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**PARENTING IN ADOLESCENCE AND
YOUNG ADULT INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

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Abstract

Most prior studies of intimate partner violence (IPV) have relied on traditional indices of parental support, control or coercion to examine the nature and extent of parental influences. We explore whether parents' more general attitudes toward their child's dating and associated parenting practices are related to the young adult child's report of IPV, once traditional parent factors and other covariates are introduced. Using data from the Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study (n = 625), results indicate that net of other parenting dimensions and controls for child and neighborhood characteristics, parental negativity about their child's dating and related parenting practices are associated with later reports of IPV during young adulthood. Parent-child conflict and the child's own feelings of gender mistrust were considered as potential mediators. Results suggest the importance of widening the lens beyond support, control and even the parents' own use of violence to include a range of parental attitudes and behaviors that influence the child's approach to and conduct within the romantic realm.

Keywords

Intimate partner violence, family violence, parenting, young adulthood

Parenting in Adolescence and Young Adult Intimate Partner Violence

Although parents generally take an interest in their children's intellectual and academic progress from an early age well into the transition to adulthood, the onset of dating represents a unique developmental phase that typically becomes salient during the period of adolescence (Collins, Welsh, & Furman, 2009). In Western cultures, dating is a normative transition in the life course that is part of the adolescent's increasing focus on life outside the family, but issues of timing, relationship seriousness, and choice of particular partners may be associated with new parental concerns and reactions (Gray & Steinberg, 1999; Longmore, Manning, & Giordano, 2013). Dating violence occurs with troubling frequency during adolescence and young adulthood (Klaus, 2007). Indeed, self-report data from nationally representative samples, such as the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) (e.g., Halpern, Spriggs, Martin, & Kupper, 2009; Whitaker, Haileyesus, Swahn, & Saltzman, 2007), and official arrest statistics (Rennison, 2001) indicate peaks in prevalence during the early 20s. Most studies of parental effects on the child's odds of experiencing intimate partner violence have either focused on the influence of support and supervision/monitoring (e.g., Maas, Fleming, Herrenkohl, & Catalano, 2010), or the role of direct exposure to violence either as a witness to marital violence or as a victim of child abuse/harsh parenting practices (Foshee et al., 2011). We contribute to prior work by examining a broader range of parenting influences, including parents' dating-specific attitudes and associated behaviors, as measured during the formative adolescent period.

We rely on interview data from the Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study (TARS), a four wave longitudinal study that encompasses the period of adolescence and young adulthood (n = 680). We examine whether parental negativity and cautiousness about dating in adolescence is associated with the young adult child's report of experiencing intimate partner violence, once

traditional parent factors (support, control, coercion) and other controls have been introduced. Parental negativity is conceptualized as encompassing a range of specific behaviors and communications such as cautioning the child to delay dating, imposing dating rules, conveying feelings of gender mistrust as well as expressing negative attitudes about particular partners. We hypothesize that this parental approach may increase parent-child conflict and the child's own feelings of gender mistrust. This additional exposure to verbal conflict and negative communications about romantic relationships may increase the likelihood that the child will rely on a more conflictual style of interaction and display a lack of trust with partners. Previous research has shown that these dynamics are associated with violence in intimate relationships (Leonard & Roberts, 1998; Wilkinson & Hamerschlag, 2005). As a final step in the analyses, we estimate models that incorporate interactions between the respondent's gender and parental negativity about dating to determine whether there appear to be uniquely gendered pathways of parental influence on reports of IPV during the young adult period.

Background

Prior research on IPV has shown that lower parental support and supervision are related to risk of adolescents' involvement in intimate partner violence (Capaldi & Clark, 1998; Maas et al., 2010; Simons, Lin, & Gordon, 1998). Other studies of IPV have developed the idea of direct transmission of violent behaviors, either as the child witnesses parental violence or garners direct experience as a victim of the parent's use of harsh discipline (Jouriles et al., 2012; Kinsfogel & Grych, 2004; Tyler, Brownridge, & Melander, 2011). In a recent review and assessment of this literature tradition, Foshee and colleagues (2011) concluded that child abuse, relative to witnessing marital violence, has a greater influence on IPV. The most straightforward interpretations of social learning theory emphasize the linkages between the parent's violent

actions and those of the child (Fritz, Slep, & O’Leary, 2012). This places the emphasis on learning specific attitudes about violence itself (e.g., conditions under which the use of violence may be considered justified or necessary) as well the idea of direct modeling of the parent’s behavior. These studies suggest a role for social learning and intergenerational transmission, but researchers generally point out that not all individuals with these early backgrounds go on to commit acts of violence (Smith et al., 2013). This suggests the need to explore further variations in specific attitudes and parenting practices as potential influences on the adolescent’s risk for later intimate partner violence.

