I am Because You Are: Other Group Members' Attachment Avoidance and Individual Experiences of Negative Affect in Intergroup Dialogue

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DEDICATION

First, I would like to dedicate my thesis to my grandmother Pat Buchanan who was the first person to tell me it was okay to be gay—she gave me courage and always had faith in me and my passions. Her loving resilience served as a beacon to my family and our community.

I would also like to dedicate my thesis trans and queer youth born to families who are less than understanding. The desire to reconcile one's love for their family of origin with their lack of acceptance is often the first experience of intergroup conversation that is painful, hard, and important. Your bravery inspires me and fuels my faith in the possibility of changing hearts and minds. Together, we can.

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ABSTRACT

We investigated the relationships between attachment style and session-level process and outcome variables (i.e., group members' perceptions of group climate, session depth and smoothness, and positive and negative affect) among 94 participants in 17 intergroup dialogues (IGD). Each participant completed an measure of adult attachment style prior to the first IGD, and measures of group climate, session depth and smoothness, and positive and negative affect following each session. We used the actor-partner interdependence model (Kenny, Mannetti, Pierro, Livi & Kashy, 2002) to examine relationships between actor (i.e., an individual group member's attachment) and partner (i.e., the attachment scores for the other individuals in the group, excluding the focal individual group member) scores on attachment anxiety and avoidance and the session-level variables using hierarchical linear modeling. Neither the actor nor partner effects of anxious attachment was significantly associated with the session-level variables. We found a significant positive relationship between the other group members' (OGMs) attachment avoidance (i.e., partner effect) such that higher levels of avoidance among OGMs predicted an individual member's experience of negative affect. Results are discussed in relation to the literature on attachment in intergroup relations and group interventions.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

> During the past few decades, modern technology… has woven a network of communications which puts each part of the world into almost instant contact with all the other parts. Yet, in spite of this world-wide system of linkages, there is, at this very moment, a general feeling that communication is breaking down everywhere, on an unparalleled scale. People living in different nations, with different economic and political systems, are hardly able to talk to each other without fighting. And within any single nation, different social classes and economic and political groups are caught in a similar pattern of inability to understand each other.
>
> –David Bohm, *On Dialogue,* 1996

American society has grown increasingly polarized on a number of issues over the last few decades (PEW Research Center, 2017). For example, in 1994, 66% of Republicans, 59% of Independents, and 53% of Democrats agreed with the statement, "Blacks who can't get ahead in this country are mostly responsible for their own condition" (p. 7). In 2017, 75% of Republicans, 49% of Independents, and 28% of Democrats agreed with the same statement (PEW Research Center, 2017, p. 7). Similarly, in 1994, 58% of Democrats and 38% of Republicans said that the government should do more to support needy Americans even if that meant going into more debt. The split had grown to 71% for Democrats and 24% for Republicans by 2017. Across various social issues (e.g., immigration, military strength, LGBT rights, and taxes), the average percentage difference in opinions between those who attend religious services regularly and those do not has doubled in the last two decades from 5 percentage points to 11 (PEW Research Center, 2017). Taken together, these statistics suggest

growing divides in the US, meaning the importance of intergroup contact and dialogue is arguably more important now than ever.

Social media, although ironically designed to bring people together, has recently received critiques in popular culture for its use of algorithms that create vast echo chambers that reinforce our existing beliefs and values (Sanders, 2016). Such interactions have only intensified the culture wars (Holley, 2015). To quell such tensions, recent events such as #MeetAMulsim day have arisen to reduce stigma and to increase, at minimum, tolerance by sparking dialogue and communication between people who otherwise might not interact (Shankar, 2017). Although such programs have been useful, they do not provide opportunities for sustained contact and communication, which scholars (Gurin, Nagada, & Lopez, 2004) suggest is vital for reducing biased attitudes.

Dialogue is communication that inherently differs from debate or discussion. It seeks to bring people closer together through a deeper sense of connection. The purpose of dialogue is not to convince, convict, or convert the other person, but rather to gain a deeper insight of them and their position (Bohm, 1996). Dialogue does not have the goal of winning or convincing, or of problem-solving (as do debate and discussion). Rather, dialogue seeks for participants to gain insight into their own beliefs, biases, and assumptions as they arise during conversation with others.

In order to help address intergroup relationships on campus and build multicultural and social justice competencies, many colleges and universities across the country have established intergroup dialogue programs to provide students the opportunity to dialogue across differences (Zúñiga, Nagada, Chesler, & Cryton-Walker, 2007). Intergroup dialogue (IGD) is a model of dialogue in higher education that brings people together from social identity groups that have

conflict between them, for face-to-face communication across an extended period of time (Gurin, Nagada & Zúñiga, 2013; Schoem & Hurtado, 2001; Zúñiga et. al., 2007). IGD is grounded in the goals of: (1) consciousness-raising about social justice issues, (2) building relationships across differences and conflicts, and (3) strengthening individual and collective capacities to promote social justice (Zúñiga et al., 2007). By disrupting the archetypal "banking model" of education that situates students as unknowing passive participants, IGD seeks to catalyze an increased awareness of the social power dynamics in society, or what Freire (1970) calls "conscientização," or *critical consciousness*, amongst students. IGD centers participants as experts of their lived experiences as they engage and learn with and from their peers (Gurin et al., 2004).

A growing body of research supports the idea that students who have meaningful multicultural interactions experience a host of positive outcomes. For example, Gurin et. al. (2004) found that, compared to students in a control group, IGD participants: more frequently expressed democratic sentiments, showed greater motivation to take the perspectives of others, less often evaluated the school's focus on diversity as divisive; and more often viewed commonalities between their groups and other groups. Muller and Miles (2016) found IGD participants exhibited reduced levels of blindness to race-based privilege and institutional discrimination and experienced an increase in empathic perspective-taking from pre-to-post dialogue. The most comprehensive study to date, Gurin et. al. (2013) conducted a randomized experiment with 1,437 participants with 720 students in the experimental condition (IGD groups) and 717 in the control condition (a comparable social sciences course without a dialogue component). Compared to students in the control group, IGD students demonstrated positive long-lasting effects on 21 target measures 1 year later, some of which include: increased insight

into diverse others' worldviews, more positive relationships with and motivation to engage diverse others, and more empathy towards people who differ from them (Gurin et al., 2013)

Even though research has found positive outcomes for participation in IGD, we know less about individual differences that may impact how participants experience IGD and outcomes. One potential individual difference that could impact how participants experience IGD and their outcomes is attachment style. For example, because IGD focuses upon interpersonal interactions, understanding research about interpersonal behaviors between two individuals provides insight to the current study. Additionally, recent experimental social psychology research found a statistically significant causal effect of priming attachment security (e.g., showing participants images of romantic partners consoling each other, or having them read scenarios in which their parents consoled them during a distressing event) on ratings of empathy towards others amongst participants, compared to both neutral and positive affect conditions, when responding to a tragic scenario in which a fellow college student lost their parents in a car crash and had to financially support their younger siblings (Mikulincer et al., 2001). Both the secure attachment priming and positive affect priming conditions had a significant effect such that participants reported lower levels of personal distress, compared to the neutral condition, when responding to the tragic scenario (Mikulincer et al., 2001). Relatedly, Mikulincer and Shaver (2001) found that contextual activation of a secure attachment base lessened the negative reaction to outgroup members and those who have a critical attitude towards or critical perspective of a person's worldview. Moreover, the sense of a secure base positions allows people to open their schemas to ideas that conflict with their beliefs (Mikulincer, 1997). Based on this research, we are interested in extending the body of research beyond experimental social

psychology to examine whether there is a relationship between attachment style and experiences in the applied setting of IGD.

Although there is some research about the role of attachment style in group therapy (e.g., Marmarosh, & Markin, 2007; Marmarosh et al., 2009; Marmarosh & Markin, 2014; Maxwell et al, 2014), little published research exists about the role of attachment in IGD (e.g., Miles & Mallinckrodt, 2017). Considering the goals of IGD include building relationships across differences and conflict, and building one's capacity for promoting social justice, the findings of the aforementioned studies (Mikulincer et al., 2001; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001) warrant investigating the role of attachment in IGD. Because small group data is non-independent and other group members (OGMs) influence individual group members' experiences (Illing et al., 2001; Kenny, Manetti, Pierro, Livi & Kashy, 2002; Paquin, Miles, & Kivlighan, 2001), it is important to not only look at one's own attachment style, but to also examine how the OGMs' attachment may impact a focal individual's experiences and outcomes. The current study draws upon attachment, group therapy, and group climate literatures to examine whether a relationship exists between an individual group member's and/or OGMs attachment styles, and the individual group member's perceptions of group climate, session depth and smoothness, and positive and negative affect within IGD. Providing context for the study, chapter two begins with literature about IGD theory, research, and practice.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Intergroup Dialogue

Theoretical Considerations

IGD is has several theoretical underpinnings, including: feminist pedagogy, which addresses power dynamics in the classroom (hooks, 1994); Freirean educational philosophy, which seeks to raise consciousness (1970); and Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis, which suggests intergroup contact has the potential to improve intergroup relations. Drawing on feminist philosophies, IGD recognizes and empowers students as knowers who engage equally with each other and with facilitators in the creation of new knowledge through dialogue and the sharing of personal narratives. Disrupting the "banking model" of education, which deems students empty vessels to be filled, IGD uses Freirean philosophy to center the knowledge and lived experiences of students in educational processes, which they share with one another through sustained, face-to-face intergroup contact.

