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You belong to me! Meta-analytic review of the use of male control and dominance against women in intimate partner violence

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1. Introduction

Violence against women is a social and public health problem and an expression of extreme gender inequality (O'Leary, Foran, & Cohen, 2013). It is a form of gender-based aggression because it is directly linked to the membership of perpetrator and victims in distinct gender groups (Krahé, 2018). In this study, we specifically focus on intimate partner violence (IPV) defined by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2016) as any act of violence committed by a male intimate partner or ex-partner whose consequence is either physical, sexual or psychological harm directed towards females. Global figures in more than 80 countries show that men are the most common perpetrators of violence in heterosexual intimate relationships. During their lifetime between 15% and 71% of women may suffer physical or sexual violence (WHO, 2016). Between 12% and 58% may be victims of psychological violence perpetrated by their partner (Heise, Pallitto, García-Moreno, & Clark, 2019).

Although both sexes are at risk of homicide from IPV, and in fact bi-directional violence is the most common pattern of IPV (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Misra, Selwyn, and Rohling, 2012), females are approximately five times more likely than males to be killed by an intimate partner (Cooper & Smith, 2011). Two meta-analyses (Hamberger, 2005; Hamberger & Larsen, 2015) with clinical samples found that women were more likely to suffer more serious injuries, experience more negative emotional consequences, and live with more fear. Women were more likely to use violence as self-defense or retaliation. Men compared to women were more likely to initiate violent acts and use violence as a way of inducing fear, domination and control. Although we recognize that there are similarities in both sexes and that they can use the same strategies in certain situations (i.e., women using control and men self-defense), due to

the abovementioned differences, we agree with Larsen and Hamberger (2015) that this type of violence can be analysed as a gender phenomena.

Authors such as Okeke-Ihejirika, Salami and Amodu (2019) have mentioned that the analysis of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women (IPVAW) dynamics has been studied mainly from the perspective of battered women. Important as this is, exploring the use of power from the standpoint of those men who commit these violent acts would present us with additional information which could contribute to a more global understanding of IPVAW (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). Although the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC; 2013) has identified numerous individual, relationship, community and societal level factors associated with IPV perpetration, the focus of this study is on those factors more closely related to gender dynamics. Therefore, the interest of this study is analyzing the relationship between IPVAW, control and dominance from the perspective of male perpetrators.

An important early approach to understanding IPVAW based on concepts such as power, control and dominance originated in battered women's communities and shelters within a feminist and sociopolitical activism perspective (Schechter, 1982). Maybe due to these origins, and although for decades these terms have been used as a fruitful guide for research, legislation and assessment, it is also common to find a non-differentiated use of the terms. For instance, from a conceptual perspective, and although Hamberger, Larsen & Lehrer (2017) state that there could be some differences in these constructs these same authors include the concepts under the term control. Empirically, Ruiz-Hernández, García-Jiménez, Llor-Esteban & Godoy-Fernández (2015) use a dominating scale although they refer to a measure of control. Due to this conceptual and measurement confusion authors such as Hamberger et al. (2017) have tried to develop a more precise definition of the concept of control.

This current study, based on published empirical articles, aims to present empirical data on the possible different dynamics involved in the relationship between the use of power, control and dominance and IPVAW. The only previous available meta-analytical review was conducted by Stith, Smith, Penn, Ward, and Tritt (2004) presenting limited results for control, while dominance (i.e. traditional sex-role ideology) was a moderate risk factor for men using physical violence against their partners. Due to these limited results, time elapsed since this review and the need to more thoroughly study the impact of dominance and control on IPVAW, this study provides a meta-analytical summary of the existing literature and identifies gaps and future directions for more effective male abuser programs (Arias, Arce & Vilariño, 2013; Eckhardt et al., 2013) and the promotion of gender equality in the fight against IPVAW.

1.1. IPVAW and Power

Different studies have shown that there is an association between men's use of power in a relationship and IPVAW (Kar & O'Leary, 2013; Karakurt & Cumbie, 2012). Within the context of the present study, and following Dunbar and Burgoon (2005), we define power as the capacity or potential that men have to influence the behavior, beliefs and attitudes of women imposing their will. It is a privilege given to men and legitimized by the social and cultural system.

In feminist perspectives, power is central in any analysis that aims to reflect on the subordinated role of women in patriarchal societies and the threats to their wellbeing. Patriarchy is a system of social structures and cultural practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women to maintain power and control over them (DeKeseredy & MacLeod, 1997; Sultana, 2010). Patriarchy does not directly lead to

committing IPVAW, what it may provide is an adequate context for enhancing attitudes and values that can trigger IPVAW. Feminist informed theory acknowledges the role of individual lifecourse factors in engaging in acts of violence towards a partner, but also emphasises the importance of community and macro-level factors in defining levels of abuse (Heise & Kotsadam, 2015). As Saar (2010) mentions power operates on individuals as individuals within a certain social system and context. Our concept of power in this study is linked to the idea of “power over” seen as the power to control female’s behavior, and dominate or manipulate them (see Miller & Cummins, 1992; Yoder & Kahn, 1992).

1.2. Power in IPVAW: Control and Dominance

Power manifests itself in interpersonal relationships through dominance and the ability to control a partner’s actions (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2011; Dobash & Dobash, 1979). For authors studying domestic violence such as Gage and Hutchinson (2006), based on the works of Pulerwitz, Gortmaker and DeJong (2000), power is a multidimensional construct with two components: control (specific features of the relationship, for instance, the ability to exercise authority in the relation) and dominance (ability to influence the decisions, desires, and needs of the other person).

In this study, we define dominance as the desire to maintain hierarchical and inequitable social relations that allow men to exercise their authority, disparagement (i.e. devaluation of a woman’s self-image and self-concept) and superiority over one’s female partner in a relationship. Control is defined as the restriction of a female partner’s independence (e.g. economic, social, or daily activities) while also possibly uttering threats, and enhancing a woman’s personal and social isolation.

From a range of theoretical perspectives such as feminist theories, men's dominance is a non-restricted and unfair power imbalance that reflects an existing social power over women (McCammon, 2018). Cultural expectations regarding interaction patterns and male dominance in heterosexual relationships lead to situations in which females find themselves in a disadvantaged position when there are violent conflicts with one's male partner (Anderson, 2005). We consider that dominance at the societal level is one of the crucial factors contributing to, and maintaining, women's abuse at an individual level (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). The social concept of dominance may also reflect on other individual factors such as gender role disparities, or gender role expectations (Cvancara & Kinsey, 2009); beliefs or cognitions about dominance (Kelly, Dubbs & Barlow, 2015; Moyano & Sierra, 2016); personality traits (Edens, 2009; Stanford, Houston & Baldrige, 2008); feelings and motivations (Abbey, Parkhill, BeShears, Clinton-Sherrod, & Zawacki, 2006; Lyndon, White, & Kadlec, 2007; Smith, Parrott, Swartout & Tharpe, 2015); behaviors (Gilchrist et al., 2015; Kar & O'Leary, 2013; Karakurt & Cumbie, 2012; Lawson, 2008; Lawson & Brossart, 2013; Schnurr, Mahatmya & Basche, 2013; Straus, 2008) (see table 1).

