Title:

The relationship between Child-to-Parent Violence, adolescent stressors and emotional security: The moderating role of parental divorce

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Abstract

Introduction: Child-to-Parent Violence (CPV) is a problem of great social relevance, which maintains an exponential growth. The aim of this study was to examine the influence of adolescent stressors and emotional security in the family system as predictors of CPV (reactive and proactive), considering the moderating effect of parental divorce. **Methods**: A sample composed of 892 adolescents aged 14-18 years (M = 15.15; SD = 1.06), from schools in the province of Málaga (Spain) was used. They completed questionnaires assessing emotional security in the family system, stress and child-to-parent violence. **Results**: The results showed that emotional disengagement in the family system and adolescent stressors significantly predicted reactive and proactive CPV. Parental divorce moderated the relationship between emotional security and reactive CPV, with stronger associations in intact families. **Conclusion**: These results highlight the importance of considering disengagement in the family system and adolescent stressors as key factors in reactive and proactive CPV, and the moderating role of parental divorce in these relationships. Interventions should focus on improving these variables.

Key-words: aggression, youth violence, mental health, violence

Introduction

Child-to-Parent Violence (CPV) is a growing concern in contemporary society, attracting attention both within the scientific community and the general public. Despite this, CPV has been scarcely recognized and studied compared to other forms of violence (Zhang et al., 2019). CPV is defined as abusive behaviors that a minor consciously, deliberately, and repetitively exerts against their parents (or caregivers) over time. These actions cause suffering or harm and can be emotional, economic, and/or physical, with the aim of obtaining control and undermining the authority, self-esteem, and educational role of the victims (Molla-Esparza & Aroca-Montolío, 2018).

The inconsistency in CPV definitions, the operationalization of violent behaviors, and the variety of methodologies used to assess it have made it difficult to determine its frequency (Simmons et al., 2018). However, research generally agrees that CPV is a growing phenomenon. Studies indicate a prevalence of psychological CPV in community populations ranging from 33% to 65%, while physical CPV ranges from 4% to 20% (del Hoyo-Bilbao et al., 2020). Research in the United States and Canada shows a psychological CPV prevalence of 51% to 75%, with physical CPV at 11% to 22% (Margolin & Baucom, 2014). A study in the United Kingdom found that 64.5% of youth had committed CPV, with psychological CPV more prevalent than physical CPV (McCloud, 2021). This suggests that violent behaviors often begin as psychological and verbal aggression (e.g., shouting) and may escalate to physical violence (e.g., threats).

The rise in CPV has generated a need for an explanation integrating its underlying causes, which could inform legislative guidelines and professional interventions. The theory of intergenerational transmission of violence (McCloskey & Lichter, 2003) suggests that violence within families is transmitted down through generations. Youth exposed to family violence, whether as victims or witnesses, are more likely to replicate these behaviors. Longitudinal studies have shown that parent-to-child abuse is an

indicator of future CPV (Margolin & Baucom, 2014). Social learning theory (Bandura, 1973) applied to CPV proposes that violent behaviors are learned through observation and imitation, not just from parents but also from siblings and peers. Recently, the Nested Ecological Theory (Cottrell & Monk, 2004) based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1994), has been used to explain CPV, showing it results from the interaction of psychological, sociological, and cultural factors.

Many studies have explored risk factors for CPV, including individual traits and psychopathological symptoms (Rico et al., 2017; Rosado et al., 2017), as well as parenting styles and child abuse at the family level (Cano-Lozano et al., 2021a; del Hoyo-Bilbao et al., 2018). Peer violence and adolescent intimate partner violence are also linked to CPV (Martí et al., 2020). Despite these studies, no comprehensive theoretical framework has yet been developed to integrate the various factors contributing to CPV. Most models focus on specific processes without considering the interplay of multiple variables. Thus, further research is needed. This study focuses on the role of adolescent stressors and emotional security in the family system (security, preoccupation and disengagement) as predictors of reactive and proactive CPV, considering the moderating effect of parental divorce.

What motivates Child-to-Parent Violence? Reactive and Proactive CPV

A key aspect in the context of CPV is understanding the reasons that motivate a minor or adolescent to assault their parents. Aggression is classified as reactive or proactive (Contreras et al., 2019; Phillips et al., 2025). Reactive CPV responds to perceived threats with heightened anger, while proactive CPV is deliberate, aiming at obtaining some benefit (Navas-Martínez & Cano-Lozano, 2020). Although not extensively studied, some research suggests that CPV is often reactive. Pagani et al. (2009) propose that youth may use violence as their only way to cope with perceived

threats from parents. Other studies (Tew & Nixon, 2010) highlight the instrumental function of CPV, where violence is used intentionally to achieve specific goals.

