



PARTNER SOLICITATION LANGUAGE AS A REFLECTION OF MALE SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The Briefing Book

by

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The Institute for Media Education

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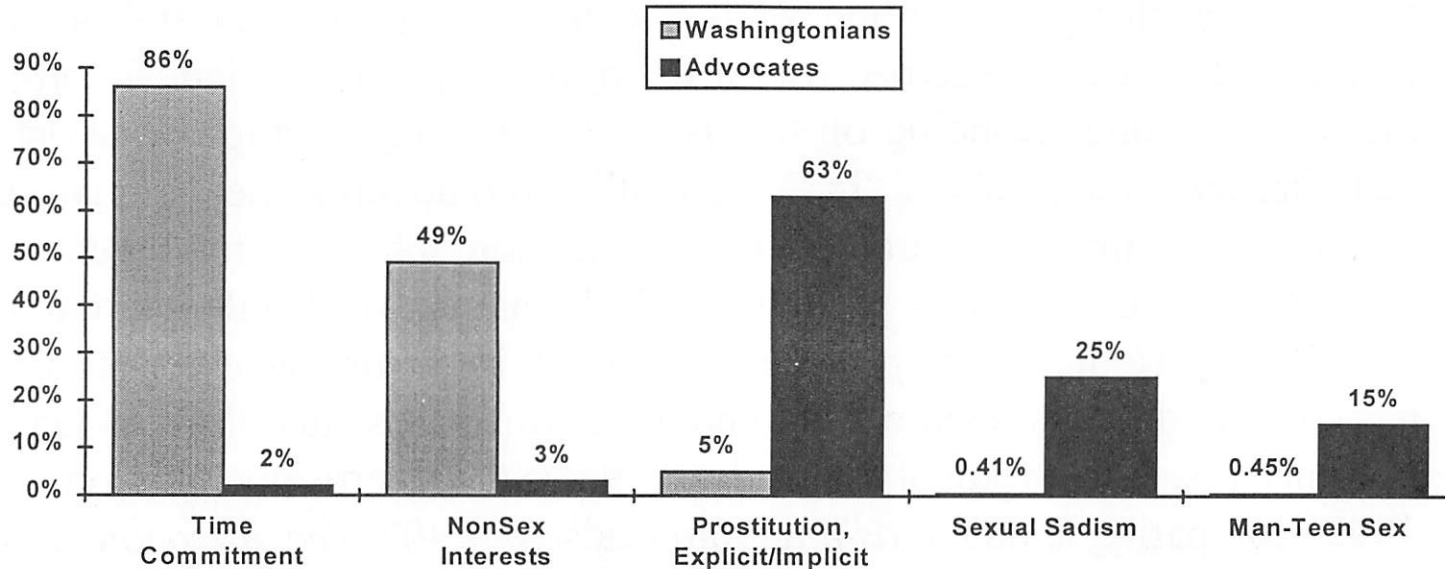
SUMMARY

The current sexual orientation debate has brought about acrimonious charges and counter charges regarding what is common heterosexual and homosexual conduct. It therefore seemed useful to apply a replicable scientific protocol to aid in public understanding on this issue. This study attempts to assist in that task through an analysis of "In Search Of" (ISO) advertisements in two upscale magazines with comparable reader demographics, one predominately heterosexual and the other predominantly homosexual. While content analysis of ISOs in periodicals and press are customary in communications studies, none has compared mainstream male homosexual to heterosexual ISO language. The present research protocol utilized 10,292 ISO advertisements from 1988 to 1992, comparing 2,885 *Washingtonian* ads to 7,407 *The Advocate* ads. Ten unduplicated months at two magazines per year over five years were analyzed using a pretest coding instrument on both samples. The resulting data were classified and tabulated by language variables (.80 IRR) and the resulting simple frequencies and cross-tabulations identified *Washingtonian* and *Advocate* solicitation characteristics. Seven key findings reflecting the partner solicitation language in those advertisements placed by men follow.

RESEARCH ABSTRACT

Major Findings

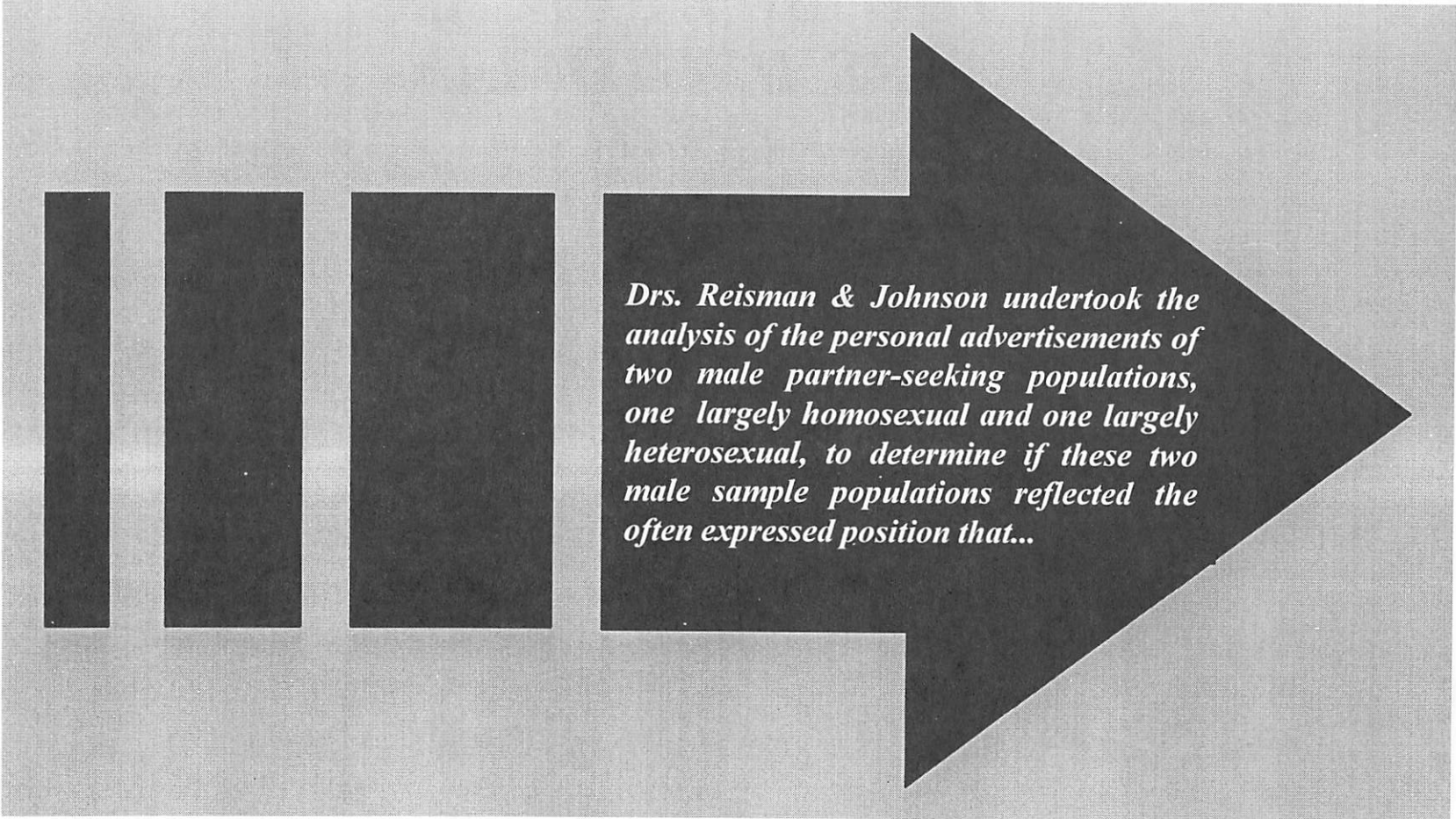
*FIVE MAJOR FINDINGS FOR PARTNER SOLICITATIONS IN
THE ADVOCATE ADS AND IN THE WASHINGTONIAN ADS
(Percent of ads with expressed preferences)*



The above findings on these two mainstream male samples show dramatic differences which are not statistically attributable to “chance,” with the advertiser’s view of time “time” impacting upon all other key findings. These findings and the usefulness of additional large-scale comparative studies of such population samples are discussed.

THE ADVOCATE and *WASHINGTONIAN* “ARGOT”

Language is conduct (conduct : “Act or manner of carrying on, as a business; management; direction; manner of conducting oneself”). An analysis of ISO language used reveals fundamental differences between the heterosexual and homosexual males studied. For example, *Advocates* commonly employed an *argot*, coded slang language, so encrypted that the words or letters required decoding via *The Queens’ Vernacular* (1972)¹, a prominent and often cited homosexual slang dictionary. As *language is conduct*, ISO and product advertisements in these two mainstream magazines objectively document similarities and differences in male heterosexual and homosexual *conduct*.



