Lesbian identity formation and self esteem.

Susan E. Wright

University of Windsor

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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE NOUS L'AVONS RÉCU.
LESBIAN IDENTITY FORMATION AND SELF ESTEEM

by

Susan E. Wright

B.Sc. Xavier University, 1980

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of Psychology
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to our foremothers who struggled through the worst of times and left us a legacy of love and strength. Also, it is dedicated to my littlest sister, Kate Saltar. It is she and her peers who must benefit from this type of work if it is to have any meaning. This is part of my legacy to them that they may live their lives in total freedom.
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate various identity formation variables in relation to both self-esteem and to each other. The relative predictive power of these variables for predicting self-esteem was also assessed. Data were obtained by means of anonymous questionnaires. These were distributed through friendship networks, and feminist organizations. Questions focused upon demographics, identity formation, degree of and type of socialization, degree of passing and disclosures, and self-esteem. The results showed that stage of identity formation was related to positive identity and disclosure and negatively correlated with passing. Passing and disclosure were negatively related while community involvement and separatism had a highly positive relationship. The only predicted relationship with self-esteem found to be significant was community acceptance. Community acceptance was the best single predictor of self-esteem. Living situation and stage also contributed to the prediction of self-esteem. Overall, this study was particularly useful in stressing the importance of sociohistorical factors for self-esteem and in the extent of its description of the identity-formation process.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Womyn must not be awed by what has been built up around her, she must reverence that womyn in her which struggles for expression.

Margaret Sanger

A number of people were supportive of my academic and personal struggle for expression.

Through numerous stops and starts, Henry Minton remained ever patient. His exacting manner and gentle criticisms made this study something of which I can be proud.

Kathleen Lahey is the particularly unwavering womyn who taught me to respect my work. Any academic project is in danger of becoming rather dull and lifeless. If this work has escaped this fate, it is in large part due to the guidance and support of this very special womyn.

Stuart Page's suggestions immeasurably improved the quality of this study. His open mindedness and easy style of being lowered my stress level considerably.

For my dear friend and mentor Phyllis Elliott, there are few words which adequately express my thanks. She introduced me to this topic by introducing me to myself. Without her I would never have learned to "face the music". Indeed, I could not have heard the melody.

Ann Sprague is perhaps the most difficult womyn for me to acknowledge as her contributions have been so pervasive. The political, feminist focus of my work is attributable solely to her. For she irrevocably tied my own lesbian identity to feminism. Her gentle and sensitive spirit has been an ever present force.

Barry Taub provided me with motivation and encouragement when my
sense of purpose waned. He greatly enhanced my own lesbian pride by teaching me to love myself as a person.

Mom, Beth Walsh, provided support, encouragement and, most of all, a loving presence that allowed me to survive my worst days. Her ability to keep her head when all around are losing theirs is phenomenal.

Sarah Sattar, through example, opened up new areas of expression as a womyn. These areas had long been repressed in my search for independence. Her home remedies for depression (German poetry and the study of Chinese) got me through the final stages of this project.

Liz Thomson's speedy and accurate typing and her ability to decipher my hieroglyphics made everything easier. Her positively delightful personality made each day a good deal more fun.

My feline family, Isis, Osiris, Shosha and Kinks, acted as alarm clocks, helped me to take breaks by falling asleep on necessary papers, and taught me that pens are for much more important purposes than mere writing. Overall, they provided me with undying affection.

Many of the wimmin who completed the questionnaire took time to write letters of encouragement and support. This made me realize the importance of this type of study.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The relationship of self-esteem to personal satisfaction and effective functioning has made the study of the determinants of enhanced and diminished self-esteem an important area of study in both psychological and social research. Many investigations have focused on the social determinants of self-esteem, especially among individuals with denigrated social identity elements. Same-sex preference is one such identity element. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the self-esteem of wimmin¹ who consider this identity to apply to themselves and the process of homosexual identity formation. Given the recent development of new perspectives in theory and research on same-sex preference, some background of this development will be provided.

Same Sex Preference

Research in the social sciences is not value-free, but instead reflects the values held by the researcher and society in general (Russ, 1980; Morin, 1977). Usually attitude changes in the popular sphere precede and provide the impetus for new perspectives in the social science literature. One can easily see this change pattern in the area of research on same sex preference.

¹ I am, of course, using the variant spelling. Many sisters feel that wimmin (plural) and womyn (singular) are preferable to the old forms due to the sexist connotations inherent in the etymology of the original form (Cornwall, 1976).
Until quite recently North American society held a negative view of same sex relations. The positive valuation of procreation was a major element in this societal value-system. Same sex preference, as inherently non-procreative, was regarded as immoral, deviant, and unnatural. It was, therefore, considered to be a threat to the very fabric of society (see Morin, 1977).

As Morin (1977) points out, the scientific literature has generally reflected a negative view of those with same sex preferences. The conceptualization of same sex preference as a deviation from the norm of other sex preference naturally placed research in this area within the domain of the professions dealing with mental health. The accepted premise of same sex preference as negative, together with the vested interest of the mental health professions in finding pathology, made for a body of research devoted to the etiology of same sex preference. The purpose of this type of research has been to determine causality so that, in line with the medical model, curative and preventative measures can be formulated.

Starting in the 1940s and 1950s some empirical research has appeared challenging the preconceived notions regarding same sex preference. One of the first of these (Kinsey, Pomeroy & Martin, 1948) revealed what can only be termed a conspiracy of silence regarding same sex behavior among those with self defined other sex preferences. The finding of Kinsey and his associates indicated that a majority of males had participated in covert same sex acts during adolescence. The incidence of covert same sex acts by women was found to be half that of men (Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin & Gebhard, 1953). However, in an earlier study Davis reported
that over half of the wimmin she studied reported intense emotional relationships with other wimmin (Davis, 1929). These studies, together with cross-cultural evidence of same sex behavior in most societies (Beach, 1951), indicated that same sex behavior was more common than had generally been thought. The first empirical studies to address the question of whether or not same sex preference per se was indicative of pathology were devised in the late 1950s by Hooker. She found that trained clinicians could not differentiate the sexual orientation of those with same sex from those with other sex preference in normal populations (Hooker, 1957, 1958). This was a breakthrough in that it showed that: "Homosexuality may be a deviation in the sexual pattern which is in the normal range, psychologically" (Hooker, 1957, p. 21). These early empirical findings indicate that many of the generally accepted notions of same sex preference were simply misconceptions with little basis in reality.

The atmosphere of the late 1960s in North America was one of re-evaluation, experimentation and radical change in the social arena. A major feature of this era was the challenge to discriminatory attitudes toward various minority groups. Blacks, wimmin, and gay people among others, organized into political action groups in order to promote change in discriminatory public policy and social attitude, and also to project a positive image of themselves to others and promote this in members of their own group. With the formation of the gay liberation movement gay people became visible and articulate in society; no longer could gays be discounted as non-existent nor regarded as completely pathological. Lesbians, as wimmin, experienced a different type of discrimination than gay men. Wimmin in general were considered to be defined by and as
having existence only for the benefit of their men and children (Friedan, 1974; Johnston, 1971). Lesbians, as wimmin without men, and usually without children, were therefore regarded as either not important or non-existent. The wimmin's liberation movement presented a new public image of wimmin as independent, self-sufficient, and equal to men. Lesbians inherently easily fit the wimmin's liberation image of wimmin, and therefore aligned themselves with a feminist perspective (Brown, 1975; Martin, 1972). It was in the context of wimmin's liberation that lesbians first presented themselves as a unified group to the general public. As a result of gay and lesbian public and political organization it could no longer be taken for granted that homosexuality was negative. Discrimination, based on the assumption of same sex preference as negative, began to be recognized as unjustified.

The first indication that the change in social values regarding same sex preference had reached the psychological community was the policy proposal (1975) submitted by the American Psychological Association's (APA) Board of Social and Ethical Responsibility for Psychology to their governing body. The vote in January, 1975 to accept the proposal committed APA members to "oppose discrimination against homosexuals and to support the recent action by the American Psychiatric Association (1973), which removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders."

During the early 1970s other sex preference bias in psychological research that is "a belief system that values heterosexuality as superior to and/or more 'natural' than homosexuality" began to give way to alternative perspectives (Morin, 1977, p. 629). The frameworks of labelling theory and social interactionism, both of which focus on the interaction
between behavior and the social context, lent themselves to a more relativistic view of same sex preference. They recognize the social meaning attached to behavior, the process of social interaction related to this, and the influence of different situational contexts. The utilization of these frameworks aided in the struggle to free same sex preferences from its stigmatized status.

Research on same sex preference in the last two decades has shown a definite progression. Much of the early research of this period focused on the problems encountered by those with same sex preferences in maintaining their identity (Schwartz, Fearn, & Stryker, 1966). This led to descriptive investigations of various facets of the life-style of same sex individuals (Bell & Weinberg, 1978). The re-interpretation of same sex preference as a legitimate yet stigmatized identity led to the postulation of various theories of same sex identity formation (Cass, 1979; Plummer, 1975; Troiden, 1979). The stigmatized aspect of this identity and hence acceptable levels of self esteem is the central feature of these theories.

The focus of the present study—the examination of the relationship between self esteem and lesbian identity formation—is in line with these recent trends in the research of same sex preference. Herein, it is recognized that a lesbian identity, like any other identity, is acquired in a developmental process. Yet, due to the social stigmatization of the lesbian identity, the developmental process may well be more complex. The way in which a positive perception of self as lesbian, and hence acceptable levels of global self esteem, may be acquired are important, and as yet unanswered questions in the study of lesbian self esteem.

The remainder of the chapter consists of a discussion of the various aspects of the process of same sex identity formation which may have an
effect upon self esteem. Specifically, the major variable of interest in this study, self-esteem, will be clarified. This will be followed by an examination of various aspects of same sex identity formation: the stages involved in this process, socialization in a gay community, and the related concepts of "passing" and identity disclosure.

Self Esteem

The importance of self esteem for effective psychological functioning is undisputed in the social science literature (Jahoda, 1958). Paradoxically, theoretical explications of this concept are often vague, ambiguous and contradictory. Perhaps both the importance and difficulty in explicating the concept of self esteem stem from its nature as a subjective state. Additional confusion stems from the fact that self esteem is directed toward another subjective construct, that of the self. In order to obtain a clear understanding of self esteem it is therefore necessary to present a broad overview not only of the literature dealing with self esteem but also that which relates to the construct of self and the related term self-concept.

The concept of self has received a great deal of attention, yet lacks consistency in usage. The "self" or "ego" has been used to refer to the "inner nature" or "essential nature" of people (Maslow, 1954); to the experience and content of self-awareness (Chein, 1944); to the individual as known to the individual (Rogers, 1951); to a constellation of attitudes having reference to the "I", "me" or "mine" experiences (James, 1890) and, most simply, to the person (Rosenberg, 1979; Wylie, 1968). Various other distinctions and conceptual emphases emerge from the literature. Turner (1976) speaks of the "institutional" and "im-
pulsive" selves; Franks and Marolla (1976) of "inner" and "outer" selves, and many others of the "self-image" (Rosenberg, 1979). It is evident that the manner in which one defines the construct of self varies in accordance with one's theoretical orientation and purpose in discussing the topic. This obvious lack of congruency in terminology clearly depicts the confusion which prevails throughout the literature on self.

Throughout these myriad orientations, purposes, and definitions, one fundamental distinction is evident; that between the self as subject or actor and the self as object of the person's own knowledge and evaluation (Wylie, 1974). In an early work G. H. Mead (1934) clearly expressed the relationship between these aspects of self. He indicated that the self is reflexive in that the individual is capable of being both subject and object simultaneously. So while these aspects have been separated theoretically for an empirical understanding of self, it appears that they function together in the subject's experiencing.

The subject-object duality introduces another term prevalent in the literature, that of self-concept. The self as subject is labelled as the "self" while the self as object is referred to as the self-concept (e.g., Rogers, 1951). Rosenberg (1979) defines this latter term as "the totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to the self as object." Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton (1976) further delineate the term defining it in a very broad manner as "a person's perception of her or himself." These perceptions are thought to be formed by experiences with the environment including the feedback from significant others. These authors postulate that the perceptions of self influence one's behavior, which in turn effects the self-concept in a
cognitive feedback loop. This appears to be in agreement with White's (1976) conceptualization of self-concept as the cognitive aspect of the self. There is, therefore, some agreement with the notion of the self-concept as the objective and cognitive aspect of self.

Many theorists have made no clear distinction between the terms self-concept and self esteem. Some have used these terms interchangeably, while others have conceptualized self esteem as a feature of the construct definition of self-concept (Shavelson, et al.). White (1976) appears to be one of the few writers to differentiate these terms. According to White, self esteem is conceptualized as the emotional aspect of the self while self-concept is the cognitive side.

Coopersmith, in his examination of the antecedents of self esteem, defines the concept as "a judgmental process in which the individual examines their performance, capacities, and attributes according to personal standards and values, and arrives at a decision of one's own worthiness" (Coopersmith, 1967, p. 5). Herein, he emphasizes both the cognitive and emotional aspects of self esteem. He further describes self esteem as an attitude toward the self as object. As with other attitudes, self esteem has both positive and negative connotations, and is intertwined with intellectual and motivational processes. While this does not explicitly clarify the difference between self esteem and self-concept, Coopersmith appears to indicate that while the process used in evaluating self is cognitive, the resulting evaluation is emotional in nature. Perhaps self-concept judgments have cognitive outcomes whereas self esteem outcomes are evaluative in nature.

As has previously been stated, self esteem signifies a positive or
negative attitude toward the self. While there is general agreement regarding the meaning of the term "low self-esteem," that is, lacking respect for the self, considering oneself unworthy, inadequate, or otherwise seriously deficient as a person, the term "high self-esteem" suffers from a dual connotation in common usage. On the one hand a person having high self-esteem has been characterized as having feelings of superiority over others in the sense of arrogance, conceit, and self-centeredness. Others consider those with high self-esteem as having self-respect and appreciating one's own merits while recognizing one's faults (Rosenberg, 1979). This inconsistency in defining the characteristics of those with high self-esteem makes it all the more difficult to accurately conceptualize the term self-esteem.

