

SEXUAL ORIENTATION, HETEROSEXISM, AND MUTUALITY
IN FRIENDSHIP RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LESBIAN
AND HETEROSEXUAL WOMEN

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR IN PHILOSOPHY

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

BY

BLANCA MORENO NAUDIN, B.S., M.A.

DENTON, TEXAS

AUGUST 2020

Copyright © 2020 by Blanca Moreno Naudin

DEDICATION

To all who have been left behind; who may have lost hope; who might need a friend.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to my Chair, Dr. Sally Stabb, for her outstanding guidance, support, and encouragement during the entirety of my dissertation process. I also want to thank Dr. Stabb for her incredible support and kindness throughout my long illness. I would have not been able to live my dream if she would have not been my Chair and advisor. I want to thank Dr. Debra Mollen for her phenomenal disposition and feedback when she edited this and many other projects she supervised throughout my training. I will forever be indebted to these two amazing scholars for having inspired me to be a better person, a better clinician, and a better researcher; for having introduced me to the world of feminism; and for having awakened a courage I did not know I had.

I want to thank Dr. Julie Herbstrith for having accepted to be part of my dissertation committee when she did not know me. I am very grateful to Dr. Herbstrith for her caring and authentic presence and valuable contributions to my dissertation. I certainly feel fortunate and honored to have Dr. Herbstrith in my committee.

Among the most important experiences I believe any graduate student in this field might experience are the clinical trainings. I was blessed to have been accepted to great sites to do my practicums and internship. I learned from every clinical case and from every clinical supervisor, especially from two brilliant and thoughtful psychologists to whom I will never forget, Dr. Sylva Frock and Dr. Faye Reimers. These two magnificent and caring supervisors taught and modeled every single element of growth-fostering

relationships. I cherish my time with them and thank them for their commitment to my clinical and personal development.

My profound appreciation to the leaders of the organizations who accepted to share my recruitment script with their employees and/or members, and all the women who participated in my survey. I would have no data to report and no dissertation to complete without their contribution.

ABSTRACT

BLANCA MORENO NAUDIN

SEXUAL ORIENTATION, HETEROSEXISM, AND MUTUALITY IN FRIENDSHIP RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LESBIAN AND HETEROSEXUAL WOMEN

AUGUST 2020

Women are socialized to base their self-worth on their ability to have meaningful relationships (Miller, 1986a; Miller & Stiver, 1997). However, in a patriarchal culture, they rarely find in their interactions with men the acceptance, validation, equality, and empowerment that are central to deep connections and women's psychological development (Jordan, 2009; Miller, 1986a). Thus, women are more likely to meet their needs for such relationships with their women friends (Diamond, 2002; Miller, 1986b) and see them as first source of support in crisis situations such as domestic violence (Campbell, 2013). However, research on women's friendships, particularly across sexual orientation, has been long ignored (Chittister, 2006; Galupo, 2009). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to contribute to the much-needed research on cisgender women's friendships across sexual orientation in relation to mutuality and heterosexism. Mutuality was selected to assess friendship quality because mutuality is characterized by elements such as emotional intimacy, authenticity, validation, and empowerment. Heterosexism was selected as it may influence openness to cross-sexual orientation friendships. Mutuality was assessed with the Mutuality Psychological Development

Questionnaire (Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin, 1992) and heterosexism was assessed with the Multidimensional Heterosexism Inventory (Walls, 2008a). A demographic questionnaire was also constructed. Participants were recruited through listservs, social media, and snowball sampling. Fifty-four lesbians and 118 heterosexual women between the ages of 19 and 82 years old participated. Most participants were White and had at least a bachelor's degree. A mixed-design ANOVA revealed participants' perceptions of mutuality were similar in same- and cross-orientation friendships. An independent-samples t-test indicated lesbian and heterosexual women endorsed low levels of heterosexist attitudes. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient indicated heterosexist views were negatively correlated to perceived mutuality in cross-orientation friendships. Results also revealed differences in the number of friends and friendship categories in cross-orientation friendships. Lesbians had similar patterns of frequency and closeness in their same- and cross-orientation friendships; however, this was not the case for heterosexual women. Implications of these findings for theory, research, and practice for these populations were included.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	v
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Friendship	1
Cultural Contexts, Gender, and Friendship	5
Women’s Friendships Across Sexual Orientation.....	12
Summary and Rationale	16
Definition of Terms	17
II. LITERATURE REVIEW	19
Overview of Friendship Relationships	19
Definition of Friendship	20
Types of Friends	26
Benefits of Friendship	36
Theories of Interpersonal Relationships	37
Overview of Women’s Friendship	67
Women’s and Men’s Friendships	69
Women’s Friendships	71
Overview of Lesbian Women’s Friendship	86
Cultural Context	88
Friendships Between Lesbian Women	95
Overview of Friendships Between Lesbian and Heterosexual Women	105
Heterosexism, Homophobia, and Internalized Stigmatization	106
Lesbian-Heterosexual Women’s Friendships: Specific Studies	108

Summary and Rationale	113
Mutuality as a Catalyst for Women’s Cross-Orientation Friendships ..	116
Research Questions	119
III. METHOD	121
Participants	121
Instruments	126
Demographic Questionnaire	126
Mutual Psychological Development Questionnaire	127
Multidimensional Heterosexism Inventory	128
Procedure	131
Statistical Analysis	132
IV. RESULTS	135
Descriptive Statistics	135
Analysis of Hypotheses	137
Hypothesis 1	137
Hypothesis 2	138
Hypothesis 3a	139
Hypothesis 3b	140
Hypothesis 4a	142
Hypothesis 4b	144
Hypothesis 5	146
V. DISCUSSION	148
Interpretation of Findings and Integration with the Literature	148
Hypothesis 1	148
Hypothesis 2	150
Hypothesis 3a and 3b	157
Hypothesis 4a and 4b	159
Hypothesis 5	162
Summary	163
Implications for Theory	164
Evolutionary Perspectives on Interpersonal Relationships	164
Aristotle’s Study of Friendship	165
Bowlby’s Attachment Theory	165
Relational Cultural Theory	167
Implications for Research	168
Implications for Practice	170

Strengths	171
Limitations	172
Conclusion	173
REFERENCES	174
APPENDICES	
A. Demographic Questionnaire	233
B.1. The Mutual Psychological Development Questionnaire Form B (Heterosexual Friend)	236
B.2. The Mutual Psychological Development Questionnaire Form B (Lesbian)	238
C. Multidimensional Heterosexism Inventory	240
D. Recruitment Script	243
E. Informed Consent	245
F. Counseling Referral Resources	248
G. IRB Approval Letter	250
H. Additional IRB Materials	252

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1a. Descriptive Statistics for Total Sample Demographics: Categorical Variables	122
1b. Descriptive Statistics for Sample Demographics for Sexual Orientation	124
2. Descriptive Statistics for Sample Demographics: Continuous Variables	126
3. Research Hypotheses and Statistical Analysis	133
4. Descriptive Statistics for Mutuality Psychological Development Questionnaire	135
5. Descriptive Statistics for Multidimensional Heterosexism Inventory	136
6. Hypothesis 3a: Sexual Orientation and Number of Friends	140
7. Hypothesis 3b: Sexual Orientation and Number of Friends after Controlling for Heterosexism	141
8. Hypothesis 4a: Sexual Orientation and Friendship Categories	143
9. Hypothesis 4b: Sexual Orientation and Friendship Categories after Controlling for Heterosexism	145

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. H3a: Estimated Marginal Means for Friends	140
2. H3b: Estimated Marginal Means for Friends after Controlling for Heterosexism	142
3. H4a: Estimated Marginal Means for Friendship Categories	144
4. H4b: Estimated Marginal Means for Friendship Categories after Controlling for Heterosexism	146

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Friendship

Friendships have been consistently ranked as one of the most important and joyful relationships (Berscheid, Snyder, & Omoto, 1989; Campbell, 2013; Demir & Weitekamp, 2007; Fehr, 2004; Larson & Bradney, 1988). Indeed, people have reported experiencing more joy, optimism, and emotional support with friends than with spouses and kin (Berscheid et al., 1989; Larson & Bradney, 1988). Women of diverse sexual orientations have expressed that they feel more appreciated, validated, connected, and encouraged with women friends than with anyone else (see Block & Greenberg, 1985; see also Dykewomon, 2018; Harrison, 1998; O'Connor, 1992). In the culture of oppression in which most women live (Gilligan, 1982; Lorber, 2010, Miller, 1986a) and the gender-based violence that many women experience (Smith et al., 2018; World Health Organization, 2017), women's friendships have been not only a source of emotional and moral support (Dykewomon, 2018; Fitzgerald, 2004), but also a source of practical support and safety (Campbell, 2013). However, research on women's friendships has been long ignored (Alger, 1868/2014; Chittister, 2006; Smith-Rothblum, 1975), particularly on women's friendships across sexual orientation (Galupo, 2007, 2009; O'Connor, 1992; Weinstock & Rothblum, 1996). Research on lesbians' needs is also limited and mostly grouped with gay men (Felicio & Sutherland, 2001; Garber, 2005;

Spaulding, 1999) and/or collectively with all sexual minority individuals, which rarely consider the differences in sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender presentation (C. M. Parker, Hirsch, Philbin, & Parker, 2018). Due to the limited research on women's friendships, many of the studies the author included in the literature review are older. However, she made efforts to incorporate studies that involved heterosexual and lesbian women whenever appropriate. Following are descriptions of the benefits that friendship relationships offer to most people.

Having good friends increases people's sense of self-worth and acceptance and helps them make sense of who they are (Allan, 1989; Fitzgerald, 2004; Stanley, 1996). Friends also increase individuals' sense of belonging (Fitzgerald, 2004; Nelson, 2016; Tokuno, 1986), as well as facilitate their integration to new cultures and groups (Allan, 1989; Campbell, 2013; Nelson, 2016; Weinstock & Bond, 2002), life's transitions, experience and success in school (Buote et al., 2007), and in the workplace (Rumens, 2011; Sherwin, 2018). Further, good friends are people's confidants of secrets, the providers of emotional intimacy, primary contacts in case of emergency, and frequently their lifespan companions (Barth, 2018; Block & Greenberg, 1985; Dykewomon, 2018). In addition, having supportive good friends also improves people's physical wellbeing. Research indicates that people with good friends tend to live longer (Berkman et al., 2004; Holt-Lunstad, Smith, & Layton, 2010; Rasulo, Christensen, & Tomassini, 2005) as well as increase their survival rate by 50%, which is comparable to quitting smoking (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010). Friendship relationships are also associated with reduced

risks of anxiety (Indian & Grieve, 2014) and depression disorders (Li, Ge, Greene, & Dunbar-Jacob, 2019), coronary heart disease (Liu, Hernandez, Trout, Kleiman, & Bozzay, 2017), cancer (Berkman et al., 2004), and diabetes (Ornish, 1997).

Conversely, losing friends or not having friends is extremely painful and might lead to depression (Brent, Chang, Garipey, & Platt, 2014) and chronic loneliness (Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008). Studies in neuroscience indicate that chronic loneliness can lead to multiple health issues, including infections, heart disease, depression, stress (Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008), inability to rest even during sleep (Hawley & Cacioppo, 2004), and functional decline in older people (Perissinotto, Cenzer, & Covinsky, 2012). Chronic loneliness can come from real isolation or people's own perceptions. In both cases, it is experienced as an intense pain derived from the absence of meaningful bonds with others (Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008; Jordan, 1995). Consequently, individuals who are popular can still feel lonely if they do not have meaningful relationships (Bowlby, 1973; Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008; Jordan, 1995; Rybak & McAndrew, 2006). In addition, studies on the brain functions indicate that people's connecting with others is vital for its healthy development.

In the same vein, Bowlby (1958, 1960, 1969, 1973, 1980) explained the formation process and importance of attachment bonds. Infants are born with attachment behaviors such as sucking, crying, and smiling to clue caregivers to their needs and emotional states. Caregivers who can interpret and provide the appropriate attention and affection to their infants help them develop healthy attachment bonds as well as confidence in

developing positive bonds with others. Thus, people who develop secure attachments tend to be self-confident, trust others, and are likely to develop close relationships. People with insecure attachments tend to develop low self-esteem, distrust others, and have difficulty establishing affectional bonds (Bender, 1999; Bowlby, 1973; Margolese, Markiewicz, & Doyle, 2005). This is important to better understand people's social skills and proneness to withdraw or to reach out to others. Although the attachment bonds formed with caregivers tend to endure, they can be modified with therapy (Levy, Ellison, Scott, & Bernecker, 2011) and through interactions with people who are accepting and supportive (Bender, 1999; Bowlby, 1980).

Neuroscientists (e.g., Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008; Cozolino, 2013) and Bowlby's (1958, 1969, 1973, 1980, 1982) attachment theory help us to understand why people hold good friends in high regard. However, people tend to be selective with whom they befriend, suggesting that in addition to the need and joy of bonding, other dynamics might be in place. For example, most people prefer to form friendships with individuals similar in sexual orientation (Galupo, 2007, 2009; Logan, 2013), age, race, social class, education level, and religious beliefs (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001), as well as moral values and cultural beliefs (Crandall, Harvey, & Schiffhauer, 1997). In the case of women, they also prefer to befriend others with similar marital and maternal status (O'Connor, 1998). Numerous factors influence people to form friendship relationships with others with similar characteristics, among which are learned values and cultural contexts.

Cultural Contexts, Gender, and Friendship

Relational-cultural theory (RCT) posits that all relationships are influenced by the cultural context in which people live (Jordan, 1991, 2009; Miller, 1986a, 1991). For example, women have expressed that their women friends understand and validate them better than anyone else (Block & Greenberg, 1985; Harrison, 1998; O'Connor, 1992). This connection and identification between women have been attributed to their need for support and validation in the face of women's oppression in our patriarchal culture (Miller, 1986a). Similarly, heterosexist norms are likely to influence people to have friends with similar sexual orientation (Galupo, 2006; Logan, 2013). However, by avoiding diverse others, people limit their opportunities for psychological growth and social change (Hunt, 1991; Jordan, 1997; Miller, 1991; Weinstock & Bond, 2002). In addition, segregation promotes isolation, loneliness, and suffering (Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008; Miller & Stiver, 1997).

Nevertheless, it is difficult for most people to avoid ethnocentric views. For instance, when Miller (1976) wrote about and initiated the first theory of psychology of women, RCT, neither Miller nor her colleagues included sexual minority or racial minority women in their initial writings (Jordan, 1997; Rich, 1986). As Jordan (1997) explained the founding scholars of RCT had blind spots inherent to their privileges as White, heterosexual, highly educated women. RCT scholars studied and represented the needs of women who were also White, heterosexual, middle-class, and well educated. To correct these "errors that occur when one subgroup speaks as if its reality is the reality"

(Jordan, 1997, p. 1), they recruited the help of women whose diversity could represent lesbians and women of color. RCT theorists did not mean to exclude lesbian women or women of color, yet they gained awareness of such omission when lesbians and Black women pointed it out to them (Jordan, 1997).

Not internalizing some level of acculturation to sexist and heterosexist norms might be extremely difficult if not impossible under patriarchal cultures such as the United States (Lerner, 1986; Rich, 1986). Cultural beliefs of heterosexual male supremacy have been transmitted and sustained through many strategies such as selective cultural heritage (Lerner, 1986; Rich, 1986), early indoctrination (Lorber, 2010), restriction of economic and education resources (Pharr, 2010; Rich, 1986), and violence (Pharr, 2010; Smith et al., 2018). According to Lerner (1986) and Rich (1986), cultural heritage is one of the strongest mechanisms to transmit and sustain male dominance. Cultural heritage and memorabilia help people to make sense of their past, understand better who they are, and have expectations for the future. Some ways in which humans know about their cultural heritage is through recorded history, searching in their past, and interpreting their findings. However, Lerner (1986), who studied women's history for more than 25 years, observed that before the movement for women's equal rights, there was almost nothing written on women's history. When women are excluded from cultural memorabilia, when none of their artifacts, philosophical theories, and feats are acknowledged, women have no means to recreate their past (Bohan, 1992; Lerner, 1986; Rich, 1986). Women learn what men wrote, and men wrote history as if only men's life

experiences and contributions were significant. Men's history presented women as their companions, servants, and incapable of survival on their own (Lerner, 1986).

Such negative messages are also part of children's indoctrination to patriarchal traditions. Girls learn early in life from important attachment figures their roles of servitude. Parents transmit and enforce their heterosexual gender stereotypes and expectations of how girls and boys should feel and behave (Hunt, 1991; Lorber, 2010), which are further modeled and encouraged by patriarchal institutions such as education, religion, and the media (Lorber, 2010). In general, girls are taught to be empathic, caring, affectionate, docile, peacemakers, and helpful (Geary, Byrd-Craven, Hoard, Vigil, & Numtee, 2003; Lorber, 2010; Miller, 1986a). They are also encouraged to imitate their mothers and make their primary goal to become wives and mothers, which is further enforced by society (Faderman, 1999; Hunt, 1991). Women are expected to raise children and take care of parents and spouses (Lorber, 2010; Miller, 1986a). Further, girls and women are discouraged from speaking their mind to avoid conflicts (Gilligan, 1982, 1991; Rich, 1986). Therefore, it is not surprising that women across sexual orientations tend to concentrate on others' needs and base their self-worth on their ability to have harmonious relationships (Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1986a). This indoctrination facilitates women's relational skills, but it also makes them targets of injustices (Miller, 1986a).

Just as girls learn to self-sacrifice, boys learn they are entitled to such sacrifices. Boys are socialized to be aggressive, competitive, and repress their sadness and fears because such emotions are considered feminine (Campbell, 2013; Kimmel, 2010). Boys

are taught not only to devalue the feminine traits encouraged in girls, but also to despise and respond with violence to insinuations that they might possess in any way such traits (Kimmel, 2010; Pharr, 2010). In addition, later in life, men learn their value is also based in their sexual and physical power (Kimmel, 2010; Munsch & Gruys, 2018; Rich, 1986). Sexual and physical power encouraged by patriarchal traditions oppresses women. For example, about 42 million women in the United States experience “physical violence, rape, and/or stalking by an intimate partner” (Merino, 2016, p. 1). It is estimated that 44% of women experience sexual abuse, and 1 in 5 women have reported being victims of attempted or completed rapes (Smith et al., 2018). About 1 in 6 women have reported threatening phone calls, emails, and social media messages as well as intrusions to their homes and cars and being followed and watched (Smith et al., 2018). In spite of the high percentage of gender-based violence, offenders are rarely prosecuted, especially if the violent acts took place at home because they are usually misconstrued as private and consensual, such as the case of intimate partner-perpetrated sexual assaults and rapes (Bieneck & Krahé, 2011; McKimmie, Masser, & Bongiorno, 2014; Merino, 2016; World Health Organization, 2017). However, violence against women is not a private matter; it exists because patriarchal institutions support men’s entitlement to see women as property (Pharr, 2010; Yllö, 2005; see also Aroustamian, 2020 for a review).

The same process of acculturation to sexist traditions is used to instill heterosexist norms (Lorber, 2010; Pharr, 2010). Children are taught their biological sex determines whether they are heterosexual boys or heterosexual girls, which as sexism is also

reinforced pervasively (Lorber, 2010; Pharr, 2010). With no models and negative religious messages about sexual minority orientations being deviant and sinful (Hunt, 1991; Morrow, 2003), boys and girls learn that heterosexuality is the norm. Later in life, men tend to perceive any behavior that does not conform to the heterosexuality norm as threatening to their male dominance (see Munsch & Gruys, 2018), and women tend to perceive it as threatening to core family's values and existence (Pharr, 2010). In addition, sexual-minority people may also believe heterosexist norms and develop internalized homophobia (Barnes & Meyer, 2012; Frost & Meyer, 2009). Sexual minorities are often excluded from parenting discussions and religious and school events (Platt & Lenzen, 2013). Exclusion to sexual minorities also occur in the workplace, where they are often left out from social gatherings and topics about sexual minorities are discouraged (Singh & Durso, 2017). In addition, same-gender love and sex are rarely included in school sex education classes (Platt & Lenzen, 2013). Furthermore, researchers rarely include demographic questions about sexual and gender identities (Pickett, Valdez, & Barry, 2019), and most research has traditionally been conducted under heterosexist assumptions and with heterosexual people (Kochman, 1997; Rose, 2000).

Recent federal laws such as legalization of same-sex marriages and prohibition of discrimination in the workplace have shown to improve the public's acceptance and work and social environments for sexual minorities (Levy & Levy, 2016). In addition, sexual minorities have reported feelings of being safer in states with greater sexual equality levels (Drabble, Veldhuis, Wootton, Riggle, & Hughes, 2019). However, researchers also

indicate that it is difficult to decipher if public support equates with private support. Diefendorf and Bridges (2020) reviewed the trend of sexual prejudices from the 1970s to the present, and they concluded that forms of discrimination have transformed from open to subtle hostilities “that are effective in preserving enduring systemic, institutionalized and structural mechanisms involved in the reproduction of inequality” (p. 2). For instance, the public’s support for same-sex marriages has increased since the legalization of same-sex unions (see Pew Research Center, 2019), but people’s opposition to the public display of affection of same-sex couples continues (Diefendorf & Bridges, 2020). In the same vein, Guschlbauer, Smith, DeStefano, and Soltis (2019) reported that lesbian and gay couples continue to experience high levels of stress due to discrimination. Further, about 51% of sexual minority individuals continue to experience violence and about 53% insults to their sexual orientation (National Public Radio, 2017).

In addition, the national survey by the Center for American Progress reported that 1 in 4 sexual minority individuals experienced some type of discrimination in 2016 (Singh & Durso, 2017). It is estimated that in 2016, about 28% lesbians, gays, and bisexual people were excluded from job promotions and 27% of transgender people were fired or denied promotions (Singh & Durso, 2017). In the same vein, Lloren and Parini (2017) indicated that 43% of sexual minority employees reported experiencing microaggressions, 29% emotional and physical harassment, and 26% having been excluded from teamwork, important projects, or social events. In general, lesbian and bisexual women tend to report experiencing more discrimination and barriers to their

professional career than gay men (Lloren & Parini, 2017; Parnell, Lease, & Green, 2012). Thus, gender and sexual discrimination seems to continue to exist and “to reinforce each other” (Lloren & Parini, 2017, p. 296). Discrimination against sexual minorities exist because they challenge heterosexist ideals (Diefendorf & Bridges, 2020; Martin, 2009).

In the specific case of lesbian women, they are perceived as a challenge to patriarchy because they are proof that sexual, financial, and physical power over women are not indicative of men’s supremacy. Lesbian women do not desire men nor seek men’s protection (Garnets, 2008; Hunt, 1991; Pharr, 2010). Oppression to lesbian women can range from verbal and behavioral microaggressions (Garnets, 2008; Lloren & Parini, 2017; Platt & Lenzen, 2013), to physical violence and robbery (Burks et al., 2018) and “corrective” rape (Chasin, 2015; Doan-Minh, 2019). Hate crimes against sexual minorities have remained high despite protective laws. In 2010, there were a total of 8,208 victims of hate crimes reported, of whom 1,528 were sexual minority individuals, including 180 lesbians (United States Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation [FBI], 2011). In 2018, there were a total of 8,819 victims of hate crimes reported, of whom 1,445 were sexual minority individuals, including 176 lesbians (United States Department of Justice, FBI, 2019).

Cultural traditions of discrimination harms both the privileged and the marginalized groups. Men have many more benefits than women do, but their expression of emotional intimacy is often truncated (Gilligan, 1991; Jordan, 1995). Men’s limited emotional intimacy and developed sense of entitlement curtails their opportunities for

relationships of mutuality. Relationships of mutuality are more frequent between women than between men, because empathy and equality are essential characteristics of mutuality, and in patriarchies, men are not likely to sustain the amount of emotion it takes to witness, comprehend, and have compassion for the myriad of “difficult, conflictual, and destructive feelings and thoughts” (Miller, 1991, p. 27) that people experience and need to share, as well as to acknowledge, validate, and celebrate the strengths of others (Jordan, 1995; Miller, 1991).

In the same vein, men are unlikely to share power with women, and in relationships of mutuality equality, it is essential for people to feel safe to be themselves; express their feelings, thoughts, and emotions; and feel confident they are understood and accepted. Further, in relationships of mutuality, difficult topics are discussed, challenges and differences are welcome, and all members are encouraged to continue growing and help others to grow (see Jordan, 1995; Miller, 1986b, 1988/2008). It does not mean that men cannot be empathic and caring nor that all women are empathic and validating, but in general, women are acculturated to be understanding, caring, and helpful, value and express feelings, and see their relationships as representatives of their own value (Fitzgerald, 2004; Gilligan, 1982; Jordan, 1999; Miller, 1986a). Therefore, women tend to be more advanced in relationships of mutuality.

Women’s Friendships across Sexual Orientation

Research specifically between lesbian and heterosexual women is scarce and dated (e.g., O’Boyle & Thomas, 1996; Stanley, 1996; Weinstock & Bond, 2002). To the

author's knowledge, no research has been conducted specifically on such friendships in the last 18 years. Institutional support for sexual minorities has increased in the last two decades expanding the opportunities for lesbian and heterosexual women to meet, such as the case of having children in the same school, which often influences mothers to engage in friendly interactions (Goldberg, Frost, Manley, & Black, 2018). Friendships are personal relationships affected by both institutional support and traditional cultural values, such as heterosexist and heteronormative ideals (see Diefendorf & Bridges, 2020; Doan, Loehr, & Miller, 2014). Researchers indicate that the support and acceptance for sexual minorities varies between public support and personal acceptance (Diefendorf & Bridges, 2020; Lloren & Parini, 2017). Therefore, it is important to explore current personal relationships between heterosexual people and sexual minorities. The investigator aimed to explore two factors, heterosexist views that might hinder women from connecting, and mutuality, which might influence women to connect. Although most are older, the following studies describe important findings on women's nature and relationships.

Both heterosexual and lesbian women are likely to experience similar needs for support, and with some differences, both groups of women experience the effects of sexism and heterosexism. Lesbian women are likely to face more instances of violence and social rejection, and heterosexual women are likely to participate in their own oppression. For instance, some women suffragists abandoned the cause because they felt obligated to support their husbands against women's rights, and other suffragists

abandoned the cause because they felt guilty for not being full-time mothers and wives (Faderman, 1999). In the same vein, some heterosexual women avoid forming friendships across sexual orientation for fear of being labeled as lesbians and being ostracized (O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996; Stanley, 1996).

However, research shows that friendships with lesbian women not only reduce negative stereotypes and homophobia (see Mereish & Poteat, 2015), but they also benefit heterosexual women in that they gain awareness about women's inequality and expand their horizons of personal growth (Galupo & St John, 2001; Weinstock & Bond, 2002). Along similar lines, having heterosexual women friends enhances lesbian women's self-esteem and acceptance. The support of heterosexual women friends is particularly important during their coming out process when lesbian women are more likely to face rejection from family (Blieszner, 2001; Chow & Cheng, 2010; Weinstock & Bond, 2002). Further, heterosexual women friends also help lesbians gain confidence in approaching other heterosexual people to expand their social networks (Galupo & St John, 2001). However, lesbian women have reported that some of the difficulties in forming close friendships with heterosexual women are the microaggressions they often experience and witness from heterosexual people against sexual minorities (Ueno & Gentile, 2015a). In addition, lesbian women have lost heterosexual women friends after disclosing their sexual orientation (Glover, Galliher, & Crowell, 2015; O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996; Stanley, 1996). At the same time, disclosing sexual orientation has shown to benefit friendships because some heterosexual women appreciate the trust that their

lesbian friends show them (Galupo & St John, 2001). In addition, disclosing sexual orientation has been associated with increased closeness (Lytle & Levy, 2015).

Goldberg, Frost, Manley, and Black (2018) studied lesbian adoptive mothers and their relationships with heterosexual parents, and reported similar findings. About 50% of lesbian parents reported favorable experiences with heterosexual parents, and about 25% reported having formed friendships with the parents of their child's friend. About 50% of lesbian moms reported feelings of disconnection, invisibility, anxiety, and discomfort, and 15% of lesbian moms expressed having avoided interactions with heterosexual parents as well as drawing attention to their lesbian orientation for fear of rejection.

Both lesbian and heterosexual women often experience concern over forming or having cross-orientation friendships. Lesbian women's concerns come from the emotional pain they experience from the wide variety of subtle and open social rejections they often face (O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996; Weston, 1991), and heterosexual women's hesitation to have lesbian friends can come from heterosexist views. Heterosexual women are afraid to be labeled as lesbians and experience discomfort due to perceived sexual attraction (real or imagined) from their lesbian friends (Galupo & St John, 2001; O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996). Similarly, lesbian women often modify their behavior towards heterosexual women to avoid their friendliness to be interpreted as flirting (Bowleg, Books, & Ritz, 2008). Sexual attraction between heterosexual and lesbian women might, and has, occurred out of the intensity of their emotions and physical affection (O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996; Palladino & Stephenson, 1990). The idea of having lesbian or bisexual

feelings often engenders fear for heterosexual friends, and some of them have terminated the friendship without facing and/or addressing their experience with their lesbian friends (Palladino & Stephenson, 1990). However, according to Palladino and Stephenson (1990) and Galupo and St John (2001), the best option to preserve the friendship is to face and talk about such experiences jointly make decisions on how to manage the feelings.

Summary and Rationale

Given that friendships are among the most important and joyful relationships in people's lives, and considering the numerous benefits that having good friends brings to individuals' overall wellbeing (Cable, Bartley, Chandola, & Sacker, 2013), it is unfortunate that oppressions limit friendships between women (Galupo, 2006; Stanley, 1996). Women are among the people in more need of support, especially women from marginalized groups. Yet research on women's friendships has been long ignored (Chittister, 2006; O'Connor, 1992), particularly research on women's friendships across sexual orientation (Galupo, 2006; Weinstock & Rothblum, 1996). The investigator located only three investigations (e.g., Galupo & St John, 2001; O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996; Weinstock & Bond, 2002) specifically on friendships between heterosexual and lesbian women, the most recent of which is 18 years old. Given the importance of friendships in women's lives, and the fact that the cultural context of oppression in which most women live affect their wellbeing in ways that only women understand (Miller, 1986a), it is important to find factors that help women across sexual orientation to unite and form friendships to share their commonalities and benefit from their differences.

There is limited but strong evidence that women across sexual orientation can surpass their fears, negotiate their differences, and achieve remarkable friendships of mutuality (see Morgan & Nerison, 1996; see also Weinstock & Rothblum, 2018) as well as impressive social changes. For example, heterosexual, lesbian, and bisexual women came together, fought, and achieved women's suffrage (Faderman, 1999; Hunt, 1991; "The woman suffrage movement," n.d.) and the feminist movements that brought attention to women's inequality and helped to decrease sexist language and behaviors (Hunt, 1991; Lerner, 1986). All these friendships merit attention and research. Finding some of the factors common to these remarkable relationships might help other women to connect and alleviate the oppression they often face. Therefore, it was the researcher's aim to expand the much-needed research on women's friendships between heterosexual and lesbian women. Specifically, the author assessed the impact of sexual orientation, heterosexism, and mutuality in women's friendships across sexual orientation.

Definition of Terms

Friendship

Considering the elements of friendships that have been identified by scholars and laypersons across sexual orientations as well as the characteristics of mutuality that influence people to form growth-fostering relationships, the author offers the following definition: Friendship is an emotionally intimate relationship between people who love and care for each other, and who are willing to contribute mutually and fairly to each other's happiness, empowerment, and growth.

Mutuality

Conceptual definition. Mutuality refers to a relational process characterized by interactions of empathy, authenticity, self-disclosure of intimate feelings and life experiences, and interest for each other's wellbeing (Jordan, 1991; Miller 1988/2008; Walls, 2004). In interactions of mutuality, people tend to appreciate each other for who they are, provide mutual empathy, validation, support, and encouragement to grow psychologically and to achieve each other's goals without forgetting one's own needs and goals (Jordan, 1991; Miller, 1988/2008; Walls, 2004). Mutuality is the fundamental property of healthy, growth-fostering relationships (Miller, 1991).

Operational definition. Mutuality was operationally defined by the Mutual Psychological Development Questionnaire (MPDQ) developed by Genero, Miller, Surrey, and Baldwin (1992) using six elements of mutuality (empathy, engagement, authenticity, zest, and diversity) as described by Miller (1988/2008).

Heterosexism

Conceptual definition. Heterosexism is "prejudice against any nonheterosexual form of behavior, relationship, or community, particularly the denigration of lesbians, gay men, and those who are bisexual or transgender" (VandenBos, 2007, p. 438).

Operational definition. Heterosexism was operationally defined by the Dimensional Heterosexism Inventory developed by Walls (2008a) that is composed by four subdomains of modern heterosexism: positive stereotypic, amnestic, aversive, and paternalistic.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains an overview of friendship relationships, characteristics of friendships between heterosexual women, lesbian women, and heterosexual and lesbian women. The overview of friendship relationships contains a description of selective theories of interpersonal relationships. This chapter also includes a summary of the literature reviewed, the rationale for the present study, as well as the research questions explored.

Overview of Friendship Relationships

Friendship is an abstract concept (Spencer & Pahl, 2006; Steenberg, 2013) impacted by multiple factors such as the participants' phenomenological experiences of their relationships (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Fehr, 1996; Wright, 2003); their personal characteristics such as race (Rose, 2008), age, class (Pogrebin, 1987), gender (Fehr, 2004), sexual orientation (Galupo, 2007), marital status (Pogrebin, 1987), health issues (Adams, Blieszner, & de Vries, 2000), cultural background (Adams et al., 2000; Bagwell & Schmidt, 2011), environmental context (Amichai-Hamburger, Kingsbury, & Schneider, 2013; Hays, 1988), life experiences (Pahl & Pevalin, 2005), societal and cultural changes (Campbell, 2013; Rose, 2008; Smith-Rosenberg, 1975), historical events (Wright, 2003), and developmental stage of the friendship relationship (Hays, 1988). In addition, the level of intimacy that friends share classifies friendship into several types

(Adams et al., 2000; Pogrebin, 1987; Rybak & McAndrew, 2006; Spencer & Pahl, 2006), which individually carry their own distinct meaning for the parties involved in the relationship (Berscheid et al., 1989; Spencer & Pahl, 2006). The complex nature of friendship has made it difficult for scholars to arrive to a definition that encompasses all the elements and processes that take place when friendships are created, maintained, and terminated (Adams et al., 2000; Fehr, 1996; Hays, 1988; Spencer & Pahl, 2006).

Furthermore, most research on friendships has been conducted on heterosexual men's friendships (Alger, 1868/2014; Chittister, 2006; O'Connor, 1992) under heterosexist assumptions (Rose, 2000). In addition, when women have been included in research studies, their unique needs and characteristics have been mostly neglected (Rose, 2000) and stereotyped (Alger, 1868/2014; Blatterer, 2016). The omission of women is especially evident in the case of sexual minority women (Rose, 2000; Weinstock & Rothblum, 2018). Moreover, participants' sexual orientation is rarely considered in studies' methodologies, which creates confounded variables and limits the generalization of findings (Rose, 2000). Thus, it is evident that no universal conceptualization of friendship exists. In lieu of these difficulties in describing and assessing friendship, researchers have opted for providing definitions based on the characteristics attributed to friendship, described below.

Definitions of Friendship

Despite the variation in concepts and working definitions used to assess friendship, most scholars agree that friendship is, in essence, a voluntary relationship

with no legal obligations (Blatterer, 2016; Hays, 1988; Spencer & Pahl, 2006), which develops gradually, and often includes the following elements: reciprocity, closeness, and intimacy (Bagwell & Schmidt, 2011; Hays, 1988; Spencer & Pahl, 2006; Thomas, 1987; Wright, 2003); loyalty, equality, and respect (Blatterer, 2016; Spencer & Pahl, 2006); trust, affection, companionship (Blieszner, 2014; Thomas, 1987; Wright, 2003); liking each other (Hartup & Stevens, 1997; Spencer & Pahl, 2006); mutual assistance, longevity (de Vries & Megathlin, 2009; Hays, 1988); acceptance, similar interests and values, self-disclosure (de Vries & Megathlin, 2009; Spencer & Pahl, 2006); and a profound knowledge of each other (Patterson, Bettini, & Nussbaum, 1993; Spencer & Pahl, 2006). Other important characteristics associated with friendship relationships are joy and happiness (Berscheid et al., 1989; Demir & Weitekamp, 2007). It should be noted that elements vary according to the type of friendship and developmental stage (Fehr, 2008; Pogrebin, 1987; Spencer & Pahl, 2006). For example, emerging friendships do not have closeness, and although friends engage in self-disclosure at this stage, their trust and affection are still developing (Fehr, 2008; Pogrebin, 1987; Reisman, 1979). A selection of scholars' and laypeople's views on friendship follows.

Scholars' views of friendship. The concept of equal exchange is central to several definitions of the construct of friendship. For example, Hartup and Stevens (1997) argued that reciprocity is essential for friendship to exist, and they believed "friendship consists mainly of being attracted to someone who is attracted in return, with parity governing the social exchanges between the individuals involved" (p. 355). In the same

vein, Spencer and Pahl (2006) offered the following definition: “friendship has been characterized as a relationship which involves participation between equals who enjoy each other’s company, who help and support one another, who respect and accept the other, and share confidences” (p. 34).

Jeske (2001) agreed that reciprocity, trust, and caring for each other’s moods and interest are important in good friendships. According to Jeske (2001), friendship is an emotionally intimate relationship that develops over time between individuals who care for and help each other, enjoy spending time together, engage in mutual self-disclosure, and are sensitive to each other’s moods and preferences. Jeske (2001) added that intimacy is essential for friendships to exist, and that when friends refuse to be responsive to the confidences and emotional needs of their friends, the friendship “can be called into question” (p. 335). Other authors (e.g., Blatterer, 2016; Miller, 1986b; Parks & Floyd, 1996; Spencer & Pahl, 2006) have also identified intimacy as an essential factor in meaningful relationships.

In addition to reciprocity, Grunebaum (2003) avowed that “preference for friends over nonfriends is at the core of friendship” (p. 1). He stated that to feel and behave with more affection, help, trust, and to share more time and activities with friends differentiates them from nonfriends. According to Grunebaum (2003), those who behave equally towards friends and nonfriends are not true friends. He also believed that friends have more obligations than nonfriends, including moral obligations such as helping in difficult times. Other authors, such as Argyle and Henderson (1984), agreed with

Grunebaum (2003), pointing out that if friends do not help, they are blamed, and the friendship might be terminated.

Hays (1988) offered another view of friendship's meaning: "voluntary interdependence between two persons over time, that is intended to facilitate social-emotional goals of the participants, and may involve varying types and degrees of companionship, intimacy, affection, and mutual assistance" (p. 395). He added that friendship "is an equalizer" (p. 395) because friends have the same status, regardless of age, sex, and class. Definitions also vary according to the discipline studying friendship. In the field of psychology, VandenBos (2007) defined friendship as:

a voluntary relationship between two or more people that is relatively long lasting and in which those involved tend to be concerned with meeting the others' needs and interests as well as satisfying their own desires. Friendships frequently developed through shared experiences in which the people involved learned that their association with one another is mutually gratifying. (p. 391)

Wright (2003) offered a sociological definition in the *International Encyclopedia of Marriage and Family*. According to Wright (2003), friendship is a relationship between people who mutually care for one another and who dedicate time to each other. He also asserted "friendship is a matter of degree rather than an all-or-none proposition" (p. 703) because friends build their relationship gradually, and the closeness of the relationship varies according to the commitment and the developmental stage of the friendship.

Among the few early sources on women's friendship is Alger's (1868/2014) book, *The Friendship of Women*. He wrote that, next to love, friendship was the strongest feeling, especially for women. Alger explained that as women were socially secluded and neglected, their friends were the first affection they experienced for nonkin. He also believed that friendship interactions served women as practice for later romantic relationships. Another scholar who wrote on women's friendship offered a definition from a feminist perspective: "voluntary human relationships that are entered into by people who intend one another's wellbeing and who intend that their love relationship is part of a justice-seeking community" (Hunt, 1991, p. 29). Thomas (1987) offered another definition, which includes many of the elements found in lesbian women's friendships. Thomas argued that "deep friends love one another" (p. 217), share "an enormous bond of mutual trust" (p. 217) and have a high regard for one another. Thomas believed that good friendships parallel romantic relationships, excepting the sexual relationship.

Lay views of friendship. Few studies have described everyday people's understandings of friendship. One of the few scholars to address such views is Blieszner (2014), who has studied friendship relationships for decades. He found that laypeople believe friendship is a voluntary relationship, in which its members give and receive affection, companionship, and trust. Blieszner also observed that laypeople classify friends into types such as best, close, and casual friends. Argyle and Henderson (1984) also reported that people value trust in friendships. They indicated that both men and

women across cultures value trust and loyalty and condemn betrayal. If any of these values are broken, people are often willing to terminate the friendship.

