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# The role of cognitive complexity in the endorsement of domestic violence myths

Kelly J. Gluba

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The Role of Cognitive Complexity in the Endorsement of Domestic Violence Myths

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(TITLE)

BY

Kelly J. Gluba

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**THESIS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
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**Master of Arts - Clinical Psychology**

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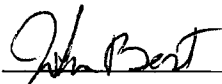
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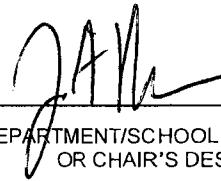
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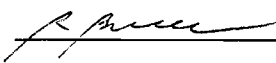
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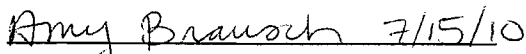
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## Abstract

The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between cognitive complexity and its role in the endorsement of stereotypical domestic violence myths. The 103 participants were recruited from the Introduction to Psychology subject pool and completed the surveys online. Measures included the Sex Role Egalitarian Scale, The Religious Orientation Scale, The Multidimensional Quest Orientation Scale, Domestic Violence Myth Acceptance Scale, and the Need for Cognition Scale. Participants were divided into four categories: those that endorsed intrinsic religious beliefs, those that endorsed extrinsic religious beliefs, those that endorsed both, and those that endorsed neither. The participants who endorsed both religious beliefs rated significantly higher on the Domestic Violence Myth Acceptance Scale than those that endorsed only one or neither.

Chapter 1

Introduction

There was a poem that was written by Jo Marie Reilly, MD, who cared for a woman who was a victim of domestic violence (Reilly, 2008). During the time Dr. Reilly spent with this particular woman, whose name was Maria, she told her that her experience with domestic violence has made her feel like a “muneca rota,” or broken doll (Reilly, 2008). Healing from the traumatic effects of domestic violence often takes a lifetime. This poem emphasized that while Maria might have been broken, she was slowly healing (Reilly, 2008).

Domestic violence is a national problem that can lead to significant physical and emotional injury, as well as death. An estimated three million women per year are victims of domestic violence in the United States alone (Norgaard, 2005). While some researchers suggest that three million may be underestimated, they also believe that 99% of all domestic violence incidents do not get reported (Norgaard, 2005). These rough estimates are based on questionnaires that neighborhood residents answer regarding domestic violence in their particular neighborhood (Norgaard, 2005). These rough statistics may suggest that the problem of domestic violence is larger and affects more people than many realize.

The purpose of this introduction and literature review is to first give a review of the problem of domestic violence and discuss how it affects both married couples and couples who do not cohabit. Then the issue of blame will be discussed and possible reasons why there is an overwhelming tendency to blame the victim. The proposed hypotheses of this thesis will also be examined.

*Proposed hypotheses*

Based on previous literature, four hypotheses were proposed for this study. First, it was hypothesized that individuals who endorsed both intrinsic and extrinsic religious beliefs also endorsed a more negative, stereotypical, and traditional view of domestic violence. Second, it was hypothesized that individuals who endorsed a traditional gender role attitude also endorsed a more stereotypical, negative view of domestic violence. Third, it was hypothesized that individuals who endorsed both intrinsic and extrinsic religious beliefs also rated low on the Need for Cognition Scale. Lastly, there will be no difference between Whites and African Americans on the Domestic Violence Myth Acceptance Scale.



## Chapter 2

### Review of Literature

In the United States alone, one in every four women will be the victim of domestic violence, which is an estimated 1.3 million women who will experience this form of abuse each year (NCADV, 2008). For married women or women who live with their significant other, 16% of them will experience some sort of domestic violence (Peters, 2003). The percentage of women who have a physical or mental disability or who are on welfare and will experience domestic violence ranges from 40% to 57% (Peters, 2003). Fifty percent of all victims of reported domestic violence incidents are severely injured (Peters, 2003). Domestic violence also accounts for a third of all femicides as well (Peters, 2003).

#### *What constitutes as domestic violence?*

Domestic violence can occur in three different ways. They include physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. Physical abuse consists of using physical force to hurt, intimidate, or control someone else (Wilson, 1997). Examples of physical abuse are pushing, slapping, restraining, and murder. Emotional abuse consists of using one's voice or action to control or hurt someone else (Wilson, 1997). Examples of emotional abuse that are considered verbal are making threats to children, threatening to kill, name calling, and insinuating someone is "dumb" or "stupid." Actions that are considered emotionally abusive are acting irresponsible with money or controlling access to it, isolating victim from friends and family, intense jealousy, and being unemployed. Sexual abuse is any sexual behavior that is used to control or intimidate another person

(Wilson, 1997). Examples of sexual abuse are false accusations, rape, forcing victims to have sex with other people, and forcing partner to observe others having sex.

Domestic violence is not only a problem in married or couples who live together, but also affects populations such as college students. Relationship violence among college students that occurs in places such as residence halls happen more often than many people want to admit (Berkel, et al. 2004). Previous studies have reported that 20% of college students of both genders have reported being involved in relationships that involved physical acts of violence (Berkel et al. 2004). These studies have shown that 1 in 4 male college students reported using physical violence on their partner (Berkel et al. 2004). Twenty-one percent of the female college students surveyed in previous studies reported being the victims of physical violence, such as kicking, biting, or punching (Berkel et al. 2004).

