

Coercive Control and Physical Violence: College Students Reporting of Intimate Partner
Violence

A Thesis

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On my honor, I have neither given nor received any
unauthorized aid on this thesis.

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory study seeks to understand the prevalence and types of intimate partner violence among college students. Using an expanded understanding of Johnson's typology (2008) of intimate partner violence, which differentiates between types of intimate partner violence based on the use of coercive control and physical violence, this study investigates intimate partner violence in a sample of college students at a small liberal arts school, suggesting that non-physical violence must also be understood as intimate partner violence, especially among college students. It attempts to contribute to the feminist understanding of intimate partner violence, noting that women experience certain types of abuse at higher rates than men and within different contexts. Using a general survey sample, however, the results found no difference between men and women reporting intimate partner violence. This apparent gender symmetry, contradicts past feminist research, suggests that new methodological approaches must be developed in order to effectively study intimate partner violence.

While sexual assault on college campuses has emerged as an important topic in the media, in politics, and generally among students, other types of gendered violence on campus and elsewhere have garnered far less attention. Intimate partner violence, in particular, receives little attention even though it is prevalent among college students. Although statistics on intimate partner violence for college students vary, many studies agree that there are high rates of intimate partner violence. For example, Libertin (2017) notes “21% of college students report having experienced dating violence by a current partner and 32% of college students report experiencing dating violence by a previous partner.” Additionally, Kimmel (2002:1349) notes that rates of violence are particularly high in populations under 30 and that violence has a different context in young, dating couples than those that are married. Further, women experience multiple forms of gendered violence, and it is hard to separate these forms, especially on college campuses. Yet due to the unique complexities of intimate partner violence, especially on college campuses, it must be researched and understood as separate from sexual assault in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of gendered violence.

The National Institute for Justice (2017) defines intimate partner violence broadly, asserting that it “describes physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former intimate partner or spouse.” While sexual assault reporting is low on college campuses, intimate partner violence reporting is even lower. This lack of reporting and attention has resulted in limited studies on intimate partner violence. Reicher (2007) observes while research has focused on the prevalence of sexual violence on college campuses, there is little information available about intimate partner violence. The limited research that has been done, however, demonstrates high rates of intimate partner

violence within the specific context of college campuses, and therefore suggests that it should be studied as a particular phenomenon, separate from gendered violence in general.

College is often a unique time in people lives, often characterized by self-discovery and competing academic and social demands. Because of this context, intimate partner violence, which has been shown to have many adverse mental and health effects (Johnson 2008), is specifically detrimental to students. As Title IX was instituted to protect against gender-based discrimination, it also covers the phenomenon of intimate partner violence on college campuses. Yet the lack of reporting to authorities makes it difficult for Title IX to specifically address intimate partner violence or fully support those who experience it in college (Reicher 2017: 856). With this implication in mind, this study seeks to illuminate the complexities of intimate partner violence across demographics of students. Further, by entering the debate on gender symmetry, this study attempts to broaden the definition of violence and understand gender dynamics within intimate partner violence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Debates on Intimate Partner Violence

Since the 1970s when the feminist movement first began to problematize intimate partner violence, many competing social theories surrounding it have emerged (Bonnet and Whittaker 2015; Johnson 2008). Scholars have offered different perspectives on and explanations of intimate partner violence, which have created several ongoing debates (Johnson 2008). One of the main debates among social theorists is between the general family violence perspective and the feminist perspective. This conflict centers around the

question of whether the perpetration of intimate partner violence is gendered or not (Lawson 2012). While both sides agree that intimate partner violence is a social phenomenon, each one focuses on different aspects of it and cites different explanations as to why it occurs (Lawson 2012). Family violence theory focuses on the family as the main unit of analysis, and it understands intimate partner violence as part of the wider conflict that is inevitable between family members (Lawson 2012). It examines intimate partner violence as a way conflict is dealt with within families. The feminist perspective, in contrast, asserts that intimate partner violence is based on issues surrounding gender. It understands intimate partner violence as more complex than family violence and as part of the larger context of misogyny and the patriarchal system (Lawson 2012).

Most notably, the debate surrounding gender symmetry arises between these competing theories (Bonnet and Whittaker 2015; Lawson 2012). Gender symmetry is the claim that men and women commit abuse at the same rates, and some large quantitative studies based on general surveys have confirmed this claim (Bonnet and Whittaker 2015). General family violence theorists posit that gender symmetry exists and that there is no real difference in the use of violence in intimate relationships (Lawson 2012). Feminist theorists, however, reject this claim and maintain that this type of survey data used to support gender symmetry is flawed (Lawson 2012). They refer to many other sources of data from emergency room visits, courts of law, and women's shelters to show that men disproportionately perpetrate intimate partner violence and women disproportionately experience it (Lawson 2012). Notably, family theorists have often used data from a general population sample, whereas feminist theorists often focus on gathering data specifically from women in battered women's shelters (Bonnet and Whittaker 2015). In

order to explain the differences regarding the claim of gender symmetry, some scholars have noted issues with large survey data and the sampling methods used in certain studies, and other scholars have pointed out issues with the variation in how violence itself is defined (Bonnet and Whittaker 2015; Lawson 2012). Further, Kimmel (2002:1337) notes that even within large scale surveys there are two separate categories of study, namely crime victimization and family conflict. Each examines different phenomena and therefore draws different conclusions about intimate partner violence.

While the nuances and critiques that these debates raise regarding how intimate partner violence has been studied are important to note, it is also essential to fully examine and challenge the claim of gender symmetry. While many studies have not found support for this claim, Kimmel (2002) particularly points out statistical issues with the idea of gender symmetry. He observes that there is a “dramatic disproportion of women in shelters and hospitals emergency care facilities” as a result of partner violence, and also notes “the empirical certainty that in every single other arena of social life, men are disproportionately likely to use violence than are women” (p. 1336). These two points undermine the claim of gender symmetry and instead suggest that issues with the methodology of studies is at the heart of this debate. Further, Loseke and Kurz (2005) observe that those who claim gender symmetry often ignore the societal context in which the violence occurs, particularly the fact that men are socialized to use violence, while women are taught to be passive.

