATIVE
- 4 MODERATE, MIDDLE OF THE ROAD
- 5 SLIGHTLY LIBERAL
- 6 LIBERAL
- 7 EXTREMELY LIBERAL

Q-49 How does a political candidate's positive stand on homosexual (lesbian/gay) issues influence your decision to vote for her/him? (Circle number)

- 1 POSITIVE INFLUENCE
- 2 NEITHER POSITIVE NOR NEGATIVE INFLUENCE
- 3 NEGATIVE INFLUENCE

Q-50 How could this country's political system be more supportive of the homosexual lifestyle?

Q-51 How important has politics been to you during your life? (Circle number)

- 1 VERY IMPORTANT
- 2 IMPORTANT
- 3 MODERATELY IMPORTANT
- 4 MODERATELY UNIMPORTANT
- 5 UNIMPORTANT
- 6 VERY UNIMPORTANT

Q-52 To what political clubs do you currently belong?

Q-53 To what hobby or garden clubs do you currently belong?

Q-54 To what professional or academic groups do you currently belong?

Q-55 To what literary, art, discussion or study groups do you currently belong?

Q-56 Are you aware of any homosexually oriented groups? (Circle number)

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

→ (If aware of homosexual groups)
Q-56a To what homosexually oriented groups do you currently belong?

Q-57 To what other political action groups do you currently belong?

Q-58 To whom or where would you turn if your rights were being denied on the basis of:

- 1 AGE:
- 2 SEX:
- 3 SEXUAL ORIENTATION:

Q-59 Within the past year, how often have you sought legal services? (Circle number)

- 1 NONE
- 2 1 - 4 TIMES
- 3 5 - 9 TIMES
- 4 10 - 14 TIMES
- 5 15 - 19 TIMES
- 6 20 OR MORE TIMES
- 7 DO NOT KNOW HOW MANY TIMES

Q-60 Have you ever purposefully sought out homosexual (lesbian/gay) persons to help you with a legal problem? (Circle number)

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 3 HAVE HAD NO NEED FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE

V. Because social services are thought to be a support system for some individuals, I would like to now ask you some questions about your relationships with "helping" professionals.

Q-61 On what basis do you select "helping" professionals to provide you services? (Please rank order where "1" is your highest priority and "4" is your lowest.)

- _____ PROFESSIONAL REPUTATION/EXPERTISE
- _____ PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE
- _____ HOMOSEXUAL SEXUAL ORIENTATION OF PROFESSIONAL
- _____ RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHERS
- _____ OTHER -- SPECIFY _____

Q-62 Within the past year, how many times have you received services from the following "helping" professionals?

	Times Received Services (Circle the appropriate numbers)					
1 Medical doctors....NONE	1 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 14	15 - 19	20 OR MORE TIMES	
2 Nurses.....NONE	1 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 14	15 - 19	20 OR MORE TIMES	
3 Social Workers.....NONE	1 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 14	15 - 19	20 OR MORE TIMES	
4 Psychiatrists.....NONE	1 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 14	15 - 19	20 OR MORE TIMES	
5 Psychologists.....NONE	1 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 14	15 - 19	20 OR MORE TIMES	
6 Other -- Specify...NONE	1 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 14	15 - 19	20 OR MORE TIMES	

Q-63 Of those helping professionals you have dealt with in the past year, which knows of your sexual orientation? (Circle number)

- 1 WITHOUT EXCEPTION, ALL KNOW
- 2 WITHOUT EXCEPTION, NONE KNOW
- 3 SOME KNOW -- SPECIFY WHICH ONES KNOW _____

Q-64 Why have you chosen to tell (or not to tell) helping professionals of your sexual orientation?

Q-65 During the past year, have you had a personal, emotional problem for which you received support from helping professionals? (Circle number)

- 1 YES
 - 2 NO
- (If helping professionals provided support)
- Q-65a Specifically, what kinds of support were provided?

Q-66 Are you aware of any of the following professional services being offered in the homosexual (lesbian/gay) community?

	Aware of Services Provided (Circle answers)	
1 Medical Services.....	YES	NO
2 Emotional Counseling Services...	YES	NO
3 Social Services.....	YES	NO

Q-67 What types of professional "helping" services has the homosexual (lesbian/gay) community provided to you when you have had a personal, emotional crisis?

Q-68 How adequate have your sources of support from homosexual (lesbian/gay) helping professionals been to you when you were faced with a personal, emotional crisis? (Circle number)

- 1 INADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 2 BARELY ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 3 ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 4 MORE THAN ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 5 SUCH SUPPORT SYSTEMS ARE NOT AVAILABLE
- 6 NOT APPLICABLE

Q-69 How adequate have your sources of support from heterosexual helping professionals been to you when you were faced with a personal, emotional crisis? (Circle number)

- 1 INADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 2 BARELY ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 3 ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 4 MORE THAN ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 5 NOT APPLICABLE

Q-70 How important have helping professionals been to you in your life? (Circle number)

- 1 VERY IMPORTANT
- 2 IMPORTANT
- 3 MODERATELY IMPORTANT
- 4 MODERATELY UNIMPORTANT
- 5 UNIMPORTANT
- 6 VERY UNIMPORTANT

VI. Education is considered an important part of growing up. In this section, I would like to first ask you some questions about your formal (classroom) education and then ask you some questions about your informal (friends/family) learning.

