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Female Autonomy, Social Norms and Intimate Partner Violence against Women in Turkey

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ABSTRACT *The theoretical literature asserts that intimate partner violence against women stems from inequalities within the relationship, and it strengthens both male power and control, and female subordination. Using Structural Equation Modelling, this paper addresses the two-way relationship between intimate partner violence and female autonomy in Turkey. Consistent with the theory, we find that (1) violence has a significant and negative effect on female autonomy; and (2) the incidence of violence decreases with the level of female autonomy. We also find that intimate partner violence is an increasing function of the strength of men's commitment to social norms upholding traditional gender roles.*

1. Introduction

As a global problem, violence against women undermines the equality, dignity and basic human rights of women. The ever-present threat of violence makes women suffer physically, psychologically, sexually, politically and economically. According to the 1993 United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women: 'violence against women constitutes a violation of the rights and fundamental freedoms of women and impairs or nullifies their enjoyment of those rights and freedoms' (UN, 1993, p. 2).

Besides being a major problem in terms of violation of human rights, violence against women also has substantial consequences to women's physical, mental and reproductive health. According to the Global and Regional Estimates of Violence against Women report by the World Health Organization (WHO), women who have been physically or sexually abused are twice as likely to experience depression, 16 per cent more likely to have a low-birth-weight baby, and 1.5 times more likely to acquire HIV (WHO, 2013). In addition to its detrimental effects on women at an individual level, violence has a long lasting effect on children and in turn on society, as many authors show that experiencing or witnessing domestic violence in childhood has an increasing effect on the probability of resorting to violence or being a victim of it as an adult (Martin et al., 2002; Straus & Gelles, 1990).

Using data from Turkey, this paper investigates the relationship between intimate partner violence and female autonomy in the household (both concepts will be discussed in following sections) in order to understand how intimate partner violence (IPV) impairs female autonomy and how incidence of IPV changes with the level of female autonomy.

When it comes to gender equality, Turkey's case is special since she performs poorly compared to other upper-middle income countries. The recent Global Gender Gap Report, which evaluates gender equality globally using four indicators (namely: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment) puts Turkey in 130th rank out of 145

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countries just above Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Pakistan (World Economic Forum, 2015). Moreover, Turkey is a country where prevalence of IPV is high. A recent report by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies shows that 36 per cent of all married women have been subjected to physical violence by their partners (Ministry of Family and Social Policies, 2014). This ratio is higher than the 30 per cent global estimate of IPV (WHO, 2013). Hence it is important to analyse female autonomy and IPV in Turkey.

This paper uses the Turkish Household Structure Survey 2006 (HSS). The HSS is a product of joint research by the Turkish National Statistics Institute (TurkStat) and the General Directorate of Family and Social Studies on the household structure of Turkish families and provides a nationally representative sample. To perform the analyses, this paper uses an Item Response Theory model which is a version of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in which the dependent variables are categorical and the latent variables are assumed to be continuous.

This study makes methodological and empirical contributions to the existing literature. Firstly, it is the first paper that estimates the two-way relationship between IPV and female autonomy within the same framework. Secondly, due to the unique property of the dataset, to the author's knowledge, it is the first study analysing the effect of social norms on IPV at the individual level. Finally, to the author's knowledge, it is the first extensive analysis of female autonomy in Turkey.

Consistent with the arguments of feminist theory on IPV, the key findings of the study show that violence has a significant and negative effect on female autonomy; and the incidence of violence decreases with the level of female autonomy. They also show that IPV is an increasing function of the strength of the husband's commitment to social norms upholding traditional gender roles.

2. Literature review

2.1. Intimate partner violence

According to the UN definition, violence against women is

> any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. (UN, 1993)

This paper focuses on intimate partner violence due the limitations of the data. However, the UN definition of violence against women includes physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated by family, general community, and by the state. It can come in many forms such as battering, sexual abuse, genital mutilation, sexual harassment, and intimidation at work. In this sense, gender-based violence is not limited to spousal or physical violence. On the other hand, empirical evidence shows that the risk of IPV is much higher than the risk of any other form of violence against women (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2006; Heise, 1998; Jewkes, 2002). According to the WHO (2013), worldwide, almost one third (30%) of all women who have been in a relationship have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partners.

In his seminal paper, Heise (1998) provides a broad conceptual model for the determinants of IPV. In this model, he presents IPV as a function of contextual and community-level factors, household and individual-level factors, women's status and autonomy and interrelated effects of these factors. Household and individual-level factors include socio-economic status, intergenerational exposure to violence, life cycle factors such as age, and risk behaviours such as alcohol and substance abuse. Contextual and community-level factors, closely related to feminist arguments, include social norms on IPV and gender inequality. Heise argues that these factors not only have a direct effect on IPV but also have an indirect effect through their influence on female autonomy.[1]

Feminist theory provides a basis for the existence of IPV and asserts that intimate partner violence originates from inequalities within the relationship, strengthening male power and control, and female subordination. Although there are different approaches to research on intimate partner violence, most look at power imbalances that cause and perpetuate IPV. It is argued that these imbalances exist in patriarchal societies where structural factors hinder equal participation of women in the social, economic and political systems and they are reproduced when men exercise power and control over women (Yllo, 1994). Dobash and Dobash (1979) assert that patriarchy is fostered by the economic and social system and contributes to IPV. They argue that the patriarchal system has defined the husband as the dominant, strong, authoritarian, aggressive and rational provider for the family, while the wife is traditionally accepted to be dependent, passive, submissive and soft. Therefore, typically, violence against women is explained in terms of a power struggle and it is argued that in a patriarchal society, men, with all the power, must resort to violence when their position of dominance is threatened. In that sense, it is argued that IPV is a consequence of patriarchy, and part of a systematic attempt to maintain male dominance at home and in society (Knickmeyer, Levitt, Horne, & Bayer, 2004).

Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) Report (OECD, 2014), which evaluates countries in terms of discriminatory family codes, restricted physical integrity, son preference, restricted resources and assets, and restricted civil liberties, puts Turkey within the 'low levels of discrimination' category. On the other hand, the same report notes that 42 per cent of women in Turkey have been subjected to physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime. This figure is significantly higher than the 30 per cent global estimate of IPV noted above.

The first nationwide research on IPV in Turkey was conducted in the Causes and Consequences of Domestic Violence Report (Turkish Prime Ministry, 1995). An interesting finding of this study was the mismatch between the responses of wives and husbands regarding the incidence of violence: while 34 per cent of men report that, in the case of a disagreement with their partners, they resort to physical violence, only 29 per cent of women reported that they were exposed to violence. A more recent survey, Domestic Violence against Women in Turkey (Ministry of Family and Social Policies, 2014), reveals the magnitude of this problem in Turkey. According to the survey results, 36 per cent of women were exposed to physical violence from their partners in their lifetime; 8 per cent were subject to violence in the last 12 months. Moreover, 12 per cent of women were sexually abused at least once in their lifetime.

Using the data from Domestic Violence against Women in Turkey 2008 Survey, Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, Türkyılmaz, and Heise (2012) analysed the determinants of IPV in Turkey. Their results show that the level of violence was much higher when one or both of the partners was/were exposed to violence in childhood. Women with family and friend support were less likely to experience violence. A surprising result of their study is that women's ownership of property and their ability to raise money were not significantly associated with partner violence. Altinay and Arat (2009) conducted a survey with 1520 women and they found similar results to Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu et al. (2012) in terms of the magnitude of domestic violence and factors that affect violence. In addition, they compared the results of their research with the results of Causes and Consequences of Domestic Violence Report (Turkish Prime Ministry, 1995) and concluded that the magnitude of violence had not changed between the mid-1990s and mid-2000s.

2.2. Female autonomy

Dyson and Moore (1983) define female autonomy as the capacity to manipulate one's personal environment and the technical, social and psychological abilities to obtain information and to use it as the basis for making decisions about one's private concerns and those of one's intimates. Empirically, it is found that higher levels of female autonomy within the household lead to lower levels of fertility, child mortality and better levels of health status for the household members (Jejeebhoy, 1999; Kishor & Johnson, 2004; Presser & Sen, 2000).

Some authors such as Mason (1998), Mason and Smith (2000) use 'autonomy' and 'empowerment' interchangeably. However, there have also been some attempts in the literature to distinguish between

these two concepts. For instance, Jejeebhoy (2000) uses the term female autonomy to reflect the extent to which women exert control over their own lives within the families in which they live, at a given point in time. On the other hand, she asserts 'empowerment' refers to a more dynamic process which includes challenging existing power relations and gaining greater control over sources of power. In other words, while empowerment represents a continuous process of change in women's status in the society, autonomy represents a position in a certain point in time. Using the same approach, Agarwala and Lynch (2006) note that, unlike autonomy which focuses on the individual aspect (implies independence), the term 'empowerment' (achieved through interdependence) emphasises the collective aspect of power.[2]

In the early examples of the female autonomy literature, education, employment, and asset ownership were used as proxy measures for female autonomy (Bradley & Khor, 1993; Mason, 1986). However, Malhotra and Mather (1997) argue that these measures can be considered as indicators of access to resources, but they do not indicate control over these resources. It is also argued that these proxies are highly imperfect and have problematic policy implications, particularly when they are used to analyse the predictors and effects of autonomy (Agarwala & Lynch, 2006). As a consequence, a growing body of literature suggested alternative indicators for female autonomy. Some of these alternatives are women's control over resources, mobility, political participation and awareness, and participation in household-related decision-making (Jejeebhoy & Sathar, 2001; Morgan & Niraula, 1995).[3]

In the Turkish context, women's status in the household, and in the general community, shows contrasting properties in different aspects of daily and social life. For instance, after the foundation of the Republic, Turkey was one of the first countries in which women gained the right to vote and to be elected (in 1934). However, currently, only 14.5 per cent of parliament members (81 in 550 seats) are women and this ratio was 4.5 per cent in 1935 when women participated in the elections for the first time. Moreover, there is only one female minister, Minister of Family and Social Policies, out of 26 ministers of the current government. This number has never been greater than two since 1996.

Looking at education statistics, TurkStat (2015a) shows that there is no gender gap in primary school education. On the other hand, for those above 25 years of age, the female illiteracy rate is 9.2 per cent, while it is 1.8 per cent for men. There is also a gender gap for high-school education (23% of men versus 15% of women achieved it) and university education (16% of men versus 11% of women). According to the SIGI Report by OECD, there are no strong legal barriers in front of women when it comes to access to resources. Although the previous law gave priority to men over the heritage of agricultural assets reportedly in order to prevent land fragmentation, the Civil Code 2001 removed this practice (OECD, 2014). Nevertheless, only a small proportion of women in Turkey have any form of asset ownership (see Appendix).

Between 1960 and 2006, the female labour force participation rate in Turkey decreased from 60 per cent to 26 per cent. Many authors, such as Gündüz-Hoşgör and Smits (2008) and Gedikli (2014), argued that urbanisation and rural-to-urban migration played a crucial role in declining female labour force participation rates. These authors argue that women who were previously employed in the rural agricultural sector as unpaid family workers were left out of the labour force due to their limited education and experience for the urban labour market. With a slow increase, the female labour participation rate in Turkey increased to 30 per cent in 2015. Nevertheless, Turkey still has the lowest female labour force participation rate among OECD countries. There is also a gender gap in the employment status: while 24 per cent (4%) of working women (men) are unpaid family workers, 1 per cent (5%) of women (men) are employers (TurkStat, 2015a).

