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EVALUATIVE ORGANIZATION OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE:  
THE HIDDEN VULNERABILITY OF COMPARTMENTALIZATION

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By

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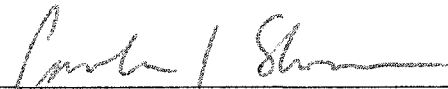
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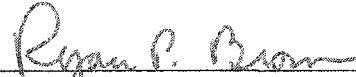
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A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

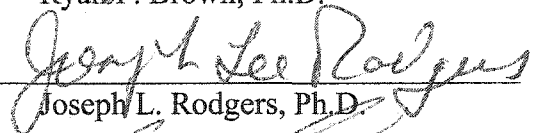
BY



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## Abstract

Three studies explored the possibility that the structure of the self-concept is associated with fragile self-esteem. The model of self-concept structure examined in the present studies is evaluative organization, especially the distinction between compartmentalization and integration. Compartmentalization is the tendency to segregate positively and negatively valenced self-beliefs into separate self-aspects, whereas integration is the tendency for attributes of opposite valence to appear in the same self-aspects. Study 1 showed that compartmentalization was associated with state self-esteem that was less stable over time and that appeared to be more reactive to daily events and stress. Study 2 found that the state self-esteem of compartmentalized individuals appeared to be primarily reactive to social events and that the self-esteem of these individuals was contingent upon meeting certain standards (e.g., approval of others and physical appearance). Study 3 employed a laboratory manipulation of social rejection to confirm that the state self-esteem of compartmentalized individuals was highly reactive to social rejection. Findings across the three studies suggest that individuals with compartmentalized self-concept structures may be best characterized as possessing fragile self-esteem, whereas individuals with integrative self-concepts appear to possess self-esteem that is relatively secure. These results suggest that some of the benefits believed to be associated with compartmentalization (e.g., high self-esteem) may actually reflect defensive processes rather than true psychological adjustment.

## INTRODUCTION

Imagine two individuals, both of whom recently lost their positions as middle-level managers at a technology firm due to corporate downsizing. Although the circumstances of these individuals may have been very similar, it is easy to imagine that their reactions to this event may have differed considerably. For example, the first individual may have immediately begun seeking employment elsewhere and continued to think of himself in relatively positive terms despite his disappointment and growing financial concerns. Understandably, the loss of his job would have increased his level of stress; however, it may have had little effect on his feelings of self-worth. On his best days, he may have even been able to see his current unemployment as an opportunity for growth. In contrast, the second individual may have been convinced by her sudden unemployment that she had been incompetent as a manager and that she would never be able to succeed in the world of business. As a result of her conviction that she was a failure, it is very possible that she became despondent about her current life circumstances and her self-esteem plummeted. Further, the second individual's strong negative emotional reactions and loss of self-esteem may have impaired her ability to function in her day-to-day life, preventing her from finding satisfactory employment and thus exacerbating her negative mood and low self-esteem.

This example illustrates that even though most individuals are emotionally responsive to the events in their lives, individuals differ widely in the intensity, duration, and variability of these responses (e.g., Diener, Larsen, Levine, & Emmons, 1985; Larsen, 1987; Larsen & Diener, 1987; Larsen, Diener, & Emmons, 1986; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Emotional responses may be evoked by events ranging from relatively

minor hassles (e.g., arguing with a spouse, gaining weight, or receiving a negative evaluation at work) to those events that have a far more substantial impact on an individual's life (e.g., divorce, traumatic injury, or loss of employment). Even relatively minor stressors have been shown to have consequences for affect (e.g., Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler, & Schilling, 1989; Clark & Watson, 1988; DeLongis, Folkman, & Lazarus, 1988; Watson, 1988) and to have serious long-term mental health consequences (e.g., depression, career burnout, or divorce) if the stressors are of a chronic nature (Brown & Harris, 1978; Markman & Hahlweg, 1993; McGonagle & Kessler, 1990). Because individuals differ in their emotional reactions to self-relevant events, it is important to understand why these differences occur and what implications these differences may have for psychological adjustment.

Self-relevant events often have consequences for global affect and feelings of self-worth. A variety of possible contributors to affective reactivity have been proposed in the literature. For example, personality dimensions have often been linked to affective reactions with the strongest associations being found for neuroticism and extraversion (Costa & McCrae, 1980; Rusting & Larsen, 1995; Watson & Tellegen, 1985). A second factor that has been linked to affective reactivity is how individuals appraise and cope with stressful daily events. Both the choice of coping strategy and the effectiveness of the chosen coping strategy for the individual may influence responses to stress (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995). Because coping is concerned with the management of psychological stress through changes in cognition and behavior (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), studies examining daily experiences hold a great deal of promise for coping research. A growing number of studies have made use of the daily process approach and have supported the

idea that appraisal and coping moderate reactions to daily events (David & Suls, 1999; Fontana & Palfai, 1994; Keefe, Affleck, Lefebvre, Starr, Caldwell, & Tennen, 1997; Marco, Neale, Schwartz, Shiffman, & Stone, 1999; Stone, Neale, & Shiffman, 1993; Tennen, Affleck, Armeli, & Carney, 2000).

In contrast to explanations of affective reactivity, which have been based primarily on personality or coping models, explanations for differences in self-esteem reactivity have focused almost exclusively on the self-concept (e.g., Butler, Hokanson, & Flynn, 1994; Nezlek & Gable, 2001). These explanations often draw upon previous ideas concerning conditions of self-worth (Rogers, 1959, 1961). Rogers explained that individual differences in well-being may be partly due to the degree an individual's self-worth is based on environmental events or conditions. Environmental feedback (e.g., positive or negative daily events) would be especially important in determining the state self-esteem of individuals with contingent self-esteem (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001). Rogers believed the self-concept may influence the degree to which an individual's feelings of self-worth are contingent upon external validation or reactive to events with potential implications for the self.

#### FRAGILE SELF-ESTEEM

Although a considerable amount of research concerning self-esteem has been conducted in the past thirty years, much of this research has merely praised the virtues of high self-esteem. Despite the accumulation of a vast number of studies documenting the many differences that exist between individuals with high and low self-esteem (see Baumeister, 1993; Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 1991), the costs and benefits associated with high self-esteem remain unclear due to contrasting views of what it

actually means to have high self-esteem. One of the popular views of individuals with high self-esteem is that they are satisfied with themselves, feel worthy, have confidence in their skills and abilities, yet are accepting of their weaknesses (Rogers, 1959, 1961). According to this perspective, individuals with high self-esteem have a solid foundation for their feelings of self-worth that does not require constant validation. The fact that their feelings of self-worth are well-anchored is able to protect their self-esteem from the normal adversities of daily life. The competing view of high self-esteem is that some individuals make frequent use of strategies to maintain or enhance their seemingly precious self-esteem resources. A considerable amount of empirical support also exists for this perspective. For example, individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to use self-serving attributions (Fitch, 1970), set inappropriately high goals following an ego-threat (Baumeister, Heatherton, & Tice, 1993), self-handicap in order to accentuate their accomplishments (Tice, 1991), actively create less fortunate others so that they can use downward comparisons (Gibbons & McCoy, 1991), and attack outgroup members following a criticism of their ingroup (Crocker, Thompson, McGraw, & Ingerman, 1987). In order to better understand this apparent contradiction, contemporary theorists (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1995; Kernis, 2003) propose that there are actually two forms of high self-esteem: secure and fragile. Individuals with secure high self-esteem match the former conceptualization of high self-esteem because their positive attitudes toward the self are realistic, well-anchored, and resistant to threat. Individuals with fragile high self-esteem are viewed as being consistent with the latter conceptualization in that their feelings of self-worth are vulnerable to challenge, need constant validation, and frequently require some degree of self-deception.

Currently, there are at least four ways to distinguish between secure and fragile high self-esteem: defensive self-esteem (Horney, 1950; Schneider & Turkat, 1975), contingent self-esteem (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001; Deci & Ryan, 1995), discrepant implicit and explicit self-esteem (Bosson, Brown, Zeigler-Hill, & Swann, 2003; Brown & Bosson, 2001; Jordan, Spencer, Zanna, Hoshino-Browne, & Correll, 2003), and unstable self-esteem (Kernis, Cornell, Sun, Berry, & Harlow, 1993; Kernis, Grannemann, & Barclay, 1989; Kernis, Grannemann, & Mathis, 1991; see Kernis & Paradise, 2002 for a review of fragile high self-esteem). Of these current conceptualizations of fragile self-esteem, self-esteem instability has received the most empirical attention so far and will also be the primary focus of the present investigation.

Although the vast majority of research has focused on the level of self-esteem (i.e., relatively enduring favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward the self), it has not gone unrecognized that self-esteem changes over time (Rosenberg, 1986). Unfortunately, this variability in self-esteem has often been perceived to be little more than error in the instruments used to measure self-esteem. However, self-esteem, like other psychological constructs (e.g., anxiety; see Spielberger, 1983), can be conceptualized as both a state that is highly dynamic and as a trait that is predominantly static (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). Self-esteem instability can be conceptualized in terms of either its baseline (long-term changes) or barometric properties (short-term fluctuations; Rosenberg, 1986). Rosenberg (1986) suggests that long-term changes in self-esteem may result from the gradual accumulation of successes or failures in any relevant area of one's life (e.g., academics, career, physical appearance, or romantic relationships). Short-term, or barometric, fluctuations in self-esteem are often conceptualized as the magnitude of



change in state self-esteem over a relatively short period of time (Kernis, Grannemann, & Barclay, 1989; Rosenberg, 1986). These fluctuations in self-esteem may be in response to particular evaluative events that are either externally provided (e.g., receiving a poor test grade) or internally generated (e.g., thinking about one's weaknesses; Kernis, Paradise, Whitaker, Wheatman, & Goldman, 2000). Kernis and his colleagues (e.g., Kernis, 2003; Kernis & Waschull, 1995; Paradise & Kernis, 2002) view the tendency to experience fluctuations in one's self-esteem as a dispositional characteristic that interacts with the immediate environment to produce a specific pattern of fluctuations. However, self-esteem instability does not directly account for the covariation between state self-esteem and environmental events (i.e., self-esteem lability). In the present research, self-esteem lability is assumed to be a specific instance of self-esteem instability (cf. Barnett & Gotlib, 1988; Butler, Hokanson, & Flynn, 1994). In contrast to self-esteem instability, self-esteem lability directly links changes in state self-esteem to events that occur in the individual's life (e.g., receiving a low grade on an important exam) or relevant internal states (e.g., feeling overwhelmed by current responsibilities). In essence, self-esteem lability is the covariation between state self-esteem and daily events (Butler, Hokanson, & Flynn, 1994); whereas self-esteem instability incorporates changes in self-esteem in response to daily events as well as fluctuations in self-esteem due to other factors (e.g., cognitive or biological processes). Thus, even though self-esteem instability and self-esteem lability are closely linked, there are important features that distinguish them from each other.

Previous research concerning self-esteem instability has focused both on potential factors that may lead to unstable self-esteem as well as possible consequences of unstable

self-esteem. For example, one of the possible contributing factors to self-esteem instability is ego-involvement, which can be defined as the degree to which an individual's self-esteem depends upon events that occur in one's life (Rosenberg, 1986). Initial research supports the assertion that individuals with unstable self-esteem also have a heightened degree of ego-involvement in their day-to-day activities (Kernis, Brown, & Brody, 2000; Kernis, Cornell, Sun, Berry, & Harlow, 1993; Washull & Kernis, 1996). This over-investment appears to result in individuals with unstable self-esteem having very strong reactions to events with potential relevance for their self-esteem. For example, individuals with unstable self-esteem feel worse in response to negative events and feel better following positive events than individuals with stable self-esteem (Kernis, Greenier, Herlocker, Whisenhunt, & Abend, 1997). Because individuals with unstable self-esteem are so invested in day-to-day activities, these individuals frequently perceive events as relevant to their self-esteem even when they are not (Kernis, Cornell, Sun, Berry, & Harlow, 1993). Essentially, the self-regard of individuals with unstable self-esteem is constantly at risk.

Individuals with high unstable self-esteem have been found to engage in more self-protective and self-enhancing strategies than other individuals (Kernis, 1993). For example, Kernis, Cornell, Sun, Berry, & Harlow (1993) found that individuals with high unstable self-esteem were more likely to accept positive feedback and reject negative feedback. Another method for protecting or enhancing the self that may be particularly attractive to individuals with unstable self-esteem is self-handicapping (Tice, 1991). Self-handicapping occurs when an individual manipulates either the situation or one's own behavior so as to seemingly lower the probability of success in some endeavor (Berglas

& Jones, 1978; Jones & Berglas, 1978). Newman and Wadas (1997) found that individuals with unstable self-esteem were more likely to engage in self-handicapping. Similar results have shown that individuals with unstable self-esteem are more likely to make excuses for their performance (Kernis, Grannemann, & Barclay, 1992).

Unstable self-esteem has also been found to be associated with poor psychological adjustment. For example, Kernis, Grannemann, and Barclay (1989) found that individuals with high unstable self-esteem experienced the highest levels of anger whereas individuals with high stable self-esteem reported the lowest levels of anger. The anger experienced by individuals with high unstable self-esteem is believed to be the result of their positive, but fragile, attitudes toward the self. Although individuals with high unstable self-esteem may appear confident, they may actually be insecure and highly sensitive to evaluative feedback. It appears that these are the individuals with the most to lose from an event that threatens their self-esteem and, as a consequence, these individuals may protect against these threats to their self-esteem by becoming angry. Conversely, the low levels of anger reported by individuals with high stable self-esteem may be explained by their more realistic self-views which are not as easily threatened by evaluative feedback. Similarly, Kernis, Grannemann, and Mathis (1991) found that low stable self-esteem was strongly associated with dysphoric symptoms (cf. Butler, Hokanson, & Flynn, 1994; Roberts, Kassel, & Gotlib, 1995; Roberts & Monroe, 1992). These results may be due to the fact that although low self-esteem is a vulnerability factor for dysphoric mood, this vulnerability will be more pronounced among individuals with chronically low levels of self-esteem.

#### ORGANIZATION OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Although theorists as early as James (1890) and Mead (1934) recognized the importance of multiple selves to the understanding of the self-concept, most research has treated the self-concept as a single, monolithic entity. Despite the views of James and Mead which hinted at the importance of self-knowledge organization, it was not until the influence of cognitive psychology spread to the study of the self-concept that researchers began to shift from a unitary view of the self toward a multifaceted self-concept (e.g., Pratkanis & Greenwald, 1985; Kihlstrom & Cantor, 1984; Linville, 1987; Markus & Wurf, 1987). This new way of conceptualizing the self-concept allowed for distinctions to be drawn between self-concept content and self-concept structure. The content of the self-concept consists of a range of attributes or beliefs pertaining to the self that can be divided into knowledge components (e.g., traits) and evaluative components (e.g., valence of specific attributes; Campbell et al., 1996). Structural features of the self-concept refer to how the content of the self-concept is organized. An individual's beliefs about the self are thought to be organized into a set of *self-aspects* such that each self-aspect is defined by situations (Pelham & Swann, 1989), roles (Simon, 1999), other individuals (James, 1890), or traits and mood states (Pietromonaco, 1985). This multifaceted view of the self allows for the differentiation of various self-aspects so that individuals are able to construct selves that are appropriate for a variety of contexts (Cantor, Markus, Niedenthal, & Nurius, 1986; Kihlstrom & Cantor, 1984; Mischel, 1973; Schlenker & Weigold, 1989). The multifaceted self-concept also allows for differences in the elaboration, positivity, and importance of self-aspects. Individual differences in the manner in which information about the self is organized and stored in memory is believed to influence the individual's characteristic level of self-esteem and mood

(Showers, 1995).

A number of theoretical perspectives concerning structural features of the self-concept have emerged in the past two decades. These structural models include self-complexity (Linville, 1985, 1987), self-concept clarity (Baumgardner, 1990; Campbell, 1990), self-concept differentiation (Donahue, Robins, Roberts, & John, 1993), self-discrepancies (Higgins, 1987; Higgins, Bond, Klein, & Strauman, 1986), differential importance (Pelham, 1991; Pelham & Swann, 1989), and evaluative organization (Showers, 1992a, 2000; see Showers & Zeigler-Hill, 2003 for a review of these structural models). Despite the important differences between these structural models, a common feature that may be relevant to temporal fluctuations in self-esteem and affect is shared by each of these models. Namely, each model suggests that the impact of any specific self-belief on the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of the individual is determined by the location of that particular self-belief in the larger self-concept structure. One possible implication of this feature is that individuals with more complex self-concept structures – with “complexity” being characterized by a large number of elements that are hierarchically integrated (Crockett, 1965) – may be less affected by their present circumstances resulting in feelings of self-worth and affective states that are less dependent on environmental feedback than those possessed by individuals with less complex self-concept structures.

#### PREVIOUS RESEARCH CONCERNING ORGANIZATION OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND REACTIVITY

In general, previous research has supported the contention that less complex self-concept structures may be associated with stronger emotional reactions to life events. An

example of this can be seen in research concerning self-complexity. Self-complexity refers to the number and interrelatedness of an individual's self-aspects such that individuals with many highly differentiated self-aspects are said to be high in self-complexity (Linville, 1985, 1987). Linville's model assumes that the mood of individuals high in self-complexity would be less affected by current circumstances because the differentiated self-concept would prevent the proliferation of affective reactions. As support for Linville's model, individuals high in self-complexity have been found to exhibit more moderate affective responses following evaluative events (Cohen, Pines, & Smith, 1997; Linville, 1985), less variability in their daily moods (Linville, 1982, 1985), as well as less stress-related illness and psychological distress (Linville, 1987; Smith & Cohen, 1993; Steinberg, Pineles, Gardner, & Mineka, 2003). However, it should be noted that other studies have provided only partial support for Linville's model or have failed to support it altogether (e.g., Campbell, Chew, & Scratchley, 1991; Rhodewalt, Madrian, & Cheney, 1998; Rhodewalt & Morf, 1998; Solomon & Haaga, 2003; see Rafaeli-Mor & Steinberg, 2002 for a review). Similarly, research concerning self-concept clarity – the extent to which an individual's self-concept is clearly defined, internally consistent, and remains stable over time (Campbell, 1990; Campbell et al., 1996) – has shown that individuals who are low in self-concept clarity have a tendency to experience greater fluctuations in both self-esteem (Dori, 2002; Kernis, Paradise, et al., 2000) and affect (Campbell, Chew, & Scratchley, 1991; Chang, 2001; Dori, 2002; Stucke & Sporer, 2002). Thus, previous research concerning self-complexity and self-concept clarity has supported the contention that the structure of the self-concept may be associated with variability in emotional experiences. The present study will extend these previous

findings concerning self-concept structure by examining evaluative organization.

