

The Role of Psychoticism in the Relationship Between Attachment to Parents and Homophobic Bullying: A Study in Adolescence

Giulio D'Urso, Jennifer Symonds, Ugo Pace

Manuscript Version

This document is a post-print version of D'Urso, G., Symonds, J., & Pace, U. (2020). The Role of Psychoticism in the Relationship Between Attachment to Parents and Homophobic Bullying: A Study in Adolescence. *Sexologies*. This post-print version is archived in accordance with the publisher's [self-archiving policy](#)

Abstract

This study investigates the role of family relationships and psychoticism in relation to homophobic bullying in adolescence. Participants were 394 adolescents and young adults, (164 boys and 230 girls) aged from 15 to 20 years. Participants completed the Homophobic Bullying Scale, to investigate bullying towards gay males and lesbians, the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment, to measure maternal and paternal trust, communication and alienation, and the Symptom Check-List-90-R, to evaluate psychoticism. The results show that, in the first mediation model, psychoticism strongly mediated the impact of maternal trust and alienation on bullying towards gay males. Moreover, in the second mediation model, psychoticism strongly mediated the impact of paternal alienation on bullying towards gay males. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Keywords: Parental relationships, Attachment perspective, Homophobic bullying, Psychoticism traits, Adolescence, Path analysis, Mediation model.

The Role of Psychoticism in the Relationship Between Attachment to Parents and Homophobic Bullying: A Study in Adolescence

Homophobic bullying among adolescents is a recurring phenomenon, especially in school settings (Espelage et al., 2018; D'Urso, Petruccelli & Pace, 2018; D'Urso, Symonds & Pace, 2020). There are many forms of homophobic bullying. The literature defines homophobic bullying as a set of deliberate actions aimed at demeaning or offending one or more people belonging to a sexual minority or attacking (with verbal or physical violence) sexual identity, gender, body, behaviors and desires (Rivers, 2011). Homophobic bullying can derive from a heterosexist culture, that considers it "normal" that males and females must be heterosexual, and therefore that the complementary genders in that socio-cultural tradition must love each other. In this sense, the paradigm of heteronormativity develops in the social fabric (Bulter, 2002, 2011; Robinson, 2005). This paradigm is also encrypted in language, in institutional practices and the encounters of daily life (Epstein & Johnson, 1994). In other words, what does not fit into these canons is labelled as different and abnormal and therefore can easily become the object of oppression in different forms. Especially in adolescence, a critical phase of development, if the individual (boy or girl) is exposed to these cultural parameters, it is more likely they will consider sexual diversity as a problem, as something wrong and therefore can be derided. Sexual minorities then become easy targets, regardless of the difficulties they make to assert their identity, as well as their acceptance. In the Italian context, there are still many prejudices that persist towards sexual minorities (Petruccelli et al., 2015). Fitting with this observation, a recent study highlights how homophobic prejudices may affect the sexual health and well-being of people belonging to sexual minorities (Silvaggi et al., 2019).

Of interest to this study, attachment theory outlines how the parental-child bond is important for social and emotional development (Bowlby, 1969; Thompson, 2008). Out of their relationships with parents, children, and then in adolescence and adulthood, develop internal

operative models that become affective and cognitive filters in social action (Pace, Zappulla & Di Maggio, 2016). Children who experience relationships based on warmth, trust and affection respond to social stimuli with greater sensitivity and prosocial behavior (e.g., Grossmann et al., 2005; Sroufe, 2005). On the contrary, an attachment based on lack of trust can lead to less capability to resolve social problems and relatedly to greater propensity for bullying (Murphy, Laible & Augustine, 2017; Dwyer et al., 2010; Eiden et al., 2010). The literature suggests how parental trust and communication are protective factors in development because this enables children to have satisfactory bonds with another person (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Ainsworth et al., 2015). In other words, if the child has bonds based on trust and communication with their parents, the child will perceive parents as a reliable source, which then feeds forward to future patterns of satisfactory relationships. In comparison, parental alienation is a risk factor that, through poor emotional bonds, can subsequently create problematic future relationships (Bowlby, 1969; Moretti & Peled, 2004).

Attachment with parents is important for children's relationships with others outside of the family network, and here we are specifically interested in how it impacts homophobic bullying. If a child's relationship with their parents is characterised by good communication and trust, this can encourage healthy coping strategies that can help them develop healthy interpersonal relationships among peers. In adolescence, having healthy relationships with parents that allow for autonomy, perceived as an important development task, relates to lowered risk of aggressing towards peers (Nikiforou, Georgiou & Stavrinides, 2013). Research emphasizes that adolescents who perceive their parents as warm but not overly restrictive, have positive developmental outcomes (e.g., good relationships among peers, general well-being) (Winnicott, 2012; Goswami, 2012). In comparison, adolescent bullies are found to have family bonds characterized by a lack of emotional support, as well as inadequate communication and lack of trust (Rigby, 1994). There, if adolescents have dysfunctional internal working models

stemming from their parental bonds, they will not have internalized positive relationship patterns and therefore will be less capable of functional interactions with peers (e.g., Patterson, 1986).

In this study, we explore in detail one of the mechanisms by which parental trust, communication and alienation can link to bullying: psychoticism. Psychoticism is characterized by aggressive interpersonal conflict, being devoid of feelings, and being hostile (Eysenck, 1977). Eysenck's description of psychoticism foregrounds the psychological characteristics that one might find in a person who is psychotic, or manifesting psychosis events (e.g., disorders of thought control). However, psychoticism can be an important risk factor for externalizing behaviours.

