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## Abstract

Infidelity is an especially severe relational transgression that can act as a predictor of negative outcomes. Though the word “severe” may seem to imply that we can expect a degree of clarity when considering whether a particular behavior qualifies as “infidelity”, thinking of infidelity behaviors in that way might be an oversimplification. Whereas researchers have had some success in predicting the outcomes of and responses to infidelity, our understanding of infidelity may be complicated by a lack of clear behavioral indices for some forms of infidelity, namely emotional infidelity. The present study explored the specific types of behaviors that participants ( $n = 113$ ; 610 behaviors total) generated as exemplars of “emotional infidelity”, and examined whether cheatingness (i.e. the amount/magnitude of cheating) of emotional infidelity behaviors was associated with different types of responses to the behaviors. Specifically, the cheatingness ratings were utilized to make inferences regarding the ambiguity of the emotional infidelity behaviors, to test a hypothesized theory of ambiguity. Participants were asked to report on how they would imagine responding to each behavior, and the primary outcomes of interest were: likelihood of breakup, likelihood of discussion with the partner, and confidence in responding to the behavior. Results showed significant linear and curvilinear associations between cheatingness and likelihood of breakup, as well as likelihood of discussion. Taken together, these associations appeared to provide support for a cheatingness effect, rather than providing support for a theory of ambiguity. However, results also revealed a significant curvilinear association between cheatingness and confidence in responding to the behavior, which appeared to support the hypothesized theory of ambiguity.

*Keywords:* infidelity, emotional infidelity, romantic relationships

**Towards a Nuanced Understanding of Emotional Infidelity: An Investigation of Behavioral  
Exemplars and the Impact of Ambiguity**

by

Morgan L. Proulx

B.A., University of New Hampshire, 2016

Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
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Social connection is a fundamental human motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), and romantic relationships, specifically, have been touted as the closest of our social bonds (Berscheid, Snyder, & Omoto, 1989). Of course, merely having relationships is not equivalent to having high quality relationships. In fact, research has shown that the quality of our social connections, rather than the quantity, serves as the best predictor of health outcomes (Fiorillo & Sabatini, 2011) and midlife psychosocial outcomes (e.g. social integration, friendship quality, loneliness, depression, and psychological well-being) (Carmichael, Reis, & Duberstein, 2015). Put succinctly, people who have high quality social relationships are healthier and happier than those who do not (e.g., Holt-Lunstad, Smith, & Layton, 2010; Uchino, 2006).

Whereas romantic relationships can contribute to positive outcomes for many individuals, they can also be the context in which individuals experience their strongest negative emotions and greatest disappointments. Relationship transgressions (i.e. a violation of a relationship rule; Metts, 1994), are associated with a host of negative psychological and physiological outcomes. One particularly severe relational transgression that can act as a predictor of negative outcomes is infidelity (Amato & Previti, 2003; Spanier & Margolis, 1983). These negative outcomes can include: marital problems, guilt (Spanier & Margolis, 1983), distress, depressive symptoms and anxiety symptoms (Atkins, Marín, Lo, Klann, & Hahlweg, 2010; Gordon & Baucom, 1999; Gordon, Baucom, & Snyder, 2004), and conflict (Balderrama-Durbin, Allen, & Rhoades, 2012). Whereas an instance of infidelity can be psychologically distressing in and of itself, infidelity has additionally been linked with romantic relationship dissolution (Amato & Rogers, 1997), which is associated with increased psychological distress (Field, Diego, Pelaez, Deeds, & Delgado, 2009; Fox & Tokunaga, 2015; Rhoades, Kamp Dush, Atkins, Stanley, & Markman, 2011; Simpson, 1987). This psychological distress can consist of symptoms related to grief such as

preoccupation with the ex-partner, crying often, and disbelief regarding the dissolution (Field et al., 2009).

Given the negative outcomes associated with infidelity, it is concerning that conservative estimates of infidelity prevalence rates are as high as 20-25% (Atkins, Jacobson, & Baucom, 2001), suggesting that infidelity may have a profound influence on many relationships. A more recent estimate, based on nationally representative samples, suggests a lifetime prevalence for extra-marital sex of up to 25% (Blow & Hartnett, 2005). Of course, infidelity is not limited to married partners. Individuals in dating relationships report the highest rates of infidelity, followed by cohabiting couples, and then married couples (Adamopoulou, 2013). However, prevalence rates of infidelity have been cited as notoriously difficult to obtain considering measurement concerns (i.e. what “counts” as infidelity), social-desirability bias in reporting, and differentiating lifetime prevalence rates and recent incidences (Blow & Hartnett, 2005; Walker, 2018).

Potentially complicating the understanding of infidelity even more, it is possible that some forms of infidelity lack clear behavioral indices. Whereas sexual infidelity can be clearly recognized as a relationship transgression, given that it involves the engagement in an unambiguous sexual behavior (e.g. extra-dyadic intercourse), emotional infidelity may be less clear. If emotional infidelity is in fact an ambiguous relational transgression, it may have implications for the nuanced reactions and responses to infidelity. In the present work, I examined behavioral exemplars of “emotional infidelity” and assessed whether cheatingness (i.e. magnitude/amount of cheating) of the behaviors is associated with different types of responses to the emotional infidelity behaviors, in order to test a theory of ambiguity. I begin with a discussion of how emotional infidelity is defined in the literature and review some of the

problems with how it is defined. I then discuss some of the literature regarding emotional reactions to infidelity, as the present study explores emotional reactions as a secondary/exploratory aim. Next, I describe some of the ways in which researchers have attempted to predict infidelity, and I highlight “investment” as a variable of interest for the present work. I then review some of the literature regarding responses to infidelity, as this area is particularly relevant to the primary hypotheses of this study. Specifically, in this section, I highlight two distinct but related theoretical frameworks that guided my primary hypotheses regarding responses to emotional infidelity. Finally, I detail some ways in which we can improve our understanding of emotional infidelity, as I transition into describing the present work.

## **Relevant Literature**

### **What is Infidelity?**

At its broadest level, definitions of infidelity in the literature can be organized into three categories: (a) infidelity as sexual intercourse, (b) infidelity as extradyadic sexual activities, and (c) infidelity as emotional betrayal (Moller & Vossler, 2015). Researchers have had some success in further differentiating between different types of infidelity (e.g. infidelity characterized by emotional connections, long-term relationships, one-night stands; Brown, 2001). However, much of the literature on infidelity has focused on differences in reactions to two kinds of infidelity, namely: sexual infidelity and emotional infidelity (e.g. Schützwohl, 2004; Shackelford, LeBlanc, & Drass, 2000). Sexual infidelity is broadly defined as extra-dyadic sexual involvement (Blow & Hartnett, 2005; Treas & Giesen, 2000), which can involve a variety of sexual behaviors and is not limited to sexual intercourse (e.g. kissing, oral sex, sexual fantasies, etc.; Moller & Vossler, 2015). Emotional infidelity (EI) has been defined in rather ambiguous ways such as: an investment of romantic love, time, and attention in a person other

than the primary partner (Shackelford et al., 2000); forming an emotional attachment, falling in love, or being interested in someone other than one's partner (Cramer, Abraham, Johnson, & Manning-Ryan, 2001; Sabini & Green, 2004; Vaughn Becker, Sagarin, Guadagno, Millevoi, & Nicastle, 2004); sharing intimate details, discussing complaints about the primary partner, flirting, and meeting for an alcoholic drink (Henline, Lamke, & Howard, 2007; Luo, Cartun, & Snider, 2010); feeling "deeply connected" (Sabini & Silver, 2005, p. 721); secrecy of a behavior that is experienced as betrayal by one's partner (e.g. in the case of internet infidelity; Hertlein & Piercy, 2008) and other violations of relationship rules or norms (e.g. Henline et al., 2007; Luo et al., 2010).

***Problems defining emotional infidelity.***

As Moller and Vossler (2015) note, some of the above definitions of EI are problematic. For example, the last definition above suggests that EI involves secrecy that is experienced as betrayal by the partner (Hertlein & Piercy, 2008). However, this would imply that any secretive behavior experienced as betrayal by the partner could be defined as infidelity. Additionally, if one defines infidelity on the basis of relationship rule violations, any behavior that violates a relationship rule could be labeled as infidelity, and such a definition would be impractical given that many romantic partners define relationship rules within the context of the dyad (i.e. the definition would not be able to be applied to a majority of dyads).

Whereas it may be argued that these previously discussed conceptualizations of the types of infidelity tap into the broad constructs of emotional and sexual infidelity, the literature has lacked a thorough examination of the specific behaviors associated with infidelity (Blow & Hartnett, 2005). Whereas sexual infidelity can be clearly described by specific behaviors that are of a sexual/physical nature, emotional infidelity appears to be lacking clear behavioral

exemplars; even when behavioral exemplars have been provided, they've still been insufficient in that they are often too vague (e.g. "forming a deep emotional attachment"; Cramer et al., 2001). That is, this exemplar of EI still appears to be too vague, because it is not an observable behavior and may be too far-reaching (e.g. one might form a deep emotional attachment for a friend, but not have any romantic involvement with them). It is also interesting to consider that the behaviors that characterize sexual infidelity are so specific and clear that they often don't need to be situated in a particular context, before we can identify it as a cheating behavior. For example, when considering behaviors like "having sex with someone else" or "kissing someone else", for partners that are in monogamous relationships, it seems difficult to imagine that many individuals would require more information about the context in order to decide whether it is a cheating behavior. However, it seems that EI lacks that degree of specificity and/or clarity, and it seems much easier to imagine instances in which individuals (even those in monogamous relationships) would require more information about the behavior before deciding whether it is a cheating behavior. For example, when considering a potential EI behavior such as "texting someone else often", one might find it quite easy to imagine an individual needing more information about the behavior and the context, prior to making a judgement about whether it is an EI behavior.

Notably, the problems associated with defining emotional infidelity do not stem from a necessary co-occurrence of sexual and emotional infidelity. That is, sexual and emotional infidelity are distinct constructs. In fact, some research has found that men and women reported that sexual and emotional infidelity need not co-occur. In one study, the majority of women (88%) and men (79%) reported believing that emotional infidelity could occur without sexual infidelity, and that sexual infidelity could occur without emotional infidelity (71% of women, 54

% of men) (Guitar, Geher, Kruger, Garcia, Fisher, & Fitzgerald, 2017). Additionally, previous findings have suggested that emotional infidelity is more vague and complex, as evidenced by higher consistency in participant-generated definitions of sexual infidelity in comparison to emotional infidelity (Guitar et al., 2017). Interestingly, Guitar et al. (2017) also found that one of the lowest rated definitions of emotional infidelity was “I’m not sure what I would even consider emotional infidelity”, suggesting that participants agree that a tangible definition of emotional infidelity exists despite the inability to agree on a definition.

Some attempts have been made to refine and improve the definition of emotional infidelity. In one such attempt discussed above, Guitar et al. (2017) examined participant-generated definitions of sexual and emotional infidelity and assessed prevalent themes. Whereas this is an important advance in understanding the definition of emotional infidelity, certain questions remain to be addressed. For example, which specific *behaviors* are associated with emotional infidelity? That is, while this study examined prevalent themes that were derived from overall definitions of EI as a construct, an examination of the specific, observable behaviors that are considered “EI behaviors” remains necessary. Additional attempts to define emotional infidelity have utilized researcher-generated infidelity behaviors (e.g. Habibi, 2010; Kruger, Fisher, Edelstein, Chopik, Fitzgerald, & Strout, 2013), and in some cases behaviors were not differentiated by type of infidelity (i.e. sexual versus emotional infidelity behaviors; e.g. Kruger et al., 2013; Kruger, Fisher, Fitzgerald, Garcia, Geher, & Guitar, 2015).

### **Emotional Reactions to Infidelity**

In one of the pioneering studies on infidelity, Buss, Larsen, Westen, and Semmelroth (1992) assessed gender differences in reactions to infidelity, with the goal of testing the hypothesis that men and women differ in their subjective distress and how upset they are by

different forms of infidelity. Utilizing a forced choice paradigm, Buss et al. (1992) asked participants to “Please think of a serious committed romantic relationship that you have had in the past, that you currently have, or that you would like to have. Imagine that you discover that the person with whom you've been seriously involved became interested in someone else. What would distress or upset you more?” (p. 252). They were then asked to select from: “(a) Imagining your partner forming a deep emotional attachment to that person, or (b) Imagining your partner enjoying passionate sexual intercourse with that other person.” (p. 252). Using the same instructional set, participants were also asked to select which of the following would upset or distress them more: “(a) Imagining your partner trying different sexual positions with that other person, or (b) Imagining your partner falling in love with that other person.” (p. 252). When tested using this forced-choice paradigm, most men (60%) reported feeling upset and distressed at the thought of their partner engaging in sexual infidelity, whereas most women (83%) reported being distressed by imagined emotional infidelity. However, it should be noted that the forced-choice paradigm likely overestimates the gender differences regarding reactions to infidelity. That is, these results cannot rule out the possibility that men and women are *both* upset by *each* form of infidelity.

Following Buss et al.’s (1992) work, many studies attempted to replicate the effects using the same conceptualization of sexual and emotional infidelity, as well as the forced-choice method. One meta-analysis, in which all of the studies included utilized forced-choice methods, found gender differences consistent with Buss et al. (1992) when assessing reactions to sexual and emotional infidelity (Dreznick, 2002). Contrasting Buss et al.’s (1992) findings, some work has found that both sexes tended to be more upset by emotional rather than sexual infidelity when using a forced-choice method (Carpenter, 2012). Additional work has failed to replicate

the original gender differences when participants were not asked to vividly and realistically imagine sexual infidelity (Kato, 2014), and with a sample of participants who had actually experienced infidelity (Berman & Frazier, 2005).

