

### **Exploring Pioneers in Polyamory:**

alt.polycon Attendance, Current Relationship Status, and Current Identities.

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## RESEARCH BRIEF

### Audience

This research brief is intended for readers of the alt.polyamory newsgroup.

### Background

*Polyamory* is a relationship style where people have multiple emotionally intimate relationships and all of the parties involved consent to the relationship structure. Similar relationships have existed for some time, but the Oxford English Dictionary traces the term itself to Jennifer L. Wesp's 1992 creation of the alt.polyamory newsgroup. (The term *polyamorous* is attributed to Morning Glory Zell.) In 1996, Elise Matthesen announced that *alt.polycon* would be held in Minneapolis for readers of the newsgroup to meet in person. About 70 people attended, and 16 more alt.polycons were held from 1997 to 2008. No previous research could be found on either the newsgroup pioneers or the alt.polycon attendees, an oversight this research begins to correct.

### Methods

A short, anonymous, online survey was announced via email to a convenience sample of alt.polycon 7 attendees, alt.polycon committee members, and those who posted to the newsgroup that they attended alt.polycon 10 or later. 46 surveys were received and all were analyzed.

### Research Questions

The main research questions were about how alt.polycon attendees might be described, and were addressed by using single questions. Five hypotheses were developed before the survey was released about how the respondents' alt.polycon attendance, relationships and/or identities might be inter-related, but none were statistically supported by the survey data that was collected.

### Key Findings

- Respondents did not appear promiscuous: half reported that they had 1 or 2 partners.
- Over half of respondents with partners were in relationships lasting 21 years or longer, and 83% of respondents with partners were in relationships lasting over a decade.
- No correlations were found between respondent relationship lengths and their identity, how many partners they have, or how frequently they see their partners.
- Significant correlations were found between the terms that respondents identified with.
  - All of the people who most identified with "Don't Ask Don't Tell" as a method of relationship openness most identified with a "Monogamous" relationship style.
  - All of the people who most identified with "Subject to Veto" as a method of relationship openness most identified with a "Poly" relationship style. They also most identified with a "Primary / Secondary" relationship priority.
  - Most of the people who identified with none of the listed terms for relationship priority most identified with a "Non-Monogamous" relationship style.

### Take-Home Message

A variety of partnership choices are being made by alt.polycon attendees, but many attendees appear to have learned how to make those choices in ways that sustain long-term relationships.

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## ABSTRACT

*Polyamory* is a relatively recent term describing an increasingly visible relationship style where people have multiple, simultaneous, close emotional relationships. The *alt.polyamory* newsgroup was formed in 1992 as an online forum for people with multiple lovers to discuss their unique problems (Wesp, 1992), and its creation is recognized by the Oxford English Dictionary as the earliest usage of the term. There have been several studies of people practicing polyamory, but this is believed to be the first research into alt.polyamory. The study focuses on the attendees of the 17 alt.polycon conventions held between 1996 and 2008 for people on the newsgroup. Emails were sent to a convenience sample of attendees asking the recipients to fill out a short and anonymous online survey with questions about their alt.polycon attendance, their current relationship status, and their current identities. The recipients were also asked to forward the email to other attendees. A total of 46 surveys were completed, and all were analyzed. Five hypotheses were made about the attendees before the emails were sent out, but a statistical analysis of the survey responses found that none of the hypotheses were supported by the survey data. This paper provides a brief overview of polyamory research, discusses the hypotheses mentioned above, and describes the survey responses. It also reports additional, statistically relevant findings about the identities of the survey respondents, discusses the implications of the study, outlines the study's limitations, and makes some suggestions for future research.

**Keywords:** alt.polyamory, alt.polycon, alternative lifestyles, consensual non-monogamy, identity, Internet communities, Internet conventions, Internet newsgroups, lovestyles, multiple relationships, non-monogamy, open relationships, polyamorous, polyamory, polyfidelity, primary / secondary relationships, relationship anarchy, usenet communities, veto agreements.

## INTRODUCTION

*Polyamory* is a relationship style where people have multiple, simultaneous, close emotional relationships, and everyone in those relationships knows about and consents to the relationship structure (*“polyamory, n.,”* n.d.). Polyamory is seen as a form of consensual non-monogamy (CNM), and a review of CNM research (Barker & Langdridge, 2010) found over 150 references including a number of non-academic works. More recently, peer-reviewed articles were subject to a content analysis (Brewster et al., 2017) that found that journals about sexuality published the vast majority of such articles and suggested that more psychological studies of the CNM experience were called for.

The sexual focus of most current scholarship on CNM is troubling because there has been more scholarship about CNM than about polyamory (Brewster et al., 2017) but the main focus in polyamory is on emotional rather than sexual connections (Kean, 2017). This emotional priority is unique in CNM (Balzarini et al., 2017; Séguin, 2017; Taormino, 2008) and might be why some people consider polyamory more acceptable than other forms of CNM (Burriss, 2014; Grunt-Mejer & Campbell, 2016; Matsick et al., 2014). In fact, some people practice polyamory in relationships that do not have any sexual component whatsoever (Hutzler et al., 2016) and therefore might not be appropriately thought of as practicing CNM in any way, strictly speaking.

Relationships that can be seen as *polyamorous* have been practiced for over a century (Roiphe, 2008). They can be seen in highly acclaimed novels (Heinlein, 1961, 1973), movies (Fosse, 1972), musical plays (Sondheim, 1986), and television series (Olsen, M. V., and Scheffer, W. [Executive Producers], 2006–2011). A number of books have been published for members of the general public who are interested in pursuing the relationship style (e.g., Anapol, 1992; Matik, 2002; Mirk, 2014; Ravenscroft, 2004; Veaux, 2014; Wolf & Labelle, 2016). There has also been a dissertation about how the identity developed

(Peace, 2012), as well as a multi-year study of the practice (Sheff, 2014b). Additionally, a large-scale study examining relationship quality and equity found that monogamous, open, and polyamorous relationships were equally healthy and viable choices (Séguin et al., 2017).

Despite the above, Polyamory is stigmatized by the larger society (Klesse, 2006; Séguin, 2017). For example, polyamory has been repeatedly used as a “straw man” argument by those opposing gay marriage (Sheff, 2011) and the general public seems to consider polyamory to be less satisfying than monogamy (Cohen, 2016). At least one non-profit specifically supports the polyamorous community (“*About Loving More®*,” n.d.), and at least one coalition group working for sexual freedom is also doing so (National Coalition for Sexual Freedom, n.d.). Some legal theories have been advanced about whether to treat polyamory as a protected class (Emens, 2004; Klesse, 2014; Tweedy, 2010). In addition, the relationship style has recently (if belatedly) come to the attention of the Social Work profession (Williams & Prior, 2015).

The term *polyamorous* is understood to have been invented by Morning Glory Zell (“*Morning Glory Zell-Ravenheart – obituary*,” 2014) to use in an article for the newsletter of the Church of All Worlds (Zell, 1990). However, the Oxford English Dictionary recognizes Jennifer L. Wesp’s (1992) proposal for the alt.polyamory online Usenet newsgroup (Crocker, 1982; Horton, 1983; Horton & Adams, 1987; McKenna & Bargh, 1998) as the first use of the term *polyamory* (“*polyamory, n.*,” n.d.). Because the Church of All Worlds was organized around a science-fiction novel (Cusack, 2009), this makes alt.polyamory the first community organized around polyamory. This would seem to make the alt.polyamory newsgroup an important community for researchers interested in how polyamorous identity has developed and continues to shift over time, but no prior research on the community could be found.



## METHODS AND DESIGN

This research study was undertaken as part of a research methods course required as part of the Author's Masters of Social Work coursework at the University of Washington. As such, it was not reviewed by an institutional review board and is ineligible for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. In addition, no further analyses are possible because all data have been destroyed in accordance with the course requirements and the informed consent agreements. This final report will be hosted at the Internet Archive and Google Drive, with links posted to the alt.polyamory newsgroup in accordance with the community's high standards for transparency.

### **Contacting and Rewarding Respondents**

In order to focus on people expected to have a high level of community investment, this research was limited to attendees of the 17 alt.polycon conventions held for newsgroup participants to get together in person between 1996 and 2008. The first of these was proposed and Chaired by Elise Matthesen (1996a), and permission to do the research was obtained from her very early on in the process (Matthesen & Hagemann, 2018). In addition, the survey instrument was vetted by two other community members. Emails were sent to a convenience sample of people whose attendance could be confirmed, informing them of the study and asking them to participate. No enticements were offered, but a YouTube playlist was created of songs the Author used as the alt.polycon 11 DJ (Hagemann, 2018) as a "thank you" to the community for their participation. Further details about this process can be found in Appendix A.

### **Survey Design and Implementation**

No previous research was found on this community, so an exploratory research model was selected. A cross-sectional design was used due to time constraints. Because polyamory is stigmatized, an online survey that did not capture IP addresses was used to ensure anonymity. In addition, no demographic data were collected, no open-ended questions were asked, and only

general information about convention attendance was collected. It was further decided that the results should be reported back to the community, a commitment made to the community part of the research design that this report fulfills. A copy of the Informed Consent Form used can be found in Appendix B.

Because of the widespread pro-monogamy bias in existing research (Conley, et al., 2017), all questions were vetted by two other community members. In addition, there were no questions about sexual practices and respondents were invited to define “partner” however they wished. As the “*alt.polyamory Frequently Asked Questions*” states:

Polyamory means "loving more than one". This love may be sexual, emotional, spiritual, or any combination thereof, according to the desires and agreements of the individuals involved, but you needn't wear yourself out trying to figure out ways to fit fondness for apple pie, or filial piety, or a passion for the Saint Paul Saints baseball club into it. "Polyamorous" is also used as a descriptive term by people who are open to more than one relationship even if they are not currently involved in more than one. (Heck, some are involved in less than one.) Some people think the definition is a bit loose, but it's got to be fairly roomy to fit the wide range of poly arrangements out there. [emphasis added]. (Matthesen, 1997, para. 2)

Because no validated survey instruments about polyamory could be located, all measures were created for this survey. To limit respondent burden, ordinal rather than scalar responses were frequently solicited and several items used an upper-bounded limit. (This also helped guarantee respondent anonymity, as granular data was not collected about respondent attendance at any specific alt.polycon except for the first one). In all, the survey had three questions about alt.polycon attendance, four questions about current relationship status, and five questions about current identities. For respondent identities, relationship terms used in polyamory were divided into three categories corresponding with relationship style, relationship openness, and relationship priority. A screenshot of the survey, modified to show all available responses, can be found in Appendix C.

## DATA ANALYSIS

A total of 46 surveys were received during the ten days that the survey was open. This was within the range of responses expected and was large enough to draw tentative conclusions.

All 46 respondents reported attending at least one alt.polycon, so no surveys were discarded as non-contributory. The surveys were examined for consistency among different answers, after which a number of blank responses could be recoded based on other data. A detailed explanation of this process can be found in Appendix D.

Descriptive statistics for all data collected were generated and examined. For interval and ratio data, the minimum, mean, median, mode, maximum, standard deviation, skew, and kurtosis were also calculated and examined. All of these data are presented as the first nine Tables (after the References) or in the first two Figures (after the Tables).

## RESULTS

Survey results are discussed for each set of data collected (i.e., alt.polycon attendance, current relationship status, and current identities). The response rates for each question are reported (with references made to the figures and/or tables reporting the underlying survey data) and the overall statistical data for the questions in each section is provided. Additional analyses were made of each set of data, and these results are also reported.

The hypotheses that were made before the start of data collection are then described. The reasoning behind each hypothesis is explained, and the results of the statistical tests used to evaluate each hypothesis are reported.

### **alt.polycon Attendance**

**Question 1: Number of alt.polycons attended.** Question 1 asked how many alt.polycons were attended by respondents. Question 1 was answered by 74% (34/46) of all respondents. The number of alt.polycons attended could be and was calculated for an additional 13% (6/46) of respondents who left Question 1 blank based on their answers to Question 2. The minimum and maximum number of alt.polycons attended for the remaining 13% (6/46) respondents who left Question 1 blank could be and were also calculated based on their answers to Question 2. All of these results are reported in Figure 1.

**Question 2: alt.polycon Eras attended.** Question 2 asked how many alt.polycons were attended during each of five Eras. The first such Era included only the first alt.polycon, and each of the other Eras spanned a three-year time frame and included four alt.polycons. Question 2 was answered by all (46/46) respondents. Question 2 data are reported in Figure 2. That information is also included and supplemented in Figure 3, which also shows whether it was the first Era, the last Era, or a middle Era for all Respondents.

**Question 3: Travel distances to alt.polycons attended.** Question 3 asked how many times respondents travelled each of five distances to attend an alt.polycon. Question 3 was answered by all (46/46) respondents. Question 3 data are reported in Figure 4.

**Range, centrality, and normalization of alt.polycon data.** Range, centrality, and normalization statistics for alt.polycon data are reported in Table 1.

**Attendees of the first alt.polycon.** 15% of respondents (7/46) were at the first alt.polycon, and a statistical analysis was made to determine their commitment to attending the convention over time.

An independent samples T-Test showed a significant difference ( $P < .01$ ) in the number of alt.polycons attended by the 15% (7/46) of respondents who were at the first alt.polycon ( $M = 7.0$ ,  $SD = 2.9$ ) and the 59% (33/46) of respondents who were not at the first alt.polycon but who answered Question 1 about how many alt.polycons they attended ( $M = 3.2$ ,  $SD = 2.3$ ). Significant differences ( $P < .01$ ) remained when the respondents who were not at the first alt.polycon and did not answer Question 1 were included based on their responses to Question 2, using any of the methods described in the section on Question 1 and shown in Figure 1 to calculate their attendance. Later attendees had less opportunity to attend subsequent alt.polycons because a limited number were ever held, but a significant difference ( $P < .05$ ) was still found when the number of alt.polycons attended was reduced by one for respondents who were at the first alt.polycon ( $M = 6.0$ ,  $SD = 2.9$ ). This remained true at the trend level ( $P < .1$ ) when respondents who were not at the first alt.polycon and did not answer Question 1 were included using most of the calculation methods based on their responses to Question 2 and shown in Figure 1. The only exception is if any of 3 possible respondents attended every alt.polycon between 1997 and 1999 and/or between 2000 and 2002 without crossing an ocean to do so,

which would only be possible if they moved away from North America and then moved back within 18 months. The results of all of these calculations are reported in Table 2.

Independent samples T-Tests comparing those who were at the first alt.polycon and those who were not at the first alt.polycon were also run on the number of Eras attended, the last Era attended, and the greatest distance travelled to an alt.polycon. None of these data would normally be subject to such tests because the data are ordinal rather than numeric, but none of these correlations were shown to be statistically significant so this would seem to have been a reasonable shortcut given the exploratory nature of this research. These results are also included in Table 2, but readers are cautioned that these results are not statistically valid.

**Commitment to alt.polycon attendance.** Respondent level of commitment to attend alt.polycons during different Eras was roughly approximated based on the different Eras that they attended, and those results are reported in Figure 3. Respondent willingness to travel various distances to alt.polycons was roughly approximated based on the different distances that they travelled, and those results are reported in Figure 4.

### **Current Relationship Status**

**Question 4: Number of partners.** Question 4 asked about how many partners a respondent had. Question 4 was answered by all (46/46) respondents. Respondents reported that they had between 0 and 7 partners ( $M = 2.2$ ,  $SD = 1.6$ ). The median number of partners was 2, there was a unimodal distribution with 1 as the peak value, and skew was 0.82 – all of which indicate a right-skewed distribution. These results can all be seen in Figure 5.