Attachment theory, however, can help to explain personality-related issues (Ainsworth et al., 2015), because an adolescent's maladaptive primary relationships can lead to the psychotic structuring of personality made up of lack of interest in relationships, anhedonia, social withdrawal, as well as strange internal experiences from anxiogenic features (Berry, Wearden, Barrowclough & Liversidge, 2006). Therefore, effective relationships with one's parents can be protective factors linked to the onset of atypical personality structure and aggressive behavior among peers, because there is a more integrated structure of the self (e.g., Morris et al., 2017; Pace, D'Urso & Zappulla, 2018). In this framework, psychotic psychopathology can result from frustration, derived from the adolescent's need to establish appropriate relationships with their parents being thwarted. In this scenario, the adolescent internalizes a model of psychological functioning that can result in acting out to compensate for their inner dysfunction.

Accordingly, there is a well-documented connection between psychoticism, or psychotic symptoms, and bullying. In 1993, Olweus established that bullies often lack empathy, and have impulsive traits and hostile and aggressive tendencies. Other studies have

since supported this, finding that bullies display interpersonal insensitivity, lack of emotionality and poor affectivity (e.g., Barry et al., 2000; Ball et al., 2008; Zych, Ttofi & Farrington, 2017; Mitsopoulou & Giovazolias, 2015). Several studies measuring psychoticism have found it is a hallmark of the personality of those who commit acts of bullying (Slee & Rigby, 1993; Mynard & Joseph, 1997; O'Moore, 1995; Connolly & O'Moore, 2003). However, although one study (Connolly & O'Moore, 2003) found that bullies have higher levels of psychoticism and lower quality relationships with parents, the pathways between parental relations, psychoticism and bullying have not yet been investigated.

The Present Study

There are many ways that parental relationship can impact bullying as evidenced in the literature above. However, the extent to which psychoticism is a significant mechanism of the impact of parental relationship on homophobic bullying is yet untested. Swearer and colleagues (2012) suggested that is necessary to refer to parental relationship as well as the internal structure of personality to explain bullying. Following these considerations, through the lens of a model that integrates family ties with individual personality structure, the aim of the present study is examine the extent to which maternal and paternal trust, communication and alienation play a role in homophobic bullying and if so, to what extent this occurs through psychoticism.

Methods

Participants and Procedure

Participants in this study were 394 adolescents and young adults, (164 males - 41.6% - and 230 females - 58.4 %) aged from 15 to 20 years ($M=16.55$; $SD=.85$), attending the third and fourth classes of public high schools in Italian cities. Regarding school, 123 participants (31.2%) attended vocational schools, and 271 participants (68.8%) attended academic schools. A written informed consent was obtained for all by sending letters to their parents to inform

them of the study. No parents objected to their child's involvement in the study. We also obtained informed assent from all the adolescents involved in the study. Data were collected between October 2017 and March 2018. The research was approved by the ethics committee of the Kore University of Enna. Therefore, all procedures which involved human participants were performed in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Measures

Demographics. Information was gathered on gender, age, religious orientation (with attention to the importance of religion and precepts), current relationship situation, country of birth, city and type of school (vocational or academic).

The *Homophobic Bullying Scale* (Prati, 2012) is a questionnaire that measures homophobic bullying behaviors by students, through three perspectives: witness (e.g., “think about a student who is perceived to be lesbian. Because of this, during the past 30 days, how often did you hear insulting remarks about her”), bully (e.g., “think about a student who is perceived to be lesbian. Because of this, during the past 30 days, how often did you isolate or marginalize her”) and victim (in this section we asked to adolescents to consider a series of events (e.g., being marginalized or teased), then asked “during the past 30 days, how often did this happen because you are perceived to be a gay male or lesbian”). Participants were also asked to report if they observed or were involved in different homophobic behaviors (isolation / exclusion, spread of lies, homophobic skirmishes, theft or damage of property, physical assault, sexual / electronic harassment) in their schools, in the last 30 days. Response options are on 4-point Likert scale [Never (1), Only once or twice (2), About once a week (3), More than once a week (4)]. In the present study we used the measure of bullying perspectives: (homophobic bullying toward gay males [$\alpha = .81$] and bullying toward lesbians [$\alpha = .87$]).

The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA; Armsden & Greenberg, 1987).

This scale contains a three-part self-report questionnaire that assesses adolescent attachment to mother, father, and peers. Perceptions of attachment are assessed by 25-items for each attachment figure (75 items in total). Each individual's attachment to a specific person (e.g., mother, father and peers) is assessed via three principal subscales (trust, communication and alienation). For example, the scale of trust measures the agreement of mutual understanding and respect to significant figure (e.g., peers, mother, father) relationship with him/her and whether the mother or father can be considered a "secure base" (e.g., My father/mother understand me; My father/mother accept me as I am), the scale of communication investigates the quality of communication (e.g., My father/mother encourage me to talk about my difficulties; When we discuss things, my father/mother care about my point of view); the scale of alienation/disaffection measure the feelings of anger and interpersonal (e.g., Talking over my problems with my mother/father makes me feel ashamed or foolish). Participants reply to the questionnaire through a 5-point Likert scale (range 1-5), which ranges from 1 = «Never true» to 5 = «Always true». For this study we used the subscales representing mother attachment [trust: $\alpha = .85$; communication: $\alpha = .84$; alienation: $\alpha = .75$], and father attachment [trust: $\alpha = .87$; communication: $\alpha = .85$; alienation: $\alpha = .77$].

