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INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS: ADULT ATTACHMENT, EMOTION

REGULATION, GENDER ROLES, AND INFIDELITY

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by

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INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS: ADULT ATTACHMENT, EMOTION REGULATION, GENDER ROLES, AND INFIDELITY

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This study explored individual differences in rates of infidelity by examining the associations among attachment styles, gender roles, emotion regulation strategies, and experiences of infidelity. While both indirect and direct support has been found between several of these variables when assessed separately, no known studies have examined emotion regulation as a partial mediator between attachment styles and infidelity and between gender roles and infidelity. Moreover, infidelity is still a relatively newly studied construct. The current study examined four types of infidelity and is the first known study to examine the construct of anonymous infidelity. Four hundred and six participants were recruited through the Educational Psychology subject pool, Facebook, and local newspaper ads, resulting in a predominantly college student population. A mixed methods approach was utilized and included the collection of quantitative data via

a secure, online questionnaire, as well as a qualitative component examining open-ended responses from 50 participants to offer a more complete understanding of the different forms of infidelity.

As predicted, path analyses revealed that individuals higher in certain attachment styles engaged in higher levels of infidelity, including emotional, combined, and anonymous infidelity. Femininity was also found to be linked to lower rates of combined infidelity. As predicted, secure attachment, preoccupied attachment, and femininity were negatively linked to the use of suppression, while fearful attachment was positively linked to the use of suppression. Surprisingly, masculinity was negatively linked with the use of suppression. Furthermore, the use of suppression was linked to higher incidents of combined infidelity. However, contrary to predictions, there was no support for emotion regulation serving as a mediator between either attachment styles or gender roles and infidelity.

The qualitative analysis uncovered salient themes related to the definition and experience of infidelity, as well as conditions potentially conducive to experiences of infidelity and consequences of infidelity. Anonymous infidelity emerged as an interesting construct within the college culture of dating. These findings are discussed in the context of attachment theory and theories of gender identity, and the implications of the findings for prevention and intervention efforts within clinical practice are described.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Research has shown that experiences of infidelity are fairly common today and have significant societal and personal ramifications. Conservative estimates indicate that between 15% and 45% of Americans have engaged in extramarital sex (Glass & Wright, 1985; Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, & Gebhard, 1953; Treas & Giesen 2000). In addition, recent studies have found that sex differences are gradually diminishing, with men and women today under the age of forty showing similarly high levels of infidelity (Wiederman, 1997). The prevalence of infidelity is alarming given the serious societal and personal ramifications associated with infidelity and the shortage of research on infidelity. For example, infidelity has been linked to divorce, spousal battery and homicide, and mental health problems (Amato & Previti 2003; Daly & Wilson, 1988).

Attachment theory provides one method of conceptualizing individual differences in rates of infidelity. Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/82; 1973; 1980) was originally designed to explain the bonding relationship between a child and caregiver, and the affect this has on a child's emerging view of them self and of others. However, links have since been made between childhood attachment and adults' close relationships resulting in the concept of "adult attachment" (Bartholomew, 1990; Collins& Read, 1990; Hazen & Shaver, 1987) and four attachment prototypes: secure, preoccupied, fearful, and dismissing (Bartholomew,1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Prior research has found that sexual behaviors and sexual beliefs vary by attachment style, with securely

attached individuals having less permissive beliefs and behaviors and insecurely attached individuals engaging in more permissive behaviors and varying on their attitudes towards infidelity (Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Bogart & Sadava, 2002; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). In addition, each attachment style has been found to be more or less comfortable with intimacy. Infidelity is one method individuals may use to decrease intimacy within their relationship, serving their ultimate goal of tolerating anxiety and closeness in a manner that is comfortable for them and helping to explain individual differences in rates of infidelity.

Theories of gender identity provide a second method for conceptualizing individual differences in rates of infidelity. While sex is one of the most commonly studied predictors of infidelity, no known studies have examined gender roles in relation to infidelity. Feminist theorists have emphasized the influence cultural, political, and societal factors have on gender, particularly in relation to one's sense of identity (Visser, 2002). There is a general consensus that men and women are socialized differently in regards to sexuality, with men encouraged to be more sexually free and promiscuous from a young age and women encouraged to be more sexually inhibited and exclusive from a young age (Oliver & Hyde, 1993; Leary & Snell, 1988). While men are traditionally believed to have higher rates of infidelity, recent research suggests that sex differences are gradually diminishing, particularly when both emotional and sexual infidelity are examined (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994; Thompson, 1984). Research has shown that more feminine individuals view moral conflicts as more

important, show more empathetic concern for others, and have more positive relationship outcomes than individuals higher in masculinity (Steiner-Pappalardo & Gurung, 2002; Skoe, Cumberland, Eisenberg, Hansen, & Perry, 2002), possibly suggesting lower rates of infidelity among these individuals. This is particularly important in that women are now conforming less to traditional gender role norms in relation to sex, which may partially account for the decreasing differences we are seeing in rates of infidelity.

However, it can logically be assumed that some securely attached individuals engage in infidelity and that some insecurely attached individuals don't engage in infidelity. Similarly, it can logically be assumed that some individuals who conform more to feminine gender norms engage in infidelity while some individuals who conform more to masculine gender roles do not. The current study posits that emotion regulation is one construct that may partially account for the relationship between romantic attachment and infidelity and between gender role conformity and infidelity. Two common regulation strategies are reappraisal and suppression (Gross & John, 2003). In terms of intimacy, expressing emotions, even negative emotions, has been shown to increase intimacy (Butler, Egloff, Wilhelm, Erickson, & Gross, 2003). Similarly, reappraisal has been found to be positively related to sharing both positive and negative emotions, which would theoretically increase intimacy within a relationship (Gross & John, 2003). In addition, a well established correlation has been found between emotion regulation and adult romantic attachment within intimate relationships (Bolwby, 1988; Feeney, 1999; Mikulincer, Shaver, & Pereg, 2003; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002) and

emotion regulation and sex (Fabes, & Martin, 1991; Gross & John, 2003; Johnson & Shulman, 1988; Manstead, 1992). Fewer studies have examined gender and emotion regulation (Jakupcak, Salters, Gratz, & Roemer, 2003; Mahalik, Locke, Theodore, Cournoyer, & Lloyd, 2001).

In sum, because both attachment theory and theories of gender may explain differences in rates of infidelity and because emotion regulation varies by attachment styles and sex, the current study sought to test whether the way in which individuals regulate their emotions partially mediates the degree to which attachment styles and gender roles influence their likelihood of engaging in infidelity. The current study recruited 406 adults through the Educational Psychology subject pool, Facebook, and local newspaper ads to fill out an on-line survey consisting of self-report measures examining the association between attachment, gender roles, emotion regulation strategies, and infidelity. Path analyses were used to examine both the direct and indirect effects of attachment style, gender roles, and emotion regulation strategies on experiences of infidelity. Additionally, given the complex nature of infidelity and the difficulty defining infidelity, a qualitative analysis was conducted of 50 individuals' definitions and experiences of infidelity. Grounded theory techniques were used to provide a clearer understanding of each type of infidelity.

These findings provide additional information regarding the etiology of infidelity. A clearer understanding of where individuals are located on direct and indirect pathways to infidelity provides therapists with the opportunity to make assessments about both

present and future problems individuals may have within their romantic relationships. Thus, therapists would be better able to determine areas of intervention and ultimately assist clients in improving their relationships by decreasing their chances of engaging in infidelity.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Infidelity Within Intimate Relationships

Within the context of intimate relationships, infidelity has been defined as a partner's violation of norms pertaining to the level of emotional or physical intimacy in which people engaged in outside the relationship (Drigotas & Barta, 2001). Research on infidelity has been slow to accumulate, with empirical research emerging in the late 1970's, presumably due to societies' shifting attitude towards sexuality. It wasn't until the 1990's that more reliable estimates of the frequency of infidelity in America emerged due to methodological improvements. However, prior research has often failed to examine actual experiences of infidelity, looking at predicted experiences of infidelity (Buss & Shackelford, 1997) or vignettes presented to college students (Parker, 1997; Sprecher, Regan & McKinney, 1998). Furthermore, studies that have assessed actual experiences of infidelity have traditionally done so in a dichotomous manner, asking whether or not individuals had engaged in infidelity and ignoring the type and level of involvement (Atkins, Baucom, Jacobson, 2001; Treas & Giesen, 2000). Researchers appear to be coming to a better understanding of the complex nature of infidelity and have more recently begun to look at both the type and degree of involvement (Banfield,& McCabe, 2001; Drake & McCabe, 2000).

Studies have found that experiences of infidelity are actually fairly common and have significant societal and personal ramifications. Conservative estimates indicate that

between 15% and 45% of Americans have engaged in extramarital sex, and among dating couples, 50% of males and females have been unfaithful to their partner in some way (Glass & Wright, 1985; Kinsey et al., 1953; Roscoe, Cavanaugh, & Kennedy, 1988, Thompson, 1983; Treas & Giesen 2000). Additionally, 30% of couples enter marital therapy due to infidelity within the relationship (Glass & Wright, 1988; Whisman, Dixon, & Johnson, 1997), and another 30% of couples disclose infidelity during the course of treatment (Humphrey, 1983). Recently, researchers have begun to examine both emotional and physical acts of infidelity. Thomspon (1984) has proposed three types of infidelity: sexual or physical (i.e., kissing to sexual intercourse), emotional (i.e., close friendship to being "in love"), and a combination of both physical and emotional. Men more commonly report less emotional involvement and more sexual involvement with their extra-relationship partners, whereas women typically engage in infidelity involving a higher level of emotional involvement (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Glass & Wright, 1985; Thompson, 1984). When differentiating between types of infidelity, 45% of men reported engaging in cuddling or kissing with someone other than their regular partner over a six-month period, 25% engaged in sex outside of their primary relationship, and 11% reported falling in love with someone other than their partner (Drake & McCabe, 2000).

In addition to the three forms of infidelity posited by Thompson, we proposed a fourth type of infidelity, anonymous infidelity. This is an exploratory construct created to capture the rising forms of anonymous or solitary involvement in sexual activities that

may or may not be considered as acts of infidelity, but are thought to be potentially damaging to individuals' relationships. For example, the pornography industry has become increasingly successful over the past two decades, grossing eight billion dollars in 1996 (Fisher & Barak, 2000; Thio, 2001). Additionally, there is an increasingly varied spectrum of pornography available today, including magazines, videos, cable programming, phone sex hotlines, internet porn, and strip clubs or adult entertainment clubs. With the addition of cyber porn, individuals now have easily accessible, affordable, and anonymous access to pornography (Putnam, 2000). This is evident in the increasing number of on-line pornography sites. For example, between 1997 and 1998, the number of porn sites grew from approximately 900 to between 20,000-30,000 (Elmer-DeWitt, 2001; Thio, 2001). Thus, the addition of on-line pornography has not only increased accessibility, but has likely resulted in a more acceptable attitude within our culture, given that it is seen as a more common form of entertainment. Additionally, strip clubs are an increasingly common and profitable form of entertainment in society today.

While viewing pornography or frequenting strip clubs may not necessarily be viewed as cheating, one could argue that these activities could be conducive to future acts of infidelity in that they may cause individuals to begin to question their current relationships or to desire individuals besides their partner. Additionally, there is evidence to suggest that these activities are directly damaging to the relationship itself, typically in the form of causing friction between the partners or resulting in the relationship being

viewed differently. For example, Shaw (1999) found that women reported strongly disliking and uncomfortably accepting their partner's porn usage.

Bergner and Bridges (2002) conducted a study of women whose partner's were heavily involved in porn usage. They found that women's perceptions of themselves, their partner, and their relationship changed as a result of their partner's porn usage. For example, many women do apparently see porn viewing as a form of infidelity, as evident in their descriptions of their partner's usage as being a "betrayal," "cheating," and an "affair." Additionally, they described seeing themselves as less attractive or valid as women and reported less respect for their partners. However, another sample of women reported that they did not see porn usage as cheating (Bridges, Bergner, & Hesson-Mcinnis, 2003). Thus at present, we are unclear as to how pornography, strip clubs, and other solitary or anonymous forms of interacting with others are viewed in respect to cheating. Additionally, viewing on-line pornography may result in a slippery slope that leads to more serious behaviors, such as involvement in on-line chat rooms, cyber sex, and cyber affairs. Therefore, given the rise in access to pornography, and the ambiguity surrounding how it is viewed within a relationship and the effects it has on the relationship, the current study sought to further explore this construct.

It has long been thought that men engage in higher incidences of infidelity. For example, men have been found to have more permissive attitudes about infidelity (Thompson, 1984), to express more interest in engaging in infidelity (Buunk & Baaker, 1995; Seal, Agostinelli, &Hannett, 1994), to be more likely to have engaged in infidelity

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in the past than women (Blumstein, & Schwartz, 1983; Laumann et al., 1994), and among men and women who do have affairs, men are found to have a greater number of partners than women do (Lawson, 1988). However, recent studies have found that sex differences are gradually diminishing. Thompson (1984) found that when emotional and sexual infidelity was considered together, 42.2% of females and 45.8% of males had engaged in infidelity. Today, men and women under age forty have been found to show no differences in reported infidelity (Wiederman, 1997). For example, one study examining five different cohorts, found that 37% of men and 12.4% of women born between 1933 and 1942 reported being unfaithful, while 27.6% of men and 26.2% of women born between 1953 and 1974 reported being unfaithful (Laumann et al., 1994). Interestingly, while the gap between men and women engaging in infidelity appears to be narrowing, the above study suggests that men are actually engaging in less infidelity than they had in the past. The effect of sex has also been found to decrease once other variables thought to affect sexual-decision making are examined, such as sexual interest and sexual values (Treas & Giesen, 2000). Thus, it appears that experiences of infidelity are prevalent, that both sexual and emotional forms of infidelity need to be examined, and that sex differences have decreased over the years, with women showing similarly high rates of infidelity as men.

Not only is infidelity prevalent, but it has been found to have serious societal and personal ramifications. Infidelity is the most commonly reported reason for divorce in America and cross-culturally (Amato & Previti 2003; Amato & Rogers, 1997; Betzig,

1989). In addition, actual or suspected sexual infidelity has been linked to spousal

homicide and battery (Daly & Wilson, 1988). Infidelity has been found to impact mental

health as well. Individuals who cite infidelity as the cause of their divorce have been

shown to have poorer adjustment and higher levels of subjective distress than those who

cite other reasons (Amato & Previti, 2003; Kitson, 1992). Logically, infidelity is also

detrimental to the romantic relationship itself. Among a sample of couples' therapists,

infidelity was viewed as one of the most damaging issues for a relationship and one of the

most difficult problems to treat in therapy (Whisman et al, 1997). Therefore, the effects

of infidelity are far reaching as infidelity appears to be common today among married

and dating couples, despite the negative ramifications associated with it.

Given the prevalence of infidelity and the consequences associated with infidelity,

a better understanding of predictors of infidelity would be of both theoretical and

practical importance. While sex has been the most commonly studied predictor of

infidelity along with numerous other socio-demographic variables (i.e., education,

religion, socioeconomic status, age, length of relationship), researchers have also

examined personality characteristics (Buss & Shackelford, 1997), opportunity (Atkins et

al., 2001; Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Treas & Giesen, 2000), and relationship quality

(Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Glass & Wright, 1977, 1992; Treas & Giesen, 2000). In

addition, attitudes or values have been studied. The theory of planned behavior posits

that attitudes lead to intentions of behaviors occurring (Ajzen, 1988, 1991). Stemming

from this, Buunk and Bakker (1995) found that a person's attitude toward extramarital

sex was the most significant predictor of extramarital sexual intention. Similarly, infidelity has been positively linked to permissive sexual values, premarital permissiveness, early sexual experiences, more sexual relationships in the past, greater interest in sex, and past infidelity (Banfield & McCabe, 2001; Bozon, 1996; Drake & McCabe, 2000; Reiss, Anderson, & Sponaugle, 1980; Smith, 1994; Treas & Giesen; 2000).

Therefore, the current study will assess actual experiences of emotional only, physical only, combined, and anonymous types of infidelity, as well as the depth of infidelity involvement in order to achieve a more complete and broader understanding of acts of infidelity. Moreover, given the complex nature of infidelity and lack of research on how individuals conceptualize it, qualitative data will examine themes that emerge in defining all four types of infidelity and individuals' experiences of infidelity.

Attachment Theory and Intimate Relationships

Attachment theory provides one method of conceptualizing individual differences in rates of infidelity. Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/82; 1973; 1980) was originally designed to explain the bonding relationship between a child and caregiver, and the affect this has on a child's emerging view of them self and of others. Bowlby used an evolutionary approach to conceptualize the attachment system, viewing the system as an organized behavioral system that serves to gain or maintain proximity to the primary caregiver during times of threat or distress. The attachment system is proposed to serve two additional functions: providing a secure base from which to explore the environment,

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and providing a safe haven during times of need. Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) expanded on Bowlby's theory by providing empirical support for the concept of a "secure base." By observing infants' reactions to separations from and reunions with their mothers and strangers, Ainsworth and her colleagues further conceptualized how this sense of safety and security varies among infants, linking parents' sensitivity and responsiveness to their child with the child's development of one of three attachment styles: secure, anxious, or avoidant. Mothers who are consistently sensitive and responsive to their infant's needs produce secure infants who actively explore in their mother's presence, become upset during separation, and are quickly comforted upon reunion. Slow responding, inconsistent, or intruding mothers produce anxious infants who show little exploration, extreme distress upon separation, and evince anger or ambivalence upon reunion. Mothers who are consistently rejecting towards their infant's attempts for contact produce detached infants who tend to avoid close contact with them.

Since the 1980's, researchers have sought to provide support for links between childhood attachment and adults' close relationships, suggesting these two constructs share similar principals so much so that many researchers have suggested the concept of "adult attachment" (Bartholomew, 1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Collins & Read; 1990; Hazen & Shaver, 1987; Levy & Davis, 1988). In fact, Bowlby (1979/1994, p.129) believed attachment was an important component in one's life "from the cradle to the grave", suggesting that attachment relationships continue to influence individuals throughout their lifespan. A key aspect of attachment theory in explaining this continuity

of attachment is Bowlby's (1973) concept of "internal working models" of attachment figures and of the self which are initially constructed during infancy. Working models are cognitive beliefs and expectations about the availability and responsiveness of attachment figures (i.e., models of others), and beliefs about whether the self is worthy of this attention and care (i.e., models of self). Models of others can be seen as either positive (others seen as available and loving) or negative (others seen as unavailable and rejecting), and models of self can also be dichotomized as positive (the self seen as worthy of love) or negative (the self seen as unworthy).

Working models develop through continued interactions with attachment figures and as time progresses, people internalize these experiences. The resulting associated cognitive beliefs are then carried over into other relationships. Working models guide an individual's cognitive processes, influencing feelings, behaviors, and expectations, and are thought to become so deeply engrained that they influence the individual automatically (Cassidy, 2000; Sherry, Lyddon, & Henson, in press). However, cognitive processes are not static, but rather, can be influenced by new experiences throughout one's lifespan. While working models are thought to be difficult to change due to individuals' tendency to assimilate new information so as to match their existing models, (Fraley & Shaver, 2000; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985), Bowlby (1973, 1988) noted that individuals can accommodate or "revise" their working models to incorporate new relational information, with individuals varying in the degree to which they are open to this. Insecurely attached individuals are believed to use assimilation more often because

they tend to selectively attend to information that confirms their existing negative mental models (Sherry et al., in press). Therefore, it may be that the intensity, quality, and stability of the attachment relationship determines the extent to which working models are open to revision and thus, the extent to which a particular attachment style continues from infancy into adulthood.

Representations of attachment figures may be influenced by experiences with both former and current attachment figures, with current experiences potentially overriding past influences (Cassidy, 2000). For example, a child with a positive view of others may later in life experience a significant traumatic event or a series of negative experiences with others which causes them to now view others in a more negative manner. It is important to note that working models of self and of others are thought to be "complementary and mutually confirming" (Bowlby, 1973, p. 204). For example, an individual with a negative view of them self and of others may have a series of positive interactions with others which aides in the development of a more affirmative view of them self, resulting in a positive view of them self, as well as a positive view of others.

Based on Bowlby's models of self and others, Bartholomew (1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) described four prototypic forms of adult attachment. Mapping nicely onto Bowlby's theory, Bartholomew supported the notion that models of both self and other can be dichotomized as positive or negative. These models interact to form four attachment prototypes: secure, preoccupied, fearful, and dismissing (see Figure 1). *Secure* adults have an internalized sense of self-worth, see others as available and

View of Self

	Positive	Negative

Positive **View of Others** Negative	**SECURE** -Comfortable with intimacy & autonomy -Internalized sense of self-worth	**PREOCCUPIED** -Validate unstable self-worth through excessive closeness in relationships
	DISMISSING -Avoid and dismiss intimacy because of negative expectations of others -Maintain self-worth by defensively denying the value of close relationships	**FEARFUL** -Avoid and fear intimacy because of expectations of rejection -Dependent on others to validate their unstable sense of self-worth

Figure 1. Attachment Styles

responsive in times of need, and are comfortable with intimacy and autonomy.

Preoccupied adults have an internalized sense of unworthiness, yet see others in a

positive manner. They are motivated to validate their unstable self-worth through

excessive closeness in personal relationships and they experience extreme distress when

their intimacy needs are not met (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994).

In conceptualizing avoidant attachment, previous researchers (Ainsworth et al.,

1978; Hazen & Shaver, 1987) had identified one avoidant style. However, Bartholomew

(1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) argued that there were actually two types of

avoidant adults, distinguishing between the Adult Attachment Interview's (George,

Kaplan, & Main, 1984; Main & Goldwyn, 1988) dismissing category which reflected a

disinterest in forming closer relationships (*dismissing-avoidant*), and Hazen and Shaver's

(1987) avoidant group which reflected in part, a fear of close relationships (*fearful-avoidant*). *Fearful* adults have an internalized sense of unworthiness and are thus highly dependent on others to validate their sense of self-worth. They desire relationships, but their negative view of others motivates them to avoid intimacy out of fear of potential rejection. Finally, *dismissing* adults have positive views of them self and have negative expectations of others. Like fearfully avoidant adults, they avoid intimacy with others, yet, by stressing the importance of independence and defensively dismissing the value of personal relationships, they are still able to maintain their high sense of self-worth (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994).

It is important to note that the attachment styles conceptualized by Bartholomew (1990, Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) are prototypes, or "fuzzy" sets (Cantor, Smith, French, & Mezzich, 1980) where members differ in their degree of typicality. Two dimensions have been found to underlie attachment styles: "anxiety" and "avoidance" (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; Feeney, Noller, & Callan, 1994; Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992). Bartholomew's "self" and "other" dimensions can be conceptualized in a similar manner, with "dependency" along the horizontal axis and "avoidance" along the vertical axis (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Therefore, categorical models of attachment are thought to be inappropriate for studying attachment because individuals do not fall cleanly into one category, but rather possess characteristics of more than one category.

A logical extension of adult attachment theory was to examine how adult attachment functions within intimate romantic relationships. Hazen and Shaver's (1987) study provided a bridge between infant attachment theory and theories of romantic love by conceptualizing romantic love, or pair bonding, as an attachment process similar to that of the child-caregiver attachment process. By translating Ainsworth and her colleagues (1978) three attachment styles into terms appropriate for adult romantic relationships, they found that adult typology of attachment parallels the typology of infants. Hazen and Shaver's (1987) study provided a framework as to what attachment styles look like in adults. Similarly, several researchers have argued that the three distinguishing functions of attachment relationships, proximity maintenance, a safe haven, and a secure base, apply to most romantic relationships, with the functions being serially transferred from childhood attachment figures to adult attachment figures (Hazen, Hutt, Sturgeon, & Bicker, 1991; Weiss, 1982, 1986).

Secure romantic attachment has been linked to high self-confidence, high regard for others, low avoidance of intimacy, high levels of trust, commitment, satisfaction, and interdependence, support and acceptance of their partners, and secure individuals describe their love experiences as happy, trusting, and friendly (Hazen & Shaver, 1987; Levy & Davis, 1988; Shaver & Hazen, 1988; Simpson, 1990). Ambivalent romantic attachment has been linked to a preference for unqualified closeness, commitment, and affection, a desire to merge with their partner, high levels of distress over threats to their relationship, heightened emotionality, low levels of trust and satisfaction, deficits in self-

confidence, extreme jealousy and sexual attraction, higher frequencies of falling in love, and higher break up rates (Feeney, 1998; Feeney & Noller, 1991; Hazen & Shaver, 1987; Levy & Davis, 1988; Shaver & Hazen, 1988; Simpson, 1990; Simpson et al., 1996). Finally, avoidant individuals have been found to be less likely to turn to others for care, to avoid intimacy and closeness, to have lower levels of self-confidence, to have lower levels of trust and relationship satisfaction, to have emotional highs and lows, and to be less invested in romantic relationships (Fraley & Shaver, 1998; Hazen & Shaver, 1987; Levy & Davis, 1988; Shaver & Brennan, 1992; Shaver & Hazen, 1988; Simpson, 1990).

While research on sex differences in attachment is sparse, it is important to note that of the research currently available, attachment styles appear to generalize across sexes (Collins & Read, 1990; Hazen & Shaver, 1987; Kobak & Hazen, 1991). There are a few exceptions to this. Collins and Read's (1990) study of attachment styles among couples found women to be somewhat higher in anxiety than men, women's anxiety to be most predictive of men's relationships satisfaction, and men's degree of closeness to be the best predictor of women's relationship satisfaction. However, this study conceptualized and measured attachment by looking at the constructs of closeness, dependency, and anxiety. Kobak and Hazen's (1991) study of attachment in married couples found that husbands described themselves as relying less on their wives than wives described themselves as relying on their husbands. However, this study assessed attachment with scales looking at reliance on one's partner and psychological availability.