Drs. Reisman & Johnson undertook the analysis of the personal advertisements of two male partner-seeking populations, one largely homosexual and one largely heterosexual, to determine if these two male sample populations reflected the often expressed position that...

“The sex and love lives of most gay and straights today are both similar and conventional.”

Kirk and Madsen, *After the Ball*, 1989

or, as argued

“Homosexualities, a widely publicized study issued by the Kinsey Institute [in 1978] showed that gay men lead daily lives that are basically similar to those of heterosexual men.”

Mark Thompson, *The Advocate: Long Road To Freedom*, 1994

was true among these two upscale male populations.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

One of the most often used research techniques for the analysis of mass media information is that of **content analysis**. Content analysis does not employ survey or personal interview instruments to measure similarity and variance of an experimental treatment. Rather, content analysis takes an identified **data set** as it exists in the research population, without treatment, and extracts the **integral variables** and **recurring themes** for tabulation.

Following its successful use in World War II by military intelligence to predict enemy intentions and movements, content analysis has enjoyed widespread use in scientific research and analysis. Hence, content analysis has a historic and current value in describing conduct, and has been shown to have a predictive value in estimating future conduct.

DATA SET CHARACTERISTICS

The data set characteristics are a record of language and conduct in the public environment. One characteristic of the homosexual lifestyle under review is the **recorded propensity** of many upscale homosexual males to **use ISO advertisements** in the “gay” press to find partners. In *The Advocate’s* own August 23, 1994 Sex Survey (reprinted in the full report), 29% of respondents self-reported that they found partner(s) in the past five years by using personal advertisements—a significant figure in any survey, suggesting the helpfulness of this research study.

Market research data find *The Advocate* is often described as the **homosexual equivalent of Newsweek**. While no two magazines are exactly alike, isolating male ISO *Advocates* finds their demographics quite similar across socio-economic variables of age, race, income, education, travel, and political affiliation. Both the *Washingtonian* and *The Advocate* have dedicated ISO sections within each issue where partners are solicited. These **partner solicitation sections** of each issue, over the five-year period, are what the two data sets reflect.

The solicitation advertisements are paid for individually. It is assumed that the words used, and the intentions expressed and implied, truly reflect the advertiser’s goals and objectives. For example, if a male is looking for an “attractive female companion with a sense of humor,” one can feel confident that it is very likely that those are the qualities being sought.

If a male is “In Search Of” another male with certain physical characteristics, it is quite likely that those characteristics are what he is seeking. Moreover, if a male claims he resembles certain physical characteristics in his efforts to attract a partner, it is assumed the advertisers define themselves by those same characteristics they find most **attractive to others** and by characteristics which **have had a largely fair record of success in attracting the partner attributes sought**.

Why use male populations from the *Washingtonian* and *The Advocate* for the study of male sexual orientation?

A review of a cross-section of the homosexual press found *The Advocate* and its ISO ads reflected mainstream homosexual mores. A subsequent study of market research data found the *Washingtonian* and *The Advocate* males demographically similar, with both magazines carrying *Classifieds* ISO sections where men sought partners.

LIMITATIONS

While market research generally finds a common ideology reflected in specialized magazine readerships, not all *Washingtonians* or *Advocates* place ISO advertisements in their publications. That is, on the one hand, we can say that if the *Washingtonians* and *Advocates* are demographically similar mainstream ISO populations they should have similar solicitation language. On the other hand, it is inaccurate to state that the men advertising ISO represent all male readers of these two mainstream magazines. To the extent that *Washingtonian* male ISOs resemble general heterosexual males, to that extent it could be reasonably argued that *Advocate* male ISOs might be expected to resemble general heterosexual males.

RESEARCH MODEL

Assuming the Kinsey Institute's "basically similar" claim for heterosexual and homosexual conduct to be correct, the research hypothesis is that **both populations will not differ** measurably in their language used in paid partner solicitations. The hypothesis is written below.

Null Hypothesis: $H_o: u1 == (P/O) == u2$
Alternative Hypothesis: $H_a: u1 \neq (P/O) \neq u2$

(P/O = process or outcome, u1= heterosexual sample, u2 = homosexual sample)

If the Null hypothesis (H_o) holds as correct, the heterosexual population ($u1$) will engage (=) in the same process and outcome (P/O) of the heterosexual population ($u2$). If not, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) would hold, that the two male populations ($u1$ and $u2$) differ (\neq) in both process and outcome P/O.

RESEARCH PHASES

Three phases of investigation were undertaken. Within each, subordinate research questions were posed for measurement:

Phase I Language Data Between Two Samples

H1: Homosexuals & Heterosexuals use similar visual and verbal language in partner solicitation.

Ho1: Homosexuals & Heterosexuals use dissimilar visual and verbal language in partner solicitation.

Phase II Partner Characteristics Sought Between Two Samples

H2: Homosexual & Heterosexual visual and verbal partner solicitation language indicates similar partner characteristics sought.

Ho2: Homosexual & Heterosexual visual and verbal partner solicitation language indicates dissimilar partner characteristics sought.

Phase III Partner Outcomes Sought Between Two Samples

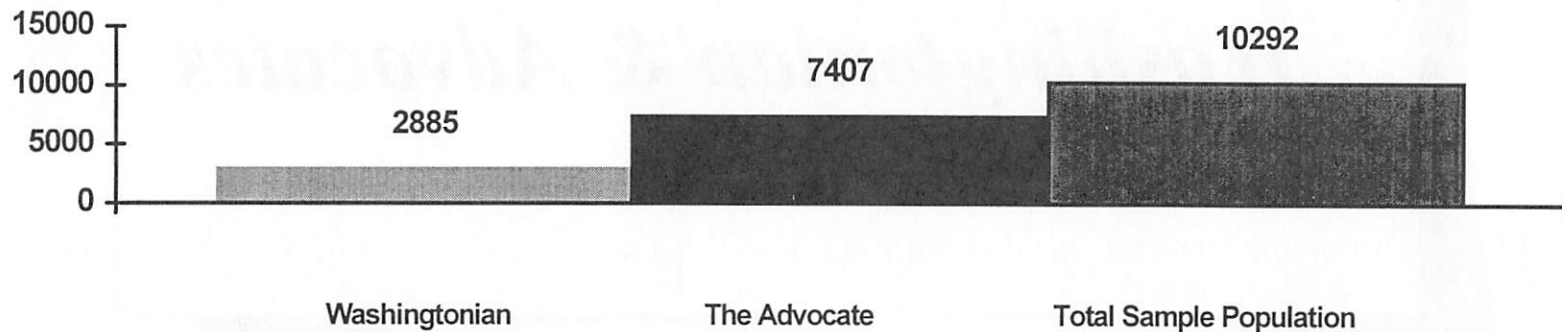
H3: Homosexual & Heterosexual visual and verbal language in partner solicitation indicate similar relationship outcomes sought.

Ho3: Homosexual & Heterosexual visual and verbal language in partner solicitation indicates dissimilar relationship outcomes sought.

The Reisman & Johnson Report

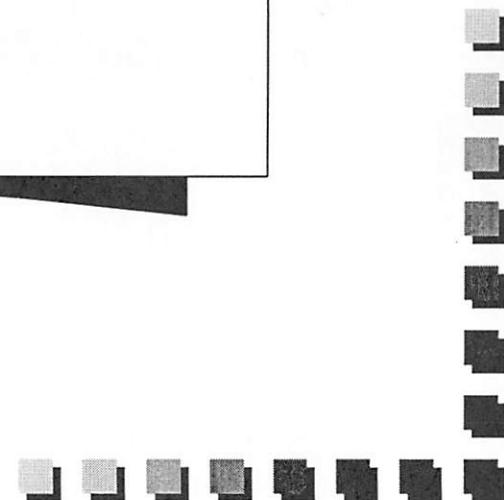
Male Paid Advertisements from 1988-1992

Heterosexual (Washingtonian, n = 2,885)
Homosexual (The Advocate, n = 7,407)
Population Totals, n = 10,292





Demographic Data
for
Washingtonian & Advocates



Washingtonian¹

Income is roughly 50% above the national average

Average household income is \$89,000

78.3% college graduates

36.5% completed graduate school

Almost all readers are employed

**Almost all own at least one car,
and travel by plane often**

**66.3% own a passport
and dine out an average of 15 times per month.**

Simmons Market Research (1991), Washingtonian QUICK Guide (1993)

