

Perceived discrimination, satisfaction with life and radicalization: Gender differences

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Abstract: The present study analyses the effect of perceived discrimination on satisfaction with life and radicalization in adolescents. We hypothesize that perceived discrimination relates positively to the radicalization of adolescents, while satisfaction with life plays a mediating role in the negative effects of discrimination. We also suggest that gender has a modulating effect, since there are vast differences in the effects of perceived discrimination in girls and boys. 87 girls and 126 boys from a Spanish secondary school participated in the study, aged 15 to 25. Results show that perceived discrimination relates positively to radicalization in boys, but not in girls. Conversely, discrimination relates negatively with satisfaction with life in girls, but not in boys. The mediating effect of this variable barely relates with radicalization in either gender, however, gender does show a modulating effect, which can be seen in the differences found between boys and girls: perceived discrimination relates positively with radicalization in boys, but not in girls; conversely, it relates negatively with satisfaction with life in the case of girls, but not in boys. These findings highlight the importance of achieving an appropriate integration of adolescents in society.

Keywords: radicalization, perceived discrimination, satisfaction with life, gender

Introduction

A new global economic order is forming in society, where new conflictive situations are emerging (Holguín 2014). In the past 15 years, the threat of violent radicals has grown in western countries (Lyons-Padilla et al. 2016). Literature shows that the current models cannot explain completely why certain individuals become violent radicals (Lynch 2017). Many theories try to describe the stages of radicalization processes, but there is little empirical data on the psychology of those who become radicalized (King and Taylor 2011). These studies focused mainly on adults, but they hardly explore radicalized adolescents (Campelo et al. 2018). It has also been seen that finding radicalization risks is considerably uncomplicated, according to results from various review studies (Campelo et al. 2018; Emmelkamp et al. 2020). However, to find violent radicalization precedents (extremism or terrorism, among other) in adolescents, the largest group of radicalized individuals, is still notably convoluted. There is, therefore, an urgent need to study in detail the social and psychological processes that lead to such radical acts in adolescents (Moghaddan 2005).

There is an increasingly presence of new political forms of organization, activities, attitudes, and beliefs. Radicalization is a dynamic process where psychological, social, economic, and political processes intervene simultaneously, which combined explain why individuals become eventually involved in violent behaviors (Heelsum and Vermeulen 2017; Frounfelker et al. 2019). Authors such as Mccauley and Moskalenko (2008) understand radicalization as an extreme increase of cognitions, emotions and support towards inter-group conflicts and violence; meaning an increase in the preparation for inter-group conflict, which leads to changes in cognitions, emotions, and support towards the increase in the justification of violence. Jordán (2009) notes three types of factors leading to radicalization dynamics: macrosocial, microsocial (many of them of group and psychosocial nature) and biographical factors (personal and psychological).

The degree of radicalization in individuals and groups is often analyzed and understood as a pyramid structure, made of categories according to ideological radicalization and violent intention (McCauley and Moskalenko, 2008). The base of the pyramid would be composed of followers, supporters and activists. According to Couch (2004), the role of activism aims at causing political change through transgressive tactics, individual or at group level, without using political violence. The next level would be

formed by radical individuals. A radical individual is someone who desires an extremist change of part or all of the social order understood in terms of causality, that is, as an impulse to achieve social change or as a reaction to poor governance (Githens-Mazer 2012). According to Emmelkamp et al. (2020), radicalization is the first level where individuals can carry out acts that can cause serious harm to society, alter social processes, and threaten other people's lives. The global economy and the different social realities affect adolescents who experience poverty, discrimination, inequality and marginalization. Likewise, their personal circumstances along with their political, social and economic contexts can make them vulnerable to different radical influences (García and Pašić 2017).

Perceived discrimination means that a person believes being treated differently or unjustly due to his or her background or individual characteristics (Evans-Whipp 2021). Discrimination can be related to a wide variety of features such as gender, body image, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status or religion (Assari, Lankarani 2017; Daley, Phipps and Branscombe 2018; Tang-Péronard, Heitmann 2008; Van Der Straten and Roskam 2012; Van et al. 2016). A study carried out by Ballesteros et al. (2019) showed that seven out of every ten Spanish adolescents felt discriminated at some point in their lives (76.2% in boys vs. 70.5% in girls). The main reasons for discrimination are related to physical appearance, gender, youth, and political opinions. Such discrimination in adolescents can have a negative impact in their personal development.

According to Campelo et al. (2018), from 2010 most radicalized people in Europe tend to be younger than they used to (frequently adolescents). Adolescence, per se, is a risk factor in radicalization due to being a stage of turbulence and reorganization (Rolling and Corduan, 2017; Ludot, Radjack and Moro, 2016). Adolescents are generally more vulnerable than other social groups when it comes to embracing ideas that justify radicalization and violence. This is due to the psychobiological stage of the life cycle at which they are, with cognitive and self-control limitations that make them particularly impressionable (De Jongh et al. 2018). For these reasons, radicalization in adolescents has become one of the big challenges in the countries where it takes place, thus making it essential to know which factors are involved in these radicalization processes.