Control refers to a dynamic process linking a demand with a credible threatened negative consequence for noncompliance (Hamberger et al., 2017). To achieve this credibility the male perpetrator must have "reward power" (Dutton & Goodman, 2005). From a Gender and Power Theory perspective (Connell, 1987), a series of significant processes (e.g. gender division of labour and power, and emotional and social displays) result in a series of inequalities based on gender that restrict women's control over everyday practice (Wingood & DiClemente, 2002). In this study control has been classified as a type of behavior (Cho, 2012; Connors, Mills, & Gray, 2013; Fulu, Jewkes, Roselli, & Garcia-Moreno, 2013; Hamel, Jones, Dutton, & Graham-Kevan,

2015; Robertson & Murachver, 2011; Ross, 2011; Ruiz Hernández et al., 2015; Yount, Miedema, Martin, Crandall, & Nave, 2016); an attribution (Ogle & Clements, 2007); or a personality trait (Cvancara & Kinsey, 2009; Fowler & Westen, 2011) (see table 1).

Lin (1982) stated that resources such as control, embedded within social connections, play a significant interaction role between social structure (dominance as a cultural construct) and the individual (IPVAW). Empirical evidence suggests that control-seeking mediates the relationship between male dominance and physical IPVAW (Whitaker, 2013). This result suggests that although in numerous theoretical and empirical studies the terms control and dominance seem to be interchangeable, they could actually exhibit different roles, and that seeking control plays a pivotal role in dominance having an effect on IPVAW. This does not imply that male dominance is irrelevant but that its effect on IPVAW depends on control seeking.

1.3. Levels of analysis of control and dominance

Research on control, dominance and their relationship with IPVAW can be studied by focusing on different levels of analysis depending on how these studies operationalize the concepts and the type of sample included in the original research.

We have established the different levels of analysis of the constructs based on Stith et al's study (2004) using Dutton's (1995) nested ecological theory on partner violence. In this current meta-analysis, and due to the nature of the control and dominance measures used in the original studies, we focus the results on two levels: microsystem (relational) and ontogenetic (individual). Within the relational level we included studies that measure both concepts as behaviors. Or in other words, as interaction patterns and relationship dynamics in which a male partner or ex-partner tries to control or dominate a female partner (Cho, 2012; Connors et al., 2013; Gilchrist

et al., 2015; Fulu et al., 2013; Hamel et al., 2015; Kar & OLeary, 2013; Karakurt & Cumbie, 2012; Lawson, 2008; Lawson & Brossart, 2013; Robertson & Murachver, 2011; Ross, 2011; Ruiz Hernández et al., 2015; Schnurr et al., 2013; Straus, 2008; Yount et al., 2016). Within the individual level, we have classified studies that consider control and dominance as a set of internal motivations, cognitions, desires or emotional responses, perceptions, beliefs or personality traits (Abbey et al., 2006; Cvancara & Kinsey, 2009; Edens, 2009; Fowler & Westen, 2011; Kelly et al., 2015; Lyndon et al. 2007; Moyano & Sierra, 2016; Ogle & Clements, 2007; Smith et al., 2015; Stanford et al., 2008) (see table 1).

Another important distinction is based on Straus' (1993) assertion that data from clinical samples yield different findings than those from community samples. Large-scale survey research using community or national samples conclude that in these cases relationship violence is not based on a dynamic of coercion and control, is less severe, and predominantly a product of partner conflicts and arguments (Johnson, 2006). Clinical samples, on the other hand, include men who have abused their partners and are, or have been, in treatment directly related to IPVAW. It is in these samples that violence is characterized by power, control and dominance and more often results in injuries to women (Dutton, 2005). Nevertheless, few studies include the comparison of results from these two types of samples (Capaldi, Knoble, Shortt, & Kim, 2012).

Numerous empirical studies using community and clinical samples, and individual or relational levels of analysis have shown that IPVAW is positively associated with the use of control or dominance (Abbey et al., 2006; Gilchrist et al., 2015; Kar & O'Leary, 2013; Ruiz-Hernández et al., 2015; Stanford et al., 2008; Yount et al., 2016). Nevertheless, the two control studies included in the meta-analytic review conducted by Stith et al. (2004) show that lower levels of decision-making power and

perception of control correlated with more IPVAV. Kaura and Allen (2004) found that individuals who may have socio-structural power but feel powerless in their relationship are more likely to perpetrate IPV within that relationship. Ogle and Clements (2007) also found that those reporting lower desire for control and low perceived control for relationship disagreements reported perpetrating higher levels of physical IPVAV.

In this study, conducting a meta-analysis we research the importance of control and dominance as separate constructs associated with IPVAV. The general aim of this study is to present empirical evidence pertaining to the relationship of these constructs and IPVAV to further the understanding and treatment of violence directed towards one's female intimate partner.

1.4.Aims of the study

The specific aims of this study are the following:

- 1.- Perform a meta-analytic review of the literature regarding control and dominance and its association with IPVAV.
- 2.- Examine if there are differences in the effect sizes found for each of these variables depending on the level of analysis (individual or relational), and the type of sample (clinical or community).

The following hypotheses are attested:

- a) Based on the previously mentioned literature, results of the average estimated effect size of control and dominance are expected to support the different role of each construct in IPVAV. Control mediates the relation between the dominant male social structure and IPVAV (Whitaker, 2013). Accordingly, in this study control is expected to be a variable more strongly associated to IPVAV. Dominance as a

social organizing feature plays an important role in predicting men's violence towards women, although its relationship with IPVAW is lower.

- b) Regarding the control studies, we expect to find differences due to the type of sample and the level of analysis. Nevertheless, these differences should not be found in the dominance studies due to its social and cultural origin. In this case, its cross-sectional nature affects all levels of analysis and is independent of the type of sample studied.

2. Methodology

2.1. Search strategy

The search for articles was managed by analyzing a series of relevant data bases (Web of Science, Scopus, Medline, Psycnet, ProQuest, Pubmed, and Wiley Online Library). The search strings in relation to power, control, dominance, and IPV used a systematic combination of the following terms: *power* and *aggressors perpetrators* or *offenders* and *intimate partner violence*; *control* and *perpetrators* or *offenders* and *intimate partner violence*; *dominance* and *aggressors* or *perpetrators* or *offenders* and *intimate partner violence*.

The inclusion of studies in this meta-analysis was based on the following criteria: a) studies should analyze or examine the relationship between male use of control and/or dominance and physical, psychological or sexual IPVAW; b) studies necessarily included enough quantitative data to at least calculate one effect size; c) the selected studies were found in relevant and amply cited databases with no local or regional restrictions; d) studies were published in a peer and expert reviewed journal; e) studies included a sample of male participants who attack, assault or batter their female partners and were of legal age (over 18 years). This general pattern was established

according to the most used criminal responsibility age defined across different countries; f) studies were published between the years 2004 and 2016. This range was established based on the last published meta-analytical review that analyzed the association between risk factors such as controlling behaviors, dominance (traditional sex-role ideology) and IPVAV perpetration (Stith et al., 2004).

The database search produced a total number of 867 studies. In addition, we also performed a cross-reference search by analyzing the references of the selected studies. This yielded another 3 potential studies. Finally, the authors of 5 studies deemed to be potentially relevant for the meta-analysis due to their theoretical assumptions and methodological relevance were contacted. The abstracts of all these studies were analyzed by 3 experts. All studies were examined independently in accordance with the inclusion criteria explained before.

