



Article

The Empirical Relationship between Procedural Justice, Police Legitimacy, and Intimate Partner Violence Experiences among a Sample of Previously Adjudicated Youth

Sara Zedaker ^{1,*} and Amanda Goodson ²

¹ Department of Criminal Justice, Political Science, and History, University of Houston-Victoria, Victoria, TX 77901, USA

² Department of Criminal Justice, The University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso, TX 79968, USA; ajgoodson@utep.edu

* Correspondence: zedakers@uhv.edu

Abstract: The impact of intimate partner violence on procedural justice has not received much attention in extant literature. As such, the current study uses data from the Pathways to Desistance Study to examine how elements of intimate partner violence affect trust in police and perceptions of legitimacy toward the criminal justice system. Results indicated several important findings regarding the effects of intimate partner violence on procedural justice. Limitations, future research, and policy recommendations are discussed.

Keywords: procedural justice; intimate partner violence; police; legitimacy



Citation: Zedaker, Sara, and Amanda Goodson. 2023. The Empirical Relationship between Procedural Justice, Police Legitimacy, and Intimate Partner Violence Experiences among a Sample of Previously Adjudicated Youth. *Social Sciences* 12: 354. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12060354>

Academic Editors: Ashley Fansher and Tina G. Patel

Received: 22 May 2023

Revised: 8 June 2023

Accepted: 12 June 2023

Published: 16 June 2023



Copyright: © 2023 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a serious, public health crisis that affects millions of women and men in the United States (US) each year (Smith et al. 2018) and encompasses a continuum of psychological (e.g., name-calling, verbal threats), sexual (e.g., non-consensual touching, rape), and physical abuse (e.g., pushing, slapping, hitting) perpetrated by an intimate partner. Prevalence rates suggest that nearly 25% of women report experiences of physical violence, sexual violence, and/or stalking perpetrated by a partner within their lifetime (Smith et al. 2018). While empirical studies suggest that IPV is a gendered crime with men predominately perpetrating abuse against women, nearly 11% of men experienced partner-perpetrated violence (Smith et al. 2018). Moreover, IPV victims have reported acute and long-term deleterious physical, psychological, financial, and social consequences resulting from abuse experiences (Campbell 2002; Coker et al. 2002; Peterson et al. 2018). Indeed, IPV victims have experienced immediate physical injuries, somatic complaints, psychological trauma consequences and financial strain from expenses associated with abuse (Campbell 2002; Coker et al. 2002; Peterson et al. 2018).

To try and address IPV, all US states have enacted legislation that offers protection to victims while trying to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. To be sure, police officers are often the first point of contact victims and perpetrators have with the criminal justice system. Police officers have a unique opportunity to intervene in abuse incidents by engaging in informal (e.g., service referral) and formal interventions (e.g., arrest). That said, IPV victims' decisions to contact police for help and IPV perpetrators' engagement in future abuse may be influenced by perceptions of police including the extent to which they are fair, helpful, and trustworthy (Fedina et al. 2019; Gover et al. 2013; Hickman and Simpson 2003)—demonstrating the importance of police engaging in procedural justice (Tyler 2003).

Within the IPV body of literature, terminology of “procedural justice” and “police legitimacy” are noticeably absent (see Paternoster et al. 1997). Special attention, however,

has been given to understanding secondary victimization, or the notion that negative police interactions exacerbate victim trauma and impede overall well-being (Campbell 2008), concepts aligning with antecedents of procedural justice. Moreover, existing studies connecting procedural justice, legitimacy, and IPV have assessed victims' experiences including mental health (Calton and Cattaneo 2014), decisions to report to police (Fedina et al. 2019; Gover et al. 2013; Hickman and Simpson 2003; Yuan et al. 2022), and engagement with the criminal justice system (Holmes et al. 2022). Studies using perpetrator samples have investigated how concepts of procedural justice and police legitimacy influence subsequent abuse (Maxwell et al. 2020; Paternoster et al. 1997). Additional studies have also assessed police response (Fedina et al. 2019) as well as victim and perpetrator experiences with court decisions (Gover et al. 2007; Holmes et al. 2022; Meyer and Williamson 2020). While limited, the existing research that integrates IPV, procedural justice, and police legitimacy provide a fruitful starting point in understanding how procedural justice and police legitimacy impact IPV victim and perpetrator decision-making processes. Questions remain, however, as to how IPV perpetration and/or victimization experiences relate to perceptions of procedural justice and police legitimacy (e.g., see Fedina et al. 2019; Hickman and Simpson 2003). Indeed, if IPV perpetration and/or victimization experiences negatively impact perceptions of procedural justice and police legitimacy then citizens may be less willing to initiate calls for service, co-operate with formal entities, or obey legal authorities in the future. The purpose of the current study, therefore, addresses the gap in the literature and answers the call for research set forth by prior scholars (Fedina et al. 2019; Hickman and Simpson 2003). Using data from the Pathways to Desistance Study, the current study assesses how IPV perpetration and victimization affect perceptions of procedural justice toward police and police legitimacy among a sample of 742 individuals who were previously adjudicated youth.

