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## Predicting Mate Poaching Experiences from Personality Traits Using a Dyadic Analysis

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### ABSTRACT

Mate poaching is “behavior intended to attract someone who is already in a romantic relationship.” We investigated actor and partner effects of the five-factor personality traits and the dark triad traits on several mate poaching experiences. We used actor-partner interdependence modeling with data secured from both members of 187 heterosexual married, cohabiting and dating couples from Croatia. In a round-robin design, each participant rated their own and their partner’s personality traits, and their own poaching experiences. The results showed that men’s lower agreeableness had the most consistent relationship with poaching experiences in both men (actor effects) and women (partner effects). The role of other personality traits from the five-factor model was limited to specific aspects of poaching. Regarding the dark triad traits, men’s psychopathy and Machiavellianism were the most consistently related to poaching experiences in both men and women, whereas narcissism did not demonstrate a consistent actor or partner effect on poaching. The results showed that men’s poaching is associated with their own personality traits, whereas women’s poaching with their own and their partner’s personality traits. We interpret the results in the context of life history theory and mate switching hypothesis.

### Introduction

#### Mate Poaching

Mate poaching occurs when someone tries to initiate romantic and/or sexual relations with someone who is already in an exclusive relationship (Belu & O’Sullivan, 2018; Foster et al., 2014). It emerges in two temporal contexts, short-term and long-term mate poaching. Short-term poaching refers to temporary sexual defection by an already-mated partner, including one-night stands and brief affairs, whereas long-term poaching refers to permanent relationship defection and the eventual formation of a new long-term mating relationship (Schmitt & Buss, 2001).

Mate poaching is a frequent and potent form of romantic attraction in humans throughout the world (Schmitt et al., 2004; Schmitt & Shackelford, 2008). Research on a large sample of participants from 53 nations across 10 world regions found that around 60% of men and 40% of women admitted attempting to poach someone else’s partner for a short-term sexual relationship or a new long-term relationship, with over 80% of both men and women reporting some poaching successes. Nearly 70% of women and men reported that someone had attempted to poach them for a short-term or long-term relationship, with about 50% of women and 60% of men reporting being successfully poached (Schmitt et al., 2004). Proportionally fewer women sought and succumbed to short-term poaching across all world regions, whereas in the majority of regions they more frequently reported being the target of short-term poaching attempts as well as being more successful in poaching attempts than men (Schmitt et al., 2004).

#### Consequences of Mate Poaching

Research suggests that relationships formed via poaching function less well than those not formed by poaching, and include lower satisfaction, commitment, and trust, and higher jealousy and emotional and sexual infidelity (Belu & O’Sullivan, 2018; Foster et al., 2014). Because of their greater obligatory parental investment, women perceive more costs of poaching than men (Davies et al., 2010). When a woman is the victim of poaching (i.e. her partner was poached by another woman), she loses a potentially high-quality partner and resources he previously directed toward her and her offspring (Semchenko & Havlíček, 2019). As a poacher, a woman perceives higher costs of poaching in terms of reputational damage and shame for both short-term and long-term relationship contexts (Davies et al., 2010). These are important costs for women since for long-term commitments men have evolved a preference for sexually non-promiscuous women to minimize paternity uncertainty (Buss, 1989). Apart from potential intrasexual retaliation, women who are poachers or are poached are also at a greater risk of violence from their partner, including sexual violence (Goetz & Shackelford, 2009; Wilson & Daly, 1996). Furthermore, children of mothers who poached or had been poached and who entered a new long-term relationship are exposed to numerous risks, such as lower investment from their stepfather and higher probability of physical abuse that may result in filicide (Anderson et al., 1999; Daly & Wilson, 1988, 2008). Although the consequences of poaching can be detrimental and potentially lethal for a woman, it is a frequent and cross-culturally universal mating strategy, which suggests it also conferred ancestral reproductive benefits. The dual mating hypothesis points to one such benefit of women’s poaching: a woman

who simultaneously pursues both long-term and short-term mating strategies may obtain investments and resources from a committed partner, and better or higher quality genes from a poacher (Gangestad & Haselton, 2015). Recently, the mate switching hypothesis – breaking up with one partner and remating with another – identified another adaptive potential benefit of women’s poaching (Buss et al., 2017; Buss & Schmitt, 2019). An already-mated woman can monitor the qualities of potential alternative partners and terminate the existing relationship and form a new one after a period of a platonic relationship, after an extra-pair affair, or after keeping a backup partner (Buss et al., 2017; Buss & Schmitt, 2019). Proximal benefits of women’s poaching include pride in the conquest of a long-term relationship, exacting revenge on a rival, gaining a proven mate (Schmitt & Buss, 2001), obscuring paternity (Hrdy, 2006), and increasing genetic variance of offspring (Gangestad, 2006).

Poached women pose a threat to paternity certainty, a specific male adaptive problem that places men at risk of investment in a rival’s offspring. An evolved response to paternity uncertainty in men is a feeling of sexual proprietariness over women that may lead to jealousy and violence, including uxoricide (Wilson & Daly, 1996) – important costs of poaching for both women and men. Other costs of poaching for men include resource depletion and future infidelity concerns (Schmitt & Buss, 2001). Because ancestral men increased their reproductive success by having more sexual partners, they perceive the benefits of poaching as greater incentives than do women (Davies et al., 2010). Enjoying sexual variety and gaining physically beautiful partners are rated as among the primary poaching benefits for men (Schmitt & Buss, 2001). Relatedly, men more than women rated “ego-boost” and “take pride in conquest” for successfully poaching someone for a short-term relationship as greater benefits (Davies et al., 2010; Schmitt & Buss, 2001). Compared to women, men prefer short-term relationships with a lower commitment and report more benefit in enjoying a lack of responsibility and having time off from a relationship (Schmitt & Buss, 2001).

### **Personality Traits and Mate Poaching**

Personality traits are associated with a range of sexual behaviors. A meta-analytic review showed that extraversion is positively related to risky sexual behaviors and liberal attitudes toward sex, whereas agreeableness and conscientiousness are negatively related to sexually aggressive behaviors and sexual infidelity (Allen & Walter, 2018). It has also been found that, especially in men, the dark triad (DT) traits (i.e., psychopathy, Machiavellianism and narcissism) are linked to unrestricted sociosexuality manifested as willingness to engage in uncommitted relationships (Reise & Wright, 1996), exploitative short-term sexual strategy (Jonason et al., 2009), and promiscuous sexual attitudes (McHoskey, 2001).

Along with numerous mutually related biological (e.g., menstrual cycle phase, physical attractiveness), psychological (e.g., relationship commitment, mate retention), and cultural and environmental factors (e.g., gender equality, socioeconomic status, sex ratio), personality traits, especially the five-factor traits and the DT traits have been investigated in relation

to poaching. Identifying personality traits related to poaching is an important step to better understanding the causes and consequences of poaching because they may create adaptive problems and may be involved in their solution, especially in socially relevant situations such as mateships (Buss, 2010).

Considering the five-factor personality traits, agreeableness and conscientiousness are the most consistently negatively, and extraversion positively, associated with poaching attempts by women and men (Kardum et al., 2015; Schmitt et al., 2004; Schmitt & Buss, 2001; Schmitt & Shackelford, 2008). Small positive correlations between openness and poaching attempts are found for women and men, and between neuroticism and poaching attempts only for women (Schmitt & Shackelford, 2008). Regarding the DT traits, psychopathy and to a lesser degree narcissism and Machiavellianism are consistently positively related to poaching attempts by both women and men (Jonason et al., 2010; Kardum et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2005).

