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PUBLIC ISSUE VERSUS PERSONAL ISSUE ARGUMENTS:

AN EXAMINATION OF THE FACTORS WHICH AFFECT ARGUMENTS

CONCERNING PUBLIC ISSUES IN FRIENDSHIPS

By

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ABSTRACT

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This paper posits that arguments which occur in interpersonal relationships can be divided into two types: public issue arguments and personal issue arguments. Public issue arguments involve topics which focus on concerns outside of the interpersonal dyad, such as politics and the environment. Personal issue arguments focus on issues tied more closely to the interpersonal relationship of the two individuals, such as arguments about household chores or how much time to spend together. Little previous research has examined public issue arguments in interpersonal relationships, but to fully understand arguments in interpersonal relationships, this type of argument cannot be ignored. Friendship is the interpersonal relationship chosen in this study to examine both types of arguments.

Two studies were conducted. The first consisted of a survey given to 210 undergraduate students, measuring factors hypothesized to predict how often they argued with a certain friend about public and personal issues. The participant's own argumentativeness and whether the reported friendship dyad was male/male, cross-sex, or female/female was found to predict how often they argued about public issues. The

perceived verbal aggressiveness of the friend about whom the participant was reporting predicted how often the friendship dyad argued about personal issues. In Study Two, friendship dyads were brought into the lab and engaged in two arguments; both a public issue and a personal issue. These individuals were found to perceive that the personal issue argument had more implications for the relationship and more implications for behavior change within the friendship dyad. These differences suggest that these two types of arguments are distinct and that public issue arguments in interpersonal relationships have been ignored by researchers.

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INTRODUCTION

What is meant by the term argument? Classical theorists have examined arguments as rational structures based on formal reasoning (Rowland & Barge, 1991). However, if people on the street are asked if they have been in an argument lately, they may be more likely to remember an emotionally-involving discussion with a person close to them. Infante (1981) claims, "that argumentative communication is pervasive in social interaction is clear" (p. 265). However, this paper posits that how individuals argue in their personal relationships depends on the issue or topic. Arguing about issues tied to personal relationships (personal issue arguments) can be very different from arguing over public issues, such as welfare, or politics (public issue arguments). Most previous research on argumentation in interpersonal relationships focused on personal issue arguments (e.g., Canary, Brossmann, Brossmann, & Weger, 1995; Semic & Canary, 1997; Trapp & Hoff, 1985). This paper will examine how these two types of arguments might differ and will explore public issue arguments in one interpersonal relationship: friendship. This is critical because if these two types of arguments are found to differ then one whole facet of arguments in interpersonal relationships, public issue arguments, has been ignored by previous research.

In order to accomplish the goal of examining these proposed two types of arguments, the following topics are discussed: the definition of the term argument; two factors which have been related to how people argue, argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness; previous research which has examined arguments in interpersonal relationships; the importance of examining the topics of particular arguments; and the

definitions of public issue arguments and personal issue arguments and hypothesized differences between them. A rationale concerning the need to examine public arguments in interpersonal relationships, such as friendships, will be discussed, and factors which might predict whether friendship dyads will engage in public issue arguments will be advanced.

Definitions of Argument

Before discussing the proposed two types of arguments, the term "argument" must be defined. Many definitions of this term exist. Kuhn (1991) discusses two types of arguments. A rhetorical argument is defined as "an assertion with accompanying justification" (p. 12). A dialogic argument, on the other hand, takes two people, in which "each offers justification for his or her own view; in addition (at least in a skilled argument), each rebuts the other's view by means of counterargument" (p. 12). This paper will focus on dialogic arguments and examine the factors which relate to arguments individuals have in their interpersonal relationships.

When examining arguments in interpersonal relationships, some researchers have widened the definitions of the term "argument" to include other concepts besides reasoning (Rowland & Barge, 1991). Rowland and Barge discuss the fact that when many individuals think of the term argument in interpersonal relationships, they may be thinking more about conflict in which screaming and threats may be a more important component than reasoning and justification. However, other researchers argue that narrowing the focus of argument to the reason-giving aspects of interpersonal interaction (such as providing justification and counterarguments) helps keep argument separate from conflict management and helps keep the concept of argumentation from becoming

too broad (Galotti, 1989; Rowland & Barge, 1991; Trapp, 1989; Trapp & Hoff, 1985). Reason-giving in arguments is perceived as a necessary ingredient to ensure that disagreements are resolved in the most productive fashion and that people are able to understand one another (Canary, et al., 1995; Rowland & Barge, 1991). Canary and his colleagues have utilized a coding scheme developed for interpersonal arguments to examine reasons that individuals supply for their positions in an argument (e.g., Canary et al., 1995; Canary, Weger, & Stafford, 1991; Semic & Canary, 1997). Focusing on argument as something that contains both disagreement and reason-giving has been perceived as the most advantageous way to examine interpersonal arguments (Trapp & Hoff, 1985).

When examining the impact of argumentation on interpersonal relationships, this paper will focus on both recall of arguments and actual argument situations. While some research on argumentation has focused on having individuals enact specific argumentative dialogue (e.g., Infante, 1981; Legge & Rawlins, 1992; Levine & Boster, 1996; Semic & Canary, 1997), other methods for examining arguments have included role-playing (Newell & Stutman, 1988), recall of arguments (Infante, Myers, & Buerkel, 1994; Infante & Rancer, 1993), and anticipation of arguments (Rancer & Infante, 1985). However, enacting an actual argumentative interaction between the participants will ascertain that a realistic portrayal of arguing in interpersonal relationships will be obtained.

In previous research concerning arguments, two constructs which have sparked much study are argumentativeness (Infante, 1981) and verbal aggressiveness (Infante and Wigley, 1986). The next section will define and discuss these two terms.

Argumentativeness and Verbal Aggressiveness

Argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness are considered personality traits which determine how a person responds to entering and sustaining an argument. Infante and Rancer (1982) define argumentativeness as "a generally stable trait which predisposes the individual in communication situations to advocate positions on controversial issues and to attack verbally the positions which other people take on these issues" (p. 73). People who are high in argumentativeness are more willing to refute another's beliefs (Infante, 1981) and are more likely to perceive that arguing can be fun and exciting (Infante & Rancer, 1982). Low argumentatives are often willing to accept another's view to avoid arguing (Infante, 1981). They have less confidence in their ability to argue, are uncomfortable during arguments, and are relieved when arguments can be avoided (Infante & Rancer, 1982). High argumentatives are more likely to believe that arguing will lead to pragmatic outcomes (such as resolving conflict), while low argumentatives are more likely to believe that arguing will lead to dysfunctional outcomes (Rancer, Kosberg, & Baukus, 1992).

Verbal aggression, on the other hand, is defined as "attacking the self-concept of another person instead of, or in addition to, the person's position on a topic of communication" (Infante & Wigley, 1986, p. 61). Individuals who are high on trait verbal aggressiveness are more likely to attack a person's character when arguing, and these message often have as their goal the outcome of psychological pain for the other interactant (Infante, Chandler & Rudd, 1989). High verbal aggressives report that they utilize verbal aggression because they want to be mean or express disdain for their

opponent and because they want to appear 'tough' (Infante, Riddle, Horvath, & Tumlin, 1992).

Several factors have been found to relate to the levels of argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness of individuals. Males have been found to be higher on argumentativeness than females (Infante, 1982). However, situational variables such as the obstinacy of the person with whom one is arguing have been found to affect whether males and females illustrate similar levels of verbal aggressiveness (Infante, Trebing, Shepherd, & Seeds, 1984). A person's level of argumentativeness has not been found to be related to his or her verbal aggressiveness (Infante & Wigley, 1986). Argumentativeness is not related to negative relational outcomes (Infante, 1982), and individuals high in argumentativeness are perceived as more competent communicators (Onyekwere, Rubin, & Infante, 1991).

However, even though the traits of argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness might help predict whether a person will argue about an issue, situational influences also affect whether an argument will occur (Rancer, 1986). One of the most important situational variables is the topic of the argument (Infante & Rancer, 1993). Another important situational variable is the individual with whom one is arguing. The following section will discuss the study of arguments in interpersonal relationships.

Arguments in Interpersonal Relationships

The examination of argumentation in interpersonal communication is fairly new. While examining arguments from a public discourse point of view dates back to classical times, examining arguments in interpersonal relationships has recently begun to catch the interest of communication scholars (Canary, Brossman, Brossman, & Weger, 1995;

Rowland & Barge, 1991). Many communication researchers believe that individuals who can argue well benefit both publicly and in their personal lives (Infante, 1982). While much argumentation research is conducted utilizing strangers (e.g., Infante, 1981; Kazoleas & Kay, 1994; Levine & Boster, 1996; Onyekwere, Rubin, & Infante, 1991), interpersonal relationships which have been examined include family (Bayer & Cegala, 1992; Infante, Myers, & Buerkel, 1994); friends (Legge & Rawlins, 1992; Semic & Canary, 1997); and romantic partners and spouses (Canary, et al., 1995; Canary, Weger, & Stafford, 1991).

The results of these previous studies on argumentation are not comparable for two reasons. One is that arguing with strangers is not comparable to arguing with people with whom one has an interpersonal relationship. This will be discussed later in the paper. The second difference is that these studies have looked at two different types of topics. Most researchers who have looked at arguments among strangers have examined arguments concerning public issues, such as gun control, drug testing, and the death penalty (e.g., Levine & Boster, 1996). On the other hand, researchers who have examined arguments in interpersonal relationships have focused on personal issue topics which did not relate to public issues, such as roommate problems (Legge & Rawlins, 1992); household chores, jealousy, how much time a couple should spend together (Canary, et al., 1995); and dating partners and family problems (Trapp & Hoff, 1985). However, only one study known to the author (Johnson, 1999a) has focused on how individuals argue about public issues in their interpersonal relationships. Because most people probably argue about public issues with individuals they come into contact with in their lives, such as interpersonal relations including family and friends, arguments about public issues appear

to be an unexplored phenomenon worthy of attention. This study will focus on the interpersonal relationship of friendship to examine the effects of public issue arguments conducted in interpersonal relationships. Johnson (1999a) found that public issue arguments composed a greater percentage of arguments among friends (37%) than among other interpersonal relationships, such as among family members (11% of total arguments) and current or former romantic partners (4% of total arguments). The next section will discuss previous research which has focused on the topics of arguments and will define the two types of arguments presented in this paper: personal issue arguments and public issue arguments.

ARGUMENTS AND HYPOTHESES

The Influence of Argument Topic

One study which examined how different topics can affect argumentative behavior was conducted by Infante and Rancer (1993). They asked individuals to report how often they advocated for or refuted against nine different issues. Rather than giving specific issues, they presented the subjects with categories of issues, such as family issues and social issues. Two examples were given for each type of issue (e.g., when the topic of social issues was presented the examples given were abortion rights and welfare reform). Although these researchers did not look at the actual argumentative behavior, they found that people who reported being high argumentatives recalled more arguments concerning political issues, social issues, personal and others' behavior issues, and moral-ethical issues. Individuals with varied argumentativeness scores did not, however, differ in reported frequency of arguing about family issues, educational issues, work issues, religious issues, sports issues, or entertainment issues.

Two other researchers who have examined how arguments differ based on topic are Newell and Stutman (1988). They claim that there are two types of arguments, disagreements over behaviors, and disagreements over ideas. They give the example of a married couple discussing welfare as a disagreement over ideas, which is in line with the definition of public issue arguments in this paper. The example of a disagreement over behaviors consists of two brothers arguing over one brother borrowing the car without permission, a situation similar to the types of arguments that have been examined before in interpersonal settings, defined as personal issue arguments in this paper.

This paper seeks to extend Newell and Stutman's (1988) differentiation of disagreements and examine whether differences among these two types of arguments are found in friendships. The first type of topic this paper designates "public issue arguments." The term "public" refers to what individuals argue about and is not utilized in the sense of the setting in which they argue or with whom they argue. These types of arguments do not focus on the particular relationship between the two and the behavior expected from each individual within the relationship. Rather, the focus here is on concerns outside of the relationship which do not have direct implications for the behavior within the arguing interpersonal dyad. The argument can have implications for behavior—e.g., who one should vote for in an election—but these implications are not as closely tied to the day-to-day functioning of the individuals within that particular interpersonal dyad. Examples of such public issue argument topics would include politics, women's right to choose abortion, the environment, the death penalty, drug legalization, and many other topics about which people discuss and argue in their everyday lives.

The second type of topic will be termed "personal issue arguments." These types of arguments focus on issues tied more closely to the interpersonal relationship of the two individuals arguing. Such arguments could include arguing over issues related directly to the behavior that each person enacts in their relationship or indirectly to the behavior of the individuals by focusing on the behavior of other intimates of the two (e.g., arguing over in-laws). Newell and Stutman (1988) suggest that these topics focus on the interdependence of the relationship and the reality that disagreements concerning these topics might represent the inability of one individual to achieve certain goals. Examples of such personal issue arguments might include household chores, one's hurt feelings or one's choice of behaviors that stem from or reflect on the relationship, and many other topics which affect the ability of people to interact positively with one another in their everyday lives. This paper posits that public and personal issue arguments will differ in the effects they have on interpersonal relationships.

Differences Between Public Issue Arguments and Personal Issue Arguments

Three differences are delineated between public issue arguments and personal issue arguments. The first is that public issue arguments should be perceived by those individuals within the arguing dyad to have fewer implications for the relationship. Arguments can be perceived as likely to result in certain effects on the relationship, either good or bad. When people argue about public issues, these arguments may not serve as indications of relationship stability like an argument about personal issues might. This might leave individuals freer to argue about public issues without worrying about hurting the relationship. When considering personal issue arguments, on the other hand, how often one argues or one's ability to reach agreements might be taken as indications of

how well a relationship is working. One might also choose not to argue about certain personal issues because the relationship is considered more important than the argument topic (Legge & Rawlins, 1992; Trapp & Hoff, 1985), and arguing about this personal topic might have negative implications for the relationship. Thus, the assessment of relational implications relates to the belief of the respondent concerning whether the outcome of an argument will have an effect, either positive or negative, on the relationship between the two individuals arguing.

