



An investigation into the status of same-sex partnerships in Ukraine

REPORT

Kyiv, 2009

An investigation into the status of same-sex partnerships in Ukraine

Abstract

In Ukraine such multifaceted topic as LGBT is still poorly studied. A few studies that preceded this one focused primarily and predominantly on legal rights of same-sex partners in Ukraine as the law outlines them. No serious effort was made to investigate social and psychological aspects of same-sex partnerships in Ukraine. The present study is therefore formative in nature and attempts to narrow this gap and draw a picture with a broader perspective on the everyday life of same-sex partnerships. It offers a sociological inquiry into the status of same-sex partnerships in Ukraine, studies social identities of same-sex partners and how they affect the everyday lives, needs and values of the couple.

Research was made by Nash Mir (Our World) Gay and Lesbian Center in cooperation with Donbass-SocProject. English variant is prepared by Serhiy Ponomaryov.

The research was made within the framework of the project "**Studying and reporting the situation of same-sex partnership in Ukraine**".

This project was supported by ILGA-Europe within its Human Rights Violations Documentation Fund. The opinions expressed in the document do not necessarily reflect any official position of ILGA-Europe.

NASH MIR (Our World) Gay and Lesbian Center

Postal address: P.O. Box 173, Kyiv, 02100, Ukraine

Telephone/fax: +380 (44) 573-54-24

E-mail: ourworld@gay.org.ua

Internet-site: www.gay.org.ua

Introduction

Various issues of marriage and family have always aroused most keen and much sustained interest among the academia. In focus have been sundry aspects of heterosexual family, i.e. age of marriage, stability and length of relationships between the partners in marriage, reasons for marriage dissolution, age difference between the partners, financial management, division of responsibilities and many others.

The institution of same-sex family became an object of research interest only in 1990s both as part of sociologists' departure from traditional perspectives (i.e. the study of "normal" and "conventional") and owing to political successes of the LGBT-community (i.e. normalization of homosexuality in medical, sociological and other discourses, repeal of sodomy laws and legalization of same-sex partnerships in a number of European countries, Canada and the US states, etc.). In Ukraine, however, such multifaceted topic as LGBT is still poorly studied and gay men and lesbians are still seen by an average Ukrainian as mythical beings that are assigned primarily negative characteristics. Issues of same-sex partnerships and particularly child adoption by gay men and lesbians look especially scandalous against such a social and cultural background. Even those who accept the fact that human sexuality is diverse and contend, albeit with some reservation, that gays and lesbians are entitled to civil rights are not ready to discuss without bias and prejudice the issue of same-sex couple being a rightful unit in the society analogous to heterosexual marriage.

For the first time some issues concerning same-sex families were raised in a 2000 study conducted by an LGBT organization "Our World" (Kyiv, Ukraine). The study concluded that same-sex families are invisible, more so legally excluded from social life in Ukraine and the partners are completely defenseless in the eyes of the law. The Family Code of Ukraine and related legislation define family as "created as a result of marriage, kinship, adoption, or on other grounds not prohibited by the law and such that do not contradict moral principles of the society". "Marriage is a familial union of a woman and a man [...]". Thus, de jure same-sex families do not exist and partners thereof have no opportunities to represent each other's interests in proprietary, financial, medical or other regards; there are no legal avenues for same-sex partners to adopt children and use the same rights and guarantees that different-sex partners enjoy; there are no means of legally defending the rights, financial and proprietary, of each of the partners in case of separation.

The major limitation of the 2000 study was that it focused primarily and predominantly on legal rights of same-sex partners in Ukraine as the law outlines them. At that time no serious effort was made to investigate social and psychological aspects of same-sex partnerships in Ukraine. The 2009 study (first and only of its kind in Ukraine), however, attempts to narrow this gap and draw a picture with a broader perspective on the everyday life of same-sex partnerships. It offers a sociological inquiry into the status of same-sex partnerships in Ukraine, studies social identities of same-sex partners and how they affect the everyday lives, needs and values of the couple.

Absence of any research concerning same-sex families on the territory of the former USSR renders present research formative in nature, i.e. outlining the basics of the issue in focus. This affects the outline of the article in that it focuses primarily on presenting the findings rather than elaborating on discussion points. They are simply included in the text as accompaniment to the analysis rather than presented in an independent section. For the most part discussion focuses on comparison or contrast of the findings in the present study with those from a few prior studies conducted in Ukraine.

Methodology

The formative nature of the study did not necessitate randomization in forming the sample and less expensive means of reaching out to respondents were selected (e.g. online and mail questionnaires).

Mail questionnaires were used to reach the population of smaller localities (predominantly townships and villages in the west of Ukraine) and those aged over 40. With respondents' addresses culled from dating personals in the classifieds section of the GAY.UA newspaper 509 questionnaires were disseminated via mail between Jan. 10 and Feb. 10, 2009. Retrieved were 102 questionnaires (20%).

To reach younger population that resides in cities (Central and Eastern Ukraine) the questionnaire was also administered through the web-based service "Virtual Research Server" (www.virtualexs.ru), where all desirous could answer its questions from Dec. 28, 2008 till Feb. 5, 2009. The information about the questionnaire and invitations for participation were disseminated through a number of Ukrainian LGBT e-groups (lgbtc@googlegroups.com, gayforum@googlegroups.com, L-community@googlegroups.com, queer_world@googlegroups.com), placed as an advertisement on web sites of a number of LGBT-organizations and initiatives (www.gay.org.ua, <http://feminist.org.ua>, <http://donbas-socproject.blogspot.com>) and bulletin e-boards popular among LGB community (<http://board.gayua.com>, <http://date.bluesystem.ru>). All together 321 questionnaires were obtained through aforementioned online services.

One hundred and five more questionnaires (13 of which were incomplete and therefore discarded during initial analysis) were obtained between Feb. 7 and March 10, 2009 from the clientele (the majority of whom are young adults) of national and local LGBT organizations and initiatives. Thus, the total size of the sample made 527.