While it is clear that the concept of self-esteem has not been fully differentiated from the related concepts of self and self-concept, nor has high self-esteem been defined consistently, the importance of the construct and the ability to identify level of esteem as behaviorally manifested has resulted in a good deal of research focusing upon the determinants of self esteem.

It is widely recognized that self esteem has both internal and external sources (White, 1976). The esteem communicated to the person by others and the sense of one's own competency are thought to occur simultaneously and interact with each other. Much of the research on the determinants of self-esteem has focused on various external sources, such as social class and religious background (Rosenberg, 1963; Coopersmith, 1967).

One of the major empirical studies of the external antecedents of
self esteem was Rosenberg's work with adolescents. In this, many of the social conditions associated with enhanced and diminished self esteem were examined. His focus upon different social classes, ethnic group affiliations, religions, and sex investigated the effect of the broader social context upon self esteem. Although Rosenberg found that differential parental attitudes within these groups were more important than group differences, this may not be generalizable to an older sample. The major importance of his investigation is the recognition that the evaluation of self by significant others in one's environment may have an effect on the self esteem level of an individual.

Goffman (1963), with his introduction of the notion of stigma, laid a foundation for understanding the effect of negative evaluation on self esteem. He explicates the process whereby individuals possessing certain attributes are denigrated by society and the effect which this has upon them. The stigmatized individual is conceptualized as "someone who might easily have been received in ordinary social intercourse yet possess an undesirable trait which causes others to turn away from her or him." (Goffman, 1963, p. 5). By definition the individual possessing a stigma is not quite human and is, therefore, not accepted on equal grounds, often being the recipient of social sanctions. The personal consequences of this negative feedback from non-stigmatized others may include feelings of self-doubt and disapproval, self-denigration, a lack of self-acceptance and overall low self esteem. While the possession of a stigmatized characteristic may well have such negative consequences for the individual there is evidence that persons strive to maintain a stable and positive sense of self (Rosenberg, 1963). Therefore, stigmatized individuals will
attempt to re-interpret the negatively evaluated attribute in a more positive manner so that it may be incorporated into the overall self-concept.

Same sex preference is considered to be one such highly undesirable, and therefore stigmatized attribute. The manner in which individuals possessing same sex feelings achieve positive integration of such feelings into the global self-concept has been explored by the various theories of same sex identity formation. Before considering same sex identity formation, the process of identity formation in general will be discussed.

**Identity Formation**

The concept of identity refers to the unity, self-sameness and continuity of the person (Breger, 1974; Erikson, 1958; Rychlak, 1976). Identity development is based on the interaction between the manner in which the individual satisfies her or his own needs and preferences and the feedback which she or he receives from society and significant others (Minton, Note 1). The process of forming a unified sense of self begins during adolescence and continues throughout adulthood with the ongoing interaction between experience and identity (Erikson, 1959).

When new experiences, which are extremely incongruent with one's perception of self occur, the individual's sense of sameness may well be disrupted leading to a crisis in identity (Erikson, 1959). The individual's previous systems of interpretations and valuations are called into question. The consequence of such a breakdown has been termed "reality shock". This is experienced as a subjective state of utter doubt and confusion and of being overpowered by feelings of unreality (Garfinkel, 1964; Holzner, 1972). The negative effect that such a break-
down has upon self esteem is obvious. Yet, in an effort to regain a
stable and positive sense of self individuals strive to reconstruct the
threatened systems accounting for the newly acquired attribute (Fein &
Neuhring, 1982).

In all likelihood this process of breakdown and reconstruction of
identity occurs with the experience of any attribute which is extremely
incongruent with one's sense of identity. When the incongruent attri-
bute is negatively evaluated by both society and the individual, the
process becomes more complex. Not only must one's previous identity be
re-examined and reconstructed but the stigmatized attribute must be re-
interpreted in a more positive light.

Same sex preference falls within the category of the aforementioned
experiences which are negatively evaluated by society. If one is to be
comfortable with this sexual-affectional orientation, one must develop
a positive role-specific identity as an individual with same sex prefer-
ences. This involves a process whereby the individual achieves the
ability to critically evaluate societal norms and role expectations so
that these may be seen as conventions rather than unassailable truths
(Minton, Note 1). The task of same sex identity formation is one in
which the individual, confronted by experiences which may potentially
result in an extremely negative identity, must in some way deal with this
so that the attribute may be perceived positively.

Most theories of same sex identity formation conceptualize this
task as a developmental process involving a number of stages, each of
which involve the development of new skills necessary for managing the
negatively defined identity such as how and when to "pass" and disclose,
how to interact with other individuals with same sex preferences in situations such as dating or sexual liaisons (Fein & Neuhring, 1982, p. 6). Although there is little consistency among these theories regarding the number, content, and to a lesser extent the sequence of stages, there is a basic agreement that with each stage there is an increasingly positive conceptualization of one's same sex identity and, therefore, an increase in one's overall level of self esteem.

The focus of the following discussion will be upon the process by which one may develop a positive identity as an individual with same sex preferences.

**Same Sex Identity Formation and Self-Esteem**

The development of a positive sense of self in individuals with same sex preferences has been related to the process of forming a same sex identity. Hammersmith and Weinberg (1973) have stated that same sex commitment should be positively associated with stability of self-concept, and that since commitment involves a preference for that identity, it should be positively associated with self esteem. Cass defines this process as "acquiring an identity of 'homosexual' fully integrated within the individual's overall concept of self" (Cass, 1979, p. 235). This integration involves the distinct yet related aspects of identity, the private and the public self. In order to achieve a positive same sex identity it is important not only to make this identity part of one's previous personal identity but also to share this with others so that there will be congruency within the individual's interpersonal environment in terms of attitudes, beliefs and behavior.

Several theories of same sex identity formation have been postulated
(Cass; 1979; Lee, 1977; Plummer, 1975; Troiden, 1979). Cass' model was chosen for a guide in this study as it is the most elaborated of the aforementioned theories while being consistent with them. Cass' first stage, identity confusion (initial awareness of same-sex feelings), is consistent with Troiden's stage of sensitization and Lee's signification. Identity comparison (alienation from the heterosexual self-image), relates to the stage of dissociation and signification (Troiden, 1979), and certain steps in signification (Lee, 1977). Identity tolerance (movement away from the other sex self-image and toward a self-image of same sex preference) is consistent with the coming out stage postulated by Troiden. Identity acceptance (validation and normalization of same sex preference as an identity and a way of life) parallels Commitment (Troiden, 1979) and Coming Out (Lee, 1977). Cass' last two stages, identity pride and identity synthesis, appear to be new aspects of identity formation theory although identity pride may bear some relationship to Lee's 'Going Public' (disclosure to the media).

Cass' model is based on her work as a counselor of those with sexual identity problems and on the theoretical perspective provided by what she terms "interpersonal congruency theory". Such a framework is useful in that it enables one to predict times of stability and times of change within the identity formation process (Elliott, 1981). Change should occur when the individual perceives incongruency within her or his interpersonal environment and stability should result from feelings and behavior which again brings congruency to the interpersonal environment. An important aspect of Cass' theory is the concept of identity foreclosure. Herein, the individual may choose, for any number of reasons, not to develop any further. This may occur at any stage in the
developmental process. The consequence of foreclosing for the individual's self-image will differ according to the stage at which this occurs, i.e., foreclosure in the initial stages of identity development may have more negative consequences for self-esteem than foreclosure during the last stages of this process. Cass delineates six stages in her model of identity formation: identity confusion, identity comparison, identity tolerance, identity acceptance, identity pride, and identity synthesis. In the following discussion these stages will be discussed.

Many theorists have cited the initial attraction to one's own sex as the central component of the first stage of this process (Cass, 1979; Plummer, 1975; Schäfer, 1976; Troiden, 1979). Herein, the individual, in accordance with social norms, having defined oneself as an individual with other sex preference, begins to question this label. Hence, Cass's term for this stage, "identity confusion". The incongruency of the possibility of a same sex identity may well result in feelings of personal alienation. At this point the individual's self-esteem may be quite low. The next task in forming a positive same sex identity is termed "identity comparison" (Cass, 1979). With the increasing awareness that one's behavior and feelings may be labelled same sex, the individual may realize that the stereotypical social attitudes regarding the same sex role may apply to oneself. Feelings of social alienation are, therefore, thought to be paramount. In order to alleviate this state of confusion and alienation the individual may seek to make contact with the lesbian/gay subculture and its members. This development is termed by some as "coming out" (Plummer, 1978; Troiden, 1979), or "identity tolerance" (Cass, p. 229). This refers to the disclosure of the identity as same
sex to members of the lesbian/gay subculture as one interacts with them. The quality of these initial contacts are extremely critical. It is necessary that these experiences be perceived as positive if one is to receive the support, role models, learn the techniques for managing the same sex identity, and the ideology of same sex preference as an acceptable identity, all of which are necessary in achieving a self-definition as an individual with same sex preferences.

The first three stages of same sex identity formation have also been considered under the rubric of the self-acknowledgment phase (Dank, 1971; Hammersmith & Weinberg, 1973; Weinberg & Williams, 1974). This is recognized as a period of acute conflict involving the breakdown of the person's systems of interpretation and valuation which may lead to the doubt and confusion of reality shock (Fein & Neuhring, 1982). There is a "crisis in thinking as usual" (Fein & Neuhring, p. 5), social life cannot continue as before, and there is a questioning of what had previously been taken for granted in terms of behavior and emotions. The personal fear, shame, and feelings of disorientation will begin to be resolved and self esteem increases only with the social validation of the undesired self-image through positive interactions with lesbian/gay subculture.

Although positive interactions with the subculture results in increasingly positive integration of the same sex identity into the global sense of self, a positive same sex identity has not yet been acquired. Cass (p. 230) postulates that the positive evaluation of self in the subculture is incongruent with the pejorative typification by heterosexuals. This results in the "identity acceptance" stage. This is characterized by attempts to sort through stereotypes to find effective ways of contending with the challenges to their systems of valuation, and to re-
build their social reality (Fein & Neuhring, 1982, p. 8). The tasks of learning how to "pass"; that is, to actively hide the undesirable quality and to appear as much as possible to be like the rest of the population (Goffman, 1963), how to disclose the identity (and how to gain or retain acceptance of those to whom they disclose), and how to interact with other people with same sex preferences in intimate relationships, are all skills which are thought to be acquired during this stage of identity formation. Cass characterizes this stage as one of increasing commitment to the identity, normalization of subcultural relations, and selective disclosure to individuals with other sex preferences. One can see a shift to the normalization of the same sex identity as a stable part of self, a positive same sex identity, and therefore, acceptable levels of self esteem.

While many individuals with same sex preferences comfortably remain in the "identity acceptance" stage, having completed the "coming out" process and achieving a positive same sex identity, Cass (p. 235) postulates two additional stages; a phase of post-"coming out". This appears to be related to the gay liberation movement. Some individuals cannot accept the discrepancy between self-evaluation of same sex preference as acceptable and negative societal opinion. They may, therefore, become activists, openly confronting society, a stage termed "identity pride". Herein, individuals with other sex preferences and their value system is denigrated while the lesbian/gay group is seen in an extremely positive light. Feelings of unity with the lesbian/gay community are paramount. This stage is characterized by high self esteem and the development of a positive lesbian identity. Cass' last stage "identity synthesis" is
characterized by maximal congruency with the lesbian identity and with other aspects of self. Lesbian others are no longer necessarily valued above individuals with other sex preferences; sexual orientation is no longer the most important criterion for friendship. Self esteem should be at very acceptable levels as a result of identity stabilization and the sense of accomplishment and self-sufficiency which stem from overcoming the structures of societal opinion. Cass indicates that identity synthesis may not be possible for many individuals due to the extreme bias against lesbians and gays within this society.

The theories of same sex identity formation suggest that as the lesbian/gay identity receives external validation from the lesbian/gay community and one learns how to interact in this group, the lesbian/gay identity should become more stable, and hence self esteem levels should increase. It will, therefore, be beneficial to determine the relationship between stage of identity formation and self esteem. As many lesbians have tried to change their sexual orientation from same sex to other sex, it will be beneficial to investigate the manner in which this occurred and their perception of the outcome. Although the relationship of identity stability and self esteem is clear, the stability of a positive identity has yet to be examined and, therefore, will be investigated. It appears that successful progression through the identity formation process depends on certain experiences so that the order of stages may well be related to self esteem. Also, since a major re-definition of self may become increasingly more difficult with age (Richardson, 1981), the age at which these stages occurred may be related to self esteem. Since this process occurs over a period of time, it might be beneficial to inspect
time lapses between stages, especially the time period between self-definition as lesbian and the development of a positive identity as these relate to self-esteem. The post-"coming out" phase is associated with the relatively recent development of the gay liberation movement, the era in which one "came out" might be an important element in self esteem.

Socialization and Self Esteem

The various theories of same sex identity formation are consistent in their postulation of socialization into the lesbian/gay community as an important factor in the stabilization of the developing identity, and therefore to the individual's level of self esteem (Cass, 1979; Lee, 1977; Troiden, 1979). As the previous discussion of the identity formation process indicated, individuals who begin to define themselves as lesbian experience feelings of alienation, not only from their previous other sex self-image, guidelines for behavior, ideals and expectations, but also from society. Initial contacts with lesbians and the lesbian/gay community are attempts to decrease this sense of alienation.

These contacts with the lesbian/gay community contribute to the devaluation of stigmatization. By providing personal experience of other lesbian and gay people, affiliation with a lesbian/gay community helps to invalidate stereotypes commonly held by the other sex society (e.g., extreme masculine behavior). The individual perceives others' acceptance of her same sex behavior. Herein, there is an acceptance of the whole person. The gay subculture, having its own behavioral norms and expectations helps to provide a new structure within which the individual can function. Overall, community participation serves to normalize the same
sex experience, provides a source of social meanings of same sex preference, gives an ideological justification, and serves as a power base with which to align oneself in the face of discrimination (Ponse, 1978; Richardson, 1981).

