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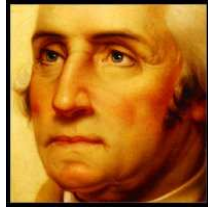**21** PUBLICATIONS   **120** CITATIONS

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Networked Individuals, Gendered Violence:
A Literature Review of Cyberviolence

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Abstract

The growth of information and communication technologies (ICT) and social networking sites (SNS) has generated new opportunities for violence, particularly aimed at women, girls, and sexual and gender minorities. The types of abuse that can occur on and through ICT and SNS represent the phenomenon of cyberviolence, including, but not limited to, cyberbullying, online harassment, cyber dating abuse, revenge porn, and cyberstalking. The authors undertook a literature review with the following aims: (1) evaluate how cyberviolence has been broadly conceived and studied in the scientific literature, and (2) assess the state of primary research in the cyberviolence field, identify gaps, and provide directions for future research. A search of peer-reviewed literature on cyberviolence published between 2006 and 2016 was conducted in May and June of 2016 through Academic Search Complete, PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science. These were read, prioritized, and analyzed against inclusion criteria. Where applicable, gray literature was also incorporated to supplement any gaps in the scientific literature. The results indicate a lack of consistent, standard definitions or methodologies used to conceptualize and measure cyberviolence. Most of the literature focuses on cyberbullying among heterosexual adolescents in high-income countries. Demographic data on perpetrators are limited, prevalence estimates are inconsistent, and almost no primary research has been conducted in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC). Cyberviolence is not only associated with negative psychological, social, and reproductive health outcomes but also it is linked with offline violence, disproportionately affecting women, girls, and sexual and gender minorities. There is an urgent need to develop a uniform set of tools to examine cyberviolence internationally. Future research should explore the gendered dimensions of cyberviolence and the continuum between online and offline violence, including in LMIC.

Keywords: cyberviolence, gender, ICT

Introduction

THE GROWTH OF information and communication technologies (ICT) and social networking sites (SNS) has been an enormous catalyst for development with regard to economic mobility, education, health, and social norm change (van der Gaag 2010). Despite the opportunities afforded by ICT, the global propagation of the Internet, social media platforms, and smart phones has also generated new mechanisms for committing violence and hate speech.

The types of abuse and aggression that can occur on and through ICT and SNS represent the nascent phenomenon of cyberviolence. The term cyberviolence emerged in the early 2000s, with the widespread diffusion of portable laptops and Web 2.0. Yet its meaning remains highly contested and steeped in controversy (Grant 2016; Jeong 2015; Lenhart et al. 2016). Broadly speaking, the concept of cyberviolence is meant to encapsulate the kinds of harm and abuse facilitated by and perpetrated through digital and technological means. The UN's adoption of the term in their 2015 *Cyber Violence Against Women and Girls* (VAWG) report incited vociferous debate about the definition of cyber VAWG, its terminological overlaps with other forms of violence and crime, and the extent to which the term's attempt to capture all forms of online violence was either accurate or fair (Chisholm 2006).

Cyber abuse (Mishna et al. 2009, 2011; Wolford-Clevenger et al. 2016), cyber aggression (Bauman and Baldasare 2015; Marganski and Melander 2018; Runions and Bak 2015; Smith 2012; Wright 2015), digital abuse (Franks 2016; MTV 2011), technology-related violence (APC Women's Rights Programme 2015; Athar 2015;

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Fascendini and Fialova 2016), and online victimization (Gamez-Guadiz et al. 2015; Mitchell et al. 2011; Montiel et al. 2016; van Wilsem 2013) are also frequently used to describe the kinds of harm individuals may experience on and through technology. Without a consensus on the best terminology to capture this phenomenon, however, cyberviolence remains the most salient idiom.

Multilateral organizations like the United Nations (Kaye 2016; UN Broadband Commission 2015) have called attention to the global scale and threat posed by cyberviolence, while health organizations like the centers for disease control (CDC) have begun to highlight its public health consequences (Hertz and David-Ferdon 2008). Cyberviolence is not only associated with negative psychological, social, and reproductive health outcomes for victims (Ang 2015; Baldry et al. 2015; Bennett et al. 2011; Cassidy et al. 2013; Citron and Franks 2014; Dick et al. 2014; Fenaughty and Harre 2013; Finchman and Sanfilippo 2015; Hinduja and Patchin 2010; Kiriakidis and Kavoura 2016; Kowalski et al. 2014; Sabella et al. 2016; Van Ouytsel et al. 2016; Weinstein and Selman 2016) but also is linked with offline physical, sexual, and psychological violence (Flach and Deslandes 2017; MTV 2011; Ojanen et al. 2015; Temple et al. 2016; WHOA 2011; Yahner et al. 2015; Zweig et al. 2013a, 2013b).

