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## Attachment and Covert Relational Aggression in Marriage with Shame as a Potential Moderating Variable: A Two Wave Panel Study

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Attachment and Covert Relational Aggression in Marriage

with Shame as a Potential Moderating Variable:

A Two Wave Panel Study

Charity E. Clifford

A thesis submitted to the faculty of  
Brigham Young University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

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## ABSTRACT

### Attachment and Covert Relational Aggression in Marriage with Shame as a Potential Moderating Variable: A Two Wave Panel Study

Charity E. Clifford  
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Using a two-wave APIM Structural Equation Model, this study investigated how husband and wife attachment styles predict husband and wife covert relational aggression one year later with husband and wife shame as potential moderating variables. Data was taken from 308 married couples in waves three and four of the Flourishing Families project using self-report and partner report of spouse questionnaires. Findings showed that an individual's attachment insecurity predicts their use of relational aggression. Wives' relational aggression is predicted by an increase in husbands' relational aggression. An increase in wives' insecure attachment had less of an impact on husbands' relationally aggressive behavior. Shame predicts the use of relational aggression. Shame moderates some of the actor and partner relationships, showing that in certain cases, as shame increases the relationship between attachment strategy and relational aggression also increases. Clinicians are advised to assess and treat partners as a couple as one partner's attachment and shame may affect the other's behavior, and those high in shame and insecure attachment are more likely to use covert relational aggression.

Keywords: shame, attachment, relational aggression, covert relational aggression, marital, couple, social sabotage, love withdrawal

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## Introduction

Physical aggression, a form of domestic violence within the family, has been a major focus of marital and family studies because of its intense nature and dramatic psychological and economical toll on society (Chan & Cho, 2010; Evans, Davies, & DiLillo, 2008; Perilla, Lippy, Rosales, & Serrata, 2011). In 2001 alone, it was estimated that the cost of physical aggression was \$12.6 billion in the United States (Waters, Hyder, & Rajkotia, 2004). Physical violence, while the most visible form of marital aggression, is not the only form of aggression that occurs within the family and creates economical as well as emotional damage.

Relational aggression, sometimes referred as covert aggression, is a more subtle type of hostility within the family that creates long-lasting damage. Relational aggression includes acts which are used to manipulate the dyadic relationship (Archer & Coyne, 2005). Crick and Grotpeter (1995) explained relational aggression as “behaviors that harm others through damage (or threaten) to relationships or feelings of acceptance, friendship, or group inclusion” (p.77). In this example, Crick and Grotpeter are referencing one of the two types of relational aggression: social sabotage. Social sabotage is used to indirectly manipulate one’s spouse thorough gossip, spreading rumors, sharing personal information with those outside the marriage or recruiting others into an ongoing dispute (Carroll, Nelson, Yorgason, Harper, Ashton, & Jensen, 2010). The goal of social sabotage is to use social pressure to control one’s partner (Carroll et al., 2010). The other form of relational aggression, called love withdrawal, is more direct than social sabotage. During love withdrawal, one spouse withdraws attention or affection from their partner in an attempt to manipulate the relationship. Examples include ignoring one’s spouse, withholding sex, threatening to leave and using “the silent treatment.”

It seems likely that spouses who experience love withdrawal from their spouse feel abandoned and those who experience social sabotage feel betrayed. As those who suffer from an attachment injury are likely to feel those two emotions (Johnson, Makinen, & Millikin, 2001), relational aggression seems to be a cause of attachment injury in some couples. In support of the idea that relational aggression has a negative effect on attachment security, one study found that relational aggression is associated with a lack of positive relationship qualities, such as feeling safe, and those victimized in such relationships are less likely to turn to their dating partner when in need (Linder, Crick, & Collins, 2002). The use of relational aggression is also associated with negative relationship qualities such as distrust, jealousy, and frustration and a more negative perception of relationship quality for both the victim and perpetrator (Linder et al., 2002). Another study found that relational aggression negatively impacts wives' sexual satisfaction (Hughes, 2010).

Even though relational aggression has the potential to be an important influence on marriage, studies of this more subtle form of relational aggression have mostly focused on children's social relationships (Madsen, 2012). A scattering of studies have investigated the use of relational aggression in other contexts such as within the interactions of young adults, between coworkers in the work place, among best friends and in romantic relationships in emerging adulthood (Nelson, Springer, Nelson, & Bean, 2008; Björkqvist, Österman, & Lagerspetz, 1994; Crick & Nelson, 2002; Goldstein, Goldstein, Chesir-Teran, & McFaul, 2008). Still, however, relational aggression within couple and family relationships has received little attention. The few studies which have examined relational aggression in the marital context have focused on its influence on the behavior of the couple's children and possible triangulation of children instead

of on the marriage itself (Hart, Nelson, Robinson, Olsen, & McNeilly-Choque, 1998; Buehler, Krishnakumar, Stone, Anthony, Pemberton, Gerard, Barber, 1998).

The first study specifically created to examine relational aggression in long-term (average length of marriage was 17 years) committed married relationships occurred only three years ago (Carroll et al., 2010). This study found that relational aggression is associated with poorer marital quality and stability for both men and women (Carroll et al., 2010). The authors noted that in small amounts these behaviors have little effect on the marriage, but the more frequent use of these strategies leads to poorer marriage quality and eventually increased divorce proneness. What future studies may discover about relational aggression's affect on marriage is unknown, but as it has already been found that greater marital instability is correlated with a greater chance of divorce (Matthews, Wickrama, & Conger, 1996), relational aggression is an area worth further investigation. With divorce rates at an all-time high in the United States, at about 40-50% of all marriages ending in divorce, its negative impact can hardly be overemphasized (Tejada-Vera & Sutton, 2010).

This study aims to create a better understanding of marital dynamics and husband wife individual characteristics that are related to covert relational aggression so that clinicians can better identify and decrease these types of aggression with their accompanying poorer marital stability and quality. More specifically, the purpose of this study was to examine how husband and wife attachment styles predict husband and wife relational aggression one year later with husband and wife shame as potential moderating variables. Shame was chosen as a moderator because it leads to two main desires: hiding and punishing others (Wicker, Payne, & Morgan, 1983). Because of these desires, it is hypothesized that the higher a person's shame, the less likely they will deal with conflict directly and constructively.

## Review of the Literature

### Attachment Theory

Attachment is a “lasting psychological connectedness between human beings” (Bowlby, 1969, p. 194). Bowlby, the founder of attachment theory, believed that the first and most influential attachment relationship is that of an infant to his or her primary caregiver, usually the infant’s mother (Bretherton, 1992). Children develop a series of beliefs concerning their mother’s responsiveness and trustworthiness based on their early experiences with their mother. A child who experiences a responsive and consistent mother will develop the belief that others in the future will be responsive and consistent and will exhibit a secure attachment style (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 1978). On the other hand, a child who experiences an inconsistent or untrustworthy mother will develop the expectation that significant others in the future will be untrustworthy. These children will develop either an avoidant attachment style, typified by disengaging from intimate relationships, or an anxious attachment style, typified by a higher reliance and investment in others than oneself (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Main & Solomon, 1986; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Such expectations create internal working models through which children shape and maintain their attachment behavior and interpersonal dynamics (Fraley, 2002).