Other scholars who have studied lay views of friendship are Adams et al. (2000), who asked women and men aged 23 to 75 years from Canada and the United States about their views of friendship and friends. Results indicated that they valued self-disclosure (especially among older individuals), having fun with friends, assistance, loyalty and commitment, trust, compatibility, solidarity, and care. Participants also distinguished friendships and friends by the degree of intimacy they shared with their friends. They classified friends as acquaintances, casual, and close, and made distinctions between friends and nonfriends.

Based on the extant literature, it is evident that friendship relationships are of paramount importance in people's lives, and the complex nature of friendship cannot be easily encapsulated in a single definition. Some scholars (e.g., Allan, 1989; Altman & Taylor, 1973; Rybak & McAndrew, 2006) believe that the phenomenological nature of friendship relationships makes it impossible to define friendship. Another complication of defining friendship is that the elements of friendship relationships vary according to the intimacy friends share or do not share (Adams et al., 2000; Hays, 1984; Rybak & McAndrew, 2006; Spencer & Pahl, 2006). Therefore, intimacy is not only a core characteristic of friendships, but it is also a determining factor for classifying friends into types. Emotional intimacy has been identified as a primary factor for forming meaningful relationships among spouses, family members, and friends (Altman & Taylor, 1973;

Perlman & Fehr, 1987; Steenberg, 2013; see also Miller, 1986a). Without emotional intimacy, relationships cannot reach to the point of being growth-fostering (Miller, 1986b), and individuals cannot reach the status of being best friends (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Richey & Richey, 1980; Rybak & McAndrew, 2006).

Having reviewed multiple theoretical and empirical definitions of friendship, considering the elements of friendships that are important for laypeople across sexual orientation, and the characteristics of mutuality that promote growth-fostering relationships, she offered the following definition: Friendship is an emotionally intimate relationship between people who love and care for each other, and who are willing to contribute mutually and fairly to each other's happiness, empowerment, and growth. Researchers have clearly indicated that both laypersons and scholars categorize friends. Therefore, types of friends are discussed next.

Types of Friends

Theorists and empirical investigators have indicated that intimacy is essential for determining the type of friendship relationship. Aristotle distinguished the degree of intimacy in every type of his friendships; Black (1898/2011) believed intimacy was the scale that measured friendships from acquaintance to the perfect friendship, and Altman and Taylor (1973) indicated that relationships are classified according to levels of intimacy exchange. In addition, other scholars (e.g., Adams et al., 2000; Blieszner, 2014; Rybak & McAndrew, 2006) have shown that intimacy levels are also used by people to classify friends into types. The most frequent types of friends are acquaintances,

neighbors, coworkers, casual friends, close, friends, best friends, and social media included online friends, such as Facebook friends. A description of such friendships follows.

Acquaintances. Every relationship starts as an acquaintance. Thus, acquaintances are at the bottom of the intimacy scale (see Pogrebin, 1987; Reisman, 1979). Some acquaintances started because people wanted to know more about each other, and in the process of getting acquainted, people decide whether to pursue a closer relationship (Reisman, 1979). There are also acquaintances whom people know because they work at the same place, live in the same neighborhood, and or go to the same school (see Pogrebin, 1987; Reisman, 1979). People might refer to acquaintances as individuals who are very nice and agreeable, but they do not know much about who they are, do not spend time with them, and most of the time, they did not choose to know them (Pogrebin, 1987; Reisman, 1979). Thus, acquaintances are the most numerous friends, but only few acquaintances become close friends. According to Reisman (1979), people have many acquaintances because social situations force them to have some type of contact, and although Americans like to be friendly, they rarely pursue the development of profound friendships.

Neighbors. Neighbors may range from acquaintances to best friends (Pogrebin, 1987). However, Oliner's (1989) research and nationwide survey by the Pew Research Center suggested neighbors are rarely more than acquaintances or casual friends (K. Parker et al., 2018). The results of their study showed that, in the United States, about

83% of people have some knowledge about their neighbors, and about 14% of this 83% meet with them for parties or get-togethers at least once a month. However, most participants who knew their neighbors also reported trusting their neighbors with a pair of keys to their homes (K. Parker et al., 2018). Although most people do not choose their neighbors, the neighborhood where they can afford to live might determine the race and social class of their neighbors. It might also affect the expansion of people's social networks. For instance, participants in the 2018 Pew study, who were from upper socioeconomic classes, reported a higher frequency of social functions with their neighbors than lower socioeconomic neighbors (K. Parker et al., 2018).

Coworkers. As with neighbors, depending on the level of intimacy, coworkers can range from acquaintances to best friends (Gates, Rich, & Blackwood, 2019; Pogrebin, 1987). Coworkers are important because employed adults spend many hours at work (Gates et al., 2019). Coworkers are also valued because they share experiences such as the same environment and the history of their employment sites. Work offers opportunities for friendship formation as well as for competition and discordances. Thus, coworkers, especially if they become friends, can offer support in hostile work environments and difficult work situations (Gates et al., 2019; Pogrebin, 1987; Rumens, 2011). In the case of women, the support of coworkers is especially important (Sherwin, 2018), particularly for sexual minority women (Gates, et al., 2019; Rumens, 2011). Women in the workplace face hostilities inherent to male domination (Sherwin, 2018). When women enter the workplace, especially in leadership positions, they are often

ostracized by the patriarchal system in several ways, and they may be ignored both professionally and personally. For example, men often exclude women from their social gatherings and tend to ignore their input at meetings (Sherwin, 2018). Additionally, stereotypes about women often affect how they are treated at work. One such stereotype is that women are warm and friendly, but in the workplace these aspects of relating are frequently judged as unprofessional because, by patriarchal norms, these behaviors are typically associated with interactions among friends but not among work colleagues (Sherwin, 2018).

However, women in the workplace value their coworkers and find stress relief through having female friends who experience the same challenges they do and who do not stereotype them (Sherwin, 2018). They also find that having women friends in the workplace helps them to perform better. For women, having women friends at work provides a buffer for the discrimination they experience in the workplace (see Sherwin, 2018). This form of support is especially helpful for individuals who hold more than one marginalized social location, such as women of color and sexual minority women (Gates et al., 2019; Rumens, 2011; Sherwin, 2018).

Casual friends. Friends who people meet from time to time and like and trust them more than acquaintances but less than close friends are called casual friends (Holladay & Kerns, 1999; Nelson, 2016; Yager, 2002). They are the friends whose company people enjoy but rarely trust with confidences (Hruschka, 2010). Although the interactions with casual friends tend to be superficial, the time spent with casual friends

can be highly rewarding as they are usually the friends with whom people share interests, hobbies or collaborate in a community projects (see Nelson, 2016; Yager, 2002). Having casual friends tends to increase people's sense of belonging. For instance, entering a new social group, school, or job in which one or more persons are one's casual friends facilitates the newcomers' integration to the group (Nelson, 2016). In addition, having numerous casual friends can provide with a sense of being liked and highly regarded (Nelson, 2016; Yager, 2002). According to Yager (2002) people on average have 26 casual friends, and according to Weinstock's (1998) review, lesbian and gay men have about 17 casual friends.

Close friends. Close friends are important sources of emotional and practical support. They are the friends to whom people provide and from whom people expect loyalty and commitment (Holladay & Kerns, 1999; Yager, 2002). Trust, loyalty, and commitment take time to develop; therefore, most close friends have been present in people's life for a long time and have survived some bad experiences and enjoyed some happy moments (Hruschka, 2010; Nelson, 2016). Thus, close friends are not numerous. According to Hruschka (2010), people have on average two close friends and according to Weinstock's (1998) review, gay men and lesbian women have seven close friends on average. Such difference might be explained by the tendency of sexual minorities to identify and bond with individuals of the same sexual orientation rapidly (De la Peña, 1996). The characteristics of close friends are similar to those of best friends. They are entrusted with confidences and their perspectives and recommendations are highly

regarded (Hruschka, 2010). For most people, close friends are one step behind best friends (Yager, 2002).

Best friends. Best friends are among the most valuable relationships in people's lives (Block & Greenberg, 1985; Pogrebin, 1987; Rubin, 1985; Spencer & Pahl, 2006). People refer to best friends as intimate (Block & Greenberg, 1985), soulmates, and confidants (Spencer & Pahl, 2006). Best friends usually have a profound knowledge of each other as well as a strong emotional connection and understanding (Block & Greenberg, 1985; Spencer & Pahl, 2006). People's willingness to sacrifice for best friends is higher than with any other type of friends because they perceive best friends as providers of unconditional support, loyalty, and commitment (Spencer & Pahl, 2006). In addition, people report the highest exchange of joy and support with best friends (Perlman, Stevens, & Carcedo, 2015) as well as the deepest pain and disappointment when they fail to what is expected of them (Rubin, 1985).

Women especially value the exchanges of emotional intimacy, confidences, trust, and support that best friends provide (Felmlee, Sweet, & Sinclair, 2012; Oliner, 1989). Additionally, women experience their best friends as a highly therapeutic relationship (Davidson & Packard, 1981), usually being a valuable company that neither spouses nor family can replace (see Block & Greenberg, 1985; Harrison, 1998). Not surprisingly, best friends are at the top of the intimacy scale, enjoying the highest levels of trust and affection (Block & Greenberg, 1985; Rybak & McAndrew, 2006). However, this level of intimacy is not frequently experienced, and best friends are the least numerous. On

average, people might have one or two best friends (Spencer & Pahl, 2006). Of note, Rubin (1985) cautioned people tend to differ in their perceptions of their friendships. She asked people to name their close friends, and when she contacted the named friends, some of them did not think of the referral friend as a close friend. Thus, the meaning of friendship differs in people's phenomenological perception (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Rybak & McAndrew, 2006).

Facebook friends. Although the interpersonal relationships that social network sites have created is out of the scope of the present study, a brief description of Facebook friends is included to provide a comprehensive description of the type of friends that exist in the present.

In February 2019, the Pew Research Center published findings that 69% of adults in the United States, and 2.23 billion adults around the world were Facebook users (Perrin & Anderson, 2019). Facebook is a part of most individuals' social lives and is the most frequently accessed social network to connect with family and friends (Buccafurri, Lax, Nicolazzo, & Nocera, 2016). The popularity of Facebook and its affordances have impacted social interactions and created a new type of friends, Facebook friends (boyd, 2008; Buccafurri et al., 2016; Chambers, 2013).

Being a Facebook friend means that users follow the Facebook rules, create a profile and a list of friends, and decide whether to survey the network passively or be an active user (Buccafurri et al., 2016; see also Facebook.com). To be an active participant, Facebook users need to engage in some type of self-disclosure, which is facilitated by the

interactive functions of the social network. Facebook friends can share information through their profiles, status updates, comments on other users' posts, displays of photos and videos, and instant messages (Buccafurri et al., 2016; see also Facebook.com). Users can control to the degree of privacy for their profiles. However, regardless of their concerns about broadcasting intimate behaviors, beliefs, and feelings (Child & Petronio, 2011; Child & Westermann, 2013; Jensen & Sorensen, 2013) in the process of social networking, most Facebook friends end up self-disclosing personal issues with all of their Facebook contacts, including those whom they have never met face-to-face (boyd, 2011; Jensen & Sorensen, 2013).

Generally, people do not trust others immediately, and they self-disclose confidences and intimate feelings only to their closest friends and in private settings (Thomas, 1987). Thus, when Facebook users exchange public displays of intimacy, they may be behaving against their own values and beliefs about privacy and friendship (Shiau, Dwivedi, & Lai, 2018; Vallor, 2012). Intimacy is the hallmark of good friendships, and it is carefully guarded among strangers (Bauminger, Finzi-Dottan, Chason, & Har-Even, 2008; Reisman, 1990). Thus, when people share their confidences with all their Facebook contacts, which usually include strangers, casual friends, and coworkers, it provokes questions. Some scholars ponder whether people's behavior is influenced by Facebook (boyd, 2008, 2011; Vallor, 2012) or if social network sites have changed people's social interactions (e.g., Chambers, 2013).

According to boyd (2011), Facebook users' interactions are influenced by the technology of the social network that limits and controls how they share information and interact with each other. Other researchers (e.g., Chambers, 2013; Child, Petronio, Agyeman-Budu, & Westermann, 2011) agree that Facebook technology acts as a third party in Facebook, which modifies the traditional ways in which people conduct their friendship relationships. However, because people have control over what they do and do not publish, Vallor (2012) argued there is a stronger motivation to engage in friendship interactions that oppose the core values of traditional friendship.

Vallor (2012) believed that the motivation for Facebook friends to broadcast personal information and expressions of intimacy is the gratifying experience of reciprocal exchanges of social and emotional support that the social network provides through its affordances. Facebook is a social network with many opportunities for reciprocal social interactions (e.g., friend requests, sharing photos and videos, tagging friends, and third-party applications to exchange virtual gifts or play). The more Facebook users share information, the more "likes," "loves," and comments they receive from other users. According to Vallor (2012), these instant and numerous interactions are seen as highly rewarding and are the main influence for users to broadcast personal and intimate details.

Another aspect that seems to attract some individuals to access Facebook is its accessibility to all, which makes it valuable for people with limited offline social support, such as those in the LGBTQ community, people with mobility difficulties (Vallor, 2012),

lonely individuals (Blachnio, Przepiorka, Boruch, & Balakier, 2016), and people with social anxiety (Indian & Grieve, 2014). Regarding women and Facebook use, research indicates women are more active in relationship maintenance than men (Muscanell & Guadagno, 2012), and they engage more in self-promoting activities such as posting photos and enhancing their profiles (McAndrew & Jeong, 2012). Another intriguing idea is that women may use Facebook because it represents a safer alternative to face-to-face interactions. Though no research was found pertaining to women's concerns of physical safety and Facebook use as an alternative to socialize from the safety of their homes after dark, studies indicate that most women fear rape, and many women avoid going out at night for fear of being raped (McDonald, Coleman, & Brindley, 2019; Riger & Gordon, 1981; Warr, 1985). Failure to consider women's rape fears in relation to Facebook use is a gap in the friendship literature.

In summary, Facebook is a virtual platform that allows Facebook users to communicate with family and friends, which is the activity cited as most important by Facebook users (Haythornthwaite, 2002; Jensen & Sorensen, 2013). Equally or even more significant, Facebook is a virtual and public space that facilitates and limits people's social interactions in ways that makes it easy and appealing for individuals to engage more openly than they do in face-to-face encounters (boyd, 2008; Chambers, 2013; Vallor, 2012). Facebook's affordances and people's behaviors on Facebook platform have created a unique and new type of friends.

Benefits of Friendship

The importance of friendship in people's lives has been documented by philosophers and scholars throughout history (e.g., Aristotle, trans. 2011; Berscheid et al., 1989; Black, 1898/2011; Cable et al., 2013; Campbell, 2013; Fehr, 1996). In addition, studies in social connection (e.g., Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008; Cazolino, 2014) have also indicated the benefits of meaningful bonds and the detrimental effects of loneliness. Philosophers of the ancient Greece, such as Aristotle, Plato, Epicurus, Cicero, and Seneca, taught friendship was the most valued virtue of humankind (Pangle, 2002). Aristotle believed friendship was essential to the experience of happiness (Aristotle, trans. 2011), and many centuries later, scholars such as Berscheid et al. (1989) and Larson and Bradney (1988) reported that friendship ranked among the most important and joyful relationship in individuals' lives. Given the happiness that friends provide, it is not surprising that friendship increases people's overall psychological (Cable et al., 2013) and physical wellbeing (Kenny, 1987). Conversely, losing friends can be extremely painful and conducive to mental health issues such as depression (see Brent et al., 2014).

Having friends provides individuals with companionship, fun (Blieszner, 2014), emotional intimacy (Hays, 1984) and social and emotional support (Kenny, 1987). It promotes people's sense of self-worth (Hartup & Stevens, 1997; Sullivan, 1953), self-esteem (Hartup & Stevens, 1997), and sense of belonging (Sullivan, 1953; Tokuno, 1986). Additionally, people with social networks are at lower risk of depression (Li et al., 2019) and anxiety disorders (Indian & Grieve, 2014; Litwin & Shiovitz-Ezra, 2011).

Friendships are also beneficial for people's physical wellbeing. Research has indicated that having friends is inversely related to having cancer (Berkman et al., 2004), diabetes (Ornish, 1997), and coronary heart disease (Liu et al., 2017). Studies on friendship relationships have also suggested a positive relationship between having friends and surviving breast cancer (Waxler-Morrison, Hislop, Mears, & Kan, 1991) and living longer (Berkman et al., 2004; Holt-Lunstad, et al., 2010; Rasulo et al., 2005). In addition, the quality of friendships and the ability to make friends have been associated with adolescents' adjustment (Waldrip, 2008), successful outcomes at college (Buote et al., 2007), and people's success in the workplace (Rumens, 2011; Sherwin, 2018). Understanding friendships may be further enhanced by considering broader models of interpersonal relationships. These theories are presented next.

Theories of Interpersonal Relationships

The same difficulties encountered into defining friendship are faced in developing a theory that fully describes and explains all the determinants, significance, and processes of friendship relationships (Bagwell & Schmidt, 2011). No single theory of friendship exists, so when researchers study friendship, they are guided by theories of interpersonal relationships (Bagwell & Schmidt, 2011; Fehr, 1996). Of note, only RCT specifically explains women's interpersonal connections (see Jordan, 2009; Miller, 1976, 1986a; Miller & Stiver, 1997). Therefore, in the following review of selected theories that are used to explain friendship relationships, emphasis will be given to RCT. In addition to

RCT, evolutionary perspectives on interpersonal relationships, Aristotle's study of friendship, and Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory will be addressed.

Evolutionary perspectives on interpersonal relationships. Evolutionary theorists believe that social interactions were born out of the need for survival, which is evident in human and nonhuman animals. Silk et al. (2010) observed female baboons' social behavior toward other female baboons and their male partners for 7 years; they noted that the female baboons who maintained stronger and more stable social bonds with both females and male partners lived longer. In another long-term study, Silk, Alberts, and Altmann (2003) indicated that those female baboons who engaged in more social activities, such as grooming and being physically closer, had a higher rate of offspring survival. Close relationships with other female baboons provided help with infant upbringing, and close relationships with male baboons provided protection against harassment for them and their offspring. In the same vein, Kalbitz, Ostner, and Schülke (2016) reported strong and stable bonds also develop between male Assamese macaques, which help them to maintain a dominance rank. Studies on male chimpanzees indicate they favor those who are kin and those with whom they engage in more frequent grooming (Mitani, Watts, Pepper, & Merriwether, 2002). Bonds were also evident in behaviors such as sharing meat, patrolling together, and supporting one another in combat (Mitani et al., 2002). Evolutionists believe that these social behaviors in nonhuman primates are indicative of survival techniques in humans (Geary et al., 2003; Kenrick, Neuberg, & White, 2013).

According to evolutionary theorists, human ancestors engaged in social interactions primarily for survival and reproduction purposes (Kenrick et al., 2013; Trivers, 1971). Social skills helped ancient human ancestors to collaborate in hunting, gathering, and protecting their offspring. They also needed social interactions to attract mates, trade resources, obtain favors, and influence others to make war or negotiate peace (Geary et al., 2003; Trivers, 1971). Men's higher physical strength made them hunters, and women's reproductive system made them the child bearers and feeders. Thus, from an evolutionary perspective, men learned aggressive and competitive tactics for survival, whereas women learned interpersonal skills to protect themselves and their offspring by obtaining the collaboration of other women and influencing men to obtain their protection against other men and environmental dangers (Geary et al., 2003; Trivers, 1971).

According to evolutionary theorists, research on sex and behavior has consistently reported modern men remain more physically aggressive than modern women, which is reflective of the survival techniques that humans' ancestors learned (Geary et al., 2003). More recent research also indicates women prefer intimacy over number of friends whereas men prefer number of friends over intimacy. This tendency can be interpreted in terms of survival since ancient men needed numerous allies to win battles and women needed intimacy to influence others to care for and to protect them (Vigil, 2007).

In addition to the described survival skills, evolutionists believe that human ancestors, as well as other primates, experienced different levels of closeness and affection and that they used behavioral clues to indicate their emotions and intentions,

which promoted survival and procreation (Trivers, 1971). According to the evolutionary perspective on interpersonal relationships theory, humans' modern social interactions are a product of the evolutionary responses needed to adjust to every environment and life situations that past generations faced (Geary et al., 2003). Thus, human ancestors knew and exercised social interactions to navigate their domestic tasks and the dangers of their time (Geary et al., 2003; Kenrick et al., 2013). Those foundational evolutionary adaptations to humans' changes in lifestyles and the development of human brain functions in turn produced the sophisticated abstract concepts of friendship (Cunnane, 2005) that have been offered by both modern scholars and ancient Greek philosophers. A critique to evolutionary theories is that they are not falsifiable (Gannon, 2002).

Aristotle's study of friendship. *The Nicomachean Ethics Book VIII and IX of Friendship* by Aristotle are considered the most comprehensive, valuable, and best known of all classical works on friendship (Benetatos 2013; Cooper, 1977; Pangle, 2002). However, Aristotle did not include women's friendship in his treatise of friendship. In ancient Greece, women were property of men with no civic rights (Raymond, 1986; Taylor, 2011) and were considered incapable of engaging in friendships (Taylor, 2011). Thus, women's friendship is not included in the most cited and well-known of the classical treatise of friendship. Nevertheless, Aristotle's study of friendship is important in friendship history and research because it was one of the earliest to depict the types of friendship and concepts associated with intimacy that relate to modern concepts of friendship relationships (Benetatos, 2013; Cooper, 1977). For

example, Aristotle's friendship of virtue is the modern best-friends friendship; his friendship of pleasure is the modern casual friends with whom one drinks, sports, and shares leisure time; and his friendship of utility is equivalent to the modern acquaintances and coworkers with whom favors are exchanged. A brief description of the three types of Aristotle's friendship follows.

In Aristotle's view, friendship is an intimate relationship between virtuous men, a necessity for survival and essential to experience a meaningful existence. He also believed friendship provides men with joy, loyalty, protection, power, guidance, and pleasure (Aristotle, trans. 2011; Benetatos, 2013). Aristotle argued that friendship could be formed between two or more people and that the personal characteristics of men determined the type (i.e., virtue, pleasure, or utility) of friendship they formed (Aristotle, trans. 2011; Cooper, 1977). Thus, only men with high moral values could form friendships of virtue, which is the kind of friendship that has been exalted by myriad other philosophers such as Plato, Cicero, and Montaigne (Black, 1898/2011), and without which the moral magnification attributed to its members might best be compared to present-day intimate friendships.

Aristotelian friendships of virtue include mutual love and affection, trust, loyalty, understanding, goodwill, reciprocity of favors, company, encouragement to become better people, and willingness to learn from each other's virtuous character. Friends of virtue experience pleasure out of the happiness of their friends; they experience utility by providing mutual company, and they exchange favors out of affection and without

expectations of receiving any benefits (Aristotle, trans. 2011; Cooper, 1977). This type of friendship tends to last forever because the good qualities of their members are permanent and so is their good will for the wellbeing of their friends (Aristotle, trans. 2011).

Contrary to friendships of virtue, friendships of pleasure are ephemeral. Friends of pleasure seek their own pleasure, so they befriend those whom they find amusing, but when they stop liking or having fun with their friends, they terminate the relationship (Aristotle, trans. 2011). However, because friends of pleasure like and enjoy each other's company, they tend to be less selfish than friends of utility (Aristotle, trans. 2011). In friendships of utility, each friend seeks to obtaining some sort of benefit from the relationship. Once the benefit ceases, friends of utility terminate the friendship association (Aristotle, trans. 2011). These types of friendships are common among business partners and rich and poor people. For example, the rich obtain services from the poor, and the poor obtain money or prestige from the rich (Aristotle, trans. 2011).

Aristotle (trans. 2011) asserted that having friends across all type of friendships was beneficial because it provided something positive to all its members. Aristotle's classification of friendships according to the personality traits and moral values of its members continues to be an important method of characterizing friendship relationships (Abell, Brewer, Qualter, & Austin, 2016; Lyons & Aitken, 2010). In addition to his stance that friends seek what is loved, convenient, or pleasant, Aristotle also mentioned that, "it is impossible for the wicked to be friends" (Aristotle, trans. 2011, p. 165).

Indeed, modern researchers have indicated that high Machiavellian personality traits impede the development of meaningful friendship relationships (Abell, Lyons, & Brewer, 2014; Lyons & Aitken, 2010). Aristotle also acknowledged that individuals tend to befriend those who share similarities with them and stated, “like is to like” (Aristotle, trans. 2011, p. 164), which is supported by contemporary research on homophily in friendship (e.g., McPherson et al., 2001).

In addition, his classification of three types of friendships can be compared to research on communal and exchange relationship orientations. In the communal relationship orientation and Aristotelian friendships of virtue, individuals attend to the needs and concerns of the other (Clark, Mills, & Powell, 1986). In an exchange orientation, as in Aristotelian’s friendships of utility, individuals seek what is advantageous to them (Clark et al., 1986). Research has indicated that in best friendship relationships, individuals find satisfaction in communal relationships but not in exchange-orientated relationships (Jones & Vaughan, 1990), which supports Aristotle’s philosophy of virtuous friendships. Moreover, Aristotle’s philosophy anteceded theories such as the reinforcement-affect theory by Byrne and Clore (1970).

Overall, Aristotle’s theory of friendship continues to be cited and studied because it is relevant for understanding modern types of friendships and answers questions regarding the benefits and factors people consider in choosing, terminating, and maintaining friendship relationships (see Block & Greenberg, 1985; Demir & Weitekamp, 2006; Thomas, 1987). However, women’s friendships were not included in

Aristotle's theory. His omission of women's friendship reflects the culture of his era and the patriarchal culture that has dominated the sciences and society for centuries, where women's friendships are perceived as unimportant (O'Connor, 1992). Nonetheless, friendships among women in ancient societies undoubtedly existed (Taylor, 2011). Women made connections in their daily chores, such as going for water or to the market, attending religious services, and exchanging favors with their neighbors. All these activities, which were central to the role of women, offered them the frequency and opportunity to establish intimate connections with other women (Taylor, 2011).

Bowlby's attachment theory. John Bowlby's attachment theory is one of the most influential theories of personality development and interpersonal relationships (Bretherton, 1992; Cassidy, 2008; Feeney, Noller, & Roberts, 2000; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016; Simpson & Belsky, 2008). Bowlby's attachment theory is important in the study of friendship relationships because attachment bonds and attachment behaviors endure through time, affecting people's intimacy patterns and interactions in close relationships (Ainsworth, 1969; Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). Although there are other more recent attachment theories, Bowlby's attachment theory was the one chosen for the current study because Bowlby's tenets of attachment continue to form the foundation for other attachment theories. Additionally, Bowlby's attachment theory was selected because his theory is one of the most widely used to study and explain interpersonal relationships (Bretherton, 1992; Cassidy, 2008; Grabill & Kerns, 2000; Heinze, Cook,

Wood, Dumadag, & Zimmerman, 2018; McElwain, Booth-LaForce, & Wu, 2011; Welch & Houser, 2010).

In his studies of child-mother relationships, Bowlby noted several behaviors that infants displayed for the person “who mothers” them (Bowlby, 1958, p. 351), whether that person was the natural mother. Bowlby (1958, 1969) identified five primary attachment behaviors: sucking, clinging, following, smiling, and crying. He determined that sucking and crying could be interpreted as cues for hunger and believed clinging, following, and smiling were biologically programmed to alert caregivers to the need for attention and protection (Bowlby, 1958, 1969, 1982). He saw these attachment behaviors as biological capacities to seek the proximity of more able persons who could provide protection, enhancing infants’ probabilities of survival (Bowlby, 1958). Bowlby also believed attachment bonds impacted children’s emotional development and mental health. The proximity of their mother-figures provided children with a sense of safety, which enabled them to explore the environment with the assurance of being able to readily retreat to their mother-figures in case of danger (Bowlby, 1958). Additionally, Bowlby (1969, 1979/1989) believed that the way in which mother-figures responded to children’s attachment behaviors or attempts for attention strongly impacted the type of attachment bonds the infants developed, which has been supported by empirical research (McElwain et al., 2011). According to Bowlby (1982), equally important to attachment behaviors are attachment bonds. Attachment bonds are affectional ties infants have to specific individuals to whom they want or need to be close. Attachment bonds, once

formed, tend to endure, and are likely to be transferred to other relationships (Bowlby, 1973, 1980). The first attachment bond is usually with a mother-figure during infancy, but it can be formed with others throughout the lifespan. Another relevant element of Bowlby's attachment theory is the concept of internal working models.

According to Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980), experiences with attachment figures are cognitively processed and stored as internal working models or "representational models of the self and of attachment figure(s)" (Bowlby, 1982, p. 670). If children have responsive and affectionate mother-figures who accurately interpret children's attachment behaviors (e.g., crying out of hunger or for fear), they construct positive internal working models of self, others, and relationships. Children with a positive view or internal working model tend to believe they are worthy and self-sufficient; they also tend to trust others to be receptive and reliable. The opposite is often seen in children with unresponsive mother-figures. They tend to construct negative internal working models, believe they are unworthy and incompetent, and have difficulty trusting and relying on others (Bowlby, 1973). Bowlby (1979/1989) believed that internal working models were carried through to adulthood, affecting individuals' interpersonal relationships, especially with those close to them. Bowlby's tenets of attachment and personality development were later supported by multiple scholars' research (e.g., Grabill & Kerns, 2000; McElwain et al., 2011; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016; Welch & Houser, 2010).

Conversely to psychoanalytic theorists who taught the child-mother relationship during infants' oral stage, from birth to 1 year, emerged mainly out of the pleasure infants

experience from oral stimulation, such as when they are fed (Freud, 1920), Bowlby believed that the infants' attachment behaviors, such as crying and sucking, were not always due to hunger (Bowlby, 1958, 1960, 1969). In addition, smiling, clinging, and following were "non-oral in character and not directly related to food" (Bowlby 1958, p. 351). He also noted that infants intensified their attachment behaviors when they were distressed. Bowlby (1969) further stressed this point by pointing out that infants did not calm down by being fed or soothed by others, but when their mothers paid attention to them, especially if the mother correctly interpreted the infants' needs and responded affectionately. Thus, Bowlby (1958, 1969) concluded neither attachment bonds nor attachment behaviors were due to oral stimulation, and because babies displayed these behaviors before acquiring learning capabilities, attachments were not learned either. Bowlby (1982) defined attachment behavior as "any form of behavior that results in a person attaining or maintaining proximity to some other clearly identified individual who is conceived as better able to cope with the world" (p. 668). He believed that children were born with the innate capacity to alert their caregivers to their needs, especially when they sensed danger.

Bowlby found evidence for his developing theory of attachment in Lorenz' (1937) ethological research on geese becoming attached to parents who did not feed them and on Harlow and Zimmermann's (1958) study on Rhesus monkeys. Harlow and Zimmermann placed Rhesus monkeys in a cage with two surrogate mothers: one made of wire and the other of cloth. The wire mother had a bottle of milk and the cloth mother did not have

any food. Infant monkeys went to the wire mother only when they were hungry, and the rest of the time they preferred the cloth mother. Infant monkeys also went to the cloth mother whenever they felt threatened. If the cloth mother was removed from the cage, infant monkeys appeared fearful and did not explore the area. In addition, when scary situations were presented, if the cloth mother was in the cage, infant monkeys explored the area and attacked the threat, but remained frozen and in fear if the cloth mother was not with them.

Therefore, Bowlby (1958, 1969, 1982) believed that children's attachment behaviors were evolutionary survival mechanisms aimed to attain proximity with mother-figures to enhance probabilities of survival to reproductive age. Bowlby's ideas about attachment bonds have been supported by research on psychophysiology (e.g., Terranova, Cirulli, & Laviola, 1999), neuroscience (e.g., Coan, 2010; Cozolino, 2013), psychotherapy (e.g., Levy et al., 2011), and by scholars in the social sciences (e.g., Ainsworth, 1969; Crittenden, 2017; Sroufe, 2005), including research on friendship (e.g., Bender, 1999; Grabill & Kerns, 2000; Heinze et al., 2018; Kochendorfer & Kerns, 2017).

Mary D. Salter Ainsworth was a pioneer in empirical research of attachment behavior. Her Strange Situation pivotal studies were instrumental to Bowlby's philosophy of attachment gaining acceptance and provoking interest among other scholars (Bowlby, 1982; Bretherton, 1992; Crittenden, 2017). Ainsworth's Strange Situation Procedure is the most commonly replicated test to study attachments (Bretherton, 1992). Ainsworth developed the Strange Situation Procedure to test

Bowlby's attachment bonds and behaviors in infants from 12 to 18 months old. The Strange Situation Procedure was conducted in a laboratory setting where a 9 foot by 9 foot square room was adapted for infants to experience eight short events: 1) the mother and observer carry the infant into the room, 2) the infant is alone with the mother, who is attentive to the infant's needs, 3) a stranger enters the room, converses with the mother, approaches the infant with a toy, and the mother leaves the room, 4) the infant is with the stranger alone, 5) the mother returns to the room, and the stranger leaves 6) the infant is left alone, 7) the stranger returns, and 8) the mother returns and the stranger leaves. Ainsworth and Bell's (1970) results from the Strange Situation Process with 51-week-old babies provided empirical evidence for Bowlby's attachment theory.

The majority of infants in Ainsworth and Bell's (1970) experiment displayed confidence, explored the room, and played with the toys when they were alone with their mothers. When a stranger entered the room, infants glanced at the stranger more frequently than at their mother and the toys. When their mother left the room for the first time and infants stayed with the stranger, most infants cried, and they did not cease crying when the stranger tried to comfort them. When the mother left a second time, and the infant stayed alone, most infants intensified their crying, which did not diminish when only the stranger came back to the room. Most infants calmed down only when their mother came back and comforted them. In addition to crying, most infants searched around the room insistently. About 20% cried desperately and searched around the room very little. Most infants sought proximity when mothers came back to the room,

intensifying their attachment behaviors for proximity in the second reunion. About 33% of the infants showed contact-resisting behavior when their mother returned. A few infants resisted contact with both the stranger and the mother, and a few infants resisted contact only with their mother. When infants were left alone with the stranger, most infants stopped exploring and playing.

From her work with infants, Ainsworth and Bell (1970) identified three attachment styles: secure, insecure-avoidant, and insecure-ambivalent. Ainsworth's attachment styles have been researched and supported by numerous scholars (e.g., Bretherton, 1992; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016), and her Strange Situation experiment has been replicated abundantly (e.g., Sroufe, 2005), receiving strong support (Bowlby 1982; Bretherton, 1992; Crittenden, 2017). In addition, infants in Ainsworth and Bell's study showed similar behaviors to infant monkeys' in attachment behavior studies (Harlow & Zimmermann, 1958; Kaufman & Rosenblum, 1967; Spencer-Booth & Hinde, 1967).

Findings from Ainsworth and Bell's (1970) study on infants' responses to separation and reunion with mothers supported Bowlby's tenets and observations about children's attachment behaviors (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970; Bowlby, 1982; Bretherton, 1992). Both Bowlby's attachment theory tenets and Ainsworth's empirical research continue to be the foundation of attachment studies (Bretherton, 1992; Coan, 2010; Feeney et al., 2000; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016; Simpson & Belsky, 2008; Sroufe, 2005) and empirical research on attachment issues (e.g., Fraley, Roisman, Booth-LaForce, Owen, & Holland, 2013; McElwain et al., 2011, Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016; Sroufe,

2005; Welch & Houser, 2010), including friendship relationships (Bender, 1999; Grabill & Kerns, 2000; Heinze et al., 2018; Kochendorfer & Kerns, 2017). Bowlby's attachment theory is relevant to studies of friendship because it offers scientific explanations for an integral part of people's personality development and the essential factors that impact their interpersonal interactions (Bender, 1999; Bowlby, 1958, 1979/1989; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016; Sroufe, 2005). For example, individuals with positive internal working models or attachment styles tend to have high-self-esteem, be affectionate, and trust and rely on others (Bender, 1999; Bowlby, 1973, 1979/1989; Sroufe, 2005). They also tend to report being happy and satisfied with their friendships (Bender, 1999; Bowlby, 1979/1989). In contrast, individuals with negative internal working models or attachment styles tend to have lower-self-esteem, conflictive relationships, and are more prone to developing depression (Bowlby, 1979/1989; Margolese et al., 2005).

All the aspects mentioned are important for personality development and friendship relationships. Having healthy attachment bonds and behaviors, in adult life, helps individuals to experience good self-esteem, feel confident approaching others to give or receive help, enjoy their relationships more (Bender, 1999; Bowlby 1958, 1979/1989), have happier marriages, and process and resolve grief (Bowlby, 1982). Additionally, people who developed healthy internal working models tend to be affectionate, supportive, and respectful of their own and others' needs (Bowlby 1979/1989), which is the basis for having good friendship relationships (Bauminger et al., 2008; Block & Greenberg, 1985; Felmlee et al., 2012). Attachment experiences are "vital

for the formation of the person” (Sroufe, 2005, p. 365), and individuals’ personal characteristics determine their ability to form friendships and the quality of the relationships (Adams, et al., 2000; Rose, 2008). Therefore, attachment bonds, attachment behaviors, internal working models, and attachment styles are important factors to consider in studies of friendship. These factors are especially important when assessing a vulnerable population that might have been confronted with others’ negative internal working models towards them, as is the case with lesbian women. Equally important is to note that internal working models, although difficult to change, can be modified through positive experiences with other attachment figures (Bowlby, 1979/1989) and through therapy (Levy et al., 2011). Thus, having good friends might help individuals maintain positive internal working models or modify negative ones.

Relational cultural theory. The development of RCT started with Miller’s (1976) publication of the book *Towards a New Psychology of Women*, and since then, it has been an evolving model (Jordan, 1997, Jordan & Walker, 2004). As Miller (1986a) and Jordan (1997) have explained, RCT is a work in progress because research on women’s essence and life experiences has been neglected for so long, that the knowledge about women was and continues to be limited (Jordan, 1997; Miller, 1986a). Therefore, RCT developed gradually, starting with Miller’s (1976) ideas and subsequently with collaborative works with her colleagues, Judith V. Jordan, Irene P. Stiver, and Janet L. Surrey, as well as with later contributions by other scholars (Jordan, 1997, 2009; Miller, 1986a). A representation of their framework is their *Working Papers* publications, in

which can be traced the movement from a philosophy of women's sense of self (Miller, 1991), to self-in-relation (Surrey, 1985/1991), to the present RCT and therapy (Jordan, 2009). Thus, examining the development of RCT shows a continuous integration of related tenets, because as Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, and Surrey (1991) described, finding the right terminology was difficult given the need to convey new concepts. An example of these interrelated terms is: connection, disconnection, central relational paradox, and relational competence (see Jordan, 2004; Miller & Stiver, 1997). There have been specific shifts within the RCT literature, such as from the term growth-fostering connection to growth-fostering relationships or from relational paradox to central relational paradox (see Jordan & Walker, 2004).

It was also new and revolutionary to place relationships at the center of women's psychological development (Miller, 1986a). RCT scholars and others (e.g., Block & Greenberg, 1985; Gilligan, 1982) have affirmed that women base much of their self-worth and happiness in their relationships, as well as in their ability to form and maintain those relationships (Miller, 1986a). In addition, RCT theorists have stated that all relationships are experienced within a cultural context (Jordan, 2009; Miller, 1986a). As the cultural context is dominated by a heterosexist White male society, the other major cultural factor that impacts women's wellbeing is social inequality. Therefore, without understanding how social inequality interferes with women achieving meaning in their life, the value of the other tenets is difficult to grasp. Thus, for purpose of clarity, in this literature review, the meaning and impact of culture and discrimination in women's

experiences and psychological growth will be presented first, followed by the other central tenets of the model: connection, disconnection, central relational paradox, growth-fostering relationships, and Miller's (1986b) five good things.

The collaboration of the four original RCT scholars started 2 years after Miller's (1976) book publication. Initially, they discussed their clinical work with female patients. Women were disclosing issues that no psychotherapy addressed at that time (Jordan, 2009; Miller & Stiver, 1997). They were expressing having profound needs and desires to establish meaningful and intimate relationships; they worried about and helped others; and they were attentive to how their actions might affect people. Miller (1986a) explained that these women in therapy, and women in general, were not aware that their concerns, attitudes, and behaviors were indicative of strengths such as empathy, sensitivity, responsibility, and vulnerability. However, as those qualities are more frequently found in women than in men, society does not perceive them as strengths (see Miller, 1986a). In addition, the founding RCT scholars noted that women were unaware that much of their fear and confusion was due to cultural beliefs. They also noted that most women were not aware of the profound impact of male-female inequality in their own and others' perceptions, relationship interactions, and life experiences (Miller, 1986a).

Impact of culture and discrimination. According to Miller (1976, 1986a), other scholars (e.g., Block & Greenberg, 1985; Gilligan, 1982), and historians (e.g., Lerner, 1979), psychology's theoretical models and empirical research have largely been written by men and for men, ignoring and distorting the essence of women, their life experiences,

and the social constraints imposed on them (Denmark, Klara, Baron, & Cambareri-Fernandez, 2008; Jordan & Walker, 2004). In agreement with Miller's views, Denmark et al. (2008) pointed out that "from Wundt's 1874 establishment of the domain of psychology up to recent times, psychology appeared to focus almost exclusively on the behavior of men or male animals" (p. 5). Therefore, at that time, no real representation of the psychology of women had been included in any of the existing theories (Miller, 1986a).

