

The Study of Intergenerational Intimacy in North America: Beyond Politics and Pedophilia

Gerald P. Jones, PhD

Institute for the Study of Women and Men
in Society
University of Southern California

SUMMARY. Intergenerational intimacy, social as well as sexual, has been studied in the United States and abroad for some time. In recent years the general trend has been to label such behavior “child sexual abuse.” Interest in this type of abuse has generated a considerable amount of more or less scientific literature, some of which seems to have been produced in a “rush to judgment” attempt to build a “professional” literature that supports popular beliefs. This tradition of child-abuse-defined literature, along with the work of investigative and helping agencies which some refer to as a “child abuse industry,” has fostered a one-sided, simplistic picture of intergenerational intimacy. A close look at the empirical studies in this tradition reveals flaws associated with two problems: the studies nearly always (1) maintain a narrow focus on sexual contact, and (2) proceed from the related basic assumption that sexual contact in intergenerational relationships by definition constitutes abuse. While sexual abuse certainly occurs, those who apply this assumption to all situations are ignoring empirical findings that show otherwise. Research outside the “child sexual abuse” tradition reveals a broader range of intergenerational relationships outside the family,

Dr. Gerald P. Jones was Affiliated Scholar in the Institute for the Study of Women and Men in Society at the University of Southern California from 1986 to 1990. Correspondence should be addressed to Gerald P. Jones, PhD, Box 18425, Los Angeles, CA 90018-0425.

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including a number of aspects which typically are not seen when the focus is on the sexual. Some studies show clearly that even when sexual contact is involved, negative outcomes are not inevitable. This indicates the need for a much broader approach. Further research in North American society and in other cultures would help us to understand more accurately the diversity and possible benefits of intergenerational intimacy.

Children and adults interact in a variety of ways in every human culture. Indeed, it is absurd to conceive of a society in which children are totally isolated from adults, Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and other allegories notwithstanding. The nature and importance of these interactions, however, is not easily agreed upon, especially in societies such as the United States where the father-dominant nuclear family is often seen as the ideal and alternative structures or influences are perceived as threats (Eliasoph, 1986). Likewise, there is disagreement about the nature and importance of childhood itself. Some insist, for example, that children become responsible adults by being given more choice, rather than less, earlier rather than later (Farson, 1974; Gross and Gross, 1977; Rodman, Lewis and Griffith, 1984). Others see the basic right of the child to be innocence, the right to be sheltered as much as possible from the world outside the home until she or he is thought to be old enough to deal effectively with its harsh realities (Janus, 1981). The child's inherent innocence often is equated with the incorrect notion that children are asexual (Jackson, 1982). Children's sexuality, indeed, is one of the most controversial topics of the present day, in spite of the fact that decades of research have documented the existence of sexual response and feelings (Bakwin, 1971; Kinsey et al., 1948; 1953) as well as the development of overt sexual behavior (Broderick, 1968) in preadolescents.

Consideration of the full range of possibilities in child-adult interactions often seems to be ignored in favor of more and more discussion about the importance of insulating children from anything even potentially sexual involving adults. The trend, also, has been for various agencies and people to capitalize on the sensationalism of the issue, as noted by Eberle and Eberle (1986):

We set out to unravel the mystery, and this is what we got: very little evidence of child molestation and a great deal of extremely corrupt behavior by police, prosecutors and “mental health professionals,” resulting in the devastation of innocent people’s lives and families. There has indeed been child abuse—perpetrated by representatives of the government and police. . . . (p. 283)

Brongersma (1984) analyzes the roots of these trends, showing how moralists began to target child sexuality, and pedophiles in particular, “slightly over a century ago” (p.79). One purpose of this paper is to show how these trends are reflected as well as abetted in social science literature, and then to outline and encourage alternatives for more accurate, unbiased and comprehensive future research.

DEFINITIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

This paper begins with the premise that children and adolescents can experience close one-to-one friendships with adults, and that many actually do so. The term used here to describe these friendships is “intergenerational intimacy.” This term includes all non-coercive, two-way interactions in which a physically mature adult and a pre-adult in mid-adolescence or younger share interests, communicate with and trust each other, share responsibility for and power in the relationship, spend time together, and feel mutually fond of one another.¹ Sexual contact is not assumed in this definition of intimacy, and if present, is regarded as adjunct rather than essential. By the same token, intergenerational sexual contact alone does not constitute an intimate relationship—though a sex-only relationship is not automatically assumed to be abuse, either.

“Intimate intergenerational relationship” as used here is not synonymous with pedophilia, child sexual abuse, pederasty, or other commonly used terms. Rather, *some* of these terms are seen as limited aspects of intergenerational intimacy. For example, “pedophilia” (at least in modern usage) is not the same as intergenerational intimacy since it is usually limited to contacts involving sexual activity. Other terms, such as “child abuse,” are considered

to be the antithesis of intimacy, and are used here to refer to behavior that is demonstrably harmful.

Some overlap between the concept of intergenerational intimacy and that of child abuse must be acknowledged, in that both involve child/adult contact and it is possible for both to involve love and caring on the part of one or both participants. The crucial difference has to do with mutuality and control. Abuse consists of an unreasonable, unilateral imposition by the adult of unwanted behavior upon the other person—even though occasionally it might be in the context of an otherwise close relationship—thereby at least partially denying the younger individual's exercise of choice. Such unwanted behavior may be induced by trickery, coercion, physical force or a number of other devices. These strategies are not typical of intergenerational intimacy, where the ability of both persons to exercise choice is fundamental.

The element of choice also points to a distinction between intimate relationships within families, and relationships between youngsters and adults outside the family. The former are highly socially scripted interactions which are more often accepted rather than chosen, learned rather than created. While intra-familial intimate relationships do exist and should be included in the scope of intergenerational intimacy, it is assumed that the element of conscious choice is not a salient factor in family intimacy, at least until the later stages of development. Relationships that arise in other socially-prescribed institutions, such as the school or church, also are seen as structured; moreover, even the closest of them usually are not characterized by the kind of intimacy described above. If a teacher-student relationship, for example, were to involve such intimacy, in the context of this paper it no longer would be considered a teacher-student relationship, but would be classified as intergenerational intimacy. For these reasons, intra-familial closeness and relationships like those between teacher and student will not be discussed here as such.

The scope of intergenerational intimacy logically includes both cross-sex and same-sex interactions. For reasons derived from developmental theory and research, however, this paper is limited to a discussion of same-sex relationships.² The pre-adult period of social development is characterized by a large majority of a girl's social

time and energy being spent with females, and a boy's with males. The overwhelming tendency for children to choose best friends of their same sex is well-known (Jones and Dembo, 1986; Sharabany, Gershoni and Hofman, 1981). Identity development in adolescence typically is associated with selective attention to a same-sex parent (Marcia, 1980). It is also widely assumed, though not well-documented in empirical research, that pubescents in particular tend to make use of older persons of their sex outside the family as role models and heroes. This strong tendency suggests that same-sex intergenerational intimacy may be developmentally functional.³

For this discussion of intergenerational relationships, no essential qualitative distinction is made between man/boy and woman/girl relationships, though the latter are almost never considered in empirical, theoretical or historical literature. For male relationships, the term "pederasty" often has been used, at least in the historical literature; no corresponding term describing female relationships is known to this author. Etymologically, pederasty actually might come the closest to the concept of same-sex intergenerational intimacy that is the subject of this paper, except for the use of the term in recent centuries as a synonym for all homosexuality (Oaks, 1979/80) and the even more recent quasi-medical definition as anal sexual contact with no connotation of emotional involvement (Freedman, Kaplan and Sadock, 1976).

