A MIXED-METHOD ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This mixed-method study aims to elucidate the relevance of gender in women's intimate partner violence through an ecologically-informed analysis of individual differences in attachment and personality and social contexts. Findings suggest that the Conflict Tactics Scales led to inflated estimates of women's violence through the misidentification of play as violence and through the categorization of a range of behaviors, called mock-violence, that fall along a continuum from playful to short of meaningfully violent. Study findings also support the position that gender fundamentally shapes the contexts, meanings, and interpretations of women's aggressive behaviors and is thus central to any analysis of intimate partner violence. Together, these findings lend support to arguments for re-visiting fundamental issues of problem definition and measurement.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

While domestic violence is popularly conceived as a phenomenon of male violence against women, survey research has consistently found that women report equal if not higher rates of violence against intimate partners (Archer, 2000; Magdol, Moffitt, Caspi, Newman, Fagan, & Silva, 1997; Straus, 1999). Furthermore, rates of women's violence are consistently highest among younger, dating, student samples (Archer, 2000). Such findings have led to heated controversies among researchers and activists – the so-called "gender symmetry debate" (e.g., Cercone, Beach, & Arias, 2005; Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daly, 1992; Kimmel, 2002; Straus, 2006). The gender symmetry position argues that domestic violence is a gender-neutral phenomenon, driven primarily by personality and psychopathology (D. G. Dutton, 2007; D. G. Dutton & Nicholls, 2005; Ehrensaft, Moffitt, & Caspi, 2004). The argument is that comparable perpetration rates and personality risk factors for men and women imply gender neutrality of the phenomenon. However as some researchers have noted, the fact that men are in general more violent than women, but that in relationships women are equally (if not more) violent than men, is an incongruous finding that begs explaining (Hamby, 2005; Kimmel, 2002; Schwartz, 2005; Straus, 1999). It is the contention of this project that the differential expression of violence by men and women necessitates an explanation of women's intimate partner violence that includes gender.

Unfortunately, the opportunity to specify the ways in which gender matters for women's intimate violence has been hindered by a limited conceptualization of gender as an individual variable rather than as a social category (Anderson, 2005; Stacey & Thorne, 1985). As Anderson (2005) and Miller (Miller, 2008; Miller & White, 2003) have argued in important recent

interventions in the domestic violence literature, it may be more productive to theorize gender as structuring and organizing the social world within which individuals act than to conceive of it simply as an individual-level variable. Miller and White (2003) state, "feminists insist that it is precisely the ways in which gender structures relationships . . . that the gendered nature of partner violence can be understood" (p. 1210). Intimate partner violence can then be analyzed as occurring within a field of gendered social relations that create the conditions for violence and within which individual differences are expressed.

The gender symmetry debate has also been characterized by the tendency to pit analyses representing different foci (e.g., individual vs. sociological) against each other. Feminist sociological analyses, framing domestic violence as an expression of patriarchy and male domination, have rejected efforts to focus on psychological factors as functioning to obscure social forms of gender inequality, re-frame domestic violence from a social problem to an individual problem, and in essence support the status quo (Bograd, 1988; Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Pence, 1999). Individual differences researchers, on the other hand, have argued that social level explanations cannot explain why only some, rather than all, men are violent, nor do they explain women's use of violence (e.g., Ehrensaft et al., 2004). Findings regarding the relevance of individual differences factors are taken to invalidate the relevance of a gendered, sociological analysis (D. G. Dutton, 2007).

As a result, despite the provocative findings regarding the prevalence of women's intimate violence, very little is known about the nature and contexts of this violence. The literature is replete with calls for research that would contextualize the phenomenon and lead to the generation of new theories (e.g., Dasgupta, 2002; Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Hamby, 2005; Holtzworth-Munroe, 2005; Straus, 2006). This study presents an analysis of women's intimate

partner violence against men as a gendered phenomenon through the assessment of both social contexts and individual differences.[1] Guided by an ecological theory that emphasizes interactions among individual, situational, and sociocultural levels in the production of complex human behaviors, this project aims to integrate individual differences findings with social and contextual data rather than place two distinct analyses side by side in an additive way (as represented in the model in Figure 1).

Specifically, this study employs a two-stage, mixed-methods approach to build this analysis. First, the study tests an individual-differences model of women's intimate partner violence and aggression, highlighting the relationship of attachment and borderline personality style to the expression of psychological and physical aggression. Borderline personality, characterized by emotional dysregulation, impulsivity, and interpersonal conflict (Linehan, 1993) has been associated with partner violence for men and women both cross-sectionally and longitudinally (D. G. Dutton, 2007; Ehrensaft et al., 2004)). More recently, adult attachment theory has been proposed as providing a rich conceptual framework from which to understand the dynamics of violence against intimates (Mayseless, 1991; Roberts & Noller, 1998; West & George, 1999). Hazan and Shaver (1987) first proposed that romantic love could be conceptualized as an attachment bond. Extending this line of thinking, Mayseless (1991) proposed that dysfunction of the attachment system could help explain the apparent paradox of violence and abuse against those one professes to love. Recent research has begun to integrate these traditions, with some theorists proposing that borderline personality is essentially a problem of disordered attachment (e.g., Agrawal, Gunderson, Holmes, & Lyons-Ruth, 2004;

[1] This study focuses on heterosexual intimate partner violence for two reasons: arguments about gender symmetry are based in comparisons of rates of heterosexual IPV between men and women, and because it is expected that the ways in which gender matters will differ for heterosexual versus lesbian IPV. However, gay and lesbian IPV are well documented in the literature and warrant further investigation, particularly analyses including gender.

Fonagy, Target, & Gergely, 2000; Holmes, 2004). The first stage of this study tests a model of women's intimate violence proposing that borderline personality mediates the relationship between attachment style and partner violence. Further, the model proposes that there is an interaction between anxious and avoidant attachment, specifically that anxious attachment style is more strongly related to borderline personality traits when avoidant attachment is low. Finally, the model proposes that the male partner's violence moderates the relationship between psychological and physical aggression by the female partner.

Second, this study investigates the role of gender in structuring the social contexts and meanings of women's dating violence in order to elaborate the nature of women's violence. While it was expected that the individual differences variables identified above would have some predictive power, it was also expected that the circumstances and meanings of women's violence would be significantly shaped by gender. De-contextualized analyses of behavior counts provide an extremely limited picture of the phenomenon of women's partner violence (Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Vivian & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 1994). Using both quantitative and qualitative data, this study attempts to locate women's violence in its larger social, as well as immediately proximal, context. Specifically, the investigation focuses on two critical domains: 1) detailed accounts of women's partner violence, and 2) the gendered social context of dating for the participant and her peer group (e.g., norms and expectations, exposure to dating violence in peer group, attitudes about dating and violence). It was hypothesized that while individual differences will influence which women use aggression against their partners, the larger social context of heterosexual dating and the more immediate relational context will influence when violence occurs and what it means for those involved. It is argued that an elaboration of the social context

allows us to better understand the nature and meaning of women's partner violence and to generate new hypotheses about women's relational aggression.

This study thus contributes to the intimate partner violence literature in a number of ways: 1) by presenting empirical evidence regarding the relationships among and relevance of individual differences variables for women's intimate violence; 2) by reconceptualizing gender as a social category that shapes the nature of women's violence against intimate partners; 3) by providing a holistic, contextualized analysis of women's intimate partner violence through 4) a novel and exploratory approach to integrating two important but generally independent methods of analyzing human behavior and social problems – individual differences and social-contextual approaches. Findings support new theoretical explanations for women's intimate partner violence (IPV) and suggest new hypotheses for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Women's Intimate Partner Violence: Prevalence Data

Domestic violence was brought to public and academic attention in the U.S. by battered women's advocates and the women's movement in the 1970's (Schechter, 1982). Battered women's experiences of violence and abuse shaped an analysis of domestic violence as an expression of patriarchal entitlement and male domination, a phenomenon geared towards the control of women (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Pence, 1999; Schechter, 1982). However, early survey research attempting to document prevalence rates among the population yielded surprising findings; women's self-reports of violence were comparable to men's (Straus & Gelles, 1986). Since then, heated debates about the validity and meaning of these findings have raged across the literature (e.g., Archer, 2000; Kimmel, 2002). These arguments begin with disagreements about the prevalence and incidence of women's violence. As Archer (2000) notes

in his meta-analysis, "There are two conflicting viewpoints about partner violence, either that it involves a considerable degree of mutual combat or that it generally involves male perpetrators and female victims" (p. 651). This section will review the prevalence data on women's intimate violence, and the following section will track the ensuing debate about how to interpret these findings.

Prevalence data on domestic violence in the United States comes from two main sources: large, nationally representative surveys; and smaller studies comprised of convenience samples (e.g., undergraduate college samples, clinical samples, court-involved samples). The nationally representative surveys are comprised of the two National Family Violence Surveys (NFVS; Straus & Gelles, 1986), the National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000), and the National Crime Victimization Study (NCVS; Bachman & Salzman, 1995). The NVAWS comprises 16,000 men and women; the NCVS surveys approximately 100,000 people twice a year. The National Family Violence Surveys included roughly 2,000 married or co-habiting individuals in 1975, and approximately 3,500 households (currently married or co-habiting) in 1985. The two NFVS both find roughly equal rates of violence by men and women, as do most smaller studies (reviewed below) that sample from the general population using the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS; Straus, 1979), the measure developed by Straus and colleagues. In general, the NVAWS and the NCVS find lower rates of intimate partner violence (by either partner) than the so-called "family conflict" studies conducted by Straus and his colleagues (1986) and significant gender asymmetry (Kimmel, 2002). For example, the NCVS indicated that women were roughly six times more likely than men to experience violence by an intimate partner (Bachman & Salzman, 1995), and the NVAWS found

that 22.1% of women, compared to 7.4% of men, reported lifetime experiences of intimate partner violence victimization.

As noted above, the majority of research on intimate partner violence relies on convenience samples and uses the CTS. Findings across these studies reveal that in general women report roughly equal rates of intimate partner violence as do men (e.g., Archer, 2000; White & Koss, 1991). The CTS has become the gold standard for measuring intimate partner violence (76 out of 82 studies in the Archer meta-analysis used the CTS). Archer's (2000) meta-analysis represents over 64,000 men and women drawn from community, college, high school, and various treatment and intervention programs. Women were slightly more likely to report engaging in acts of physical aggression (d = -.05) and to report a higher frequency of such acts. Furthermore, analyses of moderators of effect size found "an effect size in the female direction for younger [under 22], dating, student samples and in the male direction or no sex difference for older, married (or cohabiting), and community samples" (Archer, 2000, p. 666). Rates of women's partner violence in young, dating samples generally range from 20% to 39% (Follingstad, Wright, Lloyd, & Sebastian, 1991; Lewis & Fremouw, 2001; Luthra & Gidycz, 2006; Magdol et al., 1997; Orcutt, Garcia, & Pickett, 2005; Riggs & O'Leary, 1996). Straus (2006) argues that over 150 studies now document gender symmetry in perpetration, and that future research should focus on explaining, rather than debating, this finding.

A body of research addresses the validity of the CTS as a self-report measure by investigating concordance rates within couples (e.g., Archer, 1999; Caetano, Shafer, Field, & Nelson, 2002). Archer's 1999 meta-analysis of CTS studies was inconclusive, finding some evidence that both sexes underreport their own violence, with a greater rate for men. Caetano et al. (2002) conducted face-to-face interviews and found women more willing to identify

themselves as perpetrators than men. Mixed results regarding partner concordance rates have led some to argue that proxy methods are inadequate to assess prevalence rates (Armstrong, Wernke, Medina, & Shafer, 2002). However, the CTS and similar measures have been adopted as the standard measure, and while is it possible that women over-report, and/or that men under-report their IPV, self-report rates of IPV by women are clearly unexpectedly high and warrant investigation.

Some have argued that the differences in violence rates found by family conflict studies versus the other large, national surveys reflect different framings of the surveys to participants (e.g., Kimmel, 2002). Researchers have noted that the NVAWS and certainly the NCVS are framed as studies of violent, and in the case of the NCVS criminal, victimization, whereas the family conflict studies frame the survey as one about how families resolve disagreement and conflict. In actuality, the NVAWS uses CTS items to assess physical violence, and the NCVS asks respondents to report "any attack or threat or use of force . . . even if you were not certain it was a crime" (1995, p. 8). However, observers question whether the general frame of the studies as focusing on safety and crime leads respondents to minimize less severe forms of intimate partner violence and report only more severe violence. Other differences between the surveys include the reference period and relationship of the perpetrator. The NCVS asks about violent victimization in the last 6 months and the NVAWS asks about lifetime victimization. Both include current and ex-partners and spouses. The NFVS are limited to acts committed by a current partner or spouse and ask about perpetration in the past year when the respondent "had a disagreement or was angry" at his/her partner (Straus & Gelles, 1986).

Others have argued that different rates of reported violence reflect differences in samples or in the underlying phenomena. For example, Johnson (1995) attempts to resolve the debate by

arguing that family violence studies capture minor and more frequent forms of violence he calls "common couple violence," whereas the victimization and crime studies reflect severe and less frequent forms of violence he calls "intimate terrorism." Others argue that the decontextualized nature of the CTS, which counts individual acts independent of the incidents or contexts in which they occur, renders findings based on it relatively meaningless (e.g. Dobash & Dobash, 1992). However, given the widespread findings of women's perpetration of intimate partner violence, as Straus (2006) argues above, it would appear that *something* is being measured and that one challenge for those interested in domestic violence is to understand what it is.

Interpreting the Data on Women's Partner Violence: The Gender Symmetry Debate

Interpretations of the symmetry findings have taken two general forms. On the one hand are those, primarily personality and psychopathology researchers, who argue that gender symmetry in perpetration rates rule out gender as an explanatory variable, and that the phenomenon is best understood as driven by personality traits or attachment patterns (e.g., D. G. Dutton, 2007; D. G. Dutton & Nicholls, 2005; Ehrensaft et al., 2004; the evidence for the role of personality factors is reviewed in a later section.). These researchers observe that traditional feminist analyses have two specific shortcomings. First, an argument that domestic violence is the direct embodiment of patriarchy fails to account for the fact that only some men are violent to their female partners, not all men. Second, this argument cannot account for the fact of women's violence. Thus, gender as an individual level factor is not a predictor of intimate violence perpetration (men and women are equally likely to use violence as reported by studies such as the NFVS), and gender as represented in a feminist analysis of patriarchal social structures and norms fails to explain patterns of violence and victimization (Moffitt, Krueger, Caspi, & Fagan, 2000). Family violence researchers, while less committed to an individual

differences explanation, take the position that by definition symmetry in rates of violence translates to symmetry of the phenomenon (Straus, 2006). This reflects the family violence definition of domestic violence as equivalent with its behavioral indicators (what Renzetti, 1999, calls the "faulty assumption that all violence is the same," p. 44). In sum, gender symmetry proponents have a three-pronged argument: 1) male and female IPV is the same because the predictors are the same; 2) male and female IPV is the same because the rates of perpetration are the same; and 3) equal rates of male and female IPV perpetration cannot be explained by traditional feminist arguments about patriarchy and male dominance, and thus reflect a construct that is gender neutral or symmetric.

On the other hand are those who argue for the continued importance of a gendered analysis of domestic violence. They have taken a variety of positions on the gender symmetry findings. At the most extreme, some reject the survey findings outright, pointing to the inability of the CTS to capture context, meaning, motive, and outcome (e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Downs, Rindels, & Atkinson, 2007). In recognition that the CTS cannot distinguish issues such as initiation, self-defense, and retaliation, some have argued that women's perpetration rates actually reflect high levels of self-defensive or retaliatory violence, although findings have been modest and leave much of women's violence unaccounted for (DeKeseredy, Saunders, Schwartz, & Alvi, 1997; Hamberger & Guse, 2002; Saunders, 2002; Worcester, 2002).

Others sidestep the findings by arguing that the CTS is not really measuring domestic violence as properly conceptualized. Pointing to debates over problem definition, these researchers have argued that the construct of domestic violence should include components such as fear, coercive control, and physical and psychological sequelae (e.g., M. A. Dutton & Goodman, 2005; Stark, 2006). They argue that this construal would reveal a phenomenon that is

predominantly male driven, with non-symmetric physical and psychological outcomes for men and women (e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Hamberger & Guse, 2002; Saunders, 2002). By re-bounding the phenomenon, this approach reflects the ongoing debates about how to conceive of the phenomenon of domestic violence and attempts to construct the phenomenon of interest to be in line with the ongoing pattern of power and control described by domestic violence advocates (Pence, 1999). These approaches make an argument for the more specific form of domestic violence of interest, but they fail to address the violence by women that occurs outside of it.

Finally, an influential approach noted in the previous section has been to argue for distinct kinds, or types, of domestic violence, with one kind representing a gendered form of domestic violence ("intimate terrorism") that is primarily male-perpetrated, and another kind ("common couple violence") representing a gender-neutral phenomenon resulting from poor conflict resolution skills (Johnson, 1995). Some have suggested that this typology resolves the gender symmetry debate by showing both sides to be right (Jaskinski, 2005; Johnson, 1995).

What is shared across the gender symmetry debate is a conceptualization of how gender ought to matter for domestic violence. The feminist argument has posited that domestic violence is the direct replication of social level patriarchy as individual level male power and privilege over female partners. Bograd (1988) argued that "the reality of domination at the social level [leads to] wife abuse at the personal level" (p. 14). Theoretically, then, the social must be mirrored transparently at the individual level. Adherence to this formulation has fueled the gender symmetry debate. Those arguing for gender neutrality point to the failure of this theory to account for the data. Those arguing for the importance of gender must either deny women's violence, insist that it is only defensive, or carve out a subset of (male-perpetrated) violence as gendered (i.e., intimate terrorism or "classic" battering). While some intimate partner violence

undoubtedly takes the form of a direct expression of male entitlement and control, and some of women's violence is certainly in self-defense, a theoretical position that expects the social to be instantiated in scalar form at the individual level can only conceptualize men's violence and women's resistance as gendered. Non-defensive forms of women's intimate violence can only be understood as transgressive and outside of gender. The effect is to re-create the good woman/bad woman dichotomy that has been so widely criticized by feminists themselves, and especially by women of color (e.g., Crenshaw, 1992). Women are positioned as good women who are non-violent or violent only in self-defense or retaliation, or bad women who are simply trouble – women whose behavior cannot be understood within a feminist analysis and thus stand outside of theory, apparently confirming the arguments of those who would dismiss the relevance of gender (Wolf, 1994). The ultimate result is a failure to theorize *all* forms of women's violence, and the retreat of the feminist argument about the importance of sociostructural factors in understanding domestic violence (Renzetti, 1999).

Conceptualizing Gender

An alternative conceptualization of gender offers new avenues for analyzing women's intimate partner violence (Anderson, 2005; Stacey & Thorne, 1985). In the majority of intimate partner violence research gender is conceptualized and operationalized as an individual-level demographic variable (Anderson, 2005). As Stacey and Thorne (1985) observe, "Gender is assumed to be a property of individuals and is conceptualized in terms of sex difference, rather than as a principle of social organization" (p. 307). Gender is reduced to sex difference and assessed as an independent variable to predict violence. Working from this reductive perspective, researchers have attempted to identify relationships between intimate partner violence and such individual level constructs as gender identity and gender role attitudes, with

generally weak findings (Anderson, 2005; Sugarman & Frankel, 1996). Conceptualizing gender as an attribute of individuals "reduces gender to the behavior of individual women and men" (Anderson, 2005, p. 855) and leads to the conclusion that the same behavior by men and women means that behavior is not influenced by gender. Kimmel (2002) points to the central problem: "What is missing, oddly, from these claims of gender symmetry is an analysis of gender" (p. 1344). Anderson (2005) argues that the efforts of feminist scholars to re-define the construct of domestic violence have obscured the equally important need to revisit what is meant by "gender."

Feminist theorists have long argued that gender should also be understood as a social level construct, a force that structures the social world in which men and women operate. They have been particularly successful at illuminating the ways in which social structures functioned to maintain domestic violence and limit women's access to safety (e.g., lack of legal protections for victims or sanctions for batterers, social pressures for women to stay with violent husbands, victim-blaming attitudes and responses from faith and social service agencies). However, efforts to elucidate the interpersonal and individual processes whereby gender as a construct of social organization is translated into individual behavior have been hindered by the overly simplistic expectation of direct influence described in the previous section (i.e., that gender is only relevant when men hit women). Thus, feminist efforts to explain domestic violence have investigated individual attitudes, gender socialization, encouragement by peers and authority figures, and the influence of modeling by peers, family, and the media (Gordon, 2000), with the expectation that these processes would directly mediate the social into individual differences and would therefore be able to explain domestic violence as a direct expression of patriarchy. Yet, these efforts have failed to produce robust explanations.

A number of feminist theorists point to an alternative, more sophisticated approach to conceptualizing gender as a category of social organization within which individuals negotiate dating and intimacy (Anderson, 2005; Miller, 2008; Stacey & Thorne, 1985). In other words, it is not only the gender of the actors, but the gendered social structure within which they interact that shapes the contexts, forms, and meanings of intimate partner violence. This kind of approach to gender posits that all domestic violence is gendered (i.e., whether perpetrated by men or women), but it does not specify the forms that this gendered violence will take and thus allows an investigation of all forms of women's violence. For example, even women's initiation of violence and endorsement of control motives would be analyzed within the larger context of the dating environment and their own relationship history. A theory of gender as a social as well as individual level construct does not need to assume that gender is only operative when men are violent against women, but instead necessitates inquiry into the ways that social interactions (including intimate partner violence) between men and women reflect and reinforce gender structures.

An important recent study presented just such an analysis, using survey and interview data with a sample of urban, at-risk, African-American adolescents (Miller, 2008; Miller &White, 2003). Researchers found a world of pervasive violence and sexual manipulation, where "playa'" boys subscribe to a masculine code of emotional detachment, sexual infidelity and manipulation. It is only in the context of this deeply gendered social world, the authors argue, that girls' aggression can be understood. Using the CTS they find roughly equal rates of aggression, in line with previous research. However their qualitative data allow them to make sense of the numbers, showing girls navigating a socially disadvantaged position vis-à-vis boys, using verbal and physical aggression in an attempt (usually failed) to break the male "cool pose,"

to protect their reputations, to establish their autonomy, and to demand respect. Miller (2008) writes,

> young women's use of violence against their boyfriends was often rooted in their responses to the playa' (concerns about infidelity) and the cool pose (frustration at emotional detachment strategies); however, girls' violence was interpreted as ineffectual and perceived to be rooted in their greater emotionality (pp. 188-189).

Thus, girls' violence against their boyfriends reflected a structural relationship with boys (and men) in which they were disempowered and vulnerable to exploitation. Rather than reduce gender to a variable or a set of beliefs held by individual actors this study located girls' and boys' violence within the gendered social milieu where it takes place.

Conceptualizing Intimate Partner Violence: Arguments for the Importance of Context

A fundamental and unresolved question plaguing the domestic violence literature concerns the nature of the phenomenon itself. That is, what do we mean when we invoke the construct of domestic violence? This critical question of problem definition is central to the interpretations and debates across the literature (on the centrality of problem definition in social science, see Caplan & Nelson, 1973; Humphreys & Rappaport, 1993; Sarason, 1978). Gender symmetry proponents argue for what Straus (1999) has termed the "narrow definition," which defines domestic violence as "the act of assault, regardless of injury." Unsurprisingly, this definition yields the highest rates of domestic violence by including all participants who endorse any item on the CTS physical assault scale. Feminist researchers and domestic violence advocates, on the other hand, argue for what Straus characterized as a "broad definition," which conceptualizes domestic violence as a pattern of ongoing power and control by one partner against the other and that may incorporate a range of maltreatment, including verbal, emotional, physical and sexual abuse. Each conceptualization of domestic violence is located in a

nomological net that reflects disciplinary and theoretical differences (e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Pence, 1999; Stark, 2006; Straus, 1999).

When family violence researchers set out to assess rates of domestic violence, they conceptualized the phenomenon as one of maladaptive conflict resolution, reflecting their sociological approach to families as systems comprised of individuals with competing interests (Straus, 2007). This conflict model of family dynamics was operationalized in the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS; Straus, 1972), an act-based measure assessing the occurrence of minor to severe acts of physical aggression over a defined period of time. The CTS asks about behaviors engaged in during arguments or times of conflict between intimate partners. The construct of domestic violence is thus equivalent with its behavioral indicators, that is, domestic violence is by definition the presence of any violent or aggressive behavior. The CTS is a simple measure that is quickly administered and it rapidly became the gold standard for assessing domestic violence in academic research (used, for example, in 76 out of 82 studies in the Archer meta-analysis; Archer, 2000).

The ubiquity of the CTS and the flattening of the conceptualization of the phenomenon to discrete behavioral indicators has led some to argue that the CTS has become reified as the construct itself (e.g., McHugh, Livingston, & Ford, 2005) and that the field has prematurely abandoned efforts to specify the nature of the phenomenon (e.g., Johnson, 1995; Osthoff, 2002). Critics argue that the CTS fails to provide important information about context, meaning, intent, and consequence, and that without this kind of data interpretations of CTS findings are forced to be speculative (for comprehensive criticisms of the CTS see Dobash & Dobash, 2004; Kimmel, 2001; for a response, see Straus, 1990).

So called "violence against women" researchers have argued for a different conceptualization of domestic violence informed by feminist theory and work with battered women. This definition frames domestic violence as an ongoing pattern of abuse, comprised of multiple discrete acts and forms of abuse. These researchers have argued that in fact CTS studies are generally assessing a different phenomenon, and some have proposed a specific construct – "battering" – that reflects a dynamic of coercive control and the disempowering consequences of this ongoing abuse (Osthoff, 2002; Smith, Thornton, DeVellis, Earp, & Coker, 2002; Stark, 2006). For example, Smith et al. presented evidence for the existence of three distinct constructs: "battering," physical assault, and sexual assault, which can be overlapping or independent. The increasing emphasis on the distinctness of battering among violence against women researchers is reflected in Johnson's (1995, 2006) influential typology of domestic violence. Arguing for the importance of including controlling behaviors as well as assaultive ones, he distinguishes between "situational couple violence" (most prevalent, gender neutral, and most frequently seen in survey research) and "intimate terrorism" (less common, mostly male perpetrated, and more frequently found in clinical samples; Johnson, 2006).

On the one hand, the battering/intimate terrorism argument emphasizes the importance of context for understanding the nature of the phenomenon; the degree to which acts of violence are embedded within a relational context characterized by power and control by one partner over the other is seen as fundamentally important. However, by reframing "real" domestic violence as battering or intimate terrorism, violence against women researchers have in effect opted to walk away from the bulk of violence that occurs between partners. This literature emphasizes context, but primarily to the extent that male dominance is or is not present. The emphasis on male battering functions to obscure the ways that gender might matter across all forms of intimate

violence. Instead, the current study attempts to address women's violence directly in all its complexity. Giordano, Millhollin, Cernkovich, Pugh, and Rudolph (1999) argue that conceptualizing women only as victims is simplistic. They argue that "rather than bracketing off this information, theories and applied efforts might benefit from more direct focus on the heterogeneity of women's circumstances, including the paths that lead up to violence" (p. 32). The conceptualization of gender as social structure rather than individual variable proposed by the present project allows for an investigation into the nature of women's violence that is not specified a priori.

A different challenge to the conceptualization of domestic violence has been raised by findings that much of domestic violence is bi-directional or reciprocal (Capaldi & Owen, 2001; Hamberger, 2005; Magdol et al., 1997). In particular, research on women's partner violence indicates that women generally report using violence in the context of their male partner's violence (e.g., Babcock, Miller, & Siard, 2003; Swan, Gambone, Fields, Sullivan, & Snow, 2005). In other words, rates of female and male perpetration are highly correlated. For example, O'Leary and Smith Slep (2003) found very high correlations of self-reported physical aggression and victimization among adolescent daters, .73 for boys and .78 for girls. Archer's (2000) meta-analysis found that "the proportions of men and women who physically aggressed were highly correlated . . . These associations would be expected on the basis of the finding that physical aggression between partners tends to be reciprocal" (p. 660). Thus, research on women's violence in particular has emphasized that women's violence must be understood in the context of their partner's violence. For example, in a study of women in treatment for domestic violence perpetration, all women reported greater levels of victimization than perpetration, regardless of the level of severity of their own violence (Babcock et al., 2003). Such findings have led

researchers to argue for the importance of studying women's perpetration and victimization together (Sullivan, Meese, Swan, Mazure, & Snow, 2005).

In addition to cross-sectional findings, developmental and couples research has led some to argue that the phenomenon must be conceptualized and assessed as a dyadic and dynamic process, rather than as a static, present/absent phenomenon (Capaldi & Kim, 2007; Graves, Sechrist, White, & Paradise, 2005). For example, O'Leary and Smith Slep (2003) found that a cross-dyad model was needed to account for dating violence data collected at two time points. While past aggression is often seen as an important predictor of future aggression, in this sample it was the partner's physical aggression that was most predictive of aggression at time 2 (3 months later), rather than the participant's past behavior at Time 1. These studies suggest that the behavior of both partners and the experience of the relationship as it evolves over time influence the use of physical violence and aggression.