One theory to explain the violence among college students is their lack of awareness of what constitutes as verbal and emotional abuse due to their inexperience with relationships ([www.breakthecycle.org](http://www.breakthecycle.org), 2005; [www.feministcampus.org](http://www.feministcampus.org), 2005,). Since this is the first time many students are away from home, they can become lonely and isolated from their family and any resources they feel they can turn to for help ([www.breakthecycle.org](http://www.breakthecycle.org), 2005). Women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence ([www.breakthecycle.org](http://www.breakthecycle.org); [www.feministcampus.org](http://www.feministcampus.org), 2005) and 90% of victims of sexual abuse on college campuses know their attacker ([www.breakthecycle.org](http://www.breakthecycle.org), 2005).

*Dynamics of domestic violence*

Abusers use a variety of methods to control their victims. As described above, domestic violence can take the form of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. Along with emotional abuse is psychological abuse. The Power and Control Wheel lists eight psychological forms of abuse that an abuser uses to control his victim. The first method is the use of coercion and threats (Wrightsman, 2001). These include threats to harm the victim, their children, relatives, or any family pets. The abuser may also threaten to report her to welfare or child protection services. The second method an abuser may employ to control his victim is the use of intimidation (Wrightsman, 2001). The abuser keeps the victim afraid by using intimidating looks, gestures, breaking her property, and showing her weapons he could use to harm her.

The third method used to keep a victim powerless is the use of emotional abuse (Wrightsman, 2001). This method includes attacks on the victim's self-esteem, confidence, and humiliating her by forcing her to walk around nude or not letting her bathe or use the toilet. Isolation is also used as a means to control the victim (Wrightsman, 2001). She is restricted from mail, friends, family, and even T.V. The abuser may even minimize the abuse or deny that the abuse even occurred, or blame the victim for being the cause of the abuse and "making him do it" (Wrightsman, 2001). The abuser may also use a phenomenon called "male privilege" against his victim. Male privilege is the theory that the man always gets what he wants, his preferences supersede what the woman wants, and his demands and wants cannot be questioned by the woman (Wrightsman, 2001). The last form of abuse is economic (Wrightsman, 2001). The

abuser makes the woman beg for money, destroys their credit cards, or controls their transportation methods.

*Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)*

Domestic violence affects women of all races, ages, socioeconomic status, and creed. In response to this overwhelming problem, Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act in 1994 ([www.ovw.usdoj.gov](http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov), 2008). VAWA is the first piece of legislation that deals exclusively with domestic violence and was first introduced in 1994 ([epic.org](http://epic.org), 2008). VAWA protected victims of domestic violence in several ways. One way was to limit personal and embarrassing details of a victim's life into evidence at a trial, such as past sexual conduct of the victim ([epic.org](http://epic.org), 2008). This rule was established so that in the case of sexual assault in a domestic violence case, the woman's character cannot be called into question, insinuating she secretly wanted the sex or consented to it ([epic.org](http://epic.org), 2008).

VAWA also protected the abused person's address by requiring that the postal service protect the confidentiality of such addresses of abused individuals and domestic violence shelters ([epic.org](http://epic.org), 2008). VAWA also authorized courts handling cases involving domestic violence incidents to access national criminal information databases and to enter charges of domestic violence into these databases ([epic.org](http://epic.org), 2008). The final way VAWA protects the rights of a domestic violence victim is to protect the confidentiality between a victim and their counselor ([epic.org](http://epic.org), 2008). This relationship is protected in order to help victims receive the maximum benefit possible from therapeutic counseling sessions, and to allow them honest disclosure in the session ([epic.org](http://epic.org), 2008).

In 2005 VAWA was revised to include several new ways as an increased effort to protect women (www.epic.org, 2008). One of those ways is to restrict the information that is allowed to be published on an order of protection that is accessible via internet (www.epic.org, 2008). Information that would reveal the victim's identity or location is prohibited from being published (www.epic.org, 2008). Another revision involves how a woman's homeless situation is reported (www.epic.org, 2008). Homeless shelters that are receiving Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grants are required to report certain statistics of their residents to the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) (www.epic.org, 2008). This program determines how many people are facing homelessness (www.epic.org, 2008). Domestic violence shelters received an increase in their privacy under this revision, since many women who face abusive situations and must seek emergency shelter flee to these shelters (www.epic.org, 2008). Under the HMIS, it would be easy for an abuser to track a woman as she moved from shelter to shelter, until VAWA 2005 increased the protection of the privacy of these shelters (www.epic.org, 2008).

VAWA 2005 also updated previous stalking laws, due to new technologies that provide an abuser different ways to stalk his intended victim (www.epic.org, 2008). Also revised due to VAWA was the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (www.epic.org, 2008). Under the new revisions, the Department of Homeland Security, the Attorney General, and the Department of State cannot deport a woman based only on information they receive by the woman's abuser or any family member of said abuser (www.epic.org, 2008). The new revision also prohibits any

information on applications for VAWA self-petitions, T and U visas to be disclosed (www.epic.org, 2008).