Despite the interdisciplinary literature dedicated to cyberviolence, the research community lacks a clear conception of the scope, magnitude, and comparability of incidents across populations, digital communities, and cultural settings. The terms used to define forms of online harm are inconsistent and variable, leading to irregular estimates and an incomplete understanding of the media ecology within which cyberviolence occurs. Nor has the academic and gray literature across different disciplines, from cyberfeminism to psychology to criminology, been adequately put in conversation with one another.

The literature review was therefore undertaken to: (1) evaluate how cyberviolence has been broadly conceived, studied, and addressed in the scientific literature, with an eye toward the typological, definitional, and methodological similarities and variations across the studies and (2) assess the state of primary research in the cyberviolence field, identify gaps, and provide direction for future research.

Methods

A search of peer-reviewed literature on cyberviolence published between 2006 and 2016 was conducted in May and June of 2016. The authors limited the time frame for the search to the last 10 years to ensure that the technology discussed was current (Zych et al. 2015). To capture the multidisciplinary nature of research on the subject, the search was conducted in Academic Search Complete, PubMed, and Web of Science using the search terms "cyberviolence OR internet violence OR online harassment OR digital violence OR online violence OR cyberaggression OR cyber VAWG OR cyber victimization OR revenge porn OR cyberstalking OR cyberbullying OR sexting OR potentially offensive internet and mobile phone practices (POP) OR electronic dating violence OR electronic victimization OR tech abuse OR cyber psychological abuse OR cyber dating violence OR electronic aggression."

The initial search yielded 11,531 results. Duplicates were removed. All remaining titles and abstracts were reviewed

for relevance. Selection criteria included articles published in English in peer-reviewed journals, primary and secondary reports related to cyberviolence perpetration or victimization, and literature attending to the health implications of the phenomenon. Articles were discarded if they did not address the topic of cyberviolence in their titles or abstracts and meet the inclusion criteria. The citations in priority articles (i.e., reviews or frequently cited articles) were also assessed for additional relevant sources. The final number of full articles reviewed was 232. Through the process of reviewing the 232 select articles, additional terms used to describe cyberviolence were discovered. In the interest of including relevant articles not initially captured by the first search, the researchers conducted a second search in Scopus and PubMed in July 2016 using the search terms "online victimization OR cyber abuse OR cyberaggression" and the same criteria for inclusion, which yielded 19 additional relevant nonduplicate articles, accounting for 251 total articles reviewed. Where applicable, gray literature was incorporated throughout the review to supplement any gaps in the scientific literature.

Results

Findings suggest that the various terminologies used to describe cyberviolence are similar but not necessarily interchangeable (IGF 2016), demonstrating a lack of consensus within the research community on how to define and categorize these digitally based behaviors and actions. In reviewing the scientific and gray literature, online harassment, cyberbullying, cyber dating abuse (CDA), revenge porn, and cyberstalking emerge as representing specific, although not necessarily discrete, categories of cyberviolence. While cyberviolence can be perpetrated using a variety of tactics—including defamation, doxing, exclusion, hacking, impersonation, sexting, surveillance/tracking, and trolling (Table 1 for definitions, Table 2 for other terms to describe cyberviolence)—these tactics can all be used to enact different forms of cyberviolence.

Online harassment

Online harassment (Bossler et al. 2012; Dreßing et al. 2014; Lindsay and Krysik 2016; Ojanen et al. 2015; van Wilsem 2013; Wolak et al. 2007; Ybarra et al. 2007)—which has also been referred to as electronic harassment (Fenaughty and Harre 2013), cyber harassment (Melander 2010; Redondo-Sama et al. 2014; Smith et al. 2014), and Internet harassment (Ybarra et al. 2007)—is often used as an umbrella term to refer to other forms of cyberviolence, including sexual harassment, cyberbullying, cyberstalking, and revenge porn. The term online harassment itself lacks a uniform definition but tends to describe "threats or other offensive behavior targeted […] through new technology channels (e.g., Internet, text messaging)" (Jones et al. 2013). Other sources indicate that "Online harassment is defined less by the specific behavior than its intended effect on and the way it is experienced by its target" (Lenhart et al. 2016).

While anyone with an Internet modem may experience online harassment, prevalence data indicate that women, young girls, and LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer) individuals are more likely to be exposed to and be negatively impacted by it (Lenhart et al. 2016). A 2014 Pew study found that 70% of 18 to 24 year olds have experienced online harassment. Young women within this age group are

TABLE 1. CYBERVIOLENCE TACTICS

Defamation: the false statement of fact often used to damage the reputation of someone; can include slander or libel

Doxing: (sometimes spelled doxxing) releasing identifiable, and often private, information about an individual online; can include name, phone number, email address, home address, etc. and result in in-person stalking or harassment, sometimes physical violence or threats

Flaming: when a victim is belittled or demeaned on a live public forum (Pittaro 2011)

