

Sexual Orientation and Human Development: An Overview

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What part does sexual orientation play in human development? Despite the apparent significance of sexual identities in shaping lives, developmental research and theory on sexual orientation have, until recently, been relatively limited. Today, as lesbian women, gay men, and bisexual people become more open about sexual identities, psychological knowledge about the ways in which developmental processes affect and in turn are affected by sexual orientation is growing rapidly. As the articles in this special issue reveal, groundbreaking research is being conducted, from a variety of perspectives, by investigators from many different traditions. Research on sexual orientation and human development has the potential to make important contributions both to the theory and to the practice of developmental psychology.

What part does sexual orientation play in human development? Despite the apparent significance of sexual identities in shaping lives, developmental research and theory on sexual orientation have, until recently, been relatively limited. Today, as lesbian women, gay men, and bisexual people become more open about sexual identities, the need to understand the role of sexual orientation in human development is increasingly urgent. As research evidence starts to accumulate (D'Augelli & Patterson, in press; Garnets & Kimmel, 1993; Gonsiorek & Weinrich, 1991; Savin-Williams & Cohen, in press), new findings about development among members of sexual minorities are becoming available, opportunities for evaluating the relevance of classic and contemporary theories are opening up, and possibilities for a broader understanding of human development are beginning to emerge.

Although same-sex attractions and sexual behavior have undoubtedly occurred throughout history, lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities are relatively new (D'Emilio, 1983). The contemporary notion of identity is itself historically created (Baumeister, 1986). The concept of a specifically homosexual identity seems to have emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. Indeed, only in relatively recent years have large numbers of individuals identified themselves openly as gay or lesbian or bisexual. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual public identities, then, are a phenomenon of our current historical era (D'Emilio, 1983; Faderman, 1991).

For many people, throughout much of the twentieth century, the topic of homosexuality was shrouded in secrecy. Because of religious, legal, and cultural repression (Herek, 1991, 1993; Rivera, 1991), many individuals oriented toward same-sex sexuality remained "in the closet," keeping their sexual orientation

hidden. As a result of the varied manifestations of cultural heterosexism, homosexuality was, for many years, relegated to a deviant status, if not rendered altogether invisible (Gonsiorek & Weinrich, 1991).

Although earlier antecedents have been traced, the advent of modern lesbian and gay liberation movements is often dated from 1969, the year of the Stonewall Rebellion (D'Emilio, 1983; Duberman, 1993). What began as a routine police raid on a New York City gay bar called The Stonewall Inn erupted into a riot when bar patrons resisted arrest. Days of rioting followed, fueling social movements that have profoundly altered the face of gay and lesbian life (D'Emilio, 1983; Duberman, 1993). In the years since Stonewall, more and more lesbian women, gay men, and bisexual people have abandoned secrecy, come out of the closet, and declared nonheterosexual identities (D'Emilio, 1989; Faderman, 1991). Conflicts related to sexual orientation have appeared in public discourse regarding child custody, marriage and domestic partnership, military service, the HIV epidemic, and other issues. Legislative bodies have considered issues involving lesbian and gay concerns with increasing frequency, and public awareness of lesbian and gay issues has increased.

Despite the heightened visibility of lesbian and gay life, even basic demographic characteristics such as the size of the population remain a subject of debate. One oft-repeated estimate, drawn from the work of Kinsey and his colleagues (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948; Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, & Gebhard, 1953), holds that approximately 10% of the population—or more than 20 million people in the United States today—may be considered predominantly lesbian or gay (Gonsiorek & Weinrich, 1991). Estimates based on Kinsey et al.'s data have, however, varied tremendously and have also been criticized on a number of grounds (Gonsiorek & Weinrich, 1991). On the basis of national probability survey data that they collected in the 1980s, Fay, Turner, Klassen, and Gagnon (1989) suggested that between 3% and 6% of the male population in the United States is exclusively homosexual. If this smaller figure is accepted and extended to lesbians (who were not included in the study by Fay and his colleagues), it would suggest that between

I wish to thank Deborah Cohn and Anthony D'Augelli for their helpful comments on earlier versions of this article.