THE "CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE" LITERATURE

The research arising from the recent surge of interest in the issue of child sexual abuse generally has mirrored society's preconceived notions. The primary flaw evident in the bulk of research studies in this tradition is that when intergenerational relationships are studied, it is because they involve sexual behavior, and the focus is on the sexual behavior through a sort of empirical "tunnel-vision," as if no other aspect of the relationships were important. A related error is that any type of sexual contact, from penetration to kissing or non-genital caressing, regardless of the age of the "child," is defined categorically as abuse. In fact, the trend in the United States in recent years has been to widen the scope of so-called "sexual" contact to include affection thought to be excessive or inappropriate

(Eberle and Eberle, 1986), touching any part of a child's body—clothed or unclothed—with sexual “intent” (State of California Penal Code, Section 288 *et seq.*), and even photographing clothed children in order to stimulate later sexual fantasies (*State of California v. Albert Guindon*, Riverside County Municipal Court, January 1983).

A typical assumption of the child sexual abuse literature is that sexual contact with an adult is emotionally traumatic and causes damage that often extends well into adulthood. This is not at all an established conclusion in the empirical literature (Wilson and Cox, 1983). Such harm undoubtedly can occur, though a number of authors have pointed out that the trauma may be induced or exacerbated by strong reactions of parents, police, court officials and other adults when they discover that such activity has taken place (Lempp, 1978; Mohr, 1968; Weeks, 1976). Some studies have found benign or even beneficial results in boys who were at the time involved with men (Ingram, 1981; Sandfort, 1981, 1983) and in adults who had been involved in sexual relationships with adult men when they were boys (Landis, 1956; Tindall, 1978). These findings are significant because the child sexual abuse literature, as it developed in the 1970s, ignored the earlier studies that found no harm due to sexual contact *per se* (e.g., Bender and Grugett, 1952; Landis, 1956), just as today's writers are ignoring more recent literature which discusses intergenerational contact and child sexuality in value-neutral terms (see Jones, 1982, 1984, for a review of these).

The “Child Abuse Industry”

Some of the research dealing with child sexual abuse may be conducted for the secondary purpose of justifying existing or proposed law enforcement activities, not for primary purposes of adding to professional knowledge regarding human behavior. The “child abuse industry”²⁴ is the term sometimes applied to the collection of professionals who, one way or another, earn livelihoods from investigating, treating, prosecuting or otherwise dealing with those involved in child abuse. In effect, they both profit from and influence public policy regarding child abuse.

The literature associated with “child abuse industry” profession-

als is often identifiable by the fact that its authors are involved professionally in careers which depend on the continued existence of child sexual abuse, for example foundation directors (Densen-Gerber, 1980; Densen-Gerber and Hutchinson, 1977), therapists and child sexual abuse consultants (MacFarlane, 1978; Nielsen, 1983; Summit, 1983), law enforcement officers (Lanning, 1984; Tyler, 1982a, 1982b), or combinations of these (Lanning and Burgess, 1984; Stone, Tyler and Mead, 1984). Articles by such authors often contain non-empirical statements of opinion, personal experience, policy suggestions and, too often, sensationalized detail from isolated, non-typical case studies. Those few that are empirical frequently gather their information from small samples of incarcerated or court-referred adults or children (e.g., Groth, Burgess, Birnbaum and Gary, 1978). The use of research designs without control samples is common. Many of these features are virtually identical with the literature before 1970 dealing with homosexuality (Hoffman, 1970).

Child Pornography: A Case in Point

The controversy surrounding erotica and pornography provides clear examples of how questionable research is used to further the apparent goals of those in the "child abuse industry." The act of photographing minors in sexually explicit poses has been illegal in the United States for a long time, but child abuse industry professionals in the last eight years have steadily continued their call for more legislation through the use of exaggerated statistics (Densen-Gerber and Hutchinson, 1979) and emotional rhetoric. It is not uncommon to hear testimony in legislative hearings claiming (or implying) that the presence of child pornography indicates pedophile behavior (Dworin, 1984), that pornography triggers child molesting (Radovich, 1984), that there is a "growing kiddie porn subculture" catered to by underground dealers filming "sex acts on infants as young as eight months" (Gentile, 1982), and that child pornography creates more victims every time it is used by its customers (*Los Angeles Times*, 1984; Tyler and Stone, 1985). What is uncommon, however, is to hear any mention of valid documentation of these

claims. The fact is that the vast majority of such claims, in the literature and elsewhere, are not founded on rigorous research.