*Stereotypical myths about domestic violence*

There are several stereotypical myths that surround domestic violence. Even though these myths are false, there may be several reasons why some individuals in modern day society still endorse such beliefs. One reason for the beliefs of such myths is that there is an underlying hostility towards victims of domestic violence (Wrightsman, 2001). People have a desire to believe that everything is okay, and if a woman does have problems, she's either a "pathological doormat" or she is crying wolf (Wrightsman, 2001).

Another hypothesis to explain why some individuals endorse myths concerning domestic violence concerns the way court cases are handled involving women who kill their abusers and men who kill their significant others (Wrightsman, 2001). After a review of legal cases by Browne (1987), it was concluded that in the case of homicide, women received harsher sentences than men did (Wrightsman, 2001). Examples of this are the cases of Kenneth Peacock and Patricia Ann Hawkins. Kenneth Peacock was sentenced to 18 months in jail after shooting his wife, Sandra (www.now.org, 2008). On February 9, 2008, Kenneth arrived home to find his wife in bed with another man (www.now.org, 2008). After chasing the man out of his house with a hunting rifle, he then spent several hours drinking and arguing with his wife (www.now.org, 2008). He then proceeded to fire his rifle at his wife, missing her, and hitting the wall above her head (www.now.org, 2008). After reloading his rifle, he fired the fatal shot to her head (www.now.org, 2008). His sentence was reduced from first degree murder to voluntary



manslaughter, with a recommendation from the judge for work release (www.now.org, 2008). The prosecuting attorney had requested a three to eight-year sentence (www.now.org, 2008).

In the same month and state that Kenneth killed his wife, Patricia Ann Hawkins killed her husband by setting a fire near him while he was sleeping (Wrightsman, 2001). Patricia had been abused and threatened for years leading up to the murder of her husband (Wrightsman, 2001). She was sentenced to three years in prison, even though the prosecuting attorney would have accepted a one year sentence (Wrightsman, 2001).

These two hypotheses possibly could explain why people still endorse stereotypical myths concerning domestic violence. According to Diane Follingstad (1994), there are nine commonly endorsed myths concerning domestic violence (Wrightsman, 2001). They include:

1. Battered women are masochists.
2. They provoke the assaults inflicted on them.
3. They get the treatment they deserve.
4. They are free to leave these violent relationships at any time they want to.
5. The physical abuse of women is not at all common.
6. Men who are personable and nonviolent in their dealings with outsiders must be the same in their dealings with their intimates.
7. Middle class and upper class men don't batter, and middle class and upper class women don't get beaten.
8. Battering is a lower-class, ethnic-minority phenomenon, and such women don't mind because it is part of their culture.



9. “Good” battered women are passive and never try to defend themselves.

*Reasons for blaming the victim.*

Unfortunately, there is an overwhelming tendency to blame the victim in domestic violence disputes. While this phenomenon is not fully understood, previous research has led to several possible explanations. One proposed explanation is the development of individual schemas that can lead to the arrival of causal judgments (Norgaard, 2005). Schemas are formed from an individual’s own personal experience and then applied to future events that the individual assumes resemble their past experience (Norgaard, 2005). These schemas aid in helping the individual make a more systematic sense of the world (Norgaard, 2005). The problem with preconceived schemas is that they diminish the individual’s ability to consider changing their own current perspectives (Norgaard, 2005). Such a diminished capacity to endorse other, more open perspectives may lead the individual to accept more stereotypical, negative, and traditional views (Norgaard, 2005).

The phrase “negative, traditional, and stereotypical view of domestic violence” means a view that endorses such ideas as the victim is responsible for the abuse, exonerating the abuser, and minimizing the seriousness of the problem (Peters, 2003). By endorsing the idea that the victim is responsible for the abuse, the individual believes that if the victim’s situation was that horrible, he or she should have just left the abuser. By exonerating the abuser, the individual believes that the perpetrator was probably abused as a child, which releases the abuser from responsibility for his or her actions. Such negative and traditional views have historical places in social norm that date back to

the Middle Ages (Norgaard, 2005), if not before. As recently as the early twentieth century domestic violence, in the form of physical battering, whether it is to a wife or girlfriend, was still a widely accepted general practice (Norgaard, 2005).

Another explanation of why the victim is blamed is the way the legal system handles the case. A domestic violence case is dealt with in family court and the victim of the crime is named as the complainant (Bryant & Spencer, 2003). As described earlier, women are also dealt with more harshly in severe domestic violence cases, which may aid some in blaming the victim and feeling sorry for the abuser.

*Indicators for endorsement of beliefs.*

Previous studies have found possible indicators that may also aid in determining if a person will endorse a more negative, traditional, and stereotypical view of domestic violence. The two elements that previous studies have discovered that may aid in predicting those who endorse such negative and stereotypical views of domestic violence is the individual's orientation of religious belief and his or her gender role attitudes.