From the five-factor personality traits, openness and extraversion correlated positively, whereas agreeableness negatively, with poaching success for both women and men (Kardum et al., 2015; Schmitt et al., 2004). Overall, psychopathy (Jonason et al., 2010; Kardum et al., 2015) as well as its components – erratic lifestyle, criminal tendencies, and interpersonal manipulation – correlated positively with poaching success in women, whereas erratic lifestyle, criminal tendencies, and cold affect correlated positively with poaching success in men (Sunderani et al., 2013). Narcissism also positively related to poaching success in both women and men, and Machiavellianism positively related to poaching success only in women (Jonason et al., 2010; Kardum et al., 2015).

Extraversion and openness are the most consistently positively related to being the target of poaching for women and men (Kardum et al., 2015; Schmitt et al., 2004; Schmitt & Buss, 2001). Some studies have found that neuroticism is positively, (Schmitt & Shackelford, 2008) and agreeableness negatively, related to being the target of poaching for both women and men (Kardum et al., 2015; Schmitt & Shackelford, 2008). Conscientiousness is inconsistently related to being the target of poaching, with some studies reporting negative correlations for women and men (Schmitt & Shackelford, 2008), and some positive, but only for men (Kardum et al., 2015). The DT traits are more strongly related to being the target of poaching than the five-factor personality traits. Single DT traits as well as overall DT score are positively related to being the target of poaching for women and men separately (Kardum et al., 2015), whereas for the whole sample, being the target of poaching is positively related to psychopathy, narcissism, and overall DT (Jonason et al., 2010).

Being successfully poached is strongly negatively related to agreeableness and conscientiousness for women and men (Schmitt et al., 2004; Schmitt & Buss, 2001), whereas it is positively related to neuroticism and men’s extraversion (Kardum et al., 2015; Schmitt & Buss, 2001). All DT traits, especially psychopathy, narcissism, and overall DT are more strongly associated with being successfully poached than any of the five-factor personality traits (Jonason et al., 2010). The components of psychopathy, mostly interpersonal manipulation and to a lesser degree cold affect and erratic lifestyle, are

positively related to being successfully poached for women (Sunderani et al., 2013). Psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and overall DT score in the sample of women, and each DT trait and overall DT in the sample of men, are positively related to being successfully poached (Kardum et al., 2015). Although being the victim of poaching has rarely been investigated in relation to personality traits, the limited research reports that this aspect of mate poaching is positively related to extraversion, psychopathy, Machiavellianism, narcissism, and overall DT, and negatively to agreeableness (Jonason et al., 2010; Kardum et al., 2015).

Previous research suggests that women and men have somewhat different personality traits related to poaching experiences. Extraversion is more strongly related to poaching attempts by men (Kardum et al., 2015; Schmitt et al., 2004; Schmitt & Shackelford, 2008), whereas narcissism is more strongly related to poaching attempts by women (Kardum et al., 2015). Men who experience more poaching success have higher openness (Kardum et al., 2015; Schmitt et al., 2004), whereas women successful in poaching are higher on the DT traits (Kardum et al., 2015). Being the target of poaching is more strongly related to conscientiousness and openness in men than women, and the DT traits and neuroticism are more strongly related to being the target of poaching attempts in women than men (Kardum et al., 2015; Schmitt & Shackelford, 2008). Being successfully poached is related to extraversion and all DT traits, but more so in men than in women (Kardum et al., 2015). Lower agreeableness and higher Machiavellianism are more strongly related to being the victim of poaching for men than women, whereas this aspect of poaching is more strongly related to extraversion and narcissism for women than men (Grundler et al., 2013; Kardum et al., 2015). The majority of research on the relationship between personality traits and poaching is cross-sectional, mostly conducted on samples of college or university students, and rarely on community samples.

### ***Dyadic Approach in Personality-outcome Relationships***

Previous studies have considered the reports of only one partner's personality traits and poaching experiences, and although they were conducted on participants in romantic relationships, to the best of our knowledge there is no research on the effects of personality traits on poaching that includes both members of a couple. There is growing evidence that in a dyadic relationship, individuals may be affected by their own personality (actor effect) as well as by the personality of their partner (partner effect). For example, the five-factor personality traits showed both actor and partner effects on sexual function (Velten et al., 2019), narcissism showed partner effects on men's sexual satisfaction and intimacy during intercourse (Gewirtz-Meydan, 2017), and the five-factor personality traits and the DT traits showed actor effects and partner effects on mate retention behaviors (Kardum et al., 2019, 2020). Therefore, including both partner's perspectives is important because it offers an interpersonal view on social outcomes, which adds to the perspective of one partner alone (Back & Vazire, 2015). Namely, "the presence of partner effects implies

that something relational has occurred in that a person's response depends on some property of the partner" (Kenny & Cook, 1999, p. 435).

Personality traits are distal variables that influence relationship outcomes through several mediating mechanisms (Roberts et al., 2007). First, personality traits affect people's exposure to relationship events such as stressful situations and conflicts. For example, people high in neuroticism are more likely to expose themselves to daily conflicts in a relationship (Suls & Martin, 2005). Second, personality traits affect people's reactions to their partners' behaviors. People high in neuroticism interpret ambiguous relationship situations more negatively, which then affects both partners' relationship satisfaction (Finn et al., 2013). Third, personality traits evoke partners' behaviors, which affect relationship quality. A meta-analytic study found that four of the five-factor personality traits – lower neuroticism, and higher agreeableness, conscientiousness, and extraversion – are related to greater relationship satisfaction (Malouff et al., 2010). Furthermore, individuals high on the DT traits are less likely to have a committed, loving, and satisfying romantic relationship. For example, the DT traits negatively affect commitment in a romantic relationship, and relationship satisfaction mediates these links (Smith et al., 2014). This may be especially relevant for mate poaching experiences, because negative relationship outcomes, such as lower relationship satisfaction and lower commitment, may facilitate short-term mating strategies.

### ***Present Research***

The aim of the current study was to examine actor and partner effects of the five-factor personality traits and the DT traits on mate poaching experiences. We included these two groups of personality traits because previous studies found significant relationships between them and various poaching experiences, and notwithstanding a modest to moderate overlap between them, they had non-redundant effects on different poaching experiences (Kardum et al., 2015). Additionally, the inclusion of both sets of personality traits in one study affords a clear comparison of their effects on poaching, because we can rule out differences attributable to sampling or other design-related features that appear when we compare the results from two or more studies.

Furthermore, we extended previous research on the relationship between personality traits and poaching by using a dyadic approach. To statistically control for nonindependence of couple data, we used the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM; Kenny et al., 2006). As actor effects based on self-reported predictor variables and partner effects based on partner-reported predictor variables are biased by common method variance between the predictor and outcome variables (Kenny & Cook, 1999), we secured both self-reports and partner-reports of the five-factor personality traits and the DT traits. As far as we know, this is the first study investigating actor and partner effects of personality traits on poaching experiences.

We derived the hypotheses related to actor effects from the results of previous studies on the relationship between personality traits and poaching experiences. Regarding the five-factor

personality traits, we expected that agreeableness and conscientiousness would have negative actor effects on the majority of poaching experiences, whereas extraversion, openness, and neuroticism would have positive effects (H1). We could not derive hypotheses regarding partner effects from previous research, but studies investigating other outcomes such as quality, satisfaction, and stability of relationships showed that neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness had the largest partner effects on these outcomes (Weidmann et al., 2016). Therefore, we assumed that agreeableness and conscientiousness would demonstrate negative partner effects on poaching, and that neuroticism would demonstrate positive partner effects on mate poaching (H2).

