THE VICTIM-OFFENDER OVERLAP IN INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE:
CONSIDERING THE ROLE OF SELF-CONTROL

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Thesis Prepared for the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

May 2019

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Spivey, Emily. *The Victim-Offender Overlap in Intimate Partner Violence: Considering the Role of Self-Control*. Master of Science (Criminal Justice), May 2019, 69 pp., 6 tables, references, 111 titles.

While a growing body of literature in the field of criminal justice documents the relationship between victimization and offending, only recently has this knowledge been applied to the study of intimate partner violence (IPV). Accordingly, questions remain with regard to the theoretical origins of mutual violence between intimates. In an effort to fill this void in the literature, the current study examines the etiology of moderate forms of mutual IPV, specifically assessing self-control theory's applicability to the victim-offender overlap in IPV. Data were obtained from Waves I and IV of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health) to investigate whether low self-control at Wave I predicts IPV victimization, IPV offending, or both IPV victimization and offending at Wave IV. The present study extends prior literature examining the role of self-control in IPV by (1) investigating the influence of self-control on the victim-offender overlap in IPV, (2) using longitudinal data, and (3) utilizing a sample of U.S. adults ages 24 to 33. While low self-control was found to significantly predict IPV offending and the overlap in IPV victimization and offending, low self-control failed to significantly predict IPV victimization. Policy implications, study limitations, and directions for future research are discussed.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank Dr. Brooke Nodeland for her willingness to guide me through this research project. Her support, concern, and insight facilitated the development of this thesis from start to finish. Further, her ability to strike a balance between assisting me and enabling me to navigate this process on my own must be commended. I would also like to thank Dr. Adam Trahan for his endless encouragement. As my path to graduation was less than straightforward, I cannot thank him enough for his support and reassurance. My work in general, and this thesis in particular, certainly benefited from his remarkable ability to inspire students to see things differently. I would also like to thank Dr. Jessica Craig for her invaluable feedback, which significantly improved the quality of this thesis. Her keen eye for typos and the cleverness of her questions and critiques are unmatched. I would also like to thank my close friends and family for their love and support throughout my academic journey. Lastly, to my parents, thank you for believing in me when I did not believe in myself.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Victim-Offender Overlap in Intimate Partner Violence

Society often values a black and white worldview—an unambiguous, if not simplistic, perspective in which complex concepts are at times stripped of their nuances in order to better conform to specific, orderly constructs. Accordingly, individuals linked to crime are frequently portrayed in news media and popular culture as strictly victims or offenders without due attention given to any overlap that may exist between the two. While certainly not true of all victims or offenders, such overlap indeed exists. In fact, a budding body of literature suggests the overlap is quite robust, extending across various crimes, a diverse set of methodological approaches, historical and contemporary assessments, and even cross-cultural examinations of the relationship between victimization and offending (Jennings, Piquero, & Reingle, 2012; Lauritsen & Laub, 2007; Lauritsen, Sampson, & Laub, 1991; Posick & Gould, 2015).

Even so, such a “criminological fact” (Jennings et al., 2012, p. 16) has only recently been extended to the study of intimate partner violence (IPV). This gap in the research may be due in part to beliefs that IPV offenders are entirely distinct from offenders of more typical “street” crimes, assumed to differ on important characteristics (e.g., motivations) which, for some, may render IPV offenders less suitable for an investigation of the victim-offender overlap (Tillyer & Wright, 2014). It is also possible that enduring stereotypical notions of partner violence as inherently gendered and one-sided have led to the underdevelopment of this literature. In any case, increasing evidence suggests that many individuals in personal relationships are involved in mutual intimate violence and therefore cannot be readily classified as strictly “victims” or

“offenders” (Jennings, Park, Tomsich, Gover, & Akers, 2011; Muftić & Deljkić, 2012; Muftić, Finn, & Marsh, 2015; Tillyer & Wright, 2014).

The very existence of a victim-offender overlap seemingly presents a need for theories that can shed light on both criminal offending and victimization. With respect to the victim-offender overlap more generally, recent empirical work devoted to this task has emerged from the self-control perspective (Pratt, Turanovic, Fox, & Wright, 2014). In short, self-control theory posits that crime and analogous behaviors can be explained by insufficient levels of self-control stemming from inadequate parental socialization (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). The authors conceptualize crime and other deviance as spontaneous, relatively simple, and immediately gratifying, and they present self-control as the principal constraint preventing individuals from succumbing to the temptations of such activities. With reference to their six elements of self-control, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) describe individuals with low self-control as “impulsive, insensitive, physical (as opposed to mental), risk-taking, short-sighted, and non-verbal” (p. 90). Essentially, the authors argue that these elements coalesce in one individual propensity to engage in crime. That is, the concept of self-control is viewed by the authors as a singular phenomenon, and they contend that those with lower levels of self-control are more likely than those with higher levels of self-control to yield to an ostensibly universal motivation to offend.

While the general theory of crime was not initially devised to account for both offending and victimization, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) concede that “victims and offenders tend to share all or nearly all social and personal characteristics” (p. 17). These shared characteristics necessarily introduce the possibility that a common factor (i.e., low self-control) may increase one’s chances of becoming involved in both offending *and* victimization (Schreck, 1999). In fact, a body of work has examined such a possibility by assessing the link between self-control

and victimization, indicating that self-control is a modest, yet general predictor of victimization across a variety of studies (Pratt et al., 2014). Accordingly, the self-control framework may prove useful for examining the victim-offender overlap in relationship violence.

As Piquero et al. (2005) point out, the theory seems to suggest persons with low self-control are more likely to “self-select into risky social settings” and to behave in certain ways within those settings (e.g., impulsively, physically) that may incite violence from others (p. 58). With respect to IPV, persons with low self-control may self-select into unstable intimate relationships (Kerley, Xu, & Sirisunyaluck, 2008) and may be more likely to use violence as a means to relieve temporary conflict that arises throughout the relationship. Furthermore, since individuals often enter into romantic relationships with partners exhibiting similar traits (Wright, Caspi, Moffitt, & Silva, 1999), there may be an increased risk for both partners to have low self-control, further enhancing the likelihood that individuals will become *both* perpetrators and victims of relationship violence.

Although there is reason to believe self-control may be important in predicting this type of mutual violence, the influence of self-control on the victim-offender overlap in IPV remains an empirical question. While some have examined the link between self-control and IPV perpetration (e.g., Sellers, 1999; Finkel et al., 2009), research assessing the relationship between self-control and IPV victimization is “severely underrepresented” in the self-control literature (Pratt et al., 2014, p. 90). More importantly, the extant literature is limited to studies examining the relationship between self-control and IPV victimization and the relationship between self-control and IPV perpetration *separately*. That is, studies examining the victim-offender *overlap* in IPV from a self-control standpoint are all but absent from the literature.

Such an omission may appear careless at first blush. Yet, some have argued, at times vehemently, that self-control theory is particularly ill-suited to account for violence between intimates. In fact, Miller and Burack (1993) go so far as to contend that self-control theory is wholly incompatible with IPV. They assert that relationship violence involves power differentials between partners, in which female victims are controlled by their male partners over the long-term. Moreover, Miller and Burack (1993) argue that the context in which this violence occurs (i.e. one that legitimizes such behavior as a means to secure male authority) has little to do with individual levels of self-control or impulsiveness (p.122). This depiction of intimate violence coincides with much of the feminist literature on relationship violence, which links IPV to patriarchal domination (see e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 1979). However, such an argument fundamentally assumes that IPV is a unitary phenomenon. That is, it assumes *all* IPV is instrumental, undertaken by men for the sole purpose of controlling their female partners. Yet, when one considers the typology of IPV, a different picture emerges and applying self-control theory to IPV becomes more tenable.

This typology represents an integrative approach to intimate violence derived from opposing theoretical perspectives of IPV evident in the literature. Counter to the traditional feminist argument, some research suggests that not all violence in IPV is utilized by men as a means to control and subjugate women. For instance, some scholars have documented similar rates of violence perpetrated by men and women in intimate relationships (Straus, 1999). These findings align more with the *family violence perspective* (e.g., Gelles & Straus, 1979), which espouses the notion of gender symmetry in IPV and views violence between family members—including spouses—as merely one response to inevitable family conflict (Lawson, 2012). In essence, this framework suggests intimate violence can be more accurately understood as

behavior that is effectively “out-of-control” as opposed to the feminist notion of behavior that is strictly “in control” (Sellers, 1999).

In an attempt to reconcile these competing perspectives (and competing empirical findings), Johnson (1995, 2005, 2006, 2008) put forth a typology of domestic violence that suggests IPV encompasses both instrumental and expressive violence. In short, he argues that the contradictory evidence uncovered by the feminist and family violence perspectives is an artifact of their respective methodologies—that they “are actually measuring different, non-overlapping populations that are experiencing qualitatively different forms of violence” (Lawson, 2012, p. 586). Johnson’s (2008) typology acknowledges that some violence in IPV coincides with the traditional feminist interpretation and is marked by a general pattern of control in the relationship (i.e., intimate terrorism), while other violence stems from conflict and corresponds with the family violence perspective (i.e., situational couple violence). Such a qualitative difference implies divergent etiologies; thus, while the nature of intimate terrorism is likely at odds with the framework of self-control theory, the nature of situational couple violence may lend itself quite well to a self-control explanation.

Furthermore, Johnson (2008)’s conceptualization of situational couple violence proves useful for making sense of the documented victim-offender overlap in IPV. He notes that this type of relationship violence involves an individual that is “violent and noncontrolling” whose partner “is either nonviolent *or who is also violent and noncontrolling*” (Johnson, 2006, p. 1006, emphasis added). While not all situational couple violence is mutual, one can reasonably infer that the majority of mutual IPV is situational couple violence. This is especially likely since situational couple violence is the most common type of IPV identified by Johnson (2008) and, perhaps of greater significance, it is the most gender-symmetrical (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). As

alluded to above, this form of violence is essentially a response to the inevitable conflict experienced by couples. It is born of specific situations, in which “the tensions or emotions of a particular encounter lead someone to react with violence” (Johnson, 2008, p. 11). Given that (1) situational couple violence is more common and more likely to be mutual compared to other types of IPV (Johnson, 2008; Johnson & Ferraro, 2000) and (2) the focus is on conflict as opposed to control in this type of IPV (Johnson, 2008), then self-control may help explain why some individuals who experience interpersonal conflict resort to violence and are also at times victimized by partners who harbor similar levels of unrestraint. Put simply, self-control may be important in predicting this type of mutual violence.

Research Questions

While researchers have begun to explore the theoretical underpinnings of the victim-offender overlap more generally, the etiology of mutual relationship violence remains an understudied topic in this literature (Jennings et al., 2012). And although the general theory of crime has been linked to both offending and victimization in the context of relationship violence (Chapple & Hope, 2003; Finkel et al., 2012; Finkel et al., 2009; Gover et al., 2011; Gover et al., 2008; Kerley et al., 2008; Payne et al., 2011; Sellers, 1999; Zavala, 2017), studies specifically examining the *overlap* are virtually absent from this body of research, and none have examined this relationship longitudinally. In an attempt to fill this void, the current study uses a sample of adults ages 24 to 33 in order to assess whether Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990)’s self-control theory can account for the victim-offender overlap in IPV. That is, this study is designed to address whether individuals with low self-control are more likely than others to be both

offenders and victims of intimate violence. More specifically, the present study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1) Does low self-control predict involvement in IPV victimization?
- 2) Does low self-control predict involvement in IPV offending?
- 3) Does low self-control predict involvement in *both* IPV victimization and offending?