The child’s internal working model is fairly stable over the life course. In fact, research has found that attachment at infancy predicts attachment assessed 20 years later (Waters, Merrick, Treboux, Crowell, & Albersheim, 2000). Another study found that women’s attachment style assessed at 27 predicted their attachment at 52 years old with a correlation of .55 (Klohnen & Bera, 1998). One study found that attachment can change with time if the individual experiences an enduring counterexample to their previous life experience (Fraley, Vicary,

Brumbaugh, & Roisman, 2011). This counterexample must be enduring to produce extinction of the previous internal working model or intermittent conditioning will occur (Fraley, 2002). As environmental changes are often not long lasting, adults often revert back to their internal working model formed in childhood. Thus, change usually is in the form of temporary variations within a stable internal working model (Fraley et al., 2011).

Other researchers have proposed a more multidimensional approach to attachment. Instead of believing in a single internal working model of attachment, they propose that each individual has multiple coexisting attachment models (Bartholomew & Shaver, 1998). This means that an individual may feel insecure generally but have relationship-specific models or exceptions (Collins & Read, 1994; Mikulincer & Arad, 1999). This also means that a person typically labeled securely attached may at times of relationship threat act either securely or anxiously. Thus, these researches view attachment more as a strategy, than a consistent type (Hill, Fonagy, Safier, & Sargent, 2003). This view of attachment as multidimensional has led some researchers to measure attachment as a continuous variable instead of categorically (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002; Alexandrov, Cowan & Cowan, 2005). This present study takes a multidimensional view and measures attachment as a continuous variable.

### **Attachment and Relational Aggression**

Relational aggression is a subtle and complex strategy used to manipulate the relationship instead of cooperatively dealing with conflict. The aggression concept of this study has evolved from various similar terms over the last few decades, such as psychological aggression (Murphy & O'Leary, 1989), indirect aggression (Feshbach, 1969), social aggression, (Cairns, Cairns, Neckerman, Ferguson, & Gariépy, 1989) and relational aggression (Coyne et al, 2008). This study follows Carroll et al.'s specific conceptualize of relational aggression as defined by love

withdrawal and social sabotage (2010). This is because Carroll et al.'s conceptualization is well developed and their study, like this study, measures both direct and indirect forms of relational aggression.

The value of attachment theory in understanding marriage rests in large part on the theory's emphasis on links between childhood relationships and later marital success (Karney & Bradbury, 1995, p. 6), as attachment style affects the way the child relates to his or her spouse as an adult (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). A failure to form secure attachments as a child can have a negative impact on marriage and contribute to the dissolution of the couple relationship (Ditsky, 2008). Attachment style can lead to different behaviors in adulthood which will affect marital quality such as relational aggression.

Mikulincer et al. (2001) found that attachment styles are associated with different strategies for coping with conflict among adults, including in couple relationships. As adults, individuals with secure attachment use more constructive strategies, work harder to find a solution to their problems, use more empathy and seek more support from others in an emotionally charged situation (Sharir, 1996). They also compromise more often, demonstrate greater concern for their partners and use more integrative and self-centered strategies (Levy & Davis, 1998). Even as children, those with secure attachment have the greatest ability to process their feelings and resolve conflict (Carlson & Sroufe, 1995; Rosenberg, 1984). Thus, it seems less likely that an adult with a secure attachment style would use either social sabotage or love withdrawal to solve a conflict.

Anxious adults are disturbed by any situation which calls for empathy toward another and respond to emotionally charged situations with hopeless worry (Pistole 1989; Mikulincer, 2001).

When faced with conflict, anxious individuals are more likely to resort to a strategy which either

obliges the other party or avoids the conflict in order to maintain their relationship with others (Ben-Ari & Hirshberg, 2009). Anxious individuals typically have an extremely high negative perception of conflict seeing it as harmful and destructive to their relationships (Ben-Ari & Hirshberg, 2009). Thus, anxious individuals who fear abandonment often fail to deal with problems directly. It is proposed that individuals who struggle with direct conflict are drawn to the least direct form of relationship manipulation: social sabotage.

Adults with avoidant attachment avoid emotional expression and create more complex distancing strategies to avoid any situation that may become intimate (Pistole, 1989; Ben-Ari & Hirshberg, 2009). Their disengagement stems from their tendency to see others as unreliable (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Avoidant individuals generally have a negative conflict perception, possibly because they fear that conflict will bring them harm (Ben-Ari & Hirshberg, 2009). When faced with conflict, avoidant individuals are more likely to resort to dominating strategies of conflict resolution (Ben-Ari & Hirshberg, 2009) which are characterized by pursuing one's self-interests at the expense of meeting other's needs (Hammock, 1999).

### **Shame as a Moderator**

A potential catalyst for the use of relational aggression is shame. Shame is the internalized experience of feeling that you are a bad person because of an event or series of events. It is not to be confused with guilt which is the negative feeling filled with regret and responsibility toward a mistake, but not toward yourself (Harper, 2013). Shame, like attachment, is an internal working model that is influenced by the climate of the individual's family-of-origin and often develops as a result of mistreatment in childhood (Finkelhor & Browen, 1986; Feiring & Taska, 2005). The development of shame may also be related to traumatic experiences such as

sexual assault, physical abuse in dating relationships, and emotional abuse by teachers or peers (Harper, 2013; Harper & Hoopes, 1990).

Wicker, Payne, & Morgan's (1983) study found that shame led to both a desire to hide and a desire to punish others which arguably could increase the frequency of covert relational aggression. It was hypothesized that shame moderates the relationship between attachment and relational aggression in these two ways. First, shame can increase the desire to hide inadequacies which can decrease the likelihood of a person using direct conflict strategies. Second, shame can increase the escalation of negative emotion and desire to punish partners which together creates a volatile setting where constructive conflict is difficult.

**Shame and the desire to hide.** Shame is understood as primarily a negative global perception of self (Covert, 2004) and has been linked to low self-esteem (Covert, Tangney, Maddux, & Heleno, 2003). Shame-prone individuals desire to conceal their perceived deficiencies (Tangney, 1996; Wicker et al., 1983) as they are scared of being discovered as inadequate. This fear of inadequacy leads them to experience greater levels of self-consciousness of their failures in interaction with others (Tangney, 1991). As experiencing shame is painful, these individuals avoid situations which may make them feel shameful (Lewis, 1971; Malatesa-Magai, 1991; Scheff & Retzinger, 1991). For these reasons, it is no wonder that shame is correlated with conflict avoidance, poor collaborative skills and indirect forms of hostility (Lopez, 1997; Tangney, Wagner, Fletcher, & Gramzow, 2001).

**Shame and the punishing, volatile state.** Shame leads to the use of aggression (Covert, 2011). Tangney et al. (2001) found that shame-proneness was consistently correlated with anger arousal, suspiciousness, resentment, irritability, hostility and a tendency to blame others for negative events. Such high levels of anger may serve as an attempt to protect against shame and



low self-worth (Shanahan, Jones, & Thomas-Peter, 2011) as it has been seen that shamed individuals frequently shift the blame to others as a defense against painful ego threats (Lewis, 1971). Individuals with shame are less able to constructively deal with conflict, as it is well known that an increase in emotional reactivity makes successful conflict resolution difficult (Watson, Hubbard, & Wiese, 2000).