We expected that the DT traits would predict poaching experiences more strongly than the five-factor personality traits, especially being the target of poaching and being successfully poached (H3). As the DT traits facilitate short-term mating in both men and women, we expected that they, and especially psychopathy, would demonstrate significant positive actor effects on poaching experiences and because of their highly antisocial nature, that the DT traits would show positive partner effects on poaching experiences (H4).

According to sexual selection and parental investment theory, men engage more in a mating strategy oriented toward promiscuous sex and more frequently seek casual sexual opportunities, whereas women are more oriented toward a long-term relationship, and tend to be more discriminating of potential sexual partners (Geary, 2021). Men score higher on all DT traits than women and men's DT traits have more deleterious effects on relationship outcomes (Jonason et al., 2009). Additionally, being with an agreeable partner is more beneficial for women's than for men's relationship satisfaction (Dyrenforth et al., 2010; Solomon & Jackson, 2014). The above-mentioned theoretical and empirical reasons are in line with our hypothesis that women's more than men's poaching experiences will be affected by the personality traits of their partners (H5).

Although partner-reports are not redundant with self-reports, as other people may know things about our personality that we do not (Vazire & Carlson, 2011), both self-reports and partner-reports may be similar in predicting behaviors. Therefore, we hypothesized that the largest actor and partner effects would generalize across self-reports and partner-reports (H6). Furthermore, we expected larger actor effects for self-reports, and larger partner effects for partner-reports (H7).

## Method

### Participants and Procedure

A sample of 187 Caucasian heterosexual married (16%), cohabiting (37%), and dating (47%) urban couples participated in this study. All were in a committed relationship at the time of the study, and 11% percent had children. They were members of the general public from one town in Croatia, recruited by psychology students invited to refer eligible couples. Participation was voluntary and not compensated. The exclusion criteria were age less than 18 years and less than 6 months relationship length. Relationship length ranged from 6 months

to 18 years ( $M = 53.88$  months,  $SD = 35.52$ ). Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 35 years ( $M = 24.91$  years,  $SD = 3.62$  for men;  $M = 23.40$  years,  $SD = 3.29$  for women;  $t = 8.23$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $d = 0.44$ ), and women ( $M = 13.44$  years of education,  $SD = 2.18$ ) were more educated than men ( $M = 13.02$  years of education,  $SD = 1.95$ ;  $t = 2.41$ ,  $p = .013$ ,  $d = 0.20$ ). The majority of men (70%) and 36% of women were employed. Two research assistants administered the paper and pencil questionnaires to each couple in their homes. Participants first provided verbal informed consent and then rated their own and their partner's five-factor personality traits and Dark triad (DT) traits along with their own mate poaching experiences. The order of questionnaires was counterbalanced within self-reports and partner-reports to control for order effects. Partners sat apart from each other while completing the questionnaires. To ensure confidentiality, they returned the completed questionnaires via sealed envelopes. At the end of the procedure, participants were informed about the aims and hypotheses of the study. This study was a part of a larger study with additional measures not analyzed here, and was approved by the institutional ethics review committee prior to initiation.

### Measures

We measured five-factor personality traits with the Big Five Inventory (BFI; Benet-Martinez & John, 1998). Participants rated each of 44 items on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The Dark triad (DT) traits were measured by The Dirty Dozen (DD; Jonason & Webster, 2010), a 12-item measure consisting of three four-item subscales for psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and narcissism. For the purpose of this study, in addition to the three subscales we analyzed the overall DT score. Participants indicated the extent to which each statement reflected their own personalities on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all like me) to 5 (very much like me).

As mentioned before, in previous research the five-factor personality traits and the DT traits were modestly to moderately related. In this study correlations between these two groups of personality traits ranged from  $-0.41$  (women's agreeableness and psychopathy) to  $0.27$  (women's neuroticism and narcissism) for self-reports, and from  $-0.46$  (men's agreeableness and men's psychopathy) to  $0.29$  (women's neuroticism and narcissism). In both self-reports and partner-reports, as well as in women and men, the highest correlations were those of agreeableness with psychopathy and Machiavellianism (from  $-0.32$  to  $-0.46$ ). All other correlations obtained on self-reports had an absolute correlation mean of  $0.14$  ( $SD = 0.08$ ), and  $0.15$  ( $SD = 0.09$ ) on partner-reports.

We assessed short-term mate poaching with the Anonymous Romantic Attraction Survey (ARAS; Schmitt & Buss, 2001). It consists of one question for each of five poaching experiences: poaching attempts ("Have you ever attempted to attract someone who was already in a romantic relationship with someone else for a short-term sexual relationship with you?"), successful poaching ("If you have tried to attract someone who was already in a romantic relationship, how successful have you been?"), being the victim of poaching ("While you

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics and sex differences for poaching experiences.

Variables	Women		Men		<i>t</i>	<i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Poaching attempts	1.19	0.59	1.53	1.13	4.24***	0.31
Poaching success	2.73	1.84	2.86	1.84	0.82	0.06
Victim of poaching	1.87	1.22	2.19	1.53	2.60**	0.19
Target of poaching	2.41	1.45	2.05	1.31	2.97**	0.22

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; *t* = *t*-test; *d* = Cohen's *d*. \**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01; \*\*\**p* < .001.

were in a romantic relationship, have others ever attempted to obtain your partner away from you for a short-term sexual relationship?”), being the target of poaching (“While you were in a romantic relationship, have others ever attempted to obtain you away from your partner as a short-term sexual partner?”), and being successfully poached (“If others have attempted to obtain you as a short-term sexual partner, how successful have they been?”). We did not analyze the last question because of the low variability in the responses. Descriptive statistics and sex differences for poaching experiences are presented in Table 1.

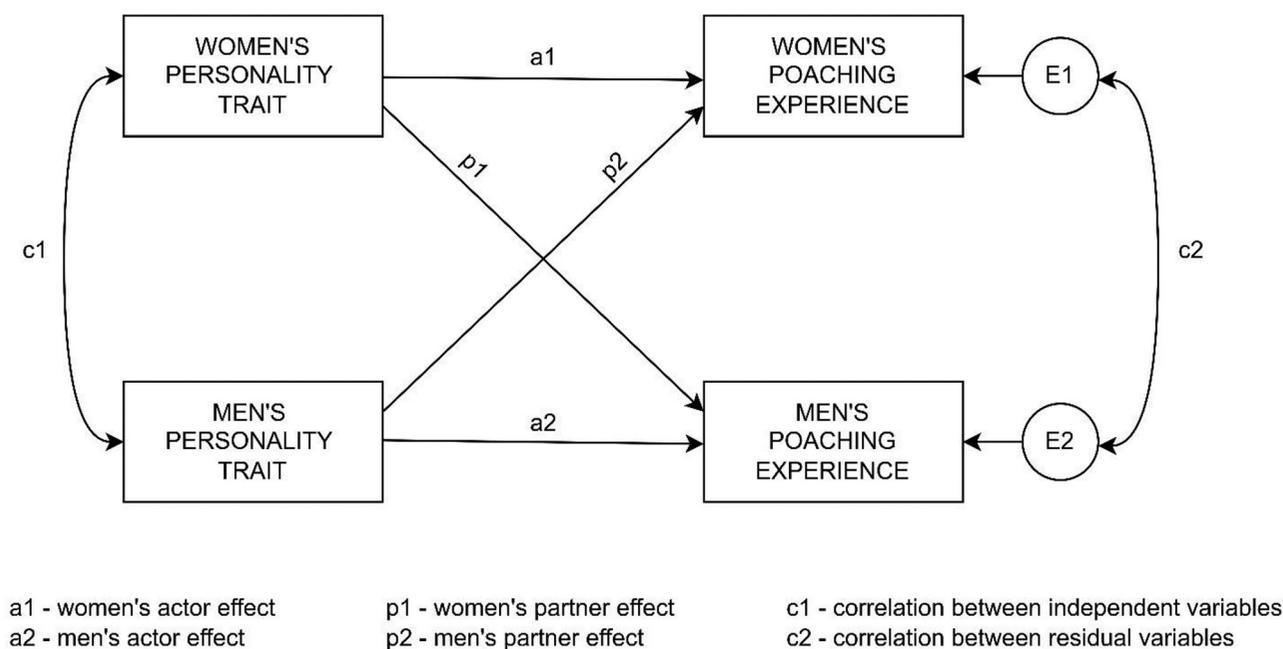
Men had higher scores on poaching attempts and being the victim of poaching, whereas women had higher scores on being the target of poaching, with small effect sizes. No sex difference was obtained for poaching success.

