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Socio-Cultural Contexts for Normative Gender Violence: Pathways of Risk for Intimate Partner Violence

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Abstract: Violent means of social control at both the micro- and macro-levels create norms of violence within societies that spill over into multiple domains as a reaction to a socio-cultural context of normative violence. This adverse effect may stem from normalized violence within both families and communities and contribute to intimate partner violence (IPV). From a contextual-ecological model, this becomes a victimizing effect. This study tests the theoretical premise of Norms of Violence in order to reconceptualize IPV as a victimizing effect within a larger community framework. Using data from the International Dating Violence Study, this study explores the interaction of violent socialization at both the familial and communal level, controlling for other conditions that could contribute to a normative standard of violence. The results indicate the presence of polyvictimization: nations in which youth experience the highest levels of violent socialization from both their families and communities tend to have higher levels of IPV victimization. This relationship is stronger when social structures support normative violence as conflict resolution. For females, this relationship is further exasperated. Societies across the world, including those in which the context of violence is most prominent, can work towards eradicating the negative impacts of gender violence for individuals, their families, and the communities in which they live by addressing the normalization of violence.

Keywords: intimate partner violence; violent socialization; gender violence; polyvictimization

1. Introduction

Gendered violence is a world public health issue (e.g., see Garcia-Moreno et al. 2006; Hooven et al. 2012; Krug et al. 2002; Varlioglu and Hayes 2022) with serious consequences. Adverse outcomes include mental health disturbances (Covey et al. 2013; Hooven et al. 2012; Schraft et al. 2013), increased suicide risk (Hooven et al. 2012), ineffective coping behaviors (DeHart 2012), and substance abuse issues (Covey et al. 2013). With almost half of the world population currently identifying as female (Trading Economics 2023), gender violence could be classified as a crisis. Yet the extent to which gendered violence can be considered a crisis is still mostly unknown due to the lack of international-based research on the topic.

Women have different violent experiences transnationally (Jaquier et al. 2011), making gendered violence difficult to measure transnationally. Gendered violence manifests in many capacities. Intimate partner violence (IPV) is one manifestation of gendered violence, as females have been known to be IPV victims more so than males (Hester et al. 2017; Stark and Hester 2019). IPV has been defined as patterns of abusive behavior used by one intimate partner to exercise power over their intimate partner (DeHart 2012). This is another way of saying IPV is used to control others, particularly those closest to us. This manifestation of violence may begin as early as childhood, before entering an intimate partner relationship, such as experiencing normalized violence within families or societies. Different nations embrace different norms surrounding the acceptability of violence, and thus, various manifestations of violence may be more prevalent in some societies. For example, when children frequently experience physical discipline within their family, other forms of violence tend to be more acceptable (Straus 2004b), and certain nation-based
characteristics, such as wide-spread violence in the community, tend to influence the use of other forms of violence in resolving conflict (Lyndon et al. 2007). This creates a context in which one form of violence may produce other forms of violence (e.g., see Straus 2009).

Consequences of childhood violence can carry through to adolescence into young adulthood. These consequences span the life course, with negative impacts on marital status, educational attainment, and employment (Covey et al. 2013; Hooven et al. 2012). There may even be a contribution to IPV. This makes the range of violence victimization an important area of study transnationally. Despite a large body of research on IPV, transnational studies examining the contextual effect of violence contributing to IPV are still limited. With many societies still viewing IPV as men assaulting women, the current study tests this premise of IPV in order to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on transnational gendered violence. The present study aims to explore the contextual effects of normalized violence transnationally, seeking to answer these questions: Is there a relationship between normalized violent social control, such as violent socialization, and IPV victimization for females? Do the effects of contextualized violence norms on IPV victimization vary transnationally? These questions will be answered by conducting a secondary data analysis.

