

BATTERED WOMEN'S EVALUATIONS OF THEIR INTIMATE PARTNERS
AS A POSSIBLE MEDIATING FACTOR BETWEEN
ABUSE AND SELF-CONCEPT

By

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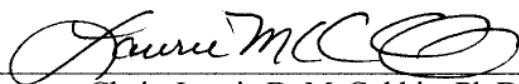
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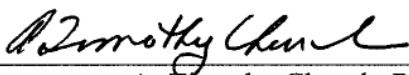
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To the Faculty of Washington State University:


The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of ISABELLA HSIU-CHEN LIN-ROARK find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.



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Abstract

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The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not battered women's evaluations of their intimate partners mediate the relationship between the abuse they experience and their self-concept. A convenience sample of 196 heterosexual women was recruited from seven shelters for abused women in the states of Wisconsin, Georgia, Kansas, Michigan, California, and Oklahoma. Participants completed anonymously scales assessing four specific forms of abuse and two different levels of partner evaluations and self-concept.

An integration of the Pearson and standard multiple regression analyses revealed a significant and inverse relationship between physical threats and global self-esteem as well as a significant and positive association between domain-specific appraisals of intimate partners and domain-specific self-conceptions. Results also indicate: (a) that battered women suffer poor self-concept, (b) that physical and psychological abuse co-occur frequently, and (c) that different forms of abuse are differentially related to battered women's self-concept. The investigation as a

whole provides empirical evidence against theoretical postulates about battered women's idealization of their abusive partners and against the hypothesized mediating role of partner evaluations in the association between intimate partner aggression and women's self-concept. The overall findings imply ongoing changes in a battered woman's internal state as she goes through different developmental stages in her process of breaking away from the cycle of intimate partner aggression.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my nephew,

Howie Huang (黃皓群),

Who, in his own life,

Strived vigorously for what he valued

And appreciated with great enthusiasm

True love and genuine acceptance among human beings.

He inspired me to reexamine my priorities in life

And to undertake the task of finding and cultivating the wisdom of living

And the beauty of human existence.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Several large-scale national surveys have revealed the high prevalence and severity of intimate partner violence against women in the United States (Rennison, 2003; Straus & Gelles, 1986; Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). It is estimated that approximately 1.3 to 1.8 million women experience severe physical aggression from their husbands or intimate cohabitants per year. Battered women are commonly observed to suffer decreased self-esteem as well as other pronounced negative outcomes of experiencing maltreatment by their intimate partners. Although previous empirical work has predominantly indicated a significant and inverse relationship between partner abuse and battered women's self-concept, little is known about factors that might explain or account for this link. Based on existing theories, the present investigation focused on battered women's evaluations of their intimate partners as a potential explanatory variable in the association between the abuse they experience and their self-concept. In particular, the purpose of this study was to determine whether or not partner evaluations mediate the relations between four specific dimensions of partner abuse and battered women's self-concept.

Prior research has documented a wide range of negative consequences of partner abuse against women, which include brain injury (Jackson, Philip, Nuttall, & Diller, 2002; Valera & Berenbaum, 2003), other types of physical damages (Muelleman, Lenaghan, & Pakieser, 1996), somatic complaints (Jaffe, Wolfe, Wilson, & Zak, 1986), anxiety (Trimpey, 1989), depression (Campbell, Kub, Belknap, & Templin, 1997; Cascardi & O'Leary, 1992; Orava, McLeod, & Sharpe, 1996; Sato & Heiby, 1992), posttraumatic stress disorder (Astin, Ogland-Hand, Coleman, & Foy, 1995; Kemp, Rawlings, & Green, 1991; Saunders, 1994; Silva, McFarlane,

Soeken, Parker, & Reel, 1997), and suicidal behavior (Abbott, Johnson, Koziol-McLain, & Lowenstein, 1995; Gayford, 1975; Thompson et al., 1999). Additionally, scholars (e.g., Gelles & Harrop, 1989; Kubany et al., 1995; Launius & Lindquist, 1988; Street & Arias, 2001; Walker, 1981, 1984; Wilson, 1986; Wilson, Vercella, Brems, Benning, & Renfro, 1992) have proposed other results that are less obvious but represent even more fundamental and long-lasting effects of partners abuse upon battered women's psychological wellbeing (e.g., learned helplessness, shame, guilt, feelings of hopelessness, passivity, and external locus of control). Furthermore, the development of a negative self-concept in the presence of abuse has been regarded as playing a pivotal role in shaping battered women's other psychological responses to intimate partner aggression (Dimmitt, 1995).

Intimate partner maltreatment appeared to be significantly linked to battered women's low self-esteem in the majority of past research studies. However, there were conflicting findings about the relationship between women's experience of physical violence or unspecified abuse and their self-concept. Some research suggests debilitating effects of physical or unspecified abuse upon battered women's self-esteem (Cascardi & O'Leary, 1992; Mills, 1984; Trimpey, 1989). Yet, a few other studies found no connection between physical battering by intimate partners and women's self-concept (Campbell, 1989; Campbell, Miller, Cardwell, & Belknap, 1994; Russell, Lipov, Phillips, & White, 1989). In contrast, studies aimed at identifying the types of abuse most associated with poor self-concept in battered women provided consistent evidence suggesting that partner maltreatment which is controlling, restricting, degrading, isolating, or dominating in nature has particularly detrimental impact upon women's self-esteem (Aguilar & Nightingale, 1994; Dutton & Painter, 1993; Lynch & Graham-Bermann, 2000; Orava et al., 1996). In addition, these studies revealed that physical aggression and psychological abuse tend

to co-occur and that different forms of partner maltreatment are differentially related to battered women's self-concept. Based on the findings of these studies, the present investigation highlighted the importance of using sensitive instruments that assess the essential components of physical and psychological abuse to further clarify the relationship between partner maltreatment and women's self-concept. This study employed the Severity of Violence Against Women Scale (SVAWS; Marshall, 1992) and the Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory (PMWI; Tolman, 1989) to measure four specific dimensions of intimate partner abuse against women: physical threats, actual physical violence, dominance-isolation, and emotional-verbal abuse.

Previous studies on how individuals evaluate their intimate partners only sampled satisfied or non-distressed couples. They also examined the kinds of appraisals that are conducive to relationship satisfaction. Studies supporting the self-verification perspective suggest that married people are happier and more committed to their marriage insofar as their spouses validate their self-appraisals, regardless of whether they possess positive or negative self-views (Swann, Hixon, & De La Ronde, 1992; Swann, De La Ronde, & Hixon, 1994). These studies measured individuals' specific qualities (e.g., athletic ability, social skills, and aptitude in arts and music). In contrast, studies corroborating the enhancement perspective yielded findings suggesting that married and dating individuals enjoy more stable and satisfying relationships to the extent that they idealize their partners and their partners hold positively biased views of them (Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996a, 1996b). Additionally, among non-distressed couples, the more favorable individuals' self-appraisals, the more idealized their evaluations of their partners. Moreover, individuals' self-concepts improve over time as their partners consistently perceive them in the most favorable light. Murray et al.'s studies assessed relatively global and abstract attributes (e.g., kind, understanding, lazy, controlling, thoughtless, and traditional). To reconcile

the self-verification and enhancement perspectives, Neff and Karney (2002) proposed the specific self-verification and global enhancement model. They postulated that self-verification and enhancement may concurrently guide partner perceptions but function at different levels of abstraction within the same relationships. Neff and Karney confirmed this premise by empirically demonstrating that people in satisfying relationships idealize their partners on global traits while evaluating their partners accurately on specific attributes. This finding underscores the importance of distinguishing between individuals' appraisals of their partners' specific attributes and their evaluations of their partners' global worth as human beings. To address this issue, the present investigation asked each participant to rate her battering partner's global worth and domain-specific attributes on two separate measures. In order to investigate the association between partner evaluations and self-concept in battered women, this study used the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) to measure participants' overall evaluations of themselves and a modification of this scale to measure their evaluations of their partners at global levels. The women's appraisals of themselves in specific domains were assessed using the ten-item version of the Self-Attributes Questionnaire (Pelham & Swann, 1989), while their domain-specific appraisals of their partners were assessed using a modification of this scale.

Several scholars have theorized about how prolonged abuse may result in decreased self-esteem in battered women (McCann, Sakheim, & Abrahamson, 1988; Mills, 1985; Walker, 1979). There also exist some theories that postulate processes on how intimate partner aggression may lead a battered woman to idealize and bond with her abusive partner and how her evaluations of the perpetrator may contribute to the development of her poor self-concept (Dutton & Painter, 1981; Graham and Rawlings, 1991; Herman, 1992). When integrated, these theories elucidate the following three aspects of partner maltreatment that are particularly

influential in shaping a battered woman's appraisals of the abuser and herself: (a) the perpetrator's coercive control and tyrannical domination over the woman, (b) the captivity of the woman in the abusive relationship, and (c) the intermittency, recurrence, and uncontrollability of abuse. These aspects of abuse are postulated to universally bring about a battered woman's perceived need to bond with the abuser, to rely on him for consolation and nurturance, and to constantly appease and please him by striving to think and feel as he does, to see the world from his perspective, and to do whatever is necessary to meet his every demand and want. As she repeatedly experiences herself as subjugated by and subservient to the abuser, she is inevitably inclined to paradoxically view him as her rescuer who is a good person with omnipotent power over her. Idealizing an abusive partner is thus conceptualized as a common response to uncontrollable maltreatment as well as a survival strategy for women recurrently victimized in intimate relationships. This strategy is further theorized to damage a battered woman's self-concept by misleading her to perceive herself as a person of low power who is inferior to and dependent on the abuser. Taken as a whole, these theories appear to suggest: (a) a negative association between intimate partner aggression and battered women's self-concept, (b) a positive association between partner maltreatment and idealization of an intimate abuser, and (c) an inverse relationship between idealization of an abusive partner and women's self-concept. These theories thus imply that idealizing an intimate abuser may function as a mediating factor between partner maltreatment and the development of a negative self-concept in battered women.

Purpose of the Study

Past studies have predominantly revealed a significant relationship between intimate partner abuse and poor self-concept in battered women. However, there remains a paucity of

research on the factors that might explain or account for this association. Although prior research has yielded fruitful findings about how people in satisfying relationships evaluate their intimate partners, little is known about battered women's appraisals of their abusive husbands or boyfriends. Existing theories suggest that idealization of an intimate abuser might be an explanatory variable in the relationship between partner maltreatment and battered women's poor self-concept. To test this theoretical proposition and to address the identified gaps in the literature, this study investigated to what extent battered women's evaluations of their intimate partners mediate the relationship between the abuse they experience and their self-concept. Specifically, this investigation examined: (a) the relationship between intimate partner aggression and battered women's self-concept, (b) the relationship between partner maltreatment and battered women's evaluations of their intimate partners, (c) the relationship between battered women's appraisals of their abusive partners and their self-concept, and (d) if partner evaluations mediate the relationship between partner abuse and self-concept in battered women.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study investigated the extent to which battered women's evaluations of their intimate partners may mediate the relationship between the abuse they experience and their self-concept. This chapter presents an overview of studies and theories that are related to this topic. The review of literature includes the following sections: (a) prevalence of intimate partner violence against women, (b) consequences of intimate partner aggression towards women, (c) studies on the relationship between partner abuse and battered women's self-concept, (d) theories and studies on how people evaluate their intimate partners, (e) theories about battered women's self-concept and evaluations of their abusive partners, and (f) hypotheses based on the studies and theories that are reviewed.

Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence against Women

Abuse of women by intimate partners has been a widespread social problem in the United States. According to the first national survey about violence in American families (the National Family Violence Survey), about 3.8% of American women experienced at least one act of severe physical aggression committed by their husbands or intimate cohabiters in 1975 (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980). Severe physical aggression referred to acts with a potential for causing serious harm, which included kicking, biting, punching, hitting with an object, beating up, and using or threatening with a knife or gun. Extrapolating from this rate of victimization resulted in the estimation that up to 1.8 million or one out of 26 adult women were abused by their intimate partners in that year. A replication of the study was conducted in 1985 and yielded a similar estimate. Approximately 1.6 million American women suffered at least one act of severe

violence by their husbands or intimate partners during the year of the National Family Violence Resurvey (Straus & Gelles, 1986).

Subsequent studies produced statistics indicating the persistence of high incident rates of intimate violence against women. From November 1995 to May 1996, Tjaden and Thoennes (2000) conducted a national survey that was jointly sponsored by the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Based on telephone interviews with a national sample of 8,000 adult females and 8,005 adult males, findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey suggest that women suffer substantially more intimate violence than do men. Specifically, the survey showed that 22.1% of interviewed women and 7.4% of interviewed men reported that they were physically assaulted and/or raped by a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, or date during their lifetime. Physical assault was defined in this study as any act(s) aimed at threatening, attempting, or actually inflicting physical injury. The study further revealed that 1.3% of the women reported experiencing such violent acts during the 12 months prior to the survey, which yielded an estimate of approximately 1.3 million women suffering abuse by intimate partners per year in the United States.

The largest survey thus far has been conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, which estimated that about 85% of nonfatal violent crimes committed by intimate partners in 2001, or about 588,490 such crimes, were against women (Rennison, 2003). Based on data obtained from a national sample of 45,000 households, estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey revealed that in 2001 intimate partners committed 20% of all nonfatal violent victimizations experienced by women. This was a sharp contrast to the estimate that intimate partner violence made up only 3% of violent crime against men. Nonfatal violent crimes examined in this survey included rape, sexual assault, simple assault, and aggravated assault. Using data from the FBI's

Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1976-2000, Rennison further indicated that 1,247 women and 440 men were murdered by intimates in 2000 and that in recent years intimate partners killed about 33% of female victims of murder and 4% of male murder victims. These national figures clearly reveal the high prevalence and severity of intimate violence against women in American society.

Consequences of Intimate Partner Aggression towards Women

In addition to recognizing the pervasiveness and seriousness of partner violence against females, researchers and clinicians have observed a variety of negative outcomes of male aggression directed against woman intimates. Muelleman, Lenaghan, and Pakieser (1996), for example, investigated the location and type of injuries in 237 women who were attacked by their husbands, boyfriends, ex-husbands, or ex-boyfriends and who sought medical care at emergency departments of 10 hospitals located in two urban districts. Compared with 2,211 women who were injured by non-battering mechanisms and sought help at the same emergency departments, the battered women were more likely to be harmed in the face, head, thorax, abdomen, and neck. The battered women also suffered more frequently than the controls 12 types of injury identified in this study, which included lumbar strain, laceration in the face and upper extremity, and contusions to the face, upper extremity, head, and thorax.

In a study exploring the incidence of brain injury in 53 battered women, Jackson, Philip, Nuttall, and Diller (2002) showed that 92% of the women reported having been assaulted in the head or face by their intimate partners. Forty percent of the women reported experiencing at least one incident in which they lost consciousness as a consequence of being attacked in the head or face or shaken intensely by a male intimate. The study further indicated a significant correlation

between the frequency of being attacked by a partner in the head and the severity of 13 cognitive symptoms experienced by the majority of these women, which included dizziness, headaches, forgetting appointments, being easily distracted, trouble concentrating and remembering, and difficulty doing or paying attention to more than one thing at a time. Another study on brain injury in abused women was conducted by Valera and Berenbaum (2003), using a sample of 99 women who experienced at least one incident of physical violence from an intimate partner. In this study, 74% of the women reported sustaining at least one brain injury related to partner battering, and 51% of them indicated suffering multiple brain injuries resulting from partner aggression. Moreover, a significant and positive association was found between severity of partner abuse and severity of brain injury.

Besides identifying specific physical injuries as negative outcomes of partner violence, researchers have recognized the harmful impact of partner abuse upon battered women's general health as well as psychological well-being. Jaffe, Wolfe, Wilson, and Zak (1986) found a significant difference in physical and emotional health between 56 residents in shelters for battered women and 89 non-abused women matched for yearly family income, number of children, and length of present or most recent intimate relationship. Specifically, this study showed that women who were physically assaulted by their husbands suffered significantly higher levels of somatic complaints, depression, anxiety and insomnia than women who did not report abuse by their intimate partners. Additionally, Trimpey (1989) revealed the presence of higher than average degrees of anxiety in a group of 36 abused women, whose mean scores on the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI; Spielberger, Gorsuch, Lushene, Vagg, & Jacobs, 1983) were compared with those of the normed groups.

Sato and Heiby (1992) found the presence of clinical levels of depression in 47% of 136 battered women. In a study designed to investigate the prevalence of depressive symptoms in 33 severely battered women, Cascardi and O'Leary (1992) found that 52% of the sample scored above 20 on the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI; Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Mock, & Erbaugh, 1961), which denoted a severe level of depression. Moreover, there was a strong correlation between the women's symptoms of depression and the severity of physical abuse their intimate partners inflicted upon them during the year preceding the study. Likewise, Campbell, Kub, Belknap and Templin (1997) examined the incidence and magnitude of depression in a sample of 164 battered women and found that 39% of the women scored in the severe (11%) and moderate to severe (28%) categories of depression on the BDI. Also, depression correlated significantly and positively with severity of both physical and nonphysical partner abuse. Orava, McLeod, and Sharpe (1996) explored the difference in depression between 21 abused women residing in shelters and 18 non-abused women. Results showed that the abused group reported significantly higher levels of depression than the comparison group and that 33% of the battered women scored 30 or above on the BDI. Analysis also indicated that the abused women's depression scores increased as the frequency and level of partner battering increased.

Furthermore, researchers have consistently verified the high prevalence of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in battered women. In a study that assessed PTSD among a sample of 77 abused women residing in spouse abuse shelters, Kemp, Rawlings, and Green (1991) revealed that 84% of the women met the criteria for a diagnosis of PTSD. Similarly, Saunders (1994) examined posttraumatic stress symptoms in 192 battered women and found that about 60% of the sample met diagnostic criteria for PTSD. The symptoms most commonly experienced by the women included intrusive recollections of the battering, avoidance of stimuli reminiscent of the

abuse, hyperarousal, and nightmares about their partners' aggression towards them. Astin, Ogland-Hand, Coleman, and Foy (1995) compared PTSD prevalence rates between 50 abused and 37 non-abused women who had experienced distress in an intimate relationship with a male partner. The abused women were found to have developed PTSD at a significantly higher rate than the non-abused, distressed women (58% versus 18.9%). Silva, McFarlane, Soeken, Parker, and Reel (1997) conducted a study that indicated a significant correlation between posttraumatic stress symptoms and severity of partner battering in an ethnically diverse group of 131 abused women. In this study, 65% of the women indicated having dreams, flashbacks, or terror attacks about the battering, and 51% of them reported experiencing such episodes as often as one to seven times a week.

In addition, research has documented the link between intimate partner abuse and suicidal behavior in women. In a survey of 100 battered women, Gayford (1975) found that half (50%) had attempted suicide prior to the investigation. In a sample of 648 adult women seeking medical care at emergency departments, those who reported having been abused by a male partner were more likely than non-abused women to have made suicide attempts (26% vs 8%). Moreover, of the women with a history of attempting suicide, 81% had experienced partner abuse at some point in their lives (Abbott, Johnson, Koziol-McLain, & Lowenstein, 1995). Similarly, in a study of 204 women seeking medical treatment at an urban hospital, those who sought out services at an emergency room due to a recent suicide attempt (N = 119) were approximately three times more likely to have experienced physical and nonphysical partner abuse than those who sought out services at the hospital for non-emergency problems with no history of attempting suicide (Thompson et al., 1999).