Conclusion

The continued empirical study of IPV is vital to developing a coherent and comprehensive understanding of the problem of relationship violence. Equally important is the “continued theoretical dialogue” with respect to intimate violence, considering the crucial role that theory plays in advancing research, policy, and, in the end, practice (Lawson, 2012, p. 588). With these purposes in mind, the present study seeks to explore the etiology of mutual relationship violence, specifically considering the influence of self-control. Research of this nature contributes to the modest, yet growing effort to gain a deeper understanding of the individuals who assume the dual role of victim and offender in the context of IPV. Such efforts are key to informing prevention measures of the factors most likely to increase both victimization and perpetration in relationship violence.

The following chapter summarizes and synthesizes the literature examining the curious matter of violence in intimate relationships, elaborating specifically on the documented victim-offender overlap in IPV. Further, in considering the etiology of such an overlap, the potential role of self-control is elucidated. Finally, a review of relevant studies is presented to contextualize how the current study fits into the limited body of research investigating the link between self-control and IPV.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The current study relies on insights gleaned from the extant literature on intimate violence, the victim-offender overlap, and applications of the general theory of crime. As such, a detailed review of the relevant literature is necessary for developing a framework on the potential role of self-control in the victim-offender overlap in IPV. To this end, the literature review sets out to: (1) provide a general overview of the empirical study of IPV by defining the problem within American society and reviewing the gender symmetry debate among scholars, (2) summarize what prior literature has established regarding the victim-offender overlap in IPV and the potential explanatory power of self-control theory, and (3) bridge this literature with the current study, emphasizing the contributions of this new piece of research and how it will improve upon existing studies that examine the relationship between self-control and IPV.

Violence in Intimate Relationships

To appreciate the intent and significance of the current research focus, it is first necessary to recognize our current knowledge of IPV. Although such violence has undoubtedly occurred throughout history, the study of IPV is a relatively recent phenomenon. Historically, intimate violence was treated as a private matter to be resolved in the home without formal intervention. Hidden behind both literal and figurative “closed doors,” IPV was not recognized as a significant social concern in America, failing to draw considerable public or scientific attention (Gelles, 1985). Yet, during the 1970s, violence in intimate relationships emerged as a central field of empirical study in the context of the women’s movement. Feminist activists interpreted IPV as

the subjugation of women and mobilized to address this sociopolitical phenomenon, facilitating efforts to detect, prevent, and respond to intimate violence (Davis, 1987). Since then, the IPV literature has grown immensely, advancing and refining the concept of IPV and those involved in such violence.

Indeed, IPV was originally conceptualized as the exclusive plight of married, cohabiting, heterosexual couples (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Yet, given empirical data on the breadth of relationship violence (e.g., Slashinski, Coker, & Davis, 2003), these initial descriptions of IPV are certainly limited. As such, many scholars have since adopted a broader characterization of “intimate partners.” In fact, the most recent definition promoted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reflects the scope of such violence evident in the literature and the need for a more inclusive description of the problem. Specifically, the CDC’s uniform definition of intimate partners encompasses both opposite-sex and same-sex couples and includes current or former spouses, boyfriends, girlfriends, dating partners, or ongoing sexual partners that may or may not be cohabiting (Breiding, Basile, Smith, Black, & Mahendra, 2015).

Likewise, scholars now acknowledge that intimate violence is complex and may take many forms. Overt *physical violence* is likely the most recognized form of IPV. This type of abuse may involve hitting, pushing, choking, scratching, biting, or any other deliberate use of physical force inflicted by an intimate partner with the potential to cause injury or harm (Breiding et al., 2015). Further, intimate violence may be *psychological* in nature. This form of violence is intended to cause mental or emotional harm and may be used as a means to exercise control over another person (Breiding et al., 2015). Threats of harm, destroying things, or restricting access to finances, employment, or social support all serve as specific examples (World Health Organization, [WHO], 2012). Similarly, intimate partners may engage in *stalking*,

or a pattern of unwelcome surveillance, attention, or contact that incites fear for one's safety (Breiding et al., 2015). Finally, *sexual violence* may take the form of unwanted sexual contact, rape, or various other types of sexual coercion (WHO, 2012). In short, researchers' characterization of intimate violence has developed to reflect the multifaceted nature of violence that takes place in the context of many intimate relationships.

Furthermore, the scope of the problem of intimate violence in America has become more evident. As mentioned, prior to the women's movement, intimate violence was commonly regarded as a private and infrequent problem (Lehrner & Allen, 2009); yet, the extent of IPV is indeed far from inconsequential. In fact, the most recent data obtained from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) reveal 37.3% of women and 30.9% of men in the U.S. have experienced physical violence, sexual violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime (Smith et al., 2017). What is more, roughly 47% of men and women report being victims of psychological aggression by an intimate partner during their lifetime (Smith et al., 2017). In terms of annual rates, the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) reports national estimates of rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault perpetrated by an intimate partner in the previous six months. In 2016, individuals reported 597,740 violent IPV victimizations, which equates to a rate of 2.2 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older (Morgan & Kena, 2017).

While it is widely recognized that IPV affects a sizable proportion of the American public, there is significantly less consensus among academics in terms of the perceived gender of those most likely to be perpetrators or victims of such violence. Stated differently, researchers diverge with respect to their interpretations of the roles played by men and women in IPV. In fact, among disputes in the literature regarding intimate violence, perhaps "none is more

acrimonious than the debate around female initiated violence” (Carney, Buttell, & Dutton, 2007, p. 108). Indeed, some scholars contend that evidence of gender symmetry in IPV is denied and diminished by researchers in the field (Gelles, 2007; Straus, 1990). Some have suggested that such evidence is discounted because the notion of gender symmetry is largely incompatible with feminist theory (see Straus, 2012). Nevertheless, since researchers first reported findings from samples of heterosexual couples indicating that men and women perpetrate violence against their intimate partners at comparable rates (Straus, 1978), academics have debated the validity of such findings. This issue of gender symmetry lies at the core of the theoretical divide in the literature on IPV (Lawson, 2012).

Gender Symmetry/Asymmetry

Generally speaking, theories of IPV fall within two opposing camps: the feminist perspective and the family violence perspective. As alluded to previously, the crux of the gender symmetry debate rests on data obtained from two separate (i.e., non-overlapping) data sets (Carney et al., 2007). The feminist literature is largely based on IPV visible to law enforcement, the court system, women’s shelters, emergency rooms, and other similar service providers. These data suggest gendered violence in which females are far more likely to be victims and males are far more likely to be offenders of intimate violence (Dobash, Dobash, Wilson, & Daily, 1992; Johnson, 1995; Johnson & Ferraro, 2000; Kurz, 1989). Accordingly, the feminist perspective argues that IPV must be viewed through a gendered lens in order for such violence to be adequately understood as an expression of male dominance. In fact, Dobash and Dobash (1979) directly define intimate violence as instrumental violence—a means for men to maintain traditional patriarchal ideology. The central focus of researchers, according to this perspective,

should be on gender and control since IPV is conceptualized as the subjugation of women by men (Yllo, 1993). In doing so, the feminist perspective decisively rejects the notion that women are just as likely as men to perpetrate IPV. They note that when females do engage in violence, it is largely in self-defense (e.g., Johnson, 1995; Kurz, 1989; Yllo, 1993)

The family violence perspective, by contrast, largely favors the notion of gender symmetry in the context of intimate violence. This literature is commonly based on data drawn from general population samples used in nationally representative surveys. Scholars have identified a growing list of studies utilizing such samples that report similar rates of IPV for men and women (see Fiebert, 2014). Thus, according to family violence researchers, viewing IPV through a gendered lens is misguided. Rather than a separate unit of analysis, the family violence perspective interprets IPV as merely one expression of the same conflict that lies at the heart of all family violence. This conflict is touted as endemic to familial relationships and family violence is understood as a form of conflict management (Giles-Sims, 1983). While this perspective upholds the notion of gender symmetry in IPV perpetration, many family violence scholars acknowledge asymmetry in the *effects* of intimate violence. That is, researchers recognize male initiated IPV is much more likely to cause fear, injury, and death among female victims (Gelles & Maynard, 1987; Straus, 1993; Straus, 2012). Still, to those submitting to a family violence perspective, these disparities in adverse effects do not necessitate a gendered analysis of IPV, as females are believed to perpetrate IPV at similar rates as males (Gelles & Maynard, 1987).

The Typology of Intimate Partner Violence

This gender symmetry debate essentially forms the foundation of Michael Johnson's

(1995, 2005, 2006, 2008) typology of IPV, which seeks to integrate these diametrically opposed positions. The contradictory conclusions reached by feminist and family violence researchers, Johnson (1995) argues, are direct reflections of built-in sampling biases evident in both methods of data collection (Lawson, 2012). He contends that both bodies of literature assume that they are measuring and analyzing the same phenomenon when in fact they are examining qualitatively different types of intimate violence. Johnson (1995) specifically argues that the dramatic differences in the conceptualizations of IPV put forth by feminist and family violence scholars is to be expected when one considers that the respective sampling decisions of the two traditions limit the generalizability of their findings. In other words, the experiences of individuals in agency/shelter samples cannot be generalized to the general population, and the nonrespondents in general population surveys deem such data nonrepresentative of the total target population (i.e., all individuals involved in IPV). Therefore, Johnson's typology argues that both conflict-based and control-based forms of IPV coexist in the target population.

Accordingly, it is argued that the feminist literature uncovers what Johnson (2008) terms *intimate terrorism* (formerly patriarchal terrorism), which reflects gender asymmetry in IPV. Intimate terrorism is inflicted by offenders in the pursuit of terroristic control of one's partner, involving "not only violence, but economic subordination, threats, isolation, and other control tactics" (Johnson, 1995, p. 284). This type of violence in intimate relationships aligns conceptionally with traditional notions of domestic battering and is believed to be perpetrated almost entirely by men against women. Such violence represents the most severe instances of IPV, as agency or clinical samples reflect cases in which fear and injury are most likely to occur (Straus, 2012), and in which specific violent episodes are situated within a larger pattern of oppression and control. Johnson (2008) also notes that victims of intimate terrorism may respond

with non-controlling, defensive violence of their own, defined as *violent resistance*. Rarer, still, is *mutual violent control*, which involves two partners that are both violent and controlling (Johnson, 2008). These instances of bidirectional IPV are uncommon, though, and thus do not imply gender symmetry among the most severe forms of IPV.

Conversely, Johnson (2008) argues that the family violence perspective largely measures and analyzes what he defines as *situational couple violence* (formerly common couple violence)—violence that is more gender symmetrical. As mentioned previously, situational couple violence is the most common form of IPV and is best understood as a violent reaction to inevitable and universal conflict that arises within intimate relationships. According to Johnson (2008), this type of IPV is no more likely to be perpetrated by men than by women and both partners may be involved in the violence. It is relatively minor in severity, although there is great variability in the violence itself (Johnson, 2008). In fact, some instances of situational couple violence may be severe (even life-threatening) or chronic if they stem from conflict that is reoccurring (Johnson, 2008). Yet, by and large, this type of IPV occurs when conflict occasionally escalates, leading a partner to react with violence. Therefore, the violence is situationally-provoked, rather than involving a relationship-wide pattern of coercive control.

