

Intergroup Violence Among Jewish and Arab Youths in Israel: Testing a Multifactor Ecological Model

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Objective: Hundreds of thousands of people around the world have lost their lives to intergroup violence (IV) over the past two decades. The current study tested a multifactor ecological model, including societal (exposure to trauma), social (exposure to community violence, and conflict with parents), and individual (exposure to microaggression) factors for engagement in IV in two samples of Israeli youths, Jewish ($N = 306$), and Arab ($N = 302$). **Method:** Participants filled out self-report questionnaires assessing exposure to trauma, community violence, conflict with parents, microaggression, and engagement in IV. **Results:** The results showed that Arab youths who indicated higher levels of religiosity and reported experiencing more traumatic events, community violence, and microaggression were more likely to perpetrate IV ($OR = 1.31, 1.39, 1.5, 2.28$, respectively). Jewish youths who reported exposure to more traumatic events, more conflict with parents, and greater exposure to microaggression events were more likely to perpetrate IV ($OR = 2.28, 2.70, 3.25$, respectively). **Conclusion:** The current study illuminates the similarities (traumatic events and microaggression) and the differential associations of individual, social, and societal factors and IV among Jewish and Arab youths. Microaggression emerged as the strongest predictor for IV in both groups. These findings highlight the need to inform ecological interventions aimed at mitigating IV in a context-sensitive manner.

Clinical Impact Statement

IV is a global security threat. The present study points to an ecological process, involving societal (i.e., trauma), social (i.e., community violence and conflicts with parents), and personal (i.e., microaggression) risk factors for IV perpetration in Jewish and Arab Israeli youths. The findings indicate that interventions designed to prevent IV in adolescence should be context-sensitive, and at different ecological levels.

Keywords: intergroup violence, community violence, microaggression, trauma, youths

Hundreds of thousands of intergroup violent acts were documented around the world in the past two decades. IV has been prevalent in Europe, and other Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries, but more so in the Middle East and Africa (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2019). IV refers to aggressive behaviors perpetrated by group members against

out-of-group members resulting, in or intended to cause, physical and/or psychological harm (Levine & Hogg, 2010). Adolescence is a critical developmental stage, during which IV tends to emerge (Beelmann, 2020). With the rising prevalence of IV (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2017), there is a growing concern about intergroup racism, intolerance, and extremism in youths (Bizina & Gray, 2014), as well as efforts to prevent IV (Vidino & Brandon, 2012). It is therefore important to identify risk factors for IV in youths. The current study tested an ecological model of risk factors for IV among Jewish and Arab youths in Israel.

The Israeli Context

There are cultural differences in risk factors for IV (Vergani et al., 2020). Israel's population is comprised of diverse ethnonational groups, including a Jewish majority, and an Arab minority which makes up about 18% of the Israeli population (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2021). There is a cultural, religious, geographical distinction, and economic inequality between Jews and Arabs in Israel. The Arab minority in Israel suffers from formal and informal exclusion, structural discrimination, and imbalance in resource allocation (Lavie, 2018). The ongoing and multigenerational Israeli-Palestinian conflict has created continual tension between Jews and Arabs in

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Israel (Smootha, 2016). In the past two decades, thousands of Israelis have suffered numerous mortalities and injuries caused by repeated rocket attacks against Israeli towns from the Gaza strip (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021). At the same time, thousands of Palestinians have lost their lives or suffered injuries in recurrent military operations (B'Tselem, 2022), and closure has been imposed on the Gaza strip. Arab citizens of Israel may be perceived by Jewish as nationally, religiously, and culturally related to the "Palestinian enemy" or can be perceived as supporting hostile activities against Israel (Smootha, 2016). The perceived threat associated with the Israeli–Palestinian conflict may provoke hostility toward the Arab minority, expressed in negative feelings, attitudes, and behaviors (Canetti-Nisim et al., 2009).

In this context, the perceived threat and sense of injustice and frustration may push young people to engage in IV (Vergani et al., 2020). There has been a growing involvement of Israeli youths in extremist political and religious activities. Between September and December 2015, the rate of juveniles imprisoned in Israel on account of involvement in political or religious violence increased by 120% (Dvorin, 2015). The involvement of Israeli youths, Arab and Jewish, in IV spiked during Israel's military campaign in the Gaza Strip "Operation Guardian of the Walls" in May 2021. Severe clashes between Jewish and Arabs citizens erupted in mixed Jewish and Arab cities (Levine et al., 2021). Still, not much is known about risk factors for IV perpetration in Arab and Jewish youths in Israel.

