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**GENDER MISTRUST AND INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE DURING
ADOLESCENCE AND YOUNG ADULTHOOD**

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GENDER MISTRUST AND IPV

ABSTRACT

Recent research demonstrates that gender mistrust influences union formation and stability. However, several scholars have noted that individuals often form relationships despite high levels of mistrust. Yet limited work has examined the implications of gender mistrust for relationship quality, including the experience of intimate partner violence (IPV). Furthermore, there are few quantitative studies addressing correlates of gender mistrust, and particularly with regard to identifying factors associated with changes in feelings of mistrust over time. Drawing on five waves of data from the Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study (TARS), the current investigation examined longitudinal predictors of gender mistrust and found that whereas parents' gender mistrust and other sociodemographic characteristics were associated with initial levels of mistrust, individuals' own relationship experiences further shaped trajectories of gender mistrust over time. Additionally, feelings of mistrust corresponded to heightened odds of IPV perpetration, and this association appeared especially salient for women.

INTRODUCTION

Family researchers have demonstrated that gender mistrust influences a range of relationship outcomes, including marriage rates and relationship instability (e.g., Burton, Cherlin, Winn, Estacion, & Holder-Taylor, 2009; Carlson, McLanahan, & England, 2004; Edin & Kefalas, 2005; Furstenberg, 2001). Most of this work has focused on women, suggesting that their general lack of trust in the opposite sex has led many women to conclude that men are not “worth a lifetime of commitment,” nor can most men “be faithful to only one woman” (Edin, 2000). Concerns about sexual exclusivity are particularly common among violent couples as researchers have found that infidelity is a key “domain of contestation” and a “bottom line” in disputes that escalate to violence (Giordano, Copp, Longmore, & Manning, 2015). Nevertheless, women continue to actively search for intimate partners and to enter dating and cohabiting relationships despite these apparently high levels of mistrust (Burton et al., 2009; Lichter & Qian, 2008; Manning & Smock, 2005). Although less often the focus of empirical investigation, men may also exhibit feelings of gender mistrust due to partner infidelity and other relationship concerns (Manning, Trella, Lyons, & Du Toit, 2010), and such feelings may influence their conduct in relationships or contribute to a sense of wariness about relationships in general.

Thus, findings from both quantitative and qualitative work suggest that issues of trust influence relationship formation patterns; however, less is known about the influence of gender mistrust on the quality or nature of those relationships once formed. At least among adolescents, gender mistrust has been linked to jealousy and verbal conflict (Nomaguchi, Giordano, Manning, & Longmore, 2011), providing a potential link between gender mistrust and patterns of violent behavior. To date, however, most discussions implicate gender mistrust as an outcome, rather than a potential cause, of exposure to physical violence (e.g., Cherlin, Burton, Hurt, & Purvin,

2004; Edin, 2000; Estacion & Cherlin, 2010). Thus, whether gender mistrust influences the use of violence within the intimate context has yet to be considered.

In the current investigation, we used data from the Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study (TARS) to highlight the complex association between gender mistrust and the experience of IPV. Because few studies have investigated the origins or development of gender mistrust, we examined factors associated with initial levels of mistrust (during adolescence), as well as those influencing within-individual changes in gender mistrust over time using linear growth curve models. This allowed us to examine the influence of early formative experiences (parents' gender mistrust, coercive parenting), as well as the role of prior relationship experiences. As few studies have considered the implications of gender mistrust with respect to relationship dynamics, we employed non-linear growth curve techniques to examine whether changes in gender mistrust correspond to changes in IPV perpetration from adolescence to young adulthood. Attention to this period of the life course is particularly important since peaks in IPV experience occur in early adulthood (Johnson, Giordano, Manning, & Longmore, 2015). We expected that gender mistrust would be a function of early social learning (i.e., parents' gender mistrust, coercive parenting) and sociodemographic factors, as well as experiences garnered in prior intimate relationships (i.e., infidelity, trust, IPV, control). Our approach allowed us to assess whether gender mistrust is associated with heightened risk of IPV perpetration as respondents move into adulthood. Finally, we examined whether the effect of gender mistrust on IPV perpetration was similar for men and women.

The TARS data are particularly well-suited for these analyses as they include detailed information about the family backgrounds and sociodemographic characteristics of respondents, as well as questions assessing parents' gender mistrust. Furthermore, the TARS provide multiple

assessments of the respondents' own feelings of mistrust and experience with IPV in addition to information about the broader relationship context within which IPV occurs. This study moves beyond prior work and provides insights into the development of gender mistrust, as well as its influence on the functioning of intimate relationships during the young adult phase of the life course.

BACKGROUND

Gender Mistrust and Romantic Relationships

Explanations for the decline in marriage have primarily focused on economic considerations, including labor market conditions (e.g., Blau, Kahn, & Waldfogel 2000; Edin, 2000; Harknett & Kuperberg, 2012; Lichter, McLaughlin, & Ribar, 2002; Manning & Smock, 2005; Wilson, 1987). Observed aggregate economic and marital trends have demonstrated that increases in unemployment rates have been accompanied by corresponding decreases in marriage (Schaller, 2012). Additionally, there are marked differences in marriage rates by race/ethnicity and educational attainment (Payne, 2014). To learn more about the precarious nature of marriage in low-income settings in particular, scholars have conducted a number of qualitative studies across a broad range of samples (e.g., Burton et al. 2009; Edin, 2000; Edin, England, & Linnenberg, 2003; Furstenberg, 2001; Manning et al., 2010). One conclusion drawn from this body of literature is that a pervasive culture of gender mistrust exists in economically disadvantaged communities, which carries serious implications for how individuals evaluate intimate relationships—particularly marriage.

