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Mate poaching strategies are differentially associated with pathological personality traits and risk-taking in men and women

Virginia E. Mitchell, Justin K. Mogilski, Virgil Zeigler-Hill, Lisa L.M. Welling*

Department of Psychology, Oakland University, 654 Pioneer Drive, Pryale Hall, Rochester, MI 48309, United States of America

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ABSTRACT

Prior research has evaluated which personality traits predict mate poaching behavior (i.e., attempts to attract an individual known to be in a relationship with another person) by soliciting retrospective reports of mate poaching success. Here we investigate differences in personality among those who are presently within poached versus non-poached relationships. Furthermore, we distinguish relationships wherein the poacher was physically intimate with versus romantically interested in their partner when they were in a relationship with another person. Men within poached relationships scored higher on detachment, negative affectivity, disinhibition, antagonism, and psychoticism compared to non-poacher men. Furthermore, men who had been physically intimate with their partner while their partner was in a relationship with someone else scored higher on ethical risk-taking compared to non-poacher men. Women within poached relationships had higher scores on antagonism, detachment, and ethical risk-taking compared to non-poachers, although female poachers scored similarly to non-poacher men on all measures. These results suggest that individuals may use distinct mate poaching strategies associated with varying degrees of risk, and that men and women may employ these strategies differently.

1. Introduction

Mate poaching refers to a knowing attempt to attract a partner who is currently in a relationship with someone else (e.g., Schmitt, 2004). Although it is generally condemned (Schmitt & Buss, 2001), about one-third to one-half of people report that they have previously attempted to poach a partner at least once (Schmitt & Buss, 2001). Mate poaching can be used as a strategy to obtain both short-term (i.e., explicitly sexual) and long-term (i.e., committed) relationships (Gangestad & Simpson, 2000; Schmitt & Buss, 2001). Certain characteristics predict mate poaching, such as higher erotophilia (i.e., one's disposition to respond positively to sexual signals) and lower preference for sexual exclusivity (Schmitt & Buss, 2001). Poachers report higher disagreeableness, lower conscientiousness (i.e., not caring for or thinking of the feelings of others; Schmitt & Buss, 2001), and less concern for others' well-being (Sunderani et al., 2013). Lower levels of conscientiousness are positively associated with risky sexual behavior (Trobst et al., 2000) and the amount of perceived benefit from risky behavior (Weller & Tikir, 2011). Indeed, the lack of empathy associated with these traits may enable individuals to pursue a poaching opportunity without thought for the person whose partner they are pursuing, thus decreasing the poacher's perception of the costs. Mate poaching is also associated with the Dark Triad (i.e., narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy; Jonason et al., 2010), a suite of personality traits characterized by a duplicitous and aggressive interpersonal style (Paulhus & Williams, 2002), impulsivity, sensation-seeking, and greater risk-taking (e.g., Jones & Paulhus, 2011). These traits may be advantageous in securing more short-term sexual encounters (Carter et al., 2014; Jonason et al., 2009), and may increase the number of sexual encounters that individuals can attain by enabling coercive or duplicitous mating strategies (Jonason et al., 2010; Schmitt & Buss, 2001). This explanation is congruent with the domain-specific situational affordance perspective (de Vries et al., 2016), which proposes that individual differences in personality may emerge and be maintained when there are social and ecological situations for which that personality variation confers an advantage. In other words, environments provide opportunities to express or constrain different personality traits that are associated with specific costs and benefits contingent upon other phenotypes that are also present in the population.

In the current work, we examine personality patterns in individuals who are currently in a relationship that resulted from their own mate poaching behavior compared to those in non-poached relationships. Previous research has asked participants to self-reflect on how many times they have either successfully poached or attempted to poach a

* Corresponding author.
E-mail address: welling@oakland.edu (L.L.M. Welling).

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partner in the past (Jonason et al., 2010; Schmitt, 2004; Schmitt & Buss, 2001; although see Foster et al., 2014). We extend this work by investigating whether these personality patterns are found, and potentially exacerbated, in individuals who are *currently* within a relationship that resulted from their own mate poaching behavior. Examining relationships that are the result of a successful poach, rather than relying on retrospective reports of success, allows inferences to be drawn about how situational affordances may favor the increased expression of pathological personality traits in these groups. If a situation arises that might afford an individual a new mating opportunity, such as mate poaching, the expression of pathological personality traits may be particularly advantageous. In this case, we would expect that those who poached their current partner would report higher scores on these personality traits compared to people who are not in currently poached relationships (regardless of one's history of mate poaching behaviors). Additionally, the situations under which poached relationships begin can vary (e.g., whether the poacher was romantically/emotionally interested versus physically intimate with their potential partner while the partner was in another relationship). If personality variation does provide situational benefits in a mate poaching context, it is possible that multiple mate poaching strategies have arisen that depend on these unique factors. Becoming emotionally (but not physically) intimate with a potential partner while that partner is in a relationship with another may result in a successful poach that entails less risk than engaging in physical intimacy. On the other hand, individuals with greater risk-taking and disregard for others (i.e., those who score higher on dark personality) may be more likely to pursue a high-risk mate poaching strategy that involves physical intimacy. Here we account for differences in personality and risk-taking behavior in relation to how poached relationships began.

