

Examining manifestations of power in couples: Influence tactics, self-concept, and wellbeing
across time

by

Michelle Washburn-Busk

B.S., Weber State University, 2014
M.S., Kansas State University, 2017

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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School of Family Studies and Human Services
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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine how various influence tactics (hostility, dominance, interrogation, lecture/moralizing, denial, and assertiveness) were linked with decision-making power and individual and relationship outcomes over a four-year span of couples' relationships. Using actor-partner interdependence mediation path modeling, I examined the use of these six observed influence tactics in a sample of 182 heterosexual dyads and found that a partner's self-concept – particularly self-worth and perception of how much one's partner respects them – tends to mediate the relationship between multiple influence tactics and wellbeing outcomes (depression, relationship quality, decision-making influence and satisfaction). Dominance (positive and negative forms), interrogation, hostility and lecture/moralizing related more often to individual and relational outcomes than the other influence tactics. Male lecturing/moralizing was linked with higher levels of female depression in and through lowering female self-worth, while potentially having a reverse effect for male depression and self-worth. Males feeling like their female partner respects their competencies and skills fully mediated the relationship between assertiveness and relationship quality for males and females; therefore, it may be that the male ego is a central organizing factor for heterosexual couples in established, committed relationships. Couples therapists can promote fairness in heterosexual couple relationships by assessing for, and intervening in, lecturing/moralizing and interrogation behaviors, as well as promoting affirming self-concepts and positive forms of dominance. When working with couples to promote positive communication such as assertiveness, therapists should ensure that male and female assertive behaviors serve to promote *both* male and females' perception that their partner respects them, as

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my husband, Paul, for his courageous wholehearted living in all domains of his life - as a spouse, friend, son, brother, colleague, and inspiring therapist.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Hidden and visible power disparities compromise autonomy and reduce the potential for individual wellbeing, satisfaction and intimacy in romantic relationships (Hadden et al., 2015; Kluwer et al., 2019; Komter, 1989; Lukes, 1974; Steil, 1997). The dyadic power-social influence model (Simpson et al., 2015) defines *power* as the ability to both exert and resist influence on an outcome or a romantic partner. It has been said that power is to social science what energy is to physics (Russell, 1938) – a core variable that drives and organizes all systemic interactions, especially those that are relational. Power in couples has predominantly been studied through the lens of decision-making processes (Harris, 2006; McDonald, 1980; Mitzan, 1994; Safilios-Rothschild, 1970), and scholars largely agree across many power theories that the key facet in power distribution lies in one’s level of influence in the relationship (Simpson et al., 2015).

The dyadic power-social influence model proposes that partners’ individual characteristics affect the influence strategies/tactics they use in their relationships, which predict individual (e.g., perceptions, wellbeing) and relationship outcomes (e.g., relationship quality and decision-making dynamics), and that this process is recursive. How these influence tactics influence outcomes is not theorized in this model, but several Couple and Family Therapy (CFT) models (e.g., Satir Experiential; Satir, 1988; Bowen/Differentiation; Bowen, 1978; Narrative; White, 2007) and research on individual and relationship wellbeing outcomes would suggest that intrapersonal variables such as self-worth, mastery, and the way one believes they are perceived by their partner may be key to this process (e.g., Wray & Stone, 2005; Sciangula & Morry, 2009; Gottman, 1999).

Better understanding the variety of ways power manifests in intimate relationships and the unique consequences of each manifestation is crucial to advancing couple’s treatment.

Currently, it is not known which of the strategies partners use to exert or resist influence are most strongly related to adverse relationship and individual wellbeing outcomes nor how they are related to such outcomes. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to better understand how various influence tactics influence partners' perceptions of the balance of decision-making power in the relationship, relationship quality, and individual depressive symptoms (i.e., wellbeing) directly and indirectly through intrapersonal variables (i.e., self-worth, mastery, perceptions of partner's respect). With a more in-depth understanding of which influence tactics are most strongly related to couple and individual wellbeing and *how* they are related, therapists and relationship educators can more deliberately intervene in couple dynamics where power is unfairly balanced to promote higher couple satisfaction, more equal decision-making power, and less depression in romantic partners.

To gain clarity on how various influence tactics differentially relate to individual and couple outcomes, this study advances previous theoretical and methodological approaches by using 1) dyadic data to take into account the ways partners influence one another – and consequently, potentially influence one another's outcomes; 2) longitudinal data to capture how couple power processes unfold over time; 3) observed measures of influence that provide more objective and reliable information versus using self-report measures only; and by 4) an expanded theoretical model of dyadic-power social influence that includes mediators that examine intrapersonal processes.

Chapter 2 - Review of Literature

Generally, the most fulfilling and functional romantic relationships are considered to be those where connection and autonomy are balanced (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Bowen, 1978); when partners feel autonomous, they also tend to feel powerful (Gan et al., 2018), and without

autonomy and fair access to power, connection in couples can be compromised (Knudson-Martin, 2013; Hadden et al., 2015). Although strides have been made societally in promoting fairness and equality in couples over the past century (e.g., Coontz, 2005), hidden and visible forms of relational inequality still affect an estimated half of all couple relationships (Bentley, Galliher, & Ferguson, 2007; Caldwell & Peplau, 1984; Komter, 1989; Tichenor, 2005; Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009; Lukes, 1974). Visible dynamics of inequality such as physical violence (e.g., demanding a partner perform sexual acts or coercing them to do so) or hostile sexism (e.g., expecting women to submit to male's power out of belief that women are incompetent; Hammond & Overall, 2017; Glick & Fiske, 2001). Hidden dynamics of inequality, on the other hand, often pervade relationships in more subtle forms such as perpetual over-accommodating or compliance without visible conflict or coercion (Tichenor, 2005; Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009).

Power imbalances in romantic relationships are correlated with feelings of disempowerment, disconnection, and poorer mental and relational health, all of which can mimic trauma's effects or contribute to relational trauma (Courtois & Ford, 2013; Hadden, Rodriguez, Knee, & Porter; Ryan & Deci, 2017; Herman, 1992). Not only are power disparities likely to contribute to disempowerment in one's partnership, such inequalities are also related to declines in relationship satisfaction (Cooke, 2006; Frisco & Williams, 2003; Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009). Further, power imbalances can be exacerbated by disparities in social power given to people with certain identity markers at the expense of people who hold marginalized or subjugated identity markers such as gender, socioeconomic, cultural, ethnic, or sexual identities (Leslie & Southard, 2009; Williams et al., 2013).

Partners with more power tend to ignore inequalities in the relationship either because they are not conscious of them, and/or because it benefits them to avoid reorganizing dynamics that they currently perceive to work to their advantage (Parker, 2009; Knudson-Martin, 2013; Lukes, 1974). However, despite unfair power dynamics benefiting the more powerful individual in a dyad, the less powerful partner *and* the relationship often inevitably suffer due to significant barriers to connection and intimacy that inequalities create (Knudson-Martin, 2013; Hadden et al., 2015). For example, disparities in decision-making authority and status are linked to higher rates of aggression and poorer relationship satisfaction in couples (Bentley et al., 2007), and abusive dynamics are significantly more likely to present in couple relationships where power is imbalanced (Kernsmith, 2005). Decision-making influence is one of the most widely used measures for relationship equality in couples. When power is imbalanced, one partner tends to have more say in decision-making, and the needs and preferences of one partner may rank higher in importance - often at the expense of the other partner's needs and preferences.

Often, therapists assume the power is balanced in a couple's relationship – especially heterosexual couples – and miss, avoid or minimize critical components of gendered power dynamics if a couple's issues are not conceptualized from a power-attuned framework (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1998; 2009). For example, communication between romantic partners can reveal power issues (e.g., partners' openness to accepting influence; status differences; mutual respect and validation; Soo Hoo, 2005; Greenberg & Goldman, 2008) and while the impact of communication strategies on relationship outcomes have been widely studied, they haven't been conceptualized through a cohesive power lens or a consistent definition of influence that is dyadic (e.g., referencing these behaviors as communication skills vs. influence strategies; see Overall, et al., 2009; Oriña, Wood & Simpson; Simpson et al., 2015). This unawareness of the

role of power in these interactions perpetuates an insidious “myth of equality” (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1998), where couples and therapists alike can operate under the assumption that partners share equal power, which allows key issues to go unaddressed. This is due, in part, to the fact that many MFT models were developed in the 1970’s and 1980’s, where much progress has been made societally in advancing gender equality. Despite knowledge that such myths of equality do, in fact, pervade many couple relationships (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1998), there is minimal research on how various types of influence tactics (lecturing/moralizing, angry coercion, interrogation, verbal attacks, etc.) affect power distribution or couple and individual wellbeing. This may lead to clinicians tailoring their interventions to address the issues (content, symptoms) couples present with in therapy rather than the underlying power dynamics (e.g., influence tactics and potentially consequential low levels of self-worth) driving the outward manifestations of couples’ interactional issues.

Couples are able to increase equality through relationship processes that are collaborative (Schwartz, 1994), mutually supportive, and vulnerable (Knudson-Martin, 2013; Jonathan & Knudson-Martin, 2012). Egalitarian marriages are more likely to distribute power fairly through deliberate revisions to roles and responsibilities (Risman & Johnson-Sumerford, 1997; Blaisure & Allen, 1995) that may otherwise passively evolve based on traditional gender roles for heterosexual couples. While we have information about the protective nature of egalitarian dynamics for couples, we know less as a field about the barriers couples encounter working towards egalitarianism. In a review of power literature informing the development of a power measure, Farrell et al. (2015) declared that the field is lacking in knowledge about the negative consequences of relational inequalities and although many individual sources of power have

been measured and researched, no empirical research has yet to determine how various types of influence tactics are linked to couple and individual wellbeing (e.g., Farrell et al., 2015).

Influence Tactics and Wellbeing Outcomes

The level of influence a partner has in a relationship has been observed as determining whose interests matter more (Knudson-Martin & Huenergardt, 2010; Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009), who makes decisions and how they get made (Farrell et al., 2015), who works to maintain the relationship (Beck & Clark, 2010; Knudson-Martin & Huenergardt, 2010), and how much influence each partner has on the other partner changing (Fishbane, 2011; Overall et al., 2009). In the dyadic power-social influence model, partners' influence is viewed as bidirectional; the level of influence someone has over their partner and the ability to resist a partners' influence both play into how much power each partner has (Simpson et al., 2015; Farrell et al., 2015). The dyadic power-social influence model (Simpson et al., 2015) integrates concepts from Social Power Theory (examining individual power; French & Raven, 1959), Resource Theory (sources of power; Blood & Wolfe, 1960), and Interdependence Theory (power from influencing exchanges of rewards and costs; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) to define power and model how power manifests in relationship processes.

Specifically, the dyadic power-social influence model posits that personal characteristics – including a person's resources, commitment and attachment style (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991) – influence the sources of power they possess (i.e., resources that can enhance one's influence such as social status, expertise or knowledge, physical leverage), which, in turn, affect the influence strategies/tactics they use in their relationships (Simpson et al., 2015). Influence tactics are thought to predict individual outcomes such as behavior, attitudes, and perceptions, as well as relationship outcomes such as relationship quality and decision-making processes (Simpson et

al., 2015). These outcomes are also believed to affect personal characteristics (as previously discussed), thus depicting what has been deemed a “circular causal process” (Olson & Cromwell, 1975, p. 236).

Tactics that Influence Power

The ways partners attempt to influence one another, as well as their ability to accept or resist influence, play a central role in how much power a partner has in a dyad (Simpson, Farrell, Oriña, & Rothman, 2015). Influence tactics are conceptualized in the dyadic social-power influence model on the spectrums of direct vs. indirect as well as positive vs. negative (i.e., having a helpful or harmful effect on the relationship or person; Simpson et al., 2015; Overall et al., 2009); therefore, tactics can be negative-direct, negative-indirect, positive-direct, or positive-indirect. Direct influence tactics that may have a positive influence on the relationship include communication through overt conversations, suggesting solutions, assertiveness, whereas those that may have a negative influence on the relationship include coercion, lecturing, and dominance. Indirect tactics include hidden or more passive strategies. Negative indirect tactics may include manipulation, passive-aggressiveness, or trying to induce guilt in one’s partner, whereas using humor to repair, softening one’s tone or delivery, actively listening, or validating partner’s views are indirect tactics that may have a positive influence (Overall et al., 2009). The ways that partners attempt to influence one another overlap with the ways they try and resist influence (e.g., a partner may use criticism or insults both to influence their partner’s feelings and opinions, as well as to defend against their partner’s coercive tactics; Gottman, 1999). Additionally, partners who mutually accept influence from one another tend to have higher levels of relationship satisfaction (e.g., Gottman, 1998; 1999), and reciprocal influence is linked to

processes that promote equality such as mutual attunement and accommodation patterns (Mahoney & Knudson-Martin, 1998).

Of the plethora of tactics romantic partners can use to exert or resist influence (i.e., gain or maintain power), some may be distinctly more harmful or beneficial to individual and couple health. For example, we are aware that direct forms of power exertion such as hostility, verbal and physical violence, criticism, contempt, and being demanding have deleterious effects on individual and couple health and relationship satisfaction (Gottman, 1998; Gottman & Notarius, 2000; Karney & Bardbury, 1995; Norlander & Eckhardt, 2005; Pence & Paymar, 1993; Weiss & Heyman, 1997), whereas positive tactics such as softness or affection often lead to less conflict and higher levels of relationship satisfaction (Gottman et al., 1999; Fletcher et al., 1999; Rusbult et al., 1991). In examining four negative interaction patterns that corrode couple relationships (criticism, contempt, stonewalling and defensiveness), researchers have been able to determine that contempt is the most predictive of divorce of the four (Gottman, 1999). This information has guided clinicians in intervening where couples are most likely to encounter irreparable conflict. While these negative patterns have been declared risk factors for couple stability, these influence strategies/communication tactics (and others) have yet to be examined through a lens of power in predicting individual and couple wellbeing. Similar to contempt being singled out as the most corrosive of Gottman's (1999) "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse", there may be variation in how different mechanisms of power (i.e., influence tactics) are most strongly linked to individual and couple outcomes.

However, little research has been conducted on how other forms of influence such as denial, interrogation, assuming superior intellect, lecturing, or moralizing affect individual wellbeing or relationship quality, limiting therapists' ability to assess for, and intervene to

address, power imbalances. The developers of the Dyadic-Power Social Influence Model state “the body of existing influence research does not cohere very well, and it does not permit clear conclusions about...the relationship outcomes associated with these strategies,” (Simpson et al., 2015, p. 409). Therefore, I chose to examine relationship outcomes in relation to an encompassing list of negative influence tactics that are theorized to have the most potential to influence the distribution of power in a couple, as well as the tactics that seem most likely to be relevant to clinical levels of distress in a couples therapy setting. Given that direct influence tactics are more likely to elicit change in a partner (whether they are positive/helpful or negative/harmful to the relationship; Overall et al., 2009; Oriña, Wood, & Simpson, 2002) and we were interested in those influence tactics that have the most visible (and, consequently measurable) effects, direct tactics were largely the focus of this study. The negative-direct tactics chosen for this study include: hostility (comprised of verbal attacks, physical attacks, contempt, angry coercion, hostile escalation, and hostile reciprocation), interrogation, lecturing/moralizing, and dominance. Dominance was not conceptualized as inherently positive or negative and was included as one of the more explicit measures of attempts to influence a situation or one’s partner. Denial was chosen a negative tactic that falls in between direct and indirect, defined as an “active rejection of the existence of a given situation or of personal responsibility for a situation being discussed,” (Melby et al., 1998, p. 97). Direct denial could include statements such as “It’s not my fault” or “It’s all your fault,”, or can take a more indirect form such as stonewalling or withdrawal. I also examined one positive influence strategy that is highly direct – assertiveness – for a reference point against highly direct forms of negative tactics.

Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Intervention Points

How partners perceive themselves (i.e., their sense of self) or personally experience their own use of various influence tactics, as well as their partner's use of these tactics, is not currently included in the dyadic power-social influence model (Simpson et al., 2015). Many CFT modalities frame the origin of individual and relational problems in terms of personal perceptions (i.e., “meaning making”) and self-concept (e.g., “sense of self”, “self-esteem”, “selfhood”, or “narratives about self”; Satir Experiential; Satir, 1988; Bowen/Differentiation; Bowen, 1978; Narrative; White, 2007). While each theoretical model of treatment has unique assumptions about change and interventions, a common therapeutic goal for creating change that spans multiple theories is to help clients develop a more affirming and positive self-concept (e.g., Metcalf, 2011; Sprenkle, Davis, & Lebow, 2009).

Self-Concept: Self-Worth, Self-Mastery, and Perceived Regard of Others

One's self-concept is comprised both of how one perceives themselves, as well as how they think others perceive them (e.g., Gecas & Burke, 1995; Oyserman, 2004; Jaret, Reitzes, & Shapkina, 2005). *Self-worth* is how one evaluates their own worth as a person and is linked to a variety of behaviors such as placating (Cramer, Gallant, & Langlois, 2005), self-criticism, and depressive symptoms (Sowislo & Orth, 2013). *Self-mastery*, also referred to as self-efficacy, is defined as “the extent to which people see themselves as being in control of the forces that importantly affect their lives,” (Pearlin et al., 1981, p. 340; Bandura & Wood, 1989).

The way individuals regard themselves is associated with how they perceive others regard them (Oyserman, 2004), which has also been referred to as the “looking-glass self” (Cooley, 1902) or an individual's *reflected appraisal* (Jaret et al., 2005). An individual's reflected appraisal is how they perceive the reactions of others which “form the basis for creating

and confirming self-concepts,” (Jaret, Reitzes, & Shapkina, 2005, p. 403). Bowen Family Systems Theory, a common CFT approach, discusses a healthy self-concept (i.e., a “differentiated self”) in terms of one’s ability to discern between fact and feelings, and having a sense of self that is autonomous while connected to others (Titelman, 1998). Within this definition of self, Bowen stresses the importance of having positive beliefs about oneself so that we are not completely reliant on others for validation for a sense of self-respect (i.e., “reflected sense of self”; Bowen, 1978).

In the context of romantic relationships, multiple facets influence how partners perceive their partner’s regard for them. Certain behaviors and communication strategies are likely to convey disrespect (e.g., contempt), which likely influences how one sees and feels about themselves (i.e., their reflected appraisal). Similarly, a person’s preexisting self-concept likely factors into how much a disrespectful or contemptuous influence tactic penetrates his/her self-concept and how he/she perceives their partner’s regard for him/her. Therefore, I have included *perceptions of a partner’s respect* as a third variable to take into consideration as a piece of one’s self-concept.

Influence Tactics → Self-Concept

A partner’s self-concept, as well as attributions made about one’s partner both affect how open to influence partners tend to be (Gottman, 1999). Influence tactics are attempts to alter another’s opinions, actions, or beliefs (Overall, Simpson, Fletcher, & Sibley, 2009). Many forms of negative influence tactics (physical, verbal, emotional, financial, or sexual abuse; coercion, etc.) are linked with lower levels of self-esteem (Aguilar & Nightingale, 1994) and self-efficacy (Zimmer-Gembeck, 2012), and people tend to report higher levels of mastery/self-efficacy if they have a partner who uses more positive influence tactics such as warmth and support and

fewer coercive and rejecting tactics (Zimmer-Gembeck, 2012). Contempt (one of many influence tactics commonly observed in couples) is a uniquely harmful behavior in couple relationships, because it signals a lack of respect (e.g., Gottman, 1999), which can lead individuals to feel misunderstood or like their opinions don't matter; this can also influence a partner's self-concept by affecting their reflected appraisal (i.e., how they perceive their partner's level of respect for them). Perceived lack of respect from one's partner is also linked to lower levels of accepting influence from one's partner (e.g., Gottman, 1999).

Understanding how influence attempts (via interactions observed between partners) affect a partner's *intrapersonal* self-concept (i.e., self-worth, sense of mastery, or perception of how much others respect them/reflected appraisal) can provide guidance for clinicians to intervene at the intrapersonal level (how a partner views themselves or perceives that their partner views them) as well as an *interpersonal* level (interactions between partners including corrosive influence attempts) to improve individual and relationship wellbeing.

Self-Concept → Wellbeing Outcomes and Decision-Making

In an individual therapy setting, helping clients increase self-mastery, unconditional self-acceptance, and self-worth has been shown to increase overall wellbeing and reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression (e.g., Crocker, 2010; Flett et al., 2003). Higher levels of self-worth are also linked to more relationship satisfaction (Sciangula & Morry, 2009). Positive regard for oneself is linked to fewer depressive symptoms (e.g., Flett et al., 2003), more satisfying friendships and romantic relationships (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2017), among many other positive outcomes. One's level of self-worth is highly related to decision-making processes (Wray & Stone, 2005), and a more developed self-concept (i.e., formulated identity) is linked to "decision-making resiliency", or confidence in and follow-through with one's own decisions (Washburn-

Busk et al., 2020). Higher levels of mastery also improve decision making abilities (Cotterill & Discombe, 2016; Bandura & Wood, 1989). Higher levels of perceived regard from one's partner (e.g., perceiving that they view you in a positive light, respects you) are also linked to more relationship satisfaction (Sciangula & Morry, 2009). Perceiving that one's partner does not respect them or accept their influence (as a potential consequence of contemptuous behavior) may also lead individuals to perceive their influence on decision-making to be lower and possibly feel less satisfaction with decision-making dynamics in their relationship.

Influence Tactics → Self-Concept → Wellbeing

Since one's self-concept is highly related to depressive symptoms (Flett et al., 2003), relationship quality (Ryan & Deci, 2017), and decision-making (Washburn-Busk et al., 2020), variables related to one's self-concept may be the mechanism whereby influence tactics relate to depressive symptoms, relationship quality and decision-making processes in couples.

Theoretically, self-concept is a key variable that factors into how individuals perceive and interact with their surroundings – specifically in a couple's context, how partners resist influence. Given the importance of conceptualizing power dyadically (i.e., the power to exert *or* resist influence), examining self-concept can also help us more accurately examine the back-and-forth process taking place in couples as partners deploy and defend against various influence tactics – especially negative ones.

Relationship Stages for Power and Influence

The dyadic power-social influence model also incorporates a stage model of power distribution (Simpson et al., 2015) in relationships to guide researchers and practitioners in their application of dyadic power concepts. The context of a couple's life stage can help guide the questions asked and what processes are studied. The dyadic power-social influence model lays

out three stages relevant to couples' power distribution: 1) the "fledgling relationship stage, when partners are just getting to know each other," 2) the "established relationship stage" when partners are committed and trying to strengthen and maintain their existing partnership, and 3) "transitional stages", which include a couple's transitions to marriage, parenthood, life as empty-nesters, etc., "when partners must negotiate new rules, new patterns of interaction and sometimes new identities," (Simpson et al., 2015, p. 414). Each of these life stages pose challenges to couples that may uniquely impact decision-making processes and how influence is received or rejected. Therefore, in order to better understand what unique power tradeoffs are taking place in the first and second stages outlined in the three relationship stages for power and influence, I examined couples in the early stages of their relationship – the first five years, on average.

Present Study

Simpson et al. (2015) stated recently that "the most under-considered topic in prior power theories is the outcomes of power and influence attempts on each partner and their relationship," (p. 404), which leaves clinicians, researchers and educators with little to no guidance as to what forms of influence to prioritize intervening in, examining, or educating couples about.

Advancing our understanding of which influence tactics are most salient to individual wellbeing, couple satisfaction, and decision-making influence – a common outcome of power distribution – will provide crucial guidance for couple therapists in knowing what to assess for, which influence tactics are most critical to address (i.e., treatment triage) and would inform effective treatment approaches to restructure power imbalances and promote fairness and authentic intimacy in couples. Therefore, this purpose of this study was to examine how various influence tactics (dominance, interrogation, hostility, etc.) were differentially linked with decision-making power and individual and relationship outcomes over the course of couples' relationships.

Additionally, to more acutely understand this process of influence in couples, I examined variables related to self-concept (intrapersonal intervention points for individual therapy) as potential mechanisms whereby influence tactics might relate to individual and relational wellbeing. To do so, I posed the following questions:

RQ1: How are various influence tactics (e.g., dominance vs. hostility) differentially associated with one's self-concept (e.g., self-worth, mastery, feeling respected), individual wellbeing (i.e., depression), and interpersonal wellbeing (e.g., relationship quality; decision-making influence) in heterosexual romantic relationships?

RQ2: Does one's self-concept (e.g., one's level of self-worth, mastery, or perceived respectability) mediate the association between the various influence tactics romantic partners use and individual and/or relational outcomes?

Chapter 3 - Methods

Procedures and Sample

To answer my research questions, I used data from the Family Transitions Project (FTP), a longitudinal study of 558 people, their parents, and close relationships (e.g., romantic partners, friends, siblings), which builds on two earlier projects: the Iowa Youth and Families Project (IYFP; Conger et al., 1989-2011), and the Iowa Single Parent Project (ISPP; Cui, Conger, Bryand, & Elder, 2002). The IYFP and ISSP originally studied 558 target participants who were in the 9th grade upon completion of the first assessment in 1989, and the retention rate of participant data was 92% up until 2003. More information about the FTP can be found in Conger and Conger (2002) and Conger and Elder (1994).

As the target participants transitioned into adulthood and became partnered, partners (spouses or cohabiting) were also recruited to participate. Between 1995 and 2005, 335 targets

married their partners. Data collection consisted of in-home assessments (i.e., interviewers visiting target participants in their residences) conducted during odd years (1995, 1997, 1999, etc.) and telephone interviews during even years (1996, 1998, etc.). Therefore, observed and self-report data were available in 1995 (one-year, post-high school graduation), 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, and 2005. Observed data were collected by videotaping couples in their residences discussing topics such as conflict and disagreement patterns, future plans, goals, time spent together, etc. for 25-minute periods. Trained coders then viewed the videotaped discussions and used the Iowa Family Interaction Rating Scales (Melby et al., 1998; Melby & Coger, 2001), a global rating system assessing interpersonal behavioral exchanges (Melby & Conger, 2001), to code the recordings. Prior to coding the couple discussions, the observers were required to undergo 200 hours of training with the completion of successful written and viewing tests. Independent coders separate from original observers were also supplemented to ensure the reliability of the coded data for approximately 20% of the observed tasks across all waves of data.

I used dyadic data from 1999 (T1), 2001 (T2), and 2003 (T3), during which target participants were 23, 25, and 27 years old, respectively. Because gender roles are considered as a key variable related to power with regards to partners' relative status (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009), I included only heterosexual couples in long-term romantic relationships. Prior research has been conducted on couples in this sample (e.g., Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000; Dinero, Conger, Shaver, Widaman, & Larsen-Rife, 2008; Donnellan, Larsen-Rife, & Conger, 2005; Durtschi, Fincham, Cui, Lorenz, & Conger, 2011). Earlier studies utilizing data from these couples examined the influence of family of origin dynamics on early adult romantic

relationships or focused on dyadic processes in early marriage. This paper expands on this work by examining power dynamics in early marriages and cohabiting relationships across time.

To assess for relationship status, participants were asked in each wave to respond 1 (*yes*) or 2 (*no*) to the question “Are you married or do you live with a romantic partner?”. They were further asked, “What best describes your current relationship status” with response options of 1 (*married*), or 2 (*living with someone in a steady, marriage-like relationship*). Participants were asked to report on their own gender and their partner’s gender, with options of 1 (*male*) or 2 (*female*). Target and partners were asked to report their age and their partner’s age in years.

At T3, there were 270 married and 48 cohabiting heterosexual couples. After tracking target and partner ID’s across T1, T2 and T3, I dropped 97 married and 42 cohabiting couples (139 couples total) who were not with the same partner at T3 as they were at previous waves, or whose partner ID was missing across waves. My final sample consisted of 182 heterosexual couples total who were together across all 4 years. Of the 182 couples, 136 couples were married at T1 and 46 were cohabiting; by T3, 44 of the 46 cohabiting couples got married, with a sample of 180 married couples and 2 cohabiting couples at T3.

The majority of participants in my final sample were Non-Hispanic and White (96%), ranging in age between 25 and 41 years of age for men and between 23 and 34 years of age for women, with an average age of 27.5 years at T3. The average relationship length for couples in this sample at T3 was 4.86 years. Participants’ household annual income was \$32,683, on average, and individual partners’ incomes ranged between \$0 and \$120,000 annually. A minority of participants in the sample were full-time homemakers (13.7% of females, 0.5% of males), whereas the majority of participants worked for pay outside the home (90%). See Table 1 for detailed descriptive statistics for males and females.

Measures

A main limitation of previous couple and family power research has been the reliance on self-report methods. When researchers inquire from partners in relationships to reflect on their own influence tactics and level of power, it is likely that those with more power may not accurately assess themselves (e.g., Godwin & Scanzoni, 1989). Using observed behavioral data likely provides a more accurate depiction of couples' power processes versus self-report alone. Accordingly, this study employed only observational measures of influence tactics.

Overall, the measures I have chosen were informed by the dyadic power-social influence model; Simpson, et al., 2015). Influence tactics were measured at T1 (dominance, lecture/moralizing, denial, interrogation, assertiveness, and hostility), intrapersonal variables (self-worth, mastery, and perception that partner respects you) were measured at T2, and outcomes related to decision-making processes (perceived influence on final decisions, satisfaction with decision-making process), couple wellbeing (relationship quality) and individual wellbeing (depression) were measured at T3.

Predictors: Influence Tactics

Trained observers applied 23 dyadic interaction scales designed to assess the behavior directed by one person toward another person in an interaction context (Melby et al., 1998) to the interactions among participating couples. Partners were asked to talk about a problem area in their marriage/relationship for 25 minutes, while videotaped in their homes without researchers present. Observers rated behaviors on a scale from 1 (*not at all characteristic; none of these behaviors is demonstrated by the focal*) to 9 (*mainly characteristic*). For this study, I used observed measures of: hostility (including verbal attacks, physical attacks, contempt, angry coercion, hostile escalation, and hostile reciprocation), dominance, lecturing/moralizing,

interrogation, and denial. Each of these observed behaviors reflect how couples communicate, how decisions are made, and what strategies are used to receive, resist, or exert influence in couples' relationships. For observed variables that included multiple behaviors, I computed a mean score for each observationally coded variable for men and women's scores separately in the model with higher scores indicating higher levels of that behavior. The following are the definitions used by the developers of the Iowa Family Interaction Rating Scales (Melby et al., 1989):

Hostility. Hostility was defined in the codebook and assessed by trained coders as “the extent to which hostile, angry, critical, disapproving, rejecting, or contemptuous behavior was directed toward the romantic partner’s behavior (actions), appearance, or personal characteristics.” Examples of hostility included statements such as, “You always do it wrong,” and “This place is a mess,” as well as behaviors such as hitting, kicking, or throwing objects at the other person. There were six other observed behaviors that were coded as elements of hostility: verbal attacks, physical attacks, contempt, angry coercion, escalating hostility, and reciprocating hostility. Verbal attacks were defined as “personalized and unqualified disapproval of another interactor’s personal characteristics; criticism of a global and enduring nature.” Verbal attacks included statements such as “You’re an embarrassment,” and “You’re lousy with handling money.” Physical attacks were defined as “aversive physical contact, including hitting, pinching, grabbing, etc.” Examples of a physical attack ranged from lower-intensity invasive or aversive physical behaviors (e.g., light hitting with an object, restraining, or light poking) to higher-intensity aversive physical behaviors (e.g., hard pushing, shoving, or hard kicking). Contempt was defined as “a specific form of hostility characterized by disgust, disdain, or scorn of another interactor.” Example statements that were coded as contempt included “You make me

sick,” and “You don’t know anything.” Angry coercion was defined as “control attempts that include hostile, contemptuous, threatening, or blaming behavior.” Angry coercion examples included statements like, “If you had any brain at all you would agree with me on this” (said with a sneer), and “Couldn’t you just realize that doing dishes is women’s work?” (said with arrogant tone). Escalating hostility was defined as “building onto one’s own hostile behaviors toward [one’s partner].” Examples of hostile escalation included “There is not one thing I like about you. You cannot be trusted to do what you say you’ll do,” and “You’re doing a lot worse. A lot worse.” Reciprocating hostility was defined as the “extent to which the focal reciprocates in the like manner of the hostility [one’s partner].” Examples included an exchange such as a husband remarking, “You spend too much money” (coded as hostility) and the wife responding with “You don’t make enough money for anyone to spend” (coded as hostile reciprocation). I ran an exploratory factor analysis, and all seven hostility-related behaviors loaded onto one factor, which I named hostility (male $\alpha = .87$, female $\alpha = .88$). Items were averaged to create a manifest variable for overall observed hostility where higher scores indicated greater levels of observed hostility.

