

REACTIONS TO ZARCO AND BADUA'S "SOCIAL DETERMINANT OF MALE SEXUALITY: A SEARCH FOR CAUSES".

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In their article "Social Determinants of Male Sexuality: A Search for Causes", Zarco and Badua (1985) attempted to identify the social variables which predict male sexuality. Using the technique of a controlled design and stepwise regression analysis, they have demonstrated that "a boy's chance of turning out to be a homosexual, bisexual or heterosexual is determined up to 68.54% by a unique combination of seven variables" (see Table 1). They hasten to add however, that this finding "does not preclude biologically inherited characteristics to be a gender or male sexuality determinant."

This paper is a critical reaction to the study. Comments focus on the following potential problem areas in research: theory, sampling, measurement, data collection, and statistics. Looking into such areas enables us to make a meaningful evaluation of the validity of the findings and conclusions of the study. To begin with, the study addresses itself to the basic question of causation and theory-building on sexuality. This is significant because in spite of the studies dealing with sexuality, there is still little sure knowledge about the causes of sexual deviations. As pointed out by Weinberg and Bell (1972), most of the discussions on the subject have dwelled mainly on speculations prompted by theoretical models or statements the constructs of which have not been tested in any systematic manner. For instance, some authors are inclined to view genetic endowment as the chief predisposing factor in homosexual behavior. Others emphasize parental relationships as the most crucial variable in the consideration of homosexual development. Studies designed to test these assumptions have been few and usually involved small, biased samples as well as measurements which have been subjectively derived. Thus, there is still so much that needs to be probed pertaining to causation and theory-building in sexuality. The potential contribution of the study is therefore tremendous. However, there are issues which tend to pose doubts on the validity of its findings.

A basic issue against the study is ambiguity in its conceptual model. According to the study, sexuality is a continuum. At the two end points of the continuum are the exclusively heterosexual and the exclusively homosexual representing pure types (Figure 1). As defined in the study, a heterosexual is a person who finds members of the opposite sex to be exclusively desirable. A homosexual is one who is sexually attracted to members of the same sex. The midpoint of the continuum is the bisexual. A person is a bisexual when he finds members of both sexes desirable concurrently or alternately. A closer look into the model reveals that it is not a continuum, but a scale of discrete intervals.

A continuum is a continuous series of gradations over the entire range of a scale. Or, "it is something in which the only assertable variation is variation in time and space" (Glove, 1976). The main characteristic of a continuum is that it has "the same magnitudinal quality over its entire range" (Du Mas, 1979). For instance, we

can speak of people varying from very short to very tall over the single, unique dimension of height. From the example we can see that height is not something which one either has or does not have. Rather, it is possessed in varying degrees. In other words, there is no explicit cut off point for examining height. Its various

TABLE 1
SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF MALE SEXUALITY

Variable Description	Zero Order Correlation (r)	Cumulative	
		Multiple R	% of Determinism
1. Number of best friends in school from 6th to 10th grade who are sex role deviants	.58	—	33.1
2. Number of masculine male family members who influenced the respondent during the first ten years of his life	— .54	.72	51.0
3. Number of masculine male teachers in life in the community, school, during childhood up to early adolescence	— .51	.76	58.4
4. Number of male masculine family members respondent, associated with longest	— .57	.79	62.8
5. Number of female family members who influenced the respondent during the first ten years of his life	.44	.81	65.8
6. Number of sisters	.28	.82	67.2
7. Number of role models in community who are sex role deviants, during childhood up to early adolescence.	.55	.83	68.5

Source: Zarco and Badua (1985), p. 67

components tend to mesh together into some unified web. In the case of the conceptual model of the study, exclusive heterosexuality exhibits no part whatsoever of the homosexual component. To treat sexuality as a continuum would be forcing persons who are exclusively heterosexual into the same scale as homosexuals.

