Gender Differences in Same-Sex Sexual Partnering, 1988-2002

Amy C. Butler

University of Iowa *

* Direct correspondence to Amy Butler, 308 NH, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242; e-mail: amy-c-butler@uiowa.edu. This research was supported in part by the University of Iowa Obermann Center for Advanced Studies.

Running Head: Gender Differences in Same-Sex Sexual Partnering

Abstract

A review of previous research suggests that sexual orientation is shaped, in part, by cultural norms and structural constraints on people's lives. This paper proposes that recent normative, economic, and legal changes in the U.S. have been sufficiently large to produce an increase in the proportion of American adults who had a same-sex sexual partner. Data from the GSS and NHSLS (n = 18,170) were used to examine gender differences in trends in same-sex sexual partnering between 1988 and 2002. The proportion of both men and women who reported having had a same-sex sexual partner in the previous year increased and the increase was greater for women than it was for men. The increase for women was present among both white and black women and was not limited to young adults. Changes in normative climate accounted for the increase in same-sex sexual partnering among men and for a portion of the increase among women.

Gender Differences in Same-Sex Partnering, 1988-2002

Much attention has been given to estimating the rate of "homosexuality" among men and women. The commonly cited figure of 10% can be traced to Alfred Kinsey and his colleagues, who concluded that in the United States, "10% of the [white] males are more or less exclusively homosexual for at least three years between the ages of 16 and 53" (Kinsey et al., 1948, p. 651). Kinsey et al. (1953) estimated that the rate for women was a third to half as large as that for men. A more recent study based on national probability samples of American adults for the period from 1988 to 1993 found that women were about half as likely as men to report having had a same-sex sex partner in the previous year (1.4% of women vs. 2.7% of men) (Laumann et al., 1994).

These estimates of same-sex sexual partnering should not be detached from their cultural context. Although genetic differences may explain some of the variation in sexual behavior within a culture, the vast differences across cultures indicate that sexual behavior, including the gender of one's consensual sexual partners, is partly a consequence of social learning and thus is dependent in part on the cultural norms and structural (e.g., economic and legal) constraints of the time and place. Moreover, cultural and structural constraints on the selection of sexual partners, including the gender of one's sexual partners, differ for men and women and may change at different rates for men and women.

Relationships that include a sexual component may have been chosen to meet needs other than sexual. Consensual sexual relations between two people may be entered into because of the desire for emotional intimacy, the prospect of increased social status and self-esteem by association with a high-status other, financial gain, social acceptance, and the desire for a family and children. Moreover, one's choice of sexual partners may be constrained by religious teachings, the opinions of friends and family, and legal factors. Thus, the potential earning power and job security of people in same-sex relationships and the legal right of same-sex couples to raise children are likely to influence whether people

choose a sexual partner of their own sex. Whether a person becomes sexually involved with a person of the same sex is also likely to depend to some extent on the prospect of a socially recognized relationship with that person. During the 1990s, people in same-sex relationships obtained greater legal protections, work-related benefits, and social acceptance, which may have made it more likely for both men and women to choose a sexual partner of their own sex. In addition, there have been striking changes in the United States during the past several decades that have given women more choices in how to live their lives than they had before, which may have led to a greater change in the prevalence of same-sex sexual partnering among women than among men.

Recent longitudinal studies have found that the percentage of men and women who reported having had a same-sex sexual partner in the previous year increased during the 1990s in both the United States (Butler, 2000) and Great Britain (Johnson et al., 2001a). Moreover, the increase was greater for women than for men in Great Britain. The rate for British men increased from 1.5% in 1990 to 2.6% in 2000, whereas the rate for British women increased from 0.8% to 2.6% over the same time period. However, the British study used different methods of data collection in 1990 and 2000, which might account for the apparent change in rates over time (Copas et al., 2002; Johnson et al., 2001a; Johnson et al., 2000b; Turner et al., 1998).

This paper has two main goals. The first goal is to briefly review prior research to a) assess the evidence that the prevalence of same-sex sexual partnering is influenced by social-cultural factors, b) to identify aspects of the social-cultural environment in contemporary United States that seem especially relevant to the feasibility of having same-sex sexual relationships, and c) to consider how these aspects may play a different role in shaping men's and women's decision to have a same-sex sexual partner. The second goal of the paper is to build on previous empirical work (Butler, 2000) to assess the extent to which the prevalence of self-reported same-sex sexual relations changed over the 1988-2002 period and whether the magnitude of the change varied by gender. I also examine

whether the increase in same-sex sexual partnering among men and women was associated with changes in the normative climate in the United States regarding same-sex sexual relationships and whether the increase in same-sex sexual partnering among men and women was limited to specific age or racial and ethnic groups.

In the following section, I provide an overview of several literatures to make the case that sexual orientation has a substantial socio-cultural component rather than being primarily biologically determined. I then describe the social, economic, and legal changes that have occurred in recent years that may have sufficiently altered cultural and structural conditions so that greater proportions of Americans, especially women, select a sexual partner of their own sex.

Cross-Cultural Variation in Same-Sex Activity

The anthropological and sociological literatures allow one to compare patterns of sexual behavior across a wide variety of cultures and societal arrangements. In a classic study, Ford and Beach (1951) obtained anthropological field research findings for 190 societies from the Human Relations Area files. They found information regarding the presence, or lack thereof, of homosexual behavior for 76 of the societies. Of these 76 societies, homosexual behavior among adult men was reported as absent, rare, or clandestine in 27 societies. In virtually all of the 27 societies, homosexual activity was punished through means ranging from ridicule to death. The remaining 49 societies approved of some forms of male homosexual behavior. Among the Siwan people of Africa, for example, all men were expected to engage in anal intercourse with boys in addition to having sexual relations with women. Keraki boys of New Guinea spent a year being sodomized by older boys, and the years following sodomizing younger boys. This ritualized practice was thought to be necessary to develop their masculinity. Some Lango men dressed as women and married other men, joining the man's other wives in their household duties. (See Herdt [1984] and Williams [1992] for more recent scholarship on this topic.) The Human Relations Area files yielded less information about same-sex

sexual activity among women. There was information on female homosexual behavior for only 17 societies, and this information was sketchier than that available for males.

The reason for the paucity of information on same-sex sexual activity among women may be because such behavior was less common among women than among the men in the societies that were studied. In many societies, women's sexuality has been limited by early, arranged marriages, economic dependence upon men, and a high degree of supervision by men. Confined to the home, married young, and controlled by the husband, women would have had less opportunity than men to engage in same-sex sexual activity.

However, as Reiter (1975) pointed out, both anthropologists and their informants were usually men and thus lacked access to the private activities of women. In addition, anthropologists and their informants tended to equate sexual activity with sexual intercourse, and therefore concluded that sexual activity was nonexistent between women, even where passionate kissing and touching between women were common (Blackwood & Wieringa, 1999; Kendall, 1999). Carrier (1980) noted the embarrassment of prudish anthropologists, especially during the 19th century and early 20th century, about asking probing questions to discover the nature of an activity that might be sexual. This would have been especially problematic when it came to intimate relationships between women, because one may have to probe to discover the extent to which romantic and emotional bonds between two women included a sexual component.

Ford and Beach (1951) concluded from their survey of the Human Relations Area files that sexual behavior, including the gender of one’s preferred sexual partner, is largely socially learned. Children are taught at an early age how to express their sexual urges by being rewarded for approved activities and punished for socially disapproved behavior. Thus, a male infant raised in the United States to be exclusively heterosexual would have had both male and female sex partners had he grown up among the Siwan people during the period reported in the Human Relations Area files.

Carrier (1980) identified the availability of sexual partners as an important determinant of whether cultural norms prevail in the gender of one's sexual partner. When opposite-sex partners are unavailable, one is likely to see a higher incidence of same-sex sexual behavior regardless of cultural norms in the broader society. We see examples of this in U.S. prisons among both men (Kirkham, 1971) and women (Giallombardo, 1966; Propper, 1981; Ward & Kassebaum, 1965). Other examples are found among men who left their villages to work in mines or on plantations (Carrier, 1980; Moodie, 1989) and among the women who remained behind (Gay, 1986). Humphreys (1970) called attention to the case of married men in the U.S. who turned to sex with other men in public bathrooms when their wives, reportedly out of fear of pregnancy and religious objections to contraceptives, refused to have sex. Other factors that affect the availability of female partners for men include the cultural value placed on female virginity and the legality and cost of engaging the services of a prostitute.

In view of the considerable cross-cultural variation in the incidence of same-sex sexual activity, the recent estimates of same-sex partnering in the United States should be seen as historically and culturally specific. They represent the proportion of men and women who have had a same-sex sex partner given the cultural norms, laws, and economic organization present in the United States at the end of the 20th century. These estimates should not be expected to remain the same as social conditions and cultural norms change.

The Role of Genetics in Sexual Orientation

Another approach to assessing the extent to which the prevalence of same-sex sexual partnering might change over place and time--and change at different rates for men and women--is to examine the role of genes in determining men's and women's sexual orientation. (More research on this topic has been conducted on men than on women.) Studies of twins have been used to examine the extent to which people's sexual orientation can be explained by their having been “born that way,” as opposed to having been so shaped by environmental factors. The logic underlying these studies is as follows.

Identical twins have identical genetic makeup, whereas the genes of fraternal twins are no more similar than they are for non-twin siblings. If genes play a large role in sexual orientation, then if one member of an identical twin set has same-sex interests, his or her co-twin would have a high probability of also having same-sex interests. In other words, identical twins should show high concordance in sexual orientation. Thus, the difference between the sexual orientation concordance rate for identical twins and complete (100%) concordance ought to provide a rough indication of the contribution of environmental factors (other than the twins' common family experiences) to the determination of sexual orientation. In addition, the difference between the sexual orientation concordance rates for identical twins and fraternal twins should reflect the influence of the identical twins' greater genetic similarity compared to that of the fraternal twins.

