

**UNFAITHFUL LESBIANS:  
HISPANIC LESBIANS AND INFIDELITY**

**BY  
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## VITA

Anagloria Mora was born in Ecuador, South America. She immigrated to the United States during her teenage years. During her Undergraduate studies, she was nominated to The National Dean's List for school years 1994-95 and 1995-96. She received a Bachelor's of Science in Psychology with Magna Cum Laude and a Master's of Science in Psychology with Distinction from The Miami Institute of Psychology, Miami - Florida. She is doctoral candidate (PhD) in Sexology at Maimonides University, North Miami Beach, Florida.

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Anagloria enjoys spending quality time with her husband decorating their home with antiques. In addition, she finds fulfillment spending quality time with her step-daughter Tania. Anagloria likes reading comfortably in her library at home and enjoys watching foreign films and psychological thrillers. She has a passion for animals, particularly for her cats.

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation describes how Hispanic lesbians manage infidelity within their intimate relationships. Their perceptions, stories, and experiences are the focus of this study. This research is supported by a literature review on the following topics: the dynamics and characteristics of lesbian relationships including those of Hispanic lesbians; the myths and beliefs of Hispanics in general regarding gender roles, sexuality, and homosexuality; the historical perceptions of homosexuality and lesbianism; homosexual identity formation; lesbians' perception and response to sexual and emotional infidelity and its effects on the duration of the relationship. For further support and clarification of this study, the terms homosexual, lesbian, Hispanic, infidelity/affair/and cheating are defined as they are used within this dissertation.

Due to the difficulty in locating participants, the sample selection for this descriptive research design was obtained through a snowball sampling technique in Miami Dade County, Florida. The sample consisted of thirty-three foreign-born Hispanic lesbians, from the following countries: Cuba, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Spain, Peru, Nicaragua, and Uruguay. All the participants were twenty years old or older. Ages of the participants ranged from 20 to 46 years. Their income level ranged from \$20,000 to \$100,000. Their level of education ranged from High School Graduate to Post Graduate School. Women who participated in the study have self-identified as Hispanics and as lesbians. For simplicity purposes of this project, project, religious affiliation was omitted. All participants have, or had been, in a live-in romantic sexual

relationship for a minimum of one year, at the time their partners were unfaithful.

The researcher personally interviewed all participants. Participants were explained the purpose of the study and were assured their identities would be kept confidential. The participants were encouraged to answer the questions sincerely. The survey questionnaire was provided to the participants in English or in Spanish, as requested. The majority of the participants were fully bilingual and felt comfortable answering the questions in either language. However, some preferred to discuss and reveal emotional details in their mother tongue, Spanish.

The survey questionnaire included questions regarding demographics. In addition, the participants were asked questions regarding their definition of infidelity; their experience with infidelity; their initial reaction to the infidelity; the length of the relationship at the time infidelity occurred; if the primary relationship continued after the infidelity; and how being Hispanic influenced their managing of infidelity and their resulting decisions with regard to the relationship. Lastly, the participants were given the opportunity to openly share their experiences with the interviewer. This study presents descriptive data as provided. Data was gathered and a qualitative analysis was drawn from the responses as received and collected.

Due to the dearth of research and literature on the aforementioned topic, the purpose of this study is to extend research on Hispanic lesbians in further studies. Additionally, this study is aimed at providing more effective services within the mental health field in the practice of couples therapy with Hispanic lesbians.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Sexual orientation refers to the enduring emotional, romantic, sexual attraction to individuals of a particular gender (Rosario 1997; Frankowski 2004). We are socialized to relate sexually to our opposite sex (Loulan 1996). When this rule is broken, there are many questions and speculations. Ultimately, “the gender of the person you desire is a serious matter seemingly fundamental to the whole business of romance” (Schwartz and Rutter 2000, 1).

The term homophobia was first coined by George Weinberg in 1973 (Hogan and Hudson 1998) to describe “the irrational fear, hatred, and intolerance of homosexual men and women” (Margolies, Becker, and Jackson-Brewer 1987, 229). Societal homophobia presents an impediment to an open view of one’s own sexuality.

Heterosexism is defined as “the system by which heterosexuality is assumed to be the only acceptable and viable life option” (Blumenfeld and Raymond 1988, 244). Heterosexuality is broadly defined and it loosely implies female-to-male or male-to-female sexual desire and/or sexual behavior (Hogan and Hudson 1998). Some people prefer the term heterosexism to describe the negative attitudes and biases commonly associated with homophobia (Hogan and Hudson 1998). Our culture and socialization process compels us to see and interpret the world as heterosexual; a world in which emotional and sexual attraction are expected to be toward the opposite sex (Rubin 1993). Consequently, if a variant is perceived, we tend to ‘awfulize’ the choice and