An Ecological Social-Developmental Model

Beelmann (2020) systematically integrated central theories (e.g., social learning theory, terror management theory) and research in the field of IV to postulate the development of radicalization and extremism. This model can be applied to IV. The model posits that IV is likely to emerge in adolescence in a process that starts with ontogenetic developmental factors, consisting of *societal, social, and personal factors*, followed by proximal processes. At the *societal level*, intergroup conflicts or threats (e.g., war), societal disintegration, and marginalization provide the base for the spread of ideologies supporting violent behaviors. *The social level* includes exposure to deviant, violent, and extremist groups, as well as conflicts and problems within the family (e.g., domestic violence), and parental prejudice. Lastly, *the individual level* refers to the personal experience of social exclusion or discrimination by individuals or personal characteristics (e.g., narcissism). Each of the three levels of ontogenetic developmental factors can lead to IV (Beelmann, 2020).

In the second stage, the ontogenetic factors may trigger four proximal factors that influence and reinforce each other and are postulated to generate extremist attitudes and actions of IV. First, experiences of rejection and discrimination may lead to a sense of injustice, marginalization, insignificance, threatened identity, or low self-esteem, each may motivate violent acts. Second, attitudes and beliefs held by family members, or by the immediate or larger social environment are models through which a person may acquire negative intergroup attitudes. These attitudes include categorization and devaluation, negative attributions, and a lack of sympathy toward out-of-group members, which may trigger acts of IV. Third, the acquisition of extreme political ideologies or extreme interpretation of religious principles may serve as the justification that legitimizes intergroup violent acts. Fourth, antisocial attitudes and behaviors, including violations of rules and norms, oppositional, aggressive, and delinquent behavior are acquired

through parental coercive practices and exposure to violent and deviant acts in the immediate violent community (Beelmann, 2020).

Although IV is likely to emerge in adolescence (Beelmann, 2020), research testing predictors for the development of intergroup violent acts at all three levels, *societal, social, and personal*, and in youths is still scarce (Scremin, 2020). Hence, based on Bleemans's (2020) ecological model, the current study aimed to test the unique contribution of societal (i.e., traumatic events), social (i.e., community violence, conflict with parents), and personal (i.e., microaggression) predictors of IV in Israeli Jewish and Arab youths. Research has identified each of these factors to be related to the broad field of violent behaviors, as presented in the following sections.

Trauma History

Trauma is broadly defined as an actual or potential threat to a person's life, serious injury, or sexual violence (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Besides exposure to civilian traumatic events (e.g., car accidents), Israeli youth may also be exposed to political violence related to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The potential cost in lives associated with political violence may trigger a sense of threat in youths *directly* exposed to political violence (Pat-Horenczyk & Schiff, 2019). Thus, direct exposure to political violence may be traumatic. Being under a realistic threat predicts a greater willingness to engage in IV (Canetti-Nisim et al., 2009), which may lead to engagement in IV (Vergani et al., 2020).

There is growing evidence that exposure to continuous political violence is associated with increased violent behaviors in children and youths. For example, Jewish youths residing near the Gaza border, who were exposed to repeated rocket attacks from the Gaza strip have shown an increase in the level of violent behavior over 4 years compared with youths living in central Israel (Henrich & Shahar, 2013). Similarly, exposure to repeated rocket attacks was associated with greater externalizing and aggressive behaviors in elementary school-aged children from the Gaza Envelope (Tangir et al., 2017). In addition, exposure to political violence in Israel is linked with more risk-taking behaviors in adolescents (Pat-Horenczyk et al., 2007). Moreover, exposure to political violence is associated with more involvement of young people in political violence (Jahnke et al., 2021). The extant literature points to a link between trauma exposure or political violence and aggressive or risk-taking behaviors, but the link between direct exposure to traumatic events and engagement in acts of IV in youths is yet to be studied.

Community Violence

Individuals exposed to violence in their community are more likely to adopt extremely violent attitudes and seek connections to extremist groups (Horgan, 2008). Exposure to community violence includes either being victimized or witnessing violent acts, such as crimes occurring within the community (Selner-O'Hagan et al., 1998). Violent communities often lack political and social trust and tend to normalize deviant or violent behaviors (Becchetti et al., 2013). Violence and social disorder undermine the trust in the existing social institutions, making individuals search for violent alternatives to answer their needs (Barber, 2001). For example, a large-scale survey consisting of over 17,000 participants from 84 communities, that was collected at three time points between 2013 and 2017 in Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad indicated that

belonging to more violent communities strongly predicts support for extremism. In this study, communities reporting the maximum level of violence showed a significant increase in the average levels of extremist support compared with communities reporting no violence (Finkel et al., 2021).