H1: Individuals should perceive public issue arguments as having fewer positive or negative implications for the relationship than personal issue arguments.

Another difference between public and personal issue arguments is the amount of attitude change which results from each type of argument. When considering arguing, one desired outcome often associated with this activity is attitude change. Friends are often important sources of influences on attitudes because opportunities for persuasion can happen daily as individuals interact in many settings (Kilbourne, 1988). One important characteristic in friendships is similarity (Deutsch, Sullivan, Sage, & Basile, 1991). If individuals find out that they disagree about certain issues, this may cause distress and keep the individuals from functioning smoothly in their relationship (Hatfield & Rapson, 1992). Thus, either or both individuals in a friendship dyad might use an argument to seek to persuade the other individual to change his or her attitude about the argument topic in question.

Kelman (1958) proposed that there are different levels of responses to persuasion attempts. The first one is compliance in which someone accepts a behavior because of the social rewards that come from the one who is trying to persuade him or her. The person's

attitudes about the issue do not change, however. The second way is identification, in which a person performs a behavior in order to "establish or maintain a satisfying self-defining relationship to another person or a group" (p. 53). He or she believes that this behavior is correct, and thus has a positive attitude toward the behavior. However, the specific content of the attitude is not as important as the fact that the group wants the individual to adopt that position. The third possible response to a persuasion attempt is internalization. The attitude is actually changed, not just the behavior enacted.

One reason that attitude change is important in friendships is because compliance might not be as easy to achieve as in other types of relationships, where obligations to one another are more structured and defined (e.g., employee, family). Friendships are different from these other relationships in that they are voluntary (Adams & Blieszner, 1994) and have fewer explicit rules regarding issues such as compliance (Blieszner & Adams, 1992). If friends require more convincing than other relationships, having friends with similar attitudes can aid in the compliance-gaining process. Having similar attitudes might make everyday interactions in the friendship more comfortable and result in more efficient compliance-gaining attempts.

When considering the persuasive effects of arguments among friends, there are likely to be some differences when considering public and personal issue arguments, but in both cases attitude change should be an important consideration. First, in relation to public issue arguments, as these arguments focus on issues outside of the relationship between the two individuals arguing, the focus might be more on attitude change, and not as much on pure compliance-gaining, changing the other's behavior. However, in personal issue arguments, as these arguments are focused more on the interaction between

the two friends, individuals arguing about these issues might focus more on convincing the other individual to change the behavior which is the source of the conflict. Successful compliance-gaining might be all that is needed to resolve the conflict. However, obtaining only compliance and successfully managing the conflict might be harder to achieve among friends. One reason obtaining only compliance might be more difficult is the characterization of friendship as a relationship of equality (Rawlins, 1992). Thus, one individual does not have as much power over the other as in other relationships (such as parent-child, employer-employee), making obtaining compliance more difficult (Kelman, 1961). Additionally, because friendships continue over a period of time, the same personal argument might reoccur if only compliance is obtained and the two friends' underlying attitudes remain dissimilar. Thus, even in personal arguments, changing a friend's attitude about the issue might be the best way to seek to resolve the conflict.

The question becomes whether individuals are equally willing to change their attitudes about an argument topic in both public issue and personal issue arguments. They might be more willing to change their opinions after public issue arguments than after personal issue arguments. One's identity in the relationship might be a focus of a personal issue argument, but individuals might not be as involved in their positions concerning public issue arguments. However, this difference might not hold true for some public issue argument topics. B. Johnson and Eagly (1989) claim that many social issue topics (which would fall under the rubric of public issue topics) are highly ego-involving. They rename ego-involvement as "value-relevant involvement" and define it as "the psychological state that is created by the activation of attitudes that are linked to important values" (p. 290). They found in their meta-analysis that attitudes which were

highly tied to important values were harder to change than attitudes for which individuals reported a lower amount of value-relevant involvement. Individuals might have high value-relevant involvement in some topics and not be able to separate their attitudes in these public issue arguments from their sense of self. Thus, for those public issue arguments which are high in value-relevant involvement, individuals might not be more willing to change their positions than in personal issue arguments. Thus, individuals should only change their positions more after the argument if the public issue argument topic is not high in value-relevant involvement. This discussion leads to the following hypothesis, which represents a second proposed difference between personal and public arguments (see Figure One for a graphical representation of this hypothesis):

> **H2:** Individuals who are arguing a public issue argument topic which is low in value-relevant involvement should report more attitude change than individuals who are arguing a public issue argument topic which is high in value-relevant involvement or individuals who are arguing a personal issue argument topic, regardless of the level of value-relevant involvement.

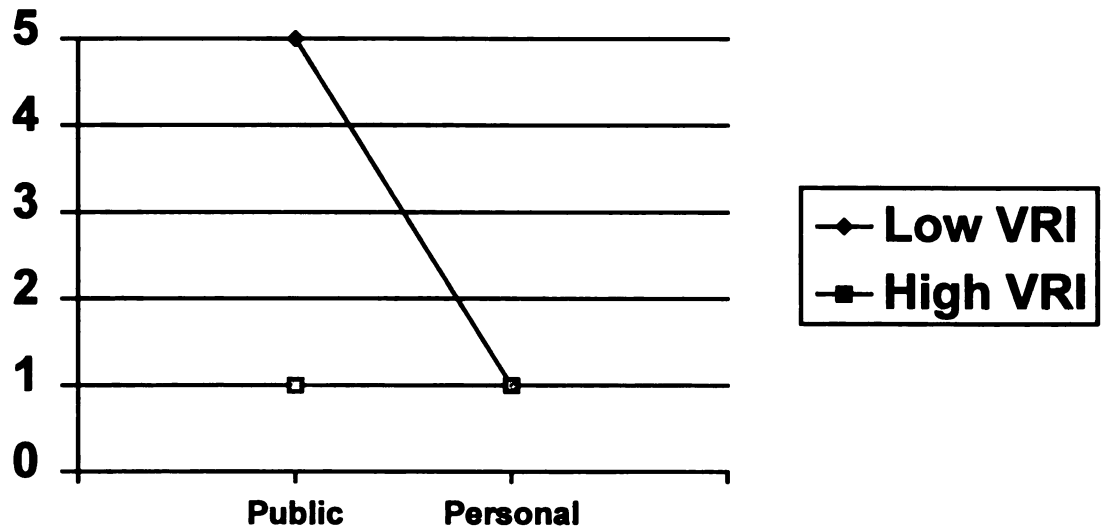

Figure One--Expected Results for Type of Argument, Value-Relevant Involvement (VRI) and Attitude Change

A third difference between personal and public issue arguments might concern the amount of behavioral implications for the interactants involved in the argument. Behavioral implications refer to the extent to which one individual believes that an argument will result in behavioral changes of one or both members of the arguing dyad. This difference refers back to Newell and Stutman's (1988) definition of a personal issue argument as differences about behavior. For example, when arguing public issues, individuals might want to change the behaviors of others, such as public officials, but are not as concerned about changing the behavior of the person with whom they are arguing. On the other hand, sometimes arguments on public issues might have the purpose of changing the other's attitudes or behaviors (such as convincing one to vote for the Democrats) but such behaviors have fewer implications for the interpersonal relationship. In a personal issue argument, however, the implications for behavioral change within the relationship are often the focus of the argument. Glick and Gross (1975) point to the fact

that individuals often consider what personal issues to argue about with their spouses because they know these issues have serious consequences in that the partner will feel the pressure to change. This discussion leads to the following hypothesis:

H3: Individuals should perceive that behavioral implications for themselves and for the person with whom they are arguing are higher in personal issue arguments than in public issue arguments.

If these two types of arguments differ, there are implications for arguing in interpersonal relationships. Public issue arguments have been examined extensively by individuals who have focused on interactions between strangers (e.g., Infante, 1981; Levine & Boster, 1996; Onyekwere, Rubin & Infante, 1991). If these studies could be generalized to arguing about public issues in interpersonal relationships, examining public issue arguments in these relationships would be redundant. However, Glick and Gross (1975) emphasize that because of the relational history and greater contact of marital couples, trying to generalize behavior from strangers to married couples is inaccurate. Trying to generalize from arguing among strangers to arguing among friends might also be inaccurate. This paper will explore distinctions between stranger dyads and friends and delineate specific differences which might be expected to affect argumentation. If public issue arguments among strangers and friends are found to possess different characteristics that would affect the nature of the argument, then research examining public issue arguments in interpersonal relationships such as friendships would be shown to be needed. This section illustrates why the previous research focused on public issue arguments among strangers (e.g., Levine & Boster,

1996) should not be generalized to public issue arguments among individuals in an interpersonal relationship.

Differences Between Arguing with Strangers or with Friends

Friendship is an important relationship to examine for the presence and form of public issue arguments. Friends often have great influence on the well-being of one another (Townsend, McCracker, & Wilton, 1988; Wood & Robertson, 1978). However, the relationship of friendship has few explicit rules governing it (Blieszner & Adams, 1992). Because there is less pressure by society to resolve differences within friendship than in families or romantic relationships, examining how friends negotiate arguments is an important area for research (Legge & Rawlins, 1992). Whether friends argue about public issues at all, how often they argue about public issues, and the extent to which they argue may be affected by factors which separate relationships between friends from relationships with strangers.

When considering such factors, one should first consider some of the dimensions that differentiate relationships with friends from relationships with strangers. Then, this paper will present differences specifically pertaining to arguing with friends versus arguing with strangers.

General Differences Between Friends and Strangers

One factor that differentiates friends from strangers is the time frame of the two relationships. Friends have a shared past and often have expectations of some degree of a shared future. With strangers on the other hand, there is no shared past, and individuals are likely to never interact with these individuals again. This difference results in several characteristics of friendship. For example, when interacting with someone one does not

know, there is often an expectation of reciprocity (Clark & Mills, 1979). If someone performs a favor for you, you are expected to return this favor. On the other hand, among friends, there is less of a requirement of exact reciprocity (e.g, Clark & Mills, 1979). Because of the expectation of continual interaction, friends realize that inputs into the friendship will balance over time, requiring less need to so closely monitor what each person contributes to the relationship.

Another dimension which differs for friends and strangers is interdependence. People's lives are tied up with their friends. What one individuals does affects the other. Strangers may also influence each other's lives, but this influence is not likely to be continuous. In a friendship, actions that each individual enacts can have long-term consequences for the self. Wright (1984) emphasizes that friends become concerned for one another's welfare and not just their own. Strangers are not as likely to elicit such concern, though politeness norms would keep individuals at least somewhat concerned for the stranger's welfare. Because of this greater interdependence with the friend, more conflicts can occur but greater rewards are also possible in these relationships. This greater interdependence leads to expected characteristics of friendships such as sharing joint activities (Monsour, 1992).

A third dimension that differentiates friends from strangers is that individuals have greater knowledge about their friends. This is partly a result of the past history of the relationship. Also, there is greater knowledge exchange in friendships. For example, much research has documented the fact that there is more frequent and more intimate self-disclosure among friends than among acquaintances (Monsour, 1992; Planalp & Benson, 1992). This greater self-disclosure could lead to greater trust and loyalty, another

important characteristic of friendship (Monsour, 1992; Sharabany, 1994). Also, this mutual knowledge can lead to a "high degree of shared understanding" (Roloff, Janiszewski, McGrath, Burns, & Manrai, 1988, p. 374). Through this knowledge exchange, friends can actually create their own "shared construction of reality" (Stephen & Markman, 1983). They can influence how one another interprets the world around them (i.e., Festinger, 1950) and can even come up with a shared language that those outside of the relationship cannot understand (such as particular idioms with special meaning to the friends, discussed by Bell and Healey, 1992).

A fourth dimension that differentiates friends from strangers is the depth of feeling that is found in these two relationships (Bukowski, Hoza, & Boivin, 1994; Sharabany, 1994). A person who is a friend elicits liking or loving from the other person, a feeling that has developed through the shared history of the relationship in a way different than any feeling one might have for a stranger (though you could immediately "like" or even "fall in love" with a stranger, these feelings are qualitatively different from the affection one has for a friend). Because of this greater feeling and the expectations related to being a friend, friends are often counted on to provide emotional and tangible support to their friends (Duck, 1991; Wright, 1984). Strangers are not counted on in this way and are not expected to provide such services. Also, individuals might expect to feel more relaxed (Planalp & Benson, 1992) and spontaneous (Sharabany, 1994) among their friends than with strangers. This also might lead to the likelihood of more conflict and arguing among friends.

Differences Between Friends and Strangers Related Specifically to Arguing

As discussed previously, one characteristic that distinguishes strangers from friends is that friends possess greater mutual knowledge and familiarity (Planalp & Garvin-Doxas, 1994). This greater familiarity helps individuals know when arguing an issue can be pursued and when arguing an issue would have negative relational implications (Legge, 1992). They know whether each friend is comfortable with arguing public issues. Some individuals enjoy this activity more than others and these people are said to be higher in argumentativeness. Infante and Rancer (1982) emphasize that friends should be able to recognize whether the other is argumentative. The perception of a friend's level of argumentativeness provides an individual with clues concerning whether and how often certain arguments should be enacted. Thus, in friendships, the mutual knowledge that each has about the other allows them to engage in those public issue arguments which might provide intellectual stimulation and excitement, while giving the friend the option to avoid those which might cause hurt feelings and defensiveness. However, the mutual knowledge of friends might also allow the less pro-social action of being able to attack the person on a sensitive issue when a person is particularly angry. In either case, the mutual knowledge that friends possess differs arguing among friends from arguing among strangers.

