

An Examination of the Factors Related to Dating Violence Perpetration Among Young Men and Women and Associated Theoretical Explanations: A Review of the Literature

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Abstract

This article provides a review of the literature on dating violence (DV) perpetration, specifically sex similarities and differences in the correlates and predictors of DV perpetration and the utility of current theories to explain young men's and women's DV perpetration. Overall, many of the correlates and predictors of DV perpetration are similar among young men and women (e.g., witnessing interparental violence, experiencing child abuse, alcohol abuse, traditional gender roles, relationship power dynamics). However, young women's perpetration of DV is more strongly related to internalizing symptoms (e.g., depression), trait anger and hostility, and experiencing DV victimization than young men's perpetration, whereas young men's perpetration of DV is more consistently related to lower socioeconomic status and educational attainment, antisocial personality characteristics, and increased relationship length than young women's perpetration. Each theory offers insights into but does not fully account for the correlates and predictors of DV perpetration. Sociocultural theories may be useful in explaining the use of coercive control in relationships, and learning/intergenerational transmission of violence theories may be useful in explaining bidirectional couple violence. Future research should focus on integrative theories, such as in the social-ecological theory, in order to explain various forms of DV. Our understanding of young men's and young women's DV perpetration is limited by cross-sectional research designs, methodological inconsistencies, a lack of sex-specific analytic approaches, and a lack of focus on contextual factors; more multivariate and longitudinal studies are needed. Further, as DV prevention programming is often presented in mixed-sex formats, a critical understanding of sex differences and similarities in DV perpetration could ultimately refine and improve effectiveness of programming efforts aimed at reducing DV.

Keywords

dating violence, theory, perpetration, sex, interpersonal violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a prevalent problem in our society, as it occurs at alarming rates among adolescents aged 16–24 (Hickman, Jaycox & Aronoff, 2004; Wolfe, Scott, Wekerle & Pittman, 2001), and is normative, with over 80% of young men and women having inflicted or received IPV (Smith, White, & Moracco, 2009). IPV is commonly referred to as dating violence (DV) among this age group, and although DV has traditionally been thought of as a man physically aggressing against a woman, it is now widely recognized that both men and women can be perpetrators and victims and that there are many forms of DV (i.e., physical, sexual, psychological/verbal). Research finds that physical DV, including hitting, punching, or throwing objects at one's partner, is perpetrated by 17% to 48% of young women and 10% to 39% of young men (Hickman et al., 2004; Luthra & Gidycz, 2006; O'Keefe, 1997; Shook, Gerrity, Jurich, & Segrist, 2000; Straus & Ramirez, 2004; Wolfe, et al., 2001). Psychological DV, which

includes disparaging or hurtful comments to a partner, is perpetrated by 60% to 83% of young women and 55% to 80% of young men (Hickman, et al., 2004; Shook et al., 2000). Although gender symmetry is often found for the rates of perpetrating psychological and physical DV, sexual DV, which refers to the use of intimidation, coercion, or force by one partner to compel the other to perform sexual acts, is perpetrated by more young men (13% to 37%) than young women (3% to

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24%; Hickman et al., 2004; O'Keefe, 1997). Additionally, although the research evidence is mixed, some research indicates that young men engage in more serious forms of DV perpetration than young women, and young women report greater injury, fear, and psychological consequences to DV victimization than do young men (Archer, 2000; Foshee, 1996; Molidor & Tolman, 1998; Swan, Gambone, Caldwell, Sullivan, & Snow, 2008; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

Despite research documenting the similarities and differences in prevalence, effects, and correlates of DV among young men and women (e.g., Foshee, 1996; Magdol, Moffitt, & Silva, 1998), very little work has been done examining these sex-related findings within existing theoretical frameworks. Although the majority of DV research has been largely atheoretical (Flynn & Graham, 2010; Shorey, Cornelius, & Bell, 2008), this is not due to a lack of posited theories. A number of theories have been applied to DV (e.g., Curtis, 1963; Hester & Donovan, 2009; Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994; Riggs & O'Leary, 1989), although there has been little theoretical work examining possible sex differences between young men's and young women's DV perpetration. The overall goal of the current article is to gain a better understanding of sex similarities and differences in the etiology of DV perpetration among adolescents and young adults. To this end, we have divided the article into three sections in order to accomplish three specific aims. First, we synthesize and critically review the literature on sex similarities and differences in the correlates and predictors of DV perpetration. A review of this literature provides the information needed to examine the utility of current theoretical perspectives in understanding sex similarities and differences in DV perpetration. The second section of the article focuses on a critical evaluation of the dominant DV theories in relation to their ability to explain the known findings on young women's and men's DV perpetration. In the final and third section of the article, we summarize the current state of the literature and discuss how the reviewed literature can be used to move forward the research agenda on DV and inform DV prevention efforts.

Although research demonstrates that there are sex differences and similarities in the rates, severity, and consequences of DV, these issues are beyond the scope of this review and have been reviewed elsewhere (e.g., Archer, 2000; Hamberger & Guse, 2002; Molidor & Tolman, 1998; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). In this article, we focus specifically on the sex differences and similarities related to risk factors for DV perpetration. Furthermore, the current review focuses exclusively on DV among adolescents and young adults, given the endemic rates of DV among this age group. Previous research suggests that although there are some similarities between young adult DV and marital IPV, there are also important differences (for a review, see Shorey et al., 2008). Marital violence appears to be less common than DV (Shorey et al., 2008; Tremblay, 2000), and characteristics of the dating relationship may lead to differential motives for DV relative to marital violence (Shorey et al., 2008; Winstok, 2012). Furthermore, many individuals who perpetrate DV do not continue to do so in marriage

(Follingstad, Bradley, Laughlin, & Burke, 1999), providing further evidence for a distinction between interpersonal violence perpetration at different stages of the life span. Additionally, although research has recently begun investigating DV in same-sex relationships (e.g., Porter & Williams, 2011), the current review will focus on research completed with opposite-sex relationships that have been more extensively studied. Further, the term "young adults" (and relatedly "young women" and "young men") is used throughout the article to refer to both adolescents and young adults. Finally, most studies reviewed herein use biological sex categories for comparison rather than gender (i.e., the extent to which individuals "do gender"; masculinity and femininity). Thus, the authors will refer to comparisons between men and women as "sex" differences and "gender" when discussing gendered processes and gender socialization (for a discussion, see Anderson, 2005).

Sex Differences and Similarities in the Correlates and Predictors of DV Perpetration

For this portion of the article, the authors performed searches in commonly used social science databases (e.g., PsycInfo, PubMed, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection) and Internet search engines (e.g., Google, Google Scholar) for studies that examined variables related to DV perpetration. Studies were included if the sample consisted of adolescents or young adults (approximately aged 12–25) and if sex-specific findings of DV correlates and predictors were provided, either in direct comparisons of young men and women or single-sex studies. The authors largely focused on studies conducted in the last 10 years, with the exception of seminal and understudied areas. Similar to previous reviews (e.g., Lewis and Fremouw, 2001), the categories used to describe variables associated with DV perpetration include demographic, historical, personal, interpersonal, and contextual variables. Summary tables detailing all the studies covered in this review are available upon request.