Hacking: gaining access to someone's private computer or data stored via digital means, such as Cloud or other storage architecture

Happy slapping: recording or filming an attack on a mobile phone

Impersonation: creating an account using the name or the domain name of another person, often with the intent to harm, harass, intimidate, or threaten others

Sexting: sending of sexually explicit messages or images by cell phone (Drouin et al. 2015), could be coercive in instances of intimate partner aggression

Surveillance/tracking: using GPS to track the movements of someone via their phone or other wireless device; secretly monitoring texts, phone calls, emails, messages, etc. conducted on someone's personal accounts

Trolling: trolls often commit intentionally inflammatory and divisive speech online (Mantilla 2015; Phillips 2015)

particularly susceptible to online sexual harassment (25%) and physical threats (23%) (Duggan et al. 2014). Younger women are also more likely to experience invasions of privacy through the digital exposure of sensitive information and undergo online harassment for a prolonged period of time (Lenhart et al. 2016). The Youth Internet Safety Surveys (2010) found that 69% of the respondents who experienced online harassment were female and that an increasing percentage of aggressors online are female (Jones et al. 2013). In a survey among primary and secondary school students across Singapore, female students were at increased risk for mobile phone harassment (Holt et al. 2016), while a survey of US college students found that women reported being harassed online more than men (Lindsay et al. 2015).

The kinds of threats specifically leveraged against women and girls online also tend to take on a sexual component, with perpetrators threatening to rape their targets or disparaging the looks and sexual desirability of their victims (Citron 2009; Mantilla 2015). This gendered nature of online harassment has been referred to as cyber gender ha-

rassment (Citron 2009), cyber/online sexual harassment (Franks 2012; Henry and Powell 2016), and technology-related/cyber VAWG (APC 2015; Baker et al. 2013; West 2016)—terms indicating that gender and sexuality may influence an individual's vulnerability to harassment (Bauman and Baldasare 2015; Citron 2009, 2014).

Researchers who gathered and analyzed secondary data on the use of sexist and misogynistic slurs directed at women and girls online through SNS like Facebook or Twitter found that engagement with anonymous sexist content promotes greater hostile sexism among users (Fox et al. 2015; Megarry 2014). Trolling, or cyber trolling (Wright 2017), is similarly characterized by its male-centered or androcentric nature. While little is known about perpetrators, trolls predominantly identify as male and often use gendered and sexuality-based harassment to defame, terrorize, embarrass, and target women and girls online (Mantilla 2015; Phillips 2015).

Cyberbullying

Most of the cyberviolence literature collected in the review deals specifically with cyberbullying. Although cyberbullying has the most robust evidence base of the various cyberviolence domains, with numerous systematic reviews and meta-analyses on the topic (Aboujaoude et al. 2015; Ang 2015; Brochado et al. 2017; Cassidy et al. 2013; Hinduja and Patchin 2008; Kiriakidis and Kavoura 2016; Kowalski et al. 2014; Patchin and Hinduja 2012; Selkie et al. 2016; Tokunaga 2010; Wingate et al. 2013), definitions and estimates of prevalence still remain inconsistent. Even the term cyberbullying is applied irregularly throughout the literature: electronic bullying, Internet bullying, cyber aggression, and online bullying have also been used to describe behaviors often captured under this term.

One frequently cited definition of cyberbullying is "an aggressive intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using mobile phones or the Internet, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself" (Cassidy et al. 2013). In addition, cyberbullying research is largely defined by setting and age group, framed in the context of adolescents in school (Wolak et al. 2007), and focused primarily on the experiences of heterosexuals in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Australia (Baek and Bullock 2014).

Roughly 10% to 40% of adolescents report having experienced cyberbullying in their lifetime (Kowalski et al. 2014, 2016; Patchin and Hinduja 2012; Tokunaga 2010).

TABLE 2. CYBERVIOLENCE CONCEPTS AND RELATED TERMINOLOGY

Cyberviolence term	Related terminology
Cyberviolence	Online violence, digital violence, digital abuse, CVAWG, cyber abuse, cyber aggression, technology-related violence
Online harassment	Electronic harassment, Internet harassment, cyber gender harassment, cyber/online sexual harassment, technology-related/CVAWG
Cyberbullying	electronic bullying, Internet bullying, cyber aggression, online bullying
CDA	cyber dating violence, electronic teen dating violence, online dating abuse, Internet partner cyber aggression, cyber teasing, DDA, electronic leashing
Revenge porn	cyber rape, nonconsensual pornography, involuntary porn, image-based sexual abuse

CVAWG, cyber violence against women and girls; DDA, digital dating abuse.

In the United States, 1.7 million youth reported experiencing cyberbullying in 2013 (Childhood Trends 2017). While researchers rarely consider or measure the sexual components of cyberbullying, except in the context of dating relationships (Alvarez 2012), evidence suggests that boys and girls have very different experiences of cyberbullying perpetration and victimization. Studies of Canadian and Swedish adolescents found that girls who experience cyberbullying are more likely than boys to be targeted for their appearance, weight, or sexuality (Berne et al. 2014; Mishna et al. 2009).