In addition, as Miller (1976, 1986a) and other scholars (e.g., Bem, 2008; Berzoff, 1989; Bohan, 1992; Furumoto & Scarborough, 1992; Gilligan, 1982; Rose, 2008) have pointed out, the values of the dominant heterosexist White culture society permeate the scientific theories, influencing people's perceptions. Consequently, women's strengths are viewed as deficiencies, and their contributions to society are devalued (Bohan, 1992; Gilligan, 1982; Jordan & Walker, 2004; Miller, 1986a). For example, women's empathic and caring attributes, as well as their desires for understanding others in intimate ways, have been interpreted as women being "inherently needy, overly emotional, and dependent" (Jordan & Walker, 2004, p. 4; Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1986a). Nevertheless, researchers have consistently indicated that empathy and intimacy are elements of good friendship relationships (Adams et al., 2000; Bagwell & Schmidt, 2011; Hays, 1988; Parks & Floyd, 1996; Steenberg, 2013) and that women especially based their friendships on intimacy (Hall, 2011; Rubin, 1985; Sapadin, 1988). In addition, researchers have consistently suggested that friendship relationships are important for people's wellbeing

(Berkman et al., 2004; Indian & Grieve, 2014). Further, recorded history indicates men's and women's differences have been frequently used to violate the rights of women (Bem, 2008; Gilligan, 1982; Kite, Deaux, & Haines, 2008; Miller, 1986a).

There are abundance of examples of gender inequality, too extensive to detail in this document. Women are disproportionately victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment, subject to devaluing and stereotypical images in the media, face discrimination, unequal compensation for work, and role overload (American Psychological Association [APA], 2018). Women do not only work for unequally compensated labor, but they also work at home for no pay and are generally the primary caregivers of children. Unequal economy and gender-role socialization is intended to influence women to believe they are not as capable as men, and therefore, they need to submit to men's protection (Pharr, 2010). It was this type of misconception that Miller (1976, 1986a) explained that even women failed to recognize as strengths instead of weaknesses, causing them intense distress.

The psychological impact of social inequality is not obvious because institutionalized discrimination is maintained through both open and subtle cultural messages. In the United States, the media, religion, and education forums are used to disseminate the supremacy of white skin (Chisholm & Greene, 2008; Rose, 2008), men's gender and sex (Bem, 2008; Kite et al., 2008), heterosexual orientation (Garnets, 2008), Christianity (Schlosser, 2003), socio-economic-middle and upper classes (Bullock, Wyche, & Williams, 2001), and able bodies (Baynton, 2010). As Ostenson (2008)

described it, “John Smith, age 40, White, happily married, with two kids, church-going (Christian), physically fit, good-looking, financially well off” (p. 17) is the perfect profile to demonstrate the ideals of the dominant group. As those are the pervasive standards promoted in society, individuals of both dominant and subordinate groups tend to believe in this model of superiority, thereby obscuring and justifying social inequality (Miller, 1986a). However, for individuals’ psychological development and wellbeing, healthy relationships are essential at both individual and social levels (Jordan, 2009; Miller & Stiver, 1997).

Even in this briefest of reviews, it is evident that women’s relationships happen within a cultural context of inequality that not only complicates but is likely to compromise the development of their full psychological potential. In summary, RCT posits that people’s, especially women’s, psychological health and growth occurs in relational connection, and ideally, in healthy or growth-fostering relationships (Jordan, 1995, 2001, 2009; Miller, 1984/1991, 1988/2008; Miller & Stiver, 1997). In addition, RCT postulates that all relationships are experienced within a cultural context that affects individuals at personal and social levels (Jordan, 2009; Miller, 1986a, 1986b; Miller & Stiver, 1997), and when the cultural context is one of inequality, positive growth is likely to be hindered.

Connection. RCT theorists have asserted that connection is essential for women’s identity, sense of self-worth, and happiness (Miller & Stiver, 1997). RCT theorists also believe lack of connection leads to isolation, which is the primary source of people’s

suffering (Jordan & Walker, 2004; Miller, 1988/2008; Miller & Stiver, 1997). This concept of isolation regarding suffering has been supported by studies in neuroscience. Cacioppo and Patrick (2008) reported loneliness, real and perceived, can cause unbearable psychological pain and deteriorate people's immune system. Similarly, Perissinotto et al. (2012) suggested that real and perceived loneliness is a predictor of functional decline and death among individuals older than 60 years of age. Connection is important for women's psychological health because it is through connection that people form and maintain meaningful and healthy relationships, and women learn, starting in their childhood years, to base their self-worth in their ability to have meaningful relationships (Gilligan, 1991; Miller, 1986a; Miller & Stiver, 1997).

In RCT, connection is a relational interaction in which participants engage in mutual empathy and mutual empowerment; participants are their authentic selves and feel safe to experience and express their feelings and thoughts in words and behaviors (Jordan, 1995, 2009; Miller, 1988/2008; Miller & Stiver, 1997). Thus, the basic elements of connection are mutual empathy, mutual empowerment, emotional accessibility, authenticity, and vulnerability (Jordan, 1995, 2009; Lawler, 2004; Miller, 1986b, 1988/2008; Miller & Stiver, 1997). Connection is a construct that moves beyond the basic security/safety of attachment theory (see Ainsworth & Bell, 1970) toward a more complex understanding of ideal relationships.

Although interactions of connection are considered empowering and energizing for all individuals, there are multiple factors that impede interactions of connection

(Jordan & Walker, 2004; Miller, 1986a). RCT theorists and other scholars have asserted that factors such as gender-role socialization and social inequality interfere with the process of connection and disconnection, and therefore, with psychological development (Jordan, 2009; Jordan & Walker, 2004; Miller, 1986b; O'Connor, 1992; Walker, 2004). Society and families teach girls they need to be caring, nurturing, obedient, peacemakers, and submissive, which contribute to the ability to form and maintain harmonious relationships (Jordan, 1995; Miller, 1986a). In contrast, boys are taught to develop aggressive and competitive attitudes as well as to reject anything that resembles femininity (Kimmel, 2010; Miller, 1986a). For example, boys are taught to suppress feeling of sadness, hurt, shame, and guilt because they are told only girls have those feelings. Therefore, in the process of gender-role identity development, boys learn to devalue women and fear everything related to socialized feminine features that threatens their masculinity (Kimmel, 2010; O'Neil & Nadeau, 1999). Masculinity influences connection and growth-fostering relationships because men are likely to avoid emotional intimacy, devalue women, and tend to ignore women's needs and, in more serious disconnections, they may also use violence to overpower them (Harway & O'Neil, 1999; Jordan, 2004; Miller, 1988/2008; Thompson, 2010).

Disconnection. While connection leads to growth-fostering relationships, disconnection leads to isolation (Miller, 1986b; Miller & Stiver, 1997). In interactions of disconnection, neither mutual empathy nor mutual empowerment is provided. Disconnections take place when participants fall into misunderstandings or someone

behaves insensitively or hurtfully toward others. In interactions of disconnection, participants tend to feel unsafe, misunderstood, and disappointed (Jordan, 2001; Miller, 1988/2008). Disconnections can be acute, chronic, and/or traumatic. Acute disconnections occur constantly as a part of daily life and generally do not affect people's wellbeing if they are not serious misunderstandings and reconnection occurs (Jordan, 2009; Miller, 1988/2008). In contrast, chronic disconnections are the result of numerous acute disconnections that were never repaired (Jordan, 2009; Miller & Stiver, 1997).

Chronic disconnections lead to isolation because the injured parties never get an opportunity to express their suffering (Jordan, 2000; Miller & Stiver, 1997). Most chronic disconnections occur in relationships where one of the participants holds most of the power and can determine the direction of the relationship (Miller, 1986a, 1988/2008). Conflicts between heterosexual spouses in traditional gender role relationships, where the men hold most of the power, are examples of interactions of disconnection at a personal level. Among such heterosexual spouses, wives are usually the party seeking communication to solve conflicts because, as the subordinate member, they want to improve their situation. However, most husbands resist dialogues that might expose their vulnerability and/or jeopardize their position of power (Miller, 1988/2008). Therefore, men tend to ignore the problem, try to dismiss it as unimportant or avoid responsibility by blaming wives, and encourage them to focus on the needs of others (Miller, 1986a). As a result of this interaction, the couple does not reconnect, and most women, in these situations, tend to feel confused about how to reconnect, doubt their own self-worth, take

blame for the situation, deny their own needs, and learn to fear conflicts (Jordan, 2000; Miller, 1988/2008; Miller & Stiver, 1997).

Disconnections can also happen at a societal level when power is used to discriminate, make unsafe, oppress, and denigrate others (Jordan, 2001; Jordan & Walker, 2004; Miller & Stiver, 1997). An example of disconnection at a societal level is men's violence against women, such as rape. Rape is a chronic and serious disconnection because people with patriarchal views tend to focus on women's behavior and excuse the male rapist (McKimmie, et al., 2014; Pharr, 2010; Rozee, 2008). For example, if the victim knew the perpetrator, especially if he was her date (McKimmie et al., 2014), was not injured during the rape, did not fight back forcefully enough, or if she wore a revealing outfit, people tend to blame the woman (Bongiorno, McKimmie, & Masser, 2016). Those stereotypes are so pervasive that many women who have been raped doubted their own innocence. Society's lack of support increases women's feelings of powerlessness, worthlessness, shame, confusion, and emotional pain (Bieneck & Krahé, 2011; Miller, Canales, Amacker, Backstrom, & Gidycz, 2011; War, 1985). Most women do not report being raped to protect their reputation and avoid shame and revictimization (Miller et al., 2011). Women's reactions to both personal and societal disconnections are attempts to avoid further pain, but in doing so, women often deny themselves, which Miller and Stiver (1991) called Central Relational Paradox.

Central relational paradox. Miller and Stiver (1991) explained that when disconnection happens, individuals opt to engage in behaviors to protect themselves from

further pain. Women tend to ignore their needs to please others and reconnect. Women also are likely to hide those aspects of themselves that seem unlikable or those features for which they think they were rejected. The paradox is that while women long for, and work towards having relationships, by ignoring their needs and true self, they disconnect from themselves and hinder authentic connection and growth-fostering relationships. For connection and growth to occur, people need to be authentic and vulnerable, but as they have often been hurt while being authentic and vulnerable, they avoid relating in that fashion. Miller and Stiver and other scholars (see Jordan, 2001) believed this type of disconnection leads to mental health issues, such as depression, phobias, and eating disorders.

Growth-fostering relationships. RCT scholars have pointed out that relationships are a combination of connections, conflicts, disconnections, and reconnections (Jordan, 2009; Lawler, 2004; Miller & Stiver, 1997). When individuals have more interactions of connection and deal constructively with disconnections, therefore reconnecting, they experience growth-fostering relationships (Miller, 1986b; Walker, 2004). In growth-fostering relationships, all participants experience growth and emotional intimacy, which is conceptualized as mutuality within RCT (Walls, 2004). Those in growth-fostering relationships also experience Miller's (1986b) five good things: zest, action, knowledge, sense of worth, and greater sense of connection and motivation for more connections.

Mutuality. Mutuality is a concept that describes the process and elements of emotional intimacy (Walls, 2004). Thus, mutuality has the elements of empathy,

authenticity, trust to self-disclose intimate feelings and life experiences, and interest for each other's wellbeing (Jordan, 1991; Miller, 1988/2008; Walls, 2004). In RCT, mutuality is not a mere exchange of affection and secrets; mutuality is a profound understanding, acceptance, and validation of the authentic self of each other. In interactions of mutuality, people tend to appreciate each other for what they are; provide mutual empathy, validation, support, and encouragement to grow psychologically and to achieve each other's goals, without forgetting the needs and goals of oneself (Jordan, 1991; Miller, 1988/2008; Walls, 2004). Thus, mutuality is an emotionally intimate interaction in which people care for their mutual growth and empowerment and are willing to be mutually influenced to express their feelings and act toward positive change (Jordan, 1991, 2009). It is important, for the present study, to note that all the elements comprising mutuality are elements of growth-fostering relationships (see Waring, Tillman, Frelick, Russell, & Weisz, 1980) and many of the elements women value in their friendships (see Bauminger et al., 2008; Block & Greeberg, 1985; Hall, 2011).

Miller's five good things. The terminology and description of the five good things were first described in Miller's (1986b) work. She referred to five things that happen while people engage in interactions that promote psychological growth. Thus, Miller's five good things are experienced in interactions of mutuality and have been used to assess perceived mutuality (Genero et al., 1992). Miller was not sure if the words she terms she used for the five good things were accurate, and she invited her colleagues to modify

them. Thus, there are other terms for Miller's (1986b) five good things. In this paper, the original terms were used, and their definitions are as follows:

1. *Zest*. Zest is the feeling produced when one knows and feels that an authentic emotional connection has been established with someone. In Miller's own words, zest is "the feeling – which comes when we feel a real sense of connection with another person(s)" (Miller, 1986b, p. 5). Zest is the starting point for the other four good things to happen; without zest, people do not feel interest in continuing connecting. However, people might experience zest or the authentic emotional connection and interest to continue connecting, but if the other four good things do not occur, growth-fostering relationships cannot happen. When zest happens, people's sense of self-worth increases because they realize they can communicate honestly and be accepted by others. Thus, they are motivated to continue being vulnerable and empathic in present and future interactions with the same and other individuals.

2. *Action*. Action is the feeling of mutual empowerment and encouragement to continue sharing and supporting each other. Action also includes the element of motivation to expand interactions with present and future relationships. An example of how action takes place might be two women consoling each other and helping each other to see various options for how to solve a problem. As they talk about the situation, they exchange expressions of validation and encouragement in a caring way. As they feel understood, listened to, and that someone cares for them, their sense of self-worth increases, and they also feel encouraged to take action toward improving their situation.

The action they are inspired to take might be at an individual level, as in having a more positive outlook or at a societal level, as in championing for social changes. Thus, growth in action is an increased sense of self-worth and ability to be empathetic and supportive to oneself and others, beyond the current relationship.

3. *Knowledge.* Knowledge is gaining new awareness of self and the other or others in one's interaction. Through the reciprocal and authentic exchange of thoughts and feelings, each participant in the interaction not only has more information about the other, but they also have a new and more profound understanding of themselves. Growth in knowledge is a closer and more intimate awareness of self and other(s).

4. *Sense of worth.* According to Miller (1986b), people develop a sense of worth when others appreciate and acknowledge their existence and experiences. A sense of worth occurs when participants engage in mutual recognition and validation of each other's feelings and concerns. Growth in sense of worth is evident in an increase of self-esteem and respect for the other's worth.

5. *Greater sense of connection and the motivation for more connections.* When people experienced the other four good things, they are likely to experience a greater connection with the person with whom they were interacting. They also experience a greater motivation to expand these good interactions beyond the current relationship.

Summary. RCT scholars believe all growth-fostering experiences lead to relational competence. Relational competence is the ability to interact with a more sophisticated awareness of all the characteristics of growth-fostering relationships while

accurately interpreting and responding to the emotions of self and others in growth-fostering interactions (Jordan, 2004; Miller & Stiver, 1991). Overall, RCT is a working model for studying the psychology of women, which has consistently expanded as RCT proponents learn more about women's experiences (Jordan, 1997, 2009). The tenets of RCT challenge traditional theories, which value independence and autonomy as well as the values of competition and male gender supremacy prevalent in male-dominant societies (Jordan & Walker, 2004; Miller, 1986a). RCT is a foundational model that links cultural beliefs and discrimination to human psychological development and pathology (Jordan, 2009; Miller, 1986b, 1988/2008). Therefore, RCT is a feminist theory (Comstock et al., 2008), which exposes social inequality and champions for social justice (Jordan, 2001, 2009; Miller, 1986a).

An RCT theoretical framework is relevant to women's friendship studies because it explains women's relationships within the context of the prevalent male-dominated culture and its tenets are closely related to the characteristics that research has suggested are essential to form and maintain meaningful friendships. For instance, RCT posits that connection is essential for women's identity and sense of self-worth, and Sullivan (1953) and Hartup and Stevens (1997) have indicated having friends promotes a sense of self-worth. In addition, the elements of connection and growth-fostering relationships such as empathy, authenticity, vulnerability, and empowerment have been related to friendship throughout history (see Aristotle, trans. 2011; Bagwell & Schmidt, 2011; Black, 1898/2011; de Vries & Megathlin, 2009; Hays, 1988). Also, the elements of mutuality

are important for women to establish friendships because women tend to value supportive and emotionally intimate relationships (Hall, 2011; Miller, 1986a).

Further, RCT's principle of isolation and its impact on women's wellbeing has been supported by other studies, including research on neuroethology. For example, losing friends or difficulty making friends is associated with depression (Brent et al., 2014) and suicidal ideation and behavior (Lytle, Silenzio, Homan, Schneider, & Caine, 2017). In addition, researchers of friendship have supported RCT's notion of empowerment. Sherwin (2018) and Gates et al. (2019) indicated women empower each other to confront heterosexism in the workplace, and Berscheid et al. (1989) and Spencer and Pahl (2006) indicated that growth-fostering relationships improve the overall wellbeing of individuals. Therefore, RCT is relevant to women's friendships.

Overview of Women's Friendship

Throughout history, women's friendship has been ignored (Alger, 1868/2014; Chittister, 2006; O'Connor, 1992; Smith-Rosenberg, 1975), especially sexual minority women's friendships (Galupo, 2009; Weinstock & Rothblum, 1996). The reasons to ignore women's friendships have been given by scholars of all age eras and were especially salient in the writings of the philosophers of the Enlightenment. Many thinkers of the Enlightenment, echoing ancient philosophers, believed that friendship was restricted to men of equal moral values, class, and education (Garrioch, 2014). They also believed that women were incapable of friendship relationships, among other things, because they were fickle, trivial, manipulative, and irrational (Garrioch, 2014; Rousseau,

1762/1979). Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued that women should devote themselves to their households and family. Rousseau also stated that women should be restrained from making their own decisions because they were impulsive, capricious, and had tendencies to develop vices. In addition, Rousseau believed that women should not try to imitate men because they were incapable of raising to the level of men. Therefore, women were incapable of behaving with the sincerity and devotion that friendships required.

Similar negative views justifying women's inability for friendships were described more recently by Allan (1989). He wrote that there is "a strong imagery of women being bitchy about one another, gossiping, and betraying confidences" (p. 65). In the same vein, Block and Greenberg (1985) indicated that there are hundreds of derogatory terms describing women and only a few describing men. However, women's writings, correspondence, and diaries of past centuries demonstrated that friendship between women existed and was meaningful and supportive (Rosenzweig, 1999; Smith-Rosenberg, 1975).

Negative beliefs about women's friendship were challenged in the 1960s by feminist women who were championing for women's liberation. According to the feminists of the time, women's friendship was a strong source of practical and emotional support (Rose & Rodes, 1987; Rosenzweig, 1999). In addition, the thought of sisterhood and the "personal is political" helped to ignite interest in research on women's friendship (Rose & Rodes, 1987; Rosenzweig, 1999). An example of publications about the importance of women's friendship is the pioneering article about heterosexual and

romantic friendships between women in the 18th and 19th century by Smith-Rosenberg (1975), who described women's friendships as among the most intimate and supportive relationships in the lives of women.

Still, most of the research that has been conducted on women's friendships has been in comparison to men. The extant research literature demonstrates a strong tendency to focus on heterosexual sex differences (Frey, Beesley, Hurst, Saldana, & Licuanan, 2016; e.g., David-Barrett et al., 2015; Felmlee et al., 2012; Hall, 2011; Sapadin, 1988). For the present study, brief descriptions of male-female differences will be presented because they shed light onto important characteristics of women's ways of relating. This section will also contain a review of friendship relationships between heterosexual women, lesbian women, and heterosexual and lesbian women.

Women's and Men's Friendships

In contrast to the philosophers of the ancient Greece and the European Enlightenment movement, who believed women were incapable of friendship relationships, more recent scholars' research has indicated that women's friendships are more satisfying and supportive (Bank & Hansford, 2000; Block & Greenberg, 1985; Reisman, 1990; Sapadin, 1988), trusting and intimate (Bauminger et al., 2008; Felmlee et al., 2012; Hall, 2011; Reisman, 1990; Sapadin, 1988), and less restrained from homophobic views than men's friendships (Bank & Hansford, 2000). Among the most salient differences researchers have identified between men's and women's friendships are that women tended to engage in more self-disclosure and value reciprocity,

commitment, and emotional and affective expressions (Block & Greenberg, 1985; Davidson & Packard, 1981; Hall, 2011).

Researchers have consistently indicated that women tend to be more skillful than men in expressing emotional intimacy (Bauminger et al., 2008; Block & Greenberg, 1985; Hall, 2011; Rubin, 1985; Sapadin, 1988; Smith-Rosenberg, 1975). For instance, Lewis (1978) and others' (e.g., David-Barrett et al., 2015; Rose & Rudolph, 2006; Vigil, 2007) studies indicated that while men tended to have more friends than women, their friendships lacked intimacy. In contrast, women's friendships tend to be characterized by affection, nurturance, and emotional intimacy (Hall, 2011; Richey & Richey, 1980; Rose & Rudolph, 2006; Sapadin, 1988; Vigil, 2007). While men tend to report less satisfaction, intimacy, and mutuality in their same-sex friendships (Bank & Hansford, 2000; Genero et al., 1992; Rubin, 1985; Sapadin, 1988), preferring less self-disclosure (Fehr, 1996, 2004; Reisman, 1990; Rubin, 1985; Sapadin, 1988), and purposely detaching themselves from expressions of emotions (Blazina, 2004; Rubin, 1985; Sapadin, 1988), women have reported favoring all those features (Miller, 1986a; Rubin, 1985). Interestingly, all the aspects mentioned as gender differences have been identified as characteristics in good friendship relationships (Blieszner, 2014; Fehr, 1996; Hays, 1988; Wright, 2003).

In addition to evolutionary factors (see Vigil, 2007), one of the most common explanations for heterosexual gender difference has been cultural beliefs and gender socialization. According to Lewis (1978) and Blatterer (2016), gender socialization and homophobic attitudes restrict men from having close friends and expressing emotional

intimacy. On the other hand, gender socialization for girls and women leads them to develop expressions of intimacy and affection (Blatterer, 2016; Block & Greenberg, 1985; Miller 1986a). Further, researchers have also indicated that men tend to be more expressive and share confidences with their female friends rather than with their male friends (Blatterer 2016; Rubin, 1985; Sapadin, 1988). Men's masculinity might be less threatened when expressing socially ascribed feminine features with women than with men (Kimmel, 2010; O'Neil & Nadeau, 1999). For example, men tend to judge harshly male friends who greet them with a kiss, while both men and women tend to judge female friends who betrayed a secret more harshly than a male friend who betrayed a secret (Felmlee et al., 2012). It seems emotional intimacy, the most important element of connecting meaningfully to others, is gendered by patriarchal cultural beliefs.

Women's Friendships

Although conclusions about women's sexual orientation in friendships cannot be made because participants' sexual orientation is rarely included (Kochman, 1997; Rose, 2000), there is evidence that women tend to value the above-mentioned characteristics across sexual orientation (Galupo & Gonzalez, 2013; Rosenzweig, 1999; Smith-Rosenberg, 1975). In addition, most of the literature reviewed for women's friendship also included men. Therefore, this section will include studies relevant to women's friendships, noting that some also assessed heterosexual and sexual minority men and women.

As Miller (1986a) described, all relationships are experienced within a cultural context, and women's friendships are experienced within a culture that has simultaneously encouraged and devalued women's roles and relationships (Rosenzweig, 1999). In traditional patriarchal society, women were considered property. Women are frequently depicted as the daughters, sisters, and/or wives of men (Allan, 1989; Block & Greenberg, 1985; Smith-Rosenberg, 1975). The obligations inherent to these roles are that of servitude to men; therefore, they have been ranked as inferior to those usually held by men (Allan, 1989; Miller, 1986a). Additionally, culture did not ascribe women the role of a friend. Until recently, friendship was a relationship exclusive of men (Alger, 1868/2014; Garrioch, 2014; Rubin, 1985). However, women are educated to develop qualities such as nurturance, vulnerability, and sensitivity (Blatterer, 2016; Miller, 1986a), which are essential to form and maintain good relationships, including friendship (Miller, 1986a; Steenberg, 2013).

Paradoxically, women have been also portrayed as bitchy, gossipers, and illogical (Alger, 1868/2014; Allan, 1989; Block & Greenberg, 1985) and women's friendships as "shallow, insincere, temporary, and insignificant" (Rosenzweig, 1999, p. 2). A brief review of fiction literature demonstrates that women friends have been largely depicted as jealous, treacherous, disloyal, vindictive, and as rivals (Alger, 1868/2014; Block & Greenberg, 1985). Undoubtedly, there are women's friendships that correspond with the stereotypes described, but researchers have indicated that those are not the norm (Block & Greenberg, 1985). In addition, research on friendship has also suggested that in

treacherous friendship relationships, personality traits, such as Machiavellianism and narcissism, are usually involved (Abell et al., 2016; Lyons & Aitken, 2010).

Furthermore, when women's friendships have been assessed including women's perceptions, attitudes, and field observations, researchers have frequently reported that women's friendships tend to be emotionally and practically supportive (Block & Greenberg, 1985; Felmlee et al., 2012; Frey et al., 2016).

Characteristics of women's friendships. Based on the literature described, it is evident that the most salient characteristic of women's friendship is their need and value for emotional intimacy, which has been observed in girls and adult women (Campbell, 2013; Candy, Troll, & Levy, 1981; Rose & Rudolph, 2006). The most important reason for women to have friends is to have someone they can trust and with whom to talk intimately (Harrison, 1998; Rubin, 1985). Consequently, most women engage in self-disclosure and expressions of empathy (Bauminger et al., 2008; Block & Greenberg, 1985; Hays, 1984; Reisman, 1990; Rose & Rudolph, 2006; Sapadin, 1988). Other features women have endorsed are loyalty and commitment (La Gaipa, 1979; Moremen, 2008). In addition, some scholars have indicated that women tend to engage in conflict resolution in a collaborative fashion (Keener & Strough, 2017). At the same time, it has also been observed that women tend to be more sensitive to criticism; thus, they might be more likely to end friendships when they feel hurt (Moremen, 2008). Therefore, emotional intimacy, self-disclosure, conflicts, and factors women consider in forming, maintaining, and terminating friendship relationships will be addressed next.

Emotional intimacy. Women's need and predilection for intimate friendships have been reported in early and recent studies. Alger (1868/2014) studied women's friendships in the 19th century, and he concluded that contrary to derogatory cultural beliefs about women's character, they were sensitive, intuitive, and compassionate. Thus, women were more apt than men to determine not only what was important and meaningful, but also what was superficial and offensive. In consequence, women were more inclined than men to intimate and supportive friendships, rather than to multiple inconsequential relationships (Alger, 1868/2014). As intimacy rarely exist in groups, women tended to have few friends, while men tended to have numerous acquaintances (Alger, 1868/2014). Certainly, not all women have meaningful friendships nor the ability to be intimately expressive (Miller, 1986b; see Abell et al., 2016). Researchers have indicated that the degree of emotional intimacy manifested also depends on individual characteristics such as attachment style and personality traits. People with secure attachment and extroverted personality traits tend to be more expressive (Bauminger et al., 2008; Grabill & Kerns, 2000). In contrast, people with insecure attachment and introverted personality traits have been observed to avoid and even reject social interactions (Bauminger et al., 2008). In addition, some friendships may lack the level of trust needed to have emotional intimacy (Spencer & Pahl, 2006). However, it seems that, in general, women are emotionally expressive at all levels of the intimacy scale, from acquaintances to best friends (Hays, 1984).

One of the first authors to reclaim the importance of women's friendship was Smith-Rosenberg (1975), who studied the mail correspondence and diaries of 35 American women from the middle class of the 18th and 19th century. Smith-Rosenberg argued friendship between women has always existed and been ignored because women have been relegated to household chores and children. She explained that women's domestic roles limited their associations to close and extended kin as well as to the visitors of their male relatives. In the women's writings Smith-Rosenberg reviewed, women's conversations did not include politics, literary works, or business-related topics. It seems that women talked mostly about issues oriented to their household, children, and family. These writings also indicated that women developed strong and lasting bonds with their friends, confiding, consoling, and supporting each other in difficult times. In addition to next of kin, women friends were also the witness and primary support through pregnancies and childbirth.

In the same vein, Rosenzweig's (1999) comprehensive study on White middle-class American women's friendship from 1900 to 1960 reported that women's friendships have been important for women throughout time and throughout social and cultural changes. She avowed the characteristics of warmth, affection, support, and intimacy that recent research has attributed to women's friendships. An interesting account on Rosenzweig's research is her comparison to women's friendship to daughter-mother relationship. Rosenzweig believed that because the relationship between daughters and mothers is based on love and emotional intensity, they transfer those

aspects to their relationships with other women. Therefore, women might experience a powerful connection with other women that might be rarely seen between men or between women and men. If women transfer their daughter-mother attachment bond to their female friends, it may influence their connection, but it also makes separations and friendships' termination more painful (see Flemke, 2001; Rosenzweig, 1999).

Women's strong connections and the pain of losing friends have also been observed by clinicians. According to Barth (2018), friendship relationships are seldomly the presenting issue in therapy, but they are mentioned as constant source of support and encouragement as well as contributors to the overall wellbeing for women. She described that for most women, friends are the witnesses and companions of their life experiences and struggles. Therefore, Barth (2018) and Flemke (2001) advocated for the integration of friendship relationships in therapy. They argued that clients' friendship relationships can illuminate women's interactional dynamics and attachment styles (Flemke, 2001). However, in Barth's experience, most women talk about their friends only when they are experiencing serious conflicts, grieving the loss of friends, or because they do not have friends, which cause women profound pain. Barth (2018) also indicated that some women expect to have the quality of friendships that has been, lately, stereotyped for women: warm, nurturing, affectionate, and intimate, and it distresses them when they do not experience it.

As indicated by Barth (2018), for some women, not having nurturing friendships or are not being able to be as warm, affectionate, and nurturing as the ascribed female

gender features is a cause of pain and shame. Therapy can serve these women to realize the factors that might be impeding them to have fulfilling friendships (Barth, 2018; Flemke, 2001) and that not all friendships are emotionally intimate or close (Reisman, 1979). However, most clinicians do not encourage the topic of friendships within their therapy sessions; furthermore, most clinicians seem not to give friends an important role in the healing of their clients (Flemke, 2001). However, numerous scholars have identified women's need for and importance of intimate relationships (Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1986a).

Women's tendency toward intimate relationships can be perceived from childhood. For example, Rose and Rudolph (2006) reviewed 80 studies on friendship interactions of children and adolescents, and they concluded that girls engaged in more self-disclosure and expressions of empathetic emotional support than boys. Papini, Farmer, Clark, Micka, and Barnett (1990) reported similar findings. They observed social interactions of adolescent girls ages 12 and 15 years old and reported that girls exhibited more self-disclosure of emotional intimacy to parents and peers than boys did. Papini et al. also observed that the older girls in the study preferred to confide in their peers more than in their parents. Another observation in Rose and Rudolph's review was that girls engaged in frequent ruminating over their problems, which has been positively associated with depression (Stone & Gibb, 2015). Girls might also engage in self-disclosure to alleviate the stress of persistent thoughts (see Ditzen, Hoppmann, & Klumb, 2008).

Self-disclosure. In addition to emotional intimacy, and essential to develop emotional intimacy, self-disclosure is at the core of women's friendships. Self-disclosure seems to also be a biological need for all human beings. Tamir and Mitchell's (2012) study on the activity in the medial prefrontal cortex and self-disclosing indicated that people preferred to talk about themselves than about others. In addition, Tamir and Mitchell also observed that people perceived self-disclosing as a rewarding experience. In contrast, restraining from self-disclosing has been associated with decline in intellectual and executive acuity (Critcher & Ferguson, 2014) and with loneliness (Franzoi & Davis, 1985).

Both men and women self-disclose with the expectation of being heard, understood, and depending on the revelation, supported and validated (Laurenceau, Barrett, & Rovine, 2005); however, cultural norms influence the content and frequency of their revelations. Derlega, Durham, Gockel, and Sholis (1981) indicated that while women's self-disclosures are higher than men's self-disclosures in traditional feminine topics, such as emotions, men reveal at higher levels about traditional masculine topics, such as achievements. Another factor influencing people's willingness and ability to engage in self-disclosing is attachment bonds. Grabill and Kerns (2000) found that people with secure attachment styles were more likely than individuals with insecure attachment styles to self-disclose intimately. In addition, individuals with secure attachment styles tended to perceive and provide support and validation in response to self-disclosure (Grabill & Kerns, 2000).

Another benefit of self-disclosing is the development of meaningful relationships. Altman and Taylor's (1973) theory of social penetration posited that closeness and intimacy in relationships developed from the gradual increase of reciprocal exchanges of intimate self-disclosures (Pan, Feng, & Wingate, 2018). Weiss & Lowenthal (1975) indicated that the more people share personal details, the more they achieve having intimacy, which is associated with satisfying relationships. Thus, self-disclosing trivial details helps people to know each other and release some stress; however, it is the sharing of personal and meaningful details that creates bonds and fosters growth (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Campbell, 2013; Miller, 1986b; Yager, 2002). Secrets, which are usually shared only with a few special people, are especially conducive to intimacy (Yager, 2002). However, secrets are zealously guarded for fear of rejection and embarrassment (Cameron, Holmes, & Vorauer, 2009). In addition to avoiding social rejection, people keep information private to avoid confrontations or conflicts that might jeopardize friendships (Moremen, 2008).

Friendship formation, maintenance, and termination. Similarities in personal factors such as social class, race, and ethnicity (McPherson et al., 2001; O'Connor, 1998), marital and maternal status (O'Connor, 1998), as well as moral values and cultural beliefs (Crandall et al., 1997) are important determinants in forming, maintaining, and ending friendship relationships. Life transitions such as marriage, divorce, and motherhood can be both promoting and impeding factors for women's friendships (Cronin, 2015; Feld & Carter, 1998; Harrison, 1998; Rubin, 1985). In addition, women's

perception of the quality of their conversations and interactions as well as the joy, relaxation, and fun derived from such experiences is important for women's decisions to maintain or terminate their friendships (Jerrome, 1984; Rubin, 1985; see also Miller, 1986a). Similarities have also been associated with altruism, intimacy, and with in-group alliances (Curry & Dunbar, 2013). In contrast, perceived and real dissimilarities have been associated with discrimination (Yamagishi & Mifune, 2008; see also Miller, 1986a).

Status and values homophily. Women have indicated preferring friends of their same gender and similar age, race, social class, education level, religious beliefs (McPherson et al., 2001), and sexual orientation (Logan, 2013; Ueno et al., 2012). In addition, male-dominant cultural beliefs frequently influence women in their selection of friends. For instance, women have indicated to prefer friends who they perceived physically attractive (Crandall, et al., 1997). This preference coincides with patriarchal beliefs that place women's value in their physical appearance (Crandall et al., 1997; Johnson, 2010). Women have also indicated preferring friends who share their political views (Crandall et al., 1997). Since political views reflect social norms, women's preference for friends with similar political views might also indicate influence of cultural beliefs in their selection of friends (Crandall et al., 1997; Daniels, 2019).

Regarding other values and status homophily, Moremen (2008) interviewed women in their 50s to 80s who were mostly White and lower middle social class. He reported women tended to befriend women with similar social class and some disclosed feeling uncomfortable with their friends of lower social class. Similarly, Jerrome (1984)

studied the characteristics of friendships in wealthy women in their 50s and 60s, and she found that women in the study valued similar social class, leisure time, conventional marriages, and feminine traditional roles in their friendships. Most of these women expressed valuing loyalty, commitment, support, and having similar activities. They also expressed having ended friendships for not respecting loyalty or abusing support. Further, some women expressed allowing friendships to fade away because they no longer shared similar values or engage in the same activities.

Other scholars have also reported status homophily as the strongest predictor of people's friendship formations. Verbrugge's (1977) comprehensive survey of factors influencing people's decisions to form friendships found social class was one of the strongest predictors to develop close friendships. Likewise, O'Connor (1998) explained that homophily in gender, class, race, marital, and maternal status supports the cultural belief that friendship is a relationship between equals. She also asserted that the maternal status is one of the strongest indicators for mothers to both lose friends and make friends.

Having children or having friends with children impact women's friendships. In Cronin's (2015) qualitative study, women expressed the arrival of children was a strong predictor of both terminating and forming friendships. Cronin also reported that some women indicated motherhood gave them an additional identity, which bonded them with other women with children. In addition, women have indicated they value similarity in maternal status more than in religious beliefs and social class in selecting their friends (Oliker, 1989). For instance, in Cronin's (2015) study, women reported to be willing to

befriend women with whom they had nothing in common, except for having a child in the same school. However, children might also be an impediment for women's friendships formation and maintenance.

Just as women with children might find appealing to befriend other women with children, childfree women might resent the restrictions on time and activities they can share with their friends with children (Cronin, 2015; O'Connor, 1998). In the same vein, married mothers have expressed their household and parenting duties consume their energy and leave them limited time to spend with their friends (Allan, 1989; Cronin, 2015). In addition, married mothers often face unsupportive spouses who might perceive women's friendships as unimportant and/or get jealous of their wives' friends (Harrison, 1998; Oliner, 1989). As friendships maintenance requires time and, as one researcher pointed out, for friendships to exist, friends need to do "friendly things" (O'Connor, 1998, p. 129), it is comprehensible that some friendships fade away. It is also reasonable that women with children value friends who also have children and who are more likely to accommodate to each other's busy schedules.

Another important determinant in friendships selection, maintenance, and termination is sexual orientation (Logan, 2013; see also Block & Greenberg, 1985). Lesbian women tend to feel safer befriending sexual minority women (Dyke, 2018; Fitzgerald, 2004; Galupo, 2006; Toomey, Ryan, Diaz, & Russell, 2018). Some lesbian women have reported fear to approach and make their sexual orientation evident to heterosexual people (Goldberg et al., 2018; Ueno & Gentile, 2015a) and feeling

devalued by their heterosexual friends due to their sexual identity (Weinstock & Bond, 2002). There is also evidence that some heterosexual women feel uncomfortable with lesbian women friends after knowing their sexual orientation (Block & Greenberg, 1985; Glover et al., 2015; Stanley, 1996). Similarly, some lesbians have abandoned friendships with heterosexual women when they perceived disapproving after sharing their sexual orientation (Block & Greenberg, 1985). However, there is also evidence that people tend to perceive disclosures of sexual orientation as a proof of trust (Beals & Peplau, 2006) and that cross-orientation relationships might improve after sexual minorities shared their sexual orientation (Lytle & Levy, 2015). Thus, sexual orientation seems to be influenced by both heterosexism and internalized heterosexism. In addition, self-disclosing private matters might improve friendships, but may also create conflicts.

Conflicts. As an interpersonal relationship, friendships include emotions and feelings such as love, affection, admiration, and respect, However, it also includes anger, jealousy, envy, guilt, sadness, and grief (Rosenzweig, 1999; Yager, 2002). While the positive feelings and emotions likely lead to closeness, the negative emotions might lead to conflicts. The length of the relationship and the level of intimacy are important factors for people's willingness to solve conflicts or terminate friendships. In general, researchers have suggested that women tend to protect their relationships (Miller, 1986a), but it has also indicated that women's friendships can be fragile because women hold high standards of loyalty and commitment (Alger, 1868/2014).

The issues women have reported to cause friendships' disruptions are inappropriate self-disclosures, jealousy, gossiping, competition, and cultural beliefs. Just as revealing confidences to close relationships might lead to closeness, revealing intense and personal information to strangers, might be perceived as bizarre and disclosers may be ostracized (Derlega & Grzelak, 1979). Cultural norms also censor disclosures of confidences in public settings as well as overly emotional reactions to inconsequential events (Derlega & Grzelak, 1979). Friends tend to distance themselves from friends who display these attitudes and behaviors (Derlega & Grzelak, 1979). On the other hand, for women, reciprocal and intimate self-disclosures are seen as a rule of friendship relationships. Thus, when self-disclosures are not reciprocated and/or not validated, women tend to feel unheard, devalued, and might distance or withdraw from the relationship (Argyle & Henderson, 1984; Miller, 1986a).

Women also value loyalty, commitment, and support. When one of these is not given or is abused, conflicts may arise (Argyle & Henderson, 1984; Miller, 1986a; Moremen, 2008). Blieszner and Adams (1998) and Moremen (2008) studied older women's values and conflicts in their same-sex friendships. They observed women's conflicts were related to friends breaking confidentiality, abusing favors, gossiping, acting bossy and/or disrespectful, and being or suspecting friends to be jealous. Blieszner and Adams also noted some friendships were not purposely terminated, but they faded away because of life changes such as retirement, divorce, remarrying, and/or moving away. Health issues preventing keeping up with activities with friends were mentioned in

both studies. Sharing time with friends is important for friendship maintenance, and when friends no longer can or will invest time in the relationship, it is likely to wane (Fehr, 1996; O'Connor, 1998).