The overall findings of the aforementioned studies on the outcomes of battering strongly suggest that intimate partner violence frequently results in pronounced physical, mental, and emotional problems for women. Although these studies together cover a wide range of negative consequences of partner abuse against women, the list of problems mentioned above is by no means exhaustive. Based on theoretical postulates or clinical observations, scholars have proposed some other effects of intimate partner aggression towards women. They include learned helplessness (Launius & Lindquist, 1988; Walker, 1984; Wilson, Vercella, Brems, Benning, & Renfro, 1992), shame (Street & Arias, 2001), guilt (Kubany et al., 1995; Street & Arias, 2001), feelings of hopelessness (Gelles & Harrop, 1989), passivity (Walker, 1981), external locus of control (Wilson, 1986), and other psychological results that are often more subtle in nature and not yet clearly defined diagnostically (e.g., poor self-concept). Most of these factors have not been examined substantially or investigated with a satisfactory level of methodological rigor. Compared to symptoms that are relatively obvious and already well defined clinically (e.g., brain injury, anxiety, depression, PTSD), these subtle factors appear to represent even more fundamental and long-lasting effects of partner abuse upon battered women's psychological well-being and particularly their evaluations of themselves. In fact, assessing and improving battered women's self-concepts has been recognized as an essential basis for therapeutic intervention aimed to alleviate their psychological distress (Landenburger, 1989; Mercy & O'Carroll, 1988). Self-concept has also been described as the central part of the personality (Lecky, 1968) and regarded as playing a pivotal role in determining how individuals perceive and interpret their experiences, which in turn influences their feelings, decisions, and actions (Combs & Syngg, 1959; Felker, 1974; Harter, 1985, 1990; Lifton, 1976). Self-concept is thus a primary index of abused women's well-being, providing a crucial knowledge base for

understanding other psychological responses to partner violence (Dimmitt, 1995). Despite the technical difficulties in defining and measuring self-concept, several scholars have investigated the impact of intimate partner abuse upon battered women's perceptions and evaluations of themselves.

Studies on the Relationship between Partner Abuse and Battered Women's Self-Concept

Empirical studies of the association between battered women's self-concept and their experience of abuse by a husband or a male intimate partner can be roughly grouped into three major categories: (a) those focusing on women's experience of physical violence or unspecified abuse, (b) those aimed at identifying the types of abuse most relevant to the development of a negative self-concept in battered women, and (c) those examining the moderating effect of specific factors that serve to protect women's self-concept in the presence of partner abuse.

Self-Concept and Physical/Unspecified Abuse

As early as 1984, Mills examined the relationship between physical victimization and self-esteem in a national sample of 1,183 women who were married or cohabiting with their male intimate partners. This sample was drawn from a national survey about violence in American families conducted in 1975 (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980). In this study, the frequency and severity of physical aggression directed towards these women by their partners during the year prior to the investigation was calculated by analyzing their responses to the eight items measuring violent behavior in the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS; Straus, 1979). The women's self-esteem was assessed using a three-item scale developed for this national survey. The three items asked about the frequency with which these women experienced themselves as (a) influencing others or taking charge of things; (b) being ambitious, working hard, and having high

standards; and (c) having a positive attitude towards self and a feeling of at least being equal with others. Results indicated a marked difference between victims of physical assault and other women in self-esteem scores. Specifically, battered women displayed a greater tendency to have low self-esteem than non-victims. This result lends support to the contention that physical abuse leads to decreases in self-esteem. In addition, the study found that victim status predicted these women's self-esteem but that self-esteem did not predict victim status. This finding serves to dispute an early, widely held speculation that women's low self-esteem precedes victimization and predisposes them to abuse in intimate relationships. One methodological weakness of this study is the absence of information on the validity and reliability of the instruments used to measure the participants' self-esteem and the violence they experienced.

Mills' (1984) research finding about the significant relationship between battered women's lowered self-esteem and their experience of abuse was supported by two subsequent studies using samples distinct from the national one (Cascardi & O'Leary, 1992; Trimpey, 1989). Specifically, Trimpey (1989) investigated the self-esteem of 36 abused women who received support group counseling at a private family service agency for victims of domestic assault. These women, aged 20 to 69 years (mean age = 33.7), identified themselves as experiencing abuse by their male intimate partners. This sample consisted mainly of unemployed women (64.7%) who were not married (57.1%) and who were residing at the shelter at the time of the study (67%). Analyses indicated that 76.3 % of these women experienced low self-esteem, as evidenced by their scores on the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventories for Adults (CFSEI; Battle, 1981). This finding suggests that abuse by intimate partners may lead to decreased self-esteem in women. One limitation of this study was that it did not assess the women's experience of

victimization or delineate the specific abuse inflicted upon them. Another limitation was the absence of a comparison group.

Cascardi and O'Leary (1992) examined the relationship between the self-esteem of 33 battered women and the severity of their intimate partners' physical aggression towards them within the year previous to the study. This sample was solicited from a community agency providing psychological services for survivors of domestic violence. The majority of these women experienced severe forms of physical violence (89%) and were predominantly white (66.7%), Catholic (60.6%), married (66.7%), and unemployed (57.6%). On average, they had maintained intimate relationships with their male partners for about 10 years and had experienced battering for approximately 5 years. The authors employed a modified version of the Conflict Tactics Scale (Neidig & Friedman, 1984) to assess the frequency of physical aggression and coded into an index each woman's injuries resulting from physical abuse by her partner. The severity of physical violence was calculated by multiplying the frequency of physical abuse by the injury index. Results indicated a strong and negative correlation between severity of physical aggression and the battered women's self-esteem, as measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES; Rosenberg, 1965). Specifically, these women's self-esteem decreased as the abuse increased and worsened across the sample. Further analyses revealed that physical aggression explained as high as about 32% of the variance in the self-esteem measure. This finding suggests that severe, frequent, and prolonged physical abuse has a debilitating effect upon the self-esteem of battered women. One major limitation of this study was the absence of a comparison group. A second limitation was that the study did not report on the validity and reliability for the sample of the injury index or the psychometric properties of the instrument and method used to measure the frequency and severity of partner violence.

Despite being flawed with some methodological weaknesses, as previously mentioned, these three studies yielded significant findings about the inverse correlation between women's self-concept and the abuse inflicted upon them by their male partners. In combination, they suggest the debilitating effect of partner abuse upon the self-esteem in battered women. However, it is also important to note that some other studies, reviewed below, have found no connection between battering by male partners and women's self-concept (Campbell, 1989; Campbell, Miller, Cardwell, & Belknap, 1994; Russell, Lipov, Phillips, & White, 1989).

Russell, Lipov, Phillips, and White (1989) investigated the difference in self-esteem between 32 physically abused and 10 physically non-abused women who were in distressed relationships with their male intimate partners. Both groups were solicited from a metropolitan family service agency in Canada where they and their partners voluntarily requested psychological help with their relationship problems. Compared to the physically non-abused group, the battered women experienced significantly higher levels of physical and verbal aggression from their partners. Their partners responded to items on the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS; Straus, 1979), which measured their violent behavior towards these women. Results failed to detect any difference between the two groups of women in self-concept, as measured by the Hudson Index of Self-Esteem (ISE; Hudson, 1982). One major limitation of the study was that it did not describe the demographic features of the sample such as age, income/socio-economic status, education, or ethnicity. In addition, it did not report any attempts to control for the effects of such variables. Moreover, the study did not provide either general information on the validity and reliability of the instruments used to measure the participants' self-esteem and their partners' aggression towards them, or the psychometric information that was specifically relevant to the sample employed in the investigation.

A lack of between-group differences in self-concept was also revealed in a study conducted by Campbell (1989). Campbell investigated self-concept in 97 battered and 96 nonbattered women who were in problematic relationships with their husbands or male intimate partners for at least one year prior to their participation in the study. Participants were recruited from two metropolitan communities and two shelters for female victims of domestic violence, with 23% of the battered women residing in the shelters. The majority of the women were younger than 35 years of age (60%), of good education and middle income, not married (65%), and employed or attending school full time (75%). The comparison women were significantly older, of higher income, in intimate relationships with longer duration, and less likely to come from a minority ethnic background. The battered group experienced at least two incidents of minor physical violence or one incident of severe physical assault, as gauged by the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS, Straus, 1979), or suffered repetitive sexual abuse (assessed by interview) by their male partners during the year preceding the study. Results indicated that the battered and nonbattered women did not differ in the variable of self-concept, as measured by the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS; Fitts, 1964).

Campbell's (1989) research findings were corroborated by a follow-up study conducted by Campbell, Miller, Cardwell, and Belknap (1994). These researchers examined self-concept in those women from the original sample who returned for a second interview approximately two and a half years later. Two thirds of the originally battered women returning for the second interview did not experience battering for at least one year at the time of the follow-up study, while about one fourth of the nonbattered women who returned were being battered. The follow-up sample consisted of 21 battered and 79 nonbattered women, most of whom were full-time employees or students (72%), fairly young (mean age = 33.5), and of moderate total family

income ($M = \$19,959$, $SD = 17,363$). Using the same instruments employed in the original study, this follow-up study likewise did not reveal a significant difference in self-concept between the women who were being battered and those who were not at the second interview.

There is support for the link between increases in battering by intimate partners and decreases in women's self-esteem. However, there are also studies that contradict such a relationship. This discrepancy across studies may be attributable to disparities between the various methods used to assess self-esteem and between varying samples employed. All of the studies mentioned above are similar in the sense that they employed the same instrument (The Conflict Tactics Scale) to measure women's experience of abuse except for the one that lacked an assessment of violence (Trimpey, 1989). However, the five self-esteem or self-concept measures used in these six studies are distinct from each other in nature and likely assess different aspects of self-esteem or self-concept in women. The two groups of studies that either support or contradict the link between abuse and self-concept also differ in their use of a comparison sample. Two of the three studies in support of the relationship lacked a control group while the remaining one employed a national sample to explore how battered women differed from the norm. In contrast, the three studies that refute the link used comparison groups that resembled abused women in the sense that all of the participants, battered and non-battered, experienced difficulties in their distressed or problematic relationships with their male intimate partners. This resemblance might have reduced the between-group difference.

The inconsistencies in findings about the relationship between abuse and self-concept may also have resulted from the fact that all of the six studies reviewed thus far focused on women's experience of physical violence or unspecified abuse. None of the researchers conducting these studies took any procedures to examine or control for the effects of other forms

of abuse (e.g., emotional or psychological abuse) that often accompany or are a precursor to physical violence in a battering relationship. The absence or presence of other types of abuse may weaken or strengthen the link of battering with women's poor self-concept. These researchers also did not investigate other relevant factors that might moderate or mediate the effect of battering upon women's self-concept (e.g., battered women's social support, power differentials between abused women and their intimate partners).

Self-Concept and Specific Types of Abuse

There are a few recent studies aimed at identifying which aspects of abuse are most associated with poor self-concept in battered women.

Physical violence and dominance-isolation. Dutton and Painter (1993) examined the self-esteem in 50 battered and 25 emotionally abused (EA) women who left their intimate relationships with their abusive male partners within the six months preceding the study. The sample consisted of women seeking help from transition houses, wives of batterers receiving court-ordered counseling, and female adults recruited through newspaper advertisements. They had a mean age of 31.4 years, were in the relationship they recently ended for about an average of 11.5 years, and had been separated from their partners for a mean period of 20.5 weeks. In this study, physical abuse was assessed using the violence subscale of the Conflict Tactic Scale (CTS, Straus, 1979). Psychological abuse was measured using the verbal aggression subscale of the CTS and the Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory (PMWI; Tolman, 1989), which consists of two subscales assessing dominance-isolation and emotional-verbal abuse. Participants' self-esteem was gauged by the Rosenberg (1965) Self-esteem Scale. The EA group experienced severe psychological abuse and fewer than two acts of physical violence in their relationships with their former partners. The battered women experienced frequent and severe

physical violence and even higher levels of psychological abuse than the EA group. Results indicated that both groups suffered from low self-esteem. Analyses further revealed that self-esteem correlated significantly with physical violence and scores on the PMWI dominance-isolation subscale, which includes items measuring demands for subservience, isolation from resources, and rigid observances of traditional sex roles. The overall findings of this study suggest that both physical violence and dominating-isolating type of abuse have debilitating effects upon battered women's self-esteem and that these effects persist for at least several months after the termination of the abusive relationship. The principal limitation of this study is the lack of a non-abused comparison group.

Physical and verbal abuse. Orava et al. (1996) assessed the difference in self-esteem between 21 battered and 18 non-battered women and also investigated the relationship between the battered women's self-esteem and the severity of partner abuse inflicted upon them within the year prior to the investigation. The study used the Conflict Tactics Scales, Couple Form R (Straus & Gelles, 1990) to assess the frequency of verbal aggression and the frequency and severity of physical aggression experienced by participants within the 12 months preceding the collection of data. The battered women were solicited from four Canadian transition houses that provide refuge and psychological help for female survivors of abuse and their children. They were shelter residents and experienced at least two (with an average of 39.5) incidents of physical abuse by their male partners during the 12 months previous to their participation in this study. Participants had a mean age of 33.9 years. Most of them were of less than high-school education (61.9%) and unemployed (76.2%). The non-battered group was comprised of women recruited from a community in Canada who were not physically abused, did not suffer any threats of violence, and experienced significantly fewer incidents of verbal aggression ($M =$

21.3) than the battered women ($M = 99.4$) during the year preceding the study. The two groups did not differ in age, number of children, or employment status although the comparison group had significantly higher levels of education. No association was found between education and the dependent variable of self-esteem. Results revealed that the severity of physical violence experienced by the women within the battered group did not correlate with their self-esteem. Analyses did indicate that the battered group reported significantly lower self-esteem on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES; Rosenberg, 1965) than the comparison group. The between-group difference in self-esteem was greatly reduced but remained significant (from $F(1, 37) = 24.21, p < .001$ to $F(1, 37) = 5.67, p < .05$) when further analyses were conducted to control for the effect of the frequency of verbal aggression. This finding suggests that verbal abuse may have a more detrimental effect upon battered women's self-esteem than physical aggression.

Controlling-emotional abuse. Aguilar and Nightingale (1994) examined the difference in self-esteem between 48 battered and 48 nonbattered women and identified the types of abuse that are associated with low self-esteem. The battered group (mean age = 32.5) was comprised of women who sought help from various family violence programs and who had experienced abuse by a husband or a male intimate partner more than one year previous to the study (29%) or within the year previous to the study (71%). The nonbattered group (mean age = 32) consisted of women who were recruited from the community and who had never experienced battering. The study found that the battered women scored significantly lower in self-esteem on the Barksdale Self-esteem Evaluation (SEI, Barksdale, 1972) than the non-battered women. Further analyses indicated that among the 48 battered women, lower self-esteem was significantly associated with controlling-emotional abuse but not accounted for by the other three clusters of battering experiences identified in this study (i.e., physical, sexual-emotional, and miscellaneous abuse).

The controlling-emotional abuse cluster was composed of controlling tactics employed to prohibit the women from working and to dictate what they can do and whom they can socialize with. The results suggest that deprived autonomy in the social and personal domains may play an instrumental role in generating poor self-concept in battered women. Although this study yielded significant findings, it contained two major limitations. It did not report possible differences in major characteristics between the two groups of women or describe any procedures taken to control for the effects of demographic variables. The study also did not provide information on the psychometric properties of the instruments used to measure the participants' self-esteem and their experience of abuse.

Self-Concept, Types of Abuse, and Protective Factors

Physical threats, controlling tactics, and self-affirmation. Lynch and Graham-Bermann (2000) examined the impact of physical and psychological violence upon battered women's self-concept and assessed the moderating effect of self-affirmation as a protective factor that buffers women's self-esteem in the presence of abuse. In this study, physical and psychological abuse was measured using the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979) and the Severity of Violence Against Women Scale (SVAWS; Marshall, 1992). Participants' self-esteem was assessed using the Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1967/1981, 1993). Self-affirmation, as defined by Steele (1988), referred to the mechanism of obtaining assurance of self-worth from accessible sources. These sources provide information that helps confirm one's view of self as being inherently good, adequate, capable, or in control. Steele suggested this mechanism stems from the human desire to maintain a positive and consistent image of self and is activated when an individual recognizes a threat to the maintenance of a favorable self-view. The authors designed six 3-part items that indirectly assess participants' level of self-affirmation. Specifically

these items measured participants' perceived availability, importance, and enjoyment of six sources of affirmation: being a parent, working, family members, female friends, male friends, and current partner. Participants in this study consisted of 60 battered women (battered by a male intimate partner during the 12 months prior to the investigation) and 56 comparison women (never battered or not battered in the year preceding the collection of data). The battered and comparison women did not differ on demographic features such as age, education, income, marital status, or ethnicity. The sample was comprised of primarily white (50%) and African American (41%) women who were young (mean age = 33.79), unemployed (59%), of education beyond high school (56%), and of low family income (mean monthly income = \$926.16). A hierarchical regression analysis found no main effect for the frequency of physical violence as a predictor of the battered women's self-esteem. The frequency of physical threats and controlling tactics, in contrast, was significantly and negatively associated with the battered women's self-concept and explained 9% of the variance in their self-esteem measure. When added to the analyses, self-affirmation alone accounted for additional 12% of the variance in self-esteem and correlated positively with the battered women's self-concept. While there was no significant interaction between total self-affirmation and physical and psychological abuse, controlling tactics correlated negatively with the availability of sources of affirmation for the battered women. When the same analysis was performed to predict self-esteem in the comparison women, no significant associations were found and no variance was explained. These results suggest that self-affirmation moderates the negative effect of physical and psychological abuse upon self-esteem and is activated to help battered women maintain a favorable self-concept through their positive experiences of working, parenting, and interacting with their family and friends.

Integrative Summary

Intimate partner abuse appeared to be negatively and significantly linked to battered women's self-concept in seven of the ten studies reviewed above. Four of the investigations also provided evidence suggesting that certain types of abuse tend to co-occur and that they are differentially associated with the self-esteem of battered women. Specifically, psychological abuse, which often accompanies battering, was found to have more detrimental impacts upon women's self-concept than physical victimization itself. Within the domain of physical abuse, threats of physical violence appeared to be more related to lowered self-esteem than actual acts of physical violence and sexual aggression. In particular, psychological abuse that is controlling, restricting, degrading, isolating, or dominating in nature proved to have the most debilitating effects upon the self-concept of women exposed to aggression from male intimate partners. These findings highlight the importance of using sensitive instruments that provide specific information regarding the essential forms of physical and psychological abuse to further clarify the relationship between intimate partner abuse and women's self-concept. The present investigation employed the Severity of Violence Against Women Scale (SVAWS; Marshall, 1992) and the Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory (PMWI; Tolman, 1989) to assess four specific dimensions of intimate partner aggression towards women: physical threats, actual physical violence, dominance-isolation, and emotional-verbal abuse.

The fact that self-affirmation was found to correlate positively with battered women's self-esteem suggests the need to investigate other abuse-related factors that might serve as moderators or mediators in the presence of intimate partner aggression. The present review indicates a dearth of literature on factors of this nature. For example, no research has ever been done to examine to what extent battered women's evaluations of their intimate partners may

mediate the link between the abuse they experience and their self-concept. Although the findings of existing research have predominantly revealed a significant association between partner aggression and decreases in women's self-esteem, most of these studies were not designed specifically to address variables that might explain or account for this connection. A constellation of factors may be playing a role in the relationship between partner abuse and self-concept among battered women. Based on existing theories, the present investigation focused on partner evaluations as a possible explanatory variable in the association between intimate partner aggression and battered women's self-concept. Particularly, the purpose of this study was to determine whether or not partner evaluations mediate the links between four specific dimensions of intimate partner abuse and battered women's self-concept.

Theories and Studies on How People Evaluate Their Intimate Partners

Research on how people in intimate relationships judge their partners' qualities has focused on what types of perceptions are conducive to relationship satisfaction. There is long-standing rivalry between two dominant views that explain how individuals in satisfying relationships evaluate their intimate partners: self-verification perspective and enhancement perspective. There also exists a model that has been proposed to reconcile competing theories of partner evaluations in satisfactory relationships by conceptualizing the two motives as operating at different levels of abstraction—the specific self-verification and global enhancement model.

Self-Verification Perspective

Self-verification theorists (e.g., Swann, 1983, 1990; Swann, De La Ronde, & Hixon, 1994) postulate that humans possess an innate desire and predisposition for external evaluations that verify their self-views. As people's self-concepts become stabilized with maturation, they

tend to favor information that is coherent and consistent with their self-expectancy and identities. They are inclined to enjoy smooth interpersonal transactions when others view them as they view themselves. In contrast, they experience relational difficulties when they find exterior appraisal incongruent with their self-evaluations. “Self-verifying” appraisal is thus associated with psychological coherence and a sense of genuineness whereas “nonverifying” information is regarded as contributing to doubt and perplexity. People may consequently seek “self-verifying” appraisal, regardless of whether they possess positive or negative self-concepts (Swann, De La Ronde, & Hixon, 1994). Correspondingly, individuals in intimate relationships may want their partners to validate their identities and to foster their psychological coherence by providing them with constant and reliable verification of their self-perceptions. Thus, according to the self-verification perspective, people enjoy smooth and satisfying interactions with their intimate partners as long as they and their partners display accurate understanding of each other’s self-perceived traits and qualities, irrespective of whether those traits and qualities happen to be positive or negative (Swann, Hixon, & De La Ronde, 1992; Swann, De La Ronde, & Hixon, 1994).

