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Precarious Manhood and Men's Attributional Biases in Partner Conflict

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by

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Abstract

A study investigated men and women's attributions of criticism, rejection, and threats to gender status in a fictitious partner conflict scenario in which the victim was either a man or a woman. The results indicated that in the context of a partner conflict scenario that ends in violence, greater perceived threats to gender status are attributed to a female victim who criticizes a man's manhood more than a male victim who criticizes a woman's womanhood. The results also revealed that women attribute greater amounts of criticism/rejection and gender status threat in a victim's statements toward an abuser than men do, regardless of the gender of the victim. Individual differences in gender role stress, ambivalent sexism, and propensity for abusiveness failed to moderate these effects. These results present preliminary evidence grounded in precarious manhood theory that attributions of intention during domestic conflicts differ along gendered lines.

Introduction

More than one quarter of all women in the United States report having been abused by a current or former male relationship partner at some time in their lives (NVAWS; Tjaden & Theonnes, 1998). Although sociologists have thoroughly described the incidence, prevalence, and nature of partner abuse (e.g., Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980), psychologists have strayed away from examining mechanisms that account for the gendered nature of partner conflict. Additionally, few psychologists have employed experimental paradigms to examine, specifically, the role of the male gender role in partner abuse. Therefore, the goal of this research is to employ experimental methodology in order to: 1) extend previous work on attributional biases in partner conflict to attributions that are specific to male gender roles; 2) examine the role of threats to gender status in over-attributions that can lead to partner abuse; and 3) demonstrate that these attributional biases are specific to men, and not shared by women. I will begin by defining partner abuse, distinguishing it from other common forms of partner violence. I will then summarize the research literatures on the male gender role and abusive men's attribution biases before proceeding to outline the current hypotheses.

Defining Partner Abuse

In order to fully understand gender differences in partner conflict, it is important to consider distinctions in methodological techniques and sampling strategies that have been used to assess partner violence at a national level. Feminist and sociological scholars have often used different methodological techniques to assess intimate partner

violence, and have consequently arrived at different, though equally valuable conclusions (Johnson, 1995). For example, feminist research on intimate partner violence has often relied on self-reports from victims to characterize intimate partner conflict as resulting from historical and contemporary manifestations of patriarchal domination over women (NVAW; Tjaden & Theonnes, 1998). In contrast, the family violence perspective has often used nationally representative surveys to examine intimate partner violence (Straus, 1999). These competing perspectives have often arrived at divergent, though equally meaningful conclusions about the frequency, perpetration, and causes of intimate partner violence.

To resolve this paradox, Johnson (1995) proposed that two forms of partner violence coexist: *common couple violence* and *patriarchal* or *intimate terrorism*. According to Johnson, common couple violence differs from patriarchal terrorism in critical psychologically and behaviorally meaningful ways. First, whereas men and women equally commit common couple violence, men are the primary perpetrators of patriarchal terrorism. This gender difference in behavior suggests that there exist important psychological features to patriarchal terrorism that are unique to men, or to cultural definitions of manhood. Providing additional evidence for this thesis, the motivation for patriarchal terrorism is that of instrumental control, domination, and terror, whereas common couple violence is emotionally motivated and characterized by temporary anger and stress rather than concerns with power. These distinctions highlight contrasting motivations for abuse that suggest that the motivation toward partner violence is not merely a result of sex differences. Instead, cultural constructions of gender contribute to the psychological mechanisms that underlie these different forms of

intimate partner violence. Finally, whereas common couple violence is singular and event-based, patriarchal terrorism is characteristically ongoing and reflects systematic abuse, terror, and control by men over women. Because key features of patriarchal terror directly relate to characteristics that describe the male gender role, the focus of the current research is on patriarchal terror, and not common couple violence.

The Male Gender Role and Violence

Given these distinctions among forms of partner violence, it is important to consider the function of the male gender role in the perpetration of partner violence. In order to do this, I will first review literature that examines correlations of self-reported endorsement of masculinity or masculine role norms with the frequency and severity of partner violence. Then, I will review contemporary psychological findings on precarious manhood, which employ experimental paradigms to examine the role of threats to gender status in aggression, violence, and attributions about conflict. Additionally, I will review an area of psychological literature that identifies an important mechanism underlying men's physical and verbal abuse. Specifically, researchers suggest that abusive men overestimate criticism and rejection from their partners in the heat of a conflict (Schweinle & Ickes, 2007; Schweinle, Ickes, & Bernstein, 2002). This work suggests that this bias is based in men's lack of empathic accuracy and active consideration of their partner's feelings. Finally, I will integrate findings pertaining to attributional biases, precarious manhood, and the implication of markers of rejection on threats to gender status. I conclude by proposing an experiment that examines whether critical/rejecting biases are interpreted by men as indicators of real or potential gender status loss.

Trait Masculinity, Male Gender Role Stress, and Partner Violence. Many attempts have been made to directly link measurements of the masculine self-concept with partner violence. A recent review, however (Moore & Stuart, 2005), found that measures of gender role traits (i.e., personal self-views) such as the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974) unreliably predict men's perpetration of partner violence on both the masculine and feminine subscales. Although some scales such as the Hypermasculinity Inventory (Mosher & Sirkin, 1984) reliably predict aggression in a laboratory environment (Parrott & Zeichner, 2003), they do not reliably predict the self-reported or partner-reported incidence of partner violence. Similarly, while indices that measure prescriptive norms and beliefs about traditional gender roles predict psychological abuse of partners, they do not reliably predict physical abuse (Moore & Stuart, 2005). Note, however, that no review to date has differentiated among the subtypes of partner violence defined above (Johnson, 2006). If male gender role norms are indeed implicated in partner violence, we would expect them to predict the type of partner violence that is primarily characterized by systematic bids for power and control, called *patriarchal* or *intimate terrorism*. Researchers' failure to distinguish common couple violence from intimate terrorism might account for some of these inconsistent and unreliable findings.

Though the psychological measurement of trait masculinity may not explain partner violence directly, some measures that examine gender role stress have modest predictive validity. Gender role stress is the degree to which people experience the negative psychological effects of conforming to unreasonable (and often deleterious) gender role expectations (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987; O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David, &

Wrightsman, 1986; Pleck, 1995). Because of persistent and pervasive demands on men to conform to male gender role norms, men may be driven to constantly defend against the potential for loss of gender status. However, because gender role demands are unreasonable, men's drive to maintain status may be stressful, difficult, and importantly, impossible. Therefore, men's motivation to perpetually defend against the potential for status loss creates immense gender role strain, resulting in persistent status striving.

