

Manifest Sadoomasochism of Males: Results of an Empirical Study¹

Andreas Spengler, M.D.²

Two hundred forty-five manifestly sadoomasochistic West German men completed an anonymous questionnaire concerning their sexual behavior and psychosocial problems. They were reached as placers of sadoomasochistic contact advertisements or as members of sadoomasochistic clubs. Thirty percent were exclusively heterosexually oriented, 31% bisexually oriented, and 38% homosexually oriented. Results are described with respect to the invisibility of deviant behavior, seeking of partners, participation in the subculture, realization of the deviant desires, self-acceptance, preferences for sadoomasochistic roles and practices, masturbation, and coming out. The possibilities for realization of the deviance are poorer for heterosexual sadoomasochists than for the other groups. However, subcultural groups exist among heterosexual sadoomasochists.

KEY WORDS: sadoomasochism; subculture; bisexuality; homosexuality; sadism; masochism.

INTRODUCTION

Manifest sadoomasochism among men has previously been described in the scientific literature only as a perversion or as an individual pathological phenomenon, not as a problem with social implications. One finds studies which describe only clinical aspects. The manner in which sadoomasochists deal with their sexual needs and realize their desires, as well as the social and psychic consequences of their orientation, remains unknown.

In his article "Fetishism and Sadoomasochism," Gebhard (1969) emphasized how widespread this deviation is: "these quantitative aspects fully justify fetishism

¹This article is an adaptation of a paper read at the Annual Meeting of the International Academy of Sex Research held in Hamburg, August 1976.

²Institut für Sexualforschung, University of Hamburg, West Germany.

and sadomasochism receiving more attention” and “in our present state of knowledge [we] cannot offer any reasoned theories buttressed by factual data.”

An exploratory and primarily descriptive study concerning the social situation and the sexual behavior of heterosexual, bisexual, and homosexual men with a manifestly sadomasochistic orientation was designed. In the course of the study, our special interest was devoted to the subcultural forms in which they are organized, possibilities for realizing the deviant behavior, and finally the consequences that arise in the course of working out the social conflicts which derive from the deviance.

We define manifest sadomasochistic deviance as a specialization of a type of sexual behavior where the interaction between the partners is concentrated on inflicting and receiving physical and psychic pain, or on ritualized submission and dominance. We define subcultures as social systems in which special norms of behavior are valid that deviate from the norms of the superimposed social system, used as a point of reference, and that make possible the deviant behavior. Where the sadomasochistic practice is affirmed and such partnerships are made possible, a social arena is created in which the usual social stigmatization of sadomasochistic behavior is suspended and is partially replaced by a positive counternorm. The independence of subcultural systems is evidenced by forms of communication peculiar to them (for example, specific linguistic systems and nonverbal rules of communication) and by special social institutions (Arnold, 1970).

METHOD

Extreme difficulties exist in questioning sadomasochists. Heterosexual sadomasochists live undercover; their groups are cut off from the outside world. The existence of subcultural groups among them has been doubted (Simon and Gagnon, 1970; Hunt, 1970). Only homosexual sadomasochists appeared to be approachable for investigation (Dannecker and Reiche, 1974). Anonymity is one of the special norms of sadomasochistic subcultures.

These conditions were taken into account by carrying out the study using a questionnaire to be filled out anonymously. Subjects were reached in two ways:

1. We sent questionnaires in response to contact advertisements used by sadomasochists to seek partners.
2. We had questionnaires distributed to members by cooperating sadomasochistic clubs.

(If one desires to go beyond individual case studies and studies of sadomasochistic prostitution, it is almost impossible to question sadomasochistically

oriented women in the subculture; there are hardly any nonprostitute ads and very few women in the clubs. As a result, we investigated men only.) We distributed 877 questionnaires (44% by contact ads, 56% by clubs). Responses were received from 245 men. The response rate was 27% for the ads, 29% for the club members, and 28% for the total.