Notably, when further parsing the feelings of “upset” and “distress” by examining “jealousy”, “anger”, “hurt”, and “disgust”, some evidence shows that gender differences were only found in the case of “jealousy” (Vaughn Becker et al., 2004). In fact, *both* men and women reported “hurt” would be the strongest feeling associated with emotional infidelity, whereas “anger” and “disgust” would be the strongest feelings associated with sexual infidelity (Vaughn Becker et al., 2004). Consistent with these findings, Green & Sabini (2006) found that both genders showed more anger and blame over sexual infidelity but more hurt feelings over emotional infidelity. Importantly, even given the gender differences previously found, these findings suggest that both men and women can be negatively affected by both forms of infidelity, but that the forms of infidelity are simply characterized by different emotional responses.

Given that the present study only examines EI, rather than a comparison between sexual and emotional infidelity, I did not hypothesize about gender differences. However, as previous research has found that different forms of infidelity may be characterized by different emotional responses, it may be interesting to consider whether emotional responses would vary as the cheatingness ratings of a suspected EI behavior varies. Thus, as an exploratory aim of this work, I collected data on the four emotional reactions (i.e. “anger”, “hurt”, “disgust”, “jealousy”) that have been examined in previous work (e.g. Vaughn Becker et al., 2004). Though I did not hypothesize about these emotional reactions, I examined the associations between each emotion and the cheatingness of potential EI behaviors, as well as the association between the emotions and responses to the behavior.

## **Predicting Infidelity**

Another line of work in the literature regarding infidelity has focused on trying to predict when infidelity is most likely to occur. Some variables that have been found to be significant predictors of the likelihood of having engaged in infidelity include: previous divorce, education level, age when first married, respondent's income, and respondent's work status (Atkins et al. 2001). Various other predictors have been examined such as personality factors, sexual dissatisfaction (Buss & Shackelford, 1997), religiosity, and parenting variables (Whisman, Gordon, & Chatav, 2007). Not surprisingly, given the vague definition of emotional infidelity, much of literature on this topic has attempted to predict sexual infidelity rather than emotional infidelity.

Given that emotional infidelity broadly refers to an investment of romantic love, time, and attention in a person other than the primary partner (Shackelford et al., 2000), the investment model (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998) might offer insights into the predictors of emotional infidelity. The Investment Model was designed to predict commitment in relationships, where commitment is broadly defined as the psychological experience of dependence on a relationship (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). The model asserts that commitment to one's relationship increases as a function of increases in satisfaction with the relationship, increases in investment into the relationship (e.g. time spent developing the relationship, shared material items, children), and decreases in quality of alternatives (i.e. viability of alternatives to the romantic relationship such as being single or seeking out a different partner) (Rusbult, 1980). One study examined investment model predictors in predicting dating infidelity (Drigotas, Safstrom, & Gentilia, 1999) and found commitment, satisfaction, and investment to be negatively associated with

likelihood of engaging in infidelity, while alternative quality was positively associated with likelihood of engaging in infidelity.

This finding that investment in the primary relationship is negatively associated with infidelity is especially interesting given that EI necessarily involves some amount of investment into an extra-dyadic relationship. It might be interesting to consider that a decrease in investment into the primary relationship may be due to an increased investment into a secondary relationship. This extra-dyadic investment could signal a commitment to the alternative relationship when discovered by the primary partner, potentially clarifying the behavior as an “infidelity behavior”. Given that the first step in the present work is to examine the types of behaviors that constitute potential EI behaviors, I am most interested in factors/qualities of the behaviors that might provide more information about the context that the behavior is situated in, and thus offer a better understanding of the behavior. That is, I am interested in whether the type of investment made into an alternative partner aids in an individual’s interpretation of the behavior as “emotional infidelity”. In the present work, I examined the type of investment made (i.e. time, money, affection/connection, attention, no investment made, other) for each emotional infidelity behavior that participants listed, to start to get a sense of the types of behaviors that fall within each investment type, as well as which investment types tend to be more prevalent.

### **Responding to Infidelity**

Whereas it has been well-established that infidelity can have negative consequences for relationships, there is less agreement in the literature regarding how partners actually respond to infidelity. Some researchers have focused on the role of forgiveness (e.g. Hall & Fincham, 2006), while others have examined contextual variables associated with relationship dissolution following infidelity (e.g. marital satisfaction before infidelity, infidelity not being publicly

disclosed, seeking professional help; Harris, 2018), and still others have argued that the discovery method of the infidelity (e.g. unsolicited partner disclosure, red-handed discovery, etc.) impacts relationship outcomes following infidelity (Afifi, Falato, & Weiner, 2001). Notably, this research often relies on data regarding infidelity broadly (i.e. without differentiating between sexual and emotional infidelity), or relies on the previously discussed vague definitions of EI. Thus, the literature could benefit from a clearer, more nuanced investigation of EI before assessing responses to this construct.

Given the ambiguity associated with EI, research on relational uncertainty may offer insights regarding how individuals might respond to EI. Relational uncertainty has been conceptualized as “the degree of confidence people have in their perceptions of involvement within interpersonal relationships” (Knobloch & Solomon, 1999, 2002). This conceptualization includes various sources of uncertainty within a close relationship such as: 1) self uncertainty (i.e. questions about one’s own involvement in the relationship), 2) partner uncertainty (i.e. questions about the partner’s involvement in the relationship), and 3) relationship uncertainty (i.e. doubts about the relationship itself). Beyond global uncertainty in relationships, research has suggested that relational uncertainty can be elicited by specific events (e.g. Knobloch & Solomon, 2002) and researchers have thus conceptualized *episodic uncertainty* as uncertainty experienced due to a discrete event (Knobloch & Solomon, 2002; Knobloch & Solomon, 2003). Research on this topic suggests that fluctuations in episodic uncertainty in close relationships can be triggered by expectancy violating events (e.g. Afifi & Metts, 1998), unfaithfulness, and third-party competition (Emmers & Canary, 1996). Considering Knobloch and Solomon’s (1999) conceptualization of uncertainty in relationships as “the degree of confidence people have in their perceptions of involvement within interpersonal relationships” (p. 264), it seems reasonable

to think of episodic uncertainty as also involving some determination of whether one is confident in their perceptions, when faced with a discrete event that triggers this type of acute uncertainty. Taking this a step further, it seems plausible that an ambiguous, expectancy violating behavior (e.g. an EI behavior) might activate/trigger episodic uncertainty which, in turn, could suggest that individuals may feel less self-assured or confident when responding to ambiguous EI behaviors. Thus, in the present study, I chose to measure “confidence in responding” to the behavior, when assessing responses to EI behaviors.

Another framework for understanding how individuals respond to relationship distress, called the EVLN model, may provide insight regarding how individuals might respond following infidelity. The EVLN model, which stands for “Exit, Voice, Loyalty, Neglect”, was developed as a way to examine how individuals may communicate following relationship transgressions, conflict, etc. (Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991). The model details four possible communication responses, which result from variations along two dimensions, namely: active vs. passive and constructive vs. destructive (Rusbult, Morrow, & Johnson, 1987). The resulting four communication responses are: Exit, Voice, Loyalty, and Neglect. The active vs. passive dimension of the model refers to whether the response involves actually doing something/taking action (i.e. active), as opposed to not taking action (i.e. passive). The constructive vs. destructive dimension of the model refers to whether the response impacts the relationship in a positive/relationship-maintaining manner (i.e. constructive) or a negative/relationship-dissolving manner (i.e. destructive). The active responses are “Exit” and “Voice”, where “Exit” is considered a destructive response characterized by leaving or threatening to leave the relationship, moving out, separating, etc., and “Voice” is considered a constructive response that is characterized by having a discussion with one’s partner, suggesting

solutions to problems, etc. The passive responses are “Loyalty” and “Neglect”, where “Loyalty” is considered a constructive response characterized by waiting and hoping things will improve, and “Neglect” is considered a destructive response that involves ignoring or withdrawing from one’s partner. Of particular relevance to the present work, these responses have been examined with regard to how individuals respond to infidelity.

Interestingly, researchers have found that individuals tend to be more likely to employ active responses (i.e. Exit and Voice) when responding to more serious relationship transgressions like infidelity (Weiser & Weigel, 2014). Applying this to the present work, these findings would suggest that individuals would utilize more active responses when responding to EI behaviors. That is, one should expect to find a greater likelihood of breakup (i.e. Exit) and a greater likelihood of discussion with the partner (i.e. Voice) in response EI behaviors. However, the ambiguity of EI might introduce nuance when it comes to how individuals interpret the severity of the behavior. Instead, one might predict that Exit (i.e. breakup) and Voice (i.e. discussion) responses would be *less* likely given the ambiguity of EI behaviors. Thus, in the present study, I chose to measure the likelihood of Exit (i.e. breakup) and Voice (i.e. discussion) responses to the behavior, when assessing responses to EI behaviors.

### **Improving our Understanding of Emotional Infidelity**

The limitations in defining EI and lack of behavioral exemplars warrant a nuanced exploration of EI behaviors. Rather than simply obtaining a list of potential behaviors from participants, gathering more information about the behavioral exemplars of EI might help to better understand responses to this type of infidelity. As such, in the present study, I collected data regarding the cheatingness of the behavior (i.e. the magnitude/amount of cheating; from

which, I made inferences regarding the ambiguity of the behavior), the type of investment made, the medium through which the behavior may occur, and with whom the behavior may occur.

**Ambiguity and cheatingness.** As previously discussed, it seems possible that the degree to which an EI behavior is ambiguous, as opposed to being obviously an EI behavior, may be associated with differences in how one responds to the behavior. In order to examine this potential association and predict responses to emotional infidelity, I collected data regarding the ambiguity of emotional infidelity behaviors. While it is difficult to find one widely accepted definition of “ambiguity” as a construct in the relationship literature, some insight on the definition of ambiguity can be gleaned from various constructs that involve ambiguity. For instance, in a review of the literature on tolerance of ambiguity, Furnham and Marks (2013) note that ambiguous stimuli have been described as stimuli that are perceived as complex, unfamiliar, uncertain or subject to conflicting interpretations. They also note that, more recently, researchers have focused on situations that are characterized by an “absence of information” (Furnham & Marks, 2013). In the relationship literature, some constructs that involve ambiguity have defined “ambiguity” in terms of a lack of information about someone (e.g. Norton, Frost, & Ariely, 2007), in terms of a lack of information about roles (i.e. role ambiguity; Dierckx, Mortelmans, & Motmans, 2019), and in terms of uncertainty regarding the outcome of a relationship dilemma (i.e. Relationship Outcome Ambiguity; Blanchard-Fields & Beatty, 2005). Taken together, it seems that these conceptualizations all involve some degree of uncertainty and/or a lack of information. As such, in the present work, my conceptualization of “ambiguity” refers to a degree of uncertainty and/or lack of information about whether a behavior could be considered an EI behavior. In the present study, the ambiguity of a behavior was deduced by examining participants’ ratings of the “cheatingness” (i.e. the magnitude/amount of cheating) of a behavior

on a scale from “*definitely not cheating*” to “*definitely cheating*”, with a midpoint of “*I don’t know/Unsure*”. For this scale, the midpoint would represent the greatest ambiguity, as it reflects that participants are unsure of whether the behavior involves infidelity or does not involve infidelity. That is, the midpoint of this scale reflects the conceptualization of ambiguity for the present work, in that it is labeled as “*I don’t know/unsure*” and thus involves some degree of uncertainty and/or a lack of information. As one moves away from the midpoint on this scale, ambiguity decreases and it would be lowest at either end of the scale, as the endpoints reflect a clear judgement of the behavior as either “*definitely not cheating*” or “*definitely cheating*”.

**Investment.** For the purposes of this study, I was most interested in factors that might aid in clarifying the behaviors such that a behavior can be recognized as emotional infidelity. One of the previously discussed definitions of emotional infidelity asserted that emotional infidelity occurs when one’s partner channels resources such as romantic love, time, and attention to someone else (Shackelford et al., 2000). As such, I collected data on the nature of the investment made for each emotional infidelity behavior. Behaviors were categorized by participants into one or more types of investment: time, money, affection/connection, attention, no investment made, other. I drew these categorizations from one of the primary definitions of emotional infidelity (Shackelford et al., 2000) and from previous literature in which “financial support” is highly rated as an infidelity behavior (e.g. Kruger et al., 2013). While the literature has not explicitly organized investment in this way, I felt that it would be a useful method for examining the investments that could be made with regard to emotional infidelity.

**With whom the emotional infidelity occurs.** With whom the emotion infidelity behavior occurs (i.e. coworker, friend, stranger, long-distance other, former partner, other) could provide more information about the context of each behavior listed. Some work finds that, when

imagining their partner engaging in emotional infidelity, women rated engagement with the former partner as more distressing while men rated engagement with a new partner as more distressing (Cann & Baucom, 2004). Additional research has shown that rivalry from a friend is more upsetting than is rivalry from a stranger (Bleske & Shackelford, 2001). Thus, in the present work, participants sorted emotional infidelity behaviors into one or more of the following categories of extra-dyadic partners with whom they picture the behavior occurring: a coworker, a friend, a stranger, a long-distance other, a former partner, or other.

**The medium through which the behavior occurs.** Given the general prevalence of technology use in society, and the growing popularity of dating apps/websites, it is no surprise that these resources have afforded new contexts in which extra-dyadic involvement can be explored (e.g. Clayton, 2014; Henline et al., 2007; Nelson & Salawu, 2017). In the present work, I collected data regarding the medium through which the emotional infidelity behavior occurs. Participants sorted the EI behaviors that they generated into one or both of the following contextual categories: “over technology” or “in person”.

### **The Present Study**

The literature has made strides in predicting responses to infidelity, but there remain considerable limitations in the definition of emotional infidelity. The present study sought to investigate behavioral exemplars of emotional infidelity and test a theory of ambiguity for responses to EI behaviors. As previously discussed, it seems reasonable to think of episodic uncertainty as involving some evaluation of whether one is confident in one’s perceptions. As such, if one considers the possibility that the ambiguity of EI behaviors might trigger episodic uncertainty, it seems possible that individuals may feel less confident in responding to those behaviors. Additionally, when considering how one might respond to EI behaviors, there are

some findings to suggest that individuals are more likely to use active (i.e. Exit and Voice) responses when responding to severe transgressions like infidelity (Weiser & Weigel, 2014). However, I discussed that, given the ambiguity of EI behaviors, one might expect that these active responses will actually be less likely (i.e. as ambiguity increases). Given these considerations, for the present study, I hypothesize about a theory of ambiguity which I tested by examining the associations between cheatingness ratings of the EI behaviors and confidence in responding to the behavior, as well as likelihood of breakup (Exit) and likelihood of discussion (Voice).