As noted above, many studies and macro-level indicators on political participation, education, and employment show a gender gap favouring men in Turkey. Although participation in decision-making is widely used as an indicator of female autonomy (for instance, Arulampalam, Bhaskar, & Srivastava, 2015; Eswaran & Malhotra, 2011; Kabeer, 1999), this aspect has not been explored for Turkey. Therefore, one of the contributions of this study is to provide the first individual-level analysis of women's participation in household-related decision-making in Turkey.

2.3. Social norms

Durlauf and Blume (2008) define social norms as rules or expectations of behaviour within a specific cultural or social group. They argue that, often unspoken, these norms offer social standards of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, governing what is and is not acceptable. In the context of gender relations, social norms define gender roles which are socially constructed relations between men and women (Parpart & Barriteau, 2000). Gender here, rather than biological differences, refers to socially learned behaviours and expectations that are attributed to masculinity and femininity. While masculinity represents characteristics such as assertiveness, leadership, physical strength, and dominance; femininity represents emotionality, nurturing, and submissiveness (Anderson, 1988). Peterson and Runyan (1999) assert that this dichotomy of traits creates a gender hierarchy in which adoption of masculine characteristics is deemed positive and adoption of feminine traits is seen negatively.

A large body of literature on Turkey provides evidence that social norms regarding gender roles have significant effects on society, especially on women. Kağıtçıbaşı (1982) shows that Turkish parents prefer a son (84%) to a daughter (16%). She also notes that son preference, especially in the rural traditional areas, seems to be related to parents' expectations that a male child would carry the family name to the next generation, contribute to the family's welfare through financial and practical help, and take care of the aging parents. The same study shows that a daughter is perceived as 'the property of strangers'. This view on daughters establishes the basis for 'bride price' (or bride money). Bride price can be defined as the amount of money, property or wealth paid by the groom or his family to the parents of the bride in return for the consent of marriage.[4] In that sense, bride price is seen as the financial cost of raising a daughter until her marriage. Although this practice became less common in Turkey, in the HSS sample 16 per cent of married women report that bride price was paid upon their marriage.

Child marriage, or 'child brides', is also a problem that is repeatedly emphasised by the activists and politicians in Turkey. Early or forced marriage is a criminal offence in Turkey.[5] Nevertheless, according to TurkStat statistics, brides were younger than 18 in 7 per cent of the marriages that took place in 2012 (TurkStat, 2015b).[6] In the HSS sample around 30 per cent of women report that they were younger than 18 when they got married. It is asserted that child marriage is seen as a way to relieve families of the economic burden of caring for their daughters, while ensuring that girls do not engage in premarital sexual activities (OECD, 2014).

Social norms also affect the division of labour between men and women in Turkey. For example, men are expected to be responsible for farm-related tasks, physically heavy jobs, and external relations. On the other hand, women are responsible for carrying out household tasks, gardening, care of domestic animals, and childcare. Furthermore, confirming the arguments on hierarchy between masculinity and femininity, it is considered to be shameful if men do 'women's work' (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1982; Kağıtçıbaşı & Sunar, 1992). The 2003 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) shows that, apart from many factors such as household responsibilities and education, around 24 per cent of women in Turkey do not work or look for a job because their husbands or elders prevent them from doing so (see Table 1 below).

As noted above, social norms affect women's life in many different dimensions such as marriage age, son preference, and division of labour. In this study, attitudes towards these issues are used as indicators of individual's commitment to social norms. Further details on indicators are provided in Section 3.

2.4. Female autonomy, IPV, and social norms – the causality

As noted in Section 2.1, feminist theory asserts that violence is used by men as a means to strengthen male power and control and female subordination. In a recent study, Carter (2014) analyses how gender identity and roles are internalised through socialisation in the family. He argues that, through this socialisation process, gender is constantly developed while boys and girls learn what behaviour means and attach identity expectations to behaviours. He notes that 'male' and 'female' are identities

Table 1. Main reasons why women are not currently participating in labour force (Turkey)

Reason	%	N
Takes care of children or household	29.74	1616
Husband or elder does not want	24.77	1346
No need for working	11.12	604
Sick or handicapped	11.67	634
No talent/education	4.56	248
Continues education	6.73	343
Other	11.41	643
Total	100	5434

Source: Based on author's calculations using Demographic and Health Survey 2003 dataset.

that have meanings attached to them. While males embody traits such as being dominant, competitive, and autonomous, females are usually seen as submissive and cooperative. Eventually these identity expectations become identity standards with the subsequent appraisals of behaviours. Finally, identity standards become more stable so that men and women continually avoid negative emotions by acting with respect to the gendered expectations required by family and, eventually, greater society. Carter further argues that gender identities and roles are internalised by men and women by receiving feedback from each other regarding their identities and roles. He notes that a wife receives feedback from her husband about her identity and role, and she can internalise this feedback depending on its nature. Although Carter does not explicitly describe the types of feedback that the husband can give, it can be argued that in the context of IPV, this feedback can be in the form of violence. This implication is consistent with the arguments of Dobash and Dobash (1979) that in a patriarchal society, men, with all the power, must resort to violence when their position of dominance is threatened. In that sense, it is reasonable to expect the level of female autonomy in the household to change with IPV.[7] From a different perspective, Eswaran and Malhotra (2011) support this argument by proposing a non-cooperative household bargaining model of IPV in which women are, in the presence of violence, forced to allocate resources in accordance with the husbands' choice.