An individual may endorse extrinsic religious orientation, intrinsic religious orientation, neither, or both. Those that endorse extrinsic religious orientation believe that their religion serves them, rather than endorse the belief that they are here to serve their religion (Hills & Francis, 2003). Those with extrinsic religious orientation use their religion for personal gain, such as relief, comfort (Berkel et al. 2004), social status, sociability, or ego-reinforcement (Hills & Francis, 2003). These people are very loosely associated with their church and get what they can out of their religion and their church (Trimble, 1997).

An individual who endorses intrinsic religious beliefs “live” their religion (Berkel, Vandiver, Bahner, 2004). They follow the teachings of their religion because they believe it is the right thing to do and the correct way to live their lives. Rather than using religion for a personal reason, they use religion as a guide to how they should live their lives (Trimble, 1997). They live their religious beliefs because they believe it is what their God intended them to do. They do not expect a reward for living out their beliefs, unlike someone with extrinsic religious beliefs (Trimble, 1997). Individuals with intrinsic religious beliefs also show a greater commitment to their religion and attend church more frequently than do people who endorse extrinsic religious beliefs (Trimble, 1997).

While an individual can choose not to endorse intrinsic or extrinsic religious beliefs, he or she can also endorse both. This phenomenon was discovered in a study done by Ross and Allport (1967). Ross and Allport referred to these individuals who endorsed both values as “muddleheads” (Trimble, 1997). These people endorsed any question that mentioned religion in a positive way, regardless of whether it was contradictory to previous questions or whether they truly believed it (Trimble, 1997). The technical term given to people who endorsed both intrinsic and extrinsic items was “indiscriminantly proreligious” (Trimble, 1997). In the study conducted by Ross and Allport, they found that people who were considered “muddleheads” were more prejudiced than the people who endorsed either intrinsic or extrinsic religious beliefs (Trimble, 1997).

One possible explanation for the “muddleheads” could be their lack of cognitive complexity. An individual who has a high level of cognitive complexity is able to see

issues as multifaceted, instead of seeing the situation just at face value (Hill, 2004). What shapes an individual's cognitive complexity are their background, views, and beliefs (Hill, 2004). Individuals who have higher levels of cognitive complexity are better able to "acquire, store, retrieve, organize, and generate information about other persons and social situations" (Burlison & Caplan, 1995).

Those individuals with a high level of cognitive complexity also rely less on what is socially acceptable and what they have been taught and rather evaluate the situation based on their own beliefs and values (Burlison & Caplan, 1995). These individuals are also less likely than those with low cognitive complexity to make quick and extreme judgments about a situation or individual (Burlison & Caplan, 1995). Cognitively complex individuals are also more "socially skilled and interpersonally competent" than those who have low cognitive complexity (Burlison & Caplan, 1995). The "muddleheads" endorsed the questions that portrayed religion in a positive way without thinking the questions through. Rather, they saw the questions, and took them at face value. Their lack of cognitive complexity could help explain their endorsement of both intrinsic and extrinsic religious beliefs.

The gender role attitudes that individuals endorse may also contribute to how they view domestic violence. Gender role attitudes are beliefs about what roles are appropriate for men and women (Berkel, Vandiver, Bahner, 2004). These roles can vary from being very traditional to being egalitarian (Berkel, Vandiver, Bahner, 2004). Someone with a more traditional view of gender roles agree more with stereotypical views based on an individual's gender (Berkel, Vandiver, Bahner, 2004). Those who believe in a more egalitarian view of gender roles do not base their views on an

individual's gender (Berkel, Vandiver, Bahner, 2004). Previous research has found that those individuals who believe in traditional gender role attitudes were also more willing to accept rape myths and the use of physical and sexual violence in relationships versus those who have more of an egalitarian view (Berkel, Vandiver, Bahner, 2004). Those who endorsed traditional gender role views also endorsed the use of force in relationships as well (Berkel, Vandiver, Bahner, 2004).

In a study conducted by Berkel, Vandiver, and Bahner (2004) 316 White college students (211 women and 105 men) were surveyed to determine if their gender role attitudes, religion, and spirituality could be used as predictors of their domestic violence attitudes. The instruments used to assess these traits were the *Sex Role Egalitarian Scale Form KK*, the *Armstrong Measure of Spirituality*, the *Religious Orientation Scale*, and a *demographic sheet* (Berkel, Vandiver, & Bahner, 2004). What the researchers found was that sex role egalitarian views and spiritual beliefs were significant predictors of how the student felt about domestic violence (Berkel, Vandiver, & Bahner, 2004). The students who endorsed more egalitarian gender role attitudes and scored higher on their spirituality beliefs had greater sympathy for battered women than those that scored lower on both beliefs (Berkel, Vandiver, & Bahner, 2004).