Each step of the process of study selection for inclusion in this meta-analysis was made using PRISMA statement protocols (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & The PRISMA Group, 2009). Although the bibliographic search retrieved 875 potential studies for inclusion within the meta-analysis, 732 were deemed non-relevant because they did not specifically address partner and intimate relationship violence (468) or were qualitative studies (264). A further 118 studies were not included because: a) 37 did not contain sufficient quantitative results or its measurement was not appropriate; b) samples in 11 studies were composed of under-age participants; c) in a further 11 studies data referred to *teen dating violence*; d) 43 studies did not establish relationships between the selected variables; and e) 16 studies only included female participants. The final number of studies included in the meta-analysis was 25, of which 14 referred to dominance, 10 to control and 1 to both dominance and control.

2.2. Coding of the studies

Two blind judges (psychology professionals not directly involved in the study) independently classified all studies using the definitions proposed by the research team into control/dominance, individual/relational and community/clinical studies and also analysing each of the items on the scales. In case of conflict a third expert, also non-related to the research team, was called upon to decide upon its inclusion within a category. Three studies, Gilchrist et al. (2015), Kar and O'Leary (2013), and Robertson and Murachver (2011) posed certain problems because they use different items from the same Psychological Maltreatment of Women Scale (Tolman, 1989, 1999). The first two studies construe the scale as an index of dominance while the latter defines it as a measure of control. After a detailed examination of the specific items used by each author, and analyzing if they referred more to aspects defined by the research team as dominance or control related, all three experts decided that the first two studies should be included within the dominance category, while the third study was related to coercive control. Another study (Fulu et al., 2013) uses both items of control and dominance. After checking the items with our definitions and their relative weight across the control and dominance categories, raters included the study in the control category. Inter-rater reliability between the first two experts was high (Cohen's Kappa = .92) and total consensus (Kappa = 1.00) was reached regarding inclusion of the studies in the different categories once the third expert intervened.

Using meta-analytical methodology, population parameters are estimated as correlations (r). Estimating r for each study was chosen as a strategy because it is easy to interpret results, and the formulas for converting other statistical procedures into an r are easily available (see Rosenthal, 1994).

The r estimates were generated using an Excel macro program written by Wilson (2016). It allows the user to introduce an incomplete set of data (for instance the t statistic and degrees of freedom) and conduct estimates for different effect sizes (means, f , t -test, χ^2 , r , d , odds ratio) using the formulas included in Mark, Lipsey and Wilson (2001).

Once the effects of each study were transformed into correlation coefficients (r), the next phase was to estimate the fixed and random effects models using the Comprehensive Meta-Analysis program. Correlations were transformed into Fischer Z 's and the error variance (Ve) was calculated. Coefficients were transformed into z values because the sample distribution of the Fischer $Z(r)$ is closer to normality. Moreover, standardized scores are more adequate when using different measurement instruments (Rosenthal, 1984). For each correlation the following data was obtained: a) 95% confidence interval of the effect; b) Standard error (Se) of each r value; c) Q_w statistic to obtain the heterogeneity of effect sizes of the sample; d) k or number of studies (Johnson & Eagly, 2014).

The r value is an index of the magnitude of the effect size. Although there is no consistent pattern towards its interpretation, in this study we follow Richard, Bond and Stokes-Zoota (2003) r scores interpretation. In their review of 322 meta-analyses comprising 25.000 different studies, they state that a correlation coefficient of .19 or lower is small and found in approximately 30% of the research literature. Results of .20 are medium size and found in roughly 50% of the studies. Finally, results of .30 or more are considered large relative to most social psychological effects, and approximately only 20% of mean effects are this large. Regarding the reliability of the effect size, the 95% confidence interval and the Se , the Q_w statistic, and the variance component (Ve) are indices of the reliability of the magnitude of the effect. A sensitivity analysis was

performed to detect the potential outliers and the robustness of the data. The I^2 statistic explains the percentage of variance in the observed effects due to variance in the true effects. I^2 values 25% as low-heterogeneity, 50% as moderate-heterogeneity, and 75% as high-heterogeneity (Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein, 2011).

The main effect sizes for the two constructs, control and dominance, were calculated separately (fixed effects). The analysis of the independent effects yielded a total of 32 effect size estimates for the 25 studies. Some of these produced more than one estimate for a certain variable. For each set of data in which there was an estimate of the size of the multiple effects (i.e. different kinds of violence) we included the mean r considering sample size (the most conservative method). Notwithstanding, to preserve the independence of effect sizes in multiple country studies which use different samples, the independent effects of r were maintained (Johnson & Eagly, 2014).

A certain level of variability in effect sizes could be expected due to the type of coding of each study (random effects). To analyze this possibility, in a subsequent moderation analysis those variables which were theoretically relevant to control and dominance were included. Group differences were accounted for by creating two dichotomous variables as a function of the level of analysis (1: individual, and 2: relational), and type of sample (1: clinical; 2: community). The Q_w within group result reflects if the categorical variable adequately explains the variability among effect sizes. If the variability is explained by the categorical variable (significant between groups Q) then the effect sizes of the categories differ significantly (Borenstein et al., 2011).

3. Results

Table 1 presents a summary of the studies included in this meta-analytic review. Twenty five studies were included. Cvancara and Kinney's (2009) study was the only

one to include both variables (control and dominance). Finally, results include a total number of $k = 11$ independent studies regarding control ($N= 10375$), and $k = 15$ for dominance ($N=3038$). All studies estimated the general relation between male control or dominance and perpetrating IPVAV (see table 1).

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Table 1

Review and description of the studies and main effects (r) found regarding control, dominance, and male IPVAV