Intimate Partner Violence on College Campuses

Despite compelling arguments refuting gender symmetry, this debate continues within the study of intimate partner violence on college campuses. Scholars have

repeatedly disagreed about the dynamics of gender within intimate partner violence for college students, especially as sampling methods and definitions of violence have varied. Makepeace's (1981) ground-breaking study was the first to examine intimate partner violence on college campuses. By conducting an exploratory study of "courtship violence" among college students that focused on physical violence and threats of physical violence, Makepeace (1981:98) found that "The majority of students responding (61.5%) had personally known of someone who had been involved in courtship violence, and one-fifth (21.2%) had had at least one direct personal experience." This study also noted that such relationships did not always end. About half the victims were still involved with the other person after the violence occurred and some became more involved. The study also indicated an extremely low rate of reporting to legal authorities (Makepeace 1981). Moreover, it did not find support for gender symmetry, but rather concluded that women more often experienced intimate partner violence than men. While Makepeace conducted his study nearly 40 years ago, many of his findings continue to be relevant, especially as the debate over gender symmetry persists.

While Makepeace (1981) found that those who identified as females were more likely to be victimized by intimate partner violence than males, studies continue to debate this finding. For example, Shook et al. (2000) and Straus (2004) found gender symmetry in the perpetration of physical violence in college student relationships. Other studies, specifically those that have a broader definition of violence as not just physical, however, have not found support for gender symmetry. For example, Oswlat et al. (2017) found that women are more likely to report both sexual assault and relationship violence. As

this ongoing debate suggests, new approaches to understanding intimate partner violence and how it is perpetrated and by whom are needed.

Johnson's Typology

From the competing perspectives of family violence theory and feminist theory, integrative approaches to reconcile their differences have emerged. Specifically, Michael Johnson's (2008) typology of intimate partner violence attempts to account for the differences between these two sides regarding their conclusions concerning gender. Johnson asserts that there are several different types of intimate partner violence and that family violence theorists and feminist theorists are really studying different phenomena (Johnson 2008). Instead of treating all types of intimate partner violence as the same, Johnson (2008) suggests that one must examine the context of the violence within the relationship, particularly the role of control. With context in mind, he asserts that there are four types of intimate partner violence: situational couple violence, intimate terrorism, violent resistance, and mutual violent control (Johnson 2008: 5). Table 1 offers definitions of each typology, along with their premise, use of control, and gender dynamics. Johnson notes that the four types have different gender dynamics. Situational couple violence and mutual violent control, he asserts, are equally perpetrated by men and women. In situational couple violence, neither partner is controlling although they are violent. In mutual violent control both partners are controlling and violent. Intimate terrorism is almost exclusively perpetrated by men and is based on both violence and control. Women, on the other hand, are more likely to use violent resistance which is not based on control but rather is a response or reaction to abuse from a partner (Johnson 2008).

Table 1: Johnson's Typology for Intimate Partner Violence (Raya 2014:213)

Situational Couple Violence	Intimate Terrorism	Violent Resistance	Mutual Violent Control
Perpetrator is violent but neither them nor the partner (victim) is violent and controlling.	Perpetrator is violent and controlling; their partner (victim) is not.	Individual (victim) is violent but not controlling; the perpetrator is the violent and controlling one.	Both partners are both violent and controlling.
Premise: An individual can be violent and non-controlling and in a relationship with a partner who is either non-violent or who is violent and non-controlling.	Premise: An individual can be violent and controlling in a relationship with a partner who is either nonviolent and or violent and non-controlling.	Premise: An individual can be violent and non-controlling and in a relationship with a violent and controlling partner.	Premise: An individual can be violent and controlling and in a relationship with another violent and controlling partner.
Physical Violence	Physical Violence & Coercive Control	Physical Violence	Physical Violence and Coercive Control
Gender symmetric	Male perpetuated	Female perpetrated	Gender symmetric

Johnson (2008) maintains that these four types of violence are very different and that intimate terrorism is what feminist theorists are focused on while family violence theorists are concerned with situational couple violence. Johnson asserts that to fully understand intimate partner violence, especially intimate terrorism, one must ask the right questions and focus on the context. He repeatedly distinguishes between intimate terrorism and situational couple violence, noting that intimate terrorism is linked to coercive control, connected to patriarchal violence, and is not gender symmetric (Johnson 2008).

In order to understand Johnson's typology and the intricacies of intimate partner violence, it is essential to study the role of coercive control, a pattern of behavior used to dominate and assert power over a partner. Dutton and Goodman (2005) conceptualize

coercive control within intimate partner violence by using previously developed theoretical frameworks of coercion and control. Their study centralizes coercive control within intimate partner violence, noting that physical violence alone offers a limited scope of intimate partner violence (Dutton and Goodman 2005). Further, their work recognizes that coercive control is gendered and hypothesize that gender difference may be especially distinct in terms of use and effect of coercive control. Dutton and Goodman (2005:744) assert, “Greater attention to the role of coercion would enable researchers to sort out gender differences in the very nature of topographically similar acts, as well as their effects on victims’ psychological well-being and future behavior.” In particular, factoring in the context of the control is necessary in order to understand its implications and effects.

In an effort to fully grasp the context of intimate partner violence, Johnson, as well as many other scholars and researchers, uses the *Power and Control Wheel*, also known as part of the Duluth Model. This schema was developed by staff members at the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in 1984 and is based on patterns of behavior identified by focus groups of women who had experienced intimate partner violence (Domestic Abuse Intervention Program 2017). Figure 1 depicts this wheel with its eight different spokes, each one representing different tactics of coercive control in intimate partner violence: using intimidation; using emotional abuse; using isolation; minimizing, denying, and blaming; using children; using male privilege; using economic abuse; and using coercion and threats. Violence, both sexual and physical surrounds the outside ring of the wheel, uniting all of together the control types of violence (Domestic Abuse Intervention Program 2017). For each of the eight tactics, specific examples of the types

of behavior used are listed. This wheel is especially relevant to intimate terrorism, which Johnson (2008) notes is based around four main tactics of control: threats and intimidation, monitoring, undermining the will to resist, and undermining the ability to resist. Using the *Power and Control Wheel* alongside Johnson's typologies allows for a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how different types of intimate partner violence are perpetrated.



