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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# Beliefs on Marital Violence and Self-Reported Dating Violence: A Comparative Study of Cape Verdean and Portuguese Adolescents

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**Abstract** In this study, we compare Portuguese and Cape Verdean youths' upholding of traditional beliefs about intimate partner violence (IPV) and the frequency of self-reported violent behavior in dating relationships. The sample ($n = 404$) consisted of 183 Cape Verdean and 221 Portuguese secondary school students of both sexes (56 % female; mean age = 16). We used two questionnaires that had previously been validated in the Portuguese population. The results revealed that young Cape Verdean adolescents uphold stronger traditional beliefs than Portuguese adolescents do, but there were no differences in overall prevalence of abuse between the two samples. The relationship between traditional beliefs and self-reported violence was significant only in the Cape Verdean sample, suggesting that campaigns against IPV have not, so far, been as effective in Cape Verde as in Portugal.

**Keywords** Intimate partner violence · Dating violence · Beliefs · Cross-cultural · Cape Verde · Portugal · Adolescents

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a serious social phenomenon that prevails in a number of cultures all over the world (García-Moreno et al. 2005; UN Women 2015). Among young people, dating violence – a type of intimate partner violence that includes sexually, physically, psychologically or emotionally violent behavior in relationships (Teten et al. 2009, p. 923) – is particularly widespread, emerging in girls' and boys' daily lives on all places. For instance, a recent survey of 13,601 university students from 32 countries (International Dating Violence Study; Straus 2008) showed that, although there were large differences between countries, even the lowest national dating violence rates were higher than expected (Chan et al. 2010). Overall, roughly one third of the respondents, both male and female, had physically assaulted their dating partner in the 12 months preceding the survey (rates ranged between 17 and 45 %; see Straus 2008).

Although national and international data suggest that both males and females are involved in violent intimate relationships (O'Leary et al. 2008), some research findings indicate that violence committed by girls is substantially different in type, frequency, severity and meaning from that by boys (e.g. Giordano et al. 2010; Miller 2005; Neves 2014). For instance, empirical data indicate that girls tend to be victims more of sexual violence and severe physical violence than boys (Arriaga and Foshee 2004; Coker et al. 2000; Hines and Saudino 2003). In addition, aggression by girls is often a reaction to previous abuse (Watson et al. 2001). Boys also seem to be more tolerant of violent acts in dating relationships than girls, and they seem to be more tolerant to the existence of violent acts in dating relationships (Machado et al. 2010b).

Regarding the psychosocial factors of IPV, at least two studies have shown that favourable attitudes towards IPV (Fincham et al. 2008) and the acceptance of traditional beliefs about marital violence (Machado et al. 2010a) are closely related to violent episodes in dating relationships. The endorsement of traditional beliefs about IPV or marital violence seems to not only increase abuse against partners but also partners' tolerance of this abuse. Closely related to these findings, research has shown that adolescents upholding conservative values, a patriarchal ideology or traditional gender

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norms are more likely to be involved in dating violence (e.g. Reyes et al. 2015). These data suggest that the fight against this social problem requires a change in the specific beliefs and attitudes held by the young population on this matter (see Berkowitz 2003; Cornelius and Resseguie 2007).

International surveys indicate that there are large differences between countries and cultures (e.g., Chan et al. 2010; Smith et al. 2005; Straus 2008). One of the present study's main goals was to compare Portuguese and Cape Verdean youths on this subject. The relevance for this comparison comes from the fact that although Cape Verde was, for five centuries, a colonial possession of Portugal, its culture was also strongly influenced by settlers from West Coast Africa and former African slaves (Cape Verde islands had a strategic location for the slave trade). Its culture is thus a unique blend of these African influences and the European culture conveyed by the former Portuguese administration and inhabitants together with other European immigrants. In addition, since its independence in 1975, its economic and cultural exchanges with Europe and its numerous emigrants working in Europe and United States (there are as many Cape Verdeans living in the archipelago as those living abroad) have been shaping the country culture as well. In Portugal, because of their common language and the historical and economic relationships between the countries, Cape Verdeans are one of the most representative foreign groups accounting for 10.4 % of the entire immigrant community living in the country in 2014 (see SEF 2015).