Women also endorsed a more egalitarian view on sex roles than did men in the study (Berkel, Vandiver, & Bahner, 2004). The way an individual felt about sex roles seemed to be the best predictor of how they viewed domestic violence in this study (Berkel, Vandiver, & Bahner, 2004). Those that endorsed the more egalitarian views felt that domestic violence was indeed wrong, and those that had less of an egalitarian view

did not see it as that big of a problem or that the abuser was doing anything wrong (Berkel, Vandiver, & Bahner, 2004).

*Domestic violence within the African American community*

Research has also shown that domestic violence is a prevalent concern among the African American community. There is some discrepancy among research, with some saying it occurs more in the African American community (Bent-Goodley, 2004) and others reporting that there is little difference in the lifetime rate between White women and African American women who will experience domestic violence (Lee, 2002). According to the National Black Women's Health Project, the number one health issue for African American women come from the aftermath effects of domestic violence, which include death and serious injuries, as well as an increased risk of contracting HIV (Bent-Goodley, 2004). Even though in the past 20 years the homicide rate for domestic violence incidents has decreased, it still remains higher for African American women (Lee, 2002). Compared to white women, African American women are twice as likely to be murdered by their abuser as are white women (Bent-Goodley, 2004). African American woman are also arrested and incarcerated at a higher rate than White women are (Bent-Goodley, 2004). Even though domestic violence affects the African American community as it does the white community, it is perceived differently by African American women (Bent-Goodley, 2004).

In a study done by Bent-Goodley (2004), 14 African American women were recruited to discuss their perception of domestic violence as well as their experiences. What was discovered was that they perceived abuse and "beating" as two different things (Bent-Goodley, 2004). Abuse was seen less severe as a beating, and consisted of pushing

and slapping (Bent-Goodley, 2004). To receive a beating consisted of getting bones broken, hospitalization, or bleeding profusely (Bent-Goodley, 2004). Domestic violence was not seen as occurring unless a beating took place (Bent-Goodley, 2004).

In a study conducted by Weis (2001), 15 white women and 15 African American women, all from working class and poor socioeconomic groups, were interviewed concerning their experience with domestic violence. What was discovered was that African American women were more likely to discuss their experiences with domestic violence compared to the white women (Weis, 2001). According to Weis, the white women in this study would not call the man an abuser, and did not blame him for any abuse that occurred in their home (Weis, 2001). In contrast, the African American women were more than willing to openly discuss the violence in their homes, as well as blame the man for the abuse that occurs there (Weis, 2001).

In the same study, Weis found that married white women who had a husband that earned an adequate living would not discuss their experiences with domestic violence (Beck & Jessup, 2004). Women who had once lived that lifestyle, but had left it, were more willing to discuss the domestic violence situation they had left, since they no longer cared about maintaining the “good” white family ideology anymore (Beck & Jessup, 2004). According to the married white women in the study who would not discuss their own encounters with domestic violence because they wanted to protect that image, “good” means a husband with a successful job, children, and a house (Beck & Jessup, 2004). In this study, Weis found that the reporting of domestic violence incidents were lower in the African American sample (67%) than in the white women (92%), the African American women were more willing to discuss their experiences openly and

honestly, seek help from police and shelters, and file orders of protection against their abusers (Beck & Jessup, 2004).

A study done by Fraser et al. (2002) found different results than the previous study. In this study, 101 African American women completed self-administered questionnaires that inquired about their previous and current domestic violence situations (Fraser et al., 2002). What the researchers discovered was that the women blamed the abuse that they sustained at the hand of their partner to external factors, such as racism, income, and employment status (Fraser et al., 2002). The battered women's decision "to withstand abuse and make a conscious self-sacrifice for what she perceives as the greater good of the community but to her own physical, psychological, and spiritual detriment" (Bent-Goodley, 2004). This is the women's way of protecting their partners from the criminal justice system which they believe will treat the African American abuser in an unfair way (Bent-Goodley, 2004). Believing that while in the criminal justice system the abuser will encounter law enforcement brutality and acts of hate, the woman forsakes her own mental and physical needs in order to maintain the relationship, protect her man, and avoid any embarrassment that a complaint may cause (Bent-Goodley, 2004).

#### *Proposed hypotheses*

Based on previous literature, four hypotheses were proposed for this study. First, it was hypothesized that individuals who endorsed both intrinsic and extrinsic religious beliefs also endorsed a more negative, stereotypical, and traditional view of domestic violence. Second, it was hypothesized that individuals who endorsed a traditional gender role attitude also endorsed a more stereotypical, negative view of domestic violence. Third, it was hypothesized that individuals who endorsed both intrinsic and extrinsic



religious beliefs also rated low on the Need for Cognition Scale. Lastly, there will be no difference between Whites and African Americans on the Domestic Violence Myth Acceptance Scale.

## Chapter 3

## Methodology

*Participants*

Data was collected from 103 undergraduate students ( $m$  age = 18.52) attending Eastern Illinois University. There were 76 women and 27 men who participated in this study. Participants were recruited from the Psychology subject pool. The self-reported ethnicities of the participants were 72% Caucasian ( $n = 74$ ), 20% African American ( $n = 21$ ), .03% Hispanic ( $n = 3$ ), and .05% International ( $n = 5$ ).