An extensive body of research has demonstrated the efficacy of intergroup contact in reducing negative prejudice (e.g., Babir, Vandevender, & Cohn, 2016; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). For example, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) conducted a meta-analysis of studies on intergroup contact that contained over 713 individual samples from 515 studies from over three decades. They found a significant, negative relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice. In fact, considering the large number of samples, the relationship was highly significant, with 94% of studies demonstrating an inverse relationship between prejudice and intergroup contact (Pettigrew et al., 2006).

IGD is grounded in the assumption that past and current political realities of the United States influence intergroup dynamics and relationships and asserts that topics such as racism or

heterosexism must be approached through a dialogic model. Such a model promotes active and generative engagement between participants and facilitators, which results in transformative connections with diverse others and new ways of viewing the world (Zúñiga et al., 2007). Unlike other diversity education programs, IGD does not merely focus on content mastery; rather, its explicit aim is to have participants explore the economic, political, and systemic reality of oppression and institutionalized discrimination. Students utilize a critical analytical perspective as they question and critique why such systems are in place and continually perpetuate oppression. These conversations are admittedly emotional and frequently quite difficult, which is why the sustained nature of the model is essential (Khuri, 2004). Sustaining the dialogue and relationship engagement across difference is another pivotal difference between IGD and other multicultural education approaches in higher education (Zúñiga et al., 2007). Remaining engaged in spite of discomfort can be difficult, but it is an essential component of transformation within feminist pedagogy.

In her book *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom,* bell hooks speaks to feminist pedagogy: "Confronting one another across differences means that we must change ideas about how we learn; rather than fearing conflict we have to find ways to use it as a catalyst for new thinking, for growth" (p. 110). As a feminist educator, one has to question the limits of responding to students in crisis while discussing deeply personal phenomena by refusing the role of decision maker and allowing students a sense of agency voice (Durfee & Rosenberg, 2009), while also attending the potential pain and sorrow that might occur when giving up old perspectives of the world (Magnet & Diamond, 2010).

The Four-Stage, Critical-Dialogic Model

Intergroup dialogue is a distinct form of multicultural and social justice pedagogy that was created to bring people together to connect across difference. Schoem, Hurtado, Sevig, Chesler, and Sumida (2001) described IGD as a:

> *diverse* twenty-first-century version of the *homogeneous* nineteenth century town hall meeting: sleeves rolled up, talking directly, honestly, and sometimes quite harshly about the most difficult and pressing topics of the day, and then moving forward together with solutions to strengthen the community and the nation. (p. 4)

Using small groups, IGD was intentionally designed as a face-to-face intervention that is facilitated over the course of multiple weeks (typically 8-16, or one half to one full semester); each session lasting roughly 1.5-2 hours. IGD brings together people from two or more identity groups that have historically been in conflict due to social inequity (e.g., women and men, people of color [POC] and White people; gay, lesbian, and bisexual people and heterosexual people), and is facilitated by two trained individuals, one who self-identifies as a member of the oppressed group in relation to the topic of their IGD, and the other identifying as a member of the privileged group (Zúñiga, Nagada, & Chesler, 2007). As participants work through a four-stage, critical dialogic model (described below), they explore similarities and differences, and progress to dialoguing about social inequity and social justice, broadly. Gaining an understanding of the power relations and social inequity inherent to the intergroup dynamics is an explicit goal of the critical conversations within IGD (Zúñiga et al., 2007).

It is important to understand the intentional naming of the "critical-dialogic" model. *Critical* is used to describe the intentional examination of individual and group experiences that are connected to group identities, which exist in a stratified social order that affords members of different groups advantages and disadvantages—inevitably perpetuating group-based inequalities

(Nagada, Gurin, Sorensen, Gurin-Sands, & Osuna, 2009, as cited in Sorensen, Gurin, & Maxwell, 2009). *Dialogic* refers to people coming together to co-create an understanding of their lived experiences through listening, story-telling, and active participation and asking questions (Sorensen et al., 2009).

The critical-dialogic model has a four-stage structure wherein participants experience the typical stages of group development: forming, storming, norming, and performing (Tuckman, 1965). Stage one focuses on forming and developing relationships amongst participants and facilitators and the meaning of dialogue. To frame stage one, group members' fears and expectations are discussed in attempts to create a safer environment (Zúñiga et al., 2007)—this is the beginning of the dialogue about dialogue, or *meta-dialogue*. Bohm (1996) stated that people will come to groups with differing ideas and interests and that they must come to negotiate the process of dialogue; this, however, is not the end of dialogue, but the beginning. Students begin to understand the conceptual importance of dialogue—this portion of IGD typically lasts two to three sessions.

Stage two focuses primarily on exploring social identity similarities and differences within the context of greater systems of oppression (Zúñiga et al., 2007). This stage is where consciousness-raising begins. Connecting their identities to greater systems of oppression and discrimination, students typically begin to explore their roles as privileged and/or oppressed people within social systems through experiential activities and discussion of course readings. During this stage, societal power dynamics may begin to play out in the "social microcosm" of the group (Bohm, 1996; Chen, Thombs, & Costa, 2003; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). For example, White participants may begin to speak over people of color (POC) during the conversation or dismiss insights of POC as anecdotal or biased. In a dialogue about race, White participants may

even withdraw as topics become more personal or for fear of asking "dumb" questions or being called racist—this is why the importance of fostering a "brave space" is vital to garnering full participation across the group (Arao & Clemens, 2013). bell hooks (1994) asserts that, to utilize transformative pedagogy, professors must transform the classroom into a democratic setting in which all students feel responsible to contribute.

During stage three, participants begin exploring "hot topics" and controversial issues that reflect tension between groups (e.g., affirmative action, gay marriage, "bathroom bills," racial profiling, or reproductive rights) (Zúñiga et al., 2007). Facilitators encourage participants to be open, honest, and direct with their perspectives and experiences as they relate to the topic. However, participants are reminded not to emphasize what is right or wrong in their perspectives as this errs on the side of debate and not dialogue (Zúñiga et al., 2007). In dialogue, no one is trying to win or gain points, rather it is an experience in which all participants work to create *shared* meaning (Bohm, 1996). Through the frustration of dialogue, assumptions about the other will surface and it is important to persist, despite the possible desire to quit— participants will again experience positive emotions as the dialogue shifts and changes over time (Bohm, 1996). Facilitating a dialogue about the dialogue is an important intervention at this stage when the climate becomes heated and or tense. Doing so allows for facilitators and participants to discuss what in the dialogue they feel is going well as what is not (Zúñiga et al., 2007). Moving beyond polite conversation to meaningful conversation is difficult but necessary, and demands hard work on everyone's part, including the facilitators (Zúñiga, Nagada, & Sevig, 2002).

The final stage of IGD asks participants to claim and dialogue about their own prejudices and biases (Zúñiga et al., 2007). Focusing on individual and group level action plans, participants create ways to change the systems of oppression that were explored in the three prior

stages. Participants come to understand the "cycle of socialization," which Bobbi Harro (2010) describes as the life long process by which individuals come to notice, learn, and internalize stereotypes and prejudiced beliefs about others and subsequently perpetuate various systems of oppression. Although facilitators may expose participants to the "cycle of socialization" earlier in the process it gains greater nuance at this point in the series of dialogues. The system of oppression is realized as a relational system in which each of us participates in ever changing ways to unconsciously uphold hegemonic structures (Foucault, 1980) and students begin to envision new possibilities (Zúñiga et al., 2002). It is through those new possibilities that students begin to intervene and divert the oppressive "cycle of socialization" into a "cycle of liberation" (Harro, 2010).

Research Supporting Intergroup Dialogue

Research suggests that participation in IGD relates to positive results. For example, Gurin, Nagada, and Lopez (2004) found that, compared to a control group, IGD participants more frequently expressed democratic sentiments, showed greater motivation to take the perspectives of others, less often evaluated the school's focus on diversity as divisive, and more often viewed commonalities between their groups and others. Students who participate in IGD may also be more likely to have reduced levels of blindness to race-based privilege and institutional discrimination (Muller & Miles, 2016). Hurtado (2005) found that students with positive cross-racial encounters in IGD were more likely to view racial inequality as a problem that must be addressed and were less likely to accept social inequality as acceptable. Students with higher reported amounts of interactions with diverse peers were also more likely to develop a pluralistic orientation, believe that conflict enhances democracy, and vote in local and federal elections, and less likely to view individuals from differing racial or ethnic groups as having

fundamentally different core values than themselves between themselves and others of differing racial or ethnic groups (Hurtado, 2005). Although some positive outcomes (e.g., pluralistic orientation, democratic sentiments) were obtained from participating in non-dialogue focused programs, most outcomes were more strongly associated with IGD participation, especially perspective-taking (Hurtado, 2005). More specifically, participating in a facilitated dialogue had an important significant contribution to such gains, above and beyond that of informal interactions outside of class (Hurtado, 2005).