Prior Research on Dating-Specific Parenting

During early adolescence, parents will often observe a clear acceleration of interest in romantic relationships, and must confront dating as a distinct shift in the child’s orientation and socializing preferences (Furman, Brown, & Feiring, 1999). Accordingly, the parent’s attitudes about the child’s dating and general approach to parenting a dating teen may be distinguished from traditional parenting dimensions such as warmth/closeness, supervision or the use of violence.

Leslie, Huston, and Johnson (1986) conceptualized dating-specific parenting as either approving or disapproving of dating, and found that parental approval on the part of mothers and fathers was lower for daughters than sons. They also examined the consequences of approving/disapproving reactions and found that across a four-month period, observed variations were not related to adolescent romantic relationship progression (e.g., moving from dating to engagement). Kan and her colleagues (Kan, McHale, & Crouter, 2008) developed a multi-dimensional approach that included a negativity factor (consisting of concerns and restrictions), as well as dimensions relating to autonomy and support. Consistent with traditional gender scripts and with the findings of Leslie et al. (1986), parents’ responses reflected more autonomy

for sons and more restrictions for daughters. The authors developed the idea of styles of dating-specific parenting by clustering the various factors (three clusters were developed, consisting of autonomy oriented, negatively involved, and positively involved styles of parenting), and in general did not find that these styles related to the aspects of adolescent romantic experiences assessed. An exception was that boys with negatively involved parents scored lower on romantic intimacy than those with autonomy-oriented or positively involved parents.

Parental Negativity about Dating and Intimate Partner Violence

The studies by Leslie et al. (1986) and Kan et al. (2008) provide a provisional basis for exploring further the impact of variations in dating-specific parenting on other aspects of the child's dating life, including the experience of intimate partner conflicts. While parenting around issues of dating involves a range of different attitudes and behaviors, both of the studies reviewed above highlighted a negativity factor, or what Kan et al. (2008) refer to as a style of "negative involvement."

Many if not all parents will experience feelings of trepidation about this phase of their child's development, yet a large share of adolescents inevitably begin to date during the adolescent period (Carver, Joyner, & Udry, 2003). Thus, a way to distinguish parental attitudes about the dating realm is to assess whether they *caution their children to delay dating* or appear more accepting of this particular transition (Bouris et al., 2012). Parents may vary further in their *imposition of dating-specific rules and restrictions*. Prior research on supervision in general and dating rules in particular has shown that girls are subject to more restrictive parenting (Hagan, Gillis, & Simpson, 1985; Madsen, 2008). It is somewhat intuitive to expect that cautions and rules about dating should be negatively associated with problem outcomes such as IPV (Hirschi, 1969), but this negative, restrictive approach may be perceived by the child as aversive and

unwarranted (Patterson, 1982).

These admonitions about dating thus may be associated with increased parent-child conflict. Increased parent-child conflict in turn may provide a poor model for communication and respect in adolescents' romantic relationships, and this may result in an increased likelihood that the child will respond in a similar manner within their own dating relationships. To the degree that parents attempt to restrict the child's dating, this may also limit opportunities for developing skills needed for building healthy romantic relationships, or to receive mentoring from parents about working through relationship problems.¹ Research on specific relationship dynamics associated with IPV has shown that high levels of verbal conflict and a reliance on coercive control within relationships are both strongly related to IPV. For example, in a married sample, Leonard and Roberts (1998) found that aggressive couples engaged in more negativity in interactions relative to non-aggressive couples, even controlling for marital satisfaction (see also Margolin, John, & Gleberman, 1988; O'Leary, 1989). And in a series of studies that included young adults in dating relationships, Stets and colleagues documented that reliance on controlling behaviors within a relationship was a significant risk factor for IPV (see e.g., Stets & Pirog-Good, 1990).

Negativity about dating may communicate an even more basic world view about what children can expect when they become involved in romantic relationships. Ross, Mirowsky, and Pribesh (2001) suggest that gender mistrust encompasses generalized expectations about other people's behaviors in the domain of intimate relationships, and has implications for how people approach and conduct their romantic lives. Thus, attitudes that reflect *gender mistrust* or *negative communications about the child's choice of partners* may be associated with the child's own developing feelings of gender mistrust. Consistent with the idea of intergenerational

transmission of such attitudes, Nomaguchi and colleagues (Nomaguchi, Giordano, Manning, & Longmore, 2011) recently documented that the parents' feelings of gender mistrust were significantly related to the adolescent's own reports of gender mistrust. Exposure to such negative attitudes may result in a lack of trust of specific partners, including, for example, an increased likelihood of developing concerns about the partner's level of commitment or fidelity—significant sources of discord associated with violence in romantic relationships (see Miller & White, 2003; Wilkinson & Hamerschlag, 2005).