Another important argument of feminist theory is that IPV originates from inequalities within the marriage. The idea that inequalities in the household lead to IPV is also supported by household bargaining models. For instance, Aizer (2010) provides evidence that reductions in the gender wage gap have a decreasing effect on IPV. Similarly, Panda and Agarwal (2005) show that women's ownership of land or a house has a negative effect on IPV. The common theme in these studies is that inequality in the household, which can be in terms of education, income, house ownership, and so forth, can reduce the exit options for women thereby reducing their bargaining power and autonomy, which in turn leads to prevalence of IPV.

Although the existing literature suggests that female autonomy and IPV have an effect on each other, empirical works on this topic mostly focus on one direction of this relationship: the effect of female autonomy on IPV. However, these studies do not provide consistent results; some studies find a decreasing level of IPV with higher female autonomy (Jejeebhoy & Cook, 1997; Lamichhane, Puri, Tamang, & Dulal, 2011) while others, in contrast, document a higher risk of violence with increasing female autonomy (Hindin & Adair, 2002; Menon & Johnson, 2007).

The main problem common to these studies is that none of them considers reverse causality, thus ignoring the potential effect of violence on female autonomy. Indeed this argument was empirically tested by Eswaran and Malhotra (2011) using the National Family Health Survey data of India. Their study is one of the first papers acknowledging the endogeneity problem due to the two-way relationship between these two variables. To overcome this problem, they exploit a two-stage least squares regression model and use the height index, calculated by the deviation of the woman's height from the mean value of height for the region that she belongs to, as an instrument for IPV. The results of their analysis showed that IPV has a highly significant and negative effect on the autonomy of the women in the household.

Both feminist theory and Heise (1998) emphasise the importance of social norms when analysing IPV and female autonomy. According to these arguments, patriarchy and conservative attitudes on gender equality lead to stronger social norms upholding traditional gender roles. Stronger social norms, in turn, lead to higher levels of IPV. However, empirical evidence on this relationship is quite limited. Using data from two rural areas in Bangladesh, Koenig, Ahmed, Hossain, and Mozumder (2003) found that in the culturally more conservative area Sirajgonj, where the social norms related to the status of women are more traditional and rigid and social mobility of women is more restricted, higher individual-level female autonomy and short-term membership in savings and credit groups were both associated with significantly higher risk of violence. However, in the less culturally conservative area Jessore, individual-level women's status indicators were unrelated to the risk of violence, but the community-level measures of women's status were associated with significantly lower risk of violence.[8]

Considering the methodological issues that prevail among the existing literature, the main contribution of the current paper is that it is the first study in which the two-way relationship between female autonomy and IPV is analysed within the same framework, by exploiting the advantages of SEM to account for the potential endogeneity and measurement error problems. Second, due to the unique properties of the dataset, to the author's knowledge, it is the first study that analyses the effect of social norms on IPV at the individual level. Finally, to the author's knowledge, it is the first extensive analysis of female autonomy in Turkey.

3. Data

This study uses the 2006 Household Structure Survey (HSS hereafter). This survey is the product of joint research by TurkStat and the General Directorate of Family and Social Studies on the household structure of Turkish families and provides a nationally representative sample. 48,235 individuals above the age of 18 were interviewed from 11,854 households. The survey provides numerous questions about socio-economic factors, household structure, perceptions and habits of Turkish families. One of the important properties of the dataset is that interviews are conducted separately with each member of the household in order to assure that the answers are not heard by the other household members. Individuals who are single, divorced or widowed are dropped from the sample. Only the heads of households and their partners are kept as some of the key variables such as the female autonomy indicators (which will be explained below) are relevant to them only. Finally, couples are dropped if either of the partners did not respond to the survey. The final sample used in the estimation consists of 6435 couples (see Appendix for sample characteristics).

The three key variables of interest in the analyses are: IPV, female autonomy, and social norms.[9] To capture IPV, answers to the question 'what is your partner's reaction if you cannot agree on an issue?' are used. Participants are asked to choose between five options: does not do anything, sulks, leaves the home, shouts, resorts to physical violence.

Around 92 per cent of women report no violence in the 12 months previous to the interview, which means violence occurred in around 8 per cent of the marriages at least once within the last 12 months. Using women's answer to this question, a dummy variable representing IPV is created: it equals 1 if the woman reports having been physically assaulted even once within the last 12 months, and 0 otherwise. To check for robustness of the variable, a dummy variable equal to 1 if the wife reports experience of violence or the husband admits resorting to violence, is also created. The similar values of these violence variable specifications show that the responses of husbands and wives match.

Female autonomy is captured by the questions asking who in the household makes the final decision regarding the following: choice of house type, choice of house setup, issues about children, shopping, relations with relatives, relations with neighbours, and issues about holiday and entertainment. For each question participants can choose between 'husband alone', 'wife and husband together' and 'wife alone'. The indicator variables take the value of 0 if the man makes the final

decision individually (for women this is the response 'husband') and 1 otherwise (for women, this collapses the two categories 'wife' and 'wife and husband together'). As a robustness check, an alternative specification of the female autonomy indicators, in which each indicator takes three different values for 'wife alone', 'husband alone' and 'wife and husband together', is also used. The results were qualitatively the same.