The Advocate²

Income is roughly 50% above the national average

Average household income is \$72,100*

68%-70% college graduates

28% completed graduate school

Almost all readers are employed

**Almost all own at least one car, and
travel by plane four times a year**

67% vacation overseas

and order drinks by brand name

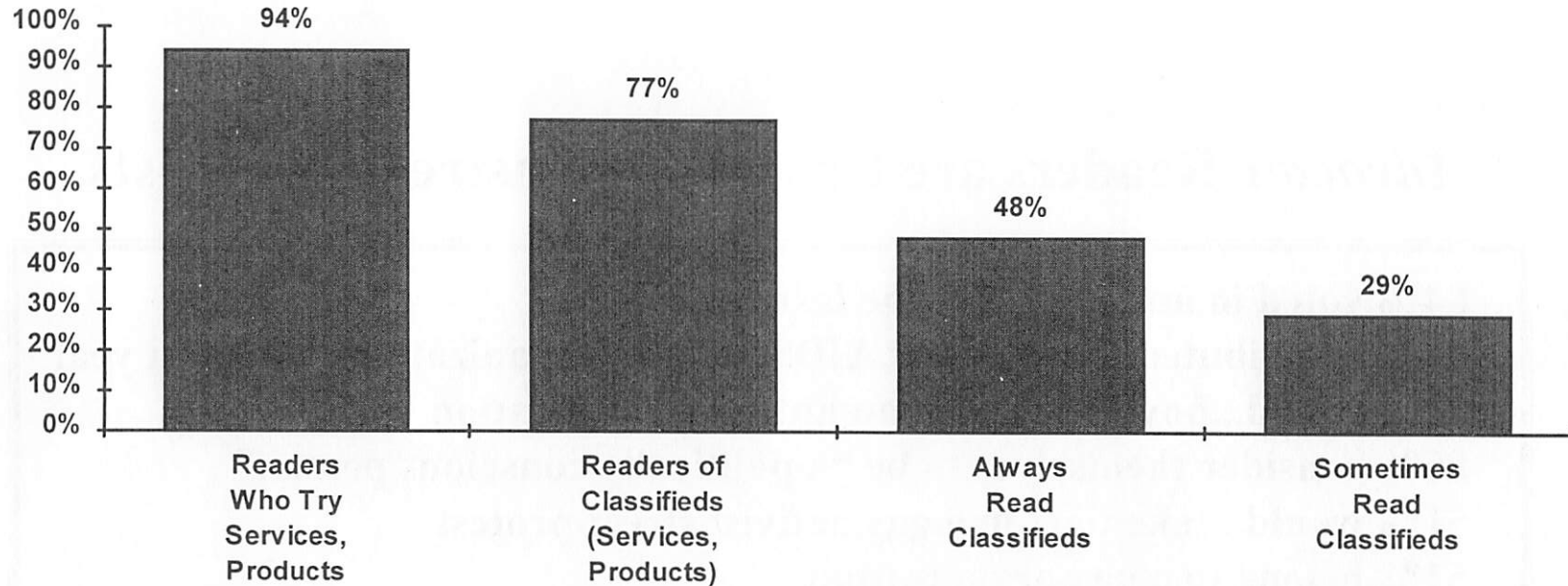
Simmons Market Research ('91), Wall Street Journal, 7/18/91 & Businessweek, 5/29/95, p. 38

Market Research
Composite Profile

Washingtonian partner seekers are a secular, urban, white, upscale, politically aware heterosexual male population.

The Advocate partner seekers are a secular, urban, white, upscale, politically aware homosexual male population.

Simmons Market Research Data on Overall Advocate Reader Use of Classified Ads (March 24, 1994)



With products and services largely sold in the *Advocate Classifieds*, Simmons Market Research found that of the 215,000 readers per issue, "94% . . . are likely to try products and services they see advertised...48% of our readers always read the pull-out section and an additional 29% of our readers sometimes read the pull-out section of *The Advocate*. Advertising in the Classifieds really works!" The *Classifieds* were thus an important feature to the overall magazine consumer.

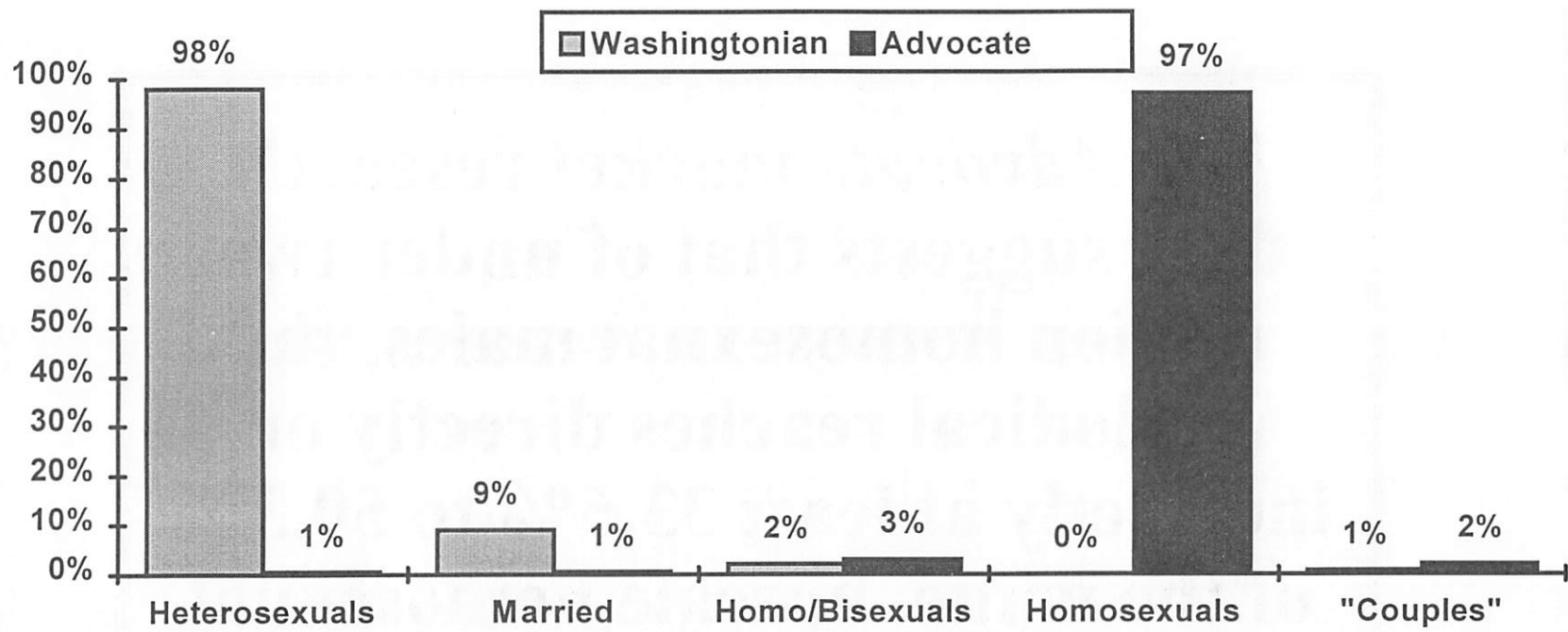
(*The Advocate*, SMRB study, 1990, March 24, 1994, p. 24-B)

Advocate Readers are Upscale, Mainstream Activists

- 84% voted in an election in the last year
- 81% contributed to a gay...or AIDS Health Organization in the last year
- 89% would...boycott against an anti-gay corporation
- 85% consider themselves to be “a politically conscious person”
- 51% would...take part in a gay activist street protest
- 51% belong to a gay organization
- 6% say they are completely “in the closet”

Source: The 1990 Simmons Report, Simmons Research

The Advocate market research data suggests that of under two million homosexual males, the periodical reaches directly or indirectly at least 33.5% to 50.3% of the white, upscale homosexual male population between ages 20-45 in America.