*Scales**Sex Role Egalitarian Scale*

This scale consists of 25 items that measure beliefs about appropriate roles for men and women across five domains of adult life: 1) marital roles, 2) parental roles, 3) employment roles, 4) social-interpersonal-heterosexual roles, and 5) educational roles. This scale uses a Likert scale, which for the purposes of this study will be treated as interval data, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) with a possible summed score from 25 to 125. Higher scores are interpreted to mean a more egalitarian gender role attitude. Internal consistency estimates are reported to be in the .90 range.

*The Religious Orientation Scale (ROS)*

This scale consists of three separate subscales that measure intrinsic and extrinsic religious beliefs (Berkel, Vandiver, & Bahner, 2004). The first scale, which measures intrinsic beliefs, consists of 11 items and can range from 11 to 55 for a summed score (Berkel, Vandiver, & Bahner, 2004). The higher an individual scores, the more intrinsic his or her beliefs are (Berkel, Vandiver, & Bahner, 2004). The second scale, which

measures personal extrinsic motivation toward religion, consists of 3 items and can range from 3 to 15 with higher scores indicating that an individual is likely to use religion for his or her own personal reasons and benefits (Berkel, Vandiver, & Bahner, 2004). The third scale, which measures social extrinsic motivation for religion, consists of 3 items and can range from 3 to 15 with a higher score indicating that an individual's beliefs are motivated by social rewards that religion can offer him or her (Berkel, Vandiver, & Bahner, 2004). Social rewards include business networking, sociability, comfort, or social status.

The reliability coefficient of the first scale, which measures intrinsic beliefs, is .87 (Berkel, Vandiver, & Bahner, 2004). The reliability coefficient for the second scale, which measures personal extrinsic motivation toward religion, is .63 (Berkel, Vandiver, & Bahner, 2004). The reliability coefficient of the third scale, which measures social extrinsic motivation for religion, is .62 (Berkel, Vandiver, & Bahner, 2004).

#### *The Multidimensional Quest Orientation Scale*

The intrinsic subscale of the ROS was intentionally designed to measure a person's mature religion beliefs, when in fact; it measures self-rated religious commitment of that individual (Beck and Jessup, 2004). The *Quest Orientation Scale* was designed to measure such beliefs (Beck and Jessup, 2004). The features that this scale includes and the *ROS* does not include complexity, readiness to face doubt, self-criticism, understanding incompleteness and tentativeness, and the continuation to search for truth as it applies to one's religious beliefs (Beck and Jessup, 2004).

This scale consists of 62 items that make up nine subscales that assess the nine dimensions of Quest. They include tentativeness, change, ecumenism, universality,

exploration, moralistic interpretation, religious angst, complexity, and existential motives. Tentativeness places emphasis on an individual's religious questions over definite answers and the understanding that doubt can serve as a positive experience. Change refers to an individual's openness to changing their religious views over time and his or her continued scrutiny of any currently held beliefs. Ecumenism refers to the acceptance of other Christian faiths. Universality is the ability to accept other worldly religions as another equal way to pursue God. Exploration is the amount of effort an individual puts forth into exploring religious teachings. Moralistic Interpretation refers to the emphasizing of moral or spiritual meanings that the Bible teaches, rather than focusing on any historical or scientific accuracy. Religious Angst refers to the experience of negative feelings, such as doubt and anxiety, on an individual's religious journey. Complexity refers to holding complex views on religious matters versus simple views. Existential Motives refers to the degree in which an individual's life is motivated by their religious beliefs based on their quest to find a purpose or meaning. Each item is rated using a Likert scale, which will be treated as interval data for the purposes of this study, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) (Beck and Jessup, 2004).

*Domestic Violence Myth Acceptance Scale (DVMAS)*

This scale consists of 18 items that determine whether or not stereotypical myths about domestic violence are endorsed by an individual. The scale was designed to assess characterological blame of the victim, behavioral blame of the victim, minimization of the seriousness and extent of the abuse, and exoneration of the abuser.

This scale was originally constructed with 80 items, from which the 18 items used were chosen (Peters, 2003). This scale has a reliability coefficient of .88 (Peters, 2003).

The items selected had good face validity as well as content validity, according to professionals in the domestic violence field that were known by the author and used as a convenience sample to judge such traits of this scale (Peters, 2003).

#### *The Need for Cognition Scale*

This scale measures an individual's "tendency to engage and enjoy thinking" (Bost, 2007). The scale consists of 18 items that inquire about the satisfaction an individual gets from thinking (Bost, 2007). The items are scored using a 9-point scale, ranging from very strong agreement (+4) to very strong disagreement (-4) (Bost, 2007). The highest possible score an individual can obtain on this scale is 72, with the lowest being -72 (Bost, 2007). An individual who scores high on this scale enjoys the thinking process, and can sort out irrelevant information when solving problems (Bost, 2007).

#### *Demographics Questionnaire*

Each participant will also fill out a questionnaire inquiring about their age, gender, and race.