### **Theoretical Foundation: Systems Theory**

Systems theory, a foundational concept of family studies, postulates a system is more than the sum of its parts because important properties arise from the interactions and relationships among the parts (Bertalanffy, 1968). This is important as it teaches that family members effect each other's emotions, behaviors and cognitions. An important concept of systems theory is the feedback loop which suggests that systems adjust to the information they receive in the environment (Nichols, 2010, p.88). This means that families may use feedback to try to maintain homeostasis in their system (Jackson, 1959). For example, they may use punishment or manipulation to keep things the same within the family. Interestingly, this sometimes backfires and escalates the deviant behavior.

Systems theory is particularly relevant within this paper as any discussion of marriage partner's use of relational aggression will be affected by the interactions within the system. The author of this paper proposes that a spouse's use of relational aggression will be related to their partner's attachment style and shame.

This postulation is supported by research that has demonstrated the interactional effects of shame, aggression and attachment strategy between partners. In regards to shame, Lansky (1987) suggests that when spouse A blames spouse B due to an ego threat, spouse B retaliates by pointing out spouse A's flaws. This can create an escalating shame cycle between the partners

which was been empirically proven by Tangney (2001). In regards to aggression, research supports that violence has its own escalation cycle where aggressive behavior is mediated by earlier partner behavior (Anderson, Buckley & Carnagey, 2008). In regards to attachment, the styles of both partners interact to influence couple interaction patterns (Feeney, 2002), marital satisfaction (Paley, Cox, Harter, & Margand, 2002), and marital quality (Mikulincer, Florian, Cowan, & Cowan, 2002) which influences researchers belief that is important to study attachment within the context of systems theory (Cowan, 1997; Alexandrov, Cowan & Cowan, 2005).

The aim of this study was to create a better understanding of the antecedents of relational aggression which might have implications for clinicians in treating relational aggression, marital instability and preventing divorce. In particular, the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of anxious and avoidant attachment and relational aggression (one year later) with internalized shame as a potential moderating variable in a two wave panel study where relational aggression is controlled for. More specifically, an actor partner interdependence model (APIM) was used in which husband and wife avoidant and anxious attachment predicted husband and wife relational aggression one year later with husband and wife shame as potential moderating variables and where relational aggression in the previous year is also a predictor of relational aggression as an outcome one year later. The conceptual and measurement model for this study is shown in Figure 1. While other studies have linked attachment with relational aggression or shame with attachment, no other study has linked all three variables in a longitudinal study to see how relational aggression is related to attachment type and shame.

It was hypothesized that avoidant attachment for both partners would be related to love withdrawal; that anxious attachment for both partners would predict social sabotage; and that shame is a moderating variable for both partners.

## **Method**

### **Sampling Frame**

The participating families were primarily recruited using a purchased national telephone survey database (Polk Directories/InfoUSA). This database held detailed information, such as presence and age of children, for 82 million households across the United States. Families which were identified using the Polk database were randomly selected from targeted census tracts that paralleled the socio-economic and racial stratification of the statistical reports of local school districts.

However, as the Polk database was generated using telephone, magazine, and internet subscriptions, reports from families of lower socio-economic status were still under-represented. In an attempt to more closely mirror the demographics of the local area, a limited number of families were recruited into the study through other means, such as referrals and fliers (n=77, 15%). By broadening the approach, the FFP was able to significantly increase the socio-economic diversity of the sample.

Of the 692 eligible families contacted within the Greater Seattle area, 500 agreed to participate resulting in a 61% response rate. The most frequent reasons cited by families for not wanting to participate in the study were lack of time and concerns about privacy.

Recruitment was conducted using a multistage recruitment protocol. First, a letter of introduction was sent to potentially eligible families (this step was skipped for the families who

responded to fliers). Second, interviewers made home visits and phone calls to confirm eligibility and willingness to participate in the study. After a family gave their consent to participate in the study, an informed consent (Appendix 1, consent for wave 3 is shown), as approved by the Brigham Young University IRB, was given to the families and the interviewers made appointments to come to their home for an assessment interview that included video-tapes interactions (not used in current study), as well as questionnaires that were completed in the home. The in-home interview for waves 3 and 4 occurred in participants homes. Average questionnaire completion was one-and-one-half hours. Each couple was paid \$100 each wave for their participation.

The participants in this study came from the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> waves (2009-2010) of the Flourishing Families Project (FFP), an ongoing longitudinal study of inner-family life. Earlier waves of the data were not used because measures of husband and wife shame were not added until wave 3. The FFP was conducted in the Greater Seattle area and the first wave of data in 2007 originally consisted of 500 families (335 two parent and 165 one parent) with a child between the ages of 10 and 13. Because this is a study about married couples, only the data for two parent families was used in this study.

The families have been contacted each year after the collection of the first wave, and 91.9% of married couples at wave 1 were still participating in the study at wave 4 (N=308 couples). There was very little missing data (less than 1%) because researchers in the home at the time of data collection checked the questionnaires and invited participants to recheck any missing answers. However, Full Information Maximum Likelihood will be used via AMOS's data imputation program to deal with missing values where necessary.

## Participants

The average age was 46.47 (SD=5.38) for wives and 48.34 (SD=5.98) for husbands at wave 3. Both husbands and wives averaged 2.27 children (SD=2.29). For wives, .3% had less than a high school education, 6% had a high school diploma, 22.4% attended some college, 38.5% had a bachelor's degree, and 30.1% had a professional/graduate degree. For husbands, 1.5% had less than a high school education, 4.8% had a high school diploma, 25.4% attended some college, 40% had a bachelor's degree, and 29.4% had a professional/graduate degree. Annual income distribution was as follows: 2.4% of the couples made under \$40,000, 24.9% made between \$40,000 and \$79,999, 27.5% made between \$80,000 and \$119,999, and 27.3% made over \$120,000. See Table 1 for further demographic information.

## Measures

**Husband and wife anxious and avoidant attachment.** The attachment styles of each parent were assessed using the Revised Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000) (See Appendix 2) related to anxious and avoidant attachment. Using a 7-point Likert response scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), participants answered each item about their feelings in their relationship with their partner. The items from the avoidant subscale completed by husbands and by wives were used to create two latent variables labeled *wife avoidant attachment* and *husband avoidant attachment*. Sample questions included "I prefer not to show my partner how I feel deep down" and "I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on my partner." The items from the anxious attachment subscale completed by both partners were used to create two additional latent variables called *wife anxious attachment* and *husband anxious attachment*. Sample items included, "I often worry that

my partner will not want to stay with me” and “I often wish that my partner’s feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him or her.” Fraley, Waller, & Brennan (2000) found the original inter-item reliability to be .91 (anxiety) and .90 (avoidance). Fraley, Waller, & Brennan (2000) performed a principal components factor analysis on the Experiences in Close Relationships measure and found that the items loaded clearly into two factors with high factor loading coefficients for all of the items. It appears then that this measure has adequate validity and reliability for use in research. Cronbach’s alphas and factor loadings for both waves 3 and 4 will be calculated for this sample and reported in the final thesis.

**Husband and wife shame.** Latent variables will be created for wife and husband shame using eight items from the Inferiority subscale of the Internalized Shame Scale (Cook, 2001) (See Appendix 3). These husband’s answers to the eight items were used to create a latent variable, husband shame, and the wife’s answers to the same eight items were used to create the wife shame latent variable. Using a 5-point Likert scale asking how often they experienced thoughts or feelings with responses ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*almost always*), participants answered items such as “I feel like I am never quite good enough” and “I think that people look down on me.” Cronbach’s alpha reliability ranged from .75 to .80 in previous studies (Cook, 2001). A seven week test-retest coefficient was .85.

