Friendship: A Hidden Form of Gender in Business Organizations

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Title of thesis Friendship: A Hidden Form of Gender in Business Organizations		
Degree Master's Degree		
Degree programme Organization and Management		
Thesis advisor(s) Janne Tienari		
Year of approval 2015	**Number of pages** 62	**Language** English

Abstract

This thesis reviews the concept of friendship and contributes to discussion on gender and equality in business organizations by addressing friendship as a gendered concept that plays a part in maintaining gendered hierarchies in business organizations. By drawing on social psychology, sociology and philosophy, a greater, more inclusive understanding of the concept of friendship is gained to include investigating the whole phenomenon of friendship from negative acts and exclusion to the marking of social boundary as well as understanding friendship as a gendered concept that makes masculine, contextual friendships invisible in the organizational setting. It is concluded that to the extent that gender is a meaningful category to a person or other people, it will continue to be a significant dimension of similarity in structuring friendships in organizations, yet the category around which contextual, masculine, friendships are formed in organizations is not necessarily dependent on gender. It is suggested that contextual, inclusive friendships should be encouraged to be formed around membership to a given organization or department instead of gender category.

Keywords Friendship, Gender, Gender Hierarchy, Gendered Organizations, Inequality

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1. Introduction

Originally, I chose the topic of women managers as the theme of my thesis as I believed it might help me on my future quest to senior positions. My idea was to get in touch with women in top management in stock enlisted companies in Finland, as I was interested in figuring out what made them special enough to succeed. I was also intrigued about why there still was an ongoing discussion in the media about inequality in the business world during the 2010s, when to me, Finland appeared to have reached gender equality. As I started reading about women in management to figure out a subtopic to concentrate on and what to ask these women, I also started to learn a lot. When I started to learn a lot, the topic of my thesis evolved. I discovered that a more suitable way to investigate the phenomenon was to approach it from a gender perspective, not from the perspective of women. If one only studies women, how can one reach conclusions about the relative difference between women and men without making assumptions and cutting corners?

So my quest of a subtopic went on. I wanted to find something that was not evident, honestly speaking, at a time I wanted to find something new to research. What first caught my eye was the fact that I could not find anything written on how the phenomenon of homosociality works in case of a group of women in organizations. After learning that gender was a way more interesting field than 'women', and all conclusions and findings are trustworthier when both sexes are included, this seemed peculiar to me. Homosociality (Holgersson 2013) is a topic quite frequently brought up in gender equality literature, but only in relation to the male sex in reproducing masculine power in organizations. So I started digging deeper and came across a fully refereed paper by Mavin et al. (2013) on women's relationship's at work. This was the first time I read about friendship. In this paper, I learned that they had done a study among many women in senior positions in the UK and found that for some reason, women seemed to consider friendships at work inappropriate, while men were, according to previous research and assumptions, more comfortable with friendships within organizations. It was written during the same year as I read it and I was hooked. I had found my subtopic.

Next, I told my father about this exciting discovery that men's and women's friendships at work are different! He thought about it for a while and replied, 'I must be a woman then, since I don't have very many close friends at work'. Intrigued, and honestly said, a little disappointed as it turned out not to be so clear-cut, I continued reading. I was studying both gender and friendship when my thesis adviser encouraged me to read beyond organization and management literature to find what has been written about friendship in other disciplines. And so I did, and slowly but surely, this thesis has reached its form as a conceptual thesis, a thesis in which I've drawn from different literature to bring forth a new topic from which gender inequality in business organizations can be approached.

In addition, being a daughter of two engineers, this has not only been a quest to discovering the topic at hand, but also a quest to break away from a positivist perspective and to begin embracing a socially constructed understanding of the world. A journey to understand that the attempt to 'solve' gender inequalities is not only involved with the aspirations and skills of individual women and men, but that each interaction occurs in a context that is already gendered itself. To understand that equal opportunity can not be reached without making visible the entrenched, gendered structures, organizational processes, concepts and terms that favor the masculine over the feminine in business organizations (Kumra et al. 2014), as these are the invisible forces making women's ascension to top positions more challenging than men's. Friendship is among those topics.

In this thesis, I bring the concept of friendship to the fore and review how earlier research in various fields have treated friendship as a concept. I argue, that as gendered organizing contexts have been identified to effect the experiences and advancements of men and women differently, the phenomenon of friendship can be identified as one of the multiple components contributing to this gendered order. This thesis is about building a conceptual framework of friendship in organizations that aims to publicize hidden aspects of gender and contribute to a greater understanding of how gendered organizing contexts construct differences between women's and men's social relations at work.

Upon constructing the framework, I draw from O'Connor's (1998) account of friendship as a gendered concept and support it with Allan's (1989) theory on contextual friendships, Mark's (1998) research on inclusive intimacy, Migliaccio's (2010) research on doing friendship as doing gender as well as many others who call for recognizing friendship as a sociological concept (Silver 1990, Spencer & Pahl 2006, Pahl 2002, Eve 2002, Allan & Adams 1998). I claim that men's homosocial desire (Fisher & Kinsey 2014), homosociality (Holgersson 2013) as well as women's negative intra-gender relations (Mavin et al. 2014) together with the relating currently understood as friendship all belong under the umbrella of the gendered phenomenon of friendship and contribute to the varying possibilities and experiences of men and women in business organizations.

My contribution focuses on revealing hidden forms of gender in action in business organizations and highlights how friendship as a gendered concept effects social relations and relating in and around organizing contexts and thus effects women's and men's experiences and advancement. By doing this, I also answer the calls of Grey & Sturdy (2007) and French (2007) to develop the concept of friendship in organizational theory.

1.1 Research aim

This thesis includes a conceptual research into other disciplines in an attempt to figure out how, and if, friendship is a factor in perpetuating gender inequalities in business organizations. I am attempting to merge research on friendship and research on gender in order to identify friendship as a gendered concept that contributes to the creation of a gendered organizing context and gender hierarchy that reproduces masculine power in business organizations.

My research question is '**How does friendship as a gendered phenomenon contribute to the varying possibilities of men and women in business organizations?'**

This research question is operationalized into fragments in the following manner:

1. How is friendship in the current organization theory seen?
2. Can something be learned about friendship from beyond organization and management literature?
3. How is friendship in relation to gender theorized?
4. How can friendship as a gendered concept be applied to research in organizations?

1.2 Key Concepts

The key concepts of this thesis are friendship, gendered, gender and doing gender. In this part, I will explain how they are conceptualized.

Friendship

The main concept of this thesis is Friendship. Friendship is understood as a phenomenon in which both the positive and negative effects and the wider and narrower conceptualization is included. The positive effects include feelings of acceptance, identity validation and a sense of worth, while the opposite, negative effects include feelings of disapproval, rejection and marginalization. The narrow, contemporary conceptualization of friendship includes understanding of friendship as a private, equal and exclusive relationship between two individuals (Adams & Allan 1998), while the wider conceptualization of friendship is the total opposite of such a conceptualization. They are referred to as masculine friendships (O'Connor 1998), contextual friendships (Allan 1989), friendships with inclusive intimacy (Marks 1998) and are public, hierarchical, inclusive relationships enjoyed through membership to a given group.

Gendered, Gender, Doing Gender

Gender comes into play through feminist realizations that most of the world, its structures, language and concepts have been created to accommodate the male norm as men have historically been the ones holding most of the power in a patriarchal society. As Beauvoir (1949) apprehended, women have constantly been construed as 'the other' to men. Men are

constructed as neutral and women as having a gender. This is what Acker also (1990) realized about organizations: They seem to be neutral containers, but in fact their neutrality hides under them masculine undertones that create varied interactional situations for men and women. Thus gendered organizing context refers to the fact that a seemingly neutral context favors one or the other gender. Calling friendship a gendered concept also relates to it accommodating one gender over another.

Gender, to be precise, is not considered a property of any given individual, but a performance (Butler 1988) or an activity (West & Zimmerman 1987) that is constantly created in interactions. West & Zimmerman (1987) were the first ones to identify between the interlinked yet independent concepts of sex, sex/gender category, and gender in order to make this conceptual distinction clear. Sex is understood as a person's biological sex, a distinction that ascribes people to the 'male' and 'female' categories according to chromosome constellations, hormones, sexual organs and the internal sexual organs in one's body (Alvesson & Billing 2002, West & Zimmerman 1987).

Sex category, on the other hand, refers to a socially defined cultural category, male or female, to which people are placed as cultural sex criteria are applied to them. This application is evaluated in everyday life through cultural expectations of particular masculine or feminine 'identificatory displays' indicating one to be of a particular sex (Mavin et al. 2014). Displays, optional performances and presentations of conventional behaviors that can be, and at most times, are used to link one to a sex category. Sex and sex category can vary independently like in the case of 'cross-dressers': Seeming to belong to a sex category doesn't automatically mean that a person's biological sex is deductible (West & Zimmerman 1987). Sex/gender category links to the cultural understandings of what is appropriate behavior for men and women.

In this categorization, gender refers to the actual activity, to the ongoing achievement of behaving culturally appropriately in accordance to one's sex/gender category. For example, a person who seems to belong to the sex/gender category of women, is 'doing gender' in quite many instances beginning from what she wears, how she walks, talks and presents herself in addition to the more easily understood and talked of

actions like what one does for a living. Understood in this way, gender is an *activity* and is conceptualized as something we do. This distinction between gender and gender category also highlights the notion that people are already categorized by sex when they 'do gender' (Mavin et al. 2014).

When gender is 'done well', appropriate to one's gender category, it includes performing feminine behavior with a body that is socially perceived to be female or vice versa (Mavin et al. 2014). When an individual acts adjacent to his or her gender category, it creates discomfort as people are behaving in an 'unexpected' way. Acting against one's gender category is referred to as 're-doing' gender (Connell 2010) or 'doing gender differently' (Mavin & Grandy 2012) and the overall gender performance includes acts of doing gender well and differently simultaneously (Mavin & Grandy 2012).

1.3 Structure

This thesis consists of four chapters: Introduction, literature review, the conceptual framework, and conclusion. In the first chapter, the introduction, I have told the story of how this thesis become the way it is, introduced my research agenda, shed light to the key concepts of friendship, gendered context, gender and doing gender and now I am presenting the structure of the thesis.

The second chapter, the literature review, is the focal part of my research and this thesis, as I draw from many other disciplines to introduce a wider, more inclusive take on friendship that can be applied to the study of organizational contexts. In the first part of the literature review, I introduce the concept of friendship from the perspectives of psychology, social psychology, philosophy and sociology. After that, I move on to introducing how friendship is present, or not present, in the organizational literature and use a wider conceptualization of friendship introduced in the previous part to also include topics that are not directly linked to friendship in the more narrow, contemporary conceptualization of the topic. After this part, I move on to shedding light on gender and friendship before moving on to the most important part, the part in which I introduce literature on gender and friendship in the organizational context.

The literature review is written in a manner that attempts to create a whole picture of the friendship phenomenon as it relates to gendered inequality and to bring forth an understanding that is marginalized in the current conceptualization. Different concepts and different perspectives are introduced to present a part of the phenomenon and slowly but surely, a complete picture will emerge. In this attempt, in every part, I will first introduce the more mainstream, positivist view on the topic at hand and then go on to discuss/introduce the socially constructed perspective that allows for a multiplicity of understandings and constructions and for the possibility of 'being otherwise'. It must be noted that there is no concrete division line between these perspectives and the perspectives each author and researcher follows are more vague than clear.

After introducing all the concepts and theory, I summarize the whole phenomenon into a framework in the third chapter. The third chapter consists of this conceptual framework devised for the study of friendship as a gendered phenomenon in business organizations as well as a visualization of the framework.

Following the chapter that introduces the framework, I lay out my conclusions and suggestions for future research in the field of organizational theory and gender.

2. Literature review

2.1 Friendship

Defining the concept of friendship is quite an elusive task due to its 2000 years old history dating back to the ancient Greeks (Thomson 2005). A plethora of fields in science including Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology, and Organizational studies have been more or less involved with the topic of friendship. This has resulted in a large variety of conceptualizations of friendship, the content of friendship, and what role context plays in all this, as well as what role friendship plays in society (Adams & Blieszner 1994, Rawlins 1992).

Friendship can be considered a state of mind, an affectionate bond between group members, but most often in contemporary research, friendship is seen as a type of personal relationship and categorized under this term together with the societally more 'meaningful' and more easily defined forms of personal relationships of kinship and marriage partners (Bell & Coleman 1999). Personal relationships can be argued to have emerged as their own field of study, but most often this 'field' with its own academic journal is understood as an interdisciplinary field combined of psychology, social psychology, communication studies, anthropology and many more, which all have their own perspectives, aims, and research methods.

This part consists of varying research and theories about friendship. I have attempted to outline a division between the more positivist approaches to friendship and the more socially constructed views and accounts of friendship and their research attempts. The division line is not absolute, as fundamentally, people's personal relationships are accepted as socially constructed even in the more positivist stream of research. What is different is that a positivist view in social psychology views the relationship between two individuals to be socially constructed within the relationship itself, while the socially constructed perspective sees friendships as embedded in special contexts and understands the concept itself to be socially constructed and negotiated on a societal and cultural level. Depending on the category, different questions are asked and investigated and different definitions of friendship are used.