1.1. Violent Socialization

Violent socialization is a combination of socialization methods embedded in violence. Violent socialization encompasses physical discipline, consistent exposure to violence, and pro-violent messages (i.e., families and community members advising youth to respond to violence with their own violence) (Delaney 2015; Varlioglu and Hayes 2022). Some experts have defined physical discipline as abusive (e.g., Taylor et al. 2011; Zolotor et al. 2008). Witnessing violence may suggest to youth normative standards of the family and community, such that violence is an acceptable means to resolve conflict (Straus and Donnelly 1994). Youth who are exposed to violence tend to be more likely to concurrently experience other types of violence, including physical abuse (Lamers-Winkelman et al. 2012). Though violence may not be directed at the youth, exposure to violence is still part of youth’s socialization in the sense of promoting pro-violent identification. While it has been argued elsewhere that pro-violent messages tend to be a deviant belief (Ohene et al. 2006), these pro-violent messages may instill within youth a sense that violence is an acceptable means in which to resolve conflict (Straus and Donnelly 1994). These pro-violent messages also become part of youth’s socialization into the norms of society.

Violent socialization is not influenced by individual families alone. Methods of socializing youth is part of a broader social context, a context subject to the influence of the social structure of a nation. There may be patterns within nations in regard to containing youth behavior that are reflective of structural influences, and these influences vary across different nations. For example, physical discipline is considered violent behavior (Straus and Donnelly 1994). Yet physical discipline within families is still considered a norm within the United States (Zolotor et al. 2011), while it is legally prohibited in Sweden (Gumbrecht 2011). This variation may be due to structural patterns in national-level acceptance of violence (Eriksson 2010) and specific disciplinary techniques (Forjuoh and Zwi 1998). Such structural patterns are considered a national context effect (Straus 2009). This contextual effect can be exemplified by research showing that methods of socialization within individual families may be associated with violent socialization occurring at the societal level (see Lansford and Dodge 2008).

1.2. Contextual Effects of Violent Socialization

A contextual effect is the reflection of informal and formal normative standards within a nation for the acceptable boundaries of socialization, including socialization embedded with violence. International research shows some degree of contextual effect in socialization processes specific to individual societies. For example, the socio-economic status of a nation has been associated with the degree to which aggregates of families in that nation engage
in harsh physical discipline of youth (Runyan et al. 2010; Cappa and Kahn 2011). Such contextual effects that hold true to national socio-economic status (i.e., gross domestic product) may also hold true for violent socialization. Violent socialization combines varying methods of controlling youth behavior through violence, both within families and communities, that have spilled over from structural norms (see Delaney 2021 for a more robust discussion). The impact of violence spreads far and wide, including people and communities (Sharkey 2018). This argument can be extended to socialization processes. These processes are not completed by one institution nor at any one time; the spread of normative violence within socialization is diffused through societies across multiple domains. Therefore, violence is not an individual level phenomenon, but rather multilevel. Frequent subjection to violent socialization across these multilevels inculcates a context of normalized violence.

Violent socialization processes that are common across societies become collective informal social control. These social connections between different groups of families and community members inadvertently promote and promulgate violence within their shared society under the guise of social control. As Eller (2006) explains, this is a group effect. This group effect does not need to be synchronized or organized shared actions. The group effect is simply another contributing force to the collective normalization of violence within society. The more groups are integrated, the greater likelihood for shared views of violence (Eller 2006). When clustered within the same nation, these shared conceptions become the orientation of a group norm and a macro-level standard creating violence as a norm. Socio-political practices of the collective may further shape group orientations towards violence, explaining differences in the degree to which violence is accepted across societies (Gartner 1993).

Normalized violence inculcates the collective acceptance of violence to resolve conflict and further perpetuates a culture of violence used to control behaviors. This is one of the main premises of Norms of Violence, a theoretical argument that the culture of some societies reproduces, supports, and promotes normalcy in the use of violence, and this normalcy spills over into other domains of society. People become indoctrinated into an environment in which they are expected to acquiescence to normative violence, perhaps even force, as an accepted means for conflict resolution. This includes intimate partner relationships. In these contexts of violent socialization, violence may be a factor contributing to IPV. Collective experiences, at both the micro- and macro-levels, encourage victims towards these violence-based relationships, even, subconsciously, as a reaction to a socio-cultural context of normative violence. In other words, IPV may simply be a manifestation of the consequences of violent socialization. In an ecological model of individual and communal based factors, this becomes a victimizing effect. The victimizing effect explains how normal societal acceptance of violence can lead to harmful outcomes, further perpetuating violent behaviors and associated victimizations. The shared meanings of the collective include acceptance of violent behavior, particularly in the presence of conflict. The present study tests the theoretical premise of Norms of Violence in order to reconceptualize IPV as a victimizing effect within a larger community framework.

