During the last three decades, social psychologists have attempted to understand how adult relationships function and to delineate the source of individual differences in the way people relate to others. In the present study, I focus on one source of individual differences—adult attachment style—and examine its association with an important relational process—the experience of trust in a relationship. The study of the attachment—trust link is highly significant, because it brings together two important processes in relationships, each with its own well-developed body of research and theory. Moreover, it provides a theoretical framework to understand how people appraise and react to partner behaviors that reinforce or violate the trust they feel toward him or her, and thereby to explain the construction of the sense of trust in a relationship—what would seem to be a necessary condition for the development of secure, intimate, and satisfactory relationships.

Adult Attachment Style and the Sense of Trust

Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1973) proposes that mental representations of self and others ("attachment working models") formed throughout interactions with attachment figures organize cognitions, affect, and behavior in close relationships. Hazan and Shaver (1987) examined this hypothesis in adult love relationships, using Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall's (1978) typology of attachment style. The secure style, defined by comfort with closeness and interdependence and by confidence in others' love, was associated with happy, intimate, and friendly love relationships. The avoidant style, defined by insecurity in others' intentions and preference for distance, was associated with fear of intimacy and difficulty depending on partners. The anxious—ambivalent style, defined by a strong desire for intimacy together with insecurity about others' responses, was associated with love addiction, passionate love, and fear of being unloved. These findings were replicated in other studies (see Shaver & Hazan, 1993, for a review).

The current study further explores the implications of attachment working models in adult love by focusing on the individual's sense of trust. Trust is one of the most desired qualities in love relationships (Holmes & Rempel, 1989). It is a definitional element of the intimacy component of love (Sternberg, 1986) and a necessary condition for the development of commitment and feelings of security (Holmes & Rempel, 1989). In fact, lack of trust may produce distress, reduce relational rewards, and lead to relationship dissolution (Holmes & Rempel, 1989).

Several definitions of interpersonal trust have been proposed (e.g., Deutsch, 1973; Rotter, 1980; Scanzoni, 1979). Rempel, Holmes, and Zanna (1985) reviewed these definitions and concluded that trust involves (a) the appraisal of partners as reliable and predictable, (b) the belief that partners are concerned with one's needs and can be counted on in times of need, and (c) feelings of confidence in the strength of the relationship. Rempel et al. (1985) labeled these components partner's predictability, partner's dependability, and faith in the future of the relationship. With the development of theory and research, trust is now defined only on the basis of dependability and faith (Holmes & Rempel, 1989; Murray & Holmes, 1993; Sorrentino, Holmes, Hanna, & Sharp, 1995).

The above definition of trust implies that trust is an integral part of secure attachment. The dependency component of trust refers to the confidence one has that a partner in a close relationship will be concerned about and responsive to one's needs, goals, and desires. Thus, this component of trust includes positive expectations about partner availability as well as about his or her responsiveness and caring. All of these expectations are the core components of secure persons' working models of others (Shaver & Hazan, 1993). These persons believe in the avail-
ability, sensitivity, and responsiveness of others and thereby may experience high levels of trust toward them.

In support of this view, studies have found that a secure attachment style is positively related to the level of trust a person feels in love relationships (e.g., Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Feeney & Noller, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Levy & Davis, 1988; Mikulincer & Erev, 1991; Simpson, 1990), to the trust felt by his or her partner, and to his or her generalized sense of interpersonal trust (Collins & Read, 1990). In addition, secure persons have been found to maintain high levels of trust over time, whereas insecure persons have been found to show a deterioration of trust over time (Keelan, Dion, & Dion, 1994). Beyond stylistic differences, persons from the three attachment styles report having experienced more trust in particular relationships wherein they feel securely attached than in "insecure" relationships (Baldwin, Keelan, Fehr, Enns, & Koh-Rangarajoo, 1996).

The problem with the above studies is that they do not tap the complex and multifaceted nature of the sense of trust. In fact, people may differ not only in the level of "felt trust" but also in the meanings they attach to trust, the emotions they experience in trust-related episodes, and their cognitive and behavioral reactions to these episodes. Furthermore, a narrow focus of research does not take into account that working models of attachment contain, at least, four components (Collins & Read, 1994): (a) autobiographical memories of social interactions, (b) expectations about self or others in interpersonal situations, (c) goals that guide one's responses in social situations, and (d) strategies aimed at attaining these goals and at regulating the distress produced by lack of goal attainment (Collins & Read, 1994; Shaver, Collins, & Clark, 1996). These components may be relevant to the appraisal, processing, and reactions to trust-related experiences and might underlie attachment-style differences in the sense of trust.

With regard to the expectation component of working models, Baldwin, Fehr, Keedian, Seidel, and Thompson (1993) reported attachment-style differences in the outcomes expected in response to trusting a partner. In the first study, secure persons expected a hypothetical partner to respond more positively to situations in which they trusted that partner than insecure persons. In the second study, reaction times in a lexical decision task revealed attachment-style differences in the outcomes that are automatically activated in the working memory upon the priming of a trust-related context. Whereas secure persons reacted more quickly to a positive outcome word (care), insecure persons reacted more quickly to a negative outcome word (hurt). These findings were replicated and extended by Baldwin et al. (1996) in their analysis of relationships that people chose as exemplars of secure and insecure patterns.

To date, there is no published study that examined the manifestations of the memory, goal, and strategy components of attachment working models in the sense of trust. This is the original contribution of the current study. Instead of asking whether people differing in attachment style differ in the level of trust they feel in a relationship, I asked whether they differ in the processing of trust-related memories, the goals they attach to trust-related experiences, and the strategies they use in dealing with betrayal of trust. This is the first systematic study that adopts a multifaceted approach in assessing the manifestations of attachment working model components in trust-relevant memories, goals, and strategies.

Trust-Related Memories

The first set of hypotheses concerns trust-related memories. Collins and Read (1994) and Main, Kaplan, and Cassidy (1985) claimed that people differing in attachment style differ in their memories of attachment-related episodes. According to Collins and Read, secure persons should recall more positive and less negative relationship episodes than insecure persons. Indeed, Baldwin et al. (1996) found that positive exemplars of relationships were more available and accessible for secure persons, whereas negative exemplars were more available and accessible for avoidant and anxious-ambivalent persons.

On this basis, I hypothesized that attachment groups would differ in the accessibility (the easiness with which a memory is retrieved) of trust-related autobiographical memories. For secure persons, their positive working model of others (Shaver & Hazan, 1993) would promote a clear-cut pattern of memories. These persons would have more accessibility to memories of positive trust-related experiences (episodes in which they felt that partners were responsive and caring) than to memories of negative trust-related experiences (episodes in which they felt a betrayal of trust).

For insecure persons, however, one cannot make simple predictions. On the one hand, the fact that both avoidant and anxious-ambivalent persons hold negative working models of others (Shaver & Hazan, 1993) may bias their memories and make episodes of betrayal of trust more accessible and positive trust-related episodes less accessible.

On the other hand, there are some findings that complicated this prediction. First, although the uncertainty inherent in the working models of anxious-ambivalent persons (Collins & Read, 1994; Main et al., 1985) may lead to mistrust and accessibility of negative trust-related memories, it could also increase the accessibility of positive memories. These persons may be uncertain about the extent to which partners are available and responsive and then may be able to access both negative and positive trust-related memories. Second, avoidant people tend to repress negative memories (Main et al., 1985; Mikulincer & Orbach, 1995), which, in turn, may reduce the accessibility to negative trust-related memories. Thus, one can predict that avoidant persons would have low accessibility to both negative and positive trust-related memories and anxious-ambivalent persons would have high accessibility to these two types of memories.