Swann, Hixon, and De La Ronde (1992) conducted a study that corroborated the aforementioned perspective by examining how committed married individuals were to spouses who verified their self-views. On average, the 172 participants (86 couples) were 32.1 years old and had been married for 6 years. Most of them were Caucasian (87.8%) and had some college education (91%). In this study, participants’ evaluations of themselves were assessed using the short form of the Self-Attributes Questionnaire (SAQ; Pelham & Swann, 1989). The SAQ measures five specific qualities: intellectual capability, physical attractiveness, athletic ability, social skills, and aptitude in arts and music. Participants also rated their spouses on the same five

SAQ attributes and reported their levels of commitment to their relationships on a seven-item scale. This commitment scale measures desire and plan to remain in the relationship, relationship satisfaction, time spent together, amount of talking with each other, discussion of worries and problems, and disclosure of personal matters. Based on their self-ratings on the SAQ, participants were divided into three groups: those with negative self-concepts, those with moderate self-concepts, and those with positive self-concepts. Analyses indicated that participants with positive self-concepts were more committed to spouses who rated them positively than to spouses who rated them negatively. Participants with negative self-concepts reported greater commitment to spouses who evaluated them negatively than to spouses who evaluated them positively. Partner ratings did not exercise any influence upon the commitment scores of participants with moderate self-concepts. The results of this study suggest that married individuals enjoy greater relationship satisfaction and are more willing to commit themselves to their marriage insofar as their spouses validate their self-appraisals, regardless of whether they possess favorable or unfavorable self-views.

Swann, De La Ronde, and Hixon (1994) also found substantial support for the self-verification perspective by investigating how intimate married people were with spouses who evaluated them in ways that verified their self-perceptions. The authors recruited 180 heterosexual, married people (90 couples) who were predominantly Caucasian (86.1%) and had received some college education (81%). They were 19 to 78 years old (mean age = 31.9) and had been in their current marriages for 1 month to 33 years ($M = 5.8$). In this study, participants rated themselves and their spouses on the SAQ and reported their levels of intimacy with their spouses on a five-item index. This intimacy index assesses relationship satisfaction, time spent together doing things and talking with each other, and disclosure and discussion of worries, problems,

and/or other personal matters. Based on the discrepancy in scores on the SAQ between participants' self-appraisals and their spouses' evaluations of them, participants were placed into three groups: congruent group (spouse evaluation was within 1 point of self-appraisal), negative discrepancy group (spouse evaluation was more than 1 point lower than self-appraisal), and positive discrepancy group (spouse evaluation was more than 1 point higher than self-appraisal). Analyses indicated that participants in the congruent group reported significantly higher scores on the intimacy index than those in the negative and positive discrepancy groups, while the two discrepancy groups did not differ in intimacy with their spouses. Apparently, intimacy between spouses increased as a function of lowered discrepancy between spouse evaluation and self-appraisal, regardless of whether the self-appraisal was negative or positive. Further analyses revealed the tendency for participants with positive self-concepts to be more intimate with spouses who evaluated them favorably and the inclination of participants with negative self-views to be more intimate with spouses who rated them unfavorably. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that married people are happier and more intimate with their spouses to the extent that their spouses agree with their self-perceived qualities, irrespective of whether these qualities are viewed as negative or positive.

Enhancement Perspective

Enhancement theorists contend that individuals in satisfying relationships are motivated to form and maintain idealized images of their intimate partners in their efforts to seek and sustain feelings of happiness and security in their relationships (e.g., Hall & Taylor, 1976; Johnson & Rusbult, 1989; Murray & Holmes, 1993, 1994; Simpson, Ickes, & Blackstone, 1995; Van Lange & Rusbult, 1995). According to this enhancement perspective, people tend to be engrossed in their partner's virtues at the beginning of a romance, which fosters a sense of safety

and creates their hopes of success of the relationship. As the romance progresses, conflicts and close interactions naturally unveil their partner's frailties and inevitably result in disappointments that pose threats to their hopes and feelings of security. To resolve the tension between their hopes and doubts and to sustain a sense of safety, people committed to their relationships are motivated to adopt positively biased views of their partners by garnishing their partners' merits and underplaying their partners' weaknesses (Murray & Holmes, 1993, 1994). Their judgments of their partners' qualities are thus shaped partly by reality and partly by motivated "illusions" (Murray et al., 1996a). Positive illusions are further postulated to foster feelings of hope, security, and optimism by buffering the negative effects of conflicts, doubts, and disappointments as they occur in the relationship. Individuals may also enhance their partner's self-esteem and consequently turn their partner into someone they actually desire by treating their partner as a wonderful person they truly admire. Idealization of partners thus promotes satisfaction and happiness within intimate relationships (Murray et al., 1996b).

The enhancement perspective was corroborated by two studies conducted by Murray et al. (1996a, 1996b). In their first study, Murray et al. (1996a) examined how positive illusions influenced relationship satisfaction among 82 heterosexual married couples and 98 heterosexual dating couples. On average, the married couples were 30.5 years old and had been in their relationships for about 6.5 years. The dating couples had a mean age of 19.5 years and had been dating for an average of 19 months. Participants rated themselves and their partners on the same attributes using the same response scales: the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES; Rosenberg, 1965) and the Interpersonal Qualities Scale (IQS), which was developed by the authors for this study and the subsequent one. The IQS contains 21 items that measure positive traits (e.g., warm, kind, understanding, responsive, and accepting), negative qualities (e.g., lazy, controlling,

complaining, thoughtless, moody, distant, and childish), and social attributes (e.g., intelligent, witty, sociable, self-assured, and traditional). Participants also completed a 3-item scale that assesses their level of satisfaction with their marital or dating relationship (i.e., the extent to which they feel happy and regard the relationship as strong and successful). A number of analyses were conducted to compare participants' mean ratings of their partners with their partners' own self-evaluations, treating each couple as a unit of analysis. Results showed that both married and dating individuals evaluated their partners more favorably than their partners evaluated themselves on the traits measured by the SES and IQS. Participants' ratings of their partners significantly but only moderately reflected their partners' own self-appraisals, suggesting that participants' perceptions of their partners contain realities as well as constructed illusions. These findings revealed a general tendency for married and dating individuals to see merits in their partners that their partners did not see in themselves. Moreover, there appeared to be a close link between participants' self-appraisals and their evaluations of their partners, controlling for the actual similarity between participants' self-ratings and their partners' self-ratings, which was found to be minimal. Participants with more positive self-images viewed their partners in a more favorable light, whereas individuals who saw themselves more negatively were less generous in their ratings of their partners. Furthermore, the act of idealizing their partner and being idealized by their partner both predicted greater feelings of happiness among married and dating individuals. More specifically, analyses indicated that participants reported higher levels of relationship satisfaction to the extent that their evaluations of their partner were positively biased, after statistically controlling for their partner's self-appraisals. Participants also scored higher on the satisfaction scale when their partners looked beyond their self-perceived or actual qualities and noticed the best in them. In contrast to the self-verification perspective,

participants' relationship satisfaction was not positively associated with their partners' confirmation of their self-views. On the whole, this study appears to strongly indicate the beneficial effects of positive illusions upon relationship satisfaction as well as a positive correlation between partner evaluation and self-concept among married and dating couples.

To compensate for the cross-sectional nature of their first investigation, Murray et al. (1996b) conducted a longitudinal study that examined the impact of positive illusions upon the development of romances among 121 dating couples over the course of one year. On average, participants were 19.5 years old and had been in the relationships with their partners for about 19 months. These dating individuals rated themselves and their partners on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES; Rosenberg, 1965) and the Interpersonal Qualities Scale (IQS, Murray et al., 1996a). They also completed five measures of relationship well-being at the first contact and at two follow-ups (4-5 months and 11-12 months after the initial contact) if they were still together. The measures of relationship well-being assessed participants' levels of satisfaction with their relationships, their ambivalent feelings about their relationships and their partners' attributes, the frequency of behavioral conflict and direct expressions of negative emotions, and their tendencies to handle their relational conflicts in destructive ways. Replicating the findings of the authors' previous work (Murray et al., 1996a), results indicated that at the first contact, participants' evaluations of their partners' qualities only partially reflected their partners' self-appraisals on the SES and IQS and included a substantial amount of constructed illusions. The inclusion of positive illusions in their partner evaluations persisted as time progressed. Participants consistently reported greater relationship satisfaction through the year insofar as their partners idealized them and to the extent that they idealized their partners, controlling for their partners' self-evaluations. As their romances developed, they also reported fewer and less

destructive conflicts, less severe doubts, and less ambivalence when they and their partners held positively biased views of each other, even after controlling for relationship satisfaction. In contrast, participants reported more conflict and more ambivalence when they failed to see their partners' self-claimed merits. Moreover, neither participants' relationship satisfaction nor relationship stability was predicted by their partners' verification of their self-views.

Furthermore, relationships were less likely to dissolve the more participants and their partners idealized each other initially and over time. Additionally, the more positive participants' self-concepts, as measured by the SES, the more idealized their evaluations of their partners, both at the first contact and as time passed. Also, being idealized predicted significant, positive changes in self-evaluations on the IQS as the year progressed, holding relationship satisfaction constant.

Taken as a whole, this study lent strong support to the longitudinal benefits of partner idealization. The overall findings suggest that relationships become more stable and satisfying when individuals and their dating partners perceive each other in the most favorable light, not when they validate each other's self-appraisals. Positive illusions appear to fend off conflicts, doubts, disappointments, and ambivalence when dating individuals become more familiar with their partners and inevitably see more frailties in their partners as their romances progress over time. Dating individuals also enjoy better self-concepts when their partners consistently view them through the most positive lens.

Specific Self-Verification and Global Enhancement Model

The studies reviewed thus far appear to yield two different kinds of findings that are in sharp contrast with each other. An examination of the measures employed in these studies revealed that studies supporting the self-verification perspective focused on evaluating participants' relatively specific qualities (e.g., athletic ability, social skills, and aptitude in arts

and music) whereas studies that corroborated the enhancement perspective tended to assess participants' more global and abstract attributes (e.g., kind, understanding, lazy, controlling, thoughtless, and traditional). Therefore, the two groups of studies appeared to measure individuals' evaluations of their partners at different levels of abstractness, which may have contributed to the discrepancy in their research results. In view of this, Neff and Karney (2002) postulated the possibility that self-verification and enhancement may concurrently guide partner perceptions but function at different levels of abstraction within the same relationships. They further proposed a likely reconciliation between competing theories of partner perceptions by distinguishing between individuals' appraisals of their partners' specific attributes and their evaluations of their partners' global worth as human beings. According to this model of specific self-verification and global enhancement, various levels of partner perceptions align along a hierarchical structure ranging from very specific judgments of traits, abilities, and behaviors to very holistic evaluations of the entire person. Abstract or global perceptions encompass a broad range of traits and/or behaviors (e.g., dependable), whereas concrete or specific appraisals are confined to a relatively limited range of discrete attributes and/or behaviors (e.g., punctual). When evaluating a more global trait, individuals find it easier to idealize their partners due to the lack of concrete or objective standards for making judgments about that trait. Individuals thus enjoy more freedom to view their partners favorably when evaluating their partners on traits at higher levels of abstractness. Moreover, since global perceptions encompass several specific appraisals, they are more evaluative in nature (Hampson, John, & Goldberg, 1986). Individuals are consequently more motivated to idealize their partners on global traits because holding positive views of the whole person is more crucial to overall relationship satisfaction than holding specific perceptions of some concrete traits or behaviors. A negative but specific

perception may exercise limited influence on general feelings of happiness because it subsumes only a restricted range of behaviors or attributes that contradict the overall admiration of a partner. From this perspective, people in satisfied relationships may idealize their partners and verify their partners' self-evaluations at different levels of abstraction within the same relationships. Individuals may enjoy psychological coherence, a sense of genuineness, and smooth interactions with their partners when they and their partners accurately validate each other's self-perceived specific strengths and weaknesses. At the same time, individuals in satisfying relationships may view their partners holistically as worthwhile and wonderful human beings in order to foster and sustain feelings of security, satisfaction, happiness, optimism, and hope.

Neff and Karney (2002) examined this model of specific self-verification and global enhancement in evaluations of intimate partners by investigating individuals' global and specific appraisals of their partners within a sample of 82 satisfied newlyweds. This sample consisted of predominantly white (86%) Christians (70%) who were full-time students (52%). These newlyweds were in their early twenties, had no children, and reported high levels of satisfaction with their marriages. Participants' global evaluations of themselves and their partners were assessed using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Questionnaire (SEQ; Rosenberg, 1965) within the first six months of their marriage. Their specific perceptions of themselves and their spouses were measured with a version of the Self-Attributes Questionnaire (SAQ; Swann, De La Ronde, & Hixon, 1994) within the same time period. The SAQ consists of six items assessing six specific attributes: intellectual capability, physical attractiveness, athletic ability, social skills, organization, and tidiness. At approximately one year into their marriages, participants were asked to spontaneously describe their partner's qualities in a written paragraph by responding to

the two questions: “What do you think of your spouse?” and “what kind of person is he or she?” They also completed the Relationship Values Questionnaire (RVQ) at about two years into their marriages. The RVQ was developed by the authors for this study and consists of 24 attributes representing various levels of breadth and desirability. For each term, participants were asked to indicate how important it was for them to perceive their partners as having the attribute.

The results of Neff and Karney’s (2002) study indicated that participants rated global traits as significantly more important than specific traits, even after controlling for trait desirability. This finding provides some support for the idea that global traits are more evaluative and thus more influential to relationship satisfaction than specific attributes. In addition, participants’ evaluations of their partners’ global worth on the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale were significantly more favorable than their partners’ self-evaluations. Significant bias towards idealization, however, was not observed in their scores on the measure of specific traits (SAQ) as the discrepancy between their ratings of their partners and their partners’ self-ratings was small. This result suggests that satisfied newlyweds tend to idealize their partners at global rather than specific levels. Moreover, analyses revealed greater agreement between spouse evaluations and self-appraisals on more specific traits measured by the SAQ, holding trait desirability constant. In contrast, participants displayed a greater tendency to view their spouses more positively than their spouses viewed themselves on broader traits of the SAQ, even when controlling for trait desirability. This confirms the premise that people in satisfied relationships perceive their partners through favorably biased lens at the global levels while simultaneously verifying their partners’ self-views at the specific levels within the same relationships. Finally, when asked to spontaneously describe their partners in a written paragraph, these newlyweds showed an inclination to depict their partners’ positive qualities with significantly more global terms and

their partners' negative attributes with significantly more specific terms. In light of this, Neff and Karney concluded that individuals in satisfying marriages fend off the impact of their partners' negative traits upon their relationships by restricting their negative perceptions of their partners to lower levels of abstraction and thus greatly narrowing the range of behaviors or traits that are in conflict with their general appreciation of their partners. Overall, this study appeared to lend strong support to the basic tenets of the specific self-verification and global enhancement model by empirically confirming that people in happy couples idealize their partners at the global levels and concurrently perceive their partners accurately at the specific levels within the same relationships.

Integrative Summary

The theorists of the three models reviewed above appeared to base their conclusions on a small number of studies, which reduces confidence in the validity of their postulates and the replicability of their research. Despite this limitation, these theorists provided convincing arguments for their respective viewpoints and gathered substantial empirical support for the premises they advocated. The different or even opposite conclusions they made about partner evaluations in satisfactory relationships mainly stemmed from the discrete viewpoints they held while trying to conceptualize how people in satisfied relationships perceive their partners. In other words, since they tackled different portions and different layers of the highly sophisticated picture of partner evaluations from very diverse angles, it is only natural their understanding of the phenomenon under investigation varies from perspective to perspective. Given that the contributions they made were relatively non-overlapping, their viewpoints and the corresponding research findings are not as contradictory or incompatible with each other as they might first appear to be.

When integrated, these theories and research findings lead to some new insights into how individuals in satisfied relationships evaluate their partners. First, human beings desire to be understood by their partners the way they understand themselves, regardless of whether they hold positive or negative self-views. At the same time, people are predisposed to seek and maintain feelings of security and happiness in their relationships by finding reassurance in partners who idealize them and by regarding their partners as wonderful people who are worthy of their love and trust. To satisfy both intrinsic needs, individuals in intimate relationships desire their partners to accurately understand their self-perceived specific strengths and weaknesses and to concurrently cherish, accept, and admire them as precious human beings. They are also motivated to view their partners' global worth in a favorably biased light while restricting their perceptions of their partners' negative qualities to specific attributes or concrete behaviors. Consequently, married and dating individuals and their partners in satisfying relationships verify each other's self-evaluations and idealize each other at different levels of abstraction. They enjoy a sense of genuineness and psychological coherence by verifying each other's self-perceived attributes at relatively specific and concrete levels. At the same time, they also create and sustain feelings of happiness, security, and hope in their relationships through idealizing each other at relatively global and abstract levels. Second, individuals' self-appraisals correlate positively not only with how they evaluate their partners but also with how their partners evaluate them. The more positive individuals' self-images, the more favorable their evaluations of their partners. Also, people's self-concepts improve over time as their partners consistently view them through positively biased lens.

Although existing research on partner evaluations has yielded significant and fruitful findings about how individuals in intimate relationships appraise their partners and how partner

appraisals are related to self-concept, most of these studies are confined in their sampling to satisfied couples recruited from the general population. This review indicates a dearth of literature on how people in distressed couples or members of special populations evaluate their intimate partners. For example, little is known about battered women's evaluations of their husbands or intimate cohabitants. To address this identified gap in the literature, the present study investigated how battered women appraise their intimate partners and how their appraisals of their partners may affect the relationship between the abuse they experience and their self-concept.

The aforementioned studies on partner appraisals strongly indicate that individuals' evaluations of a partner vary meaningfully in their breadth and level of abstraction and that people in satisfying relationships idealize their partners on global traits while evaluating their partners accurately on specific attributes. These findings highlight the importance of measuring individuals' appraisals of a partner at varying levels of abstractness by utilizing separate instruments that differentially assess traits which are relatively more global and attributes which are more specific in nature. To address this issue, the present investigation asked each participant to rate her battering partner's global worth and domain-specific attributes on two separate measures. In order to investigate the association between partner evaluations and self-concept in battered women, this study used the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) to measure participants' overall evaluations of themselves and a modification of this scale to measure their evaluations of their partners at global levels. The women's appraisals of themselves in specific domains were assessed using the ten-item version of the Self-Attributes Questionnaire (Pelham & Swann, 1989), while their domain-specific appraisals of their partners were assessed using a modification of this scale.

Theories about Battered Women's Self-Concept and Evaluations of Their Abusive Partners

Several scholars have articulated theoretical propositions to explain how many battered women develop low self-esteem in the presence of prolonged abuse. Mills (1985) posited that battered women tend to suffer a diminished sense of self in their struggle to manage the recurrence and escalation of abuse. Specifically, Mills postulated that most battered women are forced to appease their partners by restricting or even giving up their work life or contact with their friends and relatives in order to prevent further maltreatment. This restriction upon interactions with people outside of the abusive relationship not only greatly reduces the woman's identities but also the sources that can validate her self-worth. Her sense of identity is thus mainly confined to the roles she plays in the relationship or nuclear family she forms with her partner (i.e., homemaker and mother). Her partner is consequently her major source of validation for her remaining identities. Unfortunately, as is often the case, a battered woman seldom finds validation from her partner for her abilities as homemaker and mother. Over time, she is inclined to feel a great loss of self as she continues to experience the loss of her social identities and the lack of validation. Moreover, according to Mills, a battered woman is also prone to feelings of inadequacy and numbness as she tries to understand and cope with the very occurrence and recurrence of violence. She is likely to experience confusion about the perpetuation of abuse despite all the efforts she has made to pacify her partner. This confusion, coupled with his verbal attack and negative criticism about things she does, makes her doubt her ability to make accurate perceptions and judgments. Furthermore, being relatively isolated from the world outside of the relationship, she is deprived of the opportunities to obtain other perspectives on abuse and abuse related issues. Without outside verification of her judgments, she gets more and more confused as she continues to evaluate her perceptions against her partner's viewpoints.