Though both the Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS; O'Neil et al., 1986) and the Masculine Gender Role Stress Scale (MGRS; Eisler & Skidmore, 1987) reliably measure men's gender role stress, only the MGRS has been used to measure outcomes related to partner violence. For example, Copenhaver, Lash, and Eisler (2000) found that substance-abusing men who scored higher on the MGRS were more likely to report having engaged in verbally and physically abusive behavior toward their partners. Additionally, men who report higher levels of gender role stress expressed more anger, irritation, and jealousy toward female partners in a fictitious dating conflict (Eisler, Franchina, Moore, Honeycutt, & Rhatigan, 2000), especially when the hypothetical situations were indicative of infidelity and when the female target threatened the man's authority (Franchina, Eisler, & Moore, 2001).

To the extent that gender role stress reflects the gendered demands of the male gender role, one possibility is that physically abusive men experience a high level of gender role stress because they feel that their gender status as a man is persistently in question. That is, gender role stress may reflect important features of manhood as a persistently elusive state. This explanation should be especially relevant to understanding patriarchal terrorism rather than common couple violence, the latter of which is equally

likely to be committed by men and women (Johnson, 1995). To examine this idea further, I consider contemporary research on precarious manhood and its consequents in action and aggression, as well as its implications for predicting partner violence outcomes.

Precarious Manhood and Men's Cognitions about Violence. Relative to womanhood, manhood is a social status that is especially tenuous and elusive, requiring "continual social proof and validation" (Herek, 1986; Vandello, Bosson, Cohen, Burnaford, & Weaver, 2008). For men, manhood is thought of as never fully achieved, and must be continually and publicly demonstrated in order to prove and re-affirm one's status as a man. Whereas womanhood is defined in terms of biological indicators, such as puberty, manhood is often defined as socially achieved. Because manhood is an achieved (and not ascribed) status, it is thought to be "hard won, but easily lost." For example, Vandello et al. (2008) found that people were more likely to endorse statements that reflected the tenuous nature of manhood than womanhood (e.g., "Some boys do not become men, no matter how old they get"), as well as statements that described the transition from boyhood to manhood as the result of social changes, compared to biological changes. Finally, when participants read different explanations for the hypothetical loss of manhood, the explanations for this loss were easier to understand when phrased in social terms rather than biological terms.

For this reason, threats to manhood serve as effective reminders that manhood is precarious, requiring public, gender role-congruent re-affirmation. For example, threats to manhood can result in increased aggression in the form of punching a punching bag (Bosson, Vandello, Burnaford, Weaver, & Wasti, 2009) and sexual harassment in the

form of sending pornographic images to an ostensibly feminist woman (Maass, Cadinu, Guarnieri, & Grasselli, 2003). Moreover, men view gender threats as especially anxiety-provoking (Vandello et al., 2008). For instance, after receiving feedback indicating they scored low in common male knowledge, men completed more anxiety-related word stems than both men who were not gender threatened, and women who were either gender threatened or not.

Moreover, threats to manhood can have repercussions for interpersonal and romantic relationships. For example, people who live in "honor cultures" (Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle & Schwartz, 1996) not only view a wife's infidelity as damaging to a husband's reputation, but also believe that physical acts of violence against an unfaithful wife are both appropriate and necessary in order for a husband to restore his threatened honor (Vandello & Cohen, 2003). This is partly because men who live in honor cultures, such as Latin America and the Southern United States, highly value their reputation, and are prepared to violently defend it from damage or insult. Moreover, even in non-honor cultures, men are likely to excuse another man's violence when it is performed in service of restoring threatened manhood. For example, in Weaver, Vandello, Bosson, and Burnaford (2010), participants read a fictitious police report in which either two men or two women were engaged in a conflict. The perpetrator used physical violence against the victim who publicly challenged his/her gender status by attempting to thwart the perpetrator's courting efforts. When the conflict was between two men, male participants were more likely to attribute a man's behavior to situational than dispositional characteristics, while women did not differ in their attributions about the same conflict. Importantly, when the conflict was between two women, neither men nor women differed

in their interpretation of the conflict. This suggests that men are more sensitive than women to situational cues that might require them to actively defend their gender status.

Despite the evidence presented here that indicates that men are biased toward situational attributions for the causes of other men's interpersonal violence, it is still unknown whether and how manhood status is specifically threatened in the context of partner conflict. Even though men are more likely to understand a man's violence in response to a gender threat as situationally motivated, it is unknown how men, themselves, actively process gender threatening feedback in the context of an intimate relationship. One possibility is that men are biased to infer criticism from romantic partners, and to attribute that criticism as pertaining to gender status.

Critical/Rejecting Attribution Bias and Manhood. As noted, few investigators have used experimental paradigms to study the psychological mechanisms underlying partner violence. One important exception is the work of Schweinle and his colleagues. Schweinle et al. (2002) used signal detection analyses to examine men's ability to accurately detect statements indicating criticism and rejection in videotaped discussions between a man and a woman currently involved in a romantic relationship. They found that men who overestimated the amount of critical/rejecting statements said by the woman were more likely to report being verbally abusive toward their own romantic partner. That is, men in the study who erroneously overestimated the number of statements that were intentionally critical or rejecting of their partners, were more likely to report having been verbally aggressive, themselves (Schweinle et al., 2002). The authors propose that abusive men exhibit such a bias due to a lack of empathic accuracy, such that men who actively "tune out" their partners assume that their partners are being

critical of them or rejecting them, even when they are not (Clements, Holtzworth-Munroe, Schweinle, & Ickes, 2007; Schweinle & Ickes, 2007).

Alternatively, it may not be that men infer *personal* criticism or rejection from their partners (such as criticism aimed at their personal traits), but that some statements are interpreted as being critical or rejecting of their manhood status, more generally. If manhood is precarious in nature, then men should be vigilant for indications that their partner is challenging their gender status. Ambiguous statements that are misinterpreted as critical and rejecting may thus remind men of the potential for loss of manhood. The same tendency to infer criticism, and view it as a challenge to gender status, should not similarly characterize women, whose gender status is relatively secure as compared to men's. Based on this logic, the current study examines whether men, more strongly than women, interpret a woman's statements toward her male partner, in the context of an altercation that ended in physical violence, as both critical/rejecting and challenging to his status as a man. As a control, I also examine gender differences in people's interpretations of the critical/rejecting and gender challenging nature of a man's statements toward a female partner who abuses him. Given that womanhood is not as precarious as manhood, I do not expect either men or women to interpret a male abuser's statements as critical/rejecting or challenging to his female partner's gender status.

Additionally, because manhood is precarious, it is possible that men who are abusive use physical violence to reaffirm their gender status. However, because threats to status may not be explicit in the context of a romantic relationship, it is possible that men are more likely than women view partner conflict *itself* as perpetually unresolved, and therefore use violence to continually reaffirm their gender status, especially when the

abuser is also a man. To address this, I include exploratory questions pertaining to the degree to which participants view the outcome of a hypothetical physical conflict as 1) understandable, 2) resolved or unresolved, and 3) likely to occur again in the future.

