

Parental Background of Male Homosexuals and Heterosexuals¹

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Conflicting descriptions of parents of homosexuals compared to those of heterosexuals have typically been reported. The most frequently noted pattern for homosexuals includes a close-binding, controlling mother and a detached, rejecting father. Because the majority of studies have examined emotionally disturbed patients, and have contained significant methodological and sampling inadequacies, the present research evaluated nonclinical homosexual and heterosexual groups by means of systematically developed objective questionnaires. The data for the total samples indicated that homosexuals (N = 307) described their fathers and mothers as more rejecting and less loving and that they were less close to their fathers than heterosexuals (N = 138). For subsamples of homosexuals and heterosexuals scoring low on neuroticism, however, no significant differences in family relations were found. Differences in parent similarity were also considerably reduced when homosexuals and heterosexuals low on neuroticism were compared. Homosexuals low on femininity, in addition, reported negative behavior for fathers but not for mothers. The importance of considering the general level of adjustment among nonclinical subjects and the degree of masculinity of subjects was supported by the findings in the present study. The overall results, in addition, cast serious doubt on the prevalent assumption that negative parental behavior, especially of mothers, plays a critical role in differentiating the backgrounds of homosexuals and heterosexuals.

INTRODUCTION

In the search for factors which differentiate the parent-child relations of male homosexuals from those of male heterosexuals, the most typical pattern reported for the parents of homosexuals is an intensely affectionate, dominating,

¹ This research was supported by Research Grant MH 16692 from the National Institute of Mental Health.

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possessive, intimate mother and a distant, weak, ineffectual, rejecting father (Greenblatt, 1966). Freud (1916) described the mothers of homosexuals as excessively loving and their fathers as retiring or absent. Stekel (1930) noted strong, dominant mothers and weak fathers. In 1936, Terman and Miles found the mothers of homosexuals to be especially demonstrative, affectionate, and emotional, while the fathers were typically unsympathetic, autocratic, or frequently away from home. A very similar pattern was recently depicted by Bieber *et al.* (1962), who noted a close-binding, intimate, controlling mother and a detached, hostile, rejecting father. Bieber *et al.* labeled this family pattern the "triangular system." Support for the "triangular system" hypothesis has been presented by Benda (1963), Braatan and Darling (1965), Brown (1963), Edwards (1963), Evans (1969), Jonas (1944), O'Connor (1964), Snortum *et al.* (1969), and Whitener and Nikelly (1964).

Some researchers, on the other hand, have reported quite different parental characteristics. Greenblatt (1966) described fathers of male homosexuals as good, generous, pleasant, dominant, and underprotective, while mothers were good, generous, pleasant, neither dominant nor subordinate, neither overprotective nor underprotective. Greenstein (1966) studied fathers only and indicated that "the greater the degree of father closeness, the greater the frequency of overt homosexual experience" (p. 275). Apperson and McAdoo (1968) noted that fathers of homosexuals were more concerned about their sons' feelings and that mothers were overpermissive. A higher incidence of homosexual experience was found among Italian schizophrenics whose fathers were dominant and whose mothers were subordinate, in comparison to Irish schizophrenics whose fathers were passive and ineffectual and whose mothers were controlling and dominant (Opler and Singer, 1956). Bene (1965) reported mothers of homosexuals who were not more loving, intense, attached, or protective than mothers of heterosexuals.

Most of the studies in this area examined emotionally disturbed *Ss* or criminals (Greenblatt, 1966), and to generalize to all homosexuals from these clinical and prison samples would be unreasonable. Of four investigations based on nonclinical *Ss*, one (Evans, 1969) supported the "triangular system" hypothesis, one (Greenblatt, 1966) presented evidence directly opposed to this pattern, and two (Apperson and McAdoo, 1968; Bene, 1965) indicated support in terms of fathers' behavior but contrary evidence for mothers' behavior. The need to examine parental behavior of nonclinical samples is thus clearly indicated. Among nonclinical samples, in addition, a further distinction between different levels of adjustment seems desirable. If there is a relationship between parent-child relations and mental health (Frank, 1965; Mussen, 1971), a comparison between the parental behavior of *Ss* with better *vs.* less adequate adjustment would be reasonable. The attempt to objectively analyze, and control for, the adjustment of nonclinical homosexuals and heterosexuals, whose parental background was being studied, was made by only one investigator, Greenblatt (1966).