Parenting as a Reaction to Child and Environmental Characteristics

A large body of research coalesces around the idea that parenting 'matters' for understanding child well-being. However, research has also shown that child characteristics are often a significant influence on parenting attitudes and practices (Crouter & Booth, 2003). Thus, the parent's approach to issues of dating may be influenced by or represent a reaction to the child's own predispositions or conduct, as well as by their more general views about parenting a dating teen. For example, some children may exhibit a high level of interest in the dating world at an early age, which may trigger parental concerns and cautions. This precocious involvement may also be associated with IPV risk (Moffitt, Caspi, Rutter, & Silva, 2001). Similarly, research has shown that parenting styles influence the child's risk of developing conduct problems, but that parents of delinquent youth may adapt a restrictive stance as a way of coping with the demands associated with these behavior problems (Gault-Sherman, 2012; Patterson, 1982). The child's delinquency thus may influence parenting as well as the odds of reporting later IPV (Capaldi & Clark, 1998).

In addition to the potential influence of child characteristics, research has shown that parents who reside in more disadvantaged or dangerous neighborhoods may develop parenting strategies

and more general attitudes that reflect the very real dangers that the child is likely to face in such environments. Although most quantitative research on neighborhood influences has not examined dating-specific parenting directly, associations with coercive or authoritarian parenting styles have been documented (Pinderhughes et al., 2007). And in a qualitative study, Akers et al. (2011) interviewed urban African American parents about IPV and relationships who felt it imperative to instill a strong sense of self-respect and independence in their children that would shield them from being manipulated and abused by a partner. Thus, in the current investigation, it is important to account for both child and environmental characteristics, as potential sources of variation in parents' reports about dating-specific parenting, as well as influences on the child's level of risk for experiencing IPV.

The Current Study

A primary objective of the current study is to determine whether dating-specific parenting attitudes and practices as assessed in adolescence are associated with later young adult IPV, once traditional parenting dimensions (support, control, coercion) and potential confounds are taken into account. Models control for child characteristics (early dating, delinquency involvement, adolescent IPV) and the broader environment (neighborhood context), as well as traditional socioedemographic characteristics and basic features of the young adult relationship (e.g., duration, whether the individual is dating or cohabiting). Subsequently, we examine the role of parent-child conflict and the child's own feelings of gender mistrust as potential mediators. Although these models focus on reports of 'any violence' within a current/most recent relationship, supplemental models are estimated focusing on victimization and perpetration separately. Finally, based on prior literature that indicates differential treatment of sons and daughters, we estimate models that explore the degree to which variations in dating-specific

parenting have a similar or distinct influence on the odds of female and male experience with young adult IPV.

Method

Data

This research draws on longitudinal data from the Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study (TARS), which is based on a stratified random sample of adolescents and their parents/guardians. The four waves of TARS data that were collected in the years 2001, 2002, 2004, and 2006. The current analyses rely on structured interviews conducted at waves 1, 3, and 4 and the parent interview conducted at wave 1 (which was most often completed by the biological mother – 82%). The respondents' average age is 15 years in wave 1, 18 in wave 3, and 21 years in wave 4. 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 includes over-samples of black and Hispanic adolescents. The follow-up rate from wave 1 to wave 4 is 83%. Attrition analyses indicate that participation at wave 4 is not related to most characteristics assessed at wave 1 (mother's education, race/ethnicity, age, parent's report of coercive parenting, wave 1 IPV). However, the follow-up sample is more likely to be female (54% as contrasted with 51% at wave 1), and less likely to report an 'other' family structure.

The analytic sample is composed of respondents who reported at least some dating experience at wave 1 (n = 1,040) to best capture parenting surrounding dating. Our focus on IPV requires respondents who were reinterviewed and had a romantic partner at wave 4 (n = 997). The sample is further restricted to those who reported white, Black or Hispanic race/ethnic

identity (n = 978). Respondents also had to have participated at wave 3 (n = 815). We note that 16 respondents reported being in a same-sex relationship and are included in the analyses reported below. However, we estimated models without these respondents, and results do not differ.