Additionally, in order to examine the moderating effects of individual differences in theoretically relevant attitudes and experiences, participants completed the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996), the Masculine Gender Role Stress Scale (MGRS; Eisler & Skidmore, 1987), and the Propensity for Abusiveness Scale (PAS; Dutton, 1995) prior to the experiment. The ASI is a 22-item scale that that measures two independent but complementary features of contemporary sexism: Hostile sexism (HS) and benevolent sexism (BS). The MGRS asks participants to rate their anticipated level of stress in 40 hypothetical situations intended to represent typical role norm violations. Men who are high in MGRS are known to attribute more negative intent to their partners than men who are low in MGRS, and are known to exhibit higher levels of self-reported anger and jealousy (Eisler et al., 2000). The PAS is a 29-item self-report scale that combines several measures which, when taken together, index the potential for abusive tendencies.

Tying these ideas together, the current study proposes a mediated moderation model in which participant gender interacts with the gender of a hypothetical domestic abuse victim to predict perceived challenges to gender status (the outcome variable) via heightened perceptions of critical/rejecting intention (the mediator variable). Figure 1 depicts the predicted model, which is explained in greater detail below.

Overview and Hypotheses

In order to provide support for this model, I designed an experiment intended to demonstrate that men and women differentially interpret ambiguous statements said by an opposite-sex partner in the context of a hypothetical conflict that ends in physical violence. Men and women read a fictitious dialogue between a man and a woman that detailed a hypothetical verbal and physical conflict. The dialogue was presented as part of a longer police report that detailed a case of domestic abuse. Both versions of this hypothetical conflict ended in one partner (the abuser) physically assaulting the other (victim). In one version, however, the abuser was a man and the victim a woman, and in the other the abuser was a woman and the victim a man. Male and female participants were randomly assigned to read one of the two police reports, after which they rated their perceptions of the critical/rejecting intent behind each of the victim's statements, as well as the extent to which each statement implied a challenge to the abuser's gender status. To provide experimental support for the hypothesis that men are hypervigilant to indicators of criticism and rejection from their partners, I designed this experiment to test 3 specific hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Men, more than women, should interpret ambiguous statements made by a woman (in a script that ends with her being physically assaulted by her male partner) as both critical and rejecting. However, in a script that ends with physical assault of a male partner by a female partner, I expect low levels of perceived criticism in the man's ambiguous statements by both male and female participants.

Hypothesis 2: Men should also be more likely than women to interpret statements said by the victim as pertaining to the abuser's gender status when the abuser is a man.

However, when the abuser is a woman, neither men nor women will interpret ambiguous statements as indicative of challenges to gender status.

Hypothesis 3: Lastly, I expect the path from the participant gender x victim gender interaction to perceived threats to gender status to be mediated by the extent to which people believe the statements reflect criticism and rejection.

Additionally, exploratory analyses examined whether perceptions of the abuser's (social) status followed a pattern similar to the one described in *Hypothesis 2*. I also conducted several exploratory analyses to test whether Ambivalent Sexism (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996), Masculine Gender Role Stress (MGRS; Eisler & Skidmore, 1987), or Propensity for Abusiveness (PAS; Dutton, 1995) moderated the effects of the manipulations on participants' perceptions of criticism/rejection or challenges to the gender status of the abuser.

Method

Design

The design is a 2 (Participant Gender: Men vs. Women) x 2 (Victim Gender: Man vs. Woman) between-subjects design. Mass-tested measures, including the PAS (Dutton, 1995), the ASI (Glick & Fiske, 1996), and the MGRS (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987), were treated as continuous moderators.

Participants

Two hundred and seventy-five heterosexual undergraduate men and women (134 women) from the University of South Florida volunteered through an online participant pool (SONA) and received course credit in exchange for their participation. Roughly equal numbers of men and women were obtained by creating two identical surveys: one for women only, and one for men only. Both surveys were initially opened to participants at the same time; however, once either survey reached 150 participants, it was closed to new participants. Data collection for women reached this threshold before it did for men. Participants were 60% White, 18% Hispanic, 7% Black, 8% Asian, 1% Native American, and 5% Multiracial. Participants were between 18-56 years old (M = 23). Additionally, participants were asked to indicate their sexual orientation on a scale from 1 (exclusively heterosexual) to 7 (exclusively homosexual). Eighty-five percent of participants described themselves as “exclusively heterosexual,” and 3% described themselves as “exclusively homosexual.” Participants were also asked to describe their current relationship status. Forty-nine percent described themselves as single (not in a

romantic relationship), 8% described themselves as married (or in a comparable domestic partnership), 13% said they were "dating casually," and 30% said they were in a "serious romantic relationship." Finally, 26% of participants reported that they had personal experience in a physically abusive relationship (as either a victim or perpetrator).

Prior to any analyses, the data were screened for incomplete responses, and survey completion time. On average, participants completed the survey in $M = 10.71$ minutes ($SD = 8.95$). I excluded participants who took longer than two hours to complete the survey ($n = 7$), and participants who selected their gender as "None of these describe me" ($n = 1$). This left $N = 267$ participants (131 women) for all subsequent analyses.

Measures

Participants completed the ASI (Glick & Fiske, 1996), the PAS (Dutton, 1995), and the MGRS (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987) which were included in an online mass-screening session before volunteering to participate.

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory. The ASI (Glick & Fiske, 1996) is a 22-item questionnaire that measures two independent but complementary features of contemporary sexism: Hostile sexism (HS) and benevolent sexism (BS). HS describes a type of sexism chiefly characterized by deep antipathy toward women who violate conventional gender roles (e.g., "Women seek to gain power by getting control over men"). BS, on the other hand, is characterized by paternalistic attitudes that hold that women are precious, delicate, and should be cared for (e.g., "Every man ought to have a woman who he adores"). These items were randomly ordered, and participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with each item on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree)

to 7 (Strongly Agree). The scale was found to be sufficiently reliable in the current sample (coefficient $\alpha = .83$).

Propensity for Abusiveness Scale. The Propensity for Abusiveness scale (PAS; Dutton, 1995) is a 29 item self-report scale that taps several distinct constructs that collectively predict the potential for partner abuse, including borderline personality orientation, trait anger, history of trauma experiences, early childrearing experiences, and attachment style. The anger subscale asks participants to rate 12 statements on how well they think each statement describes them from 1 (Completely undescriptive of me) to 5 (Completely descriptive of me). The anger subscale ($\alpha = .88$) includes statements that pertain to anger (e.g., "I get so angry, I feel that I might lose control") as well as borderline personality disorder symptoms (e.g., "It is hard for me to be sure about what others think of me, even people who have known me very well"). Participants also rate the frequencies of several parental punishment experiences (e.g., "I was punished by my parent without having done anything") from 1 (Never occurred) to 4 (Always occurred). Participants complete the punishment subscale separately for both their mother ($\alpha = .91$) and father ($\alpha = .94$). Finally, the traumatic symptoms checklist subscale asks participants to rate the frequency with which they experience several traumatic symptoms (e.g., "Anxiety attacks," "Restless sleep") on a scale of 0 (Never) to 3 (Often). This subscale was found to have acceptable reliability, ($\alpha = .94$). The PAS and its subscales are consistently found to be internally consistent and correlate well with reports of actual physical and psychological abuse (Dutton, Landolt, Starzomski, & Bodnarchuk 2001). For purposes of analyses, I treat each subscale of the PAS as a separate continuous moderator.