A second difference between arguing with friends and strangers is that friends have a greater concern for the relationship. Strangers might not care beyond normal politeness and reciprocity norms how their behaviors affect their relationship with the other person; they often do not expect the relationship to continue outside of the argument setting. Friends, on the other hand, realize that the effects of their actions

extend beyond this particular argumentative encounter. Rawlins (1992) also emphasizes that friends believe that neither should hurt the other intentionally when speaking, and these expectations of friendship might influence how friends argue about public issues which would differ from how strangers would argue about public issues.

A third difference between arguments among strangers and arguments among friends might consist of the mutually negotiated norms of friendship. In the studies of strangers, the individuals are given no choice about whether they will argue over public issues. However, in interpersonal relationships, norms are formed about how each individual will act (Argyle & Henderson, 1984; Blieszner & Adams, 1992). Legge (1992) emphasizes that in formal arguments there are very explicit ways of arguing, but friends implicitly negotiate how they are going to argue. She gives the example that interruption might be acceptable in some friends' arguments but not in other friends' arguments. Semic and Canary (1997) also emphasize that friends develop norms that determine how they respond to their friends' efforts to start arguments. They claim that highly argumentative friends might be more willing to develop arguments, while low argumentative friends might be less motivated to develop arguments. Thus, whether friends argue about public issues at all, how they argue about public issues, and the extent to which they argue, might all be affected by these norms of friendships. Arguments among strangers, on the other hand, will be affected by task constraints and societal norms, which might differ greatly from the mutually developed norms among two friends.

Some friends might engage often in public issue arguments, while others may never discuss these issues. Whether public issue arguments are influential in many

friends' relationships is an unanswered question. This paper will seek to present factors which might affect the likelihood that two friends will engage in public issue arguments.

Factors Which Might Predict Whether Friends Engage in Public Issue Arguments

One characteristic that might predict whether two friends will engage in public issue arguments is the level of argumentativeness that each individual in the friendship has or is perceived as possessing. People who are high in argumentativeness are more willing to refute another's beliefs (Infante, 1981) and are more likely to perceive that arguing can be fun and exciting (Infante & Rancer, 1982). Low argumentatives are often willing to accept another's view to avoid arguing (Infante, 1981). This tendency in high and low argumentatives might be especially apparent in public issue arguments rather than personal issue arguments. High argumentatives might perceive that public issue arguments can be fun and exciting, but because of the greater relational implications of personal issue arguments, they may not perceive personal issue arguments in the same manner. Individuals should take their own level of argumentativeness and their perception of their friend's argumentative into account when deciding to engage in public issue arguments.

Another consideration when examining argumentativeness in a friendship dyad is the perceived match between the two friends. Because friends tend to be similar on many dimensions (Davis & Todd, 1985; Patterson, Bettini, & Nussbaum, 1993; Rawlins, 1992), individuals might also choose to be friends with those whom they believe are similar to themselves in argumentativeness. This speculation leads to the following research question:

RQ1: To what extent will the argumentativeness score of the respondent and the perceived argumentativeness score of their friend be positively correlated?

Previous research on the effect of the matching of argumentativeness in a dyad on arguing has led to conflicting results. Considering the differences between arguing with friends and arguing with strangers might explain the conflicting results found between studies done by Levine and Boster (1996) and Semic and Canary (1997). Levine and Boster utilized strangers talking about public issues in their research, while Semic and Canary utilized friendship dyads talking about issues of the subjects' own choosing. Though Semic and Canary did not break up their data into two types of arguments, the top three topics they report their subjects discussing in situations of disagreement would fall under the definition of personal issue arguments (household chores, interpersonal relationships, power/control). Levine and Boster found that in their experiment, it was in the high/low argumentativeness combination in which the most arguments were presented. They suggested that these findings could be explained by individuals in the high/high condition becoming frustrated with their inability to convince the other person and the high argumentatives in the high/low combination arguing more because they wanted to win the argument. However, Semic and Canary found that among friends, the most argument development was in the high/high condition. If an individual is the friend of a person who is a low argumentative, they may be able to easily win arguments and thus might want to argue with a low argumentative more if winning the argument is most important (Levine & Boster, 1996). However, even though a high argumentative likes to win arguments (Infante & Rancer, 1982), always winning arguments might have negative implications for the friendship, especially if the low argumentative friend does not like to

argue in the first place. Thus, in friendships as opposed to stranger dyads, there might be more concern for the relationship, leading to less arguing among the high/low condition. Also, norms among friends who are both high argumentatives might prevent arguments from becoming too frustrating, a suggestion that Boster and Levine (1996) offer for why the combination of two high argumentatives did not engage in the most arguments. Semic and Canary (1997) offer two other explanations for why friends in dyads which are high/low in argumentativeness do not argue as much. They suggest that individuals who are highly argumentative know if their friends are also highly argumentative, and only argue with friends who have similar tendencies as themselves. They also suggest that if high argumentatives are better arguers, a friendship dyad composed of a high and a low would know the outcome of an argument from past experience and thus would engage in fewer arguments.

Friendship dyads which the respondent believes to be composed of a high and a low argumentative will probably not report engaging in many public issue arguments because the outcome of the argument would be known already. However, friendship dyads in which the respondent believes a high argumentative and a moderate argumentative are paired may engage in more public issue arguments. Infante and Rancer (1982) claim that individuals who are moderate argumentatives are often more influenced by situational variables in determining whether they will argue than people who are high or low in argumentativeness. Because one situational variable is with whom one is arguing (Rancer & Infante, 1985), a friend who is high in argumentativeness might seek to encourage this quality in his or her friend who is perceived to be moderately argumentative. From the above reasoning, the following prediction is advanced:

H4: Friendship dyads which the respondent perceives to be composed of either high/high or high/moderate combinations of argumentativeness will be reported as engaging in public issue arguments more often than those which are perceived to be composed of high/low, moderate/moderate, low/moderate, or low/low combinations of argumentativeness.

Public issue arguments are assumed to be easier to avoid than personal issue arguments for friends. This is because these arguments do not have as many implications for the particular arguing dyad. However, if two individuals wish to keep their relationship working satisfactorily, they may have to engage in personal issue arguments, to resolve issues which do have implications for the functioning of the arguing dyad. Because public issue arguments are viewed as more voluntary, individuals who enjoy these arguments (such as high argumentatives) may choose to engage in these arguments, while those who do not, should choose not to engage in these arguments. Individuals who are high argumentative and who believe that their friend is high or moderate argumentative will be more likely to choose to engage in these public issue arguments because these arguments might be perceived as a pleasant activity that both individuals would enjoy. This reasoning leads to the following hypotheses (see Figure Two for a graphical representation of hypotheses four, five, and six):

H5: The argumentativeness of the respondent and the perceived argumentativeness of their friend will not predict how often the dyad is reported engaging in personal issue arguments.

H6: Dyads which are perceived by the respondent to be composed of high/high or high/moderate combinations of argumentativeness should report engaging in public issue arguments more often than personal issue arguments, while those dyads which are perceived to be composed of high/low, moderate/moderate, low/moderate, or low/low combination of argumentativeness should report engaging in personal issue arguments more often than public issue arguments.

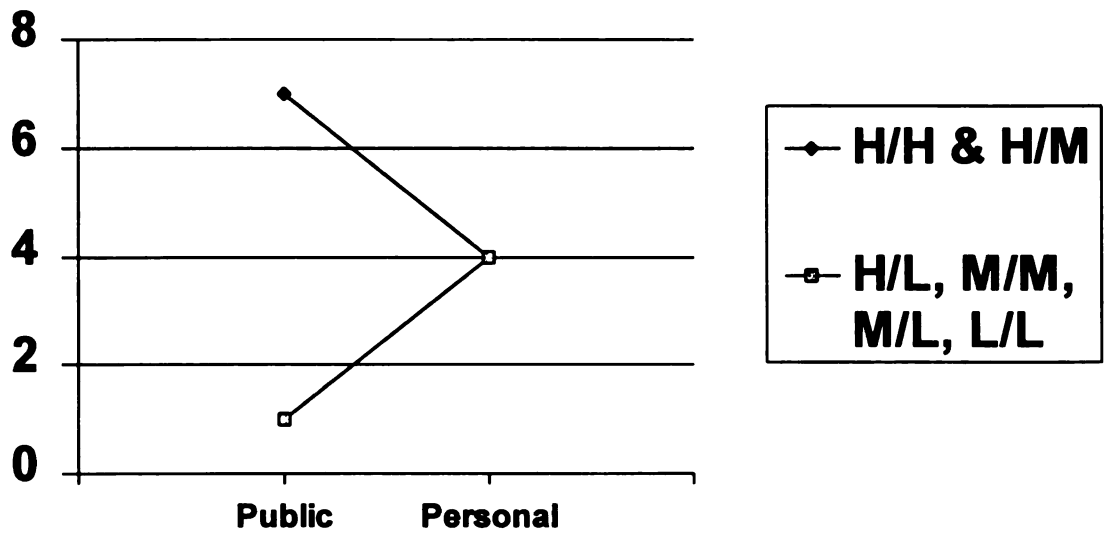

Figure Two--Expected Results for Argumentativeness and Reports of Arguments

Another variable which might predict level of public issue arguments among two friends is perceived level of verbal aggressiveness. Semic and Canary (1997) found that among friendship dyads discussing issues of their own choosing, the dyads which consisted of two highly verbally aggressive individuals were least likely to display developed argument behavior. Verbal aggressiveness from friends might have a stronger impact than from strangers. Martin and Horvath (1992, as cited in Anderson and Martin, 1994) found that messages from friends that were verbally aggressive hurt the individual more than verbally aggressive messages from acquaintances. If a person believes that he

or she is highly verbally aggressive or believes that his or her friend is highly verbally aggressive, that person might want to avoid public issue arguments to avoid opportunities for either themselves or their friends to have their self-concepts attacked. Because personal issue arguments are probably harder to avoid, individuals who perceive themselves or their friend to be high in verbal aggressiveness might argue more about personal issues than about public issues, which are arguments which can be avoided more easily. However, people who believe that themselves and their friends are low in verbal aggressiveness might be more willing to argue about both personal and public issues. The following claim regarding perceived verbal aggressiveness in friendship dyads is posited (see Figure Three for a graphical representation of this hypothesis):

> **H7:** Individuals will report engaging in public issue arguments less often when they believe that their friendship dyad has at least one individual high in verbal aggressiveness than when they believe that their dyad does not contain at least one individual high in verbal aggressiveness or when they are reporting on how often they engage in personal issue arguments, no matter the perceived verbal aggressiveness make-up of the arguing dyad.

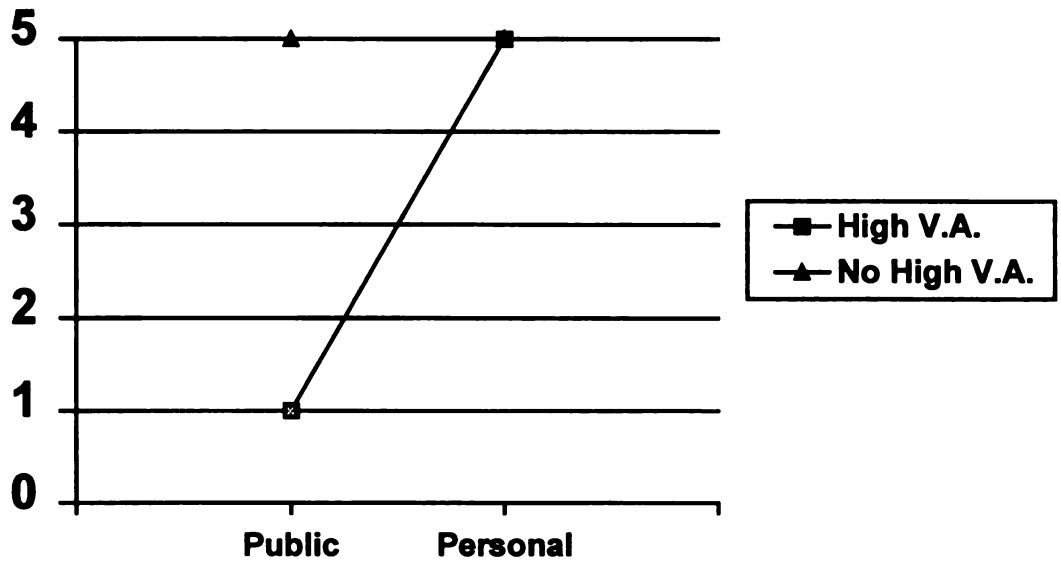

Figure Three--Expected Results for Verbal Aggressiveness and Reports of Arguments

Another factor that might affect how often friends engage in public issue arguments is the sex composition of the friendship dyad. One reason is that males have been found to be more argumentative (Infante, 1982; Martin and Anderson, 1996). Also, previous friendship research has found that males in friendships tend to be more focused on sharing activities (Inman, 1996), while females tend to be more focused on sharing emotional lives (F. Johnson, 1996). Because females are more willing to discuss emotions, they may have more personal issue arguments. Because males are less willing to discuss emotions and want to keep a stronger barrier between the two individuals, they may be less likely to discuss personal issue arguments. They may also be more likely to engage in public issue arguments in that this type of argument might be perceived as another pleasant activity that the two friends share. How mixed sex friendship dyads would react to the discussion of public issues is unclear. However, previous research has found that cross-sex friendships tend to involve more emotional involvement than same-

sex friendships for males and less emotional involvement than same-sex friendships for females (Rawlins, 1992). Cross-sex friends also report engaging in shared activities, just as male-male friendship dyads do (Rose, 1985). The following hypotheses are proposed (see Figure Four for a graphical representation of hypotheses eight, nine, and ten):

H8: Friendship dyads composed of two males will be reported as having public issue arguments more often than personal issue arguments and will also be reported as having public issue arguments more often than female friendship dyads.