### EVALUATIVE ORGANIZATION OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Evaluative organization focuses on the distribution of positive and negative beliefs across the self-aspects constituting the working self-concept (Showers, 1992a, 2000). Although individuals typically possess self-concepts that are mostly positive (e.g., Schwartz & Garamoni, 1986), most individuals have at least some important negative beliefs about the self. Importantly, the features of negative self-beliefs – such as their importance – have been shown to be more strongly correlated with mood and self-esteem than similar features of positive self-beliefs (e.g., Pelham & Swann, 1989; Showers, Abramson, & Hogan, 1998). Among the models of self-concept structure, evaluative organization is unique in that it accounts for both the category structure of specific self-beliefs as well as the valence of those beliefs (Showers & Zeigler-Hill, 2003). Because the evaluative organization of self-knowledge (i.e., the organization of positive and negative self-beliefs) is believed to affect the accessibility of specific self-beliefs, evaluative organization may moderate the impact of specific negative beliefs on self-esteem and mood (e.g., Showers, 1992a). This model recognizes that the content of the self-concept (e.g., the sheer number of negative self-beliefs) may have important implications for self-esteem and mood. It does suggest, however, that content alone may not be a sufficient predictor of psychological adjustment (Showers & Zeigler-Hill, 2003). For example, two individuals may have self-concepts containing identical positive and negative content but have very different levels of self-esteem and mood depending on how these self-beliefs are organized.

The model of evaluative organization identifies two types of self-structure:

evaluatively compartmentalized and evaluatively integrative.<sup>1</sup> In compartmentalized self-concepts, positive and negative attributes or self-beliefs are separated into distinct self-aspects such that each self-aspect contains primarily positive or primarily negative information about the self. For example, a compartmentalized individual may describe himself in his marriage as *devoted, warm, caring, and supportive*. This compartmentalized individual may also possess a self-aspect that describes who he is when he plays basketball that consists of attributes such as *lazy, uncoordinated, selfish, and irritable*. In contrast to compartmentalized self-concepts, integrative structures are composed of self-aspects containing a combination of positive and negative self-beliefs. For example, an integrative individual may describe herself in her role as an elementary school teacher as *humorous and creative* but also *forgetful and disorganized*.

The basic model of evaluative organization developed by Showers (1992a, 2000) predicts that when an individual's positive self-aspects are considered to be relatively important or are made salient by current circumstances, compartmentalization will be associated with more positive mood and higher self-esteem than will integration. Compartmentalized individuals who possess positive self-aspects that are important or salient are said to be *positively compartmentalized*. The positive mood and high self-esteem associated with positive compartmentalization is due to these individuals having less access to their negative self-beliefs because these beliefs have been relegated to relatively unimportant self-aspects that are rarely activated. However, if a compartmentalized individual's negative self-aspects or attributes are important or made salient (i.e., *negative compartmentalization*), these negative self-beliefs may flood the individual and result in negative mood and low self-esteem. Under these circumstances,



mood and self-esteem may be better maintained by individuals with an integrative self-concept structure because integration tends to activate both positive and negative self-beliefs. Thus, integration may minimize the impact of unavoidable negative self-beliefs. Even though integrative self-aspects contain both positive and negative self-beliefs, these self-aspects may differ in their overall positivity. As a result, just as there are positively and negatively compartmentalized structures, positive and negative integration is also possible.

To summarize the basic model of evaluative organization, positively compartmentalized structures should be associated with more positive mood and higher self-esteem than positively integrative structures. However, negatively compartmentalized structures should be associated with more negative mood and lower self-esteem than negatively integrative structures. Thus, compartmentalization should be associated with extreme levels of self-esteem and mood, whereas integration should be associated with more moderate levels of self-esteem and mood. The predictions of the basic model of evaluative organization have been supported by results from a variety of studies showing that the organization of self-beliefs – as measured by a variety of self-descriptive tasks – is associated with an individual's current level of mood or self-esteem (e.g., Rhodewalt, Madrian, & Cheney, 1998; Showers, 1992a, 1992b; Showers, Abramson, & Hogan, 1998; Showers & Kling, 1996; Showers & Ryff, 1996).

#### THE HIDDEN VULNERABILITY OF COMPARTMENTALIZED SELF-CONCEPT STRUCTURES

The basic model of evaluative organization emphasizes the crucial role of self-knowledge in determining the consequences of compartmentalized structures and

suggests that these structures may be vulnerable to shifts in the salience of particular self-aspects (Showers, 1995). Because the consequences of evaluative organization are based on the accessibility of self-knowledge, this *hidden vulnerability* of compartmentalized self-concept structures may be limited to self-related affect such as self-esteem. The vulnerability of individuals with compartmentalized self-concepts to shifts in the salience of particular self-aspects should result in compartmentalized individuals experiencing both *higher highs* and *lower lows* than individuals with integrative self-concept structures. The reason compartmentalized individuals are believed to experience these fluctuations in self-esteem is their greater access to self-beliefs that are evaluatively consistent with current circumstances (positive self-beliefs are readily available when things are going well and negative self-beliefs are available when things are going poorly). The consequences of integrative structures, on the other hand, are not as reliant upon the current activation of particular self-aspects as compartmentalized structures. Thus, in contrast to compartmentalized individuals, individuals with an integrative self-concept structure should experience self-esteem that is less affected by current events. Although the moderate levels of self-esteem associated with integrative structures have often been considered to be a *cost* of integration (e.g., Showers, Limke, & Zeigler-Hill, 2004), this moderation of self-esteem may actually be a benefit if it also leads to self-esteem that is more stable than that possessed by compartmentalized individuals.

#### PREVIOUS RESEARCH CONCERNING THE HIDDEN VULNERABILITY OF COMPARTMENTALIZATION

Although previous research has focused primarily on the benefits of compartmentalization for individuals with relatively positive self-aspects, the results of

three recent studies have provided support for the contention that compartmentalized structures may be vulnerable to shifts in the salience of particular self-aspects. The first of these studies (Showers & Kling, 1996) examined how individuals with compartmentalized and integrative structures function in specific contexts. Previous studies had only focused on relations between self-concept structure and characteristic levels of self-esteem or mood which may have failed to capture the fact that compartmentalized individuals may have extreme and uncharacteristic emotional reactions when oppositely-valenced self-aspects are temporarily activated. Over time, the influence of the situation should fade and their normally important self-aspects should become salient once again, returning the individual to their characteristic levels of self-esteem and mood. To examine this possibility, Showers and Kling assessed self-concept structure and then exposed participants to a sad mood induction that was intended to activate the participants' negative self-aspects. The results suggest that individuals with compartmentalized self-concept structures may be especially vulnerable to negative mood states. This vulnerability to negative mood states may lead to greater affective reactivity for compartmentalized individuals.

The second set of findings concerned how individuals organize information about their romantic partners (i.e., partner-structure rather than self-structure; Showers & Kevlyn, 1999). Although positively compartmentalized partner-structures were associated with very positive feelings about the partner in the short-term, it was unclear whether these positive feelings would translate into long-term relationship success. More specifically, it seemed possible that individuals with compartmentalized partner-structures may be vulnerable to shifts in the salience or perceived importance of their

partner's negative attributes which would most likely result in extremely negative feelings toward the partner and possible relationship dissolution.

To examine the possibility that partner-structure may be associated with relationship outcomes, participants from the Showers and Kevlyn study were contacted one year later to assess the current status of their relationship (Showers & Zeigler-Hill, in press). The results of the study showed that individuals with positively compartmentalized partner-structures – who had extremely positive attitudes toward their partners one year earlier – were the most likely to have dissolved their relationship one year later (see Murray & Holmes, 1999 for similar results). This finding suggests that compartmentalization may represent an attempt to ignore the negative attributes possessed by one's partner by “sweeping them under the rug”, whereas integration may lead individuals to acknowledge their partner's faults and possibly reach some form of resolution. Thus, compartmentalization may be associated with more positive feelings at the beginning of a relationship or when the relationship is functioning well; however, the benefits of these starry-eyed illusions appear to be relatively short-lived. In contrast, the greater realism that is believed to characterize integrative structures may be more useful for coping with the demands of a long-term relationship.

The final set of findings revealing the vulnerability of compartmentalized structures examined the relations between self-concept structure, narcissism, and self-esteem instability (Rhodewalt, Madrian, & Cheney, 1998). It is generally agreed that narcissism is characterized by extreme reactions to potentially self-relevant events (e.g., Kernberg, 1975; Kohut, 1971, 1976); however, the reasons underlying this reactivity are poorly understood. Based on previous work (e.g., Emmons, 1987; Rhodewalt & Morf,

1995, 1998; Westen, 1990), Rhodewalt and his colleagues examined whether narcissists possess self-concept structures that may lead to self-esteem instability (i.e., lower levels of self-complexity and higher levels of compartmentalization). Across two studies, narcissists with compartmentalized self-concept structures were found to possess self-esteem that was highly unstable. Rhodewalt and his colleagues argued that compartmentalization may lead narcissistic individuals to overgeneralize the implications of evaluative events for feelings of self-worth because positive events increase the accessibility of exclusively positive self-knowledge whereas negative events activate purely negative self-knowledge.

#### HYPOTHESES

As noted above, evaluative organization is believed to influence the accessibility of self-beliefs which may have implications for both the level and stability of self-esteem (Rhodewalt, Madrian, & Cheney, 1998; Showers, 1995). Although individuals with a positively compartmentalized self-concept have typically been shown to possess the highest levels of trait self-esteem (Showers, 1992a), compartmentalized individuals may be vulnerable to fluctuations in their moment-to-moment self-evaluations. The application of this logic leads to two related hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Individuals with compartmentalized self-concept structures will possess less stable self-esteem than individuals with integrative self-concepts.

Hypothesis 2: The self-esteem of individuals with compartmentalized self-concept structures will exhibit greater lability in response to daily events and stress than the self-esteem of individuals with integrative self-concepts.

Although clear predictions can be drawn for self-esteem, predictions concerning

affect are less clear. It is important to note that state self-esteem and affect are conceptually and empirically distinguishable (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). Although both state self-esteem and affect have both been found to respond to daily events (e.g., Nezlek & Gable, 2001), their covariation with daily events have been shown to be independent (Nezlek & Plesko, 2003). Because evaluative organization affects the accessibility of self-knowledge, the arguments concerning the moderating role evaluative organization should have in the relationship between daily events and emotional responses would seem to pertain solely to evaluations concerning the self. The reason for this proposed relationship is that feelings of self-worth should be directly linked with the self-knowledge that is readily available to the individual, whereas general affect may be influenced by factors that may or may not have consequences for the self. On the other hand, research concerning evaluative organization has consistently shown that compartmentalized individuals experience extreme levels of mood that would seem to imply a certain degree of mood instability (e.g., Showers, 1992a, 1992b; Showers, Abramson, & Hogan, 1998). In fact, evaluative organization has been linked to clinically significant shifts in mood (Power, de Jong, & Lloyd, 2002). Thus, based on the previous literature, it is unclear whether evaluative organization will moderate the association between daily events and affective states. Because of these conflicting possibilities, the following exploratory hypothesis was included to examine whether the lability of compartmentalized individuals was unique to self-esteem or if evaluative organization would also moderate affective reactions to daily events.

Hypothesis 3: The affective states of individuals with compartmentalized self-concept structures may exhibit greater lability in response to daily events and

stress than the affective states of individuals with integrative self-concepts.

### ADVANTAGES OF EXPERIENCE-SAMPLING

Because the present study is concerned with changes in state self-esteem over time, the present studies employed experience-sampling, which allows for the documentation of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors within an individual's everyday life rather than within a laboratory context (Christensen, Feldman Barrett, Bliss-Moreau, & Kaschub, 2003). Experience-sampling procedures were originally developed to examine the events experienced during a normal day as well as how subjective states change in response to those events. Although this approach dates back to Flugel's (1925) 30-day study of mood, it was not widely recognized until decades later (e.g., Brandstaetter, 1983; Csikszentmihalyi, Larson, & Prescott, 1977). Experience-sampling differs from basic self-report methodologies in some important ways: (1) individuals report their experiences during the course of their normal lives rather than in the confines of the laboratory; (2) individuals report their experiences much closer in time to the actual experiences through a combination of online and short-term retrospective questions (e.g., *How do you feel at this moment?* and *How much stress did you experience today?*); and (3) taking multiple measures over time allows for within-subject analyses (Christenson et al., 2003; Schimmack, 2003; Scollon, Kim-Prieto, & Diener, 2003). The particular form of experience-sampling employed in the current study was interval-contingent experience-sampling which is based on the passage of time rather than the occurrence of a particular event (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003).

Experience-sampling reduces the problems associated with retrospective evaluations of psychological adjustment and stress (see Dohrenwend, Dohrenwend,

Dodson, & Shrout, 1984; Lazarus, DeLongis, Folkman, & Gruen, 1985) by focusing on external events and by asking participants to report on recent experiences rather than “averaging across” longer periods of time (Stone, Kessler, & Haythornwaite, 1991). Another important advantage of experience-sampling is that temporal covariation of internal states and external events can be examined (Larsen, Billings, & Cutler, 1996; Larsen & Kasimatis, 1990; Tennen, Suls, & Affleck, 1991). For example, this approach allows researchers to examine the extent to which psychological adjustment and stressful experiences occur within the same individual. This approach has been adopted by researchers interested in the link between daily events and mood (Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler, & Schilling, 1989; Bolger & Schilling, 1991; Caspi, Bolger, & Eckenrode, 1987; Clark & Watson, 1988; David, Green, Martin, & Suls, 1997; Gable, Reis, & Elliot, 2000; Lewinsohn & Amenson, 1978; Marco & Suls, 1993; Rehm, 1978). These studies have consistently found that individuals experience more negative affect (e.g., anxiety) on days when they experience more negative events and more positive affect (e.g., excitement) on days when they experience more positive events. This approach has also been used to examine the association between daily events and physical symptoms (Affleck, Tennen, Urrows, & Higgins, 1994; Aikens, Wallander, Bell, & McNorton, 1994; Halford, Cuddihy, & Mortimer, 1990; Stone, Reed, & Neale, 1987; Suls, Wan, & Blanchard, 1994).

## STUDY 1

### Overview of Study 1

Participants performed a self-descriptive card sorting task (Showers, 1992a; Showers & Kling, 1996) and completed measures of state self-esteem, affect, daily



events, and daily stress each day for 14 days. There were two basic predictions. The first prediction was that compartmentalized individuals would possess state self-esteem that was less stable than the state self-esteem of integrative individuals. The second prediction was that compartmentalized individuals would possess state self-esteem that was more labile in response to daily events and stress than the state self-esteem of integrative individuals.

## Method

### *Participants*

Participants were 129 undergraduates (40 men and 89 women) enrolled in introductory psychology at the University of Oklahoma who participated in exchange for research credit. The mean age of participants was 19.03 years ( $SD = 1.69$ ). The racial/ethnic composition was 73% White, 8% Black, 5% Asian, 3% Native American, 2% Hispanic, and 9% Other.

### *Measures*

#### *Self-descriptive card sorting task*

The content and structure of the self-concept was measured by the card sorting task used by Showers (1992a; Showers & Kling, 1996). This card sorting task is based on the task originally developed by Zajonc (1960) and extended by Linville (1985, 1987). For this task, participants were provided with a deck of 40 cards with each card containing a potentially self-descriptive attribute. The deck contained 20 positive (e.g., outgoing, successful, mature, hardworking) and 20 negative attributes (e.g., unloved, isolated, tense, irritable). Participants were given the following initial instructions, "Your task is to think of the different aspects of yourself or your life and then sort the cards into

groups where each group describes an aspect of yourself or your life.” The remainder of the instructions were very similar to those reported by Showers and Kevlyn (1999). Participants were able to form as many groups as they needed, with as many or as few attributes as desired in each group. Attributes could be used in more than one group, and attributes that the respondent did not believe were self-descriptive did not have to be used. Table 1 presents sample card sorts from two participants in this study. After completing the card sorting task, participants indicated the positivity, negativity, and importance of each self-aspect generated during the card sorting task using 7-point scales.

*Evaluative organization (phi).* The measure of evaluative organization is a phi coefficient (or Cramer’s V; Cramer, 1974; Everitt, 1977) based on a chi-square statistic. Phi is an index of the deviation from chance of the number of positive and negative attributes in each self-aspect, where chance is the proportion of positive and negative attributes across all self-aspects. A frequency table is constructed that contains as many columns as there are groups in the individual’s cards sort and two rows (number of positive attributes and number of negative attributes). The observed frequency values are obtained from the card sort. For example, 7 positive attributes and 3 negative attributes would be expected for a self-aspect containing 10 attributes if the entire card sort contained 30% negative attributes. These expected frequencies represent chance values for organizing positive and negative attributes without regard for their valence. The chi-square statistic computed using these expected and observed frequencies is normalized by dividing by the number of attributes in the sort (N):

$$\phi = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2}{N}}$$

Phi can range from 0 (perfect integration; positive and negative attributes are evenly distributed across all self-aspects) to 1 (perfect compartmentalization; each self-aspect is either purely positive or purely negative). Phi was only computed if two or more negative attributes were included in the card sort. This measure is independent of the number of self-aspects generated and the proportion of positive and negative attributes used during the card sorting task. Further detail on the computation of phi is provided by Showers and Kevlyn (1999).

*Differential importance (DI).* DI is a measure of the relative importance of positive and negative self-aspects (Pelham & Swann, 1989). DI is the within-subject correlation of participants' ratings of their self-aspects (i.e., positivity ratings minus negativity ratings) and the importance assigned to those self-aspects by the participants. DI can range from -1 to +1, with positive scores indicating that positive self-aspects are considered more important than negative ones, and negative scores indicating that negative self-aspects are considered more important than positive ones (Showers, 1992a).

*Proportion of negative attributes (neg).* The proportion of negative attributes is a measure of self-concept content that is calculated by dividing the number of negative attributes appearing in a respondent's card sort by the total number of attributes used. The valence of the attributes was established by independent raters (Showers, 1992a).

#### *Trait Self-Esteem*

Participants completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965), a well-validated measure of global self-regard (Blaskovich & Tomaka, 1991; Demo, 1985). Test-retest correlations greater than .80 have been reported (Rosenberg, 1965; Silber & Tippett, 1965). Participants were instructed to complete the scale according to how they typically or generally feel about themselves. Responses were made on scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). For the current sample, the internal consistency of this measure was high,  $\alpha = .82$ .

### *Positive and Negative Affect*

Levels of positive and negative affect were measured using the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) which is a reliable and well-validated self-report measure of affect. The PANAS consists of scales that measure positive (e.g., interested, enthusiastic, proud) and negative affect (e.g., distressed, scared, hostile). Positive and negative affect have been found to be distinct, higher-order dimensions of self-rated affect (e.g., Clark & Watson, 1988; Diener & Emmons, 1984; Mayer & Gaschke, 1988; Watson & Tellegen, 1985). Participants were instructed to complete the items according to how they typically or generally feel. Responses were made on scales ranging from 1 (*very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). For the present sample, the internal consistencies of these scales were high (.83 and .86 for positive affect and negative affect, respectively).