A. Formal Education

Q-71 What is your highest level of education? (Circle appropriate number)

- 1 GRADE SCHOOL
- 2 SOME HIGH SCHOOL
- 3 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE (OR PASSED G.E.D.)
- 4 1 - 2 YEARS OF COLLEGE (OR BUSINESS/TRADE SCHOOL)
- 5 3 - 4 YEARS OF COLLEGE
- 6 COLLEGE GRADUATE
- 7 GRADUATE SCHOOL
- 8 OTHER -- SPECIFY _____

Q-72 What academic degrees have you earned? (Please list all degrees)

Q-73 What kinds of schools have you attended?

		Types of Schools Attended (Circle all that apply)			
--	--	--	--	--	--

1	Grade School....	COEDUCATIONAL	SEX-SEGREGATED	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	RELIGIOUS
2	High School.....	COEDUCATIONAL	SEX-SEGREGATED	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	RELIGIOUS
3	College.....	COEDUCATIONAL	SEX-SEGREGATED	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	RELIGIOUS

Q-74 To what school sororities do you currently belong?

Q-75 What kinds of support have educational systems provided you in times of personal, emotional crises?

Q-76 How important has formal education been to you in your life? (Circle number)

- 1 VERY IMPORTANT
- 2 IMPORTANT
- 3 MODERATELY IMPORTANT
- 4 MODERATELY UNIMPORTANT
- 5 UNIMPORTANT
- 6 VERY UNIMPORTANT

B. Informal Education

Q-77 How old were you when you first learned about homosexuality? _____
YEARS

Q-78 When you first learned about homosexuality, what influence did that information have on you?

Q-79 At what age did you become intensely, emotionally intimate with other women? _____
YEARS

Q-80 At what age did you have your first lesbian sexual experience? _____
YEARS

Q-81 What kinds of support did you need after you started to define yourself as not traditionally heterosexual?

Q-82 To whom or where did you turn for support when you started defining yourself as not traditionally heterosexual?

Q-83 Were you aware of a homosexual (lesbian/gay) community at the time you first started defining yourself as not traditionally heterosexual?
(Circle number)

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

→ (If aware of a homosexual community)
Q-83a Did this community provide you any support during this phase of your life? (Circle number)

- 1 YES -- SPECIFY TYPES OF SUPPORT _____
- 2 NO

Q-84 When you first started to define yourself as not traditionally heterosexual but homosexual, how adequate were your personal support systems?
(Circle number)

- 1 INADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 2 BARELY ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 3 ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS
- 4 MORE THAN ADEQUATE TO MEET YOUR NEEDS

VII. Finally, I would like to ask you some general questions about yourself.

Q-85 How actively are you currently involved with the homosexual (lesbian/gay) community? (Circle number)

- 1 VERY ACTIVELY INVOLVED
- 2 INVOLVED
- 3 MODERATELY INVOLVED
- 4 MODERATELY UNINVOLVED
- 5 UNINVOLVED
- 6 VERY UNINVOLVED

Q-86 How actively are you currently involved with the homosexual (lesbian/gay) civil rights movement? (Circle number)

- 1 VERY ACTIVELY INVOLVED
- 2 INVOLVED
- 3 MODERATELY INVOLVED
- 4 MODERATELY UNINVOLVED
- 5 UNINVOLVED
- 6 VERY UNINVOLVED

Q-87 Generally, what kinds of support have you wanted when faced with a personal, emotional crisis?

Q-88 Generally, what kinds of support have you found in the traditionally heterosexual world when you have been faced with a personal, emotional crisis?

Q-89 Generally, what kinds of support have you found in the homosexual subculture when you have been faced with a personal, emotional crisis?