Implicit in Johnson's typology is the danger of conflating IPV with intimate terrorism. This type of violence is most associated with gendered stereotypes of IPV (i.e., wife abuse) and enduring beliefs about the gender gap in intimate violence, suggesting men are invariably perpetrators and women are invariably victims of IPV. Thinking of IPV in such unitary terms arguably breeds "a simplistic and perhaps false dichotomy" with respect to victims and offenders of intimate violence (Muftić et al., 2015, p. 903). Such a dichotomy, it follows, may foster an unwillingness among researchers to acknowledge that some individuals may be involved in

mutual partner violence (Muftić et al., 2015), particularly situational couple violence. Given that IPV is an understudied topic within the literature examining the victim-offender overlap (Jennings et al., 2012), this may very well be the case. Nevertheless, recent efforts have uncovered a population of victim-offenders within IPV (e.g., Jennings et al., 2011; Muftić et al., 2015; Reingle, Staras, Jennings, Branchini, & Maldonado-Molina, 2012; Tillyer & Wright, 2014), underscoring the need to shed this one-dimensional understanding of IPV and acknowledge the complex reality of violence between intimates—one that encompasses a population of individuals who identify as *both* perpetrators and victims.

The Victim-Offender Overlap

As alluded to previously, researchers interested in more general forms of crime have begun to recognize the error in dichotomizing offenders and victims, acknowledging the two are “linked more closely than the distinctions made in mainstream criminology and victimology” (Lauritsen & Laub, 2007, p. 56). Indeed, numerous studies demonstrate that the likelihood of criminal victimization is often predicted by one’s involvement in crime and, conversely, that victimization is strongly correlated with offending (Lauritsen & Laub, 2007). So much so that this relationship is one of the most consistent findings in criminological research (Jennings et al., 2012). Efforts to elucidate the nexus between victimization and offending are numerous and varied, contributing to an extensive body of research. Recent reviews of this literature reveal a robust relationship that spans time, place, context, demographic subgroup, and a wide array of offending and victimization experiences (Jennings et al., 2012; Lauritsen & Laub, 2007; Posick & Gould, 2015).

Despite the breadth of this literature, studies investigating this overlap within the context

of IPV are relatively small in number. To be sure, many studies (Bensley, Van Eenwyk, & Wynkoop Simmons, 2003; Daigneault, Hébert, & McDuff, 2009; Edwards, Dixon, Gidycz, & Desai, 2014; Ehrenstaft et al., 2003; Gómez, 2011; Gover, Jennings, Tomsich, Park, & Rennison, 2011; Gover et al., 2008; Hamby, Finkelhor, & Turner, 2012; Jennings, Richards, Tomsich, & Gover, 2015; Kerley, Xu, Sirisunyaluck, & Alley, 2010; McKinney, Caetano, Ramisetty-Mikler, & Nelson, 2009; Stith et al., 2000; Widom, Czaja, & Dutton, 2014) have assessed the “cycle of violence” effect (see Widom, 1989) of victimization on future offending behavior. Specifically, the “cycle of violence” explanation adopts a state-dependent perspective, suggesting an individual’s past victimization experiences increase his or her future risk of being involved in IPV. Conversely, the event-specific explanation adopts an individual heterogeneity perspective, which suggests certain individual characteristics are correlated with both offending and victimization. Fewer studies (Jennings et al., 2011; Muftić & Deljkic, 2012; Muftić et al., 2015; Reingle et. al, 2012; Richards, Tillyer, & Wright, 2017; Richards et al., 2016; Tillyer & Wright, 2014) have examined the victim-offender overlap in IPV at the event level (i.e., violence between two individuals in a single intimate relationship; Jennings et al., 2012).

As mentioned, this is not entirely unexpected. On an individual level, some contend that many victims and offenders share certain commonalities and are “often one in the same” (Sampson & Lauritsen, 1990, p. 110). Frequently described as the principle of homogeneity (Hindelang, Gottfredson, & Garofalo, 1978; Lauritsen, Sampson, & Laub, 1991), the idea is that offenders associate with individuals they come into frequent contact with; thus, victims and offenders are more likely to share demographic or behavioral characteristics—that is, more likely to be cut from the same cloth. Yet, in the context of IPV, it has traditionally been problematic to view IPV offenders and victims similarly. Given the feminist literature on intimate violence

referenced above, it is unsurprising that researchers have treated IPV victims and offenders as mutually exclusive groups.

Yet, when considering the parallel body of work citing gender symmetry among less severe forms of intimate violence (i.e., the family violence literature), the application of the victim-offender overlap to IPV is more appropriate (Tillyer & Wright, 2014). Further, while instances of intimate terrorism are largely perpetrated by males against females, situational couple violence (the most prevalent and gender symmetric type of IPV) is more likely to be mutual (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). In exploring the potential for such an overlap, a small number of studies have documented the relationship between victimization and offending within the context of an intimate relationship (Jennings et al., 2011; Muftić & Deljkić, 2012; Muftić et al., 2015; Richards et al., 2016; Tillyer & Wright, 2014). In addition, some have found that, similar to other types of violence (e.g., Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2000), there appear to be three distinct groups among those involved in violent intimate relationships: exclusive victims (i.e., no history of crime), exclusive offenders (i.e., no history of victimization), and victim-offenders (i.e., individuals with a history of both). Such distinctions may prove useful in determining what characterizes those involved in mutual IPV (Richards et al., 2016).

Intimate Partners as Victim-Offenders

As Kelly and Johnson (2008) note, research samples drawn outside of shelters, arrestees, or other high-risk samples can be expected to detect situational couple violence as the dominant form of IPV as opposed to the more severe and controlling violence characteristic of intimate terrorism. Accordingly, the results of studies analyzing IPV data obtained from general population samples are likely to provide information relevant to situational couple violence.

Among these studies, several have uncovered a subset of victim-offenders among the full population of those involved in violent intimate relationships. For instance, Coker and colleagues (2000) analyzed data obtained from a general sample of 5,414 high school students, finding that individuals were slightly less likely to be victim-offenders (3%) than victims only (4%) or offenders only (4%) of physical IPV in the past 12 months. More recently, Coker et al. (2014) found that among their sample of 14,190 high school students, 17.6% were victims only, 15.8% were victim-offenders, and 4.4% were offenders only. Similarly, among a sample of adults, Reingle et al. (2012) found that individuals were slightly more likely to be victims only (12%) compared to victim-offenders (11.9%) and offenders only (4.7%) when asked about intimate violence that occurred in the previous year.

Notably, some studies of violent intimate relationships suggest victim-offenders represent a sizable proportion of those involved in IPV. Caetano et al. (2008), for example, examined data obtained from 1,136 intact couples. Among the 14% of partners reporting involvement in IPV, over half identified as victim-offenders. In an earlier study based on nationally representative data, Caetano and colleagues (2005) found that among those that reported IPV, 61% of Black couples, 45% of Hispanic couples, and 44% of White couples reported bidirectional violence. Further, in a recent study of middle and high school students, Richards and Branch (2011) found that one out of every four students reported being involved in a violent relationship. Of those, more than 75% reported being both a victim and offender of IPV (Richards & Branch, 2011).

The intimate violence literature also reveals several risk factors for involvement in mutual IPV. For instance, *alcohol and substance use* have been cited as a significant correlate of bidirectional IPV (Caetano et al., 2005; Coker et al., 2000; Reingle et al., 2012; Tillyer & Wright, 2014). Reingle et al. (2012) found that previous marijuana use significantly predicted

involvement in both IPV perpetration and victimization. In addition, Tillyer and Wright (2014) found that problematic drug and alcohol use was associated with membership in the victim-offender group. *Childhood maltreatment* is also identified in the literature as a risk factor for mutual IPV (Caetano et al., 2005; Jennings et al., 2011; Richards et al., 2017; Richards et al., 2016). Specifically, Caetano et al. (2005) found that severe childhood abuse was strongly correlated with mutual IPV for female respondents. One study found that childhood sexual abuse but not physical abuse significantly predicted a respondent's membership in the IPV victim-offender group (Richards et al., 2016). Jennings et al. (2011), on the other hand, found that childhood physical abuse but not sexual abuse was correlated with both psychological and physical IPV victimization and offending. Richards et al. (2017) report that both sexual and physical abuse in childhood were significantly related to mutual IPV for male respondents only, while childhood emotional abuse was a significant predictor of mutual IPV for both males and females.

The status of the relationship may also be important when considering violence between intimates. Specifically, *cohabitation* has been identified in this vein of research as a significant predictor of mutual IPV (Caetano et al., 2008; Richards et al., 2017; Tillyer & Wright, 2014) and situational couple violence in general (Macmillan & Gartner, 1999; Stets, 1991). Johnson (2008) suggests that this may be due to a lack of adjustment, as cohabitating couples may be less acclimated to one another than married couples, yet they face all of the opportunities for conflict that may arise when living with one's partner. Certain demographic variables also appear to influence one's risk of involvement in bidirectional IPV. Indeed, *younger* individuals are more likely to be involved in a mutually violent relationship (Caetano et al., 2005; Caetano et al., 2008; Jennings et al., 2011), along with those who have lower levels of *education* (Richards et

al., 2017; Tillyer & Wright, 2014). In addition, *nonwhite* respondents appear to be at increased risk for involvement in bidirectional IPV compared to white respondents (Caetano et al., 2005; Caetano et al., 2008; Richards et al., 2017; Tillyer & Wright, 2014).

Findings related to the gender composition of victim-offenders appear to be somewhat mixed. For instance, some studies find that women are significantly more likely to be IPV victim-perpetrators (Coker et al., 2014; Coker et al., 2000; Muftić & Deljkić, 2012; Richards et al., 2016), whereas others report that males are more likely to be involved in both victimization and perpetration of IPV (Jennings et al., 2011; Klevens, Duque, & Ramírez, 2002). Still, in other studies, no significant sex differences were found for those in the victim-offender category (Muftić et al., 2015; Reingle et al., 2012; Tillyer & Wright, 2014), as Johnson's framework would seem to predict for instances of situational couple violence.

Despite documentation of the victim-offender overlap within the context of IPV and the various correlates established by the literature, few theories have been invoked to explain why individuals both engage in and are subjected to IPV in an intimate relationship. It should be noted, however, that some researchers have considered a "cycle of violence" (Widom, 1989) explanation for bidirectional IPV (Richards et al., 2017; Richards, et al., 2016). Even so, it appears "various explanations for IPV have failed to recognize and/or adequately explain the overlap between victims and offenders" uncovered by researchers (Muftić et al., 2015, p. 900). This gap in the research has significant implications for individuals involved in mutual violence, given that current IPV interventions are largely offender-oriented (e.g., battering programs) or victim-oriented (e.g., shelters; Richards et al., 2016). As such, examining the etiology of IPV victim-offenders is vital to enhancing prevention and rehabilitation efforts for those that cannot be classified as exclusive victims or offenders.

Considering the dearth of research on the etiology of mutual IPV, a look to the broader literature on the victim-offender overlap may prove useful. Indeed, researchers investigating more general forms of violence have recognized the need for theories that can explain both victimization and offending. Recent reviews of this literature (Jennings et al., 2012) reveal that several criminological and sociological theories have been applied to the overlap between violent victimization and offending, not least of which is Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) self-control theory. In fact, the bulk of recent empirical work investigating the origins of the victim-offender overlap has emerged from the self-control perspective (Pratt et al., 2014). Following the initial work of Schreck (1999), scholars have tested the generality of the theory. Reviews of this body of research reveal that low self-control has been linked to a diverse set of criminal and victimization experiences (Jennings et al., 2012; Pratt & Cullen, 2000; Pratt et al., 2014).