Masculine Gender Role Stress Scale. The MGRS (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987) asks participants to rate their predicted level of stress on a scale of 1 (Not at all Stressful) to 7 (Extremely Stressful) in response to 40 different hypothetical situations that represent violations of male role norms, including: physical inadequacy (e.g., "Feeling that you are not in good physical condition"), work and sexual failure (e.g., "Having your lover say that she/he is not satisfied"), and expressing feminine emotions (e.g., "Talking with a woman who is crying"). The MGRS is both internally consistent (current sample coefficient $\alpha = .93$) and predictive of partner aggression (Eisler et al., 2000; Jakupcak & Lisak, 2002; Moore & Stuart, 2005).

Procedure

Students who completed all mass-testing questionnaires were eligible for participation and registered for the study through an online participant pool (SONA). Upon registration, participants were directed to an online survey hosted by Qualtrics.

Participants were then randomly assigned by computer to read one of two versions of a fictitious heterosexual partner conflict that closely resembled a Florida state police report adapted from Weaver et al. (2009), including a summary from the responding officer and statements describing the incident from both the victim and an eye-witness (a neighbor). According to the summary, a neighbor called the police when she overheard an argument in the adjacent apartment, which ended in the perpetrator violently hitting the victim. The police report also contained an incomplete transcript of the argument between the victim and the perpetrator prior to the physical altercation. In order to provide support for our cover story, the participant also learned that the neighbor who overheard the altercation was listening through a wall, and was not able to hear the

argument in its entirety. In the transcript of the argument, the victim made five ambiguous statements to the perpetrator, adapted from the Ambiguous Statements Task (AST; Tafarodi, 1998; see also Bosson, Swann & Pennebaker, 2000). Each statement was followed by a muffled response from the perpetrator that the neighbor was ostensibly unable to hear. Following the fifth victim statement, the perpetrator hit the victim (the neighbor heard a loud "thud" followed by a groan of pain).

After the participants read the entire police report, they viewed a separate section of the survey containing a transcript of every statement made by the victim during the conflict leading up to the physical violence. Following each statement, participants were asked to answer a series of questions about their interpretation of the intention behind the statement. Specifically, the participant rated "To what extent does this statement convey criticism of the male (female) partner?" and "To what extent does this statement imply rejection of the male (female) partner?" Additionally, for each statement, the participant indicated "To what extent does this statement challenge the male (female) partner's manhood (womanhood)?," "Does this statement imply that the male (female) partner is not enough of a 'real man (woman)?," "Is this statement an insult to the male (female) partner's status?," and "To what extent does this statement convey respect for the male (female) partner's status?" All of these questions were answered on scales ranging from 1 ("Not at all") to 7 ("Very Much"). The reliability across the five victim statements for each of the six items was acceptable (αs > .70). See Appendix A for the full text of the police report and Appendix B for the list of dependent variables.

After rating these statements, participants rated the extent to which they believed the perpetrator's actions were understandable or acceptable, e.g. "How much sense does

the man's (woman's) behavior make?" and "How understandable are the man's (woman's) actions?" Participants also rated the extent to which, after this incident, they believed that the current conflict was "resolved," "occurs with frequency," "has occurred in the past," and "will happen again" (see Appendix C). These were treated as exploratory items. A description of how these variables were treated for analyses follows.

Results

Scoring of Variables

I computed composite indices by averaging together perceived levels of criticism and rejection (rs > .38, ps < .01) for each of the five victim statements, and by averaging the two gender status threat items (rs > .68, ps < .01) for each of the five statements. I then submitted the five criticism and rejection composites to a 2 (participant gender: man vs. woman) x 2 (victim gender: man vs. woman) x 5 (statement) ANOVA. Results revealed a main effect for statement, $F(4, 1048) = 15.05$ $p < .01$, as well as a main effect for participant gender $F(1, 262) = 8.39$, $p < .01$. Importantly, the effect of statement did not interact with either participant gender, victim gender, or the participant gender x victim gender interaction, all Fs < 1.9, ps > .13. This justified collapsing across the five statements, creating a composite variable that reflected total perceived criticism and rejection across the entire transcript ($\alpha = .78$). Similarly, a 2 (participant gender: man vs. woman) x 2 (victim gender: man vs. woman) x 5 (statement) on the perceived threat to gender status composites revealed main effects of statement, $F(4, 1048) = 5.93$, $p < .01$, participant gender, $F(1, 262) = 4.69$, $p = .03$, and victim gender, $F(1, 262) = 9.10$, $p < .01$. Again, however, the effect of statement did not depend on participant gender, victim gender, or the participant gender x victim gender interaction, all Fs < 2.20, ps > .08). Therefore, items assessing perceived challenge to gender status were collapsed across the

five statements into a composite variable ($\alpha = .89$). A summary of correlations among primary study variables is presented in *Table 1*.

Because items that pertained to perceived threat to social status (globally) were not well correlated (rs < .19, ps > .05), these items were treated separately in analyses. One of the reasons for this may have been because participants failed to notice that one of these items was oppositely worded (i.e., "To what extent does each statement convey respect for the male (female) partner's status?").

Additionally, a composite variable was created for participants' ratings of "how much sense" the abuser's actions made and "how understandable" they found the abuser's actions ($r = .67$, $p < .01$). Another composite variable was created for the frequency with which participants thought the conflict occurred, both in the present (e.g., "How often do you think this type of conflict occurs now in their relationship") and in the past (e.g., "How often do you think this type of conflict occurred in the past in their relationship"), $r = .41$, $p < .001$. Finally, participants' ratings of the extent to which they believed the conflict to be "resolved" and the extent to which they believed this conflict "will happen again" (reverse-scored) were combined into a composite variable reflecting beliefs about the resolution of the conflict, $r = .30$, $p < .001$.

Tests of Hypotheses

In order to examine Hypothesis 1, that men (more than women) would interpret ambiguous statements made by a female victim as greater in perceived criticism and rejection compared to a male victim, I submitted the perceived criticism/rejection composite measure to a 2 (victim gender: man vs. woman) x 2 (participant gender: man vs. woman) factorial ANOVA. The analysis revealed only a main effect for participant

gender, $F(1, 262) = 8.84$, $p < .01$, such that women perceived overall greater criticism and rejection ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 1.06$) than men did ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.08$), regardless of the gender of the victim in the conflict. There was no main effect of victim gender or victim gender x participant gender interaction, Fs < 1, ps > .70. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was not supported. The results are presented in *Figure 2*.