Psychology literature shows that individuals in unsafe situations, who perceive discrimination and feel disconnected from society, can “turn their backs on society” and look for alternative groups with radical ideas (Heelsum and Vermeulen 2017). Feeling

unimportant due to personal trauma, shame, humiliation, and perceived abuse relate to higher levels of support towards radicalization, which can increase by experiencing discrimination (Lyons-Padilla et al. 2016). In this line, Stern (2003) adds that the consequences from suffering ongoing humiliation give rise to feelings of unbearable despair and frustration, leading individuals to be willing to commit atrocities with the purpose of regaining dignity. Some studies confirm the existence of significant risks derived from radicalization in adolescents, particularly those who come from discriminated groups (Miranda et al. 2020; Franc and Pavlović 2021). The consequences of perceived discrimination on the individuals who suffer it are several, such as a decrease in perceived health and an increase in mental health problems (Martos et al. 2012). Some studies show that the pervasiveness of perceived discrimination has harmful effects on psychological well-being (Schmitt et al. 2014), affecting areas such as self-esteem and satisfaction with life (Greene, Way and Pahl, 2006; Yoo and Lee 2005). Furthermore, it is a risk factor that increases depression, anxiety, and stress (Williams and Mohammed 2009; Rodney et al. 1999) as well as engagement in health-damaging behaviors (Molero et al. 2012).

Satisfaction with life is related to happiness (Proctor, Linley and Maltby 2009). This construct is one of the main components of subjective well-being (Wakefield et al. 2016). Satisfaction with life is a category that includes three phenomena: emotional responses of positive affection and negative affection, domain satisfactions (satisfaction with work and satisfaction with relations) and global judgements of satisfaction with life (Diener et al. 1985). The personal characteristics of individuals and the resources available, such as gender, age, and income, affect happiness through its effects on the two psychological processes of evaluation and comparison (Shin and Johnson 1978). Therefore, a life in which the highest amount possible of needs and desires are satisfied is a happy life; the frustration of not having something that is desired would be therefore a main source of unhappiness (Spaid 2020).

Satisfaction with life in adolescents is related to key emotional, social and behavioral variables (Lyubomirsky et al. 2005; Proctor, Linley and Maltby 2009), however, there is little research that relates satisfaction with life in adolescents and health-related risk variables that lead to mortality and morbidity (Valois et al. 2006). Analyses indicate that higher levels of satisfaction with life relate to less violence (MacDonald et al. 2005). Adolescents embrace risk and violent behaviors for personal benefit and

hedonistic desire (Braithwaite 1989), in an effort to respond to the stressful conditions of their lives (Agnew 1992) and protect themselves if they perceive others as enemies (Sussman et al. 1999) or if they feel depressed (Guerra et al. 1995). Individuals who experience discrimination to a higher degree or more severely are exposed to higher risk of poor health than those who experience it at lower levels or less frequently (Agudelo-Suárez 2009). Evidence shows higher levels of satisfaction with life are linked to more positive health behaviors (Grant et al. 2009). However, there is a lack of studies which study satisfaction with life as mediating variable of perceived discrimination and radicalization, despite the consistency of findings on the relation between perceived discrimination and poor health.

Perceived discrimination has a negative effect on the person who perceives it, and it leads, on some occasions, to carry out violent acts, with adolescents having a higher tendency towards embracing radical points of view (Heelsum and Vermeulen 2017). Radicalization is an issue of growing concern in the fields of public health and criminology (Blum et al. 2000; El Defensor del pueblo 2007; McLaughlin, et al. 2000), because radicalized adolescents are at a higher risk of taking maladaptive development paths and can pose a great threat to society when violent actions are committed (Emmelkamp et al. 2020). However, perceived discrimination has a different effect on females. Assuming or not expressing an answer against unjust treatment can lead to risk factors for arterial hypertension in females (Krieger, 1990). Women who perceive discrimination also show higher levels of depression (Stepanikova et al. 2020), which strongly suggests that perceived discrimination is a significant factor for women's physical and mental health, thus affecting their quality of life.

Regarding gender, some studies have found little effects between gender and perceived discrimination, with activism, superiority perceived within a group and the distance perceived from other individuals being the risk factors that have the greatest impact on discrimination (Emmelkamp et al. 2020). Conversely, other studies show that risk behaviors among adolescents have different patterns based on gender (Cho, Hallfors and Iritani 2007; Moss, Chen and Yi 2014; Swahn et al. 2011). Gender is one of the factors with the highest risk-assumption effect, with males being the ones that take on this type of actions to the highest extent (Salas-Rodríguez, Gómez-Jacinto and Hombrados-Mendieta 2021). Discrimination is also a more powerful predictor of behavioral problems among young males than among young females (Brody et al. 2006).