In a review of the cyberbullying literature, Cassidy et al. (2013) note that girls are more likely to experience cyberbullying tactics like gender-based harassment and exclusion and suggest that the gendered nature of cyberbullying may impact girls' reputations more compared with their male peers. Sun et al. (2016) indicate that gender differences in cyberbullying are likely to vary across geographic regions and cultural groups, further signaling the necessity of more systematic international research in regions underrepresented in the digital literature.

Cyberbullying has also been linked with a number of negative social and psychosocial consequences, including poor school performance, negative self-esteem, anxiety, depression, isolation, loneliness, stress, and suicidal ideation (Ang 2015; Baek and Bullock 2014; Baldry et al. 2015; Cassidy et al. 2013; Garett et al. 2016; Hinduja and Patchin 2010; Kiriakidis and Kavoura 2016; Kowalski et al. 2014; Sabella et al. 2016; Smith et al. 2008).

Risk factors for cyberbullying. Although some research suggests that boys and girls are equally likely to experience or engage in cyberbullying, a recent longitudinal study of a social norm program among middle and high school students in the United States found that girls reported higher levels of both cyberbullying perpetration and victimization compared to their male peers (Connell et al. 2014). Mixed-methods research among adolescents in Thailand found strong associations between perpetration and victimization of violence, both offline and online (Ojanen et al. 2015). Boys and girls can also be targeted through different digital means—while boys may be victimized through video games, girls are more likely to experience cyberbullying through social media (Chisholm 2006; Faucher et al. 2014; Hinduja and Patchin 2008).

Cyberbullying literature also suggests that LGBTQ youth and adolescents with physical or developmental disabilities may be at increased risk for cyberbullying victimization (Alhaboby et al. 2017; Bauman and Baldasare 2015; Bauman and Pero 2011; Didden et al. 2009; Elipe et al. 2018; Heiman and Olenik-Shemesh 2015a; Heiman et al. 2015b; Kowalski et al. 2016; Llorent et al. 2016; Zerach 2016). Time spent on the Internet, poor parental monitoring, prior experiences with traditional bullying, and negative peer influence are also risk factors for cyberbullying (Ang 2015; Arntfield 2015; Baldry et al. 2015; Kowalski et al. 2014).

Cyber dating abuse

CDA constitutes another prominent form of cyberviolence. The terms CDA, cyber dating violence, electronic teen dating violence, online dating abuse, Internet partner cyber aggression, cyber teasing, and digital dating abuse are all used to describe the control, harassment, stalking, and abuse of one's dating partner through technology and social media (Cutbush and Williams 2016; Flach and Deslandes 2017; Smith-Darden et al. 2017; Stonard et al. 2014; Zweig et al. 2014). CDA is a form of intimate partner violence (IPV) carried out through the use of technology (Baker and Carreno 2016; Marganski and Melander 2018). CDA includes using technology to monitor and control the behaviors of a partner; using a partner's password without permission to access his or her mail or social media accounts; installing tracking devices or apps to monitor a partner's location; or perpetrating emotional aggression and verbal threats through digital means during or after a relationship has ended (Baker and Carreno 2016; Borrajo et al. 2015; Cutbush and Williams 2016; Draucker and Martsolf 2010; Flach and Deslandes 2017; Peskin et al. 2017; Reed et al. 2017).

A U.S. based study found that 25% of teens had been called names, harassed, or put down by their partner over the phone; 22% were coerced to engage in sexual activity over the phone or via the Internet; 11% had private or embarrassing images or videos shared without their permission by romantic partners; and 10% had been physically threatened by intimate partners either online or through digital means (Picard 2007).

In another study, 41% of American 14–24 year olds in relationships had experienced some form of CDA (MTV 2011). Similarly, among a sample of middle and high school students in the United States, 26% of respondents had experienced some form of CDA victimization over the last year (Zweig et al. 2013a). The researchers further examined the extent to which youth who experienced CDA in relationships were also victimized by physical dating violence, psychological dating abuse, and sexual coercion. Findings suggested that females experience higher victimization rates than males and that there is a significant degree of overlap between CDA and other forms of IPV.

Emergent literature has begun to examine the connection between CDA and IPV in adult relationships (Burke et al. 2011; Kee 2005). In addition to experiencing threats, harassment, surveillance, and tracking through digital means in intimate relationships—what some have termed "electronic leashing" (Marcum et al. 2017)—Dimond et al. (2011) emphasize that women may be digitally pursued after separation from an abusive partner via harassment on SNS, receive coercive or threatening texts, or have their phone tracked through GPS software. In a study of 72 domestic violence shelters conducted by National Public Radio (NPR) in 2014, 85% of shelters reported working with clients whose abusers track them using GPS, and 75% reported working with clients whose abusers used hidden mobile apps to secretly monitor their conversations (Shahani 2014). In an online survey conducted by Women's Aid, 45% of female respondents reported experiencing some form of online abuse during their relationship, and 48% experienced online harassment or abuse after the relationship had ended (Shahani 2014).