In the definitive sample, heterosexual and homosexual sadomasochists were to be represented approximately equally. It turned out that a bisexual choice of partners was usual. We therefore divided the sample into three approximately equal groups: persons with an exclusively heterosexual choice of partners (30%), those with a bisexual choice (31%), and those with an exclusively homosexual one (38%) (see Table I). There are two effects of the selection which could have influenced the results:

1. With respect to the population of all sadomasochists, obtaining the sample by means of subcultural clubs or contact ads represents a limitation: only persons who share their deviance with others somewhere, be it only in an anonymous ad, are accounted for.
2. The response rate of 27% constitutes a selection in which those might well be overrepresented who are open and self-confident about their deviance (as indicated by their readiness to participate). A comparison of the contents of the contact ads of the persons who returned the questionnaire with those of the persons who withheld a response yielded good agreement in the basic variables of the heterosexual-bisexual-homosexual orientation and of the active-passive orientation of sadomasochistic roles.

Our sample consequently included men who sought sadomasochistic partnerships via ads or clubs, participated in subcultural media of communication, and were prepared to take part in an anonymous written questionnaire investigation concerning their sexual behavior. In the sample, the upper age groups were overrepresented. There were no persons younger than 20 years of age. The individuals often had a high social status, lived in good circumstances,

Table I. Sexual Orientation of Male Sadomasochists (self-rating, $n = 244$)

Orientation	Percent
Exclusively heterosexual	30
Bisexual, more heterosexual	11
Bisexual	4
Bisexual, more homosexual	16
Exclusively homosexual	38

Table II. Demographic Data for Male Sadomasochists

	<u>Percent</u>
a. Age (<i>n</i> = 240)	
25 years or younger	10
26-30 years	14
31-40 years	34
41-50 years	20
51 years or older	21
b. Education (<i>n</i> = 244)	
	<u>Percent</u>
9 years of school (Hauptschulabschluss)	37
10 years of school (Mittlere Reife)	22
13 years of school (Abitur)	15
University (postgraduate)	25
c. Monthly net earnings (Deutsche Marks) ^a	
	<u>Percent</u>
No answer	9
1000 DM or less	16
Up to 1500 DM	21
Up to 2000 DM	24
2000 DM or more	30

^aIn the Federal Republic, 34% of the employed men had a net income of more than 1400 Deutsche Marks per month in 1974.

and were well educated (Table II). The heterosexual, bisexual, and homosexual subgroups do not differ significantly with respect to these demographic characteristics. The fact that persons with a higher social status were so heavily represented might be attributable to the effects of the selection in obtaining the sample. Subcultural realization of the deviance could be easier for persons having more disposable time and money; the better-educated could be more motivated to participate in the investigation.

RESULTS

Invisibility

The social situation of sadomasochists is characterized by the necessity of keeping the deviant behavior a secret from the outside world (Table III). Mother, father, sister, and brother often know nothing about it. An especially difficult situation occurs in marriage: the deviant desires are frequently incompatible with the interests of the wife, and many of the wives are not informed about the deviance. The divorce rate in our sample was above average, 16% among heterosexuals, 12% among bisexuals, and 5% among homosexuals.

Table III. Invisibility of the Sadomasochistic Behavior

	Knows or suspects it (%)	Does not know (%)	No answer (%)	
Mother (<i>n</i> = 176)	19	66	15	
Father (<i>n</i> = 150)	9	69	23	
Brother, sister (<i>n</i> = 182)	15	65	19	
Wife (<i>n</i> = 109)	35	41	24	
			No	
	Many (%)	Some (%)	None (%)	answer (%)
Friends (<i>n</i> = 245)	7	47	41	4
Colleagues (<i>n</i> = 245)	2	9	70	18

Seeking a Partner

Most of the sadomasochists studied used contact advertisements: only 7% had never placed an ad, and only 14% were advertising for the first time on the occasion of the investigation. The number of responses to the last ad (Table IVa) is a good indicator of the chance of finding a partner in this manner. Heterosexual sadomasochists had less opportunity to make contacts via ads than did homosexuals. Among the latter, only 4% received no response, but the rate was 25% among heterosexuals. The contact ads were the most frequently employed method to make contact (see Table IVb); the other means of making contact are relevant only for subgroups and vary with sexual orientation. For example, information from friends, pubs, bars, and parties were named more frequently by homosexuals, while heterosexuals more often cited prostitution as their source. Homosexuals and bisexuals as well had significantly better possibilities for making contact than heterosexuals (Table IVc): in 20% of the cases the latter had “become acquainted with no partner at all” with whom they could have sadomasochistic sex. This was the case with only 6% of the bisexuals and 4% of the homosexuals.