Dominance. Dominance was defined as “[a]ttempts and successful demonstrations of control or influence (either positive or negative) of [one’s partner] and/or the situation.” Dominant behaviors include controlling the conversation or activity or resisting changing one’s opinion or adapting to other’s suggestions and statements such as “Answer that question first, please,” and “Here’s what you should do...”. The behavioral coding process did not discern between observations of positive versus negative dominance.

Lecturing and Moralizing. This category captured behaviors such as “[t]elling [one’s partner] how to think, feel, etc., in a way that assumes the focal is the expert and/or has superior

wisdom; at high levels may provide little opportunity for the [partner] to respond, initiate, or think independently.” The top observer rating scale anchor of a 9 (*mainly characteristic*) included this additional description: *the focal frequently displays lecturing behaviors, or such behaviors become more extended and unrelenting. He/she may seldom give the other interactor a chance to respond and tends to monopolize the discussion. Two-way communication may be actively inhibited.* Example statements include “Don’t you think it’s about time you start doing...” and “I’d expect more of you.”

Interrogation. Interrogation was characterized by “[u]sing questions designed to elicit specific information or to make a point, rather than to invite comment.” Interrogation questions were often rhetorical and intended on influencing someone in a conversation, such as “Didn’t we think that was fun? Didn’t we?” and “Aren’t you going to help me?”.

Denial. Denial involved “[a]ctive rejection of the existence of or personal responsibility for a past or present situation for one actually is responsible or shares responsibility [for].” Denial included behaviors that represented skirting the issue, blaming partner for creating the problem/situation, or avoiding blame by not recognizing the problem. Some example statements of denial were, “It’s all your fault”, “I can’t help it,” and “That was a joke.”

Assertiveness. Assertiveness was characterized by “[e]xpressing self through clear, appropriate, neutral, and/or positive avenues using an open, straightforward, self-confident, non-threatening and non-defensive style.” Assertive behaviors included using a direct gaze when making a positive or neutral point, as well as presenting facts, opinions or concerns in a way that is self-assured but not threatening, whiny, or sarcastic.

Self-Concept: Intrapersonal Mediators

Perception of Partner's Respect. To measure inequalities in the form of status and respect, I selected two items from the Social Provisions Scale (Cutrona & Russell, 1987) and calculated a Spearman-Brown reliability coefficient, which is the estimate recommended for a two-item scale (Eisinga et al., 2013). The reliability of the scale was acceptable (male $r_{12} = .86$, female $r_{12} = .87$ at T2). Participants were asked to report how much they agree with the statements “I feel my partner does not respect my skills and abilities,” and “I feel my competence and skills are recognized by my partner,” on a scale from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*).

Mastery. This subscale was created by Conger et al. (1998) using items adapted from the Mastery Scale (Pearlin et al., 1981) which asked participants to rate their level of agreement with 24 statements about themselves such as “I have little control over the things that happen to me,” “All in all, I am inclined to feel that I’m a failure,” and “I am responsible for my own successes” on a scale from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). I computed a manifest variable separately for husbands and wives using the mean scores of the items within the scale to create an overall scale score (male $\alpha = .80$, female $\alpha = .81$ from T2). Items were recoded so higher scores indicated higher levels of mastery.

Global Self-Worth. The Global Self-Worth subscale within the Harter Adult Perception Profile (Messer & Harter, 1986) provided participants with six two-part statements and asked participants to decide which part of each statement best described them. The two-part statements were separated by “BUT”, and consisted of examples such as, “Some adults question whether they are a worthwhile person BUT other adults feel that they are a worthwhile person,” and “Some adults like the kind of person they are BUT other adults would like to be someone else.”

Participants were then prompted to rank how true the chosen statement was for them on a scale from 1 (*sort of true for me*) to 2 (*really true for me*). The reliability of the scale was good (male $\alpha = .80$, female $\alpha = .83$). Items were recoded so that higher scores indicated higher levels of self-worth.

Wellbeing Outcomes

Relational and individual wellbeing outcomes were measured at T3, predicted by influence tactics (T1) and intrapersonal variables (T2).

Democratic Decision-Making. In a review on couple and family power literature, a main critique was the faulty emphasis on decision-making outcomes to measure power (i.e., *what* final decisions get made, *who* makes final decisions) at the expense of examining processes that influence decision making power (Farrell et al., 2015). I included two separate items related to decision-making in my outcomes – one asking partners’ perception of their influence on the decision-making process (rather than merely *who* makes the decision or what the decision is), and one that gets at satisfaction with the decision-making process. The Democratic Decision-Making scale was developed by Rand Conger (the developer of the IYFP/FTP). The first item asks, “When you and your partner have had an important decision to make, how often do you feel your opinions and feelings played a role in the final decision?” with options ranging from 1 (*always*) to 5 (*never*). Lastly, participants were asked, “How happy are you with the way you and your partner make important decisions?” on a scale from 0 (*extremely unhappy*) to 5 (*extremely happy*).

Relationship Quality. The Quality Marriage Index (QMI; Norton, 1983) is a pre-validated six-item scale that was used to measure relationship quality that asks participants to scale their agreement with statements such as “our relationship is strong” and “My relationship

with my partner makes me happy” on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). I recoded five of the six items so that higher scores indicated higher levels of relationship quality. I then computed a manifest variable with the means of items for husbands and wives separately (male $\alpha = .88$, female $\alpha = .94$ from T3).

Depression. The General Distress Depression five-item subscale from the Mini-Mood and Anxiety Symptom Questionnaire (MASQ; Casillas & Clark, 2000) asked partners to rate how often they felt depressed, discouraged, hopeless, like a failure, and worthless during the past week on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). Items were reverse coded so that higher scores indicated higher levels of depression (male $\alpha = .83$, female $\alpha = .89$ from T3). The scores of each item were averaged to compute a manifest variable of depression.

Controls

The length of a couple’s relationship and the transitions (e.g., marriage, parenthood) relevant to their relationship stage are important to include in any power analysis (Simpson et al., 2015). Also, relationship length and the transition to parenthood have both been found related to couple’s relationship satisfaction and overall individual wellbeing, although differently for males and females (e.g., Kiecolt-Glaser & Newton, 2001; Mitnick, Heyman, & Slep, 2009). Therefore, I controlled for relationship length (measured in years) and total number of children. Participants were also asked how long they had been in their current relationship, reporting on month and year they were married or began living together. Relationship length was calculated by subtracting the number of years they had either been married or living together (for cohabiting partners) from the year the survey was conducted at T3 (2003).

Chapter 4 - Results

Preliminary Analyses

Assumptions, Missing Data, and Normality

I initially tested all the assumptions necessary for conducting a path analysis, which included testing the normality of the distribution of the data (skewness $<|3|$ and kurtosis $<|10|$; Kline, 2005), linearity, homoscedasticity, and addressing non-independence of the data to guide me in determining which estimator to use for my analyses (Finney & DiStefano, 2006). Because the skewness and kurtosis values for the variables were within the recommended range for normality, I used full information maximum likelihood (FIML; Muthén & Muthén; Graham & Coffman, 2012) to handle missing data. I ran bivariate correlations for each of my variables to explore hypothesized relationships between variables of interest. I then assessed for missing data (e.g., skipped items, entire scales missing) to avoid Type I and Type II errors from biased parameter estimates that can result from missing data that is mishandled. Missing data ranged from 3.3% - 4.4% at T1, 0% - 1.1% at T2, and 0.5% - 1.6% at T3. Prior to testing our model, the omnibus test of distinguishability (Olsen & Kenny, 2006) determined that male and female partners were empirically distinguishable; therefore, we proceeded to test the dyadic model without further constraints.

Correlations

Correlations were used to examine the relationship between variables of interest at all three time points. I summarize key relationships that informed our final model here; for full correlation results, see Tables 2-8. As expected, higher levels of many negative influence tactics were linked to other variables in the expected direction – higher levels of negative influence tactics were linked with higher levels of other negative influence tactics, lower self-worth and

mastery and feeling respected, lower relationship satisfaction, and higher depressive symptoms. Also, higher levels of assertiveness (a positive influence tactic) were linked to higher levels of perceived influence on final decisions, satisfaction with decision-making, less depression, and more relationship quality for males and females.

Unexpectedly, however, higher levels of male dominance were correlated with higher levels of female self-worth at T2, as well as lower levels of female depression at T3. Oddly, neither male nor female lecture/moralizing at T1 were significantly related to any of the mediator variables at T2 or any of the outcome variables at T3. There were no significant correlations at T2 (self-worth, mastery and perception that partner respects you) with male or female denial. However, female denial was negatively correlated with female relationship quality and perceived influence on final decisions at T3. Male denial was negatively correlated with male and female relationship quality, female perceptions of influence on final decisions, and male satisfaction with decision-making. Neither male nor female denial were related to male or female depression at T3.

Actor Partner Interdependence Mediation Path Analysis

The proposed model included actor and partner paths from all influence tactics at T1 to the self-concept variables at T2, and from these T1 and T2 variables to depression, relationship quality, decision-making influence, and satisfaction with decision-making processes. The path model was run in *Mplus* 8.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012) using FIML, and indirect effects were measured with the 95% confidence intervals of 2,000 bootstrapped samples. Model fit indices (Kline, 2011) used to determine a good fit between the proposed model and the data included: a non-significant chi-square value, a Bentler comparative fit index (CFI) greater than .95, a Steiger–Lind root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) less than .05, and a

standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) less than .08. The model fit of the proposed model was excellent: $\chi^2(54) = 64.53, p > .05$; CFI = .99, TLI = .92, RMSEA = .03, SRMR = .04). Error terms were correlated for male and female partners' behavior and for corresponding indicator variables for males and females (e.g., males' hostility with females' hostility). For ease of interpretation, the model is displayed in four separate figures (see Figures 1-4; one figure includes direct paths from T1-T3, and three separate figures are provided for each mediator - self-worth, self-mastery, and perceived respect from one's partner), although the three self-concept mediators were all analyzed together in the final model in *Mplus*.

This overall model accounted for 21.7% of the variance in males' perceptions of their partners' respect for them, 15.1% in females' perception of their partners' respect for them, 14.4% of the variance in male mastery, 9% of female mastery, 12.5% of male self-worth, 11.1% of female self-worth, 22.1% of males' perceptions of influence on final decisions, 21.0% of females' perceptions of influence on final decisions, 25.7% of males' satisfaction with decision-making processes, 10.5% of females' satisfaction with decision-making processes, 30.9% of males' relationship quality, 21.8% of females' relationship quality, 26% of male depression, and 26.3% of the variance in female depression.

Direct Effects from Influence Tactics (T1) to Wellbeing (T3)

There were several significant direct effects between T1 and T3 while controlling for couples' relationship length and the number of children they had. Higher levels of observed female dominance at T1 were significantly related to females reporting that they had more influence on final decisions at T3, but females reporting less influence on final decisions at T3 was linked to higher levels of male observed interrogation at T1. Higher levels of observed male hostility at T1 were related to males feeling like they had less influence on final decisions at T3.

On the other hand, higher levels of observed interrogation-like behaviors at T1 in males were linked to males feeling less depressed and more satisfied with the decision-making process in their relationship at T3.

There were multiple direct effects that were approaching significance ($p < .10$) that are worth noting. Higher levels of female hostility at T1 were linked to lower levels of depression at T3 ($p = .09$), and higher levels of male lecturing/moralizing at T1 were linked to higher levels of male depression at T3 ($p = .09$). Higher levels of male interrogation and denial were related to males feeling like they had more influence on final decisions at T3 ($p = .07, p = .09$, respectively) (see Table 11 for full results).

Direct effects from Influence Tactics (T1) to Intrapersonal Variables (T2)

Males' and females' feelings of being respected by their partners, mastery, and self-worth at T2 were associated with different influence tactics at T1. Specifically, greater observed male interrogation and assertiveness, lower observed male hostility, and greater observed female assertiveness at T1 were significantly linked to males feeling more respected by their partner at T2. Similarly, male mastery at T2 was predicted by lower observed male hostility and lecturing/moralizing and greater observed female assertiveness at T1. Male self-worth at T2 was only predicted by greater observed male dominance at T1 (see Figure 1).

Higher levels of observed male dominance, female assertiveness (approaching significance; $p = .08$), and lower levels of female hostility ($p = .098$) at T1 were related to females feeling more respected by their partners at T2. Higher levels of observed dominance and lower levels of observed hostility in women at T1 were linked to higher levels of female mastery (approaching significance; $p = .098$) at T2. Additionally, greater female self-worth was predicted

by greater male dominance at T1. In line with expectations, female self-worth at T2 was also predicted by lower male lecturing/moralizing at T1 (see Table 9 for full results).

Direct Effects from Intrapersonal Variables (T2) to Wellbeing (T3)

Men who reported feeling like their partner respected their skills and competencies at T2 were also more likely to report higher levels of relationship quality at T3. Higher levels of males' perceived respect from their partner at T2 was linked to higher levels of perceived influence on decision-making and more satisfaction with the decision-making process in females' relationships at T3. Females who reported feeling like their partner respected their skills and competencies at T2 were also more likely to report higher levels of relationship quality and lower levels of depression at T3. Males with higher levels of self-worth and mastery at T2 had higher levels of satisfaction with decision-making. Higher levels of male self-worth at T2 were also linked to more relationship quality and less depressive symptoms at T3. Lastly, higher levels of female self-worth at T2 were linked to higher levels of male satisfaction with decision-making at T3 (see Table 10 for full results).

Tests of Mediating Pathways

Indirect Effects on Male & Female Relationship Quality

All indirect effects on relationship quality were through partners' perceptions that their partner respected them. Most of the significant mediators were *males'* perceptions of their partner's level of respect for their skills and competencies.