The *Symptom Check-list-90-R* (SCL-90-R; Derogatis, 1977) is a 90-item self-report symptom inventory designed to screen for a broad range of psychological problems. Each of the 90 items is rated on a five-point Likert scale of distress, ranging from "not at all" (0) to "extremely" (4). Subsequently the answers are combined in nine primary symptom dimensions/scales: Somatization, Obsessive-Compulsive, Interpersonal Sensitivity, Hostility, Depression, Anxiety, Paranoid Ideation, Phobic Anxiety, and Psychoticism. For the present study we used the psychoticism scale, composed by 10 items. This scale includes items indicative of an introverted, isolated, schizoid lifestyle, as well as first-rank symptoms of

schizophrenia, such as hallucinations and disorders of thought control, and is conceived as a continuum that fluctuates from moderate interpersonal alienation to psychosis (e.g., The idea that something serious is wrong with your body; Having thoughts that are not your own) [$\alpha = .86$].

Analysis Plan

First, to explore the role of gender on bullying of gay males and lesbians, maternal and paternal communication, trust and alienation, and psychoticism, we computed one-way ANOVAs in SPSS Version 22, with gender as the grouping variable.

Next, we tested four saturated models (CFI = 1.00) in IBM SPSS Amos Version 22, to explore (1) the direct effects of maternal trust, communication, and alienation on homophobic bullying toward gay males and lesbians, (2) the mediation effects of psychoticism in these relationships, (3) the direct effects of paternal trust, communication, alienation on homophobic bullying toward gay males and lesbians, and (4) the mediation effects of psychoticism in these relationships.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Analysis of variance showed significant main effects of gender on maternal communication [$F(1,393) = 18.07, p < .001$] only, with females reporting higher levels than males (**table 1**).

Path Analysis

The explained variation of the models is shown in **table 2**. In model 1 (Figure 1) maternal trust negatively predicted bullying toward gay males ($\beta = -.18, p = .015, S.E. = .045, C.R. = -2.44$) and maternal alienation positively predicted bullying toward gay males ($\beta = .18, p = .006, S.E. = .036, C.R. = 2.7$). Maternal communication did not predict homophobic bullying

toward gay males. Also, maternal trust, alienation and communication did not predict homophobic bullying toward lesbians.

In model 2 (Figure 2), maternal trust ($\beta = -.21$, $p=.003$, S.E. = .073; C.R. = -2.9), maternal alienation ($\beta = .37$, $p < .001$, S.E. = .053; C.R. = 6.03) and maternal communication ($\beta = .20$, $p=.003$, S.E. = .069; C.R. = 3.01) predicted psychoticism. Psychoticism positively predicted bullying toward gay males ($\beta = .32$, $p<.001$, S.E. = .029; C.R. = 6.25) and lesbians ($\beta = .29$, $p<.001$, S.E. = .022; C.R.= 5.54). Moreover, when psychoticism was included in the model, the relationship between maternal trust and bullying towards gay males decreased and became insignificant ($\beta = -.12$, $p = .10$, S.E. = .043; C.R. = -1.63), as did the relationship between maternal alienation and bullying toward gay males ($\beta = .07$, $p = .42$, S.E. = .027; C.R.= -.80). These results indicate that psychoticism nearly fully mediates the relationship between maternal trust and alienation on bullying toward gay males.

In model 3 (Figure 3), paternal alienation significantly predicted bullying toward gay males ($\beta = .18$, $p = .006$, S.E. = .033, C.R. = 2.75). Paternal trust and communication did not predict homophobic bullying toward gay males, nor did paternal trust, alienation and communication predict bullying toward lesbian.

In model 4 (Figure 4), paternal alienation predicted psychoticism ($\beta = .31$, $p < .001$, S.E. = .054; C.R. = 4.9). Psychoticism positive predicted bullying toward gay males ($\beta = .36$, $p<.001$, S.E. = .029; C.R. = 7.30) and lesbians ($\beta = .29$, $p<.001$, S.E. = .022; C.R.= 5.63). Moreover, when including psychoticism, the relationship between paternal alienation and bullying toward gay males decreased, becoming insignificant ($\beta = .06$, $p = .67$, S.E. = .032; C.R.= .41). As for maternal alienation, here psychoticism nearly completely mediated the relationship between paternal alienation and bullying toward gay males.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the possible risk and protection factors related to homophobic bullying, in particular the role of psychoticism in the relationship between parental relationships, and bullying towards gay males and lesbians. Preliminary analyses demonstrated how homophobic bullying is a heterogeneous phenomenon that involves males and females. The ideas of victimizing a person, who is considered different only for their sexual orientation, was widespread in both genders, probably also as a result of contagion and social influence (Gini, 2006). Regarding maternal communication, girls reported higher levels than boys. That data suggests how sometimes girl adolescents are more likely to talk about their problems or generally have exchanges communicated with their mothers than boys. Probably this occurs because the girls are tied to their maternal figure and therefore more inclined to communicate in personal ways with her. The fact that males communicated less could mean that they feel more autonomous and therefore perhaps reduced the dialogue with their mother because they tried to solve their problems alone.

Subsequently, the first model of mediation suggests how psychoticism nearly completely mediated the relationship between maternal alienation and lack of maternal trust with towards homophobic bullying towards gay males. This result highlights how the dysfunctional characteristics of the adolescent-mother bond can increase psychopathological traits related to internalizing dissociative and schizoid withdrawal problems, that are turned into acts of non-acceptance when one comes into contact with diversity and therefore acts of bullying towards gay males. In other words, in line with the literature and our theoretical framework (e.g., Winnicott, 2012), it is possible that a maternal bond made up of high levels of alienation and lack of trust does not allow for the healthy development of autonomy, and, therefore, this can lead to a closure of the adolescent towards the outside world which then turns into

homophobic bullying when the adolescent comes into contact with diversity, in this specific case represented by the effeminate, gay males or alleged gay male friend.