McCann, Sakheim, and Abrahamson (1988) suggested that a battered woman may develop negative beliefs or cognitive schemas about herself in response to the recurrent violence inflicted upon her. Specifically, repeated maltreatment by her partner may lead a battered woman to believe that she is particularly vulnerable and unable to protect herself from injury or harm, which greatly diminishes her trust in her capacities for self-protection. Expanding on Seligman's (1975) theory of learned helplessness, McCann et al. further proposed that a battered woman may even give up trying to actively protect herself after numerous experiences of futile attempts to control the abuse or after repeatedly being punished for trying to assume her self-power. She may correspondingly develop a pattern of behaving submissively, passively, or non-assertively, as a consequence of which she may feel less and less able to fend for herself over time.

Prolonged exposure to uncontrollable incidents of maltreatment may most likely result in her view of herself as hopeless, inadequate, and weak. She may ultimately suffer a debilitated sense of self as she chronically experiences powerlessness in her relationship with her partner. Walker (1979) also offered a similar explanation for the behavioral manifestations of "learned helplessness" in many battered women. Walker posited that a battered woman tends to develop a sense of incapacity to protect herself from future violence or to control future events as she continues to perceive and experience the recurrent abuse in her life as uncontrollable.

The scholars mentioned thus far mainly focused on forming assumptions about how abuse might lead to battered women's poor self-concept. They do not explain how battered women's decreased self-esteem might also be influenced, exacerbated, or perpetuated by some abuse-related factors such as their perceptions of their abusive partners.

Theories on how battered women's self-concept is related to their evaluations of their abusive partners are embedded in propositions about the frequently observed bonding between

the women and the abusers. Scholars thus far have identified three major factors that may contribute to battered women's need to form emotional bonding with the perpetrators: the power differential inherent in abusive relationships, the intermittent nature of abuse, and the dynamics of Stockholm Syndrome.

Power Imbalance

Dutton and Painter (1981) have coined the term “traumatic bonding” to explain how a battered woman may develop strong affective attachment to her abusive partner under conditions of recurrent maltreatment. The strength of this attachment is evidenced by many battered women's difficulty in leaving the abusers, which is often observed by those working or interacting with them. Two major characteristics of battering relationships—power imbalance and intermittency of abuse—have been conceptualized by Dutton and Painter as creating and perpetuating this bonding as well as contributing to many battered women's idealization of the abusers and poorer self-concept. The power imbalance caused by the inflicted abuse and control often lead a battered woman to regard herself as subjugated by her partner. Citing Ann Freud's (1942) concept of “identification with the aggressor,” Dutton and Painter posited that a battered woman, perceiving herself as a person of low power and her partner as a person in high power, may likely engage in certain internal or external behaviors in her efforts to increase her feelings of personal power and to cope with the maltreatment recurring in the abusive relationship. Specifically, a battered woman may assume her partner's perspective of her, internalize his aggression towards her, or redirect the aggression toward other powerless people like her. Dutton and Painter further pointed out that similar coping has been adopted by individuals suffering other types of victimization (e.g., people taken hostage, Jewish prisoners in the Nazi concentration camps, and powerless members of autocratic groups), as has been revealed by

Bettelheim (1943) and by Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1947). Dutton and Painter added that as the abuse is prolonged or worsens in the relationship, the increase in an imbalance of power may heighten more and more the battered woman's feelings of self-denigration, her perceived inability to fend for herself, and a sense of needing the abuser. The repeated cycle of increased dependency and decreased self-esteem may eventually produce a robust emotional bond to the abuser.

Intermittency of Abuse

The bonding between a battered woman and the abuser is often created and perpetuated by a second feature of battering relationships, the intermittency of abuse. According to Dutton and Painter (1981), battering in intimate relationships occurs periodically and intermittently. That is, a battered woman is typically subjected to maltreatment that alternates with and usually precedes positive treatment. Dutton and Painter suggested that the alternations between the abuse and the amiable treatment constitute conditions of partial or intermittent reinforcement, which has been found to be powerful in creating behavioral patterns that are long-lasting and difficult to end (Amsel, 1958). Dutton and Painter further pointed out that intermittency of abuse has also been found to be critical in producing, sustaining, and strengthening emotional attachment to abusive others in both humans and animals (Fischer, 1955; Harlow & Harlow, 1971; Rajecki, Lamb, & Obsmacher, 1978; Scott, 1963). Finally, Dutton and Painter argued that battered women typically experience extreme emotional ups and downs caused by the intermittent nature of abuse. Specifically, battered women usually experience an escalation of emotional excitement that builds up before and during each violent bout, which is followed by the peace and serenity associated with the temporary removal of aversive responses. A battered woman is thus subjected to one emotional extreme after another as a consequence of the alternations between

maltreatment and pleasant contact in between abusive episodes. As a woman is repeatedly exposed to the extremity of both aversive and good treatment in an intermittent fashion, the ever-tighter bonding between her and her abusive partner reduces more and more over time the possibility that she will leave him.

Walker (1979) described a recurrent cycle of abuse that resembles what Dutton and Painter (1981) depicted as intermittency of abuse. According to the Walker Cycle Theory of Violence, a battering cycle typically runs in three phases. During the first phase, tension builds gradually as the abuser displays more and more his discontent and antagonistic feelings toward the woman in moderate forms of emotional, physical, or sexual abuse. The woman does her best to pacify the batterer by guessing and doing whatever satisfies or pleases him. Despite her diligent efforts, the tension continues to escalate uncontrollably to a point where the cycle inevitably proceeds to its second phase—the incident of explosive battering. During phase two, the tension that has escalated during phase one is discharged in an uncontrollable and acute fashion. The perpetrator typically mistreats the woman with a bombardment of emotional, physical, or sexual abuse that has been intensified. The battering usually can leave the woman severely wounded emotionally or physically. The cessation of the battering brings the second phase to an end and leads the cycle into its third phase—a period of peaceful, loving repentance. In phase three, the batterer typically displays abundance of remorse and kindness in charming ways. He regrets abusing her, apologizes for the battering, and begs her to forgive him. He promises he will never batter her again and makes various kinds of loving gestures such as singing her love songs and buying her gifts. His actions during this phase, most of which are aimed at convincing her to stay in the relationship, often rekindle the woman's hope and belief in his sincerity and capacity to stop the abuse and to change for the better. As the cycle repeats

itself over and over again, the repetition of the woman's psychological responses in each phase perpetuates and strengthens her emotional bonding to the batterer, which in turn keeps increasing her difficulty in leaving him.

Dutton and Painter (1981) further postulated that the intermittency or cycle of abuse usually results in the gradual changes in many battered women's internal dynamics. A battered woman typically responds to the first few incidents of domestic violence with the perspective that her partner's abusive behavior was an exception, something out of his character. She is usually still hopeful about her relationship with him and believes in his promises to stop the battering. Thus these initial incidents, coupled with the essential elements of the battering cycle described above, function to instigate her bonding to the abuser. Dutton and Painter expanded on Frieze (1979) and Walker (1979) to suggest that subsequent maltreatment of greater severity and the repetition of the violent cycle tend to change the woman's perception of the abuse from the original hope that he will never batter her again, to a later fear and conviction that the battering may recur unless she endeavors to prevent it from happening. Also expanding on Walker (1979) and Frieze (1979), Dutton and Painter added that the persistence of abuse may lead the woman to hold herself responsible for evoking the battering or to blame herself for her inability to end or control the abuser's violent behavior. Along this line, Dutton and Painter suggested that the internalization of blame by the woman contributes to her poor self-concept, which intensifies her feelings of inadequacy. The continuation of self-blame may result in a vicious cycle in which she views the recurrence of abuse as evidence of her inadequacy, which further lowers her self-esteem and reduces the likelihood that she will leave the batterer. Thus, the persistency of self-blame often correlates with a battered woman's low self-esteem and contributes to her difficulty in liberating herself from the abusive relationship. Dutton and Painter further concluded that self-

blame, along with other psychological consequences of intermittent abuse, leads to the battered woman's view of herself as being subservient to the abuser.

Stockholm Syndrome

The phenomenon of bonding between a battered woman and her abusive partner has been explained by Graham and Rawlings (1991) in a way different from the approach employed by Dutton and Painter (1981). Specifically, Graham and Rawlings used the dynamics of "Stockholm Syndrome", as postulated by Graham (1987), to explain how a woman may develop the need to bond with her partner in an abusive relationship and how the bonding consequently influences her view of the abuser, her self-concept, and her difficulty in leaving the abuser. Stockholm Syndrome originally referred to the mutual bonding developed between the hostages and captors in a bank robbery occurring in Stockholm, Sweden in 1973. This syndrome was observed not only in the three women and one man held hostage in this incident but also in groups suffering from other types of victimization (see Graham, 1987 for a review of relevant studies). According to Graham and Rawlings, the universal nature of Stockholm Syndrome appears to suggest that bonding to an abuser may function as a survival strategy for people victimized in an abusive situation from which they perceive themselves as unable to escape. For example, a battered woman may experience the following internal and external dynamics in the presence of violence. She may feel a heightened need for nurturance and protection as a result of being traumatized by her abusive partner's threat to her physical or psychological survival. Being tightly controlled and isolated from the outside world, she may ironically consider the abuser as the only source from which she can obtain her needed nurturance and protection. If this need is coupled with some small kindness from him, as is usually the case, it brings her hope and leads her to emotionally bond with his positive side and to deny her anger at the abuse and his terrorizing

side. To reduce terror and to maintain hope that he will let her survive or even stop the abuse, she endeavors to constantly please him by being hypersensitive and hypervigilant to his feelings, needs, and wants. To guess what makes him happy, she strives to feel and think as he does and to view the world from his perspective. Moreover, she suppresses, neglects, and denies her own feelings, perspectives, needs, and desires because they can only hamper her effort to do whatever is necessary to survive by appeasing him. Prolonged struggle of this nature may create cognitive or perceptual distortions in her. She may see him as a good person while detesting those who try to win her escape, as this is the way he views the situation. Having habitually put herself below him, she consequently suffers a diminished sense of self and comes to see herself as he sees her. When given the opportunity to leave him, she may even experience enormous difficulty separating from him physically or psychologically, due to her strong fear of losing the only identity left—her residual sense of self as perceived by him.

Similar to Graham and Rawlings (1991), Herman (1992) has linked the “domestic captivity” of a battered woman to a need for “pair bonding” with the abuser, a worshipful view of the perpetrator, and a destroyed sense of self. Specifically, Herman posited that a battered woman is confronted with powerful but invisible barriers to leave or escape the battering relationship. Among these barriers are the various tactics her batterer uses to keep her “captive” and the resultant psychological trauma she repeatedly suffers. For example, a battered woman is inclined to chronically feel petrified in response to her batterer’s capricious use of violence or threats to kill or seriously hurt her or the people she cares for. She is likely to develop feelings of helplessness as he relentlessly imposes upon her his autocratic domination and numerous maneuvers aimed at convincing her that any resistance is useless and that any attempt to escape is doomed to result in serious or fatal retaliation. She is also prone to feelings of

disempowerment and a reduced sense of autonomy as results of his meticulous scrutiny and tyrannical control over every aspect of her life. Being repeatedly coerced into subordination and compliance, a battered woman tends to see her abuser as the most powerful person in her life. Recurrent cycles of terror and reprieve, intended to elicit both her fears and her gratitude for being spared, may paradoxically lead her to even view him as her savior. Furthermore, upon the perpetrator's jealous demands for her absolute loyalty to him, a battered woman is often forced to restrict or even terminate her connection with people outside of the abusive relationship. Being socially isolated and thus deprived of outside support, she may view him as her sole source of comfort and nurturance and over time become more and more reliant upon him. The constant terror she experiences may ironically elevate her needs to psychologically bond with the perpetrator and to cling to her relationship with him. His domination, coupled with the inaccessibility of outside perspectives, may cause her to repress her doubts, to gradually lose her original viewpoints, to empathize with him, and to eventually view the world through his lens. The pair bonding between the woman and her abuser may be further strengthened by the small kindness he capriciously grants her. To win her over and to convince her to stay, he may intermittently display postures of love, apologize, and promise to change and to stop the violence. Herman asserted that intermittent granting of small kindness is most effective in attenuating a battered woman's psychological resistance and in fortifying her attachment to the abuser. Moreover, a battered woman may be coerced into participating in activities that involve violations of her ethical principles and betrayal of the people she loves. For instance, she may be forced to cover up for the batterer's illegal or dishonest acts or to refrain from intervening with his abuse of the children. She is consequently prone to feelings of guilt, shame, distrust in herself, a loss of self-dignity, and self-loathing. According to Herman, coercive techniques of

this nature are the most destructive to the woman's basic structure of the self for they alter and contaminate her self-identity. As his coercive control continues, she is increasingly likely to experience an irrevocable destruction to her sense of self. Correspondingly, she is increasingly inclined to worshipfully perceive him as an omnipotent and almighty figure, to adopt his beliefs, to feel an intensified need to bond with him, and to depend upon him for consolation, guidance, and strength. Repeated cycles of his controlling and overpowering tactics thus progressively foster her adoration of him while incrementally debilitating her sense of self.

Integrative Summary

The theories reviewed above, either supporting or complementing each other, provide a coherent picture that explains in depth how abuse may result in a battered woman's idealization or adoration of her abuser as well as her low self-esteem. When integrated, these theories illuminate certain aspects of abuse that are most influential in shaping a battered woman's psychological and behavioral responses to intimate partner aggression as well as her resultant evaluations of the perpetrator and herself. Among these aspects are the abuser's coercive control and tyrannical domination over the woman, the captivity of the woman in the abusive relationship, and the intermittency, recurrence, and uncontrollability of abuse. These factors work together to confine the woman to an isolated environment in which she is deprived of adequate social contact, outside perspectives, and sources of validation of her self-identity and self-worth. These factors are also theorized to universally bring about the woman's perceived need to bond with the abuser, to rely on him for consolation and guidance, and to constantly please him by striving to think and feel as he does, to see the world through his eyes, and to do whatever it takes to meet his every demand and want. To appease him, she may also be forced to

behave passively and submissively, neglect her own desires and needs, deny her feelings and perspectives, and act against her will and even ethical principles.

She is consequently inclined to suffer perceptual distortions and cognitive confusions as she repeatedly experiences herself as subjugated by the abuser. She may gradually lose her original viewpoints and adopt the abuser's beliefs and worldviews. She may identify with him, worshipfully view him as a good person who has omnipotent power over her, and even paradoxically see him as her savior. Correspondingly, she is likely to perceive herself as a person of low power who is subservient to him. She may assume his perspective of her, internalize his aggression towards her, and chronically experience herself as weak, inadequate, and incapable of fending for herself. She may also question her capacity to do things right and doubt her ability to accurately perceive and judge things. Accordingly, she is prone to feelings of helplessness, self-loathing, and losses of autonomy and self-dignity. Prolonged exposure to recurrent and uncontrollable abuse, therefore, may inevitably activate and heighten a battered woman's dependence upon and attachment to her abuser, progressively foster her idealization of him, and increasingly debilitate her sense of self over time.

Overall, the above-mentioned theories appear to strongly suggest that intimate partner abuse has a detrimental effect upon battered women's self-concept. These theories also conceptualize idealizing an abusive partner as a common survival strategy for women victimized in intimate relationships. This strategy is further theorized to harm a battered woman's self-image by leading her to view herself as a lesser person who is inferior to and dependent on the abuser. Taken as a whole, these theories appear to suggest: (a) a negative association between partner abuse and battered women's self-concept, (b) a positive association between partner maltreatment and idealization of an intimate abuser, and (c) an inverse relationship between

idealization of an abusive partner and women's self-concept. Thus, these theories imply that idealizing an intimate abuser may function as a mediating factor between partner abuse and the development of a negative self-concept in battered women. The present study tested this hypothesis by examining to what extent partner evaluations mediate the link between partner abuse and self-concept in battered women.

Hypotheses

Although several studies have found that intimate partner abuse is significantly and inversely related to battered women's self-concept, little is known about the factors that might explain or account for this link. The present review also indicates a paucity of research on how battered women appraise their intimate partners. Existing theories suggest that idealization of an intimate abuser might be an explanatory variable in the relationship between partner maltreatment and battered women's poor self-concept. To test this theoretical proposition and to address the identified gaps in the literature, this study investigated to what extent battered women's evaluations of their battering partners mediate the relationship between the abuse they experience and their self-concept. To determine if partner evaluations function as a mediator between partner maltreatment and battered women's self-concept, this investigation framed and tested the following hypotheses.

First, the majority of previous studies suggest that frequency of intimate partner abuse would be negatively correlated with battered women's scores on measures of self-concept. Greater abuse would be associated with more negative self-concept.

Second, it was hypothesized, based on existing theories, that frequency of partner abuse would be positively associated with the extent to which battered women idealize their partners on

measures of partner evaluations. The more severe the abuse, the more idealized their appraisals of their battering partners.

Third, existing theoretical work also suggests that there would be an inverse relationship between battered women's idealization of their abusive partners and their self-concept. The more idealized battered women's appraisals of their partners, the lower their scores on positive self-concept.

Fourth, it was further hypothesized that among battered women, partner evaluations would mediate the relationship between intimate partner abuse and self-concept, such that when partner evaluations were statistically controlled, the strength of the inverse relationship between partner maltreatment and self-concept would be significantly reduced.

In order to examine the differential impacts of different forms of abuse, the hypotheses were tested using physical threats, actual physical violence, dominance-isolation, and emotional-verbal abuse scores separately. To investigate whether participants' evaluations of themselves and their partners varied according to the specificity of the appraisal, the hypotheses were tested using separate measures that differentially assess global worth and domain-specific attributes.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

This chapter presents the research methodology used for this study. Areas to be described include: the participants, the instruments, the data collection procedures, and the data analysis.

Participants

The sample in this study consisted of 196 heterosexual women seeking services from seven shelters for battered women in the United States, all of whom reported experiencing both physical and psychological abuse by their current or former male intimate partners during the year preceding the survey. These women were eligible for study participation because they were 18 years of age or older, literate, and had been in a marital or sexually intimate, live-in relationship with a man who battered for a period of at least six months previous to the investigation. Additionally, these women had received from their husbands or live-in boyfriends during the 12 months prior to their participation in the study at least: (a) one act of serious physical violence, (b) a few acts of sexual aggression or mild to moderate physical violence, (c) a few threats of serious violence, or (d) many threats of symbolic to moderate violence, as measured by the Severity of Violence Against Women Scale (SVAWS; Marshall, 1992). These criteria reflect battering as a pattern and make explicit the assumption that physical threats and acts of minor violence become more harmful with repetition.

Participants ranged in age from 18 to 69 years, with a mean age of 37.24 years ($SD = 10.72$). A total of 60.2% of the participants reported having children living with them. The number of children living with these women ranged from 1 to 5 with a mean of 2.15 ($SD = 1.1$) while eight participants did not report the number of children living with them. The majority of

participants (67.9%) self-identified as Caucasian, 14.8% African American, 8.7% Hispanic/Latino/Chicano, 5.6% multiracial, 1% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% Mexican Indian, and 0.5% African (Habesha/Eritrea) whereas one participant did not indicate her race. Regarding religious affiliation, 78% of the participants described themselves as Christian (21.9% Catholic, 10.7% Protestant, and 45.4% other Christian); 8.2% non-traditional/spiritual; 1% Muslim; 2.6% affiliated with other religions (Pagan, Wiccan, and Buddhism); 9.2% endorsed no religion; and two participants did not report their religious preference.

In terms of participants' level of education, 14.3% of the women had less than a high school degree, 33.7% obtained a high school diploma, 5.1% had finished partial college education, 31.6% reported obtaining a community college or technical school diploma, 12.2% completed college (four-year degree), and 3.1% had a masters degree. A little more than half (58.7%) of the participants were unemployed; about one-third reported being self-employed (1.5%) or employed full- (16.3%) or part-time (16.8%); 6.1% indicated "other" (i.e., disabled, retired, or beginning a job) while one participant did not indicate her employment status. When asked about their occupation, 25.5% of participants reported to be professionals, 10.7% manual workers, 6.6% clerical workers, 31.1% homemakers, 4.1% students, 19.4% "other", and 2.6% did not report their occupation. About one-third (30.6%) of the participants had a total family income of less than \$10,000 per year; 34.7% between \$10,000 and \$25,999; 23.5% between \$26,000 and \$49,999; and only 10.2% had a household income of more than \$50,000 per year while two participants did not report income.