Various inadequacies in methodology and sampling have reduced the significance of many studies in this field. Only a few researchers (Greenblatt, 1966; Greenstein, 1966), for example, have utilized adequate objective instruments with demonstrated psychometric properties, such as acceptable reliability or validity. More than 80% of the reports found by this writer were based on 50 Ss or less. The necessity for more sophisticated research designs is reflected in the excellent review and critical evaluation of the literature on parental background of homosexuals presented by Greenblatt (1966).

Another important characteristic that should be considered when contrasting homosexuals and heterosexuals is masculinity-femininity. A distinction has been made by Brown (1957, 1958) between the male "invert," a homosexual whose perceptions and personality are typical of women, and the "homosexual," whose sex object is men but whose behavior otherwise is masculine. Brown argued that studies attempting to distinguish between male homosexuals and heterosexuals should recognize these two types of homosexuality in order to avoid poor discrimination. If parent-child relations are associated with the development of masculinity-femininity (Kagan, 1964), distinction between masculine and feminine homosexuals and heterosexuals is suggested. Is there a difference between the parental backgrounds of masculine homosexuals and feminine homosexuals?

The purpose of the present research was to objectively compare the parental backgrounds of nonclinical homosexual and heterosexual males with psychometrically sound questionnaires. In addition to comparing total samples on parental factors, two supplementary analyses were made between (1) homosexuals scoring low on neuroticism *vs.* heterosexuals scoring low on neuroticism, and (2) homosexuals scoring low on femininity *vs.* heterosexuals scoring low on femininity.

METHOD

Subjects

The attempt was made to recruit Ss from nonclinical and noncriminal sources. The Ss were not randomly selected and could not be considered representative, but they were not drawn from prisons, state hospitals, or patients in therapy. All Ss responded anonymously to paper-and-pencil questionnaires.

The 307 male homosexuals in the present study described themselves as either exclusively homosexual ($N = 202$), or predominantly homosexual with some heterosexual tendencies ($N = 105$). For all Ss, this self-description was based on the response to the following question: "In terms of sexual contact, relations, or desires, would you currently describe yourself as (check one): (1) exclusively homosexual, (2) predominantly homosexual with some heterosexual tendencies, (3) bisexual (equally homosexual and heterosexual tendencies), (4) predominantly heterosexual with some homosexual tendencies, (5) exclusively heterosexual." One hundred and forty-seven respondents returned

questionnaires they received from this writer at lectures on homosexuality attended mostly by homosexuals, from homophile bookstores in Greenwich Village where the managers distributed them for the author, and from homosexuals who took extra copies to give to homosexual friends. An additional 160 Ss were obtained from the Mattachine Society of New York, where members completed questionnaires sent to them through the mail by the officers of this organization. The approximate rate of return of questionnaires distributed through all sources was 50%. A variety of vocations were represented, mostly professional, and the homosexual Ss could be classified as predominantly middle class.

The 138 heterosexuals were undergraduate and graduate students in education courses at The City College of New York (CCNY). The undergraduates ($N = 68$) represented most of the subject areas of concentration at CCNY. Except for three students, the graduates ($N = 70$) were all teachers. The present author administered the questionnaires to all heterosexuals, who completed the forms during a regular class period. Except for two Ss, all persons asked to complete the test forms did so. This sample described themselves as exclusively heterosexual. The graduates were professionals, and the undergraduates would become professionals when they graduated. Most of the heterosexuals were middle class. Additional information concerning the Ss used in the present study, including statistical comparisons, can be found in a recent issue of this Journal (Siegelman, 1972).