While these findings are provocative, they raise new questions about how to understand the violence that occurs in couples. A number of scholars have argued that a more complete understanding of domestic violence requires the inclusion of comprehensive, qualitative data that does not specify or bound the outcome variable a priori and that inquires into the "the wider context of ongoing events and intimate relationships" (Dobash & Dobash, 2004, p. 328). Although measures have been developed to capture different aspects of relationship abuse, such as sexual violence and psychological/emotional abuse, without the ability to contextualize this data interpretations are often reduced to post-hoc speculations (Graves et al., 2005; Straus, 2006). No studies on women's intimate partner violence have been identified that take a qualitative approach to investigating the nature and contexts of the violence (with the exception of the Miller, 2008, study of adolescents described above).

Individual Differences: Personality and Attachment

As noted in the introduction, much of the literature on domestic violence focuses exclusively on a single level of analysis. Studies of domestic violence from an individual level analysis have evaluated the influence of a range of variables including childhood experiences, communication and anger management skills, and personality (e.g., Stith, Smith, Penn, Ward, & Tritt, 2004). Many of these variables have been found to explain some of the variance in domestic violence, although researchers have noted their fairly limited explanatory power (e.g., Gordon, 2000; Michalski, 2004, 2005). A particularly strong individual-level argument has been made by some of the gender symmetry proponents, who claim that the predictive power of similar personality traits for male and female intimate partner violence perpetration implies the gender neutrality of the phenomenon. Given the strong gender symmetry argument made by personality researchers, the strength of the research on personality factors, and the theoretical power of some personality theories to help explain the processes involved in intimate partner violence, this project will include an analysis of personality factors on women's use of violence and aggression against intimate partners.

Personality Traits and Pathology

While the majority of research on domestic violence perpetration has been conducted with men, studies have increasingly shown similar patterns of personality risk factors for women. At the most general level, personality researchers have emphasized the relevance of personality styles such as negative emotionality (NE) to a wide range of "externalizing" behaviors in men and women, including aggression, substance abuse, and antisocial behavior (Krueger, McGue, & Iacono, 2001; Krueger, Schmutte, Caspi, Moffitt, Campbell, & Silva, 1994). NE is a broad construct describing individuals who "have a low general threshold for the experience of

negative emotions, such as anxiety and anger, tend to break down under stress, and perceive the world as threatening" (Moffitt, Krueger, Caspi, & Fagan, 2000, p. 209). For example, Moffitt et al. found that partner abuse was related to NE, but not to weak Constraint (i.e., low self-control) for men and women in a longitudinal cohort study (a pattern distinguishing partner abuse from other forms of violence and aggression).

While broad personality constellations such as NE have been studied in regards to a range of aggressive and antisocial behaviors, the literature on intimate partner violence as a specific form of violence has focused on personality constructs theorized to be more proximally linked to abuse against an intimate. In particular, both borderline and antisocial personality have been linked to male intimate partner violence (Chambers & Wilson, 2007; D. G. Dutton, 2007; Hamberger & Hastings, 1986, 1991; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994; Tweed & D. G. Dutton, 1998). In addition, personality characteristics consistent with borderline and antisocial personality such as fear of abandonment, dependency, and an externalizing attributional style have been linked to domestic violence in samples of partner abusive men (D. G. Dutton, 1995*;* Flournoy & Wilson, 1991). D. G. Dutton (2007) has proposed the existence of an "abusive personality" characterized by borderline personality organization, impulsive behavior, and high levels of anger.

A much smaller literature addresses personality factors related to women's domestic abuse. Prospective studies have associated childhood and adolescent antisocial behavior and Cluster B and C personality disorders (including Antisocial and Borderline) with adult women's partner abuse (Ehrensaft, Cohen, & Johnson, 2007; Giordano et al., 1999). For example, although borderline personality was not directly assessed, personality characteristics consistent with borderline personality such as intense emotional lability, poor self-control, and excessive

jealousy predicted women's partner violence in the Dunedin study, a longitudinal cohort study (Moffitt, Caspi, Rutter, & Silva, 2001). A sample of primarily African-American women arrested for domestic violence had clinically significant elevations on multiple Axis II (personality) subscales of the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory -III, including the Borderline subscale (Henning, Jones, & Holford, 2003). Given these findings, further research on the relationship of borderline personality traits to partner violence is warranted.

Attachment Theory

Efforts to identify etiological pathways to outcomes such as borderline personality and the processes that lead to violence against an intimate partner have increasingly focused on attachment theory. Based on Bowlby's work (1973), attachment theory has been proposed as offering a "rich conceptual framework" for understanding the dynamics driving partner violence (Mauricio, Tein, & Lopez, 2007, p. 140; also D. G. Dutton, 2007; Fonagy, 1999; Gormley, 2005; Mayseless, 1991; for reviews of attachment theory and its relationship to intimate partner violence see Gormley, 2005; Mayseless, 1991; Roberts & Noller, 1998; West & George, 1999). Early disruptions in attachment have also been theorized to underlie borderline personality, contributing to difficulty with affect regulation and intimacy (e.g., Fonagy, Target, & Gergely, 2000). Recent research on intimate partner violence has begun to investigate the relationships between attachment, personality, and intimate abuse.

Briefly, attachment theory posits that humans have an attachment system, evolutionarily designed to maintain physical proximity, protection and social closeness with caregivers. Under circumstances of threat (either internal or external), the system is activated and the infant behaves in such a way (e.g., crying) that closeness is re-established. When these strategies are effective, they promote a secure attachment bond. However, under some conditions proximity

and a sense of protection from the caregiver are blocked, resulting in insecure attachment patterns. Attachment theorists argue that these early experiences with caregivers lead to the development of cognitive, affective and behavioral responses that generalize into characteristic attachment styles that are activated most strongly by intimate relationships.

Social personality research on adult attachment has identified two dimensions of attachment style: anxiety and avoidance (Fraley & Waller, 1998; Simpson & Rholes, 1998). Anxious attachment is characterized by fears of abandonment, anger, proximity-seeking, feelings of helplessness, and aggression (Gormley, 2005; Mayseless, 1991; Roberts & Noller, 1998). Avoidant attachment is characterized by fears of intimacy and closeness, defensiveness, an emphasis on self-reliance, and an ability to "deactivate cognitive and emotional components of [the] attachment systems" (Fraley, Davis & Shaver, 1998, p. 274). Of the two dimensions, anxious attachment has received more attention. It is theorized that anxiously attached individuals, fearful of abandonment and anger-prone, will be likely to interpret ambiguous behavior from their partners as threatening or hostile and will rapidly escalate their anger and aggressiveness (Gormley, 2005; Mayseless, 1991). Anxious attachment has been linked to male intimate partner violence (Babcock, Jacobson, Gottman, & Yerington, 2000; Kesner, Julian, & McKenry, 1997; Mauricio & Gormley, 2001; Roberts & Noller, 1998; Tweed & D. G. Dutton, 1998). For example, a study of nonviolent and violent maritally distressed husbands found that violent husbands were more likely to be insecurely attached (74%) than the distressed but nonviolent husbands (38%; Babcock et al., 2000). Research with women has found that anxious attachment is linked to physical aggression (Bookwala & Zdaniuk, 1998; Orcutt et al., 2005) and emotional aggression (O'Hearn & Davis, 1997).

Less attention has been paid to the role of avoidant attachment and IPV. However, some have theorized that individuals high on avoidance might use emotional and physical aggression as a means of maintaining distance from intimate partners, especially in the face of intimacy-related demands or pursuit (Mayseless, 1991). Furthermore, avoidant individuals whose defense systems fail during interactions of high stress might be flooded with attachment related anxiety and anger (Fraley et al., 1998; Gormley, 2005; Mayseless, 1991). To the extent that it has been assessed, avoidant attachment has also been linked to male partner violence (Mauricio & Gormley, 2001; Babcock et al., 2000). Descriptions of the avoidant individual read like a stereotypic version of male socialization, and are consistent with Miller's (2008) descriptions of inner-city masculine codes of behavior. In her research, boys maintain a cool, distanced pose and are more likely to describe their violence as containing their girlfriends' emotionally-driven attacks or as asserting their independence and distance. However, personality traits and attachment styles were not measured in her study, so that the possible interaction of these individual differences with social processes could not be analyzed.

As noted above, attachment theorists have proposed that attachment insecurity can lead to personality pathology (e.g., Brennan & Shaver, 1998; Fonagy, Target, & Gergely, 2000; Meyer, Pilkonis, Proietti, Heape, & Egan, 2001), and domestic violence researchers have begun to investigate the relationships among personality, attachment and intimate partner violence. D. G. Dutton (2007) reports correlations between borderline personality organization and insecure attachment (.55) and between borderline personality organization and physical (.29) and emotional abuse (.48) for a sample of partner assaultive men. Follingstad, Bradley, Helff, and Laughlin (2002) used structural equation modeling to establish that anxious attachment led to an angry temperament, which in turn led to behaviors to control an intimate partner. Controlling

behaviors mediated angry temperament and greater frequency and severity of dating violence. While this study did not explicitly assess personality, an "angry temperament" (assessed by the State Trait Anger Expression Scale and the Verbal Aggressiveness Scale) is consistent with borderline personality. A recent study by Mauricio et al. (2007) provided the first published test of the mediational role of personality disorders between adult attachment style and relationship violence. Using structural equation modeling with data gathered from a sample of court-mandated male batterers, they found that borderline and antisocial personality disorders fully mediated the relationship between avoidant attachment and domestic abuse, and partly mediated the relationship between anxious attachment and abuse.

No identified research has specifically investigated the relationships among personality, attachment, and women's relationship abuse. The Follingstad et al. (2002) study described above included men and women in the sample but did not have the power to evaluate their model by gender. Orcutt et al. (2005) conducted the first study exclusively focused on female partner violence and attachment style, using a large sample of female undergraduates. Using logistic regression, they found an interaction between attachment avoidance and anxiety on women's perpetration. Specifically, women higher in anxiety but lower in avoidance reported significantly more perpetration than women high in both. However, they did not assess personality traits. Bookwala and Zdaniuk (1998) categorized male and female undergraduates into non-violent or mutually violent groups and found no interaction between sex and aggression status (non-violent or mutually violent) and attachment style. They hypothesize that this finding is due to the absence of a relationship between sex and likelihood of being in a violent relationship. Thus, while existing research suggests the relevance of both attachment and

personality factors for domestic violence, the nature of the relationships among these constructs and their role in women's intimate partner violence remain to be explored.

Limitations of single factor explanations and the need for multiple level investigations

As described in an earlier section, findings of individual differences influences on domestic violence perpetration have been argued to invalidate a gender analysis. As one researcher argues, "personality disorder, not gender, [predicts] violence" (D. G. Dutton, 2007, p. 217). There are two limitations to this argument: 1) individual differences only explain a percentage of the variance, and 2) patterns in the data suggest that domestic violence is in fact a gendered phenomenon. Many researchers have commented that approaches representing various theoretical perspectives on domestic violence (e.g., individual differences, social learning, feminist, evolutionary, social-interactionist) fail to account for much of the variance (e.g., O'Leary, Smith Slep, & O'Leary, 2007). Michalski (2004) argues that survey data "fail to account for more than about 10% of the variation in the annual incidence of intimate partner violence" (p. 659). He notes that small studies have supported parts of many theories. For example, Mauricio et al.'s (2007) models of attachment mediated by personality disorder accounted for 16% of the variance for physical violence and roughly 37% for psychological abuse. Moffitt, Krueger, Caspi, and Fagan (2000), key proponents of a personality approach to intimate partner violence, acknowledge that in their research the correlations between personality factors and aggression "were less than 1.0 (personality predicting crime R = .49 and predicting partner abuse R = .26), attesting that variables beyond the personality traits of perpetrators are needed to fully account for each outcome" (p. 216). These findings have led many in the field to conclude that domestic violence is a multi-determined, complex phenomenon that belies single factor explanations (Heise, 1998; O'Leary et al., 2007; Stith, et al., 2004).

Furthermore, although findings of roughly equal rates of male and female perpetration have been robust across studies, trends in the data suggest the necessity of including gender in understanding intimate partner violence. First, it has been widely observed that men and women's violence is not generally symmetric. That is, men are more violent in general, whereas women's aggression is predominantly directed against those with whom they have a relationship (Moffitt, Caspi, Rutter, & Silva, 2001; Straus, 2006). While personality factors may influence who behaves violently, the fact that men and women aggress in different contexts requires an explanation that includes gender. As Miller (2008) observes, "It is not categorical differences between women and men that predispose them to use violence. Instead, gender inequality, as it operates simultaneously at the structural, situational, and normative levels, is what shapes the nature and consequences of partner violence . . ." (p. 260). In her study, an analysis of "the social contexts that shape partner violence" led to findings that "relationship violence . . . was deeply grounded in gender inequalities" (p. 260).

Second, research has indicated that the rates of female to male intimate partner violence are not invariant, but change under different conditions. Women's violence is proportionately higher in younger, dating couples, whereas men's is higher for older, married couples (Archer, 2000). In addition, Archer found that the relative proportion of women to men using violence against partners was driven by the rates of men's violence. That is, the proportion of physically aggressive *men* rather than the proportion of physically aggressive women drove the effect size for sex difference in aggression. Archer summarizes, "it is the level of men's aggression that is associated with the variation in sex differences" found across studies (p. 660). This provocative finding underlies his hypothesis that women's rates of intimate violence are higher than men's under conditions when men inhibit their violence (as when they are younger and dating).

A complementary finding comes from a longitudinal study of an unselected birth cohort, which found that couples experiencing "clinical" levels of abuse (abuse that led to injury, need for medical treatment, police intervention, court conviction, or formal help-seeking) were differentiated from the non-clinical and non-abuse couples in that they more often had male partners with "long-standing disinhibitory behavioral pathology" (Ehrensaft et al., 2004, p. 268). These findings lead the authors to propose "the novel hypothesis that woman-to-man abuse is the common default, but escalation beyond this common pattern . . . requires a male partner who has a history of psychopathology" (p. 268). Although these kinds of findings are often argued to support a gender symmetry argument (as they document the existence of apparently non-defensive female perpetration), they just as clearly indicate the need for an analysis that includes gender. If women's violence against male partners is "the common default," and men generally inhibit violence against their partners (with important exceptions), this suggests a gendered nature to domestic violence that needs explaining. Something about the structure of heterosexual intimate relationships appears to allow for women's relatively freer use of violence. The relationship context is such that levels of violence and aggression shift in different contexts for men and women, signaling the relevance of gender for an understanding of the phenomenon.

Against single-factor or single-level explanations for domestic violence, Heise (1998) proposed a nested, ecological approach that emphasizes "the dynamic interplay between factors operating at multiple levels" (p. 266). This model echoes Bronfenbrenner's (1979) transactional, ecological model of development, which identifies multiple sources of influence on human behavior. Influences from individual, situational, and sociocultural levels are understood to interact to produce complex human behaviors. Despite theoretical arguments and empirical evidence for a more complex, multifactor explanation of domestic violence, researchers have

tended to focus on single-level analyses. Individual differences research on domestic violence generally ignores sociocultural factors, and the ethnographic research that tends to elaborate social contexts generally ignores individual differences (e.g., Miller, 2008; Richie, 1996). A transactional framework, however, implies that different levels do not merely co-exist on parallel planes, but interact in meaningful ways to produce behavior. Disciplinary boundaries and methodological challenges have dovetailed to make transactional, ecological analyses of domestic violence difficult. The result is that while the literature on women's intimate partner violence is rife with arguments about the centrality of including social and contextual factors, Straus (2006) has argued that these arguments are "primarily in the form of assertions, rather than empirical studies" (p. 1089-1090). He thus calls for research on "context, meaning and motive" that would "raise the ratio of data to theory" (Straus, 2006, p.1087), a goal for this project.

This project conducts an analysis of women's intimate partner violence that locates the expression of individual differences within a social structure that is organized by gender. Conceptualizing gender as a category of social organization rather than as an internal characteristic allows an analysis that neither denies women's violence nor insists on its gender neutrality. Straus (1999) observes that "one reason the repeated findings on equal rates of partner assault by men and women have been suspect is the absence of a theory to explain these findings. . . [A] rich theoretical analysis . . . has not yet happened for domestic assaults by women" (p. 30). The present project attempts to provide such an analysis by weaving together individual and social level factors in order to elaborate the gendered nature of women's intimate partner violence.

CURRENT STUDY

Given the centrality of personality factors to the arguments for the gender-neutrality of domestic violence and the centrality of context to the counter-arguments for the gendered nature of domestic violence, this study pursues a novel, mixed-method approach to combining these different levels of analysis. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) observe in their review of mixed methods in the social sciences that "a major advantage of mixed method research is that it enables the researcher to simultaneously answer confirmatory and exploratory questions, and therefore verify and generate theory in the same study" (p. 15). In order to first establish the importance of individual differences variables for women's partner violence and aggression, this study investigates how attachment style and personality interact to predict women's violence against male dating partners. Second, this study explores and elaborates the nature and contexts of women's dating violence, detailing incidents of violence and the relational contexts in which they occur, identifying the relevance of gender, and investigating the degree to which a borderline personality style and partner's use of violence is relevant for women's use of force.

It was hypothesized that while individual differences would influence which women use aggression against their partners, the larger social context of heterosexual dating and the more immediate relational context would influence when and why violence occurs. For example, as illustrated by Miller (2008), girls report using violence and aggression against their boyfriends to express jealousy, a finding consistent with other studies on women's intimate partner violence. When asked about motivations or triggers for violence, men and women both report factors such as jealousy and anger (Babcock et al., 2003; Follingstad et al., 1991; Holtzworth-Munroe, 2005). Interpreted without any contextual data, these findings can be seen as consistent with an argument that male and female partner violence is identical, reflecting similar intrapsychic and

interpersonal processes. Embedded within a larger analysis of the social context of dating and partner violence, however, Miller's (2008) findings show meaningful gender differences in the causes and function of jealousy for her urban, adolescent sample. In the context of a "playa" ethos where boys gain respect for "gaming" girls (i.e., manipulating them into having sex) while girls risk denigration for promiscuity, girls' jealousy can be seen as reflecting their disadvantaged position in the gendered power dynamics of their relationships. Miller (2008) concludes:

> while jealousy was a salient issue for both genders, girls were much more likely to have experienced infidelity . . . that exacerbated insecurity and distrust. . . . In addition, young men sometimes exploited girls' jealousy and insecurity by threatening infidelity or showing interest in other girls as a manipulation strategy. . . . As a result, jealousy was qualitatively different across gender and contributed to girls' relative power disadvantage in dating relationships. (p. 166)

This study presumes that an elaboration of the social context of dating and dating violence will allow us to better understand the nature and meaning of women's partner violence and to generate new hypotheses about women's partner violence.

The goal is to move beyond a single level of analysis, as implied by ecological theory, rather than emphasizing one level to the exclusion of others (and indeed, ignoring data from others). Furthermore, this project aims to integrate individual differences findings with social and contextual data rather than place two distinct analyses side by side in an additive way (as represented in the model in Figure 1). While mixed-methods are often thought to serve triangulation purposes, Erzberger and Prein (1997, quoted in Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003) argue that mixed-method research findings "can generate a new comprehension of the phenomenon by forming complementary parts of a jigsaw puzzle, or . . . they can produce unexplainable divergence leading to a falsification of previous theoretical assumptions " (p. 17). Indeed, many scholars of mixed-methods argue that a central function of mixed methods is to identify and

pursue divergent aspects of a phenomenon (Greene & McClintock, 1985; Mathison, 1988). In this study, a sequential (although overlapping) data collection process was followed by both independent (in the case of the individual-differences component of the model) and integrated data analysis. Taking a dialogic epistemological stance (Greene & Caracelli, 1997, 2003) that values different paradigmatic positions and the tensions that emerge from their juxtaposition, this study was designed to serve at least two purposes of mixed-method research as delineated by Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989): expansion, which seeks to extend breadth and range of inquiry; and initiation, which seeks new perspectives, contradictions, and the "recasting of questions or results from one method with questions or results from the other method" (p. 259). This project thus attempts to move beyond the single method approach predominant in the literature in order to complicate and expand our understanding of (and questions about) women's intimate partner violence.

Part 1: The Role of Individual Differences and Partner Violence

Two semi-independent literatures address personality variables as risk factors for intimate partner violence. Among personality and psychopathology researchers, borderline personality traits have been associated with partner violence for men and women both cross-sectionally and longitudinally. More recently, adult attachment theory has been proposed as providing a rich, conceptual framework from which to understand the dynamics of violence against intimates. Furthermore, some theorists have proposed that borderline personality is essentially a problem of disordered attachment. This study aims to extend and build on research, conducted primarily with men, tracing the relationships of attachment style and personality to outcomes of partner violence. Specifically, the study tests the model of women's partner violence represented above. The model represents the following hypotheses:

1. An anxious attachment style will predict borderline personality traits, but this relationship will be moderated by avoidant attachment.
    a. Specifically, the combination of high anxious attachment and low avoidant attachment will have the strongest influence on borderline personality traits.
2. Further, borderline personality traits will mediate the influence of anxious attachment style on partner abuse.
3. Psychological abuse (including verbal and emotional abuse) will mediate the relationship of borderline personality to women's partner violence.
4. Men's partner violence will have a moderational influence on women's psychological abuse and women's partner violence.

Regarding hypothesis 4, the direction of moderation is unspecified, and analyses are exploratory. The literature on women's violence has proposed two opposite hypotheses: (a) that women's partner violence is primarily reactionary, and would therefore be expected to *increase* in the presence of their partner's violence; and (b) that women's partner violence is in part enabled by social sanctions against men's violence, such that their violence is more prevalent in the absence of male violence. In this case, the presence of their partner's violence would be likely to result in *less* female violence. There is empirical data to support each hypothesis, such as findings that women's violence is more frequent and severe in cases of bi-directional violence (i.e., that women "match" men in their violence), and meta-analytic findings that the rates of women's violence are highest when male violence is lowest (Archer, 2000). Given these data, this study does not hypothesize about the nature of the influence of men's violence on women's aggression, but rather investigates its influence in an exploratory manner. Unlike previous studies, however, this investigation includes a qualitative component that allows for an exploration of bi-

directional and female-only violence. Rather than falling back on post hoc explanations, this study probes findings regarding bi-directional violence emerging from the structural equation modeling through analyses of in-depth interview data.

Data for this component of the study was generated through self-report survey measures with female undergraduates. This population was chosen in order to maximize comparativeness with the gender symmetry literature, much of which is based on undergraduate samples. In addition, given that younger, dating samples report the highest rates of female dating violence, this sample is most likely to include participants reporting dating violence.

Part 2: A Gendered, Contextual Analysis

The second component of the study uses qualitative inquiry to investigate the influence of gender and social context, as well as borderline personality traits, on women's use of violence. Using a nested data gathering approach, participants for in-depth interviews were purposively recruited from the larger survey sample based on their scores across violence and personality measures. This component of the study provides a contextual examination of the nature and circumstances of women's partner violence including: (a) detailed accounts of the social and interpersonal contexts of women's use of violence, (b) the ways in which gender shapes the socially constructed meanings of women's (and men's) violence against dating partners, and (c) to what extent individual differences in borderline personality traits contribute to violence.

Furthermore, this study attempts to integrate, rather than merely parallel, the individual differences data. Whereas research on partner violence has generally focused on the role of individual level risk factors (such as personality) or on larger sociological constructs (such as SES or patriarchy), this project explicitly attempts to investigate the interplay between individual-level constructs and the larger social context, specifically focusing on how the social

context both shapes and gives meaning to situational triggers and violent behavior. Ultimately, this study uses multiple "lenses" through which to see women's violence (behavioral, personality, social and contextual), using an ecological theoretical framework suggesting that the phenomenon of women's intimate partner violence can best be understood not as the result of disparate, independent sources of influence, but rather as the result of interactions among them.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Female undergraduate students from a large, Midwestern state university participated in the study as a voluntary part of their introductory psychology course requirements. Participants reflected a range of socioeconomic status, racial/ethnic composition and urban to rural demographics. Students completed a battery of self-report measures in the first stage of data gathering. A sub-sample of women was then recruited based on their scores on personality and violence measures to participate in a follow up interview. Interview participants received a nominal reimbursement for their participation. An undergraduate population was selected so that results will be most comparable to the populations samples in the literature reflecting the highest rates of women's partner violence, young, dating samples that are frequently drawn from undergraduate populations.

Stage 1

476 female undergraduates who reported having been in a heterosexual dating relationship in the past year completed a survey including measures assessing personality factors, experiences with intimate partner violence, and the social contexts of dating and relationships (Appendix B).

Stage 2

Throughout the survey data gathering, participants were categorized into one of eight groups based on their responses to the borderline personality scale (PAI) and the aggression subscales of the Conflict Tactics Scales 2 (CTS2). A 2 x 4 design generated 8 cells, representing two levels of borderline personality traits (high/low) and 4 levels of violence perpetration: none,

minor violence only 1-2 times, minor only 3-5 times, minor 6 times or more and/or any severe violence. Following Trull (1995), participants were rated high on borderline personality (BP+) if they scored ≥ 38 on the Personality Assessment Inventory – Borderline Features Scale (PAI-BOR; Morey, 1991). In a sample of 939 undergraduate women, 14.5% were BP+ (Trull, 1995). The rate of BP+ women in this sample was 13.9%. Partner violence was grouped along a continuum rather than simply dichotomized (present/absent) in acknowledgement of debates in the literature regarding the heterogeneity of dichotomized groups using the CTS. For example, in one study different variables emerged as relevant when analyzing violence separately by frequency and severity (Follingstad et al., 1999). It has thus been argued that studies that dichotomize participants into non-violent versus violent may in fact be obscuring meaningful differences, especially among samples reporting mostly low-level and infrequent violence (e.g., undergraduates). The four violence levels for this study reflect an attempt to investigate differences among women reporting a range of both frequency and severity of violence perpetration.

The order of the participant identification numbers was randomized for each of the 8 subgroups, and participants from each group were recruited for interviews in waves as survey data collection progressed. Within subgroups, effort was made to ensure recruitment of participants who varied as to whether they reported violence by dating partners or not. The initial target was 4 participants per cell (for a total of 32); during recruitment it was decided to oversample high violence participants to maximize the volume and quality of data on this group of interest. Ultimately 36 participants were recruited and 34 completed interviews.

The subsamples participated in in-depth, semi-structured interviews (Appendix B) regarding two critical domains: 1) the social context of dating and relationships for the

participant and her peer group (e.g., norms and expectations, exposure to dating violence in peer group, attitudes about dating and violence); and 2) detailed information about personal experiences of dating and dating violence. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Measures

Relationship Violence and Abuse

Conflict Tactics Scales 2 (CTS2). The CTS2 (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugarman, 1996) is a 39-item scale measuring psychological aggression, physical assault, negotiation strategies, sexual assault, and injury by self and intimate partner over the past year. Across 41 studies of a variety of populations, the CTS2 has demonstrated reliability coefficients ranging from .34 to .94, with a mean of .77 (Straus, 2007). Response items are Likert-style frequency choices ranging from 0 to 7 (never to more than 20 times). The 12 physical aggression items are divided into 5 minor (e.g.,"grabbed my partner") and 7 severe (e.g., "used a knife or gun on my partner").

Modified Psychological Maltreatment Inventory (mPMI). The mPMI (Kasian & Painter, 1992) is a widely-used, modified version of Tolman's (1989) measure of psychological abuse designed for a dating population. A factor analysis of data from approximately 1,446 undergraduate students identified six factors: positive behaviors, isolation and emotional control, diminishment of self-esteem, jealousy, verbal abuse, and withdrawal. Alpha coefficients for each subscale ranged from .72 to .89. The sub-scales assessing isolation and emotional control (e.g., "tried to keep me from seeing friends or family"), self-esteem (e.g., "treated me like I was stupid"), jealousy (e.g., "was jealous and suspicious of my friends"), withdrawal (e.g., "withheld emotional affection"), and verbal abuse (e.g., "swore at me") will be used to assess

psychological abuse. Response items are structured to parallel the CTS, and thus range from 0 to 7 (never to more than 20 times). Likewise, the measure uses a past 12-month reference frame, identical to the CTS. This measure was designed to assess victimization and was expanded for this study to include perpetration.

Attachment

Experiences in Close Relationships Revised (ECR-R). The ECR-R (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000) is a widely used, 36-item self-report attachment measure. The items were derived from an item response theory (IRT) analysis of most of the existing self-report measures of adult romantic attachment. The ECR-R is based on a two-dimensional model of adult attachment and yields scores on two subscales, Avoidance and Anxiety. Taxometric research has indicated that these attachment patterns are best construed as dimensional rather than typological (Fraley & Waller, 1998), and thus it is conventional to use two scores for each individual reflecting their location on the dimensions of Anxiety and Avoidance.

Borderline Personality Traits

Personality Assessment Inventory – Borderline Features Scale (PAI-BOR). The PAI-BOR (Morey, 1991) was used to assess borderline personality traits. The PAI-BOR comprises 24 items rated on a 1- 4 point scale (false, slightly true, mainly true, and very true), and generates 4 subscales: affective instability, identity disturbance, negative relationships, and self-harm. The PAI-BOR has demonstrated high internal consistency with a large undergraduate sample (.84; Trull, 1995). It should be noted that the PAI-BOR was used to assess prominent borderline personality features, not to render a diagnosis. In fact, among an undergraduate sample only 13% of participants scoring ≥ 38 also received a Borderline Personality Disorder diagnosis (Trull, 1995).

