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A Friend of Yours Is No Friend of Mine: Jealousy Toward a Romantic Partner's Friends

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Abstract

The current research examined the novel hypothesis that a romantic partner's same-sex friends can elicit jealousy by threatening people's central role in their partner's life. Thus, we expected that people whose partners were highly central to their lives would be particularly likely to experience jealousy toward their partner's same-sex friends and that jealousy would be exacerbated when they had reason to doubt their partner's commitment. Two studies supported our hypotheses. This research highlights how people alter perceptions of their partner's broader social context to minimize perceived threats to their romantic relationships.

Keywords

jealousy, close relationships, friendships, dependence

Jealousy is all the fun you think they had. –Erica Jong

As Jong implies, imagining one's romantic partner enjoying the company of others can be painful. Indeed, jealousy toward romantic rivals (RRJ) is a pervasive phenomenon (Harris, 2003). However, a romantic partner's social network is not limited to interactions with potential suitors. These networks usually include close friends and confidants who routinely compete for a romantic partner's time, affection, and energy. Because interactions with close friends likely outnumber interactions with potential suitors for most partners, it is important to understand how the ''fun'' a romantic partner has with friends outside the relationship impacts internal relationship dynamics. The current article provides an initial look at the relationship determinants and manifestations of partner–friend jealousy (PFJ).

Friends and Jealousy

People experience jealousy when a rival threatens to usurp their place in a valued relationship (Parrot, 1991). Although jealousy may help preserve relationships against this threat (Barelds & Barelds-Dijkstra, 2007; Harris & Darby, 2010), it is also associated with negative and destructive emotional and behavioral responses (DeSteno, Valdesolo, & Bartlett, 2006; Harris, 2003; Mathes, Adams, & Davies, 1985; Salovey & Rodin, 1986).

Existing research has almost exclusively focused on RRJ. But friends constitute the majority (58%) of people's social networks and are popular activity partners (Fisher, 1982). People also derive a great sense of belonging from their friendships (Doherty & Feeney, 2004; Fraley & Davis, 1997; Klinger, 1977; La Guardia, Ryan, Couchman, & Deci, 2000). Moreover, most college students show more secure attachment to their best friends than to romantic partners, perhaps because their friendships often last longer than their romantic relationships (La Guardia et al., 2000). In marriage, people even characterize time spent with friends as more enjoyable than time spent with spouses (Larson & Bradney, 1988).

Perceivers' own experiences are likely to reveal how rewarding and irreplaceable friendships can be. Given this knowledge, the ''fun'' perceivers see or imagine their partner having with his or her closest friends could elicit jealousy. Specifically, perceivers might fear their romantic partner's most valued friends could undermine their central importance to the partner's life. People typically expect their romantic partners to be more responsive to their needs than to the needs of the partners' friends (Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004). Therefore, friends can threaten the perceivers' own centrality through their potential to draw a partner's tangible and intangible resources (e.g., time and intimacy) away from oneself, violating these expectations. For example, when Leslie confides her insecurities to her best friend Ann, it diminishes her partner Ben's importance as Leslie's confidant and detracts from the time she spends with Ben. Of course, romantic rivals could also detract from the time

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Leslie spends with Ben, but their threat comes from their potential to end the relationship completely. In contrast, the threat Leslie's friends pose to Ben comes from their potential to change Ben's special or niche position in Leslie's social network into a more peripheral one (Tooby & Cosmides, 1996).

Although romantic jealousy is a fairly pervasive phenomenon (Parrot, 1991), PFJ may be less universal. Not everyone is likely to be equally threatened by the time, energy, and affections a partner devotes to his or her close friends. Instead, friends may be most threatening for people who are more dependent on their partners because their partners are especially central to their lives. People whose partners are highly central view their relationship as highly important and meaningful, include their partner in their self-concept, and are especially motivated to maintain their relationship (Agnew, Van Lange, Rusbult, & Langston, 1998; Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991). Because asymmetries in each partner's caring and commitment undermine relationships, people whose partners are highly central should also be motivated to believe that they are just as central to their partner's life as their partner is to their own life (Murray & Holmes, 2011).