Previous research distinguishes between reactive and proactive reasons for CPV. Cano-Lozano et al. (2021b) evaluated 1543 university students in which they analyzed the frequency of CPV and the reasons for perpetrating it. The results indicated that CPV could be classified into four types: psychological, physical, economic, and control or dominance. They found that the most frequent reason for CPV was reactive aggression: "due to your own temperament," followed by a proactive reason: "to be able to come home later when you went out at night." Likewise, other studies have found differences in the reasons for CPV by gender. Specifically, studies like those by Calvete et al. (2015); Cano-Lozano et al. (2023); and Navas-Martínez & Cano-Lozano (2022), suggested that girls tend to exhibit more reactive violence than boys. On the other hand, Calvete & Orue (2016) observed that girls, more frequently than boys, pointed to arriving home late, feeling misunderstood, or defense as reasons for their violence.

Other studies show that reactive and proactive CPV have distinct predictors. Contreras et al. (2020) explored the role of social-cognitive processing – a set of cognitive processes influenced by past experiences – in predicting CPV using a sample of 1624 adolescents. These authors found that the component that develops early in social-cognitive processing, "access to aggressive response," was related to reactive CPV, while components developed in later stages of processing, such as "justification of violence" and "anticipation of positive consequences," were associated with proactive CPV. Navas-Martínez and Cano-Lozano (2020) analyzed how parent-child abuse related to both reactive and proactive CPV. Using a sample of 1156 adolescents from schools, they found that parent-to-child abuse is a predictor of CPV, both reactive and proactive. However, their results showed that parent-child abuse explained reactive

CPV to a greater extent than proactive CPV, suggesting that this type of abuse may be at the root of this issue.

Despite the progress in understanding the reasons for CPV, knowledge gaps remain that require further research. Specifically, it is necessary to understand how the predictors of CPV behave depending on the reasons behind its occurrence. Thus, this research distinguishes between reactive and proactive CPV, considering the presence of stressors in adolescence and emotional security in the family system as predictors of CPV depending on the reasons for which it is perpetrated.

An Individual Factor: Adolescent Stressors

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage, marked by significant physical, emotional, and social changes. During this time, young people face various stressors that impact their individual, family, and social lives (Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2016). As adolescence progresses, peer relationships become more important, often leading to increased stress within the family, especially for the adolescent (Noakes & Rinaldi, 2006). Research shows that repeated exposure to stress during this period is linked to emotional, behavioral, or psychological issues, such as aggression or anxiety (Lima et al., 2017; Yang, 2023).

One particularly vulnerable historical moment, characterized by greater exposure to psychological stressors, was the confinement due to COVID-19, which involved school closures, economic problems, job losses, and a decrease in social support (Thompson et al., 2020). In a study conducted by Cano-Lozano et al. (2021b), CPV during confinement was examined, as well as its relationship with other forms of family violence and exposure to various psychological stressors. A sample of 2245 young people were assessed. The authors found that CPV was significantly related to parent-to-child violence, violence between parents, and exposure to various

psychosocial stressors, such as academic stressors, work-related stress, family-related stress, or illness or death of a close relative or friend.

Similarly, Jiménez et al. (2019) analyzed the relationship between family communication and verbal CPV mediated by perceived stress in adolescents. They used a sample of 2399 adolescents from schools. They found that adolescents with poor communication with their parents experienced higher stress levels, which led to more verbal CPV. Conversely, positive communication was associated with lower stress and less verbal CPV. These findings suggest that stress may mediate the relationship between family communication and CPV. However, it is important to note that this is the only study so far to address perceived stress as a mediating factor in CPV.

A Family Factor: Emotional Insecurity in the Family System

CPV is a multifactorial phenomenon influenced by various factors, including individual and social aspects, particularly family-related elements like parenting style, family structure, and communication (Cuervo, 2023). Exposure to violence and the quality of the family environment are key variables in CPV. Victimization and exposure to family violence increase the likelihood of CPV (Contreras & Cano, 2016). Research also suggests that insecure attachment and weak bonds between parents and children lead to higher rejection and greater CPV (Ibabe, 2015; Navas-Martínez & Cano-Lozano, 2023).