A total of 29.6% of the women were single; 23% separated; 22.4% divorced; 18.4% married; 4.1% cohabiting with their significant other; 1% engaged; 1% widowed; and one participant did not indicate her marital status. Almost half (49%) reported their husband or ex-

husband to be the abuser with whom they had formed their current or most recent intimate relationship (the one that had led them to seek services at a shelter) while the other half (51%) identified their current or former live-in boyfriend as their abuser. The mean time in the relationship for all participants was 9 years and 8 months (with a range of seven months to 52 years), and the average duration of the battering was 6 years and 7 months (ranged from 1 month to 51 years and 11 months). At the time of data collection, 63.8% of the women described their battering relationship as separated or ended within the last three months; 29.6% separated or ended over three months ago; and 6.6% indicated they were still together with their abusive partner. The majority (75%) of these participants were shelter residents while the remaining 25% were receiving non-resident shelter services.

In summary, participants in this study consisted mainly of middle-aged women who were not married and who were residing at a shelter at the time of the study. Most of them were Caucasian, Christian, had education beyond high school, and had low to moderate family income. A little more than half of these women were unemployed and had children living with them. On average, they had maintained intimate relationships with their male partners for more than nine years and had experienced battering for more than six years. The majority of them ended their battering relationship or separated from their abuser shortly before their participation in the study.

Instruments

For the purpose of this study, participants were asked to complete a demographic form and six scales that were used to assess their experiences of physical and psychological abuse, their global self-esteem and domain-specific self-conceptions, and their evaluations of their

intimate partners' global worth and domain-specific attributes. These measures are described below.

Participant Characteristics

A demographic form was designed to ask participants for the following information: age, number of children at home, religion, marital status, racial/ethnic background, educational level, employment status, occupation, yearly family income, relationship length, duration of the battering, current status of the battering relationship, and shelter resident status. The form consists of 15 items in a multiple-choice and fill-in-the blank format.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse by intimate partners was measured using the Severity of Violence Against Women Scale (SVAWS; Marshall, 1992). The SVAWS is a 46-item questionnaire designed to assess a woman's experience of physical aggression from her male intimate partner during the past 12 months. The instrument measures two broad dimensions representing behaviors that threaten physical violence and acts of actual physical violence. The dimension of physical threats consists of 19 items that constitute four subscales: symbolic violence and threats of mild, moderate, and serious violence. Acts of physical threats include smashing an object, shaking a fist at a woman, threatening to destroy property, and threatening with a knife or gun. The dimension of actual physical violence is composed of 27 items that constitute five subscales: acts of mild, minor, moderate, serious, and sexual violence. Examples of behaviors that represent actual physical violence are pushing, biting, slapping, beating up, and physically forcing sex. Factor analyses have confirmed the existence of the two broad dimensions and the validity of the nine subscales. For the purpose of this study, only the total scores for the two broad dimensions were entered into statistical analyses to test the hypotheses.

For each act of physical threat or violence, a woman responds using a 4-point Likert scale to rate the frequency of the act during the past year: 1 = never, 2 = once, 3 = a few times, 4 = many times. The frequency scores for items loading on the physical threats dimension can be summed as can scores for the acts of actual physical violence. Total scores can range from 19 to 76 for the dimension of physical threats and from 27 to 108 for the dimension of actual physical violence. Marshall (1992) reported that the SVAWS subscales have good internal consistency with alpha coefficients ranging from .92 to .96 for a sample of 707 college female students and from .89 to .96 for a group of 208 community women. Reliability coefficients for the two broad dimensions were found to be .93 for physical threats and .94 for actual physical violence for a sample of 131 abused women (Silva et al., 1997). Additionally, Wilson et al. (2000) reported reliability for a group of 171 abused women as .91 for the dimension of physical threats and .93 for the dimension of actual physical violence. In the current sample, reliabilities (coefficient alpha) for the two broad dimensions were .92 for physical threats and .93 for actual physical violence.

Psychological Abuse

The Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory (PMWI; Tolman, 1989) was used to assess a woman's experience of psychologically abusive behaviors from her male intimate partner. The PMWI is comprised of 58 items that delineate dominance-isolation and emotional-verbal forms of psychological abuse. In the original inventory, for each behavior women are asked to indicate on a Likert scale how often the behavior occurred in the past six months: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = occasionally, 4 = frequently, 5 = very frequently, NA = not applicable. Given the SVAWS asks about a period of 12 months it was necessary to change the time period of focus for either the SVAWS or the PMWI in order that they would match. In this study the

time period in question for the PMWI was changed to 12 months to match that of the SVAWS. The dominance-isolation subscale includes items measuring behaviors related to demands for subservience, isolation from resources, and rigid observances of traditional sex roles. The emotional-verbal subscale contains items dealing with verbal attacks, attempts to degrade a woman, and withholding emotional resources. Factor analyses support the validity of the two subscales. In the current study, the frequency scores for items loading on the dominance-isolation subscale were summed as were scores for acts of emotional-verbal abuse. The total scores for the two subscales were entered into statistical analyses to test the hypotheses of this study.

Tolman (1999) demonstrated that the PMWI has good construct validity and that both subscales have the ability to differentiate battered women from non-battered women in distressed relationships and non-battered women in satisfied relationships. Initial internal consistency reliability was reported as .95 for the dominance-isolation subscale and as .93 for the emotional-verbal subscale for a sample of 207 battered women (Tolman, 1989). Subsequent reliability coefficients for the two subscales were found to be .82 for dominance-isolation and .93 for emotional-verbal abuse in a group of 75 abused women (Dutton & Painter, 1993). In a sample of 63 battered women, alpha coefficients of internal consistency were .93 and .87 for the dominance-isolation subscale and the emotional-verbal subscale respectively (Street & Arias, 2001). For the present sample, alpha coefficients of internal consistency were .93 for the dominance-isolation subscale and .91 for the emotional-verbal subscale.

Global Self-Esteem

Each participant's overall self-evaluation was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES; Rosenberg, 1965). The SES is a ten-item instrument designed to assess an

individual's general feelings of self-worth, self-respect, or self-acceptance. Each item requires the participant to respond on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." A value is assigned to each of the 10 items for scoring (for items 1, 2, 4, 6, 7: strongly agree = 4, agree = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1; for items 3, 5, 8, 9, 10: strongly agree = 1, agree = 2, disagree = 3, and strongly disagree = 4). Total scores for the scale range from 10 to 40, with higher scores indicating higher global self-esteem. For the purpose of this study, each participant's total score on the scale was entered into statistical analyses to test the hypotheses.

The SES was originally developed for use with adolescents (Rosenberg, 1965, 1979) and has been widely used with adults, including victims of domestic violence. The internal consistency reliability was reported as .86 for a group of 33 battered women (Cascardi & O'Leary, 1992) and as .92 for a sample of 192 battered women (Saunders, 1994). Studies have shown that the scale possesses adequate construct, convergent, concurrent, discriminant, and face validity (Fleming & Courtney, 1984; Myers, Templer, & Brown, 1984; Rosenberg, 1979). The internal consistency of the 10 items for the current sample was high (coefficient alpha = .91).

Global Evaluations of Intimate Partners

Each participant's evaluations of her abusive partner's global worth were assessed using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES; Rosenberg, 1965)—Modified for Partner Evaluations. This modification of the SES includes the same items as the original scale, reworded to measure the esteem in which participants held their partners. For instance, the item "I feel that I have a number of good qualities" was reworded to state, "I feel that my partner has a number of good qualities." The items were scored using the same method for the original SES. Total scores could range from 10 to 40, with higher scores indicating higher global evaluations of partners. The

total scores for this modification of the SES were entered into statistical analyses to test the hypotheses of this study. Internal reliability coefficients for a sample of 82 satisfied newlyweds were found to be .77 for husbands' ratings of their wives and .52 for wives' ratings of their husbands (Neff & Karney, 2002). Neff and Karney attributed the lower alpha for wives' ratings of their husbands to the lower variability in responses across wives. The internal consistency reliability for the present sample was adequate (coefficient alpha = .76).

Domain-Specific Self-Conceptions

The Self-Attributes Questionnaire (SAQ; Pelham & Swann, 1989) served as the measure of domain-specific self-conceptions. The SAQ is a ten-item scale that was used to assess participants' self-views on ten domain-specific qualities: intellectual ability, social skills/social competence, artistic and/or musical ability, athletic ability, physical attractiveness, leadership ability, common sense, emotional stability, sense of humor, and discipline. For each attribute, participants rated themselves as compared with other people their own age and gender on graduated interval scales ranging from 1 (bottom 5%) to 10 (top 5%). Total scores for the scale could range from 10 to 100, with higher scores indicating higher domain-specific self-evaluations. For the purpose of this study, each participant's total score on the scale was entered into statistical analyses to test the hypotheses. Pelham and Swann (1989) reported a four-month test-retest correlation of .77 and an internal reliability coefficient of .76 for a sample of 486 undergraduates. The internal consistency reliability was reported as .64 for a sample of 86 married couples (Swann, Hixon, & De La Ronde, 1992) and for a group of 90 married couples (Swann, De La Ronde, & Hixon, 1994). The internal reliability for the current sample was high (coefficient alpha = .86).

Domain-Specific Appraisals of Intimate Partners

Each participant's evaluations of her abusive partner's domain-specific qualities were assessed using the Self-Attributes Questionnaire (SAQ; Pelham & Swann, 1989)—Modified for Partner Evaluations. This modification of the SAQ includes the same items as the original scale, the instructions of which were reworded such that participants rated their partners rather than themselves on ten domain-specific attributes. The items were scored using the same method for the original SAQ. Total scores could range from 10 to 100, with higher scores reflecting more positive views of partners on domain-specific attributes. The total scores for this modification of the SAQ were entered into statistical analyses to test the hypotheses of this study. Internal reliability coefficients for a sample of 82 satisfied newlyweds were found to be .53 for husbands' ratings of their wives and .67 for wives' ratings of their husbands (Neff & Karney, 2002). The internal consistency reliability for the present sample was adequate (coefficient alpha = .83).

Data Collection Procedures

Participants were recruited from seven shelters for battered women in the states of Wisconsin, Georgia, Kansas, Michigan, California, and Oklahoma. Correspondence was initiated with the director of each shelter to request help with data collection. Once agreement to participate in this research was obtained, the participating shelters were mailed individual survey packets that were distributed to potential participants. A designated staff member at each shelter initiated requests among women seeking services at the shelter for voluntary participation in this study. The women were assured that shelter services were in no way contingent upon their participation in this research. Those women who expressed interest in participating in the study were given by the staff member a packet of forms and questionnaires presented in the following

order: (a) an informed consent form attached to the front of the packet, (b) instructions for completing the survey, (c) a demographic form, (d) the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), (e) the Self-Attributes Questionnaire (Pelham & Swann, 1989), (f) the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)–Modified for Partner Evaluations, (g) the Self-Attributes Questionnaire (Pelham & Swann, 1989)–Modified for Partner Evaluations, (h) the Severity of Violence Against Women Scale (Marshall, 1992), and (i) the Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory (Tolman, 1989). This order of forms served the purpose of ensuring: (a) that participants understood the nature of the survey and gave consent before filling out the questionnaires, (b) that their self-evaluations were not influenced by their appraisals of their intimate partners due to rating themselves and their partners on the same scales, and (c) that their evaluations of themselves and their partners were not influenced by any possible discomfort or feelings experienced or triggered while answering questions about the abuse inflicted upon them. If a woman chose to complete the forms and questionnaires, she was instructed to place them in the provided self-addressed, stamped envelope, seal it, and return it to the designated staff member. The packet was then mailed back to the researcher. Women choosing not to complete the measures after reading the informed consent form were instructed to return their blank packets to the same staff member.

The survey was designed to be completed anonymously, asking participants not to write their names anywhere on any of the forms or questionnaires. The survey also requested that each participant base her responses upon her current or most recent intimate relationship (the one that had led her to seek services at the shelter). It took about 30 to 60 minutes to complete a survey. Each survey packet was assigned a number and the number appeared in the upper right hand corner of each of the forms and questionnaires included in the same packet. This was helpful to

the researcher in keeping track of each survey sent to and returned from a specific shelter. A total of 380 survey packets were sent to the shelters during a 14-month period in 2007-2008. Each shelter received a \$100 stipend for participating in this study regardless of how many surveys were completed. The stipend was sent to the shelter upon completion of data collection.

Of the 380 surveys requested by the shelters, 217 (57%) of them were filled out and returned. The data from 21 women were deleted because these cases had missing values or did not meet the above-mentioned criteria for inclusion in the research sample. The final sample for the study thus consisted of 196 battered women whose data were entered for regression and mediation analyses.

Data Analysis

The statistical analyses conducted for this study incorporated the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0 for Windows). Alpha levels were set at .05 for all tests of the research hypotheses. Descriptive data for this study included numbers, percentages, means, standard deviations, ranges, and reliability coefficients. Descriptive statistics were calculated for the demographic variables, the predictor variables (physical threats, actual physical violence, dominance-isolation, and emotional-verbal abuse), the hypothesized mediators (battered women's evaluations of their intimate partners' global worth and domain-specific attributes), and the outcome variables (global self-esteem and domain-specific self-conceptions). Correlations were computed to examine possible relationships between the predictor variables, the hypothesized mediators, and the outcome variables.

Standard multiple regression analyses were performed to test the hypothesis that battered women's evaluations of their intimate partners mediate the relationship between the abuse they

experience and their self-concept. Baron and Kenny's (1986) criteria for testing mediation were used to determine if partner evaluations explain the association between partner abuse and self-concept in battered women. For mediation to be supported: partner abuse (the predictor) must be related to self-concept (the outcome variable); partner abuse must be related to partner evaluations (the hypothesized mediator); and partner evaluations must be related to self-concept. For partner evaluations to function as a mediator, the association between partner abuse and self-concept must no longer be significant or must be reduced significantly in effect size when controlling for partner evaluations. Both the descriptive data and mediation analyses are described in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The findings of the study are presented in this chapter. Descriptive statistics pertaining to predictor variables, hypothesized mediators, and outcome variables are reported. Each of the four hypotheses is tested and their related statistical analyses described.

Descriptive Data

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the predictor variables (physical threats, actual physical violence, dominance-isolation, and emotional-verbal abuse), the hypothesized mediators (battered women's evaluations of their intimate partners' global worth and domain-specific attributes), and the outcome variables (global self-esteem and domain-specific self-conceptions). As would be expected, the majority of the present sample reported experiencing frequent physical abuse by their male intimate partners within the year prior to their participation in the study. Specifically, participants indicated a mean score of 50.68 ($SD = 14.07$) for the dimension of physical threats on the Marshall SVAWS and a mean score of 55.91 ($SD = 18.28$) for the actual physical violence subscale. These physical abuse mean scores were a little higher than the corresponding scores of the 171 battered women interviewed in Wilson et al.'s (2000) study (physical threats = 47.34 and actual physical violence = 52.29). Psychological abuse by intimate partners was also frequent for the current sample. On the Tolman PMWI scale, participants reported a mean score of 89.48 ($SD = 24.14$) for the dominance-isolation subscale and a mean score of 91.20 ($SD = 15.07$) for the dimension of emotional-verbal abuse. These mean annual psychological maltreatment scores were comparable to the following corresponding scores of the battered women participating in three previous studies (Dutton & Painter, 1993;

Street & Arias, 2001; Tolman, 1989): dominance-isolation = 79.1, 97.96, and 70.7 and emotional-verbal abuse = 95.5, 93.87, and 79.4 respectively. The overall abuse scores reported by the present sample not only indicated high levels of intimate partner aggression but also reflected frequent recurrence of four specific types of partner abuse: physical threats, actual physical violence, dominance-isolation, and emotional-verbal abuse.

Regarding participants' self-concept, the mean level of global self-esteem was reported as 25.46 ($SD = 6.08$) out of a possible score of 40 on the Rosenberg SES. When comparing this result with the data yielded by two preceding studies (Richards, 1992; Satalim, 2002), the present sample, on average, scored lower in self-esteem than a group of 521 abused women ($M = 31$) and another sample comprised of 50 sheltered battered ($M = 27.00$), 50 nonsheltered battered ($M = 27.20$), and 50 nonbattered women ($M = 31.08$). As measured by the SAQ, participants reported an average domain-specific self-appraisal score of 56.87 ($SD = 15.56$) in contrast to a higher mean score of 67.5 ($SD = 9.78$) for a normative sample of 486 college undergraduates (Pelham & Swann, 1989). The finding that participants scored relatively low on both the Rosenberg SES and the SAQ appears to indicate that the majority of this sample suffered from poor self-concept at both global and domain-specific levels.

Regarding participants' evaluations of their intimate partners, the women's mean ratings of their abusers on both the Rosenberg SES and the SAQ were generally lower than their averagely poor evaluations of themselves. Specifically, the present sample reported a mean rating of their partners' global worth as 24.26 ($SD = 4.76$) in contrast to 25.46 ($SD = 6.08$) as their average global evaluation of themselves. The mean score of the participants' appraisals of their partners' domain-specific qualities was 48.61 ($SD = 15.51$), which again fell below their average self-rating on the same scale ($M = 56.87$, $SD = 15.56$). These results thus reflected the

battered women's negative evaluations of their abusive partners at both global and domain-specific levels.

In summary, participants in the current sample reported experiencing frequent recurrence of four specific types of physical and psychological abuse by their intimate partners within the year prior to the study. The current data also revealed that the majority of these women rated both themselves and their abusive partners negatively on global worth and domain-specific attributes.

Simple Correlations among Variables of Interest

Pearson product-moment correlations were used to show the strengths and directions of the bivariate relationships among the eight variables under investigation. The matrix of correlation coefficients among these variables are reported in Table 2. As expected, there was a strong positive correlation between the two dimensions of physical abuse ($r = .76, p < .001$) and between the two forms of psychological maltreatment ($r = .70, p < .001$). All the other intercorrelations among the abuse variables were moderate to moderately-high (ranging from .40 to .63, $p < .001$). These correlation coefficients suggested that the four types of intimate partner aggression are likely to overlap and co-occur.

The intercorrelations among participants' global and domain-specific views of themselves and of their partners are shown in the lower right quadrant of the table. As expected, the two self-concept variables (global self-esteem and domain-specific self-conceptions) were significantly and positively correlated ($r = .52, p < .001$). Likewise, the two partner evaluation variables (global and domain-specific appraisals of intimate partners) were also significantly and positively correlated ($r = .44, p < .001$). Contrary to what was hypothesized, participants' self-

concept was not significantly and negatively associated with their evaluations of their partners at the global or domain-specific level. Rather, a significant and positive correlation was found between participants' domain-specific self-conceptions and appraisals of their intimate partners ($r = .21, p < .01$). That is, at the domain-specific level, the more negative participants' self-concepts, the less favorable their evaluations of their partners. No other bivariate correlations between self-concept and partner evaluation variables were found to be significant in this study.

Among Pearson correlations between partner abuse variables and self-concept measures, no significant correlations were found between any of the individual abuse variables and participants' domain-specific self-conceptions. The strongest correlation between individual predictor and outcome variables in this study was emotional-verbal abuse negatively correlated with participants' global self-esteem ($r = -.19, p < .01$). The frequency of physical threats was also found to be significantly and negatively correlated with global self-esteem ($r = -.14, p < .05$). Neither actual physical violence nor dominance-isolation forms of abuse were associated to a statistically significant extent with participant's global self-esteem. Overall, these data revealed that the two self-concept measures, differing from one another in level of abstractness, were differentially associated with the four individual abuse variables.

Finally, counter to theoretical postulates about a positive association between partner maltreatment and idealization of an intimate abuser, all of the four individual abuse variables were significantly and negatively correlated with participants' global evaluations of their intimate partners, with correlation coefficients ranging from $-.18$ to $-.26$. Emotional-verbal abuse was also found to be significantly and negatively correlated with participants' domain-specific appraisals of their partners ($r = -.19, p < .01$). No significant associations were found between domain-specific evaluations of partners and the other three abuse variables.

Regression and Mediation Analyses

The present investigation focused on battered women's evaluations of their intimate partners as a potential explanatory variable in the association between the abuse they experience and their self-concept. In particular, the purpose of this study was to determine whether or not partner evaluations mediate the relations between four specific dimensions of partner abuse and battered women's self-concept at global and/or domain-specific levels. Standard multiple regression and mediation analyses were conducted to test if the present data met the four criteria for mediation that Baron and Kenny (1986) delineated (see Chapter 3 for details of the criteria). Because existing theories have described the powerful effects of prolonged abuse on battered women's perceptions of themselves and their abusive partners (See chapter 2 for a detailed review), duration of battering was statistically controlled for in all regression analyses. Since prior research has documented an inverse relationship between age and violence (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980) and a significant association between relationship length and self-esteem (Dutton & Painter, 1993), age and relationship length were also entered as covariates in every regression analysis. Specifically, the three demographic variables (age, relationship length, and duration of battering) were entered as the first independent variables in all regression equations.

