

Sexual orientation, sexual functioning, and the Dual Control Model in a German sample of hetero-, homo-, and bisexual women

Velten, J.¹, Scholten, S.¹, Graham C. A.² & Margraf, J.¹

¹ Department of clinical psychology and psychotherapy, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, ² Department of Psychology, University of Southampton

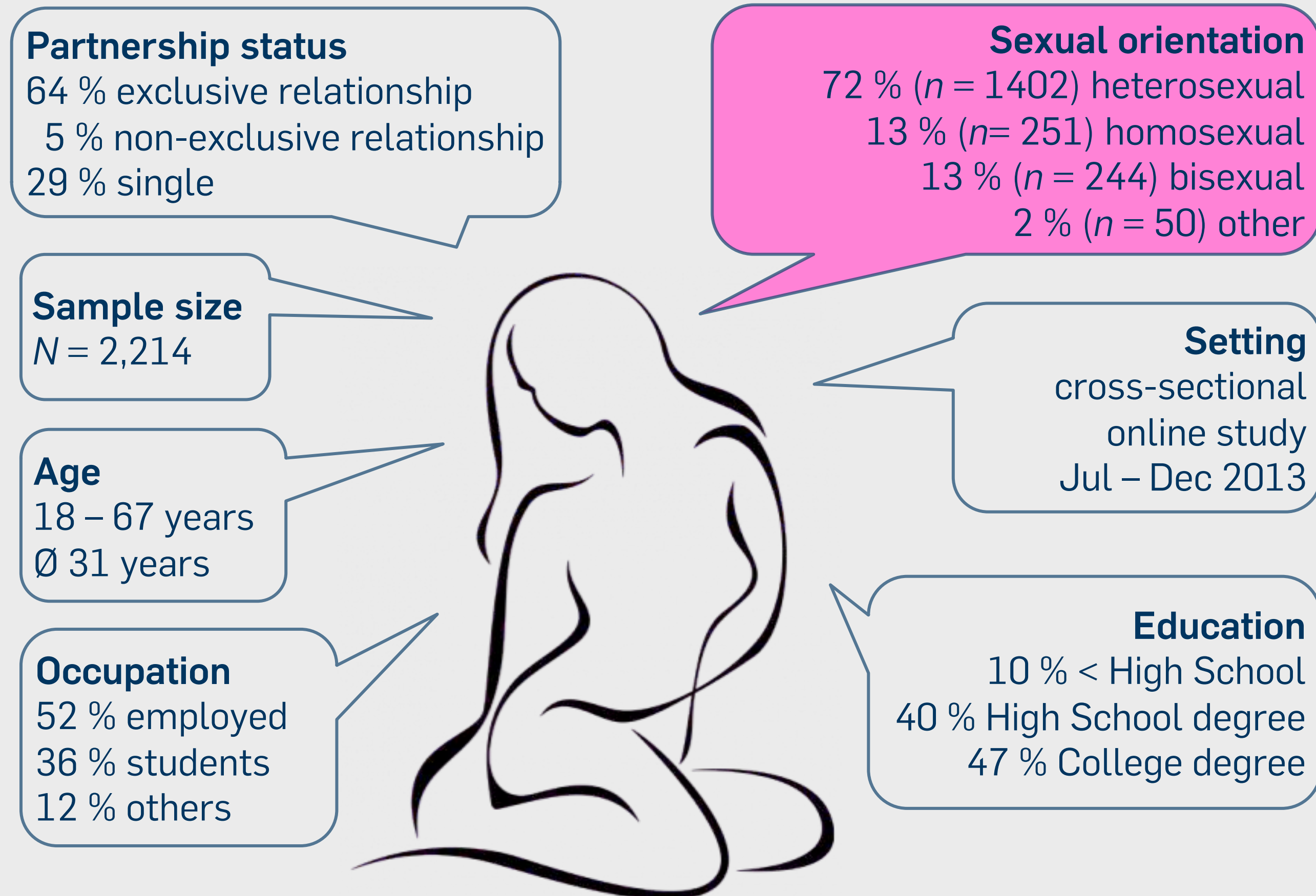
The 'Dual Control Model' in a nutshell

- Propensities for sexual excitation (SE) and sexual inhibition (SI) are assumed to vary across individuals
- Studies find lower SE and higher SI scores among women compared to men
- Higher SE and lower SI are associated with greater sexual function in men and women

Research questions

1. Do hetero-, homo-, and bisexual women differ in their SE and SI levels?
2. Are SE and SI associated with sexual function in hetero-, homo- and bisexual women?