Gottfredson and Hirschi's General Theory

Few theories, it seems, have generated such extensive scholarly interest, if not controversy, in American criminology as Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) *A General Theory of Crime*. Indeed, self-control theory is marketed as an all-purpose explanation of sorts—one that can account for “all crime, at all times” (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990, p. 117). Guided by the classical tradition, the authors assume human nature is fundamentally hedonistic. That is, they assume individuals harbor an innate desire to pursue self-interest. For Gottfredson and Hirschi, like other control theorists, such an inclination is accepted as uniform across society; thus, their theory devotes itself instead to identifying what restrains individuals from engaging in criminal and analogous behaviors. They cite self-control as the key restraint, which prevents individuals from succumbing to the ubiquitous lure of crime in everyday life.

Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) contend that self-control is developed in early childhood through effective parental socialization (i.e., parents who monitor, recognize, and punish misbehavior in their children), and this individual trait is assumed to remain relatively stable throughout one's life. Inadequate socialization, they argue, leads to the development of low self-control—the primary predictor of criminal behavior. Alternative theories are all but discounted by Gottfredson and Hirschi, faulted for failing to fully consider the true nature of crime. In their view, crime and other deviant conduct is spontaneous, easy, and immediately gratifying. Further, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) contend that offenders tend to mirror many of these same characteristics. In fact, the authors outline six specific elements of self-control: diligence, empathy, preference for mental rather than physical activity, risk avoidance, future orientation, and tolerance for frustration. Accordingly, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argue that individuals with low self-control are often “impulsive, insensitive, physical (as opposed to mental), risk-taking, short-sighted, and non-verbal” (p. 90). They assert that these traits form a stable construct in individuals, which increases the likelihood that they will yield to the temptations of criminal opportunities defined by the theorists as simple, rewarding, and requiring little planning.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, critics were quick to take issue with the generality of the theory's conceptualization of crime on the grounds that it mischaracterizes certain types of violence. In one critique of the theory, Miller and Burack (1993) assert that self-control theory is particularly ill-equipped to explain intimate violence. They argue that IPV is carried out with the long-term goal of securing complete control and dominion over one's partner—a far cry from the impulsive, short-sighted violence that an application of self-control theory would seem to imply. Therefore, they argue that self-control is essentially irrelevant to IPV offenders. Indeed, others find that an individual's autonomy may be extremely limited in a violent relationship, in which

the victim may see themselves as lacking behavioral alternatives from which to choose (Langhinrichsen-Rohling and Turner, 2012). If victims have little to no agency in the context of a violent relationship, some question whether self-control can feasibly play a role in the explanation of victimization (Pratt et al., 2014, p. 105).

Ironically, Miller and Burack (1993) contend that Gottfredson and Hirschi's false assumptions regarding the true nature of IPV render self-control theory wholly incompatible with intimate violence. Yet, these critics fail to acknowledge that there are different forms of intimate violence (Johnson, 2008) and that the nature of most IPV "does not fit the power and control model of intimate terrorism" (Johnson, 2011, p. 295). To Miller and Burack's credit, self-control theory's framework certainly appears to be at odds with intimate terrorism (and, by extension, violent resistance). However, in light of the typology of IPV, such an argument says nothing of the theory's applicability to other types of intimate violence. In fact, the nature of situational couple violence may lend itself quite well to a self-control explanation. Considering that (a) this type of IPV is best understood as an expression of interpersonal conflict rather than one partner's desire for control (Johnson, 2008), and (b) this type of intimate violence is more common and more likely to be mutual than intimate terrorism (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000), then Gottfredson and Hirschi's self-control theory may be important in explaining the victim-offender overlap in IPV.

Linking Self-Control Theory to the Victim-Offender Overlap in IPV

As noted, Gottfredson and Hirschi's general theory of crime was not originally formulated to account for both victimization and offending. Still, the authors acknowledge that offenders and victims tend to possess many of the same characteristics. Accordingly, some

scholars have extended the logic of self-control theory to account for victimization. For instance, Piquero et al. (2005) submit that if (1) self-control predicts offending, and if (2) offenders and victims possess similar personal characteristics, then it is reasonable to expect that (3) self-control predicts victimization. The theory seems to suggest that low self-control renders an individual both susceptible to the temptations of crime and more vulnerable to victimization. Using this logic, mutual IPV might be likely to occur in a relationship where at least one partner has low self-control, as this individual may use violence as a form of conflict management and may behave in certain ways within the relationship as to evoke violence from the other partner. Given that individuals often choose partners that exhibit similar traits (Wright et al., 1999), there may be an increased risk for both partners to have low self-control, enhancing the likelihood of an individual becoming both a perpetrator and victim of intimate violence within the context of a single relationship (Kerley et al., 2008).

The potential links between self-control theory and IPV are further elucidated through closer examination of the specific elements of self-control theory. Schreck (1999)'s reformulation of the theory serves as a guide, as it demonstrates how each of the six elements correspond to an increased risk of victimization. The first element of self-control involves the degree to which one adopts a future orientation. That is, those with low self-control are impulsive, unable to appreciate the long-term consequences of their actions and the impact such actions have on others. Indeed, Stewart, Elifson, and Sterk (2004) note that those with lower self-control "have difficulty succeeding in...personal relationships that require delayed gratification or planning" (p.176). Thus, in intimate relationships, impulsive partners may at times be unable to resist what may be perceived as the immediate gratification of using violence to settle a

dispute or conflict. In addition, their impulsivity may precipitate victimization from the other partner.

The second element involves one's level of self-centeredness. Schreck (1999) notes that a person with high levels of self-centeredness "might be poor at evaluating the intent of others" (p.636). Therefore, when partners are insensitive to others' needs and more likely to misinterpret the actions of others, there may be an increased risk for bidirectional violence in the relationship. The third element, frustration tolerance, is especially relevant to mutual IPV, as violence committed in anger or frustration may prompt retaliation, whether it be in the same event or a subsequent altercation (Tillyer & Wright, 2014). Among those with low levels of frustration tolerance, often "the difference between offending and being victimized depends on who wins the fight" (Schreck, 1999, p. 636). The fourth element of self-control involves one's diligence, suggesting that individuals who lack tenacity may be less cautious and neglect to protect themselves from personal victimization (Schreck, 1999). For instance, intimate partners who lack diligence may be less likely to "walk away" from a situation that has escalated (Kerley et al., 2008, p. 508), increasing the chances of mutual IPV.

Fifth, those with low self-control may have a preference for physical as opposed to mental tasks. These individuals are likely to respond to conflict by relying on their physicality as opposed to a cognitive assessment of the situation. Extending this logic to intimate relationships, it is plausible that such a preference could lead an individual to engage in IPV, as he or she "may become defensive or antagonistic, rather than contemplative or conciliatory" when faced with interpersonal conflict (Kerley et al., 2008, p. 508). The final element involves risk-taking. Individuals with low self-control are more likely to place themselves in risky social situations in which they are vulnerable to victimization. In terms of intimate violence, individuals with low

self-control may be more likely to enter into unstable or conflict-prone intimate relationships (Kerley et al., 2008). Within this context, there is a significant risk for individuals to become both offenders and victims of IPV.

As the preceding discussion demonstrates, self-control may be important in predicting mutual intimate violence that stems from conflict rather than coercive control. Yet, the role of self-control in explaining the victim-offender overlap in IPV has yet to be thoroughly examined by researchers. While some have assessed the link between self-control and IPV perpetration (e.g., Sellers, 1999), research examining the relationship between self-control and IPV victimization remains “severely underrepresented” in the self-control literature (Pratt et al., 2014, p. 90). Moreover, since much of the research examining the role of self-control in IPV has focused on offending and victimization separately, it is unclear whether self-control is important in explaining the victim-offender *overlap* in IPV. The following section provides a review of the limited body of research examining the influence of self-control on intimate violence. Importantly, the vast majority of these studies are conducted in general population samples, which are likely to detect more moderate, gender symmetric forms of IPV (i.e., situational couple violence; Kelly & Johnson, 2008).

Empirical Examinations of the Link between Self-Control and IPV

Several studies have identified low self-control as a significant predictor of IPV. In particular, Sellers (1999) conducted one of the first direct empirical tests of self-control theory’s ability to explain intimate violence perpetration. Using a sample of 985 college students, she assessed the effects of low self-control on physical courtship aggression. Her results indicate that low self-control plays a slight, yet statistically significant role in predicting the probability of

using physical violence against a dating partner (Sellers, 1999). In a sample of 1,139 youth in Grades 9 through 11, low self-control was found to significantly predict physical perpetration of IPV (Chapple & Hope, 2003). More recently, Finkel et al., (2009) found that among a sample of university students, those with low self-control had more violent impulses and engaged in significantly more acts of IPV perpetration than did those characterized by high self-control. In another study by Finkel and colleagues (2012), those with low self-control and high dispositional aggression were linked to IPV perpetration. In contrast to these findings, Moffitt and colleagues (2000) found a link between low self-control and general forms of violence, but not partner violence.

In addition to the examination of IPV perpetration, researchers interested in the influence of self-control on IPV have begun to include measures of IPV victimization in their analyses (Gover et al., 2011; Gover et al., 2008; Jennings et al., 2011; Kerley et al., 2008; Payne, Triplett, & Higgins, 2011; Zavalla, 2017). Using a sample of 2,541 college students, Gover and colleagues (2008) found that low self-control was significantly related to physical relationship violence perpetration and to physical relationship violence victimization for both males and females. Similarly, low self-control significantly predicted separate measures of psychological abuse perpetration and psychological abuse victimization, but for males only (Gover et al., 2008). Kerley et al. (2008) found that for married Thai women, low self-control was significantly associated with psychological and physical victimization and offending. Among a sample of 375 Virginia residents, Payne et al. (2011) uncovered a direct link between low self-control and partner violence. Most recently, Zavalla (2017) found that among U.S. college students, measures of low self-control predicted IPV offending but not victimization for his composite measure of psychological and physical IPV. Taken en mass, these studies seem to suggest that

self-control plays an important role in predicting the risk of psychological and physical victimization and offending within an intimate relationship.

Despite the contributions of the aforementioned studies, several weaknesses are evident, underscoring the need for the continued study of the links between self-control and IPV. First, most of these studies utilize cross-sectional research designs (Chappel & Hope, 2003; Finkel et al., 2012; Finkel et al., 2009; Gover et al., 2011; Gover et al., 2008; Kerley et al., 2008; Payne et al., 2011; Sellers, 1999; Zavala, 2017), relying on contemporaneous measures of low self-control, IPV victimization, and IPV perpetration. As such, these studies cannot establish the temporal ordering of low self-control and involvement in IPV. Additionally, the vast majority of relevant studies are drawn from convenience samples of college or high school students (Chappel & Hope, 2003; Finkel et al., 2012; Finkel et al., 2009; Gover et al., 2011; Gover et al., 2008; Jennings et al., 2011; Sellers, 1999; Zavala, 2017); thus, their results may not be applicable to individuals outside the reach of academic institutions or those of different ages. Furthermore, the preceding discussion of empirical findings reflect studies that measure IPV victimization and offending separately. Indeed, research specifically examining the influence of low self-control on the victim-offender *overlap* in intimate violence is conspicuously missing from the literature.

