SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS OF LESBIAN AND HETEROSEXUAL
FEMINIST WOMEN

By

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Abstract

This study explored the relationship between sexual preference and friendship amongst lesbian and heterosexual feminist women. Seventy respondents, 35 heterosexual and 35 lesbian feminist women between the ages of 20 and 40 participated.

Respondents were initially screened by use of the Feminist Identification Rating Scale, and included in the study if they rated themselves at 7 or higher on a scale of 1 to 10. They were then administered the Personal Data Sheet (Lustig, 1982), The Close Friendship Scale (Frum, 1979), and the Social Provisions Scale, 1982).

This was an ex post facto comparison study with one independent variable (sexual preference) and twelve dependent variables which were the twelve subscales on the instruments. The data was analyzed by means of analysis of variance and chi-square techniques.

The main conclusions of this study were:

1. There is no relationship between the qualities of close friendship and sexual preference.
2. There is no relationship between the provisions of close friendship and sexual preference.
3. There is evidence which suggests that women tend to experience their close friendships similarly, regardless of sexual preference.

The findings of the study support an approach to understanding the friendships of lesbian women which focuses on the similarities between lesbian and heterosexual women. The study thus contributes to the process of understanding the lesbian experience.
# Social Relationships

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Background and Problem Statement

Same-sex relationships, although pervasive, occupy little space in the annals of history and literature, and have received little scientific scrutiny. A new trend has emerged however, and a considerable body of literature has evolved dealing with same-sex friendships of men and women.

Lionel Tiger (1970) sparked the recent exploration of same-sex relationships with his controversial claim that men's tendency to form all-male groups arose out of a "bonding instinct" present in men but not in women. His work aroused interest in the topic, and soon after Lipman-Blumen (1976) and Bernard (1976, 1981) spearheaded further theoretical work on same-sex sociality, or "homosociality".

Lipman-Blumen (1976) developed a theory of sex roles which essentially supported Tiger's thesis that men's same-sex bonds are stronger than women's. She questioned Tiger's claim which tied this to biologic predisposition however, and said instead that cultural influences have resulted in the weak ties between women. More specifically, Lipman-Blumen's theory discusses the process of stratification in which men are consistently ranked as being of more value to society and are placed in more valued roles than women.
Women, as a less valued group, have derived much of their status and access to resources through relationships with males. They have been seen as less useful to men and to each other because of their perceived (and actual) lack of access to resources. This suggests that social ties between women have not been highly valued, nor have they been strong and enduring. Her view was that women’s bonds were in an infancy stage and would be further developed only when women’s cultural position changed in society.

Bernard (1976, 1981) disagreed with Lipman-Blumen’s thesis, and by tracing women’s relationships historically, found evidence to suggest strong and enduring ties between women in the 18th and 19th centuries. These have weakened as a result of an increased value placed on the heterosexual bond as the locus of intimacy for both men and women in the 20th century. The shift towards women depending emotionally on men in this century led to a crucial decrease in women’s social support from other women. In contrast to Tiger’s biologically based theory and Lipman-Blumen’s sociologically based theory which both implied superior bonding between men, Bernard maintained that women’s ties with other women have historically been well-developed, strong and satisfying.

Since the development of these theories, a considerable amount of research has been done in the area of women’s same-sex bonds. This research has tended to validate Bernard’s hypothesis. Women’s bonds have been shown to be enduring (Faderman, 1981; Lustig, 1983; Seiden and Bart, 1975) and affectively open and intimate (Bell, 1981; Rubin, 1973, 1985; Wright, 1902). They also play an important role in

The study of women's same-sex relationships has led naturally into a consideration of lesbian women's same-sex social ties. Do lesbian women's same-sex social bonds differ from those of heterosexual women, and if so, how? Lipman-Blumen's theory suggests that social ties between women are weak because of their disadvantaged or minority position. One might predict from this that social ties between lesbian women may be even weaker due to their "double minority" position, being both women and homosexual. Bernard's theory however, suggests that although devalued and perhaps diminished in the 20th century, women's bonds are and have been rich and strong. Lesbian women live in a milieu where their primary commitment is to other women. It might be predicted then, that their social bonds with one another would be even stronger than heterosexual women's bonds. This study tested both these predictions with two groups of feminist women.

In addition to whether lesbian feminist women's social bonds are stronger or weaker than heterosexual feminist women's, there is a complexity introduced into homosocial theory by the overlap of the social and sexual aspects of bonding. It is possible that the potential of sexual involvement may exert an influence on friendship bonds. The nature of the influence of sexual preference on homosociality is unclear and has not been addressed in the literature. This study explored the effects of this variable among women.
Objectives of the Study

The present study had as its overall objective the clarification of both homosociality and lesbian theory as they pertain to feminist women's same-sex friendships. Specifically, the study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. Do lesbian and heterosexual feminist women's friendships differ, and if so, how?
2. Which of the two major theories of homosociality agrees more closely with feminist women's self-report of their actual friendship experience?

Significance of the Study

Homosociality theories have tended to be vague and undifferentiated. The two major theorists approach women's same-sex ties in highly constrasting ways, and reach opposing conclusions. Lipman-Blumen suggests that bonds between women are weak and undeveloped and Bernard suggests that women's bonds with each other are strong and rich. Clarification is needed in applying these theories to women's actual same-sex friendship experience. This study adds to a growing body of literature revealing women's actual same-sex friendship experience, and in so doing, continues the process of clarifying theory.

Little is known or written regarding the possible influence exerted on women's same-sex friendships by sexual preference. Some clarification of its role is useful in furthering an overall understanding of women's relationships. More specifically, this study
adds to the growing body of knowledge about lesbian women's life experience. This has for many years been shrouded in a "protective cloak of secrecy" (Ponse, 1979), and has only recently begun to be illuminated.

Definition of Terms

Homosociality

Homosociality has been broadly defined as the social bonds that women and men have with their own sex (Bernard, 1976; Lipman-Blumen, 1976; Woolsey, in press). The definition includes bonds with friends, colleagues, neighbors, extended family, and others. This study uses a definition of homosociality focusing on one particular aspect – friendship bonds between women. This concept concerns social bonds, hence, homosociality doesn't necessarily involve erotic interaction, although it may under certain circumstances (Lipman-Blumen, 1976). That is, homosociality is not homosexuality, but both homosexual and heterosexual persons have homosocial bonds.

Sexual Preference

A person's sexual preference may be a choice of sexual partner of a particular gender, or a political choice which may or may not be acted upon. Heterosexual women (by definition) choose opposite sex partners and lesbian women (by definition) choose same-sex partners. In this study, the respondents identified themselves as either lesbian or heterosexual (Lustig, 1982).
Lesbianism

Traditionally, the critical feature in defining lesbianism has been sexual orientation (Gagnon and Simon, 1973; Masters and Johnson, 1979). There are a growing number of researchers, however, who find this inadequate (Brooks, 1981; Caplan, 1981; Ettorre, 1980; Faraday, 1976; Wolff, 1971) and define the lesbian woman in terms of identity. Terms such as "homoemotional" and "socio-sexual" have been used to impress the idea that it is emotionality rather than sexuality which is at the heart of women's love for each other. Brooks concludes that definition of the lesbian population is somewhat arbitrary and ultimately needs to rely on self-definition (1981). In this study, Brooks' position was followed and self-definition was the method used to identify lesbian women.

Feminist

A feminist is an individual who espouses a philosophy that women and men should have equal access in economic, political, and social realms. In this study, a scale was used for the purposes of self-identification by women as to their level of feminist identification.

Overview of the Study

This report is organized into five chapters. An introduction and rationale for this study has been presented in Chapter One. The study explored same-sex social relationships of lesbian and heterosexual
women. The conceptual framework for this research is provided in the literature review of Chapter Two. The two major theories of homosociality as well as relevant supporting research are discussed. Chapter Three provides the instrumentation, methodology, and research design of the study. Chapters Four and Five follow with a presentation of the results, a discussion of the implications of the findings, and suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of Organization

The literature review is organized in three sections which basically address the three hypotheses of this study. First, theories of homosociality will be reviewed. Following this will be a review of theory regarding lesbian women and their friendships. The relationship between these two subject areas will then be considered. A rationale for the instrumentation used and a summary will follow.

Theories of Homosociality

The first hypothesis concerns opposing theory regarding women's homosocial relationships. The two major theories of Lipman-Blumen and Bernard, as well as related research will be presented.

As was mentioned above, the recent discussion of the social bonding of men and women began with the anthropological work of Lionel Tiger (1970) in which he talked about the "mystique" of the male bond. Males were presented as having strong and stable bonds and females as having neither the capacity nor the propensity for bonding. He looked to genetic determination as well as the early history of men co-operating for survival as hunters and warriors as the basis for
this. The discussion continued by stating that bonds between men evolved as they formed power structures - political, economic, social - to which access by women was prohibited. These actions were rationalized by the notion of biologic determinism which made change practically impossible and legitimized the discrimination and oppression of women.

Tiger’s work stimulated both controversy and further investigation which failed to support his propositions (Bernard, 1976, 1981; Booth, 1972; Booth, Gibbs, Auerbach, and Fox, 1980; Gibbs, 1979; Hacker, 1981; Lipman-Blumen, 1976; Troll and Stuhl, 1980; Wright, 1982). In fact, researchers consistently pointed to women’s relationships as being emotionally rich, self-disclosing, serving of functions such as intimacy and assistance, and as having therapeutic value.

Research into homosociality was furthered greatly by the major contributions of Lipman-Blumen (1976) and Bernard (1976). Bernard in particular, acknowledged and legitimized same-sex female bonding, while Lipman-Blumen viewed bonding between women as being only in the beginning stages.

Lipman-Blumen, in her homosocial theory of sex roles, defined homosociality as "the seeking, enjoyment, and/or preference for the company of the same sex" (1976, p.16). Her theory is based on the premise that men are attracted to, stimulated by, and interested in, other men. This results from a process begun early in childhood and encouraged by social institutions - the family, the labour market, athletics, the judiciary system, the political system, sexuality - which "all act in an integrated and reinforcing way to maintain a male
homosocial world in which only men are included and allowed access to the various resources of a society" (1976, p.24). This inequality of access to resources leads males to recognize the power held by their male peers and to find one another exciting, productive, and important in their ability to contribute to virtually all aspects of one another's lives (1976).