The attempt was made to obtain comparable homosexual and heterosexual groups, and in certain respects this objective was accomplished. The two groups were not different on percent not in therapy, education of subject, education of father, education of mother, socioeconomic background of parents, and Schachter (1959) sibling position code. The homosexuals, however, were older and scored higher on the Crowne and Marlowe (1960) Social Desirability Scale (SDS) than the heterosexuals. The SDS was included in order to check on the possible influence of giving socially desirable responses on the various parental behavior measures. Two additional analyses were made when it became apparent that there were significant differences in age and on the SDS responses. First, subgroups matched on age and SDS scores were compared by means of *t*-test computations on the parental background factors. Second, age and social desirability response factors were statistically controlled through analysis of covariance. The necessity of relying on volunteer and anonymous homosexual respondents, and the desire to obtain large samples, made similar data collection procedures and matching of groups on vocational background difficult. The lack of comparability in the way in which the heterosexual and homosexual data were collected and the greater diversity of occupational backgrounds of the homosexuals were important limitations in the design of the present study. In interpreting the results, therefore, the possible contamination of these incompatibilities should be considered.

Instruments

Socioeconomic background was a composite score based on father's education and occupation (Siegelman, 1965). Education was scored on a 7-point scale described by Hollingshead and Redlich (1958). Occupation was ranked according to the procedure developed by Hamburger (1958).

Psychometric details, including previously reported reliabilities, for the SDS, the Gough (1952) Femininity Scale (Fe), and the Scheier and Cattell (1961) Neuroticism Scale Questionnaire (NSQ), along with reliability coefficients obtained on these scales for the Ss in the present study, are reported in a recent paper by this author (Siegelman, 1972). Data from the Fe and NSQ instruments were used to select subgroups of homosexuals and heterosexuals scoring low on femininity and neuroticism for parental background comparisons.

The Parent-Child Relations Questionnaire: Short Form 2 (PCR:SF2) was derived from the Parent-Child Relations Questionnaire (PCR) constructed by Roe and Siegelman (1963). The items for the PCR:SF2 were selected from the PCR on the basis of a factor analysis of the 130 PCR items. More detailed psychometric information concerning the PCR can be found elsewhere (Roe and Siegelman, 1963; Roe and Siegelman, 1964; Siegelman, 1965, 1972*b*). The PCR:SF2, a measure of adult retrospective reports of early parental behavior, contains 40 items covering five dimensions: Protecting (P), Rejecting (R), Casual (C), Demanding (D), and Loving (L). The five PCR:SF2 variables, along with their rotated factor loadings, communalities, generalized Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 reliabilities (Tryon, 1957), and percentage of the variance, are listed in Table I. Principal-component factor analysis, using unity communality estimates and subsequent varimax rotation, yielded three consistent, orthogonal factors labeled I Love-Reject (LR), II Casual-Demand (CD), and III Protect (P). These factors, which were basically the same as those found previously with the PCR (Roe and Siegelman, 1963, 1964; Siegelman, 1965, 1973), and essentially similar to factors reported by numerous researchers using many different approaches (Goldin, 1969), accounted for the major part of the total variance. Factor analyses of the 40 items used in the present study yielded clear-cut LR, CD, and P item clusters, closely paralleling the original items selected for the LR, CD, and P factors. For the homosexuals, reliability estimates for father ranged from 0.75 to 0.91 and from 0.78 to 0.90 for mother. Reliabilities for heterosexuals ranged from 0.64 to 0.88 for father and 0.67 to 0.79 for mother. Factor scores for the LR, CD, and P factors were calculated for each S by combining the appropriate variable scores (i.e., Love score with Reject score to get LR score) so that high factor scores represented loving, casual, or protecting orientations.

Additional information concerning parental background was obtained from a Biographical Questionnaire (BQ), which also included the questions on the demographic data reported above. The BQ items concerning parental back-

Table I. Rotated Factor Loadings, Communalities, Percentage of Variance, and Reliabilities