Other conflicts may arise from jealousy over professional achievements (Block & Greenberg, 1985), but most frequently over competition, especially over romantic partners (Pogrebin, 1987; Reynolds, Baumeister, & Maner, 2018). When women compete for men, researchers have shown, they usually use indirect aggression such as slandering rivals' reputation and derogative comments about their physical appearance (Reynolds et al., 2018). Somewhat contradictory findings have also been reported. Tamm, Tulviste, and Urm (2018) found evidence that girls use a more direct approach when competing with friends for romantic partners. Participants in their study clearly demanded that friends respect friendship rules of loyalty and others' romantic liaisons. In general, women perceive competition for romantic partners as a severe betrayal to their friendship (McGuire & Leaper, 2016). Sexual and/or love affairs with romantic partners of friends profoundly harms the betrayed party and destroys the friendship (Block & Greenberg, 1985). Aside from romantic betrayals, women are likely to engage in conflict resolution (Keener & Strough, 2017).

Scholars have reported women often adopt a communal or collaborative approach with other women and an agentic or solutions-focused approach with men (Keener & Strough, 2017). This opposing approach might be due to cultural constraints. Miller (1986b) indicated that women are skillful at expressing their emotions. However, in

managing conflicts with men, who often resist revealing their emotions, an agentic approach of problem solving might be more effective. For instance, in her meta-analysis of conflicts between romantic partners, Woodin (2011) observed that the combination of intimacy and problem solving was the most effective and satisfactory for both men and women. In the case of disagreements and conflict resolution. However, scholars have also indicated that both lesbian and heterosexual women may not engage in conflict resolution allowing the friendship to fade away, especially if the mutual interest that brought them together ceased to exist (Kennedy, 2004; Wright, 2003).

Overview of Lesbian Women's Friendship

Research on lesbian women's issues is quite limited (Szymanski, 2005; Weinstock, 1998), particularly in relation to their friendships (de Vries & Megathlin, 2009; Galupo, 2007; Logan, 2013; Weinstock & Rothblum, 2018). Studies of lesbian women have been in the shadow of research on gay men (Feinstein, 2019; Felicio & Sutherland, 2001; Garber, 2005; Spaulding, 1999) and heterosexual women (Spaulding, 1999; Weinstock & Rothblum, 1996). Further, lesbian women's research is frequently included in studies involving all sexual orientations as if there were no differences (C. M. Parker et al., 2018; Salway et al., 2019). With a few exceptions of empirical studies (e.g., Galupo, 2009; Logan, 2013), most of what has been published on lesbians' friendships has been based on narratives and interviews with, and written by, lesbians (Peel, 1999; Siraj, 2018; Stanley, 1996; Weinstock, 2000; Weinstock & Rothblum, 1996). Despite the importance of friendships in sexual minority women's life (Dykewomon, 2018;

Fitzgerald, 2004; Siraj, 2018), and the effects that these friendships might have experienced due to increased institutional support for minorities in the last two decades, research on sexual minority women's friendships "continues to be mostly invisible" (Weinstock & Rothblum, 2018, p. 2). Nevertheless, scholars have identified several important determinants for lesbian women's friendships. Among these determinants are heterosexism, homophobia, internalized homophobia, and same-sex sexual orientation identity (Baiocco et al., 2012; de Vries & Megathlin, 2009; Doyle & Molix, 2015; Fitzgerald, 2004; Galupo, 2006; Mason, Lewis, Winstead, & Derlega, 2015; Spaulding, 1999; see also Diefendorf & Bridges, 2020).

Heterosexism and social rejection shape lesbian women's friendships in unique ways. For example, sexual minorities often face rejection from both non-kin and kin (Carastathis, Cohen, Kaczmarek, & Chang, 2017; Fitzgerald, 2004; Gair, 2004; Robinson, 2018; see also Ingham, Eccles, & Armitage's 2017 for a review). Consequently, many sexual minority individuals such as lesbian women often need to seek safety and support in sexual minority environments (Carastathis et al., 2017; Russell, 2009; Toomey et al., 2018) and are more likely to form friendships with other lesbians than with heterosexual women (Dykewomon, 2018; Fitzgerald, 2004; Gair, 2004; see Toomey et al., 2018). Lesbians' friendship ties tend to be strong, intimate, and affectionate (Dykewomon, 2018; Fitzgerald, 2004; Galupo, 2007). They can also be intense and romantic and include a larger classification of friends than the classifications typically used by heterosexual people (Diamond, 2002; Weinstock & Rothblum, 1996).

In addition to casual, close, and best friends, lesbians may also have friends-lovers, friends-ex-lovers, and families of choice, among others (Weinstock & Rothblum, 1996).

Lesbian women's friendships are also influenced by homophilic factors such as gender, race, and sexual orientation (Galupo, 2009; Logan, 2013), which were included in women's friendships. Therefore, in this section, only the factors aforementioned influencing lesbians' friendships, types of lesbian friends, and a brief comparison of heterosexual and lesbian women's friendships will be included when relevant. It should be noted that limitations due to scant research might not allow for full descriptions of some features of lesbians' friendships. Also of note, most of the information that has been published comes from White middle-class lesbian women (Weinstock, 1998), who are open about their sexual orientation (see Crisp, 2003; Watson, Grotewiel, Farrell, Marshik, & Schneider, 2015). Thus, data will not be representative of all lesbians.

Cultural Context

Lesbian women's friendships cannot be understood outside the cultural context of discrimination and social rejection they are likely to face at some point in their lives (see Diefendorf & Bridges, 2020; Fitzgerald, 2004; Friedman & Leaper, 2010; Nardi, 1982; Smith-Rosenberg, 1975; Stanley, 1996). Just as it is unfair and inaccurate to assess women's essence, life experiences, and friendships from the male-dominated perspective (see Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1986a), it is also unfair and impossible to grasp the characteristics that are unique to lesbian women from heterosexual and heteronormative perspectives (see Fassinger & Arseneau, 2008; Fitzgerald, 2004; Greene et al., 1999;

Spaulding, 1999). It is also unfair to group sexual minority women and sexual minority men as if there were no differences at the intersection of gender and sexual orientations (Dyar, Feinstein, Eaton, & London, 2016; Ingham et al., 2017). Therefore, even though studies solely on lesbian women are scarce and tend to be old, they are included in this literature review on lesbians' friendships.

Heterosexism and homophobia. Despite the increased public support of sexual minorities in the last decade, heterosexism and homophobia continue to exist at all social levels (Calabrese, Meyer, Overstreet, Haile, & Hansen, 2015; Diefendorf & Bridges, 2020; Ingham et al., 2017). Heterosexism, homophobia, and internalized homophobia affect lesbian women's life experiences, wellbeing, social interactions, and friendships in ways that are similar to other marginalized groups and in ways that are unique to lesbian women (see Dykewomon, 2018; Fitzgerald, 2004; Meyer, 2003; Singh & Durso, 2017). Heterosexism and homophobia stem from and serve patriarchy to oppress and negate lesbians' rights to express their natural feelings in relation to not only other women but also in relation to their self-presentation and behaviors (Chasin, 2015; Doan-Minh, 2019; Spaulding, 1999; Weber, Collins, Robinson-Wood, Zeko-Underwood, & Poindexter, 2018). For instance, most lesbian women neither define themselves in relation to men nor believe the patriarchal myth about women's inability to survive without the protection of men (see Garnets, 2008; Hunt, 1991; Pharr, 2010; Rich, 1986). Autonomy is important for lesbian women because it allows them to live as lesbians. However, it is perceived as challenges to men's power over women, and challenges to patriarchy are likely to be

suppressed and punished (Doan-Minh, 2019; Garnets, 2008; Greene et al., 1999; Pharr, 2010).

Independent heterosexual women are also ostracized (Sherwin, 2018), but not as severely as lesbian women because heterosexual women are seen as pursuing and desiring men, while lesbians are stereotyped as men haters (Levitt, Puckett, Ippolito, & Horne, 2012; Spaulding, 1999). This misconception is more evident with lesbians whose appearance does not resemble the traditional stereotype of femininity ascribed to women (Levitt et al., 2012). For instance, lesbians with short hair, nontraditional feminine clothes and behaviors often experience harassment, ostracism, and have been mandated to disguise their physical appearance and coerced into hiding their sexual orientation (Garnets, 2008; Rich, 1986; Weber et al., 2018). Further, lesbians have been raped because their physical appearance was perceived as insufficiently feminine (Doan-Minh, 2019), and/or in the name of correcting their sexual orientation (Koraan & Geduld, 2015).

In addition, researchers have “uncovered two new microaggressions: denial of personal privacy and policing bodies” (Weber et al., 2018, p. 552). Lesbian women often experience subtle and open criticisms and disrespectful questions about their sexual and intimate practices as well as recommendations “to conform to gender and sexual norms” (Weber et al., 2018, p. 551). Thus, lesbian women’s challenges to heteronormative ideals are punished with stigmatization, rejection, and violence. Other forms of oppression come from religious institutions such as Christian groups that support patriarchal norms (Adamczyk, Boyd, & Hayes, 2016; Hunt, 1991; Morrow, 2003; Schuck & Liddle, 2001).

For most Americans, religion is an essential part of their lives, and it influences their attitudes toward spiritual and social values (Adamczyk et al., 2016; Daniels, 2019; Lease, Horne, & Noffsinger-Frazier, 2005; Morrow, 2003; Schlosser, 2003), political ideologies, and sexual conduct and orientations (Adamczyk et al., 2016; Barnes & Meyer, 2012; Halkitis et al., 2009). Despite increased public support, conservative religious people continue to exhibit a higher condemnation for sexual minority individuals (Adamczyk et al., 2016; Daniels, 2019). Many interpretations of Christian doctrines are used to reject and define sexual minority individuals as aberrant and sinful (Hunt, 1991; Lease et al., 2005; Morrow, 2003). Religious rejections of lesbians come from several Christian scriptures, sermons (Hunt, 1991; Schuck & Liddle, 2001), and the exclusion of identified lesbians from religious activities (Lease et al., 2005). Therefore, sexual minority parishioners frequently feel ostracized and inculcate the messages of shame and hate they receive from their religious leaders and congregations (see Dahl & Galliher, 2009; Halkitis et al., 2009; Schuck & Liddle, 2001; Super & Jacobson, 2011). Christian doctrines and negative messages against sexual minorities have been identified as strong predictors of homophobia (Plugge-Foust & Strickland, 2000) and internalized homophobia (Barnes & Meyer, 2012; Frost & Meyer, 2009). Conversely, sexual minority individuals who attend affirming religious denominations frequently report less depression associated with religion discrimination (Gattis, Woodford, & Han, 2014).

Internalized homophobia. Homophobia and the inculcation of societal and religious institutions' negative messages are among the most harmful elements for the

wellbeing and growth-fostering relationships of sexual minorities (Haas et al., 2011; Russell, 2009; Singh & Durson, 2017; Szymanski, 2005). The incidence of shame, guilt, and low self-esteem (Super & Jacobson, 2011); depression and suicidal ideation (Salway et al., 2019; Schuck & Liddle, 2001; Super & Jacobson, 2011); and suicide attempts (Haas et al., 2011; Meyer, Teylan, & Schwartz, 2015; Salway et al., 2019) is higher among sexual minority individuals than in heterosexual people. In addition, unlike many other marginalized groups, lesbian women often face rejection from their families, which makes social rejection more unbearable (Gair, 2004; Meyer, 2003; Robinson, 2018). Researchers have indicated that sexual minority youths who experienced familial rejection are eight times more likely to attempt suicide than sexual minority youths with supportive parents (Ryan, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2009).

To avoid and/or alleviate the pain related to social rejection and inculcated negative feelings, some lesbian women hide their sexual orientation entirely or in unsafe environments, fearing to be discovered (Fjelstrom, 2013; Gair, 2004). Some Christian lesbians have even tried sexual orientation change efforts treatments to get rid of the pain, shame, and guilt they felt for being someone they learned was sinful and deviant for not having the “God-given orientation” (Fjelstrom, 2013, p. 802). Internalized homophobia and desires to belong often lead lesbians to pass as heterosexual individuals, which may lead to psychological isolation and inauthentic connections (see Jordan & Deluty, 1998; Russell, 2009). Such experiences, in turn, prevent the formation of growth-fostering relationships (see Miller, 1986a, 1986b; Rausch & Wikoff, 2017) and inhibit the

development of a healthy identity as sexual minority individuals (Gair, 2004; see also Russell, 2009).

Lesbian identity and sexual orientation. Developing a sexual minority identity has been associated with positive outcomes for lesbian women's wellbeing (Jordan & Deluty, 1998; Kaufman & Johnson, 2004; Rostosky, Cardom, Hammer, & Riggle, 2018). However, it is difficult to develop an identity of a sexual orientation that is perceived as despised by society ("Discrimination in America: Experiences and views of LGBTQ Americans," 2017; Gair, 2004; Johns & Probst, 2004; Singh & Durso, 2017). Extant research shows that most of the difficulties lesbian women have expressing and developing their sexual orientation identities come from cultural contexts of discrimination and misconceptions derived from defining lesbian women by heterosexual norms (Donner, 1999; Spaulding, 1999). For instance, Platt and Lenzen (2013) reported lesbian students are often unable to participate in social gatherings because they are organized only for heterosexual people (i.e., couples composed of men and women). In the same vein, Weber et al. (2018) reported lesbian women are often coerced to hide their lesbian identity, face hostilities when they display physical affection to their romantic partners, and encounter mockery when they try to have discussions on sexual minority issues. In addition, Bowleg et al. (2008) reported Black lesbian women have been fired because of their sexual orientation, and they have often experienced harassment in the form of racist, homophobic, and heterosexist jokes (Bowleg et al., 2008). Also, some Black lesbian women have expressed stress over constantly monitoring their language

and behaviors because heterosexual coworkers have misinterpreted their friendliness as flirting (Bowleg et al., 2008).

Further, heterosexual identities are often the only identities taught, encouraged, and modeled (Felicio & Sutherland, 2001; Nardi, 1982; Platt & Lenzen, 2013). Lesbian girls are more likely to grow up struggling to make sense of their stigmatized feelings with no role model from whom to learn what it is like being a sexual minority (Donner, 1999; Kaufman & Johnson, 2004; Nardi, 1982). Despite the limited knowledge about lesbian women, their whole essence is frequently defined solely based on their sexual orientation. Lesbian women often complain about the fact that when they make their lesbian identity public, every other aspect of their identity blurs, diminishing their life existence to only their denigrated sexual orientation (Donner, 1999; see Weber et al., 2018). Thus, it is difficult for lesbians not only to develop a lesbian identity but also to make it public.

In spite of the stigmatization of sexual minority identities, researchers indicate that lesbian women who have experienced supportive environments are less likely to be affected by prejudice and more likely to develop, integrate, and express their sexual orientation identity openly (Kaufman & Johnson, 2004; Kwon, 2013; Legate, Ryan, & Rogge, 2017). Consequently, they are also more likely to have a positive self-concept and closer relationships with both sexual minority and heterosexual individuals (Kaufman & Johnson, 2004; Legate et al., 2017). However, sexual orientation is a strong bonding factor (De la Peña, 1996; Galupo, 2007; Rubin, 1985; Ueno et al., 2012); therefore, both

lesbian and heterosexual women tend to have more friends with a similar sexual orientation than across sexual orientations (Galupo, 2007; Rubin, 1985; Stanley, 1996).

Friendships Between Lesbian Women

While all the benefits of friendship relationships (e.g., joy, emotional intimacy, social support, companionship, and increased self-esteem and sense of belonging) apply to people across sexual orientation, the various forms of discrimination lesbian women face give their friendships a meaning that might be foreign to most heterosexual individuals (see Degges-White, 2012; Rubin, 1985; Stanley, 1996). For instance, there is a consensus among scholars that friendship is important for people's wellbeing and happiness (e.g., Berscheid et al., 1989; Demir & Weitekamp, 2007) and that friendship is a voluntary relationship between equals (e.g., Bagwell & Schmidt, 2011; Blatterer, 2016; Spencer & Pahl, 2006). However, homophobia and internalized homophobia limit lesbian women's freedom to choose their friends and increase their need to seek friends who accept and help them survive societal, and often, familial rejection (Fitzgerald, 2004; Galupo, 2009; Nardi, 1982; Stanley, 1996; Weston, 1991). Therefore, friends have a supremely important role in the lives of most lesbians, often replacing family, which is rarely the case with heterosexual women (Dyke-womon, 2018; Hunt, 1991; Nardi, 1982; Stanley, 1996).

Among their lesbian friends and communities, lesbian women find role models from whom they learn about the uniqueness of their lesbian identities, support to face marginalization, validation of their feelings, and normalization of their sexual orientation

(Gair, 2004; Rubin, 1985; Russell, 2009). All this support and guidance helps lesbian women to reduce the shame, guilt, and fear that may be associated with their sexuality (Gair, 2004; Stanley, 1996). Among the most named benefits lesbian women have identified of having sexual minority friends, lesbian communities, and lesbian families is the freedom to express their authentic self, especially if they are not publicly open (Fitzgerald, 2004; Gair, 2004; Rubin, 1985; Stanley, 1996). These unique bonds are evident in lesbian friendships classifications that include friends as family, families of creation, friends-lovers, friends-ex-lovers, and close and best friends (Stanley, 1996; Weinstock & Rothblum, 1996).

Scant research on lesbians' friendship relationships does not permit a full description of the range, acquaintances to best friends, that scholars usually consider in friendship relationships (Weinstock, 2000). Therefore, only close and best friendships, which are the type of friends mostly assessed and mentioned in lesbian narratives (see Rubin, 1985; Siraj, 2018) will be addressed in this section. Information regarding passionate friends, friends-lovers, friends-ex-lovers, and family of choice are also included.

Close and best friends. When forming close friendship relationships, both lesbian and heterosexual women seem to be influenced by status and value homophily. They tend to befriend people with a similar race, sex, sexual orientation (Galupo, 2007; Ueno et al., 2012; Weinstock & Bond, 2002), age, gender, social class, moral values (Weinstock, 2000), and political views (Warshow, 1996). For instance, Weinstock's

(1998) review of friendships across sexual orientation indicated lesbian women tended to befriend other lesbians within their racial group. Weinstock also reported Black lesbian women expressed they were socially rejected for their race more frequently than for their sexual orientation by both White lesbian and heterosexual women. Therefore, Black lesbian women in Weinstock's (1998) review expressed they considered it safer to avoid social interactions with people they perceive as racist, including White lesbians (Weinstock, 1998).

Another important factor for some lesbian women is their political stance. Many friendships have been formed while championing for social justice, and lesbian communities have gained power out of the effort and courage of lesbians' fighting for equality (Dykewomon, 2018). However, not all lesbians want to publicly pursue their rights, and not sharing common political ideals have caused friendships dissolutions (O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996). Another cause of friendship termination between lesbian women is the decision of some lesbians to deny their sexual orientation and go back to heterosexual behavior or a closeted life (O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996).

Nevertheless, sexual orientation seems to be the strongest predictor of close friendships between lesbian women (Stanley, 1996; Weinstock, 2000). Stanley (1996) and Galupo (2007) explained lesbian women tend to befriend other lesbian women and sexual minority individuals because they accept and understand their authentic self. In addition, close and best lesbian friends are also an affirmation of lesbian existence because they witness important events such as romantic relationships, marriages, and

anniversaries which frequently occur in private, and with no other recorded history other than the memory of lesbian friends (Nardi, 1982; Stanley, 1996). Thus, stigmatization influence lesbian women to seek friends whose sexual orientation makes them part of their same private world (Fitzgerald, 2004; Stanley, 1996).

In the same vein, de Vries and Megathin (2009) concluded social rejection influences sexual minorities to have a higher appreciation for affection, compatibility, loyalty and commitment than heterosexual individuals. These authors assessed heterosexual and sexual minority individuals' friendship perceptions with the following results: Gay men and lesbian women expressed not only wanting to have but also to be friends who accept and support their friends unconditionally. In addition, de Vries and Megathin reported lesbians and gay men were more likely than heterosexuals to express intense feelings about their friends. Some of their definitions of friendship were "like falling in love" (p. 90), and "friendship lasts longer than love" (p. 90). These expressions are common in lesbians' close friendships, particularly in passionate friendships.

Passionate friends. Both heterosexual and lesbian women have experienced passionate friendships (Diamond, 2000; Glover et al., 2015; Smith-Rosenberg, 1975) with a lesser occurrence between heterosexual women (Diamond, 2002). Passionate friends are the female friendships Smith-Rosenberg (1975) described between women in the 18th and 19th century. Smith-Rosenberg reviewed women's mail correspondence and diaries and observed an extraordinary emotional affection between most of them, which in some cases made it difficult to determine if they were friends or lovers. As Smith-

Rosenberg noted some of the writings seem to be between “lovers – emotionally if not physically” (p. 7). However, when modern women with passionate friends have been asked if they have sexual desires for each other, most frequently the answer is negative (Diamond, 2000). Similarly, Glover et al. (2015) reported both sexual minority and heterosexual women in their study expressed valuing and experiencing high levels of emotional intimacy and physical affection, and all women expressed not being sexually attracted to their friends.

Diamond (2000) interviewed 80 sexual minority young women between 18 and 25 years old among whom about 72 reported having had a friend with whom they shared intense emotional feelings, held hands, and cuddled. However, most of them reported not being sexually attracted to their friend. There are not definite answers for what causes this intense emotional intimacy and expressions of affection, but it can be powerfully bonding. Both lesbian and heterosexual women have reported the emotional connection was so intense with their passionate friends that they have experienced “unexpected, unprecedented same-sex attraction for [their] passionate friends” (Diamond, 2002, p. 12). Both heterosexual and lesbian women have expressed confusion over the nature of these relationships, but most have also concluded their passionate friends are friends, not lovers (Diamond, 2000, 2002).

Passionate friendships might also be frequent between lesbian and heterosexual women, but it is unknown because there is extremely limited research on lesbian-heterosexual women’s friendships (O’Boyle & Thomas, 1996). However, narratives in

Weinstock and Rothblum (2018) described such a relationship between two professors who authored books together and were devoted to each other in both their professional and personal lives. In the case of lesbian women, they have reported having passionate friends before and after identifying as lesbians (Diamond, 2002). They have also reported that lesbian friends often become lovers, lovers are usually their best friends, and that remaining best friends with ex-lovers is not unusual (Weinstock & Rothblum, 1996; e.g., O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996).

Friends-lovers. For most lesbians, their lovers are also considered close or best friends, but as it is not a typical characteristic of heterosexual couples, this factor is likely neglected when lesbian romances are examined (Eldridge & Gilbert, 1990; Nardi & Sherrod, 1994). Consequently, some clinicians and lesbian popular literature authors have described lesbian romantic relationships as lacking boundaries, being fused with fusion identified as promoting conflicts between lesbian lovers (Diamond, 2000; Frost & Eliason, 2014; Greene et al., 1999). Some of the characteristics that have been identified as fusion are lesbians' intense and frequent exchanges of emotional intimacy and affection (Diamond, 2000; Greene et al., 1999), as well as their tendency to spend most of their time together, combining incomes, sharing clothes, and longing for each other's company when separated even by few hours (Mencher, 1997; see also Glover et al., 2015). However, by lesbian women's reports in non-clinical settings and empirical research, their friends-lovers relationships are highly cohesive and emotionally intimate rather than fused (Eldridge & Gilbert, 1990; Greene et al., 1999; Mencher, 1997; Spencer

& Brown, 2007). As noted in romantic friendships, lesbians also tend to have such emotional and affectionate intensity with friends who are not lovers, and heterosexual women also tend to follow this pattern (Dimond, 2002; Glover et al., 2015).

Heterosexual women have also reported enjoying high levels of emotional connectedness and bonding with their friends and lovers (Felmlee et al., 2012; Greene et al., 1999; Olicker, 1989), and while they often have emotional intimacy with their women friends, they rarely have the level of intimacy they desire with their romantic partners because men tend to avoid it (see Miller, 1986a). Therefore, women's inclination to relational connectedness might not be enmeshment but rather women sharing the emotional intensity that is unlikely to occur in men-women relationships (Mencher, 1997; Miller, 1986a; Spencer & Brown, 2007). Most men tend to avoid engaging in expressions of emotional intimacy because they perceive them as weakness and diminishing their authority (Campbell, 2013; Greene et al., 1999; Miller, 1986a). Conversely, lesbian friends-lovers relationships are between two women who rarely follow heterosexual gender traditions (Vetere, 1982). Their romantic relationship is also a friendship relationship, which is likely characterized by equality and mutual emotional support (Fitzgerald, 2004; Vetere, 1982). When lesbian women have conflicts, they are likely to engage in mutual recognition of their mistakes and validation of their suffering, which might help them to heal the wounds inflicted to each other (Fitzgerald, 2004). In addition, lesbian romantic and friendship relationships are between two women who often experience discrimination; thus, they may have a higher need for demonstrations of

support and affection than heterosexual people (Fitzgerald, 2004; Spencer & Brown, 2007).

Therefore, the characteristics and processes of lesbian friends-lovers cannot be understood from existing heterosexual models that pathologize these interactions (Fitzgerald, 2004; Frost & Eliason, 2014; Spencer & Brown, 2007). Lesbian women tend to develop emotionally intimate connections with their romantic partners, which tends not to cease when the sexual relationship ends (Dykewomon, 2018; Kennedy, 2004; Nardi, 1992). It is this profound connection and emotional involvement in lesbian friends-lovers relationships that seems to make it possible for lesbian women to remain friends after romantic break-ups and start a friends-ex-lover relationship (Dykewomon, 2018; Fitzgerald, 2004; Nardi, 1992; Stanley, 1996).

Friends-ex-lovers. Lesbian women's tendency to remain friends with ex-lovers is also influenced by other factors in addition to their capacity for emotional intimacy. Most lesbian women have limited and mutual support systems, which is easier to preserve if they both can manage to have cordial relationships (Fitzgerald, 2004). Friends-ex-lovers are particularly important because they know each other intimately, understand the lesbian world, and form part of each other's history (Fitzgerald, 2004; Weston, 1991). Lesbian women often face their struggles in solitude, especially if they are closeted. When they grieve for a romantic break-up, it is not unusual that the only person who knows about it is their ex-partner (Fitzgerald, 2004). Depending on the reason for the break-up, some ex-lovers might be the main or only support they have through the

grieving process (see Kennedy, 2004). Remaining friends after betrayals is often difficult and some lesbians fail to preserve the relationship, others have needed some time apart, and some others have helped the healing process (Fitzgerald, 2004; Kennedy, 2004; O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996). Lesbians have also reported instances of jealousy over friends-ex-lovers resulting in temporary or permanent disconnections. However, it seems that in general and whatever the reason for the romantic break-up, lesbians are more likely than heterosexual women to protect and manage to preserve the friendship with and support of ex-lovers (Fitzgerald, 2004).

Lesbian friends-ex-lovers as friends-lovers might be relationships unique to sexual minority individuals (Fitzgerald, 2004; Weinstock & Rothblum, 1996). Most heterosexual romantic couples do not evolve from friendships nor remain friends after their romance is dissolved (Nardi, 1992; Weinstock & Rothblum, 1996). However, lesbians often form romantic partnerships with women who were their close friends first and often remain friends after a break-up (Diamond, 2002; Nardi & Sherrod, 1994; Vetere, 1982). Both friends-lovers and friends-ex-lovers are highly regarded as sources of love and support, and they are commonly included in lesbians' families of choice (Fitzgerald, 2004; Stanley, 1996; Weston, 1991).

Family of choice. Gay family, extended family, family of creation, and family of choice are references sexual minority people have for the friends with whom they have strong ties of love, connection, and commitment (Dyke-womon, 2018; Weston, 1991). Family of choice has been criticized by patriarchal traditions as fake family or pretend

family relations. However, for lesbians their family of choice is just as meaningful and real as their family of origin, and sometimes even more important if they were disowned by their blood kin (Fitzgerald, 2004; Weston, 1991). When sexual minority individuals are asked what makes their family of choice a real family, most of the answers included love, loyalty, solidarity, commitment, and affirmation of their existence (Stanley, 1996; Weston, 1991). Lesbians have depicted their family of choice as people with whom they exchange emotional and material help, provide care for each other, see frequently, and with whom they feel comfortable (Weston, 1991).

The assistance that family of choice provide is similar to what is expected from blood kin such as walking dogs, feeding pets, lending clothes, preparing meals, fixing cars, and running errands (Weston, 1991). Having a family of choice has been essential for lesbian women to survive the abandonment of their family of origin and others' rejection (Weston, 1991). Family of choice also helped them to have company, especially in their elder years when they might need assistance (Weston, 1991). Whatever the reason for having created a family of choice, most lesbians have reported the love and strong ties they formed with their siblings of choice last a lifetime, even if acceptance from family of origin is regained (Weston, 1991).

Sexual minority individuals usually perceive their family of choice members as sisters and brothers, regardless of their age. Members of families of choice usually include lovers, best friends, children, stepchildren, in-laws, and ex-lovers (Weston, 1991). Friends and families of choice reduce the invisibility that lesbian women often

experience (Fitzgerald, 2004). They are the people who validate and value lesbians' authentic selves and reaffirms their existence (Fitzgerald, 2004; Stanley, 1996; Weston, 1991). It is the members of family of choice who are frequently present in lesbians' life events, witnessing their life transitions, suffering, and triumphs. Also, members of family of choice such as ex-lovers, lovers, and best friends can share and pass on each other's history and legacy to loved ones and to other members in the community (Stanley, 1996; Weston, 1991).

Overview of Friendships Between Lesbian and Heterosexual Women

Research specifically assessing lesbian-heterosexual friendships is impressively scarce (Galupo, 2009; Logan, 2013; Weinstock & Rothblum, 1996). For the present literature review, the researcher only found three studies (e.g., Galupo & St John, 2001; O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996; Weinstock & Bond, 2002) specifically on friendships between lesbian and heterosexual women. Therefore, many questions about the characteristics of friendships between lesbian and heterosexual women remain unanswered. However, research on the negative effects of heterosexism, homophobia, and stigmatization (e.g., Calabrese et al., 2015; Carastathis et al., 2017; Diefendorf & Bridges, 2020; Doyle & Molix, 2015; Rich, 1986; Russell, 2009; Ryan et al., 2009; Super & Jacobson, 2011; Weston, 1991), along with the few studies on lesbian-heterosexual women's friendships located, allow a good understanding of how discrimination influences women's decisions to form, maintain, and/or terminate friendships with cross-orientation friends. In addition, Weinstock and Bond (2002) found differences in sexual identities influenced women to

have both positive and negative perceptions about their cross-orientation friends. In addition, O'Boyle and Thomas (1996) observed attitudes toward traditional gender-role socialization hinder closeness between lesbian and heterosexual women. Descriptions of the aforementioned factors are discussed below.

Heterosexism, Homophobia, and Internalized Stigmatization

Although oppression of women affects lesbian and heterosexual women differently, most likely, they both grew up experiencing heterosexism and internalizing some of its ideologies (Bongiorno et al., 2016; Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1986a, 1986b; Rose, 2000). Consequently, heterosexism might simultaneously influence women to connect and disconnect (see Weinstock & Bond, 2002). Discrimination regarding lesbian's sexual orientation has influenced them to form strong ties with other lesbian women and to distance from heterosexual people (Fitzgerald, 2004; Galupo, 2009; O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996). Support against discrimination and freedom to claim and show their love for women has been identified as the primary motive for lesbians to befriend other lesbians (Fitzgerald, 2004; Gair, 2004). Conversely, lesbian women have indicated feeling unsafe to express themselves with heterosexual people who might perceive their "gayness" as offensive (Fitzgerald, 2004, p. 178).

In the same vein, some heterosexual women have terminated or hidden their friendships with lesbian women because they do not want to be labeled as lesbians or because their heterosexual friends do not approve of their lesbian friends (O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996; Stanley, 1996). Similarly, lesbian women have reported having concerns

about being accepted by their heterosexual friends' relationships and by their lesbian community rejecting their heterosexual friends (Stanley, 1996; Weinstock & Bond, 2002). In addition, lesbian women have expressed not disclosing their sexual orientation identity for fear of losing heterosexual friends (Weston, 1991), as well as having lost heterosexual women friends when they disclosed their lesbian identity (Galupo & St John, 2001; O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996; Stanley, 1996; Weston, 1991).

Misconceptions, fears, and lack of communication between lesbian and heterosexual women prevent them from developing emotional intimacy. For instance, both groups of women have reported limiting their physical affection and the type of conversations that could be interpreted as sexual advances (O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996; Stanley, 1996; Weinstock & Bond, 2002). Conversations about romantic partners are avoided with cross-sexual orientation friends; heterosexual women tend to believe their lesbian friends do not care nor understand heterosexual love, and lesbian women tend to believe heterosexual women do not approve of their sexual orientation (O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996). It is bewildering that women do not clear up these misconceptions with simple honest communication, especially when women are known to be skillful in expressing their emotions and feelings with each other. Thus, something stronger is preventing them from reaching out and enjoying the very best benefit they have to offer in their friendships, emotional intimacy (Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1986b).

Lesbian-Heterosexual Women's Friendships: Specific Studies

Although research on lesbian-heterosexual women's friendship is particularly limited, it is not surprising. Before the late 1960s and the antigay movement, sexual minority people could face jail for expressing their sexual orientation (Weston, 1991). Additionally, before 1973, being gay or lesbian was considered a mental disorder (Morin, 1977), for which many sexual minority people were institutionalized (Weston, 1991). Therefore, before the late 1960s most lesbian women had no choice but to live closeted, and if they disclosed their lesbian identity, it might have been only to other lesbian women with whom they met in secret (Weston, 1991). Consequently, the history of lesbian women's friendships, especially with heterosexual women is new, infrequent, and under-researched (Weinstock, 2000).

According to this author's literature review, the first published study on friendships between lesbian and heterosexual women was authored by O'Boyle and Thomas (1996). Through focus groups with mostly White women, divided by sexual orientation, they noted some trends in lesbian and heterosexual women's perceptions of cross-orientation friendships. Heterosexual women who did not have any lesbian friends expressed doubts about befriending lesbians because they did not perceive common interests. For heterosexual women, lesbians were overly involved in politics, while having little to no interest in men. They also feared that lesbians' life experiences were very different from theirs. However, heterosexual women who reported having at least one lesbian friend did not show such perceptions. Also, having lesbian friends reduced

the stereotype that lesbian women hate men. Nonetheless, heterosexual women indicated avoiding conversations about their romantic partners with their lesbian friends. In the case of lesbian women, they indicated that heterosexual women's immersion in their traditional gender roles and their tendency to center their lives around men lead them to be cautious about trusting heterosexual friends with romantic confidences. However, if heterosexual women friends had a feminist worldview, lesbians expressed they were more willing to disclose their intimate romantic relationships with them. Weinstock and Bond (2002) reported similar findings about lesbian-heterosexual women's friendships.

Weinstock and Bond (2002) surveyed mostly White, young, heterosexual and lesbian women about their perceptions of the benefits and negative aspects of having cross-orientation, lesbian-heterosexual, friends. Among the benefits, results showed that about 66% of women reported some type of socioemotional benefit, 60% some learning opportunity, 6% some social benefit, and 23% found no benefit attributable to their difference on sexual identity. However, when the aggregated percentages were classified into subcategories, there was a high variance between the groups. For example, 61% of lesbian women reported valuing that their heterosexual women friends liked them for what they were and support them, which seemed to be especially appreciated during their coming out process while 17% of heterosexual women indicated this factor as a benefit. Among the negative aspects, results showed that about 22% of lesbians indicated receiving no appreciation from their heterosexual friends, and 13% reported feeling devalued due to their sexual identity, no heterosexual women experienced either of those

two negative aspects, which might indicate the privilege of holding a heterosexual orientation. Weinstock and Bond (2002) indicated that while 43% of lesbian women expressed discomfort about the lack of interest of heterosexual friends in anti-heterosexism, women's equality, role expression, and feminism, only 4% of heterosexual women perceived such issues as concerns.

In the same vein, lesbians were more concerned about their friends' heterosexist views and heterosexual privilege than heterosexual women. About 22% of lesbians reported their friends' heterosexist attitudes hurt them and made them feel like outsiders, while 8% of heterosexual women were aware of these negative aspects. Similar complaints about heterosexual friends' discriminatory attitudes were reported by sexual minority individuals in Ueno and Gentile's (2015a) study. It seems that heterosexual people might not be aware of the pervasiveness and harmful effects of sexual microaggressions, thus, unintentionally hurting their sexual minority friends. However, for most sexual minority individuals microaggressions are a daily experience that cause them psychological distress (Platt & Lenzen, 2013). They have reported feeling confused, disrespected, devalued, and hurt, especially when microaggressions come from family and friends (Platt & Lenzen, 2013), which are particularly difficult to confront because they do not want conflicts with loved ones (Ueno & Gentile, 2015a), and because most offenders claim ignorance or pretend to be joking (Platt & Lenzen, 2013).

It seems that intentional and unintentional hostilities between friends might adversely impact the affectionate and supportive nature of close friendships (see Ueno &

Gentile, 2015a). It also appears that confronting friends about their heterosexist attitudes although difficult, helps to reduce microaggressions between friends and improve their friendships (see Galupo & St John, 2001; Weinstock & Bond, 2002). For instance, in Weinstock and Bond's (2002) study, 17% of lesbian women felt it was a burden to educate their heterosexual women friends about heterosexism and lesbian issues. However, 17% of heterosexual women reported learning about lesbians' life and identity helped them to break down stereotypes, 4% indicated to have gained awareness about heterosexist views and to have become more open-minded, and 8% of heterosexual women reported to have developed a better understanding of women. In the case of lesbian women, 9% reported having heterosexual women friends helped them to break down social barriers and to build their community of allies, 4% reported to have improved their knowledge of women, and 9% expressed to have gained new perspectives on love. Galupo and St John (2001) also reported benefits and strains related to heterosexual and sexual minority women's friendships.

Galupo and St John (2001) investigated the benefits of having cross-orientation friends. They assessed dyads of close friendships between heterosexual-lesbian and heterosexual-bisexual young (18 to 25 years old) women. Their findings showed that cross-orientation friends appreciated the support and commitment friends showed by "being there when needed" (p. 86) and being able to share their confidences with someone they trust. All women expressed that their friendships improved by sexual minority women sharing their sexual orientation. Heterosexual women valued the trust

their sexual minority friends offered, and lesbians valued the increased closeness and freedom to talk about their lesbian lives. Some sexual minority women seemed especially appreciative of their heterosexual friends' acceptance because they had lost other heterosexual women friends after disclosing their sexual orientation. Their heterosexual friends' acceptance also helped lesbians to experience self-acceptance and increased self-esteem and to be open to the possibility that more heterosexual people than their friends might also accept them. Similarly, Baiocco, Laghi, Di Pomponio, and Nigito (2012) reported that having heterosexual friends reduced internalized sexual stigma in their lesbian and gay participants.

In the case of heterosexual women, Galupo and St John (2001) found some similar reports to Weinstock and Bond's (2002) participants. Heterosexual women expressed having cross-orientation friends increased their awareness and sensibility to the struggles of sexual minority individuals, helped them to break down stereotypes and learned about heterosexism, and led them to examine their own sexuality. Galupo and St John's findings also supported O'Boyle and Thomas' (1996) reports about heterosexual and lesbians avoiding talking about their romantic affairs with their cross-orientation friends as well as experiencing sexual tension. However, some participants in Galupo and St John's study did not avoid talking about their sexual tension discomfort; they addressed it with their cross-friends and worked out the situation. Although limited, research on friendships between lesbian and heterosexual women seems to support

similar benefits and negative aspects across studies, both related to heterosexism and sexual orientations.

Summary and Rationale

Overall, lesbian and heterosexual women share many similarities in their friendships and the qualities they seek in friends. They both seem to want friends with whom they feel safe, accepted, validated, supported, and with whom they can be themselves (Galupo & Gonzalez, 2013; O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996; Vetere, 1982). Qualities such as emotional intimacy, self-disclosure of confidences, affection, trust, loyalty, and commitment are friendship characteristics most women desire in their friendships, regardless of their sexual orientation (Felmlee et al., 2012; Greene et al., 1999; O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996). Additionally, they also share life experiences and physiological changes unique to and which have bonded women throughout history (Block & Greenberg, 1985; Smith-Rosenberg, 1975). In Smith-Rosenberg's (1975) study of friendships of women in the 18th and 19th century, she described how women gathered to support each other during pregnancies, childbirths, and childbearing. Pregnancies, menstruation, and menopause are physiological changes that often bond women more intimately than marital experiences (Block & Greenberg, 1985; Smith-Rosenberg, 1975).