Participation in the Subculture

Sadomasochists are integrated into their subcultural groups to various degrees, and their participation in the subculture likewise varies. Subcultural integration can be measured by active participation in subcultural activities such as sadomasochistic parties (Table Va). Approximately one-third mentioned this. An “acquaintance with like-minded persons” who also had “S/M interests” existed in 59% of the cases (Table Vb). Relatively fewer heterosexual sadomasochists participated in these direct subcultural contacts. All the more im-

Table IV. Seeking a Sadoomasochistic Partner

a. Number of responses to the last advertisement placed (%)					
	Total (<i>n</i> = 225)	Heterosexual (<i>n</i> = 73)	Bisexual (<i>n</i> = 71)	Homosexual (<i>n</i> = 81)	<i>p</i>
No answer	14	25	14	4	
1-5 answers	44	42	34	56	0.01
6-10 answers	20	18	24	18	
More answers	22	15	28	22	
b. Ways in which a sadoomasochistic sex partner was found (%)					
	Total (<i>n</i> = 244)	Heterosexual (<i>n</i> = 74)	Bisexual (<i>n</i> = 77)	Homosexual (<i>n</i> = 93)	<i>p</i>
Contact ads	64	51	80	60	0.001
Friends	36	24	31	49	0.002
Pubs	25	15	25	33	0.05
Special bars	23	15	19	33	0.02
Parks	21	4	27	31	0.001
Clubs	20	12	23	25	n.s.
Prostitution	13	23	9	7	0.01
Parties	8	3	10	12	n.s.
c. "No partner at all" for sadoomasochistic sex (%)					
	Total (<i>n</i> = 244)	Heterosexual (<i>n</i> = 74)	Bisexual (<i>n</i> = 77)	Homosexual (<i>n</i> = 93)	<i>p</i>
	10	20	6	4	0.001

portant are the indirect forms of participation in subcultural activities. Sadoomasochistic correspondence is a widespread form of communication, which often includes sexual excitement. Only one-fifth of the persons studied had not made use of this (Table Vc). The purchase of sadoomasochistic literature or pornographic magazines can also serve this function, especially when contact ads are listed by these media. Most sadoomasochists purchase these media regularly or frequently (Table Vd).

Possibilities for Realizing the Deviance

The frequency of sadoomasochistic experiences with partners in the last 12 months was low in the sample: only one in five had such an experience weekly, 15% had none at all. At about 5 per year, the median frequency is relatively low. In the total sample the number of partners (4.5 per year) is scarcely lower, and from this we can conclude that the sexual forms of behavior of sadoomasochists are characterized by low frequency and relatively great number of partners. Table VI shows further that homosexuals and bisexuals have better possibilities of realization than heterosexuals. The latter had on the average 3.3 contacts

Table V. Participation in the Sadomasochistic Subculture

a. Subcultural integration: "How often do you meet with like-minded persons for S/M parties (last 12 months)?" (%)					
	Total (n = 244)	Heterosexual (n = 74)	Bisexual (n = 77)	Homosexual (n = 93)	p
Never	67	85	57	60	0.001
1-5 times	20	12	23	25	
More often	13	3	19	14	
b. Acquaintance with like-minded persons: "Do you have acquaintances with S/M interests?" (%)					
	Total (n = 244)	Heterosexual (n = 74)	Bisexual (n = 77)	Homosexual (n = 93)	p
Yes	59	34	57	81	0.001
No	41	66	43	19	
c. Sadomasochistic correspondence (last 12 months) (%)					
	Total (n = 245)				
Never	21	(no significant difference among subgroups)			
Sometimes	54				
Often	25				
d. Purchase of sadomasochistic magazines (last 12 months) (%)					
	Total (n = 230)				
Never	0	(no significant difference among subgroups)			
1 time	9				
2-5 times	21				
6-25 times	54				
More often	15				

with 2.8 partners in the last 12 months; homosexual sadomasochists by contrast had 5.7 contacts with 7.0 partners; the bisexual group had frequencies and partner numbers similar to those of the homosexuals. Significant differences occur among the groups in the case of frequency of contacts as well as in partner numbers.

