Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity
2016, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1–10

© 2015 American Psychological Association
2329-0382/16/$12.00 http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000145

Sexual Minority Women's Relationship Quality: Examining the Roles of Multiple Oppressions and Silencing the Self

Dawn M. Szymanski, Ayse S. Ikizler, and Trevor L. Dunn
University of Tennessee

Feminist-relational theories recognize that dominant cultural messages can have a powerful influence on the construction of and behavior in relationships, particularly for members of stigmatized groups. These theories posit that experiences of external and internalized sexism and heterosexism can influence sexual minority women's (SMW) relational schemas (belief systems about how one must be and behave to maintain relationships with others), which in turn may affect their relationship quality (RQ). Our study investigated the relational schema of silencing the self as a possible mediator in the external and internalized sexism and heterosexism-RQ links among 540 SMW who were currently in a romantic relationship. Supporting our hypotheses, results indicated that silencing the self mediated the external sexism-RQ, external heterosexism-RQ, internalized sexism-RQ, and internalized heterosexism-RQ links. The variables accounted for 26% of the variance in silencing the self and 19% of the variance in RQ. Future research directions and clinical implications are discussed.

Keywords: discrimination, heterosexism, sexism, silencing the self, relationship satisfaction

This document is copyrighted by the American Psychological Association or one of its allied publishers.
This article is intended solely for the personal use of the individual user and is not to be disseminated broadly.

Feminist models of psychological scholarship and clinical practice posit that women's psychological and relational distress are highly influenced by the sociocultural context and experiences of external and internalized oppression (American Psychological Association, 2007). For example, feminist-relational theories such as Relational-Cultural Theory (Jordan, 2010; Miller & Stiver, 1997) and Silencing the Self Theory (Jack, 1991, 1999; Jack & Ali, 2010; Jack & Dill, 1992) both recognize that dominant cultural messages (e.g., sexism and heterosexism) can have a powerful influence on the construction of and behavior in relationships, particularly for members of stigmatized groups. For sexual minority women (SMW), who live in both a patriarchal and heteronormative context, their experiences of external sexism and heterosexism (i.e., gender- and sexual-orientation-based harassment, rejection, discrimination, and stereotyping), as well as internalized sexism and heterosexism (i.e., incorporation of negative dominant societal attitudes about other women and sexual minority persons, as well as toward themselves for being a gender and sexual orientation minority; Szymanski & Moffitt, 2012) are important to consider.

Feminist-relational theories posit that these experiences of multiple external and internalized oppressions can influence SMW's relational schemas (i.e., belief systems about how one must be and behave to maintain relationships with others), which in turn may affect relationship quality (RQ; Jack, 1991, 1999, 2011; Miller & Stiver, 1997). Thus, feminist-relational theories encourage investigations examining the associations among contextual, interpersonal, and relational experiences. This is consistent with lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) scholars' call for the need to examine coping/emotion regulation, social/interpersonal, and cognitive factors that might mediate the links between stressors related to oppression and poor mental health and relational outcomes (Hatzenbuehler, 2009; Szymanski & Hilton, 2013). More specifically, Hatzenbuehler (2009) put forth a theoretical psychological mediation framework that captures the roles of heterosexist stigma-related stressors in addition to "general psychological processes that are known to predict psychopathology in heterosexuals" (p. 712) in understanding undesirable outcomes among sexual minority persons.

The current study takes a feminist relational perspective that combines Silencing the Self Theory with Relational-Cultural Theory to investigate one possible pathway that combines social factors and relational schemas in the form of self-silencing. More specifically, this study examined silencing the self as a possible mediator between external and internalized sexism and heterosexism and RQ among SMW in a romantic relationship.

Silencing the Self

Silencing the self is a construct that has been identified as a major underlying mechanism associated with psychological and relational distress, particularly among women given their specific gender role socialization. According to Jack and Dill (1992), silencing the self includes four dimensions: (a) externalized self-perception, (b) care as self-sacrifice, (c) self-silencing, and (d) the divided self. These dimensions are based on dysfunctional schemas that women are taught to use to establish and maintain intimate relationships (Jack, 1991, 1999; Jack & Ali, 2010; Jack & Dill, 1992). They are meant to be dynamic as opposed to static. Externalized self-perception refers to judging the self by external standards. Care as self-sacrifice prioritizes others' needs above one's own in an effort to secure attachments. Self-silencing refers

This article was published Online First October 26, 2015.

Dawn M. Szymanski, Ayse S. Ikizler, and Trevor L. Dunn, Department of Psychology, University of Tennessee.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Dawn M. Szymanski, Department of Psychology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37996-0900. E-mail: dawnszymanski@msn.com

to the inhibition of self-expression for the purpose of avoiding conflict and loss of relationship. Finally, the divided self refers to a disconnect between outer self-presentation and inner self such that the outer self is compliant in fulfilling feminine role expectations whereas the inner self becomes angry and hostile (Jack & Dill, 1992). Taken together, these dimensions form an overarching schema for feminine role expectations that women are motivated to follow to establish, protect, and maintain relationships at the cost of sacrificing one's own self-interests and needs.

Silencing the self research has primarily focused on heterosexual women, and thus far, the literature suggests that self-silencing is associated with several unhealthy psychological and relational processes. However, the role of silencing the self in the lives of SMW is lacking. For example, in a sample of women who were HIV+, the majority of who reported dating only men, silencing the self was associated with lower levels of resilience and predicted resilience even after controlling for employment, income, and education levels (Dale et al., 2014). In a sample of low-income, African-American, primarily heterosexual women, silencing the self was related to more depressive symptoms and lower quality of life (Brody et al., 2014). Likewise, silencing the self was related to more psychological distress among a sample of mostly heterosexual college women (Hurst & Beesley, 2013). Finally, silencing the self has been related to various partner and relationship variables among heterosexual couples. For example, Harper and Welsh (2007) found that self-silencing was related to poorer RQ among adolescent girls in heterosexual romantic relationships but not adolescent boys. Relatedly, Uebelacker, Courtnage, and Whisman (2003) found that silencing the self was related to relationship dissatisfaction among married women. It is evident that silencing the self is a key psychological process that contributes to psychological and relational distress and dysfunction among women in general; however, there is a dearth of information regarding its role in SMW's mental and relational health.

How Might Multiple Oppressions Influence SMW's Self-Silencing?

Sociocultural factors, such as sexist and heterosexist harassment, violence, discrimination, and rejection, can influence SMW's self-silencing because they induce and reinforce fears about negative interpersonal, economic, and/or physical consequences if a SMW were to voice her needs, anger, and/or opposition (Jack, 1991, 1999). SMW may learn that they cannot be who they truly are in a relationship because external and internalized sexism and heterosexism teach them that what they are is inferior, abnormal, less than, and/or bad (Brown, 1994). This can interfere with a SMW's ability to identify and make sense of her experience in ways that affirm the self (Walker, 2005). Experiences of external sexism and heterosexism are relational violations and traumas that can lead to feelings of shame, unworthiness, hurt, fear, anger, self-blame, and mistrust as well as experiences of disconnection and isolation (Jack, 2011; Jordan, 2010; Jordan & Hartling, 2002; Miller & Stiver, 1997).