Rybak and Brown (1996) administered the ISS to 159 undergraduate college students from clinical and non-clinical groups to determine reliability and construct validity. They found the 4 week test-retest reliability for the 24 item shame scale to be .81, and for the 6 item self-esteem scale to be .75. Del Rosario and White (2006) concluded that there were three subscales among the 24 items and found the internal consistency coefficients to be .95, .96, and .97.

Cook's original factor analysis indicated that the factor structure was the single inferiority scale consisting of the 24 items. Del Rosario and White (2006) conducted a psychometric evaluation of the ISS with a population of mostly undergraduate college females (152 females and 31 males). They found that the structure of the 24 items on the shame scale factored into three subscales which they called inferiority, fragile/exposed, and empty/lonely. The inferiority subscale consisted of 12 items which accounted for 47.82% of the total variance with factor loadings ranging from .43 to .80. Cronbach alphas and factor loadings for this sample will be reported in the final thesis.

**Love withdrawal and social sabotage.** Latent variables for husband and wife love withdrawal and social sabotage will be created using the 12 items from an adapted version of the Self-Report of Aggression and Victimization in Marriage (SRAV-M; Nelson & Carroll, 2006) (See Appendix 4). Based on the original Self-Report of Aggression and Victimization (Linder et al., 2002; Morales & Crick, 1998), the SRAV-M was modified in language for committed couples where respondents were instructed to respond about their partner's relational aggressive behaviors in their current relationship.

Using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all true*) to 7 (*very true*), respondents were asked to respond to 6 items about their partner's love withdrawal behavior. Love withdrawal is defined as the degree to which husbands and wives feel their spouse withdraws affection and support from them as a way of manipulating their behavior. Examples of love withdrawal include the following: "My partner withholds affection or sex from me when he/she is angry with me" and "My partner doesn't pay attention to me when she/he is mad at me." Higher scales indicated higher perceived relational victimization. Wives' answers to the six items about their partners' love withdrawal behavior were used to create a latent variable called

husband love withdrawal, and husbands' answers to the same 6 items about their wives' behavior were used to create a latent variable called wife love withdrawal.

The Social Sabotage subscale is a 6-item scale that measures the degree to which a person feels that her/his spouse utilizes socially aggressive behaviors in times of conflict and difference. Examples of social sabotage items included the following: "My partner tries to embarrass me or make me look stupid in front of others" and "My partner has gone 'behind my back' and shared private information about me with other people." Using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 7 (*very true*), participants responded to items about their partner's social sabotage in their relationship. Higher scales indicated higher perceived relational victimization and subsequently higher perception that their partner uses social sabotage.

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for this sample for wave 4 was .88 for social sabotage and .90 for love withdrawal for men and .90 for social sabotage and .86 for love withdrawal for women. Carroll et al., (2010) found that the measure had good discriminate validity in that it was a strong predictor of distress and nondistress in marriage. It appears that this measure has adequate validity and reliability for use in research.

## Results

The present study examined the relationship between attachment and covert relational aggression with shame as a potential moderator for both married partners. In the two-wave APIM Structural Equation Model, wife and husband anxious attachment and wife and husband avoidant attachment were exogenous variables with wife and husband love withdrawal at time 4 and wife and husband social sabotage at 4 as endogenous variables, and wife and husband shame were potential mediating variables. Wife and husband love withdrawal and social sabotage at wave 3 were also used as control variables (See Figure 1). The moderation effects were tested by



simultaneously entering interaction terms of husband and wife attachment styles at time 3 and shame at time 4 using Mplus 6 (Muthén & Muthén, 2010).

### **Descriptive Statistics**

As shown in Table 2, the means of husband and wives' anxious attachment were similar (Wives:  $X= 2.01$ ,  $SD=1.26$ ; Husbands:  $X= 2.11$ ,  $SD=1.21$ ). The means of husband and wives' avoidant attachment were even more similar (Wives:  $X= 2.42$ ,  $SD=1.27$ ; Husbands:  $X= 2.48$ ,  $SD=1.23$ ). In both kinds of attachment, husbands had a slightly higher mean than wives. The means of husband and wives' shame were also very similar (Wives:  $X=1.80$ ,  $SD= .74$ ; Husbands:  $X=1.70$ ,  $SD=.66$ ).

Wives reported that their husbands used love withdrawal more than husbands reported their wives used love withdrawal at both time 3 and time 4 (Wives T3:  $X=2.35$ ,  $SD= 1.25$ ; Husbands T3:  $X=2.66$ ,  $SD= 1.20$ ; Wives T4:  $X=2.40$ ,  $SD= 1.29$ ; Husbands T4:  $X=2.73$ ,  $SD= 1.24$ ). Wives also reported that their husbands used social sabotage more than husbands reported their wives used social sabotage at both time 3 and time 4 (Wives T3:  $X=1.54$ ,  $SD=.86$ ; Husbands T3:  $X=1.54$ ,  $SD=.92$ ; Wives T4:  $X=1.38^b$ ,  $SD= .73$ ; Husbands T4:  $X=1.54^b$ ,  $SD=.86$ ). At time 4, husbands' and wives' means were significantly different from each other in regards to both love withdrawal ( $t=-4.24$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and social sabotage ( $t=-3.27$ ,  $p<.001$ ).

### **Correlations**

The highest correlations among the exogenous variables were seen among the attachment variables for each respective gender. These correlations were rather large between wives' anxious and avoidant attachment ( $r=.65$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and between husbands' anxious and avoidant attachment ( $r=.67$ ,  $p<.001$ ). While these correlations were statistically significant, they were not

higher than .70 so they were not considered to create a problem in terms of multicollinearity. Attachment styles at time 3 and relational aggression at time 4 were highly correlated ( $r=.46$ ,  $p<.001$  for wives' anxious attachment and social sabotage;  $r=.46$ ,  $p<.001$  for wives' avoidant attachment and love withdrawal;  $r=.46$ ,  $p<.001$  for husbands' anxious attachment and social sabotage;  $r=.57$ ,  $p<.001$  for husbands' avoidant attachment and love withdrawal). The relationship between shame and attachment was also significantly correlated ( $r=.35$  for wife anxious and shame;  $r=.24$  for wife avoidant and shame;  $r=.32$  for husband anxious and shame;  $r=.39$  for husband avoidant and shame). For wives, love withdrawal at time 3 and time 4 ( $r=.67$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and social sabotage at time 3 and 4 ( $r=.69$ ,  $p<.001$ ) were highly correlated. For husbands, love withdrawal at time 3 and time 4 ( $r=.69$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and social sabotage at time 3 and 4 ( $r=.68$ ,  $p<.001$ ) were also highly correlated. Table 2 presents the correlations among these and other variables.

### APIM Results

The hypothesized proposed model demonstrated adequate Goodness-of-Fit with the data. The Chi-Square was nonsignificant ( $\chi^2=1387.34$ ,  $df=1311$ ,  $p<.07$ ). The CFI was .962, the RMSEA was .039, and the SRMR was .046. Husband and wife age, education, and income were added as control variables, none of which were significant predictors. The overall  $R^2$  values were .42 and .35 respectively for wife and husband love withdrawal and .52 and .59 respectively for wife and husband social sabotage.