Early twin studies used advertisements in gay publications to recruit gay and bisexual men with male co-twins (Bailey & Pillard, 1991; King & McDonald, 1992; Whitam, Diamond & Martin, 1993). Respondents filled out a questionnaire that asked about their sexual orientation and the sexual orientation of their co-twin. Bailey and Pillard (1991) found that 52% of the 56 identical co-twin brothers were also either gay or bisexual. In contrast, only 22% of the 54 fraternal co-twin brothers were gay or bisexual. Whitman et al.'s concordance rates were somewhat higher (71% [n = 34] for identical co-twins and 29% [n = 14] for fraternal co-twins), whereas King and McDonald's concordance rates were lower (25% [n = 20] and 12% [n = 25] for identical and fraternal twins respectively). A similarly designed study of women found concordance of sexual orientation among 48% (n = 71) of the identical co-twin sisters and 16% (n = 37) of the fraternal co-twin sisters (Bailey et al., 1993).

More recently, Bailey, Dunne, and Martin (2000) used the Australian twin registry as the basis for their sample. They found lower rates of concordance among both identical and fraternal twin pairs for both men and women than had been found in the samples obtained through advertisements. Of the sets of male identical twins in which at least one

twin was gay or bisexual, only 11% (n = 27) had a gay or bisexual co-twin brother. The comparable figure for male fraternal twins was 0% (n = 16). Among women, the concordance rates were 14% (n = 22) for identical twins and 6% (n = 18) for fraternal twins. It should be noted that selection bias may have led to an overestimate of sexual orientation concordance rates in both the advertisement and twin registry-based twin studies. A gay, lesbian, or bisexual member of a twin set may have been more likely to agree to participate in the studies if his or her co-twin was also gay or bisexual.

The twin studies do not allow us to estimate the contribution of genetic heritability to sexual orientation with any precision because of the considerable variability in the findings across studies. However, all of the studies reported concordance rates that were higher among identical twins than among fraternal twins, indicating that some contribution of genes to sexual orientation is likely. But the concordance rates for identical twins were far from the 100% concordance that one would have expected to find if genes completely determined a person's sexual orientation (see Bailey & Pillard, 1995, for a discussion). Thus, the heredity studies indicate that environmental factors play an important role in determining a person's sexual orientation. Because of the considerable variability of the results and the small number of studies on women, one cannot draw conclusions as to whether the genetic influence for sexual orientation is stronger for men or for women.

The importance of biological heredity in sexual orientation itself should be seen as culturally and historically specific (Whitehead & Whitehead, 1999). One would expect that the more latitude the culture allowed for choice of sexual partner, the more influential genes would be in explaining patterns of same-sex activity. Thus, in a society in which same-sex behavior was ridiculed, stigmatized, or severely punished, people would largely conform to the cultural standard of heterosexual behavior, regardless of their genetic predisposition.

Understanding the Nature of One's Own Sexual Orientation

A number of qualitative studies have explored how self-identified gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals understand the underlying nature of their same-sex interest (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1976, 1976b; Burch, 1993; Charbonneau & Lander, 1991; Coleman, 1981-1982; Esterberg, 1997; Golden, 1996; Kitzinger, 1987; Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1995; Ponse, 1978; Savin-Williams, 1996; Stein, 1997; Whisman, 1996). Two main groups of people emerge from a review of these studies. One group consists of men and women who said they had known they were "different" from other boys and girls when they were growing up. They had been attracted to others of their sex ever since they first recognized sexual feelings.

A second group consists of people who grew up never questioning the suitability of a heterosexual identity. They recognized their sexual interest in others of their sex only later in life--in college or during middle age. Most of the men and many women in this second group attributed the discontinuity in their sexual identity to an early denial of their true selves. A substantial number of the women, however, felt that they "chose" to become involved with someone of their own sex, as opposed to having been driven to it by irresistible sexual urges. These women “did not feel they were attracted to women until they discovered that other women were” by meeting a lesbian, reading about lesbians, or otherwise discovering that other women were sexually attracted to women (Whisman, 1996, p. 80). This pattern was not apparent among men. A number of the women credited their recognition of their same-sex interest to the feminist movement. Some described becoming a lesbian as a political choice and others explained that they chose to have sexual relationships with other women in order to have more egalitarian and emotionally intimate relationships than might be possible with men (see Rosenbluth, 1997). Blumstein and Schwartz (1976) interviewed a number of women who switched “from heterosexual behavior and identification to homosexual behavior and identification after a very long and quite satisfactory period in the former category” (p. 172).

An individual's subjective understanding of his or her motivation and behavior can shed light on a phenomenon, but should not necessarily be taken at face value. Esterberg (1997) and Blumstein and Schwartz (1977) interviewed some respondents at two points in time and observed a tendency for people to reinterpret their past to fit their present identity. Thus, one's understanding of one's "true self" may change from one interview to the next as one's sexual partners change. Once in a same-sex sexual relationship, for example, one might look back and minimize the authenticity of an earlier heterosexual relationship that one had thought important at the time. Similarly, one might reinterpret feelings for a friend or mentor of one's youth as having had a repressed sexual component. As an additional caveat, one must be cautious about generalizing the findings of these studies to the larger population of people who have same-sex partners, because probability-sampling methods were not used to select the respondents. Despite their methodological drawbacks, one might conclude from these qualitative studies that in contemporary American society, women's sexuality is more fluid than men's.

Baumeister (2000) conducted an extensive review of the sexuality research and concluded that a case can be made that the sexuality of males is initially malleable, but becomes relatively fixed by young adulthood. Females, on the other hand, maintain their sexual fluidity into adulthood. If this is so, it would follow that both male and female rates of same-sex partnering will vary over time as childhood socialization changes, but the variation will be more evident among women in the early stages of cultural change because adult women are more capable of responding to changing conditions than are adult men.

Environmental Influences on Sexual Orientation

There are a number of environmental changes in the United States that have taken place during the last several decades that could account for the increase in the prevalence of same-sex partnering among men and women that was reported by Butler (2000). These include perinatal, cultural, economic, and legal factors. Perinatal influences include phenomenon that alter the balance of sex hormones in utero and consequently may affect

the subsequent development of sexual orientation in the offspring. This idea has received mixed empirical support. I will not pursue the issue further in this article and instead refer interested readers to Ellis (1996) and Meyer-Bahlburg (1995) for more detailed explanations of the theory and an empirical test.

Normative Climate

Part of the reason for an upward trend in same-sex sexual partnering among both men and women might have been increased public tolerance, and to some extent increased acceptance, of same-sex behavior. Data from the General Social Surveys (GSS) indicate that the proportion of adult Americans who thought that sexual relations between two adults of the same sex is either *always wrong* or *almost always wrong* fell from 76.3% in 1988 (n = 728) to 54.2% in 2002 (n = 654). This increased public tolerance might have made it easier for people to recognize their own potential for a sexual relationship with others of their own sex, as well as making it easier for people to act on that potential. (This idea will be explored further in the data analysis.) The results of other attitudinal surveys indicate that the American public's attitudes toward gay men are somewhat more negative than its attitudes toward lesbians and that this difference is driven primarily by self-identified heterosexual men's hostility toward gay men (Herek, 2002; Kite & Whitley, 1996). There are no longitudinal studies, however, that would allow us to examine whether public opinion regarding men who have sex with men has changed at the same rate as has public opinion about women who have sex with women.

During the 1980s and earlier, the general public would probably have associated homosexuality primarily with gay men, because of the low visibility of lesbians during those years. This, however, changed during the 1990s. Images of lesbians became more common in popular culture (Van Gelder & Brandt, 1996). “Lesbian chic” and “lipstick lesbians” broadened the image of what a lesbian could look like. In 1993, *Newsweek* magazine ran an uncritical cover story on lesbians. *Rolling Stone Magazine's* annual "hot list" named lesbians the "hot subculture" in 1993. A number of television shows featured

well-adjusted lesbians leading normal lives. The star of the television show "Ellen" came out as a lesbian in 1997, and there were lesbian subplots on other popular prime-time television shows, including "Seinfeld," "Roseanne," and "Friends." Popular music stars included k. d. lang, Mellisa Etheridge, and the Indigo Girls, all of whom had come out as lesbians. Lesbian relationships became *de rigueur* on some college campuses (Dixit, 2001). Given the findings of the previously-mentioned qualitative research that showed a that number of women recognized, or perhaps acquired, their sexual interest in other women only after discovering that other women were sexually attracted to women, it follows that the heightened lesbian visibility during the 1990s would have contributed to the increase in the percentage of women who had a same-sex sexual relationship during that decade. One might also expect that young women, especially women of college age during the 1990s, were more open to the influence of popular culture than were older women, who would have been more likely to be already in a committed long-term sexual relationship. If so, we may find a greater rate of increase in same-sex partnering among younger women than among older women during the 1988-2002 period. This will be explored in the subsequent data analysis.

Legal and Economic Factors

Another potential contributing factor to the increase in same-sex partnering among both men and women is that changes in the law and business policies during the late 1980s and the 1990s made it easier for men and women to have same-sex sexual relationships. Between 1988 and 2002, legal sanctions against same-sex activity lessened with the repeal of sodomy laws in three states and the District of Columbia and with the invalidation of sodomy laws by the courts in an additional seven states (American Civil Liberties Union, 2001; Summersgill, 2004). There was also an increase in the protection of people in same-sex relationships in the form of state and local human rights ordinances and employer nondiscrimination policies (Herrschaft & Mills, 2001, 2003). Increasingly, state and local

governments, universities, and businesses began offering domestic partnership benefits to their employees (Herrschaft & Mills, 2001, 2003). These trends are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 about here

In addition to economic and legal changes that affected both men and women, there have been changes that would have affected the likelihood of same-sex sexual relationships primarily among women. Women's labor force participation increased from 52% in 1980 to 60% in 2000 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2002) and the gender gap in wages declined. For full-time workers, women earned about 60% of what men did in 1979; this increased to 76.3% in 1998 (U.S. Department of Labor, 1999). The decline in the gender gap in wages was due in part to a decline in men's wages. Nevertheless, this narrowing the wage gap potentially reduced the relative financial disadvantage for women who partnered with other women instead of with men.

There were also changes in family law during the 1990s that are likely to have affected same-sex sexual partnering among women more than among men. Women in sexual relationships with other women were more likely to keep custody of their children in divorce cases and to adopt children than they had been in previous decades (Ferrero, Freker & Foster, 2002; Stacey, 1998), though their ability to do so varied considerably across states as well as across judges within a state (Bennett, 2002). Gay men who wished to adopt may have had a harder time than lesbians in doing so (Stacey, 1998). Americans are more likely to characterize gay men as child molesters than they are to so characterize lesbians (Herek, 2002), and this attitude may negatively influence the decisions of judges and adoption agencies in cases in which a gay man seeks to adopt a child.