**Question 5 and Question 6: Frequency of contact.** Question 5 asked about how frequently respondents had in-person contact with any partner(s) and Question 6 asked about how frequently respondents had remote contact (such as via chat, email, phone, or text) with any

partner(s). Question 5 was completely answered by 95% (39/41) of respondents with partners, Question 6 was completely answered by 78% (32/41) of respondents with partners, and incomplete responses were discarded as described in Appendix D. 79% (31/39) of respondents reported that they had daily in-person contact with at least one of their partners, and 91% (29/32) of respondents reported that they had daily remote contact with at least one of their partners. All data about partner contact can be seen in Table 3, along with additional details about the frequencies of greatest and least partner contact.

**Question 7: Relationship durations.** Question 7 asked about how many partners respondents had for each of 7 durations. Question 7 was answered by all (41/41) of the respondents with partners. 54% (22/41) of respondents with partners were in at least one relationship lasting over 21 years and 83% (34/41) of respondents with partners were in at least one relationship lasting over a decade. The information about relationship durations is shown in Figure 6. That information is also included in Figure 7, which also shows the durations which represent the shortest and longest relationship per respondent.

**Range, centrality, and normalization of relationship data.** Range, centrality, and normalization statistics for relationship data are reported in Table 4.

**Relationship stability since alt.polycon attendance.** The earliest year that respondents might have attended alt.polycon for the last time was calculated and compared with the longest reported relationship duration for each respondent. After analysis, it was determined that between 61% (25/41) and 80% (33/41) of respondents who were in current relationships had at least one continuous relationship since the period when they were attending alt.polycons. It should be noted that these include 71% (5/7) of the surveyed attendees of the first alt.polycon.

**No relationship correlations found.** After analysis, there were no statistically significant correlations found between respondent relationship lengths and their identity, how many partners they have, or how frequently they see their partners.

### **Current Identities**

**Question 8: Ranked identification with relationship style terms.** Question 8 asked respondents to rank relationship style terms. The seven specific terms offered were as follows: “Monoamorous” (a term created for this survey as a linguistic contradiction of polyamory), “Monogamous,” “Non-Monogamous,” “Poly,” “Polyamorous,” “Polyfidelitous” (a term that refers to groups of more than two people who are not in outside relationships), and “Polygamous” (a term that refers to marriages between more than two people). Question 8 was answered by 98% (45/46) of all respondents. The information about relationship style rankings is shown in Table 5. In addition, information about all identities is shown in Table 6.

**Question 9 and Question 10: Identification with relationship openness terms.** Question 9 asked respondents to identify the relationship openness term that the respondent most identified with or specify that “I do not identify with any of these terms” and Question 10 asked respondents to identify all relationship openness terms that the respondent identified with. The five specific terms were as follows: “Closed,” “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” “Open,” “Restricted,” and “Subject to Veto.” Question 9 was each answered by all (46/46) respondents, and Question 10 was answered by all respondents (41/41) who did not specify that “I do not identify with any of these terms” in response to Question 9. Information about all identities is shown in Table 6.



**Question 11 and Question 12: Identification with relationship priority terms.**

Question 11 asked respondents to identify the relationship priority term that the respondent most identified with or specify that “I do not identify with any of these terms” and Question 12 asked respondents to identify all relationship priority terms that the respondent identified with. The five specific terms were as follows: “Hierarchical,” “Non-Hierarchical,” “Primary / Secondary,” “Relationship Anarchy” (Kale, n.d.), and “Subject to Veto.” Question 11 was answered by all (46/46) respondents, and Question 12 was answered by all (33/33) respondents who did not specify that “I do not identify with any of these terms” in response to Question 11. Information about all identities is shown in Table 6.

**Range, centrality, and normalization of identity data.** Range, centrality, and normalization statistics for identity data are reported in Table 7.

**Identity word clouds.** Word clouds were created to show the frequency of each identity, and included as Figure 8, Figure 9, and Figure 10. Appendix E explains how these were created.

**Apparent identity conflicts.** Counts were made of respondents who reported identities that appeared to conflict with each other, and the results are shown in Table 8.

**Main identities.** A Chi-Square analysis was conducted of the main terms that attendees identified with each category, and it showed that significant correlations exist between 33% (1/3) of the category pairs. No significant correlation ( $P = 0.12$ ) was initially found between relationship style and relationship openness, but especially significant correlations ( $P < .001$ ) were found after the relationship style terms were aggregated into *Mono Styles* (“Monoamorous” and “Monogamous”), *Open Styles* (“Non-Monogamous,” “Poly,” and “Polyamorous”), and *Bonded Styles* (“Polyfidelitous” and “Polygamous”). These results can be seen in Table 9. Pairwise comparisons were made between each main identity pair using Fischer’s Exact Test (due to the sample size) and the results are shown in Table 10, Table 11, and Table 12.

**Other identities.** It was also believed that significant correlations existed between main identities and other identities, but those analyses were not undertaken as part of the Author's original research paper due to time constraints. However, additional pairwise comparisons were made prior to completing this report to the community using Fischer's Exact Test, and those results are shown in Table 13, Table 14, Table 15, Table 16, Table 17, and Table 18.

**"Poly" and "Polyamorous" styles.** One of the most statistically significant results ( $P < .001$ ) was that 93% (41/44) of respondents who identified with either term identified with both terms. Therefore, an analysis was made to determine whether there was any statistically relevant difference between those who identify more with one term and those who identify more with the other. 86% (6/7) of the surveyed attendees who attended the first alt.polycon preferred the term "Poly" to the term "Polyamorous," but the other attendee of the first alt.polycon only identified with the term "Polyamorous," so this might not be relevant. It should also be noted that different significant correlations with the most identified term for relationship openness were found for people whose most identified style was "Poly" and people whose most identified style was "Polyamorous": the former identified more with "Subject to Veto" while the latter identified more with "Open." However, no other significant differences were found between these groups.

## Hypotheses

**More alt.polycon attendance is not correlated with longer relationships.** This was the first hypothesis made, and was informed by the fact that making relationships work was a frequent topic at the conventions. Because the survey design created both of these as ordinal variables, Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient was calculated to test this hypothesis. The results indicated a positive association, but it was not found to be significant ( $r_s(29) = .22, P = .26$ ). Another Spearman correlation indicated a positive association

between the number of alt.polycon Eras attended and the longest relationship duration, but this was less significant ( $r_s(41) = .099$ ,  $P = .54$ ). A final Spearman correlation indicated a slight negative association between the greatest distance travelled to an alt.polycon and the longest relationship duration, but this was even less significant ( $r_s(41) = -.004$ ,  $P = .98$ ). Because no demographic data was collected, there is no way to compare the relationship lengths of alt.polycon attendees with the relationship lengths of the general public.

**Later attendees are not more likely to identify as “Poly.”** Although polyamory is a recent word, it was necessarily shortened to “Poly” even more recently and it was thought that this shift in usage might be reflected in the identities of convention attendees. To the contrary, attendees of earlier alt.polycons who identified with both terms more strongly identified with the term “Poly” while attendees of later conventions who identified with both terms more strongly identified with the term “Polyamorous,” as reported in Table 19. An analysis using Kendall’s Tau C showed no significant relationship between alt.polycon Era and a preference for “Polyamorous” rather than “Poly” identity:  $\tau_c = -.30$ ,  $P = .064$  for the first alt.polycon attended and  $\tau_c = -.15$ ,  $P = .36$  for the last alt.polycon attended. The results of an additional analysis of this hypothesis that did not change the outcome are reported in Table 20.

**Attendees of more Eras are not more likely to identify with “Polyamorous.”** This hypothesis was based on the fact that alt.polycons were a product of the alt.polyamory newsgroup, so an assumption was made that a longer association with the convention would correlate with higher degree of identification with the term “Polyamorous.” An analysis of the data using Kendall’s Tau C showed no significant relationship between the number of alt.polycon Eras attended and a main identification with “Polyamorous” ( $\tau_c = -.98$ ,  $P = .32$ ), a lesser identification with “Polyamorous” ( $\tau_c = -.22$ ,  $P = .77$ ), any identification with

“Polyamorous,” ( $\tau_c = 1.5$ ,  $P = .13$ ), or a greater preference to identify with “Polyamorous” than “Poly” ( $\tau_c = .24$ ,  $P = .81$ ).

**Individuals with an “Open” identity do not have more partners.** This hypothesis was based on the assumption that people would be in more relationships if their identity allowed them to do so, and this identity does not inherently limit people from being in more relationships. An Independent Samples T-Test was run, and no significant difference ( $P = .24$ ) was found in the number of current relationships between those whose main openness identity was “Open” ( $M = 2.3$ ,  $SD = 1.7$ ) and those whose main openness identity was something else ( $M = 2.1$ ,  $SD = 1.3$ ). In addition, no significant difference was found when Independent Samples T-Tests were run on the number of current relationships and any identification with “Open” identity, regardless of whether or not respondents with no partners were included.

**Individuals with a “Closed” identity do not see their partners more often.** This hypothesis was based on the assumption that people in closed relationships might have more time to devote to their partners. No difference was found ( $P = 1.0$ ) using Fischer’s Exact Test between the 100% (4/4) of respondents with a “Closed” identity and at least weekly contact with at least one partner and the 86% (30/35) of others with at least weekly contact with at least one partner. In addition, no significant difference ( $P = .18$ ) was found between the 50% (2/4) of respondents with mainly “Closed” identities with daily contact with at least one partner and the 78% (29/37) of others who had daily contact with at least one partner.

## DISCUSSION

This research started out as an assignment in a required class as part of the Author's coursework towards a Masters in Social Work degree, and should be seen in part as the product of a project-based learning exercise. From that perspective, the main purpose of this research was to provide the Author with the opportunity to gather some data and see if anything emerged from the data analysis that the Author was also learning along the way. However, a number of interesting findings emerged along the way and are detailed in this section.

### **alt.polycon Attendance**

**Attendees of the first alt.polycon.** The analysis described above suggests that attendees of the first alt.polycon may have had a greater commitment to attend later alt.polycons after their first one, but that this did not extend to travelling further distances or continuing to attend for longer periods of time.

**Commitment to alt.polycon attendance.** The sample size was too small to support any conclusions, so none were formulated.

### **Current Relationship Status**

The fact that over half of the respondents had only one or two partners suggests that alt.polycon attendees are not especially promiscuous. The fact that so many respondents are in long-term relationships further suggests that alt.polycon attendees might have learned some important lessons about how to make love last. This is unsurprising to the Author, given that this was a frequent topic at the conventions and on the newsgroup.

## **Current Identities**

**Apparent identity conflicts.** 54% (25/46) of all respondents had at least one apparent identity conflict, suggesting that the identities of the respondents are more fluid and less rigid. The survey did not provide definitions because there does not appear to be a consensus about meaning in the larger community of people practicing polyamory, which fits this conclusion.

**“Poly” and “Polyamorous” styles.** The large overlap between these identities seems likely to be due to the fact that the term “Poly” is often understood to be a shortened version of the term “Polyamorous.” Therefore, the fact that so many respondents who identified with either term identified with both terms might be expected. It might also be expected that no significant differences were found between respondents based on which term identified with more.

**“Non-Monogamous” main style and “N/A” main openness.** One of the most statistically significant identity results from Table 10 ( $P < .001$ ) was the positive correlation between the people whose main style identity was “Non-Monogamous” and people who identified with none of the openness terms (“Closed,” “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” “Open,” “Restricted,” and “Subject to Veto”). The majority (4/7 or 57%) of those who identified most with the term “Non-Monogamous” identified with none of the openness terms, and the vast majority (4/5 or 80%) of those who identified with none of the openness terms selected “Non-Monogamous” as their main relationship style. The overlap between people who identified most with “Non-Monogamous” and people who identified with none of the relationship priority terms suggests that such individuals might not want to be “pinned down.” This conclusion might also be supported by the fact that “Non-Monogamous” can be seen as a linguistically oppositional term, specifying what it is not rather than what it is. Further support

might come from the fact that the largest apparent identity conflict is that 80% of the people who identify as “Monogamous” (8/10) also identify as “Non-Monogamous.”

**“Polyfidelitous” main style and “Closed” main openness.** The other especially significant identity result from Table 10 ( $P < .001$ ) is the fact that all 2 of the respondents who most identified with a “Polyfidelitous” relationship style were also the only respondents who most identified with a “Closed” relationship openness ( $P < .001$ ). However, the overlap between these identities might be predicted by the fact that “Polyfidelitous” relationships are generally understood to be closed so this is not an unexpected result.

**“Subject to Veto” main openness: mainly “Poly” and “Primary / Secondary.”** Another significant result from Table 10 is associated with the only significant result from Table 12: each of the 4 respondents who most identified with a relationship openness of “Subject to Veto” most identified with both a relationship style of “Poly” ( $P < .01$ ) and a relationship priority of “Primary / Secondary” ( $P < .01$ ). This result is even more significant ( $P < .001$ ) when the combination Fischer’s Exact Test is run between a main relationship openness of “Subject to Veto” and the combined main relationship style of “Poly” and main relationship priority of “Primary / Secondary.” Fischer’s Exact Test was then run between any relationship openness of “Subject to Veto” and the combination of any relationship style of “Poly” and any relationship priority of “Primary / Secondary” and no significant correlation was found ( $P = .11$ ). These results suggest that the identities might be especially compatible with each other at higher levels of identification with each other.

**“Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” openness.** Another significant result from Table 10 ( $P < .01$ ) is that each of the 2 respondents who most identified with an openness of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” also most identified with a “Monogamous” style. This might mean that such individuals are practicing a *monogamish* relationship (Oppenheimer, 2011). The fact that nobody else identified

with “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” to any degree (unlike every other main identity selected) further suggests that “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” might be viewed as especially incompatible with the other relationship identities used in this research. It should be noted that each of those individuals also identified with a “Subject to Veto” openness, a “Poly” style, and a “Primary / Secondary” priority. They also each identified with a “Polyamory” style (although they differed over whether “Poly” was higher ranked than “Polyamory”) and a “Solo Poly” priority.

**“Relationship Anarchy” priority.** No respondents identified “Relationship Anarchy” as their main relationship priority and no significant correlations could be found for that identity. However, it should be noted that all (6/6) of the respondents who identified with “Relationship Anarchy” also identified with both “Open” as a relationship openness and “Non-Monogamous” as a relationship style. Furthermore, 83% (5/6) of the respondents who identified with “Relationship Anarchy” selected “Open” as their main relationship openness and also selected “Non-Monogamous” as their main relationship style. (The remaining respondent who identified with “Relationship Anarchy” was in the group with a “Subject to Veto” main openness.) This correlation with “Relationship Anarchy” might be expected, given that “Open” and “Non-Monogamous” can be seen as the least hierarchical term in their respective categories while “anarchy” can be linguistically seen as inherently oppositional to any kind of hierarchy.

## **Hypotheses**

None of the hypotheses were supported by the data. This should not be surprising considering that this is an exploratory study, but the results should be taken into account if any further studies are done with this population or with populations that seem similar.



### **SUMMARY**

This study suggests that the majority of alt.polycon attendees are in stable, long-term relationships. Attendees make a number of different relationship choices and have a number of different identities, but no significant correlations were found between their relationship lengths, their identity, how many partners they have, or how frequently they see their partners in person. This suggests that the group has found a number of sustainable approaches that work for them individually, despite the fact that many of those choices are not supported by the larger culture.

## LIMITATIONS

Although some statistically significant results emerged during the analysis process, it is important to note that they are not generalizable to the population of all alt.polycon attendees because the respondents in this study were not randomly selected and are not a representative sample. As noted in Appendix A, over half of the emails were sent to alt.polycon 7 attendees, who seem unlikely to be representative. Additional effects may have resulted from the fact that people were asked to forward on the survey to others who attended the convention, although doing so unquestionably generated a much larger sample size. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, most of the email addresses used were over a decade old, and this creates a respondent filter that is unpredictable but presumably distorting. One possible result of this can be seen in the fact that half of the respondents attended at least one of the last four alt.polycons.