In her theory, Lipman-Blumen suggested a relationship between bonding and power such that the perception of power in another contributes positively to same-sex bonding among males. As noted by Kroft (1986), Lipman-Blumen's concept of power seems to pertain to position, influence, status, access to or control of actual resources in a society. Women have little of this kind of power, and so in Lipman-Blumen's formulation, they are excluded from the male world, found less useful and interesting, and acknowledged most often in their relation to males.

Lipman-Blumen's theory pertains to male homosocial bonds and women's bonds with each other are implied in relation to these. The world of women's relationships with one another which has been attested to by numerous authors, (Cott, 1979; Faderman, 1981; Lenz and Myerhoff, 1985; Smith-Rosenberg, 1975), remains hazy and undervalued in her discussion. The strength of her work lies in her clarity and accuracy in describing reality in this society as well as in challenging Tiger's notion of biological determinism. She substituted instead the idea of cultural reinforcement as explaining bonds between men and (her perception of) the lack of bonds between women. An important limitation of Lipman-Blumen's work, in this writer's
opinion, lies in her continuation of a cultural devaluation of women and their relationships as well as a certain sense of women’s bonds occurring through default and as a result of exclusion from the “powerful” male world. As a result, her work is useful in furthering our understanding of male bonding, but of limited value in enlightening us about women’s actual experience of same-sex bonding.

Caplan (1981) analyzed the effect of patriarchal devaluation on relations between women, and in doing so carried one step further Lipman-Blumen’s ideas relating to sexual stratification. She began with the premise that ours is a society which “sets women up against each other and encourages people of both sexes to regard women as inferior” (1981, p.125). A number of barriers between women have resulted such as the expectation of more nurturance and patience from other women, increased value attributed to men’s approval and attention, fear of being emotionally drained by other women.

Caplan related the expectation of more nurturance and patience from women to possible early childhood experiences. Mothers are given the task by society of teaching daughters to be nurturant and self-sacrificing as they themselves were (and are) supposed to be. As an outgrowth of this, daughters are taught to meet their mother’s needs. Insofar as the daughter meets these needs, to that extent could her own needs for nurturance go unmet. Rubin (1985) also looked to the early mother-daughter relationship, and furthered Caplan’s ideas by suggesting that an adult woman’s relationship with another woman may reawaken old fantasies and feelings that accompanied this first woman to woman relationship. Envy, the wish to compete, the
combination of triumph and fear at the prospect of winning, may all stem from the primary mother-daughter relationship and interfere with the attainment of close connections with other women in adulthood.

The barrier created by women giving a higher value to men’s rather than women’s approval, relates directly to Lipman-Blumen’s (1976) theory of women’s identification with men as resource controllers, and with Rawlings and Carter’s (1977) discussion of intropunitive ego defenses operational in disadvantaged groups. If a woman views other women as valued and important (Rinder, 1954), then it could be expected that her bonds with this group would be strong and satisfying. Her need for and response to male attention and approval might be less than a woman who identifies less positively with her group.

The fear of being emotionally drained by one’s women friends parallels Rubin’s sense of distance created between woman friends as a result of competitive feelings in their relationships with each other. Two women in an emotionally powerful relationship could each become anxious that, in the face of this other emotional person, her own needs will be neglected (Caplan, 1981). These feelings are, in Rubin’s opinion, too often covered-over with a smile or a veneer of warmth and friendliness that bodes ill for the kind of trust a friendship requires (1985).

Rawlings and Carter (1977) explored social-psychological formulations of prejudice against minority groups in order to identify factors contributing to women’s psychology. In so doing, they applied Allport’s (1954) minority group theory which was based on observations
that minority persons who were subject to discrimination developed
had previously demonstrated the correspondence between ego defenses
observed in minority groups and ego defenses exhibited by women as
follows: denial of membership in the disparaged group; withdrawal and
passivity as a means of survival, (often rewarded by males with
protection) (1977); slyness and cunning as a means of avoiding social
ostracism, psychological isolation, economic hardship; identification
with the dominant group and self-hate. "Women identify with the
outlook and prejudice of the male culture toward women" (1977, p.18),
and accept their inferior status as natural. These came to be
identified as "intropunitive" ego defenses and the implications for
relationships between women are clear.

Rawlings and Carter went on to discuss two of defense patterns
operative in women -intropunitive and extropunitive. They then
suggested that traditional women exhibit intropunitive defenses such
as outlined above, within their own group as well as with the dominant
male society. Feminist women, they suggested, tend to exhibit
extropunitive defenses such as obsessive concern and suspicion;
strengthening in-group ties through support groups, self-help
collectives, political action; prejudice against other groups ie.
anger towards men; aggression ie. radical feminism, divorce, enhanced
striving.

Although Rawlings and Carter didn’t deal with the implications of
these defense patterns for relationships with other women, it is easy
to extrapolate from the effects on individual personality of
membership in this minority group. For instance, a woman who identifies with the dominant group in terms of their outlook and prejudices towards women, would in this author's opinion, have little propensity and find little value in seeking bonds with other members of her minority group. On the other hand, a woman who identifies with other women would seek to strengthen these bonds through support groups or utilization of other resources. In Rawlings' and Carter's work, women's defense patterns were viewed more as resulting from oppression and minority group status than as an expression of innate or biologically fixed attributes. As such, the potential for growth and change is infinitely greater, as seen in the ongoing development of feminist consciousness.

A problem with their work is their description of the bonds of traditional women as weak. This seems inaccurate in the light of growing documentation, (Bernikow, 1979; Cott, 1977; Faderman, 1981; Rubin, 1985; Smith-Rosenberg, 1975), implying strong, rich, and rewarding bonds between traditional women.

Bernard's theory of homosociality has to do with the different ways that men and women relate to their own sex. As has been well-documented, men's social bonds tend to involve instrumentality, task-orientation (Wright, 1982), separation (Bardwick, 1974), activity-sharing (Caldwell and Peplau, 1982), low intimacy motivation, low self-disclosure (Mark and Alper, 1980), and low emotional sharing (Caldwell and Peplau, 1982). Women's way of being social, on the other hand, tends to involve affiliation and attachment (Miller, 1976), high self-disclosure and emotional sharing (Caldwell and
Peplau, 1982), and communion (Bardwick, 1974). This female way of being social renders women more vulnerable to the stresses of the deprivation of such ties which might be created by certain social conditions (1976).

Bernard drew on Smith-Rosenberg (1975) and Cott (1977) to trace the movement and changes in women's relational world, from the mid-18th century to the present. Smith-Rosenberg outlined several factors in American society during this period of time which may have permitted women to form a variety of close emotional relationships with other women: rigid gender role differentiation within the family and society leading to emotional segregation of women and men; subtle shading of mother and daughter roles into one another; biological realities of pregnancies, childbirth, nursing, and menopause which bound women together in physical and emotional intimacy. Bernard added women's revulsion towards man's carnal nature, sex segregation in religious and educational activities, and participation in voluntary associations, as additional factors operating in the culture at that time. Within this framework, supportive networks developed which were "institutionalized in social conventions or rituals which accompanied virtually every important event in a women's life, from birth to death" (1975, p.250). These relationships were supported by severe social restrictions on intimacy between young men and women. Two separate spheres existed for men and women, which differed in terms of values, expectations, and personalities. Women's sphere, according to Smith-Rosenberg, had an integrity and a dignity of its own that grew out of women's shared experiences and mutual affection
A proud solidarity grew as intense value was attributed to interpersonal ties of sisterhood. A consciousness of differentiation and the experience of equality among peers outside the domestic realm increased their reliance on each other and confirmed the value of their new "group consciousness".

Bernard noted a number of trends which all but obliterated the traditional world of women towards the end of the 19th century: the effect of increased geographic mobility; the twofold impact of psychiatry which changed relationship norms by casting a pall of sexual suspicion on the strong bonds of affection permitted and encouraged among women in the 19th century, and the discouragement of confiding in friends about personal problems. The feminist movement (Sahli, 1978) may also have hastened the devaluation of these relationships at the turn of the century in its focus on women emulating of male values of rationality and autonomy.

As noted above, women were also encouraged to increase their emotional dependence on men (Seiden and Bart, 1976). Men, however, had not been socialized to provide the emotional support that women friends had supplied in the past (Bernard, 1976, 1981; Weiss, 1972). This climate encouraged heterosociality, and the marriage bond came to be seen as the locus for intimacy and emotional attachment (Bernard, 1981). Expectations continued for married women to perform the "mental hygiene function of marriage" (Blood and Wolfe, 1960), even though they were to do this in the context of a crucial "relational deficit". All this, says Bernard, has led to the high ratio of depressed women in society in this century.
Bernard's theory of homosociality addresses the crucial role played by women's friendships. She sees the provisions of these relationships as being social support, affirmation of a common and valid life experience, and a confidence in (women's) own affiliative style and judgements (Bernard, 1976). This legitimization and valuing of bonds between women is a strength of Bernard's work.

In a recent (1985) study investigating homosocial (operationally defined as friendship) preferences of 90 young adults, Rose contradicted Lipman-Blumen's (1976) contention that males are more homosocial than females. She concluded instead that in this study sample, "a homosocial norm of close friendships was more characteristic of women than of men, with a majority of women and only about one-half as many men preferring same-sex friendships to cross-sex ones" (1985, p.71). She looked to the reported functions served by friendships as a possible explanation of this finding and in so doing supported Bernard's hypothesis of "relational deficit". She found that only men reported having acceptance, intimacy, and companionship functions fulfilled to the same extent by both same and cross-sex friendships. Women's expectations for friendship do not seem to be fulfilled to the same extent by men friends as by women friends (1985).