### Statistical Procedure

Because couple data are often interdependent, meaning that their scores are either more similar or more different than the scores of two unpaired individuals, we used the actor-partner interdependence model (APIM; Kenny et al., 2006) to statistically control for nonindependence in couple data. A general model presenting APIM for women and men's personality trait and women and men's poaching experiences is presented in Figure 1.

This analytical approach allows simultaneous examination of the relationship between an individual's trait and her/his own outcome (actor effect), and the relationship between an individual's trait and her/his partner's outcome (partner effect). Additionally, APIM controls for two sources of non-independence: correlation between the independent variables and correlation between residual variables (Cook & Kenny, 2005). Thus, actor effects are estimated controlling for partner effects, and partner effects are estimated controlling for actor effects. Choosing APIM avoids making Type I or Type II errors which is a risk when performing correlations or regression analyses with nonindependent data.

Actor effects for women show whether their self-reported or partner-reported personality traits relate to their own mate poaching experiences, whereas actor effects for men show whether their self-reported or partner-reported personality traits relate to their own mate poaching experiences. Partner effects for women show whether their partner's self-reported or partner-reported personality traits relate to women's mate poaching experiences, whereas partner effects for men show whether their partner's self-reported or partner-reported personality traits relate to men's mate poaching experiences. To determine the most likely dyadic pattern that describes dyadic relationships, we computed the parameter *k*, which equals the partner effect divided by the actor effect (Kenny & Ledermann, 2010). Four general dyadic patterns can be computed: the actor-only, the couple, the contrast, and the partner-only pattern. The actor-only pattern is present when the actor effect is nonzero, and the partner effect is zero (*k* = 0), meaning that the independent variable (here personality traits) has an effect on his or her own outcome variable (here poaching experiences), but not on the partner's outcome variables. The couple pattern is indicated if actor and partner effects are equal (*k* = 1), which means that a person's outcome variable is equally affected by his or her independent variable and by the independent variable of the



**Figure 1.** A general model presenting APIM for women and men's personality trait and women and men's poaching experiences.

partner. The contrast pattern occurs if actor and partner effects are equal in size but have opposite signs ( $k = -1$ ), meaning that a person's outcome variable is positively predicted by his or her independent variable and negatively predicted by the partner's independent variable. The partner-only pattern is relatively rare and occurs if the partner effect is nonzero, but the actor effect is zero (Kenny & Ledermann, 2010). We interpreted the parameter  $k$  when standardized values of the actor effect were greater than 0.10, and when both were statistically significant. For these analyses, we used the free web-based application APIM\_SEM (Stas et al., 2018). Based on earlier findings of personality traits and mate poaching experiences (Kardum et al., 2015), we assumed a small to medium actor effect (0.20) and a small partner effect (0.15). Given that the correlation between actor and partner variables is  $r = 0.20$ , and the correlation between errors is  $r = 0.30$ , the power of detecting actor effects of 0.20 is 0.97, and the power of detecting partner effects of 0.15 is 0.81 (Ackerman & Kenny, 2016).

## Results

### Part 1

In the first part of this study, we used a dyadic approach to predict mate poaching experiences from five-factor personality traits. First, we computed descriptive statistics and sex differences for self-reported and partner-reported five-factor personality traits (Table 2).

As shown in Table 2, women had significantly higher scores on self-reported and partner-reported neuroticism with medium effect sizes and on self-reported and partner-reported openness, and partner-reported conscientiousness with small effect sizes. Next, we computed correlations between women's and men's self-reported and partner-reported five-factor personality traits and women's and men's mate poaching experiences (Table 3).

Women's and men's self-reported and partner-reported five-factor personality traits showed low to moderate correlations with women's and men's poaching experiences. Regarding women's poaching experiences, poaching attempts demonstrated the smallest correlations with the five-factor personality traits, whereas being the target of poaching showed more numerous and larger correlations with the five-factor personality traits. For men's compared to women's poaching experiences, poaching success and being the target of poaching

had fewer significant correlations, whereas poaching attempts had more significant correlations with the five-factor personality traits. Agreeableness, and especially men's agreeableness, demonstrated the most significant correlations with women and men's poaching experiences, whereas men's extraversion and openness did not have any significant correlation with women or men's poaching experiences. Correlations of men's agreeableness with women and men's poaching experiences most often generalized across self-reports and partner-reports.

### APIMs for Self-reported and Partner-reported Five-factor Personality Traits Predicting Mate Poaching

Next, we investigated whether self-reported and partner-reported women and men's five-factor personality traits related to their self-reported poaching experiences. The results of these APIM analyses are presented in Table 4.

The majority of distinguishability tests were significant, suggesting that women and men could be treated as distinguishable members. Although distinguishability tests for the effects of self-reported and partner-reported extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness on poaching success were not significant, we treated dyad members as distinguishable across all analyses to make the results more easily comparable, as suggested by Kenny and Ledermann (2010).

First, we describe the actor and partner effects that were consistently obtained across self-reports and partner-reports. Regarding poaching attempts, only the negative actor effects of men's conscientiousness were obtained. The lower men's conscientiousness was, the more frequent were their own poaching attempts. For poaching success, consistent positive women's actor effects of extraversion and openness and a negative men's actor effect of agreeableness were obtained. Therefore, the higher women's extraversion and openness were and the lower men's agreeableness was, the higher was estimated poaching success. Only agreeableness had consistent negative actor effects and partner effects on reports of being the victim of poaching. The more disagreeable men were, the higher were their reports of being the victim of poaching (men's actor effect), as well as their partners' estimation of being the victim of poaching (women's partner effect). Similarly, the more disagreeable men were, the higher were their reports of being the target of poaching (men's actor effect), as well as their partners' reports of being the target of poaching (women's partner effect). Additionally, a positive women's partner effect of

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics, Cronbach alpha coefficients and sex differences for five-factor personality traits.

	Variables	Women			Men			<i>t</i>	<i>d</i>
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>		
Self-report	Extraversion	29.17	4.79	.76	29.52	4.77	.76	.70	0.05
	Agreeableness	32.66	4.90	.72	32.60	5.29	.74	.11	0.01
	Conscientiousness	33.80	5.61	.84	33.40	5.42	.81	.70	0.05
	Neuroticism	22.39	5.67	.84	19.07	5.34	.80	5.83***	0.43
	Openness	35.38	6.36	.83	34.07	5.81	.76	2.12*	0.16
Partner-report	Extraversion	30.59	4.81	.80	30.58	5.43	.76	.02	0.00
	Agreeableness	34.31	5.52	.80	35.12	5.77	.75	1.51	0.11
	Conscientiousness	35.31	6.34	.84	33.83	6.23	.84	2.20*	0.16
	Neuroticism	23.04	6.46	.81	18.24	5.61	.86	7.71***	0.57
	Openness	36.24	6.56	.84	33.30	7.04	.83	4.68***	0.35

Note. *α* = Cronbach's alpha; *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; *t* = t-test; *d* = Cohen's *d*. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Table 3.** Correlations between self-reported and partner-reported five-factor personality traits and women and men's mate poaching experiences.