Furthermore, males and females have different biological, personality and situational traits, which can lead to gender differences when it comes to their satisfaction with life (Wood, Rhodes and Whelan 1989). Previous experiences along with gender roles can lead males and females to perceive and react differently to the same situation.

Knowing risk factors can provide relevant information on the etiology of radicalization among adolescents. It is, therefore, necessary to know which risk factors can lead to the radicalization of this population group and to act in a violent manner, as well as which factors can help avoid these actions and contribute to their appropriate civic development.

Present study

The purpose of the present study is to analyse if perceived discrimination relates positively to the radicalization of adolescents in order to know if there is a relation between experiencing discrimination and the possibility of participating in violent actions, as noted by other study (Frounfelker et al. 2019). The aim is also to know if satisfaction with life acts as a mediating element of the negative effects of discrimination. Some authors note that satisfaction with life among adolescents relates to various emotional, social, and behavioral constructs of great importance for subjective well-being (Proctor, Linley and Maltby 2009). In these relations, gender will have a modulating effect, showing differences between boys and girls in the relation between perceived discrimination and radicalization.

There is scarce research on the effects of perceived discrimination on the radicalization of adolescents. The variable of satisfaction with life and its relation with a broad range of issues has in fact been widely studied, however, there is little research that use it as mediating variable between perceived discrimination and radicalization. The study also considers gender as a modulating variable, a variable that has been little considered in previous studies.

Figure 1 shows the theoretical model suggested in the present study, where perceived discrimination relates positively to the radicalization of adolescents. Along with this direct relation of perceived discrimination, the model also includes satisfaction with life as mediating variable, thus meaning it plays a mediating role in the relation

between perceived discrimination and radicalization. It is therefore hypothesized that the negative effects of perceived discrimination would be lower if the adolescents who perceive it feel satisfied with their lives. The model also includes gender as a modulating factor, suggesting differences in the effects of perceived discrimination in boys and girls. The hypotheses derived from this model are the following:

Hypothesis 1: perceived discrimination relates positively to the radicalization. This relation is moderated by gender.

Hypothesis 2: perceived discrimination relates to a decrease of satisfaction with life. This relation is moderated by gender.

Hypothesis 3: satisfaction with life mediates the direct positive relation of discrimination and radicalization. Greater well-being in adolescents will lead them to embrace and participate in fewer radical ideas and/or actions.

Method

Participants

A total of 213 adolescents participated in the study (87 girls and 126 boys), from Miguel Romeo Esteo Secondary School. Participants were aged 15 to 25 ($M=18.26$; $SD=2.67$). They gave prior verbal consent to answer the questionnaire. 85% of participants were Spanish and 15% were non-nationals. 21.9% were in Secondary School, 28.5% were doing their A levels and the rest were students of vocational training. 6.2% belonged to middle and upper classes, 37.3% belonged to middle classes, 43.5% belonged to skilled worker classes and 13% to unskilled worker classes.

The study received approval from the Ethical Committee on Experimentation from the University of Malaga (CEUMA) (Registry number: 64-2019-H). Three researchers along with the cooperation from schoolteachers handed the questionnaire to different groups in the school during approximately 30 minutes, after informing students about the purpose of the study. Detailed explanation about how to answer the questionnaire was provided to participants and they were also informed about the anonymity and confidentiality of the study.

Instruments

Perceived discrimination. The questionnaire on discrimination contains 13 items and it is based on the one designed by Krieger (2005). Experiences of discrimination: validity and reliability of a self-report measure for population health research on racism and health. Participants were asked if they had felt discriminated in situations related to the school environment, access to public services, police treatment, relations with friends, etc. during the past year. Questions are answered using a Likert-type Scale: never (1), sometimes (2), often (3), very often (4). The Factor Analysis by generalized least squares (GLS) of the items showed that one factor explained 27.93% of the variance. Except for three items, all items had coefficients above 0.40 (range= 0.23-0.75). The model had an appropriate goodness of fit, $\chi^2 = 153.54$, d.f. = 54, $p < 0.001$. Internal consistency was also good, with Cronbach's alpha= 0.80.

Satisfaction with life. Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) of 5 items developed by Pavot and Diener (1993). This scale is designed to assess the general judgment of an individual on satisfaction with life, which theoretically predicts that such judgement depends on a comparison of life circumstances to the standards of each individual. The scale assesses positive experiences, rather than focusing on unpleasant emotions. The five items of the scale are answered through a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The Factor Analysis of this questionnaire shows that only one factor explains 50.65% of the variance. All items have loadings over 0.50 (range= 0.56-0.84) and the scale has an appropriate goodness of fit index ($\chi^2 = 11.07$, d.f. = 5, $p = 0.05$). The scale has a Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.81$.