Demographics

Demographic characteristics, which include age, race, socioeconomic status (SES), and educational attainment, have been equivocally related to DV perpetration, and there appear to be somewhat differential patterns for young men and young women. One study found that age was positively correlated with young women's perpetration of DV (Cyr, McDuff, & Wright, 2006); however, another study found that increased age was predictive of lower rates of daily DV perpetration for both young men and women (Moore, Elkins, McNulty, Kivisto, & Handsel, 2011). Foshee, Linder, MacDougall, and Bangdiwala (2001) found that being a race other than White predicted young women's perpetration of DV over time, but Boivin, Lavoie, Hebert, and Gagne (2012) found that race was uncorrelated with both young men and women's perpetration of DV. When SES has been conceptualized as parents' education and income, SES has been found to be negatively

correlated with DV perpetration for both men and women (Magdol et al., 1998; O'Keefe, 1998), with one study (Fang & Corso, 2007) finding that higher parental education was directly associated with decreased perpetration of DV among young men, but only indirectly associated with decreased DV perpetration among women, in the presence of experiences of youth violence and neglect. Another study found no relationship between parents' SES and education and young men's perpetration of DV (Brendgen, Vitaro, Tremblay, & Wanner, 2002). When measuring participant's own educational attainment, Chen and White (2004) found educational level to be negatively related to DV perpetration for both young men and women. Conversely, using a combined index of employment and educational attainment, Magdol and colleagues (1997) found that SES was more strongly related to men's than women's DV perpetration. Overall, although there is variability in the findings of the previously reviewed studies, some demographic factors, especially SES and educational attainment, appear to be more consistently related to young men's perpetration of DV. Using parental indicators, findings are variable; however, participants' own SES/educational attainment is more consistently and negatively related to perpetration of DV (perhaps more strongly for men than women).

Historical Variables

Historical variables, which are more distal in nature (Lewis & Fremouw, 2001), include variables such as witnessing interparental violence, child abuse, and juvenile delinquency. Although a number of studies found that witnessing interparental violence was positively related to, and predictive of, young men's (Brendgen et al., 2002; Chen & White, 2004; Fergusson, Boden, & Horwood, 2008; O'Keefe, 1997; O'Keefe, 1998; Shook et al., 2000) and young women's (Baker & Stith, 2008; O'Keefe, 1997; O'Keefe, 1998; Tschann et al., 2009; Wolf & Foshee, 2003) DV perpetration, other studies found nonsignificant relationships between witnessing interparental violence and young men's (Baker & Stith, 2008; Carr & Vandusen, 2002; Tschann et al., 2009; Wolf & Foshee, 2003) and young women's (Fergusson et al., 2008; Shook et al., 2000) DV perpetration. Similarly, although most published studies found that experiences of child abuse are positively related to, and predictive of, young men's (Baker & Stith, 2008; Banyard, Cross, & Modecki, 2006; Brendgen et al., 2002; Casey, Beadnell, & Lindhorst, 2008; Chen & White, 2004; Dardis, Edwards, Kelley & Gidycz, 2013; Fang & Corso, 2007; Gamez-Gaudix, Straus, & Hershberger, 2011; Gover, Kaukinen, & Fox, 2008; Kaura & Allen, 2004; Renner & Whitney, 2012; Shook et al., 2000; Wolf & Foshee, 2003; Wolfe, Wekerle, Scott, Straatman, & Grasley, 2004) and young women's (Chen & White, 2004; Dardis et al., 2013; Edwards, Desai, Gidycz, & VanWynsberghe, 2009; Fang & Corso, 2007; Follette & Alexander, 1992; Gamez-Gaudix et al., 2011; Gover et al., 2008; Kaura & Allen, 2004; Luthra & Gidycz, 2006; Magdol et al., 1998; Renner & Whitney, 2012; Shook et al., 2000) DV perpetration, a few studies found nonsignificant

relationships between experiences of child abuse and young men's (Follette & Alexander, 1992; Luthra & Gidycz, 2006; Magdol et al., 1998) and young women's (Banyard et al., 2006; Wolf & Foshee, 2003; Wolfe et al., 2004) DV perpetration. One study examining abuse experienced in childhood, perpetrated by both siblings and parents, found that young men's DV perpetration was more strongly related to sibling than parent abuse, whereas young women's DV perpetration was more strongly related to parent than sibling abuse (Simionelli, Mullis, Elliott, & Pierce, 2002). Studies have found that a secure parent-child attachment is negatively related to DV perpetration for both men and women (Gover et al., 2008; Magdol et al., 1998). Finally, although a number of studies found that juvenile delinquency was positively related to, and predictive of, young men's (Brendgen et al., 2002; Casey et al., 2008; Fang & Corso, 2007; Fergusson et al., 2008; Foshee, McNaughton Reyes, & Ennett, 2010; Magdol et al., 1998; Moore et al., 2011; Renner & Whitney, 2012; Straus & Ramirez, 2004) and young women's (Chiodo et al., 2012; Fang & Corso, 2007; Fergusson et al., 2008; Foshee et al., 2010; Magdol et al., 1998; Renner & Whitney, 2012; Straus & Ramirez, 2004) DV perpetration, other studies have found nonsignificant relationships between juvenile delinquency and young men's (Straus & Ramirez, 2004) and young women's (Moore et al., 2011) DV perpetration. Taken together, although there is variability in the findings of the previously reviewed studies, it appears that for both young men and young women, witnessing interparental violence, child abuse, and juvenile delinquency are most often positively associated with DV perpetration.

Personal Variables

Personal variables include psychopathology, alcohol and drug use, gender role beliefs, and attitudes toward violence. With regard to psychopathology, research is fairly consistent in demonstrating that higher levels of general distress, negative affect, anxiety (including posttraumatic stress symptoms), and impulsivity are positively related to DV perpetration for both young men and young women (Boivin, Lavoie, Hebert, & Gagne, 2012; Chen & White, 2004; Gover et al., 2008; Moore et al., 2011; Wolfe et al., 2004). However, depression and other internalizing symptoms are usually more strongly and consistently positively related to DV perpetration for young women than young men (Banyard et al., 2006; Chase, Treboux, & O'Leary, 2002; Foshee et al., 2001). Other research has demonstrated that greater levels of hostility and anger are related to young women's DV perpetration (Boivin et al., 2012; Wolfe et al., 2004) and that higher rejection sensitivity, more fear of negative evaluation, low empathy, and low self-esteem are positively related to young men's DV perpetration (Brendgen et al., 2002; Hanby, Fales, Nangle, Serwik, & Hedrich, 2012; Renner & Whitney, 2012; Wolfe et al., 2004). Moreover, research has consistently documented that antisocial personality features are positively related to young men's perpetration of DV and to a lesser extent young women's DV perpetration