To deal with the psychological distress associated with these feelings and experiences, SMW may learn to relate in nonauthentic ways with others and deny or hide aspects of their lives in an effort to reconnect and belong (Jordan & Hartling, 2002; Miller & Stiver, 1997). A history of rejection (e.g., repeated experiences of sexism/heterosexism) is associated with increased sensitivity to others' emotional expressions (e.g., tone of voice, facial expressions; Pickett, Gardner, & Knowles, 2004), which could indicate SMW's motivation to avoid future rejections (Smart Richman & Leary, 2009). Thus, SMW may develop a need to restore a sense of belonging after a rejection. One way to regain a sense of belonging is through silencing the self and denying aspects of the self that are devalued and/or not approved of by others to avoid risks of further rejection and marginalization and to be accepted by others (Jordan & Hartling, 2002; Miller & Stiver, 1997). In addition, SMW may enact these relational schemas in efforts to try live up to images that restrictive sociocultural and familial messages and norms have imposed on them (Hurst & Beesley, 2013; Jack, 1991, 2011). Finally, because women often have limited resources and power in patriarchal cultures and are often punished for standing up for themselves and engaging in self-advocacy when faced with external oppression, they may engage in self silencing in the context of relationships to minimize their own needs and inhibit self-expression to avoid criticism, conflict, and maintain relationships (Brody et al., 2014; Jack, 1999).

The potential link between internalized sexism and self-silencing may occur as women internalize general sexist messages (e.g., male superiority, the devaluation and distrust of women; Piggot, 2004) that are prevalent in United States' culture and its social structures and apply them to their own selves in relationships. That is, they begin to devalue their own opinions, needs, or desires in relationships because they have incorporated the societal messages that women's needs or wishes are less important or view themselves as less competent (Bearman, Korobov, & Thorne, 2009). Thus, broad internalized sexist beliefs may be linked to more individualized self-silencing schemas and behaviors. For example, because women have internalized messages that their own needs are less important when compared to others, they may put other's needs ahead of their own, an aspect of self-silencing (Jack, 1999).

The link between internalized heterosexism and self-silencing is likely to exist because of a similar psychological process of devaluing one's inner experiences. In particular, internalized heterosexist beliefs promote shame and devalue one's same-sex attraction, desires, and orientation while endorsing the superiority of heterosexual orientations (Szymanski, Kashubeck-West, & Meyer, 2008). Self-silencing schemas also include the devaluing of inner needs and desires within relationships while viewing the other person's needs as more important. Thus, because both internalized heterosexism and self-silencing include the devaluing of one's inner states (desires, attractions, needs, etc.), it is likely these will be correlated. In addition, SMW who are not comfortable with their sexual orientation may engage in self-silencing to protect themselves from being outed and being genuinely emotionally connected to others, which may serve to alleviate negative feelings about being lesbian or bisexual (Frost & Meyer, 2009; Szymanski & Hilton, 2013).

Furthermore, according to Jack and her colleagues (Jack 1991; Jack & Ali, 2010), when the internalized voices of patriarchy and heteronormativity take over a SMW's psyche, she may get caught in a vicious cycle of self-condemnation and critical self-judgment. To regain her perceived cultural "goodness" imposed by these oppressive social systems, she may engage in self-silencing and self-censorship to adhere to traditional, restrictive cultural notions of how women should act and be in the world. Rather than

This document is copyrighted by the American Psychological Association or one of its allied publishers.
This article is intended solely for the personal use of the individual user and is not to be disseminated broadly.

This document is copyrighted by the American Psychological Association or one of its allied publishers.
This article is intended solely for the personal use of the individual user and is not to be disseminated broadly.

contextualizing her struggles as part of an oppressive context and social inequality, a SMW who internalizes gender- and sexual-orientation-based oppression may be more likely to blame herself for her struggles, which in turn fuels the silencing of her own voice and inhibits her anger. Taken together, through external and internalized oppression, the dominant culture can distort SMW's sense of who and how they can be in the world and in their relationships (Walker, 2005).

How Might Self-Silencing Influence SMW's RQ?

Relational-Cultural Theory posits that all psychological growth occurs through connections with others, and that these relationships develop through mutual empathy and empowerment (Jordan & Hartling, 2002; Miller & Stiver, 1997). More specifically, Miller (1986) described "'five good things' that characterize a growth-fostering relationship: (a) increased zest (vitality), (b) increased ability to take action (empowerment), (c) increased clarity (a clearer picture of one's self, the other, and the relationship), (d) increased sense of worth, and (e) a desire for relationships beyond that particular relationship'" (as cited in Jordan & Hartling, 2002, p. 49). In addition to an emphasis on connections, Relational-Cultural Theory also focuses on the effect of disconnections (Jordan & Hartling, 2002; Miller & Stiver, 1997). Disconnections are understood as inevitable in relationships, and what happens after a disconnection is critical. If the person who was emotionally injured is able to openly share their experience authentically and be heard by the other person, a sense of *relational competence* is fostered. However, if the injured person is unable to represent themselves in this way, then the individual will begin to hide aspects of themselves. In Relational-Cultural Theory, this is referred to as the *central relational paradox* and is deemed a *strategy of disconnection or survival* (Jordan & Hartling, 2002).

It is here that Relational-Cultural Theory and Silencing the Self Theory clearly dovetail with one another. Similar to Relational-Cultural Theory, Silencing the Self Theory centralizes the role of relationships in people's lives, and self-silencing also serves as a survival strategy in the face of a threatening situation or relationship (Jack, 1999; Jack, Ali, & Dias, 2014; Jack & Dill, 1992). Silencing the Self Theory was initially developed and has been applied primarily to women for similar reasons that Relational-Cultural Theory has because women are socialized to prioritize others' needs over their own (Jack et al., 2014; Jack & Dill, 1992).

According to these theories, healthy relational functioning is characterized by authenticity, safety, and mutuality in relationships; however, self-silencing prevents individuals from experiencing such full relationships. Therefore, individuals who have high levels of silencing the self are likely to experience lower RQ even in the context of committed partner relationships. This maladaptive pattern appears to be especially salient in women because of social and cultural expectations for women to self-silence, self-sacrifice, prioritize the needs of others over their own, and judge themselves via external standards.

Supporting the link between silencing the self and RQ, silencing the self is associated with less relationship satisfaction among adolescent girls in heterosexual romantic relationships (Harper & Welsh, 2007), heterosexual college women (Remen, 2000), and adult married women (Uebelacker et al., 2003). In addition, it has been associated with poor marital adjustment, perceptions of one's spouse as intolerant or critical, and continued involvement in abusive relationships among women (Thompson, 1995; Thompson, Whiffen, & Aube, 2001; Woods, 1999). Supporting the mediating role of silencing the self in oppression and psychological health outcome links, Hurst and Beesley (2013) found that silencing the self mediated the link between external sexism and psychological distress among college women. Relatedly, fear of intimacy mediated the internalized heterosexism-RQ link among gay men in same-sex relationships (Szymanski & Hilton, 2013).