Readers are also cautioned that alt.polycon attendees are not representative of others who practice polyamory. At least some of them have stated that they did not practice polyamory themselves and were only there for the conversations about relationships. In addition, merely accessing the newsgroup required Internet access and somewhat unusual technical knowledge.

There are also limitations in the questions included in the survey. All of them were invented for the purposes of this study, none were tested for reliability, and instructions should have been included on some questions. Several items were asked in a more general way than ideal in order to ensure anonymity and reduce respondent burden, but more powerful statistical analyses require more granular data than were collected about many response items.

It is also important to note that respondents were asked about their identity rather than also asked about which terms apply to their relationships in order to reduce participant burden. An unknown but presumably significant portion of the general public is known to be in relationships that don't align with their identities for a variety of reasons, and it might be

reasonable to expect that an even larger portion of alt.polycon attendees are involved in such relationships given that their identities appear to be fairly flexible. As such, readers are especially cautioned to avoid drawing any conclusions about how respondent relationships (or any relationships) might be characterized using the terminology utilized in this research to ask about respondent identities.

Finally, the cross-sectional nature of this research means that none of the data elements can be put into their order of occurrence. Therefore, no causality should be inferred because there is no way to know which data elements might be independent variables (i.e., causes) and which might be dependent variables (i.e., effects). Proving causality is even more difficult, and requires the use of an experimental research design with random assignment.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

### **Community Involvement and Transparency**

Any future research into alt.polyamory or alt.polycon attendees should begin by contacting community leaders such as Elise Matthesen (as this Author did early on in the process) to discuss the research goals and get agreement that the research is appropriate. Ideally, community members would also be involved in selecting appropriate research goals and developing the research protocols and instruments such as surveys. It is also highly encouraged that any researchers disclose any personal and/or professional connections (or lack thereof) to the practice of polyamory or consensual non-monogamy as part of the informed consent process. Finally, of course, and at a minimum, any results should be provided to all of the subjects (or people contacted, if an anonymous survey was used). The Author understands that this is not the way that research is typically conducted and that the statements in this paragraph are seldom included in this type of research report, but he strongly believes that following such guidelines is the only way to conduct research in an ethical way. He further suggests that this report demonstrates that such open research methods are possible, and encourages readers to consider limiting their participation in research to endeavors with a similar commitment to transparency.

### **Research into alt.polyamory and the alt.polycon Conventions**

The above admonition to researchers about community involvement is especially important with the alt.polyamory community due to the community's norms of operating with a high degree of transparency. Researchers are also encouraged to interact with any newsgroup records in a respectful way by following the suggestions of Internet researchers and theoreticians Hoser & Nitchke (2010) despite the fact that such materials are now publicly available (Delio, 2001; Wiggins, 2001). Attention should specifically be given to protecting the identity of all participants who do not explicitly choose to be publicly associated with the research itself. If

research is to be done about the alt.polycons, it is recommended that each convention Chair be contacted ahead of time to get their input, find out about total attendance, and ask for copies of the convention materials, if any, although such materials should also be treated respectfully.

### **Specific Polyamorous Subpopulations**

Because all of the most significant ( $P < .001$ ) results had to do with identity correlations, it is suggested that some of these subpopulations might be worthy of specific study rather than necessarily treating everyone who practices polyamory as though they were the same. Doing so would reflect an important sensitivity and awareness of the individuals involved and developing such a more nuanced understanding of the community might also help avoid further stigmatization. Some preliminary work has already been done towards that end (Balzarini et al., 2017) and further work should be both encouraged and applauded.

### **Developing a Broader Polyamorous Taxonomy**

The majority of notable results had to do with correlations between respondent identities, and it is believed that there is a fair amount of work to be done in developing a polyamorous taxonomy following on the work of Ritchie and Barker (2006). Such an endeavor should distinguish between the identities and behaviors of the participants because they might not necessarily align with each other in predictable ways. This would also necessarily need to involve a community larger than the one studied here. In addition, the development of definitions for the terms involved is highly recommended even though doing so was beyond the scope of this research. However, it is hoped that the results of this research might be of value to any such endeavors.

### **Relationship Quality and Longevity**

Given the pro-monogamy bias in society, the most notable result of this study might be that the respondents were in such long-term relationships, despite the variety in their reported identities. The Author found very few studies about long-term polyamorous relationships, but believes that such relationships would be worthy of study. Particular emphasis might be placed on determining which relationship practices and/or strategies might be especially effective in ensuring relationship longevity and satisfaction. This would be of unquestionable value to the polyamorous community, but might also be of value to the community at large (Pappas, 2013) – a position endorsed by at least one polyamorous academic (Sheff, 2014a).

It is worth reiterating here that alt.polyamory is the first community organized around the term “polyamory.” As such, some of the earliest partnerships that embraced that relationship style would have necessarily involved people on the newsgroup. Some of these pioneers have remained in relationships that have lasted since before the very first alt.polycon, and further study is recommended.

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

This report is a work of original research and the posting to the Internet Archive (with a link on alt.polyamory) is the first publication. The Author received no funding whatsoever to produce this work and further states that there are no conflicts of interest.

### About the Formatting of This Report

This report closely follows the American Psychiatric Association's (2010) manuscript standards, but deviates from them for readability as the only record of this research. These differences include the insertion of the Research Brief and Table of Contents before the Abstract, the capitalization of first-level headings, and changes to the use of white space. The information in the references remains in the same order, but a number of line breaks were added to make them easier to scan. The references also *italicize* certain titles, add ISBNs, and list all authors. Finally, the identity word clouds use font color and size to abstract and visualize Table 6 data.

Hyperlinks are in black text with no underlining. Each entry in the Table of Contents is linked to its heading in the text and each is also listed as an Acrobat "Bookmark." Each mention of a Table, Figure, or Appendix is also linked. Each in-text citation is linked to its Reference, and each reference is included as an Acrobat "Bookmark." All URLs in the text are linked, and all were "live" on the Internet on the day this report was published.

Each survey question (or related pair of survey questions) has a descriptive paragraph in the Results section. Outside of that paragraph, each reference to a survey question number (i.e., "Question 1") is linked to that paragraph. Inside that paragraph, references to any question number(s) being described by the paragraph are not necessary. In order to provide easy access to the questions asked on the survey itself, the headings for such paragraphs are linked to the

section of Appendix C where the original question(s) can be seen. Links to the each question asked on the survey can also be found inside of the Acrobat Bookmarks.

### **Author's Involvement with alt.polycon**

The Author of this paper attended 82% (14/17) of the alt.polycons ever held, the exceptions being alt.polycon 5 in Melbourne, alt.polycon 14 in Auckland, and alt.polycon 17 in Atlanta. He was selected to use the excess funds after the first alt.polycon to attend a similar convention in Edinburgh (Matthesen, 1996b), and wrote up a trip report about the convention, the trip abroad, and a number of other topics (Hagemann, 1998). He ran alt.polycon 7 in Seattle (Hagemann, 2000). He also DJ-ed alt.polycon 11 (Hagemann, 2004). Despite the above, the Author did not fill out one any of the surveys used in this research, in accordance with direction received from his instructor.

### **Author's Appreciations**

The Author first recognizes Elise Matthesen for the vision and activism that led her to found alt.polycon (among a variety of other endeavors): the world is a richer place because she is in it. There would have been nothing to research without her, and this research would not have happened without her blessing (Matthesen & Hagemann, 2018). He also thanks the Chairs the other alt.polycons and all alt.polycon committee members. Particular thanks are also due to Jane E. Hawkins for running the Con Suite and to Betsy Lundsten for running Programming at alt.polycon 7, as that convention could not have happened without their assistance and support.

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The Author is also indebted to the mid-1980s “cast” of Seattle’s Rocky Horror Picture Show (Sharman, 1975) at the Neptune theatre, the science fiction community in general, the Seattle Poly Potluck, the Pandora community, the alt.polyamory newsgroup, the alt.polycon conventions, *the Center for Sex-Positive Culture* (n.d.), the music of a Seattle band celebrating polyamory (“*Bone Poets Orchestra*,” n.d.), and both the late Sharma Oliver and the Sharma Center named in her memory. Finally, he thanks all of his current and former partners for support as he discovered his own path as a person practicing polyamory.

Despite all the help, the Author is solely responsible for any and all errors and omissions.

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**Table 1.***Statistical Analysis of alt.polycon Data.*

Measure Concerning alt.polycons	Statistical Results								
	<i>n</i>	Range		Centrality			Normalization <sup>a</sup>		
		Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	Mode	<i>SD</i>	Skew	Kurtosis
alt.polycons Attended <sup>b</sup>									
Reported	34	1	10	4.00	3.0	1	2.82	0.85	-0.44
Calculated	40	1	10	3.68	3.0	2	2.71	1.09	0.05
Minimum	46	1	10	3.89	3.0	2	2.65	0.88	-0.30
No Migration	46	1	10	4.20	3.0	2	3.01	0.82	-0.66
Maximum	46	1	10	4.28	3.0	2	3.07	0.75	-0.83
Era <sup>c</sup>									
Eras Attended	46	1	5	2.48	2.0	2	1.17	0.62	-0.44
Earliest Era	46	1	5	2.61	3.0	2	1.04	0.13	-0.73
Latest Era	46	2	5	4.17	4.5	5	1.00	-0.93	-0.28
Travel Distance <sup>d</sup>									
alt.polycons Attended	46	1	5	2.04	1.0	1	1.32	0.96	-0.36
Closest alt.polycon	46	1	5	2.22	2.0	1	1.17	0.51	-0.58
Furthest alt.polycon	46	1	5	3.41	3.5	3	1.13	-0.70	0.26

Notes: *M* = Mean, *Mdn* = Median, *SD* = Standard Deviation.

<sup>a</sup> Normalization calculations assume scalar data, but some of the raw data is ordinal. Results for such data are not statistically sound and are provided for information only.

<sup>b</sup> Alt.polycons attended has an upper-bounded limit with a maximum answer of "10+". The different methods used to calculate alt.polycons attended are explained in Figure 1.

<sup>c</sup> Alt.polycon Era is an ordinal measure with unequal response options shown in Figure 2.

<sup>d</sup> Travel Distance is an ordinal measure with response options shown in Figure 4.

**Table 2.***Independent Samples T-Tests Based on Attendance at the First alt.polycon*

Measure	Attendance at the first alt.polycon							P
	Yes (7 respondents)			No (39 respondents)				
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Calculation <sup>a</sup>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Attendance at ANY alt.polycon (17 alt.polycons total)	7	7.00	2.89	Reported	27	3.22	2.26	< .001
				Calculated	33	2.97	2.11	< .001
				Minimum	39	3.33	2.22	< .001
				No Migration	39	3.90	2.94	< .05
				Maximum	39	4.00	3.03	< .05
Attendance at alt.polycons 2-17 (16 alt.polycons included)	7	6.00	2.89	Reported	27	3.22	2.26	< .01
				Calculated	33	2.97	2.11	< .001
				Minimum	39	3.33	2.22	< .01
				No Migration	39	3.90	2.94	.087
				Maximum	39	4.00	3.03	.11
Attendance during Eras 2-5 <sup>b</sup> (4 Eras included)								
Count of Eras	7	2.71	1.38	All	46	2.26	0.99	.30
Last Era Attended	7	3.71	1.38	All	46	4.27	0.91	.19
Greatest distance to attend <sup>b</sup> (5 distances possible)	7	2.86	0.69	All	46	2.33	1.18	.26

Notes: *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation.

<sup>a</sup> Reported attendance at alt.polycons is calculated as described in the writeup to Question 1.  
All other measures based on respondent data

<sup>b</sup> These are ordinal rather than numeric measures so T-Tests are not a statistically valid method.  
Therefore, these results are included for information only.

**Table 3.***Partner Contacts by Frequency, Type, and Number of Partners Interacted With.*

Partner Contacts <sup>a</sup>	Contact Frequency											
	Daily (or more)		Weekly		Monthly		Quarterly		Yearly		Less than Yearly	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
In-Person ( <i>n</i> = 39)												
none	8	21%	23	59%	29	74%	35	90%	33	85%	33	85%
1 Partner	22	56%	12	31%	9	23%	4	10%	4	10%	5	13%
2 Partners	9	23%	3	8%	1	3%	0	--	1	3%	0	--
3 Partners	0	--	1	3%	0	--	0	--	1	3%	1	3%
4+ Partners	0	--	0	--	0	--	0	--	0	--	0	--
<u>ANY Partners</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>79%</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>41%</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>26%</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>10%</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>15%</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>15%</u>
Most Contacted	31	79%	3	8%	4	10%	0	--	1	3%	0	--
Least Contacted	10	26%	9	23%	7	18%	2	5%	5	13%	6	15%
Remote Contacts ( <i>n</i> = 32)												
none	3	9%	21	66%	23	72%	28	88%	31	97%	32	100%
1 Partner	17	53%	8	25%	7	22%	4	13%	1	3%	0	--
2 Partners	6	19%	3	9%	2	6%	0	--	0	--	0	--
3 Partners	5	16%	0	--	0	--	0	--	0	--	0	--
4 Partners <sup>b</sup>	0	--	0	--	0	--	0	--	0	--	0	--
5 Partners <sup>b</sup>	1	3%	0	--	0	--	0	--	0	--	0	--
<u>ANY Partners</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>91%</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>34%</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>28%</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>13%</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>--</u>
Most Contacted	29	91%	2	6%	1	3%	0	--	0	--	0	--
Least Contacted	14	44%	7	22%	7	22%	3	9%	1	3%	0	--

<sup>a</sup> Respondents were invited to use any definition of “partner” that they liked.

<sup>b</sup> The survey had an upper-bounded limit of “4+” partners. However, only one respondent provided that response and a scalar value could be calculated for them based on other data.

**Table 4.***Statistical Analysis of Relationship Data.*

Measure Concerning Relationships	Statistical Results								
	<i>n</i>	Range		Centrality			Normalization <sup>a</sup>		
		Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	Mode	<i>SD</i>	Skew	Kurtosis
Partner Count	46	0	7	2.20	2.0	1	1.59	0.82	0.51
Contact Frequency <sup>b</sup>									
In-Person Contacts									
Minimum (days)									
Most Often	39	1	365	13.8	1.0	1	58.4	6.03	37.1
Least Often	39	1	367	115.	30.0	1	161.	0.96	-1.08
Remote Contacts									
Minimum (days)									
Most Often	32	1	30	2.28	1.0	1	5.27	5.05	26.7
Least Often	32	1	365	28.5	7.0	1	66.9	4.42	21.8
Partnership Duration <sup>c</sup>									
Shortest (years)	41	0	21	8.32	6.0	10	6.66	0.60	-0.65
Longest (years)	41	0	21	15.9	21.0	21	6.71	-1.06	-0.20

Notes: *M* = Mean, *Mdn* = Median, *SD* = Standard Deviation.

<sup>a</sup> Normalization calculations assume scalar data, but some of the raw data is ordinal. Results for such data are not statistically sound and are provided for information only.

<sup>b</sup> Contact frequency is an ordinal measure, with response options shown in Table 3. Contact frequency calculations were based on the minimum number of days between contact with the most-frequently-contacted partner. The categories were translated into days as follows: "Daily (or more)" = 1, "Weekly" = 7, "Monthly" = 30, "Quarterly" = 91, "Yearly" = 365, "Less than Yearly" = 367.

