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When "Together" Means "Too Close": Agency Motives and Relationship Functioning in Coresident and Living-Apart-Together Couples

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The present research addresses the interplay between agency motives and objective dyadic closeness with regard to the functioning of intimate couple relationships. Applying a Person × Situation approach, we hypothesized (a) that partners' implicit and explicit agency motives predict their selection of dyadic living arrangements characterized by high or low objective closeness (coresidence or living-apart-together), (b) that agency motives have more negative effects on relationship functioning in coresident couples, (c) that agency motives predict agentic motivational states in coresident couples, and (d) that agentic states predict day-to-day changes in relationship satisfaction under conditions of high objective closeness. We found support for these between- and within-couple hypotheses in cross-sectional and prospective analyses of an age-heterogeneous sample of 548 heterosexual couples, and in a 2-week diary study with a subsample of 106 couples. Most notably, agentic motive dispositions and motivational states related to relationship functioning more negatively under conditions of high objective closeness. The overall positive effect of objective closeness on relationship functioning was diminished by strong agentic motivation. Perspectives for future research on agency motives in couple relationships are discussed.

Keywords: agency, implicit motives, intimate relationships, living-apart-together, relationship quality

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> The most painful thing is losing yourself in the process of loving someone too much, and forgetting that you are special too.
>
> —Ernest Hemingway

Close relationships are among the most highly valued human goals (Ben-Ari & Lavee, 2007; Caldwell & Peplau, 1982; Reis & Shaver, 1988), and there is little debate among scholars that the satisfaction of the need for closeness and communion is important for relationship functioning as well as for individual well-being and health (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Hofer & Busch, 2011; Holt-Lunstad, Smith, & Layton, 2010; McAdams & Vaillant, 1982; Patrick, Knee, Canevello, & Lonsbary, 2007; Prager & Buhrmester, 1998). In adult life, romantic partnerships are mostly viewed as the closest type of relationship, and couples' relationship quality and stability have been found to depend on the amount of closeness that is actually experienced (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992; Berscheid, Snyder, & Omoto, 1989b; Hassebrauck & Fehr, 2002; Smith, Snyder, Trull, & Monsma, 1988). However, humans also possess individualistic or agentic needs for independence, mastery, and self-sufficiency (Bakan, 1966; Hagemeyer & Neyer, 2012; McAdams, Hoffman, Day, & Mansfield, 1996; Prager &

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Buhrmester, 1998; Wiggins, 1991), which may be understood as antagonistic motivational forces in couple relationships: Whereas communal needs strive for, and are fulfilled by, closeness, agentic needs are at risk of being frustrated if closeness comes at the cost of impaired individual freedom and independence (Baxter, 1990; J. A. Feeney, 1999; Goldsmith, 1990; Hagemeyer & Neyer, 2012; Hagemeyer, Neyer, Neberich, & Asendorpf, 2013; Kumashiro, Rusbult, & Finkel, 2008). A major challenge for couples' relationship regulation therefore lies in the integration of the partners' agentic needs, and, in fact, research has shown that too much closeness can have negative effects on relational as well as individual well-being (Frost & Forrester, 2013).

Applying a Person × Situation approach, the present investigation looks into the interplay of two factors that are assumed to play important roles in the regulation of couples' closeness, and thus for optimal relationship functioning: the partners' motive dispositions—that is, individual differences in the strength of the need for agency—and couples' living arrangements (coresidence (COR) vs. living-apart-together (LAT)), which provide differential contexts for the regulation of dyadic closeness and distance. In two studies, we investigated the relevance of agency motives for relationship functioning in COR and LAT couples from between-couple and within-couple perspectives. Study 1 focused on between-couple differences in implicit and explicit agency motives in a large age-heterogeneous sample of heterosexual couples. Study 2 was a 2-week diary study examining the day-to-day dynamics between motivational states, dyadic closeness, and relationship quality within COR and LAT couples.

Dyadic Closeness and Couples' Living Arrangements

Closeness is a heterogeneous concept in relationship research (see Ben-Ari & Lavee, 2007, and Berscheid, Snyder, & Omoto, 1989a, for overviews of different conceptualizations). In the present research context, it is important to differentiate subjective closeness, which is usually experienced as pleasant and fulfilling, and thus includes an evaluation of relationship quality (e.g., Aron et al., 1992), and more objectively defined and externally observable types of closeness like spatial proximity, the amount of time partners spend together, and dyadic interdependence (i.e., the extent to which the two partners influence each other; H. H. Kelley et al., 1983). Whereas the former type of closeness is an individual variable (although partners may, to some extent, concur in their subjective closeness ratings), the latter types can only be understood as dyadic characteristics, that is, as variables that describe a couple and are thus identical for both partners (Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006). Although the two kinds of closeness may not be empirically independent (e.g., high subjective closeness without some extent of objective closeness is hardly imaginable), they are conceptually distinct. The focus of this article lies on closeness as dyadic variables that are, in principle, accessible to external observation. To ensure a clear distinction from individual and subjective sentiments of closeness, we will henceforward use the term *objective closeness* for such variables.

Couples' living arrangements provide an interesting context for the study of agency motives and relationship functioning, because they constitute differential relationship conditions that foster or hinder objective closeness. We focus here on the differences between two prototypical living arrangements. COR, in which partners share a common household, is the conventional form of couple life in Western cultures, and the majority of couples engage in it (e.g., Asendorpf, 2008; Haskey, 2005). COR is characterized by high objective closeness as manifested in high amounts of time spent together, frequent routine interactions, and shared responsibilities. LAT, on the other hand, in which the partners retain separate households, is an unconventional living arrangement that affords less objective closeness and more individual freedom, independence, and privacy. LAT is also a heterogeneous type of relationship. It includes couples in the early stages of their relationships who will eventually move in together (or separate) as well as long-term LATs who live in close proximity to each other or engage in long-distance relationships (Schneider & Ruckdeschel, 2003). However, a common feature that distinguishes all LAT couples from COR relationships is the greater opportunity for individual freedom and privacy.

To date, LAT has received little attention in psychological research, but sociologists have found some evidence that this type of relationship becomes increasingly common and accepted in Western societies (e.g., Duncan & Phillips, 2010; Haskey, 2005; Milan & Peters, 2003; Schneider & Ruckdeschel, 2003; Strohm, Seltzer, Cochran, & Mays, 2009). For the German population, Asendorpf (2008) analyzed the data from the nationally representative German Socioeconomic Panel Study and found that the relative proportion of LAT adults increased from 8.5% in 1992 to 10.9% in 2006. This historical trend was especially pronounced in middle and late adulthood (age >37 years), for which LAT increased from 4.7% to 8.2%. Analyses by age showed that the probability of LAT decreased until the age of about 40, and then remained on a relatively constant level. Furthermore, the probability of moving in together within an assessment period of 6 years was markedly lower for participants older than 37 years.

Qualitative interview studies have shed some light on the reasons for having a LAT relationship (Holmes, 2006; Karlsson & Borell, 2005; Levin, 2004; Milan & Peters, 2003; Roseneil, 2006; Strohm et al., 2009). Overall, these reasons can be grouped into *external pressures* and *individual preferences*. Among the most frequently named external pressures are educational or work-related requirements (especially for long-distance relationships), care for children from a previous relationship or elderly relatives living in the household, and the partner's preference for living apart. Individual preferences for LAT revolve around gaining higher autonomy and privacy, and avoiding too much closeness, intimacy, and daily hassles with the partner.

Sociological research thus provides some support for the assumption that LAT is becoming a viable alternative to the more conventional and close COR, especially for people who (a) are around 40 or older, and (b) have a preference for agentic values and goals. The increasing prevalence of LAT in middle and late adulthood may be partially explained by a biologically induced shifting of relationship priorities (Asendorpf, 2008). Around the age of 40, women have to come to a final decision about having (biological) children (Heckhausen, Wrosch, & Fleeson, 2001), and after menopause, the wish to raise a new family is much less likely to be a viable motivation for moving in with one's partner. On the contrary, if a new relationship is commenced at this age and there are still children from a former relationship in the household, this will favor the decision for LAT (Levin, 2004). In addition, LAT is viewed by many who engage in this living arrangement as more

suitable than COR for the fulfillment of their agentic needs. Especially if the partners' households are in close proximity to each other, LAT may be viewed as providing favorable conditions for the integration of closeness with the partner and individualistic commitments, interests, and goals (Karlsson & Borell, 2005; Levin, 2004).

Agency Motives and Couple Relationships

Motive dispositions differentiate individuals with regard to their preferences for the attainment of specific classes of incentives (McClelland, 1985; Schultheiss, 2008). In the case of agency motives, these incentives refer to self-oriented, individualistic experiences and goals related to independence, self-reliance, dominance, and mastery. According to Bakan (1966), agency entails a tendency to *form separations* from others and a focus on the individual self. Agency is thus reflected in *self-protection*, *self-assertion*, and *self-expansion*. Drawing on Bakan's original definition, Hagemeyer and Neyer (2012; see also Hagemeyer, Neyer, et al., 2013) conceptualized agency motives in couple relationships as relationship-specific dispositions that focus on the propensity to form physical or psychological separations from the partner, thereby seeking experiences that confirm the self as an independent and capable individual. The proposed significance of relationship-specific agency motives for individual well-being and relationship functioning is twofold. People with strong agency motives are assumed to seek out individual activities and distance from their partners regularly. If, on the one hand, agentic strivings are successful, this will lead to feelings of reward and satisfaction on behalf of the actor, although the partner may feel deserted. On the other hand, if agentic strivings are thwarted by too much closeness (or other interferences), the resulting feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction will be more profound the stronger the motive is. Such negative experiences will, in the long run, also affect the partner's satisfaction as they may spark quarrels and conflicts (Hagemeyer & Neyer, 2012).

Implicit and Explicit Motives

We use the term *agency motives* in its plural form because we differentiate between implicit and explicit motive dispositions. According to McClelland's dual motives theory, the two kinds of motives pertain to distinct motivational systems and guide different kinds of behavior (McClelland, 1980; McClelland, Koestner, & Weinberger, 1989). On the one hand, implicit motives are assumed to operate largely outside awareness and guide operant (or spontaneous) behavior. A key function of the implicit motivational system is the regulation of affective processes during goal pursuit. Thus, implicit motives not only direct and energize behavior but also influence its emotional consequences. Affective experiences of reward after successful goal attainment, but also frustration after failure, increase with the strength of the corresponding implicit motive (Brunstein, Schultheiss, & Grässmann, 1998; Schultheiss, Jones, Davis, & Kley, 2008). Because they are not consciously represented, implicit motives are measured in an indirect way, usually with Picture Story Exercises (PSEs; e.g., Schultheiss & Pang, 2007), which are research variants of the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT; Morgan & Murray, 1935) (Morgan & Murray, 1935). Explicit motives, on the other hand, are assumed to guide respondent (or controlled) behavior, such as deliberate choices between a limited number of alternatives (Brunstein, 2008; McClelland et al., 1989). In contrast to implicit motives, explicit motives pertain to an individual's cognitively elaborated self-concept and guide behavior via conscious decision making and goal selection. They reflect a person's social values, and their attainment provides a sense of meaning and coherence rather than hedonic experiences (Cantor & Malley, 1991). Because they are represented in a propositional format, explicit motives can be assessed by self-reports, usually via standardized questionnaires (e.g., Hagemeyer, Neyer, et al., 2013; Schönbrodt & Gerstenberg, 2012). Applied to relationship-specific agency motives, dual motives theory suggests that individuals are characterized by two motive dispositions that are similar in the aspiration of individualistic goal contents, but different in their functional underpinnings.

The theoretical distinction between implicit and explicit motives originated from the repeated finding that indirect and direct motive measures are largely uncorrelated (McClelland, 1980; McClelland et al., 1989). A recent meta-analysis confirmed this for the most frequently studied motives of achievement, power, and affiliation using 56 independent samples from six decades of motive research (Köllner & Schultheiss, 2014). The average correlations between implicit and explicit motives were below .15 in all three domains. According to this low convergence, the interindividual variation of intrapersonal constellations of implicit and explicit motives is nearly unrestricted. This raises the question about the consequences of congruent or incongruent implicit–explicit motive constellations (McClelland et al., 1989). Because of their common goal content and complementary functional properties, the two motivational systems may amplify each other's effects, if implicit and explicit motives are congruently strong in a person. In fact, a recent study on communal motives suggests that motive (in)congruence plays a significant role in relationship functioning, as a strong implicit motive increased the positive actor effects of the explicit motive on relationship satisfaction. Moreover, incongruent intrapersonal motive constellations predicted a heightened risk of relationship breakup over the time of 1 year (Hagemeyer, Neberich, Asendorpf, & Neyer, 2013). These findings correspond to other studies outside the area of couple research showing that intrapersonal motive constellations are relevant for individual well-being (e.g., Brunstein et al., 1998; Hofer, Chasiotis, & Campos, 2006). However, studies on the consequences of agentic motive (in)congruence for couple relationships are missing.

Agency Motives and Relationship Functioning

Previous research has shown that both implicit and explicit agency motives are related to various aspects of relationship functioning. For the relationship-specific implicit agency motive, Hagemeyer and Neyer (2012) found negative intra- and interpersonal effects of both partners' motives on their accounts of relationship satisfaction. Notably, these effects were independent of the complementary communal motive, thus corroborating the unique significance of agentic motives for couple relationships. In addition, a strong implicit need for power (a facet of agency) in men has been related to impaired relationship satisfaction, a heightened probability of separation, unrestricted sociosexuality, and aggressive sexual behavior (Hofer et al., 2010; Stewart &

Rubin, 1976; Zurbriggen, 2000). Explicit agentic motives and goals depicting the motivation to establish independence, social distance, and solitude are also associated with indicators of poor relationship functioning, such as low relationship satisfaction, avoidant romantic attachment, and low perceived support from one's partner (Craddock, 1997; Dewitte & De Houwer, 2008; Hagemeyer, Neyer, et al., 2013). Thus, although, to date, the literature on the consequences of agency motives in couple relationships is not very extensive, the existing studies are quite consistent in identifying strong agency motives as potential problems for couple relationships in general. This applies to both implicit and explicit motive dispositions.