Trust-Related Goals

The second set of hypotheses concerns the interaction goals that may be related to the sense of trust. According to Collins and Read (1994), people differing in attachment style differ in the goals they pursue in social interactions. Secure persons' experiences with caring and responsive attachment figures teach them that attachment behaviors are rewarding, that they can rely on the attachment system during social interactions, and that they can organize interpersonal behaviors around the basic goal of the attachment system: proximity maintenance (Shaver &
ATTACHMENT AND TRUST

Hazan, 1993). On this basis, Collins and Read (1994) claimed that secure persons construe their interaction goals around the search for intimacy and closeness to significant others. The positive feelings of secure persons that they are loved by significant others led them to the conviction that intimate relationships are rewarding and foster the desire to become intimate with people (Mikulincer & Erev, 1991).

Insecure persons' experiences with nonresponsive others teach them that attachment behaviors are painful (Shaver & Hazan, 1993) and that other interaction goals and behaviors should be developed as defenses against the distress caused by attachment experiences (Bowlby, 1988). In response to this distress, anxious-ambivalent persons seem to construe their interaction goals around the hyperactivation of the attachment system and the unfulfilled need for security (Collins & Read, 1994; Mikulincer & Nachshon, 1991). These persons attempt to minimize distance from attachment figures and fight for conquering "felt security" through clinging and hypervigilant responses (Main et al., 1985; Mikulincer, Florian, & Tolmacz, 1990). They desire intimate relationships, but their hyperactivation of the attachment system may lead them to seek enmeshed love as a way of increasing felt security (Collins & Read, 1994). In contrast, avoidant persons seem to react to attachment distress by organizing their interaction goals around the deactivation of the attachment system and the search for autonomy and control (Collins & Read, 1994). These persons take distance from attachment figures and attempt to attain a sense of self-reliance as a means for compensating their reluctance to rely on their partners (Bowlby, 1988).

I hypothesize that the above attachment-style differences in interactions goals would be directly reflected in the sense of trust. Specifically, the intimacy goal would be related to secure persons' sense of trust. These persons hold a positive sense of trust (Shaver & Hazan, 1993), which may encourage them to actualize their desire for intimacy in a particular relationship. Their sense of trust may act as an internalized "secure base" from which they can confidently take the risks associated with the expression of personal information (e.g., feelings, fantasies). For secure persons, episodes that validate their sense of trust would thus contribute to the formation and maintenance of intimacy in close relationships, whereas betrayal of trust may raise concerns about the personal vulnerability inherent in intimacy.

For anxious-ambivalent persons, security seeking would be a central component of their sense of trust. These persons hold a negative sense of trust (Shaver & Hazan, 1993), which can reactivate their attachment insecurity and their defensive hyperactivation of the attachment system. That is, anxious-ambivalent persons' negative trust-related memories and expectations may activate concerns about security and security-seeking behaviors. Then, episodes in which partners behave in a responsive way may be appraised as contributing to security feelings, whereas betrayal of trust may be appraised as a threat to these feelings.

For avoidant persons, concerns about control would be central components of their sense of trust. These persons also hold a negative sense of trust (Shaver & Hazan, 1993), which may reactivate their attachment insecurity and their defensive deactivation of the attachment system and may lead them to search for personal control. For these persons, this pursuit of control seems to be necessary to validate their sense of self-reliance. Moreover, this pursuit seems to be necessary to ensure the attainment of desired outcomes in the absence of confidence that the partner will voluntarily respond to their needs. On this basis, avoidant persons may perceive each episode in which a partner is responsive as a validation of the control they exert over partner behaviors, whereas betrayal of trust may raise doubts about the control they have in the relationship.

Coping With the Violation of Trust

The third set of hypotheses concerns the ways by which people deal with negative trust-related experiences. Attachment theory and research suggest that attachment groups differ in the way they manage distress (e.g., Collins & Read, 1994; Mikulincer et al., 1990). Secure persons' interactions with supportive and caring attachment figures teach them that the attachment system is an effective device for attaining comfort and relief (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998). That is, secure persons seem to learn to manage distress through the basic guidelines of the attachment system: acknowledgment of distress, engagement in constructive actions, and turning to others for support (Bowlby, 1988; Mikulincer & Florian, 1998).

In contrast, insecure persons learn that attachment behaviors are ineffective regulatory devices and that other defensive strategies should be developed (Bowlby, 1988). According to Bowlby, the strategies developed in response to attachment-related distress (hyperactivation or deactivation of the attachment system) are generalized to the management of other sources of distress, of which the negative infant-caregiver interaction is a prototypical situation. In this way, anxious-ambivalent persons' hyperactivation of their attachment to painful others and their excessive focus on attachment-related distress (Bowlby, 1988) may result in a hyperactivation of distress cues. These persons seem to direct attention to distress in a hypervigilant manner, to mentally ruminate on its causes and meanings, and to deliberate on related negative thoughts (Shaver & Hazan, 1993). Accordingly, avoidant persons' tendency to detach from attachment distress may result in behavioral and cognitive distancing from distress cues. Specifically, avoidant people seem to deal with distress by suppressing bad thoughts, inhibiting display of distress, repressing painful memories, and escaping from any confrontation with problems (Shaver & Hazan, 1993).

These patterns of coping have been found in response to (a) missile attacks during the Gulf War (Mikulincer, Florian, & Weller, 1993), (b) a demanding military training (Mikulincer & Florian, 1995), (c) the process of divorce (Birnbaum, Orr, Mikulincer, & Florian, 1998), and (d) parenthood-related problems (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998). More important, they have been found in the ways people deal with relationship conflict and negative partner behavior (e.g., Levy & Davis, 1988; Pistole, 1989; Scharfe & Bartholomew, 1995).

In my terms, the violation of the sense of trust is an interpersonal stressor, an exemplar of what Scharfe and Bartholomew (1995) called "potentially destructive acts committed by romantic partners." As such, it may produce distress and activate habitual ways of coping. On this basis, I hypothesized that people differing in attachment style would deal with negative trust-
related experiences in the same way they deal with other stressors. Whereas secure persons would rely on constructive strategies (e.g., talking with partner), avoidant persons would rely on distancing strategies (e.g., ignoring the problem, taking distance from partner), and anxious-ambivalent persons would engage in ruminative worry about the future of the relationship and their bad destiny.

The Current Study

The current series of studies examined the associations between attachment style and trust-related memories, goals, and strategies. In examining these issues, I used newly developed, nonobvious measures and cross-validated the findings through different research techniques. Study 1 examined attachment-style differences in the accessibility of trust-related memories. Studies 2–5 focused on attachment-style differences in trust-related goals and strategies. Whereas Study 2 used open-ended probes, Study 3 used a diary methodology, and Studies 4 and 5 used a lexical decision task. The hypotheses were as follows:

1. Secure persons would have more accessibility to positive trust-related memories than to negative trust-related memories; avoidant persons would have relatively low accessibility to both negative and positive trust-related memories; and anxious-ambivalent persons would have relatively high accessibility to these two types of memories.

2. Secure persons' sense of trust would be more related to the intimacy goal, anxious-ambivalent persons' sense of trust to the security goal, and avoidant persons' sense of trust to the control goal.

3. Secure persons would deal with negative trust-related experiences by talking with partner, anxious-ambivalent persons by engaging in ruminative worry, and avoidant persons by taking distance from partner.

Study 1

Study 1 examined the hypothesis concerning attachment-style differences in the accessibility of trust-related memories. For this purpose, participants were asked to recall positive and negative trust-related memories. The response time (RT) for the retrieval of a memory was recorded as a measure of cognitive accessibility (Davis, 1987). Participants also rated the emotions that a memory aroused in order to explore the affective quality of trust-related memories.

Method

Participants. Seventy undergraduate students from Bar-Ilan University (46 women and 24 men, ranging in age from 21 to 34, \( m_{\text{age}} = 23 \)) participated in the study without any monetary reward.

Materials and procedure. Participants were tested individually. They were told that they would participate in a study on social cognitions. The questionnaires were given in a random order.