A careful reading of the literature dealing with pornography reveals a different picture, as seen in the following examples. (1) The very Senate subcommittee that heard some of the testimony mentioned above concluded that child pornography is not increasing, is not profitable, and involves a minuscule number of people (United States Senate, 1986). (2) Pornography in general has been found to reduce, rather than heighten, the tendency to act out “antisocial sexual behavior” (Goldstein and Kant, 1973, p. 152). (3) A direct study of pedophiles and others, including controls, found that “deviant” groups, one of which was pedophile sex offenders, were characterized by *less* exposure to pornography during their adolescence than the “normal” groups studied (Goldstein, Kant, Judd, Rice and Green, 1971). (4) The legalization of all erotic materials in Denmark has resulted in a significant reduction of all sex crimes, including those against children (Lipton, 1976) (though Diamond, 1980, has disputed the particular Danish findings dealing with violent sexual assaults against women).

Clearly the issue of pornography is clouded by more than just variations in research methodology, and the need for quality investigations untainted by emotion is obvious. Existing research is far from conclusive, but the possibility exists that further studies might confirm earlier findings that erotica tends to reduce antisocial acting out. If child abuse professionals succeed in eliminating access to such materials, the net effect might actually be to increase the risk to children. The basic point is that we just don't know until we study the issue.

Lack of Developmental Distinctions

Pedophilia is usually defined as sexual interest in children (American Psychiatric Association, 1980), and the common criterion for such interest is that puberty has not yet occurred. Much of the literature fails to include specific reference to the age of the pre-adult being discussed – a problem in itself – but it becomes obvious in empirical studies that adolescents often are included along with younger children. In effect, the clinical/psychological definition of

pedophilia often is ignored in favor of the current law-enforcement use of the term, in which any adult sexually involved (or in some jurisdictions, merely attracted) to persons under the age of consent is referred to as a "pedophile" (Dworin, 1984). With the age of consent in most areas of the United States between 16 and 18 years, the result is that in evaluating and criticizing such research we are asked to consider "children" as a homogeneous group and to ignore the enormous developmental differences between grade-schoolers, for example, and those about to graduate from High School. Even if the law fails to make a distinction between the sexual liaison of an adult with a middle teenager and that of an adult with a five-year-old, the standards of social science research should require investigators to consider such differences.

Unclear and Value-Laden Terminology

Another distinction often lacking in child sexual abuse studies is that between various behaviors which "abuse" or "pedophilia" is thought to include. There is no question that child sexual abuse is a subject worthy of research attention, but when such terms are poorly defined and overgeneralized to include too wide a range of behaviors, scientific precision is lost, and studies cannot be compared or replicated. It is apparent that when a single study (Burgess, Hartman, McCausland and Powers, 1984) can encompass consenting relationships between adults and middle teenagers, sexual behavior of adults with six-year-olds, pictures of a ten year old boy undressing, and photographed sex games culminating in "urinating into the mouths and onto the faces of others" (p. 657), the use of a single umbrella term such as "child sexual abuse" is ill-advised.

In discussions of sexual behavior involving children, terms often are used in value-laden and prejudicial ways. For example, Kercher and McShane (1984) circulated a questionnaire to a carefully randomized sample of Texas residents. To elicit responses about subjects' childhood sexual contacts with adults, they asked the loaded question, "As a child, were you ever sexually abused?" (p. 497). These authors even went so far as to criticize a previous study by Riede, Capron, Ivey, Lawrence and Somolo (1979) as limited because "the term 'sexual experience' and not 'abuse' appears in the

wording of the questions” (Kercher and McShane, 1984, p. 496). It would seem that a respondent who enjoyed her or his childhood sexual behavior either would have to answer Kercher and McShane’s question with a “No,” or would have to re-evaluate the experience and label it as abuse.