PCR :SF2 variable	Homosexual						Heterosexual													
	Father ^d (N = 275)			Mother (N = 314)			Father (N = 137)			Mother (N = 138)										
	I ^b	II ^c	III ^d	I ^b	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III	r_{tt}	h^2	r_{tt}					
Protecting	0.20	-0.09	0.97	0.99	0.75	0.15	-0.03	0.98	0.98	0.78	0.22	0.03	0.96	0.97	0.66	0.10	-0.01	0.97	0.94	0.67
Rejecting	-0.96	0.08	-0.08	0.93	0.90	-0.93	0.11	-0.15	0.89	0.87	-0.93	0.01	-0.13	0.89	0.79	-0.89	-0.06	-0.14	0.81	0.79
Casual	-0.01	-0.94	0.14	0.89	0.84	0.00	-0.92	0.17	0.87	0.80	-0.10	-0.89	0.13	0.83	0.79	-0.12	-0.84	0.26	0.79	0.77
Demanding	-0.23	0.91	0.00	0.88	0.91	-0.30	0.85	0.15	0.84	0.86	-0.18	0.86	0.18	0.80	0.75	-0.11	0.86	0.22	0.79	0.74
Loving	0.91	-0.14	0.24	0.91	0.91	0.92	-0.14	0.07	0.87	0.90	0.92	-0.06	0.15	0.87	0.88	0.89	-0.05	-0.02	0.80	0.78
Percent common variance	40	38	22			41	36	23			42	35	23			40	34	26		
Percent total variance	38	35	21			36	32	21			36	31	20			34	29	22		

^aDescription of father by homosexual.^bFactor Love-Reject.^cFactor Casual-Demand.^dFactor Protect.^eCommunalities^fGeneralized Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 reliabilities.

Table II. Correlations Between PCR:SF2, BQ, SDS, and Age^d

	PCR:SF2 ^b father												PCR:SF2 ^b mother												BQ ^c															
	P				R				C				D				L				LR				CD				P			CF			CM			PD		
	P	R	C	D	P	R	C	D	P	R	C	D	P	R	C	D	L	LR	CD	P	L	LR	CD	P	L	LR	CD	P	P	CF	CM	PD								
SDS																																								
Homosexual	-09	-07	-04	-01	09	09	09	03	-10	-08	-06	-03	00	14 ^e	11	-02	-10	-10	-10	-03	03	03	03	03	03	03	03	03	03	03	03	03								
Heterosexual	02	-08	-02	00	03	06	06	-02	02	-03	-04	04	-04	17 ^f	12*	05	-03	-03	-03	-03	09	09	09	09	09	09	09	09	09	09	09	09								
Age																																								
Homosexual	-05	-03	06	-01	11	06	01	06	01	02	-09	-04	03	-01	07	05	00	-06	-06	-06	36 ^f	36 ^f	36 ^f	36 ^f	35 ^f	35 ^f	35 ^f	35 ^f	24 ^f	24 ^f	24 ^f	24 ^f								
Heterosexual	-08	03	02	-03	05	02	03	03	08	-08	01	-02	-01	03	02	02	-01	-08	-08	-08	-29 ^f	-29 ^f	-29 ^f	-29 ^f	-28 ^f	-28 ^f	-28 ^f	-28 ^f	-17 ^e	-17 ^e	-17 ^e	-17 ^e								

^a N varies between 270 and 290 for homosexuals due to missing data. N varies between 134 and 138 for heterosexuals due to missing data. Decimal points are omitted in this table.

^b The PCR:SF2 factors are P, Protect; R, Reject; C, Casual; D, Demand; L, Love; LR, Love-Reject; CD, Casual-Demand; P, Protect.

^c The BQ variables are CF, Close to Father; CM, Close to Mother; PD, Parent Dominance.

^e p < 0.05.

^f p < 0.01.

ground were grouped into three areas, with each item including five multiple-choice responses. The three areas, and the items used to measure them, were as follows: (1) Close to Father: "As a child, how attached were you to your father?" "While you were growing up, how did you and your father get along?" "How do you and your father get along now?" "How close are you to your father now?" (2) Close to Mother: Same items as in No. 1 referring to mother. (3) Dominance of Parent: "While you were growing up, who in your family had the final say about how the house was run?" "While you were growing up, who in your family took responsibility for discipline?" "While you were growing up, who in your family really had the final say about how the family income was spent?" "Who in your family had the final say about your parents' social and recreational activities?" "While you were growing up, which parent was the more important in your family?" High scores on the three BQ variables indicated closeness to father, closeness to mother, and mother dominance. Low scores reflected little closeness to father, little closeness to mother, and father dominance.