Adult Attachment and Infidelity in Intimate Relationships

As noted earlier, attachment theory provides one method of conceptualizing individual differences in infidelity. Fraley and Shaver (2000, p. 132) noted that attachment theory provides "a unified framework for explaining the development, maintenance, and dissolution of close relationships while simultaneously offering a perspective on personality development, emotion regulation, and psychopathology." Therefore, attachment theory provides a context for understanding clinical issues that couples may bring into therapy, such as infidelity. As noted earlier, couples therapists have found infidelity to be one of the most damaging issues for a relationship and one of the most difficult issue to treat in therapy (Whisman et al., 1997). Given that infidelity is a violation within intimate relationships and that romantic love involves the integration of sexuality, caregiving, and attachment (Shaver, Hazen, & Bradshaw, 1988), a link between infidelity and attachment in intimate relationships seems plausible. Few researchers have examined attachment styles and actual experiences of infidelity, with most studies related to attachment and infidelity focusing on the associations between attachment styles and sexual behaviors (i.e., early sexual experiences or number of lifetime partners), sexual beliefs or attitudes, and intimacy within relationships (Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Hazen & Shaver, 1987; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). Given that people higher in different attachment styles vary in the degree to which they seek out and are comfortable with romantic intimacy, engaging in more permissive sexual behaviors or holding more permissive sexual attitudes may be used effectively to avoid developing intimacy within a relationship. Thus, engaging in emotional or sexual relationships

outside of the primary relationship may be one method that individuals use to avoid intimacy.

As noted earlier, attitudes towards infidelity, sexual values, and sexual behaviors have been found to significantly correlate with rates of infidelity (Banfield & McCabe, 2001; Bozon, 1996; Drake & McCabe, 2000; Reiss, et al, 1980; Smith, 1994; Treas & Giesen; 2000). In looking at attachment styles and sexual behaviors and attitudes, more securely attached individuals have been found to have longer relationships, are less likely to be divorced, are more likely to have a current steady partner, and among women, are less likely to have had sex at a young age (Bogart & Sadava, 2002; Hazen & Shaver, 1987). More securely attached individuals typically hold a belief that sex should be restricted to committed romantic relationships, report fewer one-night stands, are less likely to have sex outside of the primary relationship, and have a lower likelihood of ever having had a "hookup" (i.e., a sexual encounter with a stranger or acquaintance; Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Cooper, Shaver, & Collins, 1998; Hazen, Ziefman, & Middleton, 1994; Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). Given more securely attached individuals' less permissive sexual behaviors and beliefs, it could be posited that they would be less likely to engage in infidelity.

Research on sexual behaviors and beliefs among anxiously attached individuals has revealed a more complex picture. Bogart and Sadava (2002) found that anxious attachment was linked to more actual experiences of infidelity than other attachment styles. In addition, with anxious attachment styles were more likely to have had sex at an

earlier age, had more lifetime partners, and had a lower likelihood of having a current steady partner. However, other research has shown that anxiously attached individuals are not accepting of sex outside of a committed relationship (Brennan & Shaver; 1995; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). In other words, anxiously attached individuals engage in permissive behaviors, but don't hold permissive beliefs. It may be that the dependency and increased desire for intimacy associated with anxious attachment causes these individuals to both try to maintain exclusivity within their relationship, as well as seek out intimacy with others if they feel their dependency needs are not being met in their current relationship.

Avoidant attachment has also been linked to sexual behaviors and attitudes. However, given avoidant individuals desire to limit intimacy in relationships, they could successfully achieve this goal by either not engaging in sexual intercourse at all or by engaging in casual sex (Gentzler & Kerns, 2004). Indeed, avoidantly attached individuals have been shown to be more interested in and accepting of short-term, casual sexual experiences and have more permissive sexual beliefs. In addition they are more likely to have a ludic or "game-playing" love style, to have had sex at a younger age, to have had sex with a stranger, and to have had "hookups" than other attachment styles (Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Cooper et al., 1998; Feeney, Noller, & Patty, 1993; Miller & Fishkin, 1997; Gentzler & Kerns, 2004; Hazen & Zeifman, 1994; Levy & Davis, 1988; Paul et al., 2000; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). Similarly, Hazen, Zeifman, and Middleton's (1994) comprehensive study of attachment and sexual behaviors among

adults found that individuals with an avoidant attachment style were more likely to engage in one-night stands, extra-relationship sex, and sex without love. This suggests that avoidantly attached individuals can be physically intimate without being emotionally intimate. In a four year longitudinal study, Kirkpatrick and Hazen (1994) found that individuals classified as avoidant at time one were the most likely at time two to either not be dating, currently be looking for a romantic partner, or dating more than one partner.

Therefore, it is probable that if avoidant individuals have already had sex that they would be more likely to engage in higher levels of infidelity in an effort to avoid establishing emotional intimacy with their current partner. However, research suggests that avoidantly attached individuals struggle with being physically intimate as well. Fraley, Davis, and Shaver (1998) found that avoidantly attached adults dislike physical contact and cuddling within romantic relationships. In addition, men who have not had sexual intercourse were found to be higher in avoidance (Kalichman, Sarwer, Johnson, Ali, Early, & Tutan, 1993) and avoidantly attached adolescents were less likely to have had sexual intercourse than secure or anxious attachment styles (Cooper et al., 1998). Therefore, avoidantly attached individuals who have not already had sex would be less likely to engage in infidelity.

As noted earlier, engaging in emotional or physical infidelity may be one method of avoiding intimacy in relationships. In addition to comfort with intimacy, several other variables related to relationship quality provide logical links between attachment and

infidelity. For example, securely attached individuals have been found to have higher levels of intimacy, trust, relationship satisfaction, and commitment than insecurely attached individuals (Feeney & Noller, 1991; Hazen & Shaver, 1987; Levy & Davis, 1988; Mikulincer & Erev, 1991; Simpson 1990). Anxiously attached individuals have been found to be comfortable with intimacy and desire committed relationships, but report lower levels of trust and relationship satisfaction than securely attached individuals (Feeney & Noller, 1991; Levy & Davis, 1988; Mikulincer & Erev, 1991; Simpson 1990). Finally, avoidantly attached individuals have been shown to prefer limited commitment, and to have lower levels of commitment, intimacy, trust, and relationship satisfaction (Feeney & Noller, 1991, Levy & Davis, 1988; Mikulincer & Erev, 1991; Simpson, 1990). Therefore, it can be argued that individuals who report less trust, commitment, and satisfaction in their relationships may be more likely to engage in infidelity.

In sum, research on sexual beliefs and behaviors suggests that more securely attached individuals would engage in lower levels of infidelity and hold less permissive attitudes towards infidelity, more anxiously attached individuals would engage in lower levels of infidelity as well but hold more permissive attitudes towards infidelity, and that more avoidantly attached individuals would engage in higher levels of infidelity and hold more permissive attitudes towards infidelity. In addition, only two known studies have examined actual rates of infidelity in relation to attachment styles, and they did so by asking in a dichotomous manner. Therefore, the current study will assess individual differences in actual rates of infidelity.

Emotion Regulation in Intimate Relationships

Emotion theorists (i.e., Izard, 1993; Lazarus, 1991a; Tomkins, 1962) have defined emotion as an inborn, bio-socially determined process that guides behavior. According to these theorists, individuals naturally develop cognitive mediational abilities and self-monitoring abilities that, along with socialization, result in increased control or regulation over the experience and expression of emotion. Thus, while emotions are innate, individuals gradually learn to differentially guide their behaviors by regulating their emotions. Gross (1998b, p. 275) defines emotion regulation as "the process by which we influence which emotions we have, when we have them, and how we experience them". Gross (1998b; 2001) further distinguishes when emotion regulation strategies first impact individuals' emotional responses, differentiating between antecedent- and response-focused strategies. Antecedent-focused emotion regulation strategies involve things done before emotion response tendencies are fully activated. One commonly used antecedent focused emotion regulation strategy is referred to as *reappraisal*. Things done after response tendencies have been activated and emotions have arisen are called response-focused emotion regulation strategies. One commonly used response focused emotion regulation strategy is referred to as *suppression* (Gross & John, 2003).

Cognitive reappraisal involves cognitively changing how you view a potentially emotion-eliciting situation early in the emotion process in a way that alters the emotional impact (Gross, 1998b; Lazarus & Alfert, 1964). For example, one might interpret their partner's recent aloofness to the extra stress their partner is under at work, rather than to

anything that they had personally done to upset their partner, preventing them from feeling rejected, angry, or hurt. *Expressive suppression* involves inhibiting ongoing emotion-expressive behavior after behavioral reactions have already arisen (Gross, 1998a; Gross & Levenson, 1993). Following our earlier example, an individual who is upset with their partner's aloofness may then suppress or inhibit the expression of their negative emotions, rather than discussing their feelings with their partner. An individual who suppresses their negative emotions about their partner's recent aloofness may not express their feelings to their partner, yet still *experiences* these negative emotions. These emotions remain unresolved, lingering and possibly affecting numerous aspects of the relationship.

A number of studies have examined whether or not methods of regulating one's emotions can be more or less adaptive. In both experimental (Butler et al, 2003; Gross, 1998a; Gross & Levenson 1993; 1997; Richards & Gross, 1999, 2000) and individual differences (Gross & John, 2003) studies, suppressing emotions has been shown to significantly decrease the *expression* of negative and positive emotions. Yet, studies show that this strategy also reduces the *experience* of positive emotions as well (Gross & Levenson, 1997; Gross & John, 2003; Stepper & Strack, 1993; Strack, Martin, & Stepper, 1988). In addition, suppression is unable to reduce the actual experience of negative emotions and in some cases, actually increases the experience of negative emotions (Gross, 1998a; Gross & John, 2003; Gross & Levenson, 1997; Harris, 2001). In other words, suppression appears to be an ineffective strategy of reducing emotional discomfort

and may actually reduce emotional pleasure. In contrast, in both experimental (Gross, 1998a; Richards, Butler, & Gross, 2003) and individual differences (Gross & John, 2003) studies, Gross and his colleagues found that reappraisal decreases both the experience and expression of negative emotions, and actually increases positive expression and experience. Therefore, in terms of reducing emotional discomfort and increasing emotional enjoyment, reappraisal appears to be a more adaptive emotion regulation strategy than suppression.

Emotion Regulation and Infidelity in Intimate Relationships

Emotion regulation strategies have been shown to have direct (i.e., interpersonal consequences) and indirect (i.e., cognitive consequences) effects on relationship development, feelings towards one's partner, levels of intimacy, and interpersonal functioning, all of which can logically be viewed as possible contributors to infidelity. For example, in studying the impact emotion regulation strategies have on memory, Richards, Butler, and Gross (2003) examined dating couples in which one member either served as a control or was primed to suppress or to reappraise their emotions while having a conversation with their partner about an area of conflict. They found that individuals who used reappraisal remembered what was said during their conversation better than individuals who used suppression. However, individuals using suppression were better able to remember how they felt during their conversations than an uninstructed control group. Similarly, Richards and Gross (2000) found that among college students who had watched either a short clip or a series of slides that elicited

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negative emotions, suppression led to decrements in objective and verbal memory while reappraisal had no effect on verbal memory. These findings suggest that suppression is cognitively taxing and impairs memory in a way in which reappraisal does not.

Based on the above research, it could be posited that individuals who habitually use suppression may be less involved or "present" during interpersonal interactions with their partner, possibly resulting in less satisfying interactions, a disconnect in the relationship, and/or less intimacy, any one of which may lead to an increased likelihood of infidelity. However, these same individuals are more likely to remember emotional aspects of their conversations with their partners which may result in them ruminating longer over negative emotions felt during conversations. This in turn may lead to increased negative feelings about their partner and their relationship, resulting in an increased likelihood of infidelity.

Indirect research suggests that expressing one's emotions also contributes to relationship satisfaction. Theories of communication in interpersonal relationships suggest that expressive suppression is likely related to self-disclosure, a critical aspect of communication that aides in the development of intimacy within close relationships (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Derlega, Metts, Petronio, & Margulis, 1993; Perlman & Fehr, 1987). While expressive suppression is an attempt to inhibit the experience and expression of current emotions (Gross, 1998a), self-disclosure is the verbal communication of one's feelings, thoughts, attitudes, and experiences to another (Derlega et al, 1993; Sprecher & Hendrick, 2004). In addition, disclosure involves both thoughts

and emotions while emotional suppression suggests a primary focus on emotions. However, emotion theorists have long thought that the experience and expression of emotion involves cognition (Arnold, 1960a, Smith & Lazarus, 1993, Speisman, Lazarus, Mordkoff, & Davison, 1964).

Self-disclosure and intimacy should work in a reciprocal manner, with self-disclosure providing for more intimacy within a relationship and more intimate relationships fostering further self-disclosure among partners. Self-disclosure not only allows for personal insight (Kennedy-Moore, 1999), but also provides one's partner with insight as to what that individual is experiencing. In addition, self-disclosure allows for feedback from one's partner, providing both members the opportunity to express and receive a sense of understanding and validation (Reis & Patrick, 1996; Reis & Shaver, 1988).

Therefore, self-disclosure not only contributes to increased intimacy within close relationships, but also appears to aid in the maintenance of the relationship, both likely contributing to relationship satisfaction. Among marriage theorists, extensive research has been done on the concept of stonewalling, which is described as expressing little emotion. Stonewalling has been linked to decreased marital satisfaction for both members of the couple (Gottman & Levenson, 1988; Levenson, 1994). Similarly, Sprecher and Hendrick's (2004) recent longitudinal study of college dating couples examined numerous relationship quality variables in relation to three different measures of self-disclosure: the participant's own self-disclosure, the participant's perception of

their partner's level of self-disclosure, and their partner's actual reported level of self-disclosure. All three measures were positively and significantly associated with relationship satisfaction, love, and commitment. However, for men only, relationship satisfaction was not associated with their partner's level of self-disclosure. In addition, women in couples that had ended the relationship after a six month period were shown to perceive their partners' level of self-disclosure to be significantly lower at baseline than women who were in couples that had not broken up. These findings suggest that the saliency of emotional expression and disclosure within intimate relationships may differ across sexes, indicating the need for more research in this area.

Thus, it appears that self-disclosure contributes to a more satisfying, loving, committed, and stable relationship. Therefore, by extension, it could be posited that suppressing one's emotions may provide for a less satisfying, committed, and stable relationship, increasing one's chances of engaging in infidelity.

Research also suggests that self-disclosure affects how we see our partners and in turn, how they see us. For example, Collins and Miller (1994) conducted an extensive meta-analysis and found that: a) people like individuals who engage in higher levels of intimate disclosure than individuals who engage in lower levels, b) people disclose more to individuals whom they initially like, and c) people like others as a result of having disclosed to them. Therefore, if people are better liked when they disclose and like others better who intimately disclose to them, engaging in high levels of emotional suppression

would likely provide for a less satisfying relationship for both members of the couple and could possibly increase infidelity behaviors.

The above findings are further supported by a recent study in which Butler and her colleagues (Butler, et al., 2003) manipulated suppression in pairs of college women who were asked to discuss an upsetting topic. When compared to a control group, individuals who suppressed their emotions during the conversations were found to be less responsive towards their partner, more distracted during the conversation, and reported less positive emotions and more negative emotions about their partners. In addition, partners of women who were suppressing reported disliking their partners more, feeling less rapport with them, and were less interested in forming a friendship with them. Interestingly, expressing emotions, even negative emotions, was shown to increase partners' willingness to establish a friendship. Similarly, reappraisal has been found to be positively related to sharing both positive and negative emotions, and reappraisers are found to have closer relationships and to be better liked by their peers (Gross & John, 2003).

While the above study suggests that the expression of both *negative* and positive emotions was helpful in establishing interpersonal relationships, researchers disagree as to whether expressing negative emotions is beneficial. Within the coping research, emotional avoidance is thought to be adaptive at times (see review by Bonanno & Kaltman, 1999). On the other hand, Pennebaker (see review by Smythe & Pennebaker, 1999) has conducted a series of studies examining the effects of writing or talking about

traumatic experiences and has found this procedure to be linked to numerous positive outcomes.

In relation to intimate relationships, negative disclosures have been found to be viewed as more intimate than positive disclosures for a wide range of emotions (Howell & Conway, 2001). From a therapeutic standpoint, expressing negative emotions allows for a sense of genuineness that is often only experienced in very close relationships. Expressing negative emotions also conveys a sense of trust in the partner and in the strength of the relationship. The sense of genuineness and trust fostered by expressing negative emotions should logically result in a sense of increased intimacy between partners. This makes sense in light of attachment theory's proposition that attachments have to do with the quality and intensity of the relationship. Individuals could thus have positive interactions about negative things, and conversely, have negative interactions about meaningless positive things.

Furthermore, Tice and Baumeister (1993) suggest that anger that is suppressed typically results in reoccurring problems. As noted in our earlier example, an individual who suppresses their negative emotions about their partner's aloofness still *experiences* these negative emotions, resulting in unresolved, lingering negativity that will likely re-arise in some manner in the relationship. In addition, it may be that merely expressing negative feelings is different than expressing negative feelings about one's partner *towards* the partner. For example, Shimanoff (1987) found that among married couples, spouses felt more intimate with their partner when they received distressing disclosures

about other people in their partner's life than when they received distressing disclosures about themselves. Therefore, while there are conflicting results as to whether expressing negative emotion is beneficial, it seems as if it could be productive to the relationship at times, depending on who it is directed towards and whether it is used in a fixed or a flexible manner of relating to one's partner.

Thus, research has shown that expressive suppression is related to deficits in memory of conversations, better memory of emotional aspects of interactions, decreased responsiveness to one's partner, more distraction when interacting with one's partner, decreased likeability of one's partner, decreased likeability by one's partner of the suppressor, and less interest on the part of the suppressor's partner in developing a relationship with them. In addition, self-disclosure has been linked to increased relationship satisfaction, commitment, love, stability, and intimacy. Furthermore, people are better liked when they express their emotions and like others better who express their emotions. In addition, expressing both positive and negative emotions has been linked to more intimacy. Therefore, within intimate relationships the expression of emotions would prove to be more adaptive to the relationship and could be part of the reason why individuals are engaging in infidelity.

However, the relationship between reappraisal and infidelity is not as clear cut. Research has highlighted the many benefits using reappraisal may have within intimate relationships, such as an increased sharing of both positive and negative emotions, which results in higher levels of intimacy, closer relationships, and an increased chance of being

liked by others. However, as noted earlier, reappraisal involves cognitively changing

how you view a potentially emotion-eliciting situation early in the emotion process in a

way that *alters* the emotional impact (Gross, 1998b; Lazarus & Alfert, 1964). Altering

the emotional impact of an event may not always be beneficial, particularly in relation to

infidelity. For example, reappraising the opportunity to cheat may alter the emotional

impact of individuals' thoughts and feelings in a way that actually *decreases* the negative

and uncomfortable feelings surrounding the decision to cheat. These feelings may be

necessary in order to prevent cheating. Therefore, if reappraisal is used to rationalize or

decrease negative feelings surrounding cheating behavior, it would not appear to be an

adaptive emotion regulation method within intimate relationships. Thus, reappraising in

a positive manner would in general be more adaptive in managing distressing emotions,

but further research is needed in order to establish how reappraisal is used in relation to

infidelity. The current study will assess both reappraisal and suppression in order to

explore the differential affects they may have on infidelity.

Emotion Regulation and Adult Attachment in Intimate Relationships

As noted earlier, attachment theory provides a context for understanding clinical

issues that clients may bring in. As such, attachment theory may provide one method of

intervention in altering maladaptive emotion regulation strategies clients present with.

Within intimate relationships, a well established correlation has been found between

emotion regulation and adult romantic attachment (Bowlby, 1988; Feeney, 1999;

Fuendeling, 1998; Kerr, Melley, Travea, & Pole, 2003; Mikulincer et al., 2003; Shaver &

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Mikulincer, 2002). Bowlby (1982/1969, 1988) viewed proximity seeking as an innate emotion regulation strategy designed to alleviate distress, and that the successful accomplishment of this results in a sense of secure attachment. Thus, the availability and responsiveness of an attachment figure influences the development of emotion regulation strategies and attempts to attach *are* emotion regulation strategies. If attachment needs are met, security-based emotion regulation strategies arise (Mikulincer et al., 2003; Shaver & Hazen, 1993). Through previous experiences, securely attached individuals have found others to be helpful when they have expressed their feelings and sought out emotional support. Indeed, secure attachment has been linked to more direct and open discussion of emotions, to more self-disclosure than avoidant individuals, and to more emotional expression (Feeney, 1995; Feeney, 1999; Pistole, 1993). In addition, links between secure attachment and reappraisal have been found, with securely attached individuals using more constructive and positive appraisals and interpreting their situation as challenging rather than threatening (Mikulincer & Florian, 1995). Thus, for securely attached individuals, suppression appears to be used less often as a regulatory strategy, and expressing and reappraising seem to be more adaptive strategies in managing distressing emotions. This makes sense in light of their positive view of others and ability to be intimate with others.

If attachment needs are not met, secondary strategies of emotion regulation known as hyperactivation and deactivation are developed (Mikulincer et al., 2003). Insecurely attached individuals have not found others to be helpful when they have

expressed their feelings and sought out emotional support, so it is logical that they would express themselves less than more securely attached individuals. Hyperactivating strategies (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988) are characteristic of anxious or preoccupied individuals who see proximity seeking as a viable option, resulting in efforts to increase intimacy with that partner (Shaver & Hazen, 1993). Because self-disclosure of emotions is thought to increase intimacy (Berg & Derlega, 1987), it seems plausible that anxious individuals would be highly expressive due to their extreme desire for closeness. However, anxious individuals may try to inhibit their emotions for fear of upsetting their partner and putting the relationship at risk. An anxious attachment style has been linked to greater emotional control, increased control of anger, lower levels of expressivity when compared to securely attached individuals, and higher levels of inhibition when compared to secure individuals but lower levels of inhibition when compared to avoidantly attached individuals (Collins, 1996; Feeney, 1995; Feeney, 1999; Kerr et al., 2003). However, anxious individuals have been found to use emotion-focused (i.e., expressive) coping strategies more than avoidant individuals (Mikulincer, Florian, & Weller, 1993).

In addition, one study found that both anxious and avoidant attachment styles were related to a higher appraisal of threat, but anxious individuals saw themselves as having less control in the situation, supporting the belief that they are less likely to reappraise a situation (Radecki-Bush, Farrel, & Bush, 1993). Thus there are mixed findings on anxious individuals' probability of suppressing emotions which is likely a result of a conflict between their desire for intimacy and positive views of others, and

their fear of rejection. In addition, their low self-view may make it difficult for them to reappraise situations more positively. It appears then that expressing and reappraising in a positive manner would be more adaptive in managing distressing emotions, but further research is needed in order to establish which strategies anxious individuals actually use.

Deactivating strategies (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988) are typically associated with avoidant individuals who have not found proximity seeking to be an option (Mikulincer et al., 2003). Avoidant individuals who are classified as fearful actually deactivate the *expression* of negative emotion and related attachment needs out of fear of rejection. Avoidant dismissing individuals are emotionally detached due to their deactivation of the actual *experience* of emotion (Bartholomew, 1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Due to their fear of intimacy and negative view of others, it is plausible that both fearful and dismissing styles would suppress more in an effort to avoid intimacy and avoid being vulnerable. Avoidant attachment has been linked to greater control of both positive and negative emotions, to the lowest levels of expressivity and the highest levels of inhibition when compared to other attachment styles, and to more emotionally distancing methods of coping while in danger (Feeney, 1995; Feeney, 1998; Gross & John, 2003; Kerr et al., 2003; Kotler, Buzwell, Romeo, & Bowland, 1994; Mikulincer et al., 1993).

Links between reappraisal and avoidant attachment have also been found. As noted earlier, Radecki-Bush and colleagues (1993) found avoidant individuals had higher appraisals of threat but rated themselves as having more control over situations when compared to anxious individuals. Similarly, Mikulincer and Florian (1995) found that

while avoidant individuals made less positive appraisals when distressed, they interpreted their situation as challenging rather than threatening. However, Gross and John (2003) did not find reappraisal to be linked to avoidance. It is important to note that the above studies didn't distinguish between fearful and dismissing attachment styles. Given dismissing individuals' positive view of self, it would seem probable that they would be higher in reappraisal because they see themselves as being more capable of managing situations. On the other hand, individuals higher in fearful attachment would be lower in reappraisal due to their negative view of themselves and their resulting belief of being less capable of managing situations. Thus, for both types of avoidant styles, it appears that suppression is used more often as an adaptive regulatory strategy, and that low levels of reappraisal would be more adaptive if the goal is to avoid intimacy. However, individuals higher in dismissing attachment appear to use reappraisal, which increases intimacy. Further research is needed in order to establish avoidant individuals' use of reappraisal and its adaptiveness within intimate relationships.

Emotion Regulation, Infidelity, and Adult Attachment in Intimate Relationships

One construct that may partially account for the relationship between romantic attachment and infidelity is emotion regulation. Although there have been few research findings directly on romantic attachment and infidelity and on emotion regulation and infidelity, prior research highlighted earlier suggests links between romantic attachment and infidelity and between emotion regulation and infidelity based on related findings examining sexual behaviors, sexual beliefs, and relationship intimacy. In addition,

empirical findings suggest a clear relationship between adult attachment and emotion regulation. Therefore, probable links could be posited between all three constructs. Related to attachment, both emotion regulation and infidelity may serve to decrease intimacy within the relationship, serving individuals' ultimate goal of tolerating anxiety and closeness in a manner that is comfortable for them. Similarly, infidelity may not only serve to decrease intimacy, but may be a result of decreased intimacy due to the use of emotion regulation strategies.

As noted before, self-disclosure of emotions creates intimacy, which logically provides for a deeper, more satisfying relationship with a romantic partner. It may be that expressing emotions allows for the accommodation of working models to incorporate new relational information because expressing emotions provides the opportunity for feedback from one's partner. This change in one's view of themselves and of their partner may in turn decrease their likelihood of engaging in infidelity. Thus, higher levels of reappraisal and emotional expression would serve to create intimacy and decrease the probability of infidelity, while lower levels of reappraisal and higher levels of suppression would serve to decrease intimacy and increase the probability of infidelity. Therefore, the current study will assess whether the way in which an individual regulates their emotions partially mediates whether one's attachment style influences their likelihood of cheating.