### *Beck Depression Inventory–II*

The Beck Depression Inventory–II (BDI–II; Beck, Steer, & Brown, 1996) is a 21-item measure that assesses the severity of negative mood during the previous two weeks. Each item requires participants to endorse one of four options reflecting the severity of a given symptom. Scores from 0-3 are assigned to each option, with higher scores indicating more severe symptoms. The BDI–II has been found to possess high internal consistency (Beck, Steer, Ball, & Ranieri, 1996; Dozois, Dobson, & Ahnberg, 1998; Steer, Kumar, Ranieri, & Beck, 1998) and adequate validity (Sprinkle et al., 2002; Steer, Ball, Ranieri, & Beck, 1997). For the current sample, the internal consistency of the BDI–II was quite high,  $\alpha = .93$ .

### *State Self-Esteem and Self-Esteem Instability*

Participants were asked to complete a version of the RSES at 12 hour intervals for 14 consecutive days.<sup>2</sup> The RSES was modified so that participants were instructed to give the response that best reflected how they felt at the moment they completed the form.

Responses were made on scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 10 (*strongly agree*). For each participant, the within-subject standard deviation across the repeated assessments of state self-esteem served as the index of self-esteem instability, with higher standard deviations indicating more unstable self-esteem ( $M = 6.46$ ,  $SD = 4.51$ ). As in previous studies (e.g., Greenier et al., 1999; Kernis, Granneman, & Barclay, 1989, 1992), level of self-esteem and self-esteem instability were significantly correlated,  $r = -.22$ ,  $p < .02$ .

#### *State Positive and Negative Affect*

Participants were asked to complete a version of the PANAS at 12 hour intervals for 14 consecutive days. The PANAS was modified so that participants were instructed to give the response that best reflected how they felt at the moment they completed the form. Responses were made on scales ranging from 1 (*very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*).

#### *Daily Hassles and Uplifts*

Participants were asked to record their daily events each evening using a version of the Daily Hassles and Uplifts Scale (DeLongis, Folkman, & Lazarus, 1988). This measure consisted of 53 items concerning domains of life that may be sources of either stress or satisfaction (e.g., family, work, health, and money). This measure was modified so that participants were instructed to indicate whether each item had been a hassle and/or uplift that day.

#### *Perceived Stress*

Participants indicated their current level of stress each evening by indicating their level of agreement with the statement "At this moment, I feel a great deal of stress" on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 10 (*strongly agree*).

#### *Procedure*

Participants completed three laboratory sessions with 7 days between each

laboratory session. During the first laboratory session, participants completed measures of self-concept content and structure, trait self-esteem, trait positive and negative affect, and depressive symptoms. Measures collected during the second and third laboratory sessions are not relevant to the present study. During the 14 days spanning the 3 laboratory sessions, participants were instructed to complete state measures of self-esteem, positive affect, and negative affect at 12 hour intervals (at approximately 10am and 10pm). Participants also completed measures of daily hassles, daily uplifts, and perceived stress every 24 hours (at approximately 10pm). To enhance compliance, participants received enough forms for one week during the first laboratory session and were instructed to return the completed measures approximately every 3 days. Participants received forms for the second week during the second laboratory session and were again instructed to return the completed forms approximately every 3 days.<sup>3</sup>

## Results

Of the 129 participants who began the study, 8 participants failed to complete the card sorting task or used fewer than two negative attributes. Analyses not involving the daily measures used the remaining 121 participants. However, for analyses involving the daily measures, data from 12 participants were excluded due to failure to complete daily measures for 10 or more days. Analyses concerning daily measures were conducted using the 109 remaining participants. Daily measures were provided for all 14 days by 93% of these final participants.

### *Descriptive Statistics*

Table 2 presents the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for the measures of self-concept content and structure, trait self-esteem, positive and negative affect, negative mood as measured by the BDI-II, and self-esteem instability. On average, the participants' card sorts consisted of 7.1 self-aspects and contained 8.1 attributes per self-aspect. The card sorts contained an average of 15.7 (28%) negative attributes.

Before testing the hypotheses for this study, the distributional properties of the observed variables were examined. The proportion of negative attributes in the card sorting task, scores on the BDI-II, daily hassles, and daily uplifts each showed a marked departure from normality. More specifically, each of these variables was positively skewed. In order to approximate a normal distribution, the proportion of negative attributes was arcsine transformed while BDI-II, daily hassles, and daily uplifts scores were subjected to square-root transformations (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003).

#### *Organization of Self-Knowledge and Self-Esteem Instability*

The present analysis examined the association between self-concept structure and self-esteem instability by regressing self-esteem instability onto measures of self-concept structure and trait self-esteem.<sup>4</sup> For this hierarchical multiple regression, all predictor variables were centered for the purpose of testing interactions (Aiken & West, 1991). On Step 1, the main effect terms for evaluative organization and trait self-esteem were entered. On Step 2, the interaction of evaluative organization and trait self-esteem was entered.<sup>5</sup> The results of this analysis are shown in Table 3. The hypothesized main effect of compartmentalization only approached conventional levels of significance,  $\beta = .16, p < .10$ . However, this marginal main effect of compartmentalization was qualified by the interaction of evaluative organization and trait self-esteem which emerged,  $\beta = .19, p < .05$ . Predicted values for this interaction are shown in Figure 1.

Because the interaction of evaluative organization and trait self-esteem was significant, the statistical procedures recommended by Aiken and West (1991) were conducted to describe the pattern of this interaction. To describe the interaction of two continuous variables, simple regression equations of self-esteem instability on evaluative organization and the interaction of evaluative organization and trait self-esteem were computed with the value of trait self-esteem at 1 *SD* above the mean (i.e., high trait self-esteem) and 1 *SD* below the mean (i.e., low trait self-esteem). Simple slopes tests found

that evaluative organization was not a significant predictor of self-esteem instability for individuals with low trait self-esteem (i.e., the slope of the regression line was not significantly different from 0),  $\beta = -.07, ns$ . However, for individuals with high trait self-esteem, compartmentalization was associated with higher levels of self-esteem instability than was integration,  $\beta = .35, p < .02$ . Taken together, these results show that when trait self-esteem is low, self-esteem is unstable regardless of whether individuals possess relatively compartmentalized or integrative self-concept structures. However, when trait self-esteem is high, integrative individuals report possessing self-esteem that is more stable than that possessed by compartmentalized individuals.

#### *Overview of Lability Analyses*

The interval-contingent experience-sampling data from the present study comprised what is referred to as a multilevel, or hierarchically nested, data structure because observations at one level of analysis (i.e., days) were nested within another level of analysis (i.e., individuals). As a result of this hierarchical structure, observations were not independent (Jaccard & Wan, 1993; Marco, Neale, Schwartz, Shiffman, & Stone, 1999; Schwartz & Stone, 1998; West & Hepworth, 1991). Due to the hierarchical structure of the data, a series of multilevel random coefficient models (MRCM) using the program HLM (Bryk, Raudenbush, & Congdon, 1998) were employed in the present study. In accordance with de Leeuw and Kreft (1995), the term “MRCM” is employed to avoid confusing a type of analysis (MRCM) with the name of a technique (HLM). MRCM conceptually involves two steps. First, a regression analysis is performed at the within-person level. For example, in the current study, state psychological adjustment was predicted from daily events for each individual. Second, the between-person level examines whether the regression slopes obtained from the within-person level differ across individuals, depending on the level of an individual-difference variable. For example, in the current study, evaluative organization was believed to moderate the



within-person relationship between daily events and state psychological adjustment.

One of the most important advantages of MRCM over comparable ordinary-least-squares (OLS) analyses is that MRCM provides more accurate parameter estimates than OLS methods such as repeated measures ANOVA or using within-person correlations as criterion variables (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992; Kenny, Kashy, & Bolger, 1998; Kreft & de Leeuw, 1998; Nezlek & Gable, 2001). The increased accuracy of parameter estimates in MRCM is due to the modeling of within-person coefficients as random effects rather than as fixed effects (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992; Nezlek & Gable, 2001). For the present study, the exact days over which data were collected were not especially important to the hypotheses of interest. The days comprising the study were sampled from a population of days intended to represent the typical experiences of the participants. Although the coefficients would differ slightly if an alternative sample of days had been used, these analyses assume that those coefficients would have been equally valid. Because these within-person coefficients are being sampled from each participant's larger population of possible coefficients, the coefficients describing within-person relationships are modeled as random effects (Nezlek & Zyzniewski, 1998). These within-person coefficients are modeled as random by using a combination of maximum likelihood and Bayesian procedures (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). Because parameter estimates from different levels are not modeled as independent, the reliability of within-person responses is used to estimate the variance of within-person parameters. The result is that as an individual's responses increase in reliability, the weight assigned to that individual's mean also increases. This precision weighting is used to produce empirical Bayes estimates of parameters allowing for the separation of fixed and random parameter variance which are combined in OLS analyses (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). The advantages of MRCM over OLS methods are even greater when the number of days sampled are relatively small or the number of days sampled varies across individuals (Nezlek, 2001; Nezlek &

Zyzniewski, 1998). A full description of the advantages of MRCM over comparable OLS techniques for analyzing experience-sampling data has been presented previously (e.g., Nezlek, 2001; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002).

The present analyses had two goals: (1) to examine the covariation between state psychological adjustment (i.e., self-esteem, positive affect, and negative affect) and daily stress (i.e., daily hassles, daily uplifts, and stress) and (2) to examine how within-person relationships between these measures vary as a function of evaluative organization (i.e., is the within-person relationship between state self-esteem and daily negative events stronger for compartmentalized individuals than it is for integrative individuals).

*Descriptive Statistics and Reliability of Measures of  
State Psychological Adjustment and Daily Events*

Descriptive statistics for the daily measures are provided in Table 4. These descriptive statistics were obtained by an unconditional model for each daily measure. An unconditional model contains no terms other than intercepts at any level of the model. The Level 1 and Level 2 equations were as follows:

$$\text{Level 1 (within-person): } y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + r_{ij} ;$$

$$\text{Level 2 (between-person): } \beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + u_{0j} .$$

In this Level 1 model,  $y_{ij}$  is a measure of state psychological adjustment (i.e., self-esteem, positive affect, or negative affect) or daily events (i.e., daily hassles, daily uplifts, or perceived stress), for person  $j$  on day  $i$ ,  $\beta_{0j}$  is a random coefficient representing the mean of  $y$  for person  $j$  (across the  $i$  days for which each person provided data),  $r_{ij}$  represents the error associated with each measure, and the variance of  $r_{ij}$  constitutes the within-person error variance. In this Level 2 model,  $\gamma_{00}$  represents the grand mean of the person-level means from the within-person model,  $u_{0j}$  represents the error of  $\beta_{0j}$ , and the variance of  $u_{0j}$  constitutes the between-person error variance. Each of the daily measures had a reliability coefficient of .90 or above (see Table 4). To determine the reliability of

self-esteem instability during the course of the study, within-subject standard deviations were computed for three consecutive 4-day periods. The reliability coefficient for self-esteem instability was .80 which suggests that the within-subject standard deviation measure of self-esteem instability is reliable.

*Evaluative Organization and Daily Measures of Psychological Adjustment and Stress*

A two-level MRCM was used to examine relationships between evaluative organization and daily measures of psychological adjustment and stress. These effects are examined at Level 2 by modeling the variability of  $\beta_{0j}$ , the coefficient from the Level 1 model representing the group mean. These types of analyses are referred to as a “means as outcomes” analyses (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992; Nezlek & Zyzniewski, 1998). To examine whether the average scores for the daily measures of psychological adjustment and stress were associated with evaluative organization, the following Level 2 model was used:

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(\text{PHI}) + u_{0j} .$$

If  $\gamma_{01}$  is significantly different from 0, then the relationship between evaluative organization and the daily measure is significant. The only significant association that emerged from these analyses was a negative association between evaluative organization and state self-esteem such that compartmentalized individuals tended to experience lower levels of state self-esteem,  $B = -2.76, p < .02$ . On average, individuals 1 *SD* above the sample mean for evaluative organization tended to experience state self-esteem that was 2.76 points lower than individuals at the sample mean. Correspondingly, individuals 1 *SD* below the sample mean for evaluative organization tended to experience state self-esteem that was 2.76 points higher than individuals at the sample mean.

*Daily Stress and State Psychological Adjustment*

To examine within-person relationships between daily events and state psychological adjustment a two-level MRCM was used. A regression equation was

estimated for each participant which described the association between daily stress and state psychological adjustment. For example, the Level 1 model examining daily hassles and uplifts was as follows:

$$y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}\text{HASSLES} + \beta_{2j}\text{UPLIFTS} + r_{ij} ,$$

in which  $y$  is an adjustment score for person  $j$  on day  $i$ ,  $\beta_{0j}$  is a random coefficient representing the intercept for person  $j$ ,  $\beta_{1j}$  is a random coefficient for daily hassles,  $\beta_{2j}$  is a random coefficient for daily uplifts, and  $r_{ij}$  represents error. Daily hassles and daily uplifts were entered together in order to differentiate the impact of positive and negative events.

The average number of daily hassles and uplifts varied considerably across persons and days, and the average number of daily uplifts was higher than the average number of daily hassles (11.56 vs. 8.41,  $t[108] = -4.33$ ,  $p < .001$ ).<sup>6</sup> To eliminate the influence of these differences on parameter estimates, event scores were group-mean centered, with “group” being defined as the individual participant (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). Because of this group-mean centering, coefficients for daily events described relationships between the deviation from each person’s average number of events and deviations from that person’s average level of adjustment.

Within-person relationships between daily stress and psychological adjustment were examined by analyzing Level 1 (within-person) coefficients at Level 2 (between-persons) using the following model:

$$\text{Intercept: } \beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + u_{0j} ;$$

$$\text{Daily Hassles: } \beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + u_{1j} ;$$

$$\text{Daily Uplifts: } \beta_{2j} = \gamma_{20} + u_{2j} .$$

In this model,  $\gamma_{00}$  represented the average of the within-person intercepts, and  $\gamma_{10}$  and  $\gamma_{20}$  represented the average of the daily hassles and daily uplifts slopes, respectively. All three within-person coefficients are modeled as random (i.e.,  $u_{0j}$ ,  $u_{1j}$ , and  $u_{2j}$  terms are

included). The results of these analyses are presented in Table 5.

As expected, there were significant associations between daily events – both hassles and uplifts – and state psychological adjustment. The  $\gamma_{10}$  slopes representing the association of daily hassles with state self-esteem and state negative affect were significantly different from 0,  $|Bs| > 1.83$ ,  $ps < .001$ . The relationship between daily hassles and positive affect did not approach conventional levels of significance ( $B = -.41$ ,  $ns$ ). The three  $\gamma_{20}$  slopes representing the relationships between daily uplifts and measures of state psychological adjustment (i.e., self-esteem, positive affect, and negative affect) were significantly different from 0,  $|Bs| > 1.06$ ,  $ps < .04$ . Across all participants, state self-esteem was lower and negative affect was higher on days when the number of daily hassles reported were higher than on days when the number of daily hassles were lower. Conversely, psychological adjustment was higher on days when participants reported more daily uplifts.

A similar set of analyses were conducted for perceived stress. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 5. Significant associations were found between stress and each measure of state psychological adjustment,  $|Bs| > .51$ ,  $ps < .001$ . Across all participants, state psychological adjustment was lower on days when stress was higher. The similarity between these results and those for daily events are not surprising given the strong association between daily events and perceived stress. The average coefficient for the within-person relationship between perceived stress and daily hassles was  $B = .81$ ,  $p < .001$ , and the average coefficient for daily uplifts was  $B = -.42$ ,  $p < .001$ . Not surprisingly, participants reported higher levels of stress on days when they reported more daily hassles and fewer daily uplifts.

*Evaluative Organization as a Moderator of Within-Person Relationships  
Between Daily Events and State Psychological Adjustment*

This analysis examined how person-level differences in evaluative organization

moderated relationships between daily events and state psychological adjustment. To determine if the within-person relationships described in the previous analyses varied as a function of individual differences in evaluative organization, coefficients from within-person models were analyzed at the between-person level using a model such as the following:

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(\text{PHI}) + u_{0j};$$

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}(\text{PHI}) + u_{1j};$$

$$\beta_{2j} = \gamma_{20} + \gamma_{21}(\text{PHI}) + u_{2j}.$$

In these models, the moderating effect of evaluative organization was tested by the significance of the  $\gamma_{11}$  and  $\gamma_{21}$  coefficients (for daily hassles and daily uplifts, respectively). These coefficients can be interpreted like standardized regression coefficients because person-level variables were standardized prior to analysis (Nezlek & Plesko, 2003). The results of these analyses are summarized in Table 6. For state self-esteem, evaluative organization moderated only daily hassle slopes,  $B = -.74, p < .05$ . The predicted values for this analysis are shown in Figure 2. The  $\gamma_{11}$  coefficient for the state self-esteem analysis was  $-.74$  which means that for every 1.0 unit change in evaluative organization (a 1 *SD* change), daily hassles slopes changed  $-.74$ . The mean daily hassles slope for state self-esteem was  $-1.83$  (see Table 5), so the predicted daily hassles slope for a person 1 *SD* above the mean on evaluative organization was  $-2.57$ , whereas it was  $-1.09$  for a person 1 *SD* below the mean. This indicates the state self-esteem of compartmentalized individuals was more closely associated with daily hassles than was the self-esteem of integrative individuals. To examine the pattern of this cross-level interaction, simple slopes tests were employed that have been adapted for multilevel models (Curran, Bauer, & Willoughby, in press-a, in press-b). These tests are based on the procedure introduced by Aiken and West (1991). These analyses showed that individuals with compartmentalized self-concept structures (1 *SD* above the mean for

evaluative organization) experienced a significant decrease in state self-esteem as their level of daily hassles increased,  $B = -2.60, p < .001$ . Individuals with an integrative self-concept structure (1 *SD* below the mean for evaluative organization) also experienced a significant decrease in state self-esteem as daily hassles increased,  $B = -1.11, p < .03$ . Taken together, these results reveal that both compartmentalized and integrative individuals show significant decreases in state self-esteem on days when more daily hassles are experienced; however, the decrease in state self-esteem experienced by the compartmentalized individuals is significantly greater than that experienced by integrative individuals.<sup>7</sup> Evaluative organization did not moderate the within-person relationships between positive or negative affect and daily events.

A similar set of analyses were conducted for perceived stress. The results of these analyses are summarized in Table 6. Evaluative organization moderated the relationship between state self-esteem and stress. Similar to the results for daily hassles, these results show the state self-esteem of compartmentalized individuals to have a stronger association with stress than the state self-esteem of integrative individuals,  $B = -.39, p < .01$ .<sup>8</sup> The predicted values for this analysis are shown in Figure 3. Simple slopes tests found that the state self-esteem of individuals with compartmentalized self-concept structures decreased significantly as perceived stress increased,  $B = -1.21, p < .001$ . Integrative individuals also showed declines in state self-esteem as perceived stress increased,  $B = -.42, p < .01$ . These analyses show that the state self-esteem of both compartmentalized and integrative individuals is associated with stress, but the decreases in state self-esteem experienced by compartmentalized individuals are greater than those experienced by integrative individuals. The results of this analysis were similar when daily events were included in the model. The moderating effect of evaluative organization approached significance for both stress ( $B = -.23, p < .06$ ) and daily hassles ( $B = -.62, p < .10$ ). This suggests that the moderating effect of evaluative organization for

stress is unique from the moderating effect for daily hassles. Evaluative organization did not moderate the within-person relationships between perceived stress and positive or negative affect.