<sup>c</sup> Relationship duration is an ordinal measure, with responses shown in Figure 6 and Figure 7. Minimum durations used the shortest relationship, with 0 used if under 1 year.

**Table 5.**  
*Level of Identification with Relationship Style Terms.*

Relationship Style (n = 45)	Level of Identification (Rank)														(least)	
	Any															
	MAIN		other													
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(least)								
n	%	n	%	n	% <sup>b</sup>	n	% <sup>b</sup>	n	% <sup>b</sup>	n	% <sup>b</sup>	n	% <sup>b</sup>	n	%	
<b>Mono Styles</b>																
monoamorous <sup>a</sup>	0	--	1	2%	0	--	0	--	0	--	0	--	0	--	1	2%
Monogamous	3	7%	0	--	1	2%	3	7%	3	7%	0	--	0	--	6	13%
<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7%</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7%</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7%</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>16%</u>
<b>Open Styles</b>																
Non-Monogamous	7	16%	5	11%	23	51%	2	4%	0	--	1	2%	0	--	17	38%
Poly	15	33%	21	47%	5	11%	1	2%	1	2%	0	--	0	--	7	16%
Polyamorous	18	40%	14	31%	9	20%	1	2%	0	--	0	--	0	--	7	16%
<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>89%</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>89%</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>82%</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>9%</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>69%</u>
<b>Bonded Styles</b>																
Polyfidelitous	2	4%	4	9%	3	7%	5	11%	0	--	0	--	0	--	3	7%
polygamous <sup>a</sup>	0	--	0	--	1	2%	3	7%	3	7%	0	--	0	--	4	9%
<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>9%</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>9%</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>18%</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7%</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>16%</u>
<u>ANY Style<sup>b</sup></u>	<u>45</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>93%</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>33%</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>100%</u>

Note: Dotted boxes indicate levels of identification made by half or more of the respondents.

<sup>a</sup> No respondent selected these terms as their MAIN identity.

<sup>b</sup> Percentages will not sum to 100% for lower rankings because respondents did not rank identities that they did not identify with.



**Table 6.**  
*Degree of Identification with Relationship Terms by Type.*

Identity	Degree of Identification					
	MAIN		other		Any	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Style (<i>n</i> = 45)</b>						
Mono Styles						
monoamorous <sup>a</sup>	0	--	1	2%	1	2%
Monogamous	3	7%	6	13%	9	20%
<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7%</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>22%</u>
Open Styles						
Non-Monogamous	7	16%	31	69%	38	84%
Poly	15	33%	28	62%	43	96%
Polyamorous	18	40%	24	53%	42	93%
<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>89%</u>	<u>83</u>	<u>184%</u>	<u>123</u>	<u>273%</u>
Bonded Styles						
Polyfidelitous	2	4%	12	27%	14	31%
polygamous <sup>a</sup>	0	--	7	16%	7	16%
<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>42%</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>47%</u>
<u>ANY Style</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>109</u>	<u>242%</u>	<u>154</u>	<u>342%</u>
<b>Openness (<i>n</i> = 46)</b>						
Closed	2	4%	2	4%	4	9%
Don't Ask, Don't Tell	2	4%	0	--	2	4%
Open	30	65%	4	9%	34	74%
Restricted	3	7%	6	13%	9	20%
Subject to Veto	4	9%	11	24%	15	33%
<u>ANY Openness</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>89%</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>139%</u>
	<i>N/A</i> <sup>b</sup>	5	11%		5	11%
<b>Priority (<i>n</i> = 46)</b>						
Hierarchical	1	2%	7	15%	8	17%
Non-Hierarchical	16	35%	2	4%	18	39%
Primary / Secondary	14	30%	9	20%	23	50%
relationship anarchy	0	--	6	13%	6	13%
Solo Poly	2	4%	3	7%	5	11%
<u>ANY Priority</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>72%</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>59%</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>130%</u>
	<i>N/A</i> <sup>b</sup>	13	28%		13	28%

*Note:* Dotted boxes show identities reported by half or more of the respondents.

<sup>a</sup> These terms are lower case because they were never selected as a MAIN identity.

<sup>b</sup> These respondents do not identify with any of these terms.

**Table 7.***Statistical Analysis of Identity Data.*

Measure Concerning Identity	Statistical Results								
	<i>n</i>	Range		Centrality			Normalization <sup>a</sup>		
		Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	Mode	<i>SD</i>	Skew	Kurtosis
Style Identities									
Mono Styles	45	0	2	0.24	0	0	0.48	1.84	2.74
Open Styles	45	0	3	2.73	3	3	0.58	-2.84	10.28
Bonded Styles	45	0	2	0.47	0	0	0.69	1.19	0.14
<u>Any Style</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3.44</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0.89</u>	<u>0.98</u>	<u>0.57</u>
<u>ALL RESPONSES</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3.44</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0.89</u>	<u>0.98</u>	<u>0.57</u>
Openness Identities									
<u>Any Openness</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1.56</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0.71</u>	<u>0.88</u>	<u>-0.45</u>
<u>ALL RESPONSES</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1.39</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0.83</u>	<u>0.36</u>	<u>-0.28</u>
Priority Identities									
<u>Any Priority</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1.85</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0.83</u>	<u>0.99</u>	<u>0.94</u>
<u>ALL RESPONSES</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1.33</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1.10</u>	<u>0.47</u>	<u>-0.24</u>

Notes: *M* = Mean, *Mdn* = Median, *SD* = Standard Deviation.

<sup>a</sup> Normalization calculations assume scalar data. All of the data in this table are scalar.

**Table 8.**  
*Apparently Conflicting Identities (Any Level of Identification).*

Identity Type(s)	Identity 1		Identity 2		Apparent Conflicts	
	Identity	% with <i>n</i> conflict	Identity	% with <i>n</i> conflict	<i>n</i>	% of total
<b>Style</b>						
<i>(n = 45)</i>	monoamorous <sup>a</sup>	1 --	Polyamorous	42 --	0	--
	monoamorous <sup>a</sup>	1 --	Polyfidelitous	14 --	0	--
	Monogamous	10 80%	Non-Monogamous	38 21%	8	18%
	Monogamous	10 20%	polygamous <sup>a</sup>	7 29%	2	4%
<b>Openness</b>						
<i>(n = 46)</i>	Closed	4 25%	Open	34 3%	1	2%
	Don't Ask Don't Tell	2 --	Open	34 --	0	--
<b>Priority</b>						
<i>(n = 46)</i>	Hierarchical	8 25%	Non-Hierarchical	19 11%	2	4%
	Hierarchical	8 13%	relationship anarchy <sup>a</sup>	6 17%	1	2%
	Non-Hierarchical	19 47%	Primary / Secondary	23 39%	9	20%
<b>MIXED</b>						
<b>Style + Openness</b>						
<i>(n = 45)</i>	Monogamous	10 50%	Open	34 15%	5	11%
	Polyfidelitous	14 71%	Open	34 29%	10	22%
<b>Openness + Priority</b>						
<i>(n = 46)</i>	Subject to Veto	15 27%	Non-Hierarchical	19 21%	4	9%
	Subject to Veto	15 7%	relationship anarchy <sup>a</sup>	6 17%	1	2%
<b>Priority + Style</b>						
<i>(n = 45)</i>	Solo Poly	5 40%	Polyfidelitous	14 14%	2	4%
	Solo Poly	5 --	polygamous <sup>a</sup>	7 --	0	--
<b>ANY</b>					<b>25 54%</b>	
<i>(n = 46)</i>						

*Note:* Interrupted borders show identities that have an apparent conflict half or more of the time.

<sup>a</sup> These terms are lower case because they were never selected as a MAIN identity.

**Table 9.**  
*Probability that MAIN Identity Types are Statistically Related.*

MAIN Identity Type	Chi-Square Results per MAIN Identity Type									
	Openness					Priority				
	<i>n</i>	$\chi^2$	% Low <sup>a</sup>	df	P	<i>n</i>	$\chi^2$	% Low <sup>a</sup>	df	P
<b>Style</b>										
Closed Styles	45	29.5	91.7%	5	< .001	45	7.31	70.0%	4	.120
Open Styles	45	35.2	91.7%	5	< .001	45	4.17	70.0%	4	.384
Bonded Styles	45	45.0	91.7%	5	< .001	45	2.00	70.0%	4	.854
ALL Styles	45	22.8	88.0%	16	.12	45	22.8	88.0%	16	.12
<b>Openness</b>						46	32.0	90.0%	20	< .05

<sup>a</sup> Due to the sample size, many cells had an expected count of 0. Therefore, Chi-Squared Probability (P) results are not necessarily accurate. As a result, Fischer's Exact Test was run on each identity pair to determine whether any specific correlation was statistically significant. Those results can be found in Table 10, Table 11, and Table 12.

**Table 10.**

Crosstabulation of MAIN Openness with MAIN Style.

MAIN Style		MAIN Openness					N/A <sup>b</sup>
		Closed (n = 2)	Don't Ask, Don't Tell (n = 2)	Open (n = 29) <sup>c</sup>	Restricted (n = 3)	Subject to Veto (n = 4)	
Identity (n = 45)	<i>n</i>						(n = 5)
<b>MONO STYLES</b>							
monoamorous <sup>a</sup>	0	--	--	--	--	--	--
Monogamous	3	0	2 **	1	0	0	0
<u>Any Mono Style</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2 **</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>OPEN STYLES</b>							
Non-Monogamous	7	0	0	2 *	1	0	4 ***
Poly	15	0	0	11	0	4 **	0
Polyamorous	18	0	0	15 *	2	0	1
<u>Any Open Style</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>0 **</u>	<u>0 **</u>	<u>28 *</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
<b>BONDED STYLES</b>							
Polyfidelitous	2	2 ***	0	0	0	0	0
polygamous <sup>a</sup>	0	--	--	--	--	--	--
<u>Any Bonded Style</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2 ***</u>	<u>0 **</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>ANY STYLE</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>

Notes: Boxes indicate cells where every person with a MAIN openness had the same MAIN style (or vice versa).

The doubled box indicates that every person with that MAIN openness had that MAIN style and everyone with that MAIN style had that MAIN openness.

Statistically significant combinations are shown with asterisks:

\* P <= .05 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test;

\*\* P <= .01 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test;

\*\*\* P <= .001 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test.

Significant combinations with a value = 0 are negatively correlated.

Significant combinations with a value > 0 are positively correlated *except as noted below*.

**MAIN "Non-Monogamous" and MAIN "Open" identities are negatively correlated.**

<sup>a</sup> These terms are lower case because they were never selected as a MAIN identity.

<sup>b</sup> These respondents do not identify with any of these terms.

<sup>c</sup> One of these respondents did not rank relationship styles.

**Table 11.***Crosstabulation of MAIN Priority with MAIN Style.*

MAIN Style		MAIN Priority					
		Hierarchical (n = 1)	Non- Hierarchical (n = 16)	Primary / Secondary (n = 14)	relationship anarchy <sup>a</sup> (n = 0)	Solo Poly (n = 2)	N/A <sup>b</sup> (n = 12) <sup>c</sup>
Identity (n = 45)	<i>n</i>						
<b>MONO STYLES</b>							
monoamorous <sup>a</sup>	0	--	--	--	--	--	--
Monogamous	3	0	0	1	--	1	1
<u>Any Mono Style</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	--	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
<b>OPEN STYLES</b>							
Non-Monogamous	7	1	1	3	--	1	1
Poly	15	0	4	7	--	0	4
Polyamorous	18	0	10 <sup>*</sup>	3	--	0	5
<u>Any Open Style</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>13</u>	--	<u>1</u>	<u>10</u>
<b>BONDED STYLES</b>							
Polyfidelitous	2	0	1	0	--	0	1
polygamous <sup>a</sup>	0	--	--	--	--	--	--
<u>Any Bonded Style</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	--	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>ANY STYLE</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>14</u>	--	<u>2</u>	<u>12</u>

Notes: Boxes indicate cells where every person with a MAIN priority had the same MAIN style (or vice versa).

Statistically significant combinations are shown with asterisks:

\* P <= .05 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test;

\*\* P <= .01 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test;

\*\*\* P <= .001 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test.

Significant combinations with a value = 0 are negatively correlated.

Significant combinations with a value > 0 are positively correlated.

<sup>a</sup> These terms are lower case because they were never selected as a MAIN identity.

<sup>b</sup> These respondents do not identify with any of these terms.

<sup>c</sup> One of these respondents did not rank relationship styles.

**Table 12.**  
*Crosstabulation of MAIN Priority with MAIN Openness.*

MAIN Openness		MAIN Priority					N/A <sup>b</sup>
		Hierarchical	Non-Hierarchical	Primary / Secondary	relationship anarchy <sup>a</sup>	Solo Poly	
Identity (n = 46)	n	(n = 1)	(n = 16)	(n = 14)	(n = 0)	(n = 2)	(n = 13)
Closed	2	0	1	0	--	0	1
Don't Ask, Don't Tell	2	0	0	1	--	1	0
Open	30	1	13	7	--	0	9
Restricted	3	0	1	0	--	1	1
Subject to Veto	4	0	0	4 **	--	0	0
<u>Any Openness</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>12</u>	--	<u>2</u>	<u>11</u>
N/A <sup>b</sup>	5	0	1	2	--	0	2

Notes: Boxes indicate cells where every person with a MAIN priority had the same MAIN openness (or vice versa).

Statistically significant combinations are shown with asterisks:

\* P <= .05 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test;

\*\* P <= .01 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test;

\*\*\* P <= .001 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test.

Significant combinations with a value = 0 are negatively correlated.

Significant combinations with a value > 0 are positively correlated.

<sup>a</sup> These terms are lower case because they were never selected as a MAIN identity.

<sup>b</sup> These respondents do not not identify with any of these terms.

**Table 13.**  
Crosstabulation of other style with MAIN Style.

MAIN Style		other style						
		mono styles (n = 8)		open styles (n = 44)			bonded styles (n = 15)	
		monoamorous	monogamous	non-monogamous	poly	polyamorous	polyfidelitous	polygamous
Identity (n = 45)	n	(n = 1)	(n = 6)	(n = 31)	(n = 28)	(n = 24)	(n = 12)	(n = 7)
<b>MONO STYLES</b>								
monoamorous <sup>a</sup>	0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Monogamous	3	1	0	0 *	2	2	1	0
<u>Any Mono Style</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>OPEN STYLES</b>								
Non-Monogamous	7	0	2	--	7 *	6	1	0
Poly	15	0	2	13	--	14 ***	5	1
Polyamorous	18	0	2	17 *	17 ***	--	5	5
<u>Any Open Style</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>30</u> *	<u>24</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>6</u>
<b>BONDED STYLES</b>								
Polyfidelitous	2	0	1	1	2	2	--	1
polygamous <sup>a</sup>	0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<u>Any Bonded Style</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>

Notes: Boxes indicate cells where every person with a MAIN style had the same other style (or vice versa).

Statistically significant combinations are shown with asterisks (see below).

\* P <= .05 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test;

\*\* P <= .01 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test;

\*\*\* P <= .001 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test.

Significant combinations with a value = 0 are negatively correlated.

Significant combinations with a value > 0 are positively correlated.

<sup>a</sup> These terms are lower case because they were never selected as a MAIN identity.



**Table 14.**  
*Crosstabulation of other openness with MAIN Openness.*

MAIN Openness		other openness					
		closed	Don't Ask, Don't Tell <sup>a</sup>	open	restricted	subject to veto	none <sup>c</sup>
Identity (n = 46)	n	(n = 2)	(n = 0)	(n = 4)	(n = 6)	(n = 11)	(n = 23)
Closed	2	--	--	0	0	1	1
Don't Ask, Don't Tell	2	0	--	0	1	2	0
Open	30	1	--	--	3	6	20 *
Restricted	3	1	--	1	--	2	1
Subject to Veto	4	0	--	3	2	--	1
<u>Any Openness</u>	<u>41</u>						
N/A <sup>b</sup>	5						

Notes: Boxes indicate cells where every person with a MAIN openness had the same other style (or vice versa).