The second mediation model suggests how psychoticism nearly fully mediated the relationship between paternal disaffection and homophobic bullying towards gay males. This suggests that the adolescent who experiences feelings of anger towards the father, who does not feel understood, may be more inclined to psychoticism, where he closes himself in his inner world to experience unusual sensations in isolation. However, these psychopathological traits can be transformed, even in this case, into episodes of homophobic bullying towards gay males. The results are also in line with the Eysenck's theory (1977), that suggested how individuals with traits of psychoticism may also be prone to aggressive behaviours.

Therefore, the two mediation models are in line with the more complex perspective in the literature, that adequate primary relationships with the mother and the father can be important protective factors for the adolescent's psychological health, because they provide adequate internal operating models in relations with their own and others (Bowlby, 1979; Thompson, 2008), and how mental health, connoted by problems related to psychoticism (social withdrawal, avoidance, dissociative experiences), can then lead to deviant behaviour (Cannolly & O'Moore, 2003; D'Urso et al., 2020). In an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979), also, the internal frustration experienced by the adolescent can lead to episodes of manifest aggression towards the one who is considered culturally different. Therefore, homophobic bullying towards gay males can also result from an adolescent's psychological need to establish and maintain a positive internal state (Tajfel, 1981).

In this sense, adequate internal parental operative models are fundamental because they help the adolescent to self-monitor their own mental states. Maternal and paternal trust can therefore offset the onset of atypical behavior in development that can move along a continuum from internalization (psychoticism) to outsourcing (homophobic bullying) when the adolescent

comes into contact and is confronted with sexual minorities; in particular with homosexual males, who are often perceived as not being coherent with the canons of heteronormativity and gender stereotypes in the local culture, by their male and female heterosexual peers. Therefore, the bullying behavior of the adolescent can be considered as the result of the socialization of parents, and also the internal mental states and other psychological factors that result from these relationships with parents (Bandura, 1986). Moreover, if we consider bullying as a problem linked to heteronormative and heterosexism, gay males can become a scapegoat (Roberts, 2015), which, for the bully, can have a protective function of consolidating one's own social norms and can function as a defense mechanism to protect the negative parts of one's self.

Although this work extends the literature on risk and protective factors related to homophobic bullying, some limitations should be considered. First, the results cannot be generalised to the entire adolescent population, as adolescent psychology and behaviour (like all psychology and behaviour) can be culturally relative. Future studies could test whether these models operate in other cultural contexts. Second, it is possible that the use of self-report questionnaires to investigate a delicate phenomenon such as homophobic bullying influenced the participants' answers and perceptions regarding social desirability. Future studies could use different methods (e.g., implicit tools, observations) and informants (e.g., parents). A third limitation is that the data collected were not longitudinal. Future studies could explore the same variables over different time frames to develop an even clearer picture of the predisposing risk factors and protective for homophobic bullying.

In conclusion, this investigation highlights how important it is to monitor adolescents' mental health and to apply psychoeducation in schools that can help promote adaptive and positive relationships. To do this it is appropriate to target adolescents' primary relationships with parents, because they represent the fundamental design of how the adolescent builds their personal and social worlds. Therefore, it is necessary that even in school contexts, primary and

secondary prevention projects are encouraged with the involvement of parents so that we can work together with their children in the construction of healthy and fruitful relationships, made of trust, communication and affection. Sometimes parents, finding themselves unprepared to meet the needs of their adolescent children who are engaged in a critical phase of development, may not know how to approach their children in order to have a dialogue, and may therefore not recognize any signs of unease. Moreover, it is appropriate that parents and adolescents (and all the actors present in the school context) recognize that sexual diversity is not a valve on which to vent and project their frustrations, but a wealth often eclipsed by the weight of an oppressive culture still burdened by social prejudices.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of interest

All authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval

The research was approved by the ethics committee of the Kore University of Enna. Therefore, all procedures which involved human participants were performed in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed Consent

A written informed consent was obtained for all by sending letters to their parents to inform them of the study. No parents objected to their child's involvement in the study. We also obtained assent from all the adolescents involved in the study.

References

- Ainsworth, M. D. S., Blehar, M. C., Waters, E., & Wall, S. N. (2015). *Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the strange situation*. New York: Psychology Press.
- Armsden, G. C., & Greenberg, M. T. (1987). The inventory of parent and peer attachment: Individual differences and their relationship to psychological well-being in adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 16(5), 427-454.
- Ball, H. A., Arseneault, L., Taylor, A., Maughan, B., Caspi, A., & Moffitt, T. E. (2008). Genetic influences on victims, bullies, and bully-victims in childhood. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 49, 104–112.
- Bandura, A. (1986). The explanatory and predictive scope of self-efficacy theory. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 4, 359–373.
- Barry, C. T., Frick, P. J., DeShazo, T. M., McCoy, M. G., Ellis, M., & Loney, B. R. (2000). The importance of callous-unemotional traits for extending the concept of psychopathy to children. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 109, 335–340.
- Berry, K., Wearden, A., Barrowclough, C., & Liversidge, T. (2006). Attachment styles, interpersonal relationships and psychotic phenomena in a non-clinical student sample. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 41(4), 707-718.
- Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and loss: Volume I*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1979). On knowing what you are not supposed to know and feeling what you are not supposed to feel. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 24(5), 403-408.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American psychologist*, 32(7), 513-531.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). Contexts of child rearing: Problems and prospects. *American psychologist*, 34(10), 844-850.
- Butler, J. (2002). *Gender trouble*. New York: Routledge.