Collected data was analyzed using statistical package R. Statistical hypotheses were evaluated against Pearson's chi-square (χ^2) test. Individual answers to semi-close-ended questions (var. "other") were divided into semantic categories, whose accuracy was checked against several other categorizations devised by different people involved in the research and then compared.

Where possible the results of the study were compared with findings of other Ukrainian sociological studies of men who have sex with men (MSM). Original data for other studies was reviewed and re-evaluated to ensure correctness of comparison. Unfortunately, quantitative data about women who have sex with women (WSW) is almost non-existent. Prior studies like "The Blue Book" (2000) featured only 48 women, a sample far from representative, and quantitative data in "Being Lesbian in Ukraine" (2007) are insufficient since the study's goal was to give a qualitative description of lesbians' life experiences.

Different issues pertaining to same-sex families (in itself and in connection with respective sociosexual identities, extant models of heterosexual relationships, presence or absence of children, etc.) are usually enveloped - both in mass consciousness and that of LGB community - in assumptions, preconceptions and judgements stemming from individual experiences and (sub)culture-defined stereotypes. In this view the obtained data was correlated with expressions of such preconceptions that exist in LGB community derived from personal diary entries at the Qguys (<http://qguys.ru>; online social and dating service for the gay and bisexual community).

Descriptive demographics of the study and relative individual data

In terms of sex respondents are represented by 65% of biological males and 35% of biological females.¹

Respondents' age ranges from 15 to 72 and their distribution by age proves to be uneven for the majority falls into the category of 20-30 y.o.a.² The median age is 29 but the majority of the respondents are 20 y.o.a. (9%). Since young people between 15 and 35 y.o.a. are most easily accessible, they make up 80% of the sample. Noteworthy is the difference in distribution of age groups for male and female respondents:

Age group, y.o.a.	total, N = 527	male, N = 345	female, N = 182
	%		
15-19	9	6	14
20-29	53	50	58
30-39	8	9	7
50 and above	5	6	

Table 1. Respondents' distribution into age groups

The respondents represent all regions of Ukraine, albeit the regions are represented unevenly: the majority of respondents are from Kiev, the South and the East of Ukraine. In terms of geographic representation there are no significant differences between the sexes:

Region	%		
	total, N = 527	male, N = 345	female, N = 182
Kiev	24	24	25
East: Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv prov.	22	22	22
Center: Vinnytsia, Dnipropetrovsk, Kyrovohradsk, Poltava, Cherkasy prov.	15	15	15
South: Zaporizhzhia, Mykolayiv, Odesa, Kherson prov., the Crimea	23	22	26
West: Volyn, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Rivno, Ternopil, Khmelnytsk, Chernivtsy prov.	13	14	10
North: Zhytomyr, Sumy, Chernihiv prov.	3	3	2

Table 2. Respondents' distribution by the region

¹ Although the number of MSM is usually considered to be higher than that of WSW, a more reasonable assumption would be that the reason for such quantitative difference is due to higher levels of openness and social visibility of MSM in comparison to WSW.

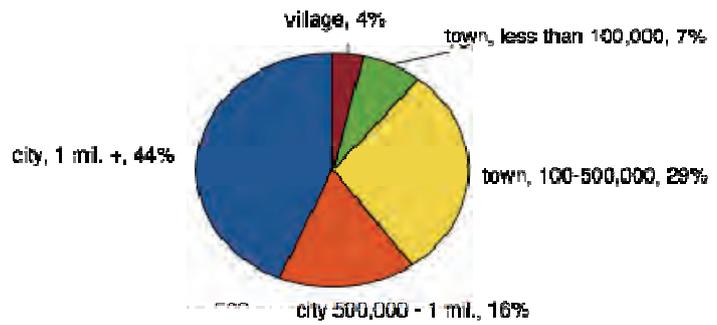
² Ukrainian censuses show that the number of males and females in each age group is approximately the same. Thus, findings on MSM and WSW are not representative of the entire population in terms of age. However, other studies (e.g. Berger, R. (1977). Report on a Community Based Venereal Disease Clinic for Homosexual Men. 13(1) J.Sex Research, 54-62) find the same discrepancy and show that it is always a peculiar group of socially accessible MSM or WSW that is in focus. Therefore such non-representativeness is not characteristic of the Ukrainian MSM/WSW population only.

More than a half of the respondents (44%) are residents of cities with the population of 1 million or above. Residents of towns with the population of less than 100,000 and villages constitute 11% of the sample (Graph 1).

Three fourth of the respondents mark their sociosexual identity as homosexual (namely gay or lesbian), slightly more than one fifth (22%) as bisexual, and people with heterosexual and transsexual identities total 5 and 7 persons correspondingly. Owing to underrepresentation of the latter two groups they were excluded from further analysis.

The distribution of homo- and bisexual identities by sex is approximately equal and agrees with the general distribution of the respondents by sex (66% male and 34% female). Among the respondents belonging to either sex no difference in distribution of homo- and bisexual identities was found (77% and 23% correspondingly).

The distribution of different sociosexual identities by age shows significant differences: if the group of respondents who identified themselves as homosexual does not vary much from one age group to another in the sample, the distribution of those who self-identified as bisexual by age is considerably different:



Graph 1. Respondents' distribution by the size of locality

Age group, y.o.a.	homosexual, N = 396	bisexual, N = 116
	%	
15-19	7	14
20-29	57	41
30-39	24	30
40-49	8	8
50 and above	4	8

Table 3. Distribution of the respondents with different sociosexual identities by age

Differences in self-identifications analyzed against the size of locality and the region of residence are statistically insignificant.

Almost a quarter of the respondents (23%) have a history of heterosexual marriage or cohabitation. The ratio of those who have never been married to or cohabited with an opposite-sex partner is not significantly different for different sexes. However, there seems to be a remarkable correlation: the higher the respondents' age group, the higher the proportion of both male and female respondents in this age group who have been in heterosexual marriage:

	Age group, y.o.a				
	15-19, N = 47	20-29, N = 279	30-39, N = 135	40-49, N = 39	50 and above, N = 25
	%				
was married	2	12	36	49	64
was never married	98	88	64	51	36

Table 4. Respondents' heterosexual marriage or cohabitation history; distribution in age groups.