While the research reviewed above shows positive outcomes for IGD, there is less research on factors that directly contribute to outcomes. Some research has begun to examine session-level group process variables that may contribute to outcomes. For instance, research has demonstrated that positive affect in a session predicted participants' ratings of session depth and smoothness (Miles et al., 2015). While this research has started to help illuminate group processes related to outcome of IGD, less is known about specific individual factors that may influence participants' experiences of IGD. For example, are there individual differences that might decrease a participant's positive affect and subsequently their perceptions of session depth? Understanding the potential role of dispositional characteristics that affect experiences of group climate within IGD is important because group climate plays an essential role in achieving positive outcomes of connecting with diverse and, potentially, unfamiliar others. Because previous research in suggests that priming secure attachment can help individuals engage in interactions with diverse others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007a), reduce negative reactions to outgroup members and those who have critical attitudes toward one's worldview (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007b), and increase participants' endorsement of values related to equality and social justice (Mikulincer et al., 2003), and because attachment has been found to be an important

factor in other group interventions, namely group therapy (e.g., Marmarosh et al, 2009), we sought to examine whether attachment plays a role in participants' experiences of IGD. Miles and Mallinckrodt (2017) recently presented a case study to illustrate how attachment may play a role in IGD, however we could locate no other research on attachment in IGD. Therefore, the present study's focus on the individual difference of attachment style within IGD.

Attachment Style

Early in his career, Bowlby conceived attachment theory as solely representative of the emotional bond between infants and their primary care giver (1951). Contrary to early beliefs that the provision of food by a consistent care taker reinforces attachment behavior, Bowlby (1969/1982) later recognized that the ways in which a baby's companion responds to their social advances is the primary reinforcement of attachment behavior. He quickly recognized attachment behavior occurring between romantic partners and friends during adolescence and adulthood, and towards younger generations during later stages of adulthood (1982). In her comprehensive review of "strange situation" research, Ainsworth (1978) expanded upon Bowlby's foundational work by providing further insight regarding varying patterns of attachment (e.g., secure, anxious, avoidant).

To best provide an understanding of attachment styles, it is important to have a fundamental understanding of the strange situation. Ainsworth (1978) brought small children and their mothers into the lab and observed a child's behavior and emotional expressiveness when their mother left them in the room with a stranger; researchers again observed the child's behavior and responsiveness towards their mother upon their reunion. The time of separation between the mother and child is known as the "strange situation." How the child behaved was, according to Ainsworth, emblematic of their attachment behaviors— (e.g., secure or insecure

[including anxious and avoidant]). Secure children were calm and appeared comfortable exploring the room and playing with toys while their mothers were absent and appeared happy with their mother upon her return. Anxious children were emotionally distressed while their mothers were gone, were less likely to interact with the stranger, and were unable to explore their surroundings without their mother present to reassure them. They were only able to stop crying after their mothers returned and physically comforted them. Avoidant children displayed emotional distress upon their mother's departure but appeared uninterested in their mother upon her arrival.

Early experiences with parental attachment provide children with internal cognitive working models that guide future interactions with self, parents, loved ones, and the world in which with they live (Bowlby, 1973). Children come to expect others to respond to their needs in much the same way their original care taker did. Research has subsequently investigated the role of attachment across many domains of the human experience, for example: within romantic love (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Vetere & Meyers, 2002); individuals' likelihood to misattribute positive or negative meaning to a situation (Barrett & Holmes, 2001); and the difference across attachment experiences in friendships, family, and romance (Hudson, Fraley, Chopik, & Heffernan, 2015; Lee & Gillath, 2016;).

For example, Barrett and Holmes (2001) presented participants with social scenarios (e.g., a friend passes you in the hallway and does not say hello) and assessed their likely thoughts and responses. They found that insecure attachment with parents and current romantic relationships accounted for 55% of the variance in interpreting ambiguous social scenarios in a threatening manner. Such findings are consistent with Bowlby's (1969/1980) working model of attachment that he developed after Ainsworth's (1972) seminal research. More importantly,

Barret and Holmes (2001) found that participants who experience insecure attachment with current romantic partners and parents, when compared to securely attached participants, are more likely to report more avoidant, and more aggressive plans of action when addressing ambiguous social situations they perceive to be threatening.

IGD as a "strange situation"

The ambiguity of the social situations was the key factor in the Barret and Holmes (2001) study that activated participants' attachment patterns and behaviors. Similarly, IGD can be an ambiguous situation for participants at the beginning as many of them have likely never experienced a social situation in which they are expected to speak so frankly with diverse others about difficult social justice issues. The "polite" social norms when having such a dialogue with diverse others present arguably a far more ambiguous situation than the simple cognitive interpretation task utilized in the Barret and Holmes (2001) study. Whereas their study asked participants to imagine such a situation, IGD requires participants to actually *be in* an ambiguous situation with a group of people. And, because the experience of engaging with diverse others is central to the ambiguity of navigating IGD, it is possible that speaking with a group of people from another racial or ethnic group, sexual orientation, religion, or a number of other social identities might activate attachment patterns. To better understand the "strange situation" of IGD, we pondered how exposure to *strangers* (diverse others) might also activate attachment patterns beyond the existing activation that occurs through engaging in the novel form of communication about difficult topics. Do our attachment patterns relate to how we perceive interactions with out-group members will feel?

Attachment and Difference

Experimental research suggests priming participants with a secure attachment base may help individuals engage in interactions with diverse others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007a), allow for people to be more open in meeting the needs of others, and reduce negative reactions to outgroup members and those who have critical attitudes toward one's worldview (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007b). Mikulincer et al. (2003) also found that priming participants with a secure attachment base increased their endorsement of values related to equality and social justice.

Although research shows adolescents with an insecure attachment style are more likely to interpret ambiguous social situations as threatening (Barret & Holmes, 2001), and that attachment influences ones' connection with others (Mikulincer, 2003; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007a; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007b), we do not know if or how attachment style influences actual intergroup contact beyond experimental conditions. There is, however, research that investigates the role attachment style plays within group psychotherapy.

Attachment in Groups

Even though we could locate no quantitative research on attachment in the context of IGD, there is a body of research on attachment in other small group interventions, namely group psychotherapy. For example, research has examined the role of attachment in: group member transference (Markin & Marmarosh, 2010); group attraction and self-other agreement within the interpersonal circumplex problems and perceptions of group members (Chen & Mallinckrodt, 2002); group member complimentary interactions in group therapy for women with eating disorders (Maxwell et al., 2012); and perceptions of group climate (Illing, Tasca, Balfour, & Bissada, 2011).

For example, Marmarosh et al. (2009) found that members with less attachment avoidance indicated experiencing less fear in exposing themselves during group psychotherapy. Similarly, Illing et al. (2012) found that higher levels of perceived group engagement were associated with lower levels of pre-treatment attachment avoidance and that higher levels of perceived engagement are associated with the positive outcome variables (e.g., decreased disordered eating behaviors). Because lower levels of pre-treatment attachment avoidance have been found to be associated with higher levels of perceived engagement in group therapy, which is associated with positive outcomes, we sought to understand whether attachment style predicts participants experiences (i.e., perceptions of group climate, ratings of IGD sessions, session-level positive and negative emotional experiences) in IGD.

Attachment in IGD. From an early age, unfamiliar objects, places, and strangers scare children because they are objects that cue danger (Bowlby, 1969). Allport (1954) extends this idea by explaining how infants' categorization of familiar and unfamiliar extend through childhood, adolescence, and adulthood as individuals define their in-groups and out-groups. However, experimental research in social psychology demonstrated that priming participants with a secure attachment base schema lessens negative reactions to out-group members (Mikulincer et al, 2001); and that the activation of attachment security promotes empathic responses to others' needs (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001). Although experimental research in social psychology has demonstrated relationships between attachment style and perceptions of diverse others, we could not find quantitative research that has extended those findings to applied settings, let alone IGD, specifically. Considering that the premise that IGD is built upon a strange encounter with diverse others in a group setting, we felt there is strong justification for

examining the role of participants' attachment style in predicting experiences of group climate. Preliminary research on attachment in IGD seems to support this (Miles & Mallinckrodt, 2017).

Based on the research suggesting that attachment may be an important factor in both interpersonal and intergroup relations (Mikulincer et al, 2001; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001), in group counseling (e.g., Marmarosh et al., 2009; Illing et al., 2011), Miles and Mallinckrodt (2017) suggested attachment style could potentially be an important factor within individuals' experiences of IGD. They explored this idea through a case study focusing on two students in an IGD focused on religion. The two students in the case study were specifically selected because their scores on a measure of adult attachment reflected the highest and lowest attachment security, relative to the other members in the group. Examining these participants' weekly reflection journals about their IGD experience, Miles and Mallinckrodt (2017) sought to understand the relationship between their attachment styles and their experiences in IGD. The participant who scored high on both the anxious and avoidant attachment subscales on the Experiences with Close Relationships Revised scale (ECR-R, Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000) reported difficulty engaging in some of the IGD activities. In her class journal, "Sarah" wrote:

> I actually had difficulty with this assignment because I found it difficult to find tangible objects to explain who I truly am to complete stranger. It was hard to talk about myself. When it was my turn to speak, I got really nervous and my hands started to sweat… I was apprehensive about sharing my views as an atheist… (Miles & Mallinckrodt, 2017, p.266)

Considering her insecure attachment, one might expect Sarah to anticipate rejection from others in the group as she shared aspects of her life with them. In the same journal entry Sarah, shared that she was not met with rejection and that she experienced immense relief as a result. Sarah's

experience of relief and subsequent increased feelings of closeness to her group may be unique to her or it may be attributed the group facilitators' skills in attending to her needs.