The primary aims of this study are as follows: 1) collect data on the specific, non-sexual behaviors that individuals regard as cheating behaviors and the qualities of those behaviors (i.e. the medium through which it occurs, with whom it occurs, the type of investment involved), 2) test linear and nonlinear associations between the cheatingness of a behavior and the likelihood of “discussion with the partner” and “breakup” as anticipated responses to the EI behavior, to examine whether the pattern of results supports a theory of ambiguity, and 3) test linear and nonlinear associations between the cheatingness of a behavior and the confidence with which individuals anticipate responding to that behavior, to examine whether the pattern of results supports a theory of ambiguity. To achieve these aims, participants generated a list of potential EI behaviors, reported on the cheatingness of each behavior, and reported on their anticipated/imagined responses to each behavior. More specifically, when reporting on their responses to the behaviors, participants first wrote about their anticipated response to each behavior in an open-response format. Then, following the open-response item, they rated their anticipated/imagined confidence in responding to the behavior, as well as the likelihood that the behavior would lead to breakup and discussion with the partner.

## Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1:** Greater ambiguity of a behavior (as inferred from ratings on a cheatingness scale) will be associated with: **a)** reporting lower scale ratings for likelihood of breakup (i.e. exit response), **b)** reporting lower scale ratings for likelihood of a discussion (i.e. voice response) with the partner, **c)** having less confidence in knowing how to respond to the cheating behavior, **d)** a lower likelihood of mentioning breakup (i.e. exit) in their open response, and **e)** a lower likelihood of mentioning discussion with the partner (i.e. voice) in their open response.

## Methods

### Sample

Participants were 113 undergraduates enrolled in Introductory Psychology at a mid-sized private university in the northeastern United States (31% male, 69% female). Participants ranged in age from 18-25 ( $M = 19.26$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ), with about half indicating that they were White (50.4%, with 36.3% Asian, 6.2% Hispanic, 6.2% Black, and .9% other) and heterosexual (83%, with 11% bisexual, 3% same-sex attracted, and 3% other). The majority of participants were not currently involved in a romantic relationship (59%). Of those that were currently involved in a romantic relationship, the majority were exclusively dating (73.9%, with 13% casually dating, 10.9% living together, and 2.2% engaged). Participants received course credit for participating.

### Procedure

Participants signed up for a particular time to complete this study in the lab. When they arrived, they were seated at a private computer and told that the screen would present all of the instructions they would need. After reading the consent form, participants were asked to generate a list of up to 20 non-sexual infidelity behaviors, which they were subsequently asked to

categorize based on each of the following factors: the medium through which it occurs (i.e. over technology/in person), with whom the behavior occurs (i.e. coworker, friend, stranger, long-distance other, former partner, other), and the nature of the investment made (i.e. time, money, affection/connection, attention, no investment made, other). Participants then reported on their anticipated response to each of the cheating behaviors that they generated. They were taken to separate pages in Qualtrics for each behavior, where the behavior was piped into questions about their anticipated response (open-response format), the likelihood of breakup and the likelihood of discussion (scale ratings), emotional responses, and confidence in responding to the behavior. After reporting on their anticipated/imagined responses to all behaviors, the participants rated the cheatingness of each behavior. Finally, participants provided demographics, were debriefed, and left. The procedure took between 30 to 45 minutes.

### **Measures**

**Behavior generation task.** For the behavior generation task, participants were instructed in the following manner: “List as many non-sexual behaviors that you can think of that could be considered cheating/infidelity, even if you don’t think it’s emotional infidelity but others might consider it to be cheating/infidelity (up to 20 behaviors). Please be as detailed as possible in your responses.”. Responses to this item were collected in an open-response format. The behaviors that participants listed were piped into separate pages in Qualtrics for the categorization task and further questions.

**Categorization task.** For the categorization task, the behaviors that participants listed in the behavior generation task were piped into a separate page in Qualtrics and they were instructed to categorize each behavior based on each of the following factors: the medium through which it occurs (via technology vs. in person), with whom the behavior occurs (coded

as: 1 = coworker, 2 = friend, 3 = stranger, 4 = long-distance other, 5 = former partner, 6 = other), and the nature/type of the investment made (coded as: 1 = time, 2 = money, 3 = affection/connection, 4 = attention, 5 = no investment made, 6 = other). Participants were first instructed to categorize the behaviors based on what they “first pictured” when listing the behavior (e.g. for the medium through which it occurs the instructions read “Please drag the behaviors you listed into the following categories based on the medium through which you first pictured the behavior occurring when you listed the behavior”). After completing this initial categorization, participants were then given a chance to select “all possible” categories for each behavior (i.e. “all possible media through which the behavior could occur”, “all possible people with whom the behavior could occur”, and “all possible types of investments that could be made for each behavior”, respectively). This task provided more information regarding the specific qualities of the behaviors/context that the participant may have been thinking of when they listed a particular behavior.

**Cheatingness (self-perception).** Two sets of items measured the cheatingness (i.e. the amount or magnitude of cheating) of each emotional infidelity behavior that participants listed. These items were ultimately utilized to obtain information about the ambiguity of the EI behaviors. That is, while these items do not directly measure “ambiguity”, they were used to infer the ambiguity of the EI behaviors that participants listed. In one item, participants were instructed in the following manner: “Using the scale provided, please rate each behavior you listed according to how much you consider it to be a cheating behavior”. The 15-point scale ranged from -7 to positive 7 and consisted of anchors from “*Definitely not cheating*” to “*Definitely cheating*” and a midpoint of “*I don’t know/Unsure*”. As such, the midpoint of the scale (i.e. “*I don’t know/Unsure*”) would reflect the greatest ambiguity. Rather than labeling the

scale with all positive values (e.g. from 1 – 15) I chose to label the points on the left as negative numbers to convey some amount of “absence” or “lack” of cheating (i.e. rather than simply “less cheating”), whereas I chose to label the points to the right as positive numbers to convey some “presence” of cheating. The behaviors that participants listed in the behavior generation task were again piped into this page in Qualtrics. This first set of items were utilized to measure the participant’s *own* perception of the cheatingness of the behavior. Thus, these items were utilized to make inferences regarding participants’ *own* perception of ambiguity of the behavior. When conducting analyses, the raw scale (i.e. from -7 to +7) for this measure was utilized.

**Cheatingness (average-perception).** In a second set of items, participants were instructed in the following manner: “Using the scale provided, please rate each behavior you listed according to how much the average person considers it to be a cheating behavior”. The 15-point scale again ranged from -7 to positive 7 and consisted of anchors from “*Definitely not cheating*” to “*Definitely cheating*” and a midpoint of “*I don’t know/Unsure*”. The behaviors that were listed in the behavior generation task were again piped into this page. This second set of items were included with the intention of being utilized to make inferences about ambiguity broadly.

**Response to infidelity.** To assess participants’ anticipated responses to the emotional infidelity behaviors, the behaviors that they listed in the behavior generation task were piped into the following open-response question: “Please describe how you would respond if you were in a romantic relationship and your partner were to do the following behavior: [insert piped behavior here]. Specifically, how would you react following an instance such as this? Please be as detailed as possible in your response.”. Participants’ open-responses to this item were coded for the following: whether or not they mentioned breakup (coded as 0 = no, 1 = yes), and whether or not

they mentioned having a discussion with their partner (coded as 0 = no, 1 = yes). Participants were also asked to rate the likelihood of breakup and the likelihood of a discussion with their partner on a scale. These scales consisted of the following: “Imagine that you are in a relationship and your partner does the following behavior: [insert piped behavior]. How likely is it that this would lead to a breakup?” (7-point scale: *extremely unlikely* – *extremely likely*), and “How likely is it that this would lead to a discussion with your partner?” (7-point scale: *extremely unlikely* – *extremely likely*). Though I am utilizing the EVLN model (Rusbult et al., 1991) as a theoretical framework to assess responses to EI behaviors, I did not utilize the accommodation measure developed by Rusbult, Zembrodt, and Lawanna (1982). I chose not to use this measure as participants were reporting on the likelihood of breakup (i.e. exit) and the likelihood of discussion (i.e. voice) for up to 20 behaviors (depending on how many they listed) and, as such, I wanted to keep the measure brief. As I had only hypothesized about specific Exit and Voice responses, I chose to only measure these active responses (i.e. Exit and Voice; likelihood of breakup and likelihood of discussion, respectively), rather than including loyalty and neglect. Importantly though, it should be noted that the scales that I utilized are quite similar to the items for Exit and Voice that are included in the accommodation measure. For example, two of the items from Rusbult et al.’s (1982) accommodation measure were: “I would end the relationship” (exit), “I would talk to my partner about what was bothering me” (voice). As such, I expect that the items that I used will still map onto Exit vs. Voice responses.

**Confidence in responding.** One item was used to assess participants’ confidence in responding to the imagined emotional infidelity behavior. Again, each behavior that the participant listed in the behavior generation task was piped into this item in Qualtrics. Participants were prompted with the behavior then asked: “How confident are you that you know

how you would want to respond to this behavior?” (5-point scale: *not at all confident* – *extremely confident*).

**Emotional responses.** Modeled after previous research that has examined emotional reactions to infidelity (e.g. Vaughn Becker et al., 2004), I chose to measure participants’ imagined emotional reactions to the behaviors for four emotions: jealousy, anger, hurt, and disgust. Participants reported on these emotional reactions for each behavior that they listed. The question read: “To what extent would you feel the following emotions if you were in a romantic relationship and your partner did this behavior?”. Positioned below this question were the four emotions (i.e. “jealous”, “hurt”, “disgusted”, and “angry”) and a 5-point scale ranging from “*not at all*” to “*a great deal*”.

**Additional measures.** In some of the models analyzed (see Analysis section), I also controlled for the following variables: attachment orientation (i.e. anxious vs. avoidant) and previous experience with infidelity (i.e. whether they had ever cheated and whether they had been cheated on in the past). In order to measure attachment orientation, I used the Experiences in Close Relationships – Short Form (ECR-Short Form) (Wei, Russell, Mallinckrodt, & Vogel, 2007). Consistent with Wei et al.’s (2007) use of this measure, reliability was acceptable for the anxiety subscale ( $\alpha = .72$ ;  $M = 4.386$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ). However, reliability was lower than expected and was minimally acceptable for the Avoidance subscale ( $\alpha = .69$ ;  $M = 2.929$ ,  $SD = .944$ ). Two separate items, modeled after items used by Tagler (2010), were used to assess previous experience with infidelity: “Have you ever discovered that a previous or current romantic partner cheated on you?” and “Have you ever cheated on a previous or current romantic partner?”.

## **Analysis**

Analyses were performed using R statistical software. The data for this study exhibit two levels of nesting (behaviors within individuals). Due to the nested structure of the data, to address H1a – H1c, I conducted multilevel polynomial regression analyses using the “lmer” function from the lme4 package in R (Bates, Maechler, Bolker & Walker, 2015), and p-values were obtained with the lmerTest package in R (Kuznetsova, Brockhoff & Christensen, 2017). I fit three separate multilevel polynomial regression models, treating “Participant” as a random intercept. In these models, the linear term represents cheatingness (i.e. amount/magnitude of cheating), and the quadratic term was utilized to make inferences about the hypothesized theory of ambiguity. That is, the quadratic term was included to test nonlinear associations between cheatingness and the outcomes of interest, with the goal of drawing inferences about whether these nonlinear associations support a theory of ambiguity. To test **H1a**, I fit a model to examine the likelihood of breakup (scale ratings) as predicted by cheatingness, and made inferences regarding whether the observed associations supported a theory of ambiguity. To test **H1b**, I fit a model to examine the likelihood of discussion with the partner (scale ratings) as predicted by cheatingness and again interpreted whether the observed associations appeared to support a theory of ambiguity. Finally, to test **H1c**, I fit a model to examine confidence in responding to the behavior as predicted by cheatingness, and made inferences regarding whether the results supported the hypothesized theory of ambiguity. In each of these models, I compared the linear term (i.e. the cheatingness ratings) to the quadratic term (i.e. cheatingness<sup>2</sup>) in the same model. Given that there was a significant positive association between self-perception of cheatingness and average-perception of cheatingness ( $r = .59, p < .001$ ), I chose to solely utilize the self-perception measure of cheatingness for all analyses. Moving forward, I simply call this predictor

“cheatingness”, as the “self-perception” component of this measure was not uniquely predictive of outcomes.

After fitting the multilevel polynomial regressions for cheatingness and the three primary outcomes (i.e. likelihood of breakup, likelihood of discussion, and confidence in responding), I also fit three additional multilevel polynomial regression models, in which I added the following covariates to the previous three models: attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, previous experience being cheated on, and previous experience cheating.

Due to the binary nature of the outcomes for **H1d** and **H1e**, I fit logistic regression models using the “glm” function within the “stats” package in R (R Core Team, 2020). I fit two separate logistic regressions to examine: the likelihood of the participant mentioning breakup in the open-response item (**H1d**) (coded as 0 = no, 1 = yes), and the likelihood of the participant mentioning a discussion with their partner in the open-response item (**H1e**) (coded as 0 = no, 1 = yes), as a function of cheatingness. In each of these models, I compared the linear term (i.e. the cheatingness ratings) to the quadratic term (i.e. cheatingness<sup>2</sup>) in the same model, to again draw inferences regarding the hypothesized theory of ambiguity. Notably, I tested these models for H1d and H1e only using data for the first behavior that participants listed and reported on, so as to avoid potential order effects. Following fitting the first two models, I fit two additional logistic regression models in which I added the following covariates to the two previous models: attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, previous experience being cheated on, and previous experience cheating.

