# Demography of sexuality 

## Ernesto F. L. Amaral

February 11, 2020
Social Demography (SOCI 622)

## Outline

- Three dimensions of sexuality
- 2006-2008 NSFG sexuality data
- Empirical analyses of sexuality
- Family partnering

2

## Sexuality

- Essentialism (based in biology)
- Dimorphism: an "essential" biological or psychological characteristic common to all persons and distinguishes them as either of one sexuality or not
- A fundamental drive for one's inclusion into, or not into, heterosexual or homosexual
- Social constructionism
- Against the notion of binary categories: varying degrees of sexuality
- Alfred Kinsey and his colleagues moved sexuality research away from essentialism
- "The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States" (Laumann et al., 1994)
- The fluidity of sexual orientation


## Three dimensions of sexuality

- Self-identification
- Self-identification of sexuality
- Sexual behavior
- The actual sexual behavior
- Sexual preference
- Sexual desire
- All of the dimensions do not necessarily agree with each other


## 2006-2008 NSFG sexuality data

- Intersectionality between the three dimensions
- The NSFG uses ACASI (audio computer-assisted selfinterviewing) for more complete and reliable data
- Self-identification dimension
- Behavioral dimension
- Heterosexual: having only opposite-sex partners and no samesex partners
- Homosexual: having only same-sex partners and no oppositesex partners
- Sexual preference: desire dimension
- Heterosexual: those who are only attracted or who are mostly attracted to the opposite sex
- Homosexual: those who are only attracted or who are mostly attracted to the same sex


## Outcomes based on NSFG data

1. A homosexual (or a heterosexual) response only to identification
2. Only to desire
3. Only to behavior
4. To both identification and desire
5. To both identification and behavior
6. To both desire and behavior
7. To identification, desire, and behavior

Source: Poston and Chang, 2015.

## Empirical analyses of sexuality

- $2.43 \%$ ( 179 out of 7,356 ) of the females gave a "homosexual" response to at least one of the three dimensions
- Self-identifying as homosexual
- Having same-sex sex in their lifetimes
- Desiring or being attracted to same-sex persons
- For males it was $2.87 \%(176$ out of 6,139$)$
- $17.62 \%$ of the female homosexual sample reported all three dimensions
- For males it was $28.69 \%$


## Homosexual females

Interrelations of Components of Homosexuality, females ,U.S., 2006-2008

| Categories | $(\%)$ |
| :--- | ---: |
| Behavior | 23.19 |
| Desire | 22.37 |
| Identity | 4.40 |
| Behave \& Desire | 0.58 |
| Behave \& ID | 0.63 |
| Desire \& ID | 31.21 |
| Beh. \& Des. \& ID | 17.62 |
| Sample Size | 179 |
| \% of total sample <br> (unweighted) | 2.43 |



Source: Poston and Chang, 2015. Figure prepared by Yuting Chang.

## Homosexual males

Interrelations of Components of Homosexuality, males ,U.S., 2006-2008


Source: Poston and Chang, 2015. Figure prepared by Yuting Chang.

## Essentialist vs. Social constructionist

- Essentialist approach works for heterosexuals
- $71.54 \%$ of females, $79.09 \%$ of males are heterosexual on all three questions
- Essentialist approach not working well for homosexuals
- Homosexuality is much more fluid than heterosexuality
- An essentialist interpretation places the percentage levels of homosexuality much lower
- Social constructionist orientation provides a much more encompassing understanding of sexuality


## U.S. prevalence rates, 2006-2008

- Heterosexuality
- Females
- 95.43\% of woman aged 15-44 gave a heterosexual answer to at least one dimension
- $71.54 \%$ gave heterosexual response to all three questions
- Males
- Corresponding percentages were $95.77 \%$ and $79.09 \%$
- Homosexuality
- Females
- $1.86 \%$ of woman aged 15-44 gave a homosexual answer to at least one dimension
- $0.33 \%$ gave homosexual response to all three questions
- Males
- Corresponding percentages were $2.24 \%$ and $0.64 \%$


## Female and male heterosexuality, United States, 2006-2008

| Heterosexuality | Females |  | Males |  |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
|  | $\%$ | Margin of error | $\%$ | Margin of error |
| Behavior | 0.41 | $+/-0.17$ | 0.11 | $+/-0.11$ |
| Desire | 1.38 | $+/-0.41$ | 0.39 | $+/-0.18$ |
| Identity | 0.54 | $+/-0.25$ | 0.21 | $+/-0.16$ |
| Behavior \& Desire | 0.48 | $+/-0.21$ | 0.27 | $+/-0.15$ |
| Behavior \& Identity | 0.84 | $+/-0.31$ | 0.22 | $+/-0.14$ |
| Desire \& Identity | 20.25 | $+/-2.53$ | 15.47 | $+/-2.48$ |
| Behavior \& Desire \& Identity | 71.54 | $+/-2.33$ | 79.09 | $+/-2.45$ |
| Sample ( $n$ ) | 6,878 |  | 5,768 |  |
| Total sample $(N)$ |  | 6,139 |  |  |
| Weighted Percentage | 9,356 |  | $+/-0.83$ | 95.77 |

Source: Poston and Chang, 2015.