In terms of Karney and Bradbury's model of couples' satisfaction and stability, agency motives therefore qualify as *enduring vulnerabilities*, that is, as dispositions that impair relationship quality (a) by increasing the likelihood of stressful events (e.g., conflicts), and (b) by weakening the couple's capacity to cope with and adapt to such events (vulnerability-stress-adaptation model; Karney & Bradbury, 1995). However, previous research falls short of accounting for two important aspects of the interplay between agency motives and relationship functioning. First, the role of intrapersonal constellations of implicit and explicit agency motives in relationship functioning has not been examined yet. Second, no prior studies have considered between-couple differences in the conditions of objective closeness provided by different living arrangements as potential moderators.

The Present Research

We conducted two studies examining the relevance of implicit and explicit agency motives for relationship functioning in heterosexual COR and LAT couples from a between-couple (Study 1) and a within-couple (Study 2) perspective. COR and LAT are introduced to motive research as two prototypical living arrangements that provide a great deal of the proximal relationship contexts in which the partners' motive dispositions operate. In Study 1, we relied on a large age-heterogeneous sample of German couples, and Study 2 employed a subsample of these couples for a 2-week diary study. COR couples were required to have a serious romantic relationship and share the main household, irrespective of their marital status (married or unmarried). LAT couples were likewise required to see themselves as being in a serious relationship, and, in addition, the partners' separate households had to be in relative proximity to each other, such that partners were able to see each other every day if they wanted to. The former criterion was used to exclude uncommitted dating couples, and the latter was used to exclude long-distance relationships, which are often living apart because of external pressures (e.g., job or educational affordances) rather than individual preferences (Schneider & Ruckdeschel, 2003). In addition, long-distance relationships differ from proximal LATs and CORs in their ability to establish closeness on a daily basis and are therefore viewed here as a third and distinct type of relationship that was not included in the current research project.

Study 1 tested (a) whether individual differences in relationship-specific agency motives predict the selection of living arrangement (LAT vs. COR), and (b) whether cross-sectional and prospective associations between the partners' agency motives and indicators of relationship functioning are moderated by couples' living arrangements. Study 2 complements these between-couple analyses (a) by linking agentic motive dispositions to agentic motivational states, and (b) by examining the consequences of day-to-day variations of agentic motivational states and objective closeness within couples for their daily relationship satisfaction, thereby capturing potential differences in the motivational dynamics of relationship functioning between COR and LAT couples.

Study 1

Hypothesis 1: Selection of Living Arrangement

People in LAT relationships often name agentic reasons for having this living arrangement, such as career goals, greater personal freedom, and privacy (Holmes, 2006; Karlsson & Borell, 2005; Levin, 2004; Roseneil, 2006). Thus, individuals with strong agentic motives who particularly value these qualities are expected to prefer LAT over COR. Especially in the postreproductive life phase (women's age $\geq$40 years), when the wish to raise a family together becomes less relevant for relationship decisions, agency motives are expected to predict the choice of LAT. We tested Hypothesis 1 with regard to explicit and implicit motive dispositions, because we assume that the motivational processes underlying couples' decisions on living arrangements involve both deliberate choices as well as more subtle and spontaneous evaluations. The vast majority of intimate relationships start out living apart. If the relationship seems to work out, most couples come to a point when moving in together becomes an important question, which is contemplated and debated among the partners, and finally a decision is made. This decision reflects a choice between two (or three) alternatives: staying LAT or moving in together (or breaking up). According to dual motives theory, such choices are expected to be guided more by explicit than implicit motives (McClelland et al., 1989). These debates and decisions involve explicit arguments exchanged in interactions with the partner, but also gut feelings about preferences that are based on less accessible, implicit motivations, and in some couples, a change of living arrangement may not even become a topic at all. Such more subtle, implicit selection processes are expected to depend on implicit agency motives. In addition, we tested the contribution of the interaction between implicit and explicit agency motives to examine potentially amplifying effects of motive congruence.

Hypothesis 2: Moderation by Living Arrangement

We expected that living arrangement (LAT vs. COR) is a moderator of the overall negative associations between relationship-specific agency motives and relationship functioning that were reported in prior studies (Hagemeyer & Neyer, 2012; Hagemeyer, Neyer, et al., 2013). Specifically, we expected negative intra- and interpersonal effects of agency motives on the partners' subjective accounts of their relationship quality to be stronger in COR couples. In addition, the amount of dyadic conflicts, a more behavioral indicator of relationship functioning, should show stronger associations with agency motives in COR couples. It is a fundamental assumption of motivational psychology that the expression and the consequences of motive dispositions depend on contextual variables (e.g., Atkinson, 1981). Al-

though we believe that the obligations that come with any serious relationship present a challenge to individuals with strong agency motives, this challenge should become a real problem under circumstances of obligatory high objective closeness as provided by COR. Thus, irrespective of whether the living arrangement was deliberately chosen or not, strong agency motives are at a higher risk of being frustrated in COR relationships. To render a comprehensive account of the differential role of agentic motivational dispositions, we tested Hypothesis 2 for implicit and explicit motives as well as for the Implicit × Explicit interaction.

Method

Participants and procedure. We used data from a larger research project on distance regulation in couples (see Hagemeyer, Neberich, et al., 2013, Hagemeyer & Neyer, 2012, and Hagemeyer, Neyer, et al., 2013, for previous publications partially based on the current data). A sample of 714 German heterosexual couples was recruited by a mass mailing to households in a metropolitan area (Berlin-Charlottenburg) and in a rural area (counties of Lower Saxony), and subsequent nationwide press announcements and newspaper ads. Couples were invited to a research project on different living arrangements and applied for participation by phone. A brief telephone prescreening and undersampling of younger couples made sure (a) that the couples were either COR or LAT, (b) that all participants spoke German fluently, and (c) that the sample comprised similar numbers of couples from each age decade between 18 and 68 years (as defined by women's age). Participants could opt for a paper-and-pencil version, which they received via mail, or an online questionnaire. Participating couples were compensated with €20 and offered an individual, confidential feedback for each of the two partners about their personality and relationship. In the present study, we included all couples with complete data on implicit and explicit agency motives. The resulting sample comprised 548 couples (332 CORs, 216 LATs), with age ranging from 18 to 73 years ($M = 40.4$, $SD = 14.1$). The partners' reports on relationship duration were highly correlated ($r = .995$), and thus averaged, ranging from 1 month to 53 years ($M = 11.2$ years, $SD = 12.5$). Participants reported 0 to 4 own children (62% had at least one child), and 42% were married to their current partners. Fifty-eight percent had a German Abitur (high school degree) or a higher educational degree.

One year after the first assessment (Time 1 [T1]), participants were contacted again and asked to participate in a follow-up study (Time 2 [T2]). As an incentive, participants were offered to take part in two lotteries with prices amounting to a total of €3,700. Response rate was 77% within the 548 T1 couples (at least one partner of a couple responded). In the present longitudinal analyses, we included T2 data from all stable couples who maintained their T1 living arrangements and for which at least one partner gave information on the current relationship quality. This was true for 235 COR and 100 LAT couples. Missing data were treated with the full information maximum likelihood procedure (Enders, 2010). A logistic regression predicting participation in the follow-up study by all T1 variables of this investigation showed that T2 couples were older (odds ratio [OR]= 1.536, $p < .001$), reported fewer conflicts ($OR = 0.774$, $p = .002$) and were less likely to be LAT ($OR = 0.393$, $p < .001$) than T1 couples who dropped out. This pattern is plausible, reflecting that dropout was partially explained by relationship break-up and LAT couples moving in together between T1 and T2.

Measures. The questionnaires administered at T1 and T2 included a variety of measures of diverse aspects of the relationship, as well as both partners' motives and personality. In the following, only the methods relevant for the present study are described.

Agency motives. Relationship-specific implicit and explicit agency motives were assessed at T1. The *implicit agency motive* was measured with the Partner-Related Agency and Communion Test (PACT; Hagemeyer & Neyer, 2012), a relationship-specific variant of the PSE, which is the most frequently applied approach to the assessment of implicit motives (Schultheiss & Pang, 2007). The PACT is comprised of eight picture cues showing interpersonal situations in the form of either line drawings or distorted photographs. Participants are instructed to invent fantasy stories about romantic relationships that describe the depicted scenes. Three questions regarding the protagonist of the respective story have to be answered in response to each picture cue: "What is important to this person in this situation, and what is he/she doing?," "How is the person feeling in this situation, and how are his/her feelings for his/her partner?," and "Why is the person feeling this way?" Participants' answers are scored by trained coders for the occurrence of agentic contents that pertain to one of eight thematic categories referring to power, independence, and individuality in couple relationships: Dominance (i.e., personalized power), Help for Partner (i.e., socialized power),[1] Differentiation (i.e., elaborated differences between partners), Independence (i.e., pursuit of individualistic interests), Self-Growth (i.e., individualistic development), Alternative Contacts (i.e., social activities in absence of the partner), Conflict (i.e., quarrels related to differences between partners), and Fear of Dependency (i.e., negative affect related to overdependence). Motive raw scores are derived from summing up the frequencies of all agentic categories across all eight PACT tasks[2] (for details on PACT administration and scoring, see Hagemeyer & Neyer, 2012).

In the present sample, PACT answers were scored by four trained coders who worked on different cases that were randomly assigned to them. Absolute agreement among coders as assessed in a random subsample of 65 cases was acceptable (intraclass correlation = .76, $p < .001$). Participants generated 0 to 11 agentic themes ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 2.09$). Women had higher raw scores than men (see Table 1),

[1] The Help for Partner category is scored for contents that indicate support given out of a concern for one's own power rather than out of sympathy and compassion for the partner. However, one might argue that this category introduces communal contents into the implicit agency motive score, which might lead to biased results. Therefore, all major analyses of this article were repeated with a reduced score of the implicit agency motive, omitting the Help for Partner category. The two scores correlated at .95 and the results of all control analyses were very similar to the main analyses.

[2] Coefficient α for the implicit agency motive score was modest (.51 for women and .52 for men). However, internal consistency of TAT-like motive measures such as the PACT is typically low. It is plausible that the response processes in these tests are complex and do not follow the assumptions of classical test theory (e.g., dynamic fluctuations of responses across pictures, idiosyncratic instigating potentials of picture cues), which makes measures of internal consistency questionable indicators of test reliability. Thus, low internal consistency does not preclude validity of TAT-like measures (see Lang, 2014, for an elaborated account of this issue).

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations (Study 1)

Variables	Men		Women		Correlations				
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5
1. Implicit agency motive	4.01	2.04	4.45	2.12	.150**	.083	−.132**	−.230**	.162**
2. Explicit agency desire	4.02	1.00	4.29	0.96	.083	.204**	−.284**	−.293**	.085*
3. T1 SRQ	0.02	0.71	−0.01	0.75	−.289**	−.175*	.548**	.734**	−.411**
4. T2 SRQ	0.01	0.76	−0.03	0.80	−.223**	−.092	.618**	.611**	−.386**
5. Dyadic conflicts[a]	1.95	0.55	1.95	0.55	.157**	−.101*	−.398**	−.369**	—

Note. *N* varies between 204 and 548 because of missing T2 data. Male correlations are above the diagonal. Female correlations are below the diagonal. Correlations within couples are on the diagonal. Correlations of the implicit agency motive were controlled for word count. SRQ = subjective relationship quality; T1 = Time 1; T2 = Time 2.
[a] Because dyadic conflicts is a dyadic variable, *M* and *SD* are identical for men and women, and no within-couple correlation is reported.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

but this difference was mainly attributable to women's longer answers and was not significant after word count was controlled, $t(547) = 1.632$, $p = .103$, $d' = 0.05$. Because the raw motive scores were correlated with the length of the answers, $r = .28$, $p < .001$, word count was partialed out in the total sample before further analyses to avoid confounding with verbal fluency. The correlation of these corrected motive scores between partners was significant (see Table 1), indicating modest similarity of implicit agency motives within couples.

The *explicit agency motive* was measured with the Desire for Being Alone scale from the ABC of Social Desires questionnaire (Hagemeyer, Neyer, et al., 2013). Participants reported, on a 7-point scale (1 = *never*, 4 = *sometimes*, 7 = *always*), the frequency of appetitive (four items; e.g., "I prefer being alone") and aversive (four items; e.g., "I avoid being completely alone") experiences regarding solitude and self-reliance. Aversion items were reversed, and all eight items were averaged to obtain explicit motive scores. Internal consistencies were good ($\alpha = .83$ in men and .84 in women), and previous research established high 1-year stabilities of the scale ($r > .70$; Hagemeyer, Neyer, et al., 2013). As displayed in Table 1, women reported slightly stronger explicit agency motives than men, $t(547) = 5.201$, $p < .001$, $d' = 0.16$, and the between-partner correlation again indicated modestly similar motives within couples. However, as expected from dual motives theory, explicit and implicit agency motives were nearly unrelated within individuals.