(Gamez-Gaudix et al., 2011; Monson & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2002; Moore et al., 2011). Other personality variables, such as the big five (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) have been studied in relation to DV perpetration; results suggest that these other personality variables are more strongly related to women's DV perpetration than men's DV perpetration (Hines & Saudino, 2008). Additionally, with the exception of two studies finding null relationships (Foshee et al., 2010; Hammock & O'Hearn, 2002), all other published studies found that substance use/abuse were positively related to, or predictive of, both young men's and women's DV perpetration (Baker & Stith, 2008; Banyard et al., 2006; Carr & VanDeusen, 2004; Chase et al., 2002; Chen & White, 2004; Fergusson et al., 2008; Foshee et al., 2001; Foshee et al., 2010; Gamez-Gaudix et al., 2011; Luthra & Gidycz, 2006; Magdol et al., 1997; Magdol et al., 1998; O'Keefe, 1997; Shook et al., 2000). Research also consistently documents that adversarial sexual beliefs, sex-role stereotyping, adherence to traditional gender roles, and accepting attitudes toward violence are positively related to both young men's and women's DV perpetration (Bookwala, Frieze, Smith, & Ryan, 1992; Brendgen et al., 2002; Carr & VanDeusen, 2002, 2004; Chen & White, 2004; Dardis et al., 2013; Foshee et al., 2001; Gomez, Speizer, & Moracco, 2011; Jakupcak, Lisak, & Roemer, 2002; O'Keefe, 1998; Parrot & Zeichner, 2003; Shen, Chiu, & Gao, 2012; Torres et al., 2012; Wolfe et al., 2004). In sum, psychological distress substance use/abuse, and attitudes about gender and violence are generally related to both young women and men's DV perpetration. However, some of the more specific forms of psychopathology and personality variables appear to have differential relationships with DV perpetration for young men (e.g., rejection sensitivity, antisocial personality) and women (e.g., depression).

Interpersonal Variables

Interpersonal variables include bidirectional couple violence, relationship power dynamics, relationship problem-solving skills, other relationship variables, and experiences of current or recent extrarelational violence. Research has consistently documented that DV victimization is positively correlated with, and predictive of, both young men's and women's DV perpetration (Baker & Stith, 2008; Capaldi & Crosby, 1997; Capaldi, Kim & Shortt, 2007; Chen & White, 2004; Dardis et al., 2013; Edwards et al., 2009; Follette & Alexander, 1992; Hendy, Burns, Can, & Scherer, 2011; Luthra & Gidycz, 2006; Magdol et al., 1997; O'Keefe, 1997). Two studies have found a stronger relationship between DV victimization and perpetration for women compared to men (Dardis et al., 2013; Herrera, Wiersma, & Cleveland, 2008). Additionally, research suggests that negative relationship interactions (e.g., conflict and antagonism) are positively related to both men's and women's DV perpetration (Hanby et al., 2012).

Other interpersonal factors found to be positively associated with both men's and women's DV perpetration include poor

conflict and anger management skills (Baker & Stith, 2008; Lundeberge, Stith, Penn, & Ward, 2004; Luthra & Gidycz, 2006; Parrot & Zeichner, 2003). Furthermore, engagement in destructive direct anger styles (i.e., behaving aggressively toward objects of anger) has been positively related to DV perpetration among young women and men (Foshee et al., 2001; Wolf & Foshee, 2003). Among women, but not men, increased destructive indirect anger expression styles (i.e., anger not directed at the target, but internalized; Wolf & Foshee, 2003) and increased obliging conflict management styles (i.e., conceding to the wishes of the other; Hammock & O'Hearn, 2002) have been positively related to DV perpetration.

Research generally finds that cohabitating and increased relationship length are positively related to DV perpetration for both young men and women (Gamez-Gaudix et al., 2011; Renner & Whitney, 2012; Straus & Ramirez, 2004), with one study finding relationship length was related to men's but not women's DV perpetration (Luthra and Gidycz, 2006). Greater dissatisfaction with one's relationship in general (Baker & Stith, 2008) and greater dissatisfaction with power in the relationship (Kaura & Allen, 2004; Ronfeldt, Kimerling, & Arias, 1998) are related to both men's and women's DV perpetration. Current or recent reciprocal violence by a sibling or parents is related more positively to young women's DV perpetration than men's DV perpetration (Hendy et al., 2011). In sum, bidirectional couple violence, anger management strategies, and relationship problem-solving skills are generally related to both young women's and men's DV perpetration. Based on the limited existing data, current family violence (with siblings and parents) may be associated more strongly with young women's DV perpetration, whereas relationship length may be more consistently associated with young men's DV perpetration.

Contextual Variables

Contextual variables include friends' victimization and aggressive experiences, parental monitoring, and motives for DV. Research consistently documents that involvement in aggressive peer groups is positively related to DV perpetration for both young men and women (Brendgen et al., 2002; Foshee et al., 2001). However, engagement in same-sex physical fights has been positively related to young women's, but not young men's, DV perpetration (Foshee et al., 2001). Furthermore, having friends who are DV victims has demonstrated significant positive relationships with young women's DV perpetration but not young men's DV perpetration (Foshee et al., 2001). A lack of parental monitoring and involvement demonstrated a significant positive association with young women's DV perpetration but not young men's DV perpetration (Chase et al., 2002). With regard to motives for DV perpetration, although the research is somewhat mixed and controversial (e.g., Flynn & Graham, 2010; Makepeace, 1986), in general, young men and young women report being equally motivated by self-defense, control, anger, and jealousy (Follingstad, Wright, Lloyd, & Sebastian, 1991; Foshee, Bauman, Linder, Rice & Wilcher, 2007; Harned, 2001; O'Keefe, 1997). In sum,

peer group characteristics and motives for DV are similarly related to DV perpetration for both young men and women, with peer group aggression and friends' DV victimization possibly related more to young women's than young men's DV perpetration.

Summary

Overall, certain variables seem to be similarly related to both young men's and young women's perpetration of DV. In terms of historical factors, witnessing interparental violence, experiencing child abuse, and engaging in juvenile delinquency are related to DV perpetration among both young men and young women. Personal variables, including psychological distress, drug and alcohol use/abuse, traditional gender attitudes, and acceptance of violence, also appear to be related to DV perpetration for both young men and young women. Certain interpersonal variables, such as bidirectional partner violence, a lack of problem-solving skills, and relationship power dynamics, seem to be related to DV perpetration among both young men and young women as well. Finally, contextual variables such as peer group characteristics and motives for DV appear to relate to both young men's and young women's perpetration of DV.

Although there are a number of sex similarities, there are some differences in the predictors and correlates of DV perpetration for young men and women. For example, demographic variables such as SES and educational attainment appear to be more consistently related to young men's perpetration of DV. Generally, demographic variables showed the most variability among findings and between sexes, possibly due to the limited amount of research examining these variables in comparison to other types of variables (e.g., historical variables). Further, among psychological variables, internalizing symptoms (e.g., depression) and personality features (e.g., high hostility, trait anger) appear to be related to women's DV perpetration, whereas among men, antisocial personality characteristics seem to be more consistently related to DV perpetration. Experiencing victimization in nonromantic relationships (e.g., peers) is more consistently associated with young women's DV perpetration, whereas the length of the relationship may be more consistently associated with young men's DV perpetration.