The role of sexting—or the exchange of explicit sexual materials in the form of text or visual imagery through digital means—in CDA is particularly fractious. Research on sexting has focused primarily on adolescents using a generalized definition that frequently characterizes victims' own behavior as "risky" or "promiscuous" for having created the image in

the first place (Henry and Powell 2015b; Krieger 2017). This victim blaming fails to distinguish between willing participants in an increasingly common form of exchange between intimate partners and victims of nonconsensual CDA and revenge porn. This distinction should be drawn when coercion or pressure to sext and/or create and disseminate nonconsensual sexual images occurs, rendering the behavior a form of CDA.

A study among Italian youth and adolescents found that individuals who frequently engaged in sexting were more likely to be perpetrators and victim of dating violence, including CDA (Morelli et al. 2016), while an online study of sexting among American undergraduates also revealed associations between coercive sexting and IPV (Drouin et al. 2015). For the purposes of this review, sexting is not considered a form of cyberviolence as such, but rather a gendered dimension of intimate relationships that can be used to perpetrate CDA and revenge porn.

Risk factors for CDA. While studies indicate that CDA victimization affects more than 50% of high school and college-aged youth in intimate relationships (Baker and Carreno 2016; Borrajo et al. 2015; Temple et al. 2016; Yahner et al. 2015), women experience more sexual CDA than men. Men are also more likely than women to report perpetrating sexual CDA (Zweig et al. 2013b). Being younger and in a homosexual relationship are associated with a higher frequency of CDA (Borrajo et al. 2015). Adolescents with experience in bullying victimization or perpetration are also more likely to engage in CDA perpetration (Peskin et al. 2017; Van Ouytsel et al. 2017), illustrating the continuum between online and offline violence, as well as the continuities between CDA and cyberbullying.

Zweig et al. (2014) identify being female; committing a greater variety of delinquent behaviors; having had sex; having higher levels of depressive symptoms; and higher levels of anger or hostility as life factors strongly correlated with CDA. CDA also appears to be connected to offline physical and sexual aggression in intimate relationships (Borrajo et al. 2015; Marganski and Melander 2018; Morelli et al. 2016; Reed et al. 2016; Temple et al. 2016; Zweig et al. 2013a), particularly if coercive or unwanted sexting is included as a tactic of CDA in the study's definition (Choi et al. 2016; Drouin et al. 2015; Morelli et al. 2016). Finally, CDA may be associated with risky sexual activity and an earlier age of sexual debut among youth, signaling a possible relationship between CDA and sexual and reproductive health among adolescent girls (Dick et al. 2014; Van Ouytsel et al. 2016).

Revenge porn

Revenge porn represents another form of cyberviolence, one with increasing visibility in the criminal and legal sector. Revenge porn—sometimes referred to as cyber rape, nonconsensual pornography, involuntary porn, or image-based sexual abuse—is the publication of sexually explicit images or videos on an online forum without the consent of the subject (Citron and Franks 2014; Henry and Powell 2016; McGlyn et al. 2017b; Walker and Sleath 2017). Although revenge porn can be perpetrated by ex-partners using archived sexually explicit text messages, photographs or videos (sexts) can also be accessed remotely through

hacking and uploaded to a revenge porn website by a third party unknown to the victim. Revenge porn becomes even more threatening when images or videos are accompanied by the subject's personal information (e.g., name, address).

There are almost no statistics on the prevalence of revenge porn—the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative conducted one of the only online surveys to document victimization. In a survey from August 2012 to December 2013, 22% of the respondents reported being revenge porn victims, 90% of whom were women (End Revenge Porn 2013). Over a period of 6 months, 139 revenge porn allegations were filed with police forces in England and Wales, with 10 of these victims being under the age of consent (Davies 2015). Another study found that 1 in 10 people have had an ex-partner threaten to share nude pictures online—60% of these threats were carried out (Franklin 2014).

Just as little is known about the incidence of revenge porn—in part because of the limited legal protections available to victims and stigma associated with the private material being released—even less is known about perpetrators, risk factors, and effective means of arbitration. Revenge porn may damage the subject's personal and professional reputation, social relationships and mental health, precipitating anxiety, depression, and panic attacks (Franklin 2014; Franks 2015; McCue 2016). The publication of personal information also provides further opportunities for abuse, both online and in person (Citron and Franks 2014).