Radicalism. The radicalization scale has 13 items and it is an adaptation of two scales: Activism and Radicalism Intention Scales (ARIS) by Moskalenko and McCauley (2009), in their Spanish version adapted by Moyano (2011) and which is composed of 10 items. The Activism Intention Scale assess individuals' keenness to participate in legal and non-violent political actions, while the Radicalism Intention Scale assess individuals' keenness to participate in illegal or violent political actions. The Personal Sacrifice Scale (Bélangier et al. 2014) was also used. This scale has 3 quantitative items that allow to assess an individual's tendency towards self-sacrifice, as it was considered of interest for the study to see if individuals would sacrifice their lives for a cause. The 13 Items are written as

statements and are answered through 7 possible options, where 1 means “strongly disagree” and 7 “strongly agree”.

All 13 items were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis through IBM AMOS 25.0 and maximum likelihood estimation. The single-factor model showed a good model fit ($\chi^2/DF= 2.70$; CFI= .94; TLI= .92; RMSEA= .09). The same program was also used to analyze the measurement invariance of radicalism through gender with a multi-group analysis (Cheung and Rensvold, 2002). Table 1 shows factor loadings for the total sample and for boys and girls. All coefficients have a related probability lower than .01, except for items 6, 7 and 8 in girls. The unconstrained invariance model (M1) showed good fitness indexes ($\chi^2/DF= 1.893$; CFI= .938; TLI= .913; RMSEA= .065). The model limiting factor loadings, where the same ones apply to boys and girls (M2), also showed appropriate goodness of fit ($\chi^2/DF= 1.957$; CFI= .927; TLI= .906; RMSEA= .067). The third model (M3) includes measurement interception, along with factor loadings which were restricted so the same ones applied to boys and girls again, showed an appropriate goodness of fit ($\chi^2/DF= 2.028$; CFI= .913; TLI= .90; RMSEA= .070). Finally, the strict invariance model (M4), which restricts error variances, has two correct fitness indexes ($\chi^2/DF= 1.991$; CFI= .901; TLI= .903; RMSEA= .069).

The comparison between M2 and M1 showed that CFI= .011, $\Delta TLI= .007$ (increase required to be lower than .01), $\Delta RMSEA= .002$ (required to be lower than .015), although $\Delta\chi^2 = .002$ (requirement $p > .05$), was significant. Something similar was observed in the comparison between M3 and M2: $\Delta CFI= .014$; $\Delta TLI= .006$; $\Delta RMSEA= .003$; $\Delta\chi^2 = .001$. Lastly, the comparison between M4 and M3 did not show significant differences: $\Delta CFI= .012$; $\Delta TLI= .001$; $\Delta RMSEA= .001$; $\Delta\chi^2 < .001$.

These results support the fitness of the 13 items to the single factor of radicalism: furthermore, when the elements of the factor structure remain invariable based on gender, fitness levels range within satisfactory limits, meaning there is partial invariance. Altogether it can be said that figures are predominantly comparable between boys and girls.

Table 1.

Factor loadings for the total sample and for boys and girls.

	Total	Boys	Girls
1. I would join an organization who fights for the political and legal rights of my group.	.792	.820	.770
2. I would support with money an organization who fights for the political and legal rights of my group.	.752	.756	.755
3. I would volunteer in an organization fights for the political and legal rights of my group (i.e., writing petitions, distributing propaganda, recruiting members, etc.)	.794	.796	.849
4. I would travel for 1 hour to participate in a meeting, protest or demonstration in support of my group.	.780	.839	.668
5. I would keep supporting an organization who fights for the political and legal rights of my group, even if it breaks the law occasionally.	.689	.745	.544
6. I would keep supporting an organization who fights for the political and legal rights of my group, even if it uses violence occasionally.	.483	.596	^a .262
7. I would participate in a protest against the oppression of my group, even if I knew that it could turn violent.	.591	.749	^a .223
8. I would attack the police or security forces if I saw them beating a member of my group.	.412	.507	^a .165
9. I would defend a cause to which I am fully committed to, even if my loved ones rejected me for it.	.371	.356	.392
10. I would be ready to assume great suffering if this was to help defend a cause important to me.	.419	.428	.382
11. I would be ready to give my life for a cause that is very important to me.	.487	.523	.385
12. I would be willing to give up all my belongings to support a cause that is very important to me.	.438	.394	.500
13. I would be willing to give up my wealth or personal possessions for a cause that is important to me.	.344	.329	.363

^a $p > .01$

Analysis

On the theoretical model of Figure 1, it can be observed that perceived discrimination is the independent variable and predictor of the dependent variable of radicalization. Satisfaction with life is the mediating variable and gender (female/male) is the moderating variable. A multiple regression analysis using PROCESS for SPSS Version 3.4. (Hayes 2018) was used, applying its model 59. The aim of this analysis was to know if the direct and/or indirect relation of perceived discrimination on radicalization varies systematically based on the moderating variable of gender. The level of reliability for all intervals in this multiple regression was 95% and the number of bootstrap samples for reliability intervals of percentage bootstrap was 5000.

