Sexuality research: Untested gender assumptions amid paradigm shifts

Donna J Walker
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Sexuality research: Untested gender assumptions amid paradigm shifts

Walker, Donna J., M.A.
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 1993
SEXUALITY RESEARCH:
UNTESTED GENDER ASSUMPTIONS AMID PARADIGM SHIFTS

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology
Department of Sociology
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
August 1993
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ABSTRACT

Content analysis of 803 sexuality research abstracts selected from Sociological Abstracts published from January 1974 to August 1992 answers three questions: 1) Are there trends in sexuality research? (2) Is there a paradigm shift? and (3) Is gender differentiation present? Research between 1973 and 1991 displayed a consistent division between the positivist "nature" paradigm and the interactionist "nurture" paradigm. The proportion of studies which attempt to be non-gender specific has declined annually while researchers have consistently neglected to study male sexuality. Although there has been little change in basic principles, there have been trends in interpretations of research data. Conclusions display significant gender differences in both gender interests and author style. The author gender differentiation and the concurrent decrease in non-specific gender studies complicate formulation of a causal distinction. Sexuality research may be broadening due to the increased involvement of female researchers or the interpretations may be influenced by a widening range of issues introduced by both interactionist and postmodern paradigms.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is more than a research project. It is a step in my own learning path which shows a link between research and the researcher. As I review my research progress, I am reminded of a 12th Step speaker who told his audience not to worry if they didn’t agree with his opinion because he might change his mind on the way home from the meeting. He would be happy, but they would still be all in a dither over his position. This is how I feel as I write up this thesis. I am describing only one step in a process of inquiry that has expanded, regressed, and altered direction many times. I have lost track, and hopefully my committee members have also, of the number of times I have outlined the research and then, after a new insight or disturbance, created a new research design. Although this thesis is an analysis of trends in sexuality research articles, the research process traces my transformation from a liberal human being to a postmodern feminist.
My Story

Before I started this research, I was not a feminist. I believed in equal rights for all human beings and did not understand the need for a "special" women's issues. I remember my sister telling me that a career counsellor had advised that her assumption that men and women are the same would cause her problems because, in fact, men and women are different. We spent many evenings puzzling over this amazing possibility. We both had careers, husbands, children and (we thought) equality. We finally concluded that, yes, men and women are different, but that was only because women's interests were different from men's concerns.¹ When affirmative action policies were implemented, I was one of the people (oh the shame of it all) who argued that if there were less women in managerial positions, it was because women did not want to be in management. It was obvious to me that there were few women in politics because women were not interested in occupying government positions.

A few years later, I was a single mother, working full-time and taking night classes. I was still confident in the equality accorded humans who worked hard, but gender differences became visible from a different

¹ Notice: at that time, I considered women had "interests"; men had "concerns"
direction, the sexual dimension. I did not have time for wine-and-dine dating rituals nor did I have the emotional stability for engaging in a new relationship. At that time, I thought it would be nice to be able to just pay a prostitute for some sexual satisfaction — like the men do. But prostitution was not legal and my need was not strong enough to risk asking my peers how to find a male prostitute (see Chapter 2: biological need versus learning sexual scripts). But I still believed in equality. I rationalized that it was merely because prostitution was illegal that inequality existed. Women are less likely to engage in illegal activities,² so there was no demand and thus no supply. A few years later, I had an opportunity to test my theory.

**Prostitution in Nevada**

I originally planned my research to explore the differences between male and female brothel clients. When I moved to Nevada, the only region in North America with legal prostitution, I assumed if there were legal brothels for men, there must be brothels for women. I was amazed to discover there are no brothels for heterosexual women. I also found there isn't even a name for a male who

² For this paper, we will ignore the illegal activities engaged in by the female prostitutes.
provides sexual services for women. A male prostitute, I was told, is a man who works for male clients. So I entered my liberal feminist phase (see chapter 3 for a summary of feminist theories). I checked the Nevada laws to see if there really was a legal distinction between male and female prostitutes.

In Nevada, it is unlawful for any person to engage in prostitution or solicitation except in a licensed house of prostitution (Nevada Revised Statutes). Licensed houses of prostitution are restricted to counties having a population of less than 250,000. Section 201.295 of the Nevada Revised Statutes defines "prostitution" as "a male or female person who for a fee engages in sexual intercourse, oral-genital contact or any touching of the sexual organs or other intimate parts of a person for the purpose of arousing or gratifying the sexual desire of either person." This statute indicates that male heterosexual prostitution could be available in Nevada brothels. According to Helen Reynolds (1986:92), Nye county is the only county with an ordinance that specifically includes male prostitutes. Yet no brothels in Nye county have actually been issued a license to provide male heterosexual services to women. In fact, three counties and two towns specifically forbid and others informally condemn male prostitutes.
My research project was redesigned into a search for men who provided sexual services for women, legal or otherwise. I only found one man who admitted providing sexual services to women and it was somewhat questionable who really benefited from the transaction. He had been paid to perform a sexual act with a male client's wife while the client watched. My informer expressed the opinion that it seemed the act was more to degrade the woman than to please her.

_Sexuality and Feminist Methodology_

So I asked myself: is this the same as women not being in managerial positions, or women not holding political offices? Are there no brothels for women because women are not interested in sexual pleasure? Having experienced my youth during the most sexually liberal years, after birth control and before AIDS, I knew this was not true. And my research project was revamped again. First I did a literature review of the sexuality theories. Chapter 2 provides summaries of two major theoretical perspectives that inform sexuality research: (1) The theory that sexual behavior, attitudes and ideology result from a natural biological need for reproduction, and (2) the interactionist theory of the social construction of sexual desire and from there, the
social construction of sexual behavior, attitude and ideology. Both of these theories are built upon the assumption that men have a naturally strong sexual desire. Sociobiologists emphasize the need to release this biological pressure. Interactionists emphasize the social scripts that society constructs for men to satisfy their sexual needs. Although social construction provides some explanations, neither theory fit with my life experiences. Specifically, both theories seemed to assume women’s sexual desires are less powerful than men’s sexual needs. My experience with the structure of prostitution, however, indicated that women merely have fewer opportunities to express their sexual needs. With many misgivings, I finally looked at the other feminists theories. Perhaps they would provide the answers. Chapter 3 provides a summary of feminist theories of female sexuality and discerns that even these theories neglect the possibility of women seeking sexual services. And so my research was revised in order to fill a gap; I would discover the truth about women’s sexuality. The new format was designed to study whether or not women were interested in sexual pleasure and if there even existed a hidden female desire for anonymous heterosexual services.

By this stage, I had decided feminist methodology - using methods that give voice to women’s experiences - was
the best means for learning what I wanted to know. The things that women "experientially know" are not always the same as the "truth" they have been told. I wanted to know how women defined their own sexual experiences. I conducted two focus groups and nine individual interviews. An incredible amount of information was gathered during these interviews. The interviews were designed to encourage the women to "teach me about sexual desire." The central theme that emerged was: yes, women can enjoy sex without a relationship; no, love is not a prerequisite; and yes, women do want to have sex. Beyond this, however, I was not prepared for the intense self-involvement qualitative research requires. These women told me more than I was comfortable knowing. At times, I wondered if they were stringing me along with their stories of sexual exploits and, conversely, I had ambivalent feelings about sharing my own stories with the respondents. There is a definite conflict between being an objective observer and contributing to the discussion (Ann Oakley, 1981).

Sex is a highly personal topic and qualitative unstructured interviews require an intense amount of self-reflection. I was not merely collecting pieces of data from a sample of women; I was interrogating my own knowledge, experiences, and emotions. I was questioning
things that I had previously acted on as taken-for-granted facts of life. I felt an emotional need to look at some objective, impersonal, quantitative data. Again, my research focus shifted. This time it was a radical shift from qualitative interviews to quantitative content analysis. I put the interviews on hold for future research while I turned to the research described in this thesis. Although this new research is positivistic and quantitative, and, as the researcher, I am objectively distanced from the data, some of the criteria of feminist research are evident in the design: (1) I have explained the assumptions I am basing my study on; (2) the analysis looks at gender differences; and (3) the assumptions underlying sexual research are critiqued with a view to opening further research dialogue. Although these criteria are addressed by most researchers, feminist research places special emphasis on locating the position of gender. My quantitative research design ultimately succumbed to qualitative questioning. Fortunately, I had designed the database to facilitate both modes of inquiry.

**The Research Design**

So this research project evolved to specifically explore trends that underlie sociological sexual research, in particular, the assumptions which guide selection and
focus of topics studied and the interpretations of data collected. In Chapter 4, I describe the content analysis utilized in this study of 1698 sexuality abstracts selected from Sociological Abstracts published from January 1974 to August 1992. I accumulated three types of data from abstracts for 803 research articles:

(1) Publication year, journal and author(s) names, and the article title were transferred directly to a database.
(2) Topic, method and gender focus were categorized into a linked database. (3) Conclusions were summarized and included in the database.

In chapter 5, I analyze the relative absence of studies focusing on men. The assumption that all men have a strong sex drive and that male dominance is natural is so prevalent that male sexuality is not questioned. Indeed, "maleness and masculinity provide the normative baseline for understanding all human sexuality" (Beth Schneider and Meredith Gould, 1987:131). The only topics under which males appear as the primary genders under analysis are homosexuality and sexual dysfunctions. These are both areas of deviance from the "norm" of strong heterosexual male sexuality and as such are studied, funded, and published. The factuality of this norm is not questioned. Although quantitative analysis indicated there has not been any changes in sexuality research
paradigms during the 18 years studied, qualitative analysis of the gender categories disclosed meaningful differences between female and male researchers' interests, questions and interpretations.

I chose this method because I wanted to know what the research tells us about sexuality. The seemingly simple question -- what is sexuality? -- spawns a plethora of new questions. There are so many divergent aspects of sexuality. Very little is known about even the basic physical act of sexual intercourse, never mind all of the sexually related social interactions. Questions have flourished at each turn, each decision, in my research path. They multiplied and grew into trailing vines bearing fruitful inquiries. As I rambled through the underbrush of sexuality articles, I gathered questions rather than answers. The questions were much more nourishing and thought-inspiring than the sparse and hollow answers. (An list a few sexuality questions is provided in Appendix A.) As these questions were chosen for personal interest, they can not be analyzed or generalized to any population. As William Simon (1989:25) recognizes: "[t]he hallmark of the sexual in contemporary society is the frequency with which it is accompanied by the problematic at virtually every stage: from anticipation to activity to retrospective contemplation."
I was moving into postmodernism -- a paradigm which welcomes diversity and plurality.

**Summary**

In summary, this research analyzes sociological sexuality research in order to answer three questions: (1) are there trends in sexuality research? (2) is there a paradigm shift? and (3) is gender differentiation present? The focus of sexual research appears to be moving towards feminist postmodernism, a trend away from the search for "truth" and towards studies of a wide range of individual experiences. Hopefully, this trend towards diversified topics and methodology will continue and innovative methods will emerge. Increased awareness of the diversity in individual everyday experiences will encourage questioning of the core assumption underlying modern research - the assumption of heterosexual masculine sexuality as the "normal" form. This stage of my learning process has satisfied me that gender differences exist, both in expression of sexual desires and in sexuality research. Questioning the underlying assumptions of traditional methodology will open the doors towards better understanding and communicative interaction between humans, as individuals and as gendered beings.
Chapter 2

SEXUALITY THEORIES

Introduction

All research is based on theory. Even the simplest research, casual observation, is conducted and interpreted from our personal theories about the nature of the world. When my casual observations about brothels contradicted my theory about the nature of sexuality, I began to observe even more contradictions, to ask more questions, and to search for theories that would explain the patterns of sexuality evident in my everyday life experiences. This chapter summarizes my passage from a curiosity about prostitution to the discovery of gender-defined differences in sexuality theories. Sexuality theories are grouped into the three primary sociological paradigms: (1) Positivistic theories assume that sexuality is behavior which satisfies the natural biological need for reproduction (Nature). (2) Interactionists assume that sexuality is socially constructed by reciprocally interacting individuals (Nurture). (3) Feminist theories represent the critical paradigm, arguing that those with power regulate sexual behavior and sexual ideology. This
chapter provides a feminist critique of a prominent sexuality theory from each of the first two paradigms: sociobiology's positivistic analysis that sexual behavior, attitudes and ideology are determined by natural biological need and interactionist's social construction of sexual scripts.

Accompanying the debate between natural need and constructed desire is a movement away from the search for sexual truth and increased emphasis on questioning underlying assumptions -- the postmodernization of sexuality. The "truth" about female sexuality has been studied by contrasting "to what might even be a false reality for men" (Beth Schneider and Meredith Gould, 1987:148-9). This research project expects to find a movement towards questioning that potentially false reality. This chapter summarizes and critiques the two primary sexuality theories. The following chapters explore feminist theory and implement feminist methodology in a content analysis of the trends in sexuality research.