Cyberstalking

Cyberstalking definitions also vary, although the practice is typically understood as "the repeated pursuit of an individual using electronic or Internet-capable devices" (Dreßing et al. 2014; Reyns et al. 2012). While cyberstalking perpetrators may have had an intimate relationship with their victim, indicating some overlap between cyberstalking and CDA, cyberstalking can also occur between strangers. The SmartSafe Study in Australia found that current or former intimate partners may use mobile technology to check their partner's location; look at their partner's messages without permission; send threats via text messages or phone calls; share private photographs or videos without permission; post negative information about their partner on social media; or demand the electronic passwords to monitor their partner's communication channels (Woodlock 2016).

Cyberstalking prevalence rates are often captured as a part of studies measuring traditional stalking by the U.S. Department of Justice (2001) or the National Crime Victimization Survey (Baum et al. 2009), which found that one in four stalking victims report experiencing cyberstalking. Other prevalence estimates indicate that 20% to 40% of Internet users have been victimized by cyberstalking (Tokunaga and Aune 2017). A 2016 survey conducted by the Data and Society Research Institute found that women and young people were more likely to be targets of cyberstalking than men, with 14% of Internet users under the age of 30 identifying as victims of cyberstalking (Lenhart et al. 2016).

Risk factors for cyberstalking. Primary research and surveys conducted by Working to Halt Online Abuse (WHOA) and Liz Claiborne Inc. indicate that cyberstalking perpetrators tend to be male and that women, nonheterosexual individuals

and people of color are more vulnerable to incidents of cyberstalking (Dreßing et al. 2014; King-Ries 2008; Laxton 2014; Reyns et al. 2012, 2016). Physical aggression among men may be a predictor of cyberstalking perpetration (Strawhun et al. 2013). Victims are also likely to know or have had a prior relationship with their perpetrator, indicating a possible connection among cyberstalking behaviors, CDA, and other forms of IPV (Dreßing et al. 2014; King-Ries 2008; Larkin 2015; Matsui 2015; Shimizu 2013; Stroud 2014). Finally, just as cyberstalking often occurs contemporaneous with in-person stalking, victims of cyberstalking are also at risk of being physically attacked by their stalkers (Dreßing et al. 2014).

Discussion

The phenomenon of cyberviolence encompasses a range of abuses perpetrated by and through digital means, including online harassment, cyberbullying, CDA, revenge porn, and cyberstalking, types of cyberviolence that often overlap and occur contemporaneous with offline violence. Studies suggest that women and girls and sexual minorities of all genders are more vulnerable to online victimization (Aboujaoude et al. 2015; Bauman and Baldasare 2015; Berne et al. 2014; Connell et al. 2014; Duggan et al. 2014; Elipe et al. 2018; Hamm et al. 2015; Lindsay and Krysik 2016; Llorent et al. 2016; Reed et al. 2016; Zerach 2016). Research also indicates that previous victimization can be a risk factor for both future victimization and perpetration (Marganski and Melander 2018; Marret and Choo 2017; Peskin et al. 2017; Temple et al. 2016; Van Ouytsel et al. 2017; Wachs et al. 2018). While their review identified over 200 academic articles related to cyberviolence, significant gaps in the literature remain.

Most of the research on cyberviolence comes from developed countries like the United States, Canada, and Australia. Low- and middle-income countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are notably absent from this literature. Insights from this review may not be applicable to those contexts where access to and ownership of devices, social norms around dating, and levels of offline violence vary widely. Since cyberviolence is part of the continuum of offline violence, rates of cyberviolence will likely vary as rates of IPV and other forms of interpersonal violence do in various countries. Given differences in income level, mobile phone ownership, and digital infrastructures regionally and internationally, the digital platforms for perpetration and prevalence of cyberviolence victimization are likely to be similarly variegated.

The primary research that has been conducted tends to focus on convenience samples of youth, adolescents, and college and high school students that may not be representative of the general population. In addition, more data are needed on the characteristics of and tactics used by perpetrators (Cassidy et al. 2013; Henry and Powell 2016; Kowalski et al. 2012; Strawhun et al. 2013), as well as the contexts and locations in which cyberviolence occurs.

There is an evident lack of definitional, theoretical, or methodological consensus within the scientific community on how to frame, study, and measure cyberviolence phenomena. The inconsistent, and sometimes incompatible, definitions impact the kinds of violence individuals may report experiencing. If definitions are provided in survey or questionnaire tools, incidents that fall outside of the description will not be captured (Aboujaoude et al. 2015;

Berne et al. 2013; Tokunaga 2010; Vivolo-Kanto et al. 2014; Ybarra et al. 2012). Other studies measure incidence through behavioral items or use different measurement time frames and indicators for frequency, which present additional measurement limitations (Henry and Powell 2016; Smith et al. 2014).