1.3. Intimate Partner Violence

There is a robust body of research that examines risk factors for committing IPV but fewer in terms of determining risk factors for being the target of IPV transnationally. Most studies concentrate on direct physical familial violence contributing to IPV victimization (e.g., see Gover et al. 2011; Riggs and O’Leary 1996; Tjaden and Thoennes 2000) or other violence-based factors (e.g., see DeGue et al. 2010; Feder et al. 2010; Cappa and Kahn 2011; Margolin and Gordis 2000). Transnational research is beginning to demonstrate the impact of multilevel factors contributing to IPV victimization. For example, the combination of family violence and negative community experiences (such as verbal aggression from peers and teachers) is associated with lower levels of resiliency amongst youth (Kassis et al. 2013). Lower levels of resiliency may encourage environments that support violence-based
relationships, as violence has been normalized in multiple contexts within specific societies. Further research is needed to understand the cultural and social contexts of gender based violent experiences (Jaquier et al. 2011), such as IPV. The present study fills this gap in the literature by examining the contextual effects that contribute to normalized violence within societies, including IPV.

1.4. IPV as a Public Health Issue

Violent experiences, whether it be exposure to or as a direct victim of violence, have been associated with a myriad of adverse outcomes. This includes stress (Margolin and Gordis 2000; Stewart et al. 2013) and trauma (Giaconia et al. 1995; Oliveira 2022). Norms of Violence argues that normalized violence creates a culture of accepted normative violence that may further stress and traumatize youth. When such a culture is reinforced within multiple domains of society, there may be the presence of a victimization effect; violence becomes familiar, and youth may be drawn towards violent relationships as a result. Multiple violent victimization experiences are considered polyvictimization (Finkelhor et al. 2011). Polyvictimization could be conceptualized to include victimizations across multiple realms of society as well. This includes a possible link between violent socialization earlier in life and experiencing IPV later in life.

1.5. The Current Study

The present study tests these theoretical premises, the “victimization effect” of Norms of Violence, within an ecological model. This larger context examines familial, communal, and structural components of violence transnationally to explore the impact on IPV victimization, with a focus on gender differences. The following hypotheses are tested: violent socialization will be associated with IPV victimization, with higher levels being associated with females experiencing more IPV victimization compared to males (H₁), and IPV will vary as a function of the context of violent socialization transnationally (H₂). This study seeks to understand the extent to which IPV manifests transnationally from a context of normalized violence, creating a victimizing effect, and whether this manifests as another mode of gendered violence.

2. Materials and Methods

This was a secondary data analysis using data from the International Dating Violence Study (IDVS). The IDVS was intended to measure the prevalence and chronicity of violence against dating partners internationally and the risk factors associated with this violence (M. Straus, personal communication, 22 January 2010). The IDVS is the most comprehensive transnational datasets, publicly accessible, that includes reliable and valid measures (e.g., see Straus 2004a; Straus and Mouradian 1999; Straus et al. 1996), including measures for both violent socialization and IPV. IRB approval was granted at each of the institutions that contributed data to the IDVS, and the present study received exempt status from the author’s institution’s IRB (for a secondary data analysis).

2.1. Sample

The sample in the IDVS consisted of college students from 68 different colleges or universities in the 32 nations. The nations came from each of the following regions: North America, South America, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Australia. A full list of nations is located at https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR29583.v1 and in several publications using this dataset (e.g., see Delaney 2015, 2021). The original dataset contained 17,404 cases. However, this sample was reduced. The length of recall period has been associated with memory recall bias (Das et al. 2012); the only means in which to reduce the length of recall period post-data collection is to restrict the ages of the respondents to those closest to youth. This would be those youth in the age range of emerging adulthood, ages 18–25 (Arnett 2000). To reduce the possibility of memory recall bias, the dataset was filtered to this specification, and this reduced the dataset to 14,157 cases. There were cases with missing
data on IPV victimization (non-response). Deleting cases tends to produce the least biased parameter estimates and standard errors compared to imputation (Allison 2002). Removing these cases further reduced the dataset and produced a final sample of 11,323 cases.