Parental socialization practices are crucial in shaping the emotional and behavioral development of adolescents. A large body of research emphasizes that warmth involvement, and open communication are key dimensions of parenting that promote psychosocial adjustment during adolescence (García et al., 2024; Martín-Blesa et al., 2024). These dimensions support the adolescent's internalization of social norms, sense of belonging, and emotional regulation. When adolescents feel loved, respected,

and emotionally supported, they are more likely to develop a stable familial self-concept and to accept the authority of their parents (Jacome-Mora et al., 2025). In contrast, negative parenting – marked by rejection, neglect, or psychological control – undermines this process and contributes to emotional insecurity and behavioral maladjustment, including CPV (Alcaide et al., 2025; Ertema et al., 2025).

In this context, the lack of emotional security in the family system, defined as the adolescent's perception of threat, instability, or deficiency of protection within the family, is increasingly recognized as a crucial factor in adolescent psychosocial adjustment (Cantón-Cortés et al., 2020). The Emotional Security in the Family System Theory (Davies & Cummings, 1994) derives from attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969), although there are differences between the two. While attachment theory focuses on the dyadic relationships that children establish with their parents or primary caregivers, the Theory of Emotional Security focuses on the influence of the entire family system and the child's perception of relationships within that system (Davies & Cummings, 1994). This theory posits that children develop regulatory strategies in response to perceived emotional threats within the family. These strategies are: a) Security, which reflects trust in the stability and availability of family members, particularly during conflict; b) Disengagement, characterized by emotional detachment or withdrawal from family relationships; c) Preoccupation, defined as excessive worry and hypervigilance to possible family problems. While security reflects a sense of emotional stability, both disengagement and preoccupation are understood as emotional insecurity strategies, often associated with emotional and behavioral maladjustment (Coe et al., 2017).

Previous studies suggest that children who resort to disengagement or preoccupation strategies in the family system to maintain their security could develop greater emotional and social difficulties, such as psychological distress, substance

abuse, or school problems (Cantón-Cortés et al., 2020). Recently, a study conducted by Junco-Guerrero et al. (2021) aimed to analyze the relationship between exposure to domestic violence, emotional insecurity in the family system, and the justification of violence with CPV. They used a sample of 904 adolescents from schools. They found that the disengagement strategy in the family system was related to CPV, both towards the mother and father. Moreover, the preoccupation strategy was related to CPV towards the father. These results suggest that emotional security dimensions in the family system as key variables in understanding CPV. However, to date, only one study has directly explored this relationship, and further research is needed to clarify how these strategies interact with other psychosocial risk factors in the development of CPV.

The Role of Divorce in Adolescent CPV Dynamics

Another variable to consider in the development of CPV within the family context is family structure, particularly parental divorce. The findings in this area are mixed and sometimes contradictory. On one hand, some studies report that adolescents from divorced families exhibit higher levels of CPV, especially toward mothers (Pagani et al., 2003; Zhang et al., 2019). On the other hand, research increasingly suggests that it is not the divorce itself, but the quality of family relationships during and after the divorce, that truly shapes adolescent's adjustment (Ibabe, 2019; Fariña et al., 2017).

From a family systems and socialization perspective, divorce represents a significant structural transition that can either destabilize emotional bonds. If the separation is managed with open communication, emotional availability, and mutual respect, adolescents may maintain a stable familial self-concept and sense of belonging (Rejaän et al., 2022; Jacome-Mora et al., 2025). However, when divorce leads to increased interparental conflict, inconsistent parenting, or emotional disengagement, the

risk of emotional insecurity and behavioral problems – including CPV – increases (Obeid et al., 2021).

Adolescents' perception of being emotionally supported and valued within the family appears to be more protective that the marital status of their parents per se (Chen et al., 2024; García et al., 2024). For this reason, parent divorce should be conceptualized as a contextual moderator, rather than a direct risk or protective factor. It may exacerbate or not the effects of other psychosocial stressors – such as emotional insecurity in the family system – depending on how the family reorganizes itself.

Moreover, the effects of divorce may interact with the type of motivation underlying CPV. For example, adolescents from intact by emotionally disengaged families might express reactive violence more strongly due to low expectation of cohesion and belonging. In contrast, in families where divorce has led to clear boundaries and emotional availability, the same insecurities may have a less impact on violent outcomes.

Given the controversial and complex nature of this variable, further research is need to clarify how divorce interacts with emotional insecurity and adolescent stressors in shaping CPV. The present study therefore aims to assess whether parental divorce moderates the relationship between emotional insecurity in the family system, adolescent stressors, and both reactive and proactive CPV.