It must be noted that the quality of interaction with the lesbian/gay community is not always positive (Cass, 1979; Richardson, 1981). Negative experiences may stem from the individual's dissatisfaction with the settings and individuals she encounters. One person may find a lesbian/gay bar exciting, whereas another may be depressed by it. Also, a person is not automatically accepted by other lesbians/gays. Poor interpersonal skills, failing to fit in with the ideology of the particular community, e.g., conservatism, radicalism, and in some cases being too old or unattractive, are some of the reasons for rejection of an individual by a lesbian/gay community. Rejection of or by a lesbian/gay community can produce an acute sense of isolation, marginality and psychological strain (Weinberg & Williams, 1974). In such individuals further identity development may be arrested and consequently the individual may be characterized by a more negative self-image than those having had positive experiences.

Weinberg and Williams (1974) suggest that, due to the importance of involvement in the lesbian/gay community for psychological well-being, more investigation into the manner in which social involvement with other lesbians/gays produces its positive effects is needed (p. 270). Learning from other lesbians/gays with which the individual feels able to identify and who may function as role models, has been suggested as one major process (Richardson, 1981, p. 119). Also, just as popularity in other sex
circles in terms of dating and "going steady" can make an individual feel socially valued, so also can having sustained a long-term lesbian relationship be related to positive appraisals by the lesbian/gay community, and therefore have a positive effect on self-esteem. It must be noted that the perceived quality of such a relationship may be equally important.

Adam indicates that an additional factor is important in relationships with the gay community. He states that "a simple association with other members of a stigmatized group is not enough in itself to enhance the self-image" and goes on to suggest a need for political awareness (Adam, 1978, p. 123). A liberationist philosophy such as that which is espoused by gay and wimmin's liberation provides an ideological justification for same sex preference not only as a viable alternative to other sex preference, but in some instances as a preferable identity (Brown, 1975; Johnston, 1971). These liberationist ideologies may provide wimmin with a basis for pride in their identity.

It appears that positive interaction with a lesbian/gay community is a major source of initial and ongoing support for lesbians. Overall degree of socialization, quality of interactions as perceived by the individual, reactions to the individual by community members, type of community (feminist or not) may all be related to self-esteem. Also, specific factors such as the presence of role models and positively evaluated, long-term sexual-affectional relationships might be important for the individual's positive feelings regarding the self.

"Passing", Disclosure and Self-Esteem

Phenomenologically oriented writers have cited the importance of disclosure of the true self for mental health and consequently self
esteem (Jourard, 1971). Yet, when a stigmatized attribute such as same sex preference is a component of the true self, disclosure of this attribute could well have negative consequences. Therefore, most lesbians and gay men must acquire several information management strategies, such as how to "pass," that is, actively hiding a stigmatized identity and thus appear to be a person with other sex preferences, and to disclose effectively, that is, actively attempting to reveal one's true identity, and how to gain or retain the acceptance of those to whom they disclose (Fein & Neuhring, 1982).

In the initial stages of identity formation, that is, identity confusion and comparison, individuals commonly "pass" or hide their same sex experiences and feelings from others (Cass, 1979). While this passing strategy serves to decrease the likelihood of being confronted by negative reactions, and in the initial stages of identity formation may underline the importance of sexual identity both to the self and others, thereby increasing both the significance of and commitment to a lesbian identity (Richardson, 1981), passing also compartmentalizes the developing lesbian identity so that one's public and private identities are incongruent. The tension produced by this self-enforced secrecy is often difficult to deal with. Social interactions with individuals with other sex preferences are characterized by a lack of spontaneity and secretiveness regarding the details of major life occurrences (Martin & Lyon, 1973). This in turn may lead significant others to perceive the "passing" lesbian as dull, untrusting, cold and somewhat detached, thereby effectively restricting interpersonal relationships with others. Self esteem, being influenced by feedback from others with whom interacts may well be
low due to this impression held by individuals with other sex preferences. So, while "passing" serves to protect lesbians from possible discrimination, it does not have entirely positive consequences for self-esteem.

With increasing certainty of the lesbian identity the person makes contact with the lesbian/gay community. It is in this context that one may become skilled at "passing", possibly through the example of role-models. A majority of lesbians are engaged in a dynamic and continual process of moving between coming out openly as homosexual and passing as individuals with other sex preferences, depending on the particular social situation in which they find themselves (Richardson, 1981). While this is not entirely acceptable the relative ease with which this may now be accomplished serves to decrease some of the tension, that is, the fear of discovery associated with passing (Weinberg & Williams, 1974), and therefore may not be entirely deleterious to self esteem.

In addition to learning how to "pass", contact with the lesbian/gay community serves to educate the person in the skill of disclosure. Cass postulates that individuals arrive at a definite self-definition as lesbian before disclosing to other sex preference people. Furthermore, these initial disclosures will be quite selective. While these initial disclosures serve to increase congruency between the public and private aspects of self, and in so doing increase self esteem, most theorists agree that the reaction of the individuals to whom one discloses and the importance of this person to the discloser may be more important in determining self esteem (Cass, 1979; Moses, 1978; Weinberg & Williams, 1974). While theorists agree that the more important the target person is, the
greater effect their reaction will have on self esteem, the effect of
the reaction itself is uncertain. Cass (p. 233) postulates that negative
reactions lead to incongruency, and therefore to the increased overtness
and higher self esteem of the identity pride stage. Weinberg and Williams
(1974), on the other hand, found lower levels of self esteem in those who
had received negative initial reactions from significant others. Perhaps
these incongruent conclusions do not indicate a discrepancy in theories
but rather in method. Cass is referring to the latter stages of identity
formation while Weinberg and Williams do not discuss stages. It is,
therefore, possible that the effect of reactions to disclosure depends
on the stage of identity formation which the individual has achieved.

In exploring the relationship between "passing" and self esteem, it
will be beneficial to examine the degree of "passing" in relation to
stage of identity formation. The relationship between self esteem and
disclosure is considered to be quite complex. Various factors, such as
stage of identity formation, target of disclosure, significance of
target, and reactions to disclosure all need to be considered.

AIMS AND HYPOTHESES

A number of aspects of the process of identity formation have been
discussed as possible predictors of self esteem: stage of identity
development, especially the development of a positive lesbian identity;
extent and quality of socialization in the gay community; degree of
"passing", and degree of disclosing. All of these areas will be explored.

The personality characteristics of the members of stigmatized and
inferiorized groups, including lesbians, have been characterized in a
negative manner (Goffman, 1963). For example, low self esteem, doubt, con-
fusion, shame and guilt, have been attributed to such individuals. Yet, a number of studies investigating the lesbian self-image have found them to be characterized by a number of highly positive characteristics. Mannion (1976), in her extensive review of the literature, concludes that many will be "dominant, autonomous, assertive, self-actualizing, inner-directed, and have high levels of self-esteem". Perhaps these conflicting descriptions of the self-image can be explained by examining the process of same sex identity formation in relation to self esteem. Elliott (1981), in her investigation of lesbian identity formation and disclosure, explored many of the same aspects of identity formation, socialization, "passing" and disclosure. In her study she found a relationship between identity strength; that is, stage of identity formation, and self esteem. She suggests that a more in-depth study focusing upon self esteem may reveal other relationships with self esteem. Specifically, she suggests that a curvilinear relationship between self esteem and disclosure may exist, and that the importance of various target persons may be important for self esteem.

The development of a positive lesbian identity has frequently been linked to increased self esteem, yet there are large individual differences in the process (McDonald, 1982; Ponse, 1978). It might, therefore, also be beneficial to explore the relative importance which the aforementioned aspects of identity formation have for self esteem.

The aims of this study are, therefore, twofold: first, to discover the extent of the relationship between self esteem and various aspects in the process of lesbian identity formation, and also how these aspects of identity formation relate to each other; and second, to investigate the relative contribution of these variables in predicting the level of self esteem.
Hypotheses

Although there has been no dearth of research in the area of same sex identity formation, many of the theories utilized differing conceptual frameworks, and therefore there is a distinct lack of continuity among the theories. Yet, there is a consistent theme among the various theories of same sex identity formation. It is this theme which is the basis of the major hypothesis of this study.

It is predicted that there is a relationship between the degree of positive lesbian identity and the level of positive self esteem. There are several corollaries to this hypothesis.

It is expected that positive relationships will be found between self esteem and:

- the last four stages of identity formation, such that distinct increases will be evident with each higher stage of identity development. These last four stages are identity tolerance, identity acceptance, identity pride, and identity synthesis.
- self-definition as lesbian.
- stability of positive lesbian identity.
- degree of involvement in a lesbian/gay community.
- positive perception of a lesbian/gay community.
- long-term, satisfactory relationship with a lover.
- possession of a feminist ideology.
- membership in a lesbian-feminist group
- involvement with lesbian role model(s).
- perception of acceptance by a lesbian/gay community.
- moderate levels of disclosure.

The relationship between reactions to disclosure and self esteem
with importance of target being considered as an important factor will be explored.

In addition, several expectations were postulated with regard to sociohistorical factors and self esteem. There will be a positive relationship between the amount of time elapsed between self-definition and acquisition of a positive identity. It is expected that those who defined themselves as homosexual before the era of gay liberation will take more time to acquire a positive lesbian identity.

It is expected that positive relationships will also be found among the following identity variables: stage of identity formation, degree of involvement in a gay community, and degree of disclosure. A negative relationship is expected between these variables and degree of "passing".

There has been a lack of previous investigation regarding the relative contribution of various aspects of identity formation in predicting levels of self esteem. This part of the present investigation will, therefore, be considered exploratory. Hence no specific expectations will be advanced.
CHAPTER II

METHOD

Subjects and Procedure.

In order to obtain subjects for this study, several lesbian-gay organizations (a gay church and two lesbian organizations) in Detroit and Toronto were contacted by the investigator. The general purpose of the study was explained, that is, to obtain more information about how lesbians feel about themselves and how they deal with various issues related to their sexual-affectional orientation. Individuals in these organizations agreed to serve as contact persons, that is, persons willing to be responsible for distribution of the questionnaire to the members of their organizations at various of their meetings. Also, individuals known to the investigator were advised of the general purpose of the study and agreed to act as contact persons distributing the questionnaire to persons in their lesbian friendship network(s). These individuals were located in several geographic areas: Windsor, Toronto, Detroit and Eastern Tennessee. All contact persons were asked to estimate the appropriate number of individuals who they felt would be willing to complete the questionnaire. They were then provided with the estimated number of questionnaires.

As Moses (1978) points out, there are particular problems in studying members of a population whose defining characteristic makes them
both vulnerable and frequently unlikely to identify themselves as members of that population. Obtaining an entirely representative sample is virtually impossible. Therefore, in order to increase the generalizability of the sample contact, persons were instructed to distribute the questionnaire to as many different types of persons as possible; young and old, overt and covert.

Approximately 300 questionnaires were available for distribution. As return rates for this type of sampling procedure is commonly 30-35 percent, it was expected that at least 100 completed questionnaires would be returned. It is felt that this would be an adequate sample.

**Materials**

As the investigator had no contact with most of the subjects and so many wimmin fear exposure, a covering letter was included (see Appendix A), which described the study (without revealing the specific purpose), introduced the investigator and stressed the anonymity of the process. The measures utilized in this investigation were presented in questionnaire form (see Appendix B). The instrument was entitled "The Lesbian Information Questionnaire". As this instrument was intended for wimmin from a variety of backgrounds and educational levels, and also to increase the probability of optimal return rates, the questionnaire was kept fairly brief. In order to increase confidence in the validity of the results using this anonymous questionnaire format, many of the items included in the present instrument have been utilized in other studies of lesbian wimmin and gay men (Elliott, 1981; Moses, 1978; Weinberg & Williams, 1974).

The questions utilized in this study fell into a number of cate-
categories: demographic information, sexual identity information, community socialization, "passing" and disclosure, and self-esteem. These categories were simply labelled I-V in order to prevent unnecessary guessing as to the purpose of the study.

A list of these categories and the rationale for their inclusion follows.

1. **Demographic Information.** Simon and Gagnon (1967) indicate that simply knowing that a person has same sex preference does not tell us much about the individual. The person's other social characteristics help us to understand the type of lesbian/gay person she or he is, and how she or he handles her/his sexuality. All of the questions in this category may be related to self-esteem.

   Age is related to the learning of particular social values. The respondents' present age gives some indication of the era in which they were socialized. Both geographic location and size have been related to size and type of gay community. In large urban areas size provides anonymity and the potential for support from a gay community. Low occupational status and income levels are indicators of social class and have been related to anxiety level, as has length of time in present job (Ferguson & Finkler, 1978). Educational level may be related to the ability to accept new concepts such as one's developing identity. The presence of children in the home may be related to more "passing" and less socialization in the lesbian community (Moses, 1978).

2. **Sexual Identity Information.** The stage of identity formation (13 A), and age and order (13 B), may be related to self-esteem. The stages are:
   1) "first awareness that my feelings may be called homosexual but still
define self as heterosexual", 2) "begin to change self-definition from heterosexual to homosexual and feel alienated from heterosexual world", 3) "definitely consider self homosexual but no contact with homosexual community", 4) "first contact with homosexual community", 5) "acquire a positive homosexual identity (generally feel good about it)", 6) "first define self as lesbian and feel this is the most important part of who I am", and 7) "feel good about being lesbian but this is not the most important part of who I am". The stages are expected to be grouped in three categories: initial stages (1 and 2), "coming out" (3, 4, 5), and post-"coming-out" (6 and 7), with categories two and three showing incremental levels of self esteem. Age at which certain stages occur may indicate era of lesbian/gay socialization and time-lapses between stages.

Stability of a positive lesbian identity (#14), attempts to change one's sexual orientation from homosexual to heterosexual (#15), the manner in which this was done (#16), and outcome (#17) were all derived from Moses' study (1978) and are thought to relate to self esteem. Attempts to change one's sexual orientation in the initial stages of identity formation may result in a more stable sense of identity.

The last item in this section (#18) is Kinsey's scale of heterosexual experience (Kinsey, 1953). This may be related to stage of identity formation.

3. **Community Socialization.** There is general agreement that socialization in a gay community has an effect on one's feelings about the self (Cass, 1979; Lee, 1977). The degree of participation in a community has been cited as an important factor for self esteem (Cass, 1979; Ponse, 1978). Several items were utilized as measures of degree of participa-
tation: involvement in a long-term relationship (#19, 20), living with another gay person (#21), belonging to gay groups (#24, 25), reading gay literature (#26), frequency of going to bars (#27), social contact with other gays (#29), number of close gay friends (#31, 32), experience with role models (#34). A number of these questions were taken from both Elliott (1981) (#24, 25, 26, 27, 32) and Moses (1978) (#19, 20, 21, 28, 30). In addition, the type of lesbian reference group is considered to be important for self-esteem (Cass, 1979), for example, considering oneself a feminist (#23) and belonging to feminist organizations (#24).