In general, gender mistrust is characterized by a set of attitudes and beliefs about men and women, and is most often conceptualized in terms of men and women's negative views of the opposite gender (Nomaguchi et al., 2011). Although these negative views often encompass a

broad range of domains, most researchers focus on gender mistrust in relation to relationship commitment and sexual exclusivity. More specifically, given that prior work on the decline of marriage has emphasized the economic constraints faced by men (e.g., limited employment opportunities), or marriage market considerations at the aggregate-level (e.g., the lack of marriageable men), most studies on marriage attitudes focus on women. Accordingly, examples of gender mistrust in the literature have tended to reflect women's direct experiences with men, as well as those of their close family members, peers, and acquaintances. These attitudes and beliefs portray men as unreliable, untrustworthy, and immature. Yet scholars (e.g., Manning et al., 2010) have acknowledged that women may also possess characteristics that make them less than ideal marital companions, many of which align with the same attributes that limit men's marriageability. Few studies, however, have examined gender mistrust among both men and women.

Despite the accumulating evidence of a link between gender mistrust and relationship formation patterns, there is limited work that directly addresses how gender mistrust may influence subsequent behavior. Rather, an underlying theme of much of this research is that women's mistrust of men leads them to become wary of relationships, driving them to focus their energy and attention on children and their own financial futures (Edin, 2000). This is only part of the story, however, and as Edin (2000) and others have suggested, most women still aspire to marry, and hope to find the 'right' man, despite high levels of mistrust. Furthermore, several scholars (e.g., Burton et al., 2009; Estacion & Cherlin, 2010; Nomaguchi et al., 2011) have found that gender mistrust is not associated with involvement in intimate relationships. In their ethnographic study of low-income mothers, Burton and colleagues (2009) raised the following question: "If generalized distrust is as influential in the decline of marriage as several recent

studies have suggested, why do so many women who declare distrust of men enter into so many relationships...” (p. 1108). This suggests that there is some utility in exploring (a) variability in the experience of mistrust based on structural location, family background, and the character of early relationship experiences and (b) consequences of these variations in gender mistrust for the ongoing nature/quality of relationships that have been formed, and more specifically IPV experiences. Examining these issues contributes beyond prior research that has primarily examined the odds of forming a relationship or movement into marriage, rather than the dynamics within these intimate relationships.

Origins of Gender Mistrust

Based on findings from ethnographic and quantitative studies, including those reviewed above, scholars have concluded that gender mistrust has negative implications for union formation and stability—particularly among economically disadvantaged populations. Yet the literature is less clear on the factors that influence the development of gender mistrust, and further, whether the observed associations between gender mistrust and relationship formation generalize beyond disadvantaged populations. Additionally, scholars have suggested that gender mistrust is not a stable characteristic, but rather feelings of mistrust likely are responsive to an individual’s own life experiences both within and beyond the intimate realm. Yet to date, limited work has attempted to capture the dynamic nature of gender mistrust, and to our knowledge, no study has empirically examined these issues. In the current investigation, we accounted for traditional predictors of gender mistrust, including economic disadvantage, race/ethnicity, and early social learning factors, as well as experiences accrued during adolescence and across the transition to adulthood. Additionally, we examined whether the correlates of gender mistrust are similar for men and women.

Explanations for why gender mistrust may be more widespread in economically disadvantaged areas are often structural in nature. In his theory on the retreat from marriage in urban communities, Wilson (1987) suggested that declines in low- and semi-skilled employment and wages resulted in a “lack of marriageable men.” As a result of men’s decreased marriageability due to their inability to provide a stable source of income for their families, women began to move away from marriage entirely (Coley, 2002). Additionally, the economic uncertainty of life in low-income settings, including persistent joblessness, places undue strain on intimate relationships contributing to discord and a lack of confidence in forming stable long-term unions.

The vast majority of research on gender mistrust has been conducted in low-income settings, and thus is overly representative of feelings of mistrust among economically disadvantaged individuals, and of Black men and women in particular. Based on his work in low-income Chicago communities, Wilson (1996) contended that gender mistrust is more prevalent among Black men and women as compared to men and women from other race/ethnic groups. Differences in employment and earnings may provide a partial explanation for race/ethnic differences in mistrust; however, differences in economic factors alone are unlikely to provide a sufficient explanation suggesting the utility of considering other distinguishing features of male-female relationships including issues of commitment, infidelity, and trust (Carlson & Furstenberg, 2006; Edin et al., 2003; Furstenberg, Morgan, Moore, & Peterson, 1987; Patterson 1998; Treas & Giesen, 2000). Thus, it is critical to move beyond race/ethnicity and economic differences.

Family experiences may also be the basis for the development of gender mistrust. In addition to economic and cultural influences, as well as individuals’ direct experiences, gender

mistrust can be transmitted intergenerationally (Coley, 2002). Family dynamics that may influence these interrelated processes include the following: (1) children may observe directly their mother's relationships with men, including instances of infidelity or abuse; and/or (2) mothers may convey negative messages about men to their daughters, including the notion that men are "irresponsible, untrustworthy, and self-serving" or "(in)capable of taking care of women" (Coley, 2002: p. 102). Although scholars typically have focused on the intergenerational transmission of gender mistrust from mother to daughter (e.g., Coley, 2002), these same processes likely influence feelings of mistrust among boys. There is limited work, however, examining gender as well as other potential correlates of mistrust using predictive models. An exception is research by Nomaguchi and colleagues (2011) who found that in addition to neighborhood poverty rates and parent-child relationship quality, parents' own gender mistrust influenced their adolescent children's gender mistrust. Although these findings shed light on adolescents' developing feelings of gender mistrust, potential factors that may continue to shape perceptions of mistrust as individuals make the transition to adulthood, and are involved in more serious relationships, were not examined.

