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Objectification in romantic relationships: Examining links between objectification, dehumanisation, and intimate partner violence

Adriana Vargas Sáenz

ORCID: 0000-0002-0578-0953

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Abstract

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a widespread problem. Worldwide, 1-in-3 women have experienced some form of violence in their lifetime, and the majority of incidents are the result of male perpetrated IPV. Scholars suggest that objectification facilitates IPV, because the phenomenon involves perceiving and/or treating a person as an object or not as fully human. Despite these theoretical claims, objectification has not been studied extensively in the realm of heterosexual romantic relationships – the most common setting for women to experience violence. The purpose of this thesis was to explore how objectification among heterosexual men relates to the perpetration of physical, sexual, and psychological IPV within romantic relationships.

I divided the study of objectification into two distinct, but complementary approaches – examining the phenomenon from implicit (Study 1 and 2) and explicit (Study 3) standpoints. Two correlational studies investigated objectification implicitly by measuring the extent to which men associated women and romantic partners with objects and/or animals. A third behavioural experiment investigated objectification explicitly by measuring the extent to which manipulating the phenomenon facilitated male physical aggression towards the romantic partner, and impacted on judgments about the objectified target's humanness, mind, and moral status (referred to as personhood).

Study 1 examined how automatically likening women to non-human entities (animals, objects) played a role in IPV perpetration in romantic relationships. Findings demonstrated that men who held implicitly objectifying perceptions of women were more likely to perpetrate sexual and physical IPV against their current female partner. Study 2 builds on the finding that men who objectify women are more prone to commit IPV, and examined whether the finding would replicate when assessing the objectification of an

intimate partner. This study also examined the relation between partner-objectification and physical aggression, particularly in the context of provocation. Results showed that men's tendency to implicitly perceive their romantic partner as an object predicted self-reported perpetration of physical IPV. They also revealed that objectification moderated the effect of provocation on physical aggression, whereby highly provoked men enacted more physical IPV against their female partner when they held stronger associations of that woman with objects and/or animals.

Study 3 then experimentally investigated the effect of explicit partner-objectification, induced via an appearance-focus mindset, on denials of personhood to the target. This study also extended the novel correlational finding that objectification predicted physical IPV, and examined a causal link between partner-objectification and physical aggression towards the romantic partner, in the context of provocation. Results demonstrated that when the romantic partner was objectified by a focus on her physical appearance, she was stripped of her personhood and perceived as lacking humanity and mind. They also demonstrated a direct aggression-facilitating effect of partner-objectification, and of provocation, wherein these variables increased physical IPV.

Together, the findings from these three studies indicate that objectification has profoundly negative manifestations and consequences for women in romantic relationships. Not only did the phenomena relate to greater male perpetrated sexual and physical IPV within romantic relationships, but men's partner-objectification also diminished perceptions of the romantic partner as possessing full personhood, and directly and indirectly facilitated enacted physical aggression against the same partner. This thesis thus provides compelling evidence that objectification—implicit or explicit—is a likely contributor to the victimisation of women in romantic relationships. Our research can help inform prevention and intervention efforts to reduce this major social problem.

Declaration

This is to certify that:

1. The thesis comprises only my original work towards the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, except where indicated in the preface;
2. Due acknowledgment has been made in the text to all other material used; and
3. The thesis is fewer than 100,000 words, exclusive of tables, figures, footnotes, references, and appendices.

_____

Adriana Vargas Sáenz

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIC	Akaike information criterion
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AIRS	Abuse Within Intimate Relations Scale
ASI	Ambivalent Sexism Inventory
B-IAT	Brief Implicit Association Test
CTS	Conflict Tactics Scale
DV	Domestic violence
FV	Family violence
HN	Human nature
HS	Hostile sexism
HU	Human uniqueness
IAT	Implicit Association Test
IPV	Intimate partner violence
IRR	Incidence rate ratio
LR	Likelihood ratio
LSHTM	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
MSA	Mental State Attribution task
MTurk	Amazon's Mechanical Turk
NB model	Negative binomial model
NISVS	National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey

OBCS	Objectification Body Consciousness Scale
PAHO	PanAmerican Health Organization
PSS	Personal Safety Survey
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
SC-IAT	Single Category IAT
SCIRS	Sexual Coercion in Intimate Relationships Scale
SCM	Stereotype content model
SOQ	Self-objectification Questionnaire
SPSW-R	Sexual Pressure Scale for Women-Revised
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
VAW	Violence against women
VDT	Voodoo Doll Task
WHO	World Health Organization

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"Once women have acquired the status of objects for men's use, then violence and abuse can easily follow" Catherine MacKinnon (1987, p. 138)

1.1. Problem Statement

Violence against women (VAW) is a global issue that cannot be ignored, applicable to girls and women of all nations and recognised as a pervasive violation of their human rights and freedoms (United Nations Human Rights & Office of the High Comissioner, 2019). Worldwide, it is estimated that 1-in-3 women are subject to some form of violence—physical, sexual, psychological, and economic—at some point in their life, with the vast majority of incidents being the result of gendered intimate partner violence (IPV; United Nations [UN], 2015). In other words, most of the violence that women experience in their daily lives is perpetrated by someone that they would normally expect to trust, that is, their romantic partner.

Acts of gendered violence have devastating short- and long-term consequences for the health and wellbeing of their victims, and at their most extreme they include death. Results from a recent global study estimated that in 2017, 87,000 women were intentionally killed worldwide (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2019a). Of these murders, 34% were committed by a male intimate partner. Similarly, Australian national statistics indicate that, on average, one woman is murdered each week

by her current or former partner (Bryant & Bricknell, 2017). These figures highlight the severe burden that violence places on women.

In addition to the clear human costs, VAW also negatively impacts the victim's family and the wider community, and exacts a significant economic burden upon nations. For instance, estimates suggest that VAW costs the Australian economy close to $22 billion each year (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2015), and globally, costs could amount to a staggering 5% of the global gross domestic product (Fearon & Hoeffler, 2014). Gendered violence also plays a key role in perpetuating and compounding inequality in the lives of women, increasing their vulnerability to financial hardship, poverty, and homelessness (Matjasko, Niolon, & Valle, 2013). For these reasons, research aimed at understanding the social and psychological factors underpinning VAW is a priority.

Feminist scholars have long argued that the objectification of women—seeing and/or treating them as objects or not as fully human—plays a detrimental role in the facilitation of violence against them (Dworkin, 2000; Nussbaum, 1999). Objectification creates a sociocultural context where great emphasis is placed on the bodies of women, reinforcing views of them as *things* to be admired, evaluated, and consumed for the pleasure of others (Bordo, 1993). A cultural milieu within which *someone* becomes *something* inevitably perpetuates inequality, enables all forms of VAW, and trivialises the seriousness of the experience as an unwanted, yet implicitly tolerated aspect of the status quo (Aubrey, Hopper, & Mbure, 2011; Flood & Pease, 2009; Murphy, 2013).

Central to the notion of objectification is that the phenomenon entails perceiving or treating another person as lacking the qualities that make them fully human (Haslam,

Loughnan, & Holland, 2013). The existing literature emphasises that women are particularly likely to be recognised as object-like or incompletely human, rather than as full people. Indeed, over the past decade scholars have compellingly demonstrated that a tendency to objectify women often results in denials of her humanity and her capacity to have a rich and complex mental life (e.g., Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Heflick, Goldenberg, Cooper, & Puvia, 2011; Loughnan et al., 2010; Vaes, Loughnan, & Puvia, 2013). Coupled with a reduction in perceived humanity, evidence suggests that objectification has profoundly negative consequences for how women are treated (Loughnan et al., 2010; Rudman & Mescher, 2012) and how people show moral concern for them (Baldry, Pacilli, & Pagliaro, 2015; Heflick et al., 2011; Loughnan, Pina, Vasquez, & Puvia, 2013; Pacilli et al., 2017). Viewing a woman as anything less than a full person consequently reduces her basic human rights and protections from harm, rendering her a more likely victim of violence.

Much of the philosophical feminist literature posits that objectification leads to IPV due to withdrawals of humanity from the victim (Dworkin, 2000; Nussbaum, 1999). Despite the role that the phenomenon may play in understanding gendered violence in romantic relationships, associations between objectification, perceptions of women as less than fully human, and IPV perpetration have been widely assumed rather than empirically examined. Aiming to fill these gaps, my research program investigates these relationships. I propose that objectification—given its overlap with dehumanisation—contributes to IPV, and this thesis presents empirical evidence to support this notion.

1.2. Aim of the Research

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the role of objectification in IPV. I aim to explain how objectifying perceptions of women, previously demonstrated in the laboratory, contribute to violence against them in the world outside.

To accomplish this goal I divide my investigation into two parts. First, in two studies, I consider whether implicitly held objectifying perceptions of women—that is, automatically likening them to objects or animals—predicts male-to-female partner violence. Study 1 investigates the objectification of women in general and Study 2 of the participant's current romantic partner in particular. This part answers the following research question: (a) What is the relation between men's implicit objectification of women and different forms of IPV perpetration in romantic relationships?

For the second part, I switch my focus of research from assessing the phenomenon implicitly to explicitly, using an experimental methodology. In Study 3, I consider whether the objectification of women impacts the degree to which men engage in dehumanisation within their romantic relationship, by denying humanness, mental states, and moral status to their current female partner (referred to collectively as their "personhood" for simplicity).[1] I also examine whether men's failure to acknowledge the romantic partner as possessing full personhood, brought on by objectification, plays a role in the perpetration

[1] Note that due to its experimental nature, Study 3 has also been referred to as Experiment 3 in later chapters. These two terms are used interchangeably throughout this thesis.

of physical IPV. This part answers two additional research questions: (b) How does objectification impact on men's explicit perceptions of personhood to their romantic partner? and (c) Does partner-objectification directly contribute to physical IPV perpetration towards the romantic partner?

By investigating women's objectification in these two ways—implicitly and explicitly—I aim to gain a more coherent and complete understanding of the role that the phenomenon plays in the facilitation of gendered violence within romantic relationships.

1.3. Scope of the Research

Limits of the research are noted from the start. This research program focuses solely on male-to-female aggression in the context of heterosexual romantic relationships. I have also restricted my research sample to young adult males 18 to 35 years of age. The reasoning behind these conceptual and methodological choices is outlined below.

1.3.1. Focusing on Gendered Violence

The literature highlights that there are clear differences in the way men and women experience interpersonal violence, and the circumstances surrounding these incidents (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002). For example, in the case of extreme violence, a 2014 global report with data from 133 countries (representing 88% of the world's population) found that men are overrepresented as victims of homicide (World Health Organization [WHO], 2014). Males accounted for 82% of cases worldwide. Additional data indicates, however, that men are also overwhelmingly the most likely

perpetrators of these types of crimes (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2016; Bryant & Bricknell, 2017; UN, 2015; WHO, 2013).

Another report shows that while women account for a much smaller share of the number of homicides globally, when they are killed, over a third of cases involve the male partner as the person responsible for the murder (UNODC, 2019a). Similarly, intimate partner homicide data from Australia show that out of the total number of identified murder cases between 2010-2014, 80% involved men killing their female partners (Australian Domestic Family Violence Death Review Network, 2018). Most offenders (93%) had a history of abuse against the murdered victim prior to her death.

In addition to experiencing fatal violence differently, the scholarly literature also identifies variation in the way that genders experience types of non-fatal violence (e.g., physical, sexual, psychological, economic). For example, in the case of physical violence, global estimates show that men are disproportionately more likely to be physically assaulted in their lifetime (WHO, 2014). However, the evidence also indicates that men (and women) are significantly more likely to be assaulted by another man.

The instances of violence that are experienced by men and women also differ in terms of the contextual circumstances surrounding the events. For men, the bulk of their experiences of violence are isolated incidents that take place outside the home (e.g., in public spaces; ABS, 2016; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW], 2018; Cox, 2015). These incidents tend to occur at the hands of other men, who may or may not be known to the victim. In contrast, the bulk of women's experiences of violence are incidents of an ongoing nature, often involving multiple and concurrent forms of victimisation, that

generally take place in private settings (e.g., the home; UN, 2015). This violence tends to be inflicted by men who are known to the female victim such as friends and acquaintances, family members, and predominantly, intimate partners (AIHW, 2018; Mouzos & Makkai, 2004). Moreover, women are far more likely to experience certain types of harm, such as sexual violence and harassment, also mostly perpetrated by men (ABS, 2016; Australian Human Rights Commission [AHRC], 2018; Cox, 2015; UN, 2015).

This body of research presents compelling evidence that women (and men) experience violence differently because of their gender. Indeed, scholars posit that gender-specific dynamics characterise VAW, making it a distinct problem to the violence that men experience, both in degree and kind (Caman, Howner, Kristiansson, & Sturup, 2016; Fulu, Warner, et al., 2013; Hamby, 2016b; Jewkes, Flood, & Lang, 2015; Loseke & Kurz, 2005; Stöckl et al., 2013; UN, 2015; UNODC, 2019a; VicHealth, 2017; WHO, 2013, 2014). As such, specific empirical and practical approaches may be required to examine and seek solutions to these distinct sets of problems.

There is a caveat that must be noted at this point. Controversy exists over the role of gender in IPV (for reviews, see Chan, 2011; Kimmel, 2002). Early studies assumed a gendered nature to the phenomenon, whereby men were mostly (if not always) the perpetrators and women their victims. However, some empirical research from the United States has found gender symmetry in IPV victimisation and perpetration (e.g., Archer, 2000). Notwithstanding these findings, there is ample evidence from national and international studies and other data sources (e.g., police arrest reports, support shelter and hospital emergency-care facility records, clinical observations, and crime victimisation

surveys) demonstrating that women are overrepresented as the primary victims of IPV (Cox, 2015; García-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2005; Kimmel, 2002; Morgan & Chadwick, 2009; Mouzos & Smith, 2007; Truman & Morgan, 2014; WHO, 2013). Even so, researchers from various disciplines largely acknowledge that patterns of IPV perpetration and victimisation are not necessarily static or unidirectional – men and women can be victims and perpetrators, or even both (Archer, 2000; Hamberger, 2005; Hamby, 2009, 2016a, 2016b; Holtzworth-Munroe, 2005; H. Johnson, 2015; M.P. Johnson, 2011; Straus, 2005).

While women's use of violence against men in romantic relationships should, and is, recognised, a large body of work demonstrates that the global burden of IPV is still borne by women (VicHealth, 2017; Webster, 2016; WHO & Pan American Health Organization [PAHO], 2012b). For example, research shows that men's use of violence towards female partners is more frequent and long-lasting; causes more severe physical injury and death; is more likely to induce a pronounced state of fear in the victim; and strongly contributes to a host of detrimental mental, physical, and quality of life problems that can perdure long after the violence has ended (Caldwell, Swan, & Woodbrown, 2012; Cox, 2015; García-Moreno, Heise, Jansen, Ellsberg, & Watts, 2005; M.P. Johnson & Leone, 2005; Kilpatrick, 2004; Kilpatrick & Acierno, 2003; Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, & Zwi, 2002; Mouzos & Makkai, 2004; Phelan et al., 2005; Straus & Gelles, 1990; Webster, 2016).

For these reasons, my research program has adopted a gender-sensitive approach to the understanding and investigation of IPV. In this thesis, I conducted a gendered examination of objectification in the context of romantic relationships, with the aim to

explain the role that the phenomenon plays in the perpetration of male-to-female IPV. This is done without suggesting that women cannot or will not perpetrate violence against men, nor with the intent to ignore or diminish men's experiences of partner abuse.

1.3.2. Focusing on Young Adults

A special interest of this program of research is the impact of objectification on populations that are more at risk of IPV perpetration. Young adults are such a population. Indeed, the WHO considers *young age* as a demographic risk factor associated with men's increased likelihood of committing IPV (Heise & García-Moreno, 2002). To this end, for this research I have exclusively used samples of young, heterosexual adult men aged 18 to 35 years old.

Support for this sampling choice comes from national and international data demonstrating that the overall prevalence of IPV perpetration and victimisation is higher among this age group (ABS, 2016; Desmarais, Reeves, Nicholls, Telford, & Fiebert, 2012). For example, longitudinal data from a population-based study with over 4,000 adolescents and young adults from the United States showed that, cumulatively, 40% of respondents reported onset of physical and sexual partner victimisation by young adulthood (Halpern, Spriggs, Martin, & Kupper, 2009). Moreover, a large study including 1,136 couples found that age was negatively associated with IPV, both for the perpetrators and the victims (Caetano, Vaeth, & Ramisetty-Mikler, 2008). Overall, the evidence suggest that the period of adolescence and young adulthood is a time when violence in relationships is heightened.

A recent review of the published research on physical IPV from 2000-2010 showed that violence perpetration rates peak during young adulthood (Desmarais et al., 2012). Additional studies using college samples of men have demonstrated that the extent of the IPV issue for this age group reaches far beyond the realm of physical violence. For example, a study found that 58% of participants acknowledged sexually assaulting a dating partner (Parkhill & Abbey, 2008), while another found that 86%, 38%, and 14% of men reported perpetrating psychological abuse, physical violence, and sexual violence, respectively, in their romantic relationships while at university (Fass, Benson, & Leggett, 2008).

Developmental theorists recognise that romantic involvement becomes progressively more important through adolescence and young adulthood: romantic relationships increase in duration, salience, and meaning at this time (W.L. Johnson, Manning, Giordano, & Longmore, 2015). Given that IPV risk may also be at its peak during this critical life stage, researchers have shown an increased interest in understanding age-related factors that influence IPV as people develop into adulthood (e.g., Halpern et al., 2009; W.L. Johnson, Giordano, Manning, & Longmore, 2015; W.L. Johnson, Manning, et al., 2015; Waller et al., 2013). In line with this, research with samples of young adult men could prove fruitful when examining contributing factors to violence perpetration that negatively impact romantic relationships. In our particular case, the current research may clarify how objectification contributes to detrimental relationship outcomes like IPV.

1.3.3. Focusing on Objectification in Romantic Relationships

In this thesis, I consider the link between objectification and IPV. As we shall see in Chapter 3, feminist thinkers, philosophers, and social psychological researchers have long posited a link between objectification and VAW. The phenomenon entails perceiving the objectified as less than fully human which, in turn, opens the door for transgressive and immoral behaviour to occur (Haslam et al., 2013). Given that violence at the hands of a male partner is the most common form of violence that women experience (UN, 2015; WHO, 2013), and that objectification may enable such violence, romantic relationships are a rich and important domain in which to investigate the potential negative consequences that the phenomenon has for women. Even so, an empirical focus on objectification in the context of romantic relationships is still missing.

To date, the limited amount of psychological research assessing objectification and IPV has mainly focused on the person who is being objectified (i.e., the target), in most cases women. This type of work often examines how experiencing IPV victimisation impacts on self-perception, health, and wellbeing through the lens of Objectification Theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; this body of work is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3). For example, researchers have assessed the direct and indirect effects of IPV on college women's self-objectification processes and the related psychological outcomes that accompany the phenomenon, such as persistent monitoring of the body's outwards appearance and increased levels of body dissatisfaction (Davidson & Gervais, 2015; Gervais & Davidson, 2013). My approach to the study of objectification in romantic relationships differs from this approach. More specifically, in this thesis I switch focus from the person

who is being objectified, to the person who is doing the objectification (i.e., the objectifier or perceiver). In doing so, I have situated the empirical investigation of objectification in the context of heterosexual romantic relationships and from the perspective of the male objectifier, to assess whether the phenomenon plays a role in the perpetration of male-to-female IPV.

I must note that other researchers have already started to examine objectification in the context of romantic relationships, and from the perspective of the objectifier (e.g., Jonnson, Langille, & Walsh, 2018; Ramsey & Hoyt, 2014; Sáez Díaz, Alonso-Ferres, Garrido-Macías, Valor-Segura, & Expósito, 2019; Zurbriggen, Ramsey, & Jaworski, 2011). However, these researchers have followed a more traditional perspective in the way that they conceptualise the phenomenon, and how they assess potential associations between objectification and a host of negative relationship outcomes. For example, Ramsey and Hoyt (2014) empirically examined objectification by the extent to which male participants placed greater emphasis on the romantic partner's body, and hypothesised (and demonstrated) a connection between partner-objectification and sexual coercion. In contrast, my research adopts the theoretical perspective from Haslam and colleagues (2013), in which they posit that objectification is more than just an increased attention to the body (or body parts) and also involves stripping the other—in our case, women—of the qualities that makes them fully human. In line with their views, I have conceptualised and tested the process of objectification as involving dehumanisation.

Another intended outcome of this thesis is to advance current knowledge on the aggression-facilitating effects of objectification, particularly in the context of romantic

relationships. To date, most of the preliminary evidence that supports a relationship between the phenomenon and VAW, both in general and within romantic relationships, has been confined to the domain of sexual aggression. Other forms of violence still warrant further investigation. As such, in addition to examining sexual violence, my research program also examines links with other forms of IPV including physical aggression and psychological abuse.

1.4. Significance of the Research

With this thesis, I aim to bridge the existing gaps in the literature and investigate the relationships between objectification and the perpetration of different forms of gender-based violence in heterosexual romantic relationships among young adults. To this end, I meaningfully extend upon the existing body of empirical work and consider how objectification harms women in their daily lives, using an approach that differs from the more traditional approaches by (a) investigating the phenomenon from the perspective of the objectifier, and (b) conceptualising the process as involving dehumanisation (i.e., by denying persons the qualities that make them fully human). Moreover, this thesis expands the breadth of the current research on objectification in romantic relationships, from the domain of sexual violence to also include a broader range of violent acts (i.e., physical violence and psychological abuse). In doing so, I aim to provide a more nuanced understanding of how the objectification of women may be consequential for how they are treated in society, and specifically in their romantic relationships.

1.5. Overview of this Thesis

This thesis consists of seven further chapters, that are broadly divided into three parts. Part I (Chapters 2 and 3), discusses the literature that informs the reasoning behind the research program. Part II (Chapters 4 to 7), establishes the research methodology and study designs, and moves to report three empirical studies that examine the negative ramifications of objectification in the context of heterosexual romantic relationships. Finally, Part III (Chapter 8) contains the summary assessment of the thesis. A more detailed description of the various chapters is outlined below.

1.5.1. Part I: The Background

Chapter 2 reviews the body of literature on VAW, with an in-depth focus on IPV. There, I present an overview of current understanding and debates on how the issue of gendered partner violence has been conceptualised, defined, and measured empirically. Following, I review the literature on IPV prevalence and its core characteristics, then summarise existing knowledge of the risk factors that contribute to its expression in society. Finally, the chapter presents a brief outline of the health and socioeconomic impacts that the phenomenon has for women and the wider community.

In Chapter 3, I review the relevant literature on objectification and discuss how the phenomenon has been previously conceptualised by feminist scholars, philosophers, and social psychologists. This chapter pays particular attention to the psychological contributions to the field and presents an overview of what is known about self-objectification, other-objectification, and dehumanisation. I focus on how these

phenomena have been operationalised and empirically tested in research, as well as their causes and, more importantly, their consequences. The chapter also describes the state of the literature on objectification in the context of romantic relationships and summarises current gaps and limitations in this body of work. This sets the scene for Chapter 4, in which my program of research is laid out.

1.5.2. Part II: The Research

Chapter 4 presents an overview of the three empirical studies that were designed to answer the overarching research questions outlined in Section 1.2. Then, Chapters 5 to 7 present the three empirical studies. In these chapters, I further divide the study of the broader concept of objectification into two distinct, but complementary approaches – examining the phenomenon implicitly (Chapters 5 and 6) and explicitly (Chapter 7).

Chapters 5 and 6, representing the first approach, report two empirical studies (Study 1 and 2). These two chapters assess objectification from an implicit standpoint by measuring the extent to which men associate women with object-, animal-, or human-related concepts. More specifically, Chapter 5 explores whether objectifying *women in general* (i.e., at the group level) informs violence in heterosexual romantic relationships. Findings demonstrate that objectification predicts the likelihood of men's self-reported use of some forms of partner violence, but not others.

In Chapter 6, I build upon the results from Chapter 5 and examine whether objectifying one's *romantic partner* also predicts the likelihood of IPV perpetration. In addition to assessing self-reported relationship violence, the study reported in this chapter

incorporates a behavioural analogue of physical aggression to assess male-perpetrated IPV. Participants are also exposed to a provocation—that is, a situational factor to aggression—as a way to increase the ecological validity of the research. Results from Study 2 partially replicate the findings from Study 1, supporting an association between objectification and violence in romantic relationships. Supplementary analyses also demonstrate that objectification moderates the effect of a situational provocation on men's enacted physical aggression towards their female romantic partner.

Chapter 7, representing the second approach, reports an experimental study (Experiment 3). This chapter assesses objectification from an explicit standpoint by measuring the extent to which manipulating the phenomenon impacts on the participant's judgments about the objectified target's personhood. More specifically, the research explores whether men who objectify their female romantic partner also spontaneously ascribe her lesser humanness, mind, and moral status. Results reveal mixed effects of partner-objectification on denials of personhood and I discuss possible explanations for these intriguing findings.

Furthermore, Chapter 7 examines whether objectification directly contributes to enacted male violence against the female partner. Building on the findings from Chapter 6, Study 3 exposes participants to a situational provocation as a way to instigate violent behaviour and uses an analogue of physical aggression to measure IPV perpetration. In addition to replicating Chapters 5 and 6's findings that objectification plays an influential role in the perpetration of physical violence in romantic relationships, the results demonstrate a causal link between partner-objectification and this form of IPV.

1.5.3. Part III: The Conclusions

Finally, Chapter 8 brings together the findings from the three empirical studies and offers conclusions regarding the role of objectification in the perpetration of IPV. This chapter also addresses the practical and theoretical importance of the research, discusses its limitations, and provides insights on future directions for the research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW – VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

2.1. Overview – Violence Against Women (VAW)

On the 20th of December 1993, the UN General Assembly adopted the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*, in its Resolution 48/104. There, VAW was defined as,

> any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. (UN, 1993, p. 3)

This was the first international instrument explicitly addressing VAW and providing a framework for action to end it.

The WHO's definition of VAW is broad and encompasses many forms of violence and mistreatment that women disproportionately experience because of their gender. Such behaviours can occur both in the family sphere and in the general community, and be perpetrated by an intimate partner, family member, relative, close friend, acquaintance, stranger, and even the state (WHO, 2013). Regardless of the form it takes or the person(s) that perpetrates it, VAW is a violation of human rights and a manifestation of gender-based discrimination, often used as a means to exercise power and control over women (Fulu, Warner, et al., 2013; UN, 2015; VicHealth, 2017).

Despite significant advances in understanding and addressing VAW, the issue remains a pervasive part of women's lives regardless of age, income, and education. Indeed, VAW is categorised as a serious public health problem worldwide (WHO, 2014). For instance, recent global estimates indicate that 30% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual IPV and 7% non-partner sexual assault in their lifetime (WHO, 2013). International studies also show that close to 20% of women report having been sexually abused as a child (WHO & International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, 2006), and although an exact number remains unknown, data suggest that over 200 million women and girls alive today have been subjected to female genital mutilation (United Nations Children's Fund, 2016). In extreme cases VAW can lead to death, with as many as 58% of all murders of women and girls across the globe in 2017 being committed by someone close to the victim (UNODC, 2019a).

From this evidence, it is clear that VAW harms a large portion of the world's women and requires urgent action. Moreover, it is possible that the true gravity and extent of the problem remains underrepresented, as there is still limited data on many other forms of violence that women are exposed to daily. While there are many forms of VAW (e.g., family violence, sex trafficking, honour killings, rape), this chapter focuses solely on male perpetrated IPV. This is the most prevalent form of VAW worldwide, irrespective of a woman's social, economic, religious, or cultural background (Fulu, Jewkes, Roselli, & García-Moreno, 2013; García-Moreno, Zimmerman, et al., 2015; UN, 2015; VicHealth, 2017). I outline the structure of Chapter 2 below.

First, I provide a working definition of IPV and briefly outline key limitations that exist when investigating this complex social problem. Next, I review the literature on estimates of global IPV prevalence, characteristic features of the phenomenon, and then discuss three of its best-known dimensions: physical violence, sexual violence, and psychological abuse. Over the past decades, most of the body of research has focused on compiling evidence on these three forms of IPV and, as such, I confine my review to them also. While acknowledging that other types of IPV also exist (e.g., harassment, stalking, reproductive coercion, financial and social abuse, image-based abuse) and warrant further investigation, they are not covered here. I then move to consider a host of factors operating at the individual, relationship, community, and societal level that drive IPV. Finally, I discuss the plethora of negative consequences that IPV has on women, including health and wellbeing outcomes, as well as the socioeconomic impact that it has on families, communities, and nations.

2.2. Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

2.2.1. Definitional & Methodological Limitations

The definition and study of IPV have changed substantially over the last half century. The WHO defines IPV as "any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship" (Heise & García-Moreno, 2002, p. 89). These harmful behaviours can range from acts of physical abuse and aggression (e.g., slapping, punching, kicking), sexual violence (e.g., forced intercourse and

other non-physical forms of sexual coercion), psychological abuse (e.g., name calling, intimidation, constant humiliation), as well as various types of controlling behaviours (e.g., isolation from family and friends, monitoring of movements, and economic deprivation; Heise & García-Moreno, 2002). An intimate relationship refers to a close, romantic, though not necessarily sexual relationship, such as a marriage, de facto partnership, or other kinds of less formal romantic relationships (Breiding, Basile, Smith, Black, & Mahendra, 2015; WHO & PAHO, 2012a). For the purpose of this thesis I adhere to the WHO definition stated above.

Before moving on, certain clarifications are warranted around limitations that exist when researching IPV. Most notably, there is no single, universally agreed-upon, uniform definition of the phenomenon, resulting in a great deal of ambiguity around definitions, terminologies, and methodologies used to collect data across studies and countries (DeKeseredy, 2000; Kilpatrick, 2004; Ruiz-Pérez, Plazaola-Castaño, & Vives-Cases, 2007; Schwartz, 2000). An incidental by-product of such ambiguity is that sources of IPV data are hard to interpret and compare. Reported statistics, like prevalence and incidence rates, will be directly affected by a researcher's conceptualisation of the issue and the criteria used to measure it. For example, earlier IPV studies were largely grounded on the husband-wife marital unit (e.g., Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981; Straus, 1979) and the normative data provided by this research does not adequately address other categories of couples, like non-married couples. In the next few sections, I discuss four of the most common problems observed in IPV research in more detail.

2.2.1.1. What constitutes an 'intimate partner'?

Over time, researchers in a diverse range of fields— psychology, sociology, anthropology, criminal justice, family studies, feminist studies, and the health sciences— have varied the types of relationship that are examined in IPV studies. For example, early research mainly focused on older heterosexual married couples (e.g., Babcock, Waltz, Jacobson, & Gottman, 1993); but the definition has since expanded to include violence occurring in other romantic structures such as de facto cohabitating couples, dating couples who do not cohabitate, and relationships involving same sex couples (Krug, Dahlberg, et al., 2002; Loseke & Kurz, 2005). Moreover, much of the IPV evidence that we have to date comes from crime victimisation studies, which tend to collect information not only about assaults perpetrated by *current* partners, but also by *former* partners.

Shifts in the definition of what constitutes an intimate partner—not limited by a person's age, sexuality, marital or cohabitation status, and/or currency of the relationship—contribute to the gaps that exist in IPV data availability, quality, and comparability (UN, 2015; WHO, 2013). For instance, studies have purposely included or excluded data from certain populations. The *Personal Safety Survey* (PSS)—Australia's most comprehensive national study on interpersonal violence—collects data on experiences of IPV from the age of 15 and explicitly defines an intimate partner as someone who the participant is living with (or has lived with) in a marriage or de-factor relationship (ABS, 2016). As a result, this survey's reported statistics do not include information about people in less formal partnerships (e.g., dating couples who do not live together), and

comparisons with data from surveys that do include these populations should therefore be done with care.

Working definitions around what is considered to be an intimate partner also have important implications for the generalisability of research findings to the broader population (Kimmel, 2002). Violence may mean different things for different groups of people and at different stages of life. For example, experiences of violence for young and unmarried dating couples may have little in common with those from older and married couples at midlife. The differences between data sources creates challenges around the interpretation of results from studies using these types of populations (Devries, Mak, García-Moreno, et al., 2013).

2.2.1.2. What do researchers mean by IPV?

Definitions around what constitutes IPV tend to differ across contexts in which the problem is being investigated (Ruiz-Pérez, Plazaola-Castaño, & Vives-Cases, 2007). The literature shows that there are a variety of terms which are often used synonymously to IPV, including domestic violence (DV), family violence (FV), and battering. Although DV and FV have both been historically used interchangeably with IPV, these two terms actually represent broader social issues. In addition to encompassing violence between romantic couples, DV and FV also cover violence perpetrated within other types of interpersonal family relationships (e.g., between siblings, parent and child), family-like relationships (e.g., between a caregiver and a person with a disability), and in different domestic living arrangements (e.g., between housemates; Pink, 2009; VicHealth, 2017).

Similarly, battering is sometimes treated as a synonym to DV but, in fact, its nature is more akin to a subset of IPV known as patriarchal or intimate terrorism (M.P. Johnson, 2008; M.P. Johnson & Leone, 2005). Battering is defined as a process of severe and escalating violence within the intimate relationship, where the offender (usually a man) incorporates multiple forms of abuse, threats, and intimidation that are embedded in a general pattern of controlling behaviours in order to gain power over the victim (WHO & PAHO, 2012a). Taken together, these alternative definitions to IPV contribute to a field of data in which terms can mean slightly different things to different sectors (e.g., policy makers, investigators, activists, the general public) and can lead to the measurement of slightly different behaviours which produce seemingly discordant epidemiological indicators such as prevalence rates (Pink, 2009).

To avoid confusion, throughout this thesis I solely use the term IPV when referring to violence by a partner in a romantic relationship. Even so, it is important to note that some of the literature reviewed here may have used different terminology—such as DV or FV—when addressing the issue of violence between couples.

2.2.1.3. Deciding what is 'violence'?

Assessment of the scholarly literature on IPV shows that investigating and measuring violence is not straightforward. First, there is inconsistency around the way that gender researchers understand and use the terms anger, aggression, violence, and abuse. Sometimes, these terms are used interchangeably to describe the same actions and behaviours (Kilpatrick, 2004). Other times, however, the term violence is used to label

harmful behaviours of a physical and/or sexual nature, while abuse is reserved for non-physical acts like psychological and emotional aggression (Follingstad, 2018).

In contrast, researchers in other fields of study such as social psychology make clearer conceptual differentiations between these types of concepts. For instance, anger is understood as an emotion that motivates a person to act; aggression as a behaviour that is motivated by the intent to cause harm to another person who wants to avoid such harm; and violence as an extreme form of aggression with the main purpose of causing grave physical harm and/or injury to the other person (C.A. Anderson & Bushman, 2002; DeWall, Anderson, & Bushman, 2011). Under this framework, all violence would be considered aggression, but not all instances of aggression would be considered violence. Nonetheless, such a level of nuance is often lost in much of the existing IPV research, with the vast majority of studies failing to differentiate between constructs. For this reason, I too use the terms aggression, violence, and abuse as interchangeable throughout this thesis.

In addition to the issues around terminology previously mentioned, there is also inconsistency in the literature around what actually qualifies and should be measured as IPV. For instance, while there is agreement between researchers, practitioners, and advocates that the use of physical force directed at a partner is enough for the behaviour to be deemed as IPV, there is disagreement on whether other harmful acts such as attempting or threatening to use physical force or performing intimidating physical acts (e.g., punching a wall) should be recognised in the same way (Follingstad, 2018; Heise & Hossain, 2017). Likewise, when considering which behaviours should be deemed as

psychologically and emotionally abusive, a clear consensus around definitions and conceptual thresholds is still missing (DeKeseredy, 2000; Follingstad, 2018; WHO, 2013).

The result of such ambiguity is that the construct of *violence* is used in a variety of different ways in the IPV literature (WHO, 2013). Sometimes, it is used as a broad-based concept that includes a wide array of hostile attitudes and abusive behaviours towards the romantic partner, including experiences of non-contact violence (e.g., emotional abuse and threats of violence). Other times, violence is used in a much narrower sense focusing only on some of these behaviours and experiences; for example, behaviours consistent with criminal offending like severe physical assault (Chung, 2013). This further contributes to issues around producing reliable and comparative IPV data, with studies that use narrower and more specific definitions likely to yield more conservative estimates of the extent of the problem (García-Moreno, Jansen, et al., 2005; UN, 2015; WHO, 2013).

2.2.1.4. How is IPV measured?

In addition to the aforementioned definitional issues, review of the available literature highlights that there is a lack of consensus around how empirical research on IPV should be conducted (Ruiz-Pérez, Plazaola-Castaño, & Vives-Cases, 2007). First, the very nature of the phenomenon generates a methodological limitation. Partner violence tends to occur in private contexts, which means it cannot be directly observed and measured (Cox, 2015). This creates a hurdle for obtaining reliable data on the magnitude of the problem. Furthermore, it is well recognised that IPV goes largely underreported (Dicola & Spaar, 2016). For example, recent data from the Australian PSS indicates that

69% and 87% of female victims of physical and sexual partner assault, respectively, did not report the latest incident to police (ABS, 2016). Thus, precisely quantifying IPV poses a clear challenge for researchers.

Second, in the same way that there is no universal definition for IPV, there is no agreed-upon qualitative and/or quantitative methodology on how to assess it (Follingstad, 2018; Heise & Hossain, 2017). Existing studies vary considerably in terms of (a) types of IPV being examined, (b) the specific instruments and tools used to measure exposure, (c) the characteristics that are measured (e.g., intensity of violence, frequency of occurrence, timeframe of victimisation, and severity of injuries caused), and (d) the types of samples being used (e.g., representative of the general population, convenience sampling of subgroups such as women seeking support services; Chung, 2013; Follingstad, 2018; Kilpatrick, 2004; Ruiz-Pérez, Plazaola-Castaño, & Vives-Cases, 2007).

It therefore follows that our understanding of IPV will invariably rely on the kinds of methodological choices that researchers make, and the survey data generated as a result. For example, a well-known point of contention in the literature is that, to date, many studies have used instruments like the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS; Straus, 1979) and the revised CTS (Straus, Hamby, Boney-Mccoy, & Sugarman, 1996) as the sole measure of IPV (DeKeseredy, 2000; Hamby, 2009; M.P. Johnson, 2011; Kimmel, 2002; Schwartz, 2000). Although highly informative, these instruments focus singularly on identifying and counting specific instances of conflict-instigated violence (mainly physical) within intact cohabitating partnerships. Critics posit that the CTS is too broadly worded as a behavioural checklist, misses the contextual factors and motives that precede IPV, and fails

to differentiate between a wide range of abusive experiences (Bender, 2017; Dragiewicz & DeKeseredy, 2012; Hamby, 2017; Heise & García-Moreno, 2002; Kimmel, 2002; Loseke & Kurz, 2005). Moreover, although the CTS includes dimensions of psychological abuse and sexual coercion, these are often omitted in studies (Hamby, 2009; Schwartz, 2000). Such omissions overlook the extent to which non-physical and sexual forms of violence are used as tools of intimidation and control over women in their romantic relationships.

To overcome such limitations, prominent scholars have suggested that multiple assessment tools—where questions are asked in a variety of different ways—are needed to adequately measure IPV (DeKeseredy, 2000; Koss et al., 2007; Schwartz, 2000). However, this is rarely done in practice. A lack of methodological uniformity in research must be taken into account when interpreting and summarising findings, as it will undoubtedly impact on the reported rates of IPV and limit comparisons between studies.

2.2.1.5. Interim summary.

In Section 2.2.1, I provided a working definition of IPV and outlined four key definitional and methodological limitations when investigating this complex social problem. Despite these limitations, large national and multi-country studies and a number of reviews of the evidence support the notion that IPV is the most common form of VAW (e.g., García-Moreno, Jansen, et al., 2005; UN, 2015; WHO, 2013).

The following sections review the literature on estimates of global IPV prevalence, general features of the phenomenon, and its three most well-researched manifestations: physical, sexual, and psychological violence.

2.2.2. Global Prevalence & Characteristic Features of IPV

As noted earlier, violence which is carried out by a male partner—compared to attacks perpetrated by strangers or other people known to the victim—is the most common form of violence that women experience (García-Moreno, Jansen, et al., 2005; UN, 2015; WHO, 2013). However, assessing IPV's true magnitude is a difficult task to accomplish. This is due to a great deal of variation in both the extent and pattern of partner violence worldwide (UN, 2015), and the lack of comparability for data from various sources (AIHW, 2018). Factors that contribute to discrepancies in reported IPV statistics include the criteria used to define IPV, the tools and items used to measure it, and various aspects of the participants and the intimate relationship. These have already been detailed in previous sections.

In reporting global estimates of IPV for this section, I have largely drawn on two international reports: the *Global and Regional Estimates of Violence Against Women* (WHO, 2013), which includes 141 studies from 81 countries, and *The World's Women* (UN, 2015), which includes data from 197 countries or areas. These reports have compiled and analysed available national and regional datasets and complementary data sources on VAW. Given that these reports rely on existing data sources, they too are affected by some of the abovementioned issues when researching IPV. For example, the WHO report exclusively focuses on women's experiences of physical and sexual partner violence in the reproductive years (15 to 49 years old). As such, comparisons are made with great caution. Despite limitations, these global systematic reviews are the most recent, comprehensive, relevant, and reliable statistics on IPV. These figures are then complemented with findings

from robust, large-scale national surveys such as the *National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey* (NISVS) in the United States and the PSS in Australia.

The WHO (2013) estimates that globally the proportion of women who are exposed to IPV at some point in their lives is 30% (95% CI = 27.8% to 32.2%). Overall, prevalence rates are highest in less developed regions (i.e., low- and middle-income countries; at 38%) and lowest in high-income countries (at 23%). Even so, evidence indicates that the occurrence of IPV incidents vary considerably within regions and countries (García-Moreno, Jansen, et al., 2005; UN, 2015; WHO, 2013). For example, the UN (2015) shows that within the (developing) African region, lifetime prevalence ranges widely from 6% in the Comoros to 64% in the Democratic Republic of Congo. On the one hand, the variability observed in the data may reflect actual differences in the size of the issue in different nations and regions. On the other hand, it could reflect cultural differences between nations; for example, the respondents' understanding and interpretation of women's experiences of violence and/or a greater willingness to report it in a survey. Even so, there is some consistency within reported statistics: in the UN's (2015) study half of the countries with available IPV data showed a lifetime prevalence similar to that of the WHO's (2013) overall rate of 30%. These findings confirm the overwhelming reach that, by any reasonable standard, this complex social problem has over women.

It must be noted that although highly informative, the aforementioned figures only capture part of the IPV problem. Many of the national and international research initiatives on VAW tend to collect data only on experiences of physical and sexual violence, and to report them in tandem (e.g., Devries, Mak, García-Moreno, et al., 2013; García-

Moreno, Jansen, et al., 2005; UN, 2015; WHO, 2013). Reliable evidence is still missing to generate global estimates for other forms of partner abuse, like psychological IPV.

In addition to reporting IPV exposure at any point in a woman's life, some studies also provide estimates of current exposure (often measured as incidents within the last year; WHO, 2013). Unsurprisingly, research shows that rates for recent IPV events are lower than rates for lifetime experience. For example, data from Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States indicate that 3%, 5%, and 7% of women, respectively, report at least one incident in the last 12 month, compared to a lifetime prevalence of 22%, 29%, and 37% for these same countries (Smith, Chen, et al., 2018; UN, 2015). Scholars suggest that the lower estimates for past-year IPV, compared to lifetime, may be due to women being less inclined to report violence from the current partner – these women may not be willing to, or be able to, identify the relationship as such (Kilpatrick, 2004; Kimmel, 2002; Ruiz-Pérez, Plazaola-Castaño, & Vives-Cases, 2007). Moreover, surveys that measure lifetime IPV also capture patterns of systematic and ongoing abuse and violence over many years, helping explain the higher rates.

While IPV prevalence is mostly measured via a woman's exposure to the abuse, some studies have also assessed the extent to which males self-report IPV perpetration. For example, a large UN multi-country study surveying over 10,000 men from the Asia-Pacific region found that over half of the participants disclosed using partner violence in their relationship (Fulu, Jewkes, et al., 2013). Additionally, most men reported committing such violence more than once. Although the study showed that IPV was pervasive, it also found a large amount of variability in occurrence across regions: between 30% to 57% in most

surveyed sites, but as high as 80% in some rural regions. Taken together, this body of research convincingly demonstrates that women are at a significant risk of IPV worldwide.

The available scholarly literature also details characteristic features of IPV incidents. In terms of their *nature*, partner violence can vary in frequency and severity along a continuum – from a single episode that may prove inconsequential for the victim, to recurrent and severe episodes over long periods of time that carry devastating consequences for women (AIHW, 2018; Krug, Dahlberg, et al., 2002). Generally, however, IPV tends to be repetitive and escalates in frequency and severity over time.

At its most extreme, IPV can result in death, usually representing the culmination of a long history of abuse in the romantic relationship (H. Johnson & Hotton, 2003). In 2017, over 30% of all deliberate female murders worldwide were committed by a male (current or former) intimate partner (UNODC, 2019a). A recent systematic review of the literature on intimate partner homicides, including data from 66 countries, found that high-income countries had the second highest proportion of male-to-female partner murder, at 41.2% (Stöckl et al., 2013). This rate was surpassed only by Southeast Asia at almost 60%. Given that women in high-income countries have a reduced likelihood of experiencing IPV (WHO, 2013), these findings were unexpected. The authors suggested that the results may reflect the scarcity of available national data on partner killings for low- and middle-income nations. Alternatively, the large proportion of partner murders in high-income nations could also be explained based on the relatively low rates of homicide by non-partners that are generally reported in these countries (UNODC, 2019b). Compared to these non-partner homicides, intimate partner killings in high-income

countries may simply represent a higher proportion of a relatively low total number of homicides in these nations.

In terms of *when IPV occurs*, research shows that exposure usually happens early in a woman's life (Breiding et al., 2014; Dicola & Spaar, 2016; Smith, Zhang, et al., 2018; UN, 2015; WHO, 2013). Partner violence tends to start before 25 years of age, peaks during a woman's reproductive years, and decreases in later life. Again, the interpretation of these findings should be done with care – reliable evidence for IPV experiences in women aged 50 years and older is limited, especially in low- and mid-income countries (WHO, 2013). It is possible that for some women, partner abuse continues well into adulthood and late life. More research is needed to understand levels of partner violence for these age groups.

2.2.3. Types of IPV

Partner violence encompasses a wide range of behaviours, broadly arranged into three dimensions: physical, sexual, and psychological (García-Moreno, Jansen, et al., 2005; UN, 2015; WHO, 2013). The next sections provide an overview of these dimensions. Given that the current research program was conducted with participants from the United States and Australia, these sections mainly concern with data sources from developed, Westernised countries so that the evidence can be more meaningfully discussed and compared.

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, additional IPV dimensions have been proposed in the literature (e.g., economic, social; Postmus, Hoge, Breckenridge, Sharp-Jeffs, & Chung, 2018). However, much of this research is still in its infancy and

comprehensive data is missing for prevalence, features, and consequences. Given that these types of IPV are not the investigative focus of the present research program, they are not discussed here.

2.2.3.1. Physical partner violence.

Most laypeople would typically understand and recognise physical abuse as a form of IPV (VicHealth, 2014). This type of violence consists of a wide range of acts that vary in frequency and severity, with the purpose of physically hurting the romantic partner. Physical IPV includes, but is not limited to, biting, scratching, slapping, pushing or shoving, shaking or physically restraining, twisting the arm, pulling the hair, kicking, hitting with the fist or an object, trying to choke or strangle, and attacking (or threatening to attack) with any type of weapon (UN, 2015; WHO, 2013).

Physical partner violence is the easiest form of violence to define and assess (Ruiz-Pérez, Plazaola-Castaño, & Vives-Cases, 2007). Many researchers have therefore restricted their focus of investigation to quantifying acts of physical aggression in the relationship as their main outcome measure (e.g., Feld & Straus, 1989; Straus & Gelles, 1990). Indeed, within epidemiological research the presence (or absence) of physical assault is the most common characteristic used to define IPV (Heise & Hossain, 2017). This narrow definition of the issue, however, can trivialise the subjective experiences of many abused women, especially in cases when physical violence is not present but IPV still occurs.

A review of the literature indicates that estimates of physical partner violence vary greatly from country to country. According to the latest findings from the NISVS, 34.4% of

U.S. women experience physical IPV in their lifetime (Smith, Chen, et al., 2018). This finding is consistent with global estimates (at 30%), but higher than the overall lifetime rate for high-income nations, at 23% (WHO, 2013). Moreover, 23.2% of U.S. women (or nearly 1 in 4) report experiencing at least one act of *severe* physical violence in their lifetime (e.g., being hit with a fist or something hard), and 2.5% report these experiences in the 12 months prior to the survey (Smith, Chen, et al., 2018).

By comparison, Australia's prevalence is somewhat lower than those reported in the United States and internationally. Based on the latest PSS—a national representative survey of over 21,000 participants—17% of Australian women (or 1 in 6) experience victimisation by a male intimate partner since the age of 15, and 1.7% report the partner violence happening in the 12 months prior to the survey (ABS, 2016). International reports also show that Australian IPV statistics are amongst the lowest in the world. For example, in 2015 the UN compared data from a previous version of the PSS (ABS, 2013) against data from 25 other countries with national representative surveys on VAW. There, Australia placed seventh lowest for rates of lifetime physical IPV since the age of 15, at 16.9% (UN, 2015). While these figures appear to be low by global standards, it is likely that a narrower definition of 'intimate partner' used in the PSS partially explains the results. The PSS survey generates IPV estimates using data exclusively from cohabitating couples, both current and former, and excluding data from less formal partnerships (i.e., non-cohabitating). Indeed, supplemental analyses from the PSS showed that once violence by intimate partners, boyfriends, and/or dates were also considered, the rate of physical IPV in Australia increased to 23% (ABS, 2016; AIHW, 2019).

2.2.3.2. Sexual partner violence.

Sexual violence is an umbrella term that covers any sort of harmful or unwanted sexual act, or attempt to obtain a sexual act, imposed onto the romantic partner (WHO, 2013). It includes, but is not limited to, sexual coercion (e.g., making threats to get sex); unwanted touching, sexual advances, or non-physical sexual events (e.g., sexting); forced engagement in sexual acts; attempted or completed physical sexual acts without consent (e.g., when the partner is sleeping); and verbal abuse and threats of a sexual nature (UN, 2015; WHO, 2013). These acts are often found to be humiliating and degrading for the victim.

Unlike blatant acts of physical aggression—which are more easily recognised as IPV—people in the community and victims of sexual partner abuse have a greater difficulty recognising these instances as IPV, particularly when physical force is not used to obtain sex (Webster et al., 2018). Feminist academics suggest this limited understanding is partly the result of outdated notions around romantic relationships and sexual consent (Easteal & Feerick, 2005; Fileborn, 2011). For instance, people may believe that by entering into a romantic relationship, women are consenting to sex with their partners on a continuing basis. This is especially the case in unions established through marriage, where women have been historically (and legally) considered as property of the spouse (Banda, 2015; Easteal & Feerick, 2005). A sense of presumed consent and sexual entitlement over the female romantic partner will contribute to men's sexual aggression against them.

Researchers suggests that sexual IPV disproportionately affects women, regardless of the kind of abuse that is being experienced (AIHW, 2018; Cox, 2015; Smith, Zhang, et

al., 2018). For example, findings from a recent U.S. national representative survey show that 47.1% and 74.7% of female victims of rape and sexual coercion, respectively, report a male partner as the perpetrator of the act (Smith, Chen, et al., 2018). Despite concerning figures such as these, sexual violence by an intimate partner is still widely tolerated by society and the law. In fact, the recognition of marital rape as a criminal act has only come into effect in Australia and other international jurisdictions in the last 40 years (Fileborn, 2011; Schafran Hecht, Lopez-Boy, & Rothwell Davis, 2008).

In reviewing the literature on sexual partner violence, the evidence demonstrates that this form of aggression is neither rare nor unique to any particular region of the world. Results from a large WHO multi-country study places women's lifetime prevalence of sexual IPV between 6.2% and 58.5% (García-Moreno, Jansen, et al., 2005). Prominent population-based studies from the United States and Australia report figures at the lower end of this range. In the United States, data from the NISVS indicates that 16.4% of women report experiencing *contact* sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime, with estimates across the 50 states surveyed ranging from 12% to 22.5% (Smith, Chen, et al., 2018). The same study found that 2.1% of women experienced this form of violence in the 12 months prior to the survey. In Australia, according to the PSS, close to 5% of sexual assaults reported by female participants since the age of 15 were committed by an intimate partner (ABS, 2013). Important to note is that the Australian figures excluded data from non-cohabitating partners, and once included, prevalence of sexual IPV increased to 10% (Cox, 2015).

Although sexual IPV affects a wide range of women in the community, women aged 18-24 years are overrepresented as victims (Cox, 2015; Smith, Zhang, et al., 2018). Conservative U.S. estimates indicate that over 10% of college aged females report having sexual intercourse, at least once, with a romantic partner that they did not want or consent to (Dicola & Spaar, 2016). The evidence also supports that sexual IPV is rarely a one-off, isolated incident (AIHW, 2018; García-Moreno, Jansen, et al., 2005; WHO & PAHO, 2012b). A study with survivors of sexual violence, commissioned by the New Zealand's Ministry of Women's Affairs, found that over two-thirds of the participants were sexually assaulted by their male partner, repeatedly (V. King & Jordan, 2009). Furthermore, compared to other forms of IPV—and other forms of non-partner interpersonal violence, for that matter—sexual IPV goes largely unreported. For example, data from the 2012 PSS shows that 80% of women who were sexually assaulted by a cohabitating partner in the previous year did not contact police after the incident (Cox, 2015).

2.2.3.3. Psychological partner abuse.

Current thinking contends that IPV does not only include acts of physical and/or sexual violence, but also acts that cause psychological harm to the victim (Jewkes, 2010). This form of partner victimisation is the hardest to define and recognise. Psychological abuse includes a wide range of non-physical, intentionally inflicted, psychologically hurtful behaviours (Carney & Barner, 2012; V.A. Kelly, 2016). Generally, it is considered to have two major components: verbal abuse (also known as expressive aggression) and coercive control. The former includes emotionally abusive acts like name calling, belittling,

intimidating, and/or humiliating the partner. The latter includes behaviours intended to monitor, control, isolate, and/or threaten her (AIHW, 2018; Smith, Chen, et al., 2018; WHO & PAHO, 2012a).

The literature shows there is a lack of clarity and uniformity of terminology and definitions around psychological IPV. For instance, the term psychological abuse is often used interchangeably with psychological violence (e.g., UN, 2015), psychological aggression (e.g., Smith, Chen, et al., 2018), and verbal or emotional abuse (e.g., ABS, 2016). To avoid confusion, I use the terms psychological abuse and/or violence throughout this thesis. There is also inconsistency on how the construct is applied by researchers (Follingstad, 2007). In some cases, the definition of psychological abuse includes both verbal aggression and coercive controlling behaviours (e.g., ABS, 2016; Smith, Chen, et al., 2018), while in others, the two phenomena are considered separately and psychological abuse becomes akin to verbal abuse. Furthermore, sometimes the construct is considered to encompass acts of financial abuse and behaviours that are meant to restrict the partner's access to medical care, education, and employment (UN, 2015). This level of ambiguity undoubtedly impacts on research efforts and our understanding of the problem. However, given that psychological IPV is considered to be a profoundly personal experience, which varies from victim to victim, consensus around a universally agreed-upon definition may be hard to come by (Follingstad, 2018; V.A. Kelly, 2016).