A high rate of community violence has been documented among Israeli youths, with higher rates among Arabs compared with Jews (Klodnick et al., 2014). Whereas, community violence may place youths at risk of taking part in IV, nonviolent significant others, and nonviolent peers were found as protective factors against IV (for a review see Wolfowicz et al., 2020). Still, little is known about community-level predictors for the engagement of youths in acts of IV.

Conflict With Parents

A large body of literature has recognized that parenting practices, such as lack of supervision and harsh or inconsistent discipline, are basic building blocks in the development of deviant behaviors. Children acquire behaviors and beliefs displayed by their parents (Patterson & Yoerger, 2002). For example, observed coercive parenting of mothers exposed to rocket attacks in southern Israel has been linked with greater externalizing behaviors in their school-aged children (Zamir et al., 2020). Similarly, parents may encourage adopting extreme and violent attitudes toward out-of-group members (Horgan, 2008).

A growing body of research indicates the central place of parent-child relationship in the development of violent behaviors (Duriez & Soenens, 2009). Conflicts between parents and children may deteriorate the quality of the parent-child relationship (Cowan & Cowan, 1992), and in turn, parents may fail to detect early signs of adoption of extreme ideas or engagement in IV in their children (Scremin, 2020). In contrast, positive parenting was found to protect against political and religious extremism and related violence (for a review see Lösel et al., 2018). Specifically, parental involvement and supervision can protect against the adoption of extreme and violent attitudes (Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2015). Several parent interventions have been designed to prevent IV in children (El-Amraoui & Ducol, 2019). However, it is yet to be studied whether conflict with parents places youths at greater risk for engagement in IV (Wolfowicz et al., 2020).

Microaggression

Microaggression refers to intentional or unintentional acts reflecting superiority, hostility, discrimination, and racial insults toward marginalized groups of people based on their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, class, and age (Nadal, 2008). Microaggression often involves verbal humiliations or ordinary behaviors related to racist, hostile, degrading, insults, or contempt that create a significant loss of mental energy in the victim (Pierce, 1970; Sue et al., 2007). Microaggressive messages are latent and often said as minor statements that express devaluation of the person and are connected to discrimination and social compartmentalization (Sue et al., 2007). The literature describes three categories of microaggression: (a) microassaults: intentionally discriminatory acts, (b) microinsults: degrading or disqualifying messages expressed in interpersonal or social relationships, and (c) microaggression: messages implying that intra-group differences between out-of-group members are unimportant (Sue et al., 2007).

A survey conducted by Massarwi and Khoury-Kassabri (2017) among 3,178 Arab youths aged 13–18, found that greater self-reported formal and informal discrimination of Jews toward Arabs is associated with a greater tendency of Arabs to perpetrate violence against other Arab students. Furthermore, perceived discrimination (Bhui et al., 2012), or microaggression (Nadal, 2011) predicted the adoption of extreme and violent attitudes. A meta-analysis showed that a sense of discrimination predicts intergroup violent attitudes, and a greater sense of injustice increases the willingness to commit IV (Wolfowicz et al., 2020). While research has focused on one type of microaggression—stereotypes toward other ethnic groups, including Jews toward Arabs in Israel and vice versa (Shoshani & Slone, 2016)—microaggression has not been tested so far, as a risk factor for IV (Wolfowicz et al., 2020).

The Current Study

The social-developmental model of radicalization postulates that IV may stem from the interplay between societal, social, and personal factors (Beelmann, 2020). A growing body of research points to a link between different risk factors and IV at the personal, social, and societal levels (Canetti-Nisim et al., 2009; El-Amraoui & Ducol, 2019; Finkel et al., 2021; Wolfowicz et al., 2020). Drawing on the extant literature, the present study aimed to examine predictors for engaging in IV among Israeli Arab and Jewish youths. We tested the unique contribution of risk factors for IV, including exposure to trauma, exposure to community violence and conflict with parents, and exposure to microaggression. We hypothesized that exposure to more traumatic events, more community violence and conflict with parents, and more experiences of microaggression will predict a greater likelihood to commit IV in both Jewish and Arab youths.