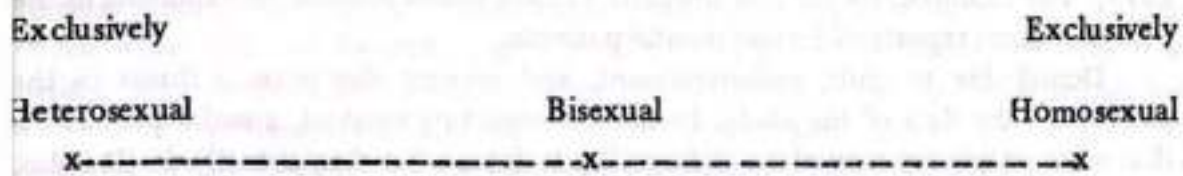
Implicit in the view that sexuality is a continuum are the contentions that all humans are more or less homosexual, that people differ from one another only in the degree of homosexuality they exhibit or in the amount they possess, and that homosexuality is normal. The idea that sexuality is a continuum has been questioned. For instance, Bergler (1957) criticizes Kinsey for labeling disease as health when he speaks of a heterosexual-homosexual continuum. According to Bergler, a psychiatrist who writes from a wide experience in psychotherapy of homosexuals, homosexuality is a disease, a neurosis, and therefore should not be put on a more equal basis with heterosexuality. Citing the behaviors of other mammals, Du Mas (1979) argues that the heterosexual-homosexual continuum does not exist as a natural phenomenon. Other authors like Stoller (1980) and Hyde (1982) contradict the idea of a heterosexual-homosexual continuum in their findings that except for certain rare and specific cases in which biological abnormalities can be demonstrated, almost all sexual deviations are the results of postnatal, societal as well as psychological influences. Stoller cites as an example that in the Israeli kibbutzim where there is heterosexual permissiveness for children, homosexuality seems rare or non-existent.

A serious limitation of the study is that it is based on small, quota sample (60 for each category of respondents). In quota-sampling, the investigator obtains a desired number of respondents by selecting the most accessible to him and those that possess certain characteristics of interest to him. This method of sampling provides too much opportunity for investigators to select the accessible elements. The most accessible elements are not necessarily representative of whatever population they were drawn from. Because there is no true means of establishing randomness as a primary statistical control, the resulting sample is not a probability sample. A major disadvantage of a non-probability sample is that we cannot obtain a valid estimate of our risk error. Strictly speaking, sampling theory does not allow us to make conclusions beyond the sample studied (Blalock, 1972; Miller and Wilson, 1983).

It may be argued that most of the studies on sexuality which produced considerable discussions on the subject were based on small, non-random samples. Prominent examples are those by Kinsey, et al. titled *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953), Bell and Weinberg's *Homosexualities: A Study of Diversity Among Men and Women* (1978), and Master and Johnson's *Homosexuality in Perspective* (1979). However, these studies have been severely criticized along methodological grounds. The central argument against these studies is that their findings and conclusions are not projectable because of inadequate and biased sampling (Du Mas, 1979).

From the text of the study, little confidence can be placed in the conclusions drawn from the data. The study does not contain any discussion on the reliability of the measures used to describe its variables. It is not even mentioned whether the measures used were validated. Reliability data on the measurement are essential for

FIGURE 1
Schematic Diagram of Zarco and Badua's (1985) Conceptual Model on Male Sexuality¹



¹The two end points of the "continuum" represent the pure types while the bisexual is located at midpoint.

Data Source: Zarco and Badua, 1985; p. 65

discovering relationships among variables. As Parel et al. (1979) point out, "Unreliable measurement makes it difficult, if not impossible, to determine how one variable is related to another. For example, if the reliability of research data is questionable, a computed correlation coefficient between two variables may be significant either because of a truly important relationship that exists or because of unreliable data. Also, the unreliability of measurement decreases its validity" (pp. 14-15). The absence of information on the quality of the measures used does not only make assessment of the findings of the study difficult but also truncates the process of refinement which could lead to an accumulation of readily available instruments with known characteristics.

The data base of the study is subjective, contingent on many sources of errors. For instance, a look into the predictors of sexuality reveals that six (6) of the seven (7) items ask the respondents to recall from memory events, evaluations, estimates, and experiences. To cite an example, Variable 6 reads as follows: "Number of masculine male family members who influenced the respondent during the first ten years." Retrospective reports from the respondents are a less desirable source of information than contemporary reporting. The information must be suspect because it is influenced by memory lapses and later experience of the informants, factors which can undermine the accuracy and precision of reporting (Riecken and Boruch, 1974). For example, Meyer and Borgatta (1959) found notable misreporting in the post treatment reports of former mental patients.