Washingtonians:

97.5% heterosexual
 2.5% bisexual (homosexual)
 9.0% married

Advocates:

97% homosexual
 3% bisexual (homosexual)
 2% "couples"

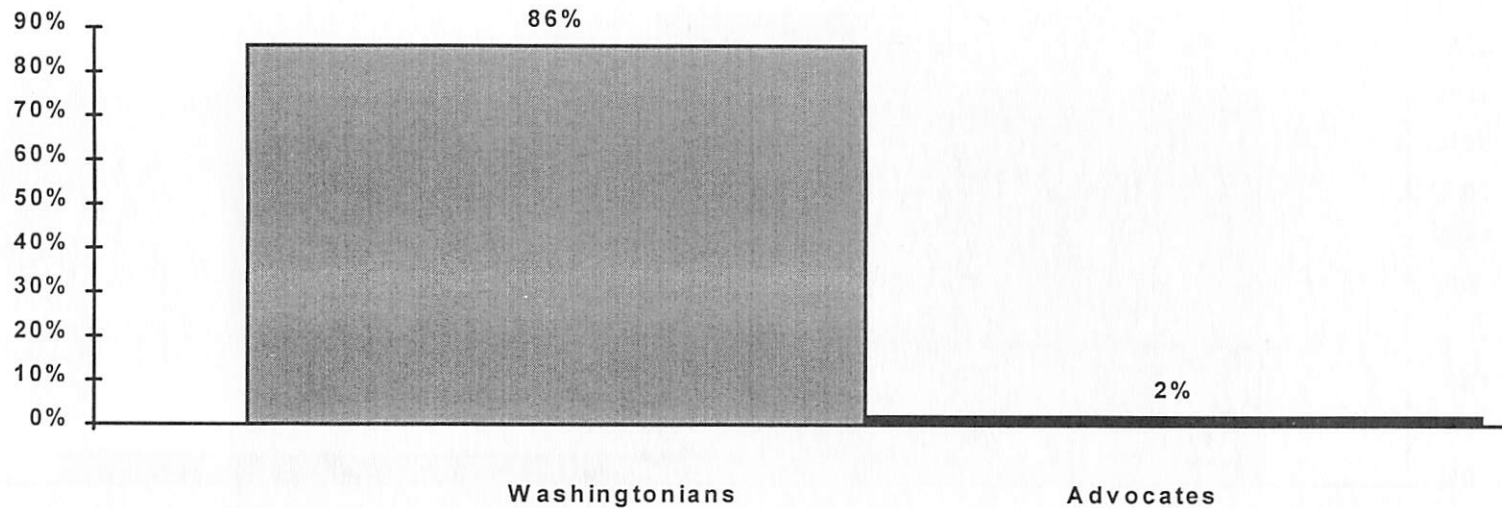
Hypothesis:

Heterosexual and homosexual male partner-seeking populations will be similar in characteristics and outcomes sought in partner solicitation advertisements. Should such similarity of relationship outcomes be borne out by the data, it would then be accurate to describe heterosexual and homosexual lifestyles as having the ability to be an “alternative” to each other.

*Seven Findings
of the
Reisman & Johnson Report*

Finding 1) Time-Bound Relationships

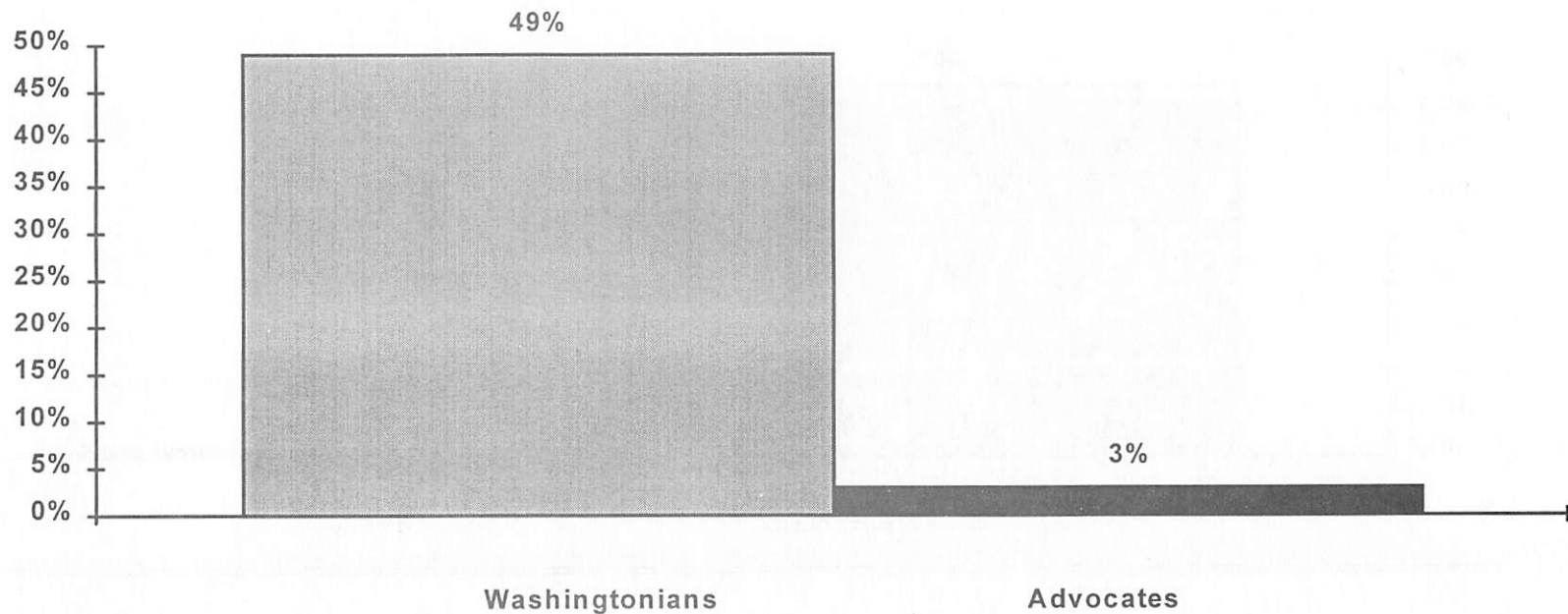
MALES SOLICITING PARTNER(S)
FOR TIME-BOUND RELATIONSHIPS



As noted, 86% of *Washingtonians* versus 2% of *Advocates* sought a **time-bound relationship**. **Ex:** “marriage,” “family,” “friendship,” “monogamy,” “forever.” The terms used suggest 98% of *Advocates* versus 14% of *Washingtonians* expected instant sex. **Ex:** “horny,” “hot,” “male call,” “models/masseurs,” “service,” “discreet.”

Finding 2) Nonsexual Interests

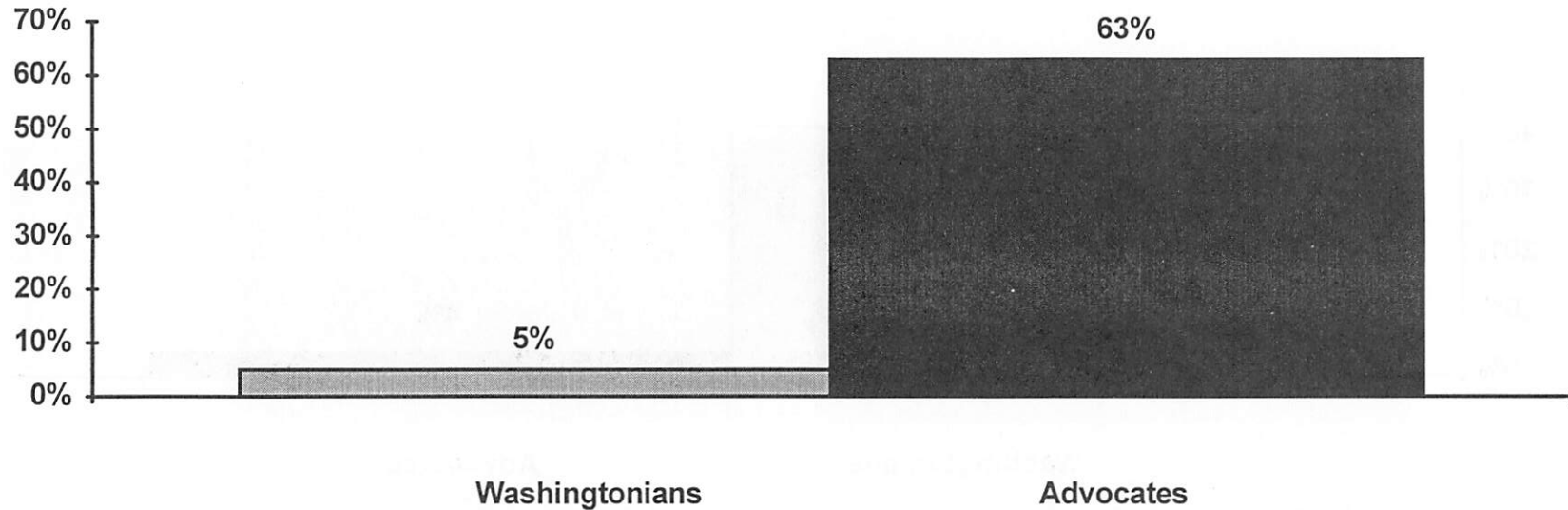
MALES SOLICITING (PARTNERS) BY NONSEXUAL INTERESTS, RELATIONSHIPS



49% of *Washingtonians* versus 3% of *Advocates* sought a person by describing their own nonsexual interests. **Ex:** camping, travel, skiing, reading, dancing, dining, volleyball, jazz, etc. *Advocates* who sought a traveling sex “buddy,” in exchange for expenses, etc., were coded as prostitution. **Ex:** “Seeking hot, hung, young guy for exciting trip to France, expenses paid.”