Objectives

CPV is a critical issue that challenges family functioning and adolescent development. Although previous research has examined some psychosocial predictors of CPV, such as family conflict, parenting styles, or parental abuse, few studies have

explored the combined role of emotional security in the family system and adolescent stressors in explaining both reactive and proactive CPV. In particular, it remains unclear how adolescents' emotional responses to perceived instability or conflict within the family (security, preoccupation and disengagement) may influence the use of different forms of CPV. Furthermore, although parental divorce is often considered a risk factor for psychosocial maladjustment, its moderating role in the relationship between emotional functioning and CPV has not been sufficiently addressed.

Thus, one objective of this study was to examine the differential predictive role of emotional security within the family system and adolescent stressors in reactive and proactive CPV, taking into account as sociodemographic control variables such as sex (female or male) and school grade. A second objective was to determine whether parental divorce moderates these predictive relationships.

In line with these objectives, three hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). Emotional security within the family system [1]will significantly predict both reactive and proactive CPV. Specifically:

H1a. Higher levels of security dimension (perception of stability and availability within the family) are expected to be negatively associated with CPV.

H2b. Conversely, adolescents who use insecurity dimensions – such as disengagement or preoccupation - are more likely to display CPV. Although differences between reactive and proactive CPV are considered exploratory, we expect these strategies may influence both types of violence.

[1] Emotional security in the family system refers to a set of emotional regulation patterns that include both security (security) and insecurity (preoccupation and disengagement) dimensions. This broader construct captures adolescents' ways of coping with emotional stress within the family context. In this manuscript, we use the term emotional security in the family system when referring to the overall construct, and refer specifically to the dimension of security (security) and the dimensions of insecurity (preoccupation and disengagement) when addressing its components individually.

This is supported by Emotional Security Theory (Davies & Cummings, 1994), which posits that emotional insecurity reduces adolescents' capacity for self-regulation and constructive problem solving, potentially leading to externalizing behaviors such as CPV (Cantón-Cortés et al., 2020; Junco-Guerrero et al., 2021).

Hypothesis 2 (H2). Higher levels of adolescent stressors are positively correlated with both reactive and proactive CPV. Previous studies have linked academic, family, and personal stress to both emotional dysregulation and increased aggressive behavior, including intra-family violence (Jiménez et al., 2019; Cano-Lozano et al., 2021b).

Hypothesis 3 (H3). Parental divorce will moderate the relationship between emotional security and insecurity dimensions, adolescent stressors and CPV. Specifically, these effects may differ in divorced versus non-divorced families depending on the post-divorce emotional climate. In line with previous studies, the strength of these associations is expected to be greater in family contexts where emotional bonds and a sense of belonging are weaker (Ibabe, 2019; Rajaän et al., 2022).

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 892 students (51% female) from eight educational centers in the province of Málaga, Spain. Participants ranged in age from 14 to 18 years (M = 15.15; SD = 1.06). Most were enrolled in the third or fourth year of Compulsory Secondary Education (77.5%), while the remaining 22.5% were attending *Bachillerato* (post-compulsory upper secondary education). Regarding parental marital status, 74.1% of participants indicated that their parents were married, while 25.9% reported that their parents were divorced.

Inclusion criteria were: (a) being between 13 and 18 years old, (b) currently living with at least one parent, and (c) having provided informed consent. Exclusion criteria included: (a) not meeting the specified age range, (b) not residing with any parent or caregiver, (c) not providing consent.

Instruments

Demographics. Data collection was carried out using a single-item questions assessing sex (0 = male; 1 = female), age (as a continuous variable), educational level, family structure, and other background characteristics.

Emotional insecurity in the family system. Security in the Family System Scale (SIFS; Forman & Davies,2005), was used to assess adolescents' perception of emotional security within their family. The scale consists of 22 items with Likert responses ranging from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 5 ("Strongly agree"). It measures three strategies children use to protect their emotional security: security (7 items), which evaluates trust in family protection during conflicts (e.g., "I believe my family members will be there to help me in the future"); preoccupation (8 items), which reflects concerns about family well-being (e.g., "I feel like something could go very wrong in my family at any moment"); and disengagement (7 items), reflecting emotional distance from the family (e.g., "When I have disagreements with family members, it is not worth trying to understand their point of view"). Higher scores in disengagement and preoccupation reflect greater emotional insecurity, whereas higher scores in security reflect greater perceived emotional stability. The original scale had good reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values of .75 for preoccupation, .82 for security, and .80 for disengagement. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha values were .87, .87, and .79, respectively.