Denial due to guilt, embarrassment, and secrecy also poses a threat to the validity of the data of the study. In the self-reporting method, a major problem is that what people say may often differ radically from what they actually do (Du Mas, 1979). This problem may be very difficult to control in the classification of the respondents into heterosexual, bisexual, and homosexual. Respondents may not tell the truth when asked about something which they never discussed with anyone, even including their spouses and their most intimate friends. For instance, a respondent may say that he is a heterosexual even when in reality he is a bisexual. Or, he may say that he is bisexual when in fact he is a homosexual. This makes the self-report method a less accurate way of selecting respondents than the general rating scale of technique where the measures of sexuality are indirect or disguised.

Finally, the statistical technique of analysis of the study is not suitable for its data. In the choice of statistical technique in data analysis, the following should be considered: the purpose of the investigation, the general characteristics of the variables involved, the statistical assumptions made about these variables, and the sampling used (Kleinbaum and Kupper, 1978). From the standpoint of purpose, stepwise regression analysis is most suitable for the study. However, there are basic assumptions that underlie the procedure which are not met by the data of the study.

One assumption of multiple regression analysis is that the data are scaled at the interval level of measurement. An interval scale is one which possesses the properties of both nominal and ordinal scales with the additional property of equal intervals between rank-ordered items along a continuum. This is to say that the data can be classified into categories with respect to a given characteristic, that one category exhibits more of the attribute being considered than another category, and that the intervals between scaled points are measured in a comparable way (Miller and

Wilson, 1883, Black and Champion, 1976). In the preceding discussion we have demonstrated that sexuality is not a continuum and, therefore, we cannot say that the exclusively homosexual has more of the homosexual component than the exclusively heterosexual. Obviously, the dependent variable of the study, sexuality, is not an interval variable.

In addition, regression analysis assumes that the sample is a probability sample. The basic concept of a probability sample involves a selection process in which all members of the population have a known chance of being selected as part of the sample. With a probability sample, it will be possible to obtain a valid estimate of the probable limits of error which would be involved in extending generalizations from the sample to the total population from which it is drawn (Blalock, 1972). As pointed out earlier, the study is based on small quota samples, a limitation which makes any statistical inference in the study questionable.

In conclusion, the study repeats many of the errors of previous studies on sexuality. These errors include questionable conceptual model, non-representative sample, subjective data base, and inappropriate statistics. Thus, no secure generalizations about male sexuality can be made from the study. It should be pointed out however that sexuality is a difficult subject to investigate. As Plummer (1975) puts it "sexuality is a *taboo* area in which the practical problems of research are much greater than in other fields." For instance, locating respondents for study is difficult. Even when they are located, it is very difficult to get their full cooperation. Very often, they do not give complete information when asked about their sexual life.

While the findings of the study are difficult to project, they provide insights into the social variables which may explain male sexuality. Moreover, the study's conceptual model and research strategies may stimulate discussions which would lead to an improvement of the methodological foundations of future research efforts on sexuality in the Philippines. Such discussions are necessary for until now sexuality remains a research area where it is easier to criticize existing works than to provide alternatives (Plummer, 1975).

On the basis of the preceding discussions, the following suggestions are presented:

1. The conceptual model of the study should be re-examined. As pointed out earlier, sexuality is not a continuum because exclusive heterosexuality and exclusively homosexuality do not lie along the same line. Perhaps a more appropriate approach is to view heterosexuality, bisexuality and homosexuality as classes rather than as magnitudinal continuum. This view does not suggest the questionable assumption that homosexuality is a natural phenomenon; that people differ from one another only in the degree of homosexuality they possess or exhibit.
2. Discussions on the reliability and validity of measures used should be included in the study. Such information will enable the reader to evaluate more objectively the validity of the findings of the study.
3. Attempts should be made to come up with a general rating scale to spot male sexuality as an alternative to the self-support method used by the study. A general rating scale is less susceptible to threats to its validity such as social desirability.

lity than the self-report method. Kinsey's H-scale and Du Mas's Diagnostic and Prognostic Sexuality Checklist may be useful in the construction of such general rating scale.

4. Retrospective reporting should not be used unless studies of reporting credibility are made. With evidence of such credibility, questionnaire data, anecdotal reports, and other methods of collecting data retrospectively may be useful (Riecken and Boruch, 1974).

5. Efforts should be made to look into the possibility that the homosexuals in the country are indeed organized in a nationwide scale. According to Mr. Delcano Redoble, alias "Delilah Jones" of Iligan City, the homosexuals in the country have a nationwide organization. They have a national president as well as chapter president in practically every city in the country. This national organization could be a channel for a wider sampling plan for future researches on male sexuality in the Philippines.

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