An increase in same-sex sexual partnering during the 1988 to 2002 period is likely to have been a consequence of an accumulation of influences over the decades, and not simply the result of environmental factors present during the 1990s. The gay rights movement following the 1969 Stonewall rebellion and the 1973 removal of homosexuality from the American Psychiatric Association's list of mental disorders (Lamberg, 1998)

spurred a cultural and professional process toward viewing homosexuality as not abnormal. The 1964 Civil Rights Act included women as a protected group from discrimination in employment, public accommodations, and programs that received federal financial assistance, and set the stage for subsequent lawsuits and legislation that brought about greater gender equality in the marketplace. The women's liberation movement blossomed in the late 1960s and early 1970s and undoubtedly influenced the socialization of girls to expect greater gender equality within marriage as well as in the marketplace. This broader array of possibilities for constructing one's personal relationships that were presented in the late 1960s and 1970s is likely to have influenced young people such that they were more likely than they otherwise would have been to contemplate a same-sex relationship in the 1990s when legal and economic constraints on such relationships eased.

Summary

The literature indicates that there has been considerable cultural variation in sexual orientation, but there appears to be at least some biological basis for it as well. Less clear is whether men and women differ in the extent to which their sexual orientation might vary with environmental conditions. Qualitative accounts indicate that there are gender differences in the way men and women in the U.S. arrive at an understanding that they want a same-sex sexual partner, with women more likely than men to discover a same-sex interest later in life. I suggest that because there have been cultural and structural changes that are relevant to the choice of sexual partner in the last several decades and because these changes appear to have been especially salient for women, we will find an increase in the likelihood of same-sex sexual partnering over the period from 1988 to 2002 among both men and women, but especially among women.

The Current Study

The empirical analysis addresses the following research questions:

1. Did the proportion of adults who had a same-sex sex partner in the previous year increase over the 1988-to-2002 period? If so, was the increase greater for women than for men?

2. Was normative climate regarding same-sex sexual relations associated with the likelihood that men and women had a same-sex sex partner in the previous year? Did the decreasing intolerance toward same-sex sexual relations during the late 1980s and the 1990s account for the increased likelihood that men and women had a same-sex sex partner during the previous year?

[The datasets used in the current study do not provide location information other than census division and size of place of residence. Thus, I cannot test the effect of factors such as state sodomy laws, local anti-discrimination ordinances, and the availability of employer-provided domestic partnership benefits on the prevalence of same-sex sex partnering.]

3. Were men and women who had been born in recent decades more likely than men and women born in earlier decades to have had a same-sex sex partner at some time during their adult years? If so, was this association greater for women than for men?

4. Do changes in the demographic makeup of the population (i.e., age, parental education, urban residence, race and ethnicity) account for the increases in same-sex sex partnering over the 1988-to-2002 period among men and women?

5. Was the increase in the likelihood of same-sex sex partnering limited to younger age groups of men and women?

6. Did the magnitude of the increase in the likelihood that men and women had a same-sex sex partner in the previous year vary by race or ethnicity?

[Broad cultural changes regarding same-sex sexual partnering would not necessarily override possible countervailing cultural forces within minority communities (Chan, 1995).]

Method

Data

The data come from two sources.

1. The General Social Surveys (GSS), collected by the National Opinion Research Center, is a series of cross-sectional surveys that began in 1972 and have continued every year or

two since (see Davis & Smith, 1992, for a description of the GSS). The GSS is based on probability samples of English-speaking, noninstitutionalized adults in the United States. It is a multi-purpose survey that covers many topics. Questions regarding sexual partners in the previous year were first included in 1988 and have been included in each subsequent wave of the survey. Questions regarding sex partners since age 18 were added in 1989. These questions were contained in a self-administered questionnaire that was a part of the larger face-to-face survey. (See Smith, 1992, for a description of the self-administered component and discussion of several relevant methodological issues.) The current study includes ten waves of the GSS: 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, and 2002.

2. The National Health and Social Life Survey (NHSLS) is a national survey of English-speaking, noninstitutionalized adults that was conducted in 1992 by Edward Laumann and his colleagues (see Laumann et al., 1994, for a description of the survey). The NHSLS focused on sexual behavior and used a face-to-face interview format. The NHSLS also included the self-administered component regarding sex partners that was used in the GSS. This component was administered early during the interview--after demographic questions had been asked but before the other questions about sexual behavior.

The GSS sample sizes for 1993 and earlier are about half the size of the GSS samples for the later years, and therefore the estimates during the early part of the period may contain more sampling error than do later estimates. The NHSLS is, therefore, a welcome addition in that it contributes a large sample size for 1992.

Sample

The combined sample (GSS + NHSLS) consists of 18,170 respondents who ranged in age from 18 to 59; 238 men and 200 women reported having had a same-sex sex partner in the previous year. The GSS sample contributed 14,908 cases; 202 men and 178 women reported a same-sex sex partner in the previous year. The NHSLS contributed 3,262 cases; 36 men and 22 women reported a same-sex sex partner in the previous year.

Cases were excluded from the sample for 1989 and subsequent years if respondents provided contradictory information in their responses to two of the questions pertaining to their sexual histories: they reported either (1) a same-sex sex partner in the previous year but then said they had no same-sex sex partner since age 18 (which would have included the previous year) (n = 39) or (2) an opposite-sex sex partner in the previous year but then said they had no opposite-sex sex partner since age 18 (n = 134).

Variables

Dependent variable

The primary dependent variable is *same-sex sex partner in previous year*. The self-administered questionnaire asked: "How many sex partners have you had in the last 12 months?" followed by,

> Have your sex partners in the last 12 months been... PLEASE CIRCLE ONE ANSWER.
>
> Exclusively male
> Both male and female
> Exclusively female

Based on the respondents' answers to these two questions and the respondents' sex, cases were coded as having had a *same-sex sex partner in previous year* (yes = 1; no = 0). Note that the dependent variable is not a measure of whether a person identifies as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. *Gay*, *lesbian*, *bisexual,* and *straight* are labels that people use to identify themselves and others, but these labels do not necessarily correspond to the nature of the person's current or past sexual activity (McIntosh, 1968; Ponse, 1976; Van Gelder & Brandt 1996).

Three additional variables were created from the two sex-partner questions and the respondents' sex: *exclusively opposite-sex sex partners in previous year* (yes = 1; no = 0), *no sex partner in previous year* (yes = 1; no = 0), and *did not answer question* (yes = 1; no = 0).

Beginning in 1989, respondents were asked "Now thinking about the time since your eighteenth birthday (including the past 12 months), how many female partners have you had sex with?" and a comparable question about the number of male partners they had since age 18. These data were coded to create a variable representing whether the respondent had a *same-sex sex partner since age 18* (yes = 1; no = 0). In addition to people who did not answer this question, there were additional respondents whose written responses were illegible or uninterpretable, totaling about 10% of responses.

Independent variables

The *year* that the interview took place ranged from 1988 to 2002. This variable was recoded for the logistic regression analysis by subtracting 1988 from year, resulting in a variable that ranged from 0 to 14 (i.e., 1988 = 0, 1989 = 1, ... 2002 = 14). *Female* is a dummy variable, in which female respondents were coded 1 and male respondents were coded 0.

Control variables

Respondent's *age* at the time of the interview was coded using four categories: 18 - 29, 30 - 39, 40 - 49, and 50 - 59 years of age. *Birth cohort* reflects the decade during which the respondent was born. Respondent's *race/ethnicity* has four categories: *White non-Hispanic*, *Black*, *Hispanic*, and *Other*. The size of the place where the respondent lived at age 14 (NHSLS) and 16 (GSS) was coded as *rural*, *small city* (population: 2,500-9,999), *medium city*, or *large city* (population: 250,000+) *or its suburb*. *Mother's education* and *father's education* represent the highest year of schooling completed and were coded as *did not finish high school*, *high school graduate, some college*, and *college graduate*. In cases in which only one parent's level of education was known, the other parent's level of education was estimated using the mean value imputation method (Kalton, 1983). Cases were coded as *missing* if both mother's and father's education were unknown. Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for men and women.

Table 2 about here

Normative climate can be conceptualized as the attitudes shared by members of a social group. Normative climate regarding same-sex sexual partnering was operationalized as the average of the attitudes of all respondents who resided in the respondent's geographic area in a given year. Geographic areas were delineated by census division and whether the area was classified as a Standardized Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) or not (nonSMSA). The resulting social groups (e.g., rural New Englanders, urban residents of the South Atlantic states, etc.) are broader than would be ideal, although it would be difficult to identify a single definition of *social group* that would be appropriate for all respondents. Attitude regarding same-sex sexual partnering was derived from a question included in the GSS 12 times between 1987 and 2002 and in the 1992 NHSLS, and was answered by 18,714 respondents age 18 years and older. Respondents were asked:

> What about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex--do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?

One might consider using the percent of respondents who reported that same-sex relations are wrong as an indicator of normative climate for that year and geographical area. Instead, I used predicted values to reduce year-to-year fluctuations in annual estimates that were likely due to sampling error. First, I calculated the percent of respondents who reported that same-sex sexual relations were wrong (either *always* or *almost always*) by census division, whether they lived in an urban (i.e., SMSA) or rural (i.e., non-SMSA) area, and year. This produced 12 annual estimates for each of 9 urban and 9 rural areas. Second, for each of the 18 geographic areas I entered the 12 annual estimates of attitudes as the dependent variable in a weighted least squares regression. The independent variables were *year* and $year^2$; the weights were the number of cases upon which each annual estimate was based. The resulting trends in urban and rural normative climate are illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. The urban and rural trends were estimated using 14,051 and 4,663 respondents respectively. Note that the normative climate became less intolerant

over time in most urban and rural census divisions, with the East South Central division (i.e., Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana) being a notable exception. The normative climate was consistently more intolerant in rural census divisions than in urban census divisions. There was considerable variation in normative climate across the census divisions, with the East South Central division being the most intolerant of same-sex sexual relations and the New England division the least intolerant. For the third and final step, I assigned sample members a predicted normative-climate value for each year (with a one-year lag) based on the census division in which they resided and whether they lived in a metropolitan or non-metropolitan area.