We investigated differences in personality using the HEXACO-60 (Ashton & Lee, 2009) and the Personality Inventory for the *DSM-5* Brief Form (PID-5-BF; American Psychiatric Association, 2013) between individuals who were physically intimate with their current partner while that partner was in a relationship with another (i.e., physically intimate poachers), those who were only romantically interested in their partner while their partner was in a relationship with another (i.e., emotionally interested poachers), those who had previously poached partners but were not currently in a mate-poached relationship (i.e., previous poachers), and individuals who had never attempted to mate poach (i.e., non-poachers). Given the potential costs associated with mate poaching (e.g., reputational damage, retribution), mate poachers may be more willing to take risks in general, particularly those who are physically intimate with the person they were poaching. Therefore, we also investigated differences in risk-taking behavior between these groups using the Domain Specific Risk-Taking Scale (DOSPERT; Blais, 2006). We predict that individuals who are currently in mate poached relationships will report higher scores on pathological personality traits and risk-taking behaviors compared to individuals who are not currently in poached relationships, regardless of mate poaching history.

2. Method

2.1. Participants and procedure

Participants ($N = 1730$) were recruited from a university in the Midwestern region of the United States ($n = 1370$) and social media websites (e.g., Facebook, Reddit; $n = 360$). Because we were specifically interested in differences between participants based on current romantic relationship status and because we did not want to inform participants of our interest in mate poaching status, we recruited participants until a sufficient number of current mate poachers was reached ($n > 33$ per cell), which resulted in many more participants in non-poached relationships being recruited. Participants were excluded if they were not currently in a relationship ($n = 289$), or if they spent < 10 min completing the questionnaires ($n = 27$). The final sample consisted of 1414 participants: 785 females (age: $M = 21.27$, $SD = 5.04$; range: 18–61) and 629 males (age: $M = 21.72$ years, $SD = 5.98$; range: 18–55). The majority of participants were White (76.4%; 8.2% Black, 5.3% Asian, 4.8% Hispanic/Latino, 5.2% other), and heterosexual (99.4%; 0.6% selected 'Not exclusively heterosexual'). Study materials were presented using the online survey software Qualtrics, and informed consent was obtained prior to participation. Participants provided demographic information (i.e., age, sex, relationship status, sexual orientation, and ethnicity) and completed the HEXACO-60 (Ashton & Lee, 2009), PID-5-BF (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), the DOSPERT (Blais & Weber, 2006), and items addressing mate poaching.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. HEXACO-60

The HEXACO-60 consists of 60 statements that assess six dimensions of personality on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) scale: *honesty-humility* (e.g., "I would never accept a bribe, even if it were very large" [$\alpha = 0.69$]), *emotionality* (e.g., "I feel like crying when I see other people crying" [$\alpha = 0.79$]), *extraversion* (e.g., "On most days, I feel cheerful and optimistic." [$\alpha = 0.78$]), *agreeableness* (e.g., "Most people tend to get angry more quickly than I do" [$\alpha = 0.76$]), *conscientiousness* (e.g., "People often call me a perfectionist." [$\alpha = 0.77$]), and *openness to experience* (e.g., "I like people who have unconventional views." [$\alpha = 0.76$]). Items were averaged to generate scores for each domain.

2.2.2. PID-5-BF

The PID-5-BF consists of 25 items that assess five pathological personality dimensions on a 0 (*very false or often false*) to 3 (*very true or often true*) scale: *negative affectivity* (e.g., "I worry about almost everything" [$\alpha = 0.71$]), *detachment* (e.g., "I don't like to get too close to people" [$\alpha = 0.70$]), *antagonism* (e.g., "I use people to get what I want" [$\alpha = 0.77$]), *disinhibition* (e.g., "People would describe me as reckless" [$\alpha = 0.79$]), and *psychoticism* (e.g., "My thoughts often don't make sense to others" [$\alpha = 0.76$]; Krueger et al., 2012). Items were averaged to generate scores for each dimension.