| Author and year | Variable ¹ | Sample | Type of Sample ¹ | Variable ¹ | Age | Country | Instrument ² | Result | Effect (r) |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|---------|---|---|------------|
| Abbey et al. (2006) | DOM | N= 163 men | Commu. | Ind. (feelings, motivations) | 18-49 years | USA | Sexual Assault Perpetration (SES; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987); Sexual Dominance Scale (Nelson, 1979) (“I have sexual relations because I like the feeling of having another person submit to me’’). | Sexual domination was related to a higher number of sexual assaults | .26** |
| Cho (2012) | CON | N= 236 violent men with their partners | Clin. | Rel. (behavior) | ≥ 18 years | USA | CTS (Conflict Tactics Scale, Straus, 1979); five items from the Collaborative Psychiatric Epidemiology Surveys (CPES) considered to be controlling | Violent men showed more controlling attitudes in comparison to non-violent ones | .18** |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|---------------------------------------|-------|-----------------|---|--------|---|---|
| | | | | | | | behaviors perpetrated by the spouse/partner (Cho, 2012) (criticizing, getting on nerves, and threatening to end the relationship) | |
| Connors et al. (2013) | CON | <i>N</i> = 159 batterer men in prison | Clin. | Rel. (behavior) | ≥ 18 years (<i>M</i> = 40 years, <i>Sd</i> = 10.4) | Canada | Aggression Questionnaire- Revised (AQ-R; Connors et al., 2013); Abusive Relationship Inventory (ARI; Boer, Kroner, Wong, & Cadsky, 1993). | Need for control of the partner is linked to more IPV. After treatment, there was a reduction in control .35*** |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|---|--------|---------------------------|-------------|-----|---|---|-------|
| Cvancara and Kinney (2009) | DOM | <i>N</i> = 415: <i>n</i> =149 men and <i>n</i> =266 women | Commu. | Ind. (expectations) | 18-34 years | USA | Male Role Norms Inventory (Levant et al., 1992) and the Sexual Beliefs Scale (Muehlenhard & Felts, 1998) measures acceptance of male sexual dominance (“A little force really turns a woman on”). | Sexual domination in men was linked to verbal and non-verbal violence in the relation | .22** |
| | CON | | | Ind. (personality traits) | | | Trait Verbal Aggressiveness Scale (Infante & Wigley, 1986); Sexual Situation Questionnaire (O’Sullivan & Byers, 1996) (“When individuals insult me, I get a lot of pleasure out of really telling them off”). | Control was linked to being verbally and non-verbally aggressive | .17** |
| Edens (2009) | DOM | <i>N</i> = 1062 | Clin. | Ind. | ≥ 18 years | USA | Edens Classification | Aggressive men | .11** |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|---|-------|---------------------------------|---|-----|---|---|--------|
| | | convicted men: <i>n</i> = 246 sexual aggressors; <i>n</i> = 163 convicted for other crimes, and <i>n</i> =53 aggressors with mental illness | | (personality traits) | | | (2009) of types of aggression; Dominance Scale of the PAI (Morey, 2007) (“I’m a ‘take- charge’ type of person”). | (verbally and physically) used more an interpersonal style of relationship with high dominance and low affiliation | |
| Fowler and Westen (2011) | CON | <i>n</i> =213 in treatment, <i>n</i> =59 with gender violence history (14 aggressors with controlling behaviors), <i>n</i> =97 arrested for other non-violent crimes, and <i>n</i> =57 no gender violence history. | Clin. | Ind. (personality traits) | ≥ 18 years (<i>M</i> = 40,5, <i>Sd</i> = 11,8) | USA | Question #22 on the Clinical Data Form (CDF) (Westen & Shedler, 1999); Shedler- Wersten Assessment Procedure-II (SWAP-II) (Shedler & Westen, 2004) (“Tends to be controlling”). | Violent men with a hostile-control profile showed more control and anger behaviors towards their partners | .57*** |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|----------------------------|--------|--------------------|-------------|----------------------|---|---|--|
| Fulu et al. (2013) | CON | N= 10178 | Commu. | Rel. (behavior) | 18-49 years | Various countries | Personal interviews: Partner is moderately or highly controlling over female partner compared with least controlling (“I tell my partner who she can spend time with”). | Controlling behavior was associated with physical and sexual violence | .45 ^{***} .49 ^{***} .53 ^{***} .50 ^{***} .30 ^{***} .47 ^{***} |
| | | Bangladesh n= 1557 | | | | | | | |
| | | Cambodia n = 1382 | | | | | | | |
| | | China n= 921 | | | | | | | |
| | | Indonesia n= 2263 | | | | | | | |
| | | Papua-New Guinea n= 710 | | | | | | | |
| | | Sri-Lanka n=999 | | | | | | | |
| Gilchrist et al. (2015) | DOM | N=235 men | Commu. | Rel. (behavior) | ≥ 18 years | Spain | CTS-2 (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996); Short version of Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory (PMWI; Tolman, 1999) | IPV was related to more domination- loneliness and verbal- emotional abuse | .22 ^{***} |

