

The Relationship between Homosexuality and Psychological Functioning in a Perspective of Personality Types

Akademisk avhandling som för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen vid Stockholms universitet fredagen den 9 december kl 10.00 offentligen försvaras i föreläsningssalen U31 Psykologiska Institutionen, Frescati Hagväg 8, 2 tr.

av

Lena Nilsson Schönnesson

Leg psykolog

Psykologiska institutionen
Stockholms universitet
106 91 Stockholm, Sweden

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ABSTRACT

The overall purpose of this empirical study was to examine the relationship between homosexuality and psychological functioning in the perspective of personality types. Two approaches were utilized in studying psychological functioning: (1) examination of sexual characteristics, psychological adjustment, and gender roles as related to personality types; (2) tentative psychodynamic assessment of each personality type's degree of psychological functioning. 740 white male and female respondents, about 3/4 of them homosexual by self-description and the rest heterosexual, were interviewed concerning their childhood experiences and present sociopsychological circumstances, after which they completed the Dynamic Personality Inventory, a measure of personality configuration. Factor analysis, conducted separately for males and for females, revealed among both groups the presence of four personality dimensions. On the basis of these, four extreme personality types were made up among both groups; Rigid-Conforming, Ambitious-Sensual, Self-Assertive, and Epicurean-Dependent. About 37 % of the males and 36 % of the females could be assigned to one or another of these four types. Analyses of childhood data were inconclusive as to what sort of history might predispose a given personality type in adulthood. Analyses of present psychological functioning showed: (1) degree of psychological dysfunction, within a psychodynamic context, was associated with personality type rather than with homosexuality (or heterosexuality) per se; (2) dysfunction among homosexuals, when it appeared, might to some degree be ascribable to social difficulties in conducting a homosexual life style. The author concludes that being homosexual does not in itself predict psychological dysfunction.