2.1.1. The Positivist View: Friendship

In many cases, the concept of *friendship* is considered so 'natural' and taken for granted that research studies investigating different aspects of friendship never actually bother to define the concept to the people taking part in the study (Spencer & Pahl 2006). In the cases actual definitions are made, the definer faces potential problems concerning the actual 'definition' of friendship as most of the time it is defined by what it is not rather than what it is: A social relation that is in no way embedded in the formal structures of our society, not bound by law, formal institutions, status, rituals, public affirmations or

locations, not a kin relationship, and not a romantically involved relationship (Blatterer 2013, Allan 1989).

Yet implicitly, and often times also explicitly, friendship is defined as a private, voluntary and intimate relationship that is distinct from instrumental or role contingent relationships, kin relations and romantically involved relationships. Such a conceptualization of friendship can be traced back to beyond Aristotle and can, in some instances, be characterized as the highest form of altruistic commitment that exists in humankind as they are washed of any selfish or instrumental aims whatsoever (Thomson 2005, p. 92).

In this perspective, friendship, and other social ties, are considered to be of small consequence societally and economically. The dominance of the market economy and formal institutions in contemporary commercial society is theorized to have created a division of labor between the public and the private in which informal personal relations belong to the sphere of the private (Allan & Adams 1998, Silver 1990, Giddens 1992). As informal solidarities are seen mainly as private concerns, friendship as a research topic, has remained primarily in the interest of psychology and social psychology, and the object of study has been restricted to the dyadic relationship between two individuals: A friendship dyad. The following part introduces the psychology and social psychology streams of friendship research.

Psychology: Attraction Research

The starting point of friendship research effort has been concerned with the mind, cognitions, personalities and motivations of individuals in friendships (Duck 1973). As friendships are defined as voluntary personal relationships, the study of attraction in personal relationships has been of special interest with main concentration on gaining an understanding of what motivates individuals to seek the company of others and to select particular others (Duck 1973, Allan 1989).

The attraction research (concerning both friendly love and marital relations) has produced a lot of varying theories on why people are attracted to each other. These theories range from the reciprocity of liking that is concerned with individuals liking those who like the same things as they do, to rational choice theory, in which individuals make calculated decisions, to claims that opposites attract and to countering claims that similarity is the primary cause of attraction (Duck 1973). The similarity hypothesis has sprung more research than the others, as the type of similarity investigated has been manifold ranging from opinions and values to reputation and economic status (Duck 1973, p. 40-50). It seems that researchers aren't in an agreement on the type of similarity that would be the most important in creating friendships. Regardless of the type of similarity, the concept of *homophily* was coined by Lazarsfeld and Merton in 1954 to refer to the notion that 'similarity' breeds association (McPherson et al. 2001).

The homophily principle has been identified as a recurring pattern in friendship formation (Mavin et al. 2014, McPherson et al. 2001, Centola et al. 2007) and has spread to the study of social networks, social capital, culture, social movements and can be closely linked to the anthropological observations of similarity in marital affairs termed as homogamy. Homophily has been 'shown' to empirically structure people's personal relations according to many socio-demographic, behavioral and interpersonal characteristics and have been claimed to limit people's social worlds with powerful implications to what kind of information they receive, as well as attitudes and experiences that they form. (McPherson et al. 2001)

Criticism of the homophily principle include the confusion over the type of similarity, the fact that perceived similarity can be inaccurate in friendships (Duck 1973) as well as that it seems to be unclear whether similarity is a cause or an effect of friendship. Due to that, the concept of *induced homophily* (McPherson et al. 2001) has also been introduced. This concept describes the influence dynamics in social relations that cause individuals to become more similar over time.

Social Psychology: Relationships

In social psychology, attention is turned away from individuals to the study of relationships as emergent ties with their own properties. The focus shifted to the study of interactions of individuals in these relationships, to the dynamics of friendships and to the processes of friendship formation and dissolution (Adams & Allan 1998, p.1). When investigating the formation of intimate friendships, the study inherently ended up also encompassing friendship non-formation, the ending of relationships and the study of all social encounters (Duck 1973, p. 31) as the line between friends and non-friends is unclear and may depend on the individual person's perception. Understanding why some initial encounters form into friendships, why others don't, and why some friendships last and others deteriorate contributes to the understanding of friendships and their development (Duck 1973). Friendship development can be thought of as a gradual transformation between strangers to deepening intensities of friendships (Lopata & Maines 1981, p.11).

For some, this has broadened the narrow conceptualization of friendships as intimate relations to include different kinds of friends such as 'true' friends, 'work' friends, 'fun' friends etc., while others call it the corruption of the idea of friendship and wrongful use of the friend-label (Krackhard 1992). Yet, the wider conceptualization of friends leads to notions of different, more or less interlinked forms (Spencer & Pahl 2006), types (Allan 1989) or stages (Duck 1973) of friendships that range from 'best' 'true' 'real'-friend or soulmate to acquaintance and stranger. This allows for the discussion of friendship repertoires (Spencer & Pahl 2006) and friendship circles (Allan 1989) that comprise different relations that vary in worth, closeness, function and setting of interaction.

Duck (1973) formulated a 'filtering' theory to friend development in which people pass through varying filters in their 'progression' to friendship. These filters include things like proximity, similarity and physical attractiveness and function differently at different stages as the process of moving up in friendship 'hierarchy' contributes to viewing one another more in terms of their individuality rather than existing stereotypes.

Duck's filtering factors could be considered to be a flexible way of viewing what Lopata & Maines (1981), among others, have called constraining factors and

facilitating factors. Facilitating factors are conditions enabling friendships to develop while constraining factors are factors inhibiting friendship formation. Facilitating factors have been noted to be factors that ease communication between individuals and help bring them together: Repeated interpersonal interaction, locational proximity, sharing a common culture, being able to take the role of the other, the ability to communicate in significant symbols (Lopata & Maines 1981, p.13) and having other friends in common (Eve 2002). The constraining, or discouraging, factors, on the other hand, include the absence of facilitating factors, strain or role conflict, personal characteristic or emotional mismatch (Lopata & Maines 1981) as well as an individual's location within a social structure: Domestic situation, work patterns, mobility as well as notions like class, age, gender and existing relationships (Allan 1989).

While some believe friendships to occur in a vacuum, for others it is clear that also contextual factors need to be considered when friendship formation is looked at. Specifically of importance, and still widely used, is the study of how social, cultural and economic variables affect and influence an individual's friendship behavior, pattern and formation. This type of research is in abundance also partly because it has been easy to find data on them via survey-methods, which have been less laborious than other types of research (Allan & Adams 1998, p.7).

Some important lessons can be learned from psychology, social psychology and the more recent, personal relations, 'discipline'. Especially interesting take-aways include the homophily principle that facilitates friendship formation, the fact that the study of friendship formation also inherently involves the study of the non-formation and dissolution of friendships, as well as that the various facilitating and constraining factors work together to cause friendships to form or not form. In addition, Duck's (1973) finding that the facilitating factors work differently at different stages of 'moving up' in the friendship hierarchy and the closer one gets to another, the more the person is viewed as an individual and not according to existing stereotypes.

Yet, these fields have been criticized to view friendship in a narrow way and as previously mentioned, most studies have failed to define what friends or friendship

means and the job has been left to the subject of study and his/her implicit definitions of friends and friendship. When conceptualized in this manner, the significance of friendship as a source of positive feelings is brought to the fore and the instrumental aspects of friendship as a provider of material benefits gets pushed to the background. Moreover, the negative effects of friendship including time demands, obligations, loyalty, and energy get pushed to the side as well as the consideration of how friendship affects 'the others' to friendship get less attention. Feelings of isolation, loneliness, and negativity towards others can also be considered 'effects' of friendships in cases of friendship disruption, or incapability to form friendships. Yet, these notions are touched upon quite rarely. (Lopata & Maines 1981)

In addition, due to the research interests in the individual and the scientific methods utilized in psychology, most of the research still treats friendships on a dyadic level (Adams & Allan 1998) and practice what has been referred to as '*context-stripping*', i.e. conceptualizing private relationships in private places and treating the social interaction as occurring in a vacuum (Morrill & Snow 2005, p. 4). Also, relatively a large portion of psychological studies have investigated the experiences of Anglo-American, white, middle-class, heterosexual college students and relatively little is known about poor, ethnic minorities, people who aren't college educated, gays and lesbians, and people who are younger and older than college students (Morrill & Snow 2005, p. 4). In order to be able to glance beyond this positivist approach, a socially constructed perspective to friendship is also worth paying attention to.

2.1.2. The Socially Constructed View: Friendship

While the previous section shows that quite some work has been done to understand what friendships are like, mostly they have been treated as ambiguously positive phenomenon that offers support and entertainment to individuals in dyads. A socially constructed perspective, which seeks to look at the friendship phenomenon in its entirety, sheds light to a much more rich and complex reality of friendship and treats it as a historically and contextually embedded phenomenon that has a part in maintaining, creating, and possibly even changing the society (Allan 1989, Spencer & Pahl 2006, O'Connor 1998).

Thus, when it comes to questions like 'what is friendship' and 'who are friends', problems of contradictions and different contradicting views are no longer seen as problems, but as competing narratives that exist in the world. The previous chapter becomes a part of the repertoire of the varying ways people can define friends and friendship and at the same time, who gets categorized as a friend can be considered to tell us more about the current society, its norms and the conceptualization of friendship than about what a friend 'actually' is (Allan 1989, Spencer & Pahl 2006, Lopata & Maines 1981, Bell & Coleman 1999, O'Connor 1992).

This part consists of two distinct parts: In the first one, the concept of friendship is put under the microscope and deconstructed (Thomson 2005) in a typical, social constructionist manner and the second part is concerned with the effects of friendship behavior and the use (or omission) of the friend label.

Deconstructing the Friendship Myth

The current understanding of friendship can be viewed as a modern myth (Sapadin 1988), an idealization similar to that of romantic love that is not manifested in reality (O'Connor 1992) and serves only to limit the concept of friendship into a certain historically meaningful construction (Allan & Adams 1998). According to O'Connor (1998, p. 185) *'A focus on friendship which sees its significance only in terms of its contribution to individual well-being is inadequate'.* Instead of claiming that the use of the friend-label has been corrupted or 'wrong' when it is not applied in the way current conceptualization requires, the interlinked concepts of friend and friendship can be understood as social constructions (Allan & Adams 1998, p. 190, Mavin et al. 2014), as ongoing achievements of communication (Rawlings 1992), that reflect aspects of the surrounding culture.

If this seems strange, lets look at it in more detail. First, anthropological studies of other cultures have taught researchers that while affectionate, 'friendship-like' relationships seem to exist in all cultures, the form and behavioral patterns manifested around these relationships can differ from that of the Western relationships. For example, in some cultures, public rituals are required to create a friendship between two individuals

(Bell & Coleman 1999). Also, friendship has not always been conceptualized in the current way in the Western world either. For example, in the medieval time, notions of loyalty and activity bases in friendships were constructed as the 'ideal' and highest form of friendship, while the current ideals can be claimed to share similarities with the Aristotelian virtuous' friendship in which friendship is formed by choice between equals and includes intimate verbal disclosure (Kimmel 2011, Sapadin 1988).

Secondly, in his time, Aristotle used a wider conceptualization with his term *philos,* which is translated to 'friendship' in most cases, but also to 'brotherly love'. It is at times understood as friendship, but often times also used as a lot wider term than just friendship. (Cooper 1977) According to Aristotle, *philos* is one of four types of love and it describes an action or a feeling rather than a bond and can also be understood as affection towards an individual (Thomson 2005). There are three kinds of *philia,* or friendships, that Aristotle accounts for. They are:

1. Friends of utility
2. Friends of pleasure
3. Friends of virtue

The first class describes relationships in which there exists no real regard for the other person, but is organized rather as a trade relationship. The second type of relationship is for people who enjoy each others' company: For example, people who drink together or play sports together, while only the last class can be categorized as 'true' friendship in which people participate as they enjoy each other's true character. (Cooper 1977)

But how has the current conceptualization come about? Giddens (1991) utilizes Aristotle's third kind of philia in his theory of the 'pure relationship' that has been brought on by modernity. Pure relationships are relationships that are endured only because of the relationship itself, stripped of any instrumentality and includes intimacy in which both partners are able to be vulnerable to each other. He claims this relationship to include new kind of intimacy, expressive intimacy, in which the partners feel so intimate and comfortable with each other that they confine about personal, potentially damaging topics as well as other topics. According to him, pure relationships became possible for lay people only in modernity, when commercial society allowed them to have free leisure

time. He called it the 'liberation' of friendship from all other types of commitments, referring to mainly economical commitments that were abound in society before the proper functioning of a market economy and the new division of labor.