One exception is found in a study conducted by Jennings and colleagues (2011), which utilized a cross-cultural data set. In a sample of 1,399 South Korean college students, the authors found a strong correlation between IPV victimization and offending for both psychological and physical forms of IPV. Further, they found that those with low self-control were more likely to report being *both* perpetrators and victims of IPV. This relationship was significant for self-reports of both physical and psychological relationship violence (Jennings et al., 2011). These findings suggest at least some support for the influence of self-control on the victim-offender

overlap in IPV. However, whether such findings are generalizable to samples of American adults remains an empirical question. Moreover, Jennings et al. (2011), rely on cross-sectional data; thus, it remains to be seen whether similar links between low self-control and IPV involvement can be established using longitudinal data.

The current study attends to these issues. In light of the above-referenced limitations of the extant research, the present study extends prior literature examining the role of self-control in IPV by (1) investigating the influence of self-control on the victim-offender *overlap* in IPV, (2) using longitudinal data, and (3) utilizing a sample of U.S. adults ages 24 to 33. Certainly, the absence of such an analysis inhibits exploration of the mechanisms underlying mutual IPV. Thus, the current research focus contributes to the limited body of literature exploring the characteristics of individuals that identify as both victims and offenders of intimate violence. Continued research of this nature is vital to identifying risk factors for IPV that can be used to enhance both the prevention and intervention of such violence.

Conclusion

The body of literature dedicated to IPV has flourished since the matter was first brought to the attention of researchers in the 1970s. Although a parallel body of literature investigating the victim-offender overlap has developed in the field of criminology, only recently has this empirical work intersected with the literature on IPV (Muftić & Deljkic, 2012), and as such, it remains an understudied topic (Jennings et al., 2012). Perhaps this is due, at least in part, to researchers' reluctance to recognize what appear to be qualitatively different types of IPV (Johnson, 1995, 2005, 2006, 2008). While the victim-offender overlap is less likely in severe forms of IPV marked by a general pattern of coercive control (i.e., intimate terrorism; Johnson &

Ferraro, 2000), scholars have documented the overlap in general population samples (Coker et al., 2000; Jennings et al., 2011; Reingle et al., 2012; Tillyer & Wright, 2014)—research more likely to detect moderate, conflict-based forms of IPV (i.e., situational couple violence; see Kelly & Johnson, 2008).

Despite the documentation of an overlap between victimization and offending in the context of IPV, little is known regarding the etiology of such violence. As the broader literature investigating the origins of the link between victimization and offending indicates (e.g., Piquero et al., 2005), the general theory of crime may provide fertile ground for explaining the victim-offender overlap in IPV. Again, acknowledging Johnson's typology of IPV, self-control theory appears to be well-suited to explain situational couple violence, which is less severe, more common, and more likely to be mutual compared to intimate terrorism (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). Accordingly, self-control theory may be useful in explaining less severe forms of mutual IPV.

While several studies have linked low self-control to IPV perpetration and victimization *separately* (Chapple & Hope, 2003; Finkel et al., 2012; Finkel et al., 2009; Gover et al., 2011; Gover et al., 2008; Kerley et al., 2008; Payne et al., 2011; Sellers, 1999; Zavala, 2017), only one (Jennings et al., 2011) has specifically examined the victim-offender *overlap*, and none, to my knowledge, have examined the overlap longitudinally in a sample of U.S. adults. Ultimately, the present study aims to fill this gap in the literature by investigating the influence of self-control on mutual IPV in a sample of adults ages 24 to 33. Specifically, the present study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. Does low self-control predict involvement in IPV victimization?
2. Does low self-control predict involvement in IPV offending?
3. Does low self-control predict involvement in *both* IPV victimization and offending?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The present study focuses on the link between self-control and involvement in IPV. The literature reviewed above documents an overlap between offending and victimization within the context of an intimate relationship. Yet, little has been established with respect to the origins of such violence. Guided by research on the victim-offender overlap in more general forms of violence, the current study seeks to examine the victim-offender overlap in IPV from a self-control standpoint. More specifically, the present study aims to address the following research questions:

1. Does low self-control predict involvement in IPV victimization?
2. Does low self-control predict involvement in IPV offending?
3. Does low self-control predict involvement in *both* IPV victimization and offending?

Based on information gleaned from a review of the relevant literature, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Respondents with low self-control will be more likely to report IPV victimization.
2. Respondents with low self-control will be more likely to report IPV offending.
3. Respondents with low self-control will be more likely to report *both* IPV victimization and offending.

The research design of the current study was uniquely developed to address these specific research questions. In describing the research design, this chapter begins with a detailed description of the data source utilized in this study, how the data were originally obtained, and the appropriateness of the overall design given the current research focus. Following that is an overview of the measures used and how each is specifically operationalized. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the analytical strategy used.

Data Source

The data utilized in the current study were drawn from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health; Harris, 2009). Specifically, data were obtained from Waves I and IV of the public-use files. The Add Health is a nationally representative sample of juveniles obtained using a two-stage clustered sampling design. The first stage of sampling utilized systematic and stratified sampling techniques to select a sample of 80 high schools and 52 middle schools in the United States. More than 90,000 students in grades 7 through 12 during the 1994-1995 school year completed self-administered in-class questionnaires (Harris et al., 2009). In the second stage of sampling, students were randomly selected from stratified school rosters to form a core sample. In addition, supplementary ethnic groups were oversampled. Those sampled completed face-to-face surveys conducted in the students' homes (Wave I). In-home surveys were administered again between 1995-1996 (Wave II), 2001-2002 (Wave III), and 2007-2008 (Wave IV). Further information on how data were collected is available elsewhere (Harris et al., 2009).

The public-use Add Health files contain much of the same information provided in the restricted-use files, albeit for a smaller sample. Wave I public-use files, for instance, contain data on a random selection of the original sample, or 6,504 respondents. Wave IV interviews were conducted with 80.3% of eligible sample members (Harris et al., 2009). The Wave IV public-use files contain data on 5,114 respondents between the ages of 24 to 33. To account for the design of the Add Health, sampling weights were used to account for the oversampling of certain groups. Since the IPV literature reviewed above is concerned with heterosexual romantic relationships, respondents who described themselves as homosexual or bisexual, while important

subjects for future IPV research, were excluded from the current sample.¹ A final sample of 4,484 respondents remained after case-wise deletion.

A large-scale national sample such as the Add Health is appropriate for the current research focus, which seeks to explore instances of less severe forms of intimate violence. As mentioned above, one can expect that the IPV detected in such a sample will be dominated by situational couple violence (Kelly & Johnson, 2008)—the most common form of IPV that is more likely to be moderate in its severity, frequency, and magnitude compared to intimate terrorism (Johnson & Ferarro, 2000). Thus, the Add Health data provide a suitable sample for examining situational couple violence. Moreover, this data source is ideal for examining individuals involved in mutual IPV since respondents were asked to report *both* victimization by and perpetration against an intimate partner. Therefore, the data allow for analysis of respondents reporting both victimization and perpetration (i.e., the victim-offenders).

Variables and Measures

Dependent Variables

Three dependent variables will be examined in this study. *IPV victim-offender* is a dichotomous variable created from six items drawn from Wave IV of the public-use files that have been utilized in previous literature (Reingle et al., 2012; Richards et al., 2017; Tillyer & Wright, 2014). The six items measure respondents' role in IPV as a victim or as an offender in the past 12 months at the time of Wave IV interviews. IPV victimization experiences were measured by three items assessing how often the respondent: (a) was threatened with violence,

¹ These cases were excluded since the current research relies on gender symmetry literature, which is limited to the study of heterosexual couples. As a result, 357 cases were dropped from the sample.

pushed, shoved, or had something thrown at them by his/her partner, (b) was slapped, hit, or kicked by his/her partner, or (c) sustained an injury, such as a sprain, bruise, or cut because of a fight with his/her partner. Responses ranged from never (coded “0”) to more than 20 times (coded “6”) in the last year. Similarly, IPV offending experiences were measured by three items assessing how often the respondent: (a) threatened his/her partner with violence, pushed, shoved, or threw something at their partner, (b) slapped, hit, or kicked his/her partner, or (c) caused his/her partner to sustain an injury, such as a sprain, bruise, or cut because of a fight with their partner. Again, responses ranged from never (coded “0”) to more than 20 times (coded “6”) in the last year.

Although the current research focus is on bidirectional IPV, separate measures of IPV victimization and IPV offending were examined to allow for the observation of any distinctions in predictors of victimization, offending, and the overlap between the two². In the model examining *IPV victimization*, respondents who reported being (a) threatened with violence, pushed, shoved, or had something thrown at them by his/her partner, (b) slapped, hit, or kicked by his/her partner, or (c) injured because of a fight with his/her partner were coded as ‘1,’ while those who did not report any victimization were coded as ‘0.’ Notably, respondents reporting both IPV victimization and offending were *included* in the model examining IPV victimization. Similarly, in the *IPV offending* model, respondents who reported having (a) threatened his/her partner with violence, pushed, shoved, or threw something at their partner, (b) slapped, hit, or kicked his/her partner, or (c) caused his/her partner to sustain an injury because of a fight with their partner were coded as ‘1,’ while those who did not report any perpetration were coded as

² Importantly, the separate measures of IPV victimization and IPV offending do not take into account the victim-offender overlap. That is, the IPV victimization variable includes respondents who reported any victimization (i.e., a combination of victims-only and victim-offenders), while the IPV offending variable includes respondents who reported any IPV offending (i.e., a combination of offenders-only and victim-offenders).

‘0.’ Of note, respondents reporting both IPV perpetration and victimization were *included* in the model examining IPV perpetration.

Next, since the current study is concerned with prevalence of IPV rather than frequency, all of the scales were dichotomized so that “0” represents no involvement in the event and “1” represents at least one or more use of or experience of the behavior. Thus, *IPV victim-offender* is a dichotomous variable: respondents reporting at least one victimization event *and* at least one offending event in the previous year were coded as ‘1,’ whereas respondents who did *not* report both victimization and offending events in the previous year were coded as ‘0.’ These distinctions between victims, offenders, and victim-offenders may prove useful for understanding what characterizes the population of individuals identified as IPV victim-offenders (Richards et al., 2016).

Independent Variable

The primary independent variable of interest in this study measures respondents’ individual levels of self-control. Although a multitude of self-control scales are available to researchers, perhaps the most extensively used scale is that developed by Grasmick, Tittle, Bursik, and Arneklev (1993). Unfortunately, this scale is not available in the Add Health data. It should be noted, however, that evidence suggests the association between low self-control and offending is not dependent upon researchers’ use of the scale developed by Grasmick and his colleagues (see Pratt & Cullen, 2000). Accordingly, this study utilizes a measurement scheme that has been identified as one of the most commonly employed measures of low self-control available to researchers using Add Health data (Wolfe and Hoffmann, 2016).

Perrone, Sullivan, Pratt, and Margaryan (2004) first developed the scale by combining Wave I survey items that approximated the various components of self-control. Since its creation, the scale has been utilized by various researchers analyzing Add Health data (Beaver, DeLisi, Vaughn, & Wright, 2010; Beaver, Mancini, DeLisi, & Vaughn, 2011; Beaver, Wright, DeLisi, & Vaughn, 2008; Boisvert, Vaske, Taylor, & Wright, 2012; Clinkinbeard, 2014; Desmond, Ulmer, & Bader, 2013). Specifically, the scale developed by Perrone et al. (2004) includes several items that index bad temper, another set of items that get at physicality, simple tasks, and impulsivity, and a final item that aims to capture self-centeredness. However, in the present study, this final item was dropped due to low factor loadings (see Table 1 for a list of all the items included in the scale). All remaining items were factor analyzed and were found to load satisfactorily (i.e., displayed factor loadings greater than or equal to 0.32; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) onto one factor. Each scale item was measured at the categorical level using the same Likert-style response categories that ranged from never (coded “0”) to everyday (coded “4”). The unit scores for the scale range from 0 to 19, and for ease of interpretation the scale is coded so that higher scores indicate lower levels of self-control. The scale was found to have good internal consistency ($\alpha=.71$; Cronbach, 1951).