#### *Procedure*

Participants were recruited primarily from the Psychology subject pool. The participants filled out the instruments online through the SONA system. Where the participants chose to fill out the instruments (home, library, etc.) was the individual choice of each participant.

#### *Proposed Data Analysis*

The data was entered into SPSS. The data was analyzed using a One-Way ANOVA test. The independent variable was the group that the participant could be in. The three groups are those who endorse intrinsic religious beliefs, those who endorse

extrinsic religious beliefs, and those who endorse both, otherwise known as the “muddleheads.” The dependent variable was the level of stereotypicality in domestic violence. The expected results will indicate that those participants who endorse both intrinsic and extrinsic religious beliefs will have a higher mean on the dependent variable, thus endorsing stereotypical views on domestic violence. The individuals who endorse either intrinsic or extrinsic beliefs are expected to have a lower mean on the dependent variable.

The expected results will also indicate that those individuals who endorse both intrinsic and extrinsic religious beliefs will rate low on the Multidimensional Quest Orientation Scale. The same three groups will be used as the independent variable and the dependent variable will be their Quest Orientation Scale score. The results were based on correlational results derived from the results from the One-Way ANOVA. The expected result is that the “muddleheads” will have a negative correlation with this score, whereas those who endorse either intrinsic or extrinsic will have positive correlations.

Another expected result will be that those individuals who endorse a more traditional gender role attitude will also endorse a more negative and traditional view of domestic violence. The independent variable was whether the participant has a traditional view of gender roles or an egalitarian view of gender roles and the dependent variable was the Sex Role Egalitarian Scale. The expected results will indicate that those participants who have a more traditional view of gender roles will have a lower mean on the dependent variable and a higher mean on the Domestic Violence Myth Acceptance Scale. The expected results will also indicate that those who have a more egalitarian view will have a higher mean on the dependent variable and a lower mean on the

Domestic Violence Myth Acceptance Scale. The last expected result is that the hypotheses predicted will provide a pattern of correlation that will be observed in whites and African Americans.

## Chapter 4

## Results

A one-way ANOVA was conducted on each of the proposed hypotheses. Each group was split up with 60% being the cutoff point on a scale, since no official cutoff point was found for the scales. For example, if a participant scored higher than 60% on the intrinsic scale, the participant was considered to have endorsed an intrinsic belief system. Besides the three groups that were used in the main hypotheses, there was a fourth group. These were the individuals that did not endorse any religious beliefs. Since they were not included in the main hypotheses, they were not reported in the results.

The first proposed hypothesis was that individuals who endorsed both intrinsic and extrinsic religious beliefs also endorsed a more negative, stereotypical, and traditional view of domestic violence. At an alpha level of .05, results showed that there is a significant difference between those that endorsed both intrinsic and extrinsic beliefs ( $n = 16$ ,  $M = 49.50$ ,  $SD = 8.32$ ) and those that did not in their endorsement of domestic violence myths,  $F(3,103) = 3.097$ ,  $p = .030$ . Those that endorsed intrinsic religious beliefs ( $n = 54$ ,  $SD = 10.49$ ) had a mean of 45.67. Those that endorsed extrinsic religious beliefs ( $n = 7$ ,  $SD = 6.09$ ) had a mean of 51.86. This finding supported the hypothesis that those that endorsed both religious beliefs also endorsed a more negative, stereotypical, and traditional view of domestic violence.

Table 1

Group	N	M	SD
Endorsed both	16	49.50	8.32



beliefs			
Endorsed Intrinsic Beliefs	54	45.67	10.49
Endorsed Extrinsic Beliefs	7	51.86	6.09

The second proposed hypothesis was that individuals who endorsed a traditional gender role attitude also endorsed a more stereotypical and negative view of domestic violence. At an alpha level of .05, results showed that there is a significant difference between those that endorsed a traditional gender role attitude ( $n = 31$ ,  $M = 50.84$ ,  $SD = 9.48$ ) and those that do not ( $n = 72$ ,  $M = 43.39$ ,  $SD = 9.48$ ) and their view on domestic violence,  $F(1,103) = 13.858$ ,  $p = .000$ . These findings support the hypothesis that individuals who endorsed a traditional gender role attitude also endorsed a more stereotypical and negative view of domestic violence.

Table 2

Group	N	M	SD
Egalitarian Beliefs	72	43.39	9.48
Traditional Beliefs	31	50.84	9.48

The third proposed hypothesis was that individuals who endorsed both intrinsic and extrinsic religious beliefs also had a lower score on the Need for Cognition Scale. At an alpha level of .05, results showed that there is no significant difference between those that endorse both intrinsic and extrinsic religious beliefs ( $n = 16$ ,  $M = 44.81$ ,  $SD = 4.09$ )

and those that do not and their score on the Need for Cognition Scale,  $F(3, 103) = .123, p = .946$ . Those that endorsed intrinsic religious beliefs ( $n = 54, SD = 3.33$ ) had a mean of 45.39. Those that endorsed extrinsic religious beliefs ( $n = 7, SD = 4.58$ ) had a mean of 45.57. These findings did not support the hypothesis that those individuals who endorsed both intrinsic and extrinsic religious beliefs will rate lower on the Need for Cognition Scale than those who endorsed only one religious belief.