Attachment style was assessed by asking participants to read Hazan and Shaver’s (1987) three descriptions of attachment styles and to endorse the one that best described their feelings.1 Fifty-five percent of the participants \( (n = 39) \) classified themselves as securely attached, 32% as avoidant \( (n = 22) \), and 13% as anxious-ambivalent \( (n = 9) \).2

In the memory task, the experimenter, who was blind to participant attachment style, told participants that they would be asked to recall six well-defined personal experiences and that when an experience came to mind, they should simply press a button and describe that experience briefly in writing. The six to-be-recalled experiences consisted of three positive trust-related episodes (trust validation) and three negative trust-related episodes (trust violation). Each of the experiences consisted of an episode in which either the father, the mother, or a romantic partner was involved. Instructions for each of the three positive memories were worded as follows: “Try to recall an episode in which your [(father/mother/romantic partner)] increased the trust you felt toward [him/her].” Instructions for each of the three negative memories were worded as follows: “Try to recall an episode in which [father/mother/romantic partner] behaved in such a way that [he/she] violated the trust you felt toward [him/her].”

Each order of the six requested memories was randomized across participants.

On completing the memory task, participants were told to rate the extent to which they felt happy, satisfied, hopeful, sad, worried, and angry in each recalled episode. These emotions were rated on 6-point bipolar scales, ranging from not at all \((1)\) to very much \((6)\). A factor analysis of the six emotions revealed two main factors, which explained 73% of the variance. The first factor consisted of the three negative emotions \((Cronbach’s \alpha = .72)\); the second included the three positive emotions \((Cronbach’s \alpha = .75)\). On this basis, two scores were computed for each memory by averaging items that loaded high in a factor.

A significant, but moderate, inverse correlation was found between these two scores, \(r (68) = - .32, p < .05\). For each participant, two accessibility scores were computed by separately averaging Ks of positive and negative memories. Pearson correlations were high between the three positive memories \((.45 \text{ to } .59)\) as well as between the three negative memories \((.51 \text{ to } .62)\). Four emotion scores were computed by separately averaging the two emotion scores across positive and negative memories. Correlations were high for positive memories \((.41 \text{ to } .55)\) for positive emotions; \(r (43) \text{ to } .50\) for negative emotions) and for negative memories \((.57 \text{ to } .60)\) for positive emotions; \(r (54) \text{ to } .58\) for negative emotions.

Results and Discussion

Data were analyzed by two-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) for attachment style (secure, avoidant, anxious-ambivalent) and valence of trust-related memories (positive, negative). The last variable was a within-subject repeated measurement. Cognitive accessibility, positive emotion, and negative emotion

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1 Participants also answered the 15-item three-factor Attachment Scale (see Mikulincer et al., 1990, for details) and were assigned to the attachment style that had the highest value on the scale. In all the studies combined, less than 10% of the classification technique pairs were mismatches. In cases of mismatches, participants were assigned to the style that they themselves chose. Statistical analysis revealed that the exclusion of mismatches from the sample did not change the results of any study.

2 No gender difference in the distribution of attachment styles was found in any of the studies. ANOVAs revealed no significant interaction between gender and attachment style. Results of no study changed when gender was introduced as a covariate.
Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations of Retrieval Time and Emotional Reactions According to Valence of Trust-Related Memories and Attachment Style (Study 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Secure</th>
<th>Avoidant</th>
<th>Anxious-ambivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retrieval time (in s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive memories</td>
<td>9.41, 7.06</td>
<td>18.38, 10.43</td>
<td>14.24, 11.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative memories</td>
<td>14.93, 8.76</td>
<td>9.54, 7.91</td>
<td>9.67, 11.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of positive emotions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive memories</td>
<td>3.53, 1.08</td>
<td>1.92, 0.75</td>
<td>3.78, 1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative memories</td>
<td>1.18, 0.28</td>
<td>1.12, 0.26</td>
<td>1.15, 0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength of negative emotions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive memories</td>
<td>1.23, 0.26</td>
<td>1.20, 0.37</td>
<td>1.18, 0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative memories</td>
<td>2.01, 0.86</td>
<td>1.89, 0.85</td>
<td>2.74, 0.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Within each row, means with different subscripts are significantly different.

were the dependent variables. Relevant means and standard deviations are presented in Table 1.

The ANOVA for cognitive accessibility revealed a significant interaction between attachment style and valence of memories, F(2, 67) = 12.13, p < .01. Tests for simple main effects for repeated measures revealed that secure persons were the quickest to retrieve positive trust-related memories, and that avoidant and anxious-ambivalent retrieved negative memories quicker than secure persons (see Table 1). In addition, whereas secure persons showed higher accessibility of positive than negative memories, the two insecure groups retrieved negative memories quicker than positive memories.

The ANOVA for positive emotion revealed an expected significant main effect for valence of memories, F(1, 67) = 226.22, p < .01, with positive trust-related memories promoting more intense positive affect (M = 3.06) than negative memories (M = 1.16). The interaction effect was significant, F(2, 67) = 17.58, p < .01. Tests for simple main effects for repeated measures revealed no difference for negative memories. However, secure and anxious-ambivalent persons reported more intense positive affect than avoidant persons when retrieving positive memories (see Table 1).

The ANOVA for negative emotion also revealed an expected significant main effect for valence of memories, F(1, 67) = 54.91, p < .01, with negative trust-related memories promoting more intense negative affect (M = 2.06) than positive memories (M = 1.21). In addition, the interaction effect approximated significance, F(2, 67) = 2.81, p = .06. No meaningful attachment-style difference was found for positive trust-related memories. However, anxious-ambivalent persons reported having experienced more intense negative emotions than secure and avoidant persons upon the retrieval of negative memories (see Table 1).

To assess whether cognitive accessibility accounted for the observed attachment-style differences in emotion scores, two-way ANOVAs were performed on negative and positive emotions with accessibility as a covariate. Findings indicated that the introduction of accessibility did not change the pattern of attachment-style differences in emotion scores observed in the original ANOVAs. That is, the data did not provide any support for a cognitive mediation of these differences.

The ANOVA for negative emotion also revealed an expected significant main effect for attachment style, F(2, 67) = 10.43, p < .01. Tests for simple main effects for repeated measures revealed attachment-style differences in emotional accessibility of trust-related memories. Whereas secure persons had more accessible memories of trust-validation episodes, avoidant and anxious-ambivalent persons showed more accessibility of memories of trust-violation episodes. The findings also qualified the affective nature of these memories. Whereas secure persons reacted emotionally mainly to positive trust-related memories, anxious-ambivalent persons showed relatively strong emotions in response to both positive and negative memories, and avoidant persons displayed weak emotional reactions to any type of memory. These differences fit Mikulincer and Orbach’s (1995) findings on the emotional architecture of attachment groups.

Taken as a whole, the findings reflect an integration of the alternative predictions presented in the introduction. On the one hand, accessibility findings may reflect the underlying action of working model of others, which might have biased secure persons’ memories toward positive trust-related episodes and insecure persons’ memories toward negative trust-related episodes. On the other hand, findings on affective ratings reflect the action of other components of attachment working model. For avoidant persons, their tendency to deactivate distress-related cues might have counteracted the arousal of negative trust memories by suppressing the distressing emotions related to these memories. For anxious-ambivalent persons, their dependence on others and wish for security might have led them to react with intense emotions not only to negative trust memories but also to positive trust memories. It seems that these components fail to affect the cognitive accessibility to trust memories but

3 Similar patterns of findings were found when analyses were separately performed for each of the six recalled events and when the order of the questionnaires was entered as a factor. No significant order effect and no significant interaction between order and attachment style was found, implying that participants’ memories were not influenced by answering the attachment style scale.
make an important contribution to the affective reactions of insecure people to these memories.

Study 2

Study 2 examined the hypotheses concerning attachment-style differences in trust-related goals and strategies. Participants frequently reported on the benefits they attached to trusting a romantic partner as well as on their reactions to betrayal of trust. Secure persons were predicted to report more on intimacy-related gains; avoidant persons, on control-related gains; and anxious-ambivalent persons, on security-related gains. In addition, secure persons were predicted to react to betrayal of trust with attempts to talk with partner; avoidant persons, with attempts to take distance from partner; and anxious-ambivalent persons, with engagement in ruminative worry. Study 2 also attempted to replicate previous findings on the association between attachment style and level of trust in love relationships.