The question concerning length of the last relationship with a sadomasochistic partner yielded widely varying answers. Half who had had such a relationship (n = 182) has it for over a year; however, 14% had a relationship for less than a week. This was observed to be independent of sexual orientation. Several questions were directed at the form of partnership (firm relationship, loose relationship, prostitution) in which sadomasochistic experiences are possible. The following observations resulted (Table VIc): loose partnerships predominated over firm relationships, only slightly in partnerships with women but consider-

Table VI. Possibilities for Realizing the Sadomasochistic Deviance

a. Frequency of sadomasochistic sex with partners (last 12 months) (%)					
	Total (<i>n</i> = 238)	Heterosexual (<i>n</i> = 74)	Bisexual (<i>n</i> = 76)	Homosexual (<i>n</i> = 88)	<i>p</i>
Never	15	26	12	8	
1-3 times	20	26	20	16	
4-6 times	28	24	24	34	0.01
7-24 times	19	15	25	17	
More often	18	9	20	25	

b. Number of sadomasochistic sex partners (last 12 months) (%)					
	Total (<i>n</i> = 244)	Heterosexual (<i>n</i> = 74)	Bisexual (<i>n</i> = 77)	Homosexual (<i>n</i> = 93)	<i>p</i>
0	5	13	0	3	
1	11	14	13	6	
2-3	25	36	18	20	0.001
4-5	21	22	26	16	
6-10	15	13	17	16	
More	23	1	26	38	

c. Sadomasochistic activities in different partnerships ^a (%)				
		Steady partner	Loose partner	Prostitute
Heterosexual				
Active sadistic activities (<i>n</i> = 66 partnerships) ^a		38	47	15
Passive masochistic activities (<i>n</i> = 63 partnerships) ^a		30	35	35
Homosexual				
Active sadistic activities (<i>n</i> = 102 partnerships) ^a		27	65	7
Passive masochistic activities (<i>n</i> = 105 partnerships) ^a		25	65	10

^aSince each partner engages in active and passive activities side by side in many partnerships, the data given here overlap.

ably in partnerships with men. By contrast, prostitution played a subordinate role, except for passive sadomasochistic experiences with a woman. The respective partnerships with active and passive sadomasochistic activities were named with practically the same frequency (with the exception of heterosexual prostitution), because for the most part active and passive role divisions occur together in a partnership.

In summary, we conclude that the bisexual group has possibilities for realizing its sadomasochistic desires that are nearly as good as those of the homosexual group. The chances of the heterosexuals are significantly less. This might

be interpreted to mean that the inclusion of men as partners for sadomasochistic practice can often occur as a substitute solution. Sex, but not sadomasochistic practice, is often possible with one's wife or steady partner. Loose sadomasochistic contacts with male partners often exist parallel to the firm partnership. (Similarly, among many homosexuals there are loose sadomasochistic relationships side by side with a firm nonsadomasochistic one.)

Self-acceptance

According to our hypothesis, direct or indirect integration into the deviant subculture makes possible the mitigation of conflicts arising from the deviant

Table VII. Self-acceptance of Sadomasochists

a. Judgment of one's own sexual orientation (<i>n</i> = 245) (%)	
"It's different from the ordinary, but all right"	78
"Many more people ought to be like this"	49
"That is absolutely normal"	41
"That is burdening"	20
"That is morbid"	3
"It's immoral"	1
b. Emotional reactions after sadomasochistic sex (<i>n</i> = 220) (%)	
"I want to do it again"	85
"It was fun"	84
"It was sexually satisfying"	79
"I feel happy"	53
"I have a bad conscience"	6
"I've got to quit this"	6
"I am depressed"	4
"I regret it"	4
c. General acceptance of the sadomasochistic deviation: "If you could decide freely which sexual disposition you wanted to have, what would you be?" (%)	
Rejection of sadomasochistic orientation	20
Acceptation of the deviant orientation	70
Don't know	9
d. Visiting a doctor, psychiatrist, or psychologist because of the sadomasochistic deviation (%)	
Never	90
At least once	10
e. Attempt to commit suicide (%)	
Never	91
At least once	9