Finally, some exploratory aims of this work were to: 1) examine whether the various category selections (i.e. from the categorization task) differ from one another in their associations with the following: cheatingness, likelihood of breakup (scale ratings), likelihood of

discussion (scale ratings), confidence in responding, and each emotional response (i.e. Jealousy, Hurt, Anger, Disgust) and 2) examine associations between cheatingness and the outcomes, with the four emotional responses (i.e. Jealousy, Hurt, Anger, Disgust) added to the multilevel polynomial regression models.

To address the first exploratory aim, I fit several multilevel polynomial regression models that again treated “Participant” as a random intercept, and included the category variables (i.e. “medium”, “with whom the behavior occurs”, and “nature/type of investment”). Separate models were fitted for the following: likelihood of breakup, likelihood of discussion, confidence in responding, and cheatingness, and the four emotional responses (i.e. Jealousy, Anger, Hurt, Disgust). To address the second exploratory aim, I fit several multilevel polynomial regression models, in which the four emotional responses (i.e. Jealousy, Anger, Hurt, Disgust) were treated as fixed effects and added to models with cheatingness and the three primary outcomes of interest (i.e. likelihood of breakup, likelihood of discussion, and confidence in responding). Rather than fit models that only included the emotional responses as fixed effects, cheatingness was included in these models to allow for an examination of the associations between emotional responses and the outcomes, above and beyond the effect of cheatingness. As in the previously described models for the primary outcomes of interest, I also added a quadratic cheatingness term (i.e. cheatingness<sup>2</sup>) to these models.

## **Results**

Table 1 summarizes several aspects of the possible EI behaviors that participants generated. Participants generated about 5.6 behaviors on average, with 3 participants at the low-end of the range listing only 1 behavior each, and 2 participants at the high-end that filled all 20 possible slots with behaviors. Regarding the distribution of behaviors on the cheatingness scale,

there were 111 behaviors on the “not cheating” side of the scale (i.e. below the midpoint of 0), and there were 458 behaviors on the “cheating” side of the scale (i.e. above the midpoint of 0). To create Table 1, I first grouped the behaviors that participants provided into “behavior types”, which I developed by sorting similar behaviors into cohesive groups and producing a comprehensive label (i.e. the behavior type) to refer to each group of behaviors. Prior to conducting analyses and creating this table, I excluded behaviors that were sexual in nature, resulting in 610 total behaviors that participants had generated. Of those 610 behaviors, I was able to sort 466 behaviors into a group with other similar behaviors. The remaining 144 behaviors could not be sorted into groups as they were either the only behavior of that type listed, or because they were incomprehensible. This process yielded 25 separate behavior types.

Also shown in Table 1 are sample responses, the number of behaviors within that type, and the number of behaviors within each category selection (e.g. number of behaviors categorized as “via tech” versus “in person”). The two most frequently listed types of behaviors were “Texting or talking on the phone to someone secretly / flirtatiously / often” and “Non-sexual physical touch (e.g. cuddling, hugging, massaging, holding hands)”. Within these types, the category selections indicate that participants tended to think that “Texting or talking on the phone to someone secretly/flirtatiously/often” was most frequently carried out via technology, with a friend, and involved an investment of attention. On the other hand, “Non-sexual physical touch (e.g. cuddling, hugging, massaging, holding hands)” tended to be categorized as being an in-person behavior that was carried out with a friend and primarily involved an investment of affection/connection.

It should be noted that, rather than reporting all possible categorizations of the behaviors in this table, I chose to utilize the category selections that participants “first pictured” when

listing the behaviors. I felt that this would be a more meaningful way to describe these data; that way, when looking at the prevalence of each category selection for a particular behavior, we can begin to get a sense of the “typical” context for that specific behavior. That is, we are able to see which particular combinations of category selections are most frequently reported when participants are first thinking about a particular EI behavior. On the other hand, reporting “all possible” categories that behaviors could fall into doesn’t seem to be as informative, as participants tended to simply select all categories provided for that measure. Figure 1 shows the relative number of behaviors that were sorted into the sub-categories. As can be seen in the figure, when it comes to the medium through which the behaviors occur, behaviors were more frequently categorized as occurring “in person” than “via technology” in this sample. When considering the extra-dyadic partner that the behavior occurs with, “friend” was the most frequent category that first came to mind. Finally, regarding the nature/type of investment made for the EI behaviors, “affection/connection” was the most frequently selected type of investment, with “attention” following not too far behind.

To examine **H1a**, **H1b**, and **H1c**, I fit separate multilevel polynomial regression models for the three primary outcomes of interest: likelihood of breakup (scale ratings), likelihood of discussion (scale ratings), and confidence in responding to the behavior. For all models, individuals (i.e. participants) were treated as random intercepts, and cheatingness, as well as the quadratic term (i.e. cheatingness<sup>2</sup>) were entered as fixed factors. When interpreting the results of these models, it’s important to clarify the distinction between significant linear and nonlinear associations and what those findings could mean with regard to the hypothesized ambiguity theory. For these models, a significant linear term would simply reflect an association between cheatingness and the given outcome of interest. A significant quadratic term, on the other hand,

would reflect a nonlinear relationship between cheatingness and the outcome of interest, that *could* represent support for the hypothesized theory of ambiguity (see Discussion for alternative explanations and a more thorough interpretation). Starting with the model for likelihood of breakup (see Table 2, Model 1) results indicated that cheatingness was significantly and positively associated with likelihood of breakup ( $B = .265$ ,  $SE = 0.017$ ,  $t = 15.61$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and cheatingness was significantly associated with curvilinear changes in participants' scale ratings of likelihood of breakup ( $B = 0.014$ ,  $SE = .003$ ,  $t = 4.22$ ,  $p < .001$ ). As shown in Figure 2, likelihood of breakup was lowest around the middle of the negative side of the scale (i.e. it was lowest around -3 to -4, which would be in between “*Definitely not cheating*” and “*I don't know/unsure*”). Additionally, the intercept showed that, at 0 on the cheatingness rating scale (i.e. the midpoint of “*I don't know/unsure*”; highest ambiguity), likelihood of breakup is estimated at 3.718 on the scale (i.e. almost reaching the midpoint of “*neither likely nor unlikely*”). When the covariates were added to this model (i.e. attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, previous experience being cheated on, and previous experience cheating), cheatingness remained significantly and positively associated with the likelihood of breakup ( $B = .264$ ,  $SE = 0.017$ ,  $t = 15.45$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and remained significantly associated with curvilinear changes in participants' scale ratings of likelihood of breakup ( $B = 0.014$ ,  $SE = .003$ ,  $t = 4.17$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Table 2 Model 2).

Regarding likelihood of discussion with the partner, results indicated that cheatingness was significantly and positively associated with participants' ratings of likelihood of discussion ( $B = .187$ ,  $SE = 0.018$ ,  $t = 10.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Table 3, Model 1). Cheatingness was also significantly associated with curvilinear changes in participants' scale ratings of likelihood of discussion ( $B = -0.020$ ,  $SE = .004$ ,  $t = -5.50$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Table 3, Model 1). As shown in Figure

3, likelihood of discussion was lowest around -7 (i.e. “*Definitely not cheating*”) on the cheatingness rating scale. Additionally, the intercept showed that, at 0 on the cheatingness rating scale (i.e. the midpoint of “*I don’t know/unsure*”; highest ambiguity), likelihood of discussion is estimated at 5.915 on the scale (i.e. almost reaching a 6 “*moderately likely*”). When the covariates were added to this model (i.e. Attachment Anxiety, Attachment Avoidance, previous experience being cheated on, previous experience cheating), cheatingness remained significantly and positively associated with likelihood of discussion ( $B = .188$ ,  $SE = 0.018$ ,  $t = 10.33$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Table 3, Model 2) and remained significantly associated with curvilinear changes in participants’ scale ratings of likelihood of discussion ( $B = -0.020$ ,  $SE = .004$ ,  $t = -5.51$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Table 3, Model 2).

Finally, regarding confidence in responding to the behavior, results indicated that cheatingness was significantly associated with curvilinear changes in participants’ ratings of confidence in responding to the behavior ( $B = 0.007$ ,  $SE = .002$ ,  $t = 3.15$ ,  $p = .002$ ; see Table 4, Model 1). The linear term in this model was not significant. As shown in Figure 4, confidence in responding was lowest around 0 (i.e. the midpoint of “the midpoint of “*I don’t know/unsure*”; highest ambiguity) on the cheatingness rating scale, and confidence in responding was highest at either end of the scale (i.e. at “*Definitely not cheating*” and “*Definitely cheating*”). The intercept showed that, at 0 on the cheatingness rating scale (i.e. the midpoint of “*I don’t know/unsure*”; highest ambiguity), confidence in responding is estimated at 3.609 on the scale (i.e. almost reaching the midpoint of “*neither likely nor unlikely*”). When the covariates were added to this model (i.e. Attachment Anxiety, Attachment Avoidance, previous experience being cheated on, previous experience cheating), cheatingness remained significantly associated with curvilinear changes in participants’ ratings of confidence in responding ( $B = 0.007$ ,  $SE = .002$ ,  $t = 3.13$ ,  $p =$

.002; see Table 4, Model 2). Perhaps not surprisingly, past experience with being cheated on emerged as a significant covariate ( $B = -0.415$ ,  $SE = 0.122$ ,  $t = -3.41$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

As participants also reported their anticipated response to each behavior in an open-response format, I tested **H1d and H1e** by fitting logistic regression models to examine the likelihood of mentioning breakup or discussion in the open responses, as a function of cheatingness of the behavior. As with the previous models, I included the quadratic cheatingness term to draw inferences about ambiguity. Notably, I tested these models for H1d and H1e only using data for the first behavior that participants listed and reported on, so as to avoid potential order effects<sup>1</sup>. All logistic regression analyses were conducted using the “glm” function from the “stats” package in R (R Core Team, 2020). Tables 5 and 6 present the results from the four logistic regressions that I conducted. Results from these models indicated that cheatingness did not significantly predict an individual's probability of mentioning breakup in the open response (see Table 5, Models 1 and 2) or mentioning discussion in the open response, for the first behavior that participants listed/reported on (see Table 6, Models 1 and 2).

Finally, though I did not hypothesize about these associations, for exploratory purposes I fit multilevel polynomial regression models to examine the associations between the category

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<sup>1</sup> To be thorough, I also fit multilevel logistic regressions using all of the behaviors that participants listed, and found significant linear and curvilinear associations between cheatingness and the likelihood of mentioning breakup as well as the likelihood of mentioning discussion in the open response. However, given that the results of these analyses might be driven by order effects (i.e. from writing multiple open responses pertaining to the rest of the behaviors they listed, after seeing the scales for likelihood of breakup and likelihood of discussion), these are merely exploratory analyses and were not interpreted as support for H1d or H1e. Starting with the exploratory model (i.e. including all behaviors) for mentioning breakup in the open response, results revealed a significant linear term ( $b = .230$ ,  $p = .000$ ) as well as a significant quadratic term ( $b = .028$ ,  $p = .002$ ). When the covariates were added to this model (i.e. attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, previous experience being cheated on, and previous experience cheating), these linear and nonlinear associations remained significant. For mentioning discussion in the open response (including all behaviors that participants listed), results revealed a significant quadratic term ( $b = -0.271$ ,  $p = .000$ ). The linear cheatingness term was not significant. When the covariates were added to this model (i.e. attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, previous experience being cheated on, and previous experience cheating), the nonlinear association remained significant.

selections (i.e. medium, with whom the behavior occurs, and nature/type of investment) and outcomes, and between emotional responses and outcomes. Regarding the category selections, there were no significant associations found between any of the categories and the outcomes. However, regarding the emotional responses, results indicated that, above and beyond the linear and curvilinear effects of cheatingness, 1) the extent to which participants would feel “hurt” by the behavior was significantly and positively associated with likelihood of breakup ( $\beta = .421$ ,  $t(561.18) = 7.44$ ,  $p < .001$ ), 2) the extent to which participants would feel “disgusted” by the behavior was significantly and positively associated with likelihood of breakup ( $\beta = .104$ ,  $t(579.84) = 2.21$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and 3) the extent to which participants would feel “angry” from the behavior was significantly and positively associated with likelihood of breakup ( $\beta = .214$ ,  $t(565.98) = 3.56$ ,  $p < .001$ ). There was no significant association found between jealousy and the likelihood of breakup. To state these findings another way, as feelings of “anger”, “disgust”, and “hurt” increase, so too does likelihood of breakup. Results of a second model predicting likelihood of discussion indicated that, above and beyond the linear and curvilinear effects of cheatingness, 1) the extent to which participants would feel “hurt” by the behavior was significantly and positively associated with likelihood of discussion ( $\beta = .247$ ,  $t(574.53) = 3.78$ ,  $p < .001$ ), 2) the extent to which participants would feel “disgusted” by the behavior was significantly and negatively associated with likelihood of discussion ( $\beta = -0.137$ ,  $t(580.99) = -2.56$ ,  $p < .05$ ), 3) the extent to which participants would feel “angry” from the behavior was significantly and positively associated with likelihood of discussion ( $\beta = .210$ ,  $t(576.40) = 3.04$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and 4) the extent to which participants would feel “jealous” from the behavior was significantly and positively associated with likelihood of discussion ( $\beta = .177$ ,  $t(574.87) = 3.72$ ,  $p < .001$ ). That is, as “anger”, “hurt” and “jealousy” increase, likelihood of discussion also

increases but as “disgust” increases, likelihood of discussion decreases. Finally, results of a third model predicting confidence in responding indicated that, above and beyond the linear and curvilinear effects of cheatingness, 1) the extent to which participants would feel “disgusted” from the behavior was significantly and positively associated with confidence in responding ( $\beta = .093$ ,  $t(573.66) = 2.73$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and 2) the extent to which participants would feel “angry” from the behavior was significantly and positively associated with confidence in responding ( $\beta = .096$ ,  $t(561.13) = 2.22$ ,  $p < .05$ ). That is, as “anger” and “disgust” increased, confidence in responding to the behavior also increased. The associations between “jealousy” and “hurt” with confidence in responding were not significant.