#### *Artifacts and Threats to Validity*

In studies involving experience-sampling methodology, it is important to determine if artifacts such as fatigue or the number of days a participant contributed data influenced within-person coefficients (Nezlek & Plesko, 2003). To examine temporal trends in the data, analyses were conducted that included the day of the study at Level 1 (within-person level). These analyses found no significant relationship between the day of the study and daily measures of psychological adjustment or stress. The potential also existed for participants to provide data for different numbers of days which allows for the possibility that such differences were associated with the results of the present study. To examine this possibility, analyses were conducted that included the number of days a participant contributed data at Level 2 (between-person level). These analyses found no significant associations between the amount of contributed data and the within-person coefficients described above. Thus, it does not appear that fatigue or the number of days participants contributed data influenced the results of the present study.

#### Discussion

The hypothesized relationship between compartmentalized self-concept structures and self-esteem instability emerged only for those individuals with high trait self-esteem. Importantly, this effect was driven by the stable self-esteem of individuals with integrative self-concepts and high trait self-esteem. This result may suggest that the advantages of integration, at least in terms of self-esteem stability, are restricted to those individuals who possess relatively positive self-evaluations. It is possible that some threshold level of positivity (e.g., high self-esteem or a high proportion of positive self-beliefs) must be met before integration is able to protect and stabilize self-esteem. This



result may also suggest that the high level of trait self-esteem which characterizes positively compartmentalized individuals may be difficult for these individuals to sustain with the result being frequent fluctuations in state self-esteem. It is also important to notice that individuals with low trait self-esteem had relatively unstable self-esteem regardless of their self-concept structure. This finding is consistent with the negative correlation that is typically found between self-esteem level and self-esteem instability (see Kernis & Waschull, 1995 for a review).

The hypothesis concerning the lability of state self-esteem was supported by the results of the present study. More specifically, the state self-esteem of compartmentalized individuals appeared to be significantly more responsive to daily hassles and perceived stress than the state self-esteem of integrative individuals. One possible reason for this observed pattern is that negative experiences (e.g., daily hassles or perceived stress) may activate purely negative self-aspects either directly or indirectly through the activation of self-beliefs contained within those self-aspects of compartmentalized individuals. The activation of these negative self-aspects may temporarily overwhelm the compartmentalized individual and result in significant decreases in state self-esteem. The failure to find self-esteem increases among compartmentalized individuals on days with high numbers of daily uplifts may be due to individuals typically having stronger reactions to negative events than to positive events (Appel, Blomkvist, Persson, & Sjoberg, 1980; Myers, Lindenthal, Pepper, & Ostrander, 1972; Persson, 1988a, 1988b, 1988c; Vinokur & Selzer, 1975). It is also possible that the measures employed in the present study were less sensitive to positive events and positive psychological adjustment. Further, the lack of effects for state positive or negative affect suggests that the lability of compartmentalized individuals occurs primarily for self-evaluation rather than indicating a more global instability. This supports Showers' (1995) contention that the consequences of evaluative organization are due to the accessibility of self-

knowledge rather than directly affecting mood.

## STUDY 2

Despite the supportive results of Study 1, a number of questions concerning the association between evaluative organization and self-esteem lability remain unanswered. One of these questions concerns whether the findings from Study 1 could be replicated. To address this question, hypotheses concerning self-esteem instability and self-esteem lability were included in Study 2 which were identical to those presented in Study 1. Another question of interest concerned whether the state self-esteem of compartmentalized individuals is especially responsive to certain kinds of events. More specifically, it is possible that compartmentalized individuals may be more reactive to daily social events than to daily achievement events because the desire for interpersonal acceptance and to form strong social bonds is believed to be a fundamental human motivation (Baumeister & Tice, 1990; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Bowlby, 1969; Hogan, 1982). Leary and his colleagues have shown that self-esteem is closely associated with feelings of social rejection (Leary, Cottrell, & Phillips, 2001; Leary et al., 2003; Leary, Haupt, Strausser, & Chokel, 1998; Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995). This sensitivity to social rejection may be especially true for individuals with unstable self-esteem because they may depend primarily on social relationships to maintain their fragile self-views (Barnett & Gotlib, 1988). Previous research has supported this contention by showing that individuals with unstable self-esteem are more likely than individuals with stable self-esteem to focus on daily events that pertain to social acceptance or rejection (Greenier et al., 1999). Because of the proposed link between compartmentalization and unstable self-esteem, this increased sensitivity to social events may also describe compartmentalized individuals. Therefore, events pertaining to social acceptance or rejection may be especially important to individuals with compartmentalized self-concept structures regardless of their specific negative self-

beliefs.

Hypothesis 4: The self-esteem of individuals with compartmentalized self-concepts will exhibit greater lability in response to daily events pertaining to social rejection or social acceptance than the self-esteem of individuals with integrative self-concepts.

Because self-esteem instability is only one of the ways in which fragile self-esteem may be distinguished from secure self-esteem (Kernis & Paradise, 2002), evaluative organization may be associated with another model of fragile self-esteem such as contingent self-esteem. Individuals with contingent self-esteem tend to base their feelings of self-worth upon meeting certain standards. Although self-esteem instability and contingent self-esteem have certain common features such as reflecting fragile, poorly-anchored feelings of self-worth that require continual validation (Kernis & Goldman, 2003; Kernis, Paradise, et al., 2000), these are clearly distinct constructs (see Kernis & Paradise, 2002; Kernis & Goldman, 2003). As with unstable self-esteem, contingent self-esteem may be related to self-concept structure. More specifically, the shifts in the salience of negative self-aspects believed to characterize compartmentalized individuals may lead these individuals to focus on garnering social approval and meeting certain standards in an effort to maintain their rather tenuous positive self-evaluations. This focus may be manifested as self-esteem contingencies within certain life domains such as those proposed by Crocker and her colleagues (Crocker, Karpinski, Quinn, & Chase, 2003; Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper, & Bouvrette, 2003; Crocker & Wolfe, 2001). Although Crocker and her colleagues emphasize that individuals may differ in which domains are important for their self-esteem, examining the degree to which any sort of self-esteem contingency is operative may also prove useful (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1995; Kernis & Waschull, 1995; Rogers, 1959). If compartmentalization is associated with both unstable self-esteem and contingent self-esteem, then this would provide convergent

support for the idea that compartmentalized individuals possess fragile self-esteem.

Hypothesis 5: Individuals with compartmentalized self-concept structures will possess self-esteem that is more contingent on external validation and achievement than individuals with integrative self-concept structures.

### Overview of Study 2

In order to replicate and extend the self-esteem instability and self-esteem lability results from Study 1, participants in the present study performed a self-descriptive card sorting task and completed measures of psychological adjustment and daily events each day. To determine whether the self-esteem of compartmentalized individuals was especially sensitive to social events, the present study employed a measure of daily events that assessed both social events and achievement events. To extend the Study 1 findings concerning the relation between evaluative organization and fragile self-esteem, contingent self-esteem was also examined in the present study.

### Method

#### *Participants*

Participants were 153 undergraduates (50 men and 103 women) enrolled in introductory psychology at the University of Oklahoma who participated in exchange for research credit. The mean age of participants was 19.03 years ( $SD = 2.07$ ). The racial/ethnic composition was 80% White, 5% Black, 4% Asian, 4% Native American, 5% Hispanic, and 2% Other.

#### *Measures*

The measures of self-concept content and structure, trait self-esteem ( $\alpha = .87$ ), positive affect ( $\alpha = .84$ ), and negative affect ( $\alpha = .88$ ) were unchanged from Study 1. For each participant, the within-subject standard deviation across the repeated assessments of state self-esteem served as the index of self-esteem instability, with higher standard deviations indicating more unstable self-esteem ( $M = 4.96$ ,  $SD = 3.78$ ). In the current

sample, level of self-esteem and self-esteem instability were significantly correlated,  $r = -.35, p < .001$ . A new measure of daily events and a measure of contingent self-esteem were added for the present study.

#### *Daily Events Survey*

Participants were asked to record their daily events each evening using a modified version of the Daily Events Survey (DES; Butler, Hokanson, & Flynn, 1994). The DES consists of 40-items that are appropriate for college students. The modifications to the DES employed in the current study were based on those used in previous research (e.g., Nezlek & Gable, 2001; Nezlek & Plesko, 2003). In the present study, 22 of the 40 events were employed (12 positive and 10 negative events). Social and achievement domains were equally represented. Events included, “Was excluded or left out by my group of friends,” “Fell behind in coursework or duties,” and “Classmate, teacher, co-worker, or friend complimented me on my abilities.” In addition, four items (positive social event, negative social event, positive achievement event, and negative achievement event) were created to measure other events that may have occurred. For example, other positive achievement events were measured using the item, “Had other type of pleasant event (not listed above) concerning performance at school, work, or another activity.” Each evening, participants rated each event using the following scale: 0 = *did not occur*, 1 = *occurred and not important*, 2 = *occurred and somewhat important*, 3 = *occurred and pretty important*, and 4 = *occurred and extremely important*. The number of positive events that occurred each day and the number of negative events that occurred were calculated.

#### *Contingencies of Self-Worth Scale*

Contingencies of self-worth were assessed using a measure developed by Crocker and colleagues (Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper, & Bouvrette, 2003; Crocker & Wolfe, 2001). The measure consists of 35-items which assess each of seven domains on which

college students might base their feelings of self-worth. These domains are: others' approval (e.g., "I can't respect myself if others don't respect me";  $\alpha = .81$ ), physical appearance (e.g., "When I think I look attractive, I feel good about myself";  $\alpha = .75$ ), outdoing others in competition (e.g., "Knowing that I am better than others on a task raises my self-esteem";  $\alpha = .87$ ), academic competence (e.g., "Doing well in school gives me a sense of self-respect";  $\alpha = .80$ ), family love and support (e.g., "Knowing that my family members love me makes me feel good about myself";  $\alpha = .82$ ), being a virtuous or moral person (e.g., "Doing something I know is wrong makes me lose my self-respect";  $\alpha = .84$ ), and God's love (e.g., "I feel worthwhile when I have God's love";  $\alpha = .95$ ). A composite score of general self-esteem contingency was calculated by summing across all items ( $\alpha = .90$ ).

### *Procedure*

Participants completed measures of self-concept content and structure, trait self-esteem, trait positive and negative affect, and contingencies of self-worth during a 90-minute laboratory session. Participants were instructed to complete state measures of self-esteem, positive and negative affect, and the measure of daily events at 24 hour intervals (at approximately 10pm each day) for 7 consecutive days. Participants were scheduled to return to the laboratory one week later to participate in Study 3.

### *Results*

Of the 153 participants who began the study, 10 participants failed to complete the card sorting task or used fewer than two negative attributes and 5 participants failed to complete measures relevant to the current study. Analyses not involving the daily measures used the remaining 138 participants. Due to failure to complete daily measures for 5 or more days, data from 20 participants were excluded from analyses involving the daily measures. Analyses concerning daily measures were conducted using the 118 remaining participants. Daily measures were provided for all 7 days by 96% of these

final participants.

### *Descriptive Statistics*

Table 7 presents the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for all variables. On average, the participants' card sorts consisted of 5.8 self-aspects and contained 8.0 attributes per self-aspect. The card sorts contained an average of 12.3 (28%) negative attributes.

As in Study 1, the distributional properties of the observed variables were examined before testing hypotheses. The only variable showing a marked departure from normality was the proportion of negative attributes in the card sorting task which was positively skewed. In order to approximate a normal distribution, the proportion of negative attributes was arcsine transformed (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003).

### *Organization of Self-Knowledge and Self-Esteem Instability*

To replicate the association found between evaluative organization and self-esteem instability in Study 1, a hierarchical multiple regression was performed. As in Study 1, the main effect terms for evaluative organization and trait self-esteem were entered on Step 1. On Step 2, the interaction of evaluative organization and trait self-esteem was entered.<sup>9</sup> Significant main effects emerged for both evaluative organization,  $\beta = .25, p < .01$ , and trait self-esteem,  $\beta = -.28, p < .01$ . Individuals with a compartmentalized self-concept structure or with low trait self-esteem reported less stable self-esteem. The interaction of evaluative organization and trait self-esteem did not reach conventional levels of significance,  $\beta = -.14, p < .11$ .

### *Descriptive Statistics and Reliability of Daily Measures*

Descriptive statistics for the daily measures are provided in Table 8. These descriptive statistics were obtained by an unconditional model (i.e., a model containing no terms other than intercepts at any level of the model) for each measure of state psychological adjustment or daily stress. Each of the daily measures had a reliability

coefficient above .90.

### *Evaluative Organization and Daily Measures*

Two-level MRCMs were used to examine relationships between evaluative organization and daily measures of stress and state psychological adjustment. These effects are examined at Level 2 by modeling the variability of  $\beta_{0j}$ , the coefficient from the Level 1 model representing the group mean. As in Study 1, a significant negative association emerged between evaluative organization and the average level of state self-esteem,  $B = -2.35$ ,  $p < .03$ . Compartmentalized individuals reported lower levels of state self-esteem than integrative individuals.

### *Daily Events and State Psychological Adjustment*

To examine within-person relationships between daily stress and state psychological adjustment two-level MRCMs were used. The Level 1 model described the association between daily stress and psychological adjustment. As expected, there were significant associations between positive and negative daily events and state psychological adjustment. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 9. The slopes representing the association between daily events and psychological adjustment were significantly different from 0,  $|Bs| > .41$ ,  $ps < .01$ . Across all participants, psychological adjustment was higher on days when more positive events were reported and lower on days when more negative events were reported.

### *Evaluative Organization as a Moderator of Within-Person Relationships*

#### *Between Daily Stress and State Psychological Adjustment*

These analyses are conceptual replications of analyses from Study 1 which examined whether evaluative organization moderated the within-person relationship between daily events and state psychological adjustment. The results of these analyses are summarized in Table 10. As in Study 1, these coefficients can be interpreted like standardized regression coefficients because person-level variables were standardized



prior to analysis (Nezlek & Plesko, 2003). Evaluative organization moderated the relationships between state self-esteem and both positive and negative events. The predicted values for positive events are shown in Figure 4 and the predicted values for negative events are shown in Figure 5. Simple slopes tests were employed to examine the patterns of these cross-level interactions. These analyses showed that individuals with compartmentalized self-concept structures experienced a significant increase in state self-esteem as their level of positive events increased,  $B = .71, p < .001$ , as well as a significant decrease in state self-esteem as their level of negative events increased,  $B = -.65, p < .01$ . Individuals with an integrative self-concept structure also experienced a significant increase in state self-esteem as their level of positive events increased,  $B = .25, p < .02$ , but did not experience a significant decrease in state self-esteem as their level of negative events increased,  $B = -.45, ns$ . Taken together, these results suggest that the state self-esteem of compartmentalized individuals is more closely associated with both positive and negative daily events than the state self-esteem of integrative individuals. Evaluative organization did not moderate the within-person relationships of daily events with positive or negative affect.

*Evaluative Organization as a Moderator of Within-Person Relationships  
Between Social Events and State Psychological Adjustment*

To examine whether the psychological adjustment of compartmentalized individuals is most closely associated with social events, the measure of daily events was decomposed into social and achievement events. Each type of event (i.e., positive social, negative social, positive achievement, and negative achievement) was entered simultaneously at the within-person level of the model. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 11. These results confirmed that both social and achievement events were linked to state self-esteem and affect. Analyses were then conducted to examine whether evaluative organization moderated the relationships between these events and

state psychological adjustment. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 12. For state self-esteem, the moderating effect of evaluative organization observed in Study 1 for the measure of daily hassles was replicated for both positive social events,  $B = .29$ ,  $p < .01$ , and negative social events,  $B = -.43$ ,  $p < .02$ , but not for positive or negative achievement events,  $|Bs| < .20$ , *ns*. The predicted values for positive social events are shown in Figure 6 and the predicted values for negative social events are shown in Figure 7. Simple slopes tests were employed to examine the patterns of these cross-level interactions. These analyses showed that individuals with compartmentalized self-concept structures experienced a significant increase in state self-esteem as their level of positive social events increased,  $B = .74$ ,  $p < .01$ , as well as a significant decrease in state self-esteem as their level of negative social events increased,  $B = -1.10$ ,  $p < .001$ . Individuals with an integrative self-concept structure did not experience a significant increase in state self-esteem as their level of positive social events increased,  $B = .16$ , *ns*, but did experience a significant decrease in state self-esteem as their level of negative social events increased,  $B = -.25$ ,  $p < .05$ . Taken together, these results suggest that the state self-esteem of compartmentalized individuals is more closely associated with social events than the state self-esteem of integrative individuals.

Similar to the results for state self-esteem, evaluative organization moderated the relationship of daily events with state positive affect and state negative affect. More specifically, the affect of compartmentalized individuals was more responsive to positive social events than the affect of integrative individuals,  $|Bs| > .27$ ,  $ps < .05$ . The results of these analyses are presented in Table 12. No other moderating effects of evaluative organization emerged from these analyses.

#### *Artifacts and Threats to Validity*

To examine whether fatigue had an influence on the results of the present study, analyses were conducted that included the day of the study at Level 1 (the within-person

level). No significant association between the day of the study and daily measures of psychological adjustment or stress emerged from these analyses. To examine the possibility that differences in the number of days participants provided data may influence within-person coefficients, analyses were conducted that included the number of days a participant contributed data at Level 2 (the between-person level). These analyses found no significant associations between the amount of contributed data and the within-person coefficients described above. Thus, it does not appear that the results of the present study were influenced by fatigue or the number of days participants contributed data.

#### *Organization of Self-Knowledge and Contingencies of Self-Worth*

To examine the association between evaluative organization and contingencies of self-worth, a hierarchical multiple regression was performed for the composite score representing global self-esteem contingency as well as each of the seven domains on which self-esteem may be contingent. On Step 1, the main effect terms for evaluative organization, differential importance, and proportion of negative attributes were entered. On Step 2, the two-way interactions of the main effect terms were entered.<sup>10</sup> Results of the analysis for composite contingent self-esteem score are shown in Table 13. The main effect of evaluative organization,  $\beta = .21, p < .03$ , was qualified by the interaction of evaluative organization and differential importance,  $\beta = .26, p < .01$ . Predicted values showing the interaction of evaluative organization and differential importance for contingent self-esteem are shown in Figure 8. The slope of the simple regression line at 1 *SD* above the mean for differential importance was significantly different from zero,  $\beta = .47, p < .001$ . The slope of the regression line at 1 *SD* below the mean for differential importance was not significantly different from zero,  $\beta = -.04, ns$ . These results suggest that evaluative organization is associated with contingent self-esteem when positive self-aspects are considered to be most important. More specifically, individuals with a

positively compartmentalized self-concept structure tended to have self-esteem that is more contingent than positively integrative individuals. Similar interactions of evaluative organization and differential importance were found for God's love, physical appearance, and family love and support,  $\beta_s > .18$ ,  $ps < .05$ . Main effects of evaluative organization also emerged for others' approval and being a virtuous and moral person such that compartmentalized individuals possessed more contingent self-esteem,  $\beta_s > .19$ ,  $ps < .04$ . No significant effects emerged for academic competence or outdoing others in competition.