2.2. Measures

All scales in the present study were derived from the original IDVS. Gender, age, and gross domestic product were also original IDVS variables. One group level variable, the legality of corporal discipline (discipline), was added to the dataset.

Dependent variable. Intimate partner victimization is a self-reported measure of the frequency of being subjected to severe forms of violence from the respondent’s intimate partner within the past year. This is a scale of thirteen items measuring circumstances such as shoving, choking, hitting, kicking, forcing sex/sexual contact, and using a weapon. The mean score is 85.72 IPV victimization experiences (IPV), with a range of 21 to 88 experiences during the past year. Due to a highly negative skew, this scale was transformed by the natural log which produced a more normal distribution.

Level-1 independent variable. Familial violent socialization (vsfamily) is the degree to which respondents experienced violent socialization within their family. This five-item scale measures being hit frequently by parents and family members, witnessing violence by adult family members, and being advised by a parent to use violence to resolve conflict on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Higher scores indicate the respondent had more violent socialization experiences within their families. A second independent variable is the individual respondent’s gender (gender), which measures whether or not the respondent identified as being either male [1] or female [0].

Level-2 independent variable. Communal violent socialization (vscommunity) measures the degree to which respondents experienced violent socialization within their communities. This three-item scale measures being hit frequently by community members, witnessing violence by community members, and being advised by community members to use violence to resolve conflict on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Higher scores indicate the respondent had more violent socialization experiences within their communities. To create the contextual effect, this scale was aggregated by averaging responses for all respondents within each nation, separately, then creating a national level mean for each of the 32 nations within the dataset.

Control variable. Childhood victimization has been shown to be associated with violence approval viewpoints (Berkowitz et al. 1994), including patriarchal norms in which it is acceptable for men to use violence as social control within the household (Schneider 1990). Such viewpoints can influence behaviors, including entering a violence-based relationship. Therefore, the violence approval beliefs scale was included as a control variable. This ten-item scale measures items (such as hitting children and spouses is “OK”, women who are raped are asking for it, and people should not walk away from a fight) on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Higher scores indicate the respondent had stronger beliefs that violence towards others is acceptable. This is a level-1 control variable.

The social desirability scale (socdesire) was also included as a control variable to reduce the possibility of social desirability bias. Given the sensitive nature of the questions asked of respondents, respondents may have provided answers more favorable rather than truthful answers. This is most likely for surveys inquiring about personal (Reynolds 1982) and sensitive information (Lee 1993). This thirteen-item scale measures items such as being jealous of others, trying to get even when wronged, and taking advantage of other people. The response categories are a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with higher scores indicating a greater likelihood that the respondent answered dishonestly. This is a level-1 control variable.

Several other control variables were included to rule out spurious relationships between the predictor variables and intimate partner victimization. As mentioned previously, socialization processes may be reflective of different socio-economic standings across dif-
different nations (Runyan et al. 2010). Therefore, gross domestic product (GDP) was included as a level-2 control variable to control for the effect of national socio-economic influences. Another level-2 control variable is whether (1) or not (0) the nation has laws prohibiting the use of physical discipline on children (discipline). The variable captures laws enacted prior to or during IDVS data collection that prohibit the use of physical discipline on youth to be coded yes; all other nations were coded no. As discussed previously, physical discipline of children is considered violent in some nations, while considered a norm in other nations. This variable is being used as a control for structural support of violence and legal support for the use of violence against others. And finally, at level-1, individual respondent’s age (age) is a level-1 control variable.

All continuous measured variables were transformed into standardized variables by centering the variable on the grand mean of responses (zero representing averages in the regression analyses). Table 1 lists the descriptive statistics for these variables.

2.3. Analysis

Multilevel modeling regression analysis (MLM) was used to test individual-level and contextual effects of violent socialization on intimate partner victimization. MLM (Bryk and Raudenbush 1992) was designed to separate individual and group level effects on the dependent variable. Data from individuals within the same nations are not independent from each other. Rather, individuals are nested within their nations, and the data may be connected, as characteristics that occur at a higher level (i.e., group level attributes) can influence individual level characteristics (Luke 2004). To avoid an ecological fallacy, MLM regression analysis is used on this hierarchical data.