Indirect Actor Effects on Relationship Quality. The association of males' observed interrogation ($\beta = .07, p < .01, CI = .07, .35$), hostility ($\beta = -.08, p = .06, CI = -.40, -.03$), and assertiveness ($\beta = .07, p < .01, CI = .04, .36$) with their relationship quality through their perception that their partner respected their competencies and abilities were approaching

significance while controlling for relationship length and total number of children. Specifically, a 1 standard deviation unit increase in males' observed interrogation at T1 was linked to a .07 standard deviation unit increase in males' relationship quality four years later (on average, from the bootstrapping procedure), via its prior effect on how much respect males perceived their female partners have for their competencies (see Figure 1). A 1 standard deviation unit increase in observed hostility (males being hostile toward their female partners) at T1 was related to a .07 standard deviation unit decrease in males' marital quality 4 years later, on average, via its prior effect on how much respect males perceived their female partners have for their competencies. Conversely, a 1 standard deviation unit increase in males' observed assertiveness at T1 was significantly linked to a .07 unit increase in their own marital quality 4 years later, on average, via its prior effect on how much respect males perceived their female partners had for their competencies at T2.

Indirect Partner Effects on Relationship Quality. Females' assertiveness also influenced their own relationship quality ($\beta = .06, p < .01, CI = .01, .14$) and their male partners' relationship quality ($\beta = .07, p < .01, CI = .04, .36$) through males' perception that their partner respected his competencies. Additionally, a male's perception that his partner respects his competencies and abilities mediated the relationships to female relationship quality (see Figure 2) from observed male interrogation ($\beta = .06, p < .01, CI = .01, .14$); female assertiveness ($\beta = .06, p < .01, CI = .01, .14$), male assertiveness ($\beta = .06, p < .01, CI = .02, .13; p = .051$), and male hostility ($\beta = -.07, p = .09, CI = -.18, -.01$). See Table 12 for full results.

Male & Female Depression

All significant indirect paths from influence tactics to depression for both males and females were through partners' perceptions of their self-worth. Male self-worth mediated the

pathways to male depression (See Figure 3) from T1 observed male assertiveness ($\beta = -.06, p < .10, CI = -.12, .01$), male dominance ($\beta = -.12, p < .01, CI = -.22, -.02$), and male lecture/moralizing ($\beta = -.07, p < .10, CI = -.00, -.27$). Similarly, female self-worth mediated the pathways to female depression from T1 observed male dominance ($\beta = -.10, p < .01, CI = -.19, -.03$), and male lecture/moralizing ($\beta = .05, p < .05, CI = .01, .12$).

Male & Female Satisfaction with Decision-Making

There were two indirect effects on decision making that were approaching significance. The indirect effect of observed male dominance on male satisfaction with decision-making through female self-worth was approaching significance ($\beta = -.05, p = .10, CI = -.13, -.00$) (see Figure 4). The indirect effect of observed male assertiveness on female satisfaction with decision-making through males' perceptions that their partner respects their competencies and abilities was also approaching significance ($\beta = -.04, p = .10, CI = .00, .13$).

Chapter 5 - Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how observed influence tactics couples commonly use to gain or maintain power (e.g., interrogation, denial, hostility) differentially relate to partners' perceptions of their decision-making influence, decision-making satisfaction, relationship quality and depression across time. Although the dyadic power-social influence model (Simpson et al., 2015) outlines the dyadic influence partners have on individual and relationship wellbeing, it does not specify how this process occurs. Accordingly, in order to increase the clinical relevance of this study, I also examined whether key therapeutic intervention points pertaining to partners' self-concepts (mastery, self-worth, and the extent to which one feels that their partner respects them) mediated the relationship between influence tactics and individual and/or couple wellbeing.

Overall, interrogation, hostility, and assertiveness were the influence strategies most frequently related to outcomes, and interrogation and hostility tended to elicit more unhelpful or negative outcomes (more male depression; females feeling less influential on final decisions) than assertiveness did. Additionally, different elements of males' and females' self-concepts (perception of partners' respect and self-worth, respectively) mediated the relationships between influence tactics (i.e., assertiveness, interrogation, dominance, lecture/moralizing) and individual and relationship wellbeing. Interestingly, these mechanisms were not the same for males and females. Specifically, females' self-worth and males' perceptions of their partners' respect were the most frequent mechanisms by which influence tactics were associated with outcomes. Although this was an actor-partner model (male *and* female paths for all variables), most of the pertinent findings relevant to relationship quality and decision-making were only related to male tactics or male self-concept (specifically, perceptions of how much his partner respects him). These findings potentially highlight a dynamic where male's ego-related feelings may dictate their relationship's organization. These results may also be due, in part, to the fact that women have been found to use more indirect tactics to effect change in their environment (Oriña, Wood, & Simpson, 2002; Overall et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2013), despite indirect influence tactics (whether positive or negative) being less effective at creating immediate and noticeable change (Overall et al., 2009). I also unexpectedly found that mastery is not a significant mechanism linking any influence tactics to wellbeing outcomes.

These results indicate that some negative influence tactics (i.e., lecturing/moralizing) may not impact a couple's relationship quality but do impact one or both partner's *individual* wellbeing (i.e., depression) in early to established stages of their relationships; future research should examine the effects of each influence tactic on both individual and couple wellbeing in

later or transitional stages of couplehood. While communication tactics/influence strategies have been studied at great length, the existing body of couple and power research is not coherent in its conceptualization of power or influence (Simpson et al., 2015). This study is the first to use an integrated dyadic power theory to examine the differential impact of couples deploying influence tactics on wellbeing via observed variables longitudinally.

Effects on Decision-Making

Male Interrogation

Interrogation was the only male influence tactic that was directly linked to females feeling like they have less influence on final decisions. It may be that interrogation was the most influential behavior on this outcome because, it is, by nature, defined as trying to persuade or insist on being right or making a point rather than invite perspective or understanding in a conversation. Many of the examples of interrogation took on a punitive or shaming nature in tone (e.g., “wasn’t that two hours later than you were supposed to be home?” or “don’t you think you should have told me about this sooner?”), sometimes manipulative (e.g., “aren’t you going to help me?”), and often condescending (e.g., “you think you can do this yourself, don’t you?”). Such elements of this influence tactic may have often resulted in conversational “dead-ends”, of sorts, leaving females feeling like their entry-point in the decision-making process was gone. From the lens of the dyadic power-social influence model (Simpson et al., 2015), these different gendered findings may suggest that interrogation is an influence tactic that is more difficult to *resist* or respond to in a way that allows one to maintain a sense of reciprocal influence – especially with regards to influence on final decisions. Interrogation has been deemed a “covert form of control” (along with gaslighting and others; Dorpat, 1996). Pre-existing research on interrogation in romantic relationships is sparse, with most findings only examining interrogation

in the context of couples navigating the aftermath of an affair or jealousy and controlling behaviors (e.g., De Silva, 1997; Dorpat, 1996).

It was unexpected, though, that male interrogation was not also associated with females' satisfaction with decision-making processes. Satisfaction levels with decision-making may have gone unaffected, in part, because of the level of influence each partner expected to have on final decisions, or because females did not feel confident in their decision-making abilities (i.e., had low levels of decision-making efficacy). Perceived self-efficacy is linked to how confident one feels in their decisions (e.g., Padula & Sullivan, 2006), so it may be that the shaming nature of many interrogation behaviors reduced females' confidence in their decision-making capabilities, and consequently, their expectations for how much influence they felt they should have. If females did not expect to have more influence on final decisions, then the interference interrogation seems to have on such influence may not feel disruptive or reduce satisfaction. Expectations surrounding decision-making power in various domains are often influenced by gender role beliefs (Donley & Baird, 2017), and these couples may have felt more comfortable with certain domains of influence being divided by gender lines. This finding may also relate to a frequently cited issue in power research where decision-making is only one of many facets of power distribution (e.g., Deutch, 2007); it may be that females remain satisfied with their decision-making processes but that interrogation could impede on other domains of power such as financial resources, social support, etc. Previous findings also suggest that there are at least 10 distinct decision-making domains within a relationship (Farrell, Simpson, & Rothman, 2015) where power distribution may shift from one partner to another. Perhaps females in this study felt that, overall, they had less influence on final decisions, but that in certain domains of decision-making they had plenty of influence and, were, therefore, satisfied overall, with

decision-making. Future research should examine the differential effects of these influence tactics on the following specific domains of decision-making found to be pertinent in couple relationships: “family and friends, finances, future plans, how to spend time together, parenting, purchases, relationship issues, religion, vacations, and when/how much time together,” (Farrell, Simpson, & Rothman, 2015, p. 396).

Higher levels of male interrogation were directly linked to higher levels of males’ satisfaction with decision-making. In line with interrogation being a more difficult form of influence to resist, males who interrogate more may feel more influential or empowered if their female partners are not resisting their influence, and therefore, more satisfied with the consequential decision-making processes. Reverse of female’s results, male interrogation was linked to *satisfaction* with decision making but not to males’ perceived influence on final decisions, while females’ perceived influence on final decisions was impacted by male interrogation but not their satisfaction with decision making. It may be that perceived influence on final decisions and satisfaction with decision-making are predicted by different components of couple’s dynamics. While these two variables were significantly correlated, the Pearson’s *r* values were mid-range (males $r = .45, p < .00$; females $r = .52, p < .00$). Future research should examine interrogation in the context of various domains of decision-making and decision-making processes (interrogation used in interactions regarding co-parenting decisions vs. suspicions about infidelity, etc.) in relation to and *satisfaction* with decision-making processes, as there may be some decision-making domains that impact satisfaction more than others (e.g. division of household labor predicts couple’s relationship satisfaction across time; Milkie & Peltola, 1999; Saginak & Saginak, 2005). Future research should also examine the potential

mediating effects of decision-making efficacy rather than general mastery regarding interrogation and satisfaction with decision-making in women.

Male Hostility

Higher levels of observed male hostility were significantly linked to males perceiving that they had less influence on final decisions in their relationship. A male who possesses characteristics that are more controlling or beliefs that are more patriarchal in nature may be more inclined to feel like they deserve to have more influence on decision-making processes than their female partners; they may also be more likely to believe that hostility is the best-suited form of influence to exert (i.e., the most effective) when they feel powerless. Such beliefs may be influenced by traditional gender role beliefs about male dominance and female subservience (e.g., Coontz, 2005). The dyadic power-social influence model (Simpson et al., 2015) posits that a person's characteristics (e.g., gender role beliefs) influence what power they possess, which influence strategies they use, and therefore, what outcomes take place in their relationship(s) (Simpson et al., 2015). Future research should investigate this relationship in the context of beliefs about gender roles – it may be that males who have more traditional gender role beliefs (i.e., females should be subservient to their male partners; males should have more decision-making power) are accounting for this relationship between male hostility and male dissatisfaction with decision-making process in their relationship. Future research should also examine the directionality of hostility's effects. The dyadic power-influence model is circular, where power-related outcomes are theorized to link back to partner's characteristics, and it may be that the association between male hostility and lower levels of perceived influence on final decisions is explained by males reacting with hostile tactics when they feel that they have less influence on final decisions, which perpetuates a cycle of frustration with relationship dynamics.

Hostility is also considered a negative influence tactic which has been shown to reduce partners' acceptance of influence (Overall et al., 2009; Gottman, 1999), so a male partner who acts in hostile ways may chronically feel like his partner is not receiving his influence if it is hostile, in nature, and consequently, he may feel like he has less influence on final decisions.

Dominance

As stated previously, observed dominance was coded in the behavioral codebook as successful demonstrations of influence and control, *whether positive or negative* (Melby et al., 1998). Dominance was the only female influence tactic directly linked to her perceptions of influence on decision-making. Combined with the positive association of female dominance with females reporting feeling respected by their partner, it may be that female partners who were successful at exerting influence (definition of dominance in observational codebook; Melby et al., 1998) did so in ways that were positive, and/or were with males who were more likely to respectfully accept influence from their partner – a protective factor for couples relationships (Gottman, 1999). Therefore, it would make sense that females in this study report feeling like their partner also respects their skills and competencies more overall if their influence attempts (i.e., dominance) were received enough for it to be coded as successful “dominance”.

Interestingly, male dominance positively influenced males' satisfaction with decision-making through female self-worth (approaching significance, $p = .08$). In other words, males' satisfaction with decision-making processes may be partially contingent upon his partner's level of self-worth. It could be that self-worth is related to how open one is to accepting influence or conveying respect to one's partner. Also, previous findings indicate that women often prefer prestigious men for long-term mates and dominant men for short-term mates, although dominance and prestige are often seen as interchangeable despite their documented differences

(Kruger & Fitzgerald, 2011). Traits and words related to dominance in the behavioral codebook (Melby et al., 1998) included “leadership,” “charisma,” being “dynamic,” and “facilitating conversation.” Dominant men are also known to make bolder moves in pursuing women, using passionate eye contact and deliberate touch to make their desires known (Kruger & Fitzgerald, 2011); therefore, it could be that women in our sample felt more attractive, wanted and important (resulting in higher reported levels of self-esteem) if their male partners seemed more attracted to them as evidenced by dominant expressions of bold pursuits and confident expressions. This may explain why male dominance was linked to higher levels of male satisfaction with decision-making in and through female self-worth, where a male would be effectively seeing himself as having influence in both promoting the self-worth of his partner and affecting change through his dominance.

This mediating effect of female self-worth may also speak to a common element of power imbalances where one partner’s feelings or wellbeing (i.e., female’s ego or self-concept) organize a couple’s dynamics (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009). If a male’s level of influence hinges on how solid his partner’s sense of self-worth is, this could lead to emotional codependency across time where female self-worth and male satisfaction with decision-making are entangled and reliant upon the other. Codependency is a risk factor for couple relationships and is correlated with lower levels of marital adjustment (Chmielewska, 2012; Lampis et al., 2017), and a female’s self-concept may be a key intervention point to disentangle codependent dynamics such as these. However, this conclusion is incomplete without more information as to whether the dominance exerted was positive or negative, as codependence refers to a negative cycle defined as “a pattern of relation to others characterized by an extreme focus outside the self, lack of open expression of feelings, and attempts to derive a sense of purpose through

relationships” (Spann and Fischer 1990 , p. 27). Given that there were significant positive actor and partner effects with dominance on self-concept (mastery, self-worth, and feelings of respect in your model), positive dominance may promote egalitarianism through enhancing self-concepts if both partners are exerting and receiving it, whereas other influence tactics such as interrogation seem to benefit one partner at the expense of the other.

Male Assertiveness

Similar to the findings on female self-worth being a mediator between male dominance and male satisfaction with decision-making, females’ satisfaction with decision-making was influenced by male assertiveness (approaching significance; $p = .10$) through male feelings of being respected by their partner. In other words, females’ satisfaction with decision-making processes may be contingent upon how respected her husband/partner feels, which also speaks to dynamics of imbalanced power previously mentioned where one partner’s feelings (i.e., males feeling respected) organize a couple’s dynamics (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009). More specifically, it could be that a male’s self-concept – in this instance, his perception of his partner’s respect for him – may indirectly control how satisfied females feel with decision-making in their relationships.

Given that both male and female self-concepts mediated on satisfaction with decision-making, a partner’s self-concept may have an inadvertent gatekeeping effect on how satisfied one feels with decision-making in their relationship. This may be a product of the early committed stage of relationships these couples were in (see dyadic power-social influence model of power stages; Simpson et al., 2015). It is possible that females in this stage are more inclined to accommodate and be more attuned to ensuring their male partners feel respected and happy as opposed to whether they, personally, feel satisfied with the decision-making (e.g., Tichenor,

2005), and that males may be more inclined to base their use of influence tactics on how it will affect a female's self-worth – for better or for worse. If a partner's focus at the established stage of a relationship is more attuned to their partner's wellbeing and satisfaction than their own, this may lead to over-accommodation and placating over time, which has been shown to predict self-silencing and depression (particularly in females) across time in romantic relationships (Jack, 1991; Jack & Dill, 1992).