Jill, the participant in Miles and Mallinckrodt's (2017) IGD case study who had a more secure attachment style according the ECR-R (Fraley et al., 2000), wrote the following in her journal regarding the same activity:

> I love learning about people; who they are, where they are from and the things that have led them to believe what they believe…This was something that was important to me because it allowed us to get to know each other in a different way. (p. 265)

Given that Jill had more secure attachment, it might make sense that she entered the process with an openness and curiosity about getting to know other members in her group.

Later, Jill wrote,

> It seemed to me that everyone really participated…even in the midst of hard questions…There was a moment that a really difficult question [whether people who do not sin but are not religious could go to heaven] was directed towards the [Christians] and I knew that the answer was going to be very offensive but I couldn't deny what I believe so I answered the question with a heavy heart and one of the girls who believes differently than I do looked me in the eyes and genuinely thanked me for sharing even though it was hard. I am really thankful for the willingness to hear each other's thoughts and beliefs about things without resulting in arguments. (Miles & Mallinckrodt, 2017, p. 266-267).

Although she experienced some discomfort, Jill experienced the group climate and the dialogue more positively and with little to no conflict. Her secure attachment to the group is foregrounded

by her ability to share her values honestly with the group even though she feared they would be "very offensive."

Miles and Mallinckrodt's (2017) case study findings suggest attachment security may play a role in IGD participants' experiences of their group. However, given the nature of their study (i.e., a case study with two participants in a single IGD group), additional research on the role adult attachment style may play in individuals' experiences of group climate in IGD is necessary. Therefore, in the current study, we sought to examine the relationship of attachment and session-level experiences of participants in multiple IGD groups. Specifically, we were interested in their perceptions of the group climate, session depth and smoothness, and their positive and negative emotional experiences in sessions. Ultimately, we sought to quantitatively extend the body of knowledge about the role of attachment style in IGD to better understand if and how it relates to participants' experiences in IGD.

Group Climate, Session Depth and Smoothness, and Emotion in IGD

We were specifically interested in the relationship between attachment and group climate because research suggests that this session-level group climate (especially the engagement aspect of the group climate) is strongly related to outcomes in group counseling (McClendon & Burlingame, 2011) and IGD (Muller & Miles, 2016). Literature on group counseling has defined group climate as, "the general emotional atmosphere of the group" which includes, "the consensually perceived psychosocial environment that [group] members work within, as well as socioemotional/feeling tone of the group" (McClendon & Burlingame, 2011, p.165). Yalom and Leszcz (2005) claim that group climate is an essential component of the success of members' experiences in group psychotherapy. Similarly, in relation to IGD, Muller and Miles (2016)

found that increases in the engaged aspect of group climate related to decreases in "blindness" to racial privilege and institutional discrimination and increases in empathic perspective-taking. Research on group psychotherapy suggests that group member attachment may relate to perceptions of the group climate. For instance, Illing et al. (2011) found that women seeking treatment for eating disorders who had higher levels of pre-treatment attachment avoidance were more sensitive to other members' perceptions of group engagement. They also found that increased engagement overtime related to reduced eating disorder symptoms. We could locate no research, however, that examined the relationship of attachment to perceptions of group climate in IGD. Therefore, we sought to examine the relationship between attachment and the session-level outcome of group climate in the current study.

Research on group counseling also suggests that group members' evaluations of session quality in terms of session depth and smoothness may relate to group member outcomes (e.g., Wade, Post, Cornish, Vogel, & Tucker, 2011). For example, Wade et al. found that group member ratings of session depth were related to reductions in self-stigma and intentions to seek help, following a single group counseling session.

While session depth and smoothness have not been examined in relation to outcomes in IGD, Miles et al. (2015) did examine patterns of session depth and smoothness over time in IGD, relative to the four-stage, critical-dialogic model of IGD (Gurin et al., 2013). They found that members rate sessions as less smooth (i.e. they were distressing and tense) and with less positive emotions over the course of the 8 sessions; that smoothness (e.g., comfortable) was positively related to positive affect (e.g., excitement), and negatively related to negative affect (e.g., ashamed, guilty, hostile). The change in smoothness and affect over time is congruent, however, with the four-stage model of IGD as members move from less risky conversations that focus on

group cohesion to more difficult conversations about oppression (e.g. racism and heterosexism) (Zúñiga et al., 2007).

While some research (Pesale, 2011; Pesale, Hilsenroth, & Owen, 2012) has demonstrated an association between greater session smoothness and improved symptoms, experiencing conflict (i.e., less session smoothness) makes sense and is a necessary component of both group therapy (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005) and IGD. Further, existing research on emotion in IGD demonstrates that both positive and negative emotions are an essential piece of the process (Dessel & Ali, 2012; Dessel et al., 2013; Gurin-Sands, Gurin, Nagda, & Osuna, 2012; Khuri, 2004).

Current Study

Research on IGD suggests there are positive outcomes (Gurin, Nagada, & Lopez, 2003; Hurtado, 2005; Miles & Muller, 2017). Less is known, however, about potential individual differences that may impact participant outcomes. Research on adult attachment suggests that those with less secure attachment may find strange situations threatening (e.g., Barret & Holmes, 2001). In addition, experimental social psychology research on attachment has found that priming secure attachment is associated with a reduction in negative reactions to outgroup members who have a critical attitude towards one's worldview (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007b). Given that IGD presents a "strange situation," where individuals are expected to interact with outgroup members and discuss their worldviews, it is worth considering if and how attachment may play out in IGD. We could locate only one study of attachment in IGD, a qualitative study (Miles & Mallinckrodt, 2017), which seems to suggest that attachment may play a role in participants' expeirences, but no quantitative studies exist. The purpose of the current study is to quantitatively examine if and how attachment may relate to group members' experiences in IGD,

specifically as related to their perceptions of the group climate, their ratings of sesison depth and smoothness, and their experiences of positive and negative emotions. Additionally, this study seeks examine if and how the aggregate effects of the group's attachment stlyes affect individual member's perceptions of group climate and their ratings of session depth and smoothness and their experiences of positive and negative emotions.

Research Questions

In this study, we examined the relationship between attachment style and: group climate, session depth and smoothness, and positive and negative affect in sessions. We investigated group climate and session depth and smoothness because research suggests that these session-level variables are related to overall intervention outcomes in research on IGD and other group interventions (e.g., Gold, Kivlighan, & Patton, 2013; Pesale, 2012). Because group data are nested in nature, and are therefore non-independent, it is important to conceptualize our research questions within a multilevel model that recognizes the nonindependence of group data (Miles & Paquin, 2014). Thus, our research questions are formulated through the Actor Partner Interdependence Model (APIM; Kenny et. al., 2002). Within the APIM, the actor effect allows us to understand the extent to which an individual's level of the independent variable (i.e., attachment anxiety or avoidance) relates to their outcome/dependent variable (i.e., perceptions of: group climate, session depth and smoothness, and positive and negative affect). The partner effect allows us to understand the extent to which the aggregate level of the independent variable amongst OGMs (i.e., their aggregate attachment anxiety of avoidance) relates to a focal member's outcome/dependent variable. The partner effect in the APIM model, is not viewed as the effect of the *entire* group, because the individual is also a group member, but rather the effect of the OGMs *excluding* that individual. The collective influence of the OGMs' characteristics

upon an individual group member is an important dynamic within IGD and warranted examining partner effects using the APIM (Kenny et al., 2002).

Research suggesting an actor effect. Research in group therapy has also found that one's own attachment style relates to perceptions of group climate. For example, greater discomfort with closeness to the group (attachment avoidance) at pre-treatment has been found to impact ratings of engagement, while attachment security has been found to be associated with positive group climate perceptions and outcomes (Illing et al., 2011). A participant's attachment avoidance has also been found to predict lower levels of engagement in group psychotherapy for women seeking treatment for an eating disorder (Illing et al., 2011). Considering these findings, the present study seeks to answer the following research questions regarding a participant's attachment style on perceptions of group climate, session depth and smoothness, and positive and negative affect (i.e., the actor effect).

1. How, if at all, does an individual group member's attachment avoidance relate to perceptions of group climate?
2. How, if at all, does an individual group member's attachment anxiety relate to perceptions of group climate?
3. How, if at all, does an individual group member's attachment avoidance relate to their perceptions of session depth and smoothness?
4. How, if at all, does an individual group member's attachment anxiety relate to their perceptions of session depth and smoothness?
5. How, if at all, does an individual group member's attachment avoidance relate to their experiences of either positive or negative affect?
6. How, if at all, does an individual group member's attachment anxiety relate to their

experiences of either positive or negative affect?