**Definitions of sexuality**

Each paradigm has a different definition of sexuality. The positivistic paradigm focuses on description and explanation of human sexual behavior. According to Paul Abramson, plenary speaker for the 1988
convention of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex, sexual science "is devoted to 1) the observation and measurement of human sexual behavior; 2) the discovery of the mechanisms which underlie human sexual expression; and 3) the development of working models for the prediction of human sexuality" (Paul Abramson, 1990:150). This emphasis on prediction and control produces a "male model" which narrowly defines sexuality as genital and mechanical (Beth Schneider and Meredith Gould, 1987:136). From an interactionist perspective, Beth Schneider, chair of the Sexual Behavior Division of the Society for Study of Social Problems, and Meredith Gould define the concerns of the sociology of sexuality as:

the study of sexual attitudes and behavior, the contexts in which these occur, and the social organization of sexual relations at the individual, community, and societal level. ... Social actors possess genitals rather than the other way around. Sexual arrangements are constructed. Sexual behaviors are enacted. Blueprints for construction and scripts for enactment are culturally and historically contingent rather than constant. ... Our anatomical structure and hormonal inheritance enhance and constrain what we can and cannot do sexually (1987:123).

David Halperin (1989) extends the construction of sexual scripts to the social construction of individual sexual identity. He argues that sex and sexuality are two different concepts: sex is a functioning of the body whereas sexuality is a cultural production which generates
personal identity defined in sexual terms. Stephen Goettsch defines what sexuality **is not:**

Sexuality is not a powerful, potentially destructive form of energy. Sexuality uses physical energy to create and concentrate on pleasurable bodily sensations, and it competes with other activities. Similarly, sexuality and reproduction are distinct phenomena that share some activities and body parts. ... Although cultural scripts and individuals' perceptions combine sexuality with emotions (e.g., love), sexuality and emotions are distinct phenomena; to claim otherwise is a value judgment (1989:254-5).

Foucault introduced the postmodern theory when he defined sexuality not as a biological fact but rather a very powerful social construction:

We must not make the mistake of thinking that sex is an autonomous agency which secondarily produces manifold effects of sexuality over the entire length of its surface of contact with power. On the contrary, sex is the most speculative, most ideal, and most internal element in a deployment of sexuality organized by power in its grip on bodies and their materiality, their forces, energies, sensations, and pleasures (1978:155).

This is different from natural biological sexual behavior analyzed by positivists and from the construction of sexual scripts described by interactionists. Sex is seen as a social institution constructed and maintained by the dominant group.

Chapter 3 explores the sexuality debate among feminists, a debate which characterizes postmodern methodology (Nicola Gavey, 1989:462). Because this project is studying paradigmatic shifts in research, a simple definition of sexuality is used. Sexuality for
this research is defined as behavior, attitudes and ideologies identified as sexuality by social researchers.

**Historical Background**

The three most famous sex studies are 1) the research done by Havelock Ellis between 1897 and 1939, 2) Alfred Kinsey’s surveys in the 40s, and 3) the laboratory experiments done by William Masters and Virginia Johnson in the 1960s. These sex researchers all worked under the auspices of the positivistic scientific paradigm: they made their observations as disinterested seekers of the natural truth. Havelock Ellis began the sexology discipline. Sexology is characterized by two fundamental assumptions: (1) heterosexuality is natural and (2) the most natural form of heterosexual activity is coitus (Margaret Jackson, 1984:44).

The scientific paradigm is centered on the assumption of natural male dominance and strong male desire. John Gagnon and William Simon (1973) introduced the hypothesis that social interaction constructs sexual desire and creates sexual scripts. They argue (1973:73) that biology does not create meanings:

The experience of sexual activity as achievement on the part of young men or as a form of social service on the part of females does not derive from immanent meanings derived from biology, but from the invented and created role categories that are available to members of a society.
Their book, *Sexual Conduct*, marks the beginning of the time period covered by my research project. Although they stress the creative powers of gender roles, their analysis does not itself escape the patriarchal framework of these roles. For example, in their discussion of homosexual conduct in prisons (1973:235 - 259), they attribute homosexual activities in male prisons to self-defense and expressions of masculinity, whereas women in female prisons are described as forming stable pseudo-families which offer emotional comfort and a potential for homosexual contacts. While Gagnon and Simon do explain how socialization formulates behavior, their arguments are couched in "natural" dominant/submissive heterosexual behaviors. My analysis investigates if there is a more complete shift from biological to socially constructed sexuality in the years following publication of Gagnon and Simon’s analysis.

The women’s movement and gay liberation activists were active during the 60s. Along with concerns for women’s issues came questions regarding lesbians and alternative sexual orientations. Adrienna Rich (1983) questioned the compulsory nature of heterosexuality. At the same time, modern scientific methods of research were being questioned. Postmodern theorists ask: how can these
questions about sexuality be answered? Indeed, are there answers to be found? As William Simon (1989:20) states:

> It becomes increasingly possible that individuals separated from each other by only a minimal number of years or only by small differences in their respective personal histories may experience identical sexual behaviors in vastly different ways and equally often with vastly different consequences.

In other words, along with the diversity in individual experiences and behaviors, we can expect sexuality research to ask questions that were previously not considered or that were not even present. Postmodernists ask if answers can be found in the chaos of questions.

My original research project was designed to study gender differences between male and female prostitution clients. In my prefeminist days, I had assumed there were few actual differences between men and women. If prostitution was legal and facilities were available, I believed that women would purchase sex as frequently as men. However, prostitution represents the inequality between the sexes, in particular, the differences between male and female sexuality that are assumed to naturally exist. It is assumed that masculine sexual desire is naturally so urgent, demanding and uncontrollable that men are willing to pay prostitutes for the use of their bodies. The prostitutes may be female (for heterosexuals) or male (for homosexuals), but the clients are always male. Books and articles on prostitution ground their

However, there is more involved than male sexual demand. As Gail Pheterson concisely puts it, men have the power to satisfy their perceived sexual needs:

"Sex client" is not a social status but rather an activity of (male) dominant persons who are more or less free from medical, legal, and social control. Perhaps if more women had the money, sexual license, and psychological inclination to buy sex, "prostitute client" would become an additional stigmatized status attached to the female gender (1990:405; parentheses in the original).

Theories and research interact: theories are collections of assumptions, these assumptions are tested by research, and the theories are modified by the research results. Even exploratory research begins from a set of assumptions which guide what the researcher observes, the questions she asks about her observations, and the interpretations she makes of the data she collects. The original assumptions are rarely questioned. Sexuality theory and research are both based on the untested assumption of male sexual dominance and female passivity. After a brief look at the male biases in early research, we will consider sociobiology. Then we observe to what extent interactionists advocating a theory of socially constructed sexuality hold on to the principal element of sociobiological theory -- the assumption of male sexual
need. In order to clearly display the gender
differentiation exhibited by these theories, each theory
is accompanied by feminist critique. The chapter
concludes with a quick review of the postmodern paradigm
advocated by Foucault: his theory of the Western obsession
with talking about sex in general and learning personal
sexual identities from expert discourse.

**Sexuality Theories and Research**

**Male Biases**

Alfred Kinsey used surveys, William Masters and
Virginia Johnson observed sexual acts in an experimental
laboratory setting, and Sigmund Freud based his theory on
analytic interviews. Margaret Jackson (1984) argues that
most sex research in general and sexology in particular is
based on male definitions of sexuality, on male supremacy,
and on domination and submission. These researchers claim
to favor women's liberation, but on men's terms. They
assume that heterosexuality is natural. Coitus
(penetration of the vagina by the penis) is the standard
against which all other activities are evaluated. The
results of Masters and Johnson's laboratory experiments,
for example, were welcomed by feminists as evidence of
female multiple orgasmic capabilities and thereby her
potential sexual superiority. Masters and Johnson,
however, were primarily concerned with marital sex and male sexual performance problems: male difficulties which were repairable if the proper instructions were followed by his female partner. Margaret Jackson (1984) claims "dominance and submission, power and violence are an integral part of the scientific model of sexuality - a sexuality which is at the same time both male and universal" (p48).

Although Sigmund Freud did not work strictly within the scientific paradigm, his analytic interviews are clearly biased by his masculine assumptions. Any conflicts between a woman's story and his theory were resolved by his decision that the female was indulging in fantasies (Sommer Brodribb, 1991:136). He developed his theory for the male population but had to contort it into "penis envy" in order to accommodate the female members of the population. All of the positivist methods used by sexologists -- survey, experiment, interviews -- were grounded in the same assumption. Theories based on male desire were proven by male biased research. Sociobiology's view of prostitution exposes their untested assumptions.
Sociobiology: Natural Need

Sociobiologists argue that men and women are naturally different. Nancy Burley and Richard Symanski (1981) provide a concise explanation of sociobiology's prostitution theory. The primary goal for males and females is to reproduce. Males have unlimited sperm so they try to impregnate as many women as possible in order to reproduce themselves as much as possible. Women have a limited number of eggs so only allow selected males to have reproductive access. Burley and Symanski do not explain how the woman protects herself against these wild impregnating men. It would be more logical for the one with the limited number of eggs to be more sexually active to insure that the most eggs would be fertilized. But the theory continues: the males support the females they have impregnated, but only these females because "natural selection strongly disfavors individuals who contribute to the off-spring of non-relatives" (1981:254). This is identified as the beginning of prostitution. First, some women trick males into supporting them by pretending to be fertile (1981:245). And second, because a man will not support another male's child, a widow must resort to prostitution to support her children (1981:256).

This is a very confusing and tautological explanation. Reasons are constructed from prehistorical
events to create proof for hypothesized results. The need to reproduce is an explanation for the assumed high male sex drive. In the days before the link between coitus and birth was made, how did the male know the new baby was in any way associated with an action he had performed many months prior? Notice that only a woman would wickedly pretend to be fertile. Does this mean that an infertile male would not engage in sexual intercourse; or does this mean the males would have no interest in an infertile woman? So why didn't they quit when they figured it out? It is convenient that the reproductive instinct to keep trying is stronger than the female reproductive instinct to be selective! It also seems that allowing widows and children to starve was considered no great loss to the human race. Yet, if the male’s main interest was reproduction and there was a fertile female available, why would the fact she already had children be a deterrent? Sociobiology does not provide an acceptable analysis. The main point I am making is that although this theory is confusing and contradictory, most sexuality theories are also grounded in this same assumption that male sexual desire stems from the need to reproduce. The presence of a strong male desire is not questioned.
Social Construction of Sexuality

The social construction of sexual scripts was formulated by John Gagnon and William Simon (1973; 1984). Gender roles are composed of appropriate behaviors referred to as scripts. A woman choosing an unscripted sexual life-style is characterized as (1) bad - flaunting the rules of society; (2) asexual - strange or sick, in need of help, ridicule or pity; or (3) homosexual - sexually deviant (Judith Laws and Pepper Schwartz, 1977:134-135). From infancy, girls are taught the heterosexual scripts of seduction and propriety. They are not taught the scripts for lesbian relationships. Often lesbian couples have to write these scripts themselves. Although most men know how they can locate a female prostitute, the scripts for women seeking male prostitutes are not taught. In the process of learning the scripts, women face intimidation and humiliation. According to Mariana Valverde (1989), it is not a lack of consent but a lack of actual choice. Women either do not have options to choose among or they do not have the power to make autonomous choices among the options that are available. In their article about the problems in writing sexuality

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1 Although not focusing on sexuality, Marlene Mackie's book, Constructing Women & Men: Gender Socialization (1987, Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston) is an excellent description of social construction based on Marxism and the sociology of knowledge.
history, Estelle Freedman and John D’Emilio (1990:486) observe that female sexuality changes, but male sexuality appears to be unchanging "lust, aggressiveness, insistence, and (without training), lack of control." They ask why, if sexual meanings are constructed, don’t the characteristics of both female and male sexuality change.