Social Relationships of Lesbian Women

A. Socio-Sexual Preference
Before beginning a discussion of social relations of lesbian women, a digression will be made to focus first on the notion of sexual preference. Within the feminist movement there is a group which perceives sexual relations between men and women as a manifestation of the unequal power distribution between them. Heterosexual relations are seen as supporting and maintaining the oppression of women by men. The belief has grown in this group that heterosexuality for women means co-operating in their own oppression. Lesbianism has come to be considered amongst them as the alternative which promotes women's interests. It has become thought of as the practice for the theory of feminism (Radicalesbian, 1970), and as such has defined itself based more on political expediency than innate desire. This view, it should be noted, cannot be interpreted as the view set forward by the women's movement as a whole, but rather by a particular group within the movement. It is also important to note that this definition of lesbianism, which is in a sense asexual, differs from the more traditional notion of lesbianism reflecting sexual object choice and innate desire. Though more closely aligned with the feminist view of lesbianism being a socio-sexual choice having to do with identity (of which sexuality is a part), this view represents a more radical position and suggests a choice of lesbianism based on political considerations. This study did not distinguish between these two, possibly distinct groups of lesbian women, and this may represent a potential sampling problem in this study.
Social Relationships

The second and third hypotheses of this study are concerned with clarifying theory regarding feminist lesbian women and their social relationships. A number of writers have identified unique features of lesbian feminist women's friendships and these will be discussed now.

Wolf (1979) described the texture of life in a contemporary lesbian community and focused on actual behaviors, attitudes, mythology, and future goals of a group of women. Through a two year period as participant-observer, she found that although the pair relationship was an ideal to which members of the community aspired, the more permanent and stable relationships were between close friends who were not lovers though they may have been lovers at one time. These close friendships within the community functioned as "kin" relationships. "The close friend is the sister who will stick with one throughout the vicissitudes of life and to whom one can to at any time for support, advice, money, or companionship" (1979, p.48).

The importance of this kinship function of friendships in the lesbian community is attested to by numerous authors. Lowenstein (1979) found that friendships in a lesbian community substitute for kinship networks of 'straight' women. Edwards and Hoover (1973) saw these friendships as paralleling family, though based on real preference, shared interest, and genuine affection. Chafetz (1974) spoke of relationships amongst lesbians as "family association units" implying a sense of loyalty and dependability. One could speculate that the kinship provisions of these relationships may be especially important to lesbian women as a result of either disapproval and
negative sanction from family of origin (Parlee, 1979), or as Ponse would say, a freedom to be and be known within the protective cloak of secrecy of the community. Within the community, friendships form the core of an individual's personal support group. As such, they serve a crucial psychological and emotional function.

Ponse (1978) studied bonds between lesbian women from the standpoint of the contribution of these bonds to identity, and saw secrecy as the context of both community and identity. As well as dominating relations between the lesbian and 'straight' worlds, secrecy also, said Ponse, affects the character of life within the lesbian world. "Within the subculture, the bonding nature of secrecy is evidenced in the rapidity with which friendships, at least on a superficial level, are formed" (1978, p.78). Secrecy tends also to intensify differences between the gay subculture and the straight world and to promote cohesion in the subgroup. The subgroup becomes a protective framework within which to initiate relationships with other lesbian women.

In its function of strengthening in-group ties secrecy could be considered an extropunitive defense according to Rawlings and Carter's formulation. Drawing on Georg Simmel's sociology, Ponse underlined the resulting pressure to stay on good terms with other members of the "secret society", in which in-group ties are strengthened by excluding those not explicitly included in "the secret". Resulting barriers between people within and without the group promote a kind of mystification of both worlds. Ponse's work contributes to our understanding of actual social bonds in identifying secrecy as a
prevalent operative variable in increasing and maintaining cohesion within the lesbian community.

Brooks (1981) studied the role and status of lesbian women in society today, and described their minority condition. In order to do this she examined the concept of minority stress and identified variables found to be related to positive and negative outcomes of stress among lesbian women. In discussing the coping process she identified major stress-mediating resources for lesbian women as being: positive group identity, satisfactory socio-economic status, and social disclosure of one's socio-sexual orientation. Most relevant to this study and in agreement with Rawlings and Carter, she said that lesbian women who in the midst of stress view other women (and in particular other lesbian women) as a reference group, will evidence less dysfunction than those with a negative view of women or of lesbian women (1981). She talked of positive and negative in-group identification and related this again to self-image again in general agreement with Rawlings and Carter that a positive identification with one's own group - or a feminist identification - decreases stress, improves self image and enhances social relatedness in the group. Feminist exposure and positive minority group identification were associated with increased social bonding within the group.

Brooks' work is strong in its theoretical and empirical underpinnings as well as application of theory to clinical insight with minority populations. Her practical application of theory regarding stress-mediating resources, makes her ideas useful for clinical practice.
Krieger (1983) conducted a study to explore individual identity in a women's community primarily composed of lesbian women. Her findings were based on a one year participant-observation method, combined with individual semi-structured interviews. The community she studied functioned to give members a group identity, support for their lifestyle, a sense of security, affirmation and acceptance not available elsewhere, a haven from the outside world, and confirmation of the crucial feelings they had about themselves as lesbians, feminists, and women. Albro and Tully (1979) alluded to a function served by the lesbian community by indicating that when lesbian women feel isolated from the heterosexual macro-culture they turn to the homosexual micro-culture for friends, for emotional support, for the majority of their social interactions.

The cost of this affirmation and acceptance Krieger (1983) found to be the expectation of a high degree of intimacy and cohesiveness. One woman said that in order to know anybody, "you had to give a considerable amount of what in other communities could be kept private" (1983, p.98). This demand for intimacy involved a sexual tension which was clear in another woman's statement that, "because you had to relate some intimate details to get along, there was always the question of whether you wanted to be intimate with the person you were talking to or whether the sharing meant you wanted to go to bed with them" (1983, p.99). Krieger sees this constant tension between merger and separation as the central conflict area in lesbian women's relationships. This relates to Krestan and Bepko's (1980) notion of a tendency towards fusion in lesbian relationships. Although Krestan
Social Relationships

and Bepko are speaking of erotic relationships, the concept applies to social relationships as well because of a possible tendency in some lesbian communities for the boundaries between romantic attachments and friendships to be less well defined (Bristow and Pern, 1984).

As well as both the possible presence of enforced intimacy and the pull towards fusion, Krieger saw another problem in the community as being its intolerance of individual differences. In her view, differences were not valued and individuals' unique identities were given little recognition. Sandoval (1984) critiqued Krieger's work and suggested that the intolerance of differences - or oppressive behaviour - had more to do with the lesbian community being a marginalized group than with it being a tendency to fuse due to sex-role conditioning or being a community of likeness. Bristow and Pern (1984) on the other hand, suggested that the concept of fusion is a heterosexist concept which has little to do with lesbian identity.

Social Relationships of Lesbian and Heterosexual Feminist Women

Weiss' typology of the provisions of social relationships and Lustig's (1982) findings involve both lesbian and heterosexual feminist women, and will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Weiss developed a typology of provisions supplied by social relationships: attachment, intimacy, emotional integration; social integration, the opportunity for nurturing others; reassurance of personal worth; a sense of reliable alliance; obtaining help and guidance. Sufficient amounts of these provisions in an individual's social relationships provide a sense of well-being and adequate life
Social Relationships

organization. Insufficient amounts, particularly of the provisions of emotional integration and social integration, result in loneliness.

Weiss described emotional integration - or attachment - as occurring in our society mainly within the marriage bond. However, rather than marriage per se, the critical feature of this provision according to Weiss is a relationship with another person such that the mere proximity of the other person can promote feelings of security and well-being (1971). This person is felt to be of unique importance (1983) and may be perceived as a source of strength or as fostering the attached individual's own capacity for mastering challenge. Attachment, according to Weiss, is often directed toward a figure with whom a sexual relationship also exists. As well as being found in relationships of central emotional importance, Weiss suggested the possibility of attachment bonds also occurring with a small, cohesive, reliable, and accepting group of peers (1982) rather than with an individual. The group itself fosters feelings of comfort and its loss is critical rather than the loss of any individual in the group. Although Weiss made no connection between this and minority groups per se, this may be an important observation when considering bonds between lesbian women.

Social integration, though still of critical emotional importance, typically involves friends, kin, co-workers, and is viewed more as affiliation. Bonds of social integration are characterized as associations in which shared interests and similarity of circumstances provides a basis for mutual loyalty and a sense of community (1982). Weiss addressed the different ways that men and women achieve social
integration. Men, he said, look more to their work for this provision while women typically look to their roles as friends, kin, neighbors. Both provide support for a sense of self and a reassurance of personal worth (Russell, 1984). Social and emotional integration are distinct from one another and neither can be substituted for the other.

In her study titled "Intimate Friendships of Feminist Women", (1982), Lustig explored the relationship amongst three variables: sexual preference, friendship type, and level of intimacy of feminist women. To measure the degree of intimacy in the relationship she chose to use Frum's Close Friendship Scale, and modified it with an additional personal data sheet, an intimacy rating, a closeness rating, and a rating of the subject's and friend's level of feminist identification. Frum developed her instrument for the purpose of defining and measuring the qualitative components of close friendship (1979). Lustig's aim in her study was to measure intimacy based on Frum's six parameters of close friendship: naturalness, stable personal community, positive interactional experience, mutual accessibility, mutual understanding and unconditional regard.

Lustig hypothesized in her study that lesbian feminists would report significantly more intimacy than heterosexual feminists in their interpersonal relationships. This hypothesis was rejected by Lustig who found that the instrument used did not differentiate between lesbian and heterosexual feminists as to the level of intimacy in their friendships. She presented two possible interpretations of this result being either that the results supported previous evidence that lesbians and heterosexual women may be similar in the way they
seek to satisfy their intimacy needs through their friendships (Oberstone and Sukonek, 1976; Rosen, 1974; Simon and Gagnon, 1976), or possible insensitivity of the measuring instrument.

Rationale for Instrumentation

This author was unable to locate an instrument specifically designed as a measure of homosociality. Because friendship is one important aspect of homosociality, instruments used to study friendship were next considered. Wright (1969) was the first to develop an instrument with which he could explore specific relationships. He developed the Acquaintance Description Form, which measured three positive values or rewards which might be derived from a friendship: stimulation value, utility value, and ego support value.