Gender Roles And Intimate Relationships

Theories of gender identity provide a second method of conceptualizing individual differences in rates of infidelity. In the 1930's Terman and Miles (1936) began studying the concepts of "masculinity" and "femininity", which were viewed as opposing personality traits in men and women. It was not until a decade later when de Beauvoir (1949) argued in *Le Deuxième Sexe* that femininity was not innate but largely culturally determined that gender began to be viewed more as a socially and politically constructed concept. Thus today in discussing sex and gender, sex typically refers to biological differences between men and women while gender refers to socially, politically, or environmentally constructed differences between men and women. Gender role development has been defined as "the process whereby children come to acquire the behaviors, attitudes, interests, emotional reactions, and motives that are culturally defined as appropriate for members of their sex" (Perry & Bussey, 1984, p. 262). Thus, gender roles consist of rules that vary by gender and shape how individuals think, feel, and act. These rules or "gender role scripts" consist of cognitive models that are used to guide interpersonal behavior (Spence, Deaux, & Helmreich, 1985). It is believed that these rules or scripts are internalized at a young age, with children as young as five having a clear understanding of how men and women are supposed to act (see Lytton & Romney, 1991, for a review). For example, one commonly held gender role belief is that women are socialized to be communal while men are socialized to be agentic (i.e., focus on self and autonomy, Eagly, 1987).

Feminist theorists have emphasized the influence cultural, political, and societal factors have on gender, particularly in relation to one's sense of identity (Visser, 2002). Gender roles can be self-fulfilling, reinforcing unconsciously held beliefs about gender (Visser 2002), and are believed to become so engrained that they may function at a subconscious level, influencing judgments and memories (Deaux, 1999). The unconscious nature of gender perceptions may result in a sense of confusion when one acts or thinks in a manner contrary to their espoused beliefs. For example, Williams (2000, p. 15) notes that Western gender roles influence our thoughts against our own better judgment: it is "a gender system we simultaneously live and deny".

Our conceptualization of masculinity and femininity has seen great changes over the past few decades. Masculinity and femininity was originally constructed as and later criticized for being a reflection of sex differences in responses, a single bipolar dimension, and a unidimensional construct that could be derived from one global score (Constantinople, 1973). Original constructions of masculinity and femininity were also criticized for their static nature, their implication that gay men were similar to feminine women, the fact that they ignored the influence society and politics played in gender construction, and that they were seen as basic human traits, allowing no room for individual differences (Lewin, 1984a). Two influential and competing theories of conceptualizing gender roles emerged in the early eighties based on measures put forth in the mid-seventies. Both Bem (1974) and Spence (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1974) put forth a trait approach of masculinity and femininity, arguing that these are two distinct

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constructs that should be measured separately. Individuals were thus classified as "masculine", "feminine", "androgynous" (i.e., high on both dimensions), and "undifferentiated" (i.e., low on both dimensions).

However, they disagreed as to the unidimensional aspect of gender role identity. Bem's (1981b, 1981c) gender-schema theory argues that "sex-typing is derived, in part, from a readiness on the part of the individual to encode and to organize information—including information about the self—in terms of the cultural definitions of maleness and femaleness that constitute society's gender schema" (Bem, 1981b, p. 369). Additionally, she argued for the interrelatedness of gender-related phenomena such as personality traits, attitudes, and behaviors. Conversely, Spence's (1984, 1985) multifactorial gender identity theory argued that gender-related personality, attitudes, and behaviors are typically independent. In other words, she argued that individuals' gender role identity consists of multiple dimensions because it is shaped by various forces in many different ways.

In more recent years, researchers have begun to look at the multiple dimensions that constitute one's gender role identity and the degree to which individuals conform to different gender role norms. Gender role norms are rules that guide men and women as to how they are supposed to feel, think, and act, indicating gendered behaviors that should be constrained because they are considered inappropriate for one gender or the other (Gilbert & Scher, 1999; Mahalik, 2000b). Gender conformity can thus be defined as the degree to which one meets societal expectations of what constitutes masculinity or

femininity in their private and public life and is reflected in one's thoughts, feelings, and actions (Mahalik, Locke, Ludlow, Diemer, Scott, Gottfired, & Freitas, 2003; Mahalik, Morray, Coonerty-Femiano, Ludlow, Slattery, & Smiler, 2005). Furthermore, it is believed that people are motivated to behave in ways consistent with their scripts of what it means to be masculine or feminine (Whitley, 1988).

However, the pressure to conform to one's gender role norms can have detrimental effects for both men and women. It is posited that individuals who don't conform to gender role norms may develop gender role conflict (see review by O'Niel, Good, & Holmes, 1995), which was originally conceptualized as sex role strain (Garnets & Pleck, 1979). Sex role strain occurs when there are "discrepancies between real self and that aspect of the ideal self-concept rooted in sex role norms" (Garnets & Pleck, 1979, p. 276). Gender role conflict is a multidimensional concept thought to affect individuals on a cognitive level, an emotional level, an unconscious level, and a behavioral level. Furthermore, it is thought to cause psychological distress and interpersonal deficits such as limited intimacy and poor relationship satisfaction (O'Neil et al., 1995). Therefore, while research suggests that gender role conformity may be more detrimental to men than women (Pleck, 1981), both men's and women's romantic relationships may suffer due to their attempts to conform to gender roles put forth by society, particularly if they feel conflicted about doing so.

Yet individuals likely vary in the degree to which they experience gender role conflict. Given the multiple dimensions constituting an individual's gender role identity,

individuals may conform to certain gender role norms and not conform to others. Similarly, they may conform to specific gender role norms to varying degrees. This would suggest that one's personal gender-role script may be more salient than gender role self-concepts based on societal norms. As Spence (1985, 1999) pointed out, each person has their own equation as to what it means to be male or female. As such, people can maintain a sense of security in their gender role identity by attaching more importance to gender characteristics they do have, and less importance to gender characteristics they do not have.

Gender Roles and Infidelity in Intimate Relationships

Sex differences that may be gender-based have been the most commonly cited predictor of infidelity, with men typically thought to engage in higher incidences of infidelity. More recently researchers have shown that differences between men and women are gradually diminishing (Greeley, 1994; Laumann et al, 1994; Thompson, 1984; Wiederman, 1997). As noted earlier, infidelity has been positively linked to permissive sexual values, premarital permissiveness, early sexual experiences, more sexual relationships in the past, greater interest in sex, and past infidelity (Banfield & McCabe, 2001; Bozon, 1996; Drake & McCabe, 2000; Reiss, et al., 1980; Smith, 1994; Treas & Giesen; 2000). Based on these findings, there is existing research suggesting that sex differences are indirectly related to infidelity, in addition to the direct findings on sex differences in rates of infidelity that were noted earlier.

It is believed that while sex differences in sexual behavior are decreasing, data still suggests that men become sexually active at a younger age (Leigh, Morrison, Trocki, & Temple, 1994; Reiss, 1990), hold more permissive sexual beliefs (Oliver & Shibley Hyde, 1993), view sex outside of a committed relationship as more acceptable (DeLamater, 1987), have a more casual relationship with their first sex partner (DeLamater, 1987), have more positive first time sexual experiences (DeLamater, 1987), engage in masturbation more often (Leitenberg, Detzer, & Srebnik, 1993; Oliver & Shibley Hyde, 1993), are more sexually experienced (Leary & Snell, 1988), and have more sexual partners during their lifetime (Brown & Sinclair, 1999; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1995; Oliver & Shibley Hyde, 1993). In addition, while one study found women to report similar or greater total number of sexual intercourse experiences (Lottes, 1986), a more recent study found that college aged men reported a higher frequency of intercourse within the last year than college aged women (Reinish, Sanders, Hill, & Davis, 1992). Men have also been found to have sexual fantasies more often than women (Leitenberg & Henning, 1995), with a greater proportion of their fantasies involving someone other than their current partner (Hicks & Leitenberg, 2001).

In addition, women are thought to be sexually motivated by love, emotional intimacy, and commitment, while men are thought to be sexually motivated by pleasure and physical attractiveness (DeLamater, 1987; Castañeda & Burns-Glover, 2004). Similarly, women more often cite love and emotional reasons for intercourse than men, while men cite pleasure, lust, and tension release more often than women (Carroll, Volk,

& Hyde, 1985; Whitley, 1988). This is in line with the notion that men engage in more

sexual only forms of infidelity, while women engage in more emotional forms of

infidelity (Glass & Wright, 1985).   These differences are often explained by the common

perception that men have higher levels of sexual desire than women. For example,

Baumeister, Catanese, and Vohs (2001) reviewed studies on sexual behaviors, sexual

thoughts, sexual fantasies, and liking for various sexual acts and found that across these

studies, men showed a more intense and frequent desire for sex, suggesting a stronger sex

drive than women. However, Levin and Levin (1975) found decreasing differences in

men's and women's sexual desire for intercourse.

Therefore, while there is ample evidence to suggest men may be more likely to

engage in infidelity based on their sexual beliefs and behaviors, there is also evidence

suggesting that sex differences in sexual beliefs and behaviors are narrowing over time.

How can this be explained? It may in part be due to changing gender role norms for men

and women, specifically in relation to sexuality. Feminist theorists posit that power is a

salient aspect of current gender social norms, with men afforded more power than women

(Connell, 1987). As women become more empowered in society, they may conform less

to societal sexual norms. Research has shown that individuals' personal gender role

scripts are better predictors of sexual behaviors than are gender role self-concepts based

on societal gender role norms (Whitley 1988). Thus, there is a need to assess gender

roles in relation to sexual behaviors and beliefs rather than sex differences per se.

However, to date no know studies have examined gender role differences in rates of infidelity.

Researchers have long concluded that men and women are socialized differently in regards to sexuality, suggesting they have internalized different messages as to how men and women are supposed to act sexually. For example, men and women are thought to be reinforced and punished differently for their sexual behavior, shaping how they view their sexuality. While men are often positively reinforced for sexually promiscuous behavior, women are more commonly positively reinforced for engaging in sex in committed, love-based, exclusive relationships (Oliver & Hyde, 1993). This can be seen from a young age, with parents often tolerating or even encouraging male sexuality more so than female sexuality (Leary & Snell, 1988). Similarly, common stereotypes suggest that men are cautious about becoming emotionally involved or committed in relationships and are more interested in sex, while women are taught to value love, affection, romance, and commitment more than sex, with sex being somewhat contingent on these constructs (Lottes, 1993). This suggests that masculine sexual norms may not always be adaptive to women *or* men in that while they encourage sexual freedom, they may also encourage more infidelity and discourage intimacy and commitment, resulting in negative relationship repercussions and possible gender role conflict.

Therefore, while a sexual double standard continues to exist in Western society in which men are entitled to more sexual freedom than women (Crawfrod & Popp, 2003), women have gradually gained more sexual freedom during the last four decades

(Crawford & Popp, 2003; Oliver & Shibley Hyde, 1993). As Ehrenreich, Hess, and Jacobs (1987, p. 2) noted, women's sexual beliefs and behaviors have changed since the mid-1960's, "from a pattern of virginity before marriage and monogamy thereafter to a pattern that much more resembles men's," such as more partners, and both premarital and extramarital sex. Women's sexual attitudes and behaviors appear to reflect this change, becoming more in-line with men's. This is likely in part due to actual changes and in part to more honest responses from women regarding their sexuality than in the past. For example, from 1974 to 1984, women's age of first intercourse has found to decrease and their number of sex partners and frequency of sex has increased (Reiss, 1990). Reinish and colleagues (1992) found that among a college population, women and men reported similar mean ages of first intercourse. Another study found that among college students, nearly half of the women in the sample reported at least one casual sexual experience as well as having engaged in sex without emotional involvement (Lottes, 1993). Again, it should be cautioned that while these findings suggest positive changes in that they reflect a more egalitarian society, high rates of promiscuousness and risky sexual activity among women *and* men are likely not conducive to positive social changes.

Studies that have measured actual gender roles in relation to sexual behaviors offer some support for indirect links between gender roles and infidelity. For example, both men and women have shown an increase in masculinity of social behaviors, sexual behaviors, and sexual attitudes, with men increasingly conforming to gender role norms and women increasingly showing nonconformity to gender role norms (Whitley, 1988).

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In addition, men and women scoring higher in instrumentality or masculinity report being more sexually experienced, having sex at an earlier age, having more sexual partners, and feeling more relaxed about having sex (Leary & Snell, 1998). Furthermore, a recent study (Shearer, Hosterman, Gillen, & Lefkowitz, 2005) found men who highly endorsed the importance of status norms had a greater likelihood of engaging in casual sex. Among men, the endorsement of traditional masculine attitudes is found to be related to more sexual partners in the last year and a less intimate relationship at last intercourse with their most recent partners (Pleck, Sonenstein, & Ku, 1993), while among women, the endorsement of more masculine traits has been linked to having two or more partners in the past year (Lucke, 1998). Therefore, it appears that across sexes higher scores on masculinity would be suggestive of higher rates infidelity.

Several feminine characteristics suggest higher relationship quality and a decreased likelihood of engaging in infidelity. Women are believed to be more likely to develop personality traits of communion (i.e., focus on other people and relationships; Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982; Helgeson, 1994, Mosher & Danoff-Berg, 2005), expressiveness, and nurturance (Bem, 1974; Jones & Costin, 1995; Spence & Helmreich, 1978), suggesting more positive relationships. For example, communion has been positively related to relational outcomes such as marital satisfaction (Mongrain, & Zuroff, 1995), and negatively related to a willingness to engage in uncommitted sex among men (Mosher & Danoff-Burg, 2005). One recent study (Steiner-Pappalardo & Gurung, 2002) found femininity in both women and men to predict more positive

relationship outcomes, such as contributing to a clear, positive, and connected concept of significant others.

Men on the other hand are believed to be more likely to develop personality traits of agency (Helgeson, 1994, Mosher & Danoff-Berg, 2005), dominance, and instrumentality (Bem, 1974; Spence & Helmreich, 1978), suggesting less focus on relationships. For example, agency has been related to an increased willingness to engage in uncommitted sex (Mosher & Danoff-Burg, 2005). However, because women are now evincing more masculine traits, women may be just as likely to cheat as men have in the past. For example, in examining changes in gender roles from 1994 to 1999, Vissar (2002) found a growing sense of power, freedom, and independence related to femininity. It should be noted that while Vissar (2002) found that masculinity was a more stable and less diversified trait than femininity, obviously not all men conform to traditional masculine sexual norms.

Specifically related to infidelity, girls are typically rated higher than boys on prosocial behaviors (Holmgren, Eisenberg, & Fabes, 1998) and report more guilt over violating social norms of interpersonal trust and compassion (Williams & Bybee, 1994). Similarly, Penner, Fritzsche, Craiger, and Freifeld, (1995) found men to score significantly lower on a measure of prosocial personality called "other-oriented empathy" which included items about feeling responsible for the welfare of others and for one's own actions. Furthermore, men and women scoring higher in femininity have been found to score higher in guilt (Evans, 1984). These findings suggest that being masculine may

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somehow buffer the emotional discomfort that can result from one's actions. In a recent study, Skoe and colleagues (2002) presented college students with vignettes of moral dilemmas and found that individuals scoring higher in femininity rated moral dilemmas as higher in importance than individuals scoring higher in masculinity, that masculinity was negatively related to personal distress, and that femininity was positively related to a responsible concern for others.

Therefore, research suggests that men are more likely than women to engage in sexual beliefs and behaviors conducive to infidelity. However, studies often fail to take into account the role socialization plays in forming men's and women's sexual beliefs and behaviors, particularly in relation to infidelity. Studies that have assessed the relationship between gender roles and sexual beliefs and behaviors have generally found that across sexes, masculine characteristics are likely to increase the chances of infidelity, while feminine characteristics are likely to decrease the likelihood of infidelity. This is particularly important in that women are now conforming less to traditional gender role norms in relation to sex, which may partially account for the decreasing differences we are seeing in rates of infidelity. The current study will assess gender roles in relation to rates of infidelity.

Gender Roles, Emotion Regulation, and Infidelity in Intimate Relationships

As noted earlier, research has shown that expressive suppression is related to many deficits in interpersonal relationships, while self-disclosure is linked to increased relationship satisfaction, commitment, love, stability, and intimacy, with the expression

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of emotions typically resulting in increased intimacy. Similarly, research has highlighted the many benefits using reappraisal may have within intimate relationships, such as an increased sharing of both positive and negative emotions which results in higher levels of intimacy, closer relationships, and an increased likelihood of being liked by others. Therefore, it is important to examine gender role differences in emotion regulation strategies as they may partially account for gender role differences that may be found in rates of infidelity.

One of the most widely held gender stereotypes is that women are more emotional than men (Manstead, 1992; Williams & Best, 1990). Indeed, emotionality is viewed by feminist authors as the most prominently distinguished feature between men and women (Chodrow, 1978; Tannen, 1990). In addition, numerous studies provide support for this stereotype. For example, women are believed to smile more and express more warmth and affection than men, to express more vulnerability, sadness, fear, and guilt than men, and to be more emotionally expressive in general than men, while men are thought to express more anger and to be more aggressive than women (Briton & Hall, 1995; Fabes & Martin, 1991; for reviews, see Brody & Hall, 1993;). Thus, based on the different natures of men and women, rationality is typically associated with men and emotionality is typically associated with women (Fischer, 1993). These stereotypes imply fundamental biological differences in emotionality.

However, researchers have long concluded that men and women are socialized differently in regards to emotionality. Emotions are thought to be socially construed,

rooted in cultural meaning, and expressed according to cultural display rules (Averill, 1982; Ekman & Friesen, 1969; Fischer, 1993; Hess, Senecal, Kirouac, Herrera, Philippot, & Kleck, 2000). One of the primary differences in gender roles are expressiveness, with girls and women encouraged to be outgoing, expressive, and concerned with interpersonal relationships while boys and men are encouraged to be more instrumental by focusing more on competitiveness and autonomy and focusing less on social-emotional or expressive concerns (Chelune, 1976; Hill & Stull, 1987). Traditionally, women's roles required a more relational and emotional orientation. Eichenbaum and Orbach (1983, pg. 47) note that "Women are reared to provide for the dependency needs of others, to respond emotionally to their children, husbands, workmates, etc. Women develop emotional antennae that alert them to the needs of others'". Thus it seems women are primed to be more emotional in that it has traditionally been a core aspect of their identity.

Furthermore, the socialization of emotions begins at an early age. For example, preschool children have shown to associate sadness and fear with females and anger with males (Birnbaum, 1983). Gender socialization theory suggests that from a young age, peers and teachers respond negatively to displays of emotion by boys and men (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998; Fivush, 1989; Zeman & Garber, 1996), and parents use more varied emotion terms and a higher frequency of them in talking to their daughters than when talking to their sons (Adams, Kuebli, Boyle, & Fivush, 1995; Fivush, 1989). In sum, from a young age boys and girls are not only taught what

emotions they should express, but also to what degree they should express them. This is particularly important given that gender stereotypes are thought to remain salient throughout development and to influence our self-identity (Fiske & Stevens, 1993).

Based on the above findings, many sex differences in emotionality may be better described as socialized gender role differences in emotionality. Not surprisingly then, sex differences in emotionality are often related more to the *expression* of emotions than to the *experience* of emotions. Stapely and Haviland (1989) found men to experience contempt more frequently than women, while women experienced more shame, surprise, guilt, and sadness to a greater frequency than men. However, men and women in this study showed similar experiences of anger, fear, disgust, and joy, similar to other studies which have failed to find sex differences in the experience of joy and anger (Averill, 1982; Scherer, Wallbott, & Summerfield, 1986). In examining the intensity of emotions, men are found to report lower levels of intensity for both negative and positive emotions (Diener, Sandvik, & Larsen, 1985; Furjita, Diener, & Sandvik, 1991). Given that women experience negative emotions such as shame and guilt more often and to a greater intensity, they may be more inclined to avoid engaging in infidelity because they may be less capable than men to buffer the emotional discomfort associated with it. In sum, prior studies suggest inconclusive findings on sex differences in emotional experience.

More significant to the current study, it is commonly believed that sex differences are found more often in emotional expression rather than emotional experience (Fabes, & Martin, 1991; Johnson & Shulman, 1988). Once again, the socialization process of

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emotions can be seen in that there has traditionally been an understood message that men should control and hide their emotions while women are not only allowed to, but are encouraged to express their emotions (Fischer, 1993; Timmers, Fischer, & Manstead, 1998). This in effect creates a self-fulfilling prophecy. For example, men have been shown to suppress their emotions more than women (Gross & John, 2003). In addition, women have been shown to control the expression of amusement less than men but to control the expression of anger, contempt, and sadness to a greater degree than men (Gross et al., in press). In addition, studies show that women report crying more often than men when disappointed, angry, afraid, sad, or moved (Fijda, Kuipers, & Schure, 1989), suggesting that women can more easily admit to and express "weak" emotions because it is in line with their gender roles, while men would have a harder time with this because it goes against traditional masculine gender roles. However, women have been shown to be as reluctant as men to go against gender-stereotypical emotions. One recent study examined men's and women's perceived stereotypical beliefs about gender and emotions and found that while men were perceived to experience female-stereotypical emotions and women were perceived to experience male-stereotypical emotions, they expressed these emotions less often than they experienced (Plant, Shibley Hyde, Keltner, & Devine, 2000). This suggests that both men and women suppress emotions that go against their gender roles.

This socialization process is significant in that the degree to which individuals regulate the expression of their emotions may indirectly alter their chances of engaging in

infidelity. For example, one recent study presented vignettes of emotional experiences and asked men and women to rate the degree to which men and women in general would react across nine different emotions as well as the degree to which the participants themselves would actually react. Across all of the negative emotional situations, women were expected to react with more sadness while men were expected to react with more happiness and serenity. Similarly, women reported that they themselves would actually react with more sadness, cry, and withdraw more, while men reported that they would likely laugh, smile, and be more relaxed (Hess et al., 2000). The fact that men both expect other men and themselves to react in a more gender stereotypical manner when encountering negative emotional experiences by discounting the negativity of the event suggests that they may actually be suppressing their emotions more. Consequently, by discounting their negative feelings in relation to cheating behaviors, they may actually feel more comfortable in engaging in infidelity.

Examining the way in which men and women express their anger differently also provides indirect support for the notion that emotion regulation strategies may partially account for differences in individuals' rates of infidelity. For example, Fabes and Martin (1991) found that men and women experienced a variety of emotions similarly, but men expressed anger more frequently than women and women expressed sadness, fear, and love more frequently than men. On the other hand, men have been found to be more likely to suppress their expression of anger than women (McConatha, Lightner, & Deaner, 1994). The discrepancy surrounding the expression of anger may be due to the

way in which anger is expressed differently by men and women. For example, women have been found to express anger more intensely and for longer periods of time (Brody, 1993; Dosser, Balswick, & Halverson, 1983), with women expressing more anger within close heterosexual relationships than men (Levenson, Cartensen, & Gottman, 1994; Shimanoff, 1985). Men on the other hand often act in a more passive manner, engaging in "stonewalling" where they inhibit their facial expression and minimize eye contact and listening in response to their wives anger (Gottman & Levenson, 1986). Similarly, in reviewing studies on sex differences in emotionality, Manstead (1992) found that men were less likely to express emotions facially and reported fewer negative emotions.

Thus, it appears that within romantic relationships men may often suppress their feelings. As noted earlier, self-disclosure and expression of emotions, even negative emotions, results in increased intimacy and relationship satisfaction. Indeed, Gottman and Krokoff (1989) found that women in marriages in which they expressed their anger by initiating conflicts with their husbands reported greater relationship satisfaction three years later than women who did not. Therefore, men and women who do suppress their emotions may be more likely to engage in infidelity as a result of decreased intimacy and relationship satisfaction. While overall it appears that men suppress their emotions more within romantic relationships and intimate self-disclosure is perceived to be more appropriate for women than for men (Derlega & Chaikin, 1976), women may eventually begin suppressing their anger more often as they learn that expressing non-stereotypical

emotions such as anger results in "punishment" or withdrawal by their husbands (Gottman & Levenson, 1986, 1992).

In addition, direct support has been found between emotionality and gender roles rather than sex per se. For example, Jakupcak and colleagues (2003) found that a more masculine ideology significantly predicted the dimension of negative reactivity, or the tendency to express negative emotional reactions (Bryant, Yarnold, & Grimm, 1996), on the Affect Intensity Measure (Laresen, 1984). In addition, among men, a more masculine ideology was related to lower overall levels of affect and to higher levels of global fear of emotions, fear of anger, fear of positive emotions, and fear of depressed mood. This is not surprising given that men are socialized to remain in control of their emotions, which likely transfers over to both negative and positive emotions. However, this has important implications within interpersonal relationships given that intimacy is often created by expressing emotions, which is unlikely in cases in which individuals are afraid of their emotions. Although there has been inconclusive research as to the relationship between relationship satisfaction and infidelity (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Glass & Wright, 1977, 1992; Treas & Giesen, 2000), it could logically be posited that individuals who experience less intimacy within their relationships may be less satisfied and thus more likely to engage in infidelity.

Gender role conflict has been shown to be related to a lower capacity for intimacy (Sharpe, Heppner, & Dixon, 1995). One recent study found that college-aged men higher in restrictive emotionality reported lower levels of social intimacy, while middle-aged

men higher in restrictive emotionality and middle-aged men higher in restrictive affection between men demonstrated lower levels of social intimacy (Mahalik et al., 2001). Furthermore, gender roles have been found to be significantly related to more communication responses than sex (Basow & Rubenfeld, 2003). Basow and Rubenfeld (2003) found that individuals' level of expressiveness or nurturance (i.e., feminine) was related to an increased likelihood of offering sympathy during hypothetical interpersonal conflict scenarios and a lower likelihood of changing the subject. Thus, more feminine individuals appear to try to enhance communication during conflict rather than avoid or suppress communicating about the conflict.