On the other hand, Ken Plummer (1990:237) argues that although sexuality has a physiological and behavioral base "amongst humans it has an essentially symbolic, socially constructed meaning." Sexuality is not an attribute fixed and waiting "repression or liberation, or even biological timing; rather it is something which is socially constructed" (1990:235). It is also uniquely constructed by each individual. Plummer provides a link between Gagnon and Simon’s social construction of sexual scripts and Foucault’s sexual identity through discourse by experts. He identifies four dimensions of a child’s construction of its own sexual script and identity. First there is the absence of talk about body feelings and sensual sexual emotions. Second is the cloaking of sexual references in typically negative judgements. Third is the secrecy which creates a potential for confusion. The child must create its own sexual script from vague and inconsistent information. And fourth, the child discovers
the social uses of sexuality. Sexual actions can be used to disturb authorities, obtain attention (and seemingly love), to exploit others, and even to make money. Plummer also identifies two aspects of gender in the construction of sexuality. Boys are more independent than girls and seek satisfaction of their urges. They are active pursuers. Girl's "sexuality is much more a matter of something that others do to them and define for them" (Ken Plummer, 1990:242; italics in the original). Gender roles precede and construct the sexual scripts.

**Foucault: Power over Sexuality**

In the midst of the sexual revolution, Ailon Shiloh (1970) reported that although there was much talk about sexuality and a wide and diversified range of communication on sexual behavior, there were "few sound methodological field studies of human sexual behavior by even fewer scholars" (Ailon Shiloh, 1970:XVII). The 1960s and 1970s were characterized by the commercialization of sex (pornography magazines and films, and sex manuals replacing marital advice books), new demographic patterns (increased divorce, single parents, working mothers), and feminist and homosexual movements (John D’Emilio and Estella Freedman, 1988:326-343):

By the end of the 1970s, it was obvious that the consensus [of sexual liberalism] had dissolved. As
Americans married later, postponed childbearing, and divorced more often, and as feminists and gay liberationists questioned heterosexual orthodoxy, nonmarital sexuality became commonplace and open. And, all of this took place in a social environment in which erotic imagery was ubiquitous (D’Emilio and Freedman, 1988:343).

Foucault offered another interpretation of sexuality. He argued that rather than Freud’s theory of sexual repression, sexuality is now discussed excessively:

What is peculiar to modern societies, in fact, is not that they consigned sex to a shadowy existence, but that they dedicated themselves to speaking of it "ad infinitum," exploiting it as the secret (1978:35; italics in the original).

Sex is constantly referred to in abstract indirect terms which present sexuality as an omnipresent undefinable entity. Postmodernism attempts to deconstruct sexuality discourse. The postmodernist perspective offers a conceptual apparatus that, although imperfect and temporary, "will move us closer, not to truth as such, but closer to finding broadened explanations for behavior and an understanding of its meaning; moving us from an arithmetic of behavior to a literacy of behavior" (William Simon, 1989:34).

Conclusion

Harold Holzman and Sharon Pines’ (1982) phenomenological study illustrates the convergence between the natural need and the social construction paradigms.
They conducted in-depth loosely structured interview with male prostitution clients. The men concurred with the sociobiological theory when they stated their reasons for visiting female prostitutes. They rationalized there was minimal risk of rejection, no entanglements, disappointments or wasted time. Sexual encounters with prostitutes were characterized as raw sex, honest and good; a girl, a guy and sex; no games. In other words, they exchanged money for satisfaction of a biological need. Holzman and Pines also found, however, that the men performed a type of courting script in their negotiating process. They would shave, shower and dress attractively. They preferred to enact their script in a social rather than business setting, flattering the woman and attempting to structure the reality as a romantic interlude. Holzman and Pines' study is an example of two paradigms, biological need and sexual script, being applied to the same situation. The interpretation depends on the circumstances of the observer. In spite of the difference between the two explanations, both paradigms are based on the assumption of high male sexual demand.

According to Nicola Gavey (1989), postmodern social science is characterized by the rejection of a search for absolute truth, acceptance of multiple interpretations for the same situation, and a belief that knowledge is closely
related to whoever has the power to proclaim what is true. Postmodernism encourages explanations which disrupt and displace dominant knowledge. From this definition, the principal difference between postmodernism and social construction theories is the search for truth. Whereas the other theories expect to locate "The Truth" after they clear away power considerations, postmodernists do not. They expect to find diverse "truths" and new questions to answer.

Somer Brodribb (1991:141) argues: "We must open the door and leave the Master’s House of theories of creation and procreation, subjectivity, and sexuality" by rejecting the framework posed by a masculinist methodology and seeing "the incongruity of seeking in masculine paradigms a process that is without our context, or a content that is without our process". "This is the core of post-structuralism’s dilemma: a relentless will to power has deconstructed the certainty of his existence as well the confidence of his domination" (Brodribb, 1991:137, italics in original). In the next chapter, we will look at feminist’s contributions to the sexuality debate.

Feminist methodology and the postmodernization of sexuality incorporate the same criteria: 1) inclusion of collective and individual experiences; and 2) displacement of power’s control over knowledge. The research for this
thesis reveals that although the assumption of male sexual need still prevails, trends in sexual research are moving towards greater diversity and broader analysis of data. Critique of sexual research's basic assumptions will eventually question male sexual desire.
Chapter 3

FEMINIST THEORIES OF SEXUALITY

Introduction
This chapter explores how the different feminist theories have investigated sexuality, specifically how they view prostitution. At this stage in my research, my questions were based on the assumption that women and men both have sexual needs and desires. The absence of brothels for heterosexual females contradicted my expectations. Because prostitution overtly expresses gender-defined sexual differences, I wanted to find out how feminist theories dealt with this issue. For this discussion, feminist theories are classified according to the categories developed by Rosemarie Tong (1989). We will look at liberal, Marxist, radical, and socialist feminists. Although feminists agree that women's sexual expression has been oppressed, they do not question the assumption that men have higher sexual needs. This chapter concludes with an introduction to postmodern feminism and a description of feminist research methodology, a methodology that encourages the researcher to question "taken-for-granted" assumptions.
Although prostitution is the world's "oldest profession," traditional research has examined prostitution as a profession with only male clientele: female prostitutes for heterosexual males and male prostitutes for homosexual males. The prostitute's function is to satisfy male sexual needs. "Innately, it seems, women have sexual attractiveness while men have sexual urges. Prostitution is there for the needs of the male hunchback--no one asks how the female hunchback manages" (Mary McIntosh, 1978:54). Traditional research has examined the characteristics of female prostitutes, the reasons they enter the trade, and whether or not they enjoy their work. The characteristics and experiences of the male client have also been studied, but the literature has not addressed the female client. Feminists have collaborated with female sex workers to narrow the socially constructed gap between "good girls" and "bad girls" (Laurie Bell, 1987; Frederique Delacoste and Priscilla Alexander, 1987), campaigning for the rights of female prostitutes. But even feminist research has neglected the invisible female sex client.

Perhaps the invisibility of the female sex client indicates that women do not have sexual desires. If women do have sexual desires, could they obtain satisfaction from male prostitutes? Or is female sexual desire a
derivative of her nurturing nature? Does prostitution function to satisfy the dominant male sex drive? Or does it represent patriarchal power over women's experiences? Is the invisibility of the female sex client actually concrete evidence of women's fear of the risks inherent in attempts to experience her own sexuality? When a woman evaluates her sexual options and "unwanted pregnancy, street harassment, stigma, unemployment, queer-bashing, rape, and arrest are arrayed on the side of caution and inaction, passion often doesn't have a chance" (Vance, 1984:4).

**Feminist Literature on Prostitution**

Although each of the feminist theorists present their arguments from different perspectives, they all agree that gender roles are significant factors in the expression of sexuality. They also agree that the female gender role is a significant factor in prostitution roles:

Prostitution is a uniquely female form of deviance because of the attributes built into the female sex role and the proximity of those attributes to the requirements of the occupation of prostitution (Karen Rosemblum, 1975:183).

They disagree, however, on what female sexuality is and consequently on the causes and characteristics of prostitution. In spite of their different approaches,
only liberal feminists offer arguments which allow for the possibility of female heterosexual prostitution clients.

**Liberal feminists**

The liberal feminist asks about the rights of a female who wants sex and is willing to pay for male sexual services. Liberal feminists argue that if women had equal opportunities, they would behave the same as men. If women's employment opportunities were not restricted, they would not be forced to accept prostitution as a career. If women were not stigmatized for active sexual behavior, they would be sex clients rather than sex providers. A woman should have freedom of choice in expressions of her sexuality.

Ulrich Clement (1989) compared data on sexual behavior from three samples covering the period from 1938 to 1981. He found an asymmetric trend of female behaviors (masturbation, coitus, homosexual) converging with the frequency of male behaviors while males behaviors have not changed. Male norms are directing the changes in human sexuality. The review of this study indicates an emphasis on student pre-marital behavior rather than adult post-marital, marital, between marital, or even instead-of marital behavior. With the increase in divorce rates and the increase in never-marrieds, a study of never-married
women may provide a better indication of liberating trends in female sexual behavior.

Liberal feminists view the decrease of male-female differences in sexual behavior as evidence of female sexuality's independence from male dominance. This approach ignores the radical feminist's view that converging norms merely indicate the acceptance of male norms, but not the development of female values. In our patriarchal society, an adjustment to the norms of female sexual behavior is acceptable and even desirable if it reduces the restrictions to male activities. Liberation extending female rights to the point of encroachment on male fantasies of superior sexual prowess are unacceptable. Liberal feminists have tried to equalize the genders by equalizing the laws governing both sexes. As evidenced by Nevada's prostitution laws, the legal right for male heterosexual brothels is not accompanied by the existence of brothels for heterosexual female clients.

**Marxist Feminists**

Marxist feminists view prostitution as the ultimate in gender class distinction. They see the capitalist system as a structure within which men (the producers) control women (the reproducers): male ownership and commodification of female sexuality. The female has a
coerced choice between being exploited and not being paid at all. Engels described marriage as selling the entire body into slavery as an alternative to the piecework done by prostitutes (1942:59-74).

The pre-eminence of sexuality in women’s lives adds up to a routine exchange of sexual favors for pay. An exemplar of the closeness between the female gender role characteristics and the patterns of prostitution is provided by the great lengths Kingsley Davis had to go to distinguish women prostitutes from non-deviant women (Karen Rosemblum, 1975:182). Marxist feminists argue that control over property is the key to sexual oppression.

**Radical Feminists**

Radical feminists view prostitution as the result of men’s control over women’s sexuality. Through his actions, men have proclaimed that women’s sexuality is for men - for what men want and need. The biological differences are exaggerated to insure men have the dominant role. Women are socialized to meet male sexual wants and needs as a matter of duty and pride. Before female oppression can be eliminated, sexuality must be reconceived and reconstructed. Some radical feminists endorse rejection of heterosexual relationships. These feminists would consider male heterosexual prostitutes
abhorrent. It is noteworthy that, in response to a request for sexual services made by the female researcher, a Nevada brothel assumed a female prostitute was desired. There are many unexplored aspects to female sexuality, factors with no relationship to male desire.

Socialist Feminists

Socialist feminists combine radical feminists’ objections towards patriarchal dominance with Marxist feminists’ terms of capitalistic oppression. Prostitution is viewed as an equation of sex with power (Priscilla Alexander, 1987). The power to "buy" is equated to the power to set the terms of sexuality and demand payment. However, the male role represents dominance in setting the terms of sexuality, so prostitution provides no additional power to a male recruit. Rather there is a disadvantage for the male when the female is accorded the power to buy his sexual services. He would then face the question: "If I am not in control, is she? Am I therefore not a man?" (Fasteau, 1974:63).

A Las Vegas journalist with contacts in the underground sex industry informed me that although males often bragged that women had paid for their services, it was doubtful if this was anything more than bragging. Payment for their sexual services was offered as proof of
their sexual prowess - proof of power, not dependence. Note that any perception of promiscuity on the part of the female is potentially labelled as prostitution. But even when proclaimed as true by the participant, the male's role in prostitution is doubted. Indeed, "heterosexual male prostitution is not considered prostitution but masculine achievement" (Roberta Perkins and Garry Bennet, 1985:216). The social meaning of sexuality is distinctly different for men than it is for women. Sex is accorded a higher power than money; natural male need has more relevance than constructed female desire.

