# PERFECTLY IMPERFECT:

# RESILIENCE AND PERSISTENCE OF THE AMBIVALENT-AVOIDANT COUPLE

By James M. Bradley Jr.

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation aimed to explore the dynamics of couples in which one person has an ambivalent attachment style, and the other has an avoidant attachment style. Attachment theory has successfully explained behavior in romantic relationships for many years. Researchers have established the benefits of a secure attachment and clinicians have sought to promote security in couples counseling. Still, the relatively common ambivalent-avoidant dyad has shown relationship persistence despite reporting adverse relationship experiences. In a longitudinal exploration of 268 dating couples, we identify paths toward healthier relationships for these couples. Depending on the attachment/gender combination, ambivalent-avoidant couples achieved higher levels of resilience and life satisfaction through gender role expectation, relationship power inequity, and conflict. Persistence and adaptation to these experiences help ambivalent-avoidant couples realize relationship satisfaction through developed resilience and life satisfaction. Implications for future research and clinical initiatives are discussed.

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# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

Attachment Theory has long been a popular lens through which researchers examine interpersonal and romantic relationships. Attachment develops during infancy, based on the attentiveness and sensitivity of the primary caregivers (Ainsworth, 1967; Bowlby, 1969), and is carried forward through internal working models of these early interactions to adult romantic relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Two factor-analyzed dimensions are the basis of current methods of measuring romantic attachments. Attachment avoidance is related to discomfort with emotional closeness and relative dismissiveness of intimacy, while attachment anxiety is related to fears of abandonment and rejection and a preoccupation with relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Securely attached individuals, those low in avoidance and anxiety, experience the best and most satisfying dating and marital relationships (Simpson, 1990). Fearfully attached individuals, who have high levels of avoidance and anxiety, report the least satisfying relationships (Banse, 2004). Anxiously attached individuals (high anxiety and low avoidance) desire greater closeness with their partners, while those avoidantly attached (low anxiety and high avoidance) shun enmeshment and seek more personal space.

Relationship satisfaction is one of the most ubiquitous correlates of relationship longevity/dissolution (Berscheid & Reis, 1998; Kelley, 1983). Insecure attachment is related to low levels of relationship satisfaction and commitment, and according to the Temporal Adult Romantic Attachment model (TARA), exacerbating this negative effect is relationship length (Hadden, Smith, & Webster, 2014). As would be expected with steadily decreasing relationship quality and stability, many insecure relationships dissolve

quickly (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994). However, one relatively common pair, consisting of one partner high in avoidance and another high in anxiety, has shown commitment similar to secure couples while simultaneously reporting low levels of relationship satisfaction (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Senchak & Leonard, 1992). This curious diversion by complementary insecure pairs has been difficult for researchers to explain. Life-long negativity and interpersonal problems stemming from attachment insecurity (Wei, Vogel, Ku, & Zakalik, 2005) may negate the expectation, and potentially even the ability, to be satisfied in romantic relationships. To that end, we suggest that complementary insecure pairs have the mechanisms in place for otherwise stable relationships, through supplementary intercorrelated mechanisms such as life satisfaction (Dyrenforth, Kashy, Donnellan, & Lucas, 2010) and resilience (Bradley & Hojjat, 2016).

For example, shared gender role expectations have been shown to have positive effects on the relationship and life satisfaction (Arránz Becker, 2013). This effect on life satisfaction is particularly strong with shared traditional gender roles (Lye & Biblarz, 1993). Insecure individuals tend to share more traditional gender roles (Alonso-Arbiol, Shaver, & Yarnoz, 2002). They are also typically highlighted by male avoidance and female anxiety (Ben-Ari, 2012), which share strong correlations with traditional expectations (Marks, Huston, Johnson, & MacDermid, 2001). Thus, it is reasonable to predict that traditional gender role expectations of the complementary insecure pair may reinforce their ideological relationship structure and positively influence life satisfaction.

On the other hand, avoidant individuals tend to have greater power in their relationships due to a lack of investment exhibited in their relationships (Simpson, 1990). While power imbalances have been found to negatively affect relationship satisfaction

(Sprecher, Schmeeckle, & Felmlee. 2006), it has also been linked positively to longevity and life satisfaction (Felmlee, 1994; Wolfe & Betz, 2004). Moreover, decreased decision-making power may be favorable for ambivalent individuals as they show greater stress when responsible for making decisions and often allow their anxiety to inhibit constructive life and career decisions (Hawley, Shorey, & Alderman, 2009; Wolfe & Betz, 2004). Conversely, avoidants strive for more power in their relationships (Mikulincer, 2004). Thus, with an avoidant partner feeling in control and an ambivalent partner being relieved of decision-making stressors, we predict that the avoidant and ambivalent attachment dynamic may moderate the effects of decision-making power imbalances, resulting in greater life satisfaction and relationship longevity.

A catalyst for relationship dissatisfaction among insecure individuals is their negative conflict strategies (Pietromonaco, Greenwood, & Feldman-Barrett, 2004). Ambivalent individuals tend to initiate conflict (Reis & Shaver, 1988) and avoidant individuals prefer to evade conflict (Gallo & Smith, 2001). Both insecure types engage in destructive conflict management behaviors (Karantzas, Feeney, Goncalves, & McCabe, 2014) with ambivalent individuals favoring intense emotional reactions of anger and hostility and avoidant individuals favoring emotional withdrawal of suppression (Simpson, Rholes, & Phillips, 1996). Nevertheless, destructive conflict management has been found to influence partner relationship satisfaction negatively, but not the actor's satisfaction (Karantzas, et al., 2014). Ambivalents in serious relationships have shown an increase in feelings of intimacy and satisfaction following negative conflict experiences, while avoidants appear emotionally unaffected (Pietromonaco, et al., 2004). Moreover, avoidants are more likely to "win" conflict negotiations and ambivalent individuals are

more likely to "lose" (Bear & Segal-Karpas, 2015) and being on these respective ends of the spectrum result in greater feelings of relationship closeness for both avoidant and ambivalent individuals (Thai, Lockwood, Pinkus, & Chen, 2015). In line with Stress Inoculation Theory of resilience, which suggests average levels of stressful experiences help to develop greater resilience (Lyons, Parker, Katz, & Schatzberg, 2009), we believe that ambivalent-avoidant romantic pairs may develop individual resilience in response to their destructive conflict behavior as their separate approaches complement and assist each other. For example, ambivalent-avoidant pairs have shown to have significantly fewer conflicts than would be statistically expected based on their tendencies (Gallo & Smith, 2001). Ambivalent conflict persistence can force avoidant individuals into emotional and intimate communication (Reis & Shaver, 1988), and their complementary positions in "winning" or "losing" conflict negotiations results in feelings of increased closeness for both partners (Bear & Segal-Karpas, 2015, Thai, et al., 2015).

Resilience is a construct often misrepresented and misunderstood in the empirical literature. Resilience is a dynamic developmental process requiring experiences of adversity while ego-resilience is a personality characteristic (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000). The literature includes positive correlations between resilience and secure attachment and negative correlations with insecure attachment (Urban, Carlson, Egeland, & Sroufe, 1991). It is more likely that there are correlations between the positive and negative traits associated with attachment (Caldwell & Shaver, 2012). Moreover, the developmental process of resilience is multidimensional. Those exhibiting this type of resilience in the face of adversity may exhibit undesirable adaptations in other domains (Luthar, et al., 2000). It is important when studying resilience and attachment, to make

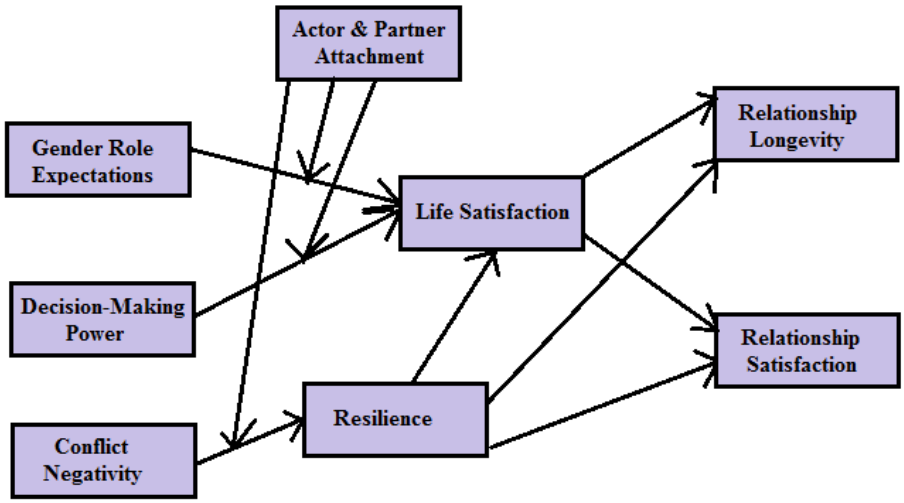
clear distinctions between ego-resiliency and the resilience process. In this dissertation, we investigate resilience in both forms. Similar to past findings (Cassidy & Shaver, 2008), we expect that multidimensional trait resilience will be correlated with attachment security and will remain static over time. On the other hand, we believe that both relationship length and discordant partner attachment insecurity will moderate the relationship between actor attachment insecurity and the resilience process. This is hypothesized to be the case because being insecurely attached is in and of itself stressful (Mikulincer & Florian, 1995), but being in a relationship with someone who confirms one's attachment insecurities can make that stress more salient (Feeney & Noller, 1991; Pietromonaco, 2004) resulting in resilient adaptations catered specifically to attachment-related issues.

Since relationship satisfaction and longevity are intuitively connected (i.e., more satisfied couples stay together longer; Kurdek, 1993), past literature has rarely investigated predictors of longevity separately from satisfaction. Since our population of interest reports low satisfaction but high longevity, we aim to understand the independent effects of resilience and life satisfaction on relationship longevity. Furthermore, cultivated stress resilience may enable ambivalent and avoidant individuals to experience greater success and satisfaction in their personal and professional lives (Seery, Leo, Lupien, Kondrak, & Almonte, 2013), increasing life satisfaction. Furthermore, the combination of resilience and life satisfaction predicts relationship satisfaction as found in the previous literature (Bradley & Hojjat, 2016; Mellor Stokes, Firth, Hayashi, Cummins, 2008), but they will also have direct independent effects on relationship

longevity. Finally, the combination of these factors may produce a delayed effect, improving relationship satisfaction over time.

While the TARA model would suggest that insecure individuals are destined for tumultuous relationships (Hadden, et al., 2014), insecure individuals may be able to find an ideal mate of the complementary insecure style. Hadden and colleagues (2014) utilized relationship length as a moderator in their meta-analysis but did not explore the moderating effects of a partner's attachment style. From a macro perspective, it is clear that individual attachment insecurity has deleterious effects on relationship outcomes. However, further study is warranted. This dissertation tested the theoretical model (Figure 1), utilizing partner attachment styles as moderators to investigate couples cross-sectionally and expands upon the TARA model longitudinally.

**Figure1**. Predicted model with attachment moderator




Attachment theory foundations and prevailing attachment-based attraction theories are reviewed, including complementarity theory and its implications for the ambivalent-avoidant couple. The roles of various psychological structures that may

influence longevity in ambivalent-avoidant couples are explored, including gender role expectations, conflict negativity, decision-making power, resilience, and life satisfaction. Actor and partner attachment styles are investigated as moderators for the intercorrelations between these factors, relationship longevity, and relationship satisfaction. Results are reviewed cross-sectionally and longitudinally following the Actor-Partner Interdependence model guidelines for MLM and SEM (Kashy & Kenny, 2000; Kenny, Kashy & Cook, 2006). The two-, three-, and four-way moderation APIM analysis adheres to the model presented by Butzer and Campbell (2008).

# CHAPTER II

## Literature Review

### Attachment Formation

Attachment styles influence how individuals view themselves, interpret their world, and understand and interact within relationships over the lifespan. John Bowlby (1969), the father of attachment theory, posited that infants form bonds with their primary caregiver(s). How the caregiver responds within this bond determines the infant's formation of an attachment style. When a caregiver is sensitive and responsive to the infant's needs, the infant will use the caregiver as a secure base from which he/she can freely explore the environment. Having a secure base is the beginning of a secure attachment style. Alternately, if a caregiver is more rejecting and inaccessible, or inconsistent in response to the infant's needs, insecure-avoidant and insecure-ambivalent attachment styles can arise, respectively (Ainsworth, 1967).

In their work on the Strange Situation task, Ainsworth and Bell (1970) viewed the behaviors of infants when separated from their caregiver. Secure children were upset when their mothers left but were easily soothed when reunited. Insecure-avoidant children did not show distress from separation and were ostensibly indifferent toward their caregiver upon return. Insecure-ambivalent children, on the other hand, showed great distress in the company of strangers and during separation. Upon the caregiver's return, these children were clingy but were very difficult to console.

Roughly 62% of infants are securely attached while 23% are avoidant and 15% are ambivalent (Campos, Barrett, Lamb, Goldsmith, & Stenberg, 1983). Suggesting that attachment behaviors are fairly static throughout life, Hazan and Shaver (1987) developed an attachment scale using adult versions of the same categories and found that, approximately 56% of people self-reported a secure orientation while 24% are avoidant and 20% are ambivalent. Thus, attachment is found to be a strong predictor of how individuals behave in adult romantic relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), and remains fairly stable from childhood, through adolescence, and into adulthood (Waters, Merrick, Treboux, Crowell, & Albersheim, 2011; Zhang & Labouvie-Vief, 2004).

**Adult Attachment**

Attachment affects behaviors and expectations similarly in adulthood as in infancy. The difference is that adults direct attachments toward a romantic partner instead of a primary caregiver (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Adult attachment is best understood as a compass identifying high and low levels of avoidance and anxiety. Those low in both avoidance and anxiety are considered to be secure, have a positive view of themselves

and others, and do not have issues with closeness or rejection in their relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

On the other hand, those classified as avoidant display high levels of avoidance and low levels of anxiety, possess a positive view of self, a negative view of others, and are dismissive of intimacy. Ambivalence is identified by high levels of anxiety and low levels of avoidance, related to a negative view of self, a positive view of others, and a preoccupation with relationships. Fearful individuals have high levels of both avoidance and anxiety. These individuals possess ambivalent and avoidant insecure traits, producing internal conflict and low levels of relationship satisfaction and functionality (Banse, 2004). The current research focuses on continuous levels of anxiety and avoidance and therefore rarely addresses individuals in specific categorical terms. Moreover, researchers interchangeably use the labels ambivalent and anxious. Since measures of ambivalent attachment utilize attachment-based anxiety levels, this dissertation will use "anxiety" when discussing measured traits and "ambivalent" when discussing the individual.

**Attachment and Romantic Relationships**

Secure and insecure individuals alike describe ideal mates using the characteristics of secure individuals (Chappell & Davis, 1998). Insecure individuals, however, often find themselves in romantic relationships with both secure and insecure partners, but they consistently rate their relationships as less satisfying compared to secure individuals (Banse, 2004; Jones & Cunningham, 1996; Molero, Shaver, Fernandez, Alonso-Arbiol, & Recio, 2016; Pietromonaco & Carnelley, 1994; Senchak & Leonard, 1992; Simpson, 1990). The contradiction between preferences for secure qualities but engagement with insecure partners has contributed to four major

frameworks theorizing on attachment's role in romantic attraction. These include the Self-Similarity Theory, the Attachment Security Hypothesis, the Similarity to Ideal-Self Theory, and the Complementarity Hypothesis (Klohnen & Luo, 2003).

**Self-similarity theory.** The self-similarity theory has garnered some support in recent empirical efforts (Klohnen & Luo, 2003). This theory posits that avoidant individuals should be attracted to similarly avoidant partners and ambivalent individuals should be attracted to similarly ambivalent partners (Holmes & Johnson, 2009). Pairing with someone of a similar attachment style confirms each other's internal working model, facilitates interaction, fosters familiarity (Klohnen & Luo, 2003), and provides positive and favorable feedback about one's attachment style (Holmes & Johnson, 2009). Some support for ambivalent individuals preferring ambivalent partners (Frazier, Byer, Fischer, Wright, & DeBord, 1996) and avoidant individuals preferring avoidant partners (Klohnen & Luo, 2003) has been found.

Nevertheless, results have been inconsistent, offering support for the other three theories. Attachment-related attraction theories also overlook individual ignorance to the theory and the salience of attachment in initial attraction. For example, both secure and insecure men tend to prefer physical beauty over a particular attachment fit, and anxious women prefer high-status males (Brumbaugh, Baren, & Agishtein, 2014).

Considering that attachment may be a residual concern in mate choice, researchers may unearth greater insights by evaluating relationship outcomes based on attachment dynamics. For instance, ambivalent-ambivalent and avoidant-avoidant pairings are consistently reported as dissatisfying (Banse, 2004), but are so rare that a single case was not present in random samples of over 350 couples (Kirkpatrick & Davis,

1994). Finally, reported secure-secure preferences could either support Self-Similarity Theory or could be related to an overall preference for secure partners.

**Attachment security hypothesis.** The attachment security hypothesis suggests that secure individuals are preferred because they offer the best opportunity to form close emotional bonds and felt security (Klohnen & Luo, 2003; Holmes & Johnson, 2009). Several studies provide support for a universal secure partner preference (Chappell & Davis, 1998; Latty-Mann & Davis, 1996). Insecure individuals appear to be aware of the desirability of secure partners as they have been found to present themselves as more secure in interactions with potential mates by acting warm, engaging, and humorous (Brumbaugh & Fraley, 2010). Still, some evidence suggests secure partner preferences are only prominent among other secure individuals (Bradley & Siegel, in prep).

Whether by deception, status, or physical attraction, insecure individuals engage in romantic relationships with both secure and insecure partners (Brumbaugh, et al., 2014). The façade worn by insecure individuals during the relationship initiation phase may not be entirely a ploy to attract a mate. Most individuals are motivated to positively change some aspects of their personality (Hudson & Roberts, 2014). Perhaps insecure individuals exhibit secure traits they genuinely want to adopt and thus find others with those traits as more attractive.

**Similarity to ideal-self theory.** The similarity to ideal-self theory combines the prevailing attraction theories in an interesting way. This theory suggests that individuals will be attracted to attachment characteristics that are similar to themselves only for qualities that they like about themselves. As it pertains to attachment characteristics they are not particularly fond of, they will prefer a partner who exemplifies the traits that he or

she strives to obtain (Klohnen & Luo, 2003). While ideal-self similarity has been found to have positive mediational effects on self-similarity attraction (Klohnen & Luo, 2003), support of this theory has been less encouraging. Although ideal-self similarity is a positive predictor of attraction initially, as a partner begins to exceed the others' ideal-self, attraction declines (Herbst, Gaertner, & Insko, 2003).

Attraction toward ideal-self similarity for security and avoidance has been supported based on perceptions, but only perceived self-similarity seems to predict attraction for ambivalent partners (Strauss, Morry, & Kito, 2012). While the main goal of this dissertation is to understand better complementary ambivalent-avoidant pairs, the reliability, and frequency of these three hypotheses are briefly investigated. Researchers have found that ambivalent-avoidant pairs exhibit longevity similar to secure-secure couples (Banse, 2004; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994), providing support for the Attachment Complementarity Hypothesis.

**Complementarity hypothesis.** Broadly, the complementarity hypothesis posits that individuals should be attracted to others with characteristics that complement their own (Klohnen & Luo, 2003). From an attachment standpoint, this framework may only be pertinent for those with insecure attachment styles. In their critique of this hypothesis, Klohnen and Luo (2003) argue that secure-secure attraction is most reasonably explained by the self-similarity theory and not the complementarity hypothesis. Nevertheless, for those with varying levels of avoidance and anxiety, the complementarity hypothesis does make logical sense. Drawing from self-consistency theory, Holmes and Johnson (2009) suggest that complementarity confirms attachment-related expectations for insecure individuals. For example, avoidant partners would confirm for anxious partners the

negative expectations that others desire to distance from them in relationships. Moreover, anxious partners would confirm for avoidant partners their negative expectations of others being clingy and dependent (Collins & Read, 1990; Holmes & Johnson, 2009).

Despite confirming negative expectations, it does seem counter-intuitive that individuals who prefer greater emotional distance from their partners (avoidants) would be a good match with those who desire demonstrably close relationships (ambivalents). Moreover, while these pairs have shown persistence in their relationships (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Banse, 2004), they consistently rate their experience as less satisfactory relative to secure-secure couples (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Moreira, Lind, & Santos, 2016; Raeisipoor, Fallahchail, & Zarei, 2012; Senchak & Leonard, 1992; Snir & Wiseman, 2010). The potential for a long-term complementary match is similarly inconspicuous to both ambivalents and avoidants because when given hypothetical partner options, they tend to choose similar or secure partners (Collins & Read, 1990; Pietromonaco & Carnelley, 1994).

This dissertation aims to understand the underlying mechanisms better-promoting longevity in ambivalent-avoidant couples despite participant allegations that their relationships are unpleasant and undesirable. Step one, however, is to understand individual awareness of their attachment styles and the associated implications by having individuals rate their attachment and how they would like to change their attachment. It is also important to understand whether partner preferences for their partner's attachment style vary when engaged in a relationship compared to previous hypothetical findings. Finally, we must confirm previous findings that the relationship longevity of ambivalent-avoidant couples is not statistically different from the longevity of secure-secure couples.

**Attachment Awareness**

Insecure individuals consistently pick partners that are more like themselves or secure when given profiles of potential hypothetical mates (Pietromonaco & Carnelley, 1994). Nevertheless, when observing actual insecure relationships, the ambivalent-avoidant combination lasts the longest. When considering a short-term sexual relationship with hypothetical partners, insecure women chose men displaying a more avoidant attachment style (Kruger & Fisher, 2008). However, when asked to choose a hypothetical long-term partner, their preferences reverted to those similar to themselves or secure partners.

The self-discrepancy model may, in part, explain the differences in hypothetical compared to actual partners (Higgins, 1987). When there is a discrepancy between actual self and ideal-self, the individual suffers negative psychological outcomes such as discomfort or sadness. Furthermore, discrepancies between actual and ideal-self with a partner, actual and ideal-self can similarly breed negative emotions such as disappointment or dissatisfaction (Higgins, 1987). Thus, when rating ideal hypothetical partners, personal cognitive dissonance may be at play, leading to higher ratings of mates that represent an ideal personal self. Conversely, when rating the ideal qualities of an actual partner, there may be a battle between personal and interpersonal cognitive dissonance that leads one to favor the qualities his or her partner already possess.

Many previous studies have dealt in hypotheticals and have not tested for attachment-based preferences when considering a current partner's characteristics. It may be the case that results are more indicative of ideal-self as opposed to an ideal partner. Considering that individuals strive for self-improvement (Hudson & Roberts, 2014), one

might assume then they must be attracted to a secure partner. However, if we accept that attachment is a compass with anxiety and avoidance on opposite ends, then both ambivalents and avoidants share qualities with secures. For instance, ambivalent positive views of others and avoidant positive views of self both overlap with secure views of self and others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Thus, an ambivalent and an avoidant each possesses the other's missing piece in achieving attachment security. Security priming has shown to improve views of self in ambivalent individuals and views of others in avoidant individuals (Gillath, Selcuk, & Shaver, 2008), suggesting that each needs to become more like the other if they wish to become more secure. Thus, if individuals are attracted to others representing their ideal-selves, this may also overlap with the complementarity theory for insecure individuals.

**Hypotheses of Attachment, Attraction, and Longevity**

**Hypothesis 1a.** Because individuals reportedly seek self-improvement, it is predicted that highly anxious participants will choose to become more avoidant and less anxious and highly avoidant participants will opt to become more anxious and less avoidant.

**Hypothesis 1b.** In line with previous hypothetical findings supporting the self-similarity attraction theory, and countering the attachment security hypothesis, individuals will report preferences for others who with similar levels of avoidance and anxiety to themselves.

**Hypothesis 1c.** In line with findings that suggest complementarity pairs are more common than similar pairs, it is predicted that actor avoidance will be positively related to partner anxiety and actor anxiety will be positively related to partner avoidance.

**Hypothesis 1d.** In confirmation of previous findings regarding attachment pairs and relationship longevity, discordant partner attachment will positively moderate the relationships between insecure actor attachment and relationship longevity.

## Gender and Gender Roles

Despite the sporadic reports of attachment-based preferences and attraction, it remains clear that when in romantic relationships, insecure individuals report lower satisfaction and are at elevated risk of relationship dissolution or divorce compared to secure individuals (Pietromonaco & Beck, 2015). Still, these reliably reported data come with a caveat. There seem to be differences in how attachment styles are experienced and expressed based on gender. While anxiety and avoidance negatively predict satisfaction for women, levels of avoidance have been found to be a more reliable positive predictor of male satisfaction than anxiety. This variation is presumed to be related to the similarity between male gender role norms and avoidant characteristics (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

While complementary insecure combinations have shown to be nearly as common as secure-secure couples, this dynamic has been found to be most common and enduring when it involves an avoidant man and anxious woman (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Feeney, 1999; Pietromonaco & Beck, 2015). The commonality of this combination may be in part because, on average, men are typically more avoidant and women are typically more ambivalent (Schmitt, et al., 2003; Del Giudice, 2011; Ben-Ari, 2012). Longevity, on the other hand, may be related to several considerations. Male avoidance and female anxiety, in some cases, have not been found to influence negative relational outcomes, but male anxiety is consistently predictive of relational conflict (Banse, 2004, Harma, &

Sümer, 2016). One of the major relationship issues with an avoidant partner is a lack of emotional interdependence (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). When avoidant partners seek reassurance, their partner reacts with greater closeness and support (Girme, Molloy, & Overall, 2016). Moreover, females lower in avoidance, compared to those higher in avoidance, are more likely to provide support to their partner (Simpson, Rholes, Orina, & Grich, 2002).

Gender role expectations may also offer insight into the longevity of ambivalent – avoidant relationships. The "dismissive" characteristics of avoidant men and the "neediness" of ambivalent women fit the traditional gender role schema for males and females (Marks, et al., 2001; Pietromonaco & Carnelley, 1994). Moreover, insecure males and females are more likely to maintain traditional gender roles (Alonso-Arbiol, et al., 2002; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994). Although on an individual basis more progressive gender roles may be ideal (Benin & Agostinelli, 1988), couples that share either traditional or progressive gender role expectations have more positive relationship outcomes than couples that disagree on gender roles (Arránz Becker, 2013; Craddock, 1980; Felmlee, 1994; Rusbult & VanLange, 2003). In addition to relationship outcomes, traditional gender roles also predict greater life satisfaction for insecure males (Pilar Matud, Bethencourt, & Ibanez, 2014) while nontraditional gender roles have been linked to lower life and family satisfaction for both males and females (Lye & Biblarz, 1993).

**Gender and Gender Role Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis 2a.** In line with previous reports, males will maintain significantly higher rates of attachment avoidance than females, while females will report significantly higher rates of attachment anxiety than males.

**Hypothesis 2b.** Based on previous reports that insecurely attached individuals are more likely to adhere to traditional gender roles, anxiety and avoidance will be positively related to traditional gender roles. Moreover, partner attachment will positively moderate the relationship between actor attachment and gender role expectations.

**Hypothesis 2c.** Since partner gender role expectations can influence each other's' life and relationship satisfaction, there will be a significant partner effect of gender role expectations on life satisfaction, relationship longevity, and relationship satisfaction.

**Hypothesis 2d.** Given the insecure tendency to adopt and share traditional gender roles, actor and partner attachment scores will moderate the relationship between gender role expectations with life satisfaction relationship longevity, and relationship satisfaction such that complementary attachment pairs will predict more positive outcomes.