According to Giddens (1992), the personal, pure, and freely chosen commitment to other individuals replace the external anchors (family, financial, etc.) present in pre-modern times and creates a modernity that is quite different from pre-modernity. In the time of individualism, individuals are free to befriend any other individual regardless of their background, financial status, and other 'externalities'. Giddens has written about pure relationships (1991,1992) and their meaning to individuals, but not about their meaning to the society as he deems it a 'residual category of the modern society', deeply belonging to the private category. This has led, in a similar manner, many sociologists to view friendship as not contributing to society, claiming it to be a 'play-form' of association with little interest to anyone in exploring it (O'Connor 92 p. 11).

Of late, some sociologists have found this view disturbing and called for a 'new sociology of friendships'. They believe friendships to have a great, but marginalized and ignored part in social theory (Allan 1989, Allan & Adams 1998, Eve 2002, Pahl 2002, Bell & Coleman 1999, Silver 1990, O'Connor 1998) and call for seeing friendships as what they are, as social constructions. One of their main arguments is that a theory of the historical split between the public and the private is misleading and problematic (Grey & Sturdy 2007). Indeed, it has been proven in many socially constructed theories as a false distinction (Martin 2000). The continued acceptance of such a split continues the dichotomous idea that lives and reality can be split into different spheres: The public sphere of the impersonal, rational, and instrumental exchange relationships, and the private sphere of the personal, irrational, and emotional relationships (O'Connor 1998).

This public/private split can be seen to marginalize 'friendships' and other personal, informal relations in the public sphere (Silver 1990) as it puts friendships in the 'private' category and renders them as unimportant to society as the most important institutions are considered those which are in the public category (O'Connor 92). The hegemonic status of liberal thought has been claimed to have led to this contemporary

'paradigm' in which friendships are conceptualized as creations of free, agentic individuals in which non-instrumental solidarity is the qualifying feature. According to Silver (1990), such a construction should be accepted as just on of the many ways of conceptualizing friendships, not the only one. This construction can actually be understood to tell more about the qualities which are marginalized in the current society and cultural context than to tell about the nature of friendships themselves (O'Connor 1998).

For example, the voluntary and equal basis of friendship can be contested. According to Allan (1989), we are all limited to our surroundings and subject-positions, and he would consider it more appropriate for the 'voluntary' nature of friendship to be reconsidered and accepted that we are all bound by our surroundings. O'Connor (1992 p. 128), on the other hand, has noted that there is nothing in the nature of friendships that requires it to be between equals and it is quite possible for un-equal constructions of friendship to exist. O´Connor (1992, p. 191) also claims that this construction has been accepted too easily and that the assumption has inhibited research on relational power-strategies in friendships, such as how equality is created in relationships. Even posing any questions regarding power in friendships has been made impossible by the assumption that friendships are equal.

Allan (1989) has argued that the concept of friendship should include a class of friendships, which are context-specific: Friendships in which structural differences can be ignored to a greater extent than in other friendships. These context-specific friendships are potentially more fragile as they are bound to one context and are not based on dyadic commitment, but to commitment to a group (O'Connor 1992, p. 161, Allan 1989). Even though this type of 'friendship' can be considered as potentially more fragile, they should not be ignored and they can, potentially, also have a larger role than expected in the construction of identities and hierarchies and can even result in a more permanent commitment and relationship than a dyadic one that involves verbal confining in each other.

Blatterer (2013) critiques the notion that the ideal form of friendship would be characterized by expressive intimacy. What he suggests is that intimacy should not be

reduced to 'disclosing intimacy' in which people disclose their innermost thoughts, but to mutual receptivity to 'being directed' in choices, interests, and activities by others, to all processes in which selves and identities are relationally constituted and supported in friendship. Helgeson et al. (1987) also argue that equating self-disclosure with intimacy is problematic, as it is neither a necessary nor a sufficient feature of intimacy. Disclosing intimacy and being vulnerable to the other has been questioned, as relationships that offer support as part of interactional dynamics without having to ask for help, or support, which is offered in a subtle way, can indeed be considered more supportive (Eckenrode & Wethington 1990). An alternative, maybe even better definition of the true nature of friendships, of intimacy, could be appreciation and affection in any form it is presented (Helgeson et al. 1987).

An alternative view to intimacy is also brought on by Marks (1998), who has studied the famous 'Hawthorn women', five women who were participating in the Western Electric Company's studies on productivity that started in 1927. More than 60 years after the initial experiments, Marks analyzed the tapes and argues that the women in the monitored Relay Assembly Test Room produced a lot more than just factory outputs during their 5 years under scrutiny. He calls it 'inclusive intimacy', a friendship pattern that is marked by regular group gatherings, a readiness to expand the group boundaries to include anyone important to any of the members and the notion that the fulfillment of the friendship was in the group gatherings themselves. In opposition to exclusive intimacy that is a product of individualism that has lead to people to regard themselves as unique and private individuals that possess separate identities, inclusive intimacy can be drawn on if people experience themselves as members of a category or group. People tend to see themselves as members of a group in large part if they are treated as such by others. Marks found that in such a friendship, closeness was expressed best through laughing, singing, and exchanging stories in large family-like gatherings instead of exclusive, self-disclosing dyads.

Using the 'Friend'-Label

The discursive practice of labeling someone a friend can be considered to reflect cultural norms about who can appropriately be defined as a friend (O'Connor 1998, Allan & Adams 1998, p. 192). There are cases in which one person is referred to as a friend, while qualitatively a similar relationship tie in another context is called something different (Allan 1989). For example, the lack of equality usually also implies the lack of categorizing such a tie as friendship. Also the deterioration of equality, in most cases, is noted to lead to the deterioration of the relationship, as it is known (Allan & Adams 1998, p. 191).

When constructed as an equal relationship between similar individuals, using the friend-label and categorization can be understood to function as an act of constructing similarity and equality (O'Connor 1998). The categories and dimensions, which are meaningful in the creation of similarity and equality, reflect important categories in the society and culture. For example, age and gender can be viewed as meaningful more often in our society than ear size or eye color. Who one identifies with, who one perceives to be 'like' them, can be considered to tell more about the culture it is embedded in rather than about friendship itself (O'Connor 1998).

While friendship can be considered as a construction of similarity and equality, it automatically also means that it can be considered as a construction of difference and inequality for the ones who are not called friends, or simply who the 'doing' of friendship is not directed at. We distance ourselves from the ones we do not make our friends, which causes isolation, negative feelings, and loneliness even when 'nothing' is actively done (Lopata & Maines 1981). Negative acts such as gossiping, plotting, joking, and complaining are more easily categorized as social boundary marking, but also the act of not 'doing friendship' can be understood as such (Mavin et al. 2013). This in turn can lead to negative feelings of self-image, dis-identification and marginalization and can reflect cultural 'otherness' (O'Connor 1998).

Indeed, one of the greatest benefits of friendship has been considered the supportive function that enhances an individual's sense of worth and sustains an

individual's social identity through processes of feedback, reflection, comparison and acceptance (Lopata & Maines 1981). In a social constructionist view, identity is understood as being fundamentally social and constantly becoming (Jenkins 1996, p.17). In other words, identity can consists of many different, even contradicting, parts or 'identities', which can intersect with each other and surface in different contexts to create an amalgamated identity (Nkomo & Cox 1999). These various parts of identities can be constantly reformed and negotiated (Nkomo & Cox 1999). In this context of thinking, friendships can be understood to contribute to molding an individual's whole identity, not just the 'social' part of it. Jenkins (1996, p.40) identifies an internal-external dialectic at place in identification: Self-identification and the way others categorize us are equally important in identity creation and recreation.

The process whereby friends (or non-friends) help to shape and mold our self-identity give credence to our identity and can be understood as identity validation. It has been noted especially in the studies of minorities that support of others involved in the same activities or sharing similar beliefs can have a huge impact on the created identity and self-image (Allan 1989). Again, the absence of friends and identity validation works the other way around.

The practice of 'doing friendship' can also be taken as an indication of an individual's status position within a locality. And indeed, patterns of sociability/friendship have been used in studies as indicators of an individual's status positions. This links friendship to wider issues of status and stratification; whom you associate with serves to locate you within a status hierarchy and affects social ease. Friendship can thus be considered consequential in sustaining the status quo and reflecting, as well as producing and reproducing, the dominant characteristics of the setting in which they are embedded (Allan & Adams 1998, p. 191). This is why it can be argued that friendships and friendship processes are an overlooked aspect of social theory and that the topic does indeed merit a role in sociological theory that extends beyond the interests of friendship-studies (Allan 1989, Allan & Adams 1998, Eve 2002, Pahl 2002).

This issue goes further than just using the friend-label or conscious social area marking as McCall (1988) has argued friendships to create and maintain social realities of their own, to be a type of institutionalized social organization with it's own culture and a form of role differentiation. O'Connor (1998, p.189) calls for a need to explore how discourses are created in various friendships while Eve (2002) has noted friendships and friendship groups to progressively integrate individuals into certain social ambiances in which friends gradually pass on sets of values and attitudes, sensitizations to particular issues, and the ability to function in a particular 'team'.

Eve (2002) utilizes Bourdieu's (1972) term '*habitus*' to explain the effects of friendship. Habitus refers to bodily ways of being, a certain 'ambiance' that is learned and shared in friendship groups, and implicit and explicit kinds of 'being' and 'doing' that can only be learned in practice. In this sense, just by using, or intentionally over emphasizing the use of, a friendship groups' culture, discourse, attitudes and bodily ways of being, can be a way to establish who one is friends with, who belongs in a certain group, and who doesn't.

While friendship can be understood as the creation of similarity, a lot of social ingenuity in devising and constructing similarity and difference also exists: For example, limiting activities to certain areas and settings, the compartmentalization of friendships (O´Connor 1992, p. 165) or contexts-specific friendships (Allan 1989) can obscure differences in wealth, status, lifestyle as well as differences can be forged within a group that 'appears' similar. What is taken to be as significant difference/similarity has noted to vary in cases in which interaction revolves around shared interests eg. hobbies. Arguably, similarity in this area is likely to function as most important. Also, in cases where a structural shortage of 'similar' others exists, socially 'dissimilar' or 'unequal' relationships, or friendships, are created (O´Connor 1992, p.40).

All in all, in this part, I have introduced the concept of friendship by drawing on research and theory from multiple disciplines, mainly psychology, social psychology and sociology. In summary it must be said that the current conceptualization of friendship as a private, dyadic affair between equal partners hides under it multiple, 'other' ways of

understanding of friendship including its complete opposite as a non-private, inclusive affair between unequal partners. The phenomenon of friendship is multifaceted and in order to fully understand it, it should also include the acts of exclusion and creation of difference, as they are at the other end of the friendship continuum as a means of inhibiting friendship formation.

The phenomenon of friendship should be taken seriously in all contexts, as its effects go way beyond the single individual concerned in the friendship. As was learned in this part, friendship can be consequential in producing and reproducing the settings they are embedded in as well as integrating individuals into certain social ambiances that might help them indirectly further along their career. Now its time to move on to literature on friendship in connection to business organizations, a topic that is considered incompatible by the mainstream conceptualization of organizations and friendship.

2.2.   Friendship and Business Organizations

Business organizations and friendship may seem like an odd couple at first. As Grey & Sturdy (2007) have noted, a mutually constitutive effect seems to be at work in the cases of friendship and work: Work doesn't involve friendships, but general, cultural notions of friendship as non-instrumental, private social relations don't involve work either. Yet, as we have learned from the previous section, friendship, as the social constructionist perspective reveals it to be, includes relations and phenomena that are not included in the more narrow, contemporary construction of friendship as exclusive, intimate and private personal relations. In addition, the way business organizations are conceptualized also affect the way friendship is thought of, or not thought of, in relation to them.

This following section is also divided along the positivist, 'mainstream' view and a more socially constructed perspective in which objective truth gives room to multiple understandings. While the former perspective mostly ignores the topic of friendship altogether in relation to business organizations, the latter takes a more holistic approach to organizations and organizing and accepts that friendship is a natural part of human

endeavors and thus a part of organizations and organizing. Yet, even in the more socially constructed perspectives in organization and management research, a lack of concentration on friendship can be identified (Mavin et al. 2014, French 2007).

All research that includes friendship in organizations can be thought to fall between these two perspectives as strictly understood, the positivist perspective doesn't acknowledge friendship relations in business organizations at all, while the socially constructed perspective should acknowledge friendship as a socially constructed term itself, which most of it doesn't. Yet, in dividing the research between these two perspectives, I have decided to divide it along an instrumental, managerial approach and the approaches that have done qualitative research and see friendship as involving different stages. In order to complete the picture on current research in light of the more inclusive construction of friendship, this section also draws on social capital and networks literature and on friendship research considering work as a special context. Social capital and networks are included in the more positivist perspective, as their research design and purpose has followed the instrumental, managerial approach while work as a special context is included in the socially constructed part.

2.2.1 The Positivist View: Friendships in Business Organizations

The positivist, or individual centric, approach to organizations, management and leadership is concentrated on accumulating knowledge about ways to gain maximum competitive advantage for business organizations and how to find best, most effective, ways to organize work. The chosen method on finding underlying patterns, mechanisms and generalizable truths about the objects of study is quantitative analysis. This perspective draws from psychology and economics. (Tienari & Meriläinen 2009, p.114-115) In this perspective, organizations are considered to be rationally functioning machines in which only position-bound interaction between individuals exist. A division between organizational conduct and personal feelings and solidarity exists (Grey & Sturdy 2007). Thus the 'negligence' of such a topic as friendship in organizational theory is often not even recognized or talked of.