Child-to-Parent Violence. Child-to-Parent Violence Questionnaire *(CPV-Q; Contreras et al., 2019),* was used to assess CPV and its reasons. The questionnaire consists of 28 parallel items, evaluating CPV towards both parents, with responses on a Likert scale from 0 ("it has never happened") to 4 ("very often = it has occurred 6 or more times"). It covers different types of CPV: psychological (e.g., "I have insulted them"), physical (e.g., "I have thrown things at them"), economic (e.g., "I have stolen money from them"), and control or dominance (e.g., "I have demanded that they stop what they are doing to attend to me"). Additionally, 8 items assess reasons for CPV using a scale from 0 ("never") to 3 ("always"), distinguishing between reactive reasons (e.g., "because of my own temperament") and proactive reasons (e.g., "to be able to come home later when I go out at night").

Regarding reliability, Contreras et al. (2019) reported Cronbach's alpha values of .89 and .88 for psychological CPV towards the father and mother, respectively; .92 for physical CPV; .55 and .57 for economic CPV; and .79 for control and dominance CPV. In our study, the reliability coefficients were .78 and .76 for psychological CPV towards the father and mother, respectively; .84 and .81 for physical CPV; .40 and .38 for economic CPV; and .47 and .53 for control and dominance CPV.

Adolescents' stressors. *The Adolescent Stress Questionnaire (ASQ-14) (Blanca et al., 2020).* This questionnaire is a brief screening tool developed from the ASQ-56 instrument (Byrne et al., 2007). It was used to assess adolescents' exposure to stressors in different areas of their lives (academic, family, personal). The scale consists of 14 items with a Likert scale response with five options (1 = "not stressful"; 2 = "slightly stressful"; 3 = "moderately stressful"; 4 = "quite stressful"; and 5 = "very stressful").

The reliability of the scale reported by its authors was high, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .85. In our study, the internal consistency coefficient was .77.

Procedure

First, approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the University of Málaga (registration number: 137-2021-H). Researchers contacted educational centers in southern Spain, scheduled meetings with management, and obtained informed consent. The data were collected during the period 2022 to 2024. The questionnaire was administered in eight public schools. Participants, all of whom voluntarily consented, were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The survey took approximately 40 minutes to complete.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 29. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations were first computed. Then, hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed to test the effects of emotional security and insecurity dimensions (security, preoccupation and disengagement) and adolescent stressors on both reactive and proactive CPV. In step 1, sociodemographic control variables – sex (female and male), course, and parental divorce - were entered. This step was included because previous research has identified sex differences in CPV (Rosado et al., 2017), and educational stage may also influence adolescents' stress and family dynamics. In step 2, emotional security and insecurity dimensions and stressors were added. In step 3, interaction terms between parental divorce and each predictor were included to test for moderation effects.

Results

Descriptive data for all measures are displayed in Table 1 and correlation matrix among the variables is shown in Table 2. As shown in Table 1, adolescents from divorced

families reported significantly lower levels of emotional security dimension (M = 31.36; SD = 6.86) compared to those from intact families (M = 33.55; SD = 5.92; U = 61232.50, $p < .001$). Additionally, the scored was higher on both insecurity strategies in divorced families: preoccupation (M = 20.38; SD = 7.64; U = 56834.50, $p < .001$) and disengagement (M = 14.01; SD = 5.62; U = 60124.00, $p < .001$). Adolescents from divorced families also reported significantly higher levels of stressors (M = 40.77; SD = 9.38; U = 63822.50, $p < .001$).

Reactive CPV

A multiple regression analysis was conducted for the reactive CPV score to test the relative effects and the proportion of variance explained by emotional security and insecurity dimensions and adolescent stressors. This was done by entering variables in three steps: Step 1 included demographic controls (female, course, and parental divorce), Step 2 added emotional security and insecurity dimensions (preoccupation and disengagement) and adolescent stressors, and Step 3 included the interaction terms between parental divorce and each of the predictors.

In Step 1 (Table 3), demographic variables accounted for 2% of the variance in reactive CPV (R^2 adjusted = .02 (F [3, 884] = 4.43, $p < .01$)), with female (β = .09; $p <$ .01). and course (β = .07; $p < .05$) as significant predictors. Divorce were not significant predictors in this step.

In Step 2 (Table 3), when emotional security and insecurity dimensions and adolescent stressors were added, the adjusted R^2 increased to .21 (F [4, 880] = 34.24, $p < .001$). Course was a significant predictor in this step (β = .10; $p < .001$). Disengagement (β = .28; $p < .001$) and adolescent stressors (β = .17; $p < .001$) significantly predicted reactive CPV. Security and preoccupation were not significant.