Therefore, for people whose partners are highly central to their lives, a partner giving affection and attention to a close friend could undermine their desired perception that their partner values their relationship just as much as they do. By envying and derogating their partner's friends, people whose partners are highly central could bolster perceptions of their partner's caring and regard for them. However, friends are likely to pose the greatest threat to perceptions of one's own centrality to the partner when people already have reason to question their partner's caring and regard (Murray, Holmes, & Collins, 2006). Therefore, we expect people to be most likely to jealously derogate their partner's friends when the relationship is highly central in their own life, but they doubt their partner's reciprocal caring.

Let's return to our example relationship triad. Leslie's friend Ann is unlikely to completely replace Ben in Leslie's life. Nonetheless, Ann can limit Ben's centrality to Leslie's life by taking up her time and being her confidant. In other words, in Ben's mind, Leslie's friendship with Ann might undermine his own unique value to Leslie. If Leslie is extremely central to Ben's life, Ann should be an especially large threat, motivating him to restore his perceived importance to Leslie. By jealously derogating Leslie's friendship with Ann, Ben can maintain his perception of his own importance to Leslie and thereby reaffirm his sense that Leslie is uniquely dependent on him and their relationship. Furthermore, Ben may be especially likely to derogate Ann when he feels less confident in his relationship with Leslie, such as after an argument. However, if Ben's life is also filled with friends, hobbies, and a great career (and Leslie is not as central), then he should be less threatened by sharing Leslie with Ann, giving him less reason to derogate Ann.

We examined these hypotheses using correlational and experimental designs. Study 1 examined whether greater centrality predicted greater PFJ and whether this association would be stronger among people who were less confident in their partners' caring and regard for them. Study 2 experimentally tested whether priming centrality would lead participants to derogate their partners' friends when participants were led to question their partner's caring and regard. Thus, both studies predict that partner centrality will predict PFJ, particularly when people feel less confident in their partners' caring and regard. Consistent with past research (Harris, 2003; Parrot, 1991), both studies also predicted that RRJ would be more common, but less contingent, than PFJ. We reasoned that centrality may not be the primary determinant of RRJ because completely losing a valued relationship to a romantic rival should be threatening even to people whose partners are not highly central.

Study 1

In this initial, correlational study of PFJ, we expected people whose partners were highly central to report greater jealousy toward their partners' same-sex friends, particularly when they were also less confident in their partners' caring for them. We also expected this interaction to remain robust when several plausible alternate explanations for the hypothesized effects were controlled. Although RRJ was not the primary focus of the present studies, we expected RRJ to be higher than PFJ and less robustly related to centrality. We operationalized a partner's romantic alternatives as his or her opposite-sex friends in both studies because individuals usually choose opposite-sex friends based on the same criteria with which they select romantic partners (Lewis et al., 2011) and often see opposite-sex friends as potential romantic partners (Bleske & Buss, 2000).

Method

Participants

One hundred eight participants (38 men) in exclusive heterosexual relationships from introductory psychology courses at the University at Buffalo participated in the study for course credit. Participants had been involved in their relationships for an average of 17.98 months (standard deviation [*SD*] = 12.59).

Procedure

Participants first completed several background and personality measures, including measures of loneliness, need to belong, and attachment anxiety. Next, participants completed measures of their feelings about their romantic relationships (e.g., centrality and perceived partner caring) and measures of PFJ and RRJ. They also evaluated various aspects of their own and their partners' friendships (e.g., partners' perceived closeness to their same- and opposite-sex friends and participants' closeness to their own friends). Relational items and items related to participants' and their partners' friendships were counterbalanced across participants.