Although they do not seem to address identical contents, both the direct and the indirect motive measure were developed to assess individual differences in the propensity to create distance to one's partner, which is a core aspect of relationship-specific agency motivation (Hagemeyer & Neyer, 2012; Hagemeyer, Neyer et al., 2013). To assess the explicit motive, this propensity could be directly addressed in a self-report questionnaire. To assess the implicit motive with the PACT, we identified, in a previous study, themes and expressions in fantasy stories about romantic relationships that reflect distance motivation (Hagemeyer & Neyer, 2012). These content categories comprised themes of power and independence in the relationship. An experimental validation study showed that both power and independence categories occurred more frequently in stories from participants who were primed with the motivation for solitude and distance to their partners compared with a control group (see Hagemeyer & Neyer, 2012, for a detailed description of PACT development). Thus, despite their obvious differences, both measures address the same core aspect of relationship-specific agency motives, but on different levels of representation (implicit vs. explicit).

Subjective relationship quality (SRQ). We view SRQ as a hierarchically organized multifaceted construct. It entails various evaluations of specific relationship aspects (e.g., commitment or sexuality), which can be diverging, but are all informed by a generalized evaluation of the relationship (see Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2000, for empirical support and a comparison with other conceptualizations of SRQ). We thus opted for an extensive measurement strategy and assessed various aspects of SRQ using single items and brief scales at T1 and T2.

At T1, SRQ was assessed with five variables: *General relationship satisfaction* and *sexual satisfaction* were measured with the items, respectively, "How satisfied are you with your relationship in general?" and "How satisfied are you with the sexuality in your relationship?" Both items were answered on an 11-point scale (0 = *not at all*, 10 = *a great deal*). *Sexual interest in the partner* was assessed with three items: "How often do you think of sex with your partner?," "How often do you feel sexual lust for your partner?," both rated on a 7-point frequency scale (1 = *never*, 4 = *about once a week*, 7 = *several times a day*), and "How strong is your lust for your current partner compared with your lust for other potential sex partners?," rated on a 7-point scale (1 = *more lust for others*, 7 = *more lust for partner*). The three items were *z*-standardized and averaged. *Commitment* to the partner was assessed with one item: "Could you imagine that your current partner is the one for the rest of your life?," rated on a 5-point scale (1 = *no, never*; 2 = *rather no*; 3 = *sometimes*; 4 = *rather yes*; 5 = *yes, fully so*). Finally, *perceived available support* was assessed with an item adapted from Asendorpf and Wilpers (1998): "If I have problems, I would turn to this person to talk about my problems." This item was rated for six types of potentially supporting persons (partner, mother, father, children, friends, colleagues) on a 5-point frequency scale (1 = *never*, 5 = *always*). Only the ratings concerning support from one's partner were used.

At T2, general relationship satisfaction, sexual satisfaction, sexual interest in the partner, and commitment were assessed in exactly the same way as at T1. However, perceived available support was not reassessed, but two additional aspects of relationship quality were measured. First, emotional closeness to the partner was measured with the item "How close (emotionally) to your partner are you currently feeling?," answered on a 7-point scale (1 = very distant, 7 = very close). Second, COR and LAT couples reported their satisfaction with

the living arrangement responding to the item "How satisfied are you with your current living arrangement?" on a 7-point scale (1 = not at all, 7 = completely).

To obtain comparable SRQ indices at T1 and T2, the four variables that were assessed at both measurement occasions—general relationship satisfaction, sexual satisfaction, sexual interest in the partner, and commitment—were *z*-standardized across men and women, and the standardized scores were averaged within each time point. For the T1-SRQ index, internal consistency was acceptable (ω = .73 for women and .69 for men),[3] and there was no significant mean sex difference, $t(547) = 0.957$, $p = .339$, $d' = 0.03$. The between-partner correlation (see Table 1) indicated substantial similarity in SRQ, but also individual variation within couples. The T2-SRQ index also had acceptable internal consistency (ω = .81 for women and .77 for men), showed no mean sex difference, $t(203) = 0.750$, $p = .452$, $d' = 0.04$, and the between-partner correlation was similar to T1. The correlations between the indices at T1 and T2 indicated high 1-year stability of individual differences in SRQ for both women and men (see Table 1).

Dyadic conflicts. The amount of dyadic conflicts was assessed at T1 in nine different domains derived from modified and amended categories from Argyle and Furnham's (1983) Sources of Conflict scale: Finances, Communication, Planning of Visits and Activities, Long-Term Life Planning, Other Persons (But Not Jealousy), Dealing With Other Potential Partners, Shared Responsibilities, Personal Problems, and Living Arrangement. Participants rated how often they experienced conflicts with their partners in each of these domains on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much*). The two partners' ratings in the nine conflict domains correlated between .24 and .53 (all *p*s <.001), indicating substantial agreement between partners, but also individual divergence because of subjective influences. Because we were interested in the actual amount of conflicts that characterizes a couple, we obtained a dyadic index by averaging both partners' reports (internal consistency ω = .84). As displayed in Table 1, amount of conflicts showed only modest correlations with SRQ, and is thus not statistically redundant as an additional indicator of relationship functioning.

Results and Brief Discussion

Analysis strategy. To test our two hypotheses, we employed logistic regression (for Hypothesis 1) and linear dyadic path models with multiple-group analysis (extensions of the actor–partner interdependence model; Kenny et al., 2006; for Hypothesis 2) using SPSS 22 and Mplus 7 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2012). All continuous variables (predictors, covariates, criteria) were *z*-standardized across men and women and across living arrangements. Resulting (unstandardized) coefficients can thus be interpreted as standardized in the total sample.

Covariates. To control for potential confounding variables, age, relationship duration, and the presence of additional cohabitants (e.g., children, parents, relatives, or friends who share the household with the participants) were entered as covariates in all analyses. The rationale for these controls is twofold. First, all three covariates showed differences *between* living arrangements in the present sample: LATs were, on average, younger than CORs ($M = 37.0$ years, $SD = 13.2$ vs. $M = 42.6$ years, $SD = 13.8$), $t(1{,}094) = 6.548$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.41$, reported shorter relationship durations ($M = 4.3$ years, $SD = 6.5$ vs. $M = 15.7$ years, $SD = 13.3$), $t(512.269) = 13.313$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.89$, and were more likely to live with additional cohabitants (57.9% vs. 43.4%), $\chi^2(1) = 11.004$, $p = .001$, Cramer's $V = .142$. Second, these variables showed associations with predictor (agency motives) and criterion variables (SRQ, dyadic conflicts) *within* the COR and LAT groups (*r* ranging from –.28 to .29). In order to avoid confounds on both levels, we controlled for age, relationship duration, and additional cohabitants in both the between-group and the within-group analyses. Like relationship duration, age was highly correlated between members of a couple ($r = .94$), and, for parsimony, average age was used as covariate. Additional cohabitants was entered as a dyadic dummy-coded variable (0 = no additional cohabitants, 1 = at least one additional cohabitant).

Sex differences. In order to determine whether men and women had to be distinguished in the dyadic analyses, we conducted a priori omnibus tests of sex differences as proposed by Kenny et al. (2006): Using structural equation modeling, all predictors and criteria of a given model are correlated with each other and each mean, each variance, and each covariance is set equal between the sexes. If this model fits the data well, further analyses can be conducted assuming indistinguishable partners, which increases parsimony and statistical power of the analyses. If the model does not fit the data, male and female variables have to be distinguished in further analyses.

Hypothesis 1: Selection of living arrangement. Hypothesis 1 stated that strong agency motives predict a preference for LAT over COR, especially in postreproductive couples. To test this hypothesis, we conducted a hierarchical logistic regression analysis of couples' living arrangement (COR vs. LAT) on their implicit and explicit agency motives and (post)reproductive age group. Age group was entered as a dyadic dummy variable (reproductive couples = women's age <40 were coded 0; postreproductive couples = women's age >39 were coded 1; see Heckhausen et al., 2001, for a similar demarcation of the developmental deadline for motherhood). As indicated by the omnibus test of sex differences, male and female motives had to be distinguished in the logistic regression model: $\chi^2(28) = 87.306$, $p < .001$, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.962, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .062. In the first step of the logistic regression, relationship duration and additional cohabitants were entered as covariates. Next, age group and both partners' agency motives were entered. This block of predictors made an additional significant contribution to the explanation of living arrangement above and beyond the covariates, $\chi^2(5) = 49.875$, $p < .001$. More specifically, the probability of being LAT was increased for the postreproductive group and for couples for which women reported a high explicit desire for agency (see Table 2). In a third step, the product interactions between motives and age group were added to the model, which rendered a further increase in predictive power, $\chi^2(4) = 16.310$, $p = .003$. Two interaction effects became significant (see Table 2). Women's implicit agency motive predicted an increased probability of LAT in postreproductive couples ($b = 0.344$, $p = .048$, $OR = 1.411$), but not in the reproductive group ($b = -0.126$, $p = .421$, $OR = 0.881$). Similarly, men's explicit

[3] Note that for the indices of subjective relationship quality and dyadic conflicts, we report coefficient ω instead of the more commonly used α. In contrast to α, ω does not rely on the assumption of essential τ-equivalence (i.e., that all items measure the underlying construct equally well). Because this assumption is likely untenable, especially in the case of heterogeneous scales such as these indices, α would tend to underestimate reliability, and ω is the more appropriate measure (K. Kelley & Cheng, 2012).

Table 2
Logistic Regression of Living Arrangement (COR vs. LAT) on (Post)Reproductive Age Group, and Agency Motives (Hypothesis 1)

Predictors	*b* (*SE*)	*p*	*OR*	95% CI
Constant	**−2.103** (0.396)	<.001	**0.122**	—
Age group	**0.869** (0.307)	.003	**2.385**	[1.387, 4.102]
Male implicit motive	−0.070 (0.127)	.572	0.932	[0.717, 1.212]
Female implicit motive	−0.091 (0.131)	.472	0.913	[0.704, 1.184]
Male explicit desire	0.094 (0.128)	.437	1.099	[0.844, 1.430]
Female explicit desire	**0.371** (0.124)	.002	**1.449**	[1.117, 1.879]
Male Implicit × Age Group	0.206 (0.280)	.433	1.229	[0.757, 1.997]
Female Implicit × Age Group	**0.562** (0.282)	.028	**1.755**	[1.106, 2.785]
Male Explicit × Age Group	**0.524** (0.288)	.048	**1.689**	[1.051, 2.716]
Female Explicit × Age Group	0.471 (0.335)	.119	1.601	[0.948, 2.705]

Note. COR was coded 0. LAT was coded 1. Reproductive age (women's age < 40 years) was coded 0. Postreproductive age (women's age > 39 years) was coded 1. Significant effects ($p < .05$) are printed in boldface. Not displayed: covariates relationship duration and additional cohabitants. COR = coresidence; LAT = living-apart-together; *b* = unstandardized regression weights; *SE* = bootstrapped standard errors of regression weights (10,000 resamples); *OR* = odds ratio; 95% CI = 95% confidence intervals of odds ratios.

agency motive predicted LAT in the postreproductive ($b = 0.468$, $p = .009$, $OR = 1.596$), but not in the reproductive age group ($b = 0.154$, $p = .327$, $OR = 1.167$). Finally, in a fourth step, we examined whether the interactions between implicit and explicit motives and the three-way interactions Implicit × Explicit × Age Group would make incremental contributions. This was not the case, $\chi^2(4) = 1.244$, $p = .871$. Thus, we dropped these interaction terms from the model. Steps 2 and 3 of the final logistic regression model, as depicted in Table 2, rendered a substantial prediction of living arrangement (combined change in Nagelkerke's $R^2 = .115$).

In summary, we found support for Hypothesis 1. After controlling for relationship duration and additional cohabitants, postreproductive couples were more than twice as likely to be LAT as reproductive couples. In addition, strong agency motives were related to an increased probability of being LAT. Women's explicit agentic desire was predictive irrespective of age, and their implicit motive was associated with being LAT only in postreproductive age. Men's explicit desire was associated with being LAT, again, only in postreproductive age. These findings corroborate the relevance of (post)reproductive age and agency motives for couples' selection of living arrangements. Both partners' motives contributed to the prediction of living arrangement. Women's explicit motive had a stronger simple effect than men's ($Z = 3.193$, $p = .001$), but no other sex difference between corresponding effects reached significance ($Z \leq 0.896$, $p \geq .370$).

Hypothesis 2: Moderation by living arrangement. We expected that living arrangement (LAT vs. COR) moderates intra- and interpersonal associations between agency motives and indicators of relationship functioning such that strong motives have more negative effects in COR relationships. To test this hypothesis, we ran three dyadic path models with multiple-group analysis, in which T1-SRQ, T2-SRQ, and amount of conflicts, respectively, were regressed on agency motives, controlling for age, relationship duration, and additional cohabitants.