Method

Participants

Two representative samples of adolescents were recruited; an Arab sample ($N = 302$) and a Jewish sample ($N = 306$), all of whom were citizens of Israel. The samples included 48.6% boys (50% of Arabs and 47.2% of Jews) and 51.4% girls (50% of Arabs and 52.8% of Jews). Participants included adolescents in the 8th grade (13.2% of Arabs and 32.9% of Jews), 9th grade (15.9% of Arabs and 19.9% of Jews), 10th grade (21.2% of Arabs and 18.2% of Jews), 11th grade (23.2% of Arabs and 15.6% of Jews), and 12th grade (26.5% of Arabs and 13.4% of Jews). All participants in the Jewish sample indicated they are Jewish, and in the Arab group participants reported being Muslim (89.4%), Christian (9.9%), or Druze (0.7%).

Procedure

The data were collected after an IRB approval provided by the Authors' university ethics committee. The data were collected by two-panel survey services, each specialized in representative sampling and data collection either among Arab or Jewish populations in Israel. Each company reached out to parents of adolescents and asked for their approval for their children's participation in a study focusing on the Israeli-Arab conflict. Next, each company contacted the adolescents and asked for their consent to participate in research on the above topic. Those who agreed to participate filled out a structured self-report questionnaire. In the Jewish sample, participants

filled out an online survey in Hebrew. In the Arab sample, participants engaged in a face-to-face interview in Arabic. Later the answers were entered into an SPSS database by the panel company.

Measures

Intergroup Violence

A scale adapted from a short version of the Conflict Tactic Scale (CTS; Straus et al., 1996) to assess the violent behaviors of Jews toward Arabs and Arabs toward Jews. The scale consists of nine selected items that specifically describe actual acts of physical violence that could be applied in the context of IV (e.g., “Did you damage property of a Jew/Arab”). Participants were asked to indicate whether they did (*yes* = 1) or did not (*no* = 0) perform each behavior during the past year. Participants reporting engagement in at least one incident of IV were categorized into the “intergroup violence” group (1), otherwise, they were categorized into the “no intergroup violence” group (0).

Exposure to Traumatic Events

The Posttraumatic Diagnostic Scale (Foa et al., 1997) includes nine items assessing exposure to traumatic events (e.g., “serious accident, combat, or war zone”). For each item, participants were asked to indicate whether they did (*yes* = 1) or did not (*no* = 0) experience the event. A total sum score was computed with a higher score indicating exposure to more traumatic events.

Exposure to Community Violence

Exposure to community violence was assessed using a subscale from a larger scale assessing the exposure of youths to violence (Selner-O’Hagan et al., 1998). The scale includes 12 statements describing violent events accruing within communities and neighborhoods (e.g., “In the last year—have you seen another person being attacked by a weapon, such as a knife or a pole?”). Participants reported whether they experienced (*yes* = 1) or did not experience (*no* = 0) each event during the past year. A higher sum score indicated exposure to more acts of community violence. The scale has shown relatively low internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.67$ in Jews and $\alpha = 0.57$ in Arabs) as would have been expected in such scales that describe different experiences of violence.

Conflict With Parents

A subscale of the Adolescent Family Process scale (Vazsonyi et al., 2003) was used to assess the degree of the perceived conflict between adolescents and their parents (e.g., “Are you angry with your parents?”). Participants rated the three items on a 5-point scale indicating the level of agreement with each statement ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree/not at all”) to 5 (“strongly/always agree”). The scale has shown adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.70$ in Jews and $\alpha = 0.71$ in Arabs). Responses to the items are averaged, with higher scores indicating greater parent–child conflict.

Microaggression

The degree of exposure to microaggression events was assessed with an adaptation of the Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (Nadal, 2011). This is an adapted scale of the original

45-items scale assessing microaggression in the context of racial discrimination. This version was adapted by a group of experts in the field of cultural identities in Israel to the Israeli context. The scale includes 18 selected statements describing exposure to overt microaggression (e.g., “Someone avoided walking next to me on the street because of my origins”). We selected items that are specifically relevant to being a Jewish or Arab teenager; for example, we excluded statements referring to microaggressions at work, which are irrelevant to teenagers. Participants were asked to rate each statement on a scale ranging from 0 (“0 times”) to 5 (“5 times or more”) during the last 6 months. The scale demonstrated an excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.89$ in Jews and $\alpha = 0.98$ in Arabs). A greater total mean score indicates exposure to more microaggression.