### Discussion

As hypothesized, individuals with compartmentalized self-concept structures had less stable self-esteem than individuals with integrative structures. Although the main effect of evaluative organization was not significantly qualified by the interaction of evaluative organization and trait self-esteem as in Study 1, it remains possible that the stabilizing effects of integration emerge primarily for individuals with relatively positive self-concepts. The findings concerning the lability of state self-esteem in response to daily stress were very similar to those from Study 1. The state self-esteem of compartmentalized individuals appeared to be more responsive to both positive and negative daily events than the state self-esteem of integrative individuals. In addition to replicating the effects from Study 1, the findings from Study 2 suggest that individuals with compartmentalized self-concept structures may be especially sensitive to social events. This sensitivity to social events may be due to the importance of social bonds regardless of the specific content of the self-concept.

The hypothesized association between compartmentalization and contingent self-esteem emerged primarily for individuals who placed more importance on their positive self-aspects than their negative self-aspects. This indicates that individuals with positively compartmentalized self-concept structures appear to possess self-esteem that is

contingent upon meeting certain standards. Compartmentalized individuals appear to be primarily concerned with sources of social approval whether it is from other people in general, family members, or even a religious deity. This focus on being accepted by others may be an attempt to sustain their rather tenuous positive attitudes toward the self. Thus, compartmentalized individuals may be more concerned than integrative individuals with monitoring their current levels of social acceptance and comparing themselves against external standards of achievement or success. This focus on environmental factors would appear to be closely related to the labile self-esteem of compartmentalized individuals. If compartmentalized individuals feel accepted, then they tend to feel very good about themselves. However, if they do not feel accepted or fail to reach a self-imposed standard, then their self-esteem is likely to plummet. This consistency in results between contingent self-esteem and labile self-esteem is not surprising given the conceptual similarities between these constructs.

### STUDY 3

The results of Study 2 indicate that the self-esteem of compartmentalized individuals may be more responsive to social events than is the self-esteem of integrative individuals. However, participants in Study 2 merely reported the events they experienced in the course of their daily lives. This leaves open the possibility of alternative explanations such as the daily social experiences of compartmentalized and integrative individuals differing in some systematic fashion. For example, it is possible that compartmentalized individuals may tend to focus more of their attention on short-term relationships than integrative individuals. The inherent instability associated with short-term relationships may contribute to the stronger reactions to social events reported by compartmentalized individuals. If any sort of systematic difference exists in the daily events that compartmentalized and integrative individuals experience, this difference could mediate the relationship between self-concept structure and self-esteem lability.

Thus, it is desirable to establish a direct, causal relationship between the event experienced by the individual and the individual's response to that particular event. This can be accomplished by observing the reactions of compartmentalized and integrative individuals to a lab manipulation in which the individual's experience of social acceptance or social rejection is controlled by the researcher.

Hypothesis 6: Individuals with compartmentalized self-concepts will experience lower state self-esteem than individuals with integrative self-concepts following a laboratory manipulation of social rejection.

### Overview of Study 3

In order to examine the association between self-concept structure and responses to social rejection, participants were exposed to a laboratory manipulation in which feelings of social rejection or social acceptance were induced. Following the laboratory manipulation, participants were asked to report their state self-esteem, affect, and perceived social rejection on three occasions.

### Method

#### *Participants*

Participants were the same 138 undergraduates who participated in Study 2. These participants completed the first laboratory session (i.e., Study 2) and were scheduled to return to the laboratory one week later for the second laboratory session (i.e., Study 3). Participants were told that the two laboratory sessions were being conducted for the same study.

#### *Measures*

Because the same participants were involved in Studies 2 and 3, the self-concept content and structure, trait self-esteem, positive affect, and negative affect measures that were collected in Study 2 were used in the analyses for Study 3. In addition, participants also reported their level of perceived social rejection in Study 3.

### *Perceived Social Rejection*

Participants indicated their current level of perceived social rejection by indicating their level of agreement with the statement “At this moment, I feel rejected by others.” Responses were made on scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 10 (*strongly agree*).

### *Procedure*

To increase the impact of social rejection or acceptance, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire labeled “Personal Biography” before attending the laboratory session. The questionnaire requested the following information: (1) first name; (2) place of birth; (3) college major; (4) a list of hobbies; (5) the first four words that come to mind when thinking about their lives; (6) the word that best describes them; (7) the first thing they would change about themselves; and (8) a brief description of how they imagine their lives in five years. Participants were also asked for their consent to share this information with three other participants with whom they believed they would interact during a mental visualization task.

At the beginning of the laboratory session, participants were given the “Personal Biography” questionnaires ostensibly belonging to their three teammates. They were given 5 minutes to read these questionnaires and to begin forming a mental image of their teammates. Participants were then instructed to visualize themselves, as well as the other players on their team, during an on-line game of virtual ball-toss. This cyberball task was developed by Williams and his colleagues (Williams, Cheung, & Choi, 2000; Williams, Govan, Croker, Tynan, Cruickshank, & Lam, 2002) to induce feelings of social rejection and ostracism.

Each action taken by any member of the team was presented on the screen. When participants received the ball, they chose whom to throw the ball to by selecting that player’s name. On each of the turns in which participants were not in possession of the

ball, they watched what was occurring between the other players. The computer-generated players' throws were controlled by an algorithm. The probability that they would throw it to the participant was programmed to correspond with the condition to which participants were randomly assigned. These conditions (social rejection vs. social acceptance) varied in the number of times participants were thrown the ball during the 30 trials that constituted this task. In the social acceptance condition, participants received the ball during 25% of the trials, which is what would be expected by chance. In the social rejection condition, participants received the ball twice during the initial rounds and then did not receive it during the remainder of the task. The amount of time taken by the computer-generated players to make their decision and throw the ball was varied with each throw in an effort to increase the plausibility that these players were real participants.

Following the laboratory manipulation, feelings of social rejection and state psychological adjustment (e.g., self-esteem, positive affect, negative affect) were measured. In an effort to capture the effects of social rejection or acceptance on psychological adjustment over time, adjustment was measured at three points in time: immediately following the manipulation (Time 1), approximately 60 minutes after the manipulation (Time 2), and at approximately 10pm that evening (Time 3). Because participants completed the laboratory session at different times during the day, the number of hours separating the laboratory manipulation and the Time 3 measures varied between participants. It is also important to note that participants were debriefed concerning the purpose of the study immediately following the Time 2 measures. Thus, participants were aware of the purpose of the study – and that their cyberball “teammates” did not actually exist – when they completed the Time 3 measures.

### Results

Of the 138 participants who completed all of the relevant measures for the present



study, 75 were randomly assigned to the rejection condition and 63 were randomly assigned to the acceptance condition. Of these 138 participants, 123 participants completed the measures at Time 3.

#### *Psychological Adjustment Following Social Rejection or Acceptance*

These analyses examine the association between evaluative organization and responses to social rejection or acceptance under controlled conditions in the laboratory. As a manipulation check, differences in perceived social rejection and psychological adjustment between the social rejection and social acceptance conditions were examined for Time 1 (immediately following rejection). As expected, participants in the social rejection condition reported greater feelings of rejection than participants in the social acceptance condition immediately following the manipulation,  $t'(134.88) = -2.35, p < .02$ . This indicates that the social rejection manipulation successfully induced feelings of rejection. Unexpectedly, measures of state self-esteem and affect at Time 1 did not differ between conditions,  $|t's| < .74, ns$ . Although the failure to find differences in state psychological adjustment between the social rejection and acceptance conditions is surprising, it does not preclude interactions of self-concept structure and social rejection condition from emerging in subsequent analyses.

The relationships between self-concept structure and reactions to the social rejection manipulation were examined by a series of hierarchical multiple regressions. For measures of psychological adjustment (i.e., self-esteem, positive affect, and negative affect), a main effect term for the trait-level of the criterion variable was included on Step 1 to control for trait-level differences. For example, it was expected that individuals with high trait self-esteem would report relatively high state self-esteem following the social rejection manipulation. On Step 1, trait psychological adjustment, evaluative organization, differential importance, proportion of negative attributes, and social rejection condition (coded as 0 = *acceptance* and 1 = *rejection*) were entered. On Step 2,

the two-way interactions of the main effect terms were entered.<sup>11</sup> Analyses concerning perceived social rejection did not include trait-level perceived social rejection because this construct was not measured. These analyses were conducted at each of the assessment points following the social rejection manipulation (i.e., Times 1, 2, and 3).

*Time 1: Immediately Following Social Rejection or Acceptance*

The first set of analyses examined the hypothesis that compartmentalized individuals would report lower levels of state psychological adjustment immediately following social rejection. As expected, significant main effects of trait adjustment were found for each of the state measures of psychological adjustment,  $\beta_s > .53$ ,  $ps < .001$ . These results indicate that individuals with high trait-levels of psychological adjustment continue to report relatively high levels of state psychological adjustment following the manipulation. Significant main effects of evaluative organization emerged for self-esteem and positive affect,  $|\beta_s| > .14$ ,  $ps < .05$ . As predicted, a significant interaction of evaluative organization and social rejection condition emerged for self-esteem,  $\beta = -.15$ ,  $p < .04$ . Predicted values for this interaction are presented in Figure 9. Simple slopes tests revealed that for participants in the acceptance condition, evaluative organization was not a significant predictor of state self-esteem immediately following the manipulation  $\beta = .03$ , *ns*. However, participants with compartmentalized self-concept structures in the rejection condition reported lower self-esteem following the manipulation than participants with integrative self-concepts,  $\beta = -.28$ ,  $p < .02$ . Together, these results suggest that the state self-esteem of compartmentalized individuals may be more affected by social rejection than the state self-esteem of integrative individuals. No other significant effects involving social rejection condition emerged from these analyses.

A similar analysis examined perceived social rejection at Time 1. For this analysis, main effects emerged for differential importance ( $\beta = -.18$ ,  $p < .05$ ), proportion of negative attributes ( $\beta = .22$ ,  $p < .02$ ), and social rejection condition ( $\beta = .24$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

An interaction of evaluative organization and social rejection condition also emerged for perceived social rejection immediately following the manipulation,  $\beta = -.16, p < .04$ . Predicted values for this interaction are shown in Figure 10. Simple slopes tests revealed that participants with integrative self-concepts did not differ in their feelings of rejection following the manipulation,  $\beta = .08, ns$ . However, compartmentalized individuals in the rejection condition reported much higher levels of rejection than compartmentalized individuals in the acceptance condition,  $\beta = .43, p < .001$ . No other significant effects emerged for perceived rejection at Time 1.

*Time 2: One Hour Following Social Rejection or Acceptance*

The relation between self-concept structure and state psychological adjustment at Time 2 was examined to determine whether effects that emerged immediately following the manipulation would persist and whether new effects would emerge over time. No interactions involving social rejection condition emerged for state self-esteem, affect, or perceived social rejection at Time 2.

*Time 3: End of the Day Following Social Rejection or Acceptance*

Similar analyses were conducted to examine whether the social rejection manipulation would have an effect on psychological adjustment hours later. As expected, significant main effects of trait adjustment were found for each of the state measures of psychological adjustment,  $\beta s > .36, ps < .001$ . As with the Time 1 analysis of state self-esteem, there was a significant main effect of evaluative organization,  $\beta = -.20, p < .03$ , that was qualified by the interaction of evaluative organization and social rejection condition,  $\beta = -.20, p < .04$ . The predicted values were similar to those presented in Figure 9. As with the Time 1 analyses, simple slopes tests revealed that for participants in the acceptance condition, evaluative organization was not related to state self-esteem at Time 3,  $\beta = .06, ns$ . However, compartmentalized individuals in the rejection condition reported lower self-esteem following the manipulation than participants with integrative

self-concepts,  $\beta = -.34, p < .02$ .

A similar analysis was conducted for the single-item measure of perceived social rejection at Time 3. An interaction of evaluative organization and social rejection condition also emerged from this analysis,  $\beta = -.21, p < .05$ . The predicted values for this analysis are similar to those presented in Figure 10. As with the Time 1 analyses, simple slopes tests revealed that participants with integrative self-concepts did not differ in level of perceived rejection regardless of condition,  $\beta = -.13, ns$ . However, compartmentalized individuals in the rejection condition reported much higher levels of perceived rejection than compartmentalized individuals in the acceptance condition,  $\beta = .29, p < .05$ .

### Discussion

The sensitivity of compartmentalized individuals to social rejection was demonstrated by their lower levels of state self-esteem and higher levels of perceived rejection following the laboratory manipulation. However, the duration of their reactions to the social rejection manipulation remains unclear. Low state self-esteem and high levels of perceived rejection were evident for compartmentalized individuals immediately following the manipulation (Time 1) but these effects did not emerge one hour later (Time 2). These findings seem to indicate that the responsiveness of compartmentalized individuals is somewhat short-lived (i.e., less than one hour). However, the low state self-esteem and high levels of perceived rejection reemerged for compartmentalized individuals at the end of the day (Time 3). It is possible that participants used the measures completed between Time 1 and Time 2 to activate their positive aspects or that these measures may have inadvertently served as a distraction task. This is consistent with previous findings showing that compartmentalized individuals are able to recover from a sad mood induction relatively quickly when they were allowed to distract themselves (Showers & Kling, 1996). It is also possible that the lack of effects at Time 2 may be due to the laboratory manipulation rather than being

indicative of how quickly compartmentalized individuals can recover from negative experiences. For example, laboratory manipulations of the sort employed in the present study produce relatively weak effects that are typically short-lived (Blaney, 1986; Buchwald, Strack, & Coyne, 1981; Isen & Gorgoglione, 1983). The re-emergence of effects at Time 3 could be due to an unexplored ruminative tendency among compartmentalized individuals or be the result of participants lacking a convenient method to distract or affirm themselves at the end of the day.

#### GENERAL DISCUSSION

The present studies examined whether compartmentalized individuals possess self-esteem that is relatively fragile. The results of three studies suggest that the self-esteem of compartmentalized individuals may be characterized as unstable over time, labile in response to daily events, and contingent upon meeting certain standards. Studies 1 and 2 found that individuals with compartmentalized self-concept structures possess less stable self-esteem than individuals with integrative self-concepts; however, this effect may be more pronounced among individuals who possess high levels of trait self-esteem. The unstable self-esteem that characterizes individuals with compartmentalized self-concepts appears to be an example of the hidden vulnerability of compartmentalization. This instability may be due to compartmentalized individuals being vulnerable to shifts in the salience of particular self-aspects.

If compartmentalized individuals are vulnerable to shifts in the salience of particular self-aspects, then it would be expected that the state self-esteem of compartmentalized individuals would have a stronger relationship with daily events than the state self-esteem of integrative individuals. As hypothesized, Studies 1 and 2 found that individuals with compartmentalized self-concept structures possessed state self-esteem that was more labile than the state self-esteem of individuals with integrative self-concepts. This increased reactivity was shown for both daily events and perceived stress.

However, this reactivity was found only in response to daily hassles and did not emerge for daily uplifts in Study 1. One possible explanation for this result is that the measure of daily uplifts was not particularly sensitive to the types of positive events that are relevant to college students. This explanation is supported by the results from Study 2 which found the state self-esteem of compartmentalized individuals to be more reactive to both positive and negative daily events. The measure of daily events used in Study 2 was specifically designed to be relevant to the daily experiences of college students (Butler, Hokanson, & Flynn, 1994). In Study 2, the effects of daily events were found to be determined primarily by social events rather than events related to achievement. These results are not surprising given the important link between self-esteem and social rejection (e.g., Leary, Haupt, Strausser, & Chokel, 1998; Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995). Although the analyses pertaining to daily events in Studies 1 and 2 employed group-mean centering, similar results emerged when daily event scores were not centered. This suggests that both the relative number of events (i.e., group-mean centered event scores) as well as the absolute number of events (i.e., uncentered event scores) may have important implications for state self-esteem. In Study 3, similar self-esteem lability results were found for individuals with compartmentalized self-concepts following a laboratory manipulation in which feelings of either social acceptance or social rejection were elicited. Across the present studies, the lability of individuals with compartmentalized self-concept structures was limited almost exclusively to feelings of self-worth. This is consistent with the contention that the consequences of evaluative organization are due to the accessibility of self-knowledge rather than reflecting a more direct path to mood (Showers, 1995). However, it is also possible that the relative lack of findings concerning affect may have been due to the measure of affect employed in the present studies not being specific to self-relevant affect (e.g., shame).

Although self-esteem instability has received the most empirical attention of the

models of fragile self-esteem, it is not the only means for distinguishing secure and fragile self-esteem. Other models of fragile self-esteem include: defensive self-esteem (Horney, 1950; Schneider & Turkat, 1975), discrepant implicit and explicit self-esteem (Bosson, Brown, Zeigler-Hill, & Swann, 2003; Brown & Bosson, 2001; Jordan, Spencer, Zanna, Hoshino-Browne, & Correll, 2003), and contingent self-esteem (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001; Deci & Ryan, 1995). In an effort to examine whether the self-esteem of compartmentalized individuals would be characterized by models of fragile self-esteem other than self-esteem instability, contingent self-esteem was included in Study 2. The hypothesized relationship between evaluative organization and contingent self-esteem emerged primarily for those individuals with positive self-concepts. More specifically, individuals with positively compartmentalized self-concept structures reported the highest levels of contingent self-esteem. This focus on meeting certain standards may be an attempt by compartmentalized individuals to sustain their rather tenuous positive attitudes toward the self. For compartmentalized individuals, this focus on environmental factors would appear to be closely related to their labile self-esteem. Thus, compartmentalized individuals may feel very good about themselves when they are able to manage their lives so that they are usually successful in meeting these standards; however, these individuals may be unable to maintain these externally-based feelings of self-worth on those occasions when they fail to meet relevant standards.

#### Why Is Compartmentalization Associated With Fragile Self-Esteem?

The explanation for the relationship between evaluative organization and fragile self-esteem has focused on the shifting salience of particular self-aspects. This explanation has considerable appeal given that compartmentalization may serve as a means to isolate negative attributes and beliefs. In support of this view, recent studies of structural change in response to stress have found that individuals are reliant on compartmentalization to a greater extent than predicted by the basic model of evaluative

organization (Showers, Abramson, & Hogan, 1998; Showers & Zeigler-Hill, 2003). Conceptually, important similarities exist between compartmentalization and the psychodynamic concept of splitting (Fairbairn, 1952; Kernberg, 1984) in which positive or negative aspects of the self or intimate others are kept separate (Showers & Kevlyn, 1999). For example, both splitting and compartmentalization provide ways for individuals to deal with negative beliefs by limiting access to that information. Splitting accomplishes this goal through the use of repression, whereas compartmentalization achieves the same goal through the isolation of negative information by relegating those beliefs to self-aspects that are unimportant and are rarely activated. However, both splitting and compartmentalization leave individuals vulnerable to the re-emergence of these negative beliefs when repression or isolation fails (Showers & Kling, 1996). Future research should examine the similarities between splitting and compartmentalization as well as further exploring the conditions under which compartmentalized individuals may be overwhelmed by negative beliefs.