H9: Friendship dyads composed of two females will be reported as having personal issue arguments more often than public issue arguments and will also be reported as having personal issue arguments more often than male friendship dyads.

H10: Cross-sex friendship dyads will fall between male-male and female-female dyads on the report of how often they argue about personal and public issue arguments.

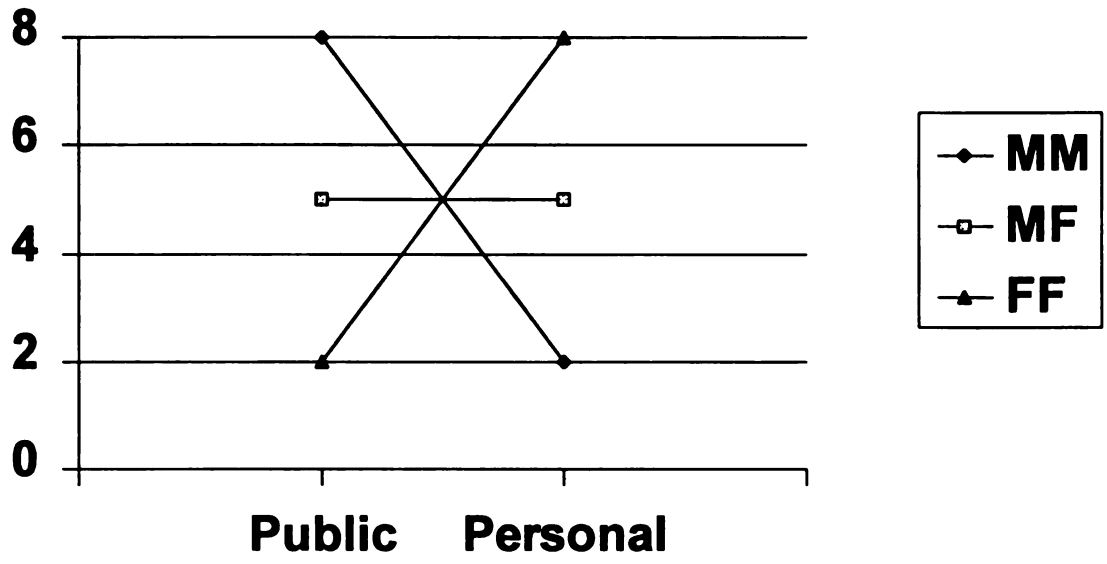

Figure Four--Expected Results for Reported Sex of Dyad and Reports of Arguments

To examine whether public issue arguments in interpersonal relationships exist, a pretest was conducted (Johnson, 1999a). Thirty-five students kept diaries of their arguments for three weeks. A total of 127 arguments were listed, 20% which were public issue arguments. Public issue arguments were found to differ from personal issue arguments in that they were more likely to occur within certain interpersonal relationships than others and more likely to occur with males. The most likely relationship to have public issue arguments was friendship. Thirty-seven percent of the arguments reported by friends were public issue arguments. These percentages dropped to 4% for current or former romantic partners, 16% for roommates, 11% for family, and 20% for individuals from work or class ($\chi^2(4)=12.85$; $p=.01$). This study illustrates that public issue arguments do appear to exist in friendships, and thus provides further rationale for this study.

To examine these proposed questions, two studies were conducted. In Study One, individuals were given a questionnaire which queried if and how often they engaged in public and/or personal issue arguments with a certain friend. It also measured actual argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness of the respondent and perceived argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness of his or her friend. In Study Two friendship dyads were brought into the laboratory. These dyads engaged in a personal and a public issue argument and then answered questions concerning their discussions.

Study One

Methods

Participants

Participants in Study One consisted of 212 undergraduate students in an introductory communication class at a large Midwestern university. College-aged students were considered an ideal population for this study because during this time period, many college-aged individuals have much time to interact with their friends, without as many obligations on their time from other roles, such as parent or spouse (Rawlins, 1992). Also, Johnson (1999a) illustrated that college students reported arguing with their friends about both public and personal issues.

Procedures

Hypotheses four through ten and the research question were examined in study one. A questionnaire was completed by the 212 students. This questionnaire examined whether and how often they reported engaging in public and personal issue arguments with one friend. They were asked to think of a close friend with whom they were not involved romantically who had been their friend for at least six months. They were told to

think of this friend while they filled out the questionnaire. The questionnaires were confidential.

Measures

The questionnaire first asked the individuals to think of a friend who met the mentioned criteria (a close friend who they normally see on a daily basis). They wrote down the name of their friend, the sex of themselves and their friend, and how long they had known their friend. They were also asked how far their friend lived from them. They were then asked whether they argued about certain issues and how often they argued about these issues; both topics from personal issues arguments and topics from public issue arguments were included (taken from Canary, et al., 1991; Canary et al., 1995; Johnson, 1999a; Legge & Rawlins, 1992; and Levine & Boster, 1996). Two factors were predicted for these questions, one including all of the public issue argument topics (both the questions of whether they argue about these issues and how often they argue about these issues were expected to fall onto this one factor) and one including all of the personal issue arguments (again, the questions asking whether they argue about these issues and how often they argue about these issues were expected to fall onto the same factor). The questionnaire included the argumentativeness scale (Infante & Rancer, 1982) and the verbal aggressiveness scale (Infante & Wigley, 1986). They were also asked to report how argumentative and verbally aggressive they thought their friend was by answering the two scales with their friend in mind rather than themselves. This measure of friends' perceived argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness was considered appropriate because it is believed to be the perception of the friend's scores on these variables rather than the actual score that determines whether individuals initiate

arguments about public issues. Also, both Infante and Rancer (1982) and Semic and Canary (1997) claim that friends should know how argumentative their friend is. This assessment should hold true for a friend's verbal aggressiveness as well. Infante and Rancer reworded the argumentativeness scale in a similar way as the one used in this study and found a correlation of .54 between a person's assessment of their close friend's likelihood to approach arguments and his or her friend's actual score on the approach items of the argumentativeness scale. A correlation of .42 was found between the person's assessment of their close friend's likelihood to avoid arguments and his or her friend's actual score on the avoid items of the argumentativeness scale. Sabourin, Infante, and Rudd (1993) found that for spouses, the correlations between spouses' perceptions of their partner's verbal aggressiveness score and his or her actual score was positive. The correlation between wives' perceptions of their husbands' verbal aggressiveness and their husbands' actual scores ranged from .31 for nondistressed couples to .61 for couples who were violent. The correlation between husbands' perceptions of their wives' verbal aggressiveness and their wives' verbal aggressiveness scores ranged from .48 for nondistressed couples to .19 for violent couples. Thus, the measure of perception of one's friend's argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness was considered appropriate. Finally, the participants in Study One reported the closeness and satisfaction of the friendship between them and their reported friend (see Appendix A for the list of items for the Study One questionnaire).

All items were measured on a 1-7 scale, with 1=Strongly Disagree and 7=Strongly Agree, except the reports of how often one argued about public and personal issues with one's friend and own and friend's perceived argumentativeness and verbal

aggressiveness. The reports of how often participants argued about public or personal issues were measured on a 5-point scale where 1=Never, 2=Less than once a month, 3=At least once a month, 4=At least once a week, and 5=At least once a day. Own and friend's perceived argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness scales were measured on a 1-5 scale from 1=almost never true to 5=almost always true.

The following section details the scales used in Study One:

Argumentativeness—This scale was formed by Infante and Rancer in 1982. It has been utilized extensively and measures a "generally stable trait which predisposes the individual in communication situations to advocate positions on controversial issues and to attack verbally the positions which other people take on these issues" (Infante & Rancer, 1982, p. 73). Previous studies have found reliabilities ranging from .75 to .91 (Rubin, Palmgreen, and Sypher, 1994). Both Exploratory Factor Analysis (Infante & Rancer, 1982) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Boster, Levine, & Kazoleas, 1993) have been conducted on this scale.

Verbal Aggressiveness—This scale was formed by Infante and Wigley (1986) and measures a trait which represents a tendency to attack "the self-concept of another person instead of, or in addition to, the person's position on a topic of communication" (Infante and Wigley, 1986, p. 61). It has been used extensively and has been found to have reliabilities in the range of .81 (Infante & Wigley, 1986) and .90 (Boster, Levine, and Kazoleas, 1993, after nine items were deleted). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Boster, Levine, & Kazoleas, 1988) has been conducted on this scale.

Closeness—Items from this scale seek to measure the depth of friendship between the person completing the questionnaire from the first study and the friend about whom

they are reporting. These items were utilized in a previous study (Johnson, 1999b) and were found to have a reliability of .84. A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on this scale in this previous study.

Satisfaction—Items from this scale seek to measure how satisfying the relationship is between the participant completing the questionnaire and the friend about whom they are reporting. These items were used in a previous study (Johnson, 1999b) and were found to have a reliability of .89. A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on this scale in this previous study. No hypotheses are made regarding this variable, but interesting results might be obtained, such as determining whether the number of public or personal issue arguments reported relates in any systematic way to friendship satisfaction.

Public Issue Arguments—Items from this scale asked respondents whether and how often they and their friend argued about issued deemed public issues according to the definition delineated in this paper. Specific argument topics which were presented were taken from Johnson (1999a) and Levine and Boster (1996).

Personal Issue Arguments---Items from this scale asked respondents whether and how often they and their friend argued about issued deemed personal issues according to the definition delineated in this paper. Specific argument topics which were presented were taken from Canary, et al. (1991), Canary, et al. (1995), Johnson (1999a), and Legge and Rawlins (1992).

Analyses

Confirmatory factor analysis was performed on the questionnaire using Hamilton and Hunter's CFA program (1988). Individual items were assessed for content, internal

consistency, and parallelism. Items which did not meet these criteria were dropped, resulting in a questionnaire with 85 questions (see Appendix A for a list of items; see Table One for a list of descriptive measures and reliabilities for each scale). Items for the following variables were summed: own and friend's argumentativeness, and own and friend's verbal aggressiveness. The average was determined for items measuring how often individuals reported arguing about each public issue, how often individuals reported arguing about each personal issue, closeness, and satisfaction. Although the items measuring whether and how often the friendship dyads reported arguing about public issues and personal issues were hypothesized to fall onto the same factor, this did not occur. Thus, the author chose to only examine the "how often" items in regards to the hypotheses.

Table One

Descriptive Measures of Study One's Scales

Variable	Mean	SD	Range	α
Argumentativeness (own)	33.69	7.05	17-52	.83
Verbal Aggressiveness (own)	39.02	8.68	18-60	.84
Argumentativeness (friend's)	34.66	7.77	15-54	.87
Verbal Aggressiveness (friend's)	41.70	11.48	17-72	.89
Public Arguments (how often)	1.75	0.64	1-5	.80
Personal Arguments (how often)	1.98	0.73	1-5	.87
Closeness	5.66	1.21	1-7	.87
Satisfaction	5.73	1.10	1-7	.81

Results

Tests of Research Question and Hypotheses:

Argumentativeness. Hypotheses four through ten and the research question were examined in Study One. The research question asked whether the argumentativeness score of the respondent and the perceived argumentativeness score of the friend would be positively correlated (See Table Two). A person's own argumentativeness and their report of their friend's was correlated at .33 ($p<.001$). The participant's own verbal aggressiveness score and their friend's perceived verbal aggressiveness score were correlated at .44 ($p<.001$). This supports the idea that people at least believe that they are similar to their friends on these characteristics.

Table Two

Correlations Between Own and Friend's Perceived Argumentativeness and Verbal Aggressiveness Scores

	Own Argumentative-ness	Friend's Argumentative-ness	Own Verbal Aggressiveness	Friend's Verbal Aggressiveness
Own Arg.	1.00			
Friend's Arg.	.33	1.00		
Own V.A.	.21	.07	1.00	
Friend's V.A.	.21	.45	.44	1.00

Hypotheses four, five, and six examined whether the match between the participant's argumentativeness score and their friend's perceived argumentativeness score predicted how often individuals reported engaging in public issue and personal issue arguments. Correlations (see Table Three) illustrated that one's own argumentativeness and perceived friend's argumentativeness was correlated positively

with how often individuals reported arguing about public issues (r=.32, p<.001; and r=.21; p=.003, respectively); but that neither of these variables was correlated significantly with how often individuals reported arguing about personal issues (own argumentativeness, r=.09, p=.18; friend's perceived argumentativeness, r=.08, p=.25).