Demographics

A recent meta-analysis indicated that younger age, being a male, and religiosity are risk factors for adopting violent attitudes and behavior (for a review see Wolfowicz et al., 2020). Thus, we controlled for gender, age, and level of religiosity in our analyses. Each participant reported on his or her ethnonational affiliation (*Jews* = 0, *Arabs* = 1), gender (0 = *male*, 1 = *female*), grade (a proxy for age) and level of religiosity (from 1 = *secular* to 10 = *very religious*).

Data Analysis

All analyses were carried out with IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 25.0). First, descriptive analyses of demographic variables and all study variables were conducted. Means and standard deviations were used to describe the variables. Categorical variables were described with the frequencies in each of the categories. Additionally, independent samples t-tests (for continuous variables; e.g., traumatic events, community violence), Mann-Whitney U tests (for ordinal variables; e.g., in grade levels), and Chi-square tests (for categorical variables; e.g., gender) were performed to compare demographic and study variables between Jewish and Arab youths.

A set of hierarchical logistic regression analyses were performed to test the relationships between the study variables and risk for IV (*no* = 0, *yes* = 1). The predictor variables were entered in blocks reflecting the theory-driven model tested in the study. Specifically, demographic control variables, including grade, gender, and religiosity were entered in Step 1, followed by traumatic experiences in Step 2, conflict with parents in Step 3, exposure to community violence in Step 4, and exposure to microaggression in Step 5. The unique contribution of each variable to the prediction of IV above and beyond the variables entered in previous steps is indicated by their respective OR and their 95% OR confidence intervals (CI) and *p*-values. The contribution of each block to the prediction of IV above and beyond the previous blocks was estimated using the block Chi-square statistic, which reflects the difference in log-likelihood relative to the previous block. Hosmer and Lemeshow’s goodness of fit test was used to assess how well the model fits the data. The proportion of the variation in the outcome variable that can be explained by predictors in the model was evaluated with Cox and Snell R square and Nagelkerke R square. Because data were collected separately and differently in Jewish and Arab youths, the analyses were conducted separately for each group.

Results

Preliminary Analysis

The means and standard deviations of all variables by ethnicity are presented in Table 1. Chi-square tests were conducted to examine the association between ethnicity and gender and between ethnicity and IV. There were no significant differences between Jews and Arabs in the distribution by gender. However, the associations between ethnicity and IV were significant, $X^2(1) = 23.02$, $p < .001$. Arabs (20.2%) were more likely to commit acts of IV against Jews (6.9%).

We also conducted independent samples t-tests to examine differences between Jews and Arabs for the study variables. We found that Jewish youths reported significantly higher exposure to traumatic events [$t(606) = 6.52$, $p < .001$] and acts of community violence [$t(455) = 10.17$, $p < .001$] compared with Arab youths. However, Arabs reported significantly more conflict with parents [$t(551) = 10.57$, $p < .001$] and exposure to microaggression [$t(409) = 4.67$, $p < .001$] than Jews. There were no statistical differences in levels of religiosity between the two groups. Lastly, we conducted a Mann-Whitney U test to examine differences in grade levels between ethnic groups, which indicated that Arabs were at a higher grade ($Mdn = 10th$) than Jews ($Mdn = 9th$) ($Z = 6.58$, $p < .001$, $r = .26$).

Predictors of Intergroup Violence in Israeli Youths

Arab Youths

Table 2 describes the results of hierarchical logistic regressions to predict IV among 302 Arab youths. Gender, grade, and religiosity were entered as controls in the first step. In this model, Arab youths who reported being more religious were more likely to perpetrate acts of IV. This model explained 6.4–10.5% of the variance in IV. Exposure to traumatic events, entered in the second step, did not significantly predict IV. The third step included conflict with parents and indicated that Arab youths reporting more conflict with parents were more likely to engage in acts of IV. This model explained 14–22% of the variance in IV. Exposure to community violence, which was entered in the fourth step, predicted IV above and beyond all previously entered variables. Arab youths reporting exposure to more community violence were more likely to perpetrate acts of IV.