### **Discussion**

The present study resulted in a rich dataset of 610 participant-generated EI behaviors. Of those 610 behaviors, 466 were grouped into “behavior types” (see Table 1), yielding a total of 26 overall “types” of EI behaviors. The two most frequently listed types of behaviors were “Texting or talking on the phone to someone secretly / flirtatiously / often” and “Non-sexual physical touch (e.g. cuddling, hugging, massaging, holding hands)”. Notably, there remained 144 behaviors that were unable to be sorted into a particular category as they were either incomprehensible/unclear, or they were the only behavior of that type listed (i.e. there weren’t any other similar behaviors that it could be grouped with). Regarding the categories that participants sorted the behaviors into (see Figure 1), the three most frequently selected categories were: “In person” for medium through which the behavior occurs, “Friend” for with whom the behavior occurs, and “Affection/connection” for the type of investment involved.

The present study helps to resolve some of the issues with the definition of EI in the literature. One such issue raised earlier was that some definitions of EI are too broad (e.g.

defining EI as any secretive behavior that is experienced as betrayal by the partner; Hertlein & Piercy, 2008) and the construct lacks clear behavioral exemplars. The present study helps to resolve this issue by presenting data on *specific* behaviors that constitute EI. These behaviors were grouped into “behavior types” (see Table 1) that are *specific to* EI, rather than defining this construct with far-reaching conceptualizations that could involve other kinds of relationship transgressions (e.g. in the case of defining EI in terms of rule violations; Hertlein & Piercy, 2008). As previously noted, some researchers have attempted to refine and improve the definition of EI by examining prevalent themes within participants’ definitions of EI (Guitar et al., 2017) or by utilizing researcher-generated infidelity behaviors (e.g. Habibi, 2010; Kruger, et al., 2013). This study improves upon these methods by examining participant-generated behaviors, rather than utilizing researcher-generated behaviors or broad themes/definitions to describe EI. Even when behavioral exemplars have been provided, they’ve still been insufficient in that they are often too vague (e.g. “forming a deep emotional attachment”; Cramer et al., 2001), and lack information about the context in which the behavior occurs. The present work enhances the specificity with which EI is described by providing data on *observable*<sup>2</sup> EI behaviors, and by situating these behaviors within a specific context (i.e. by collecting data on the type of investment made, the medium through which the behavior may occur, and with whom the behavior may occur).

For exploratory purposes, I also collected data regarding participant’s anticipated/imagined emotional responses (i.e. “Jealousy”, “Anger”, “Hurt”, “Disgust”) to the EI behaviors they listed. First, regarding likelihood of breakup (i.e. exit response), the results

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<sup>2</sup> With the exception of the behavior type “thinking about someone else in a romantic/sexual way”. However, this behavior type only included 7 participant-generated behaviors. All 24 remaining behavior types (i.e. excluding “Uncategorized”), consisting of 459 participant-generated behaviors, were observable behaviors.

showed that, as feelings of “anger”, “disgust”, and “hurt” increase, so too does the likelihood of breakup. Regarding the likelihood of discussion (i.e. voice response), as “anger”, “hurt” and “jealousy” increase, likelihood of discussion also increases but as “disgust” increases, likelihood of discussion decreases. Finally, regarding confidence in responding, as “anger” and “disgust” increased, confidence in responding to the behavior also increased. The associations between “jealousy” and “hurt” with confidence in responding were not significant. Consistent with previous research that has found “hurt” to be the strongest feeling associated with emotional infidelity (Vaughn Becker et al., 2004), I found that, above and beyond the linear and nonlinear effects of cheatingness, jealousy, anger, and disgust, hurt was significantly and positively associated with the likelihood of breakup and the likelihood of discussion.

Results for the primary hypotheses of this study revealed that cheatingness is significantly and positively associated with participants’ ratings of likelihood of breakup (i.e. exit response), and participants’ ratings of likelihood of discussion (i.e. voice response). In an attempt to highlight the importance of examining the midpoint of the cheatingness scale and refute a monotonic claim, I compared the linear term (i.e. the cheatingness ratings) to the quadratic term (i.e. cheatingness<sup>2</sup>) in the same model. When interpreting these findings, a significant linear term alone (i.e. without a significant quadratic term) would simply reflect an association between cheatingness and the given outcome of interest. A significant quadratic term, on the other hand, would reflect a nonlinear relationship between cheatingness and the outcome of interest, that *could* represent support for the hypothesized theory of ambiguity, though there could also be some alternative explanations for such a finding. Within one model, if results showed a significant linear association, but no significant quadratic association, that would reflect a lack of support for a theory of ambiguity (i.e. only a cheatingness effect is being shown). If results

showed significant linear and quadratic associations, I interpreted that to reflect that the given findings *could* be supporting a theory of ambiguity, but there could certainly be alternative explanations for what is driving these results. Finally, if results showed a quadratic association *without* a significant linear association, I interpreted that to reflect that the findings provide some initial support for a theory of ambiguity (i.e. not a cheatingness effect).

Regarding the results for the likelihood of breakup and the likelihood of discussion, results showed significant linear associations and significant curvilinear associations between cheatingness and these two outcomes. These associations between cheatingness and likelihood of breakup (scale ratings) and likelihood of discussion (scale ratings) all held even when adding four covariates to the models (i.e. attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, previous experience cheating, and previous experience being cheated on). The fact that both the linear and nonlinear associations were significant in these models suggested that the findings *could* represent some support for a theory of ambiguity. However, when it comes to mentioning breakup and mentioning discussion in the open responses, I did not find any significant associations between cheatingness and these two variables. Taken together, the significant linear *and* nonlinear associations, as well as the lack of significant findings with regard to mentioning breakup and mentioning discussion in open responses, seems to suggest that the significant findings for likelihood of breakup and likelihood of discussion need to be interpreted with caution.

Despite finding significant curvilinear associations between cheatingness and likelihood of breakup as well as likelihood of discussion, when represented graphically, these relationships appeared to be mostly linear. That is, they did not show a clear U-shaped association in which the midpoint (i.e. highest ambiguity) seemed to be unique while the poles of the scale were similar to one another, as was found for the association between cheatingness and confidence in

responding. As such, the significant curvilinear associations between cheatingness and likelihood of breakup, as well as likelihood of discussion, may not be sufficient to refute a monotonic claim for these outcomes. However, given the findings regarding confidence in responding to the behavior, it seems that an argument could be made for further investigation of the impact of ambiguity on responses to EI behaviors. That is, it seems likely that the effect on one's confidence in responding to an EI behavior would have implications for the nuanced ways in which individuals respond to the behavior.

It is important to note that the results that I found for the curvilinear association between cheatingness and likelihood of breakup, was somewhat inconsistent with the direction that I had hypothesized. Essentially, I had predicted that participants would be the least likely to engage in active responses (i.e. exit and voice) when ambiguity was at its highest (i.e. at the midpoint of the cheatingness scale). Whereas the slope for the quadratic term is in the hypothesized direction (see Table 2, Models 1 and 2), when represented graphically (see Figure 2), likelihood of breakup does not appear to be lowest at the midpoint and the direction of the relationship does not appear to reverse below the midpoint such that the poles of the scale were similar to one another. Instead, as previously noted, despite the quadratic term being significant and the slope being in the hypothesized direction, the midpoint of the scale does not appear to be uniquely related to the likelihood of breakup and the poles of the scale appear to be quite different from one another. Regarding the likelihood of discussion, the results that I found for the curvilinear association between cheatingness and likelihood of discussion were also inconsistent with the direction that I had hypothesized. The slope of the quadratic term was not in the hypothesized direction (see Table 3, Models 1 and 2) and when represented graphically (see Figure 3) likelihood of discussion appears to be lowest at -7 (i.e. one of the poles).

How might one explain why these results were in the opposite direction than predicted? Well, as previously noted, one explanation could be that these results are primarily driven by cheatingness, despite there being significant quadratic terms. Another explanation for these results seems to be that they are actually quite consistent with what the EVLN model would suggest. Some research finds that extra-dyadic dating or flirting is classified as one of the most hurtful, negatively valenced, and uncertainty-provoking events of those examined (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006). More specifically, Bachman and Guerrero (2006) asked participants to describe in detail something hurtful that their partner said or did. The researchers then sorted and coded the events based on the type of event described, and were able to organize the events into 10 event types. What they found was, out of the 10 event types, “having a partner who dated or flirted with others” (i.e. extra dyadic dating/flirting), was rated as one of the most negatively valenced, uncertainty-provoking, and emotionally hurtful events examined (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006). Regarding responses to infidelity, these researchers also found that destructive responses were positively associated with negative valence and uncertainty (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006). Additionally, the results of their study showed that when individuals reported high levels uncertainty they were more likely to utilize destructive communication responses (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006). The present results also appear to be consistent with previous research that finds that individuals are more likely to use active responses (i.e. exit and voice) when responding to more serious relationship transgressions like infidelity (Weisner & Weigel, 2014). As such, contrary to my prediction that the midpoint on the cheatingness scale (i.e. greatest ambiguity) would be associated with lower likelihood of breakup (i.e. exit) and discussion (i.e. voice), if uncertainty is triggered by ambiguity, as I suggested, then one would

instead have reason to expect that they would respond more destructively (rather than less actively).

Regarding the results for confidence in responding, results *only* showed significant curvilinear associations between cheatingness and confidence in responding (i.e. the linear term was not significant). The nonlinear association between cheatingness and confidence in responding held even when adding four covariates to the model (i.e. attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, previous experience cheating, and previous experience being cheated on). Given the fact that only the nonlinear association was significant in this model, I interpreted this to reflect that the results showed some support for a theory of ambiguity.

Importantly, regarding the association between cheatingness and confidence in responding, results showed a significant curvilinear association that was in the hypothesized direction. I had hypothesized that confidence in responding to the EI behavior would be lowest at the midpoint of the cheatingness scale (i.e. highest ambiguity). Essentially, I had reasoned that if ambiguity has the potential to trigger episodic uncertainty, then perhaps individuals would feel less confident in responding to the behaviors as ambiguity increases. Consistent with this prediction, results showed a curvilinear relationship in which confidence in responding was lowest when ambiguity was highest (i.e. at the midpoint of the cheatingness scale; see Figure 4). Notably, this finding highlights the importance of examining the midpoint on the cheatingness scale that was utilized, as the midpoint (i.e. 0 on the scale) was uniquely related to confidence in responding to the behavior, while the poles of the scale (i.e. “*definitely not cheating*” and “*definitely cheating*”) were more similar to one another.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

In this study, one limitation is that I did not measure episodic uncertainty nor did I use the accommodation processes measure to measure exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect responses. Instead, I utilized episodic relational uncertainty and the EVLN model as frameworks for understanding the potential responses to EI. However, without measuring uncertainty, I cannot speak to whether it is in fact associated with ambiguity. Moreover, it would be interesting to consider whether uncertainty is a mediator between ambiguity and active responses (i.e. exit and voice). Additionally, without having measured EVLN responses, I cannot speak to whether individuals would exhibit passive responses in response to EI and, if so, under what conditions might they do so (i.e. more or less ambiguity)? Future research should examine the association between episodic relationship uncertainty and ambiguity, and consider uncertainty as a potential mediator.

Second, the fact that this was a cross sectional study is another limitation. A couple of times throughout this paper, I speculated about the potential processing individuals might do when attempting to make sense of/resolve ambiguity. However, I certainly cannot make claims regarding the ways in which individual process and make sense of ambiguous EI behaviors, given the data that I collected. As such, for future research, longitudinal data may be necessary to examine the ways in which individuals process and/or resolve ambiguous EI behaviors.

Further, I did not directly measure or manipulate ambiguity, nor did I assess reactions to real events or situations. In this study, participants were only asked to imagine how they would respond to the behaviors that they had listed. As such, future research should attempt to directly measure and manipulate ambiguity as well as the various category selections (i.e. Medium vs. With whom vs. Investment type).

Additionally, I only examined emotional infidelity for this study, as the behavioral exemplars for sexual infidelity are already quite clear. However, a comparison of EI with sexual infidelity might be an interesting avenue for future research, to examine the relative ambiguity of EI, in comparison to sexual infidelity.

Finally, the relationship that was found between cheatingness and confidence in responding to the EI behavior seems to suggest that it may be important for future work to further examine how this relationship may impact responses to EI. For example, it seems possible that there may be a process that is mediated by confidence in responding (e.g. if increased ambiguity leads to decreases in one's confidence in responding to the behavior, how might that impact the ways in which an individual reacts to the situation/behavior?).

## **Conclusion**

Emotional infidelity is a particular type of infidelity that may be especially ambiguous, due to a lack of clear behavioral exemplars. That is, our understanding of emotional infidelity may be complicated by a lack of clear behavioral indices, coupled with broad definitions that fail to address the nuance of this construct. When examining EI in a research context, accounting for the nuance and ambiguity that is characteristic of this type of infidelity is of crucial importance, and must be addressed if we are to understand the potential impact it has. The present study explored the specific types of behaviors that participants ( $n = 113$ ; 610 behaviors total) generated as exemplars of "emotional infidelity", and examined whether a theory of ambiguity can be utilized to predict different types of responses to the behaviors. Results showed significant linear and curvilinear associations between cheatingness and likelihood of breakup, as well as likelihood of discussion. Taken together, these associations appeared to provide support for a cheatingness effect, rather than providing support for a theory of ambiguity. However, results

also revealed a significant curvilinear association between cheatingness and confidence in responding to the behavior, which appeared to support the hypothesized theory of ambiguity.

The relationship between cheatingness and one's confidence in responding to the EI behavior was especially notable, as it highlighted the importance of the midpoint on the cheatingness scale and suggested that the midpoint (i.e. highest ambiguity) may indeed be unique when it comes to responses to EI.