- Butler, J. (2011). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of sex*. New York: Routledge.
- Connolly, I., & O'Moore, M. (2003). Personality and family relations of children who bully. *Personality and individual differences*, 35(3), 559-567.
- Espelage, D. L., Hong, J. S., Merrin, G. J., Davis, J. P., Rose, C. A., & Little, T. D. (2018). A longitudinal examination of homophobic name-calling in middle school: Bullying, traditional masculinity, and sexual harassment as predictors. *Psychology of Violence*, 8(1), 57-66.
- D'Urso, G. & Pace, U. (2019). Homophobic bullying among adolescents: the role of insecure-dismissing attachment style and peer support. *Journal of LGBT Youth. Journal of LGBT Youth*, 16(2), 173 – 191. doi: 10.1080/19361653.2018.1552225.
- D'Urso, G., Petruccelli, I., & Pace, U. (2018). The Interplay Between Trust Among Peers and Interpersonal Characteristics in Homophobic Bullying Among Italian Adolescents. *Sexuality & Culture*, 22(4), 1310–1320. doi: 10.1007/s12119-018-9527-1.
- D'Urso, G., Symonds J., & Pace, U. (2020). Emergent forms of psychopathology and their associations with homophobic bullying in Italian adolescents: An exploratory quantitative study. *Sexuality & Culture*. doi: 10.1007/s12119-019-09691-7.
- Derogatis, L.R. (1977). *SCL-90-R, administration, scoring, and procedures manual for the R(evised) version*. Johns Hopkins University, School of Medicine, Baltimore.
- Dwyer, K. M., Fredstrom, B. K., Rubin, K., Booth-LaForce, C., Rose- Krasnor, L., & Burgess, K. B. (2010). Attachment, social information processing, and friendship quality of early adolescent girls and boys. *Journal of Social & Personal Relationships*, 27, 91–116. doi:10.1177/0265407509346420.
- Eiden, R. D., Ostrov, J. M., Colder, C. R., Leonard, K. E., Edwards, E. P., & Orrange-Torchia, T. (2010). Parent alcohol problems and peer bullying and victimization: Child gender

- and toddler attachment security as moderators. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 39, 341–350. doi:10.1080/15374411003 691768.
- Epstein, D., & Johnson, R. (1994). On the straight and narrow; The heterosexual presumption, homophobias and schools. In D. Epstein (Ed.), *Challenging lesbian and gay males in equalities in education* (pp. 197-230). Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Eysenck, H. J. (1977). Psychosis and psychoticism: A reply to Bishop. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 86, 427–430.
- Gini, G. (2006). Bullying as a social process: The role of group membership in students' perception of inter-group aggression at school. *Journal of school psychology*, 44(1), 51-65.
- Grossmann, K. E., Grossman, K., & Waters, E. (2005). *Attachment from infancy to adulthood: The major longitudinal studies*. New York: Guilford.
- Mitsopoulou, E., & Giovazolias, T. (2015). Personality traits, empathy and bullying behavior: A meta-analytic approach. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 21, 61-72.
- Moretti, M. M., & Peled, M. (2004). Adolescent-parent attachment: Bonds that support healthy development. *Paediatrics & child health*, 9(8), 551-555.
- Morris, A. S., Houlberg, B. J., Criss, M. M., & Bosler, C. (2017). Family context and psychopathology: The mediating role of children's emotion regulation. In L. Centifanti & D. Williams (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of developmental psychopathology* (pp. 365– 389). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Murphy, T. P., Laible, D., & Augustine, M. (2017). The influences of parent and peer attachment on bullying. *Journal of child and family studies*, 26(5), 1388-1397.

- Mynard, H., & Joseph, S. (1997). Bully/victim problems and their association with Eysenck's personality dimensions in 8 to 13 year-olds. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 67(1), 51-54.
- Nikiforou, M., Georgiou, S. N., & Stavriniades, P. (2013). Attachment to parents and peers as a parameter of bullying and victimization. *Journal of Criminology*, 2013, 1-9.
- O'Moore, A. M. (1995). Bullying behaviour in children and adolescents in Ireland. *Children and Society*, 9(2), 54-72.
- Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school. What we know and what we can do*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Pace, U., D'Urso, G., & Zappulla, C. (2018). Adolescent Effortful Control as Moderator of Father's Psychological Control in Externalizing Problems: A Longitudinal Study. *The Journal of Psychology. Interdisciplinary and Applied*, 152 (03), 162-175. doi: 10.1080/00223980.2017.1419160.
- Pace, U., Zappulla C., & Di Maggio, R. (2016). The mediating role of perceived peer support in the relation between quality of attachment and internalizing problems in adolescence: A longitudinal perspective. *Attachment & Human Development*, 18, 508-524
- Patterson, G. R. (1986). Performance models for antisocial boys. *American Psychologist*, 41(4), 432-444.
- Petrucelli, I., Baiocco, R., Ioverno, S., Pistella, J., & D'Urso, G. (2015). Famiglie Possibili: Uno studio sugli Atteggiamenti verso la Genitorialità di Persone Gay males e Lesbiche. *Giornale Italiano di Psicologia*, 42(4), 805-828. DOI:10.1421/81943.
- Prati, G. (2012). Development and psychometric properties of the homophobic bullying scale. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 72(4), 649-664.
- Rigby, K. (1994). Psychosocial functioning in families of Australian adolescent schoolchildren involved in bully/victim problems. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 16(2), 173-187.
- Rivers, I. (2011). *Homophobic bullying: Research and theoretical perspectives*. New York:

Oxford University Press.