Despite over 30 years of research investigating sex similarities and differences in dating violence, there have been few consistent findings across studies, which may be explained by a number of factors. First, many studies are multivariate in nature, such that different combinations of variables across studies may produce differential outcomes as a by-product of statistical relationships. That is, although witnessing violence may predict perpetration in one study (e.g., Brendgen et al., 2002), witnessing violence may not be related to perpetration in the presence of more proximal victimization (e.g., Baker & Stith, 2008). Further, the variability in methods of measurement contributes to variability in study findings. For example, although SES/educational attainment was found to have variable relationships with men's and women's perpetration,

studies that measure the participant's own SES/educational attainment had more stable effects (Chen & White, 2004) compared to studies measuring parental SES/educational attainment (e.g., Fang & Corso, 2007). Another example of how study variability leads to seemingly discrepant findings is the association between age and DV perpetration found by Cyr, McDuff, and Wright (2006) compared to Moore, Elkins, McNulty, Kivisto, and Handsel (2011). Cyr et al. found a positive relationship between age and DV, while Moore et al. found the opposite. The variability in these findings is likely due to the age differences between study samples. Participants in the Cyr et al.'s study were between the ages of 13 and 17, whereas the participants in Moore et al.'s study were 18 years old or older. Rates of DV perpetration generally peak in young adulthood, which would be consistent with both study findings. Thus, the equivocal nature of the findings can be attributed both to inconsistency in measurement and methodology.

Theories of Dating Violence

In this section, we review and critique theories that are commonly used in the social sciences literature to explain DV perpetration (e.g., Bell & Naugle, 2008; Shorey et al., 2008). With the exception of the background-situational model (Riggs & O'Leary, 1996), all of the psychosocial theories that have been used to describe DV perpetration were initially applied to explain the causes of marital violence. However, a number of these theories have been used to explain risk factors for DV perpetration. The selected theories were divided into three sections: sociocultural theories (i.e., feminist and coercion theories), learning/intergenerational transmission of violence theories (i.e., social learning theory and background/situational theory), and individual theories (i.e., personality and typology theories). Within each section, we first provide a general description of the theory followed by sex-specific empirical evidence.

Sociocultural Theories: Feminist and Coercion Theories

Description. Traditional feminist theorists developed a gender and power analysis of IPV and DV that underscored the social construction of masculinity. IPV and DV were explained as the exertion of power and control by men over women in relationships within broader social and institutional contexts of gender inequality (Hester & Donovan, 2009). More recent feminist theories, which developed out of the third-wave and postmodern feminist movements, are inclusive of multiple forms of oppression including sexism, classism, racism, heterosexism, and ableism (Heywood & Drake, 1997) and have also been used to explain more complex forms of IPV and DV, such as women's IPV and DV perpetration and same-sex IPV and DV (Hester & Donovan, 2009; McHugh, Livingston, & Ford, 2006; White & Kowalski, 1994).

Related to feminist theories are power and control theories (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980), which assert that when men lack resources (e.g., income, education) or perceived

power in a relationship, violence may be used to maintain or regain power (e.g., Hornung, McCullough, & Sugimoto, 1981; Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986). Coercive control is a type of control that consists of a pattern of intimidation, isolation, and control that is theorized to be used by men in order to restrict women's freedom and which can be accompanied by physical, sexual, or verbal violence (Stark, 2007). This type of control is believed to be used by men against female partners due to structural inequalities that provide greater allocation of resources to men relative to women (Stark, 2007). Thus, support for the feminist and power control theories would emerge from research investigating specific demographic variables (e.g., gender and SES), personal variables (e.g., gender role beliefs), interpersonal variables (e.g., satisfaction with power and control in the relationship), and contextual variables (e.g., controlling motives for DV).

Sex-specific empirical evidence. In support of these theories, low SES and educational attainment are more consistently related to men's DV perpetration than women's DV perpetration (Fang & Corso, 2007; Magdol et al., 1997), which is consistent with feminist conceptualizations of violence as a means of regaining power and control or to achieve a socially accepted form of masculinity (see Anderson, 2005, for a discussion). Moreover, research has found that young men's DV perpetration is related to their adversarial sexual beliefs, sex-role stereotyping, adherence to traditional gender roles, and dissatisfaction with their power in the relationship (Bookwala et al., 1992; Carr & Vandeuken, 2002, 2004; Chen & White, 2004; Gomez et al., 2011; Kaura & Allen, 2004; Ronfeldt et al., 1998; Torres et al., 2012). Consistent with feminist theory, these findings suggest that young men who perpetrate DV have internalized misogynistic social norms that place women in lower positions of social power than men. However, research has also found that these variables (i.e., adversarial sexual beliefs, sex-role stereotyping, adherence to traditional gender roles, and dissatisfaction with their power in the relationship) are related to young women's DV perpetration (Bookwala et al., 1992; Chen & White, 2004; Kaura & Allen, 2004; Torres et al., 2012). Although this may seem contradictory to feminist theory, indeed, third-wave feminists would assert that the same issues of gender-related power and status can explain how young women, as well as young men, engage in behaviors (e.g., DV) in order to gain power and status in their relationships or as a means of defending their gender identity when it is threatened. For example, young men may engage in physically violent behavior to prove their masculinity, whereas young women may use violent behavior to defend their femininity when it is called into question (White, 2009). Feminists also point out that research relies heavily on the CTS that measures acts (i.e., frequencies) of violence, without considering contextual factors such as the chronicity of the abuse and injury and fear of the victim, which have been found to be higher among abused women than men, such that although rates may be similar, women may be more negatively impacted by abuse (e.g., Stark, 2010). Thus, although women and men may endorse similar numbers of

episodes or acts of violence, the sociopolitical and contextual meaning of these acts may greatly differ between men and women (Stark, 2010).

Additionally, research generally finds that young men and women report being equally motivated by self-defense, control, anger, and jealousy (Follingstad et al., 1991; Foshee et al., 2007; Harned, 2001), which may seem to serve as evidence against feminist theories of IPV and DV. However, feminist researchers (e.g., Johnson, 2010; Stark, 2010) assert that the samples in which similar endorsement of violence are found tend to assess situational/bidirectional violence that is less severe; perpetrators of severe violence (e.g., intimate terrorists) may be less willing to participate in general surveys, and their victims may fear retribution for their participation (Johnson, 2010). Stark (2010) argues that in relationships characterized by minor bidirectional violence (what he calls "fights" rather than abuse), one would not expect sex-divergent motives. Further, Stark (2010) posits that the increasing sociopolitical autonomy granted to women leads to a "battleground" for dominant status in male-female relationships, which may include similar motives for use of violence.

Despite attempts aimed to discredit feminist theories based on data largely derived from the CTS, and showing gender symmetry (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005), feminist theories can be used to help us understand women's use of violence and violence by individuals who embody other marginalized identities. Along these lines, White and Kowalski (1994) assert that researchers need to understand women's use of violence beyond what happens in intimate relationships, in terms of the status of women in society and the intersection of gender with race, class, and other social identities. Moreover, researchers (Brush, 2005; McHugh et al., 2005) have noted that although feminist, psychological, and sociological conceptions of gender have become more complex and interaction oriented across a number of literatures using the intersectional view, gender continues to be treated as a dichotomous categorization (i.e., sex) within DV and IPV research. As these individuals assert, this type of dichotomous thinking has likely led to an overly simplistic understanding of how socially constructed notions of gender relate to various aspects of DV.

A potential limitation of feminist theory is that it fails to include some individual (e.g., alcohol) and relational (e.g., conflict resolution skills) factors that research has shown influence DV perpetration. However, feminists assert that theories that do incorporate these other individual and relational variables are not mutually exclusive or contradictory with feminist theories in explaining IPV (White & Kowalski, 1994). Thus, feminist researchers assert that not only does gender predict violence, but gender is constructed by the use of, and access to, violence (Anderson, 2005). The lack of a direct relationship between sex, as a subject or individual variable, and DV perpetration does diminish the potential impact of gender through other variables (i.e., indirect effects).