Partner Abuse and Self-concept

In order to further clarify the relationship between partner abuse and self-concept and to examine how different forms of abuse are differentially related to battered women's self-concept, two standard multiple regression analyses were conducted. In the first analysis, four types of partner abuse (physical threats, actual physical violence, dominance-isolation, and emotional-verbal abuse) were entered simultaneously as independent variables, predicting global self-esteem. In the second analysis, the four types of abuse were entered simultaneously again as

independent variables and domain-specific self-conception scores were entered as the dependent variable. Data screening did not reveal any multivariate outliers or serious problems with normality, linearity, or homoscedasticity. Review of the collinearity statistics indicated adequate tolerance and VIF values, suggesting that although the four abuse variables measured related constructs, they were not so intercorrelated as to cause problems with multicollinearity to arise. As previously reported, the Pearson correlations also demonstrated comparable interrelations among these abuse variables.

Consistent with the Pearson correlational analyses, regression results indicated that the linear combination of abuse measures was not significantly related to domain-specific self-conceptions, $R^2 = .028$, $R^2_{adj} = -.009$, $F(7, 188) = .764$, $p = .618$. The same model of abuse variables, however, significantly predicted participants' global self-esteem, $R^2 = .115$, $R^2_{adj} = .082$, $F(7, 188) = 3.5$, $p = .001$. This model accounted for 11.5% of the variance in global self-esteem. Table 3 presents a summary of regression coefficients that indicate the relative strength of the individual predictors. Review of the beta weights showed that only two variables (*physical threats* $\beta = -.316$, $t(188) = -2.505$, $p < .05$; and *actual physical violence* $\beta = .318$, $t(188) = 2.909$, $p < .01$) significantly contributed to the model. In contrast to the Pearson product-moment analysis, neither the beta weights nor the partial correlation index indicated a significant correlation between emotional-verbal abuse and global self-esteem. Since the Pearson product-moment index did not reveal a significant correlation between actual physical violence and global self-esteem, physical threats remained as the only significant independent predictor of participants' global self-esteem.

Partner Abuse and Partner Evaluations

In order to further examine the relationship between partner abuse and partner evaluations and to assess the differential impacts of different forms of abuse upon partner appraisals, two standard multiple regressions were employed. In the first regression, the four types of abuse delineated above were entered simultaneously as independent variables, predicting battered women's appraisals of their partners' global worth. In the second regression, the four types of abuse were entered simultaneously again to predict battered women's evaluations of their partners' domain-specific attributes. Results indicated that the overall model of abuse variables significantly predicted participants' global evaluations of their intimate partners, $R^2 = .103$, $R^2_{adj} = .069$, $F(7, 188) = 3.079$, $p < .01$. This model accounted for 10.3% of the variance in global evaluations of intimate partners. The same model was also significantly related to participants' domain-specific appraisals of their abusive partners, $R^2 = .082$, $R^2_{adj} = .048$, $F(7, 188) = 2.411$, $p < .05$. This model accounted for 8.2% of the variance in domain-specific appraisals of intimate partners. Yet, review of the beta weights did not indicate any of the abuse variables to be significant independent predictors of partner evaluations at the global or domain-specific level. As with the Pearson correlations, all the partial correlations between the abuse measures and the partner evaluation indices were negative. The overall results yielded by these two regression analyses thus failed to support the hypothesis that frequency of partner abuse would be positively associated with the extent to which battered women idealize their partners on measures of partner evaluations.

Partner Evaluations and Self-concept

To test whether there were significant main effects for partner evaluations on battered women's self-concept, two standard multiple regression analyses were conducted. In both

analyses, battered women's evaluations of their intimate partners' global worth and domain-specific attributes were entered simultaneously as the two independent variables. Their global self-esteem was entered as the dependent variable in one regression and their domain-specific self-conception scores were entered as the dependent variable in a second regression. Data screening did not reveal any multivariate outliers or significant problems with normality, linearity, or homoscedasticity. Review of the tolerance statistics also did not suggest problems with multicollinearity. Regression analyses demonstrated that the overall model of partner evaluation variables was not significantly related to global self-esteem, $R^2 = .038$, $R^2_{adj} = .013$, $F(5, 190) = 1.521$, $p = .185$. The same model, however, significantly predicted participants' domain-specific self-conceptions, $R^2 = .078$, $R^2_{adj} = .053$, $F(5, 190) = 3.199$, $p < .01$. This model accounted for 7.8% of the variance in domain-specific self-conceptions. Table 4 presents a summary of regression coefficients that indicate the relative importance of each of the independent variables. Review of the beta weights showed that both variables (*global evaluations of intimate partners* $\beta = -.169$, $t(190) = -2.164$, $p < .05$; and *domain-specific appraisals of intimate partners* $\beta = .281$, $t(190) = 3.558$, $p < .001$) significantly contributed to the model. Since the Pearson product-moment index did not reveal a significant correlation between global evaluations of intimate partners and domain specific self-conceptions, domain-specific appraisals of intimate partners remained as the only significant independent predictor of participants' domain-specific self-conceptions. As with the Pearson correlation, the partial correlation between domain-specific appraisals of intimate partners and domain-specific self-conceptions was also positive. The overall results yielded by these two regression analyses thus did not lend support to the hypothesis that partner evaluations would be negatively related to battered women's self-concept.

Partner Evaluations as a Hypothesized Mediator

As reported above, there were several significant associations among the variables under investigation. The various combinations of these associations, however, did not sufficiently satisfy all of the first three requirements for mediation delineated by Baron and Kenny (1986). For instance, although physical threats significantly predicted participants' global self-esteem, it was not a significant independent predictor of participants' evaluations of their partners at the global or domain-specific level. In addition, neither of the partner evaluation variables was related to global self-esteem. Similarly, although domain-specific appraisals of intimate partners significantly predicted domain-specific self-conceptions, neither of the variables was related to any of the abuse variables. Since there was not a necessary and sufficient combination of significant associations among the variables examined in this study, neither of the partner evaluation variables could be tested as a mediator of the relationship between abuse and self-concept. Results of the current investigation thus failed to support the mediating role of partner evaluations in the association between intimate partner maltreatment and battered women's self-concept.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The present investigation sought to expand on previous work by determining whether or not battered women's evaluations of their intimate partners mediate the relationship between the abuse they experience and their self-concept. Based on existing theories and prior research, this study framed and tested four hypotheses, using separate measures to differentially assess four specific types of partner abuse and to measure partner evaluations and self-concept at two different levels. An integration of the Pearson and regression analyses validated the following associations: (a) the entire group of abuse variables significantly predicted global self-esteem, global evaluations of intimate partners, and domain-specific appraisals of partners; (b) partner evaluation variables in combination significantly predicted domain-specific self-conceptions; (c) physical threats were significantly and negatively related to global self-esteem; and (d) domain-specific appraisals of intimate partners were significantly and positively associated with domain-specific self-conceptions. These associations partially supported the hypothesis that there would be a negative association between intimate partner aggression and battered women's self-concept. The overall findings, however, did not support the hypothesis that frequency of partner abuse would be positively associated with the extent to which battered women idealize their partners on measures of partner evaluations. The results also contradict the hypothesis about an inverse relationship between battered women's idealization of their abusive partners and their self-concept. Accordingly, the present data did not meet all of the first three criteria for mediation that Baron and Kenny (1986) delineated. Results of the current study thus failed to support the hypothesized mediating role of partner evaluations in the association between intimate partner maltreatment and battered women's self-concept.

Based on the statistical analyses presented in Chapter 4, this chapter focuses on examining and integrating the results with existing literature on partner abuse, partner evaluations, and battered women's self-concept. This chapter also provides possible explanations for the results found about the four hypotheses tested in this study as well as implications for theory regarding battered women's internal dynamics in relation to their struggle to break away from the cycle of intimate partner aggression. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the contributions and limitations of the study and recommendations for future research, treatment, and prevention.

Integrations, Conclusions, and Theoretical Implications

Widespread Co-occurrence and Recurrence of Four Types of Abuse

The results indicated that participants in this sample experienced high levels of physical and psychological abuse from their male intimate partners within the year prior to their participation in this study. Their mean scores for the dimension of physical threats and for the actual physical violence subscale on the Marshall SVAWS were a little higher than the corresponding scores of the 171 battered women interviewed in Wilson et al's (2000) study. Their mean annual psychological maltreatment ratings were comparable but slightly different from those reported in previous studies of abused women assessed on the same instruments and recruited from similar social-service agencies (Dutton & Painter, 1993; Street & Arias, 2001; Tolman, 1989). The intercorrelations among the four abuse variables under investigation were moderate to moderately high. These intercorrelations, along with the high incidence rates, appear to suggest that the four types of abuse are likely to overlap and tend to occur together. This interpretation of the results is consistent with findings obtained in three prior studies indicating:

that emotional, controlling, sexual, and physical abuse tended to co-occur (Aguilar & Nightingale, 1994); that emotional abuse often accompanied physical abuse (Dutton & Painter, 1993); and that the frequency of verbal abuse increased as the frequency and severity of physical abuse increased (Orava et al., 1996). Overall, the current findings reflected widespread co-occurrence and recurrence of four specific types of partner abuse: physical threats, actual physical violence, dominance-isolation, and emotional-verbal abuse.

Poor Self-concept at Both Global and Domain-specific Levels

The present study also showed that the majority of this sample suffered from poor self-concept at both global and domain-specific levels. In comparison to results from prior studies (Pelham & Swann, 1989; Richards, 1992; Satalim, 2002), not only did these women's self-evaluations appear more negative than those of non-battered women and college undergraduates, but their self-esteem was also lower than that of other groups of battered women, sheltered and non-sheltered. This finding contradicts Walker's (1984) observation that abused women had a positive self-image and is consistent with information provided by other researchers (Aguilar & Nightingale, 1994; Mills, 1984; Mitchell & Hodson, 1983; Orava et al., 1996; Semmelman, 1982; Trimpey, 1989) who have found low self-esteem to be associated with battered women or to differentiate battered from non-battered women. Supporting results from most prior research, the present study appears to provide some empirical evidence for the common belief and observation that battered women suffer poor self-concept.

Negative Evaluations of Intimate Partners' Global Worth and Domain-Specific Attributes

Several theories have described how prolonged abuse may lead a battered woman to idealize her abusive partner and consequently develop a negative self-concept (Dutton & Painter, 1981; Graham & Rawlings, 1991; Herman, 1992). Given the finding that the majority of the

participants had endured battering by their intimate partners for more than six years prior to the study, it was predicted that these women would hold a more positive view of their abusers than they would of themselves. The results of the present study, surprisingly, showed the opposite. On both the Rosenberg SES and the SAQ, participants' mean ratings of their abusive partners were even lower than their typically poor evaluations of themselves. These findings reflected participants' negative evaluations of their partners' global worth and domain-specific attributes, and thus failed to corroborate theoretical postulates about battered women's idealization of their abusive partners. The findings also contrast with results obtained in Neff and Karney's (2002) study, which indicated that satisfied couples, who were likely motivated to maintain high levels of relationship satisfaction, tended to perceive their partners' global qualities with significant bias towards idealization but view their partners' domain-specific attributes with more accuracy and less positive bias. It is difficult to compare the current findings on partner evaluations among battered women with prior studies due to a dearth of research on this topic.

There are several possible explanations for the rather surprising findings about the present sample's evaluations of their intimate partners. First, existing theories about battered women's perceptions of their abusive partners were focused on providing assumptions about their internal dynamics in response to their abusers' controlling and coercive tactics aimed at keeping them captive and isolating them from the outside world. These theories thus mainly apply to women who are caught or trapped in the middle of the cycle of intimate partner abuse, confronted with environmental and psychological barriers to escape the battering relationship, and deprived of opportunities to obtain adequate social support and outside perspectives on abuse and abuse related issues. In comparison, women from the present sample appeared to have progressed to a more advanced level of experiencing and understanding the negative impacts of

partner abuse and had begun to move forward in their process of breaking away from the cycle of intimate partner aggression. At the time of data collection, most of the participants had separated from their abusers or ended their battering relationships, and all of them had managed to find the strength and opportunity to seek help through a shelter providing service to victims of domestic violence.

Second, prior research has documented that intimate partner abuse tends to escalate in severity and frequency over time (Straus & Gelles, 1990) and that battered women who seek shelter services or otherwise display higher help-seeking behaviors are generally more severely and frequently abused than those who do not (Campbell, 1989; Wilson et al., 1992). Based on these research findings, it might be plausible to speculate that many women in the present sample might have sought aid from the shelters participating in this study when they had experienced the recurrent abuse as more and more uncontrollable and unbearable, and likely soon after the occurrence of a severe or life-threatening incident of explosive battering. They might have felt the necessity and urgency to seek outside help when the negative consequences of abuse from their partner became so obvious and could no longer be overlooked in favor of attention to the small acts of kindness from him or the loving gestures he made. The ongoing reality these women experienced might have led them to see more clearly their partner's terrorizing side, which in turn might have caused them to shift their perception of the abuser more towards being realistic and thus negative. The women's evaluations of their intimate partners might have been different if they had filled out the questionnaires employed in this study at an earlier stage of their abusive relationship or during the honeymoon phase of a battering cycle as described by Walker (1979).

Third, existing theories conceptualize idealizing an abusive partner as a common survival strategy for women victimized in a battering relationship from which they perceive themselves as unable to escape (see Chapter 2 for an integrative review). Since most participants in the current sample were away from their abuser at the time of data collection, they might have become less motivated to continue to hold their positive illusions of their intimate partner in a new living environment where these perceptual distortions were no longer experienced as essential to their survival. Moreover, being free from the bombardment of their abuser's controlling and coercive tactics might have allowed these women to re-examine the abusive relationship with increased mental clarity and to view their situation from a perspective that acknowledged their suppressed anger toward the abuser and the abuser's terrorizing behavior.

Fourth, the resources and psychological aid offered to the participants through shelters for battered women might have confounded the results of the present study. Existing research has suggested the positive effects of shelter services on battered women's psychological health (Orava et al., 1996) and their ability to eventually leave the abusive relationship (Okun, 1986). Many shelters and domestic violence programs in the United States help abused women through re-empowerment (Walker, 1981) and use consciousness-raising to debunk myths about intimate partner aggression (Trimpey, 1989). The advocacy the participants received through shelters might have stimulated them to reconsider their positive illusions of their partners and to reinterpret and reevaluate the abuser's behaviors from a perspective that reflected more negative realities.

Negative Association between Partner Abuse and Global Evaluations of Intimate Partners

In the current investigation, the relationship between intimate partner aggression and battered women's evaluations of their abusers was further clarified by multiple regression and

Pearson correlational analyses. In statistical combination, the four abuse variables significantly predicted participants' evaluations of their partners' global worth and domain-specific attributes and accounted for 10.3% of the variance in global evaluations and 8.2% of the variance in domain-specific appraisals. Although review of the beta weights did not indicate any of the abuse variables to be significant independent predictors of partner evaluations, among Pearson correlations significant and negative associations were found: (a) between the four individual abuse variables and participants' global evaluations of their intimate partners and (b) between emotional-verbal abuse and participants' domain-specific appraisals of their partners. In addition, all the partial correlations between the abuse measures and the partner evaluation indices were also negative although not significant. Overall, these findings failed to support the hypothesis that frequency of partner maltreatment would be positively associated with participants' evaluations of their intimate partners. These findings do provide further evidence, however, suggesting that theoretical postulates about battered women's idealization of their abusive partners do not seem to apply to the participants in the present sample, who, as previously mentioned, had sought outside help prior to the time of data collection and appeared to have likely shifted their perceptions of their abusers from having more positive illusions to including more realistic and more negative views. Owing to a dearth of research on the relationship between intimate partner aggression and battered women's evaluations of their abusive partners, it is difficult to compare the present findings with previous studies on this topic.

Positive Association between Partner Evaluations and Self-concept at the Domain-specific Level

Based on existing theories about battered women's perceptions of themselves and of their abusive partners, it was hypothesized that there would be an inverse relationship between participants' self-concept and partner evaluations. Data from the present sample, however, did

not support such an association at the global or domain-specific level. Rather, both the Pearson and multiple partial analyses revealed a significant and positive association between participants' domain-specific self-conceptions and appraisals of their intimate partners. That is, at the domain-specific level, the more negative participants' self-concepts, the less favorable their evaluations of their partners. This result echoed findings from previous investigations (Murray et al., 1996a, 1996b), which also demonstrated that people with more negative self-images viewed their partners in a less favorable light, whereas individuals who saw themselves more positively were more generous in their ratings of their partners. Murray et al.'s studies, however, used samples drawn from the general population and employed measures that assess self-concept and partner evaluations at more global levels. Owing to a dearth of research on the relationship between partner evaluations and self-concept among battered women, it is difficult to compare the current findings with prior studies on this topic.

In speculation, existing theories postulating an inverse relationship between partner evaluations and self-concept seem to mainly apply to women who remain isolated in an abusive relationship rather than those who have sought outside help. The similarity between this investigation and Murray et al.'s (1996a, 1996b) studies suggested that the perspectives of battered women in the present sample might have been brought into line with those of the general public due to possible healing effects of receiving shelter services, being away from the abuser, or achieving a better understanding of the abusive relationship. The difference between participants' global and domain-specific perceptions further suggests that domain-specific views are more likely to reflect these possible healing effects than global perceptions. This interpretation of the results is consistent with some theoretical postulates about partner evaluations proposed by several social psychologists who contended that the motives influencing

partner perceptions vary at different levels of abstraction (Neff & Karney, 2002) and that specific perceptions are more responsive to changes in the development of an intimate relationship than global perceptions (Karney, McNulty, & Frye, 2001).

Differential Effects of Four Types of Abuse upon Self-concept

The relationship between intimate partner aggression and battered women's self-concept was further clarified in this study by multiple regression and Pearson correlational analyses. The four abuse variables in combination significantly predicted participants' self-evaluations at the global level (but not at the domain-specific level) and accounted for 11.5% of the variance in global self-esteem. In addition, after an integrative review of the beta weights and correlational indexes, physical threats remained to be uniquely and significantly associated with participants' global self-esteem whereas the other three forms of abuse were eliminated as significant predictors of the women's self-concept.

Physical threats as a significant predictor of lowered global self-esteem. Both the Pearson and multiple partial analyses revealed a significant and negative association between physical threats and global self-esteem, indicating that the women's self-esteem decreased as the frequency of physical threats increased across the sample. A similar finding was reported in Lynch and Graham-Bermann's (2000) study that also documented a significant and inverse relationship between self-esteem and physical threats. Corroborating prior research, this study thus provides additional evidence suggesting the instrumental role of physical threats in generating women's low self-esteem. However, the hypothesis about a negative association between intimate partner abuse and battered women's self-concept was only partially supported as none of the abuse variables was significantly associated with domain-specific self-conceptions and only physical threats were uniquely correlated with global self-esteem. It is only natural to

question why physical threats appeared to have a more detrimental effect upon the women's self-concept than the other three types of partner maltreatment and why the effect was confined to the global level.

Regarding the first of these questions, one possible explanation is related to the recurrence and perceived uncontrollability of intimate partner aggression. According to existing theories, a battered woman is inclined to develop feelings of inadequacy, disempowerment, and helplessness in response to the recurrent violence inflicted upon her and experienced as beyond her ability to end or control despite her numerous efforts to do so (Dutton & Painter, 1981; Graham & Rawlings, 1991; Herman, 1992; McCann et al., 1988; Mills, 1985). Given the finding that the majority of the women in the present sample had endured chronic battering by their intimate partners prior to their participation in this study, it might be plausible to speculate that over time most of them might have suffered an intensified fear of re-experiencing the battering and a diminished trust in their capacities for self-protection. For most participants, being away from the abuser or receiving shelter services might have effectively protected them from further intimate partner aggression or greatly alleviated the negative impacts of the other three forms of abuse previously imposed upon them. However, at the time of data collection, many of the women might have still been feeling terrified by their batterers' threats to kill or hurt them (or the people they cared about) and by the numerous maneuvers their abusers had used to convince them that any resistance is useless and that any attempt to escape is doomed to result in serious or fatal retaliation. Specifically, many of the participants might still have been fearing for their safety and worried that their abusers might track them down and punish them for escaping or seeking outside help. This fear is likely to have perpetuated their negative views of themselves as hopeless, inadequate, vulnerable, and unable to protect themselves from harm or injury. This

interpretation of the results is consistent with findings obtained in prior research indicating that abused women displaying higher help-seeking behaviors reported higher levels of partner abuse as well as higher levels of learned helplessness (Wilson et al., 1992).