## Relationship Power

Relationship power is defined as:

> "The ability of one individual in a relationship to exert influence on another person so that the influence agent obtains the specific outcomes he or she wants in a given situation while being able to resist influence attempts by the target" (Simpson, Farrell, Oriña, & Rothman, 2015, p. 402).

This description applied specifically in the realm of decision-making, but may also play a role in the outcomes of ambivalent-avoidant relationships. Decision-making in relationships can be difficult, but also very important (Farrell, Simpson, & Rothman, 2015). Males traditionally tend to have more decision-making power in relationships (Bentley, Galliher, & Ferguson, 2007; Felmlee, 1994), but power may be distributed more evenly in a broader sense as decision-making power has shown to vary depending

on the division of relationship roles, individual importance, and during conflicts (Beach & Tesser, 1993; Simpson, et al., 2015).

A division of power favoring the avoidant partner makes sense with attachment literature as avoidant characteristics are more masculine and represent the more common male insecurity while ambivalent characteristics are more feminine and represent the more common female insecurity (Shaver, Papalia, Clark, Koski, Tidwell, & Nalbone, 1996; Stackert & Bursik, 2003). Moreover, avoidant individuals are more dismissing and show less distress upon relationship dissolution, while ambivalent individuals are more emotionally invested and dependent on their romantic partners (Simpson, 1990; Simpson, et al., 2015). Furthermore, ambivalent partners may fear or be uncomfortable making decisions due to a lack of confidence and increased levels of anxiety that accompany greater emotional and instrumental dependence (Alonso-Arbiol, et al., 2002; Hawley, et al., 2009).

Power and domination are considered to be two separate constructs in a relationship dynamic, with domination, not power, being more detrimental to the relationships (Dunbar & Burgoon, 2005). When one partner has a majority of decision-making power, the partner with less power does not perceive them to be particularly dominating. Additionally, individuals low in self-monitoring; a trait potentially related to ambivalent attachment (Kruger & Fisher, 2008), had trouble perceiving an imbalance of power when they were on the short end (Oyamot, Fuglestad, & Snyder, 2010). When on the short end, anxious women were also more inspired to strengthen and improve their relationship (Feiring, et al., 2010).

This research fits into the principle of "least interest." This principle suggests that the partner with less emotional involvement has more control in the relationship (Sprecher, et al., 2006), but only those with a mutually satisfactory power split are reported as satisfying (Beach & Tesser, 1993; Sprecher, et al., 2006). Nevertheless, decision-making power has been related to relationship satisfaction on the individual level (Bentley, et al., 2007), and higher levels of male relationship power have associated positively with relationship longevity (Felmlee, 1994). For ambivalent-avoidant couples, there is a natural imbalance as avoidants are less emotionally involved. Avoidants have been shown to strive for such power (Mikulincer, 2004), but ambivalents become stressed by decision-making processes and have difficulty making positive life and career decisions (Wolfe & Betz, 2004). Thus, lower levels of ambivalent partner decision-making power and higher levels of avoidant decision-making power may be ideal for ambivalent-avoidant couples and will be positively related to life satisfaction, relationship longevity, and relationship satisfaction.

**Relationship Power Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis 3a.** In congruence with previous literature, decision-making power will be higher for males than for females.

**Hypothesis 3b.** In response to literature connecting avoidant individuals to higher levels of relationship power and ambivalent individuals to greater decision-making distress, attachment avoidance will be positively related to decision-making power and attachment anxiety will be negatively related to decision-making power.

**Hypothesis 3c.** Power imbalances have been connected to greater relationship longevity under the right circumstances. Ambivalent individuals have shown to become

distressed when making decisions, negatively influencing their life satisfaction. Taken together, discordant actor and partner attachment will interact with actor and partner decision-making to positively predict life satisfaction, relationship longevity, and relationship satisfaction.

## Relationship Conflict and Resilience

**Relationship Conflict.** Conflict is inevitable in most relationships (Brehm, Miller, Perlman, & Campbell, 2002), but the activation of attachment systems can affect how couples interact during conflicts (Pietromonaco, et al., 2004). Secure individuals may not perceive conflict as a threat to the relationship, thereby providing a platform for open communication and positive conflict strategies (Kobak & Duemmler, 1994). Ambivalent individuals may perceive conflict as a threat of abandonment or lack of partner responsiveness (Simpson, et al., 1996), and avoidant partners may experience conflict as a threat to their independence and self-reliance, both resulting in more negative conflict strategies (Pietromonaco, et al., 2004)

While the secure response to conflicts may inspire greater intimacy and relationship satisfaction (Mikulincer, Florian, Cowan, & Cowan, 2002), the ambivalent-avoidant couple may possess complementary conflict strategies that foster long-term growth and development. The adverse conflict strategies used by insecure individuals are well reported. For instance, ambivalent individuals are highly persistent in conflict scenarios when their attachment bond is threatened, expressing intense emotions, lack of control, inattention to partner responses, and an overall focus on their own concerns (Gallo & Smith, 2001; Karantzas, et. al., 2014; Mikulincer, 1998; Simpson, et. al., 1996). However, following conflict, ambivalent individuals express feeling increased intimacy

and positivity (Pietromonaco, et al., 2004). Avoidant individuals prefer to shun conflict and perceive conflicts as a threat to their independence and self-reliance (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Mikulincer, 1998). While this insecurity may lead them to withdraw from conflict and downplay the importance of the issue at hand, conflicts, especially with a persistent ambivalent partner, may force avoidants to engage in meaningful and emotional communication (Pietromonaco, et al., 2004). Thus, the avoidant tendency to elude conflict may reduce the volume of spats over minor concerns (Gallo & Smith, 2001), while ambivalent persistence in relationship-threatening situations can lead an avoidant partner to gain experience with more emotional and intimate communication (Reis & Shaver, 1988).

Negotiation is a constructive process used to resolve conflict between two individuals (Thompson, Wang, & Gunia, 2010). Avoidant and ambivalent partners also complement each other in conflict negotiations. Ambivalent and avoidant individuals are more likely to negotiate with each other during conflict than they are with individuals of similar or secure attachment styles (Bear & Segel-Karpas, 2015). Moreover, avoidant individuals are more likely to outperform ambivalent individuals in conflict negotiations, receiving a more favorable return (Bear & Segel-Karpas, 2015). Coincidentally, the outperformance of one's romantic partner is positively associated with feelings of closeness to their partner for avoidant individuals while being outperformed is associated with feelings of closeness for ambivalent individuals (Thai, et al., 2015). These findings may be related to the ambivalent tendency to idealize their partners (Feeney & Noller, 1991) as well as the avoidant desire for power in their relationships (Mikulincer, 2004). Ambivalent-avoidant couples are more likely to negotiate with each other than

counterparts of different attachment styles. There are shared feelings of closeness when the avoidant partner outperforms the ambivalent partner. Thus, it appears such a pairing may be primed for positive long-term outcomes despite their negative conflict strategies.

Disagreements can allow partners to express their thoughts and feelings leading to increased feelings of intimacy (Laurenceau, Rivera, Shaffer, & Pietromonaco, 2004). Moreover, conflict experiences can help couples to learn more constructive communication and conflict resolution strategies (Pietromonaco, et al., 2004). The broadening effects stemming from negative conflict experiences parallel those associated with resilience process (Luthar, et al., 2000). Moreover, the complementary nature of ambivalent and avoidant conflict may provide a middle-of-the-road stressful experience that is optimal for resilience development as described by the Stress Inoculation Theory of resilience (Lyons, et al., 2009).

**Resilience.** Despite the findings that ambivalent-avoidant relationships can be long-lasting, individuals in these relationships often report negative experiences and dissatisfaction (Davila, Karney, & Bradbury, 1999; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Senchak & Leonard, 1992). The combination of relationship stress and longevity may suggest that ambivalent-avoidant couples develop resilience, allowing their relationships to persist. Resilience is a developmental process in which those who face adverse experiences learn how to cope effectively, rebound, and even find positive meaning in such negative situations (Luthar, et al., 2000; Ong, Bergeman, & Chow, 2010; Skodol, 2010; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Not to be confused with ego-resiliency which describes a personality characteristic comprising positive traits which makes stress coping more natural for some individuals (Block & Block, 2014). Secure individuals, who benefit from positive social,

emotional and cognitive adaptations, often rank high on ego-resiliency (Cassidy & Shaver, 2008), and insecure individuals tend to exhibit low levels of ego-resiliency (Caldwell & Shaver, 2012). Resilience, however, is a process in which at-risk individuals develop the ability to manage stressors over time, but do not necessarily improve functioning in other socioemotional domains (Luthar, et al., 2000).

According to Stress Inoculation Theory of resilience, a moderate level of life stress is more predictive of resilience development and overall well-being than low or high levels of stress (Lyons, et al., 2009; Seery, et al., 2013). While insecure attachment can sometimes stem from childhood traumas, there is no evidence to suggest that insecure individuals are more or less likely to experience serious traumas later in life (Waters, et al., 2011). According to Turner & Lloyd's (1995) lifetime adversity measure, it is more likely that insecure individuals will experience increased moderate stressors related to social, emotional, and cognitive deficiencies (Mikulincer & Florian, 1995). Moreover, anxiety is associated with the exaggeration of minor stressors while avoidance is associated with the suppression of major stressors (Maunder, Lancee, Nolan, Hunter, Tannenbaum, 2006), suggesting discordant insecure pairs may experience frequent moderate stress reactivity.

Resilience has been found to partially mediate the relationship between avoidant spousal attachment and marital satisfaction (Bradley & Hojjat, 2016), suggesting that there is a pathway for avoidant individuals to develop resilience and experience satisfying relationships. While Bradley and Hojjat (2016) did not find effects for ambivalence and resilience, they also did not analyze within-couple attachment dynamics. Considering the complementarity on various adverse characteristics between ambivalent and avoidant

individuals and the lengthy resilience development process, discordant partner attachments and relationship length may be positive moderators for the development of resilience as well as life and relationship satisfaction.

**Conflict and Resilience Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis 4a.** In line with consistently reported findings, attachment anxiety and avoidance will be related to increased conflict negativity and lower levels of state and trait resilience.

**Hypothesis 4b.** Similar to previous findings, state and trait resilience will be positively related to life satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, and relationship longevity while conflict negatively related to life satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, and relationship longevity.

**Hypothesis 4c.** Given the experiences in place for discordant insecure couples to develop state resilience, complementary partner insecurity will positively moderate the relationship between actor insecurity and state resilience.

**Hypothesis 4d.** Because ambivalent-avoidant pairs exhibit complementary traits in conflict behaviors and negotiations, partner discordant attachment insecurities will negatively moderate the effects of actor insecurities on conflict negativity.

**Hypothesis 4e.** Based upon research suggesting that negative conflict reactions between complementarily insecure pairs can produce more positive conflict reactions over time, and the parallels with stress inoculation theory, discordant actor and partner attachment insecurity will positively moderate the relationship between conflict negativity and state resilience.

# CHAPTER III

## Analysis Approach

The main focus of this dissertation is to test the proposed model visualized in Figure 1 and explained by hypotheses 2a -5c using a dyadic sample for both cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis. Cross-sectional analysis utilized the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM) with actor and partner attachment moderators following processes used by Butzer and Campbell (2008). It is appropriate to use APIM with dyadic data because couple outcomes are interdependent, producing both Actor and Partner effects in any singular case (Kashy & Kenny, 2000). APIM utilizes multilevel modeling (MLM) in which data from each partner is treated as a nested score within a group having an N of 2 (Kenny, et al., 2006). To perform moderation analysis, all continuous predictor variables were centered (Butzer & Campbell, 2008).

While Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is an excellent method for analyzing longitudinal dyadic data, the recommended latent growth curve SEM requires at least three time points and thus is not an applicable method for current use (Peugh, DiLillo, & Panuzio, 2013). With only two time points and the interest in using covariates as predictor variables, it is recommended to use a standard over-time APIM SEM for our longitudinal analysis (Vandenberghe, 2014). An issue with this method is the possibility of autocorrelation, which is rectified in our analysis by allowing for correlations between error terms (Kenny, et al., 2006). Similar to the cross-sectional analysis, we centered predictor variables in our longitudinal APIM model (Bolger & Laurenceau, 2013). Moreover, both actor and partner predictor variables will be included and covaried to determine both actor and partner effects between time points (Karantzas, et al., 2014;

Vandenberghe, 2014). Longitudinal APIM SEM analysis will first test the hypothesized model (Figure 1) and an alternate model informed by cross-sectional analyses.

As a precursor to the proposed dissertation project, two pilot studies were performed to determine the feasibility of this project. The first was an analysis of subject pool participants to determine if there were an adequate number of attachment combinations to complete the analyses. The second pilot examined how individuals would change their own and their partner's attachment style if given the opportunity. The aim was to get preliminary information about the sample's standing amongst the prevailing attraction theories. Pilot study two is followed up by using data from the main study sample to see if there is a variance between attraction preferences when partners are and are not included in analyses (Hypotheses 1a - 1d).

# CHAPTER IV

## Pilot Study 1

### Methods

Participants (N = 507) who were presently in a romantic relationship from the university's undergraduate research pool completed an online survey for course credit. They answered questions about their age ($\overline{x}$ = 21.6; Med = 20), gender (Male = 158; Female = 348), race (African American = 94; Asian = 83; Caucasian = 86; Hispanic = 132; Middle Eastern = 57; Multiracial = 37; other = 18), and religion (Atheist = 34; Buddhist = 10; Catholic = 156; Christian = 132; Greek Orthodox = 11; Jewish = 3; Muslim = 50; none = 54; other = 57).

They also selected an option from the four-paragraph Relationships Questionnaire (RQ; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) that most closely related to their own attachment style (secure = 186; ambivalent = 74; avoidant = 123; fearful = 124) and what they believed to be their partner's attachment style (secure = 169; ambivalent = 59; avoidant = 95; fearful = 83). Some participants did not indicate a partner attachment style (N = 101) and were excluded from subsequent analyses. The RQ measure offers 4 paragraph options, one for each attachment style (Secure, Ambivalent, Avoidant, & Fearful), and related to how one feels in close relationships. Paragraphs focus on comfort with relationship closeness, interdependence, and beliefs about one's value to others. Appendix A displays the full measure.

**Results and Discussion**

Using Chi-square analysis, only 26 (6.5%) of respondents identified as being in an ambivalent-avoidant relationship (Table 1). Compared to other reports (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994), this is an uncharacteristically low percentage of discordant insecure pairs. Interestingly, the highest percentages of partner attachment styles were the same as the responding participant's attachment style for all groups, suggesting support for self-similarity attraction theory. There are several issues to consider while interpreting these results.

**Table 1**
Results of Chi-square Test for Perceived and Actual Partner Attachment

| Participant Attachment | Perceived Partner Attachment | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Secure | Avoidant | Ambivalent | Fearful |
| Secure | 94 (23%) * | 22 (5%) ** | 13 (3%) ** | 28 (7%) |
| Avoidant | 31 (8%) | 40 (10%) * | 15 (4%) | 13 (3%) |
| Ambivalent | 19 (5%) | 11 (3%) | 18 (4%) * | 12 (3%) |
| Fearful | 25 (6%) ** | 22 (5%) | 13 (3%) | 30 (7%) * |

*Note*. $\chi^2 = 64.07$, df = 9, p =.000. Numbers in parentheses indicate total percentages.
* identifies positive significance based on adjusted residual scores > 1.96
** identifies negative significance based on adjusted residual scores < -1.96

The evidence for self-similarity attraction theory provided by these data is consistent with other reports (Frazier, et al., 1996; Klohnen & Luo, 2003), but skepticism of a broad generalization is warranted. The first issue is salience of attachment style in mate choice. When choosing a potential mate, many individuals are more likely to prioritize physical appearance and status over attachment orientation (Brumbaugh, et al., 2014). It is unclear if there is a link between attachment styles and physical attractiveness or status, but men and women high in anxiety tend to be less content and more invested in their body image (Cash, Theriault, Annis, 2004), and more secure individuals tend to have greater success in career development (Blustein, Prezioso, & Schultheiss, 1995) and grooming social resources (Rose-Krasnor, 1997). These patterns may contribute to some of the reported attraction trends.

We also might consider that society and, more recently, social networking sites promote the idea that we are supposed to be attracted to those who are similar to ourselves (Kaptein, Castaneda, Fernandez, & Nass, 2014). There is also evidence that such a preference is neurologically rewarding (Anders, de Jong, Beck, Haynes, & Ethofer, 2016) but, when asked, people tend to prefer a complementary partner who is

similar in personality (Dijkstra & Barelds, 2007). Despite similarity being important to initial attraction (Montoya, Horton, & Kirchner, 2008), it may also have negative effects on long-term relationship success (Shiota & Levenson, 2007) while complementarity has positive effects on long-term relationship success (Markey & Markey, 2007). In the same vein, the disconnect between attraction and long-term success combined with societal pressures may incite feelings of dissonance when partners are not the same, leading them to attribute or exaggerate similarities to themselves falsely in self-reports (Higgins, 1987).

Consider the research methodology when interpreting these results. Utilizing the RQ, the percentages at which our population identifies with the four attachment styles (Secure = 37%, Ambivalent = 15%, Avoidant = 24%, and Fearful = 25%) are vastly inconsistent with previous findings (Bakermans-Kranenburg & van IJzendroon, 2009; Ognibene & Collins, 1998), but these numbers are quite similar when identifying partner attachment (Secure = 42%, Ambivalent = 15%, Avoidant = 23%, Fearful = 20%). Instead, historic national reports find that secures = 58%, ambivalent = 19%, avoidant = 23%, and fearful = 18%. Bearing in mind the disproportion of self-reported attachment based on the four-paragraph measure compared to historically reported numbers and the fact that these numbers are similarly disproportionate for perceived partner attachment, it may be that participants are unaware of their own and others' attachment dispositions. We may also want to consider that the terminology of the RQ is outdated and is no longer an accurate representation of attachment. This notion is of particular importance because of the disproportion specifically related to fearful attachment and the rise in this

attachment identification in college students found in other literature (Roberts, Edmonds, & Grijalva, 2010).

Researchers have, for a long time, been moving away from the use of categorical attachment measures as there is a psychometric advantage for continuously measuring attachment highlighting variances in attachment-related avoidance and anxiety (Fraley & Waller, 1998). Our remaining analyses utilize the continuous measurement of attachment via the Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000; Appendix B) and Experiences in Close Relationships - Relationship Structures (ECR-RS; Fraley, Heffernan, Vicary, & Brumbaugh, 2011; Appendix C). A cursory correlation between responses to both measures to identify potential problem areas is included. Using the ECR-R, Pilot Study 2 asks participants to change their attachment style and their partner's attachment style to examine the viability of the similarity to the ideal-self attraction theory.

# CHAPTER V

## Pilot Study 2

### Methods

In pilot study 2, undergraduate students (N=23) in an attachment course completed the 7-point Likert-scale attachment measure ECR-R (Fraley, et al., 2000). They completed the survey four times with varying instructions. They were asked, in order and over 4 class periods, to complete the measure for themselves, how they would change themselves, for a romantic partner, and how they would change the romantic partner. The ECR-R measures levels of attachment-based anxiety avoidance using 36

items related to how participants feel in their romantic relationships (i.e., “I rarely worry about my partner leaving me,” “I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close”). Subjects indicated whether they were identifying a current partner (N=18), former partner (N=4), or an ideal partner (N=1). Demographic data were not collected in this study.

**Results and Discussion**

A bivariate Pearson’s correlation (Table 2) indicates a lack of support for hypothesis 1a as anxiety and avoidance scores were positively correlated with anxiety and avoidance self-change scores respectively. We find partial support for hypothesis 1b which predicted individuals would prefer partners with a similar attachment style to their own. While avoidance scores were positively related to partner anxiety ratings, they were also positively related to a desire to change their partners to become more avoidant. Anxiety scores were not related to either partner attachment measure or partner change measure.

Neither avoidance nor anxiety was negatively related to avoidance or anxiety for current partner or partner change scores, suggesting that there was not a desire for a more secure partner. Nevertheless, given that avoidant participants reported having more anxious partners and displayed a desire to make those partners more avoidant, this could indicate that avoidant respondents would prefer a more secure partner and not necessarily a more avoidant partner. Avoidant participants also offered some support for hypothesis 1c which suggests insecure individuals are most likely to be in discordant romantic relationships. Despite this, the connection drawn between the desire for self-improvement and similarity to the ideal-self was not supported. Those high in avoidance indicated they

would prefer to remain avoidant and those high in ideal-self avoidance indicated they would prefer to change their partners to be both avoidant and anxious. Anxiety scores were not significantly related to any variables other than the desire to remain anxious.

**Table 2.**
Bivariate Correlation of ECR-R Attachment scores for self, partner, ideal self, and ideal partner

| | Mean | SD | ANX | AVD | Ideal ANX | Ideal AVD | Part ANX | Part AVD | Ideal Part ANX | Ideal Part AVD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ANX | 2.7 | 1.0 | - | .17 | .65** | .05 | .27 | .25 | .27 | -.14 |
| AVD | 2.8 | 1.4 | | - | .01 | .48* | .61** | .28 | .35 | .55** |
| Ideal ANX | 2.0 | 0.8 | | | - | .27 | .13 | -.23 | .36 | -.12 |
| Ideal AVD | 2.0 | 0.9 | | | | - | .16 | -.08 | .67** | .61** |
| Partn ANX | 2.9 | 0.8 | | | | | - | .18 | .16 | .19 |
| Partn AVD | 3.2 | 1.2 | | | | | | - | .08 | .28 |
| Ideal Partn ANX | 1.8 | 0.7 | | | | | | | - | .63** |
| Ideal Partn AVD | 1.7 | 0.9 | | | | | | | | - |

Note: ** p = < .01, * p = <.05

These results can be interpreted in two ways. First, avoidant individuals are more likely to be in relationships with anxious individuals, but not the reverse. This interpretation is partially supported by Pietromonaco and Carnelley (1994) as they found that avoidant men viewed anxious women as the most viable long-term partner, but anxious women viewed avoidant men as the least viable. Second, because attachment influences one's view of self and others and, specifically for those with an avoidant style, those views lead them to believe others are impinging on their autonomy (Collins & Read, 1990; Feeney & Noller, 1991; Hazan & Shaver, 1987), it may be that avoidant

participants perceive most others as more anxious. Considering the lack of significance related to anxiety scores and the primary desire of those high in anxiety to be in close intimate relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Collins & Read, 1994; Pietromonaco & Feldman-Barrett, 2000), it may be that those higher in anxiety are less concerned with whom they are with so long as that person makes them feel loved.

Before concluding the discussion of this pilot study, it is noteworthy that the sample size in this analysis was quite small and it is not prudent to make any declarations based on these results. The participants were also part of an attachment class, which, by design, encourages students to understand and embrace their attachments. Moreover, participants were asked to postulate about the attachment styles of their partners. It is likely that college-aged students have not been in a relationship long enough and have not gained adequate expertise to diagnose another's attachment style. The hypotheses and interpretations discussed here are revisited in the first portion of the main study in which we use a dyadic sample allowing the analysis of individual attachment scores for both partners.

# CHAPTER VI

## Main Study: Attraction Theory Exploration

### Methods

**Procedure.** In this experiment, participants were recruited to join a longitudinal study. The first portion of the study involved a survey that both members of each couple were instructed to complete independently. Recruited couples were directed to an online Qualtrics survey and received four research credits upon successful completion by both partners. Timestamp and IP data were used to ensure sparate survey completion. Cross-

checking of information such as address, phone numbers, name, and relationship initiation date for self and partner was used to reduce the risk of non-couples participating for points only. Information from this survey is used in our cross-sectional analysis.

Couples who completed the initial survey were recruited to visit the lab for an interview three months later. Participating couples were separated and asked questions from the original survey. In addition to separate interviews couples also engaged in a conflict scenario, in a room separate from interviewers, while being video recorded to ensure that disagreements did not escalate to inappropriate levels. Upon completion, or expiration of the 15-minute time limit, the interviewers re-entered the room and again separated the couples for further questioning. Upon interview completion, couples were debriefed, and the researchers confirmed there was no residual animosity by comparing relationship satisfaction answers before and after the conflict scenario. Couples also participated in an activity in which they named five qualities they love about their partner and shared it with each other. This conflict scenario was modeled after methodologies used by Simpson and colleagues (1996). Couples were paid $25 for the lab visit and offered four r-points for the lab visit if needed. Finally, couples who participated in the interviews were contacted via e-mail 1-year following their initial survey to inquire about the current status of their relationship.

**Participants.** In the initial recruitment phase, a total of 268 couples were recruited via the undergraduate research pool to complete an online survey about "success in relationships separately." Utilizing a strategy similar to Molero and colleagues (2016), research assistants dispersed flyers about the study around campus, within the community, and on their social media accounts. Generally, only one

participant in the dyad was a student on campus. Couples were from relatively diverse backgrounds (Table 3). Only couples that had been dating for at least two months qualified for the study as this criterion has been used previously (Powers, Pietromonaco, Gunlicks & Sayer, 2006). Couples were together for an average of 22 months, ranging from 2-91 months and a median of 17 months. Average participant age was 21, and the median age was 20. As research has shown small but significant differences between those in opposite vs. same-sex relationships (Mohr, Selterman, & Fassinger, 2013), all participants were in heterosexual relationships. Thus, there were 268 males and 268 females. To initially qualify, couples could not be cohabiting. Commitments such assigning a lease or sharing a joint bank account can constrain relationship lengths of cohabiting couples (Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2012).

A subset of couples (N = 87) who completed the initial survey responded to follow-up recruiting and continued to the interview phase of this study (3 months after survey completion). Over that span, ten couples (11.5%) began living together. Of the continuing couples, individuals varied in race with African American (N = 26), Caucasian (N = 28), East/Southeast Asian (N = 17), Egyptian (N = 6), Hispanic (N = 80), Middle Eastern (N = 4), Multiracial (N = 7), and South Asian/Indian (N = 6) represented. The mean age was 21 years, and the median was 20.

One year after completing the initial survey, those who completed the interview phase were contacted again. They were asked to complete a short survey regarding their current relationship status. For participant completing all three portions (N = 51), the median relationship longevity was 16.5 months at time 1, 18.5 months at time 2, and 23.5 months at time 3. Nine (5.7%) of the couples who completed the final survey reported

that their relationship had ended. Given the relatively high attrition and limited survey at time 3, the analysis will consist mostly of participants from the initial survey and the interview phase. Initial survey couples will be analyzed in a cross-sectional manner, and interview couples will be explored using longitudinal methods to determine the relationship between their initial survey responses and their interview data.

**Table 3**
Chi-square breakdown of racial information of initial cross-sectional sample

| | Partner Race | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Race** | **AfAm** | **Cauc** | **E/SeA** | **Egy** | **Hisp** | **MidE** | **Mult** | **SA/I** | **Total** |
| **African American** | 60* | 3** | 0** | 1 | 17** | 0** | 5 | 2 | 88 |
| **Caucasian** | 3** | 52* | 2 | 5 | 18** | 2 | 8* | 1 | 91 |
| **East/ Southeast Asian** | 0** | 2 | 26* | 0 | 5** | 0 | 1 | 1 | 35 |
| **Egyptian** | 1 | 5 | 0 | 14* | 1** | 1 | 0 | 0 | 22 |
| **Hispanic** | 17** | 18** | 5** | 1** | 154* | 4** | 7 | 5** | 211 |
| **Middle Eastern** | 0** | 2 | 0 | 1 | 4** | 18* | 3 | 1 | 29 |
| **Multi-racial** | 5 | 8* | 1 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 27 |
| **South Asian/ Indian** | 2 | 1** | 1 | 0 | 5** | 1 | 1 | 22* | 33 |

*Note*. $\chi^2 = 1104.67$, df = 49, p =.000. * Significant positive effect based on adjusted residual scores > 1.96, identifying a potential preference for dating partners from certain racial groups. ** Significant negative effect based on adjusted residual scores < -1.96, identifying potential disinterest in dating partners from certain racial groups.