Overall, feminist and power and control theories assist in our understanding of some young men's use of DV against young women as well as some young women's use of DV

against young men by situating individual acts of aggression within a broader sociocultural framework. Feminist theories may also be helpful in shedding light on some of the gender-inconsistent findings in the literature regarding sex differences in correlates of IPV and DV by underscoring the gendered context in which IPV and DV occurs and that simplistic and dichotomous categorizations of these phenomenon, which characterize the vast majority of research, provide an overly simplistic understanding at best.

Social Learning Theories: Intergenerational Transmission of Violence Theory and Background-Situational Theory

Description. Social learning theories as they relate to the perpetration of DV posit that individuals learn to engage in interpersonally aggressive behaviors from other individuals, through observation, imitation, and modeling. The two social learning theories most commonly used to explain DV include the intergenerational transmission of violence theory and the background situational model. Intergenerational transmission of violence theory, an application of social learning theory (Curtis, 1963; Widom, 1989), asserts that “violence breeds violence” (Curtis, 1963), such that modeling of violence (e.g., child witnesses interparental violence) leads to a greater likelihood of perpetration of violence in adolescence/adulthood, as individuals enact these learned behaviors in their relationships (Bandura, 1977). Accordingly, it has been theorized that one method by which violence is transmitted is through belief systems. As children who witness or experience parent-to-child or parent-to-parent violence within their families come to view these tactics as appropriate ways to resolve conflicts, they become more likely to adopt and imitate these behaviors in their adult relationships (Lewis & Fremouw, 2001; O’Keefe & Treister, 1998).

However, researchers have long acknowledged that abused children are not universally violent and that there must be other intervening variables that differentiate people who experience or witness childhood violence and who became abusive as opposed to those who do not become abusive (Widom, 1989). To expand on the intergenerational transmission of violence theory, the background-situational theory was developed (Riggs & O’Leary, 1996), positing that background (or contextual) factors (e.g., witnessing or experiencing abuse, aggressive personality characteristics, arousability, prior use of aggression, psychopathology) interact with situational factors (e.g., interpersonal conflict, substance use, relationship satisfaction, problem-solving skills, communication styles) to determine whether or not violence will occur within a couple’s relationship. Riggs and O’Leary (1989) posited that background factors establish individual aggressive patterns of behavior, whereas situational factors increase conflict levels within the relationship, contributing to an increased risk of violence when more of these factors are present. With regard to explanations of sex, Riggs and O’Leary wrote: “Although the model as presented here does not propose any specific sex differences, the potential for understanding the differential impact of variables

on men and women is testable within the framework of the model” (p. 68). Another theory, the closely related ecological perspective to dating violence (Brofenbrenner, 1979; Foshee et al., 2001) focuses on violence as predicted by both social–environmental predictors (i.e., peer environment, family environment, and social norms) and individual predictors (i.e., personal competencies, involvement in problem behavior, and demographic characteristics). Due to the fact that both the background-situational model and the ecological model strongly overlap, they will be discussed concurrently and contrasted with the intergenerational theory of violence. Overall, given their inclusive focus, empirical support for social learning theories can be determined by examining evidence related to most historical (e.g., child abuse, interparental violence), personal (e.g., substance use, personality traits), interpersonal (e.g., conflict-management skills), and contextual variables (e.g., peers’ use/receipt of DV).

Sex-specific empirical findings. First, as indicated earlier (see historical variables), there has been a general tendency for violence to occur intergenerationally. Despite somewhat divergent evidence in the degree to which violence is transmitted intergenerationally, studies utilizing the background-situational model have provided a more holistic theory of predictors of DV for both young men and women than research including child abuse as the sole predictor of DV perpetration. Either formally or informally applying the background-situational model, numerous studies have indicated that for both young men and women, variables that include witnessing interparental violence or being the victim of child abuse can be better understood when other contextual factors are included, such as positive attitudes toward aggression, degree of relationship conflict, conflict resolution strategies, juvenile delinquency, and alcohol use (e.g., Luthra & Gidycz, 2006; Magdol et al., 1998). However, despite evidence supporting similar predictors of DV perpetration among young men and young women, the effect size of correlates and predictors may not be equivalent between sexes. For example, Luthra and Gidycz (2006) found that while the background-situational model was predictive of both young men’s and young women’s DV perpetration, the model explained 83% of the variance in women’s DV perpetration and just 30% of the variance in men’s DV perpetration. Further, although it is unclear whether background variables or situational variables are most predictive of DV, research generally suggests that proximal and situational predictors (e.g., relationship conflict, acceptance of DV) are more predictive of DV perpetration by young men and young women than distal or historical factors (e.g., parental abuse; O’Keefe, 1997).

One of the strengths of the background/situational model is its flexibility. Different background and situational predictors can be used in models for men and women, which is appropriate, given findings indicating that certain variables (e.g., education level, violence in nonromantic relationships, and psychological factors) may be differentially related to men’s and women’s DV perpetration. However, the lack of variable

specificity in the background situational model likely contributes to methodological inconsistencies (e.g., different background and contextual variables included in each of the studies, differing methods of measurement variables) across studies. Despite similar correlational findings, the inclusion of different combinations of variables in each study assessing the background-situational model may lead to contradictory findings in regression models due to issues of shared variance among the predictors.

Individual Differences Theories: Personality and Typology Theories

Description. Personality and typology theories suggest that perpetration of violence exists due to a profile of personality traits common among perpetrators (Dutton, 1995; e.g., antisocial traits, impulsivity). Other theories have further attempted to combine both personality traits and the setting in which violence occurs (e.g., generally violent in many settings, or solely in interpersonal relationships) into more comprehensive typologies. For instance, one such typology theory (Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994) postulates that some individuals perpetrate solely within the relationship (relationship-only typology), others perpetrate in additional contexts due to violent and antisocial personality characteristics (generally violent typology), and a final group perpetrates due to attachment problems (e.g., fears of abandonment, or alternatively, fears of becoming intimate with others) and borderline personality traits (histrionic/preoccupied typology). Personality and typology theories would be most supported by evidence related to personal variables (e.g., psychopathology, personality disorders), and historical variables (e.g., attachment), and to a lesser extent interpersonal variables (e.g., relationship conflict and stress) or contextual variables (e.g., motives for DV perpetration).

Sex-specific empirical evidence. In an undergraduate sample, Monson and Langhinrichsen-Rohling (2002) found support for a typology theory of violence, based on the typologies theorized by Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994). First, the relationship-only typology includes individuals who perpetrate violence within relationships but not in other settings; men and women are equally represented in this category. Second, a generally violent/antisocial typology consists of individuals who are violent both within and outside of relationships and who possess antisocial personality characteristics. For this typology, men were represented more strongly than women. Finally, Monson and Langhinrichsen-Rohling (2002) found evidence for a histrionic/preoccupied typology, characterized by anxious attachment and histrionic personality characteristics, coupled with violence that was represented more frequently among women than men. In this study, histrionic/preoccupied individuals were characterized by more severe violence than relationship-only perpetrators. However, histrionic/preoccupied individuals had a greater history of family-of-origin violence, more histrionic personality traits, and fewer antisocial personality traits than the generally violent/antisocial perpetrators.