Method

Participants. Seventy-four students from Bar-Ilan University (43 women and 31 men, ranging in age from 21 to 45, mdn = 23) participated in the study without any monetary reward. All the participants reported that they were involved at the time of the study in a serious (at least 6 months) love relationship (26% were married). 4

Materials and procedure. Participants were tested in groups of 15-20 individuals and received the questionnaires in a random order. Attachment style was assessed using the scale described in Study 1. Fifty percent of the participants (n = 37) classified themselves as securely attached, 34% as avoidant (n = 25), and 16% as anxious-ambivalent (n = 12).

Level of trust in love relationships was assessed by a Hebrew version of Rempel et al.'s (1985) Trust Scale. This self-report scale consisted of 16 items designed to tap three domains of trust in love relationships: predictability, dependability, and faith. Four items assess the perceived predictability of partner behavior. Five items focus on the belief in partner availability in times of need. Seven items tap the perceived strength of the relationship. Participants answered how much each item described their current love relationship in a bipolar 6-point scale, ranging from not at all (1) to very much (6). In the current sample, alpha coefficients for the trust subscales were adequate (ranging from .72 to .79). On this basis, three scores were computed by averaging items from each subscale.

The experience of trust was assessed by a semistructured interview. Participants were asked to freely respond, in writing, to two open-ended probes: (a) Describe what are the gains and benefits related to the experience of trust in close relationships, and (b) describe your responses when your partner violates the trust you give to him or her. Participants were told to write until they felt they had completely described their beliefs, feelings, and behaviors. Participants were given no definition of trust, and no data were collected on personal definitions of this construct.

Answers were categorized by two psychology students (unaware of participants' attachment style), who were trained on the coding system and the meaning of the coded categories. These judges read professional literature on trust, interpersonal goals, and coping behaviors. Then, they participated in a focus group, wherein they discussed, together with me and other psychology students, the personal concerns and goals related to trust and the possible responses to betrayal of trust. Finally, they coded, together with me, responses written by students who did not participate in the study until they were confident about how to classify responses in the various categories.

Judges independently read participants' descriptions and recorded verbatim every statement. Then, for the trust-related gains probe, they coded whether participants referred in their answers to goals of intimacy, security, or control. For the trust-violation probe, judges coded whether participants mentioned responses of denial, distancing from partner, rationalization of partner behavior, talking with partner about the situation, and engagement in ruminative worry. For each participant, judges coded whether he or she mentioned or not (1 or 0) a given category. The percentage of items that judges congruently allocated into the same category ranged from 86% to 95% (kappa coefficients ranged from .60 to .67). Disagreements were easily resolved.

Results and Discussion

Trust level. A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) on the three trust subscales yielded a significant effect for attachment style, F(4, 142) = 4.77, p < .01. ANOVAs revealed that this effect was significant in the dependability, F(2, 71) = 4.44, p < .05, and faith subscales, F(2, 71) = 10.94, p < .01. As predicted, Scheffé post hoc tests indicated that secure participants scored higher in the dependability (M = 4.65) and faith subscales (M = 4.85) than anxious-ambivalent (M = 4.05, M = 4.08) and avoidant participants (M = 4.07, M = 4.20).

Trust-related gains. A log-linear two-way ANOVA (SAS FUCNAT procedure) for attachment and gain category revealed a significant interaction, χ²(4, N = 74) = 12.25, p < .01. Chi-square tests revealed that all the coded trust-related gains were significantly related to attachment style (see Table 2). Whereas increase of intimacy was most frequently mentioned by secure persons as a trust-related gain, control attainment was most frequently mentioned by avoidant persons, and security attainment was most frequently mentioned by anxious-ambivalent persons (see frequencies in Table 2).

Trust-related coping strategies. A log-linear two-way ANOVA (SAS FUCNAT procedure) for attachment and strategy category revealed a significant interaction, χ²(8, N = 74) = 9.74, p < .05. Chi-square tests revealed that the categories of talking, distancing, and worrying were significantly related to attachment style (see Table 2). No significant association was found between attachment style and categories of denial and rationalization. Table 2 shows that talking with partner was most frequently reported by secure persons, taking distance from partner was most frequently mentioned by avoidant persons, and ruminative worry was most frequently reported by anxious-ambivalent persons.

Trust level and trust-related gains and coping strategies. Because the above attachment-style differences may have resulted from differences in the level of trust, it is important to examine the association between level of trust and trust-related gains and coping strategies. For this purpose, the sample was divided in three groups according to the thirds of the distribution of each trust variable (predictability, dependability, and faith), and chi-square tests were computed between each of these variables and the endorsement of each category of trust-related gains and coping strategies. Chi-square tests revealed no significant association between level of trust and endorsement of specific trust-

4 No significant effect was found for marital status.
related gains and coping strategies. That is, although the level of trust was related to attachment style, it was not directly related to the goals people attach to trust and the way they cope with trust violation.

Conclusions. The findings delineated the link between attachment style and the sense of trust. First, in a replication of past results, secure persons reported more trust in their relationships than insecure persons. Second, the gains related to the experience of trust seemed to fit the goal component of their working models: Secure persons focused on intimacy increase, anxious-ambivalent persons emphasized security seeking, and avoidant persons were more concerned with control attainment. Third, the ways by which people cope with trust-violation episodes seemed to fit the strategy component of their working models. People relied on their habitual ways of coping when dealing with trust-violation events: Secure persons adopted a constructive attitude (talking with partner), avoidant persons tended to take distance from partner, and anxious-ambivalent persons engaged in ruminative worry. Note, however, that the data were collected using open-ended probes. Study 3 explored trust-related goals and coping strategies using more standardized measures.

Study 3

Study 3 attempted to replicate findings of Study 2 using a different data collection technique ("diary" methodology) and more standardized self-report measures. Participants wrote a diary over a 3-week period. For each day, they reported whether a trust-validation event or a trust-violation event had occurred in their love relationship. Upon the occurrence of each one of these events, participants rated its impact on trust-related goals. Upon the occurrence of a trust-violation event, they reported the coping strategies they used in dealing with it.

In addition, data were collected on a person's appraisal of the reported events along dimensions of importance, stability, and partner intentionality. In this way, I attempted to further refine the examination of the way people differing in attachment style appraise trust-related events. Because of their positive working model of others and the adoption of constructive coping strategies in dealing with betrayal of trust, one might expect that secure persons would emphasize the importance, stability, and globality of positive trust episodes and dismiss the importance, stability, and globality of negative trust events. Moreover, they would emphasize partner responsibility in positive trust events and dismiss his or her involvement in negative trust events. This pattern of appraisal could reinforce secure persons' positive working model of others and maintain their confidence in partner responsiveness despite negative trust episodes.

Anxious-ambivalent persons who hold a negative working model of others (e.g., Baldwin et al., 1993; Collins, 1996) and tend to hyperactivate distress-related cues would show an opposite pattern of appraisal. This appraisal might reinforce their sense of distrust and hyperactivate concerns about betrayal of trust. For avoidant persons, one might expect that their negative working model of others would promote a pattern of appraisal similar to that of anxious-ambivalent persons. However, their tendency to deactivate distress-related cues would lead them to dismiss the importance of negative trust episodes.

Method

Participants. Thirty students from Bar-Ilan University (17 women and 13 men, ranging in age from 22 to 31, \( \text{mdn} = 23 \)) participated in the study as part of the requirements of their bachelor's degree. They reported being involved in a serious love relationship (all of them were single).

Materials and procedure. In a preliminary stage, 250 students filled out the Attachment Style Scale (see Study 1) during lecture time. Fifty-two percent of the sample classified themselves as secure (\( n = 130 \)), 31% as avoidant (\( n = 77 \)), and 17% as anxious-ambivalent (\( n = 43 \)). From those who agreed to complete a diary for a 3-week period, 30 participants, 10 secure, 10 avoidant, and 10 anxious-ambivalent, were randomly selected (within each group) to participate in the study. Refusal rate was low (13%) and did not significantly differ across attachment groups.