## Materials

**Demographics**. Similar to Kirkpatrick and Davis' (1994) longitudinal study, both partners rated the seriousness of their relationship on a 7-point Likert scale. Relationship longevity was calculated in monthly intervals using the survey question "On what date did you and your relationship partner begin dating exclusively." The date on which they began dating was subtracted from the date of survey one completed for time one longevity, the date from their interview for time two longevity, and from the date on

which they responded to the follow-up e-mail for time three longevity. Other questions used for validation purposes included names, addresses, phone numbers, gender, and age of self and partner. They were asked about their current living situation and whether or not they had plans to move in together. Finally, partners listed up to 10 of their most frequent relationship conflicts in order of severity. Questions were mostly open-ended. A full list can be found in Appendix D.

**Attachment.** Attachment styles were measured for both partners using the RQ (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Appendix A) and the 9-item ECR-RS (Fraley, et al., 2011; Appendix C). This questionnaire is a revised version of the original ECR-R (Appendix B), a well-established and commonly used measure. In the ECR-RS attachment avoidance and anxiety is measured for specific attachment relationships including mother (AVD $\alpha$ = .91, ANX $\alpha$ = .86), father (AVD $\alpha$ = .92, ANX $\alpha$ = .92), significant other (AVD $\alpha$ = .86, ANX $\alpha$ = .88), best friend (AVD $\alpha$ = .89, ANX $\alpha$ = .92), and perception of partner's attachment toward significant other (AVD $\alpha$ = .87, ANX $\alpha$ = .92). Separating the attachment figures provides a more precise understanding of the participants' attachment relationships and allows us to specifically evaluate attachment in their present romantic relationships while affording the opportunity to compare results to other relationships. Responses were collected using a 7-point Likert scale and questions were similar to those used in the ECR-R (i.e., "I find it easy to depend on this person," "I'm afraid that this person may abandon me").

As previously discussed, researchers do not recommend using a categorical attachment measure (Fraley, Hudson, Heffernan, & Segal, 2015). Upon comparison, ECR-RS avoidance was only weakly related to RQ avoidance, and it was not related to

fearful attachment (high in both avoidance and anxiety). ECR-RS anxiety appeared to be more descriptive of RQ fearfulness and was not at all related to RQ ambivalence. Both avoidance and anxiety were negatively related to RQ security (Table 4). This comparison may indicate that the inflated accounts of fearful attachment and suppressed accounts of ambivalence reported by us and others (Roberts, et al., 2010) may be a function of how modern students related to the RQ phrasing.

**Table 4**
Pearson's correlation comparison of RQ & ECR-RS

| | **RQ Attachment** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ECR-RS Attachment** | **Secure** *(N = 171)* | **Avoidant** *(N = 148)* | **Ambivalent** *(N = 85)* | **Fearful** *(N = 132)* |
| Avoidance (M = 1.8, SD = .96) | -.17** | .09* | .03 | .07 |
| Anxiety (M = 2.2, SD = 1.5) | -.13** | -.07 | .07 | .16** |

Note: ** p = < .01, * p = <.05

In addition to the suspected unreliability of the RQ, there has been pushback against the trait-like measures of attachment as individuals tend to have relationship-specific working models associated with their attachment orientation (Fraley, et al., 2011). The ECR-RS was created in response to this and has shown to be a better predictor of intra- and interpersonal outcomes. Trait-related measures, on the other hand, are more easily generalized to personality traits. A correlation of relationship-specific ECR-RS attachment scores suggests consistency of the measure across relationships despite varying in effect size (Table 5). Thus, for our research, it was most appropriate to measure and analyze the sample with the ECR-RS scores for significant others.

**Table 5.**
Bivariate Correlation of ECR-RS attachment scores for varying relationships

| | Mean | SD | Part ANX | Part AVD | Mom ANX | Mom AVD | Dad ANX | Dad AVD | Frnd ANX | Frnd AVD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Partner ANX | 2.2 | 1.5 | - | .46** | .40** | .20** | .34** | .27** | .43** | .22** |
| Partner AVD | 1.8 | .96 | | - | .26** | .26** | .24** | .22** | .29** | .27** |
| Mother ANX | 1.6 | 1.2 | | | - | .45** | .49** | .16** | .44** | .18** |
| Mother AVD | 2.7 | 1.6 | | | | - | .21** | .36** | .24** | .22** |
| Father ANX | 2.0 | 1.6 | | | | | - | .51** | .29** | .09* |
| Father AVD | 3.5 | 1.8 | | | | | | - | .15** | .20** |
| Friend ANX | 1.9 | 1.4 | | | | | | | - | .47** |
| Friend AVD | 2.3 | 1.3 | | | | | | | | - |

Note: ** p = < .01, * p = <.05

## Results and Discussion

**Pilot Study Follow up.** In response to issues raised in the pilot studies, we investigated the accuracy of partner attachment perceptions. In the discussion of Pilot 1, we posited that individuals might not have a good grasp of what others' attachment styles might be. This issue was raised because the proportion of attachment styles represented in our sample was skewed, not only for the individual but also for perceptions of their partners. Considering that those deviant percentages were similarly deviant in ratings of one's partner, and the significant effect for similarity-attraction, we suggested there may be confounding variables influencing perceptions. With our present data, we analyzed ECR-RS responses from actors speculating on their partner's attachment orientations as well as actual partner responses.

Because anxiety and avoidance influence the way one views the world, with avoidance related to a belief that others are getting too close and anxiety related to a belief that others are pulling too far away (Feeney & Noller, 1991), we conducted this analysis using a partial correlation controlling for actor attachment (Table 6). Upon initial analysis, perception scores of avoidance were positively correlated with actual avoidance and anxiety, and anxiety perceptions were also positively correlated with both avoidance and anxiety. Due to the high inter-correlations between individual anxiety and avoidance scores (r = .42, p = .000), partner anxiety and avoidance were included as controls (Butzer & Campbell, 2008).

**Table 6.**
Partial correlations of perceived and actual partner attachment

| Control | Correlates | Mean | SD | Perceived Avoidance *Mean:1.97; SD:1.08* | Perceived Anxiety *Mean:2.34; SD:1.70* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Actor AVD Actor ANX* | *Partner Anxiety* | 2.17 | 1.51 | .15** | .34** |
| *Actor AVD Actor ANX* | *Partner Avoidance* | 1.80 | 0.96 | .35** | .11* |
| *Actor AVD Actor ANX Partner AVD* | *Partner Anxiety* | 2.17 | 1.51 | .01 | .32** |
| *Actor AVD Actor ANX Partner ANX* | *Partner Avoidance* | 1.80 | 0.96 | .32** | -.04 |

*Note:* **p < .01, *p < .05

Results indicate that individuals are quite accurate in assessing their partner's attachment behaviors. As such, partner data in single respondent studies might be reasonably reliable. These analyses also support the push for the use of continuous

attachment measures centered on avoidance and anxiety as the disproportion of RQ identifications seems even more likely to be related to a lack of modern validity in the measure. Nevertheless, dyadic data are still more reliable in the analysis of relationship functioning (Kenny, et al., 2006) and the significant presence of both anxiety and avoidance in our samples predicates controlled analyses.

**Hypothesis 1a.** Hypothesis 1a predicted that ambivalent participants would want to become more avoidant and less ambivalent and avoidant participants would opt to become more ambivalent and less avoidant. Pilot study 2, did not support this hypothesis. Instead, individuals did not prefer to change their avoidance or anxiety if given the opportunity. In the present analysis, participants answered attachment change questions using the RQ. The RQ was used for analysis in this case because participant change data were not available from the ECR-RS. A Pearson's correlation was performed using dummy coded variables from the self and ideal-self RQ measures (Table 7). Again, hypothesis 1a is unsupported as all groups reported significant preferences to maintain their current attachment style if given the opportunity to change.

**Table 7.**
Correlation of dummy coded RQ paragraphs for actual and ideal-self

| | | Ideal Attachment | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Secure** | **Avoidant** | **Ambivalent** | **Fearful** |
| **Attachment** | **N** | 253 | 196 | 41 | 46 |
| **Secure** | 174 | .40** | -.25** | -.14** | -.15** |
| **Avoidant** | 148 | -.30** | .40** | -.08 | -.07 |
| **Ambivalent** | 85 | -.04 | -.10* | .38** | -.12** |
| **Fearful** | 132 | -.09* | -.06 | -.08 | .34** |

Note: ** p = < .01, * p = <.05

These results are surprising given that individuals generally strive for self-improvement (Hudson & Roberts, 2014). Avoidant individuals might prefer to stay the same due to their positive views of self and negative views of others, but it is less clear

why ambivalent and fearful individuals, who view themselves in a negative light (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), would be uninterested in changing. Perhaps by asking participants to identify with an attachment paragraph and then asking them to choose one with which they would rather identify we made salient their inadequacies and limited their options to adequately defend their present attachment leading to personal cognitive dissonance (Bem, 1967; Festinger, 1957). Thus, in defense of their cognitive harmony, they chose their present attachment as their ideal attachment. Future research should investigate the desire to change one's attachment through various methodologies. Present research has focused heavily on the question of whether or not attachment styles can change, revealing mixed reviews (Davila, Burge, Hammen, 1997; Lopez & Gormley, 2002; Waters, et. al., 2011; Zhang & Labouvie-Vief, 2004), but they have yet to ask if people should or want to change their attachment style. If evidence continues to suggest that individuals are comfortable with their attachment insecurities and would prefer to remain as they are, clinical and empirical efforts would potentially find greater success in helping people by exploring how attachment insecurities can be used more positively instead of eliminated.

**Hypotheses 1b and 1c.** These two hypotheses are discussed jointly as they posit different attachment-based attraction preferences depending on context. Hypothesis 1b suggests that given a hypothetical scenario, individuals will show a significant preference for those with similar levels of avoidance and anxiety. Conversely, Hypothesis 1c suggests that complementarity will be found in actual couple data as actor avoidance will be positively related to partner anxiety and actor anxiety will be positively related to partner avoidance. Similar to the analysis of Hypothesis 1a, preferred partner attachment

was collected via the RQ. Because of this, there is no attachment style overlap at the individual level, and a controlled analysis is not possible. Again, dummy-coded RQ categories were used to perform a Pearson's bivariate correlation (Table 8). Pilot study 2 results also indicated some support for the idea that ideal-self avoidance was positively related to ideal-partner avoidance, so ideal-self scores are also included.

**Table 8.**
Correlation of RQ self, ideal-self, & ideal partner

| | | **Ideal Partner** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Attachment** | | *Secure* | *Avoidant* | *Ambivalent* | *Fearful* |
| **Self** | **N** | 264 | 146 | 75 | 51 |
| *Secure* | 174 | .27** | -.15** | -.13** | -.09* |
| *Avoidant* | 148 | -.26** | .32** | -.01 | -.03 |
| *Ambivalent* | 85 | -.07 | -.07 | .16** | .03 |
| *Fearful* | 132 | .04 | -.11* | .01 | .10* |
| **Ideal-Self** | | | | | |
| *Secure* | 253 | .53** | -.33** | -.21** | -.15** |
| *Avoidant* | 196 | -.35** | .45** | -.03 | -.05 |
| *Ambivalent* | 41 | -.19** | -.07 | .31** | .05 |
| *Fearful* | 46 | -.16** | -.13** | .13** | .31** |

Note: ** p = < .01, * p = <.05

These data support hypothesis 1b and the self-similarity theory of attraction in a hypothetical scenario as all attachment categories identified that they would ideally change their partner to be more like themselves. Consistent with our other findings, we see that only secure individuals prefer partners who are secure, further highlighting a distinct division between secure and insecure attraction preferences. Pilot Study 2 found significant hypothetical self-similarity attraction effects for avoidance, but in this analysis results were also significant for the ambivalent category. It is difficult to compare the two analyses because Pilot 2 utilized continuous measures of avoidance and anxiety, but it seems that when individuals are forced to identify with a group, they report being more attracted to that group. These results are consistent with various other works (Byrne,

1961; Kaptein, et al., 2014; Montoya & Horton, 2013), but it too fails to address the ecological validity of hypothetical experimentation

We also find evidence for similarity to the ideal-self attraction theory (Klohnen & Mendelsohn, 1998) more robustly than the findings reported in Pilot 2. In Pilot 2 we found only ideal-avoidance similarity-attraction while in this analysis; all groups were attracted to the representation of their ideal self. While these results are again supportive of previous findings (Herbst, et al., 2003; Klohnen & Luo, 2003), there is still concern over the differences in measures used between our analyses. Much like other attraction findings from hypothetical experimentation, it is difficult to measure real-life impact (Luo & Zhang, 2009). To measure attraction to ideal-self similarity, participants must be twice removed from their normal thought processes by first being asked to imagine (and select from some pre-determined options) who it is they are striving to be, and then again to imagine if they would be attracted to another person who fits that description. The answer would almost always be yes with the thought process flowing something like this:

> "Well, I guess I could improve in these qualities they describe here. Well, yes, if I want to be better in this area that probably means I am attracted to those qualities, and maybe this person could help me achieve those goals."

The problem here is that these are not typical considerations for someone on the dating market (Luo & Zhang, 2009). Moreover, when in a relationship with someone who represents one's ideal-self, resentment quickly takes over if the "less than ideal" partner fails to achieve the status he or she had hoped (Herbst, et al., 2003).

Overall, hypothetical attraction scenarios do not yield reliable information. When in more natural situations people are less likely to adhere to similarity principles (Luo, & Zhang, 2009) and are more likely to exhibit preferences for complementary partners

(Dijkstra & Barelds, 2007). More importantly is to consider how initial attraction may influence relationship success. Since similarity can hinder long-term relationship success (Shiota & Levenson, 2007), and complementarity can be a catalyst for success (Markey & Markey, 2007), it is important to understand the trends of actual relationships.

Counter to Hypothesis 1c, participants in Pilot 1 significantly rated their current partners as being similar rather than complementary to themselves. These results were categorical and based purely on subjective perceptions of partner attachment styles. In Pilot Study 2, continuous ECR-R avoidance and anxiety scores were used, and the results showed support for Hypothesis 1c as avoidance was positively related to perceived partner anxiety. However, anxiety was not related to perceived partner avoidance. More specifically, those high in avoidance claimed to be in relationships with partners higher in anxiety, but they also indicated that they would have preferred their partners to be more avoidant. Still, results in Pilot 2 were based only on perceptions of partner attachment. While the analysis of actual vs. perceived attachment has shown to be relatively accurate, a dyadic sample is used in the present analysis and more advanced analyses were conducted.

We conducted multiple regression analyses to predict actual relationship trends based on actor and partner avoidance and anxiety scores. We used multiple regression for these models because individual avoidance and anxiety scores are highly correlated for both males ($r = .42$, $p = .000$) and females ($r = .51$, $p = .000$) making it difficult to decipher meaningful effects. Thus, regression analysis was used to factor out the influence of opposing attachment insecurities. The present analysis fails to support Hypothesis 1c as both males and females high in avoidance were more likely to be in

relationships with others high in avoidance (Table 9). There were no actor anxiety effects for either similarity or complementary attraction.

**Table 9.**
Four models multiple regression of attachment-related relationship trends

| Model | Mean | SD | *t* | *β* | F | *df* | Adj. $R^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Female Partner Avoidance** | 1.71 | 0.93 | | | | | |
| *Overall Model* | | | | | 36.54** | 3,264 | .29 |
| *Partner Anxiety* | | | 8.61** | .46 | | | |
| *Actor Avoidance* | | | 2.91** | .17 | | | |
| *Actor Anxiety* | | | 0.78 | .05 | | | |
| **Female Partner Anxiety** | 2.17 | 1.50 | | | | | |
| *Overall Model* | | | | | 32.51** | 3,264 | .26 |
| *Partner Avoidance* | | | 8.61** | .48 | | | |
| *Actor Avoidance* | | | 1.14 | .07 | | | |
| *Actor Anxiety* | | | 1.05 | .06 | | | |
| **Male Partner Avoidance** | 1.90 | 1.00 | | | | | |
| *Overall Model* | | | | | 26.10** | 3,264 | .22 |
| *Partner Anxiety* | | | 6.71** | .37 | | | |
| *Actor Avoidance* | | | 2.91** | .18 | | | |
| *Actor Anxiety* | | | 1.14 | .07 | | | |
| **Female Partner Anxiety** | 2.17 | 1.53 | | | | | |
| *Overall Model* | | | | | 20.45** | 3,264 | .18 |
| *Partner Avoidance* | | | 6.71** | .39 | | | |
| *Actor Avoidance* | | | 0.78 | .05 | | | |
| *Actor Anxiety* | | | 1.05 | .07 | | | |

*Note*: Bolded model variables indicate model DV. **p < .01

It is intriguing to find a self-similarity trend in actual couple data because it has typically been found only within hypothetical scenarios (Luo & Zhang, 2009) while complementary pairs frequently arise in research samples (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Senchak & Leonard, 1992). Moreover, previous support for self-similarity has generally reported significant findings for both avoidance and anxiety, but here, there is only support for avoidance. One of the reasons for the lack of support for Hypothesis 1c is that the sample is relatively young and still in the earlier stages of their dating relationships. It may be the case that complementary pairs would be more abundant amongst a more mature sample.

As it pertains to similarity-attraction, however, our method of analysis may have indeed found a caveat about attachment avoidance. Klohnen & Luo (2003) reported self-similarity preferences for both anxiety and avoidance. In these studies, participants rated hypothetical potential partners based on paragraphs and descriptions using attachment-specific rhetoric. As discussed by Luo and Zhang (2009), the issue with these tasks is that hypothetical scenarios are not a true representation of the human experience. Moreover, descriptions and confederates must be extreme in their representation of their targeted attachment style to prime the intended effect. Real life partners are very rarely a perfect fit in any of the attachment categories (see individual inter-correlations of anxiety and avoidance). Extrapolating meaningful data are difficult in these cases because it is not natural to force individual focus toward specific attachment traits. Instead, individuals may be more inclined to overlook some attachment-related qualities if their potential mate represents reciprocity or other appealing traits (Luo & Zhang, 2009). In our analysis, however, we used real partner data and controlled for overlapping attachment traits.

Frazier and Colleagues (1996) combined hypothetical and real partner data and found self-similarity preferences for ambivalent individuals but not avoidant individuals. One reason this may be the case was that they used the 18-item Adult Attachment Scale (Collins & Read, 1990), which has inferior psychometric properties compared to the Experiences in Close Relationships measure and is less reliable in analysis of romantic attachments (Ravitz, Maunder, hunter, Sthankiya, & Lancee, 2010). Moreover, they did not control for individual variability on these dimensions. Even though some of these

qualities correlated between males and females, other qualities were likely to vary at the individual level and may have affected their correlations.

Our novel result that attachment anxiety is unrelated to attraction preferences makes intuitive sense. In extreme terms, anxiety relates to inter-dependent and relationship-obsessed behaviors (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). It would seem the main focus of attachment-based anxiety is finding and initiating a relationship and less about selectivity. The reported indifference related to attachment anxiety may also be a response to the adverse effects anxiety has on romantic relationships. Separate from anxiety-related confrontational behaviors within relationships (Pietromonaco, et al., 2004), our results are similar to those by Latty-Mann and Davis (1996), who found anxiety to be the least desirable trait in a romantic partner. In our case, we did not find anxiety to be overtly negative, but anxiety was indeed not a preferred trait, even by others high in anxiety.

In sum, the present results support self-similarity theory for both avoidance and anxiety when presented in a hypothetical framework. In natural relationship selections, however, only support for avoidance self-similarity was found. This ran counter to our predictions supporting complementary attraction. These results also provide evidence for attraction to ideal-self similarity (see Herbst, et al., 2003; Klohnen & Luo, 2003), but completely counter attraction to attachment security. Finally, the present analyses bring to light a new attachment-related attraction consideration. These data suggest that attachment anxiety is unrelated to attraction preferences, and we argue that anxiety is related to a preoccupation with finding and maintaining close intimate relationships

(Pietromonaco & Feldman-Barrett, 2000), which may lead ambivalent individuals to enter relationships less discriminately, regardless of an attachment fit.

**Hypothesis 1d.** Previous literature has cited that ambivalent-avoidant relationship lengths are similar to those between two partners high in attachment security, but attachment insecurity is negatively related to relationship longevity overall (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Senchak & Leonard, 1992). The present results also show this general trend for attachment insecurity when controlling for age in both the cross-sectional and longitudinal samples (Table 10). In our cross-sectional data, both avoidance and anxiety contribute negatively to relationship length, while in the longitudinal data this relationship only appears for avoidance.

**Table 10.**
Correlations of age, attachment, and longevity

| **Control** | **Correlate** | | | **Attachment** | | | | **Relationship Longevity** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cross-Sectional (N = 536)** | | **Mean** | **SD** | **AVD** | | **ANX** | | *T1($\bar{x}$ =27.3; SD = 32.5)* | |
| | *Age* | 21.8 | 4.92 | .10* | | .03 | | .48** | |
| | *Avd* | 1.80 | 0.96 | - | | .46** | | -.04 | |
| | *Anx* | 2.17 | 1.51 | .16** | | - | | -.06 | |
| *Age* | *Avd* | | | | | | | -.10* | |
| *Age* | *Anx* | | | | | | | -.09* | |
| **Longitudinal (N = 174 T2; 102 T3)** | | | | **T1** | **T2** | **T1** | **T2** | *T2($\bar{x}$ = 27.1; SD = 37.2)* | *T3($\bar{x}$ = 34.3; SD = 45.6)* |
| | *Age* | 21.1 | 4.33 | .09 | -.01 | .18* | .12 | .50** | .75** |
| | *T1 Avd* | 1.75 | 0.89 | - | .54** | .42** | .25** | -.15* | -.17 |
| | *T1 Anx* | 2.13 | 1.49 | .42** | .25** | - | .51** | -.14 | -.13 |
| | *T2 Avd* | 1.72 | 0.80 | .54** | - | .25** | .34** | -.13 | -.16 |
| | *T2 Anx* | 1.74 | 1.14 | .25** | .34** | .51** | - | -.10 | -.11 |
| *Age* | *T1 Avd* | | | | | | | -.20* | -.21* |
| *Age* | *T1 Anx* | | | | | | | -.12 | -.12 |
| *Age* | *T2 Avd* | | | | | | | -.21* | -.22* |
| *Age* | *T2 Anx* | | | | | | | -.18 | -.17 |

Note: Age is highly correlated to longevity at all time-points. Attachment avoidance and anxiety are highly correlated at cross-sectionally and longitudinally. **p < .01, * p < .05

Hypothesis 1d predicted that the negative effects of attachment insecurity on relationship longevity would be positively moderated by discordant partner attachment. Due to high intercorrelations between individual avoidance and attachment as well as age and relationship longevity, we conducted APIM MLM, using age and individual attachment styles as control variables in our cross-sectional analysis. Our analysis followed the guidelines proposed by Kashy and Kenny (2000) as well as Butzer and Campbell (2008). Hypothesis 1d was not supported because actor avoidance and partner anxiety did not interact to predict greater longevity (Table 11). Nevertheless, we see that discordant attachment interactions are not detrimental to relationship length, but the interaction between actor and partner anxiety was negatively related to relationship longevity.

**Table 11.**
APIM attachment interactions predicting relationship longevity

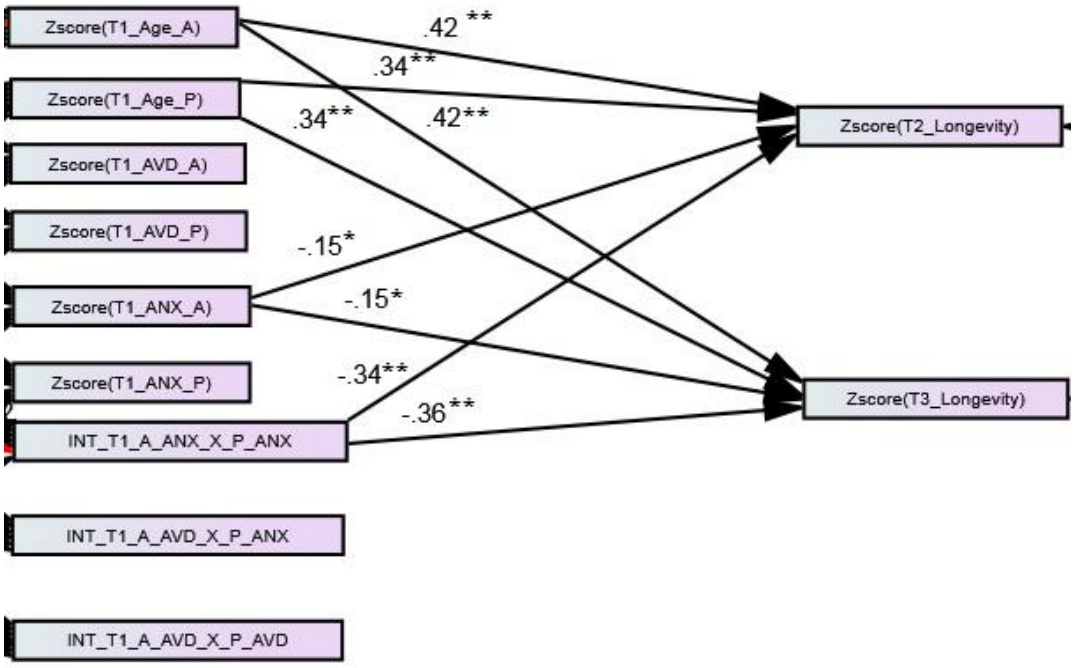
| **Predictor Variables** | ***Mean*** | ***SD*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Intercept* | 27.3 | 32.5 | .003 | .054 |
| *Actor Age* | 22.5 | 5.50 | .29** | .028 |
| *Partner Age* | 21.1 | 4.17 | .29** | .028 |
| *Actor Avoidance* | 1.90 | 0.99 | -.06 | .040 |
| *Partner Avoidance* | 1.71 | 0.93 | -.06 | .040 |
| *Actor Anxiety* | 2.17 | 1.53 | -.02 | .041 |
| *Partner Anxiety* | 2.17 | 1.49 | -.01 | .041 |
| *Actor Avoidance * Partner Avoidance* | | | .06 | .053 |
| *Actor Avoidance * Partner Anxiety* | | | -.00 | .001 |
| *Actor Anxiety * Partner Anxiety* | | | -.11* | .046 |

*Note*: all continuous variables standardized. **p < .01, *p < .05

We further tested this relationship longitudinally using APIM SEM (Bolger & Laurenceau, 2013; Karantzas, et al., 2014; Kenny, et al., 2006; Vandenberghe, 2014). Our longitudinal sample was measured at three time-points (initial measure, 3-month

interviews, and 1-year follow-up). This analysis further supports the results from the cross-sectional analysis where only the actor and partner anxiety interaction produced significant and negative effects on relationship longevity (Figure 2). This analysis also revealed a significant independent negative effect of actor anxiety on future relationship longevity.