Current Study

In sum, the purpose of our study was to investigate the relational schema of silencing the self as a mediator in the multiple oppressions-RQ links among SMW currently in a romantic relationship. More specifically, we hypothesized that silencing the self would mediate the relationships between external sexism, external heterosexism, internalized sexism, and internalized heterosexism and SMW's RQ.

Method

Participants

Data for the current study were part of a larger study that examined the mediating roles of maladaptive coping styles in the external and internalized heterosexism and sexism-psychological distress links among SMW (Szymanski, Dunn, & Ikizler, 2014). Of the 761 participants, 540 reported they were in a romantic relationship and therefore were included in the current study. Participants identified themselves as lesbian (58%), bisexual (26%), queer (15%), and not sure (2%). Consistent with Diamond's (2005, 2008) work on the variability, fluidity, and nonexclusivity of SMW's identity, attractions, and behavior, 62% of participants reported that they consistently maintain a lesbian identification, 22% reported they never adopt a lesbian label but have/had same-sex attractions and/or engaged in same-sex sexual behaviors, and 16% indicated they alternate between lesbian and nonlesbian labels. Participants' described their current feelings of romantic/sexual attraction using a 7-point Kinsey-type scale, with 43% attracted only to women (*0*), 36% attracted more to women than men (*1 or 2*), 12% attracted equally to both sexes (*3*), 9% attracted more to men than women (*4 or 5*), and 0% attracted only to men (*6*). Seventy-four percent of participants ($n = 398$) were in a romantic relationship with a woman and 26% ($n = 142$) were in a romantic relationship with a man. Relationship length ranged from .08 (i.e., 1 month [1/12 = 0.08]) to 37 years, with a mean relationship length of 4.92 years ($SD = 5.68$).

Participants ranged in age from 18 to 77 years, with a mean age of 33.17 years ($SD = 12.80$). The sample was 82% White, 7% Multiracial, 4% Hispanic/Latina, 2% African American/Black, 2% Asian American/Pacific Islander, 2% Native American, and 1% other. Self-reported social class was 37% lower middle/working class, 34% middle class, 17% upper-middle class, 11% poor, and 2% wealthy. Forty percent ($n = 216$) of participants were currently enrolled in a college or university, with 13% being first-year undergraduates, 20% sophomores, 17% juniors, 13% seniors, 27% graduate students, and 8% other. Of the 60% who were not currently students ($n = 323$), 28% attained a graduate/

professional degree, 26% attained a 4-year college degree, 18% attained a 2-year college degree, 24% attained a high school diploma, and 3% attained less than a high school diploma. Participants resided in the South (28%), West (25%), Midwest (23%), and Northeast (23%). Percentages may not add up to 100% because of rounding.

Procedures

The data were collected using an anonymous online web-based survey located on a secure firewall-protected server. Procedures for this web-based survey were based on published suggestions for collecting data online with sexual minority persons (Riggle, Rostosky, & Reedy, 2005). More specifically, participants were recruited via an e-mail announcement of the study (which included a hypertext link to access the survey) sent to various lesbian/bisexual related listservs, e-groups, organizations, and Internet resources. The announcement was sent to individuals on the website listed as either the contact person or the listserv owner. This person was then asked to forward the research announcement to their listserv and to eligible colleagues and friends. Participants were also recruited by sending the research announcement to professional and personal networks using the snowball method and via paid advertisements placed on Facebook. The advertisement included the name of the study, "Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Attitudes and Experiences," and a brief description of it (e.g., "Research study. Must identify as lesbian or bisexual woman, be at least 18 years old, and currently live in the U.S."). It was shown to Facebook users who indicated they were over 18 years of age, lived in the United States, identified as female, indicated romantic interest in women, and had Facebook interests related to one of these keywords: bisexuality, lesbian, and LGB community. After participants clicked on the advertisement, they were taken to the study's informed consent page. Respondents indicated consent to take the survey by clicking a button. They were then directed to the webpage containing the survey, which included a demographics questionnaire and the measures described in the following section. These measures were embedded among other instruments in the survey and randomly ordered.

As incentive to participate, all participants were given the chance to enter a raffle drawing, awarding a $100 Amazon.com gift card to each of three randomly chosen individuals. A separate database was used for the raffle so that participants' names were not linked to their survey responses. Participants reported hearing about the survey from a Facebook advertisement (47%); LGB-related group, organization, or listserv (23%); friend or colleague (20%); and other (10%).

Measures

External sexism. External sexism was assessed with the Daily Sexist Events Scale (Swim, Cohen, & Hyers, 1998), which consists of 26 items assessing sexism across two dimensions: traditional gender role stereotyping and prejudice and unwanted sexually objectifying comments and behaviors. Participants were asked to indicate how often during the past year they experienced various sexist events. Example items include "Had someone do or say something that made me feel threatened sexually" and "Heard someone express disapproval of me because I exhibited behavior inconsistent with stereotypes about my gender." Participants were asked to report the frequency of sexist events that occurred within the past year using the following 5-point Likert scale: *never* (1), *about once during the past during past year* (2), *about once a month during the past year* (3), *about once a week during the past year* (4), and *about two or more times a week during the past year* (5). Mean full-scale scores were used with higher scores indicating the experience of more external sexism. The reported α with a SMW sample was .95 (Szymanski & Owens, 2009). Content validity was supported by a series of daily diary studies of sexist experiences. Structural validity was supported by exploratory factor analyses. Construct validity was supported by (a) correlations demonstrating that more experiences of external sexism were related to decreased comfort, less self-esteem, more anger, and greater depression among college women and (b) results indicating that college women reported more sexist events than college men. Divergent validity was supported by results revealing that external sexism was not related to neuroticism (Swim et al., 1998; Swim, Hyers, Cohen, & Ferguson, 2001). The α for the current sample was .96.

External heterosexism. External heterosexism was assessed with the SMW's version of the Heterosexist Harassment, Rejection, and Discrimination Scale (Szymanski, 2006), which consists of 14 items reflecting the frequency with which lesbian and bisexual women report having experienced rejection, harassment, and discrimination because of their sexual orientation. Participants were asked to report the frequency of heterosexist events that occurred within the past year. Example items include "How many times have you been treated unfairly by people in helping jobs (by doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, caseworkers, dentists, school counselors, therapists, pediatricians, school principals, gynecologists, and others) because you are a lesbian/bisexual woman?" and "How many times have you heard anti-lesbian/anti-bisexual remarks from family members?" Each item is rated on a 6-point Likert scale from 1(*the event has never happened to you*) to 6 (*the event happened almost all the time [more than 70% of the time]*). Mean scores were used with higher scores indicating greater experiences of heterosexist harassment, rejection, and discrimination in the past year. The reported α with a SMW sample was .90. Validity was supported by exploratory factor analysis; by significant positive correlations with measures assessing overall psychological distress, depression, anxiety, interpersonal sensitivity, somatization, and obsessive compulsiveness; and by demonstrating that the Heterosexist Harassment, Rejection, and Discrimination Scale was conceptually distinct from internalized heterosexism (Szymanski, 2006). The α for the current sample was .91.