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7 and 15 million Americans should be considered gay or lesbian. The difficulties of definition and of estimation in this area are multiple (Brown, in press; Chan, in press; Fox, in press; Gonsiorek, in press). Whatever the actual figures, however, it is clear that a substantial number of people are involved.

The impact of an individual's lesbian or gay identity is also felt by others in the person's network of family and friends (Laird, 1993; Murphy, 1989; Strommen, 1989, 1990). Gay men and lesbian women can be expected to have parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, and perhaps children—each of whom may be affected to some extent by the individual's identity as a member of a sexual minority. Consideration of such relationships suggests that, even allowing for the possibility of aggregation as a result of genetic factors (Bailey, in press), at least 50 million Americans are either predominantly lesbian or gay themselves or have a family member who is. In view of such numbers, it is astonishing how little research attention has focused on the developmental concerns of lesbian and gay individuals and of the families in which they live.

In fact, with a few notable exceptions (e.g., Freud, 1905), most of the classic works on human development have focused primarily or exclusively on heterosexual patterns of development. For example, older (e.g., Erikson, 1968) and even more recent authoritative treatments of the developmental tasks of adolescence have ignored nonheterosexual pathways of development (see Nelson, 1994; Savin-Williams, in press). Yet, as Rotheram-Borus and her colleagues (Rotheram-Borus, Rosario, Van Rossem, Reid, & Gillis, 1995) pointed out, "An adolescent's development is likely to be significantly influenced by being gay or bisexual in a predominantly heterosexual society" (p. 76). Despite the potential value of considering lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues and experiences, such perspectives have often been missing from research and theory. As a result, gay and lesbian lives have often been rendered invisible.

When lesbian women, gay men, and bisexuals have not been omitted entirely from the literature of developmental psychology, their existence has often been acknowledged only in the context of pathology. Until the 1970s, the official policies of the American Psychological Association and those of the American Psychiatric Association stated that homosexuality was a disorder (Gonsiorek, 1991), a view that was reflected in research of the day. For example, in their well-known longitudinal studies of high-intelligence individuals, Terman and his colleagues adopted this approach (e.g., Terman & Oden, 1959).

In this context, the courage and insight of early researchers who have provided a nonpathologizing view of mental health among lesbian and gay populations is especially notable. Hooker (1957) was the first to demonstrate that standard psychological tests were not, as had been widely believed, successful in identifying an individual's sexual orientation. Other studies (e.g., Saghir & Robins, 1973; Thompson, McCandless, & Strickland, 1971) soon followed (see Gonsiorek, 1991), and this work formed the foundation of contemporary research on sexual orientation and human development.

Contemporary Research on Sexual Orientation And Human Development

The variety of topics relevant to sexual orientation and human development under study today is extremely diverse, rang-

ing across the life course and across a variety of domains (D'Augelli & Patterson, in press; Garnets & Kimmel, 1993; Gonsiorek & Weinrich, 1991; Savin-Williams & Cohen, in press). Perspectives adopted by researchers vary from essentialist views that emphasize biological influences on sexual orientation (e.g., Meyer-Bahlburg et al., 1995) to constructionist perspectives that emphasize the significance of historical and cultural influences on sexual identities (e.g., Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1995). Methodologies are almost as varied, ranging from open-ended interview techniques (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1995) to observational studies (Berenbaum & Snyder, 1995) to meta-analytic reviews (Bailey & Zucker, 1995).

One important background against which contemporary research on lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities should be seen is that of widespread prejudice and discrimination. As Herek (1991, 1993, in press) has argued, the context in which antigay prejudice and violence are fostered is one of pervasive heterosexism. Heterosexism is "an ideological system that denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any non-heterosexual form of behavior, identity, relationship, or community" (Herek, 1993, p. 90). Evidence of cultural heterosexism can be found in religion, in law, in the media, and in the social sciences (Herek, 1993). Prejudice, discrimination, and even violence against lesbian women and gay men by individuals as well as by institutions are common (Herek, 1991; Herek & Berrill, 1992) and, for many lesbian women and gay men, are a predictable part of life (D'Augelli, 1989, 1992; Herek, in press; Herek & Berrill, 1992; Morgan & Brown, 1989).