Cass indicates that the quality of socialization in the gay community is not always positive. This may involve a perception by the individual of community rejection (#35) or dissatisfaction with the community on the part of the individual (#22, 28, 30); similar items have been utilized by both Moses (1978) and Weinberg and Williams (1974). The importance of the community for the individual (#33) is also an indication of perceived quality of socialization (Weinberg & Williams, 1974).

4. "Passing" and Disclosing. This section of the questionnaire investigated "passing" and disclosing as two separate though related processes. It has been suggested that degree of disclosure is thought to be related to self-esteem in a curvilinear fashion (Elliott, 1981). In order to ascertain degree of disclosure a list of different target (Elliott, 1981) people was presented (#36). Respondents were asked to check those targets with whom they had been open. Scores could range from 0-26 with 13 targets and a "Yes" response receiving a score of 2, "No" = 1, and "Not Applicable" = 0. Weinberg and Williams (1974) have staged that both the importance and reactions of individuals to whom
one discloses may be as important as the degree of disclosure per se. Therefore, the same list of persons was presented (#37) and were rated for importance where 1 = "very important", and 7 = "very unimportant", and 0 = "no such relationship". The reactions of targets (#38) was determined by ratings including accepting = 1, understanding, tolerant, intolerant, rejecting = 5, or not applicable. The range of alternatives in these latter two questions was taken from Weinberg and Williams (1974). The effect of the reaction upon the discloser was determined by the degree of the reaction of the target person together with the importance of the target person's opinion to the respondent. The overall degree of "passing" (#39) was determined in the same manner as the degree of disclosure (#36). Questions involving the initial disclosure (#40a, b, c, d) were descriptive in nature. As these questions have not been utilized before, no predictions were made.

5. **Self Esteem.** This was the major focus of interest in this study due to the acknowledged effect that stigmatization has on self-esteem. This concept is considered to be related to identity formation in a developmental sense (i.e., stability of identity may be related to higher levels of self-esteem).

As has been previously stated, the term "high self-esteem" tends to suffer from a dual connotation, that is, conceit or self-respect (Rosenberg, 1979). Also, the concept of self-esteem itself has been conceptualized in a variety of ways. Empirical measures of self-esteem tend to reflect this diversity and duality.

As the feelings regarding lesbian identity are highly dependent upon social interactions, the testing instrument selected to measure this construct
involved the social aspects of self. Also, in line with the duality involving the term "high self esteem" the test utilized captured both of these although the self-respect aspect is more prevalent.

The Jackson Personality Inventory (JPI) is a test designed to measure 15 personality traits that are assumed to be involved in social behavior. The JPI scales are: anxiety, breadth of interest, complexity, conformity, energy level, innovation, interpersonal warmth, organization, responsibility, risk-taking, self esteem, social adroitness, social participation, tolerance, and value orthodoxy. The self esteem scale of the JPI was utilized in this study. This scale is comprised of 20 items, where 10 items require a positive (true) response, and 10 items require a negative (false) response. Jackson (1970) describes high scores as: self-assured, egotistical, self-sufficient, confident in dealing with others, not easily embarrassed or influenced by others, and imperturbable in interpersonal situations. Low scores are described as self-deprecating, timid, unassuming, modest, shy, humble and self-conscious. This scale meets the criteria of measuring the social aspects of self esteem and is advantageous in its brevity.

The JPI scale construction procedure was specifically designed to select items that had relatively high correlations with the a priori scale, i.e., Personality Research Form (PRF) and low correlations with the PRF desirability score. The correlations between the JPI self esteem scale and the PRF ranged from -.01 and -.55 and its correlation with the PRF desirability scale is reported as .36. Jackson reports reliability estimates for each of the separate scales. Herein, both the traditional coefficient alpha and Bentler's (1972) recently formulated coefficient theta, a lower-bound reliability estimate, were computed. The latter,
unlike coefficient alpha, is dimension-free and thus provides a truer estimate of lower-bound reliability in all cases where there is a departure from the assumptions of unidimensionality. The reliability estimates from two samples of university students were reported. The California sample \((n = 82)\) median theta value was .93. The Pennsylvania sample \((n = 307)\) yielded a theta of .90. For the self esteem scale in the former sample, the alpha value was .88 and theta .95. The latter yielded an alpha of .84 and theta of .91 for this scale. The evidence of scale validity is presented in the manual in the form of correlations of individual scales with an adjective checklist (self esteem .73), self-rating (self esteem .66) and peer rating (self esteem .66). The inter-correlations between the various scales on the JPI are reported in the manual. The self esteem scale ranges from .0 to .55, herein the highest correlation (.55) is with the Energy Level scale.

As the items in this scale are usually presented in a randomly balanced sequence, an additional 10 randomly-chosen items were selected from other scales and were interspersed in presenting the self esteem scale in order to approximate the manner in which the JPI is traditionally presented.

An additional open-ended question (#42) regarding the relationship between positive feelings toward lesbian identity and toward self was included in order to obtain additional information regarding self esteem and identity formation. Respondents were asked to give a Yes/No response and to explain the relationship. Hence, this item was scored first by Yes/No responses and then themes, such as increased confidence and integration were recorded. No numerical score was given.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

This chapter is presented in five sections: (1) demographic data; (2) data related to lesbian identity formation; (3) predicted correlations regarding the relationship between demographic and identity variables and among identity variables as well as the relationship of demographic and identity variables to self-esteem; (4) other correlations and, (5) regression procedures.

Demographic Data

A total of 117 wimmin returned the lesbian information questionnaire (see Appendix B, for raw data). Of these, 46 (39.3%) were residing in Canada and 71 (60.7%) lived in the United States. Table 1 details the sample distribution according to the large city they lived in or near. Most of the respondents (45.7%) reported living in a large city. Table 2 provides specific information regarding residence.

Age of the respondents ranged from 21-68 with a mean of 32 and a standard deviation of 13.9. Table 3 gives a frequency count of wimmin in each age group, that is, twenties, thirties. The median age for the sample was 35 years of age. A majority of wimmin (85.4%) fell within either the 20-29 or the 30-39 age range. An equal number of respondents (50) were in each group. Of the remaining respondents 16 (13.7%) were in
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toronto/Ottawa</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsor</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (U.S.)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Canada)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 2**

Sample Distribution by Size of Respondents' Current Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large city</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-sized city</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small city</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small town</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;50-59</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
their forties and one womyn was 68 years old. None of the sample were in their fifties.

Further demographic data are shown in Table 4 (size of city, growing-up), Table 5 (religion), Tables 6 and 7 (parental status and residence of child(ren)); and Table 8 (marital status). Many of the respondents grew up in either moderate or large-sized cities (50.5%), and many reported mainline religious affiliations (51.7%). Very few of the respondents had children (13.7%). Of these, not all had their children living with them (9.6%). Most wommin reported being single at present (98.2%) with a majority of these never having been married (76.9%).

TABLE 4

Sample Distribution by Size of City - Growing Up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large city</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-sized city</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small city</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small town</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 5
Sample Distribution by Religion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 6
Sample Distribution by Parental Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a parent</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>86.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 7
Sample Distribution by Children's Living Situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>85.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With respondent</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apart from respondent</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 8
Sample Distribution by Respondent's Marital Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single and never married</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single but have been married</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married, but not living with husband</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married, and living with husband</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data regarding socioeconomic status and related information are presented in Table 9 (occupation), Table 10 (time in present job), Table 11 (education level), Table 12 (income level). Summary information regarding the relationship between income and occupation is provided in Table 13. A majority of the respondents reported having high status occupations, i.e., occupations requiring a high degree of training (51.7%). In addition, a small number of respondents are currently students (12.9%). Most of these were studying for university (7) or graduate (8) degrees. Many of the wimmin had been in their present jobs over three years (49%). Overall, the sample had a fairly high educational level: 22.2 percent having some post-secondary education, 34.2 percent having completed a university or community college degree, and 27.3 percent having completed a graduate degree. Income of respondents ranged from less than $5,000 a year to over $10,000 a year. Many wimmin reported earning between $10,000 and $29,999. A number of those who reported income levels under $5,000 a year were students. Despite high educational and occupational levels and job tenure, few wimmin made more than $25,000 a year (23.9%).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social service</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educator</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 10

Sample Distribution by Years in Present Job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 1 year</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 3 years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 5 years</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 11

Sample Distribution by Educational Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some university or community college</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community college degree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University undergraduate degree</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or professional degree</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;$5,000</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,000-$9,999</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000-$14,999</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000-$24,999</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000-$34,999</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;$35,000</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,000-$9,999</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000-$14,999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000-$24,999</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000-$34,999</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12.93   12.93   17.24  10.34  11.21  6.90  5.17  19.83  3.45  100.00
Data Related to Lesbian Identity Formation

Most of the wimmin in the sample (93.97%) fell within the more advanced stages of identity formation, that is, stages five, six and seven. The remaining wimmin were fairly evenly distributed among the less advanced stages (see Table 14). Since so few of the wimmin were presently in the first four stages and the stages themselves could not be combined due to the unique characteristics of each stage, only the last three stages were utilized in all further analyses.

In addition to asking subjects to indicate present developmental stage, the respondents were also requested to indicate the age at which they had begun—all previous stages which were applicable to them. Using this information in conjunction with their present age, several other facets of the identity formation process were explored, that is, time required to establish positive identity, lapse between initial and present stage, year of self-definition, and year of first contact with the gay community.

By determining the time elapsed between stage three (definitely consider self homosexual yet no contact with gay community) and stage five (acquired a positive homosexual identity), it was possible to assess the length of time taken to establish positive feelings regarding their lesbian identity after they had definitely decided they had such an identity (see Table 15). Time to positive identity could be determined for only 76 subjects as others had either not attained or, alternately had not gone through stages three and/or five of the developmental sequence. The time elapsed ranged from 0, that is, immediately to 22 years. The mean time elapsed was 3.22 years, and the standard deviation was 3.9.
TABLE 14
Stage of Lesbian Identity Formation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First awareness that my feelings may be called homosexual but still define self as heterosexual</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin to change self-definition from heterosexual to homosexual and feel alienated from heterosexual world</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitely consider self homosexual yet no contact with gay community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First contact with gay community</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquired a positive homosexual identity (feel glad to be homosexual)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First defined self as lesbian and feel this is the most important part of who I am</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel good about being lesbian but this is not the most important part of who I am</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>61.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The distribution was skewed with 15.78 percent establishing a positive identity immediately, and 69.73 percent taking 1-5 years to do so. The remaining 14.46 percent took between 6 and 22 years to establish a positive lesbian identity.

The respondent's time lapse between the initial stage and the most advanced stage of identity formation was calculated in order to determine the amount of time subjects took to go through the developmental sequence to their present stage. The lapse between initial stage and present stage ranged from 0 (less than 1 year) to 46 years. The mean time elapsed was 11.52 with a standard deviation 7.92. A majority of wimmin (68%) took 1-10 years to reach their highest stage; 34.82 percent took between 11-10 years. The remaining wimmin (10.71%) took 21-46 years. It should be noted that since a majority of the sample had attained an advanced stage of identity formation, the time lapse between initial and present stage is a fairly valid estimate of the number of years required to establish a positive, well-integrated lesbian identity (see Table 16).

TABLE 16

Years between Initial and Present Stage of Identity Formation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to ascertain the effect of socio-historical factors, the year in which one defined self as homosexual, i.e., stage three, and the year of first contact with the gay community, were calculated. Only 79 wimmin indicated that they had gone through stage three, and hence the year defined could be calculated for that number of wimmin only. The year of definition ranged from 1954-1981. The mean year was 1972, with a standard deviation of 6.77. A majority of the sample defined themselves as lesbian after the gay liberation era, i.e., 1970 (77.21%) (see Table 17). The first contact with the gay community (stage 4) was interpreted as "coming out". One hundred and six wimmin indicated that they had gone through this stage. The mean year of first contact with the gay community was 1974 and the standard deviation was 7.10. As with the year defined, a majority of wimmin "came out" after the liberationist movement (80.89%) (see Table 18).

Respondents were also asked how much of the time they felt good about their identity. A majority of wimmin felt positive most of the time (96.5%). Only four wimmin (3.54%) felt positive less frequently (see Table 19).

Subjects were also asked to respond to two questions related to identity formation. First, subjects were asked to indicate whether they had attempted to change their sexual orientation from homosexual to heterosexual and, if so, the method utilized and the outcome. The percentage of wimmin who had never attempted to change their orientation was 78.07 percent. Those who indicated that they had attempted to change (21.93%) had either dated men, gone into therapy, or had utilized both of these methods. All these wimmin had felt frustrated or dissatisfied and had
### TABLE 17

Year of Self Definition as Lesbian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954-1959</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-1965</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-1969</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1975</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-1981</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 18

Year of First Contact with Gay Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-1959</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-1965</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-1969</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1975</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-1980</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>39.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980+</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 19

Stability of Positive Lesbian Identity
(I Feel Good about being Lesbian)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost always</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>78.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
renewed their relations with wimmin. Subjects were also asked to indicate their sexual history. A majority of wimmin indicated that their experience had been largely or entirely homosexual (97.4%) (see Table 20).

**Expected Correlations**

A Pearson product-moment correlation matrix was calculated to explore the extent of relationships between all of the variables. Unless otherwise indicated the correlations reported are for the complete sample (N = 117). Table 21 shows the correlations between self esteem and various subject variables. Only two of the expected relationships were found. Both community acceptance ($r = .33$, $p < .01$) and stage ($r = .20$, $p < .05$) were related to self esteem (N = 116).

A small number of the expected relationships between subject variables was found. But, as expected, developmental stage was significantly related to both disclosure ($r = .24$, $p < .05$) and stable positive lesbian identity ($r = .30$, $p < .01$). Proportion of passing was related to separatism ($r = -.23$, $p < .05$), stable positive lesbian identity ($r = .20$, $p < .05$), feminism ($r = .20$, $p < .05$) and community involvement ($r = -.19$). Relationships between proportion of passing and stage of identity development ($r = -.28$, $p < .01$) and passing and disclosure ($r = -.25$, $p < .05$) were also found. Other expected relationships between subject variables were not found. Developmental stage was not related to community involvement ($r = .02$), nor feminism ($r = .10$).