There are at least two possible explanations for the finding that physical threats were negatively associated with the participant's self-concept at the global level but not at the domain-specific level. One interpretation is methodological: the instrument employed in this study to measure the women's domain-specific attributes, the SAQ, does not include any items that directly tap into their levels of perceived overall inadequacy, uselessness, or worthlessness whereas the instrument used to assess their global self-esteem, the Rosenberg SES, does. Another possible reason is that physical threats may tend to be relatively vague and thus be construed at more abstract and global levels. By nature they are powerful maneuvers aimed at coercing a woman into subordination and compliance by stirring up her pervasive fears of retaliation and punishment. Accordingly, physical threats are more associated with a woman's general feelings of inadequacy and helplessness than her dissatisfaction with their domain-specific qualities.

Insignificant association between actual physical violence and self-concept. All the bivariate correlations between the frequency of actual physical violence and the self-concept variables were positive, and only one out of the four indices was statistically significant. Specifically, the Pearson correlations did not reveal a significant association between actual physical violence and participants' self-concept at the global or domain-specific level. Within the regression procedure actual physical violence was significantly correlated with participants' global self-esteem, but not with their domain-specific self-conceptions. These results were not expected and contradict prior research findings that documented a significant and inverse

relationship between physical abuse and battered women's self-esteem (Mills, 1984; Cascardi & O'Leary, 1992; Dutton & Painter, 1993). The results, however, partially support previous studies that revealed no significant association between physical abuse and battered women's self-concept (Aguilar & Nightingale, 1994; Lynch & Graham-Bermann, 2000; Orava et al., 1996). It is possible that the positive and insignificant association between actual physical violence and self-concept among the women from the present sample could be related to their perception of and response to the violence inflicted upon them. In comparison to the other three types of abuse examined in this study, actual physical violence has traditionally been more clearly defined and labeled within our society as abusive. Having recurrently experienced actual physical violence from their abusers, participants in the current sample might have viewed their relationships as abusive and sought outside help in terminating them. The physical harm they had sustained along with other concrete evidence and vivid memory of the violence they had endured might have served as reminders of their victim status and influenced them to seek shelter services. Their motivation to stop being a victim might have to some extent helped enhance their self-efficacy, which in turn might have cushioned the negative impacts of the violence on their self-concept.

Insignificant association between dominance-isolation and self-concept. Neither the Pearson nor multiple partial correlations indicated a significant association between the dominance-isolation form of abuse and participants' self-concept at the global or domain-specific level. These results contrast with findings from previous research suggesting the detrimental effects of controlling tactics on battered women's self-concept (Aguilar & Nightingale, 1994; Lynch & Graham-Bermann, 2000). The results also differ from findings obtained in Dutton and Painter's (1993) study, which indicated that the dimension of dominance-isolation correlated significantly with abused women's self-esteem in the Pearson analysis but

was not a main contributor to the self-esteem variable within the regression procedure. One possible reason for the insignificant association between the dominance-isolation form of abuse and self-concept among women from the current sample is related to their sense of autonomy and feelings of empowerment in their efforts to cope with their abusers' attempts to dominate and/or isolate them. As previously mentioned, most of these women reported a history of frequently experiencing intimate partner aggression that was restricting, isolating, and/or dominating in nature. However, at the time of data collection all of these women had sought outside help and most of them described their abusive relationships as ended or in separation, which evidenced their self-efficacy in releasing themselves from their abusers' autocratic domination and tyrannical control over them. The domination-isolation form of abuse might have ceased to play an instrumental role in shaping these women's self-concept after they took initial steps to break away from the ensnarement of their abusers' controlling and isolating maneuvers.

Insignificant association between emotional-verbal abuse and self-concept. Present data indicated that emotional-verbal abuse was not significantly related in zero-order or multiple partial correlations with participants' domain-specific self-conceptions. The Pearson correlation did reveal a strong and negative association between emotional-verbal victimization and participants' global self-esteem. This association was in fact the strongest zero-order correlation between individual predictor and outcome variables in this study. Despite this significant zero-order correlation, emotional-verbal abuse did not contribute unique variance in the women's global self-esteem within the regression procedure. Prior research in combination also presented a mixed picture of the relationship between emotional-verbal abuse and battered women's self-esteem. While findings from Orava et al.'s (1996) study suggest the debilitating effects of verbal

abuse on self-esteem, Dutton and Painter (1993) found no significant associations between emotional-verbal victimization and women's self-esteem in the Pearson or regression analyses. One way of interpreting the present finding regarding the mixed relationship between emotional-verbal abuse and global self-esteem is that the mixed results might have stemmed from the conservative nature of the partialing approach used in this study. Within the standard multiple regression procedure, the partial correlation between emotional-verbal abuse and global self-esteem was computed partialing out the effects of all other abuse variables. Emotional-verbal abuse, while significantly related in the Pearson correlation with global self-esteem, may have become insignificant after all shared variance between the abuse variables was removed. Another way of interpreting the current results is that although emotional-verbal abuse was negatively associated with participants' global self-esteem and domain-specific self-conceptions in both zero-order and partial correlations, its impacts upon the women's self-concept might have been significantly mitigated in their efforts to terminate their abusive relationships and/or to recover from the abuse they had endured. For many of these women, receiving psychological aid or being away from their abusers might have allowed them to view themselves with increased objectivity or effectively protected them from their abusers' further attempts to emotionally attack or verbally degrade them. Thus the present data likely depicted the relationship of emotional-verbal abuse to participants' self-concept in a way that reflected their ongoing process of moving from being battered and traumatized to being non-battered and recovered.

Differential associations of individual forms of abuse with either level of self-concept.

Data from the present sample indicated that the two levels of self-concept under investigation were differentially related to each individual form of abuse examined in this study. Likewise, the four types of abuse were differentially associated with either level of self-concept. These results

are consistent with findings from previous research (Aguilar & Nightingale, 1994; Dutton & Painter, 1993; Lynch & Graham-Bermann, 2000; Orava et al., 1996) showing that different forms of partner maltreatment were differentially related to battered women's self-esteem. Prior research, however, only assessed battered women's self-concept at a relatively global level. Expanding on previous work, the present investigation demonstrated that in order to clarify the relationship between intimate partner aggression and battered women's self-concept, it is important that sensitive instruments be utilized to differentially assess the essential components of abuse and to measure self-concept at both global and domain-specific levels.

Contributions, Strengths, and Limitations of the Study

Results of this study provide additional support for findings from previous research on intimate partner aggression suggesting: (a) that battered women suffer poor self-concept, (b) that physical and psychological abuse co-occur frequently, and (c) that different forms of abuse are differentially related to battered women's self-concept. The present investigation adds new data to literature by examining battered women's self-concept at both global and domain-specific levels and by using sensitive measures to differentially assess four specific forms of partner abuse: physical threats, actual physical violence, dominance-isolation, and emotional-verbal abuse. The current study also yields initial data on battered women's evaluations of their abusive partners, a research area that has not been previously investigated by other researchers. Findings obtained in this study provide empirical evidence against theoretical postulates about battered women's idealization of their abusive partners and against the hypothesized mediating role of partner evaluations in the association between intimate partner aggression and women's self-concept. Perhaps the most important findings of this study are the results implying ongoing

changes in a battered woman's internal state as she goes through different developmental stages in her process of breaking away from the cycle of intimate partner aggression. Specifically, the current data suggest that existing theories about battered women's self-concept and evaluations of their abusive partners mainly apply to women who remain victimized and isolated in an abusive relationship. In comparison, battered women who seek outside help or display attempts to terminate their victim status are typically at a more advanced level of experiencing, understanding, and coping with the negative impacts of intimate partner aggression. Their perceptions of themselves and their intimate partners shift over time in response to the psychological aid they receive, their increased self-efficacy regarding their ability to remove themselves from abusive situations, and the progress they make in recovering from the trauma of abuse. As their perspectives become more and more in line with those of the general public, their domain-specific views tend to reflect this healing process in a more responsive way than their global perceptions.

The validity of the results yielded by this study is enhanced by the following strengths in its design and methodology. First, the study conducted both Pearson and multiple regression analyses to examine the associations between the eight variables under investigation. The integration of Pearson and regression analyses effectively clarified the strength and direction of each association. Second, the present investigation employed comprehensive measures with adequate psychometric properties to assess four individual forms of intimate partner aggression and to examine battered women's self-concept and evaluations of their abusive partners at both global and domain-specific levels. This design helped elucidate the differential impacts of different forms of abuse and efficiently illuminate how the associations between intimate partner maltreatment, battered women's self-concept, and their evaluations of their abusive partners

varied according to the specificity of the appraisal. Third, the analyses reported in this study examined data from a relatively homogeneous sample of battered women who were similar in their help-seeking behaviors and in their displayed efforts to terminate their abusive relationships. This homogeneity reduced the likelihood that the effects observed in this study result from uncontrolled differences in these factors.

Despite these strengths, results of the current study should be interpreted in light of its limitations. First, given the correlational nature of the analyses conducted for this study, any interpretation of the findings suggesting causality should be considered speculative. Second, the present sample was a convenient, nonrandom group of abused women who sought assistance from shelters providing services to victims of domestic violence. The majority of these women had frequently and chronically experienced both physical and psychological abuse and described their abusive relationships as ended or in separation at the time of data collection. This selective sample is not necessarily representative of all battered women, particularly those who have not sought professional or other outside help or women who have not left their abusive situations. Data from the current sample also cannot be viewed as applicable to less frequently or less chronically assaulted women or women who only experience psychological abuse. Third, despite the larger number of participants compared to most other studies on battered women, the sample size of the present study is still lower than would be ideal due to the difficulty obtaining data from this population. This has the effect of not only lowering the power of the analyses but also limiting the generalizability of the findings. Finally, this investigation relied on self-report measures with high face validity, but did not assess participants' tendency to fake bad or respond in a socially desirable manner. Data derived from inaccurate reporting might have been left undetected and included in the analyses.

Recommendations for Research and Treatment

Findings obtained in this study have the following implications for future research. First, although the present investigation revealed significant associations between physical threats and global self-esteem and between domain-specific appraisals of partners and domain-specific self-conceptions, much of the variance in the two self-concept variables and in the two partner evaluation variables remains unexplained. Additional research is necessary to explore factors other than the ones investigated in this study that are influential in shaping battered women's perceptions of themselves and their abusive partners. Second, results of this study suggest that a battered woman's internal state changes over time as she goes through different developmental stages in her process of moving from being a victim of abuse to having recovered from the trauma of abuse. It is difficult to grasp how a battered woman perceives and interprets the abuse she has experienced or how she evaluates herself and her abusive partner without knowing the specific developmental stage she is in. It is thus important that instruments with sound psychometric properties be designed to assess where an abused woman is in her process of experiencing, understanding, and breaking away from the cycle of intimate partner aggression. In addition, longitudinal studies are needed to examine ongoing changes in an abused woman's internal state that occur when she goes through this process. Third, the present sample represents battered women who have experienced chronic and frequent physical and psychological abuse and who seek outside help or display attempts to terminate their victim status. Future research with larger, more diverse samples is needed to compare the perceptions of abused women who resemble the current sample in these aspects versus those who do not (i.e. those who remain victimized and isolated in an abusive relationship, those who are only psychologically abused,

etc.). Finally, it is recommended that future research use measures which include appropriate validity scales to detect any tendency to under or over report.

Data from the present investigation suggest the following clinical implications for working with battered women. First, when an abused woman presents to a social-service agency or mental health care setting, her internal state should be explored in a manner sensitive to her stage of development in her course of processing, managing, and recovering from her experience of victimization. The advocacy or interventions offered to the woman should be tailored to her needs associated with the specific developmental stage she is in. Second, given the significant findings of poor self-concept in abused women and the significant association between physical threats and low self-esteem, it is recommended that care providers in both the social-service and mental health care systems help battered women increase their awareness of the negative impacts of intimate partner aggression and enhance their understanding of how physical threats in particular might lead an abused woman to develop feelings of inadequacy, disempowerment, and helplessness. In addition, for abused women with low self-efficacy with regard to their ability to make life changes and to protect themselves from further maltreatment, central areas for advocacy and psychotherapy might involve: (a) cultivating their skills in securing necessary social and material resources, (b) offering safety information and educating ways to avoid abusive situations, and (c) enhancing their self-esteem, feelings of empowerment, and senses of control and self-efficacy. Finally, the present study yields promising and encouraging findings indicative of many participants' attempts to terminate their victim status, their courage to face negative realities, and their strength to recover from the trauma of abuse. Although the process of leaving the abuser and recovering from the abuse usually takes an extended period of time, helping professionals need not feel frustrated while delivering services to battered women who

appear to advance slowly. The current findings suggest that when abused women obtain necessary and sufficient support, treatment, and resources that meet their developmental needs, they are capable over time of making progress towards breaking away from the cycle of intimate partner aggression.

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Appendix A

Definitions of Terms

Battered Woman: A woman who has received from her husband or live-in partner physical violence, sexual aggression, and/or threats of violence, as measured by the Severity of Violence Against Women Scale (SVAWS; Marshall, 1992).

Intimate Partner Abuse: Any act of physical, sexual, or psychological maltreatment carried out with the intention or perceived intention to harm and/or establish power and control over a spouse or a live-in partner.

Physical Abuse: Threatened, attempted, or completed behaviors intended and/or likely to cause physical injury or pain to a woman, consisting of physical threats and actual physical violence (including sexual aggression), as measured in this study by the Severity of Violence Against Women Scale (SVAWS; Marshall, 1992).

Psychological Abuse: Nonphysically abusive behaviors intended to isolate, dominate, control, demean, verbally attack, or emotionally harm a woman and/or acts of withholding emotional or other resources, as measured by the Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory (PMWI; Tolman, 1989).

Self-Concept: The totality of an individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself or herself as an evaluated object. The self-concept can be viewed at both the global and specific levels and has two separate and distinguishable entities: global self-esteem and domain-specific self-conceptions (Rosenberg, 1979).

Global Self-Esteem: An overall evaluation of one's worth, value, or adequacy, signifying a negative or positive orientation toward oneself, as measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES; Rosenberg, 1965).

Domain-Specific Self-Conceptions: Specific self-views signifying an individual's attitudes about his or her domain-specific qualities such as physical attractiveness, emotional stability, social skills/social competence, and other abilities, as measured by the Self-Attributes Questionnaire (SAQ; Pelham & Swann, 1989).

Partner Evaluations: An individual's appraisals of his or her spouse or live-in partner on global worth and domain-specific attributes, as measured respectively by a modification of the SES and a modification of the SAQ.

Appendix B

Correspondence with Shelter Directors

Dear Shelter Director,

My name is Isabella Lin-Roark, I am a doctoral candidate in the Ph. D. program in Counseling Psychology at Washington State University. My dissertation research looks at battered women's evaluations of their intimate partners in relation to the abuse they experience and their self-concept. The data for this study will be collected in a mail survey format and filled out by adult females (18 years of age or older, with an English reading level above an 8th grade level) seeking services at shelters for battered women. To ensure confidentiality, the survey is designed to be completed anonymously, asking participants not to write their names anywhere on any of the forms or questionnaires. Please see below for further information regarding the survey procedures as well as the purpose and significance of the study.

I am sending you this letter in hope that you may be interested in volunteering your shelter for participation. Each shelter will receive a \$100 stipend for participating in this study regardless of how many surveys are completed. The stipend will be sent to the shelter upon completion of data collection.

It is possible that while filling out the questionnaires, participants might have emotional reactions in recalling their experiences of abuse and/or their abusive partner. You may have some type of resources to deal with women experiencing difficulty coping with their experience of abuse. If you decide to participate, but have any concerns about your shelter's ability to respond to possible reactions, please let me know of your concerns. Please also note that my national toll free number will be provided for participants to call and discuss any discomfort or other issues the survey may bring up. I will also provide a list of counseling resources that can help connect participants with alternate services and support. The list will be attached to each survey packet.

If you agree to participate in this study, I can mail you individual survey packets to be distributed to potential participants. You may designate a staff member to initiate requests among women seeking services at the shelter for voluntary participation in this study.

Please let me know if you are interested in participating in this research study. If yes, please let me know how to contact the designated staff member. If you have any questions about this research or need any additional information regarding the study, please feel free to contact me at lin-roark@wsu.edu or Dr. Laurie McCubbin (my dissertation chair) at <mailto:mccubbin@wsu.edu>.

Sincerely,

Isabella Lin-Roark, M. A.
Doctoral Candidate
Counseling Psychology

Washington State University
Pullman, WA 99163
lin-roark@wsu.edu
(509) 592-2081

Dissertation chair & supervising faculty:
Laurie McCubbin, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Counseling Psychology
Washington State University
Pullman, WA 99163
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Further information about the survey procedures:

Regarding confidentiality and anonymity, I will not initiate any direct contact with participants, they will not need to write their names on the surveys, and no reference will be made in oral or written reports identifying participants and/or shelters contributing to this study.

Women who express interest in participating in the study will be given by the designated staff member a survey packet containing: (a) an informed consent form and a list of counseling resources attached to the front of the packet, (b) instructions for completing the survey, (c) a demographic form, and (d) six short questionnaires that assess a woman's global self-esteem and domain-specific self-conceptions, her evaluations of her intimate partner's global worth and domain-specific attributes, and her experiences of physical and psychological abuse. If a woman chooses to complete the forms and questionnaires, she will be instructed to place them in the provided self-addressed, stamped envelope, seal it, and return it to the designated staff member. The packet will then be mailed back to me.

It should take a total of about 30 to 60 minutes to complete a survey. Each survey packet will be assigned a number and the number will appear in the upper right hand corner of each of the forms and questionnaires included in the same packet. This is to make sure that a participant's forms and questionnaires are kept together. This also helps me keep track of each survey sent to and returned from a specific shelter.

If you decide to participate and are interested in the results of this survey, information can be provided upon request when the study is completed.

Purpose of the Study:

Although prior empirical work has predominantly indicated a significant and inverse relationship between intimate partner abuse and battered women's self-concept, little is known about the factors that might explain this connection. Based on existing theories, this study investigates the extent to which battered women's evaluations of their intimate partners may mediate the

relationship between the abuse they experience and their self-concept. Specifically, this investigation examines: (a) the relationship between intimate partner aggression and battered women's self-concept, (b) the relationship between partner maltreatment and battered women's evaluations of their intimate partners, (c) the relationship between battered women's appraisals of their abusive partners and their self-concept, and (d) if partner evaluations mediate the relationship between partner abuse and self-concept in battered women.

Significance of the Study:

The results of this research will have several important implications for prevention of partner abuse as well as treatment, services, and understanding of battered women.

First, the findings of this study will enrich existing literature on intimate partner violence by providing information about battered women's evaluations of themselves and their battering partners on global worth and domain-specific attributes, as well as the aspects of abuse that are influential in shaping their perceptions. The information could help illuminate the internal and external dynamics a battered woman may experience in the presence of violence. Particularly, it could facilitate a more empathic understanding of many battered women's attachment to the batterers and difficulty leaving the abusive relationships. The improved understanding may help reduce the negative reactions of those professionals and nonprofessionals experiencing frustration with women who choose to return to violent relationships despite intervention efforts. This research will likely reveal the development of certain perceptions and cognitive schemas as a universal response to abuse as well as a common survival strategy for women victimized in intimate relationships. If this is the case, the knowledge generated by this study will help stop the perpetuation of victim blaming, which battered women often suffer.

Second, the findings from the study could help professionals working in the field of domestic violence devise prevention programs aimed to educate the general public about common psychological responses to intimate partner violence. This education can help increase sensitivity to early signs of partner maltreatment and cultivate ability to take appropriate precautions or measures to stop any forms of abuse from happening, perpetuating, or deteriorating. The education can also help the public learn how to treat battered women with empathy, respect, and acceptance.