Summary of Feminist Theories

In summary, while liberal feminists lobby for women's right to act the same as men, they neglect the radical feminist's argument that the masculine definition of sexuality is not the best. Marxist feminists view prostitution as representative of the commodification of sex: female desirability and male desire. Socialist feminists unite radical theory with Marxist theory and argue that a female purchasing a male's sexual services would represent confirmation of that particular male's sexual prowess. Each feminist prostitution theory is a different angle on male active sexual desire and female passive desirability.
Upholding the double standard has been the primary function of prostitution. Without prostitution and the limitation of prostitution to male clients only, "the double standard could have been preserved only through slavery, homosexuality, and rape" (Vern and Bonnie Bullough, 1987:296). The invisibility of male heterosexual prostitutes and the stigmatization of their female clients clearly reveals the dominant gender prescriptions. The nonexistence of male prostitution bolsters the idea that women do not need sex and men do. "Like rape, like contemporary forms of pornography, like beauty competitions, like much of our public culture, prostitution contributes to the casting of woman as object and man as subject, and thus to the prevailing ideology" (Mary McIntosh, 1978:64). I argue that sexuality research has performed the same function. Male-defined sex research constructs and promotes by "spurious scientific legitimation, a model of sexuality which both reflects and reproduces the interest of male supremacy" (Margaret Jackson, 1984:43). I also argue that postmodernism and feminist methodology are currently modifying scientific investigation of sexuality by introducing more interpretation dimensions, asking more questions, and indeed, questioning the cornerstones of the present paradigms.
Feminist Methodology

Liz Stanley (1990:12) defines feminist methodology as a search for unalienated knowledge. Alienated knowledge is knowledge received from authority that is inconsistent with knowledge that is acquired by experience.¹ One of the explanations I was given for the absence of male prostitutes for females was that there is no female demand. I was told all women can get sex any time they want it. This "expert" knowledge contradicted my personal experiences. Sexual activities were freely available but not without a cost in time, emotions, and autonomy. The male had to be manipulated into seducing the female. The reality I experienced was "alienated" knowledge, a "knowing" that contradicted the taken-for-granted explanations.

Although they have different foci, feminists from all perspectives (Liz Stanley, 1990; Mary Fonow and Judith Cook, 1991; Shulamit Reinharz, 1992a; Francesca Cancian, 1992) agree that feminist methodologies share three commonalities. They focus on gender and gender

¹ For example, an abused wife who is counselled to be more attentive to her husband's needs is receiving knowledge that is inconsistent with her experience. She knows from past attempts that it is impossible to attend to all his needs. Yet an outsider's knowledge of the "truth" is given priority over the insider's actual experiences. "Alienated knowledge" means that the abused woman feels she has failed and must try harder.
inequality, give voice to everyday experiences, and take a reflexive, critical stance. Although interactionists also study everyday experiences and often include gender in their analysis, examination of the position of gender is required by feminist research. And while all research and theory is self-correcting, feminist research is particularly sensitive to oppression and hierarchy. Feminist theory is subject to revision in the light of the experiences of ordinary people. It gives voice - makes visible - women's everyday lives. Specifically, it is a reflexive theory, rather than a sacrosanct 'grand theory' that places feminist academics over mere women (Liz Stanley, 1990:24). There is no hierarchy of feminist standpoints.

**Feminist Postmodernism**

According to Liz Stanley (1990:26-46), feminist postmodernists are skeptical of all universalizing claims. "Truth" is relative to the framework or context of the knower. It is not the same as, nor is it opposite to, "The Truth" that science attempts to locate existing independent of the knower. Neither is the relativity of truth to context the same as the belief that there is "no truth." Each woman's knowledge is true for the reality she is experiencing: "Each has epistemological validity
because each has ontological validity. Here we have contextually grounded truths" (Liz Stanley, 1990:27). Attempts to understand "why abused wives stay" are not able to truly analyze spousal interaction until the wife's experiences are accepted as "truth" -- as valid, legitimate, and appropriate knowledge.

Positivistic theory presupposes biological sexual needs. Interactionists hypothesize socially constructed sexual desire. Feminists critique all methodology which ignores women's contributions and/or oppression. The postmodern paradigm critiques all methodology which seeks a universal truth. I am not going to include in this thesis a discussion of postmodernistic arguments. For the purposes of my thesis, we only need to be aware that feminism and postmodernism may have extended the boundaries of sexuality research.

Conclusion

Even though all feminists do not agree with postmodernism, the condition of "Otherness" described by Simone de Beauvoir "enables women to stand back and criticize the norms, values, and practices that the dominant culture (patriarchy) seeks to impose on everyone" (Rosemarie Tong, 1989:219). Individuals are social beings and patterned social structures and categories can be
recovered. Dorothy Smith (1987) argues that researchers must recognize women's participation; women actively construct as well as interpret their everyday lives. Research should examine "the ways in which organizational frameworks and relevancies alienate people from their experiences" (Liz Stanley, 1990:34). In other words, sexuality research must examine the frameworks within which women and men define, organize, interpret and experience their sexual identity. My research examines the frameworks within which researchers define, organize and interpret sexuality research.

The following story is an example of the persistence of traditional sexual assumptions even among feminists. For twenty-five years, Esther Newton, a lesbian, and Shirley Walton, a heterosexual, were best friends. In 1976, they wrote a book, *Womenfriends*, describing their differences and similarities. In 1982, several years after their book was published, by a chance comment they discovered that they both liked to be the dominant sexual partner (Esther Newton and Shirley Walton, 1984). Together they explored how they could have spent so much time discussing feminism and sexuality without revealing the error in their assumptions about each other's sexuality. Neither of them had questioned the assumption that Shirley, being heterosexual, must be submissive.
The staying-power of these assumptions makes sexual dialogue and sexual research complex and frequently misunderstood. Each person’s sexual identity is unique to their own experience, their own cultural mores and symbols, and the social context in which they constructed their identity as well as the context in which they are now functioning. In this research project, I am looking at the trends in research assumptions, how gender interacts with these trends, and if there has been a paradigmatic shift in sexual assumptions.
Chapter 4

METHOD

Introduction

This study analyzes the trends in sexuality research that have been published in periodicals read by sociologists. The research is designed to answer the following questions: (1) Are there trends in sexuality research regarding issues of interest, questions asked, and interpretations made? (2) Are gender differences evident in sexuality research? and (3) Is there evidence of paradigm shifts?

Over eight hundred research article abstracts were selected from the Sociofile CD-ROM (Compact Disk Read Only Memory) which contains abstracts from the Sociological Abstracts published from January, 1974 to August, 1992. These abstracts were coded according to topic, gender, age, method and conclusions. This chapter describes the selection and conceptualization criteria utilized. Analysis of the data collected and conclusions derived from this research are discussed in the next two chapters.

Although trends in sexual attitudes and behavior have
been studied,¹ changes in the research attitudes and assumptions have not been tracked. Michael Shively et al. (1984) surveyed research literature in order to determine the conceptualizations and definitions of sexual orientation that have been used. They found a "conceptual jumble ... symptomatic of an underlying confusion" (1984:134). I argue in this study that the differences in definitions is attributable to the researcher's underlying assumptions and experiences. Researchers design their studies based on their understandings of the research project.

In chapter 2, we looked at two sexuality paradigms that influence researcher's data collection. These two paradigms, the natural biological reproductive need for sexual behavior and the social construction of sexual interaction scripts, place primary interest on heterosexual sexuality. Postmodernism, the feminist movement, and homosexual activism have added new dimensions to sexuality inquiries. This research project analyzes the contributions that these movements may have

had for sexuality research. I expected to find an increased diversification in topic selection and a movement towards questioning the underlying assumptions. In other words, a movement towards postmodernist sexuality research. In her response to criticisms of postmodernism, Patricia Clough states that postmodernism is:

trying to understand how criticism is possible and what kind of criticism is possible in our late twentieth-century world, in which science is the primary agent of power/knowledge ... We are trying to seriously play with science and culture so to startle ourselves into fresh sight(ing) and sound(ing) the world of our desires (1992:364).

Although I did not find fluctuation in the issues being researched, I did find increased diversity in the interpretations derived from the data collected. There is a trend towards new insights leading to new questions.

Population Frame

I chose to analyze research articles because they represent the questions that have been asked about sexuality as well as the answers that have been found. Distortion begins at the inception of each research project; "the questions asked or not asked are as significant as the answers" (Linda Thompson, 1992:9). Analysis of the trends in published research topics will illustrate the trends in sexuality interests. There is a link between the issues of the day and the areas of
research which get funded and published. Pornography, abortion, AIDS, the women's movement and the backlash against the women's movement are recent issues in sexuality. Analysis of the topics and of the genders studied as well as analysis of the conclusions made by the researchers reveal trends in sexuality issues. As our social world becomes more complex, our interactions more flexible and our choices more diversified, we all seek information to guide our everyday lives. Research reflects as well as creates knowledge: "all research sustains beliefs and politics whether or not they are acknowledged" (Linda Thompson, 1992:9). The goal of this research is to identify trends in sexual research in the sociology discipline. Articles listed in the *Sociological Abstracts* (SA) are primarily sociological in content. According to the SA guide, abstracts included in the *Sociological Abstracts* are for articles from (1) journals published by sociological associations, groups, faculties and institutes; (2) periodicals containing the word "sociology" in their titles; (3) selections from journals in related disciplines; and (4) discussions or criticisms of sociology and sociological topics from journals of general circulation.

There are two criticisms of the validity of an analysis of published research: funding and gatekeepers.
Funding directs which questions are actually researched and publication gatekeepers guide the selection of research topics. Funding influences the direction of the field for the nonfunded as well as the funded research (Beth Schneider and Meredith Gould, 1987:121). Chapter 5 analyzes the journals included in the database and addresses funding and gatekeeping issues. For now, I will merely point out that SA selects articles from a wide array of publications. The articles chosen for this database came from a total of 218 different journals. This represents an adequate range of gatekeepers and funders. I chose articles because they are more timely and display a greater scope and diversity than books. Major book authors also produce articles for publication in the journals. Periodicals are customarily utilized as a proving ground for future book ideas. For this reason, nontraditional research may be more likely to be published in a journal article than book format.

The purpose of this research is to locate the interests in sexuality research. What topics have been studied? Which genders have been studied? What conclusions have been made? What position has gender had in the interpretations that have been made? I am looking at breadth rather than depth. The more articles I can include in the study, the better. For this reason I chose
to analyze abstracts rather than complete articles. Abstracts are available whereas articles are more difficult and sometimes are impossible to obtain. Time constraints limit the number of articles that can be analyzed. I was able to code abstracts for all of the appropriate articles. The issue of sampling error was eliminated because sampling was not required.

Abstracts provide a concise summary of the articles. The SA abstracts contained all of the items of concern for this study. Abstracts for the SA collection are written according to specific requirements. The abstract must include the hypothesis tested, the method of data collection, a description of the research subjects, the type of analysis, and the interpretation of the data analysis. The abstracts are written or modified by SA's staff members to conform to SA standards, insuring objectivity of the abstract as a condensation of the article.

A total of 1698 abstracts from SA were downloaded from Sociofile CD-ROM to a database. Title, author, institutional affiliation of first author, journal name, country of publication and publication year were transferred without modification. The article abstracts were stored in a separate database file linked to the first database by a locator number. Only the abstracts
were coded. They were separated from the rest of the article information so that information about the author, year, or journal would not influence abstract coding decisions.

**Coding Procedures**

The selected sexuality abstracts were reviewed three times: (1) Before coding began, the abstracts were scanned and general topic areas were listed. From these lists, coding categories were developed. Then (2) the abstracts were coded using a reverse aggregation method (Michael Stefanko, 1984). Application of this coding method is described in more detail in later sections explaining specific variables. In general, each abstract was reduced to its essential features. The main topic, method, research subjects and conclusions were briefly described. A structured coding format was developed from sorted lists of these descriptions. (3) The actual coding was done in the final review using the structured format developed from the previous unstructured coding. Each variable and its categories will be described later in this chapter. At each stage, all remaining abstracts were evaluated for deletion.
Sample Selection

Abstracts from the Sociological Abstracts CD-ROM were downloaded to a standalone work station. Abstracts were selected if they contained the word "sexuality" in the title, abstract, or article key word descriptors. This term selected 1910 abstracts compared to 12,188 abstracts selected by the term "sex". An analysis of the gender content of the abstracts was made using Sociofile. The gender percentage is not altered by reducing the population size. More important, "sex" is a biological term whereas "sexuality" represents a cultural effect, "the appropriation of the human body and of its physiological capacities by an ideological discourse" (Halperin, 1989:257, italics in the original). The positivistic paradigm has been the most profuse in sociological research (see chapter 2 history). This study is tracking trends rather than absolute quantity. Although using "sexuality" rather than "sex" as the search term may have reduced the overall prevalence of positivistic methodology, reduction of the database improves the capacity to compare alternative paradigms.

Restricting to articles available in the English language reduced the sample size to 1698. The search for articles which would be instrumental in the construction of American knowledge instigated this decision. Articles
in other languages would be available to a limited audience, especially a limited American audience. Of secondary importance in the decision to limit to the English language was the concern that access to the articles may be needed. These concerns justified the restriction in sample size to English only articles.