| | | | | | | | (“Treating partner like an inferior”). | | |
|----------------------------|-----|--|--------|-----------------|---|-----|--|---|---|
| Hamel et al. (2015) | CON | <i>N</i> =428: <i>n</i> = 240 men and <i>n</i> = 188 women | Commu. | Rel. (behavior) | 18-69 years (<i>M</i> =35.30 <i>Sd</i> = 9.95) | USA | The Controlling and Abusive Tactics-2 (CAT-2) (Hamel et al., 2015) (“Tries to restrict partner’s movements”). | More use of control behaviors was related to more IPV | .31 ^{***} physical .49 ^{***} verbal <i>r</i> _{mean} = .40 ^{***} |
| Kar and O’Leary (2013) | DOM | <i>N</i> = 453 couples, <i>n</i> =36 battering men (unilateral violence), <i>n</i> =145 (bilateral violence) | Clin. | Rel. (behavior) | ≥ 18 years | USA | CTS-2 (Straus et al., 1996); Scale based on Kasian and Painter’s (1992) factor analysis of the Psychological Maltreatment of Women Scale (Tolman, 1989) (“I tried to make my wife feel like she was crazy”). | Violent men reported more dominance in bidirectional violence than in unidirectional | .36 ^{***} |
| Karakurt and Cumbie (2012) | DOM | <i>N</i> = 87 men, and 87 women who were in a relation | Commu. | Rel. (behavior) | 18-53 years | USA | CTS-2 (Straus et al., 1996); Dominance Scale (DS; Hamby, 1996) (“Sometimes I have to remind my partner of who’s the boss”). | Men showed a stronger need for authority, more hostile attitudes, and higher levels of aggression towards women | .17 ^{**} |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|--|-------|-----------------|--|-----------|---|---|--------------------|
| Kelly et al. (2015) | DOM | <i>N</i> = 154 men | Comm. | Ind. (beliefs) | 18-39 years | Australia | Aggressive Manipulation (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Palarea, Cohen, & Rohling, 2000); Social Dominance Orientation (SDO; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994) (“Some people are just inferior to others”). | Higher scores in social dominance reflect a stronger use of aggressive-manipulative strategies towards women when feeling rejected | .28 ^{**} |
| Lawson (2008) | DOM | <i>N</i> = 135: <i>n</i> =100 violent men with their partner, and <i>n</i> = 35 non-violent. | Clin. | Rel. (behavior) | 18-58 years (<i>M</i> = 32.2, <i>Sd</i> =10.3) | USA | CTS (Straus, 1979); Inventory of Interpersonal Problems (IIP-SC; Soldz, Budman, Demby, & Merry, 1995) (“Domineering: I am too aggressive toward other people”). | An increase in severe physical and psychological aggression was related to an increase in levels of dominance and more problems within the relation | .26 ^{**} |
| Lawson and Brossar (2013) | DOM | <i>N</i> = 132 men with GV history | Clin. | Rel. (behavior) | 18-58 years (<i>M</i> = 32.2; <i>Sd</i> = 10.3) | USA | Modified Conflict Tactics Scale (MCTS; Pan, Neidig, & O’Leary, 1994); Inventory of Interpersonal Problems | Aggressive men are more prone to use coercive violence and be more controlling and vindictive when | .32 ^{***} |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|---|--------|------------------------------|-------------|-------|--|--|--------------------|
| | | | | | | | (IIP-SC; Soldz et al., 1995). (“Domineering: I am too aggressive toward other people”). | solving conflicts. Hostile dominant interpersonal style was related with more IPV. | |
| Lyndon et al. (2007) | DOM | <i>N</i> = 528 men | Commu. | Ind. (feelings, motivations) | 18-20 years | USA | Sexual Experiences Survey (SES; Koss, et al., 1987); Reasons for Sexual Behavior (Nelson, 1979). (“Because I like the feeling that I really have someone in my grasp”). | Aggressors who have witnessed and been a victim of abuse during childhood are more tolerant to the use of IPV and use sexual relationships more with a manipulative objective. | .30 ^{***} |
| Moyano and Sierra (2016) | DOM | <i>N</i> =561 participants: <i>n</i> = 228 men and <i>n</i> =333 women. | Commu. | Ind. (beliefs) | 18-50 years | Spain | Sexual Experiences Survey (SES; Koss & Gidycz, 1985); Sexual Cognition Checklist (Moyano & Sierra, 2012, adapted from Renaud & Byers, 1999) (They have experienced each cognition “as a positive | Compared to non-aggressors, male aggressors reported using dominance more frequently. | .19 ^{***} |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|---|--------|--------------------|---|-------------|--|---|--------------------|
| | | | | | | | thought” and “as a negative thought”: “Forcing someone to do something sexually”). | | |
| Ogle and Clements (2007) | CON | <i>N</i> = 100 men: <i>n</i> =57 non-aggressors and <i>n</i> =43 aggressors | Clin. | Ind. (attribution) | ≥ 18 years (<i>M</i> =28.32, <i>Sd</i> = 8.82) | USA | CTS-2 (Straus et al., 1996); Control Attributions and Expectations Questionnaire (CAEQ), modified version of the Attributional Style Questionnaire (Peterson & Seligman, 1984) (Explaining the cause: “You go out on a date and it goes badly”). | Batterers who have lower perception of control in their relationship were more likely to perpetrate IPV compared to other male batterers whose perception for control were greater. | .24 ^{***} |
| Robertson and Murachver (2011) | CON | <i>N</i> =172: <i>n</i> =31 male students and <i>n</i> =36 female students, <i>n</i> =30 general population men | Commu. | Rel. (behavior) | 18-60 years | New Zealand | CTS-2 (Straus et al., 1996); 28 item version of the Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory (PMWI; Tolman, 1989) (“I | In male batterers, coercive control was related to IPV and more control behaviors in comparison to those with no violence | 34 ^{***} |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----|--|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|---|--|--------------------|
| | | and $n=36$ general population women, $n=24$ men and $n=15$ women imprisoned for GV | | | | | monitored my partner's time and made her account for her whereabouts"). | related history | |
| Ross (2011) | CON | $N= 86$; $n=30$ women and $n=56$ violent men with their partner | Clin. | Rel. (behavior) | ≥ 18 years | USA | CTS-2 (Straus et al., 1996); Controlling Behaviors Scale (CBS; Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2003) ("Did you limit the other's activities outside the relationship?"). | Controlling motives did not related to male aggression in IPV | .05 ns |
| Ruiz-Hernández et al. (2015) | CON | $N= 139$ men: $n= 50$ batterers, $n=89$ common delinquents | Clin. | Rel. (behavior) | ≥ 18 years | Spain | CTS-2 (Straus et al., 1996); Dominating and Jealous Tactics Scale (Kasian & Painter, 1992) ("I have tried to prevent my partner from talking to or seeing his/her | IPV associated with more emotional dependence, more control and jealousy | .20 ^{***} |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|--|-------|---------------------------------|-------------|-----|--|--|--------|
| | | | | | | | family”). | | |
| Schnurr et al. (2013) | DOM | <i>N</i> = 296: <i>n</i> = 148 men and <i>n</i> = 148 women. | Comm. | Rel. (behavior) | ≥ 18 years | USA | CTS-2 (Straus et al., 1996); 14 items adapted from Hamby’s (1996) Dominance Scale (Sugihara & Warner, 2000) (“My partner needs to remember that I am in charge”). | In men dominance was associated with IPV | .24** |
| Smith et al., (2015) | DOM | <i>N</i> = 208 men | Comm. | Ind. (feelings, motivations) | 21-35 years | USA | CTS-2 (Straus et al., 1996); Sexual Dominance Scale (Nelson, 1979) (“I enjoy the feeling of having someone in my grasp”). | Domination, fostered by social norms, increases the use of sexual aggression towards women | .33*** |
| Stanford et al. (2008) | DOM | <i>N</i> = 113 men sentenced for gender violence | Clin. | Ind. (personality traits) | ≥ 18 years | USA | Impulsive Premeditated Aggression Scale (IPAS; Stanford et al., 2008); Psychopathic Personality Inventory (PPI; Wilson, Frick & Clements, 1999) (Fearless Dominance: | IPV was related to higher scores in the dominant and impulsiveness subscales | .23** |

| | | | | | | | Able to manipulate and influence others). | | |
|---------------------|-----|---|-----|-----------------|---|--------------|---|--|--------|
| Straus, 2008 | DOM | <i>N</i> =13601 university students in 32 nations (<i>n</i> = 420 male perpetrators) | Com | Rel. (behavior) | 18-40 years; <i>Me</i> = 22.3 | 40 countries | CTS-2 (Straus et al., 1996); Dominance scale of the Personal and Relationships Profile (Straus, Hamby, S. L., Boney-McCoy, S., & Sugarman, 1999; Straus & Mouradian, 1999) (“I generally have the final say when my partner and I disagree”). | Dominance is associated with an increased probability of violence | .22*** |
| Yount et al. (2016) | CON | <i>N</i> = 1572 ever-partnered men | Com | Rel. (behavior) | 18-49 years (<i>M</i> = 36.1, <i>Sd</i> = 7.6) | Bangladesh | Perpetration of IPV (10 items) assessing men’s lifetime perpetration of psychological (4 items) and physical IPV (6 items); Controlling Behavior Men’s (5 items) (“I won’t let my partner wear certain | Men’s controlling behavior was positively correlated with perpetration of physical IPV | .18*** |

things”).

Note: Clin. and Commu. = Clinical and Community samples; Ind. and Rel. = Individual and Relational level of analysis; GV = Gender violence

N= 25 studies

¹ The inclusion of studies in these categories are based on the research team’s definition of categories presented in the introduction of this article

² We first present the measure reflecting aggression, violence or perpetration, and secondly the measure for dominance or control

. *** $p \leq .0001$; ** $p \leq .001$; * $p \leq .05$

Results show, as expected, that the effect size of the independent studies was positive, stressing the existence of a positive relation between the scores in both measures (control and dominance) and perpetrating male violence towards one's female intimate partner.