Although Wright's was a first step in the development of instruments with which to study friendship, this instrument provided a limited description of friendship and would for that reason not be useful for this study. Merrill (1975) developed another instrument to study friendship, called the Friendship Inventory. This inventory was designed to assess the quantitative and qualitative aspects of close friendships, and did so by measuring six friendship criteria devised by Merrill. It was designed initially, however, to explore the relationship between personal adjustment and close friendship. This study does not consider personal adjustment, so Merrill's instrument was not appropriate for use.

An instrument which could clearly and accurately measure a woman's actual experience of and feelings about her close friendship with a
target friend was needed. Frum (1979) developed such an instrument and called it The Close Friendship Scale. This is a reliable and valid scale (refer to Chapter Three) which measures people's experience within six parameters of close friendship.

As well as an instrument which measured similarities between the two study groups in their experience of close friendship, an instrument was needed which would be sensitive to what these relationship would or would not provide in a woman's life. As noted above, the literature suggests that feminist lesbian women may experience their close friendships differently than feminist heterosexual women in terms of what they are provided with through the relationship. Wright's Acquaintance Description Form does emphasize differences in relationships, but does so in a somewhat vague and non-specific way. Curtona (1982) developed an instrument which was designed to test Weiss' typology of the six provisions of social relationships. Rather than focusing on one particular friendship, as does the Close Friendship Scale, this scale asks the respondent to consider her current social relationships with other women in general, as to what they supply. The Social Provisions Scale tests the respondents' experience, feelings, and attitudes more specifically, and was useful in this study.

Summary

The literature relevant to homosociality and to friendships of lesbian and heterosexual feminist women in particular, has been
reviewed in this Chapter. We have seen that following Tiger, two major theories of women's same-sex bonds were developed. Both theorists agree that in this century women's bonds with one another have been limited. Where the theorists differ, is at the point where Lipman-Blumen says that women's homosocial bonds are poorly developed in comparison to men's well-developed all-male groups. Bernard believes that although women's bonds are suffering a current devaluation and diminishment, they have been highly developed and ritualized in women's lives over time, and have a life and integrity of their own.

Lesbian women's social relationships have also maintained a life of their own, though they have functioned until recently mainly within the context of secrecy. A number of authors have hypothesized ways in which lesbian feminist women may experience their friendships differently than do heterosexual feminist women.

This study considered both of the above-stated problems and attempted to both clarify major homosocial theory about women's friendships, and to describe lesbian feminist women's actual friendship experience as contrasted to that of heterosexual feminist women. The methodology for achieving this is discussed in the following chapter.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology of the present study. Included in this will be discussions of methodological approach, design of the research, respondent selection, instrumentation, data collection and delimitations of the study.

Hypotheses

As we have seen, two main theories of homosociality have developed. The two theorists, Bernard and Lipman-Blumen, approach the construct in different ways and reach different conclusions regarding women’s social ties with one another. As a result, predictions arising from their theories differ with regard to the influence of sexual preference on friendship between women. Lustig (1982) through her findings, presents a third possibility for the influence of this variable. Three research questions arise:

1. Bernard’s theory of sex differences in sociality implies that lesbian feminist women might have stronger social bonds than heterosexual feminist women; whereas,
2. Lipman-Blumen's theory of sexual stratification would predict that lesbian feminist women would have weaker homosocial bonds than would heterosexual feminist women.

3. Lustig though, found no differences between lesbian and heterosexual feminist women as to the level of intimacy in their relationships.

   The literature tends to support Bernard's point of view (Bardwick, 1974; Bell, 1981; Davidson and Packard, 1981; Rubin, 1973, 1985), and so for the purposes of this study, hypothesis H1 is the following:

1. Lesbian feminist women will obtain higher mean total and subscale scores on the Close Friendship Scale and on the Closeness Rating, than will heterosexual feminist women.

2. Two particular qualities have been identified numerous times as characteristic and descriptive of social relationships of lesbian women - that of a strong "kin" quality of friendships (Wolf, 1979), and an expectation of mutual demands being made in the relationship (Krieger, 1983). These qualities parallel Frum's definitions of the "Stable Personal Community" and "Mutual Accessibility" subscales. Hypothesis 2 states therefore that lesbian feminist women will obtain higher mean scores than heterosexual feminist women on the Close Friendship Scale subscales of Stable Personal Community and Mutual Accessibility.

3. In addition to reflecting strong kinship and mutual accessibility qualities, bonds between lesbian feminist women seem to provide a
Social Relationships

sense of security, dependability and reliability (Edwards and Hoover, 1973; Lowenstein, 1979; Wolf, 1979). These provisions are reflected in the Social Provisions Scale subscales of "a Sense of Reliable Alliance" and "Attachment". It is hypothesized that lesbian feminist women will obtain higher mean scores on the Attachment and Sense of Reliable Alliance subscales of the Social Provisions Scale, than will heterosexual feminist women.

Instrumentation

Three questionnaires were used to conduct this study: The Personal Data Sheet (Lustig, 1982), The Close Friendship Scale (Frum, 1979), the Social Provisions Scale (Cutrona, 1982). A description of these questionnaires, along with reliability and validity data, will follow.

1. Personal Data Sheet (PDS) - Lustig used Frum's CFS in her 1982 study of the relationship between sexual preference, friendship type, and level of intimacy of feminist women. She modified Frum's original instrument by calling her demographic information a separate instrument - The Personal Data Sheet - and adding to it questions regarding income, children of respondent and friend, sexual preference of respondent and friend, whether or not respondent is presently in a committed relationship with a man or a woman. Lustig added as well, an intimacy rating and a rating of feminist identification. For the purposes of this study, the PDS was used and modified only slightly. The intimacy rating was not included (as this is not a study
investigating intimacy), and questions added included highest level of education of respondent and friend, and previous sexual relationship between respondent and friend.

2. The Close Friendship Scale (hereafter called the CFS) - Frum, 1979

This scale was developed by Frum to assess and measure the parameters of close friendship, its qualitative components, and the relationship between men's and women's same and other-sex social relationships. In developing the instrument, characteristics of a close friendship were first determined on the basis of philosophical speculation and previous research. Six parameters of close friendship were then established: naturalness, stable personal community, positive interactional experience, mutual accessibility, mutual understanding, and unconditional regard. Based on these six parameters, scale items were obtained from semi-structured interviews, previously developed instruments, and extrapolated from the literature. The 210 items developed were rated by three expert judges for appropriateness within one of the six parameters. The final version of the CFS consists of 88 items with a 6-point Likert style response set. As well, 13 demographic and qualitative variables were included and a closeness rating was added, (where 1 was complete lack of closeness with the target friend, and 10 was as close as a person could be to another.

Definition of the Subscales
(N) Naturalness - Relative self-disclosure, in conjunction with the
lack of inhibition and with the freedom to be totally oneself, characterizes the "naturalness" component of close friendship.

(MA) Mutual Accessibility - The items representing this component of close friendship reflect a sense of security that results from feeling involved with another individual who can be relied upon.

(PIE) Positive Interactional Experience - This component of close friendship is reflected in the scope of shared activities and thoughts, in a sense of mutuality, in consideration of the other when planning activities, and the disposition to enter spontaneously into numerous activities with one another.

(SPC) Stable Personal Community - This friendship component is reflected in the sense of being in community with another. Included is the sense of importance in one another's life, caring, and in having a history and future orientation to the relationship.

(PU) Personal Understanding - Items related to personal understanding reflected the ease of communication, sensitivity to being able to predict each other's reactions, experience with non-verbal communication which reflect short cuts in communication, and feelings of being on the same "wavelength".

(UR) Unconditional Regard - This is reflected in the nonjudgemental attitude which is free of the desire to change the other. Unconditional regard is reflected in the ability to accept the friend wherever she is at any particular time.

Reliability and Validity

Odd-even reliability coefficients and intercorrelations were
performed on the six subscales and total scores of the CFS. Cronbach's (1951) coefficient alpha and Pearson's r were the statistics used. The overall reliability of the CFS was .98. The reliability scores of the six subscales of the CFS ranged from .85 for women in the positive interactional experience subscale, to .94 for the personal understanding subscale. The subscales showed positive correlations with one another ranging from .49 for the intercorrelation on the N (naturalness) and PIE (positive interactional experience) subscales for both sexes to .74 for women on the intercorrelation of MA (mutual accessibility) and SPC (stable personal community). These results indicate that this measure possesses internal consistency and is highly reliable.

3. Social Provisions Scale (hereafter called the SPS) - The third instrument used in this study was the Social Provisions Scale (Cutrona, 1982). This scale was designed by Cutrona to assess the usefulness of Weiss' (1974) typology of relational needs supplied by social relationships. Based on his work with groups lacking in various aspects of their social networks, Weiss developed a typology of the following provisions: Attachment, intimacy, and emotional integration; social integration; the opportunity for nurturing others; reassurance of personal worth; a sense of reliable alliance; obtaining help and guidance. Weiss hypothesized that satisfactory provision of these gives the individual an adequate life organization and sense of well being. Deficits, on the other hand, particularly regarding needs for attachment and social integration, result in loneliness.
Social Relationships

The SPS contains 24 items, with four items keyed on each provision, two in a positive direction and two in a negative direction. Respondents answered each question on a 4-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Scoring

A score for each provision can be derived separately such that a high score indicates the individual is receiving that provision. Negatively keyed items were reversed before scoring. The maximum score which could be obtained was 16, the minimum score was 4. A total of six separate scores (one for each provision) as well as a composite score with maximum values of 84 and minimum values of 16 were obtained for each respondent.

Definition of Subscales

(A) Attachment - provided by relationships in which the person receives a sense of safety and security.

(SI) Social Integration - provided by a network of relationships in which individuals share interests and concerns.

(NU) Opportunity for Nurturance - derived from relationships in which the person feels responsible for the well-being of another.

(RW) Reassurance of Worth - provided by relationships in which the person's skills and abilities are acknowledged.

(RA) Reliable Alliance - derived from relationships in which the person can count on assistance under any circumstances.

(G) Guidance - provided by relationships with trustworthy and
Social Relationships

authoritative individuals who can provide advice and assistance.