Finding 4) Prostitution

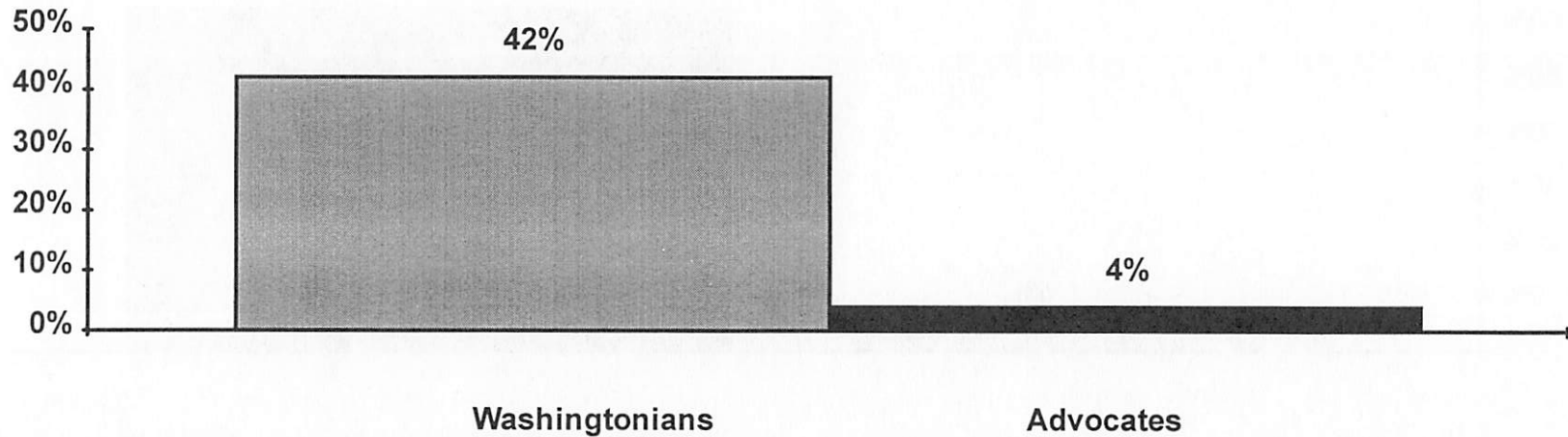
MALES SEEKING TO NEGOTIATE PROSTITUTION SERVICES



Although illegal, 63% (465 average ads per issue) of *Advocates* rather openly negotiated for paid sex, often citing the acts and the amount charged. **Ex:** “very hds....smooth body, hung, \$100 In and \$150 Out. Satisfaction Guaranteed.” In the *Washingtonian*, roughly 5% of ads, (15) per issue, implied the possibility of paid sex via sexy masseuses and the like. **Ex:** “a relaxing massage by a lovely young woman...great touch, sensual.”

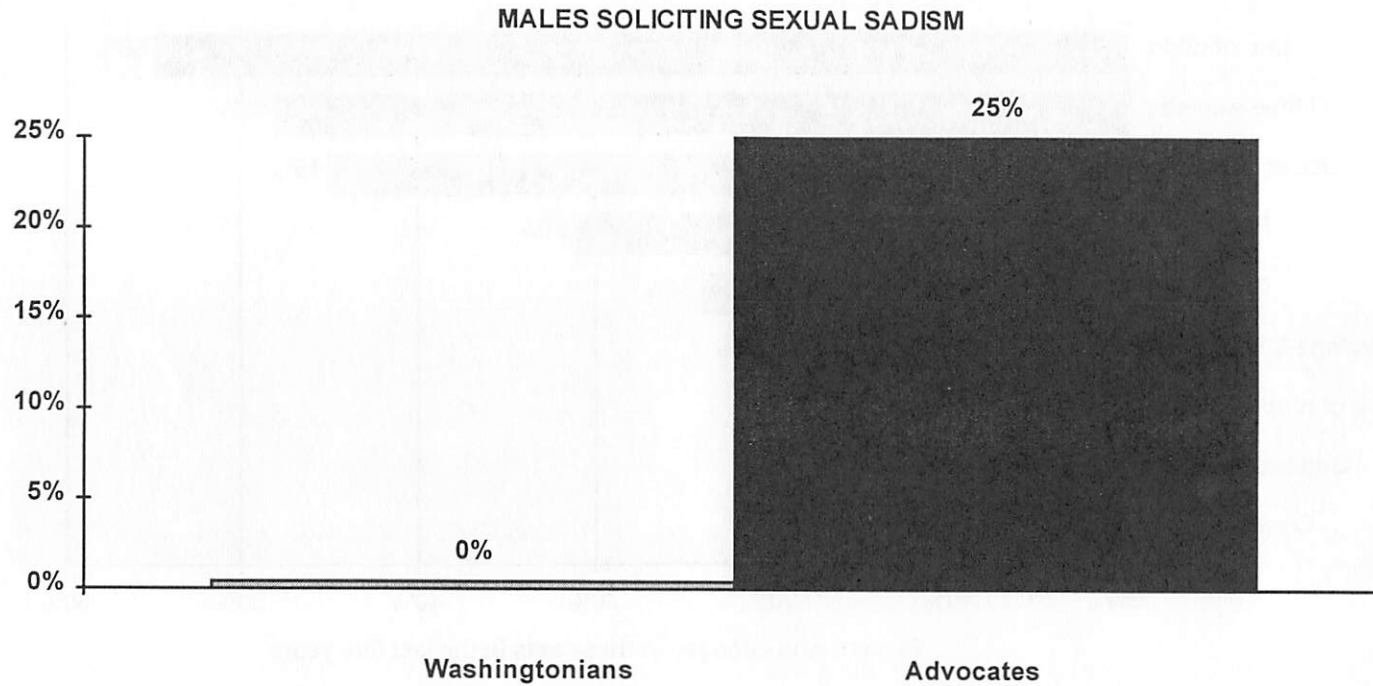
Finding 3) Nonsexual Characteristics

MALES PREFERRING NONSEXUAL CHARACTERISTICS



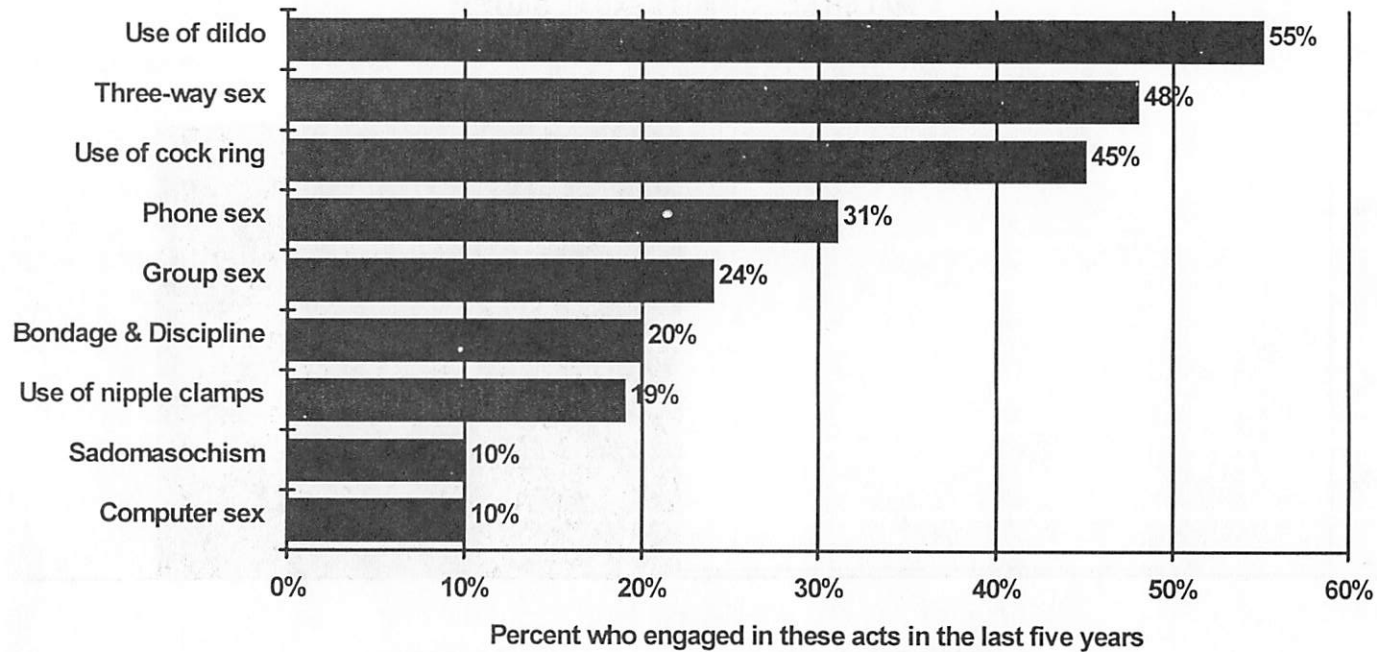
Overall, 42% of *Washingtonians* sought a woman by nonsexual characteristics. **Ex:** a lady, kindhearted, loves children, clean habits, ladylike, intelligent, sensitive, humorous, honest. Of *Advocates*, 4% sought similar characteristics: intelligence, sensitivity, humor, or honesty.

