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Phone: (419) 372-7279 cfdr@bgsu.edu

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**WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE: FRIENDSHIP DYNAMICS ASSOCIATED WITH
INTIMATE PARTNER CONFLICT IN YOUNG ADULTHOOD**

Peggy C. Giordano¹

Jennifer E. Copp²

Wendy D. Manning¹

Monica A. Longmore¹

¹ Department of Sociology &
Center for Family and Demographic Research
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, OH

² College of Criminology and Criminal Justice
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32309

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When Worlds Collide:**Friendship Dynamics Associated with Intimate Partner Conflict in Young Adulthood****Abstract**

Although it is axiomatic that close social ties are beneficial for health and well-being, involvement in social relationships may bring challenges as well as offering numerous benefits. A further complication is that the life course perspective has increased recognition that each phase of development is associated with unique preoccupations. While it is widely accepted that peers are central to an understanding of adolescence, and that romantic ties loom larger in adulthood, the current analysis focuses on areas of discord associated with the peers-to-romance transition itself. Particularly in light of societal level transformations, including an increased age at first marriage, the transition to adulthood often involves simultaneous involvement in both ‘worlds,’ even as romantic ties begin to deepen in significance.

The current study identifies specific conditions under which peer involvement is associated with intimate partner conflict. Analyses relied on structured and qualitative data elicited in connection with a longitudinal study of a large, diverse sample of male and female respondents followed across the adolescent to adult transition (n=928). Results showed that involvement with friends characterized by more liberal attitudes toward dating and sexuality was associated with higher odds of experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV). Further, analyses examining the character of peer involvement across the full study period documented that within-individual variability in affiliation with delinquent peers was linked to greater odds of reporting IPV. The content of in-depth interviews (n=102) converge with the quantitative results, but further illustrate the dynamic, unfinished nature of relationships during this phase of the life course.

When Worlds Collide:

Friendship Dynamics Associated with Intimate Partner Conflict in Young Adulthood

Ample research has demonstrated that friendship relations play a key role in social development. Attachment theories emphasize the foundational role of these relationships, highlighting that intimacy of friendships in childhood and adolescence is associated with the quality of romantic relationships and other forms of adjustment in adulthood (Collins & Sroufe, 1999; Tay, Tan, Diener, & Gonzalez, 2013). These research traditions connect to an even larger body of research that has focused on the benefits of social support for health and emotional well-being (Berkman & Glass, 2000; Schwarzer & Leppin, 1991; Thoits, 2011). Although it is thus well established that involvement in social relationships is generally beneficial, the association between intimacy and well-being is not necessarily simple, straightforward, and unequivocal. For example, the relative salience of particular types of close relationships changes as individuals transition through the life course, and intimate ties bring with them the potential for interpersonal conflict as well as providing considerable benefits.

Classic depictions of the transition to adulthood trace a reliable shift from intense focus on peers as characteristic of the adolescent period to involvement in a stable relationship with a spouse or other romantic partner (Collins & van Dulmen, 2006). In support of this idea, early on Johnson and Leslie (1982), describing a process of “dyadic withdrawal” associated with intimate involvement, found that the number of friendships tended to decrease as individuals developed more stable romantic ties. However, researchers focused on the period of emerging adulthood have stressed that societal level changes have not only lengthened the transition, but produced a life stage with a unique character and set of concerns (Arnett, 2014). Further, as Shulman and Connelly (2013) recently noted, these unique features potentially influence the character of relationships formed during this time period.

It seems quite plausible that, at least in part due to the uncertainties and rapidity of changes during young adulthood, friendships may be of special importance, as they fulfill needs for continuity, affiliation, and identity support. At the same time, research has documented that across the transition, romantic relationships themselves increase in intimacy and levels of commitment (Fincham & Cui, 2011;

Giordano, Manning, Longmore, & Flanigan, 2012; Meier & Allen, 2009). This basic juxtaposition of findings provides a general rationale for expecting that some young adults may experience challenges associated with simultaneous involvement in both types of close relationships during this phase of the life course. The conceptual goals of this paper are to forge more explicit connections between the worlds of friendship and romance during young adulthood, and to identify specific aspects of peer involvement that may be associated with conflicts within the romantic realm.

We drew on Cherlin's (2004) notion of "incomplete institutionalization" and social learning theory (Sutherland, 1939) to provide a conceptual background for investigating the role of peer dynamics in intimate partner conflicts. Analyses rely on quantitative and qualitative data from a contemporary longitudinal study of a large, heterogeneous sample of young adults initially interviewed as adolescents. We focused on friends' attitudes and behaviors related to dating/sexuality as well as their involvement in delinquency or substance use as potential sources of conflicts with romantic partners. The analyses centered on intimate partner violence, a form of conflict that has been shown to peak during the period of early adulthood (Johnson, Giordano, Manning, & Longmore, 2015; Rennison, 2001), as well as reports of verbal disagreements. In-depth relationship history narratives elicited from a subset (n=102) of respondents were a primary source for determining peer concerns related to romantic partner conflict, and basis for examining these connections more systematically relying on quantitative methods and the larger sample. These in-depth relationship history narratives are an important supplement to quantitative analyses by providing a window on ways in which respondents themselves experience and describe concerns related to peer involvement, and illustrate the processual nature of the peers-to-romance transition during the period.

Background

Romantic Relationships and Friendship in Young Adulthood

Researchers have documented delays in the average age at first marriage and a range of other changes in the expected sequence and likelihood of achieving markers of adult status (e.g., rise in cohabitation and premarital births, periods of co-residence with parents) (e.g., Arnett, 2014; Furstenberg,

2010; Lamidi & Manning, 2016; Settersten, Ottusch, & Schneider, 2015; Settersten & Ray, 2010; Shanahan, 2000). Many scholars have linked these changes to economic uncertainties that young people increasingly confront as they mature into adulthood (Furstenburg, 2008; Mortimer, 2012; Silva, 2012; Vuolo, Staff, & Mortimer, 2014). As noted above, Shulman and Connolly (2013) recently argued that these changes have complicated previous depictions of a stage-like developmental progression that culminates in involvement in a committed adult romantic relationship. The authors suggested that challenges associated with developing a clear life plan (in this conceptualization career issues are central) are inextricably linked to relationship instabilities and may become challenges for couples during this phase of the life course.

In support of this view, recent research has shown that fluidity of relationships and changing partners is relatively common during the period (Halpern-Meekin, Manning, Giordano, & Longmore, 2012). Also indicative of a less than fully settled pattern, many young adults report some level of experience with sex outside a traditional romantic context (England & Bearak, 2014; Manning, Giordano, & Longmore, 2006; Manning, Longmore, & Giordano, 2005). Other lines of research complicate this portrait of change and instability, however. For example, while many young adults report some casual sexual experience, contemporary samples of young adults nevertheless indicate that sexual behavior occurs most often within a dating or romantic context (Collins, Welsh, & Furman, 2009; Manning, Longmore, & Giordano, 2000; McCarthy & Casey, 2008). Further, studies of age-related trends in the character of romantic ties have highlighted that across the transition to adulthood, intimate relationships not only increase in average duration, but in reported comfort and closeness, emotional rewards, perceived influence, and level of commitment (Fincham & Cui, 2011; Giordano et al., 2012; Meier & Allen, 2009). Findings also point to age-related shifts in utilitarian benefits of romantic relationships ranging from the provision of social to material support (Giordano et al., 2012). Finally, across the period, forms of involvement such as cohabitation are common, reflecting for many experiences with a higher level of enmeshment and interdependence (Manning, 2013).