2.2.3. DOSPERT

The DOSPERT measures risk-taking behavior across five domains using 30 items measured on a 1 (*extremely unlikely*) to 7 (*extremely likely*) scale: *social* (e.g., "Speaking your mind about an unpopular issue in a meeting at work." [$\alpha = 0.68$]), *health/safety* (e.g., "Drinking heavily at a social function" [$\alpha = 0.67$]), *financial* (e.g., "Investing 5% of your annual income in a very speculative stock" [$\alpha = 0.79$]), *recreational* (e.g., "Going down a ski run that is beyond your ability" [$\alpha = 0.82$]), and *ethical* (e.g., "Passing off somebody else's work as your own" [$\alpha = 0.78$]). Items were averaged to generate scores for each subscale.

2.2.4. Mate poaching questions

We used participant responses to four questions to categorize participants into groups based on current relationship status and mate poaching history. Two questions assessed their current romantic relationship: 1) "Was your current partner in a committed relationship with another person when you first became interested in them as a romantic partner?" (*Yes/No*), 2) "Was your current partner in a committed relationship with another person when you first became physically intimate with one another (e.g., kissing, intimate touching, sexual intercourse, etc.)?" (*Yes/No*). Participants also answered two questions about their previous attempts to mate poach: 3) "How many of your past relationships (not including your current relationship) have started from your attempts to attract someone knowing that they were currently in a relationship with someone else?" (*0*, *1*, *2–3*, *4–5*, *6 or more*), and 4) "How many times have you unsuccessfully attempted to attract someone knowing that they were in a relationship with someone else?"

(*0*, *1*, *2–3*, *4–5*, *6 or more*). Participants were divided into four groups based on their responses to these items. *Non-poachers* ($n = 754$) were participants who indicated that they were neither interested in nor physically intimate with their partner while their partner was in a relationship with someone else, and who had never poached or attempted to poach someone. *Previous poachers* ($n = 411$) were those who had previously poached or attempted to poach a partner (indicated 1 or more to questions 3 and/or 4), but were not currently in a relationship that resulted from mate poaching. *Emotional poachers* ($n = 150$) were individuals who were only romantically interested in their current partner during their partner's prior relationship (i.e., answered "yes" to question 1, but "no" to question 2) and *physical poachers* ($n = 99$) were individuals who were physically intimate with their current partner during their partner's prior relationship (i.e., answered "yes" to question 2). "Interest" in potential romantic partners certainly consists of many unique and specific factors, of which emotional interest is only one. Our intent with this categorization was to tease apart some of the differences between individuals willing to move from being "interested" in a potential romantic partner (whatever that interest entails) and those who *acted* on their interest by engaging in a physical relationship with someone while that individual was in a in a relationship with someone else.

3. Results

3.1. HEXACO

A 2 (sex [male, female]) × 4 (poaching status [non-poacher, previous poachers, emotional poachers, physical poachers]) between-subject MANOVA was used to compare HEXACO scores (subscales: honesty-humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience), revealing main effects for sex ($F_{6,1401} = 47.17$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.17$) and poaching status ($F_{18,4209} = 4.31$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.018$). There was also a marginal sex × poaching status interaction ($F_{18,4209} = 1.57$, $p = .06$, $\eta p^2 = 0.007$). Follow-up ANOVAs indicated that women had higher scores than men for honesty-humility ($F_{1,1406} = 39.45$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.027$), emotionality ($F_{1,1406} = 69.70$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.138$), agreeableness ($F_{1,1406} = 5.399$, $p = .020$, $\eta p^2 = 0.004$), and conscientiousness ($F_{1,1406} = 34.06$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.024$), whereas men had higher scores than women for agreeableness ($F_{1,1412} = 1.986$, $p = .02$, $\eta p^2 = 0.004$). See Table 1 for HEXACO subscale descriptive statistics.

Follow-up ANOVAs to investigate the main effect of poaching status for HEXACO traits indicated that honesty-humility ($F_{3,1406} = 14.25$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.029$), emotionality ($F_{3,1406} = 2.838$, $p = .037$, $\eta p^2 = 0.006$), and conscientiousness ($F_{3,1406=}12.20$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.025$) differed across poaching groups. Pairwise comparisons (critical $p = .01$) indicated non-poachers reported significantly higher levels of honesty-humility compared to all other groups (all $ps < .001$). The other three groups did not significantly differ on honesty-humility (all $ps > .068$). Non-poachers reported significantly higher scores for emotionality compared to previous ($p < .001$) and physical poachers ($p = .009$), but only marginally higher scores than emotional poachers ($p = .059$). Non-poachers also reported higher scores for conscientiousness compared to previous ($p < .001$), emotional ($p = .003$), and physical poachers ($p < .001$). Physical poachers, conversely, reported significantly lower scores for conscientiousness compared to non-poachers ($p < .001$), previous poachers ($p = .001$), and emotional poachers ($p = .012$).