If studies of child sexual abuse were limited to behavior meeting a strict definition of the term, then some terms such as “assault” or “molester” would be acceptable, when clearly defined. Even in such studies, however, if the parameters are clear and the issues accurately defined, the use of less value-laden terms might serve objectivity better. Terms such as “kiddie porn” or “child pornography” (Pierce, 1984) could be replaced by the more neutral “sexually explicit material.” “Sexual assault victim” and “assailant” (DeJong, Hervada and Emmett, 1983) could be replaced by the more neutral “child” and “adult.” The widespread abhorrence of these activities is not questioned, but this does not excuse the use of emotion-laden terminology in professional writing. It is difficult to imagine that the literature in other scholarly disciplines would tolerate such a moralistic or emotional tone.

In summary, the evidence presented in this section underscores the necessity for serious researchers to insist that emotion-charged and substandard scholarship be exposed wherever it appears. Writers who neglect to define “child” when talking about child sexual behavior and abuse (J.G. Jones, 1982; Nielsen, 1983; Summit, 1983) or to distinguish between child and adolescent (Densen-Gerber and Hutchinson, 1977; Pierce and Pierce, 1985) should be questioned. Researchers whose samples are biased (Fisher and Howell, 1970; Groth and Birnbaum, 1978), whose conclusions are overbroad and emotional (Burgess, Hartman, McCausland and Powers, 1984), or whose “research” consists mostly of secondary sources (Pierce, 1984) and focuses on extreme, lurid, non-representative and intentionally shocking case material (Baker, 1978; Densen-Gerber, 1980 and wherever she appears in print; Janus, 1981) should be challenged. “Scholars” whose expertise is limited to law-enforcement (Tyler, 1982a 1982b) or other narrowly specialized training should be exposed. Finally, writers who cite estimates or unfounded statistics and figures (Densen-Gerber and Hutchinson, 1979) should be held to answer.

**THE POLITICAL CLIMATE:
SUPPRESSION OF RESEARCH**

In addition to criticizing existing research, it is also important to consider the work that remains to be done. It is becoming apparent that the broad-based study of pedophilia and related issues is being limited by emotional public reaction and unprecedented attention from local and federal government officials. This is related to the fact that, according to newspaper and other reports, routine child-adult relationships, especially in professional settings such as day-care centers, also are being limited and restricted (Baker, 1985; Gardner, 1985). The suppression of research dealing with sex is nothing new. Sonenschein (1987) documents this history in chilling detail, from the purge of John Watson from Johns Hopkins just after WW I, to Kinsey's loss of Rockefeller Foundation funding and attendant FBI "monitoring." The FBI interest in Kinsey, according to documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, resulted from that agency's "feeling that continued research in Kinsey's direction would corrupt and endanger the nation's children" (p. 1). Sonenschein also documents recent seizures of sex-related research materials, including his own (in 1984), and those of the present author (in 1985). This is convincing evidence that Constantine and Martinson's (1981) warning about the special risks of research on children's sexuality, incest and pedophilia was well advised. In case one might think the discouragement of certain types of research comes only from outside the profession, Sonenschein (1987) cites almost unbelievable evidence to the contrary:

The first [way in which professional and scientific integrity is broken down] is perhaps the most astounding and involves the direct and conscious abandonment of science itself. . . . By asserting his personal belief that children inherently cannot consent to sex with adults, [David] Finkelhor says he deliberately "puts the argument on a moral, rather than empirical footing" (1979, p. 695). . . . Finkelhor . . . further insists that any empirical evidence to the contrary is irrelevant and is to be totally discounted. (p. 412)

DIRECTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF INTERGENERATIONAL INTIMACY

Research outside the child sexual abuse tradition is available, and should be consulted and integrated into a framework that is more inclusive of the full range of actual and potential intergenerational behavior. This research, from longitudinal studies beginning in the 1930s (Bender and Grugett, 1952) through the present volume provides alternatives to the narrow focus on sexual abuse, and occasionally shows how intergenerational relationships can be studied without looking at sexual behavior at all (e.g., Seidl's [1982] study of Big Sisters, an organization in the United States which matches adult women with motherless girls).