The parent questionnaire was a self-administered paper survey, which resulted in some inappropriate skips in the dating section and parents did not know their child was dating so it was inappropriate for them to answer with reference to a “most recent” as well as a current boyfriend/girlfriend. The final analytic sample thus consists of 625 respondents (287 males and 338 females). Further analyses (not shown) indicate that the respondents who had not dated at wave 1, or were otherwise restricted, did not differ significantly from those included in the analytic sample in their odds of reporting IPV later on in adulthood. As the primary respondents (as adolescents and then as young adults) answered all questions using the computer assisted survey method, missing data were low for these respondents. We conducted several sets of sensitivity analyses to determine how these types of missing data might influence our results. We found no significant differences in our dependent variable, IPV at wave 4, between those missing and those retained in the sample. However, black respondents were more likely to have missing data, as were those with children. We employed multiple imputation techniques to handle the missing data. Multiple imputation, performed in Stata, involves missing values being imputed on the basis of the other values in the data set, however we also estimated models using the smaller subsample with no missing data, and results are substantively similar to those presented below.

Measures

Intimate partner violence. The dependent variable is *IPV experience in young adulthood* as

measured at wave 4. Responses were based on four items from the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus & Gelles, 1990), including “thrown something at,” “pushed, shoved or grabbed,” “slapped in the face or head with an open hand,” and “hit,” in reference to experiences with the current/most recent partner. These items are asked about the respondent as the victim ($\alpha = .89$) as well as the perpetrator ($\alpha = .89$). In the analyses shown, we focus on the report of “any violence.” Those who respond positively to experiences of either victimization or perpetration are coded as 1 and 0 otherwise. Analyses also include a control for wave 1 IPV ($\alpha = .90$), measured with the same four-item scale. Supplemental models (available upon request) were conducted using the measures of perpetration and victimization separately. The pattern of results regarding effects of negative parenting is similar whether the focus is on victimization, perpetration or the measure of ‘any violence,’ as shown.

Parents’ negativity about dating. We developed a summary measure of *parental negativity toward their child’s dating* that includes 15 items tapping the dimensions outlined above. The content and wording of these items were based largely on qualitative interviews with a convenience sample of parents of teens, and results of focus group interviews with teens who varied on the basis of gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status and level of delinquency involvement (for a more complete discussion of the pre-test phase of the project see author citation). Although developed independently, other researchers focusing on dating-specific parenting developed similar items, and also identified a negativity factor (Kan et al., 2008; Leslie et al., 1986) ($\alpha = .73$). Items indexing cautions to delay dating assessed how often the parent “Told my child to wait until she/he has finished school before getting involved with someone,” and “Told my child to wait until she/he is older before getting involved with someone.” To measure the imposition of dating rules, parents were asked how often: “I let my child know

about the people I think she/he should date,” “I tell my child what types of people she/he can date,” and “I have forbidden my child to date someone.” Regarding questioning partner choices, parents were asked, “Since your child started dating, how often have you,” “Talked to my child about other people she/he could date,” “Asked my child what she/he sees in her/his boy/girlfriend,” and “Told my child her/his boy/girlfriend was not right for her/him.” Items tapping gender mistrust include agreement/disagreement regarding the following statements: “Boys are only after one thing,” “Girls are too aggressive these days,” “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.” All responses include a 1-5 range, where strong agreement or a frequent use of this tactic reflects a more negative attitude toward the child’s dating life. The sample included 92 respondents whose parents had missing data on the above items; sensitivity analyses indicate results were similar with and without imputed values.

Parent-child conflict about dating is measured by a single item indicator at wave 3 – assessing how often the adolescent indicates having disagreements about dating issues with the parent. Responses were 1 for never, 2 for hardly ever, 3 for several times a year, 4 for twice a month, 5 for once a week, and 6 for two or more times a week. We also estimated models relying on a more generic measure of conflict (parent yelling), and results are similar.

Child gender mistrust is a six-item mean scale ($\alpha = .73$) as reported by the respondent at the wave 3 interview. Respondents are asked to what degree they agree with the following statements: “Guys will say anything to get a girl;” “Most guys are always ‘hitting on’ girls;” “You can’t trust most guys;” “Most girls are too boy crazy;” “Girls will often use a guy to make

another guy jealous;” and “You can’t trust most girls around other guys.” The responses range from 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree.

Traditional parenting domains. *Parental support* is measured with a four-item mean scale (Hirschi, 1969), ($\alpha = .72$) drawn from the parents’ wave 1 questionnaire asking parents to what extent they agree with the following: “I like to hear everything about what my child’s into,” “It’s easy for me to have a good time with my child,” “My child is closer to me than a lot of kids his or her age are to their parents,” and “I get along well with my child.” Responses range from 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree.