In addition to the influence of early formative experiences in the family of origin on the development of mistrust, individuals are further affected by their own experiences—both within the intimate context and beyond. Some individuals, for example, may exhibit a more global sense of mistrust as a result of personal and community disadvantage (Ross, Mirowsky, & Pribesh, 2001). Yet this general mistrust also pervades intimate relationships as mistrusting individuals prefer to "keep their guard up" and distance themselves from others, which may include placing little trust in intimate partners. Infidelity has also been identified as a key reason for mistrusting others (Edin, 2000), and issues of fidelity are central concerns for both men and

women (Manning et al., 2010). Finally, scholars (e.g., Burton et al., 2009; Edin, 2000; Edin et al., 2003; Leone, Johnson, Cohan, & Lloyd, 2004; Manning et al., 2010) have identified experiences of prior abuse as a source of mistrust, and a factor that may exacerbate trust issues in intimate relationships. Thus, although early relationships provide opportunities for relationship-skill building, which is usually viewed in a positive light (e.g., Furman, Brown, & Feiring, 1999), exposure to violence or other negative relationship features may influence one's capacity to trust in future relationships.

The studies reviewed above highlight several of the key correlates of gender mistrust identified in the literature. Yet this roster, while providing a descriptive portrait of key influences of gender mistrust, overlooks the extent to which these forces are interrelated. Although it may be useful to examine economic, cultural, and interpersonal sources of mistrust separately in some instances, such an examination overlooks the multifaceted nature of gender mistrust in which these features overlap and become "fused into a system of beliefs" that is embedded in certain contexts and significantly influences how men and women interact with one another (Furstenberg, 2001: p. 237), including their involvement with intimate partner violence.

Gender Mistrust and Involvement in Violent Relationships

Issues of jealousy and mistrust are commonly referenced in the intimate partner violence (IPV) literature, and a number of scholars have demonstrated an association between experience of abuse and gender mistrust. Most of this research, while concluding that past exposure to abuse limits one's ability to trust in future relationships, neglects to consider whether the association between trust and abuse may be reciprocal in nature. Prior research has identified jealousy as an important correlate of IPV, and a key motivation for IPV perpetration (Giordano, Soto, Manning, & Longmore, 2010; Hettrich & O'Leary, 2007; Kerr & Capaldi, 2011). Feelings

of jealousy within the intimate context, however, are often tied to issues of fidelity (Manning et al., 2010), and sexual exclusivity is a critical site of conflict in couples (Giordano et al. 2015). Whereas traditional approaches to IPV view men's jealousy as a risk factor for female victimization, recent evidence suggests that women's jealousy may also lead to relationship discord (Giordano et al., 2015; Ross, 2011). Although concerns about infidelity may be linked to actual relationship experiences—both past and present—such considerations may also reflect a general mistrust of the opposite sex. Yet in the IPV literature, the association between gender mistrust and IPV remains underdeveloped.

Relying on samples of both adolescents and adults, researchers (e.g., Cascardi & Vivian, 1995; Miller & White, 2003; Nemeth, Bonomi, Lee, & Ludwin, 2012) have indicated that jealousy and trust represent key themes in men and women's accounts of partner violence. The link between jealousy and IPV is particularly well-documented in the psychological literature as researchers have compared attachment styles, dependency, and jealousy of violent and non-violent married men (see Holtzworth-Monroe, Stuart, & Hutchinson, 1997), concluding that violent men are more concerned about potential abandonment, more dependent on their wives, and express more jealousy and less trust in their intimate partners. Such depictions characterize jealousy and trust as individual predispositions or traits, giving limited weight to concerns rooted in the relationship itself. Another line of reasoning has focused on men's hostility toward and objectification of women, which also accommodates the idea of mistrust, but locates the source in societal level socialization and masculine value systems (Dobash & Dobash, 1979).

Conversely, scholars who place greater emphasis on the relationship context have argued that negative views of the opposite sex may influence levels of trust within the context of a current relationship, including concerns about commitment or fidelity—both of which have been

identified as precursors to relationship violence (Giordano et al., 2015; Giordano, Johnson, Manning, & Longmore, 2014; Miller & White, 2003). These views are consistent with research that shows greater variability in IPV across relationships than would be expected based on either the idea of a stable personality trait or the emphasis on violence as an extension of masculinity training (Capaldi & Kim, 2007).

Thus, considerable work has foregrounded the association between gender mistrust and relationship violence, however, whether mistrust influences the perpetration of violence has yet to be considered empirically. We expect variations in gender mistrust to be associated with IPV risk such that higher levels of mistrust will parallel heightened odds of perpetration. Based on prior research and theorizing, it is less clear whether gender will condition the effect of mistrust on IPV. On the one hand, qualitative research on the transmission of attitudes toward the opposite sex indicates that the endorsement of gender mistrust may be more widespread among women. Similarly, researchers have indicated that men are more likely to be unfaithful to their partners, and thus women may be more mistrusting as a direct result of their own experiences. Despite these potential differences in feelings of mistrust between men and women, there is little basis upon which to expect gender differences in the effect of mistrust on IPV perpetration. Nevertheless, gender is central to theorizing on partner violence, and consequently we focus particular attention on the role of gender in the link between mistrust and violence.