3.2. PID-5-BF

A 2 (sex) × 4 (poaching status) between-subject MANOVA was used to compare scores for the PID-5-BF (subscales: negative affectivity, detachment, antagonism, disinhibition, and psychoticism), revealing main effects for sex ($F_{5,1402} = 40.46$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.126$) and poaching status ($F_{15,4212} = 9.89$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.034$) as well as a sex × poaching status interaction ($F_{15,4212} = 1.99$, $p = .013$, $\eta p^2 = 0.007$). Follow-up ANOVAs indicated that this interaction was significant for negative affectivity ($F_{3,1413} = 4.96$, $p = .002$, $\eta p^2 = 0.010$), detachment ($F_{3,1413=}2.81$, $p = .038$, $\eta p^2 = 0.006$), antagonism ($F_{3,1413} = 4.83$, $p = .002$, $\eta p^2 = 0.010$), disinhibition ($F_{3,1413} = 7.46$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.016$), and psychoticism ($F_{3,1413} = 3.53$, $p = .014$, $\eta p^2 = 0.007$).

Next, to test for main effects of poaching status on PID-5-BF scores, the data were split by sex and ANOVAs were run separately for men and women. In men, follow-up ANOVAs revealed main effects of poaching status for all five subscales of the PID-5-BF (negative affectivity: $F_{3,625} = 10.45$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.048$; detachment: $F_{3,625} = 16.73$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.074$; antagonism: $F_{3,625} = 26.44$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.113$; disinhibition: $F_{3,625} = 31.65$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.132$; psychoticism: $F_{3,625} = 14.73$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.066$; see Table 2 for PID-5-BF subscale descriptive statistics). Follow-up Tukey tests (critical

Table 1
Differences in scores for the HEXACO-60 subscales in each poaching group for men and women. Subscripts refer to pairwise comparisons within a row. Means with different subscripts are significantly different from one another (critical $p < .01$).

	Non-Poachers	Previous Poachers	Emotional Poachers	Physical Poachers
	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)
Men				
Honesty-humility	$3.34(0.55)_a$	$3.18(0.59)_b$	$3.12(0.60)_b$	$2.94(0.39)_b$
Emotionality	2.94(0.55)	2.89(0.54)	3.07(0.56)	3.07(0.39)
Extraversion	3.42(0.58)	3.45(0.61)	3.47(0.58)	3.25(0.43)
Agreeableness	3.22(0.59)	3.25(0.55)	3.26(0.57)	3.15(0.46)
Conscientiousness	$3.52(0.56)_a$	$3.47(0.57)_a$	$3.41(0.55)_a$	$3.10(0.50)_b$
Openness to experience	3.18(0.67)	3.26(0.65)	3.18(0.59)	3.23(0.53)
Women				
Honesty-humility	$3.54(0.58)_a$	$3.35(0.52)_b$	$3.42(0.56)_{a,b}$	$3.33(0.83)_{a,b}$
Emotionality	3.68(0.56)	3.59(0.58)	3.69(0.49)	3.43(0.82)
Extraversion	3.39(0.63)	3.34(0.62)	3.34(0.69)	3.29(0.81)
Agreeableness	3.18(0.63)	3.04(0.62)	3.16(0.65)	3.10(0.84)
Conscientiousness	$3.76(0.56)_a$	$3.58(0.57)_b$	$3.61(0.58)_{a,b}$	$3.50(0.82)_{a,b}$
Openness to experience	3.22(0.68)	3.18(0.66)	3.21(0.65)	3.31(0.90)

Table 2
Scores for Personality Inventory for the DSM-5 Brief Form (PID5-BF) subscales in each poaching group for men and women. Subscripts refer to pairwise comparisons within a row. Means with different subscripts are significantly different from one another (critical $p < .01$).