Table 2
Average standardized effects of the studies included in the meta-analysis

| Study (<i>N</i> =25) | Statistics for each study | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| | <i>Z_r</i> | <i>SE</i> | <i>Ve</i> | Lower limit | Higher limit | <i>Z</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>N</i> |
| <i>Control (k= 11)</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Cho (2012) | .18 | .07 | .00 | .05 | .31 | 2.78 | .005 | 236 |
| Connors et al. (2013) | .37 | .08 | .01 | .21 | .52 | 4.56 | .0001 | 159 |
| Cvancara and Kinney (2009) | .17 | .08 | .01 | .01 | .33 | 2.07 | .038 | 149 |
| Fowler and Westen (2011) | .65 | .07 | .01 | .51 | .78 | 4.85 | .003 | 14 |
| Fulu et al. (2013) | | | | | | | | |
| *Bangladesh | .49 | .03 | .00 | .43 | .53 | 19.11 | .0001 | 1557 |
| *Camboya | .54 | .03 | .00 | .48 | .59 | 19.91 | .0001 | 1382 |
| *China | .59 | .03 | .00 | .53 | .65 | 17.88 | .0001 | 921 |
| * Indonesia | .55 | .02 | .00 | .51 | .59 | 26.11 | .0001 | 2263 |
| *Papua – New Guinea | .31 | .04 | .00 | .24 | .38 | 8.23 | .0001 | 710 |
| *Sri-Lanka | .51 | .03 | .00 | .45 | .57 | 16.10 | .0001 | 999 |
| Hamel et al. (2015) | .42 | .06 | .00 | .30 | .55 | 6.52 | .0001 | 240 |
| Ogle and Clements (2007) | .25 | .10 | .01 | -.05 | .44 | -1.55 | .122 | 43 |
| Robertson and Murachver (2011) | .42 | .22 | .05 | -.00 | .85 | 1.94 | .05 | 24 |
| Ross (2011) | .05 | .14 | .02 | -.21 | .31 | .364 | .716 | 56 |
| Ruiz Hernández et al. (2015) | .20 | .14 | .02 | -.08 | .49 | 2.36 | .165 | 50 |
| Yount et al. (2016) | .18 | .02 | .00 | .13 | .23 | 7.21 | .0001 | 1572 |
| Fixed | .43 | .01 | .00 | .42 | .46 | 44.59 | .0001 | |
| Random | .35 | .05 | .00 | .26 | .44 | 7.73 | .0001 | |
| <i>Dominance (k= 15)</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Abbey et al. (2006) | .28 | .08 | .01 | .12 | .43 | 3.50 | .0001 | 163 |
| Cvancara and Kinney (2009) | .20 | .09 | .01 | .04 | .37 | 2.45 | .0001 | 149 |
| Edens (2009) | .11 | .06 | .00 | -.02 | .24 | 1.72 | .085 | 246 |
| Gilchrist et al. (2015) | .22 | .07 | .00 | .109 | .35 | 3.41 | .0001 | 235 |
| Kar and O'Leary (2013) | .37 | .08 | .01 | .23 | .52 | 5.03 | .0001 | 181 |
| Karakurt and Cumbie (2012) | .17 | .11 | .01 | -.04 | .39 | 1.57 | .116 | 87 |
| Kelly et al. (2015) | .29 | .08 | .01 | .13 | .45 | 3.53 | .0001 | 154 |
| Lawson (2008) | .27 | .10 | .01 | .07 | .47 | 2.62 | .009 | 100 |
| Lawson and Brossar (2013) | .33 | .09 | .01 | .16 | .50 | 3.77 | .0001 | 132 |
| Lyndon et al. (2007) | .31 | .04 | .00 | .22 | .40 | 7.09 | .0001 | 528 |
| Moyano and Sierra (2016) | .19 | .07 | .00 | .06 | .32 | 2.88 | .004 | 228 |
| Schnurr et al. (2013) | .22 | .08 | .00 | .06 | .37 | 2.69 | .0007 | 148 |
| Smith et al. (2015) | .34 | .08 | .01 | .18 | .50 | 4.21 | .0001 | 154 |
| Stanford et al. (2008) | .22 | .10 | .01 | .03 | .41 | 2.35 | .019 | 113 |
| Straus (2008) | .22 | .05 | .01 | .13 | .32 | 4.57 | .0001 | 420 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------|------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|
| Fixed | .25 | .02 | .00 | .22 | .29 | 13.78 | .0001 |
| Random | .25 | .02 | .00 | .22 | .29 | 12.68 | .0001 |

Results show that 25% ($n=4$) of the 16 estimated effect sizes reflected that control has a low relation with violence (equal or smaller than .19), a total of 12.5% ($n=2$) of studies reported a moderate effect size (between .20 and .29), and 62.5% ($n=10$) a large effect size (equal or bigger than .30) (see table 2). In sum, there is evidence to support the existence of a clear relationship between the use of control behaviors and IPVAV.

Regarding dominance, results show that 20% ($n=3$) of the 15 effect sizes presented a low effect in perpetrating gender violence, whereas 53.33% ($n=8$) reflected a medium level effect size. Finally, 26.67% ($n=4$) presented a large effect.

The global weighted effect size for the 11 control studies was high (.43 and .35), while for the 15 dominance studies the effect could be considered as medium (.25) (see table 2).

3.1. Moderating effects

The homogeneity (Q_w) of the total number of studies ($k=25$) was calculated to test for the variability of effect sizes. The final score was significant $Q_w(30df)=336.99$, $p=.0001$, $I^2=91.09$. Similar results were obtained when the control studies were examined with a total of 16 effect sizes and a $Q_w(15df)=241.78$, $p=.0001$, $I^2=93.793$. Nevertheless, results were non-significant for the dominance variable ($k=15$), $Q_w(14df)=14.18$, $p=.4365$, $I^2=1.27$, which was homogenous. In sum, the variations in the effect size of the control variable were larger than in the dominance condition.

Table 3 presents the comparison between the average effect of the selected categorical variables. When comparing the mean of the 16 effect sizes of control on men perpetrating violence directed towards women with the mean of the 15 studies (or

effect sizes) on dominance, the between groups Q_b value was significant. This result confirms that control has a positive and significantly stronger relation with perpetrating violence towards women than dominance. Moreover, there are statistically significant differences regarding the sample type and level of analysis. Estimated effect size was larger for community samples and relational level of analysis in comparison to clinical samples and individual level of analysis.

Table 3

Intergroup differences in the type of variable, sample and level of analysis.

| Variable | Control ($k_{\text{Effect size}} = 16$) | Sig. | Dominance ($k_{\text{Effect size}} = 15$) | Sig. | Q between groups (two-tailed significance) |
|-------------------|--|-------------|--|-------------|--|
| | .35 | .0001 | .25 | .0001 | 4.13, $p = .042$ |
| Total $Z r$ | .27, SE=.02, IC 95% (.23, .30), $Z = 15.56$, $p = .0001$ | | | | |
| Type of sample | Clinical ($k_{\text{Effect size}} = 11$) | | Community ($k_{\text{Effect size}} = 20$) | | |
| | .22 | .0001 | .35 | .0001 | 3.75, $p = .050$ |
| Total $Z r$ | .29, SE: .03, IC 95% (.24, .35), $Z = 10.03$, $p = .0001$ | | | | |
| Level of analysis | Individual ($k_{\text{Effect size}} = 11$) | | Relational ($k_{\text{Effect size}} = 20$) | | |
| | .22 | .0001 | .35 | .0001 | 5.43, $p = .020$ |
| Total $Z r$ | .28, SE= .03, IC 95% (.23, .33), $Z = 10.65$, $p = .0001$ | | | | |

The relation between control and dominance independently analyzed showed that regarding control, those studies that employed community samples had a larger effect size than the clinical samples. There were no effect size differences in individual and relational measures. There were also no differences in dominance comparing either the type of sample, or the level of analysis (see table 4).