Future research into adult-child sexual contacts conceptually should be considered part of the spectrum of behavior which also includes relationships between coaches and their team members, Big Sister/Little Sister and Big Brother/Little Brother pairs, parents and children, indeed all intergenerational contacts. The use of such a conceptual scheme may be the only way to understand fully the reality of the human behavior involved, to inform accurately public policy and popular attitudes, and to liberate research from the unfortunate biases and limitations of the past. In short, correctly identifying and outlining the whole picture may be the only way effectively to reduce true child abuse. Without accurate definitions and dependable research regarding true abuse the clarity needed to attack the problem effectively will remain elusive.

Some feminists have highlighted another important issue in the study of intergenerational relationships with their concern that male dominance and power needs may be the motivation for the adult who seeks contact with children (Lederer, 1980). Feminists rightly condemn the use of male power wherever it is used to maintain male dominance, and many see parallels between sexual adult-child contacts and the rape of adolescent or adult women. The available research, however, fails to support this position. Even explicitly sexual pedophilia—particularly homosexual (i.e., man-boy) contact—rarely involves the use of force or violence (Quinsey, 1977). The few studies done outside institutional settings (e.g., Ingram, 1981; Sandfort, 1981; 1983) suggest that such relationships can ex-

ist without the exercise of any manipulative power on the part of the adult.

The study of intergenerational relationships could point to alternatives to what feminist scholars have identified as destructive male dominance, provided that such relationships are characterized by intimacy and interpersonal equality, instead of the man-over-boy power imbalance typical of so many father/son or coach/player relationships, for example. Late childhood and early adolescence represent a turning point in development after which attitudes, roles and behavior patterns—especially friendship patterns (Jones and Dembo, 1986)—often are not as flexible as they were before. If qualities like warmth, intimacy or anti-sexism are going to be encouraged, the pre-adult years are probably the time to do so. After the age of 11 or 12, puberty begins to highlight physical differences of males and females, social pressures toward heterosexuality intensify, and homophobia begins to appear (Jones, 1985; see also Friday, 1981, for personal accounts of men whose childhood homosexual experiences stopped around puberty because of fears associated with homosexuality). Of course, “mainstream” man-boy contacts, typically revolving around sports and macho posturing, tend to reinforce sexist attitudes and glorification of violence, but not all intergenerational contacts are “mainstream.” Systematic study of such relationships might reveal that some can result in behavioral outcomes on the part of boys that feminists would welcome.⁵

Indeed, the whole question of just what images of masculinity are functional in the socialization of boys could well be investigated, regardless of the question of sexual activity. Riddle's (1978) review of the literature shows how children—those who will be involved in homosexual behavior as well as those who will not—might well benefit from gay role models. Morin and Schultz (1978) have asserted that access to gay role models is indeed a right to which growing persons are entitled.

It may be that the study of intergenerational intimacy, especially when same-sex pairs are involved, is particularly well-suited to the growing community of lesbian and gay scholars. Morin (1977) has documented the effects of pro-heterosexual bias on research into homosexual behavior, which raises the legitimate question of whether heterosexual scholars in general are able to view non-het-

erosexual behavior objectively. Heterosexual researchers often are encumbered by biases such as Erikson's (e.g., 1968) in which he defined intimacy as the type of relationship characteristic of marriage, therefore characteristic of late adolescence and early adulthood. If he had been able to give same-sex relationships the same importance as heterosexual ones, he might have theorized, as did Sullivan (who was himself homosexual), that intimacy in its early forms begins in what he called life's first love relationships, those of the same-sex "chumships" of preadolescence (1953a, 1953b).