Model 1: T1-SRQ. In Model 1, both partners' accounts of SRQ at T1 were regressed on both partners' concurrently assessed implicit and explicit agency motives and on the Implicit Motive × Explicit Motive interaction within persons. The a priori omnibus test of sex differences indicated that men and women had to be distinguished in the analysis, $\chi^2(20) = 88.516$, $p < .001$, CFI = 0.820, RMSEA = .079. A multiple-group analysis assuming all corresponding actor and partner effects of the motive variables on SRQ to be equal across COR and LAT couples did not fit the data well, and thus indicated overall moderation by living arrangement, $\chi^2(12) = 29.756$, $p = .003$, CFI = 0.945, RMSEA = .073. To determine which single effects in the model were moderated, we conducted further multiple-group analyses, each with one single effect constrained to be equal across CORs and LATs. Table 3 displays the results of chi-square difference tests from these models. Aside from significant group differences in the intercepts of men and women, these analyses showed that living arrangement significantly moderated four effects: The simple actor and partner effects of men's implicit motive and the actor and partner effects of men's Implicit × Explicit interaction.[4]

Inspection of the path coefficients from the unconstrained model (see Table 3) revealed that the moderation effects for the male

[4] Because relationship duration, age, and additional cohabitants were associated with living arrangement, the moderating effect of living arrangement could be attributable to these variables. To rule out such potential confounds, we reran Model 1 using propensity score matching to balance the COR and LAT groups with regard to the three covariates (Rosenbaum & Rubin, 1983; Thoemmes, 2012). A weighted multiple-group model assuming the four effects that were moderated by living arrangement in the original analysis to be equal across CORs and LATs did not yield a good fit, $\chi^2(4) = 17.485$, $p = .002$, CFI = .914, RMSEA = .119, thus confirming moderation by living arrangement in the balanced sample. Inspection of the path coefficients from the unconstrained model showed that the moderation was in the expected direction of stronger negative effects of agency motives in CORs than in LATs (see Table S8 of the online supplemental materials). Multiple-group tests of single-path moderation revealed that three of four moderation effects remained substantial in the balanced analysis, $\chi^2(1) \geq 3.128$, $p \leq .077$. Only the moderation of the actor effect of men's Implicit Motive × Explicit Motive interaction was reproduced as a nonsignificant trend, $\chi^2(1) = 1.289$, $p = .256$. In sum, men's agency motives had stronger negative actor and partner effects on SRQ in COR couples, even after group differences in relationship duration, age, and additional cohabitants were controlled. This supports our interpretation that the moderating effects of living arrangement are largely attributable to group differences in objective closeness and not to other group characteristics.

Table 3
Cross-Sectional Actor and Partner Effects of Agency Motives on Subjective Relationship Quality in COR and LAT Couples (Hypothesis 2, Model 1)

Predictors	Effects	COR			LAT			Group differences	
		b (*SE*)	*p*	95% CI	*b* (*SE*)	*p*	95% CI	$\chi^2(1)$	*p*
	Intercept M	0.062 (0.071)	.383	[−0.078, 0.201]	**−0.405** (0.128)	.002	[−0.664, −0.156]	**10.533**	.001
	Intercept F	−0.006 (0.081)	.942	[−0.172, 0.145]	**−0.385** (0.128)	.003	[−0.647, −0.141]	**6.821**	.009
Implicit motive	M → M	**−0.225** (0.050)	<.001	[−0.324, −0.130]	0.062 (0.069)	.371	[−0.077, 0.195]	**12.649**	<.001
	F → F	**−0.235** (0.058)	<.001	[−0.350, −0.122]	**−0.254** (0.072)	<.001	[−0.390, −0.106]	0.052	.821
	M → F	**−0.195** (0.058)	.001	[−0.310, −0.083]	0.023 (0.060)	.705	[−0.094, 0.143]	**6.825**	.009
	F → M	**−0.159** (0.049)	.001	[−0.259, −0.064]	**−0.163** (0.078)	.037	[−0.316, −0.013]	0.002	.964
Explicit desire	M → M	**−0.232** (0.052)	<.001	[−0.337, −0.133]	**−0.231** (0.061)	<.001	[−0.352, −0.110]	<0.001	.985
	F → F	**−0.134** (0.060)	.025	[−0.252, −0.016]	−0.060 (0.062)	.334	[−0.180, 0.065]	0.706	.401
	M → F	**−0.175** (0.056)	.002	[−0.284, −0.062]	−0.068 (0.072)	.341	[−0.211, 0.073]	1.645	.200
	F → M	−0.078 (0.054)	.148	[−0.186, 0.024]	0.054 (0.065)	.411	[−0.079, 0.178]	2.371	.124
Implicit × Explicit	M → M	**−0.147** (0.046)	.002	[−0.242, −0.056]	0.109 (0.075)	.149	[−0.053, 0.246]	**9.626**	.002
	F → F	0.001 (0.070)	.984	[−0.135, 0.138]]	0.003 (0.071)	.962	[−0.136, 0.141]	0.001	.982
	M → F	**−0.168** (0.054)	.002	[−0.271, −0.059]	0.074 (0.071)	.298	[−0.078, 0.199]	**8.139**	.004
	F → M	0.008 (0.056)	.892	[−0.107, 0.112]	0.007 (0.080)	.934	[−0.138, 0.178]	<0.001	.992

Note. M → F denotes the partner effect of male predictor on female outcome and vice versa. Significant coefficients ($p < .05$) are printed in boldface. Not displayed: covariates age, relationship duration, and additional cohabitants. COR = coresident couples; LAT = living-apart-together couples; *b* = unstandardized path coefficients; *SE* = bootstrapped standard errors (10,000 resamples); 95% CI = 95% bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals; M = male; F = female.

agency motives were all in the expected direction of stronger negative effects in COR couples. Specifically, simple actor and partner effects of men's implicit agency motive were significantly stronger in CORs. The corresponding effects of men's explicit motive tended to be more negative in CORs, but the group differences were not significant. In addition, the simple actor and partner effects of men's motives were further qualified by significant Implicit × Explicit interaction effects in COR couples. In LAT couples, by contrast, a nonsignificant trend for a positive actor interaction effect was observed. Figure 1 (Panels A and C) displays this pattern of results for the male agency motives. In COR, but not LAT couples, the overall negative actor effect of the implicit agency motive was increased if accompanied by a strong ($M + 1$ *SD*) explicit motive (simple slope $b = -0.372$, $p < .001$) and decreased in the presence of a weak ($M - 1$ *SD*) explicit motive ($b = -0.078$, $p = .224$; Panel A). The same was true for the corresponding partner effect ($b = -0.363$, $p < .001$, and $b = -0.027$, $p = .674$). Further, the average levels of SRQ as reported by women and men were higher in COR couples (see the intercepts in Table 3). However, in COR couples with men high in both implicit and explicit agency motives ($M + 1$ *SD*), male as well as female partners' predicted SRQ was even slightly lower than in the average LAT couple. The pattern of results emerging for women looked rather different (Figure 1, Panels B and D). First, women's implicit and explicit motives also had negative actor and partner effects on SRQ, but these effects were comparable in size across COR and LAT couples (see Table 3). Second, there were no significant Implicit × Explicit interaction effects of women's motives in neither COR nor LAT. Taken together, the amounts of variance explained by male and female motive variables in the unconstrained model above and beyond the covariates were markedly higher in COR than in LAT couples (17.7% in male and 15.6% in female SRQ vs. 9.9% and 8.2%, respectively).

These findings corroborate Hypothesis 2 for male, but not for female agency motives. For a further exploration of sex differences, we conducted additional multiple-group tests for all path coefficients that were significant for one sex, but not for the other, within the groups of COR and LAT. In CORs, this was the case for three paths (see Table 3). Whereas the partner effect of women's explicit motive was not significantly different from the effect of men's motive, $\chi^2(1) = 1.427$, $p = .232$, the actor and partner effects of the Implicit × Explicit interaction term both showed substantial sex differences, $\chi^2(1) \geq 3.694$, $p \leq .055$. In the LAT group, the actor and partner effects of the implicit agency motive, as well as the actor effect of the explicit motive, showed sex differences, all of which were at least marginally significant, $\chi^2(1) \geq 3.410$, $p \leq .065$. These findings imply that sex differences within both groups contributed to the sex-specific moderation effects of living arrangement.

Model 2: T2-SRQ. In the next step, we examined whether the cross-sectional results were replicable in a prospective analysis of SRQ assessed 1 year after motive assessment. Therefore, Model 2 was identical with Model 1, except that T1-SRQ was replaced with T2-SRQ. Again, the omnibus test showed significant sex differences, $\chi^2(20) = 79.423$, $p < .001$, CFI = 0.729, RMSEA = .074, and thus male and female motives were distinguished in Model 2. The multiple-group analysis with all corresponding effects of the motive variables set equal across COR and LAT couples indicated significant group differences in the pattern of associations between agency motives and SRQ, $\chi^2(12) = 30.671$, $p = .002$, CFI = 0.878, RMSEA = .096. Subsequent multiple-group tests of single-effect moderation revealed the same four significant group differences that were found in Model 1 (see Table 4). In addition, the moderation of the actor effect of men's explicit motive was marginally significant.

Inspection of the path coefficients from the unconstrained model (see Table 4) revealed a pattern that was very similar to the cross-sectional results. Again, stronger negative actor and partner effects of men's implicit motives and the Implicit × Explicit interaction were observed in COR compared with LAT couples.

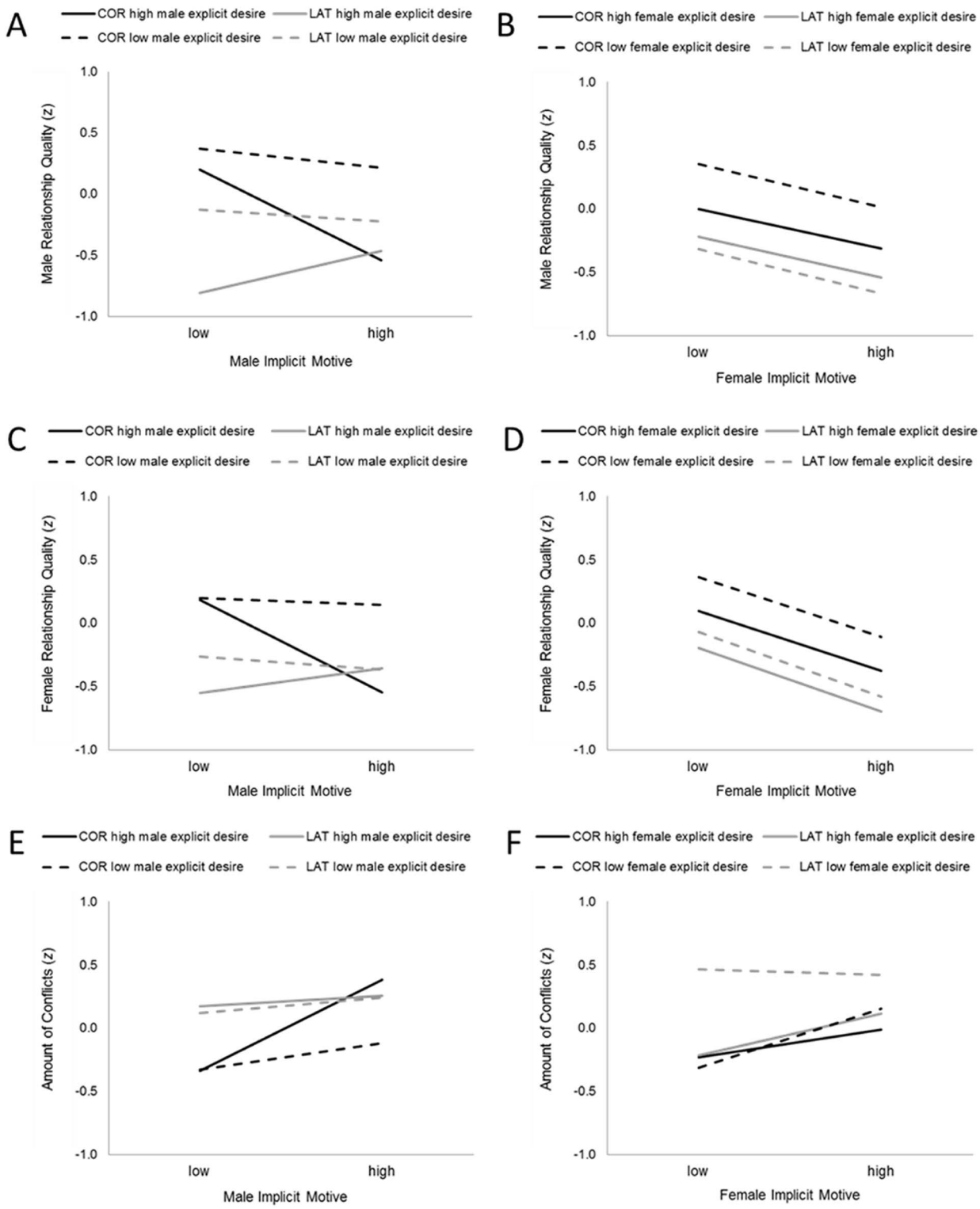

Figure 1. Cross-sectional joint and interactional effects of implicit and explicit agency motives on SRQ and amount of conflicts in COR and LAT couples (Hypothesis 2). Results are plotted for predictor and moderator values one standard deviation below and above the grand mean. Panel A: Male actor effects on SRQ. Panel B: Partner effects of female motives on male SRQ. Panel C: Partner effects of male motives on female SRQ. Panel D: Female actor effects on SRQ. Panel E: Male effects on dyadic conflicts. Panel F: Female effects on dyadic conflicts. SRQ = subjective relationship quality; COR = coresidence; LAT = living-apart-together.