Table 3

Group	N	M	SD
Endorsed both beliefs	16	44.81	4.09
Endorsed intrinsic beliefs	54	45.39	3.33
Endorsed extrinsic beliefs	7	45.57	4.58

The fourth proposed hypothesis was that there would be no difference between Whites and African Americans on the Domestic Violence Myth Acceptance Scale. At an alpha level of .05, results showed that there was no significant difference between races and their beliefs on domestic violence,  $F(3, 103) = .351, p = .788$ . Those that reported to be Caucasian ( $n = 74, SD = 9.89$ ) had a mean of 45.78. Those that reported to be African American ( $n = 21, SD = 10.40$ ) had a mean of 45.38. This finding showed that there was no difference between Whites and African Americans and how they scored on the Domestic Violence Myth Acceptance Scale.

Table 4

Group	N	M	SD
Whites	74	45.78	9.89
African Americans	21	45.38	21

The research question that was proposed was that individuals who endorsed both intrinsic and extrinsic religious beliefs will rate low on the Quest Orientation Scale. At an alpha level of .05, results showed that there was no significant difference between those who endorsed both intrinsic and extrinsic religious beliefs ( $n = 16$ ,  $M = 1.56$ ,  $SD = .51$ ) and those that endorsed only one,  $F(3,103) = .751$ ,  $p = .525$ . Those that endorsed intrinsic religious beliefs ( $n = 54$ ,  $SD = .49$ ) had a mean of 1.39. Those that endorsed extrinsic religious beliefs ( $n = 7$ ,  $SD = .54$ ) had a mean of 1.57. These findings concluded that those individuals who endorsed both religious beliefs did not score lower on the Need for Cognition Scale than those that endorsed only one religious belief.

Table 5

Group	N	M	SD
Endorsed both religious beliefs	16	1.56	.51
Endorsed intrinsic religious beliefs	54	1.39	.49
Endorsed extrinsic religious beliefs	7	1.57	.54

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of cognitive complexity in the endorsement of domestic violence myths. In general, most of the students in the study did not support the use of violence in relationships and most of the participants endorsed an egalitarian gender role attitude.

Three of the four proposed hypotheses were supported. Individuals who endorsed both intrinsic and extrinsic religious beliefs also endorsed a more negative, stereotypical, and traditional view of domestic violence. The second hypothesis to be supported was that those individuals who endorsed a traditional gender role attitude also endorsed a more stereotypical and negative view of domestic violence. The assumption for these two hypotheses was that, based on previous literature, those individuals that endorsed both views would be less likely to think for themselves when proposed with myths that have been long standing and still socially accepted. Based on previous literature, it was also assumed that those individuals who endorsed both views would be less likely to treat others with dignity and respect and place less value on helping others.

However, contrary to the hypothesis, individuals who endorsed both intrinsic and extrinsic beliefs did not score lower on the Need for Cognition Scale than did individuals who endorsed only one religious orientation. It was proposed that those individuals who endorsed both intrinsic and extrinsic religious beliefs would have a lower Need for Cognition than would individuals who endorsed only intrinsic or extrinsic beliefs. There could be several reasons for the lack of support for this hypothesis. One reason could be that since the myths presented to the participants are still considered socially acceptable

in some areas, it could be that the participants did not actively think about the myths. They just simply endorsed what they have previously heard. The Need for Cognition Scale required the participants to evaluate how much they prefer to think on their own. It could be possible that the myths are something they do believe based on their upbringing and social history.

It was assumed that since those individuals endorsed both religious beliefs, they would rate low on this scale. This was a surprising result and one that was highly unexpected. It was assumed that those who would score high on the Quest Orientation Scale would be more reflective in the religious areas of their lives than those that endorsed both intrinsic and extrinsic religious beliefs. Those that endorsed both religious beliefs were thought to be not as reflective in the religious area of their life since they often endorse religious orientation statements that are often self contradictory.

There were several limitations in this study. The participants were all recruited from the Introduction to Psychology subject pool at Eastern Illinois University. While this allowed for easy recruitment for participants, it did not allow for a wide range of ethnicities or ages. The participants are also required to participate in a set amount of studies, which might lead to the students hurrying through the surveys. The survey was also given online, so the participant's environment was not controlled. External stimuli were not accounted for in any of the answers, such as input from other people.

Suggestions for improving this study may be to use a wider variety of students from different backgrounds and majors. It may also be important to include a wider range of ethnicities in the sample population. While the hypothesis that applied to the difference in Whites versus African Americans and their view on domestic violence

resulted in no significant difference, it might be interesting to see if other races could show different results.

### *Conclusion*

The first main finding of this study was that those participants who endorsed both intrinsic and extrinsic religious beliefs were more likely to endorse a stereotypical and negative view of domestic violence. The second main finding of this study was that those who endorse a traditional gender role attitude for women are also more likely to endorse a stereotypical and negative view of domestic violence.

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