Internalized sexism. Internalized sexism was assessed using the Internalized Misogyny Scale (Piggot, 2004), which consists of 17 items reflecting three dimensions: valuing men over women, devaluing of women, and distrust of women. Example items include "Women exaggerate problems they have at work" and "I prefer to listen to male radio announcers than female." Each item is rated on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Mean scores were used with higher scores indicating greater internalized sexism. The reported α with a SMW sample was .88. Content validity of the Internalized Misogyny Scale was supported by generating items from a focus group of SMW and a review of the literature. Structural validity was supported via exploratory factor analysis. Construct validity was sup-

This document is copyrighted by the American Psychological Association or one of its allied publishers.
This article is intended solely for the personal use of the individual user and is not to be disseminated broadly.

This document is copyrighted by the American Psychological Association or one of its allied publishers.
This article is intended solely for the personal use of the individual user and is not to be disseminated broadly.

ported by correlating the Internalized Misogyny Scale with measures of modern sexism, internalized heterosexism, self-esteem, depression, body image, and psychosexual adjustment (Piggot, 2004). The α for the current sample was .91.

Internalized heterosexism. Internalized heterosexism was assessed using the Internalized Homophobia Scale (Herek, Cogan, & Gillis, 2000; Martin & Dean, 1987), which consists of nine items reflecting the extent to which lesbian and bisexual women reject their sexual orientation, seek to avoid attractions and romantic feelings to other women, and are uncomfortable about their sexual desires toward other women. Example items include "I have tried to stop being attracted to women in general" and "I wish I weren't lesbian/bisexual." Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Mean scores were used with higher scores indicating greater internalized heterosexism. The reported α with a SMW sample was .87 (Szymanski & Henrichs-Beck, 2014). The validity of scores was supported by correlating the Internalized Homophobia Scale with other internalized heterosexism scales and measures assessing connection with and feelings toward the sexual minority community, degree of outness, perceived stigma related to being a sexual minority person, self-esteem, and depression (Frost & Meyer, 2009; Herek, Cogan, Gillis, & Glunt, 1998, Herek et al., 2000; Szymanski & Kashubeck-West, 2008; Szymanski & Owens, 2009). The α for the current sample was .85.

Silencing the self. Silencing the self was assessed with the Silencing the Self Scale (Jack & Dill, 1992), which consists of 31 items assessing silencing the self along four dimensions: externalized self-perception (e.g., "I tend to judge myself by how I think other people see me"), care as self-sacrifice (e.g., "Considering my needs to be as important as those of the people I love is selfish"), silencing the self (e.g., "I don't speak my feelings in an intimate relationship when I know they will cause disagreement"), and divided self ("Often I look happy enough on the outside, but inwardly I feel angry and rebellious"). Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Because of Jack and Dill's conceptualization of the Silencing the Self Scale subscales as interrelated components of an overarching construct, as well as the extensive literature base that has used the Silencing the Self Scale full-scale score (rather than simultaneous use of each of the four subscale scores) in regression-type analyses, we used the full-scale score in this study. Mean scores were used, with higher scores indicating higher levels of silencing the self.

Using three independent samples of women residing in a domestic violence shelter, mothers who had abused drugs during pregnancy, and female college students, Jack and Dill (1992) reported internal consistencies ranging from .86 to .94 and test–retest reliabilities ranging from .88 to .93. Validity was supported by generating items from interviews of women suffering from major depression and by the Silencing the Self Scale's positive correlation with depressive symptoms. In addition, validity was supported by theorized differences between groups varying by social context, with higher Silencing the Self Scale scores among groups of battered women (who had high conflict, unsatisfactory relationship contexts that expect submissive behaviors) and lower Silencing the Self Scale scores among groups of female university students (who had more freedom from social role demands and from long term committed relationships). The α for the current sample was .92.

Relationship quality. RQ was assessed using the Couples Satisfaction Index four-item short form (Funk & Rogge, 2007). The Couples Satisfaction Index 4-item short form was developed from the longer 32-item version for its ability to contribute a large amount of information on relationship satisfaction despite its brevity. Example items include "In general how satisfied are you with your relationship?" and "Please indicate the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship?" Response options vary (e.g., not at all to very; extremely unhappy to perfect), with three items being rated on a 6-point Likert scale from 0 to 5 and one item being rated on a 7-point Likert scale from 0 to 6. Mean scores were used, with higher scores indicating higher levels of RQ.

Funk and Rogge (2007) reported an α of .94 for a community sample recruited via the Internet. Construct validity was supported via exploratory factor analyses and item response theory; high positive correlations with other measures of relationship satisfaction and quality; positive correlations with positive communication and sexual chemistry; and negative correlations with ineffective arguing, perceived stress, hostile conflict, and neuroticism. In addition, Funk and Rogge (2007) showed that long and short forms of the Couples Satisfaction Index have greater power for detecting differences in relationship satisfaction scores and higher precision of measurement (less noise) than the two most widely cited RQ measures—the Marital Adjustment Test (Locke & Wallace, 1959) and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976). The α for the current sample was .91.

Results

Preliminary Data Analyses

Analysis of missing data patterns for the 540 participants in our sample indicated that .32%, or less than one third of a percent, of all items for all participants/cases were missing, and 28% of the items were not missing data for any participant/case. Considering individual cases, 77% of participants had no missing data. Finally, no item had 1.8% or more missing values. Given the very small amount of missing data, we used available case analyses procedures to address missing data points (Parent, 2013).

Examination of skewness and kurtosis for each variable indicated sufficient univariate normality (i.e., skewness <3, kurtosis <10; Weston & Gore, 2006). Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations among all study variables and relationship demographic variables (i.e., relationship type [0 = *in a relationship with a woman*, 1 = *in a relationship with a man*]) and relationship length are shown in Table 1. Being in a romantic relationship with a man, $r = -.11$, $p < .05$, and being in a relationship longer, $r = -.15$, $p < .001$, were significantly associated with less RQ; thus, we controlled for relationship type and relationship length in the main analyses.