1.1. Procedural Justice and Police Legitimacy

Scholars have argued that police legitimacy facilitates co-operation, compliance with the law and legal authorities, and public satisfaction with the criminal justice system (Mazerolle et al. 2013; Papachristos et al. 2012; Tyler 2003; Tyler and Fagan 2008). To accomplish this objective, formal agencies including police attempt to gain legitimacy through the use of procedurally just behaviors. Indeed, procedural justice is a process-based model that posits police legitimacy is connected to public judgements about the fairness of which police exercise their authority and make decisions in citizen–police interactions (Tyler 2003; Tyler and Fagan 2008). Procedural justice emphasizes the role of neutrality, respect, trustworthiness, and voice—all of which shape individuals' perceptions of and future engagement and compliance with authorities (Mazerolle et al. 2013; Tyler 2003; Tyler and Fagan 2008). Citizens, for example, who interact with law enforcement and determine that officers engaged in a respectful manner, were unbiased and fair in their interpretations of events, and provided an opportunity for all parties to speak to the incident may perceive police to be more legitimate and trustworthy (Mazerolle et al. 2013; Tyler 2003; Tyler and Fagan 2008). In turn, citizens may have more positive assessments of police (Tyler and Fagan 2008), be more inclined to co-operate during encounters with police (Mazerolle et al. 2013) and continue to engage in law-abiding behavior (Paternoster et al. 1997; Tyler 2003).

1.2. Intimate Partner Violence Victimization, Procedural Justice, and Police Legitimacy

IPV victims have reported experiencing detrimental consequences as a direct result from abuse (Campbell 2002; Coker et al. 2002; Peterson et al. 2018). Moreover, numerous empirical studies have documented that IPV victims are often met with blame, hostility, and disbelief from police officers (DeJong et al. 2008; Stephens and Sinden 2000; Stewart et al. 2013). As a result, IPV victims may encounter secondary victimization (Campbell 2008), which can negatively impact overall well-being and the likelihood of re-engaging with the criminal justice system (Koss 2000).

In recent decades, scholars have assessed IPV victims' perceptions of satisfaction and fair treatment by police officers (Fedina et al. 2019; Fugate et al. 2005; Hickman and Simpson 2003; Johnson 2007). Understanding how IPV victims perceive police legitimacy and procedural justice may be particularly important given the potential implications these concepts have on subsequent outcomes. IPV victims, for example, who perceived higher levels of procedural justice during interactions with legal authorities reported experiencing higher levels of quality of life and lower levels of depression (Calton and Cattaneo 2014). Moreover, IPV victims who have positive perceptions of procedural justice and police legitimacy are more likely to initiate calls for service (Gover et al. 2013; Hickman and Simpson 2003), co-operate and engage with legal authorities (Calton and Cattaneo 2014; Fedina et al. 2019; Holmes et al. 2022), and hold positive perceptions of police responses to incidents of abuse (Fedina et al. 2019).

That said, there has been call for research to better understand the empirical relationships between IPV victimization, procedural justice, and police legitimacy (see Fedina et al. 2019). Indeed, IPV victimization may directly impact perceptions of procedural justice and police legitimacy. To the best of our knowledge, however, only two empirical studies have assessed how IPV victimization affects victims' perceptions of procedural justice and police legitimacy. Hickman and Simpson (2003), for example, used data from 180 cases involving female IPV victims to explore barriers in reporting to law enforcement, with special attention to how prior encounters with police officers impacted the likelihood victims would report subsequent victimization. To try to better understand the results from the main questions, the scholars conducted supplemental analyses to determine predictors of victims' perceptions of procedural justice. White and Hispanic female victims, compared to Black female victims, held lower perceptions of procedural justice. Heightened satisfaction with police significantly increased female victims' perceptions of procedural justice (Hickman and Simpson 2003).

Most recently, Fedina et al. (2019) used cross-sectional data from the Survey of Police–Public Encounters to assess the relationship between police legitimacy/trust, experiences of IPV, decisions to report abuse, and perceived adequacy of police response among 1000 participants. Results suggested that increased exposure to IPV was significantly associated with lower levels of police legitimacy/trust. This relationship was stronger for Black participants, compared to non-Black participants (Fedina et al. 2019).

1.3. Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration, Procedural Justice, and Police Legitimacy

Scholars suggest that individuals who perceive officers to be fair and procedurally just are more likely to perceive police to be legitimate (Tyler 2003; Tyler and Fagan 2008) and comply with the law (Paternoster et al. 1997; Tyler 2003). In other words, perceptions of procedural justice and police legitimacy can affect offending behavior. Within the context of IPV, Paternoster et al. (1997) were among the first to assess how interactions between perpetrators and police affected recidivism. The findings from the study suggested that perpetrators who reported being with met with fair and respectful treatment had a lower rate of recidivism regardless of whether an arrest was made (Paternoster et al. 1997). More recently, Maxwell et al. (2020) used interview data from 456 men who had been arrested for partner abuse to determine how perceptions of procedural and distributive justice during police encounters affected long-term compliance with the law. Interestingly, perpetrators who reported that police engaged in a respectful manner were associated with fewer subsequent arrests; however, perceptions of fairness were not significant (Maxwell et al. 2020). That said, research has yet to assess the empirical relationship between IPV perpetration experiences and perceptions of procedural justice and police legitimacy. This is important to consider because significant relationships between IPV perpetration behaviors, procedural justice, and police legitimacy can have implications for continued engagement in abuse behaviors (Paternoster et al. 1997).

The present study aims to better understand the relationship between IPV experiences, procedural justice, and police legitimacy. Specifically, a sample of 742 previously

adjudicated youth from the Pathways to Desistance data were employed to evaluate how perceptions of procedural justice are influenced by individuals' experiences with IPV victimization and/or perpetration. Based on prior research assessing IPV exposure, procedural justice, and police legitimacy (Fedina et al. 2019; Hickman and Simpson 2003), it is hypothesized that (1) individuals will have fewer positive perceptions of procedural justice toward police and lower views of legitimacy when they have experienced IPV victimization and (2) individuals will have fewer positive perceptions of procedural justice toward police and lower views of legitimacy when they have perpetrated IPV.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Data