Social Context

Survey. A questionnaire was specifically designed for this study to assess dating norms and dating violence among peers, and the social contexts of dating violence (e.g. in front of others or in private, peer responses to dating violence).

Interview Protocol

Semi-structured interview. A semi-structured interview protocol developed for this study, building on Dobash and Dobash (2004) and Miller (2008), was used to investigate the following: dynamics and nature of violence in the current relationship (e.g., first, worst, and typical incidents), the social contexts of dating and dating violence (e.g., peer experiences); and attitudes and expectations about dating and dating violence. The interview protocol was revised in an iterative process in response to early interviews. While it remained substantively unchanged, the ordering of the sections was revised, and additional questions were added in response to topics frequently raised by participants. Most notably, in response to participants' almost universal denial of any violence in their relationships using open-ended questioning, the protocol was revised to include specific follow up questions to participants' previous CTS responses.

Data Analysis

Part 1: The Role of Individual Differences

In order to test the individual differences component of the proposed model, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Mplus Version 6 (Muthén & Muthén, 2010) was used to parsimoniously test the multivariate relationships among attachment style, borderline personality, psychological aggression and intimate partner violence illustrated in the model represented in Figure 3. SEM allows one to estimate the fit of a proposed model by creating

matrices of observed variances and covariances among measured variables and determining parameter estimates that most nearly reproduce relationships among variables as specified by the model. Goodness of fit statistics indicate how well the implied relationships match the observed relationships.

However, estimation procedures in SEM assume normal distributions for continuous variables (Kline, 1998), while the intimate partner violence data in this undergraduate sample was positively skewed. While parameter estimates are relatively robust against non-normality, non-normal distributions generate inflated chi-square statistics and increased Type I error rates (Kline, 1998). For this reason, Mplus was used for data analysis. Mplus estimation takes into account non-normality of outcomes and provides robust estimation of standard errors and fit. Mplus allows for estimation using MLM, which are "maximum likelihood parameter estimates with standard errors and a mean-adjusted chi-square test statistic that are robust to non-normality" (Muthén & Muthén, 2010). Boostrapping, a technique to increase robustness of parameter estimates, is not available with MLM since parameter estimates and bootstrap standard errors for these estimators do not differ from conventional maximum likelihood estimates.

SEM tests the relative fit of the data to the specified model, and Monte Carlo studies have identified goodness of fit statistics that have a reduced sensitivity to non-normal distributions (Hu & Bentler, 1998). Many researchers have recommended the use of multiple fit indices for a more detailed evaluation of the proposed model (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Based on Monte Carlo studies, Hu and Bentler (1998) recommend using the ML-based standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) supplemented by at least one additional index such as the comparative fit index (CFI). Furthermore, these analyses indicate that the SRMR and CFI are relatively

insensitive to non-normal distributions. Therefore the above fit indices are used to evaluate model fit. Hu and Bentler propose that values above .95 for the CFI and values below 0.08 for the SRMR indicate acceptable model fit.

Part 2: A Gendered, Contextual Analysis

Quantitative data regarding peer and participant experiences with and perspectives on dating and partner violence were analyzed to characterize the social contexts, attitudes, and individual experiences of dating violence. Frequencies were examined for the sample as a whole, and then compared across subgroups (e.g., BP+/High Violence, BP+/Low Violence) to describe the social world for the overall sample and to identify significant differences across subgroups.

Interview transcripts were analyzed using multiple strategies to examine the social contexts, proximate situations, and experiences of dating violence and abuse for this sample. In particular, this analysis focuses on the way gender structures dating relationships and violence, the nature of women's dating violence, and the relevance of personality. Each interview was first analyzed holistically to generate a phenomenologically informed narrative, including the story line (what happened), the larger context, and the participant's understanding of the story (what it means, why it happened). Second, transcripts were coded using qualitative software (NVivo8) using a process of open (i.e., unrestricted) coding to identify themes and generate hypotheses. Coding categories were determined using a combination of inductive and deductive approaches (Berg, 2001). "In vivo" codes emerged inductively, grounded in the literal terms and experiences described by participants (e.g., categories of violence). "Sociological constructs" were deductively generated based on theory and experience (Berg, 2001; Strauss, 1987) and emphasize social context, gender structures, and personality style. For example, transcripts were

coded for aspects of the social context of dating and relationships (e.g., dating violence among peers, dating norms and expectations), the context of dating violence (e.g., proximate triggers of violence, presence or absence of partner's violence, relationship history), and processes or interpretations potentially reflective of borderline personality (e.g, emotional reactivity and dysregulation).

The multiple codes generated through open coding were then sorted into a multi-level coding frame that organizes the data by identifying themes. Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe a process of "constant comparison" whereby data are coded and analyzed concurrently, so that theory may be systematically generated. Using this process, analysis of the data and hypothesis generation proceed in an iterative fashion with the coding process (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). In tandem with the coding process, review of transcripts also included the generation of memos, whereby observations, questions, and ideas are tracked in order to "identify, develop and modify broader analytic themes and arguments" (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 157.). At these analytic stages, transcripts were read, summarized, and coded across the dataset without regard to subgroup categorization (i.e., without first identifying participants as BP high or low, violence high or low).

Following the analysis across the sample, transcripts were sorted into two groups of BP high or low in order to investigate possible differences by personality subgroup. Themes from the narratives and coding framework were compared across groups to investigate differences and similarities. For example, the analysis examined whether and how personality style might emerge as a relevant and differentiating construct, and whether other themes appeared differentially salient across groups.

Finally, the data interpretation attempts to "read" the qualitative findings against the CTS results and individual differences findings from the SEM in order to ultimately generate a picture of women's partner violence that includes both social and individual factors (i.e., mixing at the interpretive stage). A final step in the analysis involves checking the validity and applicability of hypotheses through a search for and explication of negative cases, checking that conclusions are representative of broad patterns in the data, and where relevant, addressing atypical cases (Berg, 2001; Miller, 2008).

CHAPTER 3

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Description of Sample

480 female undergraduates completed surveys in the first stage of the study (see Tables 1 and 2 for demographic data). Of those, three who did not complete the CTS and one outlier with inconsistent reporting were removed from the analyses for a total N = 476. Participants ranged in age from 18 through 24 years (M = 19.22; SD = 1.07). The sample was 67.9% Caucasian, 17.4% Asian/Asian-American/Asian Pacific Islander, 10.9% Latina/Hispanic, 7.6% African-American, .6% Native American, and 1.9% biracial. Participants were asked about the highest level of education completed by their parent(s) to estimate socioeconomic status (using parental educational level as a proxy for SES). 68.3% reported at least one parent's attainment of an undergraduate degree or higher, and 54.6% report the same for a second parent, indicating that the majority of this sample is middle- to upper-middle class.

The majority of respondents (54.8%, *n* = 261) reported having grown up in a suburb; 22.7% (*n* = 108) grew up in a city; 14.3% (*n* = 68) came from a town; and 5.7% (*n* = 27) came from a rural community. In order to assess participants' social milieu, they were asked about membership or participation in various student organizations or groups. 30.5% were members of sororities, 18.5% endorsed participating in an athletic/recreation group, 12.8% were members of a cultural or ethnic organization, 11.8% were members of a creative or performing arts group (e.g., band, choir, etc.), 13.9% were members of a religious club or group, and 26.5% were members of an academic or professional organization (e.g., Psi Chi).

27.3% of participants described their current relationship status as single, 57.4% reported dating, 11.8% endorsed "casual dating relationship," and 3.6% reported other. Excluding single

participants, 55% (n = 260) of those dating reported that it is extremely likely that their current relationship will last one year, whereas 1.5% (n = 7) reported it is not at all likely to last one year. A full 23.9% of the sample reported it is extremely likely that their current relationship will last 5 years. In terms of satisfaction, 60% of participants described themselves as satisfied or very satisfied, while only 4% were dissatisfied or somewhat dissatisfied. Finally, 69.9% were somewhat to extremely committed to their current relationship, whereas only 2.3% described themselves as not committed.

Contextual Descriptives

Quantitative data regarding peer and participant experiences with and perspectives on dating and partner violence were collected to help characterize the social contexts, attitudes, and individual experiences of dating violence. 88.7% of the sample reported that physical force or violence in dating relationships never or almost never happens among their friends or peers. However, when asked how many female friends or acquaintances have used physical force to resolve conflicts with their boyfriends, 41.6% reported "a few of them," and 4.8% reported most or half of them. Just less than half the sample, 42.9%, have seen a female friend or acquaintance use physical force or violence against a boyfriend at least once. On the other hand, only 17.2% have ever seen a male friend or acquaintance use force or violence against a girlfriend. In response to witnessing a female peer's force or aggression against a boyfriend, 13.7% ignored it, 8.2% laughed, 5% restrained the woman, 8.2% yelled at her to stop, and 20.8% talked to her about it later. Regarding responses by other bystanders, 20.2% of participants reported bystanders ignored it, 14.3% laughed, 6.1% restrained the woman.

Reliability of Measures

Internal reliabilities for each scale were computed using Cronbach's alpha and are reported in Table 3. Alphas for the full measures ranged from .66 to .93. Internal consistency for the severe psychological abuse scale of the CTS is low but to be expected due to the nature of the brief scale (4 items), which assesses a range of behaviors across a domain rather than assessing a single construct. For example, the endorsement of an item such as "called my partner fat or ugly" should not necessarily lead to the endorsement of "destroyed something belonging to my partner."

Descriptive Statistics

Almost half the sample, 48.7% (232 participants), endorsed perpetration of at least one item on the CTS physical violence scale (see Tables 4 and 5 for descriptive statistics). Of these participants, 35.1% (n = 167) reported minor violence only, and 13.7% (n = 65) endorsed at least one severe item. Given Follingstad's findings that respondents who endorsed one physical aggression item only were more similar to those endorsing none than to those endorsing more than one, the sample was also dichotomized into two groups representing no violence or one endorsement only (i.e., one act committed once) and more than one endorsement. 40.3% (n = 192) reported violence more than once in the past year: 39.3% (n = 187) reported minor acts, and 7.1% (n = 34) reported severe acts. 33.7% of participants (n = 160) reported that their male dating partner engaged in at least one item on the CTS physical violence scale. Of the subset of participants reporting violence by their male partner, 25.7% (n = 122) reported experiencing minor violence only, and 8.0% (n = 38) endorsed at least one severe item.

Looking at the directionality of all reported violence, 51.1% participants (n = 243) endorsed at least one physical violence item by themselves or their partners. Of these, 4.5% (n =

11) reported violence by partner only, 34.2% (*n* = 83) reported violence by themselves only, and 61.3% (*n* = 149) endorsed at least one violence item by both self and partner. While the majority of violence reported was violence by both partners overall, the pattern is quite different when looking only at severe violence. In this case, unidirectional severe violence is more common than bidirectional violence. Of the 16.6% (*n* = 79) who endorsed at least one severe act by self or partner, 17.7% (*n* = 14) report severe violence by partner only, 51.9% (*n* = 41) report severe violence by self only, and 30.4% (*n* = 24) report severe violence by both self and partner.

Psychological abuse was measured by the CTS and the mPMI. On the CTS, 89.1% (*n* = 424) endorsed at least one item on the psychological aggression subscale. 88.4% reported minor psychological aggression; 27.3% reported severe psychological aggression. Looking at frequency of severe psychological abuse in order to investigate whether these reflect ongoing patterns of abuse versus discrete incidents, 16.6% of the sample reported between 1 and 3 incidents of severe psychological aggression; 11.3% reported 4 or more incidents of severe psychological aggression. The mPMI is both much more detailed and assesses more domains of psychological abuse than the CTS, and as a result has higher prevalence and incidence results. Overall psychological abuse results were similar on the mPMI: 99.4% endorsed at least one item in the past year. Frequency rates were much higher. Estimates of actual number of times an act was committed (generated by summing the midpoints for each response) suggested that psychological abuse is fairly frequent, with a mean of 76.42 and a median of 54 (maximum possible score = 1,000). PAI results measuring borderline personality were consistent with the literature. 13.9% (*n* = 66) participants scored equal to or greater than 38, placing them in the

high borderline trait category. Participants' ECRR scores for anxious attachment (M = 2.98) and avoidant attachment (M = 2.45) were similar to reported norms for this age group.[2]

Distribution of Observed Variables

As expected, physical and psychological abuse data were positively skewed: physical assault by self (skew = 4.92) and by partner (skew = 7.25) showing the most severe skewness. Due to the severe non-normality of the abuse data, Mplus (Muthén & Muthén, 2010) was used for data analyses. As noted previously, Mplus estimation takes into account non-normality of outcomes and provides robust estimation of standard errors and fit.

Relations Among Variables

Bivariate correlations for all scales used in analyses are reported in Table 6. All variables hypothesized to be related through mediation should have significant indirect effects on each other demonstrated by significant bivariate correlations. The only non-significant relationships were between anxious attachment and physical abuse, and avoidant attachment and all abuse outcomes. However, given the hypothesized mediation of anxious attachment by multiple variables (i.e., borderline and psychological abuse), it is possible that the distal nature of the relationship might lead to an insignificant bivariate relationship while the indirect effect remains significantly greater than zero. Given the significance of the relationships between anxious attachment and both borderline traits and psychological abuse, and the strength of the association between anxiety and borderline (r = .54**), anxious attachment was retained in the structural equation modeling. Avoidant attachment had been hypothesized to function as a moderator of the relationship between anxious attachment and borderline personality, and was significantly

[2] An item typically included in the Anxiety subscale, "I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love," was omitted due to a printing error. Given there are a total of 17 remaining items in the subscale this is not likely to have an appreciable impact on the overall subscale score

correlated with these two variables. However, preliminary investigations using regression found no moderation by avoidant attachment. Given the non-significant relationships of avoidance with physical abuse and the CTS measure of psychological abuse, and the weak association with the mPMI (r = .10*), avoidant attachment was dropped from further multivariate analyses.

Following Follingstad et al., (1999), multiple outcome variables were initially created to investigate whether dichotomizing the sample into no violence/any violence as is conventional versus a none/one item only group as against a two items or more group generates different results. Unlike Follingstad's findings, preliminary multivariate investigations of the CTS violence scores using regression found no significant differences when the sample was dichotomized at no/any violence versus none or one only/any more than one. Thus, for the SEM, partner violence was analyzed using a continuous variable. This reflects a conceptualization of IPV as occurring along a continuum of frequency and severity and is consistent with arguments in the literature against creating potentially heterogeneous groups through rough dichotomization.

Structural Equation Modeling

As described above, structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted using Mplus Version 6 (Muthén & Muthén, 2010). Mplus provides robust estimation of test statistics and standard errors for nonnormal data. When available, MLM (robust maximum likelihood estimates) was used due to its robustness with non-normal distributions. As noted in Chapter 2, the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) and the comparative fit index (CFI) are relatively insensitive to non-normal distributions and were thus used to evaluate model fit. Hu and Bentler (1998) propose that values above .95 for the CFI and values below 0.08 for the SRMR indicate

acceptable model fit. In addition to fit indices, the magnitude and signs of estimated parameters were evaluated.

Measurement model

Structural equation modeling comprises two components, the measurement and structural models. The measurement model relates observed variables to latent factors, and assesses relationships among all latent factors that may take the form of causal paths in the structural model. Analyses of the psychological abuse factor indicated that optimal fit resulted from dropping the CTS minor psychological abuse subscale, as this indicator was redundant with the mPMI verbal abuse indicator. See Figure 2 for the fit of the measurement model. The final measurement model includes both latent and observed variables, and is thus a hybrid model. Fit statistics for the final measurement model, including all latent factors and observed indicators, indicate a good fit for the data, with SRMR = .05, CFI = .94.

Structural Models

The structural model relates variables and factors to each other and provides a test of the hypothesized relationships.

Moderated mediation. As represented conceptually by Model 1 (Figure 3), the original hypothesized model includes what Preacher, Rucker and Hayes (2007) label "conditional indirect effects," sometimes called moderated mediation. As they define it, "moderated mediation occurs when the strength of an indirect effect depends on the level of some variable, or in other words, when mediation relations are contingent on the level of a moderator" (Preacher et al., 2007, p. 193). Borderline traits were hypothesized to mediate the relationship of anxious attachment to both psychological abuse and physical violence. Psychological abuse was hypothesized to mediate the relationship of borderline to physical abuse. Finally, partner's violence was

hypothesized to moderate the relationship of psychological abuse to physical violence. The interaction term was created using the XWITH command, which defines interactions between a continuous latent variable (i.e., psychological abuse) and an observed variable (partner's violence). The latent variable is centered and it is not necessary to center the observed variable to test this interaction (Linda Muthén, personal communication). MLR, maximum likelihood estimates that are "robust to non-normality and non-independence of observations," was used for model estimation as MLM is not available for moderated mediation models in Mplus.

Since the inclusion of partner violence as a moderator requires the more complicated moderated mediation model, the first step in evaluating the hypothesized model was to investigate the significance of the interaction term representing the moderation of psychological abuse by partner violence. The interaction was not significant. As reported in Chapter 1, hypotheses regarding the influence of male partner violence on women's IPV have been conflicting, and a goal of this study was to investigate the influence of male partner violence in an exploratory manner. Thus, a second model was tested (Figure 4, Model 2) to determine whether partner violence moderated the relationship between borderline traits and women's violence, but the interaction term was again not significant.

Given the failure to find any relationships that were moderated by partner violence, the models were simplified by dropping partner violence as a moderator. However, given the strength of the bivariate relationship between partner violence and women's violence and the plan to explore the influence of male IPV given the mixed findings in the literature, partner violence was retained and explored (along with the mediation of anxious attachment by borderline traits) in a series of modified models (Figures 5-8). These simplified models, no longer including moderated mediation, were then tested using MLM.

Mediation Models. A model building process was followed building from the initial conceptual model varying the role of male partner violence. The first model to be tested is similar to the moderated mediation models above but with partner's violence as an independent predictor of women's violence (Figure 5, Model 3). Standardized estimates of structural model coefficients are represented in the model, but fit indices indicate that this model is a poor fit for the data (SRMR = .09, CFI = .91). In separate regression analyses, partner's violence did moderate the relationship of borderline traits to women's violence, and is strongly related to women's violence in the context of SEM. Thus, a second model was tested with partner's violence mediating the relationship of borderline to women's violence (Figure 6, Model 4). Fit indices are marginally better, but are still non-optimal (SRMR = .07, CFI = .92).

The next model (Figure 7) investigates the possibility that women's violence predicts male partner violence.. Standardized estimates of structural model coefficients are represented in the model. Fit indices for this model indicate an improved fit of the model to the data (SRMR = .05, CFI = .94). Mediation is assessed through testing the significance of indirect effects in the model. In Model 5, the indirect path from anxious attachment to borderline traits to psych abuse was significant ($\beta = .30$, $p < .000$). The indirect path from anxious attachment through borderline traits and psych abuse to physical violence was also significant, although weak ($\beta = .16$, $p < .000$).

Finally, Model 6 (Figure 8) investigates whether model fit is improved by treating psychological abuse and physical violence as independent but correlated outcomes. Model fit is identical with Model 5 above (SRMR = .05, CFI = .94). In this model, however, the path from borderline traits to physical violence is significant ($\beta = .24$, $p < .001$). The two indirect effects in this model were both significant: the path from anxious attachment through borderline to

psychological abuse ($\beta = .29$, $p < .000$); and the path from anxious attachment through borderline to physical violence (($\beta = .16$, $p < .002$).

To explore the mediation of the abuse outcomes by borderline traits (found in the two best fitting models, Models 5 and 6), a direct effects model with the paths from borderline constrained to zero was tested (Figure 9). Three of the four direct paths were significant, while the path from anxious attachment to physical violence was not. Fit indices for this model were poor (CFI = .87; RMSEA = .08), indicating that a model in which paths from borderline to abuse outcomes are constrained to zero is not supported by the data.

Summary

Regarding hypothesis 1, an anxious attachment style predicted borderline personality traits as hypothesized, but contrary to initial hypotheses, avoidant attachment did not moderate this relationship. The data also support hypothesis 2, that borderline personality traits mediate the relationship of anxious attachment to partner abuse. The third hypothesis was that psychological abuse would mediate the relationship of borderline traits to partner violence. Model 5 clearly supports this hypothesis, with this meditational path statistically significant, if fairly weak. Furthermore, with the path from psychological abuse to physical violence in the model, the direct relationship from borderline to physical abuse is non-significant. However, when psychological abuse and physical abuse are considered separate outcomes and allowed to covary (Model 6), borderline personality mediates the influence of anxious attachment for both outcomes. Regarding hypothesis 4, partner violence did not moderate the relationship between psychological and physical abuse as hypothesized. However, partner violence was highly correlated with physical violence in the bivariate context (r = .79**), and a path from women's physical violence to male partner violence was significant in models 5 and 6, the best fitting

models. One goal of this study was to explore the relationship of partner violence to women's IPV, and the model testing indicates that the best model fit is obtained when women's violence is positioned as a predictor in the model. Interpretations of these findings will be discussed in Chapter 6.

The difference in models 5 and 6 is the role that psychological abuse plays in mediating the influence of borderline traits on physical violence. When psychological and physical violence are considered distinct outcomes, the influence of borderline traits on physical abuse becomes significant. However, when a path from psychological abuse to physical violence is modeled, the relationship of borderline traits to physical violence drops to non-significance. Taken together, these two models indicate that borderline personality traits do mediate the relationship of anxious attachment to IPV, but they do not establish whether borderline traits have a direct or indirect relationship with physical violence.

CHAPTER 4

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Overview

There are two main findings of this component of the study. (1) the CTS likely inflates estimates of women's partner violence due to: (a) clearly non-violent playful behavior reported on the CTS, and (b) a range of more ambiguous behaviors (e.g., mock violence) also reported on the CTS which arguably do not rise to the level of IPV. This ambiguity in part reflects (2) that gender is a central principle of social organization that fundamentally shapes the contexts, meanings, and interpretations of women's dating violence. Together these findings - of overestimation of dating violence and of the centrality of gender - necessitate questions about how to define and measure violence. In contrast to the CTS' act-based conceptualization and measurement of violence, study findings reflect the centrality of meaning in interpreting an act as one of violence.

Description of Sample

Thirty-six female undergraduates were recruited for interviews; 34 completed face-to-face interviews. The survey sample was divided into eight categories, representing cells in a 2x2 table of 2 borderline rows (high/low) and 4 levels of perpetrated violence columns (no violence to high violence). Violence perpetration was divided into four categories in order to distinguish frequency and severity: 1) no violence, 2) minor violence only once or twice, 3) minor violence only 3-5 times, and 4) minor violence 6 times or more and/or any severe violence. The table and numbers of participants representing each group can be found in Table 7. Seventeen participants were freshman, 9 were sophomores, 4 were juniors, and 4 were seniors or fifth-year seniors. Study participants reflected multiple social worlds, including sorority, religious, and dorm and

activity-based (e.g., band, sports) contexts. Five participants reported no violence (62.5% of the "no violence" group on the CTS), 7 participants reported non-conflictual/playful contact only, two reported self-defense only (with a third reporting self-defense in addition to self-initiated violence), and the remaining 20 described a range of aggressive behaviors (these categories all described below). Descriptive details on participants can be found in Table 8.

Overestimation of Women's Dating Violence

A central aim of the study was to elaborate the social contexts and specific incidents of women's use of violence against male dating partners, and women reporting more frequent and/or severe violence on the CTS were purposively oversampled for that reason. Given this sampling strategy, the degree to which participants across subgroups denied violence in their relationships or expressed surprise and confusion when asked about their CTS responses was striking. While this finding may reflect a minimization and denial of violent behavior, it also results from important distinctions about the nature of violence that are the major findings of this part of the study. First, participants distinguished the nature of their "violent" behavior across a continuum from purely playful to mock-violent to meaningfully violent. Across the sample, participants were able to give fairly detailed accounts of all incidents of what they considered real violence in their relationships (either perpetrated or received), but in contrast they tended to speak more generally about teasing or mock-violent contact, unable to recall the contexts or details of events that had not been perceived as meaningful or significant. In addition, despite the expected press to minimize socially undesirable behavior, many participants did in fact describe violent behavior, which they identified as such. Furthermore, because of the many contingencies under which women's violence is seen as relatively acceptable or insignificant, there is reason to believe that the press to minimize violence was attenuated. Finally, regardless

of whether individual participants were minimizing their behavior, it is significant that in doing so they are referencing a shared interpretive framework that gives meaning to behavior, distinguishing violent from less significant behaviors. It is less important how "true" any particular account is than that it illuminates a shared set of social understandings. In the current study, CTS findings led to an overestimation of women's use of violence through the identification of play as violence, by failing to distinguish teasing or playful "mock-violence" from meaningful violence, and by their inability to incorporate the social meaning of women's behavior towards their boyfriends.

Misidentification: When the CTS Identifies Play as Violence

The first way in which women's dating violence is overestimated is through the misidentification of non-violent play as dating violence. Participants across the sample reported a common form of non-conflictual physical aggression best characterized as playful contact. As described below, playful contact was universally understood as not-violent, and in fact was frequently invoked in opposition to violence. Playful contact was frequently reported in interviews, with 18 participants (53%) reporting some playful contact and seven of these reporting *only* playful contact.

For example, participant 80 initially denied engaging in any behaviors on the CTS violence scale and reported having been "fortunate" not to have "any abusive relationships." When asked about her endorsement of having "pushed or shoved" on the CTS she was confused and replied, "That might have been, just like, joking around? I don't know if it, I like, considered that as a, fighting context? [Yeah] Have I put that in there? [Yeah] Um…I honestly can't remember having a fight, like in person, with anyone. It's always been like, over the phone or something." Participant 101 likewise initially denied any acts of violence by either partner in her

relationship and then struggled to account for her endorsement of "grabbing," describing it as in jest rather than as an act of aggression:

> Q: you marked that you had grabbed your boyfriend a number of times. Do you remember either what you thinking that was about then, or (participant interrupts)
> A: I don't think [I] was thinking of it necessarily in a physical conflict way.
> Q: … you had endorsed that you had grabbed him and he had grabbed you a number of times.
> A: (pause) I can't, off the top of my head, I can't think of examples of being grabbed. […] I'd say overall I wouldn't say we grabbed each other… maybe… like as a joke, or yeah, maybe like that, never out of anger.

Another participant [155] who endorsed pushing on the CTS was asked, "any instance of you shoving him?" to which she replied, "Just playfully, like nothing serious, over arguments or anything." This participant described a very committed, supportive relationship and eschews violence of any kind. When asked specifically about her endorsement on the CTS, she described an incident when in fact her boyfriend had pushed her to keep her from seeing something embarrassing to him (he had wet the bed). Not only was this a non-aggressive behavior, it was in fact his act and not hers which she had mis-categorized on the CTS.

Other participants described teasing contact that they did *not* endorse on the CTS. Participant 22 describes the same kinds of behavior as the previous participants, only in her case she did not report it on the survey: "like, if we do something like physical, it's more like a joking way. Because like, compared to him I'm like very small, so I like, I can like, push him around, and like, just joking around with him. Cause like, it's really not gonna do anything [participant laughs]." Another participant [117] who did not endorse any violence on the CTS similarly described teasing contact. She reports "no, nothing," to a question about any arguments that included physical contact, but when asked if they engaged in "playful contact or wrestling" she replied: "Yeah, every once in awhile. . . . Yeah, we have joking stuff." These examples suggest

that not only might the CTS generate overly inclusive categorizations, but also that it likely fails to discriminate among comparable acts or participants.

In recognition of the breadth of behaviors on the CTS and critiques of possible overinclusiveness, some researchers have exclusively used or separately analyzed groups reporting severe violence in an attempt to insure a "purer" sample with unmistakeable IPV. It is striking in this study that reports of playful violence often included items coded as severe on the CTS, such as kicking, punching, or resulting in injury to self or partner. For example, one participant [353] endorsed injury to partner, and reported the following when asked about it, "I just meant that one time in the beginning, when I used to like playfully hit him and he actually started getting bruises and so I stopped after that."

An extended example of playful wrestling involved a participant who was identified by the CTS as perpetrating severe violence. Participant 106 endorsed significant frequency and severity of violence, including throwing something, twisting arm or hair, pushing, shoving, grabbing, slapping and two instances of having had an injury for herself and her boyfriend. When asked an open-ended question about times when arguments or fights have ever "gotten physical" between partners in any way, she replies:

> P: Honestly, not when we're fighting have we ever been physical. I mean when we're joking around and you know, things like that? We like to just play around and like pretend to beat each other up. But it's not anything that would really inflict pain on each other. And if it is, it's very minor and it's accidental. But…
> Q: Not in the context of like an argument or a conflict?
> P: No. I honestly cannot remember a single time where we were fighting and it had gotten physical. Usually if anything we're on the phone or we are 5 feet away from each other.