On the other hand, male assertiveness and his perceptions of his partner's respect may be a positive reciprocal pattern, where positive influence tactics may be used more frequently if one's self-concept is high, which may also loop back to increasing self-concept in oneself and one's partner when positive influence tactics are used; this could lead to more positive decision-making dynamics, overall. Since assertiveness and dominance could both be positive-direct forms of influence, perhaps partners using these strategies are striving for egalitarianism, whereas partners using other negative influence tactics (e.g., interrogation) may be fighting to correct an imbalance in power or create a greater imbalance. Future research should examine the long-term effects of males' perceptions of their partner's respect and females' self-worth as mediating factors, as well as the sources and potentially harmful effects of codependency related to these variables in addition to positive reciprocal patterns that do not have the same risks as codependency.

Lack of Direct Influence on Female Satisfaction with Decision-Making

No influence tactics observed by males or females were directly linked to female satisfaction with the decision-making process. These findings speak to another potential missing link (in addition to the role of one's self-concept) in the dyadic power-social influence model that relates to common *coping stances* (e.g., accommodating/placating, blaming, distracting;

Satir, 1988) used in reaction to influence tactics and/or injured self-concepts. With regards to the placating/accommodating coping stance, previous research on invisible male power highlights that women are less likely to report dissatisfaction with inequalities in their partnerships if alternative power dynamics do not feel attainable; women reportedly often “learn... what their husband’s limits of tolerated behavior are and stay within them... the man’s power is not observable because there is no conflict and the wife never seems to want anything the husband does not,” (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009, p. 19; Tichenor, 2005). Therefore, in early but established stages of couple relationships (i.e., stage 2; Simpson et al., 2015), some influence tactics may not yet have a measurable effect on women’s satisfaction with the relationship or decision-making processes that might otherwise show up in a “transitional” stage of their relationship. For example, many couples do not report a noticeable decline in relationship satisfaction until the transition to parenthood, when gender roles are often exacerbated and the current power distribution (e.g., imbalances in division of labor and co-parenting roles) no longer feels viable long-term, resulting in accommodation no longer feeling like a sustainable coping tactic for females (Frisco & Williams, 2003; Goodwin, 2003; Koivunen, Rothaupt, & Wolfgram, 2009). Future research should investigate females’ satisfaction with decision-making at transition stages of their relationship (stage 3 of the dyadic-social power model; Simpson et al., 2015) to further examine the role of females’ self-concept – particularly feeling respected by her partner – in power distribution and influence across time.

Effects on Depression

Interrogation

In addition to male interrogation at T1 predicting lower levels of females’ perceived influence on decision-making at T3, male interrogation was also unexpectedly linked to higher

levels of male depression. In line with the earlier findings cited above about interrogation often being used in the context of suspicions of infidelity or with possessive and controlling partners (De Silva, 1997; Dorpat, 1996), previous findings illustrate that an insecure attachment style (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991) is associated with high levels of suspicion, possessiveness and sometimes controlling behaviors (Mahalik et al., 2005), which might lead a partner to interrogate more. People with a more insecure attachment style tend to report higher levels of depressive symptoms, as well (Gerlsma & Luteijn, 2000). Attachment style is theorized in the dyadic power-social influence model (Simpson et al., 2015) as a key characteristic that predicts which influence tactics are utilized; therefore, an insecure attachment style may explain part of the association between interrogation and depression in males, and it could be that males are reacting to relational insecurities when they are interrogating their partner. Future research should account for attachment styles at T1 when examining the effects of interrogation on depression.

Self-Worth is a Key Mediator on Depression

Dominance. Higher levels of male dominance were indirectly linked to lower levels of depression for both males and females in and through male and female self-worth, respectively. It is likely that males who are able to successfully exert influence in their relationships feel more important and worthwhile in the context of their relationship – in other words, they feel like their partner is accepting their influence (Gottman, 1999), and subsequently, feel less depressed. These males may have also been exerting positive forms of influence that made their female partners more receptive to accepting influence. Additionally, these findings link back to the previous discussion about women preferring dominant qualities in men. If men were conveying charismatic qualities or leading a conversation in a dynamic way, females may have felt more valuable to their partner based on the directive, commanding or attentive (synonyms of

dominance; Melby et al., 1998) cues they were receiving. This would also mirror the previous discussion wherein a male's self-worth may increase when using dominance if he sees himself as worth listening to or being influenced by (i.e., if he sees himself as effectively having influence), which would also explain why male dominance was linked to lower levels of male depression in and through male self-worth. Further, given that many dominant qualities are traditionally viewed as valuable male traits and highly regarded by females, men's self-worth may increase if they perceive that their partner finds these qualities (e.g., displaying "boldness" or "masculinity"; Kruger & Fitzgerald, 2011) worthwhile.

Interestingly, male dominance affected his own self-worth, but not his feelings of being respected. Similarly, female dominance affected her own mastery, but not her perceptions of her partner's respect. This may be explained by previous findings that people tend to project their feelings about themselves (self-worth or mastery) onto others in their behaviors (Felson, 1993). In other words, partners who perceive their opinions or points of view as worthwhile may manifest these self-beliefs via dominant behaviors outlined in the behavioral codebook such as directing the flow of the conversation, changing their partner's opinions or actions, or successfully interrupting (Melby, 1998). It may also be that as male and female partners exert dominant influence tactics, the personal effects influence different components of self-concept for males vs. females (i.e., self-worth vs. mastery, respectively). More research is needed on whether positive versus negative forms of dominance differentially impact males compared to females, and how positive versus negative forms of dominance influence various forms of self-concept.

Future research should examine whether gender role beliefs (e.g., the belief that dominance makes someone "manly" or that males are weak if they are not dominant; that

females are “bossy” when they are dominant) moderate the relationships between dominance vs. assertiveness and wellbeing outcomes. While these forms of dominance are not necessarily harmful (and are, in fact, seemingly helpful for reducing depressive symptoms), further research is needed to determine whether such forms of dominance that partners may find flattering early on (i.e., stage 2 – established couples; Simpson et al., 2015) transition into more harmful behaviors later on such as being demanding, controlling, or domineering at the expense of someone’s sense of mastery or self-worth in the relationship. This may be true for male or female dominance and self-concept outcomes.

Lecturing/Moralizing. The more females lecture/moralize their male partners through a “lectury, preachy, [or] pushy” (Melby et al., 1998, p. 89) style, the more depressed males tend to be across time (approaching significance; $p = .096$). This may link to findings mentioned previously about how one appraises oneself based on how their partner seems to appraise them (Jaret, Reitzes, & Shapkina, 2005); if males are treated in condescending ways by their female partners, it is likely to take a toll on how he feels about himself and contribute to depressive symptoms (Sowislo & Orth, 2013). Also, female self-worth was a key mechanism whereby male lecturing/moralizing behaviors worsened female depression but reduced male depression across time (approaching significance; $p = .06$). In other words, lecturing/moralizing may be a tactic used to gain power through reducing one’s partner’s self-worth and creating hopelessness, helplessness, or dependency – some of which are key correlates of depression (e.g., Sowislo & Orth, 2013). This confirms previous findings that power and control can be gained in abusive relationships by attacking a partner’s sense of self (e.g., Morgan, 2007). The dyadic-power social influence model (Simpson et al., 2015) posits that overall power in a couple’s context cannot be accurately measured without taking into consideration the ways that partners accept

and resist influence; therefore, these results would suggest that males who exert power by lecturing/moralizing may be negatively impacting their partner, especially if females are also unable to resist these attempts (i.e., have low self-esteem), and therefore, absorb the influence attempts in ways that worsen their depression across time. This would make sense in the context of multiple CFT theories that posit that low self-esteem is the origin of a plethora of symptomatic behaviors and clinical levels of distress (low self-worth or feelings of worthlessness is one of the diagnostic criteria for major depressive disorder; DSM-V). Lower levels of self-worth are associated with higher levels of self-silencing, placating, and self-concealment - often at the expense of one's own needs and/or self-respect (Satir, 1988; Cramer, Gallant, & Langlois, 2005). Contrary to this explanation, though, male self-worth did not mediate the relationship between female lecturing/moralizing and higher levels of male depression. Thus, there may be a missing component in the model to account for how male's self-concept is being affected by female lecturing/moralizing, as none of the male self-concept variables significantly mediated this relationship.

These results contribute a highly important finding to the couples literature by illustrating the negative toll male or female lecturing/moralizing influence tactics can have on both male and female wellbeing by worsening depressive symptoms. More specifically, male lecturing/moralizing can negatively affect female wellbeing by damaging her self-worth *and* worsening depression (which likely worsens a female's overall wellbeing), while concurrently reducing male's depressive symptoms. This confirms previous literature that power dynamics in couples are imbalanced if the relationship seems to benefit one partner's overall wellbeing (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009; in this case, where male depression lessens across time

when males lecture/moralize) at the expense of another partner's overall wellbeing (female depression worsening over time).

It is interesting to note that neither male lecturing/moralizing nor female self-worth were significantly related to female relationship quality, female perception of influence on final decisions, or female satisfaction with decision-making. Perhaps male lecturing/moralizing may not take a toll on the *relationship's* quality this early on in a relationship; couples in our sample were in the "established relationship" stage (stage 2 of the dyadic power-social influence stages of power; Simpson et al., 2015) and had only been together for an average of about five years by T3. It may be that the toll that lecturing/moralizing behavior can take on the overall relationship becomes noticeable only *after* it has negatively impacted the individual (in this case, depression for males or females). There is, indeed, a well-documented link between depression and relationship quality for couples (e.g., Whisman & Uebelacker, 2009; Davila, Karney, Hall, & Bradbury, 2003; Whitton, Stanley, Markman, & Baucom, 2008). These results may confirm and expand on previous findings that speak to the "myth of equality" in many opposite gender marriages – in this case, if partners are exerting influence through a superior stance like lecturing their partner or interrupting frequently with "should" or "ought" statements, this may alter the distribution of power – and, potentially future relationship quality (Knudson-Martin, 2013) – in ways that are not immediately noticeable, but still deleterious to couple satisfaction over time (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009). Therefore, future research should follow couples into later transitional stages of their relationships to see if lecturing/moralizing takes a toll on relationship quality, as well as depression in each partner, as key transitions like the birth of a child take place.

Effects on Relationship Quality

Unexpectedly, there were no direct associations between influence tactics and relationship quality for males or females; all of the significant paths from influence tactics to relationship quality were indirectly significant through self-concept mediators. This highlights the importance of viewing couple relationships interpersonally and intrapersonally to fully capture what predicts couple satisfaction and relationship quality across time.

Males Feeling Respected is a Key Mediator on Relationship Quality

The only variable directly related to relationship quality for males or females was male perceptions that his partner respects him. Males feeling respected by their partner fully mediated the paths to relationship quality for males and females from male interrogation, male assertiveness, female assertiveness, and male hostility. In other words, the mechanism whereby these influence tactics related to relationship quality for males and females seems to be the way these strategies alter males' perception of how much their partner respects them.

Although females' perception that their partner respects them was related to multiple influence tactics (male dominance, female hostility, female assertiveness) and outcome variables (female relationship quality, female depression), it was only approaching significance in relation to their reported relationship quality, and it did not significantly mediate any paths. On the surface, it would appear that the perception of how much one's partner respects them does not matter as much for women as it does for men. However, this contradicts previous findings highlight the importance of *both* partners conveying and receiving respect from one another, as this is linked to partners accepting influence from one another – a protective factor for couple stability (Gottman, 1999).

Rather than feeling respected by one's partner mattering more for males than females, these findings may illustrate a potential dynamic previously mentioned occurring in these couples where the male self-concept/ego (potentially measured, in part, here by males' perception of their partner's respect for them) seems to dominate effects. Previous findings discuss the "fragile masculine self", which describes a male self-concept that is driven by fear and self-loathing, thus relying heavily on external sources of validation (i.e., perceiving that his female partner respects his abilities and competencies; Watkins & Blazina, 2010). Therefore, it would seem that for couples in the early but established stage of their relationship, relationship quality for men *and* women may, in some facet, revolve around men's feelings – men feeling like their skills and competencies are recognized and respected, to be specific, which also relates back to risks couples face if the relationship dynamics are organized around one partner's preferences, mood, or personal wellbeing (Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009; Hare-Mustin, 1991). If a couple's relationship dynamics revolve around the male ego, then a female's relationship satisfaction may be contingent on her male partner feeling adequately respected, and consequently, may fall to secondary levels of importance.

Unexpected Non-significant Findings

Assertiveness

The only observed influence tactic used by females that was significantly related to any male outcomes was female assertiveness, which was indirectly related to male and female relationship quality through males' perception that their partner respects them. These results may also be due, in part, to the fact that women tend to use more indirect tactics to influence change in their environment (Oriña, Wood, & Simpson, 2002; Overall et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2013), as previously mentioned. Further, more assertive or direct forms of self-advocacy are viewed as

more appropriate for men than women (Rudman, 1998). Therefore, it may not be that men are attempting to exert more influence, but rather, the ways that women are more inclined to exert or resist influence use were not fully captured in the variables chosen for this study. It may also be that many of the direct tactics studied are more visible and more often measured because they tend to impact men more than women, as there are preexisting disparities in the literature where research has traditionally been more relevant to white males compared to any other demographic (Konkel, 2015). Therefore, future research should examine more indirect influence tactics to determine whether the female self-concept is as much an organizing factor for relationship dynamics and outcomes as the male self-concept.

Despite both male and female assertiveness being linked to males feeling more respected by their partner at T2, oddly, assertiveness (male or female) was not significantly linked to how much respect females perceived that their partner had for them at T2. Assertiveness was also not significantly directly linked to any decision-making outcomes at T3, only self-concept outcomes at T2. It may be that the effects of dominance paled in comparison to the effects of assertiveness, and were, therefore, not captured by the model given our relatively low sample size. This may also illustrate a new finding that dominant behaviors (e.g., trying to control the conversation, interrupting frequently, using “persuasive” or “powerful assertions”; Melby et al., 1998, p. 86) are more direct, and consequently, more noticeable influence tactics in couples than assertive behaviors (e.g., being “straight-forward, non-threatening, and empathetic”; Melby et al., 1998, p. 123). Future research should examine the effects of assertiveness in comparison to other influence tactics with a larger sample size to replicate and confirm these findings.

Denial

Denial was only linked to higher levels of males' satisfaction with decision-making, and this path was only approaching significance ($p = .09$). Denial did not show up in any other actor or partner paths. Given that the definition of denial in the behavioral codebook deals mostly with taking accountability or acknowledging issues (Melby et al., 1998), it may be that expectations or beliefs (e.g., gender role beliefs) about what one feels personally responsible for, in general, is a missing component in the model. Future research should examine the potential of moderating effects of gender role beliefs on the relationship between denial and wellbeing outcomes to account for the missing link between this influence tactic.

Mastery was an Insignificant Mediating Mechanism

Unexpectedly, although mastery was related to several influence tactics and to males' satisfaction with decision-making, mastery did not significantly mediate any relationships between influence tactics and wellbeing outcomes. The assessment for this variable measured general domains of personal self-efficacy, and is possible that a more specific measure such as relational self-efficacy or decision-making efficacy that assesses more directly how much control partners feel they have over specific aspects of their relationship would have elicited more significant outcomes pertaining to these romantic relationship outcomes. Although mastery did not significantly mediate any actor or partner pathways, the relationship between female dominance and female mastery may speak to the general importance of seeing the noticeable effects of one's influence on one's own sense of mastery. If dominance (whether positive or negative) fosters a sense of mastery over one's environment and life, so it is important for therapists to be attuned to whether dominance is being exerted in ways that lend one partner higher mastery at the expense of another partner's sense of empowerment.