The Pathways to Desistance Study is a two-site, prospective, longitudinal study following serious juvenile offenders from adolescence to adulthood between 2000 and 2010 (Mulvey and Shubert 2012). This study began in 2000 with 645 adjudicated youth from juvenile and adult court systems in Maricopa County, Arizona and 700 adjudicated youth from Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania (Mulvey 2000). In order to be selected for participation in this study, participants were between 14 and 18 years old at the time of their committing offense and had been found guilty of a serious offense, mostly felonies, but with a few exceptions for some misdemeanor property offenses, sexual assault, or weapons offenses. In each jurisdiction, juveniles were processed either through the juvenile court in the area or the adult court, depending on the severity of the offense. Data were collected with computer-assisted interviews that took place in the participants' homes, in libraries, other public places, or in facilities. Trained interviewers read each question aloud, and respondents had the option to enter their responses on a keypad. These interviews were validated through collateral interviews and official records, including FBI records of arrest for each respondent and juvenile and adult court records from each jurisdiction. Baseline interviews were conducted from November 2000 to January 2003, and follow-up interviews were conducted at multiple time periods through 84 months after baseline interviews (Schubert et al. 2004).

To test the hypothesis for the current study, the data are drawn from the 84-month follow-up ($n = 1134$), and only respondents that responded to the IPV and procedural justice questions are included here ($n = 742$)¹. The 84-month follow-up was collected in 2010, when respondents were between 20 and 26 years old. See Table 1 for descriptive statistics. Respondents are only included in the descriptive table if they are also included in the multivariate analysis models. Please see Figure 1 for a visual representation of sample attrition.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics ($n = 742$).

Variable	Mean (n)	SD (%)	Range
IPV Victimization—Physical	0.40	1.05	0–7
IPV Victimization—Psychological	0.89	1.51	0–8
IPV Perpetration—Physical	0.31	1.05	0–10
IPV Perpetration—Psychological	0.78	1.29	0–7
White	(174)	(23.50)	0–1
Black	(296)	(39.90)	0–1
Hispanic	(272)	(36.70)	0–1
Sex			0–1
Male	(617)	(83.20)	
Female	(125)	(16.80)	
Age	23.02	1.16	20–26
Non-Violent Offending	0.73	1.38	0–9
Violent Offending	0.36	0.78	0–8
Procedural Justice—Police	13.72	3.04	4–20
Procedural Justice—Legitimacy	2.44	0.61	1–4

Note: Ranges are based on actual responses, not possible range. Note: The 'other race' category was excluded due to there not being enough cases to analyze.

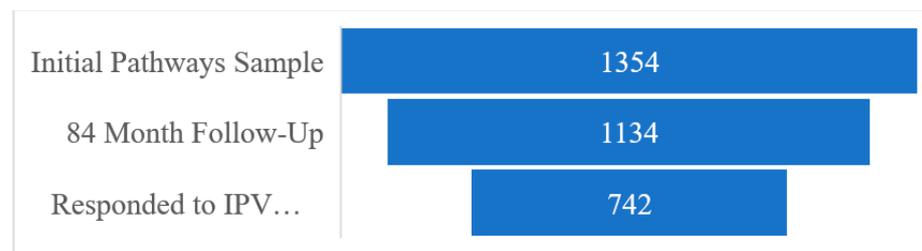


Figure 1. Sample Attrition.

2.2. Measurement

2.2.1. Dependent Variables

The procedural justice inventory included in the Pathways study was adapted from Tyler (1997) to measure the respondent's perception of fairness and equity regarding arrest and court processing. The 55 items in the overall procedural justice measure were divided into four sections by Pathways researchers: police, judges, legitimacy, and legal cynicism. The current study is only utilizing perceptions of police and legitimacy.

Perceptions of Police. The current study follows Pina-Sanchez and Brunton-Smith's (2020) method for the police scale as they pointed out that reliance on the aggregated index based on the combined score of all 19 items is problematic due to the potential for conflation between direct and indirect contact questions. As such, a new police index was created using four measures that refer to perceptions of equality in treatment shown by the police in their interactions with people ($M = 13.72$; $SD = 3.04$; $\alpha = 0.83$; skewness = -0.61 ; kurtosis = 0.33). These questions asked a respondent's level of agreement with each of the following statements: Police treat males and females differently, police treat people differently depending on age, police treat people differently depending on race/ethnic group, and police treat people differently depending on neighborhood. These were coded as: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree. Higher scores on this variable indicate more positive views of police.

Legitimacy. The legitimacy scale seeks to capture respondents' confidence in the professionalism and good intentions of the justice system, as well as respondents' belief that the norms of the justice system should be obeyed. This variable focuses on legitimacy of the criminal justice system, more broadly, and includes questions related to police legitimacy and court legitimacy: I have a great deal of respect for the police, overall, the police are honest, I feel proud of the police, I feel people should support the police, the police should be allowed to hold a person suspected of a serious crime until they get enough evidence to charge them, the police should be allowed to stop people on the street and require them to identify themselves, the courts generally guarantee everyone a fair trial (hearing), the basic rights of citizens are protected in the courts, many people convicted of crimes in the courts are actually innocent (reverse coded), overall, judges in the courts here are honest. These were coded as 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = somewhat disagree; 3 = somewhat agree; 4 = strongly agree, with higher scores indicating greater feelings of justice system legitimacy ($M = 2.44$; $SD = 0.61$; $\alpha = 0.87$; skewness = -0.30 ; kurtosis = -0.04).

2.2.2. Independent Variables

The Domestic Violence Inventory adapted for the Pathways study (Moffitt et al. 1997; Moffitt et al. 2000; Straus et al. 1995) is designed to measure IPV victimization and perpetration events over the past year between the respondent and any of his/her intimate partners or ex-intimate partners. These count measures were created by the Pathways researchers after data collection. For IPV victimization, physical victimization² ($M = 0.40$; $SD = 1.05$) is a count variable and includes items such as: has your partner pushed, grabbed, shoved, slapped, or shaken you, has your partner punched, choked, strangled, kicked, or bitten you, and has your partner threatened you with a knife or gun. Psychological victimization ($M = 0.89$; $SD = 1.51$) is a count variable and includes items such as: has your

partner insulted or shamed you in front of others, has your partner damaged or destroyed any other property when angry with you, and has your partner called you stupid, fat, or ugly.