The amount of research on romantic relationships in young adulthood has thus grown considerably. Yet fewer studies have focused on young adults' friendships. Theorizing and research from the more general young adulthood literature provide some recognition of the complexity of involvement in multiple social relationships and the transformations that are ongoing during the period (e.g., Collins & van Dulmen, 2006). However, prior work has not specifically investigated challenges associated with the process of affecting these transformations. Recognizing that both types of close relationships continue to be important, we explore conceptually and empirically the possibility that difficulties may attend the individual and couple's attempts to achieve a comfortable and compatible peer-partner balance. Clearly, these social changes are ubiquitous during the period suggesting that most young adults work through any such issues effectively. However, recent findings relying on data elicited from a large sample of young adults indicated that disagreements about "time spent with peers" was a significant "contested domain" associated with variability in reports of intimate partner violence within a focal relationship (Giordano et al., 2015). The purpose of the current study is to explore further the links between these social worlds, and to identify conditions under which issues related to peer socializing become a source of disagreements and discord in young adults' romantic relationships.

Intimate Partner Violence in Young Adulthood

Intimate partner violence (IPV) refers to behaviors that cause physical, psychological, or sexual harm to individuals in intimate relationships (World Health Organization, 2002). Although a range of behaviors can thus be included in the definition, in this paper, we focus on the use of physical violence (e.g., boyfriend/girlfriend, cohabiting partner, spouse). IPV has been identified as a significant social and public health problem that negatively affects emotional and physical well-being (Campbell, 2002; Coker et al., 2002). Recent estimates indicate that roughly 1 in 3 women (32.9%) and 1 in 4 men (28.2%) have experienced physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetimes (Black et al., 2011). An extensive literature has identified risk factors ranging from personality differences to socioeconomic disadvantage, gendered socialization practices, and violence within the family of origin (Capaldi, Knoble, Shortt, & Kim, 2012). While prior research has established that these are generally important predictors of IPV,

researchers have also documented considerable within-individual variability in perpetration and victimization experience, and distinct trends over the life course. For example, researchers have shown considerable changes over time in exposure within the context of a focal relationship, and there is evidence of even greater discontinuity across partners (Johnson, Manning, Giordano, & Longmore, 2015; Shortt et al., 2012). Further, self-report studies and analyses of official statistics converge in documenting apparent peaks in prevalence during the period of young adulthood (Halpern, Spriggs, Martin, & Kupper, 2009; Johnson, Manning et al., 2015; Kim, Laurent, Capaldi, & Feingold, 2008; Rennison, 2001).

These findings suggest that theories focused primarily on personality differences or family of origin influences are not comprehensive as explanatory frameworks, as they do not provide a basis for understanding the patterning of such changes over time. This has led researchers to investigate couple-level and life course specific factors that may be associated with heightened risk for IPV. Early on, researchers centered on important relational dynamics such as men's desire to exert control and dominance within the relationship (e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Johnson & Ferraro, 2000; Yllo, 1993). Research findings support this emphasis, but results of recent studies, particularly those relying on community samples, offer a more complex picture. For example, during adolescence as well as young adulthood, male respondents in general and those in violent relationships in particular on average report higher levels of control attempts on the part of their female partners (Giordano et al., 2012; Giordano, Soto, Manning, Longmore, 2010; Stets & Pirog-Good, 1987). In addition, Giordano et al. (2016) recently documented that relationships characterized by high levels of male and female partner controlling behaviors were associated with especially high odds of reporting IPV.

Based on such findings, researchers have begun to explore what it is that individuals are attempting to change about their partners, that appears to be linked to such control attempts and heightened risk for interpersonal conflict. In a recent study of young adults, Giordano et al. (2015) found that infidelity concerns and disagreements about time spent with peers were two significant contested domains associated with IPV, net of traditional predictors such as a family history of violence. These findings differ in some respects from early research linking jealousy and IPV, as earlier discussions often

focused primarily on jealousy of male partners and essentially apocryphal concerns (e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Gayford, 1979). Although this is a critical dynamic associated with violence, especially with regard to women's victimization, research, again relying primarily on community samples, suggests that male partner infidelity is not only more common (e.g., Ford, Sohn, & Lepkowski, 2002) but that female partner concerns about their partner's infidelity were also associated with conflict within many young adult relationships that included violence (Giordano et al., 2015; Nemeth, Bonomi, Lee, & Ludwin, 2012).

Although it is intuitive to connect jealousy and infidelity concerns to the experience of relationship conflict, the finding that disagreements about time with peers was also related to IPV warrants additional investigation. Most studies of IPV have not focused heavily on peers, perhaps due to an initial focus on samples of older married couples. However, some scholars have drawn on the logic of attachment theories to incorporate peer dynamics, arguing that early bonding with peers provides opportunities for relationship skill building, thus increasing social competence and reducing the odds of later experiencing IPV (Linder & Collins, 2005). Another peer-related theme within the IPV literature is that perpetrators of violence often limit the partner's access to friends and family, resulting in a pattern of isolation from their peers (Pence & Paymar, 1993). The latter depiction fits generally with the results indicating that time with friends may be a contested domain associated with IPV. Yet, that there is apparently active engagement about this (i.e., these domains are 'contested') suggests that the partner's success in achieving control may be less than complete. In our view, Cherlin's (2004) concept of 'incomplete institutionalization' provides a useful general backdrop for developing hypotheses about specific issues related to peer involvement that may be associated with heightened conflict.

On the 'Incomplete Institutionalization' of Romantic Relationships in Young Adulthood

A majority of adults will eventually form marriage relationships, which include greater emphasis on commitment, obligation, and permanence. Yet a potential challenge for young adults is that even though a majority have not yet married, romantic relationships formed during this time may come to engender similar expectations. At the same time, such expectations and changing relationship goals begin

to emerge largely absent a set of agreed upon norms about how to manage a deepening intimacy with partners while retaining valued relationships with friends. Early on, Cherlin (1978) theorized that relationships other than first marriage (dating, cohabiting or remarriage) are not fully institutionalized, and thus are characterized by a lack of clarity regarding norms and expectations (see also Cherlin 2004). This absence of a clear normative framework or set of cultural guideposts requires individuals to determine and negotiate their own sense of expectations and obligations, which may be associated with uncertainty, a mismatch of perspectives, and in turn a greater potential for interpersonal conflict (see also Brown & Manning, 2009). For example, cohabiting young adults experience greater levels of interpersonal conflict than their married counterparts (Brown & Bulanda, 2008; Manning, Longmore, & Giordano, 2016), in part due to a high level of enmeshment along with uncertainty surrounding the issue of commitment.

In addition to juggling career and romantic relationship goals during the period (Shulman & Connelly, 2013), young adults must figure out how to achieve a comfortable pace of romantic relationship development while maintaining or transforming their friendship ties. Similar to romantic ties, friendships during this period are “incompletely institutionalized.” For young adults who are typically not yet married, the appropriate level of peer socializing may not be entirely clear or, at least initially, agreed upon. To date no studies have considered how friendship ties during young adulthood influence relationship conflict. Next we consider specific facets of peer involvement that may be implicated in intimate partner conflicts, and subsequently investigate links between these peer factors and IPV within the context of a current/most recent relationship.