There are many potential benefits for lesbian and heterosexual women to form friendship relationships, some of which have been identified in the few research studies on their friendships, and some that may yet be discovered. The antagonistic views about

social inequality between sexual minority and heterosexual women have been identified as a point of conflict (Weinstock & Bond, 2002); however, it could also be a point of cohesion and empowerment. For example, lesbian women tend to trust heterosexual women with a feminist worldview, and for their part, heterosexual women have indicated an increase in their self-worth for acquiring more knowledge and awareness on heterosexism and lesbian women's struggles and identity (Ueno & Gentile, 2015b). There is very limited but encouraging evidence of women who have been able to establish remarkably strong and empowering friendships, regardless their sexual orientation (see Morgan & Nerison, 1996; see also Weinstock & Rothblum, 2018). There is also evidence to support that when women transcend their fears and negotiate their differences, they can form strong and empowering ties with each other. The feminist and antigay movements showed that when women make alliances, social changes can happen. For instance, feminists brought awareness of sexist language and behaviors, and the media and other powerful figures started paying attention to these types of harassments (Hunt, 1991; Lerner, 1979). Women in the antigay movement helped to remove homosexuality from the American Psychiatric Association list of mental disorders (Morin, 1977).

Further, there is sufficient theoretical and empirical evidence on women's relational skills and caring dispositions to conclude women have within their nature and socialization the abilities to form growth-fostering relationships across sexual orientation (see Greene et al., 1999; Hunt, 1991; O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996). Finding the factors that can promote unity between women across sexual orientation might alleviate both sexual

minority and heterosexual women's oppression. Lesbian women usually do not ascribe to either traditional feminine gender-roles nor base their identity on men (Garnets, 2008; Rich, 1986). Thus, they might be in a better position to help heterosexual women reflect on how women's oppression and internalized sexism limit their horizons. For example, most lesbian women do not depend on men for safety nor financial support (Garnets, 2008; Pharr, 2010), so they can be good role models for women who need to achieve emotional and financial independence from men. Heterosexual women can support lesbian women's coming out process and fight along with them for sexual orientation equality. Heterosexual women can also support through and share their experiences with lesbians about pregnancies, childbirth, marriages, divorces, and parenting. With the legalization of marriages for sexual minority individuals, divorce is likely to happen, and heterosexual women have more experience in these processes. In sum, heterosexual and lesbian women can be empowering agents of each other.

One factor that might help women to connect meaningfully and work towards the aforementioned benefits is mutuality. Relational-cultural theorists have identified mutuality and Miller's (1986b) five good things as powerful elements to promote connection and growth-fostering relationships (see Jordan, 1991; Miller, 1986b; Surrey, 1997). Mutuality and Miller's (1986b) five good things were described in RCT section. In this section complementary research related to the benefits of mutuality in forming growth-fostering relationships will be included.

Mutuality as a Catalyst for Women's Cross-Orientation Friendship

Mutuality is a complex process that, if present in people's interactions, can enhance all types of relationships. It is not exclusive to romantic partners or friends. Mutuality can exist at a personal, dyadic, group, and global levels. At a personal level, the individual possesses the characteristics to care for oneself and others; at the dyadic level, both persons care for oneself and the other, and their interactions inspired them to continue feeling and behaving in mutuality ways beyond the dyad's relationship (see Miller, 1986b; see also Surrey, 1997). Aristotle believed that friends of virtue for their good nature and mutual desires and empowering behaviors promote justice (Aristotle, trans. 2011), and growth-fostering friends might be compared to Aristotle's friends of virtue. However, there is not sufficient research on mutuality to conclude that it can promote social justice, but as it motivates people to expand their mutual interactions beyond dyadic relationships, it might be found in people who are political activists as well as in women who care to befriend those who are different and vulnerable. For instance, Jordan (1991) and Surrey (1997) recommend mutual interactions in therapy settings to help patients' healing process. The following characteristics of mutuality offered by Surrey (1997) and outlined by other RCT scholars (e.g., Jordan, 1991; Miller & Stiver, 1997), depict well why mutuality can be considered a catalyst for women's friendships, empowerment, and wellbeing:

Mutuality is the fundamental property of healthy, growth-enhancing connections.

In these connections both or all participants are engaged in creating mutual,

interactional growth, learning, and empowerment. In relationships based on search for mutuality, each participant can represent increasingly her feelings, thoughts, and perceptions in the relationship, can have an impact on the other(s) and on the relationship, and can be moved by or move with the other(s). (p. 12)

It is important to note that mutuality is a process by which all participants care to understand at cognitive and emotional levels each other's experiences and are open to change either by exposure to other's ideas or by the experiences in their relationships (Jordan, 1991). In this way, all participants in mutuality interactions are allowing something new to happen within their worldview and possibly within their physical environment because they are also motivated to act in empathic relational ways (Jordan, 1991; Miller, 1986b; Surrey, 1997). It is this empathic openness to new horizons what makes mutuality particularly important in lesbian-heterosexual women's friendships and research. According to Miller (1986a), women have the natural ability to enact many of the elements of mutuality interactions described by Jordan (1991), such as empathy, willingness to engage in authentic self-disclosures of thoughts and feelings, and expressions of affection and validation for others' suffering as well as the tendency to help others to achieve their goals. Thus, it should be more likely for women to form growth-fostering relationships between one another than with other gender individuals. For instance, researchers have shown that when some heterosexual women have close lesbian friends, they not only support their lesbian friends in claiming their lesbian identity but also participate in antigay political events (Fingerhut, 2011).

However, it seems that most women limit their friendships to women with similar homophily (McPherson, et al., 2001; Verbrugge, 1977), including political views (Crandall et al., 1997; see Daniels, 2019; Weinstock & Bond, 2002), and sexual orientation (Galupo, 2007; Ueno et al., 2012). It has been well established that heterosexism and discrimination negatively impact women's connections, but what has not been established is how to reduce these tendencies (Galupo, 2006) and help women to improve their social and emotional support and combat the devaluation of women's relational-culture (see Jordan, 1991; Miller, 1986a).

Research on women's friendship is needed to expand the knowledge of and to add sources of social and emotional support to women. Many men need social and emotional support also, but the oppression of women makes them more vulnerable than men and in more need of allies (Miller, 1986a). There are many men and women who hold one or more minority identities, such as sexual orientation, race, age, social class, and physical disability, which affects them in ways that might be foreign to people with the dominant group characteristics (e.g., White, heterosexual, Christian, able-bodied, middle-class men). However, researchers frequently only include people from privileged groups (Gilligan, 1982; Lerner, 1979; Miller, 1986a). This author aims to contribute to the virtually neglected research on friendships between two marginalized groups, heterosexual and lesbian women.

Lesbian women's friendships offer affection, support, and help to face discrimination and develop a healthy sexual identity (Fitzgerald, 2004; Stanley, 1996).

However, most lesbians grow up and live in a heterosexist society. Therefore, lesbians most likely start out befriending heterosexual girls and women (Rust, 1993) and hiding their sexual orientation from them (see Fitzgerald, 2004). Heterosexual women are not only likely to be the first friends of lesbian women, but they are also the friends from and with whom they learned about friendships and social acceptance or rejection (Rust, 1993; Weinstock & Bond, 2002). Although the obvious solution is the eradication of homophobia and heterosexism, it is unlikely a viable achievement at this time. However, as scientists and humanists, scholars could start opening venues to alleviate women's oppression and the isolation that is often forced on lesbian women (Fitzgerald, 2004; Garnets, 2008). Lesbians' identity and independence from men challenge patriarchal traditions; thus, isolating them and dividing them from their heterosexual sisters is convenient for patriarchal cultures but not for women (see Hunt, 1991; Rich, 1986). Therefore, the other purpose of the present study is to help to identify the factors that might help women to form meaningful connections across sexual orientation, specifically to assess the impact of mutuality in women's desires to befriend and help each other, regardless their differences.

Research Questions

The overall research question for this study was, "What are the relationships among heterosexism, mutuality, and friendship closeness in heterosexual and lesbian women's same-sexual orientation and cross-sexual orientation friendships?" This

question was operationalized through specific hypotheses which are presented in the Method chapter.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This chapter includes descriptions of participants' demographics, instrumentation, and the procedures used in the study. Hypotheses and the associated statistical analysis plan are presented at the end of the chapter.

Participants

An a priori power analysis was conducted using G*Power 3.1.9 to determine the minimum sample size required to find statistical power at .80, an alpha (α) level at .05, and a moderate effect size of .20 (f). It was determined that a minimum of 52 total participants would be required to ensure adequate power (Cohen, 1988). A total of 263 women took part in the online survey. Of these participants, 91 were removed for invalid data (duplicated cases, no responses to any of the scales, not meeting eligibility, or taking longer than 60 minutes or less than 2 seconds per question to answer the survey). The final sample consisted in 172 women, mostly White, in their early 40s and with at least a bachelor's degree. Detailed information about participants' demographic diversity is provided in Table 1a, 1b, and Table 2.

Table 1a

Descriptive Statistics for Total Sample Demographics: Categorical Variables

Variable	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Sexual Orientation			
Lesbian	54	31.4	31.4
Heterosexual	118	68.6	100.0
Race/Ethnicity			
White	117	68.0	68.0
Hispanic/Latina	39	22.7	90.7
Black/African American	9	5.2	95.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	1.7	97.6
Biracial	1	0.6	98.2
Multiracial	1	0.6	98.8
Mediterranean/Italian	1	0.6	99.4
Middle Eastern	1	0.6	100.0
Relationship Status			
Single	39	22.7	22.7
Married	89	51.7	74.4
Living with Partner	24	14.0	88.4
Divorced/Separated	9	5.2	93.6
Widowed	3	1.7	95.3
In a long-term relationship	2	1.2	96.5
In a relationship	4	2.3	98.8
Companionship	1	0.6	99.4
Did not answer	1	0.6	100.0
Have Children			
Yes	73	42.4	42.4
No	99	57.6	100.0
Academic Education Level			
Less than High School Diploma	1	0.6	0.6
High School Diploma	3	1.7	2.3
Some College	24	14.0	16.3
Bachelor's Degree	47	27.3	43.6
Master's Degree	57	33.1	76.7
Doctoral Degree	40	23.3	100.0

Table 1a, continued

Variable	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Religion			
Christian	52	30.2	30.2
Catholic	33	19.2	49.4
Non-denominational	7	4.1	53.5
Spiritual	5	2.9	56.4
Unitarian	3	1.7	58.1
Jewish	3	1.7	59.8
Buddhist	2	1.2	61.0
Pagan	2	1.2	62.2
Non-religious	2	1.2	63.4
Metaphysic	1	0.6	64.0
Earth Based/Native American	1	0.6	64.6
Unsure	1	0.6	65.2
Satanist	1	0.6	65.8
Atheist	17	9.9	75.7
Agnostic	34	19.7	95.4
Did not answer	8	4.6	100.0
Annual Income			
Below \$45,000.00	32	18.6	18.6
\$45,000.00 to \$122,000.00	95	55.2	73.8
Exceed \$123,000.00	45	26.2	100.0

Table 1b

Descriptive Statistics for Sample Demographics by Sexual Orientation

	Lesbian Women		Heterosexual Women	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Race/Ethnicity				
White	40	23.3	77	44.8
Hispanic/Latina	7	4.1	32	18.6
Black/African American	5	2.9	4	2.3
Asian/Pacific Islander			3	1.7
Biracial	1	0.6		
Multiracial			1	0.6
Mediterranean/Italian			1	0.6
Middle Eastern	1	0.6		
Relationship Status				
Single	10	5.8	29	10.7
Married	27	15.7	62	36.0
Living with Partner	10	5.8	14	8.1
Divorced/Separated	1	0.6	8	4.7
Widowed	1	0.6	2	1.2
In a long-term relationship			1	0.6
In a relationship	3	1.7	1	0.6
Companionship	1	0.6		
Did not answer	1	0.6		
Have Children				
Yes	16	9.3	57	33.1
No	38	22.1	61	35.5
Academic Education Level				
Less than High School Diploma			1	0.6
High School Diploma			3	1.7
Some College	9	5.2	15	8.7
Bachelor's Degree	12	7.0	35	20.3
Master's Degree	18	10.5	39	22.7
Doctoral Degree	15	8.7	25	14.5

Table 1b, continued

	Lesbian Women		Heterosexual Women	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Religion				
Christian	13	7.6	39	22.7
Catholic	3	1.7	30	17.4
Non-denominational	1	0.6	6	3.5
Spiritual	3	1.7	2	1.2
Unitarian	2	1.2	1	0.6
Jewish	1	0.6	2	1.2
Buddhist	1	0.6	1	0.6
Pagan	1	0.6	1	0.6
Non-religious	1	0.6	1	0.6
Metaphysic			1	0.6
Earth Based/Native American	1	0.6		
Unsure	1	0.6		
Satanist				
Atheist	10	5.8	7	4.1
Agnostic	11	6.4	23	13.4
Did not answer	4	2.3	4	2.3
Annual Income				
Below \$45,000.00	10	5.8	22	12.8
\$45,000.00 to \$122,000.00	29	16.7	66	38.4
Exceed \$123,000.00	15	8.7	30	17.4

Chi-Square tests revealed no significant differences between lesbian and heterosexual women in relation to race, education, income, marital status, and religious affiliation. However, lesbian and heterosexual women differed in number of children and atheist beliefs. Regarding number of children, Chi-square test indicated lesbian women had significant less children than heterosexual women, $X^2 (1, n = 172) = 5.29, p = .02$. Concerning atheist beliefs, Chi-square test indicated a significant association between lesbian women and atheist beliefs, $X^2 (1, n = 172) = 6.59, p = .01$.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Sample Demographics: Continuous Variables

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Range	Mean	SD
Age in Years					
19-20	1	0.6	19–82	43.12	14.24
21-30	33	19.2			
31-40	67	39.0			
41-50	32	18.6			
51-60	20	11.6			
61-70	22	12.8			
71-82	7	4.1			

Note. An independent-samples t-test revealed no statistical difference between lesbian and heterosexual women’s age, $t(111.75) = -.686, p = .494$, two tailed.

Instruments

The instruments used consisted in a demographic questionnaire developed by the author, the Mutual Psychological Development Questionnaire (MPDQ; Genero et al., 1992) used to assess perceived mutuality, and the Multidimensional Heterosexism Inventory (MHI; Walls, 2008a) used to assess heterosexist attitudes. Descriptions of these scales are provided below.

Demographic Questionnaire

A demographic questionnaire with questions regarding participants’ age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, relationship and maternal status, income and academic education level, and religious beliefs was constructed by the author. The demographic questionnaire also included questions about women’s number of same- and cross-orientation friendships in relation to the categories of casual, close, and best friends. A definition of these three categories was provided to guide participants’ selection and to

limit variation in their classification of friendships. Refer to Appendix A for a full description.

Mutual Psychological Development Questionnaire

The MPDQ (Genero et al., 1992) is used to assess perceived mutuality in close relationships. It was based on Miller's (1988/2008) six conceptual elements of mutuality: empathy (attunement to each other's feelings and experience), engagement (attentive and caring involvement), authenticity (expressing their authentic self and mutually recognizing each other's authentic self), zest (feeling energized), diversity (expressing and understanding each other's perspectives and feelings), and empowerment (influencing, impacting, and encouraging each other to act). The MPDQ is a 22-item Likert type scale (6-point) with response categories labeled never, rarely, occasionally, more often than not, most of the time, and all the time. The 22 items are divided in two sections of 11 items each. On the first section, respondents rate 11 items in relation to the question, "When we talk about things that matter to my [friend], I am likely to..." (Genero et al., 1992, p. 39), and on the second section, respondents rate 11 items in relation to the question "When we talk about things that matter to me, my [friend] is likely to..." (Genero et al., 1992, p. 39). In other words, only one person of the dyad responds to both sections rating self and the other's perceptions of the level of mutuality in their relationship (Genero et al., 1992).

The two sections of the MPDQ contain six items that convey mutuality and five items that convey negative attitudes to the relationship. The items conveying negative

attitudes are reversed before adding the scores and dividing them by the total number of responses to obtain the mean score. Mean scores can range from 1 to 6 with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived mutuality. Genero et al. (1992) constructed two equal questionnaires: Form A for spouse/partners and Form B for friend relationships. Form B for friends has the variation of instructing participants to rate “a relationship with a close friend excluding your spouse or partner” (Genero et al., 1992, p. 39). For the present study, only form B was used to assess same-sex friendships between women.

Regarding reliability and validity, Genero et al. (1992) conducted a study obtaining a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of .92 for both partner and friend forms. The alpha coefficient for friends was .89, suggesting a high degree of internal consistency among the items. In the current study, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .83 for both MPDQ heterosexual friend and lesbian friend versions. The MPDQ has also demonstrated test-retest reliability with reliability alphas ranging from .87 to .91 over a 2-week time period. In addition, the MPDQ has demonstrated construct validity. Specifically, for Form B, friends’ version, scores were correlated with social support ($r = .44, p < .001$), relationship satisfaction ($r = .72, p < .001$), and cohesion ($r = .75, p < .001$) (Genero et al., 1992). See Appendices B.1 and B.2 for the heterosexual friend Form B and lesbian friend Form B, respectively.

Multidimensional Heterosexism Inventory

The Multidimensional Heterosexism Inventory was developed by Walls (2008a) to capture four modern heterosexism subdomains (aversive, amnestic, paternalistic, and

positive stereotypic). The MHI consists in four scales, one for each subdomain with a total of 23 questions, which are divided into two groups. The first group of questions contains the scales of positive stereotypic heterosexism (6 questions), amnesic heterosexism (4 questions), aversive heterosexism (6 questions), and the second group contains the scale of paternalistic heterosexism (6 questions). For the three scales in the first group, a 7-point Likert scale is used with response categories labeled strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, slightly disagree, neither agree nor disagree, slightly agree, somewhat agree, and strongly agree. Scores can range from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). As each subdomain measures a different type of heterosexism, there is no overall mean. Mean scores for each scale in the first group range from 1 to 7 with higher scores indicating greater endorsement of the subdomain the scale measures. The paternalistic heterosexism scale has an additional response, “okay with gay kid” in addition to the seven response categories. Therefore, the scores for this scale can range from 1 (*okay with gay kid*) to 8 (*strongly disagree*). Mean scores for the paternalistic heterosexism scale can range from 1 to 8 with higher scores indicating greater endorsement. To have a metric comparable score of the paternalistic heterosexism scale with the other three scales, the average score is multiplied by 7, and then divided by 8.

The aversive heterosexism subdomain captures the aversion to political and cultural demands for the rights of sexual minorities. An example of items in this scale is “Lesbians have become too radical in their demands.” The amnesic heterosexism subdomain captures refusals to acknowledge information about sexual minorities’ current

discriminations, and misconceptions about sexual minorities having reached social equality. An example of items in this scale is, “Gay men are treated as fairly as everyone else in today’s society.” The positive stereotype heterosexism subdomain captures endorsements of positive stereotypes, which tend to perpetuate discrimination against sexual minorities. An example of items in this scale is, “Lesbians are better than heterosexual women at physically defending themselves.” The paternalistic heterosexism subdomain captures combinations of concern and preference for heterosexual norms and expressions. An example of items in this scale is, “I would prefer my daughter NOT be homosexual because she would unfairly be stopped from adopting children.” Refer to Appendix C for full details.

Regarding reliability, Cronbach’s alphas were .84 for aversive, .64 for amnestic, .89 for paternalistic, and .90 for the positive stereotypic scale. The reliability for the overall scale was .82 (Walls, 2008a). In the current study, the Cronbach’s alphas were .86 for aversive, .68 for amnestic, .97 for paternalistic, .89 for positive stereotypic, and .90 for the overall scale. The aversive heterosexism scale has demonstrated convergent validity by yielding positive correlations with conservative political ideologies, religiosity, and hostile sexism (Katz, Federici, Ciovacco, & Crosey, 2016). The amnestic heterosexism scale has demonstrated convergent validity by yielding positive correlations with hostile sexism, reaching a Cronbach’s alpha of .93 in Brownfield, Flores, Morgan, Allen, and Marszalek (2018) study.

Procedure

Upon approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), participants were recruited to participate in an online survey created on PsychData (<https://www.psychdata.com/default.asp>). Participants were recruited through several avenues. A recruitment script (see Appendix D) introducing the study, eligibility, and the online survey's link was sent to the following organizations that previously consented to post it in their listservs and/or social media: The American Psychological Association (APA) Division 44 (Society for the Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity), Association of Women in Psychology, Borderland Rainbow Center, Dallas Children's Advocacy Center, and the Organization for Women's Empowerment. In addition, recruitment was also conducted via social media and snowball sampling. The recruitment script was posted in the authors' Facebook page and in the Facebook page of some of her friends. Using the online survey was the only method for gathering the research data.

Once participants accessed the study link, they were taken to an Informed Consent page (see Appendix E). Participants who indicated their consent and verified having all the five requirements to participate (be cisgender woman, at least 18 years old, hold either a heterosexual or lesbian identity, have at least one lesbian friend, and one heterosexual women friend) were taken to the demographic questionnaire and subsequent scales. There was only one version of the survey with the following sequence: a) Informed Consent, b) Eligibility, c) Demographic questionnaire, d) MPDQ (Genero et al.,

1992), e) MHI (Walls, 2008a), f) Counseling referral sources, g) Option to request results, and h) Option to enter drawing.

Upon completion of the survey, participants were presented with a list of referral sources (see Appendix F). This list also contained a note inviting participants to print or screenshot the page to have the sources available in case of later need. After the list of referrals, participants were presented first with the option to request the results of the study and second with the option to enter in a drawing to win one of five \$25.00 Amazon gift cards. To protect participants' confidentiality, participants who opted to receive the results and/or enter in the drawing were taken to a separate survey to provide their contact information. In total, the survey was estimated to take about 15 minutes to complete. However, there were no restrictions on time to complete the survey, except to complete it in one sitting. Data were collected and stored via PsychData (<https://www.psychdata.com>). As per the PsychData website, "PsychData is specifically designed to meet and exceed industry standards for Internet security as well as IRB standards for the protection of research participants" (PsychData, n.d.).

Statistical Analysis

The independent variable in this study was sexual orientation (lesbian and heterosexual women). The dependent variables were perceived mutuality as measured by participants' scores in the MPDQ (Genero et al., 1992), the number of women's same-orientation and cross-orientation friends, friendship categories (casual, close, and best) as measured on the demographic questionnaire, and heterosexist attitudes, as measured by

participants' scores in the four (positive stereotypic, amnesic, aversive, and paternalistic) subdomains of the MHI (Walls, 2008a). The hypotheses and statistical techniques in relation to these variables are listed in Table 3.

Table 3

Research Hypotheses and Statistical Analysis

Hypotheses	Statistical Analysis
H1: Perceived mutuality will be higher in same-orientation than in cross-orientation friendships	Mixed ANOVA
H2: Heterosexual women will score higher in heterosexist attitudes than lesbian women.	Independent <i>t</i> -Test
H3a: There will be a higher number of friends in same-orientation dyads than in cross-orientation dyads.	Mixed ANOVA
H3b: There will be a higher number of friends in same-orientation dyads than in cross-orientation dyads, after controlling for heterosexism.	Mixed ANCOVA
H4a: There will be differences in the friendship categories between same- and cross-orientation friendships.	Mixed ANOVA
H4b: There will be differences in the friendship categories between same- and cross-orientation friendships, after controlling for heterosexism.	Mixed ANCOVA
H5: There will be a negative correlation between heterosexism and perceived mutuality in cross-orientation friendships.	Pearson Correlation

Prior to conducting these analyses, the data were cleaned. As noted earlier, 91 cases were removed for invalid data. Participants who left blank all responses and/or did

not answer any of the items on the scales were removed. However, participants who did not provide a response for a particular item on any of the scales were not removed and received average scores for that scale. In addition, assumptions related to each analysis were tested prior to conducting it; if assumptions were violated, relevant corrections were made in order to safely run the relevant statistics (e.g., Greenhouse-Geisser corrections).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results yielded in the assessments of perceived mutuality and heterosexist attitudes in relation to lesbian and heterosexual women's friendship relationships. First, the descriptive statistics for the measurements used are discussed, followed by the analyses of hypotheses.

Descriptive Statistics

The means, range, and standard deviations were calculated for the instruments used in this study and are presented in Table 4 and Table 5. Descriptive statistics for number of friends and friendship categories are presented in the analysis of corresponding hypotheses.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Mutuality Psychological Development Questionnaire

Variable	<i>n</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
MPDQ-Same-Orientation Friendships	152	3.59–6.00	4.91	0.41
MPDQ-Cross-Orientation Friendships	147	3.73–5.77	4.86	0.44
Perceived Mutuality Lesbian Women				
Lesbian-Lesbian Friends	48	3.82–6.00	4.93	0.45
Lesbian-Heterosexual Friends	52	3.86–5.77	4.90	0.39
Perceived Mutuality Heterosexual Women				
Heterosexual-Heterosexual Friends	104	3.59–5.73	4.90	0.39
Heterosexual-Lesbian Friends	95	3.73–5.73	4.84	0.47

Higher scores in the MPDQ represent higher levels of perceive mutuality (Genero et al., 1992). Although Genero et al. assessed only heterosexual individuals, the scores ($M = 4.99, SD = .52$) they reported for perceived mutuality between heterosexual women’s friendships are comparable with the scores of both heterosexual-heterosexual women’s friendships and lesbian-lesbian women’s friendships as well as with the scores of same-orientation and cross-orientation friendships in the present study.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Multidimensional Heterosexism Inventory

Variable	<i>n</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Heterosexist Attitudes (full sample)				
MHI-Positive Stereotypic	142	1.00–7.00	2.85	1.32
MHI-Amnestic	142	1.00–4.50	1.65	0.72
MHI-Aversive	142	1.00–5.67	1.96	1.07
MHI-Paternalistic	135	0.88–7.88	2.19	1.78
Lesbian Women				
MHI-Positive Stereotypic	47	1.00–7.00	3.42	1.40
MHI-Amnestic	47	1.00–3.50	1.59	0.64
MHI-Aversive	47	1.00–4.00	1.76	0.89
MHI-Paternalistic	45	1.00–6.00	1.58	1.32
Heterosexual Women				
MHI-Positive Stereotypic	95	1.00–4.83	2.57	1.19
MHI-Amnestic	95	1.00–4.50	1.67	0.76
MHI-Aversive	95	1.00–5.67	2.06	1.14
MHI-Paternalistic	90	1.00–6.86	2.50	1.91

Higher scores in in the MHI’s subdomains represent higher endorsement of the heterosexist attitude measured by each subdomain (Walls, 2008a). The means in the

current sample for the four subdomains are below the averages found by Walls (2008a) when he measured these constructs in women in his original study, indicating that overall women in this study hold less modern heterosexist attitudes.

Analysis of Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to explore friendship relationships between lesbian and heterosexual women in relation to mutuality and heterosexism. Overall, the researcher expected that perceived mutuality would contribute to having friendship relationships across sexual orientation, but that mutuality would be higher in same-orientation friendships; that sexual orientation would impact women's number of same- and cross-orientation friends and friendship categories; and that heterosexist attitudes would be higher in heterosexual women and would hinder perceived mutuality in cross-orientation friendships. These expectations were formulated with the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1

The researcher hypothesized that perceived mutuality would be higher in same-orientation than in cross-orientation friendships. This hypothesis was not supported. A mixed-design ANOVA with perceived mutuality (in same- and cross-orientation friendships) as a within-subjects factor and sexual orientation (lesbian and heterosexual women) as between-subjects factors revealed no main effect of perceived mutuality, $F(1, 141) = 1.508, p = 0.221, \eta_p^2 = .011$, and no significant interaction between perceived mutuality and sexual orientation, $F(1, 141) = 0.297, p = 0.587, \eta_p^2 = .002$.

Hypothesis 2

The researcher hypothesized that heterosexual women would score higher in heterosexist attitudes than lesbian women. Heterosexist attitudes were measured by the MHIs four subdomains (positive stereotypic, amnestic, aversive, and paternalistic). This hypothesis was partially supported.

For the MHI-Amnestic subdomain, the independent-samples *t*-test indicated that there was no statistical difference between lesbian and heterosexual women's scores, $t(107.56) = -.635, p = .527$, two tailed. For the MHI-Aversive subdomain, the independent-samples *t*-test indicated that there was no statistical difference between lesbian and heterosexual women's scores, $t(114.16) = -.171, p = .091$, two tailed.

For the MHI-Positive Stereotypic subdomain, the independent-samples *t*-test indicated that scores were significantly higher for lesbian women ($M = 3.42, SD = 1.40$) than for heterosexual women ($M = 2.57, SD = 1.19$); $t(140) = 3.80, p = .000$, two-tailed, $d = .66$, indicating a medium effect size. These scores suggest that in comparison to heterosexual women, lesbian participants tended to believe more in the stereotypes and myths attributed to sexual minorities, in particular those that may appear to be affirming at one level but which nevertheless may serve to perpetuate stigmatization of sexual minorities (Walls, 2008a).

For the MHI-Paternalistic subdomain, the independent-samples *t*-test indicated that scores were significantly higher for heterosexual women ($M = 2.50, SD = 1.91$) than for lesbian women ($M = 1.58, SD = 1.32$); $t(119) = -3.25, p = .001$, two-tailed, $d = .56$,

indicating a medium effect size. These results suggest that heterosexual women participants tend to have more concerns about sexual minorities' life experiences than do lesbian women. However, these beliefs are based on considering sexual minorities' orientation inferior to heterosexual orientation and contribute to perpetuate stigmatization and segregation of sexual minorities (Walls, 2008a).

Hypothesis 3a

The researcher hypothesized that there would be a higher number of friends in same-orientation dyads than in cross-orientation dyads. This hypothesis was partially supported. The mixed-design ANOVA with friendship type orientation (same and cross-orientation) as a within-subjects factor and sexual orientation (lesbian and heterosexual women) as between-subjects factor revealed no main effect of sexual orientation $F(1, 126) = 3.37, p = 0.069$.

However, the mixed ANOVA, $F(1, 126) = 50.85, p = .000, \eta_p^2 = .29$, revealed a significant main effect of number of same and cross-orientation friendships, regardless of sexual orientation. Based on the effect size, the main effect was large. There was also a significant interaction between number of same and cross-orientation friendships and sexual orientation $F(1, 126) = 23.73, p = .000, \eta_p^2 = .16$. Based on the effect size, the interaction effect was large. These results and inspection of the estimated marginal means indicated that the number of same-orientation friendships was similar between lesbian participants and heterosexual women participants but differed in their number of cross-orientation friendships. Lesbian women reported higher number of friendships with

heterosexual women than heterosexual women reported friendships with lesbian women.

Refer to Table 6 and Figure 1 for full information.

Table 6

Hypothesis 3a: Sexual Orientation and Number of Friends

Measure:	Mean	SD	95 % Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Lesbian				
Same-Orientation Friendships	14.49	11.51	10.91	18.06
Cross-Orientation Friendships	12.14	5.26	10.60	13.68
Heterosexual				
Same-Orientation Friendships	17.23	10.35	15.04	19.42
Cross-Orientation Friendships	4.79	4.33	3.84	5.73

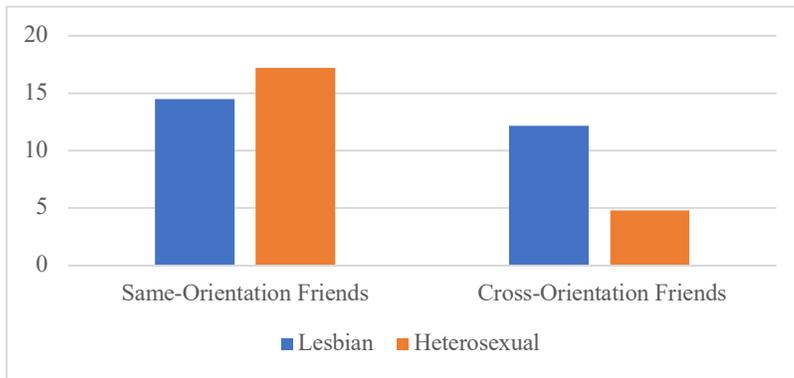


Figure 1. H3a: Estimated marginal means for same and cross-orientation friends

Hypothesis 3b

The researcher hypothesized that there would be a higher number of friends in same-orientation dyads than in cross-orientation dyads, after controlling for heterosexism. This hypothesis was supported partially. A mixed-design ANCOVA with friendship type orientation (same and cross-orientation) as a within-subjects factor and

sexual orientation (lesbian and heterosexual women) as between-subjects factor, and the four (positive stereotypic, amnestic, aversive, and paternalistic) subdomains of the MHI as covariates to control for heterosexism revealed no significant effects between number of same and cross-orientation friendships and any of the covariates.

However, the mixed ANCOVA, $F(1, 92) = 25.69, p = 0.000, \eta_p^2 = .22$, revealed a significant interaction between number of same and cross-orientation friendships and sexual orientation, after controlling for the covariates. Based on the effect size, the interaction was large. These results and the inspection of the estimated marginal means indicated that the number of same-orientation friendships was similar between lesbian participants and heterosexual women participants. However, the two groups differed in their number of cross-orientation friendships. Lesbian women reported higher number of heterosexual friendships than heterosexual women. Refer to Table 7 and Figure 2 for full information.

Table 7

Hypothesis 3b: Sexual Orientation and Number of Friends after Controlling for Heterosexism

Measure:	Mean	SD	95 % Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Lesbian				
Same-Orientation Friendships	12.93	11.15	7.48	16.24
Cross-Orientation Friendships	12.07	5.20	10.04	14.11
Heterosexual				
Same-Orientation Friendships	18.23	10.37	15.63	20.83
Cross-Orientation Friendships	4.97	4.65	3.76	6.18

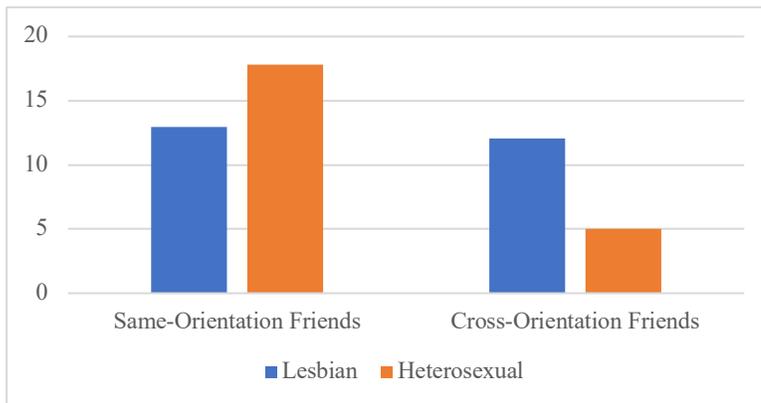


Figure 2. H3b: Estimated marginal means for same and cross-orientation friends after controlling for heterosexism

Hypothesis 4a

The researcher hypothesized that there would be differences in the friendship categories between same- and cross-orientation friendships. This hypothesis was partially supported. A mixed-design ANOVA with friendship categories (casual, close, and best in same- and cross friendships) as within-subjects factor and sexual orientation (lesbian and heterosexual women) as between-subjects factor was run.

The mixed design ANOVA, $F(1.68, 211.69) = 80.58, p = .000, \eta_p^2 = .39$, revealed a significant main effect of number of friendship categories, regardless of sexual orientation. Based on the effect size, the main effect was large. There was also a significant interaction between friendship categories and sexual orientation $F(1.68, 211.69) = 11.21, p = .000, \eta_p^2 = .082$. Based on the effect size, the interaction effect was medium.

These results and the inspection of the estimated marginal means of sexual orientation and friendship categories (see Table 8) indicated lesbian and heterosexual

women reported similar number of friendships in all categories of same-orientation friendships. However, they differed in the number of all categories of cross-orientation friendships. Overall, lesbian women reported fewer same-orientation friendships than heterosexual women and more cross-orientation friendships than heterosexual women in all categories. However, only the cross-orientation friendships reached a statistically significant difference. Refer to Table 8 and Figure 3 for full information.

Table 8

Hypothesis H4a: Sexual Orientation and Friendship Categories

Sexual Orientation	Friendship Categories	Mean	SD	95 % Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Lesbian Women	Same-Orientation				
	Casual	8.46	7.40	6.00	10.92
	Close	4.31	4.03	3.19	5.44
	Best	1.71	1.30	1.23	2.20
	Cross-Orientation				
	Casual	7.31	3.98	6.32	8.31
	Close	3.43	2.24	2.83	4.03
	Best	1.40	0.95	1.12	1.68
	Heterosexual Women	Same-Orientation			
Casual		9.54	7.33	8.03	11.05
Close		5.24	3.08	4.55	5.93
Best		2.45	1.49	2.16	2.75
Cross-Orientation					
Casual		2.89	2.52	2.28	3.51
Close		1.39	1.58	1.02	1.75
Best		0.51	0.79	0.33	0.68

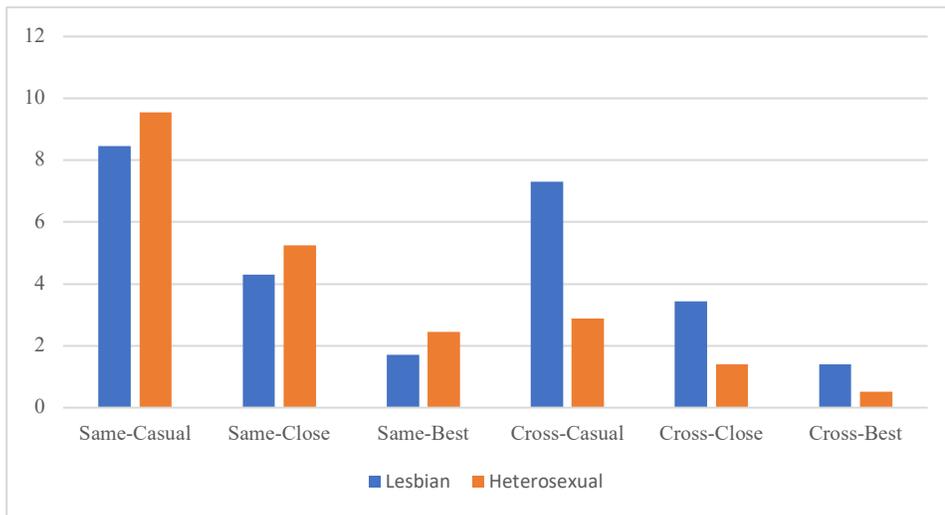


Figure 3. H4a: Estimated marginal means for friendship categories

Hypothesis 4b

The researcher hypothesized that there would be differences in the friendship categories between same and cross-orientation friendships after controlling for heterosexism. This hypothesis was partially supported. A mixed-design ANCOVA with friendship categories (casual, close, and best in same and cross friendships) as within-subjects factor and sexual orientation (lesbian and heterosexual women) as between-subjects, and the four (positive stereotypic, amnesic, aversive, and paternalistic) subdomains of the MHI as covariates to control for heterosexism revealed no significant effects between friendship categories and any of the covariates.

However, the mixed-design ANCOVA, $F(1.67, 152.75) = 5.90, p = .006, \eta_p^2 = 0.06$, revealed a significant effect of friendship categories. Based on the effect size, the effect was medium. There was also a significant interaction between friendship categories and sexual orientation, $F(1.67, 152.75) = 11.32, p = .000, \eta_p^2 = 0.11$. Based on the effect

size, the interaction was medium. These results and inspection of the estimated marginal means of sexual orientation and friendship categories indicated that differences in lesbian and heterosexual women’s friendship categories persisted after controlling for heterosexism. Overall, lesbian women reported fewer same-orientation friendships than heterosexual women and more cross-orientation friendships than heterosexual women. However, only friendship categories in cross-orientation friendships reached a statistically significant difference. Refer to Table 9 and Figure 4 for full information.

Table 9

Hypothesis 4b: Sexual Orientation and Friendship Categories after controlling for Heterosexism

		95 % Confidence Interval			
Sexual Orientation	Friendship Categories	Mean	SD	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Lesbian Women	Same-Orientation				
	Casual	7.18	6.75	3.97	9.91
	Close	4.18	4.21	2.14	5.01
	Best	1.57	1.23	0.78	1.92
	Cross-Orientation				
	Casual	7.07	3.52	6.02	8.47
	Close	3.57	2.43	2.68	4.31
	Best	1.43	0.96	0.96	1.71
	Heterosexual Women	Same-Orientation			
Casual		9.87	7.27	8.21	11.73
Close		5.44	3.19	4.83	6.54
Best		2.49	1.42	2.24	2.92
Cross-Orientation					
Casual		3.04	2.63	2.25	3.70
Close		1.39	1.68	0.93	1.90
Best		0.54	0.86	0.36	0.90

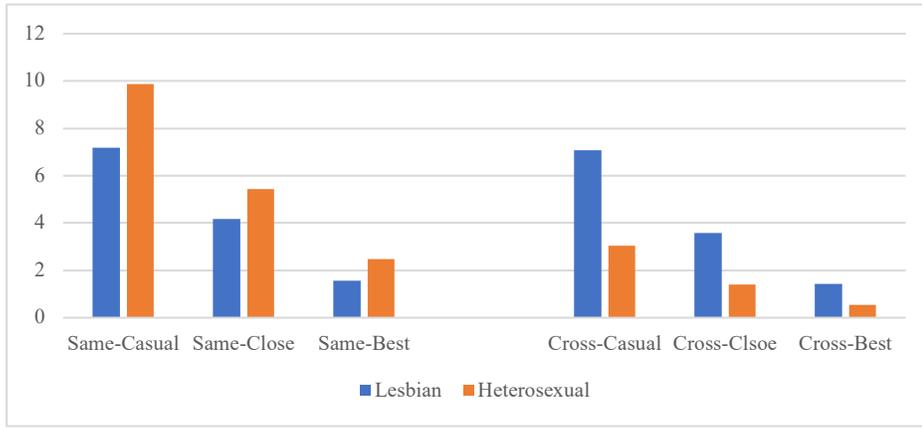


Figure 4. H4b: Estimated marginal means for friendship categories after controlling for heterosexism

Hypothesis 5

The researcher hypothesized that there would be a negative correlation between heterosexism and perceived mutuality in cross-orientation friendships. The relationship between perceived mutuality as measured by the MPDQ and heterosexism as measured by the four (positive stereotypic, amnesic, aversive, and paternalistic) subdomains of the MHI were analyzed with Person product-moment correlation coefficients. This hypothesis was supported partially. The relationship between perceived mutuality in cross-orientation friendships and MHI-Positive Stereotypic subdomain was not significant, $r = -0.074$, $n = 140$, $p = .192$.