Parental control is a revised version of a scale included in the Add Health ($\alpha = .84$), and is drawn from the wave 1 parent questionnaire asking parents how often the following statements are true: “When my child is away from home she/he is supposed to let me know where she/he is going;” “My child gets away with breaking the rules” (reverse coded); “I call to check that my child is where she/he said she/he would be;” “I ask who my child is going out with;” “My child must be home at a specific time on the weekends;” “I ask where my child is going;” and “I wait up for my child to get home at night.” Responses range from 1 for “none of the time” to 4 for “all of the time.”

Coercive parenting is based on items included in the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus & Gelles, 1990), with reference to the parent-child relationship. The six-item mean scale ($\alpha = .84$) is drawn from the wave 1 parent questionnaire, which asked parents to indicate, during the past month, how often they have had the following experiences: “Gotten angry at their child;” “criticized their child;” “shouted or yelled at their child;” “argued with their child;” “threatened to physically hurt their child;” and “pushed, grabbed, slapped, or hit their child”. Responses range from 1 for never to 5 for very often.

Child and Environmental Characteristics. The indices of child and environmental characteristics were all drawn from the wave 1 parent or child questionnaires/interviews.

Early dater is based on a question to parents asking if their child “started dating at an early age.”

Juvenile delinquency is based a ten-item self-report scale completed by the adolescent composed of the mean of reported frequencies of items such as: “drunk alcohol,” “stolen (or tried to steal) things worth \$5 or less,” “stolen (or tried to steal) things worth more than \$50,” “carried a hidden weapon other than a plain pocket knife,” “damaged or destroyed property on purpose,” “attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting him/her,” “sold drugs,” “been drunk in a public place,” “broken into a building or vehicle to steal something or just to look around,” and “used drugs to get high” (alpha = .81). *Adolescent IPV* is based on the same items that comprise the young adult IPV measure, as described above (alpha = .90).

Neighborhood context is based on a ten-item scale (alpha = .91) from the wave 1 parent questionnaire in which parents were asked about potential problems in their neighborhoods associated with disorder and violence (e.g., run-down buildings, fights, unemployment).

Sociodemographic characteristics. We include the following sociodemographic indicators: *age*, measured in years using a continuous variable reported from respondent’s age at wave 4; *gender* (male is the contrast category); as well as three dummy 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. To control for socioeconomic status, we rely on a measure of mother’s level of educational attainment.

Romantic Relationship. To control for relationship status at wave 4, three dummy indicators

indicate whether the relationship of interest is *dating* (contrast category), *cohabiting*, or *married*. Additionally, a dichotomous variable is used to denote whether responses reference a *current relationship* or their most recent romantic relationship (1 = current). Relationship *duration* is measured using a single item asking respondents how long they have/had been with their current or most recent partners. The range is from less than a week (1) to a year or more (8). These reports reference the same young adult relationship on which reports about violence are based.

Analytic Strategy

We estimate zero order logistic regression models examining relationships between our index of parental negativity about the child's dating and the child's reports of IPV in a current/most recent relationship as elicited at wave four (some six years later) when respondents on average are 21 years of age. Next, we examine this association while controlling for child characteristics (early dater, self-reported delinquency at wave 1, and wave 1 IPV) and environmental context (neighborhood disorder/violence), traditional sociodemographic characteristics (race/ethnicity, gender, the child's age at the time the parents' responses were elicited, mother's education as an index of socioeconomic status, family structure), as well as indices tapping more general parenting dimensions that have been emphasized in prior research (support, control, coercive parenting). The full models also include controls for basic features of the young adult romantic relationship (whether the focal relationship is a dating, cohabiting or marriage relationship, whether current (vs. most recent), and a measure of duration. We then include potential mediators (parent-child conflict and child's own level of gender mistrust), relying on wave 3 indicators. Models focus on reports of any violence, but supplemental analyses estimate models focusing on victimization and perpetration as separate dependent variables. As a final step in the analysis we estimate models that include an interaction of gender and each of the parenting

indices to determine whether effects are similar or distinct across respondent's gender.

Results

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for the sample, and results according to gender. As shown in the table, 40.5% of the sample reports the experience of IPV in young adulthood, and male respondents are more likely to report "any violence." This is consistent with findings in the literature based on similar samples (e.g., Rhoades, Stanley, Kelmer, & Markman, 2010). Thirty-three percent of respondents report victimization, while 25% of respondents report perpetration. The mean value on the parental index of negativity is 10.28. Results of supplemental analyses indicate that the negativity index is significantly related to the scale measuring more general control ($r = .15, p < .001$), and the parents' use of coercive tactics ($r = .20, p < .001$), but is not significantly correlated with the index of attachment/support ($r = -.02, p = .634$). Results shown in Table 1 also indicate that parents who referenced attitudes and behaviors toward daughters' dating expressed more negativity relative to parents referencing sons' dating lives.