Figure 1. Power and Control Wheel (Domestic Abuse Intervention Program 2017).

Johnson's conceptualization of the typology of intimate partner violence, that draws on the *Power and Control Wheel*, is essential to understanding intimate partner violence. Yet, many studies on intimate partner violence on college campuses have failed

to acknowledge the different types of abuse that Johnson outlines and instead often focus on physical violence (Makepeace 1981; Shook et al. 2000; Straus 2004). Further, despite accounting for control and focusing on context, Johnson's typology proves somewhat limited due to the fact that it is based on a narrow definition of violence as being only physical. Other studies have shown that intimate partner violence can include emotional, verbal, psychological, and sexual abuse without having the presence of physical abuse (Outlaw 2009). Further, Reicher (2017:839) notes that on college campuses "Intimate partner violence most commonly takes the form of psychological abuse, and reports indicate that between eighty and ninety percent of students are subjected to psychological abuse by an intimate partner during their time at a college or university." Oswalt et al. (2017) found that emotional abuse was the most commonly reported type of violence, even more prevalent than sexual assault. Johnson (2008) cautiously addresses this issue noting that patterns of coercive control can exist without physical violence, yet he does not fully integrate this element into his typology. Because of the high prevalence of non-physical abuse, especially on college campuses, it should be incorporated into studies of intimate partner violence. Non-physical coercive control is based on the premise that an individual can be controlling and not violent.

In general, non-physical intimate partner violence has been shown to be even more prevalent than physical abuse (Outlaw 2009). Additionally, research among survivors of abuse indicates that non-physical violence was perceived as even more devastating than physical abuse (Outlaw 2009; Johnson 2008). Outlaw (2009) explores different types of non-physical violence: emotional, psychological, social, and economic violence and assess how these vary by gender. While she finds that it is four times more

common than physical violence, she also notes that it is unclear how it varies by gender. Further, she notes that emotional and social abuse are more consistently related to the presence of physical violence (Outlaw 2009). Based on this research, the fifth typology, non-physical coercive control, will also be included in this study and examined in terms of gender.

Intersectionality and Intimate Partner Violence

In addition to using an expanded version of Johnson's typology to understand intimate partner violence on campuses, an intersectional lens is needed. It is important to locate systems of oppression within the structures of racism, homophobia, and class that exist in the United States in general and on college campuses in particular. Because of these interlocking forms of oppression, women from different races and socioeconomic classes may experience and deal with intimate partner violence differently. The black feminist scholar Kimberly Crenshaw first developed the concept of intersectionality noting that different forms of oppression are interlocking and work together in specific ways (Crenshaw 2004). She notes, "Intersectionality simply came from the idea that if you're standing in the path of multiple forms of exclusion, you are likely to get hit by both" (p.4). For example, black feminists have critiqued white feminists for the criminalization of intimate partner violence, which has disproportionately affected people of color (Bonnet and Whittaker 2015).

Generally, many debates have arisen over the social determinants of violence as related to race and class. While some studies suggest that intimate partner violence is correlated with poverty (Bonnet and Whittaker 2015), this connection continues to be questioned. Other research has tried to find connections between race and the prevalence

of intimate partner violence, but when controlling for socio-economic status, no correlation was found (Bonnet and Whittaker 2015). It is important as well to take into account the possibility of variation with the experience of and reaction to intimate partner violence depending on socio-economic status and race, while not oversimplifying these complexities. Raya (2014) observes “When [Johnson’s] typology is viewed within Crenshaw’s theory of intersectionality, both constructs together provide an even more robust understanding of the forces and complex structures of racism, patriarchy, and class that converge and engender discrimination and oppression” (p.215). This observation suggests that within types of intimate partner violence not only the gender dynamics but also other demographics along the lines of discrimination, such as race and class, should be examined.

As previous research suggests, Johnson’s typology must be used in order to differentiate between types of intimate partner violence as it recognizes the complexities of gender within intimate partner violence and accounts for the misunderstood debate of gender symmetry. In addition, while studies have found non-physical intimate partner violence to be prevalent on college campuses (Oswalt et al. 2017; Reicher 2017), data comprehensively examining intimate partner violence from both the lens of coercive control and physical violence across genders remains scarce. In order to examine the role of gender in intimate partner violence, an expanded version of Johnson’s typology including non-physical coercive control will be used alongside the *Power and Control Wheel*. These approaches will be combined in this study to interrogate the gendered dynamics of intimate partner violence among college students, particularly non-physical violence. By doing so, this study seeks to address the critique of feminist scholars about

the approach family violence theorists traditionally take. Further, due to the uniqueness of college campus culture and the setting, as well as the complexities of intimate partner violence across race and class, it will be attempted to be investigated in an intersectional way.

METHODS AND DATA

The Survey

A survey (see Appendix A) prompting participants to report their experience of intimate partner violence was created and distributed to students at a small liberal arts college in the United States. While feminist scholars have problematized the use of general population surveys for understanding intimate partner violence, one was used in this study in order to try to gain general understanding of intimate partner violence across demographics. Due to feminist critiques, however, it was understood that the use of a general survey may find little extreme violence because women experiencing such violence often refuse to participate in general surveys about violence (Loseke and Kurz 2005:83). Despite the use of a general survey, the questions and wording of the survey were formulated created to try to account for feminist theorists' critiques of previous research methodologies.

While the scale for measuring physical aggression used the basis of *the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS)*, which asks participants to identify the frequency of various types of physical violence experienced in their relationships, ranging from pushing to using a weapon, changes were made in how this scale was used. Many scholars have problematized the use of *the Conflict Tactics Scale* due to the fact that it often leads to apparent gender parity in reporting. Specifically, Loseke and Kurz (2005) note that

“there will be a tendency for the *CTS* to *overestimate* violence done by women and *underestimate* violence done by men,” regardless of the respondents’ gender (p. 83). Further, they note that often the *CTS* does not allow for reporting of violence by a former partner and restricts reporting to the past year. With these criticisms in mind, a few changes were made to the *CTS*. Normally, this scale asks participants to report both their own violence as well as that of their partners, but in this survey participants were only asked to report their partners’ violence. Participants additionally could report about former partners and were specifically asked to report if violence increased after relationships ended. They were also asked if they used violence as self-defense. Further, questions about intimate partner violence were not limited to the *CTS*.