sexual orientation and poor acceptance of these desires. Interpretations of interaction theory concerning sexual subcultures point in this direction (Plummer, 1975). We thus expected that many persons in our sample (characterized by a relatively active subcultural integration) would have a positive relation to their deviance. We tried to measure self-acceptance in several questions. Regarding one's own self-judgment and emotional reactions after sadomasochistic experiences, positive ratings (for example, "it's perfectly normal" or "it was fun") predominated over negative ones (for example, "it's sick" or "I've got to get our of this"). Moreover, most would want to be sadomasochists even if they could "decide freely about it" (Table VIIc). Only 10% had seen a doctor or psychiatrist because of their sadomasochistic deviance (Table VIIId), and 9% had tried to commit suicide (Table VIIe) (with few exceptions these two groups are not identical). The rate of attempted suicides is less than that of homosexual men in West Germany (Dannecker and Reiche, 1974). Thus only a minority in our sample appeared not to have found a way to positive self-acceptance; only about one-fifth responded with a gross negative reaction. We found a number of significant correlations which indicate that subcultural integration (defined by the frequency of participation in sadomasochistic parties) and the possibility of realizing the deviance in a partnership context are associated with self-acceptance. Positive self-judgments and positive emotional reactions after deviant experiences (for example "I'm happy" or "many more people ought to be like this") were affirmed significantly more frequently by active participants in the subculture. This confirms our hypothesis that having social roots in the subculture decisively influences the possibility of a positive self-acceptance.

Sadomasochistic Role Orientation

Only a minority of our sample were oriented in an exclusively active (sadistic) or passive (masochistic) direction (Table VIII). Most sadomasochists, heterosexuals as well as homosexuals, alternate between these roles. In this

Table VIII. Sadomasochistic Role Orientation (%)^{a,b}

Orientation	Total (<i>n</i> = 243)	Heterosexual (<i>n</i> = 73)	Bisexual (<i>n</i> = 76)	Homosexual (<i>n</i> = 93)
Exclusively active	13	16	12	12
Versatile, mainly active	19	19	20	18
Versatile	29	23	28	37
Versatile, mainly passive	22	16	30	20
Exclusively passive	16	25	10	13

^a*p* = n.s.

^bAnswer to the question: "Do you prefer the active role (lord, master, teacher) or the passive role (servant, slave, pupil) in S/M sex?"

manner they can adapt themselves more flexibly to different partners. At the same time varying preferences for one or the other of the two roles can be realized. Consequently, we speak of preferences for certain roles in sadomasochistic interaction which we designate as active, versatile, and passive sadomasochistic role orientation. Our statistical analysis reveals only few significant differences among persons with a more active role orientation, a versatile one, or a more passive one. The social and sexual behavior is not dependent on this role preference. The fact of assuming an active or passive role with a partner is, therefore, of no decisive consequence for the realization of this deviation.

Degree of Preference for Sadomasochistic Practices

In the article referred to previously, Gebhard (1969) emphasized that fetishism is a "graduated phenomenon." This can also be applied to sadomasochism. We define the degree of preference by the frequency with which sadomasochistic practices are desired in sexual experience. In this sense, an exclusive preference was reported by 16% of the subjects. The group of those who only occasionally desired to include sadomasochistic elements in their experiences was likewise 16%. Medium preferences and strong but not exclusive preferences each amounted to 32% (Table IXa). An exclusive fixation on deviant practices is thus relatively rare. This may also be observed in the fact that only 15% could experience an orgasm exclusively with sadomasochistic

Table IX. Degree of Sadomasochistic Preference

a. Preferred relative frequency of sadomasochistic sex with respect to the sadomasochistic role (%)					
	Total (n = 239)	Active (n = 77)	Versatile (n = 69)	Passive (n = 92)	p
"I would like sex . . . exclusively with S/M"	16	13	3	29	
predominantly with S/M"	32	30	36	33	
equally often with and without S/M"	32	35	42	23	0.001
predominantly without S/M"	16	22	19	15	
only without S/M"	2 ^a	—	—	—	
b. Conditions of orgasm: "Under what conditions do you come to sexual climax with a partner?" (n = 245) (%)					
Without sadomasochistic activity			45		
With sadomasochistic activity			79		
With sadomasochistic fantasies			44		
Exclusively with sadomasochistic activity			15		

^aThese persons were primarily oriented fetishistically.

activities. By contrast, 45% experienced orgasm without any sadomasochistic activity (Table IXb). Heterosexuals, bisexuals, and homosexuals do not vary in this respect. There was a somewhat stronger fixation on these practices by the passively oriented persons (Table IXa).

Sadomasochistic Practices

Table X summarizes the most widespread sadomasochistic practices and elements of fetishistic or fetishlike style. In contrast to the "classical" style elements of beating or bondage, the more extreme and actually dangerous practices occurred with minimal frequency. A distinction between various types of behavior such as "hard-core S/M" and "flagellism" (or the divisions between "bondage" and "spanking," etc., common in the United States) appears to be inconsequential with respect to the social and sexual situation.