In order to examine Hypothesis 2, that men (more than women) would interpret ambiguous statements made by a female victim (compared to a male victim) as more challenging to gender status, I submitted the gender status challenge composite to a 2 (victim gender: man vs. woman) x 2 (participant gender: man vs. woman) factorial ANOVA. Again, the analyses revealed a main effect for participant gender, $F(1, 262) = 4.69$, $p = .03$, such that women perceived greater challenge to the abuser's gender status ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 1.36$) than men did ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 1.37$), regardless of the gender of the victim in the conflict. The ANOVA also revealed a significant main effect for victim gender, $F(1, 262) = 9.10$, $p < .01$, such that a female victim was seen as challenging the male abuser's manhood ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 1.37$) more than a male victim was seen as challenging the female abuser's womanhood ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 1.37$). These results were not qualified by a participant gender x victim gender interaction, $F(1, 262) = 1.66$, $p = .199$. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was not supported. The results are presented in *Figure 3*.

Because the predicted participant gender x victim gender interaction was non-significant for both perceived threats to gender status as well as perceived criticism/rejection, the test of Hypothesis 3 (moderated mediation) was not conducted.

Exploratory Analyses

Fourteen multiple regression analyses were conducted, separately regressing the perceived criticism/rejection composite and the challenge to gender status composite onto participant gender, victim gender, one of the mean-centered individual difference moderators that both men and women completed, and all 2- and 3-way interactions. Individual differences in each ASI subscale (hostile sexism and benevolent sexism), the combined ASI, and each PAS subscale (anger, punishment from mother, punishment from father, and traumatic symptoms) did not significantly moderate the effects of participant gender, victim gender, or the participant gender x victim gender interaction on either perceived criticism/rejection, or perceived challenge to gender status, all $\beta s < .30$, $ts < 1.60$, $ps > .11$. Two additional multiple regression analyses were conducted on men only, regressing perceived criticism/rejection and challenge to gender status onto victim gender, the MGRS (centered), and their interaction. Individual differences in MGRS among men did not moderate the relationship between victim gender and perceived criticism/rejection or perceived threat to gender status, $\beta s < .301$, $ts < 0.8$, $ps > .43$.

Exploratory analyses were conducted for items that measured participants' perceptions of the victim statements as challenging the abuser's status, globally. A 2 (participant gender: man vs. woman) x 2 (victim gender: man vs. woman) ANOVA on degree of perceived insult to partner status revealed only a main effect of participant gender, $F(1, 262) = 3.98$, $p = .05$, such that women perceived a greater amount of insult to the abuser's status ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.41$), overall, than men did ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.41$). However, the results did not reveal a significant effect for victim gender, $F < 1$, or for the victim gender x participant gender interaction, $F(1, 262) = 1.19$, $p = .28$. Additionally, a

2 (participant gender: man vs. woman) x 2 (victim gender: man vs. woman) factorial ANOVA on perceived respect for the abuser's status did not yield any significant effects, *F*s < 1.47, *p*s > .23.

Several exploratory analyses were also conducted for each of the composite variables related to the conflict as a whole. A 2 (victim gender: man vs. woman) x 2 (participant gender: man vs. woman) ANOVA on the composite variable for "how understandable" the abuser's actions were failed to yield any significant effects, *F*s < 2, *p*s > .15. Additionally, a 2 (victim gender: man vs. woman) x 2 (participant gender: man vs. woman) ANOVA on the composite variable for "how frequent" the conflict was also failed to produce any significant effects, *F*s < 1.75, *p*s > .29. However a 2 (victim gender: man vs. woman) x 2 (participant gender: man vs. woman) ANOVA on the composite variable for "how resolved" participants thought the conflict was revealed a marginally significant main effect for victim gender, $F(1, 262) = 3.14$, $p < .08$, such that the conflict was seen as being more "resolved" when the victim was a man ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 1.45$) than when the victim was a woman ($M = 2.30$, $SD = 1.47$). The analysis did not reveal a significant main effect for participant gender, $F < 1$, however, there was a marginally significant victim gender x participant gender interaction, $F(1, 262) = 3.20$, $p = .08$. A simple effects analysis of victim gender at each level of participant gender revealed that, among women, the conflict was seen as being more "resolved" when the victim was a man ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.15$) than when the victim was a woman ($M = 2.17$, $SD = .89$), $F(1, 262) = 6.25$, $p < .02$. However, among men, there were no victim gender differences in how "resolved" the conflict was perceived as being, $F < 1$.

Discussion

Goals and Findings

This study investigated men and women's perceptions of criticism, rejection, and challenges to gender status in the context of a violent partner conflict, depending on the gender of the victim in the conflict. To do this, men and women read scenarios of a fictitious violent partner conflict, and interpreted statements made by a victim toward his/her abuser on dimensions of implied criticism, rejection, and challenge to gender status.

Contrary to predictions, the results revealed that women relative to men made greater attributions of criticism/rejection in a victim's statements, and perceived more challenges to gender status from a victim to his/her abuser, regardless of the gender of the victim in the conflict. One potential explanation for this result may be that, when asked to make attributions of criticism, rejection, and gender threat, people draw on a type of knowledge for emotional events (semantic emotional knowledge) that is experienced more intensely by women than it is by men. According to Robinson and Clore (2002), episodic knowledge of emotional events is knowledge about one's emotional state in a given place and time. By contrast, semantic emotion knowledge is knowledge that contains beliefs about one's own emotions, broadly, and is not temporally bound to event or circumstance. These authors found that women compared to men experience stronger emotions when reporting on events that occurred over longer time frames (semantic

emotional knowledge), compared to shorter ones (episodic emotional knowledge). Perhaps, when participants in the present study were asked to make inferences about the victim's intentions, they drew on semantic emotional knowledge to make comparisons to similar events in their own lives. Given that the incidence of violent partner abuse is relatively rare for most of our participants (25.8% of the sample reported having personally experienced physical abuse), most participants probably did not draw on episodic emotional knowledge to make attributions of criticism and rejection in our scenario. If participants were, in fact, drawing on semantic emotional knowledge to make inferences about the level of criticism and rejection present in the scenario, and if women experience stronger levels of emotion related to semantic emotional knowledge than men do, then the main effect for participant gender in the present study may have been a result of more intense experiences of emotions among women, compared to men, regardless of the gender of the victim.

However, partially consistent with predictions, perceived challenges to gender status were greater when the victim of domestic abuse was a female than when the victim was male. That is, people thought a woman was criticizing a male abuser's manhood more than a man was thought to be criticizing a female abuser's womanhood. This finding is consistent with the tenets of precarious manhood theory (Vandello et al., 2008) in that manhood is a precarious social state that is more easily lost, relative to womanhood. For example, Vandello et al. (2008) found that participants reported statements that reflected the loss of manhood ("It is fairly easy for a man to lose his status as a man") as being easier to understand than statements that reflected the loss of womanhood ("It is fairly easy for a woman to lose her status as a woman").