Figures 1 and 2 about here

Data Analysis

The initial bivariate analyses of trends across time (shown in Table 3) were conducted for each of the four categories of sex partner in the previous year: same-sex sex partner, exclusively opposite-sex sex partner, no sex partner, and did not answer. The significance levels were derived from logistic bivariate regression analyses. The bivariate analyses for same-sex sex partnering and the socio-economic variables (shown in Table 5) used cross-tabulations and the $\chi 2$ test of statistical significance for nominal-level independent variables and Spearman's correlation (r_s) for ordinal-level independent variables. Logistic regression was used for the multivariate analyses (shown in Tables 4 and 6). All tests of significance were two-tailed; the threshold for statistical significance was .05.

A case might be made to conduct the bivariate and multivariate analyses for the subset of cases that was reportedly sexually active in the previous year, that is, respondents who reported either a same-sex sex partner or exclusively opposite-sex sex partners in the previous year (i.e., excluding respondents who reported no sex partners or who did not answer the sex-partner questions). To see if this made a difference, the analyses were also

run on this subsample. The results for the subsample were essentially same as the results for the total sample and therefore are not reported.

Results

During the years 1988 to 2002, the percent of men and women who reported a same-sex sex partner in the previous year increased, the percent of men and women who reported no sex partners increased, and the percent of men and women who reported exclusively opposite-sex sex partners decreased (see Table 3). There was no discernable trend in the percentage of men or women who did not answer the sex questions.

Table 3 about here

It is important to examine the consistency in the NHSLS and GSS estimates because they came from different surveys. NHSLS respondents might have been less reluctant than GSS respondents to answer the sex-partner questions because the NHSLS questions were part of a larger survey about sexual behavior and, thus, NHSLS respondents would be expecting potentially discomfiting questions about sex. This might have led to higher NHSLS reporting of same-sex partnering, compared to the GSS. Had that occurred, it would have been inappropriate to combine the NHSLS and the GSS to assess trends over time. Note, however, that the 1992 NHSLS estimates are consistent with the GSS trends. The percent of men who did not answer was slightly lower in 1992 than in other years, but the 1992 estimates for men for the other three categories do not appear unusually high or low. The 1992 NHSLS estimates for women are consistent with the trends found in the GSS data. The trends in same-sex sex partnering for men and women are shown in graph form in Figure 3. (All relationships reported in this study involving *year* that were statistically significant in the combined GSS/NHSLS sample were also statistically significant and in the same direction when the analyses were run for the GSS-only sample.)

Figure 3 about here

Model 1 (Table 4) included *year*, *female*, and an interaction term between *year* and *female* to assess the magnitude and statistical significance of the difference in the male and

female trends over time. The results of the logistic regression indicate that the increase in same-sex sex partnering over the 1988-2002 period was significantly greater for women than for men. (The coefficient for *year* for men is .043. To obtain the effect for women, one must add the coefficients for year and the interaction [.043 + .067 = .110].)

Table 4 about here

Normative climate

When normative climate was included in the analysis (Model 2, Table 4), the effect of year disappeared for men (b = -.002). The effect of year for women declined slightly to .081 (.083 - .002) and remained significant. The coefficient for normative climate was negative, indicating that the greater the percent of people in one's geographic area who think that sexual relations between two adults is wrong, the less likely respondents are to report having had a same-sex sex partner during the previous year.

Age and Birth Cohort

Younger women were more likely to report a same-sex sex partner during the previous year than were older women, and women born in more recent decades were more likely to report a same-sex sex partner in the previous year than were women born in earlier decades (see Table 5). There was a similar pattern among men, except that men in their thirties and men born in the 1960s were the most likely to report a same-sex sex partner. Age and birth cohort are highly correlated variables, and so it is difficult to differentiate between the contributions of age and birth cohort to the variation in same-sex sexual partnering. Respondents in their fifties may have been less likely than younger respondents to report a same-sex sex partner during the previous year because they had lost their long-term sex partner though death (age effect). Alternatively, respondents in their fifties may have been less likely than younger respondents to report a same-sex sex partner in the previous year because, having been born in the 1930s and 1940s, they had been socialized during an era when same-sex sexual partnering was taboo (cohort effect).

Table 5 about here

To help sort out the age and cohort effects, a cross-tabulation was run for birth cohort and whether respondents had had a same-sex sex partner at any time since age 18 (Table 5, bottom). The Spearman's correlation coefficient for women was positive and the cross-tabulation indicated that women born in the 1950s and later were more than twice as likely as earlier cohorts of women to have had a same-sex sex partner since age 18. In contrast, the correlation between birth cohort and same-sex partner since age 18 was not significant for men. The absence of significance persisted when the analysis was rerun (not shown) to exclude male respondents who reported no sex partners since age 18--a group that was over-represented among the youngest cohort. The correlation between birth cohort and same-sex sexual partnering remained nonsignificant even when this most recent birth cohort of men was dropped from the analysis. Thus, it appears that decade of birth is not an important indicator of whether a man had had a same-sex sex partner since age 18. (This says nothing, however, about whether the nature or frequency of men's same-sex sexual relationships have been affected by changing times.) The results of a test of the difference between men's and women's correlations showed that the difference was statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Role of demographic background characteristics

An examination of the relationships between same-sex sexual partnering in the previous year and respondents' background characteristics indicated which variables should be controlled in the multivariate analysis. As seen in Table 5, there was no relationship between race/ethnicity and same-sex sexual partnering for either men or women. Size of hometown at age 14 or 16 was positively associated with same-sex sexual partnering among both men and women. Additional analysis [not shown] differentiating the effect of large cities from the effect of the suburbs found no notable differences. Mothers' and fathers' educational attainment were positively associated with same-sex sexual partnering among women; the relationships were not significant for men. Thus, with the exception of

parental education, there was no gender difference in the ways in which background factors affected the likelihood of having a same-sex sex partner during the previous year.

Given that age, size of hometown at age 14 or 16, and parental education were associated with same-sex sexual partnering, it is important to examine whether the increase in same-sex sexual partnering over time can be explained by demographic changes that may have taken place between 1988 and 2002, such as shifts in the distribution of the population across age categories, in the proportion of the population that grew up in urban areas, and in the educational attainment of parents. Table 6 illustrates the results of the logistic regressions. Models 3 and 7 are bivariate regressions for men and women respectively. Models 4 and 8 include controls for age, size of hometown during adolescence, and mother's education. By comparing the coefficients for year with and without the presence of controls, we see that there was no difference for either men or women, indicating that the effect of year on same-sex sexual partnering was not explained by shifts in these demographic factors. [Birth cohort and age were too highly correlated for both to be included in the multivariate analysis.]

Trends by age

Models 5 and 9 in Table 6 included interaction terms for year and the age dummies for men and women respectively. There was an upward trend in same-sex sexual partnering among women age 18 to 29 ($b = .108$; $p < .001$) but not among men in this age group ($b = .030$; n.s.). There were no significant interactions between year and the age dummies, indicating that the trends among the three older age groups were not significantly different from that of the youngest groups. This model, however, does not test whether the effects of year for the three older age groups were significantly different from zero. When three additional analyses (not shown) were conducted for both men and women that alternatively allowed each age group to represent the main effect, there were significant increases across time in the likelihood of same-sex sexual partnering among women in each of the four age groups. There were no significant increases among any of the four age

groups of men. Thus, it would appear that the temporal increase in same-sex sexual partnering among men was not strong enough to be detected among any of the age subgroups.

Trends by race and ethnicity

Models 6 and 10 in Table 6 include interaction terms for year and the race/ethnicity dummies for men and women respectively. There was an upward trend in same-sex sexual partnering among white men and women (.044 for white men and .107 for white women). There were no significant interactions between year and the race/ethnicity dummies, indicating that the trends among the three race and ethnic groups were not significantly different from that of white men and women. When three additional analyses (not shown) were run for both men and women that alternatively allowed each race and ethnic group to represent the main effect, there were no significant effects among any of the other race or ethnic groups for men. There was a statistically significant increase in the likelihood of same-sex sexual partnering among black women, but not among Hispanic women or among women of other race and ethnic groups. However, the sample contained too few respondents in Hispanic and other groups to interpret the absence of trends as meaningful.

Discussion

Findings from anthropological and sociological research and from twin studies indicate that there is a substantial environmental component to whether a person takes a same-sex sexual partner, as opposed to the action being purely biologically determined. The current study addressed the question of whether recent socio-cultural changes in the United States were sufficiently great to lead to an increase in the prevalence of same-sex sexual partnering among American men and women. The analysis of survey data indicated that the percentage of men and women who reported having had a same-sex sex partner during the previous year increased over the 1988 to 2002 period, that this increase was significantly greater for women than it was for men, and that the increase could not be explained by shifts in the demographic characteristics of the country, specifically, shifts the

age structure, urban residence during adolescence, and parental education. Moreover, one cannot dismiss the increase among women as merely a fad among adolescents and college-age women, because the increase in the likelihood of having a same-sex sex partner was present for all age groups of women.

I have suggested a number of changes in the social environment that may have contributed to the increase in same-sex partnering, such as a changing normative climate, an increase in the positive depictions of gay men and lesbians in popular culture, a reduction in the number of states in which same-sex sexual activity is a criminal offense, increased protections against employment discrimination, the development of domestic partnership benefits that are offered by an increasing number of employers, and liberalization of laws regarding child custody and adoption by same-sex couples. In addition, the increase in labor market opportunities over the last several decades for women to obtain economic independence from men may have allowed more women to visualize a satisfying life with a woman as an intimate partner and then act on that vision. This study measured and controlled for only one such change in the social environment: normative climate regarding same-sex sexual relations. Changes in normative climate (together with unmeasured correlated factors) accounted entirely for the increase over time in the percentage of men who reported a male sex partner during the previous year. In contrast, changes in normative climate explained only about a quarter of the increase in the likelihood that women reported a same-sex sex partner in the previous year. Changing legal and economic factors that were independent of changing social norms may have accounted for an additional component of the increase in the likelihood of same-sex sexual partnering among women, and should be a focus of future research.

