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Amigas y Amantes: Sexually Nonconforming Latinas Negotiate Family (Families in Focus)

Katie L. Acosta

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Amigas y Amantes (Friends and Lovers) explores the experiences of sexually nonconforming Latinas in the creation and maintenance of families. It is based on forty-two in-depth ethnographic interviews with women who identify as lesbian, bisexual, or queer (LBQ). Additionally, it draws from fourteen months of participant observation at LBQ Latina events that Katie L. Acosta conducted in 2007 and 2008 in a major northeast city. With this data, Acosta examines how LBQ Latinas manage loving relationships with the families who raised them, and with their partners, their children, and their friends.

Acosta investigates how sexually nonconforming Latinas negotiate cultural expectations, combat compulsory heterosexuality, and reconcile tensions with their families. She offers a new way of thinking about the emotion work involved in everyday lives, which highlights the informal, sometimes invisible, labor required in preserving family ties. Acosta contends that the work LBQ Latinas take on to preserve connections with biological families, lovers, and children results in a unique way of doing family.

Paying particular attention to the negotiations that LBQ Latinas undertake in an effort to maintain familial order, *Amigas y Amantes* explores how they understand femininity, how they negotiate their religious faiths, how they face the unique challenges of being in interracial/interethnic relationships, and how they raise their children while integrating their families of origin.

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