The largest survey on dating violence in Portugal was carried out recently by Machado et al. (2010a), and covered a representative sample of young Portuguese people residing all over the country ($n = 4467$; mean age = 18.9 years). In this study, 25.4 % of students reported at least one act of abuse by a dating partner in the previous year, with 13.4 % claiming to have been victims of physical abuse and 19.5 % of emotional abuse (we will describe more results of this study below when comparing them with our own). Several other recent studies have shown that Portuguese adolescents and young people have experienced violent episodes in their dating relationships from early ages (Caridade 2011; Caridade et al. 2007; Machado et al. 2010b; Machado et al. 2003; Paiva 2012; Paiva and Figueiredo 2004; Saavedra 2011).

To our knowledge, there are no research data on violence in dating relationships among the young population in Cape Verde. The sole information available is qualitative and indirect, coming from reports from young Cape Verdean people living in Portugal. Some of the relevant conclusions of these reports were that (1) Cape Verdean society tends to be permissive to violence against women, and (2) abuse in dating relationships is frequent among Cape Verdean teens of both sexes (e.g. Lima 2007; Neves and Torres 2015; Pinheiro 2011; see also, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW 2010). In fact, violence against women is one of the social problems that the Cape Verdean authorities have been actively tackling since the 90's (Cape Verdean Institute for Gender Equality and Equity - ICIEG 2014). Based on the Second Demographic and Reproductive Health Survey, conducted by the National Institute of Statistics (INE et al. 2008), 22 % of Cape Verdean women aged 15 to 49 reported having suffered emotional, physical or sexual abuse by a partner or former partner, in most cases from the age of 15. One in every five women reported having been a victim of at least one episode of violence in the past year (20 %), including physical (16 %), psychological (14 %) or sexual (4 %) violence (INE et al. 2008). It is worth noting that, although high, these figures are lower than those reported by Portuguese women – 36 % of whom say that they have experienced some form of emotional or psychological abuse by a partner from the age of 15, 18 % report physical violence and 3 % sexual violence (see FRA 2014).

The questions raised by national differences in gender violence reports stress the importance of analyzing the associations between traditional beliefs about marital relationships that are embedded in national cultures and the existence of such violent behaviors. As mentioned above, the change of underlying social attitudes and beliefs is a priority of intervention programs against widespread undesirable behavior such as dating violence (e.g. Berkowitz 2003; Cornelius and Resseguie 2007).

The main goals of this study were (1) to provide a provisional estimate of the prevalence of dating violence among young Cape Verdean people, (2) to compare Portuguese and Cape Verdean teens in terms of the prevalence of dating violence and endorsement of traditional beliefs about marital violence and (3) to examine relationships between the endorsement of beliefs and reports of dating violence. In addition, we wanted to check potential differences in the endorsement of traditional beliefs and self-reported dating violence as a function of the respondents' gender and age.

Given that there are no previous statistics for Cape Verde, we can only speculate about our comparisons' results. If we rely on the above-mentioned official data on violence against women, the Second Demographic and Reproductive Health Survey (INE et al. 2008) for Cape Verde, and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA 2014) for Portugal, we can expect a higher prevalence of dating violence in the Portuguese than in the Cape Verdean sample. Because the only data available regarding the endorsement of traditional beliefs about marital violence in Cape Verde is limited and indirect (i.e., the accounts of young Cape Verdean immigrants in Portugal; Neves and Torres 2015), we make no predictions for this particular comparison.

Finally, based on the above research (see Fincham et al. 2008; Machado et al. 2010a), we predict the existence of a positive relationship between the endorsement of traditional beliefs and self-reported violent behavior in the two national samples. Last, we expect more female than male respondents to report being victims of especially physical and sexual dating violence.