Clinical Implications

Examining influence tactics with self-concept variables as mediators provided information on multiple entry-points – relational and individual – for therapists working with couples to reconfigure power dynamics to be more equal and conducive to intimacy. It seems that assertive and dominant behaviors are important for increasing self-concept and wellbeing outcomes, while interrogation, lecturing/moralizing, and hostility are detrimental to partners' self-concepts. Therefore, screening for these behaviors can help therapists intervene to reduce interrogation, lecturing/moralizing, and hostile behaviors while promoting positive dominance and assertiveness. Specific to assessing a heterosexual couple's dynamics, if partners are observed to be taking a moralizing stance toward their partners, it is possible that their partner may be suffering from low self-esteem (particularly females in this instance), and higher levels of depression (e.g., Sowislo & Orth, 2013). When assessing for this influence tactic as a potential risk factor for a couple and an individual, couples therapists can look for partners who “present information to their partner in a didactic, superior-wisdom manner that may be lectury, preachy, intrusive, pushy, and/or moralizing” (Melby et al., 1998, p. 89). Other behavior to assess for include frequent interruptions or partners who do not give their partners a chance to “respond, initiate, or think independently,” giving long monologues “concerning the way things should or shouldn't be, how people should or shouldn't act, morality lessons from his own experience, or advice based on his superior insight” (Melby et al., 1998, p. 89). Some examples of moralizing/lecturing in our sample included statements such as “you should know better”, “you should be ashamed of yourself for breaking your promise,” “I'd expect more of you,” and “don't you think it's about time you start doing...” (Melby et al., 1998, p. 89). Therapists can intervene in lecture/moralizing as an unhelpful influence tactic by acknowledging it when it comes up in

the room, commenting on what how it appears, and processing the function this behavior serves in the relationship. Practitioners can also intervene at an individual level to promote self-worth to buffer the negative effects of lecture/moralizing using CFT theories such as Satir's experiential modality (Satir, 1988) that promote authenticity and congruence to increase self-worth.

The relationship between lecturing/moralizing and depression can also be a key point to consider when working with couples who cannot afford self-pay, as most insurance companies do not reimburse for relational diagnoses. Our results highlight that relational dynamics such as one's partner influencing them negatively through moralizing/lecturing is related to clinical diagnoses like depression. From a systemic standpoint, a clinical level of depression in one partner is highly likely to have damaging effects on her and her partner's relationship satisfaction, thus warranting individual and couple-level intervention to get at the root of depressive symptoms. Therapists should also assess the degree to which a female's self-worth seems to organize the relationship's dynamics, as her level of self-worth may indirectly relate to how satisfied her male partner feels with decision-making. This could either result in females' ego-related needs predominating male's desires or preferences, or males purposefully influencing females' self-worth to effect change on his own satisfaction levels.

In order to fully understand a couple's functioning, it is important to note that the male ego may also be a key organizing factor of a couple's relationship, and this may result in males purposely or inadvertently serving as gatekeepers of females' relationship quality and decision-making influence. Couples therapists can navigate this by using a lens attuned to both partners' self-concept as well as the balance of partners resisting, exerting, and accepting influence from one another. Asking couples questions such as "do you feel like your partner values your input on [topic]?", and following up with inquiries such as "what does it cost your relationship or you

personally if you feel like your input is not valued?” can help elicit dynamics where decision-making disparities may be occurring. Circular questioning (Strategic Family Therapy; Haley, 1987) such as “what would shift in your relationship if you felt more worthwhile as a person?” or “how would your dynamics change if you felt respectable regardless of how she seemed to perceive you?” could help illustrate the degree to which a poor self-concept in one or both partners is contributing to codependency and consequent relationship distress (Lampis et al., 2017).

When intervening to help couples redistribute power, male interrogation may be a key behavior to assess for as it was found to significantly reduce females perceived influence on final decisions in their partnerships and increase male depression. Helping couples restructure interactions so that questions asked are open-ended, not accusatory, and invite understanding can help partners – especially females – feel more influential in the decisions made as a couple. Related to this intervention point, it may be useful to examine interrogation behaviors through a lens of coping stances to deconstruct attachment styles that such interrogation may stem from. This examination of coping stances (Satir, 1988) and attachment styles (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991) can benefit both partners as therapists can also examine whether one or both partners may, by default, react to certain influence tactics with coping stances (e.g., accommodation or placating; defensiveness or dominance) that override one’s own influence or their partner’s influence. Therapists can provide guidance to partners regarding ways to exert and receive influence from one’s partner in ways that provide space for reciprocal influence.

Limitations & Future Research

One of the biggest limitations of this study is the fact the sample was nearly 100% white. This sample was collected in rural Iowa, which lent itself to a very homogenous group of

participants. Therefore, we cannot generalize these findings to those living in a non-rural environment or who are not White. Another limitation and simultaneous strength of this study is the young age of these couples. The average couple was in their fifth year of their relationship, in their late 20's to mid 30's. These were young, established couples, which allows us to further our knowledge as a field about couples in established, committed relationships, but prevents us from generalizing these findings to other stages of couplehood such as those in transitioning into empty-nesting or parenthood.

Most of these findings are relevant for male outcomes – particularly, male relationship quality and decision-making. It would seem that the influence tactics measured here tend to be more influential for male outcomes, in general, and/or males in this study may have had more influence, in general, as there were over twice as many paths that were significant or approaching significance between male influence tactics and related to outcomes (27) compared to female influence tactics (12). Related to these findings, it is also important to note how many actor paths (e.g., male IV → male DV) there were for males (23) compared to females (7). Given previous findings that females tend to utilize more indirect influence tactics (Overall et al., 2009), our study was lacking in representation of tactics females generally use more often; therefore, future research needs to examine more negative and positive-indirect tactics to get a more complete picture of how various influence tactics effect male *and* female outcomes, as denial was the only negative influence tactic examined that could have been indirect or direct, and it was not significantly related to any mediator or outcome variables for men or women. Also, the observed dominance variable encompassed both positive and negative forms of dominance, which made it difficult to examine dyadic power through the lens of positive vs. negative influence tactics for this variable. Also, decision-making is only one of many facets of

power distribution in couples' dynamics (e.g., Deutch, 2007; Harris, 2006), and there are likely many other domains of power that each of these influence tactics affect that were not captured in this study. Future research should investigate other influence tactics through a lens of dyadic lens of power. Future research should also examine what influence tactics are typically used in *reaction* to specific influence tactics in couple's dynamics influence to better understand the reciprocal effects of influence strategies in couples across time.

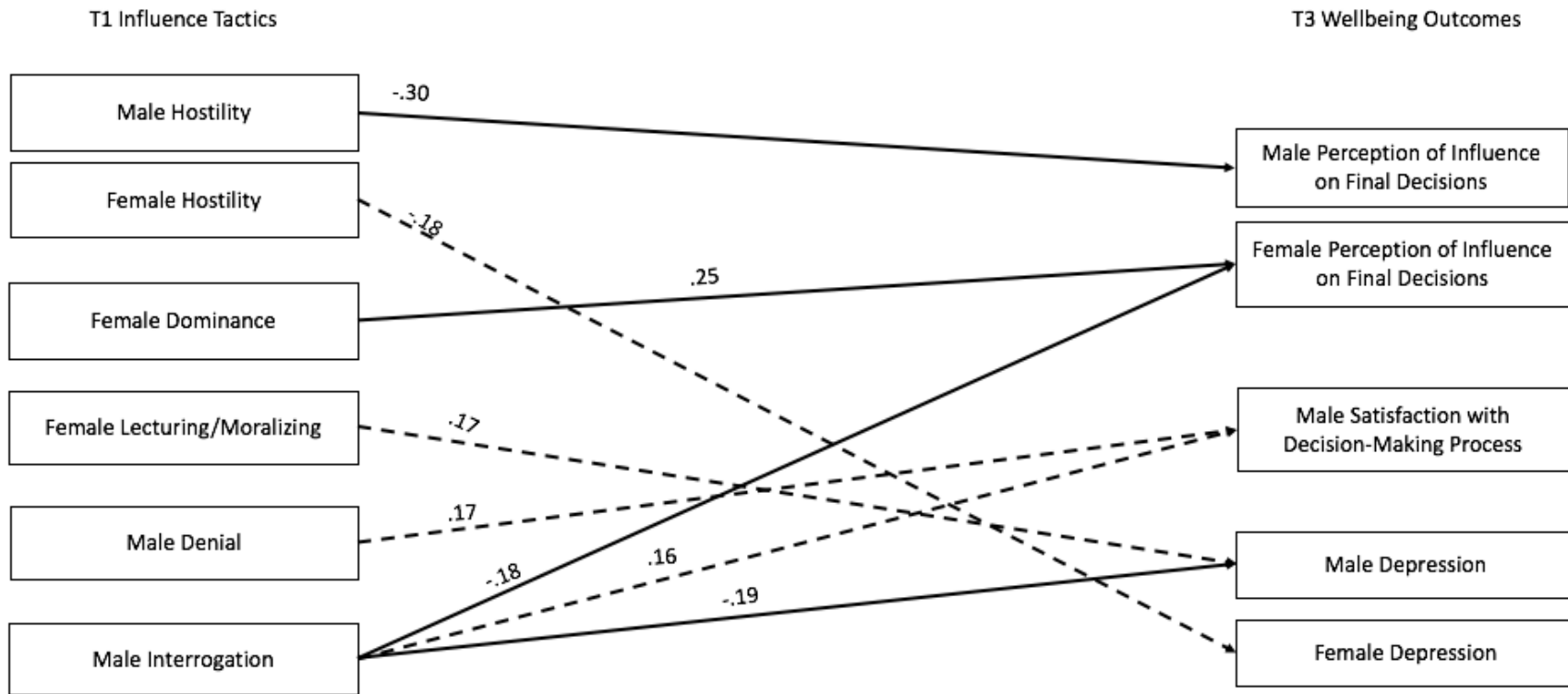
Lastly, these results render replication as these data were collected in the late 90's and early 2000's, and social ideals and definitions of power amongst couples may have progressed. Additionally, this sample was also relatively small, and we had low power for the model we analyzed. Specifically, based on tests of nonindependence of the dyads in our sample, we only had enough power to detect a medium correlation (Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006), so any small effects would have been undetectable.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

When examining six different influence tactics used by couples to manifest power in their relationships, dominance, interrogation, and lecture/moralizing seem to relate more strongly to individual and relational outcomes. Denial did not relate directly or indirectly to relationship quality, decision-making, or depression for males or females. Male lecturing/moralizing may contribute to worsening female depression in and through lowering female self-worth, while potentially having a reverse effect for male depression and self-worth. Assertiveness is only related to relationship quality for males and females in and through males feeling like their female partner respects their competencies and skills. Therefore, men's perception of being respected as a key mechanism may be a subtle, but significant, way that a men's status or satisfaction can, over the course of time, take precedence over women's. Self-worth may also be

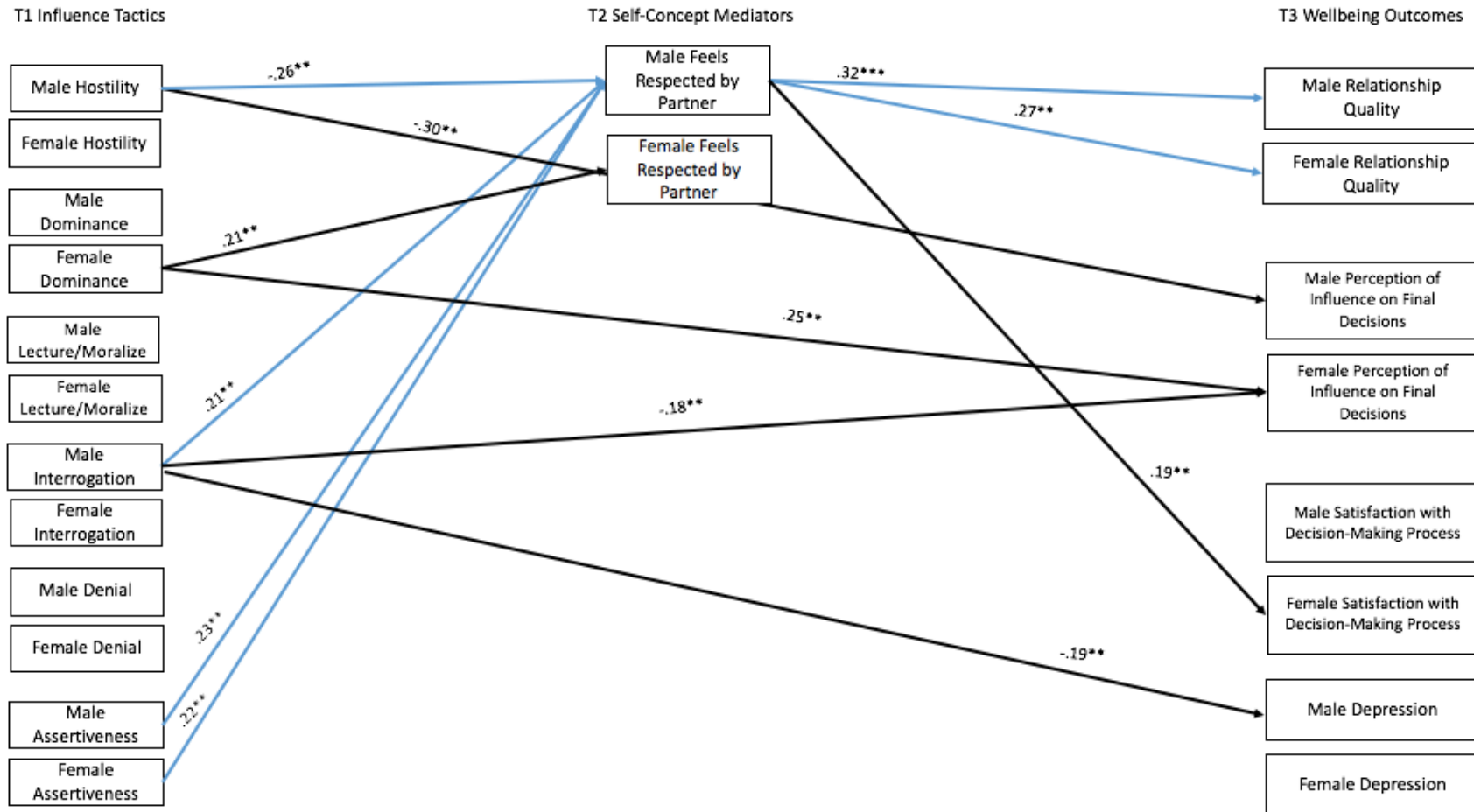
a key organizing factor of couple outcomes for both males and females. Couples therapists can promote fairness in heterosexual couple relationships by assessing for and intervening in lecturing/moralizing, interrogation and negative dominant behaviors and promoting positive forms of dominance in both partners. When working with couples to promote positive communication such as assertiveness, therapists should ensure that male and female assertive behaviors serve to promote both male and females' perception that their partner respects them. Future research should examine how coping stances such as accommodation or placating play into a couple's dynamics and outcomes to better understand the effects of each influence tactic.

