In earlier centuries impressionistic notions of the rarity of homosexual contacts went hand in hand with their conceptualization as abnormal or unusual pathology. Although some European studies had questioned the conventional wisdom of low incidence, it was the massive data that was accumulated by Alfred Kinsey and his associates at Indiana University that first revealed how widespread homosexual activity was, thus compelling a rethinking of the problem and its relation to the purported "unnaturalness" of same-sex behavior.


In this report on 1,000 married and 1,200 single women (mostly college educated, from the Northeast U.S.), about 40% disclosed that they had had an "intense emotional relationship with other women." Some 14% of the married and 19% of the unmarried reported some overt lesbian contact.


About 23% of West German males surveyed reported homosexual experiences.


Surveys the existing literature on incidence in Europe and the United States, indicating the need for a more consistent definition of homosexual behavior so that results can be compared. Much existing work shows a bias towards upper-middle and upper class respondents, including students. Because of overrepresentation of prisoners, the 1948 Kinsey male data are distorted--though independent evidence suggests that the famous figure of 37% for overt male homosexual experience is not much exaggerated. (Nonetheless it is essential to consult the 1948 and 1953 Reports of Alfred Kinsey et al.).


Results of a questionnaire returned by West German university students show that 15% of the males and 3% of the females reported homosexual experience, mainly in adolescence.
Q. INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

Cross-cultural comparisons, even among Western societies, are still uncommon in homosexual studies. This neglect may be attributed to a variety of causes: the need to record local manifestations which in many spheres are only just emerging from clandestinity; lack of research funds; and an unanalyzed notion that homosexuality is the same everywhere. It is just the latter question that the neglect of this kind of research begs. Also needed, of course, is more work on non-Western societies (see IV.A-F).


Holds that the gay world in Australia is marked by working-class culture, while that of the U. S. reflects the hegemony of middle-class values.


Offers separate, but to some extent coordinated presentations on Germany (by Johannes Werres, pp. 81-150), The Netherlands (by Cees Straver, pp. 151-208), and the United States (by Edward Sagarin, pp. 208-66). Comparative material on Denmark, The Netherlands, and the U. S. appears in Martin S. Weinberg, and Colin J. Williams, Male Homosexuals: Their Problems and Adaptations (New York: Oxford