In addition, relationship type (with higher numbers indicating being in a relationship with a man) was positively related to external sexism, $r = .26$, $p < .01$, and negatively related to external heterosexism, $r = -.15$, $p < .01$. Such correlations make sense because a SMW in a relationship with a man (as opposed to a woman) may have more encounters with heteronormative contexts and heterosexual men, which might put her at increased risk

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for All Study Variables

Variable	Possible range	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. External Sexism	1–5	2.49	.83	—						
2. External Heterosexism	1–6	1.81	.81	.57**	—					
3. Internalized Sexism	1–7	2.20	.99	−.01	.21**	—				
4. Internalized Heterosexism	1–5	1.40	.58	.22**	.20**	.21**	—			
5. Silencing the Self	1–5	2.53	.67	.24**	.33**	.40**	.29**	—		
6. Relationship Type	0–1	—	—	.26**	−.15**	−.10*	.14**	−.02	—	
7. Relationship Length	0.08–37 years	4.92	5.68	−.22**	−.19**	.02	−.10*	−.10*	.06	—
8. Relationship Quality	0–5.25	3.97	1.06	.00	−.02	−.17**	−.15**	−.36**	−.11*	−.15**

Note. Relationship type coded 0 = *in relationship with a woman* and 1 = *in relationship with a man.*
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

This document is copyrighted by the American Psychological Association or one of its allied publishers.
This article is intended solely for the personal use of the individual user and is not to be disseminated broadly.

for sexist harassment and discrimination. In addition, she may be perceived by others as heterosexual rather than as a SMW, which may lessen her exposure to heterosexist rejection, harassment, and discrimination. Being in a relationship with a man was also related to less internalized sexism, $r = -.10$, $p < .05$, and more internalized heterosexism, $r = .14$, $p < .01$. Again, it may be that being in a relationship with a man increases a SMW's encounters with heteronormative contexts and social structures, which fuel more internalization of heterosexist messages. In addition, SMW in these types of relationships may have less connection to the LGB community and therefore potentially less support for her sexual identity and less exposure to positive messages about SMW. Alternatively, SMW who have higher levels of internalized heterosexism may be more likely to seek out relationships with men than with women. An explanation for the correlation between relationship type and internalized sexism is less clear. Perhaps SMW are more likely to choose male partners who are more liberal and feminist and/or develop relationships with men that are more egalitarian, which in turn cultivates internalized positive messages about being a woman.

Likewise, at the bivariate level, external sexism and external heterosexism were not associated with RQ. Such relationships make sense because previous research has not shown a direct link between interpersonal experiences of heterosexist harassment and discrimination at the individual level and RQ among LGB persons (Balsam & Szymanski, 2005; Kamen, Burns, & Beach, 2011; Otis, Rostosky, Riggle, & Hamrin, 2006). In addition, internalized sexism, $r = -.17$, $p < .01$, and internalized heterosexism, $r = -.15$, $p < .01$, were negatively associated with RQ. These findings are consistent with other research showing that internalized heterosexism is linked to poorer relational outcomes among individuals in same-sex relationships (Frost & Meyer, 2009; Mohr & Fassinger, 2006; Otis et al., 2006; Szymanski & Hilton, 2013).

Main Analyses

To test the multiple mediation effects predicted in our hypothesis, we used the Preacher and Hayes (2008) MEDIATE macro to conduct bootstrapping analyses with 1,000 bootstrapping resamples to produce 95% confidence intervals (CIs) for the indirect effect. This resampling method requires no assumptions about the normality of the sampling distribution of the indirect effect, minimizes Type I error, and is appropriate for use with small samples. Current recommendations for testing indirect effects, which do not require significant bivariate relationships between the predictor and criterion, were followed (Hayes, 2013; Shrout & Bolger, 2002). We conducted one model with multiple independent variables and a single mediator in predicting our dependent variable, RQ. We entered relationship type and relationship length as covariates. Power analyses, based on 10–20 observations per estimated parameter (Weston & Gore, 2006) for the mediation model, suggested a sample size of between 110 and 220. Thus, our sample was more than adequate. If the CI does not contain zero, then one can conclude that mediation is significant and meaningful (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

The results of our fully saturated path model are shown in Figure 1. No unique significant direct effects in predicting RQ were found for external and internalized sexism and heterosexism. However, direct effects for both control variables were significant, indicating that being in a relationship with a man and being in a relationship for a longer time period were associated with less RQ. Supporting the indirect effects, results indicated that silencing the self mediated the external sexism → RQ ($\beta = -.05$; $b = -.06$; $SE = .03$, 95% CI [–.1084, −.0097]), external heterosexism → RQ ($\beta = -.06$; $b = -.07$; $SE = .03$, 95% CI [–.1248, −.0177), internalized sexism → RQ ($\beta = -.12$; $b = -.13$; $SE = .02$, 95% CI [–.1851, −.0920]), and internalized heterosexism → RQ ($\beta = -.06$; $b = -.11$; $SE = .03$, 95% CI [–.1175, −.0531]) links. The variables accounted for 26% of the variance in silencing the self and 19% of the variance in RQ.

Discussion

Taking a feminist relational theoretical approach, our study investigated the interplay among sexism and heterosexism, silencing the self, and RQ. Our study found support for the mediating role of silencing the self in the multiple external and internalized oppressions-RQ links among SMW in a romantic relationship. Our findings suggest that the social context and associated realities in SMW's lives are important to their relational schemas. More specifically, the results are consistent with the notion that certain aspects of SMW's gender- and sexual-orientation-based oppression may influence their need to self-sacrifice, prioritize the needs of others over their own, and judge themselves via external standards. These socially and culturally based relational schemas in turn appear to harm RQ.

Other studies have found that the internalized heterosexism-relationship problems link was mediated by depressive symptoms

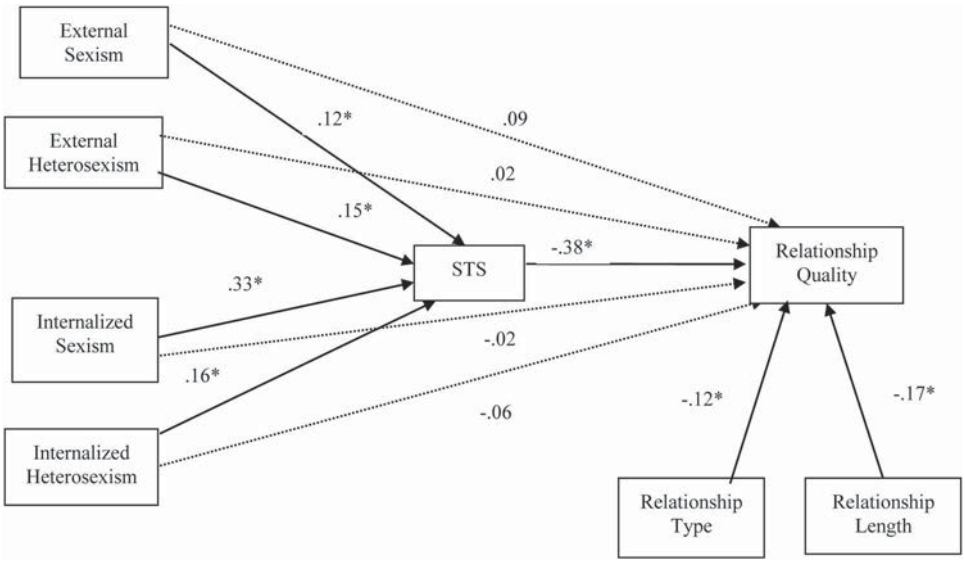

Figure 1. Model predicting relationship quality. STS = Silencing the Self. All coefficients are standardized. Solid lines represent significant effects. Dotted lines represent nonsignificant effects. * $p < .05$.