Reliability and Validity

Test-retest and internal consistency reliability coefficients were derived from two investigations. The first investigation conducted by Cutrona, Russel and Rose (1984) involved a prospective study of stress and social support among a sample of 100 community elderly residents. The SPS was administered twice over a four to six month period. Internal consistency reliabilities for the individual social provisions were all above .70. Test-retest reliabilities were not as high and ranged from .36 to .66. However, "given that social support may not necessarily be constant over time, these low test-retest correlations do not necessarily imply that the scale is unreliable" (Russell and Cutrona, 1984, p.6). Internal consistency estimates based on a second study of 300 teachers conducted by Russell, Altmier and Van Velzen (1984) on the relationship between social support and teacher burnout, found reliability coefficients of .60.

In order to test the factor structure of the instrument, a confirmatory factor analysis based on the data derived from the teacher study was used. An oblique six factor model was tested using the Lisrel VI program, with each of the factors corresponding to the six social provisions. The factor loadings indicated a "fairly good fit to the data" (1984, p.6). The Goodness of Fit Index was .857. Cutrona (in process) found in a study of first-time mothers that the provisions of reliable alliance, reassurance of worth, social integration, and guidance were predictive of post partum depression.
Women who lacked these provisions during pregnancy were more likely to become depressed after the birth of their child (Russell et al., 1984, p.1315). Further support for the validity of the SPS is a (1982) study by Cutrona of first year college students, in which she found that the social integration, reassurance of worth, and guidance provisions were all significantly related to scores on the UCLA Loneliness Scale.

Sample Selection

Respondents for this study were obtained from the general population of feminist women, that is for the purposes of this study, those women who place themselves at 7 or higher (between 1 and 10) of the Feminist Identification Scale. Feminist women were selected out of the general population of women in order to more closely replicate a previous study (Lustig, 1982), and because of an assumed commitment to other women.

Questionnaire packages were distributed to women until 35 heterosexual feminist women and 35 lesbian feminist women who fit the criteria, completed the questionnaires. Participation was solicited in feminist bookstores, meetings, gatherings, university classes, as well as through friendship pyramiding.

Description of Respondents

In order to place limits around the study, respondents met the
Social Relationships

following criteria:
1. 20 - 40 years of age
2. self-identified feminist

Procedures

Respondents were initially given a page describing concepts central to feminist identification. They were then asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 10 as to their level of feminist identification. Finally, they were asked whether or not they would be willing to participate in a larger study of friendship between women. If they indicated a willingness to participate and had rated themselves at 7 or above on the rating scale, they were included in the study.

After the initial screening respondents were administered a package containing three questionnaires - The Personal Data Sheet, The Close Friendship Scale, and The Social Provisions Scale. Respondents were tested individually or in small groups. Oral and written instructions were given regarding procedures for completing the questionnaires. A copy of instructions may be found in Appendix .

The original instructions of the CFS were modified to include the other two instruments and to eliminate the reference to an other-sex as well as same-sex close friend. Demographic information requested by Frum on the original CFS was modified in the following way:

Delete: Relationship, Your sex

Insert: 1. Number of children - respondent and friend
2. Sexual preference - respondent and friend
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3. Income - respondent and friend
4. Are you in a committed relationship?
5. Highest level of education - respondent and friend
6. Previous sexual relationship between respondent and friend? Yes or No.
7. Feminist Identification Scale

Respondents were not informed that they were grouped by sexual preference. Each participant was assured anonymity. The final results will be available upon request.

Design and Statistical Analysis

This study was an ex post facto comparison between two groups where the pre-existing source of variation was sexual preference. To test the hypotheses presented, data was analyzed with the goal of obtaining information in three areas: a description of the sample, reliability of the CFS and SPS, and a comparison of the same-sex bonds of heterosexual and lesbian feminists.

A coding transformation table (similar to those developed by Lustig and Frum) was developed for demographic items. Means were tabulated for all identifying characteristics and quantitative data. Blanks left in the response column were given a neutral score. Scores for negatively phrased items were reversed.

Data collected relative to social bonds of the two groups of women was analyzed using Hotelling's t2 (a special case of multivariate analysis for use when there is one independent variable). The one
independent variable was sexual preference; the twelve dependent variables correspond to the six subscales on each instrument: naturalness, stable personal community, mutual accessibility, positive interactional experience, personal understanding, unconditional regard, attachment, social integration, the opportunity for nurturing others, reassurance of personal worth, a sense of reliable alliance, and obtaining help and guidance. Means and standard deviations were calculated for the twelve treatment conditions.

For the purpose of this study, the significance level was set at .05.

Delimitations of the Study

This study was delimitated by this author in the following ways:

1. The study was restricted geographically to respondents living in Vancouver, B.C., and Bellingham, Wa..

2. Respondent age was restricted to ages 20 to 40 years, thus limiting the generalizability of results to either younger or older women.

3. Respondents were restricted to women self-reporting a feminist identification of 7 or more on the Feminist Identification Scale, therefore limiting the usefulness of the application of results to a non-feminist population of women.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Overview

This chapter presents the results of this study. These results are organized into four sections which are, a) Description of Respondents and Friends, b) Results Pertaining to Hypothesis $H_1$, c) Results Pertaining to Hypothesis $H_2$, d) Results Pertaining to Hypothesis $H_3$.

Hotelling's $t^2$ multivariate test for statistical significance was used in the analysis of variance because of its special application when there is only one independent variable, which is in this study, sexual preference. This test was used in analysis of total CFS and SPS score means. Univariate $F$ tests of significance were used in the analysis of variance of each of the twelve subscales. Chi-squares were computed to determine differences in the frequency distributions of the closeness rating as well as income and occupation frequencies.

Description of Respondents and Friends

To obtain information about specific respondent, friend, and relationship characteristics, data was obtained from each of the 70 respondents, 35 lesbian feminist women and 35 heterosexual feminist
Respondents and friends' ethnicity was predominantly Caucasian, with 95.7% of respondents and 97.1% of friends reporting this. All respondents rated themselves at 7 or higher on a scale of from 1 to 10 measuring their level of feminist identification. Respondents' ages ranged from 22 to 40 (M=32). Friends' ages ranged from 24 to 52 (M=33). A majority of both respondents and friends were not married, 61.4% and 54.3% respectively. Interestingly however, although 82% of the lesbian respondents reported being unmarried, 74% also reported being in a committed relationship with another woman. Of the heterosexual group, 40% reported being unmarried and predictably, 60% reported being in a committed relationship. It may be that a question regarding "marital status" is confusing or presents a dilemma for lesbian women who are in committed relationships with another woman. Having no socially accepted label for this relationship they may or may not call it a "marriage". The data resulting from the question regarding committed relationship may give a truer picture of the lesbian group for this reason. (See Tables 1 and 2). Seventy-seven percent of respondents and 62.9% of friends had no children. Of the respondent group, 88% of lesbian women and 65% of heterosexual women had no children. Of their friends, 82% of lesbian women and 42% of heterosexual women were without children.

Table 3 presents respondents' and friends' occupations. Sixty percent of respondents and 54.3% of friends were professionals. Of the two respondent groups, 62.8% of lesbians and 57.1% of heterosexuals were professionals. There were a higher proportion of
### Table 1

**Frequencies and Percentages for Respondents’ and Friends’ Marital Status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th></th>
<th>Friends</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondents</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>43 (61.4%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>38 (54.3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>18 (25.7%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>24 (34.3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>3.0 (4.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.0 (4.3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>6.0 (8.6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.0 (7.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesbians</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>29 (82%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>14 (40%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>4.0 (11.4%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>14 (40%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>1.0 (2.8%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.0 (5.7%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>1.0 (2.8%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.0 (7.1%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Percentages in parentheses

### Table 2

**Frequencies and Percentages for Committed Relationships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th></th>
<th>Lesbians</th>
<th></th>
<th>Heterosexuals</th>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Respondents</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>47 (67.1%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>26 (74.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>21 (60%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>22 (31.4%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>9 (2.5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>13 (37.1%)</td>
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</table>

**Lesbians**

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<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>26 (74.3%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9 (2.5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Heterosexuals**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21 (60%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13 (37.1%)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
lesbian than heterosexual women in both the semi- or unskilled worker category, 11.4% to 2.8% respectively, and the executive or managerial category, 5% to 0% respectively. A chi-square was computed to determine if there were occupational differences between the two groups. No significant occupational differences between lesbian and heterosexual women were found. (See Table 3).

Eighty-two percent of respondents' and 81.5% of friends' incomes were above $10,000. In terms of the two respondent groups, 45.7% of lesbian and 48% of heterosexual women had incomes between $10,000 and $20,000. Forty-five percent of lesbian and 25.7% of heterosexual women had incomes above $20,000. A chi-square was computed to ascertain income differences between the two groups. No significant income differences were found between lesbian and heterosexual women. (See Table 4).

Data concerning level of education showed that 75.7% of respondents and 62.9% of friends had completed a basic university degree. In the respondent groups 42.8% of lesbian and 25% of heterosexual women had completed graduate school. Twenty percent of lesbian respondents' friends and 20% of heterosexual respondents' friends had completed graduate school. (See Table 5).