	Non-poachers	Previous poachers	Emotional poachers	Physical poachers
	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)
Men				
Negative affectivity	$0.96(0.04)_a$	$1.11(0.04)_a$	$1.19(0.07)_{a,b}$	$1.45(0.08)_b$
Detachment	$0.74(0.04)_a$	$0.90(0.04)_b$	$0.88(0.06)_{a,b}$	$1.34(0.08)_c$
Antagonism	$0.58(0.04)_a$	$0.80(0.04)_b$	$0.82(0.07)_b$	$1.34(0.08)_c$
Disinhibition	$0.67(0.04)_a$	$0.93(0.04)_b$	$1.02(0.07)_b$	$1.51(0.08)_c$
Psychoticism	$0.94(0.04)_a$	$1.17(0.04)_b$	$1.15(0.07)_{a,b}$	$1.54(0.09)_c$
Women				
Negative affectivity	1.40(0.03)	1.56(0.05)	1.37(0.08)	1.45(0.10)
Detachment	$0.70(0.02)_a$	$0.85(0.04)_b$	$0.68(0.07)_b$	$0.99(0.08)_b$
Antagonism	$0.45(0.02)_a$	$0.72(0.04)_b$	$0.58(0.06)_{a,b}$	$0.80(0.08)_b$
Disinhibition	$0.55(0.03)_a$	$0.8(0.04)4_b$	$0.66(0.07)_{a,b}$	$0.86(0.09)_b$
Psychoticism	$0.86(0.03)_a$	$1.06(0.05)_b$	$0.89(0.08)_{a,b}$	$1.04(0.10)_{a,b}$

$p = .01$) indicated that physical poachers reported significantly higher scores for detachment, antagonism, disinhibition (all $ps < .001$), and psychoticism ($p = .003$) compared to emotional poachers and significantly higher scores for all five PID-5 subscales compared to previous poachers (all $ps \leq .002$), and non-poachers (all $ps < .001$). Emotional poachers reproted higher scores for antagonism ($p = .008$) and disinhibition ($p < .001$) compared to non-poachers, but were not significantly different from previous poachers for any PID-5-BF subscale (all $ps > .616$). Previous poachers reported marginally higher scores for detachment ($p = .012$), and significantly higher scores for antagonism, disinhibition, and psychoticism (all $ps \leq .001$) compared to non-poachers.

In women, follow-up ANOVAs revealed significant effects of poaching status for each PID-5-BF subscale (negative affectivity: $F_{3,781} = 3.09$, $p = .027$, $\eta p^2 = 0.012$; detachment: $F_{3,781} = 6.41$, $p \leq 0.001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.024$; antagonism: $F_{3,781} = 16.27$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.059$; disinhibition: $F_{3,781} = 12.82$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.047$; psychoticism: $F_{3,781} = 4.93$, $p = .002$, $\eta p^2 = 0.019$). Follow-up Tukey tests (critical $p = .01$) indicated that physical poachers reported marginally higher scores for negative affectivity compared to non-poachers ($p = .02$) but did not differ from emotional or previous poachers. Physical poachers also reported significantly higher scores for detachment compared to non-poachers ($p = .007$) and marginally higher scores compared to emotional poachers ($p = .024$), but did not differ from previous poachers ($p > .46$). Physical poachers reported significantly higher scores for antagonism and disinhibition than non-poachers (both $p < .001$), but did not differ from emotional or previous poachers. Female emotional poachers did not significantly differ from either previous or non-poachers for any of the PID-5-BF subscales (all $ps > .158$). Previous poachers reported marginally higher scores on negative affectivity compared to non-poachers ($p = .020$) and significantly higher scores for detachment ($p = .008$), antagonism ($p < .001$), disinhibition ($p < .001$), and psychoticism ($p = .002$) compared to non-poachers.

Next, to test for main effects of sex on PID-5-BF scores, data were split by poaching group and MANOVAs were run separately for each group. There were significant sex differences in PID-5-BF scores in all four groups (physical poachers: $F_{5,93} = 8.85$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.323$; emotional poachers: $F_{5,144} = 6.49$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.184$; previous poachers: $F_{5,405} = 23.53$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.225$; non-poachers: $F_{5,748} = 34.65$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.188$). Women reported higher scores for negative affectivity than men in the non-poach ($F_{1,752} = 82.25$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.099$) and previous poach groups ($F_{1,409} = 56.72$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.122$), but not in the emotional poach or physical poach groups (both $F < 2.64$, both $p > .10$). Men reported significantly higher scores than women for detachment only in the physical poach group ($F_{1,97} = 7.52$, $p = .007$, $\eta p^2 = 0.072$) and marginally higher scores in the emotional poach group ($F_{1,148} = 3.65$, $p = .058$, $\eta p^2 = 0.017$). Men also reported higher scores than women for antagonism in the non-poach ($F_{1,752} = 12.26$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.016$) and physical poach groups ($F_{1,97} = 15.29$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.136$), and marginally higher scores in the emotional poach group ($F_{1,148} = 5.63$, $p = .019$, $\eta p^2 = 0.016$). This pattern was similar for disinhibition, such that men reported higher scores than women in the non-poach ($F_{1,752} = 8.90$, $p = .003$, $\eta p^2 = 0.012$), emotional poach ($F_{1,148} = 11.94$, $p = .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.075$), and physical poach ($F_{1,97} = 19.54$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.168$) groups, but not the previous poach group ($p > .157$). Finally, men also reported marginally higher scores than women for psychoticism in the emotional poach ($F_{1,148} = 5.67$, $p = .019$, $\eta p^2 = 0.037$) and significantly higher scores in the physical poach group ($F_{1,97} = 12.90$, $p = .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.117$). Generally, men reported higher scores for these traits across poaching groups, except for negative affectivity.