Table 1

Low Self-Control Scale Items

Survey Item	Factor Loadings
Do you have trouble paying attention in school?	0.801
Do you have trouble getting your homework done?	0.750
Do you have trouble getting along with your teachers?	0.659
Do you have trouble getting along with other students?	0.606
Do you have trouble keeping your mind focused?	0.546

Covariates

Previous literature (Caetano et al., 2005; Coker et al., 2000; Reingle et al., 2012; Tillyer & Wright, 2014) has established drug and alcohol use as a correlate of mutual IPV. *Problem substance and/or alcohol abuse* is a dichotomous variable created to measure whether past alcohol or substance use³ has caused problems in different areas of individuals' lives (Tillyer and Wright, 2014). Specifically, six items were used to create this variable. Three items measure how often respondents alcohol use has (a) led to legal problems, (b) has caused problems with family, friends, coworkers, or classmates, or (c) has put oneself or others at risk. Correspondingly, three items measured how often respondents' marijuana use has (a) led to legal problems, (b) has caused problems with family, friends, coworkers, or classmates, or (c) has put oneself or others at risk. All responses ranged from never (coded "0") to more than one time (coded "2"). All of the scales were dichotomized so that "1" represents any problematic alcohol or substance use and "0" represents no problematic use.

Childhood maltreatment is a dichotomous variable created from Wave IV items intended to measure whether respondents experienced abuse by a parent or guardian before their 18th birthday.⁴ Since prior studies have identified physical, sexual, or emotional abuse as predictors of bidirectional IPV (Richards et al., 2017; Richards et al., 2016), a measure was constructed using three items that inquired about each of these types of maltreatment: "Before your 18th birthday, how often did a parent or adult caregiver hit you with a fist, kick you, or throw you down on the floor, into a wall, or down stairs," "How often did a parent or other adult caregiver

³ The items used to create this measure do not specify a specific reference period. Therefore, it measures *any* history of problematic alcohol or substance use.

⁴ The item measuring sexual abuse did not specifically ask respondents to report only the parental abuse that occurred prior to their 18th birthday. Therefore, this measure may include reports of parental abuse that occurred after a respondent's 18th birthday.

touch you in a sexual way, force you to touch him or her in a sexual way, or force you to have sexual relations,” and “Before your 18th birthday, how often did a parent or other adult caregiver say things that really hurt your feelings or made you feel like you were not wanted or loved?” Responses for all three items ranged from never (coded “0”) to more than ten times (coded “5”). The three items were combined and the scales were dichotomized so that “1” represents at least one instance of physical, sexual, or emotional maltreatment and “0” represents no past experience with childhood maltreatment.

In addition, a series of other control variables drawn from Wave IV were operationalized. *Age* is a continuous variable that represents the respondent’s age in years at the time of the Wave IV interview. *Education* is a dichotomous variable that measures the respondent’s highest level of educational attainment at the time of the Wave IV interview (0 = *no college or vocational training*; 1 = *at least some college or vocational training*). *Gender* is a dichotomous variable obtained from Wave I that measures the respondent’s sex (0 = *female*; 1 = *male*). Finally, *Race* was measured using four variables obtained from Wave I: *White*, *Black*, *Hispanic*, and *Other*. This variable was dichotomized so that “0” represents white and “1” represents non-white; thus, White Non-Hispanic represents the omitted reference category (Tillyer & Wright, 2014).

Analytical Strategy

First, the analyses began with descriptive statistics computed for all of the study variables. Second, frequency of IPV involvement by sex was examined to specifically assess the gender composition of IPV victim-offenders. Third, bivariate statistics were calculated for all variables of interest to test for multicollinearity. Finally, due to the dichotomous nature of the dependent variables, a series of three logistic regression models were estimated to determine

whether self-control is correlated with each of the separate outcome measures while controlling for the covariates detailed above. That is, the analyses examined whether one's level of self-control predicted IPV victimization (Model 1), IPV offending (Model 2), and involvement as an IPV victim-offender (Model 3). In step with recommendations for analyzing Add Health data, probability sampling weights were utilized in analyses to account for the unequal probability of selection introduced by the study's two-stage sampling design (Chen & Chantala, 2014). All analyses were conducted using STATA 15 (StataCorp, 2017).

Conclusion

The research design described in this chapter is suitable for exploring the specific research questions outlined above. In testing these research questions, the current study will contribute to the limited body of literature examining the etiology of mutual violence in intimate relationships. Specifically, the purpose of this research is to explore the potential role of Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) self-control theory in predicting involvement in both IPV victimization and offending. The present study extends prior research assessing the link between self-control and IPV by examining the *overlap* of IPV victimization and offending and by utilizing longitudinal data obtained from a sample of U.S. adults ages 24 to 33. The following chapter details the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The following chapter includes a detailed presentation of the results of this study. First, descriptive statistics of the sample are presented, including a breakdown of the frequency of involvement in IPV (i.e., victimization, offending, or the overlap in victimization and offending) by gender to assess the gender composition across these variables. The latter portion of this chapter is dedicated to presenting results from the multivariate models estimating the three outcome measures (i.e., IPV victimization, IPV offending, and IPV victim-offenders).

Descriptive Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for all study variables in the current analysis. 10.1 percent of the sample reported at least one instance of IPV victimization in the past year, while 5.9 percent reported involvement in at least one instance of IPV offending and 3.4 percent reported at least one instance of IPV victimization *and* involvement in at least one instance of IPV offending. The mean of the low self-control scale was 4.86 and the range was 0 to 19. Recall that the low self-control scale was coded so that higher scores indicate lower levels of self-control. Thus, the respondents had, on average, relatively high levels of self-control.

Forty-eight percent of respondents reported experiencing at least one incidence of emotional, physical, or sexual maltreatment by a parent or guardian. In terms of problematic alcohol or substance use, thirty-three percent of respondents reported that they had ever experienced (1) legal problems, (2) issues with family, friends, co-workers or classmates, or (3) had placed themselves or others at risk as a direct result of either their marijuana or alcohol use

(or both). Sixty-seven percent reported having at least some college or vocational training beyond a high school diploma at the time of the Wave IV interview. Forty-seven percent of the sample was male and the average age was 28.41, with age ranging from 24 to 33. Finally, forty percent of the sample was nonwhite, which includes the categories Black, Hispanic, and other.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for All Study Variables

Variable	Mean (%)	S.D.	Range
IPV Victimization	(10.1)	--	0-1
IPV Perpetration	(5.9)	--	0-1
IPV Victim-Perpetrator	(3.4)	--	0-1
Low Self-Control ^a	4.86	3.30	0-19
Childhood Maltreatment	(48.8)	--	0-1
Alcohol/Substance Use	(33.1)	--	0-1
Education	(67.0)		0-1
Sex (Male=1) ^{ab}	(47.1)	--	0-1
Age	28.41	1.81	24-33
Race (Nonwhite=1) ^{ac}	(37.3)	--	0-1

^aMeasured at Wave I; Reference Categories: ^bFemale; ^cWhite

Table 3 demonstrates a breakdown of IPV involvement by respondent gender. It presents the frequencies and corresponding percentages for the three measures of IPV involvement, distinguishing between female and male respondents. Among the 461 respondents who reported experiencing IPV victimization within the past year, 36.88 percent were female, while 63.12 percent were male. Among respondents who reported IPV offending in the previous year, 71.43 percent were female, while 28.57 were male. Lastly, 56.49 percent of the IPV victim-offenders were female and 43.51 percent were male. In sum, males were overrepresented in the

victimization category, females were overrepresented in the offending category, while the victim-offender category displayed the most gender symmetry across the three IPV categories measured in this study.

Table 3

IPV Involvement by Gender

	IPV Victimization		IPV Offending		IPV Victim-Offenders	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Females	170	36.88	190	71.43	87	56.49
Males	291	63.12	76	28.57	67	43.51
Total	461	100	266	100	154	100

Multivariate Analyses

To address the research questions outlined in this study, a series of logistic regressions were estimated to determine whether low self-control can predict one's involvement in IPV across three separate outcome measures. Table 4 presents estimates from the first model predicting IPV victimization. The model appears to fit the data well, correctly classifying 89.9% of cases. Further, assessment of bivariate correlation coefficients and VIF statistics suggests that multicollinearity is not an issue in this data.

Although the relationship between low self-control and IPV victimization was positive for respondents in this sample, the relationship was not statistically significant. Therefore, the first hypothesis is not supported by the data. As can be seen, several of the covariates emerged as statistically significant predictors of IPV victimization. Specifically, among respondents with a history of childhood maltreatment, the odds of reporting IPV victimization in the previous year were 1.74 times greater than those with no reported history of childhood maltreatment (OR=1.74,

$p \leq .001$). Among respondents who reported problematic alcohol and/or marijuana use, the odds of reporting IPV victimization were 1.26 times greater than respondents with no reported history of problematic alcohol and/or substance use, although this relationship was only marginally significant ($OR=1.26$, $p \leq .10$). Further, the odds of reporting IPV victimization were 0.56 times greater for respondents without any college or vocational training compared to those with at least some college or vocational training ($OR=.56$, $p \leq .001$). Finally, the odds of reporting IPV victimization were 1.95 times greater for males compared to females ($OR=1.95$, $p \leq .001$) and 1.63 times greater for nonwhites compared to whites ($OR=1.63$, $p \leq .001$).

Table 4

Logistic Regression Predicting IPV Victimization

Predictor Variable	OR	SE
Low Self-Control	1.01	.02
Childhood Maltreatment	1.74***	.23
Problem Alcohol/Substance Use	1.26 [†]	.16
Age	.99	.04
Education	.56***	.06
Gender (Male=1) ^a	1.95***	.24
Race (Nonwhite=1) ^b	1.63***	.20
Constant	.07*	.09
Pseudo R ²		.049
n		4,487
Cases correctly classified		89.93%

Note. OR = odds ratio; Reference Categories: ^aFemale; ^bWhite. *** $p \leq .001$, ** $p \leq .01$, * $p \leq .05$, [†] $p \leq .10$ (two-tailed)

Table 5 reveals the effects of low self-control on IPV offending. Again, the model appears to fit the data well, correctly classifying 94.11% of cases. As can be seen, respondents with lower self-control were significantly more likely to report involvement in IPV offending in

the previous year than those with higher levels of self-control, lending support to the second hypothesis. Specifically, the odds of respondents with lower self-control reporting IPV offending were 1.05 times greater than the odds of respondents with higher levels of self-control (OR=1.05, $p \leq .01$), indicating a modest effect.

Table 5

Logistic Regression Predicting IPV Offending

Predictor Variable	OR	SE
Low Self-Control	1.05**	.02
Childhood Maltreatment	2.13***	.30
Problem Alcohol/Substance Use	1.64**	.29
Age	.98	.04
Education	.65**	.11
Gender (Male=1) ^a	.38***	.06
Race (Nonwhite=1) ^b	1.90***	.31
Constant	.06*	.07
Pseudo R ²		.067
n		4,498
Cases correctly classified		94.11%

Note. OR = odds ratio; Reference Categories: ^aFemale; ^bWhite. *** $p \leq .001$, ** $p \leq .01$, * $p \leq .05$, † $p \leq .10$ (two-tailed).