Finding 5) Sadism/Abuse



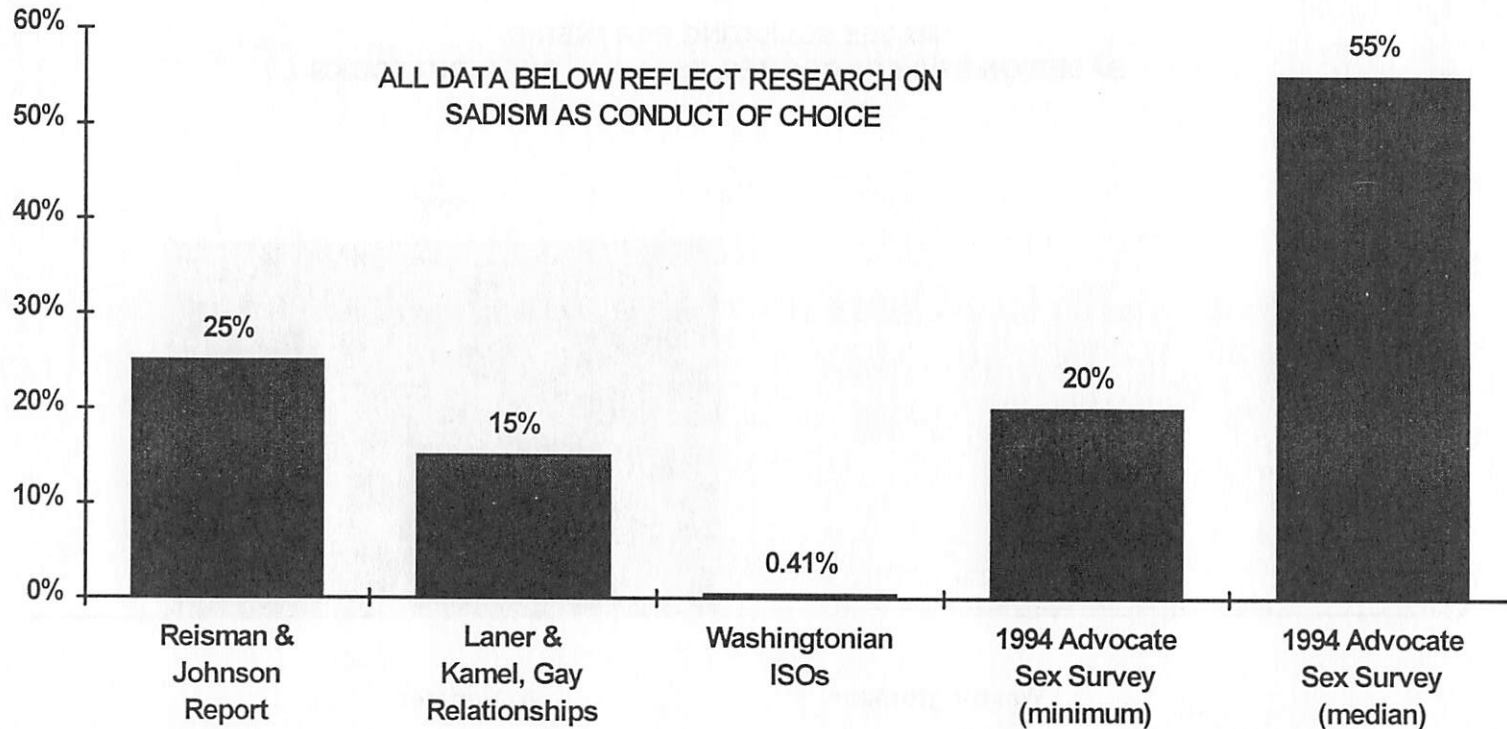
0.41% of *Washingtonians* versus 25% of *Advocates* sought forms of sadism and abuse with their partners.
Ex: "Lashmates," "F/F Club Europe," "S&M Playroom," "Leather and Toys," "Fly on my sling," "Master," "Slave," "SM Rituals," "Dominant stud."

*Self-Report Data: The Advocate Survey of Sexuality
August 23, 1994 on Sadism/Self-Abuse*



Corroboration for the report's sadism data came from, among other sources, *The Advocate* table above: 10% of respondents engaged in sadism, 20% "bondage and discipline," and 55% other forms of sadosexual conduct.

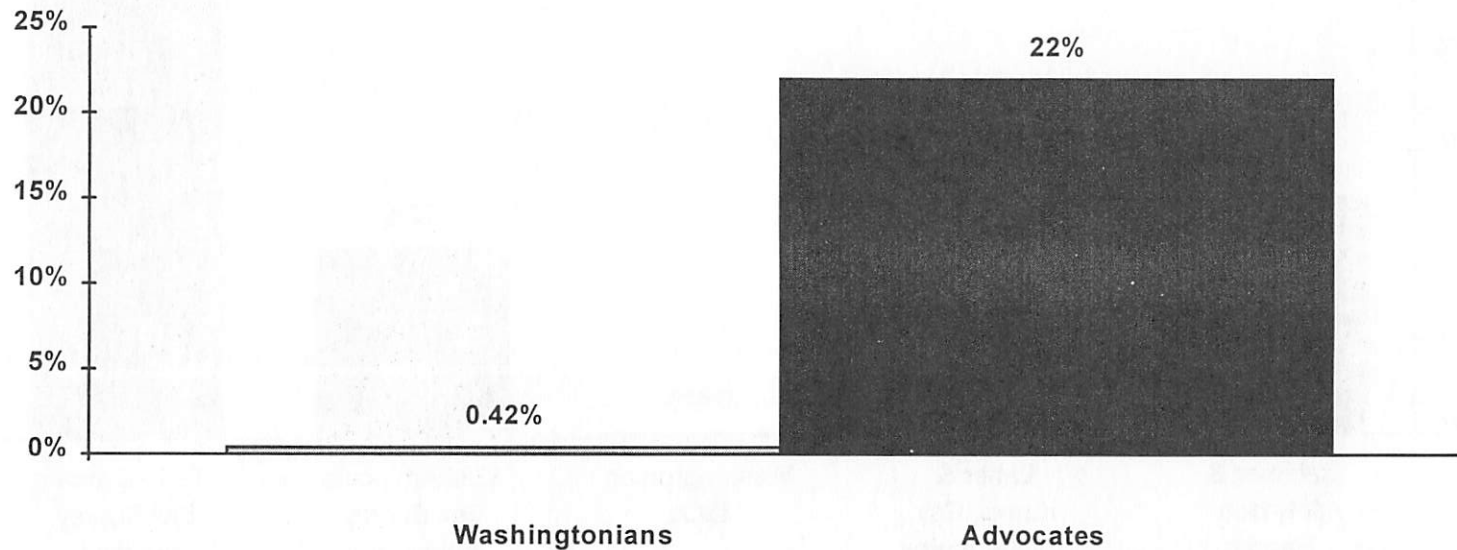
Sadism/Abuse Corroborative Data



Additional data come from Laner and Kamel (1977) finding at least 15% of *Advocates* desiring sadism, 20% to 55% self reported sadism desires in *The 1994 Advocate Survey of Sexuality*, while well under 1% of *Washingtonians* desired sadism.