Table 3
DOSPERT subscale scores in each poaching group for men and women. Subscripts refer to pairwise comparisons within a row. Means with different subscripts are significantly different from one another (critical $p < .01$).

	Non-poachers	Previous poachers	Emotional poachers	Physical poachers
	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)
Men				
Ethical	$2.11(0.93)_a$	$2.53(1.16)_b$	$2.49(1.05)_{a,b}$	$3.87(1.42)_c$
Financial	$2.82(1.06)_a$	$3.19(1.19)_b$	$2.95(1.17)_{a,b}$	$3.88(1.39)_c$
Health-safety	$3.24(1.16)_a$	$3.78(1.32)_b$	$3.55(1.29)_{a,b}$	$4.37(1.23)_c$
Recreation	$3.96(1.48)_a$	$4.23(1.48)_{a,b}$	$4.04(1.51)_{a,b}$	$4.67(1.41)_b$
Social	4.45(1.04)	4.56(1.07)	4.44(1.10)	4.63(1.26)
Women				
Ethical	$1.88(0.83)_a$	$2.35(1.06)_b$	$2.10(1.14)_{a,b}$	$2.56(1.27)_b$
Financial	2.27(0.93)	2.52(1.16)	2.34(1.10)	2.57(1.30)
Health-safety	3.06(1.16)	3.34(1.21)	3.02(1.25)	3.23(1.30)
Recreation	3.62(1.47)	3.71(1.42)	3.77(1.56)	3.69(1.55)
Social	4.51(1.03)	4.44(1.16)	4.61(1.02)	4.52(1.35)

3.3. DOSPERT

A 2 (sex) × 4 (poaching status) between-subject MANOVA was used to compare scores for the DOSPERT (subscales: ethical, financial, health and safety, recreational, and social), revealing main effects of poaching status ($F_{15,4212} = 10.24$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.035$) and sex ($F_{5,1402} = 25.54$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.083$), and a significant sex × poaching status interaction ($F_{15,4212} = 2.54$, $p = .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.009$; see Table 3 for DOSPERT subscale descriptive statistics). Follow-up ANOVAs revealed that the sex and poaching status interaction was significant for the ethical ($F_{3,1406} = 27.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.019$), financial ($F_{3,1406} = 12.32$, $p = .015$, $\eta p^2 = 0.007$), and health-safety ($F_{3,1406} = 21.49$, $p = .002$, $\eta p^2 = 0.010$) subscales of the DOSPERT. To determine the main effects of poaching status, MANOVAs were next run separately for men and women. DOSPERT subscale scores were different among poaching groups in both men ($F_{15,1869} = 8.48$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.064$) and women ($F_{15,2337} = 27.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.023$).

In men, follow-up ANOVAs revealed that scores for the ethical ($F_{3,625} = 42.18$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.168$), financial ($F_{3,625} = 14.74$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.066$), health-safety ($F_{3,625} = 16.00$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.071$), and recreational ($F_{3,625} = 4.18$, $p = .006$, $\eta p^2 = 0.020$) subscales of the DOSPERT varied by poaching status. Tukey tests indicated that physical poachers reported significantly higher scores for ethical (all $ps < .001$), financial (all $ps < .001$), and health-safety risk-taking (all $ps \leq .008$) than all other groups. They also scored higher for recreational risk-taking than non-poachers ($p = .006$) and marginally higher than emotional poachers ($p = .062$). Emotional poachers reported marginally higher scores for ethical risk-taking than non-poachers ($p = .026$). Previous poachers reported significantly higher scores for ethical ($p < .001$), financial ($p = .002$), and health-safety ($p < .001$) risk-taking compared to non-poachers.