Additional correlational evidence that changing socio-cultural factors may account for the increased likelihood of same-sex sexual partnering among women was provided by the finding that women born in the 1950s and later were more likely to report having had a female sex partner since age 18 than were women born in the 1930s and 1940s. There was

no comparable pattern found among men. Women born in the 1950s and later had been influenced during their formative years by the women's liberation movement, as well as the 1964 Civil Rights Act and subsequent legislation that solidified equal rights for women, whereas women born in the 1930s and 1940s were socialized into narrower sex-typed roles.

The increase in the proportion of men and women who reported a same-sex sex partner during the previous year may comprise two distinct processes. First, the changing cultural, economic, and legal climate might have led respondents to become less reluctant to act on their already-recognized same-sex desire. In other words, people who had known they were attracted to others of their sex but who had not previously acted upon that desire out of fear of public ridicule may have felt more comfortable taking the risk. Second, the changing social environment may have led a greater proportion of people to become attracted *for the first time* to others of their own sex. If so, this latter explanation is likely to have played a greater role for women than for men, and it would help account for why the increase in same-sex sexual partnering over the 1988-2002 period was greater for women than it was for men. The findings from the qualitative studies reported earlier suggested that women were less likely than men to have "always known" that they had same-sex interests. Instead, it was often something they "discovered" later in life, as a result of forming a friendship with a lesbian or otherwise being exposed to the concept of lesbian or bisexuality.

It is unclear to what extent the increase in the rate of same-sex partnering was present among different racial and ethnic groups because of the relatively small numbers of respondents from minority racial and ethnic groups. However, the increase was present for white men and for both white and black women, indicating that, for black women at least, the somewhat greater homophobia found among African Americans than among white Americans (Battle & Bennett, 2000; Smith & Seltzer, 1992) did not prevent black women

from responding to the general cultural, legal, and economic factors that made same-sex sexual partnering more attractive to white women.

An alternative explanation for the increase over time in reports of same-sex sexual partnering may be found outside the realm of social science. Instead of being caused by changes in social-structural factors, it may that an addition of chemical substances in the environment, such as changes in the food we eat or the air we breathe, are responsible for the increase in same-sex sexual partnering. This possibility requires a theoretical rationale and specific hypotheses that would enable one to identify and measure the hypothesized cause of the behavioral change. This is outside the scope of the current study, but could be the subject of future epidemiological research.

A second alternative explanation for the increased percentage of men and women who reported a same-sex sex partner in the previous year is that the increasingly tolerant normative climate and increasing legal protections merely led respondents to be more comfortable *reporting* same-sex sexual behavior. If so, then there might have been no real change in sexual behavior but instead only an increase in the likelihood that people with same-sex sex partners answered the questions honestly. However, because there was no decline over time in the proportion of respondents who did not answer the questions about sex partners, it is likely that greater comfort in answering the questions was not a major reason for the increase in reports of same-sex partnering over time, although it may have played some role.

Whereas estimates of same-sex sexual partnering found in previous studies have been higher for men than for women in the United States (Kinsey et al., 1948; Kinsey et al., 1953; Laumann et al., 1994) and in Europe (Spira et al., 1994; Wellings et al., 1994), the estimate for women in the current study had exceeded that for men by 2002. One should not make too much of this finding, however, because each estimate has a margin of error, and the rates for women may have been overestimated and the rates for men underestimated as a consequence of random sampling error. Additionally, reporting errors may vary systematically by sex,

with perhaps greater reluctance to admit to same-sex sexual activity among men than among women. There are several reasons why this might have occurred. First, fear of being identified as someone who might have AIDS may have made men less likely than women to admit to same-sex sex partners on a questionnaire. Second, there appears to be somewhat more hostility and violence toward gay men than toward lesbians in American society (Kite & Whitley, 1996; Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 1999), which could also lead to a greater reluctance among men than among women to report a same-sex sex partner. There is also some evidence that gay men may have more negative feelings about their sexuality than do lesbians (Bell & Weinberg, 1978; Herek et al., 1997), which could lead to greater reluctance to disclose their same-sex sexual activity on a questionnaire. Because of possible systematic gender differences in reporting, one should pay less attention to the difference, or lack thereof, between male and female estimates and focus instead on the greater increase in same-sex sexual partnering found among women than among men.

The finding of greater temporal change among women than among men is consistent with Baumeister's (2000) argument that women have greater "erotic plasticity" than men. However, without good measures of the specific socio-cultural factors that impinge upon men and women, it is hard to say whether women responded more flexibly to social changes than did men or whether women's greater response was due entirely to their having experienced greater social changes than did men. There appears to be a stronger psychological unease with the concept of homosexuality among men than is found among women in the United States (Kite & Whitley, 1996). Research by Adams and his colleagues (1996) suggests that a number of self-described heterosexual men who express strong homophobic attitudes are, in fact, repressing homoerotic feelings. Thus, it may be that flexibility in men’s sexuality cannot express itself because of strong cultural norms around what it means to be a man in contemporary America. The anthropological studies referred to earlier that documented widespread same-sex sexual behavior among men in some societies corroborate this observation.

Conclusion

Legal changes in the 1990s included a reduction in the number of states in which same-sex activity was illegal, as well as an increase in laws that protected people from discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation. Increasingly, businesses and governmental agencies provided same-sex couples with the same fringe benefit package that they offered to married couples. These trends continued beyond the 1990s. In 2003, the Supreme Court struck down the Texas sodomy law in *Lawrence v. Texas* and thereby invalidated the sodomy laws in the remaining 12 states that still had them. Further increases in the opportunities for adoption and donor insemination as well as civil unions or marriage among same-sex couples would make same-sex sexual partnering more attractive to other people who wish to have a family and children. If these trends continue, it is likely that the upward trend in same-sex sexual partnering found for the 1988 to 2002 period will continue beyond the year 2002.

References

Adams, Henry E., Lester W. Wright, and Bethany A. Lohr. 1996. "Is Homophobia Associated with Homosexual Arousal?" *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 105*, 440-445.

American Civil Liberties Union. July 2001. *'Crime' and punishment in America: State-by-State Breakdown of Sodomy Laws*. New York: Author. Retrieved August 2, 2002, from the World Wide Web: http://www.aclu.org/issues/gay/sodomy.html.

Bailey, J. Michael, Michael P. Dunne, and Nicholas G. Martin. 2000. "Genetic and Environmental Influences on Sexual Orientation and its Correlates in an Australian Twin Sample." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78*, 524-536.

Bailey, J. Michael, and Richard C. Pillard. 1991. "A Genetic Study of Male Sexual Orientation." *Archives of General Psychiatry, 48*, 1089-1096.

Bailey, J. Michael, and Richard C. Pillard. 1995. "Genetics of Human Sexual Orientation." *Annual Review of Sex Research, 6,* 126-150.

Bailey, J. Michael, Richard C. Pillard, Michael C. Neale, and Yvonne Agyei. 1993. "Heritable Factors Influence Sexual Orientation in Women." *Archives of General Psychiatry, 50,* 217-223.

Bell, Alan P., and Martin S. Weinberg. 1978. *Homosexualities: A Study of Diversity Among Men and Women*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Bennett, Lisa. 2002. *The State of the Family: Laws and Legislation Affecting Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Families*. Washington, D.C.: Human Rights Campaign.

Battle, Juan, and Michael Bennett. 2000. "Research on Lesbian and Gay Populations Within the African American Community: What Have We Learned?" *African American Research Perspectives, 6* (2): 35-47.

Baumeister, Roy F. 2000. "Gender Differences in Erotic Plasticity: The Female Sex Drive as Socially Flexible and Responsive." *Psychological Bulletin, 12*6 (3): 247-374.

Blackwood, Evelyn, and Saskia E. Wieringa. 1999. "Sapphic Shadows: Challenging the Silence in the Study of Sexuality." Pp. 39-63 in *Female Desires: Same-Sex Relations and Transgender Practices across Cultures*, edited by Evelyn Blackwood & Saskia Wieringa. New York: Columbia University.

Blumstein, Pepper, and Philip Schwartz. 1976. "Bisexuality in Women." *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 5*, 171-181.

Blumstein, Philip, and Pepper Schwartz. 1977. "Bisexuality: Some Social Psychological Issues." *Journal of Social Issues, 33*, 30-45.

Burch, Beverly. 1993. *On Intimate Terms: The Psychology of Difference in Lesbian Relationships*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois.

Butler, Amy C. 2000. "Trends in Same-Gender Sexual Partnering, 1988-1998." *Journal of Sex Research, 37*, 333-343.

Carrier, J. M. 1980. "Homosexual Behavior in Cross-Cultural Perspective." Pp. 100-122 in *Homosexual Behavior: A Modern Reappraisal*, edited by Judd Marmor. New York: Basic Books.

Chan, Connie S. 1995. "Issues of Sexual Identity in an Ethnic Minority: The Case of Chinese American Lesbians, Gay Men, and Bisexual People." Pp. 87-101 in *Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identities over the Lifespan*, edited by Anthony R. D'Augelli & Charlotte J. Patterson. New York: Oxford.

Charbonneau, Claudette, and Patricia Slade Lander. 1991. "Redefining Sexuality: Women Becoming Lesbian in Midlife." Pp. 35-43 in *Lesbians at Midlife: The Creative Transition*, edited by Barbara Sang, Joyce Warshow, & Adrienne J. Smith. Minneapolis, MN: Spinsters Ink.

Coleman, Eli. 1981/1982. "Bisexual and Gay Men in Heterosexual Marriage: Conflicts and Resolutions in Therapy." *Journal of Homosexuality, 7*, 93-103.

Copas, A. J., K. Wellings, B. Erens, C. H. Mercer, S. McManus, K. A. Fenton, C. Korovessis, W. Macdowall, K. Nanchahal, and A. M. Johnson. 2002. "The

Accuracy of Reported Sensitive Sexual Behavior in Britain: Exploring the Extent of Change 1990-2000." *Sexually Transmitted Infections, 78,* 26-30.

Davis, James A., and Tom W. Smith. 1992. *The NORC General Social Survey: A User's Guide.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Dixit, Jay. 2001. "The Highly Charged Erotic Life of the Wellesley Girl." *Rolling Stone Magazine*, March 15, Issue 864, 55-60.