As Johnson’s typology suggests, in order to understand intimate partner violence, both control and physical violence must be examined. As such, participants were also asked to report coercive control tactics used by their partners. The majority of the questions about coercive control were specifically derived from *the Controlling Behaviors Scale (CBS)* developed by Graham-Kevan and Archer (2003). This scale uses five categories of control: economic abuse, threats, intimidation, emotional abuse, and isolation, reflecting five spokes of the *Power and Control Wheel*. From the *CBS*, certain questions were modified to be more appropriate to college students. Further, in order to include the “minimizing, denying, and blaming” spoke of the *Power and Control Wheel*, two additional questions were added about this type of control. Questions relating to the last two spokes, “using male privilege” and “using children” were not included; the first because of being inherently gendered, and the second because children typically do not factor into relationships at small liberal arts colleges specifically. A random sample of

1,127 students at Colorado College were sent the survey via email. Overall, 403 surveys were completed, creating a response rate of 31.5 percent.

Measures of Intimate Partner Violence

Variables were also created to reflect reports of physical violence. Participants were marked as having experienced physical violence if they reported one or more acts of physical violence used against them. Unlike with measures for coercive control, where the participant had to report a certain frequency of a tactic to be coded as experiencing it, with physical violence if the participant reported any type at any frequency, they were coded as experiencing physical violence. As the *CTS* has been critiqued for equating all types of violence, additional analysis of specific types of violence reported was conducted. Additionally, a physical violence composite to reflect the frequency of violence was also created using all seven variables related to physical violence. This composite produced an alpha score of 0.65 for men and 0.74 for women. Alpha scores above 0.65 are considered acceptable for creating composite variables, with scores closer to one demonstrating more coherence between variables (Goforth 2015).

From the data, variables were created to measure the existence of coercive control, both by specific type and in general, and the frequency of coercive control (never, rarely, sometimes, or always). Participants were marked as having experienced each of the six types of coercive control if they reported that their partners had “sometimes” or “always” acted in a way to fit each of these six types. The number of methods of coercive control reported was also coded for each participant. Composite variables were created for each of the tactics of coercive control and alpha scores were calculated for each by gender (see Appendix B). The alpha scores for both economic

abuse and threats were both below the 0.65 threshold. In order to increase the alpha score for economic abuse, one variable was dropped, resulting in an alpha above 0.65.

Additionally, a variable was dropped for threats, yet the alpha score still remained under 0.65. Further, a composite variable was created to reflect frequency of behavior related to coercive control overall. For this composite, all 22 items related to coercive control were used, producing an alpha coefficient of 0.91 for men and 0.93 for women. Coercive control and physical violence were also shown to be correlated, and as such, a general composite score for intimate partner violence was created using the variables from both types of violence. The composite produced an alpha score of .91 for men and .93 for women. Descriptive statistics for each of the variables that were used to measure intimate partner violence appear in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Variables Used to Measure Intimate Partner Violence

	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Number of Coercive Control Tactics	1.35	1.64	0	6
Presence of Coercive Control	0.59	0.49	0	1
Frequency Coercive Control	1.34	0.42	1	4
Presence of Physical Violence	0.11	0.37	0	1
Frequency of Physical Violence	1.04	0.18	1	4
Frequency of Intimate Partner Violence	1.28	0.35	1	4

Methods

Only respondents who had been in intimate relationships were included in this analysis. For physical violence and each of the types of coercive control tactics, chi-square analysis was used to determine if there was a difference in reporting of the existence of these types of violence between men and women. Further, t- tests were run to see if there was a difference in the frequency of the reporting of coercive control and physical violence between men and women using the composite variables. Both

variables for coercive control and physical violence violated assumptions of normality and equal sample size for groups. As such, a non-parametric alternative, the Wilcoxon Rank-Sum test, was also run. Both t-tests and ANOVA tests were run in order to compare other demographic variables: race, sexual orientation, class, and citizenship status. The same assumptions were also violated and the non-parametric alternative Kruskal-Wallis Rank test was additionally used. In order for results to be reported, both the original tests and their nonparametric alternatives had to confirm statistical significance.

RESULTS

Demographics

Demographic statistics for the participants of the survey and for those who specifically indicated they were in a relationship appear in Table 3. A large majority of survey respondents (70.0%) were women, which is over representative of the student body. Previous research has shown that women often have higher response rates for surveys than men (Smith 2008) and the topic of the survey, which women may have thought related to them specifically, could have exacerbated this trend. Respondents were also predominately white, which is reflective of the student body at the college studied. Respondents were in all four years of their schooling and had a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds and sexual orientations. Both coercive control and physical violence were reported across all demographics. Of the respondents, 66.6 percent said that they had been in an intimate relationship. In general, respondents who have been in relationships are demographically similar to the entire sample and there was no statistically significant difference between gender, race, and sexual orientation and being in a relationship. There was a statistically significant difference in year in school, and citizenship status,

and being in a relationship, with juniors having the highest percentage of being in a relationship compared to other years and citizens having a higher percentage of being in a relationship than non-citizens. While it is interesting to acknowledge this difference in being a relationship, reporting of intimate partner violence was still tested in the same way for these populations.

Table 3. Survey Respondents Demographics (N=389).