The possible influences of age and the tendency to give socially desirable responses on parental background descriptions were assessed by computing correlations among these variables, and they are presented in Table II. The generally low associations between SDS, age, and the PCR:SF2 dimensions indicated that the SDS reactions and age accounted for a very small amount of the variance in the PCR:SF2 data. Age and the tendency to give socially desirable responses had little in common with the responses on the PCR:SF2. The BQ variables, similarly, had little association with the SDS reactions. A rather perplexing relationship exists between the BQ dimensions and age, with a positive correlation for homosexuals and a negative correlation for heterosexuals, but there is no clear indication of how these associations could influence the BQ findings.

RESULTS

Table III presents the findings for the total samples. Except for the father Protect and the mother Demand factors on the PCR:SF2, the *t* and *F* statistics were essentially in agreement with each other. On the PCR:SF2, the homosexuals, in contrast to the heterosexuals, reported their fathers to be more rejecting and less loving. The homosexuals also described their mothers as more rejecting and less loving. In responding to the BQ, the homosexuals indicated less closeness to their fathers than the heterosexuals. The two groups were not different from each other on the PCR:SF2 father and mother Protect, Casual, and Demand factors, nor on the BQ Close to Mother and Parent Dominance factors.

Responses to several additional BQ items were also of interest for the present study. For the total samples, as well as for the subgroups equated on age and

Table III. Parental Background Comparisons Between Homosexuals and Heterosexuals (Total Samples)

Variables	<i>N</i> ^a		<i>M</i>		SD		<i>t</i>	<i>F</i> ^b
	Homo-sexual	Hetero-sexual	Homo-sexual	Hetero-sexual	Homo-sexual	Hetero-sexual		
PCR:SF2 father								
Protecting	275	137	19.57	21.14	6.06	5.05	2.60 ^c	3.31
Rejecting	274	137	20.15	15.75	8.65	5.59	5.45 ^d	27.73 ^d
Casual	274	137	24.04	22.63	7.72	6.43	1.85	1.05
Demanding	274	137	23.81	23.06	7.92	6.28	0.96	1.12
Loving	274	137	23.33	27.98	8.81	7.16	5.36 ^d	36.06 ^d
I Love-Reject	274	137	51.19	60.26	16.70	12.00	5.67 ^d	34.93 ^d
II Casual-Demand	274	137	48.02	47.57	14.48	11.15	0.32	0.00
III Protect	274	137	19.76	21.14	6.36	5.05	2.21 ^e	3.46
PCR:SF2 mother								
Protecting	293	138	25.38	25.06	6.66	5.28	0.50	1.68
Rejecting	294	138	14.10	12.89	6.44	4.61	1.98 ^e	5.19 ^e
Casual	293	138	23.43	22.27	6.90	6.04	1.70	1.54
Demanding	294	138	23.58	21.91	7.77	5.94	2.24 ^e	3.68
Loving	294	138	29.54	32.34	7.96	5.15	3.77 ^d	18.74 ^d
I Love-Reject	293	138	63.43	67.45	13.77	8.72	3.14 ^c	12.83 ^d
II Casual-Demand	293	138	47.62	48.36	13.11	10.17	0.59	0.19
III Protect	293	138	25.35	25.05	6.86	5.28	0.44	1.56
BQ								
Close to Father	293	137	7.18	8.17	3.92	3.54	3.93 ^d	35.47 ^d
Close to Mother	302	136	12.23	12.88	5.17	4.66	1.16	2.39
Parent Dominance	298	136	15.05	14.26	7.83	6.56	1.02	1.22

^a *N* differed for some variables because of missing data.

^b Analysis of covariance with age and SDS controlled.

^c $p < 0.01$, two-tailed.

^d $p < 0.001$, two-tailed.

^e $p < 0.05$, two-tailed.

SDS scores, there were no significant *t*-test differences on responses to the following BQ items: "While you were growing up, how much friction was there between your father and mother?" "How much friction is there between your parents now?" "While you were growing up, how energetic a person was your father?" "While you were growing up, how energetic a person was your mother?" "Which of your parents demanded higher achievement of you and kept after you to make special efforts?"