For IPV perpetration, physical perpetration ($M = 0.31$; $SD = 1.05$) is a count variable and includes items such as: have you pushed, grabbed, shoved, slapped, or shaken your partner, have you punched, choked, strangled, kicked, or bitten your partner, and have you threatened your partner with a knife or gun. Psychological perpetration ($M = 0.78$; $SD = 1.29$) is a count variable and includes items such as: have you insulted or shamed your partner in front of others, have you damaged or destroyed any other property when angry with your partner, and have you called your partner stupid, fat, or ugly.³ It should be noted that the IPV victimization and IPV perpetration variables are not mutually exclusive; therefore, there could be overlap between victims and offenders, which aligns with extant IPV literature (Muftic et al. 2015).

2.2.3. Control Variables

Age was self-reported and measured as a continuous variable ($M = 23.02$; $SD = 1.16$). Individuals' sex is a dichotomous variable (0 = male); 83.2% of the respondents were male. Individuals' race is measured with three dummy variables for White, Black, and Hispanic. The most prevalent race was Black ($n = 296$; 39.9%), followed by Hispanic ($n = 272$; 36.7%). Non-violent and violent offending were also included as controls as research suggests that those who have/are participating in crime, may have differing perceptions of procedural justice (Papachristos et al. 2012). These variables do not indicate the onset of offending, but rather re-offending or desisting after being found guilty of a serious offense. Non-violent offending ($M = 0.73$; $SD = 1.38$; $\alpha = 0.75$) is a nine-item variety score with items relating to: destroying property, entering buildings to steal something, buying or receiving stolen property, stealing cars or motorcycles, driving drunk or high, shoplifting, selling marijuana, selling other drugs, and carrying a gun. Violent offending ($M = 0.36$; $SD = 0.78$; $\alpha = 0.71$) is an eight-item variety score and includes items related to: carjacking, shooting at someone where the bullet did and did not hit the person, robbery with and without a weapon, beating someone up resulting in serious injuries, being in a fight, and fighting as part of a gang.

3. Results

3.1. Bivariate Results

Correlations were computed for the psychological victimization, physical victimization, psychological perpetration, and physical perpetration scales and the police and legitimacy scales. Correlational analysis of the police scale and IPV victimization and perpetration scales found that more psychological victimization experiences ($r = 0.09$, $p < 0.01$) and more psychological perpetration experiences ($r = 0.10$, $p < 0.01$) were related to higher perceptions of the police. For legitimacy and IPV victimization and perpetration, fewer physical victimization experiences ($r = -0.10$, $p < 0.01$) and fewer physical perpetration experiences ($r = -0.08$, $p < 0.05$) were related to higher perceptions of legitimacy toward the criminal justice system.

3.2. Multivariate Results

First, a multicollinearity analysis was performed and all VIF scores were below 5, which indicates that multicollinearity should not be an issue in this data. Second, multivariate ordinary least squares models were conducted for police and legitimacy. For the first model, which included the police scale and the IPV victimization variables, there were three significant findings. Model 1 predicted approximately 10% of the variance in police procedural justice (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.10$, $p < 0.001$). For the IPV measures, those who experienced psychological IPV victimization had significantly more positive views of police ($b = 0.21$; $SE = 0.09$; $p < 0.05$). Compared to White individuals, Black individuals had fewer positive views of police ($b = -0.58$, $SE = 0.29$; $p < 0.05$). Additionally, lower levels of

perceived legitimacy were associated with positive perceptions of police ($b = -1.55$, $SE = 0.19$, $p < 0.001$; See Table 2).

Table 2. Model 1: OLS Regression (Police and IPV Victimization).

Variable	b	SE	β	Sig.
Constant	15.61	2.23	-	0.001 ***
Physical Victimization	-0.13	0.13	-0.04	0.341
Psychological Victimization	0.21	0.09	0.11	0.020 *
Non-Violent Offending	0.10	0.10	0.05	0.298
Violent Offending	-0.02	0.17	-0.01	0.928
Black ^a	-0.58	0.29	-0.09	0.044 *
Hispanic ^a	-0.35	0.29	-0.06	0.217
Age	0.09	0.09	0.03	0.335
Sex	-0.10	0.29	-0.01	0.722
Procedural Justice: Legitimacy	-1.55	0.19	-0.31	0.001 ***
Adjusted R ²		0.10, $p < 0.001$ ***		

^a white is the reference category. * $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.001$.

The second model which included the police scale and the IPV perpetration variables, predicted approximately 10% of the variance in police procedural justice (Adjusted R² = 0.10, $p < 0.001$). For the IPV measures, perpetrating psychological IPV was related to significantly higher perceptions of police ($b = 0.29$, $SE = 0.10$, $p < 0.01$). Compared to White individuals, Black individuals had fewer positive views of police ($b = -0.57$; $SE = 0.29$; $p < 0.05$). For the procedural justice measure, lower levels of perceived legitimacy were related to positive perceptions of police ($b = -1.55$, $SE = 0.19$, $p < 0.001$; See Table 3).

Table 3. Model 2: OLS Regression (Police and IPV Perpetration).