## Female and male homosexuality, United States, 2006-2008

| Homosexuality | Females |  | Males |  |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
|  | $\%$ | Margin of error | $\%$ | Margin of error |
| Desire | 0.43 | $+/-0.18$ | 0.28 | $+/-0.20$ |
| Identity | 0.42 | $+/-0.19$ | 0.30 | $+/-0.22$ |
| Behavior \& Desire | 0.08 | $+/-0.09$ | 0.10 | $+/-0.09$ |
| Behavior \& Identity | 0.01 | $+/-0.02$ | 0.02 | $+/-0.02$ |
| Desire \& Identity | 0.01 | $+/-0.02$ | 0.00 | $\mathrm{~N} / \mathrm{A}$ |
| Behavior \& Desire \& Identity | 0.33 | $+/-0.24$ | 0.89 | $+/-0.29$ |
| Sample ( $n$ ) | 179 | $+/-0.16$ | 0.64 | $+/-0.22$ |
| Total sample ( $N$ ) |  |  | 176 |  |
| Weighted Percentage | 7,356 |  | 6,139 |  |

## Family partnering

- Four types of family partnering
- A married or cohabiting male and male
- Gay partners
- A married or cohabiting female and female
- Lesbian partners
- Two persons living together as a married male and female
- Opposite-sex married partners
- A cohabiting male and female
- Opposite-sex cohabiting partners


## 2010 Census questionnaire

1. Print name of Person 2


First Name $\square$ мı $\square$
2. How is this person related to Person 1? Mark $\triangle$ ONE box.

| $\square$ Husband or wife | $\square$ Parent-in-law |
| :--- | :--- |
| $\square$ Biological son or daughter | $\square$ Son-in-law or daughter-in-law |
| $\square$ Adopted son or daughter | $\square$ Other relative |
| $\square$ Stepson or stepdaughter | $\square$ Roomer or boarder |
| $\square$ Brother or sister | $\square$ Housemate or roommate |
| $\square$ Father or mother | Unmarried partner |
| $\square$ Grandchild | $\square$ Other nonrelative |

3. What is this person's sex? Mark $X$ ONE box.

Male
Female
4. What is this person's age and what is this person's date of birth?

Please report babies as age 0 when the child is less than 1 year old. Print numbers in boxes.
Age on April 1, 2010 Month Day Year of birth
$\square$
$\square$
$\square$
$\square$

## Analysis of 2010 Census

- 366 metropolitan areas in the U.S.
- Estimate prevalence indexes for each type of partnering (Gates and Ost, 2004; Poston and Chang, 2013)
- Ratio of the proportion of each type living in a metropolitan area to the proportion of all households that are located in a metropolitan area
- They measure over- or underrepresentation of each type of partnering in a geographic area relative to the population


## Interpretation of indexes

- Index equal to 1.0
- Partnering type is as likely as a randomly selected household to locate in the metro area
- Index above 1.0
- Partnering type is more likely to live in the metro area than a random couple household
- Index below 1.0
- Partnering type is less likely to live in the metro area than a random couple household
- Percentage interpretation: (index - 1) * 100


## Prevalence ratio

- Prevalence ratio index for gay partners: 0.69
- In the "average" metropolitan area, gay couples are $31 \%$ less likely to live there than would be a couple from a randomly selected metropolitan household
- Lesbian partners: 0.86
- 14\% less likely to live there
- Opposite-sex married partners: 1.02
- 2\% more likely to live there
- Opposite-sex cohabiting partners: 1.03
$-3 \%$ more likely to live there


## Means, standard deviations, maximum, minimum values for several indexes, U.S., 2010

| Rate | MeanStandard <br> deviation | Maximum <br> value | Minimum <br> value |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Gay Male <br> Couples Index | 0.69 | 0.31 | San Francisco, CA |$\quad$ Grand Forks, ND-MN

## Geographic distribution

- Same-sex couples have uneven distribution in the U.S.
- Gay male couples are much more likely to be in some areas than in other areas
- Lesbian couples are more concentrated in metropolitan areas in general than gay male couples
- But they don't prefer particular cities as gay men
- Opposite-sex couples are the majority of couples in any metropolitan area
- They are just about as likely to reside in any of the areas: ratio around 1.0
- Especially married couples: min. \& max. values are closer to 1.0


## Support of same-sex marriage by age

## GSS Data]Explorer

## N『Kし

ande UNIVERSTYYéCHICAGO

Gender \& Marriage: Homosexuals should have right to marry (agree/disagree)
Response: Strongly agree
Breakdown: Age ${ }^{\circ}$


Citation
Smith, Tom W., Davern, Michael, Freese, Jeremy, and Hout, Michael, General Social Surveys, 1972-2016 [machine-readable data file]/Principal Investigator, Smith, Tom W.; Co-Principal Investigators, Peter V. Marsden and Michael Hout; Sponsored by National Sclence Foundation --NORC ed.-- Chicago: NORC, 2018: NORC at the University of Chicago [producer and distributor]. Data
accessed from the GSS Data Explorer website at gssdataexplorer.norc.org.

## References

Poston, DL (Ed.). 2019. Handbook of Population. Cham: Springer. Chapter 10 (pp. 279-288).

Poston DL, Bouvier LF. 2017. Population and Society: An Introduction to Demography. New York: Cambridge University Press. 2nd edition. Chapter 5 (pp. 110-122).