## Method

**Sample** It consisted of 404 secondary school students, 183 Cape Verdean and 221 Portuguese, with ages ranging from 14 to 19 ($M = 16.25$, $SD = 1.47$), and similar representation of males and females. The majority (57.4 %) had been dating for about 12 months on average when they completed the questionnaire; another 14.6 % had dated in the past, while the remaining 28 % had never dated. A small number of participants (5.3 %) said they had a relationship with a same-sex partner (see Table 1).

There were no differences between country samples in the proportion of respondents' gender and whether they were currently dating, both $\chi^2$ (1) < 1, $n = 404$. However, the Cape Verdean sample was slightly older on average than the Portuguese sample, $F$ (1, 402) = 16.13, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$. The length of the current dating relationship was similar across the samples, $F$ (1, 201) < 1. The partner's age of those currently dating was significantly higher among Cape Verdean than Portuguese respondents, $F$ (1, 225) = 21.41, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .09$ (however, were several missing cases in these two variables, 12.5 and 2.2 % respectively, among currently dating respondents).

**Procedure** Three state schools were contacted in each country and the school boards were asked for permission to distribute the questionnaires according to a schedule agreed on later with teachers. The Portuguese schools were located in the country's northeastern region and Cape Verdean schools were mainly on Santiago Island, the largest in the Cape Verde archipelago.

At each session, the researcher introduced her/himself and informed the students of the voluntary nature of their participation, explaining that they could stop at any point in the session. Once informed consent had been obtained, each participant filled in two questionnaires and a personal information form individually in class. Informed consent was requested from a parent or legal guardian for those aged under 18. At the end of each session, the researcher debriefed the participants and thanked them for their contribution.

**Instruments** We selected two measuring instruments that had been used previously on Portuguese samples, the *Scale of Beliefs about Marital Violence* (SBMV, Matos et al. 2000a), and the *Marital Violence Inventory* (MVI, Matos et al. 2000b). We present a brief description of each of the instruments below, followed by an analysis of their psychometric characteristics.

**Scale of beliefs about marital violence** The SBMV consists of a list of beliefs, about which the respondent registers his/her degree of agreement in 5-point Likert scales (1 = totally disagree to 5 = totally agree). The original validating studies (Caridade et al. 2007; Machado et al. 2010a), conducted in a large, representative Portuguese sample ($n = 4467$) that was slightly older than this one ($M = 18.9$ years old), showed the overall scale to have high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .90$) and a 4-factor structure, explaining 48 % of the variance. In spite of this difference, most of the variance was accounted for by one factor, 30 %, and the authors opted for summing up all items.

In this study, the SBMV also revealed high internal consistency, Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$., We conducted a principal components analysis of the internal structure of the SBMV (KMO = .91) which yielded five components explaining 48.55 % of the total variance. Similar to the original study,

**Table 1** Demographic characteristics of Portuguese and Cape Verdean respondents

| Variables | | Cape Verdean $n = 183$ (45.3 %) | Portuguese $n = 221$ (54.7 %) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sex | Females | 99 (54.1 %) | 127 (57.5 %) |
| | Males | 84 (45.9 %) | 94 (42.5 %) |
| Age | *Mean* | 16.58 | 15.96 |
| | *SD* | 1.35 | 1.70 |
| Schooling | Lower secondary | 21 (11.7 %) | 116 (56.3 %) |
| | Upper secondary | 158 (88.3 %) | 90 (43.7 %) |
| Dating status | Currently dating | 109 (59.6 %) | 123 (55.7 %) |
| | Dated in past | 35 (19.1 %) | 82 (10.9 %) |
| | Never dated | 34 (21.3 %) | 74 (33.5 %) |
| Currently dating: | *Mean* | 11.86 | 11.89 |
| For how long? (months) | *SD* | 12.38 | 10.87 |
| Dating partner's age | *Mean* | 18.91 | 16.98 |
| | *SD* | 3.70 | 2.58 |
| Same-sex dating | Yes | 4 (3.9 %) | 8 (6.6 %) |