CURRENT STUDY

The current investigation focused directly on variability in gender mistrust, relying on a longitudinal study of the adolescent and young adult experiences of a large heterogeneous sample of respondents. Using predictive models, we first examined correlates of gender mistrust to further understand sociodemographic and family background influences, as well as the role of

prior relationship experiences in further shaping within-individual changes in levels of gender mistrust over time. Next we examined whether changes in gender mistrust correspond to changes in IPV perpetration over time, net of a range of time-varying and time-invariant factors—including a number of well-documented risk factors. Finally, we assessed whether the effect of gender mistrust on IPV perpetration is similar or distinct for male and female respondents. Here we focused on variations in reported IPV perpetration rather than victimization, as our primary interest was in the extent to which individuals' feelings of gender mistrust were associated with their own use of violence within the relationship.

The existing research on gender mistrust may lead to the conclusion that mistrust is a ubiquitous feature of contemporary relationships. Yet prior research on gender mistrust has often focused on contexts of disadvantage, and thus relatively little work has considered the correlates of gender mistrust in a more diverse sample. Further, there is limited empirical research examining factors associated with variation in gender mistrust, including family influences and prior relationship experiences, and the existing work is largely cross-sectional. Based on a range of qualitative studies, it seems plausible that relationship experiences at earlier stages of the life course may influence one's attitudes about the opposite sex, and that those attitudes are then carried forward into subsequent relationships as a form of "relationship baggage." Research on the developmental significance of intimate relationships reinforces this idea, as prior relationship experiences have been found to influence behavior in adult unions (Manning, Longmore, Copp, & Giordano, 2014; Meier & Allen, 2009). In the current investigation we examined factors associated with variability in gender mistrust, drawing on a diverse sample of individuals interviewed first as adolescents and then subsequently at various points throughout the transition to adulthood. In this way, we were able to assess gender mistrust

longitudinally, focusing particular attention on the ways in which prior relationship experiences influenced individual trajectories of mistrust.

Next, we assessed the role of this variability as an influence on conduct within intimate relationships. Much of what is known about gender mistrust comes from the marital literature and its focus on mistrust as an influential force in the decline of marriage. This focus on union formation, however, neglects to consider potential ways in which gender mistrust influences the dynamics or ‘inner-workings’ of non-marital as well as marital unions. A remaining question, then, is whether gender mistrust influences the quality of those unions formed—an issue that has received inadequate attention—and specifically, whether it is associated with the use of violence in the intimate context. Research on adolescents’ romantic relationships found that gender mistrust was associated with other negative qualities of adolescents’ relationships, including jealousy and verbal conflict (Nomaguchi et al., 2011), both of which are risk factors for violence. Additionally, researchers examining the structural origins of mistrust have emphasized the extent to which the actions of mistrusting individuals may actually provoke hostile responses (Ross et al., 2001). Thus, in the current study, we considered whether changes in gender mistrust were associated with trajectories of IPV perpetration, net of respondents’ own prior relationship experiences as well as a broad range of family background, sociodemographic, and relationship factors. Experiencing coercive parenting in the family of origin is a risk factor of partner violence (e.g., Ehrensaft et al., 2003; Smith et al., 2011). Additionally, socioeconomic factors, including neighborhood poverty, influence the experience of partner violence (see Capaldi et al., 2012). Relationship characteristics, including relationship status, are associated with partner violence (Brown & Bulanda, 2008), and parenthood increases IPV risk (Vest, Catlin, Chen, &

Brownson, 2002). Additionally, we examined whether men and women's reports of gender mistrust have a similar influence on the odds of IPV perpetration.

DATA AND METHODS

This research drew on longitudinal data from the Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study (TARS), which is based on a stratified random sample of 1,321 adolescents and their parents/guardians. The TARS data were collected in the years 2001 (wave 1), 2002 (wave 2), 2004 (wave 3), 2006 (wave 4), and 2011 (wave 5). The sampling frame of the TARS study encompassed 62 schools across seven school districts. The initial sample was drawn from enrollment records for 7th, 9th, and 11th grades, but school attendance was not a requirement for inclusion in the study. The stratified, random sample was devised by the National Opinion Research Center and included over-samples of Black and Hispanic adolescents. These data are unique because they include indicators of gender mistrust at each interview wave along with measures of intimate partner violence. They also include a rich array of background indicators as well as parental reports of gender mistrust.

The current analyses relied on structured interviews conducted at waves 1 through 5 with a few exclusions including respondents reporting their race as "other" ($n = 26$). Additionally, the youngest (12 years) and oldest (29 years) observations were dropped as small cell sizes precluded meaningful analyses of these groups ($n = 38$). The final analytic sample ($n = 1257$) represented an 11-year accelerated cohort design with three overlapping cohorts (ages 13 to 28 years).

Dependent Variables

Gender mistrust was assessed across all five interviews. At the first three interviews, respondents were asked about the extent to which they agreed with the following statements:

“You can’t trust most guys,” and “You can’t trust most girls around other guys.” Adolescent gender mistrust was measured as the mean of these items. At the time of the fourth and fifth interviews, however, these questions were combined, yielding the following: “You can’t trust most guys[girls]” (respondents were shown opposite sex, regardless of sexual preference). This measure of gender mistrust was included as a within-subjects factor in the models predicting IPV perpetration.

IPV perpetration was also assessed across all five interviews using four items from the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996). Respondents were asked how often they committed the following acts against their current or most recent partner: “thrown something at him/her”; “pushed, shoved or grabbed him/her”; “slapped him/her in the face or head with an open hand”; and “hit him/her.” Responses were scored on a 5-point scale that ranged from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). We used a dichotomous measure of relationship violence, distinguishing between those who reported *any* (1) and no perpetration (0).