As noted in Section 2, social norms are argued to be a key determinant of IPV. To capture the effect of social norms, the 'social norms of the husband' variable, representing his perception of traditional gender roles, is created. The indicators for this variable are created using the husband's agreement with the following statements; 'Having a male child increases the prestige of the wife', 'Not doing housework is a sole reason for divorce', 'The best age of marriage for women is between 15–19', 'Continuation of the family is guaranteed only by a son', 'It is appropriate for close relatives (first cousins) to marry' and 'It is not appropriate for women to work'.[10]

4. Methodology

In order to analyse the relationship between IPV and female autonomy in the household, an Item Response Theory (IRT) model is applied. IRT models are a member of SEM family in which the observed (indicator) variables are discrete and the latent variables are assumed to be continuous. In that sense, IRT models can be considered as factor models for non-continuous (including binary) indicators. There are numerous benefits of choosing SEM over the standard multiple regression technique. First, it allows for measurement error in the indicator variables. For instance, in this study social norm and female autonomy variables are assumed to be latent variables as their true values are unobservable. However, there are some indicators of these variables which include a measurement error component in their absolute values. Using SEM, it is possible to disintegrate the variation in indicator variables into two components: measurement error in the indicator and the variation due to the change in latent variables. Second, in the multiple regression technique, in order to estimate the coefficients of a reverse causality relationship between two variables, one needs to run two separate regressions for each direction of the relationship. SEM, on the other hand, allows association between latent variables in a single model specification.[11]

The conventional way to present models in SEM is to use path diagrams. Path diagrams contain two components: (1) a structural model, which shows the causal hypothesis between the variables of interest; and (2) measurement models showing the relationship between latent variables and their indicators. Figure 1 shows the path diagram of the measurement model (the dashed rectangles) and the structural model (the solid rectangle). Latent variables, in this study social norm and female autonomy, are shown as ellipses. The exogenous observed variables are presented by dashed rectangles and IPV – the endogenous observed variable – is represented by a solid rectangle. The single-headed arrows represent hypothesised direct effects of one variable on another.

As mentioned in Section 2.4, Eswaran and Malhotra (2011) used a two-stage instrumental variable model in their study to deal with reverse causality between female autonomy and IPV, which is a common way to solve this problem. Nevertheless, their analysis suffers from measurement error as they simply take the average of binary indicator of variables to capture female autonomy. In order to solve reverse causality (that is the potential endogeneity) and measurement error problems at the same time, a non-recursive version of SEM is used. A non-recursive model can be defined as a SEM model in which two variables in the structural model have a feedback loop between them (Kline, 2011). As can be seen from Figure 1, the causality between violence and female autonomy is represented by a direct feedback loop showing the bilateral relationship between violence and autonomy. The disturbances of female autonomy and violence are allowed to be correlated in order to account for the unobservable variables that affect both female autonomy and IPV. Also, husband's social norms are allowed to affect IPV directly in the model.[12]

Finally, there are two sets of observable variables represented by the dashed rectangles. The first set of observable variables (X^{FA}) has an effect only on female autonomy. This set contains: age, age at

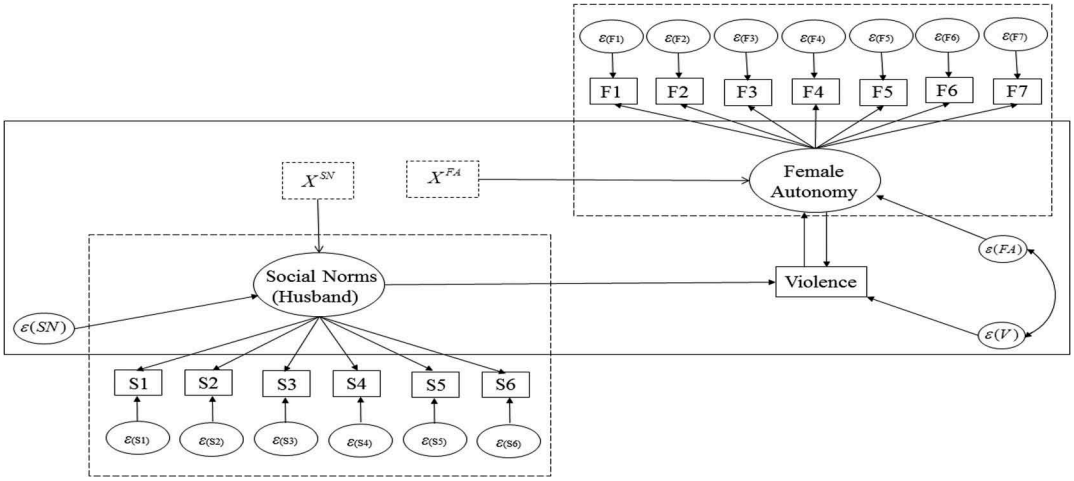

Figure 1. Path diagram of the model.

Notes: The measurement models are the dashed rectangles; the structural model is the solid rectangle. Latent variables are shown as ellipses. The exogenous observed variables (X's) are presented by dashed rectangles and the endogenous observed variable is represented by a solid rectangle. The single headed arrows represent hypothesised direct effect of one variable on another. The indicator variables shown on Table 2 are represented by rectangles S1–S6 for social norms and F1–F7 for female autonomy latent variables.

marriage, education level, income status of the wife, arranged marriage and the number of male and female children. The second set of observable variables (X^{SN}) affects the social norms of the husband. It consists of age, age at marriage, education level and income of husband. Formal representation of the model can be found in the Supplementary Materials.