Table 4

Difference in control and dominance by type of sample and level of analysis

| Control | <i>K</i> | <i>Effect size</i> | <i>r</i> | <i>IC 95%</i> | | <i>Z</i> | <i>p-value</i> | <i>Q_b</i> | <i>p-value</i> |
|-------------------|----------|--------------------|----------|---------------|-----|----------|----------------|----------------------|----------------|
| <i>Clinical</i> | 6 | | .17 | .00 | .35 | 1.96 | .005 | 6.10 | .013 |
| <i>Community</i> | 10 | | .42 | .32 | .52 | 8.36 | .0001 | | |
| Total | 16 | | .36 | .28 | .45 | 8.22 | .0001 | | |
| <i>Individual</i> | 3 | | .14 | -.26 | .52 | .66 | .511 | 1.63 | .201 |
| <i>Relational</i> | 13 | | .39 | .30 | .48 | 8.34 | .0001 | | |
| Total | 16 | | .37 | .29 | .46 | 8.28 | .0001 | | |
| Dominance | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Clinical</i> | 5 | | .26 | .15 | .36 | 4.72 | .0001 | .003 | .954 |
| <i>Community</i> | 10 | | .25 | .21 | .30 | 11.99 | .0001 | | |
| Total | 15 | | .26 | .22 | .31 | 12.135 | .0001 | | |
| <i>Individual</i> | 8 | | .25 | .19 | .30 | 8.48 | .0001 | .067 | .795 |
| <i>Relational</i> | 7 | | .27 | .20 | .31 | 9.15 | .0001 | | |
| Total | 15 | | .25 | .21 | .29 | 12.47 | .0001 | | |

4. Discussion and conclusion

Using a total of 25 quantitative studies this research aimed to measure the relationship between power (defined as control and dominance) and IPVAV perpetrated by male participants. It confirms that IPVAV is a matter of control, rooted in patriarchal traditions of male dominance in heterosexual relationships.

Results confirm our first hypothesis regarding the heterogeneity of the effects of both variables on perpetrating IPVAV. Although there was a moderate effect of dominance as in Stith et al's review (2004), the total effect size was larger for studies including the control variable. In this study, control is the main tool used by men to subordinate women partners and engage in IPVAV (Grose & Grabe, 2014; Fowler and Westen, 2011; Hamel et al., 2015; Ruiz-Hernández et al., 2015).

Aggressors use control over the resources to maintain power within a relationship (e.g. economic ties, decisions regarding the relationship). For instance, various studies have shown that there is a negative association between IPVAW and the socioeconomic status of the male partner, occupational prestige and available resources (Capaldi et al., 2012; Fox, Benson, DeMaris, & Van Wyk, 2002). This could reflect a perception by male aggressors of lack of control over their immediate environment and context, and the need to compensate this feeling by using violent strategies (Ruiz-Hernández et al., 2015). Furthermore, this control allows perpetrators to exercise a level of subjugation as devastating as IPVAW (Stark, 2007).

Dominance was found to be homogenously associated across a variety of studies with violence perpetrated towards a partner by male abusers, although only moderately and less than control. Dominance could imply a fixed and timeless structure (a structural dimension) and thus its influence on IPVAW could be more indirect and diffuse (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). Among those studies researching dominance included in this meta-analysis some refer to the power transferred to men by cultural values and beliefs which favor male violence directed towards females (Kar & O'Leary, 2013; Moyano & Sierra, 2016).

Regarding our second hypothesis, interaction patterns, interpersonal abusive behaviors (relational level) have a stronger effect on IPVAW than individual level variables (attributions, cognitions, personality traits). Nevertheless, there were no differences when results are analysed disaggregated (specifically analyzing control and dominance settings). From a personality theory perspective, violence could be seen as a reflection of a dysfunctional personality manifested through a romantic relationship and linked to contextual and relational dynamics (Fulu et al., 2013), thus explaining these results. Even though personality development shows a strong association with

abusiveness, statistically significant variance is linked to relational factors, indicating that social factors are important precursors of abusiveness (Ross, 2011; Ruiz-Hernández et al., 2015).

Partially supporting our second hypothesis, differences were also found only in the mean effect of control depending on the type of sample. Contrary to what could be expected (Dutton, 2005; Johnson, 2006), community sample studies report significantly larger effect sizes than those found in the clinical sample research (Hamel et al., 2015). This result may highlight Hamberger and Larsen's (2015) assertion that there is an important gap in the literature regarding how the construct of control in IPVAW is defined and measured in different samples (for instance, different facets of control such as intentionality may not have been taken into account).

Moreover, from a community or population study perspective, a belief system that validates men's sense of having the right to certain privileges in their relationship with women allows the aggressor to deflect responsibility and provides a justification for the continued use of control and dominance (Sultana, 2010). Aggressors may probably believe that in a relationship, they have the right to use control as a way of expressing love, and as a legitimate way of obtaining power. This mindset leads to a rejection of an aggressor's individual responsibility because culture legitimizes violence and men can transfer the responsibility of the aggression to the victim (both denying and blaming women) (Fulu et al., 2013; Robertson & Murachver, 2011; Smith et al., 2015).

From a clinical perspective, various reasons could explain these differences. First, as Hamberger & Larsen (2015) mention, clinical samples usually study a small proportion of all IPVAW situations, and for instance underrepresent "situational couple

violence” in comparison to community samples. Second, these differences could also be because many studies that employ clinical samples include men who have been, or are in, a treatment program. As some studies mention, men trying to present a positive self and social image of themselves may distort reality and report lower levels of control in the relationship to defend their actions, minimize the consequences of their violent behavior, or disguise their use of violence (Eckhardt, Samper, Suhr, & Holtzworth-Munroe, 2012). Vecina and Chacón (2019) found that a large majority of convicted male aggressors defined themselves as people with a high adherence to moral foundations: did not want to harm others (care), treated them fairly (fairness) and led a self-controlled life (purity). In addition, as indicated by Gracia, Rodriguez and Lila (2015) distortion using self-reports may be more problematic in clinical samples of IPVAW offenders than in community samples.

The study supports our second hypothesis regarding the dominance variable. Although this variable had only a moderate effect on perpetrating violence, results were homogenous and consistent over types of samples. This is coherent with theories that state that dominance reflects the cultural component associated with violence.

In sum, control over resources would imply using control tactics and techniques by males to obtain more power within a relationship, while dominance, in line with feminist theories, would play a central role in complying with the prevailing socio-cultural norm (Karakurt & Cumbie, 2012; Smith et al., 2015).

4.1. *Limitations*

This meta-analysis has some limitations that need to be addressed. First, although we have clearly defined our concepts of power, dominance and control, referring to its individual and societal nature, we have encountered difficulties finding

clear definitions proposed by other authors regarding these concepts. Hamberger et al. (2017) reflected recently on the theoretical and measurement difficulties posed by not having clear definitions of the concept of control. This problem has made the categorization of some studies a difficult task. An example is Lawson and Brossar's study (2013) in which the authors do not clearly differentiate controlling behaviors and hostile dominant interpersonal styles and use the same instrument for their measurement. We believe definitions should not be used interchangeably and each concept must be clearly differentiated (in terms and measures) as we have done in order to proceed with the meta-analysis.

Second, a problem of some of the measures is that they are comprised by items that reflect at the same time both dominance and control. This may produce a significant overlap in any resulting effect. For instance, in Fulu et al.'s study (2013) of the 8 items used in the personal interview, 6 represent control and 2 reflect dominance. It would be important in future studies to include the dimensionality of measures to be sure if they are measuring one or more constructs. These analyses have not been conducted in the current study due to the unavailability of the raw data.