the first factor alone accounted for 28 % of the variance. However, in this sample, both the graphic method and Parallel Analysis recommended the extraction of two components, accounting for 34.90 % of the variance. Eleven beliefs correlated distinctively (loadings above .40) with the first component, which explained 20.38 % of the variance, after Varimax Rotation. The beliefs with higher loadings included, "Husbands and wives have always beaten each other. It's a natural thing and there's nothing wrong with it", "A slap in the face hurts no one", or "Slapping a partner when one is annoyed or angry is no big deal"; we named this component, *Trivializing Beliefs*. The second component, explaining 14.52 % of variance after rotation, correlated distinctively and above .40 with seven beliefs. These included, "The main cause of marital violence is alcohol-based", "Maltreatment occurs only when there are other problems in the family, e.g. unemployment, drug use and money problems" "Men abuse women only when they lose their heads because of some problem in their lives or for something the women have done", and we named the component, *Minimizing Beliefs*. An analysis of each component's items suggests that Trivializing Beliefs conveys a positive attitude towards marital violence, blatantly accepting small acts of violence between spouses, whereas Minimizing Beliefs conveys a more neutral position. The latter shows a generally detached attitude towards marital violence, attempting to minimize its prevalence and limiting it to particular sections of the population: alcoholics, drug addicts, unemployed, poor people, adultery, etc. Given that the two components were statistically and conceptually distinct, we opted to retain both for analysis.

Both components presented adequate internal consistency, Cronbach's $\alpha = .83$ and .72, respectively. Their items were, therefore, averaged in two indices, which were named after the corresponding component. The two indices were moderately correlated, $r = .51$, $p < .001$. Both indices presented relatively low global mean scores of $M = 1.90$, $SD = 0.65$, for Trivializing Beliefs, and $M = 2.66$, $SD = 0.75$, for Minimizing Beliefs, indicating a generally negative attitude towards marital violence. The fact that Trivializing Beliefs scored significantly lower than Minimizing Beliefs, $t(403) = 22.14$, $p < .001$ supports the idea that the former conveys a more blatant acceptance of marital violence than the latter.

To compare the results of our Portuguese sample with the one obtained by Machado et al. (2010a) in their equivalent upper secondary school subsample, we summed all items as those authors did, obtaining $M = 54.28$, $SD = 14.70$. This amount of endorsement is similar to the one obtained by above authors, 5 years ago, $M = 55.4$, $SD = 13.94$.

**Marital violence inventory** The MVI consists of a list of 20 abusive behaviors that may occur in an intimate relationship. The respondents are asked to report whether they have perpetrated or suffered any of the listed behaviors in their intimate relationship in the last year. The list of behaviors includes four physically abusive acts (e.g. slapping partner's face, or pulling his/her hair), nine severe forms of physical abuse (e.g. throttling, punching, kicking or head-butting) and seven emotionally abusive behaviors (e.g. insulting, humiliating, yelling or threatening) (see Machado et al. 2010a). Next, the respondents are asked to complete the list, thinking of any relationship they had earlier than the last year.

The MVI scores referred only to respondents who were currently dating or had dated in the past ($n = 291$). In this subsample, 33 % of the respondents (96) reported having committed at least one act of violence on their partner and 34.4 % (100) reported having been victims of at least one abusive act by their partners. The equivalent ratios considering only the Portuguese sample were 25.9 % for perpetrators and 32 % for victims, which were close to the 30.6 and 25.4 %, respectively, reported by Machado et al. (2010a). Note that, besides the differences between the two samples' sociodemographic characteristics, these authors considered only responses regarding the previous year, not all previous dating relationships, as in this study.

## Results

To compare the results of Cape Verde and Portugal, we began by analyzing the SBMV and MVI scores, while also considering the respondents' sex and age. We then analyzed the relationship between the two variables in each country.

**Beliefs on marital violence** To analyze the means of the Trivializing Beliefs and Minimizing Beliefs indices, considering respondents' nationality and sex, we conducted a mixed ANOVA with the two indices, as within-participants factor, and respondents' variables, as between-participants factors. The two types of beliefs as a whole were more endorsed by Cape Verdean than by Portuguese respondents, $F(1, 400) = 171.04$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .30$, and, as expected, more endorsed by male than female respondents (although this effect was considerably weaker), $F(1, 400) = 31.31$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$.