5. Results

Table 2 shows the results of the measurement models for female autonomy and the social norm latent variables. The estimated parameters represent the strength of the relationship between the latent

Table 2. Estimation results of the measurement model

	Coefficient	Std. Err	Standardised coefficient	R-square
Latent variable: Women's autonomy (FA)				
Choice of House	1.00	Na	0.83	0.70
House Setup	0.96***	0.01	0.80	0.64
Children Related Issues	1.04***	0.01	0.87	0.75
Shopping	1.04***	0.01	0.87	0.75
Relationship With Relatives	1.19***	0.01	0.98	0.96
Relationship With Neighbours	1.15***	0.01	0.95	0.90
Entertainment and Holiday	1.13***	0.01	0.94	0.87
Latent Variable: Husband's Social Norm (SN)				
Having a male child increases the prestige of the wife	1.00	Na	0.58	0.34
Not doing housework is a sole reason for divorce	0.48***	0.07	0.28	0.08
The best age of marriage for women is between 15–19	0.60***	0.07	0.35	0.12
Continuation of the family is guaranteed only by a son	0.87***	0.09	0.51	0.25
It is appropriate for close relatives (first cousins) to marry	0.60***	0.08	0.35	0.12
It is not appropriate for women to work	0.63***	0.08	0.37	0.13

Notes: Sample weights are used. *** $p < 0.01$.

variable and the observed indicator (item) variable. More precisely, they show how well the indicator discriminates between individuals with similar scores on the latent variable. All of the parameter estimates in the measurement models are statistically significant and positive which means female autonomy and the husband's social norm latent variables have a positive and significant effect on their respective indicators.

As the latent variables and the underlying continuous response behind the indicator variables do not have a unit of measure, one can use the standardised estimates of coefficients to interpret the effect of latent variables on their indicators. The standardised coefficients show the mean change in standard deviation units of indicators for a 1 standard deviation change in the latent variables. According to the results of the measurement model, women having a say on choice of entertainment/ holiday, and relationships with the relatives and neighbours (that is people outside the household), are the best indicators of female autonomy in the household. On the other hand, having a say on the house setup, is the weakest among the indicators of female autonomy. This is consistent with the arguments of Kağıtçıbaşı (1982) and Kağıtçıbaşı and Sunar (1992) that house setup, or housework, is traditionally accepted as the duty of women while men are responsible for external relations. In terms of husband's social norms, indicators showing husbands' agreement on 'having a male child increases the prestige of the wife' and 'continuation of the family is guaranteed only by a son' have greater factor loadings. This means that husbands' son preference seems to be the strongest indicator of their social norms.

Table 3 presents the results of the structural model. Female autonomy in the household is found to be positively and significantly affected by the wife's education. The coefficients of the age and age at marriage on female autonomy are positive; however, they lack statistical significance. While having a personal income has an increasing effect, asset ownership does not have a significant contribution to female autonomy. Arranged marriage and bride price have negative effects on female autonomy. This is not surprising since women who are forced into a marriage are less likely to have a say on decision-making processes within the household. Considering the results of the measurement model of the husband's social norms, which show the importance given to male child by husbands, two separate variables to control for the number of male and female children are included. The estimated coefficients for these variables are the same in terms of both size and magnitude, indicating a negative effect of having children on female autonomy.

The strength of the husband's social norms is found to be negatively related to socio-economic status. The effect of education is negative and strongly significant. Similarly, the level of income has a negative effect on the husband's social norms. The effect of age is negative. The age at marriage is not significantly related to social norms.

The key findings of the analysis are also reported in Table 3. First, IPV has a negative effect on female autonomy. This finding suggests that women who are victims of IPV have less autonomy since, in the decision-making process, they are forced to be in line with the preferences of the abuser. This result is consistent with the results of Eswaran and Malhotra (2011) who proposed a non-cooperative model of spousal violence in which women are, in the presence of violence, forced to allocate resources in accordance with the husbands' choice. Second, female autonomy has a significant and negative effect on IPV. In other words, the incidence of violence is less likely to occur once the autonomy of women, which is promoted by the income and the education they possess and reflected by their presence in decision-making processes, gains acceptance. This result is in accordance with feminist theory on violence which asserts that intimate violence stems from inequalities within the household, and it is used by husbands to maintain spousal subordination. In this sense, husbands' resorting to violence becomes less likely in the absence of these inequalities and male dominance.

Finally, the strength of the husband's social norms on traditional gender roles positively affects the risk of violence. This result supports Heise (1998), who argues that adherence to rigid gender roles increases the likelihood of violence against women. Koenig et al. (2003) find supporting

Table 3. Estimation results of the structural model

	Coefficient	Std. Err	Standardised coefficient
Dependent Variable: Violence			
Female autonomy	−0.79***	0.00	−0.67
Husband's Social Norms	0.16*	0.09	0.09
Dependent Variable: Female autonomy			
Violence	−0.77***	0.16	−0.91
Education level[a]			
Primary	0.06*	0.03	0.03
Secondary	0.06	0.04	0.03
High school or above	0.12*	0.07	0.05
Age[b]			
25–34	0.00	0.03	0.00
35–44	0.04	0.04	0.02
45–54	0.04	0.05	0.02
55–64	0.03	0.05	0.01
65+	0.02	0.06	0.01
Age at Marriage[c]			
18–24	0.00	0.01	0.00
25–29	−0.03	0.03	−0.01
>30	0.00	0.05	0.00
Economic status and family variables			
Having income	0.05*	0.03	0.02
Asset ownership	0.03	0.02	0.01
Arranged marriage	−0.06*	0.03	−0.03
Bride price	−0.05*	0.03	−0.02
Number of daughters	−0.03*	0.01	−0.04
Number of sons	−0.03*	0.01	−0.04
Dependent Variable: Husband's Social Norms			
Education level[a]			
Primary	−0.19***	0.05	−0.16
Secondary	−0.29***	0.07	−0.16
High school or above	−0.37***	0.07	−0.28
Age[b]			
25–34	−0.24*	0.14	−0.17
35–44	−0.18	0.15	−0.14
45–54	−0.31*	0.16	−0.22
55–64	−0.37**	0.18	−0.22
65+	−0.43**	0.19	−0.23
Age at marriage[c]			
18–24	0.03	0.06	0.03
25–29	−0.03	0.06	−0.02
>30	0.05	0.09	0.02
Income Level[d]			
Income Less than 400	−0.05	0.07	−0.03
401–600 TL	−0.19***	0.06	−0.15
601–800 TL	−0.14**	0.07	−0.09
801–1 200 TL	−0.27***	0.07	−0.17
1 201–2 500 TL	−0.29***	0.09	−0.13
More than 2 501 TL	−0.28**	0.14	−0.06
Disturbance Covariance (Female autonomy, Violence)	0.94***	0.10	

Notes: N = 6435, RMSEA = 0.015; CFI = 0.984. Sample weights are used. Base categories: [a] no formal education, [b] age 18–24, [c] marriage before the age of 18, [d] no income. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

results for this argument at the community level. In line with these studies, the results of this study provide evidence for the literature by examining the effect of social norms on violence at the individual level.