Table 4
Prospective Actor and Partner Effects of Agency Motives on Subjective Relationship Quality 1 Year After Motive Assessment in COR and LAT Couples (Hypothesis 2, Model 2)

		COR			LAT			Group differences	
Predictors	Effects	*b* (*SE*)	*p*	95% CI	*b* (*SE*)	*p*	95% CI	$\chi^2(1)$	*p*
	Intercept M	−0.041 (0.096)	.667	[−0.231, 0.147]	−0.327 (0.273)	.231	[−0.933, 0.151]	1.255	.263
	Intercept F	−0.105 (0.104)	.313	[−0.315, 0.095]	−0.201 (0.234)	.390	[−0.696, 0.227]	0.163	.686
Implicit motive	M → M	**−0.310** (0.067)	<.001	[−0.443, −0.180]	0.115 (0.129)	.373	[−0.120, 0.395]	**10.267**	.001
	F → F	**−0.211** (0.068)	.002	[−0.344, −0.075]	−0.164 (0.154)	.289	[−0.435, 0.169]	0.111	.739
	M → F	**−0.216** (0.066)	.001	[−0.348, −0.090]	0.109 (0.131)	.406	[−0.124, 0.394]	**5.940**	.015
	F → M	**−0.139** (0.065)	.031	[−0.268, −0.013]	−0.049 (0.154)	.748	[−0.335, 0.272]	0.367	.545
Explicit desire	M → M	**−0.290** (0.065)	<.001	[−0.420, −0.166]	−0.044 (0.149)	.767	[−0.327, 0.256]	3.731	.053
	F → F	−0.117 (0.072)	.103	[−0.260, 0.023]	0.036 (0.165)	.829	[−0.276, 0.367]	1.080	.299
	M → F	**−0.183** (0.068)	.007	[−0.317, −0.053]	−0.104 (0.116)	.370	[−0.338, 0.115]	0.403	.526
	F → M	−0.008 (0.068)	.907	[−0.140, 0.125]	−0.131 (0.155)	.398	[−0.411, 0.191]	0.632	.427
Implicit × Explicit	M → M	**−0.215** (0.065)	.001	[−0.348, −0.092]	0.190 (0.143)	.182	[−0.105, 0.458]	**9.655**	.002
	F → F	−0.027 (0.071)	.702	[−0.166, 0.116]	−0.170 (0.188)	.365	[−0.507, 0.219]	1.006	.316
	M → F	**−0.194** (0.061)	.002	[−0.313, −0.071]	0.072 (0.122)	.556	[−0.178, 0.311]	**4.153**	.042
	F → M	−0.021 (0.074)	.778	[−0.152, 0.139]	−0.096 (0.168)	.570	[−0.419, 0.251]	0.227	.634

Note. M → F denotes the partner effect of male predictor on female outcome and vice versa. Significant coefficients ($p < .05$) are printed in boldface. Not displayed: covariates age, relationship duration, and additional cohabitants. COR = coresident couples; LAT = living-apart-together couples; *b* = unstandardized path coefficients; *SE* = bootstrapped standard errors (10,000 resamples); 95% CI = 95% bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals; M = male; F = female.

The additional trend for moderation of the male explicit actor effect was also in line with Hypothesis 2, as men's explicit agency motive had a negative effect on SRQ in COR, but not LAT couples. Women's agency motives showed significant negative effects on SRQ in COR couples that were similar to those observed in Model 1. As also observed in Model 1, none of these effects were moderated by living arrangement. With few exceptions, all path coefficients in both groups fell within the boundaries of the 95% confidence intervals obtained in the cross-sectional Model 1. Thus, the pattern of within-group associations between agency motives and SRQ from Model 1 was very well reproduced despite the time lag of 1 year. This highlights the stability of the observed relations between agency motives and SRQ. The total amount of variance in T2-SRQ explained by male and female agency motives was again markedly higher in COR than in LAT couples (24.4% in male and 18.0% in female SRQ vs. 10.6% and 6.4%, respectively).

Having established temporally stable group differences in motive-SRQ associations, we turned to the prediction of differential change in SRQ. To this end, male and female accounts of SRQ at T1 were added as covariates to Model 2. Significant change effects would support our assumption of a causal pathway from agency motives to SRQ. However, given the high stability of SRQ (see Table 1), we did not expect to find large change effects. Accordingly, the multiple-group test of overall moderation did not reach significance, $\chi^2(12) = 18.122$, $p = .112$, CFI = .985, RMSEA = .055. Subsequent multiple group tests of single-effect moderation revealed one significant group difference. In line with Hypothesis 2, men's explicit agency desire predicted decreases in their own SRQ in COR couples ($b = -0.110$, $p = .023$), but not in LAT couples ($b = 0.143$, $p = .242$), $\chi^2(1) = 6.821$, $p = .009$. This moderation effect was not observed in the cross-sectional Model 1, which might be explained by shared method variance between the Explicit Desire scale and the SRQ index that would enhance associations in both groups, thereby obscuring the true group difference. No other path coefficient in neither COR nor LAT couples reached the 5% level of significance, but two additional findings should be mentioned. First, and in line with Hypothesis 2, men's implicit agency motive tended to predict decreases in their own SRQ in COR couples ($b = -0.097$, $p = .073$), but not LAT couples ($b = 0.085$, $p = .433$), $\chi^2(1) = 3.372$, $p = .066$. Second, there was another marginal trend for moderation concerning the partner effect of women's explicit motive, $\chi^2(1) = 3.826$, $p = .051$. However, this trend was inconclusive, because the partner effect was not even marginally significant in either group. A full account of the change results can be found in the online supplemental materials (Table S1). In sum, men's agency motives tended to predict decreases in their own SRQ in COR, but not LAT relationships, which was consistent with the cross-sectional analyses and further corroborates Hypothesis 2.

Model 3: Dyadic conflicts. Next, we examined the cross-sectional associations between agency motives and the amount of dyadic conflicts in COR and LAT couples. Model 3 comprised the same covariates and predictors as Model 1 and Model 2, and amount of conflicts was entered as a dyadic criterion variable. The omnibus test of sex differences was significant again, $\chi^2(15) = 87.089$, $p < .001$, CFI = 0.394, RMSEA = .094, and thus male and female predictors had to be distinguished. The multiple-group model with all corresponding effects of the motive variables set equal between LAT and COR couples did not yield a good fit, $\chi^2(6) = 19.204$, $p = .004$, CFI = 0.813, RMSEA = .090, indicating overall moderation by living arrangement. Further multiple-group analyses showed that the effects of men's implicit motive and women's explicit motive on dyadic conflicts were significantly moderated by living arrangement (see Table 5).

The path coefficients from the unconstrained model displayed in Table 5 indicated that these moderations were in the expected direction. Men's implicit agency motive predicted an increased amount of conflicts in COR, but not LAT relationships. This

Table 5
Cross-Sectional Effects of Agency Motives on the Amount of Dyadic Conflicts (Hypothesis 2, Model 3)

Predictors	Effects	COR			LAT			Group differences	
		b (*SE*)	*p*	95% CI	*b* (*SE*)	*p*	95% CI	$\chi^2(1)$	*p*
	Intercept	−0.100 (0.070)	.151	[−0.238, 0.035]	0.197 (0.139)	.156	[−0.080, 0.456]	**4.052**	.044
Implicit motive	M	**0.231** (0.055)	<.001	[0.122, 0.337]	0.051 (0.059)	.388	[−0.065, 0.167]	**4.598**	.032
	F	**0.171** (0.052)	.001	[0.066, 0.270]	0.073 (0.059)	.219	[−0.043, 0.190]	1.325	.250
Explicit desire	M	**0.122** (0.054)	.025	[0.015, 0.227]	0.018 (0.066)	.781	[−0.111, 0.144]	1.514	.219
	F	−0.020 (0.056)	.720	[−0.130, 0.092]	**−0.247** (0.077)	.001	[−0.394, −0.092]	**6.438**	.011
Implicit × Explicit	M	**0.127** (0.050)	.011	[0.030, 0.227]	−0.009 (0.065)	.889	[−0.139, 0.120]	2.538	.111
	F	−0.061 (0.060)	.315	[−0.172, 0.063]	0.094 (0.062)	.132	[−0.040, 0.207]	2.852	.091

Note. Significant coefficients ($p < .05$) are printed in boldface. Not displayed: covariates age, relationship duration, and additional cohabitants. COR = coresident couples; LAT = living-apart-together couples; *b* = unstandardized path coefficients; *SE* = bootstrapped standard errors (10,000 resamples); 95% CI = 95% bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals; M = male; F = female.

association was further qualified by a significant Implicit × Explicit interaction in CORs. Figure 1 (Panel E) illustrates this pattern of results. In COR couples, the overall positive effect of men's implicit agency motive on conflicts was stronger in the presence of a strong ($M + 1$ *SD*) explicit motive (simple slope $b = 0.358$, $p < .001$) than in the presence of a weak ($M - 1$ *SD*) explicit motive ($b = 0.104$, $p = .130$). Further, in LAT couples, the average amount of conflicts was higher (see the intercept in Table 5), and male agency motives were no significant predictors. However, in COR couples, the combination of high scores ($M + 1$ *SD*) on implicit and explicit motives in men predicted amounts of conflicts that slightly exceeded the average level of conflicts in LAT couples. Regarding men's motives, the pattern of results for dyadic conflicts was thus very similar to the findings for SRQ. The findings for women's motives, again, looked different (see Table 5 and Figure 1, Panel F). In LAT couples, a strong explicit motive was related to lower amounts of conflicts, whereas there was no significant effect in CORs. Although this is plausible, no comparable effects were found in the other models, and thus this effect should be interpreted with caution. There was also a marginally significant moderation of women's Implicit × Explicit interaction effect (see Table 5). However, because this interaction did not reach significance within either group it is not interpreted. Overall, male and female agency motives explained more variance in COR than in LAT relationships (11.4% vs. 7.0%).

In summary, consistent with the findings for SRQ, men's agency motives tended to have stronger effects on dyadic conflicts in COR couples than in LAT couples. Diverging from SRQ, the female explicit motive predicted lower amounts of conflicts in LATs, but not CORs. If this effect is reliable, it would point to the possibility that agency motives might have even beneficial effects for couples, if the contextual conditions are right. Finally, we explored sex differences in the path coefficients employing the same strategy as in Model 1. In the LAT group, the effect of women's explicit agency motive differed from the male motive, $\chi^2(1) = 7.310$, $p = .007$. In the COR group, this was not the case, $\chi^2(1) = 2.709$, $p = .100$, but the implicit × explicit interaction effect showed a significant sex difference, $\chi^2(1) = 5.679$, $p = .017$. Thus, as observed for SRQ, significant sex differences in both groups contributed to the sex-specific moderation effects of living arrangement.

Mediation analysis. In a final step, we specified a variant of Model 1, in which dyadic conflicts were added as mediators of the paths from agency motives to SRQ in the groups of COR and LAT. The results for COR couples showed that eight of the nine significant effects observed in Model 1 (see Table 3) were mediated by dyadic conflicts (indirect effects *ab* ranging from −0.111 to −0.053, $p \leq .029$; see Table S2 of the online supplemental materials for detailed results). However, for six of these mediated paths, the direct effects remained significant (*b* ranging from −0.180 to −0.092, $p \leq .022$), indicating that the negative effects of agency motives on SRQ cannot be fully explained by increased dyadic conflicts. In the LAT group, by contrast, none of the three significant effects from Model 1 were mediated by dyadic conflicts (*ab* ranging from −0.018 to −0.005, $p \geq .258$). These findings further highlight the differential role of couples' living arrangements for the expression of agency motives, as negative associations with SRQ in CORs are partially grounded in different processes than the corresponding effects in LATs.

Supplemental analyses. To further corroborate the robustness and generalizability of the findings regarding Hypothesis 2, we conducted a number of supplemental analyses. First, we reran Model 1 and Model 2 using all information on SRQ that was assessed at T1 and T2. In these analyses, the T1-SRQ index comprised five measures (*perceived available support* was added), and the T2-SRQ index comprised six measures (*emotional closeness* and *satisfaction with the living arrangement* were added). The results were nearly identical to the original analyses. In both models, all significant moderation effects were replicated (see Tables S3 and S4 of the online supplemental materials for detailed results). This highlights the generalizability of the moderating function of living arrangement across different operationalizations of SRQ.

Second, we tested variants of Models 1 through 3 in which implicit and explicit agency motives were replaced with the complementary communal motives as assessed with the PACT (Hagemeyer & Neyer, 2012) and the ABC scales (Hagemeyer, Neyer, et al., 2013), respectively. The multiple-group analyses of the cross-sectional (Model 1) and prospective (Model 2) associations between communal motives and SRQ showed no significant overall moderations by living arrangement, $\chi^2(12) = 9.703$, $p = .642$, CFI = 1.000, RMSEA = .000, and $\chi^2(12) = 10.625$, $p = .561$,

CFI = 1.000, RMSEA = .000, respectively. Inspection of the unconstrained paths in CORs and LATs mainly revealed positive actor and partner effects of the explicit communal motive on SRQ that were of comparable size in both groups (see Hagemeyer, Neberich, et al., 2013, for related analyses of the present data on communal motives). The analysis of dyadic conflicts (Model 3) revealed significant overall moderation by living arrangement, $\chi^2(6) = 14.006$, $p = .003$, CFI = 0.954, RMSEA = .070, but the group-specific patterns of effects were different from the analysis of agency motives (see Table S5 of the online supplemental materials). These findings have two implications. First, the group-specific associations found for agentic motives cannot be attributed to overlap with their communal counterparts. Second, the group differences observed for agency motives are not attributable to a general effect of higher interdependence in COR relationships that would increase the effects of all relevant personality dispositions.

Finally, we specified moderated actor–partner interdependence models using multilevel regression as an alternative analysis strategy to reproduce the cross-sectional and prospective findings from Model 1 and Model 2 concerning SRQ (Kenny et al., 2006). Complementing the multiple-group analyses, the multilevel approach provides (a) controls of between-group (but not within-group) differences in the three covariates, and (b) direct tests of all Predictor × Sex interactions. The results of the cross-sectional multilevel model fully confirmed the findings from Model 1 (see Table S6 of the online supplemental materials). Most notably, the four-way interaction term Sex × Living Arrangement × Implicit Motive × Explicit Motive showed significant actor and partner effects ($b = 0.066$, $p = .037$, and $b = 0.063$, $p = .043$, respectively). The results of the prospective model were similar, albeit that the partner effect of the four-way interaction was marginally significant (see Table S7 of the online supplemental materials). Thus, the sex-specific patterns of moderation by living arrangement were robust, irrespective of the methodological approach.