Measurement is rendered all the more difficult due to troubles associated with detecting and tracking the multiple covert pathways and digital means through which cyberviolence can be perpetrated, particularly given the anonymity afforded by ICT. Nor are existing studies being put into discussion with one another. Cyberbullying literature remains siloed among psychologists and educators, while revenge porn and cyberstalking tend to attract legal and criminal scholars. Within the wider digital ecology precipitated by ICT networks and infrastructures, different forms of cyberviolence are often treated as discrete phenomena. Yet, these incidents cannot be separated from the social norms and forms of violence that occur offline or the broad network of cyberviolence victimization in which incidents like online harassment, CDA, and revenge porn often intersect with one another.

Due to the limited number of longitudinal studies, very little is known about the long-term impacts of cyberviolence. While incidents of online harassment, cyberstalking, and revenge porn have been shown to negatively impact short-term professional and educational opportunities, social relationships, living situations, feelings of safety, and mental health, (Cassidy et al. 2013; Chisholm 2014; Citron and Franks 2014; Franklin 2014; Franks 2015), almost no data have been collected on the long-term health consequences of victimization. Studies have found that victims of cyberviolence often suffer from feelings of isolation, stigma, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and sadness (Bilic 2013; Drouin et al. 2015; Hamm et al. 2015)—incidents of revenge porn or cyberstalking in particular can lead to interruptions in employment or education, sensitivities over privacy, issues with trusting others, and increased susceptibility to suicidal ideation (Bloom 2016; Dreβing et al. 2014; Franklin 2014).

Feminist cyberviolence scholars, however, emphasize that the harms associated with victimization are gendered (Henry and Powell 2016; McGlyn and Rackley 2017a; Reed et al. 2017) (See Table 3 for an overview of the environmental, interpersonal and intrapersonal factors contributing to cyberviolence perpetration and victimization). The potential frequency and duration of online victimization over an individual's lifetime suggest that some of the negative health outcomes associated with cyberbullying, CDA, or online harassment may result in chronic symptoms and trauma. The long-term health effects of cyberviolence represent a prescient concern in the public health community.

Despite the fact that women and young girls are disproportionately affected by technology-based harms (Bloom 2016; Cassidy et al. 2013; Chisholm 2006; Citron 2014; Halder and Jaishankar 2011, 2012; Hamm et al. 2015; Hardaker and McGlashan 2016; Henry and Powell 2015a, 2015b; Holt et al. 2016; Lindsay et al. 2015; Marcum et al. 2014; Mitchell et al. 2016; Montiel et al. 2016; Stoleru and Costescu 2014), the gendered nature of cyberviolence represents a nascent frontier in the research community. Gender influences how cyberviolence is perpetrated and experienced differently

TABLE 3. INFLUENCES ON CYBERVIOLENCE VICTIMIZATION AND PERPETRATION AT THE ENVIRONMENTAL,
INTERPERSONAL, AND INTRAPERSONAL LEVELS

	Types of cyber violence	Selected references
Environmental influences		
Gender	Cyberbullying; Online Harassment; Trolling	Berne et al. (2014), Citron (2009), Mantilla (2015), Mishna et al. (2009), Phillips (2015)
Normative beliefs about aggression	Cyberbullying	Kowalski et al. (2014)
Region	Cyberbullying	Sun et al. (2016)
Interpersonal influences		
History of risky sexual behavior	CDA	Dick et al., 2014; Van Ouytsel et al., 2015
IPV	CDA	Borrajo et al. (2015), Marganski and Melander (2018), Morelli et al. (2016), Reed et al. (2016), Temple et al. (2016), Zweig et al. (2013b)
In-person aggression	Cyberbullying; CDA; cyberstalking	Baldry et al. (2015), Dreßing et al. (2014), Kowalski et al. (2014), Peskin et al. (2017), Van Ouytsel et al. (2017)
Poor parental monitoring	Cyberbullying	Ang (2015)
Intrapersonal influences		
Age	Cyberbullying; online harassment	Borrajo et al. (2015), Cassidy et al. (2013), Lenhart et al. (2016)
Disability status	Cyberbullying	Alhaboby et al. (2017), Bauman and Pero (2011), Didden et al. (2009), Heiman et al. (2015b), Heiman and Olenik-Shemesh (2015a)
Early age of sexual debut	CDA	Van Ouytsel et al. (2015)
Race/ethnicity	Cyberstalking	Reyns et al. (2012, 2016)
Sexual and gender orientation	Cyberbullying; CDA; online harassment	Borrajo et al. (2015), Elipe et al. (2018), Lenhart et al. (2016), Reyns et al. (2011), Zerach (2016)
Sex	Cyberbullying; CDA; cyberstalking; online harassment	Cassidy et al. (2013), Connell et al. (2014), Dreßing et al. (2014), Holt et al. (2016), Jones et al. (2013), Lenhart et al. (2016), Lindsay et al. (2015), Mantilla (2015), Phillips (2015), Reyns et al. (2011), Zweig et al. (2014)
Time spent on Internet	Cyberbullying	Ang (2015)

CDA, cyber dating abuse; IPV, intimate partner violence.

by men and women, boys and girls, and by sexual and gender minorities (Balakrishnan 2015; Bennett et al. 2011; Berne et al. 2014; Chang et al. 2016; Chisholm 2014; Faucher et al. 2014; Finchman and Sanfilippo 2015; Megarry 2014; Mishna et al. 2009; Patchin and Hinduja 2012; Reed et al. 2016), but further research is needed to theorize and understand how gender inequality and offline VAWG inform and impact victimization (Henry and Powell 2015b). Still less scholarship has been devoted to studying the role social factors like race, class, or disability status might play in experiences of cyberviolence, particularly among minority populations.