Within-Subjects Factors

Prior relationship experiences. *IPV victimization* was based on the same four items from the Conflict Tactics Scale outlined above, but here focused on victimization. We used a dichotomous measure of relationship violence, distinguishing between those who reported *any* (1) and no victimization (0) at each of the five interviews. *Partner non-exclusivity* was based on responses to the following question: “How often do you think X has gotten involved with other girls[guys]?” Responses were dichotomized to indicate any sexual non-exclusivity. *Partner influence attempts* was measured as the mean of the following two items: “X sometimes wants to control what I do” and “X always tries to change me.” Responses ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). *Partner-specific mistrust* was based on a single item asking

respondents' level of agreement with the following: "Sometimes X cannot be trusted."

Responses ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Relationship status assessed whether the current or most recent relationship reported by respondents was a dating, cohabiting, or marital relationship (reference category), or whether the respondent did not have a relationship to report (single). *Parent* was a dichotomous variable indicating whether the respondent had any children. *Age* was measured in years using a continuous variable reported from respondent's age at the time of the fifth interview.

Between-Subjects Factors

Parent gender mistrust was measured as the mean of the following seven statements: "Boys are only after one thing," "Girls are too aggressive nowadays," "I think some children have too much freedom to be around the opposite sex," "Boys and girls play emotional games with each other," "I think some parents allow their children too much freedom to date," "It's better not to get too serious about one boy/girl in high school," and "Nowadays girls are too boy crazy." Additionally, *coercive parenting* was measured using a single item from the wave 1 adolescent report asking respondents: "When you and your parents disagree about things, how often do they push, slap, or hit you?" Responses were dichotomized to indicate any coercive parenting.

We included a series of sociodemographic indicators: gender, race/ethnicity, family structure, and neighborhood poverty. Gender was measured as female (1) and male (0). We included three dichotomous variables to measure race/ethnicity including non-Hispanic white (contrast category), non-Hispanic Black, and Hispanic. Family structure (wave 1) includes the following categories: two biological parents (contrast category), step-family, single-parent family, and any "other" family type. Neighborhood poverty was from U.S. census data at the

time of the first interview, and indicated the “percent of population living below the poverty level” in the respondent’s census tract while growing up. Neighborhood poverty was logged in the multivariate analyses to correct for skewness.

ANALYTIC STRATEGY

We employed both linear and nonlinear growth-curve analyses to model gender mistrust and IPV perpetration. In the first set of analyses, gender mistrust was modeled as a function of age, prior relationship experiences, and several controls. We estimated linear mixed-effects models using restricted maximum likelihood estimation in SAS 9.3. For model comparison purposes, we relied on the Aikake and Bayesian Information Criteria (AIC and BIC, respectively) with smaller values indicating better overall model fit. For the second set of analyses, IPV perpetration was estimated using population-averaged logistic regression models for the probability of perpetrating violence toward a current/most recent partner, and was modeled as a function of age, gender mistrust, prior relationship experiences, and controls. Models were estimated using generalized linear mixed models with a logit link in SAS 9.3. In these models, model fit was assessed using the generalized chi-square statistic.

We begin by presenting descriptive statistics for all study variables (Table 1). Next, we estimated an unconditional means model to determine the amount of variation in gender mistrust which occurs between- versus within-individuals. We calculated the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC), ρ , by $\sigma^2_u / (\sigma^2_u + \sigma^2_e)$, which describes the proportion of variation in the outcome variable that lies between individuals. In our sample, the ICC was 0.26, indicating that about a quarter of the variation in gender mistrust is attributable to differences among individuals, whereas the remaining three-quarters lies within-individuals. Next, we estimated an unconditional growth model by entering the linear effect of age. Model 2 added the within-

subjects factors, including prior relationship experiences, relationship status, and status as a parent. Model 3 introduced the between-subjects factors including parent gender mistrust, coercive parenting, and a range of sociodemographic controls. A similar strategy was followed in the second set of analyses predicting IPV perpetration. First, we estimated an unconditional means model to partition the variance component into within- and between-individual variation. Similar to the procedure described above, we computed the ICC, however, in these logistic regression models σ^2_e is the variance of the standard logistic distribution ($\pi^2/3$). The ICC was 0.24, indicating that approximately one-quarter of the variation in IPV perpetration occurs between individuals, and the remaining three-quarters is attributable to within-individual variation. Next, we estimated an unconditional growth model by entering age and age-squared to the model. Model 2 introduced the within-subjects factors, and Model 3 added the between-subjects predictors. A final model (see Table 4) added the interaction between gender mistrust and female to determine whether the effect of mistrust on IPV perpetration is similar for men and women.

RESULTS

Descriptive Results

Descriptive statistics for all study variables (see Table 1) are based on the 4,448 person-periods, or observations. The average level of gender mistrust was 3.15. This corresponds to a response of “neither agree nor disagree” on questions referencing trust of the opposite sex. On average, 19%, or roughly one in five, observations indicated IPV perpetration. About two-fifths of respondents (41%) reported IPV perpetration at some point during the study (results not shown). The average age of respondents during the study period was 19, and this ranged from 13-28. Approximately 25% of observations indicated IPV victimization and partner non-

exclusivity to have occurred. At the person-level, we find that roughly half (51%) experienced prior victimization and three-fifths reported partner non-exclusivity during the study period (results not shown). Average levels of control were relatively low, as were partner-specific levels of mistrust, with average scores of 2 and 2.21, respectively, across the five survey waves. At the between-subjects level, parent gender mistrust was 3.59, indicating fairly high levels of mistrust (tending toward endorsement of gender mistrust attitudes). Additionally, roughly one-fifth of respondents reported experiencing coercive parenting.