Variables	Total % (n)	Relationship % (n)
Gender	100.00 (387)	100.00 (255)
Female	70.03 (271)	69.02 (176)
Male	27.13 (105)	27.24 (70)
Non-binary	2.84 (11)	3.53 (9)
Race	100.00 (388)	100.00 (257)
White	63.66 (247)	66.54 (171)
Black	3.35 (13)	3.11 (8)
Latinx/Hispanic	11.08 (43)	12.06 (31)
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.80 (7)	2.33 (6)
Asian	17.27 (67)	12.84 (33)
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.52 (2)	0.39 (1)
Other	2.32 (9)	2.72 (7)
Year	100.00 (387)	100.00 (257)
First Year	28.42 (110)	23.35 (60)
Sophomore	21.45 (83)	19.84 (51)
Junior	26.36 (102)	31.13 (80)
Senior	23.77 (92)	25.68 (66)
Financial Aid	100.00 (389)	100.00 (257)
Full Financial Aid	12.34 (48)	10.51 (27)
More than Half	22.37 (87)	21.01 (54)
Less than Half	13.37 (52)	15.18 (39)
No Financial Aid	51.93 (202)	53.31 (137)
Sexual Orientation	100.00 (389)	100.00 (257)
Heterosexual	68.89 (268)	66.54 (171)
Lesbian/Gay	6.17 (24)	6.61 (17)
Bisexual	18.25 (71)	19.46 (50)
Other	6.68 (26)	7.39 (119)
U.S. Citizenship Status	100.00 (388)	100.00 (270)
Citizen	89.18 (346)	91.83 (236)
Non-Citizen	10.82 (42)	8.17 (21)

Intimate Partner Violence on College Campuses

Reports of intimate partner violence were widespread among these respondents. Specifically, high levels of non-physical intimate partner violence were found, confirming previous research on college students (Outlaw 2009), while physical violence was much less reported. The six tactics of coercive control derived from the *Power and Control Wheel* (minimizing, denying, and blaming; isolation; intimidation; economic abuse; emotional abuse; and threats) were reported across gender, race, class, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, and citizenship status. Of participants in relationships, only 40.6 percent reported that controlling behavior never or only rarely occurred, whereas 19.9 percent reported that three or more types of controlling tactics were used sometimes or always. This means that for the survey respondents as a whole, only 60.6 percent experienced no form of coercive control and 13.2 percent of all respondents reported three or more tactics of control.

Generally, different tactics were reported at different rates. Isolation was the most commonly reported type of coercive control while threats were the least common. Table 4 depicts the presence or absence of reported behavior related to each tactic of coercive control as well as the presence or absence of physical violence. As noted in Table 4, physical violence was much less reported. Of participants in relationships, 88.8 percent of respondents reported no physical abuse and only 11.2 percent reported that any occurred. As compared to the sample in general, only 7.0 percent of respondents reported physical violence. Of the abuse reported, much of it was not extreme. No one reported being “beat-up” or threatened with a weapon, and instead being pushed, grabbed, or shoved was the most commonly reported behavior.

Table 4. Reporting of Coercive Control Tactics and Physical Violence (Scale 1-4)

	Mean	SD	Sometimes/Always % (n)
Minimizing, Denying, and Blaming	1.54	0.76	23.42 (59)
Isolation	1.44	0.60	38.10 (96)
Intimidation	1.35	0.31	26.57 (59)
Economic Abuse	1.28	0.42	23.83 (61)
Emotional Abuse	1.28	0.52	16.67 (42)
Threats	1.13	0.31	11.37 (29)
Physical Violence	1.04	0.18	11.24 (28)

Beyond coercive control and physical violence, this study found low levels of seeking help and reporting. No one in the study, whether they reported physical abuse or not, reported seeking medical attention. While medical attention may have been unwarranted due to lack of serious injury, other reasons for not seeking help, such as embarrassment or fear, also could have prevented participants from getting medical attention. Additionally, respondents also reported low levels of telling people outside their relationship about intimate partner violence. Of those that reported three or more tactics of coercive control, only 16.2 percent told someone about it, and of those that experienced physical abuse, only 22.2 percent told someone about it. Further, no statistically significant difference in reporting was found between men and women.

Gendered Dynamics of Intimate Partner Violence

Both the existence of coercive control tactics and physical violence as well as the frequency of each of these types of violence were examined by gender. Figure 2 shows the percent reported for people in relationships of each tactic of coercive control used, as well as physical violence for women and men. The bar graph is ordered according to the mean values from highest to lowest of each tactic as depicted in table 4. Interestingly, although “minimizing, denying, and blaming” was reported at the highest frequencies, it

was reported by fewer participants than “isolation.” In general, men reported tactics of coercive control and physical violence slightly more frequently, with the exception of the tactic of minimizing, denying, and blaming, which women reported more frequently. As noted with previous studies, when general survey data is used, there often appears to be no statistically significant difference in reporting of physical abuse between women and men (Bonnet and Whittaker 2015); the same was found here. This lack of difference could possibly be due to the fact that men’s violence is often underreported while women’s violence is over reported (Loseke and Kurz 2005:83). Additionally, there was no relationship between gender in the reporting of the frequency of control tactics, physical violence, or both types of violence.

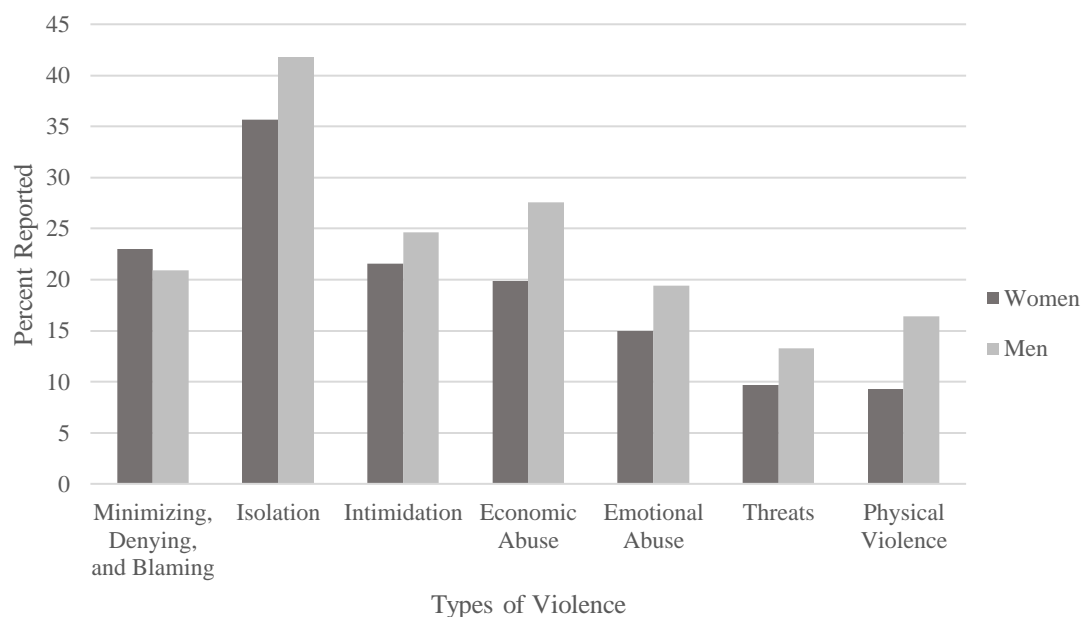


Figure 2. Types of Intimate Partner Violence by Gender.