As described elsewhere, fetishistic preferences to the point of definite fixations on certain fetishes (in our sample among about one-third) are widespread. (This group revealed no practical difference from the remaining sadomasochists.) We also found hardly any relevant differences among the practices of homosexual, bisexual, or heterosexual sadomasochists.

Table X. Sadomasochistic Practices and Fetishistic Preferences ($n = 233$)

Practice	Percent
Cane	60
Whip	66
Bonds	60
Anal manipulations	26
"Torture" apparatus	27
Nipple torture	9
Needles	6
Clothespins/clamps	7
Glowing objects	7
Knives/razor blades	4
Fetishistic preference	Percent
Leather	50
Boots	50
Jeans	19
Uniforms	16
"Strafhose"	11
Rubber	12
Women's clothing	14
Urolagnia	10
Coprophilia	5
"Dirty sex"	3

Masturbation

The relationship of masturbation frequencies and sexual orientation was studied. Such a comparison must first of all be based on the observation that heterosexual and homosexual men have highly varying masturbation frequencies. The comparison in our sample showed no significant difference among heterosexual, bisexual, and homosexual sadomasochists (Table XI). A comparison with the data of Dannecker and Reiche (1974) reveals that the frequencies we observed are approximately as high as those of the "common homosexuals" in West Germany. Similar to the findings of Dannecker and Reiche, the highest masturbation frequencies in our sample occurred among persons who had deviant experiences with partners most frequently. It would therefore be shortsighted to view the high masturbation frequencies as substitute satisfaction. It is rather a question of a behavior which exists independently alongside the partnership forms of sadomasochistic practice. This becomes clear in the frequency of autoerotic sadomasochistic activities: 28% reported self-bondage, self-beating, torture of nipples with clamps, and the like during masturbation.

Coming Out

We define the first awareness of sadomasochistic desires as "sadomasochistic coming out." Table XIIIa shows that this experience occurred relatively late among many of the subjects: 43% experienced it only after the age of 19 years, 11% at the age of 30 or later. The portion of those who experienced their sadomasochistic coming out after the age of 25 was significantly less in the heterosexual group (13%) than in the bisexual group (32%) or the homosexual group (27%). Under the special conditions of integration into the homosexual subculture, sadomasochistic desires often appear to occur when homosexuality is already being actively practiced. In comparison with the average homosexual coming out (Dannecker and Reicher, 1974), sadomasochistic coming out occurred much later (in the homosexual group of our sample).

Table XI. Frequency of Masturbation (last 12 months) (%)^a

Frequency	Total (<i>n</i> = 244)	Heterosexual (<i>n</i> = 74)	Bisexual (<i>n</i> = 77)	Homosexual (<i>n</i> = 93)
Never	4	8	4	1
Less than once per month	12	15	13	9
About once per month	14	13	17	12
About once per week	18	16	16	21
More than once per week	38	36	32	45
Daily	13	11	18	12

^a*p* = n.s.

Table XII. Sadomasochistic Coming Out

a. Age of the first awareness of sadomasochistic desires: "How old were you when you realized for the first time that you had a special sexual preference or disposition for S/M?" ($n = 237$) (%)

	Total ($n = 237$)	Heterosexual ($n = 70$)	Bisexual ($n = 77$)	Homosexual ($n = 90$)	<i>p</i>
10 years or younger	7	11	5	6	
11 to 13 years	10	10	10	11	
14 to 16 years	25	21	26	26	
17 to 19 years	15	21	9	13	n.s.
20 to 24 years	20	23	18	18	
25 to 29 years	12	6	16	16	
30 years or older	11	7	16	11	

b. Emotional reactions to the coming out: "... How did you react to it?" ($n = 245$) (%)

"I was glad"	24
"I felt happy"	22
"I was proud"	13
"I wanted to do it again"	69
"I was troubled"	40
"I thought it was immoral"	23
"I was afraid about the future"	21
"I felt guilty"	11
"I was disgusted with myself"	6

The first awareness of sadomasochistic desires brings a difficult conflictual situation. Nevertheless, a portion of the persons we studied coped in a rather positive manner (Table XIIb). Reactions like "glad," "happy," and "proud" were affirmed much more often by those persons actively integrated into the subculture (frequent attendance of parties).