In another application of typology theory, Foshee, Bauman, Linder, Rice, and Wilcher (2007) conducted a qualitative study of 17- and 18-year-olds, which resulted in four categories of adolescent women perpetrators and one category of adolescent men perpetrators. Among young women, (from most to least common) categories included, “patriarchal terrorism” (using violence against the young man who had tried to abuse or control her for some time), an “anger response” (girlfriend responded to a situation out of anger with no history of experiencing abuse from boyfriend), the “ethical enforcement” type (in which the young woman reported that she used violence to inform her boyfriend that he had wronged her by cheating, drinking, or for other reasons), and finally a “first-time aggression response” (used violence for the first time in response to her boyfriend using violence against her for the first and only time). Among young men, the only category that emerged was “escalation prevention,” that is, young men were violent only in response to violence perpetrated by a girlfriend or to prevent or de-escalate violence initiated by a girlfriend. Although typologies are theoretically excellent vehicles for examining differential mechanisms for men’s and women’s perpetration of marital violence, there has been limited application of such theories to DV/young adult literature (for a discussion, see Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2010). Moreover, although typology theories provide helpful information about the patterns and types of DV perpetrated by young men and women, they provide less information about the etiological causes of DV perpetration for both the sexes. Further, despite the parsimony associated with studying young men and young women as perpetrators at the individual level, as opposed to the societal or institutional level (e.g., feminist theory), personality and typology theory are imperfect theoretical bases for violence without considering societal factors (e.g., gender roles, women’s ability to invoke power and control) and relational variables (e.g., relationship length, partner’s use of violence) that have been identified as correlates and predictors of DV perpetration among both men and women.

Summary

Examining the theories discussed earlier, each theory may contribute to our understanding of men’s and women’s perpetration of DV (Table 1). Feminist theory offers a larger socio-cultural framework within which the dynamics of men’s and women’s DV perpetration can be understood. Social learning theory (i.e., intergenerational transmission of violence and background-situational model) suggests that not only are background factors (e.g., child abuse) related to later perpetration but that situational factors (e.g., current relationship conflict) may also contribute to this phenomenon and can be used to explain similarities and differences in the factors related to young men’s and women’s DV perpetration. Finally, personality and typology theories provide an explanation for individual-level differences in DV perpetration (e.g., attachment style, beliefs about dating violence). Likewise,

Table 1. Critical Findings.

| Theory | Theoretical Features | Theoretical Variables of Interest | Gender-Specific Findings | Limitations |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| Sociocultural theories: Feminist and Coercion theories | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals use violence to gain or regain power/control Originally explained as men's exertion of power over women, has evolved to include women's struggles to exert power over men | Demographic variables (e.g., gender, age, SES), personal variables (e.g., gender role beliefs), interpersonal variables (e.g., satisfaction with power and control in relationship), contextual variables (e.g., controlling motives for DV) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Men's and women's DV perpetration related to adversarial sexual beliefs, sex-role stereotyping, traditional gender role beliefs, dissatisfaction with relationship power Men and women equally motivated to perpetrate DV due to self-defense reasons, control, anger, and jealousy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not fully explain some individual factors (e.g., drug/alcohol use) and psychological factors (e.g., depression, antisocial behavior) Relational factors (e.g., conflict resolution skills) are not included |
| Learning and Intergenerational theory: Social Learning and Background- Situational theory) Background Situa- tional theory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Violence that has been modeled (through witnessing or experiencing parental or interparental violence), leads to acceptance of violence as a conflict resolution strategy in relationships Background variables (e.g., child abuse, personality, and pathology) predict who will become violent in relationships Situational factors (e.g., substance use, problem-solving, and communication) predict when or in what contexts an individual will use violence | Historical variables (e.g., child abuse, witnessing interparental violence), personal variables (e.g., substance use, personality variables), interpersonal variables (e.g., conflict-management and problem-solving skills), and contextual variables (e.g., peers' use of DV) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong evidence for relationship between men's and women's perpetration of DV and child abuse and witnessing interparental violence In addition to child abuse/witnessing interparental violence, young men's and women's DV perpetration related to positive attitudes toward aggression, degree of relationship conflict, conflict-management skills, delinquency, alcohol use Psychological variables differ among men and women, with women's internalizing, and men's antisocial personality characteristics related to perpetration of DV Among men, but not as consistently women, SES and educational attainment are related to DV perpetration Further, experiencing victimization from peers is related to women's DV perpetration, whereas relationship length is more consistently related to men's DV perpetration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studies often include different predictors, with great variability in significant findings and effect sizes across studies Does not explain how variables interact, or how they may differ between men and women |
| Individual Differences theory: Personality and Typology theories) | DV perpetration results from personality traits or patterns of violence common among perpetrators | Personal variables (psychopathology, personality disorder), personal variables (attachment), interpersonal variables (relationship conflict and stress), contextual variables (motives for DV) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women and men equally perpetrate relationship-only violence; men are more likely to be violent across contexts and exhibit antisocial traits; violent women exhibited more histrionic traits and anxious attachment Some inconsistent results; sometimes similar motives for men and women, other research shows young women report more emotional and relational motives, whereas men report more power and control motives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few studies have applied personality/typology theories to DV/young adult literature Limits the study of DV perpetration to personal factors, excluding societal/institutional factors and relational/contextual factors |

Note. SES = socioeconomic status.

each approach has limitations, as traditional feminist theory and personality theories may present opposite problems (the former focusing largely on social structures, the latter solely on individuals), and social learning theories have produced inconclusive results. As Kalmar and Sternberg (1988) assert, psychologists often focus unduly on comparing theories and finding evidence for a superior theory, when many theories evidence high overlap and similar underlying constructs (e.g., acceptance of violence seems to result from societal expectations of masculinity in feminist theory and of witnessing violence in childhood in background-situational theory). Thus, integrative approaches that seek to identify components of separate theories and combine them to produce a unified explanation of a phenomenon may be especially useful in future work examining the correlates and predictors of DV perpetration among both sexes. Integrative approaches have been used successfully in other areas of research, such as the child sexual abuse perpetration literature (e.g., Ward & Siebert, 2002). One example of a combined approach to understanding the association between sex and DV perpetration is the social-ecology theory of DV adapted from Bronfenbrenner's model (1979) and proposed by Smith, White, and Moracco (2009). This model integrates the reviewed theories by examining predictors and correlates of violence at various levels of the social ecology. Some of the findings from prior studies fit at various levels of the social ecology, including individual (intrapersonal; e.g., depression is related to dating violence among women but not men; Banyard et al., 2006), microsystem (interpersonal/dyadic variables; e.g., anger in the face of rejection is related to men's DV perpetration but not women's; e.g., Brendgen et al., 2002), mesosystem (one's peers and social network; e.g., men and women in violent peer groups are more likely to perpetrate DV; e.g., Foshee et al., 2001), the macrosystem (community's sociocultural norms and customs; e.g., in the presence of low achieved social power [SES/education], men, but not women, are more likely to perpetrate DV; Magdol et al., 1997), and the chronosystem (changes over time as identities at each level intersect; e.g., child abuse is related to DV perpetration among both women and men; e.g., Baker & Stith, 2008). Within this model, gender is viewed as a status that shapes one's identity across these systems.