Against pervasive heterosexism, lesbian women, gay men, and bisexuals struggle to create nonheterosexual identities. Borrowing from stage theories of development, classic work by Cass (1979, 1990), Coleman (1981/1982, 1990), Troiden (1979, 1989), and others has outlined stage models of identity formation for gay and lesbian individuals. Critiques and revisions of these approaches have been offered on a number of grounds (e.g., Brown, in press; de Montefiores, 1986; Golden, 1987; Gonsiorek, in press; Gonsiorek & Rudolph, 1991), and a number of issues surrounding the assessment of sexual identities are currently subjects of debate (e.g., Brown, in press; Esteberg, 1994; Kitzinger, in press; McWhirter, Sanders, & Reinisch, 1990).

Although cultural as well as individual tendencies have encouraged splitting of sexual identities into homosexual versus heterosexual ones, many individuals nevertheless identify themselves as bisexual (Fox, in press; Paul, 1985). Early work on bisexuality was reported by Kinsey and his colleagues (Kinsey et al., 1948; Kinsey et al., 1953) and by Blumstein and Schwartz (1977). More recently, new research by Fox (in press) and Weinberg, Williams, and Pryor (1994) has highlighted difficulties as well as rewards experienced by those who identify themselves as bisexual.

The sheer variety of sexual behaviors, attitudes, and identities invites questions about origins. Seminal research by Money, Ehrhardt, and their associates (e.g., Money, 1987, 1988; Money & Ehrhardt, 1972) has suggested the importance of social as well as biological factors. More recently, significant attention has been devoted to biological aspects of sexual orientation (e.g., Bailey, in press; Byne & Parsons, 1993; LeVay, 1993). Es-

pecially prominent in this area have been studies implicating genetic contributors to sexual orientation (e.g., Bailey, in press; Bailey, Bobrow, Wolfe, & Mikach, 1995; Blanchard, Zucker, Bradley, & Hume, 1995).

Whatever the origins of sexual orientation, one interest of developmental psychology is in its early manifestations. Although relatively little is known about the early experiences of those who later identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, some research does exist. For instance, R. Green's (1986) pioneering study followed the development of a group of boys who were referred to clinical settings because of their gender atypical behavior during childhood. The study revealed that these boys were more likely than a group of same-age boys who did not show such behavior to identify as gay or bisexual later in life. No comparable prospective studies of girls have been reported. Most of the work has been retrospective, and, as Bailey and Zucker (1995) showed in their meta-analysis of available studies, results from retrospective studies also suggest that cross-gender behavior in childhood may be a predictor of later nonheterosexual identities. As to other possible childhood indicators of later sexual orientation, research has been largely lacking.

With the advent of adolescence, sexual aspects of the self emerge as increasingly central, and the issues of nonheterosexual youths begin to surface (Boxer & Cohler, 1989; Herdt, 1989; Herdt & Boxer, 1993; Savin-Williams, 1990, in press). Because the pervasive heterosexism of their environments often makes communication seem dangerous, young lesbians and gay men are likely to experience feelings of attraction for members of the same sex in isolation from others in the same situation. For example, D'Augelli (1989, 1992) reported that college students generally remembered gaps of several years between initial recognition of same-sex attractions and disclosure of them to even one other person. Those who do identify openly as lesbian or gay during the teenage years are more likely to experience discrimination and even violence, both at home and at school (D'Augelli, 1989; Herek & Berrill, 1992; Pilkington & D'Augelli, in press). One result may be depressive or suicidal symptoms (Savin-Williams, 1994).