Although data on psychological IPV is still scarce, the literature provides evidence that this type of partner abuse is more common than physical and sexual IPV (AIHW, 2018). For instance, a large multi-country study by the WHO—surveying over 24,000

women in 10 countries—found that between 20% and 75% of participants reported experiencing at least one emotionally abusive act from a partner in their lifetime (García-Moreno, Jansen, et al., 2005). Similarly, recent data from the NISVS indicated that nearly half of U.S. women (47.1 %) experienced some form of psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetime, including both expressive aggression and coercive control (Smith, Chen, et al., 2018). Across the 50 states surveyed, lifetime psychological IPV estimates ranged between 37% and 52%. The same study found that 14.1% of women experienced this form of IPV within the 12 months prior to the survey.

Australian estimates suggest a slightly lower lifetime prevalence of psychological IPV in this country. For example, the 2016 PSS reported that 23% of women experienced emotional partner abuse since the age of 15, and 4.8% in the 12 months prior (ABS, 2016). Moreover, compared to available data from 25 other countries, Australia placed seventh lowest for lifetime rates of psychological IPV and second lowest for past-year occurrence (UN, 2015). However, as previously mentioned, results from the PSS do not include psychological abuse from non-cohabitating partners, and rates may in fact be higher than those reported in this survey.

The literature also suggests that psychological IPV, despite not leading to direct physical injury, can prove to be very damaging for women. Some researchers characterise this type of abuse as more hurtful and having more negative long-lasting impacts than physical or sexual partner violence (Coker, Smith, Bethea, King, & McKeown, 2000; DeKeseredy, 2000; Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottmoeller, 2002). Given its intangible, widespread, and protracted nature, psychological IPV can leave women living in a

continuous state of loneliness, anxiety, and fear (ABS, 2016). Moreover, this type of abuse has also been shown to increases vulnerability to a number of other clinical issues such as low self-esteem and depression (Coker et al., 2002; V.A. Kelly, 2016). The negative consequences stemming from IPV are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

2.2.3.4. Overlap between different types of IPV.

For simplicity, in the previous sections I have discussed the physical, sexual, and psychological dimensions of partner violence individually. However, decades of research demonstrate that in abusive relationships women rarely experience only a single type of abuse (Heise & Hossain, 2017; VicHealth, 2017). For instance, data from the Australian PSS shows that multiple victimisation is a common occurrence in women's lives (ABS, 2016). In this survey, 13% of women reported being subjected to both physical and sexual abuse since the age of 15 (VicHealth, 2017). In another study with a sample of women seeking IPV assistance from the U.S. judicial system, McFarlane and colleagues (2005) found that 68% of participants had experienced both physical and sexual assault by the same perpetrator.

Additional research indicates that both physical and sexual partner violence are often preceded and/or accompanied by psychological abuse (Alsaker, Moen, Baste, & Morken, 2018; Gondolf, Heckert, & Kimmel, 2002; Henning & Klesges, 2003; V.A. Kelly, 2016; Yoshihama, Horrocks, & Kamano, 2009). For example, a national population-based study in Japan showed that, out of the 13.6% of women who reported experiencing physical and/or sexual IPV, 89.3% had also experienced psychological abuse (Yoshihama et al.,

2009). Taken together, the evidence suggests that co-occurence of multiple forms of abuse is almost always the norm when it comes to relationship violence.

2.2.3.5. Interim summary.

In the previous sections, I have reviewed the available evidence on global rates of IPV (lifetime and past-year estimates), several characteristic features of the phenomenon, and its three most commonly examined manifestations: physical and sexual violence, and psychological abuse. These sections have also highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the existing litearture. Overall, the evidence indicates that while there is variation in IPV prevalence across settings and countries, all forms of partner violence are a common occurence in the lives of women worldwide. Moreover, studies showed that instances of IPV are not isolated events and that they generally present in a context of systematic co-occurrence of different forms of partner abuse.

The following section provides an overview of the predictors and risk factors of IPV.

2.2.4. The Multifaceted Nature of IPV

Intimate partner violence is a complex and multifaceted problem, and its underlying causes are strongly debated by social researchers (Jewkes, 2002). To date, no single-factor theory or explanation of men's VAW adequately captures the full complexity and messiness of the issue (Krug, Dahlberg, et al., 2002). In structuring my discussion on the risk markers for IPV, I have drawn upon Lori Heise's (1998) integrated ecological framework model, as presented in the *World Report on Violence and Health* (Krug,

Dahlberg, et al., 2002). This model is one of the most well-referenced and best-recognised by experts in the subject (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002; Krug, Mercy, et al., 2002; WHO & PAHO, 2012a). The model posits that to completely address partner abuse, theorists must shift from single factor approaches to a multifactor framework and understand IPV as the interplay of various factors operating at multiple levels – personal, situational, and sociocultural (Heise, 1998).

Different forms of violence have different causes. The ecological framework conceptualises IPV as resulting from the interaction of contributing factors that operate at four different levels (Dutton, 1995; Heise, 1998). These levels are best visualised of as four nested circles. The innermost circle, the *individual domain*, includes personal history and biological markers that are conducive to IPV (e.g., experiencing FV as a child). The next circle, the *microsystem*, encompasses situational factors from the immediate context in which IPV takes place. This domain includes relational factors from the couple's interactions and other interpersonal factors that can shape an individual's behaviour (e.g., relationship conflict). The third circle, the *exosystem*, encompasses factors from institutions and social structures, formal and informal (e.g., neighbourhood, workplace), that surround and impact the microsystem (e.g., living in areas with high unemployment). Finally, the outermost circle, the *macrosystem*, encompasses sociocultural and political determinants that create the conditions for VAW to occur and be maintained (e.g., the entrenched structural inequalities between men and women). The dynamic interplay between these factors that operate at these four levels underlies IPV (Heise, 1998).

2.2.4.1. IPV risk factors.

Over the past 20 years various comprehensive systematic reviews of the literature (e.g., Black, Heyman, & Smith Slep, 2001; Capaldi, Knoble, Shortt, & Kim, 2012; Lewis & Fremouw, 2001; O'Leary, Tintle, & Bromet, 2014; Regan & Durvasula, 2015; Schumacher, Feldbau-Kohn, Smith Slep, & Heyman, 2001; WHO & London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine [LSHTM], 2010) and meta-analyses of the evidence (e.g., Cafferky, Mendez, Anderson, & Stith, 2018; Spencer, Cafferky, & Stith, 2016; Stith, Green, Smith, & Ward, 2008; Stith, Smith, Penn, Ward, & Tritt, 2004; Sugarman & Frankel, 1996) have identified a wide number of factors associated with the perpetration of partner violence. Some of this research has only focused on specific topics or contexts (e.g., risk markers for dating couples; Lewis & Fremouw, 2001), on risk markers for particular IPV types (e.g., sexual abuse; Black et al., 2001), and on specific risk marker types (e.g., substance use; Cafferky et al., 2018). Given the sheer volume of the literature in the area, the inconsistent ways in which IPV has been assessed and, at times, the contradictory findings across studies, the evidence is hard to condense and summarise.

In the next few sections, I outline key risk factors to IPV pertaining to each of the four levels of the integrated ecological framework model, as previously discussed. There, I narrow my review focus to the research that examines contributing factors for IPV in male offenders. Factors related to higher rates of IPV victimisation for women (and men) are not reviewed (but see Spencer, Stith, & Cafferky, 2019, for a recent meta-analysis). Also, given that there is limited research on the exo- and macrosystem level risk factors affecting the likelihood of partner abuse (WHO & PAHO, 2012a), community and societal level

influences are discussed together. Moreover, it is important to highlight that there is considerable room for interpretation as to where a particular contributing factor best fits within the different levels of the ecological framework (Heise, 1998).

Before moving on, however, there are limitations to the scholarly literature on the drivers of IPV that need mentioning. First, the ecological framework is a probabilistic model rather than a deterministic one (Heise, 2011; Webster & Flood, 2015). This model is concerned with identifying factors that would increase the likelihood of IPV occurring; however, the mere presence of any of these factors in a person's circumstances does not indicate that they will invariably become violent (Heise, 2011). Second, the list of risk factors outlined in the next few sections is not definitive; other plausible factors may still be lacking a robust research base (Heise & García-Moreno, 2002). Third, there is limited information as to which of the risk factors are the most important in enabling IPV. To date, the body of work has been skewed towards investigating individual level factors over community or societal level influences (WHO & PAHO, 2012a). Fourth, most studies examining the factors related to IPV likelihood are cross-sectional. As a result, some of these markers may prove to be strong correlates to abuse, rather than true predictors or causal factors to the phenomenon (Regan & Durvasula, 2015; WHO & LSHTM, 2010).[2]

[2] Scholars contend that, from a technical perspective, specific IPV markers cannot be interpreted as providing the root cause to violence. The reason being is that, given IPV's complex nature, it is not always possible to determine whether a particular marker preceded or succeeded the violence (Fulu, Warner, et al., 2013).

Fifth and final, most of the current data on IPV risk factors are biased towards samples from the United States and other high-income countries. Thus, this evidence may be context specific and only apply to certain countries and regions (Heise & García-Moreno, 2002; Webster & Flood, 2015; WHO & PAHO, 2012a).[3]

2.2.4.2. Individual-level risk factors: Personal influences.

Sociodemographic characteristics. Although the evidence is still mixed, the more consistent sociodemographic characteristics associated with an increased likelihood of male-perpetrated IPV are age, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (including educational attainment, occupational status, and income; Capaldi et al., 2012; R.P. Dobash & Dobash, 2003; Heise & García-Moreno, 2002; O'Leary et al., 2014; Schumacher et al., 2001; Stith et al., 2004). Cross-sectional studies, longitudinal research, and systematic reviews find that rates of male IPV perpetration are highest at young ages, peaking between 20-30 years old (Caetano et al., 2008; Kim, Laurent, Capaldi, & Feingold, 2008; Regan & Durvasula, 2015). Additional sociodemographic attributes that are linked to higher levels of IPV perpetration include: being from an ethnic minority group (e.g., Black/Hispanic vs. Caucasian), having a lower income or being chronically unemployed, and having fewer years of education (Caetano et al., 2008; Capaldi et al., 2012; Fulu,

3 But some risk factors have been consistently linked to IPV perpetration across studies from different countries.

Jewkes, et al., 2013; Lewis & Fremouw, 2001; WHO & LSHTM, 2010). However, these relationships are complex as the effect of some risk factors (e.g., education) can weaken or even dissipate once factors at other ecological levels (e.g., relationship conflict) are considered (Capaldi et al., 2012).

Developmental history. Researchers have examined childhood developmental experiences in the family of origin as precursors to IPV perpetration (Capaldi et al., 2012; Regan & Durvasula, 2015). Across several studies, both early childhood exposure to abuse or neglect and witnessing parental IPV have been positively associated with an increased risk of perpetrating partner violence later in life (Fleming et al., 2015; Fulu, Warner, et al., 2013; Gil-González, Vives-Cases, Ruiz, Carrasco-Portiño, & Álvarez-Dardet, 2007; Heise, 1998; Linder & Collins, 2005; Mouzos & Makkai, 2004). Another meta-analysis by Stith and colleagues (2000) supported the notion that the cycle of partner abuse is, in part, transmitted intergenerationally (but is not a prerequisite to IPV).

However, much of the evidence for a relationship between developmental precursors and IPV is derived from cross-sectional studies (Capaldi et al., 2012). These studies rely on retrospective reporting, which can be largely affected by recall bias of early childhood experiences. Additional longitudinal research is needed to further support these relationships (but see Linder & Collins, 2005, for a 23 yearlong prospective study that found childhood markers consistently predicted couple violence in early adulthood).

History of violence outside and within the relationship. The literature suggests that endorsing and enacting interpersonal violence significantly impacts an individual's likelihood of perpetrating IPV (Fleming et al., 2015; Fulu, Warner, et al., 2013; Regan &

Durvasula, 2015). Findings from the Australian component of the *International Violence Against Women Survey* showed that males who regularly used violence against persons other than their intimate partner (e.g., in a bar, at work) were six times more likely to inflict violence within the romantic relationship, compared to those men who did not use violence outside the home (Mouzos & Makkai, 2004). Similarly, in a large multi-country study with over 10,000 males, those who reported committing IPV (vs. no IPV) were also more likely to be involved with gangs and gang-related violence (Fulu, Warner, et al., 2013).

Moreover, research shows that a prior history of IPV perpetration is a risk factor for future IPV. For example, a meta-analysis of the evidence found that among men, past physical IPV moderately predicted future physical IPV, with an effect size of $r = .24$ (Stith et al., 2004). In the same study, emotional and verbal abuse strongly predicted physical partner violence in the current relationship, $r = .45$. Taken together, these results suggest that violence outside and within the relationship acts as a gateway for future IPV.

Psychological and personality characteristics. Men's attitudes towards women, marriage, sex, gender roles, and VAW have contributed to our understanding of partner aggression (Flood & Pease, 2009; Malamuth, Sockloskie, Koss, & Tanaka, 1991; Sugarman & Frankel, 1996). A variety of studies have found that the likelihood of perpetrating psychological, physical, and/or sexual IPV increases when men hold hostile and demeaning attitudes towards women; negative gender beliefs (e.g., men's need of power over people); highly traditional attitudes about marriage (e.g., husband as the dominant partner); and perceptions of violence as an appropriate tactic to resolve conflict (e.g., the belief that it is acceptable to hit the partner in certain situations; Abrahams, Jewkes,

Hoffman, & Laubsher, 2004; C.A. Anderson & Anderson, 2008; Fleming et al., 2015; Forbes, Adams-Curtis, & White, 2004; Glick, Sakalli-Ugurlu, Ferreira, & Souza, 2002; Heise, 1998; Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2002; Renzetti, Lynch, & DeWall, 2015). Evidence from a multifactorial meta-analytic review of IPV risk factors supported these findings (Stith et al., 2004). In this study, hostility, attitudes condoning violence, and traditional sex-role ideology moderately or strongly predicted male IPV, with overall effect sizes ranging from r = .26 to .30.

Researchers have also examined a number of personality factors for violent men (Capaldi et al., 2012; Heise & García-Moreno, 2002; Regan & Durvasula, 2015). Several meta-analytic studies have consistently demonstrated that men's anger and hostility moderately predict IPV perpetration (Birkley & Eckhardt, 2015; Norlander & Eckhardt, 2005; Stith et al., 2004). The same studies found additional weaker associations for internalising negative emotions (Birkley & Eckhardt, 2015) and jealousy (Stith et al., 2004). Moreover, impulsivity (or a lack of self-regulation) has been implicated in IPV perpetration. Compared to non-violent men, studies show that men who commit IPV are more likely to experience difficulty controlling their impulses (Caetano et al., 2008; Shorey, Brasfield, Febres, & Stuart, 2011; Watkins, Maldonado, & DiLillo, 2014). Research also shows that an inability to adequately self-regulate, resulting in IPV perpetration, is often triggered by situational factors that commonly increase aggression such as perceived partner provocations (DeWall et al., 2013; Finkel et al., 2012; Finkel, DeWall, Slotter, Oaten, & Foshee, 2009; Slotter et al., 2012).

Psychopathology and personality disorders. The scholarly literature suggests a consistent association between various types of psychopathology and IPV perpetration. For example, in their meta-analysis Stith and others (2004) found that depression was a moderate risk factor for male-to-female physical IPV. Additional studies have also linked personality disorders and personality disorder-related traits with IPV (Porcerelli, Cogan, & Hibbard, 2004; WHO & LSHTM, 2010). In their comprehensive systematic review, Schumacher and colleagues (2001) found that male IPV perpetrators tended to score higher on well-validated measures indicative of personality pathology such as narcissistic, antisocial, and borderline personality disorders. Another longitudinal study of a sample of men diagnosed with alcohol dependence, found that baseline scores for antisocial personality traits significantly predicted rates of IPV perpetration at the 6- and 12-month follow-up points (Taft et al., 2010).

Romantic attachment style. The Attachment Theory framework (Ainsworth, 1973; Bowlby, 1969) posits that romantic love is a process whereby affectional bonds between adults are influenced by internal models of attachment that were established in early childhood (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). The quality of these bonds affects how a person experiences romantic love and can predict their behaviour within interpersonal relationships. Theorists posit four styles of adult attachment: secure, anxious-preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant, and fearful-avoidant (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). These are conceptually comparable to attachment styles in infancy.

A body of research has examined individual differences in men's attachment style to their partner and IPV (Lafontaine & Lussier, 2005; Ogilvie, Newman, Todd, & Peck, 2014;

Schumacher et al., 2001; Velotti, Beomonte Zobel, Rogier, & Tambelli, 2018). For example, a Canadian cross-sectional study found that dismissive-avoidant attachment (which is characterised by emotional distance and autonomy) was significantly associated with perpetration of psychological IPV (Lafontaine & Lussier, 2005). The relationship was mediated by experiences and expressions of anger towards the partner. Another meta-analysis of 30 studies examining the link between attachment and violent offending found that attachment insecurity (i.e., styles with high levels of anxiety and/or avoidance) was strongly associated with all types of criminality, including IPV (Ogilvie et al., 2014). A more recent systematic review of the literature (n = 113 studies) found that compared to non-violent men, those who were violent against intimate partners showed higher levels of preoccupied and dismissing attachment styles (Velotti et al., 2018). However, across the available studies the associations between the constructs were mostly weak and some studies even failed to find statistical significance. Additional research is therefore needed to understand the process linking attachment with IPV.

2.2.4.3. Microsystem risk factors: Relationship influences.

Relationship characteristics. Researchers have examined various aspects of the romantic relationship that are linked to IPV perpetration. For instance, cross-sectional studies, longitudinal research, and systematic reviews find that relationship status (i.e., whether a couple is married, cohabiting, divorced, or dating) is linked to IPV incidence (Caetano, Field, Ramisetty-Mikler, & McGrath, 2005; Caetano et al., 2008; Capaldi et al., 2012; Herrera, Wiersma, & Cleveland, 2008). More specifically, the evidence demonstrates

that couples who cohabitate are more likely to engage in IPV, compared to married and dating couples. Additional household characteristics have been examined, such as living conditions (e.g., household crowding), place of residency (e.g., urban vs. rural areas), and number of children in the family. With the exception of the latter, where having more children is linked to higher IPV risk, no associations have consistently emerged between the variables (DeMaris, Benson, Fox, Hill, & Van Wyk, 2003; Jewkes, 2002).

Relationship satisfaction. The literature suggests a strong link between lower levels of relationship satisfaction and likelihood of male IPV perpetration (Heise & García-Moreno, 2002; Schumacher et al., 2001; Smith Slep, Foran, Heyman, & Snarr, 2010; Stith et al., 2008; Stith et al., 2004). A large scale study with a representative sample of U.S. Air Force active duty members (n = 52,780) found that relationship satisfaction negatively predicted partner physical aggression (Smith Slep et al., 2010). Moreover, a meta-analysis of 85 studies found a large effect size for the negative association between these same two variables, r = -.30 (Stith et al., 2004).

Relationship satisfaction may also serve as the intervening variable linking other risk factors to IPV. For example, in a longitudinal study H.R. White and Chen (2002) examined whether relationship *dissatisfaction* mediated the association between problem drinking and IPV perpetration. Using five waves of data from a non-clinical sample (n = 725), the authors found that among men, this variable fully mediated the relationship. Taken together, a variety of studies clearly support that relationship satisfaction is a robust predictor of IPV.

Relationship conflict/discord. The concept of relationship satisfaction is strongly correlated to relationship conflict, and the latter is also a common precipitator of IPV (Capaldi et al., 2012; Fulu, Jewkes, et al., 2013; Heise, 1998; Kessler, Molnar, Feurer, & Appelbaum, 2001; Stith et al., 2008). A large U.S. study (n = 4,095 couples) using two waves of data from the *National Survey of Families and Households* investigated the relationship conflict-IPV link (DeMaris et al., 2003). Results showed that couples with a higher frequency of disagreements had a higher risk of *intense* IPV, defined by the researchers as violent incidents in which the man was the primary aggressor. Evidence also indicates that interactional styles and communicative strategies that couples use when disagreements erupt impact partner aggression. For example, couples who exhibit a more hostile disagreement style (DeMaris et al., 2003) and destructive conflict resolution strategies (Bonache, Gonzalez-Mendez, & Krahé, 2019) have been shown to be at a higher risk of experiencing IPV.

Asymmetrical power structures in the relationship. The literature shows that compared to more egalitarian couples, those partnerships in which the male is the authoritative, dominant party controlling the household's decision-making and finances tend to experience more IPV (Berkel, Vandiver, & Bahner, 2004; Fulu, Jewkes, et al., 2013; Heise, 1998; WHO & LSHTM, 2010). In their meta-analysis, Sugarman and Frankel (1996) found that compared to maritally non-violent men, husbands who held higher levels of patriarchal ideology were more likely to use violence against their wife during marital interactions. Another meta-analysis examined the link between masculine ideology and sexual aggression in 39 studies (Murnen et al., 2002). The authors found that men who

adhered to more extreme forms of masculinity, representing support for the patriarchal structure, were more likely to report being sexually aggressive towards women they knew. For example, the study found a moderate effect size (r = .27) for the relationship between dominance/power ideology (i.e., thinking that it is men's place to be dominant) and sexual violence (Murnen et al., 2002).

Harmful use of alcohol and illicit drugs. There is a plethora of research that establishes a positive association between alcohol use and different types of partner abuse, across populations (Brem, Florimbio, Elmquist, Shorey, & Stuart, 2018; Coker, Smith, McKeown, & King, 2000; Devries et al., 2014; Eckhardt, 2007; Eckhardt & Crane, 2008; Foran & O'Leary, 2008a; Gervais, DiLillo, & McChargue, 2014; G. Gilchrist et al., 2015; Graham, Bernards, Wilsnack, & Gmel, 2011; Parkhill & Abbey, 2008; Renzetti et al., 2015; Smith Slep et al., 2010; Waller et al., 2013). Evidence demonstrates that a history of alcohol consumption, especially at harmful levels, is associated with more frequent IPV perpetration, an increased likelihood of causing serious injury to the partner, and greater likelihood to be sexually assaultive towards her (Capaldi et al., 2012; Fulu, Jewkes, et al., 2013; Heise & García-Moreno, 2002). However, given that IPV can occur in the absence of alcohol, scholars caution that a focus on alcohol-related phenomena may diminish an offender's accountability for their actions and serve as a rationalising excuse for IPV (Flynn & Graham, 2010; Gelles, 1993; WHO, 2006).

The mechanism by which alcohol may facilitate partner violence is still not clear. Some researchers suggest that alcohol acts as a situational factor that escalates the risk of IPV perpetration, by reducing an individual's cognitive inhibitions and limiting their

capacity to adequately attend to and interpret social cues (Brem et al., 2018; Clements & Schumacher, 2010). For instance, in the presence of additional IPV risk factors (e.g., relationship conflict) alcohol could impair information processing and lead men to misinterpret cues from the female partner as threats or insults, thus triggering aggression. Furthermore, alcohol (and other drugs) can potentiate aggressive behaviour by interacting with an individual's capacity to cope with stress, personality characteristics (e.g., impulsivity, hostility, jealousy), and/or existing psychopathology (e.g., antisocial personality disorder; Brem et al., 2018; Clements & Schumacher, 2010; Foran & O'Leary, 2008b). Indeed, studies have found significant interactions for the alcohol-IPV relationship and difficulties with controlling impulses when experiencing negative emotions (Watkins et al., 2014), jealousy problems (Foran & O'Leary, 2008b), and antisocial personality disorder traits (Brem et al., 2018).

To date, less research has examined the role of illicit drug use in IPV. A recent meta-analysis with data from 285 studies expanded the scope of knowledge and assessed the relationship between different drug substances and physical IPV perpetration (Cafferky et al., 2018). The authors found that for men, overall substance use (including both alcohol and drugs; $r = .23$), alcohol use ($r = .22$), and drug use ($r = .24$) were significant correlates to IPV perpetration. Moreover, the study did not find a statistically significant difference between the type of illicit drug—including stimulants (cocaine and amphetamines) and non-stimulants (marijuana)—and physical abuse. These results suggest that non-stimulant drugs like marijuana, which tend to be considered "safer" in terms of violence occurrence (Ostrowsky, 2011), may not be any less dangerous than drugs more typically

associated with IPV perpetration (e.g., alcohol, cocaine, and amphetamines). A recent study using a sample of men (n = 269) arrested for IPV offences lends additional support for the harmful relationship between marijuana and negative couple-related outcomes (Shorey et al., 2018). Results showed that marijuana use predicted physical, sexual, and psychological IPV, even after controlling for other well-known IPV risk factors like alcohol use, relationship satisfaction, and antisocial personality symptoms.

2.2.4.4. Exo- and macrosystem risk factors: Community and societal influences.

Scholars emphasise the importance of the role that exo- and macrolevel factors play in influencing higher rates of IPV (Heise, 2013). This sort of approach, however, has received more theoretical than empirical attention to date (Heise & Kotsadam, 2015; WHO & LSHTM, 2010). While knowledge gaps remain, emerging research suggests that a variety of community and sociocultural markers are associated with IPV perpetration.

Poverty and life stressors. Despite the indeterminate nature of the findings, there is some empirical support that poverty and life stressors are key contributors to IPV. For example, financial stress, work-related stress, and parenting stress have been found to increase the risk of IPV perpetration among men (Capaldi et al., 2012; Regan & Durvasula, 2015; Smith Slep, Foran, & Heyman, 2014; Smith Slep et al., 2010). In their meta-analysis, Stith and colleagues (2004) found that career/life stress had a moderate effect on male-to female physical IPV, with an overall effect size of r = .26. Researchers posit that life stressors, especially when coupled with lack of social support and resources to reduce

stress, have the potential to intensify the levels of conflict within a romantic relationship resulting in IPV (Lewis & Fremouw, 2001; Regan & Durvasula, 2015).

Moreover, although IPV is a problem observed in groups from all socioeconomic backgrounds, research shows that it tends to be more frequent among men living in poverty and in settings with little to no employment (Fulu, Jewkes, et al., 2013; Jewkes, 2002; WHO & LSHTM, 2010). The precise mechanism for how poverty increases risk of violence remains unclear. It is possible that this situational factor is a risk factor in itself, or that its effects may be due to a variety of other risk factors that accompany poverty (e.g., higher stress levels, relationship disagreement, men's sense of inadequacy for failing to be good providers), or both (Heise & García-Moreno, 2002).

Community acceptance and response to IPV. Social tolerance of men's use of violence as a way to resolve conflict affects the overall level of IPV observed in a community (Jewkes, 2002; WHO & LSHTM, 2010). These cultural environments enable IPV to go overlooked and not clearly condemned, and women's experiences of violence are not appropriately recognised by personal support networks (e.g., family, friends, neighbours), health providers, or the law (Webster & Flood, 2015). Indeed, some cultures, religions, and social customs actively condone and encourage men's use of physical VAW, particularly in certain circumstances (e.g., suspicion of marital infidelity) and as long as it is kept confined within certain boundaries of severity (Jewkes, 2002). A broader environment in which there is a lack of community sanctions to VAW, either informal (e.g., police trivialising reports of abuse) or formal (e.g., lack of legislation and policies to protect

women in these circumstances) normalises experiences of IPV (Heise, 1998; Jewkes, 2002). As a society, men learn to use violence in the home and women learn to tolerate it.

In contrast, community-supportive responses to VAW ameliorate IPV (WHO, 2013). These are reflected in the ideological values and social norms held by members of the community, as well as the availability of informal (e.g., family, friends, neighbours) and formal support systems (e.g., police and legal services, health professionals, and housing assistance) for women experiencing IPV. There is consensus in the literature that the existence of stronger community sanctions against VAW and the availability of resources for women escaping violence reduce the likelihood of IPV in a society (UN, 2015; WHO, 2013; WHO & LSHTM, 2010).

Entrenched gender inequality. Previously, I noted a link between familial patriarchal structures and IPV (see *Asymmetrical power structures in the relationship*). Theorists suggest that the norms that maintain male dominance and decision-making authority in the household are driven by a constellation of sociocultural ways of life, values, and beliefs about gender roles that are rigid and stereotypical (Berkel et al., 2004; Flood & Pease, 2009; Jewkes, 2002). For example, cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity that emphasise dominance over women, unemotionality, and aggression as the appropriate way to be a man, and subserviency, obedience, and sexual availability as the appropriate way to be a woman, are thought to cause and reproduce IPV (Flood & Pease, 2009; Fulu, Warner, et al., 2013; Jewkes et al., 2015; Webster & Flood, 2015). Indeed, feminist scholars have long contested that high levels of power imbalances between

genders are an underlying cause of VAW (e.g., R.E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Dworkin, 1989).

The literature demonstrates that gender inequality is a feature of most human societies, with women generally having lesser access to power, status, and resources than men in the social, economic, and private spheres (Webster & Flood, 2015). Findings from a number of reviews corroborate links between gender inequality and VAW; results show that societies that more strongly adhere to traditional gender norms are more likely to have higher rates of IPV (Heise, 1998; Jewkes, 2002; WHO & LSHTM, 2010). Similarly, a recent study using data from 44 countries found that macro-level factors—including norms related to male authority over female behaviour and norms justifying wife beating—were strong predictors of population prevalence of physical and sexual IPV (Heise & Kotsadam, 2015). Another large study using data from the *International Men and Gender Equality Survey* (*n* = 7,806 men) found that permissive attitudes towards VAW and having inequitable gender attitudes were associated with a higher likelihood of lifetime male perpetration of physical IPV (Fleming et al., 2015).[4]

Scholars also suggest that community held attitudes are reflective of overarching gender inequality and imbalanced gender-power relations that are embedded and accepted

4 The *International Men and Gender Equality Survey* is a large multi-country study on men's attitudes and practices on a variety of topics related to gender equality. Created and led by Promundo and the International Centre for Research on Women in 2008, the survey has been administered to over 20,000 men ages 18-59 in 12 countries, between 2009 to 2014.

within the broader societal context (Webster & Flood, 2015). Results from the latest *National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women* survey—an Australian national survey with over 17,000 participants, aged 16 and over—indicated that many people still endorse attitudes that undermined gender equality (Webster et al., 2018). For example, 40% of Australians agreed with the statement "*many women exaggerate how unequally woman are treated in Australia*." Results also showed that many people still hold attitudes that promote VAW, such as a willingness to excuse violence as part of "normal" gender dynamics in a relationship. For example, 20% of participants agreed with a statement that suggested IPV was a "*normal reaction to day-to-day stress and frustration.*" Importantly, researchers highlight that these types of collectively held attitudes reinforce social norms about gender inequality and violence, which, in turn may drive IPV within romantic relationships (Webster & Flood, 2015).

2.2.4.5. Interim summary.

In Section 2.2.4, I reviewed the large and complex body of work on key drivers of IPV, drawing upon Lori Heise's (1998) integrated ecological framework. The model posits that the dynamic interactions between factors at the individual, interpersonal, community, and societal levels underlie VAW. This framework also highlights the importance of a holistic approach for violence prevention efforts across all the different levels of the model.

The next section summarises the host of detrimental health and socioeconomic consequences of IPV.

2.2.5. Consequences of IPV

Experiences of IPV impact women in many ways, some of which are hard to quantify. Global data indicates that gendered partner violence effects a heavy burden on the victim's physical, psychological, sexual, and reproductive health (UNODC, 2019a; WHO, 2014). The evidence suggests that these impacts are not exclusively linked to the occurrence of violence, but that they can persist long after it has ended (Dillon, Hussain, Loxton, & Rahman, 2013; Heise et al., 2002). Moreover, the consequences of IPV extend far beyond the individual, impacting on the wellbeing of children living with violence (or the foetus during pregnancy) and the wider society (Heise et al., 2002; Webster, 2016).

Partner violence also has significant socioeconomic costs, both directly (e.g., in the form of increased use of social services) and indirectly (through lost productivity; VicHealth, 2017; WHO & LSHTM, 2010). Indeed, estimates suggest that the economic burden of IPV is substantial – by 2021-22 it will cost the Australian economy $15.6 billion per year (Ayre, Lum On, Webster, Gourley, & Moon, 2016; National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children, 2009). Moreover, IPV plays a large role in perpetuating and compounding inequality in the lives of women, increasing vulnerability to financial hardship, poverty, and homelessness (Matjasko et al., 2013). For instance, Australian national statistics show that in 2010, 42% of women who sought assistance from homelessness agencies also reported domestic or family violence as their main reason for approaching these services (Council of Australian Governments, 2010).

2.2.5.1. Health and wellbeing consequences.

A large body of research has examined and documented the host of potential negative consequences that IPV has on women's health and wellbeing, across a wide range of samples, cultures, and ages (e.g., Ayre et al., 2016; Campbell, 2002; Coker et al., 2002; Coker, Smith, Bethea, et al., 2000; Delara, 2016; Dillon et al., 2013; García-Moreno, Jansen, et al., 2005; García-Moreno, Zimmerman, et al., 2015; Heise & García-Moreno, 2002; Lum On, Ayre, Webster, & Moon, 2016; McFarlane et al., 2005; Ruiz-Pérez, Plazaola-Castaño, & del Río-Lozano, 2007; VicHealth, 2017; Webster, 2016; WHO, 2013; WHO & LSHTM, 2010). Partner violence-related health outcomes can range from the non-fatal (e.g., disability) to the more extreme and lethal (e.g., suicide); have immediate (e.g., physical injury) or long-term impacts (e.g., chronic health conditions); and direct (e.g., unintended pregnancy) or indirect effects (e.g., risk factor to other diseases and conditions; Heise et al., 2002; WHO & LSHTM, 2010). In Australia, exposure to IPV has been found to be a lead contributor to disease burden (i.e., the combined impact of living with illness and disability, and of premature death) for women aged 18-44 years old (Ayre et al., 2016). Its effect was more substantial than other contributing risk factors across this population, including alcohol use, tobacco use, illicit drug use, and obesity.

The most direct health consequence of IPV is the potential for physical injury, and the fear and concerns for safety that accompany physical assault. According to results from a meta-analysis conducted by the WHO (2013), among all women who experience IPV, 41.8% were injured as a result. Moreover, data from the latest NISVS indicates that among U.S. women who report IPV-related impacts from incidents in the last 12 months, 30.8%

suffered injuries, 58.4% felt fearful, and 55.4% were concerned for their safety (Smith, Chen, et al., 2018). Similarly, in Australia, 66.1% and 74% of women reported feeling anxious and fearful, respectively, during the 12 months after the most recent incident of physical and/or sexual assault by the male intimate partner (Cox, 2015).

Compared to the general population, victims of IPV also experience more mental health and behavioural problems. Multiple reviews and meta-analyses of the national and international literature demonstrate that these women have an increased risk for drug and alcohol abuse, low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), sleep disorders, eating disorders, self-harm, and suicidal ideation (Coker et al., 2002; Coker, Smith, Bethea, et al., 2000; Dillon et al., 2013; Lum On et al., 2016; WHO, 2013; WHO & LSHTM, 2010). Furthermore, research shows that many of the reported relationships between the various health outcomes and IPV are bidirectional. For instance, a positive association has been found between IPV and subsequent risk of depression and, conversely, between depressive symptomatology and subsequent risk of IPV (Devries, Mak, Bacchus, et al., 2013). Bidirectional relationships are also observed between IPV and anxiety and the harmful use of alcohol/drugs (WHO, 2013).

A number of large population-based studies show that female victims of IPV regularly report negative mental health outcomes. For example, recent data from a national U.S survey supports the findings for PTSD (Smith, Chen, et al., 2018). In this study, out of the 73.4% of women who reported experiencing at least one IPV-related impact in their lifetime, 51.8% reported PTSD symptomatology. Similarly, in a national Japanese study Yoshihama and colleagues (2009) found that, relative to women reporting

no IPV, the odds of experiencing suicidal ideation significantly increased for those with a history of IPV (adjusted odds ratio = 5.04). Results showed that 34% of women who reported IPV also reported suicidal thoughts, compared to only 8% of women without IPV. The prevalence of lifetime suicide attempts is also strongly and significantly associated with IPV, as shown by the results from a large WHO multi-country study with over 20,000 female participants (Devries et al., 2011).

Besides negatively impacting mental health status and functioning, IPV is also associated with poor physical and reproductive health. Various systematic reviews of the literature consistently find that women with a history of IPV report higher incidence for a wide range of chronic health conditions including diabetes; chronic pain and fatigue problems (e.g., arthritis); gastrointestinal conditions (e.g., irritable bowel syndrome); respiratory problems (e.g., asthma); migraines and headaches; cardiovascular and circulatory problems (e.g., hypertension); and difficulty sleeping (Dillon et al., 2013; WHO, 2013). Additionally, research shows that IPV impacts a woman's *perceived* physical health and functioning, with victims reporting a reduced capacity to perform daily activities, and constantly feeling "run down" and more vulnerable to illnesses like the flu (Lowe, Humphreys, & Williams, 2007; Yoshihama et al., 2009). Gynaecological complaints are another area of health that is consistently associated with experiences of IPV. The evidence shows that victims of IPV are more susceptible to contracting sexually transmitted infections including HIV, have a higher incidence of abnormal pap smear results, and are more likely to report having had induced abortions (Dillon et al., 2013; Lum On et al., 2016; WHO, 2013).

Moreover, research suggests a dose-response trend between IPV-related symtomatology and IPV severity, intensity, and/or frequency (Dillon et al., 2013). In other words, health outcomes resulting from experiencing IPV are more severe when the instances of abuse are more severe, more frequent, and more intense. A population-based Japanese study found an association between IPV comorbidity and poorer health and wellbeing outcomes for women (Yoshihama et al., 2009). Results showed a dose-response relationship between a variety of health indicators and the amount of partner abuse experienced by the female participant. Compared to women who reported no IPV, the odds of experiencing health problems such as emotional distress and suicidal ideation were significantly higher for women who reported experiencing emotional abuse. The odds increased further for those women who reported experiencing more than one form of IPV in the relationship (i.e., physical or sexual plus emotional abuse; Yoshihama et al., 2009). Dose-response relationships are also observed between IPV and depression, PTSD, and anxiety (Dillon et al., 2013).

2.2.5.2. Socioeconomic consequences.

Partner violence has a substantial impact on communities and the economy. As previously mentioned, these impacts can be direct or indirect (VicHealth, 2017; WHO & LSHTM, 2010). The direct impacts of IPV include those costs associated with the access to social services such as medical care, police, legal, and housing services. Recent data from the NISVS indicates that among U.S. women who report lifetime IPV-related impacts, 19.3% needed medical care, 21.1% legal services, 8.1% victim advocate services, and 7.9%

housing services (Smith, Chen, et al., 2018). These findings highlight the potentially enormous economic burden resulting from IPV.

The indirect impacts of IPV include those costs related to reduced employment and productivity. Partner violence can hinder a woman's ability to work and contribute to society. A population-based U.S. survey found that among women who reported lifetime IPV, 24.9% missed at least one day of paid work or school as a result of the abuse (Smith, Chen, et al., 2018). Research also demonstrates that IPV can act as a barrier to stable employment. For example, a prospective 3-year longitudinal study found that baseline IPV significantly predicted future employment instability in a sample of female welfare recipients (Staggs, Long, Mason, Krishnan, & Riger, 2007). Similarly, results from a Californian state-wide study (n = 6,698) showed that experiencing psychological IPV significantly predicted women's unemployment (Kimerling et al., 2009).

In addition to the economic costs, IPV can also affect a woman's capacity to care for her family. In fact, researchers suggests that IPV has a negative impact on the health and normal development of the children who witness such violence (WHO & LSHTM, 2010). In a meta-analysis of 118 studies, Kitzmann and colleagues (2003) consistently found a significant association between exposure to parental IPV and various psychosocial adjustment problems in children. Compared to children who did not witness IPV, witnesses had poorer social, psychological, and academic outcomes, with effect sizes ranging from $\bar{d}$ = .27 to .53 (Kitzmann et al., 2003). Taken together, the reviewed body of work demonstrates that IPV has widespread and far-reaching implications that extend beyond the individual experiencing the abuse.

2.3. Concluding Remarks

This chapter has comprehensively outlined the literature on IPV, starting from issues around its conceptualisation and measurement (Ruiz-Pérez, Plazaola-Castaño, & Vives-Cases, 2007). I showed how ambiguity around definitions, terminologies, and methodologies contribute to existing gaps in IPV data availability, quality, and comparability (UN, 2015; WHO, 2013). Despite these limitations, the chapter demonstrates that IPV is the most prevalent form of violence that women experience worldwide, irrespective of their social, economic, religious, or cultural background (Fulu, Jewkes, et al., 2013; García-Moreno, Zimmerman, et al., 2015; UN, 2015; VicHealth, 2017). The chapter also highlights the substantial level of variation that exists in lifetime and past-year IPV prevalence, both within and between countries (WHO, 2013).

Partner violence encompasses many forms of abuse and mistreatment, and I have provided an overview of its three most well-researched manifestations: physical and sexual violence and psychological abuse. Afterwards, the chapter provided compelling evidence for a variety of contributing factors to the phenomenon. These factors are thought to operate at the level of the individual, relationship, community, and wider society, and the dynamic interplay between them underlies IPV perpetration (Heise, 1998). Finally, the chapter reviewed the growing body of research documenting the deleterious health and economic consequences that result from IPV. I summarised evidence demonstrating consistent associations between IPV and a wide range of adverse mental, physical, and gynaecological health outcomes for women. Evidence for the enormous socioeconomic burden imposed by IPV was also reviewed. Cumulatively, Chapter 2 has clearly

demonstrated that IPV constitutes a major health problem for women across a wide range of samples, cultures, and ages.

As we shall see in Chapter 3, objectification is a psychological process that may play a role in enabling VAW. Indeed, feminist scholars have long argued that objectification facilitates IPV due to withdrawals of humanity form the victim (Dworkin, 2000; Nussbaum, 1999). From an ecological standpoint, it is plausible that the objectification of women facilitates IPV both at the level of the individual and society. For the former, individual differences in the extent to which men objectify women may promote IPV. For the latter, the widespread sexual objectification of women in popular culture, mass media, pornography, and consumer capitalism creates a sociocultural context in which women are viewed as *things* to be used and consumed, rather than persons with agency and the capacity to make decisions. These portrayals of women reinforce negative gender norms and further promote gender inequality. As the present chapter has shown, these types of cultural milieus place women at a greater risk of experiencing IPV.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW – THE OBJECTIFICATION OF WOMEN

3.1. Overview – What is Objectification?

During the last 20 years, objectification has been the subject of much academic enquiry in the psychological domain. Researchers have aimed to understand the phenomenon, its antecedents, and the array of negative consequences that follow from viewing oneself and others as objects (Gervais, Bernard, Klein, & Allen, 2013). Spearheaded by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), objectification is broadly defined as a process whereby someone—usually a woman—is treated or seen not as a person but as a *mere* object; one that exists and is valued for its use for the pleasure of others. Objectification has mainly been discussed in the context of the sexual realm, but the phenomenon also occurs outside this domain.

Although interest in objectification from a psychological standpoint is relatively recent, discussions about the phenomenon are by no means new. Its conceptualisation dates back to the 18th century, conceived by philosopher Immanuel Kant. Later, in the 1980s, female objectification also played a central role in the development of feminist theory and viewed by most scholars as a problematic phenomenon for women. Objectification has even received attention in other disciplines, for instance, in economics and medicine. In the former, Marxist theory frames the phenomenon around the object-like treatment of labour workers in capitalist societies – cogs in the process of production, both expendable and interchangeable (Marx, 1964). In the latter, it is framed around

modern medicine and the de-individuated treatment of patients in clinical settings (Ennis, 1990; Foucault, 1989). It is not my intention to neglect this work; however, for brevity and clarity this chapter will only focus on philosophical, feminist, and psychological perspectives on objectification. That is, thinking around the processes and outcomes involved in people seeing and treating themselves and others as objects in the interpersonal domain, as opposed to intergroup or institutional domains. I outline the chapter's structure below.

I first provide a brief historical overview of philosophical and feminist perspectives on objectification. I focus on key scholars who have discussed objectification and how their theoretical contributions have shaped our current psychological understanding of the phenomenon. I then discuss how the concept entered the realm of psychology, which was firstly studied from the perspective of the self (i.e., what it means to view oneself in an object-like manner, or self-objectification). In doing so, I review how self-objectification is conceptualised, measured, and the negative consequences of being the target of sexual objectification. Given that these areas of study are not the main focus of this thesis, these overviews of the literature are not exhaustive. Even so, earlier philosophical, feminist, and psychological work heavily influenced current understanding of what it means to see *others* in an object-like manner and how to assess the phenomenon.

After introducing self-objectification, I then present a more in-depth discussion about the other side of the objectification coin – what it means to perceive or treat *others* as objects. This part of the chapter is broadly divided along the two major ways in which other-objectification has been conceptualised and measured: by viewing a person as an

object or as not a full person. When addressing the latter, I extensively review the literature on objectification as a phenomenon that involves dehumanisation. I argue that this dehumanisation-like process is perhaps the common thread that integrates most philosophical, feminist, and psychological accounts on objectification and its most damaging feature. In line with this, I first define the idea of what it means to be human and the different ways in which humanness can be denied to objectified targets. This research is core to my approach when examining objectification in the context of romantic relationships. Finally, I describe what is known about the negative consequences of objectifying women, such as VAW, and review the literature on objectification in romantic relationships, which is still in its infancy.

3.2. Philosophical & Feminist Perspectives on Objectification

Thinking on objectification was firstly introduced in the 1790s by Immanuel Kant. His notion of the phenomenon focused mainly on human sexuality and was largely rooted on the concept of instrumentality: the treatment of a person as a tool, a means to an end to achieve another's sexual purposes (Kant, 1963). Kant argued that any form of sexuality exercised outside monogamous marriage led to (sexual) objectification, because sexual love outside this context reduces a person's worth to the status of a mere tool that is used to satisfy the lover's sexual desires (for a review, see Papadaki, 2007).

In Kant's view, becoming the object of another's sexual appetite stripped the individual of their humanity. Moreover, he deemed that losing one's personhood was

especially problematic because *things*, as opposed to people, do not deserve moral treatment. Kant also noted that in theory both men and women could be sexually objectified; however, he acknowledged that in practice women were the most common victims. This was the result of power inequalities within sexual relationships that existed outside monogamous marriage (e.g., prostitutes used as objects for the satisfaction of men's sexual appetites). Kant's notions on objectification and its damaging consequences to a person's humanness strongly influenced feminist thinking in the late 20th century.

Key scholars like Catharine MacKinnon (1987) and Andrea Dworkin (1989) have drawn upon Kant's views on the problematic and dehumanising nature of using a person as a *mere* instrument for sexual pleasure. Distinct to Kant, however, these anti-pornography feminists emphasised gender inequality (i.e., the asymmetrical power structures between men and women) as the root cause of sexual objectification. They posited that through men's heterosexuality and their consumption of pornography, specifically, the sexual objectification of women was created and sustained (Dworkin, 1989; MacKinnon, 1987, 1993). As such, only women (as a group) could be the victims of sexual objectification and only men (as a group) the objectifiers.

Pornography took a centre stage to MacKinnon and Dworkin's account, defining women's role in society as sex objects. According to these thinkers, pornography made *all* women into passive entities that existed as means to the end of male sexual pleasure. Through pornography, female sexuality became a commodity that could be bought, sold, and consumed; and women, the sex objects, were judged solely on basis of their looks and instrumental value for men's purposes (Dworkin, 2000; MacKinnon, 1987, 1993). Hence,

sexual objectification encompassed both the *perception* of women as sexual objects and the *treatment* forced upon them as a result.

Moreover, MacKinnon and Dworkin described objectification as a process that was *always* harmful to women. They suggested that the treatment of a woman as if she had the status of a mere object for another person's use involved autonomy-violation and was a threat to her humanity. MacKinnon (1993) argued that even in cases where women appeared to consent to men's sexual objectification—for example, those in the pornographic industry presenting themselves as enjoying being used by men—there could not be true consent. Under conditions of gender inequality, the sexual objectification of women was always demanded and inflicted by men and "consenting" to such treatment only reflected the lack of options that women had in a patriarchal society.

In their account, pornography also served to enable and justify VAW (Dworkin, 2000; MacKinnon, 1987). To the extent that pornography reduced women to the status of mere tools, it encouraged the mistreatment of women within *all* heterosexual relationships (including marriage, which was the Kantian solution to sexual objectification). After all, there is nothing inherently problematic with harming a thing, as opposed to the moral reprehensible act that is harming another human being. These scholars also blamed pornography for men not seeing anything wrong with perpetrating violence and abuse upon women. They posited that pornography's depictions of women experiencing pleasure from being mistreated (e.g., bound, tortured, battered) led men to believe that these behaviours were not only socially acceptable, but also something that women desired.

Feminist philosopher Rae Langton (1995, 1999) also discussed the causal connection between pornography and men's treatment of women as objects. Like MacKinnon (1987), she claimed that pornography passes the message to its audience that women are objects to be used (and abused) for men's consumption (Langton, 1995). That is, if men are capable of using actual artifacts (e.g., pornographic images) as women, they would also be capable of using real women as objects. Langton noted, however, that this pornography-objectification relationship was not as all-encompassing as MacKinnon suggested. She proposed that the link was restricted to only a particular subset of pornography, the type that presents violent and/or misogynistic views of women.

Although MacKinnon and Dworkin placed pornography at the core of women's sexual objectification, other feminist scholars have questioned its centrality in sustaining gender inequality and the phenomenon, and the amount of influence that it holds over men (Green, 2000; Nussbaum, 1995). Indeed, some thinkers place a greater emphasis on Western popular culture, mass media, and consumer capitalism for passing the message to its consumers that women are mere objects to be used and consumed (Papadaki, 2018). Through the ubiquitous object-like representations of women in advertising, television, movies, music, novels, and the fashion industry, perceptions of women as lacking agency, subjectivity, and humanity are reinforced, and pornography is not unique in this respect.

Feminist theorists like Sandra Bartky (1990) and Susan Bordo (1993) suggested that objectification was not necessarily tied to pornography or gender roles. In their view, both men and women could objectify other women, or women could even objectify themselves. Instead, these thinkers posited that objectification occurred when a woman was reduced to

her sexual body parts or sexual functions, as if these parts were capable of completely representing her. For Bartky, objectification encompassed both a *process* (i.e., the symbolic fragmentation of a person) and an *outcome* (i.e., the treatment of a person as if they were a mere object). This conceptualisation of the phenomenon heavily influenced the psychological understanding and empirical examination of objectification that is discussed later in this chapter.

Bartky and Bordo claimed that the fragmentation of a woman's body into its parts stemmed from a patriarchal society that valued women (more so than men) on the basis of their physical appearance. As a result, and to gain social acceptability, women would experience a continuous pressure to conform to the sociocultural norms of feminine beauty of their time (e.g., youthful and slender, with large breasts and a rounded buttocks). Moreover, a constant preoccupation with physical appearance would lead women to see and treat their own bodies as objects in the pursue of unattainable beauty perfection (Bartky, 1990, 2005); for example, engaging in practices such as extreme dieting and cosmetic surgery to make their body match an idealised shape and size. Simply put, these scholars argued that society views women as things to be decorated and observed, and consequently, women adopt this outsider's view and see and treat themselves as aesthetic objects. As Bartky (1990) insightfully points out, sometimes the objectifier and the objectified can be one and the same person.

Similar to Kant, MacKinnon, and Dworkin, for Bartky and Bordo the objectification of women constituted a reduction in a person's humanity. According to the latter two, however, the loss of humanity resulted from having all the focus being placed on a

woman's body (or body parts) to the detriment of the other qualities that made her a full-fledged human being: her mind and personality. Furthermore, the failure to acknowledge a person's thoughts, feelings, and experiences would have devastating consequences for that individual's humanity and their absolute moral worth (Bartky, 1990; Bordo, 1993).

Thus far, the feminist accounts of objectification that have been presented have predominantly located and defined the phenomenon within the domain of sex, discussing the causes and potential negative outcomes for those who are sexually objectified (e.g., how pornography reduces women to sex objects, transforming them into dehumanised commodities for men's purposes; MacKinnon, 1987). More recently, however, philosophical theorists like Martha Nussbaum (1995) and Rae Langton (1995) expanded the characterisation of objectification as a process that goes beyond the sexual realm. These thinkers critically examined and detailed a multitude of ways—other than the sexual—in which another person can be regarded and/or treated in an object-like manner. For instance, in her influential writings Nussbaum (1995, 1999) identified seven key aspects involved in the objectification of others, they include:

1. *Instrumentality:* the treatment of a person as a tool to be used and consumed;
2. *Denial of autonomy:* the treatment of a person as lacking in self-determination and autonomy;
3. *Inertness:* the treatment of a person as lacking in agency and/or activity;
4. *Fungibility*: the treatment of a person as interchangeable with other objects;
5. *Violability:* the treatment of a person as something that is permissible to be harmed and abused;

6. *Ownership:* the treatment of a person as a possession that can be bought and sold; and
7. *Denial of subjectivity:* the treatment of a person as lacking feelings and experiences.

Later, Langton (2009) expanded on Nussbaum's defining features and added three more aspects involved in the objectification of others:

8. *Reduction to the body (or body parts)*: the treatment of a person as identified with their body;
9. *Reduction to appearance*: the treatment of a person primarily in terms of how they look or how they appear to the senses; and
10. *Silencing:* the treatment of a person as if lacking the capacity to speak.

A person is therefore objectified if they are perceived and/or treated in one (or more) of the ways outlined above. Nussbaum's systematic analysis also offered a broader understanding of objectification and spoke to the complexity of the phenomenon, more so than any previous account. For example, while for Kant, MacKinnon, and Dworkin the concept of instrumentality was at the core of objectification, for Nussbaum, this aspect was only one way in which a person could be objectified (although she did consider instrumentalisation as an especially problematic feature of the phenomenon).

Nussbaum (1995) also challenged the characterisation of objectification as a uniquely negative phenomenon and posited that it did not always have devastating consequences to an individual's humanity. In her view, objectification could be benign and even positive in some contexts: "in many if not all cases, the difference between an objectionable and a benign use of objectification will be made by the overall context of the

human relationship in question" (Nussbaum, 1995, p. 271). As such, objectification was considered negative when it took place in a context where equality, respect, and consent were absent, and benign or positive when it was compatible with these principles.

Indeed, Nussbaum (1995) claimed that romantic relationships are a place where some of the features of objectification, like instrumentalisation, could be positive and even enjoyable. Supporting this claim, she puts forward an example in which a pair or lovers lay in bed and one rests their head on the other's stomach. Here, one person instrumentally uses the other as a pillow and, by definition, this is objectifying. However, according to Nussbaum this instrumentality is not *per se* morally problematic. She argued that the objectification noted in the example is benign, because (a) it would have occurred consensually, and (b) in the context of a romantic relationship the pillow-like lover would generally be regarded for more than just their pillow-like qualities. In order for the objectifying act described in the example to become morally objectionable, the objectified lover must be perceived and/or treated as if they were *merely* a tool and nothing else. According to Nussbaum, only then would their humanity be denied.

Although highly influential, Nussbaum's theoretical proposals on objectification have received criticism. For instance, philosopher Lina Papadaki (2010, 2012) considered them too broad and inclusive, and suggested that the phenomenon is yet to be adequately defined. She notes that the word *treat*, as used by Nussbaum, has a very wide meaning when it comes to objectifying others: it involves both regarding and behaving towards a person as an object. Papadaki also claims that the notion of objectification has been used rather vaguely, and that without further guidance it becomes difficult to determine when

objectification is present. Indeed, she suggests that as per Nussbaum's account, it would appear that in some way or another, people constantly objectify nearly everyone in their daily life (e.g., using a waiter as a means to get food, using a bus driver as a means to get to places, using oneself as a means to prepare a meal). Papadaki thus proposes that for the concept of objectification to be meaningful—and avoid becoming unreasonably broad—the term should be restricted to only describe instances when "negative" objectification occurs; in other words, when the phenomenon impacts a target's humanness.