Figure 1. Actor-Partner Interdependence Model Across the First 4 Years of Relationship: Influence Tactics and Wellbeing Outcomes



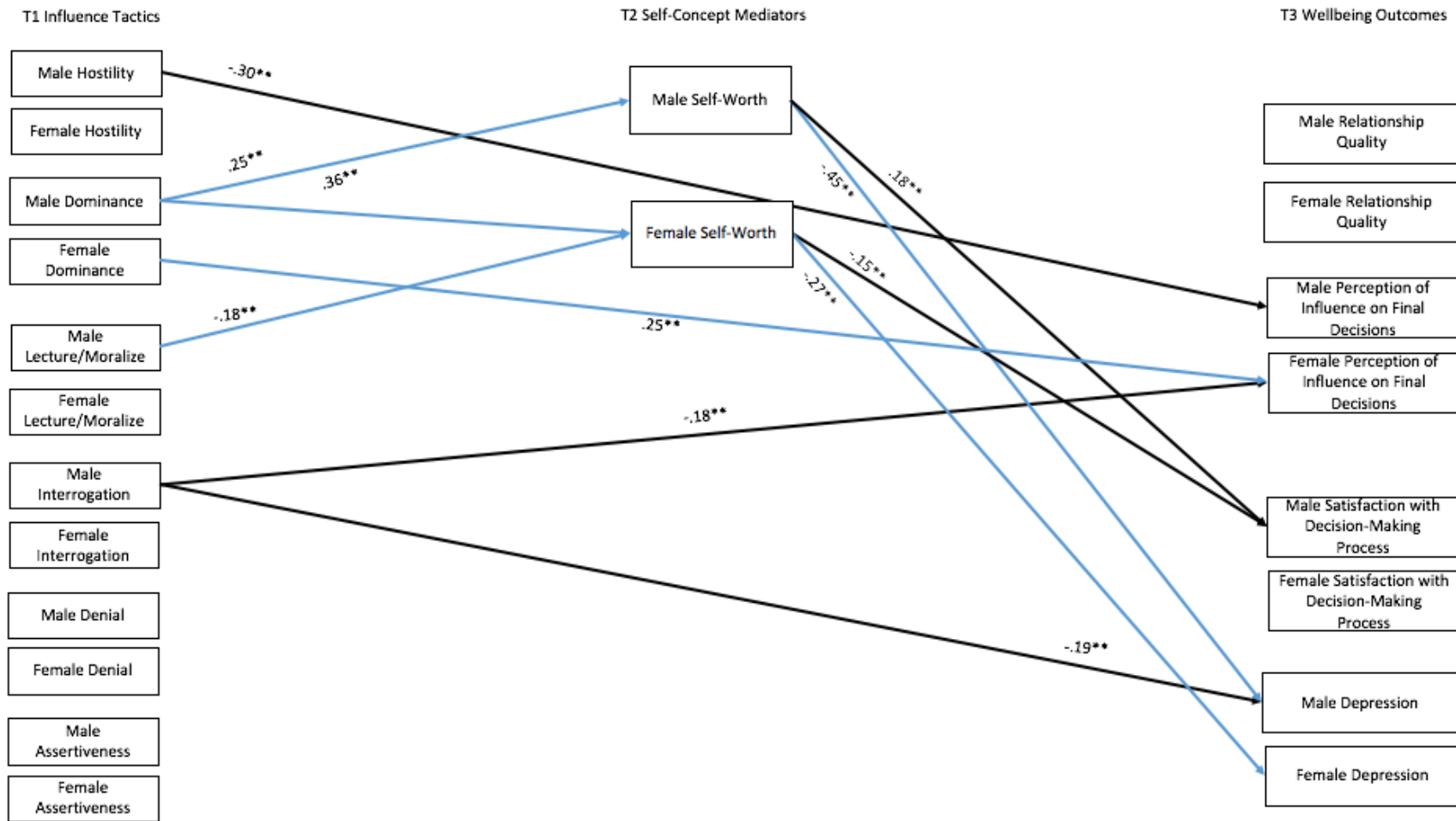
Note: Only significant paths displayed. paths ($*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$; two-tailed). Controlled for relationship duration and number of children at T3. CI=95%. $\chi^2(54) = 64.53, p = .15$; CFI = .99; TLI = .92; RMSEA = .03; SRMR = .04

Figure 2. Actor-Partner Interdependence Model Across the First 4 Years of Relationship: Influence Tactics, Perceptions of Partner's Respect, and Wellbeing Outcomes



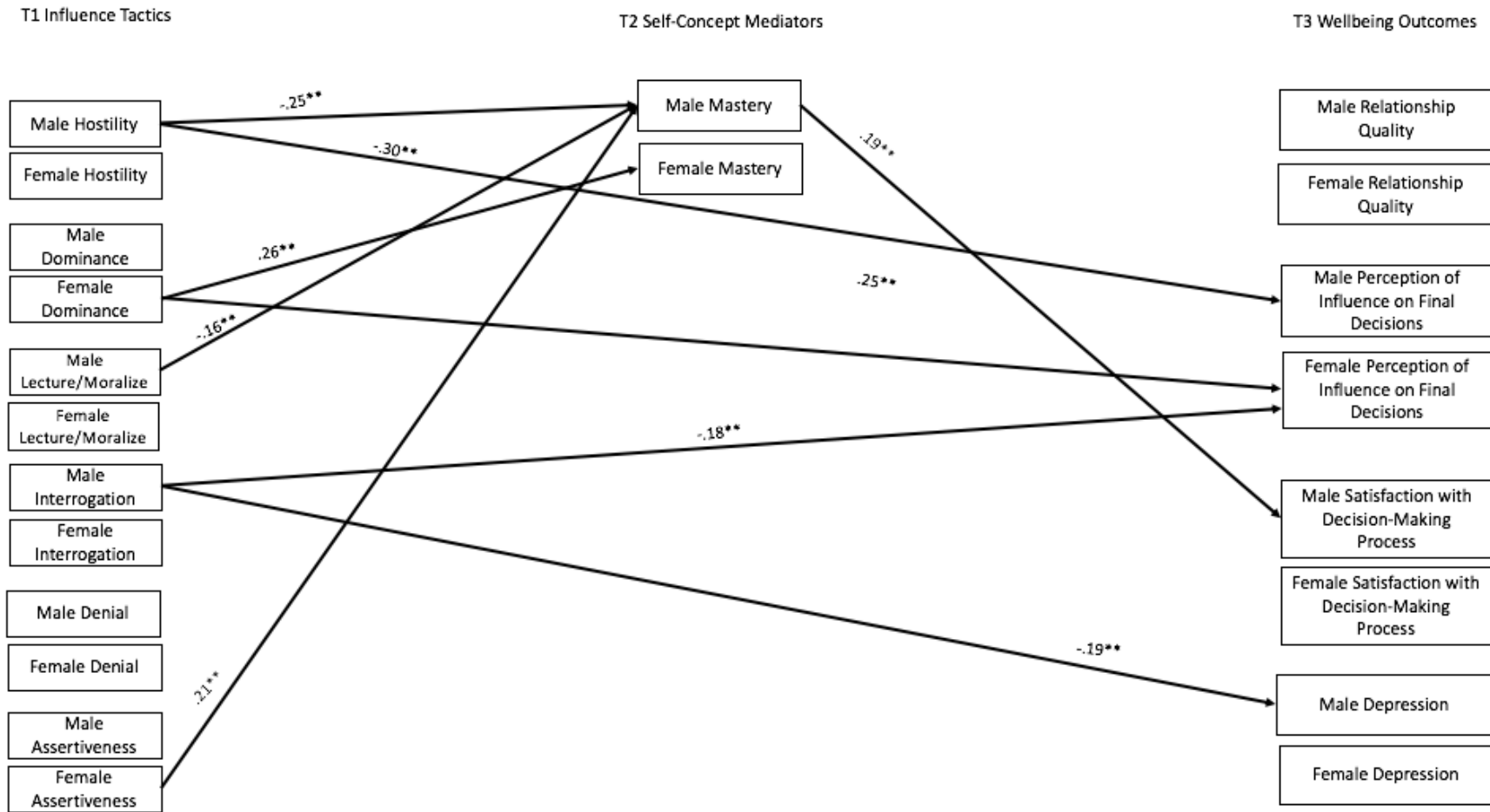
Note: Only significant paths displayed. paths ($*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$; two-tailed). Blue lines represent significant mediating paths. Controlled for relationship duration and number of children at T3. CI=95%. $\chi^2(54) = 64.53$, $p = .15$; CFI = .99; TLI = .92; RMSEA = .03; SRMR = .04.

Figure 3. Actor-Partner Interdependence Model Across the First 4 Years of Relationship: Influence Tactics, Self-Worth, and Wellbeing Outcomes



Note: Only significant paths displayed. paths ($*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$; two-tailed). Blue lines represent significant mediating paths. Controlled for relationship duration and number of children at T3. $\chi^2(54) = 64.53$, $p = .15$; CFI = .99; TLI = .92; RMSEA = .03; SRMR = .04.

Figure 4. Actor-Partner Interdependence Model Across the First 4 Years of Relationship: Influence Tactics, Mastery, and Wellbeing Outcomes



Note: Only significant paths displayed. paths (* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; two-tailed). Blue lines represent significant mediating paths; there were no significant mediating paths through mastery. Controlled for relationship duration and number of children at T3. CI=95%. $\chi^2(54) = 64.53, p = .15$; CFI = .99; TLI = .92; RMSEA = .03; SRMR = .04

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (Time 3) and Variable Information (N = 364)

Variables	Males (N = 182)				Females (N = 182)			
	<i>M or n</i>	SD or %	Range	α	<i>M or n</i>	SD or %	Range	α
Age	28.5	2.39	25 – 41		27	1.25	23 – 34	
Ethnicity								
Non-Hispanic	174	95.6%			175	96.2%		
Latinx/Hispanic	4	2.2%			4	2.2%		
Race								
White	174	95.6%			175	96.2%		
Asian	3	1.6%			3	1.6%		
Other	1	.5%			1	.5%		
Relationship Status								
Married	180	98.9%			180	98.9%		
Cohabiting	2	1.1%			2	1.1%		
Relationship Length ^a	4.88	1.94	0 – 11		4.83	1.83	0 – 10	
Number of Children	1.34	1.19	0 – 5		1.34	1.19	0 – 5	
Personal Gross Income	\$40,811.55	\$18,640.14	\$0 - \$120,000		\$24,555.86	\$20,362.52	\$0 - \$105,000	
Wave 1 (F6)								
Hostility	2.05	1.14	1 – 7.29	.87	2.58	1.40	1 – 7.29	.88
Dominance	6.33	.75	4 – 8		6.54	.75	5 – 8	
Lecturing/Moralizing	3.67	1.91	1 – 9		3.91	1.92	1 – 9	
Interrogation	3.13	1.97	1 – 9		3.71	2.08	1 – 9	
Denial	2.83	1.81	1 – 9		2.77	1.78	1 – 9	
Assertiveness	4.83	1.67	1 – 9		5.36	1.62	1 – 9	
Wave 2 (F8)								
Feels Respected by Partner ^{sb}	4.27	.64	2 – 5	.86 ^{sb}	4.43	.63	2 – 5	.87 ^{sb}
Mastery	4.05	.53	2.43 – 5	.80	3.99	.58	2.43 – 5	.80
Self-Worth	3.21	.48	1.67 – 4	.83	3.19	.51	1.5 – 4	.83
Wave 3 (F10)								
Relationship Quality	4.28	.67	1.17 – 5	.88	4.30	.75	1 – 5	.94
Perception of Influence on Final Decisions	4.27	.76	2 – 5	–	4.43	.73	1 – 5	–
Satisfaction with Decision-Making Process	3.71	1.05	0 – 5	–	3.78	.99	0 – 5	–
Depression	1.39	.42	1 – 3	.83	1.46	.57	1 – 4	.89

^aRelationship Length in years; ^{sb}Spearman-Brown coefficient ($_{qy1y2}$) used for 2-item scale

Table 2. Correlations with Relationship Quality (T3) for Partnered Women (N=182) and Men (N=182)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Male Relationship Quality ^{T3}	–	.40**	-.23**	-.09	-.19**	.02	-.02	-.01	-.17*	.17*	-.7*
2. Female Relationship Quality ^{T3}	.40***	–	-.05	.01	-.18*	.05	-.02	-.07	-.16*	.17*	-.18*
3. Age ^{T3}	.03	.08	–	-.11	.17*	.13	.15	.07	.05	-.04	.12
4. Relationship Length ^{T3}	-.05	-.002	.10	–	.34**	-.19*	-.04	-.08	-.01	.03	-.19*
5. Number of children ^{T3}	-.19**	-.19*	.002	.39**	–	-.004	.04	.05	.05	-.15*	.04
6. Dominance ^{T1}	.06	.01	.10	.001	-.02	–	.38**	.31**	.20**	.07	.35**
7. Lecture/Moralize ^{T1}	-.02	-.10	-.003	.06	-.001	.46**	–	.14	.07	.06	.10
8. Interrogation ^{T1}	-.11	-.06	-.01	-.09	-.02	.28**	.26**	–	.48**	-.19*	.33**
9. Denial ^{T1}	-.06	-.19*	.02	-.07	.05	.12**	.16*	.43**	–	-.21**	.31**
10. Assertiveness ^{T1}	.18*	.18*	.10	-.03	-.18*	.20**	.09	.48	-.28**	–	-.22**
11. Hostility ^{a, T1}	-.15*	-.17*	.03	-.07	-.02	.31**	.31**	.47**	.23**	-.14	–

(* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$)

Note: Bottom left rows 3-11 are women's scores, top right rows 3-11 are men's scores

^aHostility is a mean score of the following observed coded variables: *Hostility, verbal attack, physical attack, contempt, angry coercion, escalate hostility, and reciprocate hostility*

^{T1} = Time 1, ^{T2} = Time 2, ^{T3} = Time 3

Table 3. Correlations with Perception of Influence on Decision-Making (T3) for Partnered Women (N = 182) and Men (N = 182).

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Male Influence on Decision-Making ^{T3}	–	.16*	-.08	-.08	-.18*	.03	-.06	-.02	-.13	.09	-.29*
2. Female Influence on Decision-Making ^{T3}	.16*	–	.09	.11	-.18	-.05	-.10	-.23**	-.20**	.19*	-.10
3. Age ^{T3}	-.08	.09	–	.11	.002	-.05	-.05	-.05	.002	.02	-.03
4. Relationship Length ^{T3}	-.06	.09	.10	–	.34**	-.19*	-.04	-.08	-.01	.03	-.19*
5. Number of children ^{T3}	-.18*	-.18*	.002	.39**	–	-.004	.04	.05	.05	-.15*	.04
6. Dominance ^{T1}	-.08	.15*	.10	.001	-.02	–	.38**	.31**	.20**	.07	.35**
7. Lecture/Moralize ^{T1}	-.10	-.05	-.003	.06	-.001	.46**	–	.14	.07	.06	.10
8. Interrogation ^{T1}	-.09	-.05	-.01	-.09	-.02	.28**	.26**	–	.48**	-.19*	.33**
9. Denial ^{T1}	-.04	-.18*	.02	-.07	.05	.17**	.16*	.43**	–	-.21**	.31**
10. Assertiveness ^{T1}	.15	.21**	.10	-.03	-.18*	.20**	.09	-.05	-.28**	–	-.22**
11. Hostility ^{a, T1}	-.24**	-.15*	.03	-.07	-.02	.31**	.31**	.47**	.23**	-.14	–

(* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$)

Note: Bottom left rows 3-11 are women's scores, top right rows 3-11 are men's scores

^aHostility is a mean score of the following observed coded variables: *Hostility, verbal attack, physical attack, contempt, angry coercion, escalate hostility, and reciprocate hostility*