Variable	b	SE	β	Sig.
Constant	15.62	2.23	-	0.001 ***
Physical Perpetration	-0.18	0.12	-0.06	0.151
Psychological Perpetration	0.29	0.10	0.12	0.003 **
Non-Violent Offending	0.11	0.09	0.05	0.234
Violent Offending	-0.05	0.17	-0.01	0.774
Black ^a	-0.57	0.29	-0.09	0.046 *
Hispanic ^a	-0.32	0.29	-0.50	0.264
Age	0.09	0.09	0.03	0.345
Sex	-0.10	0.30	-0.01	0.743
Procedural Justice: Legitimacy	-1.56	0.19	-0.31	0.001 ***
Adjusted R ²		0.10, $p < 0.001$ ***		

^a white is the reference category. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

The third model, for the legitimacy scale and IPV victimization, predicted approximately 18% of the variance in legitimacy (Adjusted R² = 0.18, $p < 0.001$). For the IPV measures, experiencing physical victimization was related to significantly lower levels of perceptions of legitimacy ($b = -0.07$, $SE = 0.03$, $p < 0.01$) and, alternatively, experiencing psychological victimization was related to significantly higher levels of perceptions of legitimacy ($b = 0.05$, $SE = 0.02$, $p < 0.01$). For the procedural justice measure, more negative perceptions of police were related to higher perceptions of legitimacy ($b = -0.06$, $SE = 0.01$, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, Black and Hispanic individuals had lower perceptions of legitimacy than did White individuals ($b = -0.33$; $SE = 0.05$; $p < 0.001$; $b = -0.16$; $SE = 0.05$; $p < 0.01$, respectively). Lastly, women had higher perceptions of legitimacy ($b = 0.11$, $SE = 0.06$, $p < 0.05$) and those who reported violent offending had significantly lower levels of perceived criminal justice system legitimacy ($b = -0.10$, $SE = 0.03$, $p < 0.001$; See Table 4).

Table 4. Model 3: OLS Regression (Legitimacy and IPV Victimization).

Variable	b	SE	β	Sig.
Constant	4.05	0.41	-	0.001 ***
Physical Victimization	-0.07	0.03	-0.12	0.004 **
Psychological Victimization	0.05	0.02	0.11	0.009 **
Non-Violent Offending	-0.03	0.02	-0.07	0.094
Violent Offending	-0.10	0.03	-0.13	0.001 ***
Black ^a	-0.33	0.05	-0.27	0.001 ***
Hispanic ^a	-0.16	0.05	-0.13	0.003 **
Age	-0.03	0.02	-0.05	0.130
Sex	0.11	0.06	0.07	0.052 *
Procedural Justice: Police	-0.06	0.01	-0.28	0.001 ***
Adjusted R ²		0.18, $p < 0.001$ ***		

^a white is the reference category. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

The last model, for the legitimacy scale and IPV perpetration variables, predicted approximately 18% of the variance in legitimacy (Adjusted R² = 0.18, $p < 0.001$). In this model, both IPV predictors were significant, but in opposite directions. Those who perpetrated physical IPV had significantly lower levels of perceptions of legitimacy ($b = -0.07$, SE = 0.02, $p > 0.01$), whereas those who perpetrated psychological IPV had significantly higher levels of perception of legitimacy ($b = 0.04$, SE = 0.02, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, more negative perceptions of police were related to higher perceptions of legitimacy ($b = -0.06$, SE = 0.01, $p < 0.001$) and women had higher levels of perceived criminal justice system legitimacy ($b = 0.13$, SE = 0.06, $p < 0.05$). Lastly, those who were involved in violent offending had lower levels of perceived criminal justice legitimacy ($b = -0.11$, SE = 0.03, $p < 0.001$), as did Black and Hispanic individuals ($b = -0.33$, SE = 0.05, $p < 0.001$; $b = -0.15$, SE = 0.05, $p < 0.01$, respectively). Please see Table 5.

Table 5. Model 4: OLS Regression (Legitimacy and IPV Perpetration).

Variable	b	SE	β	Sig.
Constant	4.08	0.41	-	0.001 ***
Physical Perpetration	-0.07	0.02	-0.11	0.006 **
Psychological Perpetration	0.04	0.02	0.09	0.033 *
Non-Violent Offending	-0.03	0.02	-0.06	0.135
Violent Offending	-0.11	0.03	-0.14	0.001 ***
Black ^a	-0.33	0.05	-0.27	0.001 ***
Hispanic ^a	-0.15	0.05	-0.12	0.004 **
Age	-0.03	0.02	-0.05	0.109
Sex	0.13	0.06	0.08	0.028 *
Procedural Justice: Police	-0.06	0.01	-0.28	0.001 ***
Adjusted R ²		0.18, $p < 0.001$ ***		

^a white is the reference category. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

4. Discussion

This study examined how experiences of IPV victimization and perpetration affect perceptions of procedural justice. This is one of few studies that explore this effect. Previous research argues that police legitimacy is important for co-operation, compliance with the law and legal authorities, and public satisfaction with the criminal justice system (Mazerolle et al. 2013; Papachristos et al. 2012; Tyler 2003; Tyler and Fagan 2008) and, as such, it is important to consider what happens when those who experience or perpetrate IPV interact with the criminal justice system.