**Figure 2.** Longitudinal APIM SEM of attachment interactions predicting longevity




*Note:* $\chi^2(10, N = 174) = 10.67, p = .384$*; CFI = .999; TLI =.996 ; RMSEA = .020(90% CI: .000,.086 ); power > .90. *p < .05, **p < .01*

In both analyses, there are three interactions measured (actor anxiety X partner anxiety; actor avoidance X partner avoidance; actor avoidance X partner anxiety). Given the structure of APIM analysis, each partner is measured as both an actor and partner in a nested design. Thus, an interaction term including actor anxiety by partner avoidance would be redundant. The results suggest that attachment anxiety is the factor in relationship dissolution. However, the negative effects of anxiety appear to be inconsequential if paired with someone who is not also high in anxiety. These findings

are novel because various literature have reported that avoidance is the deciding factor in relationship dissolution (Feeney & Noller, 1992; Kirkpatrick & Hazan, 1994). These effects were found, like in our analysis (Table 10), through simple correlations. However, when accounting for the high intercorrelations of individual avoidance and anxiety, we uncover that anxiety may instead be the factor driving relationship dissolution. In the subsequent sections, decision-making power, relationship conflict, resilience, and life satisfaction are investigated as potential explanations for the mitigation above of anxiety effects.

# CHAPTER VII

## Main Study: Gender Roles

### Measures

The following measures were used in both the initial survey and the interview phase along with all measures discussed in the previous section. Procedure and participants did not vary.

**Gender Roles.** The gender role measure was a compilation of twelve statements and questions related to gender role expectations taken from some studies (Bem, 1974; Lye & Biblarz, 1993; Kalmijn, 2005; Alonso-Arbiol, et al., 2002; Arránz Becker, 2013). Reliability analysis revealed eight relevant questions rated on a 7-point Likert scale in the measure ($\alpha = .78$) with high scores representing more traditional gender role expectations and low scores representing more progressive gender role expectations. The items in this measure are related to how individuals view the appropriate gender roles in the context of work, home, and social interaction. Some examples are, “women should be more

concerned with family than a career," "in general, when it comes to relationships, there are certain responsibilities women should handle and certain responsibilities men should handle," and "it is better for a person to get married than to go through life being single." The full survey can be found in Appendix E.

**Life Satisfaction**. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) is a widely used measure with sound psychometric properties (Diener, Emmons, Larson, & Griffin, 1985). The measure contains five statements rated on a 7-point Likert scale ($\alpha = .85$). The scale is intended to gauge how satisfied one is in their lives (e.g., "In most ways my life is close to my ideal."). A full version is available in Appendix F

**Relationship Satisfaction**. The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS; Hendrick, Dicke, & Hendrick, 1998) measures relationship satisfaction. This 7-item, 5-point Likert scale has been widely used as an efficient method of measuring relationship satisfaction (e.g., "How good is your relationship compared to most?"). This scale has strong psychometric properties ($\alpha = .84$). A full version can be found in Appendix G.

**Results and Discussion**

**Hypothesis 2a.** Based on findings that suggest avoidant tendencies are more masculine and anxious tendencies are more feminine, hypothesis 2a predicted that males would have significantly higher rates of avoidance and females would have significantly higher rates of anxiety. Correlations from the cross-sectional data with all variables pertinent to this section of analyses are shown in Table 12. Males had a positive correlation with avoidance levels, but neither gender had a significant relationship to anxiety. Analysis of the longitudinal sample revealed a significant decrease in anxiety from time 1 to time 2, but there was no significant change in avoidance (Table 13). A

one-way ANOVA revealed no gender differences in this sample. There was no support for hypothesis 2a. While previous reports do reveal gender differences in avoidance and anxiety (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Simpson, 1990), more expansive work has indicated that this effect might not exist (Bakermans-Kranenburg & van IJzendroon, 2009; Feeney & Noller, 1992; Schmitt, et al., 2003). Neither avoidance nor anxiety had a significant relationship with gender role expectations also bringing hypothesis 2b into question. Nevertheless, avoidance and anxiety levels do show significant negative relationships with life satisfaction, while more traditional gender roles have a positive relationship with life satisfaction, indicating a potential interaction as predicted in hypotheses 2c and 2d. These hypotheses are investigated deeper in the following subsections.

**Table 12.**
Correlation of attachment, gender-roles, gender, and outcome variables

| | Mean | SD | Gen | Avd | Anx | GenRole | LifeSat | Long | RelSat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | 21.8 | 4.95 | -.14** | .10* | .03 | .01 | .05 | .48** | -.10* |
| **Gen** | 0.50 | 0.50 | | -.10* | .00 | -.30** | -.00 | .00 | -.03 |
| **Avd** | 1.80 | 0.96 | | | .46** | .03 | -.25** | -.04 | -.54** |
| **Anx** | 2.17 | 1.51 | | | | .02 | -.28** | -.06 | -.37** |
| **GenRole** | 3.62 | 1.16 | | | | | .11* | -.08 | -.08 |
| **LifeSat** | 22.8 | 6.21 | | | | | | .10* | .29** |
| **Long** | 27.3 | 32.5 | | | | | | | -.02 |
| **RelSat** | 4.27 | 0.63 | | | | | | | |

*Note:* N = 536, *p < .05, **p < .01

**Table 13.**
Paired Samples *t*-test of time 1 and time 2 attachment

| | Mean | SD | Mean Difference | Paired SD | *t* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **T1 Avoidance** | 1.75 | 0.89 | .030 | 0.81 | 0.49 |
| **T2 Avoidance** | 1.72 | 0.79 | | | |
| **T1 Anxiety** | 2.13 | 1.49 | .389 | 1.34 | 3.83** |
| **T2 Anxiety** | 1.74 | 1.14 | | | |

*Note:* N = 174, **p = .000

**Hypothesis 2b.** Hypothesis 2b predicted that avoidance and anxiety would be positively related to more traditional gender role expectations, but the results shown in

Table 12 are not supportive. In the present analysis, this relationship was tested using APIM MLM in the cross-sectional sample. An interaction model between actor and partner attachment on gender role expectations was also run. The models revealed no significant results, so they are not included here. Longitudinal sample analysis revealed a significant move toward less traditional gender role expectations between time one and time two as well as a significant increase in life satisfaction (Table 14). However, there was no significant change in relationship satisfaction. Standard APIM over-time SEM revealed there was neither a significant influence from actor or partner attachment nor any interaction effects from attachment at time one to gender role expectations at time two. Given the lack of results, this model is also not reported.

**Table 14.**
Paired Samples *t*-test of time 1 and time 2 gender-roles and satisfaction

| | Mean | SD | Mean Difference | Paired SD | *t* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **T1 Gender Roles** | 3.56 | 1.17 | 0.15 | 0.68 | 2.23* |
| **T2 Gender Roles** | 3.40 | 1.15 | | | |
| **T1 Life Satisfaction** | 22.0 | 6.40 | 1.67 | 5.64 | 3.85** |
| **T2 Life Satisfaction** | 24.7 | 6.13 | | | |
| **T1 Relationship Satisfaction** | 4.37 | 0.58 | 0.04 | 0.52 | 0.95 |
| **T2 Relationship Satisfaction** | 4.33 | 0.50 | | | |

*Note:* N = 174, *p = .027

Overall, hypothesis 2b was fully unsupported. There was no indication in either sample and through multiple forms of analysis that gender role expectations related to attachment styles. As Alonso-Arbiol and colleagues (2002) found, it may be the case that gender roles and attachment are dually related to levels of dependency, but in general, it may not influence views on gender within relationships and family structures. We might also consider the strides in gender equity over the past several years. Many have changed their views on inequality, and despite previous findings of more traditional gender views

associated with attachment insecurities (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994), insecure individuals were perhaps not impervious to this societal change. Despite these findings, it remains possible that gender roles have a moderating effect between attachment and life satisfaction as predicted in hypotheses 2c and 2d.

**Hypothesis 2c.** Before investigating the interactions between gender role expectations and attachment on longevity and life and relationship satisfaction, the role of partner effects of gender roles were investigated. APIM MLM of the cross-sectional data partially supports hypothesis 2c as there was a significant partner effect for more traditional gender roles predicting greater actor life satisfaction but no significant effects for relationship satisfaction or longevity (Table 15). A standard longitudinal APIM over-time SEM revealed no significant time one effects on time two satisfaction variables or relationship longevity. This model is not presented.

**Table 15.**
APIM MLM of gender roles on satisfaction and longevity

| **Life Satisfaction** | ***Mean*** | ***SD*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Intercept* | 22.8 | 6.21 | .000 | .047 |
| *Actor Gender Roles* | 3.97 | 1.14 | .073 | .044 |
| *Partner Gender Roles* | 3.27 | 1.08 | .096* | .044 |
| **Relationship Satisfaction** | ***Mean*** | ***SD*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** |
| *Intercept* | 4.27 | .630 | .000 | .052 |
| *Actor Gender Roles* | 3.97 | 1.14 | -.079 | .042 |
| *Partner Gender Roles* | 3.27 | 1.08 | -.001 | .042 |
| **Relationship Longevity** | ***Mean*** | ***SD*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** |
| *Intercept* | 27.3 | 32.5 | .000 | .052 |
| *Actor Age* | 22.5 | 5.50 | .275** | .028 |
| *Partner Age* | 21.1 | 4.17 | .278** | .028 |
| *Actor Gender Roles* | 3.97 | 1.14 | -.040 | .032 |
| *Partner Gender Roles* | 3.27 | 1.08 | -.038 | .032 |

*Note*: all continuous variables standardized. Intercept mean and SD represent DV. **p < .01, *p < .05

Our study was designed to look at individual partner effects on one another and it is inappropriate to use a common fate longitudinal SEM model (Garcia, 2017). Moreover, being limited to only two data points eliminates the possibility of performing a latent growth SEM model (Peugh, et al., 2013). Because of this, the lack of results from the longitudinal sample may be misleading. There is a strong indication that partner gender role expectations influence one another's life satisfaction. More specifically, traditional gender roles were positively related to life satisfaction. These results have been reported in past literature, but only for life satisfaction of males (Pilar, et al., 2014) or satisfaction with family life for both males and females (Lye & Biblarz, 1993). Of note, gender roles did not effect relationship satisfaction or longevity as was previously reported (Arránz Becker, 2013; Rusbult & VanLange, 2003). These findings coincide with our predictions for our overall model as life satisfaction is identified as a mediating factor for ambivalent-avoidant couples' relationship longevity. Along those lines, gender role expectations were predicted to moderate the relationship between attachment and life satisfaction. This portion of the model will be tested next.

**Hypothesis 2d**. The interaction predicted by Hypothesis 2d was a four-way interaction involving actor and partner gender roles and discordant attachment styles. This interaction was predicted to positively relate to life satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, and relationship longevity. Due to the verbosity of results, Table 16 only presents models with significant effects. Analyses were conducted using APIM MLM in step-wise format first running singular relationships followed by two, three, and four-way interactions sequentially. Similarly, the longitudinal APIM SEM model included all necessary controls and interactions in the analysis, but only included significant effects in

Figure 3 for easier comprehension. All significant interactions presented in this dissertation are plotted using empirically supported methods (Aiken & West, 1991; Dawson, 2014; Dawson & Richter, 2006) and are displayed in Appendix L.

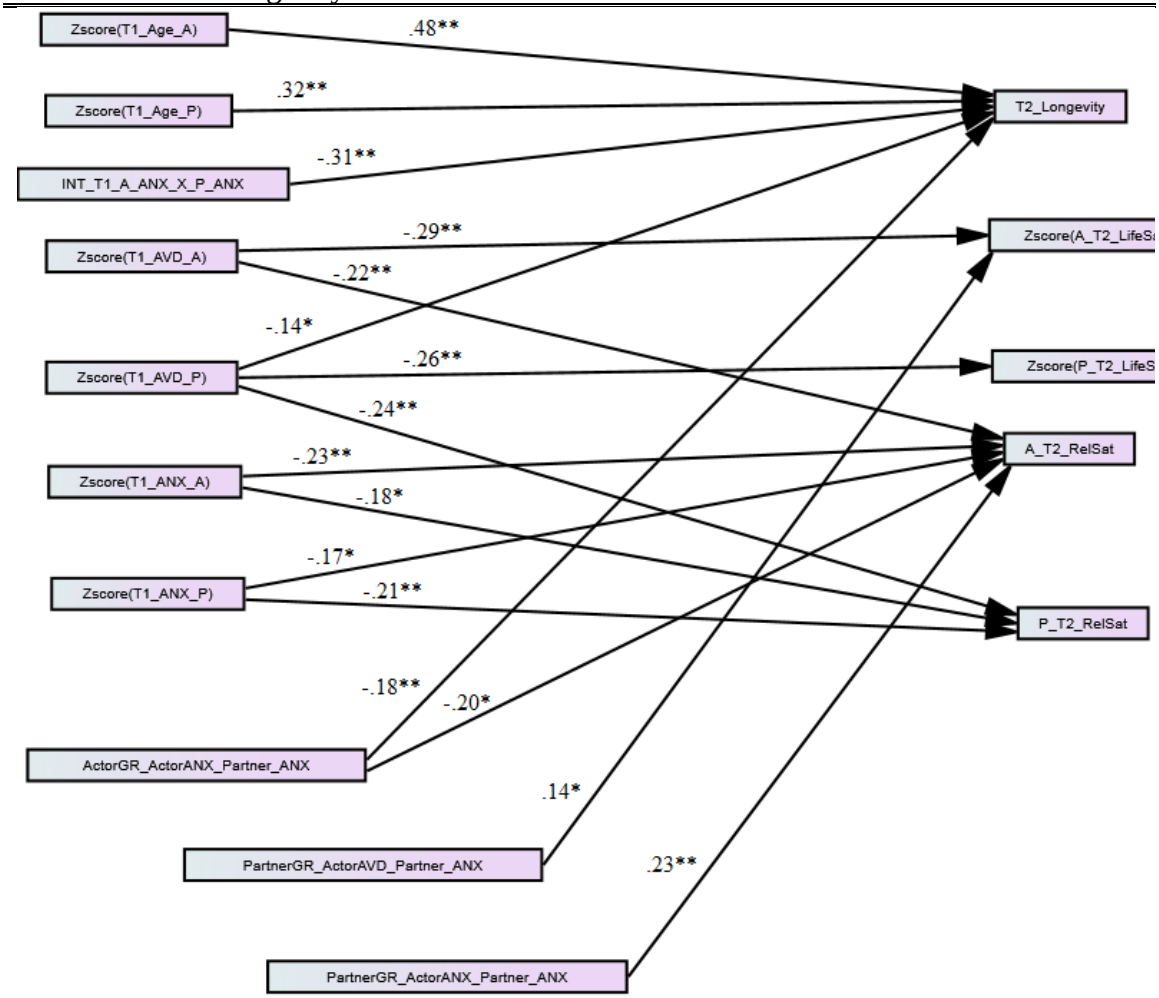
**Table 16.**
APIM MLM attachment and gender-role interactions on satisfaction and longevity

| **Main Effects Model (LS)** | ***F*** | ***t*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** | ***Sig.*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Intercept* | 0.00 | 0.06 | .002 | .044 | .956 |
| *Actor Gender Roles* | 4.00 | 2.00 | .085 | .043 | .046 |
| *Actor Avoidance* | 8.88 | -2.98 | -.139 | .047 | .003 |
| *Actor Anxiety* | 18.5 | -4.30 | -.198 | .046 | .000 |
| **Three-Way Interaction (LS)** | ***F*** | ***t*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** | ***Sig.*** |
| *Intercept* | 0.03 | -0.17 | -.008 | .049 | .865 |
| *Partner GR x Actor AVD x P ANX* | 3.60 | 1.90 | .125 | .066 | .051 |
| **Main Effects Model (RS)** | ***F*** | ***t*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** | ***Sig.*** |
| *Intercept* | 0.00 | 0.00 | .000 | .040 | 1.00 |
| *Actor Avoidance* | 114 | -10.7 | -.430 | .040 | .000 |
| *Partner Avoidance* | 9.94 | -3.15 | -.127 | .040 | .002 |
| *Actor Anxiety* | 11.0 | -3.31 | -.132 | .040 | .001 |
| **Two-Way Interaction Model (RS)** | ***F*** | ***t*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** | ***Sig.*** |
| *Intercept* | 0.03 | -0.18 | -.007 | .040 | .859 |
| *Actor ANX x Partner ANX* | 5.79 | 2.41 | .095 | .040 | .017 |
| *Actor GR x Actor ANX* | 9.88 | 3.14 | .134 | .043 | .002 |
| *Partner GR x Actor AVD* | 4.98 | -2.23 | -.099 | .044 | .026 |
| **Three-Way Interaction Model (RS)** | ***F*** | ***t*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** | ***Sig.*** |
| *Intercept* | 0.70 | -0.84 | -.034 | .041 | .405 |
| *Partner GR x Actor ANX x P ANX* | 4.12 | -2.03 | -.085 | .042 | .043 |
| **Three-Way Interaction Model (RL)** | ***F*** | ***t*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** | ***Sig.*** |
| *Intercept* | 0.11 | 0.33 | .017 | .052 | .741 |
| *Actor GR x Actor ANX x Part ANX* | 7.77 | -2.79 | -.092 | .033 | .006 |
| *Partner GR x Actor ANX x P ANX* | 7.75 | -2.78 | -.092 | .033 | .006 |

*Note*: All continuous variables standardized. Mean, and SD statistics reported previously for all variables present. All models included preceding and concurrent control variables and interactions but were excluded for clarity. Age was a significant control variable in all relationship longevity models. (LS) = Life satisfaction DV, (RS) = Relationship Satisfaction DV, (RL) = Relationship Longevity DV.

In a review of both analyses, hypothesis 2d was partially supported. Actor and partner gender roles did not work concurrently to predict any of the outcome variables. Suggesting that there may not be a gender role similarity effect. Craddock (1980) suggests that shared gender roles only matter when the male adheres to more traditional views. The difference between males and females in our may not have been adequate to find a significant relationship. Still, individual gender roles did interact with dyadic anxiety and avoidance. By not accounting for attachment in previous studies (Arránz Becker, 2013; Craddock, 1980; Felmlee, 1994; Rusbult & VanLange, 2003), this attachment effect may have been misinterpreted as a gender effect. Especially considering past work has reported greater avoidance in males and anxiety in females (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Simpson, 1990).

**Figure 3.** Longitudinal APIM SEM of attachment and gender-role interactions on satisfaction and longevity.




*Note: $\chi^2(117, N = 174) = 246.16$, $p = .000$; CFI = .933; TLI =.750; RMSEA = .080(90% CI: .066-.094); power = .95. All predictor variables, 2- and 3-way interactions, error terms, and covariations included in analysis model. Excluded from figure for easier viewing. *p < .05, **p < .01*

As it pertains to life satisfaction, we found a significant positive interaction in both the cross-sectional and longitudinal samples. More specifically, partners high in avoidance showed greater life satisfaction at time 1 and time 2 when the anxious partner maintained more traditional gender views. These findings are similar to others who have found that more traditional gender roles are related to greater life satisfaction (Lye & Biblarz, 1993; Pilar, et al., 2014). From an attachment perspective, it also makes intuitive sense as avoidance is related to more masculine qualities while ambivalence is related to

more feminine qualities (Shaver, et al., 1996; Stackert & Bursik, 2003). Along the lines of the gendered research, one would expect greater satisfaction when the "feminine" partner is more traditional (Craddock, 1980). Moreover, in this specific dynamic, it seems it would be beneficial for an avoidant individual to pair with someone more concerned with traditional values because this would allow the avoidant freedom to explore other life-enriching experiences while maintaining a stable home life without contributing as much effort. This interaction did not directly contribute to any relationship specific outcomes, but as proposed in our overall model, we would expect life satisfaction to mediate those relationships.

While there were no significant gender role interactions for discordant insecure couples predicting relationship outcomes, there were significant interactions for couples who are both high in anxiety. This relationship is a bit more difficult to understand and, in most cases, seems to have a deleterious effect over time. In the cross-sectional sample, high anxiety couples reported high levels of relationship satisfaction. Moreover, more traditional gender roles and anxiety interacted on the individual level to also predict greater relationship satisfaction. However, looking at both partners' anxiety, it appears to be a negative effect on relationship satisfaction and longevity when only one reports more traditional gender views. These relationships are almost entirely the opposite in the predictions of relationship outcomes at time 2 in our longitudinal sample. High anxiety couples, in this case, have a strong negative relationship with relationship longevity. This dynamic is also negatively predictive of relationship longevity when one partner reports more traditional gender roles. The answer, however, may lie in relationship satisfaction. When the "actor" in this dynamic reports more traditional gender roles, they are less

satisfied, but when the partner reports more traditional gender roles, the “actor” is more satisfied.

Overall, high anxiety couples, but not high avoidance couples, appear to exemplify the negative long-term outcomes discussed in self-similarity theory of attraction (Shiota & Levenson, 2007). On the other hand, gender role expectations interact with discordant couples positively, supporting the literature arguing for the positive long-term benefits to complementarity (Markey & Markey, 2007). In part, it appears that an imbalance of power may also be at play here. For high anxiety couples, one is only satisfied when the other is highly traditional, and they are dissatisfied when they are the one who is more traditional. For ambivalent-avoidant pairs, more traditional ambivalent partners positively influence their avoidant partner’s life satisfaction, but they are not affected adversely. In the next section, power imbalances are analyzed more deeply and specifically as it pertains to relationship decision making.

# CHAPTER VIII

## Main Study: Decision-Making Power

### Measures

The following measures were used in both the initial survey and the interview phase along with all measures discussed in the previous section. The outcome measures discussed in previous sections (Satisfaction with life scale, Relationship assessment scale, and relationship longevity) will not be reviewed again here, but they will be discussed in the results. Procedure and participants did not vary from previous sections.

**Decision-Making Power**. Power was measured using the Relationship Power Inventory (RPI; Farrell, et al., 2015). This measure improves upon past power measures because it allows for flexibility in the analysis of only couple-relevant decision-making domains. Partners may also weigh the domains based on how important it is to each. The RPI is a 20-item measure that is flexible for use with a variety of couples (i.e., dating, cohabiting, and married). For this study, the general version of this inventory was used. To separate effects of decision-making power, a factor analysis was performed revealing four domains. There were six items for personal decision making power (i.e., "I have more influence than my partner does on decisions in our relationship", "When my partner and I make decisions in our relationship, I tend to structure and lead the discussion;" $\alpha$ = .92) and partner decision making power (i.e., "My partner is more likely to get his/her way than me when we disagree about issues in our relationship;" $\alpha$ = .94). Four items for personal power in conflicts (i.e., "I tend to bring up issues in our relationship more often than my partner does;" $\alpha$ = .83) and partner power in conflicts (i.e., "My partner is more likely than me to start a discussion about issues in our relationship;" $\alpha$ = .85). The full measure can be found in Appendix H. Given our theoretical focus on decision-making power and availability of data from both partners; our analysis will utilize the scores from the personal decision-making subsection of this measure.

## Results and Discussion

**Hypothesis 3a.** A Pearson's correlation was run to examine the relationships between all variables pertinent to the present hypotheses. Since the correlations of most variables involved have been previously reported, only those associated with decision-making power are presented (Table 17). For a more accurate representation of

relationship longevity, results are included with and without age as a control variable. Hypothesis 3a, which suggested that males would have significantly higher decision-making power than females, was wholly unsupported. The cross-sectional sample showed no significant gender effects. The longitudinal sample, on the other hand, did exhibit significant gender effects related to decision-making power at both times 1 and time 2. One-way ANOVA was conducted on the longitudinal sample revealing that it was, in fact, the female partner with more decision making power at both measurement points (Table 18). The means in this analysis suggest that both males and females increased in decision-making power over time. This increase was found to be significant through a paired-samples *t*-test (Table 18). Our findings are in direct opposition to previous reports that males have more decision-making power in romantic relationships (Felmlee, 1994; Sprecher & Felmlee, 1997).

**Table 17.**
Correlations of decision-making power, covariates, & outcome variables.

| | **Mean** | **SD** | **Gender** | **AVD** | **ANX** | **LifeSat** | **RelSat** | **Longevity** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Decision Power** | 3.51 | 1.30 | .08 | .17** | .04 | .03 | -.25** | .05 |
| | **Mean** | **SD** | **Gender** | **T2 AVD** | **T2 ANX** | **T2 LifeSat** | **T2 RelSat** | **T2 Longevity** |
| **T1 Dec Pow** | 3.46 | 1.24 | .19* | .18* | -.04 | -.09 | -.17* | -.01 |
| **T2 Dec Pow** | 3.70 | 1.17 | .25** | .16* | .07 | -.16* | -.16* | -.04 |

*Note:* Reporting r value. Longevity correlations controlled with age. **p < .01, *p < .05

**Table 18.**
One-way ANOVA of gender & decision power & paired *t*-test of decision-making power

| | Mean | SD | DF | Mean$^2$ | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **T1 Decision Power (M)** | 3.22 | 1.18 | 1,172 | 9.81 | 6.50* |
| **T1 Decision Power (F)** | 3.70 | 1.28 | | | |
| **T2 Decision Power (M)** | 3.41 | 1.13 | 1,172 | 14.3 | 11.1** |
| **T2 Decision Power (F)** | 3.99 | 1.17 | | | |
| | **Mean** | **SD** | **Mean Difference** | **Paired SD** | ***t*** |
| **T1 Decision Power** | 3.46 | 1.25 | -.239 | 1.15 | -2.74** |
| **T2 Decision Power** | 3.70 | 1.17 | | | |

*Note:* N = 174, (M) = Male, (F) = Female. **p < .01, *p < .05

One explanation for the divergence of our findings from previous studies may be related to our sample. Our sample is from an urban area. Urban populations, compared to many rural populations, are typically more egalitarian (Harrison, 1997; Stamm, 2003). Our sample is also very young. Younger couples have been found to behave in a more egalitarian manner (Galliher, Rostosky, Welsh, & Kawaguchi, 1999), and young females are often better equipped for romantic relationships, communication, and problem-solving than young males (Giaordano, Manning, & Longmore, 2005).

Beach and Tesser (1993) report decision making differences among couples in specific contexts and find females to have more power in areas of social contact, friends, and small purchases. These types of decisions are more likely to be made in younger relationships than the more life-altering decisions over which men have been found to exhibit greater power. Still, as gender gaps continue to close in areas such as income (Bernhardt, Morris, & Handcock, 1995), corporate presence (Bertrand & Hallock, 2001), political participation (Kaufmann, 2006), and even internet access and usage (Bimber, 2000); it is possible such gendered relationship effects may be fading into history as well.

With an apparent shift in gender roles and decision-making, attachment-related effects remain alive and well. Both samples provide evidence that avoidance is positively

related to decision-making power. Interestingly, having more decision-making power appears to be associated negatively with life and relationship satisfaction over time. This comes counter to findings that relationship power is positively related to relationship satisfaction individually (Bentley, et al., 2007), when disproportionate (Felmlee, 1994), and when viewed as equal or having a satisfactory division (Beach & Tesser, 1993; Sprecher, et. al., 2006).

**Hypothesis 3b.** Both cross-sectional and longitudinal correlation analyses (Table 17) provide partial support for hypothesis 3b which predicted a positive relationship between attachment avoidance and decision-making power, and a negative relationship between attachment anxiety and decision-making power. Specifically, support was found for the avoidant portion of this hypothesis, but not for the anxious portion. There may be actor and partner effects that are unaccounted for in the previously reported correlations. Here we examine APIM MLM results from the cross-sectional sample and APIM over-time SEM from the longitudinal sample. Again, only finding a significant positive effect of actor avoidance positively predicting decision-making power (Table 19). Analysis of actor and partner attachment interactions yielded no significant results.