Ellis, Lee. 1996. "The Role of Perinatal Factors in Determining Sexual Orientation." Pp. 35-70 in *The Lives of Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals*, edited by Ritch C. Savin-Williams & Kenneth M. Cohen. New York: Harcourt Brace.

Esterberg, Kristen G. 1997. *Lesbian & Bisexual Identities: Constructing Communities, Constructing Selves*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Ettorre, E. M. 1980. *Lesbians, Women and Society*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Ferrero, Eric, Joshua Freker, and Travis Foster. 2002. *Too High a Price: The Case Against Restricting Gay Parenting*. New York: American Civil Liberties Union.

Ford, Clellan S., and Frank A. Beach. 1951. *Patterns of Sexual Behavior*. New York: Harper & Row.

Gay, Judith. 1986. "'Mummies and Babies' and Friends and Lovers in Lesotho." *Journal of Homosexuality, 11,* 97-116.

Giallombardo, Rose. 1966. *Society of Women: A Study of a Women's Prison*. New York: Wiley.

Golden, Carol. 1996. "What's in a Name? Sexual Self-Identification among Women." Pp. 229-249 in *The Lives of Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals*, edited by Ritch C. Savin-Williams and K. M. Cohen. New York: Harcourt Brace.

Herdt, Gilbert H. 1984. *Ritualized Homosexuality in Melanesia*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Herek, Gregory M. 2002. "Gender Gaps in Public Opinion About Lesbians and Gay Men." *Public Opinion Quarterly, 66*, 40-66.

Herek, Gregory M., Jeanine C. Cogan, J. Roy Gillis, and Eric K. Glunt. 1997. "Correlates of Internalized Homophobia in a Community Sample of Lesbians and Gay Men." *Journal of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association, 2,* 17-25.

Herek, Gregory M., J. Roy Gillis, and Jeanine C. Cogan. 1999. "Psychological Sequelae of Hate Crime Victimization Among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Adults." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 67,* 945-951.

Herrschaft, Daryl, and Kim Mills. 2001. *The State of the Workplace for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Americans 2001*. Washington, D.C.: Human Rights Campaign.

Herrschaft, Daryl, and Kim Mills. 2003. *The State of the Workplace for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Americans 2002*. Washington, D.C.: Human Rights Campaign.

Human Rights Campaign. 2001. *Documenting Discrimination*. Washington, DC: author.

Humphreys, Laud. 1970. *Tearoom Trade: Interpersonal Sex in Public Places*. Chicago: Aldine.

Johnson, Anne M., Catherine H. Mercer, Bob Erens, Andrew J. Copas, Sally McManus, Kaye Wellings, Kevin A. Fenton, Christos Korovessis, Wendy Macdowall, Kiran Nanchahal, Susan Purdon, and Julia Field. 2001a. "Sexual Behavior in Britain: Partnerships, Practices, and HIV Risk Behaviors." *The Lancet, 358,* 1835-1843.

Johnson, Anne M., Andrew J. Copas, Bob Erens, Sundhiya Mandalia, Kevin A. Fenton, Christos Korovessis, Kaye Wellings, and Julia Field. 2001b. "Effect of Computer-Assisted Self-Interviews on Reporting of Sexual HIV Risk Behaviours in a General Population Sample: A Methodological Experiment." *AIDS, 15,* 111-115.

Kalton, Graham. 1983. *Compensating for Missing Survey Data*. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.

Kendall. 1999. "Women in Lesotho and the (Western) Construction of Homophobia." Pp. 157-178 in *Female Desires: Same-sex Relations and Transgender Practices across*

Cultures, edited by Evelyn Blackwood & Saskia Wieringa. New York: Columbia University.

King, Michael, and Elizabeth McDonald. 1992. "Homosexuals Who are Twins: A Study of 46 Probands." *British Journal of Psychiatry, 160,* 407-407.

Kinsey, Alfred C., Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin.1948. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders.

Kinsey, Alfred C., Wardell B. Pomeroy, Clyde E. Martin, and Paul H. Gebhard. 1953. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders.

Kirkham, George L. [1971] 2000. "Homosexuality in Prison." Pp. 250-266 in *Bisexuality in the United States: A Social Science Reader*, edited by Paula C. R. Rust. New York: Columbia University.

Kite, Mary E., and Bernard E. Whitley. 1996. "Sex Differences in Attitudes Toward Homosexual Persons, Behaviors, and Civil Rights: A Meta-Analysis." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 22*, 336-353.

Kitzinger, Celia. 1987. *The Social Construction of Lesbianism*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Kitzinger, Celia, and Sue Wilkinson. 1995. "Transitions From Heterosexuality to Lesbianism: The Discursive Production of Lesbian Identities." *Developmental Psychology, 31*, 95-104.

Lamberg, Lynne. 1998. "Gay is Okay with APA--Forum Honors Landmark 1973 Events." *JAMA, 280*, 497-499.

Laumann, Edward. O., John H. Gagnon, Robert T. Michael, and Stuart Michaels. 1994. *The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States*. Chicago: University of Chicago.

McIntosh, Mary. 1968. "The Homosexual Role." *Social Problems, 16*, 182-192.

Meyer-Bahlburg, Heino F. L., Anke A. Ehrhardt, Laura R. Rosen, Rhoda S. Gruen, Norma P. Veridiano, Felix H. Vann, and Herbert F Neuwalder. 1995. "Prenatal Estrogens

and the Development of Homosexual Orientation." *Developmental Psychology, 31*, 12-21.

Moodie, T. Dunbar. 1989. "Migrancy and Male Sexuality on the South African Gold Mines." Pp. 411-425 in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, edited by Martin Bauml Duderman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr. New York, NAL Books.

Ponse, Barbara. 1978. *Identities in the Lesbian World: The Social Construction of Self*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Propper, Alice M. 1981. *Prison Homosexuality: Myth and Reality*. Lexington, MA: Heath.

Reiter, Rayna R. 1975. *Towards an Anthropology of Women*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Rosenbluth, Susan. 1997. "Is Sexual Orientation a Matter of Choice?" *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 21*, 595-610.

Savin-Williams, Ritch C. 1996. "Memories of Childhood and Early Adolescent Sexual Feelings Among Gay and Bisexual Boys: A Narrative Approach." Pp. 94-109 in *The Lives of Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals*, edited by Ritch C. Savin-Williams and Kenneth M. Cohen. New York: Harcourt Brace.

Smith, Tom W. 1992. "A Methodological Analysis of the Sexual Behavior Questions on the General Social Surveys." *Journal of Official Statistics, 8,* 309-325.

Smith, Robert Charles, and Richard Seltzer. 1992. *Race, Class, and Culture: A Study in Afro-American Mass Opinion*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Spira, Alfred, Nathalie Bajos, and the ACSF Group. 1994. *Sexual Behavior and AIDS*. Brookfield, VT: Avebury.

Stacey, Judith. 1998. "Gay and Lesbian Families: Queer Like Us." Pp. 117-143 in *All Our Families: New Policies for a New Century*, edited by Mary Ann Mason, Arlene Skolnick, & Stephen D. Sugarman. New York: Oxford University Press.

Stein, Arlene. 1997. *Sex and Sensibility: Stories of a Lesbian Generation*. Berkeley, CA: University of California.

Summersgill, Bob 2003. *Sodomy Laws in the United States*. Retrieved January 5, 2003, from the World Wide Web: http://www.sodomylaws.org/usa/usa.htm.

Turner, C. F., L. Ku, S. M. Rogers, L. D. Lindberg, J. H. Pleck, and F. L. Sonenstein. 1998. "Adolescent Sexual Behavior, Drug Use, and Violence: Increased Reporting With Computer Survey Technology." *Science, 280,* 867-873.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. 2002. *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2002*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Labor. 1999. "What Women Earned in 1998." *Issues in Labor Statistics,* Summary 99-5. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

Van Gelder, Lindsy, and Pamela R. Brandt. 1996. *The Girls Next Door: Into the Heart of Lesbian America*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Ward, David A., and Gene G. Kassebaum. 1965. *Women's Prison: Sex and Social Structure*. Chicago, Aldine.

Wellings, Kaye, Julia Field, Anne Johnson, and Jane Wadsworth. 1994. *Sexual Behavior in Britain: The National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles*. New York: Penguin.

Whisman, Vera. 1996. *Queer By Choice: Lesbians, Gay Men, and the Politics of Identity*. New York: Routledge.

Whitam, Frederick L., Milton Diamond, and James Martin. 1993. "Homosexual Orientation in Twins: A Report on 61 Pairs and Three Triplet Sets." *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 22,* 187-206.

Whitehead, Niel, and Briar Whitehead. 1999. *My Genes Made Me Do It!* Lafayette, LA: Huntington House.