The findings from this study suggest that police and criminal justice system legitimacy have unique implications for IPV. Our first hypothesis regarding the association between IPV victimization and procedural justice was partially supported. Results indicated that experiences of physical IPV victimization were related to lower levels of perceived criminal

justice system legitimacy; however, experiences of psychological IPV victimization were related to *higher* levels of trust in police and belief in legitimacy of the criminal justice system. Considering all the respondents in the current study were adjudicated youth, it is assumed that they had at least one prior experience with the criminal justice system. This could have, of course, shaped their perceptions unrelated to the IPV incident. However, it is interesting that those who experienced psychological IPV victimization reported much more trust in the police and the criminal justice system than did those who experienced physical IPV victimization. One potential explanation could relate to the specific type of IPV experienced. Empirical research, for example, suggested IPV victims who experienced more frequent and severe forms of abuse, such as physical assault, were more likely to seek help from police (Cheng and Lo 2019). It is possible that the police response to their physical IPV experience was harmful or resulted in secondary traumatization. Indeed, prior research has suggested that IPV victims who reported abuse to police were met with disbelief and disrespect, resulting in overall negative interactions with officers (Fugate et al. 2005; Gover et al. 2013; Johnson 2007). This is why it is so critical for police and other criminal justice officials to be given comprehensive training on how to interact with victims of IPV. Further, if physical IPV victims perceived that the criminal justice system did not provide adequate responses to their situation, it could erode victims' trust in the criminal justice system's legitimacy. This may include instances where protective orders were not enforced, cases were mishandled, or the sentences their perpetrator's received were perceived as too lenient. Lastly, some victims may feel that the criminal justice system is biased against them due to systemic issues related to gender, race, socioeconomic status, or other factors. These systemic issues can contribute to a perceived lack of legitimacy and trust in the police and other justice officials.

Our second hypothesis regarding the association between IPV perpetration and procedural justice was also partially supported. Results indicated that those who perpetrated physical IPV had lower perceptions of legitimacy, whereas those who perpetrated psychological IPV had *higher* levels of trust in police and belief in legitimacy of the criminal justice system. This finding is interesting and contrary to what one would expect given extant research in this area. This begs the question: why would those who perpetrate IPV have greater perceptions of police and legitimacy? It could be that they received a "slap on the wrist" in terms of a light sentence, so the IPV perpetrators did not feel as if they were unfairly punished by the criminal justice system. It would be interesting for future studies to attempt to parse out this effect. For example, future research should examine IPV perpetrator interactions with the police and criminal justice system to see if these higher perceptions of legitimacy affect offending behavior—as we know that those who perceive officers to be fair and procedurally just are more likely to comply with the law (Paternoster et al. 1997; Tyler 2003; Tyler and Fagan 2008). IPV perpetrators may also engage in denial and rationalization of their actions, so by minimizing and justifying their actions, they may view the criminal justice system as unjust or biased against them, perceiving it as a threat to their self-image and a barrier to their control over victims. This may also translate into fear of consequences for their actions; consequently, this fear of legal consequences could influence perpetrators' perceptions of legitimacy. Lastly, they may just have a general distrust of legal authorities due to prior experience, belief that they were unfairly targeted, or other personal experiences.

Further, compared to men, women had higher belief in legitimacy of the criminal justice system and those who reported violent offending had lower belief in legitimacy. Research indicates that those who believe their sentence is just and proportional, are more likely to view the criminal justice system as fair and just and, thus, be less likely to recidivate (Corrado et al. 2003). In our sample of adults who had been adjudicated in their youth, it is no surprise that there were some who were still involved in offending behaviors as adults and, as research suggests, it is additionally no surprise that they have less belief in the legitimacy of the criminal justice system. Lastly, Black and Hispanic individuals had lower perceptions of both police and legitimacy. The lower levels of trust that some

Black and Hispanic individuals may have in the police and the criminal justice system can be attributed to a combination of historical, social, and personal factors. Both Black and Hispanic communities have faced a history of systemic discrimination, racial profiling, and unequal treatment by the criminal justice system (Silva and Esparza 2021).

4.1. Limitations and Future Research

Although the current study has contributed knowledge on the effects of IPV victimization and IPV perpetration on perceptions of procedural justice, it is not without limitations. First, the dataset in this study was particularly useful in examining the effects of IPV on procedural justice, but, in some cases, it did limit the ability to construct precise measures related to IPV. Second, the IPV victimization and IPV perpetration scales were pre-constructed by the creators of this dataset and, while the individual items are available in restricted files, the authors were unable to gain access to them. Future research would benefit from using the individual IPV measures to construct scales, to ensure accuracy. Third, each of the youths in the study had been processed in either juvenile court or adult court depending on the jurisdiction and severity of the offense committed. This could, of course, potentially impact their perceptions of procedural justice. Juvenile courts are much more focused on rehabilitation compared to the adult court system, which likely influences youths' perceptions of their treatment in the criminal justice system. Lastly, this was also a high-risk sample of previously adjudicated youth, so it is possible that respondents were particularly entrenched in deleterious behaviors and had many interactions, potentially positive and negative, with the criminal justice system, which could influence their overall perceptions of procedural justice. Future research should continue to assess how IPV victimization and/or perpetration experiences affect perceptions of procedural justice and police legitimacy using a myriad of samples to determine potential differences in empirical results.

4.2. Policy Recommendations

Despite these limitations, there are policy recommendations to discuss. Police legitimacy is important for ensuring the safety of both police and the citizens with whom they interact, but, as the current study suggests, legitimacy also has implications for IPV victims and perpetrators. That said, it is important to provide training for all criminal justice professionals, including law enforcement officers, prosecutors, judges, and court personnel on effective responses to IPV. To be sure, ineffective responses can produce secondary victimization and may reduce the likelihood that victims call the police with any subsequent victimization experience. Further, having adequate support services for IPV victims, such as counseling, therapy, or medical assistance is crucial for victim recovery and overall satisfaction (Sullivan 2018). Co-ordinating with victim service organizations or establishing partnerships with community resources can provide IPV victims with the necessary support beyond the legal aspects of their case. Additionally, improving accessibility to the justice system is important. This includes providing information and resources in multiple languages, accommodating disabilities, and offering transportation or childcare support for IPV victims in need. Efforts must be made to minimize the retraumatization that IPV victims may experience when navigating the system (Gezinski and Gonzalez-Pons 2021). Lastly, implementing restorative justice programs can provide IPV victims with the opportunity to participate in the resolution process. Broadly, restorative justice programs focus on repairing harm and addressing the needs of both the victim and the offender, facilitating dialogue and reconciliation (Pennell et al. 2021). Involving victims in decisions regarding restitution and sentencing may improve victim empowerment and increase satisfaction with the justice process.