Table Three

Correlations Between How Often Report Arguing about Each Type of Issue and Argumentativeness

	Public Arguments (How Often)	Personal Arguments (How Often)	Own Argumentative-ness	Friend's Argumentative-ness
Public	1.00			
Personal	.58	1.00		
Own Arg.	.32	.09	1.00	
Friend's Arg.	.21	.08	.33	1.00

Hypotheses four and five stated that the argumentativeness composition of the friendship dyad would make a difference in the number of public issue arguments reported but would not make a difference in the number of personal issue arguments reported by the friendship dyad. The distribution of scores was examined for the variables of own reported argumentativeness and reported friend's perceived argumentativeness. The scores for each variable were divided into thirds in such a way to make the three groups as equal in frequency as possible across the two variables.[1] Because of deleted items, the possible range on these two variables was 11-55. Low argumentativeness was defined as a score of 31 or lower (N=149). Moderate argumentativeness was defined as a score from 32 to 37 (N=142). High argumentativeness was defined as a score of 38 or higher (N=129). Based on the hypotheses, a variable was created in which dyads who

were composed of either two high argumentatives or a high and a moderate argumentative were grouped together (Group 2), and the all other possible combinations (high/low, moderate/moderate, low/moderate, low/low) were grouped together (Group 1). Hypotheses four and five claimed that these two groups would differ in how often they reported arguing about public issues but would not differ in how often they argued about personal issues. T-tests were used to test this claim. The difference between groups approached significance in how often they reported arguing about public issues ($t(205)= -1.845$; $p=.07$; $M_1=1.68$; $SD_1=.67$; $M_2=1.85$; $SD_2=.55$; Possible range=1-5). However, the difference between groups concerning personal issues did not approach significance ($t(203)=.09$; $p=.93$; $M_1=1.98$; $SD_1=.76$; $M_2=1.97$; $SD_2=.69$; Possible range=1-5). In both cases, individuals reported arguing about these issues rarely. The scale for the items assessing how often they argued about each issue had five points: 1=Never, 2=Less Than Once a Month, 3=At Least Once a Month, 4=At Least Once a Week, and 5=At Least Once a Day. Thus, both groups reported that they argued these issues on average less than once a month (mean of 1.68 for Group 1, public issues; 1.85, Group 2, public issues; 1.98, Group 1, personal issues; 1.97 Group 2, personal issues). Overall, there appeared to be partial support for hypotheses four and five.

Also, it was hypothesized that high/high and high/moderate dyads would engage more often in public issue arguments than personal issue arguments, while all other combinations would engage more often in personal issue arguments than public issue arguments (Hypothesis Six). Two one-way repeated measures ANOVA's were performed. The first one illustrated that dyads composed of high/high and high/moderate argumentativeness combinations approached significance concerning how often the

participant reported arguing about public issues versus how often the participant reported arguing about personal issues; however, the means illustrated that the difference was opposite the predicted direction: a greater percentage occurred in the personal argument condition than in the public argument condition ($F(1,67)=3.37$; $p=.07$; $M_{public}=1.82$; $SD_{public}=.51$; $M_{personal}=1.97$; $SD_{personal}=.69$). The second ANOVA supported the hypothesis that all other combinations of argumentativeness would report engaging in personal issue arguments more often than public issue arguments ($F(1, 136)=34.20$, $p<.001$; $M_{public}=1.68$; $SD_{public}=.66$; $M_{personal}=1.98$; $SD_{personal}=.76$).

However, though these results supply some support for the hypotheses, assessment of the means concerning how often individuals of each argumentativeness combination argued about personal or public issues suggested that it was the low/low combination which was driving the differences, while the other argumentativeness combinations did not differ from one another (see Table Four). Thus, dyads composed of low/low were put into one group (Group 1) and all other combinations were grouped together (Group 2), to examine whether individuals who were low/low might differ from other combinations in how often they argued about public issue arguments but not differ in how often they argue about personal issue arguments (a rewording of hypotheses four and five). T-tests were used to test this claim. The difference between groups was significant in how often they reported arguing about public issues ($t(205)=-4.267$; $p<.001$; $M_1=1.37$; $SD_1=.44$; $M_2=1.83$; $SD_2=.65$; Possible range=1-5), showing that the group with low/low combinations of argumentativeness on average reported that they argued about these issues "never" (a mean of 1.37 on the 5-point scale), while other groups were closer to reporting they argued about these issues "less than once a month" (a mean of 1.83 on

the 5-point scale). However, the difference between groups concerning personal issues was not significant ($t(203)=-1.47$; $p=.14$; $M_1=1.83$; $SD_1=.70$; $M_2=2.02$; $SD_2=.74$; Possible range=1-5), both groups being closest to reporting they argued about these issues, "less than once a month" (means of 1.8 and 2.0 respectively). Thus, the reworded versions of hypotheses four and five are supported.

Table Four

Cell Means for Dyad Argumentativeness Composition and How Often Individuals Report Arguing about Types of Issues

	Public	Personal
Low/Low	1.38	1.83
Low/Moderate	1.67	1.94
Moderate/Moderate	1.82	2.01
High/Low	2.00	2.24
High/Moderate	1.83	1.96
High/High	1.88	1.99

To examine whether low/low dyads might report more personal issue arguments than public issue arguments, while all other combinations might report more public issue arguments than personal issue arguments (a rewording of hypothesis six), two repeated measure one-way ANOVA's were run. These illustrated that for both groups of argumentativeness combinations, personal issue arguments were reported more often than public issue arguments, not supporting this part of the hypothesis (for low/low dyads—$F(1,40)=28.60$; $p<.001$; $eta^2=.42$; $M_{public}=1.37$; $SD_{public}=.45$; $M_{personal}=1.85$; $SD_{personal}=.70$; for all other combinations—$F(1, 163)=16.17$; $p<.001$; $eta^2=.09$; $M_{public}=1.80$; $SD_{public}=.65$; $M_{personal}=2.00$; $SD_{personal}=.75$).

To examine the interaction predicted and illustrated in Figure Two and stated in hypotheses four, five, and six, a two-way mixed ANOVA was run with the argumentativeness composition as the between-subjects variable (low-low versus all other combinations) and the type of argument (personal or public) as the within subjects variable. This ANOVA illustrated that both the main effects for type of argument ($F(1, 203)=35.53$; $p<.001$; $eta^2=.15$; $M_{public}=1.75$; $SD_{public}=.60$; $M_{personal}=1.95$; $SD_{personal}=.75$) and argumentativeness dyad composition ($F(1, 203)=9.00$; $p=.003$; $eta^2=.04$; $M_1=1.60$; $SD_1=.55$; $M_2=1.90$; $SD_2=.65$) were significant. Also, the interaction between type of argument and argumentativeness dyad composition was also significant ($F(1, 203)=5.06$; $p=.025$; $eta^2=.02$). Figure Five illustrates the actual data, which can be compared to Figure Two to examine how this relates to the hypothesized results. Cell means and 95% confidence intervals can be found in Table Five. The only condition whose confidence intervals did not overlap the other conditions was the low/low argumentatives in the public argument condition, who were closest to reporting that they argued about these issues "Never." Low/Low argumentatives reported arguing about public issues less often than the other combinations, who were closer to reporting that they argued about these issues on average "Less Than Once a Month." Altogether, the results tend to support the patterns presented in hypotheses four and five, in that in the public issue argument condition, the argumentativeness composition of the dyad does make a difference in how often individuals report arguing about public issues, but the argumentativeness composition does not appear to differentiate how often dyads report arguing about personal issue arguments.

Table Five

Cell Means and 95% Confidence Intervals for Dyad Argumentativeness Composition and How Often Individuals Report Arguing about Types of Issues

	Public	Personal
Low/Low	M=1.37 SD=.45 (1.20, 1.55)	M=1.85 SD=.70 (1.60, 2.05)
Low/Moderate, Low/High, Moderate/Moderate, Moderate/High, High/High	M=1.80 SD=.65 (1.75, 1.90)	M=2.00 SD=.75 (1.90, 2.15)

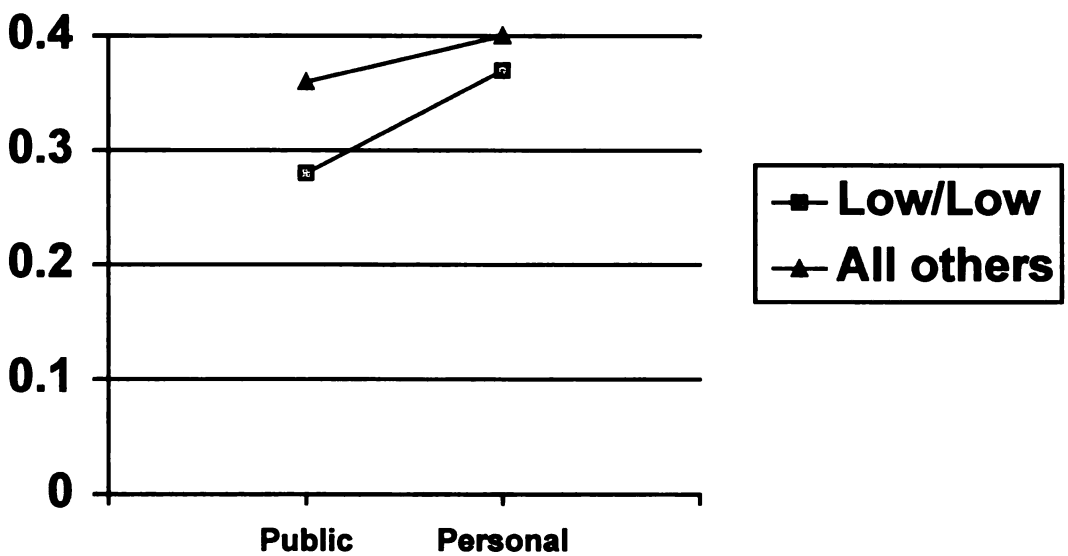

Figure Five--Actual Results for Argumentativeness and How Often Report Arguments

Verbal Aggressiveness. Hypothesis seven claimed that individuals who perceived their friendship dyad as containing at least one individual high in verbal aggressiveness would report having public issue arguments less often than individuals who perceived their friendship dyad as having no individuals high in verbal aggressiveness. However, the verbal aggressiveness of the dyad was not expected to make a difference in how often

individuals reported arguing about personal issue arguments. The distributions of both own verbal aggressiveness and friend's perceived verbal aggressiveness were examined and the score of 40 was chosen as a cut-off point which produced as equal frequency groups as possible. Scores lower than 40 were labeled low verbal aggressiveness, while those higher than or equal to forty were labeled high verbal aggressiveness. All dyads which consisted of two individuals perceived as low in verbal aggressiveness were placed in one group (Group One, 61 dyads), while those dyads perceived to contain at least one individual high in verbal aggressiveness were placed in the second group (Group Two, 141 dyads). A negative correlation between this grouping and how often they argue about public issue topics and a nonsignificant correlation between this grouping and how often they argue about personal issue topics would support this hypothesis. However, a positive correlation which approached significance was found between this grouping and how often individuals reported arguing about public issues (r=.13; p=.07), and a significant positive correlation was found concerning how often individuals reported arguing about personal issues (r=.23; p=.001). Thus, especially in the personal topic condition, the dyads which contained at least one individual high in verbal aggressiveness tended to report arguing about these issues more often, the direction opposite to what hypothesis seven suggested, failing to support hypothesis seven (see Table Six).

Table Six

Correlations Between How Often Argue about Each Type of Issue and Whether Dyad Is Perceived to Contain One Individual High in Verbal Aggressiveness

	Verb. Aggress. Dyad Composition	Public Arguments (How Often)	Personal Arguments (How Often)
VA Dyad Comp.	1.00		
Public	.13	1.00	
Personal	.23	.58	1.00

To examine the interaction proposed in hypothesis seven, a two-way mixed ANOVA was run, with the verbal aggressiveness composition as the between-subjects variable and the type of argument (personal or public) as the within subjects variable. This ANOVA illustrated that both the main effects for type of argument ($F(1, 198)=21.31$; $p<.001$; $eta^2=.10$; $M_{public}=1.70$; $SD_{public}=.60$; $M_{personal}=1.95$; $SD_{personal}=.70$) and verbal aggressiveness dyad composition ($F(1, 198)=8.60$; $p=.004$; $eta^2=.04$; $M_1=1.65$; $SD_1=.60$; $M_2=1.90$; $SD_2=.65$) were significant. Also, the interaction between type of argument and verbal aggressiveness dyad composition was also significant ($F(1, 198)=5.21$; $p=.024$; $eta^2=.03$). Ninety-five percent confidence intervals for each condition illustrates that the only condition which does not overlap with the others is the personal argument condition in which there is perceived to be at least one individual high in verbal aggressiveness. Individuals in this condition appear to report arguing about these topics more often (averaging arguing about these issues "less than once a month," 2.05) than individuals in the other conditions (whose averages were between "never," and "less than once a month," 1.55, 1.70, 1.75). Table Seven shows the cell means and 95% confidence intervals for each condition, and Figure Six shows these means graphed. Figure Six can

be compared to Figure Three to illustrate how the data compares to the hypothesized results.