Research suggesting a partner effect. Given the nature of groups, a group member's outcomes are impacted by not just their own experiences and characteristics, but those of the OGMs, as well. Small group research has increasingly used the APIM to examine this partner "effect." For example, one study (Bonito, DeCamp, Coffman, & Fleming, 2006) showed that the groups' level of interpersonal control was related to an individual's degree of participation in group (i.e., the partner effect predicted an individual's degree or participation). Another study using the APIM found that an individual group member's session attendance is also related to combined intimate behaviors of OGMs in previous sessions (Paquin, Miles, & Kivlighan, 2011). Research using the APIM has also examined partner effects in terms of the OGMs' attachment styles. For example, this research demonstrates the aggregated attachment styles of group members predicts group climate (Illing et al, 2011; Kivlighan et al., 2012). Kivlighan, Coco, Gullo, Pazzagli, & Mezzeschi (2017) explained that:

> …aggregated attachment dimensions of group members are an important (and understudied) predictor of group climate. Therefore, it is important to understand the mix or composition of the group members' attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance dimensions and its influence on the group relationships and client's outcome as well. (p.225)

Due to the non-independence of small group data, the present study also sought to answer the following research questions regarding the OGMs attachment style on focal perceptions of group climate, session depth and smoothness, and positive and negative affect (i.e., the partner effect).

1. How, if at all, the attachment avoidance of the OGMs relate to an individual group

member's perceptions of group climate?

2. How, if at all, does the attachment anxiety of the OGMs relate to an individual group member's perceptions of group climate?
3. How, if at all, does the attachment avoidance of the OGMs relate to an individual group member's perceptions of session depth and smoothness?
4. How, if at all, does the attachment anxiety of the OGMs relate to an individual group member's perceptions of session depth and smoothness?
5. How, if at all, does the attachment avoidance of the OGMs relate to an individual group member's perceptions of positive and negative emotions?
6. How, if at all, does the attachment anxiety of the OGMs relate to an individual group member's perceptions of positive and negative emotions?

CHAPTER III: METHODS

Participants

Groups

This study involved 17 IGD groups that were a required component of an undergraduate multicultural psychology course at a large, public university in the Southeastern US across three semesters. The IGD groups included: five groups focused on religion/spirituality, two on social class, four on race/ethnicity, three on sexual orientation, and three on gender. The number of members in each group ranged from 8 to 14 with approximately half of the members in each group identifying as a member of the marginalized identity group related to the topic of the group (e.g., people of color in an IGD focused on race), and half identifying as a member of the privileged identity group (e.g., White people in an IGD focused on race). All students were asked to complete surveys regarding their experiences in their IGD group, which included the measures described below. These were administered as a part of the evaluation of the IGD portion of the class. While participation in an IGD group was a required portion of the multicultural psychology course, completion of the surveys was not a requirement, nor was consenting to participate in the research.

The IGD component of the course was intended to further these objectives of the multicultural psychology course (i.e., increased multicultural competence – e.g., awareness of self and others, knowledge of systems of inequality). To create equal representation in the groups, students completed a demographic questionnaire and ranked their preferences of IGD group topics (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation). The graduate teaching assistant for the

course then assigned participants into groups based upon their responses to the demographic questionnaire and their IGD topic preferences to ensure that each group was comprised of approximately equal numbers of individuals who identify as members of the marginalized and dominant social identity groups, while trying to ensure students were in a dialogue on one of their topic preferences.

The course met twice a week, on Tuesday and Thursdays, for an hour and 15 minutes each class. Students experienced a traditional lecture/discussion format during both weekly classes for the first half of the semester. During the second half of the semester students attended the traditional course on Tuesdays, and participated in an IGD group on Thursdays, facilitated two graduate students trained in the theory, research, and practice of IGD.

Group members

Group members were 138 students enrolled in the multicultural psychology course described above, 102 (73%) of whom gave consent to participate in the research and completed a pre-dialogue survey and at least one session-level assessment (there were eight total sessions). The mean number of surveys completed was 5.66 and the standard deviation for surveys completed was 2.16 (For 2017, one of the weekly sessions was canceled due to a scheduling conflict for all group facilitators). To be included in the analyses, participants must have completed both pre- and post-dialogue assessments and a minimum of one weekly session-level assessment. Because it seemed implausible to thoughtfully complete the assessment in under ten minutes given the length, all participants with completion times under 10 minutes were removed. Ninety-four participants met these inclusion criteria and were subsequently used in the analyses.

Ages ranged from 20- 42 years (M = 21.80; SD = 3.01). Seventy-six participants identified as female; 23 as male; 1 as transgender; and 1 as gender non-conforming. With regard

to racial and ethnic identity, 12 identified as Black/African American, 1 as Asian/Asian American, 127 as White/European American, 7 as Latinx, 2 as Middle Eastern/Arab, 1 as Native American/Alaskan Native, 1 as Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 3 as multiracial, one of whom specifically wrote "Palestinian/European."

Facilitators

Thirty-five doctoral students in counseling psychology and one doctoral-level faculty member in counseling psychology co-facilitated the 17 groups (the number of groups each person facilitated from 1-3 groups). Each of the facilitators had completed or was currently enrolled in an advanced group methods course focused on the theory, research, and practice of IGD. The faculty member facilitator had training in IGD and experience facilitating IGDs at three universities.

Measures

Individual attachment style

Participants completed the Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised Questionnaire (ECR-R; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2002) at the beginning of the semester, prior to the first IGD session. The ECR-R (Fraley et al., 2000) is a 36-item questionnaire with two subscales assessing anxious and avoidant attachment styles. Items are rated on a scale that ranges from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Example items from the avoidant subscale are: "I don't feel comfortable opening up to my romantic partner," and "I am nervous when partners get too close to me." Example items for the anxiety subscale include: "I worry that my romantics partners won't care about me as much as I care about them," and "Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for not apparent reason." The reliabilities for the current study were .94 for anxiety and .95 for avoidance. The scale was developed through an item response

theory analysis of various scales originally designed to assess an individual's romantic attachment style. To discern independent markers of each dimension, Fraley et. al. (2002) selected items scoring .40, or higher, correlation with avoidance and .25 or less for anxiety. Only the items with the highest discrimination scores were kept 13/18 of the originally anxiety questions and 7/18 original avoidance items, such that the measure had a high fidelity in measuring those who were high, but now low, in both attachment anxiety and avoidance, thus improving the accuracy of prior measures. The authors found convergent validity with pre-existing attachment assessments, such as the Experiences with Close Relationship Questionnaire (ECR; Brennan et. al., 1998), Adult Attachment Scale (AAS; Collins, & Read, 1990), the Relationship Style Questionnaire (RSQ; Griffin and Bartholomew, 1994), and the Simpson inventory (1990).

Session Evaluation Questionnaire

Following each session, participants completed the Session Evaluation Questionnaire (SEQ; Stiles, 1980), an 11-item measure assessing perceptions of the depth and smoothness of a session. Participants are provided with 11 bi-polar pairs of adjectives describing session depth or smoothness and asked to rate how close the session felt with respect to one poll or the other. For example, when evaluating session depth, participants rate it on a scale from 1 (*shallow*) to 7 (*deep*); with regard to session smoothness, participants rate it on a scale from 1 (*rough*) to 7 (*smooth*). Session depth and smoothness are measured separately with five bi-polar pairs each. (The eleventh item asks participants to rate the session as "good" or "bad." As this item does not fall within the depth or smoothness subscales, it was not examined in the analyses). "Smoothness/ease appears to describe good feelings of relaxation and comfort within the session rather than a general positive evaluation, whereas depth/value adds a positive

evaluation to potency" (Stiles, 1980, p.183). The session depth and smoothness subscales were unrelated for clients (r= -.4) and for therapists (r= .08), suggesting discriminate validity amongst the therapy session dimensions rated (Stiles, 1980). Although this scale was developed in the context of individual therapy, it has been used to examine depth and smoothness in IGD research (Miles et al., 2015). Stiles et al. (1994) reported reliabilities of .90 for the depth subscale and .92 for the smoothness subscale of the SEQ (Stiles, 1980). Reliabilities for the present study were .73 for smoothness and .63 for depth. The authors found conceptual convergence with prior scales such as the Therapy Session Report (TSR; Orlinsky, & Howard, 1967, 1975, 1977) used to examine client perceptions of sessions.

The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule

Following each session, participants also completed the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), a 20-item measure that asks participants to indicate the extent to which they felt 10 positive emotions (e.g., excited, interested) and 10 negative emotions (e.g., afraid, hostile, and upset) in their most recent IGD session on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to five (*extremely*). The summed scores for the positive and negative affect scales range from 10 to 50. Watson et. al., also found low correlation between the PA and NA scales, ranging from -.12 to -.23, demonstrating quasi-independence of the scales and, thus, discriminate validity. Regarding item validity, "it is not surprising that two dimensions accounted for virtually all of the common variance in these solutions (ranging from 87.4% in the moment data to 96.1 % in the general ratings)" (Watson et. al., 1988, p. 1066). They also administered the PANAS to university employees and found a -.09 correlation between the scales, demonstrating consistent discriminate validity across sample populations and generalizability to adults beyond college students. According to Watson et al. (1988),

reliabilities for positive affect range from .86 to .90 and negative affect range from .84 to .87. Reliabilities for the current study were .90 for positive affect and .86 for negative affect. The authors also found convergent validity correlations (i.e., .81 to .94) with other brief affect measures of positive affect and affect (e.g., Diener & Emmons, 1984; McAdams & Constantian, 1983).