**Actor effects.** The hypothesis that avoidant attachment would be positively related to love withdrawal was confirmed in both husbands and wives (Wives:  $\beta =.28$ ,  $p<.001$  Husbands:  $\beta =.63$ ,  $p<.001$ ). The hypothesis that anxious attachment would be positively related to social

sabotage was also confirmed in both husbands and wives ( $\beta=.21, p<.01$ ; Husbands:  $\beta =.59, p<.001$ ).

Contrary to the hypothesis, wife anxious attachment was a stronger predictor of love withdrawal ( $\beta=.40, p<.001$ ) than social sabotage ( $\beta=.21, p<.01$ ). For wives, both anxious and avoidant attachment better predicted love withdrawal than either predicted social sabotage. For husbands both attachment styles predicted both forms of relational aggression. That is anxious attachment predicted the reported use of social sabotage ( $\beta =.59, p<.001$ ) and use of love withdrawal ( $\beta=.30, p<.001$ ) and avoidant attachment predicted the reported use of love withdrawal ( $\beta =.63, p<.001$ ) and use of social sabotage ( $\beta=.59, p<.001$ ).

**Partner effects.** Wife's anxious attachment was a predictor of husband's social sabotage ( $\beta =.20, p<.01$ ). Husband anxious attachment was a predictor of wife love withdrawal ( $\beta =.43, p<.001$ ) and wife social sabotage ( $\beta =.33, p<.001$ ). Husband avoidant attachment was a predictor of wife love withdrawal ( $\beta =.61, p<.001$ ) and wife social sabotage ( $\beta =.58, p<.001$ ).

### **Wife and Husband Shame as a Potential Moderating Variables**

**Actor effects.** For wives, only their social sabotage was significantly predicted by their shame ( $\beta =.24, p<.01$ ). For husbands, both their social sabotage ( $\beta =.19, p<.01$ ) and love withdrawal ( $\beta =.26, p<.001$ ) were significantly predicted by their shame. The relationship between husband anxious attachment and husband love withdrawal was also significantly moderated by shame ( $\beta =.39, p<.001$ ). In other words, when husband shame is high, the relationship between his anxious attachment and his love withdrawal becomes stronger.

**Partner effects.** Husband shame significantly moderated the relationship between wife anxious attachment and wife social sabotage ( $\beta =.37, p<.001$ ) and between wife anxious attachment and wife love withdrawal ( $\beta =.18, p<.01$ ). When husband shame is higher, the impact

of his wife's anxious attachment on her social sabotage and love withdrawal is increased. Wife shame significantly moderated the relationship between husband anxious attachment and wife social sabotage ( $\beta = .21, p < .001$ ). In other words, when wife shame is higher, the impact of her husband's anxious attachment on her social sabotage is increased. Wife shame significantly moderated the relationship between husband avoidant attachment and wife love withdrawals ( $\beta = .37, p < .001$ ). In other words, when wife shame is higher, the impact of her husband's avoidant attachment on her love withdrawal is increased.

### **Discussion**

The findings appear to provide evidence that relationship attachment is associated with different conflict strategies in adult relationships, specifically love withdrawal, which is consistent with the theoretical assertions of Mikulincer et al. (2001). Even though the two attachment constructs did not uniquely predict love withdrawal and social sabotage, the findings reaffirmed systems theory assumptions that husband and wife attachment not only affect each individual's behavior but that of their partner (Alexandrov, Cowan & Cowan, 2005; Feeney, 2002). The findings also confirm the relationship between internalized shame and use of aggression, specifically more subtle and manipulative forms of relational aggression, which is similar to the findings of Covert (2011).

#### **Attachment and Relational Aggression**

As hypothesized, there was a significant relationship between attachment strategy and relational aggression with avoidant attachment predicting the use of love withdrawal and anxious attachment predicting the use of social sabotage. However, the two attachment constructs were not as distinct of predictors as hypothesized as both significantly predicted both forms of

relational aggression. One explanation is that the use of social sabotage and love withdrawal may depend on both attachment style and the relationship context. Such a conclusion would be consistent with theory by Hill et al. (2003) that attachment is more a fluid strategy that depends on context, rather than a consistent type. Another explanation is that individuals with such attachment styles may not care about which type of aggression they use, so long as it is indirect.

The notable exception to the finding that attachment constructs were not distinct predictors was that wives' avoidant attachment predicted only the use of love withdrawal. It may be that for women commitment and trust are more essential factors in their relationship with others. Women with avoidant attachment may be less likely to have trusting relationships. In consequence, they may have few people that they feel comfortable gossiping with or recruiting help from.

One possible explanation for why men with avoidant attachment use social sabotage significantly while women do not may stem from gender differences and the nature of social sabotage. In those with dismissing attachment, a similar term to the avoidant attachment discussed in this study, men have more negative attitudes than women about expressing feelings to one's partner (Monteoliva, 2012). Social sabotage is less prevalent in most marriages, possibly because it is a more extreme tactic (Carroll et al., 2010). Thus, husbands' experiencing avoidant attachment may feel more negative about expressing feelings to their partner which may predict a higher use of the more extreme tactic in men than in women.

In terms of partner effects, for husbands, both attachment types predicted an increase in wives' love withdrawal and social sabotage, suggesting that partner's attachment does in fact affect the other partner's use of relational aggression. One possible explanation for why wives use of love withdrawal and social sabotage is positively related to husband's anxious and

avoidant attachment is that women are more socialized to tune into the dynamics of relationships (Fitzpatrick & Sollie, 1999). They are possibly more aware of and sensitive to husbands who are avoidant or anxious and use strategies such as love withdrawal or social sabotage to get their husband's attention.

However, wives' anxious attachment only had an effect on husband's social sabotage. A possible explanation for men's use of social sabotage in association with their wife's anxious attachment may be that males are socialized to place more of an emphasis on productivity instead of relational attunement (Sax, 2002). It may mean that men feel smothered by wives who are anxious attached and require reassurance that they are loved so they "act out" their feelings by sabotaging with friends or by withdrawing love as a way of creating more emotional distance. This is consistent with Feeney and Hohaus' (2001) findings that spouses often use a demeaning tone when describing a needy spouse's behaviors (Feeney & Hohaus, 2001). An alternative explanation may be that the husband realizes that using love withdrawal strategy would not help her anxiety lessen and would instead exacerbate the problem.

### **Shame and Relational Aggression and Shame as a Moderator**

As hypothesized, shame is related to the use of love withdrawal and social sabotage with the exception of wives' love withdrawal. A possible explanation for this finding might be that wives who feel they are flawed in some way do not feel secure enough to use tactics of love withdrawal. The finding that both husbands and wives are likely to use more social sabotage when their shame is higher is consistent with concepts of projection in which a person projects on to others how they feel about themselves (Abrams, 2009). In this sense a husband or wife who feels bad inside uses the arena of friends and acquaintances to project their bad feelings into their husband who is not present and cannot defend himself.

Shame moderated the relationship between husband anxious attachment and husband love withdrawal. This relationship may exist because the husband's anxious attachment and shame compound to make him very unsure and confused about his relationship. He may use love withdrawal to protect himself or to punish his spouse enough to manipulate her to behave in ways he hopes will make him feel more secure.