While no difference was found between experiencing violence during a relationship, there was a significant difference between men and women with reported escalation in violence when the respondent tried to end their relationships with their partners. Overall, 30 people (11.7% of people in relationships and 25.6% of people who

reported breaking up), reported some type of escalation of violence after ending their relationships. The most common type of escalation reported was that their partner did not respect their space. It was also reported that partners became violent, increased their violence, and stalked respondents. A statistically significant difference in the reporting of type of escalation between men and women ($X^2(3, N=30) = 11.60; p=0.01$) was found. In our sample of 30 people who reported escalation, men were the only ones who reported just stalking, while women reported multiple types of escalation and a much higher rate of not respecting boundaries. The strength of the relationship between gender and escalation was fairly strong ($V=0.62$). Table 5 depicts the types of escalation reported between women and men.

Table 5. Type of Escalation after Break-Up by Gender (Percent (n))

	Did Not Respect Boundaries	Stalked	Became Physically Violent	Two or More of the Previous
Women	80.95 (17)	0.00 (0)	4.76 (1)	14.29 (3)
Men	55.56 (5)	44.44 (4)	0.00 (0)	0.00(0)

Johnson's Typology

Beyond investigating the general prevalence of intimate partner violence and examining differences in reporting between men and women, tests were run in order to analyze Johnson's typology of intimate partner violence. Reporting of frequency of coercive control was shown to be related to reporting of frequency of violence. The correlation between frequency of coercive control and physical violence ($r=.57, p<.00001$) was positive, moderately strong, and statistically significant for both men and women, and even stronger for just women ($r=.63, p<.0001$). Figure 3 visually represents the data as well as the regression line of best fit for the relationship between coercive control and physical violence. As Figure 3 demonstrates, coercive control was reported

common for both college men and women. Since physical violence reporting was low, intimate terrorism, defined as both coercive control and physical abuse, was also rarely reported. In general, 26 people total (10.12% of people in relationships), 10 men and 15 women and 1 non-binary person, reported experiencing both coercive control and physical violence.

Reporting of resistance to violence was somewhat low. Of those who reported physical violence, 18.18 percent of men and 12.50 percent of women said they had to use force to resist. Surprisingly, there was no statistically significant difference in reporting of violent resistance between men and women. Interestingly, a few respondents (four men and ten women) reported having to use violent resistance even though they did not report any type of physical violence. In general, these findings do not support Johnson's assertion that violent resistance is mainly used by women and demonstrates that violent resistance in general is not very common, at least among this demographic.

Intimate Partner Violence Across Other Demographics

While this study found no statistically significant difference between reporting of intimate partner violence between men and women, there was statistically significant variation in reporting of frequency of intimate partner violence by gender when considering those who identified as outside the gender binary compared to cis-gendered people, as well as between people who identified as heterosexual and people who identified as non-heterosexual (lesbian, gay, bisexual). Due to low numbers of non-heterosexual people, the categories of lesbian/gay, bisexual, and other were all combined to run statistical tests. For coercive control, an ANOVA test shows there to be a significant difference in means by gender ($F(2, 247) = 3.58, p=0.03$). A Bonferroni

comparison of means shows the statistically significant differences to be between the means female ($M= 1.32$) and non-binary people ($M=1.69$). A Kruskal-Wallis Rank Test confirmed this statistically significant difference. Further a t-test showed that there was a significant effect of sexual orientation on reporting of coercive control ($t(262)=-2.68$, $p=0.01$), with heterosexual people ($M= 1.29$) reporting lower levels of experiencing coercive control than non-heterosexual people ($M= 1.44$) on average. The effect size of sexual orientation for this comparison was moderate (*Cohen's D*=-0.34). Non-parametric alternatives supported this statistically significant difference.

For physical violence, an ANOVA test shows there to be a significant difference in means across gender ($F(2, 244) = 6.37$, $p =0.002$.) A Bonferroni comparison of means shows the statistically significant differences to be between the means of male ($M = 1.06$) and non-binary ($M = 1.25$) as well as female ($M = 1.03$) and non-binary. A Kruskal-Wallis Rank Test confirmed this statistically significant difference. While this difference exists, there is a small effect size of gender on reporting of coercive control ($\eta^2= 0.05$). Non-parametric t-tests demonstrated that physical violence did not vary in a statistically significant way for sexual orientation.

Additionally, for overall intimate partner violence, a measure of both coercive control and physical violence, statistically significant differences were also found for gender and sexual orientation. An ANOVA test shows there to be a significant difference in means across gender ($F(2, 247) = 4.96$, $p= 0.01$.) A Bonferroni comparison of means shows the statistically significant differences to be between the means of female ($M = 1.26$) and non-binary people ($M=1.63$) and male ($M=1.29$) and non-binary people. A Kruskal-Wallis Rank Test confirmed this statistically significant difference. Figure 4

displays the distribution of the violence composite, with higher scores signifying higher levels of coercive control, for men, women, and non-binary people in a box plot. There was a statistically significant effect of sexual orientation on reporting of violence ($t(262)=-2.82, p=0.01$) with heterosexual people ($M=1.23$) reporting lower levels of violence than non-heterosexual people ($M= 1.36$). The effect size of sexual orientation for this comparison was moderate (*Cohen's D*=-0.35). In Figure 5, the violence composite scores are displayed for heterosexual and non-heterosexual identifying people.