Statistically significant combinations are shown with asterisks:

\* P <= .05 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test;

\*\* P <= .01 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test;

\*\*\* P <= .001 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test.

Significant combinations with a value = 0 are negatively correlated.

Significant combinations with a value > 0 are positively correlated.

<sup>a</sup> This term is capitalized because it was ONLY selected as a MAIN identity.

<sup>b</sup> These respondents do not not identify with any of these terms.

<sup>c</sup> These respondents only indicated that one relationship openness terms applied to them.

**Table 15.**  
*Crosstabulation of other priority with MAIN Priority.*

MAIN Priority		other priority					
		hierarchical	non-hierarchical	primary / secondary	relationship anarchy	solo poly	none <sup>c</sup>
Identity (n = 46)	n	(n = 7)	(n = 3)	(n = 9)	(n = 6)	(n = 3)	(n = 12)
Hierarchical	1	--	0	1	0	0	0
Non-Hierarchical	16	2	--	6	5	1	8
Primary / Secondary	14	5	3	--	1	2	4
relationship anarchy <sup>a</sup>	0	--	--	--	--	--	--
Solo Poly	2	0	0	2	0	--	0
<u>Any Priority</u>	<u>33</u>						
	N/A <sup>b</sup>	13					

Notes: Boxes indicate cells where every person with a MAIN priority had the same other openness (or vice versa).

Statistically significant combinations are shown with asterisks:

\* P <= .05 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test;

\*\* P <= .01 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test;

\*\*\* P <= .001 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test.

Significant combinations with a value = 0 are negatively correlated.

Significant combinations with a value > 0 are positively correlated.

<sup>a</sup> This term is lower case because it was never selected as a MAIN identity.

<sup>b</sup> These respondents do not not identify with any of these terms.

<sup>c</sup> These respondents only indicated that one relationship priority term applied to them.

**Table 16.***Crosstabulation of Any Openness with Any Style.*

Style	<i>n</i>	Openness					<i>N/A</i> <sup>b</sup>
		Closed ( <i>n</i> = 4)	Don't Ask, Don't Tell ( <i>n</i> = 2)	Open ( <i>n</i> = 34) <sup>c</sup>	Restricted ( <i>n</i> = 9)	Subject to Veto ( <i>n</i> = 15)	
<b>Mono Styles</b>							
monoamorous <sup>a</sup>	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Monogamous	9	3 *	2 *	5	5 *	5	1
<u>Any Mono Style</u>	10	3 *	2	5	5 *	5	1
<b>Open Styles</b>							
Non-Monogamous	38	2	0 *	30	7	13	5
Poly	43	3	2	31	8	15	5
Polyamorous	42	3	2	31	9	15	4
<u>Any Open Style</u>	44	3	2	32	9	15	5
<b>Bonded Styles</b>							
Polyfidelitous	14	3	1	10	4	9 **	0
polygamous <sup>a</sup>	7	1	0	6	2	3	0
<u>Any Bonded Style</u>	16	3	1	12	5	9 *	0
<u>Any Style</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>5</u>

Notes: Boxes indicate cells where every person with a MAIN openness had the same other style (or vice versa).

Statistically significant combinations are shown with asterisks:

\*  $P \leq .05$  per Fischer's 1-Sided Test;

\*\*  $P \leq .01$  per Fischer's 1-Sided Test;

\*\*\*  $P \leq .001$  per Fischer's 1-Sided Test.

Significant combinations with a value = 0 are negatively correlated.

Significant combinations with a value > 0 are positively correlated.

<sup>a</sup> These terms are lower case because they were never selected as a MAIN identity.

<sup>b</sup> These respondents do not identify with any of these terms.

<sup>c</sup> One of these respondents did not rank relationship styles.

**Table 17.**

Crosstabulation of Any Priority with Any Style.

Style	<i>n</i>	Priority					<i>N/A</i> <sup>b</sup>	<i>(n = 12)</i> <sup>c</sup>
		Hierarchical <i>(n = 8)</i>	Non- Hierarchical <i>(n = 19)</i>	Primary / Secondary <i>(n = 23)</i>	relationship anarchy <sup>a</sup> <i>(n = 6)</i>	Solo Poly <i>(n = 5)</i>		
<b>Mono Styles</b>								
monoamorous <sup>a</sup>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Monogamous	9	2	3	7	1	3	3	3
<u>Any Mono Style</u>	10	2	3	7	1	3	3	3
<b>Open Styles</b>								
Non-Monogamous	38	7	16	20	6	2 *	9	9
Poly	43	8	18	22	5	5	11	11
Polyamorous	42	7	18	22	5	5	11	11
<u>Any Open Style</u>	44	8	19	23	6	5	11	11
<b>Bonded Styles</b>								
Polyfidelitous	14	1	8	6	2	2	3	3
polygamous <sup>a</sup>	7	0	4	2	2	0	3	3
<u>Any Bonded Style</u>	16	1	9	7	3	2	4	4
<u>Any Style</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>12</u>	

Notes: Boxes indicate cells where every person with a MAIN priority had the same MAIN style (or vice versa).

Statistically significant combinations are shown with asterisks:

\*  $P \leq .05$  per Fischer's 1-Sided Test;

\*\*  $P \leq .01$  per Fischer's 1-Sided Test;

\*\*\*  $P \leq .001$  per Fischer's 1-Sided Test.

Significant combinations with a value = 0 are negatively correlated.

Significant combinations with a value > 0 are positively correlated **except as noted below**.

**“Solo Poly” and “Non-Monogamous” identities are negatively correlated.**

<sup>a</sup> These terms are lower case because they were never selected as a MAIN identity.

<sup>b</sup> These respondents do not not identify with any of these terms.

<sup>c</sup> One of these respondents did not rank Relationship Styles.

**Table 18.**  
*Crosstabulation of Any Priority with Any Openness.*

Openness		Priority					N/A <sup>b</sup>
		Hierarchical	Non-Hierarchical	Primary / Secondary	relationship anarchy <sup>a</sup>	Solo Poly	
Identity (n = 46)	n	(n = 8)	(n = 19)	(n = 23)	(n = 6)	(n = 5)	(n = 13)
Closed	4	0	1	1	0	1	2
Don't Ask, Don't Tell	2	0	1	2	0	2 **	0
Open	34	7	16	17	6	2	9
Restricted	9	2	3	6	1	2	2
Subject to Veto	15	2	4	10	1	4 *	3
<u>Any Openness</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>11</u>
N/A <sup>b</sup>	5	1	1	2	0	0	2

Notes: Boxes indicate cells where every person with a MAIN priority had the same MAIN openness (or vice versa).

Statistically significant combinations are shown with asterisks:

\* P <= .05 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test;

\*\* P <= .01 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test;

\*\*\* P <= .001 per Fischer's 1-Sided Test.

Significant combinations with a value = 0 are negatively correlated.

Significant combinations with a value > 0 are positively correlated.

<sup>a</sup> This term is lower case because it was never selected as a MAIN identity.

<sup>b</sup> These respondents do not not identify with any of these terms.

**Table 19.**  
 “Poly” vs. “Polyamorous” Identity by Era.

	Level of Identification by alt.polycon Era											
	<i>n</i>		<i>Era 1</i>		<i>Era 2</i>		<i>Era 3</i>		<i>Era 4</i>		<i>Era 5</i>	
			<b>1996</b>		<b>1997 - 1999</b>		<b>2000 - 2002</b>		<b>2003 - 2005</b>		<b>2006 - 2008</b>	
			alt.polycon		alt.polycon		alt.polycon		alt.polycon		alt.polycon	
				2 - 5		6 - 9		10 - 13		14 - 17		
		<i>(n = 7)</i>		<i>(n = 22)</i>		<i>(n = 31)</i>		<i>(n = 31)</i>		<i>(n = 24)</i>		
Either Identity by Era ( <i>n</i> = 44)	MAIN	Any	MAIN	Any	MAIN	Any	MAIN	Any	MAIN	Any	MAIN	Any
<b>All Attendees</b>												
Poly	15	43	6	6	8	21	8	29	8	28	6	22
Polyamorous	18	42	1	7	7	22	15	29	14	28	10	21
Both		41		6		22		29		28		21
More Poly		19		6		8		15		14		10
More Polyamorous		22		0		14		14		14		11
<b>First Era Attended</b>												
Poly	15	43	6	6	2	15	4	13	3	8	0	1
Polyamorous	18	42	1	7	6	15	8	12	3	7	0	1
Both		41		6		15		12		7		1
More Poly		19		6		8		8		3		1
More Polyamorous		22		0		7		4		4		0
<b>Last Era Attended</b>												
Poly	15	43			3	4	3	7	3	10	6	22
Polyamorous	18	42			0	4	2	6	6	11	10	21
Both		41				4		6		10		21
More Poly		19				3		4		4	10	
More Polyamorous		22				1		2		6	11	

**Table 20.***Statistical Results for "Poly" vs. "Polyamorous" Identity by Era.*

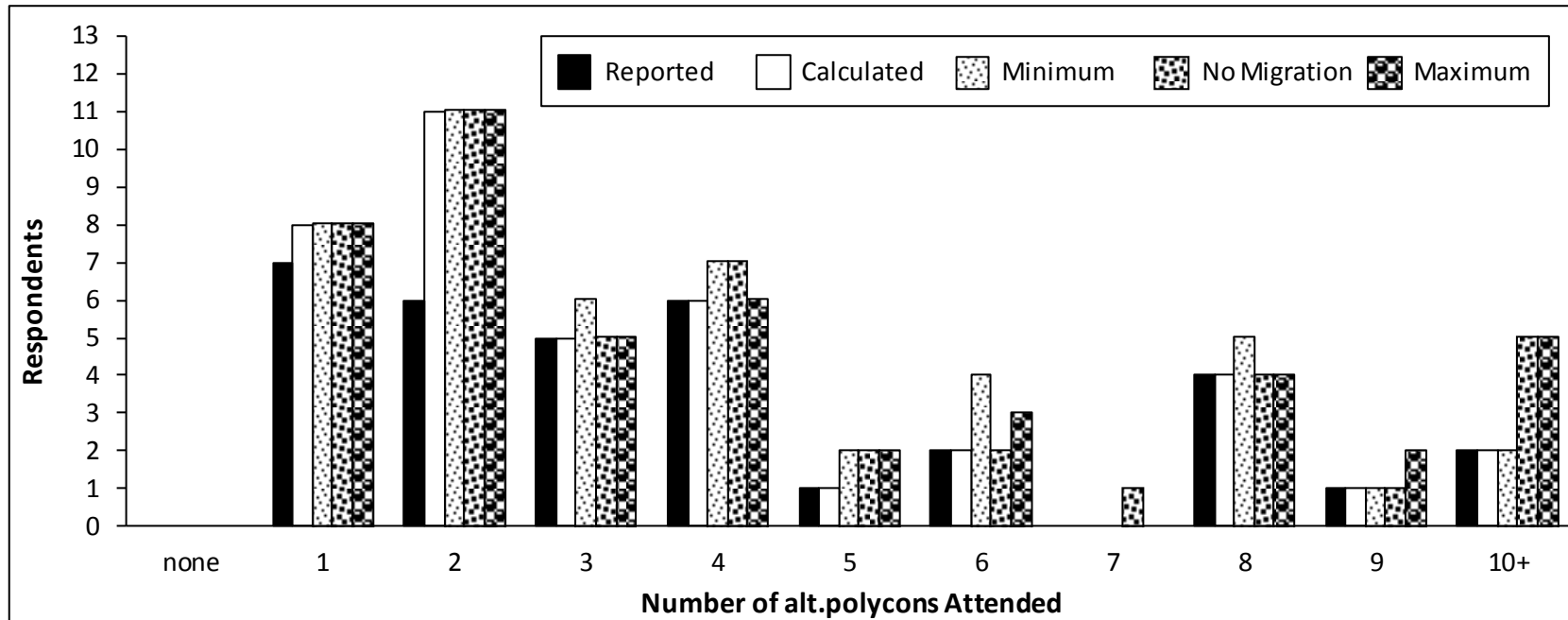
Identities and Era Attended	Statistical Results				
	Measure	Value	Asymptotic Standard Error <sup>a</sup>	Approximate T <sup>b</sup>	Approximate Significance (P)
<b>Both Identities</b> ( <i>n</i> = 41)					
First Era Attended	Kendall's Tau C	-0.31	0.164	-1.86	0.064
	Spearman's Rho	-0.28	0.148	-1.79	0.081 <sup>c</sup>
Last Era Attended	Kendall's Tau C	-0.15	0.164	-0.915	0.36
	Spearman's Rho	-0.14	0.153	-0.89	0.379 <sup>c</sup>
<b>Either Identity</b> ( <i>n</i> = 44)					
First Era Attended	Kendall's Tau C	-0.19	0.164	-1.16	0.247
	Spearman's Rho	-0.17	0.148	-1.13	0.266 <sup>c</sup>
Last Era Attended	Kendall's Tau C	-0.14	0.159	-0.87	0.384
	Spearman's Rho	-0.13	0.148	-0.848	0.401 <sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Not assuming the null hypothesis

<sup>b</sup> Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

<sup>c</sup> Based on normal approximation.

**Figure 1.** alt.polycons Attended.



*Figure 1.* Number of alt.polycons attended. To aid in visualization, the vertical axis includes just over a quarter of the respondents. This figure shows all of the responses available on the underlying survey question.

The Number of alt.polycons Attended was calculated in a number of different ways, as described below

“Reported” shows the responses to Question 1 ( $n = 34$ ).

“Calculated” shows “Reported” attendance as well as the calculated attendance using scalar responses to Question 2 ( $n = 40$ ).