Length of friendships ranged from 0 to over 20 years (M=3.9). Ninety percent of respondents reported friendships of from 0 to 15 years duration, 72.9% being from 0 to 10 years. The largest single category was from 6 to 10 years, at 32.9%. It is interesting that respondents were asked to think of their closest female friend, and that the mean length of relationship with the chosen friend was only
Table 3

Frequencies and Percentages of Respondents' and Friends' Occupations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Friends</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exec./Managerial</td>
<td>2 (2.9%)</td>
<td>2 (2.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>42 (60%)</td>
<td>38 (54.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>5 (7.1%)</td>
<td>4 (5.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>2 (2.9%)</td>
<td>5 (7.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi/Un-skilled</td>
<td>5 (7.1%)</td>
<td>7 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>10 (14.3%)</td>
<td>6 (8.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homemaker</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
<td>4 (5.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2 (2.9%)</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Lesbians</th>
<th>Heterosexuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exec./Managerial</td>
<td>2 (5.0%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>22 (62.8%)</td>
<td>20 (57.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
<td>4 (5.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi/Un-skilled</td>
<td>4 (5.7%)</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>3 (4.3%)</td>
<td>7 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2(8, N=70) = 9.295, p<.05$
Table 4  
**Frequencies and Percentages of Respondents' and Friends' Income**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th></th>
<th>Friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $10,000</td>
<td>12 (17.1%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>12 (17.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000-$20,000</td>
<td>33 (47.1%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>27 (38.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above $20,000</td>
<td>25 (35.7%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Lesbians</th>
<th></th>
<th>Heterosexuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $10,000</td>
<td>3 (8.5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>9 (25.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000-$20,000</td>
<td>16 (45.7%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>17 (48.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above $20,000</td>
<td>16 (45.7%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>9 (25.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2(2, N=70) = 4.99, p < .05$
Table 5

**Frequencies and Percentages of Respondents' and Friends' Highest Level of Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Level</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th></th>
<th>Friends</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10th Grade</td>
<td>2 (2.9%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 (4.3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>14 (20%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>18 (25.7%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech. School</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 (7.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>29 (41.4%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>30 (42.9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad. School</td>
<td>24 (34.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>14 (20.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Level</th>
<th>Lesbians</th>
<th></th>
<th>Heterosexuals</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10th Grade</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>6 (17%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 (22%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tech. School</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>12 (34.2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>17 (48.5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad. School</td>
<td>15 (42.8%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>9 (25%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social Relationships

3.9 years. This may have had to do with factors such as Bernard identified, for instance increased geographic mobility, an increase in the number of women in the work force, as well as with the age and developmental tasks of the respondent age group. Of these relationships, 20% of lesbian women's friendships and 2.8% of heterosexual women's friendships had had a previous sexual component. The fact that 62.8% of lesbian respondents chose lesbian friends and only 20% reported a previous sexual involvement would appear to question recent suggestion that in the lesbian community boundaries between social and erotic relationships are ill defined (Bristow and Pern, 1984).

Respondents were asked to rate their friendship on a scale of 1 to 10 as to the degree of closeness they experienced with the friend. Responses ranged from 3 to 10 (M=7.5), closely resembling Lustig's (1982) mean closeness rating of 7.24. Sixty percent of lesbian respondents and 85.7% of heterosexual respondents rated the closeness in the relationship at 7 or above. (See Table 6).

Results Pertaining to Hypotheses £1:

Hypothesis 1 states: (a) Lesbian feminist women will obtain higher total and subscale mean scores on the CFS as well as higher closeness ratings, than will heterosexual feminist women.

Table 7 shows mean total and subscale scores and standard deviations on the CFS. Table 8 shows univariate F-tests for subscales as well as a nonsignificant t2 value of .817, p<.05. This indicates
Table 6

Frequencies and Percentages of Closeness Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6 (8.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8 (11.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>12 (17.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>26 (37.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>11 (15.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>5 (7.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M = 7.514
S.D. = 1.49

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Lesbians</th>
<th>Heterosexuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5 (7.1%)</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4 (5.7%)</td>
<td>4 (5.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5 (7.1%)</td>
<td>7 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>12 (34.2%)</td>
<td>14 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5 (7.1%)</td>
<td>6 (8.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2 (2.9%)</td>
<td>3 (4.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that there is no significant difference in overall closeness lesbian feminist women and heterosexual feminist women perceive and report in their close friendships. Table 6 (p. 51) shows mean ratings of the closeness rating scale. A chi-square computed reveals that there is no significant difference between respondent groups in these ratings. Hypothesis 1(c) was therefore supported, and no evidence found to reject the null hypothesis. On both the closeness rating scale and the CFS lesbian feminist women and heterosexual feminist women report no significant difference in the closeness of their relationships with a target friend. These findings replicate those of Lustig (1982).

Results Pertaining to Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 states: Lesbian feminist women will obtain higher mean scores than heterosexual feminist women on the subscales of Stable Personal Community and Mutual Accessibility. Refer to Table 7 for mean scores, standard deviations for these subscales. F values for these subscales follow in Table 8. The F value for the Stable Personal Community subscale is .001, p<.05. The F value for the Mutual Accessibility subscale is .256, p<.05. Both F values are nonsignificant. This indicates that there is no significant difference between lesbian feminist women and heterosexual feminist women on their reports of the characteristics of stable personal community and mutual accessibility in their close friendships. Hypothesis 2 is rejected. No evidence was found which would allow the rejection of the null hypothesis.
### Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations for CFS Subscales and Total Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Lesbian Mean</th>
<th>Heterosexual Mean</th>
<th>Lesbian Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Heterosexual Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>74.08</td>
<td>76.80</td>
<td>9.78</td>
<td>9.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>82.17</td>
<td>83.25</td>
<td>9.53</td>
<td>8.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>59.65</td>
<td>59.71</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>7.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIE</td>
<td>49.17</td>
<td>49.51</td>
<td>7.43</td>
<td>6.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PU</td>
<td>92.86</td>
<td>94.80</td>
<td>15.75</td>
<td>11.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UR</td>
<td>61.20</td>
<td>61.48</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>6.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Total Score</td>
<td>419.13</td>
<td>425.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 8

Univariate F-tests With Six Subscales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>.256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPC</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIE</td>
<td>.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PU</td>
<td>.349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UR</td>
<td>.036</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hotellings t2 = .817
Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations for Subscales and Total Scores of The SPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Lesbian Mean</th>
<th>Heterosexual Mean</th>
<th>Lesbian SD</th>
<th>Heterosexual SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>14.26</td>
<td>14.97</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>14.28</td>
<td>14.54</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NU</td>
<td>11.28</td>
<td>11.57</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RW</td>
<td>14.37</td>
<td>14.48</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>15.22</td>
<td>15.31</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>15.05</td>
<td>15.40</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Total Score</td>
<td>84.45</td>
<td>86.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10

Univariate F-tests With Subscales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NU</td>
<td>.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RW</td>
<td>.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hotellings $t^2 = .883$
Results Pertaining to Hypothesis £3

Hypothesis 3 states: Lesbian feminist women will obtain significantly higher mean scores on the Attachment and Sense of Reliable Alliance subscales of the SPS, than will heterosexual feminist women.

Tables 9 and 10 show means, standard deviations, and F values for the six subscales of the SPS. The F values for the Attachment and Sense of Reliable Alliance subscales are 1.98, p<.05, and .05, p<.05 respectively, both nonsignificant. It appears from this data that there are no significant differences between respondent groups on mean scores of these two subscales. Hypothesis 3 is rejected.

Discussion of these results, including discussion of the possibility of Type II error resulting in non-significance, will be discussed in the next chapter.
Overview

This study explored one particular area within the general construct of homosociality, that of close friendship bonds between women. The objectives of the study were to address the following questions:

1. Do lesbian feminist and heterosexual feminist women's friendships differ, and if so, how?
2. Which of the two major theories of homosociality agrees more closely with women's self-report of their actual friendship experience?

These objectives were addressed through asking respondent groups to consider both the qualitative components of their close friendships and the provisions of these relationships. Respondents who qualified (through rating themselves at 7 or higher on a scale of feminist identification) were given a questionnaire package containing a Personal Data Sheet, The Close Friendship Scale, and The Social Provisions Scale, along with instructions as to how to complete them.
Profile of Respondents

The average respondent was a Caucasian, single, feminist woman, about 33 years of age. She had no children. She had completed at least one university degree and was most likely a professional earning between $10,000 and $20,000. The length of her relationship with her target friend was approximately 4 years and they had probably met either at work or through mutual friends. If the respondent was a lesbian woman she likely chose a lesbian friend (62.8%), and if she was a heterosexual woman she with one exception chose a heterosexual target friend (98.6%). The friendships were generally felt to be close (M=7.5) and satisfying.

Lustig (1982) raised a number of questions which were addressed in this study by additions to the "Personal Data Sheet". The first concerns a suggestion by her that there may be important class differences between heterosexual women and lesbian women (1982, p.149). A question pertaining to highest level of education was added to that of occupation. Chi-squares computed on both revealed no significant differences, and provide no evidence to support this suggestion. As Lustig states however, a question regarding parents' highest income might be useful in its possible reflection of class level of the respondents' families. Lustig was also concerned with the possibility of platonic friendships having had a previous sexual component, whether or not this was idiosyncratic, and what effect it could have on the present level of intimacy in the friendship. This study asked the question directly and found that 20% of lesbian
respondents and 1.4% of heterosexual respondents reported having had a previously sexual component in their relationship with their target friend. This response suggests that it is an idiosyncratic experience in the heterosexual group, but less so in the lesbian group. The effect of this on the present level of intimacy was not determined in this study and would be interesting to explore.

Findings of the Study

Hypothesis 1. Result: There is no significant difference between lesbian and heterosexual feminist women on the closeness they report experiencing in their close friendships. Hypothesis 1(c) is accepted and the null hypothesis is not rejected. Hypotheses 1(a) and 1(b) are not supported.

Discussion: The possibility of Type II error must be considered in discussing the findings of non-significance. A number of factors may have contributed to produce a lack of power in the test. These include sampling bias (the influence of feminism), sample size and an insensitive measuring instrument.

This study has a sampling bias which may be associated with recruitment methods resulting in extremes of socio-economic and educational status. This could lead to homogeneity in the sample. The results of this study however, question whether or not there is an actual sampling bias resulting in homogeneity, given that the standard deviations of the scores are as great as they are.
Another possibility which could help explain the lack of significant difference could be the use of an insensitive measuring instrument. The CFS and SPS as developed have been shown to be valid and reliable measures of the qualitative components of close friendship and of the provisions of social relationships. It may be that used in this particular way, they are not sensitive to subtle differences between the two groups. This may be a methodological consideration in future study of this construct.

It may be that with an N of 35 in each group, the test lacked power. However, with such a small difference between mean scores and the resulting small effect size, an unmanageably large sample would be needed to possibly illuminate any existing difference between the two groups (Cohen, 1977). Thus, it is doubtful that sample size is a significant factor in the finding of no significant difference between the two groups. In any case, if such an extremely large sample were to find a difference, it probably would be of the kind referred to as statistically significant but practically trivial.