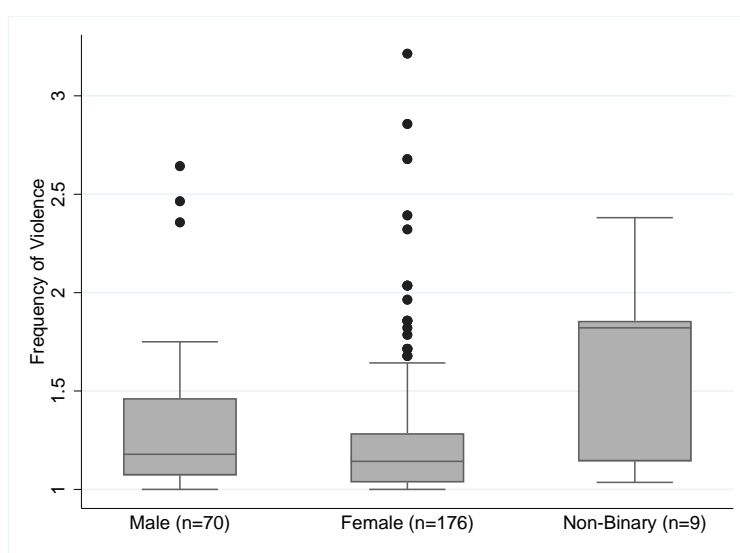


Figure 4. Comparison of Intimate Partner Violence Across Genders

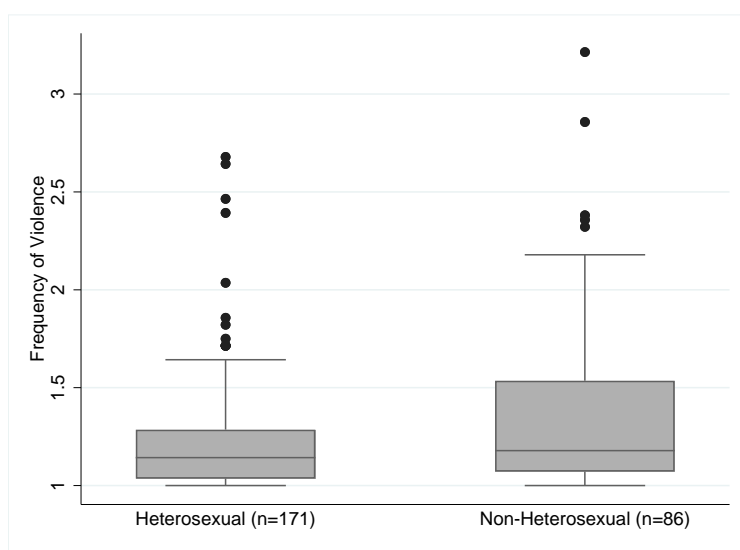


Figure 5. Comparison of Intimate Partner Violence Between Sexualities

Tests were also run to compare intimate partner violence across other demographics. No statistically significant differences were found between reporting of coercive control, physical violence, and overall intimate partner violence with regard to race, year, socioeconomic status, or citizenship.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Overall participants reported high levels of intimate partner violence, specifically non-physical coercive control, demonstrating the importance of including a fifth type of intimate partner violence, non-physical coercive control, in Johnson's Typology. About 40 percent of all respondents and about 60 percent of people in relationships reported that some type of coercive control occurred in their relationship. Physical violence was much less reported at about 7 percent of all respondents and around 11 percent of people in relationships. Generally, little support of violent resistance and common couple violence was found in this population. While the lack of reporting of physical violence could reflect that this type of violence is less common in college student populations, it could also be a result of the likelihood of women experiencing extreme violence choosing not to participate in the survey (Loseke and Kurz 2005: 83). Johnson's typology of intimate partner violence was investigated by gender, and no statistically significant differences were found between men and women with the exception of escalation after a relationship ended. Certain populations, however, specifically non-binary people and those who identified as non-heterosexual, did report higher frequency of intimate partner violence.

The prevalence of coercive control, combined with the low frequencies of seeking help or telling others when violence did occur, suggests that intimate partner violence needs to be addressed at colleges. More education about intimate partner violence,

especially expanded beyond notions of physical violence, should be provided to students. Just as schools are implementing more comprehensive training on sexual assault and sexual safety, training about intimate partner violence and healthy relationships should be included. Further, barriers to seeking help, specifically the stigmatization of intimate partner violence, should be addressed and students should be informed that Title IX can also help them in cases of gendered intimate partner violence.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Generally, more research needs to be done about intimate partner violence, especially within college student populations. The context of a small liberal arts school was unique, and as such, research on college students at different types of universities should be conducted. Additionally, it is important to not generalize intimate partner violence in one context to another, and therefore more research among non-college students should be conducted using the expanded version of Johnson's typology developed here.

While scholars have problematized general survey data as a method to study intimate partner violence (Kimmel 2002), through using a general survey while also addressing concerns with *CTS*, this study attempted to gain a general understanding of the prevalence and types of intimate partner violence on college campuses. Despite specifically addressing issues with the *CTS* and general survey data by using an expanded version of Johnson's typology, and including the *Power and Control Wheel* as a basis for creating the survey, issues with studying intimate partner violence persisted. As feminist researchers have noted, general survey data, especially ones that use the *CTS* scale, often falsely exhibit gender parity in the perpetration of intimate partner violence for a variety

of reasons, including men's violence being underreported and women's violence being over reported (Loseke and Kurz 2005:83). Perhaps additional issues surrounding general survey data could result from those respondents who Johnson might categorize as intimate terrorists, those who would likely misreport their behavior and their partners' behavior. Because of these issues, the findings of no difference in reporting of intimate partner violence between men and women should be taken with caution.

Future research must find ways to account for issues in reporting between men and women. While feminist scholars rightly critique general survey data as a method of studying intimate partner violence, family scholars who focus only on women in shelters or court cases is also important as it ignore large parts of the population which may be experiencing intimate partner violence. While these two sides offer important critiques, new methods must still be developed to effectively and accurately study this phenomenon. There is a need for creativity and innovation in how to study and understand such a complex issue, one that continues to be pervasive in a highly gendered and unequal society and varies within different social contexts. Mixed methodologies that include both survey data and follow-up interviews could perhaps work to uncover a more nuanced understandings of intimate partner violence, specifically focusing on the motivation, initiation, and consequences of violence. Further, gender dynamics should be centralized in future research in order to understand how gender norms intersect with violence. Additionally, given the importance of context of violence, more systemic-level research should be conducted, especially at colleges due to their unique settings.