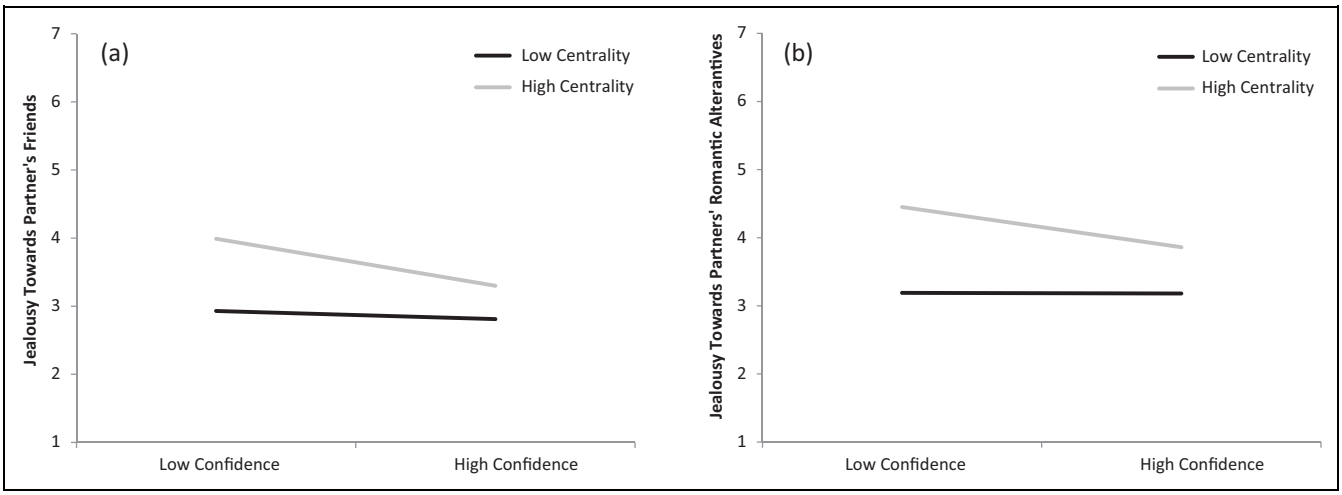

Figure 1. (a) The confidence by partner centrality interaction predicting partner–friend jealousy in Study 1. (b) The confidence by partner centrality interaction predicting jealousy toward romantic rivals in Study 1.

Measures

Partner centrality. We assessed partner centrality ($\alpha = .82$) with a 4-item measure from Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, and Lipkus (1991; e.g., ''Among the things that give your life meaning, how important is your relationship?'') on a 7-point scale.

Perceived partner caring. We assessed perceived partner closeness (e.g., ''My partner is very much in love with me.'') with a 5-item measure (1 = *not at all true*, 9 = *completely true*) from Murray, Rose, Bellavia, Holmes, and Kusche (2002). We also measured perceived partner commitment to the relationship with a 3-item measure (1 = *do not agree at all*, 9 = *agree completely*) modified from Rusbult, Martz, and Agnew (1998; e.g., ''My partner wants our relationship to last a very long time''). We standardized and combined these scales to form an index of perceived partner caring ($\alpha = .72$).

Jealousy. We created two 18-item measures to assess PFJ ($\alpha = .89$) and RRJ ($\alpha = .93$). Participants completed the two scales based on their feelings about their partners' same- and opposite-sex friends as a whole. Items tapped jealousy toward the amount of time partners spend with their same-sex friends and romantic alternatives (e.g., ''I wish my partner would spend less time with his/her friends.'') and toward partners' self-disclosure to their same-sex friends and romantic alternatives (e.g., ''It sometimes bothers me when my partner shares personal information with his/her friends.'') on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). We created these items to capture negative emotions related to the partner's friendships and participants' desire to change the partner's behavior with his or her friends.

Personality covariates. Participants completed scales tapping various personality constructs, including the University of California, Los Angeles Loneliness Scale (Russell, 1996), a measure of chronic loneliness (e.g., ''How often do you feel that you lack companionship?''), the Need to Belong Scale (Leary, Kelly, Cottrell, & Schreindorfer, 2013), a measure of people's need for close bonds with others (e.g., ''I want other people to accept me.''), and a shortened (19-item) Experiences in Close Relationships–Revised Questionnaire (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000), a measure of attachment security.

Friendship covariates. We assessed several aspects of participants' own friendships and their perceptions of their partners' friendships. Participants rated their own closeness to their same- and opposite-sex friends and their partners' closeness to their same- and opposite-sex friends on a 7-point scale (1 = *not at all close*, 7 = *extremely close*). Participants were also asked to compare the amount of time their partners spent with them to the amount of time they spent with friends on a 7-point scale (1 = *much less than with me*, 7 = *much more than with me*).

Results and Discussion

First, we conducted a paired-samples *t*-test to determine whether participants experienced one type of jealousy more than the other. As expected, participants were significantly more jealous of their partners' romantic alternatives ($M = 3.61$) than their partners' same-sex friends ($M = 3.20$), $t(107) = 5.52$, $p < .001$, suggesting that romantic rivals may be more threatening in general.

We then tested our primary prediction that partner centrality would interact with confidence in the partner's caring to predict PFJ. We regressed PFJ on partner centrality (standardized), the perceived caring composite, and their interaction. As expected, centrality and perceived caring significantly interacted to predict PFJ, $\beta = -.19$, $t(104) = -2.00$, $p < .05$ (see Figure 1a).[1] We then decomposed this interaction at high and low values of perceived caring. Greater centrality generally predicted greater PFJ, but as expected, this relation was stronger when

Table 1. Regression Analysis Predicting PFJ and RRJ in Study 1.