Table 1
Sample Characteristics, Means and Standard Deviation of the Study Variables by Ethnicity

Category	Jews $N = 302$	Arabs $N = 306$
Age (by grade), N (%)		
Eighth grade	61, (19.9%)	48, (15.9%)
Ninth grade	56, (18.2%)	64, (21.2%)
10th grade	48, (15.6%)	70, (23.2%)
11th grade	41, (13.4%)	80, (26.5%)
12th grade	101, (32.9%)	40, (13.2%)
Gender, girls, N , %	162, (52.8%)	151, (50%)
Religiosity, mean (SD)	3.75, (3.14)	3.77, (1.92)
Trauma history, mean (SD)	2.02, (1.16)	1.41, (1.40)
Conflicts with parents, mean (SD)	2.16, (.65)	2.84, (.89)
Community violence, mean (SD)	1.35, (1.55)	.33, (.79)
Microaggression, mean (SD)	1.17, (.42)	1.46, (.98)
Intergroup violence, N (%)	21, (6.9%)	61, (20.2%)

This model explained 16–25% of the variance in IV. In the final step, exposure to microaggression was entered. This model showed that Arab youths exposed to more microaggression were more prone to commit acts of IV. In this final model, greater religiosity, and greater community violence still significantly predicted acts of IV, but conflict with parents was no longer a significant predictor. Trauma history, which was not a significant predictor in previous models, has been shown as a predictor in the final model. This model explained 23–36% of the variance in IV.

Jewish Youths

Table 3 shows the results of hierarchical logistic regressions to predict IV in 306 Israeli Jewish youths. After controlling for the three demographic variables (gender, grade, and religiosity) in Step 1, exposure to traumatic events was entered in the second step and significantly predicted IV. Specifically, Jewish youths who experienced a greater number of traumatic events were more likely to commit acts of IV. This model explained 9.0–22.8% of the variance in IV. The third step included conflict with parents and indicated that Jewish youths reporting greater conflict with parents were more likely to engage in acts of IV. This model explained 11.2–28.4% of the variance in IV. Exposure to community violence, which was entered in the fourth step, did not predict IV. In the final step, exposure to microaggression was entered. This model showed that Jewish youths exposed to more microaggression had a greater likelihood of committing acts of IV. Moreover, in this final model, traumatic events and conflict with parents remained significant predictors of IV. This model explained 14–36% of the variance in IV.

Discussion

The present study aimed to examine a multifactor ecological model for involvement in IV among Jewish and Arab youths in Israel. Inspired by the social-developmental model of radicalization (Beelmann, 2020), we tested the unique effects of exposure to trauma, community violence, conflict with parents, and exposure to microaggression on engagement in IV. In line with our hypothesis, we found that Arab youths who reported exposure to more traumatic events, community violence, and experiences of microaggression, were more likely to report engagement in IV ($OR = 1.39, 1.5, 2.9$, respectively). Jewish youths who reported more exposure to traumatic events, more conflict with parents, and more experience of microaggression were more likely to commit IV ($OR = 2.2, 2.7, 3.2$, respectively). Also, in both groups, age and gender were not risk factors for IV, but a higher level of religiosity among Arabs was a risk factor ($OR = 1.31$).

Our findings are consistent with other studies linking exposure to trauma (Canetti-Nisim et al., 2009), community violence (Finkel et al., 2021), parent–child relationships (El-Amraoui & Ducol, 2019; Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2015), and individual factors with IV outcomes, including attitudes and willingness to engage in IV (Wolfowicz et al., 2020). Research has indicated that adolescents and young adults are at the highest risk of holding beliefs and attitudes supporting IV (for a review see Jahnke et al., 2021; Lösel et al., 2018; Wolfowicz et al., 2020). However extreme attitudes rarely develop to intergroup violent acts (McCauley & Moskaleiko, 2017). Whereas the vast majority of the literature has focused on attitudes toward IV or willingness to engage in IV (for a review see

Table 2*Hierarchical Logistic Regression of Violent Radicalization Among Arabs (N = 302)*