Following Papadaki's thinking, in this thesis I use a narrower conception of objectification that is restricted to include only morally objectionable instances of the phenomenon. I then argue that the objectification of women facilitates IPV due to a general reduction in perceived humanity to the objectified. I draw parallels between Nussbaum's key manifestations of objectification and the treatment women experience when subjected to physical, sexual, and psychological IPV. For example, when physical and sexual assault are perpetrated by a partner, women are being treated as if they were *violable* things, permissible to be broken, harmed, and abused. These extreme forms of violence are committed against a woman's consent, where her feelings, emotions, and intentions—that is, her *subjectivity*—are blatantly dismissed. Moreover, systematic violence in romantic relationships may reflect a sense of enacted *ownership* of women, where physical and sexual aggression become instrumental for the assertion of masculinity, dominance, and control in the service of a patriarchal society. In the absence of physical abuse, partner violence can also take the form of systematic coercion and control (J.B. Kelly & Johnson, 2008). This form of abuse creates an environment in which women are *denied autonomy*

and their rights as persons; for example, a controlling partner can restrict access to resources that provide agency, like money. Taken together, these examples describe situations in which women are literally being treated as things rather than as full people.

3.2.1. Interim Summary

Objectification has long been discussed in various philosophical and feminist accounts. Despite its rich complexity and the underlying differences between the various accounts outlined in this section, the majority of objectification theorists have considered the phenomenon to be morally problematic for women (Bartky, 1990; Dworkin, 1989, 2000; Langton, 2009; MacKinnon, 1987; Nussbaum, 1995).

Central to the notion of objectification is that the phenomenon involves a reduction or denial of an individual's humanity. Kant and Nussbaum understood humanity as the one characteristic that distinguishes us from animals and inanimate objects, granting human beings dignity and the right for moral treatment (for a in-depth discussion see Papadaki, 2012). As such, in this thesis I argue that objectification may play a critical role in the enactment of IPV, increasing the likelihood of women to suffer harm in their romantic relationships. Once a person's sense of humanity is denied through objectification, moral treatment is no longer a legitimate claim. Thus, opening the door for transgressive and immoral behaviour to occur.

In the next section, I review how the feminist and philosophical work discussed earlier has translated into the understanding and the measure of objectification in the psychological realm.

3.3. Psychological Perspectives on Objectification: Objectification Theory

3.3.1. Self-Objectification & Appearance Focus

In Western culture, messages that sexually objectify women—those that emphasise physical beauty, sexual appearance, and sexual appeal to others—saturate virtually every mainstream media platform (American Psychological Association, 2007; L.M. Ward, 2003). Moreover, experiences of sexual objectification are a widespread, daily occurrence in women's lives (Holland, Koval, Stratemeyer, Thomson, & Haslam, 2017; Swim, Hyers, Cohen, & Ferguson, 2001). Unsurprisingly, since the mid-to-late 1900s scholars across several academic disciplines have expressed concern over the widespread sexual objectification of women and its undesirable impacts on those who are being objectified (Moradi & Huang, 2008), those exposed to objectifying media content (L.M. Ward, 2016), and society at large (Murnen & Smolak, 2013). An abundance of empirical work supports claims about the nature, significance, and consequences that stem from being viewed through a sexually objectifying lens; for instance, see Moradi and Huang (2008), Loughnan and Pacilli (2014), and Heflick and Goldenberg (2014) for excellent reviews on the published evidence on objectification, and L.M. Ward (2016) on the effects of media sexualisation.

In the academic discipline of psychology, the early 2000s saw a growth of interest in objectification research, particularly in relation to gender. Building on the ideas proposed by the feminist philosophers that were discussed in the previous section, psychological researchers developed empirically testable predictions about the phenomenon and its

negative consequences for women's wellbeing. Pioneering work by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) focused on women's tendency to see themselves as sexual objects as a result of living within a sociocultural context in which their bodies were continuously looked at, evaluated, and always potentially objectified. In their seminal work titled *Objectification Theory*, the authors provided a theoretical framework for understanding how direct sexual objectification (e.g., unwanted stares, appearance remarks, sexual harassment) and vicarious experiences (e.g., exposure to sexualised depictions of women in the media) impacted on women's psychological wellbeing and associated psychopathology (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). The theory posited that, over time, cultural practices that place emphasis on women's bodies to be looked at and evaluated on the basis of appearance and sexual function (above other aspects, like competence) acculturated women to internalise an observer's perspective on the physical self. This effect was termed self-objectification. The theory also delineated the micro-level components linked to the daily exposure to sexually objectifying interactions in the interpersonal and social domains, including self-conscious body monitoring and surveillance, and the comparison of one's body to unrealistic cultural ideals about appearance (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Empirical evidence supports these assertions. Studies show that a common manifestation of adopting an objectifying perspective of the self is the habitual monitoring of the body's outward appearance (i.e., body surveillance, Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Research also shows that self-objectification and body surveillance, in turn, promote negative psychological consequences like experiences of body shame and dissatisfaction, when evaluating one's body against unrealistic cultural

standards and not meeting them (Calogero, 2009; Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998; Moradi, Dirks, & Matteson, 2005; Noll & Fredrickson, 1998). Moreover, habitual body monitoring increases anxiety about when and how the body will be evaluated next (Calogero, 2004; Harper & Tiggemann, 2008), and reduces awareness of essential bodily cues and thwarts peak motivational states (Daubenmier, 2005; McKinley & Hyde, 1996; Tiggemann & Kuring, 2004). Taken together, these findings suggest that sexual objectification can profoundly disturb a woman's self-definition, her subjective experiences, and promote a detached relationship with her body (i.e., a split between the self and the body).

3.3.2. Measuring Self-Objectification: Trait & State

Objectification Theory suggests that self-objectification can be both a stable construct and an induced state, and that people are likely to vary in the extent to which they self-objectify (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Fredrickson et al., 1998). On the one hand, self-objectification can be a learned trait resulting from gender socialisation within a sociocultural milieu that is permeated with the sexual objectification of women (i.e., trait self-objectification). On the other hand, self-objectification can also be triggered or induced by immediate situational factors (i.e., state self-objectification), such as making salient an observer's perspective on the body (e.g., when anticipating the male gaze or evaluative body commentary). These are the two overarching frameworks in which researchers have empirically tested self-objectification.

The study of *trait self-objectification*, that is, the degree to which people (particularly women) are chronically preoccupied with their physical appearance, has primarily been measured using self-report instruments; most notably, the Self-objectification Questionnaire (SOQ; Noll & Fredrickson, 1998) and the Objectification Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). The SOQ measures the degree of concern that respondents have with their bodily appearance over competence (Noll & Fredrickson, 1998). This scale asks people to rank-order five observable appearance-based attributes (e.g., physical attractiveness) and five non-observable competence-based attributes (e.g., physical fitness). Ratings are then used to compute a difference score, with positives scores indicating a person's greater emphasis on their bodily appearance over their competence; in other words, greater self-objectification.

As just one example, Tiggemann and Kuring (2004) used the SOQ with a sample of men and women to assess the relationship between self-objectification and two psychological disorders that disproportionally affect women: depression and disordered eating. Correlational evidence showed that for women only, self-objectification was significantly and positively associated with depressed mood and disordered eating. Although these findings support the applicability of Objectification Theory to these disorders, a limitation must be noted. The lack of an effect for men may be an artifact of the measurement instrument itself. The SOQ was originally developed to be used with heterosexual adult women and its usefulness with male samples—who tend to score lower—has been questioned (Calogero, 2011). Given that the social standards for valuing

the physical appearance of men and women are vastly different, it is possible that the SOQ is measuring distinct constructs when applied to these two populations.

Another instrument that is widely used to measure trait self-objectification is the self-surveillance subscale of the OBCS (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). The OBCS also has two additional subscales: body shame and control beliefs. The 8-item self-surveillance subscale measures the extent to which women engage in the habitual monitoring of their external appearance, constantly thinking and worrying about how their body looks to others rather than how it feels (e.g. "*I am more concerned with what my body can do than how it looks*;" reversed coded item). Higher ratings on this subscale therefore suggest a more negative body experience for women through constant self-surveillance.

As just one example, Moradi and others (2005) used the OBCS's self-surveillance subscale with a sample of 221 undergraduate women to assess the associations between body surveillance (as a manifestation of self-objectification), sexual objectification experiences, and eating disorder symptomatology (among other variables like body shame and internalisation of standards of beauty). Results demonstrated a significant positive correlation between all the variables measured. Moreover, body surveillance mediated the relationship between sexual objectification experiences and body shame, and between sexual objectification experiences and eating disorder symptoms. A limitation to this approach, however, is that the OBCS subscale is often used interchangeably with the SOQ as a measure of self-objectification. However, scholars suggest that the habitual self-monitoring of the body's appearance is a corollary of self-objectification, and not self-objectification *per se*. Indeed, Calogero (2011) argues that the OBCS and the SOQ tap into

conceptually different phenomena and her claim is supported by studies that employ both measures yielding diverging results depending upon the measure that is used (e.g., Kozee & Tylka, 2006).

Self-objectification has also been studied experimentally, as a *temporary experience* (or a state) that can be influenced by immediate situational factors. Participants are typically exposed to real or fictitious circumstances designed to make salient the observer's perspective on the body, thus making them think of the self as an object to be evaluated. For example, researchers have induced state self-objectification by exposing participants to objectifying images and words (Roberts & Gettman, 2004), getting them to wear a swimsuit in front of a mirror (Fredrickson et al., 1998), or by having women anticipate the male gaze by interacting with confederates of the opposite sex (Calogero, 2004).

Moreover, studies have often used the Twenty Statements Test (Fredrickson et al., 1998) to check the effectiveness of self-objectification manipulations. This test asks participants to make 20 "*I am*" statements about themselves and their identity. The task's premise is that greater levels of state self-objectification would prompt participants to write more appearance-related statements (those about their body shape or size; e.g., "*I am chubby*"), rather than statements related to their feelings (e.g., "*I am bored*") or personality (e.g., "*I am friendly*"). This experimental paradigm has been widely used to study the relationships between an induced state of consciousness marked by self-objectification and consequential cognitive, emotional, and behavioural functioning (e.g., Aubrey et al., 2011; Fredrickson & Harrison, 2005; Fredrickson et al., 1998; Quinn, Kallen, Twenge, & Fredrickson, 2006; Roberts & Gettman, 2004).

The first empirical test of the effect of state self-objectification is the well-known swimsuit study conducted by Fredrickson and colleagues (1998). Under the cover of a consumer behaviour study, the authors manipulated the salience of self-objectification in a sample of male and female undergraduates by asking them to either try on a swimsuit or a sweater in front of a full-length mirror. Compared to the group who wore sweaters, those wearing the swimsuit reported greater levels of body shame and negative emotions, displayed more restrained eating behaviour (by eating fewer cookies), and performed worse in a maths test. These relationships were found only for women. Objectification Theory postulates that self-objectification disrupts an individual's attentional focus and hinders cognitive resources as a result of having to constantly attend to physical appearance concerns rather than to the task at hand (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). The pattern of results observed in the swimsuit study supported these tenets.

More recently, studies have applied novel methodologies to examine state self-objectification without the need to experimentally manipulate the phenomenon in a laboratory-based setting. For example, Holland and colleagues (2017) used momentary ecological assessment to track the prevalence and short-term impact of objectifying events in the daily life of 81 young women. Results demonstrated that these types of events caused participants to show an increase in momentary state self-objectification. This study provided the first test of how exposure to objectifying events impacts self-objectification in the context of daily life.

The adoption of the aforementioned trait and state self-objectification measures in empirical research has extended our knowledge about (a) what it means to chronically

value the body for how it appears to others, (b) the situational factors that induce the phenomenon, and (c) the host of negative outcomes that result from a heightened focus on bodily appearance. However, a limitation of these instruments is that they may not fully capture certain features of objectification that are critical to the conceptualisation of the phenomenon (e.g., Bartky, 1990; Bordo, 1993; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). For instance, these measures fail to assess the theorised disconnection between self and body that occurs with self-objectification or whether the individual in fact adopts a third-person view on the body (Calogero, 2011). Moreover, these measures lack the ability to capture the reduction in humanity that philosophical and feminist scholars suggest accompanies the phenomenon and makes it highly morally objectionable (e.g., Dworkin, 1989; Kant, 1963; Nussbaum, 1995). As we shall see later in this chapter, the withdrawal of humanity from the objectified target is of particular importance in my attempt to assess objectification within the context of romantic relationships.

3.3.3. Consequences of Sexual Objectification & Self-Objectification for Women

While both men and women can be sexually objectified, evidence demonstrates that women are typically more vulnerable to the phenomenon and its damaging consequences (McKinley, 2006b; Moradi & Huang, 2008; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005). Accordingly, this section—and more broadly speaking, this thesis—focuses on the impact that objectification has on the quality of life and wellbeing of women.

As noted earlier, an accumulation of objectifying experiences and subsequent self-objectification can result in a chronic state of self-consciousness, body monitoring, and a stream of anxiety-provoking experiences for women (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). In turn, these experiential consequences contribute to an array of mental health risks and linked psychopathology (for reviews, see Calogero, Tantleff-Dunn, & Thompson, 2011; Moradi & Huang, 2008).

The literature provides considerable evidence supporting the conclusion that higher self-objectification, body surveillance, and body shame are linked with a number of negative and damaging psychological outcomes that disproportionately affect women. For example, studies find associations between these variables and reduced psychological well-being, self-esteem, and body-esteem (Breines, Crocker, & Garcia, 2008; McKinley, 2006a; Moradi & Huang, 2008). Studies also find links with an increased prevalence for more severe clinical outcomes such as disordered eating (Calogero, 2009; Peat & Muehlenkamp, 2011; Tiggemann & Kuring, 2004; Tiggemann & Slater, 2001; Tylka & Hill, 2004), depression (Grabe, Hyde, & Lindberg, 2007; B.A. Jones & Griffiths, 2015; Szymanski & Henning, 2007), sexual dysfunction (Calogero & Thompson, 2009; Sanchez & Kiefer, 2007; Steer & Tiggemann, 2008; Tiggemann & Williams, 2012), and substance abuse (Carr & Szymanski, 2011). Additionally, recent studies have found significant positive associations between these body image-related variables and women's experiences of extreme sexual objectification such as sexual harassment (Fairchild & Rudman, 2008) and sexual violence and IPV (Davidson & Gervais, 2015). Taken together, these findings

demonstrate the widespread impact that sexual objectification has on the psychological wellbeing of women.

Also under the umbrella of Objectification Theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), a substantial body of research has examined the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural ramifications of sexual objectification and subsequent self-objectification. Studies show that a heightened focus on physical appearance, either induced or dispositional, leads women to perform poorly in cognitive tasks (Gay & Castano, 2010; Gervais, Vescio, & Allen, 2011; Quinn, Chaudoir, & Kallen, 2011) and motor tasks (Fredrickson & Harrison, 2005), report increased intentions to engage in cosmetic surgery (Calogero, Pina, & Sutton, 2014), and experience a sense of moral impurity (e.g., sinful feelings; Zhansheng Chen, Teng, & Zhang, 2013). These findings suggest that self-objectification impacts how women think, see, and feel about themselves.

Moreover, sexual objectification contributes to women behaving in a more passive, object-like manner. Drawing on this idea, studies have shown that women who adopt an objectified view of the self are less willing to engage in gender-based social activism (Calogero, 2013) and spend less time talking in social interactions (Saguy, Quinn, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2010). Additionally, research finds that experiencing objectification can negatively impact a woman's quality of life by reducing workplace wellbeing. For example, with a sample of 253 waitresses, Szymanski and Feltman (2015) found that both working in a sexually objectifying environment (e.g., Hooters-style restaurant) and experiencing interpersonal sexual objectification in the workplace (e.g., undesired explicit sexual advances from others) were related to lower levels of job satisfaction, directly and

indirectly. Taken together, these findings highlight just how damaging experiences of sexual objectification can be to women and the deleterious consequences of living within a sociocultural milieu that serves to disempower them.

3.3.4. Why do Women Self-Objectify?

If the tendency to self-objectify is so damaging, as attested by the multitude of harmful outcomes previously outlined, why do women do it? Throughout history women have been taught to manipulate their bodies to attain societal ideals of beauty and physical attractiveness to a greater extent than men (Murnen, 2011). Grounded in feminist theory, Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) suggest that because Western culture highly rewards beauty and physical attractiveness, at times, sexual objectification can masquerade as a form of positive social evaluation. Moreover, through gender socialisation, beauty and physical attractiveness have become a central aspect of the feminine role and identity. These traits then serve as a prime currency for women's social and economic success. As a result, women learn to value themselves primarily based on their external appearance, rather than their competence (Aubrey, 2010; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Against this background, a woman's heightened focus and commitment to her beauty and physical appearance are often seen as personal choices or even as essential female qualities, as opposed to by-products of cultural and societal pressures that encourage female over-preoccupation with appearance (McKinley, 2011; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). These circumstances make it difficult for women to challenge the status quo and avoid the negative psychological and behavioural ramifications of sexual objectification,

and by extension, self-objectification. As suggested by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997), objectification serves as a mechanism of control and oppression—both external and internalised—that maintains and perpetuates gender inequality.

3.3.5. Limitations of the Research

Objectification Theory is heavily rooted in feminist thinking and, as such, most self-objectification research has focused on understanding women's experiences of the phenomenon (Loughnan & Pacilli, 2014). A limitation to this work, however, is that the samples used have primarily consisted of heterosexual, white, middle-class, college-aged women. Therefore, the empirical evidence for the impacts of sexual objectification on women of different populations remains scarce (Moradi & Huang, 2008). Given that sexual objectification may not affect all women equally (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), researchers still need to examine the phenomenon within more diverse female samples.

Some efforts to empirically test Objectification Theory among subgroups of women have begun. For instance, researchers have examined the phenomenon among lesbians (Kozee & Tylka, 2006); bisexual women (Brewster et al., 2014); women of different cultural, racial, and ethnic groups (Buchanan, Fischer, Tokar, & Yoder, 2008; Frederick, Forbes, Grigorian, & Jarcho, 2007; Loughnan et al., 2015); and women of different ages (Lindberg, Hyde, & McKinley, 2006). Although results suggest similarities for self-objectification processes and some of the body-image related variables (Tiggemann & Slater, 2001), more research is needed to help shed light on minority women's experiences

of sexual objectification and how this form of oppression may intersect with other forms of oppression like racism.

Another limitation of the self-objectification research is the lack of studies examining the phenomenon as it pertains to men. Objectification Theory posits that, for males, a parallel self-objectification processes may also be operating (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). A recent meta-analysis investigating the influence of sexualising media on self-objectification processes supports this notion. This study found an overall positive, small-to-moderate robust effect of media use on men's objectified self-concepts (Karsay, Knoll, & Matthes, 2018). Even so, additional research in the field is necessary to better understand men's experiences of objectification and its consequences.

3.3.6. Interim Summary

In Section 3.3, I have reviewed theoretical and empirical work on sexual objectification from a psychological perspective. Since the inception of Objectification Theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), the framework has contributed to our understanding about the experiences and consequences of being female in a sociocultural milieu that places great emphasis on women's bodies, to be evaluated on the basis of appearance and sexual function, above all other aspects.

Researchers have examined what it means to view the self through an objectifying lens, and the damaging ramifications that ensue for those who engage in the process. For instance, studies support Objectification Theory's posited relationships between an accumulation of objectifying experiences, subsequent self-objectification, and a host of

negative emotional states like body surveillance, body shame, and body anxiety (e.g., Calogero, 2004; Daubenmier, 2005; Fredrickson et al., 1998; Harper & Tiggemann, 2008; McKinley & Hyde, 1996; Moradi et al., 2005; Noll & Fredrickson, 1998). Moreover, empirical research demonstrates the wide array of negative emotional, behavioural, and cognitive consequences that follow from a heightened focus, induced or dispositional, on physical appearance. Studies show that self-objectification contributes to the development of mental health risks and linked psychopathology (e.g., depression, disordered eating), negatively impacts cognitive function and physical performance, and can even affect how women interact with the world around them and their quality of life (e.g., Calogero, 2013; Carr & Szymanski, 2011; Fredrickson & Harrison, 2005; Gay & Castano, 2010; Peat & Muehlenkamp, 2011; Szymanski & Feltman, 2015; Tiggemann & Williams, 2012). Cumulatively, this large body of literature indicates that sexual objectification and self-objectification are pervasive phenomena that have a number of harmful effects to an individual's wellbeing and functioning, particularly for women.

Despite the advance that self-objectification research has made during the past couple of decades, limitations exist. First, there is still a lack of consensus around the best way to conceptualise and measure the phenomenon, which is reflected in the different measurement tools and approaches used in practice. The construct requires further clarification and refinement. Second, philosophical and feminist scholars suggest that objectification entails a reduction in humanity (e.g., Dworkin, 2000; Kant, 1963; Nussbaum, 1995), and this key aspect of the phenomenon is not captured by the existing measures of self-objectification. Third, research applying the Objectification Theory

framework to explain the experiences of more diverse populations (e.g., women minority groups and men) is still scarce.

Up to this point, I have described what is known about objectification from the perspective of the person being objectified (i.e., the target). This process can be brought on by sexually objectifying experiences and/or directing an objectifying lens towards the self. In the next section, I will shift the focus to the opposite side of the objectification coin and discuss the phenomenon from the perspective of the person doing the objectification (i.e., the objectifier). These two different but complementary approaches help create a broad understanding of objectification and its potential consequences for women's lives and their treatment in society; for example, in the facilitation of gendered violence within romantic relationships.

3.4. Psychological Perspectives on Objectification: The Objectification of Others

In the last decades, a new body of research has emerged examining the processes and consequences of objectification from the perspective of the agent (i.e., the objectifier). This research examines what it means to view another person—as opposed to the self—in an object-like manner. To date, scholars have theorised and studied other-objectification (hereafter referred to as "objectification") in a variety of different ways, yielding, at times, a confused conceptual picture. The lack of consensus over a clear definition of the phenomenon and the preferred single method to empirically capture it has resulted in a wide range of understandings within the field (Haslam et al., 2013). Even so,

objectification research has shed important light on the factors that encourage a person to objectify another and demonstrated a multitude of negative outcomes for the perceiver's judgements, social perceptions, and even their behaviours towards the objectified target.

Central to the philosophical and feminist accounts of objectification that were presented earlier in this chapter, is the notion that the phenomenon entails (a) a reduction of a person to the status of their body parts or functions for some end purpose, and (b) a lessening of their humanity. Accordingly, the psychological investigation of people's tendency to objectify others has broadly followed along these two lines (discussed in Section 3.4.1 and Section 3.4.2, respectively). These different approaches to the study of objectification represent a significant gap in the literature, because it is not possible to ascertain whether different types of assessment would capture the same core underlying construct.

3.4.1. Viewing a Person as an Object

Grounded in Objectification Theory and the idea that objectification entails an exaggerated emphasis on physical appearance (Langton, 2009), much of the objectification research has examined the psychological mechanisms involved in the reduction of a person to their body parts and sexual utility (i.e., seeing someone as an object; Loughnan & Pacilli, 2014). To do so, researchers have focused on ordinary cognitive processes to demonstrate that women are commonly seen as things (e.g., Bernard, Gervais, Allen, Campomizzi, & Klein, 2012; Bernard et al., 2017; Gervais, Bernard, et al., 2013;

Gervais, Holland, & Dodd, 2013; Gervais, Vescio, Förster, Maass, & Suitner, 2012; Vaes, Cristoforetti, Ruzzante, Cogoni, & Mazza, 2019).

Most notably, a line of research lead by Sarah Gervais, Philippe Bernard, and others focuses on the cognitive underpinnings of sexual objectification and whether objectified targets are automatically evaluated similarly to objects (for a recent review, see Bernard, Gervais, & Klein, 2018). This body of research largely draws on the person- vs. object-recognition literature that suggests people and things are perceived through very different cognitive processes (for reviews, see Maurer, Le Grand, & Mondloch, 2002; Tanaka & Simonyi, 2016).

People are visually recognised via global (configural) processing. This type of processing involves perceiving the holistic features of a stimulus and the spatial relationships between its parts; for example, stimuli of faces or body postures are more accurately identified when they are shown upright, than when they are shown upside down (Reed, Stone, Bozova, & Tanaka, 2003; Reed, Stone, Grubb, & McGoldrick, 2006). Given that person recognition takes into account the relationships between the features of a stimulus, individual parts of a face (or a person) are more easily recognised when they are presented in the context of the whole face (or body), than when the same parts are presented in isolation (Seitz, 2002; Tanaka & Farah, 1993).

In contrast, objects are visually recognised via local (analytic) processing which involves perceiving the piecemeal features of a stimulus. Unlike global processing, this system does not heavily depend on information about the spatial relationships between the parts of the stimulus. As a result, the accuracy of object recognition is not affected—or

is affected to a lesser degree than in person recognition—by presenting a stimulus upside down (i.e., inversion), and when the part of the stimulus is seen in the context of the whole or in isolation. For example, a door of a house is recognised similarly when presented upright or inverted, and in the context of a house or on its own (Seitz, 2002).

Integrating these literatures, Bernard and others (2012) proposed the sexualised body-inversion hypothesis to investigate whether sexualised (female) bodies would be recognised in a similar way to objects. Based on the premise that an inverted stimulus is more accurately recognised if it corresponds to an object (Maurer et al., 2002; Reed et al., 2003), 78 undergraduates were presented with images of sexualised male and female bodies in upright vs. inverted positions. Results showed that inverted female bodies were significantly better recognised than inverted male bodies. Moreover, images of sexualised men were better recognised when presented upright compared to inverted; this effect was not found for images of women. Taken together, these findings suggest that at a basic cognitive level, sexualised women are being perceived in ways that typically resemble the recognition of objects, whereas sexualised men through processes involved in the recognition of people.

The object-like processing of female bodies postulated by Bernard and colleagues (2012) has been strongly debated by some researchers. For example, Schmidt and Kistemaker (2015) attributed Bernard's results to methodological confounds with the original stimulus set, rather than to target gender effects. These authors proposed that the images used in Bernard's study showed less symmetry for female bodies when presented upside down, compared to all other images. The greater asymmetry was due to the

postures in which the female bodies were depicted (i.e., s-shaped with one hand on hip). Given that perceptual factors, like symmetry, can impact stimulus recognition (Tarr, 2013), Schmidt and Kistemaker concluded that greater asymmetry of the inverted female stimuli explained why these bodies were more easily recognised (but see Bernard, Gervais, Allen, & Klein, 2015, for a challenge of these conclusions). Despite these criticisms, additional research has successfully replicated Bernard's original pattern of effects (e.g., Bernard, Gervais, Allen, Delmée, & Klein, 2015; Civile, Rajagobal, & Obhi, 2016; Cogoni et al., 2018; Kostic, 2013), supporting the notion that at a perceptual level, the local processing of women's bodies appears to be an indicator of sexual objectification.

In a similar conceptual vein to the sexualised body-inversion effect, research by Gervais and colleagues (2012) has demonstrated another manifestation of the object-like processing that underlies sexual objectification – the sexual body part recognition bias. This bias suggests that at a cognitive level objectification involves the perceiver reducing another to their sexual body parts. As such, in their study the authors hypothesised that female sexual body parts would be more easily recognised. Moreover, based on the premise that the accuracy of object recognition is not affected by presenting a stimulus in isolation, the authors hypothesised that female sexual body parts would be more easily recognised, even when presented in isolation (Gervais, Vescio, Förster, et al., 2012).

Adapting cognitive psychology's part vs. whole body recognition paradigm (Seitz, 2002; Tanaka & Farah, 1993), Gervais and colleagues (2012) presented 83 undergraduate students with images of fully clothed bodies of men and women. Results showed that perceivers did, in fact, reduce women's bodies to their sexual body parts, as demonstrated

by a better recognition of sexual female body parts when presented in isolation than in the context of the entire body. Much like when recognising objects, the information provided by the context was not required to recognise these stimuli. Importantly, this effect was not found for images of males, where male bodies were better recognised as a whole than when the parts were presented in isolation (Gervais, Vescio, Förster, et al., 2012). Using the same task, later research successfully replicated this effect using sexualised females bodies (Bernard, Gervais, Allen, Campomizzi, & Klein, 2015) and sexualised female faces (Bernard, Geelhand, & Servais, 2019), suggesting that sexualised women are cognitively objectified (i.e., processed more analytically, like objects). Taken together, these findings support Objectification Theory's notion that objectification entails a narrowed focus on sexual body parts, particularly those of women, as if these individual parts were capable of representing the whole person.

An additional indicator of objectification proposed in philosophical theorising is that of seeing a person as if they were interchangeable or fungible with similar others (Nussbaum, 1999). Drawing on this notion, Gervais, Vescio, and Allen (2012) examined the fungibility hypothesis and measured objectification as the extent to which human targets were interchangeable with physically similar others. In their study, 66 participants were presented with digitally manipulated images of *average* and *ideal* men and women (images of idealised women displayed the classic hourglass figure, and large shoulders and narrow waists for idealised men). Participants were then asked to complete a matching task for the bodies and faces of the images that they had previously seen. Supporting the author's hypotheses, results showed greater target fungibility for women's bodies (regardless of

body type) and for ideal male bodies, as indicated by a greater number of body-face pairing errors in those conditions. This evidence suggests that women are visually interchangeable with other women, a finding that coheres with Nussbaum's fungibility proposition as one of the ways to see a person as an object.

Empirical research has also used other cognitive methodologies to support the notion that objectification manifests as a heightened visual focus on a person's body or sexual body parts, also known as the *objectifying gaze*. Using eye-tracking technology, Gervais, Holland, and Dodd (2013) found that when participants were asked to focus on the target's appearance (vs. personality), they dwelled for longer on the sexual body parts of women (e.g., breasts, waist) and less time on their faces. Moreover, male participants were more likely to exhibit this objectifying gaze pattern when the target depicted women with highly idealised body types, irrespective of whether the participant was asked to focus on the target's physical appearance or personality.

Extending our understanding of objectification beyond gender, additional research has demonstrated that certain target characteristics (e.g., attractiveness, body size, clothing type, race) facilitate the objectifying gaze among perceivers. For example, a recent eye-tracking study found that participants attended more often, and for a longer duration, to the sexual body parts of Black women compared to White women (J.R. Anderson, Holland, Heldreth, & Johnson, 2018). In yet another study using a dot-probe task, the authors found a greater fixation on the target's body relative to their face, when looking at slim targets compared to overweight targets, and when all the targets were portrayed in

revealing attire (Holland & Haslam, 2013). Together, these findings provide further insight into the factors that can make a target particularly vulnerable to objectification.

Besides body-inversion, sexualised body parts bias, fungibility, and the objectifying gaze, the literature suggests additional indicators of cognitive objectification (Bernard, Gervais, et al., 2018). For example, a recent line of work has examined people's neurophysiological responses and shown that objectified targets are perceived like real objects in ways that go beyond similarities in perceptual processing styles. In two studies, Bernard and others measured the neural electrical activity associated with early-stage visual processing of faces and bodies (Bernard, Content, Deltenre, & Colin, 2018; Bernard et al., 2017). Their research focused on the N170 neural correlate, an event-related potential component that peaks about 170ms after stimulus onset. Prior research indicates that different visual stimuli categories elicit different N170 signatures, and that the amplitude of this component is larger and delayed when stimuli of human faces and bodies are shown inverted (vs. upright; Stekelenburg & Gelder, 2004) and scrambled (vs. intact; Soria Bauser & Suchan, 2013). Given that in object perception neither the inversion nor scrambling of stimuli modulate the N170 amplitude, Bernard and colleagues considered the presence of these two effects as strong indicators of a configural processing style (as with person perception).

Accordingly, in one study, they hypothesised and demonstrated that the N170 amplitude was not sensitive to stimuli inversion when participants processed images of sexualised bodies (i.e., men and women wearing swimsuits or underwear) and objects (e.g., shoes), compared to non-sexualised bodies (i.e., men and women wearing normal

clothes; Bernard et al., 2017). In another study, they hypothesised and demonstrated the same pattern of effects when using scrambled (vs. intact) stimuli of sexualised bodies, objects, and non-sexualised bodies (Bernard, Content, et al., 2018). Put simply, inverted and scrambled sexualised bodies and objects (vs. upright and intact) did not elicit the N170 amplitude signature in a manner consistent with person recognition, whereas the N170 inversion and scramble effects did emerge for non-sexualised bodies. These findings suggest that, at a neural level, sexualised bodies and objects are processed similarly.

More recently, Vaes and colleagues (2019) have adapted the well-known oddball paradigm (i.e., when an array of repetitive stimuli is infrequently interrupted by an unexpected stimulus; Squires, Squires, & Hillyard, 1975) and measured another event-related potential component associated with visual processing, the P300. This component occurs around 300ms after stimuli presentation, and its amplitude is known to increase in response to novel, infrequent, or improbable stimuli (Picton, 1992). In a series of experiments, the researchers repeatedly presented participants with objectified (Experiment 1) and non-objectified (Experiment 2) male and female human stimuli, and a perceptually comparable object (i.e., a gender-matched doll-like avatar) as the infrequent stimulus or oddball (Vaes et al., 2019). Results showed that objectified female targets were the only stimuli perceived more similarly to objects, as demonstrated by significantly smaller P300 amplitudes following the presentation of the female doll-like avatar. In other words, the oddball stimulus (a real object) was elaborated similarly to the frequent stimulus (a woman). This effect was not present for objectified male targets (Experiment 1) or for non-objectified male and female targets (Experiment 2); each of these stimuli were

clearly differentiated form their respective doll-like counterpart, as demonstrated by significantly larger P300 amplitudes in response to the presentation of the oddball stimulus. Taken together, this body of work further supports the notion that people tend to erroneously perceive objectified women as real objects.

The lines of research that have been reviewed here provide a good understanding of objectification as an automatic perceptual process in the abstract (i.e., how people are seen when they are objectified). Empirical findings support the notion that objectified targets, usually women, are subject to more sexualised body scrutiny, and are processed and recognised, at a neural and cognitive level, as objects. However, the aforementioned studies provide little clarity about how these perceptual processes translate into how people are mistreated when they are objectified.

3.4.2. Viewing a Person as not a Person

Consistent with philosophical theorising, another way in which researchers have conceptualised objectification is by studying the ways in which the phenomenon can have dehumanising implications for the target. Indeed, scholars have argued and demonstrated that a tendency to objectify others has negative implications for a person's humanity (Haslam et al., 2013; Loughnan et al., 2010; Vaes et al., 2013). Perceiving others as not fully human can deny them basic human rights and protection from harm (for a recent review, see Haslam & Loughnan, 2014). In this section, I will discuss the conceptual links between objectification and dehumanisation, and review the major ways in which social

psychologists have examined objectification conceptualising the phenomenon as involving some form of dehumanisation.

Objectification and dehumanisation encompass phenomena in which people are perceived in fundamentally inaccurate ways: as objects, animals, or in other ways not as people (Gervais, Bernard, et al., 2013). At its core, objectification involves a loss in humanity; as stated by philosopher Martha Nussbaum when we objectify we treat "as an object what is really not an object, what is, in fact, a human being" (1995, p. 257). To the extent that objectification entails perceiving others as less than fully human (Dworkin, 2000; Kant, 1963; Nussbaum, 1995), objectifying others involves denying them (or seeing them as lacking) the characteristics that makes them a person. Put simply, it involves a type of dehumanisation or depersonalisation.

But what does it mean to dehumanise others? The psychological literature on dehumanisation shows humanness can be granted and denied in a variety of different ways (for two excellent reviews, see Haslam, 2015; Haslam & Loughnan, 2014). Early theorists understood dehumanisation as a blatant denial of humanness and an extreme form of prejudice and moral exclusion; one that was predominantly observed in conditions of conflict and used to explain and enable violence (Bandura, 1999; Bar-Tal, 1989; Kelman, 1976; Opotow, 1990; Staub, 1989). More recent accounts recognise that humanness can also be denied in more subtle and commonplace ways. For example, it can be denied by ascribing people a reduced capacity to experience complex human emotions (Leyens et al., 2001), by denying others the attributes that separate humans from animals and other non-human entities (Haslam, 2006), by failing to ascribe or perceive another's mind (Fiske,

2009; H.M. Gray, Gray, & Wegner, 2007; Harris & Fiske, 2006), and by attributing social targets lesser warmth and competence (Fiske, Cuddy, Xu, & Glick, 2002). Indeed, dehumanisation is shown to be an everyday social phenomenon rooted in ordinary social-cognitive processes that can occur in the absence of intergroup animosity (Haslam, 2006; Haslam & Loughnan, 2014).

Why is it important that others perceive us as human? Since the Enlightenment, philosophers have argued that some rights are inherently and inalienably part of being human (e.g., protection from harm), and that a number of moral norms and rules govern the social interactions between those extended the status of a person (Sapontzis, 1981). By implication, excluding others from this category, whether in blatant or subtle ways, may facilitate (and legitimise) behaviours that are generally not reserved for human beings, like aggression. In this thesis, I argue that the loss of humanity that is observed in objectification constitutes a first step towards enabling acts of violence against others, for example, the violence women experience at the hands of their romantic partners.

Parallel to the different conceptualisations of dehumanisation, the study of objectification as involving dehumanisation has also taken many forms (Haslam, 2015). Three main approaches have been used to examine ties between the phenomenon and dehumanising social perceptions of targets. These methodologically diverse frameworks include Haslam's (2006) dual humanness model, the mind perception and moral status model (H.M. Gray et al., 2007), and the stereotype content model (SCM; Fiske et al., 2002). Although some conceptual overlap exists between these approaches, each provides

a unique understanding of the distinct ways in which humanness is denied to objectified targets. Each one is discussed next.

3.4.2.1. The stereotype content model (SCM).

Stereotypes are cognitive representations of culturally held beliefs about social groups, including desirable and undesirable traits (Amodio & Devine, 2006). According to the SCM, the stereotypes of social groups can be captured by two dimensions: warmth and competence, the central axes of social perception (Fiske et al., 2002). These two dimensions align with the fundamental motives that, within groups and individuals that compete for resources, people want to know the intentions of others (to identify friends and foes), and whether they have the capability to pursue those intentions (Cuddy et al., 2009; Fiske, 2009). In this context, warmth reflects traits related to perceived intent (e.g. friendliness, helpfulness, sincerity, trustworthiness, and morality), while competence captures traits related to perceived ability to act on intent (e.g., skill, intelligence, creativity, and efficacy; Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007).

Research shows that the two dimensions of the SCM are universally associated with people's understanding of social structures and can be used to predict how people react, emotionally and behaviourally, to groups and individuals (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008; Cuddy et al., 2009; Fiske et al., 2007; Fiske et al., 2002). For instance, allies and those we identify with (e.g., the in-group) are seen as high on both warmth and competence, and tend to elicit feelings of pride and admiration; groups that are powerful and high status (e.g., the rich) are seen as competent but cold, and elicit feelings of envy and resentment;

groups that are weak and do not compete with others (e.g., the elderly) are seen as warm but incompetent, and elicit feelings of pity; and groups that are hostile, disliked, or disrespected (e.g., the homeless) are consistently seen as low on both dimensions and evoke feelings of disgust, avoidance, and contempt (Cuddy et al., 2008; Fiske et al., 2002). Perceptions of warmth and competence are therefore central for understanding intergroup and interpersonal relations.

Although the SCM was originally conceived as a model of social cognition and impression formation, work by Susan Fiske and colleagues has demonstrated the relevance of its two dimensions in recognising and denying another's humanity (Fiske, 2013; Fiske et al., 2007; Harris & Fiske, 2006, 2011). Considered through a dehumanisation lens, the SCM helps explain why some outgroups may not be perceived as fully human. For example, dehumanising social perceptions tend to target groups that are stereotyped as lacking on both warmth and competence, which are devalued as literally worth-less (i.e., "the lowest of the low"; Harris & Fiske, 2006). Perceiving someone in this way represents a form of relative dehumanisation (Haslam & Loughnan, 2014).

Social psychologists have used the SCM to examine how dimensions of warmth and competence are attributed to objectified targets. To this end, studies have varied the extent to which targets are depicted in a sexualised manner. Manipulating the way in which people think of others as sexual objects is a widely used method of inducing objectification; for example, by showing participants images of targets dressed in provocative attire (e.g., Loughnan et al., 2015) or in sexualised postures (e.g., Bernard & Wollast, 2019). In line with this, Glick and others (2005) examined the effect of sexy self-

presentation on perceptions of competence for career women in high- and low-status occupations (managers and receptionists, respectively). In their study, 66 undergraduate students viewed a videotape in which a female target dressed in a way that emphasised her sexuality (e.g., wore makeup, tight skirt, low-cut shirt) or in business-like attire. Results showed that women in high-status jobs who dressed in a sexy manner were seen as significantly less competent and evoked more negative emotions from the participants. A later study replicated these findings using a larger sample of participants and different stimulus materials and evaluation measures (Wookey, Graves, & Butler, 2009).

In a similar conceptual vein, Gurung and Chrouser (2007) presented 82 participants with photographs of three well-known female Olympic athletes, in either provocative or sport-appropriate attire. Results showed that when depicted provocatively, the athletes were rated lower in traits related to competence (i.e., intelligence and various capability rankings). In another study, Loughnan and others (2010; Study 2) showed that both men and women were attributed with less competence and intelligence when they were depicted wearing minimal clothing (women wore bikinis, men were shirtless). Lesser attributions of competence to female targets have also been observed when male participants are primed to view women as sexual objects in a fictitious market research task (Rudman & Borgida, 1995), when pre-teen girls are presented in sexualised clothing (Graff, Murnen, & Smolak, 2012), and when women are hyper-sexualised (i.e., shown in revealing clothing and suggestive body positions; Bernard & Wollast, 2019). The latter study also found that hyper-sexualised women were perceived as lacking warmth. As this body of research demonstrates, objectification, as assessed by target sexualisation, impacts

the way in which people recognise women and girls (and to some extent men) as warm (i.e., kind, friendly) and competent (i.e., intelligent, capable) human beings. However, these studies construe sexualisation as objectification and this underlying assumption may have some limitations. For instance, sexualisation may indeed promote objectification; however, it may not necessarily be representative of objectification *per se*.

Additional empirical work has replicated the effect of objectification on perceptions of competence and warmth using methodologies that do not emphasise target sexualisation. For instance, studies have varied the degree to which perceivers focus on the target's appearance over the entire person (e.g., Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Heflick et al., 2011). This mind-body dualistic perspective captures Langton's (2009) notion that objectification involves a reduction of a person to their physical appearance. Hence, participants who are prompted to focus on the target's physical appearance are said to engage in objectification, whereas those prompted to focus on the person (or their personality) do not. Supporting this notion, Heflick and Goldenberg (2009) found that focusing on the appearance of two well-known females—actor Angelina Jolie and politician Sarah Palin—promoted decreased perceptions of the targets' competence as well as reduced intentions to vote for Palin. Later, in a series of three studies with a similar methodology, Heflick and colleagues (2011) found that focusing on a woman's appearance (vs. her personhood) reduced not only perceptions of her competence, but also of her warmth and morality. This effect did not extend to male targets when using the same appearance-focus manipulation. Together, the aforementioned studies are indicative that a heightened focus on a woman's appearance, and therefore seeing her as an object, may

prompt dehumanisation. When objectified, a woman is perceived as lacking both warmth and competence and her humanity is not completely recognised.

More recently, research has integrated eye-tracking methodologies with dehumanising perceptions of targets to empirically examine the objectifying gaze (Riemer et al., 2018). After being administered either an alcoholic or placebo drink, 49 male undergraduates were asked to look at images of women and to evaluate their appearance or personality (participants completed both conditions, counterbalanced). Replicating previous findings, appearance-focus increased objectification, as assessed by longer visual dwell times on the chest and waist of women and shorter times on their face. Results also showed that images of women previously rated as low on both SCM dimensions elicited more objectifying gazes; for example, participants dwelled for significantly longer on the waist and chest of women who were low in perceived warmth and competence. On the contrary, images rated as high on both SCM dimensions (i.e., more humanised targets) elicited fewer objectifying gazes. Moreover, alcohol moderated the effects of warmth and competence on the objectifying gaze, whereby intoxicated participants objectified women rated as low in warmth and competence to a greater extent than their sober counterparts (Riemer et al., 2018). These findings replicate and extend on previous work demonstrating that objectification involves dehumanisation. They also suggest that visual information about a target's warmth and competence may facilitate objectifying perceptions of women in the minds of the perceiver.

3.4.2.2. Haslam's dual humanness model.

Haslam's (2006) account of dehumanisation is another approach that is widely used to examine how objectification may impact on the target's perceived humanity. His model proposes two ways in which an individual can be attributed humanness, by bestowing them with characteristics that embody *human nature* and *human uniqueness*. Human nature (HN) encompasses those specific traits that differentiate humans from inanimate objects or automatons (e.g., warmth, depth, emotionality, openness), whereas human uniqueness (HU) encompasses traits that fundamentally distinguishes humans from animals (e.g., civility, refinement, morality, higher cognition).

To these two senses of humanness correspond to two types of dehumanisation (Haslam, 2006). The first way in which a person can be dehumanised is through the denial of HN characteristics, also referred to as mechanistic dehumanisation. This form of dehumanisation represents the other as lacking warmth, emotions, and individuality; in other words, human essence. People who are mechanistically dehumanised are likened to unfeeling robots or machines. The second way in which a person can be dehumanised is through the denial of HU characteristics, also referred to as animalistic dehumanisation. This form of dehumanisation represents the other as an unthinking savage (i.e., unrefined and lacking in intelligence and self-control). As such, people who are animalistically dehumanised are seen as more closely linked to animals than to humans.

Building on Haslam's framework, studies have demonstrated that objectified women are sometimes the targets of dehumanisation (Bongiorno, Bain, & Haslam, 2013; Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Heflick et al., 2011; Morris, Goldenberg, & Boyd, 2018; Puvia

& Vaes, 2013; Rudman & Mescher, 2012; Vaes, Paladino, & Puvia, 2011). For example, in a series of studies, Heflick and Goldenberg (2009; Heflick et al., 2011) found that women (but not men) were consistently perceived as lacking traits deemed essentially human (e.g., emotional warmth) when participants were instructed to focus on their appearance. This effect replicated across studies irrespective of whether participants viewed videotapes or still images of women that were not explicitly sexualised, and whether the studies varied the level of target familiarity (e.g., Michelle Obama) and attractiveness (e.g., Angelina Jolie). Additional studies have also found that sexually objectified women are attributed less HU traits than their non-objectified counterparts (Bongiorno et al., 2013; Morris et al., 2018). These findings provide direct evidence that objectification induces a perceived reduction in the HN and HU dimensions at an explicit level, particularly for women, thus reducing their status from persons to things or animals.

In addition to altering how people explicitly think about others, the literature suggests that the dehumanising aspect of objectification also occurs automatically. Objectification has been linked to the implicit dehumanisation of women, implicating both of Haslam's senses of humanness (Puvia & Vaes, 2013; Rudman & Mescher, 2012; Vaes et al., 2011). For instance, a set of studies using implicit measures found that sexually objectified female targets (i.e., women depicted in provocative clothing) were more strongly associated with animal concepts (e.g., nature), compared to uniquely human concepts (e.g., culture; Vaes et al., 2011). This animalisation effect was not observed with objectified male targets or with non-objectified targets of both genders (i.e. men and women wearing regular clothing). The same pattern of effects was observed for male and

female participants alike, although the reason for dehumanising sexualised women varied by participants' gender (Vaes et al., 2011). The implicit animalistic dehumanisation of sexually objectified targets was later replicated in a study with an all-woman sample (Puvia & Vaes, 2013).

Additional studies have focused on whether men spontaneously associate women with objects or animals, more than with humans (Rudman & Mescher, 2012). In two studies, the authors measured the participants' tendency to implicitly associate women with animal-, object-, and human-related concepts. Results demonstrated a link between men's tendency to associate women with animals (thus, denying them HU traits) or objects (denying them HN) and the participants' likelihood to sexually victimise women. Cumulatively, the aforementioned studies offer convergent evidence that objectified women are likely to be at risk for both types of dehumanisation, using a range of implicit and explicit techniques.

Expanding our understanding about how objectification includes dehumanising perceptions of the objectified, Loughnan and others (2017) recently demonstrated that targets of objectification also internalise these dehumanising judgements onto the self (i.e., self-dehumanisation). In two studies, the authors found that describing a past experience of objectification resulted in female participants engaging in self-dehumanisation. Indeed, following an objectifying event recall manipulation, participants then thought about and rated themselves as having less HN and HU traits (as well as less competence and warmth). It appears that objectification impacts not only how people

come to view others as less than fully human, but also to view themselves as lacking humanness when they are targeted.

Although the literature provides compelling evidence that objectified women are dehumanised along Haslam's two senses of humanness, it is less clear what conditions would implicate one form of dehumanisation over the other (or both). A recent line of work lead by Kasey Lynn Morris, Jamie Goldenberg, and others aims to differentiate the type of dehumanising signature that stems from objectification (Heflick & Goldenberg, 2014; Morris, 2013; Morris & Goldenberg, 2015; Morris et al., 2018). These authors posit that the manner by which a woman is objectified informs the type of humanity that is denied to her as a result (i.e., whether she is more readily perceived as object-like or animalistic), and that academic researchers have rarely made this distinction when testing objectification (Morris & Goldenberg, 2015). A framework that systematically addresses the dehumanising nature of objectification could help reconcile discrepancies in the existing body of research.

According to Morris and colleagues, portrayals of women that focus on their beauty or appearance, but that are devoid of a sexual component, trigger beauty-based (or appearance-focused) objectification (Morris & Goldenberg, 2015; Morris et al., 2018). This type of objectification leads to mechanistic dehumanisation, thus the objectified is seen as lacking HN. Conversely, portrayals of women that focus on physical appearance, but that are also sexualising, would trigger sex-based (or sexual) objectification. This type of objectification leads to animalistic dehumanisation, thus the objectified is seen as lacking

HU attributes. In some instances, however, sex-based objectification could enable both animalistic and mechanistic dehumanisation to occur (Morris & Goldenberg, 2015).

Across three studies, these authors directly tested this theoretical position and demonstrated that experimentally manipulating both forms of objectification (sex-based and appearance-focused) led to the expected dehumanising outcomes (Morris et al., 2018). More specifically, sexually objectified women (vs. appearance-focused and control) were significantly perceived as lacking HU traits, using two different composites for animalistic dehumanisation. Results also showed that appearance-focused objectified women (vs. control) were significantly perceived as lacking HN traits, using two different composites for mechanistic dehumanisation. Although mean differences of HN traits between the two types of objectification operationalisation did not reach statistical significance, mean scores trended in the hypothesised direction (i.e., lower for appearance-focused objectification compared to sex-based). Importantly, these patterns of results replicated across all three studies, using images (Study 1) and videos of women (Study 2), and a fictious social media profile (Study 3). In addition, Study 3 extended the findings and showed that appearance-focused objectification was uniquely associated with perceptions of women as less capable of feeling pain, and this effect was mediated by mechanistic dehumanisation. This finding is consistent with dehumanisation theory (Haslam, 2006) which suggests that being likened to an object increases a person's vulnerability to harm because, after all, objects are incapable of feeling pain and suffering.

3.4.2.3. Mind perception and moral status models.

The third approach that has largely guided the study of how objectification impacts perceptions of humanity is the mind perception model (H.M. Gray et al., 2007). Similar to Haslam's notion of humanness, this model proposes two orthogonal dimensions—agency and experience—along which attributions of mind are granted or denied (H.M. Gray et al., 2007; K. Gray & Wegner, 2009). *Mental agency* refers to an entity's psychological capacity for thoughts and intentions and encompasses the ability to engage in self-control, deliberate planning, and judgement. *Mental experience* refers to an entity's capacity to feel emotions (e.g., joy, anger), sensations (e.g., pain), appetites (e.g., hunger), and desires. Crucially, recognising another's inner mental states (i.e., affording them a mind) is fundamental in perceiving them as a full person (see Epley & Waytz, 2010, for a review). This, in turn, qualifies the individual as being deserving of moral treatment and ethical consideration (Sapontzis, 1981).

Early research on mind perception demonstrated that people represent an entity's mind, intuitively or intentionally, along the agency and experience dimensions. Work by H.M. Gray and colleagues (2007) found that participants readily ascribed differing levels of these two human-like mental capacities to a wide range of targets (e.g., humans, animals, things, gods) along a pair of continua. For example, robots were seen as having a high degree of agency but possessing little capacity for experience, whereas animals were seen as high in experience yet lacking in agency. Moreover, people inferred different levels of mind even to targets that belong to the same species, like humans. Whereas human

adults were seen as high in both experience and agency, children were seen to possess high levels of experience but to lack agency (similar to animals).

The relative presence and absence of mind is a central feature for the psychological differentiation between people and non-people; as stated by Epley and Waytz "without perceiving minds, people are not perceiving people" (2010, p. 499). Importantly, failure to ascribe mind (i.e., dementalization) impacts how others are perceived and treated. Given that humans possess greater ability for intentional action, self-control, and deliberate planning than non-human animals, when people lack mindful agency they are perceived as animalistic and treated as subservient or instrumental (akin to Haslam's animalistic dehumanisation; Waytz, Gray, Epley, & Wegner, 2010). Moreover, given that humans possess greater capability to experience conscious emotions than mindless things, when people lack mindful experience they are perceived as cold, less sensitive to pain, and treated as objects (akin to Haslam's mechanistic dehumanisation; Waytz et al., 2010).

Additional work by the same research group was able to link mind perception to moral status (K. Gray & Wegner, 2009, 2010, 2011; K. Gray, Young, & Waytz, 2012; Waytz et al., 2010). As previously mentioned, perceiving mindful agency and experience confers others with the basic rights of personhood including autonomy, moral value, and ethical treatment (and no other person can impinge on these rights). Thus, mind perception is fundamental for everyday moral action and moral judgement (Epley & Waytz, 2010). Indeed, an individual's causal responsibility for moral and immoral deeds is closely linked with their perceived *moral agency* (i.e., the capacity to discern right from wrong and intentionally deliberate about these actions). Moreover, an individual's capacity to be the

target of moral and immoral acts is closely linked with their perceived capacity for experience (referred to as *moral patiency*). For example, children are seen as having greater moral patiency than adults, in that they are more vulnerable and sensitive to harm. The extent to which someone spontaneously considers another's moral patiency increases their empathic concern for that person, and makes harming that person seem immoral and unethical (Epley & Waytz, 2010). In contrast, denying mindful capacities and moral worth to another person makes aggression and other immoral treatment onto that person seem permissible (Bandura, 2002). I discuss the consequences of failing to consider the mind and moral worth of objectified women in Section 3.5.

Objectification research suggests that people fail to ascribe mind and moral status to the objectified (K. Gray, Knobe, Sheskin, Bloom, & Barrett, 2011; Heflick et al., 2011; Holland & Haslam, 2013; Loughnan et al., 2010; Loughnan et al., 2013). In two studies, Loughnan and others (2010) found that relative to non-objectified targets, participants attributed lesser mental states and moral status to objectified targets, using both subtle and blatant measures for these variables. In each study, the authors employed a different objectification manipulation: face prominence (the ratio of space occupied by the face over the body: high, medium, low) and degree of skin displayed (clothed vs. skimpily clothed targets). Results showed that participants consistently rated images of men and women as having fewer mental states when their facial prominence was low (Study 1) and when they were sexualised (Study 1 and 2). Put simply, these targets were dementalized when objectified. Moreover, participants showed less moral concern towards objectified individuals, as demonstrated in Study 2, by allocating these targets with a greater quantity

of fictitious pain pills, in a hypothetical pill-allocation task. Consistent with these findings, a later study showed that objectified women elicited significantly lower ratings of mind attribution and moral concern from the participants, when compared to their non-objectified counterparts (Loughnan et al., 2013).