Summary. The findings concerning Hypothesis 2 can be summed up as follows. First, both implicit and explicit agency motives had independent and interactional effects on SRQ and dyadic conflicts as indicators of relationship functioning. Second, negative effects of agency motives on relationship functioning were, as expected, more pronounced in COR couples than in LAT couples. Third, this moderation was mainly found for men's motives; women's explicit motives overall had fewer negative effects on relationship functioning than men's, and only one effect of women's motives was moderated by living arrangement. Thus, across different indicators of relationship functioning and cross-sectional and prospective analyses, Hypothesis 2 was consistently confirmed for men's, but not for women's, agency motives. The benefits of the greater objective closeness provided by COR seems to be diminished in the presence of congruently strong implicit and explicit agency motives in men.

Study 2

Study 1 exclusively addressed the dispositional level of agency motives and thus focused on between-couple differences. To get a more comprehensive picture, we conducted a 2-week dyadic diary study to examine the interplay between agentic motivational states, objective closeness, and relationship functioning at the within-couple level. It is noteworthy that the within-couple perspective of Study 2 is complementary to the between-couple analyses of Study 1, and renders additional insights into relationship processes that cannot be observed with the between-couple approach of Study 1 (Molenaar, 2004). In order to establish a link between the two studies, however, the first research question of Study 2 addressed the between-couple level, namely, whether typical agentic motivational states in COR and LAT relationships could be predicted by dispositional agency motives (Hypothesis 3). In particular, we focused on a motivational state in which persons long for more agency, which we will henceforward call *agency appetence*. Second, we investigated, on the within-couple level, whether the interaction between daily agency appetence and objective closeness was predictive of daily relationship satisfaction (Hypothesis 4).

Hypothesis 3: Agency Motives Predict Daily Agency Appetence, Especially in COR Relationships

A defining feature of motive disposition is the propensity to be in a specific motivational state (Atkinson, 1981; McAdams & Constantian, 1983). Hence, dispositional agency motives were expected to predict the mean level of daily agentic motivational states in our diary study. However, dynamic theories of human motivation make specific predictions *when* an association between a disposition and corresponding motivational states should be expected (Atkinson, 1981; Bischof, 1975, 1993). According to these theories, the current motivational activation depends on the discrepancy between a set point (the need or motive strength) and the current level of need satisfaction. If the current level is below the set point, a motivational activation is triggered with the goal to reduce the discrepancy. If the goal is achieved, consummatory actions or experiences reduce the motivational activation (see also Kumashiro et al., 2008, for a similar motivational mechanism applied to the regulation of personal vs. relational concerns). Environmental factors play an important role in this process, because they can foster or hinder immediate need satisfaction. For example, a person with a strong dispositional agency motive might rarely experience the corresponding state of agency appetence when he or she is able to satisfy the need immediately. In contrast, a person with a strong agency motive who lives in an environment that hinders the satisfaction of that need will soon experience a state of appetence.

Applied to our current study, the relationship environment provided by different living arrangements (COR vs. LAT) is expected to interact with the strength of agency motives in the prediction of motivational states. Specifically, we expected that agency appetence would be better predicted by agency motives in COR couples, because living together provides more obligatory objective closeness, which makes the satisfaction of agentic needs more difficult. Comparable with Study 1, we tested Hypothesis 3 for implicit and explicit agency motives and the Implicit × Explicit interaction.

Hypothesis 4: Daily Relationship Satisfaction Is Predicted by the Interaction of Objective Closeness and Motivational States

The overarching assumption of the present investigation was that relationship functioning depends on the match or mismatch between

agency motives and objective closeness. Hypothesis 4 addresses this assumption at the daily within-couple level. We expected relationship functioning within couples to be poor when a mismatch between the individual agency appetence and the actual objective closeness occurred. More specifically, relationship satisfaction was expected to decrease on days when high amounts of time spent with one's partner were counteracted by high agency motivation. In addition, we hypothesized that this association is most pronounced in COR relationships, because the average amount of time spent with the partner is higher, and much of the time spent together in COR relationships is likely obligatory proximity (e.g., routine actions like getting dressed, having breakfast, watching one's favorite TV show, etc., are usually carried out with the partner nearby). This makes the regulation of closeness in accordance with one's needs more difficult, and thus increases the probability of experiencing dissatisfaction and frustration.

Method

Participants and procedure. A subsample of 106 couples from Study 1 participated in the 2-week diary study (48 COR, 58 LAT). Couples who had participated in Study 1 were invited to take part in the diary study and selected for a balanced number of COR and LAT couples. Participants were compensated with €40 per couple and an individual, confidential feedback about the trajectory of their relationship quality across the diary-study period. The average age was 40.8 years (SD = 13.7, ranging from 18 to 72), and the average relationship duration was 7.8 years (SD = 9.5 years, ranging from 5 months to 40 years). Thus, couples who took part in the diary study had significantly shorter relationships compared with nonparticipating couples from Study 1, $t(546) = 3.219$, $p = .001$, $d = 0.336$, probably because of oversampling of LAT couples.

The diary data were completely assessed online. For each couple, the assessment period started on a Monday and ended on Sunday 13 days later. The first and the last day were used for pre- and postdiary questions that are not included in the current analyses. Thus, the diary lasted for 12 days, from a Tuesday to a Saturday. Each partner received an individual access code for each day of assessment by e-mail that expired after answering the required questions. To ensure confidentiality and some control about the assessment situation, participants were instructed to answer all questions of the day at once when the partner was not present. During the diary phase, the access codes were sent at 6:00 p.m., and participants were instructed to answer the questions between 8:00 p.m. and noon of the next day. Analyses of the log-in times showed that 64% of the participants reported on a day before 2:00 a.m. the next day, and 96% before noon of the next day.

Missing data. The study design consisted of 106 couples × 2 persons × 12 days = 2,544 observations. Five days (0.39%) were missing completely, which reduced the final data set to 2,534 observations. Other missing values were rare (<2.5% for each variable) and were excluded on a per-analysis basis.

Background data. From the data of Study 1, the following variables were used in the present analyses: implicit relationship-specific agency motive (assessed with the PACT), explicit desire for being alone (eight items, response scale 1 to 7), age, relationship duration, and additional cohabitants (see Study 1 for details).

Daily measures. To assess agentic motivational states, participants completed the item "The amount of time I had for myself today was . . .,"[5] with a rating on a 7-point scale (−3 = *too little*, 0 = *just right*, 3 = *too much*). Ratings <0 indicated agency appetence, and ratings >0 indicated agency aversion. To obtain a linear measure of agency appetence, ratings of 1 to 3 were set to 0, and ratings of −3 to −1 were reversed. Daily relationship satisfaction was measured with the item "How satisfied with your relationship are you today?," rated on an 11-point scale (0 = *not at all*, 10 = *a great deal*). Finally, participants reported the amount of time spent together with the partner on a given day in hours. It was treated as a dyadic variable (i.e., we used the average of both partners' reports, which were nearly identical), and the maximum was set to 18 hr (i.e., 24 hr excluding sleeping time).

Table 6
Descriptive Statistics of the Daily Measures (Study 2)

Measures	Men		Women	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Hours spent together (0–18)[a]	5.96	4.94	5.96	4.94
Relationship satisfaction (0–10)	7.60	2.29	7.65	2.43
% of days with agency appetence rating > 0	24.86	43.24	36.15	48.06
Agency appetence (0–3)	0.37	0.72	0.63	0.96

[a] Because hours spent together is a dyadic variable, *M* and *SD* are identical for men and women.

Results and Brief Discussion

Mean differences. Table 6 shows descriptive statistics of the daily measures. Before testing our Hypotheses, we examined using multilevel models mean differences between living arrangements, sex, or between specific cells of living arrangement and sex. For the sake of brevity, we only report the results for group differences at $p < .10$. As expected, COR couples spent on average more daily hours together than LAT couples (M = 7.85, SD = 4.56 vs. M = 4.40, SD = 4.69 hr), $t(104.19) = 7.52$, $p < .001$. Thus, COR relationships were indeed characterized by higher objective closeness. Furthermore, average daily relationship satisfaction tended to be higher in COR couples than in LAT couples (M = 7.90, SD = 2.13 vs. M = 7.39, SD = 2.52), $t(103.90) = 1.839$, $p = .069$, which was in line with the results from Study 1. Finally, there was a significant sex difference in agency appetence. Irrespective of living arrangement, women experienced agency appetence on more days (see Table 6), $t(2{,}380.30) = 5.504$, $p < .001$, and made higher appetence ratings, $t(2{,}379.00) = 7.007$, $p < .001$, than men.

Analysis strategy. The dyadic diary data were analyzed with multilevel models (Bolger & Laurenceau, 2013) using the lme4 package (Bates, Maechler, Bolker, & Walker, 2014) for the R Statistical Environment (R Core Team, 2014). This statistical approach models the within-person causal process at Level 1, treats couples as random factors at Level 2, accounts for dyadic nonindependence of the couple members, and allows for disentangling within-person and between-person processes.

[5] The original German wording was "Die Zeit, die ich heute für mich allein hatte, war mir . . .," which implies a focus on the individual self and privacy, thus reflecting a core aspect of relationship-specific agency motivation.

It has been suggested that all within-person intercepts and slopes should be allowed to vary randomly between persons, which yields a conservative approach that preserves Type I error rates (D. J. Barr, Levy, Scheepers, & Tily, 2013). This approach, however, has also been criticized, as it involves estimations from a large number of variances, which can lead to degenerate variance–covariance matrices with small data sets (Pinheiro & Bates, 2000). In our analyses, random slopes frequently led to convergence problems. Thus, we fixed the slopes and only included a random intercept for couples to control for dyadic nonindependence.

To keep the multilevel models parsimonious, we fitted the models to the data in a stepwise procedure, testing whether additional blocks of potential predictors (e.g., interactions with sex) increased the model fit. Model comparisons were conducted via chi-square difference likelihood ratio tests and the difference in Akaike Information Criterion (ΔAIC; Burnham, Anderson, & Huyvaert, 2011). In general, the model with the smaller AIC shows a better fit to the data. Rough guidelines (e.g., Burnham & Anderson, 2002) suggest that an AIC difference ≤2 is regarded as marginal, and both models fit roughly equally well. If $4 < \Delta AIC < 7$, one would favor the model with the smaller AIC, but not discard the other model yet. Models with ΔAIC >10 have essentially no support.

Centering. Agency appetence, which is a central variable in the analyses, has a natural zero point: Zero describes a day in which no appetence was experienced, and positive values describe an increasing appetence with a maximum value of 3. The number of hours partners spent together was a dyadic variable and centered at Level 1 within couples (Bolger & Laurenceau, 2013). Hence, the Level 1 effect of hours spent together refers to deviations from a couple's typical level. The dependent variable daily relationship satisfaction was kept in its original metric ranging from 0 to 10. All variables on person level were *z*-standardized across men and women.

Covariates. We included *time* as a covariate on Level 1 in all models. Although we were not primarily interested in temporal change, it is necessary to include this variable to control for possibly spurious effects attributable to third variables (Bolger & Laurenceau, 2013). For this purpose, *time* was centered at the middle of the measurement period and rescaled such that one unit expresses 1 week. Furthermore, in line with the analyses of Study 1, mean-centered age and relationship duration, as well as effect-coded sex and additional cohabitants, were entered as covariates in all models.

Sex differences. We made no a priori predictions about sex differences in the hypothesized effects. Thus, the multilevel models were initially specified irrespective of sex. The contributions of the interactions between predictors and sex were tested in a subsequent step to explore sex differences. If these interaction terms did not yield a better model fit, they were omitted for parsimony.

Hypothesis 3: Agency motives predict agency appetence, especially in COR relationships. For the prediction of average agency appetence, we fitted four nested models with increasing numbers of predictors to the data. The baseline model included the covariates time, sex, age, relationship duration, and additional cohabitants. Next, we added the focal predictors implicit and explicit agency motives, living arrangement, and the Motive × Living Arrangement two-way interactions. This model had a significantly better fit than the baseline model, $\Delta\chi^2(5) = 34.4$, $p < .001$, $\Delta AIC = 24.4$. Next, the interactions between sex and all predictor variables were added, which further increased the model fit, $\Delta\chi^2(5) = 55.5$, $p < .001$, $\Delta AIC = 45.5$. Thus, sex was retained in the model as a moderating variable. Finally, we added the interaction between implicit and explicit motives along with the three-way and four-way interactions between the motives, living arrangement, and sex. This last block of variables made no further significant contribution to the prediction of agency appetence, $\Delta\chi^2(4) = 2.1$, $p = .722$, $\Delta AIC = -5.9$, and was thus excluded from the model.

Table 7 shows the results of the final model. There were significant effects of living arrangement and the explicit agency motive. However, these simple effects were further qualified by significant interaction effects. The explicit motive interacted with sex, and living arrangement interacted with sex and the implicit

Table 7
Multilevel Model for the Prediction of Average Daily Agency Appetence by Implicit and Explicit Agency Motive Dispositions, Living Arrangement, and Sex (Hypothesis 3)

Predictors	*b* (*SE*)	*p*	95% CI
Intercept	**0.573** (0.060)	<.001	[0.460, 0.699]
Sex (M = −1; F = 1)	**0.097** (0.018)	<.001	[0.060, 0.131]
Living arrangement (LAT = −1; COR = 1)	**0.114** (0.046)	.014	[0.024, 0.202]
Implicit motive	0.031 (0.023)	.173	[−0.015, 0.076]
Explicit desire	**0.117** (0.027)	<.001	[0.069, 0.159]
Living Arrangement × Implicit Motive	0.040 (0.029)	.079	[−0.008, 0.089]
Living Arrangement × Explicit Motive	0.026 (0.028)	.262	[−0.024, 0.071]
Sex × Living Arrangement	−0.023 (0.018)	.185	[−0.061, 0.012]
Sex × Implicit Motive	**−0.113** (0.023)	<.001	[−0.161, −0.068]
Sex × Explicit Motive	**0.046** (0.023)	.028	[0.005, 0.088]
Sex × Living Arrangement × Implicit Motive	**−0.128** (0.022)	<.001	[−0.172, −0.085]
Sex × Living Arrangement × Explicit Motive	0.026 (0.021)	.218	[−0.015, 0.066]

Note. Significant coefficients ($p < .05$) are printed in boldface. Not displayed: covariates time, age, relationship duration, and additional cohabitants. *b* = unstandardized regression weights; *SE* = standard errors of regression weights; 95% CI = 95% bootstrap confidence intervals; M = male; F = female; COR = coresident couples; LAT = living-apart-together couples.