Abstract Deletions

Each time the database was reviewed, all remaining abstracts were judged for applicability to the study. Over half of the abstracts were removed because they were not suitable. To be accepted in this study, the abstracts had to meet two criteria. First, the abstract must be from a research article. To qualify as a research article, there must be a description of empirical evidence — one or more specified people, objects or events must have been observed and analyzed. For example, "comparison of issues" was deleted; "comparison of news reports on issues" was left in the database. Issues are not observable. The second criteria for inclusion was the requirement for the article to be primarily concerned with sexuality. This was loosely defined as: articles about sexual behavior, beliefs or attitudes. A study of a support group for wives of homosexuals was deleted because it was a study of the group and the emotional needs
satisfied by the group, not a study of sexual needs, attitudes or behaviors. Sexuality was only a single characteristic of the sample chosen for the study (locator #377). Notes were written each time a question was raised regarding deletion. I reviewed these notes after the coding was completed. Less than 20 abstracts were not clearly identifiable by the established criteria. These questionable abstracts were re-reviewed and half were retained and half rejected. The number of questionable decisions (20 out of 1698) is not significant.

Two topic areas were removed from the database. The first is sex education articles. Abstracts for articles describing curriculums and suggesting methods for teaching sexuality were easy to delete because they were not research articles. Sex education articles studying how much subjects know and whether or not they should know more were more difficult. These articles were rejected in the first stage of the study because they were judged to be oriented towards morals, education, and control rather than sexuality. While a separate study of these sex education articles would be informative about trends in sexual ideology, their focus on adolescents (mostly female adolescents) and birth control could skew the database for this study.
The topic area 'data collection' was removed from the final analysis. There were 18 articles which described performing research to test the reliability of the measurement scales. Although these qualified as research under the database criteria for this project, they are more closely related to validating the method than studying sexuality. The "data collection" category is an exemplar of an objection to scientific research: the instrumentation becomes the research topic itself (Thomas Kuhn, 1962).

The database contained less than 5 abstracts for articles published in each of the first and last years (1970, 1971, 1972 and 1992; n=10). These were removed from the analysis because there was insufficient representation of the publications for those years. The database sample size was reduced to 775 abstracts.

**Variable Categorization**

Each of the remaining 775 abstracts were coded for 6 variables. In this section I will describe the categories for each variable and discuss the coding decisions required by each variable. The variable I thought would be the most informative, "topic," is followed by "gender," "method," "subject," and "age" variables. The last variable discussed, "interpretations", proved to be the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature (biological need)</th>
<th>Nurture (socialization)</th>
<th>Deviance (from heterosexual norms)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biological Sexuality</td>
<td>Sex discussions</td>
<td>Men’s issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex drive, hormones, menopause</td>
<td>adult/child</td>
<td>Homosexuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual behavior</td>
<td>sexual imagery</td>
<td>Bisexuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>virginity, orgasms, frequency</td>
<td>art, humor, pornography, media</td>
<td>Sexual dysfunctions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth control</td>
<td>Sexual ideology</td>
<td>inability to function sexually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>includes abortion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premarital sexuality</td>
<td></td>
<td>Women’s issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extramarital sexuality</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sexual harassment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>includes swinging</td>
<td></td>
<td>sexual, not gender harassment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital sexuality</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sexual abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>single parents, widows</td>
<td></td>
<td>rape, incest, date/rape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extramarital sexuality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonmarital sexuality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexuality of disabled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mentally and/or physically</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1**

**TOPIC CATEGORIES**
most illuminating. Each abstract and its title, author, and year of publication is identified by a locator number.

**Topic Coding**

The variable named "topic" has 16 categories (see table 1). These were later collapsed into 3 paradigm groupings: nature, nurture, and deviance. The nature grouping represents abstracts studying the dimensions surrounding marital intercourse. This includes sexual behavior and birth control. These are themes that reflect the social norms for discipline and control over the natural sexual need to reproduce - the "nature" paradigm. The "nurture" grouping represents social interactions and the socialization factors of sexuality. The "deviance" grouping is composed of topics which I felt should be analyzed separately. It is composed of 2 subgroups. The first subgroup, called "men's issues," was designed after analysis of gender categories. It consists of the three topic categories which focused on men more than women. This will be further described in the analysis in chapter 5. I separated the second subgroup, "women's issues," from the other groupings because it contains two problematic topics: sexual harassment and sexual abuse.

---

2 This is a misleading title because these are actually about men's behaviors; however, they are considered "issues" primarily by women.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locator</th>
<th>Problematic Topic Coding Decisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#319</td>
<td>Concludes that sexual liberals are more experienced than sexual conservatives. &quot;Sexual ideology&quot; or &quot;sexual behavior&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#608</td>
<td>Sexual asphyxia deaths: &quot;sexual behavior&quot; (arousal by heightening senses) or &quot;sexual dysfunction&quot; (but not impotent or failing to perform) or &quot;sexual abuse&quot; (causing death, even though self-inflicted).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#803</td>
<td>&quot;Sexual dysfunctions&quot; used to construct myth (&quot;sexual ideology&quot;) to hide more fundamental problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#812</td>
<td>About sexual relationships between students and teachers. Appears to be &quot;sexual harassment&quot; but the term is not used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#1058</td>
<td>A specific group of Indian women are considered sexually available. Appears to be &quot;sexual abuse&quot; but they may not consider it unwanted, so &quot;sexual ideology&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#1450</td>
<td>&quot;sexual abuse&quot; or &quot;sexual dysfunction&quot; or &quot;sexual ideology&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#1555</td>
<td>Article analyzes pedophiles' positive self labeling. &quot;sexual dysfunctions&quot; or &quot;sexual abuse&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#1684</td>
<td>&quot;sexual abuse&quot; or &quot;biological sexuality&quot; for testosterone treatment for rapists or child molesters.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Harassment was a problematic topic because abstracts about sexual employment inequalities were deleted from the database, while work harassment, if specifically sexual, was retained. Determining if the harassment was sexual or gender based was very subjective. I decided to isolate these two categories from the rest of the analyses.

Despite the difficulties in drawing concise boundaries between the categories, only eight of the 803 abstracts (less than 1%) were problematic. Table 2 is a list of the subjective coding decisions. The underlined descriptor is the chosen category.

**Gender Coding**

After the first review through the selected abstracts, I redesigned the gender coding. The original design specified that this field would be used to summarize the research subjects/respondents. This data would be analyzed for research gender preference -- to see if females were studied more than men. An exemplar of the problem with this coding procedure was an abstract about female circumcision (locator #198). Three hundred women and two hundred men were interviewed about the sexual satisfaction experienced by circumcised women. Even though the men were asked for their opinion, the main topic of the article was female sexuality. I adjusted the
coding procedure to differentiate between research gender interests rather than research subjects. Therefore this abstract was coded "solely female". The final coding was performed based on the gender interest of the data interpretations.

There are two gender variables: "female" and "male." Female was coded if conclusions were about females. Male was coded if conclusions were about males. This was relatively straightforward coding. Abstracts were categorized into four groups: solely female, solely male, females compared to males, and fe/males. The last category was for abstracts in which the gender is not identified. Studies of cultures, religions, or texts often fall into this default category. Feminist's argue that failure to specify gender implies a study of male endeavors. I hypothesize, however, that because male norms are a constant unchanging and unquestioned factor in sexuality research, any research which does not specify gender is likely to be studying women's sexuality. An exception is homosexuality research which does assume male gender unless specified otherwise. Occasionally an abstract primarily making conclusions about one gender would have a brief reference to the other gender. Only if these comments were included in the conclusion coding (see
Table 3

METHOD CATEGORIES

SURVEYS  structured; questionnaires including tests, inventories, and scales. n=312

CONTENT ANALYSIS  latent and manifest; frequency analysis: text, court or medical records, research reviews, media. n=118

SECONDARY ANALYSIS  analysis of someone else's data collection. n=59

ANALYSIS OF STATISTICS  statistics from other areas n=12

CASE STUDY  few cases intensely studied over period of time. Variety of techniques (interviews, observation, tests) includes life histories and oral histories and daily logs. n=60

EXPERIMENT  has a stimuli and a posttest and either a pretest or a control group. n=23

HISTORIOGRAPHY  attempt to recreate from point of view of the people at that time or place (include cross cultural studies). Use several sources of data. Includes historical analysis. n=51

INTERVIEWS  unstructured, indepth, face-to-face. n=105

FIELD STUDY  participant and/or observation in the field. n=43

SEMIOTICS  study of signs: symbols of something for somebody. n=20
section on conclusion coding) was that gender included in the gender coding.

Method Coding

The categories for methods were selected to provide the most information about the greatest diversity with the minimum options (see table 3). Multiple methodology, vague descriptors, and changing meanings combined to make mutually exclusive and exhaustive category construction difficult. Abstracts did not always provide enough information about the specific method used. Occasionally several methods (triangulation) had been used. Coding forced a decision as to which method was the most important.

The most serious difficulty was the distinction between structured and unstructured interviews. For coding purposes, the "surveys" category was defined as quantitative methods using structured questionnaires and including tests, inventories, and scaling formats. On the other hand, the "interviews" category was defined as unstructured, indepth face-to-face qualitative methods. A structured survey is valued for its objectivity and avoidance of interviewer reaction. Unstructured interviews are valued for their access to the depth of the respondent’s understanding. Structure achieves the best
reliability; unstructured formats can achieve high validity. Frequently an abstract would only say "interviews" without any qualifiers. Usually the interpretation statements or the subject descriptions would indicate the type of interview structure, but there are likely a significant number of abstracts coded as "interviews" that should be coded as "survey". The validity of coding for the variable "methods" was compromised.

Naming the method was extremely problematic. An exemplar is a study about Irene Castle’s part in the 20s dance craze (locator #1271). This abstract presented an historiographical account describing greater acceptance of and fewer restrictions of sexuality. But the abstract also contained a good deal of semiotic analysis on Irene’s symbolic portrayal of intimate pleasure in a context of marital propriety. Afixing a name to the methodology limited the information available in the database. I considered using two variables for categorizing methods but soon realized that two variables would soon expand exponentially. For example, the category "content analysis" deserves more extensive differentiation. There should be a noted difference between creative expressive pictures or films and repetitive bureaucratic records.
Analysis of the methods used is informative, but only if there is an awareness of the subjectivity of the categorization. Vague abstract descriptors and affixing names to mixed methodology compromise the validity of the "method" category coding. I only used this variable for general overviews of other variables.

Subject Coding

The subject variable collected descriptive information about research subjects. For human subjects, data included: race, location (city or state or country), sample size, marital status, sexual orientation, education or medical institution, and any other selection criteria mentioned in the abstract. For non-human studies, information identifying the objects, locations, or events studied was recorded. These data were not included in the analysis for this study but were useful for interpreting other categories.

Age Coding

One of the most frequent criticisms of sexual research is the tendency to obtain the data from young, single or newly married individuals. Age can be a relevant factor in sexuality research. Information from rarely studied age groups may contradict common sexual
assumptions. For example, Joey Sprague and David Quadagno (1989) tested the hypothesis that sexual attitudes vary according to age, sexual experience and marital status. Their self-administered questionnaire was completed by students with an age range from 22 to 57 (mean age 31 years). They concluded that women's love motive declines and their physical motive increases with age cohort groups. Men display the opposite: male physical motive declines and love motive increases with age cohort groups. From my viewpoint, this indicates the assumption that men need sex and women need relationships is not valid for middle aged and older, sexually experienced individuals.

Age of research subjects was coded into seven categories according to information provided in the abstract. To keep the coding consistent for each variable, age focus in the conclusion overrode the age of the subject. For example, an abstract about adult subjects surveyed on their experiences as abused children was coded "child" because the research issue was child abuse. The category for students was included because many abstracts merely identified subjects as university students. They could be adolescents or adults but were likely a mixture depending on the university and the year. There are now more "mature" students attending university. Age is coded according to category with largest proportion
of the age range. "18 - 21" is coded as ADLES, "40-91" is coded SENIOR. This data indicates that there is a relative absence of research that includes senior citizens.

Table 4
Age Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Ages Included</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>INFANT</td>
<td>0 - 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>CHILD</td>
<td>4 - 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>ADLES</td>
<td>12 - 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>153</td>
<td>ADULT</td>
<td>21-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>SENIOR</td>
<td>61+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>STUDNT</td>
<td>identified as students; no ages given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>374</td>
<td></td>
<td>unidentified films, cultures, etc. (includes those with no age identification)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpretation Summaries

The database allowed only 250 characters for summarizing the abstract interpretations. The main conclusions recorded in the abstract were condensed to concise sentences. These sentences were recorded hierarchically according to emphasis and order of presentation in the abstract. Usually three statements
were fit into the conclusion field for each abstract. Quantitative research conclusions tended to be in the form of hypotheses and were easily copied to the conclusion category whereas abstracts from qualitative research contained observations that were longer and more complex and therefore more difficult to simplify. Predictions and suggestions were not included because they were not direct interpretations of the data. If I reworked this research project, I would include a variable for suggestions. They seemed to express the researcher’s assumptions more directly than the data interpretations did.