In Step 3 (Table 3), interaction terms were included to test for moderation by parental divorce. The model explained 23% of the variance in reactive CPV (R^2 adjusted = .23 (F [4, 876] = 22.80, $p < .001$)), and significant interaction effects were found for security x divorce (β = -.42; $p < .05$) and disengagement x divorce (β = -.38; $p < .05$), indicating a moderating effect of parental divorce.

To clarify the nature of these moderating effects, separate multiple regression analyses were conducted for divorced and non-divorced families (Table 4). The relationship between security and insecurity strategies and reactive CPV was weaker in divorced families (β = -.20; $p < .01$). Conversely, the association between disengagement and reactive CPV was stronger in intact families (β = .44; $p < .001$) compared to divorced families (β = .21; $p < .01$).

Proactive CPV

A multiple regression analysis was also conducted for proactive CPV using the same three-step approach.

In Step 1 (Table 5), demographic variables did not significantly predict proactive CPV (R^2 adjusted = .003 (F [3, 888] = 1.82). In Step 2 (Table 5), when emotional security and insecurity dimensions and adolescent stressors were included, the model explained 9% of the variance in proactive CPV, R^2 adjusted = .09 (F [4, 884] = 13.91, $p < .001$). Female (β = -.11; p < .001) and course (β = .08; p < .01), were significant predictors. Disengagement (β = .12; p < .01) and adolescent stressors (β = .24; p < .001) were significant predictors. Security and preoccupation were not significant.

In Step 3 (Table 5), the model explained 9.7% of the variance, R^2 adjusted = .097 (F [4, 880] = 9.74, $p < .001$). Moderation analyses showed that the interaction term

preoccupation x divorce was significant (β = -.41; p < .05), indicating that divorce moderates the effect of preoccupation on proactive CPV.

To better understand this interaction, the analysis was repeated for each group separately (Table 6). The relationship between preoccupation and proactive CPV was significant in intact families (β = .21; p < .001), but not-significant in divorced families. These findings support the hypothesis that parental divorce moderates the relationship between emotional security and insecurity dimensions and both reactive and proactive CPV.

Discussion

The present study aimed to analyze the influence of adolescent stressors and emotional insecurity in the family system on CPV, distinguishing between the reasons behind it (reactive or proactive). Additionally, the moderating role of parental divorce in the relationship between these variables was considered. The results obtained allow for meaningful conclusions regarding the proposed hypotheses, contributing greater knowledge about CPV.

The results partially support **Hypothesis 1 (H1),** [Emotional security within the family system will significantly predict both reactive and proactive CPV.]. Specifically, the data indicate that disengagement in the family system is significantly related to both reactive and proactive CPV, which supports the hypothesis in this aspect. However, preoccupation and security dimensions were not revealed as significant predictors of CPV. These results align with previous studies suggesting that children who resort to emotional insecurity strategies when facing family conflicts may develop emotional and psychological difficulties (Cantón-Cortés et al., 2020). Furthermore, this finding is consistent with research indicating that disengagement is a factor significantly related to CPV, both towards the mother and father. This suggests that adolescents who

emotionally disengage from their family system may lack the emotional and cognitive resources needed to manage conflicts properly, resorting to violence, both reactive and proactive, as a response to handle those situations. This result provides evidence not only of the explicit conflict that may exist within the family system but also of the implicit emotional state of disconnection in the adolescents.

Stressors during adolescence significantly predict CPV, both reactive and proactive, supporting **Hypothesis 2 (H2),** [Higher levels of adolescent stressors are positively correlated with both reactive and proactive CPV]. These results are consistent with studies that suggest stress acts as a mediator, amplifying the relationship between CPV and other predictor variables (Jiménez et al., 2019). Additionally, this finding is particularly relevant in contexts like the COVID-19 pandemic, where recent studies have linked an increase in adolescent stressors to a rise in CPV (Cano-Lozano et al., 2021b). What makes this finding especially novel is that it not only associates the presence of stressors with immediate aggressive reactions, such as in reactive CPV, but also suggests that it can predispose adolescents to use proactive violence to achieve specific goals. Despite the importance of considering this variable as a predictor or moderator of CPV, there are still few studies that have specifically considered how stress affects the different forms of CPV. This opens new avenues for research that should delve into how the presence of specific stressors (e.g., academic or social) differentially relates to reactive or proactive forms of CPV.