Husbands' shame significantly moderated the relationship between wives' anxious attachment and both forms of her relational aggression. A possible explanation would be that as anxious wives are likely to be attuned and worried about their place in the relationship, they may be especially sensitive to their husband's shame. As husbands begin to withdraw from the relationship as a function of their desire to hide their inadequacies, wives may become more anxious and confused about their place in the relationship and resort to strategies in an attempt to manipulate him to reassure her.

Wife's shame moderated the relationship between husband's anxious attachment and wife's social sabotage. The finding may be explained by the following plausible scenario. Imagine, as he becomes more anxious, he may pursue the relationship for reassurance. If she has high shame, his anxious seeking reassurance behaviors increase her annoyance and her belief that she is "no good." She then may turn to social sabotage and use the setting of friends to project her "badness" onto her husband. In this way, she may also use social sabotage as an attempt to cover her flaws by shifting blame to her husband.

Wife's shame also moderated the relationship between husband's avoidant attachment and wife's love withdrawal. This finding might be explained by another scenario. As he withdraws, his wife who has high shame may assume that she does not deserve his love so she employs love withdrawal to increase the distance even more. Another explanation might be that

his avoidant behavior interacting with her shame leads to shame rage, anger at the idea that nobody will ever love her because she is flawed. She then uses love withdrawal to punish him. A third alternative may be that as he withdraws, she uses love withdrawal as a defensive mechanism against the pain that his leaving causes. Either of these explanations could be heightened when the wife is high in shame, as shame increases the desire to punish others (Wicker et al., 1983) and motivates individuals to avoid shameful situations (Lewis, 1971).

### **Clinical Implications for Couple Therapy**

One aim of this study was to create a better understanding of the antecedents of covert relational aggression so that clinicians can better identify and intervene in these types of aggression with their accompanying poorer marital stability and quality. Clinicians may assess for physical aggression while missing the destructive dynamic of more subtle relational aggression strategies such as love withdrawal and social sabotage. It is important for clinicians to assess for covert relational aggression, especially if either one of the partner's present with high shame or high insecure attachment as the use of relational aggression may be more prevalent in such a couple. This could be essential to couple stability as relational aggression may escalate and create a dysfunctional cycle which may add more attachment injuries to an already at-risk relationship. Through this cycle partners may develop even more of a loathing for self, even more distrust in other's capacity to be trust worthy and the use even more relational aggression. Over time, the couple may find they have a conflict creating relationship, instead of a conflict resolving relationship.

As one partner's attachment and shame may affect the other's behavior, it is important for clinicians to see partners together in therapy. By seeing the couple together, clinicians will be better able to assess couple dynamics and treat the couple. For example, wives who are using



social sabotage are likely to be using it as a result of their own shame, their own anxious attachment or their husbands' anxious and avoidant attachment. By understanding partner effects, the therapist can help a husband understand how his anxious attachment affects his wife's emotional state and behavior, instead of blaming the wife for using relational aggression.

Emotionally-Focused Therapy (EFT) is a treatment modality that may be useful in treating couples with high shame and insecure attachment. EFT promotes an understanding of couple cycles as well as the communication of deeper emotions, needs, and vulnerabilities (Johnson, 2004). Through EFT, clients may learn how their or their partner's relational aggression stems from their fear of not being enough or being hurt. Clients may also come to see their partner's behavior as a wish to maintain the relationship's homeostasis because their partner values them and the relationship. Enactments as outlined by Butler & Gardner (2003) may be a particularly useful EFT intervention when treating those high in shame or insecure attachment.

There are other interventions which may prove useful in treating such clients. Genograms may be a helpful intervention in exploring family dynamics which contribute to the development of shame or insecure attachment. They may also be helpful in understanding how family dynamics may have contributed to the idea of relational aggression as a normal and acceptable conflict resolution strategy. Experiential activities may be useful in helping partners understand and experience their partner's vulnerable emotional state. Clinicians may need to develop a specific strategy for couples where an individual has experienced traumatic events which have led to their shame as such couples may need more extensive therapy than others.

Relational aggression is fairly common (Carroll et al., 2010) and is not always fueled by shame or insecure attachment. In such cases, a therapist can educate couples about the negative

impact of relational aggression on their marriage. Couples can then work to eliminate these behaviors to enhance their relationship.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

One possible limitation of this study was that use of relational aggression was measured by the other spouse's perception, instead of by self-report or observation. In this study, men were reported to use relational aggression more often than women; most other studies find the opposite conclusion when comparing the genders. This leads to the question that further research may be able to answer: Did the men in this study actually use more relational aggression or were their wives just more likely to perceive and report relational aggression than they were? Measuring relational aggression by the other spouse's perception may be useful because it shows how the spouse perceives and then reacts to their partner, but it also makes it difficult to know what is actually occurring within the relationship.

Another possible limitation is that the sample was a fairly functional community sample. For example, the mean score on the attachment measures for both genders stayed in the range of 2-2.5 with standard deviations of about 1.23 within a 7-point Likert scale. While this makes the study more generalizable to the general public than a clinical sample, it begs the questions: Would the results be the same, or larger, with participants who scored higher in the use of insecure attachment and shame?

The other limitations deal with generalizability. This sample was made up of heterosexual individuals who have been married for many years. How generalizable are the results to other couples, such as those married for different amounts of time, those cohabitating, and those with different sexual orientations? The sample was also taken from a northwestern city

which may not be generalizable to other areas of the United States. The participants also had a high average monthly income which may influence the results.

Many of these limitations could be resolved with future research using different samples. Other avenues of future research include measuring at what level the use of relational aggression becomes more of an issue with couples, as Carroll et al. (2010) has stated that it is both common and linked to divorce proneness. Other research may look into the definition of relational aggression itself—is there another form of relational aggression that couples use to manipulate the dyad other than love withdrawal and social sabotage? Further research could follow up on any of the study's results that had no clear theoretical explanation, such as why does shame moderate the relationship between husband anxious attachment and husband love withdrawal but not other actor relationships? Future studies could also study in depth the effect of different attachment combinations on creating unique marriage interaction cycles.

### **Conclusion**

This study found that an individual's attachment insecurity predicts their use of both love withdrawal and social sabotage. In addition, wives' relational aggression is predicted by an increase in husbands' love withdrawal or social sabotage. An increase in wives' insecure attachment had less of an impact on husbands' relationally aggressive behavior. It was also found that increases in shame predict the use of relational aggression. As a moderator, shame had mixed results. Shame did moderate a few of the actor and partner relationships showing that in some cases as shame increases the relationship between attachment strategy and relational aggression also increases. Further research may attempt to answer why shame moderated some specific actor or partner combinations but not others.

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### Appendix 1: Adult Attachment Scale

Variable Values:

1=Strongly disagree 7=Strongly agree

Higher scores on questions 1-4 indicate higher perceived anxiety attachment. Questions 6 and 8 were reverse coded so that higher scores on questions 5-8 indicate higher perceived avoidance attachment. Higher scores on question 9 indicate higher perceived sexual satisfaction with partner.

1. I am afraid that I will lose my partner's love.
2. I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me.
3. I often worry that my partner does not really love me.
4. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him or her.
5. I prefer not to show my partner how I feel deep down.
6. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.
7. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on my partner.
8. I am very comfortable being close to my partner.
9. I am satisfied with my sex life with my partner.