Some research can be found in the organizational theory on friendships in organizations within this positivist perspective. While very little attention is put on personal relations at work directly in organizational theory, more interest and research attention has been circling around instrumental, informal relations under topics such as social capital and networks. In this part, I will first introduce a managerial perspective to friendships inside organizations and then move onto the topics of social capital and networks.

Friendships at Work

Some research can be found on friendships within organizations. In such cases, friendships are defined as: '*Voluntary workplace relations that involve mutual trust, commitment, reciprocal liking and shared interests and values*' (Berman et al. 2002). When researched or theorized within an organization, friendship is considered mostly between peers and considered unique workplace relationships, as unlike other formal relations at work, they are voluntary and include a more personalistic focus in which friends are treated as whole persons rather than workplace role occupants (Sias and Cahill 1998).

When attention is explicitly turned onto friendships at work, or friendships in organizations, a preoccupation with performance outcomes and instrumentality is evident (Grey & Sturdy 2007). The perspective is managerial and is usually motivated by the attempt to build a business case for recognizing or allowing friendships to 'exist' in organizations by referring to the benefits of friendships to the organizations. These include increased commitment that result in decreased turnover (Maertz & Griffeth 2004), increased job satisfaction (Markiewicz et al. 2000, Morrison & Nolan 2007) and the break down of barriers and a more open communication within the organization (Morrison & Nolan 2007, Bakar & Sheer 2013). Work friendships have also been identified as important in providing information on job opportunities and support in climbing career ladders (Kram & Isabella 1985, Granovetter 1973).

These positive functions have also been noted as potentially negative as they may lead to the magnifying of interpersonal problems such as envy, gossip and

interpersonal conflicts and confrontations as well as favoritism to which a special term, cronyism, is linked. Cronyism is *'favoritism shown by the superior to his or her subordinate based on their relationship, rather than the latter's capability or qualification, in exchange for the latter's personal loyalty.'* (Khatri & Tsang 2003). Friendships have been widely linked to creating and sustaining inequalities and disturbances in organizations. Morrison and Nolan (2007) also found that friendships 'in the public sphere' hold the possibility for decreased productivity through work distraction, reduced work commitment, and the blurring of boundaries created by the incompatible demands of friendship and work roles.

While there is concern that workplace friendships lead to negative outcomes, these outcomes can also be considered manageable. Instead of ignoring friendships existence in organizations, discussing them at work places with a focus on how they can be interpersonally managed can contribute to capitalizing on the benefits of friendships. Managing friendships as well as coupling them with clear policies regarding friendships is suggested as a potential solution. Some people may lack in social skills, managers as well as employees, and education in friendship formation and maintenance strategies within role conflict situations can be seen as a good strategy. Friendships as tools for trust building can be important especially in these times of cultural diversity. (Berman et al. 2000)

Workplaces are seen to differ according to their position towards friendships and range from encouraging friendship creation and providing locations and opportunities for friendship formation to discouraging and marginalizing them. Hierarchical elements and incredible competition among workers can be seen to impede friendship formations at work (Allan 1989). This may cause role conflicts between informal and formal organizational roles. Bridge and Baxter (1992) referred to the dichotomous roles of coworker and friend "blended relationships " and believe these two roles of coworker and friend to be contradictory.

Literature on workplace friendships borrow from attraction theories in social psychology that suggest that proximity, similarity in respect to various attributes, attitudes, and values is the key to facilitating friendship formation. It has been noted that

relationships at work develop into close friendships only if there are factors outside workplaces that workers share (Markiewicz et al. 2000).

Social Networks, Social Capital

Rather than concentrating on individual friendships, a lot of attention by organizational scholars has been put on the networks of individuals and 'networking' as a term has become known as a crucial element for managerial success in the business world. Yet, Mavin et al. (2014) have criticized the fact that network literature seem to over-emphasize instrumentality and under-emphasize friendship. Ibarra (1993) can be seen to also agree with Mavin et al. (2014) in stating that some network theorists do not include expressive ties of friendship to their research, but only concentrate on instrumental ties, which leaves a partial view on networks and their effect.

The motivating idea for the study of networks in organizational research originates from the concept of *Social Capital*. Social Capital can be considered a shorthand for the positive consequences of sociability, social resources that reside in relationships and in interactions between individuals. It is considered to include inter-personal, inter-group and inter-organizational relationships, networks and connections and to contribute to competitive advantage of organizations. (Luthans & Youssef 2004) It is also recognized as a contested topic: there seem to be no real agreement on how it could be measured and direct causation has been difficult to prove. Spencer and Pahl (2006) refer to it as 'A magic ingredient'.

Social capital is often operationalized into the study of networks and considered as a complement to human capital: people who do better are better connected. A network position, relations to certain others and trust with certain others can be considered an asset. (Burt 2000) People who have networks that extend beyond a person's immediate workgroup, work unit, workflow interaction or even organization tend to be perceived as more powerful, while horizontal networks can help implement a manager's agenda and the development of power (Ibarra 1993). The development of networks and their composition has been empirically studied and the ideal, most *effective* network

structures have been discussed. Also external causes that focus on the relational content have been examined: demographic similarity such as gender (Ibarra 1992), and the type of affect, and the type of tie (Granovetter 1973).

Granovetter (1973) has distinguished between weak and strong ties in networks. Strong ties tend to bond similar people to each other while a weak tie constitutes a 'local bridge' to parts of social systems that would otherwise be disconnected. Weak ties are considered to provide maximum impact in instrumentality as they require less maintenance and potentially provide for a larger network with more connections. Krackhardt (1992) notes that two issues have been neglected in this approach: The problem of categorizing a tie as weak and strong is unclear and the motivation for weak ties to mobilize action in uncertain situations can be questioned. A lot of variety in categorizing a tie as weak or strong also exists: Some use frequency of interaction, some labeling as 'friend', 'relative' or 'neighbor' and some just note that a strong tie requires more time, involves more intimacy and is emotionally more intense. Krackhardt (1992) also notes that Granovetter (1973) himself has claimed that weak ties provide more access to information, but strong ties have more motivation to be of assistance, an aspect frequently not referred to in the network literature.

Krackhardt (1992) believes strong ties to be of special importance in times of severe change and uncertainty in organizations. According to him, strong ties constitute a base for trust that can reduce resistance and provide comfort and thus, change can be considered to be better facilitated by strong ties than weak ties. He uses the Greek word '*Philos'* to characterize strong ties, as he considered the word 'friend' to be a folk-concept, a term that can be used interchangeable with no bound definition. According to him, interaction, affection, and time are needed for the emergence of *philos*.

Another quite similar distinction in network literature is between instrumental and expressive network relationships. Instrumental relationships are ties that arise from work roles and involve the exchange of job-related resources such as information and expertise. These relatonships include developmental relationships, relationships that include career advice, exposure to upper management, advocacy for promotion etc. Expressive network relationships involve the exchange of friendship and social support.

Many network relationships seem to be both instrumental and expressive rather than strictly just either or. (Ibarra 1993)

In a sense, literature about networks and social capital seem to be about friendship, personal relations and larger groupings, but most often than not, the topic of networking circle only around instrumentality more than any other benefits or phenomenon. Perhaps the business context somehow excludes the 'f-word' from phenomena that could in other contexts be labeled as friendship? As was learned on the socially constructed perspective to friendship, sometimes qualitatively similar ties to friendship are not seen as such in other contexts. In the next part, some researchers seem to agree with this notion.

2.2.2 The Socially Constructed View: Friendship and the Organizing Context

The socially constructed perspective has risen within the last 20 years as a focal part of management and organization theory and research. Based on qualitative data, the 'object' of study is organizing as a process rather than organization as an entity. Management and leadership are viewed as processes, phenomena, rather than managers as individual actors. Social reality is understood as being constructed in interactions that occur in historically constructed contexts. Universal truths in social reality do not exist. (Tienari & Meriläinen 2009, p.114-115) One aim of this perspective is to bring to light alternative, competing understandings that are hidden by the power of the existing 'truths' and paradigms (Alvesson & Deetz 2006).

A myriad of studies have demonstrated that actual organizational practices are not captured by the logic of rationalized procedures. Topics discussed in relation to informal aspects of organizations have evolved from control and supervision to empowerment and creativity and to the 'acceptance' of the fact that individuals come to work as holistic beings. This has introduced themes such as emotions (Fineman 2000) and sexuality (Brewis et al. 2014) to organization studies. Feminist theorizing and critical theories have contributed to these topics, and organizations are understood as being

embedded in social relations (Uzzi 1999). Yet even with this turn, friendship in organizational theory can be argued to have received very little direct attention (Grey & Sturdy 2007) and the understanding has remained somewhat superficial and partial (French 2007). In this part, I will introduce a couple of authors who have identified the same problem.

One of the tasks in the socially constructed perspective is to make organizational 'truths' visible in showing how they are just 'one perspective' instead of universal truths and how other ways of being have become marginalized (Alvesson & Deetz 2006). With this in mind, Grey and Sturdy (2007) consider friendship to be implicitly evident in the current attention to topics such as informal organization, organization cultures, inter-firm and interpersonal trust building, relationship management, solidarity in organizations, identity building, well-being and mutual support and commitment. All of these topics include similar human processes and interactions as friendship and bring to the fore notions relevant to friendships such as trust, commitment, reciprocity and human relationships. Yet, the term *friendship* seems absent and can be claimed in some sense to be construed as 'the other' of formal organizations in organization theory and marginalized as irrelevant or segmented. (Grey & Sturdy 2007)

French (2007) also claims a difference to potentially exist between the current norm and reality. According to him, the public opinion judges the formation of interest groups and networks that would be friendship based and deem them 'inappropriate'. According to him, this might be the reason that organizational theories and people in organizations are 'avoiding' this kind of categorization. He calls for a 'widening' of the conception of friendship in organizations away from the notion of an exclusive, private affair and a move away from a distinction between the private and the public. He refers to an understanding of friendship as an organizing principle and organizational element in the workplace to be important and names this as a future task of organizational studies. He believes that drawing on Aristotle's classical conception of friendship as a state of mind, as a *'hexis'*, could help researchers understand and conceptualize friendship relations in today's organizations in a more holistic way.

Berman et al. (2002) have also made a plea for the concept of "work-place friendship" to be further developed. According to them, we don't have enough words to distinguish between different forms of 'workplace friendships'. They say that it would be useful to be able to distinguish between friends who regularly assist with instrumental aspects of people's jobs, friends to whom are turned to in times of need and friends who are more casual. They note that by naming the phenomenon, managing it also becomes more possible. Examples such as 'work partner', 'computer tech friend', 'occasional friend', 'bail-me-out friend' and 'lunch friend' are suggested. This can also lead to possibilities in identifying what kind of ties are appropriate and what would be deemed as inappropriate or harmful. They name this as the future task in organizations as identifying appropriate and inappropriate friendships in workplaces enables the encouraging, or discouraging, of these friendships. (Berman et al. 2002)

Overall it can be seen that friendship is a phenomenon that is present in business organizations both in the narrow conceptualization as well as the more inclusive, 'different' conceptualization. Some, like French (2007) and Grey & Sturdy (2007), have called for investigation of the concept of friendship in relation to organizations yet it seems that not a lot of researchers have acted upon their calling. Yet, recently, concentration on friendship has been on the rise especially in connection to gender studies and feminist theorizing about inequalities and different opportunities in the context of gendered organizations (Mavin et al. 2014, Sheppard & Acquino 2014). The following section first sheds light to research on gender and friendship before moving on to fully embracing the topic of gender, friendship, and business organizations in the chapter following the next.

2.3. Friendship and Gender

The topic of friendship and gender is quite a popular one in friendship research. The variety of approaches to the study of friendship and gender can be traced back to the way gender is conceptualized, as the varying ways of conceptualizing of gender leads to great distinctions also in the way gender is seen as a factor in relation to friendship.

In this section, again, the first part introduces the positivist view in which sex role theory and socialization is used to account for the differences between men and women in friendship and relating. In this part, the concentration is on answering the questions of how and why friendships are different for men and women. The second part relies on a socially constructed perspective, which looks at the gendered-ness of the concept of friendship and attempts to explain why these differences in friendship behavior and relating seem to exist, but could just as well be differently.

2.3.1 The Positivist View: Gender in Friendships

In the positivist approach to friendship research, as was stated earlier, gender is considered an essential similarity/difference and is used as a variable similar to age, occupation, interests and income level. A lot of effort has been put in understanding the differences between men's and women's ways of relating to other people and how it effects friendship (Williams 1985).