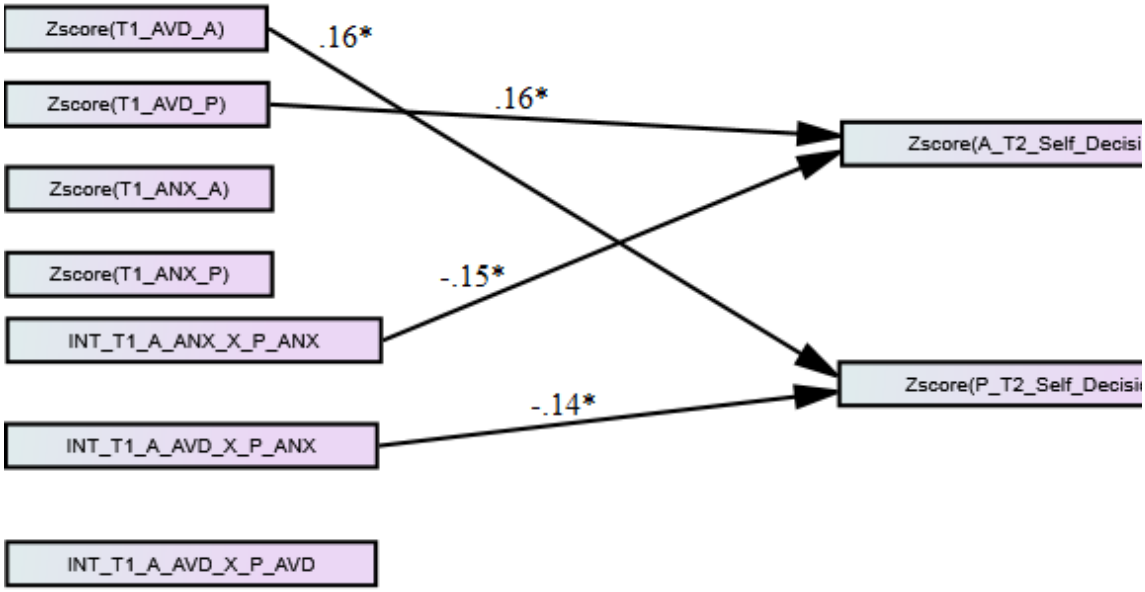
**Table 19.**
APIM of attachment on decision-making power.

| **Main Effects Model** | ***Mean*** | ***SD*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Intercept* | 3.51 | 1.30 | .000 | .043 |
| *Actor Avoidance* | 1.89 | .987 | .170** | .049 |
| *Partner Avoidance* | 1.71 | .926 | .062 | .049 |
| *Actor Anxiety* | 2.17 | 1.53 | -.055 | .048 |
| *Partner Anxiety* | 2.17 | 1.49 | .035 | .048 |
| **Interaction Model** | ***F*** | ***t*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** |
| *Intercept* | .047 | .217 | .010 | .045 |
| *Actor AVD x Partner AVD* | .027 | -.163 | -.008 | .049 |
| *Actor AVD x Partner ANX* | .002 | -.046 | -.002 | .051 |
| *Actor ANX x Partner ANX* | .769 | -.877 | -.038 | .043 |

*Note*: all continuous variables standardized. Intercept mean and SD represent DV. **p < .01, *p < .05

Conversely, longitudinal analysis over-time APIM SEM did reveal actor and partner effects as well as significant interaction effects (Figure 4). These data suggest that avoidant partners may yield more decision-making power to their mate over time. Time 1 avoidance scores were positively related to time two decision-making power across the dyads. In other words, actor avoidance positively predicted partner decision-making power and partner avoidance positively predicted actor decision-making power. Moreover, partner anxiety interacted with actor anxiety to negatively predict actor decision-making power. Finally, partner anxiety interacted with actor avoidance to negatively predict decision-making power.

**Figure 4.** Longitudinal APIM SEM of attachment and decision-making power.




*Note: $\chi^2(10, N = 174) = 4.36, p = .930$; CFI = 1.00; TLI =1.07; RMSEA = .000(90% CI: .000-.024); power = 1.0. All error terms and covariance calculated in model but removed from figure for ease of viewing. *p < .05, **p < .01*

Most of the results reported in this section align with previous literature and present predictions. Previous reports suggest that high attachment anxiety is associated with greater feelings of distress and difficulty during decision-making (Alonso-Arbiol, et al., 2002; Hawley, et al., 2009; Wolfe & Betz, 2004). The current analyses did not produce a direct negative connection between attachment anxiety and decision-making power as was predicted in hypothesis 3b. There were, however, significant dyad interaction effects for high anxiety individuals when in relationships with others high in anxiety or high in avoidance. Over time, high anxiety pairs showed a tendency to decrease in decision-making power. This effect was significant for the "actor" in the pair but, considering the nested nature of the analysis, this effect was similarly likely to occur with either partner. This dynamic warrants further investigation as a reduction in decision-making, which for both partners is distressing, could have broader negative

implications. These couples may be prone to stagnating in their lives and their relationships, potentially resulting in mutual resentment.

On the other hand, high anxiety individuals with high avoidant partners also show a significant reduction in decision-making power over time. This fits the dynamic predicted for complementary insecure pairs, and on the surface, appears that it would be mostly positive. In this dyad, there is still one dominant decision-maker who has the opportunity to guide their interpersonal life positively. Much of the analysis presented supports previous literature (Mikulincer, 2004; Sprecher, et al., 2006) and the hypothesis 3b prediction that attachment avoidance would be positively related to decision-making power. While there was not a negative over-time effect in the longitudinal sample, avoidance positively associated with increases in partner decision-making power. While very little research has looked at possible negative long-term outcomes for the more powerful partner, there does seem to be a desire for power in domains that are more important to the individual than those that are not (Simpson, et al., 2015). More powerful individuals have also been found to have more interpersonal sensitivity than those with low power (Schmid Mast, Jonas, & Hall, 2009). Accordingly, the over-time trends we see with avoidant partners may signify a submission of power in domains less important to the avoidant individual and those that are more important to their mate. Next, we explore the relationship and life outcomes associated with these effects and interactions.

**Hypothesis 3c.** Preceding results have suggested that attachment insecurity and decision-making power are negatively related to life and relationship satisfaction. Hypothesis 3c predicts that discordant actor and partner attachment insecurities and decision-making power will interact to positively predict life satisfaction, relationship

satisfaction, and relationship longevity. To test this hypothesis, APIM MLM is used with cross-sectional data to examine actor and partner effects and multiple interactions ranging up to four-ways. The longitudinal analysis utilizes standard over-time APIM SEM to test these same relationships at two-time points. Only significant relationships are reported, despite the incorporation of all variables and interactions in the analysis. Cross-sectional analysis (Table 20) reveals no interaction effects related to life satisfaction. In partial support of hypothesis 3c, high actor avoidance and decision-making power interacted with high partner anxiety to positively predict relationship satisfaction. There were no main effects for relationship longevity other than age. A two-way interaction of actor and partner decision-making power negatively predicted longevity, suggesting that couples in which both partners exhibit high levels of decision-making power are more likely to dissolve.

**Table 20.**
APIM MLM attachment and decision-making interactions on satisfaction and longevity

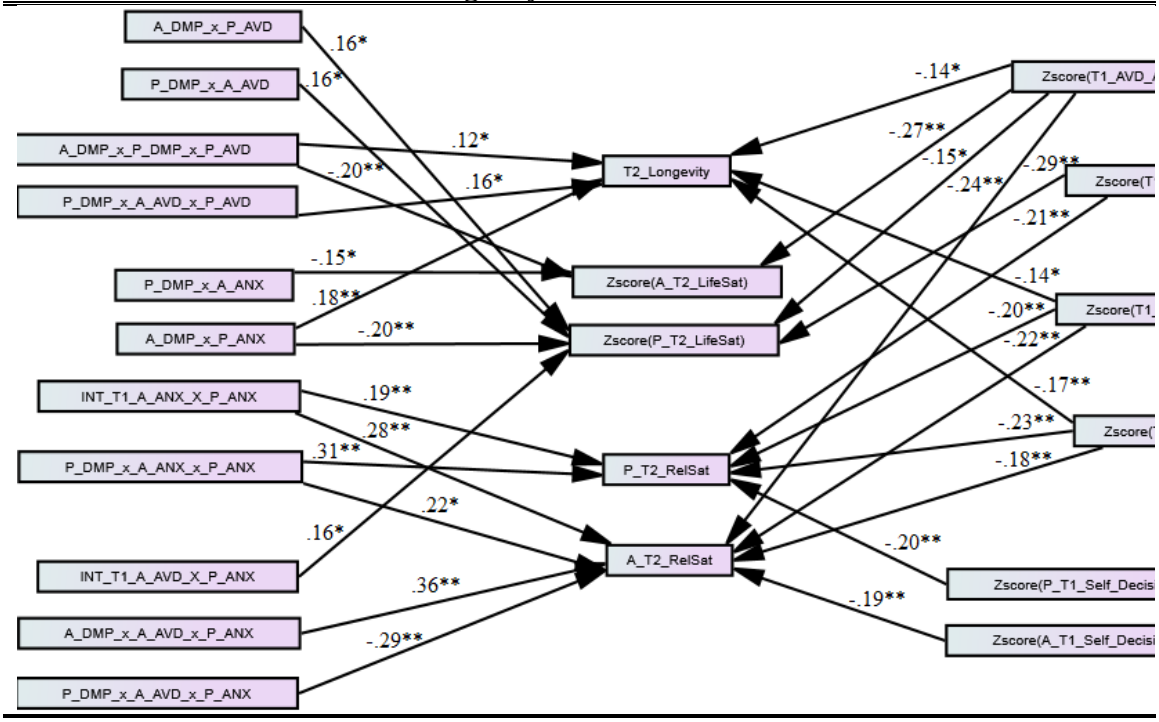
| **Maine Effects Model (LS)** | ***F*** | ***t*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** | ***Sig.*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Intercept* | .003 | 0.56 | .002 | .044 | .956 |
| *Actor Avoidance* | 10.2 | -3.20 | -.152 | .048 | .001 |
| *Actor Anxiety* | 17.7 | -4.21 | -.196 | .047 | .000 |
| **Main Effects Model (RS)** | ***F*** | ***t*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** | ***Sig.*** |
| *Intercept* | .000 | .000 | .000 | .039 | 1.00 |
| *Actor Decision Power* | 20.1 | -4.49 | -.159 | .035 | .000 |
| *Actor Avoidance* | 100 | -10.0 | -.401 | .040 | .000 |
| *Partner Avoidance* | 7.02 | -2.65 | -.106 | .040 | .008 |
| *Actor Anxiety* | 12.5 | -3.54 | -.139 | .039 | .000 |
| **Three-Way Interaction Model (RS)** | ***F*** | ***t*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** | ***Sig.*** |
| *Intercept* | .008 | -.088 | -.004 | .043 | .930 |
| *Actor Pow x Actor AVD x Partner ANX* | 6.16 | 2.48 | .122 | .049 | .013 |
| **Two-Way Interaction Model (RL)** | ***F*** | ***t*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** | ***Sig.*** |
| *Intercept* | 100 | -10.0 | -2.57 | .257 | .000 |
| *Actor Pow x Partner Pow* | 4.41 | -2.10 | -.111 | .053 | .037 |

*Note*: All continuous variables standardized. Mean, and SD statistics reported previously for all variables present. All models included preceding and concurrent control variables and interactions but were excluded for clarity. Age was a significant control variable in all relationship longevity models. (LS) = Life satisfaction DV, (RS) = Relationship Satisfaction DV, (RL) = Relationship Longevity DV.

Analysis of the longitudinal sample tells a more complete story of how attachment and decision-making power interact over time to influence relationship and life outcomes (Figure 5). Actor avoidance and anxiety, as well as partner anxiety, negatively predicted relationship longevity. Life satisfaction was negatively influenced by actor and partner avoidance for partner outcomes and actor avoidance for actor outcomes. Actor avoidance and anxiety and partner anxiety negatively influenced actor relationship satisfaction at time two while partner avoidance and anxiety, as well as actor anxiety, had negative effects on partner relationship satisfaction. The attachment results are to be expected, but it is interesting that these effects remain significant when accounting for decision-making

power. Interestingly, partners who reported more decision-making power also reported lower life satisfaction in this model.

**Figure 5.** Longitudinal APIM SEM of attachment and decision-making power interactions on satisfaction and longevity.




*Note: $\chi^2$(127, N = 174) = 209.49, p = .000; CFI = .976; TLI =.887; RMSEA = .061(90% CI: .046-.076); power = 1.0. All predictor variables, 2- and 3-way interactions, error terms, and covariations included in the analysis model. Excluded from the figure for easier viewing. Age was used as a control and was highly correlated with longevity. *p < .05, **p < .01*

In lockstep with the cross-sectional results, the longitudinal model partially supported hypothesis 3c as avoidant individuals with high levels of decision-making power showed positive relationship satisfaction when they paired with a highly anxious individual. This model also shows that avoidant individuals are less satisfied over time when their highly anxious partner has more power. Neither discordant attachment by decision-making power interaction significantly predicted life satisfaction or relationship longevity. However, this model also reveals a positive effect on life satisfaction for high anxiety individuals when paired with a high avoidance partner. Considering that this is the case when decision-making power is being controlled, it would suggest that those

high in attachment anxiety struggle with decision-making, adversely affecting life and relationship outcomes.

Couples in which both members are high in anxiety showed a positive relationship satisfaction effect for both actor and partner. This is the opposite of the effects found in the previous analyses as this pairing showed negative relationship satisfaction and longevity. Interestingly, when anxious individuals had partners with high levels of decision-making power generally, they showed negative life satisfaction effects but positive relationship longevity. Moreover, when in the context of a dual anxiety dyad, they also showed greater relationship satisfaction.

There are a few ways to think about this apparent contradiction. First, none of our analyses to this point has shown a positive relationship between anxiety and life satisfaction. This is consistent with the literature reporting similar findings (Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Priel & Shamai, 1995; Simpson, 1990). Still, even with the present controls and interactions, no effects have been found. The inability to achieve life satisfaction has been found to stem from the lack of hope, curiosity, and perspective taking for high anxiety individuals (Lavy & Littman-Ovadia, 2011). Moreover, they are highly relationship oriented and derive their happiness and view of self from the context of close interpersonal relationships (Feeney & Noller, 1990). It may be the case that they identify life satisfaction as being in a long-term and satisfying relationship. Along these lines, attachment anxiety is related to submissiveness (Horowitz, Rosenberg, & Bartholomew, 1993) and focus on serving their partner (Clark & Reis, 1988). The compilation of these factors may inhibit high anxiety individuals from focusing on personal goals, especially early on in relationships when anxiety is heightened (Eastwick & Finkel, 2008).

However, as avoidance increases with age (Chopik, Edelstein, & Fraley, 2013), perhaps it is the later stages of relationships in which anxiously attached individuals begin to focus on personal life satisfaction. There may also be a clinical explanation as attachment anxiety is also related to clinical depression (Carnelley, Pietromonaco, & Jaffe, 1994). As such, it may be difficult to derive meaning and satisfaction from life even when in a successful relationship.

Life satisfaction does not appear to be as difficult to attain for avoidant individuals under the right circumstances. The present analysis suggests that avoidant individuals are satisfied in their lives when they have high decision-making power in their relationships or if their partner does. Moreover, their relationships last longer when both partners are high in decision making and when they are with another high avoidance individual who reports increased levels of decision-making power. This is somewhat curious considering the negative relationship with satisfaction effects when paired with high decision-making and high anxiety partner, but it is reasonable.

We reported previously that partners of highly avoidant individuals show increases in decision-making power over time. This effect was not associated with a decrease in avoidant decision-making, but instead, avoidant individuals may push their partners, either directly or indirectly, to be pro-active in decision-making. Equity in decision-making is positive for relationships (Beach & Tesser, 1993; Sprecher, et al., 2006), and being the sole decision-maker can be a stressful role to fill (Hughes & Scholer, 2017). Hence, avoidant individuals may explicitly express their desire for their partners to contribute more. Alternately, the negative effects felt by partners when one partner is more dominating (Simpson, et al., 2015) may influence partners to be more

vocal in decision-making processes, resulting in more egalitarian and positive relationship. Still, this does not seem to be the dynamic for discordant insecure pairs. Because anxiously attached individuals are overly distressed by decision-making (Deniz, 2011; Hawley, et al., 2009), they may prefer to take a back seat, as supported by our results, and do not enter a decision-making competition with their avoidant partner. Furthermore, high power partners have shown empathy and sensitivity toward their low power partners (Schmid Mast, et al., 2009). Thus, avoidant individuals may recognize their anxious partner's distress and, as a result, take on more of the decision-making burden and withhold explicit contribution demands as a benevolent act. Still, frustration and one-sided decisions are likely to come with some degree of relationship conflict.

# CHAPTER IX

## Main Study: Relationship Conflict and Resilience

### Measures

In the measurement of relationship conflict, the procedure varied somewhat between the initial survey and the in-person interviews. During the initial survey, participants were asked to remember their most recent relationship conflict and respond to a series of questions about that conflict. The initial survey also asked participants to list their top 10 relationship conflict topics in rank order from most to least severe. These lists were used during the interview phase to facilitate a conflict discussion between the couple. Following this discussion, couples were again asked the same set of questions from the initial survey, but in this case, it was about the conflict discussion they had just experienced. Specific details of this procedure are provided below.

**Conflict Response Survey**. During the initial survey, couples were asked to remember the last conflict they had with their significant other (Simpson, et al., 1996). Following this prime, they responded to twelve questions on a 7-point Likert scale related to how they feel about the outcome of the argument. Questions, selected from various previously used methods (Karantzas, et al., 2014; Mikulincer, 1998; Simpson, et al., 1996), focused on satisfaction, distress, perceptions, and emotions (i.e., "How satisfied were you with the outcome of that discussion?"). A factor analysis was performed to identify specific domains. Three subscales emerged, including a 3-item conflict distress subscale ($\alpha = .84$), a 5-item conflict negativity subscale ($\alpha = .87$), and a 4-item conflict positivity subscale ($\alpha = .84$). Negative post-conflict responses were the focus of our hypotheses, and this subscale has the best Alpha. Thus, the present analyses utilize this subscale in its measurement. See Appendix I for a complete list of questions used.

**In-Person Conflict Procedure.** During the interviews, members of the couples were separated into two different rooms at each end of the building. Interviewers and participants were not assigned by a specific gender, but instead, interviewer-interviewee pairs were randomly assigned. Interview questions consisted of the same series of surveys used for part 1 of the study. Interviewers asked each question and clarified when necessary to ensure accuracy. When the interview was roughly 75% completed, a conflict scenario was introduced. This modification from the initial survey collection intended to eliminate any confounding factors associated with remembering conflicts.

At the beginning of the interview process, interviewers asked their participants to review the list of conflicts submitted during the initial survey and to adjust the list as appropriate. Interviewers then set the list aside and continued with the interview

questions. The conflict scenario required bringing the couple back together in one interview room. While preparing couples for the conflict scenario, one interviewer reviewed both lists and selected a mid-range conflict that was pertinent to both participants, wrote it down, and placed it in an envelope. Simultaneously, the other interviewer explained the conflict scenario process to the couple and consented to this portion of the study. Couples were given a maximum of 15 minutes alone to discuss the conflict topic (Heyman, Chaudhry, Treboux, Crowell, Vivian, & Waters, 2001). When the interviewers left the room, the couple opened the envelope containing the conflict topic that had been placed on the table in front of them. The conflict discussions were video recorded to ensure that disagreements did not escalate to an inappropriate level.

Upon completion of their discussion, or expiration of the 15-minute time limit, the interviewers re-entered the room and again separated the couple. Once separated, the interview process began again. The first set of questions asked upon return to their interview rooms were those used in the initial survey. This time, however, couples answered regarding the discussion they had just finished. Upon interview completion, couples were debriefed, and interviewers confirmed there was no residual animosity by comparing relationship satisfaction answers before and after the conflict scenario. Couples also participated in an activity in which they named five qualities they love about their partner and shared it with each other. This conflict scenario was modeled after methodologies used by Simpson and colleagues (1996). Couples were paid $25 and offered four r-points for the lab visit if needed.

**Resilience**. Also pertinent to this section is resilience. As discussed previously, resilience is a complicated construct that is often misrepresented. Ego-resiliency, which is

a personality trait, is often used interchangeably with resilience, which is a developmental state or process (Luthar et al., 2000). To investigate resilience in a way that accounts for state and trait characteristics, two resilience measures were used. The Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA) is one of the highest rated resilience measures that examine the protective factors or traits associated with positive adaptation (Windle, Bennett & Noyes, 2011). It is a 33-item self-report 7-point Likert scale for measuring protective resilience factors among adults (Hjemdal, Friborg, Braun, Kempenaers, Linkowski, & Fossion, 2011). The RSA ($\alpha = .90$) contains six factors including perception-of-self (i.e., "When something unforeseen happens: I often feel bewildered;" $\alpha = .78$), planned future (i.e., "My plans for the future are: Difficult to accomplish;" $\alpha = .81$), social competence (i.e., "I enjoy being: Together with other people;" $\alpha = .71$), structured style (i.e., "I am at my best when I: Have a goal to strive for;" $\alpha = .58$), family cohesion (i.e., "My family's understanding of what is important in life is: Quite different;" $\alpha = .84$), and social resources (i.e., "I can discuss personal issues with: No one;" $\alpha = .78$). The RSA (Appendix J) is used as a trait resilience measure in the present analysis.

The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS; Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Tooley, Christopher, & Bernard, 2008) is a highly rated state outcome measure to assess the ability to recover from stress (i.e., "It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event;" Windle, et al., 2011). The BRS (Appendix K) is a 6-item, 5-point Likert scale survey with sound psychometric properties ($\alpha = .92$) and no subscales. The BRS is used for the majority of the present analyses as the study design calls for a state rather than trait resilience measure.

## Results and Discussion

**Hypotheses 4a and 4b.** In line with previous findings, hypothesis 4a predicts that both attachment avoidance and anxiety will have a positive relationship with negative post-conflict feelings and a negative relationship with state and trait resilience. Moreover, hypothesis 4b suggests that state and trait resilience will be positively related to the outcome variables of life satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, and relationship longevity while conflict negativity will be related to these outcome variables negatively. These hypotheses are tested via Pearson's correlations of cross-sectional and longitudinal data. Only relationships not previously reported are displayed (Table 21). Age is included as a control variable in reported correlations with relationship longevity.

In the longitudinal sample, time two avoidance had no significant relationship with state resilience. Avoidant individuals have a positive view of themselves, but a negative view of others and anxious individuals have a negative view of themselves and a positive view of others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Both insecurities are related negatively to the types of resources associated with ego-resilience, such as strong interpersonal ties, social competence and support, positive future outlook, self-regulation, and openness to change (Hjemdal et al., 2011; Lavy & Littman-Ovadia, 2011; Neff & Broady, 2011). As state resilience is a developmental process increasing over time and trait resilience remaining stagnant (Luthar, et al., 2000; Seery, 2011), confident self-views can positively impact the building of greater state resilience through experience (Cohn, Fredrickson, Brown, Conway, & Mikels, 2009). Thus it would make sense that avoidant individuals and not anxious individuals see improvements in state resilience while both remain relatively low in trait resilience.

**Table 21.**
Correlations of conflict negativity, resilience, covariates, & outcome variables.

| | Mean | SD | SRes | TRes | AVD | ANX | LifeSat | RelSat | Long |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Conflict Neg** | 2.21 | 1.33 | -.19** | -.28** | .41** | .36** | -.14** | -.50** | .01 |
| **State Resilience** | 20.4 | 4.57 | | .49** | -.14** | -.23** | .32** | .19** | .08 |
| **Trait Resilience** | 5.23 | .812 | | | -.32** | -.29** | .48** | .29** | .06 |
| | | | | | | **Time 2** | | | |
| | **Mean** | **SD** | **SResil** | **TResil** | **AVD** | **ANX** | **LifeSat** | **RelSat** | **Long** |
| **T1 Con Neg** | 2.02 | 1.23 | -.14 | -.14 | .29** | .19* | -.12 | -.37** | -.10 |
| **T2 Con Neg** | 1.29 | .719 | -.23** | -.17* | .24** | .47** | -.30** | -.52** | -.09 |
| **T1 SResil** | 20.2 | 4.56 | .60** | .35** | -.07 | -.25** | .29** | .18** | .13 |
| **T2 SResil** | 21.2 | 4.39 | | .48** | .00 | -.31** | .37** | .25** | .15* |
| **T1 TResil** | 5.18 | .813 | .40** | .73** | -.31** | -.22** | .42** | .29** | .12 |
| **T2 TResil** | 5.16 | .809 | | | -.26** | -.26** | .54** | .30** | -.03 |

*Note:* Reporting r value. Longevity correlations controlled with age. **p < .01, *p < .05

The longitudinal averages presented here suggest that there is a general increase in state resilience, a decrease in conflict negativity, and a stagnation of trait resilience between time 1 and time 2. A paired samples *t*-test shows that these changes are significant (Table 22). This is likely not to be coincidental as increases in stress resilience can dull the negative effects associated with relationship conflicts (Rutter, 1999). Of Hypothesis 4b predictions, only state resilience positively affected relationship longevity, suggesting that there may be a broadening effect of the resilience process that expands to multiple domains (Fredrickson, 2001). While conflict negativity had deleterious effects on relationship satisfaction at a single time-point and over time, there appears to be a limited impact on life satisfaction in the long term as there was no relationship between conflict negativity at time 1 and life satisfaction at time 2. Moreover, conflict negativity

did not correlate with relationship longevity. Taken together, this is evidence that relationship-specific resentment may fester and negatively impact satisfaction (Simpson, Overall, Farrell, & Girme, 2016), but consistent with other findings this negativity does not negate commitment (Knee, Lonsbary, Canevello, & Patrick, 2005).

**Table 22.**
Paired-samples *t*-test of conflict negativity, state resilience, and trait resilience.

| | Mean | SD | Mean Difference | Paired SD | *t* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **T1 Conflict Negativity** | 2.02 | 1.23 | -.728 | .100 | -7.28** |
| **T2 Conflict Negativity** | 1.29 | .719 | | | |
| **T1 State Resilience** | 20.2 | 4.56 | .930 | .306 | 3.04** |
| **T2 State Resilience** | 21.2 | 4.39 | | | |
| **T1 Trait Resilience** | 5.18 | .813 | .026 | .045 | .576 |
| **T2 Trait Resilience** | 5.16 | .809 | | | |

*Note:* N = 174 **p < .01, *p < .05

**Hypothesis 4c.** The results of hypotheses 4a and 4b aligned with previous findings. However, these predictions did not address interdependence effects. Hypothesis 4c predicts that discordant partner insecure attachment will interact with insecure actor attachment to positively predict state resilience. In the first step of the APIM MLM moderation analysis (Table 23), there are not significant partner effects on state resilience. Moreover, in accounting for avoidance, only anxiety had a significant negative impact. Both avoidance and anxiety were negatively related to trait resilience. Nevertheless, there were no significant actor-partner attachment effects on either state or trait resilience.