Friends’ Views on Dating and Sexuality

The social learning perspective differs from attachment theories in focusing less on the quality of early peer bonds than on the attitudes and behaviors of close friends (Sutherland, 1939). Thus, if we accept the basic premise that friendships continue to be important during young adulthood, it is reasonable to expect that friends often telegraph attitudes related to the romantic/sexual realms, through interaction and communication, and by virtue of their own conduct. For example, prior research has

shown that friends' aggression is related to respondents' own aggression (Espelage, Holt, & Henkel, 2003) and Minter et al. (2015) recently documented that reports of friends' IPV were significantly related to young adults' self-reports of partner violence. In the current study, we consider the role of more general views about dating and sexuality as a further influence on intimate partner conflicts.

In a study of a Midwestern middle school, for example, Eder and colleagues (1995) found that peer interactions fostered the idea that one must always "be in love," but particularly among the young women she studied, communications also telegraphed that dating more than one person at a time was inappropriate. This is not a universally accepted view, however, and thus friends' liberal or conservative perspectives on dating during young adulthood are a potential source of variability in peer contexts that may be linked to intimate partner conflict (e.g., Hall, Lee, & Witherspoon, 2014). In a related vein, variability in peers' views about the acceptability of engaging in casual sex or cheating on a partner are somewhat removed from the dependent variable of IPV (relative to peer attitudes about IPV), but could nevertheless affect the dynamics within intimate relationships and consequently influence the odds of violence. Examining the relationship between friends' views on dating/sexuality and IPV contributes beyond prior work, as previous studies have highlighted that active endorsement of the idea of using aggression against an intimate partner itself tends to be quite low (Copp, Giordano, Longmore, & Manning, 2016; Simon et al., 2002).

Friends' Involvement in Delinquency and Substance Use

A robust literature has established an influence of friends' delinquency and substance use on adolescents' own levels of involvement (Brauer & DeCoster, 2015; Haynie, 2002; Hoeben, Meldrum, & Young, 2016; Jose, Hipp, Butts, Wang, & Lakon, 2016; Thornberry & Krohn, 1997), and associations with adult crime (Goldweber, Dmitrieva, Cauffman, Piquero, & Steinberg, 2011) and young adult antisocial behavior patterns (Andrews, Tildesley, Hyman, & Fuzhong, 2002; Zedaker, 2017) have also been documented. Romantic partners may have a keen awareness of such connections. Thus, aside from their influence on issues related to fidelity and commitment, friends who exhibit a delinquent profile may be a source of worry and consternation, and over time such affiliations may be linked to heightened risk

for intimate partner conflicts. Researchers have previously theorized that adolescent delinquency in many respects can be seen as a kind of premature bid for adult status (e.g., smoking, drinking, staying out late, acting tough (Krohn, Lizotte, & Perez, 1997; Newcomb & Bentler, 1988). However, with changing expectations associated with young adulthood, continued ‘partying’ and hanging out with delinquent companions may increasingly be positioned by others (including partners) as immature, and limiting to the assumption of adult responsibilities and concerns (Massoglia & Uggen, 2010).

A classic study relying on data collected in the early 1980s, Warr (1998) found that entry into marriage was reliably associated with reductions in the amount of time spent with peers and in particular, socializing with delinquent peers. These changes in peer affiliations were associated with reductions in delinquency involvement as respondents transitioned to adulthood. The findings thus suggest that some of the positive benefits of marriage relate to the partner’s role in “knifing off” the partner’s “bad” companions. A critical caveat is that as the average age at marriage has increased (from 24 in 1980 to nearly 30 today), shifts in peer affiliations related to romantic involvement may not be automatic or abrupt. Thus, some individuals may recognize that certain friends are not good influences, but enjoy or otherwise wish to associate with them nevertheless (Arnett, 2005). To the degree that partners continue to socialize with delinquent peers who are likely to reinforce such behaviors, concerns may revolve around the reality that at this phase of the life course, such actions potentially accrue increasingly significant costs (arrest, negative effect on job/career, as well as those pertaining to the relationship). Thus, socializing with delinquent friends may not only be associated with continued delinquency involvement, as prior work has demonstrated, but with increased tension and conflict at the couple level.

The Current Study

Our goal is to examine the association between specific peer attitudes and behaviors on young adult relationship conflict. The data are drawn from a longitudinal study of a large, heterogeneous sample of respondents interviewed initially as adolescents, and followed up four additional times, across the transition to adulthood. We consider several interrelated research questions. First, we assess whether affiliations with peers described as having liberal attitudes toward dating/sexuality (e.g., ok to date more

than one person at a time, have been unfaithful to their own partners) is associated with the odds of experiencing IPV, once traditional covariates and a measure of friends' IPV have been taken into account. Second, prior research has shown that IPV and delinquency tend to be significantly associated (Capaldi et al., 2012), but some researchers have suggested that this is primarily due to an underlying propensity for antisocial behavior (Felson, 2002). Thus, we estimate growth curve models examining reports about friends' delinquency/criminal involvement and IPV across the full study period (spanning 3 data collection points and 13 years). This analysis provides an assessment of within-individual change in IPV reports as influenced by the time-varying index of involvement with delinquent peers.

We focus on the experience of 'any violence' in the relationship, but supplemental models explored whether results vary by the form of IPV considered (perpetration or victimization). Significant differences across type are not anticipated, as prior research has demonstrated that perpetration and victimization tend to be correlated within the context of community based samples, and measures tapping such "common couple," or mutual violence often are not fully sensitive to gendered differences in the nature of these experiences (Anderson, 2013; Johnson, 2006; Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Misra, Selwyn, & Rohling, 2012). Further, supplemental analyses investigated whether the associations described are significant in models focused on variability in verbal disagreements. Additionally, models were estimated that include gender interactions, in order to determine whether the effect of the focal variables on IPV and verbal disagreements is similar according to respondent gender. The in-depth relationship history narratives we collected from a subset of respondents who had reported violence on the structured instrument provide additional support for the direction of the quantitative results. In particular, they highlight the connections described from respondents' own perspectives, and illustrate the processual, negotiated character of the 'dyadic withdrawal' phenomenon.

Data and Method

Quantitative analyses relied on data from structured interviews collected in connection with the Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study (TARS), a longitudinal investigation of the social relationships of a large diverse sample of teens originally interviewed in 2001, and followed up four additional times as

they have navigated the transition to adulthood. TARS is a useful dataset for this investigation, as multiple questions were elicited about key constructs such as friends' attitudes toward dating/sexuality and reports of their delinquency involvement, as well as variables tapping traditional predictors (parents' use of violence, quality of early peer relations) of relationship conflict. The current analyses relied primarily on responses to structured questions at the fifth interview. However, the analysis of within-individual change uses information from all five waves of structured interviews (12-29).