In sum, conflicting evidence has been found in relation to sex differences in the experience of emotions, with men and women generally experiencing similar levels of anger and joy and women generally experiencing a wider range of emotions and to an intense degree. There is stronger evidence for sex differences in the *expression* of emotions, which is likely due to the role socialization plays in forming men's and women's gender stereotypes. Men are traditionally socialized to remain in control of their emotions while women are encouraged to express them. Research suggest that men are more inclined to suppress their emotions, however it may be that men and women express their emotions differently, with men doing so in a more passive manner. Furthermore, both sexes are thought to suppress emotions more if they go against gender role expectations. Studies that have assessed the relationship between gender roles and emotions have generally found that more masculine traits are associated with lower levels

of emotion, more fear of emotion, and decreased intimacy. In addition, while there is

little research on reappraisal and gender differences in emotionality, no consistent gender

differences have been found in reappraisal using the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire

(Gross & John, 2003).

CHAPTER THREE

The Current Study: Methodology

In summary, previous research has been successful in establishing independent links between attachment and infidelity (based on sexual behaviors and attitudes), emotion regulation and infidelity (based on relationship satisfaction and intimacy variables), and gender role identity and infidelity (based on sex). In addition, independent links have been found between attachment and emotion regulation and between gender role identity and emotion regulation. However, no known studies have examined links between attachment, emotion regulation, and infidelity simultaneously, or links between gender roles, emotion regulation, and infidelity simultaneously. Further, studies that have examined experiences of infidelity often assess predicted infidelity or assess actual experiences of infidelity in a dichotomous manner, ignoring the type and depth of infidelity and therefore providing a more superficial picture of infidelity behavior.

Studies examining attachment and infidelity typically look at attachment and sexual behaviors (i.e., early sexual experiences or number of lifetime partners) or sexual beliefs, rather than attachment and actual experiences of infidelity. Similarly, studies examining gender roles and infidelity typically look at gender roles and sexual behaviors or sexual beliefs, or *sex differences* and infidelity, rather than gender roles and actual experiences of infidelity. The current study posited that both romantic attachment and gender roles were two constructs that may explain individual differences in rates of

infidelity. Furthermore, the degree to which emotion regulation mediates the relationship between attachment and infidelity and gender role conformity and infidelity was explored as well.

The current study builds upon previous research by examining two specific types of emotion regulation in association with attachment styles and infidelity. Additionally, no known studies have examined links between emotion regulation and infidelity or between gender roles and infidelity. The current measure of infidelity allows for a more complete and broader understanding of acts of infidelity than in the past and extends the research that has been done on infidelity. In addition, this is the first known study to examine the construct of anonymous infidelity. Moreover, the current study proposed to use an analytic method that takes into account the overlap among predictor variables.

Participant Recruitment and Procedures

The current study consisted of 406 individuals over the age of 18 who had had at least one dating relationship (committed or not) in the past five years. Complete data sets were obtained from 388 participants, which served as the data base for this study. Participants were recruited through the Educational Psychology subject pool, the website Facebook, and local newspaper ads for a study investigating their experiences in romantic relationships. Students from the Educational Psychology subject pool comprised 78.9% ($N = 306$) of the sample, students from Facebook comprised 19.6% ($N = 76$) of the sample, and individuals from the community comprised 1.5% ($N = 6$) of the sample.

Participants were provided with a URL to fill out an on-line survey consisting of self-report measures to examine the association between adult attachment, gender roles, emotion regulation strategies, and infidelity. All self-report measures were posted on a secure website dedicated specifically to this research study. Instructions about logging on to the website were provided on the EDP Subject Pool website as well as the recruitment ads that were distributed about this study. Prior to completing the questionnaires, subjects read the stated purpose, benefits, and risks of the study and electronically indicated their consent before proceeding. Among the possible risks, they were warned of the potentially distressing subject matter of some questions and were advised to discontinue their participation at any time if they found the material too overwhelming. The online consent form and instructions provided to participants in the study are presented in Appendix B.

Survey

    Demographics. Participants were asked to provide information concerning age, gender, race, relationship status, and socio-economic information (education), among other demographic information (Appendix A). The demographic information was study-specific.

    Relationship Scales Questionnaire. The RSQ (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994) consists of 30-items assessing four adult attachment patterns: secure, preoccupied, fearful, and dismissing (Appendix A). Items are drawn from Hazan and Shaver's (1987)

attachment measure, Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) Relationship Questionnaire, and Collins and Read's (1990) Adult Attachment Scale. Items are rated on a five-point scale, ranging from "not at all like me" (1) to "very much like me" (5). Attachment style scores are derived by computing the mean of the items representing each attachment pattern, with scores ranging from zero to five and higher scores indicating of higher levels of that specific attachment style. The RSQ was designed as a continuous measure of attachment rather than a categorical measure, with the implication that there is some overlap in the degree to which individuals fit into attachment categories. Griffin and Bartholomew (1994) provided evidence of convergent validity indicated by a correlation ranging from .25 (secure) to .47 (dismissing) with interview ratings of adult attachment patterns.

Internal consistency of the RSQ scale has been reported as ranging from $\alpha = .41$ for the secure pattern to $\alpha = .70$ for the dismissing pattern. Low internal consistencies are thought to be due to the combining of two orthogonal dimensions anxiety and avoidance (self-model and other-model) (Griffin and Bartholomew, 1994). Consequently, Griffin and Bartholomew have argued that it is inappropriate to assess internal consistency at the subscale level. The reader is referred to Kurdek (2002) for a thorough discussion of the psychometric properties of the RSQ.

Emotional Regulation Questionnaire. The ERQ (Gross & John, 2003) contains ten items assessing emotional regulation strategies (Appendix A). The measure consists of two subscales: cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. Cognitive reappraisal

involves being able to cognitively change how one perceives a situation in order to alter the emotional impact of the situation, such as "When I'm faced with a stressful situation, I make myself think about it in a way that helps me stay calm" and "When I want to feel more positive emotion, I change the way I'm thinking about the situation." Expressive suppression involves inhibiting ongoing emotion-expressive behavior (Gross, 1998a), such as "I keep my emotions to myself" and "I control my emotions by not expressing them." Items are rated on a seven-point scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (7) "strongly agree." Subscales are attained by summing reappraisal items and suppression items separately, with higher scores indicating higher levels of reappraisal and suppression. Scores range from zero to 42 for the six-item reappraisal subscale, and zero to 28 for the four-item suppression subscale. Gross and John averaged internal consistency estimates with prior samples of $\alpha = .79$ (reappraisal) and $\alpha = .73$ (suppression). The internal consistency of the ERQ for this sample was estimated at $\alpha = .82$ (reappraisal) and $\alpha = .79$ (suppression). Test-retest reliability across three months was estimated at $r = .69$ for both scales. They also reported evidence of convergent validity, with reappraisal found to relate to coping through interpretation $\beta = .43$, and suppression found to relate to coping through venting, $\beta = -.43$ on the Reinterpretation and Venting scales of the COPE (Carver, Scheier, and Weintraub, 1989).

Personal Attributes Questionnaire. The PAQ (Spence & Helmreich, 1978) contains 24-items describing behavior or traits stereotypically associated with instrumentality or expressiveness. The measure consists of three eight-item subscales:

instrumental (masculinity), expressive (femininity), and instrumental-expressive (masculinity-femininity). Participants describe themselves by choosing between two contradictory characteristics on a five-point scale, with higher scores indicating higher levels of masculinity or femininity. Only the instrumental and expressive scales were used in this study because the bipolar scale is typically not used for the classification of participants into gender roles. The elimination of the instrumental-expressive items from data analyses has not been found to alter the classification of the other two scales (Desertrain & Weiss, 1988). Additionally, factor analysis of self-report responses to the 16 items have revealed the presence of two orthogonal factors in each gender that confirmed the assignment of items to the instrumental and expressive scales (Helmreich, Spence, & Wilhelm, 1981). The PAQ has demonstrated adequate internal consistency and test-retest reliability (Spence & Helmreich, 1978). The internal consistency of the PAQ for this sample was estimated at $\alpha = .76$ (masculinity) and $\alpha = .79$ (femininity).

Experiences of Infidelity. A modified version of Banfield and McCabe's (2001) extra-relationship involvement scale was used to assess experiences of infidelity (Appendix A). The experiences of infidelity (EOI) measure consists of 21 items and four subscales assessing (1) emotional only infidelity, (2) physical only infidelity, (3) a combination of both emotional and physical infidelity, and (4) anonymous infidelity. Both the emotional and physical only subscales consisted of four items each assessing the rate and depth of infidelity over the past five years, and the degree to which their partners were aware of and alright with the experiences of infidelity. The combined infidelity

subscale consisted of these same four items, as well as two items assessing both the longest and shortest time individuals were involved in relationships with different non-partners. The anonymous infidelity subscale consisted of three items assessing the rate of infidelity, and the degree to which their partners were aware of and alright with the experiences of infidelity. For the purposes of this study, only items assessing the rate and depth of infidelity for each type of infidelity were used. The two items (i.e, rate and depth of involvement) were multiplied to attain a total score for each type of infidelity, with higher scores indicating higher levels of infidelity. Anonymous infidelity contained only the one item assessing the rate of anonymous infidelity, with higher scores indicating higher rates of infidelity.

The examples of emotional infidelity provided were talking intimately (emailing, text messaging), flirting, having intense romantic feelings for another person, spending time with someone you have romantic feelings for, or regularly fantasizing for a period of time about a particular person with whom you have on-going contact (like a feeling of infatuation). Participants rated the depth of their emotional involvement, ranging from 0 (no involvement) to 5 (deep love relationship). In addition, participants rated the number of individuals with whom they had been emotionally involved with over the past five years, ranging from 0 to 5 (more than 12).

The examples of physical infidelity that were provided were cuddling, holding hands, kissing, heavy petting, oral sex, or intercourse. Participants rated the depth of their physical involvement, ranging from 0 (no involvement) to 5 (sexual intercourse).

Participants rated the number of individuals with whom they had been physically involved with over the past five years, ranging from 0 to 5 (more than 12). Participants rated the depth of their combined physical and emotional involvement, ranging from 0 (never) to 5 (intense, on-going affair). Participants rated the number of individuals with whom they had had combined emotional and physical involvement with over the past five years, ranging from 0 to 5 (more than 12). The examples of anonymous infidelity that were provided were looking at porn (internet or movies), adult entertainment clubs, and prostitutes. Participants rated the amount of time engaged in anonymous infidelity, ranging from 0 (never) to 5 (daily). Thus total scores ranged from 0 – 25 for the physical only, emotional only, and combined infidelity subscales, and 0 – 5 for the anonymous infidelity subscale. In addition, participants were asked to write about their experiences and definition of each type of infidelity.

No known standardized infidelity measures have currently been developed. Rates of infidelity are typically assessed as part of measures assessing sexuality, sexual behaviors, sexual attitudes, and sexual history (Bogart & Sadava, 2002; Gentzler & Kerns, 2004), by asking one or two question variations of whether or not an individual had ever engaged in infidelity and ignoring the type of and level of involvement, (Atkins et al., 2001; Treas & Giesen, 2000), by looking at predicted experiences of infidelity (Buss & Shackelford, 1997), or by presenting vignettes of hypothetical infidelity experiences. (Parker, 1991; Sprecher et al., 1998). More recently, researchers have begun to look at both the type and depth of involvement (Banfield,& McCabe, 2001;

Drake & McCabe, 2000). The internal consistency of the different subscales for this sample was estimated at α = .67 (emotional), α = .68 (physical), and α = .70 (combined).

Attitudes Toward Infidelity. Attitudes toward infidelity was measured using a subscale from Banfield and McCabe's (2001*)* extra-relationship involvement questionnaire (Appendix A). Participants were asked their attitudes toward becoming (1) emotionally involved, (2) sexually involved, and (3) both emotionally and sexually involved with someone other than their regular partner. For example, "I think that becoming sexually involved with someone other than my partner is…" Participants rated the following six attitudes: bad-good, unfavorable-favorable, immoral-moral, unsafe-safe, not enjoyable-enjoyable, and negative-positive (Azjen, 1991) on a seven-point scale for each type of infidelity (i.e., emotional, sexual, or both). The seven point scale ranges from -3 (most negative) to +3 (most positive). All eighteen items were rescored to range from 1 to 7 and were then averaged to provide a total attitude towards infidelity, with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes towards infidelity. Drake and McCabe (2000) reported high internal consistency α = .95 in a prior sample for the global score and Banfield and McCabe reported high internal consistency for all three types of infidelity, emotional, sexual, and combined, α = .95, α = .94, α = .95, respectively. The internal consistency of the ATI for this sample was estimated at α = .92 (global score).

Research Hypotheses and Statistical Analyses

Path analyses were conducted to examine both the direct and indirect effect of adult attachment, gender roles, and emotion regulation on experiences of infidelity (i.e.,

emotional, physical, and combined). Initially, "attitudes towards infidelity" was

hypothesized as a fourth outcome variable influenced by attachment styles, gender roles,

and emotion regulation strategies. However, given that 91.8% ($N = 356$) of the

participants who specified their attitudes towards infidelity answered "3" or lower on a

scale of 1 to 7, indicating more negative attitudes towards infidelity, the variance for

these outcomes was insufficient for analysis and this variable was dropped from the

analyses of both models. The original hypotheses are reflected in Figures 2 and 3. After

dropping the variable "attitudes towards infidelity", "anonymous infidelity" was added as

a fourth outcome variable, which is reflected both in the hypotheses below and in Figures

4 and 5.

Hypothesis 1. Adult attachment styles will have direct effects on experiences of

infidelity (emotional, physical, combined, and anonymous). More specifically, (a) more

securely attached individuals will report having lower levels of infidelity than less

securely attached individuals; (b) individuals higher in preoccupation will report having

higher levels of infidelity than individuals lower in preoccupation; (c) more fearfully

attached individuals will report having higher levels of infidelity than less fearfully

attached individuals; (d) and individuals higher in dismissing attachment will report

having higher levels of infidelity than individuals lower in dismissing attachment (see

Figure 2).

Hypothesis 2. Emotion regulation strategies will partially mediate the effect of

adult attachment on experiences of infidelity. More specifically, (a) across all four
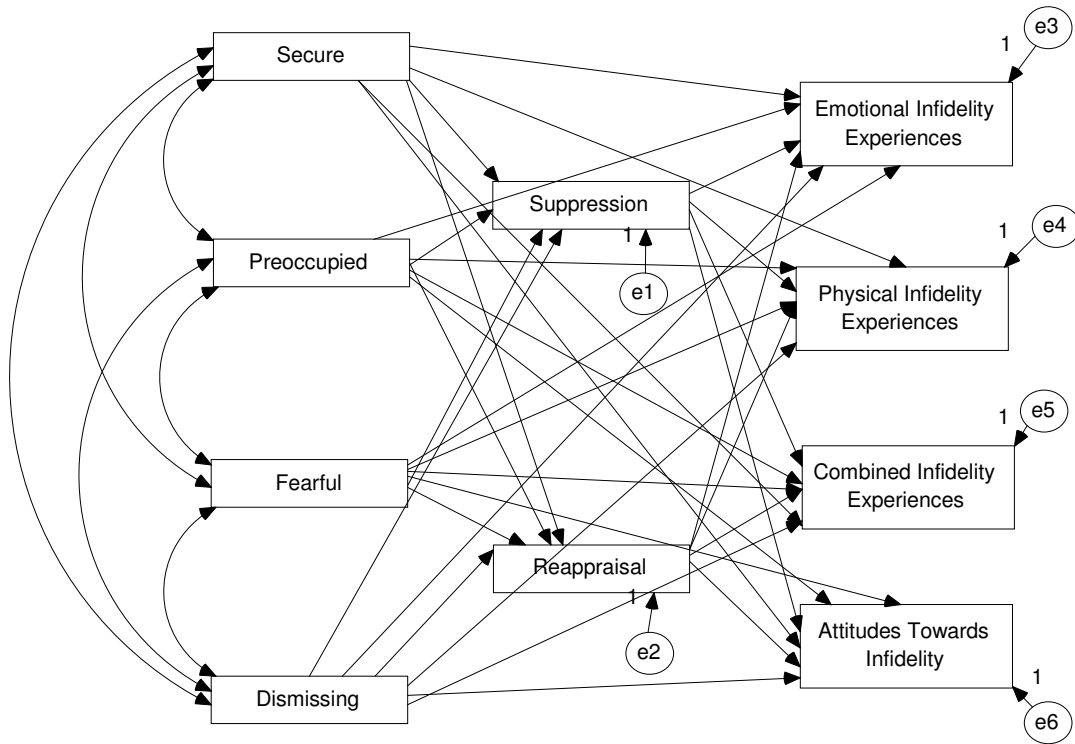
Figure 2. Conceptual attachment model

attachment styles, individuals with higher levels of suppression will report more

experiences of infidelity (emotional, physical, combined, and anonymous), (b) and

individuals with higher levels of reappraisal will report fewer experiences of infidelity

(emotional, physical, combined, and anonymous, see Figure 2).

In order to test a mediation effect, the direct effect of attachment styles on

emotion regulation strategies will be tested. It is hypothesized that, (c) more securely

attached individuals will report using lower levels of suppression and higher levels of

reappraisal than less securely attached individuals; (d) individuals higher in

preoccupation will report using lower levels of both suppression and reappraisal than individuals lower in preoccupation; (e) more fearfully attached individuals will report using higher levels of suppression and lower levels of reappraisal than less fearfully attached individuals; (f) and individuals higher in dismissing attachment will report using higher levels of both suppression and reappraisal than individuals lower in dismissing attachment (see Figure 2).

Additionally, emotion regulation strategies will have a direct effect on experiences of infidelity (emotional, physical, combined, and anonymous) at a statistically significant level. More specifically, (g) individuals higher in suppression will report having higher levels of infidelity across all four types of infidelity than individuals lower in suppression, (h) and individuals higher in reappraisal will report having lower levels of infidelity across all four types and than individuals lower in reappraisal (see Figures 2).

Hypothesis 3. Gender roles will have a direct effect on experiences of infidelity (emotional, physical, combined, and anonymous). More specifically, (a) individuals scoring higher in masculinity will report having higher levels of infidelity than individuals scoring lower in masculinity, (b) and individuals scoring higher in femininity will report having lower levels of infidelity and than individuals scoring lower in femininity. Furthermore, (c) individuals higher in masculinity will report having higher levels of physical only infidelity than emotional infidelity, (d) and individuals higher in

femininity will report having higher levels of emotional only infidelity than physical only infidelity (see Figure 3).

Hypothesis 4. Suppression will partially mediate the effect of gender roles on experiences of infidelity (emotional, physical, combined, and anonymous). More specifically, for both masculinity and femininity, individuals with higher levels of suppression will report more experiences of infidelity across all four types of infidelity (see Figure 3).

In order to test a mediation effect, the direct effect of gender roles on suppression will be tested. It is hypothesized that, (a) individuals scoring higher in masculinity will report using higher levels of suppression than individuals scoring lower in masculinity, (b) and individuals scoring higher in femininity will report using lower levels of suppression and than individuals scoring lower in femininity (see Figure 3).

Additionally, suppression will have a direct effect on experiences of infidelity (emotional, physical, combined, and anonymous) at a statistically significant level. More specifically, (c) individuals higher in suppression will report having higher levels of infidelity across all four types of infidelity than individuals lower in suppression (see Figures 3).

Exploratory analyses. Given the complex nature of infidelity and lack of research on how individuals conceptualize it, qualitative analyses using grounded theory will examine individuals' definitions and experiences of infidelity to provide a clearer understanding of this construct.
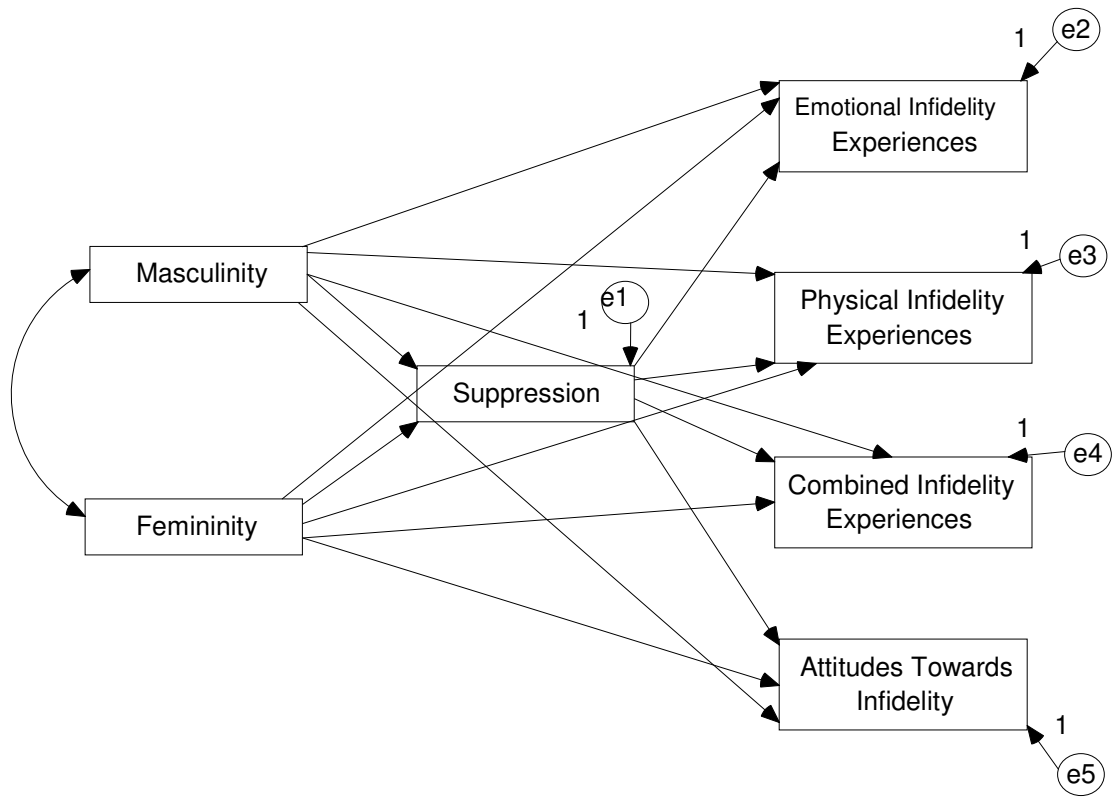
Figure 3. Conceptual gender model

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CHAPTER IV

Quantitative Results

The sample consisted of 388 adult participants with a mean age of 22-years-old (SD = 4.65, range 18-51 years old). Males comprised 19.3% (N = 75) of the sample, while females comprised 80.7% (N = 313) of the sample. Of the sample, 4.4% (N = 17) were currently married, 51.3% (N = 199) were currently in a committed relationship, 42.8% were currently single (N = 166), and 1.3% (N = 5) were divorced. Among participants in a committed relationship, 14.0% (N = 28) were currently living together and 86% (N = 169) were not cohabitating. Among individuals in a relationship, the average length of relationship was 14.3 months (SD = 39.80, range less than a month to 27 years), and 5.7% (N = 22) were in an open relationship. The sample was predominantly heterosexual (94.8%, N = 368).

Participants selected all applicable ethnicities, and examination of the responses indicated that 71.1% self-described as Caucasian (N = 278), 15.2% (N = 59) self-described as Asian American, 10.6% (N = 41) self-described as Hispanic or Latino/a, 1.3% (N = 5) self-described as Native Hawaiian, 1.0% (N = 4) self-described as Eastern Indian, .8% (N= 3) self-described as African American, and 2.1% (N = 8) self-described as "other." The educational attainment of participants was used as indicator of socio-economic status. The educational attainment of the sample was as follows: 1.0% (N = 4) doctorate or professional degree, 1.8% (N = 7) masters degree, 14.9% (N = 58)

bachelor's degree, 5.2% (*N* = 20) associate degrees or junior college, 76.3% (*N* = 296) high school degree, and .8% (*N* = 3) "other."

Descriptive Statistics for Measures

Table 1 depicts the mean scores and standard deviations for predictor variables (i.e., attachment styles, gender roles, and emotion regulation strategies). Table 2 depicts the mean scores and standard deviations for outcome variables (i.e., experiences of infidelity and attitudes towards infidelity). Given that 91.8% (*N* = 356) of the participants who specified their attitudes towards infidelity answered "3" or lower on a scale of 1 to 7, indicating more negative attitudes towards infidelity, the variance for these outcomes was insufficient for analysis and this variable was dropped from the analyses of both models.

Infidelity Outcomes According to Sociodemographic Characteristics

Sex and recruitment source were tested as possible confounding influences on experiences of infidelity. As noted above, the sample was primarily female (80.7%, *N* = 313) and primarily recruited through the Educational Psychology subject pool (78.9%, *N* = 306). To examine the possible confounding influence of recruitment source, we performed a series of analyses that examined Educational Psychology subject pool participants versus non-Educational Psychology subject pool participants for all variables. The associations between potential covariates and study variables were tested through linear regression *t*-tests for independent samples.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for the Attachment Styles, Emotion Regulation Strategies, and Gender Roles

Measure:	N	Mean	SD	Range
Predictor Variables				
RSQ (Secure)	388	3.27	.61	1.80-5.00
RSQ (Preoccupied)	388	2.98	.70	1.25-5.00
RSQ (Fearful)	388	2.78	.84	1.00-5.00
RSQ (Dismissing)	388	3.11	.63	1.00-4.40
ERQ (Reappraisal)	388	28.26	6.40	6.00-42.00
ERQ (Suppression)	388	12.57	5.02	4.00-26.00
PAQ (Masculinity)	388	19.22	4.77	4.00-31.00
PAQ (Femininity)	388	23.40	4.43	0.00-32.00

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Infidelity Outcomes

Measure:	N	Mean	SD	Range
Outcome Variables				
EOI (Emotional)	388	2.73	3.17	0 – 20
EOI (Physical)	388	2.30	3.64	0 – 25
EOI (Combined)	388	.98	1.84	0 – 15
EOI (Anonymous)	388	.98	1.50	0 – 5
Attitudes Towards Infidelity	388	1.78	.85	1 – 7

The analysis examining sex as a possible covariate showed that men reported higher levels of secure attachment ($M = 3.413$, $SD = .64$) than women ($M = 3.24$, $SD = .60$), $t(386) = 2.275$, $p < .05$, higher levels of suppression ($M = 13.99$, $SD = .4.95$) than women ($M = 12.23$, $SD = 5.00$), $t(386) = 2.75$, $p < .05$, higher levels of masculinity ($M = 21.80$, $SD = 4.41$) than women ($M = 18.61$, $SD = 4.66$), $t(386) = 5.37$, $p < .05$, lower levels of femininity ($M = 21.74$, $SD = 5.15$) than woman ($M = 24.80$, $SD = 4.16$), $t(386) = -3.67$, $p < .05$, more experiences of emotional infidelity ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 4.40$) than woman ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 2.72$), $t(386) = 2.96$, $p < .05$, more experiences of physical infidelity ($M = 5.12$, $SD = 5.41$) than woman ($M = 1.62$, $SD = 2.67$), $t(386) = 5.45$, $p < .05$, and more experiences of anonymous infidelity ($M = 2.87$, $SD = 1.70$) than woman

(M = .53, SD = 1.03), t (386) = 11.54, p < .05. There were no other significant

correlations between sex and infidelity outcomes, all p > .05.