**Reliability and Validity**

The question arose as to whether or not the homosexuality topic area and the biological sexuality topic area had been coding correctly. First, there were more solely-female abstracts in the homosexuality topic than expected. And second, there was the possibility that the fe/male articles may have actually been about men. All homosexuality abstracts and biological sexuality abstracts (70 plus 30 respectively totaling 100 abstracts) were reviewed. Only 3 codes were modified, an acceptable number (3%) given the subjectivity of the coding and the information available. The coding of fe/male homosexuality abstracts did not change. The actual
articles would have to be analyzed to determine whether they actually were studying men or if they were truly gender neutral.

To avoid any influence that knowledge of the author or the year of publication may have, only the abstract was available for coding the method, topic, subjects, and interpretation variables.

Table 5

Abstract Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Sexuality&quot; abstracts</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not English language</td>
<td>&lt;212&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not research or sexuality focused</td>
<td>&lt;895&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection Topic</td>
<td>&lt;18&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 abstracts per year</td>
<td>&lt;10&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>775</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

This chapter has described the data collected for this research project. Title, author, journal, and publication year for 1698 articles on sexuality were transferred directly from the Sociological Abstracts CD-
ROM. Of these, 803 were identified as research articles. The abstracts for these research articles were coded according to topic, gender, method, research subjects and research interpretations. I removed the "data collection" topic and the abstracts for years with less than 5 abstracts. The remaining database contained 775 abstracts. In the next chapter, this database is analyzed to answer the research questions: (1) Are there trends in sexuality research? (2) Is there a paradigm shift? and (3) Is gender differentiation evident?
Chapter 5

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

The analysis in this chapter provides some insights into trends in sexuality research. Trends for the theory paradigms reviewed in chapter 2 are analyzed. Research between 1973 and 1991 consistently maintained a paradigm division between the positivistic "nature" paradigm scientifically searching for the true nature of sexuality, and the interactionist "nurture" paradigm seeking to understand the ways people learn their sexual scripts. In accordance with the feminist methodology described in chapter 3, this research concentrates on the gender differences expressed in sexuality research. This study reveals considerable gender differentiation in research interests and, more explicitly, gender distinctions in the data interpretations.

This chapter offers both quantitative and qualitative interpretations of the sexuality research abstracts collected from Sociological Abstracts from 1973 to 1991. The analysis begins by describing the absence of statistical trends in annual topic and gender
distributions. Qualitative analysis of the research conclusions contradicts the quantitative evidence somewhat. While topic selection and gender focus indicate that the nature/nurture paradigms have remained constant in proportion to the total sexuality research, each author's interpretation of their research findings present a trend towards increased flexibility and diversity in sexuality research.

Quantitative analysis discloses the absence of studies solely on males. The little research that has been done on male sexuality concentrates on controlling and correcting deviations from the norm. Neither the nature nor the nurture paradigm has paid much attention to male sexuality. It seems the validity of the assumption that men have a naturally strong sex drive has not been questioned.

Qualitative analysis of the conclusions reported in the abstracts provides evidence of a subtle paradigm shift. The gender categories of sexual ideology exhibit different interpretation patterns. Studies primarily interested in male sexuality are narrowly focused and cynical in tone. Research projects focusing on females have leaned towards the positive aspects of sexuality. They examine sexuality from many directions and exhibit a trend towards diverse conclusions.
General Changes Over 19 Years

Initial Analysis

There are 775 abstracts during the nineteen years from 1973 to 1991. The number of articles on sexuality research peaked between 1976 and 1978 (n = 206) averaging 68.7 research abstracts annually (see Table 6). Research steadily declined until 1984 and remained level at an average of 34.1 research abstracts annually until the end of the research period. This is approximately half the number of abstracts during the peak years. Abstracts on males solely and abstracts on female/male comparisons declined 60% while abstracts on females only declined by 31.8%, indicating a change in gender focus.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Number of Abstracts Annually</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upon first analysis, it appeared that while sexuality research was declining, interest in female sexuality did not decline proportionately. For example, articles in the two categories, "females only" and "male and female
comparisons" each averaged 17 annually in the peak years, but in the later period there were annually 12 articles on females contrasted to only 7 articles comparing men and women.

Predominant Journals

I wanted to find out the breadth of the research trends in sexuality studies. Specified criteria guide the articles each periodical selects for publication. Academic publishing gatekeepers have a direct influence on which research gets published (Dale Spender, 1981). To avoid the probability of the database being biased by a few prolific journals, I excluded all abstracts from journals with more than nine abstracts in the database. An analysis of the database’s 218 journals revealed that 11 journals contributed 44% of the abstracts. Two publications, the Archives of Sexual Behavior and Journal of Sex Research, accounted for 21.4% of the abstracts.

Each of the deleted journals had specific interest areas such as adolescents, homosexuals, or heterosexual marriage. Analysis of these journals would provide an in-depth study of patterns for the specific journal, but I

---

### Table 7

**Journals Removed From Database**  
(Journals with over 8 research abstracts)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(nothing between 1979 - 1983)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archives of Sexual Behavior</td>
<td>1973 - 1990</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(45 between 1976 - 1978)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Communication</td>
<td>1976 - 1986</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4 articles in 1976)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Homosexuality</td>
<td>1974 - 1991</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Marriage &amp; Family</td>
<td>1973 - 1989</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Sex Research</td>
<td>1973 - 1991</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9 in 1973; 10 in 1976)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Social History</td>
<td>1974 - 1982</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Roles</td>
<td>1978 - 1991</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Studies International</td>
<td>1983 - 1990</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3 in 1984; 2 in 1990)</td>
<td>(1 each in 1983, 85, 86, 88)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total abstracts removed from the database**  
343

**Remaining abstracts from 207 journals**  
432
am more interested in the breadth of sexuality research topics and wish to avoid "gatekeeping" biases. I have not determined the circumstances causing the research peak for these periodicals. Table 7 notes by year the number of abstracts for each journal removed from the database. Although I did not gather information on publishers' interests, funding or publication histories, most of the journals had published sexuality research throughout the period under study. Leaving these abstracts in the database would obscure the question of general trends in sexuality interests.

Table 8
Gender Groupings by Year
in 3 year intervals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female + Male</th>
<th>Fe/male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974-76</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-79</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-82</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-85</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-88</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-91</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>128</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td><strong>88</strong></td>
<td><strong>154</strong></td>
<td><strong>424</strong>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 8 abstracts for 1973 are not included in this total.
The remaining 432 abstracts are drawn from 207 journals. This indicates the widespread interest and dispersed concerns in sexual research. The constant number of abstracts per year (see table 8) indicates consistent publishing of research evenly distributed over a range of topics by diverse publishers. These concerns are spread over 207 periodicals with different focuses and distinctively divergent readerships. Their only linkage is their interest in sexuality research and inclusion in the *Sociological Abstracts*.

The peak period, from 1976 to 1978, disappeared when the eleven journals were removed from the data base.

### Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female + Male</th>
<th>Fe/male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976-78</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-91</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>&lt;0.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>.5%</td>
<td>+3.0%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

 Deleting eleven journals from the database removed the 1976 to 1978 sexual research peak. It also removed the observed differences in the decline in specified gender
sexuality research. The number of research abstracts solely on females and exclusively on males remained consistent throughout the research period (table 9). While the annual total number of abstracts declined, the number of abstracts focusing on a specific gender did not change. There is a trend away from mixed gender research, rather than an increase in solely female research.

**Feminist Publications**

The women's movement encouraged feminist writers. Over representation of feminist publications could skew the database. If a large number of feminist publishers enter the market, we could expect abstracts exclusively on women would increase. All publications in the database were matched to a listing in *Feminist Periodicals* (winter 1993), a publication which attempts to include all feminist periodicals with emphasis on scholarly journals and small press offerings. Two of the deleted journals, *Sex Roles* and *Women's Studies International*, were identified as feminist periodicals. Only 7.6% of the final database (33 out of 432) were identified as feminist periodicals (see table 10). There are no abstracts from feminist journals for 1973, 74, 81 or 85. There are 1 to 3 feminist abstracts in each of the other years except 1989. In 1989, 4 feminist periodicals contributed 5
abstracts. These are not sufficient quantities to skew the data. However, analysis will include consideration of journal diversity and feminist publications.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feminist Publications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differences (2 - 1989; 1 - 1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Studies (1975, 76, 86, 87, 2 - 1979)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontiers (1977, 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender and Society (1988, 1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Women (1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWSA - Journal (1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology of Women - Quarterly (1979, 80, 82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources for Feminists (1988)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs (2 - 1977, 84; 1 - 1978, 80, 82, 83)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every effort has been made to collect a data base with a broad perspective, including as many different sociologically relevant sexuality research abstracts as possible. Because I am attempting to identify the areas that have been neglected, the data analysis is focusing on breadth rather than depth. Although fluctuations in the
The number of yearly research studies published was created by a few specified publications, the gender breakdown to be discussed in the next section was not disturbed significantly by the removal of the most prolific journals. The low interest in male only topics remained consistent.

**Gender Grouping**

Linda Thompson summarizes the objections family studies researchers have against the use of gender comparisons and gender-neutral measures:

They emphasize sex differences and neglect similarities; deny diversity within gender; ignore both the immediate and wider structural contexts; disregard symbolic meanings or offer vague meanings that researchers can fill in in any way that suits them; and mask power, inequality, conflict, and change (1992:7).

In other words, the female versus male category emphasizes the differences between men and women. Through the act of comparing, the actual characteristics of both genders are distorted. Comparing men against women magnifies and gives priority to differences. Conversely, lumping the two genders together obscures the differences, creating an impression that men and women are identical to each other. Gender non-specific articles often contain evidence that they are actually speaking of only one gender, assuming the characteristics they discuss apply to both sexes.
Feminists have criticized the medical profession for extending findings from research on male subjects to conclusions about female patients.

The lumping of gender characteristics was quite evident in the homosexual abstracts. There was no identification of whether they were referring to male or female homosexuals so the abstracts had to be coded as unidentified gender. The articles themselves would likely identify the subjects as male. I experienced this problem during my search for information on male prostitutes serving female clients. To avoid wasting time on irrelevant materials, I learned to scan articles for references to females. The assumption that all clients are male is so strong that it was often only near the end of an article that the client's sex would be identified.²

It is significant (p < .001) that only 12.7% (n=55) of the 432 abstracts studied men exclusively, while 30.6% (n=132) focused on women (see table 11). Men were the majority in only two topic areas, homosexuality and sexual dysfunctions. When we only look at Nature and Nurture groupings, the results are more differentiated -- only 7.8% studied males only and 32.7% studied females only. More than half of the articles were not coded as

² For an example, see Christopher Earls and Helene David (1989).
Table 11

Topics by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>F vs M</th>
<th>Fe/male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth control</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extramarital</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonmarital</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
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<td>Sex of disabled</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Sex</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<td>Subtotal Nature</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(32%)</td>
<td>(7.8%)</td>
<td>(24.3%)</td>
<td>(35.7%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex discussions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual imagery</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual ideology</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>142</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subtotal Nurture</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>181</td>
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<tr>
<td>(33.1%)</td>
<td>(7.7%)</td>
<td>(20.4%)</td>
<td>(38.7%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>subtotal</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(32.7%)</td>
<td>(7.8%)</td>
<td>(22.1%)</td>
<td>(37.4%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexuality</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexuality</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex dysfunctions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal men's issues</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(21.4%)</td>
<td>(42.9%)</td>
<td>(14.3%)</td>
<td>(21.4%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(31.4%)</td>
<td>(11.8%)</td>
<td>(21.2%)</td>
<td>(35.5%)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sex harassment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subtotal</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                      | 132    | 55   | 88     | 157     | 432   |
| (30.6%)              | (12.7%) | (20.4%) | (36.3%) | 100%   |
specifically male or female. If we analyze this
difference further, of the studies that looked exclusively
at one sex, only 29.4% studied males compared to 70.6%
studying females. There are 2.4 times as many women only
articles as there are articles studying only men.
part, are apparently exempt from any ethical
responsibility, or at least they are not challenged to
reflect on their actions." Research on socialization has
a very large difference between the genders.
Socialization research focuses on women 29% and men 7% of
the time.

In addition to the apparent lack of research on male
sexuality, other neglected areas are senior citizens,
bisexuality, and marital sexuality. These are only a few
of the potential research studies which could be
considered by sexuality research.