An intersectional lens must be applied to consider how gender articulates with other aspects of an individual's identity in their experiences of and vulnerabilities to cyberviolence. The cyberfeminism movement of the early 1990s emerged to counteract ICT's potential to recapitulate and further instantiate unequal power relationships between men and women, while feminist theories of technology have also been used to demonstrate the gendered ways in which digital infrastructures are designed and employed (Luckman 1999; Paasonen 2011; Wajcman 2010).

Whether or not technology is inherently gendered, it has been used to both reinforce and subvert traditional gender paradigms (Henry and Powell 2015a; Stoleru and Costescu 2014; UN Broadband Commission 2015). To capture the gendered and sexual nature of cyberviolence, Henry and Powell (2016) have devised a provisional typology, "technology-facilitated sexual violence" (TFSV), which provides a broader criteria for online victimization and illustrates the complex opportunities for violence a networked individual (Rainie and Wellman 2012) is vulnerable to.

This intersectional approach should further consider the cultural saliency of terms like cyberviolence; alternative cultural configurations of gender, sexuality, and ethnicity; and the digital divide in developing countries or the extent to which differential access to ICT impacts the manifestation and distribution of cyberviolence in countries around the world. A more comprehensive cyberviolence typology should similarly scrutinize the fact that the types of violence occurring on SNS and ICT exhibit many characteristics similar to sexual harassment, traditional stalking, and IPV and may be occurring contemporaneous with physical, sexual, and/or psychological violence offline. In studying the continuum between online and offline violence, researchers must similarly reckon with the extent to which harms precipitated through ICT and social media are distinct from those that occur offline (Henry and Powell 2015b, 2016; Sargent et al. 2016).

Limitations

This review has limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The search terms were intentionally broad to capture any literature pertaining to violence that

occurs online or through digital means. However, because cyberviolence is an understudied and multidimensional phenomenon, it is possible that the authors were unable to capture and assess all relevant articles that have been published over the last 10 years. In addition, only articles published in English were included in the review, missing evidence that may have been published in other languages. As noted above, the findings above reflect the available literature from only a small number of high-income countries, limiting the applicability to a wider set of contexts. This remains an important gap to be addressed by future research.

Other forms of digital harm may fall within the purview of cyberviolence, including the recording and online distribution of sexual violence videos (Boux and Daum 2015; Henry and Powell 2015a; Powell 2010), online hate speech (Awan and Zempi 2016), online sexual solicitation (Mishna et al. 2011; Mitchell et al. 2011; Normand and Sallafranque-St-Louis 2016; Priebe et al. 2013; Smith et al. 2014; Wells and Mitchell 2014; Young et al. 2007), or cybercrime (Citron 2014; Halder and Jaishankar 2011; Wolak et al. 2010). These phenomena represent a very small subset of the literature collected for the review and were beyond the purview of their analysis.

Conclusion

Every day, a growing number of men, women, and children gain access to personal mobile devices and technologies that allow them to communicate and connect through time and space. And every day individuals are driven off the virtual grid because of cyberviolence. Cyberviolence violates basic human rights to safety and freedom of expression (Kaye 2017), while representing a growing yet invisibilized mental, physical, and sexual health threat to networked citizens around the world. However, movements like Take Back the Tech and advocacy organizations like Crash Override Network employ the very same technology used to perpetrate cyberviolence to counteract and raise awareness about online abuse.

Developing standard definitions and methodologies on cyberviolence is a first step to designing and implementing primary prevention and response mechanisms. Comparable prevalence data are possible only once the conceptual framework and terms related to cyberviolence are clarified. Many researchers and practitioners speculate that incidents of cyberviolence are underreported through formal channels (Arntfield 2015; King-Ries 2008), perpetuating ignorance on the part of local and national governments about the scale and severity of the phenomenon, leaving many victims without recourse for justice or recovery.

Standard measures will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of cyberviolence, how it varies across settings, and its impacts on vulnerable populations. Building consistency within the field will also inform the design, implementation, and evaluation of interventions to address cyberviolence. A concerted effort toward establishing coherence in the research community will illuminate the digital shadows within which cyberviolence operates and elevates prevention as an issue of international concern.

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