Enhancing IPV offender satisfaction with the criminal justice system is a complex issue because of the focus on ensuring public safety and justice for victims. However, there are some approaches that can promote a fair and rehabilitative process, which may work to increase offender satisfaction with the justice system. First, ensuring that the criminal

justice system operates in a fair and transparent manner is important (Benesh and Howell 2001; Tyler 2001; Tyler et al. 1989). This could include providing clear information to IPV offenders about their legal rights, charges, and the progress of their case and explaining the rationale behind sentencing decisions can help offenders perceive the process as fair. Second, focusing on rehabilitation rather than solely punitive measures can help IPV offenders feel that the justice system is invested in their successful reintegration into society. Some of these rehabilitative strategies could include educational programs, batterer intervention programs, vocational training, substance abuse treatment, and mental health support and counseling (Shepard et al. 2002). Lastly, ensuring that IPV offenders are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness by criminal justice professionals is important. This can include treating offenders as individuals and avoiding stigmatization or discrimination and timely resolution of cases.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, S.Z. and A.G.; methodology, S.Z.; software, S.Z.; validation, S.Z.; formal analysis, S.Z.; investigation, S.Z. and A.G.; resources, S.Z. and A.G.; data curation, S.Z.; writing—original draft preparation, S.Z. and A.G.; writing—review and editing, S.Z. and A.G.; visualization, S.Z. and A.G. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Institutional Review Board of Sam Houston State University (protocol code 2014-05-16624; 14 May 2014) for studies involving humans.

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

Data Availability Statement: Data for this study is available on ICPSR: <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/web/ICPSR/studies/29961>, Accessed on 22 May 2023.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ Little's Missing Completely at Random test was conducted to assess patterns of missing data (Li 2013). The test showed that the missing data did have significant patterns ($\chi^2 = 105.103$; $p < 0.001$). T-tests and chi-square tests were conducted to determine any patterns among the missing data in the sample. Significant differences were found for the legitimacy scale, non-violent offending, race, and sex.
- ² The researcher was unable to obtain access to the restricted data with the individual IPV items. As such, the alphas for the four IPV scales: physical victimization, psychological victimization, physical perpetration, and psychological perpetration, were unavailable.
- ³ Dichotomous physical and psychological IPV victimization and perpetration variables were included in supplementary analyses. There were no substantial changes.

References

- Benesh, Sara C., and Susan E. Howell. 2001. Confidence in the courts: A comparison of users and non-users. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law* 19: 199–214.
- Calton, Jenna, and Lauren Bennett Cattaneo. 2014. The effects of procedural and distributive justice on intimate partner violence victims' mental health and likelihood of future help-seeking. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 84: 328–40. [CrossRef]
- Campbell, Jacquelyn C. 2002. Health consequences of intimate partner violence. *The Lancet* 359: 1331–36. [CrossRef]
- Campbell, Rebecca. 2008. The psychological impact of rape victims. *American Psychologist* 63: 702–17. [CrossRef]
- Cheng, Tyrone C., and Celia C. Lo. 2019. Physical intimate partner violence: Factors related to women's contact with police. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 50: 229–41. [CrossRef]
- Coker, Ann L., Keith E. Davis, Ileana Arias, Sijata Desai, Maureen Sanderson, Heather M. Brandt, and Paige H. Smith. 2002. Physical and mental health effects of intimate partner violence for men and women. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 23: 260–68. [CrossRef]
- Corrado, Raymond R., Irwin. M. Cohen, William Glackman, and Candice Odgers. 2003. Serious and violent young offenders' decisions to recidivate: An assessment of five sentencing models. *Crime and Delinquency* 49: 179–200. [CrossRef]
- DeJong, Christina, Amanda Burgess-Proctor, and Lori Elis. 2008. Police officer perceptions of intimate partner violence: An analysis of observational data. *Violence and Victims* 23: 683–96. [CrossRef]