Third, most of the studies have analyzed one of the components: control or dominance. Only one study was conducted including both factors establishing their possible relationship (Cvancara & Kinney, 2009). It would be necessary to test both variables in the same analytical model to see if dominance and control are related to a larger conceptual structure such as power.

Four, different kinds of violence were included in the analysis, but most research tend to use a global IPVAV indicator not specifying the type of violence when

establishing the relation between dominance, control and violence, so a comparison was not possible.

Fifth, the impact of power on IPVAW may be affected by other covariables such as education or employment (Cho, 2012), alcohol consumption (Abbey et al., 2006) or attitudes towards women (Gilchrist et al., 2015).

Finally, results may not represent all the studies that have been conducted in relation to the interplay between control, dominance and IPVAW. Although major databases were analyzed, some studies may not have been included in this study due to a number of reasons: a) problems finding unpublished studies; b) non-availability of the primary sources of data and results; c) lack of the necessary statistical results needed to obtain effect sizes; d) studies published in other languages than English.

4.2. *Implications*

Although there are limitations to the study, the result of this meta-analysis has important practical and theoretical implications in the study and treatment of aggressors and in prevention and intervention efforts targeting men's IPVAW. Control and dominance are basic factors needed to understand men's violence towards women and should be included in batterer intervention programs.

First, if control is the variable most associated to different forms of violence, a challenge in intervention programs is to map the tactics used in control and their interplay (Bohall, Bautista, & Musson, 2016; Stark, 2007). This result reinforces the content structure of the DULUTH model (Domestic Abuse Intervention Project) (Pence & Paymar, 1993) which emphasizes awareness of how both violent and nonviolent control tactics are used in intimate relations. However, although interventions based on

the Duluth model are some of the most employed by practitioners (Price & Rosenbaum, 2009), the evidence for the effectiveness of this model is still inconclusive. Miller, Drake, & Miller's (2013) meta-analysis shows that participating in Duluth model interventions had no effect on violence reduction. Karakurt, Koç, Çetinsaya, Ayluçtarhan, & Bolen's (2019) study showed mixed results in reducing violence in comparison to other treatments. Finally, Gannon, Olver, Mallion & James' (2019) meta-analysis reports robust reductions in domestic violence recidivism. Programs should continue to enhance interactions built on equality and mutual confidence eliminating relations based on the use of asymmetrical power relationships that encourage the use of coercive control tactics.

Second, dominance, although to a lesser extent, is also associated with IPVAW. This result suggests the need to change socially transmitted beliefs, attitudes and emotions that support male violence against females. Dominance rooted in social structures must be addressed not only individually educating men and women in IPVAW reduction programs, but by also organizing society in collective actions to change social norms and power relationships that can act as a hotbed for violence towards women (Flood, 2011). As such, implicating men, not only those who are violent offenders or batterers, in these actions is important to achieve a cross-sectional response to a problem rooted in sociocultural and economic male entitlement (Flood, 2011). Intervention programs aimed towards decreasing violent behavior based on a cognitive-behavioral treatment (CBT) model have shown inconsistent and heterogeneous results (Schmucker & Lösel, 2015; Smedslund, Dalsbø, Steiro, Winsvold, & Clench-Aas, 2007). These interventions should address the importance of social influence in the restructuring of negative patterns of thinking, which lead to negative emotions directed towards women (anger and hostility).

Therefore, it is advisable to apply programs which combine the modification of coercive control tactics through the teaching of communication skills with the restructuring of intense negative emotions and cognitions to prevent future violent behaviors. It is necessary to design and evaluate new methods to build awareness of control tactics and negative beliefs and emotions to raise men's awareness of their possible intentions to control and dominate women. As stressed by feminist perspectives, these intervention programs should also include an analysis and reflection of the power structure embedded within society. Nevertheless, focusing on individual pathologies instead of deficits in social structures is the main orientation in intervention programs. Nichols (2013) stresses that it is important to include among others, a social change perspective (changing structural conditions) in intervention practices and programs. As Messing, Ward-Lasher, Thaller, & Bagwell-Gray (2015) state, individual analysis of risk factors (micro level) must be combined with macro level efforts to reduce structural inequalities (e.g. socioeconomic status; access to social services) that perpetuate IPVAW. An interesting example of an intervention program that addresses the above-mentioned individual, social and political factors is described in Hamberger (2002).

Third, our study shows that the type of sample moderates the relationship between control and IPVAW. From the perspective of the community samples, the larger effect size attests to the need to work with the general population in the deconstruction of certain ideas associated with the legitimacy of the use of control tactics intended to exercise power over women. On the other hand, regarding clinical samples, Saunders (1991) mentioned the importance of addressing social desirability biases using different methods to establish the relevance of this bias and positive self-image construction in the responses given by in-treatment batterers. Sugarman &

Hotaling's (1997) meta-analysis found a moderate negative relationship between one's desire to respond in a socially acceptable way and reports of one's involvement in IPVAW. More recently, Visschers, Jaspaert & Vervaeke (2017) showed that of the two components of social desirability, IPV reports were influenced by impression management but not by self-deception.

Fourth, measurements of individual and relational type control and dominance do not present significant differences in the strength of the association with IPVWA. In Stith et al.'s (2004) study, factors at the microsystem and ontogenic levels were not clearly different in their relationship to IPVAW. This implies that analyses of control and dominance derived from studies of personality, internal motivations, beliefs or emotions, or from behaviors contribute in a similar way to a better understanding of the dynamics and processes underlying IPVAW.

Some potential trends were identified, and as such, a series of recommendations for further research with male offenders can be envisaged. For instance, researchers should include both variables (control and dominance) simultaneously in the same study to test their mutual interdependence and their differential impact on IPVAW. Furthermore, due to some men being, or having been, registered in an intervention program, future research in control and dominance should consider in a separate way clinically treated and non-treated abusers.

Finally, the analysis of control and dominance in female participants is necessary in this area of research and intervention. Women may exert control and dominance over their partners, although generally in many spheres of society men are still in positions of power and women must fight more to obtain the same status (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000).

In sum, although control may be the aspect most strongly associated with male IPVAW, both control and dominance should be included jointly in empirical studies and intervention programs aimed at male violence against females in an intimate relationship. Focusing on control and dominance and addressing its individual anchors and relational dynamics is a therapeutic imperative. Developing primary prevention remains necessary to delegitimize the use of control in intimate relationships as a way of maintaining power. In addition, treatments aimed at IPVAW offenders are necessary to reduce their probable distorted image favoring relationships with others, and particularly with their female partners. Moreover, the definition, and differentiation, of both concepts is important to understand the dynamics that underlie men's IPVAW. Likewise, the differentiated inclusion of both concepts in scientific research could help to clarify if they are part of the power construct. To support the recovery of male offenders and the survival of female victims, it is important to delineate the differentiated contributions of each of the concepts to reduce this social scourge.

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Highlights

- Batterers use dominance and control to gain power over a woman's life
- Male violence against women is usually more related to control than dominance.
- Control reinforces the power of men within relationships to maintain the subordination of the women.
- There are not differences between individual and relational levels of analysis in domination and control.

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