3. Results

The results of the analyses are shown in Table 2. The exploratory multilevel model (Model 0) determined that the mean national level for IPV victimization, across all nations, on average, was estimated at approximately 85.6 points net of predictors and controls (85.637, \( p < 0.001 \)). IPV victimization significantly varies among the nations in the IDVS, with approximately 98% more of the variation occurring within the same nation (32.470, \( p < 0.001 \)) than between nations (0.394, \( p < 0.01 \)). When accounting for the effects of familial violent socialization (Model 1), the mean national IPV victimization score is about the same, at 85.6 points on average among respondents with average levels of violent socialization within their individual family (85.583, \( p < 0.001 \)). But, as the levels of familial violent socialization increases, the average national IPV victimization scores tend to increase significantly, estimated at 0.342 points on average for each 1-point increase in the familial violent socialization scale. There is still significant variation within and between the nations in the IDVS. When accounting for the effects of communal violent socialization (Model 2), the mean national IPV victimization score is still the same, at approximately 85.6 points among respondents with average levels of violent socialization within their individual family.
As the levels of communal violent socialization increase, the average national IPV victimization score tends to increase significantly, estimated at 0.238 points on average for each 1-point increase in the communal violent socialization. IPV victimization continues to vary significantly within (31.211, \( p < 0.001 \)) and between the nations (0.183, \( p < 0.05 \)).

Combining the two levels of violent socialization and adding gender (Model 3), the mean national IPV victimization score remains the same, at approximately 85.6 points, with average levels of violent socialization at both levels (85.579, \( p < 0.001 \)). As the levels of violent socialization increase, the average national IPV victimization score tends to increase significantly, estimated at 0.129 points (\( p < 0.001 \)) on average for each 1-point increase in familial violent socialization and 0.857 points (\( p < 0.05 \)) on average for each 1-point increase in communal violent socialization. IPV victimization continues to vary significantly within (31.202, \( p < 0.001 \)) and between the nations (0.175, \( p < 0.05 \)). Males contribute 0.434 points less (\( p < 0.001 \)) on the average national IPV victimization score, controlling for mean levels of violent socialization at both levels. These variables, combined, explain approximately 96% of the variation in IPV victimization within the same nation and approximately 44% of the variation between different nations.

The full model with all control variables (Model 4) has a minimal impact on the mean national level IPV victimization score, with an average of 85.7 points (85.688, \( p < 0.001 \)), and offers no additional explanation in the variation of IPV victimization within or between nations (Pseudo-\( R^2 \)). However, the hypotheses are supported. In this final model, violent socialization at both levels significantly increases mean IPV victimization scores across nations. For each 1-point increase in familial violent socialization, the mean national level IPV victimization score increases by an estimated 0.894 points (\( p < 0.01 \)), on average, net of controls. For communal violent socialization, each 1-point increase increases the mean national level IPV victimization score by an estimated 0.886 points (\( p < 0.05 \)), on average, net of controls. The prototypical national IPV victimization score for males from families with average levels of violent socialization and living in communities with average levels of violent socialization is estimated at 86.739, on average, net of controls. For females

### Table 2. Results from fitting the taxonomy of multilevel models to intimate partner violence regressed on level-1 and level-2 predictors (\( n \) of respondents = 11,323; \( n \) of nations = 32).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 0</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
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<td><strong>Fixed Effects</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>85.637 ***</td>
<td>85.583 ***</td>
<td>85.581 ***</td>
<td>85.579 ***</td>
<td>85.688 ***</td>
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<td>vsfamily</td>
<td>0.342</td>
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<td>gender</td>
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<td>0.129 *</td>
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<td>belief</td>
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<td>-0.434 ***</td>
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<td>age</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
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<td><strong>Variance Components (Random Effects)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Level-1: Within</td>
<td>32.470 ***</td>
<td>31.290 ***</td>
<td>31.211 ***</td>
<td>31.202 ***</td>
<td>31.172 ***</td>
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<td>Level-2: Between</td>
<td>0.394 **</td>
<td>0.167</td>
<td>0.183 *</td>
<td>0.175 *</td>
<td>0.161 *</td>
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<td><strong>Pseudo-R^2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>% within nation</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>96.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>% between nation</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>40.1</td>
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<td><strong>Goodness of Fit Statistics</strong></td>
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\(* p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05, ~ p < 0.10.*\)
living under the same conditions, the prototypical IPV victimization score is estimated at 87.468 points, net of controls. This finding fully supports the first hypothesis (H₁): higher levels of violent socialization, both within families and in the community, are associated with females experiencing more IPV victimization compared to males, on average.