Another relevant finding concerned the degree to which the mothers and fathers of each group were alike. The parents of the heterosexuals were more similar to each other than the parents of the homosexuals on all of the PCR:SF2 factors except Casual. The greater similarity between the parents of the hetero-

sexuals was especially marked for the Reject and Demand factors. For the homosexual sample ($N = 270$), the correlations between fathers and mothers were $P = 0.41$, $R = 0.27$, $C = 0.43$, $D = 0.21$, $L = 0.32$. The correlations between the parents of the heterosexuals ($N = 137$) were $P = 0.46$, $R = 0.49$, $C = 0.41$, $D = 0.45$, $L = 0.45$. The tendency for the parents of the heterosexuals to resemble each other more than the parents of the homosexuals was also reflected in data collected with a Semantic Differential technique (McGuire, 1966) for the purpose of studying parent-child identification. The parents of the homosexuals were less like each other than the parents of the heterosexuals on the Semantic Differential factors of Dominance, Neuroticism, Extroversion, Poise, and Conventionality.

The comparisons of homosexuals and heterosexuals matched on age and the tendency to give socially desirable responses are noted in Table IV. The findings

Table IV. Parental Background Comparisons Between Homosexual and Heterosexual Sub-samples Matched on Age and SDS Variables

Variables	N^a		M		SD		t
	Homosexual	Heterosexual	Homosexual	Heterosexual	Homosexual	Heterosexual	
PCR:SF2 father							
Protecting	103	119	19.96	21.11	5.96	5.11	1.55
Rejecting	103	119	19.90	15.76	8.66	5.66	4.27 ^b
Casual	103	119	23.13	22.31	7.96	6.49	0.84
Demanding	103	119	24.71	23.55	7.83	6.35	0.69
Loving	103	119	22.50	27.98	9.06	7.13	5.05 ^b
I Love-Reject	103	119	50.83	60.23	17.02	12.15	4.78 ^c
II Casual-Demand	103	119	46.87	46.76	14.58	11.26	0.06
III Protect	103	119	19.91	21.11	5.95	5.11	1.61
PCR:SF2 mother							
Protecting	111	119	26.22	24.86	6.34	5.29	1.77
Rejecting	111	119	13.67	12.94	6.40	4.60	0.99
Casual	111	119	22.65	22.24	7.12	5.98	0.47
Demanding	111	119	23.43	21.87	6.82	5.67	1.90
Loving	111	119	29.35	32.37	7.77	5.12	3.50 ^b
I Love-Reject	111	119	63.78	67.43	13.17	8.57	2.51 ^d
II Casual-Demand	111	119	47.24	43.38	12.37	9.70	0.78
III Protect	111	119	26.12	24.86	6.39	5.29	1.65
BQ							
Close to Father	113	118	5.58	8.64	3.48	3.40	6.78 ^b
Close to Mother	117	117	10.43	12.79	4.58	4.55	3.96 ^b
Parent Dominance	117	117	12.54	13.91	7.09	6.26	1.56

^a N differed for some variables because of missing data.

^b $p < 0.001$, two-tailed.

^c $p < 0.01$, two-tailed.

^d $p < 0.05$, two-tailed.

for these matched groups were quite similar to the results for the total samples noted above in Table III.

The parental background variable comparisons between homosexuals and heterosexuals with low neuroticism scores are presented in Table V. A low neuroticism score was set at 35 or below. The score of 35 fell approximately one standard deviation below the mean neuroticism score for the combined homosexual and heterosexual samples ($M = 43$). No significant differences on the parental background factors were found between the two subsamples matched on low NSQ scores.

The results of the last analysis made, of Ss scoring low on the Fe scale, are noted in Table VI. A low femininity score, set at 27 or below, fell approximately one standard deviation ($SD = 5.14$) below the Fe mean for homosexuals ($M = 32.21$). The cutoff point of 27 was selected to insure that a reasonable number of cases would be left in the two groups for this low Fe analysis. The significant findings were that the homosexuals described their fathers as less protecting and loving and more rejecting and demanding.