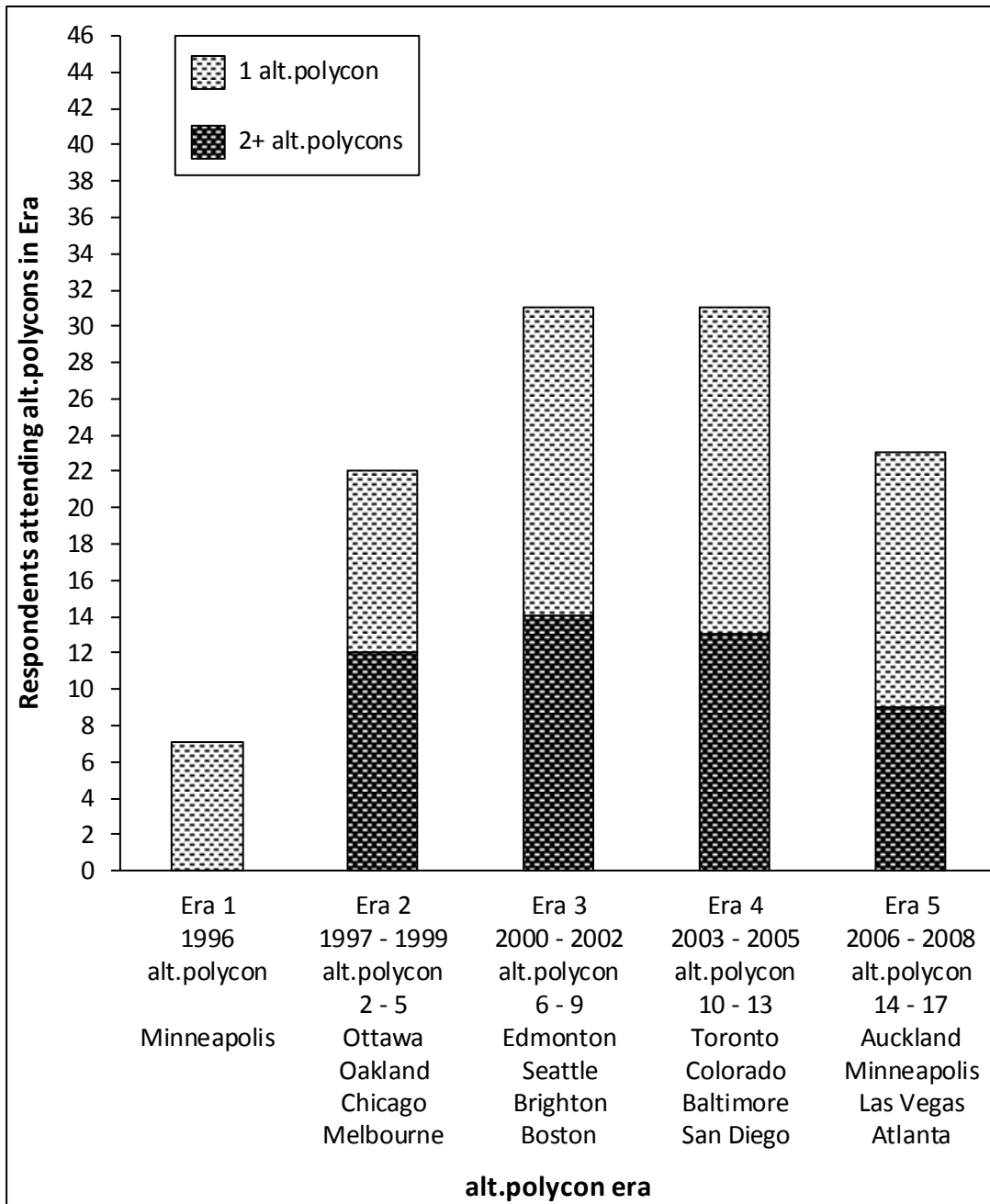
“Minimum” shows “Calculated” attendance as well as the minimum attendance using ordinal responses to Question 2 ( $n = 46$ ).

“No Migration” shows “Calculated” attendance as well as the maximum attendance using ordinal responses to Question 2 ( $n = 46$ ) *assuming no respondents moved from North America and back to attend all alt.polycons in any era without crossing an ocean.*

“Maximum” shows “Calculated” attendance from Question 1 as well as the maximum attendance based on Question 2 ( $n = 46$ ) *regardless of any respondent moves from North America and back.*

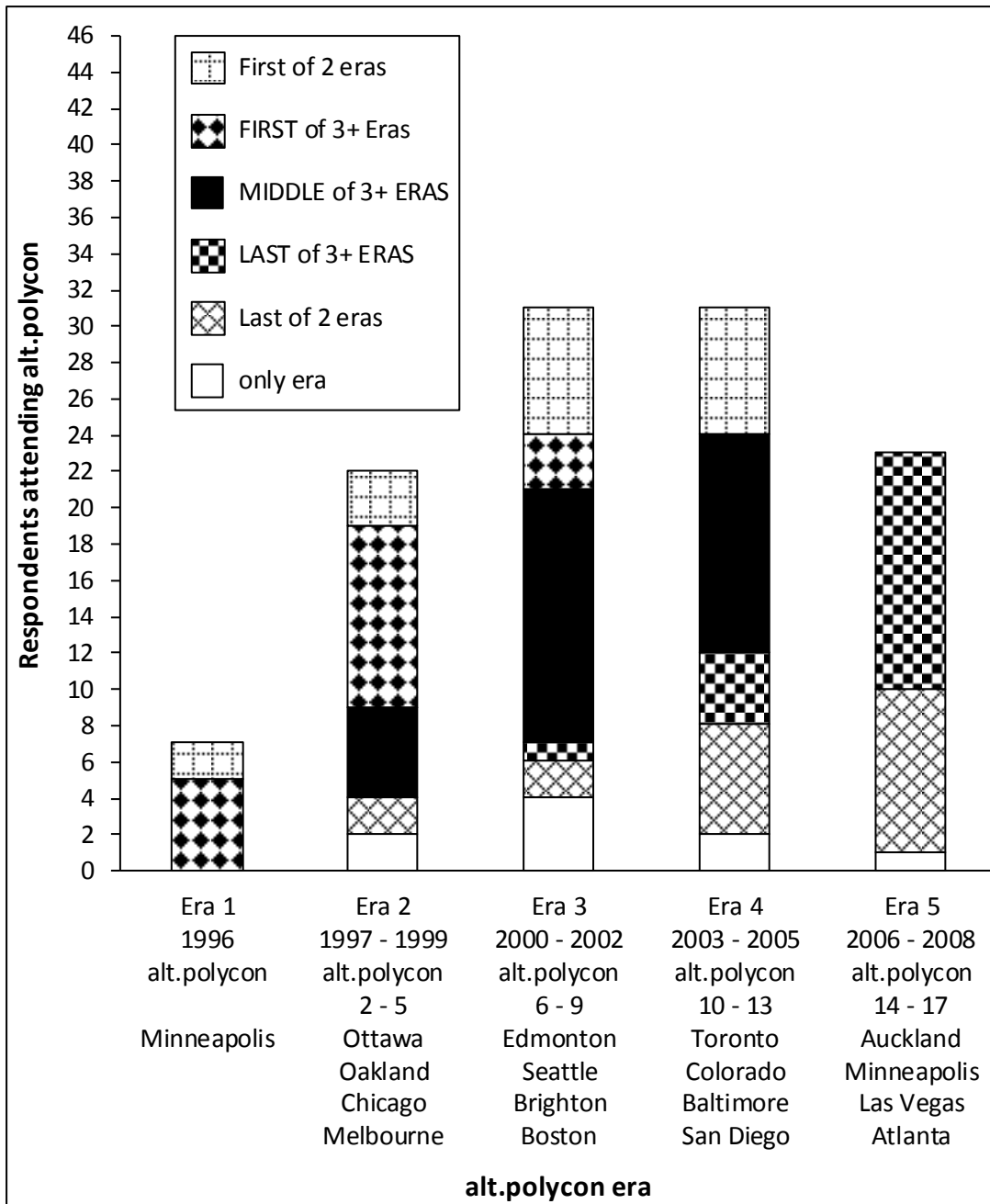


**Figure 2.** alt.polycons Attended Per Era.



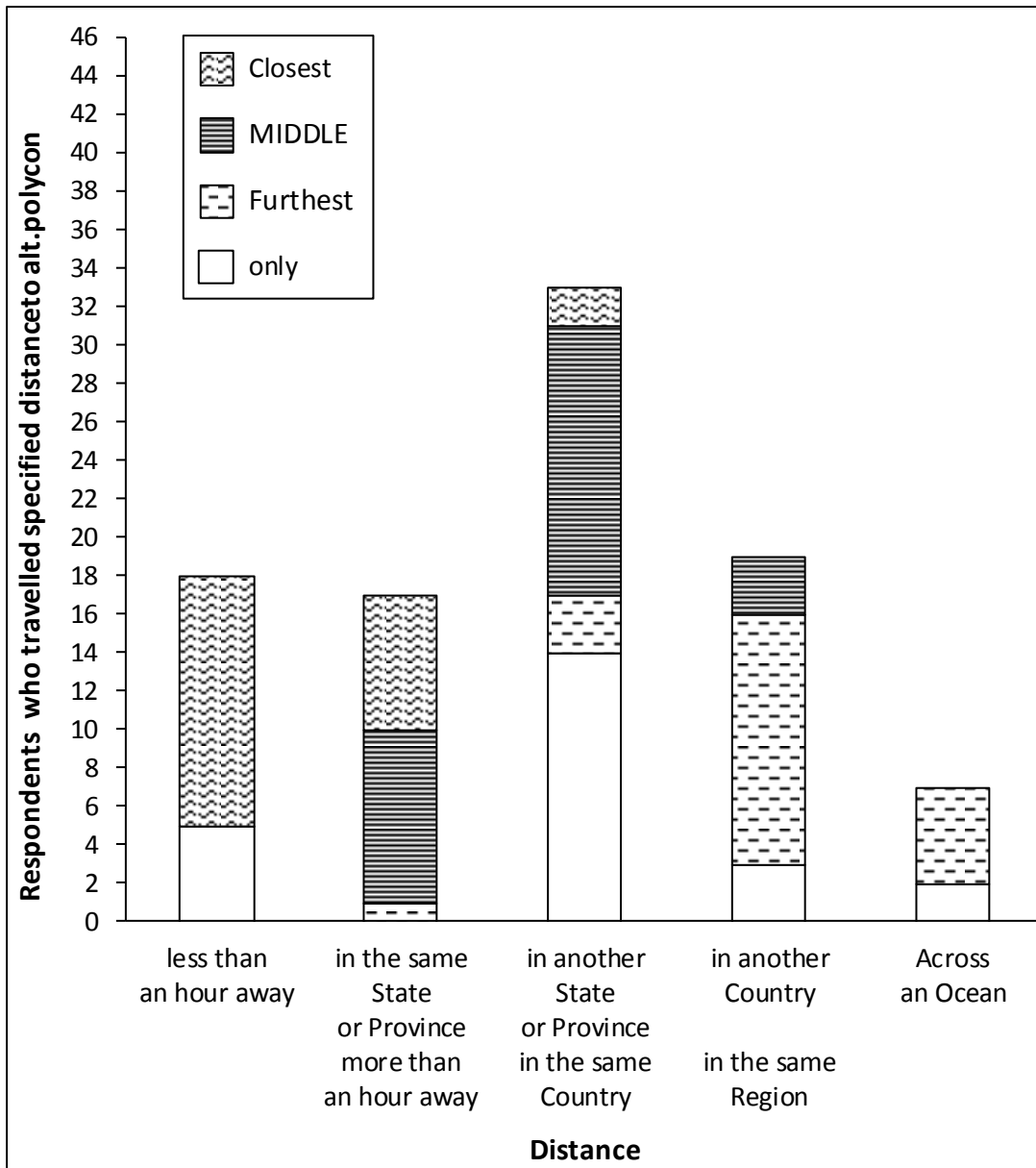
*Figure 2.* alt.polycon Attendance by Era. This chart reports all of the possible survey responses except for “none.” To aid in visualization, the vertical axis includes all respondents. The horizontal axis includes all possible Survey responses.

**Figure 3.** alt.polycons Attended in Multiple Eras.



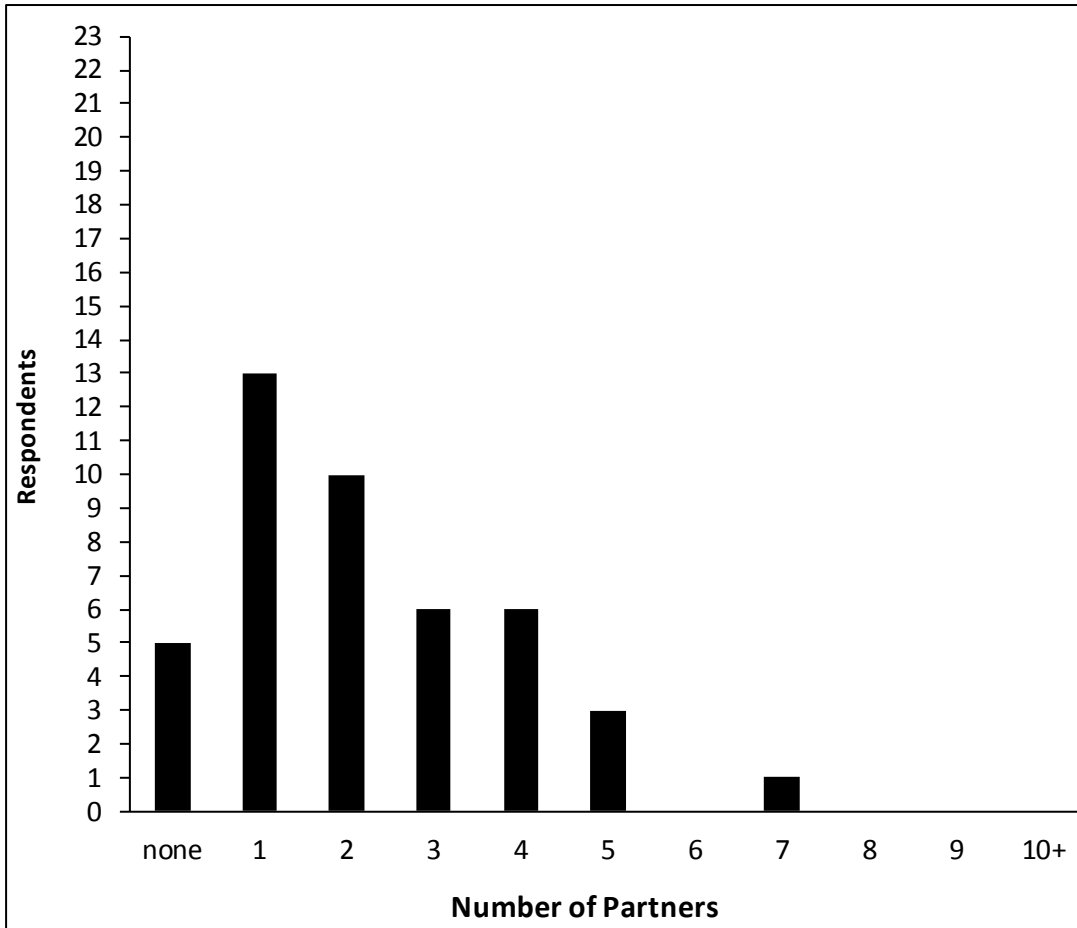
*Figure 3.* alt.polycon Attendance by Era. This chart also distinguishes between respondents who attended one Era, two Eras, or three or more Eras as an admittedly imprecise approximation of the respondents' commitment to attend alt.polycon. respondents who attended 3 or more Eras are centered on the graph and surrounded by respondents who attended 2 or more Eras. To aid in visualization, the vertical axis includes all respondents. The horizontal axis includes all possible Survey responses.