Group Climate Questionnaire Short-Form

Following each session, participants also completed the Group Climate Questionnaire Short-Form (GCQ-S; MacKenzie, 1983), a 12-item survey measuring participants' perceptions of group climate in the most recent session. The GCQ-S was selected because it is one of the most commonly used group measure of group climate. Each item is ranked from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*extremely*). There are three subscales: engagement, which measures closeness between group members (e.g., "Members liked and cared about each other"); avoidance, which measure attitudes and behaviors group members employ to avoid difficult topics or situations (e.g., "Members avoided looking at important issues going on between themselves"); and conflict, which measures hostility between members (e.g., "Members were distant and withdrawn from each other"). Each subscale has a low level of correlation with the others ranging from -.44 to .30, which demonstrates discriminate validity amongst the subscales. Regarding convergent validity, item/scale correlations amongst engaged items ranged from .69 to .77; item/scale correlations amongst avoiding subscale items ranged from .72 to .75; item/scale correlations amongst conflict subscale items ranged from .81 to .88 (MacKenzie, 1983). Kivlighan and Goldfine (1991) found high internal consistencies in the GCQ-S subscales with following alphas: .94 for engagement, .92 for avoidance, and .88 for conflict. The group climate questionnaire had convergent overlap with some of the most commonly used group climate measures such as the

Group Environment Scale (Moos & Humphrey, 1974; Moos, 1986, 1994, 2004), and the Group Atmosphere Scale (Silbergeld, Koenig, Manderscheid, Meeker, & Hornung, 1975; Silbergeld, Manderscheid, Koenig, 1977), which investigate similar phenomenon within group dynamics (e.g., McClendon, & Burlingame, 2010). The alphas for the present study were .75 for engagement, .30 for avoidance, and .80 for conflict. We recognize the reliability for avoidance is low, but it is consistent with previous research (e.g., Johnson, Burlingame, Olsen, Davies, & Gleave [2005] and Kivlighan, Lo Coco, & Gullo [2012] found alphas of .36 and .48, respectively). Results related to avoidance should subsequently be interpreted with caution.

Procedure

Prior to the first session, participants received an email containing a link to an online survey that contained a demographic questionnaire, the ECR-R, and other measures that were included as part of a larger study of the process and outcomes of IGD (Muller & Miles, 2016). These included the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee, & Browne, 2000), the Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (Wang, Davidson, Yakushko, Savoy, Tan, & Bleier, 2003), Miville-Guzman Universality Diversity Scale - Short Form (Fuertes et al., 2000), and the Openness to Diversity/Challenge Scale (Pascarella et al., 1996). Following each IGD session, participants again received a link to an online survey that included the SEQ (Stiles, 1980), the PANAS (Watson et al., 1988), and the GCQ-S (MacKenzie, 1983). They were asked to complete each of these measures with regard to their most recent session.

For both the pre-dialogue survey, and the post-session surveys, participants were told that their responses would not be shared with their group leader or their other IGD group members. They were told that completing the surveys was not a course requirement, and students were given a small amount of extra credit toward their final grade for each survey they completed. At

the end of the semester, after the last IGD session, all of the IGD participants were given a paper consent form so that they could indicate their informed consent to have their data included in the research or they could decline to consent. They were asked to sign the consent form or decline to sign it, and place it in an envelope provided and to seal the envelope. The envelopes were collected and were not opened until the semester ended and grades for the course had been submitted, to ensure that their consenting (or not) did not impact their grade one way or the other.

Data Analysis

Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002) was used to account for the nested nature of the data (i.e., sessions were nested within individuals, who were nested within groups). Fourteen three-level (within individual/session, between individual, and between group) HLM analyses were conducted to explore the relationships between attachment avoidance and anxiety, and session-level perceptions of: (a) group climate (engagement, avoidance, and conflict), (b) session depth and smoothness, and (c) experiences of positive and negative affect.

As described above, due to the nature of small groups, the data are interdependent; any individual group member's data is influenced by others in the group. As such, the actor-partner interdependence model (APIM; Kenny et al., 2002) was used to understand the impact of both focal individuals' attachment styles (i.e., the actor effect) as well as the OGMs' attachment styles (i.e., the partner effect) on the focal group member's perceptions of group climate, session depth and smoothness, and experiences of positive and negative affect.

In our analyses, individuals' session-level outcome data (i.e., session-level scores on group climate subscales, ratings of session depth and smoothness, and positive and negative affect scores) served as the dependent variables at Level 1. Actor and partner attachment scores

(anxiety and avoidance) served as predictor variables at Level 2. There were no Level 3 predictors.

We conducted 14 HLM analyses to test our hypotheses regarding the relationships between attachment style and perceptions of: group climate (engagement, avoidance, and conflict) (b) session depth and smoothness, and (c) positive and negative emotions. Each of the analyses used the same model illustrated below, with the dependent variable being the only difference. To illustrate, the analyses predicting scores on the negative emotion subscale of the PANAS is provided below. For each of the subsequent analyses, only variable Y at Level 1 changed to a different of the session-level dependent variables. Variables were grand mean centered.

The Level 1 (session-level/within group member) model was:

$$Y_{tij} = \pi_{0ij} + e_{tij}$$

where Y_{tij} is the PANAS negative emotion score at Session *t* for Individual *i* in Group *j*, π_{0ij} represents Individual *i*'s mean PANAS negative emotion score, and e_{tij} represents the session-level error.

The Level 2 (between group member) model was:

$$\pi_{0ij} = \beta_{00j} + \beta_{01j}*(\text{ACT\_ANX})_{ij} + \beta_{02j}*(\text{ACT\_AVO})_{ij} + \beta_{03j}*(\text{PAR\_ANX})_{ij}$$
$$+ \beta_{04j}*(\text{PAR\_AVO})_{ij} + r_{0ij}$$

Where β_{00j} is the mean negative emotion score in Group *j*; β_{01j} is the linear rate of change in negative emotions by the actor's anxiety score, $(\text{ACT\_ANX})_{ij}$ is the actor's anxiety score, β_{02j} is the linear rate of change in negative emotions by the actor score, $(\text{ACT\_AVO})_{ij}$ is the actor's avoidance score; β_{03j} is the linear rate of change in negative emotions by the partner's anxiety score; $(\text{PAR\_ANX})_{ij}$ is the partner's anxiety score; β_{04j} is the linear rate of change in negative

emotions by the partner effect avoidance score; $(PAR\_AVO)_{ij}$ is the partner's avoidance score; and r_{0ij} is individual level error.

The Level 3 model was:

$$\beta_{00j} = \gamma_{000} + u_{00j}$$

$$\beta_{01j} = \gamma_{010} + u_{01j}$$

$$\beta_{02j} = \gamma_{020} + u_{02j}$$

$$\beta_{03j} = \gamma_{030} + u_{03j}$$

$$\beta_{04j} = \gamma_{040} + u_{04j}$$

Where γ_{000} is the mean score of PANAS negative emotion across all groups; γ_{010} represents the mean linear rate of change in negative emotions by actor anxiety score across groups, γ_{020} is the mean linear rate of change in negative emotions by actor avoidance score across groups, γ_{030} is the mean linear rate of change in negative emotions by partner anxiety score across groups, γ_{040} is mean linear rate of change in negative emotions by partner avoidance score across groups, and $u_{04j,}$ $u_{04j,}$ $u_{04j,}$ and u_{04j} represent group level error.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

First, we ran seven unconditional three-level (session, individual, group) HLM analyses (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002) to partition the variance in the three subscales of the GCQ-S (engagement, avoidance, conflict), the two subscales of the SEQ (session depth and smoothness), and the two subscales of the PANAS (positive and negative affect). With regard to engagement, 59.77% of the variance was accounted for at the session level, 29.88% of the variance was accounted for at the individual level (attachment avoidance or anxiety), and 9.19% of the variance was accounted for at the group level. With regard to conflict, 12.57% of the variance was accounted for at the session level, 87.53% of the variance was accounted for at the individual level, and < .01% was accounted for at the group level. With regard to avoidance, 69.30% of the variance was accounted for at the session level, 30.69% was accounted for at the individual level, and < .01% was accounted for at the group level. With regard to positive affect, 50.77% of the variance was accounted for at the session level, 37.60% was accounted for at the individual level, and 11.63% was accounted for at the group level. With regard to negative affect, 72.22% of the variance was accounted for at the session level, 27.72% of the variance was accounted for at the individual level, and < .01% of the variance was accounted for at the group level. With regard to session depth, 28.04% of the variance was accounted for at the session level, 9.35% was accounted for at the individual level, and 62.62% was accounted for at the group level. With regard to session smoothness, 43.62% of the variance was accounted for at the session level, 10.74% was accounted for at the individual level, and 45.64 was accounted for at the group level.