Three articles in this special issue concern adolescence. In a community sample of young adolescents, Savin-Williams (1995) explored the associations between the timing of pubertal maturation, sexual behavior, and self-esteem. An intriguing finding from his study was that whereas same-sex sexual behavior followed the timing of maturation (i.e., early maturers began to have same-sex sexual encounters earlier than did late maturers), sexual behavior with members of the opposite sex did not. For these gay and bisexual youths, then, initiation of sexual behavior with same-sex partners was closely synchronized with biological cues, but sexual behavior with opposite-sex partners began instead according to a social clock. In other articles, Hershberger and D'Augelli (1995) traced the impact of victimization experiences on the mental health of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youths, describing the extent to which family support can counteract the impact of stressful life experiences. Rothram-Borus et al. (1995) examined problem behaviors among a sample of predominantly urban ethnic minority gay and bisexual male adolescents and reported that the structure of these

behaviors was different than might be expected on the basis of earlier work with heterosexual samples.

Although the adoption of lesbian or gay identities is often thought to be a phenomenon of adolescence, some women and men identify themselves as nonheterosexual for the first time after they have become adults (Brown, in press; Gonsiorek, in press). Although the fluidity of sexual identities over time, especially among women, has been mentioned by a number of authors (e.g., Golden, 1987), little research has compared the processes of identification as lesbian or gay or bisexual at different points in the life course. The work of Kitzinger and Wilkinson (1995), then, represents a pioneering effort to comprehend the processes involved in adopting lesbian identities in midlife.

After coming out, many lesbian women and gay men form sexual and romantic relationships. Considerable research has been devoted to the study of lesbian and gay couples (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Kurdek, 1988, 1994, in press; McWhirter & Mattison, 1984; Murphy, 1994; Peplau, 1991; Peplau & Cochran, 1990). One of the clearest findings is that of great similarity among lesbian, gay, and heterosexual couples in the determinants of relationship satisfaction over time, although many other differences among lesbian, gay, and heterosexual couples have also been noted (Kurdek, in press; Peplau, 1991). Kurdek (1995) described a study of changes in relationship satisfaction among cohabiting lesbian and gay couples over time and provided a new test of interdependence models of commitment to romantic relationships.

In couples or alone, many lesbian women and gay men have made parenting an important part of their lives (Bozett, 1989; Bozett & Sussman, 1990; G. D. Green & Bozett, 1991; Lewin, 1993; Patterson, 1992, 1994a, in press). Many have had children in the context of heterosexual relationships before coming out, and some have faced custody disputes on the dissolution of a marriage. Research has examined the behavior and views of lesbian and gay parents as well as the psychosocial development of their children (Patterson, 1992, in press). To date, there is no evidence of significant developmental difficulties encountered by children of lesbian and gay parents. Adding to this literature is the study by Bailey et al. (1995) of sexual orientation among the adult sons of gay fathers. Consistent with the findings of other investigators, Bailey and his coworkers reported that the great majority of sons identify as heterosexual. Bailey et al. found that sexual orientation was unrelated to the amount of time that the sons spent living with their gay fathers, a result that would seem to be at odds with many versions of environmental theories about the transmission of sexual orientation.

Although many lesbian women and gay men become parents before coming out, others have chosen to bear or adopt children after assuming nonheterosexual identities. Whether or not there is currently a "lesbian baby boom" may be a matter of controversy (cf. Bryant & Demian, 1994; Patterson, 1994a), but all commentators agree on the existence of lesbian and gay parents who have borne or adopted children after coming out. Flaks, Ficher, Masterpasqua, and Joseph (1995) compared the children of lesbian couples to those of a matched group of heterosexual couples and reported on the striking similarity of development in the two groups. My own article (Patterson, 1995) considered diversity among families in which children have

been born to or adopted by lesbian couples. Although in the main I found that lesbian couples shared household and child-care labor more evenly than do many heterosexual couples with children, the biological mothers in my sample nevertheless reported doing more child care and the nonbiological mothers reported spending more time in paid employment. When mothers shared child care more evenly, I found that both mothers and children were better adjusted. Comprehending differences and similarities among lesbian, gay, and heterosexual families with children and exploring diversity within lesbian and gay families are important tasks for future research.