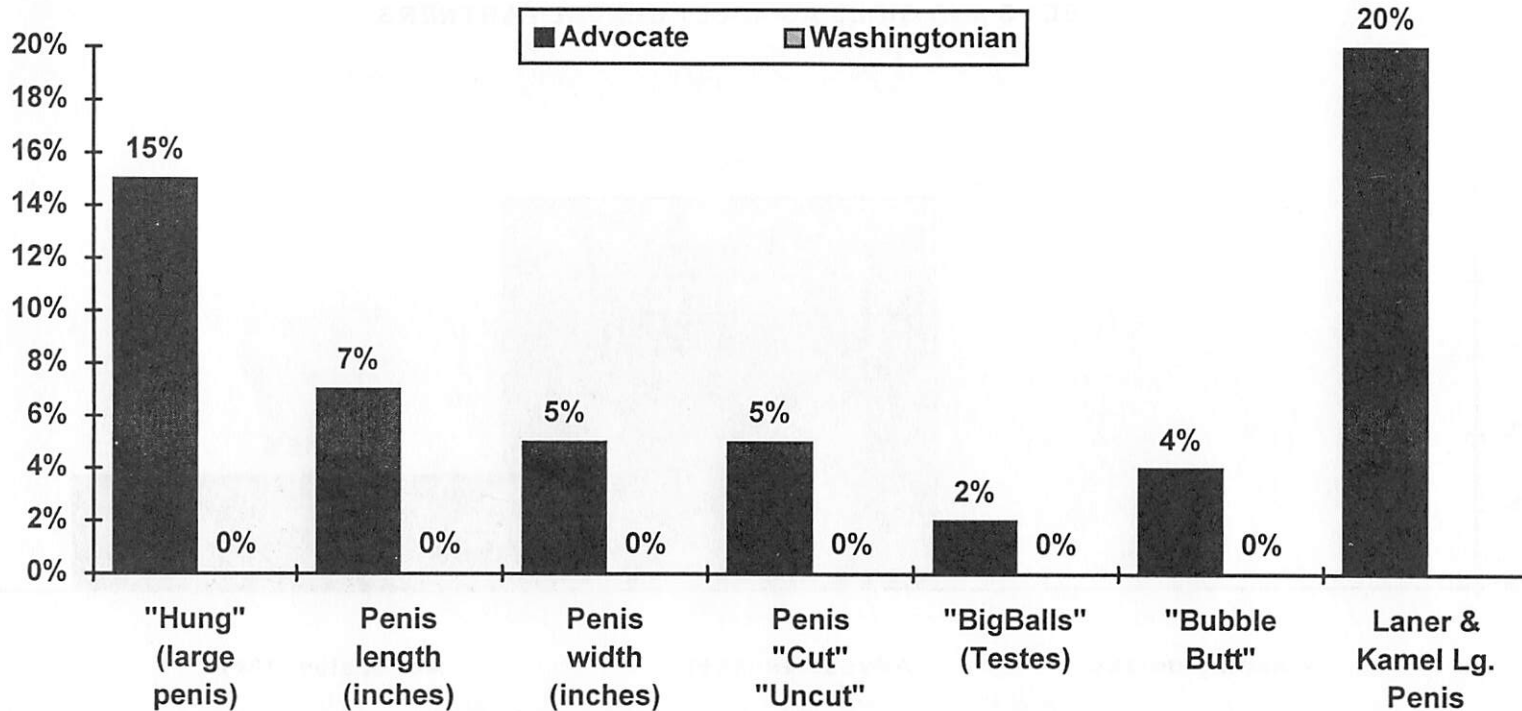
Finding 6) Body Parts and Size

MALES SOLICITING PARTNER(S)
BASED ON BODY PART SIZES, PHALLUS, BUST, BUTTOCKS



No *Washingtonians* sought a woman by “bust-waist-hip size,” 0.42% men mentioning interest in a “buxom” or “rubesque” woman, versus 22% of *Advocates* who sought males by their phallic size or other body parts such as “hung,” “9X 6,” “cut,” “uncut.”

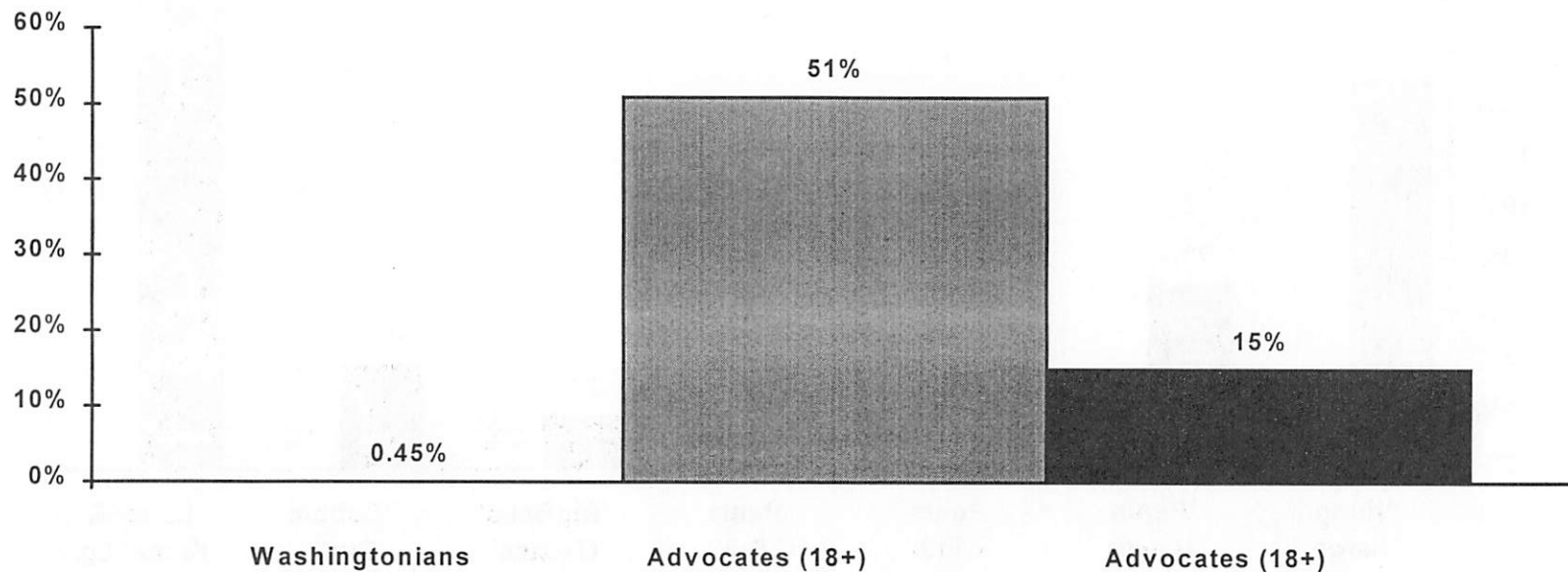
Body Parts and Size Corroboration



As noted, no *Washingtonians* defined self or women by precise size. Of *Advocates*, 15% advertised their phallus; 7% length; 5% width; 5% circumcision status; 2% advertised testes size; and 4% buttocks. Likewise, Laner and Kamel cite a 20% phallic focus, and *The 1994 Advocate Survey of Sexuality* found 62% of respondents seeking a larger phallus.