Sample

The TARS data are based on a stratified random sample of 1,321 adolescents. Data were collected in the years 2001, 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2011. The sampling frame of the TARS study was based on enrollment records of 62 schools across seven school districts, but school attendance was not a requirement for inclusion in the study. In a majority of instances, interviewers traveled to respondents' homes with preloaded laptops, and after entering basic information, interviewers handed the laptop to the respondent for answering the majority of all questions. Due to lack of privacy or respondent preference, a few interviews took place in public locations such as a library. At the fifth interview an online version was available, which was useful in the goal of retaining respondents who had moved or those who were not available to complete a personal interview (28% completed this version). Respondents who completed the online instrument did not differ from others on most indicators, but had slightly higher SES origins, consistent with research showing that mobility is related to socioeconomic status (Cohn & Morin, 2008). The stratified, random sample included over-samples of Black and Hispanic adolescents. The initial sample included 1,321 respondents and the fifth interview retained 1,021 valid respondents, or 77% of wave 1. Attrition analyses indicated that subjects retained did not differ significantly on most dimensions, but were somewhat more likely to be female (52% at wave 1, 55% at wave 5), and less likely to report a non-traditional (step-parent, single parent, and 'other') family structure. Additionally, Black respondents (25% at wave 1, 22% at wave 5) and those reporting low levels of parental education (less than high school) (13% at wave 1, 11% at wave 5) were less likely to be retained. The analyses relied primarily on structured surveys completed in connection with the fifth data collection (2011), but a parent

questionnaire (primarily mothers) administered at the first interview provided information about sociodemographic characteristics. The growth curve models rely on all five waves of survey data.

The analytic sample included all those who participated in the fifth interview, but individuals who were not identified as Black, White, or Hispanic were excluded ($n = 23$) due to small cell size, as were those respondents who did not report about a current or most recent relationship (i.e., those reporting no dating or relationship experience) ($n = 70$). The final analytic sample consisted of 928 respondents (421 males and 507 females). The qualitative sample included 102 core respondents interviewed at wave 5 who were selected because they had reported exposure to violence within a current/most recent relationship on either the wave 4 or wave 5 survey. The analytic sample for the growth curve analysis was derived from the wave 5 analytic sample described above, but drew on 4 additional waves of structured interviews (waves 1-4). The final analytic sample ($n = 3,739$ observations) for this portion of the analyses represented a 13-year accelerated cohort design with three overlapping cohorts (ages 12-29 years).

Measures

Dependent variables. *Relationship violence* is measured at the time of the fifth interview and is based on responses to twelve items from the revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2) (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) ($\alpha = .91$), including whether the respondent had “thrown something at,” “twisted arm or hair,” “used a knife or gun,” “punched or hit with something that could hurt,” “choked,” “slammed against a wall,” “beat up,” “burned or scalded on purpose,” “kicked,” “pushed, shoved or grabbed,” “slapped in the face or head with an open hand,” or “hit” in reference to experiences with the current or most recent partner. An identical set of questions were asked about the respondent’s victimization experiences. We used a dichotomous measure of relationship violence, distinguishing between those who reported any violent behaviors (perpetration, victimization, and mutual) and those who reported no violence (1 = IPV, 0 = no IPV). Supplemental analyses focused on the perpetration and victimization subscales separately as well as an index of *verbal conflict* ($\alpha = .88$) (based on two items assessing how often respondents and partners “have disagreements or arguments” and “yell or shout at

each other”). In addition, the growth curve analyses assessed relationship violence across all five waves of data using a four item version of the CTS2, which included “thrown something at,” “pushed, shoved or grabbed,” “slapped in the face or head with an open hand,” and “hit.”

Peer factors. The section of the survey focusing on peers was introduced with text highlighting that a separate section would consider romantic partners, in order to direct responses toward friends other than romantic partners. *Friends’ liberal attitudes/behaviors* was measured at wave 5 using a standardized scale based on the following three items: “My friends think it’s okay to date more than one person at a time”; “My friends think it’s okay to have sex with someone you are not actually dating” (responses ranged from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree”); and “How many of your friends have cheated on their boyfriend, girlfriend, or spouse?” (responses ranged from 1 “none” to 6 “all of them”) ($\alpha=.60$).

Peer IPV was measured at the time of the fifth interview using a four-item version of the CTS2 ($\alpha = .90$). Respondents were asked how often their friends and their romantic partners did the following: “throw something at each other”; “push, shove, or grab each other”; “slap each other in the face or head with an open hand”; and “hit each other” (responses ranged from 1 “never” to 5 “very often”). Based on responses to these four items we created a dichotomous variable indicating whether their friends ever engaged in any of these behaviors (1 = peer IPV, 0 = no peer IPV). *Peer attachment* was based on a question from the wave 1 survey that focused on friends’ caring, and indexed the respondent’s level of agreement with the following: “They (my friends) care about me” (responses ranged from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree”).

Delinquency. *Respondent delinquency/crime* was measured across all five interviews (α ranged from .71 to .91) using a 9-item version of Elliott and Ageton’s (1980) self-report instrument assessing how often individuals had done the following in the past 12 months: “drunk alcohol”; “stolen (or tried to steal) things worth \$5 or less”; “carried a hidden weapon other than a plain pocket knife”; “damaged or destroyed property on purpose”; “stolen (or tried to steal) something worth more than \$50”; “attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting him/her”; “sold drugs”; “been drunk in a public place”; “broken into a building or vehicle (or tried to break in) to steal something or just to look around”; and

“used drugs to get high (not because you were sick)” (responses ranged from 1 “never” to 9 “more than once a day”). *Friends’ delinquency/crime* was measured across the five survey waves (α ranged from .78 to .81) using a 9-item scale identical to the delinquency scale described above, referencing peer involvement in delinquency and crime. Delinquency scales were constructed as variety scores, which possess high reliability and validity and lessen the relative influence of less serious items (Sweeten, 2012).

Family violence. *Coercive parenting* was based on a question from the first questionnaire in which respondents reported how often parents pushed, slapped, or hit them. Responses were dichotomized to indicate any exposure to coercive parenting (1 = yes).

Sociodemographic characteristics. We included a series of sociodemographic indicators: *gender*, *age*, *race/ethnicity* including non-Hispanic White (contrast category), non-Hispanic Black, and Hispanic, *family structure* including two biological parents (contrast category), step-family, single-parent family, and any “other” family type, and *socioeconomic status* as measured by the highest level of education reported in the parent questionnaire at the first interview.

Adult status characteristics. Adult status characteristics included dichotomous indicators of employment at the fifth interview (*full-time*, *part-time*, and *unemployed* (contrast category)), and status as a *parent* determined by a question asking whether the respondent has any children. These are included to control for respondents’ current life circumstances as possible influences on friendship dynamics as well as on IPV.

Relationship characteristics. We included a series of basic relationship variables in the models. Three dichotomous indicators distinguished whether the relationship of interest is *dating* (contrast category), *cohabiting*, or *married*. Additionally, we used a dichotomous variable to denote whether responses reference a *current relationship* or their most recent romantic relationship (1 = current). Relationship *duration*, measured in years, assessed how long respondents have/had been with their current or most recent partners. These variables are included in models, as features such as duration and cohabitation have been positively linked to IPV in prior research (e.g., Giordano et al., 2015). The range

is from about a month (.08) to 14 years.