6. Conclusion

The key findings of the study are in accordance with the literature on female autonomy and IPV. First, violence has a significant and negative effect on women's autonomy. This result is consistent with the argument of feminist theory and findings of Eswaran and Malhotra (2011) who argued that IPV is used by males as a means to control women. Second, the incidence of violence decreases with the level of women's autonomy, which is consistent with the arguments of the feminist theory on IPV which assert that IPV stems from inequalities within the household. Finally, in accordance with Heise's (1998) framework model, IPV is found to be an increasing function of the strength of husband's commitment to social norms upholding traditional gender roles.

There are some potential limitations of the study. For example, although the SEM model accounts for the measurement errors of indicators of latent variables, the incidence of violence is likely to be underreported by the respondents, given the intimate nature of the subject. Moreover, the dataset only contains information about physical violence. However, violence can take a sexual or an emotional form as well. Additionally, the dataset provides information about violence that occurred only in the last 12 months. These limit the analysis of different types and life-cycle impact of violence. Another issue is that, as noted in Section 2, participation in decision-making is only one aspect of female autonomy. Due to lack of information in HSS regarding women's employment status, mobility, control over resources, and political participation and awareness, it is not possible to analyse these dimensions of female autonomy.

The methodological approach and the result of the study provide a basis for future research especially in the context of Turkey. For instance, due to the cross-sectional nature of the data it was not possible to analyse the time dimension of the hypothesised relationships in the model. With longitudinal data, the model used in this paper can provide better insight into the relationship between IPV, social norms and female autonomy. For instance, having information on occurrence of violence in previous years can allow using alternative methodologies to deal with endogeneity issue as a robustness check. Moreover, if longitudinal data become available, it would be possible to analyse how long the impact of violence lasts, which is a common topic explored in the employment stability literature. As noted above, HSS survey design constrains the analysis of social norms in Turkey as the number of questions are quite limited. SIGI Reports by OECD evaluate country-specific social institutions in terms of discriminatory family codes, restricted physical integrity, son preference, restricted resources and assets, and restricted civil liberties. Therefore, this study's results can become comparable across countries with a new survey design which considers these dimensions of social norms.

Nevertheless, this study makes significant contributions to the existing literature on IPV and female autonomy. First, it analyses the two-way relationship between female autonomy and IPV within a single framework. Second, exploiting the advantages of SEM, it accounts for the potential endogeneity and measurement error problems; and finally, it tests the importance of social norms at the individual level. Finally, to the author's knowledge it is the first extensive analyses of female autonomy in Turkey.

7. Discussion

The results of the study provide many suggestions for policy-makers. For instance, traditional social norms regarding genders roles are found to have an increasing effect on IPV. Therefore, policies aiming to overcome social norms that damage women's status in society should be adopted simultaneously with policies that promote gender equality in all aspects of social life. This is also noted in the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women:

States should condemn violence against women and should not invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination. States should pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating violence against women. (UN, 1993, Article 4)

As remarked in OECD's SIGI Report on Turkey, there have been promising changes in the laws that can be effective on gender roles. For instance, the provision that deems the father as the head of

household in Turkish law was abolished in 2001. Nevertheless the same report also notes the shortcomings in the practices such as protection against violence only covering 'spouses' or family members, potentially excluding women who were divorced, in unofficial religious marriages, or had been in dating relationships (OECD, 2014).

The paper's results also show that education and income not only weaken the strength of traditional social norms for both men and women but also promote a higher level of female autonomy. Accordingly, policy-makers should consider focusing on education, particularly promoting the educational attainment of women which can also eliminate the gender gap in post-primary education. Further, the analyses also show that women who do not have any source of income and have a low level of education suffer oppression in the household which, in turn, makes them the most vulnerable group to IPV. Hence, policies targeting new employment opportunities for women should be prioritised as the labour participation rate of women in Turkey is already the lowest among OECD countries.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes

1. Numerous studies have investigated the relationship between IPV and household and individual level factors outlined in Heise's framework with a particular interest on the effect of employment on IPV. However, empirical works on the employment status of women and its relationship with the incidence of IPV provide inconsistent results as some studies find a positive effect of employment on IPV while others find a negative effect or no effect at all (Jejeebhoy, 1998; Schuler, Hashemi, & Badal, 1998). In the case of Turkey, Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu et al. (2012) find no significant associations between the employment status of women and the risk of IPV.
2. Agarwala and Lynch (2006) argue that while the collective aspect of power is essential to gender equality, it is the individual aspect of power (captured through the term 'autonomy') that appears more frequently in the quantitative literature on gender and power. This paper fits in this stream of literature.
3. Due to the lack of data on other indicators, this paper uses participation in decision-making as an indicator for female autonomy.
4. See Anderson (2007) for further details on bride price and its differences from dowry.
5. Since 2001, the legal minimum age to enter into a marriage in Turkey is 17 although this requires a court decision and parental consent if a participant is younger than 18. Before 2001, with the consent of parents, women were allowed to marry at the age of 15 and men were allowed to marry at the age of 17.
6. This only represents statistics on registered marriages. If unregistered religious marriages are considered, the share of child brides could be much higher.
7. Another implication of this argument is that women's own attitudes towards social norms on gender roles can affect their autonomy. This is tested in the alternative specification that is presented in the Supplementary Materials.
8. In order to capture individual level women's status, Koenig et al. (2003) used variables such as women's freedom to talk to strangers, freedom to seek medical care, and freedom to possess any cash. To capture the community-level women's status, they used percentage of married women in a community with any formal education, percentage of married women in a community belonging to a savings and credit group, and the mean value of the individual-level women's status in each community.
9. See Supplementary Materials for the descriptive statistics and more detailed information on IPV, female autonomy, and social norms.
10. Using the same data, Goksel (2012) exploited some of these questions to capture social norms in a different setting where she analysed the effect of conservativeness on female labour force participation.

11. It is also possible to construct a dynamic model with time variance under SEM approach using longitudinal data. Unfortunately, no such data are available at the moment for Turkey.
12. An alternative specification which includes women's own social norms is constructed to see how women's internalisation of social norms affect their autonomy. See Supplementary Materials for the estimation results of the alternative specification.

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Appendix

Sample Characteristics

Table A1 shows the number of individuals dropped from the sample. Table A2, column 1 provides the descriptive statistics for the sample. More than half of women in the sample are between 25 and 44 years old. While the majority of women were between 18–25 years old when they got married, almost 30 per cent of women reported that they were younger than 18 when they got married. Like the women in the sample, more than half of men are between 25 and 44 years old. However, marriage before the age of 18 is not as common among men as it is for women. The HSS includes a categorical variable providing income bands. As most of the women in the sample report having zero or low levels of income, a dummy variable to represent women who have a positive income is created. According to Table A2, only 20 per cent of women in the sample reported having an income. This is consistent with the low level of female labour force participation in Turkey. Furthermore, only 17 per cent of women reported that they have any form of asset ownership (such as house, land, automobile, or other). The majority of men in the sample reported having an income. Twenty-five per cent of women do not have any form of formal education and nearly half of them attended only primary education.

The analyses also look at variables relating to the family setup, namely arranged marriage and bride price. Arranged marriage is a type of marital union in which partners are chosen by the family or other elders in the family. In the HSS, women are asked to report if the marriage was an arranged one and furthermore, they are asked if the arranged marriage was with or against their will. The arranged marriage category is created only for those whose marriage was against their will. Even after considering this difference, 33 per cent of women in the sample stay in this category. In around 16 per cent of the marriages, bride money is reported to be paid.

Table A2, column 2 shows the prevalence of violence against women by the characteristics of women and men. Although it is not possible to find a clear-cut relationship between age and violence, the incidence of violence is slightly higher at older ages for both men and women. Lower levels of violence are observed in marriages starting at early ages. The incidence of violence is lower for women who have an income or for those who own assets. The incidence of violence gets smaller at higher levels of husband's income. Similarly, the incidence of violence decreases with the education level of men and women. Table A2 also shows that, on average, the incidence of violence is higher in arranged marriages and marriages in which bride price is paid.

Table A1. Sample selection

	N
Full sample	48,235
Dropped observations	
Single, divorced, widowed	30,367
Individuals who are not head of household and neither is their spouse	1446
Individuals who (or whose partner) did not respond to the survey	3552
Resulting sample	12,870

Table A2. Descriptive statistics for explanatory variables

	Mean value of the dummy variable	Mean value of violence dummy variable
Wife's age		
18–24	0.07	0.07***
25–34	0.29	0.05***
35–44	0.26	0.07***
45–54	0.20	0.07***
55–64	0.11	0.08***
65+	0.07	0.07***
Wife's age at marriage		
<18	0.28	0.03***
18–24	0.62	0.07***
25–29	0.08	0.07***
>30	0.01	0.09*
Husband's age		
18–24	0.01	0.06**
25–34	0.23	0.06***
35–44	0.29	0.06***
45–54	0.22	0.09***
55–64	0.13	0.08***
65+	0.11	0.08***
Husband's age at marriage		
<18	0.06	0.06***
18–24	0.58	0.06***
25–29	0.29	0.08***
>30	0.07	0.07***
Does wife have an income		
No		0.08***
Yes	0.20	0.06***

(*continued*)

Table A2. (*Continued*)

	Mean value of the dummy variable	Mean value of violence dummy variable
Wife's asset ownership		
No		0.08***
Yes	0.17	0.06***
Husband's monthly income [a]		
No income	0.06	0.12***
Less than 400	0.18	0.10***
401–600	0.32	0.08***
601–800	0.20	0.06***
01–1 200	0.16	0.05***
1 201–2 500	0.07	0.03***
More than 2 501	0.02	0.05*
Wife's education		
No formal education	0.24	0.10***
Primary	0.53	0.07***
Secondary	0.07	0.07***
High school or above	0.16	0.04***
Husband's education		
No formal education	0.09	0.12***
Primary	0.52	0.08***
Secondary	0.12	0.07***
High school or above	0.28	0.05***
Arranged marriage		
No		0.06***
Yes	0.33	0.10***
Bride price		
No		0.06***
Yes	0.16	0.12***
Number of daughters [b]	1.33 (0.02)	
Number of sons [b]	1.43 (0.02)	
Observations	6435	

Notes: Sample weights are used. [a] In terms of Turkish Liras. [b] Number of daughters and sons enters the analysis as continuous variables. Standard deviations are given in parenthesis. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.