Williams, Walter L. 1992. *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Figure 1: Urban Trends in Negative Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Sexual Relations, by Census Division and Year

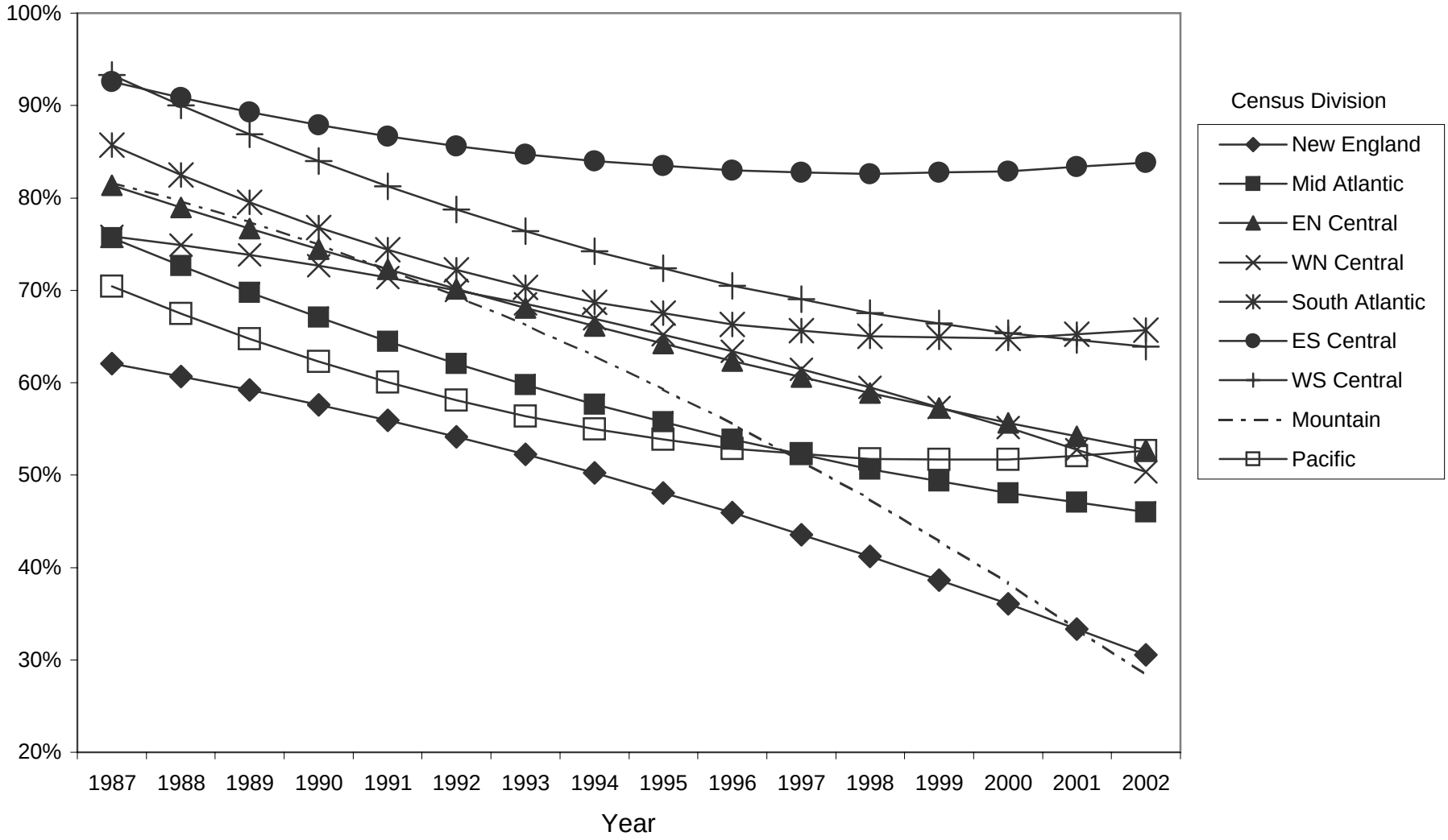

Figure 2: Rural Trends in Negative Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Sexual Relations, by Census Division and Year

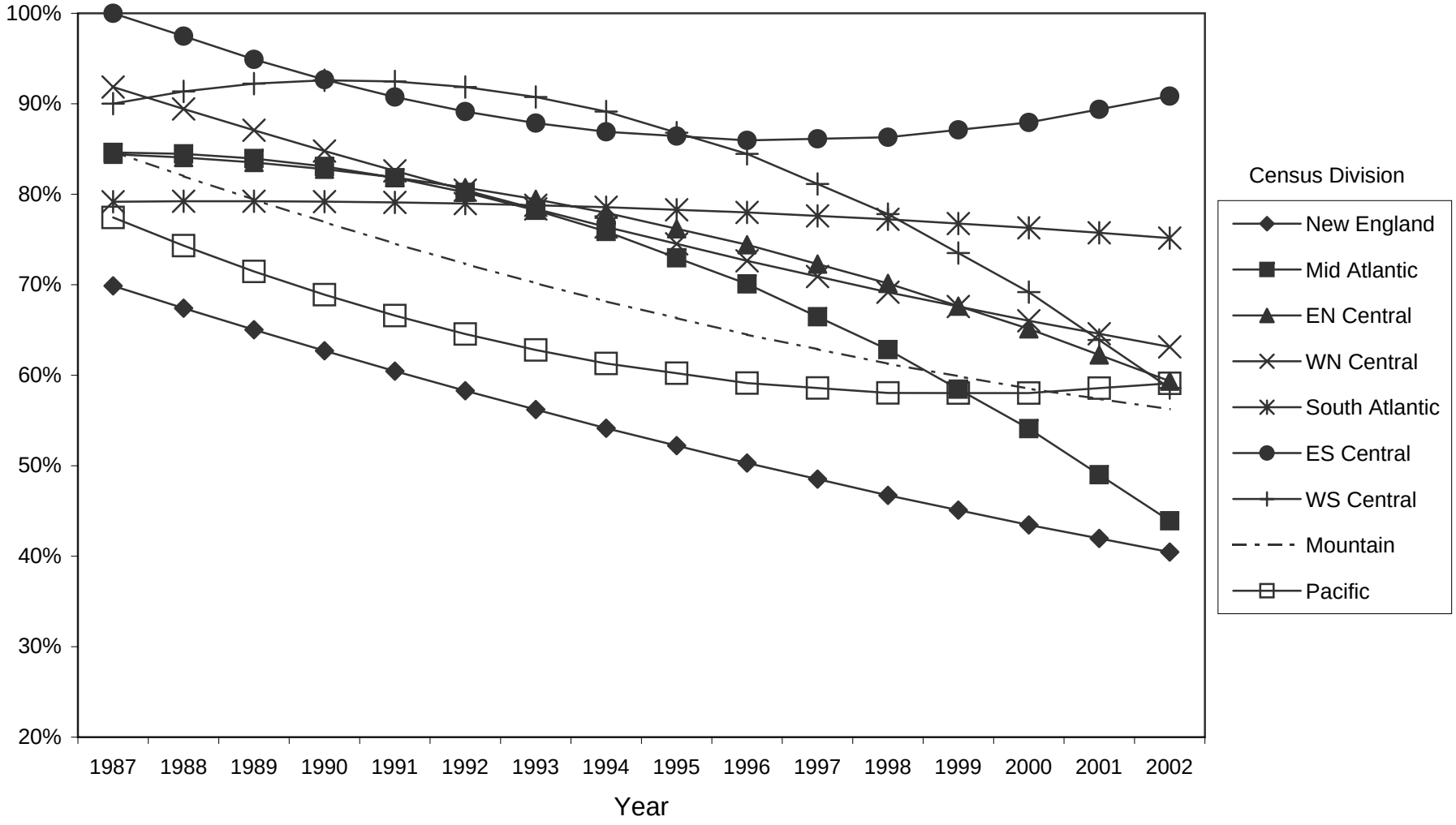

Figure 3: Percent of Men and Women with a Same-Sex Sexual Partner in Previous Year, 1988-2002

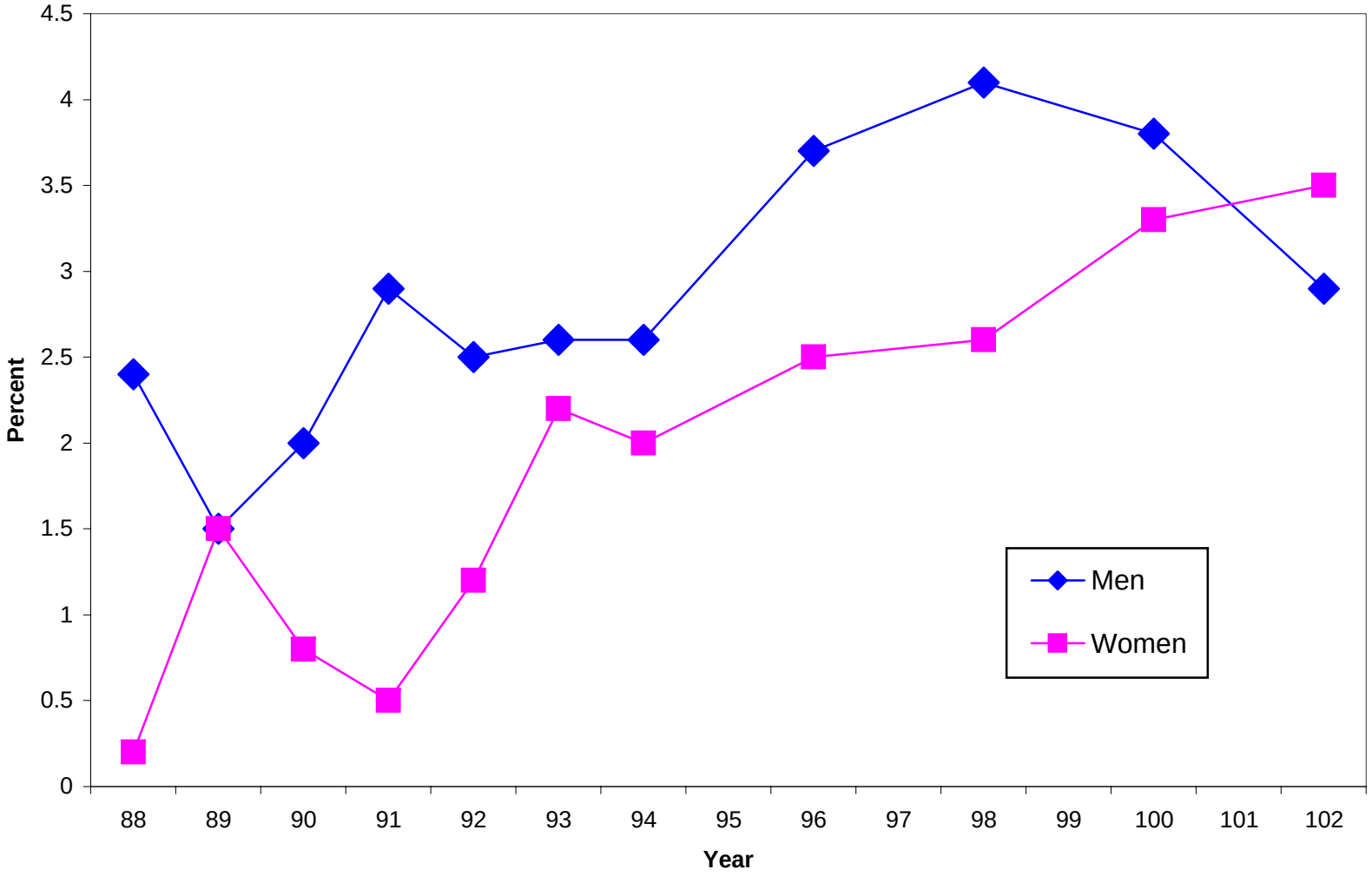

Table 1: Law and Business Policies of Particular Relevance to People Who Have a Same-Sex Sexual Partner, by Year