Before executing the regression analysis, a logarithmic transformation was carried out on perceived discrimination, with the purpose of improving asymmetry and kurtosis indexes, which went from 2.62 to 1.44 and from 11.87 to 2.48 respectively. After transformations were carried out, all variables were standardized. A dummy variable was created for gender (1 = female; 0 = male). Multicollinearity diagnoses showed that the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) did not exceed 1.05 in any of the cases, which means an appropriate level of multicollinearity between variables.

Results

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics and the matrix of intercorrelations between variables based on gender. Perceived discrimination relates positively to radicalization in boys, but not in girls; conversely, it relates negatively to satisfaction with life in girls, but not in boys. Satisfaction with life relates poorly with radicalization in both genders.

Table 3 shows results from the moderation-mediation regression analysis following model 59 from PROCESS. The first equation, with satisfaction with life as dependent variable and perceived discrimination and gender as independent variables, is statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.52$, $F = 3.81$, $p = .011$; ΔR^2 interaction = .023, $F = 5.16$, $p = .024$). Both variables are observed to be poor predictors of satisfaction with life, however, the interaction of both is statistically significant. Figure 2 shows the sense of such interaction; the increase of discrimination relates to the decrease of satisfaction with life, but only in girls ($B = -.313$, $SE = .095$, 95% CI $[-.500, -.127]$, $p = .001$).

The second equation of the model considers radicalization as dependent variable and satisfaction with life as mediating variable. This equation is statistically significant as well as the interaction between perceived discrimination and gender. However, the interaction between satisfaction with life and gender is not statistically significant ($R^2 = .053$, $F = 2.30$, $p = .046$; ΔR^2 interaction of gender X Discrimination = .023, $F = 5.03$, $p = .026$; ΔR^2 interaction of gender X satisfaction with life = .004, $F = 0.92$, $p = .339$). As it can be observed in Table 3, the increase of perceived discrimination relates to an increase of radicalization. It also shows that boys tend to be more radical than girls.

Satisfaction with life is not a good predictor, however, an increase in this variable covaries a slight decrease in radicalization. Boys show a positive relation between discrimination and radicalization to a higher extent ($B = .242$, $SE = .099$, 95% CI [.047, .437], $p = .015$), while this relation is negative and non-significant in girls. This can be seen more clearly in Figure 3.

Finally, the indirect effect of perceived discrimination on radicalization is very low and non-significant in boys ($B = .001$, $SE = .013$, 95% CI [-.025, .030]) and girls ($B = -.013$, $SE = .032$, 95% CI [-.080, .053]). The mediating effect of satisfaction with life is close to zero and statistically non-significant, as shown by the moderate mediation index (Index = $-.013$, $SE = .034$, 95% CI [-.088, .053]). Satisfaction with life does not show mediating capacity in the relation between discrimination and radicalization. Furthermore, the indirect effect between both variables does not relate to gender. Figure 4 shows an overview of the results obtained.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and correlations (Females, $N = 87$, upper diagonal; Males, $N = 126$, lower diagonal) of perceived discrimination, satisfaction with life and radicalism.

	1	2	3	M females	DT females
1. Perceived discrimination	1	-.263*	-.111	15.55	4.55
2. Satisfaction with life	.016	1	.082	23.21	6.70
3. Radicalism	.199*	-.082	1	39.12	13.28
M males	14.33	23.79	43.08		
DT males	3.16	5.89	16.49		

* $p < .05$

Table 3. Moderated mediated regression analysis with perceived discrimination as independent variable, satisfaction with life as mediating variable, gender as moderating variable, and radicalism as dependent variables.

Perceived discrimination → *Satisfaction with life*

	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t value</i>	<i>p value</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Constant	.037	.088	.421	.674	-.137	.211
Perceived discrimination	-.003	.099	-.030	.976	-.197	.191
Gender	-.032	.138	-.231	.818	-.305	.241
Perceived discrimination x Gender	-.310	.137	-2.272	.024	-.579	-.041
<i>Perceived discrimination → Satisfaction with life → Radicalism</i>						
Constant	.141	.089	1.585	.115	-.034	.316
Perceived discrimination	.242	.099	2.446	.015	.047	.437
Satisfaction with life	-.093	.093	-.998	.319	-.276	.091
Gender	-.277	.139	-1.990	.048	-.551	-.003
Perceived discrimination x Gender	-.316	.141	-2.244	.026	-.594	-.038
Satisfaction with life x Gender	.134	.140	.958	.339	-.142	.410

In bold the significant coefficients (p < 0.05)

Figure 2. Conditional effect of perceived discrimination on satisfaction with life at values of gender.