**Figure 4.** alt.polycon Travel Distances.



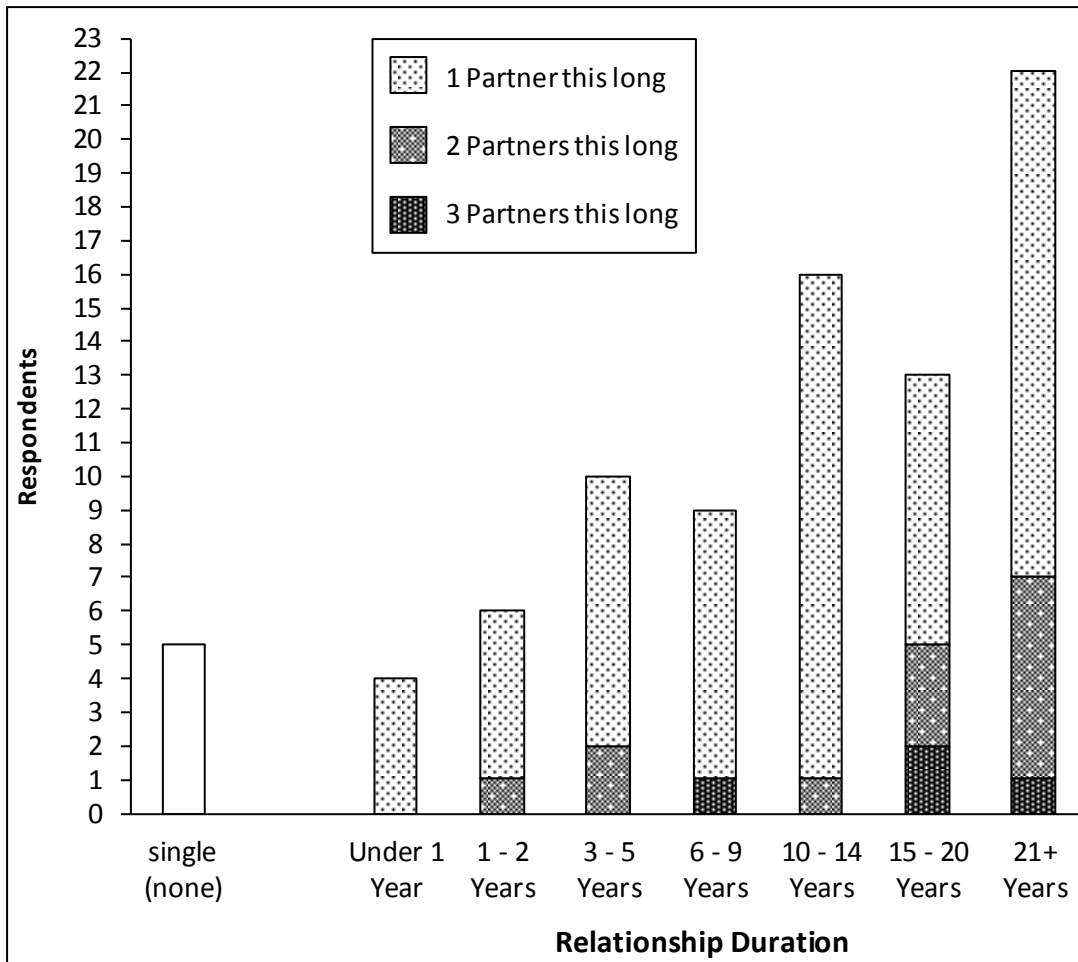
*Figure 4.* alt.polycon Attendance per Distance Travelled. This chart also distinguishes between attendees who only travelled one distance from those who travelled two distances and those who attended alt.polycons both closer and further away as an admittedly imprecise approximation of the respondents' commitment to attend alt.polycon. To aid in visualization, the vertical axis includes all respondents. The horizontal axis includes all of the possible survey responses.

**Figure 5.** Partnerships per Respondent.



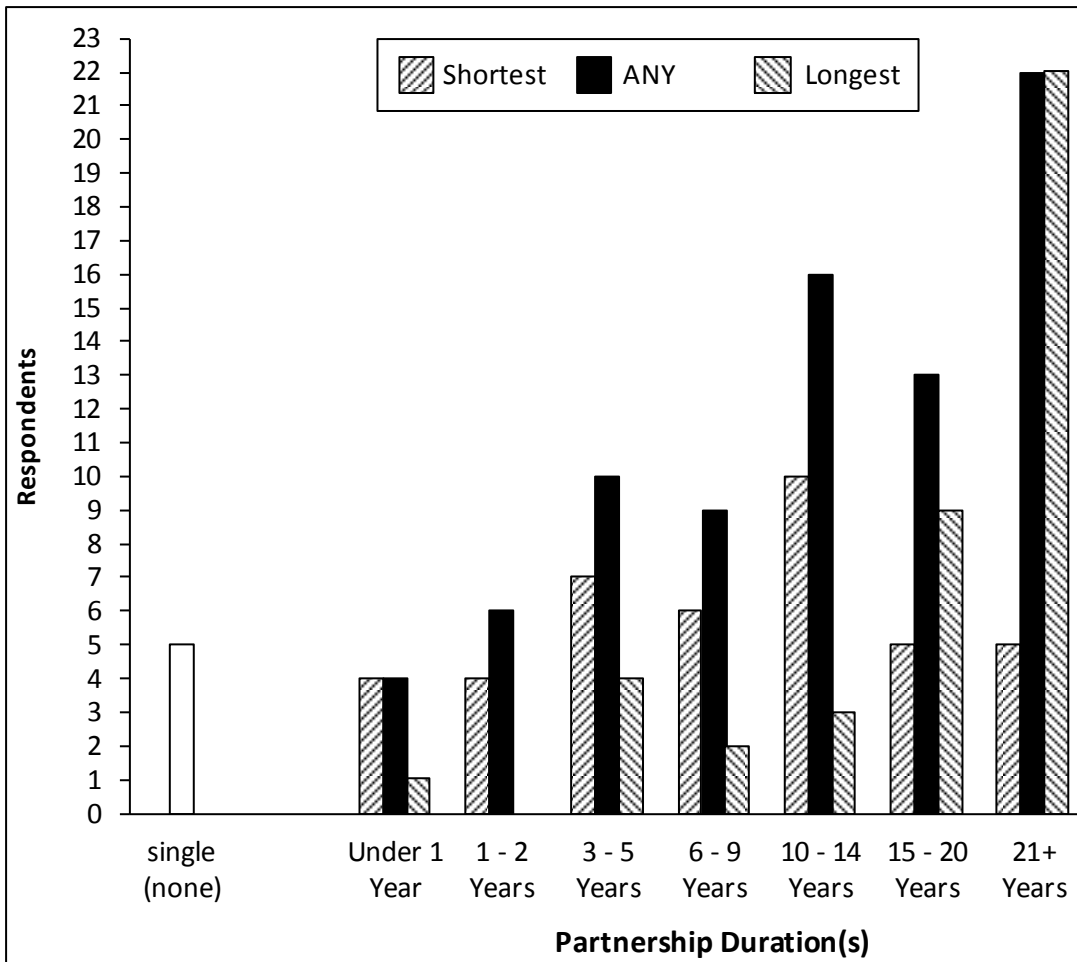
*Figure 5.* Number of Partners per Respondent. Respondents were invited to define “partner” however they wished. This chart reports all possible survey responses. To aid in visualization, the vertical scale extends to half of the respondents. The horizontal scale shows all of the possible survey responses.

**Figure 6.** Relationship Durations.

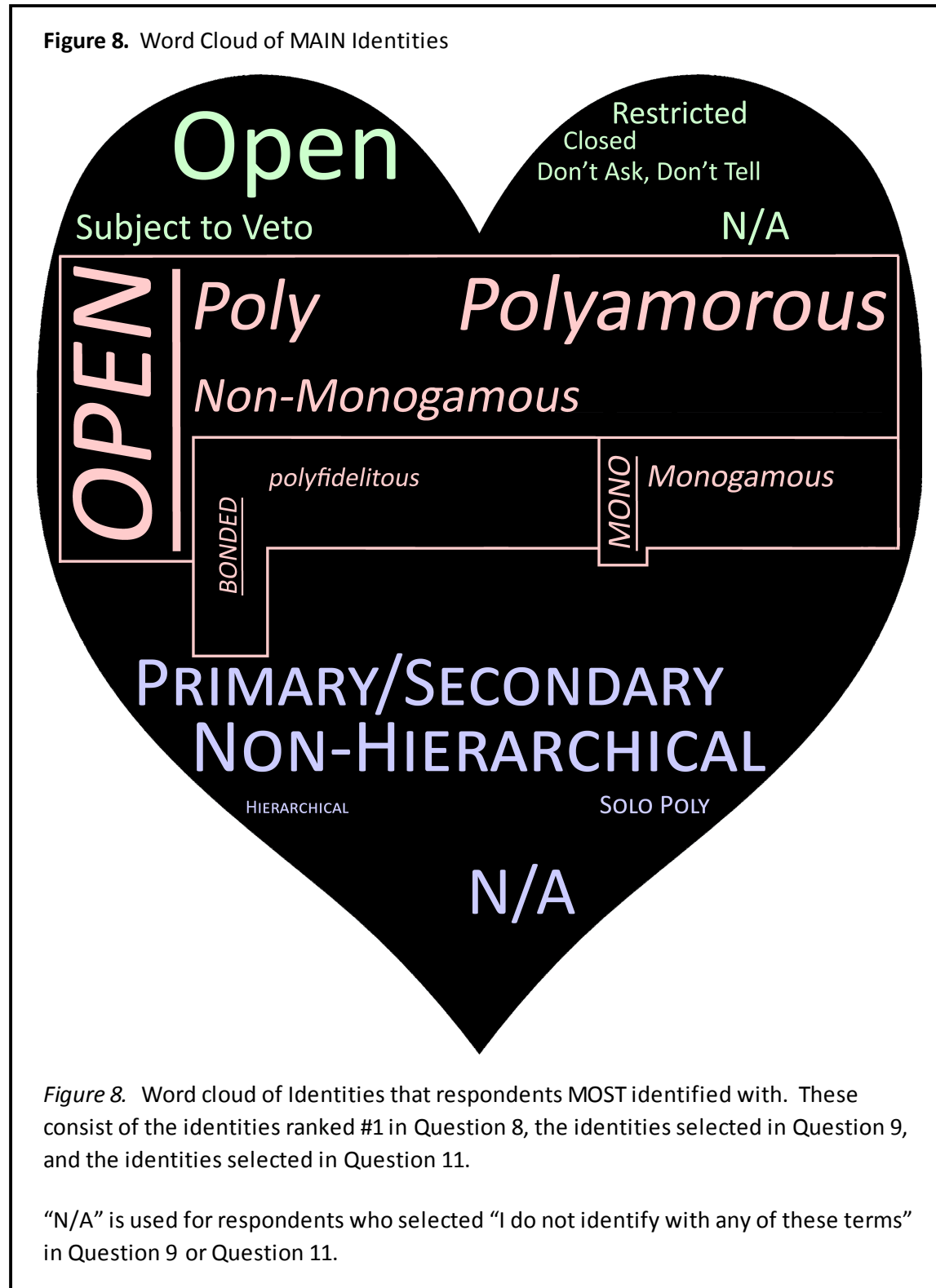


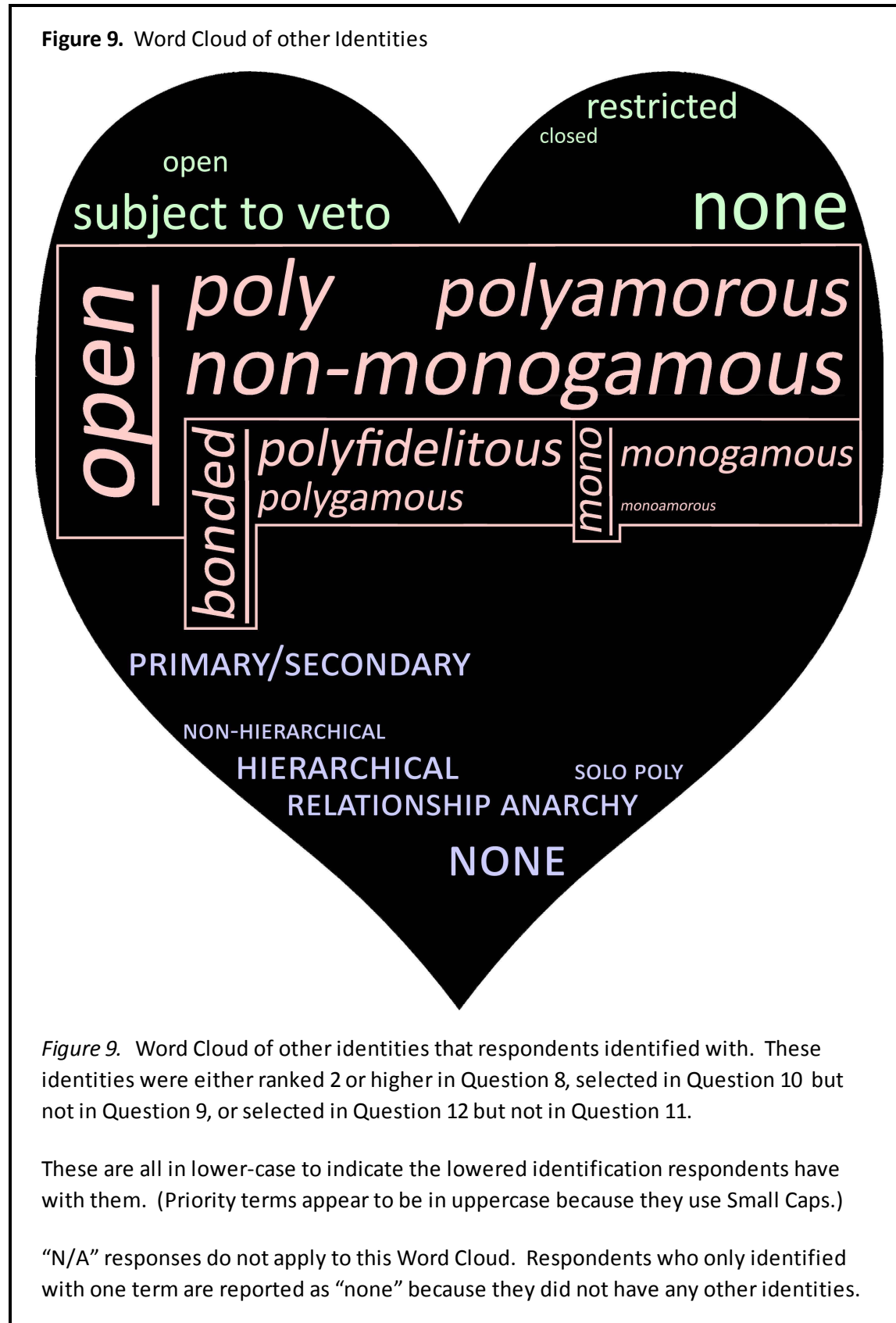
*Figure 6.* Length of Respondent relationships. To aid in visualization, the vertical axis includes half of the respondents. The horizontal axis shows the number of respondents who selected “none” as the number of their partners in addition to all of the possible survey responses.

**Figure 7.** Partnerships per Relative Duration.



*Figure 7.* Length of Resporndent relationships. The horizontal axis shows the number of respondents who selected “none” as the number of their partners in addition to all of the possible survey responses to the question about relationship durations. To aid in visualization, the vertical axis includes half of the respondents.