One of the most interesting findings in this study is the association between the use of corporal discipline on children and IPV victimization. In nations in which corporal discipline of children is legal, the mean IPV victimization score increases by 2.327 points ($p < 0.10$) on average. In other words, in nations where the socio-cultural context of normative violence to control children’s behaviors is embedded in law, the mean national level of IPV victimization tends to be higher on average. And IPV victimization significantly varies within (31.172, $p < 0.001$) and between the nations (0.161, $p < 0.05$). This variation is a function of violent socialization at the familial, communal, and structural levels (i.e., corporal discipline laws) transnationally. This fully supports the second hypothesis (H₂).

4. Discussion

Overall, these findings indicate that polyvictimization is present; experiences of violence within multiple domains of society contribute to experiencing violent victimization within intimate relationships. The socio-cultural conditions within society intensify this effect. Nations that have legal approval of a violent standard to control children’s behaviors (i.e., hitting children) tend to have higher levels of IPV victimization. This violence is occurring at the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of society and range from childhood to emerging adulthood. This may be indicative of violence perpetrated on children spilling over into other domains of society, including adult intimate relationships. These results, that higher levels of violent socialization, both within families and in the community, are associated with more IPV victimization, further reinforce a context of normalized violence, particularly where the legal structure of the nation supports violence to control children’s behaviors. Ultimately, violent socialization victimizes youth, and this victimization may extend throughout the life course. The range of normative violence they experience during their developmental years can inculcate violent behavior as an acceptable means for conflict resolution, which then translates into normative behavioral responses. Such acceptance may create environments that reinforce, support, and reproduce violence. This becomes a victimizing effect.

When accounting for gender differences, the effect of violent socialization on IPV victimization is more pronounced among women compared to men. When IPV is concentrated towards women within a nation, IPV can arguably be considered gendered violence. It may be that some nations do not support victims of violence, especially women. Beyond failure to recognize violence, because of the normative standards accepting violence as a means of social control, norms of violence may be gendered. Research indicates that nations with higher levels of gender equality tend to offer more supportive public based interventions for IPV (Bucelli and Rossi 2019). Perhaps there is an issue of gender equality within the nations of the IDVS? Unfortunately, there is no such measure in the dataset, and future research is necessary to parse out the reasons why a greater context of violent victimization is more prominent for women than men, particularly under socio-cultural conditions in which violence is normalized. In all, this study supports the premise that IPV may, generally, continue to manifest as gendered violence transnationally.

These results are not without limitations. First, consistent measures of violence transnationally are challenging. This study cannot account for many issues of violence because there is little comparable data across different nations. Therefore, the study does not represent all of violence nor all cultural aspects of violence. Future research needs to include other social forces, consistently conceptualized and operationalized, that may contribute to violence, as well as qualitative data to help explain reasons for specific contexts of violence. This also holds true for gender. While there may be changing conceptions of gender identity in some nations, the concepts and definitions of gender are not consistent transnationally (Ember et al. 2019) and continue to trend towards binary identities (Segal 2003). Thus, even
if the IDVS had a non-binary measure of gender, the present study cannot reliably consider gender diverse identities within the current study. Second, this study is a transnational comparison of statistical estimates, comparing rates of victimization across different nations rather than cultural phenomenon. The present study does not answer the question of why IPV victimization occurs. An additional ethnographic or case study is needed to further explain such cultural phenomenon. Third, though a measure for social desirability was included, there is still the possibility of respondents answering in a less than completely truthful manner. Results need to be interpreted with care, as nothing in this study indicates causality. And finally, the present study is exploratory in nature. The study sought to present preliminary evidence on the contextual effect argument for Norms of Violence, but additional research is necessary to fully support the victimization effect thesis. Overall, further etiological research is needed to support the findings of this exploratory study and expand socio-cultural understandings of IPV victimization. The present study helps to move forward research on both family and community violence, seeking to examine potential consequences of socially approved violence that may become part of the context in which youth are socialized.