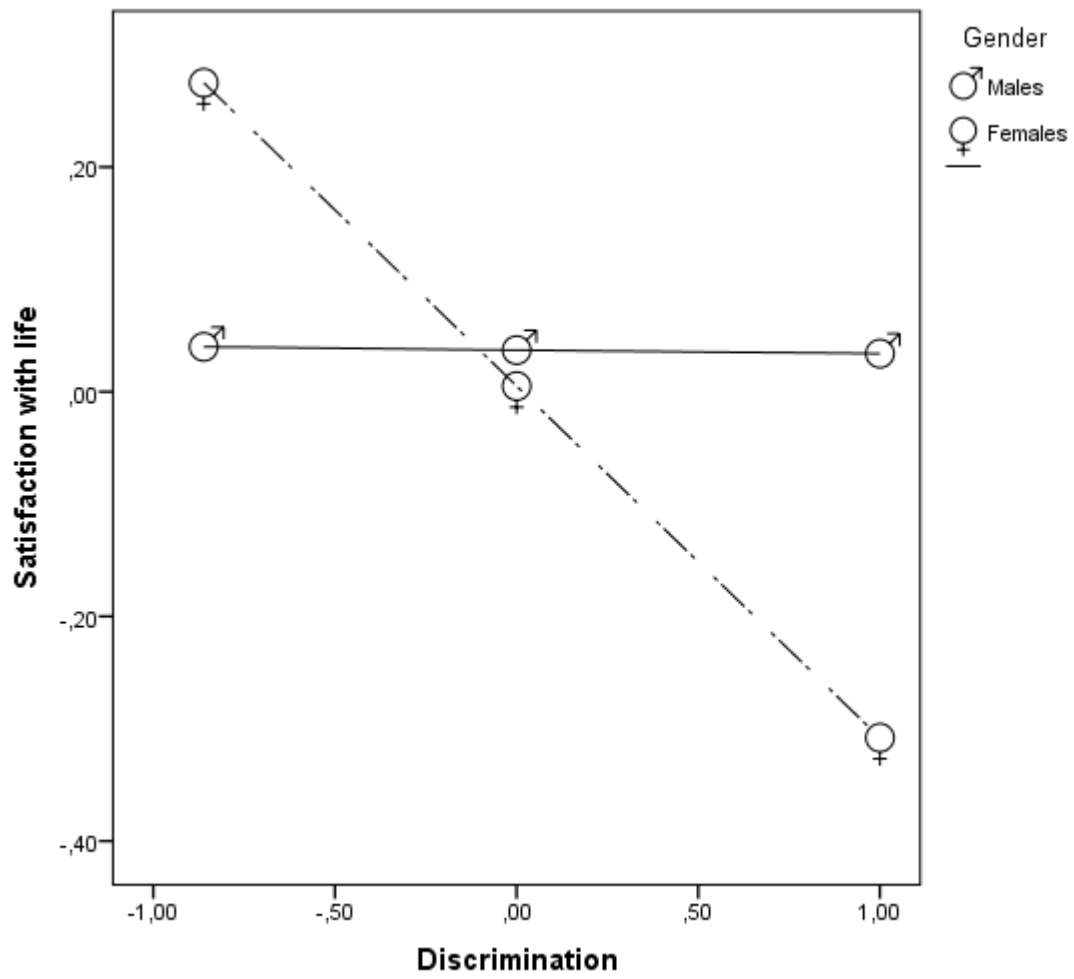


Figure 3. Conditional effect of perceived discrimination on radicalism at values of gender.