The distribution of those who have a history of heterosexual marriage and/or cohabitation by sex presents an interesting picture. Homo- and bisexual women are more likely to get married to an opposite-sex partner earlier and in greater numbers compared to men. Although this fact reflects the general findings of the national statistics of marriages for men and women (Census 2001), there is a much smaller number of MSM and WSW in all age groups who were married if contrasted with numbers of men and women from the general population.

There is a significant difference between groups of respondents with homosexual and bisexual identities in terms of marriage/cohabitation history. Whilst the percentage of bisexuals who have such histories approaches 45%, the percentage of homosexually identified respondents is appreciably smaller - 15%. It is noteworthy, however, that it is impossible to establish causal links in this respects: it is either the history of heterosexual marriage/cohabitation that makes the respondent self-identify as bisexual or it is in fact bisexuality that genuinely predisposes the respondent to have heterosexual relationships.

Only a sixth of the respondents irrespective of their sex have children:

Do you have children?	total, N = 525	male, N = 343	female, N = 182
	%		
yes	16	15	18
no, but I would like to	57	56	59
no and I don't want to	27	29	24

Table 5. Presence of and desire to have children

Having children positively correlates with age (table 6) and history of heterosexual marriage/cohabitation (table 7) and there is a clear marker at the age of 30 that divides those who have or would like to have children and those who don't.

Do you have children?	15-19, N = 47	20-29, N = 279	30-39, N = 134	40 and above, N = 65
	%			
yes	2	6	26	46
no, but I would like to	66	67	47	28
no and I don't want to	32	27	27	26

Table 6. Presence of and desire to have children; distribution in age groups

Do you have children?	was married, N = 119	was never married, N = 405
	%	
yes	56	4
no, but I would like to	35	63
no and I don't want to	8	33

Table 7. Presence and desire to have children in groups of respondents who have a history of heterosexual marriage/cohabitation

Slightly more than a half of the respondents (regardless of their sociosexual identity) who have no children expressed the desire to have one (Table 8). However, there is a remarkable difference between homosexually and bisexually identified respondents who don't want to have a child. More than a third of the respondents who identified themselves as homosexual claim to have no interest in having a child whilst among bisexually identified respondents such claim was sustained by only 13%.

Do you have children?	homosexual, N = 395	bisexual, N = 115
	%	
yes	11	30
no, but I would like to	58	57
no and I don't want to	31	13

Table 8. Distribution of the respondents with different sociosexual identities wrt. presence or desire to have children

Same-sex families as they are

Family statics

About two thirds of the respondents claimed to currently have a same-sex partner (Graph 2).

WSW have been found to form more families than MSM, but the difference is not significant (i.e. manifests itself merely as a tendency) (Table 9).

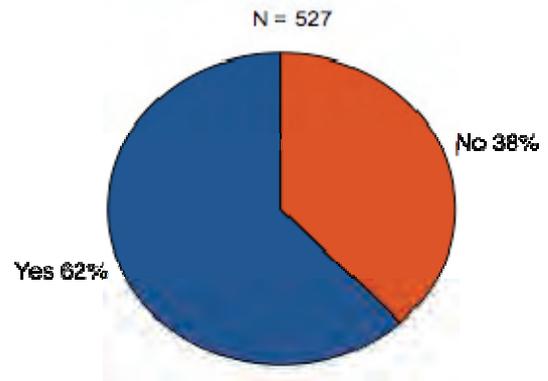
Do you currently have a same-sex partner?	Male, N = 345	Female, N = 182
	%	
Yes	59	69
No	41	31

Table 9. Presence of a same-sex partner; distribution by sex

Interestingly, in the study conducted in 2000 the situation was inverse: 65% of respondents stated that they did not have a same-sex partner (a sum of answers “no”, “no, but I would like to have one”, and “no, I don’t want to have one”). Although the difference in the findings of the two surveys is significant it is hard to say whether they reflect a presence or absence of a tendency since neither of the surveys has formal characteristics of representativeness.

Collected data allows to approximate the number of same-sex families in Ukraine. If we are to assume that the ballpoint number of homosexual persons in Ukraine ranges from 2 to 4 percent, then their number will add up to about one million people. If we further assume that 50% of MSM and WSW have a same-sex partner then their number will come to around 250 thousand. The study of the International Alliance against HIV/AIDS estimated the number of MSM in Ukraine between 177 and 430 thousand, in which case the number of male same-sex families will range from 40 to 100 thousand. Thus we think that there may be from 100 to 200 thousand same-sex couples in Ukraine.

It was hypothesized that presence of a same-sex partner correlates with the age and previous history of heterosexual marriage/cohabitation and sociosexual identity. However, the data does not corroborate the hypotheses. Between the age groups “20-29” and “30-39” there is no statistically significant difference; the groups “40-49” and “50 and above” are poorly represented in the sample and thus were combined for the purpose of this analysis. Nevertheless, even with the age groups combined the differences between the “younger” age group (less than 19 y.o.a), “mature” (20-40) and “older” (40 and above) are insignificant and lie within the margin of error:



Graph 2. Distribution of respondents by presence of a same-sex partner

Do you currently have a same-sex partner?	Age group, y.o.a.		
	15-19, N = 47	20-39, N = 415	40 and above, N = 65
Yes	51	65	55
No	49	35	45

Table 10. Presence of a same-sex partner; distribution by age groups

In terms of a history of heterosexual marriage/cohabitation and sociosexual identity of the respondents there are also no significant differences:

Do you currently have a same-sex partner?	homosexual, N = 396	bisexual, N = 116
	%	
Yes	66	55
No	34	45

Table 11. Presence of same-sex partner; distribution by sociosexual identity

Those among the respondents who negatively answered to the question “Do you currently have a same-sex partner?” stated that the reason behind absence of a same-sex partner was difficulty to find a suitable person (54%) and unfavorable conditions (22%):

Why don't you have a same-sex partner?	total, N = 213	male, N = 157	female, N = 56
	%		
I prefer being alone	8	7	7
It's hard to find a suitable person, no decent candidates	54	55	50
Unfavorable conditions (e.g. lack of time, nowhere to seek, nowhere to meet, etc.)	21	22	18
I am afraid of censure from relatives, friends, etc.	5	6	2
I am disappointed in same-sex relationships	4	4	5
Other	8	5	18

Table 12. Reasons for absence of a same-sex partner

Comparing these findings with the results of a previous 2000 study we can see that the percentage of those who simply stated that they did not want to have a same-sex partner didn't change much. Then and now this option was picked by 6% of the respondents.