Participants were asked to complete two questionnaires every evening, over a 3-week period. In the first questionnaire, they reported at the top of a page whether they experienced in that day an event in which their partner behaved in such a way that increased the trust they felt toward...
him or her. Participants reported on a wide variety of trust-validation events, such as “My partner shared with me problems [he/she] had at work” and “My partner fulfilled [his/her] plans for the summer.” Instructions and scales were identical to those of the first questionnaire. Participants answered the nine above-described items, as well as nine other items on affect regulation. Items, constructed from sentences collected in Study 2, assessed the extent to which participants talked with partner (3 items), distanced themselves from partner (3 items), and engaged in ruminative worry (3 items) in response to the reported event. Interitem correlations in each coping category were high (from .46 to .71), indicating adequate reliability. On this basis, three coping scores were computed by averaging items in each category.

Results and Discussion

Participant’s scores were averaged across the entire 3-week period and analyzed by one-way ANOVAs for attachment style. The number of trust-validation events and the number of trust-violation events that a participant reported were counted as two additional variables.

Trust-validation events. As can be seen in Table 3, ANOVAs yielded a significant effect for attachment style in most of the questions, with the exception of intimacy goal and globality attribution (see Fs in Table 3). Scheffé tests indicated that secure persons reported more trust-validation events and were more likely to perceive these events as stable and reflecting partner intentions and personality than avoidant and anxious-ambivalent persons (see Table 3). In addition, secure and anxious-ambivalent persons perceived trust-violation events as more important than avoidant persons. Finally, anxious-ambivalent persons were the most likely to appraise the importance and impact of these events on feelings of security, whereas avoidant persons were the most likely to deal with these events by talking with partner.

Conclusions. With the exception of intimacy, findings about trust-related goals and coping strategies were similar to those of Study 2. They indicated that the way people experienced daily trust-related events fits the goal and strategy components of their working models. The lack of a significant effect of attachment style on intimacy goal was at odds with predictions, and it is discussed in the General Discussion section, after relevant findings of Study 4 are presented.

Findings also seemed to support the finding of Study 2 that secure persons felt more trust than insecure persons. First, attachment-style differences were found in the amount of reported trust-related events. Whereas secure persons reported the highest amount of trust-violation events, insecure persons reported the highest amount of trust-violation events. Second, attachment-style differences were found in the way people appraised trust-related events. Secure persons appraised trust-validation events, but not trust-violation ones, as important, stable, and reflecting partner personality. The heavy weight secure persons attach to trust-validation events and the concomitant dismissal of trust-violation events might serve as a means for maintaining their sense of trust despite the occurrence of negative partner behaviors (Murray & Holmes, 1993). In contrast, the opposite profile observed among insecure persons might maintain and reinforce their basic sense of distrust. However, note that all these conclusions are based on persons’ self-reports, which might be influenced by response style or social desirability bias. These problems are addressed in Studies 4–5.

The above interpretation implies that people differing in attachment style biased their attributions of trust-related episodes. However, it may be that secure and insecure participants reported on qualitatively different episodes of trust. Thus, the findings may not reflect differences in interpretation, but rather differences in the objective characteristics of the experienced episodes of trust. Unfortunately, the brief descriptions provided by participants prevented the coding of the properties of the episodes. Further research should collect more qualitative and observational data on trust-related episodes.

Study 4

Study 4 assessed attachment-style differences in trust-related goals, while addressing problems identified in Study 3. Participants performed a lexical decision task (Meyer & Schvaneveldt, 1971). They read a string of letters and tried to identify as quickly as possible whether it was a word or not. In this study, the target words were trust-related goals (intimacy, security, and control) and they were embedded within trust-relevant or trust-irrelevant context sentences.

Two past findings highlight the suitability of a lexical decision task for exploring the cognitive structure underlying a person’s sense of trust. First, research found a context-relatedness effect: RTs for identifying target words are quicker when these words are primed by semantically related context sentences (e.g., Sta-
Table 3
Means and Standard Deviations of Dependent Variables According to Attachment Style and Valence of Trust-Related Episodes (Study 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Secure</th>
<th>Avoidant</th>
<th>Anxious-ambivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust-validation events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of events</td>
<td>7.50a</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>4.60b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on mood</td>
<td>4.58c</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>3.06a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on relationship</td>
<td>5.27f</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>3.95a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability attribution</td>
<td>5.41j</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>3.52a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globality attribution</td>
<td>4.61b</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>4.42a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner’s intentionality</td>
<td>4.91a</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>3.72a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner’s internality</td>
<td>5.33i</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>3.71a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimacy goal</td>
<td>5.22n</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>5.14a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security goal</td>
<td>3.75o</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>3.37a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control goal</td>
<td>3.87p</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>5.44a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust-violation events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of events</td>
<td>2.10s</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>3.70a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on mood</td>
<td>2.82t</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>2.41a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on relationship</td>
<td>2.71u</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>2.26a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability attribution</td>
<td>2.62r</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>4.14a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globality attribution</td>
<td>2.91q</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>2.50a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner’s intentionality</td>
<td>2.67p</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>2.38a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner’s internality</td>
<td>2.65m</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>3.54a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimacy goal</td>
<td>4.90l</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>4.91a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security goal</td>
<td>3.39k</td>
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<td>Control goal</td>
<td>3.42k</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>4.63a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with partner</td>
<td>4.51n</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>2.95a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distancing from partner</td>
<td>2.80n</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>4.23a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruminative worry</td>
<td>2.35l</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Within each row, means with different subscripts are significantly different.  
†p < .10 (marginally significant). *p < .05. **p < .01.

Method

Participants. Thirty participants (10 secure, 10 avoidant, and 10 anxious) who did not participate in Study 3 were randomly chosen from the pool of 250 students described in Study 3. The sample consisted of 18 women and 12 men ranging in age from 20 to 34 (median = 23).

Materials and procedure. The lexical decision task was performed on an individual basis, and it was described as a social cognition task.

The task was programmed on the basis of apparatus, procedure, and stimuli used by Baldwin et al. (1993). It was run on a 386-SX computer, with an SVGA color monitor. Brightness and contrasts were set somewhat low, and the target stimuli were displayed in light gray letters. The context sentences were displayed in white lettering on a black background.

For the current study, four context sentences and eight target stimuli were constructed. Two of the sentences were trust-relevant sentences and were adapted from Rempel et al.’s (1985) Trust Scale ("I count on my partner to be concerned with things that are important to me" and "I rely on my partner to keep the promises that my partner makes to me"). The other two sentences were trust-irrelevant sentences, which were matched for number of words and length with the trust-relevant sentences ("I buy a book that received good critiques in yesterday’s newspaper"). The eight target stimuli were constructed as follows: Three stimuli were Hebrew words that reflect trust-related goals (intimacy, security, and control). One stimulus was a noninterpersonal, neutral Hebrew word (operation) and served as a control for the time required to identify a word stimulus. Finally, four nonwords were generated by taking common Hebrew verbs and nouns (e.g., thinking) and changing one letter (e.g., linking). These nonwords were matched for number of characters with target words. In this way, there were 32 context sentence—target pairs, which were presented twice, for a total of 64 trials. Trials were randomly ordered across participants.

5 The Hebrew words used in the lexical decision task in Study 4 were kira, which means closeness; shlita, which means control; and bitahon, which means security.
Participants worked at their own pace. They were first given nine practice trials with different words and nonwords from those of the experimental trials. In each trial, a letter string was displayed on the computer screen and participants were asked to judge as quickly as possible whether it was a word or nonword. They initiated each trial by pressing the space bar and responded by pressing the ‘‘1’’ on the keyboard number pad if they thought that the letter string was a word or the ‘‘2’’ if they thought that the letter string was a nonword.