Table V. Parental Background Comparisons Between Homosexual and Heterosexual Subsamples Scoring Low on Neuroticism

Variables	N^a		M		SD		t
	Homosexual	Heterosexual	Homosexual	Heterosexual	Homosexual	Heterosexual	
PCR:SF2 father							
Protecting	32	40	20.16	21.42	6.01	4.25	1.05
Rejecting	32	40	15.88	15.85	6.06	5.79	0.02
Casual	32	40	24.84	23.75	5.82	6.01	0.78
Demanding	32	40	23.38	22.80	6.77	5.78	0.39
Loving	32	40	27.75	28.75	7.34	6.68	0.60
I Love-Reject	32	40	60.42	60.90	12.56	11.96	0.17
II Casual-Demand	32	40	49.24	48.95	11.24	10.48	0.12
III Protect	32	40	20.00	21.42	5.98	4.25	1.19
PCR:SF2 mother							
Protecting	35	41	25.26	24.80	6.01	5.08	0.36
Rejecting	35	41	12.17	13.34	4.98	5.12	1.01
Casual	35	41	23.94	22.00	4.79	5.00	1.72
Demanding	35	41	22.89	22.37	6.85	5.89	0.36
Loving	35	41	32.54	32.71	6.02	5.14	0.13
I Love-Reject	35	41	68.53	67.37	10.08	8.54	0.55
II Casual-Demand	35	41	49.08	47.63	10.31	9.41	0.65
III Protect	35	41	25.00	24.80	6.12	5.08	0.15
BQ							
Close to Father	34	41	8.41	8.68	3.85	3.51	0.32
Close to Mother	36	41	13.30	12.71	4.83	4.51	0.56
Parent Dominance	35	40	14.40	15.45	8.03	6.87	0.61

^a N differed for some variables because of missing data.

Table VI. Parental Background Comparisons Between Homosexual and Heterosexual Sub-samples Scoring Low on Femininity

Variables	<i>N</i> ^a		<i>M</i>		SD		<i>t</i>
	Homo-sexual	Hetero-sexual	Homo-sexual	Hetero-sexual	Homo-sexual	Hetero-sexual	
PCR:SF2 father							
Protecting	46	69	19.15	21.26	5.72	4.44	2.22 ^b
Rejecting	46	69	18.13	14.42	9.10	4.62	2.88 ^c
Casual	46	69	22.35	22.35	6.79	6.14	0.00
Demanding	46	69	25.76	22.91	8.22	5.91	2.16 ^b
Loving	46	69	26.39	29.64	8.91	6.37	2.28 ^b
I Love-Reject	46	69	56.72	63.22	17.34	10.24	2.53 ^b
II Casual-Demand	46	69	44.53	47.43	13.80	10.10	1.31
III Protect	46	69	19.06	21.26	5.69	4.44	2.33 ^b
PCR:SF2 mother							
Protecting	45	70	24.09	24.37	6.72	4.90	0.26
Rejecting	45	70	13.78	13.37	6.70	5.41	0.36
Casual	45	70	22.56	20.54	6.00	5.43	1.86
Demanding	45	70	23.38	22.40	6.97	6.05	0.80
Loving	45	70	30.76	32.17	7.70	5.45	1.15
I Love-Reject	45	70	65.17	66.80	13.77	9.81	0.74
II Casual-Demand	45	70	47.24	46.14	11.46	9.47	0.56
III Protect	45	70	23.91	24.37	6.76	4.90	0.42
BQ							
Close to Father	49	69	9.18	8.72	3.85	3.46	0.68
Close to Mother	49	68	12.94	12.03	4.62	4.53	1.06
Parent Dominance	50	68	14.82	13.88	7.38	6.00	0.76

^a *N* differed for some variables because of missing data.

^b $p < 0.05$, two-tailed.

^c $p < 0.01$, two-tailed.

DISCUSSION

The findings for the total samples, shown in Table III, were generally consistent with the "triangular system" account of fathers of homosexuals as rejecting and distant. The homosexual characterization of rejecting mothers who were not more protective, demanding, close, or dominant, however, differed sharply with the delineation of mother depicted in the "triangular system." In the studies of Bene (1965) and Ullman (1959), both mothers and fathers of homosexuals were also reported to be rejecting or hostile and less loving. Bene noted, in addition, that the mothers of homosexuals were not more intense, attached, overprotective, or indulgent. The finding in the present study that father *vs.* mother dominance did not differentiate between homosexual and heterosexual parental backgrounds was also reported by Freund and Pinkava (1961) and by Greenstein (1966).