The qualitative interview guide. In addition to the structured survey, a subset of respondents (n=102) participated in face-to-face interviews. The in-depth interviews were structured around seven broad questions designed to elicit respondents' own views about their romantic relationships and the dynamics within them. The interview began with a request for the respondent to 'walk' the interviewer through the various romantic relationships in which they had been involved. Probes subsequently elicited more detailed information about qualities and dynamics within each relationship, including conflicts but also positive features of each relationship. As the focus was upon these relationships, the guide did not specifically query respondents about peers, except as it related to situational details surrounding conflict/violence within these relationships. For example, respondents were asked whether they told anyone about the violence. Thus, it is notable that respondents included so many unsolicited references to peers within their narratives, even absent interviewer questions designed to establish peer-romantic partner linkages for this age group. This provides support for prior work on friendship during young adulthood, as these references emerged organically as the individuals discussed their lives and relationships. However, the numerous references linking peer issues and partner disagreements led to our decision to examine these sections of the narratives focusing on friendships in more detail, and subsequently to explore the connections described more systematically relying on the quantitative data. The average interview length was 85 minutes, and transcribed pages ranged from 21 to 90.

Analyses of the qualitative data relied on Atlas.ti software, which allowed us to organize and select data segments for further study and more refined coding, but that also facilitated our ability to return to the location of these segments within the context of the more extended narrative. An initial set of codes followed the broad outline of the interview guide. Subsequently, we conducted word searches (e.g., friends, hanging out) to locate all of the sections that referenced friends or friends' linkages. Initial coding of the friendship related material distinguished friends as a source of conflict and friends as a source of social support. As the project progressed, we focused greater attention on the references to friends as a source of conflict, given that this link to conflict had received relatively less attention within

the literature. As a part of the study and interpretation of these materials, we recognized the importance of investigating further respondents' references to changes over time in respondents' approach to peers, which led to a return to the data and assignment of codes focused on these dynamic features (e.g., changes in the type of partner sought, rules/regulations the couple established, change in form of socializing).

Results

Friends' Attitudes and Behaviors Related to Dating/Sexuality

Table 1 reports descriptive statistics for all study variables for the overall sample and by gender. In young adulthood the friends attitudes and behaviors related to dating and sexuality are 2.85 (standardized values reported in Table 1) with higher values for men. The levels of friend IPV (46%) are on par with the respondent's own experiences and men and women report similar friend experiences with IPV. Scores on the peer attachment index are higher for women than men with mean values of 4.49 and 4.10, respectively.

Table 2 presents logistic regression results predicting the odds of experiencing IPV in a current/most recent relationship. The zero-order or bivariate results are presented in column 1. As shown, friends' attitudes/behaviors related to dating/sexuality are associated with increased odds of experiencing IPV in a current or most recent romantic relationship. Higher scores on the index indicate more liberal attitudes (e.g., friends more likely to think ok to date more than one person at a time, more likely to have cheated on a partner). As expected, friends' IPV is also linked to higher odds of self-reported IPV. While not included in this model because of collinearity with friends IPV, we also find that peer delinquency is associated with higher odds of IPV. Consistent with prior work, quality of early peer relationships was negatively associated with odds of reporting young adult IPV. The traditional indicators operate in the expected direction. Parent's use of coercive discipline was positively related to later IPV. In addition, minority status, family structure other than two-parent biological (single parent and other), mother's education (college education), employment (full or part time), status as a parent, cohabitation, and relationship duration were significant at the bivariate level.

Model 2 includes all study variables and indicates that both friends' IPV and friends' liberal attitudes/behaviors are positively associated with IPV, net of traditional predictors. In supplemental analyses, the full model was estimated with and without the friends' attitudes/behavior index to determine whether its inclusion improved the overall model fit. Results of a nested χ^2 -test show that the addition of the index of friends' liberal attitudes/behaviors significantly contributes to the model fit ($\chi^2 = 9.97$; $p < .01$). Net of the other covariates, quality of early peer relationships was no longer significant. To determine whether the associations between peer factors and IPV differed for men and women, we tested interaction terms, and these were not significant. Results indicate a similar effect across gender in the association between having friends with more liberal attitudes about dating and sexuality and the odds of reporting violence ($p = .47$). Similarly, the association between friends' IPV and relationship violence is similar for young men and women ($p = .66$). Supplemental models predicting variability in verbal disagreements yielded similar peer findings. Finally, models focusing on the perpetration and victimization subscales (available from authors) result in similar peer findings.¹

In sum, these findings suggest that friends' attitudes and behaviors make a difference for understanding variability in IPV reported during the young adult period and not just during adolescence. In addition, while friends' IPV behaviors are important features of what constitutes social climate, it is also potentially useful to move beyond the parameters of the dependent variable itself (here, IPV) to consider the role of a broader range of attitudes about dating and sexuality that may be communicated through friendship interactions.

Within-Individual Changes in Involvement with Delinquent Peers

Table 3 presents results of an analysis examining within-individual variability in IPV reports across the full study period, focusing on reports about friends' involvement in delinquency. We are

¹ Due to the cross-sectional nature of these associations, it is not possible to establish causal order, and as such, it is possible that findings reflect that individuals choose to affiliate with friends who are similar in their attitude/behavior profiles or perceive and overstate similarity in these areas. Although the liberal attitudes/behavior items were not asked across all waves of the study, we also estimated growth curve models relying on waves 3, 4, and 5 when items were included and observed significant within-individual effects of variability in reports about friends' attitudes/behaviors on the odds of reporting IPV across these study years.

limited to questions about friends' delinquency because they are the only peer characteristics that were asked at each of the five waves. Time varying factors in the model include the focal variables of respondent and friends' delinquency involvement, along with age, relationship status (i.e., dating, cohabiting, married) and timing of transition to parenthood. Between-subjects factors include the traditional predictors (early peer relationship quality, coercive parenting), as well as respondent sociodemographic characteristics (gender, race, family structure, mother's education). Respondents' self-report of delinquency involvement and reports of friends' delinquency were significant predictors of variability in IPV reports, net of other relevant controls. In this model, early peer quality and coercive parenting continue to be significant. However, we note that the between-subjects differences in the model account for 22% of the total variance, suggesting an important role for the time-varying factors, including the extent of respondent and friends' involvement in delinquent behavior at each wave of the study (78% of the variance in IPV reports is accounted for by within-individual factors). Interactions of gender and friends' delinquency were not significant, indicating a similar effect for male and female respondents of friends' delinquent behavior on variability in IPV reports. Supplemental analyses focusing on variations in levels of verbal conflict were similar (results available from authors), and results hold whether focusing on perpetration or victimization. As the results of these growth curve analyses point to significant within-individual variations, this provides evidence of an effect of friends' delinquency on reported partner conflicts that does not appear to be due exclusively to an underlying propensity for antisocial behavior.

Respondents' Perspectives on Peer Issues and Relationship Conflict

The quantitative analyses pointed to peer characteristics associated with heightened risk of intimate partner conflict. The in-depth interviews provide additional support for these findings by accessing respondents' own points of view about connections and 'collisions' between the worlds of peers and romantic relationships. An initial observation based on analyses of the content of the in-depth interviews was simply the number of references to friends that they contained. In general, such frequent references to peers accord with prior research on young adulthood that have highlighted an important role for friendships during the period. However, in forging connections to problems within their romantic

relationships, the interview content along with the quantitative results offer some complications to the generally understood positive role of such intimate ties. The frequent references to peer contacts also suggest the need to explore further the notion that those in violent relationships tend to be isolated from their friends.