Table 2 presents results of analyses examining the associations between parental negativity about dating and risk for intimate partner violence in young adulthood. Bivariate results indicate that the composite index of parental negativity is significantly and positively related to later reports of IPV in a current or most recent relationship. Parent-child conflict and the child's own report of gender mistrust are also significantly related to IPV. With regard to traditional parenting variables, consistent with prior research on intergenerational transmission, coercive parenting is associated with higher odds of IPV, although parental support and control are not significantly tied to young adult IPV. Of the child and environmental characteristics indices, being an early dater (parent report) and wave 1 child report of IPV were associated with young adult IPV, and the neighborhood disadvantage index was also a significant predictor of later IPV.

Among the sociodemographic characteristics assessed, minority status (black, Hispanic), lower mother's education and living in a family with a step-parent, or under some other living arrangement as an adolescent are associated with risk. Consistent with prior research, IPV is more likely in cohabiting or marriage relationships, compared with dating relationships, and is also positively associated with relationship duration. Whether respondents are reporting about a current or most recent relationship is not significantly related to reports of IPV within the focal relationship.

The subsequent models examine the influence of the index of parental negativity, after introducing controls for traditional parenting variables, child and neighborhood characteristics, other sociodemographic indices, and features of the focal young adult relationship. As the results in Table 2 indicate, parental negativity with regard to the child's dating remains a significant predictor of young adult IPV with the addition of the various controls, including the traditional parenting dimensions and the measures of child and neighborhood characteristics.² Changes in significance levels among the sociodemographic indicators are accounted for by the inclusion of parental negativity, adolescent dating violence, and relationship duration. The negativity index is also significant in separate models focused on perpetration and victimization.

Models 2 and 3 of Table 2 introduce hypothesized mediators—parent/child conflict and the child's own level of gender mistrust. Parental conflict and gender mistrust in adolescence are both positively associated with IPV in early adulthood. While, as hypothesized, each of these is significantly related to IPV, results of these analyses indicate that parental negativity is still a significant predictor when each is introduced separately, as shown in Models 2 and 3. However, as shown in Model 4, when both are introduced, parental negativity is only marginally significant related ($p = .07$) to young adult IPV.

As a final step in the analyses, we estimated models that included an interaction of gender and parental negativity about dating (results not shown). The interaction was not significant, indicating a similar effect of these dating-specific attitudes and behaviors on men and women's reports of IPV in young adulthood.

Conclusion

Parental support is a critical dimension of a child's life that is associated with a range of positive outcomes, even as coercive parenting practices are often linked to negative ones. However, the focus on these more general dimensions of parenting does not provide a comprehensive portrait, as this does not provide information about the parent's attitudes, emphases, rules and concerns relating to specific developmental outcomes. Thus, surveys show that a majority of children report relatively high levels of parental attachment (Demuth & Brown, 2004), but these same parents vary substantially in how much they read to their children, or whether they are heavily involved at the school their children attend. Similarly, a majority of parents likely want their child to eventually develop a meaningful romantic relationship, but their approaches to parenting a dating teen differ. The above analyses highlight that various forms of negative communications and cautions about dating are associated with greater risk of IPV in young adulthood, after controlling for more frequently assessed dimensions of the parent-child relationship, including parental coercion, as well as child and neighborhood characteristics. Parent-child conflict and a measure of the respondent's feelings of gender mistrust were introduced as mediators, and appeared to operate as more proximal influences on young adults' reports of experiencing IPV.

It is somewhat ironic that such indications that parents are actively engaged in their child's romantic lives (i.e., they take a stand by offering strong cautions to delay dating or expressing

misgivings about romantic partner choices) not only appear to be ineffective, but are tied to greater risk. Undoubtedly the parents who engage in these negative forms of involvement around dating issues express these attitudes and opinions because they want to protect their children from unfortunate dating experiences and their consequences. And it is likely that parents who express more negative sentiments and attempt to impose restrictions often have good reasons to do so, based on their own experiences, and their understanding of the environment their children must navigate. Indeed, the negativity index was significantly related to neighborhood disadvantage and minority status, as well as certain child characteristics (e.g., being an early dater) that may also have influenced parents' attitudes and associated parenting behaviors. However, the negativity index remained significantly related to later IPV, even after taking these factors into account. Thus, it appears that this composite index captures variations in dating-specific parenting, and results contribute beyond prior studies that have examined basic gender differences (Leslie et al., 1986; Kan et al., 2008) as well as effects of dating-specific parenting on attachment processes (Kan et al., 2008). The current findings illustrate that while this type of engagement may be well intentioned, in some instances it may be counterproductive, or at minimum ineffective in preventing problems in the child's later romantic life.