## Appendix 2: Shame Scale

Variable Values:

1=Never 2=Seldom 3=Sometimes 4=Frequently 5=Almost Always

Higher scores indicate increased tendency to view oneself as shameful.

1. I feel like I am never quite good enough.
2. I think that people look down on me.
3. I see myself as being very small and insignificant.
4. I feel intensely inadequate and full of self doubt.
5. I feel as if I am somehow defective as a person.
6. When I compare myself to others I am just not as important.
7. I see myself striving for perfection only to continually fall short.
8. I would like to shrink away when I make a mistake.

### Appendix 3: Covert Relational Aggression Scale

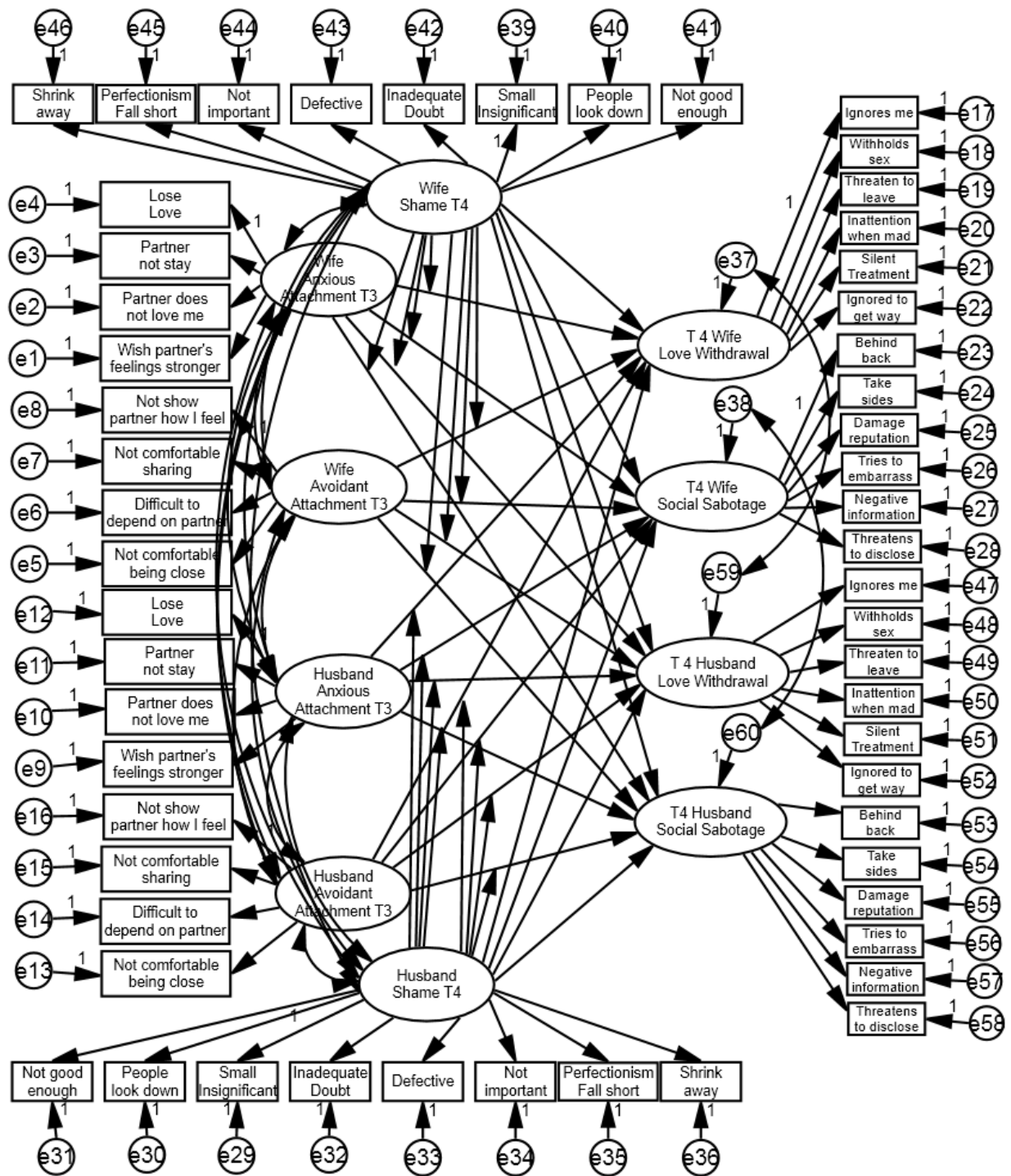
Variable Values:

1, 2 = Not at all true; 3, 4, 5 = Sometimes true; 6, 7 = Very true

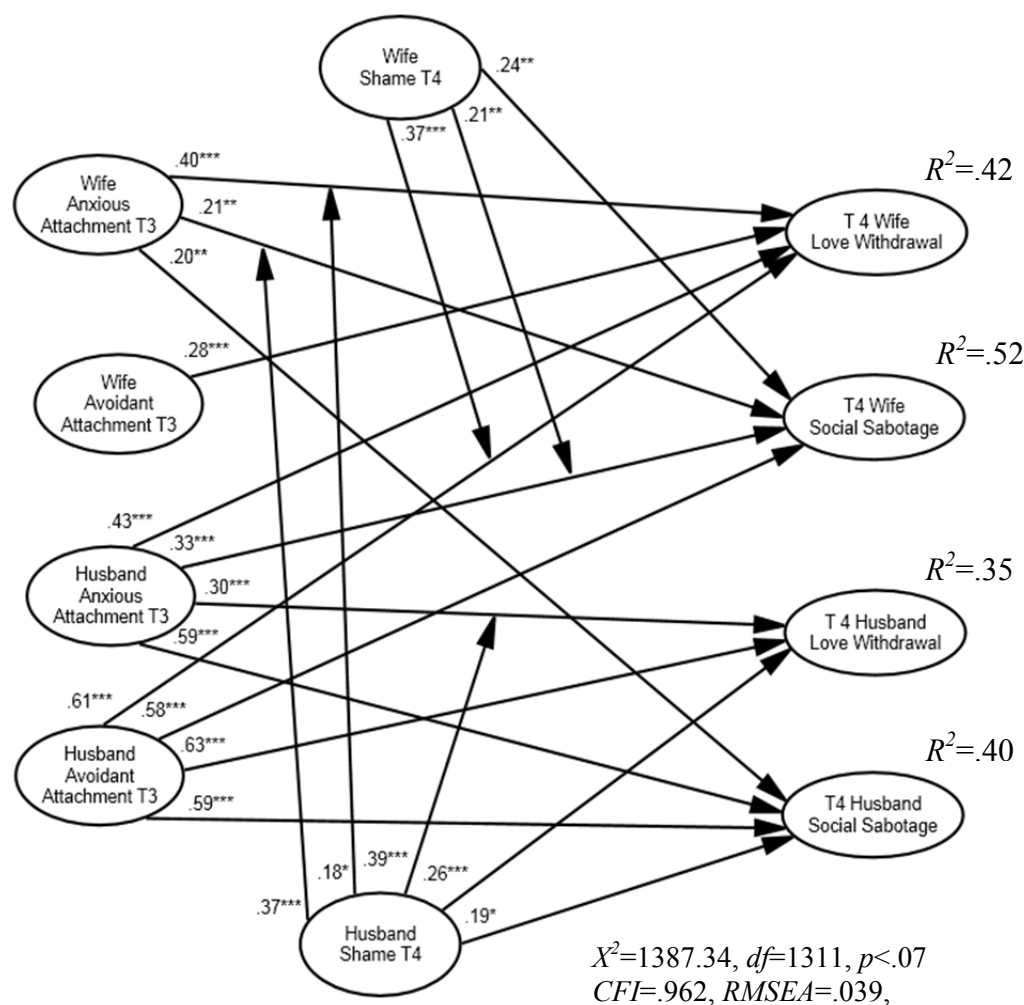
Higher scores indicate higher perceived relational victimization. Items 1-6 represent the Love Withdrawal Subscale. Items 7-12 represent the Social Sabotage Subscale.