Within the margin of error these reasons are significant across sex, different age groups, sociosexual identities and localities of different sizes.

The analysis of individual responses (option “Other” picked by 10% of the respondents) reflects and reinforces general findings. Mainly the same reasons are articulated:

Categorized individual responses	%, N = 21
just separated	33
external reasons (e.g. nowhere to meet, absence of private lodgings, etc.)	24
internal reasons (e.g. psychological unreadiness, age, lack of feelings, etc.)	24
currently in search of a partner	10
unavailable, currently dating an opposite-sex partner	5

Table 13. Reasons for absence of a same-sex partner (option “Other”)

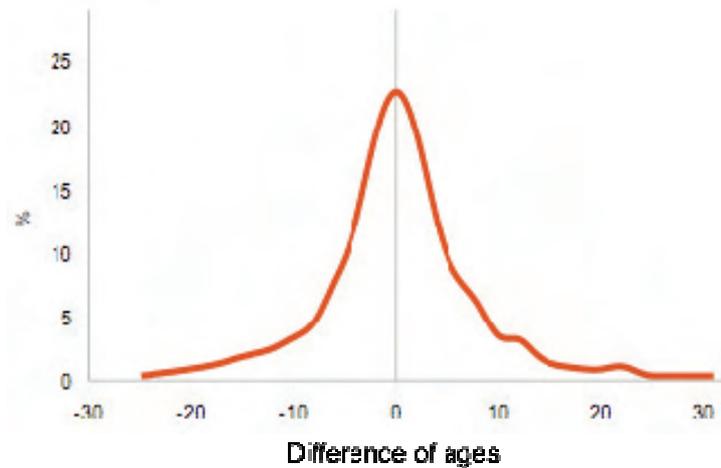
Age of the respondents and that of his partner vary in their correlations (N = 351): slightly less than two thirds of respondents (61%) live with a peer, about one fifth (22%) with a partner who is 5-9 years younger or older, 10-year difference in age is recorded for one fifth (18%) of the respondents. The maximum age difference between the partners is 31 years and the mean age difference is ± 6 years (Graph 3).

Remarkable is that age difference equalizes moving from the youngest to the oldest respondents: if the respondents in the age group “20-29” prefer their peers, older respondents (“40 and above”) seem to be more liberal in this respect.

In regards to sharing property and finances in the families the respondents' answers (N = 503) split into almost equal halves: 47% chose the option "Yes, we live together" and 53% chose "No, we live separately, but see each other periodically". In comparison to earlier findings the percentage of those who choose to live together have grown considerably; in 2000 only one third of the respondents gave an affirmative answer to this question.

Men and women differ significantly in terms of sharing a household and having common property. The latter more often choose the model that resembles traditional marriage:

Graph 3. Relative weight of couples with a significant difference in age of partners



Do you and your same-sex partner share a household? (Note: If currently you don't have a same-sex partner, please refer to your last relationships)	male, N = 327	female, N = 176
	%	
Yes	42	57
No (We live separately, but see each other periodically)	58	43

Table 14. Sharing household in same-sex couples

There is also a correlation between the number of people who share a household and the size of locality in which they reside. The respondents from smaller towns and villages considerably more often live separately (60% vs. 43% in cities).

Cohabitation and sharing property in well-represented age groups in the sample is not significantly different. 20-29-year-olds and 30-39-year-olds have an almost equal percentage of people who live together. At the same time 15-19-year-olds and 40-and-above-year-olds are more likely to live separately.

Logically, cohabitation and sharing a household may be related to having joint finances and a family budget. In fact, more than two thirds (65%) of respondents who live together with their partner and run the household together have joint finances. One fifth is same-sex families in which one partner financially supports the other. Among those respondents who live separately from each other different finance management models are equally distributed.

How does your same-sex family handles finances? (Note: If currently you don't have a same-sex partner, please refer to your last relationships)	total, N = 499	live together, N = 237	live separately, N = 257
	%		
We have joint finances (earn and spend together)	43	65	22
Each partner pays for him/herself	23	8	37
One of the partners financially supports the other	29	23	33
Other	5	4	8

Table 15. Financial management models in different types of same-sex families

As it was established earlier: the distribution of men and women in terms of cohabiting is different. We can assume that they attitude to and practice of handing financial issues is also different. This assumption is confirmed by the study data: the distribution for men is similar to that of those who live separately from the partner whilst the distribution for women is similar to that of cohabiting partners.

How does your same-sex family handles finances? (Note: If currently you don't have a same-sex partner, please refer to your last relationships)	male, N = 324	female, N = 175
	%	
We have joint finances (earn and spend together)	35	56
Each partner pays for him/herself	28	15
One of the partners financially supports the other	31	25
Other	6	5

Table 16. Financial management models; distribution by sex

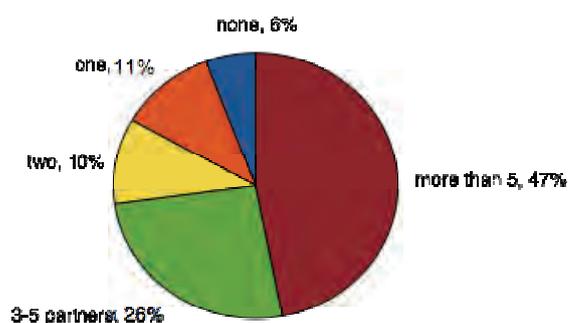
In regards to age difference between partners in a same-sex family there is also a significant difference in the choice of financial management model. Fifty percent of families where partners' age doesn't differ considerably (within the margin of ± 6 yrs.) have joint finances. Families where there is a significant difference in partners' age in 40% of cases assume financial support on the part of one of the partners.