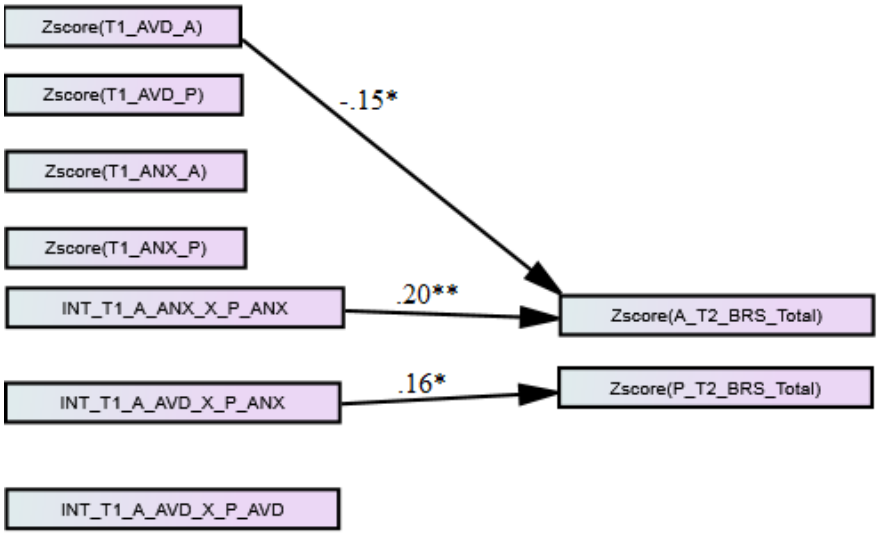
**Table 23.**
APIM MLM attachment interactions and resilience

| **Maine Effects Model (State)** | ***F*** | ***t*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** | ***Sig.*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Intercept* | .000 | .000 | .000 | .045 | 1.00 |
| *Actor Avoidance* | .969 | -.984 | -.048 | .048 | .325 |
| *Partner Avoidance* | .353 | -.594 | -.029 | .048 | .553 |
| *Actor Anxiety* | 18.9 | -4.34 | -.207 | .048 | .000 |
| *Partner Anxiety* | .792 | .890 | .042 | .048 | .374 |
| **Main Effects Model (Trait)** | ***F*** | ***t*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** | ***Sig.*** |
| *Intercept* | .000 | -.005 | -.000 | .044 | .996 |
| *Actor Avoidance* | 23.2 | -4.81 | -.223 | .046 | .000 |
| *Partner Avoidance* | 1.02 | -1.01 | -.047 | .046 | .314 |
| *Actor Anxiety* | 15.1 | -3.88 | -.178 | .046 | .000 |
| *Partner Anxiety* | .018 | -.133 | -.006 | .046 | .894 |

*Note*: All continuous variables standardized. Mean, and SD statistics reported previously for all variables present.

According to the cross-sectional sample, hypothesis 4c was not supported. Overall, the analysis suggests that partners do not influence each other's resilience, but it is only attachment anxiety that negatively influences state resilience. While this is an interesting finding, resilience is a developmental process, and measurements at one time-point only show a partial picture. Longitudinal analysis using APIM over-time SEM was conducted (Figure 6) to reveal a significant positive effect for anxious partners when paired with another high in avoidance or anxiety. Moreover, there was a curious negative effect on actor avoidance on actor state resilience.

**Figure 6.** Longitudinal APIM SEM of attachment and resilience.




*Note: $\chi^2(11, N = 174) = 14.01$, $p = .233$; CFI = .990; TLI =.967; RMSEA = .40(90% CI: .000-.094); power = .80. Since the RSA is considered to be a static trait resilience measure, only the BRS state resilience is included in the model as an outcome variable. *p < .05, **p < .01.*

In a cumulative view, some surprising findings stem from the present analysis. Partial support for hypothesis 4c using longitudinal data was found for high anxiety individuals in relationships with high avoidance individuals. However, considering the positive over-time effect for high anxiety individuals in relationships with other high anxiety individuals, it may be that simply being in a relationship can increase state resilience for high anxiety individuals. While surprising, this effect coincides with evidence suggesting that those high in attachment-based anxiety judge their self-worth through their ability to attract and maintain romantic partners (Park, Crocker & Mickelson, 2004). Being in a relationship may increase their personal and interpersonal resources and allow for high anxiety individuals to view stress as more manageable (Neff & Broady, 2011). Moreover, this effect is only found in a relationship context. When measured at an individual level, attachment-based anxiety appears to be the most important negative predictor of state resilience.

Avoidant individuals, on the other hand, seem to develop in an opposite pattern than anxious individuals. At an individual level, avoidance had few negative correlations with state resilience, but in a relationship context, actor avoidance had a significant negative effect on state resilience three months later. Avoidance is related to a desire for autonomy (Collins & Read, 1990) and positive self-views. It may be the case, when in a relationship; those high in avoidance use their protective resources interpersonally (Masten, 2001) making it more difficult to handle stressful situations when they arise. Moreover, avoidance is related to more masculine and protective tendencies (Shaver, et al., 1996; Stackert & Bursik, 2003), so they may also experience greater stress from the burden of managing stress in a way that is beneficial for their partner as well as themselves. The literature regarding interpersonal attachment and resilience is presently quite sparse. Future research should continue to look at the interactions between these variables and how it may affect long-term relationship outcomes.

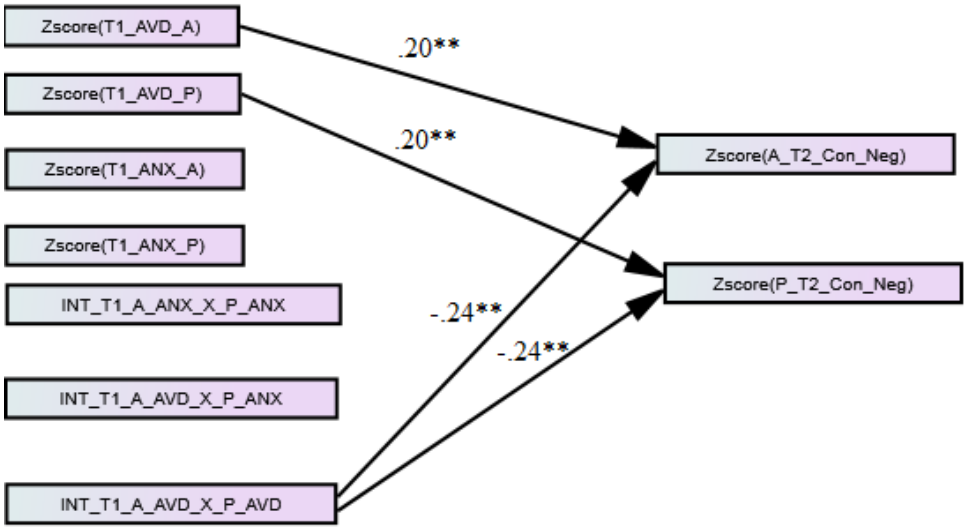
**Hypothesis 4d.** In Table 21 there are significant positive correlations between conflict negativity and attachment avoidance and anxiety. Based on the previously cited literature, hypothesis 4d predicts that complementary attachment styles would interact to invert this relationship. APIM MLM of cross-sectional data did not support this hypothesis; there were no significant interaction effects, and only actor avoidance and anxiety influenced conflict negativity (Table 24). Longitudinal APIM SEM also did not support hypothesis 4d as attachment avoidance was related to a significant increase in conflict negativity while high avoidance dyads were related to a significant decrease in conflict negativity (Figure 7).

**Table 24.**
APIM MLM attachment interactions and conflict negativity

| **Maine Effects Model** | ***F*** | ***t*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** | ***Sig.*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Intercept* | .091 | .302 | .014 | .045 | .763 |
| *Actor Avoidance* | 41.8 | 6.47 | .287 | .044 | .000 |
| *Partner Avoidance* | 2.84 | 1.68 | .075 | .044 | .093 |
| *Actor Anxiety* | 21.8 | 4.67 | .206 | .044 | .000 |
| *Partner Anxiety* | 2.04 | 1.43 | .063 | .044 | .154 |

*Note*: All continuous variables standardized. Mean, and SD statistics reported previously for all variables present.

**Figure 7.** Longitudinal APIM SEM of attachment and conflict negativity




*Note: $\chi^2$(10, N = 174) = 9.60. p = .476; CFI = 1.00; TLI =1.004; RMSEA = .000(90% CI: .000-.080); power = .60. *p < .05, **p < .01.*

While the longitudinal model has poor power, it does reveal an interesting pattern for avoidant attachment and conflict negativity. Individuals high in avoidance report greater feelings of negativity in response to the simulated conflict task. However, when both partners are high in avoidance, they both show a significant decrease in conflict negativity. Research has consistently shown that avoidant individuals utilize more avoidant conflict strategies (Gallo & Smith, 2001). This model suggests that avoidant individuals also experience more negativity following conflicts, but when paired with another who avoids conflict, they report significantly less conflict negativity. These data

suggest that avoidant individuals do not merely use avoidant conflict strategies by default, but counter to previous findings (Karantzas, et al., 2014) these strategies may be more beneficial to their long-term emotional and interpersonal development when shared. Still, in experiencing greater conflict negativity and being in a relationship in which they are forced to face conflict, avoidant partners may benefit in the development of state resilience.

**Hypothesis 4e.** The main model proposed in this dissertation suggests that through state resilience, the interaction of attachment and conflict negativity will have a positive indirect relationship with life satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, and relationship longevity. Hypothesis 4e predicts that the interaction between discordant insecure attachment and conflict negativity will positively relate to state resilience. This hypothesis is tested using APIM MLM moderation analyses of four interaction models (Table 25). Only significant relationships are presented.

**Table 25.**
APIM MLM interactions of attachment and conflict negativity on state resilience.

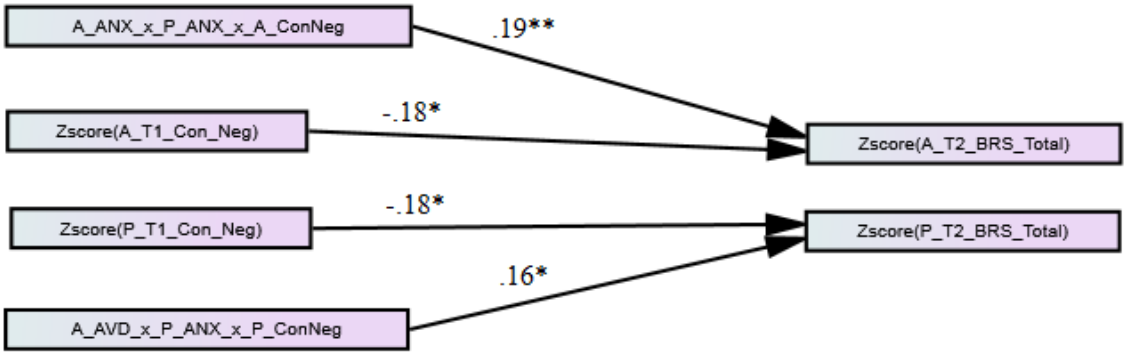
| **Maine Effects Model** | ***F*** | ***t*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** | ***Sig.*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Intercept* | .000 | .000 | .000 | .045 | 1.00 |
| *Actor Anxiety* | 14.4 | -3.79 | -.183 | .048 | .000 |
| *Actor Conflict Negativity* | 8.00 | -2.83 | -.135 | .048 | .005 |
| **Three-Way Interaction Model** | ***F*** | ***t*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** | ***Sig.*** |
| *Intercept* | .049 | .221 | .010 | .047 | .825 |
| *Actor AVD x Partner ANX x Partner CoNeg* | 3.72 | 1.96 | .120 | .060 | .051 |
| *Actor ANX x Actor CoNeg x Partner CoNeg* | 4.51 | -2.12 | -.107 | .051 | .034 |
| **Four-Way Interaction Model** | ***F*** | ***t*** | ***β*** | ***SE*** | ***Sig.*** |
| *Intercept* | .771 | -.878 | -.050 | .057 | .381 |
| *A_AVD x P_ANX x A_CoNeg x P_CoNeg* | 3.96 | 1.99 | .090 | .044 | .047 |

*Note*: All continuous variables standardized. Mean, and SD statistics reported previously for all variables present. All models included preceding and concurrent control variables and interactions but were excluded for clarity.

The present analysis suggests that although conflict negativity and attachment anxiety are negatively related to state resilience, discordant insecure attachment pair moderates these relationships. In three-way interactions, it is found that individuals high in avoidance display greater state resilience when paired with a partner high in anxiety and conflict negativity. Moreover, when an individual high in anxiety and conflict negativity paired with a partner high in conflict negativity, they too see greater levels of state resilience. Finally, in a four-way interaction, it is found that this is specifically the case when an avoidant and anxious couple are both high in conflict negativity. These findings support hypothesis 4e and suggest that discordant insecure couples may benefit from conflict as it may increase feelings of closeness and intimacy (Pietromonaco, et al., 2004) while improving conflict management resources (Roloff, 2009) in a relatively stable and committed relationship context. Longitudinal over-time APIM SEM finds support for hypothesis 4e for high anxiety individuals in discordant and similarly attached

relationships over a three-month period, but there are no significant results regarding high avoidance partners (Figure 8).

**Figure 8.** Longitudinal APIM SEM of attachment and conflict negativity interactions on state resilience




*Note: $\chi^2(44, N = 174) = 36.94$, $p = .766$; CFI = 1.000; TLI =1.021; RMSEA = .000(90% CI: .000-.037); power = 1.0. All predictor variables, 2- and 3-way interactions, error terms, and covariations included in the analysis model but excluded from the figure for easier viewing. No 4-way interactions were significant, so they were removed from analysis to preserve power. *p < .05, **p < .01*

These analyses present evidence in support of hypothesis 4e as discordant insecure attachment styles interacted with conflict negativity to positively predict state resilience. This effect was not shared equally by partners. At time 1, there were significant positive effects for avoidant partners' state resilience stemming from relationships with partners high in anxiety and conflict negativity. Results from the three-month interview, however, were not significant for avoidant partners. In this longitudinal analysis, it was the high anxiety and high conflict negativity individual that benefited from being in a relationship with a high avoidance partner. Interestingly, these individuals also saw increased state resilience when with a high anxiety partner.

In considering why avoidant individuals did not show increased state resilience over time, it is noted that they also did not exhibit a decrease. Moreover, it was only attachment anxiety which had a negative relationship with state resilience in the cross-sectional analysis. Avoidant individuals tend to explore their environments (Ainsworth &

Bell, 1970), maintain positive self-views (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), have an internal locus of control (Hexel, 2003), and are committed to persist in work and interpersonal relationships (McMahon, 2007). As such, it is likely they developed a fair amount of stress resilience throughout their lives, reducing variability over a short period. These attributes also may allow avoidant individuals to be a consistent social resource on which to build resilience (Murray Nettles, Mucherah, & Jones, 2000) as individuals high in anxiety typically have an external locus of control (Hexel, 2003; McMahon, 2007), are accustomed to inconsistent support (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970), and perceive their self-worth from their interpersonal relationships (Masten, 2001). Therefore, at a younger age and often participants' first romantic relationship, it is reasonable to expect a significant spike in anxious individuals' state resilience over a relatively short period.

# CHAPTER X

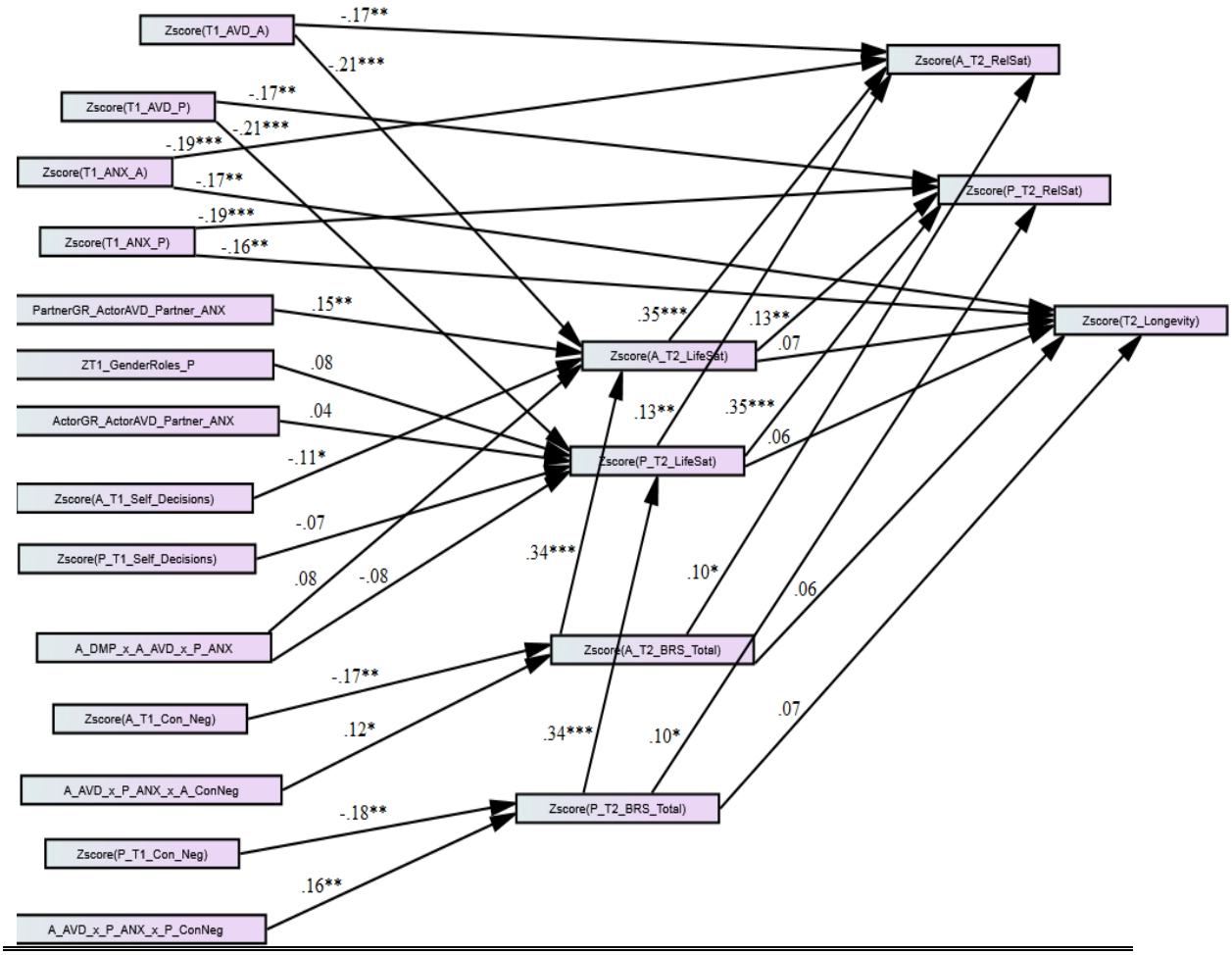
## Main Study: Predicted & Alternate Path Models

### Predicted Model

Figure 1 represents the overall model predicted in the dissertation. This model suggests that discordant couple attachment styles will interact with traditional gender role expectations to positively predict the opposing partner's life satisfaction three months later. For example, more traditional avoidant actor gender roles were predicted to positively affect life satisfaction for their high anxiety partners and vice-versa. Also predicted to positively influence actor and partner life satisfaction was the interaction between actors high in avoidance, who report high levels of decision-making power, with partners who are high in attachment anxiety. Moreover, discordant insecurely attached couples, exhibiting high levels of conflict negativity, were predicted to relate to state

resilience three months after initial measurement positively. Life satisfaction and state resilience were predicted to positively influence relationship longevity and life satisfaction, with the three interaction relationships positively contributing indirectly through their effects on life satisfaction and state resilience. Using standard over-time APIM SEM with longitudinal dyadic date, we find that this prediction yielded a reasonably strong model (Figure 9). All necessary moderation steps were included in the model but only predicted relationships were regressed. Age was a significant predictor of relationship longevity.

**Figure 9.** Longitudinal APIM SEM of the predicted model




*Note: $\chi^2(194, N = 174) = 349.189$, $p = .000$; CFI = .960; TLI =.863; RMSEA = .068(90% CI: .056-.079); power = .095. All predictor variables, 2- and 3-way interactions, error terms, and covariations included in analysis model but excluded from figure for easier viewing. * p < .10, **p < .05, ***p < .01*

While the predicted model boats reasonable fit statistics, many of the regression lines were insignificant. Still, a number of these paths trended toward significance and might have reached the .05 threshold had some other paths been removed and/or added. In the predicted model we see that attachment avoidance and anxiety negatively affect life satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, and relationship longevity, but they did not have an individual impact on state resilience. Resilience is a complex process involving multiple influences (Luthar, et al., 2000), so it would be expected that individual predictors would not have a significant effect when accounting for several variables and interactions.

Traditional gender roles influenced avoidant partner's life satisfaction positively and when the anxious partner exhibited high levels of traditional gender roles. Traditional gender roles and attachment anxiety are similarly related to prioritizing family and relationships (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Pietromonaco & Carnelley, 1994). When maintained by an anxious partner, the combination may result in more vigilance toward handling family and interpersonal interactions. As such, partner control in this domain may benefit those high in avoidance as they do not need to expend much effort, yet still, benefit as an extension of their partner. These results are also consistent with other reports suggesting that insecure individuals experience greater life satisfaction when they hold more traditional gender roles (Pilar Matud, et al., 2014).

There were no significant interaction effects present for decision-making power, but greater decision-making power at time one negatively predicted life satisfaction at time2. This decrease is similar to effects found in previous analyses, but counter to findings in the previous literature (Bentley, et al., 2007). Making life decisions can be

stressful when those choices only affect oneself (Hughes & Scholer, 2017), but in a relationship context, this burden may be exacerbated leading to decreased life satisfaction for high decision-making power partners. Nevertheless, the lack of significance related to the decision-making power and discordant insecure couple interaction may be related to other effects in the model having hierarchically more important impacts or it could be related to the deficits in this predicted model.

While conflict negativity negatively influenced state resilience, the interaction with discordant insecure attachment had a positive effect on state resilience for either partner reporting high levels of conflict negativity. Considering stress inoculation theory of resilience (Seery, et al., 2013), it would be expected that the individual experiencing greater conflict negativity would show greater resilience over time and individual conflict negativity would not influence partner resilience. The present analysis supports this notion while highlighting an important dyadic effect not previously considered. With individual conflict negativity being an adverse predictor of resilience, this effect appears to occur only when in a complementary insecure pair. Still, because the predicted model focused solely on such complementary pairs, similar pairs were not included in the model. This effect is examined further in the alternative exploratory model.

Due to the limitation of having complete data at only two time-points, mediating variables and outcome variables were analyzed from the same 3-month follow-up time-point. State resilience had a strong positive relationship with life satisfaction for the individual, but neither partner's resilience affected the other's life satisfaction. This is in line with research on the Broaden-and-Build Theory, which suggests the development and utilization of positive resources, such as resilience, have a broadening effect making

those behaviors more habitual and leading to increases in life satisfaction (Cohn, et al., 2009). Moreover, in line with Neff and Broady's (2011) early marital stress studies, individual resilience progress did not influence partner development, but both partners did improve at varying levels simultaneously.

A similar, but insignificant, trend emerged for this effect and relationship satisfaction suggesting that resilience may be a greater predictor of personal life gains and only effects relationship gains through life satisfaction. Accordingly, in this model, relationship satisfaction was positively influenced by individual and partner life satisfaction. This partner effect is expected from life satisfaction as those more satisfied in their lives are more confident, optimistic, and controlled (Cummins & Nistico, 2002), which positively influences partner relationship satisfaction (Assad, Donnellan, & Conger, 2007; Barnes, Brown, Krusemark, Campbell, & Rogge, 2007; Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 2000).

Finally, in this model, there were no significant positive predictors of relationship longevity. This lack of effect is disappointing but not entirely surprising. Relationship longevity is strongly tied to relationship satisfaction (Berscheid & Reis, 1998; Kelley, 1983), which may have affected longevity. Moreover, the student sample was young and the longitudinal time frame was only three months, which may have limited the variability in relationship longevity. Finally, longevity may not have been represented by the appropriate correlates as previous analyses revealed significant predictors for longevity through paths that were not present in the predicted model. These varying relationships were examined and discussed incrementally in our previous analyses. Based on these analyses, an alternative exploratory longitudinal model was tested (Figure 10).

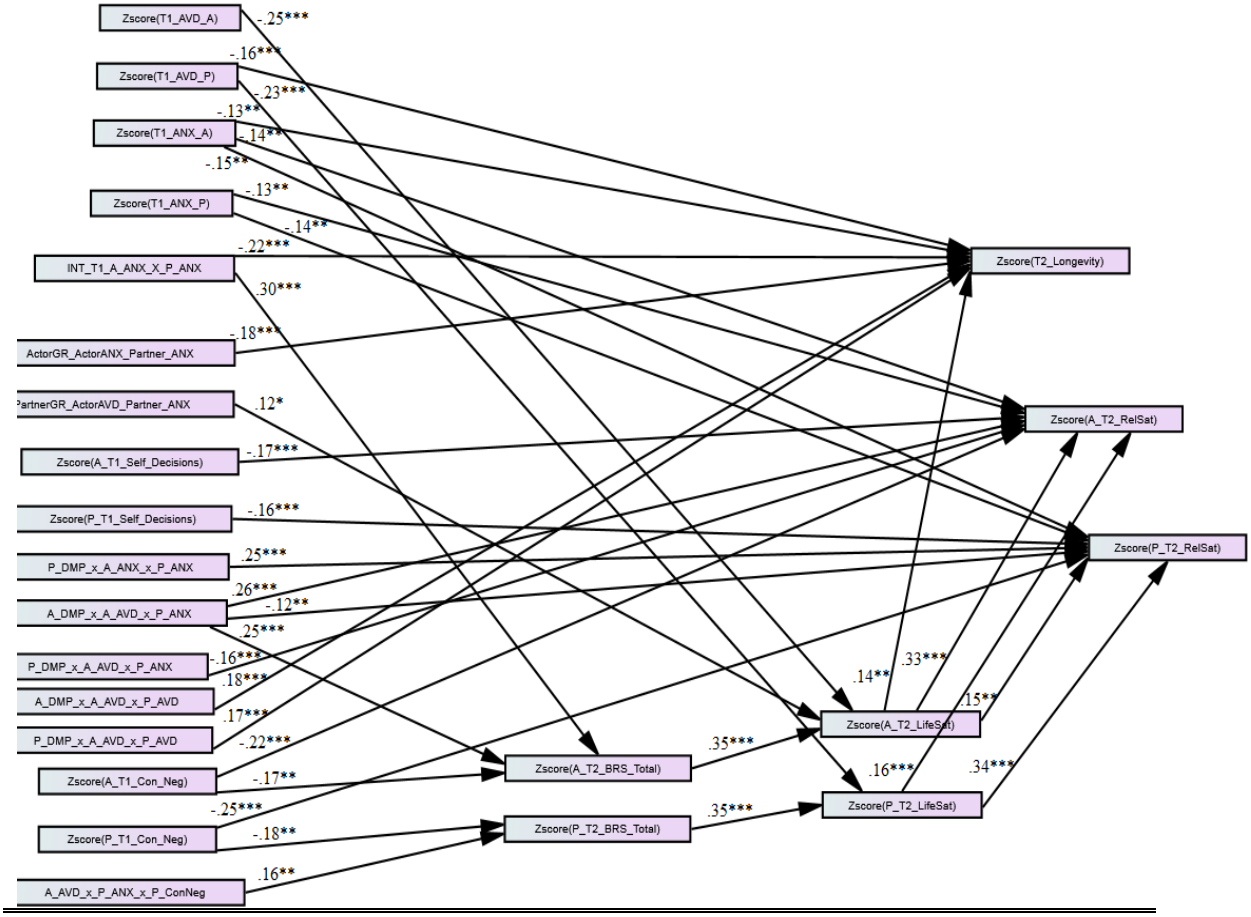
**Alternative Model**

The alternative model showed a better fit than the predicted model and included all dyadic combinations. Like all previous models, the appropriate controls, interactions, covariance, and error variance were included in the model, but only significant paths are displayed for easier evaluation. Moreover, age was a consistent significant control related to relationship longevity. Individual avoidance had a negative effect on relationship longevity and one's life satisfaction. Attachment anxiety also had a significant negative effect on relationship longevity as well as negative actor and partner effects on relationship satisfaction. Similar to the predicted model, insecure attachment did not have a significant effect on state resilience (discussed above).