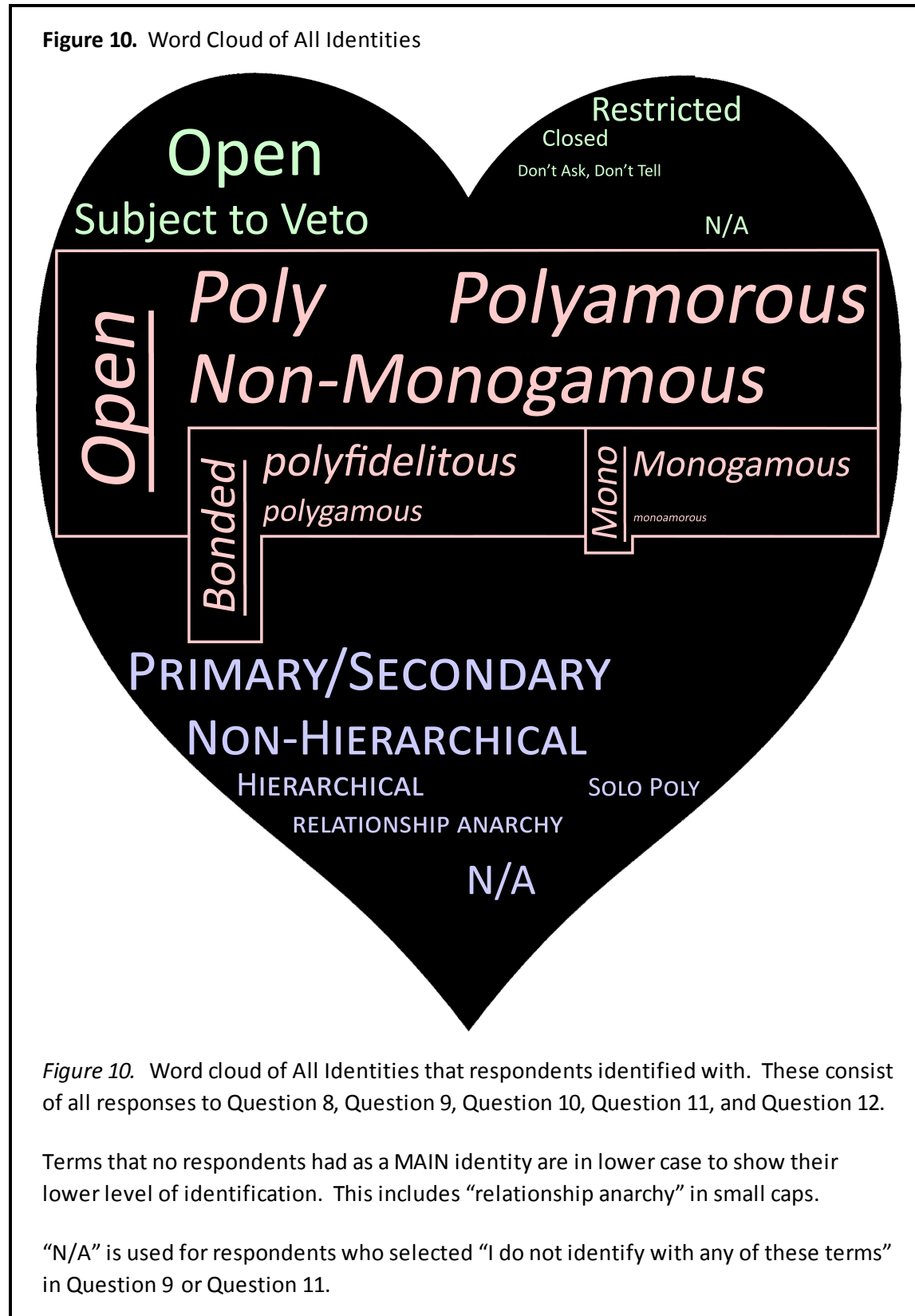


Figure 10. Word cloud of All Identities that respondents identified with. These consist of all responses to Question 8, Question 9, Question 10, Question 11, and Question 12.

Terms that no respondents had as a MAIN identity are in lower case to show their lower level of identification. This includes “relationship anarchy” in small caps.

“N/A” is used for respondents who selected “I do not identify with any of these terms” in Question 9 or Question 11.

## **Appendix A:**

### **Email Details**

On April 21, 102 emails were sent to an initial convenience sample of 99 people, 80 of whom attended alt.polycon 7 (which was Chaired by the Author) and 22 of whom were known by the Author to have attended a different alt.polycon. In response, 53 emails belonging to 53 people came back as invalid. Subsequent emails were sent on April 21 to 13 additional email addresses, 9 of which were for people in the initial convenience sample and 4 of which were not. In response, 5 emails came back as invalid. In all, 115 emails were sent out on April 21 to 103 people and 58 emails belonging to 55 people came back as invalid, leaving 57 presumably valid email addresses belonging to 55 people.

The Author does not use Facebook regularly, but an individual who recently connected with the Author on that platform was also contacted via Facebook Messenger on April 21, but they replied via email that they tried to keep all indication of their non-monogamous activities off of that platform, so no further Facebook contacts were attempted.

Two individuals from the original mailing reported that the original email was marked as spam. Further investigation showed that the “spam” markings were due to three factors: the emails did not have a recipient address, the emails had different “send” and “reply-to” email addresses, and the emails had a “reply-to” email address that is from a free-net. The Author originally used Yahoo as a mail reader service for a different email address hosted by a free-net, so these deficiencies were addressed by specifying that the Yahoo email address should be used for email replies and by sending out individual emails for the duration of the project.

No other emails were received and there was a concern about spam filtration, so individual “resent/reminder” emails were sent on April 27 to presumably valid email addresses

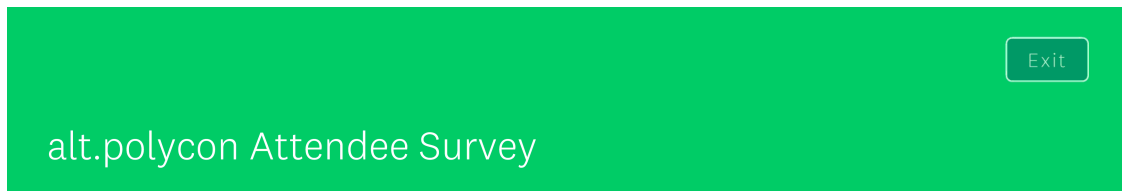
contacted on April 21. In response, 1 email came back as invalid, presumably because the spam filtration meant that the server wouldn't reply.

Individual emails were also sent on April 27 to a supplemental convenience sample of 37 emails belonging to 37 individuals, consisting 30 people who posted that they attended an alt.polycon after 2002, 6 people in the initial sample where even more recent email addresses could be located, and the person contacted via Facebook Messenger. In response to this additional activity, 14 of the emails from Google Groups came back as invalid.

In total, contacts were attempted with 152 email addresses used by 133 individuals. 47% of these emails (72/152) belonging to 52% of the individuals (69/133) came back as invalid, leaving a remainder of 53% of the email addresses (80/152) belonging to 56% of the individuals (75/133) that were presumably valid. (The number of individuals will not sum to 100% because some individuals had more than 2 email addresses.) It should be noted that this is not a representative sample of emails in general or of emails from the newsgroup, and that the age of the emails ranged from over 20 years to a few weeks. Therefore, no conclusions should be drawn about the email response rate, as the percentage of emails that were valid is only included to describe the process of contacting potential survey respondents.

A total of 31 responses were received from the first email and 15 more responses were received when the survey closed on April 30, for a total of 46 surveys. This represents an overall individual response rate of 61% (46/75) of the individuals with at least one valid email addresses. This would seem to be quite a bit higher than might be expected, but the actual rate is unknown because the email asked people to pass the survey along to other alt.polycon attendees, and two people that the Author has been romantically involved with each reported that they forwarded the survey to others who completed it.

**Appendix B:**  
**Informed Consent Form**



## Informed Consent Form

### **About this survey.**

This survey is for people who were at an alt.polycon. If you were never at one, please do not take the survey.

This survey was made by Ian K. Hagemann, who was the Fan Fund winner from alt.polycon one and Chaired alt.polycon 7 in Seattle. He was also at most of the other alt.polycons. He made this survey as part of his work to earn a Master's in Social Work degree. He hopes to learn more about those of us who were at an alt.polycon, how we relate to our partners, and how we see ourselves.

The survey is anonymous. All surveys will be held in confidence. Survey responses will only be used to write a school paper. All survey data will be deleted by the end of June.

The final paper will be posted to alt.polyamory in June of 2018 so that people who were at an alt.polycon can learn more about ourselves.

**Taking the survey.**

Taking the survey is voluntary. You can skip any question or any part of any question. If you do not want to record your answers while taking the survey, click the "Exit" button at the top of the page.

If you take the survey, it has twelve (12) questions and it should take less than 10 minutes to finish. All surveys must be completed on or before April 30.

**Thanks in advance.**

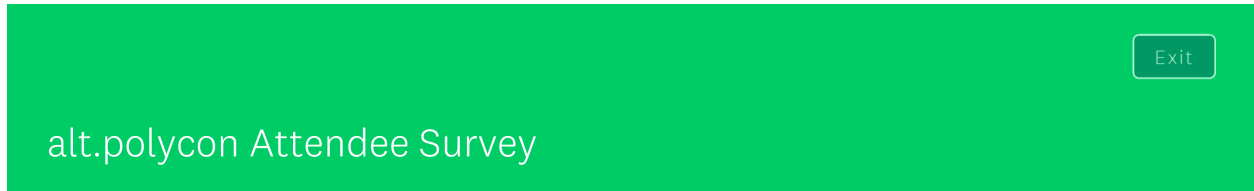
Ian also DJ-ed alt.polycon 11 (which is where his email address comes from). He created a YouTube playlist of that mix for your listening pleasure to thank the community. You can [listen to the alt.polycon 11 dance mix online](#) regardless of whether you take the survey or not.

**Questions?**

If you have any questions about this survey, [email Ian at apc11dj@yahoo.com](mailto:apc11dj@yahoo.com).

I understand and want to take the Survey.

**Appendix C:**  
**Survey**



1. How many alt.polycons did you attend?

- none
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10+

2. How many alt.polycons did you attend during each period?

	1996	1997-1999	2000-2002	2003-2005	2006-2008
alt.polycon	one	2 to 5	6 to 9	10 to 13	14 to 17
Minneapolis		Ottawa Oakland Chicago Melbourne	Edmonton Seattle Brighton Boston	Toronto Colorado Baltimore San Diego	Auckland Minneapolis Las Vegas Atlanta
alt.polycon(s) this period	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	none 1	none 1 2+	none 1 2+	none 1 2+	none 1 2+

3. Check each box that describes how far you traveled to any alt.polycon you attended.

	<b>Less than an hour away</b>	<b>In the same State or Province <i>more than an hour away</i></b>	<b>To another State or Province <i>in the same Country</i></b>	<b>To another Country <i>in the same Region</i></b>	<b>Across an ocean</b>
alt.polycon(s) this far away	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. How many partners do you currently have?  
(Use any definition for "partner" that you like.)

none

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10+

5. How many of your current partners do you interact with in person (i.e., face-to-face) during each time period?  
*(Count each partner only once.)*

	Daily (or more)	Weekly <i>but less than daily</i>	Monthly <i>but less than weekly</i>	Quarterly <i>but less than monthly</i>	Yearly <i>but less than quarterly</i>	Less than Yearly
Partner(s) interacted with in person	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	none	none	none	none	none	none
	1	1	1	1	1	1
	2	2	2	2	2	2
	3+	3+	3+	3+	3+	3+

6. How many of your current partners do you interact with remotely (such as via chat, email, phone, or text) during each time period?  
*(Count each partner only once.)*

	Daily (or more)	Weekly <i>but less than daily</i>	Monthly <i>but less than weekly</i>	Quarterly <i>but less than monthly</i>	Yearly <i>but less than quarterly</i>	Less than Yearly
Partner(s) interacted with remotely	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	none	none	none	none	none	none
	1	1	1	1	1	1
	2	2	2	2	2	2
	3+	3+	3+	3+	3+	3+



7. How many of your current partners have you been with for each time period?  
*(Count each partner only once.)*

	less than 12 months	1 to 2 years	3 to 5 years	6 to 9 years	10 to 14 years	15 to 20 years	21 + years
Partner(s) this long	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	none	none	none	none	none	none	none
	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	4+	4+	4+	4+	4+	4+	4+

8. Rank these terms for relationship type by how much you identify with them.  
*(If you do not identify with a term, click "N/A".)*

<input type="text"/>	monoamorous	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="text"/>	monogamous	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="text"/>	non-monogamous	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="text"/>	poly	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="text"/>	polyamorous	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="text"/>	polyfidelitous	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="text"/>	polygamous	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

9. Select the term you most identify with for relationship openness.

- closed
- don't ask, don't tell
- open
- restricted
- subject to veto
- I do not identify with any of these terms.*

10. Select each term you identify with for relationship openness.

- closed
- don't ask, don't tell
- open
- restricted
- subject to veto

11. Select the term you most identify with for relationship priority.

- hierarchical
- non-hierarchical
- primary / secondary
- relationship anarchy
- solo poly
- I do not identify with any of these terms.*

12. Select each term you identify with for relationship priority.

- hierarchical
- non-hierarchical
- primary / secondary
- relationship anarchy
- solo poly

Prev

Done

## **Appendix D:**

### **“Gut Checks” and recoding**

In order to validate the surveys, a number of specific checks were made as noted below.

#### **alt.polycon Attendance Data**

The number of alt.polycons attended was investigated according to Question 1 and Question 2. Although Question 2 allowed respondents to specify that they attended “none” of the alt.polycons in each Era, only 15 of the respondents (33%) did so while 31 respondents (67%) left one or more responses blank. After calculating the number of alt.polycons that might have been attended based on the responses to Question 2 with an assumption that these blank responses corresponded to time periods when those respondents did not attend an alt.polycon, it was found that there were no discrepancies found between the responses. Therefore, the blank responses to Question 2 were recoded as 0 alt.polycons attended during such periods.

#### **Current Relationship Status Data**

The number of relationships reported in Question 4, Question 5, Question 6, and Question 7 were also compared. 100% (46/46) of all respondents answered Question 4, but 83% (38/46) of all respondents left at least one response to Question 5 blank, 80% (37/46) of all respondents left at least one response to Question 6 blank, and 80% (37/46) of all respondents left at least one response to Question 7 blank. The calculated totals for Question 4 and Question 7 were always consistent when Question 7 blanks were considered as zeros.

The calculated totals for Question 5 were consistent with the calculated number of partners based on the answers to Question 4 and Question 7. 89% (41/46) of respondents only used scalar values, and scalar values could be calculated for an additional 7% (3/46) of respondents because they only reported one upper-bounded limit (“3+”). However, 4% (2/46)

of Question 5 responses did not provide data for all relationships so those responses were discarded.

The calculated totals for Question 6 were consistent with the calculated number of relationships based on the answers to Question 4, Question 5, and Question 7. 61% (28/46) of respondents only used scalar values and scalar values could be and were calculated for an additional 11% (5/46) of respondents because they only reported only one upper-bounded limit (“3+”). However, 7% (3/46) of responses to Question 6 were discarded because the respondents did not include responses for all relationships. In addition, 11% (5/46) of respondents had no response at all.

It was believed that Question 5 and Question 6 were confusing, especially when used in combination with each other, so those questions were recoded as binary variables to indicate any frequency of contact in any relationship for analysis.

### **Current Identities Data**

One respondent to Question 9 about relationship openness mainly identified with “Restricted” but did not specify that term when answering Question 10 about all the openness terms they identified with. A different respondent to Question 11 about relationship priority mainly identified with “Non-Hierarchical” but did not specify that term when answering Question 12 about all the priority terms they identified with. An additional respondent to Question 11 about relationship priority mainly identified with “Solo Poly” but did not include that term when answering Question 12 about all the priority terms they identified with. All other respondents included the terms they mainly identified with as a terms they identified with to any degree for all identity types, so it was decided to recode these terms as though the respondents forgot or meant to imply that the supplemental question only applied to less-favored terms.

## **Appendix E:**

### **Word Cloud Generation**

To better visualize the identity data, word clouds were created in Adobe Photoshop for main identities, other identities, and all identities. The different identity types were color-coded, with italic red text used for relationship style terms, normal green text used for relationship openness terms, and blue Small Caps text used for relationship priority terms. Each set of terms appears in descending order of frequency when reading from top to bottom and from left to right so that it is easier to scan each word cloud. In addition, each identity term is located in the same place in each word cloud in order to make it easier to locate the identity in the different word clouds, with the lower left corner of the text box containing each identity term in the same place and the center of the terms indicating an absence of identities (“N/A” and “none”) centered but on the same level. Relationship style categories have rotated fonts and are both underlined and centered and the terms in each category are outlined.

The term “Polyamorous” appears in the same location and font size in each word cloud to provide a visual reference. The font sizes of the identities and relationship style categories in each word cloud are proportional to the square root of the frequency of the other terms in that word cloud to show the relative frequencies of each term based on the area of the letters used in each term. However, each word cloud also uses a different font size multiplier in order to use the same font sizes for the term “Polyamorous.”