Consequently, because manhood is precarious, it is also thought to be more susceptible to threat. In the context of the present study, because manhood is seen as more easily lost, participants we more likely interpret a female victim's statements as greater in implied threat to manhood toward a male abuser.

This thesis initially proposed that the link between the participant gender x victim gender interaction and perceptions of threat to gender status would be mediated by perceived criticism/rejection. However, because the predicted participant gender x victim gender interaction was non-significant for both perceived threats to gender status as well as perceived criticism/rejection, the moderated mediation model was not supported. Additionally, although I did an exploratory analysis to determine if men versus women would perceive a greater threat to social status, overall, when the victim was a woman (and the abuser was a man), this interaction pattern did not emerge from the sample. The analysis only revealed a significant main effect for participant gender, which may also be attributable to gender differences in semantic emotional knowledge.

Several individual difference variables were measured and exploratory analyses tested whether they moderated the relationship between the participant gender x victim gender interaction and perceptions of the victim's statements. These variables included ambivalent sexism, masculine gender role stress (for men only), and propensity for abusiveness. Puzzlingly, none of these variables moderated the associations between the independent variables and perceived criticism/rejection or perceived threat to gender status. It is possible that, because the student sample reported relatively low amounts of trait anger (M = 2.50, SD = .71), had relatively few experiences of punishment from their mothers (M = 1.53, SD = .57) and fathers (M = 1.47, SD = .60), and experienced

relatively few traumatic symptoms (M = .87, SD = .54), there were not enough people in the sample with a genuine propensity for abuse. If so, I most likely did not have sufficient power to detect moderation by the PAS. Additionally, although previous studies have found that men who are higher in MGRS report higher levels of anger, jealousy, and irritation toward female partners in a fictitious partner conflict, there was no evidence that MGRS moderated the relationship between victim gender and perceived criticism/rejection or perceived threat to gender status among men. One reason may be that the materials did not explicitly indicate that the cause of the conflict was driven by infidelity, which may be a critical feature that drives the relationship between MGRS and perceptions of gender threat (Franchina et al., 2001).

Relationship to Contemporary Findings about Attributions in Partner Violence

Previous research found that aggressive men perceive greater amounts of criticism than non-aggressive men (Schweinle & Ickes, 2007; Schweinle, Ickes, & Bernstein, 2002). The goal of this study, however, was to extend these findings to attributions of criticism related to one's *gender* in a hypothetical partner conflict. I expected that this tendency would be greater among men than women. Contrary to expectations, the analyses revealed that women in this study not only attributed greater amounts of *personal* criticism and rejection to the victim than men, but also attributed greater amounts of criticism related to the abuser's gender than men. However, the goals and methods of this study differed greatly from those of Schweinle et al. (2002). For instance, the present study did not intend to compare aggressive (or abusive) with non-aggressive (or non-abusive) men. Indeed, participants in this study were recruited from a relatively non-abusive college-aged sample. Additionally, individual differences in propensity for

abusiveness did not predict attributions of either personal or gender-oriented criticism, regardless of the participant's gender or the gender of the victim in the scenario. Furthermore, One potential explanation for this result may be that while this study used written materials to describe the conflict, Schweinle et al. (2002, 2007) showed participants a videotaped conflict. This limitation is described in greater detail in the following section.

Additionally, other work has found that men who report higher levels of gender role stress (MGRS) attribute greater amounts of negativity (Franchina et al., 2000) and aggression (Eisler et al., 2000) toward a woman in a hypothetical conflict, especially when the conflict was indicative of infidelity or when the woman threatened a man's authority (Franchina, Eisler, & Moore, 2001). Based on these findings, I expected that participants would also attribute greater amounts of blame and greater amounts of criticism toward a female, but not a male victim to the extent that criticizing her partner's manhood is seen as negative and provocative. I also expected that MGRS would moderate these tendencies among men. In the present study, however, MGRS did not moderate the relationship between victim gender and perceptions of gender status threat among men. That is, men who experience higher levels of gender role stress did not view the victim in the conflict as threatening the abuser's gender status, even when the victim was a woman. One possible explanation for this may be that men who are higher in MGRS only attribute grater amounts of negativity in a scenario in which a female victim has either committed or is suspected of having committed some act of infidelity. In the present study, although a participant may have inferred infidelity on the part of the victim

in the conflict (who arrived home late), infidelity was not explicitly mentioned in the scenario. This limitation is described in greater detail in the following section.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although the theory that guided this research emphasized the importance of distinguishing between common couple violence and patriarchal terror (Johnson, 1995), the present study design may not have provided a valid conceptual test that included critical features of violence that are central to patriarchal terror. For instance, the fictitious scenario neither emphasized the instrumental nature of the violent act, nor did it indicate that the violence was ongoing in the couple's relationship. Recall that patriarchal terror is characterized by a (typically) male abuser's motivation to control and dominate his (typically) female partner, and it tends to assume an ongoing pattern of abuse. Perhaps it is important to clearly articulate both the motivation and the enduringness of the conflict, in a manner that conveys patriarchal terrorism, for men to interpret a female victim's statements as challenging her abuser's manhood. Future experimental materials should more closely observe the nuances of this theoretical distinction, and should provide a more valid conceptual representation of patriarchal terror. For example, in creating materials, one might emphasize the systematic nature of the abuse, its frequency, and its ostensible intention to terrorize the victim. A revised version of the study materials might include a statement from the officer or from the victim that summarizes the couple's history with abuse, for example. Modified materials may also include other features, such as economic subordination, that are also characteristic of patriarchal terror, compared to common couple violence. If participants perceive the conflict in line with the features of patriarchal terror, they may also be more

likely to see an abuser's behavior as resulting from challenges to manhood status, especially if patriarchal terror is thought to be a phenomenon that is characteristic of male abusers.

Additionally, previous research indicates that both men and women from honor cultures believe that infidelity can undermine a man's honor (Vandello & Cohen, 2003). Thus, it may be the case that infidelity is an important component of attributional biases surrounding gendered perceptions of threat in conflict. Although the scenario that was used in this study may have implied that infidelity (or the threat thereof) was related to the conflict, it was not made explicit. It is possible that attributions of gender status challenges only arise if the cause of the conflict is perceived as threatening to a man's gender status or honor. The inclusion of specific information about the ostensible cause of the conflict should be made more explicit. For example, future materials may include speculative information from a witness or a responding officer about the ostensible cause of the violence. If participants are better able to interpret the cause of the conflict (overall) as being caused by infidelity, attributions of threat to gender status should be greater for men, but only when the victim is a woman.