Finally, **Hypothesis 3 (H3),** [Parental divorce will moderate the relationship between emotional security and insecurity dimensions, adolescent stressors and CPV.], was fully confirmed. The results of this study indicate that divorce moderates the relationship between emotional insecurity in the family system and reactive and proactive child-to-parent violence (CPV). In particular, emotional disengagement in the

family system was more strongly related to reactive violence in intact families than in divorced families, suggesting that adolescents from intact families, when experiencing emotional detachment, are more likely to respond with reactive aggression in family conflict situations. This finding is consistent with previous research, such as Ibabe (2019) and Cano-Lozano et al. (2021), which indicate that emotional disengagement can amplify reactive violence in adolescents, especially in family contexts with less cohesive emotional relationships. On the other hand, emotional preoccupation also moderated the relationship with proactive violence, being stronger in intact families. This pattern aligns with studies by McCloskey & Lichter (2003) and Tew & Nixon (2010), which have pointed out that adolescents from families with intense emotional conflicts, tend to use proactive violence as a strategy to gain control or avoid responsibilities. In divorced families, both reactive violence and proactive violence showed weaker associations with emotional insecurity, which might suggest that the divorce process itself creates an emotional separation that reduces the influence of this type of insecurity on aggressive behavior. These results highlight the importance of family structure in predicting child-to-parent violence and suggest that both emotional disengagement and emotional preoccupation should be considered differently depending on whether the parents are divorced or not.

Study Limitations

This study is not without limitations that should be considered. The design is cross-sectional, preventing causal relationships between the studied variables from being established. Future research should conduct longitudinal studies to better understand the relationships identified. The evaluation relied solely on the adolescents' responses. Future studies should consider analyzing data from parents as well. Furthermore, the data come from a sample composed of Spanish adolescents,

specifically from the province of Málaga, which may compromise the generalization of the findings. Moreover, it is important to reflect on the generalizability of these findings to populations with different diversity characteristics. Factors such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, family structure beyond divorce (e.g., blended families, single-parent households, or caregivers who are not biological parents), and cultural context may influence the manifestation and understanding of CPV. Previous research has suggested that certain minority groups may experience distinct family dynamics, which could modify the relationship between emotional insecurity, stressors, and reactive or proactive violence (del Hoyo-Bilbao et al., 2020; McCloud, 2021). Additionally, it is relevant to explore how gender may shape these interactions, as previous studies have indicated significant differences in the perpetration and motivation of CPV between boys and girls (Navas-Martínez, & Cano-Lozano, 2023). Future studies should expand the analysis of diversity within this issue to enhance the applicability of interventions and prevention strategies.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The findings have significant theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, they emphasize that CPV is a multifactorial phenomenon, influenced by factors from various systems, such as adolescent stressors and emotional insecurity within the family. Practically, the study highlights the need for interventions that improve family relationships, particularly by enhancing adolescents' perceptions of their parents as emotional support. It also suggests that reducing stressors during adolescence could help decrease both reactive and proactive CPV. Finally, the stronger link between emotional insecurity and reactive CPV in intact families suggests that interventions should focus on strengthening emotional bonds and communication, regardless of

parental marital status, challenging the assumption that divorce is always a risk factor for CPV.

In conclusion, the results of this study provide a comprehensive view of CPV, considering individual and family variables such as emotional disengagement in the family system, the presence of adolescent stressors, and the impact of divorce. These findings fill important gaps in knowledge, providing evidence that CPV should not only be understood in high-risk family contexts, such as families with divorced parents, but also in intact families, considering the existing emotional dynamics and coping strategies. Future research will be essential to continue exploring how these variables interact with CPV and to identify other factors at the individual, family, or social level that may increase this violence. Additionally, future studies would benefit from examining how CPV motivations (reactive or proactive) influence their relationship with different risk factors.

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Table 1

Descriptive statistics and Mann-Whitney U Test of proactive and Reactive CPV, Emotional insecurity in the family system and Adolescent stressors, according to divorce status.

Variable	Marital Status	*n* (%)	Mean	*SD*	Minimum	Maximum	Mann-Whitney U
Sample size	Divorced	231(25.9%)					
	Non-divorced	661(74.1%)					
Reactive CPV	Divorced	230	2.19	2.21	0	12	70890.50
	Non-divorced	658	2.00	2.21	0	15	
Proactive CPV	Divorced	231	3.10	3.02	0	14	72863.50
	Non-divorced	661	2.94	3.13	0	23	
Security	Divorced	231	31.36	6.86	9	40	61232.50***
	Non-divorced	661	33.55	5.92	8	41	
Preoccupation	Divorced	231	20.38	7.64	8	40	56834.50***
	Non-divorced	661	17.11	7.18	8	40	
Disengagement	Divorced	231	14.01	5.62	6	28	60124.00***
	Non-divorced	661	12.08	5.39	6	30	
Adolescent stressors	Divorced	231	40.77	9.38	16	64	63822.50***
	Non-divorced	661	38.06	9.11	14	70	