^{T1} = Time 1, ^{T2} = Time 2, ^{T3} = Time 3

Table 4. Correlations with Satisfaction with Decision-Making (T3) for Partnered (N=182) and Men (N=182)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Male Satisfaction with Decision-Making ^{T3}	–	.16*	-.13	.08	-.07	.05	-.06	.002	-.15*	.17*	-.18*
2. Female Satisfaction with Decision-Making ^{T3}	.16*	–	.14	.06	-.17*	-.07	-.08	-.05	-.11	.07	-.09
3. Age ^{T3}	-.02	.04	–	-.11	.17*	.13	.15	.07	.05	-.04	.12
4. Relationship Length ^{T3}	.11	.06	.10	–	.34**	-.19*	-.04	-.08	-.01	.03	-.19*
5. Number of children ^{T3}	-.07	-.17*	.002	.39**	–	-.004	.04	.05	.05	-.15*	.04
6. Dominance ^{T1}	.01	.02	.10	.001	-.02	–	.38**	.31**	.20**	.07	.35**
7. Lecture/Moralize ^{T1}	-.06	-.05	-.003	.06	-.001	.46**	–	.14	.07	.06	.10
8. Interrogation ^{T1}	-.14	-.06	-.01	-.09	-.02	.28**	.26**	–	.48**	-.19*	.33**
9. Denial ^{T1}	-.07	-.13	.02	-.07	.05	.17**	.16*	.43**	–	-.21**	.31**
10. Assertiveness ^{T1}	.18*	.13	.10	-.03	-.18*	.20**	.09	-.05	-.28**	–	-.22**
11. Hostility ^{a, T1}	-.21**	-.14	.03	-.07	-.02	.31**	.31**	.47**	.23**	-.14	–

(* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$)

Note: Bottom left rows 3-11 are women's scores, top right rows 3-11 are men's scores

^aHostility is a mean score of the following observed coded variables: *Hostility, verbal attack, physical attack, contempt, angry coercion, escalate hostility, and reciprocate hostility*

^{T1} = Time 1, ^{T2} = Time 2, ^{T3} = Time 3

Table 5. Correlations with General Distress Depression (T3) for Partnered Women (N=182) and Men (N=182)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Male General Distress Depression ^{T3}	–	.10	.13	.04	.05	.02	.10	-.08	-.04	-.03	.06
2. Female General Distress Depression ^{T3}	.10	–	.01	.24**	.21**	-.16*	.02	.05	.07	-.16*	-.04
3. Age ^{T3}	.02	.08	–	-.11	.17*	.13	.15	.07	.05	-.04	.12
4. Relationship Length ^{T3}	.04	.24**	.10	–	.34**	-.19*	-.04	-.08	-.01	.03	-.19*
5. Number of children ^{T3}	.05	.21**	.002	.39**	–	-.004	.04	.05	.05	-.15*	.04
6. Dominance ^{T1}	-.13	-.06	.10	.001	-.02	–	.38**	.31**	.20**	.07	.35**
7. Lecture/Moralize ^{T1}	-.14	-.05	-.003	.06	-.001	.46**	–	.14	.07	.06	.10
8. Interrogation ^{T1}	.01	-.08	-.01	-.09	-.02	.28**	.26**	–	.48**	-.19*	.33**
9. Denial ^{T1}	-.01	.05	.02	-.07	.05	.17**	.16*	.43**	–	-.21**	.31**
10. Assertiveness ^{T1}	-.15	-.09	.10	-.03	-.18*	.20**	.09	-.05	-.28**	–	-.22**
11. Hostility ^{a, T1}	-.06	-.10	.03	-.07	-.02	.31**	.31**	.47**	.23**	-.14	–

(* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$)

Note: Bottom left rows 3-11 are women's scores, top right rows 3-11 are men's scores

^aHostility is a mean score of the following observed coded variables: *Hostility, verbal attack, physical attack, contempt, angry coercion, escalate hostility, and reciprocate hostility*

^{T1} = Time 1, ^{T2} = Time 2, ^{T3} = Time 3

Table 6. Correlations with Perception that Partner Respects Skills and Competencies (T2) for Partnered Women (N=182) and Men (N=182)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Male Perception of being Respected ^{T3}	–	.05	-.20**	-.12	-.21**	.06	-.04	-.08	-.24**	.34**	-.21**
2. Female Perception of being Respected ^{T3}	.05	–	.29**	.02	-.02	.03	-.02	-.06	-.02	.12	-.03
3. Age ^{T3}	-.01	.19*	–	-.11	.17*	.13	.15	.07	.05	-.04	.12
4. Relationship Length ^{T3}	-.09	-.004	.10	–	.34**	-.19*	-.04	-.08	-.01	.03	-.19*
5. Number of children ^{T3}	-.21**	-.02	.002	.39**	–	-.004	.04	.05	.05	-.15*	.04
6. Dominance ^{T1}	.01	.16*	.10	.001	-.02	–	.38**	.31**	.20**	.07	.35**
7. Lecture/Moralize ^{T1}	-.17*	.03	-.003	.06	-.001	.46**	–	.14	.07	.06	.10
8. Interrogation ^{T1}	-.16*	-.004	-.01	-.09	-.02	.28**	.26**	–	.48**	-.19*	.33**
9. Denial ^{T1}	-.10	-.09	.02	-.07	.05	.17**	.16*	.43**	–	-.21**	.31**
10. Assertiveness ^{T1}	.21**	-.16*	.10	-.03	-.18*	.20**	.09	-.05	-.28**	–	-.22**
11. Hostility ^{a, T1}	-.24**	-.04	.03	-.07	-.02	.31**	.31**	.47**	.23**	-.14	–

(* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$)

Note: Bottom left rows 3-11 are women's scores, top right rows 3-11 are men's scores

^aHostility is a mean score of the following observed coded variables: *Hostility, verbal attack, physical attack, contempt, angry coercion, escalate hostility, and reciprocate hostility*

^{T1} = Time 1, ^{T2} = Time 2, ^{T3} = Time 3

Table 7. Correlations with Mastery (T2) for Partnered Women (N=182) and Men (N=182)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Male Mastery ^{T2}	–	.20**	-.04	.00	-.20**	.01	-.14	-.05	.01	.18*	-.15
2. Female Mastery ^{T2}	.20**	–	.04	-.02	-.26**	.01	-.03	-.10	-.12	.11	-.06
3. Age ^{T3}	.03	-.01	–	-.11	.17*	.13	.15	.07	.05	-.04	.12
4. Relationship Length ^{T3}	-.02	-.05	.10	–	.34**	-.19*	-.04	-.08	-.01	.03	-.19*
5. Number of children ^{T3}	-.20	-.26**	.002	.39**	–	-.004	.04	.05	.05	-.15*	.04
6. Dominance ^{T1}	.03	.17*	.10	.001	-.02	–	.38**	.31**	.20**	.07	.35**
7. Lecture/Moralize ^{T1}	-.07	.07	-.003	.06	-.001	.46**	–	.14	.07	.06	.10
8. Interrogation ^{T1}	-.10	-.08	-.01	-.09	-.02	.28**	.26**	–	.48**	-.19*	.33**
9. Denial ^{T1}	.02	-.08	.02	-.07	.05	.17**	.16*	.43**	–	-.21**	.31**
10. Assertiveness ^{T1}	.19*	.12	.10	-.03	-.18*	.20**	.09	-.05	-.28**	–	-.22**
11. Hostility ^{a, T1}	-.05	-.07	.03	-.07	-.02	.31**	.31**	.47**	.23**	-.14	–

(* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$)

Note: Bottom left rows 3-11 are women's scores, top right rows 3-11 are men's scores

^aHostility is a mean score of the following observed coded variables: *Hostility, verbal attack, physical attack, contempt, angry coercion, escalate hostility, and reciprocate hostility*

^{T1} = Time 1, ^{T2} = Time 2, ^{T3} = Time 3

Table 8. Correlations with Global Self-Worth (T2) for Partnered Women (N=182) and Men (N=182)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Male Self-Worth ^{T2}	–	.07	-.15*	.00	-.13	.13	-.07	-.08	.01	.17*	-.03
2. Female Self-Worth ^{T2}	.07	–	.01	-.07	-.18*	.21**	-.04	-.03	-.10	.03	-.02
3. Age ^{T3}	.09	-.03	–	-.11	.17*	.13	.15	.07	.05	-.04	.12
4. Relationship Length ^{T3}	.02	-.11	.10	–	.34**	-.19*	-.04	-.08	-.01	.03	-.19*
5. Number of children ^{T3}	-.13	-.18*	.002	.39**	–	-.004	.04	.05	.05	-.15*	.04
6. Dominance ^{T1}	.04	-.09	.10	.001	-.02	–	.38**	.31**	.20**	.07	.35**
7. Lecture/Moralize ^{T1}	-.07	-.04	-.003	.06	-.001	.46**	–	.14	.07	.06	.10
8. Interrogation ^{T1}	-.10	-.06	-.01	-.09	-.02	.28**	.26**	–	.48**	-.19*	.33**
9. Denial ^{T1}	-.06	-.09	.02	-.07	.05	.17**	.16*	.43**	–	-.21**	.31**
10. Assertiveness ^{T1}	.13	-.07	.10	-.03	-.18*	.20**	.09	-.05	-.28**	–	-.22**
11. Hostility ^{a, T1}	-.02	-.06	.03	-.07	-.02	.31**	.31**	.47**	.23**	-.14	–

(* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$)

Note: Bottom left rows 3-11 are women's scores, top right rows 3-11 are men's scores

^aHostility is a mean score of the following observed coded variables: *Hostility, verbal attack, physical attack, contempt, angry coercion, escalate hostility, and reciprocate hostility*

^{T1} = Time 1, ^{T2} = Time 2, ^{T3} = Time 3

Table 9. Direct Effects for Influence Tactics (T1) to Internal States (T2) (N = 173 dyads)

Predictor (T1)		Outcome (T2)	β	CI	<i>t</i> -value
Male Dominance	→	Male Self-Worth	.25**	.04, .43	2.54
Male Lecture/Moralizing	→		-.16 ^a	-.34, .00	-1.87
Male Assertiveness	→		.13 ^a	-.04, .27	1.67
Male Dominance	→	Female Self-Worth	.36***	.14, .52	3.68
Male Lecture/Moralizing	→		-.18*	-.33, -.04	-2.38
Male Hostility	→	Male Mastery	-.25**	-.47, -.05	-2.43
Male Lecture/Moralizing	→		-.16*	-.31, -.00	-2.02
Female Assertiveness	→		.21**	.03, .37	2.47
Female Dominance	→	Female Mastery	.26**	.06, .43	2.80
Male Hostility	→	Male Feels Respected by Partner	-.26**	-.43, -.05	-2.58
Male Interrogation	→		.21**	.08, .34	2.98
Male Assertiveness	→		.23***	.09, .36	3.24
Female Assertiveness	→		.22**	.07, .37	2.89
Female Hostility	→	Female Feels Respected by Partner	-.19 ^a	-.41, .03	-1.65
Male Dominance	→		.21*	.02, .35	2.45
Female Assertiveness	→		.18 ^a	-.01, .38	1.78

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, (two-tailed). ^aApproaching significance $< .10$. CI=95%. $\chi^2(54) = 64.53$, $p = .15$; CFI = .99; TLI = .92; RMSEA = .03; SRMR = .04.

Table 10. Direct Effects for Internal States (T2) and Relationship Quality, Perception of Influence on Decision-Making, Satisfaction with Decision-Making and Depression (T3) (*N* = 173 dyads)

Predictor (T2)		Outcome (T3)	β	CI	<i>t</i> -value
Male Self-Worth	→	Male Relationship Quality	.17 ^a	-.05, .35	1.65
Male Feels Respected by Partner	→		.32***	.13, .50	3.40
Male Feels Respected by Partner	→	Female Relationship Quality	.37**	.07, .45	2.83
Female Feels Respected by Partner	→		.17 ^a	-.03, .33	1.75
Male Self-Worth	→	Male Depression	-.45***	-.60, -.29	-5.76
Female Self-Worth	→	Female Depression	-.27**	-.44, -.09	-3.01
Female Feels Respected by Partner	→		-.16 ^a	-.34, .02	-1.81
Male Feels Respected by Partner	→	Female Perceived Influence on Decision-Making	.16 ^a	-.03, .32	1.79
Male Self-Worth	→	Male Satisfaction with Decision-Making	.18*	.02, .33	2.27
Female Self-Worth	→		-.15*	-.29, -.01	-2.05
Male Mastery	→		.19*	.01, .37	2.07
Male Feels Respected by Partner	→	Female Satisfaction with Decision-Making	.19*	-.01, .37	1.94

Note: ** $p < .05$, * $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed). Indirect paths tested with 2,000 bootstraps. CI=95% confidence interval. $\chi^2(54) = 64.53, p = .15$; CFI = .99; TLI = .92; RMSEA = .03; SRMR = .04.

Table 11. Direct Effects for Influence Tactics (T1) and Relationship Quality, Perception of Influence on Decision-Making, Satisfaction with Decision-Making and Depression (T3) (*N* = 173 dyads)

Predictor (T1)		Outcome (T3)	β	CI	<i>t</i> -value
Female Lecture/Moralizing	→	Male Depression	.17 ^a	-.07, .21	
Male Interrogation	→		-.19**	-.35, -.03	-2.37
Female Hostility	→	Female Depression	-.18 ^a	-.40, .02	-1.69
Male Hostility	→	Male Perceived Influence on Decision-Making	-.30**	-.52, -.09	-2.78
Female Dominance	→	Female Perceived Influence on Decision-Making	.25**	.09, .42	3.00
Male Interrogation	→		-.18**	-.36, -.04	-2.29
Male Interrogation	→	Male Satisfaction with Decision-Making	.16 ^a	-.02, .32	1.84
Male Denial	→		.17 ^a	-.35, .03	-1.68

Note: ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed). Indirect paths tested with 2,000 bootstraps. CI=95% confidence interval. $\chi^2(54) = 64.53, p = .15$; CFI = .99; TLI = .92; RMSEA = .03; SRMR = .04.

Table 12. Indirect Effects for Influence Tactics, Internal States and Relationship Quality, Perception of Influence on Decision-Making, Satisfaction with Decision-Making and Depression ($N = 173$ dyads)

Predictor	Mediator	Outcome(s)	β	CI	t -value
Male Interrogation	→ Male Feels Respected	→ Male Relationship Quality	.07**	.07, .35	2.21
Male Interrogation	→ Male Feels Respected	→ Female Relationship Quality	.06**	.01, .14	1.95
Female Assertiveness	→ Male Feels Respected	→ Male Relationship Quality	.07**	.04, .36	2.11
Female Assertiveness	→ Male Feels Respected	→ Female Relationship Quality	.06**	.01, .14	2.01
Male Assertiveness	→ Male Feels Respected	→ Male Relationship Quality	.07**	.04, .36	2.42
Male Assertiveness	→ Male Feels Respected	→ Female Relationship Quality	.06**	.02, .13	2.22
Male Assertiveness	→ Male Feels Respected	→ Female Satisfaction w/Decision-Making	-.04 ^a	.00, .10	1.65
Male Assertiveness	→ Male Self-Worth	→ Male Depression	-.06 ^a	-.12, .01	-1.65
Male Hostility	→ Male Feels Respected	→ Male Relationship Quality	-.08 ^a	-.40, -.03	-1.87
Male Hostility	→ Male Feels Respected	→ Female Relationship Quality	-.07 ^a	-.18, -.01	-1.71
Male Dominance	→ Female Self-Worth	→ Female Depression	-.10**	-.19, -.03	-2.22
Male Dominance	→ Female Self-Worth	→ Male Satisfaction w/Decision-Making	-.05 ^a	-.13, -.00	-1.65
Male Dominance	→ Male Self-Worth	→ Male Depression	-.12**	-.22, -.02	-2.22
Male Lecture/Moralizing	→ Male Self-Worth	→ Male Depression	-.07 ^a	-.00, .17	1.70
Male Lecture/Moralizing	→ Female Self-Worth	→ Female Depression	.05 ^a	.01, .12	1.86

Note: ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed). Indirect paths tested with 2,000 bootstraps. CI=95% confidence interval. $\chi^2(54) = 64.53$, $p = .15$; CFI = .99; TLI = .92; RMSEA = .03; SRMR = .04.

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