The full interaction was significant, $F(1, 400) = 8.87$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2 = .02$, indicating that, whereas Cape Verdean males and females had similar scores for Minimizing Beliefs, Portuguese males had higher Minimizing Beliefs scores than Portuguese females (see Table 2). The Portuguese males tended to lessen the prevalence of marital violence, presenting a mean score of 2.60, close to the middle of the response scale. The Portuguese females, on the other hand, disagreed with depreciating the prevalence of marital violence. Regarding Trivializing Beliefs, the difference between males and females was similar in both countries, with the males having higher scores than the females.

**Table 2** Difference of means in trivializing beliefs and minimizing beliefs scores by respondents' country and sex

| | | Trivializing Beliefs | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *M* | *SD* | *F* | *p* | $\eta^2$ |
| By Country | Cape Verde | 2.22 | 0.59 | 102.64 | <.001 | .20 |
| | Portugal | 1.63 | 0.58 | | | |
| By Sex | Female | 1.75 | 0.59 | 25.67 | <.001 | .06 |
| | Male | 2.08 | 0.69 | | | |
| Cape Verde | Female | 2.09 | 0.57 | 11.24 | .001 | .06 |
| | Male | 2.37 | 0.58 | | | |
| Portugal | Female | 1.49 | 0.46 | 17.34 | <.001 | .07 |
| | Male | 1.81 | 0.68 | | | |
| | | Minimizing Beliefs | | | | |
| Country | Cape Verde | 3.07 | 0.59 | 130.88 | <.001 | .25 |
| | Portugal | 2.33 | 0.70 | | | |
| Sex | Female | 2.53 | 0.79 | 16.01 | <.001 | .04 |
| | Male | 2.83 | 0.65 | | | |
| Cape Verde | Female | 3.06 | 0.61 | <1 | – | – |
| | Male | 3.08 | 0.57 | | | |
| Portugal | Female | 2.12 | 0.67 | 27.98 | <.001 | .11 |
| | Male | 2.60 | 0.64 | | | |

The correlations of respondents' age and Trivializing Beliefs were non-significant in both countries, highest, $r = -.12$, *ns*, $n = 183$. Minimizing Beliefs was negatively correlated with age both for the Cape Verdean respondents, $r = -.22$, $p = .003$, $n = 183$, and for the Portuguese respondents, $r = -.19$, $p = .004$, $n = 221$. The older respondents were, the less they tended to depreciate the prevalence of marital violence.

**Dating violence and prevalence of abuse** When comparing the two countries' results on the MVI, we considered the number of respondents reporting at least one occurrence of abusive behavior, which we called, the Prevalence of Abuse. We compared this prevalence across the two national samples also taking account of the respondents' sex. Finally, we analyzed the relationship of prevalence with the respondents' age.

As shown in Table 3, the overall prevalence of abuse, i.e. considering all types, committed and suffered, is, contrarily to hypotheses, not significantly higher in Portugal than in Cape Verde. The separation of data by type of abuse revealed a significant difference between countries in terms of the number of respondents reporting severe physical abuse committed and suffered, and more Cape Verdeans than Portuguese reported it. In addition, the separation of data by agent of abuse revealed significant differences between countries regarding the number of self-reported abusers, which was also higher among Cape Verdean than Portuguese respondents. When we disaggregated the data on perpetrators by respondents' sex further, we found that the above significant difference was mainly due to the male respondents.

We compared the two countries for each type of abuse committed within the male and female subsample (not shown in Table 3) to test whether the above significant differences were interrelated. As expected, the only significant differences emerged within the male subsample. Specifically, more Cape Verdean than Portuguese boys reported committing severe physical abuse, $\chi^2$ (1) = 11.00, $p = .001$, $n = 125$. To a lesser extent, also more Cape Verdean than Portuguese boys reported committing emotional abuse, $\chi^2$ (1) = 5.25, $p = .02$. The number of Cape Verdean and Portuguese girls who reports committing abuse was similar for all types, highest, $\chi^2$ (1) = 1.89, *ns*, $n = 166$. The respondents who reported having committed or suffered abuse within an intimate relationship at least once were not significantly older than those who reported no abuse at all (highest difference, $t$ (289) = 1.80, *ns*).