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for each variable can be found in Table 1. Results of the HLM analyses are found in Table 2. Out of our seven HLM analyses, only one

relationship proved significant: the partner effect related to the OGMs' attachment avoidance was significantly and positively associated with an individual member's negative affect (p =.01). There were no other significant actor or partner effects between attachment avoidance or anxiety and any of the other variables investigated in this study.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

IGD is a quickly growing educational intervention that is implemented on college campuses across the U.S. with the intention of addressing issues of social justice and diversity both on campus and in society as a whole (Zúñiga et al, 2002; Zúñiga et al., 2007). Although a growing body of research has demonstrated IGD's effectiveness (Dessel & Rogge, 2006; Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013; Zúñiga et al., 2007), we know less about what happens during individual sessions, or about individual characteristics that relate to participants' experiences. Building on research on the role of attachment style in group processes and outcomes (e.g., Kivlighan et al., 2012; Kivlighan et al., 2017; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007b) and social psychological research on secure attachment priming (e.g., Illing et al, 2011; Tasca et al., 2014), the present study investigated the potential relationship between IGD participants' attachment styles and their perceptions of the group climate, positive and negative affect, and session depth and smoothness.

Although not focused on IGD, adjacent social psychology research has investigated the role of attachment style in perceptions of diverse others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007a) and reactions to outgroup members (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007b), and how attachment styles relate to interpreting ambiguous social situations (Barret & Holmes, 2001). Subsequently, investigating the relationship between individual attachment style and perceptions of group climate, session depth and smoothness, and experiences of positive and negative affect within IGD seemed appropriate considering that dialoging with diverse others in a novel situation and is the premise of IGD. Kivlighan et. al., (2017) explained that aggregated attachment styles are an important and understudied predictor of group climate in group interventions, and future research should examine the relationship. Investigating the relationship between attachment style and

group dynamics within the context of IGD is particularly relevant considering our understanding of attachment in group and the influence of group on the individual. Specifically, Kivlighan and Kivlighan (2013) asserted that the partner effect of variables upon perceptions of group climate within small groups should be examined using the APIM to best capture the inherent influence the group has on an individual.

Groups member relationships can be viewed as attachment bonds, and the group itself can also become a symbol of safety and support for the individual, a "security-enhancing attachment figure" —a place for exploration and learning (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2017, p. 169). Marmarosh, Markin, and Spiegel (2013) further emphasized that individuals can develop an internal working model of and attachment to the group itself—a secure base. IGD is a form of critical multicultural pedagogy, so experiencing the group as a "place for exploration and learning" would be ideal. Mikulincer and Shaver (2017) go on to say that, "creating supportive group interactions can provide a relational foundation for beneficial psychological and organizational transformations" (p. 169). However, building a supportive environment requires that the leader understand the group's dynamics. Research demonstrates that the aggregate of group members' attachment styles predicts (i.e., there is a partner effect) an individual's perception of group climate (Illing et al., 2011; Kivlighan et al., 2012); other aggregated characteristics influence outcome variables such as individual participation in group (Bonito et. al., 2006) and an individual group member's session attendance (Paquin, Miles, & Kivlighan, 2011).

Expanding upon the research about the role of individual characteristics within IGD, using APIM as a best practice for group research design (Miles & Paquin, 2014), the present study sought to understand the predictive quality of both an individual's attachment style (i.e.,

actor effect) and the aggregated attachment style of the OGMs (i.e., partner effect) upon an individual group member's perceptions of group climate, session depth and smoothness, and experiences of positive and negative affect.

We found that the partner effect for avoidant attachment style (i.e., the mean avoidant attachment score for group members minus the focal individual) was significantly and positively associated with an individual's experiences of negative affect. This means that an individual group member, irrespective of their own attachment avoidance score, was more likely to experience negative emotions (e.g., afraid, hostile, and upset) when the aggregate attachment avoidance of all OGMs is high. This builds upon other research that demonstrates the influence of a partner effect in group interventions (e.g., Illing et al, 2011; Kivlighan et al., 2012; Bonito et al., 2006; Miles et al., 2011) and further emphasizes the need to examine group data with the APIM model to fully understand the non-independence of group data.

Our finding for the partner effect of the OGMs' attachment avoidance dovetails with existing literature regarding the interpersonal problems individuals with avoidant attachment styles experience in groups. Namely, Chen and Mallinckrodt (2002) found that attachment avoidance was related to self-rated problems with hostile-dominant circumplex behaviors, which Horowitz, Rosenberg and Bartholomew (1993) describe as domineering, cold, and potentially being critical of others. With that in mind, an individual group member's experience of negative emotion, as a result of OGMs' attachment avoidance, and its associated interpersonal problems (Chen & Mallinckrodt, 2002), may make sense. The aggregate effect of many group members displaying such interpersonal behaviors would likely cause any individual to experience negative emotions. Building upon the notion of interpersonal problems and behaviors, several studies have shown that individuals with avoidant attachment styles were highly sensitive to other's

perceptions of group cohesion (Illing et al., 2011) and that they downplay engagement at the beginning stages of group processes as a way to protest themselves (Tasca, 2014). The aggregate effect of many group members engaging in self-protection may be connected to our finding. We might interpret our results such that a group high in attachment avoidance score may relate to more negative interpersonal behaviors (e.g., downregulated affective emotions) that make it difficult for members to connect in group and inevitably feel bad.

No other research has quantitatively investigated the role of attachment style in IGD, so our findings are novel and important to our understanding of session-level outcomes within IGD. Beyond building upon and emphasizing the importance of the APIM, our findings also contribute to the research on affect within IGD that demonstrated participants with higher mean levels of negative emotion were more likely to engage in avoidance behavior when they experienced negative emotion and that negative emotion predicted conflict within groups (Frantell, 2016). Comparatively, participants with higher mean levels of positive emotions in IGD reported greater levels of engagement (i.e., they reported experiencing greater closeness with group members) (Frantell, 2016).

Although we found a partner effect for avoidance predicted negative affect, the actor effect for avoidant attachment style did not predict negative affect (i.e., an individual's own avoidant attachment style did not predict negative affect), which contradicts research on other group interventions (Tasca et al., 2014). Tasca et al., for example, suggested group facilitators spend extra time with individuals with avoidant attachment styles, norming the expectations of personal sharing and engaging the group prior to sessions began in attempts to increase retention and decrease aversion to group treatment. Relatedly, the present study may have lacked an actor effect for attachment avoidance because explicit discussion about group rules and norms are

already a part of IGD's four-stage model. Such a discussion may address the concerns put forth by Tasca et al., and reduce potential negative emotions experienced by an individual with an avoidant attachment style. Moreover, people with more attachment avoidance may experience differing pressures to share and build connections in IGD when compared to individuals in group psychotherapy (i.e., potentially experiencing more environmental norms/expectations of emotional intimacy).

Inconsistent with previous research on attachment in other group interventions, there were no significant actor or partner effects related to anxious or avoidant attachment and group climate session depth and smoothness, or positive affect. This may be explained by the differences between group therapy and these specific IGD groups. Whereas members of a psychotherapy group are typically unknown strangers prior to the beginning of treatment, participants in the present study were in class together two days a week for six weeks prior the beginning of IGD sessions. Having prior connection with other IGD group members may have provided relief or comfort to those with anxious attachment styles and enough time for individuals with avoidant attachment styles to let their guard down. Moreover, specific activities like "hopes and fears" (in these dialogues, participants dialogued about their hopes and fears for the IGD experience in the first session) may provide anxious individuals an opportunity to express their fears and have them normalized as they hear similar concerns from other students. Such attentiveness is likely beneficial to all group members— setting norms and expectations for avoidantly attached participants and attending to the need for interpersonal connection for anxiously attached participants.

Studies have also shown individuals with attachment anxiety do well in group psychodynamic interpersonal psychotherapy (GPIP) and experience an increase in working

alliance and perceptions of engaged group climate, a signifier of cohesion and security (MacKenzie, 1983), over time (Tasca, Balfour, Ritchie, & Bissada, 2007). Moreover, Tasca et al. (2006) found that engaged group climate growth over time mediated the relationship between attachment anxiety and outcome for individuals in GPIP treatment but not group cognitive behavioral treatment that focuses less on interpersonal connections of participants. Research on IGD has similarly demonstrated growth in group engagement scores over time (Miles & Kivlighan, 2008, 2010; Muller & Miles, 2017). Indeed, because IGD has an initial focus upon building relationships and interpersonal safety and connection (Zúñiga et al., 2007), similar to GPIP (Tasca et al., 2007), it may be the case that participants with anxious attachment styles similarly do well in IGD and experience a buffer against negative affect. Paralleling findings by Tasca et al. (2007), the interpersonal focus of IGD and its demonstrated pattern of increased engagement over time (Miles & Kivlighan, 2008, 2010; Muller & Miles, 2016) may have attenuated the effects of attachment anxiety addressed in our research questions. Future research should investigate the relationship between attachment anxiety and avoidance and group climate, session depth and smoothness, and positive and negative affect.

Strengths and Limitations

Strengths

A strength of this study is that it was the first to quantitatively explore the role of attachment style in IGD. Another strength of the current study is the examining of research findings from experimental social psychology on the interplay between attachment styles and diverse others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001; Mikulincer et al., 2003; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007a; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007b) within an applied setting. Our findings that attachment styles did not necessarily predict perceptions of group climate, session depth and smoothness, or

positive affect when dialoguing with diverse others may seem to contradict the aforementioned studies in experimental social psychology. Such contradictions demonstrate the importance of applied intervention research that may provide more "real life" experiences that a purely experimental study in a laboratory may not. The aforementioned studies provide a snapshot, but do not consider nuanced relationships like those developed amongst students in the present study across many weeks of class before the IGDs began.