- Roberts, B. (2015). The journey toward a world free from homophobic bullying: A review of homophobic bullying: Research and theoretical perspectives. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 12(1), 90–95.
- Robinson, K. H. (2005). 'Queerying' gender: heteronormativity in early childhood education. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 30(2), 19-28.
- Silvaggi, M., Eleuteri, S., Colombo, M., Fava, V., Malandrino, C., Simone, S., Nanini, C., Rossetto, C., & Di Santo, S. G. (2019). Attitudes towards the sexual rights of LGB people: Factors involved in recognition and denial. *Sexologies*, 28(3), e72-e81.
- Slee, P. T., & Rigby, K. (1993b). The relationship of Eysenck's personality factors and self-esteem to bully/victim behaviour in Australian school boys. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 14, 271–373.
- Sroufe, L. A. (2005). Attachment and development: A prospective, longitudinal study from birth to adulthood. *Attachment and Human Development*, 7, 349–367. DOI: 10.1080/14616730500365928.
- Swearer, S. M., Espelage, D. L., Koenig, B., Berry, B., Collins, A., & Lembeck, P. (2012). "A social-ecological model of bullying prevention and intervention in early adolescence," in S. R. Jimerson, A. B. Nickerson, M. J. Mayer, & M. J. Furlong (eds.), *Handbook of school violence and school safety* (pp. 333–355). New York: Routledge.
- Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human groups and social categories: Studies in social psychology*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Thompson, R. A. (2008). Early attachment and later development: Familiar questions, new answers. In J. Cassidy, & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 348–365). New York: Guilford Press.

Winnicott, D. W. (2012). *The family and individual development*. New York: Routledge.

Goswami, H. (2012). Social relationships and children's subjective well-being. *Social Indicators Research*, 107(3), 575-588.

Zych, I., Ttofi, M. M., & Farrington, D. P. (2016). Empathy and callous–unemotional traits in different bullying roles: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 1-19. doi: 10.1177/1524838016683456

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the study variables

	Boys	Girls	<i>F</i> (1,393)
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	
Bullying toward gay males	1.40 (.46)	1.38 (0.40)	n.s.
Bullying toward lesbian	1.20 (0.33)	1.22 (0.30)	n.s.
Maternal trust	4.02 (.70)	4.05 (.71)	n.s.
Maternal communication	3.39 (.76)	3.74 (.84)	18.07*
Maternal alienation	2.15 (.73)	2.14 (.80)	n.s.
Paternal trust	3.85 (.77)	3.89 (.86)	n.s.
Paternal communication	3.19 (.81)	3.22 (.96)	n.s.
Paternal alienation	2.27 (.86)	2.23 (.84)	n.s.
Psychoticism	.78 (.62)	.80 (.64)	n.s.

* $p < .001$

Table 2. R^2 for the independent variables of the models

Model 1 (mother)	R^2	Model 2 (mother)	R^2	Model 3 (father)	R^2	Model 4 (father)	R^2
Bullying toward gay males	.09	Bullying toward gay males	.16	Bullying toward gay males	.05	Bullying toward gay males	.14
Bullying toward lesbian	.03	Bullying toward lesbian	.11	Bullying toward lesbian	.02	Bullying toward lesbian	.09
		Psychoticism	.18			Psychoticism	.12

Figure 1. Relationship between maternal attachment and homophobic bullying.

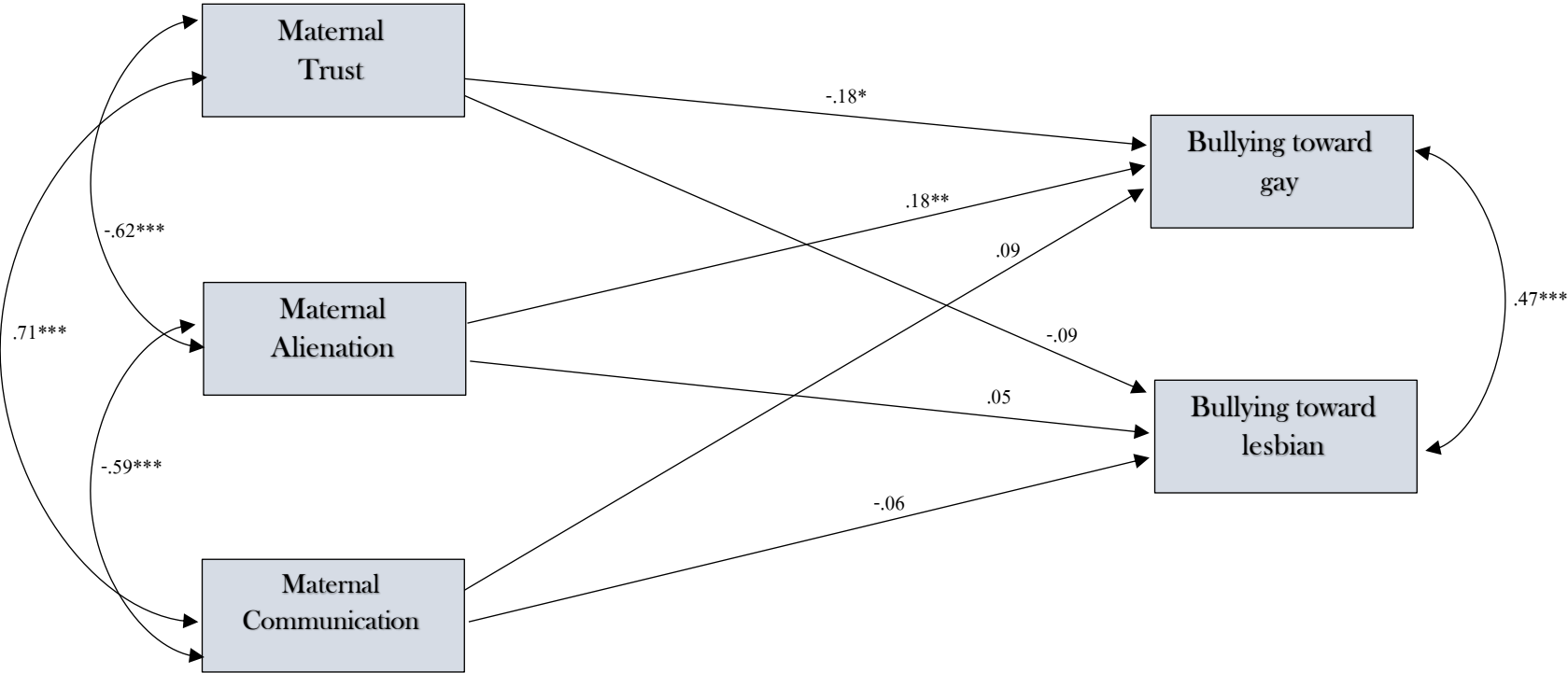


Figure 2. The role of psychoticism in the relationship between maternal attachment and homophobic bullying.