The size of locality also correlates with the model of managing of financial resources in the same-sex family in a manner that in smaller towns and villages more than a third of families have one partner supporting the other.

One fifth of the respondents affirmed that there was a strict division of responsibilities around the house. Correspondingly, four fifths deny such division.

Strict division of responsibilities around the house, somewhat similar to the model that exists in heterosexual marriage, begets assumption that the respondents who confirmed having such a strict division may be coming from smaller localities, have an appreciable age difference between themselves, financial dependency of one of the partners, and presence of a history of heterosexual marriage. However, the data from the study corroborates none of these assumptions. It is therefore, safe to argue that established divisions are not taken in from the outside in a form of traditional models of behavior, but in fact result from mutual arrangement. This assumption is confirmed in the works of I. Kon's, who states that "[...] same-sex couples don't have and can't have an standard gender-predisposed role differentiation, which is almost obligatory in relationships of different-sex couple. But this "minus" can easily become a "plus" since two men, unlike heterosexual couples, cannot mimic their parents in performing distinct gender roles. Hence, the division of responsibilities around the house, which is a known cause of many conflicts in the family, is initially set with considerations for personal preferences and on the basis of reasonable compromise." (Kon 1998).

The question "Is/Was you same-sex family raising a child?" only 48 (19 men and 29 women) respondents answered positively. Thus, the number of same-sex families raising a child constitutes one tenth of all respondents in the sample. This, in turn, means that for the majority of the respondents questions in regards



Graph 4. Distribution of number of same-sex partners in a respondent's life-time

to values, needs and expectations concerning child-parent relations are not of immediate significance. Therefore, there answers to such questions, presented in the questionnaire, are speculative.

Family dynamics.

Trying to identify the number of same-sex partners (defined as those with whom a respondent was in long-lasting family-type relationships) in a respondent’s life-time resulted in the following picture (Graph 4.)

The distribution by sex confirms the tendency frequently reflected in studies of same-sex partnerships - men are more prone to leading extensive sex life. Contrasted with the body of female respondents in the sample they tend to have more same-sex partners over the life-time (Table. 17).

Analysis did not show significant statistical difference in terms of region of residence and sociosexual identity. However significant differences were noted for age and size of locality.

How many same-sex partners have you had in your life-time?	male, N = 344		female, N = 182	
	%			
none	6	total - 45	5	
1-2	15		34	
3-5	24		29	
more than 5	55		32	

Table 17. Number of same-sex partners; distribution by sex

In general, the data confirms frequent change of sexual partners. This, however, should not be seen as a result of homosexual’s innate promiscuity, but rather as caused by the absence of the institution of same-sex partnership/marriage, lack of established traditions and greater susceptibility of same-sex couples to outside pressures. Although no such data was collected in the present research but it is corroborated by the findings of other studies, e.g.

Replying to the question “How long lasted your longest relationships with a same-sex partner?” the respondents gave different answers: from 1 month to 36 years. For convenience we broke up the answers into meaningful groups (Table 18). In half of the cases same-sex familial relations lasts from one to five years irrespective of the respondents sociosexual identity and region of residence. However, the length of relationships positively correlates with the respondent’s sex (i.e. lesbian families are more stable) and age (older respondents are more likely to have been with their partner the longest).

How long lasted your longest relationships with a same-sex partner?	total, N = 463	male, N = 297	female, N = 166
	%		
less than 6 mo.	10	14	3
6 mo. - 1 year	7	9	4
1-5 yrs.	54	46	69
5 - 10 yrs.	21	22	19
more than 10 yrs.	8	9	6

Table 18. Maximum length of same-sex familial relationships

How long lasted your longest relationships with a same-sex partner?	15-19, N = 32	20-39, N = 372	40 and above, N = 59
	%		
less than 6 mo.	22	8	14
6 mo. - 1 year	9	8	3
1-5 yrs.	47	59	31
5 - 10 yrs.	9	19	36
more than 10 yrs.	13	6	17

Table 19. Maximum length of same-sex familial relationships; distribution by age

Another positive correlation found is with the size of locality (i.e. residents of smaller localities are more likely to have been in same-sex relationship longer). However, this correlation can be explained by the fact that in the sample the MSM/WSW population of bigger cities was represented mainly by younger people whilst those respondents who come from smaller towns and villages belong to the “older” age group.

Additionally, the proportions of respondents who have a same-sex partner are approximately similar for all the regions represented in the sample. However, this may not reflect a true picture due to insufficiency of collected data and the fact that the level of urbanization, which may greatly impact the representation of sociosexual identities and structure of the LGBT community, is different for different regions.

We also assumed that the number of respondents with a stable same-sex partner will correlate with the respondents’ openness about their sociosexual identity. However, since these two parameters heavily depend on the respondent’s sex, size of locality and sociocultural identity such analysis requires selection of groups of respondents of the same sex, locality, age and identity. Unfortunately these limitations lead to selection of too small group that do not differ one from another significantly. Potentially, this assumption can be verified in a bigger samples.

As main reasons for break up of same-sex families difference in values and unfaithfulness are listed (Table 20). Importance of various reasons is different for the two sexes: women put similarities in the outlook and values first whilst men consider unfaithfulness and dissatisfaction with sex life considerably more important.

What were your reasons for breaking up with your same-sex partner?	total, N = 527	male, N = 345	female, N = 182
	%		
Different values	48	45	54
Unfaithfulness	32	34	27
Dissatisfaction with sex life	18	23	9
Tired of being together	16	15	16
Practical issue (unresolved material problems)	10	11	8
Conflicts	11	12	8
Other	15	16	14

Table 20. Reasons for separation

The analysis of individual answers in the option “Other” displays a wide range of other reasons for separation. We could group the answers into seven meaningful categories.