The shifting salience of particular self-aspects is not the only potential explanation for the link between fragile self-esteem and compartmentalization. Another possibility is that compartmentalized individuals may possess self-knowledge that is inconsistent. Individuals with inconsistent self-knowledge – such as individuals with low self-concept clarity or highly differentiated self-concepts – are believed to possess fragile self-esteem because their impoverished self-concept forces them to be more reliant on their immediate contexts for cues concerning their feelings of self-worth (Dori, 2002; Kernis, Paradise, et al., 2000). Functionally similar inconsistencies may exist within compartmentalized structures. Because evaluative organization is concerned with the valence of specific self-beliefs, a compartmentalized self-concept is likely to be evaluatively inconsistent across self-aspects by its very definition. That is, because of the segregation of positive and negative attributes, individuals with compartmentalized self-



concept structures may have greater variability in evaluations between self-aspects than individuals with integrative self-concepts. Individuals with integrative self-concept structures, on the other hand, may have inconsistencies within a particular self-aspect. For example, an integrative individual may consider oneself to be *shy* but *genuine* during social interactions. Because these self-beliefs are contained within the same self-aspect, this may suggest that the integrative individual has been successful in resolving the evaluative inconsistency between these specific self-beliefs. Not surprisingly, data from the present studies confirm that compartmentalization is significantly associated with the variability in evaluations across self-aspects,  $r_s > .53$ ,  $p_s < .001$ . This evaluative inconsistency of compartmentalized structures offers a potential explanation for the fragile self-esteem of compartmentalized individuals that complements the explanation concerning the shifting salience of specific self-aspects.

It should be noted that the explanations presented for the current findings are based on a process model which assumes that evaluative organization is a relatively stable feature of the individual that exists prior to potentially self-relevant events and influences self-esteem and affective reactions to these events. However, the data in the present studies cannot rule out the possibility that the direction of causality is reversed. For example, Larsen & Diener (1987) provided an alternative conceptualization of structural effects which suggests that the tendency to experience extreme and variable emotional states may actually determine the structure of the self-concept rather than structure determining emotional responses. This model implies that individuals with stronger affective reactions may structure their self-representations in a manner that tends to generate the higher levels of affect they desire. For example, an individual who desires intense emotions may construct a simple life organized around only a few self-aspects such as being a mother and wife. By organizing her life in this manner, her emotional states are likely to be very dependent upon her relationships with her children and her

husband. When she feels loved and accepted by her family, she may experience extremely positive emotions; however, she may experience extremely negative emotions on those occasions when she does not feel loved and accepted by her family. If necessary, it seems that she could reduce the intensity and variability of her emotional experiences by increasing the complexity of her life (e.g., by focusing some of her attention on her role as a worker). Of course, it is also possible that emotional reactivity and self-concept structure are both by-products of some third variable (Emmons & King, 1989). For example, certain neurologically-based memory deficiencies may lead individuals to act as though their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are completely dependent upon what is happening in the present (Lumsden, 1993). It is possible that both compartmentalization and fragile self-esteem are due to this sort of time frame truncation. Future research should examine whether this sort of memory bias is associated with compartmentalization.

Previous studies have established that positively compartmentalized individuals tend to possess the high levels of self-esteem and positive mood (e.g., Showers, 1992a; Showers, Abramson, & Hogan, 1998). However, these studies have relied exclusively on self-report measures of current adjustment which leaves open the possibility that positively compartmentalized individuals may positively inflate their self-reports of adjustment. Essentially, compartmentalization may reflect a tendency to bolster self-esteem and mood by denying or isolating information that threatens feelings of self-worth or mood. This tendency may be manifested in responses to self-report measures of psychological adjustment. Thus, some of the benefits that are believed to be associated with compartmentalization – such as high self-esteem – may not actually reflect true psychological adjustment. This perspective is supported by results from the present studies showing that individuals with compartmentalized self-concept structures may possess fragile self-esteem.

## Conclusion

The present studies explored the possibility that evaluative organization is associated with fragile self-esteem. Across three studies, compartmentalized individuals were found to possess self-esteem that was less stable over time, more reactive to daily events, and more contingent on meeting certain standards than the self-esteem of integrative individuals. The present findings are consistent with the view that compartmentalization may leave individuals vulnerable to shifts in the salience of particular self-aspects which may have serious implications for long-term psychological adjustment. Thus, compartmentalized individuals may experience relatively high self-esteem on days when things go well for them but their self-esteem may plummet on days when things go poorly. Individuals with integrative self-concept structures, on the other hand, possess feelings of self-worth that are less affected by daily experiences because of their continued access to both positive and negative information about the self.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Compartmentalized and integrative self-concept structures are referred to for ease of explanation. Conceptually and empirically, evaluative organization is a continuous variable with compartmentalization and integration representing the ends of the continuum.

<sup>2</sup> In previous research, self-esteem instability has often been measured by assessing state self-esteem at 12 hour intervals over 4 days (e.g., Monday night to Friday morning; Kernis, Paradise, Whitaker, Wheatman, & Goldman, 2000; Kernis, Whisenhunt, Waschull, Greenier, Berry, Herlocker et al., 1998; Paradise & Kernis, 2002). Data were collected over 14 days in the current study in order to examine the within-person relationships between state self-esteem and daily stress. Within the current sample, measures of self-esteem instability for these two periods (14 days vs. 4 days) were highly correlated,  $r = .83$ .

<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, the date and time participants provided their responses were not recorded or verified (cf. Reis & Gable, 2000; Tennen & Affleck, 2002). Two potential ways to rectify this problem are through the use of computer-assisted daily reporting methods that document the exact time participants complete daily measures (Stone, Shiffman, & DeVries, 1999) or by having participants return the measures to the researcher each day. This is important considering large numbers of participants delay completing one or more daily measures during their participation (Gable, Reis, & Elliot, 2000; Litt, Cooney, & Morse, 1998). As Tennen and Affleck (2002) point out, this increase in retrospective accounts will, at best, lead to increased error variance. However, this optimistic view assumes that the delays in completion of daily measures are random both across participants and within participants over time. More likely, given the literature concerning systematic biases in recalled experiences (e.g., Conway & Ross, 1986; Pearson, Ross, & Dawes, 1992), individuals who delay responses to daily measures may rely on their own implicit theories concerning personality and the stability of personality. Despite this limitation, participants did appear to comply with instructions. First, they were given reminders at both the first and second lab sessions to drop the measures off approximately every 3 days. Second, their supply of daily measures would only last until the next lab session (i.e., one week later). Third, as instructed, some participants skipped days when they forgot to complete the daily measures.

<sup>4</sup> To replicate previous findings concerning the association between self-concept structure and negative mood (e.g., Showers, 1992a), the BDI-II was regressed onto evaluative organization, differential importance, and proportion of negatives. Similar to findings from previous studies, a significant interaction of evaluative organization and differential importance was obtained for level of negative mood,  $\beta = -.18$ ,  $p < .05$ . Simple slopes tests found that when self-concept structure was compartmentalized, high differential importance was associated with lower negative mood than low differential importance,  $\beta = -.41$ ,  $p < .01$ . When self-concept structure was integrative, there was no difference between high differential importance and low differential importance,  $\beta = -.07$ , *ns*. As predicted by the basic model of evaluative organization, compartmentalized individuals reported extreme levels of negative mood.

<sup>5</sup> Initial analyses included differential importance, proportion of negative attributes, and their interactions. Because none of these terms approached conventional levels of significance,  $|\beta s| < .13$ , *ns*, they were trimmed from the final analyses (cf. Hull, Tedlie, & Lehn, 1992; Yzerbyt, Muller, & Judd, in press). However, when the main effects of differential importance and proportion of negative attributes were entered on Step 1, the interaction of evaluative organization and self-esteem level only approached significance,  $\beta = .18$ ,  $p < .06$ .

<sup>6</sup> To increase the ease of interpretation, this analysis used the untransformed daily

hassles and uplifts scores. Similar results were obtained with the square-root transformed scores, daily hassles = 2.72 and daily uplifts = 3.20,  $t(108) = -4.44$ ,  $p < .001$ .

<sup>7</sup> The results of the analyses were consistent when proportion of negative attributes and differential importance were included in the model. The moderating effect of evaluative organization for the relationship between state self-esteem and daily hassles approached statistical significance,  $B = -.85$ ,  $p < .06$ .

<sup>8</sup> The results of the analyses were similar when proportion of negative attributes and differential importance were included in the model. Evaluative organization significantly moderated the relationship between state self-esteem and stress,  $B = -.37$ ,  $p < .01$ .

<sup>9</sup> Initial analyses included differential importance, proportion of negative attributes, and their interactions. Because none of these terms approached conventional levels of significance,  $|\beta_s| < .17$ , *ns*, they were trimmed from the final analyses.

<sup>10</sup> Initial analyses included the three-way interaction of the main effect terms. Because the three-way interaction did not approach conventional levels of significance for the global measure of contingent self-esteem or any of the seven domains,  $|\beta_s| < .15$ , *ns*, they were trimmed from the final analyses.

<sup>11</sup> Initial analyses included the three-way interactions of the main effect terms. Because the three-way interaction did not approach conventional levels of significance for any of the analyses, they were trimmed from the final analyses for Times 1, 2, and 3.



Table 1

*Examples of Actual Card Sorts Illustrating Compartmentalization and Integration*

Panel A: Compartmentalized Organization							
Me at home	Me at work	Me in class	Me in Norman, OK	Me and my sorority	Me with people I don't know	Me when I'm stressed	
Giving	Successful	Successful	Successful	Successful	- Weary	- Hopeless	
Confident	Capable	Capable	Confident	Giving	- Inferior	- Not the "real me"	
Comfortable	Confident	Independent	Comfortable	Confident	- Tense	- Uncomfortable	
Lovable	Comfortable	Organized	Independent	Comfortable		- Sad & Blue	
Outgoing	Needed	Interested	Fun &	Lovable		- Irritable	
Happy	Communicative	Hardworking	Entertaining	Fun &		- Disorganized	
Friendly	Organized		Interested	Entertaining		- Tense	
Optimistic	Interested		Outgoing	Interested			
	Outgoing		Hardworking	Outgoing			
	Hardworking		Happy	Energetic			
	Happy		Friendly	Happy			
	Friendly		Optimistic	Friendly			
Panel B: Integrative Organization							
Family	Religion	Student	African American	Intimate Relationship	Friendship	Dreams (as in goals)	Perfectionist
Organized	Needed	Successful	- Hopeless	Comfortable	Giving	Independent	Successful
- Irritable	Organized	- Lazy	Organized	- Irritable	- Uncomfortable	Organized	- Disagreeing
- Disagreeing	Giving	Mature	Confident	- Immature	- Insecure	- Weary	- Irritable
- Self-centered	Happy	- Irritable	- Irritable	- Insecure	- Irritable		Capable
Communicative	- Irritable	Organized		- Inferior	- Isolated		Confident
Lovable	Optimistic	Intelligent		Organized	Organized		Organized
Fun &		Interested		- Tense	Friendly		Intelligent
Entertaining		Hardworking			- Not the "real me"		Outgoing
Energetic		- Tense					Hardworking
							- Tense

Note. Negative attributes are identified by a minus sign. Panel A: compartmentalization = 1.00; differential importance = .80; and proportion of negative attributes = .17. Panel B: compartmentalization = .32; differential importance = .65; and proportion of negative attributes = .40.

Table 2  
*Study 1: Intercorrelations and Descriptive Statistics for Measures of Self-Concept Structure, Self-Concept Content, and Trait Psychological Adjustment*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Evaluative Organization	(121)							
2. Differential Importance	.14	(121)						
3. Proportion of Negative Attributes	.31 <sup>***</sup>	-.24 <sup>**</sup>	(121)					
4. Trait Self-Esteem	-.16 <sup>†</sup>	.27 <sup>**</sup>	-.35 <sup>***</sup>	(121)				
5. Positive Affect	-.04	.35 <sup>***</sup>	-.33 <sup>***</sup>	.68 <sup>***</sup>	(121)			
6. Negative Affect	.10	-.29 <sup>***</sup>	.36 <sup>***</sup>	-.55 <sup>***</sup>	-.48 <sup>***</sup>	(121)		
7. Negative Mood (BDI-II)	.08	-.25 <sup>**</sup>	.27 <sup>**</sup>	-.50 <sup>***</sup>	-.49 <sup>***</sup>	.61 <sup>***</sup>	(121)	
8. Self-Esteem Instability	.18 <sup>†</sup>	-.04	.17 <sup>†</sup>	-.22 <sup>*</sup>	.10	.14	.32 <sup>***</sup>	(109)
<i>M</i>	0.71	0.47	0.28	42.51	37.52	22.00	3.36	6.46
<i>SD</i>	0.24	0.45	0.15	7.26	6.43	7.59	1.32	4.51

*Note:* Values in parentheses are the number of respondents who completed each measure. Proportion of negative attributes was arcsine transformed and depressive symptoms was square-root transformed for the computation of correlations. Means and standard deviations shown are transformed values. Actual values: proportion of negative attributes,  $M = .28$ ,  $SD = .15$ ; negative mood,  $M = 12.51$ ,  $SD = 9.43$ .

<sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ ; <sup>\*</sup> $p < .05$ ; <sup>\*\*</sup> $p < .01$ ; <sup>\*\*\*</sup> $p < .001$ .

Table 3  
*Study 1: Hierarchical Regression of Self-Esteem Instability Onto Evaluative Organization and Trait Self-Esteem*

Predictors	Self-Esteem Instability			
	Cumulative $R^2$	Increase in $R^2$	$sr^2$	$sr$
Step 1:	.04	.04		
Evaluative Organization			.03 <sup>†</sup>	.16 <sup>†</sup>
Trait Self-Esteem			.01	-.11
Step 2:	.08*	.04*		
Phi X Trait Self-Esteem			.03*	.19*

*Note.*  $sr^2$  (squared semipartial correlation coefficient) represents the proportion of variance uniquely accounted for by each predictor, beyond that accounted for by all other predictors at that step. The sign of  $sr$  (semipartial correlation coefficient) indicates the direction of the relation between each predictor and the criterion variable. Phi = evaluative organization.

<sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ ; \* $p < .05$ .

Table 4  
*Study 1: Descriptive Statistics for State Psychological Adjustment and Daily Events*

	Daily Measures			Reliability
	Mean	Within-Person <i>SD</i>	Between-Person <i>SD</i>	
State Self-Esteem	81.58	7.75	13.27	.97
State Positive Affect	24.59	6.89	5.65	.90
State Negative Affect	17.09	5.33	4.67	.91
Daily Hassles	2.57	.83	1.08	.96
Daily Uplifts	3.48	.65	1.03	.97
Stress	5.18	2.14	2.22	.93

*Note:*  $N = 109$ . Daily hassles and daily uplifts were square-root transformed. Means and standard deviations shown are transformed values. Actual values: daily hassles,  $M = 8.43$ , within-person  $SD = 4.31$ , between-person  $SD = 5.84$ ; daily uplifts,  $M = 11.63$ , within-person  $SD = 4.93$ , between-person  $SD = 7.79$ .

Table 5  
 Study 1: Results of HLM Analyses Predicting State Psychological Adjustment from Daily Events

	State Self-Esteem				State Positive Affect				State Negative Affect			
	Coeff. <sup>a</sup>	<i>t</i>	SE <sup>b</sup>	Effect size <sup>c</sup>	Coeff. <sup>a</sup>	<i>t</i>	SE <sup>b</sup>	Effect size <sup>c</sup>	Coeff. <sup>a</sup>	<i>t</i>	SE <sup>b</sup>	Effect size <sup>c</sup>
Intercept	81.58	55.89***	1.28		24.58	43.22***	.57		17.09	36.58***	.47	
Daily Hassles	-1.83	-4.39***	.50	.39	-.41	-1.31	.32		1.84	6.95***	.26	.56
Daily Uplifts	1.06	2.11*	.42	.20	2.83	6.72***	.42	.54	-1.28	-4.35***	.30	.39
Intercept	81.58	55.89***	1.28		24.58	43.22***	.57		17.09	36.58***	.47	
Stress	-.80	-5.56***	.14	.47	-.51	-4.11***	.13	.37	1.00	10.40***	.10	.71

Note:  $N = 109$ ,  $df = 108$ .

a. Unstandardized coefficients.

b. Standard error.

c. Effect sizes were computed with the following formula (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1984) and are presented for significant effects only:

$r = \text{square root of } [t^2 / (t^2 + df)]$ .

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

Table 6  
*Study 1: Evaluative Organization as a Moderator of Within-Person Relationships Between Daily Events and State Psychological Adjustment*

	Daily Self-Esteem				Daily Positive Affect				Daily Negative Affect			
	Coeff. <sup>a</sup>	<i>t</i>	SE <sup>b</sup>	Effect size <sup>c</sup>	Coeff. <sup>a</sup>	<i>t</i>	SE <sup>b</sup>	Effect size <sup>c</sup>	Coeff. <sup>a</sup>	<i>t</i>	SE <sup>b</sup>	Effect size <sup>c</sup>
Intercept	-2.76	-2.47*	1.12		.63	1.14	.55		.39	1.02	.38	
Daily Hassles	-.74	-1.98*	.38	.19	-.09	-.28	.32		.37	1.58	.23	
Daily Uplifts	.54	1.07	.50		.39	.85	.45		-.43	-1.21	.35	
Intercept	-2.76	-2.47*	1.12		.63	1.14	.55		.39	1.02	.38	
Stress	-.39	-3.25**	.12	.30	-.20	-1.87 <sup>†</sup>	.11		.04	.48	.09	

Note:  $N = 109$ ,  $df = 107$ .

a. Unstandardized coefficients.

b. Standard error.

c. Effect sizes were computed with the following formula (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1984) and are presented for significant effects only:

$r = \text{square root of } [t^2 / (t^2 + df)]$ .

<sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 7

*Study 2: Intercorrelations and Descriptive Statistics for Measures of Self-Concept Structure, Self-Concept Content, Trait Psychological Adjustment, and Contingencies of Self-Worth*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Evaluative Organization	(138)													
2. Differential Importance	.09	(138)												
3. Proportion of Negative Attributes	.45 <sup>***</sup>	-.10	(138)											
4. Trait Self-Esteem	-.13	.37 <sup>***</sup>	-.45 <sup>***</sup>	(138)										
5. Trait Positive Affect	-.13	.28 <sup>***</sup>	-.44 <sup>***</sup>	.56 <sup>***</sup>	(138)									
6. Trait Negative Affect	.07	-.20 <sup>*</sup>	.40 <sup>***</sup>	-.46 <sup>***</sup>	-.19 <sup>*</sup>	(138)								
7. Others' Approval	.24 <sup>**</sup>	-.16 <sup>†</sup>	.23 <sup>**</sup>	-.24 <sup>***</sup>	-.24 <sup>**</sup>	.14	(138)							
8. Physical Appearance	.19 <sup>*</sup>	-.12	.27 <sup>**</sup>	-.34 <sup>***</sup>	-.12	.40 <sup>***</sup>	.42 <sup>***</sup>	(138)						
9. Outdoing Others in Competition	.03	.09	.11	-.07	.01	.20 <sup>*</sup>	.15 <sup>†</sup>	.34 <sup>***</sup>	(138)					
10. Academic Competence	.07	-.07	.10	-.08	.04	.21 <sup>*</sup>	.36 <sup>***</sup>	.37 <sup>***</sup>	.37 <sup>***</sup>	(138)				
11. Family Love and Support	.05	.02	-.09	.10	.14 <sup>†</sup>	.05	.26 <sup>**</sup>	.26 <sup>**</sup>	.06	.29 <sup>***</sup>	(138)			
12. Being Virtuous and Moral	.18 <sup>*</sup>	.02	-.04	.10	.07	-.04	.35 <sup>***</sup>	.16 <sup>†</sup>	.02	.45 <sup>***</sup>	.37 <sup>***</sup>	(138)		
13. God's Love	.09	.12	-.16 <sup>†</sup>	.20 <sup>*</sup>	.20 <sup>*</sup>	-.04	.22 <sup>**</sup>	.12	-.07	.21 <sup>*</sup>	.46 <sup>***</sup>	.41 <sup>***</sup>	(138)	
14. Self-Esteem Instability	.29 <sup>***</sup>	.03	.28 <sup>**</sup>	-.32 <sup>***</sup>	-.17 <sup>†</sup>	.27 <sup>**</sup>	-.08	.13	.04	.06	-.04	-.03	-.17 <sup>†</sup>	(118)
<i>M</i>	.68	.44	.28	42.24	36.67	21.67	20.03	24.51	24.97	27.80	27.00	25.88	24.50	4.97
<i>SD</i>	.24	.47	.15	5.93	5.81	7.07	6.28	4.98	5.80	4.97	5.44	5.92	9.62	3.78

*Note:* Values in parentheses are the number of respondents who completed each measure. Proportion of negative attributes was arcsine transformed for the computation of correlations. Mean and standard deviation shown are transformed values. Actual values:

proportion of negative attributes,  $M = .28$ ,  $SD = .15$ .

<sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ ; <sup>\*</sup> $p < .05$ ; <sup>\*\*</sup> $p < .01$ ; <sup>\*\*\*</sup> $p < .001$

Table 8  
*Study 2: Descriptive Statistics for State Psychological Adjustment and Daily Events*

	Daily Measures			
	Mean	Within-Person <i>SD</i>	Between-Person <i>SD</i>	Reliability
State Self-Esteem	80.06	6.03	11.61	.96
State Positive Affect	28.98	6.56	7.45	.90
State Negative Affect	19.61	5.48	7.09	.92
Positive Events	6.94	2.06	2.92	.93
Negative Events	3.75	1.71	2.75	.95

*Note:*  $N = 118$ .



Table 9  
 Study 2: Results of HLM Analyses Predicting State Psychological Adjustment from Daily Events

	Daily Self-Esteem				Daily Positive Affect				Daily Negative Affect			
	Coeff. <sup>a</sup>	<i>t</i>	SE <sup>b</sup>	Effect size <sup>c</sup>	Coeff. <sup>a</sup>	<i>t</i>	SE <sup>b</sup>	Effect size <sup>c</sup>	Coeff. <sup>a</sup>	<i>t</i>	SE <sup>b</sup>	Effect size <sup>c</sup>
Intercept	80.04	73.25***	1.09		28.98	40.25***	.72		19.61	28.97***	.68	
Positive Events	.46	4.72***	.10	.40	1.22	9.56***	.13	.66	-.63	-5.25***	.12	.44
Negative Events	-.41	-3.06**	.13	.27	-.65	-3.85***	.17	.33	1.23	7.63***	.16	.58

Note: *N* = 118, *df* = 117.

a. Unstandardized coefficients.

b. Standard error.

c. Effect sizes were computed with the following formula (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1984) and are presented for significant effects only:

$r = \text{square root of } [t^2 / (t^2 + df)]$ .

\**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01; \*\*\**p* < .001.

Table 10  
*Study 2: Evaluative Organization as a Moderator of Within-Person Relationships Between Daily Events and State Psychological Adjustment*

	Daily Self-Esteem				Daily Positive Affect				Daily Negative Affect			
	Coeff. <sup>a</sup>	<i>t</i>	SE <sup>b</sup>	Effect size <sup>c</sup>	Coeff. <sup>a</sup>	<i>t</i>	SE <sup>b</sup>	Effect size <sup>c</sup>	Coeff. <sup>a</sup>	<i>t</i>	SE <sup>b</sup>	Effect size <sup>c</sup>
Intercept	-2.35	-2.33*	1.01		-1.12	-1.57	.72		1.00	1.81 <sup>†</sup>	.55	
Positive Events	.23	2.82**	.08	.25	.18	1.30	.14		-.22	-1.88 <sup>†</sup>	.11	
Negative Events	-.25	-1.99*	.13	.18	.01	.06	.17		-.03	-.25	.12	

Note: *N* = 118, *df* = 116.

a. Unstandardized coefficients.

b. Standard error.

c. Effect sizes were computed with the following formula (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1984) and are presented for significant effects only:

$r = \text{square root of } [t^2 / (t^2 + df)]$ .

<sup>†</sup>*p* < .10; \**p* < .05; \*\**p* < .01.

Table 11  
*Study 2: Results of HLM Analyses Predicting State Psychological Adjustment from Social and Achievement Events*

	State Self-Esteem				State Positive Affect				State Negative Affect			
	Coeff. <sup>a</sup>	<i>t</i>	SE <sup>b</sup>	Effect size <sup>c</sup>	Coeff. <sup>a</sup>	<i>t</i>	SE <sup>b</sup>	Effect size <sup>c</sup>	Coeff. <sup>a</sup>	<i>t</i>	SE <sup>b</sup>	Effect size <sup>c</sup>
Intercept	80.04	73.25***	1.09		28.98	40.25***	.72		19.61	28.97***	.68	
Positive Social	.45	2.76**	.16	.25	1.38	7.72***	.18	.58	-.84	-5.59***	.15	.46
Negative Social	-.65	-3.75***	.17	.33	-.55	-2.20*	.25	.20	1.31	6.52***	.20	.52
Positive Achievement	.55	3.66***	.15	.32	.99	4.37***	.23	.38	-.25	-1.40	.18	
Negative Achievement	-.08	-.30	.28		-.88	-2.99**	.29	.27	1.15	4.60***	.25	.39

Note:  $N = 118$ ,  $df = 116$ .

a. Unstandardized coefficients.

b. Standard error.

c. Effect sizes were computed with the following formula (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1984) and are presented for significant effects only:

$r = \text{square root of } [t^2 / (t^2 + df)]$ .

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

Table 12

*Study 2: Evaluative Organization as a Moderator of Within-Person Relationships Between Social and Achievement Events and State Psychological Adjustment*

	State Self-Esteem				State Positive Affect				State Negative Affect			
	Coeff. <sup>a</sup>	<i>t</i>	SE <sup>b</sup>	Effect size <sup>c</sup>	Coeff. <sup>a</sup>	<i>t</i>	SE <sup>b</sup>	Effect size <sup>c</sup>	Coeff. <sup>a</sup>	<i>t</i>	SE <sup>b</sup>	Effect size <sup>c</sup>
Intercept	-2.35	-2.33*	1.01		-1.13	-1.56	.72		1.00	1.81	.55	
Positive Social	.29	2.12*	.14	.19	.42	2.43*	.17	.22	-.27	-2.16*	.13	.20
Negative Social	-.43	-2.43*	.18	.22	-.31	-1.24	.25		.21	.91	.23	
Positive Achievement	.20	1.27	.16		-.04	-.19	.24		-.09	-.53	.17	
Negative Achievement	-.07	-.27	.25		.42	1.47	.28		-.11	-.49	.22	

Note:  $N = 118$ ,  $df = 116$ .

a. Unstandardized coefficients.

b. Standard error.

c. Effect sizes were computed with the following formula (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1984) and are presented for significant effects only:

$r = \text{square root of } [t^2 / (t^2 + df)]$ .

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

Table 13

*Study 2: Hierarchical Regression of Contingent Self-Esteem Onto Measures of Self-Concept Content and Structure*

Predictors	Contingent Self-Esteem			
	Cumulative $R^2$	Increase in $R^2$	$sr^2$	$sr$
Step 1:	.04	.04		
Evaluative Organization			.04*	.19*
Differential Importance			.00	-.02
Proportion of Negative Attributes			.00	-.03
Step 2:	.10*	.06*		
Phi X DI			.06**	.24**
Phi X Neg			.00	.07
DI X Neg			.01	-.10

*Note.*  $sr^2$  (squared semipartial correlation coefficient) represents the proportion of variance uniquely accounted for by each predictor, beyond that accounted for by all other predictors at that step. The sign of  $sr$  (semipartial correlation coefficient) indicates the direction of the relation between each predictor and the criterion variable. Phi = evaluative organization; DI = differential importance; Neg = proportion of negative attributes.

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ .

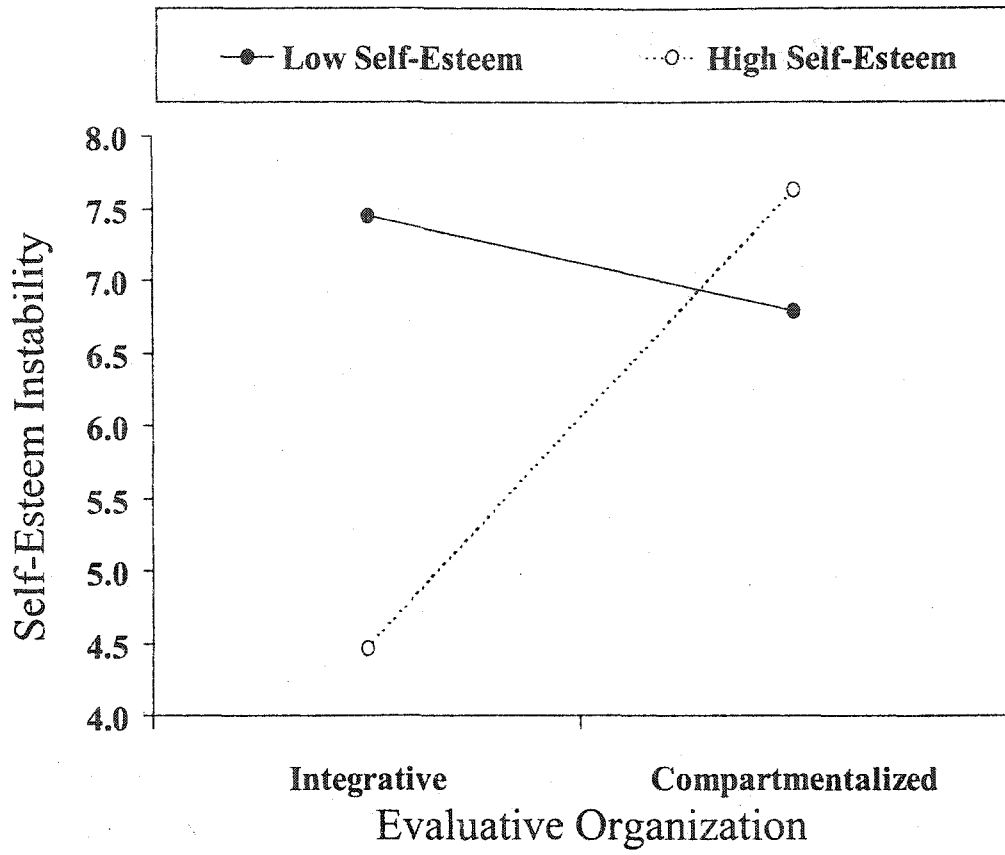


Figure 1. Study 1: Predicted values for self-esteem instability, illustrating the interaction of evaluative organization and trait self-esteem at values that are one standard deviation above and below the means.

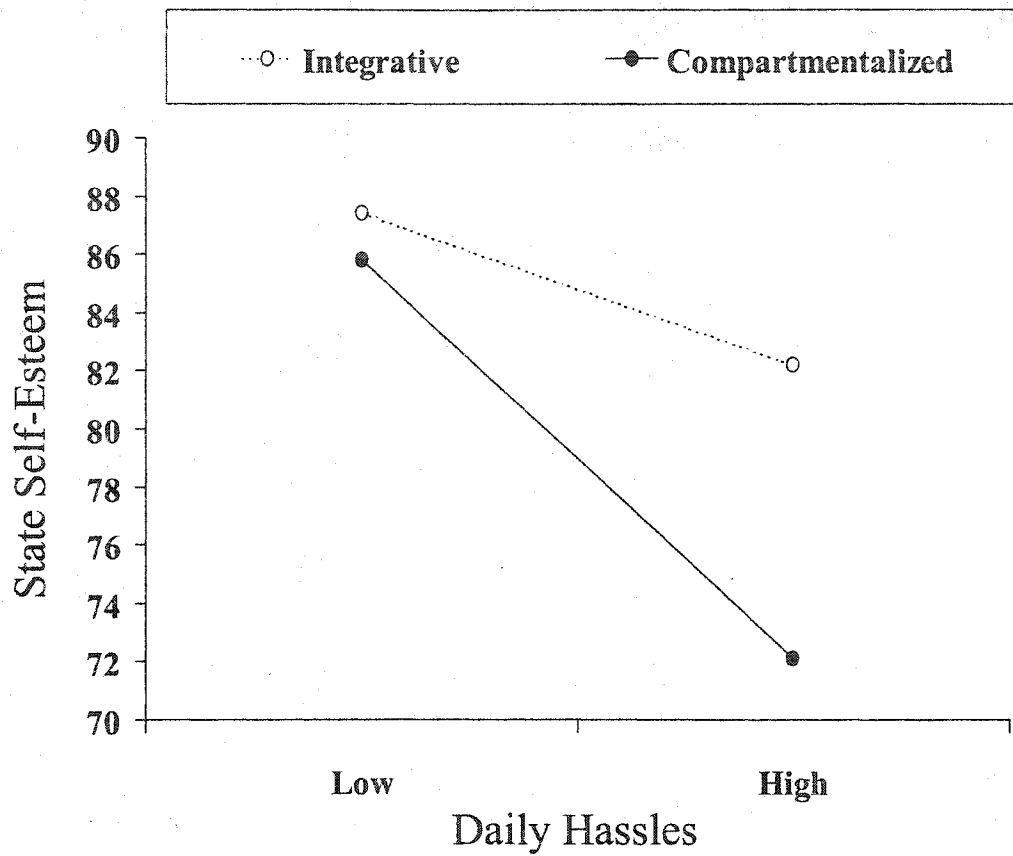


Figure 2. Study 1: Adjusted predicted values for state self-esteem, illustrating the cross-level interaction of evaluative organization (one standard deviation above and below the grand mean) and daily hassles (two standard errors above and below the group mean).

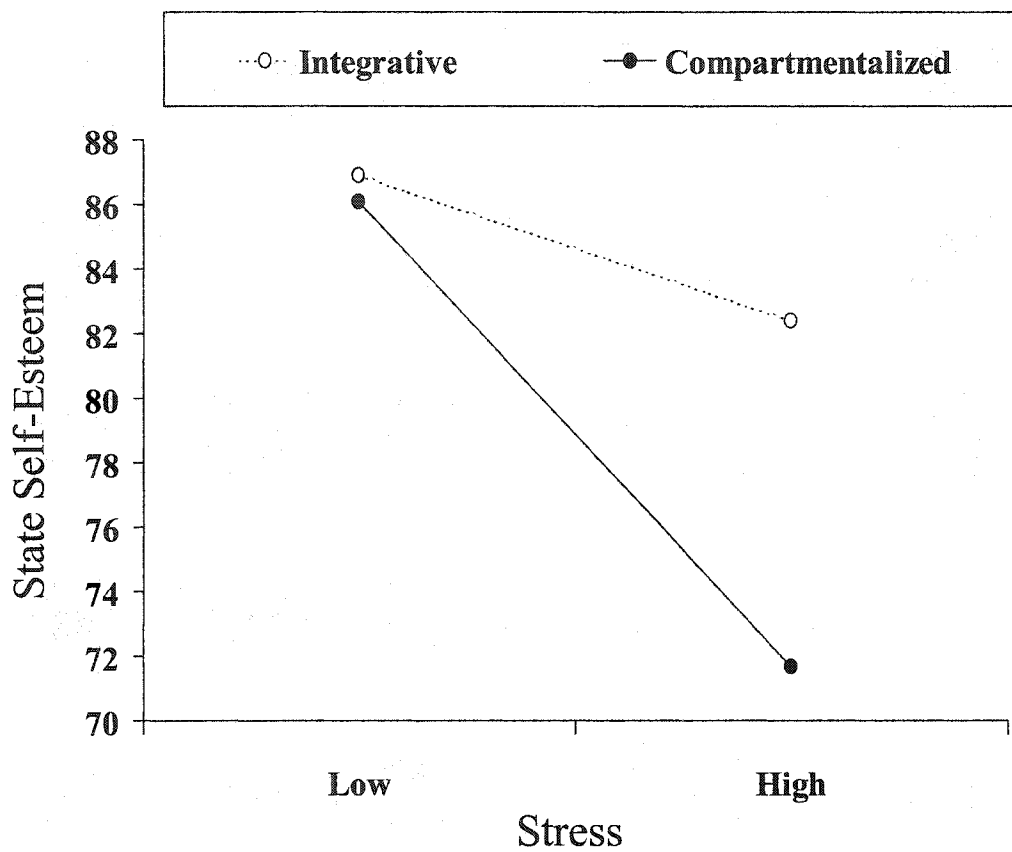


Figure 3. Study 1: Adjusted predicted values for state self-esteem, illustrating the cross-level interaction of evaluative organization (one standard deviation above and below the grand mean) and stress (two standard errors above and below the group mean).