Variables	Women's poaching experiences				Men's poaching experiences				
	Attempts	Success	Victim	Target	Attempts	Success	Victim	Target	
Self-report	Extraversion – W	.08	.22**	-.00	.24***	-.04	-.03	-.01	.09
	Extraversion – M	.08	.05	.12	.07	-.02	.14	.04	.11
	Agreeableness – W	-.12	-.11	-.16*	-.15*	-.14	-.02	-.10	.14
	Agreeableness – M	-.05	-.03	-.17*	-.22**	-.14*	-.24***	-.26***	-.25***
	Conscientiousness – W	-.03	-.02	-.09	-.13	-.11	-.01	-.01	.01
	Conscientiousness – M	.01	.01	.01	-.10	-.24***	.00	-.10	-.06
	Neuroticism – W	-.09	-.12	.07	.04	.05	-.03	-.03	-.05
	Neuroticism – M	.01	.01	.18*	.15*	.15*	.06	.16*	.12
	Openness – W	.06	.32***	.07	.28***	.04	.06	.08	.05
	Openness – M	-.03	.07	.04	-.00	-.12	.03	-.03	.04
Partner-report	Extraversion – W	.00	.18*	-.05	.06	-.18*	-.09	-.10	-.09
	Extraversion – M	.02	.04	.08	-.03	.04	.14	.12	.11
	Agreeableness – W	-.08	.02	-.15*	-.08	-.25***	-.14	-.20**	-.08
	Agreeableness – M	-.19**	-.19**	-.18*	-.32***	-.13	-.22**	-.20**	-.23**
	Conscientiousness – W	.02	-.02	-.13	-.12	-.18*	-.13	-.16*	-.13
	Conscientiousness – M	.01	-.04	-.05	-.19**	-.16*	-.02	-.05	-.06
	Neuroticism – W	-.05	-.04	.12	.09	.11	.19*	.14	.16*
	Neuroticism – M	.14	.10	.03	.14*	.07	.00	.12	.14
	Openness – W	-.03	.22**	.00	.11	-.15*	-.03	.00	-.03
	Openness – M	.02	.04	.01	.00	-.09	.02	.00	.02

Note. W-women; M-men. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

neuroticism on being the target of poaching was obtained. The higher men's neuroticism was, the higher were women's reports of being the target of poaching.

To sum up, regarding the five-factor personality traits, men's agreeableness was the most important predictor of men's own and their partners' mate poaching experiences. Extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness consistently showed actor effects only, neuroticism showed one consistent partner effect and agreeableness showed consistent actor and partner effects. Poaching attempts were the least predictable aspect of mate poaching experiences. Two partner effects that were not consistent across self-reported and partner-reported personality traits, but which included two informants and, therefore, were less susceptible to common method variance, were a positive men's partner effect of agreeableness on being the target of poaching and a positive women's partner effect of neuroticism on being the victim of poaching.

Several actor effects obtained only by self-reported personality traits included a positive men's actor effect of neuroticism on poaching attempts, a positive men's actor effect of extraversion on poaching success, a negative women's actor effect of agreeableness and a positive men's actor effect of neuroticism on being the victim of poaching, as well as positive men's actor effects of extraversion and openness on being the target of poaching. Although potentially important, these effects were affected more by common method variance. We obtained several partner effects that were not consistent across self-reports and partner-reports. They also included one informant and, therefore, were affected more by common method variance. Regarding poaching attempts, partner-reported agreeableness had significant negative women's and men's partner effects, and partner-reported conscientiousness had a negative men's partner effect. As for poaching success, partner-reported agreeableness had a negative women's partner effect, whereas partner-reported neuroticism had a positive men's partner effect. Concerning reports of

being the victim of poaching, partner-reported agreeableness and conscientiousness had negative men's partner effects. Furthermore, partner-reported conscientiousness had a negative women's partner effect, and partner-reported neuroticism had a positive men's partner effect on reports of being the target of poaching.

### *Dyadic Patterns of the Relationships between the Five-factor Personality Traits and Mate Poaching*

Plausible dyadic patterns in this study relate to the effects of self-reported extraversion on poaching success and self-reported agreeableness on the experience of being the victim of poaching. Dyadic patterns for the effects of self-reported extraversion on poaching success were actor-only for both women and men, and dyadic patterns for the effects of self-reported agreeableness on the experience of being the victim of poaching were couple and actor-only in women, and actor-only in men. Therefore, poaching success was related only to the higher self-reported extraversion in both members of a dyad. Being the victim of poaching in men was related to their own lower self-reported agreeableness, whereas in women being the victim of poaching was related to their own as well their partners' lower self-reported agreeableness.

### *Part 2*

In the second part of this study, we used a dyadic approach to predict mate poaching experiences from the DT. Descriptive statistics and sex differences for self-reported and partner-reported DT traits are presented in Table 5.

As shown in Table 5, men had a significantly higher score on self-reported psychopathy with a small effect size. Further, we computed correlations between women's and men's self-reported and partner-reported DT traits and women's and men's mate poaching experiences (Table 6).

**Table 4.** The effects of self-reported and partner-reported five-factor personality traits on mate poaching experiences.

	Extraversion		Agreeableness		Conscientiousness		Neuroticism		Openness	
	Actor effects	Partner effects	Actor effects	Partner effects	Actor effects	Partner effects	Actor effects	Partner effects	Actor effects	Partner effects
	W → W M → M	M → W W → M	W → W M → M	M → W W → M	W → W M → M	M → W W → M	W → W M → M	M → W W → M	W → W M → M	M → W W → M
Mate poaching experiences										
Poaching attempts										
Poaching success	<b>.23**</b> <b>(.18*)</b>									
Victim of poaching	.14*									
Target of poaching	.24***									

Note. W → W – women’s actor effect; M → M – men’s actor effect; W → M – women’s partner effect; M → W – men’s partner effect. Only statistically significant beta coefficients are presented. Standardized beta coefficients for self-reported five-factor personality traits are presented without parentheses. Standardized beta coefficients for partner-reported five-factor personality traits are presented within parentheses. Bolded beta coefficients are statistically significant across self-reports and partner-reports.  
\*p < .05; \*\*p < .01; \*\*\*p < .001.

Women’s and men’s self-reported and partner-reported DT traits showed more and larger correlations with women’s and men’s poaching experiences than the five-factor personality traits. Considering women’s poaching experiences, poaching attempts again demonstrated the smallest correlations with the DT traits, and being the target of poaching showed more numerous and larger correlations with the DT traits than other aspects of mate poaching. As for men’s poaching experiences, poaching attempts and poaching success had more correlations with the DT traits than being the victim and the target of poaching. Women’s and men’s psychopathy and Machiavellianism demonstrated the strongest relationships with women’s and men’s mate poaching experiences, and correlations between men’s Machiavellianism and both women’s and men’s poaching experiences generalized most often across self-reports and partner-reports.