	Partner–Friend Jealousy		Romantic Jealousy	
	β	*t*	β	*t*
Gender	−.05	−.57	−.01	−0.13
Relationship length	.10	1.13	.07	0.83
Loneliness	.02	.23	.17	1.87†
Need to belong	.37	4.09***	.25	2.78**
Attachment anxiety	−.04	−.46	−.09	−0.96
Participants' closeness to own same-sex friends	−.13	−.1.32	−.07	−0.77
Participants' closeness to own opposite-sex friends	−.19	−2.04*	−.18	−1.97†
Partners' perceived closeness to same-sex friends	−.06	−.66	.06	0.66
Partners' perceived closeness to opposite-sex friends	−.03	−.36	−.20	−2.22*
Time partner spends with friends	−.01	.15	.12	1.47
Partner centrality	.39	3.97***	.37	3.83***
Perceived partner caring	−.25	−2.46*	−.16	−1.54
Partner Centrality × Perceived Partner Caring	−.18	−1.91†	−.12	−1.36

Note. PFJ = partner–friend jealousy; RRJ = jealousy toward romantic rivals.
†$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

participants were less confident of their partners' caring, $\beta = .63$, $t(104) = 4.60$, $p < .001$, than when participants were more confident, $\beta = .31$, $t(104) = 2.66$, $p < .01$.

Next, we explored whether centrality and confidence in the partner's caring would interact to predict RRJ. The analysis revealed a marginally significant interaction between centrality and perceived caring (see Figure 1b), $\beta = -.16$, $t(104) = -1.69$, $p < .094$. Greater centrality predicted greater RRJ, but this relation was stronger when participants were less confident of their partners' caring, $\beta = .61$, $t(104) = 4.49$, $p < .001$, than when participants were more confident, $\beta = .34$, $t(104) = 2.97$, $p < .01$.

We next examined whether these interactions remained robust when several confounds were controlled. Table 1 summarizes the effects of these covariates on PFJ and RRJ. We reasoned that these variables could plausibly account for the observed effects of centrality and perceived partner caring. For example, people with highly central partners who doubt their partners' caring might report greater PFJ because they are less close to their own friends or because they are chronically lonely or anxiously attached. We also controlled for how close participants perceived their partners to feel to their same- and opposite-sex friends and the amount of time partners spent with friends. Even with these numerous covariates, the partner centrality by perceived caring interaction still remained marginally significant for PFJ, $\beta = -.18$, $t(94) = -1.91$, $p < .10$ but was no longer significant for RRJ, $\beta = -.12$, $t(94) = -1.36$, *ns*.

In sum, our findings suggest that people whose partners were highly central were more likely to experience both PFJ and RRJ, particularly when they questioned their partners' caring. The interaction effect for PFJ was reduced only slightly when we controlled for the influence of covariates that could plausibly influence PFJ, suggesting that centrality is a fairly strong determinant of PFJ, especially among people who question their partners' caring. In contrast, the interaction effect for RRJ was reduced substantially when we included the covariates in the model, suggesting that although centrality may be related to RRJ, other factors may be more influential in predicting this phenomenon.

Study 2

Study 2 tested these dynamics experimentally by examining the effect of priming partner centrality on people's derogation of their partners' friends. In the centrality prime condition, we primed participants with their partners' importance. In the love prime condition, we primed participants with positive thoughts about their relationships. We expected the centrality prime to make participants' dependence on their partners salient. However, consistent with Study 1, we expected such acutely increased dependence to be more likely to elicit PFJ when participants were less confident in their partners' reciprocal regard. In other words, we expected participants in the centrality prime condition to be most concerned with maintaining their perceived importance to their partners when they had reason to doubt their partners' caring for them (Murray et al., 2006). Thus, we also manipulated relationship threat to create concerns about the partner's caring, regard, and long-term commitment (Cavallo, Fitzsimons, & Holmes, 2009).