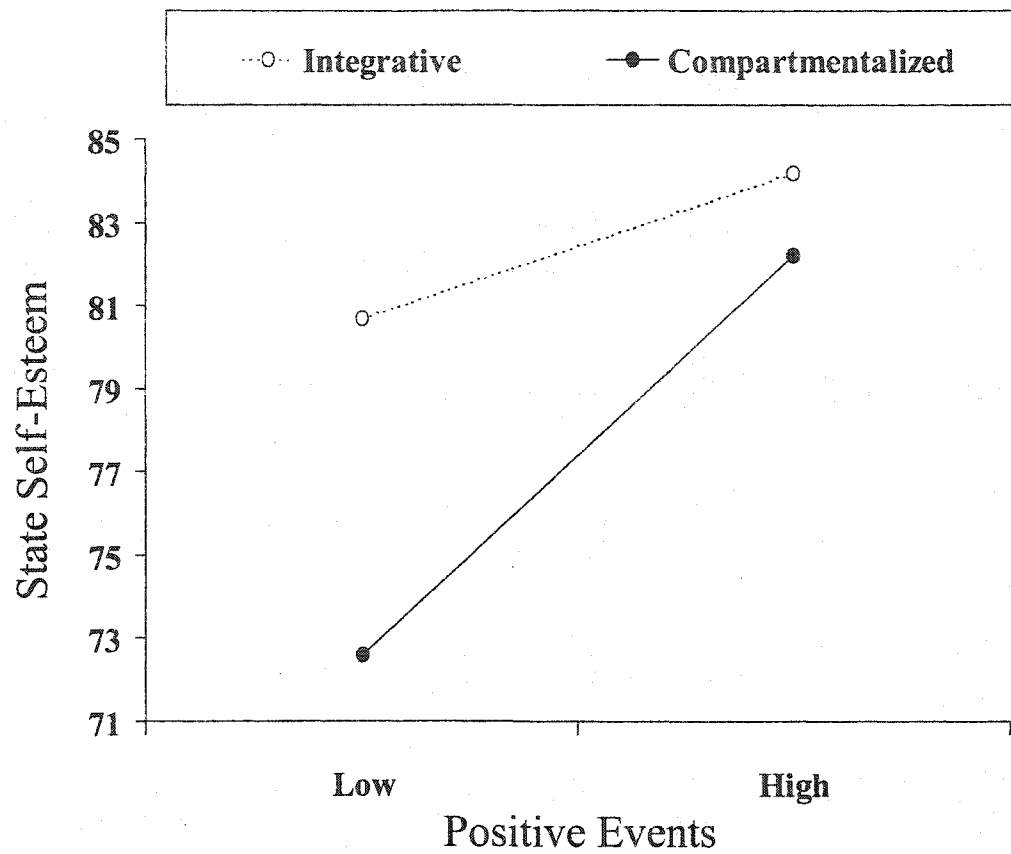


Figure 4. Study 2: Adjusted predicted values for state self-esteem, illustrating the cross-level interaction of evaluative organization (one standard deviation above and below the grand mean) and daily positive events (two standard errors above and below the group mean).

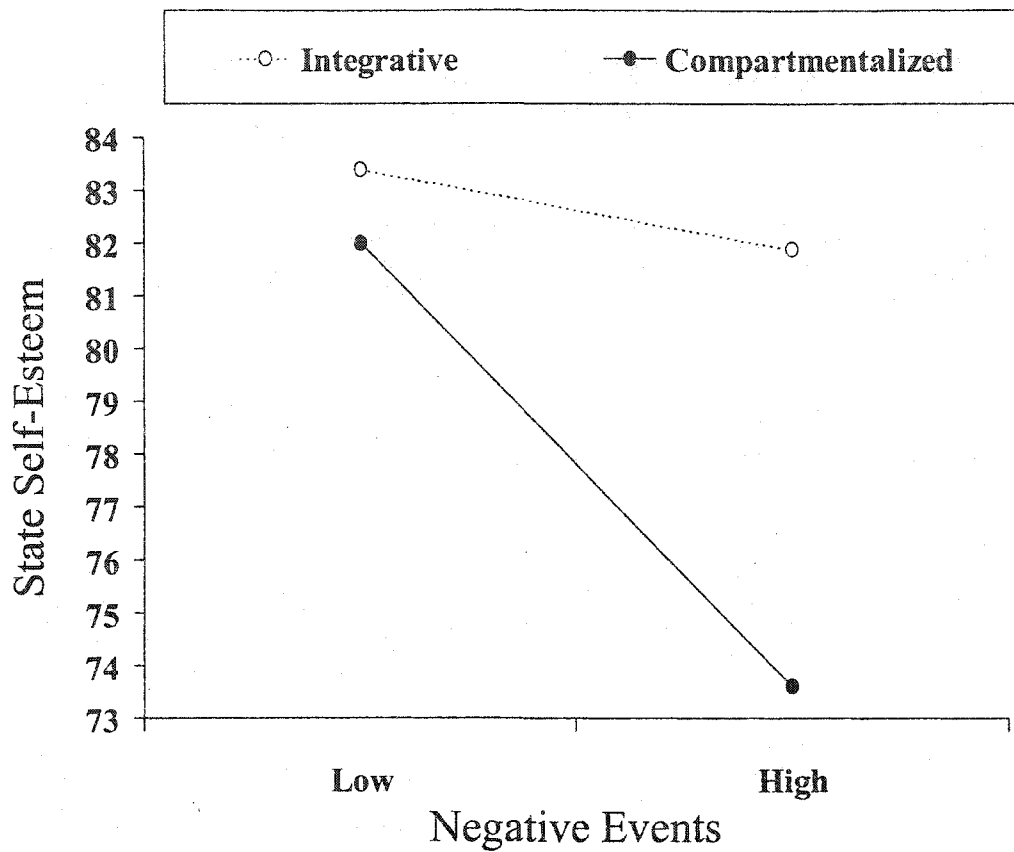


Figure 5. Study 2: Adjusted predicted values for state self-esteem, illustrating the cross-level interaction of evaluative organization (one standard deviation above and below the grand mean) and daily negative events (two standard errors above and below the group mean).

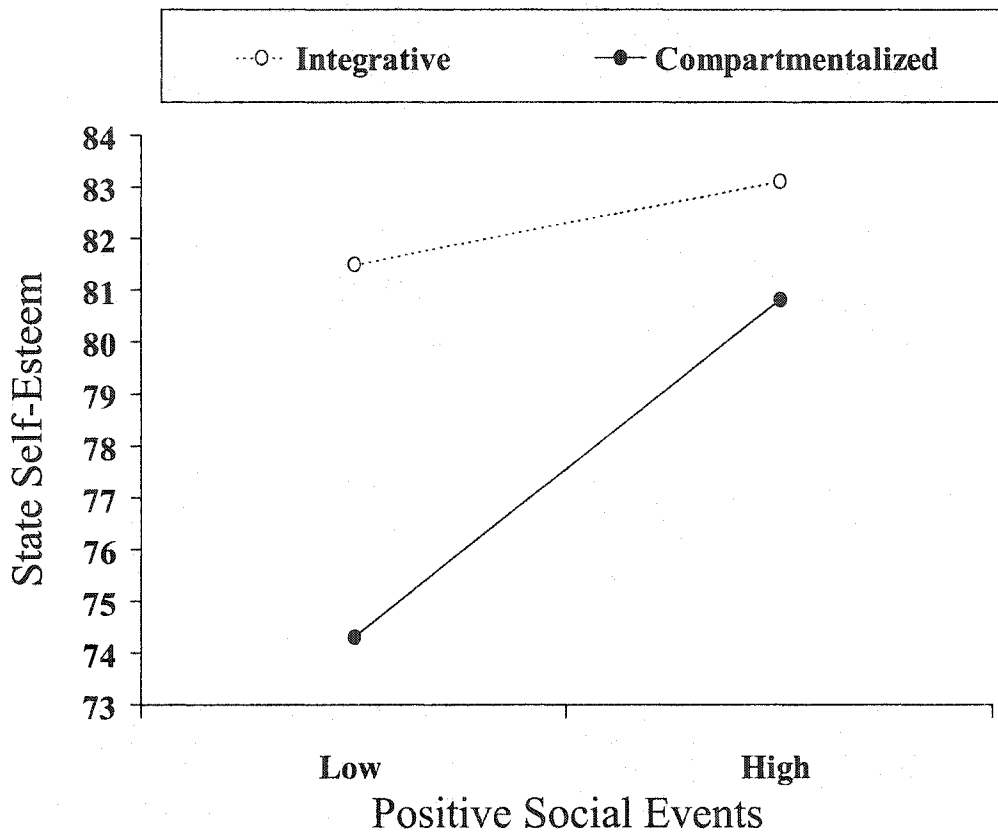


Figure 6. Study 2: Adjusted predicted values for state self-esteem, illustrating the cross-level interaction of evaluative organization (one standard deviation above and below the grand mean) and daily positive social events (two standard errors above and below the group mean).

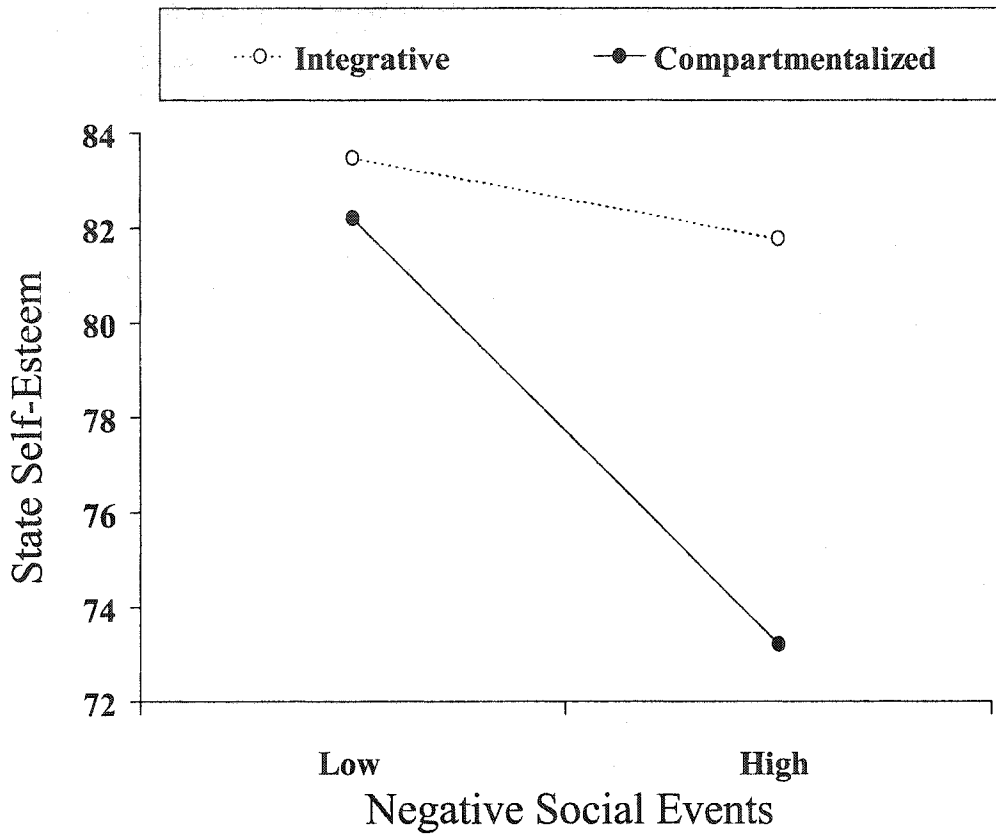


Figure 7. Study 2: Adjusted predicted values for state self-esteem, illustrating the cross-level interaction of evaluative organization (one standard deviation above and below the grand mean) and daily negative social events (two standard errors above and below the group mean).

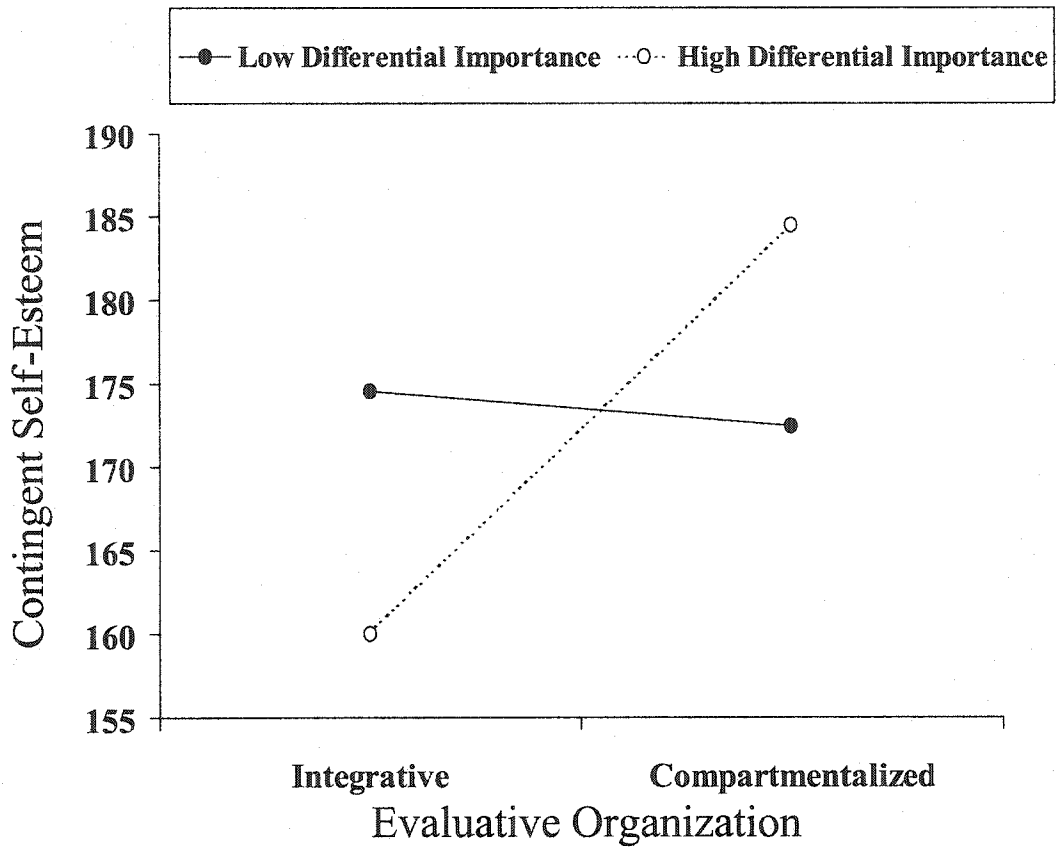
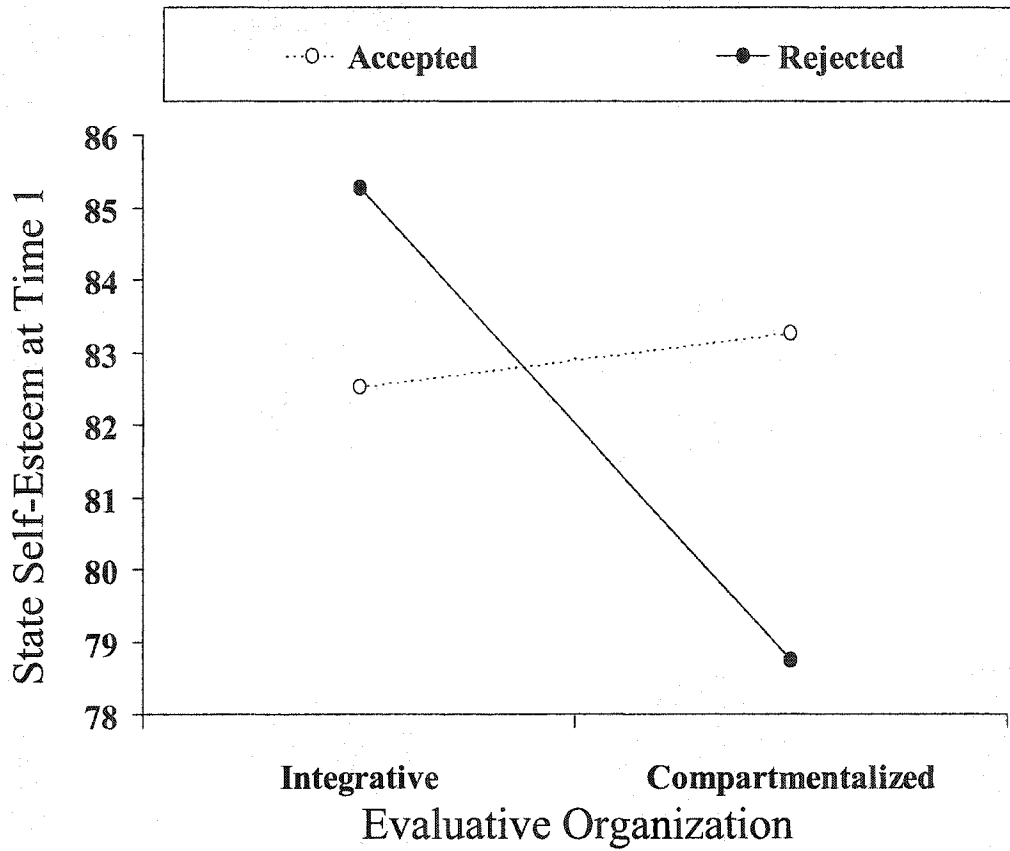


Figure 8. Study 2: Adjusted predicted values for contingent self-esteem, illustrating the interaction of evaluative organization and differential importance at values that are one standard deviation above and below the means.



*Figure 9.* Study 3: Adjusted predicted values for state self-esteem at Time 1, illustrating the interaction of evaluative organization and social rejection condition at values that are one standard deviation above and below the means.

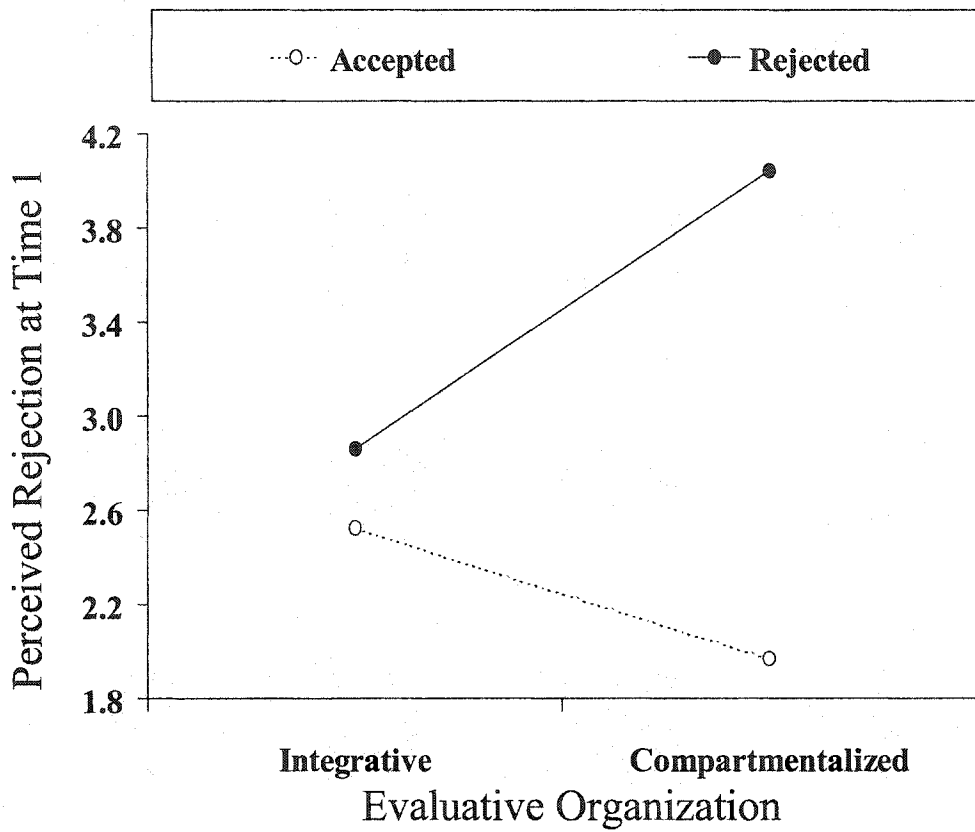


Figure 10. Study 3: Adjusted predicted values for perceived rejection at Time 1, illustrating the interaction of evaluative organization and social rejection condition at values that are one standard deviation above and below the means.