When her CTS responses were shared with her and questioned more directly she responded, "I think I might have been thinking in context of playing sort of thing. . . it probably, I thought it

was in the context of just at all?. . . And when we are like at all, you know, physical like that it's just like all in fun." Her interview continues:

> Q: What about the question of having a bruise or cut or something the next day?
> A: I think I mean having a guy like sometimes when he's grabbing my arms or something, at times he would grab a little bit too hard. But I knew he wasn't meaning intentionally to hurt me. I think I might have scratched him at some point.
> Q: This is all in the kind of wrestling play?
> A: Yeah. And we don't mean to actually hurt each other, and if there is like real injury, then we're like "oh geez sorry, didn't mean to do that."

When asked to describe an average incident in detail, she describes the following:

> A: Well I'll either just like go up to him "let's fight" or something, and then I'll just like you know lightly punch him or something like that. And then you know he would like pick me up and throw me on the couch, and like start tickling me. Usually that's what ends up stopping is that he'll just keep tickling me until I can't breathe anymore. But I mean that's pretty much it.
> Q: And so you'll get in that point where you're trying to really overpower him and see if you can do it, and you never can?
> A: Yeah. Usually the only thing I can do is like pinch him or something? I pull his hair he'll stop tickling me. But that's about it.
> Q: So when are the times where you'd be in the mood to say, "hey let's fight?"
> A: I don't know, a lot of times when I'm at home, I get bored and there's really not a lot to do in my town. So watching TV and movies gets kind of old. So we're just you know, something to do? Like kind of like a brother/sister type of thing, where you just have nothing else to do so let's beat up on each other kind of…

This interview is reported in some detail as an example of a case that was coded as severe violence by the CTS but for which there was no evidence of dating violence in the interview. Multiple additional probes and conversation about this participant's relationship, boyfriend, and arguments were consistent with her report of no violence in her relationship. It is notable that the episodes she describes are never in the context of an argument, but instead emerge in the context of boredom and the need for diversion.

Teasing Mock-Violence: Is This Intimate Partner Violence?

The second way in which women's dating violence is overestimated is through the categorization of teasing and mock-violence as dating violence. Generally, mock-violence is a form of quasi-violence, intended to communicate disapproval or command attention, yet it is understood by both parties as not real violence. Teasing mock-violence occurs in quasi-protest against some behavior or comment by a boyfriend that might have been seen as sexist, insulting, annoying or dismissing. Mock-violence can range from the clearly playful into a grey area of not merely playful, but not clearly violence.

For example, one participant described her violent behavior as "fake": "like messing around just like in a conversation if he says something dumb like making fun of me I might just like give him like a cute little punch or like a fake little slap, like not really slap him." [178]. Another participant [134] described a similar pattern: "like he'll talk about something, and then say something that's kind of upsetting like towards women or something. And I'll be like 'that was unnecessary.' But it won't ever be hard or anything. I'll just like tap him and then he'll be like 'ok.'" She added, "it's playful . . . so yeah, usually those are just like lighthearted. They're not really angry or violent or upset or anything." Participant 90 described a pattern of her boyfriend playfully provoking her and apologizes when she thinks she has misled the researcher to understand her behavior as an act of violence. She described a common interaction as her telling her boyfriend: "'You're getting on my nerves,' like, 'stop.' He plays around and stuff like that so I'm sorry but I didn't…"

While some participants only reported mock-violence to account for their CTS endorsements, others reported and distinguished between both real and mock violence. For example, a participant from Group 8 (severe and/or frequent violence reported and BP +)

described multiple incidents of self-described serious violence against her boyfriend during the interview [participant 239]. However, she laughed when she realized her endorsement of kicking her boyfriend (coded as severe violence by the CTS) had been interpreted as an incident of dating violence. She described the incident as follows: "It was when he came to visit and we were just like messing around. I'm like…he was like on the floor and I like kicked him like 'get up, like be serious, like just get up. What are you doing?' So that's probably like a tap, like that was probably…I shouldn't have wrote that." She continued, "Well that was like a joke. I wasn't yelling or anything." She distinguishes her actual violence from this kind of playful contact – as she describes it, "messing around." This example suggests that playful versus "real" violence are discrete categories, although participants acknowledged that one can lead to the other. Similarly, participant 178 acknowledged using violence against her partner, but made distinctions between violent incidents and other acts of playful contact that she also reported on the CTS: "like the ones that I did more times - like I've kicked him like kiddingly before, pulled his hair, hit him - but like only like a few times I've done it like seriously."

These acts of mock-violence may be intended to communicate annoyance or command attention, but are not intended or received as violence. For example, a participant [134] who reports "There's never really been any angry like other physical contact. Like we've never gotten into a physical…," later goes on to add:

> It's not like – there haven't been any cases where it's been like an extreme emotion. There'll be some cases where I'm like upset and maybe I'll lightly punch him in the arm or something. But it's never like in a violent manner. It's never like intended to hurt him. It's just like a "pay attention to me. I'm trying to talk to you." Because like sometimes he and I will have conversations and something else will be going on, and so he'll like turn. And I'm like "pay attention to me." So it's never like violent or upset or - I won't say upset - angry. But it's sometimes it'll just be like "pay attention". . . . I'll like, you know, tap him or lightly hit him in the shoulder.

While these behaviors may reflect poor communication and/or conflict resolution skills, they are significantly different from the violence described by participants as "real violence" and from what IPV researchers presumably intend as their object of study. Given the ambiguity of mock-violence, sometimes quite playful but shading into annoyed, irritated acts, the participant table categorizes all but clearly playful contact into the "any violence" category (Appendix B).

Playful wrestling and teasing mock-violence were widely recognized and reported as normative among peers. A participant [63] who was categorized as non-violent on the CTS described normative teasing contact in her social network:

> a lot of my friends we do a lot of like playful fighting. Like me and my boyfriend used to wrestle a lot. He was stronger than me so I usually failed at that. . . and then like us girls we'd playfully hit the other guy. So we're used to like hitting people but not like in a bad way. Just like in a, you know, we don't try to hurt them. It's just like you know, they said something stupid so, just like a punch in the arm.

This contact is understood to be playful, even flirtatious. Playful wrestling is mutual, and it is acceptable for boyfriends to wrestle with their girlfriends. Teasing mock-violence, however, is more gendered, available to these young women precisely because violence by women is seen as both more acceptable and less serious. This form of teasing violence is thus given meaning by the gendered nature of violence and shared understandings of the meaning of violence, elaborated in the next section.

The Gendered Nature of Violence I: The Non-symmetry of Women's and Men's IPV

The second major finding of the study is of the centrality of gender in organizing and shaping the meaning of women's IPV. Across interviews, men's and women's violence against dating partners was experienced as non-equivalent phenomena and functioned differently in relationships. Male violence was understood to be serious, potentially injurious, and socially unacceptable. Women's violence was considered less significant, less injurious, and while

wrong, less stigmatized. Interestingly, although participants represented a wide range of social milieu, norms regarding violence and distinctions between male and female violence were remarkably consistent across interviews. With only one exception, a participant who described a social world of men trying to con women into sexual encounters and women who either allow themselves to get "played" or who remain, like her, "guard up," the women in this study report knowing and expecting relationships that are supportive and respectful, and their status as university undergraduates informed a sense of choice and empowerment voiced by many. Interview sections about dating experiences, expectations and observations, and attitudes regarding male and female violence against partners yielded remarkably similar findings and were not distinguishable across sub-groups. This almost universal distinction between the seriousness and significance of male versus female violence was elaborated though a number of themes.

First, participants repeatedly observed the greater acceptance and reduced stigma of women's violence against boyfriends, in part because it is less likely to result in pain, injury, or fear. Second, while violence was universally condemned in the abstract, a single exception was repeatedly described where violence by women was in fact seen as the appropriate and even required response: the case of women defending their virtue or honor in response to an insult by a man, specifically his cheating on her or specific forms of sexually degrading name-calling (e.g., slut, whore). Third, the difference between male and female violence was elaborated through the extreme stigma and seriousness of men's violence against women. Men were held to a different and higher standard, reflecting a sense of women's relative vulnerability compared to men. A corollary is the assumption that men were always capable of ending the violence; that is, that they could always choose to either walk away or restrain a woman. So while women could

choose to start violence, men's greater size and strength mean that they have the power to end it, a dynamic that is not true in the reverse direction. Fourth, this proscription against male violence under any circumstance combined with the relative insignificance accorded women's violence has the effect of facilitating women's violence against boyfriends. Participants labeled this imbalance a "double standard:" the social fact that women are freer to use violence against a boyfriend partly because men are socially constrained in their response. Thus, while the proximate causes of women's violence were often similar to those reported in the literature regarding men's IPV (e.g., jealousy, anger/frustration), the larger context in which they occurred (i.e., the gendered social space) creates the conditions and shapes the meaning and impact of women's partner violence.

Female violence: "It's not a big deal"

While participants across the sample agreed that young women should not hit their boyfriends, there was a universal reflection that women's violence is qualitatively different from and less significant than men's violence. This participant [156] is reflecting on women's violence against boyfriends/men:

> A: I think it's more – it's portrayed in movies and so just seeing it is common, especially like girls usually react generally. It's like it doesn't make it right, but I think it's just more common. And it's like it doesn't seem as horrible. You still shouldn't hit or harm your boyfriend, but I think it's like, doesn't seem like as big of a deal if a girl does it.
>
> Q: Yeah. Do you think your friends think the same way?
>
> A: Yeah.

Another participant echoed the same theme while talking about her friends' attitudes about women's violence against male dating partners: "I think it's kind of like 'No, it's not okay, but it's not that bad either?'" [105]

One fundamental difference widely mentioned was the unlikeliness of women doing any

physical harm. Participants almost universally mentioned women's smaller size, relative physical weakness compared to men, and lack of skill and experience physically fighting. For example:

> But for most of my friends, I think that they kind of see it as like, well, the girl, you know, what's she gonna do to him? It's not a big deal. Like did you think she was really gonna hurt him? No.[105]

> But I mean it [violence]shouldn't happen but since like typically girls can't cause as much harm to guys it doesn't make it okay but it makes it less, worse . . . [178] And just in terms of like the size and stuff like it's not really gonna affect [guys] like physically as it would a guy hitting a girl, wouldn't…I wouldn't think that a girl would really do that much damage. [90]

> some of my girlfriends . . . if they hit a guy, I don't know if I'd be as like offended just because like they're a little bit smaller, a little bit weaker and like you shouldn't hit anyone, but really like I think if a guy hit like one of my smaller friends I think that'd be way worse than if they hit them. [136]

Even when young women use violence in anger and frustration, in no case did they report a boyfriend responding with fear or intimidation. One participant [178] describes an almost parental response by her boyfriend to her repeated use of violence. He scolds her, "you can't do that to me," in recognition that she felt her behavior was acceptable. She reports:

> I was always the one. He'd always get mad at me actually because like it'd be something like dumb and I'd like just get like frustrated and I'd hit him and he'd be like, "[Julie] that actually hurts and you can't do that to me." And I'd be like "okay," like I'd just get like caught up in the moment. But we've actually had fights about that before. He's gotten mad at me. He's like, "I told you so many times like don't like hit me, like don't like, kick me."

She is clearly using violence, and her boyfriend perceives it as such and finds it unacceptable, yet it is hard to imagine the story in reverse with the girl lecturing her boyfriend that he just should not kick her, that it is not okay. Men know it is not okay to hit their girlfriends, whereas the boundaries of what constitutes acceptable aggression from women is more fluid and ill-defined. Neither her friends nor her boyfriend approve of her use of violence, but neither do they fear for her boyfriend's safety or judge her harshly.

Whereas women did not find their own violence funny or trivial (when it expressed anger or felt out of control), the reaction of others was often amusement (except in the cases where it was supportive, as described in the next section). This social reading of women's violence is fundamentally patronizing, communicating that regardless of women's intent, their efforts to be taken seriously (including to do serious harm) are akin to child's play and carry no weight. For example, while participant 178 noted that her friends and boyfriend lecture her about her use of violence ("You can't just kick people . . . You can't do that"), and while she takes it quite seriously, her boyfriend's friends tease her about it:

> they'd like joke about it like at school . . . Like when I'd see them next they'd be just be like, "gonna kick?"- like we'd be like joking about something and they'd be like - "you gonna kick me now . . . just gonna take it out on me?" I'd be like, "shut up!" like. They'd just like joke with me about it.

The possibility that women's violence against a male partner could be dismissively laughed at reflects the perceived triviality of the act.

Slap him if he cheats or insults your womanly virtue: "it just seems to be the thing to do"

Despite the loosened sexual mores many participants described, comments that question or disrespect a woman's sexual integrity continue to be seen to warrant an aggressive reaction. Although in some ways unmoored from its historical roots, when to question or degrade a woman's virginity or sexual honor had serious social consequences for the woman, an "old fashioned slap across the face" remains a cultural touchstone and a reflection of the continued relevance of the sexual double standard. This form of violence continues to be prescribed as appropriate when a man insults a woman's fidelity or challenges her sexual honor. Numerous participants mentioned cinematic representations of this violence as a shared cultural reference. For example, when asked about the acceptability of women's violence, one participant [117] responded, "The only thing I can think of is that, you know the old fashioned slap across the face

if a guy like cheats on you or something. I just feel like I would have to do that, you know. . . I watch a lot of old movies and that just seems to be the thing to do. . . like obviously she's been betrayed and used."

This violence is clearly gendered; participants noted that there is no acceptable symmetric behavior for men. When the interviewer asks the participant above if there is ever a comparable situation where a man should slap a woman who cheats on him, she responds simply, "No." Others agree:

> I think it's just more acceptable for a girl to kinda hit a guy if he you know, I mean you see it like in movies or TV shows. Like if some guy says some lewd comment, the girl will turn around and slap him in the face but, if a girl said something like that, you wouldn't expect the guy to turn around and slap her. 'Cause you know it would be like, "Whoa!" you know, "that's not right." [106]

> Oh yeah slapping definitely. Like if he says something disrespectful that you see the whole like quick slap in the face and walk away, yeah. . . . personally for a guy to be slapped by a girl in the face it's really minor. It's more like of a respect thing like, "Damn, that girl slapped you, whoa, what'd you do?" you know? It's not like when a guy gets in a fight and he has a black eye like that's different. [31]

In the above example the participant interprets a woman's slap as both minor and serious. It is physically minor (i.e., not injurious), but symbolically significant. The hypothetical questioner asks the male what he had done to insult the woman rather than asking her how she could behave in such a manner. The slap is in fact taken seriously, not for its threat or the risk of harm but as a marker of a serious breach of respect toward a woman. In response to a question about when it might be "okay for a girl to slap a guy or hit a guy," other participants gives a similar answers:

> Well, usually when I've seen it, it's like when the guy has called her like a bitch or a whore, or slut or something like that? Something to demean her. Or it's like you know, you know, oh the one that I saw where it was actually like, hard. I mean [the boyfriend] had called her a fat cunt, and like she just turned around and just, yeah, - so that was…. more just like, "Dude you deserved that one." [119]

> I mean if they know it's like coming like okay like one time I saw my friend get smacked. It wasn't even by his girlfriend. It was by some girl. He was like giving her a hard time the whole night just like calling her out. She's kind of a like a very promiscuous girl just like he was giving her shit you know for everything. She took off like her flip flop and slapped him in the face with it. And it left the biggest mark of her foot like he kind of was like, "Alright. I mean I was kind of a dick to her," so he didn't really do anything. [167]

Given the shared set of social rules about women defending their virtue, the man in the last story decides that her act was warranted ("I was kind of a dick to her") and chose not to respond. In both cases the male's disrespect of the woman's sexuality was seen as warranting the woman's physical response.

Prohibitions on male dating violence: "men cannot hit women"

As described above, there was near universal disapproval of male dating violence under any circumstances. Within participants' social contexts, men who used violence against women were stigmatized and judged negatively by peers. For example, one participant described the need for men who are violent to hide their behavior, describing her friend's abusive boyfriend as an example:

> A: They don't do it in front of people. But like her close friends know about it and I don't…I don't think he tells his guy friends at all because that makes him look really bad. He's just pushing around this little girl who has no ability to really defend herself against him.
>
> Q: So you think that would be considered…
>
> A: I think if they did know about it, it would be viewed very negatively like I feel like he would lose a lot of respect from his friends. [148]

Others echoed the theme that male violence, with very few exceptions, is simply unacceptable. For example, a participant [105] observed, "Probably about 99 percent of the time people just think [a guy getting physical with a girlfriend is] wrong immediately. You know, because it's – that's just what's been programmed into our heads. I think even if the guy's not as, you know, not that big, I think it's a problem." Another echoed, "society has this 'men cannot hit women'

[rule]. You don't really hear 'women cannot hit men' very often." [101] Not only is male violence condemned, but it also provokes immediate consequences. For example,

> Oh if a guy slapped his girlfriend in a bar I promise you at least five guys would jump on him . . . when it comes to physical abuse [guys] know like there's a line that you draw to hitting a woman. And if you're using your power over a woman that way in the bar there will be guys jumping on that dude. [31]

The only qualification to the general prohibition against men's violence against a girlfriend is that a man may *restrain* a woman who is trying to hit him, but not retaliate in kind. For example, a participant notes that a response by a man that crosses the line of self-defense is not acceptable:

> some of my guy friends are like, "Well, I'd restrain her." Like there's a difference between restraining them so they're not hurting anybody versus like hitting back or throwing them or like, you know, like my, like my one guy friend who threw her in frustration. Like he regretted it but it's like I think no one would be – not a person that I know would be like, "Oh, you should have done that, that was right."

Another echoes:

> I think so like if a girl was gonna hit a guy I think it's okay for the guy to just push her back a little so she can't hit him. But I don't think it's appropriate if he were to like punch her in the face because that would probably hurt her really, really bad. And she didn't hurt him in that degree, so. [66]

This prohibition against hitting women was endorsed by those who did and did not use violence against their boyfriends. Recounting an incident in which she hit her boyfriend and he tried to hit her back, a participant describes the reaction of a friend: "[she] was very angry that he even tried to hit me. She was like, 'I don't care if you slapped him. He can't hit a girl, that's not right.'" [353] A participant [178] who was repeatedly violent with her boyfriend is asked what she would have thought had her boyfriend ever hit her back (which he had not). She responds:

> Oh I wouldn't be able to trust him anymore. If he like seriously injured me I don't think I'd be able to be with him. I wouldn't feel safe. Like one of my friends . . . she was the one who her boyfriend, they were in a fight and he actually like pushed her like down, and she like instantaneously – like he was,

> "oh, my, gosh. I shouldn't have done that." But she felt so like scared of him, like almost like betrayed like. She broke up with him.

The assumption behind this careful parsing of the acceptable level of male self-defensive force is that men always have the ability to contain or end women's violence against them. Unlike for women, for men there is always a choice – to walk away, to restrain, to hit back. Participant 167 describes witnessing an incident when her female friend became violent against her boyfriend: "like so she got really upset and just slaps him and started pushing him and I was like, 'What are you doing?' [He's] like, 'somebody get her away from me right now' because like he was getting pissed. Like obviously he couldn't do anything back but he's like 'alright if you keep doing that I'm gone.'" She remarks almost parenthetically that "obviously" he could not retaliate; it is clear to everyone involved that hitting his girlfriend back is simply not an option, even though he was angry at her abuse. Another participant observes, "I mean I would never like be able to seriously injure [my boyfriend], like I would have never been able like if I was like ever wanted to like, I don't know, like hurt him really bad he'd be able to stop me. Like girls can be stopped unless they have like a gun or something." [178] Regardless of the nature or cause of women's violence, men are expected to choose the least forceful option in response.

Women's violence facilitated: effects of the double standard

The prohibition against male violence coupled with the relatively lesser stigma against women's violence can function to free women to use violence against their boyfriends. Given the assumption that they will not be hurt in response, physical aggression becomes relatively more available in women's repertoire of behaviors. For example, a participant [105] observes, "Like it's like, 'Well, you shouldn't do it, but like if you do, like, the guy's not go- most of the times - the guy's not gonna hit you back.'" Her qualification – "most of the times" – indicates the recognition that there is always a risk to women in using violence. Women may be

evaluating that risk with each partner and in light of their past experiences. For example, participant 167, who has experienced violence by her boyfriend and has a family experience of abusive men, speaks from experience when she says, "men are physically more capable than us and why would you start something that you cannot finish? Like honestly, I think it's really stupid." She recognizes that women's relative freedom to use violence is contingent on men's choice to not respond violently. However, given the strong social prohibitions against male violence, women reported feeling relatively more safe to use violence.

For example, a participant [239] who repeatedly uses violence against her boyfriend when she is angry or frustrated acknowledges that part of the reason she does so is the knowledge that he will not retaliate physically. She reports that "I feel like because like they won't do stuff to me and I could do it to them because I'm a girl which is like so bad but." She elaborates, " like I know [my boyfriend] would never like hit me." In addition to this participant's impulsivity and difficulties expressing her feelings and resolving conflicts, the knowledge that her boyfriend would never hit her back frees her to act on her aggressive impulses.

Other participants identified the prevalence of the double standard, but reported that they still choose to restrain from using violence. For example, the following participant explains why she does not slap her boyfriend:

> I don't know I always think like you know, society is like, "Okay, girls can slap a guy," but if guys slap a girl it's like, "oh my gosh, so bad." But its like, okay it's just as bad if I slap him because you know, we're on the same level, we're both people. Why would I think that it's okay for me to slap him, if I don't think it's okay for him to slap me? So I don't. 'Cause it's not right. [162]

In a very few cases, participants described their own or peer attitudes that if a girl starts a physical fight with a boy, it is legitimate for him to fight her back. While most participants described their peer group as one that rejects this position, a few described a more mixed

attitude. For example, while describing her peer group's response to a couple who regularly fight physically – fights started by the woman – one participant states:

> Our girlfriends don't like it. They're, most are like, "You know she is a girl. She does hit you but maybe instead of like hitting her back you should just try and stop her and like I don't know, defend yourself but not physically hurting her." And if you talk to our guy friends they'll be like, "Well she started it. She hit him first," and they're like, "He's not that much bigger than her. It's not like he…it's not like she can't take him kind of and" which, I mean I feel like that's just kind of a typical guy response. Some of our guy friends though like they're very like, "Oh no, like I can see how in this situation he - why he hits her back or like fights with her but I would never do that."

Another participant's comments suggest that men may react violently to women's physical aggression when they feel the unfairness of the double standard:

> I just actually got in an argument with my cousin about, he says he knows [Rihanna] deserved it almost like he's tired of girls feeling like they can put their hands on guys and nothing's gonna happen. [90]

This participant is shocked at her cousin's position, and worries that this attitude leads to a justification for male violence against women. While she disagrees with her cousin, in fact they are both describing a universal taken-for-granted in the social fabric – that men are not allowed to hit women under any circumstances.

That retaliatory violence by a man might be legitimate was clearly a minority opinion. More common is the expectation that men will avoid violence at any cost. For example, this participant relates the response of her boyfriend's best friend, who was present in the aftermath of a fight where the participant was hit by her boyfriend and physically defended herself: "his friend was like just screaming at him like 'You're such an idiot! Like I don't care what happened!" [My boyfriend was] like 'She bit me! She bit me,' like, you know, it was, 'Well I don't even care. You never put your hands on a girl.'" [167]

There was only one contrasting case where a participant described a social context in which violence against girlfriends was supported. This participant, a victim of pervasive verbal

and physical abuse, describes the gendered peer culture among her boyfriend's friends as encouraging and even directing her boyfriend to abuse her:

> A: I think it was, pretty much like his friends telling him. Because his friends would talk to him and tell him to do things and….
>
> Q: What kind of things did his friends tell him, do you know?
>
> A: Oh well he told me once that his friends were telling him that he should have sex with me. And that, it was okay for guys to hit girls when they were out of line. And stuff like that. So it was like basically like disciplining the girlfriends. [405]

This case stands out both for the severity of the boyfriend's violence, the unambiguity of the participant's victimization, and the context of support for violence against women described among the boyfriend's friends and family. It also highlights the importance of the gendered social context in shaping and giving meaning to both men's and women's behavior.

The Gendered Nature of Violence II: Women's Use of Violence

Although a significant amount of the endorsements on the CTS referred to acts understood as non-violent, a subset of participants did report engaging in a range of behaviors more clearly characterized as violent or aggressive (see Table 8). Indeed, these participants' willingness to describe their own violence in detail suggests that the distinctions they elaborated between meaningful and nonsignificant "violence" do not merely reflect an instinct to minimize or deny their own violence. These incidents were the least often reported form of physical contact. In addition, some participants described physically aggressive behaviors that they did not consider "violent," but that were not playful or mock-violence. With notable exceptions, these acts were most frequently seen as unremarkable, fairly insignificant to the partner and the relationship, and not harmful (i.e., not understood by the participants as "violence.").

As described below, women reported using violence to create space, to maintain contact, to express anger, frustration and jealousy, to be taken seriously, and in self-defense. In many

cases, examples could be used to illustrate multiple themes, and are not intended to be exclusive. Individual motivations, deficits, and proximate contexts for women's violence are generally consistent with the literature for both male and female IPV. However, given the way gender shapes the social context and meanings of women's violence (as articulated above), what is different is the meaning of this behavior when women engage in it.

Violence out of Anger or Feeling Insulted

As noted above, in many cases participants who reported playful aggression also reported meaningful violence, as with the following participant, who was distinguishing her violent slap from her other aggressive behaviors reported on the CTS [131]: "The slap, that wasn't playful. . . . I'm sure he probably said something that really offended me or upset me. And I think I just did it, not even thinking. Just like out of reflex. And *that* he did not like." In this case, her boyfriend also read the difference in the meaning of the behavior, and was upset because he understood her action as violence.

Another participant described a single incident of violence against her ex-boyfriend, who she had discovered had been cheating on her. Very drunk at a party, they become sexually intimate until he decided to stop it. Rejected and feeling powerless, she wants to hurt him:

> So we went out drinking and we were making out in the bathroom or whatever and he stopped. He's like, "you're drunk. I don't want to do this." And I go "what was I when we first had sex?" So I was like "you're an idiot." . . . And he's just, he was like, "no, dude, I don't want to do this." I blew up on him, yelling. I was yelling at him and [he's] about almost six foot like two, something like he's a big dude. And I just remember trying to push him. He never violently pushed me back. But I definitely remember him like just…he was just that strong that I'm walking and he just flipped me around with my hips and was just like grabbed my shoulders and is like "you don't understand..." [31]

This story provides an interesting example of the complications of gender (and the frequency of alcohol use) for this woman's violence. She has a worldview and life experience that men are all "players," only interested in sexual conquest and tricking women. When the guy she has fallen

for turns out to have been cheating on her (i.e., he's been playing her), she is devastated to have been duped just like the women she generally disrespects. She tries to reassert her control over the situation by having sex with him at a party in the knowledge that he is with someone else; she is trying to be an actor instead of a victim. When he stops her, her anger and violence reflect her experience of feeling used and powerless as a woman. This incident was not reported on the CTS as it had occurred over a year ago, but it also gives an example of an incident that could have been scored as sexual violence: this participant could have endorsed the item asking about trying to physically force a partner to have sex. However, while her acts here are clearly violent, they should not be coded as an act of sexual assault.

Another participant described violence in the context of an argument that had reached an impasse:

> there was only like one time where I actually shoved him for a point, only because it just was, it was a really bad night, and just he just kept denying something that he did. But I knew it was a fact. And I just got so frustrated and I just like shoved him. But he didn't really shove me back. He just kind of grabbed me and just like, "calm down, blah-blah-blah." But then I shoved him again. But that was like the only one. [145]

Again, while this participant minimizes the violence and implies that violence has not had a significant role in her relationship, the second shove ("But then I shoved him again") is telling. Her boyfriend has tried to restrain her to calm her down, but she shoves him again to insist on the legitimacy of her cause and her anger. She wants to be heard, and his attempt to placate her only escalates her sense of frustration. This incident also exemplifies a theme described below: violence to be heard or taken seriously.

Violence in Response to Boyfriend's Jealousy

A number of participants describe violence in the context of their boyfriend's jealousy. This played out in a number of ways. In some cases, participants felt that their boyfriends were

being controlling by telling them what to do. In others, an accusation of possible infidelity is received as deeply insulting. Participants reported a range of emotions, predominantly feelings of anger or frustration, in response to their boyfriend's behaviors and suspicions. In none of these cases were the boyfriends physically violent or threatening. Jealousy also played a role for the women, which will be demonstrated in the next subsection.

For example, this participant reacted physically to feeling controlled and misunderstood:

> It was again like kind of one of the fights that I was talking about before . . . he's just giving me a really hard time about [having gone out]. And I guess I just hit that point where like I just got so angry that I just (inaudible). Yeah, so I pushed him. That was the only time I got to that though. . . . I just get – when people try to tell me what to do, and I feel like you're – he's trying to be my dad, like that just makes me so angry because I feel like you know, I made it through a whole year and another year without him. And I don't really need him to tell me what to do I guess is kind of how I was really feeling. Just so frustrating, because I had told him that before, and he just didn't really understand where I was coming from. [310]

Another participant [178] reports violence in frustration when her boyfriend tries to tell her what to do or seems to not understand or listen to her. In this case, her boyfriend is jealous that she is talking and dancing with a male friend at a concert and tells her to stay away from him. She reports that she was "kind of intoxicated but not like extremely." The incident unfolded as follows:

> He's like you know, "I hate [Dave] like stay away from him like when we're together like stay away from him" and it turned into like a debate. And I ended up kicking him really hard in the knee and like walking to a different part of the concert like before he could like say anything. And we didn't talk for the rest of that night because like he was so pissed. . . . Just I get so frustrated with him because like he didn't understand that like that kid is my friend like, like I hate when he can't see my side.

