



# The Impact of Stress and Childhood Environment on Women's Mating Psychology

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## Background

- Research consistently finds that women are more sexually fluid than men at all stages of life (Diamond, 2009).
- Some scientists hypothesize that in times of resource scarcity, women may become more open to relationships with people other than men, to secure care and resources for their children (Kanazawa, 2016).
- Resource scarcity and other stressors have been found to have a particularly strong effect on the mating psychology of adults who come from low SES childhood environments (Griskevicius et al., 2011; Tan et al., 2022)

## Hypotheses

- We predicted that women from low SES backgrounds would report greater attraction to a wide range of gender identities after being stressed, compared to control.
- We predicted that women from low SES backgrounds would report greater sexual fluidity after being stressed, compared to control.

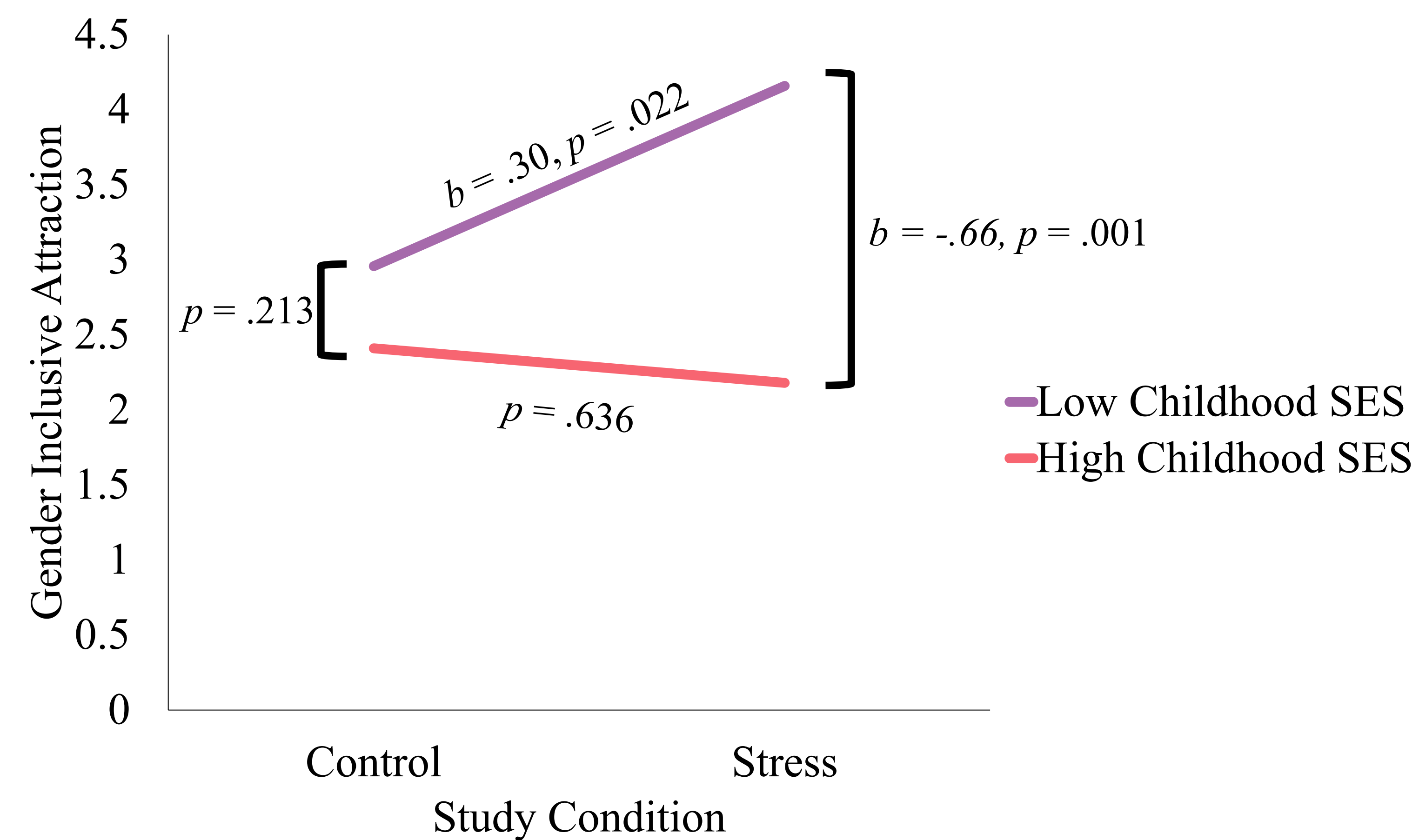
## Method

- 34 women ( $M_{age} = 18.97$ ) were randomly assigned to the stress or control condition of the Trier Social Stress Test.
- Participants rated their attraction to a range of gender presentations and reported their sexual fluidity.
- Participants then provided information about their childhood SES and demographics.