Several relationships were expected between disclosure and other variables. Relationships were not found between disclosure and year of "coming out" ($r = -.11$, N = 106), separatism ($r = -.18$, stable positive lesbian identity ($r = .13$), nor feminism ($r = .19$).

Other expected relationships, such as that between separatism and
**TABLE 20**

**Sexual History**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largely heterosexual but with distinct homosexual history</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equally heterosexual and homosexual</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largely homosexual but with distinct heterosexual history</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>37.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largely homosexual but with incidental heterosexual history</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entirely homosexual</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>28.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 21
Correlations between Self Esteem and Other Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Self Esteem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Stage</td>
<td>.20*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Category</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable Positive Lesbian Identity</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Involvement</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Socialization</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to Relationship</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminism</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Activity</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Model</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Acceptance</td>
<td>.33**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Accepting Reactions to Disclosure</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Understanding Reactions to Disclosure</td>
<td>-.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Tolerant Reactions to Disclosure</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Intolerant Reactions to Disclosure</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Rejecting Reactions to Disclosure</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to Acquire Positive Lesbian Identity</td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Defined as Homosexual</td>
<td>.07*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lapse between Initial and Present Developmental Stage</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05
** p < .01

a N = 117
b N = 76
c N = 79
d N = 113
feminism ($r = .15$) and between community involvement and disclosure ($r = -.18$), and community involvement and stable positive lesbian identity ($r = .10$), were not found. Only the relationship between community involvement and separatism ($r = .51$, $p < .001$) was found.

The remaining expected relationships were between demographic and other variables. Of these only size of city of residence and separatism was found ($r = .24$, $p < .05$). Relationships were not found between size of current residence and either community involvement ($r = -.02$), or feminism ($r = .04$). No relationships were found between disclosure and income ($r = -.05$), or occupation ($r = .15$). Educational level was not correlated with lapse between initial and present stage of identity formation ($r = -.01$, $N = 113$). Passing was not related to either living with child(ren) ($r = .01$) or community involvement ($r = .07$).

Since so few of the expected relationships were found chi square analyses were computed for all of the aforementioned relationships. As correlations indicate only linear relationships, it was thought these analyses might show other types of relationships. Scores of a number of variables were divided into two or three categories, high, medium, and low, or negative and positive, in such a way that approximately the same number of subjects fell within each category. Of these, significant results were found for community involvement by living with one's child(ren), community involvement by developmental stage, and community involvement by passing (see Tables 22, 23 and 24).

It was also expected that reactions to disclosure, (e.g., accepting, rejecting), and self esteem would be related. This possibility was explored by means of a chi square analysis involving high, medium and low levels of both self esteem and disclosure reactions. In both cases levels were determined by means of percentile groupings. Reactions were divided
TABLE 22

The Relationship between Community Involvement and Living with One's Child(ren)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Community Involvement</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-32</td>
<td>33-36</td>
<td>37-40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with children</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, child(ren) with me</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, not living with me</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 9.8, \text{ df } = 6, p < .05 \]

TABLE 23

The Relationship between Developmental Stage and Community Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Community Involvement</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>02-12</td>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 13.5, \text{ df } = 5, p < .05 \]
TABLE 24

The Relationship between Community Involvement and Passing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Community Involvement</th>
<th>Low 0-26</th>
<th>Medium 27-59</th>
<th>High 60-100</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 9.8, \, df = 5, \, p < .05 \]

TABLE 25

Straight Person's Reaction to Disclosure by Self Esteem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Self Esteem</th>
<th>Low 0-32</th>
<th>Medium 33-36</th>
<th>High 37-40</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Straight reactions</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative 30-49</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive 50-100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 5.7, \, df = 4, \, p < .05 \]
by target groups, i.e., family, work, straight people and gay people for four different analyses. Of these, only straight reactions to disclosure was significantly related to self esteem (see Table 25).

Other Correlations

In addition to the expected relationships, other relationships, while not having been predicted, were of some interest. Relationships were found between a number of variables and age, education, stable positive lesbian identity, depression, lapse between initial and present stage of identity formation, and attempt to change sexual orientation (see consecutively Tables 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31).

Sociohistorical Variables

Relationships were also found between identity and other variables. Time to achieve positive lesbian identity and satisfaction with relationship ($r = .21, p < .05$), and other's reaction to first disclosure ($r = -.31, p < .001$) were significant. Year of self definition as lesbian was related to commitment to relationship ($r = .20, p < .05$), and feminist group ($r = .23, p < .05$). Year of coming out was related to community acceptance ($r = .24, p < .05$), $N = 106$, and reaction to first disclosure ($r = .31, p < .01$). Also, a relationship was found between the demographic variable religion and stable positive lesbian identity ($r = -.28, p < .01$).

Relationship between Socialization and Other Variables

Most of the significant relationships were found between the composite measure, community involvement or the components of this measure and other variables. The composite variable, community involvement, was made up of frequency and satisfaction with going to bars, and frequency and satisfaction with socialization.

Community involvement was negatively correlated with commitment to relationship ($r = -.23, p < .05$), time in relationship ($r = -.24, p < .05$),
### TABLE 26

**Correlations between Age and Other Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time to establish positive identity</td>
<td>.42***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with socialization</td>
<td>-.20*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community involvement</td>
<td>-.35***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separatism</td>
<td>-.20*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction to first disclosure</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \( p < .05 \)  \( N = 76 \)  
** \( p < .01 \)  \( N = 117 \)  
*** \( p < .001 \)

### TABLE 27

**Correlations between Education and Other Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change of identity</td>
<td>.20*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political activity</td>
<td>.41***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with bars</td>
<td>-.19*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist group</td>
<td>.56***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \( p < .05 \)  \( N = 117 \)  
** \( p < .01 \)  
*** \( p < .001 \)
**TABLE 28.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation between Stable Lesbian Identity and Other Variables</th>
<th>Stable Positive Lesbian Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to lesbian relationship</td>
<td>21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of socialization</td>
<td>22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of gay friends</td>
<td>-21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community acceptance</td>
<td>20*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$  \hspace{1cm} N = 117

---

**TABLE 29.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations between Depression and Other Variables</th>
<th>Depression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage of identity formation age</td>
<td>-.27**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational level</td>
<td>-.23*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability of positive lesbian identity</td>
<td>-.39***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to relationship</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community acceptance</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>-.29**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$  \hspace{1cm} ** $p < .01$  \hspace{1cm} *** $p < .001$  \hspace{1cm} N = 117
### TABLE 30

Correlations between Time Lapse and Stage of Identity Formation and Other Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Time Lapse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b Stable positive lesbian identity</td>
<td>-23*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b Developmental category</td>
<td>-23*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a Year defined</td>
<td>-46***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b Year of 'coming out'</td>
<td>-48***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b 'Others' reaction to first disclosure</td>
<td>-26**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* * P < .05  
** ** P < .01  
*** *** P < .001

N = 79  
N = 106

### TABLE 31

Correlations between Attempts to Change Sexual Orientation and Other Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b Stable positive lesbian identity</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b Educational level</td>
<td>.20*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b Proportion rejecting reaction to disclosure</td>
<td>.28**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b Proportion accepting reaction to disclosure</td>
<td>-.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b Proportion passing</td>
<td>.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a Time to acquire positive lesbian identity</td>
<td>.24*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* P < .05  
** ** P < .01  
N = 76  
N = 106
and political activity ($r = -.19, p < .05$). Community involvement was also related to separatism ($r = .51, p < .001$).

Frequency of going to bars was negatively correlated with commitment to relationship ($r = -.23, p < .05$), and separatism ($r = -.20, p < .05$), and time in relationship ($r = -.24, p < .05$). Satisfaction with bars was positively related to proportion of lesbian and gay socialization ($r = .20, p < .05$), and membership in gay groups ($r = .26, p < .05$), and negatively to feminism ($r = -.20, p < .05$).

Frequency of socialization was significantly related to passing ($r = -.28, p < .01$), while satisfaction with socialization was related to separatism ($r = .39, p < .01$) and disclosure ($r = -.29, p < .01$).

In addition, several other relationships with socialization variables were found. Passing was correlated with membership in a feminist group ($r = -.21, p < .05$). Time in relationship was negatively correlated with community involvement ($r = -.26, p < .05$) and separatism was related to community acceptance ($r = -.29, p < .01$).  

Regression Analyses

In order to investigate the relative contribution of various subject variables in predicting levels of self esteem, several types of regression analyses were computed. Specific subject variables were chosen because they had been posited as having significant relationships with self esteem. Since this part of the investigation is exploratory in nature, several types of regression procedures were conducted.

**Multiple Regression Model.** A multiple regression based on the sample was calculated using 18 subject variables. Table 32 summarizes
the analysis of variance and related statistics for the multiple regression model. The percentage of variation due to linear multiple regression (i.e., 100 $R^2$) was 44.38 percent and the overall $F$ ratio was not significant.

TABLE 32

Summary of Analysis of Variance and Related Statistics for Multiple Regression Equation Based on Self Esteem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>432.51</td>
<td>25.44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>542.04</td>
<td>14.26</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>974.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several variables did contribute significantly to the model as reflected by the test of parameters. These were community acceptance ($t = 2.69, p < .01$), living situation, i.e., with a lover ($t = 2.25, p < .05$) and developmental stage ($t = 2.06, p < .05$) (see Table 33). Although these three variables contributed significantly to the model, the model was, overall, not significant. Hence, the meaningfulness of these predictions is somewhat tenuous.

$R$ Square. The $R$ Square procedure performs all possible regressions for one or more dependent variables and any number of independent variable(s). Table 34 shows the 1-14 variable models which account for the most variation in the dependent variable, i.e., self esteem. It should be noted that the $R^2$ increased to any noticeable extent only to the 10
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Probability</th>
<th>Standard Error of Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>283.649464241</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>0.2478</td>
<td>241.67745737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>1.42238874</td>
<td>2.06*</td>
<td>0.0458</td>
<td>0.68898055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time between initial and present stage</td>
<td>-0.09470742</td>
<td>-0.98</td>
<td>0.3311</td>
<td>0.09619070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to establish positive identity</td>
<td>-0.08005092</td>
<td>-0.41</td>
<td>0.6871</td>
<td>0.19724686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of self-definition as lesbian</td>
<td>-0.12382633</td>
<td>-1.03</td>
<td>0.3103</td>
<td>0.12042084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable, positive identity</td>
<td>0.09286215</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.0487</td>
<td>1.43310292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time in relationship</td>
<td>-0.26911670</td>
<td>-0.48</td>
<td>0.6357</td>
<td>0.56355792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living situation</td>
<td>1.54789599</td>
<td>2.25*</td>
<td>0.0300</td>
<td>0.68665681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with relationship</td>
<td>-0.20294053</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>0.8593</td>
<td>1.13725740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminism</td>
<td>-2.39753493</td>
<td>-1.26</td>
<td>0.2137</td>
<td>1.89565145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist group</td>
<td>-1.88037229</td>
<td>-1.27</td>
<td>0.2112</td>
<td>1.47848846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay group</td>
<td>-1.08053145</td>
<td>-0.75</td>
<td>0.4553</td>
<td>1.43254370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay literature</td>
<td>0.33122985</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.8105</td>
<td>1.37150077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency going to bars</td>
<td>-0.77969911</td>
<td>-.56</td>
<td>0.1281</td>
<td>0.50118846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with bars</td>
<td>0.34337518</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.7467</td>
<td>1.05535831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of socialization</td>
<td>0.51255289</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.6073</td>
<td>0.98912178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with socialization</td>
<td>0.65302922</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.5429</td>
<td>1.06368384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community acceptance</td>
<td>-8.48317794</td>
<td>-2.69**</td>
<td>0.0106</td>
<td>3.15333654</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05
** p < .01

N = 117
TABLE 34
Summary of R Square Models 1-13
Accounting for Maximal Variance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number in Model</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Variables in Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>COMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>LSIT COMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>DEVS LSIT COMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>DEVS LSIT FBAR COMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>DEVS LSIT FEMG FBAR COMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>DEVS LSIT FEM FEMG FBAR COMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>DEVS LSIT FEM FEMG FBAR FSOC COMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>DEVS LSIT FEM FEMS GLIT FBAR FSOC COMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>DEVS LSIT FEM FEMG GAYS GLIT FBAR FSOC COMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>DEVS LSIT SREL FEM FEMG GAYS GLIT FBAR FSOC COMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>DEVS LSIT SREL FEM FEMG GAYS GLIT FBAR FSOC COMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>DEVS TINV LSIT SREL FEM FEMG GAYS GLIT FBAR FSOC COMA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>DEVS TINV LSIT SREL FEM FEMG GAYS GLIT FBAR FSOC COMA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. COMA = Community Acceptance, LSIT = Living Situation, DEVS = Developmental Stage, FBAR = Frequency of going to bars, FEMG = Feminist group membership, FEM = Feminism, FSOC = Frequency of lesbian/gay socialization, GLIT = Gay/lesbian literature, GAYG = Gay group membership, SREL = Satisfaction with relationship, SSOC = Satisfaction with gay/lesbian socialization, TINV = Time involved in relationship, BARS = Satisfaction with gay/lesbian bars.
variable model. Also, the largest increase in $R^2$ came with community acceptance, living situation and developmental stage.

**Stepwise Regression-Maximum $R$ Improvement Technique.** Stepwise regression procedures utilizing the maximum $R^2$ improvement techniques were used to examine the relationships between self esteem and those subject variables which were expected to be related to self esteem.

According to the SAS Users Guide (1979) this technique is considered to be superior to most other regression techniques in that it does not settle on a single model. Instead, it looks for the "best" one-variable model, the "best" two-variable model, and so forth, until all the independent variables or predictors have been considered. It starts by finding the one-variable model which accounts for the greatest proportion of variance ($R^2$). It then adds the next most useful variable; that is, the one that would add the next greatest increase in variance.