Q-90 Please rank yourself on the following scale based on your present intense, emotionally intimate feelings. (Mark the one statement that is closest to how you feel) (Circle number)

- 0 INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY ONLY WITH MEN
- 1 INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY PREDOMINANTLY WITH MEN, BUT WITH INCIDENTAL INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY WITH WOMEN
- 2 INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY PREDOMINANTLY WITH MEN, BUT WITH MORE THAN INCIDENTAL INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY WITH WOMEN
- 3 INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY WITH WOMEN AND MEN EQUALLY
- 4 INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY PREDOMINANTLY WITH WOMEN, BUT WITH MORE THAN INCIDENTAL INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY WITH MEN
- 5 INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY PREDOMINANTLY WITH WOMEN, BUT WITH INCIDENTAL INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY WITH MEN
- 6 INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY ONLY WITH WOMEN
- 7 INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY WITH NEITHER WOMEN NOR MEN

Q-91 Please rank yourself on the following scale based on your intense, emotionally intimate feelings for the past twenty (20) years. (Mark the one statement that is most closely related to your past feelings) (Circle number)

- 0 INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY ONLY WITH MEN
- 1 INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY PREDOMINANTLY WITH MEN, BUT WITH INCIDENTAL INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY WITH WOMEN
- 2 INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY PREDOMINANTLY WITH MEN, BUT WITH MORE THAN INCIDENTAL INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY WITH WOMEN
- 3 INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY WITH WOMEN AND MEN EQUALLY
- 4 INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY PREDOMINANTLY WITH WOMEN, BUT WITH MORE THAN INCIDENTAL INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY WITH MEN
- 5 INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY PREDOMINANTLY WITH WOMEN, BUT WITH INCIDENTAL INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY WITH MEN
- 6 INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY ONLY WITH WOMEN
- 7 INTENSE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY WITH NEITHER WOMEN NOR MEN

Q-92 Please rank yourself on the following scale based on your present physical sexual experiences. (Mark the one statement that is closest to your experiences) (Circle number)

- 0 SEXUAL EXPERIENCES ONLY WITH MEN
- 1 SEXUAL EXPERIENCES PREDOMINANTLY WITH MEN, BUT WITH INCIDENTAL EXPERIENCES WITH WOMEN
- 2 SEXUAL EXPERIENCES PREDOMINANTLY WITH MEN, BUT WITH MORE THAN INCIDENTAL SEXUAL EXPERIENCES WITH WOMEN
- 3 SEXUAL EXPERIENCES WITH WOMEN AND MEN EQUALLY
- 4 SEXUAL EXPERIENCES PREDOMINANTLY WITH WOMEN, BUT WITH MORE THAN INCIDENTAL SEXUAL EXPERIENCES WITH MEN
- 5 SEXUAL EXPERIENCES PREDOMINANTLY WITH WOMEN, BUT WITH INCIDENTAL SEXUAL EXPERIENCES WITH MEN
- 6 SEXUAL EXPERIENCES ONLY WITH WOMEN
- 7 NOT NOW SEXUALLY ACTIVE WITH ANOTHER PERSON

Q-93 Please rank yourself on the following scale based on your physical sexual experiences during the past twenty (20) years. (Mark the one statement that is most closely related to your past experiences) (Circle number)

- 0 SEXUAL EXPERIENCES ONLY WITH MEN
- 1 SEXUAL EXPERIENCES PREDOMINANTLY WITH MEN, BUT WITH INCIDENTAL SEXUAL EXPERIENCES WITH WOMEN
- 2 SEXUAL EXPERIENCES PREDOMINANTLY WITH MEN, BUT WITH MORE THAN INCIDENTAL SEXUAL EXPERIENCES WITH WOMEN
- 3 SEXUAL EXPERIENCES WITH WOMEN AND MEN EQUALLY
- 4 SEXUAL EXPERIENCES PREDOMINANTLY WITH WOMEN, BUT WITH MORE THAN INCIDENTAL SEXUAL EXPERIENCES WITH MEN
- 5 SEXUAL EXPERIENCES PREDOMINANTLY WITH WOMEN, BUT WITH INCIDENTAL SEXUAL EXPERIENCES WITH MEN
- 6 SEXUAL EXPERIENCES ONLY WITH WOMEN
- 7 FEW OR NO SEXUAL EXPERIENCES WITH EITHER WOMEN OR MEN

Q-94 What word do you use to sexually define yourself? (Pick the one word that you are most comfortable with) (Circle number)

- 1 HOMOSEXUAL
- 2 GAY
- 3 LESBIAN
- 4 BISEXUAL
- 5 HETEROSEXUAL
- 6 ASEXUAL
- 7 OTHER -- SPECIFY _____

Q-95 Please rank your present openness about your sexual orientation on the following scale. (Circle the appropriate number)

SEXUAL ORIENTATION								COMPLETE OPENNESS
HIDDEN WITH FEW	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	AND HONESTY ABOUT
EXCEPTIONS								SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Q-96 Where were you born? _____
CITY STATE

Q-97 What was the date of your birth? _____
MONTH YEAR

Q-98 Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic identification? (Circle number)

- 1 AMERICAN INDIAN (NATIVE AMERICAN)
- 2 CAUCASIAN (WHITE, NON-HISPANIC)
- 3 HISPANIC
- 4 NEGRO (BLACK, NON-HISPANIC)
- 5 ORIENTAL
- 6 OTHER -- SPECIFY _____