Hypothesis £2. Result: There is no significant difference between lesbian and heterosexual feminist women in their experience of the qualitative components of "Stable Personal Community" and "Mutual Accessibility" in their close friendships. Hypothesis 2 is rejected, and no evidence is found to reject the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis £3. Result: Lesbian and heterosexual feminist women experience and report no significant difference regarding the
provisions of "Attachment" and "Sense of Reliable Alliance" in their close friendships. There is no evidence sufficient to reject the null hypothesis.

**Discussion:** Friendships of lesbian feminist women have been characterized as involving a "level of caring (which) provides for a stable family-like commitment to one another" (Frum, 1979, p.43), support and a sense of security in knowing the friend can be relied upon, a sense of safety and security, the freedom to count on assistance under any circumstances (Weiss, 1974). This obvious in-group identification (Brooks, 1981) operates within a context of secrecy which seems to facilitate a rapid formation of friendships. These friendships tend to express both a family-like commitment and an expectation of mutual support and availability. Why then the findings of no significant differences between friendships of lesbian and heterosexual feminist women?

Much of the data regarding social relationships of lesbian women has been obtained through observation or participant-observation of actual lesbian communities. It may be that characteristics of relationships and close friendships of lesbian women described by these writers - such as the kin quality, mutual accessibility, sense of attachment, and sense of reliable alliance - have more to do with community living (perhaps intensified by being a marginalized community) than with sexual preference. It may also be that these findings were, at least partially, due to observer bias. The lesbian women in this study were not necessarily living in community, thus the findings of previous researchers may not apply.
Age may be a factor affecting the results of this study. With a mean age of 32, respondents would tend to have resolved the developmental task of intimacy versus isolation (Erickson, 1950), and whether presently with partners or not, would tend to have at least made some decisions about the role this will play in their lives. As a result, they tend to be involved in the issue of generativity versus stagnation, part of which is building and maintaining friendships. It would be interesting to explore close friendships of women in other developmental stages. Women in early adulthood as well as older women have been exposed to different social/cultural influences than this respondent group, one of which is the different time in each group's life that they were affected by the women's movement. This may or may not predict differences in social bonding.

This study did not specify sexual preference of the target friend. Sixty-two percent of lesbians chose lesbian friends, while 98.6% of heterosexuals chose heterosexual friends. Only one heterosexual feminist woman chose a lesbian friend. It may be that this relates to the proportion of lesbian women in the general population, to proximity, or to perhaps unresolved homophobic feelings amongst the heterosexual feminist respondents. Caplan (1981) points out that despite the effects of the women's movement and a general increase in societal awareness of the homosexual lifestyle, homophobia remains a barrier between women. The non-specification of sexual preference of the target friend may also have obscured differences between lesbian "separatists" and "integrationists".
General Discussion

One other possibility exists however, to explain the findings of nonsignificant differences, and that is that the findings are an accurate reflection of reality. They suggest, and it may be, that there is no significant difference between lesbian and heterosexual feminist women in the degree of closeness they experience in their close friendships with other women. It may be that for all intents and purposes, the same population was tested. Or, in other words, without the variable of sexual preference which appeared to have exerted little influence, the populations may have been homogeneous (feminist women). Hypothesis 1 findings do support previous evidence of Lustig (1982), and suggestions of Simon and Gagnon (1976), and Oberstone and Sukonek (1976), that lesbian and heterosexual women may experience the satisfaction of their intimacy needs in friendship in similar ways.

One might speculate that needs for intimacy could differ depending on whether or not an individual was in a committed relationship. An analysis of variance was computed with respondent groups for the effect of a committed relationship on close friendship. Using this study's instruments, no significant differences were found between women in committed relationships or not in committed relationships. The evidence seems to suggest that whether or not in committed relationships, feminist women tend to meet their needs in close friendships in similar ways. It is interesting to note however, that four questionnaire packages were returned incomplete by lesbian
respondents with the explanation that they really had no close woman friend other than their partner. Two other lesbian respondents completed the questionnaire package but stated they had difficulty because they were unable to use their partner for the CFS.

It has been shown that at the level of close friendship evidence does not support a difference between lesbian and heterosexual feminist women. Characteristics of close friendship appear to relate more to women as a group and their affiliative style of relating, and tend not to be distinguishable on the basis of sexual preference. Rubin drew on Chodorow (1985) to point out the connection between the powerful mother-daughter relationship and adult women's same-sex friendships. Peplau and Amaro (1982) see childhood socialization experiences of girls in this culture as emphasizing emotional expressiveness and love as central to women's close relationships. These themes can be seen, they suggest, in adult relationships of both lesbian and heterosexual women (Cochran and Peplau, 1979). The women's movement of the 1960's has done much to re-legitimize and value women's bonds with one another. Rawlings' and Carter's suggestion of a number of extropunitive defense patterns exhibited by feminist women is relevant. Concerns with building and strengthening ties within their group through close associations, and the rewards of the "affirmation of a common and valid life experience as well as confidence in (women's) own affiliative style" (Bernard, 1976, p.233), or a feminist consciousness, may override concerns regarding sexual preference.

The results of this study appear to support Bernard's thesis of
women's bonds being rich and satisfying. Regardless of sexual preference feminist women in this study identified similar qualities of the relationships, and reported receiving similar supplies of the provisions of these relationships. Their friendships are viewed as close and important in their everyday living. One would assume this to be the case when studying feminist women, and this attests to the pervasiveness of homosocial bonds in women's lives and to the reluctance of women to live with an absence of them.

One stated objective of this study was to further the process of demystifying the lesbian population through reporting actual life experience. The intention was to continue the movement away from cause and effect thinking and in the direction of recording behaviors and perceptions of experience. The results of this study overwhelmingly support a focus on how lesbian women are similar in values and experiences to other women, rather than to how they are different. In these times of changing roles and values, it would seem advantageous to concern ourselves with similarities, common ground, unifying factors, rather than with factions and divisiveness. Women's friendships may be, as viewed by Lenz and Myerhoff (1985) "a possible antidote to the alienating, depersonalizing effects of the dominant, male-controlled culture" (1985, p.37), and as such maintain a critical importance in women's lives.

Methodological Limitations

An ex post facto comparison design was used in this study.

The usual limitation of this design exists which is that one cannot
infer cause and effect. Rather, one can only conclude that a relationship exists between the variables. In this study one can infer that there is virtually no relationship between sexual preference and close friendship experience for feminist women.

As discussed previously, there are a number of possible considerations in the nonsignificant findings in this study's hypotheses. A methodological consideration is noteworthy with regard to the sample. Three questionnaire packages were eliminated from the sample pool because the respondents did not assign themselves to one of the two sexual preference categories. Instead, they created a third, that of "bisexual", and located themselves there. Four respondents who were included in the sample pool also created the category of "bisexual" and commented that they may have located themselves there if the choice had been given. Each of these women did, however, respond to the forced-choice situation by placing themselves in one of the two categories. This may indicate that bisexual women have inadvertently been included in the sample, which may possibly mask subtle differences between heterosexual and lesbian women.

Another limitation of the method chosen is that only feminist women were selected for participation. While this assumes a certain commitment to women and to affiliation with other women, this also limits the generalizability of the results of the study. The results are limited to feminist women, between the ages of 20 and 40.

A final possible methodological limitation of the present study may have been the actual method chosen. Greater depth and the ability to
make use of immediate feedback may have been sacrificed in using questionnaires. Use of the interview technique may have, with this subject matter and with this population, elicited a greater richness than was allowed by a Likert-style questionnaire.

Summary

This study explored the relationship between sexual preference and close friendship amongst lesbian and heterosexual feminist women. In order to do this, the Close Friendship Scale, the Social Provisions Scale, and the Personal Data Sheet were chosen for use. The Personal Data Sheet was modified from its form on the original Close Friendship Scale to include: number of children of respondent and friend, sexual preference of respondent and friend, income of respondent and friend, whether respondent was involved in a committed relationship, highest level of education of respondent and friend, whether or not there had been a previous sexual relationship between respondent and friend, a feminist identification scale. To be included in the study, respondents were required to rate themselves at 7 or higher on a scale of 1 to 10, measuring feminist identification.

Seventy respondents, 35 heterosexual and 35 lesbian feminist women were recruited for participation through friendship pyramiding (Boxley, 1973; Thompson et al., 1971), university classes, meetings, and gatherings of women.

The data was analyzed through computing an analysis of variance for total and subscale mean scores for both the CFS and the SFS.
Chi-squares were computed to analyze frequency distributions of the demographic data. MANOVAs were also computed for committed relationship.

The main conclusions of this study are:

1. There is no evidence to suggest a relationship between the qualities of close friendship and sexual preference.

2. There is no evidence to suggest a relationship between the provisions of close friendship and sexual preference.

3. There is evidence which would strongly suggest that all women tend to experience their close friendships similarly, regardless of sexual preference.

4. There is evidence to support Bernard's thesis of women's homosocial bonds as strong, well-developed, and enduring.
REFERENCES


Women’s Studies International Quarterly. 3, 415-428.


University of Chicago Press.


Social Relationships


Social Relationships


APPENDIX A

LETTER OF INITIAL CONTACT
APPENDIX B

ADVERTISEMENT FOR VOLUNTEER RESPONDENTS
APPENDIX C

FEMINIST IDENTIFICATION RATING SCALE
FEMINIST IDENTIFICATION RATING SCALE

Central to feminist identification are the following concepts:

1. Women should have both the freedom and the responsibility to direct all important areas of their lives—emotional, intellectual, economic, and sexual.

2. Women must define themselves as independent persons, separate and apart from their relationships with others, be they husbands, parents, children, or lovers.

3. Feminism holds that, in theory, all roles are open to all people; that every person is entitled to the opportunity to develop her/his potential to the fullest.

4. Feminism assumes that where differences between men and women exist, they can no longer be seen in terms of "inferiority" and "superiority".

5. Feminism strives to equalize personal power between the sexes. Power is conceptualized as an enabling force used for self-determination and control over one's life rather than as a violent, coercive, and destructive force against others.

Imagine a scale of feminist identification ranging from 0 to 10, where 0 is no feminist identification, and 10 is complete identification as a feminist. Considering the principles stated above, rate your level of feminist identification.

Rating......