We expected threatened, centrality-primed participants to restore perceptions of their importance to their partner by jealously derogating their partners' close friends. We also explored whether priming centrality would lead participants to derogate their romantic rivals. Therefore, we asked participants to evaluate the interpersonal characteristics of their partner's closest same-sex friend and an opposite-sex friend. We did not directly measure jealousy as an outcome because we wanted to examine jealousy's potential consequences (i.e., derogation) without making jealousy salient and potentially eliciting reactivity. Indeed, people are sometimes reluctant to admit to being jealous because it is considered a socially undesirable emotion (DeSteno et al., 2006; Wiederman, Allgeier, &

Ragusa, 1995). When participants had reason to question their partners' reciprocal regard (i.e., threat condition), we expected centrality-primed participants to derogate their partners' friends. When participants had no reason to question their partners' reciprocal regard (i.e., no-threat condition), we expected centrality to have an attenuated effect on jealous derogation.

Method

Participants

One hundred and fifty-two participants in exclusive heterosexual romantic relationships (mean length = 22.29 months, $SD = 38.97$) participated in Study 2. Two participants were dropped because they expressed suspicion about the textbook passage, and two participants were dropped because they did not complete the priming task, leaving a sample of 148 (70 men). Participants were recruited from introductory psychology courses at the University at Buffalo and were compensated with course credit.

Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions. Participants were told the study concerned their thoughts and feelings about various members of their social network and their memory for social events. Participants first named various members of their social network, including their partner's same-sex best friend and an opposite-sex friend (i.e., romantic alternative) and were told that they would answer questions about randomly selected individuals from the names they provided. In reality, all participants answered questions about their partner's same- and opposite-sex friends. Next, participants completed several background and personality measures (e.g., self-esteem).

Then participants completed the priming task. In the centrality prime condition, participants were asked to list ways their lives would be different if they had never met their partners. More specifically, they were asked to "imagine what your life would be like if you were not in a relationship with and did not know your current romantic partner. When you are imagining this scenario, think about the important contributions your partner makes to your life and the ways in which you rely on your partner" and then to "list the four most important or significant ways in which your life would be different." This prime was intended to make the partners' importance to participants' lives salient without inviting comparisons between the importance of the partner relative to other areas of the participants' lives, particularly their own friendships. Participants in the love prime condition were asked to "think about the reasons why you love your romantic partner and the aspects of your romantic partner that you love the most" and then to "list the four things about your partner that you love the most." This prime was designed to also activate positive thoughts about the relationship without specifically activating centrality.

After completing the priming manipulation, participants read a fabricated textbook passage they were told summarized recent research in our lab (Cavallo et al., 2009). To ensure they attended to the passage, participants were told that they would be asked to recall details from the passage later in the study. The passage described vignettes in the week of a fictional couple and then interpreted each vignette from a research perspective. Each vignette featured the couple negotiating different preferences and coordinating activities (e.g., deciding which movie to see). In the threat condition, the research interpretations suggested that the couple's behaviors showed evidence of a lack of regard for one another and that couples often overlook such evidence and perceive their relationships as better than they actually are. Reading this passage has been shown to foster doubts about people's own relationships and to trigger risk regulation processes (Cavallo et al., 2009). In the no-threat condition, the research interpretations suggested that the couple's behavior was evidence of good relationship functioning.

Next, participants rated their partner's same-sex best friend's and romantic alternative's interpersonal qualities.[2] Finally, participants were asked to recall details from the passage. Then they were thanked for their participation and debriefed.

Measures

Friends' interpersonal qualities. Participants rated their partners' same-sex best friends and romantic alternatives on 26 interpersonal qualities (adapted from Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996) on a 9-point scale (1 = *not at all characteristic*, 9 = *extremely characteristic*). We included both positive (e.g., friendly and warm) and negative (e.g., lazy, critical and judgmental; reverse-coded) qualities.

Results and Discussion

In the relationship threat condition in particular, we expected centrality-primed participants to derogate their partner's same-sex best friend more than love-primed participants. We also explored the effects of our manipulations on participants' derogation of their romantic rivals. To test our predictions, we created separate composites for participants' ratings of their partner's same-sex best friend's and romantic alternative's interpersonal qualities, with higher scores representing more positive evaluations. Consistent with Study 1, participants derogated their romantic rivals ($M = 5.95$, $SD = 1.22$) more than their partner's best friends ($M = 6.18$, $SD = 1.11$) overall, $t(147) = -1.91$, $p < .10$.