Participants from the Educational Psychology subject pool reported higher levels

of secure attachment (M = 3.32, SD = .57) than non-Educational Psychology subject pool

participants (M = 3.09, SD = .72), t (386) = 2.60, p < .05, and fewer experiences of

anonymous infidelity (M = .91, SD = 1.48) than non-Educational Psychology subject

pool participants (M = .1.27, SD = .1.56), t (386) = -1.95, p = .05. There were no other

significant correlations between recruitment source and infidelity outcomes, all p > .05.

The Effects of Attachment Styles and Emotion Regulation Strategies on Experiences of

Infidelity

A path analysis was conducted to test the model proposed in Figures 2 within all

four attachment styles (i.e., secure, preoccupied, fearful, and dismissing). The analysis

was conducted using Mplus (version 3.11) structural equation modeling software.

Parameters were estimated using maximum likelihood estimation. Correlation matrices

and standard deviations were calculated using SPSS (version 14.0) and subsequently used

as input for the Mplus program. To control for sex differences and recruitment

differences, the effects of sex and recruitment source were partialled out of the

correlation matrix. Table 3 presents the partial correlation matrix of secure attachment,

preoccupied attachment, fearful attachment, dismissing attachment, reappraisal,

suppression, emotional only infidelity, physical only infidelity, combined infidelity, and

anonymous infidelity. Outcome error terms were correlated, since it was accurately

anticipated that the different forms of infidelity would significantly covary, as shown in Table 3.

Overall model fit was assessed with the chi-square goodness of fit index (x^2), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Current standards recommend that small, non-significant x^2 values, CFI and TLI values greater than .90, and RMSEA and SRMR values less than .05 suggest adequate model fit (Kline, 2005). Additionally, the 90% confidence interval accompanying the RMSEA value provides additional fit information, with the entire confidence interval below .05 indicating maximum fit, the entire confidence interval straddling .05 indicating moderate fit, and the entire confidence interval above .05 indicating poor fit (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). The current model demonstrated good fit, as indicated by the model fit indices found in Table 4. Additionally, Table 5 presents R^2 values for the current model. Suppression was found to have the most amount of variance accounted for by the model (20.9%), while physical infidelity was found to have the least amount of variance accounted for by the model (2.4%).

Table 6 presents both direct and indirect path coefficients (standardized partial regression weights) for the hypothesized model. Significant path coefficients are presented for the final attachment model in Figure 4. Each indirect effect in Table 6 is the product of the two direct effects in the path leading from either secure attachment,

Table 3

Partial Correlations Among Study Variables for the Attachment Model

Study Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Secure	1.00									
2. Preoccupied	-.28***	1.00								
3. Fearful	-.50***	.27***	1.00							
4. Dismissing	-.21***	-.18***	.41***	1.00						
5. Reappraisal	.14**	-.01	-.04	.05	1.00					
6. Suppression	-.34***	.02	.41***	.26***	.00	1.00				
7. Emotional	-.12*	.13*	.15**	.13**	.01	.13**	1.00			
8. Physical	-.05	.07	.10	.10***	.00	-.02	.44***	1.00		
9. Combined	-.09	.14**	.16**	.06	-.03	.08	.34***	.41***	1.00	
10. Anonymous	-.02	.12*	.05	.07	.01	-.04	.25***	.25***	.16**	1.00

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 4

Model Fit Indices

	X^2	Df	*P*	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	90% C.I.		SRMR
Model	0.645	1	0.4221	1.000	1.044	0.000	0.000	0.124	0.005

Table 5

R-Squared Values for Dependent Variables

	Reappraisal	Suppression	Emotional	Physical	Combined	Anonymous
R-Square	0.03	0.21	0.05	0.02	0.04	0.03

Table 6

Attachment Model Direct and Indirect Effects on Experiences of Infidelity

	Direct	Indirect	Total
Emotional Infidelity			
Secure	-0.02	-0.01	-0.03
Preoccupied	0.13*	-0.01	0.12
Fearful	0.03	0.02	0.05
Dismissing	0.12*	0.01	0.13
Reappraisal	0.01		0.01
Suppression	0.07		0.07
Physical Infidelity			
Secure	-0.00	0.02	0.02
Preoccupied	0.07	0.01	0.08
Fearful	0.06	-0.02	0.04
Dismissing	0.11	-0.01	0.10
Reappraisal	-0.00		-0.00

	Direct	Indirect	Total
Suppression	-0.08		-0.08
Combined Infidelity			
Secure	0.03	-0.01	0.02
Preoccupied	0.12*	-0.01	0.11
Fearful	0.11	0.01	0.12
Dismissing	0.03	-0.00	0.03
Reappraisal	-0.03		-0.03
Suppression	0.03		0.03
Anonymous Infidelity			
Secure	0.02	0.01	0.03
Preoccupied	0.15**	0.01	0.16
Fearful	-0.00	-0.01	-0.01
Dismissing	0.12*	-0.01	0.11
Reappraisal	-0.00		-0.00
Suppression	-1.06		-1.06

*p < .05. **p < .01

Secure

.17**   .13*   Emotional Infidelity
                       Experiences
-.28***   -.20***
                Reappraisal   .42***
-.50***   Preoccupied
                              .97   .98   .31***
                       .12*
                                      Physical Infidelity
-.21***   .27***   Experiences
                                                    .39***
            -.11*
-.18***   Fearful   .96
                                      Combined Infidelity
            .31***   Experiences   .23***
            Suppression
.41***   .11*   .23***
                              .15**
                .79   .14**
            .12*   Anonymous Infidelity
Dismissing   Experiences

.95
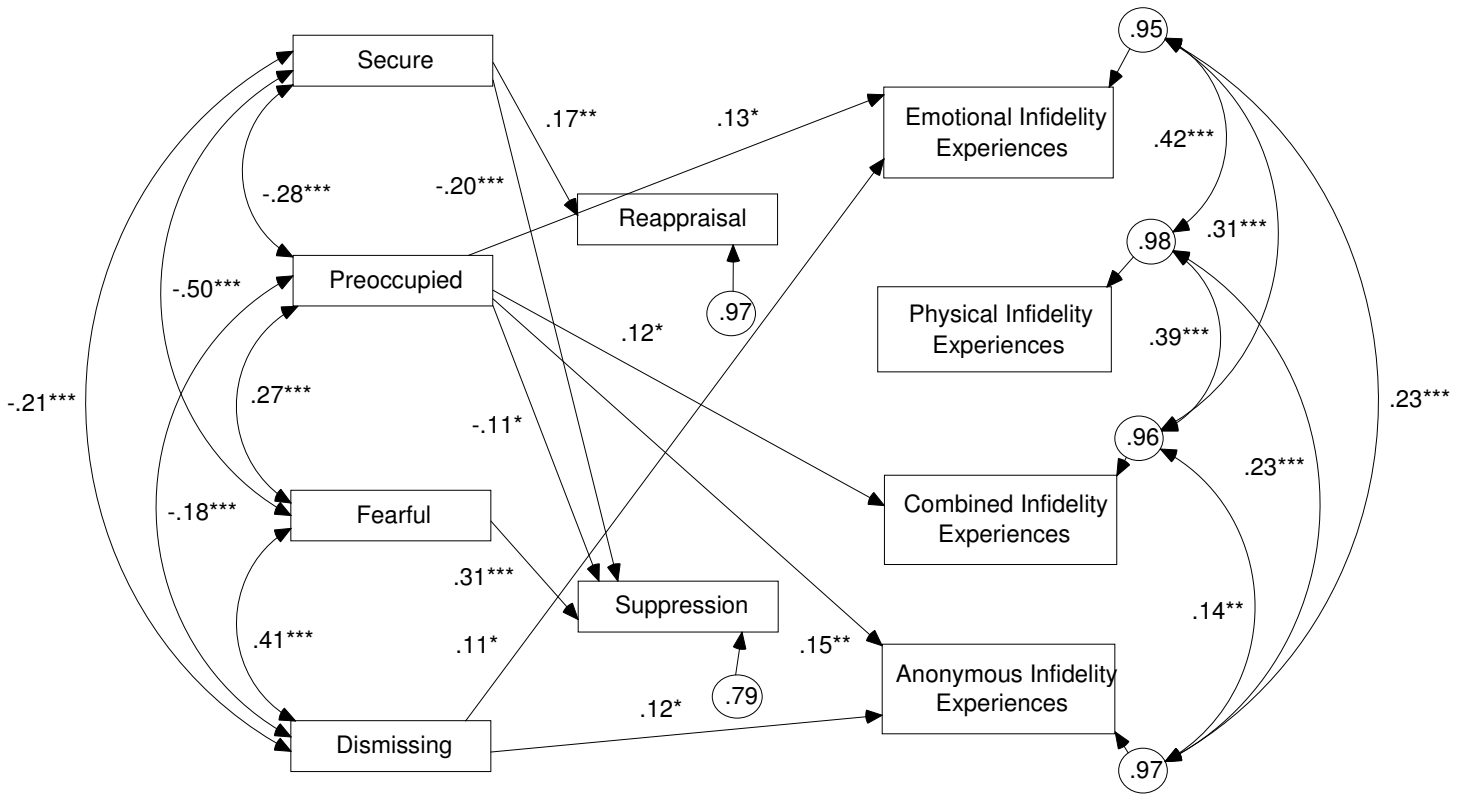
Figure 4. Final attachment model

p < .05. **p* < .01 *** *p* < .001

preoccupied attachment, fearful attachment, or dismissing attachment, through either

reappraisal or suppression, to each infidelity outcome (see Figure 4). None of the

hypothesized indirect effects predicted a significant amount of variance in the emotional

infidelity experiences, physical infidelity experiences, combined infidelity experiences,

or anonymous infidelity experiences, as shown in Table 6. Additionally, none of the

hypothesized direct effects between emotion regulation strategies (i.e., reappraisal and

suppression) and infidelity outcomes were significant. Consistently, none of the indirect effects or the direct emotion regulation effects predicted any of the infidelity outcomes, all $p > .05$.

Attachment and Infidelity Results

Preoccupied attachment had a fairly consistent positive direct effect on experiences of infidelity. Preoccupied attachment was found to have the strongest relationship with anonymous infidelity experiences ($\beta = .15$), followed by emotional infidelity experiences ($\beta = .13$) and combined infidelity experiences ($\beta = .12$). Dismissing attachment was found to have a significant positive direct effect on both emotional infidelity experiences and anonymous infidelity experiences. As shown in Figure 6, the effects of dismissing attachment on these types of infidelity experiences are only marginally different from one another. Holding all else constant, anonymous infidelity experiences an increase of .12 *SD* for every one standard deviation increase of dismissing attachment, and emotional infidelity experiences increase .11 *SD* for every standard one deviation increase of dismissing attachment. Additionally, a stronger relationship was found between preoccupied attachment and both emotional infidelity and anonymous infidelity ($\beta = .13$, $\beta = .15$, respectively), than between dismissing attachment and emotional infidelity and anonymous infidelity ($\beta = .11$, $\beta = .12$, respectively). There were no significant effects between both secure and preoccupied attachment styles and all four types of infidelity.

Attachment and Emotion Regulation Results

Secure attachment was found to have a significant positive direct effect on reappraisal and a significant negative direct effect on suppression. The effect sizes were moderate to large. Holding all else constant, a one standard deviation increase in secure attachment was associated with an increase in reappraisal of .17 *SD*. Similarly, a one standard deviation increase in secure attachment was associated with a decrease in suppression of .20 *SD*.

Preoccupied attachment was found to have a significant negative direct effect on suppression. Holding all else constant, suppression decreases .11 *SD* for every one standard deviation increase of preoccupied attachment. In addition, fearful attachment was found to have a significant positive direct effect on suppression. Suppression increases .31 *SD* for every one standard deviation increase of fearful attachment. Thus, it appears that attachment styles had a fairly consistent direct effect on the use of suppression. Suppression was found to have the strongest effect among fearfully attached individuals (β = .31), followed by individuals higher in secure attachment (β = -.20) and individuals higher in preoccupied attachment (β = -.11). There were no significant effects between dismissing attachment and either type of emotion regulation strategies.

The Effects of Gender Roles and Emotion Regulation Strategies on Experiences of

Infidelity

A path analysis was conducted to test the model proposed in Figure 3 within both gender roles (i.e., masculinity and femininity). The analysis was conducted using Mplus

(version 3.11) structural equation modeling software. Parameters were estimated using maximum likelihood estimation. Correlation matrices and standard deviations were calculated using SPSS (version 14.0) and subsequently used as input for the Mplus program. To control for sex differences and recruitment differences, the effects of sex and recruitment source were partialled out of the correlation matrix. Table 7 presents the partial correlation matrix of masculinity, femininity, suppression, emotional only infidelity, physical only infidelity, combined infidelity, and anonymous infidelity. Outcome error terms were correlated, since it was accurately anticipated that the different forms of infidelity would significantly covary, as shown in Table 7.

The hypothesized path model is one that is just identified (i.e., the number of equations is equal to the number of unknowns). Consequently, no overall measure could be computed for the fit of the model as it fits the data perfectly. Therefore, we evaluated fit using the standard goodness-of-fit statistical tests associated with multiple regression (i.e., tests of the standardized partial regression weights and of the multiple correlations). Table 8 shows the R^2 values associated with the dependent variables. Suppression was found to have the most amount of variance accounted for by the model (9.4%), while anonymous infidelity was found to have the least amount of variance accounted for by the model (0.6%).

Table 7

Partial Correlations Among Variables for the Gender Role Model

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Study variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.Suppression	1.00						
2. Masculinity	-.15**	1.00					
3. Femininity	-.27***	-.02	1.00				
4. Emotional	.13*	-.05	-.09	1.00			
5. Physical	-.02	.10*	-.08	.44***	1.00		
6. Combined	-.08	-.04	-.13**	.34***	.41***	1.00	
7. Anonymous	-.04	-.06	-.00	.25***	.25***	.16**	1.00

*p < .05. **p < .01 *** p < .001*

Table 8

R-Squared Values for Dependent Variables

	Suppression	Emotional	Physical	Combined	Anonymous
R-Square	0.09	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01

Table 9 presents both direct and indirect path coefficients (standardized partial regression weights) for the hypothesized model. Significant path coefficients are presented for the final gender role model in Figure 5. Each indirect effect in Table 7 is

Table 9

Gender Role Model Direct and Indirect Effects on Experiences of Infidelity

	Direct	Indirect	Total
Emotional Infidelity			
Masculinity	-.03	-.02	-.05
Femininity	-.06	-.03	-.09
Suppression	.11*		
Physical Infidelity			
Masculinity	.10	.01	.11
Femininity	-.09	.01	-.08
Suppression	-.03		
Combined Infidelity			
Masculinity	-.03	-.01	-.04
Femininity	-.12*	-.01	-.13
Suppression	.04		
Anonymous Infidelity			
Masculinity	-.07	.01	-.08
Femininity	-.02	.01	-.01
Suppression	-.05		

*$p < .05$.
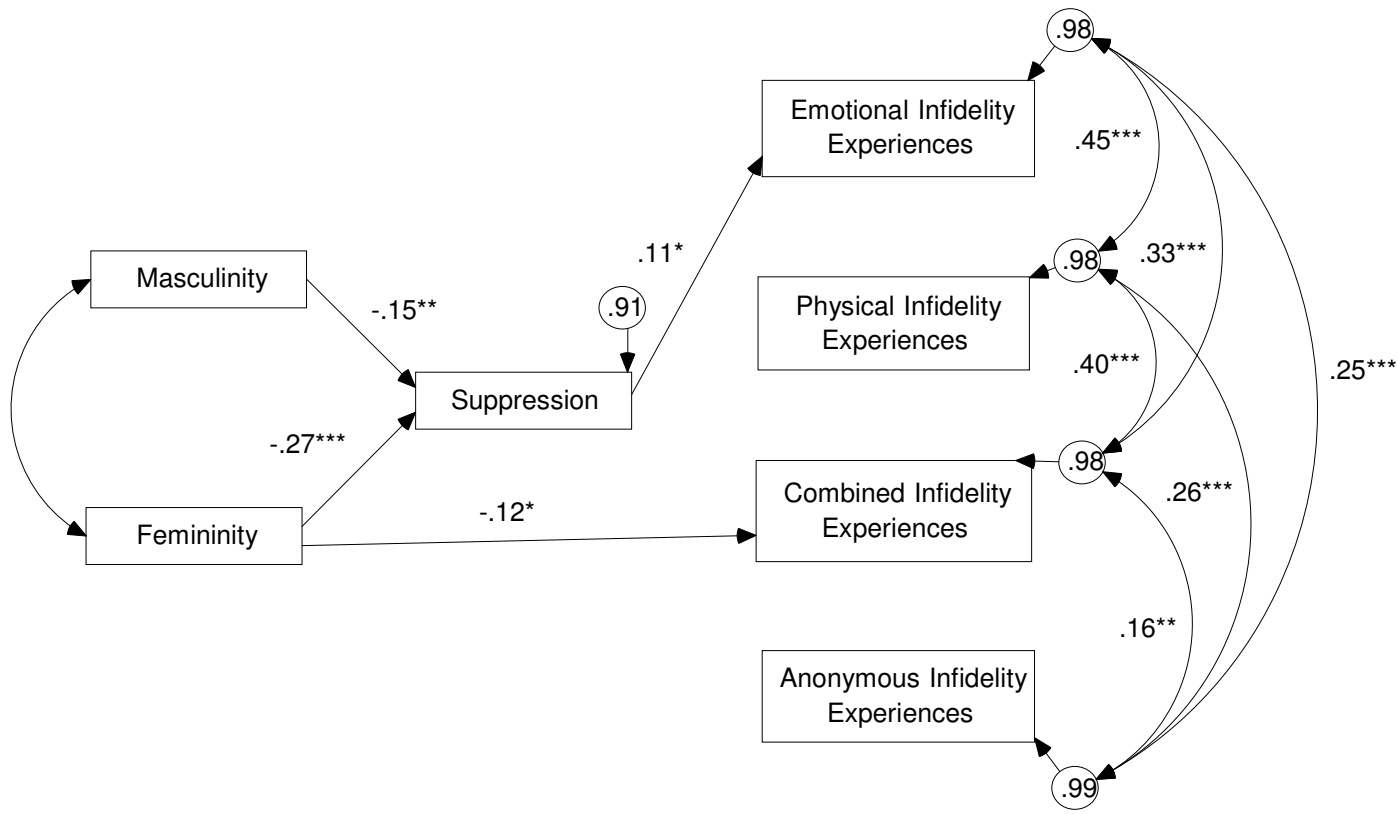
Figure 5. Final gender role model

*p < .05. **p < .01 *** p < .001

the product of the two direct effects in the path leading from either masculinity or

femininity, through suppression, to each infidelity outcome (see Figure 5). None of the

hypothesized indirect effects predicted a significant amount of variance in the emotional

infidelity experiences, physical infidelity experiences, combined infidelity experiences,

or anonymous infidelity experiences, as shown in Table 7. Consistently, none of the

indirect effects predicted any of the infidelity outcomes, all *p* > .05.

Gender Roles and Infidelity Results

Femininity was found to have a significant negative direct effect on combined infidelity experiences. Holding all else constant, combined infidelity experiences decrease .12 *SD* for every one standard deviation increase of femininity.

Gender Roles and Suppression Results

Femininity was found to have a significant negative direct effect on the use of suppression, with suppression decreasing .27 *SD* for every one standard deviation increase of femininity. Masculinity was found to have a significant negative direct effect on the use of suppression. The effect size was moderate. A one standard deviation increase in masculinity was associated with a decrease in suppression of .15 *SD*. Additionally, a stronger relationship was found between femininity and suppression than between masculinity and suppression (β = -.27, β = .15, respectively).

Suppression and Infidelity Results

Suppression was found to have a significant positive direct effect on emotional infidelity experiences. Holding all else constant, emotional infidelity experiences increase .11 *SD* for ever one standard deviation increase of suppression.

CHAPTER V

Qualitative Results

A second part of the study was to examine individuals' definitions of each type of infidelity, as well as their experiences with each type of infidelity. The purpose of this analysis was to gain a clearer understanding of this complex construct which to date has not been adequately studied or defined. As part of the qualitative analysis, grounded theory techniques (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) were chosen to examine 25 males' and 25 females' randomly chosen open-ended responses. Currently, grounded theory is the most widely used qualitative approach in the social sciences (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Grounded theory is a procedure for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A key aspect of grounded theory is that the theory emerges from the data, rather than imposing a preconceived theory onto the data.

Participants' descriptions were first separated into the four different forms of infidelity. Thus all 50 responses to emotional infidelity were analyzed at once, followed by physical infidelity, combined infidelity, and anonymous infidelity. The analysis of the descriptions was carried out in two stages, open-coding and axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Open-coding consists of defining concepts and categorizing the data. Participants' descriptions were initially scanned for salient words and initial concepts were labeled. A line-by-line microanalysis was then conducted in which we listed

numerous associations related to salient words, and a range of possible meanings for the words. This resulted in a more in-depth and dense understanding of each concept, and often generated additional concepts. Concepts were then grouped into categories which were developed in terms of their properties and dimensions. Thus, characteristics or properties of each category were generated and divided into dimensions that lie along a continuum. For example, one of the categories for emotional infidelity is "feelings and non-physical behaviors towards a non-partner." One of the properties of this category was "depth or degree of emotional involvement," which ranged from "an attraction or crush to love."

During the second stage of coding, axial coding, we linked the categories. This begins by answering questions such as who, what, where, when, how, why or how come, and with what results (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For each type of infidelity, we used a scheme or paradigm to organize emerging connections. The paradigm consisted of linking the codes by making connections between the *conditions* present that influence occurrences of infidelity, *actions/interactions* or the process of infidelity, and the *consequences* or outcomes of the actions (i.e., experiences of infidelity). Memos were used throughout the analysis to keep track of any thoughts or questions that arose so that these could be incorporated into our attempts to link the different categories. Additionally, throughout the course of analysis, we made efforts to make frequent comparisons within and between the different accounts of each type of infidelity.

Conceptualization of Infidelity

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The qualitative analysis begins with a description of some of the basic details about the participants' definitions of and experiences with infidelity. Throughout the descriptions provided, individuals emphasized that infidelity occurs within a *committed* relationship. Thus, a defining aspect of infidelity that emerged was that it involves crossing boundaries within a committed relationship that are *subjective* and defined by the couple. This is in line with Drigotas' & Barta's (2001) definition of infidelity being a partner's violation of norms pertaining to the level of emotional or physical intimacy in which people engaged in outside the relationship. However, Drigotas and Barta are unclear as to whether these are norms set by society or by the couple. Spring's (1996) definition of an affair as being "a breech of trust, dependent upon what an individual agreed to or what they thought they agreed" indicates that infidelity involves crossing boundaries set by the couple. This is in-line with how participants conceptualized infidelity. For example, in defining physical infidelity, one man indicates that it is the couple who defines what constitutes infidelity. He stated, "Physical infidelity is relative to the relationship. Some may be okay with kissing other people, others may not. Relationships need to set the boundaries what constitutes infidelity."

Additionally, another defining aspect of infidelity is that the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors are directed towards someone you are potentially romantically or physically interested in. Thus, while sharing intimate feelings or

going on dinner dates with a friend may look similar to what many individuals

defined as different forms of infidelity, the differentiating factor is how an

individual perceives the outside member of the couple. For example, one woman

described infidelity as, "viewing them as more than 'friends' while you are in a

committed relationship with another individual." This is in line with research

differentiating extramarital emotional involvement from friendship due to the

level of emotional intimacy, secrecy, and sexual chemistry involved in the former

(Glass & Wright, 1997).

Conceptualization of Emotional Infidelity

Feelings for a non-partner, romantic thoughts for a non-partner, and specific non-

physical behaviors emerged as common descriptors of emotional infidelity. These

feelings and behaviors appear to lie on a continuum of degree or depth of involvement or

feelings, ranging from an attraction or crush to "longing feelings and thoughts" or deep

love. For example, one man described it as "crushes and flirting." Other behaviors that

are included in the process of engaging in emotional infidelity are acts such as going to

dinner or on dates with a non-partner, spending time with a non-partner, rearranging your

schedule so you can spend time with a non-partner, talking on the phone with a non-

partner, and disclosing feelings or intimate information to a non-partner. Individuals

described the feelings as "a close connection," "liking," "love," "romantic thoughts or

feelings," "wanting to be with someone else," and "a close emotional relationship."

While individuals uniformly described emotional infidelity as a non-physical act, the

subjective nature of not only emotional infidelity, but infidelity in general, is seen in one man's description of it as "engaging in kissing and anything beyond kissing with someone else while in a committed relationship." Thus, while there is a general consensus that emotional infidelity involves feelings, thoughts, and non-physical behaviors for a non-partner that range on a continuum of degree or depth of involvement, the subjective nature of infidelity makes it hard to provide one definitive definition of infidelity.