In line with other research (Banse, 2004; Harma, & Sümer, 2016; Girme, et al., 2016; Pietromonaco & Beck, 2015), attachment avoidance did not influence relationship satisfaction but did adversely influence life satisfaction and longevity. Avoidant individuals lack the social skills and motivation to develop and maintain supportive interpersonal relationships (Horowitz, et al., 1993), which could explain, decreased life satisfaction (Gillespie, Frederick, Harari, & Grov, 2015), but not decreased relationship satisfaction. Having large social networks can lead to partner jealousy and conflict (Utz & Beukeboom, 2011). Avoidant individuals engage in few interpersonal relationships and anxious individuals seeking numerous acquaintances (Horowitz, et al., 199), may explain why anxiety and not avoidance is negatively related to relationship satisfaction. Moreover, anxious individuals, who thrive on interpersonal connections (Masten, 2001; Park, et al., 2004), would likely see negative life satisfaction effects buffered due to their social networks. These opposing effects on life and relationship satisfaction may also

explain why both anxious and avoidant individuals showed decreased relationship longevity.

**Figure 10.** Longitudinal APIM SEM of alternative model




*Note:* $\chi^2(214, N = 174) = 246.2$, $p = .065$; *CFI = .993; TLI =.974; RMSEA = .029(90% CI: .000-.045); power = .094. All predictor variables, 2- and 3-way interactions, error terms, and covariations included in analysis model but excluded from figure for easier viewing. * p < .08, **p < .05, ***p < .01*

Dual anxiety couples were negatively correlated with relationship longevity three months after the initial survey, supporting that similarity has a negative impact on long-term relationship outcomes (Shiota & Levenson, 2007). This effect, however, was only found for dual anxiety couples, suggesting that similarity may not adversely affect avoidant or secure couples. There is ample evidence that secure pairs have healthy and lasting relationships (Pietromonaco & Carnelley, 1994; Senchak & Leonard, 1992; Simpson, 1990), but it is novel find no negative effects for avoidant pairs. Partners high

in avoidance exhibit little intimacy (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) and lack effective conflict and communication skills (Domingue & Mollen, 2009; Shi, 2003), which has been negatively attributed to their relationship success (Collins & Read, 1990; Feeney 1994). However, previous studies do not account for their partner's attachment avoidance and anxiety.

Moreover, avoidant individuals do consistently report that they prefer avoidant partners (Klohnen & Luo, 2003), and in our previous analyses, avoidant individuals showed a preference for changing their partners to be more avoidant. It may be that a mutual distaste for intimacy and conflict avoidance allow high avoidance couples to remain in their relationships for similar lengths as secure and complementary pairs. Still, these qualities are maladaptive in a relationship context, and while they may not predict relationship dissolution over a three-month span, it is possible that relationship issues come to a head further down the line. Attachment anxiety, on the other hand, is related to increased confrontation (Pietromonaco, et al., 2004) that is particularly divisive and self-centered (Mikulincer, 1998; Pietromonaco & Beck, 2015; Simpson, et al., 1996). Which, may contribute to the dissolution of high anxiety couples earlier in their relationships. In a similar fashion to the present study, future research should investigate the intricacies of similarly attached insecure pairs and their relationship outcomes.

Despite relationship longevity concerns, high anxiety couples were positively related to state resilience over a three-month period. This counters other research reports that have connected attachment anxiety with decreased state resilience (Bradley & Hojjat, 2016; Karreman & Vingerhoets, 2012) but is consistent with our previous findings. This effect may be particularly related to anxious couples for compounding effects associated

with increased stressful experiences. Findings like ours, reporting frequent break-ups for those high in attachment anxiety (Le, Dove, Agnew, Korn, Mutso, 2010), suggest that anxious individuals may be the most likely also to experience the stress associated with break-up most often. Moreover, when two individuals who frequently initiate conflicts are paired, the resulting stress is likely to exceed that experienced by other attachment pairs. Thus, more quickly inoculating high anxiety couples to such stressors resulting in a pronounced state resilience development arch. Avoidant individuals, on the other hand, tend to explore their environments (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970), maintain positive self-views (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), and have an internal locus of control (Hexel, 2003). Moreover, unlike those high in anxiety, these positive avoidant qualities are not dependent upon interpersonal relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Thus, avoidant individuals may experience steady state resilience development commencing well before their romantic lives.

Dual anxiety couples in which one partner reported more traditional gender roles also displayed significant negative relationship with longevity. This finding is consistent with the previous results regarding anxious couples and relationship longevity as well as previous reports that suggest when one partner, particularly the male partner, has more traditional gender role expectations, the relationship suffers (Craddock, 1980). This effect was not present when both partners maintained more traditional gender roles. Conversely, there was a positive trend for avoidant partner life satisfaction in complementary pairs when their high anxiety partners held more traditional gender role expectations. While this hypothesized relationship was only found to trend toward significance in the alternative model, it was significant the analysis of the predicted model, suggesting there

may indeed be an effect here. Neither insecure attachment style were related to gender roles in our previous analyses, but we have since shown that avoidant individuals with traditional gender role partners were more satisfied. Previous literature suggests that both insecure types are more likely to maintain traditional gender roles (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994). The present analysis supports previous work (Alonso-Arbiol, et al., 2002), suggesting that it is more likely the balance between gender role expectations and other attachment-related factors within a dyad that impacts personal and relationship functioning. The present understanding of the impacts of dyadic gender roles and attachment would benefit from more expansive research that focuses more specifically on these constructs.

Decision-making power turned out to be one of the strongest and most ubiquitous predictors in the present study. Partners in dual anxiety relationships showed higher levels of relationship satisfaction when they had greater decision-making power. When paired with a more powerful avoidant, high anxiety individuals showed decreased relationship satisfaction. Avoidant partners, on the other hand, had greater relationship satisfaction and resilience when they had more power in a complementary relationship but decreased relationship satisfaction when their anxious partner had more power. In dual avoidance couples, there was a positive relationship with longevity when either actor or partner reported greater decision-making power.

Like our findings in earlier analyses, decision-making power negatively related to satisfaction for individuals reporting more power. When including attachment dynamics, relationship outcomes were consistently positive for all higher decision-making partners. Countering our predictions that both partners would benefit from avoidant decision-

making power in complementary pairs, we found that this negatively affected anxious partners' relationship satisfaction. Along the lines of our prediction, anxious partners did not benefit from having more power in a complementary relationship, and less powerful avoidant partners were negatively affected. While our findings mostly support previous literature suggesting that power imbalances only favor those in the position of power (Bentley, et al., 2007), there is still an effect of attachment dynamics deserving of further attention. Unlike reports suggesting equity in decision-making is ideal for couple functioning (Beach & Tesser, 1993; Sprecher, et al., 2006), an imbalance amongst similarly attached insecure couples was not overtly negative for either partner. Instead, this negative partner effect was only found amongst complementary pairs. It is also interesting that high-power avoidants in complementary relationships had higher levels of state resilience. This path was the only one in the model that positively influenced state resilience for avoidant individuals and still may be a key component in the longevity of complementary insecure pairs. Actor state resilience positively predicted greater actor life satisfaction and actor life satisfaction positively predicted relationship satisfaction for both partners as well as relationship longevity. The development of state resilience has been found to have positive life and relationship outcomes (Cohn, et al., 2009), but in our analyses, we have revealed that complementary insecure pairs may specifically persist due to the development of state resilience associated with avoidant partner decision-making power and anxious partner conflict negativity.

Individually, conflict negativity had adverse effects on resilience and relationship satisfaction for both partners. However, partner anxiety in complementary relationships was positively related to state resilience when they reported high levels of conflict

negativity. Combined with our previous findings of dual anxiety couples reporting higher state resilience, it might be assumed that being in a relationship increases resilience for high anxiety individuals due to their tendency to judge themselves interdependently (Park, et al., 2004). However, in this model, these were the only two instances positively linking anxiety and resilience. As such, it appears the conflict management of avoidant partner may indeed benefit their anxious counterparts. In our predicted model, we assumed the relationship would be reciprocal, positively influencing resilience for both the anxious and avoidant partners.

As discussed previously, effects may not be present for the avoidant partner because the traits associated with avoidant attachment, such as positive views of self and more explorations (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), allow them to develop resilience more gradually throughout life. Although avoidant attachment is related to relationship dissolutions, when in more serious and long-term relationships they become distressed by the idea of reorganizing their lives and interpersonal connections and are more likely to persist in such relationships (Pietromonaco & Beck, 2015). Hence, becoming a more stable presence for their high anxiety partners and allowing for their growth of state resilience.

# CHAPTER XI

## General Discussion

The many predicted relationships were discussed in-depth throughout this dissertation, building and informed basis for our alternative exploratory model. These discussions were integrated into the results sections. We have found that many of our predictions regarding complementary insecure relationships were not as expected.

Despite our intentions to focus on only complementary insecure relationships, we also discussed results regarding similarly insecure couples. This study was not designed to gain an increased understanding of similarly attached couples, but some interesting results were uncovered. It is recommended that future research is conducted to target the effects of similar attachments. This dissertation study also has weaknesses that should be addressed in future research. The longitudinal portion of this study was time restricted and limited data to only two complete time points. It is recommended that couples be followed with a full arsenal of measures for at least 1-2 years. It is also recommended that future research seek a more evenly distributed range of couple maturity. An undergraduate sample may show us how couples interact early on in their relationships, but restricts the ability to interpret the effects of couples in or nearing marriages, having children, empty nesting, and retiring. A wider range of relationship stages can capture the influences of long-term relationship investment, looming concerns about age and reproduction, careers, and major life changes. The contribution of these factors may expose much more about the function and compatibility of complementary insecure couples. Nevertheless, there are many valuable findings in the present research worth considering.

In the evaluation of the four-paragraph relationship questionnaire, we found abnormally high rates of fearful attachment and abnormally low rates of ambivalent attachment. When compared with the ECR-RS, it appeared that high anxiety individuals were more inclined to choose the fearful option than high avoidance individuals, suggesting that the RQ may not be an adequate attachment measure for modern students. In further analysis of the ECR-RS we found consistency in avoidance and anxiety

amongst relationships supporting the universal paradigm of attachment style, but also identify variability of magnitude amongst specific relationships supporting the intentions and necessity of such a measure.

As is frequently found, the present sample's avoidance and anxiety scores were strongly correlated. Thus, we controlled individual avoidance and anxiety to find that individuals were fairly accurate in their perceptions of their partner's attachment style. While dyadic analyses are ideal for investigating interpersonal relationships, this accuracy suggests that studies restricted to data from only one partner may still yield valuable and insightful information for future exploration.

Considering the notions that insecure attachment is not preferred and individuals would be expected to desire self-improvement toward a more secure style, we asked participants to rate their attachment and ideal attachment. These results suggested that both avoidant and anxious individuals preferred to maintain their current attachment insecurity. As mentioned in the previous discussion, this finding may be due to cognitive dissonance and should be studied further. If future results continue this trend, it might be beneficial to review clinical practices that attempt to change individual insecurities to securities and alternatively consider focusing on management of insecurities.

Analysis of the four major attraction theories did not find support for the attraction security hypothesis or the complementary attraction theory in either hypothetical or actual relationships. We did, however, find attachment similarity preferences to be significant in a hypothetical framework, but only significant for avoidance in a real relationship framework. Using this design, anxiety was unrelated to any specific attachment preferences, suggesting that high anxiety individuals may be

inclined to enter a relationship with any attachment type. Finally, there was some evidence of ideal-self similarity-attraction, but in considering the tendency for individuals to desire to remain the same, their preference for similarly attached others is likely to be the overriding influence.

To examine reports suggesting complementary insecure pairs persist in relationships at similar lengths as do similarly secure pairs, we analyzed couple attachment dynamics and relationship lengths. Similarly, secure pairs were positively correlated with relationship longevity while similarly anxious pairs were negatively related to longevity. Complementary insecure pairs and similarly avoidant pairs did not significantly correlate with longevity, suggesting that such relationships may not be overtly positive or negative. Future studies, like the present dissertation, may vastly improve clinical efforts by developing a stronger understanding of the positive factors within these insecure dyads.

The present study provides a strong start to such efforts through the analysis of dyadic attachment interactions with gender role expectations, decision-making power, conflict negativity, resilience, and life satisfaction. Life satisfaction was found to be the main contributor to relationship satisfaction and longevity for insecure couples, showing significant actor and partner effects. The key challenge for insecure couples is finding the pathways to greater life satisfaction. One of the strongest contributors to life satisfaction was found to be state resilience. Dual anxiety couples find success through this path as the interaction of actor and partner anxiety significantly predicted state resilience. Moreover, the partner reporting higher decision-making power in dual anxiety couples benefited from a direct path to relationship satisfaction. There were few relationships

significant for dual avoidance couples, but when both actor and partner have a high level of decision-making power, these relationships were found to last longer. As for our main dyad, complementary insecure partners found success through all predicted paths, differing based on their avoidance or anxiety. For example, when anxious partners maintained more traditional gender roles, their avoidant partners were more satisfied in their lives. Moreover, when the avoidant partner had more decision-making power than their anxious counterpart, they displayed higher levels of resilience as well as relationship satisfaction. Finally, when paired with an avoidant, anxious partners high in conflict negativity experienced increased levels of state resilience.

Through this dissertation, we highlight three significant pathways toward the relationship satisfaction and longevity of complementary insecure pairs. There are still many other factors to consider, and we hope future research will take our approach of finding the strengths within insecure dyads and further the empirical database to help individuals maintain their attachment identities and still have fulfilling romantic relationships.

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# APPENDIX A

## Relationship Questionnaire (RQ)

Please read the following paragraphs and answer the questions below.

1. It is relatively easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on others and having others depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me.
2. I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.
3. I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.
4. I am somewhat uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I sometimes worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.

Please answer these questions with the number from the corresponding paragraph.

_____ Which paragraph(s) best describes your **significant other**?

_____ Which paragraph(s) best describes **yourself**?

# APPENDIX B

## The Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) Questionnaire

The statements below concern how you feel in emotionally intimate relationships. We are interested in how you *generally* experience relationships, not just in what is happening in a current relationship. Respond to each statement by selecting a number (1 = strongly disagree through 7 = strongly agree) to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement

1. I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love.

2. I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me.

3. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me.

4. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.

5. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him or her.

6. I worry a lot about my relationships.

7. When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become interested in someone else.

8. When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me.

9. I rarely worry about my partner leaving me.

10. My romantic partner makes me doubt myself.

11. I do not often worry about being abandoned.

12. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.

13. Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.

14. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.

15. I'm afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won't like who I really am.

16. It makes me mad that I don't get the affection and support I need from my partner.

17. I worry that I won't measure up to other people.

18. My partner only seems to notice me when I'm angry.

19. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.

20. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.

21. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.

22. I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners.

23. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.

24. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.

25. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.

26. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.

27. It's not difficult for me to get close to my partner.

28. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.

29. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.

30. I tell my partner just about everything.

31. I talk things over with my partner.

32. I am nervous when partners get too close to me.

33. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.

34. I find it easy to depend on romantic partners.

35. It's easy for me to be affectionate with my partner.

36. My partner really understands me and my needs.

# APPENDIX C

## The Experiences in Close Relationships – Relationship Structures (ECR-RS) Questionnaire

*Each of the following instructions preceded an individual section of the questionnaire regarding a specific relationship.*

Using a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree through 7 = strongly agree) please select the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding this specific relationship.

A. Please answer the following questions about your mother or a mother-like figure.

B. Please answer the following questions about your father or a father-like figure.

C. Please answer the following questions about your dating partner.

D. Please answer the following questions about your best friend.

E. Please answer the following questions the way you believe your dating partner may answer in reference to your relationship with each other.

F. Please answer the following questions about how you would ideally feel about your dating partner.

G. Please answer the following questions about how your dating partner would ideally answer these questions in reference to your relationship together.

*Questionnaire Items*

1. It helps to turn to this person in times of need.
2. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with this person.
3. I talk things over with this person.
4. I find it easy to depend on this person.

5. I don’t feel comfortable opening up to this person.

6. I prefer not to show this person how I feel deep down.

7. I often worry that this person doesn’t really care for me.

8. I’m afraid that this person may abandon me.

9. I worry that this person won’t care about me as much as I care about him or her.

## APPENDIX D

### General Demographic Questionnaire:

1) Please enter your name
2) Please enter your address
3) Please enter your phone number
4) Please enter your partner's name
5) Please enter your partner's address
6) Please enter your partner's phone number
7) What date did you and your partner begin dating exclusively?
8) Would you consider your relationship with your partner to be a serious romantic relationship (Please give a number 1-7 1 = no we are not at all serious – 7 = yes we are extremely serious)
9) What is your racial/ethnic background?
10) What is your partner's racial/ethnic background
11) What is your age?
12) What is your partner's age?
13) What is your gender?
14) What is your partner's gender?
15) How many months did you and your partner know each other before beginning dating?
16) Please rank the top 10 conflicts in your relationship starting with the one that concerns you the most and working your way to the issues that concern you the least.

17) Do you and your partner live together?

18) Do you and your partner have plans to move in together within the next year?

## APPENDIX E

### Gender Role Expectations

*To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Please answer on a 1-7 scale 1= completely disagree and 7 = completely agree)*

1. If husband and wife both work full time, they should share household tasks equally
2. It is better for a person to get married than to go through life being single.
3. Mothers should not work full time when their youngest child is under age 5.
4. Mothers should not work part time when their youngest child is under age 5.
5. Children under three years old should not be cared for all day in a daycare center
6. Preschool children are likely to suffer if their mother is employed
7. It is much better for everybody if the man earns the main living and the women takes care of home and family.
8. It is all right for an unmarried couple to live together as long as they have plans to marry.
9. It is all right for an unmarried couple to live together even if they have no interest in considering marriage
10. Women should not have a child without being married.
11. Women should me more concerned with family than about career.
12. In general, when it comes to relationships, there are certain responsibilities women should handle of and certain responsibilities men should handle.

## APPENDIX F

### Satisfaction with Life Scale

Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1 – 7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

- 7 – Strongly agree
- 6 – Agree
- 5 – Slightly agree
- 4 – Neither agree nor disagree
- 3 – Slightly disagree
- 2 – Disagree
- 1 – Strongly disagree

____ In most ways my life is close to my ideal.

____ The conditions of my life are excellent.

____ I am satisfied with my life.

____ So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.

____ If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

## APPENDIX G

### Relationship Assessment Scale

*Please mark on the answer sheet the letter for each item which best answers that item for you.*

How well does your partner meet your needs?

| A | B | C | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Poorly | | Average | | Extremely well |

In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

| A | B | C | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unsatisfied | | Average | | Extremely satisfied |

How good is your relationship compared to most?

| A | B | C | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Poor | | Average | | Excellent |

How often do you wish you hadn't gotten in this relationship?

| A | B | C | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never | | Average | | Very often |

To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations:

| A | B | C | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hardly at all | | Average | | Completely |

How much do you love your partner?

| A | B | C | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not much | | Average | | Very much |

How many problems are there in your relationship?

| A | B | C | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very few | | Average | | Very many |

## APPENDIX H

### Relationship Power Inventory (RPI)

*For each statement, rate how true it is of you and your partner generally in your relationship*

*1 2 3 4 5 6 7*

*Never Sometimes Always*

1. I have more say than my partner does when we make decisions in our relationship.
2. I have more control over decision making than my partner does in our relationship.
3. When we make decisions in our relationship, I get the final say.
4. I have more influence than my partner does on decisions in our relationship.
5. I have more power than my partner when deciding about issues in our relationship
6. I am more likely than my partner to get my way when we disagree about issues in our relationship.
7. My partner has more say than I do when we make decisions in our relationship.
8. My partner has more control over decision making than I do in our relationship.
9. When we make decisions in our relationship, my partner gets the final say.
10. My partner has more influence than I do on decision in our relationship.
11. My partner has more power than me when deciding about issues in our relationship
12. My partner is more likely to get his/her way than me when we disagree about issues in our relationship

13. I am more likely than my partner to start discussions about issues in our relationship.
14. When my partner and I make decisions in our relationship, I tend to structure and lead the discussion.
15. I lay out the options more than my partner does when we discuss decisions in our relationship
16. I tend to bring up issues in our relationship more often than my partner does.
17. My partner is more likely than me to start discussion about issues in our relationship.
18. When my partner and I make decisions in our relationship, my partner tends to structure and lead the discussion.
19. My partner lays out the options more than I do when we discuss decisions in our relationship.
20. My partner tends to bring up issues in our relationship more often than I do.

# APPENDIX I

## Conflict Resolution Attitudes

*Please think of the most recent argument you had with your partner. Remember what you were arguing about and why you were upset with your partner. Remember what you were thinking about and how you felt during this argument. Then please answer the following questions relating to the argument's resolution. Please use a 1-7 scale (1 = not at all and 7 = extremely).*

1. How stressful was the discussion you had with your partner?
2. How upset did you feel during the discussion?
3. To what extent was the topic you discussed a major problem in your relationship?
4. Did this discussion negatively change your feelings of love or commitment towards your partner?
5. Did this discussion positively change your feelings of love or commitment towards your partner?
6. Did this discussion negatively change your feelings of respect towards your partner?
7. Did this discussion positively change your feelings of respect towards your partner?
8. Did this discussion negatively change your feelings of support and open communication towards your partner?
9. Did this discussion positively change your feelings of support and open communication towards your partner?
10. Did this discussion leave you feeling hostile towards your partner?

11. After some had time passed, did you maintain left over feelings of animosity towards your partner?
12. Overall, how satisfied were you in the outcome of your discussion?

## APPENDIX J

### Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA)

*Please think of how you usually are, how you think and feel about yourself, and about important people surrounding you. Please select the number that is closest to the end statement that best describes you.*

1. When something unforeseen happens:

I often feel bewildered 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I always find a solution

2. My plans for the future are:

Difficult to accomplish 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 possible to accomplish

3. I enjoy being:

Together with other people 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 By myself

4. My family's understanding of what is important in life is:

Quite different 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very similar

5. I can discuss personal issues with:

No one 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Friends/Family members

6. I am at my best when I:

Have a goal to strive for 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Can take one day at a time

7. My personal problems:

I know how to solve 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I cannot find any solutions for

8. I feel that my future looks:

Very promising 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Uncertain

9. To be flexible in social settings:

Is not important to me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Is really important to me

10. I feel:

Very happy with my family 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very unhappy with my family

11. Those who are good at encouraging me are:

Some close friends/family members 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No one

12. When I start on new things/projects:

I rarely plan ahead, just get on with it 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I prefer to have a plan

13. My judgements and decisions:

I often doubt 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I trust completely

14. My goals:

I know how to accomplish 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I am unsure how to accomplish

15. New friendships are something:

I make easily 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I have difficulty making

16. My family is characterized by:

Disconnection 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 healthy cohesion

17. The bonds among my friends is:

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strong

18. I am good at:

Organizing my time 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Wasting my time

19. Belief in myself:

Gets me through difficult periods 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Is of little help in difficult periods

20. My goals for the future are:

Unclear 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Well thought through

21. Meeting new people is:

Difficult for me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Something I am good at

22. In difficult periods my family:

Keeps a positive outlook on the future 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Views the future as gloomy

23. When a family member experiences a crisis/emergency:

I am informed right away 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 It takes quite a while before I am told

24. Rules and regular routines:

Are absent in my everyday life 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Are a part of my everyday life

25. In difficult periods I have a tendency to:

View everything gloomy 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Find something good that helps me thrive/prosper

26. When I am with others:

I easily laugh 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I seldom laugh

27. Facing other people, our family acts:

Unsupportively of one another 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Loyally towards one another

28. I get support from:

Friends/ family members 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 No one

29. Events in my life that I cannot influence:

I manage to come to terms with 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Are a constant source of worry/concern

30. For me, thinking of good topics of conversation is:

Difficult 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Easy

31. In my family we like to:

Do things together 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Do things on our own

32. When needed, I have:

No one who can help me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Always someone who can help me

33. My close friends/ family members:

Appreciate my qualities 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Dislike my qualities

## APPENDIX K

### Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)

Please respond to each item by marking one box per row

*1: Strongly Disagree / 2: Disagree / 3: Neutral / 4: Agree / 5: Strongly Agree*

1. I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times

2. I have a hard time making it through stressful events.

3. It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event.

4. It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens.

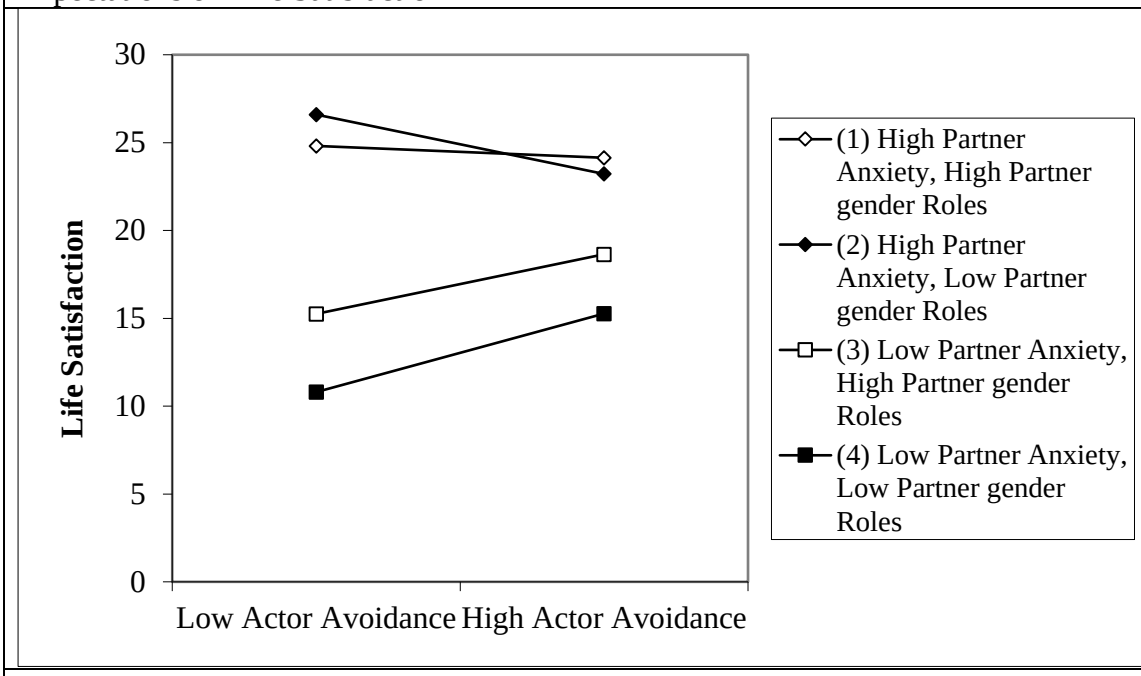
5. I usually come through difficult times with little trouble.