Other topics in adult development and aging are beginning to be studied as well. For instance, Kimmel (1993) and Sang (1993) have reviewed the literature on adult development (see also Kimmel & Sang, in press), pointing out both similarities and differences among the ways in which adulthood is experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual adults. Classic research on aging among lesbians and gay men has been reported by Adelman (1986), Berger (1982), and Kehoe (1989), among others: this work has recently been reviewed by Reid (in press). Much work remains to be done in this field.

Recognition of the varieties of experience within lesbian, gay, and bisexual communities has also been growing, especially with regard to the role of race and ethnicity (Greene, 1994a, 1994b; Morales, 1990). Recent work has focused on issues relevant to African American (Loiacano, 1989; Mays, Cochran, & Rhue, 1993), Asian American (Chan, 1989, in press), Native American (Williams, 1986), and Latina/Latino (Espin, 1987) lesbian and gay communities. Although the potential for internal conflict between ethnic and sexual identities has been highlighted, the integration of multiple identities is also acknowledged as a possible source of strength. In addition to exploration of issues relating to ethnicity, it will also be valuable in future work to focus on other sources of diversity within lesbian and gay communities, such as religious identification and cultural context (e.g., Herdt, 1990).

To create a more comprehensive understanding of human development, one needs to learn more about how developmental processes affect, and how they are affected, by sexual orientation. At every point in the life course, it seems clear that sexual orientation and its manifestations may shape and be shaped by experience. An important challenge for developmental research is to provide a clearer understanding of such processes.

Contemporary Theoretical Perspectives

The conceptual tasks posed by the inclusion of sexual orientation in a vision of developmental psychology are multiple (Brown, 1989; D'Augelli, 1994; Rothblum, 1994). These include, among others, the conceptualization of sexual orientation itself, the assessment of the relevance of classic and contemporary theories of development to the lives of those with nonheterosexual sexual orientations, and the development and application of new theoretical models to encompass phenomena of special interest in gay, lesbian, and bisexual contexts.

Tremendous controversy currently surrounds the conceptualization and assessment of sexual orientation itself. Some scholars have viewed sexual orientation as a fixed quality, devel-

oped either before birth or very early in life, whereas others have emphasized its plasticity and the potential for change over time and circumstances, and still others have attempted to combine both biological and cultural influences into a unified view (see Bailey, in press; Byne & Parsons, 1993; Kitzinger, in press). Within any particular developmental period, controversy has also surrounded the assessment of sexual orientation (McWhirter et al., 1990). Some, like Kinsey and his colleagues (Kinsey et al., 1948; Kinsey et al., 1953), have advocated unidimensional assessment techniques, whereas others, like Storms (1980), have advocated two-dimensional approaches that discriminate levels of both heteroeroticism and homoeroticism. Discussion has also focused on the significance of sexual fantasies, attitudes, behaviors, and identities for the assessment of sexual orientation (McWhirter et al., 1990). It seems likely that conceptual progress in this area will enlarge developmentalists' understanding of sexual dimensions of human experiences across the life course.

The study of sexual orientation in human development also provides an opportunity to test the generalizability of existing theories of human development. For example, attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988) predicts, without regard to parental sexual orientation, that significant developmental advantages should be enjoyed by those who, as infants and children, formed secure attachment relationships with their parents. In contrast, common stereotypes (Falk, 1989) suggest that, regardless of the qualities of attachment relationships, children reared by lesbian or gay parents should be expected to suffer from a variety of significant problems in personality and social development. Research that follows the offspring of lesbian and heterosexual mothers, assesses the qualities of their attachment relationships, and explores the course of their later development could simultaneously evaluate both the generalizability of attachment theory and the accuracy of widespread beliefs about development of children in nontraditional family environments. Theoretical perspectives within both the normative and the individual difference traditions could be evaluated in such research, and the result could well be a more comprehensive understanding of human development.

Another pathway through which work on sexual orientation and human development might make significant contributions is by construction and testing of theories to encompass phenomena specific to lesbian, gay, or bisexual experience. For example, a number of models of the coming out process have been described (Gonsiorek & Rudolph, 1991). Although these have been developed specifically to describe experiences of lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals coming to terms with their sexual identities, they may also apply to other aspects of personal identities. Thus, models of the acquisition of sexual identities might prove to be applicable to understanding the growth of religious or occupational identities (see Morgan & Brown, 1989).