**APIMs for Self-reported and Partner-reported DT Traits Predicting Mate Poaching**

The results of APIM analyses concerning the DT traits are presented in Table 7. All distinguishability tests were significant, except for the effects of self-reported and partner-reported narcissism on poaching success. For the reason stated before, we treated dyad members as distinguishable across all analyses. Here we also begin by commenting on the actor and the partner effects consistently obtained across self-reports and partner-reports (see Table 7). Regarding poaching attempts, we obtained only a positive actor effect of men’s Machiavellianism. The higher men’s Machiavellianism was, the more frequent were their poaching attempts. As for poaching success, we obtained consistent positive actor effects of women’s and men’s psychopathy, a women’s partner effect of Machiavellianism, and a men’s actor effect of overall DT traits. The higher women’s psychopathy and men’s Machiavellianism were, the higher were women’s reports of their own poaching success, and the higher men’s psychopathy and overall DT traits were, the higher were men’s reports of their own poaching success.

Psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and overall DT traits showed consistent positive actor and partner effects on reports of being the victim of poaching. The higher women’s psychopathy was, the higher their reports of being the victim of poaching, and the higher men’s Machiavellianism was, the higher their reports of being the victim of poaching. Furthermore, the higher men’s psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and overall DT traits were, the higher were women’s reports of being the victim of poaching. Psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and overall DT traits also had consistent positive actor and partner effects on being the target of poaching. The higher women’s and men’s psychopathy, Machiavellianism and overall DT traits were, the higher were women’s reports of being the target of poaching, and the higher men’s Machiavellianism and overall DT traits were, the higher were their reports of being the target of poaching.

Compared to the five-factor personality traits, the DT showed more numerous and consistent effects on poaching experiences. Women’s mate poaching experiences were the most strongly related to their own psychopathy and to men’s psychopathy and Machiavellianism, whereas men’s poaching experiences were the most strongly related to their own Machiavellianism. Narcissism did not show any actor or

**Table 5.** Descriptive statistics, Cronbach alpha coefficients and sex differences for the DT measures.

Variables	Women			Men			<i>t</i>	<i>d</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>			
Self-report	Psychopathy	10.14	5.41	.67	11.84	6.26	.63	2.95**	0.22
	Machiavellianism	11.86	6.98	.82	12.76	7.98	.83	1.37	0.10
	Narcissism	16.74	8.31	.88	15.89	7.97	.85	1.18	0.09
	Overall DT	38.74	16.66	.85	40.50	17.50	.85	1.17	0.08
Partner-report	Psychopathy	9.83	5.57	.66	10.84	6.09	.61	1.93	0.14
	Machiavellianism	9.90	6.73	.86	10.49	7.61	.84	.94	0.07
	Narcissism	16.07	8.07	.91	16.16	9.16	.85	.03	0.01
	Overall DT	35.80	16.50	.88	37.49	18.29	.86	1.12	0.09

Note. *α* = Cronbach's alpha; *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; *t* = *t*-test; *d* = Cohen's *d*. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Table 6.** Correlations between self-reported and partner-reported DT traits and women and men's mate poaching experiences.

Variables	Women's poaching experiences				Men's poaching experiences				
	Attempts	Success	Victim	Target	Attempts	Success	Victim	Target	
Self-report	Psychopathy – W	.14	.19	.20**	.22**	.05	.00	.01	–.04
	Psychopathy – M	.02	.14	.17*	.24***	.23**	.22**	.17*	.19**
	Machiavellianism – W	.23**	.12	.08	.28***	.14	–.00	.03	–.03
	Machiavellianism – M	.10	.19**	.21**	.25***	.29***	.39***	.31***	.34***
	Narcissism – W	.12	.19**	.06	.20**	.14	–.01	.01	.04
	Narcissism – M	.13	.10	.13	.14	.19**	.31***	.11	.28***
	Overall DT – W	.20**	.21**	.12	.29***	.14	–.01	.02	.00
	Overall DT – M	.11	.19*	.22**	.26***	.30***	.40***	.25***	.35***
Partner-report	Psychopathy – W	.04	.18*	.22**	.27***	.25***	.17*	.23**	.16*
	Psychopathy – M	.09	.16*	.29***	.29***	.06	.20**	.09	.11
	Machiavellianism – W	.08	.18*	.15*	.30***	.27***	.29***	.27***	.18*
	Machiavellianism – M	.24***	.21**	.21**	.27***	.23***	.19*	.24***	.23***
	Narcissism – W	.14	.07	–.01	.13	.23***	.17*	.09	.10
	Narcissism – M	.15*	.17*	.09	.18*	.15*	.17*	.09	.13
	Overall DT – W	.12	.16*	.13	.28***	.31***	.26***	.23**	.18*
	Overall DT – M	.20**	.23***	.23***	.30***	.19**	.23**	.17*	.19**

Note. W-women; M-men. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Table 7.** The effects of self-reported and partner-reported DT traits on mate poaching experiences.

Mate poaching experiences	Psychopathy		Machiavellianism		Narcissism		Overall DT	
	Actor effects	Partner effects	Actor effects	Partner effects	Actor effects	Partner effects	Actor effects	Partner effects
	W → W M → M	M → W W → M	W → W M → M	M → W W → M	W → W M → M	M → W W → M	W → W M → M	M → W W → M
Poaching attempts	.23**	(.25***)	.22** <b>.28***</b> (.16*)	(.23**) (.22**)	.17**	(.21**)	.18* <b>.29***</b>	(.18*) (.28***)
Poaching success	.17* (.15*) <b>.22**</b> (.17*)		.42***	.17* (.17*) (.26***)	.17*	(.17*)	.17* <b>.43***</b> (.16*)	(.19*) (.20**)
Victim of poaching	.18* (.16*)	.15* (.25***)	.32*** (.17*)	.21** (.18*) (.22**)			.27***	.20** (.21**) (.19*)
Target of poaching	.20** (.21**) .19**	.23** (.24***)	.23** (.25***) <b>.38***</b> (.20**)	.18* (.19**)	.18*	(.15*)	.24*** (.20**) <b>.38***</b> (.15*)	.20** (.22**)

Note. W → W – women's actor effect; M → M – men's actor effect; M → W – women's partner effect; W → M – men's partner effect. Only statistically significant beta coefficients are presented. Standardized beta coefficients for self-reported DT traits are presented without parentheses. Standardized beta coefficients for partner-reported DT traits are presented within parentheses. Bolded beta coefficients are statistically significant across self-reports and partner-reports.

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

partner effects on poaching that generalized across both self-reports and partner-reports. Actor effects obtained only on self-reported data included a positive men's actor effect on poaching attempts, and women's and men's actor effects on

poaching success and being the target of poaching. Psychopathy showed positive men's actor effects on poaching attempts and being the victim and the target of poaching. Machiavellianism showed a positive women's actor effect on

poaching attempts and a positive men's actor effect on poaching success, whereas overall DT traits showed positive women's and men's actor effects on poaching attempts, a positive women's actor effect on poaching success, and a positive men's actor effect on being the victim of poaching.

Additionally, we obtained several partner effects that did not generalize across self-reports and partner-reports. All these effects were obtained on partner-reported personality traits and included only one informant. Regarding poaching attempts, psychopathy and narcissism had significant men's partner effects, whereas Machiavellianism and overall DT traits had significant women's and men's partner effects. Considering poaching success, Machiavellianism and overall DT traits had significant men's partner effects, and narcissism and overall DT traits had positive women's partner effects. Regarding the reports of being the victim of poaching, psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and overall DT traits had significant men's partner effects. Furthermore, narcissism had a positive women's partner effect on being the target of poaching.