Modeling Gender Mistrust

The first set of analyses addressed how respondents' prior relationship experiences, in addition to a number of sociodemographic, family background, and relationship characteristics, were related to levels of gender mistrust. Table 2 presents a series of nested growth curve models for gender mistrust. Model 1 included only the linear effect of time. Results of this model indicate that the trajectory of gender mistrust is relatively flat, and declines slightly over time. Model 2 added the within-subjects factors. Of the prior relationship experiences, partner non-exclusivity, partner influence attempts, and partner-specific mistrust were positively associated with gender mistrust. This suggests that, net of time, the experience of partner non-exclusivity, partner influence attempts, and partner-specific mistrust correspond to higher levels of gender mistrust. Although IPV victimization is not significant in this model, supplemental models examined the effect of each of the prior relationship experiences on gender mistrust individually, and in this more trimmed model, IPV victimization did exert a positive effect on gender mistrust. This effect is attenuated, however, after controlling for the other relationship experiences. Additionally, as compared to respondents in marital unions, single, dating, and

cohabiting respondents reported greater levels of gender mistrust. Finally, status as a parent was positively associated with gender mistrust.

Model 3 introduced the between-subjects factors, and consistent with prior work, several of the sociodemographic and family background factors were related to gender mistrust. Specifically, respondents whose parents reported higher levels of mistrust were more mistrusting of the opposite sex. Higher levels of neighborhood poverty were also associated with respondents' reports of gender mistrust. As compared to their white counterparts, Black and Hispanic individuals reported higher levels of mistrust. Mother's education was negatively associated with gender mistrust; respondents with college educated parents reported lower levels of gender mistrust than their peers whose parents had a high school degree. Net of these factors, however, prior relationship experiences—including partner non-exclusivity, partner influence attempts, and partner-specific mistrust—continued to exert a positive influence on gender mistrust, suggesting that at any given age (of the ages observed in this study), exposure to these different negative features of relationships enhance levels of gender mistrust.

A number of interactions were tested to determine whether any of the between subjects factors modified the trajectory of IPV perpetration. There was a significant gender interaction for the effect of age ($p < .05$), suggesting that the trajectories of gender mistrust over time are different for males and females. Specifically, there appears to be a significant decline in feelings of gender mistrust over time for females. Although the effect of age on gender mistrust follows a similar pattern among male respondents, it does not reach statistical significance. Further examination of the trajectories of gender mistrust for male and female respondents revealed that levels of mistrust were significantly higher among females as compared to their male

counterparts across study waves (results not shown). At wave 4, however, levels of gender mistrust were similar among male and female respondents.

Modeling IPV Perpetration

The analysis of IPV perpetration is shown in Table 3. Again, a series of nested models is presented addressing how changes in feelings of gender mistrust influence changes in the odds of IPV perpetration over time. Model 1 presents the results of the unconditional growth model, which included both age and age-squared to account for the curvilinear trajectory of IPV perpetration observed over the study period. Model 2 added the between subjects factors, and a number of significant findings emerge. First, net of prior relationship experiences, relationship status, and status as a parent, gender mistrust was associated with heightened odds of IPV perpetration. Similar to the models predicting gender mistrust, respondents' prior relationship experiences appear to have a positive effect on the odds of IPV perpetration. In contrast to the models predicting gender mistrust, however, the effect of IPV victimization was significant and positive in these models. Additionally, those in dating relationships, as compared to married, report lower odds of IPV perpetration, and respondents with children of their own report higher odds of IPV perpetration.

Furthermore, examination of the generalized chi-square statistic indicated a substantial improvement in model fit from the unconditional growth model (Model 1) following the addition of the within-subjects factors (Model 2). This is further captured by the reduction in the age coefficients; the introduction of the relationship factors in Model 2 reduced the linear effect of age by 51%, and the quadratic effect of age by 38%. These findings suggest that the within-subjects factors, including gender mistrust, account for a significant portion of the variability in IPV perpetration by age. Supplemental models examined whether the effect of gender mistrust

on IPV perpetration varied by age, however, the lack of a significant age by gender mistrust interaction suggests that the effect of mistrust on the perpetration of partner violence is similar across the age range observed in this investigation (not shown).

Model 3 included the between subjects factors, and net of these covariates, the effect of gender mistrust was no longer significant. This attenuation is driven by the addition of gender to the model. Of the between-subjects factors, only race and gender were significantly associated with IPV perpetration; as compared to males, females reported higher odds of IPV perpetration, as did Black respondents as compared to their white counterparts.

A secondary objective of this investigation was to focus particular attention of the role of gender, and accordingly, interactions were tested to determine whether the effect of gender mistrust on IPV perpetration was similar for males and females (see Table 4). The coefficient for the cross-product of gender mistrust by female was significant and positive suggesting that the effect of gender mistrust on IPV perpetration is stronger for women. Moreover, it appears that the effect of gender mistrust is not significant for males net of these other factors. Figure 1 depicts this interaction graphically by plotting the predicted probability of IPV perpetration across levels of gender mistrust for male and female respondents, while holding all other covariates at their mean values. In contrast to the significant positive association between gender mistrust and IPV perpetration among females, this figure reveals that gender mistrust contributes little to our understanding of IPV perpetration among males, controlling for these other factors. Supplemental analyses (not shown) disaggregated the sample by gender to determine whether the effect of gender mistrust on IPV perpetration was significant for males prior to the addition of the full roster of covariates, and controlling for family background and sociodemographic characteristics, gender mistrust was significantly associated with a heightened risk of IPV

perpetration among males. After controlling for the more immediate relationship context via the items tapping prior relationship experiences, however, the effect of gender mistrust on perpetration was no longer significant for males.