The Future of Research and Theory on Sexual Orientation and Human Development

Affirmative research on sexual orientation and human development is still relatively new. Despite vigorous activity and real

advances, many research and theoretical questions are in need of study (Brown, 1989; D'Augelli, 1994; Rothblum, 1994).

Most obvious is the need to understand more clearly the phenomenon of sexual orientation itself (McWhirter et al., 1990). Is sexual orientation best thought of as an inborn characteristic determined by genetic factors? Or should it be regarded as socially constructed and malleable across the life span? It seems likely that elements of both approaches will provide valuable components of a comprehensive theory of sexual orientation (Bailey, in press; Byne & Parsons, 1993). Evaluation of the ways in which biological and experiential factors may become entwined remains a challenge for future research.

Inextricably linked with the conceptualization of sexual orientation is, of course, its assessment (Brown, in press; Gonsiorek & Weinrich, 1991). Both dimensional and categorical techniques have been used with regard to individuals' behavior as well as their identities. Little research to date has compared the results of varied assessment techniques or evaluated their predictive utility. Decisions about assessment, though often presented without much discussion in reports of empirical research, are significant in determining which and how many individuals will be identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or heterosexual. The number of individuals who are identified as nonheterosexual is strongly affected by the nature of the assessment tools used (McWhirter et al., 1990); as a result, different assessment techniques may select different groups of people for study. It can be hoped that future research will yield better understanding of the associations among different assessment procedures.

Given the absence of clear consensus about assessment, it is not surprising that many basic descriptive questions about aspects of sexual orientation, and about their relations over time, remain unanswered. How do sexual behavior, fantasy, attitudes, and identities fit together, or fail to do so, at different points of the life course, and why? Although it is widely agreed that so-called "therapies" intended to change sexual orientation have not been successful in doing so (Haldeman, 1991, 1994), we know little of normal variability in sexual behavior, fantasies, attitudes, and identities over the life course (Brown, in press; Golden, 1987) or about how these are affected by contextual factors.

In addition to considering questions surrounding the conceptualization, assessment, and description of sexual orientation over time, researchers are also beginning to examine its impact on experience at different points in development (D'Augelli & Patterson, in press; Garnets & Kimmel, 1993; Gonsiorek & Weinrich, 1991; Savin-Williams & Cohen, in press). As the articles in this special issue reveal, essential questions about the impact of sexual orientation during childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and aging are beginning to be examined. Much important research remains to be conducted, and tremendous opportunities for theoretical contributions exist. How does an adolescent's growing acceptance of a lesbian, gay, or bisexual identity affect his or her experience of adolescence, and how is this shaped by cultural and other contexts in which the adolescent lives? How are the adult's experiences at home, at work, and in the community affected by his or her sexual orientation and by changing cultural constructions of it? How does sexual identity

affect the experience or the likelihood of aging in different environments? And how does the individual's management of his or her own sexual and other identities in turn influence his or her social and cultural environments?

Although research focused on individuals is sorely needed, studies focused on other levels of analysis can also be valuable. For instance, despite significant progress (e.g., Kurdek, 1994, 1995, in press; Murphy, 1994; Peplau, 1991), much remains to be learned about the ways in which sexual and gender identities shape relationships within couples, as well as about the ways in which couples relate to others in their social worlds. Similarly, although information is beginning to become available (e.g., Laird, 1993; Lewin, 1993; Patterson, 1994a, 1994c; Weston, 1991), many opportunities exist for greater understanding of lesbian and gay families. Nonheterosexual identities can create challenges not just for the individual who identifies as lesbian or gay or bisexual, but also for the members of his or her family of origin (Boxer & Cohler, 1989; Strommen, 1989, 1990), and these are as yet little understood.