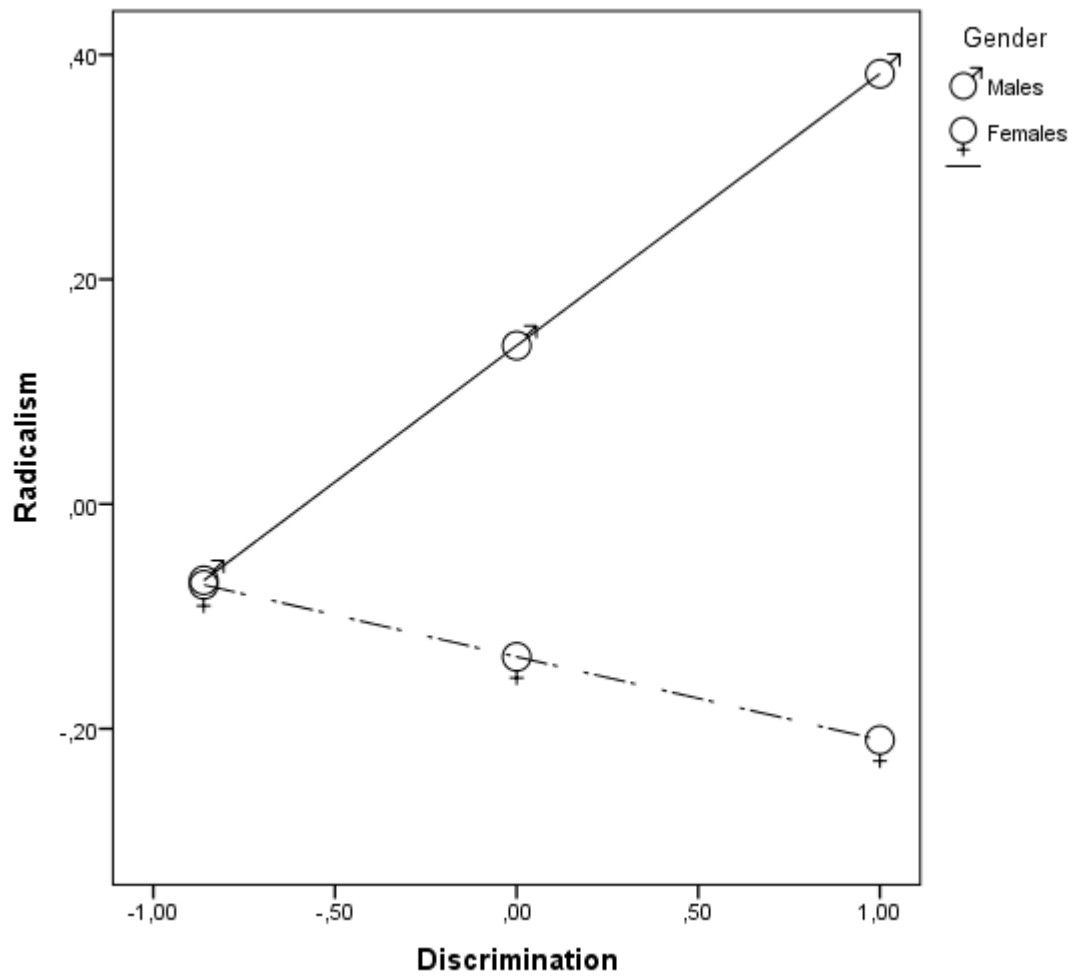


Figure 4. Overview of results obtained.



Discussion

Previous research has provided evidence of the factors involved in the processes of radicalization. However, we can confirm that we do not currently have enough scientific data so as to be able to explain, predict and prevent radicalization (Moyano 2011). Figure 4 shows the results obtained from the structural equation analyses. In such figure, a direct effect of perceived discrimination on radicalism in adolescents can be observed. Likewise, there is interaction between perceived discrimination and gender on radicalism, specifically in boys. This means that perceived discrimination leads to higher radicalization in this group. This figure also shows interaction between perceived discrimination and gender on satisfaction with life, specifically in girls. This means that perceiving discrimination predicts lower satisfaction with life in this group. Finally, this figure also shows that satisfaction with life does not mediate the direct relation between perceived discrimination and radicalism.

Following the first hypothesis, results show that, as it was expected, perceived discrimination relates to higher levels of radicalization in adolescents. These results are in line with studies that suggest that the higher the discrimination experienced, the higher the tendency towards radicalization (Frounfelker et. al. 2019). There is a relation between perceiving a threat against one's social identity and radicalization, thus leading adolescents in some cases to radicalize with the purpose of neutralizing such threat

(Krause et al. 2014), as well as satisfying the desire of revenge caused by feeling mistreated (Lowe et al. 2019). These situations lead individuals to feel anxious, and when such unease is not resolved, they will have reactions of defense of their ideology, which can lead them to radicalize against the social consensus to ease such anxiety (McGregor, Prentice and Nash 2012). According to Gøtzsche-Astrup (2018), perceived discrimination frustrates the individual's attitude and leads them to feel a need of being valued by others, thus motivating them to amend such feeling, occasionally. It could be said that radicalization is a way to achieve such attention.

Regarding the second hypothesis, higher perceived discrimination in girls has been found to relate to lower levels of satisfaction with life, this not being the case in boys. Studies show that perceived discrimination relates negatively to the well-being of discriminated individuals. Perceiving discrimination relates to higher physiological responses to stress, higher negative psychological responses to stress and higher participation in unhealthy behaviors (Pascoe and Richman 2009). Results from a study carried out with women showed that highest levels of perceived discrimination have a positive relation with stress (Araújo, 2009), as well as risk of developing cardiovascular diseases and depression (Saban et al. 2018; Stepanikova et al. 2020). There is evidence that perceived discrimination is a significant predictor of loneliness, meaning that lower levels of perceived discrimination relate to lower levels of loneliness (Wilks and Neto 2017) and lower sleep quality (Majeno et al. 2018), which has a direct impact on the quality of life of those who suffer it. Results are in line with the literature that confirms perceived discrimination has a negative relation with well-being in discriminated women.