Variable	Step 1		Step 2		Step 3		Step 4		Step 5	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Gender	0.85	0.47, 1.54	0.84	0.47, 1.53	0.75	0.40, 1.40	0.73	0.38, 0.37	0.79	0.40, 1.56
Grade	1.00	0.80, 1.24	1.00	0.80, 1.24	1.01	0.80, 1.27	1.02	0.81, 1.29	1.09	0.85, 1.40
Religiosity	1.35***	1.17, 1.55	1.35***	1.18, 1.55	1.35***	1.16, 1.56	1.30**	1.11, 1.51	1.31**	1.11, 1.50
Trauma history			1.01	0.84, 0.42	1.27	0.95, 1.68	1.23	0.92, 1.65	1.39*	1.00, 1.90
Conflicts with parents					2.41***	1.68, 3.46	2.56***	1.76, 3.71	1.26	0.78, 2.03
Community violence							1.54*	1.08, 2.20	1.50*	1.04, 2.17
Microaggression									2.86**	1.89, 4.35
–2LLR		283.92		283.47		257.79		252.06		223.87
Block $\chi^2(df)$		19.97(3)***		0.45(1)		25.67(1)***		5.73(1)*		28.19(1)***
Cox and Snell R^2		0.06		0.07		0.14		0.16		0.23
Nagelkerke R^2		0.10		0.11		0.22		0.25		0.36
Hosmer and Lemeshow (df)		17.5(8)		14.73(8)		15.26(8)		6.42(8)		14.48(8)

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Wolfowicz et al., 2020), our study focused on risk factors for acts of IV, which is an actual threat to the lives of individuals and the security of communities and societies around the world (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2019).

Consistent with Beelmann's (2020) social-developmental model of radicalization, our model indicated that IV is a multifactorial process by which societal (i.e., exposure to traumas), social (i.e., violence in the community, conflict with parents), and individual factors (i.e., microaggression) may provoke IV. Beelmann (2020) postulated that when individuals are exposed to different forms of hostility, such as intergroup, community, or domestic violence, they may acquire prejudice against out-of-group members and attitudes that legitimize violent acts, as well as actual aggressive behaviors. Together, these processes may motivate acts of IV. Still, our model focused only on the ontogenetic factors, but the mechanisms by which proximal factors mediate the effects of trauma, community violence, conflict with parents, and microaggression on IV need further investigation.

This study presents a novel finding regarding the role of microaggression in IV. While exposure to trauma, community violence, and conflict with parents reflects an overt form of aggression, microaggression is a covert form of aggression, one that is difficult to detect. Microaggression is a casual and ordinary statement loaded with hostility toward out-of-group members (Sue et al., 2007). Despite the latent nature of microaggression, it is the strongest predictor of IV in Jewish and Arab youths. These findings suggest that more than actual threats (e.g., trauma, aggression in the family, or violence in the community), daily implicit messages of devaluation, discrimination, and contempt by out-of-group members are the strongest risk factor for IV.

Intergroup Differences

In both groups—Jewish and Arab—societal, social, and individual factors predicted IV. Specifically, exposure to traumatic events and microaggression was associated with more IV in both groups. However, several intergroup differences emerged, suggesting that discrepant forces promote the development of IV in each society. First, in Arab youths, social risk factors included community violence. Although Jewish youths reported greater exposure to community violence, it was not found to significantly predict IV, but rather

more conflict with parents. Parents, peers, and the community are role models through which youths acquire beliefs about injustice, discrimination, marginalization, and negative intergroup attitudes, as well as antisocial attitudes and delinquent oppositional, and aggressive behaviors, all of which motivate IV (Beelmann, 2020). It could be that while among Jewish youths, the parent–adolescent relationship is a central role model for the acquisition of behaviors and attitudes associated with IV, in Arab youths violence in the community is the central role model. A recent study points to an ongoing process of disintegration of the Arab family structure and undermining of the authority of parents, which contribute to the rising crime rate in Arab communities, and as a result a growing involvement in IV. In contrast, the study indicates that the participation of Jews in IV is often influenced by extreme right-wing ideologies (Lavie et al., 2022). Such political attitudes are typically acquired in the family (Murray & Mulvaney, 2012).

Second, we found that Arab youths who reported greater religiosity levels were more likely to report involvement in IV. The literature concerning the role of religiosity in violence is inconclusive. Although radicalized attitudes and behaviors could be supported by extreme religious ideologies, the vast majority of religious individuals are not extreme (Aly & Jason-Leigh, 2012). Moreover, a recent meta-analysis showed that religiosity by itself has a relatively small effect on IV. Instead, embracing religious group identity and religious fundamentalism are strong predictors of IV (Wolfowicz et al., 2020). It should be noted that the literature in this field has been largely focused on jihadist radicalization in Western countries (Vergani et al., 2020), which profoundly differs from the Israeli context. Therefore, further research is needed on the role of religiosity in IV in Israeli–Arab youths.