In women, follow-up ANOVAs indicated that scores for the ethical ($F_{3,781} = 15.44$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.056$), financial ($F_{3,781} = 3.43$, $p = .017$, $\eta p^2 = 0.013$), and health-safety ($F_{3,781} = 4.06$, $p = .035$, $\eta p^2 = 0.011$) DOSPERT subscales varied by poaching status. Tukey tests revealed that physical poachers reported significantly higher scores for ethical risk-taking than non-poachers ($p < .001$), marginally higher scores than emotional poachers ($p = .068$), but did not differ from previous poachers ($p > .56$). Previous poachers reported higher scores for ethical risk-taking ($p < .001$) and marginally higher scores for financial ($p = .029$) and health-safety ($p = .021$) risk-taking compared to non-poachers.

Splitting data by poaching status to investigate sex differences using separate MANOVAs revealed main effects of sex for DOSPERT scores in all four poaching groups (physical poachers: $F_{5,93} = 8.28$, $p < .001$,

$\eta p^2 = 0.308$; emotional poachers: $F_{5,144} = 3.87$, $p = .003$, $\eta p^2 = 0.118$; previous poachers: $F_{5,405} = 8.31$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.093$; non-poachers: $F_{5,748} = 12.82$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.079$). Follow-up ANOVAs indicated that both male non-poachers and physical poachers reported significantly higher scores for ethical risk-taking than women in the same groups (both $ps \leq .001$). Male previous poachers and emotional poachers reported marginally higher ethical risk-taking scores than women in the same groups (previous poachers: $p = .092$; emotional poachers: $p = .031$). Across all four poaching groups, men reported significantly higher scores for financial risk-taking than women (all $ps < .001$). Men also reported significantly higher scores for health-safety risk-taking than women in the physical poacher, emotional poacher, and previous poacher groups (all $ps < .001$), and marginally higher scores in the non-poach group ($p = .036$). Finally, men reported higher scores for recreational risk-taking than women in the physical poacher, previous poacher, and non-poacher (all $ps \leq .002$) groups.

4. Discussion

Consistent with reports that mate poaching attempts and successes are associated with dark personality traits (Jonason et al., 2010; Schmitt & Buss, 2001; Sunderani et al., 2013), those currently in poached relationships reported distinct personality characteristics compared to others. Specifically, *physically intimate* poachers differed the most from individuals who did not poach their current partner (i.e., higher scores for antagonism, disinhibition, and ethical risk-taking, and lower scores for honesty-humility). However, there were more differences among men in personality and risk-taking behavior as a function of poaching status than among women. Male physical poachers reported higher levels of detachment, antagonism, disinhibition, and psychopathy, and lower levels of conscientiousness compared to others. Additionally, these men reported lower levels of honesty-humility compared to the non-poach group. Higher levels of disinhibition and lower levels of conscientiousness might suggest that male physical poachers are less concerned with potential negative outcomes of impulsive and risky behaviors, such as mate poaching. Extending previous research indicating that mate poachers report higher scores for measures of the Dark Triad (Jonason et al., 2010), which is associated with deceitfulness and duplicity (Paulhus & Williams, 2002), we found that male physical poachers had higher levels of pathological personality traits (e.g., antagonism) and lower levels of honesty-humility. Subterfuge is likely required to maintain a physical relationship with someone who is currently in a committed relationship with another person, especially if that person is an integrated part of that couple's social circle (e.g., a close friend). Therefore, lower levels of honesty-humility and a willingness to deceive and manipulate others for personal gain (i.e., antagonism) likely facilitates successful infiltration of an established relationship.

Male physical poachers also reported higher scores for financial, health-safety, and ethical risk-taking compared to the other three groups. This suggests that a willingness to undertake risky ventures may increase the chances of successful mate poaching, particularly for sexual contact. Greater financial risk-taking is associated with greater anticipation for rewarding stimuli and attenuation of risk aversion (Knutson et al., 2008; Kuhnen & Knutson, 2005). Higher scores for this trait may therefore reflect a poacher's willingness to prioritize the benefits of physical contact with a mate over the risk of partner retaliation. Physical intimacy with someone currently in a relationship with another person may also entail exposure to pathogens spread by sexual contact (e.g., gonorrhea) or close physical contact (e.g., influenza virus; see Altizer et al., 2003). Greater health/safety risk-taking may index greater willingness to endure pathogens, whereas greater ethical risk-taking may indicate less aversion to social retaliation, partner retribution, and reputation loss from disrupting an established relationship.