**Relationship between beliefs on marital violence and prevalence of abuse** We conducted logistic regressions within each national sample, with Committed and Suffered Mild, Severe and Emotional Abuse as dependent variables, and Trivializing Beliefs and Minimizing Beliefs as covariates, entered simultaneously, to check the extent to which the endorsement of traditional beliefs on marital violence predicted the reporting of acts of violence in dating relationships,

As shown in Table 4, the regressions yielded significant models only with the Cape Verdean data. By showing that the existence of violent behavior in intimate relationships, especially physical violence, is significantly associated with the endorsement of beliefs, among Cape Verdean adolescents, but not among Portuguese adolescents, these results suggest a more direct connection between beliefs and behavior in the former sample. Importantly, while agreement with Trivializing Beliefs increases the chances of reporting violent behaviors, agreement with Minimizing Beliefs decreases the chance. The same result emerged with the Portuguese data, although, not so expressively. Apparently, respondents' detachment from the marital violence problem was significantly associated with the absence of violence in their own intimate relationships.

## Discussion and Conclusions

This study revealed that self-reported dating violence rates in the Portuguese sample were slightly below the average found in multinational studies (roughly one third of the respondents) (see Chan et al. 2010; Straus 2008), and replicated previous Portuguese research data (Machado et al. 2010a). Cape Verdean rates were higher than the Portuguese, but that was due to the higher reporting of severe physical abuse and to the reports of male participants.

Cape Verdean adolescents also endorsed more traditional beliefs, blatantly and disguisedly, when compared to

**Table 3** Frequency of self-reported abusive behaviour (at least one occurrence) by respondents' nationality

| | | | Cape Verdean $n = 144$ | Portuguese $n = 147$ | $\chi^2$ (1) $n = 291$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All abuse | | Total | 66 (45.8 %) | 52 (35.4 %) | 3.30 |
| By type | | Mild | 49 (34 %) | 38 (25.9 %) | 2.32 |
| | | Severe | 36 (25 %) | 19 (12.9 %) | 6.92 ** |
| | | Emotional | 42 (29.2 %) | 41 (27.9 %) | <1 |
| By agent | Perpetrated | Total | 58 (40.3 %) | 38 (25.9 %) | 6.85 ** |
| | | Girls | 33 (39.8 %) | 25 (30.1 %) | 1.70 |
| | | Boys | 25 (41.0 %) | 13 (20.3 %) | 6.31 * |
| | Suffered | Total | 53 (36.8 %) | 47 (32.0 %) | <1 |
| | | Girls | 28 (33.7 %) | 29 (34.9 %) | <1 |
| | | Boys | 25 (41.0 %) | 18 (28.1 %) | 2.29 |
| | Reciprocal abuse | Total | 45 (31.3%) | 33 (22.4 %) | 2.87 |

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Portuguese adolescents. Importantly, Cape Verdean males in general endorsed the two kinds of beliefs more than the females, showing less awareness of the seriousness of such conduct. The social recognition of IPV seems to be linked to gender status, suggesting that IPV is still regarded as a women's issue rather than a human rights issue. This difference between sexes was greater in Portugal, where boys endorsed the more disguised forms significantly more than girls.

In what concerns respondents' age, although several studies indicate that younger ages represent a risk factor to IPV (Abramsky et al. 2011), in the present study, the relationship between age and self-reported IPV was non-significant for both countries. One possible explanation for this result is the limited age range of the sample. However, other results revealed that the older the respondents were, the less they tended to depreciate the prevalence of marital violence, suggesting that there is an increased awareness of violence in older respondents probably coming from life experience and maturity.

Finally, we anticipated a significant relationship between traditional beliefs regarding marital violence and self-reported violent behaviors. The results partially confirmed the hypothesis, because only in the Cape Verdean sample did the endorsement of traditional beliefs on marital violence significantly predict self-reported violence in intimate relationships. Importantly, support of minimizing beliefs negatively predicted reports of intimate partner violence (i.e., the more they thought marital violence only happened to other people, the less they reported violent behavior in their relationships). Not surprisingly, the trivialization of marital violence predicted an increase in reports of abuse committed and suffered.