Unlike the other theories we have reviewed, this model has been less frequently applied in studies of DV, likely due to the difficulty in assessing all levels of the model within one study as well as the difficulty in quantifying the outer levels of the ecology (e.g., macrosystem and chronosystem). Further, although this theory includes individual variables that are influenced at various levels of the social ecology, this theory has not often included personality constructs that have been found to be related to DV among personality theorists. Future integrative work should focus on inclusion of these variables as well. Use of this model would require reviews examining results across multiple studies but if achieved has a strong potential for understanding the broad implications of research results.

Implications for Research and Prevention of Dating Violence

Although the extent to which there are true sex differences and similarities in factors related to DV perpetration is still unclear due to the methodological limitations in the extant body of literature, the current review provides a number of implications for future empirical work. More specifically, we urge researchers in this area to identify and utilize appropriate theoretical frameworks to guide their work, include both young men and young women in their samples, conduct sex-specific analyses, strive for methodological consistency, employ longitudinal designs with multiple and frequent data points, and consider the sociopolitical context and complex nature of DV.

First, most of the research on DV perpetration has been atheoretical in nature despite the prevalence of theories in the IPV and DV literature to explain partner aggression. As discussed earlier, theory integration could be an important step in future research. Use of the social ecological model that assesses variables at different levels of social experience (e.g., interpersonal, macrosystem) can also be accomplished by summarizing results across studies. Although all theories could benefit from integration and a greater consideration of sex and gender, it is also possible that some types of theories are better at explaining certain types of DV perpetration. For example, mutual DV (the most prevalent type of DV; Straus, 2009) where there is more equitable power may be explained better by a background-situational theory, which given preliminary evidence appears to be an equally efficacious model for understanding both young men and women's DV perpetration. However, sociocultural and feminist theories of DV perpetration may be better used to explain unidirectional DV perpetration, especially DV perpetration characterized by coercive control (Stark, 2007).

Moreover, although most of the theories used to explain DV perpetration are psychological (with the exception of sociocultural and feminist theories), there have been suggestions for future work to consider biological predictors of violence (e.g., salivary cortisol; National Institute of Justice, 2011) and sociological theories, especially those that emphasize the role of neighborhoods and communities (Pinchevsky & Wright, 2012), when studying risk and protective factors for young men's and women's DV perpetration. Additionally, developmental theories may provide some insight into the interpretation of the unique factors and processes that contribute to young men's and women's perpetration of DV as this may be related to differences in gender socialization experiences. For instance, although masculinity has been traditionally linked to characteristics such as power, strength, and authority, femininity has been typically associated with interpersonal sensitivity and care for others (White, 2009). According to White (2009), men and women may engage in DV as a means of constructing, maintaining, or reestablishing gender identity (White, 2009). Thus, although predictors and correlates of DV perpetration may be similar for men and women, the developmental pathways could be different based on different

gender socialization processes, all of which are important avenues for future research.

Other developmental factors outside of gender socialization may also help explain differences and similarities in DV among young adults. Research has also consistently demonstrated that DV is related to an increased risk of engagement in other maladaptive behaviors, such as violent delinquency and arrest, problem drinking and drug abuse, school aggression, and bullying (e.g., Hamby & Grych, 2013; Herrenkohl, Kosterman, Mason, & Hawkins, 2007; White & Chen, 2002), and such polyperpetration is particularly strong among men (Hamby & Grych, 2013). Further, a single risk factor (child maltreatment) has been found to predict bullying, gender-based harassment, difficulties with emotion regulation, DV, and violent delinquency among both men and women (see Wolfe, Crooks, Chiodo, & Jaffe, 2009, for a review). The overlap in these experiences highlights the need for broader intervention targeting multiple risk factors to prevent a variety of negative outcomes. Future work should look to incorporate and integrate a variety of perspectives that may help enlighten our understanding of the mechanisms and factors that contribute to DV among both young men and women as well as other problematic behaviors that appear to share similar causal links. Next, a number of previous studies did not conduct separate analyses for men and women or include sex as a moderator and were therefore not included in this review. Given that the factors that are similarly or differentially related to DV perpetration for young men and women are unclear, future research should strive to include both men and women in their samples and include sex-specific findings. This is especially important, given that to date women are underrepresented in the DV perpetration literature, whereas men are underrepresented in the DV victimization literature. Further, consideration should be taken when examining sex differences in DV perpetration. The use of gender/sex as subject variables in research has been eschewed by feminist researchers, as this approach reduces gender to an innate explanatory variable (i.e., sex) that “causes” and explains violent behavior without offering explanations for gender differences (Anderson, 2005). As such, researchers call for gender to be conceptualized as a social construction that is created and maintained through gendered structures that differentiate available resources and opportunities for men and women to learn about and use aggressive strategies (Smith et al., 2009). As such, White (2009) argues that social learning and sociocultural/feminist theories are not incompatible but must be informed by interactionist theory, which suggests that multiple social identities (i.e., gender, race, SES, etc.) and experiences (e.g., aggression) produce gender. Further, Stark (2010) calls for researchers to be cautious in interpreting similar rates of violence that are based on acts scales (e.g., the CTS and Conflict in Adolescent Dating Relationships Inventory (CADRI; Wolfe et al., 2001) as evidence of gender symmetry; this overly simplistic approach ignores the contextual and sociopolitical experience and consequences of violence (e.g., violence reinforces gender norms). Many of the studies presented in the current review use such measures and

thus should be considered to be more representative of the “general sample” (as opposed to clinical sample) literature (Johnson, 2010) and likely underrepresent severe violence (which may show evidence of a different set of predictors and correlates).

Additionally, methodological variability among the existing studies on the correlates and predictors of DV perpetration limits our understanding of their results. For example, the studies reviewed herein often used variable definitions (e.g., type of DV) and measures as well as different methodologies (e.g., variable time frame, dichotomous vs. ordinal vs. continuous measurement of DV). Researchers often dichotomize participants’ reports of DV perpetration into “any” or “no” categories due to low participant endorsement of perpetration items and heavily skewed distributions. However, by fitting a diverse group of perpetrators (in terms of both severity and frequency) into the same category, researchers are likely losing valuable information about differences among perpetrators of various types and levels of DV perpetration. Predictors of DV perpetration may differ for perpetrators of severe versus moderate violence or infrequent versus chronic perpetrators of DV. Within some research studies, various types of DV have been examined individually (e.g., psychological, physical, sexual; e.g., Jouriles, McDonald, Garrido, Ronsefield, and Brown, 2005, Magdol et al., 1998), whereas other studies collapse across forms of violence and consider perpetration to be of any of these forms to be DV (e.g., Foshee et al., 2001; Renner & Whitney, 2012).