Third, Arab youths reported nearly three times more involvement in IV than Jewish youths. Compared with Jews, Arabs, in Israel face more formal and informal discrimination and live under conditions of socioeconomic inequality (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2021; Lavie, 2018; Smooha, 2016). This is reflected in our study—Arab youths reported significantly more exposure to microaggression than Jews. A sense of marginalization, discrimination, isolation, and frustration can motivate individuals to commit IV (Lösel et al., 2018). Furthermore, it could be that the intersection between greater exposure to microaggression, combined with the

Table 3*Hierarchical Logistic Regression of Violent Radicalization Among Jews (N = 306)*

Variable	Step 1		Step 2		Step 3		Step 4		Step 5	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Gender	1.17	0.47, 2.89	1.64	0.59, 4.55	1.48	0.52, 4.22	1.74	0.58, 5.19	1.40	0.45, 4.36
Grade	1.30	0.96, 1.77	1.03	0.72, 1.47	1.06	0.74, 1.52	1.05	0.73, 1.52	1.05	0.72, 1.55
Religiosity	0.98	0.85, 1.13	0.98	0.83, 1.15	1.00	0.84, 1.19	1.01	0.84, 1.21	0.992	0.82, 1.19
Trauma history			2.43***	1.66, 3.56	2.53***	1.71, 3.74	2.21***	1.44 3.37	2.28***	1.46, 3.57
Conflicts with parents					2.79**	1.36, 5.74	2.80**	1.33, 5.89	2.70*	1.24, 5.86
Community violence							1.28	0.94, 1.74	1.12	0.82, 1.53
Microaggression									3.25**	1.49, 7.05
–2LLR		149.70		124.29		116.67		114.28		105.51
Block $\chi^2(df)$		3.20 (3)		25.49 (1)***		7.53 (1) **		2.397 (1)		8.76 (1) **
Cox and Snell R^2		0.01		0.09		0.11		0.12		0.14
Nagelkerke R^2		0.03		0.22		0.28		0.30		0.36
Hosmer and Lemeshow (df)		7.75 (8)		6.62 (8)		8.41 (8)		8.00 (8)		4.93 (8)

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

larger effect of community violence and religiosity provides a fertile ground for IV to prosper in Arab youths (Wolfowicz et al., 2020).

Limitations and Future Directions

The present study examined a novel model predicting IV among a representative sample of Jewish and Arab youths in Israel. However, some limitations need to be considered when interpreting the results. First, this is a survey study, and as such causal processes cannot be inferred. Second, given the cross-sectional design employed in this study, the chronological order between risk factors and IV is limited. We cannot rule out that some risk factors occurred after engaging in IV. For example, it could be that involvement in IV increased tensions and conflict between the participants and their parents. Future studies should incorporate a prospective longitudinal research design. Third, the study was conducted in two separate and different procedures in each group. Arab participants reported their answers in person to an interviewer, a procedure that may have encouraged social desirability. For example, despite a higher crime rate in Arab communities (Lavie et al., 2022), Arab youths reported lower levels of community violence compared with Jews. Perhaps, Jewish youths were more comfortable disclosing community violence, in an anonymous electronic format, while Arab participants were more reluctant to disclose the violence in their community in person to an interviewer. Further research is needed to examine the distinct processes by which IV is acquired in Arab and Jewish youths. Fourth, the study was conducted on Israeli youth in Israel, which may limit the generalizability of the study to other populations. Replication studies in different cultures are needed.

Clinical Implications

Youth involvement in IV is a growing concern in the international community. As such, it needs to be acknowledged as a top priority for prevention interventions. Our findings offer several directions for international efforts to prevent the trajectories of IV among youths. First, our study indicates several psycho-social risk factors for IV, suggesting that prevention interventions should incorporate a comprehensive ecological model targeting societal, social, and personal risk factors.

Our study also points to the need for context-sensitive interventions geared toward the prevention of IV. Policymakers should be informed of the diverse universal and context-specific risk factors, at different ecological levels, and for each ethnonational group. Universal aspects of prevention and intervention programs should focus on the role of traumatic events and microaggression experiences in their associations with IV. In addition, differential components of such interventions can be developed to address the specific risk factors of different ethnonational groups. For instance, the topics of religiosity and community violence need to be elaborated with special emphasis as part of psycho-social and educational interventions geared for Arab youths, while special emphasis should be put on conflict with parents for Jewish youths. Also, the specific contextual risk factors for IV need to be addressed at the individual level as well as with families, schools, and communities. It is crucial to ensure access to social resources and services, and the sustainability of prevention and intervention programs. Providing universal prevention interventions, rather than stigmatizing individuals and communities, is a vital step against IV.

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