Categories	%, N = 80
Partner’s personal qualities (e.g. unreadiness for relationships)	28
Distance (e.g. partners live in different localities; one partner moves or gets transferred)	18
Unwillingness to date (incl. one of the partner’s marriage)	16
Feelings (e.g. loss of feelings for the partner, inability to understand each other)	14
Never got separated	10
Pressure from the surrounding (e.g. relatives, friends)	8
Other	6

Table 21 . Reasons for separation; analysis of individual answers

Geographic factors are given significant weight in the respondents’ individual answers. It is remarkable that mostly young people (26 y.o.a. on average) complain about distance. We assume that given diminished ability to meet in person (Table 12, 21%), search of partners is most frequently an online activity where “falling in love” online sooner or later discomfits the seeker who realizes the inability to maintain proper communication offline. Pressure from one’s surrounding can also be a significant factor that influences the partners’ decision to separate.

In general, however, individual answers give almost the same reasons for partners’ separation as are provided in the close-ended questions portion of the survey.

Same-sex families in terms of values, needs and expectations

The respondents were given the opportunity to rate their values (i.e. material well-being, satisfaction with sex life, same-sex partner (family), equality and social justice, health, etc.). The number of correctly filled out questionnaires totaled less than a half of all questionnaires in the sample (N = 232). To assess the importance of each value we calculated the number of “votes” for each of them. Overall, the results are as follows:

Most “votes” received the value “same-sex partner”, which in the context of the survey was interpreted as family;

Second in the rating came “health”;

Third - mixed answers;

Forth - “satisfaction with sex life”, and

Fifth - “well-being and equality and social justice”.

The most voted for value (i.e. “same-sex partner”) correlates with the respondents’ history of heterosexual marriage/cohabitation, current presence of a same-sex partner and some other characteristics (e.g. education, material well-being, etc.) The respondents who have a history of heterosexual marriage or cohabitation do not mark this value as high-priority in contrast to those who don’t have such a history. Currently being in a same-sex relationship also increases the weight given to this value.

This same value also correlates with presence of children, readiness to officially register same-sex relationship, division of responsibilities around the house in the respondents’ same-sex families and the respondents’ view on the ideal of a same-sex family.

Three fourths of the respondents consider the ideal model for same-sex family monogamous relationships:

What model of relationships do you find ideal?	total, N = 518	male, N = 338	female, N = 180
Monogamous (steady same-sex partner who is the only sex partner)	75	69	86
Polygamous (steady same-sex partner, but there are sexual contacts elsewhere)	17	21	9
No stable relationship	6	7	4
Other	3	3	2

Table 22. Respondents' ideal model of same-sex relationships

Remarkable is that one fifth of men prefers having sexual contacts elsewhere alongside having a steady same-sex partner. Among women there are twice as few those who consider this model ideal. Compared to the findings of the 2000 study the number of proponents of open relationships have decreased considerably (from 44% then vs. 17% now) whilst the number of those who are in support of monogamous relationships have grown only by one fifth (from 53% to 73%).

There are no correlations between the ideal model of same-sex relationships and presence of a same-sex partner, age and the size of locality. However, there is a correlation with a history of heterosexual marriage/cohabitation. Significantly more respondents (79% vs. 62%) who were never married to or cohabited with a different-sex partner favor monogamous relationships.

For those respondents who state their preference for monogamous relationships (current presence of a same-sex partner who is the only sex partner) the value "same-sex partner" is high-priority (62%). Other values for such respondents take priority only in 6-15% of cases. Those who see the ideal of a same-sex family as having a partner but indulging in sexual contacts outside the family also prioritize the value "same-sex partner", but to a lesser extent (46%). Meanwhile other values are rated as top-priority in 15-30% of cases.

Such value as "satisfaction with sex life" correlates with having children. Those respondents who have children rate "satisfaction with sex life" rather low (mostly 3rd place); those who don't but would like to have children - on the fourth place, and those who don't and would not like to become parents any time soon - on the second place.

Another important correlation is between the value "satisfaction with sex life" and readiness to officially register same-sex partnership. The respondents who are ready to officialize status as a same-sex family place this value on the fourth place whilst those who are not yet ready - on the third.

The value "material well-being" is closely connected with raising a child in the same-sex family. For those who have children in their same-sex family the value "material well-being" is on the fifth place (i.e. is not very important). Among the respondents who don't have a child in their same-sex family, relative importance of this value takes up from second to fifth place; however, the number of "votes" for this value ranges from 20 to 25 percent, which isn't a high value in itself.

The importance of the value "health" is dependent on the type of relations within the same-sex family. It is top-priority for those respondents who have chosen same-sex relationships without cohabiting (60%) and is less a priority for those who have a steady same-sex partner but also have sexual contacts elsewhere (34%). It may be due to the realization that polygamy poses a greater health-related danger than monogamy or that health is important as a factor that determines "desirability as a sexual partner" if the respondent is oriented on having several

sexual partners. Those respondents who chose the model of monogamous relations in their same-sex family place the value “health” onto the second place.

Analysis of the values and subsequent analysis of the respondents’ needs evaluated against the background of the Maslow’s hierarchy of needs shows that for the overwhelming majority lower level physiological needs are not of immediate importance. As we could see such values as “material well-being” and “health” are rated pretty low. More important seem to be the need for equality, safety and acceptance and for having a family and children. These observations are further supported by the respondents’ answers to a number of auxiliary questions.

To determine how significant was the need in equality and acceptance, we asked the respondents to identify external problems in the life of their respective same-sex families. The answers can be presented as follows:

What external problems can you identify as significantly affecting your same-sex partnership?	%, N = 527
Lack of acceptance/condemnation on the part of relatives	55
Never experienced any problems	33
Inability to apply for loan/credit jointly and obtain official permission for joint possession of property	17
Inability to regulate division of property in case of separation	11
Lack of the right to refuse to witness against the partner	10
Inability to inherit after the deceased partner	10
Inability to adopt the partner’s child	8
Denial of leave or social welfare support in order to look after sick partner/child	8
Denial of tenancy	7
Other	5

*NOTE: The sum of answers is not 100% as the respondents could tick several answers.
Table 23. External problems affecting same-sex families*

Individual answers complete the picture:

What external problems can you identify as significantly affecting your same-sex partnership?	N
Condemnation on the part of the society	7
Condemnation on the part of friends	3
Discrimination in employment (refusal to hire, denial of promotion, termination of employment)	4
Discrimination on the part of public servants and the police	2
Lack of the right to refuse to witness against the partner	2
Did not have any problems	7

Table 24. External problems affecting same-sex families; analysis of individual answers

The answers are not significantly contingent upon respondents' sociosexual identity and their openness about it; however, the more open they are about their identity/orientation, the more likely they are to have problems with the surrounding.