Table Seven

Cell Means and 95% Confidence Intervals for Dyad Verbal Aggressiveness Composition and How Often Individuals Report Arguing about Types of Issues

	Public	Personal
Low/Low	M=1.55 SD=.50 (1.45, 1.75)	M=1.70 SD=.65 (1.55, 1.90)
Low/High and High/High	M=1.75 SD=.60 (1.65, 1.85)	M=2.05 SD=.75 (1.95, 2.20)

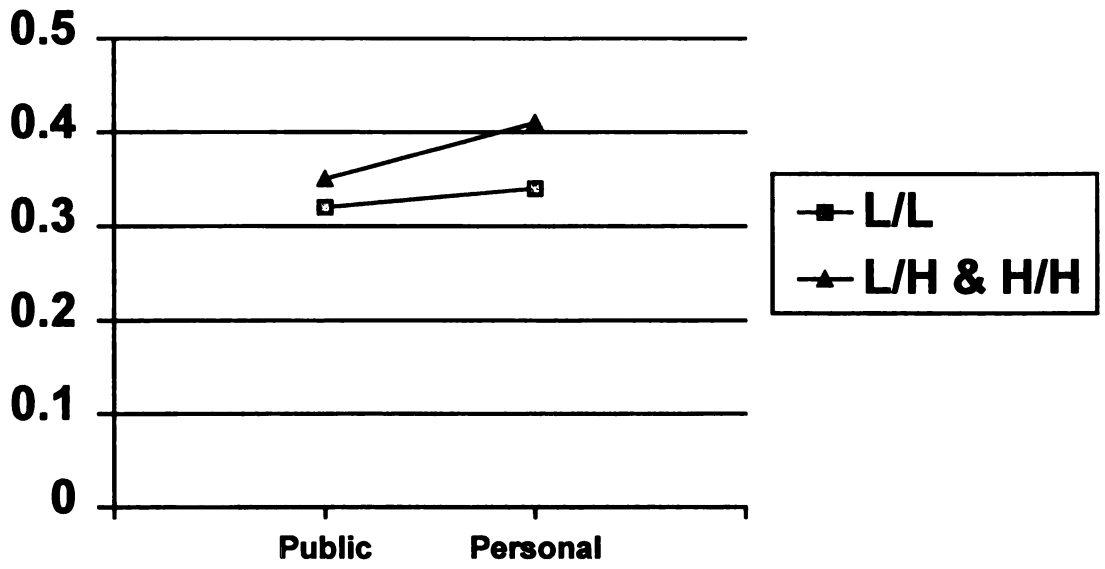

Figure Six--Actual Results for Verbal Aggressiveness and How Often Report Arguments

Rather than the predicted results, dyads which are perceived to have one individual high in verbal aggressiveness appear to engage in both more public arguments and personal arguments, though this trend is stronger for personal arguments. Both dyad types engage in more personal issue arguments than public issue arguments, but this trend

is significant only for those dyads which are perceived to possess at least one individual high in verbal aggressiveness. Thus, hypothesis seven was not supported.

Sex Composition of Dyad. Hypotheses eight, nine, and ten examine whether the sex composition of the dyad affects how often individuals engage in public issue and personal issue arguments. Seventy-three friendship dyads were composed of two males (34%), 119 dyads were composed of two females (56%), and 16 were cross-sex (8%); for four dyads, sex composition was missing. Hypothesis eight claimed that male-male dyads would report having public issue arguments more often than personal issue arguments and would also report having public issue arguments more often than female-female dyads. A one-way repeated measures ANOVA showed that the difference between how often male-male dyads reported public issue arguments and personal issue arguments was not significant, but was in the opposite of the predicted direction ($F(1,70)=3.61$; $p=.06$; $eta^2=.05$; $M_{public}=2.00$; $SD_{public}=.70$; $M_{personal}=2.20$; $SD_{personal}=.80$). A t-test illustrated that male-male dyads did report arguing about public issue arguments more often than female-female dyads ($t(190)=5.27$; $p<.001$; $M_{mm}=2.04$; $SD_{mm}=.73$; $M_{ff}=1.56$; $SD_{ff}=.53$), with male-male dyads reporting they argued about these issues on average "less than once a month" (2.0), while female-female dyads fell between reporting they argued about these issues "less than once a month" or "never" (1.6) supporting the second part of hypothesis eight.

Hypothesis nine claimed that female-female friendship dyads would report having personal issue arguments more often than public issue arguments and would report having personal issue arguments more often than male-male dyads. A one-way repeated measures ANOVA showed that females were more likely to report having personal issue

arguments more often than public issue arguments ($F(1,117)=38.50$; $p<.001$; $eta^2=.25$; $M_{public}=1.60$; $SD_{public}=.55$; $M_{personal}=1.90$; $SD_{personal}=.70$), supporting the first part of hypothesis nine. However, a t-test illustrated that male-male dyads reported arguing about personal issue arguments more often than female-female dyads ($t(187)=2.17$; $p=.03$; $M_{mm}=2.14$; $SD_{mm}=.79$; $M_{ff}=1.90$; $SD_{ff}=.69$), the opposite direction from that suggested by hypothesis nine.

Hypothesis ten claimed that male-female friendships would fall between male-male and female-female friendships in how often they argue about public and personal issues. First, a one-way repeated measures ANOVA illustrated that cross-sex friendships did not differ in how often they reported arguing about public or personal issue arguments ($F(1,14)=0.00$; $p=1.00$; $eta^2=.00$; $M_{public}=1.80$; $SD_{public}=.55$; $M_{personal}=1.80$; $SD_{personal}=.60$). To examine how cross-sex friends compare to male-male and female-female friendships, a two-way mixed ANOVA was run, with dyad sex composition as the between-subjects variable and the type of argument (personal or public) as the within subjects variable. This ANOVA illustrated that both the main effects for type of argument ($F(1, 201)=6.95$; $p=.009$; $eta^2=.03$; $M_{public}=1.70$; $SD_{public}=.60$; $M_{personal}=1.95$; $SD_{personal}=.70$) and dyad sex composition ($F(2, 201)=3.45$; $p=.034$; $eta^2=.03$; $M_{mm}=2.05$; $SD_{mm}=.70$; $M_{mf}=1.80$; $SD_{mf}=.55$; $M_{ff}=1.75$; $SD_{ff}=.60$) were significant. Also, the interaction between type of argument and dyad sex composition was also significant ($F(2, 201)=7.31$; $p=.001$; $eta^2=.07$). Ninety-five percent confidence intervals illustrate that the confidence intervals for the cross-sex friendships overlap with both the male-male and female-female confidence intervals for both public and personal issue arguments, but that the female-female and male-male 95% confidence intervals only overlap in the personal issue

argument condition. The low number of cross-sex friendship dyads might contribute to the overlap in that the standard error is larger for this group than the other two groups. In either case, the data in this study cannot lead one to conclude that cross-sex friends differ from either male-male or female-female friendships in how often they report having public issue or personal issue arguments. However, male-male friendship dyads appear to have more public issue arguments than female-female friendship dyads. Although the same trend is apparent in personal issue arguments, this difference is not significant according to the 95% confidence intervals. Table Eight shows the cell means and 95% confidence intervals for each condition, and Figure Seven shows these means graphed. This Figure can be compared to Figure Four to illustrate how the data compares to the hypothesized results. Table eight illustrates that most groups reported arguing about these issues on average "less than once a month," except for the female-female dyads whose average fell midway between "less than once a month" and "never."

Table Eight

Cell Means and 95% Confidence Intervals for Dyad Sex Composition and How Often Individuals Report Arguing about Types of Issues

	Public	Personal
Male/Male	2.00 SD=.70 (1.85, 2.15)	2.15 SD=.80 (1.95, 2.30)
Male/Female	1.80 SD=.55 (1.50, 2.10)	1.80 SD=.60 (1.45, 2.20)
Female/Female	1.55 SD=.55 (1.40, 1.65)	1.90 SD=.70 (1.75, 2.05)

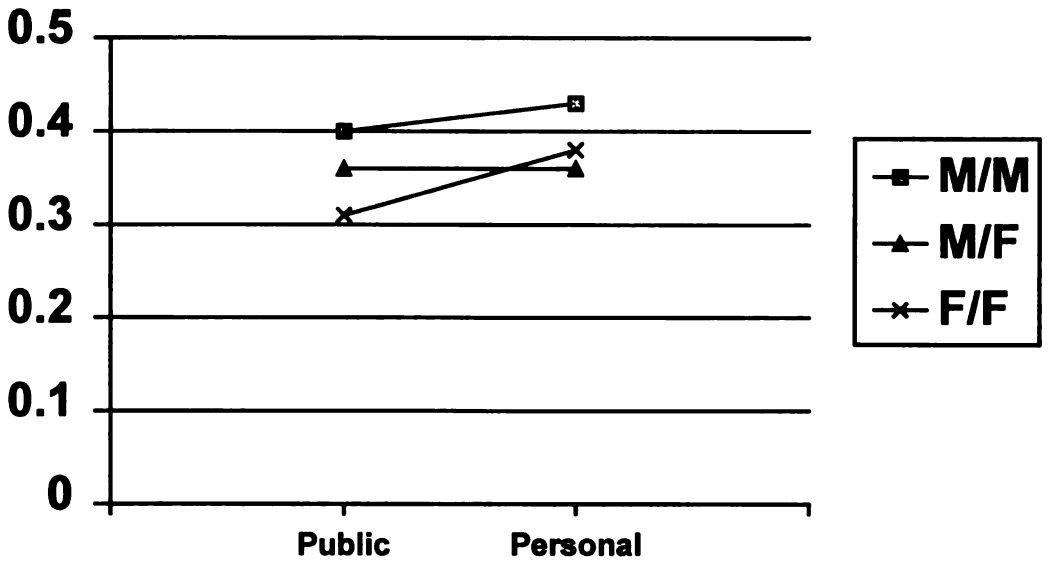

Figure Seven--Actual Results for Reported Sex of Dyad and How Often Report Arguments

Regression. To examine how the variables of argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, and dyad sex composition together contribute to how often individuals report arguing about public and personal issues, a series of multiple regressions were run. One's own argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness scores, one's perceptions of one's friend's argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness scores, and the sex composition of the friendship dyad were entered into the regression. Sex composition was coded in the following way: male-male=2, male-female=3, female-female=4, so that a negative beta would illustrate that dyads with males were more likely to report engaging in that type of argument more often. First, a multiple regression was run to predict how often individuals reported arguing about public issues. Results showed that these variables predicted how often individuals reported arguing about public topics well ($F(5, 188)=6.848$; $p<.001$; $R=.39$; $R^2=.154$). One's own argumentativeness was positively

related to how often one reported arguing about public issues (Beta=.21; t=2.83; p=.005), and the sex composition of the dyad was negatively related to how often one reported arguing about public issues (Beta=-.17; t=-2.40; p=.02), meaning a dyad with a male was more likely to report arguing about public issues more often. Friend's perceived argumentativeness (Beta=.10; t=1.29; p=.20) and verbal aggressiveness (Beta=.07; t=.86; p=.39) and one's own verbal aggressiveness (Beta=.01; t=.15; p=.89) were not significant predictors of how often one reported arguing about public issues. Once the nonsignificant predictors were dropped and another multiple regression was run, one's own argumentativeness (Beta=.25; t=3.70; p<.001) and sex composition of the dyad (Beta= -.28; t=-4.16; p<.001) were found to predict how often one argued about public issues well ($F(2, 204)=22.00$; p<.001; $R=.42$; $R^2=.18$).

Next, a multiple regression was run with the same variables to predict how often individuals reported arguing about personal issues ($F(5, 187)=5.44$; p<.001; $R=.36$; $R^2=.13$). One's perception of his or her friend's verbal aggressiveness was the only significant predictor (Beta=.32; t=3.62; p<.001) and was positively related to how often individuals reported arguing about personal issues. One's own argumentativeness (Beta=.05; t=.63; p=.53) and verbal aggressiveness (Beta=.09; t=1.20; p=.23), one's perception of his or her friend's argumentativeness (Beta=-.07; t=-.81; p=.42), and the sex composition of the dyad (Beta=-.003; t=-.04; p=.97) were not significant predictors. Once the nonsignificant predictors were dropped and another multiple regression was run, perception of friend's verbal aggressiveness (Beta=.34; t=5.09; p<.001) predicted how often individuals reported arguing about personal issues well ($F(5, 198)=25.89$; p<.001; $R=.34$; $R^2=.12$).

Exploratory Analyses

The measure of satisfaction was correlated to how often individuals reported arguing about public and personal issues. The correlation for public issues was -.28 ($p<.001$), and the correlation for personal issues was -.23 ($p=.001$). In both cases, the more often individuals reported arguing about these issues, the less satisfaction they reported with this friendship.

Discussion for Study One

This study illustrated that different factors could be utilized to predict how often individuals argued about public or personal issues. However, the hypothesized differences between public and personal issue arguments presented in the front end of this paper refer to outcomes associated with each type of enacted argument. Study Two has friendship dyads engage in both a public issue and a personal issue argument to see if outcomes such as perceived relational implications, perceived behavioral implications, and attitude change differ between the two types of arguments.

Study Two

Methods

Participants

Sixty of the students were recruited from the same undergraduate communication class to complete the second part of the study. Each student brought a friend. Data from four of these sixty dyads had to be discarded because the participants did not follow the directions of the study, leaving a sample size of 56 dyads, or 112 participants. This part of the study utilized only individuals who reported that they sometimes argue over both personal and public topics in Study One or individuals who were carefully told to bring in

a friend who they argued with concerning a number of issues and that they would be required to argue about these issues in this experiment. Participants who were recruited from Study One were asked to bring in their friend about whom they answered the questionnaire. If this was not possible, they were asked to bring in a friend with whom they argue concerning a variety of issues.

Procedures

Hypotheses one through three were examined in Study Two. This research was conducted in two studies so that individuals could be chosen to be brought into the lab who reported arguing about both public issue and personal issue arguments in their friendship. This was done to ensure that the researcher was not causing friendship dyads to argue about issues when this was not a normal practice in their friendship. Also, once individuals were brought into the lab, they were allowed to pick from a list of public issue and personal issue topics so that they could avoid any topic which might be too sensitive. These precautions were taken to seek to ensure that the friendships of these individuals were not disturbed by this experiment. Both studies were approved by the Human Subjects' Committee at the author's university.

Each dyad was brought into the lab and given either a list of personal issue argument topics or a list of public issue argument topics (which friendship dyads were given the personal or the public issue topics first was decided by random assignment without replacement; see Appendix B for a list of these topics). They were asked to select a topic together which they had previously discussed in their friendship but had not been resolved. If they did not have any unresolved arguments related to the provided topics, they were asked to try to recreate an argument about one of the issue which had been

resolved. Then, they were given a questionnaire which measured their attitude toward the topic they selected. Next, they were asked to discuss the topic for five minutes without the experimenter in the room. They were told that a videocamera and audiotape were recording their interaction, which was true. After finishing their conversation, they completed another questionnaire concerning their perceptions of the argument and their attitude toward the argument topic. Then the dyad repeated the procedure with the type of argument which they were not given first (either personal or public). After they finished the second interaction and completed the second questionnaire, they were debriefed and dismissed.