Q-99 How would you classify your present health? (Circle number)

- 1 EXCELLENT
- 2 GOOD
- 3 FAIR
- 4 POOR

Q-100 In what type of housing do you currently live? (Circle number)

- 1 HOUSE
- 2 APARTMENT
- 3 ROOMING SITUATION
- 4 NURSING HOME
- 5 OTHER -- SPECIFY _____

Q-101 Do you own (are buying) or rent your living space? (Circle number)

- 1 OWN (ARE BUYING)
- 2 RENT

→ (If you own or are buying)
Q-101a Do you share the expense with another?
(Circle number)

- 1 YES -- SPECIFY WITH WHOM _____
- 2 NO

Q-102 With whom do you presently live? (Circle the number of all that apply)

- 1 FEMALE LIFE PARTNER
- 2 FEMALE FRIEND
- 3 ACQUAINTANCES
- 4 RELATIVES -- SPECIFY WITH WHOM _____
- 5 LIVE ALONE
- 6 OTHER -- SPECIFY _____

Q-103 What kinds of people do you currently live with? (Circle number)

- 1 HOMOSEXUAL WOMEN
- 2 HETEROSEXUAL WOMEN
- 3 HOMOSEXUAL MEN
- 4 HETEROSEXUAL MEN
- 5 HOMOSEXUAL WOMEN AND MEN
- 6 HETEROSEXUAL WOMEN AND MEN
- 7 OTHER -- SPECIFY _____
- 8 NOT APPLICABLE

Q-104 How long have you lived with the person (or persons) you currently live with?

_____ YEARS

Q-105 Where do you now live?

_____ CITY

_____ STATE

Q-106 How long have you lived in this city/town?

_____ YEARS

_____ MONTHS

Q-107 How did you learn about this study?

If you wish to further clarify any of your answers, feel free to use this space for that purpose.

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your personal support systems? If so, please use this space for that purpose.

Your contribution to this research is greatly appreciated. If you would like additional copies of this questionnaire to distribute to other women, print your name and address and the number of copies you would like on the back of the return envelope (NOT on this questionnaire). If you would like a copy of the summary of results when published, print your name and address on the back of the return envelope. I will see that the information you request will be sent to you.

APPENDIX C
RESPONDENT'S CURRENT PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Respondent's Current Place of Residence
(N=73)

<u>Place</u>	<u>N</u>
Arizona	
Chandler	1
Flagstaff	2
Lakeside	1
Phoenix	5
Show Lo	1
California	
Fort Bragg	1
Los Angeles	1
San Francisco	1
Colorado	
Denver	4
District of Columbia	1
Illinois	
Edwardsville	1
Indiana	
Indianapolis	1
Iowa	
DesMoines	1
Iowa City	1
Waterloo	1
Kentucky	
Jamestown	1
Lousiana	
New Orleans	1
Maryland	
Baltimore	1
Massachusetts	
Boston	1
New Salem	1
North Andover	1
Westwood	1
Minnesota	
Robbinsdale	1
New Jersey	
Bogata	1
Newark	2
New Mexico	
Santa Fe	1

New York	
New York City	2
Long Island	1
North Carolina	
Brevard	1
Ohio	
Cincinnati	1
Columbus	1
Oregon	
Elmira	1
Eugene	1
Pennsylvania	
Ardmore	1
Philadelphia	2
Rhode Island	
Providence	2
Texas	
Houston	4
Vermont	
Burlington	3
Franklin	1
Marshfield	1
Virginia	
Charlottesville	2
Gordonsville	1
Lynchburg	1
Newport News	1
Richmond	7
Washington	
Spokane	1
Wisconsin	
Madison	2
Wyoming	
Gillette	1

APPENDIX D
RESPONDENT'S JOB TITLE

Respondent's Job Title
(N=73)

<u>Professional Type and Job Title</u>	<u>N</u>
Business Oriented	
Administrative Service Administrators	4
Advertising Manager	1
Baker/Chef/Dietary Supervisor	3
Clerk	1
Editor	2
Encoder	1
Flight Instructor	1
Personnel Manager/Director	2
Purchasing Agent	1
Real Estate Broker	1
Sales Manager	1
Shear Operator	1
Shop Laborer	1
Supervisor	2
Typist	1
Educational	
Assistant Professor	2
Associate Professor	1
Professor	6
Book Buyer	1
Curriculum Developer	1
Director of Library Collections	1
School Principal	1
Teacher	2
Helping	
Biomedical Researcher	1
Counselor	1
Clinical Social Worker	6
Director of Christian Education	1
Executive Director/Chief	7
Nurse	6
Pharmacist	1
Physician	1
Psychiatrist	2
Psychotherapist	2
Self Employed	
Business Owner	2
Dog Breeder	2
Writer	3

VITA

CAROL THORPE TULLY