The positivist approach to gender and friendship is built on top of the way gender is conceptualized within the positivist approach. The approach centers on the idea of 'sex roles' in which gender is conceived of as fixed traits that result in conceptualizing of women and men in fixed notions. In this view, already, the concept of gender is differentiated from sex as a biological characteristic and gender as a social categorization (Cálas et al. 2014). This distinction dates back to Freud's psychoanalysis that has been considered to demonstrate that the adult character is not predetermined by the body, but is constructed through development and the various emotional attachments to other individuals along the process. Coupled with the understanding from anthropology of the importance of social structures and norms on human conduct brought about an understanding in which males and females are different due to social learning, socialization, which has taught them an internalized role identity that reflects a particular society's cultural norms and values about proper roles for men and women, femininity and masculinity. (Kimmel et al. 2005, p. 5)

When gender differences are taken as the norm and object of study, three different categories of friendships are distinguished: Female friendships, male friendships and cross-gender friendships or more simply, same-sex and cross-sex relationships. Traditionally friendship is presumed to form between individuals representing the same categories of biological sex while cross-gender friendships are considered anomalies. This is because cross-sex friendships are seen to present a number of challenges to the friendship dyad because of the ambiguity that surround such relationships. This ambiguity is attributed to the gender role socialization that leads men and women to view one another in romantic/sexual terms rather than in terms of friendship alone. (Blatterer 2013) Also, the homophily principle in which similarity breeds association is understood to be a mechanism that facilitates the friendship formation between similar individuals.

When same-sex friendships have been researched, the interactions that occur in the friendships have been found different while the quantitative factors, like the number of friends, have been the same. Women seem to value discussions on personal topics, while men seem to report preferences for activities. (Elkins & Peterson 1993) A common understanding has evolved since then that describes female same-sex friendships as 'expressive', 'face-to-face' or `'communal' while male same-sex friendships are considered 'instrumental', 'side-by-side' or `agentic´. While female friendships are characterized by greater amounts of self-disclosure, emotional supportiveness, and complexity, male friendships tend to be action-oriented and organized around shared interests and structured activities (Markiewicz et al. 2000, Wright 1982). Female same-sex friendships are considered intimate and close while men are constrained from displaying emotion that in turn inhibits friendship formation with other men (Blatterer 2013).

As the current conceptualization of friendship includes expressive intimacy, women are often found to be able to provide qualitatively better friendships than men. Wright & Scanlon (1991) found, in line with previous research, that women tend to be more open, intimate and 'self-disclosing' with other women than with their male friends, while men also tended to be more open and intimate with their female friends. They found women's friendships with other women to be significantly more rewarding than their friendships with men or than same-sex friendships that men have. Elkins & Peterson

(1993) reached the same conclusion that friendships that involved at least one woman were considered more satisfying than friendships between two men.

Yet researchers have found conflicting results from their studies: The nature of friendship for women and men have been found to be similar in many respects, but some notable differences have emerged (Elkins and Peterson 1993, Wright and Scanlon 1991) and some say that there are more similarities than differences (Wright 1982). Some claim these gender differences to be large and pervasive, especially between established friendships, while others have found the opposite to be true: that differences tend to diminish as strength and duration of the friendship increases (Wright 1982). The social constructionist perspective, that doesn't attempt to bring out one correct answer, can be of help in figuring out why the research accounts on gender and friendship seem to offer varying results.

2.3.2 The Socially Constructed View: Gendered Friendship

The socially constructed perspective's goal is to show how the 'mainstream' worldview and contemporary understanding is just one way of looking at the world that hides under it multiple other ways of being and understanding. In the case of gender and friendship, the question that is attempted to answer in this view is 'how the existing structures and institutions produce the differences in friendship behavior and relating between genders and how could it be otherwise?' In answering this question, we must look at all the elements at play in social constructionism: Both the historically formed structures that form the cultural context and the individual interactions within these structures. Keeping this in mind, I will first discuss the cultural understandings of gender as a relational difference (Bruni & Gherardi 2002) followed by the culturally formed gendered concept of friendship (O'Connor 1998). After this, I will move onto shedding light to the concept of gender as a situated activity (West & Zimmerman 1987) and doing gender in relation to friendship.

Cultural Concepts

According to Bruni & Gherardi (2002), gender functions as a symbol of relational difference. What this means is that the terms male and female, and the masculine and feminine characteristics typically attributed to male and female bodies, draw their meaning from each other and are only defined in opposition (Bruni & Gherardi 2002). In other words, defining one sex, stating something about one sex implicitly means that something else is true of the opposite (Billing & Alvesson 2002). This construction is problematic, as it produces dichotomous thinking. As we've already learned from the socially constructed part on friendship, the trouble with dichotomous thinking is that it cannot account for mixed attributes that may fall between polar opposites and it hides the extent to which these fixed opposites have things in common (Martin 2000). Yet, the relational difference means that these concepts are indeterminate and always in motion, as when an idea on what is masculine changes, also what is feminine evolves along it (Bruni & Gherardi 2002).

The view that concepts are constantly in motion and not 'fixed' is a fundamental part of the social constructionist tradition. Truths and knowledge are not seen as objective (like in positivitic thinking) or subjective (like in relativist thinking), but are continuously negotiated in social actions. This negotiation occurs in and is framed by dominant discourses and structures, but these discourses are concurrently shaped, changed, ie. produced and reproduced, by people in their social interactions. This grants the individual an active role in shaping their environment. (Alvesson & Deetz, 2006) In this sense, gender binary and notions of gender can be considered to be actively 'done', created and recreated, in action or subsequently undone (West & Zimmerman 1987) or done differently (Mavin & Grandy 2012).

It is important to remember the local and diverse nature of these cultural definitions: They can be divided, ambiguous, and contradictory as well as multiple levels of masculinities and femininities can exist all at once (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005). Groups may vary in terms of how they construct and view masculinities and femininities as well as vary to the extent to which they view the world in such terms altogether: A tendency to not take part in gender construction can perhaps be what equality is all about

(Billing & Alvesson 2002). It is important to also look critically at the use, meaning, and organization and the effects of distinctions between men and women, feminine and masculine and what precedes and succeeds them. In this sense, existing discourses about masculinities and femininities are important.

Masculinity and Femininity can be understood as cultural ideas carried by a specific group representing what is assumed to be natural, typical, or appropriate behavior, thinking and prioritizing for men and women. These ideas are historically variable, interrelated, and loosely defined social ascriptions to persons and also to varying degrees occupations, colors, practices and many other physical or abstract objects and things. Men are coupled with masculinity and women with femininity, but the borderline of what is stereotypical and what is 'true' is very unclear with some championing for a view that society exaggerates these differences and some arguing for no initial differences to exist at all. (Billing & Alvesson 2002, p.72-79)

When it comes to investigating the concept of friendship, O'Connor (1998) claims that the current, western conceptualization of friendship as a private, dyadic relationship characterized by expressive intimacy implicitly favors a feminine style of relating and being intimate over a masculine style. As such, she categorizes the current conceptualization as feminine and gendered. Calling a concept gendered implies that it accommodates one gender over the other. In a social constructionist perspective, one of the tasks is to try identify concepts that appear gender neutral and reveal them as belonging to one gender (Martin 2000, Lewis & Simpson 2012). Usually, it is so that masculine concepts appear gender neutral and feminist attempts show the gendered-ness of the concept or practice. But, just as well, it can work the other way too.

The claim of the current conceptualization favoring one gender over another gets more understandable, if one looks back in history at different constructions of friendship: In the medieval times, the 'ideal' and the highest form of friendship was

constructed as activity based and loyal (Kimmel 2011, p. 215) and characterized by duty, bravery and heroism (Sapadin 1988). In the medieval construction of friendship, women were seen as 'incapable of friendship' as they lack the qualities that were considered essential to ideal friendships, just as in the current construction, claims for men to be incapable of close friendships exists (Kimmel 2011, p. 215).

Oliker (1998) believes the roots of contemporary differences in (western) men's and women's friendship to be found in the nineteenth—century industrializing society. She criticizes the way individualism is treated as a complex, yet single ideology rather than a diversified one. In her article, she introduces a historical account for how both individualism and intimacy are gendered and have affected the modernization of friendship that occurred along the public/private spheres. According to her, the male and female forms of individualism have been different and contradictory, like the spheres they have developed in. The daily lives of (American) men provided little opportunities for the cultivation of intimate friendships while the daily lives of women were especially favorable for emotionally intense and intimate friendships with other women. While men became committed and affectionate with their friends in the public spaces, women became intimate when they met at private places amidst the tasks and rituals of home. According to her, gendered patterns of intimacy merged with the varying situations of men and women.

In contrast to Gidden's (1992) theory on the 'liberation' of friendship in the modern time when individuals became free from external anchors, women were still depended on their husbands for support. What occurred in the course of history, according to O'Connor (1998), was that as the misleadingly dichotomous public/private split caused friendships and other private relationships to be categorized as belonging to the sphere of the private (the sphere of the feminine), these relationships became defined by the peculiarly characteristics of feminine friendships. These peculiar characteristics reflected and reinforced women's disempowered situation in society. While intimacy for women in their friendships meant confining in each other by sharing problems and being emotionally vulnerable around the kitchen table, the only thing they had power to do as they had no power to change the situation they were in, intimacy for men meant something totally different. This kind of intimate relating that occurred around the kitchen table, also referred to disclosing intimacy, expressive intimacy, has become an indicator of close, freely

chosen, highly desirable personal relationships and has led to 'other' kinds of friendships to be considered as inferior ways of connecting and contributes to the marginalization of friendships in the public sphere.

O´Connor (1998) claims that masculine friendships that are characterized as involving inarticulate solidarities in which identity is constructed as a part of a particular 'scene', should not be considered as inferior friendships, but *different* friendships and should be allowed the same importance in sharing and experiencing solidarity as well as in the construction of identity. These types of friendships can be considered to be embedded in social structures and reinforce and reflect categorical identities. It can even be argued that a stronger solidarity, and a more 'ideal' friendship should be based on sharing strengths and resources rather than problems (O'Connor 1992).

These friendships exist in the public area and play an important part in creating men's identities as men and in maintaining the system and shouldn't be excluded, ignored, or belittled. The marginalization of this type of friendship can be seen as a part of a wider phenomenon that obscures the gendered reality of the 'neutral' public. More attention should be put into the role of male friendships in reinforcing men's concept of themselves as men and thus indirectly, maintaining concepts of masculinity. (O'Connor 1998, p.124-128)

Individual interactions

So how do the cultural notions and structures relate to individuals in the contemporary world? The cultural notions of appropriate/typical behavior of men and women binds each individual to construct their identities in a certain way and affect the subtle ways people reward and punish each other for acting or not acting correctly (Billing & Alvesson 2002). In order to understand it properly, it is worthwhile to look at how these categorizations relate to individuals. While the positivist view acknowledges a distinction between biological sex and gender, this perspective divides the concept of gender into two: A cultural gender category and gender as 'doing gender' (West & Zimmerman 1987).

West & Zimmerman (1987) were the first ones to identify between the interlinked yet independent concepts of sex, sex/gender category, and gender in order to make this conceptual distinction clear. Sex is understood as a person's biological sex, a distinction that ascribes people to the 'male' and 'female' categories according to chromosome constellations, hormones, sexual organs and the internal sexual organs in one's body (Alvesson & Billing 2002, West & Zimmerman 1987). This kind of a distinction is usually the most taken-for-granted division between the sexes even though it also has been problematized by some who remind that the meaning and implications of biological sex, too, is fundamentally socially defined (Alvesson & Billing 2002).

Sex category, on the other hand, refers to a socially defined cultural category, male or female, to which people are placed as cultural sex criteria are applied to them. This application is evaluated in everyday life through cultural expectations of particular masculine or feminine 'identificatory displays' indicating one to be of a particular sex (Mavin et al. 2014). These 'identificatory displays' include optional performances and presentations of conventional behavior that can be and at most times are used to link one to a sex category. Sex and sex category can vary independently like in the case of 'cross-dressers': Seeming to belong to a sex category doesn't automatically mean that a person's biological sex is deductible (West & Zimmerman 1987). Sex/gender category links to the cultural understandings of what is appropriate behavior for men and women.

In this categorization, gender refers to the actual activity, to the ongoing achievement of behaving culturally appropriately in accordance to one's sex/gender category. For example, a person who seems to belong to the sex/gender category of women, is 'doing gender' in quite many instances beginning from what she wears, how she walks, talks and presents herself. Understood in this way, gender is a situated activity and is conceptualized as something we do. This distinction between gender and gender category also highlights the notion that people are already categorized by sex when they 'do gender' (Mavin et al. 2014). When a person who looks like a man all of a sudden starts to talk and act like a women, it attracts more attention than when a woman starts to talk and act like a women.

When gender is 'done well', appropriate to one's gender category, it includes performing feminine behavior with a body that is socially perceived to be female or vice versa (Mavin et al. 2014, p. 227). When an individual acts adjacent to his or her gender category, it creates discomfort as people are behaving in an 'unexpected' way. Acting against one's gender category is referred to as undoing gender (Deutsch 2007). Some question such optimistic notions that gender could be 'undone' and consider it more adequate to talk about 're-doing' (Connell 2010) or 'doing differently' (Mavin & Grandy 2012, Messerschmidt 2009).