CONCLUSION

The existence of sadomasochistic subcultures (especially heterosexual ones) has heretofore been denied in sex research. Only homosexual sadomasochistic subcultural groups have been described (Gregersen, 1969; Dannecker and Reiche, 1974). As a result of the findings of our study and observations made beyond the study based on the questionnaire, this must be corrected.

Several important aspects of subcultural activity could not be measured directly through the questionnaire investigation. Our understanding of these data was expanded as a result of supplementary investigations concerning subcultural documents (for example, through an analysis of 344 advertisements of male sadomasochists, through a secondary analysis of three questionnaires of a sadomasochistic organization submitted to 270 heterosexual and homosexual

club members), and on the basis of correspondence ($n = 76$ letters) and 15 detailed interviews with members of sadomasochistic clubs. These impressions were further expanded by the study of subcultural media (newspapers, pornography, magazines) and literature (e.g., Mechler, 1959/1960; Greene and Greene, 1974; Townsend, 1972; Schertel, 1957).

Tentative assumptions which have not yet been secured by data will be summarized. The various possibilities of finding partners who are available to heterosexual sadomasochists on the one hand and to bisexual/homosexual ones on the other, and also the varying characterization of their subcultural groups, appear to be explained by the fact that there are few women who seek this practice in the realm of the subculture. According to available data from representative studies (Kinsey *et al.*, 1953; Hunt, 1970), there appear to be a number of women interested in sadomasochistic themes. However, the number of women prepared to enter sadomasochistic relationships in the mode of behavior that manifestly sadomasochistic men seek appears to be extremely small. This is confirmed by Nacht (1948), Deutsch (1959), and Gebhard (1969).

We consider the assumption that manifest sadomasochistic deviance among women is very rare (at least within the subculture) to be essential for an understanding of the situation of heterosexual sadomasochists. Accordingly, sadomasochistic prostitution, which in part affords the sole possibility for realization of the deviance for this group, plays a special role. With regard to our unsystematic impressions, nearly all the subcultural groups among heterosexual sadomasochists exist in cooperation with prostitutes (Bornemann, 1974). It is therefore also an important function of the heterosexually oriented subculture with its media, modes of behavior, and ideologies to maintain specific fictions which are supposed to make the lack of like-minded and "passionate" female partners bearable (for example, the fiction that the prostitute is indeed a genuine "sadist"). Against this background it becomes more comprehensible why the possibilities of subcultural meetings in homosexually oriented groups are far better: here a basic partner problem arising from the sex of the partner does not exist.

REFERENCES

- Arnold, D. O. (1970). *Subcultures*, Glendessary Press, Berkeley, Calif.
- Bornemann, E. (1974). *Sex im Volksmund I/II*, Rowolt, Reinbek/Hamburg.
- Dannecker, M., and Reiche, R. (1974). *Der gewöhnliche Homosexuelle*, Fischer, Frankfurt.
- Deutsch, H. (1959). *Psychologie der Frau*, Huber, Bern.
- Gebhard, P. H. (1969). Fetishism and sadomasochism. In Massermann, M. E. (ed.), *Dynamics of Deviant Sexuality*, Grune and Stratton, New York.
- Greene, G., and Greene, C. (1974). *S/M: The Last Taboo*, Grove Press, New York.
- Gregersen, E. A. (1969). The sadomasochistic scene. Paper read at the Meeting of the American Anthropological Association.
- Hunt, M. (1970). *Sexual Behavior in the 1970s*, Playboy Press, New York.
- Kinsey, A. C., Pomeroy, W. B., Martin, C. E., and Gebhard, B. H. (1953). *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, Saunders, Philadelphia.

- Mechler, U. (1959/1960). *Sadistinnen und Masochisten I/II*, Prehm, Dachau.
- Nacht, S. (1948). *Le Masochisme*, Paris.
- Plummer, K. (1975). *Sexual Stigma*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.
- Schertel, E. (1957). *Flagellantismus*, Vols. 1-12, Decker, Schmiden b. Stuttgart.
- Simon, W., and Gagnon, J. H. (1970). *Sexuelle Aussenseiter*, Reinbek/Hamburg.
- Townsend, L. (1972). *The Leatherman's Handbook, The Other Traveller*. New York.