DISCUSSION

The results of the current analyses suggest that feelings of gender mistrust have implications for the healthy functioning of intimate relationships by heightening the risk of IPV perpetration. Additionally, such feelings appear to be more than simply a function of poverty or socioeconomic factors. Drawing on a large, diverse sample of individuals first interviewed as adolescents, and then subsequently at various points across the transition to adulthood, growth curve analyses showed that family influences and prior relationship experiences were significantly associated with gender mistrust. Furthermore, variations in such feelings of mistrust were tied to a heightened risk of IPV perpetration. These findings suggest the need to further examine gender mistrust in relation to the quality of intimate unions, with a particular focus on its role in the resort to violence.

Both qualitative and quantitative research have forged a link between economic conditions and gender mistrust, and others have acknowledged the potential for intergenerational transmission of attitudes and beliefs about the opposite sex. In the current investigation, a range of sociodemographic and family background factors emerged as significant predictors of gender mistrust including parent's gender mistrust, neighborhood poverty, race/ethnicity, and mother's education. Yet whereas prior research has been largely cross-sectional, the current analyses shed additional light on the nature of these associations. That is, although early social learning and other structural considerations are important factors in the development of feelings of mistrust, they do not appear to alter trajectories of mistrust over time. Thus, individuals learn to be wary

of relationships, but those expectations have little opportunity to be reinforced until they become involved with intimate partners (Furstenberg, 2001). Relationship experiences, including partner non-exclusivity, partner control, and partner-specific mistrust, provide the potential for reinforcement of such negative views of the opposite sex and are associated with changes in feelings of gender mistrust over time.

Whereas most of the prior work on gender mistrust focuses on relationship formation, the results of the current analyses indicate that feelings of gender mistrust have consequences for the quality of intimate unions, including the use of violence. The results indicated that increases in feelings of gender mistrust were associated with increases in the odds of IPV perpetration at any given point in time across the study period. However, after controlling for a range of time-stable characteristics, the effect of gender mistrust was no longer significant. Supplemental analyses revealed that this was due to the addition of gender to the model; it appears that the effect of gender mistrust on IPV perpetration is stronger for women. A contribution of these findings is that net of individual feelings of trust toward a partner, the more general notion of gender mistrust remains an important factor leading to IPV perpetration among women. In fact, after controlling for the more immediate relationship context, the effect of gender mistrust on IPV perpetration is not significant for males. These gendered findings warrant further investigation. On the one hand, they point to a more pervasive culture of gender mistrust among women, and this seems largely consistent with prior qualitative research. However, this is incomplete as an explanation. There is a general consensus that feelings of gender mistrust are more widespread among women, but based on this, we should merely expect to see greater endorsement of gender mistrust among females—not a stronger association between such feelings and violence.

This investigation is, to our knowledge, the first to examine gender mistrust as a precursor to violence. Further, it is one of a small number of studies to examine gender mistrust beyond contexts of disadvantage, and also, to do so longitudinally. Despite these contributions, this study is not without its own limitations. First, whereas our measure of parent's gender mistrust is based on seven items tapping several dimensions of gender mistrust, our measure of the respondent's gender mistrust is much more limited. Additionally, it is based on a general measure of mistrust of the opposite sex and thus is not context specific. Prior research has indicated that gender mistrust often stems from relationship and sexual behaviors, particularly sexual infidelity, but likely other considerations influence feelings of mistrust (e.g., concerns about partner's financial prospects), and some of these considerations may be life course specific. To account for the intergenerational transmission of gender mistrust, we control for parent's gender mistrust. However, other aspects of the respondents' upbringing, including parents' unstable relationships, frequent discord, and inter-parental violence, likely influence feelings of mistrust. Future work may benefit from further attention to the processes underlying transmission of negative views of the opposite sex from one generation to the next. While these data offer an unparalleled view of gender mistrust and IPV in a population-based sample, the results are based on respondents from one region of the country. These results should be replicated with nationally representative samples. Our project focuses on young adulthood, a period characterized by peaks in intimate partner violence; the observed associations may shift, however, as respondents move into middle age and more stable relationships. Further work that extends the implications of gender mistrust into older age ranges is warranted.

The primary objective of the current investigation was to examine the association between gender mistrust and IPV perpetration. However, future work should focus attention on

specific ways in which gender mistrust influences the perpetration of relationship violence. Scholars have suggested, for example, that mistrusting individuals may engage in “preemptive actions” that provoke violent responses (Ross et al., 2001), including monitoring the whereabouts of significant others, as well as looking through partners’ phones, email, and social media accounts. High levels of gender mistrust may also cause individuals to be mistrusting of a specific partner—particularly regarding issues of sexual exclusivity—and thus fidelity concerns may provide a potential mechanism linking a broader sense of gender mistrust to the use of violence within a specific relationship. Finally, monitoring, fidelity concerns, and other potential consequences of gender mistrust represent behaviors that may elicit verbal discord. This may be particularly true when the monitoring and issues of fidelity are not the result of past behaviors of the partner (i.e., as a result of their own infidelity), but rather stem from one’s own worldview of men/women as untrustworthy. Forging a link to communication processes within the relationship is potentially important, as much prior research has documented that high levels of verbal conflict are reliably associated with IPV risk (Wilkinson & Hamerschlag, 2005).