Borrowing from the traditional view on gender and friendship, there are also cultural notions of appropriate behavior for men and women as means of relating to one another even though these cultural notions may vary in time and space. Migliaccio (2010) argues that men's friendships are a part of their performances of masculinity. These masculine performances can be linked to the over all balance of doing gender and doing gender differently. In his study, he found that men in more female-traditional occupations (teachers) behaved in more masculine ways in their friendships than men in male-traditional occupations (military). He claims this to be due to the fact that the men in non-traditional male occupations needed to counteract their 'feminine performance' at work by behaving in more masculine performance in their friendships.

As such, the claim that men have also been shown to be equally capable of such intimacy, but seems to 'prefer' to do it less often is quite understandable, even trivial. According to Migliaccio (2010), it could also be the case that they, too, may want to have 'expressive' relationships, but choose not to as there are social consequences for doing gender 'differently' and not adhering to the dominant type of masculinity within society. For example, if it is more acceptable in society for men to perform intimacy by using an instrumental approach along with self-disclosure, then men will most likely adjust the way they practice their friendships to meet these expectations for masculine behavior so that they can manage their gender identities in a socially successful and acceptable manner. In the cases men choose to have 'expressive' relationships, they preferred to confine in women (O'Connor 1998). Men are also faced with homophobia and the fear of being

labeled a homosexual if they act in a way that is culturally considered as 'too feminine' (Oliker 1998, Blatterer 2013).

In summary, friendship was introduced as a gendered concept that in the current, feminine conceptualization hides under it a masculine conceptualization of friendship where identity is constructed as a part of a scene. This theory connects to earlier discussion on friendship as a socially constructed concept and Blatterer's (2013) claim that intimacy in friendship should not be reduced to expressive intimacy, but widened to include the mutual receptivity to 'being directed' in choices, interests, and activities to all processes in which selves and identities are relationally constituted and supported. As such, the concept of friendship can and should indeed be understood as a wider phenomenon that includes contextual friendships, inclusive intimacy as well as companionship and shared enjoyment.

With the understanding of the concept of doing gender, it is also easier to understand the normative pressures facing men in 'doing friendship' and answers to why men and women tend to relate to people in different ways can be given. This perspective also 'allows for' and gives an explanation to the local and individual 'deviations' from the norm. Now, with the current understanding, we can move on to the final part of this thesis in which we look at gender and friendship in organizations both from the positivist and socially constructed perspectives.

2.4. Friendship, Gender and Business Organizations

The topic of gender and business organizations has attracted a vast amount of scholarly attention that has focused on examining inequalities in career opportunities. Among this attention, some researchers have concentrated on the varying friendships and networks of men and women. As already learned from the previous part, varying explanations to potential differences in friendship exist between researchers on how, if any, gender affects friendship. When it comes to gender and friendship in organizations, it gets even more interesting as organizations, or the organizing contexts, serve as special cases that deviate

from the general 'free-time' context friendship is most often linked to, or considered to, belong to.

The study of gender in business organizations has been divided in literature quite clearly to two broad categories referred to as Gender in Organizations and Gendering Organizations (Calás et al. 2014), traditional and non-traditional (Ely & Meyerson 2000) or women in management and critical management theories (Aaltio & Mills 2002). These two categories follow the same division that has been used in the previous sections: The first perspective being a positivist one and the second a socially constructed one. In the first approach, the gender in organization, organizations are viewed as neutral containers in which individuals and their aspirations are focused on and the concentration is on improving women's opportunities. In the second approach, the gendered organization perspective, the concentration is on the organizing context, on the interactions, norms and structures with an aim to make visible the gendered practices and concepts that appear gender neutral, but in fact affect women and men differently as they have been formed to accommodate the masculine over the feminine (Calás et al. 2014).

In line with these perspectives, in the topic of gender and friendship in organizations, the first part concentrates on literature on friendships and networks of individual women and men in organizations while the second part concentrates on how the gendered phenomenon of friendship in its widest conceptualization contributes to the different opportunities and experiences of men and women in the gendered organizing context.

2.4.1. The Positivist View: Gender and Friendships in Organizations

The positivist perspective to gender and friendship in organizations relies on the positivist view of friendship and gender introduced in the previous section. According to this view, men and women have been rendered different due to socialization. When men and women are understood to be different, applying the homophily principle introduced in the section about friendship makes it clear that same-sex friendships are indeed more common and

easily formed than cross-sex friendships. This kind of thinking coupled with the positivist approach to gender in organizations that aims to answer the question of 'why wont women succeed?' creates the goal of this approach: Answering why women aren't succeeding in managerial positions through differences between men's and women's friendships & networks. The differences in same-sex friendships between men and women, let alone cross-sex friendships, are the foundation of this perspective.

In organizational research, it has been found that same-sex relationships provide greater social support, identification and personal attraction in both peer relationships (South et al. 1982) and subordinate-superior relationships (Kram 1988). In addition, same-sex developmental relationships, relationships that provide career development and information that help one in their career, more commonly also fulfill expressive functions than cross-sex relationships (Kram 1988). One explanation for this, according to Kram (1988), is that gender differences in relationship behavior get highlighted when the relationship moves beyond an instrumental focus. Closeness and intimacy in cross-sex relationships may also cause negative repercussions that might cause tension and misunderstandings (Ibarra 1993).

While these are in line with the findings based on Sex-Role Theory in any setting, some peculiar findings in relation to friendships have been found in the organizational context. Ibarra (1993) and Markiewicz et al. (2000) have reached a conclusion that female friendships at work will be experienced as less desirable, particularly with respect to instrumental rewards and potential assistance in career advancement. Having a close tie with a female friend at work has been shown to be associated with earning less money (Markiewicz et al. 2000). This has lead Markiewicz et al. (2000) to reach a conclusion that seeking out and investing in women as close work friends may not be a wise strategic choice for the most ambitious and career driven individuals. According to them, women as instrumental assistants may be able to promote one's career as long as one is not perceived too closely allied to these women.

The fact that researchers have found differences between organizational settings and 'free-time' settings implies that a structural approach would be more

appropriate (Ibarra 1993, Waldstrøm and Madsen 2007, Markiewicz et al. 2000). This approach allows for differences to exist in various organizations with varying gender compositions and according to different variables such as age and position (manager, non-manager) alongside gender. According to this approach, most observed differences in behavior are accountable to the varying contexts rather than socialization alone.

This approach moves into looking at structural issues in organizations and how they, in addition to socialization, affect the development of friendships and networks differently between men and women. According to Ibarra (1993), the organizational context produces unique constraints on women's friendships. These include their minority position in power elites, the overall composition of men and women in the organization (Kanter 1977, p. 382), the segregation of functions/departments by sex, the turnover of women compared to men and limited access to informal networks. They cause women's homophilous ties to be less available, have less instrumental value and require more time and effort to maintain during a career than men's homophilous ties (Ibarra 1993).

It seems that in the organizational context, instrumentality seems to be infused with friendships more clearly than outside the organizations and it brings an interesting twist to the way friendship is considered in organizations. According to Ibarra (1993), the more powerful a person is in an organization, the more attractive they will be to others. The attraction is formed through the potential of an individual to also form more links and enhance the power and status of their network through having a powerful person as their friend. As women are a minority in power elites, friendships with women are potentially not seen as attractive as friendships with men in organizations. In addition, for men the preference for homophily and status will coincide, while for women they exit in competition. This has lead McGuire (2002) into a conclusion that the homophily principle tends to maintain and reinforce imbalances and structural differences in organizations.

The overall composition of the organizations also seems to suggest that the higher up a woman climbs on her career, the less friends she will have on the same level. Indeed, Waldstrøm and Madsen (2007) have found that while men tend to see their nearest colleagues more and more as friends while they move up in the organization, women tend to do the opposite. The compositions of men and women in managerial jobs have also led

some to question whether women managers actively choose to interact with other women, or are forced to this network by exclusion from male networks and by low power positions (Ibarra 1993). Whether women's same-sex networks and relationships are a result of choice homophily or induced homophily (McPherson et al. 2001).

Another explanation for the diminishing number of friends of female managers can be attributed to the fact that women's homophilous relationships at work are more subject to disruptions as women have more career interruptions than men (Ibarra 1993). The turnover of women in organizations in comparison to men is also greater, which means that more time is required from women to keep up with the friends made in lower-levels while the traditional home-maker role restricts women's free-time that could be used for friend-making and networking (Linehan 2001).

Indeed, while the friendship word is not used in relation to networks all the time, Ibarra (1993) has noted that both expressive and instrumental networks should always be considered when talking of networks. In addition, most of the time, one cannot be told apart from the other. She has found (1992) that men and women use social networks in different ways. While men tend to have relations mainly with other men in their network, women tend to have dual networks: One for developmental, career enhancing instrumental relationships with dominant men in the organization and the other that consists of mostly relationships with other women and concentrate on friendship and support.

While these are interesting findings, the perspective has been criticized as they draw their justification from body-counting, from the idea that the distribution of men and women in particular spheres can help us in any significant way to understand gender relations in society (Billing & Alvesson 2002, p. 72). Also, in all of the previous approaches, organizations are viewed as neutral containers in which individuals act and the stage is rarely examined. This tradition has been criticized because of its ethnocentrism, positivism, blurring of norms and behavior, and lack of power perspective. (Kimmel et al. 2005, p. 5, Connell & Messerschmidt 2005)

In addition, when using the sex-role theory or in concentration on groups of

men and women, there is a tendency to erroneously stress statistical significance between genders and overlook variability within gender. Wright (1988) advised researchers to be moderate and skeptical in their interpretation and reporting of gender differences because most pattern differences attributed to gender are actually modal, rather than categorical or dichotomous. In order to move on from this dichotomy, a social constructionist perspective is needed.

2.4.2 The Socially Constructed View: The Gendered Phenomenon of Friendship in the Gendered Organizing Context

Instead of conceiving of business organizations as neutral containers in which processes and work occurs, this perspective identifies organizations as gendered contexts that associate management with masculinity and men. Work itself has been associated historically and culturally with masculinity and men and contributes to the creation of a gendered order. The ideal worker sets a standard against who all others are assessed and the ideal worker is associated with men and masculinity. This gendered setting produces unique challenges to women, who are construed as 'the other' in organizations and always end up dealing with their gender, where as men have to deal with their gender more rarely. (Acker 1990).

Combining the gendered organizational context with the gendered notion of friendship makes things very interesting. The fact that friendship is a gendered concept means that its current conceptualization favors the feminine over the masculine and renders masculine friendship and ways of relating invisible. As such, it can be claimed that the gendered construction of friendship in the gendered organizing contexts in fact contributes to the favoring of men and to the recreation of gendered power by constructing feminine friendship and the way of relating inappropriate and masculine way of friendship and relating invisible. As such, the appropriate way for women to do friendship as part of their doing gender is not considered appropriate in the business organizations while for men, the

appropriate way for doing friendship as a part of their gender performance is appropriate and natural.

In order to fully grasp and comprehend the phenomenon of friendship and the implication of friendship as a gendered concept in the gendered organizing context, we must look at the concept of hegemonic masculinity. This is a contested concept, as it has been criticized from a social constructionist position to refer to a singular view of hierarchy and gender. Yet Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) have re-formulated the concept to accommodate the social constructionist perspective. According to them, hegemonic masculinity is a masculine role identity, a dominant, normative form of masculinity that suppresses women and subordinate forms of masculinity. It is a contested topic perhaps, but yet it is also considered a useful tool in understanding how masculinity can award power on to men over women.

Connell and Messershmidt (2005) understand the term to be an abstract concept that is open to historical change. It is considered normative, but not normal in a statistical sense. They understand it as an ideal, 'most honorable' way of being a man that requires all men to position themselves in relation to it. This 'fantasy' does not correspond directly to the lives of actual men, but expresses ideals, and desires, a role identity and things done and way spoken that is distinct from other, subordinate masculinities. It is not just an ideology or norm, but also constituted through practices and institutions such as domestic labor, child-care, and sexuality. New forms of masculinity might take over the old and the new masculinities taking over might be less oppressive on the road to abolition of gender hierarchies. Men can adopt hegemonic masculinity when it is desirable, but the same men can distance themselves strategically from hegemonic masculinity at other moments. Not all men are comfortable with what may be seen as 'dominant and successful ways of being a man' and thus may not like being a part of this male bonding. As long as they don't openly rebel against such acts, even the men not engaging in such performances of masculinities benefit from it. Their 'complicity' makes those versions of masculinity stronger simply because they remain unchallenged in public spaces (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

As said, hegemonic masculinity can be considered a useful tool in understanding how masculinity can award power on to men over women (Connell & Messershmidt 2005). Thus phenomena contributing to hegemonic masculinity can also be understood as strengthening this 'male power'. The gendered phenomenon of friendship in its widest understanding seems to contribute to it on multiple levels. Not only is hegemonic masculinity established through male bonding and homosociality, through the invisibility of male friendships, but barriers to female bonding and homosociality and the problematization of negative relations between women also contribute to it. In addition to the identity support men receive being invisible and the intimacy and emotional base of men's relationships uncontested (Mavin et al. 2014**),** competition and conflict between men are often perceived as natural, dismissed as 'boys being boys', while same behavior between women is seen as dysfunctional (Sheppard & Acquino 2014). As such, it can be claimed that a dysfunction in the way male and female relationships are viewed in organizational literature exists (Mavin et al. 2014). I am claiming that all of these dysfunctionalities can be explained though the gendered phenomenon of friendship.