	1975	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Cities and Counties that Prohibit Sexual Orientation Discrimination in the Workplace [a, d]	3	17	29	49	58	65	78	84	87	88	92	101	112	119	127	142
States + DC that Prohibit Sexual Orientation Discrimination in the Workplace [c, d]	0	0	1	2	4	7	8	8	9	9	11	11	12	12	13	14
States Where Sodomy Laws Have Been Repealed or Struck Down by Courts [b]	11	25	26	27	26	27	28	28	29	30	31	33	34	34	36	37
Cities and Government Organizations that Offer Domestic Partner Health Benefits [a]	0	0	3	10	11	15	20	28	33	36	44	57	72	90	115	140
Fortune 500 Companies that Offer Domestic Partner Health Benefits [d]	0	0	0	0	0	1	9	13	17	23	37	61	83	115	149	169

a. Herrschaft & Mills (2001)
b. American Civil Liberties Union (2001); Summersgill (2004)
c. Human Rights Campaign (2001)
d. Herrschaft & Mills (2003)

Table 2: Social-Demographic Characteristics, by Sex

Characteristic	Men %	Women %
Birth Cohort		
1929-39	6.3	7.3
1940s	20.1	19.3
1950s	29.1	29.8
1960s	29.0	28.7
1970-82	15.4	14.9
	100%	100%
Age		
18-29	27.6	26.6
30-39	30.5	31.2
40-49	25.8	25.4
50-59	16.1	16.8
	100%	100%
Race/Ethnicity		
White, non-Hispanic	79.7	74.6
Black	11.3	15.6
Hispanic	5.6	6.3
Other	3.4	3.5
	100%	100%
Residence at age 14/16		
Rural	23.9	20.7
Town	31.0	32.5
Medium city	15.4	17.2
Large city/suburb	29.6	29.6
	100%	100%
Mother's education		
Less than high school	26.3	31.6
High school graduate	42.4	37.4
Some college	14.0	14.0
College graduate	11.9	11.0
(Missing)	5.4	6.0
	100%	100%
Father's education		
Less than high school	38.1	41.2
High school graduate	26.5	25.3
Some college	13.0	12.7
College graduate	17.1	14.8
(Missing)	5.4	6.0
	100%	100%

Note. Sample sizes: 8,108 men and 10,062 women.

Table 3: Sex of Sexual Partners in Previous Year, by Interview Year and Sex of Respondent

	Interview Year												
Sexual Partners	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	*p*	sign
Male respondents (%)													
Same sex	2.4%	1.5%	2.0%	2.9%	2.5%	2.6%	2.6%	3.7%	4.1%	3.8%	2.9%	.006	+
Opposite sex only	82.3	86.4	88.4	83.3	84.1	82.9	83.6	82.9	80.6	80.5	82.5	.002	-
No partners	10.9	9.6	6.6	11.5	10.9	9.3	10.9	8.6	11.3	11.7	12.5	.046	+
Did not answer	4.4	2.5	3.0	2.4	2.4	5.2	2.8	4.9	4.0	4.0	2.1	n.s.	
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%		
N	458	479	396	419	1,429	503	960	957	869	845	798		
Female respondents (%)													
Same sex	0.2%	1.5%	0.8%	0.5%	1.2%	2.2%	2.0%	2.5%	2.6%	3.3%	3.5%	<.001	+
Opposite sex only	83.5	82.6	85.1	83.9	81.7	82.0	80.3	79.7	80.0	78.3	78.3	<.000	-
No partners	12.8	13.8	10.8	13.2	13.6	11.7	14.0	13.1	14.6	15.5	16.4	.002	+
Did not answer	3.6	2.1	3.3	2.3	3.4	4.2	3.7	4.8	2.7	3.0	1.8	n.s.	
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%		
N	556	581	482	560	1,833	643	1,203	1,176	1,062	1,015	955		

Table 4: Logistic Regression; Dependent Variable is Whether Respondent Had a Same-Sex Sexual Partner During the Previous Year

	Men and Women			
	(Model 1)		(Model 2)	
	b	s.e.	*b*	s.e.
Year (*1988* = 0)	.043**	.016	-.002	.020
Year x Female	.067**	.023	.083**	.029
Female (*yes* = 1)	-.924***	.210	-1.539*	.783
Normative climate			-2.563***	.677
Normative climate x Female			.764	.968
Constant	-3.800***	.133	-1.776**	.546
N	18,170		18,170	
-2 Log Likelihood	4062.98		4041.25	

Note: s.e. = standard error. * $p < .05$.; ** $p < .01$.; *** $p < .001$.

Table 5: Percentage with Same-Sex Sexual Partner, by Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Sex

Characteristic	Men		Women	
	%	*n*	*%*	*n*
Same-sex sexual partner in previous year				
Race/Ethnicity				
White, non-Hispanic	2.9	6454	2.0	7500
Black	3.6	918	1.7	1570
Hispanic	3.3	453	2.0	635
Other	2.2	274	2.3	350
χ^2	n.s.		n.s.	
Residence at age 14/16				
Rural	2.0	1936	1.5	2077
Town	2.8	2513	2.0	3259
Medium city	2.7	1251	1.7	1731
Large city/suburb	4.0	2308	2.5	2975
r_s	.043***		.021*	
Mother's education				
Less than high school	2.9	2129	1.0	3178
High school graduate	2.7	3438	2.4	3766
Some college	3.5	1138	2.3	1410
College graduate	3.4	968	2.9	1103
(Missing)	2.8	435	2.3	605
r_s	.013		.047***	
Father's education				
Less than high school	2.7	3088	1.7	4141
High school graduate	2.9	2150	1.8	2543
Some college	2.9	1052	2.2	1282
College graduate	3.5	1383	2.8	1491
(Missing)	2.8	435	2.3	605
r_s	.017		.026*	

(continued)

Table 5 (continued)

Characteristic	Men		Women	
	%	*n*	%	*n*
Age				
18-29	3.0	2237	2.5	2677
30-39	3.6	2469	2.2	3138
40-49	2.9	2093	2.0	2556
50-59	1.7	1309	0.7	1691
r_s	-.022*		-.038***	
Birth Cohort				
1929-39	1.2	511	0.4	737
1940s	2.0	1631	0.9	1942
1950s	2.8	2362	2.0	2997
1960s	3.9	2354	2.5	2889
1970-82	3.3	1250	3.1	1497
r_s	.041***		.057***	
Same-sex partner since age 18				
Birth Cohort				
1929-39	4.2	408	2.5	552
1940s	5.1	1390	3.5	1629
1950s	5.6	2027	5.6	2589
1960s	6.0	2032	5.8	2504
1970-82	5.1	1167	6.0	1405
r_s	.009		.043***	

Note. n.s. = not significant. * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$, *** = $p < .001$.

Table 6: Logistic Regression; Dependent Variable is Whether Respondent Had a Same-Sex Sexual Partner During the Previous Year

	Men							
	(Model 3)		(Model 4)		(Model 5)		(Model 6)	
	b	s.e.	*b*	s.e.	*b*	s.e.	*b*	s.e.
Year (*1988* = 0)	.043**	.016	.045**	.016	.030	.029	.044*	.018
Age								
18-29			----	----	----	----		
30-39			.222	.166	.107	.319		
40-49			-.029	.184	-.254	.366		
50-59			-.557*	.253	-.970	.544		
Age x Year								
18-29 x Year					----	----		
30-39 x Year					.015	.039		
40-49 x Year					.028	.043		
50-59 x Year					.046	.060		
Race/Ethnicity								
White, non-Hispanic							----	----
Black							.216	.394
Hispanic							.016	.568
Other							.268	.802
Race/Ethnicity								
White, non-Hispanic x Year							----	----
Black x Year							.002	.046
Hispanic x Year							.018	.065
Other x Year							-.077	.102
Residence, age 14/16								
Rural			----	----				
Small city			.342	.205				
Medium city			.299	.241				
Large city/suburb			.683***	.197				
Mother's education								
< High school			----	----				
High school grad			-.224	.170				
Some college			-.017	.212				
College graduate			-.082	.227				
Parents' ed. missing			-.215	.322				
Constant	-3.800***	.133	-4.081***	.248	-3.689***	.236	-3.835***	.150
N	8,108		8,098		8,108		8,099	
-2 Log Likelihood	2140.94		2110.42		2126.37		2137.25	

continued

Table 6 continued

	Women							
	(Model 7)		(Model 7)		(Model 7)		(Model 10)	
	b	s.e.	*b*	s.e.	*b*	s.e.	*b*	s.e.
Year (*1988* = 0)	.110***	.017	.107***	.017	.108***	.029	.107***	.020
Age								
18-29			----	----	----	----		
30-39			-.119	.174	-.005	.374		
40-49			-.222	.190	-.489	.436		
50-59			-1.199***	.318	-2.731**	.981		
Age x Year								
18-29 x Year					----	----		
30-39 x Year					-.019	.041		
40-49 x Year					.021	.045		
50-59 x Year					.140	.088		
Race/Ethnicity								
White, non-Hispanic							----	----
Black							-.303	.496
Hispanic							-.208	.686
Other							.491	.792
Race/Ethnicity								
White, non-Hispanic x Year							----	----
Black x Year							.014	.052
Hispanic x Year							.025	.070
Other x Year							-.049	.088
Residence, age 14-16								
Rural			----	----				
Small city			.200	.221				
Medium city			-.043	.260				
Large city/suburb			.367	.218				
Mother's education								
< High school			----	----				
High school grad			.721***	.212				
Some college			.591*	.258				
College graduate			.826**	.260				
Parents' ed. missing			.653*	.325				
Constant	-4.724***	.162	-5.190***	.295	-4.426***	.266	-4.682***	.184
N	10,062		10,042		10,062		10,055	
-2 Log Likelihood	1922.05		1874.96		1892.04		1913.70	

Note: s.e. = standard error. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.