### ***Dyadic Patterns of the Relationships between the DT Traits and Mate Poaching***

The DT traits showed more interpretable dyadic patterns than the five-factor personality traits. Plausible dyadic patterns for the effects of self-reported and partner-reported psychopathy on poaching success in women were couple and actor-only, whereas in men self-reported psychopathy resulted in actor-only and partner-reported psychopathy in couple and actor-only dyadic patterns. Dyadic patterns for the effects of self-reported psychopathy on being the victim of poaching in women were couple and actor-only, and in men actor-only. The effects of self-reported psychopathy on being the target of poaching were best described by a couple dyadic pattern in women, and by an actor-only pattern in men. Plausible dyadic patterns for the effects of self-reported Machiavellianism on poaching attempts were actor-only for both women and men. The effects of self-reported and partner-reported Machiavellianism on being the target of poaching in women were best described by couple and actor-only dyadic patterns. Self-reported Machiavellianism showed actor-only, whereas partner-reported Machiavellianism showed couple and actor-only dyadic patterns on being the target of poaching in men. Dyadic patterns for the effects of self-reported narcissism on poaching success and being the target of poaching were couple and actor-only in women, and actor-only in men. Expectedly, the results obtained for the overall DT score reflect the above-mentioned dyadic patterns. Plausible dyadic patterns for self-reported overall DT on poaching attempts and poaching success were couple and actor-only in women, and actor-only in men. The effects of self-reported and partner-reported overall DT on being the target of poaching were best described by couple and actor-only patterns in women. Self-reported overall DT showed a actor-only dyadic pattern, whereas partner-reported overall DT couple-and actor-only dyadic patterns on being the target of poaching in men.

### ***Controlling for Age and Relationship Status***

We controlled for relevant variables that could modify the relationship between personality traits and mate poaching experiences. Specifically, we may assume that poaching experiences increase with age, and that costs associated

with mate poaching are likely to increase in participants who are in more committed relationships such as cohabiting and married couples than dating couples. However, correlations between participants' age and poaching experiences as well as between relationship status and poaching experiences did not corroborate these assumptions. The only significant correlations were between men's age and women's ( $r = 0.18$ ;  $p = .012$ ) and men's poaching attempts ( $r = 0.15$ ;  $p = .037$ ), as well as between men's age and women's reports of being the victim of poaching ( $r = 0.18$ ;  $p = .012$ ). Women in more committed relationships were somewhat more inclined toward poaching attempts ( $r = 0.17$ ;  $p = .019$ ). Expectedly, controlling for participants' age and relationship status (dating vs cohabiting and married couples) by including these variables in APIMs as within-dyad (age) and between-dyad (relationship status) covariates, we obtained very similar results to those presented in Tables 4 and 7, showing that they did not modify relationships between the personality traits and mate poaching experiences.

In Table 8 we present the summary of the most consistent effects of self-reported and partner-reported five-factor personality traits and DT traits on women's and men's poaching experiences. Given the number of analyses conducted in this study, there is a possibility that some of the significant results might be spurious. Therefore, we used a recommendation given by Benjamin et al. (2018), and in Table 8 we bolded those personality traits that had at least one (self-reported or partner-reported) significant actor or partner effect at the level of  $p < .005$ . The effects meeting this threshold could be treated as "significant," whereas other effects, which did not meet this threshold, as "suggestive" (Benjamin et al., 2018).

## **Discussion**

In the present study, we investigated actor and partner effects of self-reported and partner-reported five-factor personality traits and the DT traits on self-reported poaching experiences in a sample of heterosexual romantic couples. As there have been no studies on the partner effects of personality traits on mate poaching, only the actor effects from this study could be compared to previous findings. Firstly, we will comment on actor effects of the five-factor personality traits and the DT traits on mate poaching experiences.

### ***Actor Effects of Personality Traits on Mate Poaching Experiences***

Along with several women's and men's actor effects obtained by one informant (self or partner), our results showed two consistent (across both informants) actor effects on poaching attempts: negative actor effects of men's conscientiousness and positive actor effects of men's Machiavellianism. These results are partly in accord with previous studies that did not use a dyadic approach, and confirm that low impulse control and manipulative, self-interested, and exploitative behaviors of male Machiavellians facilitate short-term gains and immediate benefits that may be achieved by frequent poaching attempts (Kardum et al., 2015).

**Table 8.** Summary of the effects of self-reported and partner-reported personality traits on mate poaching experiences.

Mate poaching experiences	Women		Men	
	Actor effects W → W	Partner effects M → W	Actor effects M → M	Partner effects W → M
Poaching attempts			<b>Conscientiousness (-)</b> <b>Machiavellianism</b>	
Poaching success	<b>Extraversion</b> <b>Openness</b> Psychopathy	Machiavellianism	<b>Agreeableness (-)</b> Psychopathy	
Victim of poaching	Psychopathy	Agreeableness (-) <b>Psychopathy</b> Machiavellianism	<b>Agreeableness (-)</b> <b>Machiavellianism</b>	
Target of poaching	Psychopathy <b>Machiavellianism</b>	<b>Agreeableness (-)</b> Neuroticism <b>Psychopathy</b> Machiavellianism	<b>Agreeableness (-)</b> <b>Machiavellianism</b>	

Note. W → W – women’s actor effect; M → W – women’s partner effect; M → M – men’s actor effect; W → M – men’s partner effect. Bolded are those personality traits with at least one (self-reported or partner-reported) significant actor or partner effect at the level of  $p < .005$ .

Regarding poaching success, women’s extraversion, openness and psychopathy as well as men’s psychopathy and overall DT traits had consistent positive actor effects, whereas men’s agreeableness had a consistent negative actor effect on this poaching experience. The results regarding actor effects are in line with previous findings and indicate that different personality traits are associated with poaching success in women and men. These traits in men are related to a short-term sexual strategy, whereas in women they are not only related to short-term sexual strategy but also to women’s higher mate value. A function of extraversion and openness in women may be in securing social context for poaching but they also are indicators of their potentially higher mate quality. Extraversion is a highly visible trait accurately perceived by others (Borkenau et al., 2009), desirable for potential partners (Figueredo et al., 2006), and positively associated with various indices of women’s mate quality (e.g., facial symmetry and attractiveness; Welling et al., 2009). Similarly, the creativity facet of openness may increase social and sexual attractiveness (Nettle & Clegg, 2006) and thus facilitate poaching success. It is likely that the combination of extraversion and openness may provide opportunity to a poacher, because individuals who are highly social and open to new ideas and experiences are more likely to interact with those who attempt to poach (Schmitt et al., 2004). Once again, our results confirm that psychopathy facilitates high mating effort-strategy, pursuing many partners with little investment (Jonason et al., 2011). Individuals higher on psychopathy have higher self-perceived mate value, which may broaden their pool of mating partners to choose from, make them more confident in attracting mates, and consequently, lead them to be more successful in luring a new partner from a current relationship (Erik & Bhogal, 2016). Although there is evidence that the interpersonal facet of psychopathy positively predicts the fertility component of fitness (Mededović et al., 2017), it is also possible that a grandiose self-concept and poor insight may result in positively distorted reports of poaching success in individuals higher on psychopathy.

Lower agreeableness and higher Machiavellianism in men as well as higher psychopathy in women had consistent actor effects on being the victim of poaching, which is in line with previous studies (Jonason et al., 2010; Kardum et al., 2015). Predictors of being the victim of poaching

were similar to those of being the target of poaching. Namely, higher psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and overall DT traits in women and lower agreeableness, higher Machiavellianism, and overall DT traits in men demonstrated consistent actor effects on being the target of poaching. Personality traits predicting being the victim of poaching as well as being the target of poaching are undesirable characteristics that may facilitate one’s own and one’s partner sexual unfaithfulness. Additionally, these traits may make an individual suspicious about the partner’s faithfulness, which may create the impression of being the victim of poaching, even in the absence of confirmatory information. It seems that a lack of moral concern, manipulateness and a tendency toward short-term mating form the dynamics of these two aspects of mate poaching in which a person’s propensity toward being the target of poaching may be either justified by the perception of partner’s unfaithfulness, or may serve as a retaliation for perceived poaching victimization.