The availability of the larger sample was useful throughout the analysis, however, as it was often possible to rely on this sample and the structured data to verify observations that emerged from our analyses of the qualitative data. For example, as we explored the content of the less structured in-depth interviews, we turned to a variable included in the structured protocol (how often do you hang out with friends during the week) to determine whether those in relationships that contained violence actually reported lower levels of overall contact with their friends. Results indicated that those in violent relationships did not, on average, report spending less time with friends relative to those respondents who did not report that violence had occurred in their relationship.² Nevertheless, the in-depth interviews were useful as they highlighted that this appeared an accurate depiction (i.e., withdrawal from peers due to a controlling partner) for a subset of respondents. Further, a larger set of narratives conveyed feelings of isolation or negative reactions to partners' attempts to steer them away from friends, even though absolute levels of "time spent" were not necessarily below average for similarly aged respondents:

I didn't have a lot of friends when I dated Dan. The jealousy kind of drove away a lot of friends I had because I was spending all my time with him, which now I know that is another deal breaker that I have. I have to have my own life and I will have my own friends and if you don't like it you can get bent [laughs] cuz I won't go down that road again. [Abby]

One of the biggest problems that we had was that he was really jealous of me hanging out with my friends. He kinda put a limit on that, he kinda gave me an ultimatum like you're gonna hang out with me. [Erin]

² Results also indicate that young women who report violence do not differ from those who do not in average time spent, and this pattern was also found when we examined reports on the victimization scale only—women who report victimization do not on average indicate that they spent less time with friends relative to non-victimized women. We also examined a separate but similarly worded question about time spent with opposite sex friends, and results indicated similar levels of opposite sex socializing reported by the violence and no-violence exposure subgroups.

The above quotes reveal the concerns of some respondents about partners' attempts to control their time with friends, and increased recognition that this type of controlling behavior was unacceptable. Erin considered the issue as "one of the biggest problems" the couple had, and Abby indicated that she would consider limiting her time with friends "a deal breaker" in subsequent relationships. Some respondents forged an explicit link between peer involvement and ongoing conflict they experienced, and made clear that this had been a significant contested area in their relationships. The quotes below convey the strength of these respondents' concerns about the issue of partner socializing with friends, and illustrate that both female and male partners at times had issues with the peer-partner balance:

If I tried to hang out with my friends or something then she would flip out and accuse me of cheating and we would just argue about that...and like one of my best friends was in the marines. He's actually home right now. I barely ever get to see him. He came back from Iraq, and I was like I'm gonna go over his house and you can come with me if you want. No f this f that, you're going out to cheat on me...and like we would just start an argument. [Drew]

I'd went, hung out with some friends and hung out all night till the next morning and I came home she was mad, she hit me. And she thought I was out with another woman. [Jake]

Why can't we go have a drink, I'm 21, this is my 21st birthday and she wouldn't let me--she was accusing me of cheating--and I couldn't have friends over from work....These two girls gave me a ride home from work and she swore I was cheating on her. [Justin]

Like me and my friends... every weekend we get together and have a girl's day and sometimes that gets in the way of me and Jake's relationship. Because he doesn't really care so much for my friends. He say that they're hoes, they gonna turn you into a ho. Janelle, I mean she's been around the block a couple of times but like I tell him, what she does, doesn't mean I'm gonna do. You can't put us in the same category. [Sarah]

The content of these accounts ("you're going out to cheat on me," "she thought I was out with another woman," "she swore I was cheating on her," "they gonna turn you into a ho") illustrates that partner admonishments about time with peers often trace back to infidelity concerns. Sarah's description in particular connects well with results shown in Table 1, as her partner focused explicitly on her friends' sexual behaviors as a source of his reservations about them.

As a supplement to the quantitative results, the qualitative data are also useful as they provide a window on the dynamic character of these concerns and young adults' attempts to address them.

Respondents such as Erin and Abby indicated that they had moved on to other partners, and appeared to

have experienced a ‘learning curve’ about the need to avoid the type of partners who would try to limit their involvement with friends. Other respondents indicated that they were currently working within the framework of a particular relationship to develop strategies or rules to accommodate partners, while retaining some level of involvement with their friends:

I let her go through my phone and like try to show her that I’m not doin’ nothing. But stuff that I do, like going out, some stuff does not work. Like I’m always, wanna go out with my friend, so that mean she always think I’m cheating. So I guess I gotta just try to min, either minimize it or go out with her. [James]

Although James had tried to make some adjustments, it appears that he is still in a transitional phase (e.g., “I’m always, wanna go out with my friend” is narrated in the present tense, and James indicates further that he is still grappling with the notion that he is going to have to “try to either minimize it or go out with her...”). Jackie, quoted below, had also tried to improve her relationship by creating rules about Joe’s socializing with friends. After discovering his infidelity, Jackie indicated that she would only allow Joe to socialize with friends if he did so at their home. Yet as her account makes clear, this attempt to control the negative consequences of peer contact does not appear to be a ‘stabilizing’ solution to the problem. Instead, this respondent suggests that the strategy had caused resentments, and had the unintended consequence of restricting her own freedom to socialize with her friends:

Like I feel really bad ...like he used to go out with his buddy Jake to like the pool hall and play pool... he has not yet done that. We have a pool table in the garage that he can go to with his buddies. And there’s times when I go out there to check and make sure what they’re doing... and his buddies will pick on him, like ooh you know, you’re on the ball and chain like she has you on lockdown. And I guess in a way he is. [Lately] it started being a damper on me going out, because now ...I don’t want you to go out....He’s trying to put the same restrictions on me. Which I think is outright unfair and starts a lot of arguments about that. [Jackie]

Other respondents referenced more extensive changes that did not rely on surveillance or partner rules to enforce compliance. Garrett, quoted below, considered the shift part of a developmental process:

I kind of emotionally I don’t think I was...you know, I would leave, I was kind of young minded at the time. I would end up going to my friends all the time. And she’d be sad. Maybe even sometimes she would cry. And I didn’t really know all that and I didn’t take it in as much as I should have back then. I don’t know, I was immature basically. [Garrett]

From his current vantage point, Garrett has reframed his earlier socializing pattern as immature and to a degree self-centered, and indicated that his partner’s emotional responses to these issues gradually led to

greater feelings of empathy and a change in his behavior. Marc also referenced a shift, as he told the interviewer that he and his girlfriend have moved past earlier feelings of jealousy and suspicion.