Another potential limitation of this experiment has to do with a lack of experimental realism. Although Schweinle and Ickes (2007) used video stimuli of a partner conflict in their work, I chose to use written materials in order to gain experimental control, and to administer the survey easily in an online survey environment. In doing so, I may have sacrificed the experimental realism of the study, making the materials more difficult for participants to comprehend, process, and interpret. Participants may have found it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions based

on the limited amount of information given in the scenario, especially if the details about the conflict were confusing to them. To address this in future work, it will be important to conduct the experiment within a laboratory setting, in order to alleviate the potential for distraction, and to improve participants' focus and comprehension of the experimental material. Additionally, it may also be necessary to present the conflict scenario using alternate media, such as an audio or video recording. For example, modified materials may contain a recording of a fictitious 9-1-1 call in which ambiguous statements made by the perpetrator can be heard over the phone by an emergency operator. These changes should both enhance experimental realism and may also increase attentiveness to the stimuli.

Conclusions

Despite the limitations outlined here, this research provides an initial conceptual test of the hypothesis that attributions about threats to gender status in the context of partner violence depend on the gender of both the victim and the perceiver. Previous research has not employed experimental paradigms to examine people's perceptions of threats to gender status during domestic conflict, and the present framework provides preliminary evidence that some attributional biases that specifically pertain to perceived threats to gender status are largely dependent on the gender of the victim and abuser in a violent partner conflict. Specifically, consistent with precarious manhood theory, attributions of gender status threat were greater for male abusers than female abusers. However, attributions of criticism/rejection overall did not depend on the gender of the victim in the conflict. This finding provides preliminary evidence which suggests that

attributions of gender status loss are implicated in partner conflict, however, only among male abusers whose gender is more susceptible to challenge.

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Table 1

Bivariate correlations among study variables by gender (men below diagonal)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Perceived Criticism/Rejection		.66**	.25**	.14	.30*	.03	.03	.11	-.02	.16	-.01	.13	.72**	-.03
2. Perceived Gender Threat	.53**		.19*	.17	.20	-.02	-.02	.12	-.04	.40**	.17	.07	.77**	.21*
3. Hostile Sexism	.05	.27**		.30**	.26	.11	.11	.13	0	.17	.09	.13	.20*	.14
4. Benevolent Sexism	-.03	.17	.28**		.41**	-.05	-.05	-.15	-.03	.08	.03	.08	.15	.11
5. MGRS	.14	.20*	.34**	.22*		.32*	.32*	-.09	-.03	.06	-.04	.05	.03	-.04
6. PAS Anger Subscale	.04	.13	.12	-.01	.37**		.03	.31**	.42**	-.04	-.01	.05	.01	.03
7. PAS Mother Punishment Subscale	.07	.08	.18*	.04	0.10	.26**		.76**	.19*	0	-.07	-.01	.06	.16
8. PAS Father Punishment Subscale	.01	.01	.09	-.01	.09	.26**	.80**		.21*	.03	-.05	.09	.08	.05
9. PAS Traumatic Symptoms	0	.09	.07	-.07	.09	.45**	.26**	.24**		-.10	.04	-.10	.04	-.03
10. Composite Understandability	.31**	.38**	.04	0	.25**	.08	.03	.01	.14		.33**	.03	.33**	.30**
11. Composite “how resolved”	-.06	.14	-.05	.04	.19*	.02	.04	.02	-.06	.41**		.38**	.10	.18*
12. Composite Frequency	.29**	.14	.09	-.01	-.04	.12	-.14	0	.04	-.07	.37**		.08	-.04
13. Perceived Insult to Status	.66**	.72**	.10	.09	.15	.09	-.02	-.06	.08	.31**	.03	.24**		.09
14. Perceived Respect for Status	.25**	.39**	.06	.07	.24**	.08	.18*	.05	.10	.32**	.34**	-.08	.29**	

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 2

Summary of study variables

	Perceived Criticism/Rejection	Perceived Gender Threat	Hostile Sexism	Benevolent Sexism	Ambivalent Sexism	MGRS
M	4.23	3.13	3.82	4.19	4.00	3.71
SD	1.09	1.40	1.00	0.95	0.78	0.95

Note. MRGS = Masculine Gender Role Stress

Table 2 (continued)
Summary of study variables

	PAS Anger Subscale	PAS Mother Punishment Subscale	PAS Father Punishment Subscale	PAS Traumatic Symptoms	Composite Understandability	Composite "how resolved"	Composite Frequency	Perceived Insult to Status	Perceived Respect for Status
M	2.55	1.54	1.47	0.87	2.63	2.41	4.74	3.71	2.75
SD	0.71	0.57	0.60	0.54	1.35	1.05	1.01	1.41	1.05

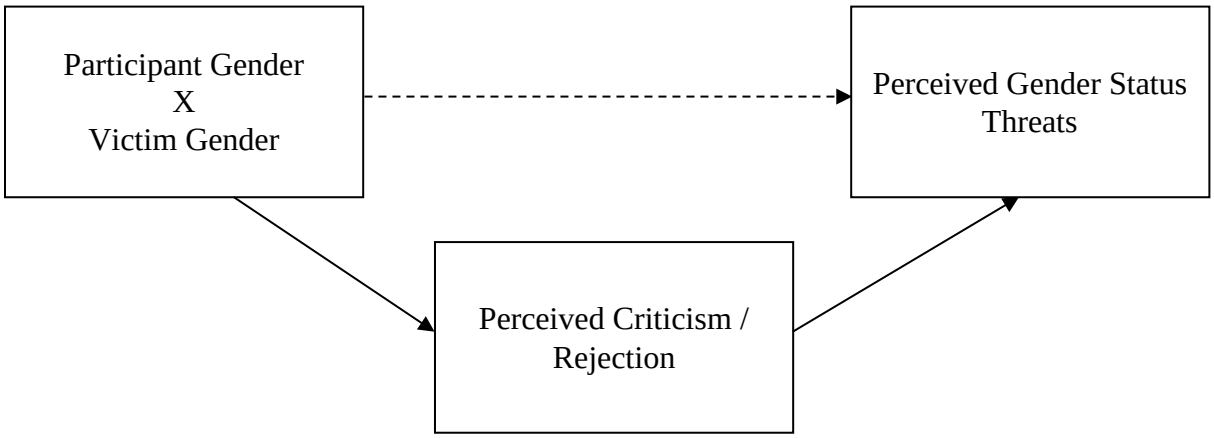

Figure 1. Mediated moderation model predicting perceived threats to gender status from participant gender x victim gender interaction via perceptions of critical/rejecting statements.

Figure 2. Perceived criticism and rejection by victim gender and participant gender.

Figure 3. Perceived challenge to gender status by victim gender and participant gender.