### Partner Effects of Personality Traits on Mate Poaching Experiences

Regarding partner effects of the five-factor personality traits, men’s lower agreeableness demonstrated consistent effects on women’s perception of being the victim and the target of poaching, and men’s higher neuroticism on women’s perception of being the target of poaching. The DT traits demonstrated more numerous and stronger partner effects than the five-factor personality traits. Men’s higher Machiavellianism showed consistent effects on women’s poaching success, and women’s perception of being the victim and the target of poaching. Furthermore, men’s higher psychopathy and men’s overall DT demonstrated consistent effects on women’s perception of being the victim and the target of poaching.

Therefore, we confirmed the hypothesis that men’s personality traits would affect women’s poaching experiences more than women’s personality traits would affect men’s poaching, because all consistent partner effects were women’s partner effects. Thus, our results demonstrated that a partner “matters” to women’s poaching more than to men’s poaching. This is also confirmed by the dyadic patterns of the relationship

between personality traits and poaching, showing that agreeableness, psychopathy and Machiavellianism most frequently resulted in a couple dyadic pattern, and especially in women. Therefore, our results show that women are more sensitive to their partners' characteristics than men are.

Although the design of our study did not allow the direct testing of two competing hypotheses about women's poaching, dual mating and mate switching hypotheses, it seems that our results are more in line with the mate switching hypothesis (Buss et al., 2017). Namely, personality traits in men that increase the tendency of women's mate poaching are socially undesirable and potentially detrimental for romantic relationships. Women whose partners are high on these traits may be more prone to seek a new partner and eventually break up with a previous partner and remate with a new one. On the other hand, the dual mating hypothesis implies that a current partner is committed to the relationship and provides investment and resources (Gangestad & Haselton, 2015). Although not unequivocally, evidence shows that the abovementioned socially undesirable personality traits are often related to lower socioeconomic status and income (Benning et al., 2003; Judge et al., 2012), as well as lower commitment in a romantic relationship (Smith et al., 2014). Therefore, a woman's poaching experiences may be better explained by her desire to change a current partner who is higher on undesirable and detrimental traits than by her desire for another partner who can provide benefits that cannot be provided by their regular one (e.g., superior genes).

Taken together, actor and partner effects of these personality traits in men show that the same personality traits that contribute to men's poaching may also make them vulnerable because these traits facilitate their partners' poaching success and being the target of poaching. In other words, those personality traits in men that may facilitate their reproductive success may as well produce a cost via the loss of a mate by poaching. Therefore, by using a different methodological approach, the results of this study are in line with previous findings that in the context of reproductive success the DT traits may have benefits as well as costs (e.g., Jonason et al., 2010). It should be noted that our main results were not modified by participants' age and relationship stability, but similarity in the effects of agreeableness, psychopathy and Machiavellianism could be partly attributable to the shared variance between these traits.

## Conclusions

We partly confirmed our hypotheses regarding actor and partner effects of the five-factor personality traits (H1 and H2). It seems that men's lower agreeableness is the most important predictor of poaching experiences in both men (actor effects) and women (partner effects). The role of other personality traits from the five-factor model is limited to some specific aspects of poaching experiences. Regarding the DT traits, we also partly confirmed the hypotheses H3 and H4. Higher psychopathy and Machiavellianism, especially in men, proved to be the most important predictors of poaching experiences in both men and women. Contrary to our expectation, from the personality traits analyzed, narcissism did not demonstrate any consistent actor or partner effect on mate poaching experiences. Notably, previous research showed that narcissism was inconsistently related to infidelity,

with some studies finding a positive relationship between narcissism and infidelity, whereas others did not find any significant relationship between them. These inconsistencies may be due to the global assessment of narcissism, which is coarse and does not capture specific facets of narcissism activated in the sexual domain, such as sexual narcissism (McNulty & Widman, 2018). Moreover, some studies suggest that narcissism is not adequately represented in Dirty Dozen, and that this measure is better conceptualized as a combined Machiavellianism-psychopathy factor than a three-factor scale (Kajonius et al., 2016). These are possible reasons why in this study narcissism showed only those actor and partner effects obtained by one informant.

As hypothesized (H5), our results show that men's mate poaching is more under the impact of their own personality traits, whereas women's poaching is influenced by their own as well as their partner's personality traits, suggesting once again that women's sexuality is more contextual and discriminative than men's. In line with our hypothesis (H6), the results showed several actor and partner effects that generalized across self-reports and partner-reports. Regarding inconsistent effects of personality traits on poaching experiences, we can see that all actor effects were obtained on self-reports, and almost all partner effects (except two) on partner-reports, which is in accord with our hypothesis (H7). These results indicate that they were influenced by an unknown degree of common method variance.

Generally, relationships between personality traits and mate poaching experiences in this study corroborated the finding that men have a greater tendency toward a fast life history strategy. Whereas slow life history strategy organizes and facilitates long-term gains and benefits that could promote delayed reproduction, pro-social behavior etc., fast life history strategy organizes and facilitates short-term gains and immediate benefits that could manifest in different domains – reproductive (e.g., the increase in reproductive success with minimal parental investment), behavioral (e.g., antisocial behavior), and physiological (e.g., high sympathetic reactivity; Reale et al., 2010). Our results suggest that men's mate poaching experiences are the most consistently related to traits indicating fast life history strategy (psychopathy, Machiavellianism and disagreeableness). On the other hand, regarding mate poaching in women, our results are more in accord with the mate switching hypothesis.

## Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research

A key contribution of this research is that it is the first to examine the relationships between personality traits and mate poaching experiences using a dyadic perspective on a large and heterogeneous sample of heterosexual romantic couples. We secured both self-reports and partner-reports of independent variables, thus controlling for common method variance, which enables obtaining more reliable actor and partner effects. Specifically, consistent actor effects may help in addressing the inconsistencies of previous research results obtained only by self-reports, and thus were under the influence of an unknown degree of method variance. Furthermore, including two relevant sets of personality traits as predictors afforded a clearer comparison of their effects on poaching experiences. Additionally, identifying personality traits related to mate poaching and eventual relationship dissolution may help treating couples facing infidelity.

This study had several limitations that could be addressed in future research. One of them was its cross-sectional design that precludes causal interpretations. Additionally, only partners in current relationships, but not those who broke up were included, and therefore our results could be partly a consequence of attrition. Namely, the effects of personality traits on some aspects of poaching experiences such as poaching attempts may be stronger than obtained in this study, which may eventually cause a breakup. Furthermore, our results may be specific regarding sociodemographic characteristics of participants and their relationships. Because monogamous societies consider poaching as socially undesirable (Vakirtzis & Roberts, 2012), we assume that the participants' responses were biased toward socially desirable responses to an unknown extent, which might have narrowed the variability of responses on poaching experiences and restricted their correlations with personality traits. Therefore, to obtain more valid data of poaching experiences, future research should secure multiple informants (e.g., partners and friends). Additionally, because of the modest to moderate overlap within both personality domains as well as between them, the unique contribution of each personality trait should be investigated. Furthermore, future research should use a more comprehensive measure of the five-factor traits, and especially the DT traits because the results obtained by them could give insight into potential mechanisms through which personality traits may have impact on mate poaching experiences.

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## Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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