Respondents of different sex rated the importance of the problems differently:

- men are more likely to face condemnation on the part of relatives (61%) than women (39%);
- it is harder for men to adopt the partner's child (53% and 47% correspondingly);
- men have more problems regulating property rights (65%) than women (35%) in case of separation;
- men are less likely to receive loan/credit (56%) than women (44%);
- men more often face problems receiving pension of the deceased partner (86% and 14% correspondingly).

Problems not listed above are equally faced by men and women.

I have already referred to having and raising children in same-sex families in the account of the status of same-sex families in Ukraine. Speaking about needs it has to be mentioned that among homosexually identified respondents who don't have a history of heterosexual marriage there is a greatly unsatisfied need to be a parent. Ninety-two percent of currently child-free respondents in this category stated their desire to have children. Meanwhile the percentage of the surveyed bisexuals is significantly lower (80%).

In search of the respondents' expectations about their respective same-sex families we asked them to consider a hypothetical situation where Ukraine allows for registration of same-sex partnerships and asked them if they would want to register their relationships. Out of the entire sample 77% expressed their willingness to do so. The analysis found that such a willingness is contingent upon the respondent's sex, sociosexual identity, presence of a same-sex partner and a history of heterosexual marriage.

Women have been found to be more willing to register their partnership (84%) than men (72%). Respondents aged below 45 are significantly more ready for such a step (77%) than those who are over 46 y.o.a. (62%). Self-identified homosexuals are also more desirous of registration (83%) than bisexuals (56%). Finally, presence of a same-sex partner makes readiness to register more likely:

If registration of same-sex partnerships was allowed in Ukraine, would you register yours?	Have a same-sex partner, N = 324	Don't have a same-sex partner, N = 192
Yes	83	66
No	17	34

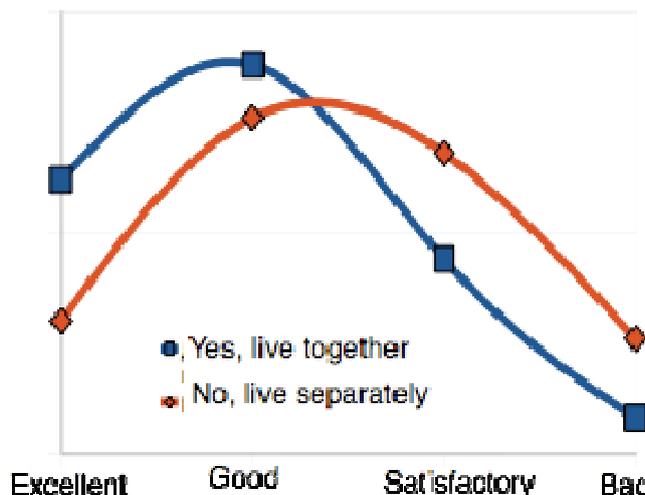
Table 25. Readiness to register same-sex partnership; distribution by presence of a same-sex partner

I would like to finish with the analysis of the respondents' evaluation of their satisfaction with private life, a question that the respondents were presented with in the questionnaire. The respondents had to evaluate their overall satisfaction with private life on a Likert four-point scale from "excellent" through "good" and "satisfactory" to "bad". The study found that one's satisfaction significantly correlates with presence of a same-sex partner. The respondents who currently have a partner rate their level of satisfaction significantly higher than those who don't have a partner. The same positive correlation is observed in the respondents who live with their same-sex partner as opposed to those who don't. These findings are presented in the Graphs 5 and 6 below:

Graph 5. Satisfaction with private life; respondents in couple vs. single respondents



Graph 6. Satisfaction with private life; cohabiting respondents vs. respondents who live separately



A similar correlations has been established between satisfaction with one's private life and division of responsibilities around the house.

An interesting correlation is found between satisfaction with one's private life and the model of financial management in the family.

How would you rate your satisfaction with your private life?	How does your same-sex family handles finances?		
	Joint finances (earn and spend together), N = 213	Each partner pays for him/herself, N = 116	One partner supports the other financially, N = 143
Excellent	32	11	20
Good	47	41	28
Satisfactory	13	35	38
Bad	8	13	14

Table 26, Satisfaction with private life; distribution by different models of financial management

More satisfied are the respondents who have joint finances. The respondents who financially support their partner or are supported by their partner rate their satisfaction as satisfactory. However, in the future a distinction should be made between supporters and supportees as, presumably, the level of satisfaction may be different for these two subgroups.

Satisfaction with one's private life is contingent upon the ideal model of same-sex relationships³ and readiness to officially register same-sex relationships. Maximum satisfaction is observed in the respondents who are monogamous or would like to be exclusively monogamous with their partner. Those respondents who find having a steady same-sex partner and having sexual contacts elsewhere acceptable rate their satisfaction as good. The least satisfied are those who do not want to be in a stable relationship.

³ Although the ideal model may not reflect the the reality of the respondents' relationships in the family it doubtlessly reflects the experience that affects one's satisfaction with private life.

Those, who find themselves ready for registering their partnership are significantly more satisfied with their private lives (25% - “excellent” and 40% - “good”) than those who are not (38% - “good” and 29% - satisfactory).

Overall, we can see that positive evaluation of one’s satisfaction with private life are contingent upon having a same-sex partner, with whom the respondent lives together and is subject to division of responsibilities. Besides, the partners have joint finances, are exclusive in their relationship and are willing to register their partnership. This, to a certain extent, resembles a model characteristic of heterosexual family. However, the findings also confirm that alternative models of familial arrangements are quickly catching up in terms of satisfaction with one’s private life.