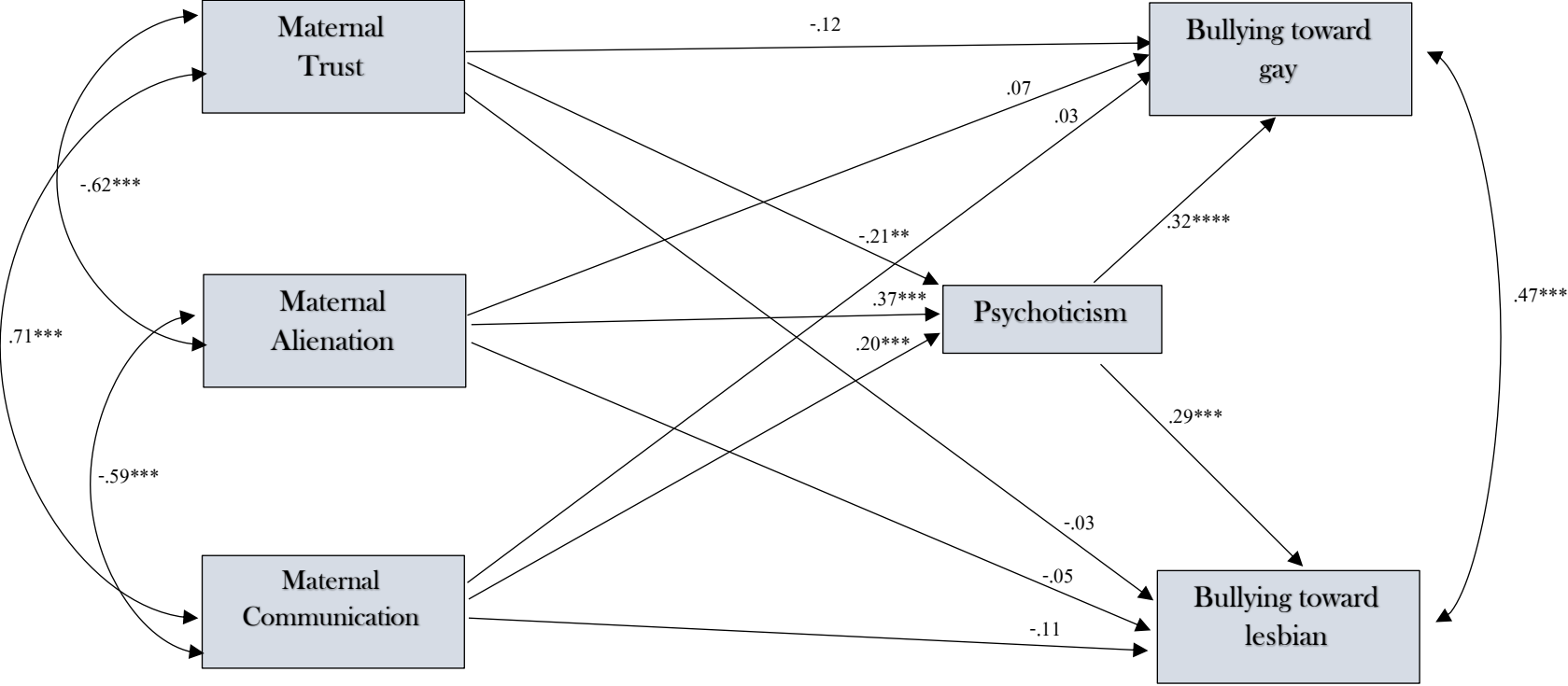


Figure 3. Relationship between paternal attachment and homophobic bullying.