After the two-variable model is found, each of the variables in the model is compared to each variable not yet in the model. For each comparison, "MAXR" determines whether removing one variable and replacing it with another would increase the variance. After comparing all possible switches, the one producing the next largest increase in variance is selected. Comparisons begin again and the process is repeated until no switch could increase the variance. The two variable model thus found is considered the "best" two-variable model. Another variable is then added and the comparing and switching process begins again. The process continues in like manner until all the predictors have been considered.

Table 35 contains the summaries of analysis of variance and related statistics for each model predicting self esteem. Useful predictors for self esteem, in order of their importance, were community acceptance,


TABLE 35
Predictors of Self Esteem

Summary of Analysis of Variance and Related Statistics
for Stepwise Regression using Maximum R² Improvement Technique

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Entered</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community acceptance</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>113.91</td>
<td>113.91</td>
<td>7.15**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>860.65</td>
<td>15.94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>974.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living situation</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>206.38</td>
<td>103.19</td>
<td>7.12**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>768.17</td>
<td>14.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>974.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental stage</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>297.67</td>
<td>99.22</td>
<td>7.62***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>676.88</td>
<td>13.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>974.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist group membership</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>341.28</td>
<td>85.32</td>
<td>6.87***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>633.28</td>
<td>12.42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>974.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of going to bars</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>361.11</td>
<td>72.22</td>
<td>5.89***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>615.44</td>
<td>12.27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>974.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with socialization</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>373.27</td>
<td>62.21</td>
<td>5.07***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>601.28</td>
<td>12.27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>974.55</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminism</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>390.46</td>
<td>55.78</td>
<td>4.58***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>584.10</td>
<td>12.17</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>974.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lapse between Initial and present stage of identity formation</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>398.98</td>
<td>49.87</td>
<td>4.07***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>575.57</td>
<td>12.25</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>974.55</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of self-definition as lesbian</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>411.11</td>
<td>45.68</td>
<td>3.73**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>563.44</td>
<td>12.25</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>974.55</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

* p < .05
** p < .01
*** p < .001
TABLE 35 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Entered</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership in a gay group</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>418.00</td>
<td>41.80</td>
<td>3.38**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
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<td>556.55</td>
<td>12.36</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>974.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of socialization</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>423.11</td>
<td>38.46</td>
<td>3.07**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
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<td>551.45</td>
<td>12.53</td>
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</tr>
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<td>974.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to acquire positive</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>425.75</td>
<td>35.48</td>
<td>2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lesbian identity</td>
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<td>12.76</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>974.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time involved in relationship</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>428.53</td>
<td>32.96</td>
<td>2.54*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>546.10</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>974.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay/lesbian literature</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>430.75</td>
<td>30.77</td>
<td>2.32*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>543.80</td>
<td>13.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>974.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with bars</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>432.05</td>
<td>28.80</td>
<td>2.12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>542.51</td>
<td>13.56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>974.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with relationship</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>432.45</td>
<td>27.03</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>542.10</td>
<td>13.90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>974.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable positive lesbian</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>432.51</td>
<td>25.44</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>identity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>542.04</td>
<td>14.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>974.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $P < .05$
** $P < .01$
*** $P < .001$
living situation (that is, with a lover), and stage of identity formation. Other variables did not add significant increases to the variance explained. The single most important predictor of self esteem in all models was community acceptance. Table 36 gives the best model for predicting self esteem. Again, it should be noted that since the overall model was not found to be significant the meaningfulness of these predictors is somewhat tenuous. Significant predictors indicate that a relationship may exist.

Self Esteem and Identity Acceptance

An additional open-ended question regarded the relationship between positive lesbian identity and positive self image. Eighty-four percent of the respondents indicated that as they came to accept and feel good about their identity they felt better about themselves as a person. Major themes regarding changes in self image were integration, centeredness, confidence, wholeness, and free and at ease with oneself. Several wimmin indicated that acceptance of lesbian identity had not changed their self image. However, many of these wimmin had either always felt good about themselves or had changed their views of self as they came to accept themselves as a person. In addition, a number of wimmin indicated that the acquisition of a feminist ideology was the major factor in feeling good about themselves.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B Value</th>
<th>STD Error</th>
<th>Type II SS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>283.64946242</td>
<td>0.68988055</td>
<td>60.79566658</td>
<td>4.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>1.42238874</td>
<td>0.09619070</td>
<td>13.82775895</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lapse between initial and present identity stage</td>
<td>-0.09470742</td>
<td>0.09619070</td>
<td>13.82775895</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to acquire positive identity</td>
<td>-0.08005092</td>
<td>0.19724686</td>
<td>2.34942965</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of self-definition as lesbian</td>
<td>-0.12382633</td>
<td>0.12042084</td>
<td>15.08247600</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable positive lesbian identity</td>
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<td>0.05989253</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time in relationship</td>
<td>0.26911670</td>
<td>0.56355792</td>
<td>3.25277570</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living situation</td>
<td>1.54789599</td>
<td>0.68665681</td>
<td>72.48508179</td>
<td>5.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with relationship</td>
<td>-0.20294033</td>
<td>1.13725740</td>
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<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminism</td>
<td>-2.39753493</td>
<td>1.89565145</td>
<td>22.81722656</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist group membership</td>
<td>1.88037229</td>
<td>1.47848846</td>
<td>23.0787700</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership in gay group</td>
<td>-1.08053145</td>
<td>1.43254370</td>
<td>8.11538279</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay literature</td>
<td>0.33122985</td>
<td>1.37150077</td>
<td>0.83198743</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of going to bars</td>
<td>-0.77969911</td>
<td>0.50118846</td>
<td>34.52247254</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with bars</td>
<td>0.34337518</td>
<td>1.05535831</td>
<td>1.51003799</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of socialization</td>
<td>0.51255289</td>
<td>0.98912178</td>
<td>3.83025590</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with socialization</td>
<td>0.65302922</td>
<td>1.06368384</td>
<td>5.37638115</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community acceptance</td>
<td>-8.48317794</td>
<td>3.15333654</td>
<td>103.23487804</td>
<td>7.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05.
CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Efforts to obtain an adequate number of lesbians for this sample were quite successful. The return rate for questionnaires was estimated to be approximately 30 percent. This rate of return is generally considered to be quite adequate in survey research.

Overall, the results did not conform to predicted expectations. The reasons for this will be discussed in relation to each variable in question. There were, however, some areas of exception. Generally, predictions involving socialization and disclosure variables were found. The study was particularly beneficial in suggesting questions to be explored in future research. The contributions, strengths and weaknesses of this study will be discussed in four sections: (1) representativeness of the sample, (2) relationships among subject variables, (3) the prediction of self esteem, and (4) other relationships. A summary of the results and suggestions for future research will be discussed in a final section.

Representatives of the Sample

It is generally acknowledged that lesbians are an invisible, stigmatized minority group, a "discreditable" group in Goffman's (1963, p. 5) terms. Hence, it is difficult to obtain an entirely representative sample. Specifically, there is a tendency to obtain samples composed of wimmin in the more advanced stages of same sex preference identity formation,
that is, wimmin who feel good about this identity and who are fairly open about it. In a word, samples tend to be self-selecting. Those wimmin who are less certain regarding their identity are often covert and socially isolated and, hence are either unavailable for research purposes or are disinclined to answer questionnaires. In general, the defining characteristic of this segment of the population, that is, covertness, is exactly what makes it difficult to obtain information from them. Virtually the only method of reaching this group is the friendship network, and even this requires a certain degree of disclosure.

The aforementioned sampling problem is evident in this study. Most wimmin located themselves in the more advanced stages of identity formation, that is, stages five, six, or seven. They had definitely identified themselves as lesbian and felt relatively good about this. In fact, most felt positive about this identity a majority of the time. Since there were so few wimmin (N = 8) in the initial identity stages, it appears that this segment of the lesbian population was not adequately represented. Hence, caution should be exercised in generalizing the findings of this study to the lesbian population in general.

The sample was representative on many of the demographic dimensions. With the exception of one womyn in her sixties, the age of respondents fell within the 20-49 age range. It would have been valuable to have had a number of wimmin in the 50- and 60-year age group. These individuals would have begun the identity formation process in the 1940s and 1950s, a time period quite different from our own on many of the social factors which may affect self-esteem. In addition, it would have been informative to have had wimmin in their teens in the sample. Differences in the
identity formation process may be evident with this group, due to socio-
historical effects such as the entrenchment of liberationist ideology.

Questionnaires were returned from both the U.S. and Canada. Al-
though most of these came from large cities, every size community was
included. The size of city while growing up was also evenly distributed
in the sample.

Although the sample was representative in terms of time in present
job, educational level, occupation, and income, a large proportion of the
wimmin were highly homogeneous on these variables. Specifically, an un-
expected number of respondents were highly educated with professional
positions and high income levels. In addition, 10 percent of those
making under $15,000 were presently students studying for graduate de-
grees. Hence, these income levels do not represent a permanent status,
and therefore give no indication of social class. Eventually these wimmin
will probably fall into the middle class. According to Statistics and Revenue
Canada (1981) the average income for this sample, that is, $15,000, puts
this group in the upper 3 percent of all Canadian wimmin and, in all
probability, an even higher percentage of the American population. It is
of great interest that so many of these wimmin were so well educated with
well paying high-status occupations. For the most part lesbians cannot
depend upon a second income as many straight wimmin can. Therefore, it
is not surprising that these wimmin are such high achievers. The sample
was also representative in terms of religion. Although many of the re-
spondents indicated that their religion was of the mainline variety,
that is, Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish, it was obvious from many of the
written-in comments that while these may have been the religion of child-
hood they are not presently practicing this religion. Also, a number of
wimmin indicated "other" as a religious preference. It would have been
interesting to have had specific questions which would tap information on
both practice and the specifics of the "other" category.

The sample was not representative with regard to parental status,
living with child(ren) or marital status. Almost all of the wimmin were not
parents and a majority of the respondents had never been married although
some were divorced. Hence, the results of this study may not be generaliz-
able to wimmin who fall within these categories. Considering recent changes
regarding methods of conception, that is, artificial insemination, it would
be beneficial to determine whether those who were parents had them by
previous marriages or by the aforementioned techniques. Another point of
interest was the discrepancy between parental status and the child(ren)'s
living situation. Several wimmin did not have children currently living
with them. It would have been informative to know if this was by choice or
due to the decisions of a legal system which often deems lesbian mothers to
be " unfit".

The sample was representative with regard to self esteem ($\bar{x} = 33.45;
s.d. = 4.5$). Both the mean and standard deviation compare well with the
norms for the female college educated sample reported by Jackson ($\bar{x} = 34.2;
s.d. = 4.1$) in the test manual (Jackson, 1976).

Although there are some problems with the representativeness of the
sample, overall it stands up well when compared with many of the other
studies which have dealt with either lesbian identity formation or self
esteem. This sample is less select than Cass' (1979) in that she utilized
only those who were having problems with their identity. It is more repre-
sentative than Bell, Weinberg and Hammersmith's (1981) sample in terms of
the higher levels of education and occupation. The majority of their sample
had only some college education with the consequent lack of representation of professional wimmin. Although income levels were not reported by Bell et al., it is safe to assume that the upper income ranges were not as representative as they are in the present sample. The wimmin in this study are similar to both those in Jay's (1979) and Bell's (1978) on several dimensions, such as occupation, income, religion, size of community, and age. This speaks well of the representativeness of the present sample in that both of the other samples were considerably larger (Jay, N = 962; Bell & Weinberg, N = 675). This sample appears to be most similar to Moses' (1978). Although the focus of her study was different (lesbian identity management), the methodology was very similar (questionnaires distributed through friendship networks and lesbian gatherings).

Expected Relationships

A number of relationships were predicted with regard to self esteem and other variables. Several relationships of the latter type were found while few of the expected relationships with self esteem were significant. It should be noted that confidence in the results is somewhat limited due to the extremely homogeneous nature of the sample in terms of demographic and identity formation variables. Therefore, many of the variables had low variances which could reduce the chance of obtaining significant correlations. This sample, because of its homogeneity also presents some problems in making comparisons with studies that had more heterogeneous samples.

Self Esteem

The major focus of this study was the relationship between self esteem and other variables. One major hypothesis having a number of corollaries was advanced. For the most part these predictions were not substantiated. The following section contains a discussion of these predicted relationships.
The major hypothesis of this study stated that there would be a relationship between self esteem and identity formation. Although this relationship was found, the correlation was not high enough to give one a great deal of confidence in supporting the hypothesis. Although the sample was representative with regard to self esteem ($\bar{x} = 33.45$, s.d. = 4.5), it was unrepresentative with regard to the initial stages of identity formation found between stage and self esteem. So few wimmin placed themselves in the initial stages of identity formation that highly significant differences in self esteem related to differences in stage could not be observed. Had the sample been more representative with regard to stage, the relationship with self esteem might have been higher. Some support for this possibility was found in the open-ended question designed to tap this relationship. Most wimmin indicated that they had acquired more positive views of self as they had accepted their lesbian identity.

**Identity Variables and Self Esteem**

Although predictions were made for self esteem, stable positive lesbian identity, time to acquire positive identity, year of self-definition and time between initial and present identity stage, none of these relationships were found. As has been stated in the previous section, it is possible that differences with regard to stable positive lesbian identity may not show up due to the fact that most wimmin felt good regarding this identity a majority of the time. It is interesting to note that the measure of depression had a high negative correlation with self esteem and also was negatively correlated with the aforementioned identity variable. Thus, an alternative explanation for the lack of relationship among these variables and self esteem may have been that while the uncertainty and confusion regarding this new identity is related to depression, feeling better
regarding the identity does not necessarily result in higher self esteem. Depression is a more transitory state than self esteem so that one may well feel depressed while adjusting to and integrating the new identity, yet successful integration of the new identity may not result in higher global self esteem. It is especially difficult to measure self esteem in relation to identity formation process as it was impossible to ascertain what level of self esteem respondents had before they began this process. It would perhaps be more beneficial to study more transitory states such as depression and anxiety in relation to identity formation.