Conclusion

The article aimed to elucidate selected findings from the research into sociological portrait of same-sex families in Ukraine. The respondents in the study represent a range of strata within the Ukrainian population in general and LGBT community in particular. However, the majority is represented by the age group 20-40 who reside in bigger cities of the Central and Eastern parts of Ukraine. Some of the respondents have had a history of heterosexual marriage/cohabitation and it is them who are most likely to have children and be raising them in their present same-sex family. However, most of the respondents identify themselves as homosexual and were never married to an opposite-sex partner.

Comparing the findings with those from previous studies shows the proportion of the respondents who have a same-sex partner and with whom they share a household and have joint finances have grown considerably.

The study also focused on the values, needs and expectations of same-sex families in Ukraine. Most of the findings are also reflected in the article. In the context of values and expectations and with consideration for the status of same-sex families an evaluation of the respondents’ satisfaction with their private lives was conducted. The results of the evaluation show that most satisfied are those who currently have a partner, live together and are monogamous in their relationship.

All in all, such is the portrait of today’s same-sex family in Ukraine.

References

1. Маймулахин А., Касянчук М., Лещинский Е. Однополое партнерство в Украине: Отчет / Центр “Наш мир”. - К., 2009 [FULL REPORT]
2. Национальный ежегодный отчет о положении в Украине геев, лесбиянок, бисексуалов и трансгендеров (с конца 2007 по конец 2008 г.) / С. Шеремет, М. Касянчук, Е. Лещинский. (Гей-Форум Украины). - К., 2009
3. Касянчук М., Лещинский Е. Геи и лесбиянки в зеркале общественного мнения (по результатам интернет опросов 2006-2008 гг.) // <http://donbas-socproject.blospot.com/2008/12/2006-2008.html>
4. Блакитна книга. Стан геїв та лесбійок в сучасній Україні (Звіт) / А. Грибанов, Т. Данілевич, Ю. Жиловець та ін., за ред. А. Кравчука і А. Грибанова (Центр “Наш світ”). - К., 2000 // <http://gay.org.ua/publication/bluebook/bluebook.htm>
5. Дискримінація за ознакою кохання: Звіт / Центр “Наш світ”. - К.: Нора-Друк, 2005 // <http://gay.org.ua/publication/report2005-r.pdf>
6. Маймулахин А., Зинченков А., Кравчук А. Украинские гомосексуалы и общество: взаимное проникновение: Обзор ситуации: общество, государство и политики, СМИ, правовое положение, гей-сообщество / Центр «Наш мир». — К.: Атопол, 2007 // http://gay.org.ua/publication/gay_ukraine_2007-r.pdf
7. Гейдар Л., Довбах А. Быть лесбиянкой в Украине: обретая силу. — К., 2007.
8. Кісь З. Чоловіки, які мають секс з чоловіками / в кн. Виклик та подолання: ВІЛ/СНІД та права людини / Упор. В. Рябуха. — К.: UNDP Ukraine, 2008. — С.59-69.
9. Кон И. С. Лунный свет на заре. Лики и маски однополый любви. — М.: Олимп; ООО «Издательство АСТ», 1998.
10. Моніторинг поведінки чоловіків, які мають секс з чоловіками. Аналітичний звіт за результатами опитування 2007 року / О. М. Балакірева, Т. В. Бондар, М. Г. Касянчук, З. Р. Кісь, Є. Б. Лещинський, С. П. Шеремет-Шереметьєв (Український Інститут соціальних досліджень ім. О. Яременка). — К.: МБФ «Міжнародний Альянс з ВІЛ/СНІД в Україні», 2008.
11. Моніторинг поведінки чоловіків, які мають секс з чоловіками, як компонент епіднагляду другого покоління. Аналітичний звіт / Л. Амджадін, К. Кащенко, Т. Коноплицька, О. Лисенко та ін. — К.: МБФ «Міжнародний Альянс з ВІЛ/СНІД в Україні», 2005.
12. Оцінка чисельності груп підвищеного ризику інфікування ВІЛ в Україні / Балакірева О. М. (гол.ред.), Гусак Л. М., Довбах Г. В. та ін. — Київ: МБФ «Міжнародний Альянс з ВІЛ/СНІД в Україні», 2006

An investigation into the status and needs of same-sex partnerships in Ukraine

Such multifaceted topic as LGBT and Ukrainian society is still poorly studied and gay men and lesbians are still seen by an average Ukrainian as mythical beings that are assigned primarily negative characteristics. Issues of same-sex partnerships and particularly child adoption by gay men and lesbians look especially scandalous against such a social and cultural background. Even those who accept the fact that human sexuality is diverse and contend, albeit with some reservation, that gays and lesbians are entitled to civil rights are not ready to discuss without bias and prejudice the issue of same-sex couple being a rightful unit in the society analogous to heterosexual marriage.

For the first time some issues concerning same-sex partnerships were raised in a 2002 study conducted by an LGBT organization Nash Mir (Kyiv, Ukraine). The study concluded that same-sex partnerships are invisible, more so legally excluded from social life in Ukraine and the partners are completely defenseless in the eyes of the law. The Family Code of Ukraine and related legislation define family as "created as a result of marriage, kinship, adoption, or on other grounds not prohibited by the law and such that do not contradict moral principles of the society". "Marriage is a familial union of a woman and a man [...]". Thus, de jure same-sex partnerships do not exist and partners thereof have no opportunities to represent each other's interests in proprietary, financial, medical or other regards; there are no legal avenues for same-sex partners to adopt children and use the same rights and guarantees that different-sex partners enjoy; there are no means of legally defending the rights, financial and proprietary, of each of the partners in case of separation.

The major limitation of the 2002 study was that it focused primarily and predominantly on legal rights of same-sex partners in Ukraine as the law outlines them. At that time no serious effort was made to investigate social and psychological aspects of same-sex partnerships in Ukraine. The 2009 study (first and only of its kind in Ukraine), however, attempts to narrow this gap and draw a picture with a broader perspective on the everyday life of same-sex partnerships. It offers a sociological inquiry into the status of same-sex partnerships in Ukraine, studies social identities of same-sex partners and how they affect the everyday lives, needs and values of the couple. The study also reviews the current legal status of same-sex partnerships but this time does so by linking it to socio-psychological specificities of the partnership.