We conducted analyses of variance to examine the effects of our manipulations on derogation of the two targets. In support of our primary hypothesis, the predicted threat by prime interaction was significant for ratings of partners' best friends, $F(1, 144) = 6.15$, $p < .05$ (see Figure 2a). The threat by prime interaction was not significant for ratings of romantic alternatives, $F(1, 144) = 1.38$, *ns* (see Figure 2b).[3] For PFJ, simple effects tests revealed that among participants who were threatened, those who had previously been primed with centrality

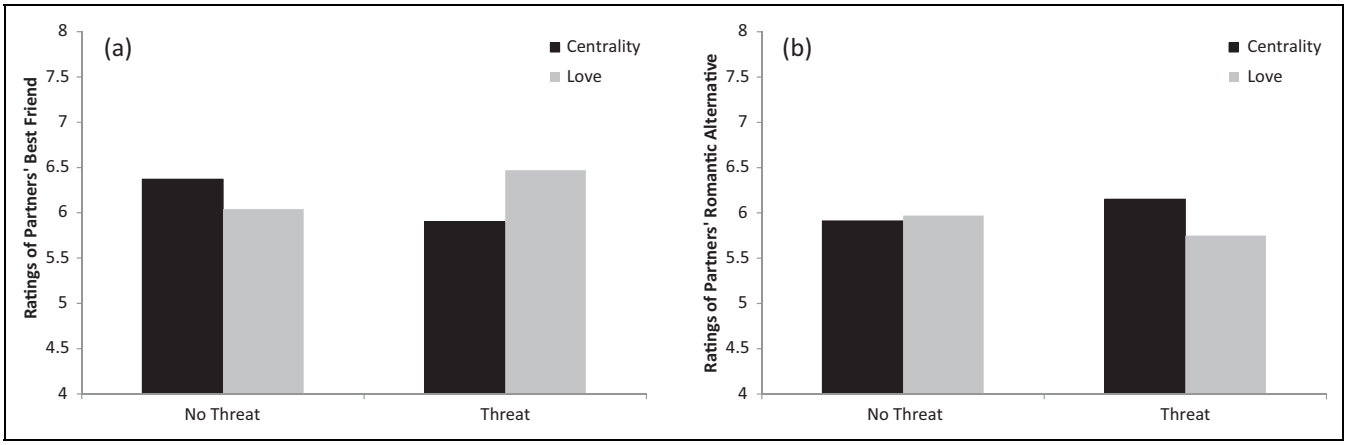

Figure 2. (a) The threat by prime interaction predicting ratings of partners' best friends in Study 2. (b) The threat by prime interaction predicting ratings of partners' romantic alternatives in Study 2.

rated their partners' best friend significantly less positively ($M = 5.90$, $SD = 1.39$) than those who had been primed with love ($M = 6.47$, $SD = 0.78$), $t = -2.31$, $p < .05$. In the no-threat condition, the centrality prime condition ($M = 6.37$, $SD = 0.94$) and the love prime condition ($M = 6.04$, $SD = 1.24$) did not differ, $t = 1.23$, *ns*.

In priming centrality, we intended to make the partner's importance to the participant salient. But thinking about how their lives would be different without their partners might have also evoked anxiety about losing the relationship for participants in the centrality prime condition. As a result, our findings may have emerged because threatening cognitions about the relationship, rather than thoughts about the partner's importance, were salient. To address this issue, four coders rated the extent to which participants' responses to the primes reflected anxiety about participants' relationships. Coders were blind to the study's hypotheses and participants' condition. Although the level of anxiety expressed was very low overall, participants in the centrality prime condition ($M = 2.23$, $SD = 0.52$) did express more concern about their relationships than participants in the love prime condition ($M = 1.08$, $SD = 0.13$), $t(146) = 18.97$, $p < .001$. However, when these average ratings were controlled, the threat by prime interaction predicting ratings of partners' best friends remained significant, $F(1, 143) = 6.13$, $p < .05$, whereas the threat by prime interaction predicting ratings of participants' romantic rivals remained nonsignificant, $F(1, 143) = 1.43$, *ns*. Thus, our findings do not appear to have emerged because threatening cognitions about participants' relationships were more salient in the centrality prime condition.

In sum, Study 2 demonstrated that making partner centrality salient led participants to derogate their partner's best friend when they doubted their partner's mutual regard. Compared to participants who were primed with love, participants primed with centrality viewed their partner's best friend more negatively when they experienced relationship threat. In contrast, centrality and threat did not lead to additional derogation of romantic alternatives.