Two participants described slapping boyfriends in response to accusations of cheating, whereas no participants described the reverse scenario. When boyfriends were accused of cheating, participants reported that the men either denied it or apologized. Infidelity by men or

women was universally viewed as unacceptable, but the accusation of cheating carried different meanings for men and women. As described further in a later section, women's virtue remains a construct worth fighting for, and for these participants, an accusation of cheating implies a major insult. For example [353], "I slapped him once because he accused me of cheating on him. And he knows what my views are on cheating. He knows that I hate, despise, despise, despise cheaters, there's no excuse for cheating, in my book. So for him to accuse me of cheating it was just a really low blow and so I slapped him." The other participant describes a complex scenario where her boyfriend expresses his jealousy passive-aggressively by telling her she is free to flirt with other guys. She understands him to be implying that she wants or plans to cheat on him, a continuation of an argument from earlier in the evening.

> And so by the time he came back I was dancing with my other friends. And so we were like, "Why are you leaving?" He's like, "Well you're not even paying attention to me," and he's like, "I'm just gonna go home. You can go dance with other guys now." That's not mature, it's not. And so he was basically saying like, "go ahead and cheat, I don't care." And so, there's another cheating inference. I got mad and I slapped him again. . . And he flipped out and moved to hit me, but my friends got in the way. And I'm trying to remember the order, if I slapped and then, I think I pushed him and then, yeah, and then I probably would have kept going but, and he would probably would have hit me too. But my friends got in the way, like I said. [353]

Violence in Jealousy

Very few participants described an incident of violence against her boyfriend to express her own jealousy. This is surprising, given the frequency with which participants discussed jealousy and cheating in their own relationships and within their peer groups. One participant had been in a relationship with the man involved, but they were "taking a break" at the time of this fight. She described a long evening of drinking and fighting at a party after she finds the man being sexually intimate with another woman:

> And so I walk into his room and they were like making out and stuff. And I like freaked out and got really, really upset. . . . he was really drunk and she was really

> drunk, and I was pretty intoxicated, myself. I took, I had my beer, I poured it on him. And then later let's see, I think I broke something. I think he like, he apparently handed somebody like a picture frame to give back to me or something? And I threw it on the ground. And I pulled [inaudible] off of his coat, I think I like, I didn't like hit him. I kind of like did one of those like pushing him away sort of things?

This participant's recollections of the event are clearly hazy, and it is not clear how much violence she directed at her ex-boyfriend. However, she experienced the incident as serious, embarrassing, and difficult to reconcile with her sense of herself. Another participant [90] described a single incident of violence against her boyfriend. An alcoholic, he had promised to quit drinking. When she found him drunk, with a text message on his phone from another woman, she describes losing control: "Then I woke him up and I was hitting him. . . . emotional madness, just crying and stuff. . . . Yeah he got scared. I would be scared, too. I'm a strong person. I wasn't gonna like beat him up or anything but I was gonna cause damage." While this woman strongly disapproves of violence in relationships and denies any other instances, in this instance she and her boyfriend both understand her actions as violent: they are angry, injurious, and scary.

Violence to Create Space or to Maintain Contact

Many women described pushing to leave an argument or enclosed space, or to create physical space between themselves and their boyfriends when they felt encroached upon. In the latter scenario, it is not a sense of physical threat from their boyfriends that motivates the push, but rather a feeling that the argument is being prematurely abandoned or that the boyfriend is seeking physical intimacy before the participant is ready. These were not acts that participants considered self-defense, and in most cases participants did not consider them acts of violence against their boyfriends.

Using physical force to leave an argument occurred in contexts ranging from being physically blocked from leaving to more subjective feelings of being cornered. This participant describes a repeated pattern with a jealous ex-boyfriend who would block her exit when she tried to leave arguments:

> And we . . . started yelling at each other. And I just wanted to leave and he wouldn't let me leave. So I was getting mad about it so I like tried like just like shoving him out of the way because I wanted to go and I didn't want to say anything that I was gonna regret. So after like a little bit he just eventually like let me go. [148]

She contrasts this pattern with her experience with her current boyfriend, with whom she reports no violence: "He's never really harmed me or like I've felt like he was going to so it makes our relationship easy and like I don't feel the need to like…if he knows I'm mad about something and I want to leave, he lets me leave." Participant 146 describes pushing her boyfriend to get him out of her apartment. He arrived drunk at 4:00 a.m. and she wanted him to leave:

> I was like, "okay. Get out of my apartment." And he's like "no, I want to talk to you." I was like "no you don't. You can't even talk right now." . . . . I was just mad and I slammed the door in his face. I probably pushed him back or something but it was like, that wasn't…I don't know. And like I said, it's not like I was trying to hurt him. It was more like "I don't want you in my face right now. I need to be away from you."

She is moved to immediately qualify the push as soon as she reports it. She says of the push, "but it was like, that wasn't…I don't know." The unfinished thought, elaborated in her following statements, is that "that wasn't *violence*." It was a push, it was serious and intended to be consequential, but it was not intended to hurt him.

In contrast, participant 178 describes a much more severe reaction to feeling trapped, which she does characterize as violence. She reported a number of instances of severe violence against her boyfriend. In this incident they were arguing about her boyfriend's jealousy while he was driving. She describes it as follows:

> And we were just like screaming and I was crying. And I was screaming and I said, "just let me out of the car! Let me out of the car like I don't want to be," like I felt so like claustrophobic I, like I said I usually need out of the situation. . . . finally it's like "let me get out of the car" and I grabbed his hair really hard before and finally he just slams on the brakes and then I - he let me out of the car and it was like a block away from my house so I just like walked home.

The second type of violence to create space is force used to reject a rapprochement from a boyfriend during or immediately following an argument. For example, participant 149 initially responded to the opening question and list of CTS items with a simple, "No." When asked about her CTS endorsements of pushing and shoving, she struggles to identify any incidents of pushing, which she does not characterize as violent or particularly significant:

> I mean the only time that I can think of is maybe when we were…when, you know, some of these like major, major conflicts were going on and I was just really upset and like, you know, there was times when he was trying to like get like really close to me or hug me or kiss me or something. I was probably just like, "Don't touch me," you know, kind of thing.

Another participant who was not ready to make up with her boyfriend also physically pushes him away. While she qualifies her pushing as never injurious, she does characterize it as angry:

> The shoved against the wall, that was probably out of anger. Just like sometimes if I'm really upset and he'll come like try to make it better, like "Oh I'm so sorry." I'm like, "Leave me alone." [131]

Similarly, a participant [256] reports what she describes as insignificant physical contact: "As for violent, I think the only thing that really happens either in our relationship is the pushing, shoving thing." When asked if she can give an example, she replies, "Nothing really comes to mind in particular. Usually he'll try and hug me and I'll tell him I don't want to hug him. Because I'm mad at him, I'll push him." These incidents are not self-defense – participants do not describe feeling physically threatened – but neither are they threatening or injurious.

In the reverse pattern to the above, a few participants described grabbing to keep a boyfriend from leaving an argument. For example, a participant described trying to keep her boyfriend from leaving an argument:

> The only think I'd say like out of frustration I do is if he's walking away, I'll like grab his arm and try to like, like hold onto his hand and like, he usually kind of like stands there and then, like, he'll pull away for a second and then he'll like come back until we sit down. But I don't like shake him or anything. [105]

Violence to be Heard or Taken Seriously

Whereas in many cases women describe their violence as relatively insignificant and not meaningful, in other cases they describe violence that instead functions to insist on their seriousness. While others may laugh at or minimize their violence, they see it as serious and as an indication of the severity of the feeling or conflict involved. As opposed to the "it's not really violence" of much of women's reports, these incidents are seen as meaningful. The struggle in this case is to have the violence recognized as such, as real and serious, in a social context that minimizes and trivializes women's violence and aggression. Feeling already minimized or trivialized, women resort to violence to communicate their seriousness, only to struggle to have the violence taken seriously as well. The reception of their violence mirrors the reception of their upset and emotional expression. In other cases women's violence is taken seriously and is judged negatively (although less harshly than male violence, as previously illustrated).

The following participant [158] describes pushing in anger/frustration over feeling unheard by her boyfriend. She describes her use of pushing in her relationship as a way to communicate to her boyfriend that she is serious and wants him to recognize this. It is not the violence that she sees as serious (as in, dangerous or intended to harm), but her intention to be acknowledged. She says, "And I got really mad, and he wouldn't hear my side. So I like shoved him and tried to leave, but he didn't let me leave." She describes the actual physical contact as

not particularly significant, indeed she deems it ultimately effective in communicating what is significant - her desire to be taken seriously:

> A:I don't see [the pushes] as anything like really serious. It's not like I shoved him and he fell down the stairs, something like that. I don't see them as anything too serious, because I don't hurt him in any way.
>
> Q:Yeah. And how do you think he thinks about it?
>
> A:He probably realizes that I'm giving up and I want to go and leave, so he starts to pay more attention to the situation after that. Like before he's kind of like standoffish, and then after that seems like he cares more when he sees that it really bothers me.
>
> Q:So it's like a way of really getting his attention about how serious you are. Does that sound like…?
>
> A:Yeah.

Similarly, another participant [134] describes slapping her boyfriend after finding out he had cheated on her: "I mean I was so angry. So upset. You know, sobbing and sad - whole boat of emotions. And so like at that point I didn't know what else to do to make him realize 'this is more serious than you think it is.'" When asked what happened afterwards, she says: "after that he was like 'what was that for?' And like, I was like 'honestly this is not working out. Nothing is going right. You have gone and kissed another girl. You're not taking it seriously as I think you need to be. And this is obviously not working out.'

Participant 136 describes an escalation from joking or teasing into angry arguing:

> Normally it would be like I'd like grab his arm or something because I'd be just like so mad and I would be trying to like, because another thing that we would do is like pretend like we're not paying attention to the, one another and stuff and it would be just like so frustrating, especially if one of us was really angry and the other wasn't particularly angry, was just kind of playing along. So I would grab him and be like, "why aren't you listening to me?" and stuff, "This is serious" and I don't know, that's the kind of thing that would happen.

Two participants described public incidents where some of the witnesses laughed at the woman's violence. Neither participant found women's use of violence funny, and they resented

the trivialization. For example, a participant [178] who was observed kicking her boyfriend during an argument reported that some of those present laughed, which made her angry:

> A: I didn't think it was funny and that's why I was kind of like annoyed with them for thinking it's funny like. It's not something you laugh at when someone hurts someone else.
>
> Q:It's serious.
>
> A:Yeah.

Violence in Self-defense

There has been much discussion in the literature regarding the extent to which women's reported violence reflects actions taken in self-defense or preemptively in the face of imminent danger. In this study, three participants reported violence in self-defense. One [119] described self-defense or retaliatory violence with two previous boyfriends in high school (she is a freshman). She reports, "most of the things that I've done like you know, have just been in a reaction state. It's not much like, I don't provoke anything, it's more of just like, you know he grabbed me, he threw me, I, I wanted to just get away from him." When asked to elaborate, she describes using violence when she feels scared that a boy might hurt her:

> Yeah for me it's more it's just like, it's very much self-defense. It's just, I want to get away from whoever is doing it to me. And the past it's been boyfriends . . . it's the adrenaline that kicks in, and all of a sudden you're just like "oh, he could hurt me." And then you result to smacking him. Because I mean most of the guys, all the guys that I've dated, are all bigger than me.

She also described using violence in a more retaliatory mode. When her boyfriend threw something at her, she ducked and he taunted her, "oh I guess you're lucky, you're fast or something?" When she realizes he was not kidding but was serious, "I picked it up and I threw it back at him. Because I was pissed then, because I was like, 'if you're trying to hit me in the face, I'm going to hit you in the face,' you know?" This participant denied ever initiating contact with a boyfriend.

Two participants [167, 405] described patterns of severe violent victimization by a dating

partner. Whereas the majority of men's violence in this sample was described as minimal and usually in response to women's aggression, these participants described multiple incidents of male violence that were qualitatively different from any other reports. This violence was serious, injurious, and intentional, and always initiated by the boyfriends. In both cases, the participants fought back and were coded by the CTS as perpetrating severe violence against a partner. For participant 167, the violence always occurred when both participants were intoxicated. Her violence was universally defensive, always in the context of an assault by her boyfriend. She reported experiencing 3 violent incidents: first during an argument, next when her boyfriend tried to force her to have sex during an argument, and most recently during the week prior to the interview when he mistakenly thought she had locked him out of her room (this incident not reported on the CTS due to its recency). She reported being afraid during these incidents and having injuries as a result, and she describes using violence to defend herself every time. She described the incident where he boyfriend tries to rape her as the worst fight:

> Oh, we were in a fight so he was really upset at me about something and then he tried to like…he wanted to hook up like I was like, "No like I'm upset," you know. And I don't want to do whatever so he got on top of me and he kind of like I don't know. He like thinks it's funny to do weird things like he fish-hooked me [demonstrates to interviewer by hooking finger in mouth and pulling towards cheek], like he does that all the time, like he thinks it's like hilarious when you like wrestle around. So I bit his finger. And he just slammed me across the face like - I was like I will never forget this because - and he goes, "I bet that fucking hurt, bitch, right?" Like all of a sudden I was like shocked. I just ran out of my apartment like I didn't even know what to do.

She also described trying to defend herself physically the first time her boyfriend became violent:

> A: So we got in a huge fight about that and like it just got like super violent but not like at each…like we hadn't been touching each other. It was like shit was getting like thrown everywhere. He was like punching holes in walls just like things like that and then it moved to like physical because he grabbed my arm and like it hurt really bad and I was like, "Let go of me! Get off me!" Like he always gets on top of me to like control me like kind of because like obviously I can't

> push him off of me like when he is in control. So I like smacked him. I was like, "I told you get off me!" I was like "I don't want you in this apartment. I can call the police for this." I slapped him. So he just like took my fist like this was - he had never hit me before. It's like he took my fist and started punching me with it.
>
> Q: While he's on top of you?
>
> A: Yeah it's like he was hitting me with it. Like it got really messed up, like I had bruises everywhere. He ended up like I threw - like when I was trying to pull my hand like I threw my hand off but like smacked him like when I like…when it ripped because he had like pulled my hand off and like it kind of just went back like smacked him like right in the corner like here and got all like messed up like. Only way I could get him off me like, this is gonna sound so horrible, like but only way I could get him to get off me I was like scratching at his face because I couldn't get him off me. I was scared. I was scared like I had never had that before. I've never had a boyfriend ever get physical like or even close to that like…

The most recent incident, occurring after she had completed the survey, involved her boyfriend dragging her across the room, resulting in injuries to her legs that she showed the interviewer. This participant also reported playful wrestling with her boyfriend, resulting in a CTS profile that conflates self-defense and play, making both the frequency and severity results impossible to interpret on their face.

Participant 405, a freshman, described a long history of severe physical and emotional abuse starting in childhood and continuing through her two dating experiences in high school. Her most recent relationship, which lasted for her final two years of high school, ended the summer before she began college (within the 12 month time frame of the CTS). She described severe verbal and physical abuse from her boyfriend over the duration of the relationship, and it was difficult to ascertain in the interview which behaviors actually occurred during the previous year time frame of the CTS. She described the verbal abuse as frequent and not only in the context of an argument:

> He'd be putting me down and calling me things and telling me I was ugly, and stuff. . . .It was more of all the time. Like I didn't do anything to him and he would just tell me stuff and then he would make me cry and he'd be like, "Fine,

start crying." He would just leave me there, and just walk away.

She reported multiple incidents of severe victimization as well, including choking, slamming into a wall, and being thrown down stairs. Some of these incidents left her bruised, and more than once she was afraid for her life.

> Q: So when he choked you, did it happen repeatedly or did it only happen once?
>
> A: It only happened like a couple of times. But it was pretty bad like, he, like I would be coughing for a while until I could actually catch my breath. And…
>
> Q: Were there times, any of the times he choked you, that you were afraid he might kill you?
>
> A: Yeah. Like every time, 'cause I didn't know, because I would tell him to stop, and stop and he like he just stopped whenever he wanted.

At one point, she expressed suicidal feelings to her boyfriend and he hit her in response, suggesting that he could kill her if she wanted to die:

> I would talk to him about it, and how it made me feel. I was like, "why do you hit me? Why do you make me feel so bad?" And he would just yell at me and tell me like, "I can make you feel like however I want." And then I, I think I mentioned once that I didn't want to be here anymore because I had like so much pain in my life. I remember that he hit me, and he's like, "You don't want to live anymore? Because I can help you." And it was really bad, and then I started crying, I was like, "No, no, no. It's okay."

This participant, coded by the CTS as using severe violence, reported that at some point in the relationship she began to fight back, although it always led to an escalation of violence by her boyfriend.

> A: Well yeah because I didn't feel like it was right for him, to hit me. So I started defending myself, after a while, it was like a year after he had started everything. So…
>
> Q: So what would happen if you would hit him or kick him back?
>
> A: He would hit me harder.

She reports that at some point she began to also initiate violence: "But like after a while, I started hitting him because, he hit me, so…" In response, her boyfriend "would always hit me back."

This participant describes a pattern of violent victimization completely different from the other participants coded into the severest violence group.

It has often been observed that CTS responses cannot distinguish "bidirectional" or "mutual" violence from self-defense in the context of violent victimization, and these narratives provide powerful examples of how heterogeneous even a severe violence group may be. The contexts, motivations, intentions, and outcomes of these participants' violence are simply not the same as those of other participants similarly categorized. In short, their violence is neither gender symmetric nor gender neutral.

Defining Violence: The Centrality of Meaning

The two major findings reported above – that the CTS appears to overestimate women's IPV and that women's IPV is a fundamentally gendered phenomenon – imply a failure of the literature to adequately theorize and measure violence. However, participants across the sample, despite their many differences reflected a shared understanding of the meaning of violence. This interpretive framework was often spontaneously deployed to distinguish what was seen to be playful or non-significant (e.g., mock-violent) contact from true violence. Participants did not evaluate behaviors based on the topographical nature of the act, but on the socially constructed meaning of the act. As the findings reported above imply, it is the gendered social context that renders a behavior socially interpretable. In other words, a behavior is not violence until it is understood as such, and that understanding is guided in part by the social context of the act. While not initially an explicit question of the current study, the definition of violence itself became an emergent theme of central importance.

When interpreting potentially violent behavior, participants overwhelmingly privileged the question of intent. In other words, it was the intention of the actor, rather than the action

itself, that gave the behavior its meaning. And the intention that mattered the most for these participants was an intention to do harm to the other. Intention to do harm was understood to motivate actions undertaken in anger, and included intention to harm the other emotionally and psychologically. Some examples of the centrality of intent include:

> Violence to me is when you're actually tying to hurt somebody. When you're intentionally trying to hurt somebody.[119]
>
> Actual violence is something that feels like the spirit behind it was like really mean. And almost beyond just – like more in the heat of the moment. If it's like purely the point is to hurt them physically. [131]
>
> I think violence is like when you are angry and you – like you are beyond – unlike us where it's playful or teasing, or like maybe to get attention, I think if you are really angry with a person and you hit them out of that anger, or if you touch them in a manner that hurts, whether it be grabbing their arm or pushing them, I think that would be considered violence. [134]

Responses like these help clarify why participants expressed surprise that many of their CTS endorsements had been interpreted as acts of violence. While the CTS is constructed on the assumption that all of its physical aggression items are equivalent, similarly meaningful, and interpretable as acts of violence (i.e., that they are all assessing the same construct), participants held a different understanding of what constitutes violence against a dating partner.

In addition to intention, some participants included in their definition of violence the perceptions or feelings of the victim. They emphasized fear, feeling physically encroached upon, and psychological damage to self-esteem and self-efficacy. For example: "even yelling [is] violence because it's something you bring fear into a person, like it's different when a guy - like if [my boyfriend] ever yelled at me, he's six-four, like I'm five-seven. Any guy yelling on top of you with their finger pointing down like that I think is pretty violent." [31].

This quote illustrates the salience of gender when intention and perception shape the meaning of a behavior. In this case, "it's different" when a physically much larger man yells at

his girlfriend in an intimidating way. Her fear and the threat implied by his physicality combine to make that act violent; if the roles are reversed it is not clear whether the "same" behavior by the girlfriend would qualify as violent. "Real" violence, as some of the participants specified, was thus widely understood to occur when the perpetrator is angry, acting with an intention to physically or emotionally hurt the other, and/or when the recipient is afraid or feels physically or emotionally violated (as when one party says "stop" and the other does not, or is being touched in a way they don't like or accept.). And as argued above, this more nuanced understanding of what makes an act violent is fundamentally colored by the gender of the actor. Given this shared understanding of violence and the ways in which gender influences meaning, participants overwhelmingly understood questions about "physical force" used during conflicts or arguments to pertain to what they considered real or serious violence. Despite framing questions carefully, participants brought their own interpretive lens to the interview, and this partly accounts for surprise and confusion when the interview shifts from more open-ended and unstructured conversation about conflicts and violence in their relationships to more structured questions about their CTS responses.

"Real" dating violence was universally condemned by participants and described as non-normative across the various peer groups. While many participants could report having witnessed or heard about at least one incident of dating violence among friends or peers, these incidents were considered unusual and surprising. When asked how common it is for "physical force of any kind to be used" among friends in their relationships, one participant [90] replied, "if it happens it's shocking." Participants interpret this question to refer to serious, intentional violence by either partner. On the other hand, participants did report a range of acts, understood as either not violent or not serious, as being much more frequent among themselves and their

peers. Findings from this study provide evidence that the meaning of an act is embedded in its social context and is inextricably influenced by gender. An actor's intention and perception take form in a gendered social context, and efforts to categorize women's behavior towards their male dating partners as violence must take the gendered social meanings of their behavior into account.

CHAPTER 5

MIXED METHOD RESULTS

The combination of qualitative and quantitative data generated unique findings that were not merely additive or triangulating. The qualitative results troubled the underlying principles of the CTS (i.e., the conceptualization of dating violence as the presence of any act of physical aggression and the operationalization of IPV as any endorsement on a decontextualized act-based measure), highlighting fundamental issues of problem definition and construct validity. And while personality was related to violence in the quantitative modeling, qualitative findings reflected the tenuousness of this relationship in this undergraduate sample.

Reading Interview Data Against CTS Data

Scores from the Conflict Tactics Scales were used to categorize participants into groups for recruitment for phase two interviews as previously described. The qualitative findings generated from this subset of participants contradicted and complicated the CTS categorizations in important ways. Overall, CTS categorizations were not consistent with interview findings. For example, of the 26 interview participants categorized by the CTS as violent, almost a fifth (19.2%, n = 5) report playful contact *only*. On the other hand, of the 8 participants categorized as non-violent, approximately a third (37.5%, n = 3) reported playful or other physically aggressive contact in the interview, which did not specifically probe for this kind of behavior. These findings alone seriously challenge the specificity and sensitivity of the measure. The ambiguity of some mock-violence, detailed in the previous chapter, coupled with the breadth of the CTS instructions led to confusion and variation in whether these behaviors were reported on the CTS or not, making interpretation of CTS results problematic (see Table 8 for a breakdown of

interview participants by *a priori* grouping and categorization based on interview coding. All ambiguous or mock-violent acts were coded as "any violence").

In addition, a long-argued critique of the CTS and other act-based measures is their inability to identify self-defensive acts due to the absence of contextual information. This proved true in this study, as 2 of the 10 women identified as severe "perpetrators" reported self-defense *only*, and a third proved in fact to be severely victimized. This inability of the CTS to distinguish victims leads to the conflation in the quantitative data of meaningfully different phenomena, as in the case of participants 167 and 178, two participants from Group 4 (severe violence/low borderline). While participant 167 is defending herself against repeated and severe assaults by her boyfriend, participant 178 is never defending herself against her boyfriend, but always initiating violence. Her boyfriend does not respond violently, at the most simply grabbing her hand to avoid being hit. Although grouped together, these participants are mirror opposites. Furthermore, both participants report a mix of "real" and playful violence on the CTS, inflating their range and frequency scores. Taken together, these findings problematize the discriminant validity of the CTS.

In order to allow investigators to analyze their data by "directionality" of violence (as opposed to the commonly reported categories of "victim" and "perpetrator" with the attendant problems documented above), the CTS has scores for "mutuality" that groups those reporting violence into one of three categories: self-only, partner-only, or both. The mutuality scores in CTS studies have led to widespread claims in the literature that the majority of IPV is "mutual" or "bi-directional" on the assumption that these three categories distinguish perpetrators, victims, and "mutual combatants" (of course, this categorization strategy still cannot distinguish "mutual" from aggressive and self-defensive violence). CTS results in this study, consistent with

the literature, indicate a predominance of mutual violence: of the interview sample over half reported bidirectional violence on the CTS (Table 5). Of the 27 interview participants who reported any violence on the CTS, one reported violence by partner only (3.7%), 8 reported violence by self only (29.6%), and 18 reported violence by both partners (66.7%). When read against the qualitative data, however, mutuality scores failed to distinguish victims, perpetrators, or identify couples who could best be characterized as using mutual violence.

For example, participant 22, the single interview participant who reported violence by partner only, described the incident where her boyfriend grabbed her as follows: "that was like because I was just about to like walk out, but he just like grabbed my arm and told me not to leave. But that's not like – [that's] as physical as it gets." She states in the interview that she thinks she endorsed having pushed her boyfriend (she had not), and then describes engaging in playful contact that she had not endorsed on the CTS. As the sole apparently "pure" victim, her experiences more like the majority of other participants than not, and had she endorsed any of the playful violence on the CTS she would have been fairly indistinguishable from the other "mutually violent" participants. In fact, she describes herself as more likely to be physical with her boyfriend ("I can push him around . . . it's really not gonna do anything"), and does not experience his behavior as threatening or violent. Compare this participant with the three participants who were clearly victims described in Chapter 4 and coded by the CTS as severe perpetrators with mutual violence.

Interestingly, the two participants who reported violence only in self-defense in the interview were distinguished on the CTS by one score: they were the only two interview participants who reported severe violence by self *and* partner. Those identified as mutually violent include participant 405, who reported severe victimization (coded by CTS as severe

perpetration and only minor victimization); participant 178, who reported unidirectional violence against her boyfriend; and two others who endorsed playful contact only (106, 155). With the exception of the three clear victims, participants generally denied dating violence by their boyfriends (despite the mutuality percentages on the CTS).

Furthermore, qualitative findings challenge the CTS' construct validity. As described in Chapter 4, participants described a range of behaviors that included playful and mock-violent acts that did not fit their or their peers' definitions of dating violence. These behaviors were widely reported: over half the sample (53%, N = 18) report some playful contact, and seven participants (20.6%) report only playful contact. At least 12 participants (33.3%) reported a mix of playful, mock- and serious violence (including self-defense). In addition, initial interviews were conducted without follow up probes regarding specific CTS endorsements as the interviewer only knew group categorization. As the pattern of discrepancy between participant response and CTS grouping became clear, the interview protocol was revised to include specific follow-ups.

The repeated confusion about the meaning of CTS endorsements reflects participants' distinctions between acts they considered "violent" and other behaviors considered not meaningfully violent, such as mock violence. The framing instructions on the CTS led participants to report behaviors across a wide range of contexts and led to confusion for many participants. The CTS instructions read as follows:

> No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with the other person, want different things from each other, or just have spats or fights because they are in a bad mood, are tired, or for some other reason. . . . This is a list of things that might happen when you have differences. Please circle how many times you did each of these things in the past year…

By conflating behaviors across a wide range of contexts, the CTS characterizes as violence acts that participants characterize differently in the context of an interview frame about fights or

conflicts that "got violent." The CTS, aiming for sensitivity, includes behavior in the context of being "annoyed" or "tired" because it presumes the violence of the act inheres in the behavior regardless of context. However, for many participants, these instructions led to confusion as they tried to distinguish violent from non-violent behavior. For example, participant 256 observes that she had been aware of the ambiguity of the survey items at the time she took the survey. When asked about her endorsements of pushing/shoving, slapping, punching/hitting, and being grabbed, she said, "See I wasn't really sure how to answer those questions. . . Just because a lot of it isn't you know in conflict situations either, but I figured it still kind of counted if we're doing like type of physical thing in a relationship." The lack of clarity about the significance of the items on the CTS contributed to participants' confusion and concerns that their CTS responses may have been misinterpreted. They frequently reported these behaviors on the CTS, especially because they may have occurred during a conflict, yet they describe the majority of these acts as qualitatively different from "real" violence. Participant 353 also noted a dilemma about what to endorse on the CTS. When asked specifically about her endorsements, she replied, "I don't know why I said that? . . . sometimes it doesn't apply like the way they word it? It doesn't apply but I don't want to say 'no,' flat out because it kind of is 'yes.'" Her responses, a qualified, "kind of yes," reflect a large portion of the CTS endorsements. Yes, the behavior may have happened, but "it doesn't apply" because it was not understood as an act of real violence.