For the relationship between perceived mutuality in cross-orientation friendships and MHI-Amnesic subdomain, the Pearson's r data analysis revealed a small negative correlation, $r = -.244$, $p = .002$. These results might indicate that increased levels of

perceived mutuality were associated with decreased attitudes about sexual minorities' discrimination being "a thing of the past, and that lesbian women and gay men are treated fairly in contemporary society" (Walls, 2008a, p. 231).

For the relationship between perceived mutuality in cross-orientation friendships and MHI-Aversive subdomain, the Pearson's r data analysis revealed a small negative correlation, $r = -.240, p = .002$. These results suggest that increased levels of perceived mutuality were associated with decreased endorsement of attitudes about sexual minorities demanding excessive political and cultural support for their rights (Walls, 2008b).

For the relationship between perceived mutuality in cross-orientation friendships and MHI-Paternalistic subdomain, the Pearson's r data analysis revealed a small negative correlation, $r = -.177, p = .02$. These results suggest that increased levels of perceived mutuality were associated with decreased endorsement of beliefs about sexual minorities' orientation is inferior to heterosexual orientation (Walls, 2008a).

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This chapter includes interpretations of findings and their integration with the prior literature. Following this, implications for theory, research, and practice are presented. The discussion finishes with limitations of the study and key conclusions.

Interpretation of Findings and Integration with the Literature

The purpose of this study was to explore friendship relationships between lesbian and heterosexual women in relation to the impact of sexual orientation on perceived mutuality, number of friends and friendship categories in and between lesbian and heterosexual women's friendships; levels of heterosexist attitudes; and the relationship between heterosexism and perceived mutuality in cross-orientation friendships. To investigate these variables, seven hypotheses were formulated and tested; the statistical analyses used partially supported six of the seven hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1

The researcher expected that women would report higher levels of perceived mutuality with friends of their own same sexual orientation, but results did not support this expectation. The researcher's expectations were based on past literature showing that women tend to trust and connect more and more rapidly with other women with the same sexual orientation (Galupo, 2007; Logan, 2013; Ueno et al., 2012), which seems to be especially the case for lesbian women who may fear judgments due to heterosexist

attitudes (Fitzgerald, 2004; Gair, 2004; Toomey et al., 2018). However, researchers have also suggested that education, interests, and moral beliefs are associated with higher levels of intimacy (Curry & Dunbar, 2013), and intimacy is a basic component of mutuality (Miller, 1986b). Participants in this study were highly educated. Out of the 172 participants, 47 had a bachelor's degree, 57 a master's degree, and 40 a doctoral degree, making the sample highly skewed in terms of education. In addition, the recruitment process may have also targeted women with not only affirming attitudes towards sexual minorities, but also with altruistic views, which are also associated with higher levels of intimacy (Curry & Dunbar, 2013). For example, recruitment scripts were sent to associations such as the APA Division 44, Borderland Rainbow Center, and the Organization for Women's Empowerment. All these organizations are either LGBTQ affirming and/or pro social equality. Thus, participants likely are not only empathic to each other but also empowering, which is also an element of mutuality (Jordan, 1991; Miller & Stiver, 1997; Surrey, 1997).

Another factor that might have impacted these women's scores could be increased political and social support of sexual minorities in the last decade. The legalization of same-sex marriages and adoption for sexual minorities has shown improvement in public acceptance (Drabble et al., 2019; Levy & Levy, 2016). This support has also opened opportunities for sexual minority women to meet and bond with heterosexual women. For example, Goldberg et al. (2018) reported that lesbian and heterosexual mothers have opportunity to meet and bond because they have children at the same school. Although

Goldberg et al. (2018) found that 50% of lesbian mothers felt uncomfortable, they also reported improvement because 25% of lesbian mothers formed cross-orientation friendships and 50% reported favorable experiences.

Increased public political support might have also increased lesbian women's sense of safety to live openly. Researchers have reported that sexual minority individuals who feel safer tend to have a positive self-concept and develop closer friendships with both sexual minority and heterosexual women (Kaufman & Johnson, 2004; Legate et al., 2017), and mutuality is a basic component of closer friendships. Thus, it may be that the women who participated in this study might have elements that contribute to increase their mutuality interactions, which could be above the average, helping them to connect equally across sexual orientation, and superseding the influence of sexual orientation.

Hypothesis 2

The researcher expected that heterosexual women would score higher in modern heterosexism attitudes, which were assessed by the four heterosexism subdomains of the MHI. The researcher's expectations were based on research about the influence that the culture of heterosexism in patriarchal societies have on most individuals (Miller, 1986a; Singh & Durson, 2017), which might have a greater influence on heterosexual women than on lesbian women. Heterosexual women often internalize the cultural values of traditional cross-gender marriages, heterosexual families, and male supremacy (Bongiorno et al., 2016; Gilligan, 1982; Lorber, 2010; Miller, 1986a). Lesbian women,

on the other hand, are more likely to distance themselves from patriarchal myths (Garnets, 2008; Hunt, 1991; Pharr, 2010).

In addition, lesbian women are more likely than heterosexual women to experience discrimination based on their sexual orientation (Doan-Minh, 2019; Platt & Lenzen, 2013; Ueno & Gentile, 2015a; Weber et al., 2018), which may increase their awareness and susceptibility to subtle heterosexist attitudes and behaviors (Platt & Lenzen, 2013; Ueno & Gentile, 2015a). Thus, due to women's indoctrination to heteronormative ideals, the author expected that both lesbian and heterosexual women would report some level of heterosexist attitudes, but that heterosexual women would report higher scores. Because direct hostile heterosexist attitudes are unlikely to be present in friendship relationships, the MHI was selected to capture subtle heterosexist views that are often outside of individuals' awareness.

Results partially supported Hypothesis 2 and revealed an unexpected outcome related to lesbian women. Scores on the MHI-Amnestic and MHI-Aversive subdomains showed that lesbian and heterosexual women did not differ significantly in any of these two types of modern heterosexism. However, heterosexual women scored higher in the MHI-Paternalistic subdomain and lesbian women scored higher in the MHI-Positive Stereotypic subdomain.

The MHI-Amnestic subdomain captures denials of the existence of discrimination against sexual minority individuals. People with amnestic heterosexist views tend to believe that discrimination against sexual minorities no longer exists and perceive any

hostility against sexual minorities as trivial; therefore, demands by sexual minorities for justice are perceived as unjustified and militant (Walls, 2008a). These individuals also tend to ignore factual data about sexual minorities' discrimination and wellbeing (Walls, 2008a). Regarding the MHI-aversive subdomain, it is the most comparable to hostile heterosexism, but it is expressed in subtle forms. The MHI-Aversive subdomain captures negative attitudes, feelings, and beliefs about sexual minorities (Coons & Espinoza, 2018; Walls, 2008b). People with aversive heterosexist views are against political and cultural changes that support sexual minorities, and they hold the beliefs that "too much attention is given to issues of lesbian and gay sexuality" (Walls, 2008b, p. 46).

The statistical analysis yielded no significant difference between lesbian and heterosexual women regarding to amnestic and aversive heterosexism. The means yielded by both groups did not reach the midpoint (3.5), indicating low levels of heterosexist attitudes in both subdomains. These results might be indicative of women's similar political ideology, beliefs about social justice, or experiences of having cross-orientation friends. Researchers have indicated that amnestic and aversive heterosexism are related to people's unwillingness to support political and cultural change in favor of sexual minorities and the associations from which these women were recruited are pro-social justice for women and sexual minorities. Also, researchers have indicated that academic education (Fingerhut, 2011), having knowledge about multicultural issues (Dessel, Westmoreland, & Gutiérrez, 2016), and interests in anti-heterosexism and social equality movements reduces prejudice against sexual minorities (Bickmore, 2002;

Stormhøj, 2019). Participants in this study were likely to have such characteristics. Most participants reported having at least a bachelor's degree, and their membership in organizations supportive of sexual minorities might indicate their interest in anti-heterosexism and social equality. Also, this membership likely provided opportunities for women to expand their multicultural knowledge, especially on sexual minority issues. In addition, all participants had at least one lesbian friend, and researchers have indicated that having friends and/or past and present contact with sexual minorities is associated with decreased discriminatory views (Fingerhut, 2011; Galupo & St John, 2001; Mereish & Poteat, 2015; Weinstock & Bond, 2002).

In the case of heterosexual women's higher scores in the MHI-Paternalistic subdomain, heterosexual participants may have concerns about sexual minorities' suffering, especially if they have a family member or a friend who holds a sexual minority orientation. However, they might have internalized and be unaware of having paternalistic heterosexist attitudes. Walls (2008a) indicated that paternalistic heterosexism is present as a form of concern for sexual minorities' wellbeing, while simultaneously holding beliefs that a heterosexual orientation is superior to sexual minorities' orientations. For example, people with paternalistic heterosexist attitudes tend to rationalize their preference for their children to be heterosexual as concerns for the suffering they would experience if they were gay or lesbian. However, "expressing a preference for heterosexuality, regardless of the reason, is still a segregating preference" (Walls, 2008b, p. 32) and contributes to the denial and denigration of sexual minorities'

“behavior, identity, relationship, or community” (Walls, 2008b, p. 28). Therefore, even though concerns for sexual minorities wellbeing are present, higher scores in the MHI-Paternalistic subdomain means higher but subtle agreement with ideals of heterosexism (Walls, 2008a). Although heterosexual women participants scored significantly higher than lesbian women in paternalistic heterosexism, their scores ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.91$) were below the midpoint (4.0) and below the averages of women participants in Walls’ (2008a) original study.

These results support previous studies that individuals with sexual minority friends tend to score higher in the paternalistic subdomain than people who do not have sexual minority friends. This is contradictory to other forms of heterosexism and/or homophobia which tend to decrease in individuals who have friends with a sexual minority orientation and with contact and experiences with sexual minorities (Fingerhut, 2011; Mereish & Poteat, 2015). However, in the case of Paternalistic Heterosexism, having friends increases people’s concerns about sexual minorities’ wellbeing, but their preference for heterosexual orientation does not decrease (Walls, 2008b). The present findings also support past research on lesbian women’s observations about their heterosexual friends being both supportive with lesbians struggles and oblivious to their own heterosexist views and hurtful biased remarks (e.g., Ueno & Gentile, 2015a; Weinstock & Bond, 2002). These findings might also help to understand the conundrum some heterosexual women face when they care for a lesbian friend but decide to terminate the relationship for fear of being labeled as lesbian and/or fear of experiencing

sexual tension in the friendship (e.g., Glover et al., 2015; O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996; Stanley, 1996). While heterosexual women value their lesbian friends and the benefits these relationships bring to their lives, heterosexual women's paternalistic heterosexism may lead them to believe that their heterosexual friends are better or more important than their lesbian friends and opt to avoid conflict with heterosexual friends by sacrificing their lesbian friendships.

The MHI-Positive Stereotypic subdomain captures positive stereotypes ascribed to sexual minorities, which while at one level may be an indication of appreciation for sexual minorities characteristics, are based on myths and false beliefs. In addition, positive stereotypic heterosexism contributes to the maintenance of stratification by sexual orientation (Walls, 2008a). These results were unexpected for several reasons. For example, prior research has noted that although cultural stereotypes are internalized by both lesbian and heterosexual women, it is more likely that lesbian women have greater awareness and knowledge about the meaning of lesbian identity than do heterosexual women (Weinstock & Bond, 2002). This knowledge might especially be the case among educated women who are involved in sexual minority organizations and whose average age is in the early 40s. Most sexual minority women identified their sexual orientation by the age of 18, their first same-attraction by the age of 14, their first same-sex relationship by the age of 20, and have come out to sexual minority friends and to at least one heterosexual friend and one family member by the age of 20 (Martos, Nezhad, & Meyer, 2015). Thus, most women in this sample could have already had all those experiences

which might increase their exposure to lesbian models and knowledge about what it means to be lesbian, which includes identifying false beliefs. Yet lesbian women in the current sample endorsed significantly higher levels of positive stereotypic heterosexism than did their heterosexual counterparts. However, researchers have also indicated that internalization of heterosexism is pervasive and influenced by external heterosexism experiences (Mason et al., 2015), which may partially account for these results.

Another factor that might influence lesbian women's scores on the Positive Stereotypic Heterosexism subscale are their own perceptions about their abilities and achievements. One of the positive stereotypes ascribed to lesbians is their ability to achieve independence, and education increases opportunities for financial independence. More than 80% of participants held a higher education degree, including 33% of women with a master's degree and about 24% with a doctoral degree. Women in this study also reported above average household incomes. About 55% of women reported annual incomes between \$45,000 and \$122,000 and more than a quarter (26%) exceeded \$123,000.00. In addition, these women might perceive their membership with pro-social organizations as empowering; they may be valuable contributors to the improvement of sexual minorities' rights and might see themselves as other front lines championing equality, which may require above average courage and assertiveness. Furthermore, financial independence helps lesbian women to live as lesbians (Garnets, 2008). Thus, although it is a stereotype that lesbian women are more independent than heterosexual women, being independent might be a must for many lesbians to be able to marry and/or

have children (see Garnets, 2008). In the case of many lesbian participants in this study, it is possible that their responses were influenced by their personal accomplishments and self-perceptions as independent and capable women.

Hypotheses 3a and 3b

The researcher expected that both lesbian and heterosexual women would report having more same than cross-sexual orientation friends. These expectations were based on past researchers' reports that most people befriend others with similar sexual orientation (Galupo, 2007; Logan, 2013; Ueno et al., 2012), that same-orientation friendships are more common than cross-orientation friendships (Galupo, 2007, 2009), and that heterosexism influences both heterosexual and lesbian women to befriend women with a similar sexual orientation (Fitzgerald, 2004; Galupo, 2007; Stanley, 1996; Toomey et al., 2018), which might be particularly the case for lesbian women (Baiocco et al., 2012; de Vries & Megathlin, 2009; Doyle & Molix, 2015; Fitzgerald, 2004; Galupo, 2006). Thus, to ensure heterosexism was not a confounding variable, Hypothesis 3b tested number of same and cross-orientation friends, after controlling for the four heterosexism subdomains of the MHI.

Results partially supported Hypothesis 3a. The number of same-orientation friendships was similar between lesbian and heterosexual women participants, but the two groups differed in their number of cross-orientation friendships. Lesbian women reported more cross-orientation friends than did heterosexual women. This interaction

persisted after controlling for the four MHI-subdomains in Hypothesis 3b. Thus, this hypothesis was supported only for heterosexual women's scores.

The researcher did not find other studies assessing number of friendships between lesbian and heterosexual women. Therefore, specific comparisons cannot be made. However, Galupo (2009) indicated that in her assessment of heterosexual and sexual minority adults, heterosexual women reported more heterosexual friends than lesbian women. Also, heterosexual women's scores on more same-orientation friends than lesbian friends support previous findings about the impact of sexual orientation on women's friendships formation (e.g., Galupo, 2006; Logan, 2013; O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996; Stanley, 1996), but not in regards to the influence of heterosexism because neither lesbian nor heterosexual women's scores were significant in regards to any of the MHI-subdomains. In addition, lesbian women's similar scores of friends across sexual orientation seem to contradict reports on the influence of sexual orientation on lesbian women's friendship formations (e.g., Galupo, 2006, Logan, 2013; O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996; Stanley, 1996). Lesbian participants might possess some characteristics that have not been assessed previously and that may help them to approach and trust heterosexual women and lesbian women alike. Lesbians in this study could have experienced greater exposure to heterosexual peers, opening opportunities of connection. According to Bowlby (1982), people formed attachment bonds with those with whom they have proximity, but also with those they perceived as more capable of facing life's challenges. In the case of lesbian participants, they might perceive heterosexual friends as capable

allies to face discrimination and increase their social support (Weinstock & Bond, 2002). Alternatively, these results may simply reflect the fact that there are proportionally many more heterosexual women in the population. Thus, there is a limited pool of potential same-sex friends for lesbian women and cross-orientation friends for heterosexual women. In addition, heterosexual women may have lesbian friends who are not open to them and count them as heterosexual friends.

Regarding total number of friends, lesbian women reported on average 14 lesbian friends and 12 heterosexual friends, and heterosexual women reported 17 heterosexual friends and five lesbian friends. No exact comparisons on number of friends can be made because no other study was found assessing specifically heterosexual and lesbian women number of friends in same- and cross-orientation friendships. There were few studies reporting the number of friends people tend to have that are either casual, close or best, and when they were added up, people seem to have on average 30 friends (see Hruschka, 2010; Spencer & Pahl, 2006; Yager, 2002). However, these researchers did not distinguish participants' sexual orientation. The analysis of this hypothesis does not indicate the closeness of these friendships. To better understand what type of friendships women would have included in the number of friends reported, another hypothesis (H4a) was formulated.

Hypotheses 4a and 4b

In Hypothesis 4a, the researcher expected lesbian and heterosexual women would report different number of casual, close, and best friends in same and cross-orientation

friendships. To the author's knowledge this assessment is the first conducted specifically between lesbian and heterosexual women. However, expectations were based on researchers consistently indicating that emotional intimacy determines the closeness of relationships (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Blieszner, 2014; Rybak & McAndrew, 2006), that emotional intimacy is more common in same-orientation friendships (De la Peña, 1996; Diamond, 2000; Fitzgerald, 2004; Russell, 2009), and that heterosexist attitudes limit cross-orientation friendships (Bowleg et al., 2008; Fitzgerald, 2004; Glover et al., 2015; O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996; Toomey et al., 2018).

Results partially supported this hypothesis. Lesbian and heterosexual women reported comparable number of same-orientation friends in all categories, but lesbian women reported significantly lower number of cross-orientation friends in all categories. These results persisted after controlling for heterosexism in Hypothesis 4b. While heterosexual women's responses might support previous findings about the influence of sexual orientation on the development of close friendships (Galupo, 2007, 2009; Logan, 2013), lesbian women's responses challenge such findings. This is particularly important because traditionally, researchers have found that lesbian women tend to find more support, safety, and emotional intimacy in other lesbian women (Diamond, 2002; Fitzgerald, 2004; Russell, 2009).

One possible explanation for lesbian women's scores could be the mutuality skills of women in this sample. Mutuality helps to develop relational competence (Miller, 1986b), and in the case of lesbian women this aptitude might not only help them to

connect and develop close friendships across sexual orientation, but it may also help them to navigate differences with heterosexual women. Researchers have indicated that lesbian women are often willing to oversee hostilities from heterosexual friends to preserve their friendships (Platt & Lenzen, 2013; Ueno & Gentile, 2015a). In addition, lesbian women often have less social support than heterosexual women; therefore, lesbians possibly have a higher interest in having heterosexual friends than heterosexual women having lesbian friends.

It should also be noted that lesbian women have many more classifications, of friendships than heterosexual women. Lesbians frequently count their families of origin and choice, romantic partners, and prior romantic partners as close and best friends (Dykewomon, 2018; Fitzgerald, 2004; Kennedy, 2004; Stanley, 1996; Weinstock & Rothblum, 1996; Weston, 1991) and such type of friendships were specifically excluded from the assessment. This might have also increased the number of friends for heterosexual women, but it is unlikely that heterosexual women count prior romantic partners as friends and most heterosexual women do not have families of choice (Weinstock & Rothblum, 1996).

Another possible explanation for lesbian women's scores may be their political ideologies. Researchers have indicated lesbian women often form friendships in sexual minority organizations and events (Dykewomon, 2018). It could be that lesbians in this sample had more opportunity not only to befriend other lesbian women but also heterosexual women allies. Researchers have indicated that lesbian women tend to trust

more and develop friendships with people they perceive as accepting as well as with heterosexual women with a feminist worldview (Ueno et al., 2015b). Although heterosexual participants were also recruited from pro-social organizations, they might not have the same opportunities to meet lesbian women as lesbian women may have to meet heterosexual allies.

Hypothesis 5

The researcher expected a negative correlation between heterosexism and perceived mutuality in cross-orientation friendships. Although research on friendships between lesbian and heterosexual women is scarce (Galupo, 2009; Logan, 2013; Weinstock & Rothblum, 1996), and no study was found assessing mutuality and heterosexism in relation to friendships between lesbian and heterosexual women, the researcher based her expectation on the negative effects of heterosexism in the development of close friendships across sexual orientation (Fitzgerald, 2004; Galupo, 2006; O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996; Weinstock & Rothblum, 2018), and the benefits of mutuality in developing close relationships (Jordan, 1991; Miller, 1986b; Miller & Stiver, 1997; Surrey, 1997).

Results supported three of the four subdomains. No correlation was found between perceived mutuality and the MHI-Positive Stereotypic subdomain. A small negative correlation was found between perceived mutuality and the MHI-Amnestic, Aversive, and Paternalistic subdomains. These results suggest that women who scored higher in endorsements of beliefs that discrimination against sexual minorities has been

eradicated (Amnestic subdomain), that there is no need of more political and cultural support to sexual minorities (Aversive subdomain), and that have simultaneous concerns about sexual minorities' suffering and beliefs that a heterosexual orientation is superior (Paternalistic subdomain) might have lower levels of perceived mutuality with their cross-orientation friends. Although the correlation was small, it was significant and at some level in friendships between lesbian and heterosexual women, perceived mutuality and heterosexist attitudes are related.

Summary

Overall, results on the seven hypotheses tested suggest that participants' perceptions of mutuality, which indicate interactions of empathy, support, authenticity, and empowerment, exist at similar levels in same- and cross-orientation friendships. However, at low levels, heterosexist attitudes were also present in both lesbian and heterosexual women and were associated with perceived mutuality in cross-orientation friendships. In addition, these results indicated differences in the number of friends and friendship categories in cross-orientation friendships. Lesbian women reported similar number of lesbian and heterosexual women friends; however, this was not the case for heterosexual women. Heterosexual women reported significant more heterosexual friends than lesbian friends. Several alternatives may explain these differences, such as demographic characteristics, disproportionate number of lesbians and heterosexual women in the population, and recent public political support for sexual minorities that

have possibly helped lesbian women's sense of safety and created opportunities for them to expand their social networks with heterosexual individuals/women.

Implications for Theory

This section will include the implications of the present study for the theories of interpersonal relationships addressed in the literature review: evolutionary perspectives on interpersonal relationships, Aristotle's study of friendships, Bowlby's attachment theory, and RCT. All these theories concur that connection is a human need, that social support enhances people's physical and psychological wellbeing, and that meaningful connections are important for happiness and psychological growth (see Aristotle, trans. 2011; Bowlby, 1958, 1969, 1973, 1982; Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008; Geary et al., 2003; Miller, 1986a; Silk et al., 2010).

Evolutionary Perspectives on Interpersonal Relationships

Evolutionary theorists believe that humans developed their sophisticated social interactions out of the need for help to survive the challenges of their time (Cunnane, 2005; Geary et al., 2003). Although the present study did not assess women's techniques for survival, women's scores in perceived mutuality across sexual orientation friendships might reflect women's needs for the emotional intimacy, validation, and practical support they often lack in patriarchal societies. This is especially salient because research has indicated that emotional intimacy, which is a basic element of mutuality, is often negatively impacted by sexual orientation (see Fitzgerald, 2004; Russell, 2009). While it

is certainly arguable that the kind of interpersonal support that friendships bring is critical to women's survival, the results of this study do not directly inform evolutionary theory.

Aristotle's Study of Friendship

Although Aristotle did not include women in his study of friendships, women's scores in number of friendship categories could support Aristotle's beliefs that casual friends are the most numerous and best friends the least numerous (see Aristotle, trans. 2011). Results in the current study might also partially support Aristotle's beliefs that people tend to like and befriend those who resemble their personal characteristics. For example, heterosexual women reported significantly higher numbers of heterosexual women friends than of lesbian women friends.

Bowlby's Attachment Theory

According to Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) infants' experiences with attachment figures are cognitively processed and stored as internal working models, which influence people's perceptions of self, others, and relationships throughout their lives. Thus, people with positive experiences tend to develop good self-esteem, self-confidence to connect with others, and are better prepared to form meaningful relationships than people with negative experiences (Bender, 1999; Bowlby, 1958, 1979/1989). People with negative attachment figures and experiences tend to lack self-confidence and are less likely to bond intimately and form close relationships (Bowlby, 1979/1989; Margolese et al., 2005). Although the present study did not assess women's past experiences with their caregivers, some aspects of attachment theory may be related to results in this study. For

example, the fact that both heterosexual and lesbian participants reported moderately high levels of mutuality is likely a reflection of secure attachment. Associations between mutuality and secure attachment have been documented in the adult romantic relationship literature (e.g., Julal Cnossen, Harman, & Buttterworth, 2019). It is logical extension that the ability to form same- and cross-orientation friendships is probably enhanced by secure attachment. However, this hypothesis was not directly tested in the present study.

Bowlby (1982) stated that internal working models might be affected by later attachment bond experiences, and that attachment bonds are also the result of experiencing proximity to others who are “conceived as better able to cope with the world” (p. 668). In the case of lesbian participants, many may belong to affirming sexual minority organizations. Therefore, they are likely to be exposed to supportive heterosexual allies, who might be perceived by lesbian women as empowering friends to help them face discrimination and champion for sexual equality. In addition, lesbian women are likely to have grown up among heterosexual attachment figures, and their first meaningful friendships may have been with heterosexual girls. These lesbians’ early bonds with heterosexual individuals could have helped them to develop a sense of trust with heterosexual people. On the other hand, heterosexual women participants might not have had either sexual minority individuals as attachment figures nor childhood or adolescent lesbian friends from whom to learn about sexual minorities and develop trust connections with them. Thus, although specific assessments of attachment bonds were

not made in the present study, some of Bowlby's (1969, 1973, 1982) attachment theory tenets might help to explain women's scores in this study.

Relational Cultural Theory

RCT scholars avowed that women base much of their self-worth and happiness in their ability to connect meaningfully with others (Miller, 1986a, 1986b), and that women experience such connections in a culture of oppression (Jordan, 2009; Miller, 1986a). The dominant culture teaches men that happiness is achieved through power, and power is accomplished through competition, individual success, and domination (Jordan, 1999; Miller, 1988/2008; Munsch & Gruys, 2018). In contrast, the dominant US culture teaches women to be empathic, caring, docile, and to strive for a heterosexual marriage and motherhood (Blatterer, 2016; Gilligan, 1982). As society inculcates opposing values to boys and girls, relationships of mutuality that include equality, emotional intimacy, empathy, and mutual empowerment may be comparatively rare between men and women (Blatterer, 2016; Miller, 1986a, 1986b). Thus, women often find and form relationships of mutuality with other women (Miller, 1986b).

The results of the current study support RCT's tenet of mutuality. Results in the assessment of heterosexist views showed that participants hold heterosexist views; yet they were able to hold consistently high levels of mutuality with friends across sexual orientation. In interactions of mutuality, participants welcome challenges and are willing to consider opposing views and influence each other (Jordan, 1999; Miller, 1988/2008). Thus, results might indicate that participants' skills in the elements of mutuality helped

them to navigate the conflicts and barriers they may encounter due to cultural differences in attitudes towards those with differing sexual orientations. It is also clear from this study that women have many friends across varying levels of closeness. These relationships are likely to be maintained because they contribute to women's wellbeing. RCT theorists would expect to find multiple friendships between women as they seek vital connection and support in a male-dominated society (Miller, 1986b; Miller & Stiver, 1997).

Implications for Research

The current investigation contributes to the expansion of the limited research and knowledge on women's friendships across sexual orientation. Results offer preliminary insights in lesbian and heterosexual women's friendships in relation to mutuality, heterosexism, and overall number of friends and friendship categories. Clearly, more research on these factors needs to be conducted to acquire a better understanding of how women develop and experience mutuality in friendship relationships across sexual orientation. For example, feminist qualitative research methods (e.g., McHugh, 2014) would be ideal for exploring the lived experienced of women in cross-orientation friendships, how such relationships develop and are maintained, and the rewards and challenges they present.

It is important to further explore the number of same and cross-orientation friends in all friendship categories to better understand the social support that women may experience across sexual orientation. It would also be illuminating to assess women's

friendships before and after the legalization of marriage for sexual minority individuals. This investigation was conducted after the legalization of same-sex marriage and adoption by sexual minorities, and the number of friends reported in this study are higher than the number of friends Galupo (2009) reported. This difference possibly reflects the increased public support and more opportunities for lesbian women to live openly and meet other lesbians as well as heterosexual women (Drabble et al., 2019; Goldberg et al., 2018; Levy & Levy, 2016). Consequently, the current study provides updated and/or new information on lesbian and heterosexual women's friends support after and perhaps in reaction to increased public political support.

Equally important are the results concerning participants' perceived mutuality. Traditionally, lesbian women have reported finding such acceptance, support, and emotional intimacy among sexual minority communities (Fitzgerald, 2004; Russell, 2009; Stanley, 1996). Similarly, heterosexual women have reported higher levels of trust and intimacy with their heterosexual friends (O'Boyle & Thomas, 1996). However, both lesbian and heterosexual women in the current study reported trusting their lesbian and heterosexual friends equally. These results might be an indication of the benefits that mutuality provides to women's relationships (Miller, 1986b). To confirm these assumptions further, investigations need to be conducted on these and other variables that could interfere with and/or enhance mutuality, such as attachment styles, experiences with oppression, and internalization of religious beliefs. These variables were not assessed in the present study but have been identified as important for people to bond

(see Barnes & Meyer, 2012; Bender, 1999; Bowlby, 1979/1989; Frost & Meyer, 2009; Heinze et al., 2018; Miller, 1986b; Plugge-Foust & Strickland, 2009).

Since this study's participants were primarily White and highly educated, additional research should be conducted with women of color and those across the educational and socio-economic spectrum. Research exploring women's across-orientation friendships at the intersections of race, class, and other identity variables would be welcomed expansions of the present work.

Implications for Practice

The current study provides mental health providers, training psychologists, and educators with updated and/or new information about the potential benefits of mutuality in friendship relationships between lesbian and heterosexual women. Results in this study concerning number of friends and friendship categories may also help clinicians to be aware that both lesbian and heterosexual women's social support and relationships' conflicts could include cross-orientation friends. Clinicians should not assume that lesbian clients only associate with lesbian friends or that heterosexual women clients limit their friendships to other heterosexual women and should support women in their expanding social contexts (APA, 2018).

Extrapolating further, these results also add evidence to the importance of mutuality in therapy (Miller & Stiver, 1997). This study shows that mutuality can exist between lesbian and heterosexual women. Therefore, mental health professionals across sexual orientation might benefit from implementing interactions of mutuality with their

same and cross-orientation clients (APA, 2012), particularly with women clients (see Miller, 1986b). In a related vein, those engaged in the training of psychotherapists should consider the advantages of teaching RCT, both for the understanding of relationships that it brings as well as for its usefulness in practice (Miller & Stiver, 1997).

Strengths

Most studies on friendships have been done on men (Garrioch, 2014), followed by a limited research on heterosexual women's friendships (Alger, 1868/2014; Chittister, 2006; O'Connor, 1992), an even more limited research on sexual minority women (Szymanski, 2005; Weinstock, 1998), and an impressively scarce research on friendships between lesbian and heterosexual women (Galupo, 2009; Logan, 2013). Most researchers have assessed friendship patterns by grouping sexual minority individuals in a single study as well as by comparing sexual minority and heterosexual individuals in a group form. Although there may be good reasons to study sexual minorities as a group, the needs, personal characteristics, and life experiences of gay men, lesbians, and bisexual individuals are not necessarily similar. The current study is the first to assess friendships exclusively in women across two sexual orientations, lesbian and heterosexual. By providing attention to only these two groups, important information about their social support and friendships have been identified.

In addition, this work also provides a thorough literature review on the most prominent interpersonal relationship theories, friendship history, women's friendships in relation to men, to heterosexual women, lesbian women, and lesbian and heterosexual

women. The literature review also included recent findings in relation to the impact of marriage equality on the increased public support for sexual minorities.

Limitations

An obvious limitation of this study is the limited generalizability of findings to women with lower levels of education. While about 13.1% of men and women hold either a master's, professional degree, or doctorate in the United States (United States Census Bureau, 2019), in this study, 56.4% of participants hold a master's or a doctorate degree. The participation of highly educated women might have skewed results in a direction that might not be seen in the general women's population. About two-thirds of participants were also White. The cross-orientation friendship experiences of racial minority women are thus under-represented in this study. Another limitation was the recruitment process that likely led to the inclusion of many women with affirming attitudes towards sexual minority individuals. Of note, the author attempted recruiting women in large organizations that were not affiliated to prosocial movements or sexual minority organizations, but none accepted or responded the author's request to post the recruitment script to their employees or members. Another limitation related to recruitment process was that in addition to organizations listservs and webpages, women were recruited through social media such as Facebook, and this process could have prevented the participation of women who do not have a Facebook accounts, do not access social media, or who do not have internet access.

Conclusion

The benefits and importance of having friends have been well established. However, there still much to explore concerning women's friendships because it seems these friendships represent venues to alleviate the suffering and isolation women often experience in patriarchal societies. Yet research on women's friendships is limited and with sexual minority and heterosexual women it is disturbingly scarce. Friendships unify women and unity represents power; and it is not in the interest of patriarchies to provide opportunities for women to gain power. History shows that when women across sexual orientation have formed alliances and worked toward a common goal, they have overcome obstacles and major social changes such as women's suffrage can happen. Many more changes need to take place for women to overcome oppression and sexual discrimination, and the dominant group often seems unwilling to relinquish their privileged position. Thus, the least scholars, humanists, and psychologists can do is to explore factors such as mutuality that could facilitate women in developing meaningful relationships across sexual orientation to increase their social support and champion for their rights.

REFERENCES

- Abell, L., Brewer, G., Qualter, P., & Austin, E. (2016). Machiavellianism, emotional manipulation, and friendship functions in women's friendships. *Personality and Individual Differences, 88*, 108–113. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.09.001>
- Abell, L., Lyons, M., & Brewer, G. (2014). The relationship between parental bonding, Machiavellianism and adult friendship quality. *Individual Differences Research, 12*, 191–197.
- Adamczyk, A., Boyd, K. A., & Hayes, B. E. (2016). Place matters: Contextualizing the roles of religion and race for understanding American's attitudes about homosexuality. *Social Sciences Research, 57*, 1–16.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2016.02.001>
- Adams, R. G., Blieszner, R., & de Vries, B. (2000). Definitions of friendship in the third age: Age, gender, and study location effects. *Journal of Aging Studies, 14*, 117–133. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0890-4065\(00\)80019-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0890-4065(00)80019-5)
- Ainsworth, M. D. S. (1969). Object relations, dependency, and attachment: A theoretical review of the infant-mother relationship. *Child Development, 40*, 969–1025.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1127008>
- Ainsworth, M. D. S., & Bell, S. M. (1970). Attachment, exploration, and separation: Illustrated by the behavior of one-year-olds in a strange situation. *Child Development, 41*, 49–67. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1127388>

- Ainsworth, M. D. S., & Bowlby, J. (1991). An ethological approach to personality development. *American Psychologist*, *46*, 333–341.
- Alger, W. R. (2014). *The friendships of women*. Boston, MA: Robert Brothers (Original work published 1868). [Kindle 1.26.1]. Retrieved from <http://www.amazon.com>
- Allan, G. (1989). *Friendship: Developing a sociological perspective*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Altman, I., & Taylor, D. A. (1973). *Social penetration: The development of interpersonal relationships*. New York, NY: Rinehart and Winston.
- American Psychological Association. (2012). Guidelines for psychological practice with lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients. *American Psychologist*, *67*(1), 10–42.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024659>
- American Psychological Association, Girls and Women Guidelines Group. (2018). *APA guidelines for psychological practice with girls and women*. Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/about/policy/psychological-practice-girls-women.pdf>
- Amichai-Hamburger, Y., Kingsbury, M., & Schneider, B. H. (2013). Friendship: An old concept with a new meaning? *Computers in Human Behavior*, *29*, 33–39.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.05.025>
- Argyle, M., & Henderson, M. (1984). The rules of friendship. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *1*, 211–237. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407584012005>

- Aristotle. (2011). *Aristotle's nicomachean ethics*. (R. C. Bartlett & S. D. Collins, Trans). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. (Original work published ca. 350 B.C.E)
- Aroustamian, C. (2020). Time's up: Recognizing sexual violence as a public policy issue: A qualitative content analysis of sexual violence cases and the media. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 50*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avg.2019.101341>
- Bagwell, C. L., & Schmidt, M. E. (2011). *Friendships in childhood & adolescence*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Baiocco, R., Laghi, F. Di Pomponio, I., & Nigito, C. S. (2012). Self-disclosure to the best friend: Friendship quality and internalized sexual stigma in Italian lesbian and gay adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence, 35*, 381–387. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2011.08.002>
- Bank, B. J., & Hansford, S. L. (2000). Gender and friendship: Why are men's best same-sex friendship less intimate and supportive? *Personal Relationships, 7*(1), 63–78. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6811.2000.tb00004.x>
- Barnes, D. M., & Meyer, I. H. (2012). Religious affiliation, internalized homophobia, and mental health in lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 82*, 505–515. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.2012.01185.x>
- Barth, F. D. (2018). Not good at friends: Bonding a woman's friendships into the frame in psychodynamic psychotherapy. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 46*, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10615-018-0647-8>

- Bauminger, N., Finzi-Dottan, R., Chason, S., & Har-Even, D. (2008). Intimacy in adolescent friendship: The roles of attachment, coherence, and self-disclosure. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 25*, 409–428.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407508090866>
- Baynton, D. C. (2010). Disability and the justification of inequality in American history. In P. S. Rotenberg (Ed.), *Race, class, and gender in the United States: An integrated study* (8th ed., pp. 92–101). New York, NY: Worth.
- Beals, K. P., & Peplau, L. A. (2006). Disclosure patterns within social networks of gay men and lesbians. *Journal of Homosexuality, 51*, 101–120.
https://doi.org/10.1300/j082v51n02_06
- Bem, S. L. (2008). Transforming the debate of sexual inequality: From biological difference to institutionalized androcentrism. In J. C. Chrisler, C. Golden, & P. D. Rozee (Eds.), *Lectures on the psychology of women* (4th ed., pp. 3–15). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Bender, S. T. (1999). *Attachment style and friendship: Characteristics in college students*. (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database. (UMI No. 9930651)
- Benetatos, S. (2013). Aristotle's notion of friendship. In D. Caluori (Ed.), *Thinking about friendship: Historical and contemporary philosophical perspectives* (pp. 11–29). New York, NY: Pelgrave Macmillan.