Self Esteem and Sociohistorical Variables

Predictions were also made with regard to the sociohistorical identity variables of time to acquire positive identity, year of self-definition, time between initial and present identity stage, and self esteem. It was thought that older wimmin who defined themselves as lesbian and came out at an earlier time, that is before liberationist movements in which the negative connotations and lack of support for this identity was paramount, would not have as high self esteem levels as younger wimmin who had had more support. This was not found to be the case, perhaps due to the retrospective nature of these variables. While older wimmin may have had lower self esteem than younger wimmin upon first defining self and coming out, over time they may have received support and ideological justification so that this difference would not be evident now. With regard to time between initial and present identity stage, it was thought that older wimmin would take more time to go through stages, and as McDonald (1982) states, the longer the time between self-definition and stabilization of this identity, that is, the more time spent in identity confusion, the more negative one's self-evaluation. Older wimmin did take longer to reach present stage, but
again this is retrospective, so that any difference in self esteem due to longer time between initial and present identity stage would not be seen now.

Disclosure and Self Esteem

Predictions were also made with regard to reactions to disclosure and self esteem, that is, accepting-rejecting. None of these were found. Yet, chi square analyses revealed a relationship between the reactions of target persons of disclosure with other sex preferences and self esteem. Negative reactions to disclosure from these individuals were related to lower self esteem. The reaction of other groups, that is, family members, work colleagues, was not related to self esteem. One may be able to escape the censure of specific individuals, such as family members, yet the opinion of target persons of disclosure with other sex preferences as representatives of the majority in society is virtually inescapable. This supports Weinberg and Williams' (1974) contention that lower self esteem is found in those who have had negative reactions to disclosure. These authors also indicated that the importance of the target was a factor in self esteem. This was not supported. It is possible that when certain important target persons respond to disclosure in a rejecting manner, they are denigrated and, hence, seen as less important. Indeed, Cass (1979) suggests that straight individuals who are rejecting may themselves be rejected (p. 233). If this had occurred prior to completing the questionnaire it would be impossible to determine the importance of the target at the time of disclosure so that the relationship of target importance and self esteem would not be evident.
Socialization Variables and Self-Esteem

The next set of predictions was made with regard to self-esteem and the socialization variables of community involvement, perceived community acceptance, satisfaction with socialization, commitment to relationship, feminist ideology, political activity, and role model. Of these variables community acceptance was the only correlate of the major hypothesis which was found. Community acceptance was moderately correlated with self-esteem. This seems to support Fein and Nuehring's (1982) notion that "The personal fear, shame and feelings of disorientation will begin to be resolved and self esteem increased only with social validation of the undesired self image through positive interaction with the subculture" (p. 10). Also, Cass indicates that what is important for self esteem is not the degree but the quality of community involvement for the individual.

None of the other socialization variables were related to self-esteem. The proportion of the sample having a role model was quite low, so it is not surprising that a relationship with self-esteem was not found. The lack of relationship between either overall degree of political activity, feminism and self-esteem was questionable as a good number of wimmin indicated in the open-ended question that they had begun to feel more positive about themselves with the acquisition of a feminist ideology. The lack of relationship may again be due to an unrepresentativeness of the sample with regard to nonfeminists. Since feminism was a component of political activity, this sample bias could also have affected this relationship.

Neither satisfaction with socialization nor community involvement were related to self-esteem. Satisfaction with socialization deals with
satisfaction with individuals with whom one usually socializes. It seems that this component of socialization is not as important for self-esteem as the more general concept of acceptance by the community in general. Cass (1979) states that what is important for self-esteem is not the degree but quality of community involvement. Hence, it is not surprising that community acceptance (quality) is related to self-esteem, whereas community involvement (degree) is not.

Commitment to relationship was not related to self-esteem, yet one component of this composite measure, that is, living with one's partner, was a significant predictor of self-esteem.

The Prediction of Self-Esteem

The relative predictive power of certain variables for predicting self-esteem had not been previously studied, and was therefore an exploratory part of this study. Several regression analyses were performed utilizing the variables which were thought to be related to self-esteem. Community acceptance was the single best predictor of self-esteem in all regression models. Living with one's partner and developmental stage were also significant predictors in all models.

The overall model for the prediction of self-esteem was not significant, hence the meaningfulness of the aforementioned significant predictors is questionable. It seems likely that the homogeneous nature of the sample again played a part in the questionable nature of these results.

Expected Relationships among Subject Variables

In addition to the predictions dealing with self-esteem a number of
other predictions involving relationships between subject variables were made. A number of these were found. The following section discusses the relationships.

One of the most important expected relationships among subject variables was between stage of identity formation and stable, positive lesbian identity. This relationship was found. A central feature of most theories of same sex identity formation, such as Cass' (1979), is that as one progresses through the developmental sequence, there will be a concurrent increase in positive feelings regarding one's identity. Hammer-smith and Weinberg (1973) have stated that, "commitment to an identity involves a preference for that identity" (p. 63). The correlation between stage and stable, positive identity was only moderate. It is quite likely that this was due to the restricted variance of both variables. Additional support for the relationship is found in the average time required to establish a positive lesbian identity (3.2 years), and also in the finding that 35.5 percent of this sample established a positive identity within one year.

Socialization and Identity Variables

None of the predicted relationships between identity and socialization variables were found. This may well have been due to the restricted variance of the identity variables.

Stage was not related to community involvement, separatism nor feminism. Since the first two relationships were so central to theories of same sex identity formation, such as (Cass, 1979), chi square analyses were performed. In both cases only stages five, six and seven were
utilized. Cass (1979) posited that both community involvement and separatism would be highest in stage six. Community involvement was highest in stage seven, with all levels of involvement being represented. The variation in involvement for those in stage seven may have been due to their commitment in a relationship. Commitment is negatively related to involvement so that they may be focusing their energy on their relationship. No relationship was found for separatism. This was probably due to the fact that so few wimmin placed themselves in stage six. Feminism and stage were not related. Since 77 percent of the wimmin were feminists, the variance is quite restricted, which may well have been problematic.

The expected relationship between positive lesbian identity and community involvement was not found. Most wimmin had stable identities so that an association would not be evident.

The relationship between educational level and lapse between initial and present stage was not found. It was thought that higher education would increase one's ability to accept new concepts such as a lesbian identity. It is possible that formal education is not particularly helpful in the task of identity formation. This may depend upon other factors, such as personality strengths and social skills.
Associations with Passing and Disclosure

Some of the predicted relationships between disclosure or passing and other variables were found. Passing and disclosure were highly negatively correlated. This supports the contention of most identity theorists that as one becomes more comfortable with their identity individuals become less fearful of being 'discovered' and, hence pass less and disclose more. Several relationships which were found indicate that the relationship between passing and disclosure may not be as clearcut as these theories propose. Also, both passing (negative) and disclosure (positive) were related to stage of same sex identity formation.

Neither stable, positive lesbian identity nor community involvement were related to passing or disclosure. With regard to stable identity, most wimmin had very stable identities so a relationship may not have been evident for this reason. Chi-square analyses were performed for the predictions. While these were not significant for disclosure, both passing and stable identity, and passing and involvement were significant. Stable identity was associated with low or moderate passing. It is possible that with more positive feelings toward one's identity, one is less fearful of being 'found out' and, hence passes less but will continue to be selective in their disclosure with regard to the second chi square analysis. High degrees of community involvement were associated with extremes of passing. Community involvement involves different types of groups. If one is highly involved in a radical support group passing may be very low; conversely it may be very high with a covert group. Cass' (1979) theory suggests this possibility.

It seems evident from these relationships that both passing and dis...
closure are quite complex, both in themselves and in relation to each other. It would be beneficial to study these in-depth.

Other expected relationships with either passing or disclosure were not found. The prediction of a negative association between passing and feminism and a positive relationship between disclosure and feminism were not found. While a feminist ideology per se was not related to less passing, membership in a feminist group was. This supports Adam's (1978) contention that both an ideology and a support group are necessary for changes in behavior to occur. Disclosure was not related to feminism or feminist group membership. This appears to be another instance where extreme covert behavior decreases, while disclosure remains somewhat selective.

The expected correlation between degree of disclosure and the year in which one 'came out' was not found. Other studies which have examined the relationship between sociohistorical factors and disclosure (e.g., Elliott, 1981) have found that the era in which one 'came out' was an important predictor of disclosure. Specifically, in other samples wimmin who have come out more recently tended to disclose a great deal more than their older counterparts did. This finding did not hold true for this sample. It is quite likely that in light of the changes in both lesbian community support for disclosure and increased toleration by society in general, that older wimmin have become less fearful of disclosure. Hence, over time older wimmin may have begun to disclose more. It would be beneficial to study this possibility specifically.
Disclosure and Demographic Variables. It was thought that social class would be positively related to disclosure. Ferguson and Finkler (1978) state that low-paying, insecure jobs are related to anxiety, and hence have a constraining effect on disclosure. None of the social class variables, that is, income, occupation, were related to disclosure. This may have been due to the fact that this sample was somewhat biased in favor of upper-middle class wimmin.

The predicted positive relationship between degree of passing and living with child(ren) was not found. Since the sample was unrepresentative in terms of lesbian mothers, it is doubtful if this relationship would be evident.

Socialization Variables

Several relationships between socialization and other variables were predicted. Several of these were found. Living with child(ren) and community involvement were not correlated, yet few wimmin were parents, so this lack of relationship is not surprising. A chi square analysis revealed a relationship between moderate community involvement and living with child(ren). These wimmin may interact with others in their homes, read gay literature, and feel satisfied with this; yet avoid the more public, and hence threatening bar situation.

Separatism was associated with community involvement and size of city. As previously mentioned, separatism refers to exclusivity of lesbian/gay interactions not necessarily politically motivated, so that the relationship between separatism and community involvement is not particularly meaningful. Size of city is indicative of size and diversity of lesbian/gay community. Size was related to separatism as predicted.
Certainly wimmin in larger areas would have a greater opportunity to be more exclusive in their lesbian/gay interactions. Separatism and feminism were unrelated. Since most wimmin were feminists, the lack of relationship may have been due to this restricted variance.

Size was not related to either community involvement or feminism. With regard to involvement, it is possible that wimmin in smaller communities have less options for involvement, yet may fully utilize the limited resources available. Regarding feminism and city size, as mentioned in an earlier section, feminist views may now be so prevalent in society that one does not have to live in a larger area in order to attain this ideology. Also, most of the wimmin in the sample were feminists, so that the variance was again restricted.

Other Correlations

There were a number of other correlations which not having been predicted were of interest. Many of these have been discussed in relation to the predicted correlations as they were useful in elucidating certain findings. Other significant correlations which have not been previously discussed fall within three groups: 1) those related to identity change, that is, attempts to change one's identity from lesbian to heterosexual, 2) sociohistorical factors, and 3) miscellaneous correlations.

No specific predictions were made with regard to attempts to change one's identity. This was to be investigated in terms of methods and outcomes of change. A number of variables were related to change. These help to elucidate its significance. Attempts to change one's identity were related to higher education levels. It was thought that change would be related to inability to deal with one's lesbian identity. Perhaps more
educated individuals felt that such a negative identity would be particularly threatening to their careers. Change was negatively associated with stable positive identity. Most subjective comments regarding outcome of change indicated that they had returned to a lesbian orientation and felt good about this. Hence, perhaps they felt positive regarding their lesbian identity but this had not stabilized. There was no way to ascertain time elapsed from change to present time, so that the attempted change may have been quite recent. Passing was negatively correlated with change so that once individuals had attempted to change and return to a lesbian identity, they may have felt more positive and certain regarding this identity. It is interesting to note that change was positively correlated with rejecting reactions to discovery, and negatively correlated with accepting reactions. This does not support Cass' (1979) notion that rejecting reactions will decrease incongruency and, hence, increase ideology formation. Perhaps this occurs, but attempts to change intervene.

Many significant correlations were found with regard to socio-historical factors. Overall, younger wimmin took less time to achieve a positive lesbian identity, had a shorter time lapse between initial and present stage of identity formation. They tended to be more involved with the community, political, committed to religion, satisfied with socialization, likely to interact exclusively with lesbians and gays, and had had more positive reactions to disclosure. On the other hand, older wimmin, while having benefited from the changes in both society in general and the lesbian subculture in particular, seem not to have internalized the ideological changes, such as politicalization. It is surprising that
younger wimmin are more committed to relationships. Perhaps this is simply an age related phenomenon. Having a relationship may be more important to younger wimmin due to societal expectations.

Wimmin who took longer to go through stages had less stable identity and a lower identity category. This supports McDonald's (1982) statement that the longer time taken to go through the stages the less positive one feels regarding the identity.

There were several other significant correlations which provide important information yet do not fit with any particular theme. It was found that mainline religious affiliation, as opposed to either fringe or no-religious affiliation, was negatively associated with feminist groups and stable, positive identity. Hence, affiliation with groups that present such a negative view of lesbian identity is not helpful in making one feel good about it. Comments by wimmin regarding religion showed many do not currently practice, yet no members are known, so it is difficult to say whether these wimmin are presently being exposed to such discriminatory attitudes. Negative association with mainline religion and feminine group shows that some wimmin may be influenced by the traditional ideology of many doctrinaire religions regarding feminism.

Another interesting correlation was the positive one found between lesbian/gay group membership and satisfaction with bars. Feminist ideology typically rejects relationships not founded in friendship and mutual respect, whereas many lesbian and, especially gay groups, seem to not find this an important issue (Martin, 1972; Brown, 1975). In the opinion of this and other gay and lesbian writers, bars are not particu-
larly conducive to mutual respect because of the emphasis on casual and sexual liaisons (see Brown, 1975). It was clear that highly political lesbians tended to be better educated. Perhaps these wimmin found it easier to be open to a politicized ideology and apply this in practical terms.

Summary of Results and Recommendations for Future Research

Although only a small number of the predicted relationships were found, a great deal of information was obtained from these. Other unpredicted yet significant relationships added to the usefulness of the study. It should be noted that all of the predicted relationships were in the expected direction.

The following expected relationships were found. A moderate positive relationship was found between stage and stable positive lesbian identity. Separatism, that is, exclusivity of lesbian/gay specialization, was related to size of community and to community involvement. Both of these were in the positive direction. Commitment to a relationship was negatively related to community involvement. Additionally, the more time one spends in a relationship the greater frequency of socializing with friends, but less satisfaction with bars.