Further, to our knowledge, it was the first to use APIM (Cook & Kenny, 2005; Kenny et al., 2002) with individual characteristics to make predictions about perceptions of group climate, positive and negative affect, and session depth and smoothness in IGD. Using the APIM is essential to obtaining a nuanced understanding of group phenomena that account for inherent interdependence of data. APIM in the present study allowed us to examine the potential effects of individual group members' own attachment styles (i.e., the actor effect) on perceptions of group climate, session depth and smoothness, and positive and negative affect, as well as the effect of other members' attachment styles (i.e., the partner effect).

Limitations

There are, however, a number of limitations of the study. First, Kenny et al. (2002) stated that one of APIM's limitations is its assumption that all group sizes are the same and that it is unclear how the model would generalize to groups of unequal size, which is the case for groups in the present study. Further, the alpha for the avoidance subscale of the GCQ-S (MacKenzie, 1983) was quite low at .30. However, this is similar for alphas reported in research on IGD (Frantell, 2016) and in studies looking at clients in group therapy (Johnson et. al., 2005; Kivlighan et al., 2012). As others have noted (Frantell, 2016), an explanation for the avoidance subscale's low alpha in IGD may be that it was originally designed for group therapy which

differs from IGD in various ways. Had the reliability of this subscale been higher, we may have found differing results.

Further, it is also important to note the limitations of the ECR-R (Fraley et al., 2000) identified by the creators of the scale. The ECR-R scale "assess high levels of security (i.e., low anxiety and low avoidance) with considerably less precision than insecurity" (Fraley et al., 2000, p. 360). It is plausible that more of our participants were securely attached, which could explain some of the null hypothesis results in the present study. To address this possibility, future research might use the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI; George, Kaplan, & Main, 1985) which is a more extensive assessment of attachment history. Such a tool might provide a more accurate representation of an individual.

Implications for Practice and Research

Practice

The present study has demonstrated a high partner score for attachment avoidance within a group is related to an individual group member's experience of negative affect. Therefore, an implication of the present study is that IGD facilitators might want to consider members' attachment styles. Marmarosh and Markin (2014) echoed this idea and encouraged group leaders to focus on role modeling interactions and building group cohesion so that the group can be internalized by members as a secure base. Just as facilitators attend to individual differences at the social identity level within IGD, so too could they give attention to the possible influence of attachment style and the experience of negative. It is impractical for facilitators to assess each IGD participants' attachment style, but it would be practical and important, per our findings, that facilitators be aware of various attachment styles and how they may relate to interpersonal problems and subsequent emotional experiences. Therefore, IGD facilitators should be attentive

to the group's aggregate expressions of cold, domineering or judgmental behaviors (Chen & Mallinckrodt, 2002) and work to processes the emotional content by working to build relationships amongst group members in an attempt to establish a secure base.

Research

A potentially confounding variable in the present study was the relationship between IGD facilitators' attachment styles and group members experiences of group climate, session depth and smoothness, and positive and negative affect. Tucker (2016) found that therapists contributed a small but reliable amount to both group cohesion and alliance at different stages in group development, which suggest the plausibility the aforementioned relationship. Relatedly, anxious soldiers have been found to have a positive effect on group cohesion as they emphasize emotions, disclosure, and interdependence (Davidovitz, Mikulincer, Shaver, Ijzak & Popper, 2007). Research on individual therapy has demonstrated a negative relationship between therapist attachment avoidance and client rated alliance (Dunkle & Friedlander, 1996); that therapist attachment anxiety is associated with earlier alliance but later difficulties in forming working alliance (Sauer, Lopez, & Gormley, 2003); and that securely attached therapist obtain better working alliances (Black, Hardy, Turpin, & Parry, 2005). Interestingly, Tyrell, Dozier, Teague and Fallot (1999) found that dissimilarity in attachment strategies between client and therapist (i.e., hyperactivation or deactivation) was related to stronger alliances.

Future studies should extend this research and investigate how, if at all, IGD facilitators' attachment style is associated with group members experiences of group climate, session depth and smoothness and positive and negative affect. This may explain the null findings of the present study. Future studies might also examine the relationship between group member attachment styles and members' perceptions of group leaders' behaviors and leadership styles.

Lastly, future research might also seek to understand if differences exist between IGDs that are stand-alone and those that are paired with a class. As discussed earlier, our participants grew to know each other during class leading up to IGD sessions which may buffered various attachment related behaviors. Future studies might investigate whether or not attachment characteristics manifest differently in IGD that are stand-alone, which is similar to typical group therapy arrangements in that no prior relationships exist between group members.

Conclusions

This study extends our knowledge regarding attachment styles and group processes and outcomes within IGD. We now know that OGMs attachment avoidance predicts individual member's experiences of negative affect. IGD facilitators can use this information to better inform their attunement to various group members' needs as they navigate conflicts and foster relationships of group members.

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APPENDIX

Table 1.
Pearson Correlations Between Group Climate, Affect, and Session Depth and Smoothness

	M	SD	Positive Affect	Negative Affect	Engage.	Avoid.	Conflict	Depth	Smooth.
Positive Affect	35.5	7.86	1	-.147**	.587	-.017**	-.253**	.444**	-.170**
Negative Affect	15.35	5.69		1	-.084**	.195**	.571**	-.165**	.070
Engagement	5.22	.97			1	.076*	-.257**	.467**	-.160**
Avoidance	3.74	1.03				1	.249**	-.155**	.026
Conflict	1.95	1.00					1	-.241**	.127**
Depth	4.77	.68						1	-.425**
Smoothness	3.71	.84							1

Table 2.
Output for HLM Analyses of Group Climate, Affect, and Session Depth and Smoothness and Attachment Style

Effect	Gamma Coefficients	Standard Error	t-Ratio	Df	p-Value
GCQ-S					
Engagement					
Intercept	5.25	.08	62.74	16	<0.001
Act. Anx	-0.05	0.06	-0.082	16	0.043
Act. Avo	0.01	0.06	0.20	16	0.84
Par. Anx	0.00	0.16	0.03	16	0.98
Par. Avo	0.26	0.15	1.73	16	0.11
Conflict					
Intercept	1.96	0.07	27.45	16	<0.001
Act. Anx	0.10	0.06	1.58	16	0.13
Act. Avo	-0.09	0.06	-1.45	16	0.13
Par. Anx	-0.03	0.16	-0.22	16	0.17
Par. Avo	0.10	0.14	0.77	16	0.82
Avoidance					
Intercept	3.83	0.07	51.79	16	<0.001
Act. Anx	0.11	0.07	1.56	16	0.15
Act. Avo	-0.10	0.07	-1.42	16	0.17
Par. Anx	0.21	0.16	1.33	16	0.20
Par. Avo	-0.08	0.13	-0.60	16	0.56
PANAS					
Positive Affect					
Intercept	35.69	0.81	43.94	16	<0.001
Act. Anx	0.29	0.54	0.53	16	
Act. Avo	-0.24	0.66	-0.36	16	
Par. Anx	0.10	1.52	0.07	16	
Par. Avo	1.01	1.39	0.73	16	
Negative Affect					
Intercept	15.67	0.40	39.36	16	<0.001
Act. Anx	-0.40	0.37	-1.07	16	0.30
Act. Avo	-0.30	0.33	-0.92	16	0.37
Par. Anx	-0.89	0.85	-1.05	16	0.31
Par. Avo**	1.92	0.69	2.78	16	0.01
SEQ					
Session Depth					
Intercept	3.57	0.21	17.14	16	<0.001
Act. Anx	0.01	0.05	0.16	16	0.88
Act. Avo	0.03	0.04	0.70	16	0.50
Par. Anx	-0.04	0.21	-0.19	16	0.86
Par. Avo	-0.03	0.11	-0.30	16	0.78
Session Smoothness					
Intercept	3.55	0.22	15.43	16	<0.001
Act. Anx	0.04	0.06	0.57	16	0.58
Act. Avo	0.10	0.06	1.54	16	0.14
Par. Anx	0.30	0.27	1.10	16	0.29
Par. Avo	-0.02	0.21	0.20	16	0.91

Note. SE= standard error; DF= degrees of freedom, $^{**}p < .05$

VITA

Elliott N. DeVore was born in Knoxville, TN to Monica and Don DeVore and raised by many family members. He has one older sibling, Nicholas, and two younger half siblings, Kate and Wyatt. He attended Shannondale, Fountain City and Beaumont Magnet elementary schools, Gresham Middle School, and graduated from Central High School as senior class president. He then attended the University of Tennessee with a B.A. in Psychology in 2011 and received the Torchbearer Award, the university's highest honor given to an undergraduate student. After graduating, Elliott moved to Iowa where he obtained an M.Ed. in Education and Student Affairs and a Graduate Certificate in Social Justice in Higher Education from Iowa State University. He then worked as a Residence Director in the Division of Student Life at the University of San Francisco for three years. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.