The centrality of context and meaning illuminated by the qualitative data underscores the need for more sophisticated construct specification and operationalization. As it stands, the acts identified as partner violence by the CTS obscure a quite heterogeneous picture. The difficulty of attempting to classify participants into dichotomous violent/non-violent groups based on interviews is reflected in the multiple categories of Table 8. Questionable behaviors (e.g., a push

in annoyance that is meant semi-playfully) were ultimately categorized in the "any violence" category, keeping company with severe, intentional acts such as kicking in anger. These categorization challenges highlight the need for further discussion about what "counts" as violence against a dating partner, whether and how the intent, reception and social meaning should be considered, and about how to interpret the IPV literature that is based on the CTS and similar act-based measures.

Whereas qualitative findings problematize CTS results, having survey data available during interviews proved invaluable in probing initial denials of violence and led to discussions of playful and mock-violence that would not have emerged from the interview alone. Even direct questions about conflict, fights, and provision of the list of CTS assault items frequently resulted in blanket denials of violence. While much of these acts were not in fact considered violence by participants, their CTS responses provided a base from which to explore these behaviors. Combining the relatively anonymous, closed-ended and behaviorally specific questionnaire with the more flexible interview allowed for more data than either alone would have generated.

The Relevance of Personality

No clear patterns or differences emerged across transcripts between the high and low borderline trait groups. In this sample of young women (aged 18-24), reports of intense emotions, problems with anger and irritability, relationship conflict (especially regarding trust and jealousy) and relational instability occurred across the interview sample. Many participants across high and low borderline groups reported relationship conflict, a level of comfort with some physical teasing/contact with boyfriends (and other male friends), and differences in their behaviors across their relationships and through time. In fact, it was notable that at this

developmental stage, many participants spoke explicitly about consciously discussing, trying, and learning new interpersonal and conflict resolution skills over time.

Reading interview data against the survey results highlights the difficulty of interpreting quantitative results in isolation. For example, some participants rated as low on borderline traits in fact appeared to have many borderline characteristics. Two participants from Group 4 described above (178 and 167) are in the high violence/low borderline group, but both described dynamics suggestive of borderline traits. Participant 178 describes herself as emotionally reactive, impulsive and physically aggressive with her boyfriend, consistent with the hypothesis of how borderline personality would increase risk of IPV. She reports that she becomes frustrated, is particularly reactive when she experiences her boyfriend as jealous or controlling, and has poor interpersonal skills for communicating her feelings. Participant 167, who reports violence only in self-defense, describes a pattern of intense and unstable intimate relationships and alcohol abuse, both characteristic of borderline personality. While she describes herself as not "clingy" in relationships but as strong-willed and as the one who usually ends relationships, she finds it difficult to leave her violent boyfriend.

On the other hand, some of the participants who appear the most troubled and impaired by their borderline traits do not report perpetration of violence. For example, participant 31 scored a 42 on the PAI (placing her in the top 20% of PAI scores), endorsing items indicating intense moods, feelings of emptiness, little control over anger, and she reported problematic drinking during her interview. She experiences herself as overwhelmed by her feelings and troubled, stating at the start of the interview, "my life is really complicated so you're – this will be a really interesting interview. I'm mentally unstable with a very non-normal relationship." However, she reports no violence in the past year during the interview (she did describe a single

episode of violence when intoxicated, reported in an earlier chapter, prior to the 12 month anchor of the CTS. She had reported this on the CTS and was thus coded into Group 6). She expressed intense affect and emotional distress during the interview, but her borderline traits did not lead to higher rates of impulsive, violent behavior. Instead, she described herself as guarded and avoidant of intimacy with men, quick to end relationships and expecting little from them.

Participants from the high borderline/any violence groups (Groups 6-8) were in fact quite heterogeneous in their relationship dynamics, experiences of violence, attitudes, and descriptions of themselves. One (148) reported violence and lots of conflict with an ex-boyfriend who was cheating on her, but no violence with current boyfriend (highlighting the importance of context and relationship). She describes herself as laid back and not easily angered, describing interpersonal conflict as restricted to her previous relationship. Another participant (181) describes herself as having "panic attacks" and being dependent on her boyfriend to care for her when she has an episode. She describes a pattern of desperate behavior to avoid separation, including grabbing her boyfriend to keep him from leaving. This behavior, while clearly linked to her emotional instability and dependency, is a quite different manifestation of these personality traits from the aggressive and angry behavior of others. Still others describe themselves as "tomboyish," comfortable with physical aggression with boyfriends and other male friends. Yet another was the participant (405) described in a previous chapter with a long history of severe victimization by family and boyfriend, who described her actions as primarily self-defensive and who presented as passive, submissive, and beaten down. The low borderline/any violence groups (Groups 2-4) did not generate different themes or patterns, likewise reflecting a heterogeneous mix of dynamics, precipitants, experiences and attitudes. Thus while borderline scores on the PAI were related to abuse by women, qualitative interviews

suggest that the relationship is complicated at best. Borderline traits may function in relationships in diverse ways, including increasing participants' vulnerability to violent victimization.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

There are three major findings of this study with at least two important implications. First, results suggest that estimates of women's IPV in the literature are greatly inflated in both frequency and severity. The central aim of the study was to take the widespread reports of the prevalence of women's IPV seriously and attempt to understand this violence through a contextualized analysis. Contrary to expectations and despite oversampling violent women as identified by the CTS for qualitative interviews, this study found much less dating violence than expected when interview data was compared with CTS results. This inflation results from two sources: (a) the misidentification of play as violence, and (b) the misrepresentation of other behavior such as mock-violence as dating violence.

Second, the ambiguity of many of the acts reported and the prevalence of behavior such as mock-violence reflect the centrality of gender as a principle of social organization and therefore the gendered nature of all of women's behavior towards their boyfriends. On the one hand, much of women's reported "violence" was more meaningfully understood as not-violence in part due to the fact that the actor was a woman. The minimization and trivialization of women's potentially violent acts frees them to mobilize a range of behaviors that would be more clearly proscribed for men. On the other hand, women's meaningfully violent behavior is also interpreted and given meaning through the lens of gender, rendering it significant but still different from (i.e., not symmetric with) men's violence against women.

Third, mixed-method findings complicate interpretations about the roles of personality, in particular borderline personality traits, and male partner violence for women's IPV. A goal of the study was to conduct quantitative analyses and use mixed method analyses to test multiple hypotheses about potential mediators and moderators. However, the interpretability of

quantitative analyses using CTS data is thrown into serious question given the validity problems of the measure. If the measure of IPV is weak or invalid, then any findings premised on this data are questionable. Personality traits, while somewhat weakly correlated with IPV in a bivariate context, are found to express themselves in diverse ways in participants' relationships when investigated through qualitative inquiry. Male partner violence as assessed by the CTS mirrored reports in the literature that bi-directional or "mutual" violence was the most common pattern (Archer, 2000). However, in the interview subsample, male dating violence was described as rare. When men were violent to their girlfriends, in this small sample women universally used violence in self-defense or retaliation. Men, however, were almost never reported to retaliate violently against their girlfriends' aggression.

The implications of these findings point to fundamental problems with problem definition and construct measurement in the IPV literature. Given the importance of the gendered social context in making acts socially meaningful behaviors, the inability of the CTS to address context in any way, even at the most basic level of self-defense, problematizes its ability to reliably and validly measure IPV. More fundamentally, the way that gender imbues the range of behaviors reported in this study with meaning raises basic questions about the nature of the construct of IPV. In attempting to understand women's aggression and characterize it as partner violence or not, the question becomes what do we mean to signify when we reference "intimate partner violence"?

What Does an Act Mean? The Centrality of Gender

The qualitative data evidences the centrality of gender as an organizing principle of social interaction, shaping participants' field of intimate relationships and the meanings of actors' behaviors (Anderson, 2005; Dobash et al., 1992; Miller & White, 2003). Any inquiry into what

violence is and how it functions between partners must grapple with the gender asymmetry of the phenomenon. While many of the behaviors women reported may be undesirable, the question remains whether they are best characterized as intimate partner *violence*. The definition of violence above, in privileging intention and perception, makes clear the social nature of violence. An act becomes violence in a social, interpretive context; it is violence when it is understood and given meaning as such (see Puente & Cohen, 2003, for experimental data showing that the context can change the meaning of domestic violence). A man standing on a curb waving his arm may be hailing a cab or greeting a friend – the behavior takes on meaning depending on its social context. Violence does not necessarily inhere in an act, it must be construed as such by the actors involved. Findings from this study necessitate the question: if there is no intention to cause harm and no perception of threat, is there violence? The gendered aspect of domestic violence becomes central to the resolution of this question. In many cases, the behaviors women described in this study may not be understood as domestic violence because they were engaged in by women. As participants reported in various ways, a "similar" act by a man would convey a completely different meaning. If by domestic violence one means to imply behavior that is fear inducing or injury producing, then many acts that would qualify as domestic violence by men may not when engaged in by women. This observation, that the same act engaged in by differently gendered actors may not have the same meaning, has been supported in studies of attitudes that show that participants rate acts of partner violence differently based on the genders of the actors. For example, a study of attitudes about dating violence among adolescents found that female aggression was always rated as more acceptable and justifiable than men's dating violence (Slep, Cascardi, Avery-Leaf, & O'Leary, 2001). This is often seen as evidence of a

blind spot, an illogical double standard that participants unwittingly reveal. However, perhaps it is better understood as a reflection of meaningful differences rather than of the interpreter's bias.

Furthermore, the question of what is violence is compounded by the question of what is meant in particular by the construct of "intimate partner violence" or "domestic violence." While there is a long history of debate in the literature regarding the appropriate meaning of these terms (e.g., as the presence of any act on a checklist versus the presence of an ongoing pattern of coercive control, see for example Johnson, 2006; Kimmel, 2002; Osthoff, 2002; Stark, 2006;), researchers continue to use terms such as IPV to describe a broad range of phenomena. In the qualitative components of this study, even the clearest cases of women's violence did not appear to be part of a larger pattern of intimidation or control, partly because they were engaged in by women against men.

Gender thus functions at multiple levels in this study of domestic violence. Gender contributes to the meaning of behavior between intimate partners; it renders women's aggression less serious, even not-violent. It also shapes the social context and norms such that women in this study were generally freer to engage in both minor and even relatively severe violence than are men. Despite the vastly different social context, these findings are consistent with Miller's (2008). Whereas in her sample of poor, urban, African-American adolescents interpersonal violence was more normative, participants in this study experienced and witnessed much less violence and generally rejected and judged the use of violence negatively. However, in both cases women's aggression was judged as less severe, less significant, and more tolerable than men's. In both cases, male violence against girlfriends was seen as serious, definitive, and a breach of the code of male behavior (thus requiring a higher threshold of offense before being considered warranted). In this study, women's behavior was less often seen as meaningfully

violent, and therefore paradoxically women were in fact more often aggressive, and even violent in some cases. Men's violence, potentially dangerous and socially stigmatized, was never ambiguous or trivialized. When men were violent there was no question of its meaning or potential consequences. Women fought back precisely because they understood the nature of the attack. Men on the other hand, rarely retaliated, at most restraining or complaining of women's behavior. Since gender rendered much of women's aggression not-violence, it was therefore more available as a choice, and gender likewise constrained men's behavior independently and in response to women's aggression.

In sum, in opposition to a reductive assumption that gender always operates to produce female victims and male aggressors (a position taken by both feminist and gender-symmetry scholars), this study investigated the myriad ways that gender structures dating relationships and the use of aggression and violence between heterosexual partners. Because of the different meanings ascribed to women's and men's physical aggression, women in this study were generally freer to engage in both minor and even relatively severe violence than are men, as evidence by both qualitative and quantitative data. Yet, in no case in the qualitative portion of the study did women's violence appear to contribute to a pattern of coercive control or induce fear. On the other hand, there were three cases of injurious and fear-inducing male violence, in one case reflecting an ongoing pattern of abuse and control.

Inflation of Women's IPV by the CTS

The findings that women report a wide range of behaviors on the CTS that are not easily characterized as violence are troubling given the status of the CTS as the gold standard for measuring IPV, and they raise serious questions about the validity of the measure. Straus argues that the validity of the measure is well established by the range of studies establishing an

association between CTS findings and theoretical and empirical propositions about IPV (e.g., "risk factors" such as poverty and alcohol use; Straus, 1990). However, questions about the validity of the CTS have been raised repeatedly in the past. In an investigation of the factor structure of the CTS, Cascardi, Avery-Leaf, O'Leary, & Slep (1999) note that there is a lack of evidence for the validity of the CTS with adolescents. They observe, "there are no well-validated, published measures of dating aggression other than the CTS" (p. 547). Critics have also pointed to the absence of any contextual data as seriously compromising the interpretability of CTS data (e.g., Dobash et al., 1992, Downs et al., 2007). Murray Straus, the author of the CTS, defines violence as: "an act carried out with the intention, or perceived intention, of causing physical pain or injury to another person" (Straus & Gelles, 1986, p. 467). As early as 1987, Margolin observed that "in line with this definition, there has been increasing recognition that the assessment of violence must include . . . perceptions of the victim, and intention of the attacker" (p. 82). Straus' definition of violence in fact hinges on the contextually dependent *meaning* of the act. This is consistent with participants' definitions of violence in this study, as the women repeatedly distinguished their own and their boyfriends' behaviors based on the intent and experience of the act. Acts that were not intended to cause harm, but were instead intended to command attention, create space, maintain contact, or register annoyance were universally characterized as "not violence" and as qualitatively different from behavior intended to cause harm. These findings are also consistent with Cascardi et al.'s findings suggesting "profound [gender] differences in the ways aggressive acts are perceived or experienced" (p. 554). For example. men in their study experienced mild physical aggression from their female partners as equivalent to psychological aggression.

The decontextualized acts on the CTS, however, reflect neither intent nor perception. If violence as such hinges on these facets, then the CTS should not be understood to be measuring violence. In this study, much of the reported violence by interview participants did not fall into Straus' own definition of violence. Margolin (1987), a marital conflict researcher not identified with the feminist camp, noted this concern early in the history of the CTS and IPV research, observing that while "CTS items appear behaviorally specific, their meanings still are open to interpretation" (p. 83). Describing research on couples using the CTS, she reports similar problems to those identified in this study. She describes a couple who endorsed kicking on the CTS (a severe violence item) that turned out to be play under the bedcovers, and another couple where the wife endorsed one instance of serious violence that was in fact self-defense against longstanding abuse by husband. These examples, consistent with data from this study, show how the CTS fails to discriminate between such disparate behaviors as play and terrified self-defense. Her conclusion, that "the accurate labeling of marital violence has been hampered by the lack of consensus in the conceptualization of this sensitive topic, inadequate precision in our terminology, and insufficient detail in the assessment of this problem" (Margolin, 1987, p. 83) is unfortunately as true today as it was then. As long as domestic violence is simply defined as the occurrence of any specific act on the CTS or a similar measure,[3] stripped of its meaning, research findings will be hampered by the extreme heterogeneity of the target group and appear likely to artificially inflate estimates of partner violence.

[3] While this critique is levied at the CTS due to its overwhelming prominence in the literature, the fundamental problems hold for any act-based measure, including those developed by feminist scholars (which generally produce similar findings to the CTS).

The Role of Personality and Partner's Violence

Study results complicate the independent interpretation of the quantitative data by throwing the outcome variable into question. The structural equation modeling shows that borderline personality style mediates the relationship of anxious attachment to abuse, as predicted. However, given the problems with the CTS illuminated through the mixed analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, overall study findings raise questions about the integrity and interpretability of the IPV outcome variable. Furthermore, it is likely, and suggested in the qualitative data, that the measurement of partner's physical violence is similarly compromised. The failure of partner violence to function as a moderator may thus reflect measurement error rather than a true relationship. Partner violence is highly correlated with violence by self, and in fact is significantly predicted by women's violence when included in the model, but the interpretability of these two indicators and their relationship remains a problem.

As noted in the introduction, one value of mixed method research is the opportunity to "answer confirmatory and exploratory questions, and therefore verify and generate theory in the same study" (Teddlie and Tashakkori , p. 15). While qualitative findings problematize the outcome variable, they also contribute to generating hypotheses about how to interpret the CTS findings and results of the structural equation modeling. While many of the behaviors coded as violent on the CTS may not be clearly characterized as "intimate partner violence," in some cases they did occur in the context of an argument (e.g., physical contact to keep a partner from leaving, or to get away from a partner). To the extent that these behaviors were not playful and were used by participants to manage or react to an interpersonal conflict, they may function as a proxy for poor communication or conflict resolution skills. CTS findings might also be interpreted as an indication of a heightened degree of relationship distress or as a measure of

relational conflict, and these constructs have been correlated with CTS2 violence outcomes (e.g., O'Leary et al., 2007). These interpretations still beg the question whether these behaviors are best conceptualized as intimate partner violence.

Yet another possibility is that the violence scale is assessing impulsivity or disinhibition, and that women higher on these traits engage in and report higher rates of impulsive behaviors. This impulsivity could be linked to difficulties with emotion regulation. In this case, one would expect the violence scale to be correlated with the borderline measure, as impulsivity and emotional dysregulation are central components of borderline personality. In the bivariate context, borderline personality as measured by the PAI shows a moderate correlation with total violence reported on the CTS (.178**). In the multivariate context, borderline traits directly predict CTS violence only when the mediational relationship between psychological abuse and violence is removed. When psychological and physical abuse are allowed to covary, borderline traits only predict psychological abuse. Given these data, the argument that the violence outcome is a proxy for impulsivity is relatively weak, although the PAI is not exclusively a measure of impulsivity and further empirical investigations could contribute to this question.

Of course, the majority of participants do not endorse any violence items on the CTS. However, given the confusion reported by many in the qualitative component about what to endorse on the CTS, and the finding that playful and mock-violence were inconsistently reported by participants, even these hypotheses about what the violence outcome variable might mean are tentative. In other words, it is not only that the outcome variable is noisy, but that the measure appeared to be poor at discriminating among participants even for the heterogeneous behaviors reported as violence. Of the playful and mock-violent behaviors reported in the interviews, not all had been reported on the CTS (e.g., of the eight interview participants who reported no

violence on CTS, three reported playful or mock-violence in interviews that were not structured to assess these behaviors).

Definitional and measurement issues also complicate interpretation of the role of partner violence on women's use of violence. In the structural equation modeling, partner's violence does not have a moderational role, and the best model fit is obtained when women's violence functions as a predictor of male violence. In the qualitative data, men's violence emerged as significant and qualitatively different from women's violence. Although infrequent, men's violence was seen as serious, frightening, and injurious. In the qualitative sample, for the two cases of CTS-reported severe male violence participants reported their own use of severe violence, and in both cases their actions were in self-defense. The other case of severe male violence reported in an interview was coded as minor on the CTS, and involved serious and longstanding abuse by the boyfriend. This participant also reported engaging in severe violence, initially in self-defense and more generally over time. Thus, in all cases of severe male violence, their female partners fought back using severe violence in return. In two cases the women's actions were inadequate to end the violence, in a third case the participant's violent response stopped one boyfriend but not another.

From the qualitative data, then, the hypothesis that in the presence of severe partner violence women are more likely to use violence (i.e., men's violence as a moderator) would be supported. In the qualitative data the few incidents of meaningful male violence always led to severe violence by women, and often to their getting hurt. In the quantitative sample, however, severe violence reported on the CTS was more likely to be unidirectional than bidirectional, with half as many participants reporting both using severe violence (30.4%) as reported bidirectional violence overall (61.3%). Findings from this study appear to support hypotheses by Archer

(2000) and Ehrensaft et al. (2004) that women's violence is more normative and is facilitated by socially constrained male violence, and are consistent with Ehrensaft et al.'s theory that in order to overcome the higher threshold of social constraint, men's violence may be more reflective of disinhibitory personality or pathology. While participants overwhelmingly characterized IPV as non-normative and unusual among their peers, they were much more likely to have witnessed a female peer use violence against a boyfriend (42.9%) than vice-versa (17.2%). Participants universally endorsed stricter prohibitions against male dating violence (consistent with a code of male chivalry) than against women's violence, which was seen as less problematic precisely because it was seen as unlikely to cause injury, fear, or retaliation. The qualitative data also support the hypothesis that male violence is likely to provoke female violence in response, but that female violence is relatively unlikely to provoke a violent male response. This claim is in contradiction to the structural equation modeling which suggests that female violence is a stronger predictor of male violence than vice-versa. The strong bivariate correlation between male and female CTS assault, the shared method, the limitations of having one partner report on both partner's behavior, and the serious validity problems of the CTS raised by this study all point towards cautious interpretations of the relationship between these two variables.

Of course, this study argues that one reason that women's "violence" is more normative is that it is not functioning like male "violence" but is instead construed differently as a gendered act. So while other literature argues that women are in fact more violent (based on CTS or act-based measures), this study argues that women's behavior is fundamentally gendered, rendering it more often not-violence. What is being measured and interpreted as violence is not symmetric in any meaningful way to men's violence. Further research that does not rely on CTS-style measures is needed to investigate the role of male partner violence on women's IPV, and

prospective, longitudinal studies re needed to tease apart the influence of partner's violence for men and women.

Implications for Policy and Research

Research documenting high rates of female IPV have begun to influence social policy. Some researchers and advocacy groups have argued against continued funding for shelters and services for battered women, arguing for equivalent funding for male victims on the basis of CTS research (e.g., the National Family Violence Legislative Resource Center, the website Menweb). Gender symmetry approaches to domestic violence have led to dual arrest policies in many jurisdictions and increasing numbers of women arrested for domestic violence. Given study findings of inflated estimates of violence based on the CTS, the current literature promotes questionable epidemiological estimates and is at risk of supporting misinformed social policy.

Future research should engage with the problems and limitations of the CTS, rather than simply acknowledging them and then proceeding with research as usual. Conclusions about "violence" and about "perpetrators" and "victims" based on CTS findings create what is likely an over-estimation of the problem, and set a tone of criminality and severity not warranted by the data. By reifying all CTS endorsements as domestic violence, researchers risk trivializing actual violence and missing opportunities to further our understanding of IPV. The decontextualized, act-based assessment of domestic violence is a problem not only for the CTS, but is replicated in many alternative measures designed for widespread survey use. The challenge is to first specify the nature of intimate partner violence (a clear point of contention among researchers), and then to operationalize and reliably measure the contextual dimensions required for its valid assessment. Gordon (2000) suggested development of a structured assessment tool similar to the structured clinical interview for the DSM-IV (SCID-IV) that would include screening questions

and different modules for different dimensions of abuse. This would potentially require an interviewer, although it could conceivably be translated to a self-report measure. One downside of a more detailed assessment tool is that it would be more time consuming, and one of the selling points of the CTS is its significant brevity (there are 9 items on the physical assault scale). However, brevity at the cost of validity is false economy. Results from this study also suggest that efforts to distinguish playful and mock-"violence" from acts that are meaningfully violent to the actors might lead to more accurate and interpretable outcome data.

In recognition of the limitations of act-based assessments, alternative measures have been proposed. For example, a measure assessing the victim's perception and experience, the Women's Experience of Battering (WEB, Smith et al., 2002), has been factor analyzed and used to argue for distinct constructs of abuse (battering, physical assault, and sexual assault). Smith et al. provide empirical support for a construct of battering that is distinct from (although overlapping with) physical or sexual assault and that comprises behaviors that "create or sustain fear, provoke a loss of power and control, and induce shame and diesmpowerment in the relationship" (p. 1222). While the WEB assesses dimensions of abuse such as perceived threat and a pervasive experience of disempowerment and loss of sense of self, it has been criticized for overemphasizing the victim's subjective experience at the cost of also measuring the violent behavior (Dutton, 1999). However, it has the potential to qualify (at least from the victim's perspective) the results from purely act-based measures like the CTS. Attempts to generate alternative measures for more specific constructs, such as coercive control (Dutton & Goodman, 2005), may successfully improve measurement specificity and clarify the construct of interest. However, in re-defining the phenomenon of interest (from IPV generally to coercive control specifically) they leave under-theorized the range of women's violence that falls outside this new

construct, precisely the violence that critics argue represents the gender symmetry of IPV. These moves to redefine IPV will function to allow a parallel literature to develop without addressing the conclusions of the CTS-based literature. The lack of engagement between those attempting to better specify the nature of the phenomenon of interest (both theoretically and empirically) with those continuing to rely on the CTS to make claims about IPV has led to a literature that Johnson described as "unintelligible" (Johnson, 2006).

From a social policy perspective, study findings have a number of implications. Most importantly, problems with the CTS raised in this study caution against any social policies premised on claims of equal rates of domestic violence by men and women. As noted in the introduction, different claims about the prevalence of IPV based on different survey methods (e.g., crime victimization vs. family violence) have led to contentious debates about appropriate policy responses to IPV (e.g., reauthorization of and funding for the Violence Against Women Act, first enacted in 1994). For example, the National Family Violence Legislative Resource Center (whose tag line is "advocating for non-discriminatory and evidence-based policies") has a board of influential researchers and engages in legislative advocacy. In their policy statement (http://www.nfvlrc.org/docs/NFVLRC_2_.Policy.statement.pdf) they argue that problems with law enforcement, intervention and victim services are the result of "frequently misleading, and outright false, information available to policy makers," information that leads to a "distorted picture of IPV" of female victims and male abusers. The statement argues that public policy has been unduly influenced by "special interests" that "skew the research in their favor" by focusing on arrest and crime data rather than on CTS-based family violence research showing that "men and women assault one another at approximately equal rates." While many of their policy recommendations are reasonable regardless of the data (e.g., IPV services should be available for

victims regardless of gender or sexual orientation), the claim that assaults are equal is troubled by the results of this study, both in that the CTS codes as "assault" many non-violent behaviors, and in that even when women are aggressive or violent it is not meaningfully the same phenomenon as male IPV.

One policy arena where these claims are playing out is in the debate over the increasing rates of women arrested for domestic violence (Busch & Rosenberg, 2004; Henning, Jones and Holdford, 2005). While the reasons for this are still being analyzed, the gender neutrality of legal discourse, the research arguing for equal rates of female IPV, and successful work of the IPV advocacy community to push for strong, "zero tolerance" responses to IPV have dovetailed to create a response where women are increasingly arrested and mandated to batterer's intervention programs (DeLeon-Granados, Wells, & Binsbacher, 2006). One the one hand, study findings of overestimation of women's violence in the CTS-based literature may have little relevance for the debate about women who get arrested. It could be, as some have argued, that the predominantly minor forms of violence reported in community and student sample on the CTS are unlikely to result in police intervention and arrest and that those arrested for IPV are a mostly non-overlapping population (what Straus has called the representative and clinical sample fallacies; Straus, 1999, see also Hamberger & Guse, 2002). On the other hand, to the extent that all domestic violence occurs within a social milieu structured in part by gender, study findings of the centrality of gender in shaping the meaning of partner violence should theoretically apply across populations. In this case, the context, intent, perceptions and meanings of the violence should inform treatment and interventions, rather than being ignored in favor of "gender-neutral" responses.

To be clear, it is not the contention of this study that women are never violent to their male partners or that they should not be held accountable for their actions. Arguing that women's violence is not the same as men's is not to say that it should be dismissed. This study argues that the gendered context shapes the meaning of a behavior, and that women's violence is not meaningfully symmetric with men's. It argues furthermore that attempts to theorize and measure IPV should take the influence of gender into account. The application of gender-neutral laws against violence and assault is in many ways a separate issue. The question of how to meaningfully define and measure the construct of IPV and the question of what behaviors warrant justice system involvement (which is constrained in multiple ways) are not the same questions. This is confused by the use of the terms IPV and domestic violence to refer to such disparate phenomena as reflected by CTS data and criminal justice statistics.

More fundamentally, this study asks whether all the behaviors flagged by CTS-like measures warrant concern, or at least whether they warrant concern as incidents of domestic violence. One outcome of the research on the prevalence of women's violence has been a shift in dating violence prevention programs towards gender neutrality. Programs promoting respect (e.g., the Center for Disease Control's "Choose Respect" program) and discouraging controlling and abusive behavior by anyone (e.g., Family Violence Prevention Fund's "That's Not Cool" campaign) encourage healthy relationship and communication skills. While much of the behavior flagged by the CTS may not have been easily categorized as dating violence, study findings support prevention programs that encourage respectful behavior and healthy relationship boundaries and skills. Participants in this study expressed mixed feelings in that while they experienced women's violence as different from men's, they also felt this position to reflect a double standard (which by definition felt unfair). Prevention programs that promote positive

behaviors by all parties acknowledge the potential for anyone to be abusive while not flattening all abuse into the same mold.

Limitations and Future Directions

As with all research, there are a number of limitations to this study. First, as discussed previously, is the possibility that interview participants were minimizing, lying, or otherwise distorting their responses in a socially desirable direction. This is a particular concern given the sensitive topic, and it is likely that in some cases participants were less than forthcoming. However, perhaps encouraged by the more permissive attitudes about women's violence reported, many participants did describe their own and others' violence against boyfriends, often distinguishing what had been "serious" and what they considered non-violent or trivial. Participants for the most part presented as conscientious, open, and collaborative with the interview. Furthermore, the overwhelmingly dominant pattern of surprise about having interpreted CTS endorsements as reflecting incidents of violence and the repeated descriptions of teasing and mock-violence suggest that the problem is not only one of honest/correct answers on the more anonymous CTS followed by minimization at interview. Interview data also suggested that participants respond to the CTS about their experiences more globally than within the 12-month anchor provided, another limitation of CTS-only research.