Moreover, whether or not intimate terrorism, or intimate partner violence more generally, are experienced equally by women and men, it is important to continue to

examine the gendered context that this violence occurs in and its gendered impact on both men and women. Specifically, Loseke and Kurz (2005) observe that there is a history and continued acceptance of normalizing men's violence against women (p. 85). Further, the systems of oppression and marginalization of women make them more vulnerable to economic dependence on men and allow them fewer resources for leaving violent relationships. Moreover, research shows that women are disproportionately affected physically in terms of injuries and mentally, in terms of mental health implications by intimate partner violence (Loseke and Kurz 2005: 89). While more attention should be paid to intimate partner violence on college campuses and more education on healthy relationships is clearly needed for people of all genders, it is necessary to continue to specifically support and assist those who identify as women. Further, the implications of the gendered context suggest that in order to address intimate partner violence fully, sexism and misogyny, as well as toxic masculinity, must also be addressed. A systemic shift in how our society understands violence and gender is needed.

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APPENDIX A.

Intimate Partner Violence Survey

What is your gender? (check all that apply)

- Male
- Female
- Non-Binary/Gender non-conforming
- Other _____

What is your race/ethnicity? (check all that apply)

- White
- Black or African American
- Latinx/Hispanic
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Other

What year are you at Colorado College?

- First Year
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior

What level of financial aid do you receive?

- Full financial aid
- More than half
- Less than half
- No financial aid

What is your sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual
- Lesbian/Gay
- Bisexual
- Other _____

Are you a U.S. Citizen?

- Yes
- No

Are you on a club or varsity sports team?

- Yes, a varsity team
- Yes, a club team
- No

What varsity sports do you play? (check all that apply)

- Hockey
- Soccer
- Lacrosse
- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Track and Field
- Swimming and Diving
- Tennis
- Cross Country

What club sports do you play? (check all that apply)

- Soccer
- Rugby
- Ultimate Frisbee
- Baseball
- Figure Skating
- Equestrian
- Climbing
- Cycling
- Indoor Track and Field
- Ice Hockey
- Nordic Skiing

Are you in a sorority or fraternity?

- Yes
- No
- I was in the past, but I no longer am.

Have you been in an intimate/romantic relationship while at Colorado College? (If so, please describe, ex: long distance boyfriend/consistent hook-up/dating for a bit but not exclusive)

- Yes _____
- No
- Unsure

How long was your longest intimate/romantic relationship?

- Less than one semester
- Less than one year
- One year or more

The following questions will ask you about the behaviors of your partner in a romantic relationship. Please respond using the longest/most serious relationship you have had while in college. (*Participants were asked to indicate never, rarely, sometimes or always for the following questions*)

1. Did your partner disapprove of you working or studying?
2. Did your partner try and prevent or make difficult you working or studying?
3. Did your partner feel it was necessary to have control of your money?
4. Did your partner give you an allowance or require you to ask for money?
5. Did your partner make or carry out threats to harm you?
6. Did your partner threaten to leave you or commit suicide?
7. Did your partner encourage you to do illegal things you would not otherwise do?
8. Did your partner use looks, actions, and/or gestures to change your behavior?
9. Did your partner make you afraid when this was done?
10. Did your partner damage property when annoyed/angry?
11. Did your partner put you down when they felt the you were too confident or self-assured?
12. Did your partner put you down in front of others (friends, family, roommates)?
13. Did your partner tell you that you were going crazy?
14. Did your partner call you unpleasant or demeaning names?
15. Did you partner insist that things in the past happened in a way that you remember differently or have no recall of?
16. Did you partner refuse to admit shortcomings or inconsiderate actions towards you?
17. Did your partner restrict the amount of time the you spent with friends and/or family?
18. If you went out without your partner, did your they want to know where you went and who you spoke to?
19. Did your partner limit your activities outside of the relationship?
20. Did you partner feel suspicious or jealous of you?
21. Was this used as a reason to monitor and control your activities?
22. Did your partner check or monitor your texts, emails, or social media?

The following questions ask about things that your partner might have done when you had a conflict. Taking all disagreements into account, not just the most serious ones,

indicate how frequently your partner did the following during a conflict. (*Participants were asked to indicate never, rarely, sometimes or always for the following questions*)

1. Your partner threw something at you.
2. Your partner pushed, grabbed, or shoved you.
3. Your partner slapped you.
4. Your partner kicked, bit, or hit you with a fist.
5. Your partner "beat you up."
6. Your partner threatened you with a weapon (e.g. a knife or gun).
7. Your partner used a weapon (e.g. a knife or gun).

Did you ever seek medical attention as a result of the force or violence your partner used?

Did you ever tell a friend, family member, or official person (the SARC, a counselor, etc) about what was going on in your relationship? If so, please specify.

- Yes _____
- No

Were you ever required to use force to resist or defend yourself from your partner?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If so, what types of force were you required to use? (check all that apply)

- I never had to use force.
- Shoving or throwing objects
- Kicking, hitting, or biting
- A weapon (e.g. a knife or gun)
- Other (please specify)

Regarding the relationship that you referred to in order to answer the previous questions, are you still together with the person?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

When you broke up did any of the following occur? (check all that apply)

- Your partner did not respect your boundaries/space.
- Your partner became violent (used violence for the first time)
- Your partner increased their violence (was violent in a way they previously had not been)
- Your partner stalked you.

APPENDIX B

*Alpha Scores**Table 6.* Alpha Scores for Coercive Control Tactics

	Overall	Men	Women
Minimizing, Denying, and Blaming	.99	.73	1.00
Isolation	.86	.83	.88
Intimidation	.65	.47	.69
Emotional	.84	.84	.82
Emotional	.84	.84	.82
Threats	.44	.39	.49