Table 1. Prevalence of behaviors organized by behavior types and categories.					
			Prevalence Within Behavior Categories		
Behavior Type	Specific Sample Responses	Number of Behaviors of this Type	Medium <sup>b</sup>	With Whom <sup>b</sup>	Investment Type <sup>b</sup>
Texting or talking on the phone with someone else <sup>a</sup> secretly / flirtatiously / often	"Texting other people "flirty" way"  "Texting and/or calling another person in a flirtatious or romantic way"	47	Via tech: 43  In Person: 4	Coworker: 4 Friend: 21 Stranger: 5 LD Other <sup>c</sup> : 5 Former partner: 7 Other Person: 5	Time: 8 Money: 1 Affection/Connection: 12 Attention: 23 No Investment: 1 Other Investment: 2
Non-sexual physical touch (e.g. cuddling, hugging, massaging, holding hands)	"Cuddling with someone that is not your significant other."  "Holding someone else's hand other than your partner"	47	Via tech: 2  In Person: 45	Coworker: 3 Friend: 25 Stranger: 6 LD Other: 0 Former partner: 10 Other Person: 3	Time: 1 Money: 1 Affection/Connection: 38 Attention: 4 No Investment: 2 Other Investment: 1

*Notes.* Twenty-three behaviors were excluded from the analysis, and this table, on the basis of being sexual behaviors. This yielded 610 remaining behaviors, of which 466 were able to be grouped with other similar responses, while 144 were not able to be grouped into a "behavior type" as they were either the only behavior of that kind listed, or they were incomprehensible.

a. In all behavior types, "someone else" refers broadly to someone that could be a potential threat to the relationship (i.e. rather than a platonic/ non-romantic friend).

b. If sub-categories do not add up to the total number of behaviors for that type, that indicates that one or more behaviors within that type were not dragged into any category by the participant.

c. LD Other = long distance other.

Table 1. Prevalence of behaviors organized by behavior types and categories. (cont.)					
			Prevalence Within Behavior Categories		
Behavior Type	Specific Sample Responses	Number of Behaviors of this Type	Medium	With Whom	Investment Type
Flirting	"Flirting with anyone who isn't your partner"  "Flirting with other potential partners while in a relationship"	45	Via tech: 15  In Person: 30	Coworker: 5 Friend: 13 Stranger: 23 LD Other: 0 Former partner: 3 Other Person: 1	Time: 0 Money: 0 Affection/Connection: 23 Attention: 20 No Investment: 1 Other Investment: 1
Going on dates with someone else; Doing things with another person that could be considered "romantic" or "date-like"	"Going on dates with someone while you are in a romantic relationship with someone else."  "going out to dinner/to a restaurant alone with another person"	41	Via tech: 2  In Person: 39	Coworker: 2 Friend: 20 Stranger: 5 LD Other: 1 Former partner: 6 Other Person: 7	Time: 15 Money: 9 Affection/Connection: 10 Attention: 5 No Investment: 0 Other Investment: 1

Table 1. Prevalence of behaviors organized by behavior types and categories. (cont.)					
			Prevalence Within Behavior Categories		
Behavior Type	Specific Sample Responses	Number of Behaviors of this Type	Medium	With Whom	Investment Type
Interacting with someone else over social media	"DM-ing other people on social media (telling them how attractive they are)"  "Hitting "like" on sexually charged pictures of other people"	27	Via tech: 27  In Person: 0	Coworker: 0 Friend: 5 Stranger: 11 LD Other: 1 Former partner: 9 Other Person: 1	Time: 1 Money: 0 Affection/Connection: 7 Attention: 15 No Investment: 1 Other Investment: 3
Sending nude or suggestive pictures/messages to someone else	"send suggestive photos or other information, like naked photos"  "Sending explicit texts or photos"	26	Via tech: 0  In Person: 26	Coworker: 1 Friend: 12 Stranger: 3 LD Other: 4 Former partner: 5 Other Person: 1	Time: 1 Money: 2 Affection/Connection: 10 Attention: 8 No Investment: 5 Other Investment: 0

Table 1. Prevalence of behaviors organized by behavior types and categories. (cont.)					
			Prevalence Within Behavior Categories		
Behavior Type	Specific Sample Responses	Number of Behaviors of this Type	Medium	With Whom	Investment Type
Providing/seeking intimate emotional support or sharing personal information with someone else	"Discussing extremely personal things with someone else"  "opening up about very detailed emotional topics that you haven't even discussed with your significant other "	25	Via tech: 10  In Person: 25	Coworker: 0 Friend: 16 Stranger: 2 LD Other: 1 Former partner: 6  Other Person: 0	Time: 1 Money: 0 Affection/Connection: 22 Attention: 2 No Investment: 0  Other Investment: 0
Lying about your whereabouts and/or meeting up with someone else discreetly	"lying about where you are or who you are with"  "romantic secret meetings, behind significant other's back"	25	Via tech: 9  In Person: 16	Coworker: 3 Friend: 2 Stranger: 2 LD Other: 1 Former partner: 16 Other Person: 1	Time: 7 Money: 0 Affection/Connection: 9 Attention: 2 No Investment: 5 Other Investment: 2

Table 1. Prevalence of behaviors organized by behavior types and categories. (cont.)					
			Prevalence Within Behavior Categories		
Behavior Type	Specific Sample Responses	Number of Behaviors of this Type	Medium	With Whom	Investment Type
Spending a lot of time with someone else / spending more time with another person than one spends with their current partner	"Spending more time with someone else romantically rather than with your partner"  "Spending more time with a female friend than your girlfriend, giving them more attention than your romantic partner."	20	Via tech: 1  In Person: 19	Coworker: 2 Friend: 16 Stranger: 1 LD Other: 0  Former partner: 1  Other Person: 0	Time: 12 Money: 0 Affection/Connection: 4 Attention: 4  No Investment: 0  Other Investment: 0
Hanging out alone with someone that may be a threat to the relationship	"hanging out alone with someone that you know has a crush on you"  "Going out (one-on-one) with someone you find attractive that's not your partner"	20	Via tech: 1  In Person: 19	Coworker: 0 Friend: 11 Stranger: 3 LD Other: 0 Former partner: 5 Other Person: 1	Time: 5 Money: 0 Affection/Connection: 8 Attention: 5  No Investment: 0 Other Investment: 2

Table 1. Prevalence of behaviors organized by behavior types and categories. (cont.)					
			Prevalence Within Behavior Categories		
Behavior Type	Specific Sample Responses	Number of Behaviors of this Type	Medium	With Whom	Investment Type
Communicating with someone else often and/or secretly; Communicating with someone else more than one's partner	"Constant communication with someone who isn't your partner/ who threatens relationship"  "communication with someone behind partners back"	16	Via tech: 11  In Person: 5	Coworker: 3 Friend: 9 Stranger: 0 LD Other: 0 Former partner: 4 Other Person: 0	Time: 3 Money: 0 Affection/Connection: 5 Attention: 8 No Investment: 0 Other Investment: 0
Ignoring your partner or distancing yourself from your partner	"Distancing oneself from a significant other as a means to not threaten others of the preferred sex"  "Disregarding your significant other to spend time with someone youre attracted to."	16	Via tech: 5  In Person: 11	Coworker: 0 Friend: 4 Stranger: 3 LD Other: 2 Former partner: 0 Other Person: 5	Time: 5 Money: 0 Affection/Connection: 4 Attention: 4 No Investment: 1 Other Investment: 2

Table 1. Prevalence of behaviors organized by behavior types and categories. (cont.)					
			Prevalence Within Behavior Categories		
Behavior Type	Specific Sample Responses	Number of Behaviors of this Type	Medium	With Whom	Investment Type
Having a dating profile	"being on tinder or any dating websites"  "having an active account on a dating app. even if it is not being used."	13	Via tech: 12  In Person: 1	Coworker: 0 Friend: 0 Stranger: 10 LD Other: 1 Former partner: 0 Other Person: 2	Time: 3 Money: 0 Affection/Connection: 0 Attention: 7 No Investment: 3 Other Investment: 0
Buying gifts for someone else / giving money to someone else; accepting romantic gifts from someone other than one's partner	"Buying nice things for another girl, like flowers, chocolates or jewelry"  "Accepting romantic gifts from someone while you are in a romantic relationship with another person."	13	Via tech: 4  In Person: 9	Coworker: 0 Friend: 4 Stranger: 1 LD Other: 1 Former partner: 3 Other Person: 4	Time: 0 Money: 8 Affection/Connection: 4 Attention: 0 No Investment: 0 Other Investment: 0

Table 1. Prevalence of behaviors organized by behavior types and categories. (cont.)					
			Prevalence Within Behavior Categories		
Behavior Type	Specific Sample Responses	Number of Behaviors of this Type	Medium	With Whom	Investment Type
Sleeping in the same bed as someone else/ staying over someone else's house	"Sleeping in the same bed with someone other than your significant other (even if no sexual activity was being committed)"  "Going back to someone else's place"	13	Via tech: 0    In Person: 13	Coworker: 0 Friend: 7 Stranger: 1 LD Other: 0 Former partner: 5 Other Person: 0	Time: 4 Money: 0 Affection/Connection: 9 Attention: 0 No Investment: 0 Other Investment: 0
"Checking out" someone else; Gazing affectionately or seductively at someone else	"Checking other people out in a very obvious way while in the presence of a significant other"  "Looking at someone other than your significant other in a way that implies your sexual interest toward that person"	12	Via tech: 10    In Person: 11	Coworker: 0 Friend: 0 Stranger: 7 LD Other: 0 Former partner: 3 Other Person: 2	Time: 1 Money: 0 Affection/Connection: 4 Attention: 6 No Investment: 1 Other Investment: 0

Table 1. Prevalence of behaviors organized by behavior types and categories. (cont.)					
			Prevalence Within Behavior Categories		
Behavior Type	Specific Sample Responses	Number of Behaviors of this Type	Medium	With Whom	Investment Type
Lying about your relationship status (e.g. saying you are single when you are not) or hiding your partner	"Not telling someone who has a romantic interest in you about your current partner."  "hiding (downplaying) her relationship with me when talking to others"	12	Via tech: 8  In Person: 4	Coworker: 0 Friend: 4 Stranger: 5 LD Other: 1 Former partner: 1 Other Person: 1	Time: 0 Money: 0 Affection/Connection: 4 Attention: 4 No Investment: 4 Other Investment: 0
Communicating with or hanging out with a past partner	"texting someone else that you have dated before or have some sort of history with"  "Spending time with a former significant other"	9	Via tech: 4  In Person: 5	Coworker: 0 Friend: 0 Stranger: 0 LD Other: 0 Former partner: 8 Other Person: 1	Time: 2 Money: 0 Affection/Connection: 3 Attention: 3 No Investment: 0 Other Investment: 1

Table 1. Prevalence of behaviors organized by behavior types and categories. (cont.)

			Prevalence Within Behavior Categories		
Behavior Type	Specific Sample Responses	Number of Behaviors of this Type	Medium	With Whom	Investment Type
Dancing with someone other than one's partner at a bar/party	"Dancing with someone at a party/club"  "Dancing with other potential partners while in a relationship"	9	Via tech: 0  In Person: 9	Coworker: 0 Friend: 3 Stranger: 4 LD Other: 0 Former partner: 2 Other Person: 0	Time: 0 Money: 0 Affection/Connection: 4 Attention: 5 No Investment: 0 Other Investment: 0
Telling someone you love them and/or are committed to them	"telling someone else you love them "  "Telling another person besides their partner that you are faithful to only them."	8	Via tech: 6  In Person: 3	Coworker: 0 Friend: 3 Stranger: 2 LD Other: 3 Former partner: 0 Other Person: 1	Time: 0 Money: 0 Affection/Connection: 7 Attention: 2 No Investment: 0 Other Investment: 0
Thinking about someone else in a romantic/sexual way	"thinking about being with someone else romantically"  "Thinking about another man/woman while with your spouse"	7	Via tech: 1  In Person: 6	Coworker: 0 Friend: 3 Stranger: 0 LD Other: 0 Former partner: 1 Other Person: 3	Time: 0 Money: 0 Affection/Connection: 6 Attention: 0 No Investment: 0 Other Investment: 1

Table 1. Prevalence of behaviors organized by behavior types and categories. (cont.)					
			Prevalence Within Behavior Categories		
Behavior Type	Specific Sample Responses	Number of Behaviors of this Type	Medium	With Whom	Investment Type
Going on vacation with someone else	"Going on a vacation with someone else"  "Going on a private vacation with a possible romantic interest while being in a romantic relationship"	5	Via tech: 0  In Person: 5	Coworker: 1 Friend: 2 Stranger: 0 LD Other: 1 Former partner: 1 Other Person: 0	Time: 0 Money: 2 Affection/Connection: 2 Attention: 0 No Investment: 0 Other Investment: 1
Taking/posting pictures with someone that might be a threat to the relationship.	"Portraying an image as a couple with someone who is not the person you are already in a romantic relationship with."  "posting pictures with a person consistently on social media"	4	Via tech: 2  In Person: 2	Coworker: 0 Friend: 2 Stranger: 1 LD Other: 0 Former partner: 0 Other Person: 1	Time: 0 Money: 0 Affection/Connection: 1 Attention: 2 No Investment: 0 Other Investment: 0
Masturbating	"masturbation of any sort"  "Constantly masturbating to a specific person (excluding celebrities)"	3	Via tech: 1  In Person: 2	Coworker: 0 Friend: 1 Stranger: 1 LD Other: 0 Former partner: 1 Other Person: 0	Time: 0 Money: 1 Affection/Connection: 0 Attention: 1 No Investment: 0 Other Investment: 1

Table 1. Prevalence of behaviors organized by behavior types and categories. (cont.)					
			Prevalence Within Behavior Categories		
Behavior Type	Specific Sample Responses	Number of Behaviors of this Type	Medium	With Whom	Investment Type
Buying someone else a drink	"Buying someone else a drink"  "buying other people drinks"	3	Via tech: 0  In Person: 3	Coworker: 1 Friend: 0 Stranger: 2 LD Other: 0 Former partner: 0 Other Person: 0	Time: 0 Money: 0 Affection/Connection: 0 Attention: 1 No Investment: 0 Other Investment: 0
Other/Uncategorized	"having an imaginary partner in video games"  "Not trusting your partner"	144	Via tech: 42  In Person: 102	Coworker: 14 Friend: 46 Stranger: 22 LD Other: 16 Former partner: 22 Other Person: 23	Time: 21 Money: 7 Affection/Connection: 49 Attention: 43 No Investment: 6 Other Investment: 15

Table 2. Results of multilevel polynomial regression models for cheatingness scale on likelihood of breakup (scale ratings).