Before beginning the experimental trials, participants were told that ‘‘to make this task a little more difficult’’ they would do a second task at the same time. This second task involved reading some sentences and trying to remember them for later. Then, each trial consisted of a rapid presentation of the context sentence followed by the presentation of a letter string. Each context sentence was displayed one word at a time on the computer screen at a rate of 600 ms per word. After a 1,000-ms pause, the sentence was followed by one of the target letter strings, presented for 1,500 ms, which participants were to identify as either a word or a nonword. After participants pressed either ‘‘1’’ or ‘‘2’’ on the number pad, the letter string vanished and, after a 5-sec pause, the next trial began.

Results and Discussion

For each person, RTs were averaged according to type of sentence (trust-related or -irrelevant) and type of target stimuli (trust-related goals, neutral word, or nonword). RTs for trust-related goals (only correct responses) were analyzed by a three-way ANOVA for attachment style, type of sentence, and type of goal. The two last variables were within-subject repeated variables. The RTs for nonwords and neutral words in each context sentence were introduced as covariates in the analyses.

The ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for type of context sentence. $F(1, 27) = 32.34, p < .01$, with quicker RTs for trust-relevant sentences ($M = 621.66$) than for trust-irrelevant ones ($M = 667.87$). This difference implies the existence of a context-relatedness effect, by which RTs for trust-related goal words were facilitated by sentences that placed these words in a meaningful trust context.

The ANOVA also revealed that the interaction for type of context sentence and type of goal word approximated statistical significance, $F(2, 54) = 2.92, p < .10$. Simple main effects for repeated measures revealed that under trust-irrelevant sentences, no significant difference was found in RTs among the three goal words ($M = 668.99$ for intimacy; $M = 663.70$ for security; $M = 667.92$ for control). However, under trust-relevant sentences, RTs for intimacy were quicker ($M = 592.96$) than for security ($M = 639.66$) and control ($M = 635.37$). This effect suggests that intimacy was the most available trust-related goal.

Attachment style, however, qualified the above effects, as shown in the three-way interaction that approximated significance, $F(4, 54) = 2.01, p < .10$. Tests for simple main effects for repeated measures revealed no significant effect under a trust-irrelevant context (see Table 4). Under a trust-relevant context, however, a significant interaction for attachment and target word was found, $F(4, 54) = 4.32, p < .01$.

Simple main effects tests across attachment styles revealed that (a) anxious-ambivalent persons reacted quicker to the word security than secure and avoidant persons, $F(2, 54) = 4.30, p < .05$, and (b) avoidant persons reacted quicker to the word control than secure and anxious-ambivalent persons, $F(2, 54) = 3.22, p < .05$ (see means in Table 4). No significant attachment effect was found in RTs for the word intimacy. Additional simple main effects tests across target words revealed that (a) secure persons reacted quicker to the word intimacy, (b) avoidant persons reacted quicker to the words intimacy and control than to security, and (c) anxious-ambivalent persons reacted quicker to the words intimacy and security. As in Study 3, the goal of secure persons in trust-related contexts was defined by intimacy, the goal of anxious-ambivalent persons by intimacy and security, and the goal of avoidant persons by intimacy and control.

Study 5

Study 5 used a lexical decision task for assessing attachment-style differences in ways of coping with trust-violation events. In this study, the target words were trust-related coping strategies (talk, escape, worry), and they were embedded within trust-relevant or trust-irrelevant context sentences. The main prediction was that upon the priming of trust-relevant context sentences, secure persons would show the quickest RT for the word talk, avoidant persons for the word escape, and anxious-ambivalent persons for the word worry.

Method

Participants. Thirty participants (10 secure, 10 avoidant, and 10 anxious) who did not participate in Studies 3–4 were randomly chosen from the pool of students described in Study 3. The sample consisted of 21 women and 9 men ranging in age from 20 to 36 (mdn = 23).

Materials and procedure. The apparatus, instructions, and procedure of the lexical decision task were identical to those described in Study 4. In the current study, I constructed four context sentences and eight target stimuli. Two sentences described trust-violation events (e.g., ‘‘I trust my partner and [he/she] hurts me’’). The other two sentences were trust-irrelevant contexts and were similar to those used in Study 4. The eight stimuli were (a) three Hebrew words that described coping strategies with trust-violation events—talking with partner (talk), distancing (escape), and ruminate worry (worry); (b) a neutral Hebrew word; and (c) four nonwords. The neutral word and the nonwords were the stimuli used in Study 4. There were 32 sentence–stimuli pairs, which were presented twice, for a total of 64 trials.

Results and Discussion

RTs for the three exemplars of coping strategies (only correct responses) were analyzed by a three-way ANOVA for attach-

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6 Analyses in Studies 4–5 were conducted on RTs for correct responses. All the scores were included in the analyses because there were few cases of very long RTs and their exclusion did not affect the results. The average percentage of trials in which incorrect responses were recorded (responding word to nonword, or vice versa) was low (3.5% in Study 4, 2.7% in Study 5). These trials were randomly distributed across context-target pairs and were excluded from analyses.

7 In Studies 4–5, the covariates were included to control for individual differences in overall RT. ANOVAs revealed no significant effects for attachment style and type of context sentence on RTs for neutral words as well as on RTs for nonwords.

8 The Hebrew words used in the lexical decision task in Study 5 were medaber, which means talk; boreah, which means escape; and doheg, which means worry.
memory, though self-reports in Studies 2-3 showed a proneness only escape was mentioned by these persons in self-report scales (Shaver & Hazan, 1993). Despite the discrepancies, one should tendency of these persons to overreport distress and worry toward only worry. This discrepancy might reflect the observed worry seemed to be the most available strategies in working observed discrepancy between avoidant persons' self-reports (Studies 2-3). This discrepancy might reflect the recurrently worry seemed to be the most easily activated strategies, though easily activated strategy. For avoidant persons, both escape and than to worry and anxious-ambivalent persons reacted quicker to talk, 4.60. For secure people, talking with partner seemed to be the most easily activated strategy. For avoidant persons, both escape and worry seemed to be the most easily activated strategies, though only escape was mentioned by these persons in self-report scales (Studies 2–3). This discrepancy might reflect the recurrently observed discrepancy between avoidant persons’ self-reports and more subtle measures of their state of mind (e.g., Mikulincer, 1995). For anxious–ambivalent persons, both talk and worry seemed to be the most available strategies in working memory, though self-reports in Studies 2–3 showed a proneness toward only worry. This discrepancy might reflect the observed tendency of these persons to overreport distress and worry (Shaver & Hazan, 1993). Despite the discrepancies, one should note that the overall pattern of results replicated those of Studies 2–3 and validated the observed attachment-style variations in trust-related coping strategies.

General Discussion

Taken as a whole, the findings demonstrate the usefulness of a multifaceted approach for the study of the sense of trust in close relationships. They clearly show that attachment groups differed in the level of trust they felt toward romantic partners, the accessibility and affective quality of trust-related memories, the appraisal of trust-related experiences, the interaction goals related to the sense of trust, and the strategies used in coping with trust-violation events. These differences were found in self-reports and in the cognitive structure underlying a person’s sense of trust. Theoretically, the findings might imply that attachment working models are closely related to the way people construe and process trust-related memories, experiences, goals, and coping strategies.

For secure persons, the sense of trust was found to be exclusively related to the goal of intimacy in a relationship. Together with past findings (Mikulincer & Nachshon, 1991), the data seem to emphasize the prevalence of the relational goal of intimacy over more intrapersonal goals of security and control. It may be that the attainment of a secure base satisfies these latter intrapersonal needs and frees cognitive and emotional resources to the regulation of relationship quality. On this basis, secure persons could develop a more open, selfless, and caring attitude toward their partners. They could become an active agent responsible for partner well-being and relationship quality rather than a passive recipient of caring and comfort and thus could move from egocentric to more reciprocal relationships. This is particularly important in the realm of adult relationships, wherein the attachment and caregiving systems are combined, and both partners are equally responsible for the development of an atmosphere of closeness and the maintenance of the relationship (Berman & Sperling, 1994).