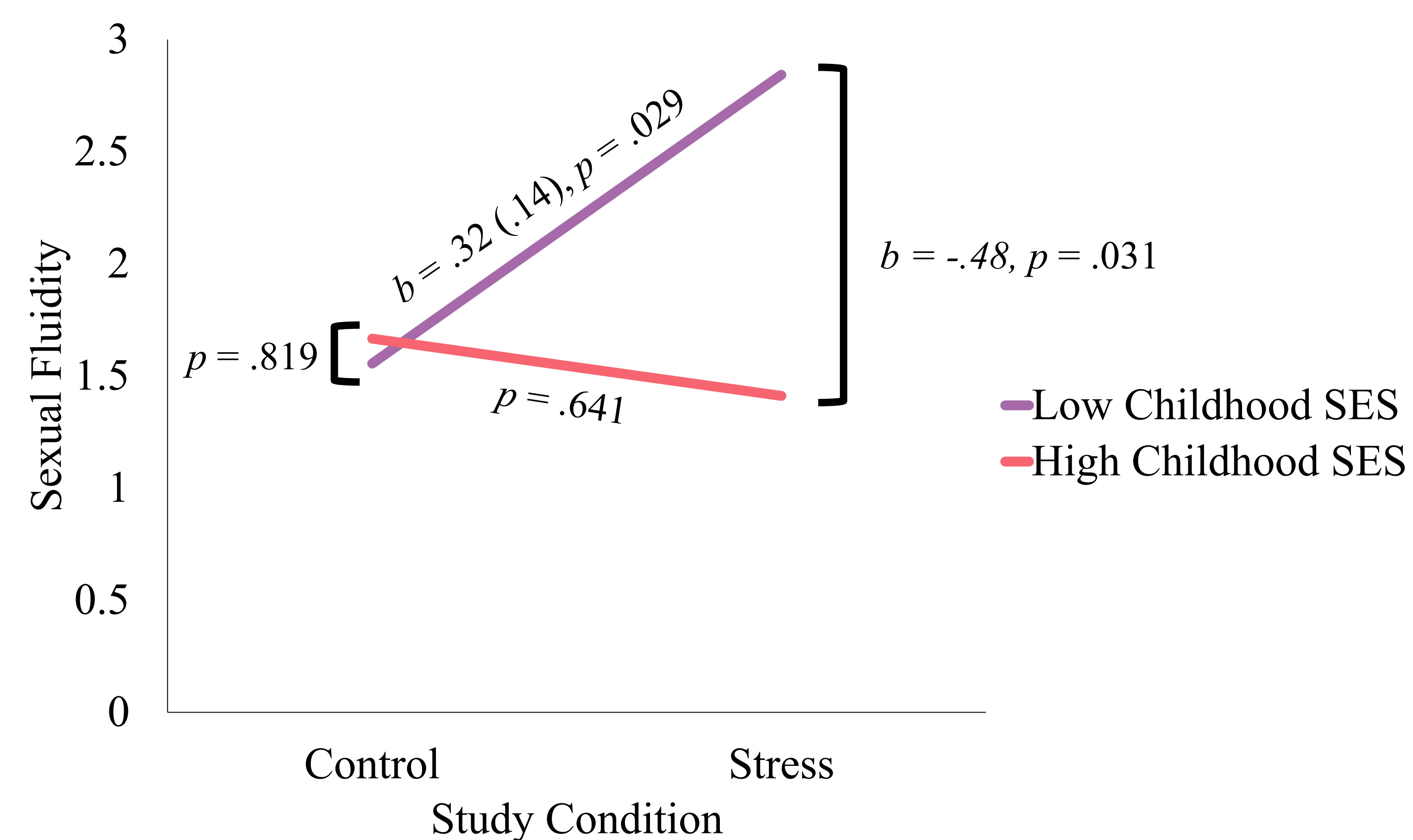
## Preliminary Findings

Data collection is ongoing.  
Current results support the hypotheses.

### Gender Inclusive Attraction



### Sexual Fluidity



## Results

- Stress did not impact the gender inclusive attraction or sexual fluidity of women who grew up high SES.
- Women who grew up low SES reported more attraction to a wider range of gender identities when stressed, compared to control.
- Women who grew up low SES reported being more fluid sexual orientation when stressed, compared to control.

## Conclusions

- Women's sexual orientation and the fluidity of their sexual orientation are sensitive to environmental stress.
- Specifically, women exposed to resource scarcity early in life report being attracted to a wider range of genders and having a less rigid sexual orientation compared to women who are not experiencing stress, or women who grew up with plentiful resources.
- Results are in line with previous hypotheses that women's greater sexual fluidity may serve to acquire investment from a wider range of people, but the underlying cause of this relationship requires more research.

## References

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