Measures

For the second study, the first questionnaire given before each argument contained attitude items in regards to the topic of the argument which was selected. After the argument, individuals were given a questionnaire which asked them questions concerning the relational implications they perceived for the argument, the behavioral implications they perceived from the argument for themselves and for their friend, their level of value-relevant involvement related to the topic of the argument, and attitude items related to the topic of the argument (see Appendix C for a list of items in the questionnaire for Study Two). The friend who was not included in Study One also filled out the argumentativeness scale (Infante & Rancer, 1982) and the verbal aggressiveness scale (Infante & Wigley, 1986).

All items were measured on a 1-7 scale, with 1=Strongly Disagree and 7=Strongly Agree, except for the first four items measuring attitude change. These four attitude change items were a series of four 7-point semantic differentials.

The following section details the scales used in study two:

Relational Implications—The items from this scale measure the belief of the respondent concerning whether the outcome of the argument in which one participated will have an effect, either positive or negative, on the relationship between the two individuals arguing. Some of the items from this scale were taken from Cody and McLaughlin (1980), who found that the reliabilities ranged from .75 to .84. They also conducted an Exploratory Factor Analysis on their scale, but no Confirmatory or Exploratory Factor Analysis has been conducted on the scale used in this study.

Attitude Change—This is operationalized as the difference between the reported attitude about the argument topic before the two individuals engage in each argument and after they have engaged in each argument. The items measuring this variable were created for this study.

Value-Relevant Involvement—Items from this scale were based on a definition by B. Johnson and Eagly (1989): "Psychological state that is created by the activation of attitudes that are linked to important values" (p. 290). The items measuring this variable were created for this study.

Behavioral Implications—The items created for this scale measure the extent to which the participant believes the argument in which he or she was involved will result in behavioral changes of one or both members of the arguing dyad. The items measuring this variable were created for this study.

Analyses

Confirmatory factor analysis was performed on the questionnaire using Hamilton and Hunter's CFA program (1988). Individual items were assessed for content, internal

consistency, and parallelism. Items which did not meet these criteria were dropped, resulting in a questionnaire with 19 questions (see Appendix C for a list of items; see Table Nine for a list of descriptive measures and reliabilities for each scale). In the case of attitude change, a confirmatory factor analysis was run on the difference scores (from the items before the argument was conducted subtracted from the same items after the argument was conducted). The absolute value for the difference scores for attitude change was determined and these scores were averaged (Possible Range, 0-6). The average was taken for each individual's response on the following scales: relational implications, behavioral implications, and value-relevant involvement (Possible Range, 1-7).

Table Nine

Descriptive Measures of Study Two's Scales

		Public Argument Condition			Personal Argument Condition	
	Mean	SD	α	Mean	SD	α
Relational Implications	1.85	.78	.90	3.14	1.57	.95
Attitude Change	.53	.95	.92	.74	.99	.88
Behavioral Implications	2.70	1.42	.75	4.11	1.41	.62
Value-relevant involvement	4.55	1.56	.86	4.22	1.46	.84

The videotapes and audiotapes will not be analyzed in this paper but will be saved for future analyses to determine whether the structure of the argumentative dialogue differs when individuals engage in public issue arguments or in personal issue arguments.

Results

Tests of Hypotheses:

Hypothesis one claimed that individuals should perceive public issue arguments as having fewer positive or negative implications for the friendship than personal issue arguments. A one-way repeated measure ANOVA was conducted, and a significant F-value was found ($F(1, 110)=66.93$; $p<.001$; $eta^2=.38$), indicating that relational implications were higher after the personal issue argument ($M=3.14$; $SD=1.57$) as compared to after the public issue argument ($M=1.85$; $SD=.78$), thus supporting hypothesis one. To see if value-relevant involvement in the argument topic moderated the relationship between type of argument and perceived relational implications, correlations were run between value-relevant involvement and relational implications at both the public issue argument condition and at the personal issue argument condition. In both cases, the correlation was significantly positive (for public, $r=.26$; $p=.006$; for personal, $r=.41$; $p<.001$), indicating that individuals perceived that the relational implications of the argument was greater the more value-relevant involvement they had for the argument topic. To examine whether this relationship was stronger in the personal issue argument condition, as would be expected by the author, Fisher's r to z transformation was utilized (please note that the assumption of independent groups was made to utilize this test, even though the two groups in this instance were the same because of the repeated-measures design). This test illustrated that the two correlations were not significantly different; thus, the claim cannot be made that the positive correlation was stronger in the personal issue condition than in the public issue condition.

Hypothesis two claimed that individuals who argued a public issue argument topic which was rated as low in value-relevant involvement would report more attitude change than those who argued a public issue argument topic considered high in value-relevant involvement. This difference was not expected in the personal issue argument topic condition. The correlation between value-relevant involvement and attitude change was -.04 (p=.70) in the public issue argument condition and -.08 (p=.43) in the personal issue argument condition. Thus, in neither condition did there appear to be a significant relationship between value-relevant involvement and attitude change, providing no support for hypothesis two. However, these low correlations could be caused by little variance in the attitude change measure.

Hypothesis three claimed that individuals would perceive more behavioral implications for the argument in the personal issue condition than in the public issue condition. A one-way repeated measure ANOVA was conducted, and a significant F-value was found ($F(1, 111)=77.53$; $p<.001$; $eta^2=.41$), indicating that behavioral implications were rated higher after the personal issue argument (M=4.11; SD=1.41) as compared to after the public issue argument (M=2.70; SD=1.41), thus supporting hypothesis three.

General Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine proposed differences between two types of arguments, public issue arguments and personal issue arguments, to examine factors which might predict whether friendship dyads engage in public issue arguments, and to examine whether these two types of arguments differ in their outcomes, such as perceived implications for the relationship and relational satisfaction. It was suggested that previous

research on arguments is not comparable for two reasons: it has not delineated these two types of arguments and studies which have examined public issue arguments have utilized strangers, while those examining personal issue arguments have utilized interpersonal relationships. This study provides evidence for the distinctiveness of these two types of arguments and illustrates the importance of both types of arguments in one interpersonal relationship: friendship.

First, through having friendship dyads actually argue about public or personal issue topics, differences between the results of these two types of arguments emerged. For example, individuals perceived personal issue arguments to have more relational and behavioral implications for their friendship than public issue arguments. Whether one resolved the argument was perceived as more important to the friendship (relational implications) for personal issue arguments than public issue arguments. Relational implications for the friendship were also greater the higher the value-relevant involvement of the argument topic, but this was true regardless of whether the topic was personal or public. To resolve the argument was believed to require more changes in the behavior of the friends (higher behavioral implications) for personal issue arguments than public issue arguments.

However, little attitude change resulted from these arguments, leaving little ability to test the hypothesis that claimed that attitude change would be greater in the public argument condition as long as the topic was low in value-relevant involvement. Perhaps the fact that individuals were only arguing for five minutes reduced the amount of attitude change which could result. For example, K. Johnson and Roloff (1998) found that many romantic couples reported that they argued about the same issues repeatedly. If the same

is true for these friendship dyads, then one interaction in which the topic is discussed would not be expected to lead to much attitude change. Another problem consists of the low reliability of the behavioral implications measure in the personal issue arguments condition (α=.62). This low reliability might have been caused by the fact that these questions asked about both the subject's own and his or her friend's behavior. Some arguments might have been perceived to have implications for one member of the dyad but not the other, lowering the correlations among the items. Perhaps adding more items would help increase the reliability of this measure, as after the confirmatory factor analysis the scale only had three items.

Other evidence that these two types of arguments differ consists of the finding that even though how often individuals reported arguing about public and personal issues could be predicted well, different factors predicted each. The participant's own argumentativeness score and the sex composition of the dyad (whether it was male/male, cross-sex, or female/female) predicted how often individuals reported arguing about public issues, but neither of these variables predicted how often individuals reported arguing about personal issues in their friendship dyad. Rather, the perceived verbal aggressiveness of the friend was the only factor which predicted how often an individual reported that he or she argued with their friend concerning personal issues.

It makes sense that one's own argumentativeness, "a generally stable trait which predisposes the individual in communication situations to advocate positions on controversial issues and to attack verbally the positions which other people take on these issues" (Infante & Rancer, 1982, p. 73), would predict how often individuals argue over

public issues. However, the finding that it does not predict how often individuals report arguing over personal issues illustrates the differences between these two types of arguments. It also suggests interesting implications for the generalizability of the argumentativeness construct, in that this construct might apply to one type of argument (public issue arguments) more than the other (personal issue arguments). Also, the finding that male/male dyads are more likely to argue about public issues supports current research on sex differences in friendship, as previous research has claimed that male/male friendships tend to be focused more on sharing activities (Inman, 1996), and arguing about public issues can be perceived as a joint activity which these two individuals share. Individuals in a male/male dyad might perceive arguing about public issues as a fun, competitive game that the two individuals enact together.

Why one's perception of the friend's verbal aggressiveness is the only significant predictor of how often individuals argue over personal issue arguments is harder to explain. Perhaps individuals are more willing to admit to their friend's verbal aggressiveness than their own. Thus, if they were more willing to admit their own verbal aggressiveness, this might also have been a significant predictor of how often one argues about personal issues (one's own verbal aggressiveness was positively related to how often one reported arguing about personal issues, but this positive relationship was not significant). Also, if individuals argue more often about personal issue arguments, this might give both themselves and their friends more opportunities to exhibit verbal aggressiveness. On the other hand, if an individual is friends with a person who is perceived to be high in verbal aggressiveness, the behaviors that this high verbally aggressive person might exhibit, such as attacking another person's character,

background or physical appearance attacks, and ridiculing (Infante, Riddle, Horvath, & Tumlin, 1992) might lead to more personal issue arguments.

More evidence for the distinctiveness of these two arguments is found in the results related to the matches between the friends on argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness. For example, the argumentativeness composition of the dyad was only found to exhibit a difference in how often individuals argue about public issue arguments (the low/low argumentativeness dyads argued less often about these issues) but not in terms of how often individuals reported arguing about personal issue arguments. In the same way, whether the friendship dyad had one individual high in verbal aggressiveness related to a difference in how often one reported arguing about personal issue argument topics but not public issue argument topics. These findings illustrate that these two types of arguments which have been treated as one by almost all previous research (for an exception see Newell & Stutman, 1988), appear to be quite different phenomena and need to be treated as such.

The findings regarding one's own verbal aggressiveness and the perceived verbal aggressiveness of one's friend were opposite to what was predicted. It was believed that if one individual in the dyad was high in verbal aggressiveness, this would lead the friends to avoid public issue arguments. Personal issue arguments are not as easily avoided and thus, the verbal aggressiveness of the individuals in the dyad was not suspected to make a different in how often individuals argue over personal issues. However, in both cases, (though it was only a trend in the public issue condition), having an individual high in verbal aggressiveness resulted in reports of having arguments more often. Again, as

discussed above, behaviors enacted by high verbally aggressive people might lead to more personal issue arguments.

Thus, this study illustrates that two types of arguments which are distinct have been treated as one by previous research, even though this research shows that both types of arguments are present in the interpersonal relationship of friendship and that these two types of arguments have different outcomes associated with them and varied factors which predict them. For example, personal issue arguments are found to elicit much higher reports of beliefs that this argument will affect the relationship in either a positive or a negative way and beliefs that one or both members of the friendship dyad will need to change their behavior to resolve the argument. Also, two factors which have been utilized extensively in research concerning argumentation are verbal aggressiveness and argumentativeness. However, in this research these factors are found to have different implications for public issue and personal issue arguments. These differences need to be further explored and considered when predicting the generalizability of these constructs.

One interesting finding of this study was the relative infrequency that individuals reported arguing about both public and personal issues. In both cases, the most common average for many of the groups was that they argued about these issues "Less than once a month." However, even if they argue about these issues rarely, how often they argued about both types of issues was related to less satisfaction with the friendship. Examining more consequences of these arguments and how individuals seek to resolve these arguments in their friendship provide more interesting directions for future research.

Future Directions

One future direction for this research concerns examining the structure of the arguments recorded in the second study. Newell and Stutman (1988) describe research in which they asked individuals to role-play either an argument about ideas or an argument about behaviors (similar to the public/personal issue argument distinction). They found that in disagreements about behavior turns were short, interruptions were common, and individuals sought to resolve the disagreement. In disagreements about ideas, on the other hand, turns were long, interruptions were rare, and the conversation ended when the participants ran out of information to share. Examining whether actual arguments with friends also show these differences in structure should add useful information to our knowledge concerning arguing in interpersonal relationships.

Another future direction would be to examine how public issue arguments and personal issue arguments differ in relation to the beliefs individuals have about these two types of arguments. Rancer, Kosberg, and Baukus (1992) delineated five types of beliefs about arguing: whether arguing was perceived as an enjoyable activity, whether one believes that arguing leads to pragmatic outcomes (such as resolving the argument), whether arguing is perceived as a "reflection of ones' self concept" (p. 6), the ego-involvement of the arguer in the argument, and whether one believes that arguing leads to dysfunctional outcomes (such as not resolving the argument). Rancer, Baukus, and Infante (1985) developed these categories of argument beliefs based on a general question, "Why do you feel the way you do about arguing?" (p. 39). No types of argument topics were presented to the participants. Public and personal issue arguments might differ related to these five beliefs about arguing. For example, public issue

arguments might elicit more beliefs about enjoyment, while personal issue arguments might elicit more beliefs about having pragmatic outcomes, involving higher ego-involvement, and having more dysfunctional outcomes.