(Frost & Meyer, 2009) and fear of intimacy (Szymanski & Hilton, 2013) among individuals in same-sex relationships, which is consistent with the finding in the current study that the internalized heterosexism-RQ link can be explained by internal processes. In addition, these findings extend previous research by demonstrating that internal and relational processes are also important in explaining the link between external heterosexism and external and internalized sexism and RQ. Our findings support Hatzenbuehler's (2009) LGB theorized psychological mediation model that posits that oppressive experiences (e.g., discrimination) "get under the skin" through general psychological processes, such as relational schemas, which in turn negatively affects psychological and relational health outcomes for minority group members. Furthermore, they support feminist assertions that experiences of societal oppression may leave a SMW feeling marginalized, powerless, unwanted, and demeaned (Jack, 2011; Jordan, 2010). These feelings may fuel self-silencing beliefs and behaviors that are used to protect and maintain romantic relationships, but they come at a cost of how satisfying they are for her.

Interestingly, we also found that relationship length and relationship type were uniquely directly linked to RQ. More specifically, the results indicated that relationship length was negatively associated with RQ. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that most couples experience the highest levels of RQ during the first several years together with a decline in levels of RQ during the later years (Bradbury, Fincham, & Beach, 2000), perhaps because of habituation and less shared participation in novel and stimulating activities (Aron, Norman, Aron, McKenna, & Heyman, 2000). Another potential explanation could be due to the cross-sectional nature of the study, with potential cohort or age effects. Especially as acceptance for same-sex relationships grows in society, couples who have been in relationships for a shorter amount of time (whether with men or women) may be experiencing their relationship in a period of more acceptance for sexual minorities, which may affect RQ.

In terms of relationship type, our results indicated that SMW in romantic relationships with men were more likely to report lower RQ than SMW in romantic relationships with other women. This finding may be in part due to higher ratings of intimacy and other factors within women's same-sex relationships. For example, it has been relatively well established that women in same-sex relationships report higher levels of relationship intimacy, compatibility, and autonomy compared with women in relationships with men (Balsam, Beauchaine, Rothblum, & Solomon, 2008; Kurdek, 1998, 2004; Rosenbluth & Steil, 1995). Women in same-sex relationships also seem to spend more time together and have more shared social networks and activities. For example, Solomon, Rothblum, and Balsam (2004) found that women in same-sex relationships reported attending more social events and engaging in more leisure activity with their partners and having more mutual friends than married women in relationships with men. Furthermore, this finding may be because women in same-sex relationships tend to be more egalitarian and experience greater freedom from traditional gender roles, especially in terms of divisions of household tasks, childcare, relationship maintenance behaviors, and finance, than women in other-sex relationships (Solomon et al., 2004, Solomon, Rothblum, & Balsam, 2005). Finally, in a same-sex relationship, a woman's partner is likely to have also experienced gender- and sexual-orientation-based oppression. These shared experiences of multiple minority oppressions can form the basis for mutual respect, support, and understanding of one another, which could contribute to higher levels of RQ.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although our study deepened the understanding of how silencing the self acts as a mediator between oppression and RQ, our study must simultaneously be evaluated in the context of its limitations. This study used correlational and cross-sectional analyses with a nonprobability sample, and although we used statistical

This document is copyrighted by the American Psychological Association or one of its allied publishers.
This article is intended solely for the personal use of the individual user and is not to be disseminated broadly.

means of predicting directionality, care must be taken so as not to assume strict directional causality between our predictor and outcome variables. Longitudinal research is needed to understand how changes over time (within individuals and between cohorts) may affect RQ. Furthermore, our sampling methodology recruited a unique sample of SMW, with our sample having access to the Internet, high connectivity with LGB-related groups, and a more public self-identification as a sexual minority. Consequently, our results may be biased toward women who are very comfortable with their sexual identity and those who are well connected with the LGB community. Our results should not be generalized to SMW populations who do not fit these characteristics; innovative research is needed to understand this difficult-to-reach population. Furthermore, our data are based solely on self-report measures, including self-perceptions of behavior and experiences with oppression.

Similar to other research on SMW, our study used an additive multiple oppression conceptual framework; therefore, future studies might use intersectional frameworks (Szymanski & Henrichs-Beck, 2014; Szymanski & Moffitt, 2012). For example, given previous findings that gendered heterosexism is a unique predictor of identity-related variables (sexual identity and commitment to feminist activism and sexual minority collective action) after controlling for sexism, heterosexism, and their interaction (Friedman & Leaper, 2010), it may be beneficial for future research to examine the role of gendered heterosexism in the links between silencing the self and RQ.

Although our research looked at SMW, future research should look at how silencing the self may mediate the link between oppression and RQ among other groups (e.g., women of color, sexual minority men, etc.). Because silencing the self is viewed as a relational schema to achieve intimacy within a context of inequality (Jack, 2011), it makes theoretical sense that other communities dealing with inequality may also use silencing the self as a coping mechanism with potential negative relational outcomes. Furthermore, examining other potential mediators, such as attachment styles, relationship conflict, and general stress in the link between multiple oppressions and SMW's RQ is needed. Research is also needed to examine potential moderators, such as conformity to feminine norms, feminist identity, and identity salience of SMW's experiences of multiple oppressions, silencing the self, and relational outcomes. Finally, although we looked at how silencing the self and external and internal oppression is related to romantic-RQ, future research could explore how these constructs may be related to other close relationships for SMW, including coworkers, friends, and family. For example, it is plausible that highly oppressive workplace environments may evoke more self-silencing behavior, which may, in turn, have negative consequences on the quality of workplace relationships.

Clinical Implications

For clinicians working with SMW in relationships, this study highlights some potential points of intervention. As SMW navigate their lives within a sexist and heterosexist culture, they may adopt relational schemas in an attempt to maintain closeness and avoid conflict in relationships; however, ironically, this may negatively affect the quality of relationships (Jack, 1991, 2011). As a relational strategy, self-silencing may have the unintended consequences of not having one's needs and emotions heard and met, which may result in inauthentic experiences and a disconnection within one's self. By examining the four dimensions of silencing the self, clinicians can target interventions to these facets with the goal of improving RQ. For example, practitioners may aim to help SMW judge themselves on the basis of their own internal standards and less on imposed external standards (Tan & Carfagnini, 2008).