More recently Holland and Haslam (2013, 2015) have looked at different target characteristics and extended our understanding into what facilitates depersonalisation in objectification. In a series of studies, they examined how body size, clothing type, facial prominence, and age impacted on attributions of mind and moral standing. Results showed that participants' ratings for agentic mental capacities were significantly lower for thin (vs. overweight) and sexualised (vs. fully clothed) targets; however, no effect was observed for attributions of mental experience (Holland & Haslam, 2013). Moreover, body size significantly influenced participants' ratings of moral agency and moral patiency, with thin targets denied both dimensions to a greater extent than overweight targets. Clothing type only had an effect on attributions of moral agency, with targets dressed in underwear seen as lacking in this dimension more so than women dressed in plain clothing (Holland & Haslam, 2013). In two later studies, the same authors examined the impact of sexualization and facial prominence of images of prepubescent girls on the same dependent variables (Holland & Haslam, 2015). Results showed that similar to adult women, girls presented in revealing attire and with low facial prominence were perceived as lacking mental agency (but not mental experience) and moral standing.

Studies have also assessed the impact of objectification on automatic cognitions about the target's agency. Cikara, Eberhardt, and Fiske (2011) found that men with hostile

sexist beliefs implicitly associated sexualised women with first-person action verbs (e.g., push) compared to third-person action verbs (e.g., pushes). These findings suggest closer associations between women being the objects of action, rather than the agents of action. In a second study, the authors found that men with hostile sexist attitudes who were shown images of sexualised women (vs. clothed) exhibited lowered activation of the brain regions associated with the attribution of mind and mental states to others (i.e., medial prefrontal cortex; Cikara et al., 2011). It appears that people in general, and in some instances only men, spontaneously ascribe less humanity and agency to objectified women.

It is important to note that although the findings for mental agency appear to be consistent among the research, there is mixed evidence for mental experience. While some studies have found that target objectification reduces perceptions of mindful experience (Loughnan et al., 2010), others have found no effect (Holland & Haslam, 2013, 2015). Moreover, some studies have found the opposite effect altogether (K. Gray et al., 2011). The latter presents an alternative account to models of objectification that suggest that heightened body-focus diminishes attribution of *all* mental capabilities to others.

For example, evidence across six studies indicates that objectification may not induce complete dementalization of the target, but, instead, lead to a redistribution of its perceived mind (K. Gray et al., 2011). More specifically, results showed that seeing someone as a body reduced perceptions of agency, but increased perceptions of experience. These effects were observed when objectification was assessed through target sexualisation (revealing vs. non-revealing images of men and women; Study 1, 3, and 4) and when prompting participants to focus on the physical characteristics of the target (vs.

personality; Study 2). An increased body-focus also influenced moral intuitions, with those represented as a body perceived to be lesser moral agents, but greater moral patients (i.e., more sensitive to harm; Study 5 and 6). Previous studies of mind perception have demonstrated that animals are perceived as high in mental experience but lacking in agency (H.M. Gray et al., 2007), and these six studies indicate that objectified targets may be also perceived as animal-like.

Alternatively, some scholars argue that the conflicting evidence observed in the studies by K. Gray and others (2011) is due to procedural differences in the measurement of mental experience (Vaes et al., 2013). Compared to other research (e.g., Loughnan et al., 2010), the authors used a smaller number of items to measure the construct and a narrower scope for the experience-related traits being assessed. Previous studies have measured a fuller spectrum of mental states reflecting perceptions, emotions, intentions, and thoughts, whereas K. Gray and others (2011) assessed the construct only in terms of the attribution of primary emotions to the target (e.g., pleasure, fear).

Cumulatively, the aforementioned studies largely suggest that objectification contributes to a reduction of perceived mind and moral status to the target. They also provide empirical evidence for some of Nussbaum's (1995, 1999) key features of objectification; more specifically, that the phenomenon involves the denial of certain human characteristics like autonomy, subjectivity, and agency to the objectified. This literature also aligns with the longstanding philosophical conceptualisation of objectification as a phenomenon that encompasses a forfeiture of humanity (Kant, 1963), where placing a greater emphasis on a woman's body (or collection of body parts) comes at

the expense of other non-physical human characteristics related to her mind, personality, and moral worth (Dworkin, 1989; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; MacKinnon, 1991). In essence, the more a woman is objectified the less she is ascribed the capacity to have a rich and complex mental life and be deserving of moral concern. Crucially, these denials of personhood open the door for immoral treatment to occur.

3.4.2.4. Overlap between the three models.

The three humanness frameworks previously outlined overlap to some extent. Yet, Haslam's (2006) model is the only one that has explicitly conceptualised humanness as the foundation for an account of dehumanisation. Considering it as the reference point, both the dimensions of warmth (SCM; Fiske et al., 2002) and mental experience (mind perception model; H.M. Gray et al., 2007) hold some resemblance to Haslam's HN dimension. Similarly, the dimensions of competence (SCM; Fiske et al., 2002) and mental agency (mind perception model; H.M. Gray et al., 2007) map onto the HU dimension. Further, Haslam's humanness dimensions and the mind perception dimensions seem to be more closely aligned – mental experience and HN differentiate humans from objects and robots, while mental agency and HU differentiate humans from animals in a comparable way (Haslam, 2015; Haslam & Loughnan, 2014; Haslam et al., 2013).

Despite their similarities, scholars argue there are important conceptual differences between dimension sets and theoretical difference between models; as such, they should not be treated as synonymous or mutually interchangeable (Haslam et al., 2013; Loughnan & Haslam, 2007). For instance, the SCM aims to capture differences between group

stereotypes and its dimensions make reference to traits that are strongly evaluative (e.g., warmth is positively valued). On the other hand, the mind perception framework aims to capture differences between attributions of mind to all kind of entities (e.g., humans, animals, God, things) and its dimensions refer to mental capacities that are relatively content neutral. Finally, Haslam's model aims to capture differences between humans and non-humans and its dimensions refer to broader psychological characteristics, that are also relatively neutral in content.

As described in the previous sections, all three models have been used to examine objectification as involving dehumanisation. However, only the humanness and mind perception models have been used as proxies for the phenomenon itself, both implicitly (e.g., Rudman & Mescher, 2012) and explicitly (e.g., Holland & Haslam, 2013, 2015). To this end, for the research presented in this thesis I have used measurement techniques aligned to Haslam's model and the mind perception framework when assessing men's implicit and explicit objectification of women and of their romantic partners.

3.4.3. Interim Summary

Although a complete understanding of what it means to objectify another person is still lacking, the research reviewed in the previous sections shows that (a) women are particularly likely to be seen as objects rather than full people (e.g., Bernard et al., 2012; Gervais, Bernard, et al., 2013; Gervais, Holland, et al., 2013; Gervais, Vescio, Förster, et al., 2012), and (b) that objectification is a form of dehumanisation as it involves withdrawals of aspects of humanity from the target (e.g., Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Heflick et al., 2011;

Loughnan et al., 2010; Morris et al., 2018; Vaes et al., 2013). However, the lack of consensus around a definition and the preferred single method to empirically capture the phenomenon has resulted in a wide range of understandings within the field (Haslam et al., 2013).

Researchers have claimed to assess the objectification of others in a variety of ways. On the one hand, research grounded in Objectification Theory has looked at the psychological mechanisms involved in visually recognising others as objects. These researchers have focused on the ordinary, automatic processes underpinning objectification and measured the phenomenon via cognitive methodologies. Some have used images of male and female bodies in different recognition or selective-attention paradigms (Bernard et al., 2012; Bernard, Gervais, Allen, Campomizzi, et al., 2015; Gervais, Vescio, & Allen, 2012; Gervais, Vescio, Förster, et al., 2012; Holland & Haslam, 2013), others have measured neural correlates (Bernard et al., 2017; Vaes et al., 2019), while others have used eye-tracking technology (J.R. Anderson et al., 2018; Gervais, Holland, et al., 2013). However, to date, these studies provide little clarity about how these processes translate into how people are treated when they are objectified.

On the other hand, researchers have also conceptualised objectification as involving dehumanisation and measured it through participants' implicit and explicit judgements of the objectified. To this end, objectification scholars have manipulated the phenomenon by varying the target's degree of sexualisation and facial prominence, or by shifting evaluation contexts (e.g., K. Gray et al., 2011; Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Heflick et al., 2011; Loughnan et al., 2010; Morris et al., 2018). Cumulatively, the empirical evidence sheds light

on the factors that encourage a person to objectify another, and demonstrates the multitude of negative outcomes for the perceiver's judgements and social perceptions towards objectified individuals, particularly women.

Taken as a whole, the body of work previously reviewed indicates that objectified women are sometimes the targets of mechanistic dehumanisation. For example, studies show women can be neurocognitively processed as objects (e.g., Bernard et al., 2012; Bernard et al., 2017), implicitly associated with things rather than humans (e.g., Rudman & Mescher, 2012), and explicitly perceived as lacking human essence, warmth, mindful experience, and moral patiency (e.g., Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Heflick et al., 2011; Loughnan et al., 2010; Morris et al., 2018; Pacilli et al., 2017). In addition, objectified women can also be the targets of animalistic dehumanisation. Studies show that they can be implicitly associated with animals rather than humans (e.g., Puvia & Vaes, 2013; Vaes et al., 2011) and explicitly perceived as possessing less HU traits, competence, intelligence, and capacity for mental agency (e.g., K. Gray et al., 2011; Gurung & Chrouser, 2007; Holland & Haslam, 2013; Loughnan et al., 2010; Morris et al., 2018). As we shall see in the next section, these dehumanised perceptions of women may facilitate violence against them.

3.5. Negative Consequences of Objectifying Women

Having established the underlying theory and research on sexual objectification, I now turn to consider how objectification relates to VAW. Indeed, a key challenge for social psychologists is to explain how objectifying perceptions of women that have been

demonstrated in the laboratory contribute to violence towards them in the world outside. This thesis focuses on the dehumanisation-based measurement of female objectification in the context of romantic relationships. I argue that given its overlap with dehumanisation, the objectification of women is likely to disinhibit aggressive behaviours and render the objectified a more likely victim of violence.

Suggesting that objectification has serious consequences for women that lead to their maltreatment is not a novel idea. Concerns about the association between objectification and interpersonal violence have spawned work over the past decades, particularly in the domain of sexual aggression (e.g., Awasthi, 2017; Gervais et al., 2014; Lanis & Covell, 1995; Rudman & Mescher, 2012; Vance, Sutter, Perrin, & Heesacker, 2015; Yao, Mahood, & Linz, 2010). Moreover, the links between dehumanisation and violence and aggression in intergroup contexts have already been extensively discussed and firmly established in the social psychology literature (for in-depth discussions, see Haslam, 2015; Haslam & Loughnan, 2014). However, there is a dearth of research regarding the extent to which objectification, conceptualised as involving dehumanisation, may be associated with the maltreatment of those whom we regard as closest to us, like romantic partners. To this end, here I will focus my discussion on how denials of aspects of humanity to objectified women (and to romantic partners in Section 3.6) is consequential for how they are (mis)treated.

As noted by the studies reviewed in the previous sections, coupled with a general reduction in perceived humanity, evidence suggests that objectification alters mind attribution and moral status. Being denied these human qualities also makes objectified

individuals seem unworthy of respect, moral concern, and be perceived to suffer less and be more deserving of pain (e.g., Heflick et al., 2011; Loughnan et al., 2010; Morris et al., 2018; for a review, see Loughnan & Pacilli, 2014). Recently, Loughnan and others (2013) were able to replicate some of these findings in a VAW-related context. This study consisted of an impression formation task, followed by an acquaintance rape vignette using a sample of 60 undergraduate students. In line with previous research, results showed that depictions of sexually objectified women (wearing bikinis) evoked lower attributions of mind and moral concern, compared to their non-objectified counterparts (wearing regular clothing). Moreover, after participants learnt about the rape, results showed that the target's clothing increased ratings of the woman's blameworthiness for her sexual assault and reduced perceptions of her suffering (but only for an indirect measure of victim suffering that assessed how much counselling support she should receive and how long it would take her to resume life "as normal" post-attack). Importantly, participants were told that the woman was not wearing the clothing depicted in the images at the moment of the sexual assault. In sum, these findings indicate that objectified women were denied mind and moral concern and were also victim-blamed and deemed to suffer less.

In addition to impacting how the objectified is perceived, studies also show that denials of humanity and moral status to victimised women are consequential for how third parties react to their mistreatment. For example, researchers find that people are less willing to help and provide support to victims of IPV when these women elicited lower ratings of humanness (Baldry et al., 2015) and when they are depicted in sexually objectifying ways (Pacilli et al., 2017). In a similar vein, another study showed that

participants were less willing to provide support to prepubescent girls who were sexually objectified (vs. non-objectified; Holland & Haslam, 2015). These same girls were also judged as more responsible and blameworthy for the harm caused to them in a scenario depicting bullying. Taken together, these findings indicate that objectification has profoundly negative consequences for women (and girls) – not only does it diminish their perceived humanity, but it also affects how others respond to them and show moral concern for them when their moral rights have been clearly violated. Given that objectification entails a loss in target's humanity, personhood, and moral concern, it is likely that these dehumanising perceptions may indeed lay the foundations for violence. However, relatively little psychological research has empirically tested these relationships.

Preliminary evidence supports the speculated link between a tendency for objectification and VAW. Recent research examined the extent to which women were implicitly associated with animal- and object-related constructs (more so than with human-related constructs) and how these associations informed male intentions to sexually aggress towards women (Rudman & Mescher, 2012). Results showed that a tendency to associate women with animals was related to men's willingness to engage in sexual harassment and rape, and to endorse rape myths. A follow-up study measured men's associations between women and animalistic terms, and tools and objects. Results showed that a stronger tendency to objectify women (as animals or objects) was associated with men's rape proclivity and with an analogue task assessing sexual assault (by imposing graphic images of sexual violence on fictitious women; Rudman & Mescher, 2012). Although the outcome variables used in these studies did not include actual aggressive

behaviours, it appears that the tendency to objectify women is related to a range of hostile attitudes and beliefs towards them that facilitate and promote sexual violence.

Additional research supports the notion that objectified women are more vulnerable to violence and at a greater risk of sexual harm. For example, in two studies men who were exposed to objectifying television programs (Galdi, Maass, & Cadinu, 2014) and sexually-explicit video games (Yao et al., 2010) reported an increased likelihood to sexually harass fictitious female interaction partners. In another study, Blake, Bastian, and Denson (2016) examined female sexualisation and sexual aggression. Using a mediation model in a sample of 216 male students (Experiment 1), the authors found that participants perceived women in revealing attire (vs. non-revealing) as more vulnerable to sexually aggressive acts when they were also perceived as being sexually open and lacking in agency (but perceived capacity for experience did not mediate the effect). Taken together, these findings suggest that objectification makes women an easier target for sexual harm.

Researchers have also found a more direct link between engaging in sexual objectification and enacted sexual violence. Using a sample of 502 undergraduate males, Gervais and others (2014) assessed objectification perpetration as the frequency with which men engaged in evaluations of women's bodies and in unwanted sexual advances towards them. Participants then reported their engagement in behaviours reflecting sexual assault perpetration including rape, sexual coercion, and sex without consent. The results showed that among college men, self-reported perpetration of sexual objectification was significantly associated with the perpetration of sexual VAW (Gervais et al., 2014).

The aforementioned studies contribute to the limited but compelling evidence that objectification is a likely contributor to the victimisation of women. However, various limitations to this literature must be noted. First, most of the research to date has been confined to the domain of sexual aggression, and the associations between objectification and other forms of VAW (e.g., physical and psychological abuse) are still poorly understood. Second, with the exception of Rudman and Mescher (2012) and Blake and colleagues (2016), these studies did not directly conceptualise or measure objectification as involving some form of dehumanisation. As such, it remains unclear whether dehumanising perceptions of women informed the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours reported in the studies. Third, although the cumulative evidence suggests that objectification has clear implications in interpersonal aggression, most of the studies have largely relied on participants' self-reports, which are prone to biases, and did not examine actual aggressive behaviours towards women.

More recent studies have attempted to fill some of these gaps in the literature. For instance, researchers have begun to examine the links between objectification and non-sexual aggression towards girls and women (Vasquez, Ball, Loughnan, & Pina, 2018; Vasquez, Osinnowo, Pina, Ball, & Bell, 2017). A study with adolescent youths aged 12-15 years showed that the sexual objectification of girls significantly predicted general aggression towards them, even after controlling for other factors of aggression like trait aggression, gang affiliation, age, and gender (Vasquez et al., 2017). These results suggest that the objectification-aggression link can even be observed in juvenile men. However,

this study was correlational and could not make causal attributions between objectification and VAW.

A later study extended these findings and examined the causal link between objectification and physical aggression towards women in the context of a provocation (Vasquez et al., 2018). In two experiments, participants were asked to interact with a female confederate either face-to-face (Experiment 1; n = 80) or via a video presentation (Experiment 2; n = 128). Objectification was manipulated by asking participants to focus on their interaction partner's physical appearance or her personality (body- and personality-focus conditions, respectively). Participants then received bogus feedback about their interaction performance, either positive or negative (no provocation and provocation conditions, respectively). Following the feedback, participants could physically aggress against the female confederate indicating the amount of time she should hold her hand under ice-cold water. Results replicated for both experiments, showing a statistically significant interaction between objectification (i.e., body-focus condition) and provocation, with a body-focus mindset triggering aggressive behaviour towards the target, but only in the absence of provocation. Although the findings were not what the authors expected—they hypothesised that provoked participants who objectified the target would be the most aggressive—this study demonstrated that just by asking participants to focus on a woman's body (the minimal conditions for objectification) was enough to elicit heightened aggression (Vasquez et al., 2018). Moreover, compared to other research (e.g., Loughnan et al., 2010; Morris et al., 2018), the effect was observed with participants who believed the pain that they were inflicting was real (vs. hypothetical in previous studies)

and perpetrated on an actual female target (vs. an image of an unknown woman). This study therefore adds to the growing amount of evidence that suggests objectification may encourage more than just sexual aggression towards women.

It is important to clarify that I do not intend to claim that objectification is linked to dehumanising perceptions of the target and violence perpetration only for men. In Westernised cultural milieus people are often objectified and viewed as commodities. The mainstream media is saturated with representations of men and women that are sexually objectifying or that glorify sexual violence (Calogero et al., 2011). Therefore, it is not surprising that the evidence indicates that women also objectify other women (Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005) and that they too hold dehumanising perceptions towards those they objectify (Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Loughnan et al., 2010). As demonstrated in this section, perceiving another person as anything less than fully human has negative implications for how they are treated and cared for. Accordingly, research demonstrates that women (as do men) care less for the suffering of objectified female targets (Pacilli et al., 2017) and are willing to physically aggress against them (Vasquez et al., 2018).

Although objectification may also facilitate violence towards men in the real world, my research program focuses solely on male-to-female aggression, specifically IPV. I have outlined the reasoning behind these methodological decisions in Chapter 1 (see Section 1.3.1). Moreover, the factors that promote objectification and the psychological processes that link the phenomenon with aggression may be different for men and women. Studies show that physique-anxiety, sexual competition, and psychological distancing may impact the extent to which women objectify other women (Puvia & Vaes, 2013; Vaes et al., 2011). In

contrast, for men, sexual motivation, power, and holding negative and hostile sexist attitudes and beliefs towards women are some of the factors that contribute to a tendency for female objectification (Cikara et al., 2011; Rudman & Mescher, 2012; Vaes et al., 2013), and these factors are likely to translate into male violence targeted at the objectified (Awasthi, 2017). To this end, my approach does not intend to ignore or diminish men's experiences of violence in romantic relationships, but to conduct a gendered examination of objectification, as a plausible factor playing a role in men's perpetration of VAW.

3.6. Objectification of Women in Romantic Relationships & IPV

As demonstrated in Chapter 2, women continue to experience acts of violence in their daily lives, and mainly at the hands of their male intimate partners (UN, 2015). Given that objectification involves seeing the objectified as less than fully human, and that dehumanisation opens the gate to aggression, it seems likely that objectification is a powerful contributor to male perpetrated IPV. As such, heterosexual romantic relationships are an important domain for studying the negative effects of objectification.

Moreover, physical attraction and sexual interest are considered to be important parts of most romantic relationships (and normal aspects of human beings), especially in cultures where women are highly valued for their looks and beauty (Feingold, 1990; Wolf, 1990). Thus, it is likely that through an emphasis on physical appearance heterosexual men may often objectify their romantic partners. As demonstrated in the previous sections, objectification has been associated with a host of negative consequences that influence the

expression of aggression and VAW. However, and despite the potential real-world detrimental implications that the phenomenon could have, an empirical focus on objectification in the context of romantic relationships is still missing.

Dehumanisation scholars have long theorised and demonstrate that the phenomenon plays a role in facilitating maltreatment, violence, and aggression towards others (Bandura, 1999; Haslam, 2015). The majority of past research, however, has examined these detrimental outcomes in the context of intergroup relationships and conflict. More recently, researchers have started to focus on interpersonal dehumanisation and its consequences for how people are treated in their daily social interactions (Bastian, Jetten, & Haslam, 2014). To date, only one published study has directly investigated dehumanisation in the context of romantic relationships and the extent to which the phenomenon is associated with the maltreatment of romantic partners (Pizzirani & Karantzas, 2019). During a 6-week period, the authors examined longitudinal associations between dehumanisation and perpetration of emotional abuse and physical violence towards the romantic partner. Results showed that engaging in dehumanisation, by way of denials of HN and HU characteristics to the partner, predicted increases in IPV over time, which were marked by a dynamic pattern of decreases and large increases (Pizzirani & Karantzas, 2019). Although this study did not directly examine objectifying perceptions of romantic partners nor manipulated the phenomenon, it provides empirical evidence to the claim that dehumanisation—which is central to our notion of objectification—has dire consequences within romantic relationships.

Research that directly examines objectification in the context of romantic relationships and its associations with violence is very rare. However, as demonstrated in the previous section, emerging psychological research supports a link between objectification and VAW more generally (e.g., Galdi et al., 2014; Gervais et al., 2014; Rudman & Mescher, 2012; Vasquez et al., 2018). Moreover, qualitative and interview-based studies outside psychology support the more specific claim that viewing women in objectifying ways facilitates men's IPV (Lau & Stevens, 2012; Pappas, McKenry, & Catlett, 2004; Tilley & Brackley, 2005). For instance, a study of male hockey players found that the objectification of women was a contributing factor to the use of violence outside the athletic arena and in their close interpersonal relationships (Pappas et al., 2004). Additional qualitative studies suggest a possible relationship between objectification and IPV, identifying common themes among male offenders that may play a role in their perpetration of violence. These themes include viewing women as possessions and things to be dominated and conquered (Tilley & Brackley, 2005; Totten, 2003), feelings of ownership towards a partner's body and identity (Lau & Stevens, 2012), and believing that they have the right to control the partner's life (Wood, 2004). These themes parallel many of Nussbaum's key facets of objectification, first discussed in Section 3.2 of this chapter. It appears that when men see and treat their romantic partner as objects—to be possessed and controlled—this facilitates and condones immoral treatment enacted upon them.

Over the last decade, researchers have started paying more attention to the negative effects of objectification in the context of romantic relationships (e.g., Davidson & Gervais, 2015; Gervais & Davidson, 2013; Jonnson et al., 2018; Ramsey & Hoyt, 2014; Ramsey,

Marotta, & Hoyt, 2016; Sáez Díaz, Alonso-Ferres, et al., 2019; Sáez Díaz, Riemer, Brock, & Gervais, 2019; Tylka & Kroon Van Diest, 2015; Zurbriggen et al., 2011). However, many of these studies did not assess IPV at all, but instead focused on other relationship outcomes. For example, some studies have investigated associations between objectification and relationship satisfaction (Ramsey et al., 2016; Sáez Díaz, Alonso-Ferres, et al., 2019; Sáez Díaz, Riemer, et al., 2019; Zurbriggen et al., 2011) while others have examined how a woman's perceptions of her male partner's pornography consumption impact on her self-reported experiences of objectification, body surveillance, and body shame (Tylka & Kroon Van Diest, 2015). Although informative, these findings are not directly relevant to our understanding of why men commonly engage in violent acts towards the romantic partner.

Out of the few studies in the literature that directly assess objectification and IPV, two have used samples of college women to examine the effect of IPV victimisation on Objectification Theory constructs (Davidson & Gervais, 2015; Gervais & Davidson, 2013). Specifically, results have demonstrated that experiencing IPV (physical, sexual, and psychological) positively predicts self-objectification, body surveillance, and body shame for women. However, these findings provide little insight into the research questions informing this thesis because they consider the impact of violence victimisation on women through self-objectification processes, rather than the impact of violence perpetration by men through other-objectification processes.

To date, only three studies have examined associations between other-objectification and IPV perpetration (Jonnson et al., 2018; Ramsey & Hoyt, 2014; Sáez Díaz, Alonso-Ferres, et al., 2019). The first study consisted of a sample of 116 heterosexual

college men and investigated the relationship between objectification and sexual violence in romantic relationships (Ramsey & Hoyt, 2014; Study 2). The authors found that men who self-reported frequently surveying and judging their female partner's body were more likely to sexually pressure and sexually coerce them into having unwanted sex. This effect was mediated by self-reported feelings of shame about the size and shape of the partner's body. This study provides preliminary evidence that men who commit (sexual) violence towards female romantic partners also have a tendency to perceive them as objects. A later study showed similar results, where heterosexual men (n = 136) who objectified their romantic partners, and other women in general, also perpetrated more sexually coercive behaviours towards the current (or former) female intimate partner (Sáez Díaz, Alonso-Ferres, et al., 2019; Study 2). Similar to Ramsey and Hoyt (2014), however, these researchers conceptualised and assessed partner-objectification (and interpersonal-objectification) as the extent to which men evaluated and monitored the bodies of the female targets.

The third study consisted of a sample of 1,005 male and female Canadian university students who were in a heterosexual relationship during the previous year (Jonnson et al., 2018). The authors examined whether self-objectification and other-objectification—defined as the objectification of members of the opposite sex—were associated with a history of severe IPV perpetration and victimisation (sexual, physical, and psychological). In their study, self-objectification was measured using the SOQ (Noll & Fredrickson, 1998; discussed in Section 3.3.2) and other-objectification was measured using a modified version of the same scale. Results showed that for women (but not for men), a history of

severe IPV victimisation (all types) was significantly associated with higher levels of self-objectification, compared to women who were not victimised or who were bidirectionally violent (i.e., both a victim and a perpetrator of IPV). These results are consistent with prior research by Davidson and Gervais (2015) where IPV predicted women's self-objectification scores. Moreover, for men (but not for women), a history of severe IPV perpetration (physical and psychological) was significantly associated with higher levels of other-objectification, compared to non-violent or bidirectionally violent men. This study provides evidence that for men (but not for women) a greater tendency to objectify members of the opposite sex is related to IPV perpetration.

There are important limitations to the aforementioned studies that need noting. First, in their research, these authors conceptualised and measured objectification as involving an exaggerated emphasis on physical appearance. Researchers are yet to explore objectification as involving dehumanisation and in the context of romantic relationships. Moreover, thus far the scope of knowledge has been mostly limited to the domain of sexual aggression and it remains unclear whether similar associations would emerge between objectification and other forms of partner maltreatment (but see Jonnson et al., 2018, for preliminary evidence). Finally, Jonnson and others (2018) assessed other-objectification as the extent to which participants objectified members of the opposite sex (as a category); however, they did not assess partner-objectification *per se*. Hence, it remains unclear whether their results would replicate when looking directly at the female romantic partner as the objectified target.

3.7. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have outlined the literature on objectification starting from its philosophical conceptualisations and then moving onto the psychological domain. There, the phenomenon has been examined from the perspective of the person being objectified and the person doing the objectification. My program of research assesses objectification solely from the perspective of the objectifier and in the context of romantic relationships.

Cumulatively, this chapter has demonstrated that at its core, objectification, although a multifaceted and complex process, involves cognitively reducing a person to an object (Bernard, Gervais, et al., 2018) or perceiving them as less than fully human (ascribing them lesser humanness, mind, and moral status; Haslam et al., 2013). In addition, I have reviewed the literature connecting dehumanisation and objectification, and how these processes can have harmful consequences for women in their daily lives (e.g., how people treat and show moral concern for them). I argue that given its overlap with dehumanisation, it is likely that objectification facilitates maltreatment towards women in romantic relationships. However, despite the existence of well-established links between dehumanisation, violence, and aggression there is limited evidence linking objectification and IPV. These associations have been largely assumed in the philosophical, feminist, and psychological literature rather than empirically examined.

Despite the scarcity of research into objectification and violence in romantic relationships, preliminary findings provide support for general associations between objectification and VAW (e.g., Gervais et al., 2014; Rudman & Mescher, 2012; Vasquez et al., 2018), and more specific associations between objectification and IPV (e.g., Jonnson et

al., 2018; Ramsey & Hoyt, 2014; Sáez Díaz, Alonso-Ferres, et al., 2019). However, to date, this literature has been largely limited to the domain of sexual aggression. It remains unclear whether similar associations would emerge in the context of romantic relationships, when also expanding the breadth of research to include a broader range of IPV acts outside the sexual realm.

Moreover, most of the studies that provide compelling evidence for objectification as a likely contributor to the victimisation of women have failed to conceptualise and measure the phenomenon as involving some form of dehumanisation. As such, it remains unclear whether similar associations would emerge in the context of romantic relationships, when also focusing on the dehumanisation-based measurement of female objectification. The purpose of this thesis is to address these gaps in the literature and provide empirical evidence for a direct link between objectification and different forms of IPV.

CHAPTER 4: OVERVIEW OF APPROACH, METHODS, & EMPIRICAL STUDIES

4.1. Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of three interconnected empirical studies that examine the extent to which the objectification of women may facilitate men's IPV perpetration within heterosexual romantic relationships. These studies' objectives are to bridge the existing gaps in the literature, as detailed in Chapter 2 and 3, and deepen our understanding of the range of detrimental effects that stem from objectification.

As discussed in Chapter 2, IPV is a major burden on the health and wellbeing of women, and is a common source of physical, psychological, and emotional harm to them (Cronholm, Fogarty, Ambuel, & Harrison, 2011; Lum On et al., 2016). In this thesis, I argue that objectification plays a role in the enactment of male perpetrated IPV, increasing a woman's likelihood of suffering harm at the hands of her romantic partner. As detailed in Chapter 3, researchers have made considerable efforts to examine objectification and the array of negative consequences that follow as a result of being viewed as an object. For women, being the target of objectification lessens their personhood and facilitates transgressive and immoral behaviour to occur against them (e.g., Loughnan et al., 2010; Rudman & Mescher, 2012; Vasquez et al., 2018). Nonetheless, to date, little research has focused on the processes and outcomes involved in people seeing and treating women as objects in the domain of romantic relationships. A lack of academic enquiry is surprising,

given that this context is where most violence and abuse are perpetrated upon women in the world outside. To the extent that objectification contributes to the victimisation of women, the phenomenon may represent an under-researched risk factor for IPV.

This chapter will provide a synopsis of the general approach and main methods behind my program of research (i.e., the overall arc of my research). Then it moves to concisely outline the broad approach adopted for each study, including samples, methodologies, and findings obtained. I leave discussion of the specificity of each study to the individual chapters in the remainder of this thesis. At the end of this chapter, I also provide a table that summarises the empirical studies and the fundamental research questions they each address (see Table 4.1).

4.2. General Approach & Main Methods

My research program employs a mixed methodology, combining surveys and behavioural experimentation. It targets heterosexual men from a range of backgrounds recruited from online community samples. All the participants were from developed, Westernised countries like the United States and Australia. As detailed in Chapter 1, young adult males are at a greater risk of IPV perpetration (Heise & García-Moreno, 2002), and therefore, I investigate objectification exclusively with men aged 18-35 years old. Further, all men were currently in a committed heterosexual romantic relationship for a minimum of one year, and all of the IPV-related measures in this research program asked participants to solely base their responses on that particular romantic relationship.

In this thesis, male partner violence perpetration is always assessed in relation to the participants' objectification of female targets: Study 1 (Chapter 5) measures the objectification of women in general, while Study 2 and 3 (Chapter 6 and 7, respectively) measure the objectification of the female romantic partner. This is a novel approach, because most of the literature to date that investigates the negative effects of objectification in the context of romantic relationships either focuses on relationship outcomes other than IPV (e.g., Ramsey et al., 2016; Zurbriggen et al., 2011) or considers the impact of IPV victimisation on women through self-objectification processes (e.g., Davidson & Gervais, 2015; Gervais & Davidson, 2013). In contrast, this thesis uniquely focuses on the impact of male-to-female violence perpetration through other-objectification processes.

Moreover, in my research program I conceptualise objectification as involving some form of dehumanisation. Hence, I focus on the dehumanisation-based measurement of female objectification in the context of romantic relationships and use measurement techniques that align with Haslam's (2006) dual humanness model and the mind perception framework (K. Gray et al., 2011). As discussed in Chapter 3, these two models have been previously used in objectification research as proxies for objectification (e.g., Holland & Haslam, 2013, 2015; Rudman & Mescher, 2012). This too is a novel approach, given that prior research on objectification in the realm of romantic relationships has mostly conceptualised and measured the phenomenon as involving an excessive preoccupation with women's bodily appearance.

Across all three studies, I measure objectification using either implicit (Study 1 and 2) or explicit (Experiment 3) methods, with the aim of gaining a more coherent and complete understanding of the role that the phenomenon plays in the victimisation of women in romantic relationships. To this end, I also examine different forms of male perpetrated IPV – sexual, physical, and psychological. To date, most research on objectification and VAW has been confined to the sexual realm; however, the phenomenon may also have deleterious consequences outside this domain. I therefore attempt to overcome this limitation and provide a more complete account of the process by focusing on different types of IPV.

The aim of this thesis is thus to provide a more nuanced understanding of how objectification may facilitate violence and be consequential for how women are treated in their romantic relationships. Further, its approach meaningfully extends upon the existing body of empirical work on objectification in romantic relationships in three major ways: (a) by focusing on the person doing the objectification rather than the person being objectified, (b) conceptualising and testing objectification as involving dehumanisation, and (c) examining how objectification contributes to violence in a variety of domains.

4.3. The Studies

In three studies, I investigate whether objectification (a) contributes to the perpetration of different forms of male IPV (Study 1, 2, and 3), (b) directly and indirectly facilitates male physical aggression towards the female partner (Study 2 and 3), and (c) is associated with reductions in the perceived personhood of the female romantic partner

(Study 3). Further, Study 1 and 2 examine the objectification of women implicitly, while Study 3 does it explicitly. Next, I provide a brief overview of each empirical study.

4.3.1. Study 1 & 2: Implicit Objectification & IPV

In an attempt to establish whether objectifying perceptions of women that have been demonstrated in the laboratory also contribute to violence towards them in romantic relationships, Study 1 (Chapter 5) focuses on the relation between *implicit* objectification and IPV. To this end, the study uses an online community sample of men (n = 215) with the purpose of assessing whether objectifying women *in general* (i.e., at the group level) plays a role in IPV perpetration in romantic relationships. Specifically, I present male participants with an implicit task and measure whether spontaneously associating women with non-human entities (animals, objects; Haslam, 2006) more than humans, predicts self-reported past perpetration of sexual, physical, and psychological violence against their current female intimate partner. Moreover, given that sexism has been linked with a tendency to perceive women as less than fully human, and with VAW, this study also assesses sexist hostility towards women and its associations with IPV and objectification.

The findings from Study 1 reveal that implicitly associating women with objects (but not animals) predicted two of the three types of IPV – increasing men's likelihood of having perpetrated sexual and physical partner violence in their current romantic relationship. In addition, the results indicate that sexism predicted all forms of IPV, but it was not associated with automatically likening women to objects or animals. This study adds to the body of evidence suggesting that female objectification—even if the link is not

made explicit—plays a role in male sexual and physical aggression towards women, expanding these findings to the context of romantic relationships.

Study 2 (Chapter 6) builds on the finding that men who objectify women are more prone to commit IPV, and examines whether the finding replicates when assessing the objectification of a close relationship partner. Specifically, with an online community sample of men (n = 325), I explore the relations between implicitly associating the intimate partner with animals or objects and the likelihood of perpetrating IPV within the romantic relationship. This study uses a similar implicit task to Study 1, as well as the same sexism and IPV-related measures. Additionally, the study also includes a behavioural task as a proxy for male physical aggression towards the female romantic partner. Moreover, given that IPV does not occur in a vacuum, this study exposes men to a situational provocation known to instigate an urge to aggress prior to administering the physical IPV analogue.

Partially replicating the results from Study 1, the findings from Study 2 suggest that men with a stronger tendency to automatically associate their female partner with objects (but not with animals) self-reported perpetrating more physical IPV in their current romantic relationship. Also, these men—as well as those who associate their partner with animals—behave in a more physically aggressive manner towards their partner when highly provoked. Further, results reveal that sexism predicted all of the IPV-related measures (both self-reports and the behavioural proxy), but this variable was, as with Study 1, not related to objectification. This finding suggests that sexism and objectification may be independently contributing to IPV risk in romantic relationships.

The reason for investigating objectification implicitly in these two studies is two-fold. First, men may be unaware that they hold dehumanising mental associations about women, as they can exist outside of conscious awareness or be introspectively inaccessible (Gawronski, Hofmann, & Wilbur, 2006; Nosek, 2007). Thus, directly asking men whether they equate women to objects and/or animals may prove a futile endeavour. Second, even if aware, men are likely to be reluctant to admit that they ascribe women with lesser humanity, as this is clearly socially undesirable (Gawronski & De Houwer, 2014). In dealing with these limitations, I examine men's objectifying perceptions of women via implicit methodologies. Indeed, these techniques have been shown to be a valuable tool for researchers when assessing psychological attributes with people who are either unable or unwilling to provide accurate reports (Gawronski & De Houwer, 2014).

4.3.2. Experiment 3: Explicit Objectification & IPV

The final study, Experiment 3 (Chapter 7), changes the focus of investigation to examine the *explicit* objectification of romantic partners and the consequences that follow for women in romantic relationships using an experimental design.

The findings from Study 1 and 2 provide novel evidence that men who commit physical violence towards their current female partner also have a tendency to implicitly perceive her as an object (as well as to perceive women, in general, in the same way). But these two studies are correlational and cannot make causal claims between objectification and IPV. Experiment 3 thus builds upon these findings and examines a direct causal link between explicit partner-objectification and enacting physical aggression towards the

romantic partner. Additionally, this study evaluates men's judgements about their female partner's perceived personhood brought on by objectification.

Using an online community sample of heterosexual men (n = 192), Study 3 experimentally manipulates partner-objectification—induced by asking participants to either focus on the physical appearance or personality of their female romantic partner—and measures its effect on enacted physical aggression towards the same partner. Building on the findings from Study 2, this study's experimental design also includes provocation as a common instigating factor for aggression (see C.A. Anderson & Bushman, 2002). To this end, Study 3 experimentally manipulates provocation by exposing participants to a social dynamic in which they are either severely provoked or not provoked by the romantic partner. The study then examines whether objectification and provocation interact to increase men's willingness to cause physical harm to the partner. The results suggest a direct causal link between engaging in partner-objectification and provocation on enacted physical violence towards the romantic partner. These findings extend on previous work by demonstrating that the aggression-promoting effect of objectification is not restricted to general interpersonal contexts where men interact with women (strangers or acquaintances), with our results showing similar effects within the context of intimate relations where men interact with their close female partner.

Further, because objectification involves reducing another to an object rather than seeing them as a full person, Study 3 examines the impact of a body-focused mindset on men's perceptions of their female romantic partner's personhood. The results reveal mixed effects on denials of aspects of personhood that stem from partner-objectification,

whereby men that attend to their female partner's physical appearance perceive her as lacking humanness (in terms of HN, but not HU) and mental capacity (in terms of experience, but not agency); however, these men do no fail to acknowledge her as possessing moral standing. These novel findings suggest that the pernicious impact of a narrowed focus on a woman's appearance on judgements of humanity and mind applies equally to women in the context of romantic relationships.

Taken together, the findings from these three studies indicate that objectification has profoundly negative manifestations and consequences for women in romantic relationships. Not only does it diminish their perceived humanity and mind, but it also directly and indirectly facilitates physical violence against them (and to a lesser extent sexual violence, as seen in Study 1). Cumulatively, this program of research provides compelling evidence that objectification is a likely contributor to the victimisation of women in romantic relationships.

Table 4.1.
Overview of the Studies and Major Research Questions Informing Each Study

Study	Design & Analysis	Independent variable(s)	Dependent variable(s)	Primary research question(s)
1 *N* = 215	Correlational: Negative binomial regression model	Implicit objectification (of women in general)	IPV (sexual, physical, and psychological): self-reported past perpetration	Is the objectification of women associated with men's likelihood of perpetrating IPV? Does objectification predict men's past use of physical, sexual, and psychological IPV in their current romantic relationship?
2 *N* = 325	Correlational: Negative binomial regression model	Implicit objectification (of the current female romantic partner)	IPV (sexual, physical, and psychological): self-reported past perpetration Physical IPV via a behavioural proxy for physical aggression	Is partner-objectification associated with men's likelihood of perpetrating IPV? Does partner-objectification predict men's past use of physical, sexual, and psychological IPV in their current romantic relationship? Does partner-objectification facilitate men's enacted physical aggression against their romantic partner?
3 *N* = 192	Experimental: Between-subjects ANOVA with objectification and provocation as factors	Explicit objectification (of the current female romantic partner) Partner provocation	Attributions of humanness, mind, and moral status to the romantic partner Physical IPV via a behavioural proxy for physical aggression	Does partner-objectification and provocation directly contribute to enacted physical IPV against the female romantic partner? Does partner-objectification impact on men's perceptions of personhood to their female romantic partner? Do men attribute lesser humanness, mind, and moral status to their romantic partner when she is objectified (vs. non-objectified)?

CHAPTER 5: IMPLICIT OBJECTIFICATION OF WOMEN & IPV

5.1. Overview of Study 1

Feminist scholars argue that Western societies—through the media and consumer capitalism, for example—reinforce views of women as things to be admired, evaluated, and consumed for the pleasure of others (Bordo, 1993; Dworkin, 1989, 2000; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Gill, 2008). A culture within which some*one* becomes a some*thing* perpetuates inequality and facilitates violence (Aubrey et al., 2011; Bemiller & Schneider, 2010; Flood & Pease, 2009; Lanis & Covell, 1995; Murphy, 2013). Indeed, the philosophical feminist literature suggests that the objectification of women, and its consequential perceptions of them as less than fully human, facilitates IPV (e.g., Bartky, 1990; Dworkin, 2000; Nussbaum, 1999). However, these associations have been widely assumed by theorists rather than empirically examined.

Support for these claims has started to emerge in recent years, with experimental research suggesting that objectification may render women more likely to be victims of violence. For example, an Italian study found that men who were exposed to objectifying television programs, depicting women as sexual and decorative adornments, were more likely to engage in gender-harassing behaviours during a subsequent interaction with a fictitious female partner (Galdi et al., 2014). Similarly, research using implicit social cognition measures demonstrated that men who perceived women as less than fully human, likening them to either animals or objects, were also more likely to report greater

proclivities for sexual harassment and rape (Rudman & Mescher, 2012). Taken together, these findings indicate a link between objectification and the sexual victimisation of women. However, it remains unclear whether similar associations would also emerge in the context of romantic relationships.

Given that the vast majority of the violence that women experience is perpetrated by intimate partners (UN, 2015), and that objectification may facilitate such violence, romantic relationships are a rich domain to examine the negative effects of the phenomenon. Yet, research in this area is scarce. The small quantity of existing studies suggest that objectification contributes to IPV. For instance, recent research has found that partner-objectification among heterosexual men is associated with higher self-reported rates of sexual pressure and sexual coercion against female partners (Ramsey & Hoyt, 2014; Sáez Díaz, Alonso-Ferres, et al., 2019). The evidence therefore supports a relationship between objectification and sexual aggression both outside (Rudman & Mescher, 2012) and within romantic relationships (Ramsey & Hoyt, 2014; Sáez Díaz, Alonso-Ferres, et al., 2019).

A major difference between this program of research and the existing psychological literature on objectification in romantic relationships is how the phenomenon has been conceptualised and measured. For instance, to date, the research has only examined partner-objectification as the extent to which men survey and judge the body of female partners using modified versions of the OBCS (discussed in Section 3.3.2), whereas in this thesis I have opted to focus on the idea that objectification involves dehumanisation. It is

unclear whether this theoretical approach—conceptualising objectification as more than just body surveillance—would replicate prior findings.

Although the existing literature indicates that a tendency to objectify women contributes to violence in the sexual domain, little research has examined whether associations would also emerge in other domains. In one of the only studies published to date, Jonnson and colleagues (2018) found that males with a history of perpetration of severe physical and psychological IPV also objectified members of the opposite sex to a greater extent, compared to non-offenders or men with a history of bidirectional IPV. Again, however, the authors of this study conceptualised other-objectification primarily as the participants' excessive preoccupation with women's bodily appearance.

Additional experimental research has found preliminary causal evidence for an objectification-physical aggression link. Vasquez and colleagues (2018) examined whether objectification and provocation interacted to increase physical, non-sexual aggression towards real-life female targets. In two experiments, they demonstrated that in the absence of provocation, aggression levels were higher for participants who directly objectified women, compared to those who did not (Vasquez et al., 2018). A limitation to this study is that, while the authors theoretically implicated dehumanisation in the objectification process that elicited heightened aggression, they did not directly measure whether the phenomenon impacted the extent to which targets were afforded humanness.

My research aims to build on previous findings and address the evidence gaps discussed above. To do so, Study 1 focuses on heterosexual men in romantic relationships and examines the role that objectification plays in the victimisation of their current female

partner. In this study, I assess the phenomenon as the extent to which men implicitly associate women to non-human entities (animals, objects; Haslam, 2006), and measure self-reported perpetration of IPV in various domains (sexual, physical, and psychological). Although claims of causation cannot be made, Study 1 informs whether objectification predicts IPV. I hypothesise that men who hold stronger automatic cognitive associations between women and objects or women and animals would be more likely to report (a) sexual violence as measured by the extent to which they sexually pressure and coerce their partners into unwanted sex, and (b) physical violence and psychological abuse, as measured by frequency of perpetration of these types of behaviours in the current romantic relationship. The first part of the hypothesis looks to replicate and extend previous findings for associations between objectification and sexual violence (Ramsey & Hoyt, 2014; Rudman & Mescher, 2012; Sáez Díaz, Alonso-Ferres, et al., 2019). Given the relatively little research on objectification in the context of romantic relationships, the second part of the hypothesis is exploratory. It aims to further understanding on the detrimental behavioural consequences of objectification for women by considering a broader range of intimate abusive behaviours.

In addition, Study 1 examines the relationships between sexism, objectification, and IPV, although demonstrating these associations is not central to this thesis. Similarly to objectification, patriarchy and sexist hostility towards women have a negative flow-on effect for how women are perceived and treated in society. For example, a recent systematic review of the literature found that hostile attitudes and behaviours towards women (e.g., negative talk about them) were moderate proximal predictors of men's IPV perpetration

(Capaldi et al., 2012). Another meta-analysis of the components of masculine ideology found that hostility towards women (e.g., beliefs that females deserve violence in certain situations) was consistently associated with the likelihood of reporting sexual VAW (Murnen et al., 2002), with a small-to-moderate effect size (r = .26, d = .54) according to Cohen's (1998) guidelines. Moreover, cross-sectional research directly examining a range of sexist attitudes towards women and gender-based violence consistently demonstrate that hostile sexism (HS)—defined as antipathy and distrust towards women who challenge male authority and power (Glick & Fiske, 2001)—positively correlates with IPV perpetration (Allen, Swan, & Raghavan, 2009; Forbes et al., 2004; Renzetti et al., 2015). Taken together, these studies suggest that hostile sexist attitudes towards women are a common contributor to men's violence against them.

Although feminist scholars argue that the objectification of women is a key component of sexism (De Beauvoir, 1949/1979; MacKinnon, 1987), the empirical psychological evidence supporting this relationship is not straightforward. To date, research has yielded inconclusive results. For instance, some studies have found a positive association between these variables, with men who score high in HS more likely to objectify sexualised women (Cikara et al., 2011) and to perceive women as having lesser humanity (Viki & Abrams, 2003). Moreover, at an experimental level, exposure to objectifying media images of women has been shown to increase men's endorsement of sexist attitudes towards them (i.e., HS scores; Rollero, 2013). However, other evidence fails to support these relationships. For example, in two studies Rudman and Mescher (2012) did not find a statistically significant correlation between participants' HS scores and their

tendencies to implicitly dehumanise women as either animals or objects. It is possible that the discrepancies observed in the empirical literature may reflect the different ways in which objectification has been measured in the field. Nevertheless, further research is needed to better elucidate these relationships. Based on the earlier review, the current study examines the extent to which objectification and sexism relate to IPV perpetration and to each other. I expect that HS would be positively associated with female objectification and predict all of the IPV-related outcome measures.

5.2. Method

5.2.1. Participants

I performed a priori statistical power analysis on the free-to-use software G*Power 3.1 (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) to determine sample size. The estimation used an expected small-to-medium effect size (r = .20), as obtained in previously published similar studies (e.g., Rudman & Mescher, 2012), and standard statistical parameters of α = .05 and 1-β = .80 (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). The projected sample size needed to detect this level of effect was 193 participants; however, given the study's strict recruitment criteria, the expected level of attrition, and the amount of data exclusion that is common when using implicit measures, I sampled 300 participants to account for data loss and retain power.

Participants were recruited from an online community sample via Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). This web service distributes task requests to a population of

workers throughout the United States. There, workers volunteer to complete human intelligence tasks, such as research surveys, for a nominal amount of money. Empirical evidence suggests MTurk produces reliable data for the social sciences by providing samples of participants that are more diverse and more representative of the population, compared to samples gathered from typical Western university settings or other internet samples (see Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011, for a description of MTurk sampling). To participate, respondents needed to identify as being male, heterosexual, 18 to 35 years old, and currently involved in a committed romantic relationship for at least one year. These inclusion criteria were verified via a screening page and those who did not meet the requirements were immediately terminated and thanked for their interest. Participants who completed the study were compensated US$2.50 for their time.

The study consisted of two parts: an online questionnaire and a computer-based reaction-time task. Participants who failed to complete both parts were excluded from analysis (n = 31). Additionally, 13 respondents engaged in deception and their data were also removed from analysis. I identified deception in two ways. First, eight respondents attempted to complete the survey twice (or more times), changing their responses on the screener page to bypass eligibility safeguards. For example, in a first attempt a participant would identify as *"female"* and was automatically terminated; immediately after, the same person would restart the survey changing their response to *"male"* to be allowed to continue. Second, five respondents admitted to deception via a question included at the end of the survey that asked them to tick a box if they did not meet the eligibility criteria

but participated anyway. To encourage honest responding, I assured participants that they would receive compensation even if they decided to disclose ineligibility at this stage.

Three additional exclusion criteria were used to ensure data quality. First, I removed data from six participants who found the language of the study confusing or hard to follow. Second, three attention checks were randomly placed throughout the survey to check whether participants were paying attention and carefully reading instructions. These items explicitly asked respondents to choose a specific answer from a list of given options (e.g., *"Select 'never' if you have been reading the questions in this survey"*). Participants who failed two out of the three attention checks were removed from analysis (n = 5). Third, and in line with the literature on exclusion rules for implicit measures (Nosek, Bar-Anan, Sriram, Axt, & Greenwald, 2014; Rudman, 2011; Sriram & Greenwald, 2009), data from participants who presented with very fast response latencies in the reaction-time task (i.e., having more than 10% of trials faster than 300ms) were removed from analysis (n = 69). Very fast responses correlate with making frequent errors and disrupt the data's psychometric properties (Nosek et al., 2014). It also suggests neglect of task instructions and participants responding more rapidly than possible for accurate responding.

The exclusions outlined above resulted in a final sample of 215 men (M_{age} = 28.84 years, SD = 3.85, age range: 18-35), considered adequate for the main objective of this

study.[5] Most men identified as White (74%) and spoke English as their first language (96%); others identified as Latino (9%), African American (7%), Asian (7%), American Indian (1%) or multiracial (3%). Regarding their romantic relationship status, 40% of participants had been in their current relationship for over 12 months, and the rest, for over two years. Moreover, the majority (75%) lived with their romantic partners, and out of those who did not cohabitate, 91% lived within one hour from each other. In terms of education, more than half (58%) had completed either a 2-year college or 4-year bachelor's degree, with the remainder having completed high school (10%), some college (20%), or some form of postgraduate studies (11%, e.g., masters, PhD, or professional degree). Less than one percent reported not completing high school. Finally, 41% identified as being politically moderate, 41% as liberal or very liberal, and 19% as conservative or very conservative. The percentages reported above may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

5.2.2. Procedure

Participants accessed the survey remotely via the MTurk website by selecting to complete a task titled *Perceptions and Opinions About Romantic Relationships.* There, they followed a link to the survey and completed a screener page to verify eligibility. If eligible,

[5] Note that the study's exclusion criteria were not independent of each other and participants could satisfy more than one criterion at a time (e.g., answering attention checks incorrectly and performing poorly in the reaction-time task). As a result, adding the total number of respondents excluded in each exclusion category (n = 124) exceeds the total, and final, number of participants excluded from the main analysis (n = 85).

participants then read the plain language statement and provided electronic informed consent. Immediately after, participants were presented with measures assessing: (a) the extent to which they implicitly associate women (and men) with objects and animals, (b) their perpetration of violence within the intimate relationship (sexual, physical, and psychological), (c) sexist attitudes towards women, and (d) demographic information about themselves and their romantic partner. The order of presentation for all experimental measures (implicit task and questionnaires), and the items within each questionnaire, were randomised for each participant. Demographic information was always presented last. On completion, participants were provided with a debriefing statement and a unique completion code to use on MTurk for payment. Participants completed the study within 25 minutes.

5.2.3. Materials & Measures

All the survey questionnaires were created using Qualtrics software (Qualtrics, 2017) and the implicit task was scripted using Inquisit 5 software (Inquisit, Version 5.0.2.0) and uploaded to the Millisecond website for completion. Participants automatically navigated back and forth between the two online platforms using embedded webpage links placed within the survey and the computer-based task.

5.2.3.1. Implicit measure of objectification.

I used a Brief Implicit Association Test (B-IAT; Sriram & Greenwald, 2009) to measure automatically activated associations between target words representing men (*he,*

his, man, men, male, boy) or women (*she, her, woman, women, female, girl*), matched with descriptor words characteristic of either animals (*animal, instinct, paw, snout, nature, hibernation*), objects (*object, tool, device, thing, instrument, machine*), or humans (*human, culture, logic, rational, society, mind*). I also included six neutral words (i.e., not object-, animal-, or human-related) as background stimuli (*sunset, yellow, blue, orange, green, dust*). These 36 words were selected based on previous implicit objectification research (e.g., Rudman & Mescher, 2012; Vaes et al., 2011).[6]

The B-IAT examines comparisons between pairs of associations using participants' reaction times (Nosek et al., 2014; Sriram & Greenwald, 2009). During the task, a target category (e.g., women) and a descriptor (e.g., animal) are prominently presented on the top of the screen. These two items are referred to as the focal categories. Following, a verbal stimulus is presented in the middle of the screen (for an example, see Figure 5.1). Participants then press a right-hand response key if the word matches either focal category or a left-hand response key if it does not. The task's logic is that words will be classified faster during blocks of trials when the respondents' cognitive associations between the concepts match a pairing of focal categories (e.g., women-animal) than when they mismatch a pairing (e.g., women-human).

6 I am grateful to Professor Laurie Rudman who shared and granted permission to use the implicit task from her 2012 paper *Of Animals and Objects: Men's Implicit Dehumanization of Women and Likelihood of Sexual Aggression*. Modified versions of this task were coded and used in Study 1 and 2.

The psychometric properties for the B-IAT are well established (Bar-Anan & Nosek, 2014; Nosek et al., 2014; Sriram & Greenwald, 2009), with similar internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and convergent validity to the popular Implicit Association Test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998). In addition, compared to the IAT (and other implicit tasks), the B-IAT measures the absolute strength of non-relative, single associations (e.g., women with animals) in non-comparative contexts (Nosek et al., 2014), thus allowing researchers to test associations between women and animal, object, and human categories separately, rather than only relative to associations between men and these categories.