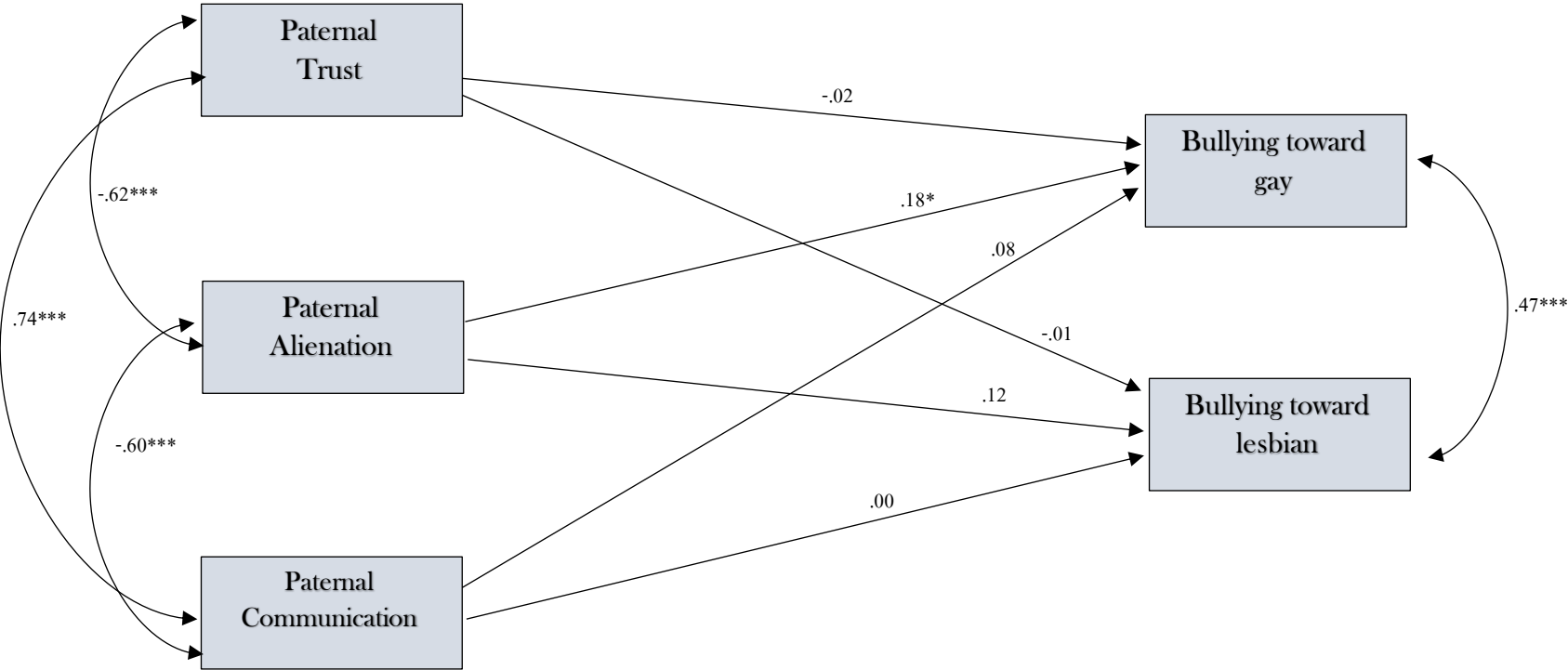
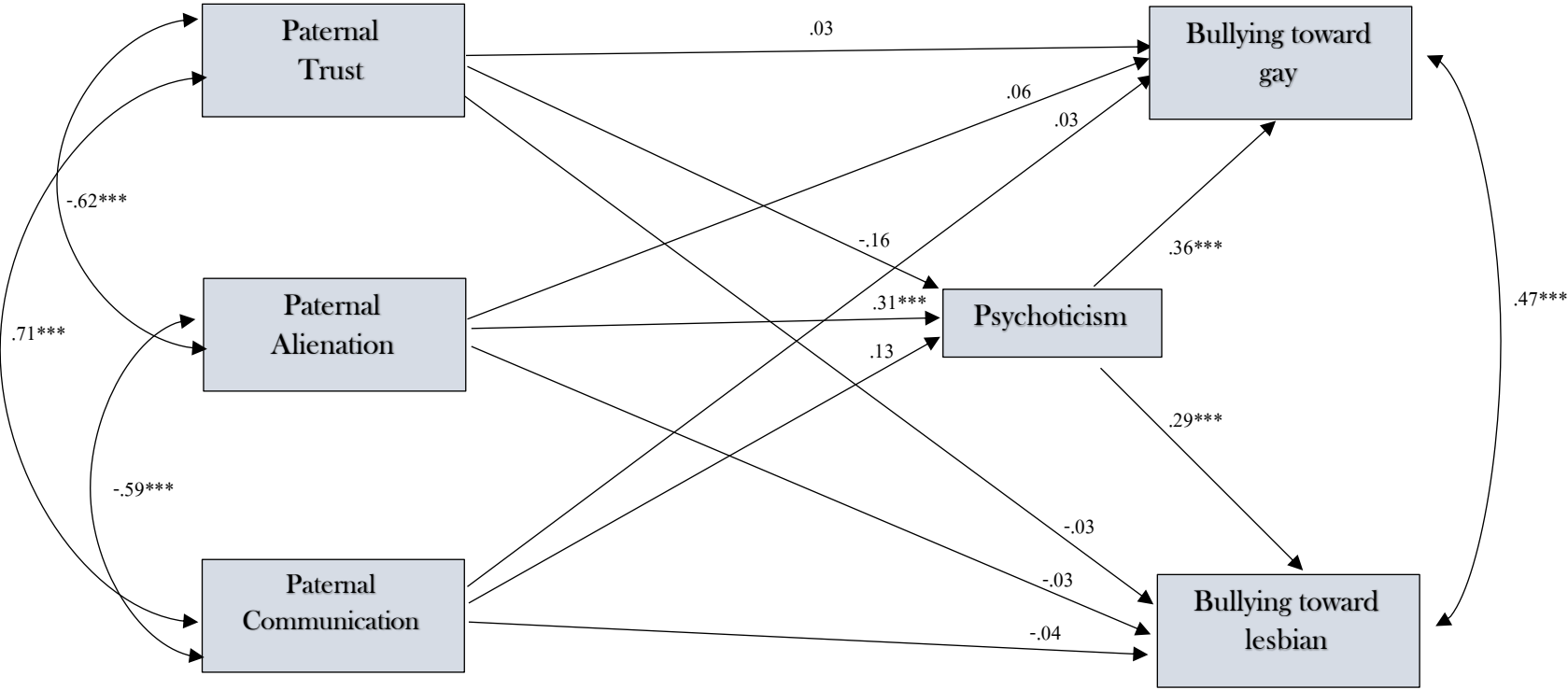


Figure 4. The role of psychoticism in the relationship between paternal attachment and homophobic bullying.



Note: * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$