Qualitative findings about the continuum of behaviors from playful to meaningfully violent emerged from interviews designed only to follow up on participants' prior CTS responses, not from a protocol specifically designed to assess the existence or extent of non-serious violence by participants. Future research might investigate this continuum more directly. Finally, a significant limitation and area for future research is the absence of male participants, due to practical constraints of this project and its focus on women's violence. Future research

attempting to investigate the nature and contexts of women's intimate partner violence should include both men and women, and extend beyond undergraduate samples. Most fundamentally, study results point to the need for a renewed conversation about the nature of intimate partner violence, the role of gender and context in making actions meaningful as IPV, and new ways to measure it. As the literature currently stands, counts of decontextualized acts interpreted as indicators of IPV function as the unwarranted foundation for claims about incidence, prevalence, correlates and risk factors of a phenomenon that remains poorly defined.

Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the nature of women's IPV and to elucidate its social contexts. Instead, findings overwhelmingly suggested an overestimation of women's violence by the CTS, currently the gold-standard for measuring IPV. While women's violence did exist in this sample, overall findings suggest that the literature may have made a mountain of "perpetrators" out of a molehill of truly partner violent and aggressive women. The CTS led to inflated estimates through the misidentification of play as violence, and through the categorization of a range of behaviors, labeled here as mock-violence, that fall along a continuum from playful to short of meaningfully violent. Study findings also support the position that gender matters for any meaningful understanding of domestic violence. The gendered social environment shaped the occurrence and meaning of women's acts. Whereas gender-symmetry proponents argue that gender is irrelevant because it does not predict intimate partner violence, this study in contrast documents the centrality of gender for IPV. That women's aggression was more normative, and male violence seriously proscribed, reflects the relevance of gender, not its absence. Arguments that gender does not predict IPV fail to recognize that IPV, and women's behavior towards boyfriends, is itself fundamentally gendered.

One of the reasons that the CTS overestimated women's IPV is that gender influences the meaning of women's behavior such that many of the acts endorsed were not socially interpretable as dating violence. Together, these findings lend support to arguments for re-visiting fundamental issues of problem definition and measurement as well as social policy and intervention.

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APPENDIX A

TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure 1

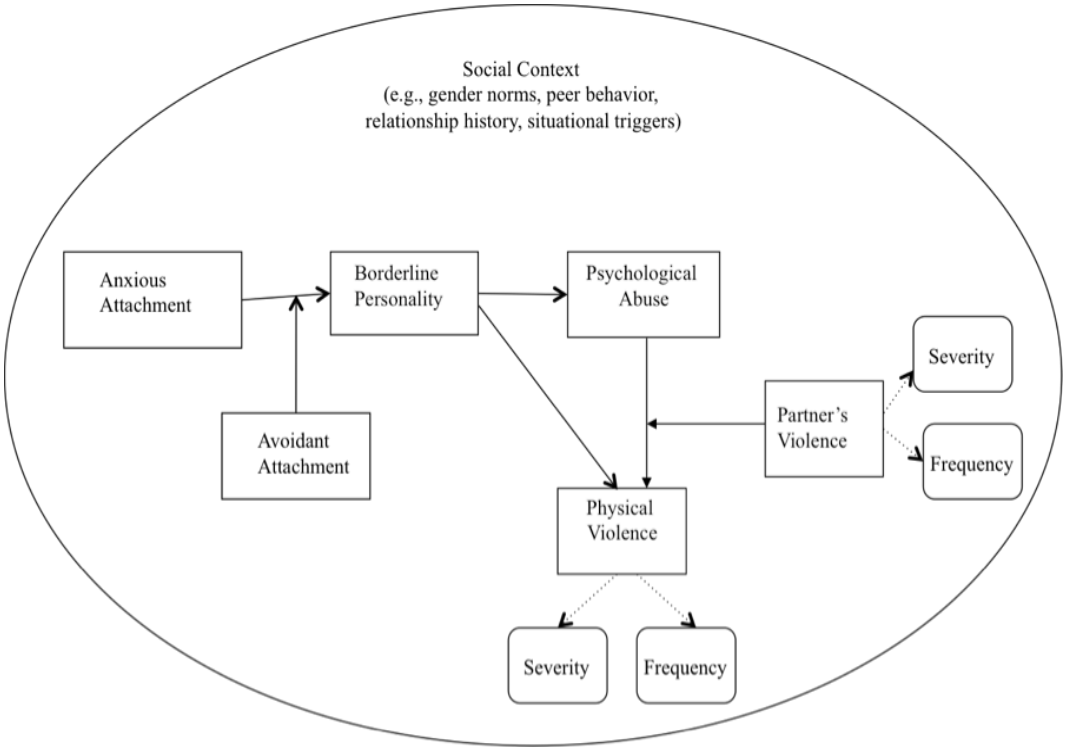


Table 1

Age and Year in School of Survey Participants

Demographic	n	%
Age		
18	119	25
19	218	45.8
20	80	16.8
21	38	8.0
22 and over	21	4.4
Year in School		
Freshman	277	58.2
Sophomore	120	25.2
Junior	52	10.9
Senior	27	5.7

Table 2

Racial/Ethnic Identity of Survey Participants

Race/Ethnicity	n	%
African-American	36	7.6
Asian/Asian-American/Asian Pacific Islander	83	17.4
Caucasian	323	67.9
Latina/Hispanic	52	10.9
Native American	3	.6
Biracial	9	1.9

Table 3

Reliabilities, Means, and Standard Deviations of Observed Variables

Latent construct/indicator	*α*	*M*	*SD*
Borderline Personality Traits			
Personality Assessment Inventory – Borderline Features Scale (PAI-BOR)			
Affective Instability Scale	.81	6.30	3.90
Identity Disturbance Scale	.59	7.51	3.30
Negative Relationships Scale	.69	7.29	3.41
Self-harm Scale	.74	4.24	3.24
Physical Violence			
Conflict Tactics Scales 2 (CTS2)			
Violence Scale - Self	.65	4.70	11.07
Violence Scale - Partner	.72	3.06	10.57
Psychological Abuse			
Conflict Tactics Scales 2 (CTS2)			
Severe Psychological Abuse Scale – Self	.29	1.44	4.40
Modified Psychological Maltreatment Inventory (mPMI).			
Isolation and Emotional Control Scale	.70	4.21	5.94
Self-esteem Scale	.76	6.96	7.21
Jealousy Scale	.64	12.27	6.65
Verbal Abuse Scale	.84	7.66	7.48
Withdrawal Scale	.65	7.63	6.08
Attachment			
Experiences in Close Relationships Revised (ECR-R)			
Avoidant Attachment Scale	.93	44.19	17.42
Anxious Attachment Scale	.90	50.69	17.59

Table 4

Assault and Psychological Abuse Prevalence

	n	%
Total assault by self	232	48.7
Minor assault	228	47.9
Severe assault	65	13.7
Total assault by partner	160	33.6
Minor assault	153	32.1
Severe assault	38	8.0
Psychological Abuse		
CTS Minor Abuse	421	88.4
CTS Severe Abuse	130	27.3
CTS Total Abuse	424	89.1
mPMI Total Abuse	473	99.4

Table 5

Mutuality Types

	n	%
Assault Total		
Partner Only	11	2.3
Self Only	83	17.4
Both	149	31.3
Assault Severe		
Partner Only	14	2.9
Self Only	41	8.6
Both	24	5.0

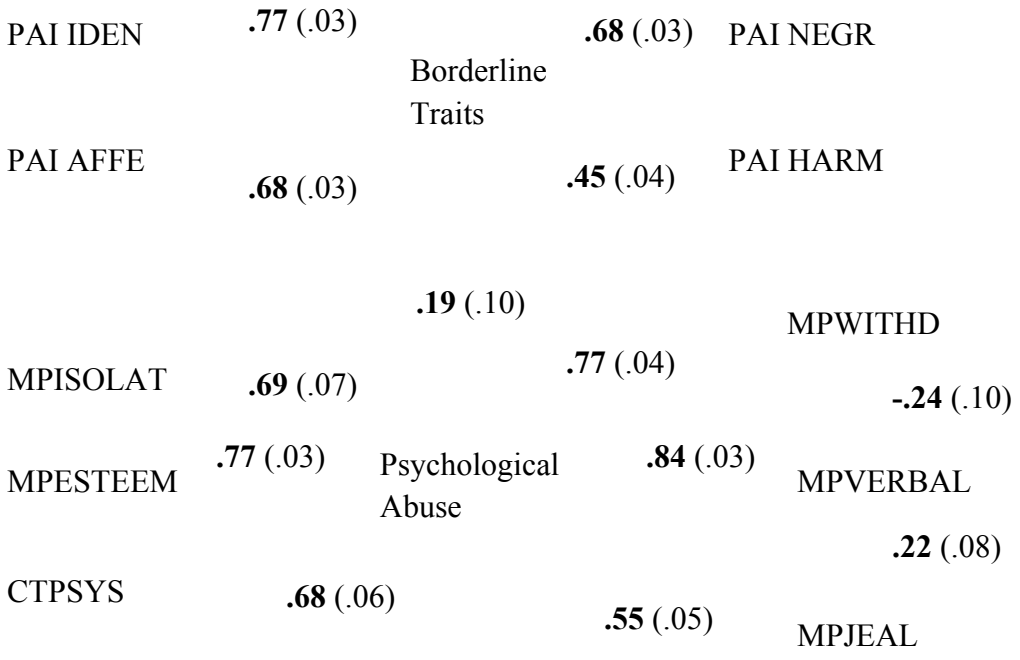
Table 6

Bivariate correlations between indicators

Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6
ECR Anx	1	**.388****	**.541****	**.193****	.060	.090
ECR Avd		1	**.181****	**.101***	.010	.030
PAI			1	**.346****	**.173****	**.137****
mPMI				1	**.431****	**.290****
CTS-S					1	**.792****
CTS-P						1

Note: Bold numbers indicate statistical significance (* = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$). ECR Anx = ECR Anxiety Scale; ECR Avd = ECR Avoidance Scale; PAI = Personality Assessment Inventory – Borderline Features Scale (PAI-BOR); mPMI = Modified Psychological Maltreatment Inventory, CTS-S = Conflict Tactics Scales Assault Scale Self; CTS-P = Conflict Tactics Scales Assault Scale Partner.

Figure 2. Measurement Model



PAI IDEN = PAI Identity Scale; PAI AFFE = PAI Affective Instability Scale; PAI NEGR = PAI Negative Relationships Scale; PAI HARM = PAI Self-Harm Scale; MPISOLAT = mPMI Isolation and Emotional Control Scale; MPESTEEM = mPMI, MPWITHD = mPMI Withdrawal Scale; MPVERBAL = mPMI Verbal Abuse Scale; MPJEAL = mPMI Jealousy Scale . Includes estimates of structural model coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses). Parameters in bold are significant.

Figure 3: Moderated Mediation, Model 1

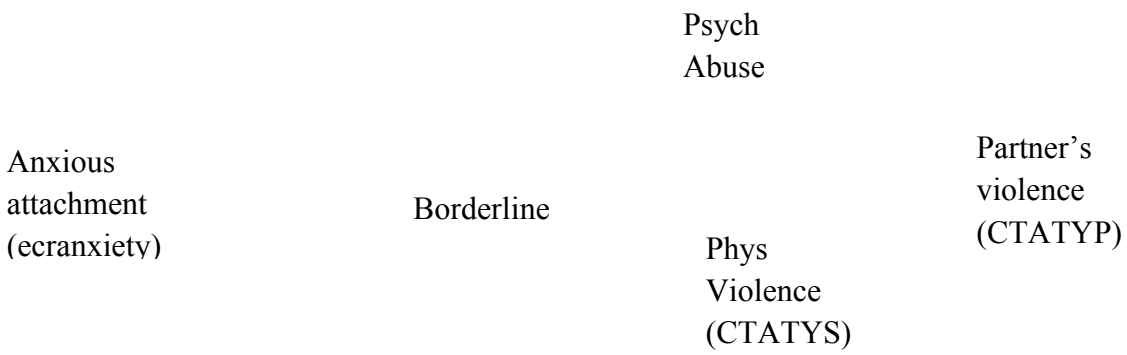


Figure 4: Moderated Mediation, Model 2

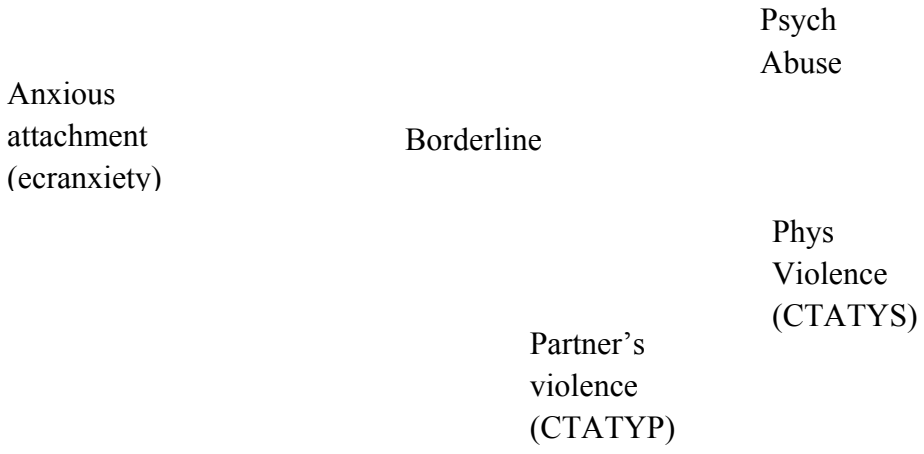


Figure 5: Mediation Model 3

Mediational models including standardized estimates of structural model coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses). Parameters in bold are significant.

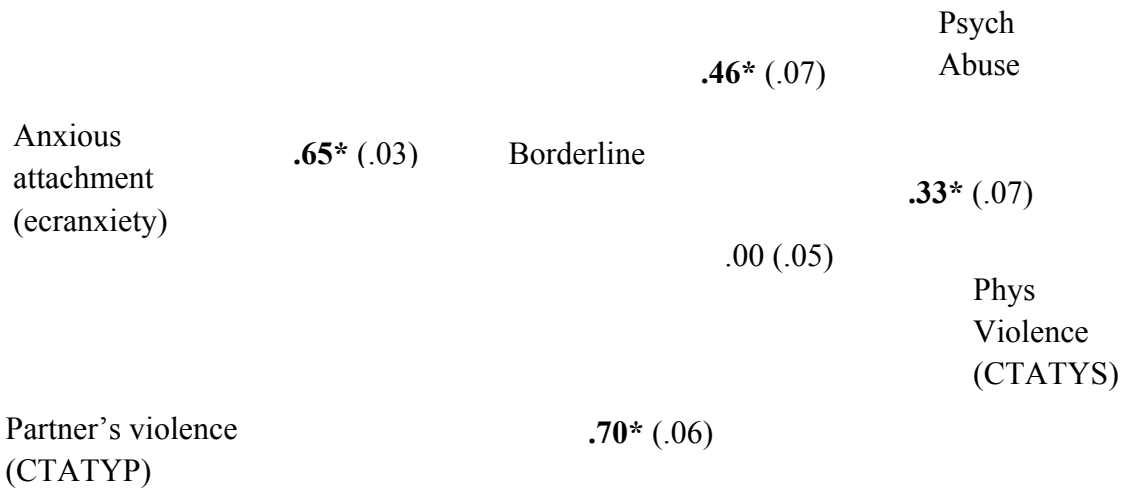


Figure 6: Mediation Model 4

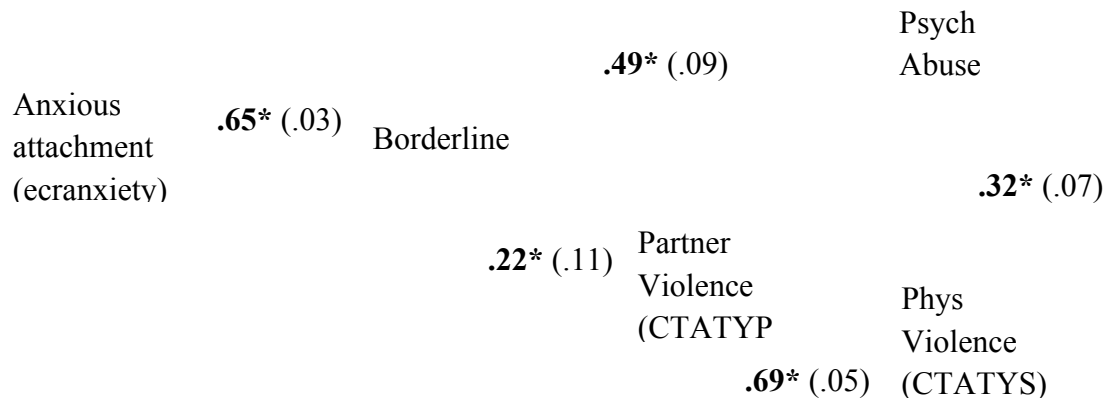


Figure 7: Mediation Model 5

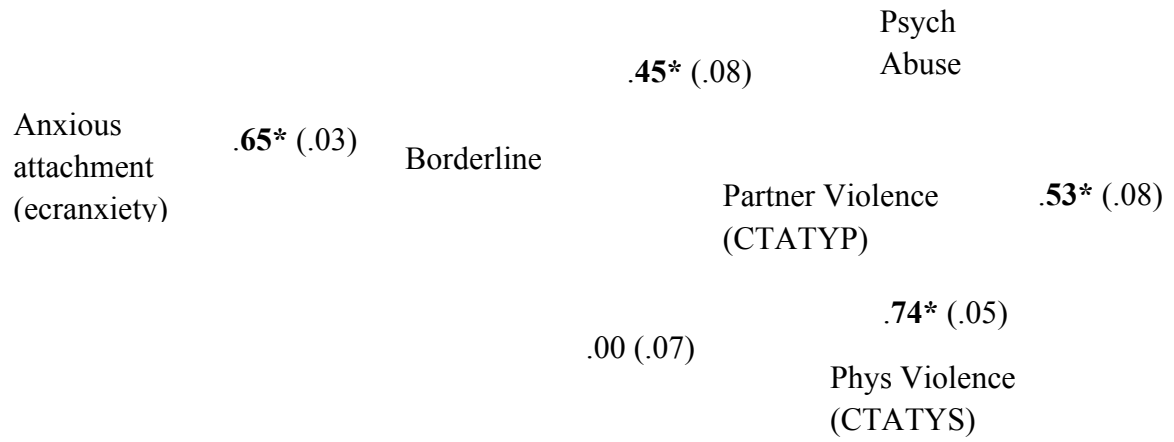


Figure 8: Mediation Model 6

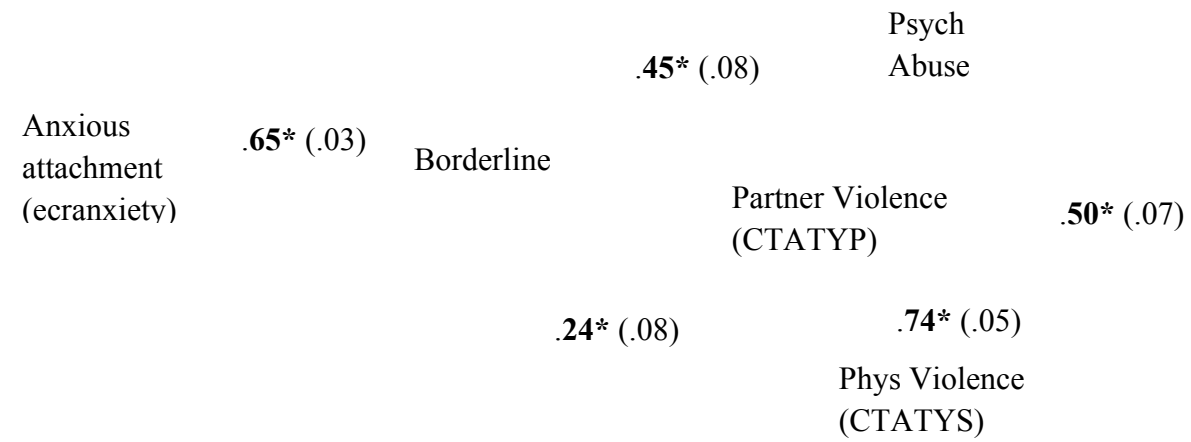


Figure 9: Direct Effects Model

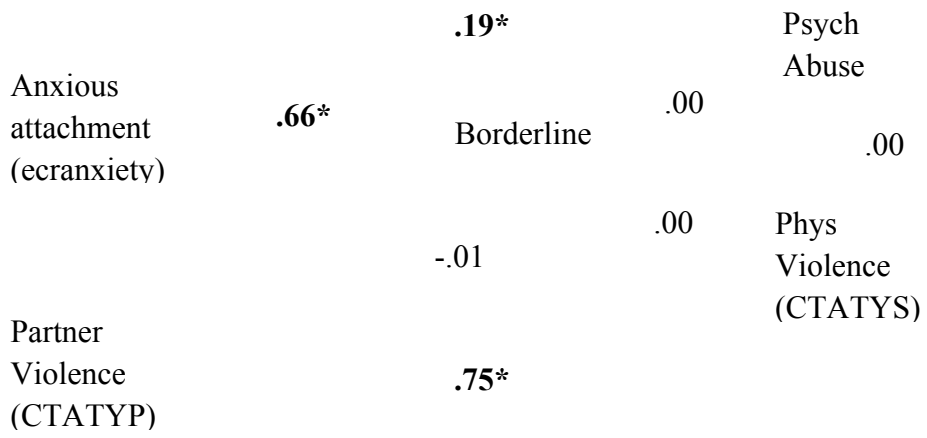


Table 7

Interview groups and number of participants

	No violence	Minor 1-2	Minor 3-5	Minor ≥ 6 and/or severe
PAI < 38	Group 1 (4)	Group 2 (4)	Group 3 (5)	Group 4 (6)
PAI ≥ 38	Group 5 (4)	Group 6 (4)	Group 7 (3)	Group 8 (4)

Table 8

Interview Participant Categorizations

Part #	Group	No Violence	Playful Only	Any violence	Any Playful	Self-defense	Self-defense Only
22	G1			x	x		
117	G1		x		x		
120	G1	x					
187	G1	x					
66	G2		x		x		
80	G2		x		x		
145	G2			x			
162	G2			x			
131	G3			x	x		
134	G3			x	x		
146	G3			x			
149	G3			x			
158	G3			x	x		
90	G4			x			
101	G4			x	x		
106	G4		x		x		
119	G4			x		x	x
167	G4				x	x	x
178	G4			x	x		
63	G5		x		x		
77	G5	x					
89	G5	x					
105	G5	x					
31	G6		x		x		
148	G6			x			
155	G6		x		x		
310	G6			x			
136	G7			x	x		
156	G7			x			
181	G7			x			
239	G8			x	x		
256	G8			x	x		
353	G8			x	x		
405	G8			x		x	

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE, INTERVIEW PROTOCOL, INFORMED CONSENTS, AND DEBRIEFING FORM

Demographics

Please provide some information about yourself.

1. Age (in years): _____

2. Race/Ethnicity (please check all that apply):
   a. _____ African-American
   b. _____ Asian/Asian-American/Pacific Islander
   c. _____ Caucasian
   d. _____ Hispanic/Latina
   e. _____ Native American
   f. _____ Biracial
   g. _____ Other (please specify): _____
   h.

3. Current class standing (please check one):
   a. _____ freshman
   b. _____ sophomore
   c. _____ junior
   d. _____ senior
   e. _____ Other (please specify): _____
   f.

4. Parent's highest level of education:
   a. ___ Not applicable
   b. ___ Grade school
   c. ___ High school graduate/GED
   d. ___ Associate's Degree
   e. ___ Bachelor's Degree
   f. ___ Graduate/Professional Degree
   g.

5. Other parent's highest level of education:
   a. ___ Not applicable
   b. ___ Grade school
   c. ___ High school graduate/GED
   d. ___ Associate's Degree
   e. ___ Bachelor's Degree
   f. ___ Graduate/Professional Degree

6. I grew up in:
   a. ____ a rural area
   b. ____ a town
   c. ____ a suburb
   d. ____ a city

7. Are you a member of any of the following categories of student organizations or groups? (please check all that apply)
   a. ____ sorority
   b. ____ athletic/recreation
   c. ____ cultural/ethnic (e.g., Arab Student Association, Association of Latin American Students)
   d. ____ creative or performing arts (e.g., choir, dance, band)
   e. ____ religious club or group
   f. ____ political organization (e.g., Amnesty, NOW student chapter)
   g. ____ ROTC
   h. ____ student governance/student council
   i. ____ academic/professional (e.g., Psi Chi)
   j. ____ other (please specify): _____

8. How often do you spend time with your friends? (Please check the best answer)
   h. _____ Every day
   i. _____ A few times a week

j. _____ Once a week
k. _____ A few times a month
l. _____ Once a month or less

9. Of your friends, is there anyone you feel close to, that you cantrust to talk to when you're upset or have problems? (Please circle one)
Yes No

ECR

The following statements concern how you feel in romantic relationships. We are interested in how you *generally* experience relationships, not just in what is happening in a current relationship. Respond to each statement by circling a number to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement. (Please circle the best answer)

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Somewhat Disagree
4 = Neutral
5 = Somewhat Agree
6 = Agree
7= Strongly Agree

1. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become interested in someone else.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I rarely worry about my partner leaving me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. It makes me mad that I don't get the affection and support I need from my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. My partner only seems to notice me when I'm angry.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him or her.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I'm afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won't like who I really am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Response options 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)

13. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I worry that I won't measure up to other people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I tell my partner just about everything.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. It's easy for me to be affectionate with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. I am nervous when partners get too close to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. My partner really understands me and my needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. I worry a lot about my relationships.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. I find it easy to depend on romantic partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. It's not difficult for me to get close to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. I talk things over with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. I do not often worry about being abandoned.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PAI

This questionnaire consists of numbered statements. Read each statement and decide if it is an accurate statement about you. Mark your answer next to each statement. Be sure to answer every statement. There are no right or wrong answers.

	False, not at all true	*Slightly true*	*Mainly true*	*Very true*
1. My mood can shift quite suddenly.	0	1	2	3
2. My attitude about myself changes a lot.	0	1	2	3
3. My relationships have been stormy.	0	1	2	3
4. My moods get quite intense.	0	1	2	3
5. Sometimes I feel terribly empty inside.	0	1	2	3
6. I want to let certain people know how much they've hurt me.	0	1	2	3
7. My mood is very steady	0	1	2	3
8. I worry a lot about other people leaving me.	0	1	2	3
9. People once close to me have let me down.	0	1	2	3
10. I have little control over my anger.	0	1	2	3
11. I often wonder what I should do with my life.	0	1	2	3
12. I rarely feel very lonely.	0	1	2	3
13. I sometimes do things so impulsively that I get into trouble.	0	1	2	3
14. I've always been a pretty happy person.	0	1	2	3
15. I can't handle separation from those close to me very well.	0	1	2	3
16. I've made some real mistakes in the people I've picked as friends.	0	1	2	3
17. When I'm upset, I typically do something to hurt myself.	0	1	2	3

18. I've had times when I was so mad I couldn't do enough to express my anger.	0	1	2	3
19. I don't get bored very easily.	0	1	2	3
20. Once someone is my friend, we stay friends.	0	1	2	3
21. I'm too impulsive for my own good.	0	1	2	3
22. I spend money too easily.	0	1	2	3
23. I'm a reckless person.	0	1	2	3
24. I'm careful about how I spend my money.	0	1	2	3
25. Sometimes I get upset.	0	1	2	3
26. Occasionally, I talk about people behind their backs.	0	1	2	3
27. There are some people I don't like.	0	1	2	3
28. I have never told a lie.	0	1	2	3
29. I believe that my brain is not working properly.	0	1	2	3
30. A nuclear war may not be such a bad idea.	0	1	2	3
31. I lied a lot on this questionnaire.	0	1	2	3

10. What is your current relationship status? (please check one)
    a. _____ Single
    b. _____ Dating
    c. _____ Casual dating relationship
    d. _____Married
    e. _____ Married but separated
    f. _____ Other: (please specify) _____

Please answer the following questions regarding your current romantic relationship. (IF CURRENTLY SINGLE, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 18)

11. How old is your current partner? _____

11a. What is the gender of your current partner? M F Other: _____

12. How long have you been in this relationship (in years/months)? _____

13. Please give your opinion regarding your current relationship: (Please circle the best answer)

	Not at all likely	*Not likely*	*Somewhat likely*	*Extremely likely*
a. Likelihood of current relationship lasting 1 year	1	2	3	4
b. Likelihood of current relationship lasting 5 years	1	2	3	4

14. How satisfied are you with your current relationship? (Please circle the best answer)

Strongly dis-satisfied	*Dis-satisfied*	*Somewhat dis-satisfied*	*Somewhat satisfied*	*Satisfied*	*Very satisfied*
1	2	3	4	5	6

15. How committed are you to the relationship?

Not at all committed	*Not committed*	*Not very committed*	*Somewhat committed*	*Committed*	*Extremely committed*
1	2	3	4	5	6

16. How often do you spend time with your partner? (Please check the best answer)

a. _____ Every day
b. _____ A few times a week
c. _____ Once a week
d. _____ A few times a month
e. _____ Once a month or less

17. Are you and your partner sexually active? (Please circle one) Yes No

18. Before your current relationship (or in the past), have you had any other boyfriends or dated other men? (Please circle one)

Yes No [IF NO, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 19]

19. Thinking about your previous boyfriend or male dating partner:

a. How old was he when you were together? _____

b. How old were you when you were together? _____

c. How long were you together? _____

d. How often did you spend time with him?

i. _____ Every day
ii. _____ A few times a week
iii. _____ Once a week
iv. _____ A few times a month
v. _____ Once a month or less

e. Were you and your last partner sexually active? (Please circle one) Yes No

20. Some people think it is all right for a *man* to slap or hit his girlfriend in certain situations. Otherpeople think it is not all right. For each of the following situations, do you think yourfriends would approve of a man slapping his girlfriend?
21. Do you think it is all right for a man to slap or hit his girlfriend if:

Would your friends approve if:	*Yes*	*Depends*	*No*	*Don't Know*
a. She won't do what he tells her	1	2	3	4
b. She insults him when they are alone	1	2	3	4
c. She insults him in front of other people	1	2	3	4
d. She gets drunk or high	1	2	3	4
e. She is crying hysterically	1	2	3	4
f. She won't have sex with him	1	2	3	4
g. He finds out she is going out with someone else	1	2	3	4
h. She hits him first when they are arguing	1	2	3	4

	Yes	*Depends*	*No*	*Don't Know*
a. She won't do what he tells her	1	2	3	4
b. She insults him when they are alone	1	2	3	4
c. She insults him in front of other people	1	2	3	4
d. She gets drunk or high	1	2	3	4
e. She is crying hysterically	1	2	3	4
f. She won't have sex with him	1	2	3	4
g. He finds out she is going out with someone else	1	2	3	4
h. She hits him first when they are arguing	1	2	3	4

22. Some people think it is all right for a *woman* to slap or her boyfriend in certain situations. Other people think it is not all right. For each of the following situations, do you think your friends would approve of a woman slapping her boyfriend?