**Table 4** Logistic regression of prevalence of abuse ($n = 291$) on beliefs on marital violence

| | | Cape Verde | | | | | Portugal | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *B* | *SE* | *p* | Odds ratio | Model $\chi^2$ (2) | *B* | *SE* | *p* | Odds ratio | Model $\chi^2$ (2) |
| Perpetrated Abuse | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mild | Triv. | .80 | .32 | .01 | 2.20 | 13.38** | .72 | .32 | .05 | 2.05 | 3.98 |
| | Min. | −1.03 | .34 | .003 | .36 | | −.52 | .37 | *ns* | .60 | |
| Severe | Triv. | .84 | .36 | .02 | 2.32 | 9.18* | .62 | .54 | *ns* | 1.86 | 1.32 |
| | Min. | −.87 | .38 | .02 | .42 | | −.18 | .56 | *ns* | .84 | |
| Emotion. | Triv. | .54 | .33 | *ns* | 1.72 | 5.93 | .77 | .38 | *ns* | 2.15 | 4.08 |
| | Min. | −.69 | .34 | .04 | .50 | | −.22 | .38 | *ns* | .80 | |
| Abuse suffered | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mild | Triv. | 1.08 | .37 | .003 | 2.95 | 14.92** | −.07 | .41 | *ns* | .94 | <1 |
| | Min. | −1.11 | .39 | .004 | .33 | | −.23 | .35 | *ns* | .80 | |
| Severe | Triv. | .61 | .39 | *ns* | 1.84 | 6.31* | −.45 | .58 | *ns* | .64 | <1 |
| | Min. | −.90 | .41 | .03 | .41 | | −.05 | .45 | *ns* | .95 | |
| Emotion. | Triv. | .60 | .35 | *ns* | 1.83 | 13.57** | .17 | .35 | *ns* | 1.18 | <1 |
| | Min. | −1.30 | .39 | .001 | .28 | | −.21 | .31 | *ns* | .81 | |

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Socio-psychological research on the attitude-behavior relationship may shed some light on the difference between the two countries. Indeed, empirical findings have shown that the strength and pervasiveness of beliefs in the community affects the attitude-behavior relationship (Terry and Hogg 1996; Terry et al. 1999). If traditional beliefs are entrenched in communities, there is a more direct relationship between beliefs and behavior, (i.e. if one personally endorses the belief one will act accordingly). If counteracting beliefs gradually spreading in the community start weakening traditional beliefs, the relationship between them and behavior also becomes weaker. Specifically, even if a person upholds traditional beliefs, the translation to congruent behavior will not be as straightforward as if these traditional beliefs prevail. The fact that the endorsement of traditional beliefs on marital violence was more predictive of self-reported violence in intimate relationships among young Cape Verdean than in young Portuguese people, in our opinion, may indicate that the investment in promoting gender equality has been less effective in Cape Verde than in Portugal. Furthermore, the mere fact suggested by the present results that Cape Verdeans support more traditional beliefs and reported more abuse in their dating relationships adds to the idea that anti-violence attitudes are still not as consensual in their society as they are in Portugal.

As limitations on the present study, we must mention the relatively small number of respondents in each country, as well as limited information collected regarding respondents' personal data. Information such as family structure, socio-economic group and parents' educational background could prove helpful in understanding which sections of the young Cape Verdean population were already responding to government campaigns to reduce gender violence. Such aspects could be addressed by future studies to provide additional tips for effective intervention on this issue.

In conclusion, one of the most relevant implications of this study is that, despite three decades of campaigns against gender violence, obsolete beliefs and attitudes regarding marital violence persist, and violent behaviors continue to occur in dating relationships, in both Portuguese and Cape Verdean youths. Thus, more official actions are needed in order to effectively prepare younger generations for full cooperation and harmonious relationships in adult life.

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