General Discussion

Although friends are highly important to most people's lives, take up a large portion of their free time, and make them happier than most other relationships, no other research, to date, has examined how a partner's friendships might threaten romantic relationships. Two studies supported our hypotheses that when their partners are more central, people experience greater PFJ and engage in jealous derogation of their partners' same-sex friends. In Study 1, we found that participants whose partners were more central reported greater jealousy toward their partners' same-sex friends, particularly when participants were less confident in their partners' caring. This interaction remained marginally significant even when we controlled for participants' personality characteristics and characteristics of their own and their partners' friendships, suggesting that centrality has a unique relationship with PFJ that is not accounted for by other related factors. In Study 2, we replicated these findings experimentally. When participants experienced relationship threat, those primed with centrality derogated their partner's best friend more than control participants. Thus, the current work provides evidence that people whose partners are central to their lives, yet doubt their partner's reciprocal caring, may routinely engage in behavior (e.g., jealous derogation of the partner's friends) that may undermine their partner's bonds with others.

The current work also suggests that PFJ differs from RRJ. Across both studies, participants showed higher overall levels of RRJ than PFJ, and the relationships between RRJ and centrality and confidence were less consistent. These differences are unsurprising, given the different kinds of threats posed by different members of partners' social networks. Specifically, a partner's friends cannot completely replace one in the partner's life. However, they can compete for time and attention. Thus, PFJ should be strongest when a partner's attention is very important and when one doubts one's own importance to the partner. Conversely, romantic rivals have the potential to completely replace one in a partner's life. Thus, although one would predict that centrality and confidence (and other variables

related to relationship quality) might be related to RRJ, one might also predict that this relationship should be smaller than with PFJ, just as we found.

Our findings make several significant and novel contributions to the scientific understanding of close relationships. These studies are among the first to demonstrate that a partner's same-sex friends can elicit jealousy and its outcomes. Thus, our findings underscore the importance of studying romantic relationships within their broader social context. Although a partner's friends can validate and support their romantic relationships (Parks, Stan, & Eggert, 1983; Sprecher, 2011), our findings suggest that a partner's friends may also have negative effects on their romantic relationships. In perceivers' minds, friends might compete with perceivers for their partner's attention and affection. Because they can threaten people's status as the central figure in the partner's life in this way, a partner's friends may be a source of conflict and may undermine the stability of romantic relationships. Future research is needed to better understand how partners balance their friendships and romantic relationships to cope effectively with this threat.

Our findings also highlight a potential cost of becoming more interdependent with a romantic partner. Although greater interdependence can be rewarding (e.g., Aron, Paris, & Aron, 1995), it also leaves people vulnerable to pain and rejection (Murray et al., 2006). The current studies suggest that when romantic partners become more central to people's lives, people who doubt their partner's commitment have negative and defensive reactions to others who might undermine people's own importance to the partner. These defensive responses may ultimately alienate partners and weaken their commitment, leading to the very outcome these people fear. Discovering how people whose partners are highly central might react more constructively to doubts about their relationships would be a fruitful avenue for future research.

Conclusion

Although friends cannot directly replace romantic partners, they threaten people's central status in their partners' lives. When partners are particularly important, sharing their attention, affection, and intimacy with a friend may be a distasteful prospect. Rather than sharing, people in this situation adopt a more defensive approach—they derogate the quality of their partners' friendships. Taken together, our findings expand scientific understanding of jealousy beyond romantic jealousy and demonstrate that a partner's same-sex friends can evoke this powerful emotion.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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Notes

1. Gender did not moderate the partner centrality by perceived partner closeness interactions for either partner–friend jealousy (PFJ) or jealousy toward romantic rivals (RRJ).
2. Participants also completed measures not relevant to the current hypotheses, which can be obtained from the first author.
3. There were no interactions with gender for ratings of partners' best friends. There was, however, a marginally significant interaction between gender, prime, and threat predicting ratings of partners' romantic alternatives, $F(1, 140) = 3.41$, $p < .10$. Decomposing this interaction revealed a significant prime by threat interaction for women, $F(1, 74) = 4.04$, $p < .05$, but not for men, $F < 1$. Among women in the threat condition, those who had been primed with love ($M = 5.54$, $SD = 1.16$) rated their partners' romantic alternatives significantly more negatively than those who had been primed with centrality ($M = 6.49$, $SD = 0.74$), $t = -2.47$, $p < .05$.

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