In the final part of the literature review, I will first introduce the topic of male friendships that the concepts of homosociality and homosocial desire make visible. Then I will move on to talking about female friendships in organizations before finally moving on to introducing the final piece of the friendship phenomenon, the negative relations and acts which can be seen as barriers to friendship formation.

Male Friendships: Homosciality and Homosocial Desire

Homosociality can be understood as one phenomenon upholding hegemonic masculinity. Homosociality is the preference to associate with people like oneself (Gruenfeld and Tiedens 2005, Holgersson 2013) and in the organizational literature, acknowledged as the enactment of masculinity in which top managers hire and associate with similar others. It has also been referred to as the act of '*redefining competence and doing hierarchy, resulting in a preference for certain men and the exclusion of women'* (Holgersson 2013).

Mavin et al. (2014) have suggested that homosociality has contributed to research investigating gendered experiences in management through a focus on social capital and network theory, but a specific focus on friendship has been lacking. Yet some researchers have done this. Kiesling (2005) relates men's friendships to male solidarity and the 'old boys club', also known as homosociality, which has been claimed to play a role in maintaining masculine power in organizations. Homosociality has also been described as male solidarity and ego support (Fisher and Kinsey 2014).

Fisher and Kinsey (2014) have connected homosociality to the need to sustain a shared masculine identity and concentrate on how *'informalism'*, a discourse and practice identified by Collinson and Hearn (1994) to be widespread in many business organizations, works to sustain gendered power in organizations. They claim informalism to have received very little focus in research, link it to the concept of 'old boys club', and see it as a significant factor in supporting 'hegemonic' masculinity. According to them, informalism reveals the nature of the informal networking between men that is based on masculine interest and values (Fisher and Kinsey 2014). This kind of behavior has been noted to seem natural and harmless to the men taking part in it and is enacted in the presence of women, not towards women (Martin 2001). Yet, it can be understood as an act of constructing difference between males and females by acting in a masculine way. This kind of behavior has been referred to as *mobilizing masculinities* (Martin 2001).

Fisher and Kinsey (2014) identify between two types of behavior characterized as mobilizing masculinities: 'contesting' and 'affiliating'. Affiliating behavior includes informal, casual visits in corridors and places that appear recreational, but also provide support, inclusion, access and opportunities. A link to Collison's and Hearn's (1994) informalism where men build networks and 'bond'. They also note this type of behavior, affiliative, informal, and intimate, can be used to challenge the 'rational man' discourse. Roper (1996) has identified a lack of research in this area to be due to the dominant organizational model in which masculinity is rational and impersonal as opposed to emotional and irrational.

Fisher and Kinsey (2014) call it homosocial desire, '*the glue that holds a multitude of different performances of masculinity by different men at different times and supports notions of hegemonic masculinity'*. It supports male ascension and extends through hierarchies. The affiliative performance of homosocial desire includes physical acts of shaking hands, slapping backs and holding arms, verbal acts such as using the word 'mate', jokes, humor and insults, and subject specific discussions of topics such as sports, cars, even sexual banter, as well as rejection of places in which masculinity cannot be performed.

This unacknowledged '*daily stream of emotional and irrational male "love-ins"* (Fisher & Kinsey 2014) is organizationally very powerful. Key career decisions are made all underpinned by male friendships. It effects the selection, appraisal and promotion opportunities and it is impossible to "prove" with one section of the workforce not necessarily knowing anything about it, not being involved and with no-one acknowledging that anything so "emotional" has happened that has influenced the "rational" decision making. Kaplan (2009) refers to it as a '*public staging of seemingly unintelligible language of relatedness' that is 'not only a tour de force of male exclusivity but also is a collective display of power'*.

While at first, this kind of behavior might seem odd, it soon becomes clear that the same mechanisms are at work than with the friendship research. In friendship research, a bond is built on mutual attraction, and attraction is quite close to desire; whom one wants to, for whatever reason, to have closer relations with whether it be attraction to, or desire for. While business organizations seem to be places in which male solidarity, homosocial desire, affiliative behavior and ego support, all that can be understood as facets of masculine friendship, flourishes and are given space, the same doesn't seem to be the case for feminine friendships. Indeed, quite the opposite seems to take place with respect to them.

Female friendships

Not a lot of qualitative studies on senior managers' friendship perspectives have been done, Mavin et al. (2013) have identified it as an under-researched area in management and

organizational theory. They have done a qualitative study on senior managers experiences of friendship with other women at work that revealed that senior women seem to construct friendship along existing research. They view friendship as affective and meaningful and share life's journeys, experiences, happiness and unhappiness with their friends. Mavin et al. (2013) found that the women in their study constructed a social boundary that located friendships outside the organizational hierarchies. Over half of them viewed friendships at work as inappropriate and at odds with the appropriate (masculine) view on social relations at work. To most of them, friendship happens in private life and is considered an antidote to work. The rest who didn't find friendships to be inappropriate at work, found themselves too busy with the demands of work and home life to have more than one or two friends at their job.

Women who found friendships at work inappropriate viewed them as a threat to their professionalism and leadership at work. Due to their seniority, they felt that these friendships wouldn't be equal in a hierarchical context. Most of them had more work friendships with women when they were down the organizational hierarchy. It gets implicitly evident that most of these women only have women subordinates, not women as peers and they see that developing true friendships is difficult. Yet male answers to questions on friendships at work could be similar, given that equality is a facet in the contemporary construction of friendship.

What is interesting though, is that Mavin et al. (2013) also interpret that senior women cannot afford to have feminine friendships that may be interpreted by others as expressions of femininity. This can be related to the double bind dilemma in which doing gender well and differently (Mavin & Grandy 2012) at the same time creates identity trouble. While the job of a manager is masculine, feminine friendships could be supportive of their identity, but it could risk tilting their overall gender performance to more to the feminine side.

According to Mavin et al. (2013), senior women are missing out on the identity formation benefits and the potential for solidarity. They conclude that whatever it is that makes women 'attractive' to other women outside organizations is prohibited inside

the gendered organizations while men's 'attractiveness' to each other is facilitated in the gendered organizing contexts. Restricting friendships outside organizations limits women's homosociality and homosocial desire in organizations as well as constrains women's possibilities of expressing intimacy and opportunities to be 'otherwise' (Mavin et al. 2013). According to them, alternative views on social relations at work are needed as well as role models for female relationships that span over hierarchies in organizations.

To this, I believe, looking at friendship as a gendered concept sheds more light and understanding. What makes men attractive to each other at work is the fact that masculine friendships are created within hierarchies, do not require equality or exclusiveness, and can be understood as the opposite of feminine friendships, the current conceptualization of what true friendship is.

Barriers to friendships formation: Negative relations
Mavin et al. (2014) have researched a topic that they refer to as a 'feminist taboo': How gendered organizing contexts contribute to the construction of negative relations between women. They see drawing attention to women's negative intra-gender relations as a potentially risky endeavor as it risks the reduction of the problem to individual women rather than problematizing social relations. According to them, an oxymoron exists for senior women: They face expectations for positive solidarity behavior towards other women, and at the same time they are negatively evaluated for performing masculinities. Mavin et al. (2014) identify negative relations between women in organizations as an under-researched topic in management and organization studies and have built an initial conceptual framework for studying women's negative intra-gender relations in organizations. Their aim is to reveal hidden aspects of gender at work in explaining how gendered organizing contexts construct negative relations between women that may be a barrier to women's advancement in organizations and constrain opportunities for women to be 'otherwise'.

Sheppard & Acquino (2014) claim that negative relations between women are problematized in a gendered way that serves to reinforce the 'queen bee' or 'mean girl'

stereotype. They found that observers were inclined to view conflict between women as violating the prescriptive norm regarding the nature of interaction between women. This leads observers to make more negative conclusions about the consequences of the conflict. Female-female conflict is evaluated as more problematic even when reasons for the behavior and conflict were identical with female-male and male-male conflict. In these cases, the observers are more likely to think that women who have interpersonal difficulties with other women are more likely to experience lower organizational commitment, job satisfaction etc. than other kinds of couples in interpersonal troubles. These findings can have serious implications for these women: Their commitment to the organization might be questioned, the over dramatization by observers might lead to loss of opportunities to work together in the future, and they might even be overlooked for advancement more than people who are in male-male or male-female conflicts.

These assumptions and stereotypes can also create self fulfilling prophesies: Women might produce, or exacerbate the negative consequences that originate from their same-sex conflict just because they have a perception that such a conflict will be particularly dramatic and difficult to resolve. The gender of a manager can also make a difference in moderating these interpersonal issues as the way upper management deals with conflicts has significant implications for relationship repair and reconciliation. (Sheppard & Acquino 2014)

Eberly et al. (2011) have proposed two relational attributions, relational task attribution and relational person attribution, that conceptualize this phenomenon. These refer to the varying ways individuals explain events to themselves. Relational person attributions put the locus of the events in interpersonal problems, while relational task attributions identify the cause of events to lay external to the couple interacting. In a conflict between women, third parties are more likely to make relational person attributions and identify the conflict as caused by interpersonal factors rather than performance related conflict. When a female conflict is understood as a relationship conflict, no matter if it actually is such or not, it will be perceived as having a more adverse repercussions for the organization. This theory in a way ends up suggesting that women are in some way less capable than men to deal with the challenges of the organizational life

and helps sustain ideas that women will not be as effective leaders because they will not be as effective in leadership roles as they have hard times with other women.

All in all, the organizational literature already acknowledges male friendships and the problem with female friendships as well as the construction of negative relations as more frequent in the cases of women. I am drawing these 'separate' realizations together under the umbrella of the gendered phenomenon of friendship. In the following chapter, a framework for the study of the phenomenon is presented and visualized.

3. The Conceptual Framework

In this part I will bring all of the previous literature together into a theoretical framework for the study of the gendered phenomenon of friendship in business organizations.

Friendship as a Gendered Phenomenon

Friendship is indeed a gendered concept (O'Connor 1998) that includes both masculine and feminine friendships. The current conceptualization of friendship as a private, personal relationship that is equal, context-free and involves expressive intimacy is referred to as 'feminine' friendship. When gender is understood as a symbol of relational difference (Bruni & Gherardi 2002), femininity and masculinity is understood as opposites. Thus, it should not be surprising that masculine friendships are characterized in opposition to the feminine construction of friendship. They are inclusive, contextual friendships that take place in the public, are ingrained in hierarchies and include implicit intimacy.
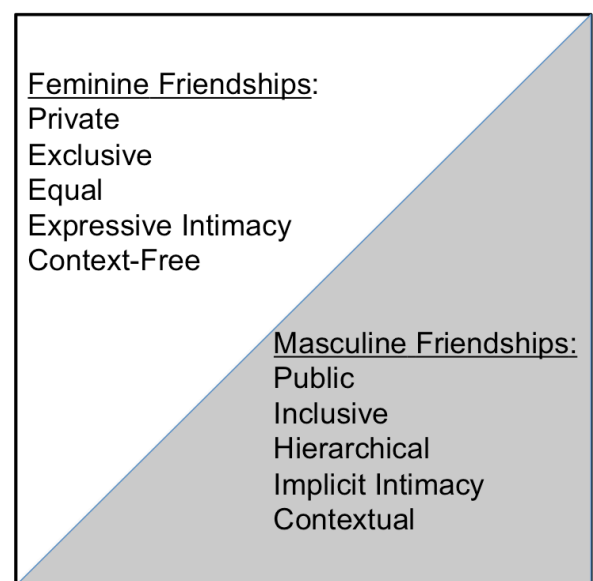

Feminine Friendships:
Private
Exclusive
Equal
Expressive Intimacy
Context-Free

Masculine Friendships:
Public
Inclusive
Hierarchical
Implicit Intimacy
Contextual

Figure 1: Feminine and Masculine Friendships

These two types of friendships can be considered dichotomous archetypes of friendship according to which individuals need to position their doing of friendship. They are visualized in Figure 1. The current conceptualization idealizes the feminine construction of friendship and leaves the masculine friendships to linger in the shadows, to live a life unnoticed. Yet, the positive and negative effects of both friendships are real and it is debatable which kind of friendship offers the most support, acceptance, identity validation or companionship and should be considered 'better' than the other.