Note: *n* = sample size; *SD* = Standard Deviation; Mann-Whitney U Test values correspond to the comparison between divorced and non-divorced for each variable. Significance is indicated by: *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Table 2
Correlation Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Reactive CPV	--								
2. Proactive CPV	.410**	--							
3. Female	.088**	-.073*	--						
4. Course	.076*	.057	-.001	--					
5. Divorce	.047	.019	.036	.012	--				
6. Security	-.268**	-.073*	-.039	.024	-.150**	--			
7. Preoccupation	.315**	.176**	.178**	.019	.190**	-.373**	--		
8. Disengagement	.421**	.202**	.154**	-.052	.148**	-.532**	.564**	--	
9. Adolescent stressors	.342**	.277**	.134**	-.078*	.114**	-.285**	.540**	.529**	--

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

Table 3

Regression Analysis of reactive CPV According to the Emotional security in the family system (Security, Preoccupation and Disengagement) and Adolescent stressors, Controlling for the Sex, Course and Divorce.

Variable	Adjusted R^2	F, Δ	B	SE	β	t
Step 1	.02	4.43**		2.20		
Female			.43	.15	.09	2.91**
Course			.11	.06	.07	1.95*
Divorce			.17	.17	.03	1.00
Step 2	.21	55.78***		1.97		
Female			.05	.14	.01	.42
Course			.18	.05	.10	3.41***
Divorce			-.21	.15	-.04	-1.40
Security			-.02	.01	-.06	-1.60
Preoccupation			.01	.01	.04	1.00
Disengagement			.12	.02	.28	6.81***
Adolescent stressors			.04	.01	.17	4.48***
Step 3	.22	2.40***		1.96		
Female			.06	.14	.01	.43
Course			.17	.05	.10	3.28***
Divorce			3.27	1.35	.64	2.42**
Security			.05	.04	.15	1.41
Preoccupation			.03	.04	.13	1.09
Disengagement			.22	.05	.54	4.18***
Adolescent stressors			.04	.03	.18	1.57
Security x divorce			-.06	.03	-.42	-2.10*
Preoccupation x divorce			-.02	.03	-.13	-.77
Disengagement x divorce			-.08	.04	-.38	-2.08*
Adolescent stressors x divorce			-.00	.02	-.02	-.08

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001. Reactive CPV indicates Child-to-parent reactive violence

Table 4

Association Between Security and Disengagement in the family system and reactive CPV According to the divorce.

Interaction	Category	Adjusted R^2	F	β
	Non-Divorced	.21	84.82***	
	Divorced	.13	17.42***	
Divorce x security	Non-Divorced			-.02
	Divorced			-.20**
Divorce x disengagement	Non-Divorced			.44***
	Divorced			.21**

Table 5

Regression Analysis of proactive CPV According to the Emotional security in the family system (Security, Preoccupation and Disengagement) and Adolescent stressors, Controlling for the Sex, Course and Divorce.

Variable	Adjusted R^2, Δ	*F*, Δ	*B*	SE	*β*	*t*
Step 1	.003	1.83		3.09		
Female			-.34	.21	-.05	-1.61
Course			.13	.08	.05	1.49
Divorce			.18	.24	.03	.77
Step 2	.092	22.84***		2.95		
Female			-.68	.20	-.11	-3.33***
Course			.19	.08	.08	2.37**
Divorce			-.12	.23	-.02	-.49
Security			.03	.02	.06	1.49
Preoccupation			.01	.02	.02	.44
Disengagement			.07	.03	.12	2.68**
Adolescent stressors			.08	.01	.24	6.05***
Step 3	.097	2.30***		2.94		
Female			-.66	.20	-.11	-3.23***
Course			.17	.08	.07	2.17*
Divorce			2.90	2.02	.41	1.44
Security			.12	.06	.23	1.98*
Preoccupation			.12	.05	.29	2.28*
Disengagement			.16	.08	.28	2.00*
Adolescent stressors			.02	.04	.07	.59
Security x divorce			-.07	.04	-.34	-1.60
Preoccupation x divorce			-.09	.04	-.41	-2.25*
Disengagement x divorce			-.07	.06	-.24	-1.20
Adolescent stressors x divorce			.05	.03	.34	1.49

Note: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001. Proactive CPV indicates Child-to-parent proactive violence

Table 6.

Association Between Security and Disengagement in the family system and proactive CPV According to the divorce.

Interaction		Category	Adjusted R^2	F	β
Divorce preoccupation	x	Non-Divorced	.04	29.17***	.21***
		Divorced	.00	.83	.06