Second, therapists may help clients learn to balance the needs of self and others, including challenging existing ineffective schemas of care as self-sacrifice and fostering an examination of the ways sociocultural factors work to maintain these beliefs (Tan & Carfagnini, 2008). Because Silencing the Self Theory indicates that SMW may hide aspects of themselves that could potentially produce relational conflict, resulting in a disconnected self, clinicians may use this framework to work with clients on ways to authentically express their needs and emotions (e.g., assertiveness skills training). They may also emphasize gaining a broader skill set in how to manage interpersonal conflict in ways that help SMW to feel more authentic, more holistic, and less fragmented (Tan & Carfagnini, 2008). Using Relational-Cultural Theory, therapists may also focus interventions on increasing mutually empowering and growth-fostering relationships in SMW (Jordan & Hartling, 2002). Although these are tentative aspects of clinical intervention, further research is needed to determine how and under what circumstances it is advisable to decrease the silencing the self relational schema with the goal of increasing RQ in SMW. Furthermore, because of the culturally oppressive (sexist and heterosexist) environments for SMW, it is imperative that we not only encourage empowerment of SMW at the individual level but encourage advocacy at the systemic level aiming to create a more just society for SMW. This may include changing policies and practices with the goal of combating sexism and heterosexism in the workplace, in educational and religious institutions, and in the legal system.

References

American Psychological Association. (2007). Guidelines for psychological practice with girls and women. *American Psychologist, 62,* 949–979. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.62.9.949

Aron, A., Norman, C. C., Aron, E. N., McKenna, C., & Heyman, R. E. (2000). Couples' shared participation in novel and arousing activities and experienced relationship quality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78,* 273–284. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.78.2.273

Balsam, K. F., Beauchaine, T. P., Rothblum, E. D., & Solomon, S. E. (2008). Three-year follow-up of same-sex couples who had civil unions in Vermont, same-sex couples not in civil unions, and heterosexual married couples. *Developmental Psychology, 44,* 102–116. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.44.1.102

Balsam, K. F., & Szymanski, D. M. (2005). Relationship quality and domestic violence in women's same-sex relationships: The role of minority stress. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 29,* 258–269. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2005.00220.x

Bearman, S., Korobov, N., & Thorne, A. (2009). The fabric of internalized sexism. *Journal of Integrated Social Sciences, 1,* 10–47.

Bradbury, T. N., Fincham, F. D., & Beach, S. R. (2000). Research on the nature and determinants of marital satisfaction: A decade in review. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 62,* 964–980. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2000.00964.x

This document is copyrighted by the American Psychological Association or one of its allied publishers.
This article is intended solely for the personal use of the individual user and is not to be disseminated broadly.

Brody, L. R., Stokes, L. R., Dale, S. K., Kelso, G. A., Cruise, R. C., Weber, K. M., . . . Cohen, M. H. (2014). Gender roles and mental health in women with and at risk for HIV. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 38,* 311–326. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0361684314525579

Brown, L. S. (1994). *Subversive dialogues*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Dale, S. K., Cohen, M. H., Kelso, G. A., Cruise, R. C., Weber, K. M., Watson, C., . . . Brody, L. R. (2014). Resilience among women with HIV: Impact of silencing the self and socioeconomic factors. *Sex Roles, 70,* 221–231. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11199-014-0348-x

Diamond, L. M. (2005). A new view of lesbian subtypes: Stable versus fluid identity trajectories over an 8-year period. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 29,* 119–128. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2005.00174.x

Diamond, L. M. (2008). Female bisexuality from adolescence to adulthood: Results from a 10-year longitudinal study. *Developmental Psychology, 44,* 5–14. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.44.1.5

Friedman, C., & Leaper, C. (2010). Sexual-minority college women's experiences with discrimination: Relations with identity and collective action. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 34,* 152–164. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2010.01558.x

Frost, D. M., & Meyer, I. H. (2009). Internalized homophobia and relationship quality among lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 56,* 97–109. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0012844

Funk, J. L., & Rogge, R. D. (2007). Testing the ruler with item response theory: Increasing precision of measurement for relationship satisfaction with the Couples Satisfaction Index. *Journal of Family Psychology, 21,* 572–583. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.21.4.572

Harper, M. S., & Welsh, D. P. (2007). Keeping quiet: Self-silencing and its association with relational and individual functioning among and adolescent romantic couples. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 24,* 99–116. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0265407507072601

Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2009). How does sexual minority stigma "get under the skin"? A psychological mediation framework. *Psychological Bulletin, 135,* 707–730. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0016441

Hayes, A. F. (2013). *Introduction to mediation, moderation and conditional process analysis: A regression based approach*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Herek, G. M., Cogan, J. C., & Gillis, J. R. (2000). *Psychological well-being and commitment to lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities*. Paper presented in G. M. Herek (Chair), Identity, community, and well-being among lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Herek, G. M., Cogan, J. C., Gillis, J. R., & Glunt, E. K. (1998). Correlates of internalized homophobia in a community sample of lesbians and gay men. *Journal of the Gay & Lesbian Medical Association, 2,* 17–25.

Hurst, R. J., & Beesley, D. (2013). Perceived sexism, self-silencing, and psychological distress in college women. *Sex Roles, 68,* 311–320. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11199-012-0253-0

Jack, D. C. (1991). *Silencing the self: Women and depression*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

Jack, D. C. (1999). Silencing the self: Inner dialogues and outer realities. In T. Joiner & J. C. Coyne (Eds.), *The interactional nature of depression* (pp. 221–246). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/10311-008

Jack, D. C. (2011). Reflections on the silencing the self scale and its origins. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 35,* 523–529. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0361684311414824

Jack, D. C., & Ali, A. (Eds.). (2010). *Silencing the self across cultures: Depression and gender in the social world*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195398090.001.0001

Jack, D. C., Ali, A., & Dias, S. (2014). Depression in multicultural populations. In F. T. L. Leong, L. Comas-Díaz, H. Nagayama, C. Gordon, V. C. McLoyd, & J. E. Trimble (Eds.), *APA Handbook of multicultural psychology: Vol. 2. Applications and training* (pp. 267–287). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/14187-016

Jack, D. C., & Dill, D. (1992). Silencing the Self Scale: Schemas of intimacy associated with depression in women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 16,* 97–106. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1992.tb00242.x

Jordan, J. V. (2010). *Relational-cultural therapy*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press.

Jordan, J. V., & Hartling, L. (2002). New developments in Relational-Cultural Theory. In M. Ballou & L. S. Brown (Eds.), *Rethinking mental health and disorder: Feminist perspectives* (pp. 48–70). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Kamen, C., Burns, M., & Beach, S. R. (2011). Minority stress in same-sex male relationships: When does it impact relationship satisfaction? *Journal of Homosexuality, 58,* 1372–1390. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2011.614904

Kurdek, L. A. (1998). Relationship outcomes and their predictors: Longitudinal evidence from heterosexual married, gay cohabitating, and lesbian cohabitating couples. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 60,* 553–568. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/353528

Kurdek, L. A. (2004). Are gay and lesbian cohabitating couples really different from heterosexual married couples? *Journal of Marriage and Family, 66,* 880–900. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.0022-2445.2004.00060.x

Locke, H. J., & Wallace, K. M. (1959). Short marital adjustment and prediction tests: Their reliability and validity. *Marriage & Family Living, 21,* 251–255. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/348022

Martin, J. L., & Dean, L. L. (1987). *Ego-dystonic homosexuality scale*. Unpublished manuscript, Columbia University. Retrieved from http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/ihpitems.html

Miller, J. B. (1986). *What do we mean by relationships? Work in progress No. 22*. Wellesley, MA: Stone Center.