	Model 1: Likelihood of breakup (scale ratings)				Model 2: Likelihood of breakup (scale ratings)			
	Coef.	SE	t	P value	Coef.	SE	t	P value
Intercept	3.718	0.124	29.95	.000***	4.444	0.739	6.01	.000***
Cheatingness Rating	0.265	0.017	15.61	.000***	0.264	0.017	15.45	.000***
Cheatingness Rating, squared (i.e. ambiguity theory)	0.014	0.003	4.22	.000***	0.014	0.003	4.17	.000***
<i>Covariates</i>								
Attachment anxiety					-0.069	0.096	-0.71	.478
Attachment avoidance					-0.132	0.109	-1.22	.225
Previous experience being cheated on					-0.198	0.184	-1.08	.284
Previous experience cheating					0.172	0.198	0.87	.389

*Note.* "Participant" was added as a random intercept for both models. The quadratic term (i.e. Cheatingness Rating, squared) was included to test the hypothesized ambiguity theory.

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

Table 3. Results of multilevel polynomial regression models for cheatingness scale on likelihood of discussion (scale ratings).

	Model 1: Likelihood of discussion (scale ratings)				Model 2: Likelihood of discussion (scale ratings)			
	Coef.	SE	t	P value	Coef.	SE	t	P value
Intercept	5.915	0.121	48.87	.000***	6.289	0.690	9.12	.000***
Cheatingness Rating	0.187	0.018	10.38	.000***	0.188	0.018	10.33	.000***
Cheatingness Rating, squared (i.e. ambiguity theory)	-0.020	0.004	-5.50	.000***	-0.020	0.004	-5.51	.000***
<i>Covariates</i>								
Attachment anxiety					-0.069	0.093	-0.74	.458
Attachment avoidance					-0.129	0.103	-1.25	.213
Previous experience being cheated on					0.118	0.173	0.68	.498
Previous experience cheating					0.053	0.186	0.28	.777

*Note.* "Participant" was added as a random intercept for both models. The quadratic term (i.e. Cheatingness Rating, squared) was included to test the hypothesized ambiguity theory.

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

Table 4. Results of multilevel polynomial regression models for cheatingness scale on confidence in responding.

	Model 1: Confidence in Responding				Model 2: Confidence in Responding			
	Coef.	SE	t	P value	Coef.	SE	t	P value
Intercept	3.609	0.084	43.16	.000***	4.329	0.491	8.81	.000***
Cheatingness Rating	0.019	0.011	1.75	.081	0.017	0.012	1.53	.126
Cheatingness Rating, squared (i.e. ambiguity theory)	0.007	0.002	3.15	.002**	0.007	0.002	3.13	.002**
<i>Covariates</i>								
Attachment anxiety					-0.021	0.063	-0.33	.743
Attachment avoidance					-0.083	0.072	-1.16	.247
Previous experience being cheated on					-0.415	0.122	-3.41	.000***
Previous experience cheating					0.193	0.132	1.47	.145

*Note.* "Participant" was added as a random intercept for both models. The quadratic term (i.e. Cheatingness Rating, squared) was included to test the hypothesized ambiguity theory.

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

Table 5. Results of logistic regression models predicting response to behavior (i.e. mentioning breakup in open response) from cheatingness scale.

	Model 1: Mentioning breakup (open response)			Model 2: Mentioning breakup (open response)		
	Coef.	OR <sup>a</sup>	P value	Coef.	OR <sup>a</sup>	P value
Intercept	-1.366	0.26	.000***	-1.293	.27	.437
Cheatingness Rating	0.249	1.28	.063	0.225	1.25	.081
Cheatingness Rating, squared (i.e. ambiguity theory)	-0.004	1.00	.833	-0.004	1.00	.845
<i>Covariates</i>						
Attachment anxiety				0.324	1.38	.190
Attachment avoidance				-0.505	0.60	.059
Previous experience being cheated on				-0.312	0.73	.452
Previous experience cheating				0.293	1.34	.510

*Note.* Only data for the first behavior that participants listed and reported on were utilized for these analyses. The quadratic term (i.e. Cheatingness Rating, squared) was included to test the hypothesized ambiguity theory.

a. OR = Odds Ratio

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

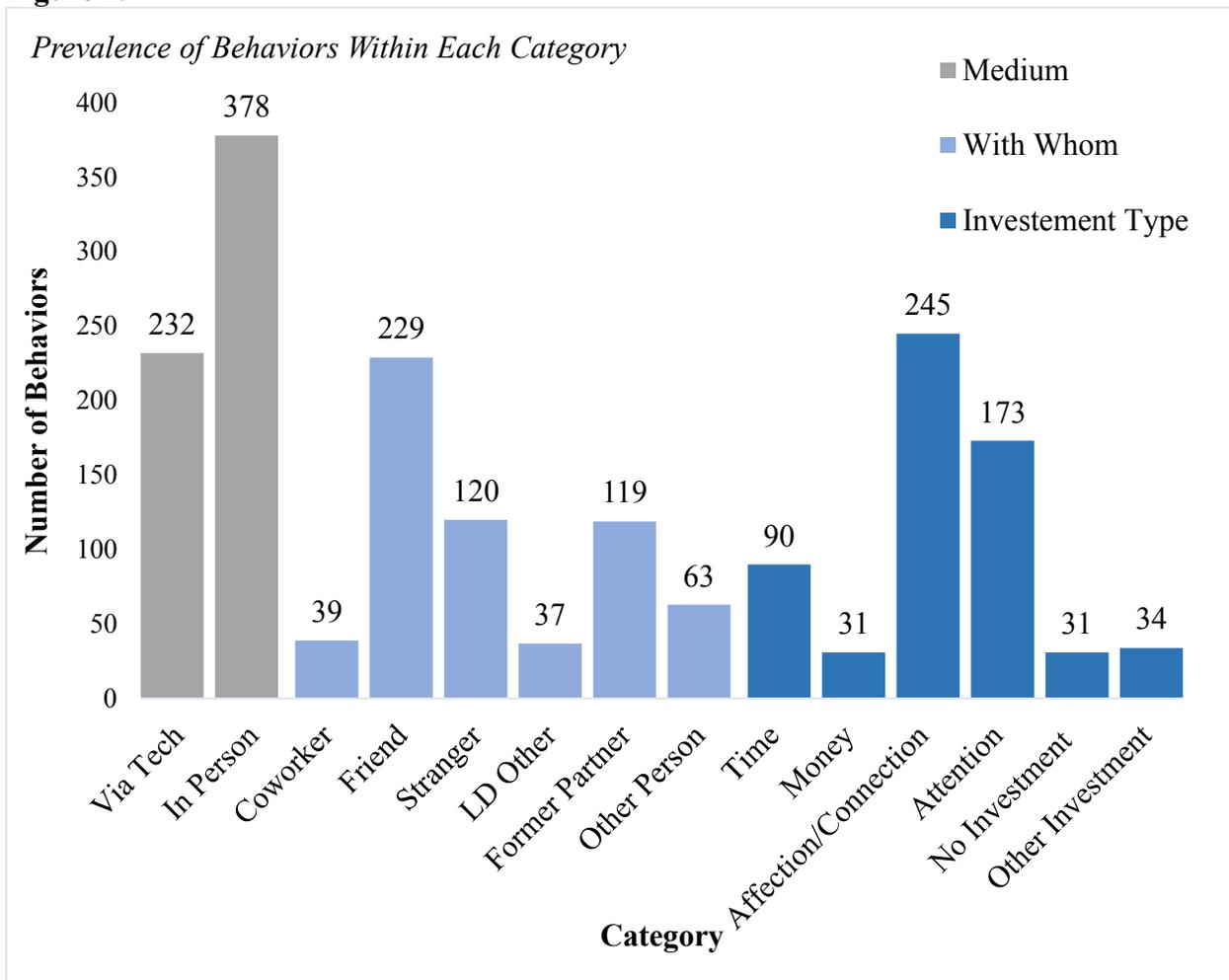
Table 6. Results of logistic regression models predicting response to behavior (i.e. mentioning discussion in open response) from cheatingness scale.

	Model 1: Mentioning discussion (open response)			Model 2: Mentioning discussion (open response)		
	Coef.	OR <sup>a</sup>	P value	Coef.	OR <sup>a</sup>	P value
Intercept	0.802	2.23	.017*	2.256	9.54	.171
Cheatingness Rating	0.083	1.09	.225	0.091	1.10	.207
Cheatingness Rating, squared (i.e. ambiguity theory)	-0.015	0.98	.279	-0.017	0.98	.235
<i>Covariates</i>						
Attachment anxiety				-0.262	0.77	.250
Attachment avoidance				-0.115	0.89	.640
Previous experience being cheated on				0.010	1.01	.979
Previous experience cheating				0.012	1.01	.978

*Note.* Only data for the first behavior that participants listed and reported on were utilized for these analyses. The quadratic term (i.e. Cheatingness Rating, squared) was included to test the hypothesized ambiguity theory.

a. OR = Odds Ratio

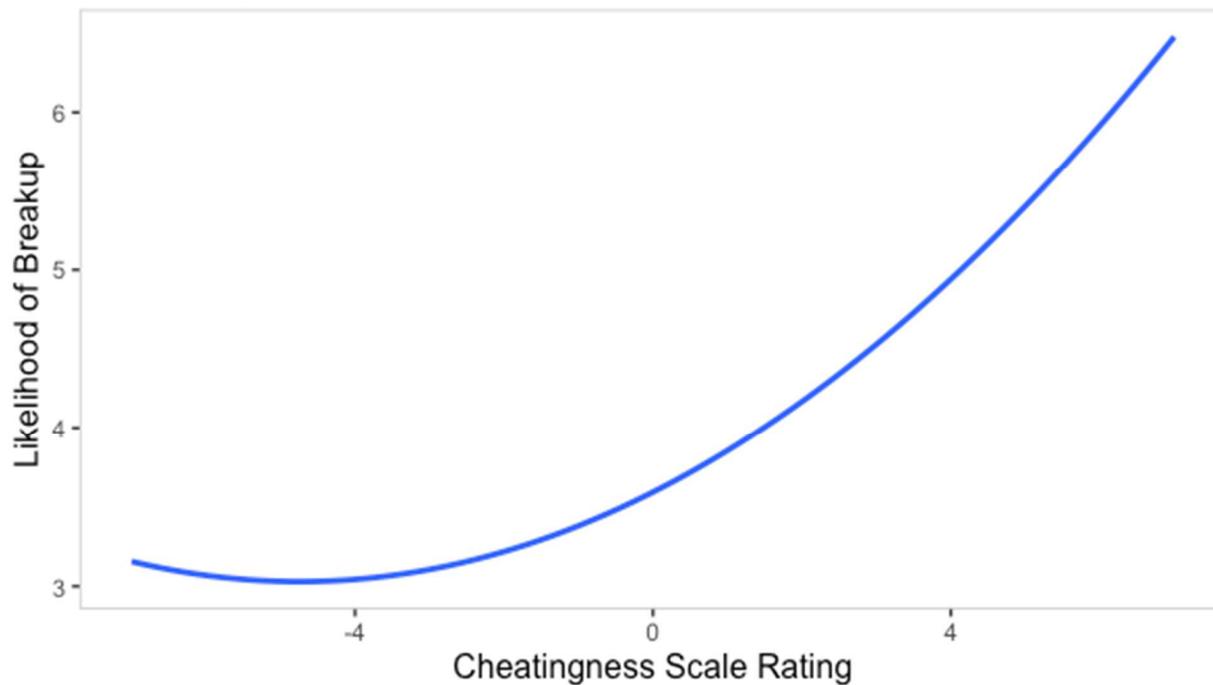
\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

**Figure 1.**

*Note.* LD Other = Long Distance Other

**Figure 2**

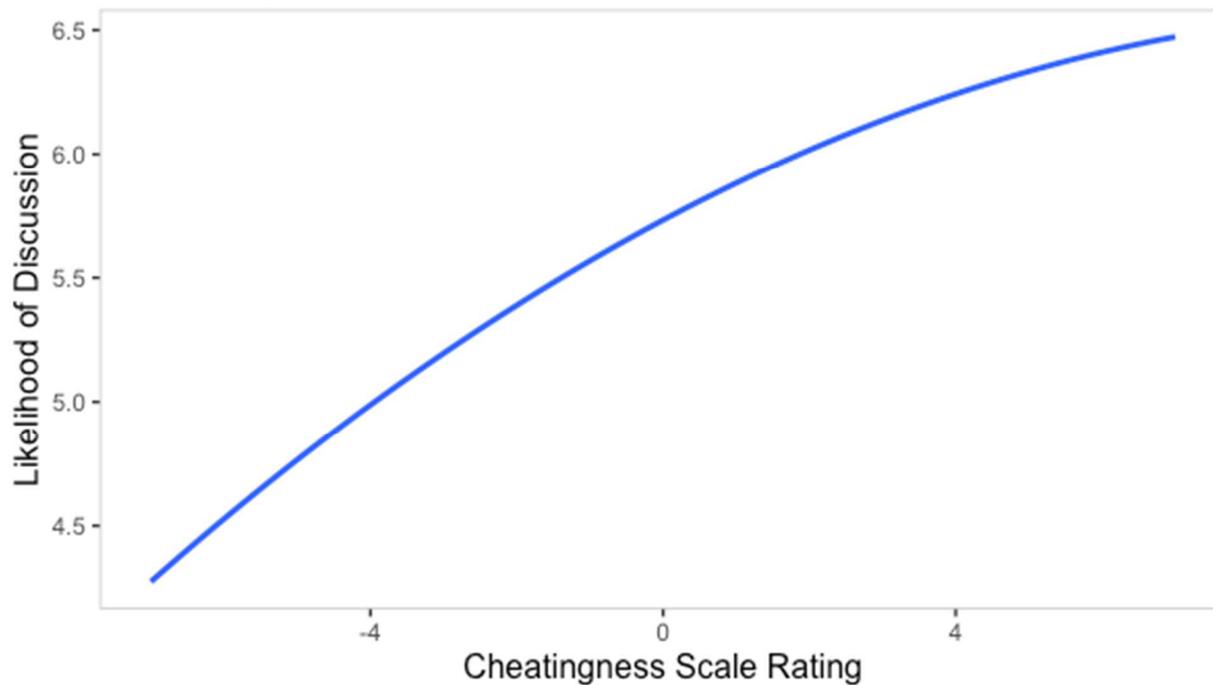
*Relationship Between Cheatingness and Likelihood of Breakup*



*Note.* A rating of 0 (i.e. the midpoint of “*I don’t know/unsure*”) on the cheatingness scale would reflect the highest ambiguity. This figure is based on the model that does not include covariates.