The data in Tables III, IV, and VI indicate more significant differences between homosexuals and heterosexuals on father, in contrast to mother, background variables. Partial correlations, with age and SDS responses partialled out, between the total samples and PCR:SF2 father Reject ($r = -0.24$), father Love ($r = 0.27$), mother Reject ($r = -0.10$), and mother Love ($r = 0.20$) also depicted stronger associations for fathers than for mothers. These tendencies conflict with the primary emphasis given to the role of mothers, and the secondary importance attributed to fathers of homosexuals, by many psychoanalysts (Socarides, 1968; Wiedeman, 1962). More emphasis was given to father background than to mother background of homosexuals by Liddicoat (1957), Miller (1958), and Paitich (1964). West (1959) concluded that "exclusive emphasis on the mother figure in male homosexuals is misplaced" (p. 94).

The most striking results of the current investigation can be found in Table V. The complete lack of significant differences in parental background between homosexuals and heterosexuals with low neuroticism scores is in sharp contrast to those studies supporting the "triangular system" hypothesis and to the data for the total samples noted in Table III. Comparison of data in Table III with the data in Table V suggests that degree of neuroticism, even in nonclinical samples, needs to be evaluated and controlled in order to avoid misleading information about heterosexual and homosexual parental backgrounds. The mean difference on neuroticism between the total samples of homosexuals ($M = 44.87$; $SD = 8.26$) and heterosexuals ($M = 39.44$; $SD = 7.43$) was significant ($t = 6.48$, $p < 0.001$), with the homosexuals scoring higher on the NSQ. It is thus possible that the tendency for homosexuals to report more rejecting and less loving parents is related to neurotic trends rather than to homosexuality *per se*. After reviewing the evidence that investigations of parental background may contaminate psychopathology with homosexuality, Hooker (1969) emphasized the importance of assessing psychopathology in such studies. This recommendation by Hooker is clearly supported by the contrasting findings in Tables III and V. The lack of significant differences noted in Table V is quite similar to the results of Greenblatt (1966), who also evaluated psychopathology, and who found no differences in the parental relations of homosexuals compared to heterosexuals.

The greater behavioral dissimilarity between the parents of homosexuals, in contrast to the parents of heterosexuals, for the total sample groups may also be contaminated with psychopathology. The difference in parent similarity between the two groups was considerably reduced in the low neuroticism sample comparisons, and practically absent in the low femininity group comparisons. Parents of more neurotic homosexuals were more disparate than the parents of less neurotic homosexuals. If differences between parental personality and behavior are related to conflicts between parents, then the study of Gassner and Murray (1969) is relevant. Gassner and Murray found greater parental conflict among parents of neurotic children in contrast to parents of normal children.

The reduction of negative parental background indicators for the low feminine homosexuals (Table VI compared to Table III) is consistent with the report by Evans (1969) that high masculine homosexuals had more desirable family backgrounds than low masculine homosexuals. Additional *t*-test comparisons of parental background for homosexuals scoring low on femininity vs. homosexuals scoring high on femininity indicated that low feminine homosexuals reported less casual and more loving fathers and greater closeness to father. No support was given to the findings of Nash and Hays (1965) that feminine homosexuals had closer relations with their mothers.

There is no way of discerning from the data in the present study whether or not a cause-and-effect relationship exists between parental behavior and sexual orientation in their children. Evans (1969), Greenblatt (1966), Hooker (1969), and West (1959) came to similar conclusions. In the current research, the possible influence that children have on parental behavior, in contrast to the typical assumption that parents mold their children's personalities, is also totally unresolved (Greenblatt, 1966; Chess *et al.*, 1967). The present findings, in fact, seriously question the existence of *any* association between family relations and homosexuality vs. heterosexuality. The evidence found in the present investigation is consistent with the belief of Hooker (1969) "that disturbed parental relations are neither necessary nor sufficient conditions for homosexuality to emerge" (p. 141).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author is grateful to the Mattachine Society of New York for help in securing homosexual subjects, and to the Computation Center staffs of The City College of New York and The University of London for supplying free computer time and facilities.

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