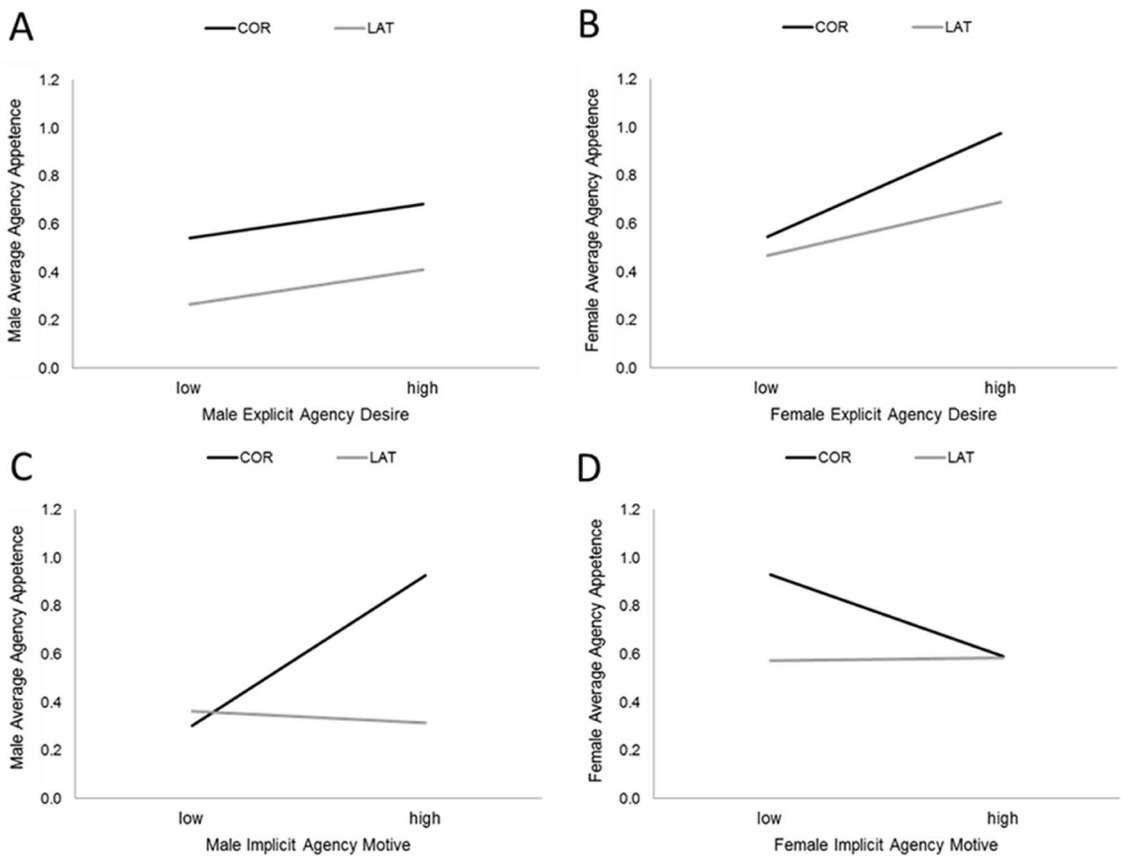

Figure 2. Prediction of average daily agency appetence by explicit and implicit agency motives in COR and LAT relationships (Hypothesis 3). Results were plotted for predictor values one standard deviation below and above the grand mean. Panel A: Male effects of explicit agency desire on agency appetence in COR and LAT couples. Panel B: Female effects of explicit agency desire on agency appetence in COR and LAT couples. Panel C: Male effects of implicit agency motive on agency appetence in COR and LAT couples. Panel D: Female effects of implicit agency motive on agency appetence in COR and LAT couples. COR = coresidence; LAT = living-apart-together.

motive in the prediction of agency appetence.[6] Figure 2 displays this pattern of results. First, the explicit agency motive was positively related to agency appetence, and this association was stronger in women (simple slope $b = 0.162$, $p < .001$) than in men ($b = 0.071$, $p = .018$; Panels A and B). Living arrangement was not a significant moderator, but there was a nonsignificant trend indicating that the stronger effect of the female explicit motive was largely attributable to women in COR relationships. Second, the implicit agency motive predicted higher agency appetence only for men in COR relationships ($b = 0.312$, $p < .001$; Panel C). In COR women, unexpectedly, this association showed a negative tendency ($b = -0.169$, $p = .001$; Panel D). In LATs, there was no significant association between the implicit agency motive and agency appetence in neither women ($b = 0.006$, $p = .875$) nor men ($b = -0.024$, $p = .595$; Panels C and D).

In sum, this pattern of results lends partial support to Hypothesis 3. As expected, dispositional agency motives were significantly linked to agentic motivational states. However, the expected context sensitivity was found only for the implicit motive disposition and only in men.

Hypothesis 4: Daily relationship satisfaction is predicted by the interaction of objective closeness and motivational states. For the prediction of daily relationship satisfaction, we specified a lag model using the agency appetence rating from yesterday (t_{-1}) in interaction with today's (t_0) hours spent with the partner to predict today's (t_0) relationship satisfaction. This was the most reasonable causal link, as the questionnaire ratings were given at the end of each day. In addition, we controlled for yesterday's (t_{-1}) relationship satisfaction to model day-to-day changes in relationship satisfaction.

[6] To make sure that the moderating effect of living arrangement indicated by this three-way interaction was not attributable to potential confounding of living arrangement with the covariates age, relationship duration, or additional cohabitants, we conducted three control analyses to test whether these covariates had a similar moderating effect as living arrangement. In each of these analyses, living arrangement was replaced by one of the covariates as a moderator in the final multilevel model for Hypothesis 3. Age and relationship duration had no significant moderating effects ($p = .152$ and $p = .186$, respectively). However, the presence of additional cohabitants had a significant moderating effect ($b = 0.067$, $p = .002$). Thus, we tested the moderations by living arrangement and additional cohabitants simultaneously in a final control analysis. The results showed that the effect of the three-way interaction Sex × Implicit Motive × Living Arrangement was robust ($b = -0.099$, $p < .001$) when the interactions with additional cohabitants were controlled. In sum, the control analyses showed that the moderating effect of living arrangement cannot be attributed to confounding with any of the covariates.

Table 8
Lag Multilevel Model for the Prediction of Daily Changes in Relationship Satisfaction by Daily Agency Appetence, Daily Hours Spent Together, and Living Arrangement (Hypothesis 4)

Predictors	*b* (*SE*)	*p*	95% CI
Intercept	**5.209** (0.215)	<.001	[4.753, 5.646]
Relationship satisfaction (t–1)	**0.318** (0.020)	<.001	[0.282, 0.358]
Living arrangement (LAT = −1; COR = 1)	0.189 (0.118)	.112	[−0.047, 0.443]
Hours together (t0)	**0.104** (0.011)	<.001	[0.081, 0.127]
Agency appetence (t–1)	−0.090 (0.049)	.067	[−0.188, 0.008]
Living Arrangement × Hours Together	<0.001 (0.011)	.997	[−0.023, 0.021]
Living Arrangement × Agency Appetence	−0.065 (0.048)	.177	[−0.150, 0.027]
Hours Together × Agency Appetence	−0.015 (0.012)	.219	[−0.041, 0.007]
Living Arrangement × Hours × Appetence	**−0.027** (0.012)	.022	[−0.049, −0.006]

Note. Significant coefficients ($p < .05$) are printed in boldface. Not displayed: covariates *sex*, time, age, relationship duration, and additional cohabitants. *b* = unstandardized regression weights; *SE* = standard errors of regression weights; 95% CI = 95% bootstrap confidence intervals; COR = coresident couples; LAT = living-apart-together couples.

Again, we fitted the model in a stepwise procedure. The baseline model included the covariates yesterday's relationship satisfaction, time, sex, age, relationship duration, and additional cohabitants. Next, we added the focal predictors living arrangement, today's hours spent together, and yesterday's agency appetence along with their two-way and three-way interaction terms. This block of variables made a highly significant contribution to the prediction of daily relationship satisfaction, $\Delta\chi^2(7) = 124.04$, $p < .001$, $\Delta AIC = 110.1$. Finally, we entered the interaction terms between sex and all predictor variables. This step did not lead to a better model fit, $\Delta\chi^2(7) = 4.2$, $p = .760$, $\Delta AIC = -9.9$. The interaction terms with sex were therefore dropped from the model.

Table 8 presents the results of the final model. First, the number of hours spent with the partner on a given day was significantly associated with increased relationship satisfaction on this day. This finding at the within-couple level underlines the overall beneficial role of daily objective closeness and complements previous studies that found positive associations between objective closeness and relationship functioning at the between-couple level (e.g., Berscheid et al., 1989b; Smith et al., 1988). Second, there was a marginal trend for yesterday's agency appetence to predict decreases in today's relationship satisfaction. Finally, these two simple effects were further qualified by a significant three-way interaction effect of Living Arrangement × Hours Spent Together × Agency Appetence.[7] Figure 3 shows the pattern of this interaction. As expected, the overall positive effect of hours spent together (simple slopes *b* ranging from 0.103 to 0.142, all *p*s < .001) was diminished and even reversed in sign, if participants in COR relationships experienced high agency appetence ($b = -0.023$, $p = .645$). This effect of the mismatch between high objective closeness and high agency appetence confirms Hypothesis 4.

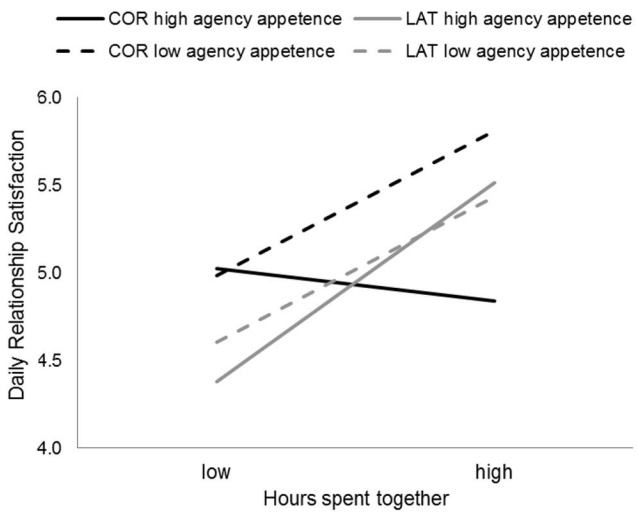

Figure 3. Prediction of day-to-day changes in relationship satisfaction by the interaction of daily hours spent together and daily agency appetence in COR and LAT relationships (Hypothesis 4). Results were plotted for deviations of 4 hr below and above the couple-specific average level of hours spent together and minimum (= 0) and maximum (= 3) values of agency appetence. COR = coresidence; LAT = living-apart-together.

[7] To control for potential confounding of living arrangement with the covariates in this three-way interaction effect, we employed the same strategy as in the control analyses for Hypothesis 3 (see Footnote 6). Again, neither age nor relationship duration had significant moderating effects ($p = .461$ and $p = .842$), but the interaction effect of Additional Cohabitants × Hours × Agency Appetence was significant ($b = 0.026$, $p = .028$). However, a subsequent simultaneous analysis showed that the effect of the interaction Living Arrangement × Hours × Agency Appetence remained substantial ($b = -0.022$, $p = .078$) when the interactions with additional cohabitants were controlled. Thus, as in all previous analyses, the moderating effect of living arrangement cannot be attributed to confounding with age, relationship duration, or additional cohabitants. We also tested whether individual differences in dispositional agency motives moderated the within-couple effect of the mismatch between agency appetence and objective closeness in two additional models, in which either explicit or implicit agency motives, along with all of their product-interaction terms with all other predictors, were added to the final model for the test of Hypothesis 4. In both models, the hypothesized three-way interaction effect Living Arrangement × Hours Spent Together × Agency Appetence remained significant ($b \leq -0.028$, $p \leq .026$), and the four-way interaction Living Arrangement × Hours Spent Together × Agency Appetence × Motive Disposition was not significant ($p \geq .564$).

General Discussion

Applying a Person × Situation perspective, we investigated the interplay between relationship-specific agency motives and objective dyadic closeness on the between-couple and the within-couple levels. As an important environmental factor that affects objective closeness, we introduced the distinction of two prototypical dyadic living arrangements to the study of motive dispositions in couples: living-apart-together (LAT) and coresidence (COR). Our analyses showed, first, that implicit and explicit agency motives and (post)reproductive age contributed to the prediction of couples' living arrangements. Second, congruently strong implicit and explicit agency motives in men were associated with impaired relationship functioning in COR, but not LAT couples. Third, implicit and explicit agentic motive dispositions contributed to the prediction of daily agency appetence, and, fourth, concurrently high agency appetence and objective closeness impaired relationship satisfaction on a day-to-day level. In sum, these findings highlight the benefits of a motivational Person × Situation approach to couple research, and corroborate the assumption that relationship functioning depends on the match or mismatch between the partners' agency motives and the objective closeness realized in the relationship.