Interestingly, male emotional poachers had lower scores for honesty-humility and higher scores for antagonism, disinhibition, and ethical risk-taking compared to non-poachers, but did not differ from previous poachers. These personality characteristics may still facilitate a mate poaching strategy in that higher levels of disinhibition might lead these men to care less about the consequences of impulsive behavior, and lower levels of honesty-humility could enable the deceit necessary for mate poaching. Perhaps these men did not become physically intimate with the person they attempted to poach because the opportunity did not arise. However, male emotional poachers had significantly lower scores for ethical risk-taking compared to male physical poachers, suggesting they may not capitalize on physical intimacy opportunities because the perceived costs outweigh the benefits. Alternatively, male emotional poachers may use an alternative mate poaching strategy compared to male physical poachers (i.e., motivated more by the establishment of a trusting romantic bond than sexual access). Differences between poaching groups may reflect unique situations leading to the "activation" of different personality traits (i.e., situational affordances; de Vries et al., 2016), but future research should investigate this possibility more explicitly.

Women did not show as many differences between poaching groups, with female physical poachers scoring higher on antagonism, disinhibition, and detachment compared to female non-poachers, but not emotional or previous poachers. Female physical poachers also had higher scores for ethical risk-taking compared to non-poachers and marginally higher scores than emotional poachers, but did not differ from previous poachers. As with the differences in ethical risk-taking observed in men, this difference may indicate a willingness to endure costs of becoming physically intimate with someone who is currently in another relationship. The size of these differences were smaller than in men, which is consistent with research indicating that women score lower than men on measures of dark personality (Jonason et al., 2009; Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Female poachers had similar scores for the PID-5 traits (e.g., detachment, antagonism) and ethical risk-taking compared to non-poacher men.

Despite differences in dark personality traits compared to men, women still poach partners, albeit at lower rates than men (e.g., Jonason et al., 2010). Women may use different mate poaching strategies than men, and may only vary on dark personality traits that are consequential to those sex-typical strategies. For example, varying attitudes toward interpersonal investment and self-reliance (i.e., detachment) and social manipulation (i.e., antagonism) might influence women's willingness to attempt to mate poach. Making impulsive decisions (i.e., disinhibition), however, might not be as advantageous for women compared to men because it can have larger, more longer-lasting consequences (e.g., unwanted pregnancies). Sex-differentiated mate poaching strategies make sense when considering that women, compared to men, are thought to have evolved mate preferences that increase their access to partners of *high quality*, rather than overall partner *quantity* (e.g., Gangestad & Simpson, 2000). Future research should investigate this further.

That we investigated personality and risk-taking behaviors in individuals who were currently in a mate poached relationship means our results are more applicable to individuals who have made a long-term (versus short-term) poaching effort. Future research could compare those currently attempting to poach a partner for short-term and long-term relationships, although, as evinced by the discrepancy between our group sizes, acquiring enough participants of each type may be difficult. Future research could also specifically ascertain what types of investment (e.g., financial, emotional) poachers may have made in their partners while they were in a relationship with someone else, as opposed to looking at emotional interest versus physical intimacy.

The current research also used the PID-5 to investigate differences in pathological personality traits between individuals who are currently in a poached relationship and those who are not. Interestingly, we found the largest effect sizes in personality emerged when considering the PID-5 rather than HEXACO subscale scores. This may reflect the fact

that the PID-5, which was developed for clinical use, captures more "extreme" ends of the distribution of personality traits compared to the HEXACO. Previous research has used the Big 5 traits (e.g., Schmitt, 2004; Schmitt & Buss, 2001) and various measures of the Dark Triad (e.g., Jonason et al., 2010; Kardum et al., 2015) to investigate personality variation in mate poachers. That the effect sizes for the PID-5 traits were larger than those of the HEXACO may suggest that the PID-5 more accurately captures personality variation in these groups compared to non-clinical measures of personality. Future research should include a measure of the Dark Triad when investigating differences between these groups to better understand whether group differences in personality are due to Dark Triad traits, or if the PID-5 traits are uniquely associated with current mate poaching behavior. Finally, our results suggest that there may be important distinctions between individuals who are willing to be physically intimate with versus emotionally interested in their partner while their partner was in a relationship with someone else. *Both* of these groups may have distinct characteristics compared to previous mate poachers and non-poachers. Our results suggest that emotional poachers show differences in personality traits compared to non-poachers, and that they may employ tactics that do not include physical intimacy that may still enable them to infiltrate and poach partners from established relationships. Future research could further investigate the potential distinctions between different mate poaching strategies, under what scenarios individuals employ those strategies, and how personality traits predict the strategies an individual may use.

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