**Paradigmatic Shifts**

In order to statistically test for paradigm changes,
topics were collapsed into three paradigms: nature,
nurture, and deviance. There is no evidence of a paradigm
shift over the 18 years studied (see table 12). Lambda is
near zero and chi-square is far below an acceptable level
of significance. Statistical analysis of the two primary
paradigms, nature and nurture, also rejects the paradigm change hypothesis.

Table 12
Paradigm Topic Groupings by Year in 3 year intervals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Natural Reproduction</th>
<th>Social Construction</th>
<th>Deviance from norms</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974-76</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-79</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-82</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-85</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-88</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-91</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>135</strong></td>
<td><strong>179</strong></td>
<td><strong>110</strong></td>
<td><strong>424</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 8 abstracts for 1973 are not included in this total.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis of the sexuality research interpretations shows a more subtle paradigm shift. The topics remain constant, but the interpretations have broadened in scope and developed more positive and optimistic tones. A confounding aspect to this analysis is that the shift is more evident in gender specific categorization. Female specific abstracts tend to express
broad encouraging constructive understanding while male specific abstracts tend to make narrow controlling predictions. This research does not attempt to resolve whether the shift is gender or paradigm based. Either way, there remains a qualitative trend towards diversified interpretations. In the next section we will examine how female homosexuality abstract conclusions shift from questioning why the individuals are lesbians to examining how they manage their everyday lives; a trend towards improved understanding and communication; a movement from abstract generalizations to concrete issues. After analyzing the lesbian abstracts, we will look at gender differences under the sexual ideology topic category.

Lesbian Studies

There is a definite difference between early and late lesbian abstracts, especially before the 11 predominant journals were removed. The bias created by these journals will be discussed at the end of this section. The solely female homosexual abstracts from 1981 and prior emphasized the concepts of female preference for fidelity, lesbian preference for a heterosexual orientation, and the notion that sexual satisfaction is not important to lesbians. Only one abstract found the lesbian subjects had positive attitudes towards their sexual orientation. The questions
asked were not typical of questions asked heterosexual males or even heterosexual females. The subjects were asked questions about sex toys, faking orgasm, and sadomasochism. Of the seven abstracts from articles published before 1982, approximately half were male authored. Perhaps the author’s gender has more impact than the research gender of interest.

From 1982 to 1986, only 2 homosexuality abstracts fit the solely female category. Of the eight "female only" abstracts dated after 1986, 7 were authored by women. Gender of the eighth abstract is not identifiable. While earlier abstracts had been about lesbians, those after 1986 were for lesbians. Most of the later abstracts had a positive orientation and were focused on issues of interest to lesbians: revealing sexual identity to coworkers, tensions of compulsory heterosexuality, and relationships with their children and with current or ex-husbands.

The lesbian abstracts also had a change in the method of inquiry. Prior to 1982, either survey or interview was the method for gathering data. After 1986, a variety of methods were used: 2 surveys, 2 case studies, 1 field study, 1 content analysis, 1 secondary analysis, 1 interview. Six different methods used for eight abstracts.
At the beginning of this chapter, I discussed the removal of 11 journals from the database. These periodicals were deleted from the database because they were over-represented and could potentially bias the data. The analysis of solely female homosexual abstracts included abstracts from these 11 journals. Six of the 7 pre-1982 abstracts and 2 of the 8 post-1985 abstracts were from the deleted journals. There were no feminist journals included in the pre-1982 abstracts and 4 of the 8 post-1985 abstracts were from feminist journals. Removal of the prolific and the feminist journals leaves only 1 abstract before 1982 and 2 abstracts after 1985. The conclusions from these remaining abstracts display the same characteristics as those described for the deleted abstracts. The remaining pre-1982 abstract is from an article by a male author and concludes:

Many of the lesbians studied had sought professional counselling. 25% had attempted suicide. Less than 50% of the women desired to be exclusively homosexual. Almost 25% indicated they would like to be "transformed" to heterosexuals if such a possibility existed (locator #1384).

The conclusion from one of the two post-1985 female authored abstracts says:

1940-50s "butch-fem" roles created an authentic lesbian sexuality and facilitated development of a separate lesbian culture. In actively pursuing satisfying sexual lives, lesbians laid the foundation for personal and political feminism (locator #508).
Female homosexuality abstracts exhibit a definite trend towards broadening the research scope and reporting positive interpretations. This trend is also evident in the gender categories of the sexual ideology abstracts.

Table 13

Gender Groupings for Sexual Ideology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female + Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
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<td>1976</td>
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<td>1977</td>
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<td>1978</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

46 13 30 53 142

Sexual Ideology Studies

Conclusions from the "sexual ideology" articles were analyzed in year order for central themes and patterns. See table 13 for gender categories of sexual ideology.
articles each year. Solely-female sexual ideology articles in the late 1970s criticized male domination (locators #1517 and #1014).\(^3\) In the early 1980s, there were 7 articles linking deviancy and female sexuality (locators #579 and #733). But in 1984, a new theme emerged from the female abstracts (locators #557 and #253). The conclusions expressed greater diversity in topics and areas of investigation. They analyzed love, menstrual pollution, slavery, sadomasochism, healing, and pleasure. A positive learning and creation theme runs through most abstracts.

In contrast, the conclusions for the solely-male sexual ideology abstracts in the 1970s described male sexual prowess and aggression (locators #1302 and #589). In 1983, the abstracts were more negative, expressing concerns about female threats to male sexuality (locator #688), sex as an unclean and low-class sin (locator #280), and male sexual vulnerability (locator #27). There was a sense of despair about the conflict between moral perfection and male sexual desire.

The fe/male sexual ideology articles are those which generalize sexuality without specifying gender. The fe/male articles of the 1970s promoted sexual expression

\(^3\) The conclusion field for selected abstracts are in Appendix B
and freedom (locators #1145, #1415 and #1249). In 1978, a few years earlier than the negative patterns in the solely male category, the fe/male abstracts expressed concern regarding the risks of excessive sexual freedom (locators #1071 and #1664). From 1979 to 1987, researchers changed from predicting which controls were effective (locators #851, #823 and #615) to critiquing the use of controls and analyzing the underlying purposes for controls (locators #568 and #389). In 1988, the sexual control issue changed to a focus on AIDS and the political aspects of sexual control.

No distinctive patterns emerged from abstracts comparing females and males in the sexual ideology topic area except an emphasis on linkages between gender roles and sexuality (locators #1060, #601 and #189). There is also a generally even dispersion of male and female authors in this category over the 19 years. In the next section, we will look at how author dispersion may account for the absence of patterned trends.

In summary, for sexual ideology abstracts, the exclusively female category showed a trend towards expressing positive acceptance of diversified sexual experiences and sexual identities; exclusively male abstracts expressed negative fears about threats to their sexuality; and fe/male abstracts centered around debates
over sexual control processes. The female/male comparison category displayed concerns over differences between gender roles and expressions of sexuality.

Table 14
Authors by Year

Gender Groupings for Sexual Ideology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Fe/male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>DK</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

* Author's gender - identified by first name of first author. "M" - male, "F" - female, "DK" - don't know, can not determine gender from the name.

Gender Differences in Authorship

The gender categories exhibit traditional gender role characteristics: female expressive optimism and male dominant control. A central concern I had about my
analysis was whether I had created the categories and coded the abstracts under the assumption of traditional gender role characteristics. When I coded the abstracts, I would first determine if the abstract was about women and/or men. Then I would summarize and condense the abstract’s conclusions. In order to restrict potential errors, information regarding authors and journal names were not available when I condensed conclusions from the abstracts. This information was also hidden when I analyzed the conclusions. However, I was aware of the gender-interest category. It is possible I selected expressive optimistic conclusions from solely-female abstracts and dominant controlling conclusions from solely-male abstracts. It is also possible that authors drew conclusions that were consistent with traditional gender roles for their subjects. I later separately analyzed the article authorship for each category of the "sexual ideology" topic variable. I found that author gender correlated with research methodology, research questions, and research conclusions (see table 14). Abstracts are assigned to gender authorship categories on the basis of the first author’s gender.

While table 14 reveals the consistency of author gender with the gender categorization of the abstract, the abstracts that did not fit the general pattern displayed
more interesting information. In the discussion of the solely-female category in sexual ideology, I noted there were several abstracts about female sexual deviance. All but one of these deviancy articles were authored by males, accounting for almost half of the male authored articles in the female category. Male authors researching female sexuality tended to be interested in female deviancy. This is consistent with traditional male control and dominance characteristics.

Examination of the abstracts on males only shows the same type of author gender differentiation. The first female authored article in the male category (locator #1302) is more strongly negative towards male sexuality than the other abstracts. This article was published in the early 1970s when feminist ideas were expressed in ways that were strongly anti-male. The only other female authored article in this category (locator #205) is also distinctive because it describes Mexican male-to-male sexual practices that are not defined as homosexual by the participants. The female author questions a behavior which would probably be taken-for-granted by a male researcher.

The analysis of the authorship of the fe/male category confirmed the relationship between author gender and sexuality research style. This category focused on
social controls over sexuality, the predictors and effectiveness of these controls, and the political factors inherent in social controls. Approximately 80% of these articles were authored by men. Traditional male gender characterization is dominance and control, the characteristics expressed by these male-authored fe/male categorized abstracts.

Qualitative research requires more subjective interpretation of data than quantitative analysis. Feminist research emphasizes the importance of the researcher’s self-reflectivity. While reviewing the positive tone of the female oriented research conclusions, I questioned if the interpretations were actually "positive." Although there were positive terms and phrases -- "affirming personal and sexual identity", "females enjoy full sexual freedom", "female power and sexuality" -- were the interpretations merely legitimations of male dominance, evidence of false consciousness, or perhaps compliance with publication gatekeepers? Regardless of the causes, the general positive tone of female abstracts contrasts with the negativity of the male focused abstracts. To continue on this positive note, even the male authored articles have moved towards critiquing standard and untested assumptions. There was a movement from predicting a
control's effects to understanding who benefits from the control. There is a definite shift in research interpretations.

**Conclusion**

In summary, sexuality research which attempts to be non-gender specific has declined and research on male sexuality has consistently been neglected. The nature/nurture paradigms have consistently maintained their influence over research topics. However, interpretation of the conclusions drawn from the data collected does reveal a paradigm shift. The shift is displayed by different interpretation patterns in the gender categorization of both the homosexual and the sexual ideology categories of the topic variable. The author gender differentiation and the concurrent decrease in non-specific gender studies complicate a causal distinction. Sexuality research interpretations may be broadening due to the increased involvement of female researchers, development of the interactionist perspective, or influence from postmodern criticisms. Appendix A contains a short list of questions that theorists have asked. These questions indicate that research has not provided the answers. Postmodernists argue there are no universal answers. Indeed, research
introduces new questions. Several feminist theorists, however, argue that postmodernism is a product of male domination: men's failure to find the truth they wanted has resulted in their decision that there is no truth (Francesca Cancian, 1992:630). Being an optimistic feminist, I argue that there has been a shift to a paradigm which encourages researchers to criticize previously unquestioned assumptions and to concentrate on the positive contributions their research can make towards improving interactive understanding.
Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This thesis traces my learning process as I passed from my stand of naive belief in human equality to a recognition of female oppression to my present position as a researcher attempting to understand what our options for the future are. The study started with the history of my "alienated knowledge." I could not understand the absence of male heterosexual prostitutes for female clients. The reasons offered by "experts" contradicted my personal experiences. A review of sociological sexuality theories indicated a distinctively male bias. Sexual theories and their substantiating research were based on heterosexual norms and dominant/submissive gender roles.

Two Paradigms

Two paradigms prevailed over the sexuality theories. The first, the positivistic paradigm based on biological need to reproduce, stresses a crucial relationship between male sexual needs and survival of the species. Male desire is viewed as essential. Social norms evolve to
control this biological force. Although the second paradigm also revolves around male sexual desires, interactionists emphasize the socialization process. They trace how sexual interaction is accomplished. One paradigm emphasizes social norms for discipline and control. The other examines how social actors learn the scripts to satisfy their needs. Both paradigms fail to seriously question the male need for sexual performance.

While both paradigms include the assumption of strong male desire, they have not ignored women. However, "strong androcentric bias in empirical research design has limited our knowledge of female sexuality even in studies that include women" (Beth Schneider and Meredith Gould, 1987:127). The following is an example of male biased "expert" promotion for the sexual liberation of women. Between 1968 and 1981, the British magazine Forum had a wide distribution and was an established and respectable organization. Its objective was an assault on sexual ignorance. It published professional articles and letters from its readers. It also ran private training courses for sex therapists. A study which read over 150 issues of the Forum magazine found the publication utilized its "expert knowledge" to promote heterosexual dominance and submission norms that "demand not only the willing participation of women in their own degradation but, in
addition, their active initiation of it" (Lal Coveney, 1984:88). In essence, the magazine advised that whatever women could do to increase their man's sexual enjoyment would automatically improve their own sexual pleasure.