Taken together, these findings provide additional support for a relational approach to intimate partner violence as individuals’ prior relationship experiences significantly contributed to within-individual variation in IPV perpetration over time. However, net of one’s own relationship experiences, feelings of gender mistrust continued to influence IPV risk. Thus, gender mistrust appears to have consequences for the perpetration of relationship violence even net of these other negative relationship features—all of which are known correlates of IPV in their own right. Furthermore, feelings of gender mistrust are associated with parent’s gender mistrust and a range of sociodemographic factors, but in addition to these influences, gender mistrust is further shaped by experiences in the relationship context. Whereas gender mistrust is

most often examined in relation to union formation, the findings of the current investigation suggest the utility of directing attention to the quality of unions formed. Programs aimed at fostering healthy relationships may benefit from shifting from a singular focus on trust of a specific partner to a more comprehensive view of mistrust and its most proximate causes.

Addressing these factors will not only serve to promote healthier relationships, but may lessen the probability of IPV.

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables (n = 4448)

	Mean/Freq	SD	Range
Outcomes			
<i>Gender Mistrust</i>	3.15	0.99	1-5
<i>IPV Perpetration</i>	0.19	0.40	0-1
Within-subjects			
Age	19.31	3.88	13-28
Age squared	388.11	158.70	169-784
<i>Prior Relationship Experiences</i>			
IPV victimization	0.25	0.43	0-1
Partner non-exclusivity	0.25	0.43	0-1
Partner influence attempts	2.00	0.94	1-5
Partner cannot be trusted	2.21	1.18	1-5
<i>Relationship Status (married)</i>			
Single	0.01	0.10	0-1
Dating	0.81	0.39	0-1
Cohabiting	0.12	0.32	0-1
Parent	0.16	0.37	0-1
Between-subjects			
Parent gender mistrust	3.59	0.57	1-5
Coercive parenting	0.23	0.42	0-1
Neighborhood poverty	14.44	14.35	0-70.13%
<i>Gender (male)</i>			
Female	0.52	0.50	0-1
<i>Race/ethnicity (White)</i>			
Black	0.23	0.42	0-1
Hispanic	0.11	0.32	0-1
<i>Family structure (bio parents)</i>			
Single parent	0.23	0.42	0-1
Step-parent	0.14	0.34	0-1
Other family	0.12	0.32	0-1
<i>Mother's education (high school)</i>			
Less than high school	0.12	0.32	0-1
Some college	0.33	0.47	0-1
College or more	0.22	0.41	0-1

Source: Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study

Table 2. Growth Curve Models of Gender Mistrust (n = 4448)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Fixed Effects, Composite Model			
<i>Within-subjects</i>			
Initial status	3.631***	2.667***	1.975***
Age	-0.025***	-0.022***	-0.017***
<i>Prior Relationship Experiences</i>			
IPV victimization		0.030	0.034
Partner non-exclusivity		0.118***	0.095**
Partner influence attempts		0.067***	0.074***
Partner cannot be trusted		0.114***	0.102***
<i>Relationship Status (married)</i>			
Single		0.391**	0.359**
Dating		0.478***	0.467***
Cohabiting		0.386***	0.363***
Parent		0.271***	0.161***
<i>Between-subjects</i>			
Parent gender mistrust			0.125***
Coercive parenting			0.077
Neighborhood poverty			0.003*
<i>Gender (male)</i>			
Female			0.206***
<i>Race/ethnicity (White)</i>			
Black			0.205***
Hispanic			0.121*
<i>Family structure (bio parents)</i>			
Single parent			0.052
Step-parent			0.036
Other family			0.020
<i>Mother's education (high school)</i>			
Less than high school			0.069
Some college			-0.065
College or more			-0.171***
<i>Variance components</i>			
Level 1: Within-person	0.622***	0.625***	0.627***
Level 2: In intercept	1.218***	0.956***	0.769***
Level 2: In rate of change	0.004***	0.003***	0.003***
AIC	14438.4	11772.0	11640.3
BIC	14459.0	11792.4	11660.7

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

Source: Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study

Table 3. Growth Curve Models of IPV Perpetration (n = 4448)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Fixed Effects, Composite Model			
<i>Within-subjects</i>			
Initial status	-7.642***	-5.906***	-7.857***
Age	0.630***	0.309*	0.341*
Age squared	-0.016***	-0.010**	-0.010**
<i>Gender Mistrust</i>		0.206***	0.107
<i>Prior Relationship Experiences</i>			
IPV victimization		2.834***	3.365***
Partner non-exclusivity		0.350**	0.322**
Partner influence attempts		0.163**	0.274***
Partner cannot be trusted		0.200***	0.148**
<i>Relationship Status (married)</i>			
Single		-0.683	-0.730
Dating		-0.883***	-0.831**
Cohabiting		-0.037	-0.024
<i>Parent</i>		0.441**	0.109
<i>Between-subjects</i>			
Parent gender mistrust			0.133
Coercive parenting			0.217
Neighborhood poverty			0.002
<i>Gender (male)</i>			
Female			1.689***
<i>Race/ethnicity (White)</i>			
Black			0.343*
Hispanic			0.134
<i>Family structure (bio parents)</i>			
Single parent			0.234
Step-parent			0.070
Other family			0.188
<i>Mother's education (high school)</i>			
Less than high school			0.044
Some college			0.011
College or more			-0.360
Variance component, Intercept			
τ	1.055	0.956	0.679
χ^2	3153.55	2617.82	2775.99

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

Source: Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study