5. Conclusions

The present study offers a unique contribution in the study of IPV transnationally. Violent socialization may be the ‘norm’ within one nation but considered deviant in another nation. First, the findings show that IPV victimization may manifest as gendered violence within a greater context of normative violence. Second, the use of violence to control people’s behavior, from childhood to young adults, has become so normalized that these methods are not seen as violence within some societies. And finally, IPV victimization may be an outcome of a socio-cultural context within Norms of Violence. Violence may be so inculcated within socialization processes that societies may not be aware of the reinforced and reproduced violence across multiple domains of society.

While exploratory in nature, the present study presents important data for understanding the impact of culture on IPV. Culture has a significant impact on IPV responses (DeHart 2012). Nations can make small changes to begin to effectuate plans to reduce and prevent IPV. Communities and nations can be encouraged to develop specific non-violent peer conflict resolution strategies and other positive alternative dispute resolution techniques for families, schools, and neighborhoods to combat normalized violent responses to conflict. Prevention-based programming may be developed into the structured primary and secondary educational curriculum to address interpersonal relationships throughout the life course, taking a focus on developmentally appropriate responses (e.g., bullying at the elementary level and IPV at the secondary level). Such programming needs to be implemented into other regularly scheduled courses, such as health education courses, in order to begin the process of altering the socio-cultural standards that normalize violence-based responses within interpersonal conflict. These programs need to consider issues of gender-based violence as well. Most particularly, structural and community familial supports need to focus on gender equity in the treatment of children. By focusing on this small structural change, socialization processes moving away from normative violence may spill over into the socialization methods exercised within communities and families living within these communities. Community-based programs may then begin to offer support for parent–child relationships and parenting behavior (DeHart 2012), with a focus on non-violent conflict resolution techniques within the family. Tertiary prevention can include communities introducing local services, such as medical and mental health treatment (DeHart 2012), to inform more violence prone communities of such services rather than communities being dependent on justice system interventions. These suggestions support victims from a primary prevention approach, with the goal of ceasing violence, empowering females, and promoting non-violent conflict resolutions skills (Crooks et al. 2019). Since some of these socio-cultural beliefs are deeply embedded at multiple levels within society, all programming must consider cultural nuances (e.g., norms in dating versus arranged
courtship) that may vary in approaches to interpersonal relationships. These approaches must be developed and implemented gradually, as societies need time to transition away from normative violence and move towards non-violent practices and interactions. This requires intergenerational transmission of changing social norms. Regardless of the time investment, prevention approaches and programming can be offered to all youth before they enter intimate dating relationships.

Victim supported environments tend to produce less IPV aggression (Vernon 2015). Such programming can consider community specific gender issues to combat the perpetuation of gendered violence. For example, communities and nations must explore their regional specific conditions of gender equity, or lack thereof, that contribute to norms of violence against females. Females of all ages may need to be offered programming focusing on nonviolent outcomes within a supportive environment. To truly act as primary prevention, programming needs to be offered as response, education, and awareness of the dynamics and impacts of IPV (DeHart 2012) as well as gendered violence issues. Safety planning is no longer sufficient for intervention of gender-based violence, particularly IPV. Societies across the world, including those in which the socio-cultural context of violence is most prominent, need to work towards eradicating the negative impacts of violence. Societies have a responsibility to their citizens to protect current victims and prevent future victims. While IPV may be a manifestation of gendered violence, efforts at creating protective factors against violence benefit all individuals, their families, and the communities in which they live. How society treats the most vulnerable of their population is an indicator of the health of that nation.

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**Informed Consent Statement:** Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

**Data Availability Statement:** The dataset used in this study is archived with the ICPSR and can be downloaded from https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR29583.v1, accessed on 20 April 2023. For additional data source, see note 1.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The author declares no conflict of interest.

**Notes**

1. This data comes from the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (2012) organization’s website. This website lists the legal status of corporal discipline across 172 nations, including all nations contained in the IDVS dataset.
2. Five nations passed anti-physical punishment laws after data had been collected for the IDVS.
3. The p-value set at 0.10 is being used, as the level-2 sample is only 32.

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