Miller, J. B., & Stiver, I. P. (1997). *The healing connection: How women form relationships in therapy and in life*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Mohr, J. J., & Fassinger, R. E. (2006). Sexual orientation identity and romantic relationship quality in same-sex couples. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 32,* 1085–1099. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0146167206288281

Otis, M. D., Rostosky, S. S., Riggle, E. D., & Hamrin, R. (2006). Stress and relationship quality in same-sex couples. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 23,* 81–99. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0265407506060179

Parent, M. C. (2013). Handling item-level missing data: Simpler is just as good. *The Counseling Psychologist, 41,* 568–600. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0011000012445176

Pickett, C. L., Gardner, W. L., & Knowles, M. (2004). Getting a cue: The need to belong and enhanced sensitivity to social cues. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 30,* 1095–1107. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0146167203262085

Piggot, M. (2004). *Double jeopardy: Lesbians and the legacy of multiple stigmatized identities*. Unpublished thesis, Psychology Strand at Swinburne University of Technology, Australia.

Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2008). Asymptotic and resampling strategies for assessing and comparing indirect effects in multiple mediator models. *Behavior Research Methods, 40,* 879–891. http://dx.doi.org/10.3758/BRM.40.3.879

Remen, A. L. (2000). Silencing the self: An examination of a theoretical explanation for depression in women. *Dissertation Abstracts International B. The Physical Sciences and Engineering, 60* (12-B), 6380.

Riggle, E. D. B., Rostosky, S. S., & Reedy, C. S. (2005). Online surveys for BGLT research: Issues and techniques. *Journal of Homosexuality, 49,* 1–21. http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J082v49n02_01

This document is copyrighted by the American Psychological Association or one of its allied publishers.
This article is intended solely for the personal use of the individual user and is not to be disseminated broadly.

Rosenbluth, S., & Steil, J. M. (1995). Predictors of intimacy for women in heterosexual and homosexual couples. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 12,* 163–175. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0265407595122001

Shrout, P. E., & Bolger, N. (2002). Mediation in experimental and nonexperimental studies: New procedures and recommendations. *Psychological Methods, 7,* 422–445. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/1082-989X.7.4.422

Smart Richman, L., & Leary, M. R. (2009). Reactions to discrimination, stigmatization, ostracism, and other forms of interpersonal rejection: A multimotive model. *Psychological Review, 116,* 365–383. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0015250

Solomon, S. E., Rothblum, E. D., & Balsam, K. F. (2004). Pioneers in partnership: Lesbian and gay male couples in civil unions compared with those not in civil unions and married heterosexual siblings. *Journal of Family Psychology, 18,* 275–286. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.18.2.275

Solomon, S. E., Rothblum, E. D., & Balsam, K. F. (2005). Money, housework, sex, and conflict: Same-sex couples in civil unions, those not in civil unions, and heterosexual married siblings. *Sex Roles, 52,* 561–575. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11199-005-3725-7

Spanier, G. B. (1976). Measuring dyadic adjustment: New scales for assessing the quality of marriage and similar dyads. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 38,* 15–28. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/350547

Swim, J. K., Cohen, L. L., & Hyers, L. L. (1998). Experiencing everyday prejudice and discrimination. In J. K. Swim & C. Stangor (Eds.), *Prejudice: The target's perspective* (pp. 37–60). San Diego, CA: Academic Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/B978-012679130-3/50037-5

Swim, J. K., Hyers, L. L., Cohen, L. L., & Ferguson, M. J. (2001). Everyday sexism: Evidence for its incidence, nature, and psychological impact from three daily diary studies. *Journal of Social Issues, 57,* 31–53. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00200

Szymanski, D. M. (2006). Does internalized heterosexism moderate the link between heterosexist events and lesbians' psychological distress? *Sex Roles, 54,* 227–234. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11199-006-9340-4

Szymanski, D. M., Dunn, T. L., & Ikizler, A. S. (2014). Multiple minority stressors and psychological distress among sexual minority women: The roles of rumination and maladaptive coping. *Journal of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, 1,* 412–421. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000066

Szymanski, D. M., & Henrichs-Beck, C. (2014). Exploring sexual minority women's experiences of external and internalized heterosexism and sexism and their links to coping and distress. *Sex Roles, 70,* 28–42. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11199-013-0329-5

Szymanski, D. M., & Hilton, A. N. (2013). Fear of intimacy as a mediator in the internalized heterosexism-relationship quality link among men in same sex relationships. *Contemporary Family Therapy, 35,* 760–772. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10591-013-9249-3

Szymanski, D. M., & Kashubeck-West, S. (2008). Mediators of the relationship between internalized oppressions and lesbian and bisexual women's psychological distress. *The Counseling Psychologist, 36,* 575–594. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0011000007309490

Szymanski, D. M., Kashubeck-West, S., & Meyer, J. (2008). Internalized heterosexism: Measurement, psychosocial correlates, and research directions. *The Counseling Psychologist, 36,* 525–574. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0011000007309489

Szymanski, D. M., & Moffitt, L. B. (2012). Sexism and heterosexism. In N. A. Fouad (Ed.), *Handbook of counseling psychology: Vol. 2. Theories, practice, training, and policy* (pp. 361–390). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/13755-015

Szymanski, D. M., & Owens, G. P. (2009). Group-level coping as a moderator between heterosexism and sexism and psychological distress in sexual minority women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 33,* 197–205. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2009.01489.x

Tan, J., & Carfagnini, B. (2008). Self-silencing, anger and depressive symptoms in women: Implications for prevention and intervention. *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community, 35,* 5–18. http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J005v35n02_02

Thompson, J. M. (1995). Silencing the self: Depressive symptomatology and close relationships. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 19,* 337–353. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1995.tb00079.x

Thompson, J. M., Whiffen, V. E., & Aube, J. A. (2001). Does self silencing link perceptions of care from parents and partners with depressive symptoms? *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 18,* 503–516. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0265407501184004

Uebelacker, L. A., Courtnage, E. S., & Whisman, M. A. (2003). Correlates of depression and marital dissatisfaction: Perceptions of marital communication style. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 20,* 757–769. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0265407503206003

Walker, M. (2005). Critical thinking: Challenging developmental myths, stigmas and stereotypes. In D. Comstock (Ed.), *Diversity and development: Critical contexts that shape our lives and relationships* (pp. 47–66). Belmont, CA: Thomson, Brooks/Cole.

Weston, R., & Gore, P. A. (2006). A brief guide to structural equation modeling. *The Counseling Psychologist, 34,* 719–751. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0011000006286345

Woods, S. J. (1999). Normative beliefs regarding the maintenance of intimate relationships among abused and nonabused women. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 14,* 479–491. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/088626099014005002

Received July 16, 2015
Revision received September 16, 2015
Accepted September 16, 2015 ■

This document is copyrighted by the American Psychological Association or one of its allied publishers.
This article is intended solely for the personal use of the individual user and is not to be disseminated broadly.