However this respondent also noted that changes in the manner of socializing with friends and mature, “settled down” character of the friends supported improvements within the relationship:

We don't never like call our friends to go out. We talk to each other, then we call them to see if they just want to join in with us. So, plus all my friends, we all grown up now. They all got their relationships so they bring their girls so then we all just couples out, stuff like that. [Marc]

Ian, quoted below, also said that he had experienced a change in attitude, and recognized the need to move away from his earlier pattern of socializing frequently with peers. Yet his description of the process underscores that achieving the more settled and committed type of lifestyle is ultimately a couple-level accomplishment:

I quit hanging out with my friends so much. I realized that I should be home and I should be working. And she was working at [X] and the roles kind of reversed, she wanted to go out with her friends all the time and this and that. So maybe I had started that situation and eventually she started seeing the guy... telling me she was with her friends. I'd wake up in the middle of the night sometimes and she wouldn't be there. She'd leave me a note saying that she went to her friends and really she was going to the guy's house. [Ian]

The quotes above illustrate that infidelity concerns were considered frequently as a “bottom line” that connected peer socializing and relationship conflict. However, consistent with the results reported in Table 3, some respondents pointed to the negative impact of the partner's friends on drinking, drugs, and other types of delinquent acts, and subsequently on relationship dynamics. Prior research has documented a significant connection between delinquent peers and risk for continued involvement in various forms of antisocial behavior, including substance use. Thus, it is not surprising that individuals are often keenly aware of the role their friends play in encouraging and carrying out these activities (see e.g., Giordano, Cernkovich, & Holland, 2003). However, these relationship history narratives are useful as they also access the partner vantage point, and the potential for relationship conflict stemming from peers' connections to delinquency, substance use, or both:

Lyndsey, she might say something like all I like to do is go out or all I want to do is drink all the time...But my friends, they don't say nothing. She's probably the only one that says something. “Why don't you stay home?” [Jack]

In this straightforward account, Jack references what could be considered a basic distinction in the approach of friends and romantic partners. While friends can certainly offer negative evaluations about the individual's conduct, they may be generally less likely to do so (i.e., the non-judgemental qualities of friends are a much appreciated part of their appeal—see e.g., Barry et al., 2015). This could reflect essential differences in the character of the two types of relationships (Giordano, Longmore, & Manning, 2006), but also that Jack's friends have a vested interest in continuing to have a companion with whom they can 'party.' In contrast, partners such as Lyndsey may be more likely to view the behavior in terms of its longer term impact on Jack, his future prospects, as well as on the progress of their relationship. Nikki, quoted below, not only expressed a general level of disapproval about her partner's actions and those of his friends, but mentioned the potential for this to have a negative effect on her and their relationship:

The problem with Derek is not so much that he wants to hang out with his friends but the fact that they all deal drugs. Just driving around with them, or I'll ask when we get into the car with them, "You have anything with you?" Things like that. We're out to eat we'll be out and his phone is constantly ringing. He's trying to rush back ...he's rushing to get back to whoever. [Nikki]

Dylan appears to be farther along in the process of "settling down," as he has moved away from the area where most of his friends live, and currently gets together with them infrequently. Yet his comments reflect on the recency of the shift, and the difficulties involved in letting go of such long time companions:

I mean pretty much the group of friends that I have, I've had the same group of friends since my 9th grade year... So it's pretty, 12 or 13 years I've been around the same group of people and you know been there to talk and do certain events that we usually do. [Dylan]

As his narrative continues, however, Dylan indicates an awareness that if he were still around these friends on a regular basis, he would be "partying" and "out and about 24/7." This respondent recognized that these friends were not a good influence, and that his socializing had caused problems in the relationship. This heightened awareness suggests the confluence of many developmental changes, including his own 'cognitive transformation' (Giordano, Cernkovich, & Rudolph, 2002; Kreager, Ragan,

Nguyen, & Staff, 2016), agentic moves to avoid delinquent companions, reinforcement from his partner, and a reduction in intimate partner conflict:

Deep down she really don't want me to go and then just for the sake of not arguing I won't go. But I definitely feel isolated and it's just, it's just hard not really having that cuz it, you know, sometimes you just need to be around somebody else. [Dylan]

Although Dylan's responses generally support the direction of the quantitative results (reduced conflict under the condition of lower levels of affiliation with delinquent peers), his narrative also conveys that for him these are not easy, or easy to sustain choices. For example, he laments that he misses people who have "been there to talk and do certain events that we usually do," and indicated that "sometimes you just need to be around somebody else." This example and the broader pattern of results described illustrate that romantic ties may eventually achieve a place of dominance in the "relationship hierarchy" (Collins & van Dulmen, 2006); yet this may not be automatic, unexamined, or (for some) a problem-free aspect of the adolescent to adult transition.

Conclusion

The traditional bachelor party evokes a night of revelry with friends, framed culturally as a "last night of freedom" prior to taking one's marriage vows (Montemurro, 2006). In the current study, we highlighted that within the context of the contemporary period of young adulthood, such social demarcations are less clear cut. Thus, even as romantic partners loom larger as companions and sources of support, individuals often continue to value and wish to socialize with their friends. We theorized, drawing on Cherlin's (2004) concept of "incomplete institutionalization," that the process of managing both sets of relationships occurs largely absent a clearly codified set of rules or cultural guideposts. Accordingly, individuals and couples must construct their own understandings about how one 'does' romance, adult socializing with friends, cohabitation, or even marriage at a time when a majority of similarly aged others have not yet made this transition. Clearly, most young adults manage these relationship issues and this transitional phase with relatively few serious difficulties. However, recent research relying on a large sample of young adults documented that disagreements about "time with peers" was significantly related to romantic partner conflict (IPV). This initial investigation suggested the

need to explore further the conditions under which peer socializing may emerge as a source of discord in intimate relationships. We drew on basic tenets of social learning theory as a framework for developing hypotheses about specific peer attitudes/behaviors likely to be associated with heightened conflict within the romantic realm.

Respondents who reported that friends had experienced IPV or held more liberal attitudes toward dating and sexual behavior were more likely to report intimate partner conflict, whether the dependent variable was IPV or, as revealed in supplemental models, ‘verbal disagreements.’ These results have implications for the content of prevention and intervention programs. Such programs have appropriately centered most on the unacceptability of using violence or other means of coercive control. Yet the current findings suggest the need to broaden the discussion to include: a) a range of relational dynamics associated with conflict in romantic relationships, and b) ways in which social ties may foster or deter behaviors such as infidelity that have been shown to increase the odds of experiencing intimate partner conflict. In addition, greater attention to peers as part of the social climate affecting attitudes and behavioral choices would add further nuance to the current focus on isolation from peers (Murphy & Smith, 2010). The emphasis on isolation appears to capture the experiences of a subset of respondents, but in this study, on average, levels of peer involvement did not differ for those who did and did not report IPV. Similarly, the focus here on peer characteristics contrasts with the emphasis of attachment theories, which focus more attention on the role of early deficits in peer relationship quality as precursors of IPV (Linder & Collins, 2005).

Additional analyses explored the delinquency profiles of friends as another set of peer characteristics potentially related to intimate partner conflicts. Results of the analyses indicated that involvement with delinquent peers was associated with IPV reports, controlling for other covariates, including foundational predictors such as family history and the quality of early peer relations. Prior research has demonstrated an association between delinquent friends and delinquency involvement, and some scholars have theorized that the association between delinquency and IPV reflects a common underlying propensity (Felson, 2002). The current study contributes to this line of research, as results

indicate that the presence of delinquent friends was significantly linked to within-individual variability in the odds of reporting IPV. In documenting considerable within-individual variation in IPV reports over the full study period, results suggest the utility of considering potentially malleable social factors (e.g., social climate, dyadic processes), in addition to the role of personality correlates or other early background characteristics. Thus, when individuals socialize with delinquent friends or themselves engage in these behaviors, various negative events and consequences (arrest, erratic employment, financial losses, inattention to the relationship) may reverberate at the couple level, as well as for the individual involved. Although not considered in the analyses, it is also likely that various peer factors tend to cluster, adding multiple layers to partner concerns.