Several covariates were also found to be significant predictors of IPV offending. In particular, among respondents with a history of childhood maltreatment, the odds of reporting IPV offending were 2.12 times greater than those with no reported history of childhood maltreatment (OR=2.12, $p \leq .001$). The odds of reporting IPV offending were 1.64 times greater for respondents with a history of problematic alcohol and/or substance use compared to those with no reported history of problematic alcohol and/or substance use (OR=1.64, $p \leq .01$). Further, the odds of reporting IPV offending were 0.65 times greater for respondents without any college or

vocational training than respondents with at least some college or vocational training (OR=.65, $p \leq .01$). Finally, the odds of reporting IPV offending were 0.38 times greater for females compared to males (OR=.38, $p \leq .001$) and 1.90 times greater for nonwhites compared to whites (OR=1.90, $p \leq .001$).

Results of the final model predicting IPV victim-offenders can be found in Table 6. Importantly, the model correctly classified 96.59% of cases. As depicted in the table, those with lower self-control were significantly more likely to report both experiencing at least one instance of IPV victimization *and* being involved in at least one instance of IPV offending within the previous year, lending support to the third hypothesis. Specifically, the odds of respondents with lower self-control reporting IPV victimization and offending are 1.05 times greater than respondents with higher levels of self-control (OR=1.05, $p \leq .05$), demonstrating a modest effect.

Table 6

Logistic Regression Predicting IPV Victim-Offenders

Predictor Variable	OR	SE
Low Self-Control	1.05*	.03
Childhood Maltreatment	2.62***	.49
Problem Alcohol/Substance Use	1.44 [†]	.32
Age	1.02	.06
Education	.56**	.11
Gender (Male=1) ^a	.80	.15
Race (Nonwhite=1) ^b	2.08***	.41
Constant	.01**	.02
Pseudo R ²		.057
n		4,484
Cases correctly classified		96.59%

Note. OR = odds ratio; Reference Categories: ^aFemale; ^bWhite. *** $p \leq .001$, ** $p \leq .01$, * $p \leq .05$, [†] $p \leq .10$ (two-tailed).

Among respondents with a history of childhood maltreatment, the odds of reporting both IPV victimization and offending were 2.62 times greater than respondents with no reported history of childhood maltreatment (OR=2.62, $p \leq .001$).

Further, the odds of reporting both IPV victimization and offending were 1.44 times greater for respondents with a history of problematic alcohol and/or substance use compared to respondents with no reported history of alcohol and/or substance use, although this relationship was only marginally significant (OR=1.44, $p \leq .10$). Finally, the odds of reporting both IPV victimization and offending were .56 times greater for those with no college or vocational training compared to individuals with at least some college or vocational training (OR=.56, $p \leq .01$), and 2.08 times greater for nonwhites compared to whites (OR=2.08, $p \leq .001$). Of note, gender was not a statistically significant predictor in this model. In other words, these results suggest that gender does not affect one's odds of being involved in IPV as a victim-offender.

Summary

This chapter began by discussing descriptive statistics for all of the variables used in this study. Further, an effort was made to specifically examine the gender breakdown of IPV involvement across the three IPV outcomes measures. Lastly, the results of the three binary logistic regressions were presented and discussed in detail. Of note, post analyses suggested good model fit across the three models. Overall, low self-control emerged as a statistically significant variable in the second and third models predicting IPV offending and IPV victim-offenders, respectively, although the effects were modest. Further, low self-control, as measured in this study, failed to predict IPV victimization. In sum, the second and third hypotheses were supported by the data, while the first hypothesis was not.

Further, several covariates were found to be statistically significant across the three models. Specifically, respondents with a history of childhood maltreatment, individuals with a history of problem substance and/or alcohol abuse, those with no college or vocational training, and nonwhites were all more likely to report involvement in IPV. Males were significantly more likely to report IPV victimization and females were significantly more likely to report IPV offending; however, gender was not related to respondents' likelihood of reporting involvement in both IPV victimization *and* IPV offending within the previous year. The final chapter interprets and contextualizes these results, outlining their theoretical and policy implications. It concludes by reviewing the limitations of the current study and providing suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

A burgeoning body of literature in the field of criminal justice documents the relationship between victimization and offending. In fact, this relationship is regarded as quite robust, extending across various types of crimes (Jennings et al, 2012; Lauritsen & Laub, 2007; Posick & Gould, 2015). Yet, only recently has this knowledge been applied to the study of IPV (Jennings et al., 2011; Muftić & Deljkić, 2012; Muftić et al., 2015; Richards et al., 2016; Tillyer & Wright, 2014). Accordingly, questions remain with regard to the origins of this specific type of mutual violence. In an effort to explore the etiology of moderate forms of bidirectional IPV, this study invoked the general theory of crime (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990) and Johnson's (2008) typology of IPV, drawing parallels between the nature of situational couple violence and Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) conceptualization of violence. In doing so, a framework was developed from which to assess self-control theory's applicability to the victim-offender overlap in IPV. Specifically, this study investigated whether low self-control can predict IPV victimization, IPV offending, and the overlap in IPV victimization and offending.

The originality of this study is threefold. First, to my knowledge, only one study has examined the relationship between low self-control and the *overlap* in IPV victimization and offending (Jennings et al., 2011). Yet, the sample analyzed by Jennings et al. (2011) was limited to South Korean college students. The current study investigated the link between self-control and the victim-offender overlap in IPV using a sample of American adults. Second, relevant studies have overwhelmingly relied on convenience samples of college or high school students (Chappel & Hope, 2003; Finkel et al., 2012; Finkel et al., 2009; Gover et al., 2011; Gover et al., 2008; Jennings et al., 2011; Sellers, 1999; Zavala, 2017). In contrast, the current study utilized a

sample of adults ages 24 to 33. Third, this is the first study of its kind to use longitudinal data. Specifically, the current study utilized data obtained from Waves I and IV of the Add Health public-use files to assess whether low self-control at Wave I interviews predicted involvement in IPV across three outcome measures (IPV victimization, IPV offending, and IPV victim-offenders) at Wave IV interviews, while controlling for a variety of covariates identified by previous literature. The following sections discuss several noteworthy findings that emerged in this study.

IPV Involvement

First, roughly 15.8 percent of respondents reported either IPV victimization or offending within the previous twelve months, of which 3.4 percent reported being involved in *both* IPV victimization and offending. As previously mentioned, the separate IPV victimization and IPV offending measures used in this study do not account for the victim-offender overlap. When IPV involvement is constructed as a four-category nominal variable (no involvement, victim-only, offender-only, and victim-offender), the victims-only category (6.7%) represents the largest proportion of those involved in IPV, followed by victim-offenders (3.4%) and offenders-only (2.5%), which is in step with prior literature (Coker et al., 2014; Reingle et al., 2012; Tillyer & Wright, 2014).

In terms of gender, males were found to be overrepresented among those who reported any IPV victimization, while females were found to be overrepresented among those who reported any IPV offending within the last year. Further, the results of multivariate analyses suggested that males were significantly more likely to report IPV victimization and females were significantly more likely to report IPV offending. A small body of work reports similar findings

with respect to the gender composition of IPV victims and IPV offenders (Gover et al., 2011; Straus, 2004; Zavalla, 2017). Some speculate that such results may reflect a tendency among females to underreport victimization (Reingle et al., 2012), or a discomfort among males when it comes to disclosing their own perpetration against females, leading to underreports of male-perpetrated IPV (Kaukinen, 2002). Notably, the IPV victim-offenders variable displayed the most gender symmetry among the three outcome variables measured in this study, and multivariate analysis revealed that gender was not found to be significantly related to one's likelihood of becoming an IPV victim-offender. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Muftić et al., 2015; Reingle et al., 2012; Tillyer & Wright, 2014), and coincides with Johnson (2008)'s predictions for instances of situational couple violence.

Low Self-Control and IPV Involvement

The focus of the present study was to assess the relationship between low self-control and involvement in IPV across three outcome variables. Based on insights gleaned from a review of prior literature, several hypotheses were formulated and the analyses revealed mixed support for them. Recall that the first hypothesis stated that low self-control would predict involvement in IPV victimization. Instead, estimates revealed that low self-control, as measured in this study, failed to predict IPV victimization. That is, individuals with lower levels of self-control measured at Wave I interviews were not significantly more likely than individuals with higher levels of self-control at Wave I interviews to report any IPV victimization within the previous twelve months at Wave IV interviews.

While this finding contradicts previous literature that has examined the links between low self-control and IPV victimization (Gover et al., 2011; Gover et al., 2008; Jennings et al., 2011;

Kerley et al., 2008; Payne et al., 2011), at least one other study failed to uncover a significant relationship between low self-control and IPV victimization (Zavalla, 2017). There are several possible explanations for this. First, it should be noted that Pratt and colleagues' (2014) meta-analysis on the relationship between low self-control and criminal victimization revealed that low self-control was a stronger predictor for non-contact forms of victimization (e.g., cybervictimization) compared to physical forms of victimization. Given that the present study's measure of IPV victimization largely measures physical violence (e.g., hitting, shoving, slapping, kicking), Pratt et al.'s (2014) finding may shed some light on why self-control did not emerge as a significant predictor of victimization in the current study.

Further, it is important to highlight that some instances of intimate terrorism (Johnson, 2008) are undoubtedly included in this sample, most likely in the separate measures of IPV victimization and IPV offending. Considering that the nature of intimate terrorism is likely at odds with the self-control framework (see literature review), the presence of these cases may have weakened the relationship between low self-control and IPV victimization in this study. Lastly, the majority of studies that have uncovered a significant low self-control-IPV victimization link utilized cross-sectional research designs and were thus unable to establish temporal order between low self-control and IPV victimization. Therefore, it may be that low self-control is better conceptualized as a correlate rather than a cause of IPV victimization. Some (Tillyer & Wright, 2014) suggest that IPV victims may require different theoretical explanations relative to IPV offenders and IPV victim-offenders, as findings from the current study appear to indicate. In fact, while low self-control failed to predict IPV victimization, childhood maltreatment emerged as a significant predictor, suggesting a "cycle of violence" (Widom, 1989)

explanation may be more important in explaining IPV victimization. Overall, the specifics of this relationship remain unclear and warrant further examination.

The second hypothesis specified that low self-control would predict involvement in IPV offending, and the data support this hypothesis. Specifically, individuals with lower levels of self-control at Wave I were significantly more likely than individuals with higher levels of self-control to report involvement in at least one act of IPV offending in the previous year at Wave IV. This relationship is in agreement with previous studies that have found low self-control significantly and positively related to IPV perpetration (Chapple & Hope, 2003; Finkel et al., 2012; Finkel et al., 2009; Gover et al., 2011; Gover et al., 2008; Jennings et al., 2011; Kerley et al., 2008; Payne et al., 2011; Sellers, 1999; Zavalla, 2017). To be sure, the effect was modest. That is, respondents with low self-control were only five percent more likely to report IPV offending compared to those with high levels of self-control. Nevertheless, this finding contributes to the literature that identifies low self-control as a robust predictor of offending behavior (see Pratt & Cullen, 2000).

The third and final hypothesis was the main focus of this research project. It anticipated that low self-control would predict involvement in *both* IPV victimization and IPV offending. This hypothesis was also supported by the data. Particularly, individuals with lower levels of self-control at Wave I were significantly more likely than individuals with higher levels of self-control to report involvement in at least one IPV victimization event *and* at least one IPV offending event during the previous year at Wave IV. Importantly, the effect was modest, as respondents with low self-control were only five percent more likely to report IPV victimization and offending compared to those with high levels of self-control. Still, the relationship was significant and may reflect a tendency for those with low self-control to self-select into volatile

relationships—particularly, intimate relationships—that are more conflict-prone. Further, due to their lack of self-control, these individuals may be more likely to use violence as a means to manage the conflict that appears throughout the relationship, increasing their odds of becoming both a victim and an offender of relationship violence.