In addition to the degree or depth of emotional involvement, various other properties pertain to the definition of emotional infidelity. The frequency with which one engages in thoughts, feelings, and behaviors for *different* non-partners throughout their relationship varies. For example, one man stated that this has occurred "quite a few times in our two years together," whereas, one woman stated that this has only occurred once for her while in her past relationship. She stated:

> It was a relationship that I now define as a 'comfort' relationship, and it took several attempts of breaking up (all initiated by me) before we actually stayed apart. Eventually I started talking to other boys and developed a pretty big crush on one.

Additionally, the frequency with which one engages in thoughts, feelings, and behaviors for *the same* non-partner can vary as well, from "constant flirting with a coworker" or "consuming time thinking about another person" to occasionally thinking, feeling, or

acting on your feelings with a non-partner. Individuals can also vary in how they view

the non-partner whom they have feelings for, ranging from a random, non-specific

individual to someone known and specific, such as the coworker noted above.

In addition to the specific behaviors, thoughts, and feelings that define emotional

infidelity, there are numerous other dimensions that provide a clearer understanding of

this construct. For example, participants indicated that emotional infidelity involves a

level of control which individuals described on different continuums. Thus, emotional

infidelity can range from being an unconscious act to a conscious act, or from being an

accidental act to a deliberate or planned act. Individuals described emotional infidelity as

"making an effort to be emotionally closer to someone," "wanting to be in a close

relationship with someone other than the person you are committed to," "letting yourself

become romantically/emotionally involved with someone that is not your partner," and

"actively seek to have emotional infidelity…mentally pursuing someone other than you

partner."

The subjective nature of emotional infidelity is again evident in the differing

accounts of whether merely *having* feelings and thoughts for a non-partner is a violation

of the relationship, or whether it is actually *acting* on these feelings and thoughts (i.e.,

calling, talking with, or going on dates with a non-partner) or *wanting* to have these

thoughts and feelings. For example, one woman stated:

Every once in awhile I have crushes on other men. I usually don't go forward with it, but I know that it's there. I feel as though it's emotional infidelity because it's having feelings for someone other than my significant other.

A differing view exemplifying the more unconscious or unplanned forms of emotional infidelity can be seen in one man's account of emotional infidelity. He stated:

Emotional infidelity is almost non-existent. You can't help how you feel or the emotions you experience, despite any social constructs you may have (e.g. a relationship). However, if I'm in a relationship and fall in love with someone else and am no longer interested with the person I am in the relationship with, and still stay with them for whatever reason, then that is emotional infidelity. BUT, if I'm in a relationship and am attracted or like someone else (e.g. crush, interest), then that isn't emotional infidelity. There is no *active* emotion involved. You just *can't help* [italics added] basic feelings.

In describing engaging in emotional infidelity, another man described his tendency to "unknowingly seek some sort of intimate relationship," implying it was an unconscious act on his part.

Another characteristic of emotional infidelity is that there appears to be a level of comparison involved between how the individual feels about the partner compared to the non-partner which seems to imply that it is not *just* having feelings for another person, but having *stronger* feelings for the non-partner than the partner. For example, one woman stated that this could include "liking qualities about someone else *better* than me

or relating *better* to someone else than me." Another woman described this comparison as "being *more* emotionally involved with someone that is not your partner." Similarly, one man stated emotional infidelity is "when you begin to care less about how your committed partner feels, and more about the wants and needs of someone else." This statement suggests that emotional infidelity, and potentially any form of infidelity, involves a gradual shift in how one feels about their partner. In addition to comparing feelings for a partner versus a non-partner, part of the comparison seems to be how individuals rank the partner to the non-partner. For example, one man stated that emotional infidelity is "to aspire to the next best thing," indicating the non-partner is a better catch or somehow ranks higher in the dating pool than his current partner.

Emotional infidelity also involves a level of exclusivity in terms of how one feels about their partner, meaning individuals can either have similarly strong feelings for their partner while engaging in emotional infidelity (non-exclusive), or they are unable to maintain the same level of feelings for their partner once they become involved with a non-partner (exclusive). Thus it is the idea that being involved with someone else somehow diminishes or completely extinguishes the feelings one has for their partner. For example, one woman stated that individuals "either lose the feelings they had for their partner or gain feelings for someone else" when they engage in emotional infidelity. This suggests that you can not feel the same way about both partners, as does the comment made by one woman that emotional infidelity is "complete devotion to your partner." Thus having feelings for someone else would detract from that level of

devotion. Another woman described her inability to be non-exclusive by stating, "The day I knew my emotions now belong to this new man, which happened only the first day we ever hung out, I broke things off with the old one."

Emotional infidelity also involves a degree of dishonesty and secretiveness. This could range from blatantly lying to simply failing to tell your partner about your feelings, thoughts, and behaviors for another person. This dichotomy can be seen in the following two statements. Whereas one man stated, "I used to take other girls out to dinner and talk on the phone sometimes and tell my girlfriend I couldn't talk 'cause I was busy or something," one woman stated, "You have feelings for them (another guy/girl) and your significant other does not know. The descriptions of "not being emotionally honest about a situation" and "not being true to your emotions, hiding them from yourself" both imply emotional infidelity may involve being dishonest both to one's partner and to oneself.

Conditions Conducive to Emotional Infidelity

Participants accounts of both how they define emotional infidelity and their experiences of emotional infidelity indicate that there are certain conditions that increase one's likelihood of engaging in emotional infidelity. A salient theme that emerged was that individuals are more likely to cheat if they feel their needs are not being met in the relationship or that there are certain deficits in their relationship. While relationship quality is a commonly cited predictor of infidelity, there has been mixed findings on this construct (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Glass & Wright, 1977, 1992; Treas & Giesen,

2000). Relationship deficits not only serve as a condition for emotional infidelity, but are also part of the process and one of the consequences of actually engaging in emotional infidelity in that it is tied to individuals' attempts to rationalize their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

For example, individuals commonly attempted to rationalize, normalize, or avoid blame for having engaged in infidelity. It could be deducted that if this kind of behavior is going on prior to engaging in emotional infidelity, individuals may feel less guilty or more comfortable about actually engaging in the act. This attempt to rationalize emotional infidelity by citing deficits or unfilled needs in their relation can be seen over and over again. For example, one woman stated:

> When I was still with my ex, *who had cheated on me* [italics added] (physically, however I'm not sure if it was emotionally) *a few months prior* [italics added], I met a new man, with whom I eventually let in as a close friend, and then we proceeded to fall in love with each other quickly.

Another man described how he became emotionally involved with another woman after his girlfriend began to pull away emotionally from him. He stated:

> I broke up with my long term girlfriend of over 7 years this May because she had been having a committed relationship with another man for over 6 months. Before I found out, I knew something was wrong from the way she seemed very cold and distant to me. Unable to resolve the problem, I found myself turning to my female roommate (1 of 3) for emotional support. Although I am no longer in

a relationship, I now find myself with an emotional attachment to my roommate

similar to one I would feel for a partner.

A second man described how he begins to question his relationship when his needs are

not being met. He stated:

> In my experience, there are girls that take my interest for one reason or another,
> usually because *they show me some type of attention that may be lacking with that
> of the committed partner* [italics added]. This interest sparks curiosity on my part.
> Questions like, 'Do I really want to be with my girlfriend?' 'Is she the one for me?'
> 'How long will this last?' 'Why doesn't she treat me like that?' 'Is this new girl
> better than what I already have?' and other similar questions.

> This last description highlights another property of emotional infidelity, desires or

wish fulfillment, that seem to be both a part of the process of engaging in emotional

infidelity, and a potential condition increasing one's likelihood of engaging in emotional

infidelity. This is seen in his fantasizing about what it could potentially be like to be with

another woman. Another man stated that he "will entertain the idea of what it would be

like to be with certain other people." Similarly, one woman stated:

> I have been in a relationship with my boyfriend since my senior year of high
> school. When I started college, I really started thinking about what it would be
> like to date other people because I was exposed to so many new people.

Another aspect of wishful thinking and fantasizing about others that may contribute to emotional infidelity is the need to be validated by others. For example, one man stated:

> Well, I think emotional infidelity is when you reach to others to fulfill something besides the physical aspects of a relationship. In my relationship experience I have done this several times through flirting with random girls, or *wondered how I would rather be with someone else* [italics added]. I don't think emotional infidelity is all that bad or means there are things missing in a relationship, sometimes *people just like knowing they have options* [italics added].

This implies this man wants to feel as if he is desired by others and is still attractive to others.

The description above describing one woman's experience with fantasizing about others when she arrived at college highlights another condition that may increase one's likelihood of engaging in emotional infidelity, having opportunities available to actually engage in emotional infidelity. This is in line with the literature which commonly cites opportunities such as having potential partners, financial independence, and having a job which requires traveling, as factors conducive to infidelity (Atkins et al., 2001; Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Treas & Giesen, 2000.) One woman described how she maintains contact with her ex-boyfriends, which results in her thinking about them and their relationship more often. Similarly, one man stated that he felt uncomfortable in his relationship because his girlfriend was still "very close" with her ex-boyfriend. Thus,

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maintaining contact with an ex-partner could create an opportunity for engaging in emotional infidelity.

Individuals' attitude towards infidelity is another condition that emerged as a possible contributor to emotional infidelity, in line with prior research citing individuals' attitude toward extramarital sex as the most significant predictor of extramarital sexual intention (Buunk & Bakker, 1995). As noted throughout the above descriptions of emotional infidelity, individuals vary in how they define emotional infidelity and whether they actually think it exists. For example, we have seen that individuals question whether it is simply natural to have feelings and thoughts for others (i.e., "You can't help how you feel or the emotions you experience".) Additionally, individuals question whether emotional infidelity is having thoughts and feelings for others, or actually acting on those thoughts (i.e., "I don't really see it as a huge deal unless a person acts on their feelings physically"). Individuals also engage in social comparisons in an attempt to both normalize and rationalize their attitudes toward infidelity. For example, one woman stated, "I think that in the long run emotional infidelity is ok...because I think a lot of my really good friends are emotionally like this." Thus having beliefs that emotional infidelity does not exist, that it must require acting on it, or that it is a normal event would likely allow for individuals to feel more comfortable or less guilty about engaging in emotional infidelity.

Consequences of Emotional Infidelity

Individuals cited numerous negative outcomes that arise from engaging in emotional infidelity. In line with research findings citing infidelity as one of the most damaging issues for a relationship (Whisman et al., 1997), emotional infidelity was described as being damaging to the relationship itself. For example, numerous individuals cited emotional infidelity as resulting in the end of a relationship. A second consequence is that individuals seem to feel badly about themselves afterwards or to experience a sense of cognitive dissonance. For example, one woman described how she was "destructive" to her relationship. In describing engaging in emotional infidelity, one man described his tendency to "unknowingly seek some sort of intimate relationship" as a "defect of my character," implying he sees himself negatively for this behavior. Another man blamed himself afterwards. Additionally, individuals described how a partner's emotional infidelity made them uncomfortable or was hurtful to them in some way.

Conceptualization of Physical Infidelity

Physical infidelity was most commonly described by participants as sexual physical behaviors with a non-partner. These behaviors appear to lie on a continuum of degree or depth of physical contact, ranging from no physical contact to sexual intercourse. While individuals typically described physical infidelity on a continuum of "kissing to sex," the full continuum appears to include behaviors such as flirting, internet sex, "grinding dancing," going on dates, holding hands, caressing, cuddling, or fondling, excessive touching, kissing, "seeing them (i.e., the non-partner) naked in a sexual

context," mutual masturbation, oral sex, and vaginal sex. Additionally, as noted above, individuals varied in whether they believed physical infidelity was actually physical, or could include behaviors that did not involve bodily contact. For example, both flirting and going on dates appear to be seen as both emotional and physical forms of infidelity, although it is unclear whether flirting behaviors and dates actually include any form of bodily contact. Additionally, while internet sex is cited as physical infidelity, other participants cited this as a form of anonymous infidelity, which will be explored further in later sections of this paper.

On the other end of the spectrum, many individuals defined physical infidelity as either engaging in everything but sex [i.e., "having physical relationships (not sexual) with another guy/girl"], or *only* including sexual activity. Thus, as with emotional infidelity, there is a lot of variability and subjectivity in how individuals perceive physical infidelity, making it more difficult to provide one clear definition of physical infidelity.

While many would define physical infidelity as being strictly physical in nature, some participants included emotions as part of their conceptualization of physical infidelity. For example, one woman described physical infidelity as "infidelity that involves no emotional attachment…purely physical." On the other hand, one male described physical infidelity as "when you do something physical which involves *feelings* [italics added] or pleasure with someone other than your partner." His definition brings up the question of what type of feelings individuals are experiencing during physical

infidelity, which were described as being both sexual in nature (i.e., lust, desire, etc.) to more emotional in nature (i.e., "loving contact"). In addition, physical infidelity may develop out of feelings individuals had for the non-partner and eventually acted on. Thus, physical infidelity may be a gradual process that arises out of emotional infidelity, as noted by one woman's statement that physical infidelity is "having feelings for another person and eventually leading to physical contact."

In addition to the depth of physical infidelity, another property of physical infidelity is the frequency with which individuals engage in these behaviors with different partners throughout their relationships. For example, one man stated that he had sex with someone else besides his partner once, whereas one man stated that he has always cheated. He described this as a character defect, which implies that engaging in infidelity is potentially driven by individuals' personalities. This is in line with Buss and Shackelford's 1997 findings highlighting specific personality characteristics that were found to be more strongly linked to the possibility of engaging in infidelity. His statement is also in line with the common English saying, "Once a cheater, always a cheater." However, there are no definitive findings on whether infidelity is specifically tied to certain personality traits or characteristics. In addition, individuals appear to compare the different types of infidelity, as noted by one man's statement that he "had more run-ins with physical infidelity than I have had with emotional infidelity."

In addition to the specific behaviors and potentially feelings that define physical infidelity, physical infidelity appears to share numerous dimensions with emotional

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infidelity. For example, participants indicated that like emotional infidelity, physical

infidelity involves a level of control, ranging from being an unconscious act to a

conscious act, or from being an accidental act to a deliberate or planned act. Unlike with

emotional infidelity, individuals indicated that physical infidelity could be both conscious

and unplanned. For example, one woman provided a good description of this, stating:

> Physical infidelity is the act of being physically close with someone other than
>
> your partner. It may not be with someone you really like. It could happen at a
>
> party with a stranger when the two of you are drunk. That's still infidelity.

So while you are conscious of the act, the fact that it occurred at a party while you are

drinking suggests it was more than likely an unplanned event.

Individuals described physical infidelity as "actually acting on your feelings for

another" and as having the "intent" of cheating. In general, individuals tended to believe

that they had control over whether or not they engaged in physical infidelity, as noted by

one man's comment about having only danced with other women. He stated, "I'm sure I

could have gone further, but I still have a strong conscience." Similarly, individuals

indicated a level of awareness about whether or not they should be engaging in physical

infidelity, as noted by one man's statement about physical infidelity. He stated, "In my

experience, this was the hardest because you know you are doing something wrong."

Physical infidelity, as with emotional infidelity, also involves a level of

exclusivity in terms of how one feels about their partner, with the idea being whether or

not being involved with someone else detracts from the initial relationship. For example, one woman described physical infidelity as "having physical, extramarital activities while *maintaining* unwavering love with a committed partner." This indicates that it is possible to be in a non-exclusive relationship in which you have strong feelings for both partners. This is further exemplified by one man's statement that while he has always cheated, he "really can love the person I am cheating on." Additionally, participants also described a degree of dishonesty or secretiveness involved in physical infidelity. In describing having been physically unfaithful to his girlfriend, one man stated that he "never told my partner because I was afraid of her reaction."

Another property of physical infidelity that emerged was that of crossing a boundary, or as one man put it, "I crossed that line with a roommate of mine." As noted earlier, these boundaries appear to be subjectively defined based on either societal standards or on standards the couple has set for their relationship. For example, one man described physical infidelity as "anything you would NOT do if your partner could see you," suggesting that infidelity will look differently for all couples. Similarly, another man described physical infidelity as "sexual contact, kissing, intercourse, anything that you wouldn't want your partner to do with someone else." This is further supported by one woman's comment in which she stated:

> I am a jealous personality, so I could define almost any affection that my guy
> shows towards another girl as physical infidelity. More specifically, hand holding

and kissing is already physical infidelity, and of course anything more serious than that, i.e., sex/oral sex, is also infidelity.

Conditions Conducive to Physical Infidelity

Similar to emotional infidelity, several conditions emerged that appear to potentially increase one's likelihood of engaging in physical infidelity. Need fulfillment and relationship deficits again emerged as a salient condition. As noted earlier, prior studies have found mixed results in terms of the link between relationship quality or satisfaction (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Glass & Wright, 1977, 1992; Treas & Giesen, 2000.) One man indicated that his experience with physical infidelity occurred due to the state in which his relationship was in. His statement that he "slept with someone else during a bad time in a committed relationship" exemplifies this.

Interestingly, engaging in physical infidelity appears to be used at times as a method of ending a committed relationship. For example, one man stated, "I have been in such a situation last year, when out of wanting to end a relationship, had sex with someone other than my partner…it worked." Similarly, another man stated, "I have only once been physical with someone other than my partner and I had already made the decision to end the relationship before that." The statement made by one man that he "did it because my partner and I were in a long distance relationship" also exemplifies individuals' attempts to rationalize their behaviors or avoid blame in the situation, which may both serve as a condition for engaging in physical infidelity and as a consequence to having done it in order to alleviate feelings of guilty they may be experiencing.

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In line with the literature (Atkins et al., 2001; Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Treas & Giesen, 2000), having more opportunities to engage in physical infidelity is also a contributing factor to whether or not this occurs. As noted in the conceptualization of physical infidelity and the above statement, physical infidelity may be more likely to occur at parties, when alcohol is involved, or if your partner is physically unavailable, as in a long distance relationship or if one travels often. Additionally, one's attitude towards infidelity appears to be a contributing factor to physical infidelity. In general, participants tended to view physical infidelity in a negative manner and to see it as something that is morally wrong. However, the subjectivity in defining physical infidelity should be kept in mind. For example, physical infidelity was described as the "worst kind" of infidelity by one woman. However, she qualified this as stating that she could "understand like a one night fling, but an on going physical relationship is not acceptable."

Interestingly, individuals' prior experiences with infidelity emerged as potential conditions that may make it more or less difficult to engage in physical infidelity. For example, one man described how he appears to have learned from his experience of being unfaithful to his girlfriend, which suggests that he is thus less likely to engage in infidelity in the future. He stated:

> I had sex with someone else instead of my partner once. She found out from a
> friend who was friends with the girl I did that with. She was real pissed but we
> worked things out. I never did it again though.

It is unclear whether having been cheated on in the past by a partner potentially changes one's views on infidelity or their likelihood of actually cheating. For example, whereas one man stated that he had never been cheated on before but that he had engaged in physical infidelity, one woman's statement indicates her experience of having been cheated on has shaped how she views infidelity. She stated, "I have not experienced any physical infidelity because I want to remain faithful to my boyfriend. I have been cheated on before and could not do that to someone I love." This statement indicates that her experience of having been cheated on was painful and negative, and has consequently prohibited her from treating someone she cares about in a similar manner.

Consequences of Physical Infidelity

Individuals described both negative and positive consequences to physical infidelity. For example, individuals whose partners had been physically unfaithful to them cited feelings of jealousy and hurt. Individuals who had engaged in physical infidelity described feeling negatively about themselves afterwards. This is exemplified by one man's description of his cheating as being "an act of cowardice that haunts me still." This statement suggests that the negative consequences to physical infidelity are not easily overcome, but have a lasting effect on individuals. This is further supported by one man's statement about his experience of physical infidelity. He stated, "For the most part I like to follow the rules, so doing this was very difficult for me, and even afterward, it was hard to deal with what I had done." However, physical infidelity was associated with the positive outcome of providing physical feelings of pleasure.

Conceptualization of Combined Infidelity

Throughout participants' accounts of combined infidelity, the defining characteristic appears to be that it is seen as a second relationship, in addition to their committed relationship, that includes both emotional and physical involvement. As with both emotional and physical infidelity, individuals define the degree of involvement within combined infidelity in a subjective manner, varying between a less intense relationship, such as a crush, to a more intense relationship, such as a deep involvement, love, or an affair. For example, one man described combined infidelity as, "having a side relationship basically where the physical acts are coupled with an emotional connection in the same manner as a relationship." Similarly, another man stated, "I consider this as basically having another partner. The combination of physical and emotional feelings is one of the defining characteristics of a relationship." Combined infidelity was described as including behaviors such as spending time with the non-partner, talking and disclosing feelings to the non-partner, and "baring your soul to another as well as sexual encounters." Additionally, as with other forms of infidelity, the frequency with which one engages in combined infidelity with *different* non-partners throughout their relationship varies, as does the duration of an affair with the *same* non-partner.

Combined infidelity shares numerous other dimensions with both emotional and physical infidelity, such as the degree of control individuals perceive having over the affair and whether or not they believe it is possible to have a similar sort of relationship with both partners (i.e., exclusivity). This includes the degree to which individuals

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compare their relationship with their partner to their non-partner. One woman suggests

engaging in combined infidelity is a conscious choice or deliberate act that can be

controlled. She stated, "I believe I only committed 'emotional infidelity' for a day…I

broke things off before physical infidelity could occur." Similarly, one man stated:

> When combining emotional and physical infidelity, you are basically *setting up*
>
> [italics added] the new relationship to *coincide or take the place of* [italics added]
>
> your already committed one. It's not just thoughts and it's not just messing
>
> around. It's having a relationship with someone new.

However, another woman described combined infidelity as more of an accidental process

that you have little control over. She stated, "It's when infatuation and lust become a

little too much to control and you lose yourself to the other person."

The above statement about the second relationship coinciding or taking the place

of the original relationship illustrates one of the varying beliefs as to whether or not there

is a level of exclusivity involved in combined infidelity. He is saying that while it is

possible to have feelings for both partners, there is also a likelihood that the new

relationship will replace the original relationship, suggesting that it is not possible to

maintain feelings for both partners. This concept is further demonstrated by one man's

definition of combined infidelity as "having feelings that as such cause you to want to be

with/around that person a lot, *possibly more than* [italics added] the person you're

with…" On the other hand, one man's description suggests you can have feelings for

both partners and maintain a relationship with both. He described combined infidelity as

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"having a similar, if less extensive, emotional/physical relationship with someone with whom you are not involved." This view can be seen even more clearly in a second man's account of combined infidelity. He stated:

> Combined emotional and physical infidelity would be a complete relationship behind someone's back, for example, having two girlfriends or boyfriends at the same time, and trying to keep them a secret from one another. Where you were *deeply involved in both of them, or in love with them both* [italics added].

The above statement also illustrates a key characteristic of all types of infidelity, that of secretiveness or dishonesty. A new and interesting idea emerges from his comment as well. He is suggesting that infidelity includes attempts to hide *both* partners from one another. This is different from any other responses provided, which all indicated that the non-partner was typically aware of the original relationship. Another new concept revolving around secrecy emerged in participants; accounts of combined infidelity as well. One woman described how she maintains close contact with her ex-boyfriends, talking to and text messaging them frequently. However, she stated that this is not cheating because she usually tells her boyfriend about these men and her relationship with them. While this sounds more like individuals' definitions of emotional infidelity, it raises the question whether simply informing a partner about feelings individuals have or behaviors they engage in with non-partners somehow changes whether or not these acts are seen as cheating.

Conditions Conducive to Combined Infidelity

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As with both emotional and physical infidelity, individuals described how in their experiences, combined infidelity often arose out of unfilled needs in their relationship or deficits in their relationship. Within their descriptions of what was lacking in their relationships, it can also be seen that one of the conditions for and consequences of engaging in combined infidelity is an attempt to rationalize their experience and avoid blame. For example, one man described how he began cheating when he started feeling insecure in his relationship. He stated:

> I had one affair like this. The two of us went on dates and had sex on a regular schedule, but I was still involved with another person. I did this because I was afraid of losing what I already had with my partner, yet the new girl couldn't give me the emotional support I had from the old. My old relationship eventually ended after a month into my affair, at which point I started a new relationship with my partner from the affair.

This statement also informs us that affairs have the potential of turning into more permanent relationships. Another man stated that he was unfaithful when he was in a bad relationship in which he no longer "cared about my partner's emotional state." Similarly, another man stated:

> If you are dealing with both emotional and physical infidelity, then you are pretty much not planning on having a true lasting relationship with your current partner much longer. I believe that at this stage, you really find your partner irritating.

Similar to physical infidelity, individuals cited past experiences of infidelity as potential determinants of engaging in future infidelity. As one woman stated:

I've had that done to me twice, which has given me a complex to be completely honest. Therefore, I wouldn't do that to someone else. I believe in being completely honest and devoted to the person you are with.

Not only does having been cheated on in the past potentially affect your likelihood of having an affair, but individuals' own experiences of having engaged in infidelity potentially affect whether or not they cheat. For example, one man suggested that he experienced negative repercussions after cheating and learned from this experience. He stated, "I've done that before and got caught and then never did it again." Additionally, as with other types of infidelity and in line with research findings (Atkins et al., 2001; Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Treas & Giesen, 2000), having more opportunities to engage in infidelity, such as with maintaining contact with an ex-partner, emerged as a potential condition conducive to combined infidelity.

Consequences of Combined Infidelity

In line with the literature (Whisman et al., 1997) citing infidelity as detrimental to one's relationship, participants described how they see engaging in combined infidelity as an indication that the relationship is over or as an experience that results in the end of the relationship. As one woman stated, "I would feel that there was no point in being with my boyfriend if either of us had combined emotional and physical infidelity." Similarly,

as noted earlier in describing deficits in one's relationship, one woman described how combined infidelity is an indication of the relationship ending. She stated:

> If you are dealing with both emotional and physical infidelity, then you are pretty much not planning on having a true lasting relationship with your current partner much longer. I believe that at this stage, you really find your partner irritating.