Limitations of the current study include the regional nature of the sample, and the use of a general index of IPV that does not allow for distinctions regarding the severity of abuse experiences. In addition, future research would benefit from additional consideration of selection and reciprocal effects, recognizing that youths who date partners viewed by parents as less desirable may elicit the forms of negativity included in our composite index. Because our assessments of parents' attitudes and behaviors were obtained at the initial interview, in a majority of instances, the child's partner at wave one would not be the same individual the

primary respondents describe at wave four. Further, analyses included controls for whether the child was an early dater, as well as measures of early delinquency involvement and IPV experience. Nevertheless, it is possible that certain respondents develop a pattern of dating ‘problem’ individuals, and this more than parental negativity itself is related to the significant relationship we documented in the current study.

Research on intergenerational transmission of IPV has tended to focus largely on the experience of violence within the home (either witnessing marital violence or experiencing child abuse) as a key formative influence. Yet even within the framework of traditional social learning theories, it is recognized that the learning process involves more than the act of hitting (Akers & Jensen, 2003; Sutherland, 1939). Specific information is also communicated about how emotions tend to be displayed or ‘managed,’ how individuals cope with stressful situations, and specific conditions under which violence is viewed as acceptable or justified. Because IPV involves violence that unfolds within the context of intimate romantic relationships, it has been useful to extend the conceptual focus beyond the experience of violence to encompass a range of different parental attitudes and ways of communicating about the world of romantic relationships. This is generally consistent with the logic of attachment theories, which have focused on the role of early bonding with parents as an influence on secure attachments with friends and romantic partners (Collins & Sroufe, 1999). Yet as the results in Table 1 show, the general measure of parental support is not significantly related to young adult IPV. Thus, a more multidimensional perspective on parental influences is warranted, in order to capture the content of parental communications, as well as the level of warmth or caring associated with the parent-child bond. In addition, research is needed on the role of parental behaviors other than violence (e.g., relationship instabilities, repartnering) that may affect the child’s own attitudes and conduct

within the romantic realm. This would extend the modeling notion to include features of the parent's intimate relationship behaviors other than the presence/absence of violence. Even where the focus is on parental socialization in the realm of violent behavior, additional research is needed on communication processes that may influence the child's willingness to resort to violence under certain circumstances. For example, in a qualitative study of the children of parents with significant antisocial backgrounds, Giordano (2010) found that such parents often counseled their children to try to avoid violent relationships, but if this occurred to retaliate strongly to avoid continued victimization (e.g., "If a girl hits you, hit her back, hit her hard enough to let them know--you don't hit me;" "knock a man out who puts his hands on you." (2010: 160-161). Finally, a fully comprehensive portrait of parenting influences on these and other aspects of the child's developing romantic life will necessarily include attention to the parent's emphasis and approach in other areas. For example, some parents may provide a balanced approach to the child's romantic life not by expressing negative attitudes or imposing restrictions, but by communicating excitement about the child's academic progress and involvement in extracurricular activities.

Notes

1. We appreciate the insights of an anonymous reviewer about potential mechanisms linking parental attitudes and behaviors and the dynamics that may unfold in later romantic relationships.
2. Although the alpha for this scale is acceptable, a reviewer wondered whether combining items across several forms of negativity might result in masking different effects by each. A secondary factor analysis is generally supportive of considering the various dimensions as a single factor, but shows that the parental responses on the more general gender mistrust items could be assessed separately. This index is significantly related to later IPV, as is the negativity scale without the gender mistrust items. However, in a full model, as a separate indicator, gender mistrust is not significant. Our view is that it is useful to consider the parent's negative attitudes and specific behaviors as potentially cutting across the various areas (e.g., making negative comments about particular partners as well as about gender relationships more broadly). Thus, the higher scores on this scale will capture the parent who expresses greater negativity in a variety of ways. For example, it is possible that a parent might impose relatively strict dating rules, but absent these other forms of negativity, this parental approach would not necessarily communicate negativity about romantic relationships.