The in-depth ‘relationship history narratives’ elicited from a subset of respondents were a useful adjunct to the quantitative analyses, as respondents themselves often forged similar connections to those that were identified relying on multivariate techniques. This convergence across methods provides additional confidence in the study findings. In addition, the interview data convey the respondents’ own reactions and feelings related to these concerns, and illustrate the processual aspects of respondents’ efforts to grapple with these issues. A limitation of this component of the study, however, is that individuals were selected for these interviews based on their previous reports of IPV. Thus, a logical next step is to conduct such interviews with young adults who represent a broader range, including those who have apparently been more successful in navigating issues related to peer socializing, and who report lower levels of conflict with their partners. This study is also limited by the regional nature of the sample, and the analyses focused on liberal peer norms were based on cross-sectional data. Thus, as we noted, it is likely that individuals select friends with similar attitudes and behavior profiles as well as being influenced by their friends, as prior research on peer dynamics attests (Becker & Curry, 2014; Kandel, 1978; Scalo, Trucco, Coffman, & Colder, 2015). The growth curve analyses focused on peer delinquency address the issue of temporal order, and a similar strategy could be employed where studies have included repeated measures of other peer attitudes and behaviors. The analyses also did not include attention to

potentially important distinctions with regard to friends (e.g., best friends vs. the wider network) that also warrant additional scrutiny in future investigations.

Additional research is also needed to provide a comprehensive picture of the role of gender in relation to the issues examined above. For example, while interactions of gender and key focal variables were not significant in these analyses, nevertheless women on average score higher on measures of intimacy of their friendships, men are more likely to have delinquent friends, and the consequences of IPV fall more heavily on women relative to male victims. The experiences associated with other sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity) may also significantly influence the character and mix of affiliations at this phase of the life course, as well as their impact on IPV and other outcomes of interest. Finally, the findings describe associations and sources of variability in conflict found within a community sample, rather than providing a window on the lives of those experiencing the most serious levels of IPV.

In spite of these study limitations, the quantitative and qualitative analyses converge in pointing to some of the conditions under which contact with friends comes to be associated with intimate partner conflict during young adulthood. The results of the study suggest the need to continue to refine our understanding of the nature and impact of social relationships, including how life course stage complicates these basic understandings. For example, a measure of total support from romantic partner and friends would not capture some of the difficulties and areas of mismatch associated with involvement in both types of relationships during this period. Further, and consistent with the logic of social learning theories, attention to significant others' perspectives and behaviors as well as to levels of support provided (a more traditional health focus) will result in a more comprehensive treatment of the complex roles of close ties as influences on various forms of well-being (see e.g., Schwarzer & Leppin, 1991).

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WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE

Table 1. Means/Percentages and Standard Deviations for Study Variables, by Gender (n = 928)

Dependent Variables	Full Sample (n = 928)			Males (n = 421)	Females (n = 507)
	Mean/Percentage	SD	Range		
Intimate partner violence	23.28%			24.23%	22.49%
Verbal Conflict	2.44	0.93	1 - 5	2.42	2.45
Independent Variables					
<i>Peer Factors</i>					
Friends' liberal attitudes/behaviors	0.00	0.75	-1.58 – 2.06	0.20	*** -0.16
Friends' IPV	45.58%			46.08%	45.17%
Peer attachment	4.31	0.68	1-5	4.10	*** 4.49
<i>Family Violence</i>					
Coercive parenting	22.41%			21.14%	23.47%
<i>Sociodemographic Characteristics</i>					
Female	54.63%				
Age	25.42	1.83	22 – 29	25.46	25.39
Race					
White	67.35%			67.22%	67.46%
Black	21.34%			21.38%	21.30%
Hispanic	11.31%			11.40%	11.24%
Family structure					
Two biological parents	53.45%			57.72%	* 49.90%
Single parent	21.01%			20.19%	21.70%
Step-parent	13.58%			12.35%	14.60%
Other	11.96%			9.74%	13.81%
Mother's education					
Less than HS	10.78%			9.74%	11.64%
High school	32.44%			32.78%	32.15%
Some college	33.41%			33.25%	33.53%
College or more	23.38%			24.23%	22.68%
<i>Adult Status Characteristics</i>					
Respondent's employment					
Unemployed	24.89%			21.85%	27.42%
Part-time	19.18%			15.20%	** 22.49%
Full-time	55.93%			62.95%	*** 50.10%
Parent	41.16%			35.87%	** 45.56%
<i>Relationship Characteristics</i>					
Union status					
Dating	44.40%			46.32%	42.80%
Cohabiting	32.33%			34.92%	30.18%
Married	23.28%			18.76%	** 27.02%
Current relationship	79.96%			75.77%	** 83.43%
Duration	3.42	2.88	0.083 - 14	3.15	** 3.65

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

Source: Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study

Table 2. Odds Ratios for the Association between Friends' Dating/Sexual Attitudes and Behaviors and Relationship Violence (n = 928)

	Zero Order	Model 2
	OR	OR
<i>Peer Factors</i>		
Friends' liberal attitudes/behaviors	1.845***	1.507**
Friends' IPV	3.758***	2.794***
Peer attachment	0.652***	0.788
<i>Family Violence</i>		
Coercive parenting	1.713**	1.569*
<i>Sociodemographic Characteristics</i>		
Female	0.907	1.005
Age	0.983	0.953
Race		
(White)		
Black	2.167***	0.978
Hispanic	2.314***	1.510
Family structure		
(Two biological parents)		
Single parent	2.743***	1.949**
Step-parent	1.532	1.017
Other	2.667***	1.957*
Mother's education		
Less than HS	1.423	0.802
(High school)		
Some college	0.851	0.885
College or more	0.426***	0.664
<i>Adult Status Characteristics</i>		
Respondent's employment		
(Unemployed)		
Part-time	0.507**	0.586*
Full-time	0.377***	0.465***
Parent	0.715***	1.101
<i>Relationship Characteristics</i>		
Union status		
(Dating)		
Cohabiting	0.687***	1.942**
Married	0.276	1.630
Current relationship	0.872	0.732
Duration	1.085**	1.107**
χ^2		165.39***

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

Table 3. Hierarchical Generalized Linear Model for Relationship Violence (n = 3739 observations)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	Unconditional Growth Model	Linear Effect of Time and Within-Subject Factors	Linear Effect of Time, Within- and Between Subjects Factors
Fixed Effects, Composite Model			
<i>Within-subjects</i>			
Initial status	-8.548***	-7.014***	-6.785***
Age	0.764***	0.565***	0.621***
Age-squared	-0.019***	-0.015***	-0.016***
<i>Antisocial Behavior</i>			
Respondent Delinquency/Crime		0.136***	0.150***
Friends' Delinquency/Crime		0.162***	0.147***
<i>Relationship Status</i>			
(Dating)			
Cohabiting		0.600***	0.587***
Married		0.682**	0.822***
Parent		0.532***	0.224
<i>Between-subjects</i>			
Peer attachment			-0.230**
<i>Family Violence</i>			
Coercive parenting			0.561***
<i>Sociodemographic Characteristics</i>			
Female			-0.185
<i>Race</i>			
White			
Black			0.570***
Hispanic			0.171
<i>Family structure</i>			
Two biological parents			
Single parent			0.184
Step-parent			0.165
Other			0.328*
<i>Mother's education</i>			
Less than HS			0.389*
High school			
Some college			-0.154
College or more			-0.474***
Variance component, Intercept			
τ	0.945	0.739	0.594

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