The possibility should be considered that intergenerational attraction on the part of some adults could constitute a lifestyle "orientation," rather than a pathological maladjustment as is typically assumed. It has been suggested, for example, that some forms of intergenerational contact, particularly male homosexual relationships involving boys at or around puberty, are a result of an integral, lifelong social/sexual preference on the part of the adult (Quinsey, 1977) which is analogous to the more familiar lesbian, androphile homosexual, or heterosexual orientations. This orientation is seen as different from situational, or transitory pedophile actions in which an adult male who usually fulfils his sexuality with adult females turns to children under temporary, unusual circumstances (Groth and Birnbaum, 1978). Further information regarding this distinction is needed, and it should be ascertained whether pedophile-like impulses are rare or relatively common, even in the general population (Righton, 1981).

Interview and projective-test studies should be designed to assess the importance of role-modeling, hero worship and similar constructs at various ages—and whether such relationships are more likely to be intergenerational or peer-based. We can't really know, as we move into a more egalitarian society with more egalitarian role definitions, whether same-sex role modeling and hero worship is necessary at some basic level. Intuitively it may seem likely that it is, considering its presence cross-culturally (Herdt, 1984; Williams, 1986), and the fact that core gender identity is one of the earliest acquired notions (Stoller, 1965), but we don't know until we identify the issue and begin to study it as such, both within our culture and in cross-cultural research.

Retrospective studies with a wide range of adults could provide

more information about people's reactions to early sexual involvement with adults, including trauma associated with sexual contacts and whether sexual activity in and of itself contributes to such trauma. With regard to the issue of consent, comparative studies could be conducted to determine how one's general ability to comprehend the world develops, and how or when competence and consent develop in non-sexual situations, such as choice of friends, activities outside the home, hobbies, personal responsibility or the ability to handle money effectively. These activities typically don't wait for an arbitrary age of consent.

CONCLUSION

As in all research, the study of intimate intergenerational relationships, pedophilia, child sexuality and related issues will be effective only to the extent that professionals involved in such study resolve to identify and reject emotionality in all its forms and influences. Terminology must be neutral and each researcher and author must acknowledge the probability that society's emotional reactions are affecting her or his results or interpretations.

The study of these issues must include accurate definitions, and these definitions should whenever possible be standardized across studies. This includes specification of the ages and other characteristics associated with the terms child, adolescent, adult, pedophile, child molester, etc.; delineation of what constitutes sexual activity (e.g., does it include hugging? kissing? caressing?); and distinctions between such terms as erotica and pornography, sexual behavior and molestation, and so forth. In general, the criteria of social science literature, when a rationale exists, should be differentiated from criteria of the law.

Effective public policy in a free society is only possible when the best information is available for decisionmaking. Regardless of trends in popular culture, social science needs to rise above special-interest research, attain the highest standards, and provide that information. The limited concepts appropriate for the child sexual abuse research tradition should be augmented and expanded into the more inclusive study of intergenerational intimacy.

NOTES

1. For a more complete background and development of a definition of interpersonal intimacy, see Jones, 1985.

2. This is not to diminish the importance of cross-sex intimacy between generations. Such relationships also should be studied as part of the overall picture of intergenerational intimacy.

3. A further discussion of developmental research and theory regarding intergenerational intimacy, including theoretical propositions about needs for intergenerational intimacy, critical periods for the development of interpersonal skills, and a comprehensive model for future study, may be found in this author's invited contribution (Jones, 1987b) to the Jemez Springs (New Mexico) Symposium of the International Society for Human Ethology. The subject under consideration at the Symposium was "Adult Human Sexual Behavior with Children and Adolescents."

4. The term "child abuse industry" first came to the attention of the present author in a speech by Berkeley, California psychiatrist Lee Coleman, delivered in Altadena, California on June 19, 1985. Dr. Coleman's talk, a critique of the widely-used Child Sexual Abuse Accomodation Syndrome (Summit, 1983), was entitled "False Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse: Have the Experts Been Caught With Their Pants Down?"

5. These points are developed further by the present author (Jones, 1987a) in a paper presented at a recent conference of feminist scholars. The paper was invited for inclusion in a conference session on "Men and Feminism."

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