Sample



Measures

Sexual Excitation Sexual Inhibition Inventory for Women (SESII-W) (Graham et al., 2006)

- Assesses sexual excitation and sexual inhibition with 36 items
- 8 factors: SE-Arousability, SE-Partner Characteristics, SE-Sexual Power Dynamics, SE-Setting, SE-Smell, SI-Concerns about Sexual Function, SI-Relationship Importance, SI-Arousal Contingency
- Satisfactory to good psychometric properties

Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI) (Rosen et al., 2000)

- Assesses sexual functioning in women over the last four weeks
- Low sexual function is associated with sexual dysfunctions

Measurement invariance

Partial strong invariance likely
 ($\chi^2 = 5196.44$; $p < 0.000$; CFI = .89; TLI = .88; RMSEA = .05)
 Group comparisons of means and regression weights allowed

Results

- Bisexual women: Highest SE in 4 SE-factors
- Greatest concerns about sexual function in heterosexual women
- Lowest FSFI in sexually active heterosexual women ($F(2, 1571) = 8.29$, $p < .001$)

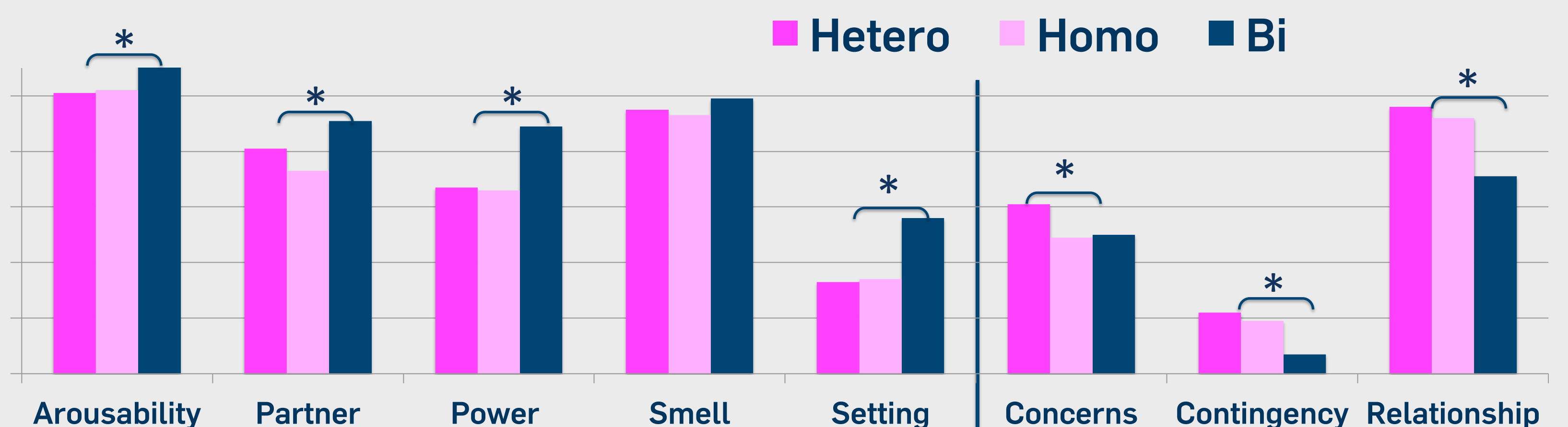


Table 1: Multiple regression analysis of sexual function (sig. predictors)

	Heterosexual		Homosexual		Bisexual	
	β	t (sig.)	β	t (sig.)	β	t (sig.)
SE-Arousability	0.18	6.61***	0.30	4.01***	0.09	1.55
SE-Sexual Power Dynamics	0.08	3.10**	-0.03	-0.45	0.09	1.45
SE-Setting	0.05	1.99*	-0.01	-0.08	0.10	1.55
SI-Concerns about Sexual Function	-0.18	-6.78***	-0.26	-2.95**	-0.34	-5.38***
SI-Arousal Contingency	-0.40	-14.52***	-0.38	-4.65***	-0.39	-6.00***
SI-Relationship Importance	0.11	4.37***	0.13	1.77	0.19	2.97**
Other significant predictors: Age, Partnership status, Depression, Education, Health						
	R ²	.48	.52	.56		

- Six SESII-W factors predictive of FSFI
- SI-Arousal Contingency is strongly associated to sexual function
- Overall model explains about 50 % of the variance in each of the groups

Key findings

1. Yes, subgroups differ in their SE and SI levels. Bisexual women show highest proneness for SE and lowest for SI.
2. Yes, SE and SI are associated with sexual function in women regardless of their sexual orientation.

Conclusions

- Proneness for SI is associated with lower sexual function among women of all sexual orientations
- The SESII-W is a valuable tool to investigate sexual problems, not only in heterosexual, but also in homo- and bisexual women
- Limitations: Cross-sectional study, convenience sample

Selected literature:

Bancroft, J., Graham, C. A., Janssen, E. & Sanders, S. A. (2009). The Dual Control Model: Current Status and Future Directions. *Journal of Sex Research* 46, 121-142.
 Graham, C. A., Sanders, S. A. & Milhausen, R. R. (2006). The Sexual Excitation/Sexual Inhibition Inventory for Women: Psychometric Properties. *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 35, 397-409.
 Rosen, C. Brown, J. Heiman, S. Leiblum, C. Meston, R. Shabsigh, D. Ferguson, R. D'Agostino, R. (2000). The Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI): a multidimensional self-report instrument for the assessment of female sexual function. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 26(2), 191-208.