The findings seem to emphasize the importance of attachment security for the development of a positive attitude toward trust. Secure persons have been found to be confident in others’ benevolence (e.g., Shaver & Hazan, 1993) and to believe that a partner

### Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context and word type</th>
<th>Secure</th>
<th>Avoidant</th>
<th>Anxious-ambivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trust-related context</strong></td>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td><strong>SD</strong></td>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimacy</td>
<td>595.07</td>
<td>66.67</td>
<td>590.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>658.72</td>
<td>66.42</td>
<td>666.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>661.48</td>
<td>70.84</td>
<td>588.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trust-unrelated context</strong></td>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td><strong>SD</strong></td>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimacy</td>
<td>668.73</td>
<td>73.54</td>
<td>672.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>665.51</td>
<td>73.23</td>
<td>661.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>669.75</td>
<td>69.83</td>
<td>665.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Within each row, means with different subscripts are significantly different.
would not hurt or abandon them if they trust him or her (Baldwin et al., 1993). On this basis, secure persons can develop
trust-based relationships and feel confident in their partners’ trustworthiness. In the current studies, this positive attitude can be
seen in the high level of trust secure persons felt toward partners as well as in the way they processed trust-related episodes.
Specifically, this attitude seemed to be manifested in (a) secure persons’ accessibility of memories of trust-validation episodes,
(b) the strong positive affect they reported in the recollection of these memories, (c) the high number of trust-validation epis-
odes that secure persons experienced in their ongoing relationship, (d) the importance they attached to these episodes,
and (e) their appraisal of these events as reflecting dispositional features of their partners.

Attachment security also appears to be associated with constructive coping. The most direct expression of this coping strategy
was found in the tendency of secure persons to openly talk with their partners in response to a trust-violation episode.
Constructive coping can be also seen in findings that secure persons had low accessibility of negative trust-related memories,
affected by these memories with weak negative affect, and appraised trust-violation episodes as nonimportant and unrelated
to a partner’s personality. It is possible to view these findings as manifestations of the cognitive and affective maneuvers secure
persons make to minimize the distressing impact of negative partner behaviors. These maneuvers may include the suppres-
sion of memories that raise doubts about a partner’s goodwill, the suppression of negative affect related to these memories,
and the dismissal of trust-violation events.

Although secure persons’ pattern of memories and appraisals can be interpreted as a manifestation of coping strategies, it
may also reflect secure persons’ actual relationships. It may be that secure people are involved in more rewarding relationships
(Shaver & Hazan, 1993) and then may have a smaller proportion of negative memories to recall. Moreover, the fact that secure
persons appraised trust-violation events as stable and reflecting partner personality might have resulted from the partner’s actual
personality. Further research should explore this alternative and examine the interactive effects of stable working models and
ongoing relationships on the sense of trust.

Another theoretical issue that the current findings raise deals
with the way a secure working model affects a person’s cogni-
tions. At first sight, the data may suggest a position that people assimilate their perceptions of close relationships to
their working models. That is, secure persons’ positive trust-related expectations may lead them to experience high levels
of trust in particular relationships and to perceive their current partner as available and responsive. However, as an alternative,
working models can act as standards against which relationships are compared. In these terms, secure persons’ positive expectations may lead them to judge a particular relationship according to these high standards and to experience trust only when partner behavior fits these standards. Further studies
should examine this possibility, which could clarify the condi-
tions in which secure persons become dissatisfied with their close relationships.

The association between attachment security and the sense of trust is further highlighted by the trust-related memories, goals,
and coping strategies of insecure persons. The sense of trust of these persons was found to be negative, egocentric, and mal-
adaptive. Specifically, both avoidant and anxious-ambivalent persons reported low levels of trust toward partners, showed
high accessibility of negative trust-related memories, appraised trust as a means for attaining egocentric goals, and dealt with
them by relying on strategies that would seem to be maladaptive for relationship maintenance (Shaver & Hazan, 1993).

Despite the above similarities, avoidant and anxious-ambivalent persons differed in several aspects of the sense of trust.
First, they differed in trust-related goals: Whereas avoidant persons put emphasis in control attainment, anxious-ambivalent
persons emphasized security attainment. Second, differences were found in coping strategies with a trust-violation event. On
the one hand, avoidant persons usually tended to distance from partners, though the lexical decision task showed an additional
activation of the word worry upon the priming of a trust-violation context. On the other hand, anxious-ambivalent people
usually engaged in ruminative worry, though the lexical decision task showed additional activation of the “talking with partner”
strategy. Third, differences were found in the affective and cognitive configuration of trust-related experiences. Anxious-ambivalent persons reacted to these experiences with stronger affect and tended to attach more importance to them than avoidant

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context and word type</th>
<th>Secure</th>
<th></th>
<th>Avoidant</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Anxious-ambivalent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust-related context</td>
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<td>Talk</td>
<td>582.02</td>
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<td>71.53</td>
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<td>Escape</td>
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<td>65.73</td>
<td>584.17</td>
<td>90.40</td>
<td>652.57</td>
<td>71.34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worry</td>
<td>669.52</td>
<td>76.28</td>
<td>610.80</td>
<td>88.23</td>
<td>593.65</td>
<td>75.54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust-unrelated context</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk</td>
<td>675.17</td>
<td>76.28</td>
<td>671.25</td>
<td>66.77</td>
<td>667.68</td>
<td>69.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Escape</td>
<td>669.52</td>
<td>79.01</td>
<td>665.34</td>
<td>67.46</td>
<td>655.93</td>
<td>69.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worry</td>
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<td>81.21</td>
<td>667.37</td>
<td>73.72</td>
<td>661.85</td>
<td>70.09</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note. Within each row, means with different subscripts are significantly different.
persons. In my terms, these differences reflect the rules that guide each insecure group in regulating distress.

Avoidant persons cope with their insecurity by suppressing painful attachment-related thoughts and affects, striving for autonomy and control, dismissing the importance of attachment episodes, and distancing from attachment figures (Bowby, 1988; Slaver & Hazan, 1993). Though these strategies may reduce overt expressions of distress, they are unable to mitigate inner insecurity, as manifested in below-level-of-awareness measures and physiological recordings (Feeney & Kirpatrick, 1996; Mikulincer et al., 1990). These strategies are seen in current findings showing that avoidant persons’ sense of trust was related to control attainment and that these persons reported weak negative trust-related affect, attached low importance to trust-related events, and coped with trust-violation events by distancing from partners. The observed discrepancy between self-reports and RTs in the lexical decision task points to the fragile nature of avoidant strategies. In fact, when responses to a trust-violation context were done without the mediation of deliberate, controlled processing, avoidant persons showed a more anxious pattern of reaction.

The most original finding with regard to avoidant persons’ sense of trust was their endorsement of control as a trust-related goal. Although the idea of control as a theme for avoidants is implicit in Bowlby’s (1988) theory, it did not receive sufficient theoretical attention in recent attachment literature and it was not empirically examined in adult attachment research. It seems to me that this idea sheds light on avoidant persons’ way of relating to others and expands our knowledge of avoidant persons’ working models. Future studies should examine more in depth the ways by which the control theme pervades avoidant persons’ cognitions, emotions, and behaviors.

Anxious—ambivalent persons deal with insecurity by obsessionally searching for security in any relationship (Slaver & Hazan, 1993). In this way, they are unable or unwilling to end frustrating relationships. Rather, they attach high importance to these relationships, excessively ruminate on problems and frustrations, and tend to be overwhelmed by negative affect, all of which divert mental resources away from instrumental actions. In my terms, these strategies are seen in current findings showing that anxious—ambivalent persons tended to link trust with security attainment, experienced high levels of negative trust-related affect, attached high importance to negative trust-related events, and coped with these events by engaging in ruminative worry. The inability or unwillingness of anxious—ambivalent persons to engage in instrumental actions was seen in the discrepancy between self-reports and RTs in the lexical decision task. Though “talking with partner” was quickly activated in the working memory of anxious—ambivalent persons, this coping strategy was not manifested in their self-reports.