However, as with physical infidelity, combined infidelity is described by some as being a pleasurable experience.

Conceptualization of Anonymous Infidelity

Anonymous infidelity emerged as a more complex form of infidelity in that individuals had a harder time defining it, had a wider range of views on it, or had not even heard of the concept. This is likely because the authors made up this term and, although the name is somewhat intuitive, it is not a commonly used term. Individuals most commonly described anonymous infidelity as falling into one of two realms: either experiences involving specific *solitary* behaviors resulting in self-pleasure or behaviors with unattainable individuals (i.e., going to strip clubs or internet sex), or experiences involving sexual physical behaviors with an *anonymous* or *random* individual.

Participants described several different acts within the first realm of solitary behaviors and behaviors with unattainable individuals. The solitary nature of it was emphasized by many. For example, they described watching or viewing pornographic magazines and videos, as well as viewing pornographic material on the internet. One man stated:

Anonymous infidelity is that of watching porn, looking at sleezy magazines, strip

clubs, etc. It's mainly for self enjoyment, and doesn't involve your committed

partner. I don't see anything wrong with this type of infidelity as long as it does

not become a problem within the relationship.

Another man stated:

I guess that's just giving pleasure to yourself by looking at people in certain ways

and having thoughts in your mind etc...I went to titty bars all the time while I was

in a relationship or I would look at other girls all the time too.

One woman described these solitary behaviors as "not involving feelings for or

physical encounters with another person." They also described fantasizing and

masturbating about some unknown individual, such as while viewing pornographic

materials. One woman described this as, "getting off to and fantasizing about someone

who is not actually a possibility in the dating world." This raises the question about

whether masturbating to the image of someone you actually know is considered

anonymous infidelity, or is more in line with what others have described as emotional

infidelity. Yarab and Rice Allgeier (1998) found individuals reported that individuals'

fantasies were more likely to be rated as unfaithful if they posed a greater threat to the

relationship. For example, fantasizing about a partner's best friend was considered to

more of a threat than fantasizing about someone famous because the likelihood of the

former occurring was more realistic and thus, threatening. Additionally, this comment

also highlights that while we have attempted to discretely define the different types of infidelity, these are subjective terms which likely have a certain degree of overlap.

In describing behaviors with unattainable individuals, going to strip clubs was commonly cited. While this is not necessarily a solitary behavior since others (i.e., strippers) are involved, the idea is that there is minimal interaction between the individuals. Participants also cited talking on the internet, internet dating, and internet sex as a form of anonymous infidelity involving unattainable individuals. As one woman described it, "through the internet, sex in which neither person knows the others true identity." Similarly, another woman described anonymous infidelity as "talking on the internet with another guy/girl and they have never met you (email, IM, and text messages) and your significant other doesn't know about this." This suggests there is a level of anonymity to these interactions, as well as a degree of secrecy involved in anonymous infidelity, as with the other forms of infidelity.

These solitary behaviors or behaviors with unattainable individuals were reported as ranging in frequency from "not too often" to frequently or daily. As the man noted above, he went to "titty bars" all the time. In relation to viewing pornographic materials, several men stated that they did so often or daily. However, one condition for engaging in such behavior is how an individual's partner views these behaviors. For example, one man stated, "porn, not too much though. My ex was against it."

Within the second realm of infidelity, sexual physical behaviors with an anonymous person, a salient aspect of their definitions was that these behaviors occurred

with an anonymous individual or with random individuals. Participants commonly used the phrase "random hook up" to describe this form of anonymous infidelity. Individuals also described anonymous infidelity as engaging in one night stands, being unfaithful to one's partner without knowing the other person's name, and "kissing someone you don't know and will probably never see again—this can go beyond kissing."

Interestingly, two individuals described anonymous infidelity in a different manner. They conceptualized it as a somewhat unconscious or casual behavior that includes simply noticing someone they view as attractive in their daily interactions. For example, one man described anonymous infidelity as "Just everyday noticing someone other than your partner. This could range from severe cases or sexual thoughts to mere admiration." Similarly, one woman stated, "I define anonymous infidelity as having feelings for another person and flirting with them without even knowing that you are doing it."

<div align="center">Conditions Conducive to Anonymous Infidelity</div>

Participants cited several conditions that potentially alter their likelihood of engaging in anonymous infidelity. In line with the literature (Buunk & Bakker, 1995,) one's attitude toward anonymous infidelity emerged as a potential factor. As noted earlier, individuals had more varied opinions as to whether they believe anonymous infidelity even exists or is a problem. For example, several individuals stated that anonymous infidelity does not exist and that viewing pornographic material does not count as a form of infidelity. One man stated, "I look at porn often, and never once have

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I felt like I was infidelitious by doing so." Another man stated, "Porn isn't infidelity, it's a form of entertainment that exists solely for that purpose. No other attachments are present, so it wouldn't infringe on the relationship." This statement suggests that infidelity must include an attachment to others and affect the relationship in some manner. Similarly, another man stated, "I think looking at porn or going to strip clubs isn't infidelity. I do it, and have no problem if my partner did it. I don't think that it makes someone unfaithful at all."

Interestingly, women typically described their attitudes toward their partners engaging in anonymous infidelity, rather than their own involvement with anonymous infidelity. As noted earlier, individual's partner's attitudes towards different forms of anonymous infidelity also serves as a potential influences as to whether they engage in these behaviors or the frequency with which they do so. One woman stated, "I would be bothered with it if it caused him to not be as happy with me or if he spent a lot of time doing it (looking at porn, strip clubs, etc.)." Another woman stated, "While I wouldn't want a boyfriend to have a serious porn problem where he watches it all the time and wishes that were his life, I am ok with a guy using anonymous involvement every now and then when I'm not able to be around."

In addition to their attitudes towards anonymous infidelity, participants also described other potential conditions for engaging in anonymous infidelity. For example, one man stated that he masturbates if his partner is unavailable or unwilling to have sex when he wants to. Another man described how because he feels "guilty as hell" when he

engages in anonymous infidelity, he has chosen not to. It is unclear however, how he is defining anonymous infidelity. Another man stated that his girlfriend worked at an adult entertainment club and so consequently, he spent a lot of time at these clubs.

<p align="center">*Consequences of Anonymous Infidelity*</p>

As with other forms of infidelity, participants described feeling like anonymous infidelity could potentially be damaging to the relationship. As noted earlier, there was also some indication that anonymous infidelity may result in feelings of guilt. However, individuals also described anonymous infidelity as being a pleasurable experience. One man stated, "Whether it be for masturbation or pure amusement, erotic self pleasure is natural for males and females. In my own experience, I felt it helped blow off some steam if I was stressed and my committed partner was not available or willing to be sexual at a given time, and it helped stamina for sex."

<p align="center">*A Comparison of the Types of Infidelity*</p>

Throughout individuals' accounts of the different forms of infidelity, there was a tendency to compare them and make differentiations between them. For example, participants seemed to see emotional infidelity as a gateway to other forms of infidelity. This is clear in one mans statement about emotional infidelity. He stated, "It is very likely that it will lead into even more." Similarly, several individuals described combined infidelity as a gradual process, beginning with emotional infidelity or feelings for a non-partner and progressing towards the inclusion of sexual behaviors, and eventually resulting in a full affair. Additionally, individuals tended to rank the various

forms of infidelity, with combined infidelity being seen as somehow more serious or worse than other forms of infidelity and anonymous infidelity being seen as a less serious form of infidelity. As one woman stated, "Of course the combination is the worst kind of infidelity, because it has the negative characteristics of both kinds of infidelity, and is harder to make excuses for."

Individuals also talked about how they are able to somehow compartmentalize the different types of infidelity, seeing them as clearly different from one another. This is evident in one woman's description of having not had any experiences with combined infidelity. She stated, "For me, when I was being physically unfaithful, I had little or no feelings for the other person. The person I did have very strong feelings for, I never did anything with him." Therefore, she is saying that she was able to emotionally detach herself from her physical encounter with one man, and physically restrain herself from becoming physically involved with a man she has emotions for. Similarly, one man stated, "It's odd for me, I feel I've committed both, but never both at the same time." Another man stated, "I have always been physically cheating. Never both with the same person while in a relationship."

Additionally, while we are able to identify specific thoughts, feelings, and behaviors with which the different forms of infidelity are comprised of, we were unable to assess where specifically these acts lie on the continuum of degree or depth of involvement. For example, while one individual may see going on a date, kissing, or even sex as a more serious or intense form of infidelity, another individual may see

disclosing intimate feelings and information to a non-partner as a more serious or intense form of infidelity. Based on the literature, one could postulate that men and women may rate the seriousness of different forms of infidelity differently. For example, as noted earlier, men tend to engage in more sexual only forms of infidelity and women engage in more emotional forms of infidelity (Glass & Wright, 1985). Similarly, women are thought to be sexually motivated by love, emotional intimacy, and commitment, while men are thought to be sexually motivated by pleasure and physical attractiveness (DeLamater, 1987; Castañeda & Burns-Glover, 2004).

Thus, men may see their partners' engagement in more physical forms of infidelity (i.e., flirting or going on dates) as a more serious violation of their relationship, and women may see an emotional connection, such as the disclosure of intimate details, as a more serious violation of their relationship. In fact, women more than men have been found to rate emotional involvement with a non-partner as more upsetting than physical involvement with a non-partner (Shakelford & Buss, 1996). Similarly, Roscoe, Cavanaugh, and Kennedy (1988) found that men were more likely to name a sexual encounter with a non-partner as cheating, whereas women were more likely to name acts such as spending time with a non-partner and keeping secrets from a partner as cheating.

CHAPTER VI

Discussion

Previous research has been successful in establishing independent links between attachment and infidelity (based on sexual behaviors and attitudes; Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Cooper et al., 1998; Hazen et al., 1994; Paul et al., 2000; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991), emotion regulation and infidelity (based on relationship satisfaction and intimacy variables; Altman & Taylor, 1973; Butler, et al., 2003; Derlega et al., 1993; Gross & John, 2003; Perlman & Fehr, 1987), and gender roles and infidelity (based on sex; DeLamater, 1987; Leigh et al., 1994; Oliver & Shibley Hyde, 1993; Reiss, 1990). In addition, independent links have been found between attachment and emotion regulation (Bolwby, 1988; Feeney, 1999; Mikulincer et al., 2003; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002) and gender roles and emotion regulation (Jakupcak et al., 2003; Mahalik et al., 2001).

However, no known studies have examined links between attachment, emotion regulation, and infidelity simultaneously. Additionally, no known studies have examined links between gender roles, emotion regulation, and infidelity simultaneously. Therefore, the purpose of our study was to further examine the links between attachment styles, gender roles, emotion regulation strategies, and infidelity among 388 individuals. Additionally, we sought to gain a better understanding of four different types of relationship infidelity. To explore these constructs, a mixed methods approach was utilized. Quantitative information was gathered using self-report questionnaires assessing

a number of variables that have thus far shown both direct and indirect links to infidelity. Additionally, a qualitative analysis based in grounded theory methods was conducted on participants' open-ended responses to provide an in-depth, inside account of how individuals both define and experience infidelity.

Attachment and Infidelity

Prior research has found that anxiously attached individuals engage in higher levels of infidelity than other types of attachment styles (Bogart & Sadava, 2002), and are more likely to have had sex at an earlier age, to have had more lifetime partners, and to have had a lower likelihood of having a current steady partner (Brennan & Shaver; 1995; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). Consistent with these findings, the current study found that individuals higher in preoccupied attachment demonstrated higher levels of anonymous infidelity, emotional infidelity, and combined infidelity experiences. Additionally, the relationship between preoccupied attachment and infidelity was strongest with anonymous infidelity experiences, followed by emotional infidelity experiences and combined infidelity experiences.

However, preoccupied attachment was not predictive of physical infidelity. This is not surprising, given that prior research has found that anxiously attached individuals demonstrate strong dependency and intimacy needs (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994; Hazen & Shaver, 1987). Thus, they may impulsively attempt to meet these needs through engaging in anonymous "hook ups" which they hope progress into an actual relationship, or through fantasizing about or interacting with others on-line. Similarly,

they may attempt to meet these needs through actually developing a level of emotional

intimacy or a deep relationship with someone. However, they would be less likely to get

these needs met through relationships that are physical only and thus would avoid

engaging in physical only forms of infidelity.

As expected, individuals higher in dismissing attachment were found to engage in

higher levels of anonymous infidelity. This is consistent with prior research suggesting

that avoidant individuals are more likely to have sex with a stranger, have engaged in

"hook ups", and are in general more comfortable being physically intimate without being

emotionally intimate (Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Cooper, Shaver, & Collins, 1998;

Feeney, Noller, & Patty, 1993; Miller & Fishkin, 1997; Gentzler & Kerns, 2004; Hazen

& Zeifman, 1994; Hazen, Zeifman, & Middleton, 1994, Levy & Davis, 1988; Paul,

McManus, & Hayes, 2000; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). Surprisingly, dismissing

attachment was not significantly associated with physical only infidelity and showed a

positive relationship with emotional only infidelity. Thus, individuals higher in

dismissing attachment engaged in higher levels of emotional infidelity.

While both emotional and anonymous infidelity showed a stronger effect with

preoccupied attachment than dismissing attachment, the relationship between dismissing

attachment and emotional infidelity is somewhat confusing given these individuals' fear

of intimacy and closeness (Fraley & Shaver, 1998; Hazen & Shaver, 1987; Levy &

Davis, 1988; Shaver & Brennan, 1992, Shaver & Hazen, 1988; Simpson, 1990). It could

be that we are capturing behaviors at the lower end of the spectrum of emotional

infidelity such as flirting and fantasizing about a non-partner, rather than sharing intimate details and falling in love with a non-partner. This is supported in part by the finding that individuals higher in preoccupied attachment showed high levels of both emotional and combined infidelity experiences, while the dismissing attachment style was not significantly associated with combined infidelity. This suggests they may be flirting with or fantasizing about non-partners, but never develop deep feelings for a non-partner that could potentially lead into a combined affair. On the other hand, it could be that they are able to make an emotional connection to others, however, it is less deep and meaningful than it would be for other attachment styles, particularly because the connection is likely to be more of a short-term connection formed out of a need to reinforce their own positive sense of self.

It is important to note, however, that both secure attachment and fearful attachment were unassociated with any of the forms of infidelity that we examined. This is in line with research findings suggesting securely attached individuals hold less permissive sexual beliefs and engage in less permissive sexual behaviors (Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Cooper, Shaver, & Collins, 1998; Hazen, Ziefman, & Middleton, 1994; Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991), and have higher levels of intimacy, trust, relationship satisfaction, and commitment than insecure individuals (Feeney & Noller, 1991; Hazen & Shaver, 1987; Levy & Davis, 1988; Mikulciner & Erev, 1991; Simpson, 1990). However, we may have failed to have found an association between fearful attachment and infidelity because these individuals were either too afraid

to even get into relationships due to their fear of rejection and intimacy (Fraley, Davis, & Shaver, 1998; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994) and were thus not even candidates for engaging in infidelity, or once in a relationship, were too nervous to put the relationship at risk by engaging in infidelity. Thus, their negative view of both themselves and others may keep them from either initially forming relationships, or from seeing others as potential partners while in a relationship.

Attachment and Emotion Regulation

In line with prior research (Bowlby, 1988; Feeney, 1999; Fuendeling, 1998; Kerr, Melley, Travea, & Pole, 2003; Mikulincer et al., 2003; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002), attachment styles showed significant direct effects on emotion regulation styles, particularly the use of suppression. As predicted, individuals higher in secure attachment showed higher levels of reappraisal and lower levels of suppression. This is consistent with literature citing securely attached individuals ability to make positive appraisals and interpretations when in challenging situations (Mikulincer & Florian, 1995), and their tendency for emotional expression (Feeney, 1995; Feeney, 1999; Pistole, 1993). Similarly, individuals who were higher in fearful attachment showed higher levels of suppression. This is in line with research findings showing that avoidantly attached individuals demonstrate high levels of inhibition and emotional control and low levels of expressivity (Feeney, 1995; Feeney, 1998; Gross & John, 2003; Kerr et al., 2003; Kotler, Buzwell, Romeo, & Bowland, 1994; Mikulincer et al., 1993).

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As predicted, individuals higher in preoccupied attachment showed lower levels of suppression. This finding provides a clearer picture on how these individuals regulate their emotions. Prior research has found mixed results, finding that anxiously attached individuals both inhibited their emotions (Collins, 1996; Feeney, 1995; Feeney, 1999; Kerr et al., 2003) and used emotion-focused or expressive coping strategies (Mikulincer, Florian, & Weller, 1993). The former was presumably done in an effort to avoid upsetting the relationship and putting it at risk, while the latter was presumably done in an effort to increase intimacy through self-disclosure (Berg & Derlega, 1987). Thus, it appears that their desire for intimacy and positive view of others enables them to express their feelings, potentially overriding their fear of rejection and tendency to suppress their emotions. Additionally, in comparing the effects of suppression on attachment styles, suppression was found to have the strongest effect among individuals higher in fearful attachment, followed by individuals higher in secure attachment and individuals higher in preoccupied attachment.

It is important to note, however, that there were no significant effects between dismissing attachment and either type of emotion regulation strategies. Based on research suggesting that dismissing individuals are able to deactivate the actual *experience* of emotion (Bartholomew, 1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), it may be that these individuals are engaging in the unconscious act of repression, rather than the more conscious act of suppression. In other words, they may not even be consciously

aware of some of the feelings they are experiencing, and thus report low levels of suppression.

Gender Roles and Infidelity

Feminine characteristics such as communion, expressiveness, and nurturance are suggestive of higher relationship quality and thus a potentially decreased likelihood of engaging in infidelity (Bem, 1974; Chodrow, 1978; Mongrain & Zuroff, 1995; Mosher & Danoff-Berg, 2005; Steiner-Pappalardo & Gurung, 2002). Additionally, women are found to engage in sex in committed, love-based, exclusive relationships (Oliver & Hyde, 1993), thus potentially decreasing their likelihood of engaging in infidelity. In line with the literature and as predicted, individuals higher in femininity were found to have lower levels of combined infidelity experiences. It is important to note, however, that femininity was not associated with any other forms of infidelity and masculinity was not associated with any forms of infidelity.

One reason why gender roles generally failed to significantly predict experiences of infidelity could be due to the measure used to assess gender roles. Although the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ; Spence & Helmreich, 1978) is one of the most commonly used gender role measures (Spence & Buckner, 1995), over the years it has been widely criticized (Hoffman, 2001). As noted earlier, researchers have begun to move away form assessing gender roles as a global construct and move towards examining the multiple dimensions that make up one's gender role identity and the degree to which individuals conform to different gender role norms (Mahalik et al., 2003;

Mahalik et al., 2005). Both men and women today appear to be less satisfied with

traditional gender role restrictions (Hoffman, 2001). As societies' views on gender roles

have gradually shifted and individuals are conforming less to societies' previous

definitions of masculinity and femininity, a more appropriate measure gender role

measure may have been one that assesses individuals' conformity to different dimensions

of gender role norms. In other words, men and women today appear to be gradually

moving away from the boundaries placed by them by traditional gender role norms,

conforming to certain norms but not others and to varying degrees.

Gender Roles and Suppression

The finding that individuals higher in femininity engage in lower levels of

suppression adds to research suggesting that women suppress less than men (Gross &

John, 2003) and that feminine individuals attempt to enhance communication during

conflict (Basow & Rubenfeld, 2003). Contrary to our prediction, individuals higher in

masculinity showed lower levels of suppression as well. While a stronger relationship

was found between femininity and suppression than between masculinity and

suppression, we had hypothesized that higher masculinity would be linked to higher

levels of suppression. This could be due to one potential limitation of the emotion

regulation measure used, the ERQ. The ERQ assesses reappraisal and suppression of

both positive and negative emotions that are described very generally (Gross & John,

2003). It may be that masculine individuals are more likely to suppress emotions that go

against the masculine stereotype, such as sadness or fear. If this is the case, a measure

that offers greater specification of these emotional states might be more appropriate. Another possible reason as to why individuals higher in masculinity were found to actually use less suppression could be related to the above noted changes in how individuals are defining their gender identity and the way in which gender roles was assessed.

Emotion Regulation: Infidelity and Mediator Effects

As predicted, individuals higher in suppression were found to engage in higher levels of emotional infidelity experiences. This is in line with prior research findings showing that self-disclosure increases intimacy (Berg & Derlega, 1987) and that suppression decreases the experiences of positive emotions (Gross & John, 2003; Gross & Levenson, 1997), both of which could affect relationship satisfaction and the likelihood of engaging in infidelity. However, neither suppression or reappraisal were significantly associated with any other forms of infidelity. This in part explains our lack of support for emotion regulation strategies partially mediating the relationship between attachment styles and infidelity outcomes, and gender roles and infidelity outcomes.

Baron and Kenny (1986) proposed four steps necessary to establish a mediation effect. First, the initial variable (i.e., attachment styles or gender roles) must be found to correlate with the outcome variable (i.e., experiences of infidelity). Second, the initial variable must correlate with the mediation variable (i.e., suppression or reappraisal). Next, the mediator variable must be found to correlate with the outcome variable. Finally, if the path between the mediator (i.e., suppression or reappraisal) and the

outcome variable (i.e., experiences of infidelity) is significant after controlling for the direct effect of the initial variable (i.e., attachment styles or gender roles) on the outcome variable (i.e., experiences of infidelity), but the path between the initial variable and the outcome variable is still significant, then a partial mediation has been found. Given that the only significant finding between a mediator variable and an outcome variable was our finding between suppression and emotional infidelity, we could not adequately support predictions for emotion regulation strategies functioning as a partial mediator.

A possible explanation for the lack of support between emotion regulation strategies and infidelity is the above noted potential limitation of the ERQ assessing reappraisal and suppression of both positive and negative emotions that are described very generally (Gross & John, 2003). A second limitation of the ERQ that may have potentially affected our findings is that the measure asks participants how they regulate their emotions in general. It may be that participants regulate their emotions differently in relation to specific individuals or relationships they have with others. Therefore, a measure that assesses how individuals regulate their emotions within their romantic relationships might be more appropriate for capturing the effect of emotion regulation on experiences of infidelity. Additionally, a cohort effect is another possible explanation for the lack of support for our mediational findings, as well as several other non-significant findings. This will be discussed elsewhere in this paper.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions provided important, and much needed, descriptive information about how individuals both define and experience different forms of infidelity. In general, infidelity was described as crossing subjectively defined boundaries within a committed relationship with someone whom you are romantically interested in or physically attracted to. Emotional infidelity was described as involving feelings, thoughts, and non-physical behaviors directed towards a non-partner, whereas physical infidelity only included sexual physical behaviors with a non-partner. In describing combined infidelity, the defining characteristic appeared to be that it is seen as a second relationship, in addition to the original committed relationship, that includes both emotional and physical involvement. Anonymous infidelity was both harder to define and to even view as a form of infidelity for some participants. Individuals described anonymous infidelity as falling into one of two realms: either experiences involving specific *solitary* behaviors resulting in self-pleasure or behaviors with unattainable individuals (i.e., going to strip clubs or internet sex), or experiences involving sexual physical behaviors with an *anonymous* or *random* individual.

Numerous dimensions emerged within the four types of infidelity, many of which overlapped between the different forms of infidelity. Individuals reported that the degree to which individuals were involved in the different forms of infidelity ranged on a continuum from being more or less involved. However, it is still unclear how the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors are ranked along the continuum of involvement. Participants also reported different frequencies of

involvement for both different non-partners throughout the relationship, and for one specific non-partner. In addition, participants questioned whether individuals have a level of control over whether they engage in infidelity, whether they engage in comparisons about how they feel about the two partners, and whether it is possible to have feelings for both partners at the same time without detracting from the initial relationship. Finally, individuals conceptualized infidelity as involving a certain level of secrecy and dishonesty.

Participants cited numerous conditions that were conducive to potentially engaging in infidelity. For example, feeling as if one's needs are not being met by the relationship or as if there are deficits in the relationship emerged most often in individuals' accounts of infidelity. Along these lines, participants often used these unmet needs and relationship deficits as rationalizations as to why they had engaged in infidelity. Another commonly cited factor potentially increasing the likelihood of engaging in infidelity was one's attitude towards infidelity. Similarly, individuals' partners' attitudes toward infidelity were also potential factors increasing the likelihood of infidelity. In addition, desires, wish fulfillment, and a need to be validated by others emerged as a potential factor increasing the likelihood of infidelity. This was the idea that individuals began to fantasize about what it would be like with others, often out of a desire to feel attractive to others. Additionally, both having more opportunities to engage in

infidelity and having had past experiences with infidelity emerged as potential

factors influencing whether individuals engaged in infidelity.

Experiences with infidelity were found to have both negative and positive

consequences. Participants commonly described experiences of infidelity as

being damaging to the relationship itself and as involving feelings of hurt and

jealousy. In addition, individuals described feeling negatively about themselves

or experiencing a sense of cognitive dissonance after having engaged in infidelity.

Finally, several individuals described experiences of infidelity as being physically

pleasurable.

<p align="center">*Anonymous Infidelity*</p>

The current findings concerning anonymous infidelity are interesting and deserve

additional comment. This was an exploratory construct created by the researchers in an

effort to capture the growing forms of anonymous or solitary involvement in sexual

activities that may or may not be considered as acts of infidelity, but are thought to be

potentially problematic to the relationship.   As noted, individuals struggled with whether

or not they viewed many of the examples provided for anonymous infidelity as actual

forms of infidelity. While we had initially conceptualized this term as including activities

such as viewing porn, going to strip clubs, calling 1-900 numbers, and interacting with

prostitutes, the participants came up with a second form of anonymous infidelity: random

hook ups. Individuals described anonymous infidelity as falling into one of two realms:

either experiences involving specific *solitary* behaviors resulting in self-pleasure or

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behaviors with unattainable individuals, or experiences involving sexual physical behaviors with an *anonymous* or *random* individual (i.e., random hook ups). Among the four types of infidelity, anonymous infidelity emerged as having the strongest relationship with both preoccupied attachment ($\beta = .15$) and dismissing attachment ($\beta = .12$). Additionally, 36.9% of individuals reported having engaged in anonymous infidelity at least once over the past five years. Therefore, it appears to be a fairly common construct.