Figure 5.1. Example of a B-IAT Trial Used in Study 1

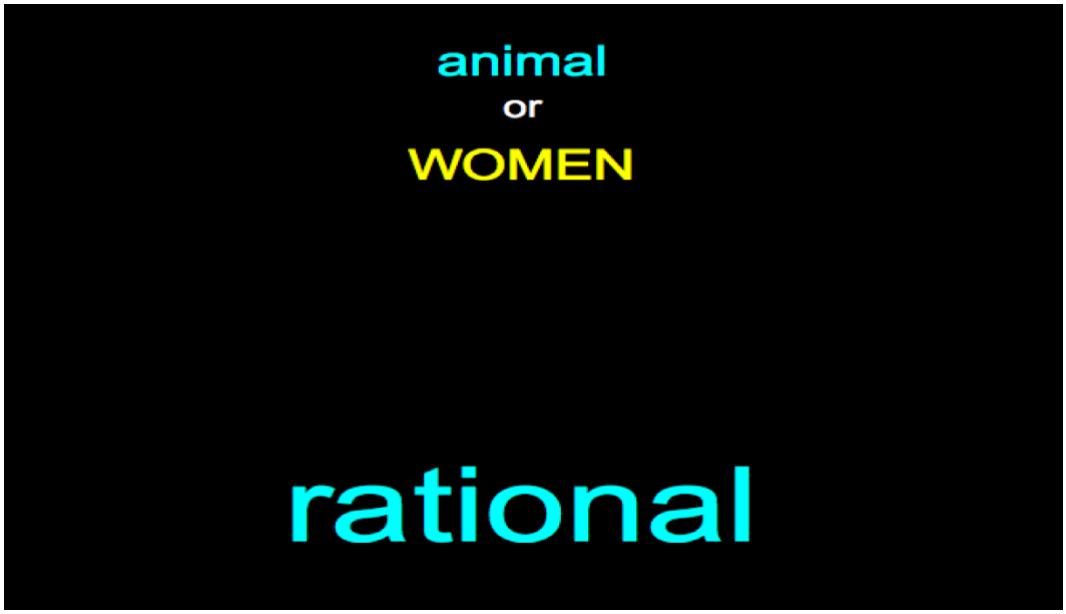


Figure 5.1. Block trial with "Women" and "Animal" as the focal categories paired with a non-focal word stimulus. To record a correct trial response, participants would need to press the left-hand key.

B-IAT procedure. The B-IAT procedure followed in this study was similar to the one used by Rudman and Mescher (2012; Study 2). Here, participants were presented with a task consisting of 10 blocks of trials. The first block showed the general instructions and asked participants to categorise, as quickly and as accurately as possible, a set of words using two keys: the right "*P*" key when words matched the categories being shown and the left "*Q*" key for anything else. Appendix A presents the general instructions for the task.

Next, blocks 2-5 and 6-9 followed an identical procedure: each set began with a block of 24 practice trials, followed by three blocks of 44 critical test trials each. The only difference between these block sets was that if the first block set (i.e., blocks 2-5) corresponded to categorising *women* with animal, object, and human constructs, the subsequent block set (i.e., blocks 6-9) would categorise *men* with the same constructs and in the same order. Block order was counterbalanced to minimise order effects. Although there were 12 possible block order combinations (i.e., 2 B-IAT targets [men, women] crossed with 6 possible B-IAT orders of the three entities [animal, object, human]), in keeping with Rudman and Mescher (2012) I only included the six combinations that these authors employed in their research. These combinations are listed in Table 5.1. Finally, block 10 included two questions asking for participant handedness (*right*/*left*) and previous participation in similar tasks (*yes*/*no*).

Table 5.1.
Order of Presentation of B-IAT Blocks for Study 1

Condition	Order of presentation
1	Women with animal, human, object; Men with animal, human, object
2	Women with human, animal, object; Men with human, animal, object
3	Women with object, human, animal; Men with object, human, animal
4	Men with animal, human, object; Women with animal, human, object
5	Men with human, animal, object; Women with human, animal, object
6	Men with object, human, animal; Women with object, human, animal

B-IAT Scoring. The script's configuration allowed us to test four separate B-IATs: women-animal, women-object, men-animal, and men-object. Each B-IAT score was based on two blocks of 44 test trials each. From each test block, the first four prefatory trials were considered practice trials and excluded from analysis (Nosek et al., 2014). Then, the B-IAT effect was scored using the D-statistic, an improved scoring algorithm recommended for this task (for more information about scoring procedures, see Greenwald, Nosek, & Banaji, 2003; Nosek et al., 2014; Sriram & Greenwald, 2009). The D-statistic is an effect-size-like measure with possible range of -2 to +2 (Sriram & Greenwald, 2009).

The women-animal B-IAT score was generated using the response latency difference between the blocks involving women-animal and women-human pairings, while the women-object B-IAT score was generated using the women-object and women-human pairings. Positive values (i.e., $D > 0$) reflected quicker latencies to pairings of women with animals and objects than to pairings of women with humans. The same scoring procedure, with positive D values indicative of dehumanising associations, was followed for the men-animal and men-object B-IATs.

5.2.3.2. IPV self-report outcome measures.

In Qualtrics, participants completed several questionnaires assessing the extent to which they had engaged in psychological, physical, and sexual IPV within their current romantic relationship. I also assessed the respondents' likelihood of pressuring their partner into sex, sexist attitudes towards women, and general demographic information about themselves and their romantic partner. For the IPV-related measures, participants were instructed to solely base their responses on the current romantic relationship.

Psychological abuse and physical violence. I used the Abuse Within Intimate Relations Scale (AIRS; Borjesson, Aarons, & Dunn, 2003) to assess how often participants had engaged in violence against their romantic partner, both physically and psychologically. This scale is a psychometrically sound measure of partner abuse within young adults, originally designed to identify college students at risk of perpetrating IPV (Borjesson et al., 2003). While existing IPV scales measure the perpetration of more severe forms of abuse and violence (e.g., CTS; Straus et al., 1996), the AIRS was developed to tap into more subtle, less severe forms of abusive behaviour. As such, the scale is considered a valuable tool in identifying precursors to violence among young non-clinical populations like ours (Borjesson et al., 2003).

The AIRS has 26 items, with two factors and subscales within each factor. The first factor, Psychological Abuse (α = .92), has three subscales: Emotional Abuse (7 items, *"I have mocked my partner,"* α = .89), Deception (4 items, *"I have lied to my partner,"* α = .80), and Verbal Abuse (5 items, *"I have screamed at my partner,"* α = .80). The second factor, Physical Violence (α = .94), has two subscales: Overt Physical Violence (7 items, *"I have*

physically attacked my partner," α = .92), and Restrictive Violence (3 items, *"I have grabbed my partner's arm tightly,"* α = .86). The scale asks participants about frequency of perpetration for each of the 26 types of violent behaviour in their current romantic relationship, using a 3-point scale (0 = *Never,* 1 = *Once,* 2 = *Twice or more*). Scores are calculated by summing responses across items within subscales, with higher scores indicating greater perpetration of IPV (scale range: 0 to 52).

Sexual violence. Two scales were used to assess sexual violence, operationalised as sexual coercion and sexual pressure against female romantic partners. To measure sexual coercion, I used the Sexual Coercion in Intimate Relationships Scale (SCIRS; Shackelford & Goetz, 2004). The SCIRS is a 34-item scale that measures men's self-reported use of blatant and subtle psychological and behavioural tactics of sexual coercion in romantic relationships (e.g., hints, threats, withholding of resources, and violence to obtain sex). The scale has satisfactory convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity (Goetz & Shackelford, 2006, 2009; Shackelford & Goetz, 2004; Starratt, Goetz, Shackelford, McKibbin, & Stewart-Williams, 2008; Starratt, Popp, & Shackelford, 2008). Moreover, previous studies using the SCIRS have primarily collected data from North American heterosexual young adults (Fisher, Davis, Yarber, & Davis, 2010), making it a suitable measure to use for our research purposes and population.

The SCIRS asks participants to report how often each of 34 acts have occurred in their romantic relationship, indicating frequency as *"act did not occur," "act occurred 1 time," "act occurred 2 times," "act occurred 3 to 5 times," "act occurred 6 to 10 times," "act occurred 11 or more times".* The scale has three subscales: Resource Manipulation/Violence

(15 items, *"I gave my partner gifts or other benefits so that she would feel obligated to have sex with me,"* α = .96), Commitment Manipulation (10 items, *"I told my partner that if she were truly committed to me she would have sex with me,"* α = .92), and Defection Threat (9 items, *"I told my partner that other women were interested in a relationship with me, so that she would have sex with me,"* α = .96). Scores are calculated by summing responses across items within subscales, with higher scores indicating greater perpetration of sexual coercion (scale range: 0 to 170).

To measure sexual pressure, I used a modified version of the Sexual Pressure Scale for Women-Revised (SPSW-R; R. Jones & Gulick, 2009). The SPSW-R is a reliable scale originally designed to measure how much young heterosexual women feel pressured or forced to engage in unwanted sexual acts by their romantic partners. For the purpose of this study, and similarly to Ramsey and Hoyt (2014), the scale was modified to reflect how much men sexually pressure women in romantic relationships to engage in sex. For example, the item *"If my partner wants sex, it's my responsibility as his woman to have sex with him"* (R. Jones & Gulick, 2009) was modified to *"If I want sex, it's my partner's responsibility as my woman to have sex with me."* The complete list of modified items is found in Appendix B.

Although the SPSW-R comprises four subscales, only two were included in Study 1: Men Expect Sex (the perception that men view sexual intercourse as a highly important aspect of the relationship, 5 items, α = .80) and Women's Sex Roles (the sexual behaviours women are expected to follow to find and hold onto a male partner, 5 items, α = .84). I did not use the Show Trust subscale (5 items) because it could not be appropriately modified

to use with men, nor the Sexual Coercion subscale (3 items) because I was already capturing this construct using the more detailed SCIRS.

For the Men Expect Sex subscale items, participants are asked to report how often each of five situations have occurred in their romantic relationship (e.g., *"I make my partner feel like she owes me something and should have sex with me"*), using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). For the Women's Sex Roles subscale items, participants are asked to report how much they agree with five statements about women adhering to gender stereotypical expectations to engage in sex (e.g., *"A woman needs to please her man sexually to hold onto him"*), using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*definitely do not agree*) to 5 (*definitely agree*). Scores are calculated by averaging across items in each subscale and higher scores reflect men's greater engagement in, and agreement with, tactics to pressure their female partner into unwanted sex.

5.2.3.3. Additional variables measured.

Sexism. I used the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996) to assess sexism towards women. The ASI consists of two 11-item subscales that measure HS and benevolent sexism. The HS subscale represents sexist antipathy towards women (e.g., *"Most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them,"* α = .92), whereas the benevolent sexism subscale represents attitudes towards women that appear to be subjectively positive but are actually sexist (e.g., *"Women should be cherished and protected by men,"* α = .86). Items are rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*), with higher scores reflecting more hostile or benevolent

sexist attitudes towards women. The ASI has satisfactory convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

Demographics questionnaire. The study's sociodemographic information included age (self and romantic partner), gender (self and romantic partner), sexual orientation, relationship status, length of romantic relationship, living arrangements (whether the respondent cohabitated with the romantic partner [yes/no]; when couples did not cohabitate, participants were asked about the living proximity measured in time [e.g., 1 hour distance]), country of birth, ethnicity (self and romantic partner), socioeconomic status (highest level of education completed and yearly income), employment status, religion, religiosity, political stance, membership to specific groups (e.g., sporting teams), and disability (self and romantic partner).

5.2.4. Analytic Strategy

Frequency data on violence is typically positively skewed, due to it often being a low base-rate phenomenon (Swartout, Thompson, Koss, & Su, 2015). A common way of dealing with data with a highly positively skewed distribution is to apply statistical transformations so that it more closely matches the assumptions for the more traditional linear models (e.g., Malamuth, Hald, & Koss, 2012). However, this strategy is not effective for count data where the frequency of violent events is rare (Beaujean & Morgan, 2016; Gardner, Mulvey, & Shaw, 1995; Hilbe, 2011), and, in our study, a large portion of the participants reported never perpetrating violence themselves (see Table 5.2 in *Results*).

Instead, models based on the Poisson distribution are the best-known statistical methods to analyse count data on dependent measures with rare discrete events (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003; Gardner et al., 1995; Hoffmann, 2004; Long, 1997). However, the Poisson regression assumes equidispersion (i.e., when the response count variables have equal mean and variance) and our data violated this assumption (see Table 5.2). As an alternative statistical strategy, I used a negative binomial (NB) model because this method is more flexible than the Poisson models and accommodates the overdispersion that our data evidenced (i.e., when the variance of the counts exceeds the means; Gardner et al., 1995; Hilbe, 2011; Swartout et al., 2015).

Additional support for the use of a NB model when predicting non-normal frequency outcomes comes from the work of Swartout and colleagues (2015) on sexual violence perpetration. With the aim of predicting frequency of male-perpetrated sexual aggression from the same data set, the authors compared the overall model fit, parsimony, and interpretability of the results (based on previous empirical findings and theory in the field) using six different count-specific analytic methods. These methods included: ordinary least squares regression, ordinary least squares regression with a square-root-transformed outcome, Poisson regression, NB regression, zero-inflated Poisson regression, and zero-inflated NB regression. In their study, the NB model outperformed all of the other regression models and was the recommended approach to use for frequency data on relatively low-base-rate behaviours (Swartout et al., 2015). Given that the choice of statistical model should primarily be made on the grounds of data properties (Warton, Lyons, Stoklosa, & Ives, 2016), and that our data closely resembles those from Swartout and

colleagues (2015) in terms of their properties (i.e., overdispersion) and distribution characteristics (i.e., positively skewed with a multitude of zeros), I infer that a NB regression approach would also be the most appropriate strategy to analyse this study's frequency data on IPV perpetration.

5.3. Results

5.3.1. Preliminary Analyses

5.3.1.1. Examining B-IAT scores.

Because our study's outcomes concerned the B-IATs, I first conducted a mixed factorial ANOVA on the pairing mean latencies to assess for order effects. The design was a 2 (target group: women, men) x 3 (B-IAT: animal, object, human) x 2 (target group order: women first, men first) x 3 (B-IAT order: animal first, object first, human first) mixed factorial ANOVA with repeated measures on the first two factors. Results showed no significant effects for the two order factors, so I collapsed across them.

Scores for the women-object and men-object B-IATs resulted in small D-scores (M_{female} = .14, M_{male} = .11) that did not differ from each other, $t(214) = 0.98$, $p = .329$. However, the scores significantly differed from zero, female: $t(214) = 5.35$, $p < .001$, $d = .36$, and male: $t(214) = 3.95$, $p < .001$, $d = .27$. Animalisation D-scores for female and male targets were also small (M_{female} = .03, M_{male} = -.02) and did not significantly differ from each other, $t(214) = 1.59$, $p = .113$, nor from zero (ps > .05). The correlation between the women-animal and women-object B-IATs was significantly positive, $r(215) = .34$, $p < .001$,

as it was for the corresponding B-IATs when men were the target category, $r(215) = .43$, $p < .001$. Given that Study 1's experimental factors only concerned the women B-IATs, from this point on, I do not report on the men B-IATs nor include them in the main analyses.

5.3.1.2. Generating IPV composite scores.

Following scoring protocols in IPV research (e.g., Hamby, 2016a, 2016b; Straus et al., 1996) I recalculated the SCIRS scores to report the number of sexually coercive acts by taking the midpoint of the instrument's third and fourth response categories (i.e., *"act occurred 3 to 5 times,"* and *"act occurred 6 to 10 times,"* recoded to 4 and 8, respectively) and 16 for the *"11 or more times"* response category. The first three response categories remained unaltered (0, 1, and 2 for *"act did not occur," "act occurred 1 time,"* and *"act occurred 2 times,"* respectively). Then, I summed the number of acts across the items in each subscale to generate a score (new scale range: 0 to 512). For completeness, I also conducted all the analyses reported here using the scale's original scoring procedure and results revealed no change in statistical significance values.

Correlational analyses for the IPV-related measures showed that the subscales within each instrument were highly intercorrelated (AIRS Psychological Abuse factor subscales: $rs > .57$; AIRS Physical Violence factor subscales: $rs > .83$; SCIRS subscales: $rs > .68$; and SPSW-R subscales: $rs > .60$). This suggests that these subscales are representing the same constructs. Prior to analysis, I then calculated composite scores for the two AIRS factors (psychological abuse, physical violence), the SCIRS (sexual coercion),

and the SPSW-R (sexual pressure) by collapsing across subscales within each measure. See Appendix C for the complete list of correlation coefficients for all these measures.

5.3.1.3. Examining sociodemographic data.

As demonstrated in Chapter 2, the more consistent sociodemographic risk factors associated with an increased likelihood of male-perpetrated IPV include age, race/ethnicity, years of education, and income (Capaldi et al., 2012; R.P. Dobash & Dobash, 2003; Heise & García-Moreno, 2002; O'Leary et al., 2014; Schumacher et al., 2001). To identify possible control variables for our main analyses, I examined the relationship between the participants' demographic information and the IPV-related outcomes.

The majority of the men in our sample identified as White (74%) and, as such, the ethnicity variable was recoded as binary (white = 1, non-white = 0). I then conducted a series of analyses on the new composite scores (psychological abuse, physical violence, sexual coercion, and sexual pressure) using bivariate correlations for the continuous and dichotomous demographic variables (age, ethnicity, political stance, personal yearly income, and length of romantic relationship) and a one-way ANOVA for the categorical variables (level of education). There were no statistically significant associations or mean differences between any of the variables of interest (*p*s > .05); therefore, the demographic markers are not included in the main analyses that are reported next.

5.3.2. Main Analyses

5.3.2.1. Descriptive statistics and correlations.

As expected, all of the outcome variables were non-normally distributed as assessed by the Shapiro-Wilk's test (*p*s < .05) and highly positively skewed. Table 5.2 presents the descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, skew, and the range of scores) for the variables of interest and the percentage distribution of participants' self-report IPV perpetration within their romantic relationship.

Table 5.2.
Descriptive Statistics for the Variables of Interest and Percentages for IPV Perpetration in Study 1

					No. of perpetrated acts of IPV			
Variable	*M*	*SD*	Skew	Min, Max	0	1-5	6-10	> 10
Women-animal	0.03	0.36	-0.51	-0.98, 1.01				
Women-object	0.14	0.37	-0.24	-1.16, 1.06				
Psychological abuse	10.92	8.94	0.66	0, 32	12.1%	21.4%	20.1%	46.6%
Physical violence	1.15	3.29	3.64	0, 20	78.1%	14.4%	4.2%	3.4%
Sexual coercion	10.97	28.97	4.19	0, 204	52.6%	21.9%	4.2%	22.1%
Sexual pressure	1.82	0.79	1.05	1, 4.50				
HS	3.12	1.16	-0.04	1, 6				

Note. *N* = 215, skew standard error = .166. HS = Hostile sexism.

Table 5.3 presents the correlation coefficients among the same variables. I report the Spearman rank-order statistic due to the non-normality and significant skewness of the data (only scores for the women-object B-IAT were normally distributed). Results showed that the women-animal and woman-object B-IATs were positively correlated; however, only the latter was significantly correlated with perpetration of physical and

sexual IPV. Neither of the B-IATs significantly correlated with HS; this suggests that these variables represent distinct psychological outcomes for this study. Finally, and as expected, HS was significantly and positively correlated with all the IPV-related outcome measures.

Table 5.3.
Summary of Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficients for all Variables in Study 1

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Women-animal	1					
2. Women-object	.39**	1				
3. Psychological abuse	.00	.13	1			
4. Physical violence	.00	.14*	.39**	1		
5. Sexual coercion	.11	.14*	.30**	.43**	1	
6. Sexual pressure	.00	.10	.35**	.34**	.55**	1
7. HS	.11	.08	.23**	.20**	.45**	.55**

Note. N = 215. HS = Hostile sexism.
*p < .05. **p < .01.

5.3.2.2. Predicting IPV.

To test whether dehumanising women as either animals or objects contributed to the prediction of past perpetration of psychological abuse, physical violence, and sexual coercion within the romantic relationship, I conducted a NB regression using the women-animal, women-object, and HS scores as predictors for each of the IPV-related outcomes. To facilitate the interpretation of the NB regression coefficients in terms of incidence rate ratios (IRR; i.e., the exponentiated coefficients), prior to the analyses the raw values for the independent variables were standardised using a z-score transformation (M = 0, SD = 1) so that the measures were on the same metric (i.e., standard deviations). The IRR represents

the percentage change, increase or decrease, in the observed counts and quantifies the direction and strength of the relationship between the predictor and outcome (Atkins & Gallop, 2007; Hilbe, 2011). There was no evidence of systematic patterns of outliers in the data or of extremely influential cases, assessed by visually inspecting plots of mean predicted values against deviance residuals and by values for Cook's distance above 1 (R.D. Cook & Weisberg, 1982). Accordingly, all data were retained for analysis.

Table 5.4 presents the summary statistics for all the NB regression analyses. Results showed that the predictor variables accounted for significant variation in psychological abuse, with the full regression model representing a statistically significant improvement in fit over the null model, likelihood ratio (LR) χ_2 (3, n = 215) = 7.80, p = .050. However, only HS had a significant effect. There was a positive relationship between HS and psychological abuse log counts: a standard deviation unit increase in the predictor variable increased the rate for this type of abuse by 17% (IRR = 1.17, 95% CI: 1.02, 1.33).

For physical violence, the full regression model also represented a statistically significant improvement in fit over the null model, LR χ_2 (3, n = 215) = 12.03, p = .007. Both the women-object B-IAT and HS were associated with an increased likelihood of perpetrating physical violence, where a standard deviation unit increase in the predictor variables increased the rate of violence by 93% (IRR = 1.93, 95% CI: 1.15, 3.25) and 92% (IRR = 1.92, 95% CI: 1.20, 3.06), respectively.

For sexual coercion, again, the full regression model represented a statistically significant improvement in fit over the null model, LR χ_2 (3, n = 215) = 32.12, p < .001. Both the women-object B-IAT and HS were associated with an increased likelihood of

perpetrating sexual coercion, where a standard deviation unit increase in the predictor variables increased the rate of sexual coercion by 40% (IRR = 1.40, 95% CI: 1.01, 1.95) and 334% (IRR = 4.34, 95% CI: 2.68, 7.04), respectively.

Table 5.4.
Summary of the Negative Binomial Regression Analyses for the Variables Predicting IPV in Study 1

Variable	*b*	SE	IRR	Wald χ^2	*df*	*p**
			Psychological abuse			
Intercept	2.38	.07	10.73	1292.31	1	<.001
Women-animal	-.02	.08	.98	.07	1	.793
Women-object	.11	.07	1.11	2.01	1	.156
HS	.16	.07	1.17	5.34	1	.021
Dispersion parameter	.84	.10				
			Physical violence			
Intercept	-.16	.22	.85	.53	1	.496
Women-animal	-.19	.33	.83	.32	1	.570
Women-object	.66	.27	1.93	6.09	1	.014
HS	.65	.24	1.92	7.43	1	.006
Dispersion parameter	8.51	1.67				
			Sexual coercion			
Intercept	1.93	.16	6.92	141.93	1	<.001
Women-animal	-.08	.21	.92	.16	1	.694
Women-object	.34	.17	1.40	3.98	1	.046
HS	1.47	.25	4.34	35.44	1	<.001
Dispersion parameter	5.39	.65				

Note. *N* = 215. HS = Hostile sexism; *b* = Unstandardised coefficient; SE = Standard error; IRR = Incidence-rate ratio; *df* = degrees of freedom.
*statistical significance at $p < .05$.

Finally, because sexual pressure was not a frequency count variable and, as such, a NB model is not indicated, I conducted a multiple linear regression analysis to assess whether dehumanising women predicted likelihood of pressuring romantic partners into sex. The assumption of linearity between the outcome and the predictor variables was met, as assessed by a plot of studentised residuals against predicted values and partial regression plots. There was no evidence of multicollinearity, assessed by tolerance values greater than 0.1. There was no evidence of influential outliers, assessed by leverage values greater than 0.2 and values for Cook's distance above 1 (R.D. Cook & Weisberg, 1982). However, the assumptions of homoscedasticity and normality of the residuals were not met, assessed by visual inspection of a plot of studentised residuals vs. unstandardised predicted values and a P-P plot, respectively (as recommended by Field, 2013). To overcome these violations, I used the bootstrapping approach to statistical inference, which makes analyses robust to non-normality (A.C. Davison & Hinkley, 1997).

The results showed that the overall regression model significantly predicted sexual pressure, $F(3, 211) = 24.15$, $p < .001$, adj. $R^2 = .25$; however, only HS added statistical significance to the prediction. Regression coefficients and standard errors are found in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5.
Summary of the Multiple Regression Analyses for the Variables Predicting Sexual Pressure in Study 1

Variable	*b*	*bCa 95% CI*	*St. err. b*	*Beta (β)*	*p**
Women-animal	-.06	(-.16, .04)	.05	-.08	.204
Women-object	.08	(-.02, .17)	.05	.09	.139
HS	.40	(.30, .49)	.04	.50	<.001

Note. Confidence intervals and standard errors based on 2000 bootstrap samples. HS = Hostile sexism; *b* = unstandardised regression coefficient; *bCa* CI = Bias-corrected and accelerated bootstrap 95% confidence interval; β = Standardised coefficient.
*βs significant at $p < .05$.

5.4. Discussion

Study 1 examined whether dehumanising women *in general*, either by likening them to animals or objects, predicted different forms of IPV. I hypothesised that men who implicitly objectified women would be more likely to perpetrate IPV within their current relationships, because objectification—even if the link is not made explicit—involves stripping the target of their emotions, autonomy, and personhood. This process makes the target a more likely victim of violence and the results partially support these claims.

Ideally, instances of IPV should not occur within romantic relationships. However, in Study 1, 22% of male participants admitted to perpetrating at least one act of physical violence against their current partner, close to 50% at least one act of sexual violence, and close to 90% some form of psychological abuse (see Table 5.2). These results are comparable to those found in global data (e.g., Fulu, Warner, et al., 2013; UN, 2015) and empirical studies related to IPV prevalence (Carney & Barner, 2012; Desmarais et al., 2012; Devries, Mak, García-Moreno, et al., 2013; Fass et al., 2008; Fleming et al., 2015; G.

Gilchrist et al., 2015; Waller et al., 2013). These findings highlight how IPV is rife among young adults and demonstrate the importance of investigating potential underlying causes, such as objectification.

The study's data showed support for some aspects of the hypotheses. As expected, men who automatically associated women with objects (e.g., tool, thing, device) were significantly more likely to perpetrate both sexual and physical violence against their current female partner. If women are perceived as less than fully human, their wants, needs, and personal integrity need not to be taken into consideration. As evidenced by the dehumanisation literature, objectification is often a precursor to enacting violence (Haslam, 2006) because things do not need to be treated like human beings, and our results indirectly bolster these views.[7]

Looking at sexual violence, and consistent with prior research on sexual coercion in romantic relationships (Ramsey & Hoyt, 2014; Sáez Díaz, Alonso-Ferres, et al., 2019), our data showed that the implicit objectification of women predicted men's use of psychological and behavioural tactics, both subtle and blatant, to force the romantic partners into having unwanted sex. Moreover, Study 1 conceptually replicated findings

7 Given that Study 1 is cross-sectional and correlational in nature and only assessed IPV perpetration via men's retrospective accounts, we cannot interpret the findings as a direct demonstration of objectification facilitating IPV. These data only reveal that men who objectify women are more prone to commit some forms of violence in their romantic relationships, but they do not tell us whether the violence is the direct result of objectification. Later studies investigate the objectification-violence link more directly.

from Rudman and Mescher (2012), suggesting that dehumanising women as objects plays a role in male sexual aggression, expanding these findings to the context of romantic relationships.

The significant association between the women-object B-IAT scores and frequency of physical violence (as distinct from sexual violence and harassment [Rudman & Mescher, 2012]) is a novel finding. This pattern of results suggests that the more men implicitly associate women with objects, the more likely they are to perpetrate a wide array of physically abusive behaviours against the romantic partner. According to Haslam (2006), mechanistically dehumanising people (i.e., likening them to objects) strips them of their individuality and personhood and elicits indifference and emotional distancing; thus, these targets may be easier to harm. Whilst Study 1 did not test whether male participants objectify their romantic partner, it is plausible that men who objectify women in general will, in turn, objectify their female partner by virtue of them being a member of that same gender category. Study 2 explores the association between partner-objectification and IPV directly.

Taken together, the current findings support feminist theorists' claims that objectifying women plays a role in male sexual and physical aggression towards them (e.g., Dworkin, 2000; MacKinnon, 1991). Philosopher Martha Nussbaum (1995, 1999) discusses the idea of objectification as associated with what it means to treat another as an object. Among other features, she posits that female objectification involves treating a woman as if she is permissible to be harmed and abused (i.e., violable); she is instrumental (i.e., a tool for men's purposes and desires); she is interchangeable (i.e., fungible); and there is no need

to show concern for her experiences, thoughts, and feelings (i.e., denial of subjectivity). Whether in isolation or as a cluster of features, these aspects of *thing-like* treatment were all implicated in the outcome measures in Study 1.

Ecological models for understanding gender-based violence suggest that IPV is a complex and multifaceted problem shaped by the interplay between individual, relationship, community, and society-level factors (Heise, 1998; Krug, Dahlberg, et al., 2002; Little & Kantor, 2002). From this perspective, objectification is a potential causal factor that may play a role at various levels of the ecological framework. For example, at the individual level, this study has demonstrated that differences in the extent to which men objectify women are related to IPV offending. Moreover, at a societal level, implicitly likening women to things may reflect the degree to which men have internalised social norms that reduce women to mere mindless bodies (and not see them as protagonists of their own stories). These types of social norms contribute to societal and structural factors that legitimise and justify VAW. Indeed, Objectification Theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) posits that the objectification of women saturates Western culture, its media (American Psychological Association, 2007), and women's daily personal interactions (Swim et al., 2001). A sociocultural context that reinforces dehumanising views of women, where their bodies are separated from their personhood and are regarded as property, sustains an environment that becomes ripe for abuse to occur. To truly redress IPV, researchers must understand the dynamic interrelations among interacting forces operating at multiple levels that are conducive to violence, including environmental

factors that create the conditions for violence to occur and be maintained (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002).

Although the results previously discussed extend the current understanding about the negative implications of objectification for romantic relationships, our hypotheses were only partially supported. Similar to the woman-object B-IAT, I predicted that the women-animal B-IAT would relate to all forms of IPV measured. Contrary to expectations, however, automatically associating women with animals failed to predict any of the outcome variables. In their study, Rudman and Mescher (2012) demonstrated that men who implicitly animalised women were also more likely to sexually victimise them, and Study 1 did not conceptually replicate this finding.

A potential explanation for these null results is that the pernicious effects of animalising women, as seen in previous research, do not carry over to specific contexts such as romantic relationships (at least when assessing these generalised associations as precursors to IPV). It therefore begs the question, is there something unique about romantic relationships? Philosopher Martha Nussbaum (1999) suggests that this domain may be the one place where objectification can be safe and even enjoyable. While in some settings, likening people to animals is often accompanied by degradation and humiliation (e.g., Jewish people referred to as vermin by the Nazis; Haslam, 2006), in romantic relationships the explicit comparison of partners to animals can be accompanied by positive value judgements (e.g., calling an intimate partner by a *cute pet name* like kitten or bunny). In couples, these types of person-animal associations are often used as terms of endearment, admiration, and expressions of affection towards the loved one.

Further, intimate partners are sometimes treated as childlike, exemplified by the use of "baby talk" between lovers. Again, according to Haslam (2006), childlikeness is a feature of animalistic dehumanisation where the target is seen as unintelligent, amoral, and lacking refinement and self-control. In romantic relationships, however, childlike treatment may be imbued with positive attributes and emotions and may even connote intimacy and reinforce interpersonal connectedness. Previous research shows that the use of personal idioms and private language in romantic relationships are associated with higher levels of relationship satisfaction and commitment (Bruess & Pearson, 1993). These relationship quality-promoting factors, in turn, are considered to be protective against IPV (Capaldi et al., 2012; Shortt, Capaldi, Kim, & Laurent, 2010; Slotter et al., 2012).

Additionally, perceiving and/or treating the female romantic partner as childlike could cast her as dependent and in need of protection. Although these perceptions connote benevolently sexist attitudes towards women (Glick & Fiske, 1996), they might also contain some protective elements that mitigate IPV (e.g., Allen et al., 2009; Hammond & Overall, 2013). Taken together, it is possible that while female animalisation enables violence perpetration when directed at strangers (because it weakens moral inhibitions against harming other human beings, e.g., Rudman & Mescher, 2012), the same form of dehumanisation would not contribute to IPV. This may be due, in part, to the availability and accessibility of subjectively positive emotional associations between animals and romantic partners in this particular context.

Turning our attention to psychological IPV, although this was the most prevalent type of abuse in our sample, the results showed no relation with the animal nor the object

B-IATs. This was contrary to our expectations. A plausible explanation for these null effects lies in the nature of the violence itself. The main characteristic of psychological abuse is that this type of IPV is an assault on the victim's mind, experiences, and feelings, rather than an assault on their physical body. It is therefore conceivable that emotionally abusive men need to ascribe their close female partner with the capacity to think, feel, love, and choose—that is, see them as human—even if it is just with the intent to punish and harm them. If so, implicitly dehumanising women would not directly contribute to this type of violence, because it strips the target of the psychological qualities that are required to inflict this type of abuse in the first place.

To be clear, this is not to say that holding explicit attitudes and beliefs about women that can be considered dehumanising does not cause psychological violence within close relationships. Perhaps when it comes to this complex, multidimensional phenomenon the implicit and explicit aspects of seeing women as less than fully human predict different behaviours. Scholars suggest that the expression of psychological IPV often involves well thought-out and repeated patterns of behaviour (e.g., ridiculing, criticising, and controlling the the partner; V.A. Kelly, 2016), and that explicit attitudes best predict these types of deliberate actions (Gawronski & De Houwer, 2014). As such, explicit dehumanisation may be a more direct contributor to psychological IPV. Indeed, prior research shows that severe psychological IPV male offenders display a greater tendency towards explicitly objectifying women (Jonnson et al., 2018) and qualitative research has identified common themes among male offenders, such as expressing feelings of ownership for the partner's identity, as factors playing a role in their perpetration of IPV

(Lau & Stevens, 2012). Yet, another possibility is that this form of IPV is driven by processes other than objectification, for instance, by constructions of masculinity that emphasise male dominance and control over women (Fulu, Warner, et al., 2013; Jewkes, 2002; Jewkes et al., 2015). In this research program, however, I did not investigate these associations and teasing them apart is worthy of future exploration.

Finally, Study 1 also considered how sexism related to IPV and to objectification. The literature shows that hostile sexist attitudes towards women are a contributing factor to general male-to-female aggression (C.A. Anderson & Anderson, 2008), physical violence (Allen et al., 2009; Renzetti et al., 2015), verbal aggression (Forbes et al., 2004) and sexual coercion (Forbes & Adams-Curtis, 2001; Forbes et al., 2004). In line with this evidence, the current study found that general negative beliefs about women were associated with men's self-reported use of violence within their romantic relationship. More specifically, higher HS scores consistently predicted higher incidence for all of the IPV-related outcomes. This pattern of results suggests that to truly redress VAW, traditionally hostile attitudes and beliefs about gender roles ought to be targeted.

It is important to note that our data showed that HS was unrelated to the women-animal and the women-object B-IATs. Although previous research has found that HS is associated with implicitly objectifying sexualised women (Cikara et al., 2011), our findings suggests that HS is not related to objectifying women in general. Previous studies have found similar results (e.g., Rudman & Mescher, 2012) and, taken together, it appears that men do not have to score high on HS to implicitly dehumanise women as a group, either as animals or objects. Accordingly, if men do not need to hold hostile sexist attitudes towards

women to objectify them, sexism and objectification may act as risk factors for violence that are independent of hostile sexist attitudes and perhaps act in tandem with them, increasing a woman's chances of becoming a victim of IPV.

5.4.1. Limitations

Limitations to the study deserve mentioning. First, Study 1 assessed IPV perpetration through the participants' self-reported accounts and the contextual and motivational factors for such violence were not examined (e.g., who initiated the violence and the circumstances around why it ensued). These factors could provide alternative explanations to the range of violent behaviours reported in this study. For instance, cases where IPV was intentionally enacted as a problem-solving strategy, or cases when it was a reactive behaviour to violence initiated by the other partner (e.g., in self-defence), as opposed to resulting from men's dehumanising perceptions of women.

Second, causality cannot be determined from a cross-sectional design. Although the data showed that objectification was related to IPV, these data did not reveal if the phenomenon really caused men to victimise the intimate partner rather than the other way around.[8] Previous research shows that men who commit IPV also tend to have a predisposition to use violence outside the relationship (Fleming et al., 2015; Fulu, Warner,

8 Although we cannot make directional distinctions with Study 1's data, the remainder of this program of research attempts to clarify the objectification-IPV causal pathway.

et al., 2013; Mouzos & Makkai, 2004; Regan & Durvasula, 2015). Moreover, men's endorsement of a suite of hostile and violence-related attitudes and behaviours have been shown to correlate with VAW (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007), IPV (Stith et al., 2004), and the objectification of women (Cikara et al., 2011; Rudman & Mescher, 2012; Vasquez et al., 2017). Therefore, objectification may emerge as a result of a man's generalised violent tendencies, as a way to self-justify unfavourable acts, attitudes, and beliefs towards women. In a similar conceptual vein, it is possible that power dynamics within the relationship help explain both IPV and objectification. Prior research shows that unequal distributions of power in a romantic relationship is a strong correlate of male IPV perpetration (Berkel et al., 2004; Sugarman & Frankel, 1996), and that social power increases objectification (Gruenfeld, Inesi, Magee, & Galinsky, 2008). Thus, unequal gender power structures in intimate relationships may contribute to both IPV perpetration and female objectification. Future research should examine these variables and experimentally test whether they are causally related to objectification and IPV.

A final limitation to this study is that it only assessed women's dehumanisation at the category level, without considering the potential impact of the target's identity on the outcomes measured. In other words, Study 1 evaluated the strength of men's cognitive associations between women-related concepts and non-human entities, and how these cognitive associations, in turn, were related to violence perpetration against female romantic partners. Thus, we cannot interpret these findings as a direct demonstration of objectification facilitating IPV in romantic relationships. The results only reveal that men who objectify women are more prone to commit some forms of IPV, but they do not tell us

whether the violence is related directly to objectifying the female partner. It is possible that the associations observed in Study 1 do not necessarily transfer to actual romantic partners. In Study 2, I attempt to replicate Study 1's findings while directly evaluating partner-objectification and IPV (as opposed to general female objectification and IPV).

5.4.2. Concluding Remarks

The present research extends on the current understanding on how objectification enables VAW. Given the dearth of literature on objectification in romantic relationships, Study 1 aimed to provide preliminary evidence for the long-speculated but previously unsupported link between objectification and IPV. To my knowledge, this study is among the first to examine the extent to which objectification predicts men's sexual, physical, and psychological violence in the context of heterosexual romantic relationships. Although others have already investigated sexual aggression, no study has examined this form of IPV in relation to objectification conceptualised as involving dehumanisation, nor connected the phenomenon to non-sexual forms of IPV towards women.

Our results indicated that objectification (but not animalisation) affects women in romantic relationships. The study uniquely found that men who automatically perceived women as object-like were more likely to report having perpetrated physical and sexual IPV in their current romantic relationship, but not psychological abuse. The findings on sexual aggression conceptually replicate those from previous objectification research (e.g., Ramsey & Hoyt, 2014; Rudman & Mescher, 2012; Sáez Díaz, Alonso-Ferres, et al., 2019). Overall, the results echo feminist theorising about the serious consequences that

objectification has for the lives of women, especially those in societies saturated with cultural practices that routinely reduce women to things. Scholars have long argued that by reducing a woman's humanity to the status of an object she then becomes a more likely victim of violence (MacKinnon, 1987), and the data from Study 1 largely demonstrate that men's objectifying perceptions of women (even if implicitly) are an important contributor to self-reported IPV perpetration in romantic relationships. In the next study, I expand my research focus to assess the objectification of close others. There, I directly measure men's implicit objectification of their current female partner and how it relates to IPV perpetration within their current romantic relationship.

Finally, although men's HS scores robustly predicted all of the IPV-related outcomes, these attitudes were not associated with neither of the B-IATs. This suggests that objectification and sexism may each play unique roles in facilitating men's partner victimisation. Further research is needed to support this conclusion. Taken together, the findings from Study 1 provide a considerable contribution to the small but growing body of work that examines objectification as a correlate and potential precursor to IPV.

CHAPTER 6: IMPLICIT OBJECTIFICATION OF ROMANTIC PARTNERS & IPV

6.1. Overview of Study 2

Results from Study 1 suggest that female objectification plays a role in the victimisation of women in romantic relationships, with the phenomenon predicting higher men's self-reported rates of sexual and physical violence. However, it remains an open question whether the objectification of one's intimate partner (i.e., partner-objectification) would contribute to gender-based violence in the same way.

On the one hand, the closeness of romantic relationships and the high degree of interdependence that characterises these types of partnerships could protect women from the negative features of objectification. In fact, Martha Nussbaum (1999) posits that the overall context of human relationships matters when it comes to objectifying practices. In her view, romantic relationships are a place where objectification can be benign or even positive, because interactions within this context are often characterised by intimacy, equality, consent, and mutual respect for the other's autonomy. In these cases, objectification needs not be morally problematic as it would not have devastating consequences for a person's humanity (Nussbaum, 1995).

On the other hand, however, interactions within romantic relationships do not always abide by these principles—equality, consent, respect for others—and perceiving intimate partners as not fully human may result in the same harmful outcomes that are also observed in other contexts, most notably the facilitation of interpersonal aggression

(e.g., Galdi et al., 2014; Loughnan et al., 2010; Rudman & Mescher, 2012). Moreover, partner-objectification has been shown to predict lower levels of relationship satisfaction (Zurbriggen et al., 2011), a well-studied relational-level IPV risk factor that is consistently associated with the perpetration of physical and psychological abuse (Capaldi et al., 2012; Stith et al., 2008). Given the potential dire consequences for women, partner-objectification is an important psychological phenomenon to study.

Qualitative and interview-based studies outside psychology support the notion that viewing an close partner in objectifying ways, as a thing to be owned and controlled, plays a role in men's use of violence within intimate relationships (Lau & Stevens, 2012; Tilley & Brackley, 2005; Totten, 2003; Wood, 2004). In the same vein, a recent psychological study of 116 heterosexual college males found that those who reported frequently judging their romantic partner's body were more likely to use tactics to pressure and coerce them into having unwanted sex (Ramsey & Hoyt, 2014; Study 2). Although these results suggest a link between partner-objectification and the sexual victimisation of women, in their study the researchers used the notion of the objectifying male gaze (discussed in Chapter 3) as the main component of objectification. More specifically, Ramsey and Hoyt (2014) operationalised partner-objectification as the extent to which men surveyed, and expressed concerns for, their romantic partner's physical appearance. Here, I have opted to focus on the idea that objectification is more than just body surveillance (Haslam et al., 2013), and researchers have only recently started to explore the phenomenon as also involving denying the romantic partner of their humanness (e.g., Pizzirani & Karantzas, 2019).

The present study thus examines whether in the context of romantic relationships objectification predicts sexual and non-sexual IPV, focusing directly on implicit perceptions of the current female partner. Like Study 1, this study uses an implicit task to assess objectification as participants may be reluctant to admit that they dehumanise their partners as animals or objects. Unlike Study 1, the current IAT includes context-specific stimuli (i.e., romantic partner-related words), as opposed to the more general women-related words used previously. I hypothesise that men who hold stronger automatic cognitive associations between the romantic partner and objects or animals, would be more likely to report engaging in sexual, physical, and psychological IPV, as measured by the frequency of perpetration of these types of behaviours over the past six months of their ongoing relationship.

In tandem with self-reported accounts of past IPV perpetration, Study 2 also includes a behavioural task as a more direct, laboratory-analogue measure of male perpetrated physical aggression against the female partner (this measure is discussed in more detail later in this chapter). I expect that men who score high on the partner-objectification IAT would be more willing to physically victimise the romantic partner, as assessed by the behavioural proxy for aggression. The hypotheses stated above look to (a) conceptually replicate previous findings linking partner-objectification with sexual IPV (Ramsey & Hoyt, 2014; Sáez Díaz, Alonso-Ferres, et al., 2019), (b) broaden the scope of research on objectification in romantic relationships beyond the domain of sexual aggression, and (c) directly examine the predictive link between partner-objectification and physical aggression towards the objectified partner using a behavioural measure.

As with Study 1, the present research also includes a measure of sexist attitudes towards women to examine the extent to which partner-objectification and sexism relate to IPV perpetration and to each other. Hostile sexism towards women is a known contributing factor to the violence that they experience in their daily lives and intimate relationships (Allen et al., 2009; Capaldi et al., 2012; Malamuth et al., 1991; Murnen et al., 2002; Renzetti et al., 2015). Study 1 showed that HS significantly predicted all of the IPV-related outcomes, and I hypothesise that the same pattern of results would emerge for Study 2.

As highlighted previously, however, the relationship between HS and objectification is not clear: while some studies report a positive association between the variables (e.g., Cikara et al., 2011; Rollero, 2013; Viki & Abrams, 2003), others fail to find a relationship (e.g., Rudman & Mescher, 2012; Study 1 and 2). Moreover, the results from our first study supported the latter assumption (i.e., HS was dissociated from dehumanising perceptions of women as animals and objects) and I expect to replicate this finding in Study 2.

6.1.1. Methodological Improvements for Study 2

Study 2 uses the same research methodology and data analysis strategy as Study 1, whilst also incorporating several methodological improvements. These changes, outlined in the next few pages, are aimed at minimising some of the difficulties researchers face when measuring IPV perpetration. Taken together, the approach is expected to yield a richer picture about the extent to which violence is persistent and embedded within romantic couples' lives and interactions.

6.1.1.1. Measuring IPV perpetration.

Intimate partner violence is difficult to quantify. To date, using retrospective self-reports of violence is one of the most common ways to assess it (Lewis & Fremouw, 2001), and this is how the phenomenon was measured in Study 1. However, this measurement strategy has received criticism because respondents can deliberately distort it, thus yielding potentially inaccurate data (see Bender, 2017, for a critical review on issues around IPV measurement). Partner violence occurs predominately in private settings, is intensely personal, and carries a high level of stigma and shame for the offender (S.L. Cook, 2002; Makepeace, 1986). As such, survey participants are likely to resist admitting to these types of behaviours and could underreport and minimise their abuse (e.g., Riggs, Murphy, & O'Leary, 1989). To circumvent this limitation, Study 2 combines different approaches for the empirical measurement of male-to-female IPV.

Study 2 quantifies men's frequency of IPV perpetration in two ways: (a) via retrospective self-report accounts of violence against the partner (as with Study 1), and (b) using a computer-based behavioural proxy for physical aggression towards the partner, the Voodoo Doll Task (VDT; DeWall et al., 2013). The inclusion of the VDT is an attempt to yield a more reliable measure of violence perpetrated in the intimate relationship. In addition to providing a more comprehensive measure of IPV, this approach also allows for the assessment of the convergent validity between the physical violence-related measures (i.e., the VDT and the AIRS Physical Violence factor) and the predictive utility of the partner-objectification implicit task.

6.1.1.2. Assessing physical IPV with a behavioural proxy.

Physical partner violence is very difficult to assess: it seldomly takes place in the presence of others; there is wide variability in the way that it is empirically defined and measured in the literature; and ethical, practical, and safety limitations prevent researchers from testing physical partner assault in the laboratory (Bender, 2017; Waltermaurer, 2005). Thus, behavioural analogues for physical aggression become a practical and effective option for researchers to gain more direct insights into this problem.

Study 2 uses the VDT (DeWall et al., 2013) as a behavioural proxy for male-perpetrated physical IPV. The task gives participants the opportunity to intentionally harm a computer-based image of a doll representing the romantic partner by stabbing it with pins. DeWall and colleagues (2013) posit that harming the representation of the person (i.e., the doll) has important psychological similarities to the process of causing actual harm to the person that the doll represents. The VDT's logic draws upon influential research on superstitious beliefs and everyday magical thinking that suggests that people—including ordinary and well-educated individuals in contemporary Western societies—experience considerable difficulty when harming representations of well-liked others (Rozin, Millman, & Nemeroff, 1986). These representations can include spoken words, mental images, or physical objects that stand in for the real person.

Research shows that people are generally reluctant to cause harm to representations of persons that they respect, admire, and like, or those who are incapable of behaving aggressively towards others. In one study, Rozin and colleagues (1986) asked participants to throw darts at pictures of faces of: well-known politicians (John F. Kennedy and Adolf

Hitler), the study's experimenter, and imagined faces of strongly liked and disliked persons chosen by the participant. Supporting their hypotheses, participants were significantly less accurate when aiming at the pictures of strongly liked persons and at the face of John F. Kennedy, when compared to blank targets (Rozin et al., 1986). In a similar study, participants showed less task accuracy when throwing darts at a face-shaped target, when this target depicted the face of a baby (L.A. King, Burton, Hicks, & Drigotas, 2007).

Scholars suggest that concerns about harming the intended target's representation emerge from a latent superstitious belief (or a low-level gut intuition) in which the representation is equated with the real person; as Rozin, Markwith, and Ross (1990) simply put it "the image is the object" (p. 383). This principle is known as the law of similarities. According to it, things that resemble one another share fundamental properties and, as such, anything that happens to the representation will also affect the depicted person (Rozin & Nemeroff, 1990). These types of (non-rational) beliefs operate at an automatic unconscious level and can influence behaviour in spite of often being at direct odds with the person's own conscious, rational beliefs (Kramer & Block, 2008).

When it comes to the VDT, although most people would not explicitly endorse the idea that stabbing a doll with pins could actually harm the person it represents, these same people may still be influenced by a primitive feeling that something bad will result from such acts. Therefore, they would likely refrain from harming the doll, particularly in cases like ours, where the person being represented by the doll is the current romantic partner. Indeed, prior research has successfully demonstrated that the VDT is a valid and reliable

test for the assessment of physical aggression in the context of romantic relationships (e.g., Bushman, DeWall, Pond, & Hanus, 2014; DeWall et al., 2013; Slotter et al., 2012).

6.1.1.3. Increasing the ecological validity of the research.

Given that wanting to harm a close relationship partner does not often occur in a vacuum, Study 2's design also exposes the participants to a situational factor known to instigate an urge to aggress prior to administering the VDT. This technique is commonly used in the anger and aggression literature, including IPV studies (e.g., DeWall et al., 2013; Eckhardt & Jamison, 2002; Finkel et al., 2009; Slotter et al., 2012), as a way to increase the ecological validity of the research.

Provocation (real or perceived) holds a close temporal relationship with aggressive behaviour (C.A. Anderson & Bushman, 2002). Empirical evidence demonstrates that experiencing interpersonal provocation results in a strong aggression-promoting effect (C.A. Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Bettencourt & Miller, 1996; Eckhardt, 2007; Eckhardt, Jamison, & Watts, 2002) and plays a role as a specific situational predictor of violence in intimate relationships (Berkowitz, 1989, 1993; Bettencourt & Miller, 1996; DeWall et al., 2013; Finkel et al., 2012; Finkel et al., 2009; Slotter et al., 2012).

As demonstrated in Chapter 2, research shows that IPV can result from escalations in a couple's disagreement, conflict, and hostility (Capaldi et al., 2012; Fulu, Jewkes, et al., 2013; Heise, 1998; Kessler et al., 2001; Stith et al., 2008). In turn, conflict frequently begins with one partner feeling "provoked" by the other (Winstok, 2008). A provocation can include a wide range of anger-eliciting behaviours enacted by the relationship partner

(e.g., starting an argument, infidelity, wanting to leave the relationship). However, certain types of provocation such as jealousy, humiliation, and rejection are commonly cited as primary precipitating factors for both non-lethal (Delgado & Bond, 1993; Follingstad, Wright, Lloyd, & Sebastian, 1991; G. Gilchrist et al., 2015; Kaufman-Parks, Longmore, Giordano, & Manning, 2019; Makepeace, 1986) and lethal IPV (Daly & Wilson, 1998; R.E. Dobash & Dobash, 2011; R.E. Dobash, Dobash, & Cavanagh, 2009; R.E. Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh, & Medina-Ariza, 2007). Moreover, although most people deem IPV as unacceptable, research shows that the degree of a woman's provocative behaviour plays a role on people's interpretations of violent situations (Bettencourt & Miller, 1996). For example, a study found that both abusive and non-abusive men endorsed IPV more (i.e., viewed the violence as justified), and attributed greater blame and responsibility of the violence to the female, when they perceived a situational provocation to be *severe* (e.g., a scenario depicting the girlfriend flirting with another man at a party; Moore, Eisler, & Franchina, 2000).

Accordingly, Study 2 uses provoked aggression as a contextual factor in IPV. I ostensibly instigate participants' violent impulses by exposing them to a social dynamic with the potential victim that would *normatively* trigger an urge to aggress.[9] Specifically, the study uses a hypothetical scenario chosen for being severely provoking: it describes the

9 As defined by Slotter and others (2012), the term normatively refers to "the experience of the typical person confronting this particular instigator under the typical circumstances." (p. 292).

female partner acting in ways that are normally considered to be highly disrespectful and would make the other person jealous. Afterwards, participants are given the opportunity to physically aggress against the romantic partner via the VDT.

Before moving on a caveat is in order. I am not suggesting that female victims of IPV are, in any way, responsible for their own victimisation, or that in some way they may have "provoked" their male partner into behaving violently. The blame for partner abuse rests firmly with the abuser. Sadly, and despite years of public awareness and educational efforts, too often are women blamed for the violence that they experience in real and hypothetical situations (e.g., Hillier & Foddy, 1993; Koepke, Eyssel, & Bohner, 2014; Viki & Abrams, 2003); when seeking formal and informal support (Meyer, 2016); in the media (Sutherland, Simons, & Blatchford, 2017); and by the perpetrators of violence, the victim's own family members, and the general public (García, 2014; Waltermaurer, 2012). It is neither the intent nor outcome of this thesis to fuel these misconceptions. Nevertheless, considering objectification in the context of provoked aggression when examining IPV may provide much needed insight into the underlying causes of this major social problem. Understanding whether and why men who objectify their romantic partner are more prone to engage in aggressive acts against them is an important contribution to the scientific community and for the prevention of VAW more generally.

6.2. Method

6.2.1. Participants

This study's research design and data analysis strategy are comparable to that of Study 1. In line with the power analysis reported in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.2.1), I sampled a total of 394 men to retain sufficient statistical power while accounting for potential data loss. Participants were recruited from a U.S. online community sample via MTurk. To ensure a pool of naïve respondents, I prevented those who had previously participated from taking part in the current study. This was achieved using the platform's in-built user interface for excluding specific users via their unique MTurk ID. This ID is an alphanumeric code that Amazon assigns to each worker which replaces all of their personally identifying information, thus protecting their privacy and maintaining anonymity at all times.

Participants completed the study within 30 minutes and were compensated US$3 for their time. The inclusion criteria from Study 1 were retained—identifying as being male, heterosexual, 18 to 35 years old, and currently involved in a committed romantic relationship for a minimum of one year—and participants were verified via a screening page. Respondents who did not meet the necessary requirements for the study were immediately terminated and thanked for their interest.