Although the above reasoning can explain the current findings, an alternative line of thinking can be proposed. Unlike many stressors, a betrayal of trust is a direct attack on attachment working models. Consequently, a person’s ways of coping with this betrayal may be a direct reflection, if not the product, of their level of trust. Secure persons may talk with their partner because they need to understand an unexpected violation. They have the confidence that confronting their partner does not represent an untenable risk and it can result in a productive outcome. Anxious—ambivalent persons’ basic doubts about a partner’s responsiveness could lead them to feel greater levels of anxiety in response to a betrayal of trust and to engage in rumination about the conditions that can predict partner’s future responses. Finally, avoidant persons may distance from their partner because they are not at all confident that he or she will respond in a positive way if discussion about the betrayal episode is raised.

As this discussion indicates, levels of trust may underlie attachment-style differences in coping with betrayal of trust. Although trust has often been conceptualized as a relationship-specific process, people are still likely to have a more stable trust orientation that may be activated and applied in close relationships. It is possible that this trust orientation is central to the attachment working model of others. Moreover, it may determine the way people differing in attachment style cope with the betrayal of trust.

Findings of Study 2 deal with the above possibility. Although secure attachment was significantly related to positive trust orientation, this orientation was not significantly related to trust-related goals and to the way people cope with trust-violation episodes. This pattern of findings sorts out the extent to which trust and attachment differ or reflect the same underlying process. On the one hand, level of trust was found to differentiate between secure and insecure attachment. On the other hand, it did not differentiate between avoidant and anxious—ambivalent persons and failed to explain the way these persons construct the meaning of trust and the way they deal with trust violation. On this basis, one can argue that the observed differences between avoidant and anxious—ambivalent persons may result from their habitual way of affect regulation rather than from their trust orientation. Although both of them hold a similar negative trust orientation, their habitual ways of affect regulation lead them to react to trust-related episodes in different ways.

Along the above reasoning, one can speculate about how the different aspects of working models supposedly work together. Using Anderson’s (1994) terminology, the memory and expectancy components can be seen as declarative knowledge, which may be encoded in episodic propositions and “if—then” scripts. The goal and strategy components have two facets: a declarative facet, which may be encoded in semantic propositions about the meaning of each goal and strategy, and a procedural facet, which may be encoded in if—then operational rules. All the components seem to have associative links between them, so that the activation of one component would activate other related components and inhibit competing cognitions. They seem also to have associative links with contextual and relationship-relevant data, which may serve as retrieval cues for the activation of working model components. In my terms, there is no reason to assume a single unidirectional causal path among the various components. Rather, a network analysis of their associations may be a more adequate way for understanding how working model components work together.

In the case of the sense of trust, situations in which one feels distressed and needs the attention, affection, and support of a partner may activate the most accessible attachment memories, expectancies, goals, and concerns. As a result, a partner’s responses, either positive or negative, may be appraised and inter-
interpreted through the lens of the already activated memories, expectations, and goals. In addition, particular coping reactions to negative partner behavior would be chosen according to the activated memories, expectations, and goals and would correspond to the most accessible attachment-related ways of affect regulation. Of course, partner behaviors that do not fit the memory and expectancy components, particularly those that are stable and personally relevant, could change the activation level of these components, strengthen associative links with alternative goals and strategies, and have an impact on the sense of trust.

The findings also enrich our knowledge on the meaning of trust among young adults. Regardless of a person’s attachment style, trusting a partner was more strongly associated with the search for intimacy than with the attainment of security or control. This primacy of intimacy is far from surprising. A sense of trust may be a prerequisite to taking risks in a relationship and to openly sharing one’s feelings and thoughts with partners. It may strengthen a partner’s commitment to the relationship and his or her willingness to initiate intimate interactions.

The question here concerns the directional sequence of the above relational events: Is trust a means for strengthening intimacy, or is intimacy a precondition for trusting a partner? I think that the answer is simple and complex at the same time. Like other personality and social psychology phenomena, trust and intimacy may be reciprocally related. Trust may promote intimacy, and intimacy, in turn, may increase trust. Further research should conduct a prospective follow-up of the trust–intimacy link throughout the different stages of a relationship and attempt to increase the internal validity of the findings by experimentally manipulating key variables.

One basic strength of the above conclusions is that the findings in several of the studies were derived from the powerful, novel use of nonobvious measures. These measures are particularly convincing in the empirical examination of the attachment approach, which in the social psychology literature has been overwhelmingly associated with self-report questionnaires. Moreover, the findings were validated across different research techniques. Similar patterns of attachment-style differences were obtained using an autobiographical memory task, a diary methodology, open-ended probes, and a lexical decision task. Moreover, paper-and-pencil self-reports generally fit RT patterns found in the memory and lexical decision tasks. These RTs might shed some light on the cognitive structure of attachment working models—the memories that are accessible for information processing, and the declarative and procedural knowledge that underlie a person’s interaction goals and strategies of affect regulation.

Despite the above methodological strengths, there are important questions that remain unanswered, for example, whether the goals that characterize the sense of trust of each attachment group would be involved in other interpersonal phenomena, or whether attachment-style differences in coping with trust-violation episodes would recur in the ways people cope with other negative relational events. In fact, it seems quite possible that most of the current findings hold just as well for other kinds of negative or positive relationship events having nothing to do with trust. Lamentably, I did not collect information on relationship phenomena other than trust.

In my terms, the answer to the above questions is not so simple. On the one hand, I think that the observed attachment-style differences may recur in a wide variety of relationship phenomena. As such, the current findings are still important because they are valuable illustrations of the action of attachment working models. In fact, there is no published study that has assessed the contribution of the various working model components, particularly the goal and strategy components, to a specific relationship phenomenon.

On the other hand, I think that the generalization of the findings should be limited to relationship phenomena that have something to do with trust. As discussed earlier, the basic beliefs that differentiate between secure and insecure persons are trust-related cognitions, such as memories and expectancies about the availability and responsiveness of significant others. Moreover, the goal and strategy components are originated within trust-relevant contexts, in which a significant other (e.g., a caregiver) responded positively or negatively to a person’s needs. On this basis, one can argue that the current findings may be unique to relationship phenomena that involve a trust-relevant context or can activate basic trust-related cognitions.

Other possible limitations of this study should be noted. The use of the standard Hazan and Shaver (1987) prototypes in order to measure adult attachment style raised two basic problems that should be addressed in further research. First, this assessment did not take into account Bartholomew and Horowitz’s (1991) conceptualization and measurement of models of self and models of others. This framework may be particularly relevant in the research of the sense of trust, because it seems to be closely related to the model of others. In this context, further research should examine whether Bartholomew and Horowitz’s distinction between dismissing avoidants and fearful avoidants, who are assumed to differ along the model of the self, could further refine our understanding of the attachment—trust link. Second, there is still a question about whether Hazan and Shaver’s self-report measure could be equated with attachment observational measures in infancy and childhood. More research is needed before one can conclude that what we measure with this self-report scale fits Bowlby’s (1973) theory and the research in developmental psychology that emerged from it.

Further research should also deal with the possibility that the observed attachment-style differences may reflect an underlying action of other general personality traits. Though this possibility should be taken seriously, Shaver and Brennan (1992) found that attachment style was a better predictor of several dimensions of relationship quality than global personality traits. In addition, the sample included young Israeli adults, who may emphasize intimacy and relatedness. Further studies should replicate the current findings on older samples and in other cultural settings. Finally, these studies should also attempt to collect data from the two partners of a dyad, providing a more complex relational picture of the association between attachment and trust.

Despite the above limitations, I believe that the current findings can be viewed as a further contribution to the understanding of the role attachment working models play in adult relationships. Specifically, they delineate the manifestations of the memory, goal, and strategy components of these models in a basic relationship phenomenon. Moreover, the current findings enrich our knowledge on the experience of trust and contribute to a multifaceted conceptualization of the sense of interpersonal
trust. In this way, the current study opens a new avenue of research for studying specific relationship processes and phenomena from an attachment perspective.

References


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