Finding 7) Seeking, Advertising Teen Boys and Girls

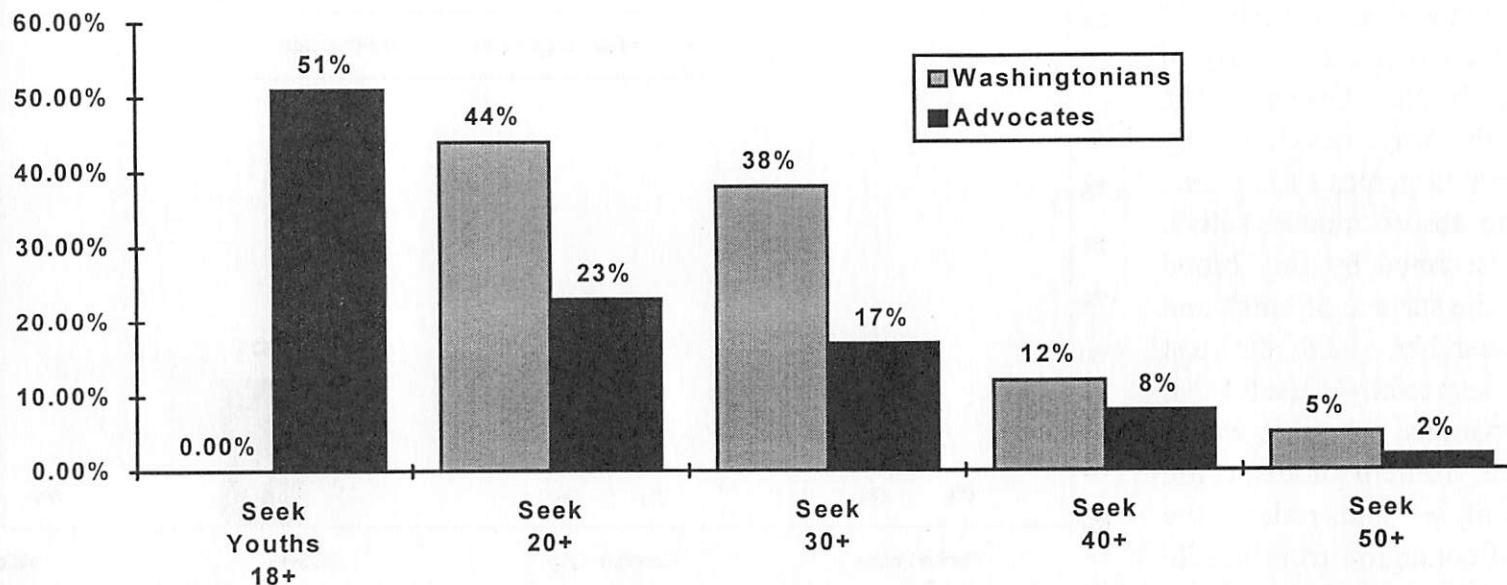
BOYS AND GIRLS AS ADULT SEXUAL PARTNERS



47% of *Washingtonians* and 17% of *Advocates* cited some age boundary. Of *Advocates* citing some age boundary, 51% solicited young boys legally available for sex (18+) while overall, 15% of *Advocates* cited man-boy sex. **Man-girl sex was not sought by the *Washingtonian* heterosexual men.**

Of Those Citing An Age Boundary, What Was The Partner's Preferred Age?

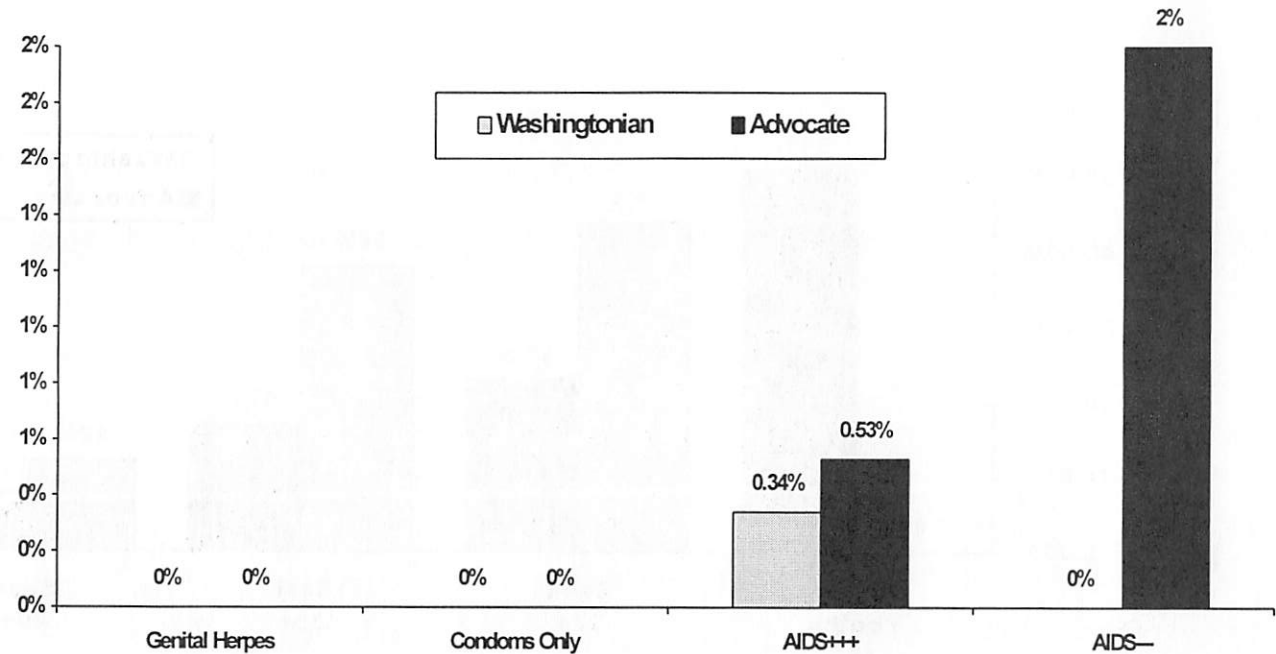
CORROBORATION FOR AGE DESIRED



89% of *Washingtonians* and 41% of *Advocates* reported their own age with almost half of *Washingtonians* seeking a partner within an age boundary, primarily in their 20's and 30's and 17% seeking a woman over forty. 41% of *Advocates* reported their own age, 18% seeking an age boundary. Of those even citing an age boundary for a partner, 51% sought youths 18+.²

ISO Reports of AIDS, Condom Use or Venereal Disease

A new oral test for HIV is 100% accurate and yields results in one fourth the time of current oral tests, researchers announced at a May 21 meeting of the American Society of Microbiology in New Orleans. The ImmunoComb assay, developed by the Israeli firm Orgenics Ltd., uses a cotton pad to absorb mucus, saliva, and plasma secreted by tiny blood vessels near the surface of bums and teeth. Researchers said the test would be especially useful in developing nations, where it would eliminate the problem of disposing of blood samples and reduce the possibility of contagion from needle sticks.



Condom avoidance was a “basically similar” *Advocate* and *Washingtonian* value. As above, few *Washingtonians* or *Advocates* noted health, or STDs. Well under 1% of ISOs said they had AIDS and none insisted on condom-only sex. While the May 31, 1994 *Advocate* data estimated about 50% of “middle-aged” homosexuals as AIDS carriers, no high-profile pictorial “public service” AIDS prevention ads or condom sales appeared in either publication.* As under 5% of *Washingtonian* solicit quick sex, condoms (associated only with sex) are not mentioned.

*(A single CDC “safer sex” text, without pictures, appeared regularly in later years.)

Conclusions

The five to seven major comparative findings follow a similar pattern:

- *The Advocate* partner solicitations find mainstream secular, white, upscale homosexual males seeking short-term, often paid sex relationships with multiple male boys and men, based on body parts, shape and specific sex acts.
- *The Washingtonian* partner solicitations find mainstream secular, single, white, upscale heterosexual males seeking a time-bound relationship with an adult female partner based on mutual interests and character.

FURTHER CONCLUSIONS

- ◆ The results of our study showed differences that were striking and sometimes [to us] unexpected. Kirk and Madsen's theory that the "sex lives of gays and straights today are both similar and conventional" was not sustained by the data describing these two affluent white male populations. As these heterosexual and homosexual males are demographically alike, their ISO language might also have been alike, yet the advertising language finds the attitude and conduct differences between these otherwise similar affluent populations to be striking at every level.

- ◆ Partner solicitation between the two samples are “**basically dissimilar.**” The dissimilarities between the two groups are **fundamental and statistically significant at every level:** a) in how they describe themselves, b) in what they seek in partners, and c) in what they intend the outcomes of their relationship to be. The divergent view of a commitment of time by these male populations is one of the strongest and most consistent differences we found and may account for a myriad of homosexual behavioral life choices (for example, AIDS prevention conduct).

- ◆ While this study is hardly the last word on the issue, these two socio-economically similar groups of men-- whose only apparent difference is sexual orientation-- are dramatically and consistently opposite in their sexual attitude and conduct in several critical ways. For example, it was both surprising and interesting to find that sex acts and preferences were a non-issue to *Washingtonians*, especially as these related to coarse or harmful sexual conduct, or to female body depictions. *The Advocate* ISOs so deviate from the male-female norm as to make their male-male data aberrant to reasonable comparison.

Both populations studied in this report are representative of an affluent, educated and hence influential part of their society. In *After the Ball*, Kirk and Madsen (1989) testify, “[w]e and our friends have placed many such ads over the years,” while *The 1994 Advocate Survey of Sexuality* confirms our ISO data. Personals, says Davidson (1991), are “useful data sources for assessing the meanings people attach to their sexuality.” The interpretation of these meanings was based on the authors’ assumptions that the words used, and the intentions expressed and implied largely reflect the advertiser’s goals and objectives. It is hoped that further analyses can be conducted on these data and that others will undertake large-scale comparative studies of sexual orientation in mass media.