**Figure 3**

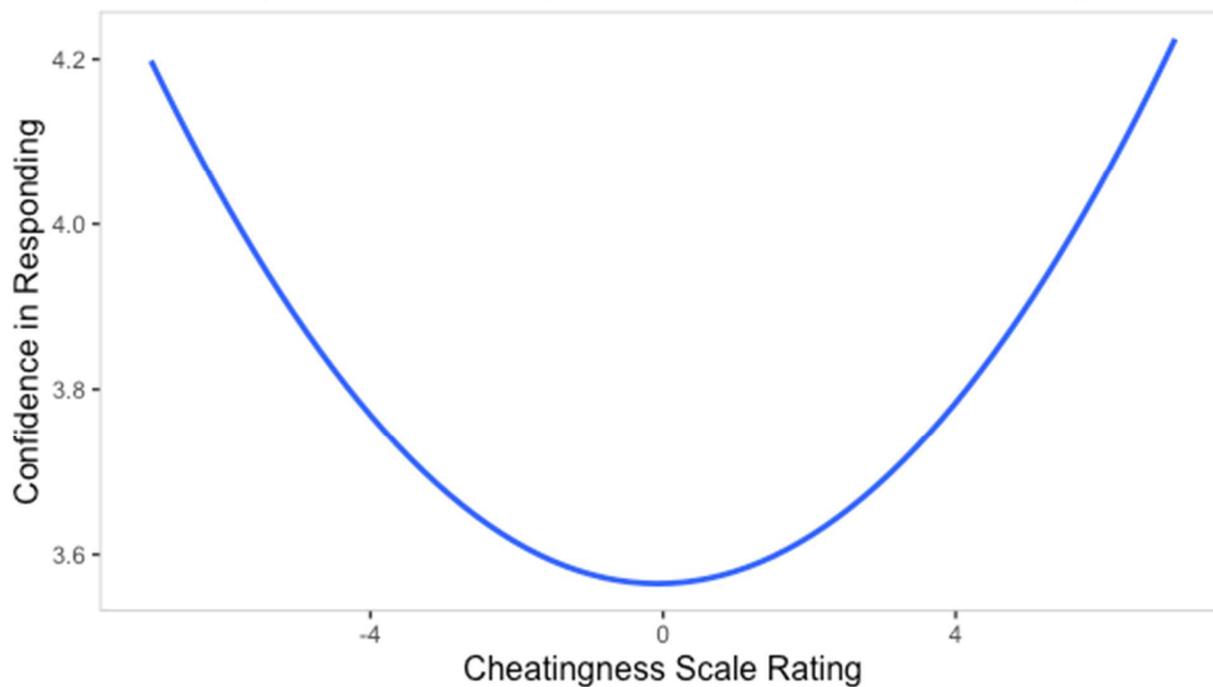
*Relationship Between Cheatingness and Likelihood of Discussion*



*Note.* A rating of 0 (i.e. the midpoint of “*I don’t know/unsure*”) on the cheatingness scale would reflect the highest ambiguity. This figure is based on the model that does not include covariates.

**Figure 4**

*Relationship Between Cheatingness and Confidence in Responding*



*Note.* A rating of 0 (i.e. the midpoint of “*I don’t know/unsure*”) on the cheatingness scale would reflect the highest ambiguity. This figure is based on the model that does not include covariates.

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## Morgan Leigh Proulx

### *Curriculum Vitae*

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#### Education

**M.S. Syracuse University**, Syracuse, NY  
December 2020  
Master of Science, Social Psychology  
Advisor: Laura V. Machia  
Cumulative GPA: 4.0

**B.A. University of New Hampshire**, Durham, NH  
May 2016  
Bachelor of Arts and Sciences, Psychology  
Minor in Deaf and Hard of Hearing Studies  
Overall GPA: 3.33  
Psychology Major GPA: 3.82

#### Publications

##### PEER REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

- VanderDrift, L. E., **Proulx, M. L.**, Ioerger, M., & Lehmilller, J. J. (2020). A Longitudinal Study of Friends with Benefits Relationships. *Personal Relationships*.
- Machia, L. V., & **Proulx, M. L.** (2019). The Diverging Effects of Need Fulfillment Obtained from Within and Outside of a Romantic Relationship. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. doi:10.1177/0146167219877849.
- Proulx, M. L.**, Straus, M. A., & Douglas, E. M. (2018). Testing the link between dyadic concordance in corporal punishment, positive parenting, and crime in an international sample of young adults. *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family*. doi:10.1093/lawfam/eby010
- Douglas, E. M., Ahola, S. B., **Proulx, M. L.**, & Maloney, S. V. (2018). An exploratory analysis of the notable activities of U.S. child death review teams. *Death Studies*, 42(4), 239-246. doi: 10.1080/07481187.2017.1334015

##### BOOK CHAPTERS

Houck, S. C., Huber, K. J., Ess, M., & Proulx, M. L. (2020). Cognitive complexity in political contexts. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*.

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### Conference Presentations

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**Proulx, M. L., & Machia, L. V.** (2019, June). *The Impact of Ambiguous Sacrifices on the Expression of Gratitude*. Poster presented to the International Association for Relationship Research, Ottawa, CA.

Kourani, J., **Proulx, M. L., & Machia, L. V.** (2019, May). *Testing the Effects of Perceived Differences in Ambition on Relationship Outcomes*. Poster presented at the Syracuse University Undergraduate Poster Session, Syracuse, NY.

**Proulx, M. L., & Machia, L. V.** (2019, April). *Examining the Link Between Perceptions of Ambition Misalignment and Romantic Relationship Outcomes*. Paper presented at the Syracuse University Psychology Action Committee Data Blitz, Syracuse, NY.

**Proulx, M. L., & VanderDrift, L. E.** (2019, February). *Ambition in Relationships: The Effects of Misalignment of Ambition on Relationship Outcomes*. Poster presented to the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Portland, OR.

VanderDrift, L. E., & **Proulx, M. L.** (2018, July). *With a little help from my friends: The effects of need-fulfillment from outside of the relationship*. Paper presented to the International Association for Relationship Research, Fort Collins, CO.

Straus, M. A., **Proulx, M. L., & Douglas, E. M.** (2016, July). *Correlation of perpetration and victimization in three modes of partner violence*. Paper presented to the International Family Violence & Child Victimization Research Conference, Portsmouth, NH.

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### Research Experience

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#### Graduate Researcher

August 2017 – December 2020

#### *Syracuse University Close Relationships Laboratory*

- Develop novel empirical research questions and hypotheses regarding work on intimate relationships
- Utilize R statistical programming
- Utilize a variety of research methods to examine empirically-based questions
- Write and prepare manuscripts for publication in peer-reviewed journals
- Supervisor: Dr. Laura V. Machia

#### Research Assistant

May 2016 – August 2017

#### *Bridgewater State University*

- Collaborate with Dr. Emily Douglas on various research projects
- Code and enter data into SPSS statistical software and Excel
- Write sections for empirical research papers as well as edit and proofread these papers
- Search databases for previous literature
- Compile relevant literature and write literature reviews
- Supervisor: Dr. Emily M. Douglas

**Research Assistant**

August 2015 – May 2016

***University of New Hampshire Family Research Laboratory***

- Collaborate with Dr. Murray Straus and other researchers to problem solve as needed and discuss tasks to be completed for various projects
- Work with data from the International Dating Violence Study as well as data from other resources pertaining to, but not limited to: Intimate partner violence, family violence, abuse of children, dyadic concordance types, and conflict tactics scales.
- Enter data into excel files and SPSS, and organize data into tables as needed
- Run various data analyses in SPSS statistical software with Dr. Straus and discuss the results and implications
- Create and edit charts/graphs to visually represent data
- Supervisors: Dr. Murray Straus and Doreen Cole

**Research Assistant**

August 2015 – January 2016

***University of New Hampshire Interpersonal Violence Research Laboratory***

- Enter quantitative and qualitative data into SPSS statistical software and Excel
- Code qualitative responses
- Remain up-to-date on relevant literature regarding interpersonal violence
- Supervisor: Dr. Katie Edwards

**Research Assistant**

Sept. 2014- May 2016

***University of New Hampshire Data Visualization Laboratory***

- Recruit subjects each week for participation in various experiments
- Explain to the participants how to complete the study and complete a demonstration with them in order to visually teach them how to complete the task
- Collaborate with Dr. Colin Ware and other researchers to modify the experiments and problem solve as needed
- Work closely with Dr. Ware to monitor the project budget and change funding as needed
- Enter and organize data in Excel files
- Supervisor: Dr. Colin Ware

**Teaching Experience****Graduate Teaching Assistant:** Syracuse University

August 2020 – December 2020

- PSY 274: Social Psychology
- Independently teach four discussion sections (~115 students total)
- Develop lecture materials and activities, facilitate discussions, and hold review sessions via Zoom
- Supervisor: Dr. Leonard Newman and Dr. Laura Machia

**Graduate Teaching Assistant:** Syracuse University

August 2020 – December 2020

- PSY 474: Forensic Psychology (~150 students)
- Conduct project help sessions via Zoom, grade all assignments, respond to student emails
- Supervisor: Dr. Laura Machia

**Instructor of Record:** Syracuse University

July 2020 – August 2020

- PSY 205: Foundations of Human Behavior
- Independently teach one summer session course (~25 students)

**Teaching Assistant Coordinator:** Syracuse University

August 2019 – May 2020

- PSY 205: Foundations of Human Behavior
- Provide support and mentoring to a team of 16 Teaching Assistants (including first-time Teaching Assistants)
- Promptly respond to questions and concerns from students and Teaching Assistants via email
- Write and submit case reports for academic integrity violations
- Meet with students regarding academic integrity violations
- Edit, format, and prepare exams (~1,200 students)

**Instructor of Record:** Syracuse University July 2019 – August 2019

- PSY 274: Social Psychology
- Independently teach one summer session course (~15 students)

**Graduate Teaching Assistant:** Syracuse University January 2019 – May 2019

- PSY 382: Health Psychology (~60 students)
- Conduct exam review sessions, grade all assignments, facilitate in-class “journal clubs” and other activities
- Supervisor: Dr. Sarah Wolf-King

**Graduate Teaching Assistant:** Syracuse University August 2018 – May 2019

- PSY 205: Foundations of Human Behavior
- Independently teach one recitation section (~25 students)
- Develop all lecture materials and activities, facilitate discussions, develop quizzes and tests, grade all quizzes/tests and assignments.
- Supervisor: Dr. Shannon Houck

**Graduate Teaching Assistant:** Syracuse University August 2018 – December 2018

- PSY 274: Social Psychology (~110 students)
- Conduct exam review sessions, grade all assignments, independently teach 1-2 lectures
- Supervisor: Dr. Brittany Jakubiak

**Instructor of Record:** Syracuse University May 2018 – August 2018

- PSY 205: Foundations of Human Behavior
- Independently teach one summer session course (~25 students)

**Graduate Teaching Assistant:** Syracuse University August 2017 – May 2018

- PSY 205: Foundations of Human Behavior
- Independently teach 7 recitation sections (~175 students)
- Develop lectures and activities, facilitate discussions, develop quizzes, grade all quizzes and assignments, and hold exam review sessions.
- Supervisor: Dr. Shannon Houck

### Leadership Experience

**Undergraduate Research Mentor** August 2017 – August 2020

*Syracuse University Close Relationships Laboratory*

- Mentor a team of 2-3 undergraduate research assistants
- Train research assistants to run participants on a number of current studies
- Provide research assistants with empirical literature in order to teach them the theoretical framework

upon which our research questions are based

- Conduct laboratory meetings with my team in which we discuss and interpret findings, discuss relevant background literature, modify current studies, and prepare them for presentations on current studies

**Teaching Mentor:** Syracuse University

May 2018 – August 2019

- Independently mentor small groups (~10 students) of incoming Graduate Teaching Assistants
- Collaborate with approximately two other Teaching Mentors to organize an orientation program session titled: Creating Your Teaching Persona
- Develop and implement ongoing programs/activities throughout the academic year for Teaching Assistants

Supervisors: Shawn Loner and Glenn Wright

### **Group membership and Campus Involvement**

**Future Professoriate Program**, Syracuse University (August 2018 – August 2019)

**Syracuse University Relationship Research Interest Group**, Syracuse University (August 2017-August 2018)

**Psychology Action Committee**, Syracuse University: Social Psychology Area Representative (August 2017- May 2018)

### **Advanced Statistical Training**

**R Statistical Programming Training**, Syracuse University (2018)

### **Awards and Honors**

**2019 Graduate Student Organization Travel Grant** (\$350)

**2019 Society for Personality and Social Psychology Travel Award** (\$500)