Passing was negatively related to disclosure. Chi square analyses revealed that stable identity resulted in low or moderate passing. Community involvement was related to extremes of passing, that is, very high or very low. Neither of these variables were related to disclosure. Living with children was related to moderate community involvement. This involvement was thought to be private rather than public in nature.
The major focus of this study was the self esteem. Very few of the predicted relationships were found. The only hypothesis advanced was that of a relationship between self esteem and identity formation. While this was found, the correlation was quite low. This may have been due to the fact that most wimmin were in the more advanced stages. While findings from the open-ended question dealing with this relationship offered some support for the hypothesis, it is possible that the manner in which this question was stated may have presented some demand characteristics, so that the positive aspect of identity development may have been emphasized. Most wimmin stated that they began to feel more positive about themselves as they accepted their lesbian identity. Community acceptance was moderately correlated with self esteem. This was also the best overall predictor of self esteem. Stage of identity formation and living with one's lover were also significant predictors. The confidence in these variables as predictors is somewhat tenuous as the overall model was not significant.

Sociohistorical variables indicated that younger wimmin have had a swifter and more supportive identity development, and are more likely to be involved with the community. Attempts to change one's orientation from lesbian to nonlesbian were associated with rejecting reactions to identity disclosure, and led to less passing but less stable positive identities. Another interesting relationship was found between association with gay group and satisfaction with the bars and feminist groups and dissatisfaction. Wimmin who were in lesbian and gay groups were also less educated. Mainline religious affiliations were negatively associated
with feminist group affiliation and less stable positive identity.

The study was unique in that no other investigators have focused on the relationship between identity formation and self esteem in lesbians. Hence, even nonsignificant findings here are especially important for future study. While being basically exploratory in nature, the finding that predictors of self esteem, that is, socialization factors, were significant, is a good basis for further study. Sociohistorical factors and interruptions in the identity formation process, that is, change identity, have never been fully investigated, yet findings here indicate that this is an important factor for identity.

The study as a whole had several limitations. The most serious of these was the sampling technique. Most of the wimmin in the sample were in the more advanced stages of identity formation and had fairly positive identities so that the variance was restricted with regard to identity variables. Apparently, questionnaires did not reach wimmin in the less advanced stages. Perhaps friendship networks could have been more fully utilized in order to reach more covert wimmin. Also, contacts with lesbian and feminist counseling centers would help to locate wimmin who are less sure of their identity. While this method is problematic in its focus on wimmin who feel they need professional help, it would provide a more heterogeneous sample than the forced-choice format utilized here. An interview format would be more beneficial in locating relationships. This would also help in understanding questions which of necessity are retrospective, such as reactions to disclosure. Although the measure of self-esteem utilized in the study, that is, a subscale of the Jackson Personality Inventory, is quite good, it may have been beneficial to have had
a lengthier measure of this. Also, an open-ended question dealing with self-esteem would have been beneficial. Based on the findings in this study, some ideas for future research presented themselves:

1. Formulation of a lesbian identity formation theory.

2. More in-depth investigation of passing and disclosure in relation to other variables.

3. Longitudinal studies to avoid the necessity for retrospective information.

4. Study of younger lesbians with regard to "coming out" and identity formation in general.

5. Study of older women in their fifties and sixties to determine changes they have made since the political changes in the lesbian world.

6. Study of more transitory states such as depression and anxiety in relation to identity formation.

7. Investigation of lesbian mothers with regard to their community involvement.

APPENDIX
APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER FOR LESBIAN INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE
LESBIAN INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

If you are (or think that you might be) lesbian, please take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. It has only been recently that research on lesbians has focused on the ordinary, everyday issues with which we must deal. As a result, many questions remain unanswered. It is only through the co-operation of lesbians like you that some of these questions can be answered, and in so doing, correct some of the widespread misconceptions about us. Please be assured that this process is completely anonymous.

This study is designed to find out what lesbians think and feel about themselves and how you deal with certain issues in your everyday experience. While many features of your life are similar to straight people, there are many things you must deal with that straights don't have to worry about.

This questionnaire is fairly brief, but the information gained from a few minutes of your time will be invaluable. Knowing more facts may help to make your life and the lives of wimmin in the future somewhat easier.

ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

I am presently a student at the University of Windsor. This study will be the last step in obtaining my M.A.

I believe that it is time for research which focuses specifically on lesbians so that we can offset some of the discrimination which we presently experience.

Thanks for your help.
APPENDIX B

LESBIAN INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE
LESBIAN INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS, CIRCILING THE ALTERNATIVE, OR WHERE INDICATED, FILLING IN THE BLANK THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOU. REMEMBER: DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THIS SURVEY.

PART A

1. Age:

2. City I am currently living in (or near):

3. Size of place where I currently live:
   1. large city
   2. medium-sized city
   3. small city
   4. small town
   5. town
   6. country

4. When I was growing up, I lived mostly in a:
   1. large city
   2. medium-sized city
   3. small city
   4. small town
   5. town
   6. country

5. Occupation: (if retired or unemployed, answer in terms of the work you used to do or usually do)

6. Length of time in my present job
   1. less than a year
   2. 1-3 years
   3. more than 3 years
   4. more than 5 years

7. Highest education level I have obtained
   1. some high school
   2. high school graduate
   3. some university or community college
   4. community college degree
   5. university undergraduate degree
   6. graduate or professional degree
8. What is your religion?
   1. Protestant
   2. Catholic
   3. Jewish
   4. Other
   5. None

9. Do you have any children?
   1. Yes
   2. No

10. Are any of your children living with you now?
    1. Yes
    2. No

11. My average annual income is:
    1. Less than 5,000
    2. 5,000 - 9,999
    3. 10,000 - 14,999
    4. 15,000 - 24,999
    5. 25,000 - 34,999
    6. Over 35,000

12. I am presently:
    1. single and never married
    2. single, but have been married
    3. married, but not living with my husband
    4. married, and living with my husband

PART II

13. Read all of this question before answering.
    (a) Circle the number of the alternative which best describes
        you right now.
    (b) Next, in the space before each alternative, indicate the age
        at which these described you in the past. If any of these
        statements have never described you, please leave the space
        before it blank.
        Please do BOTH parts of the question.

AGE

1. first awareness that my feelings may be called homosexual
   but still define self as heterosexual
2. begin to change self-definition from heterosexual to homo-
   sexual and feel alienated from heterosexual world
3. definitely consider self homosexual yet no contact with gay
   community
4. first contact with gay community
5. acquired a positive homosexual identity (feel glad to be
   homosexual)
6. first define self as lesbian and feel this is the most important part of who I am
7. I feel good about being lesbian but this is not the most important part of who I am

14. I feel good about being lesbian

15. I have attempted to change my sexual orientation from homosexual to heterosexual.
1. Yes
2. No

16. If you answered yes above, how did you attempt to do this?

17. What was the outcome of this attempt?

18. Using the scale given below, please circle the number of the alternatives which most closely describes how you think of yourself.
1. exclusively heterosexual
2. largely heterosexual but with distinct homosexual history
3. equally heterosexual and homosexual
4. largely homosexual but with distinct heterosexual history
5. largely homosexual but with incidental heterosexual history
6. entirely homosexual

PART III

For each question circle the number of the alternative which best describes you.

19. I currently have a lover/partner.
1. Yes
2. No

20. If you answered yes above, how long have you been involved?
1. less than 1 month
2. between 1-6 months
3. 6 months - 1 year
4. 1-5 years
5. over 5 years
21. I am currently living
   1. by myself
   2. with parent(s)
   3. with lover/partner
   4. with gay person who is not my lover
   5. with straight friend(s)
   6. other

22. If you currently have a relationship with another woman, how would you describe this relationship?
   1. extremely satisfactory
   2. satisfactory
   3. unsatisfactory
   4. extremely unsatisfactory

23. I consider myself to be a feminist.
   1. Yes
   2. No

24. I belong to a feminist group(s)
   1. Yes
   2. No

25. I belong to group(s) designed to further the cause of lesbian/gay people.
   1. Yes
   2. No

26. I subscribe to or read regularly magazines or newspapers by and for the lesbian/gay community.
   1. Yes
   2. No

27. I go to lesbian/gay bars about
   1. once a week or more
   2. 2 or 3 times a month
   3. once a month
   4. several times a year
   5. occasionally
   6. never

28. I would describe my feelings about lesbian gay bars as
   1. extremely satisfactory
   2. satisfactory
   3. unsatisfactory
   4. extremely unsatisfactory

29. I have social contact with other lesbians and gays (besides your partner) about
   1. once a week or more
   2. 2 or 3 times a month
   3. once a month
   4. several times a year
   5. occasionally
   6. never
30. I would describe my feelings about these contacts as
   1. extremely satisfactory
   2. satisfactory
   3. unsatisfactory
   4. extremely unsatisfactory

31. Approximately (circle the number) of my close friends are lesbian/gay.
   1. all
   2. most
   3. more than half
   4. about half
   5. less than half
   6. only a few
   7. none

32. Approximately (circle the number) of my leisure time is spent socializing with lesbian/gay people as compared with straight people.
   1. all
   2. most
   3. more than half
   4. about half
   5. less than half
   6. only a few
   7. none

33. I consider the most important group in my life to be (circle only one)
   1. lesbian wimmin (not partner)
   2. gay men
   3. straight female friends
   4. straight male friends

34. There is or has been a special person who has provided me with guidance and support in my lesbian experiences.
   1. Yes
   2. No

35. Overall, I feel that I have been accepted as a person by members of a lesbian/gay community.
   1. Yes
   2. No
PART IV

36. With which of the following people have you been generally open about your sexual identity? If any of these are not applicable to you just mark N/A, e.g., if you have no children or your mother died before you defined yourself as homosexual.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>No</th>
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<td>Close gay friend(s)</td>
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<td>Gay people in general</td>
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<td>Close straight friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Straight people in general</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

37. Now indicate how important it is to you that each of the following persons has (or had if deceased) a good opinion of you. Check the space as close to or as far from "very important" as characterizes your feelings. If you have no such relationship, for example, you have no children, just mark Not Applicable (N/A) in the appropriate space.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Mother</td>
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<tr>
<td>Straight people in general</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
38. How have each of the following persons reacted to finding out that you are lesbian? If a person does not know that you are a lesbian, just mark Not Applicable (N/A).

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<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>0</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accepting (or it would not matter)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding (but not accepting)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tolerant (but not understanding)</td>
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<td>Intolerant (but not rejecting)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rejecting</td>
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</table>

39. From which of the following people have you actively tried to conceal your sexual identity? If any of these are not applicable to you just mark N/A, for example, if you have no children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
40. a) The first person with whom I was open about my sexual identity was

b) Their reaction at the time I disclosed was

c) Their reaction made me feel


d) I was (fill in age) at this time

PART V

41. Read each of the following statements and decide whether it describes you or not. If you agree with a statement or decide that it describes you, answer TRUE = T in the appropriate column. If you feel it is not descriptive of you, answer FALSE = F. Answer every statement either true or false.

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.1</td>
<td>My daily life is full of things that keep me interested.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b.1</td>
<td>I make a better follower than a leader.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a.3</td>
<td>I am usually quite confident when learning a new game or sport.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b.4</td>
<td>I have never been a very popular person.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b.5</td>
<td>I rarely feel self-conscious in a strange group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b.6</td>
<td>I am not the type of person one remembers after one meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b.7</td>
<td>It is easy for me to strike up a conversation with someone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a.8</td>
<td>I am about as able to work as I ever was.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a.9</td>
<td>I am at ease when I am meeting new people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a.10</td>
<td>I find it hard to keep my mind on a task or job.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b.11</td>
<td>I am seldom at a loss for words.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b.12</td>
<td>My behavior would be quite awkward if I had to apply for a loan from a bank.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a.13</td>
<td>I seldom worry about my health.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b.14</td>
<td>I am considered a leader in my social circle.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a.15</td>
<td>I have had periods of days, weeks or months when I couldn't take care of things because I couldn't &quot;get going&quot;.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b.16</td>
<td>I often wish that I were more outgoing.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b.17</td>
<td>I wish I could be as happy as others seem to be.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

a Depression items
b Self esteem items
PART V continued...

b18. I seem to be about as capable and smart as most others around me.  TRUE FALSE
b19. I enjoy stating my opinion in front of a group.  TRUE FALSE
b20. I seem to do more listening than talking in conversations with others.  TRUE FALSE
b21. People seem to be interested in getting to know me better.  TRUE FALSE
b22. I like to remain unnoticed when others are around.  TRUE FALSE
a23. I do not worry about catching diseases.  TRUE FALSE
a24. I am troubled by attacks of nausea and vomiting.  TRUE FALSE
b25. I usually try to add a little zest to a party.  TRUE FALSE
b26. I have trouble expressing my opinion.  TRUE FALSE
b27. I am able to talk intelligently to people in a wide variety of occupations.  TRUE FALSE
b28. I prefer to go to social functions with a group of people so as not to stand out.  TRUE FALSE
a29. I work under a great deal of tension.  TRUE FALSE
b30. I find it easy to introduce people.  TRUE FALSE

b31. It is very important that you answer this last question as it is central to the study.  

Depression items
Self esteem items

As you have come to accept and feel good about your homosexual identity, did this (or did it not) change your view of yourself, for example, do you feel better about yourself as a person. Now, please indicate the way in which your view of yourself has changed.

________________________________________________________________________

You have almost completed your part in this study. Please make sure that you have answered all the questions. Now, the only thing left to do is mail the questionnaire. It's easy to forget that part, so please do it right away so that I can complete this essential project. If you're mailing from the U.S. a 20¢ stamp is adequate (30¢ in Canada). Here's the address:

Susan E. Wright
Psychology Department
University of Windsor
Windsor, Ontario
N9B 3P4

If you would like to know the results of the study, please send a note to me at the above address. I'll send a summary to you as soon as the study is completed.

Thanks again for your help.
REFERENCE NOTE

REFERENCES


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Schwartz, M., Pearn, G. F. N., & Stryker, S. *A note on self conception and the emotionally disturbed role.* Sociometry, 1976, 29 (September), 300-305.


VITA AUCTORIS

1957    Born in Cincinnati, Ohio

1963-1976 Educated in Cincinnati, Ohio; Buffalo, New York;
           Simcoe, Ontario

1980    Received Bachelors degree in Psychology,
           Xavier University;
           Cincinnati, Ohio