Study 2 consisted of two parts: a computer-based reaction-time task followed by an online questionnaire. To ensure data quality, cases were removed from analysis following the same exclusion criteria that were outlined in Study 1: (a) failing to complete both parts

of the study (n = 5); (b) engaging in deception by changing responses on the screener page to bypass eligibility safeguards (n = 13); (c) finding the language of the study confusing or hard to follow (n = 1); (d) failing to answer correctly two out of the three attention checks (n = 1); and (e) performing poorly on the IAT (n = 63). As with the previous study, on completion of Study 2 participants were given the chance to admit to deception by ticking a box that confirmed they did not meet eligibility criteria but participated anyway (n = 7). New to Study 2, participants were also given the option to withdraw their data from analysis on completion of the survey (n = 11). To encourage honest responding, I assured participants that they would receive compensation even if they disclosed ineligibility or withdrew their data from future analysis.

The exclusions outlined above resulted in a final sample of 325 men (M_{age} = 29.75 years, SD = 3.71, age range: 20-35), considered adequate for the main objective of this study.[10] Most men identified as White (82%) and spoke English as their first language (98%); others identified as Latino (6%), African American (6%), Asian (6%), and less than 1% as either American Indians or multiracial. Regarding their romantic relationship status, 42% of participants had been in the current relationship for over 12 months, and the rest, for over two years. Moreover, the majority (72%) lived with their romantic partners, and

[10] As with Study 1, exclusion criteria were not independent of each other (men could satisfy more than one criterion at a time). Summing the total number of respondents excluded in each category (n = 107) exceeds the final number of participants excluded from the main analysis (n = 69).

out of those who did not cohabitate, 86% lived within one hour from each other. In terms of education, more than half (53%) had completed either a 2-year college or 4-year bachelor's degree, with the remainder having completed high school (16%), vocational school (1%), some college (18%), or some form of postgraduate studies (13%). Finally, 20% identified as being politically moderate, 52% as liberal or very liberal, and 28% as conservative or very conservative. The percentages reported above may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

6.2.2. Procedure

Participants accessed the survey remotely via the MTurk website by selecting to complete a task titled *Attitudes Towards Romantic Partners.* There, they followed a link to the survey and completed a screener page to verify eligibility. If eligible, participants then read the plain language statement and provided electronic informed consent. Immediately after, participants were presented with a reaction-time task, several questionnaires, and a behavioural measure for aggression in the order outline below.

First, participants responded to a reaction-time task designed to measure psychological constructs implicitly. Implicit testing was conducted at the start of the study because these types of associations can be influenced by previously performed tasks and contextual cues (Blair, 2002; Dasgupta & Greenwald, 2001; Mitchell, Nosek, & Banaji, 2003; Nosek, Greenwald, & Banaji, 2005). Thus, for the aim of this research it was important to assess these constructs free from experimental measure interference. On completion of the implicit task, the men were asked to provide the name or nickname of

their current female romantic partner. This information would be used later to populate other portions of the study (i.e., the partner-provocation vignette and the VDT).

Next, participants were presented with the questionnaire portion of the study including: (a) two questionnaires assessing self-reported past perpetration of violence in their current romantic relationship (sexual, physical, and psychological) and (b) one questionnaire assessing sexist attitudes towards women. For the IPV-related measures, participants were instructed to solely base their responses on the current romantic relationship (e.g., *"Below is a list of behaviours that can occur in a romantic relationship. Thinking about your current romantic relationship, please indicate how often in the past six months you have engaged in each of these behaviours"*). The order of presentation for all questionnaires, and the items within each questionnaire, were randomised for each participant.

Following the questionnaires, participants read a vignette that asked them to immerse themselves in a simulated situation involving their romantic partner. The vignette described the female partner clearly expressing romantic interest towards another man and was designed to powerfully instigate an aggressive urge. After being exposed to the situational provocation, they then completed a brief measure looking to quantify their current feelings and emotions. The logic behind including a measure of affect was two-fold. First, the scale served as a "filler" between the provocation vignette and the VDT so that the aim of the study would not appear obvious to the participants. Second, the affect measure could also be used as a way to check for the level of provocation incited by the vignette.

Next, participants completed the computer-based behavioural proxy for physical aggression (i.e., the VDT). This task offered the participants the opportunity to stab with pins a doll representing their romantic partner for a period of 2 minutes. To increase the salience of the provocation vignette and the VDT, the survey was programmed to include the participants' romantic partner's name or nickname throughout these instruments' instructions and text.

Finally, participants responded to the same demographic questionnaire as in Study 1 and read the debriefing statement. They were then provided with a unique completion code to use on MTurk for payment. Following the debriefing stage, participants were given a final chance to admit to deception and to withdraw their data from any future analysis.

6.2.3. Materials & Measures

All the survey questionnaires and the behavioural proxy for physical aggression were created using Qualtrics software (Qualtrics, 2017). The implicit task was scripted using Inquisit 5 software (Inquisit, Version 5.0.2.0) and uploaded to the Millisecond website for completion. Participants automatically transitioned back and forth between the two online platforms using embedded webpage links placed within the survey and the implicit task.

6.2.3.1. Implicit measure of partner-objectification.

I used a relational Single-Category IAT (SC-IAT; Karpinski & Steinman, 2006) to assess the extent to which men implicitly dehumanised their female romantic partner as

animals or objects. A methodological requirement for, and a limitation of, the standard IAT is that participants must categorise *two* target concepts (e.g., male and female) with an attribute (e.g., science). These two target concepts must be direct contrasts of each other. In research, however, concepts do not always have a clear counter-category to test. The SC-IAT is a modified version of the IAT that uses only *one* target category instead of the *two* target categories required for the original task. As such, it can be used to evaluate automatically activated associations for concepts without an obvious and direct contrast (Karpinski & Steinman, 2006), like when assessing perceptions of intimate partners.

In the present research the SC-IAT was used to evaluate implicit associations between words representing the (single) target concept "Romantic Partner" (*partner, lover, significant other, beloved, loved one, companion*) matched with descriptor words characteristic of either animals (*instinct, paw, snout, nature, hibernation, wild*), objects (*tool, device, thing, instrument, machine, ornament*), or humans (*logic, culture, rational, society, mind*). The stimulus words were selected based on prior research on objectification (Rudman & Mescher, 2012; Vaes et al., 2011) and on partner aggression (Slotter et al., 2012) that used similar implicit tasks. The SC-IAT measures the absolute strength of the non-relative associations between the single target concept and the matched dimensions using participants' reaction times (Blanton, Jaccard, Gonzales, & Christie, 2006; De Houwer, 2002; Gawronski & De Houwer, 2014; Karpinski & Steinman, 2006).

During the SC-IAT, the single target concept (e.g., romantic partner) is paired with a descriptor category (e.g., human) and prominently presented on one top corner of the screen. On the opposite top corner, the second descriptor category is presented (e.g.,

object). A word stimulus is then displayed in the middle of the screen (for an example, see Figure 6.1). Participants must then sort the word stimulus using two keystroke presses: a right-hand key response if the word matches the category(ies) presented on the right, and a left-hand key response if it matches the category(ies) on the left. After the first target-descriptor pairing is tested (e.g., human or romantic partner) the order is reversed for a second test (e.g., object or romantic partner).

Figure 6.1. Example of a SC-IAT Trial Used in Study 2



Figure 6.1. Block trial with the pairing "Romantic Partner or Human" vs. "Object" matched with an object-related word stimulus. To record a correct response, participants would need to press the right-hand key.

The task's logic is that words will be classified faster during blocks of trials when the respondents' own cognitive associations between the concepts presented match a pairing of target-descriptor categories (e.g., object or romantic partner) than when they mismatch a pairing (e.g., human or romantic partner). The SC-IAT has been shown to have adequate

psychometric properties including internal consistency, test-retest reliability, convergent and discriminant validity, and predictive validity (Bluemke & Friese, 2008; Friese, Bluemke, & Wanke, 2007; Karpinski & Steinman, 2006).

SC-IAT procedure. Participants were presented with two SC-IATs that ran consecutively. These two tasks were identical and consisted of five blocks of trials each. The only difference between the tasks was that if the first SC-IAT corresponded to categorising romantic partners with *object* and human constructs (hereafter referred to as the partner-object SC-IAT), the subsequent SC-IAT would categorise romantic partners with *animal* and human constructs (hereafter referred to as the partner-animal SC-IAT). Given that both SC-IATs followed an identical procedure, for brevity I will only describe the partner-object SC-IAT as follows.

The first block of the partner-object SC-IAT presented participants with the study's testing categories (i.e., romantic partner, object, and human) and their corresponding word items. Participants were then instructed to sort, as quickly and as accurately as possible, a set of words using two keys: the right "*I*" key when the words matched the category(ies) being shown on the right top corner, and the left "*E*" key when they matched those on the left top corner (see Appendix A for the full set of task instructions).

Next, blocks 2 and 3 evaluated the first target-descriptor pairing (e.g., object or romantic partner). This block set began with a block of 24 practice trials, followed by a block of 72 critical test trials. The next block set (i.e., blocks 4 and 5) evaluated the reverse target-descriptor pairing (e.g., human or romantic partner) in the same way – a practice block followed by a testing block. Immediately after, participants completed the partner-

animal SC-IAT which was identical to the partner-object SC-IAT but substituted the *object*-related words for *animal*-related words. For this study, the romantic partner-object pairing, and the romantic partner-animal pairing were deemed to be the *compatible* tasks, while the romantic partner-human pairing was deemed to be the *incompatible* task.

On completion, participants were presented with a final block that asked them about handedness (*right*/*left*) and previous participation in similar tasks (*yes*/*no*). Order of presentation for the two SC-IATs and for the blocks within each SC-IAT was counterbalanced between participants to minimise order effects resulting in four different presentation conditions. Table 6.1 shows a summary of these presentation conditions.

Table 6.1.
Order of Presentation for the SC-IATs and the Target-Descriptor Pairings for Study 2

	Order of presentation	
Condition	SC-IAT	Target-descriptor pairing in each SC-IAT
1	Partner-object, Partner-animal	Incompatible, Compatible
2	Partner-object, Partner-animal	Compatible, Incompatible
3	Partner-animal, Partner-object	Incompatible, Compatible
4	Partner-animal, Partner-object	Compatible, Incompatible

SC-IAT Scoring. Each SC-IAT score was based on the two blocks of 72 test trials each (blocks 3 and 5), with all practice trials excluded from analysis (Karpinski & Steinman, 2006). Then, the SC-IAT effect (or D-score) was calculated using the improved scoring algorithm described by Greenwald and colleagues (2003). The D-statistic is an effect-size-like measure with a possible range of -2 to +2 (Sriram & Greenwald, 2009).

In this SC-IAT, the strength of the association between concepts is measured using the response latency differences between blocks categorising compatible tasks (i.e., romantic partner or object/animal) and incompatible tasks (i.e., romantic partner or human). Specifically, the partner-object SC-IAT score was generated using response latency differences between the blocks involving partner-object and partner-human pairings, while the partner-animal SC-IAT score was generated using the partner-animal and partner-human pairings. Positive D values (> 0) reflect quicker latencies to pairing the romantic partner with animals and/or objects, than to pairing the romantic partner with humans.

6.2.3.2. IPV self-report outcome measures.

Psychological abuse and physical violence. As with Study 1, I used the 26-item AIRS (Borjesson et al., 2003) to assess how often participants engaged in psychological and physical violence in their romantic relationship (Psychological Abuse factor [α = .90]: Emotional Abuse [7 items, α = .85], Deception [4 items, α = .77], and Verbal Abuse [5 items, α = .82]; Physical Violence factor [α = .90]: Overt Physical Violence [7 items, α = .89] and Restrictive Violence [3 items, α = .83]). The scale rated the frequency of perpetration for each of the 26 violent behaviours in the last six months of the current relationship, using a 3-point scale (0 = *Never,* 1 = *Once,* 2 = *Twice or more*). Scores are calculated by summing responses across items within subscales, with higher scores indicating greater perpetration of IPV (scale range: 0 to 52).

Sexual violence. Again, I used the 34-item SCIRS (Shackelford & Goetz, 2004) to assess how often participants had perpetrated sexual violence against their female partner (Resource Manipulation/Violence [15 items, α = .93], Commitment Manipulation [10 items, α = .91], and Defection Threat [9 items, α = .96]). The scale rated the frequency of perpetration for each of the 34 sexually violent behaviours in the last six months of the current relationship, using 6-point scale: *"act did not occur," "act occurred 1 time," "act occurred 2 times," "act occurred 3 to 5 times," "act occurred 6 to 10 times,"* and *"act occurred 11 or more times".* Scores are calculated by summing responses across items within subscales, with higher scores indicating greater perpetration of sexually coercive behaviours (scale range: 0 to 170).

6.2.3.3. Partner-provocation & behavioural proxy for physical IPV.

Partner-provocation vignette.[11] To instigate an urge to aggress against the partner, Study 2 used a personally involving simulated scenario that described a *severe* partner-provocation. This scenario is grounded in the Articulated Thoughts in Simulated Situations paradigm (G.C. Davison, Robins, & Johnson, 1983), a clinical psychological procedure used to encourage hostile thoughts and actions against a target. This procedure exposes participants to well-controlled and experientially impactful provocations (ranging

[11] I am grateful to Dr. Erica Slotter who granted permission to use and shared the transcripts for the provocation scenarios used in this study and in Experiment 3 (reported in Chapter 7).

from mild to severe) and is widely used in psychological research on IPV with clinical (Babcock, Green, Webb, & Yerington, 2005; Costa & Babcock, 2008; Eckhardt, 2007; Eckhardt, Barbour, & Davison, 1998) and non-clinical populations (Eckhardt et al., 1998; Eckhardt & Crane, 2008, 2015; Eckhardt & Jamison, 2002; Eckhardt et al., 2002; Finkel et al., 2009; Slotter et al., 2012). The scenario version used in Study 2 was adapted from work by Slotter and colleagues (2012), see Appendix D for the complete transcript.

In this study, participants read and psychologically immersed themselves in a hypothetical situation where their romantic partner acted in ways that would normally be considered highly disrespectful and jealousy provoking. Specifically, the scenario described the couple out at a bar, and while the participant was getting drinks, another man would start flirting with his female partner. During this interaction, she would express clear romantic interest in the new suitor (e.g., engaging in flirtatious physical contact) and discontent about her current relationship (e.g., making statements such as *"things just aren't the same anymore"* and *"I really don't know why I'm still dating him").* To ensure participants read the vignette carefully and immersed themselves in the situation being described, the ability to continue advancing throughout the survey was disabled for 2 minutes.

After reading the vignette participants responded to a short scale specifically designed by the author to measure affect. It asked participants to report the extent to which eight words (*provoked, disrespected, hostile, angry, humiliated, happy, appreciated, supported*) described their current affect (i.e., *"Thinking about your girlfriend's behaviour in the scenario, please read each item and indicate to what extent you feel this way right*

now, that is, at the present moment") on a 1 (*not at all*) to 9 (*extremely*) Likert-type scale. This scale served as a "filler" task between reading the scenario and responding to the VDT, and as a way to check the level of provocation instigated by the vignette.

Proxy for physical aggression.[12] I used the VDT (DeWall et al., 2013) as an ethical proxy for physically harmful or aggressive behaviour against the romantic partner in an online setting. During the task, participants were shown a computer-based image of a doll and told that it represented their current female partner. Then, they were given the chance to stab the doll with pins for 2 minutes, in order to release any negative feelings towards the partner that may have developed from the study. Participants could stab the doll with as many pins as they wanted, between 0 to 100. To make the link between the doll and the romantic partner more salient, her name or nickname was programmed into the task.

Figure 6.2 presents the details of the VDT's experimental procedure. The 2-minute timer would only start once the participant had read and acknowledged the task's instructions. Then, the computer screen would show an image of a doll with no pins stuck to it and an icon of a pin located at the bottom (see Figure 6.2a). The participant could select whether to stab the doll with the pin or not. If they chose to insert the pin, the following screen then displayed the doll stabbed with a pin (see Figure 6.2b). This process was repeated until the participant reached the desired number of pins to inset within the

[12] I am grateful to Professor Eli Finkel who granted permission to use and shared the online version of the VDT. Modified versions of this task were used in this study and in Experiment 3.

time limit. Scores are calculated by summing the total number of pins stuck in the doll and a greater number of pins indicates a higher level of physical aggressive intention towards the female romantic partner (scale range: 0 to 100).

Previous research shows that the VDT is a valid and reliable behavioural method of measuring aggressive inclinations (at the trait and state level) in the laboratory (DeWall et al., 2013; Pronin, Wegner, McCarthy, & Rodriguez, 2006), in the context of romantic relationships (Bushman et al., 2014; DeWall et al., 2013; Slotter et al., 2012), and in research settings where data collection takes place over the Internet (DeWall et al., 2013; Slotter et al., 2012).

6.2.3.4. Additional variables measured.

Sexism. As with Study 1, the ASI (Glick & Fiske, 1996) was used to measure sexist attitudes towards women. However, in this study the shorter 12-item version of the scale was administered. Similar to the original inventory, the ASI short-form consists of two subscales assessing HS (6 items, $\alpha = .92$), and benevolent sexism (6 items, $\alpha = .85$). This scale has satisfactory psychometric properties that are consistent with the long-form version while containing only half the number of items (Rollero, Glick, & Tartaglia, 2014). Items were rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*), with higher scores reflecting more hostile or benevolent sexist attitudes towards women.

Demographics questionnaire. Participants provided the same sociodemographic information as in Study 1 (see Section 5.2.3.3).

Figure 6.2. Details of the Experimental Procedure for the VDT Used in Study 2

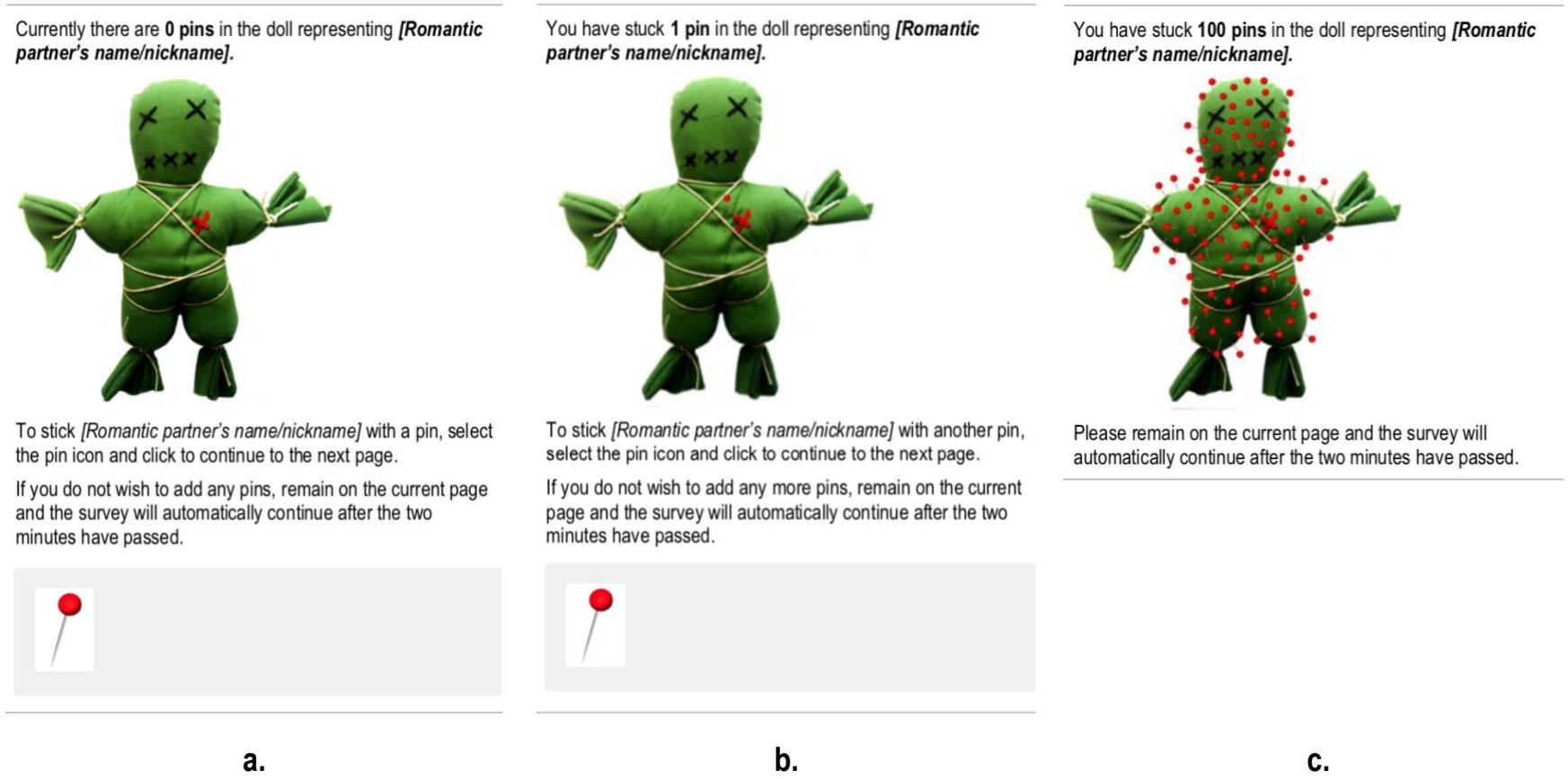


Figure 6.2. Screenshots for the first (a), second (b), and hundredth (c) screen of the VDT task. During the study, the text depicted in italics is replaced by the name or nickname of the participants' current female romantic partner, which was provided at the beginning of the study.

6.3. Results

6.3.1. Preliminary Analyses

6.3.1.1. Examining SC-IAT scores.

Because the study's primary outcomes involved the SC-IATs, I first conducted a mixed factorial ANOVA on the pairing mean latencies to assess for order effects. The design was a 2 (SC-IAT: animal, object) x 2 (SC-IAT order: animal first, object first) x 2 (Pairing order: compatible first, incompatible first) mixed factorial ANOVA with repeated measures on the first factor. Results showed no significant effects for the two order factors, so I collapsed across them.

Scores for the partner-object SC-IAT resulted in small D-scores (M = -.16) that significantly differed from zero, $t(324) = -9.97$, $p < .001$, $d = .55$. D-scores for the partner-animal SC-IAT were also small (M = -.13) and significantly differed from zero, $t(324) = -8.46$, $p < .001$, $d = .47$. The correlation between the partner-object and the partner-animal SC-IATs was significantly positive, $r(325) = .16$, $p = .003$.

6.3.1.2. Generating IPV composite scores.

As with Study 1, and following scoring protocols in partner violence research (e.g., Hamby, 2016a, 2016b; Straus et al., 1996), the SCIRS scores were recalculated to report the number of sexually coercive acts by taking the midpoint of the instrument's third and fourth response categories (i.e., *"act occurred 3 to 5 times," and "act occurred 6 to 10 times,"*

recoded to 4 and 8, respectively) and 16 for the *"11 or more times"* response category. The first three response categories remained unaltered (0, 1, and 2 for *"act did not occur," "act occurred 1 time,"* and *"act occurred 2 times,"* respectively). Scores were generated by summing the number of acts across the items in each subscale (new scale range: 0 to 512). For completeness, I also conducted all the analyses reported here using the scale's original scoring procedure and results revealed no change in statistical significance values.

Moreover, correlational analyses showed that the subscales within the two AIRS factors were highly intercorrelated, suggesting that they represented the same constructs (Physical Violence factor subscales: $rs > .66$; Psychological Abuse factor subscales: $rs > .47$). The same pattern of results emerged between the SCIRS subscales ($rs > .68$). Therefore, prior to analysis I calculated composite scores for the two AIRS factors (psychological abuse, physical violence) and the SCIRS (sexual coercion) by collapsing across subscales within each measure. See Appendix E for the complete list of correlation coefficients between the subscales of the instruments outlined above.

6.3.1.3. Examining sociodemographic data.

I first examined the relationship between the participants' demographic information and the IPV-related outcomes to identify possible control variables. Given that the majority of the men in our sample identified as White (82%), the ethnicity variable was recoded to white (1) vs. non-white (0). I then conducted a series of analyses on the dependent variables (psychological abuse, physical violence, sexual coercion, and VDT) using bivariate correlations for the continuous and dichotomous demographic variables

(age, ethnicity, political stance, personal yearly income, and length of romantic relationship) and a one-way ANOVA for the categorical variables (level of education). Given that there were no statistically significant associations or mean differences between the variables of interest (*p*s > .05), the demographic markers were not included in the main analyses reported next.

6.3.2. Main Analyses

6.3.2.1. Descriptive statistics and correlations.

As expected with frequency data on violence, all the outcome variables were non-normally distributed as assessed by the Shapiro-Wilk's test (*p*s < .05) and highly positively skewed. Table 6.2 presents the descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, skew, and the range of scores) for the variables of interest and the percentage distribution of the participants' IPV perpetration frequencies. For the IPV self-report measures, the distribution was calculated based on the number of violent acts perpetrated during the last six months of the relationship. For the VDT, the distribution was calculated based on the number of pins stuck into the doll in the 2-minute timeframe.

Table 6.3 presents the correlation coefficients among the variables. I report the Spearman rank-order statistic due to the non-normality and significant skewness of the data (only scores for the two SC-IATs were normally distributed). The partner-animal and partner-object SC-IATs were positively correlated, but only the former was significantly and negatively correlated with one of the IPV-related outcomes (psychological abuse). The animal-partner SC-IAT was also significantly correlated with HS and in the same direction.

Finally, as expected, HS was strongly and positively correlated with all of the IPV-related outcome measures.

Table 6.2.
Descriptive Statistics for the Variables of Interest and Percentages for IPV Perpetration in Study 2

					No. of perpetrated acts of IPV			
Variable	*M*	*SD*	Skew	Min, Max	0	1-5	6-10	> 10
Partner-animal	-0.13	0.28	0.10	-0.79, 0.69				
Partner-object	-0.16	0.28	0.30	-0.87, 0.90				
Psychological abuse	11.04	8.66	0.61	0, 32	10.2%	24.0%	20.4%	45.3%
Physical violence	0.86	2.65	4.55	0, 20	81.2%	13.2%	3.6%	1.8%
Sexual coercion	11.32	34.23	5.99	0, 336	52.3%	19.1%	8.3%	20.3%
VDT	3.21	9.25	6.44	0, 100	47.7%	38.5%	8.3%	5.5%
HS	2.87	1.31	0.30	1, 6				

Note. *N* = 325, skew standard error = .135. VDT = Voodoo Doll Task; HS = Hostile sexism. All variables were non-normally distributed as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test (*p*s < .05), except for the partner-animal and partner-object SC-IATs which were normally distributed.

Table 6.3.
Summary of Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficients for all Variables in Study 2

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Partner-animal	1					
2. Partner-object	.16**	1				
3. Psychological abuse	-.11*	.02	1			
4. Physical violence	-.07	.06	.41**	1		
5. Sexual coercion	-.04	.04	.46**	.36**	1	
6. VDT	-.01	.08	.30**	.19**	.34**	1
7. HS	-.15**	-.00	.21**	.16**	.30**	.30**

Note. *N* = 325. VDT = Voodoo Doll Task; HS = Hostile sexism.
p < .05. **p* < .01.

6.3.2.2. Predicting IPV.

Once more, I employed a NB procedure to account for the non-normal, highly skewed, overdispersed, and count-based nature of the outcome measures (Hilbe, 2011; Swartout et al., 2015). To test whether dehumanising the female romantic partner as either animals or objects contributed to the prediction of (a) the likelihood of past perpetration of psychological abuse, physical violence, and sexual coercion within the relationship, and (b) partner aggression as assessed by the number of pins stabbed into the doll, I conducted a series of NB regressions using the partner-animal, partner-object, and HS scores as predictors on each of the outcome variables. To facilitate the interpretation of the NB regression coefficients in terms of IRRs, prior to analysis the raw values for the independent variables were standardised using a z-score transformation ($M = 0$, $SD = 1$) so that the measures were on the same metric. The IRR represents the percentage change, increase or decrease, in the observed counts and quantifies the direction and strength of relationship between the predictor and outcome (Atkins & Gallop, 2007; Hilbe, 2011).

Visual inspection of the plots of mean predicted values against deviance residuals indicated the presence of outliers in the data; however, these cases were not multivariate outliers. Moreover, there was no evidence for extremely influential cases as assessed by values for Cook's distance above 1 (R.D. Cook & Weisberg, 1982). Given that no systematic pattern of outliers emerged, and that excluding outlier cases did not change the significance of any of the analyses critical to the hypotheses, all data were retained for analysis.

Predicting likelihood of past IPV perpetration: Psychological abuse, physical violence, and sexual coercion. Table 6.4 presents the summary statistics for the NB regressions. Analysis showed that the predictors accounted for significant variation in psychological abuse, with the full regression model representing a statistically significant improvement in fit over the null model, LR χ_2 (3, n = 325) = 11.69, p = .009. However, only HS had a significant effect. There was a positive relationship between HS and psychological abuse log counts: a standard deviation unit increase in the predictor variable increased the rate of abuse by 17% (IRR = 1.17, 95% CI: 1.05, 1.29).

For physical violence, the full regression model also represented a statistically significant improvement in fit over the null model, LR χ_2 (3, n = 325) = 14.59, p = .002. Both the partner-object SC-IAT and HS were associated with an increased likelihood of perpetrating physical violence, where a standard deviation unit increase in the predictor variables increased the rate of violence by 33% (IRR = 1.33, 95% CI: 0.87, 2.02) and 44% (IRR = 1.44, 95% CI: 1.03, 2.01), respectively.

For sexual coercion, again, the full regression model represented a statistically significant improvement in fit over the null model, LR χ_2 (3, n = 325) = 18.80, p < .001. However, only HS had a significant effect. There was a positive relationship between HS and sexual coercion log counts: a standard deviation unit increase in the predictor variable increased the rate of sexual coercion by 77% (IRR = 1.77, 95% CI: 1.34, 2.34).

Table 6.4.
Summary of the Negative Binomial Regression Analyses for the Variables Predicting IPV in Study 2

Variable	*b*	SE	IRR	*Wald* χ^2	*df*	*p**
			Psychological abuse			
Intercept	2.39	.05	10.87	2217.29	1	<.001
Partner-animal	.08	.05	1.08	2.16	1	.142
Partner-object	-.02	.06	0.98	.12	1	.730
HS	.15	.05	1.17	8.05	1	.005
Dispersion parameter	0.74	.07				
			Physical violence			
Intercept	-.42	.19	.66	5.06	1	.025
Partner-animal	.28	.22	1.33	1.69	1	.194
Partner-object	.46	.20	1.59	5.49	1	.019
HS	.36	.17	1.44	4.43	1	.035
Dispersion parameter	9.32	1.64				
			Sexual coercion			
Intercept	2.24	.14	9.38	260.23	1	<.001
Partner-animal	.11	.16	1.12	.48	1	.490
Partner-object	.17	.16	1.19	1.21	1	.271
HS	.57	.14	1.77	16.48	1	<.001
Dispersion parameter	6.13	.59				

Note. *N* = 325. HS = Hostile sexism; *b* = Unstandardised coefficient; SE = Standard error; IRR = Incidence-rate ratio; *df* = degrees of freedom.
*statistical significance at $p < .05$.

Predicting likelihood of partner physical aggression: The Voodoo Doll Task.

Table 6.5 presents the summary statistics for the NB regressions. Analysis showed that the predictors accounted for significant variation in the number of pins used in the VDT, with the full regression model representing a statistically significant improvement in fit over the null model, LR $\chi 2$ (3, n = 325) = 23.36, p < .001. However, only HS had a significant effect. There was a positive relationship between HS and levels of partner aggression among participants, where a standard deviation unit increase in the predictor variable increased the rate of pins stuck into the doll representing the female romantic partner by 57% (IRR = 1.57, 95% CI: 1.28, 1.91).

Table 6.5.
Summary of the Negative Binomial Regression Analyses for the Variables Predicting the VDT in Study 2

Variable	*b*	SE	IRR	*Wald* $\chi 2$	*df*	*p**
			VDT			
Intercept	1.02	.11	2.78	88.88	1	<.001
Partner-animal	-.01	.14	.99	.01	1	.933
Partner-object	.05	.12	1.05	.21	1	.650
HS	.45	.10	1.57	19.30	1	<.001
Dispersion parameter	3.42	.36				

Note. N = 325. HS = Hostile sexism; b = Unstandardised coefficient; SE = Standard error; IRR = Incidence-rate ratio; *df* = degrees of freedom.
*statistical significance at p < .05.

6.3.3. Secondary Analyses: Exploring Provocation

The lack of an observed effect for partner-objectification on enacted aggression, as measured by the VDT, was unexpected. To follow up this null finding I ran ancillary exploratory analyses to remove potential confounds.

Were participants provoked by the vignette? Given that IPV does not occur in a vacuum, for this study I included a hypothetical vignette as a situational factor designed to instigate an intent-to-aggress against the female partner. The scenario described the partner engaging in ostensibly anger-eliciting behaviours. However, if participants did not feel provoked (or provoked enough) as a result of psychologically immersing themselves on the situation, it is likely that they would not be willing to harm the doll representing the romantic partner, even if they scored high in partner-objectification.

To appraise the extent to which participants felt provoked in response to the scenario, I generated a partner-provocation mean score using the ratings from the eight emotion/feeling words presented in the post-vignette scale (i.e., *provoked, disrespected, hostile, angry, humiliated, happy, appreciated,* and *supported* [the last three items were reverse scored]; Cronbach's $\alpha = .81$). These words described feelings and emotions associated with contextual factors that hold close temporal relationships to IPV. For example, jealousy, humiliation, and rejection have been cited in the literature as primary motivations for violence in close relationships (Delgado & Bond, 1993; Foo & Margolin, 1995). The ancillary results suggest that the partner-provocation vignette was effective and powerful ($M = 7.50$, $SD = 1.23$; on a scale from 1 = *not at all* to 9 = *extremely*). As such, it

appears unlikely that a lack of provocation would be responsible for the observed null findings of partner-objectification.

Does partner-objectification moderate the relationship between provocation and aggression? Given that ancillary analyses showed that participants were sufficiently provoked, I then investigated whether partner-objectification influenced the relationship between reading a severely provoking vignette and enacting aggression towards their romantic partner. Specifically, I examined whether provocation led to an increased likelihood of violent responding (assessed by the number of pins stuck onto the doll), especially if the participant objectified his romantic partner.

To test this, I employed a NB regression model as the data analytic strategy. As with the main analyses, the raw values for the independent variables were standardised using a z-score transformation. Then, I first considered the effects of adding provocation to the model separately (Model 1), then by adding the interaction terms (Model 2). To determine how well these competing models fitted the data, I used the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), which is a comparative fit index with lower scores indicating better model fit (Beaujean & Morgan, 2016; Burnham & Anderson, 2002). The two new models presented with lower AIC values (Model 1 = 1284, Model 2 = 1281) when compared to the statistic from the model tested in the main analysis (AIC = 1286). Although the AIC change was not large, the improved parameters indicate that the model containing the three additional explanatory measures (i.e., provocation and the two interaction terms) fitted the data better than the model containing only the three original measures (i.e., partner-animal, partner-object, and HS). Table 6.6 presents the summary statistics for these new analyses.

Table 6.6.
Summary of the Ancillary Negative Binomial Regression Analyses in Study 2

Variable	*b*	SE	IRR	*Wald* χ^2	*df*	*p**
			Model 1			
Intercept	.97	.11	2.71	85.54	1	<.001
Partner-animal	-.03	.14	.97	.06	1	.803
Partner-object	.01	.11	1.01	.01	1	.908
HS	.40	.10	1.49	14.79	1	<.001
Partner-provocation	.26	.12	1.30	4.82	1	.028
Dispersion parameter	3.34	.35				
			Model 2			
Intercept	.95	.11	2.59	78.74	1	<.001
Partner-animal	-.02	.13	.98	.03	1	.876
Partner-object	.02	.11	1.03	.05	1	.828
HS	.39	.11	1.47	13.42	1	<.001
Partner-provocation	.29	.12	1.34	5.74	1	.017
Partner-provocation x partner-animal	.27	.12	1.31	4.90	1	.027
Partner-provocation x partner-object	.24	.12	1.28	3.98	1	.046
Dispersion parameter	3.24	.34				

Note. *N* = 325. HS = Hostile sexism; *b* = Unstandardised coefficient; SE = Standard error; IRR = Incidence-rate ratio; *df* = degrees of freedom.
*statistical significance at $p < .05$.

Not surprisingly, when fitted alone, the main effect of provocation was statistically significant ($b = .26$), χ^2 (4, $n = 325$) = 4.82, $p < .028$, with participants who felt more provoked showing an increased likelihood of inserting pins into the doll (see Table 6.6, Model 1). A one standard deviation unit increase in provocation increased the rate of pin insertions by 30% (IRR = 1.30, 95% CI: 1.03, 1.64).

Adding the interaction terms between provocation and the partner-object and partner-animal variables improved model fit over the individual effect model, LR $\chi 2$ (6, n = 325) = 34.62, p < .001 (see Table 6.6, Model 2). Again, the main effect of provocation was statistically significant (b = .29), $\chi 2$ (6, n = 325) = 5.74, p < .017, with participants who felt more provoked associated with an increased likelihood of inserting pins into the doll. A one standard deviation unit increase in provocation increased the rate of pin insertions by 34% (IRR = 1.34, 95% CI: 1.05, 1.69).

Moreover, statistically significant interactions qualify the interpretation of the main effects. The interaction effect between provocation and the partner-object SC-IAT was statistically significant (b = .24), $\chi 2$ (6, n = 325) = 3.98, p < .046. At high levels of provocation, higher scores for likening the partner to objects were associated with greater aggression (i.e., greater number of pins inserted into the doll). Figure 6.3a plots the simple slopes of provocation at +/- 1 SD on partner objectification.

Likewise, the interaction effect between provocation and the partner-animal SC-IAT was statistically significant (b = .27), $\chi 2$ (6, n = 325) = 4.90, p < .027. Once more, at high levels of provocation, higher scores for likening the partner to animals were associated with greater aggression. Figure 6.3b plots the simple slopes of provocation at +/- 1 SD on partner animalisation.

Figure 6.3. Plots for the Two-Way Interaction Effects Between Provocation and Objectification and Animalisation for a Simple Negative Binomial Regression Analysis on the VDT

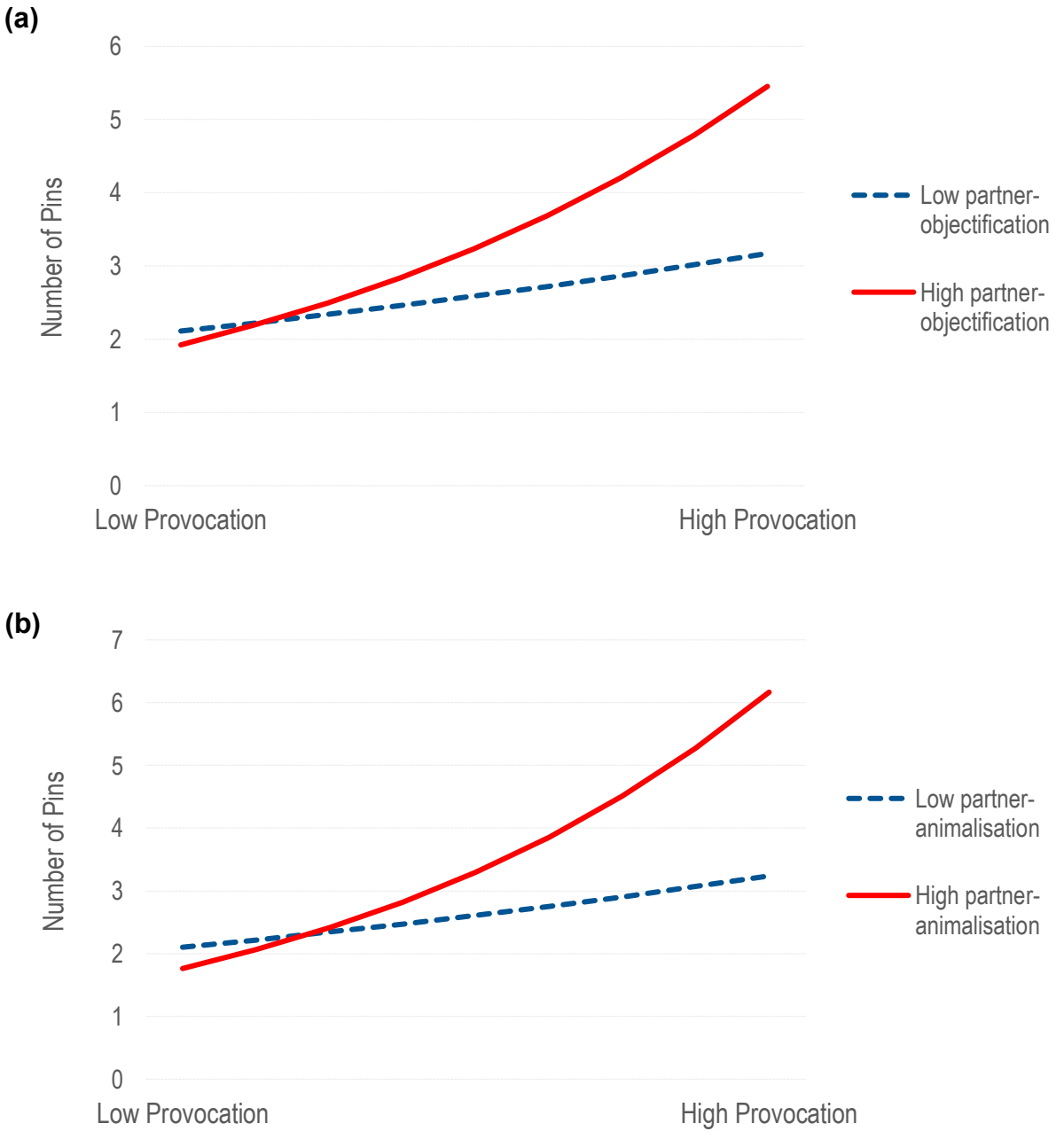


Figure 6.3. Simple slopes plot for the number of pins inserted during the VDT as a function of provocation by implicit partner-objectification (a) and partner-animalisation (b) interactions. High is at +1 SD, low is at -1 SD. Lines are not straight because the NB regression is a log-linear model.

6.4. Discussion

Study 2 examined whether dehumanising the female romantic partner, either by likening her to animals or objects, was related to different forms of IPV within the participants' romantic relationship. I hypothesised that higher scores for the two SC-IATs would predict greater IPV perpetration against the female partner, as assessed by men's retrospective accounts of violence and a behavioural proxy for physical aggression. The study also investigated how HS was related to IPV and partner-objectification. I hypothesised that HS would predict all of the study's outcomes, but that it would be dissociated from objectifying or animalising the partner. The study's findings showed partial support for these hypotheses.

Although instances of IPV should not occur within romantic relationships, 19% of male participants reported committing at least one act of physical violence against the female partner in the last six months of their relationship, 48% at least one act of sexual violence, and 90% some form of psychological abuse (see Table 6.2). These results are comparable to the findings from Study 1 and to studies using representative samples of young adults (e.g., J.W. White & Koss, 1991). In terms of enacted aggression (i.e., the VDT scores), almost half of the men (48%) chose to inset at least one pin into the doll representing their romantic partner (M = 3.21; Table 6.2). Moreover, self-reported past perpetration of physical IPV exhibited significant cross-sectional association with the number of pin insertions in the VDT (see Table 6.3). This result further supports the convergent validity of this task as a behavioural analogue of physical aggression, which has already been demonstrated in previous research (DeWall et al., 2013). In addition, the VDT

was also significantly and positively correlated with men's perpetration of sexual and psychological IPV (Table 6.3).

On average, men were more likely to humanise the romantic partner than to objectify or animalise her, as indicated by the negative mean D-values for the two SC-IATs (Table 6.2). It is not surprising that men more often equated their partners to persons (vs. non-persons), given the emotional interconnectedness, intimacy, and investment of personal resources that typically characterise close relationships (Davis & Todd, 1982; Marsiglio & Scanzoni, 1995). When considering interpersonal relationships, feeling a sense of empathy and positive social connectedness towards a person enhances perceptions of them as having humanness (Bastian et al., 2014; Haslam, 2006).

Nevertheless, as expected, automatically associating the female partner with objects significantly predicted the likelihood of perpetrating physical IPV in the relationship. This effect was independent of men's levels of HS, as these two variables were uncorrelated (Table 6.3). This is a novel finding providing empirical evidence for the long-speculated objectification-IPV link (Dworkin, 1989; MacKinnon, 1987; Nussbaum, 1999). These results were consistent with those from Study 1, strengthening the claim that heterosexual men who implicitly objectify women, in general (Study 1) and in particular (Study 2), use physical violence in their romantic relationships to a greater extent. Taken together, the findings parallel dehumanisation theory (Haslam, 2006), which posits that stripping someone of their humanity facilitates violence against them. They also support feminist assumptions about the relationship between *thing-like* perceptions of women in society and in romantic relationships and the perpetration of physical aggression against them

(Dworkin, 1989; MacKinnon, 1987; Nussbaum, 1999). Of course, because the regression models presented here were cross-sectional, causality is unknown; additional experimental and longitudinal research is required to truly test whether objectification would precede violence or *vice versa*.

Studies 1 and 2 provide the first evidence on how implicit social cognitions in heterosexual romantic relationships influence men's likelihood for perpetrating physical IPV. The implicit objectification of women (Study 1) and of the romantic partner (Study 2) applies to non-conscious thinking processes and knowledge held in long-term memory that impact people's responses outside awareness (Nosek, Hawkins, & Frazier, 2011). These non-conscious tendencies do not develop or operate in a vacuum – cultural norms, values, and years of past experiences with the world and the people in it lay their foundations (Bargh & Morsella, 2008; Kunda & Spencer, 2003). Once laid, features of the immediate social environment, like the female partner's gender group membership, can automatically trigger them, which, in turn, can actively influence explicit thinking and actions such as violence perpetration (Bargh & Williams, 2006). Taking the above into consideration, examining objectification through the lens of an implicit social cognition framework contributes to the understanding of how these underlying mechanisms may facilitate IPV offending. Parallels can be drawn between the findings from these two studies and clinical psychological and qualitative studies examining core implicit theories in the narratives of male offenders (Gannon, 2009; E. Gilchrist, 2007, 2009; Tilley & Brackley, 2005; T. Ward, 2000; Weldon & Gilchrist, 2012). This literature has identified elements denoting objectification as common themes underlying the distorted cognitive schemas held by

men who commit VAW, such as viewing women as objects or possessions as ways to explain their violence.

As previously mentioned, however, our hypotheses were only partially supported. Contrary to expectations, Study 2 did not conceptually replicate past research showing a positive association between men's partner-objectification and their likelihood to sexually coerce the romantic partner into having unwanted sex (Ramsey & Hoyt, 2014; Sáez Díaz, Alonso-Ferres, et al., 2019). However, this prior research assessed objectification via the male gaze, whereas I looked at implicit dehumanising perceptions of female partners. As such, these studies may be measuring conceptually different elements of the phenomenon, or different phenomena altogether. Study 2 also failed to replicate the objectification-sexual IPV link observed in Study 1. It is possible that objectification operates differently within the context of a romantic relationship and, therefore, the current study did not yield comparable results. Finally, objectifying and animalising the female partner did not significantly predict psychological abuse, and animalising her did not predict any of the other IPV-related variables.

The degree of heterogeneity that exists between subgroups of IPV offenders may help explain the null effects observed in Study 2. The literature shows that the pathways, motivations, and functions for IPV vastly differ among different subtypes of IPV perpetrators (Chiffriller & Hennessy, 2009; E. Gilchrist, 2009; Holtzworth-Munroe, 2000; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994). For instance, while for some men the primary motivating factor for abuse is rooted on instrumental needs (e.g., to maintain control over the partner and avoid challenge of their authority), for others it is rooted in their

emotional instability or impulsiveness (E. Gilchrist et al., 2003; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994). In line with this, objectification and animalisation of female partners may affect different groups of men in different ways.

Given that a multiple-causal model that considers the interplay between numerous risk factors best explains IPV (Heise, 1998; Straus & Gelles, 1988; WHO & PAHO, 2012a), men's implicit cognitions about their intimate partners may be just one factor in this multiple causation model. It is possible that viewing the partner in dehumanised ways would impact men's IPV perpetration differently depending on the context and the given dyadic interaction within which the violence takes place. For instance, objectifying and animalising a romantic partner might directly inform violence when coupled with instrumental motives, because characterising those who we wish to harm as sub-human acts as a psychological lubricant for violence. Indeed, recent research shows that dehumanising a target increases instrumental violence against that same target, even when the violence is morally objectionable (Rai, Valdesolo, & Graham, 2017). However, dehumanising perceptions of female partners may not play a direct role in facilitating violence motivated by impulsivity or lack of self-control. These instances are perhaps predominantly driven by other risk factors such as heightened negative affect, personality disorder characteristics, and psychopathology (Chase, O'Leary, & Heyman, 2001; Stanford, Houston, & Baldridge, 2008). To better understand the causes of IPV, future research may want to pay more attention to the heterogeneity of offenders and take into consideration the precipitants and motivations behind partner violence perpetration.

Study 2 also assessed whether partner-objectification predicted enacted physical aggression towards the female partner using a behavioural method. Contrary to expectations, there was no statistically significant effect for either of the SC-IATs on the number of pins inserted into the doll that represented the current romantic partner. In other words, men who implicitly likened their partners to animals or objects did not 'harm' representations of that same partner more. Even so, exploratory ancillary analyses revealed significant interactions between these variables and provocation in predicting enacted aggression. Specifically, feeling highly provoked after reading the simulated scenario and implicitly associating the partner with animals or objects predicted stabbing the doll with a greater number of pins. Taken together, these findings suggest that when IPV arises *in situ*, viewing the female partner as less than fully human may not directly promote violence, but may amplify or disinhibit men's reactions to emotionally charged situations.

These patterns of results can be explained using I3 theory (Finkel, 2007, 2008), a process-oriented model that elucidates IPV. The model posits that experiencing violent impulses during conflictual interactions with romantic partners is common, but that most people are typically able to override these impulses. In line with this, I3 theory details three processes—factors that trigger, impel, and inhibit aggression—through which a given non-aggressive interaction translates to actual perpetration of physical aggression (Slotter & Finkel, 2011). For instance, I3 theory predicts a high risk of IPV when a person experiences strong instigating triggers for interpersonal violence alongside strong violence-impelling forces and weak violence-inhibiting forces. Within this framework, dehumanisation may play a role as a strong impelling or disinhibiting factor for IPV, thus moderating the

relationship between an aversive event triggering an urge to aggress and the expression of fully fledge violent behaviours against the dehumanised partner.

In Study 2, a jealousy-provoking scenario (i.e., the instigator) resulted in feelings of intense negative affect for most participants (M = 7.50, on a scale from 1 to 9). Prior research shows that affect-related processes, like induced anger, are associated with impulses to attack the source of the negative affect (Izard, 1991). Research also shows that jealousy-inducing situations produce elevated levels of fear, sadness, and anger (Sharpsteen & Kirkpatrick, 1997) and are related to IPV perpetration (Holtzworth-Munroe, Stuart, & Hutchinson, 1997; Kaufman-Parks et al., 2019; Stith et al., 2004). Consistent with this research, our findings suggest that men who felt more provoked responded more violently towards the represented partner who was the source of the provocation.

Moreover, research shows that failure to recognise another's humanness is associated with reactive and retaliatory violence towards dehumanised targets, especially when the target has committed a social norm violation (Viki, Fullerton, Raggett, Tait, & Wiltshire, 2012). Consistent with the view that dehumanisation primarily enables or disinhibits violence in response to violations, in Study 2 dehumanisation only predicted stabbing the voodoo doll with more pins when in interaction with a high level of provocation (i.e., among men who experienced their partner's imagined flirtatiousness as particularly reprehensible). As Figure 6.3 showed, dehumanisation was essentially unrelated to enacted aggression among men scoring below average on provocation.

The possibility that dehumanisation acted as a violence-disinhibiting force, weakening the psychological restraints on aggression when people have been provoked, is

consistent with past research. Viewing others as less human leads to indifference towards their suffering (Loughnan et al., 2013) and reduces self-critical emotions such as guilt in people who do harm (Zebel, Zimmermann, Viki, & Doosje, 2008). In line with this, for men who were badly hurt by the partner's behaviour, dehumanising perceptions of that same partner may have subverted inhibitory forces which would normally override an impetus towards aggressive retaliation, like feeling guilty and distressed for harming the romantic partner. Future research should test these claims, examine whether these effects extend to other sources of emotional upset or arousal within romantic relationships, and investigate their psychological mechanisms.

Study 2 also investigated the relationships between HS, partner-objectification, and IPV. As expected, HS positively predicted men's self-reports of past IPV and the number of pins inserted into the doll representing the female partner. Prior research reveals hostile sexist attitudes towards women are associated with detrimental consequences within ongoing relationships, like increased endorsement of IPV acceptance attitudes (Zhixia Chen, Fiske, & Lee, 2009), more aggressive and coercive interactions towards the romantic partner (Hammond & Overall, 2013; Overall, Sibley, & Tan, 2011), and greater perpetration of physical, verbal, and sexual IPV (Allen et al., 2009; Forbes & Adams-Curtis, 2001; Forbes, Adams-Curtis, Pakalka, & White, 2006; Forbes et al., 2004; Renzetti et al., 2015). Consistent with this research, Study 2 provides further evidence that the more men endorse HS, the more violence they report perpetrating against their intimate partners. Finally, as with Study 1, HS and objectification were unrelated, but HS was significantly correlated with animalising the romantic partner. It appears that men do not need to hold

hostile sexist attitudes towards female partners to implicitly dehumanise them as objects. Hence, these psychological processes appear to be independently contributing to IPV perpetration risk in romantic relationships, rather than objectification merely being a consequence or side-effect of HS.

6.4.1. Limitations

Although this research demonstrates an important extension to the study of objectification within the context of close relationships, limitations of Study 2 must be noted. Its design was cross-sectional and the direction of causality among the variables cannot be inferred. In Study 1, the implicit measure was randomly administered within the survey; in Study 2, it was administered first so that it would not be affected by the provocation vignette that came afterwards. In both studies, the relationships between the object IATs and physical IPV were comparable. Nevertheless, these data cannot determine whether partner-objectification led to physical IPV or *vice versa*. A possibility is that objectifying one's romantic partner is a post-hoc justification and rationalisation for the use of physical violence within the romantic relationship. The experiment reported in Chapter 7 aims to unravel the causal pathway from objectification to this type of partner violence.

Another limitation of this study (which also applies to Study 1) is the use of self-reported IPV measures, which are prone to social desirability bias and the underreporting of unfavourable relationship behaviours (Lewis & Fremouw, 2001; Riggs et al., 1989). In Study 2, I balanced the use of participants' IPV retrospective reporting by also including a

behavioural analogue for physical aggression; notwithstanding, other researchers could also attempt to bypass this limitation by including dyadic data from romantic couples and comparing histories of IPV perpetration and victimisation to determine the accuracy of participants' responses. After all, IPV is an interpersonal issue and should be studied with both individuals. In this same vein, incorporating actual romantic dyads into research could allow for the evaluation of cross-gender perspectives in interpersonal objectification and their consequences. For example, whether a female partner of a male objectifier indeed perceives herself as being objectified, and whether she potentially internalises her partner's objectification and is more likely to experience IPV victimisation as a result. Future research would benefit from this approach.

6.4.2. Concluding Remarks

Despite the previous limitations, the findings from the current research provide valuable insights into heterosexual men's implicit cognitions about women and their detrimental implications for romantic relationships. Unlike Study 1, where the objectification of women was directly related to self-reported perpetration of physical and sexual violence towards partners, the current study found that the objectification of female partners predicted the former but not the latter. These mixed results speak directly to the complex nature of IPV and parallel inconsistencies reported in prior research examining IPV risk factors, already alluded to in Chapter 2. Given that IPV appears to be influenced by a multifaceted network of risk factors, it is possible that different factors—including perceptions of partners as less than fully human—impact different forms of violence

within the romantic relationship in different ways. Moreover, the impact of these factors may also depend on individual, relational, and contextual circumstances surrounding the abuse. However, examining the contextual and motivational factors underlying men's self-reported accounts of past IPV perpetration remains an endeavour for future research. These factors may help explain both the inconsistencies between our two studies and the null effects concerning the relationship between objectification and perpetration of sexual (Study 2) and psychological IPV (Study 1 and 2).