Third, the knowledge provided by this research will assist clinicians and other professionals working with battered women in designing and delivering the types of services that more effectively address and meet the women's needs. In particular, interventions can be conducted that increase battered women's awareness of how they have developed certain beliefs and perceptions in response to the abuse and how these beliefs and perceptions might negatively influence important decisions they make about their lives. Through challenging their biased views of themselves and their battering partners, therapies can be developed that enhance their feelings of empowerment and increase their sense of self-efficacy regarding their abilities to remove themselves from abusive situations and to cope with the effects of the abuse they have experienced.

Appendix C

Instructions for Distributing and Collecting Surveys at Shelters

Dear Shelter Director,

Thank you for your willingness to help me collect data for my dissertation. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Washington State University (WSU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human subject participation. The WSU IRB can be contacted at 509-335-3668 or irb@wsu.edu.

Please find enclosed in this package 25 individual survey packets to be given to potential participants. To maintain proper research methods, I have outlined a procedure to be followed in distributing and collecting the packets as follows:

1. Adult women seeking services at the shelter/center may be asked by a designated staff member whether they would be interested in participating in a study that examines *how women who have experienced abuse in intimate relationships evaluate themselves and their partners*. They should be told that the study requires each participant to fill out seven questionnaires that should take a total of about 30 to 60 minutes to complete. They should be assured that their decision to participate or not participate in this study will not affect the shelter/center services they receive in any way.
2. Women expressing interest in participating in the study should be given a survey packet that has an informed consent form attached to the front. They should be instructed to complete the questionnaires as soon as possible so that the packets will not get lost, misplaced, or forgotten.
3. Women choosing not to complete the questionnaires after reading the informed consent form should return their blank packets to the designated staff member so they can be given to others.
4. After the questionnaires are completed, they should be placed in the provided self-addressed, stamped envelope, sealed, and returned to the designated staff member. To ensure the confidentiality of participants' responses, sealed packets should not be allowed to be opened.
5. The completed packets can then be mailed back to me.

Again, thank you for your time and assistance in distributing and collecting the survey packets for this study. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (509) 432-6960 or lin-roark@wsu.edu.

Sincerely,

Isabella Lin-Roark, M. A.
Doctoral Candidate
Counseling Psychology
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(509) 432-6960

Appendix D

Informed Consent Form Self-Concept and Partner Evaluations Study

The information in this consent form is provided to help you decide whether to participate in this study or not. The Institutional Review Board of Washington State University has approved the participation of subjects in this research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this survey is to examine how women who have experienced abuse in intimate relationships evaluate themselves and their partners. You are eligible to participate if your current intimate relationship (or one ending within the last three months) is the reason you are seeking services at the shelter.

Researcher

Isabella Lin-Roark, doctoral student at Washington State University, Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling Psychology. Phone number: (800) 951-1417. Email: lin-roark@wsu.edu.

Dr. Laurie McCubbin, dissertation chair, Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling Psychology, Washington State University

Procedures

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete one demographic form and six questionnaires that assess how you view yourself and your partner as well as your experiences of physical and/or psychological abuse. This process should take a total of about 30 to 60 minutes to complete. If you decide to participate, you may keep this form for your records as well as the attached list of counseling resources.

Benefits

You are invited to participate in this study, as this research will provide valuable knowledge about women who share similar experiences. This knowledge will assist professionals working in the field of domestic violence in devising and delivering the types of services that more effectively address and meet your needs.

Compensation

Your shelter will receive a stipend for participating in this study, regardless of whether or not you as an individual complete the survey. If you choose not to participate, the services you receive at the shelter will not be compromised in any way. You may also withdraw from the survey without penalty and/or decide not to answer any questions you do not want to.

Risks or Discomfort

The risks of completing this survey are considered minimal and the study poses no known risks to your health. The only possible risk is experiencing discomfort while answering questions about the abuse you have experienced. In the event that you do experience discomfort, there may be shelter workers with whom you can discuss any reactions to any part of the survey

process. Please also feel free to contact me by phone or email provided below. You may also refer to the attached list of counseling resources that can help connect you with alternate services and support.

Participation

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may decline to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. Also, you may refuse to answer any questions or items in the questionnaires.

Confidentiality and Rights as a Participant

All completed surveys will be kept strictly confidential and will be placed in a locked file cabinet upon receipt. Only my dissertation chair and I will have access to this data. Your responses will remain anonymous, which means that you should not write your name anywhere on any of the forms or questionnaires and no reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link you to this study. If you have any concerns regarding this research, please contact me by phone or email provided below. If you are interested in the results of this survey, information can be provided to the shelter upon request when the study is completed. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, you can contact the Institutional Review Board of Washington State University at (509) 335-3668.

Thank you for your time.

Signature of researcher

Date

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❖ **Attention:** Please find in the envelope further instructions for completing the questionnaires.

Appendix E

Instructions for Completing the Survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. In this packet you will find seven questionnaires (a total of 13 pages) presented in the following order: the demographic form, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Self-Attributes Questionnaire, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale–Modified for Partner Evaluations, the Self-Attributes Questionnaire– Modified for Partner Evaluations, the Severity of Violence Against Women Scale, and the Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory. To make sure that your responses will remain anonymous, **do not write your name anywhere on any of the questionnaires**. There is a number in the upper right hand corner of each of the questionnaires. This is helpful to me in keeping track of each survey sent to and returned from your shelter/center.

Please base your responses upon your current or most recent intimate relationship (**the one that has led you to seek services at the shelter/center**). Two of the scales assess your experiences of abuse by your husband or live-in boyfriend. The other scales ask you to rate yourself and **your husband (or live-in boyfriend)** on the same attributes. Please fill out all the measures. Please also note that you may withdraw from the study at any time or refuse to answer any questions or items in the questionnaires.

When done filling out the questionnaires, place the completed packet in the provided self-addressed, stamped envelope and seal it to ensure confidentiality. You may then give your sealed packet to the shelter/center worker who talked to you about this study. Shelter/Center workers have been instructed not to allow sealed packets to be opened.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this research while you are completing these questionnaires or after you are finished, please feel free to contact me at (800) 951-1417 or lin-roark@wsu.edu.

Again, thank you for participating in this study.

Appendix F
Demographic Form

Please write your answers in the blanks provided below. For items 3 through 10 and items 14 and 15, circle the letter of the answer that best describes your present situation. Please answer every question. Do not write your name anywhere on this questionnaire. All answers will remain anonymous.

1. Your age: _____ Gender: _____
2. Number of children living with you: _____
3. Your religion:
 - a. Protestant
 - b. Catholic
 - c. Other Christian (Specify) _____
 - d. Jewish
 - e. Muslim
 - f. Non-traditional/Spiritual
 - g. None
 - h. Other (Specify) _____
4. Your marital status:
 - a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Living together
 - d. Separated
 - e. Divorced
 - f. Widowed
 - g. Other (Specify) _____
5. Your racial/ethnic background:
 - a. Caucasian
 - b. African American
 - c. Hispanic/Latino/Chicano
 - d. Asian/Pacific Islander
 - e. Native American
 - f. Other (Specify) _____
6. The highest level of education you have completed:
 - a. Did not complete high school
 - b. High school
 - c. Community college/technical school
 - d. College (four-year degree)
 - e. Masters degree
 - f. Doctoral degree
 - g. Other (Specify) _____

7. Your employment status:
 - a. Employed full-time
 - b. Employed part-time
 - c. Self-employed
 - d. Unemployed
 - e. Other (Specify) _____

8. Your occupation:
 - a. Homemaker
 - b. Student
 - c. Manual worker
 - d. Clerical worker
 - e. Professional (Specify) _____
 - f. Other (Specify) _____

9. Your family's total income (average per year over the past 3 years):
 - a. Less than \$10,000
 - b. \$10,000 – \$17,999
 - c. \$18,000 – \$25,999
 - d. \$26,000 - \$35,999
 - e. \$36,000 - \$49,999
 - f. \$50,000 - \$69,999
 - g. \$70,000 - \$99,999
 - h. \$100,000 - \$ 149,999
 - i. More than \$150,000

10. With whom have you formed your current or most recent intimate relationship (the one that has led you to seek services at the shelter/center)?
 - a. Husband
 - b. Live-in boyfriend
 - c. Other partner (Specify) _____

11. How long have you been (or were you) in this relationship? _____ years _____ months

12. When did the battering first begin in this relationship? _____ years _____ months ago

13. When did the last abusive event occur in this relationship? _____ years _____ months ago

14. What is the status of this relationship?
 - a. Still together.
 - b. Separated or ended within the last 3 months (when did it end?) _____ weeks ago.
 - c. Separated or ended over 3 months ago.

15. Do you presently live in a shelter for battered women?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No.

Appendix G

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. If you **STRONGLY AGREE**, circle **SA**. If you **AGREE** with the statement, circle **A**. If you **DISAGREE**, circle **D**. If you **STRONGLY DISAGREE**, circle **SD**.

		STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1.	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	SA	A	D	SD
2.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	SA	A	D	SD
3.	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	SA	A	D	SD
4.	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	SA	A	D	SD
5.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	SA	A	D	SD
6.	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	SA	A	D	SD
7.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	SA	A	D	SD
8.	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	SA	A	D	SD
9.	I certainly feel useless at times.	SA	A	D	SD
10.	At times I think I am no good at all.	SA	A	D	SD

The SES may be used without explicit permission. Morris Rosenberg's family, however, would like to be kept informed of its use. The Morris Rosenberg Foundation, c/o Department of Sociology, University of Maryland, 2112 Art-Sociology Building, College Park, MD 20742.

Appendix H

The Self-Attribute Questionnaire (Pelham & Swann, 1989)

This questionnaire has to do with your attitudes about some of your activities and abilities. For the ten items below, you should rate yourself relative to other women your own age by using the following scale:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Bottom	lower	lower	lower	lower	upper	upper	upper	upper	Top
5%	10%	20%	30%	50%	50%	30%	20%	10%	5%

An example of the way the scale works is as follows: if one of the traits that follows were "height", a woman who is just below average height would choose "E" for this question, whereas a woman who is taller than 80% (but not taller than 90%) of women her age would mark "H", indicating that she is in the top 20% on this dimension.

1. intellectual ability _____
2. social skills/social competence _____
3. artistic and/or musical ability _____
4. athletic ability _____
5. physical attractiveness _____
6. leadership ability _____
7. common sense _____
8. emotional stability _____
9. sense of humor _____
10. discipline _____

❖ Adapted by permission from William B. Swann, Jr.

Appendix I

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)–Modified for Partner Evaluations

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about **your partner**. If you **STRONGLY AGREE**, circle SA. If you **AGREE** with the statement, circle A. If you **DISAGREE**, circle D. If you **STRONGLY DISAGREE**, circle SD.

		STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1.	I feel that my partner is a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	SA	A	D	SD
2.	I feel that my partner has a number of good qualities.	SA	A	D	SD
3.	All in all, I am inclined to feel that my partner is a failure.	SA	A	D	SD
4.	My partner is able to do things as well as most other people.	SA	A	D	SD
5.	I feel my partner does not have much to be proud of.	SA	A	D	SD
6.	I take a positive attitude toward my partner.	SA	A	D	SD
7.	On the whole, I am satisfied with my partner.	SA	A	D	SD
8.	I wish I could have more respect for my partner.	SA	A	D	SD
9.	I certainly feel my partner is useless at times.	SA	A	D	SD
10.	At times I think my partner is no good at all.	SA	A	D	SD

The SES may be used without explicit permission. Morris Rosenberg's family, however, would like to be kept informed of its use. The Morris Rosenberg Foundation, c/o Department of Sociology, University of Maryland, 2112 Art-Sociology Building, College Park, MD 20742.

Appendix J

The Self-Attributes Questionnaire (Pelham & Swann, 1989)–
Modified for Partner Evaluations

This questionnaire has to do with your attitudes about some of your partner's activities and abilities. For the ten items below, you should rate **your partner** relative to other men his own age by using the following scale:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Bottom	lower	lower	lower	lower	upper	upper	upper	upper	Top
5%	10%	20%	30%	50%	50%	30%	20%	10%	5%

An example of the way the scale works is as follows: if one of the traits that follows were "height", you choose "E" for this question if your partner is just below average height, whereas you would mark "H" if your partner is taller than 80% (but not taller than 90%) of men his age, indicating that he is in the top 20% on this dimension.

1. intellectual ability _____
2. social skills/social competence _____
3. artistic and/or musical ability _____
4. athletic ability _____
5. physical attractiveness _____
6. leadership ability _____
7. common sense _____
8. emotional stability _____
9. sense of humor _____
10. discipline _____

❖ Adapted by permission from William B. Swann, Jr.

Appendix K

Severity of Violence Against Women Scale (Marshall, 1992)

During the past year, you and your partner have probably experienced anger or conflict. Below is a list of behaviors your partner may have done **during the past 12 months**. Describe how often your partner has done each behavior by writing a number from the following scale.

1	2	3	4
never	once	a few times	many times

How often has your partner:

- _____ Hit or kicked a wall, door or furniture
- _____ Threw, smashed or broke an object.
- _____ Drove dangerously with you in the car
- _____ Threw an object at you
- _____ Shook a finger at you
- _____ Made threatening gestures or faces at you
- _____ Shook a fist at you
- _____ Acted like a bully toward you
- _____ Destroyed something belonging to you
- _____ Threatened to harm or damage things you care about
- _____ Threatened to destroy property
- _____ Threatened someone you care about
- _____ Threatened to hurt you
- _____ Threatened to kill himself
- _____ Threatened to kill you
- _____ Threatened you with a weapon
- _____ Threatened you with a club-like object
- _____ Acted like he wanted to kill you
- _____ Threatened you with a knife or gun

1
never

2
once

3
a few times

4
many times

How often has your partner:

_____ Held you down, pinning you in place

_____ Pushed or shoved you

_____ Grabbed you suddenly or forcefully

_____ Shook or roughly handled you

_____ Scratched you

_____ Pulled your hair

_____ Twisted your arm

_____ Spanked you

_____ Bit you

_____ Slapped you with the palm of his hand

_____ Slapped you with the back of his hand

_____ Slapped you around your face and head

_____ Hit you with an object

_____ Punched you

_____ kicked you

_____ Stomped on you

_____ Choked you

_____ Burned you with something

_____ Used a club-like object on you

_____ Beat you up

_____ Used a knife or gun on you

1
never

2
once

3
a few times

4
many times

How often has your partner:

_____ Demanded sex whether you wanted to or not

_____ Made you have oral sex against your will

_____ Made you have sexual intercourse against your will

_____ Physically forced you to have sex

_____ Made you have anal sex against your will

_____ Used an object on you in a sexual way.

❖ **Adapted by permission from Linda L. Marshall**

Appendix L

Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory (Tolman, 1989)

This questionnaire asks about actions you may have experienced in your relationship with your partner. Answer each item as carefully as you can by circling a number next to each statement according to the following scale:

- 1 = Never**
2 = Rarely
3 = Occasionally
4 = Frequently
5 = Very frequently
NA = Not applicable

IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS:

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1. My partner put down my physical appearance. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 2. My partner insulted me or shamed me in front of others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 3. My partner treated me like I was stupid. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 4. My partner was insensitive to my feelings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 5. My partner told me I couldn't manage or take care of myself without him. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 6. My partner put down my care of the children. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 7. My partner criticized the way I took care of the house. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 8. My partner said something to spite me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 9. My partner brought up something from the past to hurt me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 10. My partner called me names. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 11. My partner swore at me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 12. My partner yelled and screamed at me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 13. My partner treated me like an inferior. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 14. My partner sulked or refused to talk about a problem. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 15. My partner stomped out of the house or yard during a disagreement. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |

1 = Never
2 = Rarely
3 = Occasionally
4 = Frequently
5 = Very frequently
NA = Not applicable

IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS:

16. My partner gave me the silent treatment or acted like I wasn't there.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
17. My partner withheld affection from me.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
18. My partner did not let me talk about my feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
19. My partner was insensitive to my sexual needs and desires.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
20. My partner demanded obedience to his whims.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
21. My partner became upset if dinner, housework, or laundry was not done when he thought it should be.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
22. My partner acted like I was his personal servant.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
23. My partner did not do a fair share of the household tasks.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
24. My partner did not do a fair share of child care.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
25. My partner ordered me around.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
26. My partner monitored my time and made me account for my whereabouts.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
27. My partner was stingy in giving me money to run our home.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
28. My partner acted irresponsibly with our financial resources.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
29. My partner did not contribute enough to supporting our family.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
30. My partner used our money or made important financial decisions without talking to me about it.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
31. My partner kept me from getting medical care that I needed.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
32. My partner was jealous or suspicious of my friends.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
33. My partner was jealous of other men.	1	2	3	4	5	NA

1 = Never
2 = Rarely
3 = Occasionally
4 = Frequently
5 = Very frequently
NA = Not applicable

IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS:

34. My partner did not want me to go to school or other self-improvement activities.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
35. My partner did not want me to socialize with my female friends.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
36. My partner accused me of having an affair with another man.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
37. My partner demanded that I stay home and take care of the children.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
38. My partner tried to keep me from seeing or talking to my family.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
39. My partner interfered in my relationships with other family members.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
40. My partner tried to keep me from doing things to help myself.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
41. My partner restricted my use of the car.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
42. My partner restricted my use of the telephone.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
43. My partner did not allow me to leave the house.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
44. My partner did not allow me to work.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
45. My partner told me my feelings were irrational or crazy.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
46. My partner blamed me for his problems.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
47. My partner tried to turn my family against me.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
48. My partner blamed me for causing his violent behavior.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
49. My partner tried to make me feel crazy.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
50. My partner's moods changed radically.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
51. My partner blamed me when he was upset.	1	2	3	4	5	NA
52. My partner tried to convince me I was crazy.	1	2	3	4	5	NA

- 1 = Never**
2 = Rarely
3 = Occasionally
4 = Frequently
5 = Very frequently
NA = Not applicable

IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS:

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 53. My partner threatened to hurt himself if I left. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 54. My partner threatened to hurt himself if I didn't do what he wanted me to do. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 55. My partner threatened to have an affair. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 56. My partner threatened to leave the relationship. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 57. My partner threatened to take our children away from me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |
| 58. My partner threatened to commit me to an institution. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | NA |

❖ **Adapted by permission from Richard M. Tolman**

Table 1. Descriptive Data for Predictor Variables, Hypothesized Mediators, and Outcome Variables

Total Sample (N = 196)					
Variable	Scale	Mean	SD	Range	Possible Range
Predictor	Partner Abuse				
	Physical threats	50.68	14.07	20-76	19-76
	Actual physical violence	55.91	18.28	27-100	27-108
	Dominance-isolation	89.48	24.14	29-130	26-130
	Emotional-verbal abuse	91.20	15.07	38-110	22-110
Hypothesized Mediator	Partner evaluations				
	Global (SES-Modified)	24.26	4.76	12-34	10-40
	Domain-specific (SAQ-Modified)	48.61	15.51	10-100	10-100
Outcome	Self-concept				
	Global self-esteem (SES)	25.46	6.08	14-40	10-40
	Domain-specific self-conceptions (SAQ)	56.87	15.56	16-95	10-100

Table 2. Pearson Correlations among Variables of Interest ($N = 196$)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Physical Threats	—							
2. Actual Physical violence	.763***	—						
3. Dominance-Isolation	.633***	.504***	—					
4. Emotional-Verbal Abuse	.601***	.396***	.704***	—				
5. Global Self-esteem	-.142*	.037	-.122	-.191**	—			
6. Domain-specific Self-conceptions	-.009	.050	-.032	-.070	.521***	—		
7. Global Evaluations of Intimate Partners	-.256***	-.182*	-.233**	-.262***	-.037	-.051	—	
8. Domain-specific Appraisals of Intimate Partners	-.104	-.043	-.115	-.188**	.014	.212**	.437***	—

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

Table 3. Coefficients for Regression Model of Abuse Variables on Global Self-esteem

	<i>B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Partial r</i>
Physical Threats	-.136	-.316	-2.505	.013	-.180
Actual Physical Violence	.106	.318	2.909	.004	.208
Dominance-Isolation	-.011	-.045	-.416	.678	-.030
Emotional-Verbal Abuse	-.040	-.098	-.946	.345	-.069

Table 4. Coefficients for Regression Model of Partner Evaluation Variables on Domain-specific Self-conceptions

	<i>B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Partial r</i>
Global Evaluations of Intimate Partners	-.552	-.169	-2.164	.032	-.155
Domain-specific Appraisals of Intimate Partners	.282	.281	3.558	.000	.250