Furthermore, experts in the field have also discussed the difficulties and need for research to define effectively and measure more accurately the terms “dating” and “relationship,” as their meaning and norms have changed dramatically in the last several years (e.g., brief “trysts,” sexting and Internet relationships), and it is unknown exactly what is considered dating or dating violence among today’s adolescents and young adults (National Institute of Justice, 2011). Although there is still no consensus in the field about best practices for defining and measuring DV perpetration (National Institute of Justice, 2011), we recommend that in the study of both young men’s and young women’s DV perpetration, researchers use the full version of the CTS (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996). The CTS is the most widely researched and used measure of DV and IPV victimization and perpetration to date (Vega & O’Leary, 2007), which allows for more consistency across studies and thus comparisons of findings. However, it is recognized that the CTS and CADRI (used with adolescent samples) are strictly behavioral, self-report measures of perpetration and victimization and are limited in their ability to capture the context of acts of aggression. Therefore, the use of additional measures that better capture the context, meaning, function, and effects of DV and the nuances and complexities of episodes of victimization and perpetration within relationships is recommended to supplement the CTS and to understand better how relationship context contributes to DV. Two important avenues for gaining more comprehensive information about DV are (1) the use of direct observation of interactions between romantic partners in laboratory to measure

violence (e.g., “voodoo doll” tasks used by Slotter et al., 2012) and conflict management (see Welsh & Shulman, 2008, for a review) and (2) gathering dyadic information from both partners. Qualitative and multimethod research is also of particular importance in obtaining contextual information about interpersonal processes, and although such research is common in clinical samples examining intimate terrorism, qualitative research among bidirectionally violent couples is sparse (Johnson, 2010). Although beyond the scope of the current review, victimization and perpetration co-occur and many of the predictors of victimization are similar to perpetration (e.g., Magdol et al., 1997). Additionally, theories used to explain DV perpetration often are helpful in contributing to our understanding of victimization as well. Thus, it is critical for future work to gain a greater understanding of the complex association between victimization and perpetration, which could be examined using experience sampling/daily diary methodologies (e.g., Sullivan, Khondkaryan, Dos Santos, & Peters, 2011). These approaches have been proposed in order to obtain proximal and contextual data around the time of abuse to improve reliability and validity, which is important, given that young men and women may forget or fail to mention instances of violence if long periods of time have passed (National Institute of Justice, 2011). Indeed, research by Jouriles, McDonald, Garrido, Ronsefield, and Brown (2005) indicates that the number of participants reporting perpetration was higher over several, shorter reporting periods (i.e., four 2-week periods) compared to one, longer reporting period (i.e., one 8-week period). Future research should seek to replicate these results and include both proximal measurements of DV and a sufficient number of follow-up periods in longitudinal research.

A major limitation of the current body of literature is the preponderance of cross-sectional designs and longitudinal designs with insufficient follow-up periods (e.g., 2–3 months). Longitudinal studies over a more extended period, such as the 21-year birth cohort study completed by Magdol, Moffitt, and Silva (1998), are necessary in order to provide the strongest evidence of predictive ability. Longitudinal designs would also allow for sufficient testing of variables that may mediate or moderate the effects of sex on DV perpetration (e.g., negative affect, situational factors, and motives for perpetration).

The current article also suggests implications for DV prevention programming. In recent years, there has been growing focus on developing, implementing, and evaluating DV primary prevention programs for young men and young women (Edwards, Dardis, & Gidycz, 2011; Foshee & Matthews, 2007). Although some programs are guided by feminist and/or social learning theories, other programs are characterized by more skills-based and gender-neutral approaches (for reviews, see Hickman et al., 2004; Whitaker et al., 2006). Components of existing DV prevention and intervention programs often include addressing core variables that the current review has found to be related to DV perpetration, including acceptance of violence (e.g., by providing participants information about the definition of caring and abusive relationships and the

causes and consequences of DV), peer group dynamics (e.g., helping friends who are victims of DV, confronting friends who are perpetrators of DV), traditional gender beliefs (e.g., discussions about overcoming gender stereotypes), and relationship problem-solving deficits (e.g., effective communication and anger management skills; Edwards et al., 2011; Foshee & Matthews, 2007).

Regarding the effectiveness of these types of programs, in a review of the adolescent DV prevention literature by Whitaker and colleagues (2006), among 11 studies (with a pre-post or comparison group design) 9 indicated at least one positive intervention outcome with regard to attitudes, knowledge, or behaviors (e.g., reductions in accepting attitudes of DV); and among the 4 studies that assessed DV perpetration behaviors, 2 reported a positive outcome (i.e., reductions in DV perpetration; i.e., Foshee et al., 2004; Wolfe et al., 2009). A review by Cornelius and Resseguie (2007) highlights some studies that have found support for programs leading to reductions in DV attitudes, intentions, or behaviors for only one sex (e.g., increased positive attitudes for women only, Jones, 1991; increased positive attitudes and behavioral intentions among women but not men, Jaffe, Sudermann, Reitzel, & Kellip, 1992). Additionally, results of a cluster randomized trial of a 21-lesson, school-based DV prevention program presented to ninth graders showed a reduction in DV among intervention boys, but not girls, compared to the control group (Wolfe et al., 2009). In light of these results, some researchers have suggested that gender-specific programming grounded in gender-specific socialization experiences may be more effective at preventing DV perpetration than mixed-gender programming (Edwards et al., 2011; Gidycz, Orchowski, & Edwards, 2011; Graves, 2007).

These conflicting research findings and suggestions regarding primary prevention of DV underscore the need for conceptually and methodologically rigorous research on the sex similarities and differences in DV perpetration, which could be used to revise existing programming efforts and potentially increase their effectiveness in reducing DV perpetration. Further, from a social-ecological and feminist perspective, it is possible that structures impacting and creating “gender” are equally important targets for prevention and intervention efforts, including practices rooted in community norms. The Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancement and Leadership through Alliances (DELTA) program targets factors on various levels of the social ecology with the goal of promoting healthy and equitable relationships among adults (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008) and could be promising for work with teens although systematic outcome research is lacking. Clearly, multilevel primary prevention of DV, as opposed to intervention and secondary and tertiary prevention, is of utmost importance. Moreover, DV prevention programming needs to be theory-driven and research-based, delivered with sufficient dosage and intensity, begin early in life, comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, tailored toward stage of readiness and motivation, and socioculturally relevant to the target audience. Finally,

issues of gender inequality and tolerance of all forms of violence need to be addressed within larger social and institutional structures in order to facilitate broader change and to create a culture that does not tolerate violence against a partner.

In conclusion, over the past 30 years, a large body of literature has accumulated that attempts to identify the predictors and correlates of DV. However, given the number of conceptual, theoretical, and methodological issues plaguing this body of research, there is still much work needed to better understand young men's and young women's perpetration of DV. It is hoped that through stronger and more consistent and nuanced measurements and methodologies grounded in theory and sociopolitical contexts, sex similarities and differences in DV perpetration can be better understood in order to improve primary prevention efforts and reduce the devastating effects of DV on both victims and society.

Implications for Practice, Policy, and Research

- Gender must continue to be studied using separate analyses, with the use of consistent measurement of DV and longitudinal designs to understand better the predictors of DV among young men and young women.
- Research should be theory-based, tested with multivariate methods, and researchers should seek to combine theories to capture multiple factors that predict DV perpetration. The social ecological theory is one example of a combined theory that could be employed.
- Some types of theories may be better at explaining certain types of men's and women's DV (e.g., background situational for bidirectional violence, feminist theories for coercive control).
- A critical understanding of gender differences and similarities in DV perpetration is critical to refining and improving the effectiveness of programming efforts.

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