A new element of Study 2 was examining the impact of partner-objectification on enacted physical aggression after a provocation by the female partner. Although likening the partner to animals or objects did not have a direct association with the number of stabs inflicted upon the representation of the female partner, these dehumanising perceptions were significant predictors of higher levels of aggressive retaliation for highly provoked men. Thus, implicitly objectifying or animalising the romantic partner may play a role in IPV by disinhibiting a motivation to aggress, especially in situations that induce negative affect such as when the perceiver feels provoked by the romantic partner or when the romantic relationship is being threatened in some way. Collectively, these two studies are consistent with feminist theorising which proposes objectification as a contributor to gendered violence, and ultimately, they add to a relatively new body of literature that examines the phenomenon in the domain of romantic relationships.

Study 2 also showed additional interesting findings. Not surprisingly, I found that HS was a robust predictor of all the various forms of IPV that were assessed (self-reports and enacted aggression). These results reinforce prior research demonstrating a strong link

between HS and VAW (e.g., Renzetti et al., 2015) and the findings from Study 1. Moreover, as with Study 1, HS was not associated with partner-objectification, suggesting that these two constructs represent independent psychological processes that may prove relevant in understanding why men engage in IPV perpetration in their relationships. Given the extensiveness of the body of research demonstrating the destructive impact of HS in relationships, the finding that the much less researched concept of implicit partner-objectification has distinct impacts is a significant contribution of the study.

The results from Study 1 and 2 therefore provide a range of preliminary findings that shed light upon the role of implicit objectification as a precursor to, or enabler of, IPV. In the next chapter, I extend my focus of investigation to examine partner-objectification explicitly and how it relates to IPV. I aim to provide evidence of a more direct, causal link between objectification and enacted aggression towards the romantic partner. To this end, I use an experimental design to test the phenomenon within romantic relationships, still conceptualised as a process that removes a woman's humanity.

CHAPTER 7: EXPLICIT OBJECTIFICATION OF ROMANTIC PARTNERS & IPV

7.1. Overview of Experiment 3

Study 1 and 2 suggest that implicitly objectifying women plays a role in their victimisation within heterosexual romantic relationships. This appears to be particularly impactful when male objectifiers also perceive that they have been provoked by their romantic partner's behaviour (Study 2). However, it remains an open question whether explicit partner-objectification would contribute to IPV in the same way. Prior research shows that the way in which another is objectified can occur at both the conscious and implicit levels, with differing manifestations and consequences depending on level of awareness (Loughnan & Pacilli, 2014). This research program thus combines a dual approach to the investigation of objectification, assessing the phenomenon implicitly and explicitly, in order to generate more robust findings and add veracity to the claim that objectification facilitates physical IPV perpetration within romantic relationships.

In this chapter, I turn my attention to the study of men's explicit objectification of their romantic partner and its consequences. I report an experiment that provides evidence for a direct causal link between objectification, consequential dehumanisation, and enacted physical aggression towards the female partner. More specifically, Experiment 3 considers whether attending to the partner's physical appearance impacts the extent to which men acknowledge that woman as possessing full personhood (i.e., humanness, mind, and moral status). This study also examines whether objectification is causally

linked to physical IPV perpetration, using the same aggression proxy as in Study 2 (i.e., the VDT). Further, building on the finding that objectification acted as a violence-disinhibiting force when participants felt provoked (Study 2), the current research also incorporates a situational provocation as an instigating factor for aggression in its experimental design. In doing so, I aim to examine whether partner-objectification and provocation interact to increase men's physical IPV against their current romantic partner.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the psychological literature has assessed objectification in a variety of different ways, encompassing both the direct measurement of the construct and the experimental manipulation of the phenomenon. In the two studies reported in Chapters 5 and 6, I measured the extent to which men automatically associated women (Study 1) and the romantic partner (Study 2) with objects and animals. Our findings provided evidence for associations between implicitly holding dehumanising perceptions of women, and of romantic partners, and men's engagement in IPV perpetration within their romantic relationship. On an operational level, this experiment assesses partner-objectification using a different paradigm: by manipulating objectification and observing its impacts. This is a common and influential method used to empirically examine what it means to explicitly objectify others (e.g., K. Gray et al., 2011; Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Heflick et al., 2011; Holland & Haslam, 2013, 2015; Loughnan et al., 2010).

In the current study, men are prompted to construe their romantic partner as an object by focusing on her physical appearance instead of the whole person (referred to as an appearance-focus mindset). Although this manipulation is yet to be used in the context of romantic relationships, a heightened focus on physical appearance has been successfully

employed to enlist objectification using still images and videoclips of women, and with real female targets (cf. Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Heflick et al., 2011; Vasquez et al., 2018). This experimental procedure is rooted in the longstanding feminist notion that women in society are valued primarily on the basis of their physical body. As such, placing greater emphasis on bodily appearance triggers objectification, which comes at the expense of other non-physical qualities (e.g., mind, personality, and moral worth) that make an individual fully human (Dworkin, 1989; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; MacKinnon, 1991). It also captures the notion that objectification involves a reduction of a person to their physical appearance (Langton, 2009).

The literature shows that objectification alters the way in which people are spontaneously perceived (Haslam et al., 2013). A key aspect of viewing women as objects involves the process of denying (or failing to acknowledge) the characteristics that make her a person (e.g., agency, subjectivity, autonomy). In line with this, scholars have often considered dehumanisation as an empirical indicator of objectification (e.g., Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Loughnan et al., 2010) and used different humanness frameworks as proxies for the phenomenon both implicitly (e.g., Rudman & Mescher, 2012) and explicitly (e.g., Holland & Haslam, 2013, 2015).

Prior research has established that a tendency to objectify others is associated with dehumanising social perceptions of objectified targets, such as ascribing them with lesser humanness, mental capacity, and moral standing (e.g., Haslam et al., 2013; Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Loughnan et al., 2010; Loughnan et al., 2013; Vaes et al., 2011). Yet, it remains unknown whether the negative implications of the phenomenon would equally

apply to women in romantic relationships, given that this domain may be the one place where objectification does not have devastating consequences for an individual's perceived humanity (Nussbaum, 1995, 1999). Therefore, one of the aims of Experiment 3 is to examine whether men's objectifying perceptions of their romantic partner involve the denial of attributes that fundamentally characterise their personhood, as demonstrated in previous research.

To assess partner-objectification explicitly, I use Haslam's (2006) dual humanness model and the mind perception framework (H.M. Gray et al., 2007; K. Gray & Wegner, 2009). In my review of the literature in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.4.2), I have highlighted how these two different but complementary approaches are widely used to assess the distinct ways in which humanness is denied to objectified others (e.g., K. Gray et al., 2011; Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Heflick et al., 2011; Holland & Haslam, 2013, 2015; Loughnan et al., 2010; Loughnan et al., 2013; Puvia & Vaes, 2013; Vaes et al., 2011). As presented in Section 3.4.2.2, studies show that for objectified women, the phenomenon induces dehumanising perceptions along Haslam's two humanness dimensions: HN and HU (e.g., Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Heflick et al., 2011; Morris et al., 2018; Puvia & Vaes, 2013; Rudman & Mescher, 2012; Vaes et al., 2011). For example, in two landmark studies which used the same objectification manipulation as the current research, Heflick and Goldenberg (2009; Heflick et al., 2011) showed that by merely making a woman's physical appearance salient, participants spontaneously ascribed her with less human essence (e.g., warmth, friendliness) and competence (e.g., intelligence, capability). These traits resemble losses in HN and HU to objectified targets, respectively.

As presented in Section 3.4.2.3, in addition to assigning lesser humanness to the objectified, people consistently fail to ascribe these targets with the capacity to form mental states along the agency and experience dimensions (e.g., K. Gray et al., 2011; Loughnan et al., 2010). This mind perception framework closely aligns with Haslam's notions of humanness, where experience (i.e., capacity for emotions and sensations) resembles the HN dimension and differentiates humans from objects and robots, and agency (i.e., capacity for thoughts and intentions) resembles the HU dimension and differentiates humans from animals (Haslam et al., 2013).

The evidence suggests that the denial of mind to the objectified is relatively robust. This effect is consistently observed when manipulating levels of objectification in different ways, like varying the degree of target sexualisation and facial prominence, or when prompting participants to focus on the target's appearance (K. Gray et al., 2011; Heflick et al., 2011; Holland & Haslam, 2013, 2015; Loughnan et al., 2010). Although the denial of mental agency to the objectified is consistent among studies (Cikara et al., 2011; K. Gray et al., 2011; Holland & Haslam, 2013, 2015), findings are less well-established for mental experience. For instance, some studies have implicated objectification with reduced perceptions of a target's capacity for experience (Loughnan et al., 2010), while others find the opposite pattern of results (K. Gray et al., 2011) or no effect at all (Holland & Haslam, 2013, 2015). Given this conflicting evidence, Experiment 3 examines perceptions of the romantic partner's mind using the agency and experience components separately. This strategy allows for the analysis of attributions of mind to the partner as a whole and for each subcomponent independently; thus, yielding a more complete understanding of the

type of mind denial that stems from objectification in the context of romantic relationships.

Recognising another's mind is a fundamental psychological process involved in perceiving others as persons (H.M. Gray et al., 2007; K. Gray & Wegner, 2009), which, in turn, qualifies the individual as being deserving of moral treatment and ethical consideration (Epley & Waytz, 2010; Sapontzis, 1981). Also discussed in Section 3.4.2.3, objectification influences how people grant moral value to the objectified along the two dimensions of moral perception (patiency and agency; K. Gray & Wegner, 2009). For instance, research finds that the objectified is deemed to suffer less and be more deserving of pain (Loughnan et al., 2010; Loughnan et al., 2013), which is indicative of denials of moral patiency to the target. Other research finds that participants also attribute the objectified with less moral agency (i.e., capacity to act morally or immorally; Holland & Haslam, 2013). Nevertheless, some studies show inconsistent findings for the specific aspects of moral status that are denied through objectification (K. Gray et al., 2011). As such, the current experiment tests the extent to which romantic partners are believed to possess moral status using the moral agency and patiency components separately.

Cumulatively, this extant body of work suggests that the more a woman is perceived as an object (or body) the less she is ascribed full personhood; that is, being acknowledged as possessing humanness and the capacity for a rich and complex mental life, and being worthy of moral consideration and treatment. However, it remains unclear whether men who objectify their female romantic partner would also spontaneously ascribe her with lesser personhood. To date, no study has examined the extent to which the phenomenon

impacts on ratings of the romantic partner on humanness, mind, and morality. Thus, a central aim of this chapter is to determine whether the well-established negative implications of other-objectification also relate to women in romantic relationships.

Perceiving others as lesser persons opens the door for immoral treatment to occur, enabling and legitimising behaviours that are generally not reserved for fellow human beings (Bandura, 1999; Kant, 1963; Sapontzis, 1981). As presented in Chapter 3, research shows that men's tendency to objectify women has detrimental implications for how they are treated, including the facilitation of interpersonal aggression (e.g., Galdi et al., 2014; Loughnan et al., 2010; Rudman & Mescher, 2012; Vasquez et al., 2018; Vasquez et al., 2017). Given that objectification entails a loss in the target's personhood, and that this loss in personhood is likely to enable violence, the phenomenon may lay the foundations for the violence that women experience in their romantic relationships.

Previous work into dehumanisation has extensively established that this phenomenon enables and disinhibits violence and aggression in intergroup contexts (Bandura, Underwood, & Fromson, 1975; Haslam, 2006; Haslam, Loughnan, Reynolds, & Wilson, 2007; Struch & Schwartz, 1989). Recently, work by Pizzirani and Karantzas (2019) has also shown that dehumanisation is associated with relational aggression in interpersonal contexts, like romantic relationships. Given that objectification involves dehumanisation, feminist writers and social psychologists have long argued that objectification may play a role in facilitating IPV by withdrawing humanity from the victim (Dworkin, 2000; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Gervais, Bernard, et al., 2013; Haslam et al., 2013; Nussbaum, 1999). Nevertheless, despite the potential detrimental impacts that

objectification may have for women in romantic relationships, relatively little psychological research has examined the extent to which the phenomenon is indeed associated with IPV.

Recently, a small body of work—including Study 1 and 2 of this thesis—has started to support claims that objectification is related to IPV perpetration (e.g., Jonnson et al., 2018; Ramsey & Hoyt, 2014; Sáez Díaz, Alonso-Ferres, et al., 2019). However, with the exception of ours, this research has not assessed whether women are dehumanised via objectification. Moreover, experimental research directly demonstrating the long-speculated objectification-IPV link is still largely missing. To date, only one study has provided causal evidence for a relationship between objectification and physical aggression towards women (Vasquez et al., 2018). However, this study was not conducted within the domain of romantic relationships. As such, the purpose of Experiment 3 is to address these gaps in the literature, expand on previous findings, and provide preliminary empirical evidence for a direct link between objectification and IPV.

In sum, the current research is important because it is a first step to empirically test whether objectification influences men's explicit evaluations about their romantic partner and whether in doing so, these objectifying perceptions directly contribute to the perpetration of IPV in their romantic relationship. I hypothesise that the participants' induced mindset would influence all three aspects of objectification, such that when men are asked to focus on their romantic partner's physical appearance (i.e., objectification condition) targets would be denied humanness, mind, and moral status to a greater extent, when compared to men who are asked to focus on their romantic partner's personality (i.e.,

no objectification condition). Put simply, I predict a main effect of partner-objectification on perceived humanness, mind, and moral status. I also predict that men who are manipulated to focus on their partner's physical appearance would be more willing to cause her physical harm than those who focus on her personality, as assessed by the number of pins stabbed into the representation of the romantic partner during the VDT. In other words, I predict a main effect of partner-objectification on physical IPV. I further predict a significant main effect of provocation on physical IPV, so that men who are severely provoked (relative to those who are not provoked) would behave more aggressively towards their romantic partner, as assessed by the VDT. Finally, I hypothesise that the aggression-facilitating effect of objectification would be particularly pronounced in the provocation condition; that is, I predict a two-way interaction between partner-objectification and provocation on physical IPV.

7.2. Method

7.2.1. Participants

For the experimental study design, participants were randomly assigned to a condition in a 2 (provocation: yes/no) x 2 (partner-objectification: yes/no) between-subjects factorial design. To determine sample size, I performed *a priori* statistical power analysis on the free-to-use software G*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2007). This estimation used an expected small-to-medium effect size of .20 (according to Cohen, 1998) and standard statistical parameters of $\alpha = .05$ (two-tailed) and $1-\beta = .80$. The projected sample size

needed to detect this level of effect was 195 participants. I therefore sampled 250 men to account for data loss and retain power. Furthermore, according to guidelines proposed by Simmons, Nelson, and Simonsohn (2011), experimental conditions require samples of a minimum of 20 participants each to detect an effect. Our sample size allowed for over 60 participants per condition, which is considered as more than adequate for the planned statistical analyses. It also compares favourably with similar published studies (e.g., Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Heflick et al., 2011; Vasquez et al., 2018).

As with Study 1 and 2, recruitment was done via MTurk using a pool of naïve U.S. respondents. Men who had previously participated in any of our studies were prevented from taking part in Experiment 3, using the platform's in-built user interface for excluding specific users. To participate, respondents needed to identify as being male, heterosexual, 18 to 35 years old, and currently involved in a committed romantic relationship for at least one year. These inclusion criteria were verified via a screening page. Participants completed the study within 30 minutes and were compensated US$3 for their time.

A total of 61 cases were excluded from analysis, using similar exclusion criteria to the previous two studies. Data from 44 participants were removed from the final dataset for either failing to complete the whole study (n = 26); not following instructions during the objectification manipulation (n = 13; e.g., asked to write about the partner's physical appearance, but wrote entirely about something else); finding the language of the study confusing or hard to follow (n = 2); or for failing to answer correctly one out of two reading comprehension questions presented after the partner provocation vignette (n = 3). Eleven additional cases were removed from analysis because these men had engaged in, or

admitted to, deception: they either changed their responses on the screener page to bypass eligibility safeguards (n = 7) or ticked a box at the end of the study that confirmed they did not meet eligibility criteria but participated anyway (n = 4). Finally, six participants withdrew their data from analysis on completion of the study.

The exclusions outlined above resulted in a final sample of 189 men (M_{age} = 28.62 years, SD = 3.86, age range: 20-35), considered adequate for the main objective of this study.[13] Most men identified as White (71%) and spoke English as their first language (97%); others identified as African American (8%), Asian (8%), Latino (7%), and multiracial (5%). The remaining 1% of participants preferred not to answer. Regarding their romantic relationship status, 45% of participants had been in the current relationship for over 12 months, and the rest, for over two years. Moreover, the majority (68%) lived with their romantic partner, and out of those who did not cohabitate, 82% lived within one hour from each other. In terms of education, almost two-thirds (61%) had completed either a 2-year college or 4-year bachelor's degree, with the remainder having completed high school (11%), vocational school (1%), some college (18%), or some form of postgraduate studies (10%). Finally, 23% identified as being politically moderate, 50% as liberal or very liberal, and 27% as conservative or very conservative. The percentages reported above may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

[13] Although exclusion criteria were not independent of each other, no participant satisfied more than one criterion. As such, adding the total number of respondents excluded from each category matches the final number of participants excluded from the main analysis.

7.2.2. Procedure

Participants accessed the survey via the MTurk website by selecting to complete a task titled *Impressions of Romantic Partners.* They then followed a link to the survey and completed the eligibility screening page. If eligible, participants read the plain language statement and provided electronic informed consent. Afterwards, they read the general instructions that asked them to base all responses on their current romantic relationship and to provide the name (or nickname) of their female romantic partner. This information would be later used to populate fields in the partner-provocation vignette and the VDT.

Next, participants were randomly assigned to one of two provocation conditions, where they read a vignette describing a hypothetical social dynamic involving their romantic partner. These two scenarios described the female partner engaging in behaviours that varied in the amount to which they would normatively trigger an urge to aggress in the participant. In the *provocation* condition, they read about partner behaviours that tend to be considered severely provoking, and in the *no provocation* condition they read about behaviours that would not normally be considered as provoking. Immediately after, they also completed a short affect measure as in Study 2.

Participants were then exposed to the objectification manipulation. Those in the *objectification* condition were asked to write a few lines about their romantic partner's physical appearance, while those in the *no objectification* condition were asked to write about her personality. Participants then rated their romantic partner on three measures that assessed her objectification, including attributions of humanness, mind, and moral

status. The order of presentation for these measures, and the items within each scale, were randomised for each participant.

The respondents then completed the VDT, which offered them the opportunity to stab with pins a doll representing their female partner for a period of 2 minutes. To increase the salience of the provocation vignettes and the VDT, the survey was programmed to include the romantic partner's name or nickname throughout the instruments' instructions and text. Finally, participants responded to the same demographic questionnaire as per the previous two studies and read the debriefing statement. They were then provided with a unique completion code to use on MTurk for payment. Following the debriefing stage, participants were given a final chance to admit to deception and to withdraw their data from any future analysis.

7.2.3. Materials & Measures

All the survey questionnaires and tasks were created using Qualtrics software (Qualtrics, 2017).

7.2.3.1. Experimental manipulations.

Partner-provocation (yes/no). Similar to Study 2, the provocation vignettes used in this study were modified versions from the ones used in work by Slotter and colleagues (2012). Again, to ensure participants immersed themselves in the situations being described, their ability to continue advancing throughout the survey was disabled for 2 minutes. See Appendix D for the complete set of vignette transcripts.

For this manipulation, the male participants read one of two scenarios describing the same situation: he and his female partner out at a bar, and while he was getting drinks another man would flirt with his partner. In these two scenarios, the new suitor's behaviour would remain constant while the partner's behaviour was varied (i.e., how she responded to the suitor's advances). In the (severe) provocation condition, participants read about the partner acting in ways that would normally be considered highly disrespectful and jealousy provoking (i.e., flirting in return). This experimental condition used the same vignette as in Study 2 (for a more detailed description of this vignette, see Section 6.2.3.3). In the no provocation condition, the female partner would clearly and politely refuse the other man's advances in favour of her current partner (i.e., the participant).

After reading the vignette, participants responded to two simple multiple-choice reading comprehension questions (see Appendix D for these items). Men who answered incorrectly either question (or both) were removed from analysis for not paying careful attention to the task. Following, the men completed the same 8-item affect scale from Study 2; this scale served as the provocation manipulation check. Higher scores in this measure were indicative of more severe affective reactions from reading the vignette (i.e., higher levels of provocation). For a detailed description of the affect scale and its scoring procedure, see Section 6.2.3.3.

Partner-objectification (yes/no). To induce objectification, I used a previously validated mindset manipulation task that varied the amount of focus placed on the target's physical appearance or personality (Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Heflick et al., 2011). For

this task, the men were asked to write a minimum of six sentences about their romantic partner including both positive and negative features. In the objectification condition (appearance-focus mindset) participants were told, *"Please take some time to write your thoughts and feelings about your romantic partner's physical appearance."* In the no objectification condition (personality-focus mindset), participants were given an identical set of instructions with the exception that "*partner's physical appearance*" was replaced with "*partner's personality."* The task had no time or word limit.

7.2.3.2. Personhood measures.

The personhood measures used in Experiment 3 can all be found in Appendix F.

Humanness. To measure how objectification affects the dehumanisation of the romantic partner, I used a list of 40 traits which were taken from Bastian and Haslam (2010). This list included 10 HN traits (five positive: *active, curious, friendly, helpful, fun-loving*; five negative: *impatient, impulsive, jealous, nervous, shy*), 10 HU traits (five positive: *broadminded, conscientious, humble, polite, thorough*; five negative: *disorganised, hard-hearted, ignorant, rude, stingy*), and 20 filler traits. The 20 HN and HU traits have been previously validated as rating highly and distinctively on each dimension of humanness (Haslam, Bain, Douge, Lee, & Bastian, 2005). The 20 filler traits were not used for analysis.

Participants were asked to rate the same 40-item trait set on four consecutive aspects—the target, HN, HU, and valence—using a 7-point scale. More specifically, they reported the extent to which (a) their romantic partner possessed these traits when compared to the average woman (i.e., target rating; 1 = *much less than average*; 7 = *much*

more than average); (b) these traits were essential to being human (i.e., HN rating; 1 = *not at all part of human nature* to 7 = *very much part of human nature*); (c) these traits were experienced solely by human beings and not by animals (i.e., HU rating; 1 = *shared between animals and humans* to 7 = *uniquely human*); and (d) these traits were positive or desirable to possess (i.e., valence rating; 1 = *extremely undesirable* to 7 = *extremely desirable*). The order of presentation for each rating category, and the order of individual traits within each set of ratings, were randomised for each participant.

I then generated two dependent variables, the HN and HU indices, by computing the within-person partial-correlation coefficients between ratings of the romantic partner's perceived typicality on the 20 traits of interest and the HN and HU ratings, respectively, while controlling for trait valence ratings. Statistically controlling for trait valence allows us to disentangle dehumanisation ratings from negative or positive evaluation, so each index represents the extent to which the partner was humanised or dehumanised independent of how they were liked. The two newly created indices yielded correlation coefficients ranging from -1 to +1, with lower scores indicating greater dehumanisation of the romantic partner in each humanness dimension (the HN index represents mechanistic dehumanisation, and the HU index animalistic dehumanisation). Similar approaches to developing humanness indices have been successfully employed in previous research (Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Morris, 2013; Morris et al., 2018; Paladino & Vaes, 2009).

Mind. I used the Mental State Attribution task (MSA; Haslam, Kashima, Loughnan, Shi, & Suitner, 2008) to evaluate participants' ratings on their female partner's mental capabilities. The MSA is a previously validated measure of mind attribution often used in

objectification research (e.g., Holland & Haslam, 2013; Loughnan et al., 2010). This scale asked participants to rate the extent to which they projected that their romantic partner possessed 20 mental states reflecting thoughts (5 items; e.g., *thinking*), intentions (5 items; e.g., *plans*), perceptions (5 items; e.g., *seeing*), and emotions (5 items; e.g., *fear*) on a 7-point scale (1 = *definitely does not possess*; 7 = *definitely does possess*). These items capture the two dimensions of mind perception: agency (thoughts, intentions) and experience (perceptions, emotions). Two scores were then generated by collapsing across the 10 agency items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$) and the 10 experience items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .92$). Lower scores in these variables indicated greater dementalization of the romantic partner.

Moral status. Similar to Holland and Haslam (2013, 2015), I used a short 13-item scale adapted from work by K. Gray and Wegner (2009) and H.M. Gray and others (2007) to examine which aspects of moral status are denied to objectified romantic partners. In this scale, five items assessed the romantic partner's perceived moral agency (e.g., "*In general, how intentional do you believe your girlfriend's behaviour is?"*), six items moral patiency (e.g., *"How bad would you feel if you manipulated your girlfriend?"*), and two items moral blame and praise (e.g., "*How much should your girlfriend be blamed for doing something bad*?"). Items were rated on a 7-point scale. See Appendix F for the complete list of scale items and response options.

Given that this scale taps into the two dimensions of moral perception, two subscale scores were then generated by collapsing the seven items for moral agency, blame, and praise (i.e., moral agency score) and the six items for patiency (i.e., moral patiency score). The internal consistency for the moral agency subscale was only modest (Cronbach's α

= .66). To improve its internal consistency, I removed any item showing a low item-total correlation coefficient (< .3; Field, 2013), which suggests that the item is not measuring the same construct as the rest of the items in the scale. In total, two items were removed from the moral agency subscale, as these deletions yielded the highest possible increase in scale alpha reliability (Cronbach's α = .72; see Appendix F for the list of exclusions). In contrast, the moral patiency subscale showed a high level of internal consistency (Cronbach's α = .84) and all items were retained for analysis. Lower scores in either subscale indicated lesser attributions of moral status to the female partner along the particular moral perception dimension.

7.2.3.3. Behavioural proxy for physical IPV.

Adapting the procedure of Study 2, I used the VDT (DeWall et al., 2013) as an online proxy for physical aggression within the romantic relationship. During the task, participants were shown a computer-based image of a doll representing their female romantic partner. Then, they were given the chance to stab the doll with pins, between 0 and 100, for a period of 2 minutes. A greater number of pins indicated more enacted physical aggression towards the female partner. For a detailed description of the VDT and its experimental procedure, see Section 6.2.3.3.

7.2.3.4. Additional variables measured.

Demographics questionnaire. Participants provided the same sociodemographic information as in the previous two studies.

7.3. Results

7.3.1. Preliminary Analyses

7.3.1.1. Partner-provocation manipulation checks.

To evaluate the extent to which participants felt provoked in response to the simulated scenario, I generated a composite score using the eight items from the affect measure. These items were rated on a 1 (*not at all*) to 9 (*extremely*) scale and had good reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .96$). I then conducted an independent samples t-test using the newly created score as the outcome variable. Results revealed a statistically significant mean difference between the no provocation ($M = 3.77$, SD = 2.17) and provocation conditions ($M = 7.65$, SD = 1.20), Welch's $t(146.95) = -15.23$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.21$. This suggests that the manipulation was both effective and powerful, with men in the provocation condition experiencing significantly higher levels of negative affect (i.e., feeling more provoked by their romantic partner's behaviour) than men in the no provocation condition, and *vice versa*. I report the Welch's *t*-test above because our data violated the assumption of homogeneity of variance (Levene's test statistic, $p < .05$). In these cases, the Welch's test statistic is recommended as it is unaffected by unequal variances and yields more conservative estimates (Field, 2013).

7.3.1.2. Objectification manipulation checks.

To test whether the study's objectification manipulation was effective, I first instructed two independent coders—blind to the study's experimental conditions and

hypotheses—to rate the participants' written evaluations of their romantic partner. The coders used a 7-point scale (1 = *completely appearance*; 7 = *completely personality*) to assess the amount of appearance-focus and personality-focus content that was present in the participants' responses. Inter-rater reliability was high (Krippendorff's α = .89) and coder ratings were therefore averaged to create a mindset score. I then conducted an independent samples t-test using the newly created score as the outcome variable. Results revealed a statistically significant mean difference between the no objectification (M = 1.89, SD = 1.01) and objectification conditions (M = 5.88, SD = 1.24), Welch's $t(184.88)$ = -24.34, $p < .001$, d = 3.53.[14] This suggests that the manipulation was both effective and powerful, with men in the objectification condition writing significantly more about their romantic partner's physical appearance than participants in no objectification condition, and *vice versa*.

7.3.1.3. Two-way factorial ANOVA assumptions testing and missing cases.

Prior to any substantive analyses, I performed a residual analysis to test the assumptions of the two-way factorial ANOVA. There was no systematic pattern of outliers or extreme points in the data, as assessed by inspection of boxplots. Residuals for each cell of the design were normally distributed for two of our seven indices (HN, HU), as assessed

[14] Again, I reported the Welch's t-statistic because the assumption of homogeneity of variance was violated by the data (Levene's test statistic, p = .021).

by the Shapiro-Wilk's test ($ps > .05$). However, the assumption of normality was violated for mental agency and experience; moral agency and patiency; and the VDT ($ps < .05$). Group sizes were slightly unbalanced ($N_{Objectification,Provocation} = 50$, $N_{Objectification,No\ provocation} = 49$; $N_{No\ objectification,Provocation} = 44$, $N_{No\ objectification,No\ provocation} = 46$) and the assumption of homogeneity of variance was satisfied for all variables, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($ps > .05$; except for the VDT, $p = .037$). Given that ANOVA is relatively robust to deviations from normality, especially with large and equal (or nearly equal) sample sizes (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2012), for the main analyses I used the untransformed, original data. However, for completeness, I also conducted all the analyses applying statistical transformations on the non-normally distributed dependent variables. To convert the data to normality, I used a reflect and square root method for the two MSA variables and the two moral status variables, due to moderately negatively skewed data. To the VDT scores, I applied the inverse method transformation due to extremely positively skewed data. Furthermore, the VDT showed three outliers and I conducted the analyses reported below including and excluding these cases. Results from these additional analyses revealed no change in statistical significance values for any of the variables of interest and, as such, all the data were retained for the final analyses which are presented in the next section.

Finally, some of the cases in the data showed invariant humanness ratings on one of the dimensions ($N_{HN} = 20$, $N_{HU} = 7$). As a result, the partial within-subjects correlation coefficient could not be computed for these participants. These missing data are reflected

in the reduced sample size and in the degrees of freedom for these two humanness indices that are reported in the main analyses.

7.3.2. Main Analyses

I conducted a series of 2 (provocation, no provocation) x 2 (objectification, no objectification) between subjects factorial ANOVAs on the outcome variables (HN, HU, agency, experience, moral agency, moral patiency, and VDT) to test for main effects and the two-way interaction. The means, standard deviations, and sample sizes for all these variables are presented in Table 7.1.

Humanness. For the HN index, as expected, there was a significant main effect of objectification, whereby men who focused on their romantic partner's body also ascribed her with less HN characteristics than men who focused on her personality, $F(1, 165) = 4.39$, $p = .038$, partial $\eta^2 = .026$ (see Figure 7.1a). There was no main effect of provocation, $F(1, 165) = 0.02$, $p = .894$, partial $\eta^2 < .001$, or a statistically significant two-way interaction between provocation and objectification, $F(1, 165) = 0.26$, $p = .612$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$.

For the HU index, there were no significant main effects of objectification, $F(1, 178) = 0.01$, $p = .930$, partial $\eta^2 < .001$, or provocation, $F(1, 178) = 0.48$, $p = .491$, partial $\eta^2 = .003$. Also, the two-way interaction between these conditions was not statistically significant, $F(1, 178) = 2.52$, $p = .114$, partial $\eta^2 = .014$.

Mind attribution. For mental agency, there were no significant main effects of objectification, $F(1, 185) < 0.01$, $p = .998$, partial $\eta^2 < .001$, or provocation, $F(1, 185) = 0.31$, $p = .579$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$. However, there was a significant two-way interaction between

these conditions, $F(1, 185) = 4.24$, $p = .041$, partial $\eta^2 = .022$ (see Figure 7.1c). Even so, deconstruction of the interaction revealed no simple main effects for either variable (all *p*s > .05; see Table 7.1 for the means and standard deviations).

For mental experience, there were no significant main effects of objectification, $F(1, 185) = 0.30$, $p = .582$, partial, $\eta^2 < .001$, or provocation, $F(1, 185) = 0.01$, $p = .913$, partial $\eta^2 < .001$. However, there was a significant two-way interaction between provocation and objectification, $F(1, 185) = 5.19$, $p = .024$, partial $\eta^2 = .027$ (see Figure 7.1d). Deconstruction of the interaction revealed that, when participants were severely provoked, there was no difference in attributions of mental experience to the romantic partner between the two objectification conditions, $t(92) = 1.17$, $p = .242$, $d = .24$. In the absence of provocation, however, attributions of experience were significantly lower for the objectification than for the no objectification condition, $t(93) = -2.08$, $p = .040$, $d = .43$ (see Table 7.1 for the means and standard deviations).

Moral status. For moral agency, there were no significant main effects of objectification, $F(1, 185) = 0.89$, $p = .348$, partial $\eta^2 = .005$, or provocation, $F(1, 185) = 0.15$, $p = .903$, partial $\eta^2 < .001$. Also, the two-way interaction between these conditions was not statistically significant, $F(1, 185) = 0.40$, $p = .531$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$.

For moral patiency, there were no significant main effects of objectification, $F(1, 185) = 0.61$, $p = .436$, partial $\eta^2 = .003$, or provocation, $F(1, 185) = 0.91$, $p = .342$, partial $\eta^2 = .005$. Also, the two-way interaction between these conditions was not statistically significant, $F(1, 185) = 1.12$, $p = .291$, partial $\eta^2 = .006$.

Table 7.1.
Mean, Standard Deviation, and Sample Size for the Variables as a Function of Condition in Experiment 3

	No Provocation			Provocation		
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*N*
HN						
No objectification	0.18	0.24	43	0.16	0.22	37
Objectification	0.07	0.31	47	0.10	0.27	42
HU						
No objectification	0.08	0.27	45	0.04	0.21	42
Objectification	0.01	0.31	47	0.10	0.24	48
Agency						
No objectification	5.97	0.98	46	5.55	1.12	44
Objectification	5.64	1.13	49	5.88	1.10	50
Experience						
No objectification	5.89	1.11	46	5.53	1.26	44
Objectification	5.42	1.09	49	5.82	1.10	50
Moral agency						
No objectification	5.80	0.78	46	5.75	0.82	44
Objectification	5.84	0.70	49	5.93	0.88	50
Moral patiency						
No objectification	6.63	0.63	46	6.42	0.75	44
Objectification	6.44	0.75	49	6.45	0.72	50
VDT						
No objectification	0.57	0.81	46	0.98	1.47	44
Objectification	0.96	2.12	49	1.70	2.70	50

Note. HN = Human nature; HU = Human uniqueness; VDT = Voodoo doll task. Differences in sample size for the humanness variables is a result of cases where the partial within-subject correlation could not be computed due to participants showing invariant humanness ratings on one of the dimensions.

Figure 7.1. Personhood Variables as a Function of Provocation and Objectification in a Two-Way Factorial ANOVA

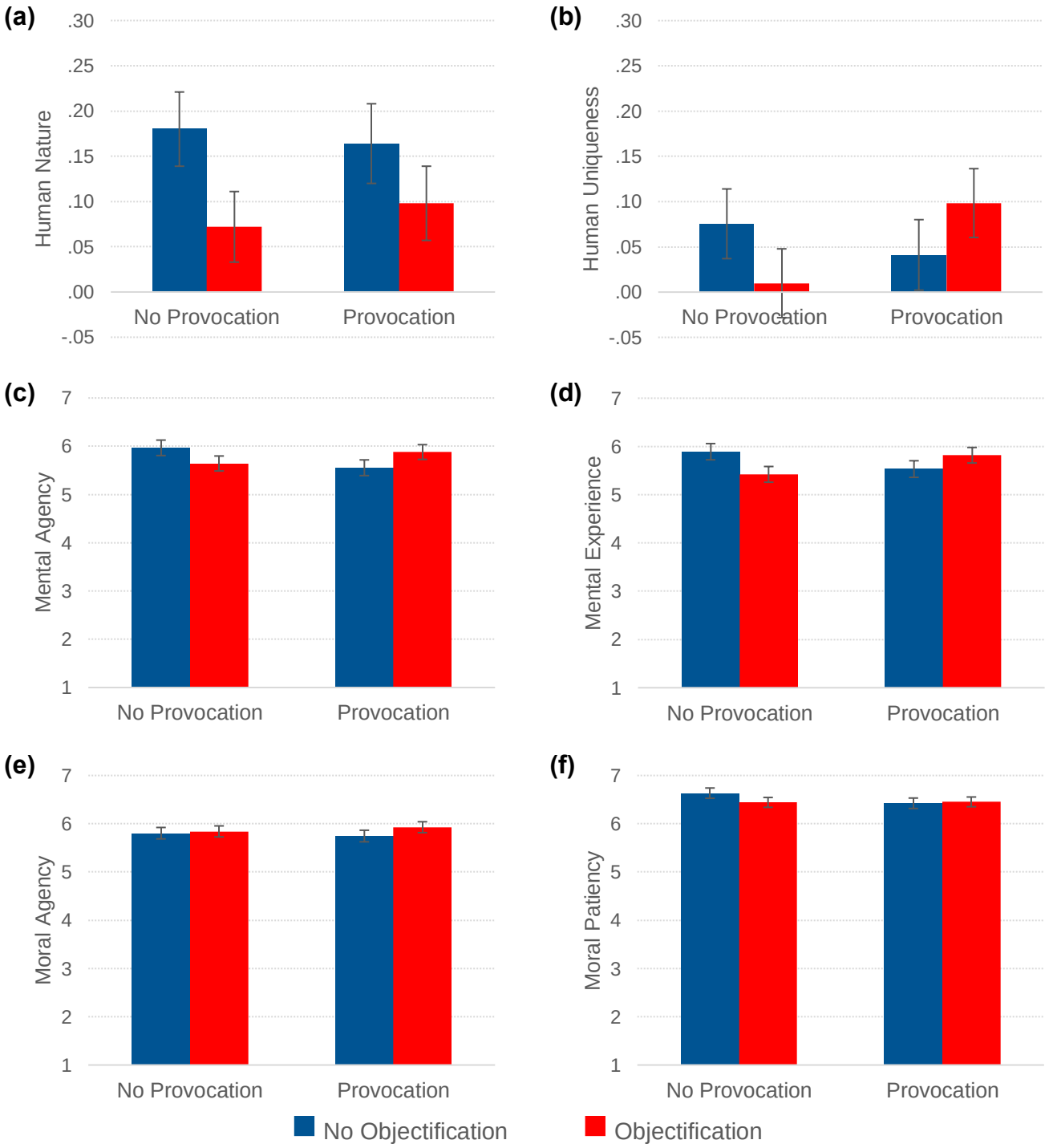


Figure 7.1. Bar charts of the mean ratings for HN (a), HU (b), mental agency (c), mental experience (d), moral agency (e), and moral patiency (f) as a function of provocation and objectification. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Physical IPV. For the VDT, as expected, there was a significant main effect of objectification, $F(1, 185) = 3.91$, $p = .049$, partial $\eta^2 < .021$, whereby men who focused on their romantic partner's physical appearance stabbed the voodoo doll with more pins than those men who focused on her personality (see Figure 7.2). Also as expected, there was a significant main effect of provocation, $F(1, 185) = 4.17$, $p = .043$, partial $\eta^2 = .022$, whereby provoked men acted more aggressively towards their romantic partner than those who were not provoked (Figure 7.2). However, these main effects were not qualified by the expected objectification x provocation interaction, $F(1, 185) = 0.34$, $p = .561$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$. See Table 7.1 for the means and standard deviations.

Figure 7.2. VDT Stabs as a Function of Provocation and Objectification in a Two-Way Factorial ANOVA

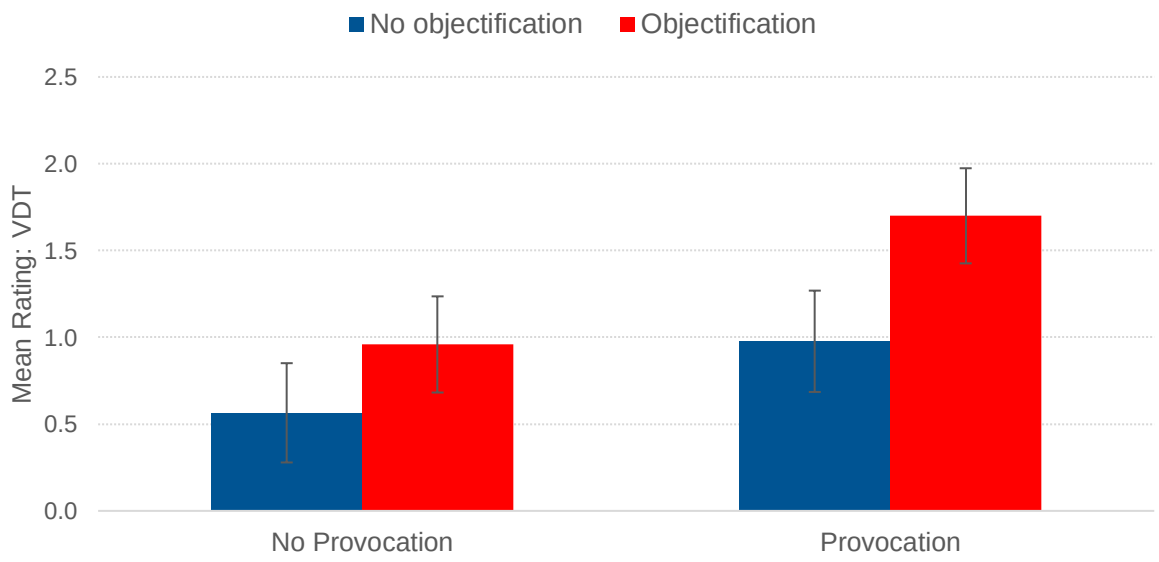


Figure 7.2. Bar chart of the mean scores for the VDT as a function of provocation and objectification. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

7.3.3. Secondary Analyses

Previous research shows that shifting participants' mindset onto a target's physical appearance is an effective way to induce objectification (Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Heflick et al., 2011), and that objectification involves target depersonalisation (Loughnan et al., 2010). As such, it was unexpected that our objectification manipulation yielded a lack of effect on some of the personhood-related variables (i.e., attributions of mental agency and of moral status to the romantic partner). I therefore conducted a series of secondary analyses to remove potential confounds and better understand the lack of effect of an appearance-focus mindset on these dependent variables. Table 7.2 presents the descriptive statistics for all the secondary analyses that were conducted.

Global MSA. A notable difference between the present study and previous research is that I assessed the participant's attributions of mind on two separate dimensions: agency and experience. However, previous objectification research has not always made this distinction when looking at target dementalization (e.g., Loughnan et al., 2010; but Holland & Haslam, 2013, considered them separatedly). To approximate our analysis to previous methodologies and allow for a more direct comparison, I computed a 20-item *Global MSA* index which combined all the items from each dimension (Cronbach's $\alpha = .96$). I then re-ran the two-way factorial ANOVAs using the new variable as the outcome.

For Global MSA, there were no significant main effects of objectification or provocation (*ps* > .05), but results showed a statistically significant two-way interaction, $F(1, 185) = 4.98$, $p = .027$, partial $\eta^2 = .026$. Deconstruction of the objectification x provocation interaction, however, revealed no simple main effects for either variable (*ps*

> .05). I did find that, in the absence of a provocation, Global MSA mean ratings trended lower for the objectification than the no objectification condition, $F(1, 185) = 3.20$, $p = .075$, partial $\eta^2 = .017$ (see Table 7.2 for the means and standard deviations). Although I made no prediction regarding simple main effects, these results did follow the expected pattern of direction, whereby objectifiers (relative to non-objectifiers) would attribute lesser overall mind to the targets, but only when unprovoked.

Global moral status. In addition, Experiment 3 also tested the participants' impressions of the romantic partner's moral status via two separate aspects: moral agency and moral patiency. However, earlier studies have not made such distinctions when looking at the moral consideration that is afforded to objectified targets (e.g., Holland & Haslam, 2015; Loughnan et al., 2010). To approach this methodology, I then computed a *Moral Status* index collapsing all the items from each dimension (11-items; Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$). Consistent with the main results, however, there were no statistically significant main effects of objectification or provocation on the newly created dependent variable nor a two-way interaction (*p*s > .05).

Overall Agency and Experience. Yet another way in which we analysed our data which differs from previous research is that, in Experiment 3, the dimensions of mind perception and moral status were assessed independently from each other. However, the literature suggests that mental agency and experience map—both theoretically and empirically—onto moral agency and patiency, respectively (K. Gray et al., 2012). For these reasons, researchers like Blake and colleagues (2016) have considered each dimensional pair (e.g., mental and moral agency) as an overall indicator of the target's perceived agency

and experience. Replicating Blake's approach, I combined the 15 mental and moral agency-related items to form a *Global Agency* index (Cronbach's α = .91), and the 16 mental experience and moral patiency items to form a *Global Experience* index (Cronbach's α = .91). Then, I re-ran separate two-way factorial ANOVAs using the new variables as the outcomes.

For Global Agency, consistent with the main results, there were no statistically significant main effects of objectification or provocation on the dependent variable, nor a two-way interaction between conditions (*p*s > .05). For Global Experience, results were also similar to those found in our main analysis. Although there were no main effects of objectification or provocation (*ps* > .05), there was a significant two-way interaction, $F(1, 185) = 4.77$, $p = .030$, partial $\eta^2 = .025$. Deconstruction of the provocation x objectification interaction revealed that, when participants were severely provoked, there was no mean difference in attributions of general experience to the romantic partner between the two objectification conditions, $F(1, 185) = 1.11$, $p = .294$, partial $\eta^2 = .006$. In the absence of provocation, however, attributions of experience were significantly lower for the objectification than the no objectification condition, $F(1, 185) = 4.16$, $p = .043$, partial $\eta^2 = .022$ (see Table 7.2 for the means and standard deviations). Once more, although no prediction was made for these simple main effects, the mean ratings for Global Experience did follow the expected pattern of direction, whereby (unprovoked) objectifiers, relative to non-objectifiers, also attributed lesser overall experience to the target.

Table 7.2.
Mean, Standard Deviation, and Sample Size for the Variables in the Secondary Analyses as a Function of Condition in Experiment 3

	No Provocation			Provocation		
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*N*
Global MSA						
No objectification	5.93	1.02	46	5.54	1.15	44
Objectification	5.53	1.07	49	5.85	1.08	50
Moral status						
No objectification	6.26	0.61	46	6.12	0.71	44
Objectification	6.17	0.65	49	6.22	0.69	50
Global agency						
No objectification	5.79	0.73	46	5.57	0.86	44
Objectification	5.64	0.75	49	5.79	0.82	50
Global experience						
No objectification	6.17	0.82	46	5.87	0.98	44
Objectification	5.81	0.85	49	6.06	0.84	50

Note. Global MSA = composite of the MSA agency and experience items; Moral status = composite of the moral agency and moral patiency items; Global agency = composite of the mental agency and moral agency items; Global experience = composite of the mental experience and moral patiency items.

7.4. Discussion

Experiment 3 examined whether men who objectify their current female romantic partner would also (a) explicitly acknowledge her as lacking personhood and (b) be more likely to behave aggressively towards her, especially when provoked. The results indicated that objectification affects women in romantic relationships. I found that under an appearance-focus mindset, perceivers attributed their female partner with lesser HN characteristics and denied her the capacity for mental experience (the latter only applied to

unprovoked men). The experimental evidence also indicated that objectification (and provocation) contributed to heightened physical aggression towards the partner, demonstrating that the phenomenon plays a causal role in IPV. More broadly, findings from Experiment 3 add considerable weight to the long standing, but largely unsupported, feminist view that objectification is a factor that facilitates VAW (Dworkin, 2000).

Existing empirical evidence shows that directly manipulating participants' mindset—and other factors known to draw attention to a woman's appearance, such as sexualisation—affects the objectification of women via reductions in perceived humanness (Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Heflick et al., 2011; Morris et al., 2018), mind (K. Gray et al., 2011; Loughnan et al., 2010), and moral status (Holland & Haslam, 2013, 2015; Loughnan et al., 2010). Novel to our research, however, is that no other study to date has examined whether the same effects hold in the context of romantic relationships. Experiment 3 partially replicated findings from previous work: our data supported some aspects of the hypothesised denial of personhood to objectified romantic partners (HN, mental experience), but not others (HU, mental agency, and moral status).

On the one hand, the results showed that objectification significantly impacted ascriptions of HN and mental experience to the target. Men who objectified their female partner also explicitly perceived her as lacking deep-seated psychological qualities deemed essentially human (i.e., HN traits). Moreover, for unprovoked men, objectifiers perceived their romantic partner as generally being less capable of experiencing emotion and sensation (i.e., mental experience). Importantly, according to Haslam's (2006) conceptualisation of humanness, these are fundamental qualities that separate humans

from robots and inanimate objects. As such, the current research demonstrates that when female partners are objectified, they are viewed as more thing-like (i.e., inert, cold, passive, fungible) and are therefore the target of mechanistic dehumanisation. Taken together, our findings affirm feminist theory and previous empirical evidence that objectification impacts the foundations of personhood (Dworkin, 2000; Haslam et al., 2013; Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Loughnan et al., 2010; Morris et al., 2018; Nussbaum, 1999). Furthermore, our work directly supports recent evidence that dehumanisation can be perpetrated against those whom we regard as our most intimate, like romantic partners (Pizzirani & Karantzas, 2019).

On the other hand, and contrary to expectations, participants' explicit perceptions of the target's HU and mental agency remained unaffected by objectification (relative to no objectification). These results are in direct contrast to existing research which provides evidence that, by virtue of construing women as objects, they are perceived as lacking psychological qualities unique to humans (i.e., rationality, morality, refinement) and capacity for mental agency (i.e., ability to plan, exert self-control, etc.; e.g., Bongiorno et al., 2013; K. Gray et al., 2011; Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Heflick et al., 2011; Holland & Haslam, 2013, 2015; Vaes et al., 2011). In short, this literature suggests that objectification should elicit animalistic dehumanisation. However, Experiment 3 did not provide empirical support for this dehumanising signature, demonstrating that objectified romantic partners were not stripped of their humanness and mind in ways that are consistent with being viewed as animal-like. Furthermore, the data provided no evidence

for the predicted effect of objectification on moral status, another well-established finding of the phenomenon (e.g., Holland & Haslam, 2013, 2015; Loughnan et al., 2010).

Next, I will discuss three plausible explanations for these unexpected results. Each explanation also highlights a potential limitation to the present study.

First, it is possible that certain aspects of objectification that are manifest in perceptions of strangers may not apply to romantic partners, who are in a close personal relationship with the perceiver. Indeed, the literature on objectification suggests that the phenomenon does not apply equally to all targets (Loughnan & Pacilli, 2014), and prior research shows that features of the perceiver and target, as well as contextual factors, serve to shield potential victims from the negative implications of other-objectification (e.g., Gruenfeld et al., 2008; Holland & Haslam, 2013; Loughnan et al., 2015; Riemer, Chaudoir, & Earnshaw, 2014). For example, in a 2013 study, Holland and Haslam demonstrated that being overweight made women less susceptible to being objectified. Similarly, it is possible that defining features of heterosexual romantic relationships—like a deep sense of intimacy, emotional closeness, and interdependence (Hatfield & Rapson, 1993; Moss & Schwebel, 1993)—may serve a protective role against the phenomenon, thus buffering the target from objectification and mitigating some of its most adverse consequences. After all, romantic relationships typically involve human interactions with a high personal willingness to know the other's thoughts, attitudes, intentions, and desires. As Nussbaum (1999) suggests, this context may represent the one place where people become less vulnerable to objectification, a claim that is consistent with work on interpersonal dimensions of dehumanisation, which posit that establishing positive relationships with

others bolsters attribution of human qualities to them (Bastian & Haslam, 2010; Bastian et al., 2014).

Although the romantic relationship between the male perceiver and the female target may have played a protective role against animalistic dehumanisation, it did not shield the romantic partner from being mechanistically dehumanised. Accordingly, future research should endeavour to examine and clarify the relational factors and mechanisms by which romantic relationships may shield objectified romantic partners from some dehumanising perceptions.

A second potential explanation for our null effects relates to the type of objectification manipulation used in our research. A discussed in Section 3.4.2.2, researchers have theorised (Morris & Goldenberg, 2015) and demonstrated (Morris et al., 2018) that the manner by which a woman is objectified informs the type of humanity that is denied as a result (i.e., whether she is more readily perceived as an object or an animal). This framework makes distinctions between beauty-based objectification (i.e., appearance-focused, but without a sexual component) and sex-based objectification, and how the former leads to mechanistic dehumanisation while the latter leads to animalistic dehumanisation (or both forms).

In line with this, Experiment 3's objectification manipulation was primarily beauty-based: the female partner was objectified through heightened attention on her physical appearance, as opposed to via her overt sexualisation. Supplementary inspection of the participants' written evaluations of their romantic partner provided further support for a

non-sexual, appearance-oriented objectification in our study.[15] For instance, in the objectification condition, men described their partner's physical appearance mainly through statements about her superficial beauty (e.g., "*her smile lights up the room*"), facial features (e.g., eye colour, hair length, face shape), and non-sexual body parts (e.g., "*she has long arms and playful hands*"). These types of statements occurred more often than those which described the partner's sexual body parts (e.g., breasts, waist, buttocks) or her sex appeal. Thus, the fact that Experiment 3 primarily found support for a link between objectification and variables associated with mechanistic dehumanisation (HN and mental experience) is consistent with the work of Morris and colleagues (2018). Future objectification research in the context of romantic relationships should test this framework directly, using measures that also sexualise the romantic partner to provide conclusive evidence on whether appearance- and sex-based objectification result in distinct types of target dehumanisation.

A third plausible explanation to our null effects, and limitation to the study, only concern the moral status variables. Unexpectedly, the results did not find differences in ascribed moral agency or patiency to female partners between objectifiers and non-objectifiers. Perhaps differences between our study and prior research, in terms of the

[15] Recall from the preliminary analyses (see Section 7.3.1.2) that our objectification manipulation check indicated that the manipulation was powerful and effective: men in the objectification condition provided significantly more appearance-relevant content than participants in no objectification condition.

procedural similarity of the objectification manipulation or the structure of the moral status scale, may account for objectification failing to influence these outcomes.

In terms of the objectification manipulation procedure, our measure differed from those studies that formed the basis of the present design as it did not include a visual depiction of the intended target. In their work, Heflick and Goldenberg (2009; Heflick et al., 2011) used mindset priming after showing the participants either images or videoclips of the target. A more recent study also used this type of mindset manipulation, but with actual female confederates as the target (Vasquez et al., 2018). Hence, in our study, there may be something specific about participants not being shown a visual representation of the objectified target that may have resulted in a lack of effect on perceptions of moral status. Moreover, prior research which establishes objectified targets are perceived as lacking moral status have manipulated objectification mostly by varying levels of target sexualisation or facial prominence (e.g., K. Gray et al., 2011; Holland & Haslam, 2013, 2015; Loughnan et al., 2010; Loughnan et al., 2013; Pacilli et al., 2017), and I did not employ these types of inductions. This may suggest that these precursors to objectification may be partially responsible for the effects on moral status that are found in the literature.

In terms of the moral status scale composition, it is possible that we did not obtain the expected results because well-validated instruments for this construct are still lacking in the objectification literature. Moral concern towards objectified targets has been empirically measured in a wide variety of ways. Sometimes researchers have assessed morality (or moral virtue) via participants' perceptions about the trustworthiness, sincerity, and honesty of the objectified target (e.g., Heflick et al., 2011; Pacilli et al., 2017).