6. I tend to take a long time to get over set-backs in my life.

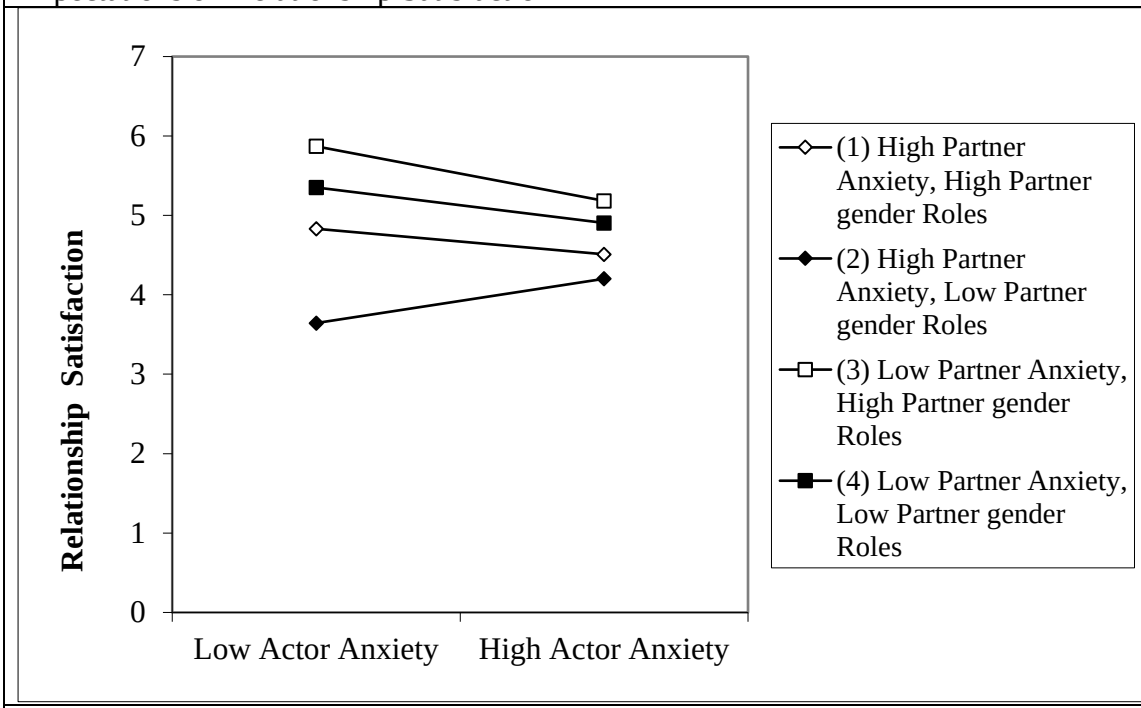
## APPENDIX L

### Interaction Plots

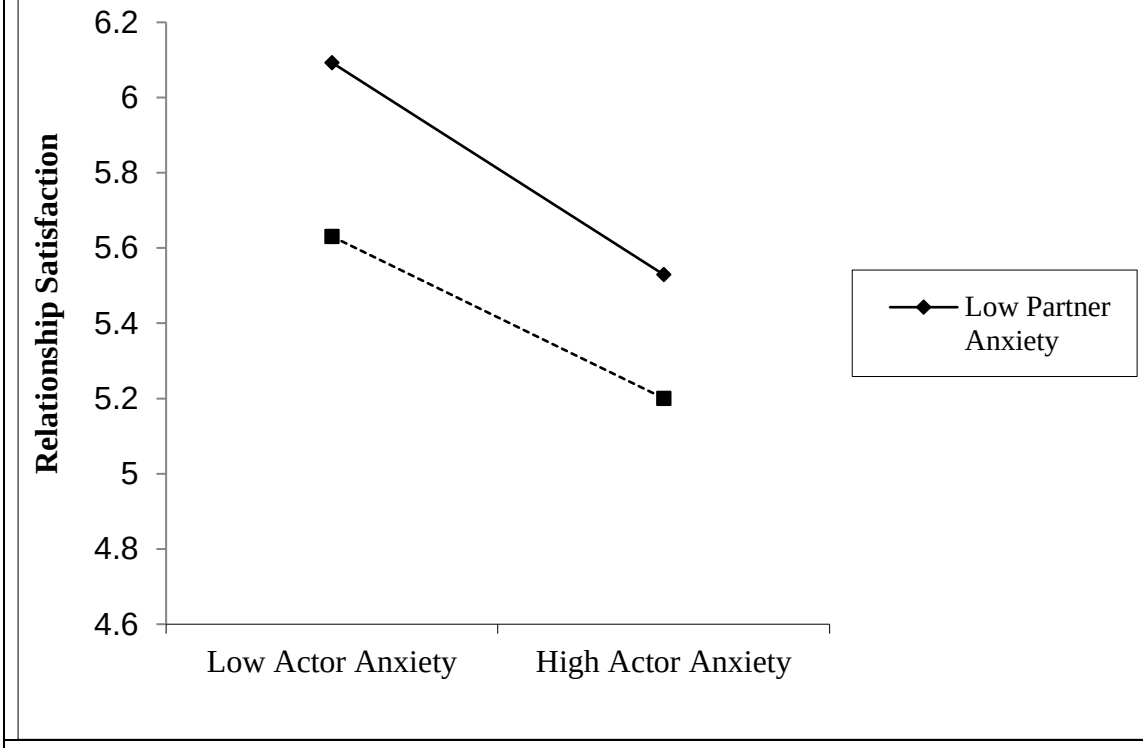
**Gender Roles Plot 1:** Actor Avoidance X Partner Anxiety X Partner Gender Role Expectations on Life Satisfaction



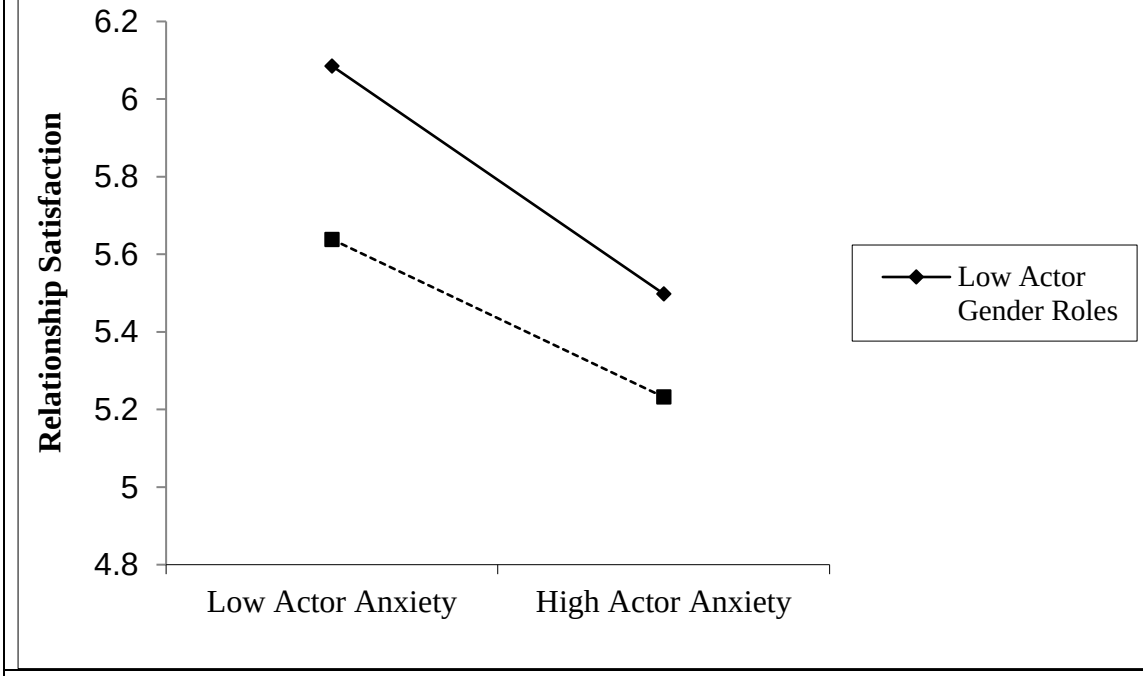

**Gender Roles Plot 2:** Actor Anxiety X Partner Anxiety X Partner Gender Role Expectations on Relationship Satisfaction



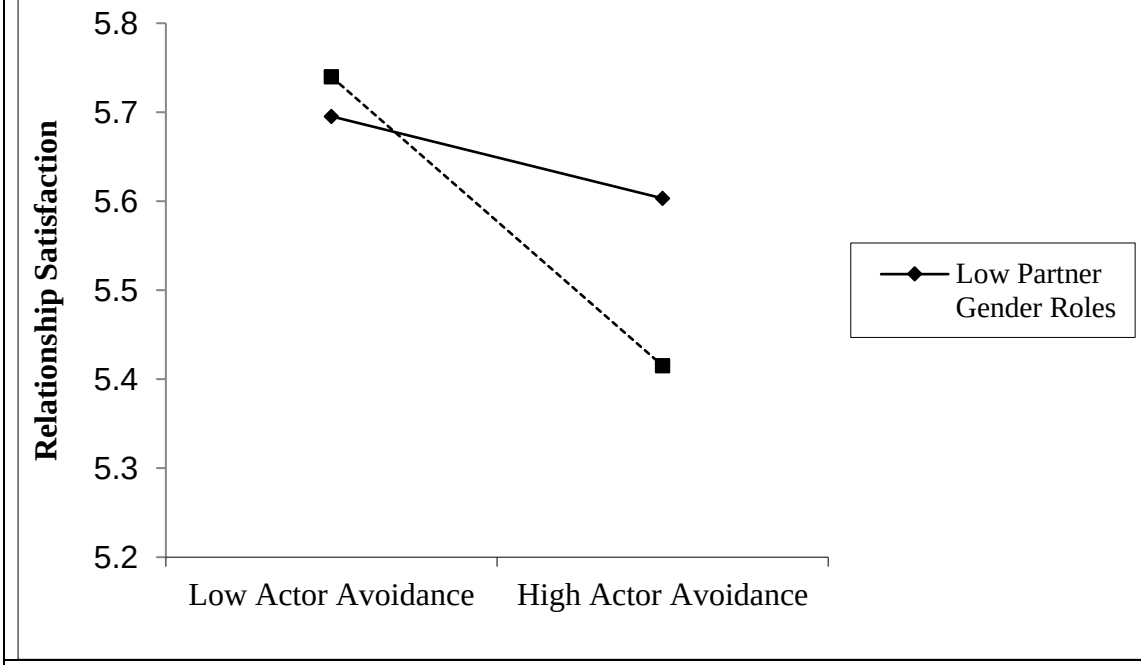

**Gender Roles Plot 3:** Actor Anxiety X Partner Anxiety on Relationship Satisfaction



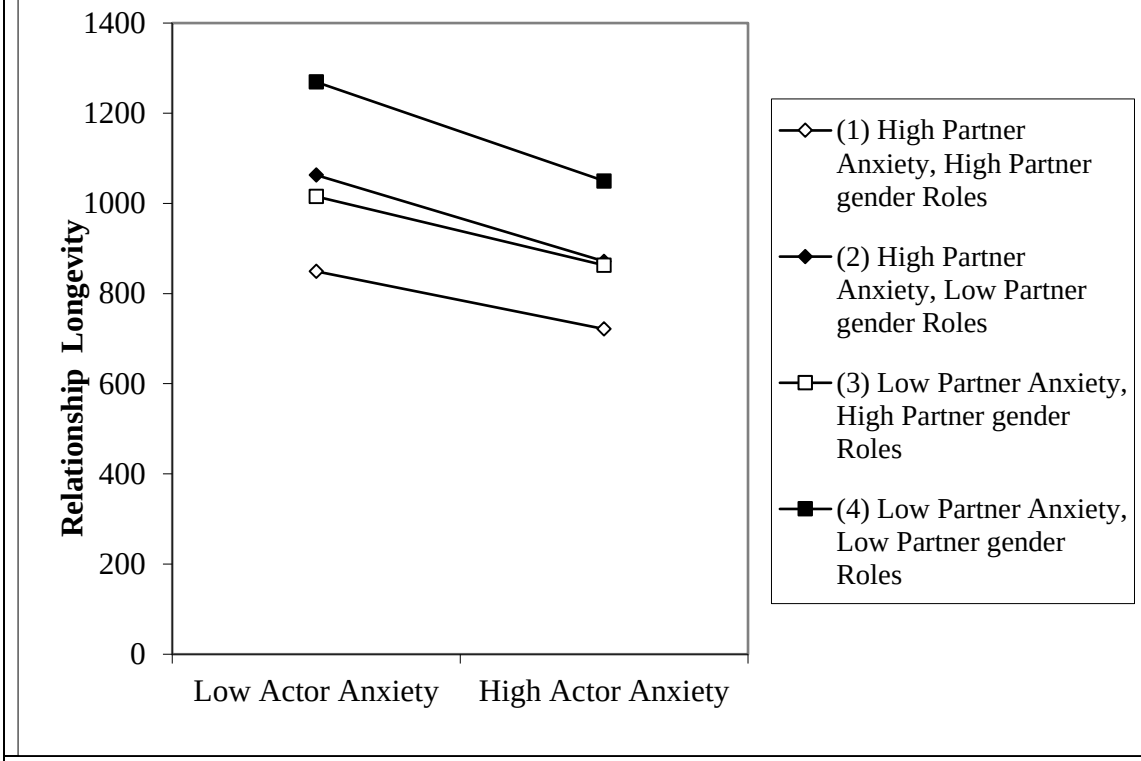

**Gender Roles Plot 4:** Actor Anxiety X Actor Gender Role Expectations on Relationship Satisfaction



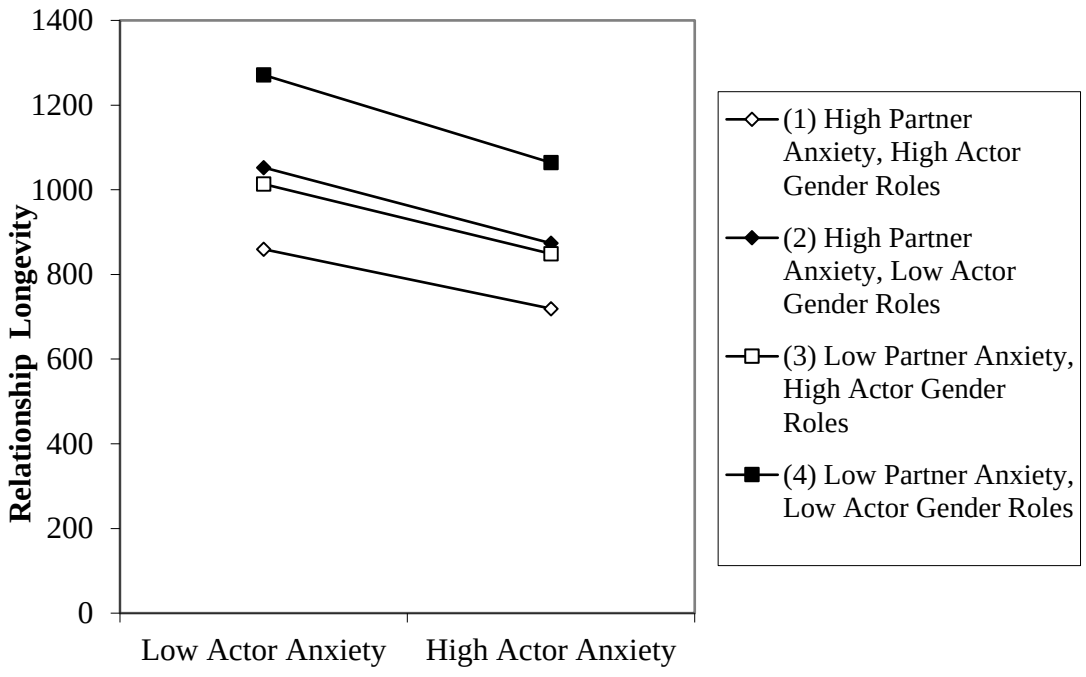

**Gender Roles Plot 5:** Actor Avoidance X Partner Gender Role Expectations on Relationship Satisfaction



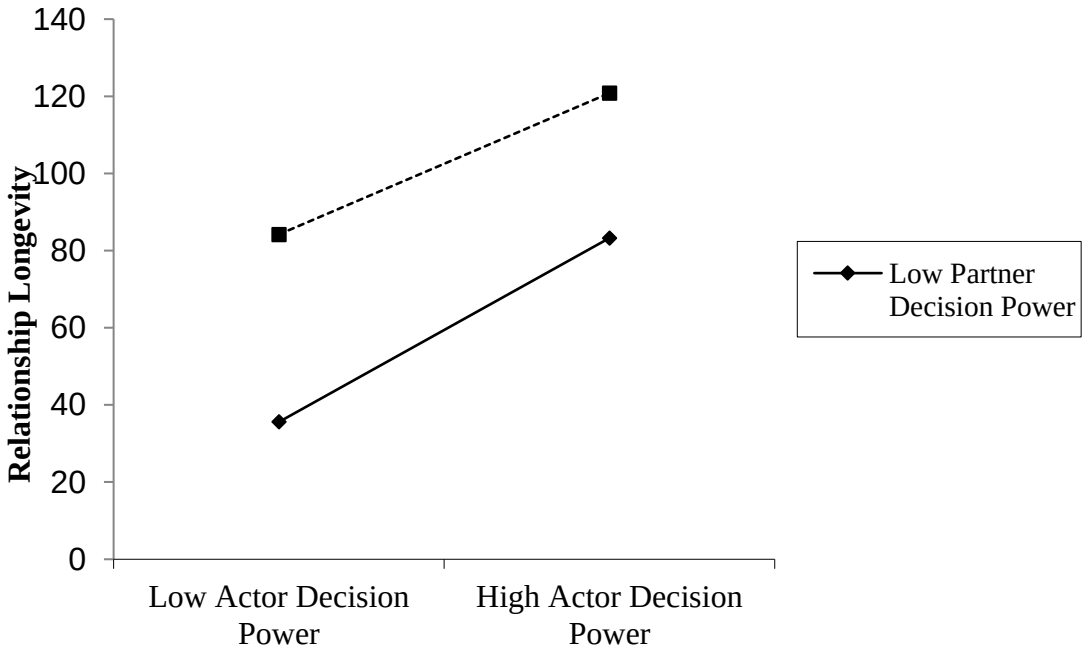

**Gender Roles Plot 6:** Actor Anxiety X Partner Anxiety X Partner Gender Role Expectations on Relationship Longevity



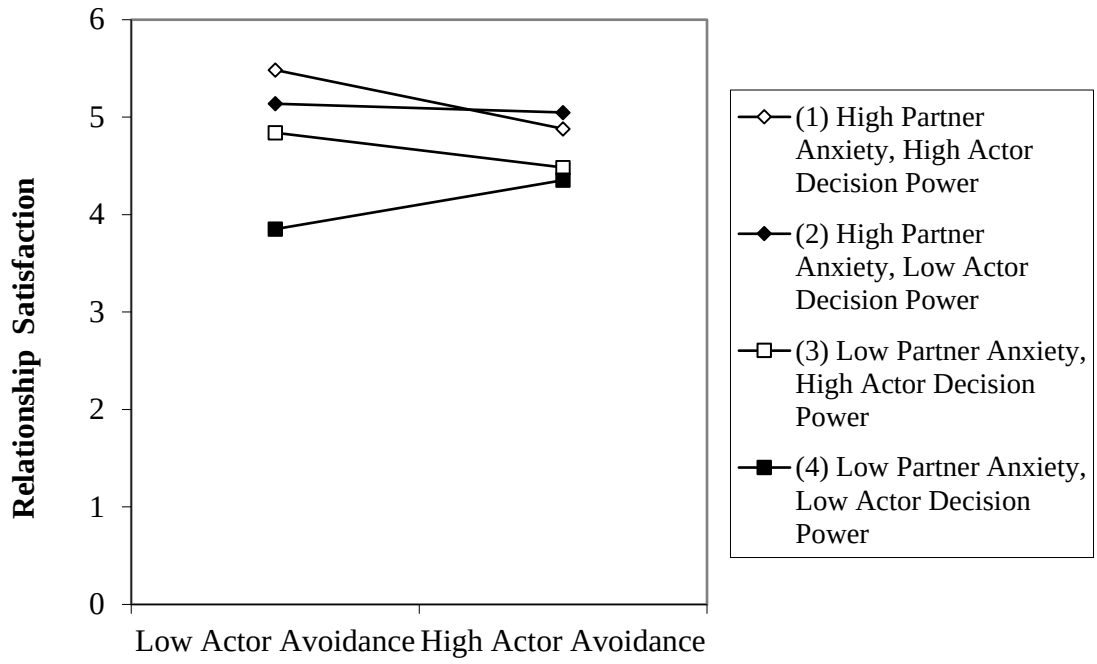

**Gender Roles Plot 7:** Actor Anxiety X Partner Anxiety X Actor Gender Role Expectations on Relationship Longevity



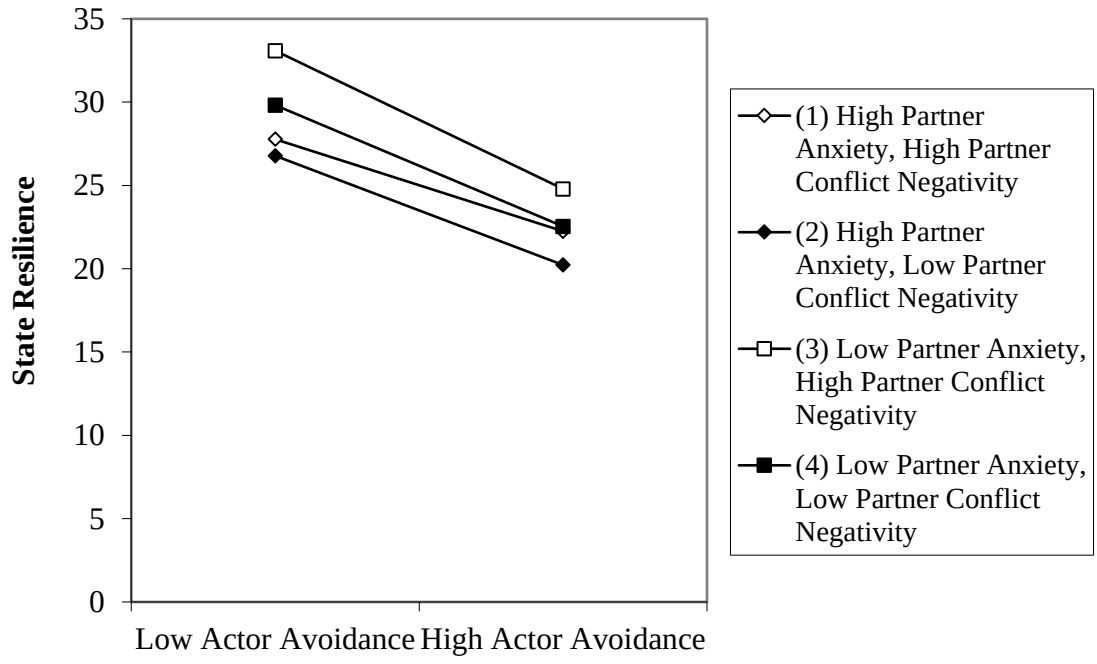

**Decision-Making Plot 1:** Actor Decision power X Partner Decision Power on Relationship Longevity



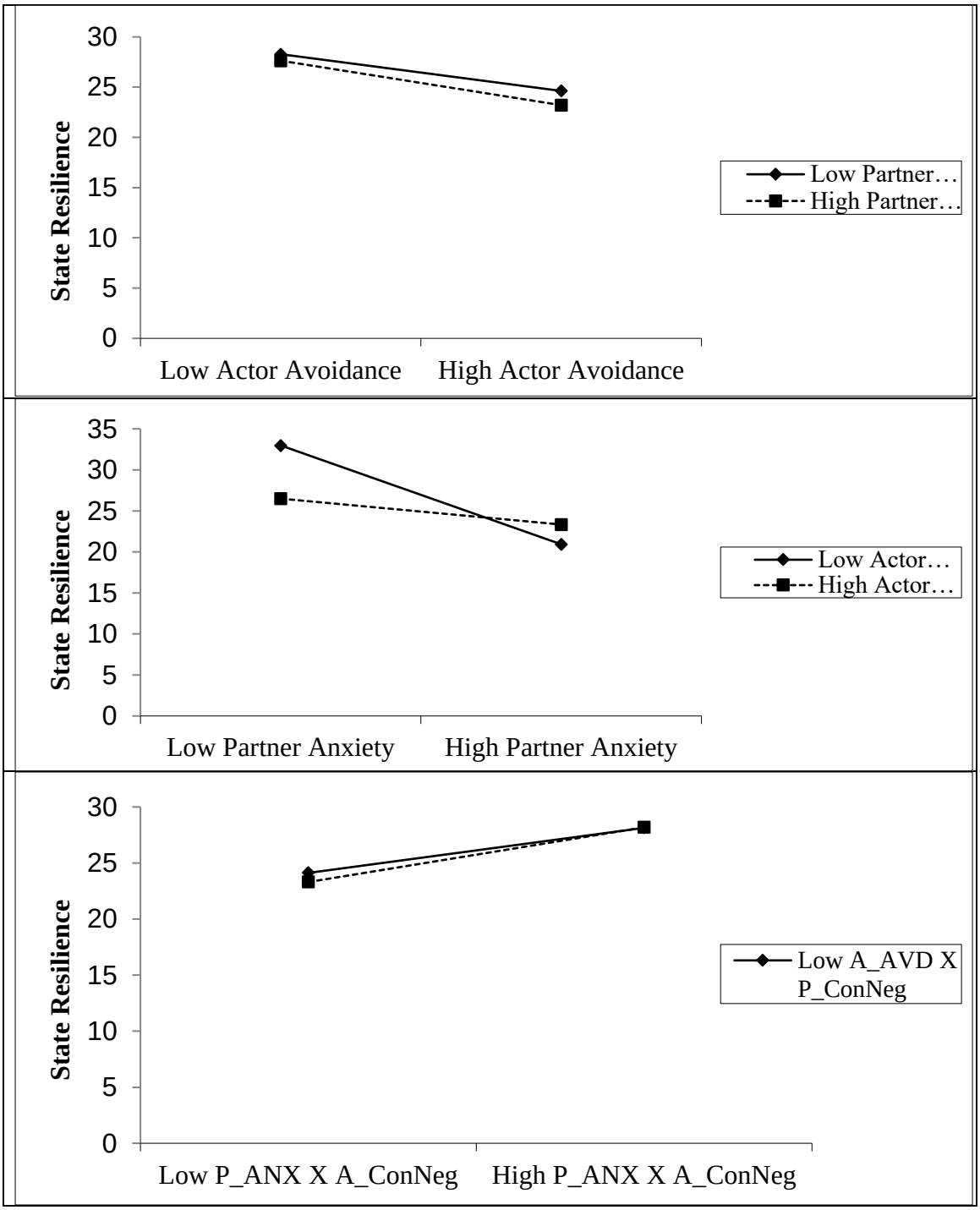

**Decision-Making Plot 2:** Actor Avoidance X Actor Decision Power X Partner Anxiety on Relationship Satisfaction




**Resilience and Conflict Negativity Plot 1:** Actor Avoidance X Partner Anxiety X Partner Conflict negativity on State Resilience




**Resilience and Conflict Negativity Plot 2:** Actor Avoidance X Partner Anxiety X Actor Conflict Negativity X Partner Conflict negativity on State Resilience. Displayed as 3 two-way interactions. (1) Actor avoidance X Partner Conflict Negativity, (2) Partner anxiety X Actor Conflict Negativity (3) Combination of interactions 1 and 2.


State Resilience
30
25
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15
10
5
0
Low Actor Avoidance
High Actor Avoidance
Low Partner…
High Partner…
State Resilience
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
Low Partner Anxiety
High Partner Anxiety
Low Actor…
High Actor…
State Resilience
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
Low P_ANX X A_ConNeg
High P_ANX X A_ConNeg
Low A_AVD X P_ConNeg