Appendix A: Florida State Domestic Incidence Summary

FLORIDA STATE DOMESTIC INCIDENT SUMMARY

000-76-3578-43 FL

ORI: FL 1330100	SPRINT NO. DR 02-20302	Incident Report #: BE – 4911B	
Date of report: 8 | 16 | 02		Date of occurrence: 8 | 16 | 02	
Time of report: 11:34 pm		Time of occurrence: 10:45 pm	
Victim's Last Name, First, M.I.: ~~XXXXXXXX~~, Melissa A.	Date of Birth: 11 | 22 | 77	Age: 24	Race: ☒ White ☐ Black ☐ Other ☐ Indian ☐ Asian ☐ Unk.
Address: ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~			
Suspect's Last Name, First, M.I.: ~~XXXXXXXX~~, Michael P.	Date of Birth: 10 | 09 | 74	Age: 27	Race: ☒ White ☐ Black ☐ Other ☐ Indian ☐ Asian ☐ Unk.
Address: ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~			
Suspect relationship to the victim: Domestic partner		Firearm present? ☐ YES ☒ NO	Registered? N/A
Offense involved: ☐ Felony X Misd ☐ Viol ☐ Other		Description (Offenses): Assault 3rd Degree	
Victim injured? ☒ YES ☐ NO		Describe: Facial lacerations, bruising and swollen eye.	
Witnesses? ☒ YES ☐ NO		How many: 1 Neighbor in adjacent apartment	

Narrative of the incident (include results of investigation and basis for action taken):

Officer received call at approximately 10:45 pm from neighbor in adjacent apartment, ~~XXXXXX~~, complaining about a fight in apartment next door. Officer arrived to find victim sitting outside the doorway, separated from the suspect. Compl (victim) had a black eye and split lip, and stated that the suspect had hit her twice in the face. Victim does not desire prosecution. Suspect briefly detained and released at the scene. To be processed.

Statement from the victim at the time of the incident:

I came home around 10:00 after my shift at the hospital, where I work in medical records. When I walk in the door Mike goes, "Getting home late again?" I didn't answer, because I usually get home at 10 o'clock three nights a week and I didn't want to start a fight. I went into the kitchen to make myself some dinner and he came in. I asked him how work went today, but I couldn't understand what he said. I think he had been drinking. Before I knew it, he was yelling at me, saying "You do this all the time." I was trying to answer him but then he grabbed me by my arms and hit me when I tried to get away.

Statement from the suspect (perpetrator) at the time of the incident:

[Suspect declined to make a statement, but was still questioned by officers.]

Officer: Did you hit her?

I just pushed her. I don't remember anything else. I'm not saying anything else.

Statement from the witness at the time of the incident:

I live next door, I was about to go to bed when I overheard an argument over there. I didn't know what was going to happen so I put my ear against the wall. I couldn't make out everything they were saying, I could only hear what she was saying so I guess he was standing farther away. I don't know if I can remember it all exactly but it was something like this:

Man: [cannot make out words]
Woman: You must be kidding.
Man: [cannot make out words]
Woman: I can tell just by looking at you.
Man: [cannot make out words]
Woman: That will do for now.
Man: [cannot make out words]
Woman: Is this how you want it? Think about it.
Man: [cannot make out words]
Woman: You better believe it!

Then I just heard her gasp and a crashing noise, like a dish being broken, then I heard I "thud" like a body falling to the floor and some yelling. It was all so confusing.

Officer I.D. No. 2886	Supervisor Signature:	Page 2 of 2

Appendix B: Ratings of Conflict Statements

Consider the police report you just read. Below is a list of the statement made by the male (female) partner in that conflict. Read each statement carefully and answer the questions below about each statement.

Statement 1: "Excuse me?"
Statement 2: "What did you say?"
Statement 3: "I can tell just by looking at you."
Statement 4: "You must be kidding."
Statement 5: "Is this how you want it? Think about it."
Statement 6: "You better believe it!"

1. To what extent does each statement convey **criticism** of the male (female) partner from 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very Much)? Circle your answers below.

	Not at all						Very Much
Statement 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. To what extent does each statement imply **rejection** of the male (female) partner from 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very Much)? Circle your answers below.

	Not at all						Very Much
Statement 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. To what extent does each statement **challenge the male (female) partner's manhood (womanhood)** from 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very Much)? Circle your answers below.

	Not at all						Very Much
Statement 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. To what extent does each statement imply that **the male (female) partner is not enough of a 'real man (woman)'** from 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very Much)? Circle your answers below.

	Not at all						Very Much
Statement 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. To what extent is each statement an insult **to the male (female) partner's status** from 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very Much)? Circle your answers below.

	Not at all						Very Much
Statement 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. To what extent does each statement convey **respect for the male (female) partner's status** from 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very Much)? Circle your answers below.

	Not at all						Very Much
Statement 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Statement 6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix C: Ratings of Nature of Conflict and Abuser

The following questions pertain to several aspects of the partner conflict you just read about *as a whole*. Please read each question carefully, and circle the answer you think most appropriately represents the conflict you just read, *as a whole*.

1. How much **sense** does the man's (woman's) behavior make?

None at all						A great deal
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. How **understandable** are the man's (woman's) actions?

Not at all Understandable						Very Understandable
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. To what extent do you believe that the current conflict is **resolved** from 1 (Completely Unresolved) to 7 (Completely Resolved)?

Completely Unresolved						Completely Resolved
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. **How often** do you think this type of conflict typically occurs **now** in Melissa and Michael's relationship from 1 (Never) to 7 (Always)?

Rarely						Frequently
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. **How often** do you think this type of conflict has occurred **in the past** in Melissa and Michael's relationship from 1 (Never) to 7 (Always)?

Rarely						Frequently
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. To what extent do you believe this type of conflict will happen **again** in Melissa and Michael's relationship from 1 (Definitely will not happen again) to 7 (Certainly will happen again)?

Definitely will not happen again						Definitely will happen again
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix D: IRB Approval Letter

USF
UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH FLORIDA

DIVISION OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 • Tampa, FL 33612-4799
(813) 974-5638 • FAX (813) 974-5618

January 5, 2012

Joshua Lenes, B.A.
Psychology, PCD 3102
4202 E. Fowler Ave.
Tampa, FL 33620

RE: **Exempt Certification** for IRB#: Pro00006417
Title: Perceptions of Crime Scenarios

Dear Mr. Lenes:

On 1/5/2012 the Institutional Review Board (IRB) determined that your research meets USF requirements and Federal Exemption criteria as outlined in the federal regulations at 45CFR46.101(b):

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
(i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

As the principal investigator for this study, it is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted as outlined in your application and consistent with the ethical principles outlined in the Belmont Report and with USF IRB policies and procedures. Please note that changes to this protocol may disqualify it from exempt status. Please note that you are responsible for notifying the IRB prior to implementing any changes to the currently approved protocol.

The Institutional Review Board will maintain your exemption application for a period of five years from the date of this letter or for three years after a Final Progress Report is received, whichever is longer. If you wish to continue this protocol beyond five years, you will need to submit a new application. When your study is completed, either prior to, or at the end of the five-year period, you must submit a Final Report to close this study.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

John A. Schinka, Ph.D.

John A. Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board