It is noteworthy that the present investigation relied on the concept of relationship-specific agency motives as introduced by Hagemeyer and Neyer (2012; see also Hagemeyer, Neyer, et al., 2013). Consequently, the employed motive measures, especially the self-report questionnaires, focused on the propensity to seek distance from one's partner, reflecting preferences for independence, self-reliance, and privacy. In our opinion, these incentives are core aspects of agentic motivation that are crucial for the understanding of couples' distance regulation and relationship functioning, and the reported findings corroborate this assumption. However, *agency* is a broad psychological construct, and other measures emphasize different aspects, such as dominance and assertion (e.g., Bartz & Lydon, 2004; Suh, Moskowitz, Fournier, & Zuroff, 2004), achievement and competence (e.g., Sheldon & Cooper, 2008), or self-esteem and self-validation (e.g., Greenberg & Goldman, 2008; Prager & Buhrmester, 1998). Generalizations of the current findings to other conceptualizations and operationalizations of agentic motives and goals should therefore be treated with caution. In the following, we discuss further implications and limitations of the two studies as well as perspectives for future research related to the four hypotheses.

Selection of Living Arrangement

As expected, the selection of either COR or LAT depended on (post)reproductive age and the partners' agency motives. Specifically, strong agency motives in women predicted being in a LAT relationship. Whereas their explicit motive was predictive irrespective of age, women's implicit motive was predictive only in postreproductive age. In addition, a strong explicit agency motive in men was associated with being LAT in postreproductive age. These findings support our assumption that couples tend to select a relationship context that suits the partners' agentic needs with regard to objective closeness, especially when otherwise predominant relationship goals like having children together tend to lose relevance. The results are also in line with previous findings from demographic and sociological studies showing (a) that the historical trend for more LAT relationships is most pronounced in postreproductive age (Asendorpf, 2008), and (b) that the subjective reasons for LAT are often agentic in nature (Holmes, 2006; Karlsson & Borell, 2005; Levin, 2004; Roseneil, 2006). The present study suggests that such reasons are rooted in dispositional implicit and explicit motives, and thus in the partners' personalities. Overall, the explicit agency motive was a stronger predictor of living arrangement than the implicit motive. This is in line with the assumption of dual motives theory that deliberate choices between limited numbers of alternatives are guided mainly by explicit motives (McClelland et al., 1989). However, the finding that the implicit motive in postreproductive women made an additional prediction suggests that more subtle and affective processes play a role in the selection of living arrangement, too.

However, because this was a cross-sectional and correlational analysis, we cannot rule out the reverse causal relation, that is, living arrangement affected the agency motives. In fact, a dynamic transactional relationship between motives and couples' environments is plausible, as intimate relationships have been shown to provide important contexts for personality development (Mund, Finn, Hagemeyer, Zimmermann, & Neyer, 2015; Mund & Neyer, 2014; Lehnart, Neyer, & Eccles, 2010; Robins, Caspi, & Moffitt, 2002). Thus, long-term longitudinal studies that follow couples over the course of their relationships are necessary to disentangle the causal nexus between motive dispositions and relationship aspects. It is also noteworthy that the present findings refer to the German population, and cross-cultural generalizations should be treated with caution. Whereas it is plausible to expect similar findings in other Western cultures, in which unconventional forms of couple relationships are increasingly accepted (e.g., in the United Kingdom; Duncan & Phillips, 2010), strict societal norms of relationship formation in other cultures may inhibit the social expression of motive dispositions and personality in general. Finally, we made no predictions about sex differences, but found that women's agency motives tended to be more relevant in explaining the selection of living arrangement. However, men's explicit agency motive also contributed to the prediction of living arrangement, and replications of the sex difference found here should be awaited to avoid overinterpretation.

Moderation by Living Arrangement

We expected that strong agency motives predict impaired relationship functioning to a greater extent in an environment that is characterized by high obligatory objective closeness (i.e., in COR relationships) than in an environment that allows for more individual freedom, independence, and privacy (i.e., in LAT relationships). This hypothesis was confirmed, especially for men's motives. Across three cross-sectional and prospective dyadic models, we consistently found that, in COR relationships, the combination of congruently high implicit and explicit agency motives in men predicted more conflicts and lower SRQ as reported by the men themselves and by their partners (actor and partner effects). In LAT relationships, only few negative effects of men's agency motives, and even trends for positive effects, were observed. Although COR couples, on average, reported fewer conflicts and higher relationship quality than LATs, these benefits

of higher objective closeness were diminished for both partners if the male partner held strong implicit and explicit agency motives.

These findings highlight the importance of a match between intimate partners' motive dispositions and their relationship environment, and thus corroborate a Person × Situation approach to relationship functioning. Conditions of objective closeness have differential effects depending on an individual's agency motives, and the consequences of a motive–environment mismatch can affect both partners of a couple. The negative actor effects in COR couples are probably attributable to a deficit of independence and privacy, and resulting feelings of frustration. Partner effects may result from two mechanisms. First, persons may feel deserted if their agentic partners strive for distance regularly. Second, partners in COR relationships probably influence each other more than LAT partners (higher interdependence; H. H. Kelley et al., 1983). For instance, A. B. Barr and Simons (2014) reported that one partner's hostility had negative effects on the other partner's subjective health in COR, but not in dating couples. Likewise, feelings of agentic frustration on behalf of one partner are more likely to affect the other partner in a COR relationship, by creating a tense and conflict-prone atmosphere.

Indeed, negative effects of strong agency motives on SRQ were partially explained by higher amounts of conflicts in COR, but not LAT couples. Although the respective mediation analyses were cross-sectional and do not warrant causal inferences, the results were in line with the assumed mechanisms of agency motive expression. Furthermore, the fact that mediation by conflicts was only partial in CORs and not present in LATs suggests that there are additional mediating mechanisms yet to be discovered, and that these mechanisms are differentially effective in COR and LAT couples. Therefore, future studies are necessary to further investigate processes of motive expression that likely operate on the level of individual experience (e.g., feelings of frustration or desertion) as well as on the level of dyadic interactions (e.g., demand–withdraw patterns; Christensen & Heavey, 1990; see Back et al., 2011, for recommendations regarding research on the interplay between individual dispositions and relationship processes).

Future studies should also look for sex-specific mechanisms, because our findings regarding female agency motives were less consistent. Although women's agency motives had negative effects on relationship functioning, too, there were no significant Implicit × Explicit interaction effects, and only one effect was moderated by living arrangement. Women's explicit motive was associated with less dyadic conflicts in LAT, but not COR couples. Although this was consistent with our assumptions, no corresponding effects were found in the analyses of SRQ. Our findings hence suggest that the processes involved in motive expression may be different for women and men. Whereas men's agency motives seem to be largely appeased with objective conditions of low closeness endorsing their individualistic interests and activities, women's agency motives may be more sensitive to subjective evaluations of closeness.

The dyadic analyses showed that both implicit and explicit agency motives made independent and interactional contributions to the explanation of differential relationship functioning, as one would expect from dual motives theory (McClelland et al., 1989; Schultheiss et al., 2008). However, implicit motives in particular have been largely neglected in relationship research. Because of their discriminant and incremental validity regarding self-reported dispositions (see also Hagemeyer, Neberich, et al., 2013; Hagemeyer & Neyer, 2012), implicit motives should receive more attention from relationship researchers to render a comprehensive understanding of the role of motivational dispositions in couple relationships. Specifically, affective processes as well as spontaneous and nonverbal behaviors, which we deem highly relevant for relationship formation and relationship functioning, depend on the strength of implicitly represented needs (Dufner, Arslan, Hagemeyer, Schönbrodt, & Denissen, in press; Fodor, Wick, & Conroy, 2012; Fodor, Wick, & Hartsen, 2006; McAdams, Jackson, & Kirshnit, 1984). However, studies on couple relationships that include implicit motives are still rare. The present investigation suggests that ignoring the implicit level of representation and processing might not even tell us half the story.

Prediction of Daily Agency Appetence by Agency Motives and Living Arrangement

We hypothesized that the typical level of an individual's motivational states (agency appetence) is a function of dispositional agency motives and the couple's living arrangement. More specifically, we expected that agency motives would predict reports of agency appetence in our daily diary study better in COR than in LAT relationships. We found partial support for this hypothesis. First, being in a COR relationship predicted higher average levels of agency appetence. Second, the implicit agency motive in men predicted higher appetence in COR, but not LAT couples. These findings were in line with our assumption that agentic motive dispositions are aroused and become salient under conditions of high obligatory closeness, in which immediate motive expression is impaired. Dynamic theories of motivation (Atkinson, 1981; Bischof, 1993) predict just that. Accordingly, experimental studies have repeatedly shown such Person × Situation effects on motivational states (e.g., Schultheiss & Brunstein, 1999; Spangler, 1992), but we are not aware of any prior studies that showed such effects for couple relationships in the more naturalistic settings of daily diary or experience-sampling designs.

However, women's implicit agency motive tended to predict lower agentic states in COR couples. In addition, the explicit motive predicted agency appetence irrespective of living arrangement, and this association was more pronounced in women. Hence, again, the results differed between the sexes. We have no explanation for these dissociations. Generally, the sex differences that we found in the analyses of this investigation did not yield a fully consistent pattern. Because this is the first study on relationship-specific agency motives and objective closeness, we reported a large number of effects from unconstrained path and multilevel models including explorative tests of sex differences. Future replications must show which of the observed sex differences are substantial and which are spurious.

In sum, although the expected context sensitivity of motive expression was only partially confirmed, states of agency appetence were linked to both implicit and explicit agentic motive dispositions. These links between motivational states and motivational dispositions suggest that dynamic regulatory processes within couples depend on stable between-couple differences in the strength of the partners' motives, and thus further corroborate the relevance of agency motives in couple relationships. Notably, such links were observed for both implicit and explicit agency motives

despite the propositional self-report format of the state measure. The link with the male implicit motive suggests that, under conditions of high objective closeness, agentic needs that are usually poorly accessible are not only activated, but become salient to introspection. Future studies should further explore the naturalistic conditions of such processes of motive activation and representation, in, for instance, more extensive diary and experience sampling designs combining direct and indirect measures at the trait as well as the state level of motivation.

Prediction of Daily Relationship Satisfaction by Agency Appetence and Objective Closeness

Our last hypothesis predicted that daily relationship satisfaction depends on the interaction between agency appetence and objective closeness. This hypothesis was confirmed. Individuals in COR relationships did not benefit from many hours spent with the partner on days when they felt high agency appetence. Although being close to one's partner is generally a highly valued and enjoyable state, which, for many, may be an important reason for being in a relationship at all, objective closeness can also lead to diminished satisfaction if it is not in accordance with one's current motivational state. This result nicely complements the findings on the between-couple level, and further supports our overarching assumption that a mismatch between agency motives and objective closeness impairs relationship functioning. It is also in line with a 10-day dyadic diary study with couples by Kumashiro and colleagues (2008), who found that overdedication to goals from either the relational (i.e., communal) or the personal (i.e., agentic) domain led to decreased well-being and increased motivation in the complementary domain.

A limitation of the present diary study is the restricted time scale. Only 12 assessments per participant, each 1 day apart, were available. Thus, we analyzed only the effects of yesterday's appetence on changes in today's relationship satisfaction (lag analysis), which reduced the effective number of assessments to 11. However, little is known about the time scale of motive arousal, satisfaction, or frustration in couples. On the one hand, much of the agency appetence experienced one evening may have vanished overnight by either motive satisfaction (e.g., by spending the night alone) or habituation. This would lead us to underestimate the immediate effects of agency appetence in our lag model. On the other hand, agency appetence may become increasingly dissatisfying if it lasts for longer time periods (several days or even weeks), which would also lead to an underestimation by our model. Thus, it is important for future research to explore the time scale of motivational appetence and frustration in extensive microlongitudinal designs (e.g., experience sampling) with continuous time models, which, under certain assumptions, allow the estimation of the actual effect of the generating process if the times of measurement had not been discretized (e.g., Voelkle, Oud, Davidov, & Schmidt, 2012).

Conclusion

Relationship conditions of objective closeness interact with agency motives in the prediction of relationship functioning. Although, on average, high objective closeness is experienced as positive, this beneficial effect is diminished or even reversed if the partners hold strong agency motives. This was observed both at the between-couple level of stable motive dispositions and the within-couple level of day-to-day motivational fluctuations. One plausible strategy to avoid such negative outcomes is the choice of LAT as a permanent living arrangement. However, this is not a feasible solution for all couples, for instance, when raising a family together requires COR. Thus, we need to better understand the motivational dynamics of the regulation of closeness and distance within couples. The present investigation showed that dispositional agency motives are relevant factors in the etiology of motivational states that can lead to immediate experiences of dissatisfaction, which may accumulate over time and affect both partners of a couple. Future studies should focus on the differential mechanisms behind the observed negative effects in COR relationships. Are there specific regulatory styles that distinguish couples, who manage to integrate strong agency motives successfully, from others? For instance, responsive partner support regarding the pursuit of personal goals has been shown to improve happiness and to facilitate goal realization (B. C. Feeney, 2004). However, little is known about the role of personality dispositions and, particularly, implicit and explicit motives in such dyadic regulation processes. In our opinion, styles and mechanisms of everyday distance regulation in couples can be best identified in the naturalistic setting of extensive microlongitudinal designs, such as experience sampling studies with multiple assessments per day across several weeks, flanked by the assessment of dispositional motives. Although such designs are not easy to implement and effortful, the identification of differentially successful styles of dyadic distance regulation would be of great benefit for applied purposes like couple counseling, as well as for our basic understanding of motivational personality processes in couples.

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