- Berkman, L. F., Melchior, M., Chastang, J., Niedhammer, I., Leclerc, A., & Goldberg, M. (2004). Social integration and mortality: A prospective study of French employees of electricity of France-Gas of France. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, *159*(2), 167–174. <https://doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwh020>
- Berscheid, E., Snyder, M., & Omoto, A. M. (1989). The relationship closeness inventory: assessing the closeness of interpersonal relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *57*, 792–807. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3515.57.5.792>
- Berzoff, J. (1989). From separation to connection: Shifts in understanding women's development. *AFFILIA*, *4*(1), 45–58. <https://doi.org/10.1177/088610998900400105>
- Bickmore, K. (2002). How might social education resist heterosexism? Facing the impact of gender and sexual ideology on citizenship. *Theory and Research in Social Education*, *30*, 198–216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2002.10473191>
- Bieneck, S., & Krahe, B. (2011). Blaming the victim and exonerating the perpetrator in cases of rape and robbery: Is there a double standard? *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *26*, 1785–1797. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260510372945>
- Blachnio, A., Przepiorka, A., Balakier, E., & Wioleta, B. (2016). Who discloses the most on Facebook? *Computers in Human Behavior*, *55*, 664–667. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.10.007>

- Black, H. (2011). *Friendship*. Chicago, IL: Fleming H. Revell. (Original work published 1898)
- Blatterer, H. (2016). Intimacy as freedom: Friendship, gender and everyday life. *Thesis Eleven, 132*(1), 62–76. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0725513615619503>
- Blazina, C. (2004). Gender role conflict and the disidentification process: Two case studies on fragile masculine self. *The Journal of Men's Studies, 12*, 151–161. <https://doi.org/10.3149/jms.1202.151>
- Blieszner, R. (2001). “She’ll be on my heart”: Intimacy among friends. *Generations, 25*(2), 48–54.
- Blieszner, R. (2014). The worth of friendship: Can friends keep us happy and healthy? *Journal of the American Society on Aging, 38*(1), 24–30.
- Blieszner, R., & Adams, R. G. (1998). Problems with friends in old age. *Journal of Aging Studies, 12*, 223–238. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0890-406\(98\)90001-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0890-406(98)90001-9)
- Block, J. D., & Greenberg, D. (1985). *Women & Friendship*. New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Bohan, J. S. (1992). Women’s invisibility: The reasons, the costs, the alternative. In J. S. Bohan (Ed.), *Re-placing women in psychology: Readings toward a more inclusive history* (pp. 1–5). Dubuque, IO: Kendall/Hunt.
- Bongiorno, R., McKimmie, B. M., & Masser, B. M. (2016). The selective use of rape-victim stereotypes to protect culturally similar perpetrators. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 40*, 398–413. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684316631932>

- Bowlby, J. (1958). The nature of the child's tie to his mother. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 39, 350–373.
- Bowlby, J. (1960). Separation anxiety. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 41, 89–113.
- Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and loss: Volume I: Attachment*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and loss: Volume II: Separation: Anxiety and anger*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1980). *Attachment and loss: Volume III: Loss: Sadness and depression*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1982). Attachment and loss: Retrospect and prospect. *American Journal Orthopsychiatry*, 52, 664–678.
- Bowlby, J. (1989). *The making and breaking of affectional bonds*. New York, NY: Routledge. (Original work published 1979)
- Bowleg, L., Brooks, K., & Ritz, S. F. (2008). “Bringing home more than a paycheck:” An exploratory analysis of Black lesbians’ experiences of stress and coping in the workplace. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 12(1), 69–84.
<https://doi.org/10.1300/10894160802174342>
- boyd, d. (2008). Facebook's privacy trainwreck: Exposure, invasion, and social convergence. *The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 14(1), 13–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856507084416>

- boyd, d. (2011). Social network sites as networked publics: Affordances, dynamics, and implications. In Z. Papacharissi (Ed.), *Networked self: Identity, community, and culture on social network sites* (pp. 39–58). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Brent, L. J. N., Chang, S. W. C., Gariepy, J. F., & Platt, M. L. (2014). The neuroethology of friendship. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, *1316*, 1–17.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/nyas.12315>
- Bretherton, I. (1992). The origins of attachment theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. *Developmental Psychology*, *28*, 759–775.
- Brownfield, J. M., Flores, M. J., Morgan, S. K., Allen, L. R., & Marszalek, M. (2018). Development and psychometric properties of the evasive attitudes of sexual orientation scale (EASOS). *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, *5*, 44–56. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000256>
- Buccafurri, F., Lax, G., Nicolazzo, S., & Nocera, A. (2016). A model to support design and development of multiple-social-network applications. *Information Sciences*, *331*, 99–119. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ins.2015.10.042>
- Bullock, H. F., Wyche, K. F., & Williams, W. R. (2001). Media images of the poor. *Journal of Social Issues*, *57*(2), 229–246.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00210>

- Buote, V. M., Pancer, S. M., Pratt, M. W., Adams, G., Birnie-Lefcovitch, S., Polivy, J., & Wintre, M. G. (2007). The importance of friends: Friendship and adjustment among 1st-year university students. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 22*, 665–689. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558407306344>
- Burks, A. C., Cramer, R. J., Henderson, C. E., Stroud, C. H., Crosby, J. W., & Graham, J. (2018). Frequency, nature, and correlates of hate crime victimization experiences in an urban sample of lesbian, gay, and bisexual community members. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 33*, 402–420. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260515605298>
- Byrne, D., & Clore, G. L. (1970). A reinforcement model of evaluative responses. *Personality, 1*, 103–128.
- Cable, N., Bartley, M., Chandola, T., & Sacker, A. (2013). Friends are equally important to men and women, but family matters more for men's well-being. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, 67*, 166–171. <https://doi.org/10.1136/jech-2012-201113>
- Cacioppo, J. T., & Patrick, W. (2008). *Loneliness: Human nature and the need for social connection*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Calabrese, S. K., Meyer, I. H., Overstreet, N. M., Haile, R., & Hansen, N. B. (2015). Exploring discrimination and mental health disparities faced by Black sexual minority women using a minority scale framework. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 39*, 287–304. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684314560730>

- Cameron, J. J., Holmes, J. G., & Vorauer, J. D. (2009). When self-disclosure goes awry: Negative consequences of revealing personal failures for lower self-esteem individuals. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 45*, 217–222. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2008.09.009>
- Campbell, A. (2013). *A mind of her own: The evolutionary psychology of women* (2nd ed.). Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- Candy, S. G., Troll, L. E., & Levy, S. G. (1981). A developmental exploration of friendship functions in women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 5*, 456–472.
- Cassidy, J. (2008). The nature of the child's ties. In J. Cassidy, & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (2nd ed., pp. 3–22.). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Carastathis, G., S., Cohen, L., Kaczmarek, E., & Chang, P. (2017). Rejected by family for being gay or lesbian: Portrayals, perceptions, and resilience. *Journal of Homosexuality, 64*, 289–320. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2016.1179035>
- Cazolino, L. (2014). *The neuroscience of human relationships: Attachment and the developing social brain* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Norton.
- Chambers, D. (2013). *Social media and personal relationships: Online intimacies and networked friendship*. Basingstoke, Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chasin, C. J. D. (2015). Making sense in an of the asexual community: Navigating relationships and identities in a context of resistance. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 25*, 167–180. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2203>

- Child, J. T., & Petronio, S. (2011). Unpacking the paradoxes of privacy in CMC relationships: The challenges of blogging and relational communication on the internet. In K. B. Wright & L. M. Webb (Eds.), *Computer-mediated communication in personal relationships* (pp. 21–40). New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Child, J. T., Petronio, S., Agyeman-Budu, E. A., & Westermann, D. A. (2011). Blog scrubbing: Exploring triggers that change privacy rules. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *27*, 2017–2027. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2011.05.009>
- Child, J. T., & Westermann, D. A. (2013). Let's be Facebook friends: Exploring parental Facebook friend requests from communication privacy management (CPM) perspective. *Journal of Family Communication*, *13*, 46–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2012.742089>
- Chisholm, J., & Greene, B. (2008). Women of color: Perspectives on “multiple identities” in psychological theory, research, and practice. In F. L. Denmark & M. A. Paludi (Eds.), *Psychology of women: A handbook of issues and theories* (2nd ed., pp. 40–69). Westport, CN: Praeger.
- Chittister, J. (2006). *The friendship of women: The hidden tradition of the Bible*. New York, NY: Blue Bridge.

- Chow, P. K-Y., & Cheng, S-T. (2010). Shame, internalized heterosexism, lesbian identity, and coming out to others: A comparative study of lesbian in Mainland China and Hong Kong. *American Psychological Association, 57*, 92–104. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017930>
- Clark, M. S., Mills, J., & Powell, M. C. (1986). Keeping track of needs in communal and exchange relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 51*(2), 333–338.
- Coan, J. A. (2010). Adult attachment and the brain. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 27*, 210–217. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407509360900>
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd. ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Comstock, D. L., Hammer, T. R., Strentzsch, J., Cannon, K., Parsons, J., & Salazar, G. (2008). Relational-cultural theory: A framework for bridging relational, multicultural, and social justice competencies. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 86*(3), 279–287. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2008.tb00510.x>
- Coons, J. V., & Espinoza, R. K. (2018). An examination of aversive heterosexism in the courtroom: Effects of defendants' sexual orientation and attractiveness, and juror gender on legal decision making. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, 5*(1), 36–43. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000253>

- Cooper, J. M. (1977). Aristotle on the forms of friendship. *The Review of Metaphysics*, 30, 619–648.
- Cozolino, L. (2013). *The neuroscience of human relationships: Attachment and the developing social brain* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Norton.
- Crandall, C. S., Harvey, R., & Schiffhauer, K. L. (1997). Friendship pair similarity as a measure of group value. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 1, 133–143. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2699.1.2.133>
- Crisp, C. (2003). Selected characteristics of research on lesbian women: 1995-1997. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 44(1), 139–155. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v44n01_08
- Critcher, C. R., & Ferguson, M. J. (2014). The cost of keeping it hidden: Decomposing concealment reveals what makes it depleting. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 143, 721–735. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033468>
- Crittenden, P. M. (2017). Gifts from Mary Ainsworth and John Bowlby. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 22, 436–442. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359104517716214>
- Cronin, A. M. (2015). ‘Domestic friends’: Women’s friendships, motherhood and inclusive intimacy. *The Sociological Review*, 63, 662–679. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.12255>
- Cunnane, S. C. (2005). *Survival of the fattest: The key to human brain evolution*. Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific.

- Curry, O., & Dunbar, R. I. M. (2013). Do birds of a feather flock together? The relationship between similarity and altruism in social networks. *Human Nature*, 24, 336–347. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12110-013-9174-z>
- Dahl, A. L., & Galliher, R. V. (2009). LGBTQ young adult experiences of religious and sexual identity integration. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 3(2), 92–112. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15538600903005268>
- Daniels, R. S. (2019). The evolution of attitudes on same-sex marriage in the United States, 1988-2014. *Social Science Quarterly*, 100, 1651–1663. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12673>
- David-Barrett, T., Rotkirch, A., Carney, J., Izquierdo, I. B., Krems, J. A., Townley, D.,...Dunbar, M. (2015). Women favour dyadic relationships, but men prefer clubs: Cross-cultural evidence from social networking. *PLOS ONE*, 10(3), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0118329>
- Davidson, S., & Packard, T. (1981). The therapeutic value of friendship between women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 5, 495–510.
- Degges-White, S. (2012). Lesbian friendships: An exploration of lesbian social support networks. *ADULTSPAN Journal*, 11(1), 16–26. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0029.2012.00002.x>
- De la Peña, T. (1996). Eco de una Amistad/Echo of a friendship. In J. S. Weinstock & E. D. Rothblum (Eds.), *Lesbian friendships: For ourselves and each other* (pp. 31–38). New York, NY: New York University Press.

- Demir, M., & Weitekamp, L. A. (2007). I am so happy cause today I found my friend: Friendship and personality as predictors of happiness. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 8, 181–211. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-006-9012-7>
- Denmark, F. L., Klara, M., Baron, E., & Cambareri-Fernandez, L. (2008). Historical development of the psychology of women. In F. L. Denmark & M. A. Paludi (Eds.), *Psychology of women: A handbook of issues and theories* (2nd ed., pp. 3–39). Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Derlega, V. J., Durham, B., Gockel, B., & Sholis, D. (1981). Sex differences in self-disclosure: Effects of topic content, friendship, and partner's sex. *Sex Roles*, 7, 433–447. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00288071>
- Derlega, V. J., & Grzelak, J. (1979). Appropriateness of self-disclosure. In G. J. Chelune (Ed.), *Self-disclosure: Origins, patterns, and implications of openness in interpersonal relationships* (1st ed., pp. 151–176). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Dessel, A., Westmoreland, A., & Gutiérrez, L. M. (2016). Reducing heterosexism in African American Christian students: Effects of multicultural education courses. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 49, 241–253. <https://doi.org/10.1080.10665684.2016.1194100>

- De Vries, B., & Megathlin, D. (2009). The dimensions and processes of older GLBT friendships and family relationships: The meaning of friendship for gay men and lesbians in the second half of life. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 5, 82–98. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15504280802595394>
- Diamond, L. M. (2000). Passionate friendships among adolescent sexual-minority women. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 10, 191–209. https://doi.org/10.1207/sjra1002_4
- Diamond, L. M. (2002). “Having a girlfriend without knowing it”: Intimate friendships among adolescent sexual-minority women. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 6(1), 5–16. https://doi.org/10.1300/J155v06n01_02
- Diefendorf, S., & Bridges, T. (2020). On the enduring relationship between masculinity and homophobia. *Sexualities*, 0(0), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460719876843>
- Ditzen, B., Hoppmann, C., & Klumb, P. (2008). Positive couple interactions and daily cortisol: On the stress-protecting role of intimacy. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 70, 883–889. <https://doi.org/10.1097/PSY.0b013e318185c4fc>
- Doan, L., Loehr, A., & Miller, L. R. (2014). Formal rights and informal privileges for same-sex couples: Evidence from a national survey experiment. *American Sociological Review*, 79, 1172–1195. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122414555886>

- Doan-Minh, S. (2019). Corrective rape: An extreme manifestation of discrimination and the state's complicity in sexual violence. *Hastings Women's Law Journal*, 30, 167–196. Retrieved from <https://repository.uchastings.edu/hwlj/vol30/iss1/8/>
- Donner, S. (1999). Ascribing master status to lesbians: Clinical echoes of identity dilemmas. In J. Laird (Ed.), *Lesbians and lesbian families: Reflections on theory and practice* (pp. 27–46). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Doyle, D. M., & Molix, L. (2015). Perceived discrimination and social relationship functioning among sexual minorities: Structural stigma as a moderating factor. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 15, 357–381. <https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12098>
- Drabble, L. A., Veldhuis, C. B., Wootton, A., Riggle, E. D. B., & Hughes, T. L. (2019). Mapping the landscape of support and safety among sexual minority women and gender non-confirming individuals: Perceptions after the 2016 U.S. presidential election. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 16, 488–500. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-018-01349-6>
- Dyar, C., Feinstein, B. A., Eaton, N. R., & London, B. (2016). Development and initial validation of the sexual minority women rejection sensitivity scale. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 40, 120–137. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684315608843>
- Dyke-womon, E. (2018). The caregiver and her friends. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 22(1), 94–101. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10894160.2017.1301174>

- Eldridge, N. S., & Gilbert, L. A. (1990). Correlates of relationship satisfaction in lesbian couples. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 14*, 43–62.
- Faderman, L. (1999). *To believe in women: What lesbians have done for America – a history*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.
- Fassinger, R. E., & Arseneau, J. R. (2008). Diverse women’s sexualities. In F. L. Denmark, & M. A. Paludi (Eds.), *Psychology of women: A handbook of issues and theories* (2nd ed., pp. 484–505). Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Feeney, J. A., Noller, P., & Roberts, N. (2000). Attachment and close relationships. In C. Hendrick, & S. S. Hendrick (Eds.), *Close relationships: A sourcebook* (pp. 185–201). London, England: Sage.
- Fehr, B. (1996). *Friendship processes*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fehr, B. (2004). Intimacy expectations in same-sex friendships: A prototype interaction-pattern model. *Journal of Personality, 86*, 265–284.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/002-3514.86.2.265>
- Fehr, B. (2008). Friendship formation. In S. Sprecher, A. Wenzel, & J. Harvey (Eds.), *Handbook of relationship initiation* (pp. 29–54). New York, NY: Psychology Press.
- Feinstein, B. A. (2019). The rejection sensitivity model as a framework for understanding sexual minority mental health. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 1–12*.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-019-1428-3>

- Feld, S., & Carter, W. C. (1998). Foci of activity as changing contexts for friendship. In R. G. Adams & Allan, G. (Eds.), *Placing friendship in context* (pp. 136–152). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Felicio, D. M., & Sutherland, M. (2001). Beyond the dominant narrative: Intimacy and conflict in lesbian relationships. *Mediation Quarterly, 18*, 363–376.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/crq.3890180405>
- Felmlee, D., Sweet, E., & Sinclair, H. C. (2012). Gender rules: Same- and cross-gender friendships norms. *Sex Roles, 66*, 518–529.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-011-0109-z>
- Fingerhut, A. W. (2011). Straight allies: What predicts heterosexuals' alliance with the LGBT community? *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 41*, 2230–2248.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2011.00807.x>
- Fitzgerald, S. B. (2004). Making the transition: Understanding the longevity of lesbian relationships. *Journal of Lesbian Studies, 8*, 177–192.
https://doi.org/10.1300/j155v08n03_29
- Fjelstrom, J. (2013). Sexual orientation change efforts and the search for authenticity. *Journal of Homosexuality, 60*, 801–827.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2013.774830>
- Flemke, K. R. (2001). The marginalization of intimate friendship between women within the context of therapy. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy, 13*, 75–91.
https://doi.org/10.1300/J086v13n01_06

- Fraley, R. C., Roisman, G. I., Booth-LaForce, C., Owen, M. T., & Holland, A. S. (2013). Interpersonal and genetic origins of adult attachment styles: A longitudinal study from infancy to early adulthood. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 104*, 817–838. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031435>
- Franzoi, S. L., & Davis, M. H. (1985). Adolescent self-disclosure and loneliness: Private self-consciousness and parental influences. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 48*, 768–780. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.48.3.768>
- Freud, S. (1920). *A general introduction to psychoanalysis*. (G. Stanley Hall, Tans.). New York, NY: Horace Liveright.
- Frey, L. L., Beesley, D., Hurst, R., Saldana, S., & Licuanan, B. (2016). Instrumentality, expressivity, and relational qualities in the same-sex friendships of college women and men. *Journal of College Counseling, 19*, 17–30. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jocc.12028>
- Frost, D. M., & Eliason, M. J. (2014). Challenging the assumption of fusion in female same-sex relationships. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 38*(1), 65–74. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684313475877>
- Frost, D. M., & Meyer, I. H. (2009). Internalized homophobia and relationship quality among lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 56*(1), 97–109. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0012844>

- Furumoto, L., & Scarborough, E. (1992). Placing women in the history of psychology: The first American women psychologists. In J. S. Bohan (Ed.), *Re-placing women in psychology: Readings toward a more inclusive history* (pp. 87–99). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.
- Gair, S. (2004). It takes a community. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 8, 45–56.
https://doi.org/10.1300/J155v08n01_03
- Galupo, M. P. (2006). Sexism, heterosexism, and biphobia. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 6(3), 35–45. https://doi.org/10.1300/j159v06n03_3
- Galupo, M. P. (2007). Friendship patterns of sexual minority individuals in adulthood. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 24, 139–151.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407506070480>
- Galupo, M. P. (2009). Cross-category friendship patterns: Comparison of heterosexual and sexual minority adults. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 26, 811–831. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407509345651>
- Galupo, M. P., & Gonzalez, K. A. (2013). Friendship values and cross-category friendships: Understanding adult friendship patterns across gender, sexual orientation and race. *Sex Roles*, 68, 779–790.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-012-0211-x>
- Galupo, M. P., & St John, S. (2001). Benefits of cross-sexual orientation friendships among adolescent females. *Journal of Adolescence*, 24, 83–93.
<https://doi.org/10.1006/jado.2000.0364>

- Gannon, L. (2002). A critique of evolutionary psychology. *Psychology Evolution & Gender, 4*, 173–218. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461666031000063665>
- Garber, L. (2005). Where in the world are the lesbians? *Journal of the History of Sexuality, 14*, 28–50. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3704708>
- Garnets, L. D. (2008). Life as a lesbian: What does gender have to do with it? In J. C. Chrisler, C. Golden, & P. D. Rozee (Eds.), *Lectures on the psychology of women* (4th ed., pp. 233–249). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Garrioch, D. (2014). From Christian friendship to secular sentimentality: Enlightenment re-evaluations. In B. Caine (Ed.), *Friendship: A history* (pp. 165–214). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gates, T. G., Rich, T., & Blackwood, R. (2019). Workplace friendships among social work, counseling, and human service educators: Exploring the impact of sexual orientation and friendships in workplace empowerment. *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health, 34*(1), 20–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080.15555240.2018.1553622>
- Gattis, M. N., Woodford, M. R., & Han, Y. (2014). Discrimination and depressive symptoms among sexual minority youth: Is gay-affirming religious affiliation a protective factor? *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 43*, 1589–1599. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-014-0342-y>
- Geary, D. C., Byrd-Craven, J., Hoard, M. K., Vigil, J., & Numtee, C. (2003). Evolution and development of boys' social behavior. *Development Review, 23*, 444–470. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2003.08.001>

- Genero, N. P., Miller, J. B., Surrey, J., & Baldwin, L. M. (1992). Measuring perceived mutuality in close relationships: Validation of the mutual psychological development questionnaire. *Journal of Family Psychology, 6*(1), 36–48.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.6.1.36>
- Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gilligan, C. (1991). Reframing resistance: Women's psychological development: Implications for Psychotherapy. In C. Gilligan, A. G. Rogers, & D. L. Tolman (Eds.), *Women, girls & psychotherapy: Reframing resistance* (pp. 5–32). Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.
- Glover, J. A., Galliher, R. V., & Crowell, K. A. (2015). Young women's passionate friendships: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Gender Studies, 24*, 70–84.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2013.820131>
- Goldberg, A. E., Frost, R. L., Manley, M. H., & Black, K. A. (2018). Meeting other moms: Lesbian adoptive mothers' relationships with other parents at school and beyond. *Journal of Lesbian Studies, 22*, 67–84.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10894160.2016.1278349>
- Grabill, C. M., & Kerns, K. A. (2000). Attachment style and intimacy in friendship. *Personal Relationships, 7*, 363–378.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6811.2000.tb00022.x>

- Greene, K., Causby, V., & Miller, D. H. (1999). The nature and function of fusion in the dynamics of lesbian relationships. *AFFILIA*, *14*(1), 78–97.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/08861099922093527>
- Grunebaum, J. O. (2003). *Friendship: Liberty, equality, and utility*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Guschlbauer, A., Smith, N. G., DeStefano, J., & Soltis, D. E. (2019). Minority stress and emotional intimacy among individuals in lesbian and gay couples: Implications for relationship satisfaction and health. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *36*, 855–878. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407517746787>
- Haas, A. P., Eliason, M., Mays, V. M., Mathy, R. M., Cochran, S. D., D'Augelli, A. R.,...Clayton, P. J. (2011). Suicide and suicide risk in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender population: Review and recommendations. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *58*, 10–51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2011.534038>
- Halkitis, P. N., Mattis, J. S., Sahadath, J. K., Masie, D., Ladyzhenskaya, L., Pitrelli, K.,...Cowie, S. E. (2009). The meanings and manifestations of religion and spirituality among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender adults. *Journal of Adult Development*, *16*(4), 250–262. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10804-009-9071-1>
- Hall, J. A. (2011). Sex differences in friendship expectations: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *28*, 723–747.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407510386192>

- Harlow, H. F., & Zimmermann, R. R. (1958). The development of affective responsiveness in infant monkeys. *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, 102*, 501–509.
- Harrison, K. (1998). Rich friendships, affluent friends: Middle-class practices of friendship. In R. G. Adams & G. Allan (Eds.), *Placing friendship in context* (pp. 92–116). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Hartup, W. W., & Stevens, N. (1997). Friendships and adaptation in the life course. *Psychological Bulletin, 121*, 355–370.
- Harway, M., & O’Neil, J. M. (1999). What causes men to be violent against women? The unanswered and controversial question? In M. Harway & J. M. O’Neil (Eds.), *What causes men’s violence against women?* (pp. 5–11). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hawley, L. C., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2004). Stress and the aging immune system. *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity, 18*, 114–119. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbi.2003.09.005>
- Hays, R. B. (1984). The development and maintenance of friendship. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 1*(1), 75–98.
- Hays, R. B. (1988). Friendship. In S. W. Duck (Ed.), *Handbook of personal relationships* (pp. 391–408). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Haythornthwaite, C. (2002). Strong, weak, and latent ties and the impact of new media. *The Information Society, 18*, 385–401.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01972240290108195>

- Heinze, J. E., Cook, S. H., Wood, E. P., Dumadag, A. C., & Zimmerman, M. A. (2018). Friendship attachment style moderates the effect of adolescent exposure to violence on emerging adult depression and anxiety trajectories. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, 47, 177–193. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-017-0729-x>
- Holladay, S. J., & Kerns, K. S. (1999). Do age differences matter in close and casual friendships?: A comparison of age discrepant and age peer friendships. *Communication Reports*, 12, 101–114. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08934219909367715>
- Holt-Lunstad, J., Smith, T. B., & Layton, B. (2010). Social relationships and mortality risk: A meta-analytic review. *PLoS Medicine*, 7(7), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000316>
- Hruschka, D. J. (2010). *Friendship: Development, ecology, and evolution of a relationship*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Hunt, M. E. (1991). *Fierce tenderness: A feminist theology of friendship*. New York, NY: Crossroad.
- Indian, M., & Grieve, R. (2014). When Facebook is easier than face-to-face: Social support derived from Facebook in socially anxious individuals. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 59, 102–106. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2013.11.016>

- Ingham, C. F. A., Eccles, F. J. R., & Armitage, J. R. (2017). Non-heterosexual women's experiences of informal social support: A qualitative metasynthesis. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services, 29*, 109–143.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10538720.2017.1295413>
- Jensen, J. L., & Sorensen, A. S. (2013). “Nobody has 257 friends” Strategies of friending, disclosure and privacy on Facebook. *Nordicom Review, 34*(1), 49–62.
- Jerrrome, D. (1984). Good company: The sociological implications of friendship. *Academic Journal, 32*, 696–718.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.1954.tb00831>
- Jeske, D. (2001). Friendship and reasons of intimacy. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 63*(2), 329-346.
- Johns, D. J., & Probst, T. M. (2004). Sexual minority identity formation in an adult population. *Journal of Homosexuality, 47*(2), 81–90.
https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v47n02_05
- Johnson, A. G. (2010). Patriarchy. In P. S. Rothenberg (Ed.), *Race, class, and gender in the United States: An integral study* (8th ed., pp. 153–162). New York, NY: Worth.
- Jones, D. C., & Vaughan, K. (1990). Close friendships among senior adults. *Psychology and Aging, 5*, 451–457.

- Jordan, J. V. (1991). The meaning of mutuality. In J. V. Jordan, A. G. Kaplan, J. B. Miller, I. P. Stiver, & J. L. Surrey (Eds.), *Women's growth in connection: Writings from the Stone Center* (pp. 81–96). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Jordan, J. V. (1995). A relational approach to psychotherapy. *Women & Therapy, 16*(4), 51–61.
- Jordan, J. V. (1997). Introduction. In J. V. Jordan (Ed.), *Women's growth in diversity: More writings from the Stone Center* (pp. 1–8). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Jordan, J. V. (1999). *Toward competence and connection. Work in Progress, No. 83.* Wellesley, MA: Stone Center Working Paper Series.
- Jordan, J. V. (2000). The role of mutual empathy in relational/cultural therapy. *Journal of Clinical Psychology/In Session: Psychotherapy in Practice, 56*, 1005–1016.
- Jordan, J. V. (2001). A relational-cultural model: Healing through mutual empathy. *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic, 65*(1), 92–103.
- Jordan, J. V. (2004). Relational awareness: Transforming disconnection. In J. V. Jordan, M. Walker, & L. M. Hartling (Eds.), *The complexity of connection: Writings from the Stone Center's Jean Baker Miller Training Institute* (pp. 47–63). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Jordan, J. V. (2009). *Theories of psychotherapy series: Relational-cultural therapy.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

- Jordan, J. V., Kaplan, A. G., Miller, J. B., Stiver, I. P., & Surrey, J. L. (1991). Introduction. In J. V., Jordan, A. G. Kaplan, J. B. Miller, I. P. Stiver, & J. L. Surrey (Eds.), *Women's growth in connection: Writings from the Stone Center* (pp. 1–7). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Jordan, J. V., & Walker, M. (2004). Introduction. In J. V. Jordan, M. Walker, & L. M. Hartling (Eds.), *The complexity of connection: Writings from the Stone Center's Jean Baker Miller Training Institute* (pp. 1–8). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Jordan, K. M., & Deluty, R. H. (1998). Coming out for lesbian women. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 35, 41–63. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v35n02_03
- Julal Cnossen, F., Harman, K., & Butterworth, R. (2019). Attachment, efficacy beliefs and relationship satisfaction in dating, emerging adult women. *Journal of Relationships Research*, 10, E19. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jrr.2019.14>
- Kalbitz, J., Ostner, J., & Schülke, O. (2016). Assamese macaques. *Animal Behavior*, 113, 13–22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.anbehav.2015.11.005>
- Katz, J., Federici, D., Ciovacco, M., & Cropsey, A. (2016). Effect of exposure to a safe zone symbol on perceptions of campus climate for sexual minority students. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 3, 367–373. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000186>
- Kaufman, C., & Rosenblum, L. A. (1967). Depression in infant monkeys separated from their mothers. *Science, New Series*, 155, 1030–1031.

- Kaufman, J. M., & Johnson, C. (2004). Stigmatized individuals and the process of identity. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 45, 807–833.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.2004.tb02315.x>
- Keener, E., & Strough, J. (2017). Having and doing gender: Young adults' expression of gender when resolving conflicts with friends and romantic partners. *Sex Roles*, 76, 615–626. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-016-0644-8>
- Kennedy, T. M. (2004). Loading up the u-haul: Traveling the spaces between friends and lovers. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 8, 45–55.
https://doi.org/10.1300/J155v08n03_09
- Kenny, M. E. (1987). Family ties and leaving home for college: Recent findings and implications. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 28, 438–442.
- Kenrick, D. T., Neuberg, S. L., & White, A. E. (2013). Relationships from an evolutionary life history perspective. In J. A. Simpson & L. Campbell (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of close relationships* (pp. 13–38). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Kimmel, M. S. (2010). Masculinity as homophobia: Fear, shame, and silence in the construction of gender identity. In P. S. Rothenberg (Ed.), *Race, class, and gender in the United States: An integral study* (8th ed., pp. 80–92). New York, NY: Worth.

- Kite, M. E., Deaux, K., & Haines, E. L. (2008). Gender stereotypes. In F. L. Denmark & M. A. Paludi (Eds.), *Psychology of women: A handbook of issues and theories* (2nd ed., pp. 205–236). Westport, CN: Praeger.
- Kochendorfer, L. B., & Kerns, K. A. (2017). Perceptions of parent-child attachment relationships and friendship qualities: Predictors of romantic relationship involvement and quality in adolescence. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, *46*, 1009–1021. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-017-0645-0>
- Kochman, A. (1997). Gay and lesbian elderly: Historical overview and implications for social work practice. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, *6*, 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1300/J041v06n01_01
- Koraan, R., & Geduld, A. (2015). “Corrective rape” of lesbians in the era of transformative constitutionalism in South Africa. *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal*, *18*, 1930–1952. <http://doi.org/10.4314/pej.v18i5.23>
- Kwon, P. (2013). Resilience in lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *17*, 371–383. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868313490248>
- La Gaipa, J. J. (1979). A developmental study of the meaning of friendship in adolescence. *Journal of Adolescence*, *2*, 201–213.
- Larson, R. W., & Bradney, N. (1988). Precious moments with family members and friends. In R. M. Milardo (Ed.), *Families of social networks (new perspectives on family)* (pp. 107–126). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Laurenceau, J.-P., Barrett, L. F., & Rovine, M. J. (2005). The interpersonal process model of intimacy in marriage: A daily-diary and multilevel approach. *Journal of Family Psychology, 19*, 314–323. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.19.2.314>
- Lawler, A. C. (2004). Caring, but fallible: A story of repairing disconnection. In M. Walker & W. B. Rosen (Eds), *How connections heal: Stories from relational-cultural-therapy*. (pp. 66–82). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Lease, S. H., Horne, S. G., & Noffsinger-Frazier, N. (2005). Affirming faith experiences and psychological health for Caucasian lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*, 378–388. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.52.3.378>
- Legate, N., Ryan, R. M., & Rogge, R. D. (2017). Daily autonomy support and sexual identity disclosure predicts daily mental and physical health outcomes. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 43*, 860–873. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167217700399>
- Lerner, G. (1979). *The majority finds its past: Placing women in history*. Chapel Hills, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Lerner, G. (1986). *The creation of patriarchy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Levitt, H. M., Puckett, J. A., Ippolito, M. R., & Horne, S. G. (2012). Sexual minority women's gender identity and expression: Challenges and supports. *Journal of Lesbian Studies, 16*, 153–176. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10864160.2011.605009>

- Levy, B. L., & Levy, D. L. (2016). When love meets hate: The relationship between state policies on gay and lesbian rights and hate crime incidence. *Social Science, 61*, 142–159. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2016.06.008>
- Levy, K. N., Ellison, W. D., Scott, L. N., & Bernecker, S. (2011). Attachment style. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 67*, 193–203. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20756>
- Lewis, R. A. (1978). Emotional intimacy among men. *Journal of Social Issues, 34*(1), 108–121.
- Li, H., Ge, S., Greene, B., Dunbar-Jacob, J. (2019). Depression in the context of chronic diseases in the United States and China. *International Journal of Nursing Sciences, 6*, 117–122. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnss.2018.11.007>
- Litwin, H., & Shiovitz-Ezra, S. (2011). Social network type and subjective well-being in a national sample of older Americans. *The Gerontologist, 51*, 379–388. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnq094>
- Liu, R. T., Hernandez, E. M., Trout, Z. M., Kleiman, E. M., & Bozzay, M. L. (2017). Depression, social support, and long-term risk for coronary heart disease in a 13-year longitudinal epidemiological study. *Psychiatry Research, 251*, 36–40. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2017.02.010>
- Lloren, A., & Parini, L. (2017). How LGBT-supportive workplace policies shape the experience of lesbian, gay men, and bisexual employees. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy, 14*, 289–299. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-016-0253-x>

- Logan, L. S. (2013). Status homophily, sexual identity, and lesbian social ties. *Journal of Homosexuality, 60*, 1494–1519. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2013.810244>
- Lorber, J. (2010). “Night to his day” The social construction of gender. In P. S. Rothenberg (Ed.), *Race, class, and gender in the United States: An integral study* (8th ed., pp. 54–65). New York, NY: Worth.
- Lorenz, K. Z. (1937). The companion in the bird’s world. *The Auk, 54*, 245–273.
- Lyons, M., & Aitken, S. (2010). Machiavellian friends? The role of Machiavellianism in friendship formation and maintenance. *Journal of Social Evolutionary, and Cultural Psychology, 4*(3), 194–202. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0099290>
- Lytle, A., & Levy, S. R. (2015). Reducing heterosexuals’ prejudice toward gay men and lesbian women via an induced cross-orientation friendship. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, 2*, 447–455.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000135>
- Lytle, M. C., Silenzio, V. M. B., Homan, C. M., Schneider, P., & Caine, E. D. (2017). Suicidal and help-seeking behaviors among youth in an online lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning social network. *Journal of Homosexuality, 65*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2017.1391552>
- Margolese, S. K., Markiewicz, D., & Doyle, A. B. (2005). Attachment to parents, best friend, and romantic partner: Predicting different pathways to depression in adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 34*, 637–650.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-005-8952-2>

- Martin, K., A. (2009). Normalizing heterosexuality: Mothers' assumptions, talk, and strategies with young children. *American Sociological Review*, 74, 190–207. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240907400202>
- Martos, A. J., Nezhad, S., & Meyer, I. H. (2015). Variations in sexual identity milestones among lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 12, 24–33. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-014-0167-4>
- Mason, T. B., Lewis, R. J., Winstead, B. A., & Derlega, V. J. (2015). External and internalized heterosexism among sexual minority women: The moderating roles of social constraints and collective self-esteem. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, 2, 313–320. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000115>
- McAndrew, F. T., & Jeong, H. S. (2012). Who does what on Facebook? Age, sex, and relationship status as predictors of Facebook use. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28, 2359–2365. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.07.007>
- McDonald, M. M., Coleman, B., & Brindley, S. (2019). Calibrating fear of rape: Threat likelihood and victimization costs. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 139, 326–330. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2018.12.001>
- McElwain, N. L., Booth-LaForce, C., & Wu, X. (2011). Infant-mother attachment and children's friendship quality: Maternal mental-state talk as an intervening mechanism. *Developmental Psychology*, 47, 1295–1311. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024094>

- McGuire, J. E., & Leaper, C. (2016). Competition, coping, and closeness in young heterosexual adults' same-gender friendships. *Sex Roles, 74*, 422–435.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-015-0570-1>
- McHugh, M. C. (2014). Feminist qualitative research: Toward transformation of science and society. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 137–164). Oxford England: Oxford University Press.
- McKimmie, B. M., Masser, B. M., & Bongiorno, R. (2014). What counts as rape? The effect of offense prototypes, victim stereotypes, and participant gender on how the complainant and defendant are perceived. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 29*, 2273–2303. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260513518843>
- McPherson, M. Smith-Lovin, L., & Cook, J. M. (2001). Birds of a feather: Homophily in social networks. *Annual Reviews, 27*, 415–444.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.27.1.415>
- Mencher, J. (1997). Intimacy in lesbian relationships: A critical reexamination of fusion. In J. V. Jordan, A. G. Kaplan, J. B. Miller, I. P. Stiver, & J. L. Surrey (Eds.), *Women's growth in connection: Writings from the Stone Center* (pp. 311–330). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Mereish, E., & Poteat, V. P. (2015). Effects of heterosexuals' direct and extended friendships with sexual minorities on their attitudes and behaviors: intergroup anxiety and attitude strength as mediators and moderators. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 45*, 147–157. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12284>

- Merino, N. (Ed.). (2016). *Violence against women*. Farmington Hills, MI: Greenhaven Press.
- Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological Bulletin*, *129*, 674–697. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674>
- Meyer, I. H., Teylan, M., & Schwartz, S. (2015). The role of help-seeking in preventing suicide attempts among lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, *45*, 25–36. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sltb.12104>
- Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R. (2016). *Attachment in adulthood: Structure, dynamics, and change* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Miller, A. K., Canales, E. J., Amacker, A. M, Backstrom, T. L., & Gidycz, C. A. (2011). Stigma-threat motivated nondisclosure of sexual assault and sexual revictimization: A prospective analysis. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *35*(1), 119–128. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684310384104>
- Miller, J. B. (1976). *Toward a new psychology of women*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Miller, J. B. (1986a). *Toward a new psychology of women* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Miller, J. B. (1986b). *What do we mean by relationships? Work in Progress, No. 22*. Wellesley, MA: Stone Center Working Paper Series.

- Miller, J. B. (1991). The development of women's sense of self. In J. V. Jordan, A. G. Kaplan, J. B. Miller, I. P. Stiver, & J. L. Surrey (Eds.), *Women's growth in connection: Writings from the Stone Center* (pp. 11–26). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Miller, J. B. (2008). Connections, disconnections, and violations. *Feminism & Psychology, 18*, 368–380. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353508092090> (Original work published 1988).
- Miller, J. B., & Stiver, I. P. (1991). *A relational reframing of therapy. Work in Progress, No. 52*, Wellesley, MA: Stone Center Working Paper Series.
- Miller, J. B., & Stiver, I. P. (1997). *The healing connection: How women form relationships in therapy and in life*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press
- Mitani, J.C., Watts, D. P., Pepper, J. W., & Merriwether, A. (2002). Demographic and social constraints on male chimpanzee behavior. *Animal Behavior, 64*, 727–737. <https://doi.org/10.1006.anbe.2002.4014>
- Moremen, R. D. (2008). The downside of friendship: Sources of strain in older women's friendships. *Journal of Women & Aging, 20*, 169–187. https://doi.org/10.1300/J074v20n01_12
- Morgan, K. S., & Nerison, R. M. (1996). Lesbian-meets-Christian-heterosexual-woman-in-the-Midwest-and-they-become-lifelong-friends. In J. S. Weinstock & E. D. Rothblum (Eds.), *Lesbian friendships: For ourselves and each other* (pp. 151–162). New York, NY: New York University Press.