- Fedina, Lisa, Bethany L. Backes, Hyun-Jin Jun, Jordan DeVlyder, and Richard P. Barth. 2019. Police legitimacy, trustworthiness, and associations with intimate partner violence. *Policing: An International Journal* 42: 901–16. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Fugate, Michelle, Leslie Landis, Kim Riordan, Sara Naureckas, and Barbara Engel. 2005. Barriers to domestic violence help seeking: Implications for intervention. *Violence Against Women* 11: 290–310. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Gezinski, Lindsay B., and Kwynn M. Gonzalez-Pons. 2021. Unlocking the door to safety and stability: Housing barriers for survivors of intimate partner violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 36: 8338–57. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Gover, Angela R., Courtney Welton-Mitchell, Joanne Belknap, and Anne P. DePrince. 2013. When abuse happens again: Women's reasons for not reporting new incidents of intimate partner abuse to law enforcement. *Women & Criminal Justice* 23: 99–120.
- Gover, Angela R., Eve M. Brank, and John M. MacDonald. 2007. A specialized domestic violence court in South Carolina: An example of procedural justice for victims and defendants. *Violence Against Women* 13: 603–26. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Hickman, Laura J., and Sally S. Simpson. 2003. Fair treatment or preferred outcome? The impact of police behavior on victim reports of domestic violence incidents. *Law & Society Review* 37: 607–34.
- Holmes, Samantha C., Christopher D. Maxwell, Lauren B. Cattaneo, Barbara A. Bellucci, and Tami P. Sullivan. 2022. Criminal protection among women victims of intimate partner violence: Women's experiences of court decisions, processes, and their willingness to engage with the system in the future. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 37: NP16253–NP16276. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Johnson, Ida M. 2007. Victims' perceptions of police response to domestic violence incidents. *Journal of Criminal Justice* 35: 498–510. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Koss, Mary P. 2000. Blame, shame, and community: Justice responses to violence against women. *American Psychologist* 55: 1332–43. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Li, Cheng. 2013. Little's test of missing completely at random. *Stata Journal* 13: 795–809. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Maxwell, Christopher D., Angela M. Moore, Jocelyn Fontaine, and Jaclyn Smith. 2020. Status influences on perceptions of procedural justice: A test of the group value model among intimate partner violence arrestees. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* 44: 29–45. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Mazerolle, Lorraine, Sarah Bennett, Jacqueline Davis, Elise Sargeant, and Matthew Manning. 2013. Procedural justice and police legitimacy: A systematic review of the research evidence. *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 9: 245–74. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Meyer, Silke, and Harley Williamson. 2020. General and specific perceptions of procedural justice: Factors associated with perceptions of police and court responses to domestic and family violence. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology* 53: 333–51.
- Moffitt, Terrie E., Avshalom Caspi, Robert F. Krueger, and Lynn Magdol. 1997. Do partners agree about abuse in their relationship? Psychometric evaluation of interpartner agreement. *Psychological Assessment* 9: 47–56. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Moffitt, Terrie E., Robert F. Krueger, Avshalom Caspi, and Jeff Fagan. 2000. Partner abuse and general crime: How are they the same? How are they different? *Criminology* 38: 199–232. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Muftic, Lisa R., Mary A. Finn, and Erin A. Marsh. 2015. The victim-offender overlap, intimate partner violence, and sex: Assessing differences among victims, offenders, and victim-offenders. *Crime & Delinquency* 61: 899–926.
- Mulvey, Edward P. 2000. Research on Pathways to Desistance. *Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research*. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Mulvey, Edward P., and Carol A. Shubert. 2012. Some initial findings and policy implications of the Pathways to Desistance study. *Victims and Offenders* 7: 407–27. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Papachristos, Andrew V., Tracey L. Meares, and Jeffrey Fagan. 2012. Why do criminals obey the law? The influence of legitimacy and social networks on active gun offenders. *The Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology* 102: 397–440.
- Paternoster, Raymond, Bachman Ronet, Brame Robert, and Lawrence W. Sherman. 1997. Do fair procedures matter? The effect of procedural justice on spouse abuse. *Law & Society Review* 31: 163204.
- Pennell, Joan, Gale Burford, Erika Sasson, Hillary Packer, and Emily L. Smith. 2021. Family and community approaches to intimate partner violence: Restorative programs in the United States. *Violence Against Women* 27: 1608–29. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Peterson, Cora, Megan C. Kearns, Wendy L. McIntosh, Lianne F. Estefan, Christina Nicolaidis, Kathryn E. McCollister, Amy Gordon, and Curtis Florence. 2018. Lifetime economic burden of intimate partner violence among US adults. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 55: 433–44. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Pina-Sanchez, Jose, and Ian Brunton-Smith. 2020. Reassessing the relationship between procedural justice and police legitimacy. *Law and Human Behavior* 44: 377–93. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Schubert, Carol A., Edward P. Mulvey, Laurence Steinberg, Elizabeth Cauffman, Sandra H. Losoya, Thomas Hecker, Laurie Chassin, and George P. Knight. 2004. Operational lessons from the Pathways to Desistance Study. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice* 2: 237–55. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Shepard, Melanie F., Dennis R. Falk, and Barbara A. Elliott. 2002. Enhancing coordinated community responses to reduce recidivism in cases of domestic violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 17: 551–69. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Silva, Andrea, and Diego Esparza. 2021. Explaining the American crisis of policing: Media, malfeasance, and racial prejudice. *Social Science Quarterly* 102: 3103–13. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
- Smith, Sharon G., Xinjian Zhang, Kathleen C. Basile, Melissa T. Merrick, Jing Wang, Marci-Jo Kresnow, and Jieru Chen. 2018. *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2015 Data Brief—Updated Release*. Atlanta: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- Stephens, B. Joyce, and Peter G. Sinden. 2000. Victims' voices: Domestic assault victims' perceptions of police demeanor. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 15: 534–47. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Stewart, Catherine C., Debra Langan, and Stacey Hannem. 2013. Victim experiences and perspectives on police responses to verbal violence in domestic settings. *Feminist Criminology* 8: 269–94. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Straus, Murray A., Richard J. Gelles, and Christine Smith. 1995. *Physical Violence in American Families: Risk Factors and Adaptations to Violence in 8145 Families*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publications.
- Sullivan, Cris M. 2018. Understanding how domestic violence support services promote survivor well-being: A conceptual model. *Journal of Family Violence* 33: 123–31. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Tyler, Tom R. 1997. Procedural fairness and compliance with the law. *Swiss Journal of Economics and Statistics* 133: 219–40.
- Tyler, Tom R. 2001. Public trust and confidence in legal authorities: What do majority and minority group members want from the law and legal institutions? *Behavioral Sciences & the Law* 19: 215–35.
- Tyler, Tom R. 2003. Procedural justice, legitimacy, and effective rule of law. *Crime and Justice* 30: 283–357. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Tyler, Tom R., and Jeffrey Fagan. 2008. Legitimacy and cooperation: Why do people help the police fight crime in their communities. *Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law* 6: 231–75. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Tyler, Tom R., Jonathan D. Casper, and Bonnie Fisher. 1989. Maintaining allegiance toward political authorities. *American Journal of Political Science* 33: 629–52. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Yuan, Yue, Claudio V. Sanchez, and Clarissa Punla. 2022. Procedural justice, neighbourhood context, and domestic violence reporting intention among subgroups of immigrants. *Policing and Society* 32: 1180–92. [[CrossRef](#)]

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.