Would your friends approve if:	*Yes*	*Depends*	*No*	*Don't Know*
a. He won't do what she tells him	1	2	3	4
b. He insults her when they are alone	1	2	3	4
c. He insults her in front of other people	1	2	3	4
d. He gets drunk or high	1	2	3	4
e. He is yelling at her	1	2	3	4
f. He is ignoring her	1	2	3	4
g. He won't have sex with her	1	2	3	4
h. She finds out he is going out with someone else	1	2	3	4
i. He hits her first when they are arguing	1	2	3	4

23. Do you think it is all right for a woman to slap or her boyfriend if:

	Yes	*Depends*	*No*	*Don't Know*
1. He won't do what she tells him	1	2	3	4
2. He insults her when they are alone	1	2	3	4
3. He insults her in front of other people	1	2	3	4
4. He gets drunk or high	1	2	3	4
5. He is yelling at her	1	2	3	4
6. He is ignoring her	1	2	3	4
7. He won't have sex with her	1	2	3	4
8. She finds out he is going out with someone else	1	2	3	4
9. He hits her first when they are arguing	1	2	3	4

24. How common is it for dating relationships to include physical force or violence among your friends or people you hang out with? (Please check one)

a. ____ never happens
b. ____ almost never happens
c. ____ happens once in a while
d. ____ happens sometimes
e. ____ happens often
f. ____ happens all the time

Please answer the following questions about dating among your friends and acquaintances to the best of your knowledge.

To the best of your knowledge:	*All of them*	*Most of them*	*Half of them*	*A few of them*	*None of them*
25. how many of your female friends or acquaintances have ever had boyfriends who used physical force, like hitting, slapping or beating, to resolve conflicts with them?	1	2	3	4	5
26. how many of your female friends or acquaintances have ever used physical force, like hitting, slapping or beating, to resolve conflicts with their boyfriends?	1	2	3	4	5
27. how many of your male friends or acquaintances have ever used physical force, like hitting, slapping or beating, to resolve conflicts with their girlfriends?	1	2	3	4	5
28. how many of your male friends have ever had girlfriends who used physical force, like hitting, slapping or beating, to resolve conflicts with them?	1	2	3	4	5

29. How often have you seen female friends or acquaintances use physical force or violence against boyfriends? (please circle one)

0……..1……2……...…..3……4…….5

never once a few times many times frequently constantly

30. What did you do when you saw this? (please circle as many options as needed)

    a. I ignored it
    b. I laughed
    c. I restrained the woman
    d. I restrained the man
    e. I yelled at her to stop
    f. I talked to her later about it
    g. Other (please describe): _____
    h. Not applicable

31. How did others who were there react? (please circle as many options as needed)

    a. They ignored it
    b. They laughed
    c. They restrained the woman
    d. They restrained the man
    e. They yelled at her to stop
    f. They talked to her later about it
    b. Other (please describe): _____
    c. Not applicable

32. How often have you seen <u>male</u> friends or acquaintances use physical force or violence against girlfriends? (please circle one)

    0……..1……2……...…..3……4……5

    never once a few times many times frequently constantly

33. What did you do when you saw this? (please circle as many options as needed)

    a. I ignored it
    b. I laughed
    c. I restrained the man
    d. I restrained the woman
    e. I yelled at him to stop
    f. I talked to him later about it
    g. Other (please describe): _____

h. Not applicable

34. How did others who were there react? (please circle as many options as needed)

    a. They ignored it
    b. They laughed
    c. They restrained the man
    d. They restrained the woman
    e. They yelled at him to stop
    f. They talked to him later about it
    g. Other: _____

    h. Not applicable

Have any of your female friends ever told you: (please circle best answer)

35. That you should respond to your boyfriend's challenges to your authority by using physical force like hitting or slapping them?

    Yes No

36. That it is all right for a woman to hit her boyfriend in certain situations?

    Yes No

37. That men can't be trusted because they will say and do anything to convince you to have sex with them?

    Yes No

38. That if a man spends money on a date, she should have sex with him in return?

    Yes No

39. That it is all right for a man to physically force a woman to have sex with him in certain situations?

    Yes No

CURRENT/MOST RECENT RELATIONSHIP

In the next section, we would like to ask you about your current or most recent relationship with a man.

CTS-2

No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with the other person, want different things from each other, or just have spats or fights because they are in a bad mood, are tired, or for some other reason. Couples also have many different ways of trying to settle their differences. This is a list of things that might happen when you have differences. Please circle how many times you did each of these things in the past year, and how many times your partner did them in the past year. If you or your partner did not do one of these things in the past year, but it happened before that, circle "7."

How often did this happen?

1 = Once in the past year	5 = 11-20 times in the past year
2 = Twice in the past year	6 = More than 20 times in the past year
3 = 3-5 times in the past year	7 = Not in the past year, but it did happen before
4 = 6-10 times in the past year	0 = This has never happened

1.	I showed my partner I cared even though we disagreed.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
2.	My partner showed care for me even though we disagreed.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
3.	I explained my side of a disagreement to my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
4.	My partner explained his side of a disagreement to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
5.	I insulted or swore at my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
6.	My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
7.	I threw something at my partner that could hurt.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
8.	My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
9.	I twisted my partner's arm or hair.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
10.	My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
11.	I had a sprain, bruise, or small cut because of a fight with my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
12.	My partner had a sprain, bruise, or small cut because of a fight with me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0

13. I showed respect for my partner's feelings about an issue.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
14. My partner showed respect for my feelings about an issue.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
15. I made my partner have sex without a condom.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
16. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
17. I pushed or shoved my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
18. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
19. I used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make my partner have oral or anal sex.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
20. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
21. I used a knife or gun on my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
22. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
23. I passed out from being hit on the head by my partner in a fight.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
24. My partner passed out from being hit on the head in a fight with me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
25. I called my partner fat or ugly.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
26. My partner called me fat or ugly.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
27. I punched or hit my partner with something that could hurt.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
28. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
29. I destroyed something belonging to my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
30. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
31. I went to a doctor because of a fight with my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
32. My partner went to a doctor because of a fight with me	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
33. I choked my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
34. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
35. I shouted or yelled at my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0

36. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
37. I slammed my partner against a wall.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
38. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
39. I said I was sure we could work out a problem.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
40. My partner was sure we could work it out.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
41. I needed to see a doctor because of a fight with my partner, but I didn't.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
42. My partner needed to see a doctor because of a fight with me, but didn't.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
43. I beat up my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
44. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
45. I grabbed my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
46. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
47. I used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make my partner have sex.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
48. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
49. I stomped out of the room or house or yard during a disagreement.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
50. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
51. I insisted on sex when my partner did not want to (but did not use physical force).	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
52. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
53. I slapped my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
54. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
55. I had a broken bone from a fight with my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
56. My partner had a broken bone from a fight with me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0

57. I used threats to make my partner have oral or anal sex.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
58. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
59. I suggested a compromise to a disagreement.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
60. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
61. I burned or scalded my partner on purpose.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
62. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
63. I insisted my partner have oral or anal sex (but did not use physical force).	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
64. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
65. I accused my partner of being a lousy lover.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
66. My partner accused me of this.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
67. I did something to spite my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
68. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
69. I threatened to hit or throw something at my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
70. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
71. I felt physical pain that still hurt the next day because of a fight with my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
72. My partner still felt physical pain the next day because of a fight we had.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
73. I kicked my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
74. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
75. I used threats to make my partner have sex.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
76. My partner did this to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
77. I agreed to try a solution to a disagreement my partner suggested.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
78. My partner agreed to try a solution I suggested.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0

40. We would like to ask about control in your relationship. Would you say that your partner controls you (choose one):

a. ____ in almost all areas of your life or most of the time.
b. ____ in many, but not all, areas of your life or much of the time.
c. ____ in only a few areas of your life or a little bit of the time.
d. ____ in no, almost no, areas of your life or none or almost none of the time.

41. We would like to ask you about times in your relationship when you might try to control your partner, or get your partner to do things he doesn't want to do. Would you say that you control your partner (choose one):

a. ____ in almost all areas of his/her life or most of the time.
b. ____ in many, but not all, areas of his/her life or much of the time.
c. ____ in only a few areas of his/her life or a little bit of the time.
d. ____ in no, almost no, areas of his/her life or none or almost none of the time.

mPMI

Please indicate the frequency of each of the following behaviors during the <u>past year</u> in your current or most recent dating relationship with a man. If you or your partner did not do one of these things in the past year, but it happened before that, circle "7."

How often did this happen?

1 = Once in the past year
2 = Twice in the past year
3 = 3-5 times in the past year
4 = 6-10 times in the past year
5 = 11-20 times in the past year
6 = More than 20 times in the past year
7 = Not in the past year, but it did happen before
0 = This has never happened

1. My partner put down my appearance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
1a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
2. My partner insulted or shamed me in front of others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
2a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
3. My partner trusted me with members of the opposite sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
3a. I trusted my partner with members of the opposite sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
4. My partner treated me like I was stupid.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
4a. I treated my partner like this.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
5. My partner was insensitive to my feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
5a. I was insensitive to my partner's feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

6. My partner treated me as if my feelings were important and worthy of consideration.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
6a. I treated my partner like this.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
7. My partner told me I couldn't manage by myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
7a. I told my partner this.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
8. My partner said things to spite me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
8a. I said things to spite my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
10. My partner brought up things from my past to hurt me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
10a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
11. My partner called me names.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
11a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
12. My partner respected my independence.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
12a. I respected my partner's independence.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
13. My partner swore at me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
13a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
14. My partner yelled and screamed at me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
14a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
15. My partner respected my choice of friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
15a. I respected my partner's choice of friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
16. My partner treated me like I was an inferior.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
16a. I treated my partner like this.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
17. My partner sulked and refused to talk about a problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
17a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
18. My partner was willing to talk calmly about problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

18a. I was willing to talk calmly about problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
19. My partner stomped out of the house or yard during a disagreement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
19a. I did this during a disagreement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
20. My partner gave me the silent treatment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
20a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
21. My partner said things to encourage me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
21a. I said things to encourage my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
22. My partner withheld affection from me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
22a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
23. My partner did not let me talk about my feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
23a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
24. My partner took responsibility for his problems or behaviors.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
24a. I took responsibility for my problems or behaviors.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
25. My partner was insensitive to my sexual needs and desires.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
25a. I was insensitive to my partner's sexual needs and desires.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
26. My partner monitored my time and made me account for my whereabouts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
26a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
27. My partner praised me in front of others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
27a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
28. My partner treated me like his personal servant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
28a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
29. My partner ordered me around.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

29a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
30. My partner told me my feelings were reasonable or normal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
30a. I told my partner his feelings were reasonable or normal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
31. My partner was jealous and suspicious of my friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
31a. I was jealous and suspicious of my partner's friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
32. My partner was jealous of other men.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
32a. I was jealous of other women.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
33. My partner treated me like an equal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
33a. I treated my partner like an equal.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
34. My partner did not want me to go to school or to other self-improvement activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
34a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
35. My partner did not want me to socialize with my same sex friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
35a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
36. My partner respected my intelligence.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
36a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
37. My partner accused me of seeing another man.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
37a. I accused my partner of seeing another woman.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
38. My partner tried to keep me from seeing or talking to my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
38a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
39. My partner respected my confidences or kept my secrets.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
39a. I respected my partner's confidences or kept his secrets.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
40. My partner interfered in my relationship with family members.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

40a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
41. My partner tried to keep me from doing things to help myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
41a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
42. My partner let me talk about my feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
42a. I let my partner talk about his feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
44. My partner told me my feelings are irrational or crazy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
44a. I said these things to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
45. My partner encouraged me to go to school or other self-improvement activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
45a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
46. My partner blamed me for his or her problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
46a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
47. My partner tried to turn my family and friends against me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
47a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
48. My partner was affectionate with me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
48a. I was affectionate with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
49. My partner blamed me for causing his or her violent behavior.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
49a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
50. My partner tried to make me feel like I was crazy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
50a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
51. My partner encouraged me to socialize with my same sex friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
51a. I did this to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
52. My partner's moods changed radically, from very calm to very angry or vice versa.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0

52a. My moods changed radically, from very calm to very angry or vice versa.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
53. My partner blamed me when upset even if I had nothing to do with it.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
53a. I did this to my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
54. My partner was sensitive to my sexual needs and desires.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
54a. I was sensitive to my partner's sexual needs and desires.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
55. My partner tried to convince my family and friends that I was crazy.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
55a. I tried to convince my partner's family and friends that he was crazy.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
56. My partner threatened to hurt himself if I left him.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
56a. I did this to my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
57. My partner threatened to have an affair with someone else.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
57a. I did this to my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
58. My partner made requests politely.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
58a. I made requests politely	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
59. My partner threatened to leave the relationship.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
59a. I threatened to leave the relationship.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
60. My partner encouraged me to see or talk to my family.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0
60a. I did this to my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 0

MJS

Please think of a person with whom you have had or currently have a strong romantic relationship with. We will call this person "X".

How often do you have the following thoughts about X?

1 = Never 7 = All the Time

1.	I suspect that X is secretly seeing someone of the opposite sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	I am worried that some member of the opposite sex may be chasing after X.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	I suspect that X may be attracted to someone else.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	I suspect that X may be physically intimate with another member of the opposite sex behind my back.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	I think that some members of the opposite sex may be romantically interested in X.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	I am worried that someone of the opposite sex is trying to seduce X.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	I think that X is secretly developing an intimate relationship with someone of the opposite sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	I suspect that X is crazy about members of the opposite sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

How would you emotionally react to the following situations? *1 = Very Pleased 7 = Very Upset*

9. X comments to you on how great looking a particular member of the opposite sex is.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. X shows a great deal of interest or excitement in talking to someone of the opposite sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. X smiles in a very friendly manner to someone of the opposite sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. A member of the opposite sex is trying to get close to X all the time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. X is flirting with someone of the opposite sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Someone of the opposite sex is dating X.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. X hugs and kisses someone of the opposite sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. X works very closely with a member of the opposite sex (in school or office).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

How often do you engage in the following behaviors?

1 = Never 7 = All the Time

17. I look through X's drawers, handbag, or pockets.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. I call X unexpectedly, just to see if he or she is there.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. I question X about previous or present romantic relationships.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. I say something nasty about someone of the opposite sex if X shows an interest in that person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. I question X about his or her telephone calls.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. I question X about his or her whereabouts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. I join in whenever I see X talking to a member of the opposite sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. I pay X a surprise visit just to see who is with him or her.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Thank you very much for completing this survey!

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview number _____

Date of interview / /

Interview location _____

Interviewer _____

Time begin: _____

Time end: _____

***Note**: Interview will include follow up questions to specific responses on survey measure (e.g., to explain attitudes, elaborate on circumstances of particular incident of violence)*

As I mentioned on the phone, I would like to talk to you about your and your friends' experiences with dating and relationships. I may also ask you to tell me more about some of your responses on the survey you filled out.

Section 1: Individual Experiences of Violence

1. Can you give me a general overview of your dating history?

    a. How would you characterize your dating experiences overall?

2. What are the best parts of your current (or most recent) relationship?

3. What are your least favorite things about your current (or most recent) relationship?

4. All couples fight or disagree sometimes. Can you tell me about what usually happens when you two fight or disagree?

    a. What are the fights about?

5. Thinking about your relationship over the past year, I'd like to ask you about the worst conflict you two had. Does anything come to mind?

a. [probe for narrative: what happened, why, how ended, context]

6. I'm particularly interested in times when fights or arguments ever got physical in any way. Can you tell me about times that has happened in your relationship?

   Probes:

   a. Here is a list of behaviors that sometimes happen between dating partners taken from the survey you filled out. Can you tell me about times that any of these things have occurred either to you or by you?

   b. I'd like to ask you about some of your responses to these items on the survey. You noted … on your response, can you tell me more about that?

   c. What were the circumstances in which you felt so … that you found yourself doing …?

   d. [probe for narratives, interpretations, consequences, affect and cognitions at time]

7. How does your boyfriend generally act when you are upset about something?

8. How does he generally act when he is upset about something?

9. How do you generally act when you are upset about something?

10. How do you generally act when your boyfriend is upset about something?

IF ENOUGH VIOLENCE IS ENDORSED: Introduce Timeline Followback Spousal Violence Interview. Present participant with a calendar of past year and list of physical violence items from CTS.

"Here is a calendar of the past year with holidays noted and a pencil. Please mark any other significant dates for you, such as birthdays, anniversaries, or other important events. Starting yesterday and moving backwards, please please mark the days, to the best of your memory, when you had fights or problems with your boyfriend that got physical in any way. Here is a list of behaviors that sometimes happen between dating partners to give you some examples. Please indicate whether it was you, your boyfriend, or both who engaged in these behaviors."

For any day of violence reported, ask participant to categorize type of violence using CTS list used by each person. Use the calendar for the rest of the interview to elaborate the following.

11. Please tell me about the first fight or situation when things got physical between you. How did it start?

    a. Probe for narrative ("then what happened?")

    b. How did it end?

    c. Why did it happen?

    d. What happened after? What were the consequences?

    e. Was this the first time you used physical force against your boyfriend? [if not, proceed to #4]

12. [if response to #3 did not include female violence] Tell me about the first time you got physical with your boyfriend?

    a. Probe for narrative ("then what happened?")

    b. How did it end?

    c. Why did it happen?

    d. What happened after? What were the consequences?

13. What was the worst incident of violence or abuse?

    a. Probe for narrative ("then what happened?")

    b. How did it end?

    c. Why did it happen?

    d. What happened after? What were the consequences?

    e. What made it the worst?

    f. Was it the worst violence you have ever used? [if not, repeat for her worst incident of violence perpetration]

14. Please describe the most common situation where physical force is used in your relationship.

    a. Probe for narrative ("then what happens?")

    b. How does it end?

    c. Why does it happen?

    d. What happens after? What are the consequences?

e. Is this the most common situation when you use force? [if not repeat for her most common situation]

15. Why do you think violence happens in your relationship?

    a. [probes] why do you use it? why does he use it?

16. Have there been times when others were present when you or your boyfriend fought physically?

    a. If so, how often has that been the case?

    b. How did they respond?

17. Have to talked to anyone about the physical force used in your relationship?

    a. [If yes,] who have you talked to?

        i. What did they say?

    b. [If no,] why not?

Section 2: Social Context

I want to ask you about what things are like between men and women you know in terms of dating.

1. How would you describe male-female dating relationships among your friends?

    a. Do people tend to have more casual relationships, or more committed dating relationships?

2. How important is it for your friends to have a boyfriend?

3. How do the guys you know act towards their girlfriends or dates?

    a. What do they expect from them?

4. How do the women you know act towards their boyfriends?

    a. What do they expect from them?

5. If you were to talk to your friends and say "you know how guys are, they're like this" how do you think they would finish that sentence?

6. Thinking about the balance of power between guys and girls in relationships, how would you describe who has the power in your friends' relationships?

    a. What makes it seem that way? How does it play out?

7. How would you describe the balance of power in your relationship?

8. Do any of your friends talk to you about their relationships with their boyfriends?

a. What kinds of things do they talk about with you?

b. Do they ever talk about fights or arguments with their boyfriends? What do they tell you about these fights?

9. Have you ever seen or heard about a fight between one of your friends and her boyfriend where either of them used physical force or violence, like slapping or hitting?

a. What happened? [Probe for narratives; repeat for multiple incidents]

- How did it start; end?

c. Why did it happen?

d. What happened after? What were the consequences?

d. How did you react?

e. How did others who were present or have heard about it react?

10. How common is it for physical force to be used among your friends in their relationships?

- what generally happens?

- why do you think it generally happens?

11. Do you think there are situations when it's ok for a guy to hit or use physical aggression against his girlfriend?

[IF YES] What situations? Any others? Why do you think so?

[IF NO] What reasons do you think it's not okay?

Do your friends think there are situations when it's ok for a guy to hit his girlfriend?

12. Do you think there are situations when it's ok for a woman to hit or use physical aggression against her boyfriend?

[IF YES] What situations? Any others? Why do you think so?

[IF NO] What reasons do you think it's not okay?

Do your friends think there are situations when it's ok for a woman to hit her boyfriend?

13. Do you think it is different for a guy to hit a girl and for a girl to hit a guy? What is different about it?

14. How would you define violence in a relationship? How would you define abuse?

Would you consider any of these behaviors [on the list previously shown] ok in a relationship? What would you consider crossing the line?

Section 3: Family Experiences of Conflict

1. Who did you live with when you were growing up?
    a. [if applicable] Are your parents still married?
        i. [if not] How old were you when when they separated or got divorced?
2. What happened in your family when one of your parents was mad at the other? [can re-phrase depending on family of origin]
    a. Did you hear them call each other names or put each other down?
    b. Did you see either of them use physical force or hit the other?
        i. [if yes] Can you tell me more about it? [probe for mother, father or both use of force]
3. What happened when one of your parents was mad at you (or your siblings)?
    a. Did they call you names or put you down?
    b. Did either of them use physical force on you? [if yes]:
        i. did you ever need medical attention as a result?
        ii. Were you ever hit or beaten so badly that it was noticed by someone like a teacher, neighbor, or doctor?
4. Was there someone in your family who helped you feel that you were important or special?

Is there anything you'd like to add about any of the topics we've discussed before we finish?

Thank you very much for participating in the interview!

Informed Consent

Please read this consent agreement carefully. You must be 18 years old or older to participate.

Purpose of the research:

To understand women's experiences of dating and abuse in relationships.

What you will do in this study:

You will fill out a survey.

Risks:

There are minimal anticipated risks, beyond those encountered in daily life, associated with participating in this study. The survey includes questions about dating experiences that may be upsetting to recall. We will provide you with resources on healthy relationships and services for relationship abuse, and a trained research assistant will be available at all times.

Compensation:

The study will take under 50 minutes to complete. You will receive 1 Psychology course credit (1 hour credit) for participating in this study. At the end of the study you will receive an explanation of the goals of the study. We hope that you will learn a little bit about how psychological research is conducted.

Voluntary Withdrawal:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty (however, you will not receive Psychology course credit for this study). You may skip over any questions, or you may withdraw by informing the research associate that you no longer wish to participate (no questions will be asked). Your decision to participate, decline, or withdraw participation will have no effect on your status at or relationship with the University of Illinois.

Confidentiality:

Your participation in this study will remain confidential, and your identity will not be stored with your data. All data and consent forms will be stored in a locked room. Results of this study may be presented at conferences and/or published in books, journals, and/or in the popular media.

Further information:

If you have questions about this study, please contact Dr. Nicole Allen, Department of Psychology, University of Illinois, Champaign, IL 61820. Email: allenne@uiuc.edu, phone (217) 333-6739.

Who to contact about your rights in this study:

If you have any concerns about this study or your experiences as a participant, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at UIUC at (217) 333-2670 (collect calls will be accepted if you state you are a study participant); email: irb@uiuc.edu

Agreement:

The purpose and nature of this research have been sufficiently explained and I agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without incurring any penalty. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form to take with me.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (print): _____

CONSENT TO CONTACT YOU IN THE FUTURE

We will be conducting a limited number of follow-up interviews within the next year. In that interview we will ask participants to talk more freely about their experiences with dating and dating conflicts. Participants will receive either subject pool credit or a gift certificate. If you are willing to be contacted about possibly participating in a follow-up interview, please fill out the information below so that we can contact you. Signing this form does **not** obligate you to participate in future research; it simply gives us permission to contact you and make you an offer.

Your Name (PLEASE PRINT): _____

Signature: _____

Current Phone Number(s): _____

Current E-mail: _____

**Please note that we cannot guarantee the confidentiality of communications by email.

Preferred method of contacting you: _____

Informed Consent

Please read this consent agreement carefully. You must be 18 years old or older to participate.

Purpose of the research:

To understand women's experiences of dating and abuse in relationships.

What you will do in this study:

You will participate in an interview.

Risks:

There are minimal anticipated risks, beyond those encountered in daily life, associated with participating in this study. The interview includes questions about dating experiences that may be upsetting to recall. We will provide you with resources on healthy relationships and services for relationship abuse.

Compensation:

The interview will take 1-2 hours to complete. You will receive 2 Psychology course credits (2 hour credit) for participating in this study, or a gift certificate. At the end of the interview, you will receive an explanation of the study and the hypotheses. We hope that you will learn a little bit about how psychological research is conducted.

Voluntary Withdrawal:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty (however, you will not receive Psychology course credit for this study). You may choose not to answer any question, or you may withdraw by informing the research associate that you no longer wish to participate in the interview (no questions will be asked). Your decision to participate, decline, or withdraw participation will have no effect on your status at or relationship with the University of Illinois.

Confidentiality:

Your participation in this study will remain confidential, and your identity will not be stored with your data. The only exception to the confidentiality agreement is in the event that you tell us about plans to seriously harm yourself or someone else, in which case we are obligated to report this information. However, please note that we are not required to report past use of violence. All data and consent forms will be stored in a locked room. Results of this study may be presented at conferences and/or published in books, journals, and/or in the popular media.

To ensure accuracy and best capture what you are saying, I would like to audiotape this interview. You may ask me to shut the tape off at any time during the interview. Only members of the research team and

professional transcribers will have access to the digital audio files. Audio files will be transcribed (typed up) and will be destroyed at the completion of the project.

Is it okay with you if I audiotape your interview? Yes No (circle one)

Further information:

If you have questions about this study, please contact Dr. Nicole Allen, Department of Psychology, University of Illinois, Champaign, IL 61820. Email: allenne@uiuc.edu, phone (217) 333-6739.

Who to contact about your rights in this study:

If you have any concerns about this study or your experiences as a participant, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at UIUC at (217) 333-2670 (collect calls will be accepted if you state you are a study participant); email: irb@uiuc.edu

Agreement:

The purpose and nature of this research have been sufficiently explained and I agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without incurring any penalty. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form to take with me.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (print): _____

DEBRIEFING FORM

Thank you very much for your participation in this research. The information you provided will help us understand more about the current dating climate and about how young women experience conflicts and conflict resolution in dating relationships. We are particularly interested in understanding women's use of force in dating relationships, and this project hopes to further our understanding of when and why women use force as well as the consequences.

If you are interested in learning more about healthy and unhealthy relationships, following are some websites and print resources:

- www.thesafespace.org
- In Love and In Danger, by Barrie Levy

If you are interested in research on women's use of force in relationships, following are some recent articles:

- Archer, J. (2000). Sex Differences in Aggression Between Heterosexual Partners: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin, 126*: 651-680.
- Kimel, M. (2002). "Gendery Symmetry" in Domestic Violence. *Violence Against Women, 8*: 1332-1363.

If you are concerned about your relationship, your behavior, or want someone to talk to, following are some local and national resources:

- UIUC Counseling Center: 333-3704
- UIUC Psychological Services Center: 333-0041
- Crisis Line (after hours): 359-4141
- A Woman's Place (local domestic violence agency): 384-4390
- National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline: (866) 331-9474
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: (800) 799-SAFE (7233)

If you have any questions about this research project or would like to talk to a member of the research team, you may contact Nicole Allen, Ph.D., at (217) 333-6739, or by email at allenne@uiuc.edu. Thank you again for your participation!