Other times, researchers have used scales that conceptually are somewhat similar to ours, but modified them to assess only certain aspects of moral judgements (e.g., harm, blame), measured only one of the moral dimensions (e.g., patiency), or only included a reduced number of items such as 2 or 3-item scales (e.g., K. Gray et al., 2011; Loughnan et al., 2013; Pacilli et al., 2017). Further, published papers that conceptualise and capture the dimensions of moral status in nearly identical ways as the present study have reported issues of poor scale reliability, which are often remedied by removing items correlating poorly with other items within the scale (e.g., Holland & Haslam, 2013, 2015). In fact, I too removed two items from the moral agency subscale in order to improve internal consistency. The high level of variability that is observed in these instruments may therefore be capturing conceptually different phenomena in terms of the moral consideration that are afforded or denied to objectified targets.

Next, I turn our attention to the hypothesised aggression-promoting effect of objectification. The current research provides novel experimental evidence for a causal objectification-physical IPV link within romantic relationships. This study demonstrated that objectified partners (relative to non-objectified) were stabbed with more pins in the VDT; in other words, objectification directly increased men's physical aggression towards their female partner. Findings from Study 2 provided preliminary evidence linking (*implicit*) partner-objectification with male perpetration of non-sexual IPV (both self-reported and a behavioural proxy for physical aggression). Experiment 3 replicates and extends those findings to show that (*explicit*) partner-objectification has a direct impact on aggression, triggering men's physical IPV in their current romantic relationship.

These results are in line with feminist thinking (Dworkin, 1989; MacKinnon, 1987; Nussbaum, 1999) and are congruent with prior empirical work showing that objectification is a likely contributor to the victimisation of women, increasing their vulnerability to violence and harm (e.g., Blake et al., 2016; Gervais et al., 2014; Jonnson et al., 2018; Loughnan et al., 2010; Morris et al., 2018; Ramsey & Hoyt, 2014; Rudman & Mescher, 2012). Although most studies to date have been confined to the domain of sexual aggression, recent evidence also demonstrates that objectification encourages non-sexual, physical aggression towards women. This effect has been reported both in correlational (Vasquez et al., 2017) and experimental (Vasquez et al., 2018) research. The current study conceptually replicated these findings and extended them to the context of heterosexual romantic relationships, making it the first known study to demonstrate this effect in this domain. Also novel to this research is that it conceptualised and measured objectification as involving dehumanisation, as opposed to the objectifying gaze or an exaggerated emphasis on physical appearance as in previous research (e.g., Jonnson et al., 2018; Ramsey & Hoyt, 2014; Sáez Díaz, Alonso-Ferres, et al., 2019). As demonstrated here, reducing someone to a something, even if that someone is the person closest to us, represents a powerful and damaging way in which men see and treat women.

Given that partner-objectification reduces attributions of HN and mental experience, and that when people are mechanistically dehumanised, they are perceived as more object-like (devoid of emotion, sensation, and human essence), our findings suggest that objectified romantic partners were more easily harmed because they did not engage the participants' sympathies. This violence-promoting effect of objectification echoes

research showing that dehumanisation is a mechanism that enables aggressive behaviour in intergroup (Haslam et al., 2007; Struch & Schwartz, 1989), interpersonal (Greitemeyer & McLatchie, 2011), and romantic contexts (Pizzirani & Karantzas, 2019). Moreover, our interpretation is conceptually consistent with the body of literature showing that objectified women are perceived as lacking experiential mental states (Loughnan et al., 2010; Study 2) and HN traits (Morris et al., 2018), and are thus viewed as relatively incapable of feeling pain. Given that most VAW is perpetrated by male intimate partners (WHO, 2013), and that objectification appears to directly inform such violence, the current research adds considerable weight to our understanding of how the phenomenon contributes to real-world negative implications in men's relationships with women.

The data from Experiment 3 also provided direct evidence for the hypothesised provocation-IPV link, whereby provoked men stabbed the representation of the romantic partner with a greater number of pins than unprovoked men. This finding is both expected and unsurprising, given that provocation is a common and robust antecedent to interpersonal aggression both outside (C.A. Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Bettencourt & Miller, 1996; Eckhardt, 2007; Eckhardt et al., 2002) and within romantic relationships (DeWall et al., 2013; Finkel et al., 2012; Finkel et al., 2009; Koepke et al., 2014; Slotter et al., 2012). However, results did not support the hypothesised objectification x provocation interaction; that is, focusing on the romantic partner's body had no effect on aggression levels for severely provoked men. Although the two-way interaction did not reach statistical significance, as shown in Figure 7.2, mean scores for the VDT followed the

expected patter of direction across all experimental conditions: number of stabs were the lowest for unprovoked non-objectifiers and highest for provoked objectifiers.

7.4.1. Concluding Remarks

The results from Experiment 3 provide a range of preliminary and novel findings that shed light upon the implications of partner-objectification on heterosexual romantic relationships. To date, a great deal of objectification research has examined how the phenomenon negatively impacts how men perceive and treat women. However, only a small number of studies have considered objectification-related phenomena within the context of romantic relationships. The present research is important because it is the first study to experimentally consider depersonalisation, stemming from objectification, in the domain of romantic relationships while integrating a comprehensive range of measures of personhood that have been used in previous objectification research.

Consistent with philosophical and psychological theorising, our results indicate that when female romantic partners are objectified, they are also perceived as possessing impoverished mental lives and being less than complete human beings. Partner-objectification had a direct effect on attributions of HN traits to the objectified. When men focused on their romantic partner's physical appearance, they were more likely to mechanistically dehumanise her, which is consistent with perceiving her more akin to an object. In addition, unprovoked male objectifiers also perceived their female partners as lacking the capacity to experience emotion and sensation. These findings provide evidence that partner-objectification leads to dehumanised perceptions of the romantic partner.

Furthermore, the present research contributes to a better understanding of the powerful role that objectification plays in the victimisation of women in romantic relationships. Most research into objectification and partner violence has been correlational and thus unable to speak to potential causal relationships between the phenomena. Our results provide novel and direct evidence for the long-speculated, but previously unsupported, link between objectification and IPV. These results empirically support existing theoretical connections between objectification and VAW.

The finding that objectification directly enables physical aggression is very troubling. For real world heterosexual couples, appearance and physical attraction are widely accepted as crucial parts of enjoyable romantic relationships (Feingold, 1990; Wolf, 1990). Given that the aggression-provoking effect of objectification was triggered merely by asking participants to focus on their partner's physical appearance, and that romantic relationships may create an environment that fosters this type of attention (and even encourages it), it stands to reason that women in these settings are likely targets of partner-objectification. In turn, our findings offered important insights into the damaging consequences of the phenomenon, whereby men perceived and treater their intimate partners as more object-like when they objectified them.

In the next chapter, I bring together the findings from the three empirical studies and offer conclusions regarding the role of objectification in the perpetration of IPV in heterosexual romantic relationships. This chapter will also provide insights into general limitations (study-specific limitations were discussed in each chapter), future research directions, and outline broader practical implications that are derived from this thesis.

CHAPTER 8: GENERAL DISCUSSION

8.1. Overview

Male perpetrated IPV embodies a contradictory phenomenon: violence and intimacy. Why would a man purposely perpetrate harm upon a woman that he cherishes? Yet, harm at the hands of male partners is the most common form of violence that women experience worldwide (UN, 2015). I started this thesis with the contention that although feminist scholars have long argued that objectification may facilitate VAW—because the phenomenon entails perceiving or treating another person as an object or not as fully human—there is a dearth of research examining the role of objectification in the context of heterosexual romantic relationships and its relation to IPV. The aim of this thesis was thus to investigate these relationships and assess whether objectifying perceptions of women that have been previously demonstrated in the laboratory, also contribute to gendered violence against them in the world outside, particularly in the setting of close relationships. The fundamental research questions of this program of research were as follows:

1. What is the relation between men's implicit objectification of women and different forms of IPV perpetration in romantic relationships?
2. Does partner-objectification directly contribute to physical IPV perpetration towards the romantic partner?
3. How does objectification impact on men's explicit perceptions of personhood (humanness, mind, and moral status) to their romantic partner?

In the following sections, I summarise the critical findings that emerged from the three studies designed to answer the research questions outlined above. There, I highlight how this thesis contributes to our understanding of objectification and gendered violence in romantic relationships. Afterwards, I acknowledge the limitations of my work and potential directions for future research. Finally, I discuss the broader practical implications of this program of research and offer recommendations that might help inform future efforts to reduce IPV prevalence. This is then followed by some concluding remarks.

8.2. Summary of Findings

A key purpose of this PhD thesis was to link objectification with IPV. Philosophical, feminist, and psychological theorising suggests that objectification facilitates VAW (e.g., Bartky, 1990; Dworkin, 2000; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Nussbaum, 1999), yet the relationship has seldom been tested empirically. I applied implicit and explicit approaches to the scientific study of objectification to yield a richer, more comprehensive assessment of the phenomenon that is inclusive of close partners. Across three studies, I obtained considerable evidence that objectification plays an influential role in the perpetration of different forms of gendered IPV within romantic relationships.

First, in Study 1 and 2 I focused exclusively on psychological processes that operate automatically. These studies investigated the association between *implicit* objectification and IPV. More specifically, they assessed how automatically likening women to objects, rather than to humans, predicted men's likelihood to use different types of partner violence in their romantic relationships, measured via self-reports and enacted

perpetration of physical violence. Results indicated that male objectifiers tend to use more physical and sexual IPV against their current female partner, but not more psychological abuse. Further, men who were more aggressive against their intimate partner after being provoked, were also more likely to hold dehumanising perceptions of her. Given the sensitive nature of our research, including implicit measures was advantageous as they tend to be relatively resistant to faking tendencies, concerns about self-presentation, and other response biases. Study 1 and 2 showed an additional interesting finding: while HS robustly predicted all types of IPV measured, this variable was consistently uncorrelated with implicit objectification, implying that they are substantially distinct contributors to IPV, and that implicit objectification is not reducible to sexism.

In Study 3, I then shifted my focus to study men's explicit objectification of their romantic partner and its links to IPV. This study experimentally assessed the direct causal link between men's partner-objectification and their enacted physical aggression towards the objectified partner. It also assessed the impact of objectification on perceptions of her personhood. Results indicated that men who objectify their current partner also behave more aggressively towards her and perceive her to be lacking some aspects of personhood. Importantly, convergent findings obtained from these three studies imply that objectification is harmful to women, negatively impacts romantic relationships, and serves as a mechanism involved in partner victimisation – irrespective of whether the processes occurs implicitly or explicitly.

Next, I will outline the major contributions of this thesis in more detail. To that end, I integrate the critical findings from the three studies to provide a more complete account

of the array of negative consequences for romantic relationships that follow from women being perceived and treated as objects rather than fully thinking and feeling persons.

8.2.1. Objectification Predicts Sexual IPV

In regard to sexual IPV offending, in Study 1 I found that men's tendency to perceive women as more akin to objects predicted their self-reported perpetration of this type of abuse in romantic relationships. In other words, men who objectified women were more likely to have used psychological and behavioural tactics, both subtle and blatant, to force their romantic partner into having unwanted sex. This finding is conceptually consistent with previous work showing that implicit objectification has implications for sexual VAW (Rudman & Mescher, 2012), and expands it to the context of romantic relationships.

This contribution also implies that objectification in the context of a romantic relationship may not be as innocuous as previously suggested (Nussbaum, 1995), and that the damaging consequences that stem from the phenomenon appear to apply uniformly for women, even in spaces that ought to be safe for them. As feminist scholar suggest, sexual VAW represents extreme manifestations of objectification where men reduce women to instrumental sexual objects and their wishes and sexual willingness need not be considered (Bartky, 1990; Dworkin & MacKinnon, 1988). Accordingly, men's dehumanising perceptions of women may set the stage for extreme objectifying behaviours to manifest in romantic relationships, such as sexual partner violence. It is possible to infer from our results that a man's tendency to consider women as things, thus no longer fully human, influences how he romantically and sexually interacts with his female romantic partner.

Nevertheless, Study 1's findings were only partly in line with those of Ramsey and Hoyt (2014) and Sáez Díaz, Riemer, and others (2019), who were the first to show that men who objectify their female partners are also more likely to pressure and coerce them into sex. Although in our study the relationship between implicit objectification of women (in general) and sexual IPV was positively significant (cf. Sáez Díaz, Riemer, et al., 2019), unlike these authors I did not directly measure partner-objectification in Study 1. Further, when doing so in Study 2, results failed to find the hypothesised predictive relationship between the variables of interest. Key differences between these studies may have hindered the replication of past findings. First, this prior research has only examined partner-objectification explicitly, whereas I assessed it implicitly. Second, these authors used the notion of the male gaze to conceptualise objectification, whereas I conceptualised the phenomenon as involving dehumanisation. Compared to these studies, Study 2 may be measuring different aspects of partner-objectification or different phenomena altogether.

Surprisingly, the fact that Study 2 did not yield comparable results to Study 1 suggests that automatically perceiving the female partner—vs. women as a social group—as less human plays a different role in terms of the adverse consequences within romantic relationships that result from objectification. Nevertheless, research shows that both an objectifying focus on women in general and on the romantic partner in particular are related to male sexual coercion in romantic relationships (Sáez Díaz, Riemer, et al., 2019), and it is not unreasonable to have expected similar results. As previously noted, however, the view of objectification examined in prior research is not equivalent to the one used here because of a focus on chronic body evaluations as the main aspect of the

phenomenon. In addition, differences between study methodologies and data sources may help explain the discrepant results. First, Sáez Díaz, Riemer, and others (2019) measured other- and partner-objectification within the same study, whereas I examined these constructs in independent studies. Unlike theirs, our data does not tell us whether men who implicitly objectify women are also likely to perceive their romantic partner in the same way. Second, to assess sexually coercive behaviours in the romantic relationship these authors used an abbreviated version of the SCIRS, whereas I used the entire scale. Third, in these authors' study, the male sample was smaller (n = 136) and composed of heterosexual, college aged men (M = 23 years), most of which were in short-term relationships (53% only dating) or not currently in a self-defined committed relationship (37%). In contrast, Study 2's sample was larger (n = 325) and composed of older, non-collegiate men (M = 30 years) who had been romantically involved with the same woman for at least one year (42%), with the majority for over two years (58%). Most men in our study also lived with their intimate partner (72%), whereas in their study only 10% of men cohabitated. As a result, these data are hard to compare and without further research I cannot conclusively identify the specific circumstances underlying why in Study 1 and 2 women's general objectification and partner-objectification differed in their capacity to predict sexual IPV.

8.2.2. Objectification Facilitates Physical IPV

Turning to physical IPV, across three studies I found convergent evidence of a relationship between objectification and male perpetrated physical IPV, both with research of a correlational and experimental nature. These findings were consistent when

objectification was assessed implicitly (Study 1 and 2) and explicitly (Study 3); when the phenomenon targeted women in general (Study 1) and the female romantic partner in particular (Study 2 and 3); and when the dependent variable was measured via retrospective self-reports (Study 1 and 2) and via a more direct, behavioural proxy for physical aggression towards the partner (Study 2 and 3). The current research thus provides a range of preliminary findings that shed light onto the damaging role of objectification as a precursor to, or enabler of, physical IPV within romantic relationships. Further, a valuable contribution of this body of work is that it is among the first to directly connect objectification to non-sexual forms of IPV towards women.

8.2.2.1. Objectification predicts self-reported physical IPV.

Two studies showed that men's automatic tendency to perceive women (Study 1) and romantic partners (Study 2) as more akin to objects predicted their self-reported perpetration of physical violence within the romantic relationship. In other words, these men were more likely to have used a wide array of physically abusive behaviours against their current romantic partner such as squeezing her arm, forcefully shoving and pushing her, throwing things at her, or physically attacking her. This novel finding is conceptually consistent with previous work showing that objectification has negative implications for physical VAW (Vasquez et al., 2018; Vasquez et al., 2017), and expands it to the context of romantic relationships.

Moreover, results from Study 1 mirror prior research associating heterosexual men's objectification of women with greater perpetration of physical IPV (Jonnson et al., 2018). I

extended on this work by demonstrating that a tendency for partner-objectification (Study 2)—as opposed to only focusing on men's general objectification of members of the other sex—also predicts physical IPV likelihood. Further, unlike prior authors, I conceptualised objectification as more than just body surveillance, and Study 2 is one of the first to find a relationship between these key variables while assessing the phenomenon as a process that reduces a woman's perceived humanity. Finally, my work also empirically supports recent longitudinal evidence showing that dehumanisation can be perpetrated against those whom we regard as our most intimate, like close romantic partners, and is related to physical abuse in these settings (Pizzirani & Karantzas, 2019).

8.2.2.2 Partner-objectification heightens physical aggression.

Although correlational and experimental research suggests that objectification may foster the sexual victimisation of women (e.g., Blake et al., 2016; Galdi et al., 2014; Gervais et al., 2014; Yao et al., 2010), little research has been done in regard to other types of abuse, particularly in the domain of romantic relationships. Across two studies, this thesis provides preliminary evidence showing that objectification can *indirectly disinhibit* and *directly promote* gendered physical IPV.

Study 2 and 3 incorporated the VDT, a behavioural analogue for physical IPV, in tandem with a situational provocation for aggression. In these two studies, I found that both implicit (Study 2) and explicit (Study 3) partner-objectification increased physical aggression towards the romantic partner. In Study 2, correlational results showed that among highly provoked men, implicit dehumanising perceptions of the romantic partner

as animals or objects played a *disinhibiting* role in the perpetration of physical violence. In other words, for emotionally charged men, holding dehumanising perceptions of their current romantic partner weakened their psychological restraints on aggression and predicted greater use of physical aggression against that same partner.

In Study 3, I then built upon these findings and provided novel experimental evidence for a causal link between objectification and physical IPV. More specifically, engaging in explicit partner-objectification *directly promoted* physically aggressive behaviours towards the objectified partner, irrespective of whether male participants had been provoked or not. Although work by Vasquez and others (2018) has previously evidenced an objectification-physical aggression link, Study 3 is important as it is the first to demonstrate this causal effect in the context of a heterosexual romantic relationship.

Collectively, findings from Chapter 5, 6, and 7 demonstrate that the process of objectification is a contributing factor to men's physical IPV perpetration within their close intimate relationships, because the phenomenon may lead a man to perceive his partner as less than a complete human being. These findings offer empirical support for feminist claims that perceiving women as objects encourages male VAW (e.g., Dworkin, 2000; MacKinnon, 1991; Nussbaum, 1999) and they also implicate some of Nussbaum's (1999) core aspects of the phenomenon. Scholars have considered IPV as a manifestation of violability and denial of subjectivity, whereby men treat their romantic partner as if she had the status of a mere object which can be harmed and abused and the victim's experiences and feelings are blatantly ignored (Bartky, 1990; Gervais & Davidson, 2013; LaCroix & Pratto, 2015). It is thus possible to infer from our results that men who perceive

their romantic partner as relatively more object-like may also tend to physically harm them more, maybe because they consider that same partner as more violable.

8.2.3. Partner-Objectification Diminishes Personhood

In order to confer the status of person on an individual, we must first perceive them as being fully human, possessing a mind, and regard them as being worthy of moral consideration and treatment (Epley & Waytz, 2010; Haslam, 2006; Sapontzis, 1981). In Study 3, I obtained experimental evidence that explicit partner-objectification implicates the denial of some of the fundamental aspects of personhood to objectified romantic partners. Specifically, I found that an appearance-focus mindset led men to perceive their current female partner as lacking characteristics that are essentially human (i.e., HN traits) and possessing a reduced capacity for emotions and sensations (i.e., mental experience). These findings align with previous research showing similar effects (e.g., Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009; Loughnan et al., 2010; Morris et al., 2018), but a novel contribution of the study is that it expands these findings to the context of a romantic relationship.

Moreover, the way in which men denied mental experience to their romantic partner differed as a function of whether they felt provoked (or not) by the partner's behaviour depicted in the provocation scenario. Whereas for *provoked* men, partner-objectification did not influence attributions of mental experience, for *unprovoked* men partner-objectification led to reductions in perceived experience to the female partner. From these findings it is possible to infer that focusing on the romantic partner's physical appearance facilitates perceiving her as less than fully human. Importantly, the signature

of personhood denial that was observed in our results—via HN and mental experience—parallels Haslam's (2006) conceptualisation of mechanistic dehumanisation, whereby a person is viewed more like an inanimate object (i.e., inert, cold, passive, fungible) and less like a human.

Although our evidence shows that partner-objectification negatively impacted some of the foundations of personhood, the findings suggest that the phenomenon did not involve a generalised denial of humanness and mind across the board. In fact, objectification had no effect on the extent to which the female partner was acknowledged as possessing HU traits or being capable of thoughts and intentions (i.e., mental agency). I also did not find that partner-objectification lead to lesser moral status being ascribed to the partner, both in terms of her moral agency and patiency. Hence, these findings contradict prior research showing that objectification involves a withdrawal of mental agency, HU, and moral standing to the objectified target (e.g., K. Gray et al., 2011; Heflick et al., 2011; Holland & Haslam, 2013, 2015; Loughnan et al., 2010). However, as highlighted in Chapter 7, it is possible that methodological factors may have contributed to the lack of effect of partner-objectification on these personhood variables.

Interestingly, another way to interpret the denial of only certain dimensions of humanness and mind to objectified targets, as seen in our research, is through the beauty- vs. sex-based objectification framework (Morris & Goldenberg, 2015; Morris et al., 2018). Indeed, the findings in Study 3 may simply reflect the manner by which the female romantic partner was objectified, thus conceptually aligning with the dehumanisation signature that results from women being the targets of beauty-based objectification. Our

evidence supports the notion that an objectification induction which directs the perceiver's attention onto the physical appearance of the target (but not to their sexual attributes) leads to the target being perceived as relatively object-like (thus lacking HN and mental experience) rather than sub-human or animalistic (thus not lacking HU and mental agency). Nonetheless, additional research is necessary to confirm or eliminate some of these explanations to our null results.

8.2.4. Hostile Sexism, Objectification, & IPV

Although not central to the main purpose of this thesis, across two studies I established a pattern of results which demonstrated that HS (a) consistently predicted all forms of IPV, and (b) was not associated to the implicit objectification of women. These studies varied whether IPV was measured through retrospective accounts (Study 1 and 2) or via a behavioural analogue (Study 2), and whether objectified targets were women as a social group (Study 1) or the male participants' current romantic partner (Study 2).

8.2.4.1. Sexism robustly predicts IPV.

In line with prior research, this thesis has demonstrated the destructive impact of HS for romantic relationships. In Study 1 and 2, HS was positively associated with all forms of IPV – physical, sexual, and psychological. This effect was consistent when the outcome variable was measured via self-reports of IPV perpetration (Study 1 and 2) and via enacted physically aggressive behaviours against the romantic partner (Study 2). In short, hostile

sexist men were more likely to engage in all types of IPV and be more physically aggressively towards the romantic partner when confronted with a provocation.

A large body of research shows that generalised hostility towards women is strongly related to violence and aggression. Cross-sectional studies, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses demonstrate that sexist hostility predicts male sexual and non-sexual aggression against women (C.A. Anderson & Anderson, 2008; Forbes & Adams-Curtis, 2001; Murnen et al., 2002) and all types of IPV perpetration (Allen et al., 2009; Birkley & Eckhardt, 2015; Capaldi et al., 2012; Fleming et al., 2015; Forbes et al., 2006; Forbes et al., 2004; Renzetti et al., 2015; Stith et al., 2004). Across two studies, I found evidence that converges with this robust body of work.

8.2.4.2. Sexism and objectification are uncorrelated.

Given its strong association with VAW, one of my secondary aims was to determine whether HS was also related to objectification. Glick and Fiske's (1996) original conceptualisation of HS makes reference to the denigration, objectification, and sexual exploitation of women as a way to justify the patriarchy and men's structural power over them. Moreover, feminist scholars argue that the objectification of women is a key component of sexism (De Beauvoir, 1949/1979; MacKinnon, 1987) and prior research shows an association between HS and objectifying sexualised women (Cikara et al., 2011).

Interestingly, in two studies I obtained considerable evidence that HS was not associated with automatically likening women to objects or animals, or romantic partners to objects. The finding that men do not need to hold hostile sexist attitudes towards

women to dehumanise them, at least at an implicit level, is consistent with prior research by Rudman and Mescher (2012). Given that objectification and HS were consistently unrelated, these results converge to suggest that each psychological process plays a unique role in facilitating men's partner victimisation, rather than objectification—or the much less researched concept of implicit partner-objectification—merely being a consequence or side-effect of HS. This more nuanced understanding of the relationship among HS, objectification, and IPV is an important contribution of this thesis.

8.3. Limitations & Future Research Directions

Limitations to each individual study have been discussed in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 (see Section 5.4.1 for Study 1, Section 6.4.1 for Study 2, and Section 7.4 for Study 3). Below I discuss additional issues that further limit the applicability of my findings as they concern the entirety of this research program and outline potential avenues for future research.

One limitation to this thesis includes the representativeness of the sample, which may hinder the generalisation of the results to the general population. Although I attempted to enlist men from a wide variety of backgrounds—albeit only from Western countries—the reality is that the current data was biased towards White/Caucasian individuals and had little representation of ethnic minorities. White/Caucasian males were largely overrepresented in all of our studies, with 74%, 82%, and 71% of participants identifying as such in Study 1, 2, and 3, respectively. These circumstances thus limit the conclusions I can make regarding men from other cultural and ethnic groups, and men from other countries and/or regions. Moreover, this thesis exclusively surveyed men aged

18 to 35 years old. While the evidence is consistent that rates of IPV perpetration are highest among young adult male populations (Caetano et al., 2008; Kim et al., 2008; Regan & Durvasula, 2015), as a result of this sampling method I am not able to generalise the findings to older adults. Additional research using participants from a wide variety of sources should corroborate our findings in more detail.

In a similar vein, in this research program I only examined objectification within heterosexual romantic relationships because the influence of the phenomenon is thought to be prominent in this interpersonal context (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005). Nevertheless, partner-objectification could also prove problematic in other relationship structures with different gender dynamics, like same-sex couples or polyamorous relationships, and addressing this gap is a fruitful avenue for future research.

Another limitation of this thesis, first alluded to in Chapter 6, is the potential inaccuracy of the data that is generated from retrospective self-reported IPV measures (impacting Study 1 and 2). It is well known that instruments that rely on retrospective reporting can be affected by recall bias (Bradburn, Rips, & Shevell, 1987; Caetano, Field, Ramisetty-Mikler, & Lipsky, 2009; Yoshihama & Gillespie, 2002). In addition, when examining sensitive topics such as IPV, these types of tools are also vulnerable to social desirability bias and the underreporting of unfavourable relationship behaviours for both victims and perpetrators (Follingstad, 2018; Lewis & Fremouw, 2001; Riggs et al., 1989). Although I attempted to circumvent this limitation by combining different approaches in the empirical measurement of IPV—using retrospective reporting and a behavioural proxy for aggressive behaviour—our self-report data could still be jeopardised by men not

providing factual reports of relationship-related abusive acts. Thus, because of probable measurement error in the self-reports, the conclusions drawn from this thesis could possibly understate the true role of objectification in the perpetration of IPV.

To address this limitation, researchers could also attempt to collect data from multiple sources, such as dyadic data from romantic couples. Partner violence is, after all, a dynamic relationship process and making assumptions about couples' behaviour based solely on one individual's reports is incomplete and potentially inaccurate when it comes to couple-level outcomes. A dyadic data collection strategy was considered for this program of research but was not pursued due to time constraints and recruitment difficulties. Future research would benefit from incorporating actual romantic couples to account for how each member experiences and/or perpetrates violence individually, and how they mutually influence each other. For instance, the current research and others empirical work (Ramsey & Hoyt, 2014; Sáez Díaz, Riemer, et al., 2019) supports the notion that men's objectification of women increases sexually coercive behaviours towards romantic partners. Moreover, previous research shows that women who feel objectified by a romantic partner are more likely to self-objectify and less likely to exhibit sexual agency and refuse unwanted sexual advances (Ramsey & Hoyt, 2014; Sáez Díaz, Riemer, et al., 2019). However, researchers are yet to examine whether these separate processes augment each other within the same romantic relationship; for example, whether women who self-objectify to a higher degree are also perceived and treated more object-like by their male intimate partners (and *vice versa*), and whether such interplay of factors translates into greater IPV victimisation and perpetration. These are interesting questions that may be

worthwhile to see incorporated into future research with both members of a romantic couple.

8.4. Practical Implications & Recommendations

This research program suggests that objectification, of women and of romantic partners, influences male IPV perpetration within close relationships. Given the emotional, judicial, and economic burden of IPV, understanding the factors that underpin its perpetration—in our case through objectification—is of great value to society. This research thus holds theoretical importance for the existing objectification literature in addition to important implications for IPV prevention and intervention efforts.

The identification of predictor variables for IPV perpetration is important and relevant for researchers, educators, advocates, public health and mental health professionals, program developers, and policy makers. A comprehensive understanding of factors associated with a greater risk of IPV may result in effective prevention, intervention, and treatment strategies, which in the long run may modifying the cycle of violence itself (WHO & LSHTM, 2010). Our results are the first to demonstrate an association between implicit female- and partner-objectification with sexual and physical IPV, as well as a causal association between explicit partner-objectification with physical IPV in heterosexual romantic relationships. Generally speaking, these findings clearly signal the need to reduce objectification in this context.

Strategies to prevent or address IPV can be categorised into three levels—primary, secondary, and tertiary—which operate along a continuum of possible harm (García-

Moreno, Hegarty, et al., 2015; Jaffe & Wolfe, 2003). Primary prevention aims to stop experiences of partner violence before they occur, and usually targets the general community with the aim of creating long-lasting (albeit slow) generational change (Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, & VicHealth, 2015). Secondary prevention (or early intervention), on the other hand, targets at-risk individuals or those with early signs of partner violence with the aim to decrease prevalence and stop IPV from reoccurring. Tertiary prevention (or intervention), in turn, deals with the aftermath and long-term consequences from IPV perpetration (García-Moreno, Hegarty, et al., 2015). Our research offers insights that could ultimately help inform strategies at all three levels.

In the space of primary prevention, our findings may help inform programs geared at educating adolescents and young men on healthy relationships, by increasing their awareness of objectification and the host of negative implications that the phenomenon may bring to romantic relationships. Given that men tend to objectify women more often than the reverse (Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005) and that they are the more common perpetrators of IPV (Krug, Dahlberg, et al., 2002), early education aimed at reducing the extent to which men objectify women has the potential to decrease relationship violence in later life. For instance, an educational curriculum in high schools could help adolescents recognise when their thinking processes and relationship expectations are being influenced by perceptions of women as objects and encourage them to think and act in ways that are more compatible with, and conducive to, equal and respectful relationship dynamics (e.g., encourage boys to see and treat girls as fully thinking and feeling human

beings). This type of program could also help boys identify the many forms in which female objectification is expressed in society and how to challenge its normalisation.

Similar approaches may be implemented with college aged men, a population at higher risk of IPV. Our research suggests that a tendency to associate women with objects was a component of sexual relationship violence, and this finding may help identify at-risk individuals for IPV perpetration. Moreover, educating men at this life stage may provide a more nuanced understanding of the differences between healthy sexual attraction in a relationship and using women as mere tools for sexual pleasure. Addressing these issues early, through school-based programs, offers a unique window to help stop unhealthy relationship patterns before they emerge in adulthood. Ultimately, our data highlight the importance of educating boys and men to meet female objectification with criticism in order to create a cultural environment with the potential to emphasise women as people.

In terms of tertiary prevention strategies, which seeks to control and treat IPV behaviours and minimise their long-term harm, our findings could inform clinicians and program developers in the design of cognitive and therapeutic interventions for young adult male IPV offenders. If, as shown in this research, men's objectification of their romantic partner plays an influential role in violence perpetration towards her, these interventions could benefit from incorporating objectification-related themes. Interventions can thus be targeted at educating perpetrators to view female partners less as an object and more as an (equal) person. In willing men, being more mindful of objectifying dynamics within their relationships could encourage these perceivers to focus more on aspects of their partner's personhood (her mind, personality, abilities, actions,

humanness, etc.). Rehumanising the female partner could also enhance crucial interpersonal skills—like empathy for that person—which potentially could combat the negative consequences of objectification (Haslam & Loughnan, 2014) and improve relationship satisfaction and commitment, which are considered to be protective against IPV (Capaldi et al., 2012; Cramer & Jowett, 2010; Slotter et al., 2012).

Finally, in terms of the implicitly held dehumanising perceptions of women and partners that played an influential role in the perpetration of physical IPV in our research, it is possible that research-based cognitive techniques previously used to mitigate unconscious prejudice (e.g., race-bias training; Devine, Forscher, Austin, & Cox, 2012) may also help abusive men mitigate their objectifying cognitions. For instance, being confronted with the fact that implicit (and explicit) partner-objectification perpetuates VAW may assist men to overcome the deleterious effects of likening women to objects, and perhaps, even remould these cognitive associations altogether. However, a caveat for strategies aimed at countering the impact of automatic (Lai, Hoffman, & Nosek, 2013) and deliberate (Monteith & Mark, 2005) cognitions on behaviour is that the individual must be internally motivated for change (Fehr, Sassenberg, & Jonas, 2012). This is not always the case with IPV perpetrators who are court mandated to attend intervention programs, but may be the case with individuals who self-select to undergo therapeutic programs and/or counselling.

8.5. Concluding Remarks

This thesis is important for understanding the role of objectification in IPV within heterosexual romantic relationships. A link between these phenomena has been widely assumed but evidence in the published literature is still scarce. Across three studies, I showed that men's objectifying perceptions of women and female partners—whether implicit or explicit—facilitated IPV perpetration. Results supported prior associations between implicit objectification and sexual aggression (Rudman & Mescher, 2012) and extended these findings to the realm of romantic relationships. Results also paralleled previous work emphasising the negative consequences of explicit partner-objectification in romantic relationships (Ramsey & Hoyt, 2014; Sáez Díaz, Alonso-Ferres, et al., 2019) and extended these findings by considering the phenomenon as involving dehumanisation. This program of research also added novel experimental evidenced of a causal link between partner-objectification and physical IPV perpetration. Collectively, our studies shed light on the objectifying cognitions of male perpetrators of IPV, and I conclude that these men may benefit from educational and intervention strategies that address these deleterious perceptions. Given that IPV is a multifaceted problem caused by a complex network of factors (Heise, 1998), objectification is neither necessary nor sufficient for IPV to occur. Nevertheless, our data suggest that the phenomenon is implicated in partner violence and that combating objectification may help lessen the burden of IPV on women and society. Ultimately, I hope that this research contributes to the goal of reducing the occurrence of male perpetrated IPV within intimate relationships.

Appendix A: Instructions for the Implicit Association Tasks for Study 1 & 2

Appendix A presents the set of participant instructions used in the IATs for Study 1 (i.e., B-IAT) and for Study 2 (SC-IAT).

A.1. Implicit Association Task for Study 1

A.1.1. Brief Implicit Association Task: General Instructions

Figure A1 presents a screenshot of the B-IAT's general instructions (i.e., block 1).

Figure A1. General Instructions for the B-IAT for Study 1

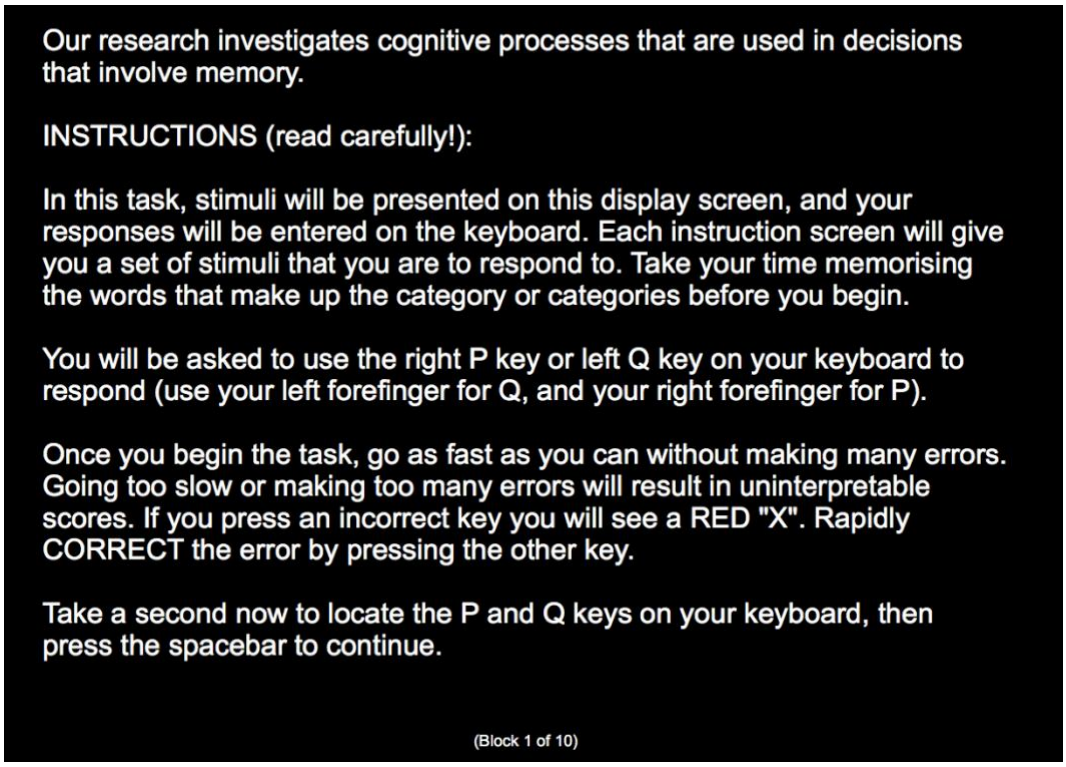


Figure A1. After being redirected from the Qualtrics survey, participants read the general instructions outlining the procedure for the B-IAT.

A.1.2. Brief Implicit Association Task: Test Trial Blocks Instructions

Figure A2 presents a screenshot of the set of instructions that participants read before starting the B-IAT's test trial blocks. The figure shows an example for the instructions preceding the women-animal B-IAT block.

Figure A2. Instructions for the Women-Animal B-IAT Test Trial Blocks for Study 1

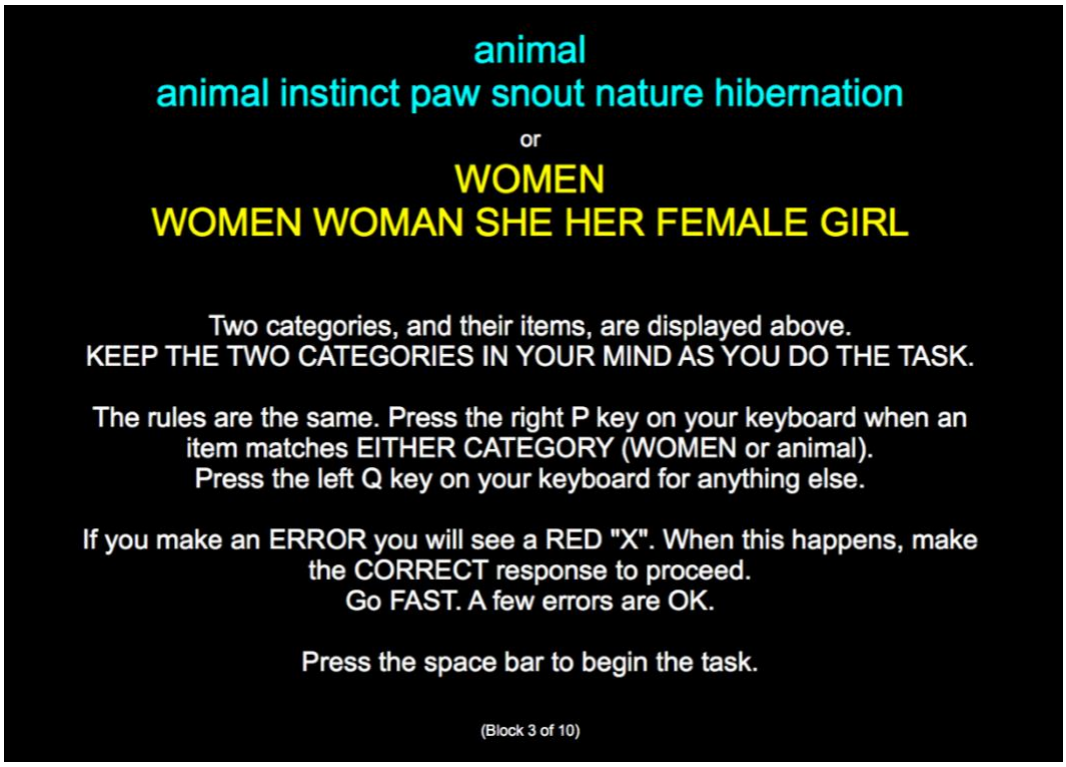


Figure A2. Before commencing each test trial block, participants once more read instructions outlining the procedure for the B-IAT.

A.2. Implicit Association Task for Study 2

A.2.1. Single Category Implicit Association Task: General Instructions

Figure A3 presents a screenshot of the SC-IAT's general instructions (i.e., block 1). The figure shows an example of the instructions preceding the partner-object SC-IAT.

Figure A3. General Instructions for the Partner-Object SC-IAT for Study 2

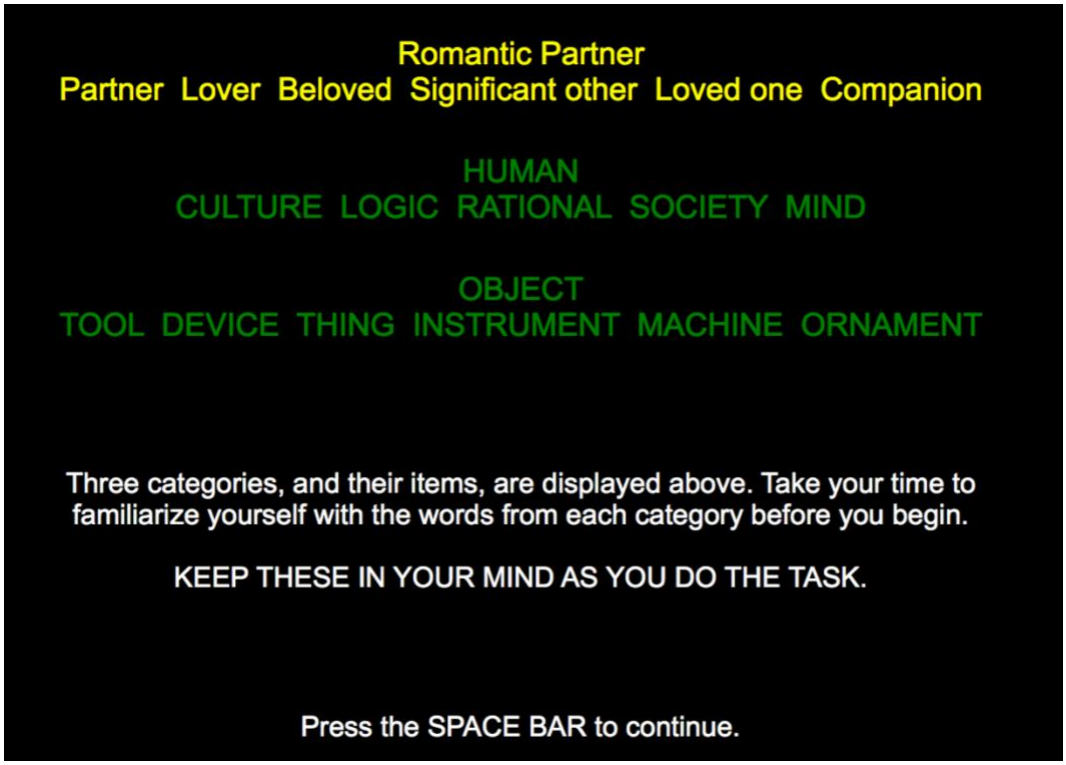


Figure A3. After being redirected from the Qualtrics survey, participants read general instructions and were presented with the target categories and representative word stimuli to be classified in subsequent test trial blocks.

A.2.2. Single Category Implicit Association Task: Test Trial Blocks Instructions

Figure A4 presents a screenshot of the set of instruction that participants read before starting the SC-IAT's test trial blocks. The figure shows an example for the instructions preceding the partner-object SC-IAT.

Figure A4. Instructions for the Partner-Object SC-IAT Test Trials Block for Study 2

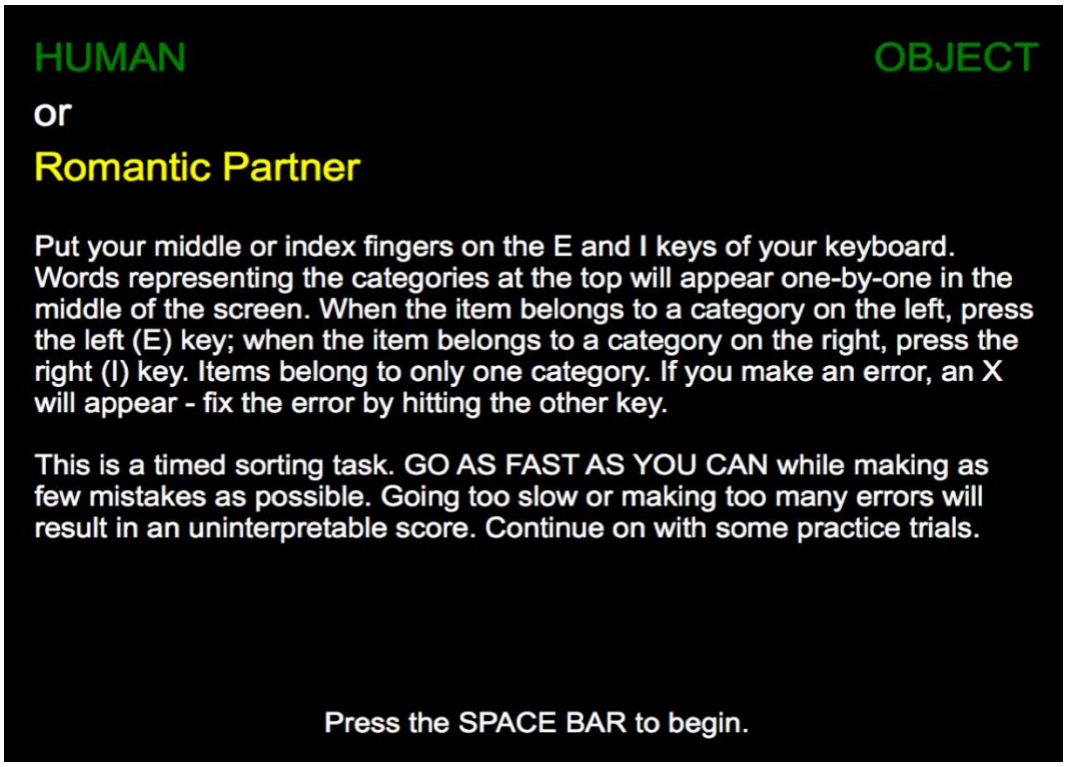


Figure A4. Before commencing the test trial blocks, participants read instructions outlining the procedure for the SC-IAT.

Appendix B: Modified Questionnaire Items for Study 1

Table B1 presents the modified items (i.e., male version) for the SPSW-R (R. Jones & Gulick, 2009) used in Study 1.

Table B1.
Modified Scale Items for Study 1

	Men Expect Sex subscale
1.	I make my partner feel like she owes me something and should have sex with me.
2.	I make my partner feel that I would leave her if she did NOT have sex with me.
3.	I make my partner feel I will cheat if she gets tired of having sex with me.
4.	My partner has sex with me because she is afraid of losing the various things I do for her (like giving her gifts, taking her out, giving her money, or helping her pay bills).
5.	I make my partner feel that she should try new ways to have sex (i.e. new position, toys, porno, or threesome).
	Women's Sex Roles subscale
6.	It's a woman's responsibility to satisfy her man sexually
7.	A woman needs to please her man sexually to hold onto him.
8.	If I want sex, it's my partner's responsibility as my woman to have sex with me.
9.	My partner shows me that she is the BEST woman for me by having sex with me.
10.	I feel my partner should have sex with me because there are plenty of women who are willing to have sex with me.

Appendix C: Summary of Correlation Statistics for Study 1's IPV Scales

Table C1.
Summary of Pearson's Correlation Coefficients for the IPV Scales for Study 1

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Psychological abuse	1												
2. Emotional abuse	.928**	1											
3. Deception	.775**	.565**	1										
4. Verbal abuse	.912**	.784**	.599**	1									
5. Physical violence	.464**	.467**	.321**	.406**	1								
6. Overt physical violence	.432**	.426**	.312**	.378**	.975**	1							
7. Restrictive violence	.468**	.484**	.301**	.408**	.934**	.831**	1						
8. Sexual coercion	.185**	.186**	.165*	0.133	.522**	.546**	.428**	1					
9. Resource manipulation violence	.162*	.168*	.144*	0.110	.519**	.549**	.414**	.956**	1				
10. Commitment manipulation	.149*	.150*	0.118	0.117	.438**	.440**	.388**	.892**	.760**	1			
11. Defection threat	.211**	.205**	.209**	.145*	.483**	.519**	.373**	.909**	.865**	.681**	1		
12. Sexual pressure	.338**	.261**	.342**	.315**	.391**	.375**	.375**	.564**	.469**	.558**	.544**	1	
13. Men expect sex	.285**	.258**	.253**	.242**	.468**	.475**	.405**	.707**	.626**	.646**	.694**	.834**	1
14. Women's sex roles	.316**	.221**	.341**	.309**	.281**	.253**	.296**	.385**	.296**	.414**	.363**	.941**	.597**

Note. $N = 215$.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Appendix D: Partner Provocation Vignettes for Study 2 & Experiment 3

D.1. General Instructions

Prior to reading the vignette, participants read the following instructions:

> We are going to ask you to read a scenario and to imagine that you are in the situations being described. Please immerse yourself in the situation, as vividly as you possibly can, and tune into what is running through your mind – your thoughts, feelings, and so on. Imagine as clearly as you can that it is really you in the situation.

Following the instructions, participants *read* one of the two scenarios shown below. These scenarios are modified from the ones used by Slotter and colleagues (2012). For Study 2, participants were only shown the *Severe Provocation* vignette. For Experiment 3, they were either shown the *Severe Provocation* or *No Provocation* vignette according to the experimental condition that they had been randomly allocated to. Note that the task was programmed so that the word "*Girlfriend*" (that is used in the vignette transcripts below) would be automatically replaced by the name or nickname of the participants' romantic partner, which they had provided at the beginning of the study. Moreover, to encourage participants to read the scenarios carefully, the survey was programmed so that they could not continue advancing through the study for a time period of 2 minutes.

D.2. Vignette Transcripts

The *Severe Provocation Scenario* and *No Provocation Scenario* were adapted from the materials from Slotter and colleagues (2012). These vignette transcripts are presented below.

D.2.1. Severe Provocation Scenario

REDACTION: The transcript of the severe provocation scenario has been removed for copyright reasons. Copyright holders are Erica B. Slotter and colleagues.

REDACTION: The transcript of the severe provocation scenario has been removed for copyright reasons. Copyright holders are Erica B. Slotter and colleagues.

D.2.2. No Provocation Scenario

REDACTION: The transcript of the no provocation scenario has been removed for copyright reasons. Copyright holders are Erica B. Slotter and colleagues.

REDACTION: The transcript of the no provocation scenario has been removed for copyright reasons. Copyright holders are Erica B. Slotter and colleagues.

Appendix E: Summary of Correlation Statistics for Study 2's IPV Scales

Table E1.
Summary of Pearson's Correlation Coefficients for the IPV Scales for Study 2

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Psychological abuse	1									
2. Emotional abuse	.912**	1								
3. Deception	.708**	.472**	1							
4. Verbal abuse	.897**	.745**	.481**	1						
5. Physical violence	.401**	.440**	.281**	.275**	1					
6. Overt physical violence	.375**	.416**	.268**	.248**	.945**	1				
7. Restrictive violence	.356**	.384**	.240**	.258**	.871**	.663**	1			
8. Sexual coercion	.285**	.304**	.244**	.174**	.560**	.556**	.447**	1		
9. Resource manipulation violence	.221**	.261**	.191**	.104	.587**	.609**	.430**	.949**	1	
10. Commitment manipulation	.310**	.303**	.264**	.221**	.456**	.422**	.411**	.901**	.744**	1
11. Defection threat	.247**	.270**	.210**	.144**	.507**	.515**	.387**	.910**	.896**	.682**

Note. $N = 325$.
$p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$.

Appendix F: Personhood Measures for Experiment 3

F1. Humanness Scale

Table F1 presents the list of 40 traits used for the humanness measure taken from Bastian and Haslam (2010). Table F2 presents the scale response anchors for the target, HN, HU, and valence ratings. For the target ratings (i.e., the romantic partner), before completing the scale participants read the following instruction:

> Think about your romantic partner, and how she is now and in general. Using the 1 to 7 scale below, indicate the degree to which she possesses the following personality characteristics compared to the average woman. Compared to the average person, to what extent is your partner…

For the HN ratings:

> Below is a list of personality characteristics. Thinking about people in general, indicate the extent to which you think each characteristic is an aspect of human nature, that is, it is essential to being human.

For the HU ratings:

> Below is a list of personality characteristics. Thinking about people in general, indicate the extent to which you think each characteristic is exclusively or uniquely human, that is, it is experienced solely by human beings and not by other animals.

For the valence ratings:

> Below is a list of personality characteristics. Thinking about people in general, indicate the extent to which you think each characteristic is positive or desirable, that is, it is seen as a characteristic people generally want to possess.

Table F1.
Humanness Scale Trait List for Experiments 3

REDACTION: The items for the humanness scale have been removed for copyright reasons. Copyright holders are Brock Bastian and Nick Haslam.

Table F2.
Scale Responses for the Target, HN, HU, and Valence Ratings for Experiments 3

	7-point Likert type scale with response anchors at		
Rating	1	4	7
Target	Much less than the average woman	Neither less nor more than the average woman	Much more than the average woman
HN	Not at all part of human nature		Very much part of human nature
HU	Shared between humans and animals		Uniquely human
Valence	Extremely undesirable		Extremely desirable

F.2. Mental State Attribution (MSA) Task

Table F3 presents the list of 20 mental states used for the MSA task, taken from Haslam and colleagues (2008). Before completing the scale, participants read the following instruction:

> Below is a list of psychological states and processes. People vary on the extent to which they possess certain attributes. Using the scale below, please rate the extent to which you think your romantic partner possesses the ability to experience or exhibit these psychological states compared to the average woman.
>
> 1 = definitely does not possess the psychological state
> 7 = definitely does possess the psychological state

Table F3.
Mental States Used in the MSA Task for Experiments 3

REDACTION: The items for the MSA task have been removed for copyright reasons. Copyright holders are Nick Haslam and colleagues.

F.3. Moral Status Questionnaire and Excluded Items

Table F4 presents the moral status measure items for Experiment 3. Similar to Holland and Haslam (2013, 2015), I adapted these items from work by K. Gray and Wegner (2009) and H.M. Gray and others (2007). Before completing the scale, participants read the following instruction:

> The next few questions ask about how your romantic partner should be treated, and how you would feel if she was treated in different ways. Answer the questions using the 1 to 7 scales provided below each item.

To generate the *Moral Agency* score, items 1 to 5, 12, and 13 were collapsed. Due to modest inter-item reliability, items 2 and 13 were removed from score calculation. These exclusions yielded the highest possible increase in scale reliability for this subscale. The *Moral Patiency* score was generated by collapsing items 6 to 11. Given that this subscale's internal consistency was high, all items were retained for analysis.

Table F4.
Moral Status Scale Items for Experiments 3

REDACTION: The items for the moral status scale have been removed for copyright reasons. Copyright holders are Heather M. Gray, Kurt Gray, and Daniel M. Wegner.

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