The formation, functioning, and life courses of families headed by lesbian and gay adults, though subjects of recent study (Patterson, 1994c), are in need of further research. For instance, although the transition to parenthood has been widely studied among heterosexual families, little is yet known about this experience among lesbians and gay men (Patterson, 1994b). Similarly, the processes of parenting and the qualities of parent-infant and parent-child relationships within lesbian and gay families are promising topics for further study (Patterson, in press). The impact of sexual orientation on relationships among children, parents, and grandparents across the life course is also in need of exploration (e.g., Murphy, 1989; Strommen, 1989, 1990).

Another perspective from which research on sexual orientation and human development can benefit is one that focuses on the structure and functioning of neighborhoods and communities (D'Augelli, 1994; D'Augelli & Garnets, in press). Issues common to gay experience such as identity disclosure may pose different questions for individuals as a function of the cultural, social, and legal aspects of their environments. The rise of urban gay and lesbian communities has resulted in the creation of settings that can provide support for lesbian and gay individuals and families. Responses of gay and lesbian individuals and groups to the HIV epidemic have provided inspiring examples of volunteerism and its role in the creation, support, and maintenance of communities (Morin, Charles, & Malyon, 1984; Paul, Hays, & Coates, in press).

Gender, social class, culture, race, and ethnicity are all variables in need of study as they relate to sexual orientation and human development (Greene, 1994a; Herdt, 1990). We know little as yet about how individuals respond to and manage the various strands of their identities as members of sexual minorities, gender categories, cultural and social class groups, religious communities, and ethnic or racial backgrounds. At this moment in history, and in Western cultural settings, sexual orientation is likely to be a significant aspect of an individual's identity, but it is not the only aspect of anyone's identity. Understanding the interrelations among the multiple strands of human identities will be of tremendous importance as psychology

seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of human development in a multicultural world.

In future research on sexual orientation and human development, the use of a broad array of methodological approaches will, it is hoped, become common. Up until now, much research has been cross-sectional in nature, focused mainly on White middle-class individuals living in large urban areas, and has relied heavily on self-report and interview methodologies (D'Augelli & Patterson, in press; Rothblum, 1994). If more diverse samples of individuals, couples, and families could be studied in a wider array of assessments, over longer periods of time, the results would be likely to provide better understanding. Research in this area would benefit from large-scale, multisite studies that would explore issues related to diverse aspects of human identities, as well as the cultural and geographical contexts in which they occur.

In summary, psychological knowledge about the ways in which developmental processes affect and in turn are affected by sexual orientation is growing rapidly. As the articles in this special issue reveal, groundbreaking research is being conducted, from a variety of perspectives, by investigators from many different traditions. Research on sexual orientation and human development has the potential to make important contributions both to the theory and practice of developmental psychology.

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Received June 15, 1994
 Revision received July 18, 1994
 Accepted July 18, 1994 ■

P&C Board Appoints Editor for New Journal: *Psychological Methods*

The Publications and Communications Board of the American Psychological Association has appointed an editor for a new journal. In 1996, APA will begin publishing *Psychological Methods*. Mark I. Appelbaum, PhD, has been appointed as editor. Starting January 1, 1995, manuscripts should be directed to

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Psychological Methods will be devoted to the development and dissemination of methods for collecting, understanding, and interpreting psychological data. Its purpose is the dissemination of innovations in research design, measurement, methodology, and statistical analysis to the psychological community; its further purpose is to promote effective communication about related substantive and methodological issues. The audience is diverse and includes those who develop new procedures, those who are responsible for undergraduate and graduate training in design, measurement, and statistics, as well as those who employ those procedures in research. The journal solicits original theoretical, quantitative empirical, and methodological articles; reviews of important methodological issues; tutorials; articles illustrating innovative applications of new procedures to psychological problems; articles on the teaching of quantitative methods; and reviews of statistical software. Submissions should illustrate through concrete example how the procedures described or developed can enhance the quality of psychological research. The journal welcomes submissions that show the relevance to psychology of procedures developed in other fields. Empirical and theoretical articles on specific tests or test construction should have a broad thrust; otherwise, they may be more appropriate for *Psychological Assessment*.