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Table 1. Means or Percentage Distributions by Child Gender

	Full (n = 625)		Women (54%) (n = 338)		Men (46%) (n = 287)	
	Mean/Pct	Std. Dev.	Mean/Pct.	Std. Dev.	Mean/Pct.	Std. Dev.
IPV in young adulthood	40.5%		37.9%		43.6%	
Parental negativity (Range: 3.6 – 19.2)	10.28	2.87	10.73***	2.83	9.76	2.69
Parent-child conflict (Range: 1 – 6)	1.91	0.92	1.97	1.00	1.83	0.82
Child gender mistrust (Range: 1.3 – 5)	3.42	0.62	3.45	0.63	3.39	0.62
Adolescent delinquency (Range: 0 – 8)	1.24	0.60	1.17**	0.40	1.32	0.76
Parental support (Range: 1.3 – 5)	4.19	0.69	4.21	0.66	4.18	0.71
Parental control (Range: 1.4 – 4)	3.37	0.38	3.41*	0.35	3.33	0.41
Coercive parenting (Range: 1 – 4.7)	1.84	0.56	1.83	0.55	1.85	0.56
Early dater (parental report)	22.8%		21.0%		24.9%	
Juvenile delinquency (Range: 1 - 8)	1.35	0.03	1.29**	0.02	1.42	.05
Adolescent dating violence	23.4%		18.9%**		28.6%	
Neighborhood context (disorder/violence) (Range: 0 - 20)	2.41	.18	2.15	.22	2.71	.29
Age (Range: 17 – 24)	20.77	1.70	20.77	1.68	20.77	1.73
Race/ethnicity						
(White)	69.9%		73.3%		65.9%	
Black	19.2%		16.0%*		23.0%	
Hispanic	10.9%		10.7%		11.1%	
Family structure						
(Two biological parents)	51.0%		50.1%		52.0%	
Single parent	26.2%		26.3%		26.1%	
Step-parent	18.2%		18.9%		17.4%	
Other living arrangement	4.6%		4.7%		4.5%	
Mother's education						
Less than 12 years	10.9%		10.6%		11.1%	
(High school graduate)	33.1%		33.4%		32.8%	
More than 12 years	56.0%		56.0%		56.1%	
Relationship type						
(Dating)	66.6%		61.8%		72.1%	
Cohabiting	25.6%		28.7%*		22.0%	
Married	7.8%		9.5%*		5.9%	
Current relationship	73.4%		77.8%*		69.0%	
Relationship duration (Range: 1 – 8)	6.84	1.64	7.10***	1.41	6.54	1.83

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Notes: P-values based on zero order regressions.

Source: Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study

Table 2. Odds Ratios for the Logistic Regression of Intimate Partner Violence in Young Adulthood (N = 625)

	Zero Order	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
	e^b	e^b	e^b	e^b	e^b
Parents' negativity about dating	1.15***	1.10*	1.09*	1.09*	1.08
<i>Mediators</i>					
Parent-child conflict about dating	1.22**		1.20*		1.19*
Child gender mistrust	1.81***			1.52**	1.49*
<i>Traditional Parenting Factors</i>					
Parental support	0.82	1.00	1.00	.97	.98
Parental control	0.83	0.85	.85	.86	.86
Coercive parenting	1.60**	1.55*	1.58*	1.48*	1.51*
<i>Contextual Risk Factors</i>					
Early dater (parental report)	1.62*	1.04	1.01	1.03	1.01
Juvenile delinquency	1.28	1.04	1.03	1.00	.98
Adolescent dating violence	2.39***	2.00**	1.98**	1.98**	1.97**
Neighborhood context (disorder/violence)	1.04*	.98	.98	.98	.98
<i>Sociodemographic Characteristics</i>					
Age	1.05	.96	.97	.96	.97
Female	0.79	.66*	.62*	.64*	.60**
<i>Race/ethnicity</i>					
(White)					
Black	2.00***	1.67	1.71*	1.57	1.60
Hispanic	2.52***	1.82	1.84*	1.76	1.79
<i>Family structure</i>					
(Two biological parents)					
Single parent	1.19	.73	.76	.69	.72
Step-parent	1.70*	1.34	1.34	1.21	1.22
Other living arrangement	2.17*	1.20	1.18	1.06	1.05
<i>Mother's education</i>					
Less than 12 years (High school graduate)	2.09**	1.59	1.55	1.60	1.56
More than 12 years	.95	1.08	1.08	1.11	1.10
<i>Relationship type</i>					
(Dating)					
Cohabiting	2.32***	1.62*	1.62*	1.56	1.56
Married	2.03*	1.57	1.60	1.62	1.64
Current relationship	1.09	.67	.65	.67	.66
Relationship duration	1.30***	1.32***	1.32***	1.33***	1.33***
<i>Constant</i>					

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Source: Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study