When I started this study, I did not realize the extent of the control exerted by social norms. Feminist theories are founded on the premise of gender inequality and women's oppression. Yet even the feminists do not question the validity of claims about male sexual needs. We are now seeing feminist debates on what constitutes feminist methodology. There is controversy over the benefits and strengths of quantitative objective research versus qualitative subjective research. Both methodologies are incorporated in this study of sociological sexuality research published in periodicals between 1973 and 1991. Each method makes its own contributions to the analysis.

**Quantitative Findings**

Quantitative analysis of trends indicate there are no paradigm changes in sexuality research topic selection. Research based in natural needs and socialization paradigms were published consistently between 1973 and 1991. There has been a statistically significant reduction in studies which do not differentiate between
women and men. Studies of specific genders have proportionately increased. The most significant quantitative finding was the relative absence of research studies solely on males. The few male studies were predominantly about the prediction and control of male deviance from the heterosexual masculine norm. My expectation that there would be few studies questioning male sexuality norms was confirmed. But my presumption there was a shift from the positivistic "nature" to interactionist "socialization" was statistically rejected. We can not merely compare the number of studies of female sexuality to the number of male sexuality studies. The format, style and presentation of the findings tells a more complete story about the paradigms and assumptions underlying the research process.

**Qualitative Findings**

I had expected to find a change in the direction of research to more feminist and postmodern paradigms. There are many different experiences of sexuality and sexual identities. In spite of the fact that there is a lot of talk about sex, there is very little information about what sexuality really is. The media and our everyday lives abound with vague references to sex. Advertising is full of sexual visualization and references. Political
candidates' sexual indiscretions are a matter of constant debate. The news is replete with sexual violence. Movie story lines are not complete without some form of sexual activity. But none of these sources really explain what sex is. Some, and sometimes all, features of the physical act are displayed. But this does not provide a complete, or even consistent, definition of what sex is. A satisfying sexual union, a prostitute's services and rape are all composed of the same physical actions.

The experience itself is socially defined. There is evidence that even five-month olds have physical orgasms, but the orgasm of a five-month-old is not the same as the experience of a 15 year old or a 50 year old (Ken Plummer, 1990). Each individual constructs his/her own sexual reality. Sexual experiences, fantasies, and expectations adjust the actor's perception of the reality of the sexual experience. A woman who experiences intercourse as an element of oppression and degradation will have an entirely different "knowledge of reality" than the woman who enjoys sexual coupling as the ultimate in sensual experiences.

Quantitative analysis indicated a reduction in generalized studies, a consistent neglect of male sexuality, and no evidence of a paradigm change. Qualitative analysis, on the other hand, presents a change
towards optimistic, pluralistic, and diversified research interpretations. I also found there is a gender difference in research interpretations. Working with the same research topic and the same gender focus, women researchers tended to express more positive, practical interpretations while men tended to focus on more negative aspects of prediction and control.

In this study, I have not attempted to discover the source of the differences between male and female researchers' interpretations. It may be the result of the feminist movement or the gay movement. Perhaps postmodern academia have influenced research interpretations. Women may be more inclined to produce diversified analysis because they often work from a critical perspective. Many reasons for gender differentiation in research analysis are possible. Locating the causes is a project for future study. This study determines that a shift towards diversification is happening and that it is being lead by women researchers.

Appendix A is a collection of quotations research writers asked. It is not a scientific randomly selected collection. Only quotes that appealed to me personally were included. It is interesting to note, however, that most of the questions included in Appendix A were asked by women authors. It seems that men make statements about
findings and designate areas of study while women ask questions about areas that have not been previously considered. This is similar to the patterns Pamela Fishman (1978) found in her analysis of conversation styles between three heterosexual couples in their own homes. She found that women asked many more questions and men made more assertions and had more control over the interaction. Perhaps my systematic research findings on gender differences reported in Chapter 5 has located yet another example of gender role enactment.

**Feminist Methodology**

I have attempted to satisfy the standards for good feminist research. I have explained my position and have explored gender differences. Discussions of the same activity have to take into account the different realities experienced by the actresses. Research methods for study of female sexuality must explore each respondent’s sexuality construction, her construction processes, and her personal sexual scripts. Interpretation of the research data must identify the researcher’s own construction of sexuality and her own sexual scripts. The world is changing, scripts are changing, alternatives are increasingly available. Self-identification is less predictable and less orderly: "a corresponding expansion
of the capacity for fantasy makes of nearly everyone a potential trickster -- particularly to themselves" (William Simon, 1989:26). Even though I have expressed my position, by the time you read this thesis my position may have changed. And as William Simon says, who knows if the position I stated is really the place I am at? Do I even know where I am? Sexualities are not just unique to the individual but also to their life cycle stage as well as their cultural, political and economic contexts. A change in any of these variables can result in changes in sexual behavior and attributions of sexual experiences by the self and others. Sexuality is a process, not a static position. Sexuality research is also a changing process.

Conclusion

There is a movement towards exploring as many avenues of sexuality as possible. Women writers look for ways to accomplish their objectives within the frameworks they have available. While feminists are definitely leading the diversification of sexuality research, male-authored research is also influenced by this trend. In spite of the quantitative statistics indicating there has been little change in sexuality research, qualitative analysis indicates a trend towards more diversity and more down-to-earth concrete studies of everyday sexuality. Whether
this is a trend initiated by interactionists or feminists or postmodernists, the future promises some valuable insights and happier correlations between people's lived experiences and the social norms against which those experiences are judged. This project reveals an increasing diversity in the types of questions asked and the interpretations offered. The debate between positivism and interactionism has not been answered; the debate between nature and nurture continues. But the point is not to settle the debate but to improve the quality of the discussion -- to keep the discussion stimulating (Shulamit Reinharz, 1992:431).

As a female writer, I will end with a question for you to consider. My research exposes the absence of studies of male sexuality, in particular, the absence of studies questioning the validity of male claims of strong sexual needs. Female sexuality has been studied extensively, and women have been found to not only have sexual desires but to be capable of multiple sexual orgasms. Rather than study female potential for sexual satisfaction, we should question male need for sexual expression. There are many questions that need to be answered. Do men have strong sexual needs? If men have strong needs for sexual satisfaction, why is the male inability to perform repeatedly given as an explanation
for the absence of male heterosexual prostitutes? If women are multiple orgasmic and men are not, why are men paying prostitutes and women are not?
APPENDIX A

Questions

Women Authors

"[Feminist work] helps us imagine what the world, and the earth, would be like if women were considered as real as men's sexual pleasure, if those who desired were caring. ... What would sex be like if women had power in the world? If reason and passion weren't located in separate parts of a mindless body? (Sommer Brodribb, 1991:135).

"What is the place of sexuality in both our oppression and our project for liberation? ... Is sexuality really important to us, or is it only a Freudianized and commercialized society that tells us it is?" (Mariana Valverde, 1989:237).

"[H]ow are our fantasies and desires constructed? Whose interests do they serve? How can we at the same time accept them (instead of guiltily suppressing them) and transcend them (rather than indulge them or celebrate them)?" (Margaret Jackson, 1984:50).

"What is the centrality of genital acts to sexual identity? Heterosexual women enjoy sex. How did they come to enjoy it?" (Beth Schneider and Meredith Gould, 1987:148).

"What is the relationship between sexuality conceived as a private interaction between bodies and 'sex policing' in the public sphere? How do these two spheres interface and reinforce one another on the level of meaning, norms, desire, power, and pleasure?" (Jacquelyn Zita, 1992:488-9).

Men Authors

"First, what are the sources of social controls over sexuality? Second, what is the content or behavioral direction of these controls? Third, how do these controls influence the individual?" (John Delamater, 1981:264-5).
"We must train ourselves to recognize conventions of feeling as well as conventions of behavior and to interpret the intricate texture of personal life as an artifact, as the determinate outcome, of a complex and arbitrary constellation of cultural processes" (David Halperin, 1989:273).

"What constitutes a simple theory of human sexual behavior? For example, can we construct a simple theory to explain the motives for human sexual behavior?; the function of human sexual behavior throughout the lifespan?; or the variability in human sexual behavior? And if so, when it is relevant, can we represent this theory mathematically? Furthermore, once we have constructed that theory, can we suggest public policy--or educational interventions--which have relevance to critical issues in sexuality (e.g., teenage pregnancy, AIDS)?" (Paul Abramson, 1990:156).
APPENDIX B

ABSTRACT CONCLUSIONS


189 (1990) Courts produced differential treatment of boys and girls and employed the friendly persuasion of socialized legal coercion in an effort to inculcate the dominant social constructions of childhood and sexuality among those youth who did not adhere to them.

205 (1989) Male-to-male sexual practices play an important role in the transmission of HIV within the Mexican-origin population of the United States; though Mexican men may not consider themselves homosexual or bisexual.

253 (1986) Changing female sex roles and sexuality in the United States have ranged from the 19th century Victorian model (where a female’s role was characterized in terms of her affiliation with husband and family) to the current standard of expanded sexual rights.

280 (1988) Personal aesthetic values were only one factor. The equation between sexuality and uncleanness or sin and the desire for moral perfection among early Christians led to an increased dedication to celibacy.

389 (1986) Evangelical manuals are not a great distance from the mainstream of US culture. They enunciate a recreative as well as a procreative motif to sexual behavior, but are far from advocating free and liberated sex.

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1 Summarized conclusions from selected abstracts in Sociological Abstracts.

568 (1984) Sex regulation to counteract social contraction and its dysfunctional effects is not confined to sexual repression. May also take place in the context of what has been called "sexual permissiveness."


589 (1979) Describes the link between male sexuality and aggression: the penis as a sign of dominance. Cultural derivatives of the basic penile display are discussed and examples given of each. Discusses castration as well.

615 (1983) Anomaly: socioeconomic status (liberal sexual attitudes) and religiosity (conservative sexual attitudes) are positively related. Religious involvement has greater impact than socioeconomic status collectivity.

601 (1980) General trend toward increasing quality as well as quantity of relationships particularly among females. Attitude trends (career, marriage, childrearing, homosexuality) are explored. Greater sexual freedom has brought new problems and challenges.

688 (1983) In superhero comic fiction: narcissism and denial of sexuality and scientific ideology and technology are found to be major elements of the making of a super male who escapes the female threat.

733 (1982) Identifies 6 early sexual experiences that are empirically shown to shape deviant sexuality in adult females. Analysis controlled for race and economic status while an adolescent.
Premarital and extramarital and homosexual permissiveness are strongly intercorrelated and have some common predictors: age and religiosity are negative predictors, education and freedom of expression are positive predictors.

Peers and mass media are of great importance for a variety of aspects of sexual conduct. Interactive effects between family and other variables may exist but direct influence of family variables is not significant.

The new middle class saw sexual promiscuity as an aristocratic excess that threatened middle class virtues and domestic security. Religious leaders taught that females were made for God's purposes. Female virtuouinosness was based on "passionlessness."

Females were found to be more likely than males to experience a sexual identity crisis. Both sexes were found to be more committed about sex than about any other issue. Male and female identities followed the same basic patterns in all areas except sex.

A strong r exists between modesty and covering genitals and restrictions against adultery and restriction of premarital sexual relations. Evidence is presented that romantic love in the United States is declining as permissiveness increases.

Measured the proportion of the day when the baby is held by any caretakers. Premarital sex norms are permissive where caretakers are highly accessible, and are restrictive where availability of caretakers is low.

These laws have been used to repress alternative life styles. Recent court decisions have found most private relationships between consenting adults to be outside the realm of the law.

A trend to greater acceptance of the body and sexuality. The Castles emphasized grace and minimized sexual suggestiveness. The image of girlish attractiveness complemented that of female as mother; offering society an acceptable compromise position.
Potlatch ceremony: the Skagit conceptually transformed food as a symbol for something lowly and despicable in man himself (sexuality) into a symbol for wealth and man's greatest achievement -- his abnegation of that which is natural to him.

Both lack of physical pleasure in infancy and lack of adolescent sexual pleasure in societies appear with a high violence or crime rate.

At least 50% of texts that indexed the topics stated: male sex drive was stronger, females were interested in sex for procreation more than for recreation, most women were "frigid" and the vaginal orgasm was the "mature" response.

Social causes of increase in illegitimate births to adolescents: modernized cultural attitudes toward illegitimacy, urbanization, industrialization, increased social services, changing social norms, poor employment opportunities, poverty.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