1. Ignores me when she/he is angry with me.
2. Withholds affection or sex from me when he/she is angry with me.
3. Has threatened to leave me to get me to do what she/he wants.
4. Doesn't pay attention to me when she/he is mad at me.
5. Gives me the silent treatment when I hurt his/her feelings in some way.
6. Has intentionally ignored me until I give in to his/her way about something.
7. Has gone "behind my back" and shared private information about me with other people (extended family, friends, neighbors).
8. Gets other people to "take sides" with her/him and gets them upset with me too.
9. Has tried to damage my reputation by sharing negative information about me to other people (extended family, friends, neighbors).
10. Tries to embarrass me or make me look stupid in front of others.
11. Has spread negative information about me to be mean.
12. Has threatened to disclose negative information about me to others in order to get me to do things he/she wants.

Figure 1. Measurement and Conceptual Model.



**Figure 2. SEM Results with Standardized Betas for Parsimonious Model.**



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

NOTE: Correlations and statistically non-significant paths are not shown in the model for clarity of presentation. Husband and wife age, education, and income were used as control variables, but none of them were significant predictors so they are not shown. Husband and wife love withdrawal and social sabotage at T3 were also in the model with paths drawn to Husband and wife love withdrawal and social sabotage, but for clarity of presentation, they are not shown here.



**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Sample (N=308 Couples).**

Variables Time 4	Wives		Husbands	
	$\bar{X}$	(SD)	$\bar{X}$	(SD)
Age	46.47	(5.38)	48.34	(5.98)
# Children	2.27	(2.29)	2.27	(2.29)
Percentages				
Race				
White Caucasian	86.0%		82.1%	
African American	5.1%		5.1%	
Hispanic	0.6%		3.0%	
Asian American	1.5%		4.5%	
Other	2.1%		1.8%	
Multi-ethnic	2.4%		3.6%	
Missing	2.4%		0.0%	
Education				
<High School	0.3%		1.5%	
High School	6.0%		4.8%	
Some College	22.4%		25.4%	
Bachelor's Degree	38.5%		40.0%	
Graduate/Prof Degree	30.1%		29.4%	
Missing	0.3%		0.0%	
Household Income				
<\$19,999		0.6%		
\$20,000-\$39,999		1.8%		
\$40,000-\$59,999		8.4%		
\$50,000-\$79,999		16.5%		
\$80,000-\$99,999		9.9%		
\$100,000-\$119,999		17.6%		
\$120,000-\$149,999		7.5%		
\$150,000-\$199,999		9.6%		
\$200,000-\$249,999		6.3%		
\$250,000+		3.9%		
Missing		17.9%		

**Table 2. Correlations of All Latent Variables and Means  
and Standard Deviations for Item Means.**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.Wife Anxious Attachment T3	1.0									
2.Wife Avoidant Attachment T3	.65***	1.0								
3.Husband Anxious Attachment T3	.61***	.66***	1.0							
4.Husband Avoidant Attachment T3	.40***	.44***	.67***	1.0						
5.Wife Shame T4	.35***	.24***	.19*	.26***	1.0					
6.Husband Shame T4	.14	.11	.32***	.39***	.10	1.0				
7.Wife Love Withdrawal T4	.54***	.46***	.37***	.47***	.15*	.09	1.0			
8.Wife Social Sabotage T4	.46***	.24***	.46***	.60***	.26***	.18*	.46***	1.0		
9.Husband Love Withdrawal T4	.22**	.28***	.50***	.57***	.17*	.25***	.27***	.36***	1.0	
10.Husband Social Sabotage T4	.37***	.29***	.46***	.58***	.13	.21**	.36***	.44***	.61***	1.0
11.Wife Love Withdrawal T3	.48***	.47***	.33***	.36***	.11	.06	.67***	.43***	.28***	.32***
12.Wife Social Sabotage T3	.47***	.54***	.41***	.29***	.21**	.12	.51***	.69***	.20***	.31***
13.Husband Love Withdrawal T3	.32***	.31***	.57***	.41***	.14*	.17*	.30***	.32***	.69***	.47***
14.Husband Social Sabotage T3	.30***	.27***	.48***	.42***	.05	.21**	.37***	.43***	.43***	.68***
15.Husband Age	-.05	.01	-.07	.01	-.14*	-.09	.10	.00	-.11	-.10
16.Wife Age	-.03	-.02	-.06	.01	-.07	-.07	.11	.02	-.12	-.16*
17.Husband Education	-.07	-.06	.00	.00	.02	-.01	-.15*	-.15*	-.08	-.17*
18.Wife Education	-.05	-.04	-.07	-.08	-.12	-.02	-.05	-.11	-.12	-.19*
19.Household Income	-.03	-.12	-.11	-.02	-.02	-.16*	-.08	-.10	-.05	-.17*
Mean	2.01	2.42	2.11	2.48	1.80	1.70	2.40 <sup>a</sup>	1.38 <sup>b</sup>	2.73 <sup>a</sup>	1.54 <sup>b</sup>
S.D.	1.26	1.27	1.21	1.23	.74	.66	1.29	.73	1.24	.86

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

<sup>a</sup>Means were significantly different from each other (paired  $t = -4.24$ ,  $p < .001$ )

<sup>b</sup>Means were significantly different from each other (paired  $t = -3.27$ ,  $p < .001$ )

Table 2. Continued

Variables	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1.Wife Anxious Attachment T3									
2.Wife Avoidant Attachment T3									
3.Husband Anxious Attachment T3									
4.Husband Avoidant Attachment T3									
5.Wife Shame T4									
6.Husband Shame T4									
7.Wife Love Withdrawal T4									
8.Wife Social Sabotage T4									
9.Husband Love Withdrawal T4									
10.Husband Social Sabotage T4									
11.Wife Love Withdrawal T3	1.0								
12.Wife Social Sabotage T3	.53***	1.0							
13.Husband Love Withdrawal T3	.34***	.23**	1.0						
14.Husband Social Sabotage T3	.36***	.33***	.52***	1.0					
15.Husband Age T4	-.01	.00	-.04	-.09	1.0				
16.Wife Age T4	.05	.00	-.11	-.12	.74***	1.0			
17.Husband Education T4	-.17*	-.07	-.10	-.10	.13	.22**	1.0		
18.Wife Education T4	-.07	-.06	-.16*	-.19*	.23*	.28***	.44***	1.0	
19.Household Income T4	-.03	-.03	-.12	-.06	.16*	.29**	.38***	.32***	1.0
Mean	2.35	1.54	2.66	1.54	48.34	46.47	N/A	N/A	\$77,371
S.D.	1.25	.86	1.20	.92	5.98	5.38	N/A	N/A	\$24,431