The Whole Phenomenon of Friendship

In order to study the complete phenomenon of friendship, Duck (1973) has identified that one must study also the non-formation of friendships. The acts and behavior that function as barriers to friendship formation include gossip, non-inclusion, discrimination or the act of engaging in friendship behavior in the presence of people to whom the doing of friendship is not directed at. Figure 2 illustrates the whole phenomenon of friendship that includes the acts of friendship, but also the negative acts or the acts of social boundary marking.
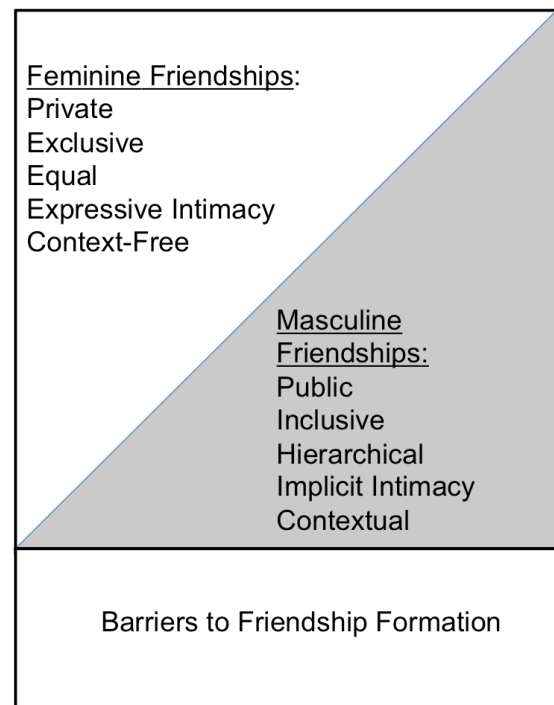
Feminine Friendships:
Private
Exclusive
Equal
Expressive Intimacy
Context-Free

Masculine Friendships:
Public
Inclusive
Hierarchical
Implicit Intimacy
Contextual

Barriers to Friendship Formation

Figure 2: The Whole Phenomenon of Friendship

Doing Friendship as Doing Gender

When a phenomenon is added to the masculinity/femininity continuum, it automatically means that individuals need to position their actions in relation to it. Along the lines of Migliaccio's (2010) research on men's friendships being a part of their overall gender performance, I claim that all friendships and 'doing friendship' contribute to the overall

gender performances of individuals. In other words, doing friendship is a part of doing gender. Gender can be done appropriately to one's gender category, meaning gender is done well, or it can be done differently, in opposition to one's gender category. Mavin and Grandy (2012) have argued for the possibility of doing gender well and differently simultaneously and this, I believe, is at the heart of doing friendship as a part of doing gender. Figure 3 illustrates this addition to the framework.
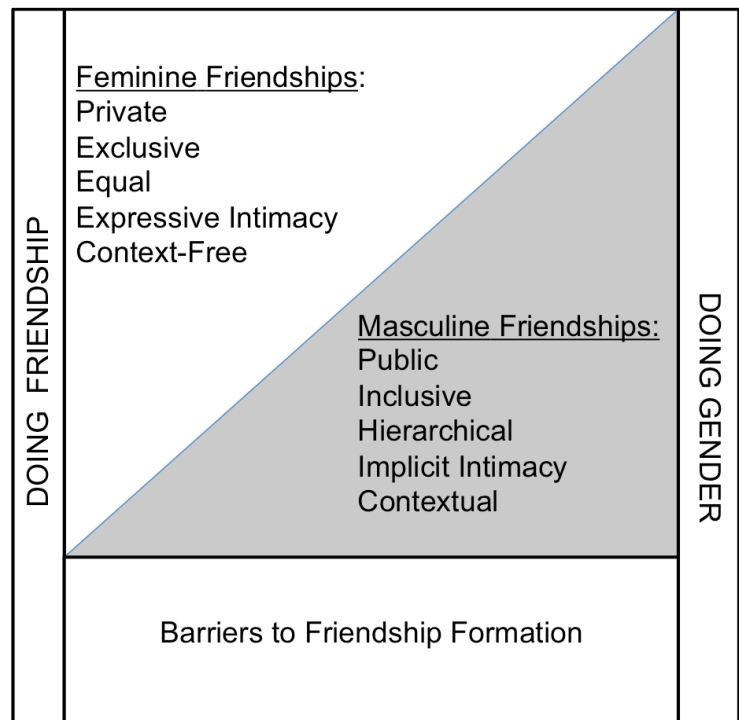

Figure 3: Doing Friendship as Doing Gender

Context

The context should not be forgotten when building a theoretical framework. The local and global nature of femininity and masculinity should be remembered. While I am arguing for the gendered nature of the current conceptualization, I am treating femininity and masculinity as unitary terms for simplicity. In real life situations, in varying contexts, the extent to which 'public' is associated with masculinity and 'private' with femininity can vary and the extent to which these different kinds of friendships are associated with femininity and masculinity also varies. In addition, the context is by no means unitary, but the global and local nature of masculinities and femininities should be accounted for within these interactional situations in which the doing of friendship as doing gender takes place. Figure 4 illustrates the complete theoretical framework of the phenomenon of gendered friendship that is always embedded in contextual situations.

When looking at the context, it should be kept in mind that as gender is socially constructed, it might be an irrelevant category to some and a fundamental divide to others. In cases of friendship and other social relations, self-categorization and the way others categorize according to gender are both relevant. One might self identify him/herself as belonging to their own gender, the opposite gender, or no gender at all, yet all categorizations in the surrounding group, organization or society will affect the formation and doing of friendship as doing gender.
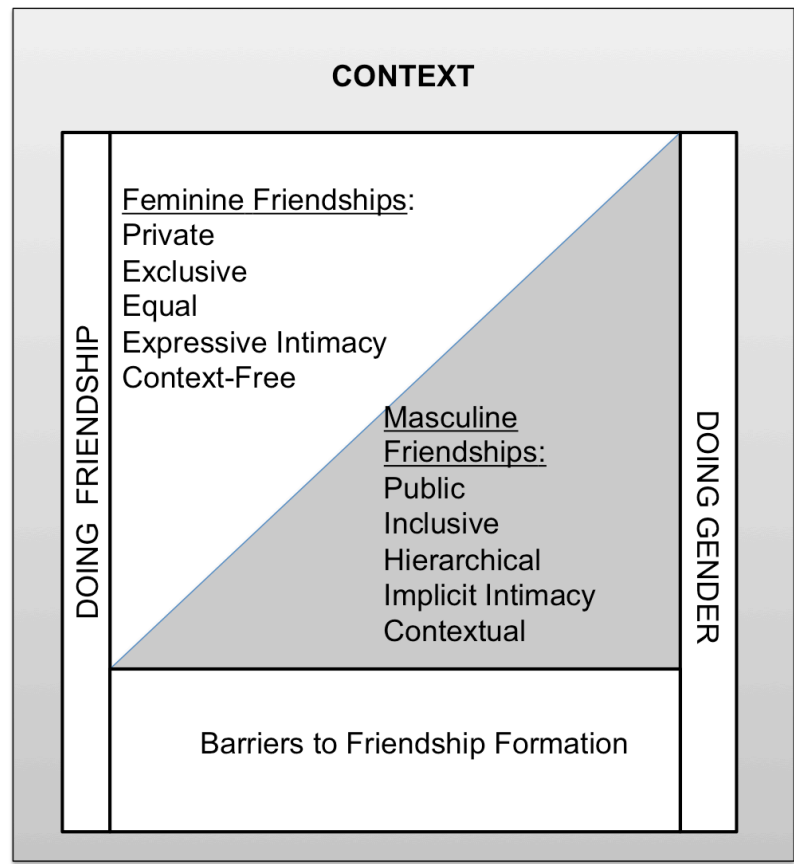
CONTEXT

DOING FRIENDSHIP

DOING GENDER

Feminine Friendships:
Private
Exclusive
Equal
Expressive Intimacy
Context-Free

Masculine Friendships:
Public
Inclusive
Hierarchical
Implicit Intimacy
Contextual

Barriers to Friendship Formation

Figure 4: The Contextuality of the Gendered Phenomenon of Friendship

Business Organizations as the Context

As was previously stated, a context is not unitary and includes multiple levels that should be included in the analysis. When the gendered phenomenon of friendship is studied in the context of business organizations, the societal and cultural context that business organizations function in should be the starting point of the analysis. From then, the culture of the specific organization should be looked at before moving on to investigating particular interactions as doing of friendship.

In general, business organizations have been recognized as gendered organizing contexts that implicitly favor men and the masculine over women and the feminine. While friendships (read: feminine friendships) are currently constructed as 'the

other' to business organizations (French 2007), masculine friendships that are not categorized as friendship enjoy their position engrained in gendered organizing contexts with the occasional glimpses of them with such phenomena as the 'old boys club', homosociality, homosocial desire, and male solidarity that is a contradiction to the prevailing 'rational man' discourse and thus not publicly acknowledged. This is the key to how the gendered phenomenon perpetuates masculine power in organizations: By making masculine friendships invisible in business organizations.

The mechanism along which friendship causes inequalities has been identified as the act of marking a social boundary between individuals. The social boundary marking includes creating barriers to friendship formation. The most obvious examples of this are explicit negative acts of gossiping, plotting or bulling that make the creation of friendship more difficult between the persons engaged in the negative acts, the subject and the object. While the previous are clear examples of barriers, more hidden forms of creating barriers exist in the organizing context as well. These include the doing of friendship in the presence of an individual it is not directed at and the problematization of female relations in the organization.

The doing of friendship in the presence of individuals that the doing of friendship is not directed at creates barriers and may lead to isolation, marginalization, and dis-identification. This is especially important in the cases of masculine, inclusive friendships in which individuals identify as members of a category or a group. According to Eve (2002), using, or intentionally emphasizing the 'groups' culture, discourse, attitude or bodily way of being can be a way to show who belongs in the group and who doesn't. In a sense, it is a construction of difference that highlights who belongs to the group and who doesn't. The category, or group, along which such friendships are formed are crucial in creating barriers or fostering an inclusive culture in organizations: Do masculine friendships based on the category of men override the potential contextual friendship which is built on the membership to a given organization?

In addition, while competition and hierarchy are seen as opposite to feminine friendships, they are not considered a hindrance to masculine friendships. While men can freely take part in competing and conflicts without it causing trouble to the formation of

masculine friendships in organizations, usually when women have similar conflicts with each other they are problematized, amplified and seen as potential problems to the way these women will get along in the future. As Sheppard & Acquino (2014) have found, the female-female conflicts can function as self-fulfilling prophesies in which women themselves might produce and exacerbate negative consequences of such conflicts by believing that such conflicts will be particularly difficult to resolve. This contributes to the creation of barriers for female friendships and feminine relating within the organizing contexts and also impedes the creation of 'masculine' friendships between women and as such, belongs in the sphere of the phenomenon of friendship in business organizations.

It is to be noted that women are not incapable of drawing on the benefits of masculine friendships within the organizing contexts. Allan (1989) has noted that the extent to which gender is a meaningful category to a person, or other people, it will continue to be a significant similarity along which friendships are formed. Yet, he also acknowledges that a lot of social ingenuity exists in devising and constructing similarity and difference. According to him, this ingenuity is especially at play in contextual friendships (read: masculine friendships). As such, it is very possible that the category around which contextual, masculine friendships are formed around is not gender, but something else, like organizational membership. Yet, a double bind dilemma may exists for women in organizations in the case of masculine friendships in which they are forced to simultaneously do gender well according to their gender category and do gender differently. This is, of course, to the extent that contextual friendships are categorized as masculine in the first place.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, it seems that there is a lot to be learned of friendship outside the organizational literature that deals with it in quite a shallow manner as has been recognized by Grey & Sturdy (2007) and French (2007). The main take-away of this thesis is that the current conceptualization of friendship and the idealization of 'best' friendships is a social construction that hides under it *different,* not *inferior,* ways of understanding friendship

and relating that lead to similar, positive and negative, effects of 'friendship'. The current conceptualization is explicated as a private, exclusive and equal personal relation with expressive intimacy while the opposite of such a conceptualization is introduced through the theories of Allan (1989), Marks (1998) and O'Connor (1998) which combines to paint a picture of inclusive, contextual and hierarchical friendships with implicit intimacy.

When gender is brought into play, O'Connor (1998) couples the current conceptualization with femininity and the marginalized one with masculinity. The false distinction of the public, the masculine, and the private, the feminine, has rendered the public organizations to not include 'private' matters such as friendship (Silver 1990). As organizations are seen as gendered contexts (Martin 2000, Calás et al. 2014) that effect women's and men's advancement and experiences in different ways, the gendered concept of friendship can be identified to contribute to the 'ease' of men's advancement, masculine hegemony, and gendered hierarchy through the creation of inappropriate and appropriate ways of relating in organizations through the seeming inappropriateness of feminine friendships in organizations all the while making masculine friendships invisible and unrecognized as friendships.

Yet, these 'masculine' friendships are not necessarily reserved for men only and have also been found in groups of women (Marks 1998) and theorized to be due to the self-conception of not perceiving yourself first as a unique individual, but as a member of a larger category or a group. Future research is suggested in studying the extent to which masculine friendships are indeed relationships reserved for men and the extent to which women are able to draw from them in the context of business organizations. In addition, the extent to which these varying types of friendships are actually associated with masculinity and femininity in different contexts would be an interesting research topic, as well as the varying discourses about friendship and the way the phenomenon is constructed to what it currently is. More research should also concentrate on investigating the gendered phenomenon of friendship in relation to friendship between women and men in cross-sex relationships as the 'stereotypes' of this thesis just presented the two dichotomous examples of feminine and masculine relationships. Findings about the variety and range of real-life relations of men and women that fall between the archetypes would be interesting

to see. Finally, the masculine, contextual friendships in business organizations should be studied in different contexts in order to understand their depth as well as ways to encourage the formation of contextual, masculine friendships around other categories than gender should be found and pursued.

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