This finding coincides with results reported by the sole study to examine the effects of low self-control on the victim-offender overlap in IPV (Jennings et al., 2011). The study conducted by Jennings et al. (2011) examined this relationship cross-sectionally in a sample of South Korean college students with a mean age of nineteen. The current study obtained similar results using longitudinal data obtained from a more diverse sample of American adults ages 24 to 33 with various levels of educational attainment, lending strength to the generalizability of the findings. Overall, despite the dearth of research in this specific area, the results henceforth appear to support, however tentatively, self-control theory's applicability to moderate forms of mutual intimate violence.

Policy Implications

In light of these findings, several implications for policy targeting prevention and intervention are evident. First, the fact that low self-control was found to predict both IPV offending and the victim-offender overlap in IPV highlights the importance of utilizing early intervention programs that aim to increase levels of self-control among children and adolescents. A meta-analysis of 34 studies conducted by Piquero, Jennings, and Farrington (2010) revealed that self-control was indeed malleable. The authors found that self-control enhancement programs improved self-control among both children and adolescents, which subsequently reduced delinquency (Piquero et al., 2010). Findings from the current study suggest that such

programs may also have the added benefit of reducing IPV later in life. That is, given that low self-control in grades 7 through 12 significantly predicted reports of IPV involvement as an offender and as a victim-offender among individuals ages 24 to 33, increasing self-control among children and adolescents may reduce IPV in adulthood.

Second, the finding that respondents with a history of childhood maltreatment (emotional, sexual, or physical) were significantly more likely to report IPV involvement across all three outcome measures demonstrates the importance of implementing intervention programs designed to help children overcome the negative effects of childhood maltreatment. One such program, Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) targets children who have endured traumatic life events, such as physical or sexual abuse. TF-CBT has been shown to lower internalizing behavior, sexualized behaviors, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and problematic behaviors among children in the treatment condition compared to children in the control condition (Cohen, Deblinger, Mannarino, & Steer, 2004; Cohen & Mannarino, 1996). Results of the current study suggest that intervention programs like TF-CBT may dampen the impact of childhood maltreatment thereby potentially reducing an individual's likelihood of becoming involved in IPV in adulthood.

Third, findings from the current study also revealed that individuals with a history of problematic alcohol and/or substance use were significantly more likely to report involvement in IPV across all three outcome measures, although the relationship was only mildly significant for IPV victims and IPV victim-offenders. Even so, such findings suggest that intervention programs that aim to reduce substance and alcohol abuse may affect levels of intimate violence, especially IPV perpetration. To illustrate, Behavioral Couples Therapy for Substance Abuse (BCT) is designed to reduce problematic substance or alcohol use while simultaneously addressing family

or relationship conflict. Evaluations of BCT have demonstrated its ability to significantly reduce substance use among the BCT group compared to the individual-based treatment (IBT) group (Fals-Stewart et al., 2000; Winters, Fals-Stewart, O'Farrell, Birchler, & Kelley, 2002).

Importantly, BCT significantly reduced intimate violence perpetration among BCT couples after a 12-month follow-up (Fals-Stewart, Birchler, & Kelley, 2006). Programs such as BCT should be implemented in order to reduce the likelihood of relationship violence among adults struggling with alcohol and/or substance abuse.

Lastly, intervention program administrators should be cognizant of other risk factors, such as education and race that may place individuals at heightened risk for IPV. Specifically, in the present study, individuals without any college or vocational training were significantly more likely to report involvement in IPV as victims, as offenders, and as victim-offenders compared to individuals with at least some college or vocational training. Accordingly, program and treatment providers should take steps to incorporate opportunities for educational advancement or vocational training into their services. With respect to race, results of the current study revealed that nonwhites were significantly more likely than whites to report involvement in IPV consistently across all three intimate violence outcome measures. Some (Johnson, 2008) have speculated that for African Americans, in particular, this relationship may be explained, at least in part, by an increased likelihood of experiencing conflict when having to deal with racism in one's life (p.68). Further, given that class is racialized in America, nonwhites, in general, may encounter heightened levels of conflict in their day-to-day lives due to structural inequalities that necessarily create more opportunities for conflict to escalate into relationship violence. In fact, socio-economic status (SES) may account for this relationship, although the current study did not

explore this possibility. Ultimately, program and service personnel should be mindful of these cultural differences in life experiences and work to address the specific needs of individuals.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The aforementioned findings and their implications for policy and practice should be considered in light of several limitations. First, the variables of interest in this study were self-reported and many inquired about past behavior, which may introduce measurement error. However, some have suggested that self-reported data are advantageous for examining mutual violence because the data are more likely to contain situational couple violence than officially reported incidents (Muftić et al., 2015). Further, the recall period for the outcome measures (inquiring about IPV victimization and IPV perpetration) was limited to the preceding year, which may reduce issues associated with respondent recall.

Second, the data were obtained via face-to-face interviews. Given that the IPV outcome measures and various other measures (e.g., childhood maltreatment, alcohol and substance use) are sensitive topics, responses are therefore subject to social desirability bias, which diminishes the accuracy of reporting. However, to reduce the likelihood of such bias, sensitive questionnaire topics in the Add Health survey were self-administered using CASI (computer-assisted self-interview) technology (Harris et al., 2009). Respondents listened to instructions through earphones and entered their answers directly in an effort to minimize the potential for interviewer influence (Harris et al., 2009).

Third, this study uses individuals as opposed to incidents as the unit of analysis. Therefore, no context is provided for the violence. That is, respondents do not report whether their own violence was perpetrated in self-defense or not. Future research should utilize data sets

with information available on the context of the violence (i.e., whether the violence was defensive or not). Moreover, the Add Health Wave IV data set does not include measures of desire for control, which precludes one from differentiating between situational couple violence and violent resistance (i.e., violence in response to intimate terrorism). However, as Johnson (2006, 2008) points out, one can reasonably infer that the majority of IPV uncovered in a general population survey, such as the one examined in this study, is situational couple violence given that individuals involved in intimate terrorism (the offenders or the victims) are less likely to disclose the violence out of fear of discovery or reprisal. Even so, future studies should include measures of desire for control when possible to further test Johnson's (2008) typology.

Fourth, the data on IPV involvement (i.e., victimization and offending) are obtained from Wave IV of the Add Health data and are limited to the reported experiences of adults between the ages of 24 and 33. While there is little variation in age among this sample, the respondents are older and in a different life stage than the typical sample of high school or college students that other relevant studies have traditionally relied on (Chappel & Hope, 2003; Finkel et al., 2012; Finkel et al., 2009; Gover et al., 2011; Gover et al., 2008; Jennings et al., 2011; Sellers, 1999; Zavala, 2017). Further, the respondents are still relatively young, and younger individuals are more likely to engage in bidirectional IPV (Caetano et al., 2005; Caetano et al., 2008). Thus, examining individuals between the ages of 24 and 33 is appropriate given the current study's focus on mutual forms of situational couple violence. Nevertheless, future research should examine this relationship in samples of other age ranges to test the generalizability of the findings.

Fifth, as discussed above, the separate measures of IPV victimization and IPV offending utilized in this study do not account for the victim-offender overlap. That is, the IPV

victimization variable measures *any* instance of IPV victimization within the previous year, which includes the victimization of those who also reported perpetration (i.e., a combination of victims-only and victim-offenders). The opposite is true of the IPV offending measure. Therefore, the IPV victim-offenders variable is the only measure in the current study to account for the victim-offender overlap. As such, true comparisons of “pure” victims, “pure” offenders, and victim-offenders could not be made across the three multivariate models estimated in this study. Accordingly, future research should use a four-category nominal variable to measure involvement in IPV (no involvement, victims-only, offenders-only, and victim-offenders) and run a multinomial logistic regression to assess whether low self-control is differentially associated with IPV victims-only, offenders-only, and victim-offenders.

Lastly, the present study was concerned with testing the ability of a single theoretical perspective (i.e., self-control theory) to account for the victim-offender overlap in IPV. While direct effects were observed between low self-control and IPV victim-offenders, other independent variables emerged as significant predictors of the victim-offender overlap in IPV (e.g., childhood maltreatment, problematic substance and/or alcohol use). Accordingly, future research should consider interactive effects in order to tease out the causal ordering of these variables. For instance, an integrated theoretical model combining elements of self-control theory and aspects of Agnew’s (1992) general strain theory may better explain the pathway to involvement in IPV in adulthood. Perhaps victims of childhood maltreatment (i.e., the presentation of negative stimuli) with lower self-control are more likely to abuse drugs or alcohol (i.e., engage in deviant coping), which in turn increases the likelihood that these individuals will be involved in IPV as both victims and offenders. Indeed, others have observed similar trajectories for more general forms of offending (see Turanovic & Pratt, 2013). Future research

examining the victim-offender overlap in IPV should consider integrated theoretical approaches in order to better understand the role self-control plays in predicting mutual IPV.

Conclusion

Prior to the women's movement, violence between intimates was largely deemed a private and infrequent issue to be dealt with informally (Lehrner & Allen, 2009). Since then, the IPV literature has expanded immensely, and scholars have come to understand that the nature and scope of the problem is far from inconsequential (Smith et al., 2017). Despite the growth in empirical interest and the advancement in knowledge of IPV, distinct gaps remain in the literature, specifically with regard to the victim-offender overlap in IPV (Jennings et al., 2012). Perhaps due to assumptions based on traditional feminist notions of IPV as inherently gendered and unilateral, few have acknowledged the population of individuals involved in bidirectional IPV that cannot be classified as "true" victims or "true" offenders—the IPV victim-offenders. As a result, little is known with respect to the etiology of this specific type of mutual violence (Jennings et al., 2012; Muftić et al., 2015).

Drawing on concepts from Johnson's (1995, 1996, 2005, 2006, 2008) typology of IPV, the purpose of this research project was to investigate the theoretical origins of moderate forms of mutual IPV. Specifically, Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) general theory of crime was invoked to explain bidirectional forms of situational couple violence—IPV that stems from conflict rather than coercive control (Johnson, 2008). The current study contributed to the limited body of literature assessing the relationship between low self-control and IPV by examining the overlap in victimization and offending specifically and by using longitudinal data obtained from a sample of U.S. adults ages 24 to 33. Low self-control at Wave I was found to be a significant

predictor of two of the three IPV involvement variables measured at Wave IV. Importantly, low self-control, as measured in this study, was found to significantly predict the overlap in IPV victimization and offending. While research in this specific area is sparse, and the effects uncovered in the current study were modest, initial findings suggest a link between low self-control and moderate forms of mutual IPV.

This study is the product of acknowledging the dangers of conflating all IPV with intimate terrorism. Broadly, this has led to a conceptualization of IPV that has discouraged researchers not only from recognizing mutual or bidirectional IPV that stems from conflict, but from investigating the risk factors that are producing this type of intimate violence. Ultimately, this research contributes to the effort to shed a one-dimensional understanding of IPV and acknowledge intimate violence for the complex phenomenon that it is so that meaningful social programs and policies can be implemented. Such efforts are necessary in order to prevent violence that continues to be a factor in intimate relationships across the nation and elsewhere.

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