- Morin, S. F. (1977). Heterosexual bias in psychological research on lesbianism and male homosexuality. *American Psychologist*, 32, 629–637.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.32.8.629>
- Morrow, D. F. (2003). Cast into the wilderness: The impact of institutionalized religion on lesbians. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 7(4), 109–123.
https://doi.org/10.1300/J155v07n04_07
- Munsch, C., & Gruys, K. (2018). What threatens, defines: Tracing the symbolic boundaries of contemporary masculinity. *Sex Roles*, 79, 375–392.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-017-0878-0>
- Muscanell, N. L., & Guadagno, R. E. (2012). Make new friends or keep the old: Gender and personality differences in social networking use. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28, 107–112. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2011.08.016>
- Nardi, P. M. (1982). Alcohol treatment and the non-traditional “family” structures of gays and lesbians. *Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education*, 27(2), 83–89.
- Nardi, P. M. (1992). That’s what friends are for: Friends as family in the gay and lesbian community. In K. Plummer (Ed.), *Modern homosexualities: Fragments of lesbian and gay experience* (pp. 108–120). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Nardi, P. M., & Sherrod, D. (1994). Friendship in the lives of gay men and lesbians. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 11, 185–199.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407594112002>

- National Public Radio (2017, November). *Discrimination in America: Experiences and views of LGBTQ Americans*. Retrieved from <https://legacy.npr.org/documents/2017/nov/npr-discrimination-lgbtq-final.pdf>
- Nelson, S. (2016). *Frientimacy: How to deepen friendships for lifelong health and happiness*. Berkeley, CA: Seal Press.
- O'Boyle, C. G., & Thomas, M. D. (1996). Friendships between lesbian and heterosexual women. In J. S. Weinstock & E. D. Rothblum (Eds.), *Lesbian friendships: For ourselves and each other* (pp. 240–248). New York, NY: New York University Press.
- O'Connor, P. (1992). *Friendship between women: A critical review*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- O'Connor, P. (1998). Women's friendship in a post-modern world. In R. G. Adams & G. Allan (Eds.), *Placing friendship in context* (pp. 117–135). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Oliker, S. J. (1989). *Best friends and marriage: Exchange among women*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- O'Neil, J. M., & Nadeau, R. A. (1999). Men's gender-role conflict, defense mechanisms, and self-protective defensive strategies: Explaining men's violence against women from gender-role socialization perspective. In M. Harway & J. M. O'Neil (Ed.), *What causes men's violence against women?* (pp. 89–116). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Ornish, D. (1997). *Love & Survival: The scientific basis for the healing power of intimacy*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.
- Ostenson, R. S. (2008). Who's in and who's out: The results of oppression. In J. C. Chrisler, C. Golden, & P. D. Rozee (Eds), *Lectures on the psychology of women* (4th ed., pp. 17–41). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Pahl, R., & Pevalin, D. J. (2005). Between family and friends: a longitudinal study of friendship choice. *The British Journal of Sociology*, *55*, 432–450.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2005.00076.x>
- Palladino, D., & Stephenson, Y. (1990). Perceptions of self: Their impact on relationships between lesbian and heterosexual women. *Women and Therapy*, *9*, 231–253.
https://doi.org/10.1300/j015V09N03_01
- Pan, W., Feng, B., & Wingate, S. (2018). What you say is what you get: How self-disclosure in support seeking affects language use in support provision in online – support forums. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, *34*, 3–27.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/026192X17706983>
- Pangle, L. S. (2002). *Aristotle and the philosophy of friendship*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Papini, D. R., Farmer, F. F., Clark, S. M., Micka, J. C., & Barnett, J. K. (1990). Early adolescent age and gender differences in patterns of emotional self-disclosure to parents and friends. *Adolescence*, *25*, 959–976.

- Parker, C. M., Hirsch, J. S., Philbin, M. M., & Parker, R. G. (2018). The urgent need for research and interventions to address family-based stigma and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 63*, 383–393.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2018.05.018>
- Parker, K., Horowitz, J. M., Brown, A., Fry, R., Cohn, D., & Igielnik, R. (2018). *What unites and divides urban, suburban and rural communities*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center website: <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2018/05/22/how-urban-suburban-and-rural-residents-interact-with-their-neighbors/>
- Parks, M. R., & Floyd, K. (1996). Meanings for closeness and intimacy in friendships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 13*, 85–107.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407596131005>
- Parnell, M. K., Lease, S. H., & Green, M. L. (2012). Perceived career barriers for gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals. *Journal of Career Development 39*, 248–268.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845310386730>
- Patterson, B. R., Bettini, L., & Nussbaum, J. (1993). The meaning of friendship across the life-span: Two studies. *Communication Quarterly, 41*(2), 145–160.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01463379309369875>
- Peel, E. (1999). Lesbian and gay psychology. *Feminism & Psychology, 9*, 487–492.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353599009004015>

- Perissinotto, C. M., Cenzer, I. S., & Covinsky, K. E. (2012). Loneliness in older persons: A predictor of functional decline and death. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, *172*, 1078–1084. <https://doi.org/10.1001/archinternmed.2012.1993>
- Perlman, D., & Fehr, B. (1987). The development of intimate relationships. In D. Perlman & S. Duck, (Eds.), *Intimate relationships: development, dynamics, and deterioration* (pp. 13–42). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Perlman, D., Stevens, N. L., & Carcedo, R. J. (2015). Friendship. In M. Mikulincer & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *APA handbook of personality and social psychology* (pp. 463–493). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Perrin, A., & Anderson, M. (2019). Share of U.S. adults using social media, including Facebook, is mostly unchanged since 2018. *Fact Tank, News in the Numbers, Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from <https://www.pwresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/16/facts-about-facebook/>
- Pew Research Center (2019, May). *Attitudes on same-sex marriage: Public opinion on same-sex marriage* [Fact sheet]. Retrieved from <https://www.pewforum.org/fact-sheet/changing-attitudes-on-gay-marriage/>
- Pharr, S. (2010). Homophobia as a weapon of sexism. In P. S. Rothenberg (Ed.), *Race, class, and gender in the United States: An integrated study* (8th ed., pp. 162–172). New York, NY: Worth.

- Platt, L. F., & Lenzen, A. L. (2013). Sexual orientation microaggressions and the experience of sexual minorities. *Journal of Homosexuality, 60*, 1011–1034.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2013.774878>
- Pickett, A. C., Valdez, D., & Barry, A. E. (2019). Measurement implications associated with refinement of sexual and gender identity survey items: A case study of the national college health assessment. *Journal of American College Health, 1–7*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2019.1598421>
- Plugge-Foust, C., & Strickland, G. (2000). Homophobia, irrationality, and Christian ideology: Does a relationship exist? *Journal of Sex Education and Therapy, 25*, 240–244. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01614576.2000.11074356>
- Pogrebin, L. C. (1987). *Among friends: Who we like, why we like them, and what we do with them*. New York: NY: McGraw-Hill Book.
- PsychData. (n.d.). *Library: Security statement*. Retrieved from
(<https://www.psychdata.com/content/security.asp>)
- Rasulo, D., Christensen, K., & Tomassini, C. (2005). The influence of social relations on mortality in later life: A study on elderly Danish twins. *The Gerontologist, 45*, 601–608. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/45.5.601>
- Rausch, M. A., & Wikoff, H. D. (2017). Addressing concerns with lesbian couples experiencing fertility treatment: Using relational cultural theory. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling, 11*(3), 142–155.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15538605.2017.1346494>

- Raymond, J. G. (1986). *A passion for friends: Toward a philosophy of female affection*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Reisman, J. M. (1979). *Anatomy of friendship*. New York, NY: Irvington Publishers.
- Reisman, J. M. (1990). Intimacy in same-sex friendships. *Sex Roles, 23*, 65–82.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00289880>
- Reynolds, T., Baumeister, R. F., & Maner, J. K. (2018). Competitive reputation manipulation: Women strategically transmit social information about romantic rivals. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 78*, 195–209.
<https://doi:10.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2018.03.011>
- Rich, A. (1986). *Blood, bread, and poetry: Selected prose 1979-1985*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton
- Richey, M. H., & Richey, H. W. (1980). The significance of best-friend relationships in adolescence. *Psychology in the Schools, 17*, 536–540.
- Riger, S., & Gordon, M. T. (1981). The fear of rape: A study in social control. *Journal of Social Issues, 37*(4), 71–92.
- Robinson, B. A. (2018). Conditional families and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer youth homelessness: Gender, sexuality, family instability, and rejection. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 80*, 383–396.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12466>

- Rose, S. (2000). Heterosexism and the study of women's romantic and friend relationships. *Journal of Social Issues, 56*(2), 315–328.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00168>
- Rose, S. M. (2008). Crossing the color line in women's friendship. In J. C. Chrisler, C. Golden & P. D. Rosee (Eds.), *Lectures on the psychology of women* (4th ed., pp. 301–320). Boston, MA: McGraw Hill.
- Rose, A. J., & Rudolph, K. D. (2006). A review of sex differences in peer relationship processes: Potential trade-offs for the emotional and behavioral development of girls and boys. *Psychological Bulletin, 132*(1), 98–131.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/003-2909.132.1.98>
- Rose, S., & Rodes, L. (1987). Feminism and women's friendships. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 11*, 243–254.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1987.tb00787.x>
- Rosenzweig, L. W. (1999). *The history of emotions series. Another self: Middle-class American women and their friends in the twentieth century*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Rostosky, S. S., Cardom, R. D., Hammer, J. H., & Riggle, E. D. B. (2018). LGB positive identity and psychological well-being. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, 5*, 482–489. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000298>

- Rousseau, J. J. (1979). *Emile: or on education* (A. Bloom, Trans.). New York, NY: Basic Books (Original work published 1762). [Kindle 1.26.1]. Retrieved from <http://amazon.com>
- Rozee, P. D. (2008). Women's fear of rape: Cause, consequences, and coping. In J. C. Chrisler, C. Golden, & P. D. Rozee (Eds.), *Lectures on the psychology of women* (4th ed., pp 322–337). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Rubin, L. B. (1985). *Just friends: The role of friendship in our lives*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Rumens, N. (2011). Minority support: Friendships and the development of gay and lesbian managerial careers and identities. *Equality Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 30, 444–462.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/026101511111577684>
- Russell, A. (2009). Lesbians surviving culture: Relational-cultural theory applied to lesbian connection. *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*, 24, 406–416.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0886109909344059>
- Rust, P. C. (1993). “Coming out” in the age of social constructionism: Sexual identity formation among lesbian and bisexual women. *Gender and Society*, 7(1), 50–77.
https://doi.org/10.1300/j155v01n01_04
- Ryan, C., Huebner, D., Diaz, R. M., & Sanchez, J. (2009). Family rejection as a predictor of negative health outcomes in White and Latino lesbian, gay, and bisexual young adults. *Pediatrics*, 123, 346–352. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2007-3524>

- Rybak, A., & McAndrew, F. T. (2006). How do we decide whom our friends are? Defining levels of friendship in Poland and the United States. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 146*(2), 147–163.
<https://doi.org/10.3200/SOCP.146.2.147-163>
- Salway, T., Ross, L. E., Fehr, C. P., Burley J., Asadi, S., Hawkins, B., & Tarasoff, L. A. (2019). A systematic review and meta-analysis of disparities in the prevalence of suicide ideation and attempt among bisexual populations. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 48*, 48–89. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-018-1150-6>
- Sapadin, L. A. (1988). Friendship and gender: Perspectives of professional men and women. *Journal of Social and Personality Relationships, 5*, 387–403.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407588054001>
- Schlosser, L. Z. (2003). Christian privilege: Breaking a sacred taboo. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 31*(1), 44–51.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1912.2003.tb00530.x>
- Schuck, K. D., & Liddle, B. J. (2001). Religious conflicts experienced by lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Psychotherapy, 5*, 63–82.
https://doi.org/10.1300/J236v05n02_07
- Sherwin, D. (2018). Beyond colleagues: Women leaders and work relationships. *Advancing Women in Leadership, 38*, 1–13.

- Shiau, W.-L., Dwivedi, Y. K., & Lai, H.-H. (2018). Examining the core knowledge on facebook. *International Journal of Information Management*, *43*, 52–63.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2018.06.006>
- Silk, J. B., Alberts, S. C., & Altmann, J. (2003). Social bonds of female baboons enhance infant survival. *Science*, *302*, 1231–1234. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1088580>
- Silk, J. B., Beehner, J. C., Bergman, T. J., Crockford, C., Engh, A. L., Moscovice, L. R.,...Cheney, D. L. (2010). Strong and consistent social bonds enhance the longevity of female Baboons. *Current Biology*, *20*, 1359–1361.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2010.05.067>
- Simpson, J. A., & Belsky, J. (2008). Attachment theory within a modern evolutionary framework. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 131–157). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Singh, S., & Durso, L. (2017). *Widespread discrimination continues to shape LGBT people's lives in both subtle and significant ways*. Retrieved from Center for American Progress: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbtq-rights/news/2017/05/02/429529/widespread-discrimination-continues-shape-lgbt-peoples-lives-subtle-significant-ways/>
- Siraj, A. (2018). Sexuality in the shadows of a friendship: An intimate portrayal of friendship between two British Pakistani lesbians. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, *22*(1), 43–53. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10894160.2017.1303284>

- Smith-Rosenberg, C. (1975). The female world of love and ritual: Relations between women in nineteenth-century America. *University of Chicago Press Journals*, *1*(1), 1–29.
- Smith, S. G., Zhang, X., Basile, K. C., Merrick, M. T., Wang, J., Kresnow, M-J., Chen, J. (2018). *The national intimate partner and sexual violence survey: 2015 data brief – updated release*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/2015data-brief508.pdf>
- Spaulding, E. C. (1999). Unconscious-raising: Hidden dimensions of heterosexism in theory and practice with lesbians. In J. Laird (Ed.), *Lesbians and lesbian families: Reflections on theory and practice* (pp. 11–26). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Spencer, B., & Brown, J. (2007). Fusion or internalized homophobia? A pilot study of Bowen’s differentiation of self-hypothesis with lesbian couples. *Family Process*, *46*, 257–268. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2007.00208.x>
- Spencer, L., & Pahl, R. (2006). *Rethinking friendship: Hidden solidarities today*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Spencer-Booth, Y., & Hinde, R. A. (1967). The effects of separating Rhesus monkey infants from their mothers for six days. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, and Allied Disciplines*, *7*, 179–197.

- Sroufe, L. A. (2005). Attachment and development: A perspective, longitudinal study from birth to adulthood. *Attachment & Human Development, 7*, 349–367. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616730500365928>
- Stanley, J. L. (1996). The lesbian's experience of friendship. In J. S. Weinstock, & E. D. Rothblum (Eds.), *Lesbian friendships: For ourselves and each other* (pp. 39–59). New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Steenberg, P. F. (2013). *Emotional intimacy 101: The surefire way to great romantic relationships* [Kindle 1.26.1]. Retrieved from <http://www.amazon.com>
- Stone, L. B., & Gibb, B. E. (2015). Brief report: Preliminary evidence that co-rumination fosters adolescents' depression risk by increasing rumination. *Journal of Adolescence, 38*, 1–4. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2014.10.008>
- Stormhøj, C. (2019). Still much to be achieved: Intersecting regimes of oppression, social critique, and 'thick' justice for lesbian and gay people. *Sexualities, 22*, 1309–1324. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460718790873>
- Sullivan, H. S. (1953). *The interpersonal theory of psychiatry*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
- Super, J. T., & Jacobson, L. (2011). Religious abuse: Implications for counseling lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling, 5*, 180–196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15538605.2011.632739>

- Surrey, J. L. (1991). Self-relation: A theory of women's development. In J. V. Jordan, A. G. Kaplan, J. B. Miller, I. P. Stiver, & J. L. Surrey (Eds.), *Women's growth in connection: Writings from the Stone Center* (pp. 51–66). New York, NY: Guilford Press. (Original work published 1985).
- Surrey, J. L. (1997). What do you mean by mutuality in therapy? In J. V. Jordan (Ed.), *Women's growth in diversity: More writings from the Stone Center* (pp. 42–49). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Szymanski, D. M. (2005). Heterosexism and sexism as correlates of psychological distress in lesbians. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 83*, 335–360.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2005.tb99355.x>
- Tamir, D., & Mitchell, J. P. (2012). Disclosing information about the self is intrinsically rewarding. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 109*, 8038–8043.
<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1202129109/-/DCSupplemental>
- Tamm, A., Tulviste, T., & Urm, A. (2018). Resolving conflicts with friends: Adolescents' strategies and reasons behind these strategies. *Journal of Adolescence, 64*, 72–80. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2018.02.002>
- Taylor, C. (2011). Women's social networks and female friendship in the ancient Greek city. *Gender and History, 23*(3), 703–720.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0424.2011.01653.x>

- Terranova, M. L., Cirulli, F., & Laviola, G. (1999). Behavioral and hormonal effects of partner familiarity in periadolescent rat pairs upon novelty exposure. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, *24*, 639–656.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0306-4530\(99\)00019-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0306-4530(99)00019-0)
- The woman suffrage movement: The most significant achievement of women in the progressive era. (n.d.). Retrieved from
<https://www.womenshistory.org/resources/general/woman-suffrage-movement>
- Thomas, L. (1987). Friendship, *Synthese*, *72*, 217–236.
- Thompson, C. (2010). A new vision of masculinity. In P. S. Rothenberg (Ed.), *Race, class, and gender in the United States: An integrated study* (8th ed., pp. 677–683). New York, NY: Worth.
- Tokuno, K. A. (1986). The early adult transition and friendships: Mechanisms and support. *Adolescence*, *21*(83), 593–606.
- Toomey, R. B., Ryan, C., Diaz, R. M., & Russell, S. T (2018). Coping with sexual orientation-related minority stress. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *65*, 484–500.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2017.1321888>
- Trivers, R. L. (1971). The evolution of reciprocal altruism. *Quarterly Review of Biology*, *46*, 35–57.
- Ueno, K., & Gentile, H. (2015a). Construction of status equality in friendships between gay, lesbian, and bisexual students and straight students in college. *Sociological Perspectives*, *58*, 402–421. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0731121415574105>

- Ueno, K., & Gentile, H. (2015b). Moral identity in friendships between gay, lesbian, and bisexual students and straight students in college. *Symbolic Interaction*, 38, 83–102. <https://doi.org/10.1002/SYMB.131>
- Ueno, K., Wright, E. R., Gayman, M. D., & McCabe, J. M. (2012). Segregation in gay, lesbian and bisexual youth's personal networks: Testing structural constraint, choice homophily and compartmentalization hypotheses. *Social Forces*, 90, 971–991. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sor022>
- United States Census Bureau. (2019, February). *Number of people with master's and doctoral degrees doubles since 2000*. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2019/02/numbr-of-people-with-masters-and-phd-degrees-double-since-2000.htm/>
- United States Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2011, November). *Uniform crime report: Hate crime statistics, 2010*. Retrieved from <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2010/narratives/hate-crime-2010-incidents-and-offenses.pdf>
- United States Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2019, Fall). *Uniform crime report: Hate crime statistics, 2018*. Retrieved from <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2018/topic-pages/incidents-and-offenses.pdf>
- Vallor, S. (2012). Flourishing on Facebook: virtue friendship & new social media. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 14(3), 185–199. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10676-010-9262-2>

- VandenBos, G. R. (Ed.). (2007). *APA dictionary of psychology*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Verbrugge, L. M. (1977). The structure of adult friendship choices. *Social Forces*, *56*, 576–598. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2577741>
- Vetere, A. V. (1982). The role of friendship in the development and maintenance of lesbian love relationships. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *8*, 51–65.
- Vigil, J. M. (2007). Asymmetries in the friendship preferences and social styles of men and women. *Human Nature*, *18*, 143–161. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12110-007-9003-3>
- Waldrip, A. M. (2008). With a little help from your friends: The importance of high-quality friendship on early adolescent adjustment. *Social Development*, *17*, 832–852. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9507.2008.00476.x>
- Walker, M. (2004). How relationships heal. In M. Walker & W. B. Rosen (Eds.), *How connections heal: Stories from relational-cultural therapy* (pp. 3–21). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Walls, C. (2004). Me, them, us: Developing mutuality in a couple's therapy. In M. Walker & W. B. Rosen (Eds.), *How connections heal: Stories from relational-cultural therapy* (pp. 107–127). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

- Walls, N. E. (2008a). Modern Heterosexism and social dominance orientation: Do subdomains of heterosexism function as hierarchy-enhancing legitimizing myths? In M. A. Morrison & T. G. Morrison (Eds.), *The psychology of modern prejudice* (pp. 225–259). Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science.
- Walls, N. E. (2008b). Toward a multidimensional understanding of heterosexism: The changing nature of prejudice. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *55*, 20–70.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00918360802129287>
- Waring, E. M., Tillman, M. P., Frelick, L., Russell, L., & Weisz, G. (1980). Concepts of intimacy in the general population. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, *168*, 471–474.
- Warr, M. (1985). Fear of rape among urban women. *Social Problems*, *32*, 238–250.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/800684>
- Warshow, J. (1996). A significant friend. In J. S. Weinstock & E. D. Rothblum (Eds.), *Lesbian friendships: For ourselves and each other* (pp. 273-275). New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Watson, L. B., Grotewiel, M., Farrell, M., Marshik, J., & Schneider, M. (2015). Experiences of sexual objectification, minority stress, and disordered eating among sexual minority women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *39*, 458–470.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684315575024>

- Waxler-Morrison, N., Hislop, T. G., Mears, B., & Kan, L. (1991). Effects of social relationships on survival for women with breast cancer: A prospective study. *Social Science & Medicine*, *33*(2), 177–183.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536\(91\)90178-F](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(91)90178-F)
- Weber, A., Collins, S-A., Robinson-Wood, T., Zeko-Underwood, E., & Poindexter, B. (2018). Subtle and severe: Microaggressions among racially diverse sexual minorities. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *65*, 540–559.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2017.1324679>
- Weinstock, J. S. (1998). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender friendships in adulthood. In C. J. Patterson & A. R. D'Augelli (Eds.), *Lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities in Families: Psychological perspectives* (pp. 122–153). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Weinstock, J. S. (2000). Lesbian friendships at midlife: Patterns and possibilities for the 21st century. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services*, *11*, 1–32.
https://doi.org/10.1300/J041v11n02_01
- Weinstock, J. S., & Bond, L. A. (2002). Building bridges: Examining lesbians' and heterosexual women's close friendships with each other. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, *6*(1), 149–161. https://doi.org/10.1300/J155v06n01_14

- Weinstock, J. S., & Rothblum, E. D. (1996). What we can be together: Contemplating lesbians' friendships. In J. S. Weinstock & E. D. Rothblum (Eds.), *Lesbian friendships: For ourselves and each other* (pp. 3–30). New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Weinstock, J. S., & Rothblum, E. D. (2018). Just friends: The role of friendship in lesbians' lives. *Journal of Lesbians Studies*, *22*(1), 1–3.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10894160.2017.1326762>
- Weiss, L., & Lowenthal, M. F. (1975). Life-course perspectives on friendship. In M. F. Lowenthal, M. Thurnher, & D. Chiriboga (Eds.), *Four stages of life* (pp. 48–61). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Welch, R. D., & Houser, M. E. (2010). Extending the four-category model of adult attachment: An interpersonal model of friendship attachment. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *27*, 351–366.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407509379632>
- Weston, K. (1991). *Families we choose: Lesbians, gays, kinship*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Woodin, E. M. (2011). A Two-dimensional approach to relationship conflict: Meta-analytic findings. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *25*, 325–335.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0023791>

- World Health Organization. (2017, November). *Violence against women: Key facts*. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>
- Wright, P. H. (2003). Friendship. In J. J. Ponzetti Jr. (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of marriage and family* (2nd ed., pp. 702–710). Farmington, MI: Gale. Retrieved from <http://ezp.twu.edu/login?url=https://search.credoreference/0?institutionId=2115>
- Yager, J. (2002). *When friendship hurts: How to deal with friends who betray, abandon, or wound you*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Yamagishi, T., & Mifune, N. (2008). Does shared group membership promote altruism? *Rationality and Society*, 20(1), 5–30. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1043463107085442>
- Yllö, K. A. (2005). Through a feminist lens: Gender, diversity, and violence: Extending the feminist framework. In D. R. Loseke, R. J. Gelles, & M. M. Cavanaugh (Eds.), *Current controversies on family violence* (pp. 19–34). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

APPENDIX A

Demographic Questionnaire

The purpose of this survey is to examine women's attitudes and friendship relationships across sexual orientation. All data collected will be reported in aggregate form in the dissertation of the investigator. This survey is completely anonymous. Women's friendships are very important, and in order to report accurate information, it is essential that you answer each item as close to your feelings and views as possible. However, you may leave blank any item that you do not feel comfortable answering. Thank you so much for your participation!

Demographic Information

Please circle or write in the most appropriate answer.

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: _____
3. Race/Ethnicity: Black or African American Hispanic or Latina White
 Asian/Pacific Islander Native American or American Indian Biracial
 Multiracial Other: _____
4. Sexual Orientation: Lesbian Heterosexual
5. Relationship Status: Single Married Living with partner Widowed
 Divorced/Separated Other: _____.
6. Do you have children:
 Yes No If yes, how many? _____ What are their ages? _____
7. Annual household income (before taxes):
 Below \$45,000.00 Between \$45,000.00 to \$122,000.00 Exceed \$123,000.00
8. Higher Academic Education Level:
 Less than a High School Diploma High School Diploma Some College
 Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree Doctoral Degree
9. Religion: _____ Atheist Agnostic

FRIENDSHIPS

Following are characteristics of three categories of friends. These characteristics are not universal, but for the purpose of this investigation, we would like you to think on all the women friends that you have, **excluding** *blood-related* and only-online friends (*e.g., Facebook friends who you do not know face-to-face*), and using the chart below, please indicate how many of your women friends belong to each of the following categories. Some people might judge that none, one, or more of their friends are best, close, or casual. There is no right answer.

	Casual Friends	Close Friends	Best Friends
Heterosexual women friends			
Lesbian friends			

Casual Friends:

Casual friends are people you like and trust more than your acquaintances. They are people whose company you enjoy, and you meet with them from time to time. Their presence helps you to integrate to new environments such as school or work. The type of conversations you have with casual friends might be enjoyable and deeper than with acquaintances, but you do not share confidences with casual friends.

Close Friends:

Close friends are people you like and enjoy their company very much. They are the people in whom you can rely, and they can rely on you. Close friends provide emotional and practical support. Close friends tend to trust each other with confidences, and they are also usually very affectionate and validating. Close friendships take time to develop; therefore, most close friends have been present in your life for some time. Your friendship with close friends is likely to have survived some bad experiences. Thus, close friends are solid friendships. The conversations you have with close friends might range from fun and trivial to emotionally intense and private.

Best Friends:

Best friends are people with all the characteristics of close friends to a higher level. They are among the most valuable relationships in your life. Best friends usually have a profound knowledge of each other as well as a strong emotional connection and understanding. Best friends share unconditional support and loyalty. They are the friends who will cancel things to help you, and you will cancel things to help them. Best friends are often described as confidants because they are the people who know our secrets, and whose advice is highly regarded. The affection shared with best friends is the highest of all friendships. The conversations you have with best friends might range from fun and trivial to profound, emotionally intense, and private

APPENDIX B.1

The Mutual Psychological Development Questionnaire

Form B (Heterosexual Friend)

Available from

Nancy P. Genero

Research Program Director

Stone Center, Wellesley College

106 Central Street

Wellesley, Massachusetts 02181-8293

ngenero@wellesley.edu

In this section, we would like you to tell us about a relationship with a ***heterosexual*** woman friend, **excluding** *blood-related* and online-only friends (*e.g., Facebook friends who you do not face to face*).

Considering the descriptions of friends, you read in the previous section, please indicate the friendship category in which she belongs:

- Casual Friend Close Friend Best Friend

Using the scale below, please tell us your best estimate of how often you and your friend experience each of the following:

- 1 = Never 3 = Occasionally 5 = Most of the Time
 2 = Rarely 4 = More Often Than Not 6 = All the Time

When we talk about things that matter to my friend, I am likely to...

be receptive	1	2	3	4	5	6
get impatient	1	2	3	4	5	6
try to understand	1	2	3	4	5	6
get bored	1	2	3	4	5	6
feel moved	1	2	3	4	5	6
avoid being honest	1	2	3	4	5	6
be open-minded	1	2	3	4	5	6
get discouraged	1	2	3	4	5	6
get involved	1	2	3	4	5	6
have difficulty listening	1	2	3	4	5	6
feel energized by our conversation	1	2	3	4	5	6

When we talk about things that matter to me, my friend is likely to...

pick on my feelings	1	2	3	4	5	6
feel like we are not getting anywhere	1	2	3	4	5	6
show an interest	1	2	3	4	5	6
get frustrated	1	2	3	4	5	6
share similar experiences	1	2	3	4	5	6
keep feelings inside	1	2	3	4	5	6
respect my point of view	1	2	3	4	5	6
change the subject	1	2	3	4	5	6
see the humor in things	1	2	3	4	5	6
feel down	1	2	3	4	5	6
express an opinion clearly	1	2	3	4	5	6

APPENDIX B.2

The Mutual Psychological Development Questionnaire

Form B (Lesbian Friend)

Available from

Nancy P. Genero

Research Program Director

Stone Center, Wellesley College

106 Central Street

Wellesley, Massachusetts 02181-8293

n genero@wellesley.edu

In this section, we would like you to tell us about a relationship with a **lesbian** friend). **excluding** blood-related, romantic partners, and online-only friends (e.g., Facebook friends who you do not know face to face).

Considering the descriptions of friends, you read in the previous section, please indicate the friendship category in which she belongs:

Casual Friend Close Friend Best Friend

Using the scale below, please tell us your best estimate of how often you and your friend experience each of the following:

1 = Never 3 = Occasionally 5 = Most of the Time
2 = Rarely 4 = More Often Than Not 6 = All the Time

When we talk about things that matter to my friend, I am likely to...

be receptive	1	2	3	4	5	6
get impatient	1	2	3	4	5	6
try to understand	1	2	3	4	5	6
get bored	1	2	3	4	5	6
feel moved	1	2	3	4	5	6
avoid being honest	1	2	3	4	5	6
be open-minded	1	2	3	4	5	6
get discouraged	1	2	3	4	5	6
get involved	1	2	3	4	5	6
have difficulty listening	1	2	3	4	5	6
feel energized by our conversation	1	2	3	4	5	6

When we talk about things that matter to me, my friend is likely to...

pick on my feelings	1	2	3	4	5	6
feel like we are not getting anywhere	1	2	3	4	5	6
show an interest	1	2	3	4	5	6
get frustrated	1	2	3	4	5	6
share similar experiences	1	2	3	4	5	6
keep feelings inside	1	2	3	4	5	6
respect my point of view	1	2	3	4	5	6
change the subject	1	2	3	4	5	6
see the humor in things	1	2	3	4	5	6
feel down	1	2	3	4	5	6
express an opinion clearly	1	2	3	4	5	6

APPENDIX C

Multidimensional Heterosexism Inventory

Available from

Walls, N. E. (2008). Modern heterosexism and social dominance orientation: Do subdomains of heterosexism function as hierarchy-enhancing legitimizing myths? In T. G. Morrison & M. A. Morrison (Eds.), *The psychology of modern prejudice* (pp. 225-259). Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science.

Eugene N. Walls, Ph.D.

eugene.walls@du.edu

For this first group of questions, please check the answer that best matches your agreement or disagreement with the statement.

		Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Lesbianism is given too much attention in today's society							
2	Gay men are treated as fairly as everyone else in today's society.							
3	Lesbians are better than heterosexual women at physically defending themselves.							
4	Lesbians make too much noise about their sexuality.							
5	Gay men take better care of their bodies than do heterosexual men.							
6	Most people treat lesbians as fair as they treat everyone else.							
7	Gay men should stop showing their lifestyle down everyone else's throat.							
8	Lesbians are more independent than heterosexual women.							
9	Things would be better if lesbians would quit trying to force their lifestyle on everyone else.							
10	Gay men no longer face discrimination in the U.S.							
11	Lesbians have become too radical in their demands.							
12	Gay men are more compassionate than heterosexual men.							
13	Lesbians excel at outdoor activities more than heterosexual women.							
14	There is too much attention given to gay men on television and in the media.							
15	Discrimination against lesbians is virtually non-existent in today's society.							
16	Lesbians are better than heterosexual women at auto maintenance and repair.							

For this second group of questions, we *ASSUME* that you have a son/daughter, or we ask you to *IMAGINE* that you have a child if you do not have one. Please check the answer that most closely matches your agreement or disagreement with each statement. Also note, that sometimes the question refers to having a daughter and sometimes to having a son.

If you agree with *ALL* parts of the statement, then your answer should be on the agree side of the scale. If you disagree with *ANY* part of the statement, then your answer should be on the disagree side of the scale. If you are just as happy having a gay/lesbian kid as a heterosexual kid, then you can check the *OK with Gay Kid* answer.

		Okay with gay kid	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
17	I would prefer my daughter NOT be homosexual because she would <i>unfairly</i> be stopped from adopting children.								
18	I would prefer my son NOT be homosexual because most churches would <i>unfairly</i> reject him.								
19	I would prefer my daughter NOT be homosexual because she would face <i>unfair</i> discrimination.								
20	I would prefer my son NOT be homosexual because he would <i>unfairly</i> be denied the right to marry the man he loved.								
21	I would prefer my daughter NOT be homosexual because religious institutions <i>unfairly</i> reject lesbians.								
22	I would prefer my son NOT be homosexual because it would <i>unfairly</i> be harder for him to have or adopt children.								
23	I would prefer my son NOT be homosexual because he would <i>unfairly</i> be discriminated against.								

APPENDIX D

Recruitment Script

Dear Readers,

My name is Blanca Moreno-Naudin. I am a doctoral candidate in the Counseling Psychology program at Texas Woman's University (TWU). I am respectfully inviting you to participate in my dissertation research. This research study is on friendships between lesbian and heterosexual women. It is intended to assess factors that might help and factors that might hinder friendships between women across sexual orientation. This study has been approved by TWU's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

To participate you must:

- 1) be woman
- 2) be 18 years of age or older
- 3) hold either a heterosexual or lesbian identity
- 4) have at least one women friend who holds a heterosexual orientation
- 5) have at least one friend who holds a lesbian orientation

If you meet the above criteria, I am asking you to please consider donating 15 minutes of your time to answer three short questionnaires about some of your demographic information, friendships, and perceptions of sexual minority individuals. Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. This is an online survey, and there is potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading electronic meetings, and internet transactions.

If you have questions about this study or need further clarification, please feel free to contact me. My contact information is at the bottom of this page.

If you complete the study, you have the option of participating in a drawing to win one of five \$25.00 Amazon gift cards.

I am immensely grateful for your time and interest in women's friendships.

In the link below, you will find an Informed Consent with explanations of your rights and responsibilities as a participant. If you agree to this consent, you will be taken to the questionnaires.

<https://www.psychdata.com/s.asp?SID=189296>

Blanca Moreno-Naudin
Doctoral Candidate, Counseling Psychology
Texas Woman's University
Contact Information: bnaudin@twu.edu Phone: 956-284-0488

APPENDIX E
Informed Consent

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY (TWU)
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title: Sexual Orientation, Heterosexism, and Mutuality in Friendship Relationships
Between Lesbian and Heterosexual Women.

Principal Investigator: Blanca M. Naudin, MA.....bnaudin@twu.edu 956-284-0488
Faculty Advisor: Sally D. Stabb, PhD.....sstabb@twu.edu 940-898-2149

Summary and Key Information about the Study

We invite you to participate in a research study of women's friendships. This study is part of Ms Naudin's dissertation at Texas Woman's University. The purpose of this research is to examine women's friendships across sexual orientation and the influence that cultural traditions and mutuality might have in such relationships. Mutuality refers to healthy and emotional intimate interactions. The requirements to participate in this study are to be woman, 18 years of age or older, to hold either a heterosexual or lesbian identity, to have at least one women friend who holds a heterosexual orientation and one who holds a lesbian orientation.

Your participation is completely voluntary. All the information you provide will be anonymous. All data will be reported in an aggregate form, and no individual data will be reported. If you have questions, please contact the researchers to their contact information provided at the top of this page.

Description of Procedures

As a participant you will be asked to spend about 15 minutes answering an online computer survey composed of three sections. The first section is about demographic information and friendships in general; the second section is about your experiences with a heterosexual woman friend and with a lesbian woman friend, and the third section is about perceptions of sexual minority individuals.

Potential Risks

There is minimal risk of emotional discomfort that might arise from answering confidential information. However, if intense or uncomfortable emotions arise during your participation, you can take breaks or withdraw completely if you feel the need to do so. You might experience such emotions after taken the questionnaire, in both instances, please feel free to contact the researchers to the e-mail addresses or phone numbers provided above. You will also be provided with a list of counseling referral resources.

Another potential risk is loss of confidentiality, which is always a concern in all research studies. There is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all email, downloading,

electronic meeting, and internet transactions. Confidentiality will be protected to the extent allowed by law. Your name is not requested in the questionnaire, and all data will be reported in an aggregate form. In other words, no one will know your individual answers. All data gathered will be kept in a secure location and will be destroyed after 5 years from the date of your participation. The researchers will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. You should let the researchers know at once if there is a problem and they will help you. However, TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because you are taking part in this research.

Participation and Benefits

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. Some of the benefits researchers foresee you might experience by answering questions about you and your friends is an increase awareness about your behaviors and feelings regarding your friends. If you are a student whose professors will award credit points in exchange for participation in this study, a confirmation code will be provided for you. Your participation in this research will potentially help science to advance knowledge in women's friendships across sexual orientation. As a compensation for your time, you have the option of participating in a drawing to win one of five \$25.00 Amazon gift cards. Instructions to enter the drawing are provided before you exit the survey.

If you would like to know the results of this study, you will have the opportunity to let us know where you want them to be sent at the end of the survey.

Questions Regarding the Study

If you have any questions about the research study, please ask the researchers; their contact information is at the top of this form. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research or the way this study has been conducted, you may contact the TWU Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 940-898-3378 or via e-mail at IRB@twu.edu.

Do you agree with these statements AND consent to voluntarily participate in this study?

- Yes
- No

Insert Link to Survey

APPENDIX F
Counseling Referral Resources

Counseling Referral Sources

In case participation in this study elicited emotional distress, you might want to consider talking to a mental health provider about your experience. The following is a list of agencies where you might find professional assistance.

American Psychological Association – Psychologist Locator
<https://locator.apa.org>

National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology
<http://www.nationalregister.org/>

Psychology Today Find a Therapist
<http://therapists.psychologytoday.com/rms/>

TWU students may also seek counseling services at Ref
TWU Counseling and Psychological Services
West Jones Hall
Denton, TX 76204-5350
<https://twu.edu/counseling/>
Phone: (940) 898-3801

Denton County MHMR
2519 Scripture
Denton, TX 76201
Phone: 940-381-5000
www.dentonmhmr.org

APPENDIX G

IRB Approval Letter

Thursday, April 23, 2020 at 4:56:32 PM Central Daylight Time

Subject: IRB-FY2020-270 - Initial: Exempt Letter
Date: Thursday, April 23, 2020 at 4:36:34 PM Central Daylight Time
From: irb@twu.edu
To: bnaudin@twu.edu, sstabb@twu.edu
Attachments: ATT00001.jpg



Texas Woman's University
Institutional Review Board (IRB)

irb@twu.edu
<https://www.twu.edu/institutional-review-board-irb/>

April 23, 2020

Blanca Naudin
Psychology and Philosophy

Re: Exempt - IRB-FY2020-270 Sexual Orientation, Heterosexism, and Mutuality in Friendship Relationships between Lesbian and Heterosexual Women

Dear Blanca Naudin,

The above referenced study has been reviewed by the TWU IRB - Denton operating under FWA00000178 and was determined to be exempt on April 22, 2020.

Note that any modifications to this study must be submitted for IRB review prior to their implementation, including the submission of any agency approval letters, changes in research personnel, and any changes in study procedures or instruments. Additionally, the IRB must be notified immediately of any adverse events or unanticipated problems. All modification requests, incident reports, and requests to close the file must be submitted through Cayuse.

On April 21, 2021, this approval will expire and the study must be renewed or closed. A reminder will be sent 45 days prior to this date.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the IRB analyst indicated on your application in Cayuse or refer to the IRB website at <http://www.twu.edu/institutional-review-board-irb/>.

Sincerely,

TWU IRB - Denton

APPENDIX H

Additional IRB Materials

Wednesday, April 29, 2020 at 4:13:55 PM Central Daylight Time

Subject: IRB-FY2020-270 - Modification: Modification Approval
Date: Wednesday, April 29, 2020 at 12:31:12 PM Central Daylight Time
From: irb@twu.edu
To: bnaudin@twu.edu, sstabb@twu.edu
Attachments: ATT00001.jpg



Texas Woman's University

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

irb@twu.edu

<https://www.twu.edu/institutional-review-board-irb/>

April 29, 2020

Blanca Naudin
Psychology and Philosophy

Re: Modification - IRB-FY2020-270 Sexual Orientation, Heterosexism, and Mutuality in Friendship Relationships between Lesbian and Heterosexual Women

Dear Blanca Naudin,

The modifications listed below have been reviewed and approved on April 27, 2020 by the TWU IRB - Denton. Modifications:

The PI has added a separate survey for students to enter their SONA ID number to get credit for completing the survey. A question was added on the survey to direct them to the SONA survey. Three more site approval letters were received and uploaded to the appropriate section.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the IRB analyst indicated on your application in Cayuse or refer to the IRB website at <http://www.twu.edu/institutional-review-board-irb/>.

Sincerely,

TWU IRB - Denton

Tuesday, May 5, 2020 at 6:03:28 PM Central Daylight Time

Subject: IRB-FY2020-270 - Modification: Modifica2on Approval **Date:** Tuesday, May 5, 2020 at 3:57:25 PM Central Daylight Time
From: irb@twu.edu
To: bnaudin@twu.edu, sstabb@twu.edu
Attachments: ATT00001.jpg



Texas Woman's University

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

irb@twu.edu

<https://www.twu.edu/institutional-review-board-irb/>

May 5, 2020

Blanca Naudin
Psychology and Philosophy

Re: Modification - IRB-FY2020-270 Sexual Orientation, Heterosexism, and Mutuality in Friendship Relationships between Lesbian and Heterosexual Women

Dear Blanca Naudin,

The modifications listed below have been reviewed and approved on May 4, 2020 by the TWU IRB - Denton.

Modifications:

The Texas Psychological Association (TPA) has been added to the list of data collecting sites. The PI is a member of TPA and has access to their listserv.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the IRB analyst indicated on your application in Cayuse or refer to the IRB website at <http://www.twu.edu/institutional-review-board-irb/>.

Sincerely,

TWU IRB - Denton