Finally, the third hypothesis is not fulfilled, given the mediating effect of satisfaction with life relates poorly with radicalization in both genders. Despite the lack of studies that relate these two variables, some empirical works have proved that activism leads to personal benefits, since it provides psychological and social well-being (Klar and Kasser 2009).

The present study shows that gender plays a modulating role, with broad differences between boys and girls. Both genders respond differently to the risk factor of perceived discrimination with different effects on their well-being. Results show that discrimination does not affect girls and boys in the same way; perceived discrimination relates positively to radicalization in boys, but not in girls. Conversely, it relates

negatively with satisfaction with life in girls, but not in boys. Satisfaction with life relates poorly to radicalization in both genders. There are other studies that have identified gender differences when it comes to risk-taking behaviors, with boys having a higher tendency towards these behaviors (Kruger and Nesse 2006; Wilson et al. 2002). Other findings show that contextual stress relates to aggressive behaviors and the use of harmful substances in males, whereas contextual stress predicted the use of harmful substances in girls but not aggressive behaviors (Copeland-Linder et al. 2011). It has also been found that higher perceived discrimination leads to lower satisfaction in girls, with different results in boys. These results are in line with those from a different study that showed that linking happiness with relations was beneficial for girls, but not for boys (Bojanowska and Zalewska 2016).

When perceiving discrimination, adolescents are expected to carry out a series of strategies to palliate the consequences of unsatisfactory social identity. Age and gender are the most noted factors when it comes to radicalization; evidence shows that radical people tend to be male adolescents (Šiňanská, Tóthová and Žiaková 2019). More risks are taken during adolescence due to male adolescents having more potential gains from positive social change as they have not yet acquired social assets such as a career path and family (Harper 2018). In relation to gender, the social role of males is associated to instrumental behaviors such as expressing anger, whereas females' roles are associated to emotional aspects such as expressing sadness (Gonzalez-Forteza et al. 2015). In this sense, results from the present study show that perceived discrimination does not affect girls' radicalization, but it does affect their satisfaction with life by decreasing it. This is not the case in boys. Perceived discrimination is a relevant indicator of stress, and it has broad consequences for individual's psychological well-being (Ajrouch 2010). Some authors note that there is enough scientific evidence proving that there is an increase of the prevalence of depression in girls during adolescence (Angold, Costello and Worthman 1987; Waller et al. 2006), which can lead to the simultaneous presence of risk factors associated to health issues such as substance abuse, early pregnancy, early school leaving or academic performance issues (Pardo, Sandoval and Umbarila 2004).

Limitations

The present study has several limitations. The first one is that it is a cross-sectional study. However, it relates variables that have been little studied, thus making it a breakthrough that sheds light into the causes leading to radicalization. The lack of immigrants in the sample constitutes another limitation, making it difficult to know whether radicalization is higher when the individual perceiving discrimination is a migrant. Data were collected through in-person questionnaires, which was beneficial for participants in case they had doubts. However, questions related to radicalization might have made adolescent participants feel uncomfortable due to the sensitive nature of the issue and due to being a behavior that is not socially accepted. Therefore, participants' answers might be biased as they tried to avoid being judged and/or face future consequences, despite being always informed about the anonymity of the study. Likewise, the questionnaire does not include any open question, so qualitative information about adolescents' experiences of discrimination could not be gathered.

Conclusion

Results show that there are still forms of discrimination that affect certain sectors of society, in this case adolescents, and which have severe consequences on their feelings and actions. In boys, it has been found that the higher the perceived discrimination, the higher the radicalization. In girls, results show that they tend to feel lower satisfaction with life if they feel discriminated in order to avoid the consequences of discrimination,

School is the main place of contact for adolescents, making it an ideal place to develop a good understanding of why some adolescents value diversity and why others don't (Bayram, Özdemir and Boersma 2020). It would be essential to design and apply educational policies that include the need to carry out interventions to prevent radicalization from education, including both workshops to promote diversity, respect and integrity and workshops that focus on improving social skills, such as increasing self-esteem, resilience and anger management. Through these workshops, adolescents would be able to acquire the necessary mechanisms to react to discrimination pacifically and with the least negative impact on their satisfaction with life. Adolescents tend to struggle to solve adverse situations and are usually not aware of the resources available, thus leading them to ongoing issues (Lenkens et al. 2019). It would be necessary to teach them

in schools about resources, associations, and different institutions at their disposal. It would also be interesting to carry out workshops with teachers with the purpose of helping them to develop strategies to solve personal problems that are socially relevant, and which take place in the school context.

Researchers must strive to understand the underlying processes that affect adolescents' satisfaction with life. Coping and self-sufficiency strategies that help solve or palliate difficult situations or negative feelings in adolescents should be studied in depth. Future field research, interventions and comprehensive evaluations in secondary school should consider measurements such as satisfaction with life and student violence and/or aggressive behaviors. Likewise, gender differences should also be included, due to their role that affects society's evolution and functioning.

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No potential competing interest was reported by the authors.

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