Thank you for your cooperation. If you would now be willing to participate in a larger study exploring women's friendships—which would require another 30 minutes of your time—please let me know by writing your name and telephone number below. I will contact you to arrange an appointment.

Pat Henderson
APPENDIX D

ETHICAL ASSURANCES
ETHICAL ASSURANCES

I am aware that my participation in this study is completely voluntary.

I am aware that I may decline to participate or discontinue my participation at any time without prejudice.

I have been informed that the confidentiality of my test results will be honored.

I am aware that I can obtain a debriefing as to the nature and purpose of the study at the conclusion of the investigation, if I so request.

My signature below signifies that I have read the ethical assurances listed above and that I agree to participate in this study with fully informed consent.

Name........................................... Date..................
APPENDIX E

PERSONAL DATA SHEET
People feel differently about their relationships with some friends than they do about others. The two following scales are aimed at exploring the ways you feel and react in relationship to your women friends.

The first inventory is called The Close Friendship Scale, and in order to fill it out please think of your current closest woman friend who is not an immediate family member or your partner. The statements in this inventory describe a variety of ways that you may feel about your friend, or ways that you may act toward your friend, and her to you. Consider each statement carefully and decide to what degree it is reflective of your present relationship with your friend. There are, of course, no right or wrong answers; each person has her own ideas.

Sometimes people tend to answer questions like these in terms of what they think a person should be like. This is not what is wanted here. We would like to know how you actually experience your relationship. Some items may seem similar to others; however, each item is different. So, please answer each one without regard to the others. If possible, please avoid leaving any blank spaces.

Before answering the items, be sure to fill in completely the information called for below. Remember, all information will be kept in complete confidence.

Your initials: ___ ___

Your age: ___

Your marital status:
  single ___ married ___
  separated ___ divorced ___

Number of children: ___

You are:
  Asian ___ White ___
  Black ___ Other ___

Your sexual preference:
  Heterosexual ___
  Lesbian ___

Your occupation: ___

Your income:
  Under $10,000 ___
  $10,000-$20,000 ___
  Above $20,000 ___

Friend’s age: ___

Friend’s marital status:
  single ___ married ___
  separated ___ divorced ___

Number of Friend’s children: ___

Friend is:
  Asian ___ White ___
  Black ___ Other ___

Friend’s sexual preference:
  Heterosexual ___
  Lesbian ___

Friend’s occupation: ___

Friend’s income:
  Under $10,000 ___
  $10,000-$20,000 ___
  Above $20,000 ___

Highest level of education for You _________ Friend _________
Number of years in this relationship: ___

How did you meet?
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

Was there a previous sexual relationship between you and your friend? ___

Are you presently in a committed relationship? ___ With a woman? ___
____________________________________
With a man? ___

Closeness rating: Imagine a scale of closeness ranging from 0 to 10, where 0 is as distant as you can be to an individual you know, and 10 as close as you can possibly be. Then rate your friend on the degree of closeness you feel towards her. ___
APPENDIX F
CLOSE FRIENDSHIP SCALE
In completing this scale please keep in mind your closest female friend who is not an immediate family member or your partner. Mark each statement in the left margin, according to how strongly you feel that it is true or not true in this relationship. Write in 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, to stand for the following answers:

1. definite
2. not true
3. tends to be true
4. true
5. especially true
6. true

1. I go out of my way to include her in things that she will enjoy.
2. There is nothing that I can't talk about with her.
3. She is like a family member.
4. My friend would loan me anything she has.
5. I find it impossible to disclose my real self to her.
6. She understands my words but does not know how I feel.
7. I would join her in an activity just to be with her.
8. She can read me like a book.
9. The desire for contact is reciprocated.
10. I don't have to watch what I say or do when I am around her.
11. She seems to hold things back, rather than tell me what she really thinks.
12. My friend seems to enjoy doing things with me.
13. There are times when I don't have to speak; she knows how I feel.
14. Sometimes I feel that what she says to me is very different from the way she really feels.
15. If something were to go wrong, I would turn to her for help or just to be a listening ear.
Social Relationships

16. There is an acceptance of our own differences.
17. She almost always seems concerned about me.
18. She understands me enough to be able to say things that can help me out.
19. I don't think she really cares if I live or die.
20. I can usually count on her to tell me what she really thinks or feels.
21. I can call her when I am really needy.
22. I would feel comfortable requesting that she spend time with me.
23. I am able to be me with all my warts, without her making me feel ugly.
24. I am accepted with whatever range of feelings I have when I see her.
25. I feel at times that she can read my mind.
26. I am openly myself in our relationship.
27. We are often on the same wavelength.
28. She seems to be able to predict my thoughts and feelings in certain situations.
29. I get a feeling of love and companionship when I am with her.
30. Nothing she can do would change how I feel about her.
31. Her time is available to me.
32. I can take shortcuts with her and save lengthily explanations.
33. I trust that she will respond appropriately to me when I turn to her.
34. I have gone to her for support and/or to have someone to cry with.
35. There seems to be an acute sense of perceptiveness between us.
36. I trust that she won't look at me in disgust.
37. Her responses to me reflect a real intuitive understanding of me.

38. She is someone I feel that I can share almost all of me with.

39. We have a collaborative relationship.

40. She seems to easily pick up on how I am feeling about myself.

41. She includes me in events and activities.

42. If I needed something, I could ask her for it.

43. There is a mutual respect for the ways we live our lives.

44. I can pick up in her voice when she is feeling upset.

45. Our relationship can withstand physical separation.

46. I appreciate exactly how the things she experiences feel to her.

47. If something catastrophic happened, she would be one of the first people I would contact.

48. I feel that she puts on a role or front with me.

49. There is a feeling of commitment to each other.

50. I can confront her with what bothers me about her without her fearing loss of my friendship.

51. She would help me during time of crisis or depression.

52. I trust that our relationship will always be there.

53. Though there are highs and lows in our relationship, there is much stability.

54. I share important common interests with her.

55. Not much could happen that would turn her against me.

56. She would be available for me in almost any way if I would ask for it clearly and directly.

57. She has tastes in common with me which others do not share.

58. Our relationship is based on real genuine authentic concern for each other.

59. When I am with her, she seems to relax and be herself, and not think of the impression she is creating.
If I were sick or hurt, I could count on her to do things that would make it easier to take.

I would do almost anything for her.

I speak freely and easily with her.

When she plans for leisure time activities, she makes it a point to get in touch with me to see if we can arrange to do things together.

I don't have to go into great detail for her to be able to sense the whole of what I mean.

There is a sense of history and connectedness in our relationship.

If I were short of cash and needed money in a hurry, I could count on her to be willing to lend it to me.

She accepts me for who I am.

She is willing to express whatever is actually on her mind with me, including any feelings about herself or me.

She accepts me for what I am building in my life.

She knows the truth of my feelings even when I will not own up to them.

I do not hide any part of myself from her that I do not also hide from myself.

She might understand my words, but she does not see the way I feel.

I have the sense that she is a constant partner even when we are apart.

Whether the ideas and feelings I express are "good" or "bad" seems to make no difference to her feelings towards me.

I care for her even when she does things that upset or annoy me.

She feels deep affection for me.

I don't know if she would come to my aid if I needed her.

Whether I am feeling happy or unhappy with myself makes no real difference to the way she feels about me.

I can read her gestures and mood
80. I feel that she is real and genuine with me.

81. I like sharing experiences with her.

82. There are times when we seem to know what each other wants without words.

83. This friend seems to be around when I need her.

84. She understands exactly how I see things.

85. I feel I have to act when I am around her.

86. We can mutually enjoy pleasurable experiences.

87. I can read between the lines of what she is saying.

88. I can predict how she would react to a situation.

Thank you very much for your cooperation in filling out the Close Friendship Scale. If you would like a summary of the findings of this scale, please include your name and address.

Name:

Address:
APPENDIX G

SOCIAL PROVISIONS SCALE
In answering the next set of questions, please think about your current relationships with women friends (excluding your partner and immediate family members). Please indicate to what extent you agree that each statement describes your current relationships with women. Use the scale 1 to 4 (see below) to give your opinion. So, for example, if you feel a statement in very true of your current relationships with women, you would circle #4 "strongly agree". If you feel a statement clearly does not describe your relationships with women, you would circle #1 "strongly disagree". After you respond, please indicate the number of women you are thinking of when you answer the question. A space is provided where appropriate.

1 = Strongly Disagree  2 = Disagree  3 = Agree  4 = Strongly Agree

**Disagree**  **Agree**  **No. of Women**

1. There are women I can depend on to help me if I really need it.  1 2 3 4  

2. I feel that I do not have close personal relationships with women.  1 2 3 4  

3. There is no woman I can turn to for guidance in times of stress.  1 2 3 4  

4. There are women who depend on me for help.  1 2 3 4  

5. There are women who enjoy the same social activities I do.  1 2 3 4  

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No. of Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Other women do not view me as competent.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>___</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I feel personally responsible for the well-being of a woman.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>___</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. I feel part of a group of women who share my attitudes and beliefs.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>___</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I do not think that women respect my skills and abilities.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>___</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. If something went wrong, there is no woman who would come to my assistance.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>___</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I have close personal relationships with women that provide me with a sense of emotional security and well-being.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>___</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. There are women I can talk to about important things in my life.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>___</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13. I have relationships with women where my competence and skill are recognized.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>___</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. There are no women who share my interests and concerns.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>___</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. There is no woman who relies on me for her well-being.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>___</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. There are trustworthy women in my life I could turn to for advice if</td>
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Social Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Women</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I were having problems.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. I feel a strong emotional bond with at least one other woman. | 1 2 3 4 | ___ |

18. There is no woman I can depend on for aid if I really need it. | 1 2 3 4 | ___ |

19. There is no woman I feel comfortable with talking about my problems. | 1 2 3 4 | ___ |

20. There are women who admire my talents and abilities. | 1 2 3 4 | ___ |

21. There is no woman who likes to do the things I do. | 1 2 3 4 | ___ |

22. I lack a feeling of intimacy with other women. | 1 2 3 4 | ___ |

23. There are women I can count on in an emergency. | 1 2 3 4 | ___ |

24. No woman needs me to care for her. | 1 2 3 4 | ___ |