Anonymous infidelity and emotional infidelity often appeared to overlap, with individuals describing both as fantasizing about others and talking to others on the internet. Other individuals described anonymous infidelity as merely noticing attractive individuals in your everyday interactions. Similarly, individuals' attitudes about emotional infidelity indicated that many felt that having feelings for or fantasizing about another person was natural and in some ways unavoidable. This implies that these behaviors may not necessarily be considered cheating or harmful to the relationship, but rather, *acting* on these behaviors may be when the relationship becomes threatened. One could argue that several of these behaviors may in fact actually be more adaptive ways of coping within the relationship. For example, being able to innocently fantasize about what it would be like to be with someone else or catching an attractive individuals' eye on the street may provide enough wish fulfillment or validation from others to prevent individuals from crossing more serious boundaries, such as developing a physical or emotional relationship with someone else. Future research should further explore the

protective nature of some of these behaviors in maintaining relationship satisfaction, as well as how individuals view these behaviors.

Another interesting finding that emerged was the concept of a "random hook up". Participants frequently used this phrase to describe anonymous infidelity. While this is a commonly used term among young adults today, it is unclear what individuals specifically mean by this term. Wikipedia (http://www.wikipedia.org/) defines a hook up as "a slang term for courtship, especially short duration or causal sex." A few researchers have recently begun to examine this construct. Paul, McManus, and Hayes (2000, p. 76) define hook ups as "a sexual encounter between two people who are brief acquaintances or strangers, usually lasting only one night without the expectation of developing a relationship." Similarly, the hook up has been described as a slang term for sexual behaviors occurring outside the traditional dating context, and is usually of a short duration, nonexclusive, and shallow with the intent being a one time sexual encounter (Manning, Giordano, & Longmore, 2006). The common frequency with which this term was used by current participants suggests it is a widely know construct among young adults today and deserves further attention among researchers.

The Current Culture of College Dating

Research suggests that youth today, particularly college students, are changing the way they define dating and relationships. Casual sex is more common (Cates, 1991) and hook ups have become a salient aspect of the college culture (Rodberg, 1999). These may be spontaneous occurrences, or experiences that are planned but the individual with

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whom the hook up will occur with is unknown (i.e., going out with the intent of hooking up with *someone*; Rodberg, 1999). Among a sample of 555 college undergraduates, Paul and colleagues (2000) found that one third of participants had had sexual intercourse with a stranger or brief acquaintance. Similarly, Paul and Hayes (2002) found that 70% of their college sample reported having hooked up at least once during their college careers, and that they defined a hook up in a consistent manner, suggesting a shared cultural meaning. Additionally, sexual activity with multiple or serial partners as well as extra-relational sexual experiences is increasingly characteristic of college campuses (Chng & Moore, 1994; Sherwin & Corbett, 1985).

The above findings suggest that among young adults today, traditional dating relationships are more commonly being replaced by, or at least rivaled by, casual, short-term, and often random physical encounters. While the current study initially proposed recruiting a varied sample ideally consisting of older, married or committed adults, complications with the institutional review board prevented us from recruiting through on-line sources capable of reaching such a population. Thus, as noted earlier, the current sample consisted primarily of college students age 18 to 51, with the average participant age being 22-years-old. Additionally, only 4.4% of the sample was married. Consequently, based on the current culture of dating relationships among college students, one reason the current study may have failed to find support for several infidelity outcomes may be due to cohort effects.

For example, given the normalcy with which college students view hooking up or casual sexual encounters, they may not be defining infidelity in the same manner as past generations, which in turn may have skewed rates of infidelity. Additionally, the lack of relationship permanence among this population may have prevented them from even having the opportunity to engage in infidelity. Within the current sample, combined infidelity was the least frequently form of infidelity engaged in, with 34.3% of individuals citing at least one occurrence of this over the past five years. This supports the above view that individuals may not even be involved in relationships long enough or serious enough to actually have an affair with someone else.

On the other hand, viewing potential partners in a more casual manner, rather than as potential mates, may actually inflate rates of infidelity because crossing boundaries within the relationship may be easier for this population than for married or committed individuals who have more at stake within their relationship. Thus, it was difficult to obtain an accurate assessment of infidelity experiences due to the population with which we sampled. Future research would benefit from examining an older, married population in which the construct of infidelity has more serious implications and in which there has been enough time in the relationship for experiences of infidelity to have actually occurred.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The limitations of this study should be recognized. As noted above, the sample consisted predominantly of college students who were either single or in a short-term

committed relationship. Thus, care should be taken in generalizing the findings of our study to couples who are older and in more committed relationships. Additionally, based on the current college culture of casual dating, our sample likely prevented us from obtaining accurate rates of infidelity and our findings were likely affected by cohort effects.

Given the nature of this research, determinations of causality cannot be made. Observations were made at a single point in time, obscuring understanding of how changes in relationships and life experiences come to shape the course of infidelity. It would be interesting to assess the bidirectional nature of infidelity and attachment styles. Based on the assumption that attachment styles are formed earlier on, we posited that attachment styles influence infidelity. However, it is more likely that these are mutually confirming constructs, such that attachment styles influence occurrences of infidelity, and experiences of infidelity (whether it's cheating or having been cheated on) potentially reshape how individuals see themselves and others, and thus their attachment styles.

Additionally, although it was hoped that the online format would facilitate greater honesty on the part of participants, it may also have contributed to hasty and incomplete responding (i.e., missing data). In using self-report measures, the researcher assumes the participants' responses are honest and accurate, yet they may respond in a biased or distorted manner. Some participants may have attempted to respond according to their perceptions of the researcher's expectations, while others may have erred toward the most socially desirable responses. In addition, while our study made improvements in

assessing infidelity by assessing actual experiences of infidelity rather than hypothetical or predicted future occurrences of infidelity, it is likely that many participants inaccurately recalled their rates of infidelity over the past five years. Thus, longitudinal research is needed in order to assess the directional nature of these constructs, as well as to allow time to assess actual experiences of infidelity as they arise, rather than hypothetical, predicted, or recalled instances of infidelity.

It has only been over the past two decades that researchers have begun to examine both emotional and physical forms of infidelity. When assessing rates of infidelity over the past five years, the current study found that 72.9% of participants reported engaging in emotional infidelity at least once, 47.8 % of participants reported engaging in physical infidelity at least once, 36.9% of individuals reported engaging in anonymous infidelity at least once, and 34.3% reported engaging in combined infidelity at least once. This highlights the need for future researchers to differentiate between the different forms of infidelity in order to capture an accurate and complete picture of cheating behaviors.

Additionally, our qualitative analysis demonstrated that there was considerable variation in how individuals both defined infidelity and the depth of involvement they assigned to each type. The current researchers debated at length over how to define each type of infidelity, as well as what items should be included in a measure of infidelity. Our original measure included items such as the frequency of involvement, the degree or depth of involvement, the length of time involved, whether partners were aware of their partners' infidelity, and the level of acceptance from their partners of their infidelity.

Final infidelity scores were obtained by multiplying rates of infidelity by depth of infidelity. Thus engaging in an affair once may have resulted in a similar rate of infidelity as flirting on several different occasions. Thus, another limitation to our study may have been in how we measured infidelity.

Given the highly subjective nature of infidelity, future research would benefit from further qualitative analyses assessing how individuals rate different feelings and behaviors in terms of the severity of the degree of involvement so that these behaviors may be more accurately placed along a continuum. Additionally, future researchers should explore the measurement issue pertaining to infidelity, ideally creating a clear, standardized measure of infidelity that adequately captures the numerous properties of infidelity.

Conclusions and Clinical Implications

The current study built upon previous research by examining direct links between attachment styles, emotion regulation strategies, and infidelity, and direct links between gender roles, emotion regulation strategies, and infidelity. Additionally, this is the first study to our knowledge to assess the construct of anonymous infidelity. A strength of the current study was the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods. This provided a more in-depth understanding of not only potential predictors of infidelity, but how college students define and experience different forms of infidelity. Interestingly, experiences of infidelity were only significantly linked to preoccupied attachment and dismissing attachment and neither attachment styles or gender roles showed links to

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physical infidelity. Attachment styles and gender roles were consistently linked to the use of suppression. Additionally, we found no evidence to suggest that emotion regulation strategies mediate the effects of attachment styles or gender roles on experiences of infidelity. Finally, men reported significantly higher levels of emotional, physical, and anonymous infidelity than women.

These findings provide additional information regarding the etiology of infidelity. Our qualitative analysis provides a clearer understanding of several properties of infidelity, such as how it is defined and experienced, conditions that are potentially conducive to experiences of infidelity, and the consequences of infidelity. Given the high rates of infidelity and the changing culture of dating, therapists are likely to face both couples dealing with infidelity within their relationship, and individuals struggling with either their own affair or their partner's. Infidelity is both detrimental to the relationship itself (Whisman et al, 1997), and to the emotional health of those involved (Beach, Jouriles, & O'Leary, 1985). Thus, a clearer understanding of what factors may influence experiences of infidelity provides therapists with the opportunity to make assessments about both present and future problems individuals may have within their romantic relationships.

The current study demonstrated that certain types of attachment styles and the use of emotional suppression are both potential factors that may increase the likelihood of engaging in infidelity. Additionally, higher levels of femininity may potentially guard against experiences of infidelity. Thus, therapists may want to talk with couples and

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individuals about potential risks and benefits of sharing their feelings with their partners. Additionally, these findings add to the plethora of research findings on the benefits of developing a more secure attachment within the therapy relationship, with the goal being that this experience both transfers to other relationships within clients' lives and helps to reshape their view of themselves.

In addition, the current research pointed out just how difficult it is to define infidelity. For example, the qualitative research findings indicated that participants see infidelity as a subjective act that should be defined by the couple. Consequently, therapists need to keep in mind that their views of infidelity may differ from their clients' views and that it would be beneficial to gain a clearer understanding of how the client or the couple is defining infidelity. Additionally, clients may benefit from therapists helping them to figure out when and how to initiate a dialogue about their views on infidelity with their partner. Clients would also likely benefit from gaining knowledge about potential factors that may increase the likelihood of infidelity within their relationships. In this manner, therapists and clients' working together may then be able to devise methods that will help to alleviate problems within the relationship, and thus decrease clients' chances of engaging in infidelity.

Appendices

APPENDIX A

Measures

Appendix A

Sociodemographics

1) Age: _____

2) Sex: _____

3) Which of the following categories best describes your race? (Check one or more):

       Black/African American _____
       Hispanic or Latino _____
       American Indian/Alaskan Native _____
       Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander _____
       Asian _____
       East Indian _____
       White/Caucasian _____
       Other: (specify)_____

4) Which of the following best describes your current relationship status (Check one)?

       Single _____
       In a committed relationship but not living with partner _____
       In a committed relationship and living with partner _____
       Married _____
       Divorced and single _____
       Divorced and in a relationship _____
       Widowed _____

5) Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend/significant other?

       Yes _____
       No _____
If yes, how long have you been together?
       _____ (enter months and/or years, for example, 1 year and 2 months would
be 1.2)

6) Which of the following best describes the current status of your biological/adoptive parents'
marriage?

       Married _____
       Divorced _____
       Separated _____
       Widowed _____

7) Which of the following best describes the makeup of the household you grew up in for the majority of your life?

        Biological mother only/siblings _____
        Biological father only/siblings _____
        Biological mother and biological father/siblings _____
        Biological parent and step-parent/siblings _____
        Adoptive parent(s)/siblings _____
        Grandparent(s)/siblings _____
        Other relatives (aunt, uncle, cousins, etc.) _____

8) Which of the following best describes the highest degree you've earned?

        _____High school diploma or equivalency (GED)
        _____Associate degree (junior college)
        _____Bachelor's degree
        _____Master's degree
        _____Doctorate (Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.)
        _____Professional (MD, JD, DDS, etc.)
        _____Other (specify)
        _____None of the above (less than high school)

Appendix A

The Relationship Scale Questionnaire

Directions: Please read each of the following statements and rate the extent to which you believe each statement best describes your feelings about close relationships.

1 = Not at all like me
2
3 = Some-what like me
4
5 = Very much like me

1.	I find it difficult to depend on other people.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	It is very important to me to feel independent.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I find it easy to get emotionally close to others.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I want to merge completely with another person.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I am comfortable without close emotional relationships.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I am not sure that I can always depend on others to be there when I need them.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I worry about being alone.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I am comfortable depending on other people.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I often worry that romantic partners don't really love me.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I find it difficult to trust others completely.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I worry about others getting too close to me.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I want emotionally close relationships.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I am comfortable having other people depend on me.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	People are never there when you need them.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	My desire to merge completely sometimes scares people away.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	It is very important to me to feel self-sufficient.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I am nervous when anyone gets too close to me.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	I often worry that romantic partners won't want to stay with me.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I prefer not to have other people depend on me.	1	2	3	4	5

23.	I worry about being abandoned.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	I prefer not to depend on others.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	I know that others will be there when I need them.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	I worry about having others not accept me.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Romantic partners often want me to be closer than I feel comfortable with.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	I find it relatively easy to get close to others.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix A

Emotional Regulation Questionnaire

Directions: We would like to ask you some questions about your emotional life, in particular, how you control (that is regulate or mange) your emotions. The questions below involve two distinct aspects of your emotional life. One is your emotional experience, or what you feel like inside. The other is your emotional expression, or how you show your emotions in the way you talk, gesture, or behave. Although some of the following questions may seem similar to one another, they differ in important ways. For each item, please answer the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree			Neutral			Strongly Agree

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	When I want to feel more *positive* emotion (such as joy or amusement), I *change what I'm thinking about*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	I keep my emotions to myself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	When I want to feel less *negative* emotions (such as sadness or anger), I *change what I'm thinking about*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	When I am feeling *positive* emotions, I am careful not to express them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	When I'm faced with a stressful situation, I make myself *think about it* in a way that helps me to stay calm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	I control my emotions by *not expressing them*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	When I want to feel more *positive* emotion, I *change the way I'm thinking* about the situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	I control my emotions by *changing the way I think* about the situation I'm in	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	When I am feeling *negative* emotions, I make sure not to express them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	When I want to feel less *negative* emotion, I *change the way I'm thinking* about the situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix A

Personal Attributes Questionnaire

Directions: The items below inquire about **what kind of person you think you are**. Each item consists of a PAIR of characteristics, with the letters A-E in between. For example,

    Not at all artistic   A......B......C......D......E   Very artistic

Each pair describes contradictory characteristics - that is, you cannot be both at the same time, such as very artistic and not at all artistic. The letters form a scale between the two extremes. You are to chose a letter which describes where YOU fall on the scale. For example, if you think that you have no artistic ability, you would choose A. If you think that you are pretty good, you might choose D. If you are only medium, you might choose C, and so forth.

1.	Not at all aggressive	A	B	C	D	E	Very aggressive
2.	Not at all independent	A	B	C	D	E	Very independent
3.	Not at all emotional	A	B	C	D	E	Very emotional
4.	Very submissive	A	B	C	D	E	Very dominant
5.	Not at all excitable in a major crisis	A	B	C	D	E	Very excitable in a major crisis
6.	Very passive	A	B	C	D	E	Very active
7.	Not at all able to devote self completely to others	A	B	C	D	E	Abel to devote self completely to others
8.	Very rough	A	B	C	D	E	Very gentle
9.	Not at all helpful to others	A	B	C	D	E	Very helpful to others
10.	Not at all competitive	A	B	C	D	E	Very competitive
11.	Very home oriented	A	B	C	D	E	Very wordly
12.	Not at all kind	A	B	C	D	E	Very kind
13.	Indifferent to others = approval	A	B	C	D	E	Highly needful of other's approval
14.	Feelings not easily hurt	A	B	C	D	E	Feelings easily hurt
15.	Not at all aware of feelings of others	A	B	C	D	E	Very aware of feelings of others
16.	Can make decisions easily	A	B	C	D	E	Has difficulty making decisions
17.	Gives up very easily	A	B	C	D	E	Never gives up easily
18.	Never cries	A	B	C	D	E	Cries very easily
19.	Not at all self-confident	A	B	C	D	E	Very self-confident
20.	Feels very inferior	A	B	C	D	E	Feels very superior
21.	Not at all understanding of others	A	B	C	D	E	Very understanding of others

22.	Very cold in relations with others	A	B	C	D	E	Very warm in relations with others
23.	Very little need for security	A	B	C	D	E	Very strong need for security
24.	Goes to pieces under pressure	A	B	C	D	E	Stands up well under pressure

Appendix A

Experiences of Infidelity

There are many ways to describe and conceptualize infidelity and this varies from individual to individual. One of the purposes of the current study is to investigate how people conceptualize the relationships that occur outside the context of their committed romantic relationship. Below describes some emotional and behavioral descriptions that might be applicable to you. Keep in mind, we are not passing judgment, but are merely interested in the variety of experiences people have had across this continuum.

Committed romantic relationships: We are interested in the extent to which each of these behaviors and feelings occurred with other people while you were in a committed romantic relationship. For the purposes of this study, this would be a relationship in which you and your partner are under the assumption that you are romantically, emotionally, and physically involved with only one another.

In the last five years, while in a committed romantic relationship rate the extent to which you have engaged in the following with someone other than your committed partner:

1a) Briefly describe your experiences with, and how you define, emotional infidelity:

1b) **Emotional only involvement.** Examples include: talking intimately (emailing; text messaging), flirting, internet dating (where you have not been physical with the person), having intense romantic feelings for another person, spending time with someone you have romantic feelings for, or regularly fantasizing for a period of time about a particular person with whom you have on-going contact (like a feeling of infatuation). In other words, these are truly emotional involvements and do not include instances where physical boundaries are crossed. **Do not include instances where these emotional feelings eventually led to physical involvement.** This will be captured in a later question.

0	1	2	3	4	5
no involvement					deep love

1c) Please indicate with **how many different people** this has occurred over the last five years.

| 0 | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5-7 | 8-12 | More than 12 |

1d) To what extent did your partner know that you were engaging in emotional infidelity?

0	1	2	3	4	5
didn't			had some		knew
know			suspicions		

1e) To what degree was your partner alright with you engaging in emotional infidelity?

0	1	2	3	4	5
not at all			tolerated it		completely
alright					fine with it

2a) Briefly describe your experiences with, and how you define, physical infidelity:

2b) **Physical only involvement.** Examples include cuddling, holding hands, kissing, heavy petting, oral sex, or intercourse. This question only refers to purely sexual/physical acts where little or no emotional involvement was present.

0	1	2	3	4	5
no	cuddling	kissing	heavy	oral	sexual intercourse
involvement			petting	sex	

2c) Please indicate with **how many different people** this has occurred over the last five years.

| 0 | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5-7 | 8-12 | More than 12 |

2d) To what extent did your partner know that you were engaging in physical infidelity?

0	1	2	3	4	5
didn't			had some		knew
know			suspicions		

2e) To what degree was your partner alright with you engaging in physical infidelity?

0	1	2	3	4	5
not at all alright			tolerated it		completely fine with it

3a) Briefly describe your experiences with, and how you define, combined emotional and physical infidelity:

3b) **Emotional and physical combined**. Examples include instances where you have acted on romantic feelings for another person. This could range from kissing or cuddling with someone you have romantic feelings for to having an intense, ongoing affair with another person.

0	1	2	3	4	5
Never					intense, on-going Affair

3c) Please indicate with **how many different people** this has occurred over the last five years.

0	1-2	3-4	5-7	8-12	More than 12

3d) If you indicated 1 to 5 on this question, indicate below the **shortest time involvement** you had with the other person from the beginning of your emotional feelings for this person, through the end of the relationship.

1	2	3	4	5
less than a week				a year or more

3e) If you indicated 1 to 5 on this question, indicate below the **longest time involvement** you had with the other person from the beginning of your emotional feelings for this person, through the end of the relationship.

1	2	3	4	5
less than a week				a year or more

3f) To what extent did your partner know that you were engaging in an emotional and physical form of infidelity?

0	1	2	3	4	5

didn't			had some		knew
know			suspicions		

3g) To what degree was your partner alright with you engaging in an emotional and physical form of infidelity?

0	1	2	3	4	5
not at all			tolerated it		completely
alright					fine with it

4a) Briefly describe your experiences with, and how you define, anonymous infidelity:

4b) **Anonymous involvement.** Examples include looking at porn (internet or movies) or going to adult entertainment clubs. This question refers to situations in which you viewed sexual individuals but it was completely anonymous.

0	1	2	3	4	5
never	once/6months	once/3months	1-2 a month	1-2 a week	daily

4c) To what extent did your partner know that you were engaging in anonymous infidelity?

0	1	2	3	4	5
didn't			had some		knew
know			suspicions		

4d) To what degree was your partner alright with you engaging in anonymous infidelity?

0	1	2	3	4	5
not at all			tolerated it		completely
alright					fine with it

Appendix A

Attitudes Towards Infidelity

1) I think that becoming **emotionally** involved with someone other than my partner is:
    -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
    Bad   Undecided   Good
2) I think that becoming **emotionally** involved with someone other than my partner is:
    -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
    Unfavorable   Undecided   Favorable
3) I think that becoming **emotionally** involved with someone other than my partner is:
    -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
    Immoral   Undecided   Moral
4) I think that becoming **emotionally** involved with someone other than my partner is:
    -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
    Unsafe   Undecided   Safe
5) I think that becoming **emotionally** involved with someone other than my partner is:
    -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
    Not enjoyable   Undecided   Enjoyable
6) I think that becoming **emotionally** involved with someone other than my partner is:
    -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
    Negative   Undecided   Positive
7) I think that becoming **sexually** involved with someone other than my partner is:
    -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
    Bad   Undecided   Good
8) I think that becoming **sexually** involved with someone other than my partner is:
    -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
    Unfavorable   Undecided   Favorable
9) I think that becoming **sexually** involved with someone other than my partner is:
    -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
    Immoral   Undecided   Moral
10) I think that becoming **sexually** involved with someone other than my partner is:
    -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
    Unsafe   Undecided   Safe
11) I think that becoming **sexually** involved with someone other than my partner is:
    -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
    Not enjoyable   Undecided   Enjoyable
12) I think that becoming **sexually** involved with someone other than my partner is:
    -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
    Negative   Undecided   Positive

13) I think that becoming **both emotionally and sexually** involved with someone other than my partner is:

  -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
  Bad   Undecided   Good

14) I think that becoming both **emotionally and sexually** involved with someone other than my partner is:

  -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
  Unfavorable   Undecided   Favorable

15) I think that becoming **both emotionally and sexually** involved with someone other than my partner is:

  -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
  Immoral   Undecided   Moral

16) I think that becoming **both emotionally and sexually** involved with someone other than my partner is:

  -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
  Unsafe   Undecided   Safe

17) I think that becoming **both emotionally and sexually** involved with someone other than my partner is:

  -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
  Not enjoyable   Undecided   Enjoyable

18) I think that becoming **both emotionally and sexually** involved with someone other than my partner is:

  -3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
  Negative   Undecided   Positive

Appendix B

Instructions and Consent

For Online Study

Appendix B

The University of Texas at Austin
Intimate Relationships: Adult Attachment, Emotion Regulation, Gender Roles, and
Infidelity

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You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The person in charge of this research will also describe this study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can stop your participation at any time and your refusal will not impact current for future relationships with UT Austin or participating sites. To do so simply tell the researcher you wish to stop participation.

The purpose of this study is to try to understand the relationships among adult attachment, emotion regulation, gender roles, and infidelity within romantic relationships. **We are particularly interested in factors predicting or influencing decisions to engage in infidelity within romantic relationships and how individuals define infidelity.** In order to participate, you must be **over the age of 18 and have been in at least one dating relationship in the past five years**. Approximately 250 individuals will be recruited.

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to do the following things:
- Complete a survey which includes questions about attachment styles, emotion regulation strategies, gender roles, infidelity behaviors and beliefs, and information about your background. The only experimental aspect of this study is the gathering of information for the purpose of analysis.

Total estimated time to participate in study is 30-45 minutes

Risks of being in the study:
Some of the questions may be embarrassing or may make you feel uncomfortable since they ask you to disclose personal and sensitive information. Some of the

questions may cause you to reflect on difficult or uncomfortable situations. Your responses will be kept private and will not be connected in any way to your name. If you find that you would like to discuss feelings that you have as a result of participation, please contact either of the principal investigators listed above for resources in your community. You may also stop participating at any time, either temporarily or permanently.

In addition, because your answers will be stored in a database, there is always the risk that unauthorized users (hackers) will try to access data in the database. Therefore, we have taken measures to try and prevent this from occurring. Data is stored in a secure database on campus. In addition, you will be asked to provide your name and email address only if you are interested in being provided a summary of our findings in the future. Your name and email address will not be linked to your data in the database.

Benefits of being in the study:
Both society and yourself may benefit from this study through a greater understanding of the links between adult attachment styles, emotion regulation strategies, gender roles, and infidelity. **I cannot guarantee, however, that you will receive any benefits from participating in this study.**

Costs/Compensations:
- There are no costs or compensation for participating

Confidentiality and Privacy Protections:

The **records** of this study will be stored securely and kept confidential. Authorized persons from The University of Texas at Austin, members of the Institutional Review Board, and (study sponsors, if any) have the legal right to review your research records and will protect the **confidentiality** of those records to the extent permitted by law. All publications will exclude any information that will make it possible to identify you as a subject. Throughout the study, the researchers will notify you of new information that may become available and that might affect your decision to remain in the study.

When filling out the survey online, we advise that you sit down and finish the entire survey in one sitting. Make sure to shut down the computer once you have completed and submitted the survey. This should be done to prevent another computer user from gaining access to your data.

Voluntary Nature of Participation:

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to stop your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are allowed.

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