The first study examined only one individual in the friendship dyad. Only this person's perception of how often he or she and his or her friend argued and the perception of his or her friend's argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness were obtained. These perceptions were believed to be very important because they might influence whether one decides to initiate these types of arguments or seeks to avoid them. However, examining both individuals in the dyad in future research can determine how accurate these friends are concerning their perceptions of their friends and whether actual matching on verbal aggressiveness and argumentativeness predicts how often individuals argue about issues more effectively.

Also, this research looked at friendship dyads only. However, the pretest (Johnson, 1999a) showed that public issue arguments were reported in family relationships and romantic relationships also, though a lesser proportion of time than in friendships. Thus, the distinction between public and personal issue arguments should have similar important implications for family and romantic relationships. Examining the factors related to public issue arguments among these dyads remains an important future direction.

This research also suggests differences between friendship and stranger dyads which relate to how arguing occurs in these friendships. These differences show that the studies which have been done concerning public issue arguments among strangers should not be generalized to public issue arguments among friends. Future research could seek to

delineate these differences more clearly and to ascertain that these differences truly occur by examining both stranger and friendship dyads arguing about public issue arguments.

In conclusion, this research should have implications for how individuals perceive arguments in interpersonal relationships. When examining such arguments, the topic of the argument, whether it is personal or public, should be taken into account as these two types of arguments are distinct. Treating these two types of arguments as one ignores the different factors that predict these arguments and the varied outcomes which results from these two types of arguments. Although previous research has not looked at public issue arguments among individuals in interpersonal relationships, this study shows that these arguments are present in the relationship of friends, and that the implications of these arguments for functioning friendships (such as the finding that how often individuals argued about public issues was associated with less satisfaction in the friendships) need to be further examined.

ENDNOTES

[1] As one's own argumentativeness and perceived friend's argumentativeness were approximately normally distributed, a ¼, ½, ¼ division was also performed. This resulted in low argumentativeness being defined as less than 29 (N=92), moderate argumentativeness as between 29 and 39 (N=222), and high argumentativeness as greater than 39 (N=106). This new division did not change the patterns illustrated by the data significantly.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

Items for the Questionnaire for Study One

All items were measured on a 1-7 scale, with 1=Strongly Disagree and 7=Strongly Agree, except the reports of how often participants reported arguing about public and personal issues, and reports of one's own and perception of friend's argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness. The reports of how often participants argued about public or personal issues were measured on a 5-point scale where 1=Never, 2=Less than once a month, 3=At least once a month, 4=At least once a week, and 5=At least once a day. The reports of argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness were on a 5-point scale from 1=Almost never true to 5=Almost always true.

Argumentativeness

++While in an argument, I worry that the person I am arguing with will form a negative impression of me.*
++Arguing over controversial issues improves my intelligence.
I enjoy avoiding arguments.*
++I am energetic and enthusiastic when I argue.
Once I finish an argument, I promise myself that I will not get into another.*
Arguing with a person creates more problems for me than it solves.*
++I have a pleasant, good feeling when I win a point in an argument.
When I finish arguing with someone I feel nervous and upset.*
++I enjoy a good argument over a controversial issue.
++I get an unpleasant feeling when I realize I am about to get into an argument.*
I enjoy defending my point of view on an issue.
I am happy when I keep an argument from happening.*
++I do not like to miss the opportunity to argue a controversial issue.
I prefer being with people who rarely disagree with me.*
++I consider an argument an exciting intellectual challenge.
++I find myself unable to think of effective points during an argument.*
I feel refreshed and satisfied after an argument on a controversial issue.
I have the ability to do well in an argument.
I try to avoid getting into arguments.*
I feel excitement when I expect that a conversation I am in, is leading to an argument.

Verbal Aggressiveness

I am extremely careful to avoid attacking individuals' intelligence when I attack their ideas.*
When individuals are very stubborn, I use insults to soften the stubbornness.
++I try very hard to avoid having other people feel bad about themselves when I try to influence them.*
When people refuse to do a task I know is important, without good reason, I tell them they are unreasonable.
When others do things I regard as stupid, I try to be extremely gentle with them.*
If individuals I am trying to influence really deserve it, I attack their character.
When people behave in ways that are in very poor taste, I insult them in order to shock them into proper behavior.
I try to make people feel good about themselves even when their ideas are stupid.*
When people simply will not budge on a matter of importance I lose my temper and say rather strong things to them.
When people criticize my shortcomings, I take it in good humor and do not try to get back at them.*
When individuals insult me, I get a lot of pleasure out of really telling them off.

When I dislike individuals greatly, I try not to show it in what I say or how I say it.*
++I like poking fun at people who do things which are very stupid in order to stimulate their intelligence.
When I attack persons' ideas, I try not to damage their self-concepts.*
++When I try to influence people, I make a great effort not to offend them.*
When people do things which are mean or cruel, I attack their character in order to help correct their behavior.
I refuse to participate in arguments when they involve personal attacks.*
++When nothing seems to work in trying to influence others, I yell and scream in order to get some movement from them.
When I am not able to refute others' positions, I try to make them feel defensive in order to weaken their position.
++When an argument shifts to personal attacks, I try very hard to change the subject.*

Perceived Argumentativeness of Friend

++I think that while in an argument, my friend worries that the person he/she is arguing with will form a negative
impression of him/her.
++I believe that my friend thinks that arguing over controversial issues improves my friend's intelligence.
I think that my friend enjoys avoiding arguments.
My friend is energetic and enthusiastic when he/she argues.
Once my friend finishes an argument, my friend promises that he/she will not get into another.
I believe that my friend thinks that arguing with a person creates more problems for him/her than it solves.
++I think that my friend has a pleasant, good feeling when he/she wins a point in an argument.
++I believe that when my friend finishes arguing with someone my friend feels nervous and upset.
I think that my friend enjoys a good argument over a controversial issue.
I think that my friend gets an unpleasant feeling when he/she realizes he/she is about to get into an argument.
I believe that my friend enjoys defending his/her point of view on an issue.
++I think that my friend is happy when he/she keeps an argument from happening.
++I believe that my friend does not like to miss the opportunity to argue a controversial issue.
++I think that my friend prefers being with people who rarely disagree with him/her.
I believe that my friend considers an argument an exciting intellectual challenge.
++I believe that my friend finds himself/herself unable to think of effective points during an argument.
I think that my friend feels refreshed and satisfied after an argument on a controversial issue.
++I believe that my friend has the ability to do well in an argument.
I think that my friend tries to avoid getting into arguments.
I believe that my friend feels excitement when he/she expects that a conversation is leading to an argument.

Perceived Verbal Aggressiveness of Friend

I think that my friend is extremely careful to avoid attacking individuals' intelligence when he/she attacks their ideas.
When individuals are very stubborn, my friend uses insults to soften the stubbornness.
++I believe that my friend tries very hard to avoid having other people feel bad about themselves when my friend tries to influence them.
When people refuse to do a task my friend knows is important, without good reason, my friend tells them they are unreasonable.
++I think that when others do things my friend regards as stupid, my friend tries to be extremely gentle with them.
If individuals my friend is trying to influence really deserve it, my friend attacks their character.
When people behave in ways that are in very poor taste, my friend insults them in order to shock them into proper behavior.
I think that my friend tries to make people feel good about themselves even when their ideas are stupid.

When people simply will not budge on a matter of importance my friend loses his/her temper and says rather strong things to them.
When people criticize my friend's shortcomings, my friend takes it in good humor and does not try to get back at them.
When individuals insult my friend, I think that my friend gets a lot of pleasure out of really telling them off.
When my friend dislikes individuals greatly, I think that my friend tries not to show it in what he/she says or how he/she says it.
I believe that my friend likes poking fun at people who do things which are very stupid in order to stimulate their intelligence.
When my friend attacks a persons' ideas, I think that my friend tries not to damage their self-concepts.
When my friend tries to influence people, I think that my friend makes a great effort not to offend them.
++When people do things which are mean or cruel, my friend attacks their character in order to help correct their behavior.
My friend refuses to participate in arguments when they involve personal attacks.
When nothing seems to work in trying to influence others, my friend yells and screams in order to get some movement from them.
When my friend is not able to refute others' positions, I believe that my friend tries to make them feel defensive in order to weaken their position.
++When an argument shifts to personal attacks, I think that my friend tries very hard to change the subject.

Public Issue Arguments

++My friend and I argue about **politics**.
How often do you and your friend argue about **politics**?
++My friend and I argue about **race relations**.
How often do you and your friend argue about **race relations**?
++My friend and I argue about **abortion**.
++How often do you and your friend argue about **abortion**?
++My friend and I argue about the **environment**.
How often do you and your friend argue about the **environment**?
++My friend and I argue about **underage alcohol drinking**.
How often do you and your friend argue about **underage alcohol drinking**?
++My friend and I argue about **sex discrimination**.
How often do you and your friend argue about **sex discrimination**?
++My friend and I argue about **religious issues**.
How often do you and your friend argue about **religious issues**?
++My friend and I argue about **sports**.
++How often do you and your friend argue about **sports**?
++My friend and I argue about **movies**.
How often do you and your friend argue about **movies**?
++My friend and I argue about **correct etiquette or manners**.
++How often do you and your friend argue about **correct etiquette or manners**?

Personal Issue Arguments

++My friend and I argue about **how to spend leisure time**.
How often do you and your friend argue about **how to spend leisure time**?
++My friend and I argue about **romantic partners**.
How often do you and your friend argue about **romantic partners**?
++My friend and I argue about **household chores**.
++How often do you and your friend argue about **household chores**?
++My friend and I argue about **how much time to spend together**.
How often do you and your friend argue about **how much time to spend together**?
++My friend and I argue about **other friends**.

How often do you and your friend argue about **other friends**?
++My friend and I argue about **one person's hurt feelings.**
++How often do you and your friend argue about **one person's hurt feelings**?
++My friend and I argue about **money and bills.**
How often do you and your friend argue about **money and bills**?
++My friend and I argue about **trust and jealousy.**
How often do you and your friend argue about **trust and jealousy**?
++My friend and I argue about **showing consideration for friend.**
How often do you and your friend argue about **showing consideration for friend**?
++My friend and I argue about **use of alcohol.**
++How often do you and your friend argue about **use of alcohol**?
++My friend and I argue about **cleaning the apartment.**
++How often do you and your friend argue about **cleaning the apartment**?
++My friend and I argue about **broken plans.**
How often do you and your friend argue about **broken plans**?
++My friend and I argue about **using each other's possessions.**
How often do you and your friend argue about **using each other's possessions**?
++My friend and I argue about **giving advice.**
How often do you and your friend argue about **giving advice**?
++My friend and I argue about **doing favors for each other.**
How often do you and your friend argue about **doing favors for each other**?

Closeness

This friendship is one of the closest I have ever had.
++I do not feel particularly close to this person.*
I would describe myself as close to this person.
This individual and I share a great amount of emotional closeness.
I do not consider that person a particularly close friend.*

Satisfaction

I am generally satisfied with this friendship.
I am not satisfied with the relationship with this friend.*
There is little I would change about this friendship to make me more satisfied.
This friendship does not bring me much satisfaction.*

An asterisk (*) signifies items which are reverse coded
Two pluses (++) signify the items were dropped because of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

Public and Personal Issue Arguments from Study Two

Public Issue Arguments

Abortion
Death Penalty
The environment
Drug legalization
Underage Alcohol Drinking
Racial Prejudice
Sex Discrimination
Discrimination based on sexual orientation
Religious issues
Gun control
Drug Testing
Increased military spending
Animal experimentation
Drug legalization
Surrogate mothering
Increased restriction of foreign products
Sports
Movies
Etiquette/Manners
Race Discrimination
Politics

Personal Issue Arguments

Conflicts over romantic partners
How to spend leisure time together
Other friends
How much time to spend together
Household chores
Roommate problems
One person's hurt feelings
Money/ Bills
Trust and jealousy
Showing consideration for friend
Use of alcohol
Space in apartment
Broken plans
Using each other's possessions

Giving advice
Doing favors for each other

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

Items for the Questionnaire for Study Two

All items were measured on a 1-7 scale, with 1=Strongly Disagree and 7=Strongly Agree, except for the first four items measuring attitude change. These attitude change items were a series of four 7-point semantic differentials.

Relational Implications

Whether we resolve this argument will have important implications for our friendship.
Whether we resolve this argument will have little effect on our friendships.*
This argument is not very important to our friendship.*
This argument has important consequences for our friendship.
This argument has future consequences for the relationship between my friend and myself.
This argument does not have future consequences for the relationship between my friend and myself.*
This argument has long-term consequences on the relationship between my friend and myself.
This argument does not have long-term consequences on the relationship between my friend and myself.*

Behavioral Implications

++If we were to resolve this argument, many changes in our friendship would result.
To solve this argument, my friend would have to change certain behaviors.
To solve this argument, I would have to change certain behaviors.
We are arguing about issues concerning changes that need to occur in my friend's and my behaviors.
++My friend does not need to change any behaviors to resolve this argument.*
++I do not need to change any of my behaviors to resolve this argument.*

Value-Relevant Involvement

The topic of this argument relates to my personal values.
The topic of this argument is very relevant to important values in my life.
The topic of this argument is not relevant to important values in my life.*
++The topic of this argument does not contradict important values I hold.*
The topic of this argument contradicts important values of mine.

Attitude Change

Mark on the following scale (with an X) how you feel about the issue you and your friend argued about:

POSITIVE	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___	NEGATIVE
GOOD	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___	BAD
AGAINST	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___	FOR
POOR IDEA	___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___	GOOD IDEA

++I think that _____ is a good idea.
++I feel negatively about _____.
++I think that _____ is a bad idea.
++I feel positively about _____.

An asterisk (*) signifies items which are reverse coded
Two pluses (++) signify the items were dropped because of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

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